

Maurice Skillern



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24 March 24, 2015

To whom it may concern

U.S. Office of Special Counsel:

I received the response to my allegations against the Veterans Administration Hospital (VA), Memphis. I must admit that I was mortified at the contents of both the investigation and its findings (or lack there-of). Initially it read like you all substantiated my findings (suggestions for the VA) then at the end of the letter it clearly indicates that none of my allegations were substantiated. I do not understand how a professional organization could put such nonsense together. You make a lot of suggestions for the VA but you all indicate that there were no findings to substantiate my allegations. If no findings were found to substantiate my allegations why were there so many suggestions made to the VA Memphis to improve care? The investigation and the findings read like a dog chasing its tail and clearly demonstrates that your office and maybe the government itself has absolutely no desire to fix the VA.

The investigators and writers of the document sent to me had to have forgotten that I worked inside the VA Memphis in a management position so I am perfectly aware how things are done to cover up wrongs that are found but never exposed. There is a cover-up to protect the VA reputation, protect friend culture alive and well within the VA system itself. I know exactly how this investigation was done. First the VA senior leaders were notified that there was a complaint that warranted investigation. Then overtly or subvertly VA Memphis leadership were given a copy of the allegations ahead of time. Then the VA leadership were told exactly when the investigators were coming. Then, on top of all of that they were given an extension of time to clean up the areas of complaint before the final report was written. This is exactly the way not to run an investigation desiring to find anything wrong. I am an Army Combat Veteran and I have been involved with properly run fact finding investigative teams. The most important thing that must occur to do an appropriate investigation is that those (individual or organization) who are being investigated should never know you are coming. Also, those who are being investigated should never be told about allegations (given a copy of the complaint or complaints before the investigators arrive)

which maintains the element of surprise in the investigators hands; which in turn allows for a properly run fact finding investigation.

I could not help but laugh at the cherry picked patients that were interviewed. Cherry picking people only interviews people who are going to give the organization a positive glowing report. Yet, if the patient advocate records were searched (they have to document every complaint) a completely different picture would have been painted of VA Memphis. I know this to be true due to the fact that I was the person being called 10 or 20 times a week with patient wait-time complaints from the Patient Advocates.

The way the Office of Special Counsel has run this investigation (even giving extra time for the VA Memphis to clean up its act) is truly ridiculous. This investigation had no intent on finding any wrong which is a posture that is not good for the Veterans that the VA serves.

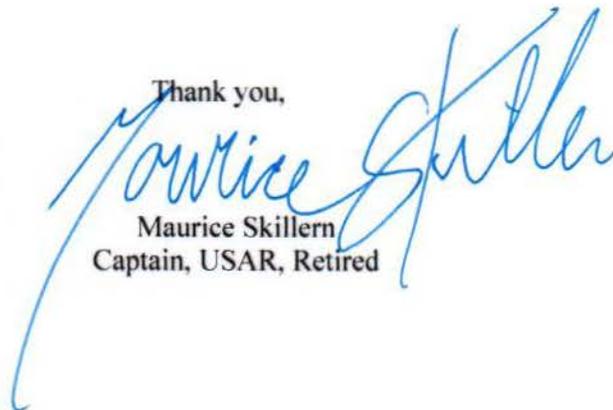
I am requesting the following actions be addressed:

1. I am not satisfied with the findings of this investigation and I feel that the whole report is a cover-up of problems found. I am requesting that my complaint be moved to the next higher echelon for further evaluation.
2. I request that an investigation be done to document the dates that all the fixes were done at the VA, Memphis. What will be found is that none of the apparent fixes that the VA Memphis has done were in place before June 2, 2015 (the date I left the VA for PTSD treatment outside) or prior to the date I submitted the allegation. These findings will clearly demonstrate that the complaint findings were present when the allegations were made but that the VA Memphis was given time to fix everything prior to the final evaluation and report being written. This is a totally ridiculous way to investigate anything and it will always document 100% of the time that no negative findings were found.
3. I am requesting that the patient advocacy record be reviewed to actually demonstrate that weekly and monthly there were chronic complaints made by Veterans about the year-long (or longer) wait-times to have total joint surgery after it was decided that surgery was to be their treatment.

4. I am requesting that the investigators for this complaint be investigated for not following appropriate procedure and turning a blind eye to the wrongs they found at the VA Memphis and allowing them to fix the wrongs found before writing the final report. The procedure used for this investigation were clearly not appropriate.
 - a. The VA Memphis was warned ahead of time about the complaint.
 - i. If an appropriate fact finding investigation were done they would not have been warned ahead of time.
 - b. The VA Memphis was given a copy of the complaint before the investigators arrived.
 - i. This prevented appropriate investigative fact finding to be done and allowed them to fix or initiate the process of fixing the problems before the fact finding team arrived.
 - c. The VA Memphis were told ahead of time when the fact finders would arrive.
 - i. This gave the VA Memphis a clear suspense date to initiate and/or complete fixing the problems documented in the allegations.

5. Overall, I am not at all pleased nor satisfied with the way the investigation was conducted nor am I pleased with the findings being written in a way to cover up the problems at the VA Memphis. This cover-up mentality does not benefit the VA organization as a whole. Only by finding, documenting and fixing problems will the VA in general deliver the care to Veterans that they deserve.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Maurice Skillern". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Maurice Skillern
Captain, USAR, Retired