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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

March 13, 2018

Mr. Michael J. Swartz  
Interim Healthcare System Director  
VA Western New York Healthcare System  
3495 Bailey Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14215

Dear Interim Director Swartz,

I am writing to express my alarm in receiving yesterday's report by the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General (OIG) outlining mismanagement of resuscitation and other concerns at the VA Medical Center in Buffalo, New York. The report details the tragic death of a VA patient as the result of a mismanaged resuscitation and the troubling series of actions taken by facility personnel in the aftermath of the incident.

This is not the first troubling revelation regarding the Buffalo Veterans Affairs Medical Center in recent years. In August of 2017, I wrote the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to express my deep concern in learning that 526 patients of the Buffalo VAMC may have been put at risk of infection due to improperly cleaned medical scopes. Yesterday's Inspector General report outlines a separate series of shortcomings, but underscores a continued trend of mismanagement negatively affecting patients and their families in Western New York.

I believe you must take immediate action on the recommendations outlined by the Inspector General's report. Nine of the ten recommendations call for direct action by the Facility Director. Some of these items seem painfully basic in the proper administration of a medical facility, but can make the difference between life and death for patients. No veteran should have to wonder whether his or her local VA facility is properly training its staff in the management of life or death emergency scenarios when a patient's health suddenly escalates. Further, the Facility Director and staff should handle serious incidents with professionalism and transparency—not attempts to obfuscate the truth or withhold information from patients or their families.

I firmly believe our men and women in uniform—past, present, and future—deserve a Department of Veterans Affairs worthy of their sacrifices. I plan to stay directly involved with you and your staff to ensure the well-being of our patients and the implementation of the Inspector General's recommendations. I respectfully request your acknowledgement of this letter and plan for implementation of the Inspector General's recommendations no later than Friday, March 23, 2018.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator