



SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL
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Ben Stuckart
Council President

January 25, 2017

Rick Richards
Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center
4815 N. Assembly Street
Spokane, Washington 99205

Dear Director Richards:

Access to the wide-ranging services at Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center is critical to many of our constituents and their families. We want to thank you for everything you do to provide high quality care to veterans in Spokane each day.

We are writing to inquire about the impacts to access and quality of care at the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center as a result of President Donald Trump's Presidential Memorandum freezing all federal hiring. A casual search of USAJOBS reveals that your facility is seeking psychologists, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacy technicians, physicians, and social workers. Local news articles also reflect that the demands for services at Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center continue to rise and some veterans are crowded out of services by the increase in demand. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer recently said the "The VA in particular, if you look at the problems that have plagued people, hiring more people isn't the answer. It's hiring the right people". These comments are concerning to us. We know there are no super doctors or super social workers who can take on even larger caseloads without it impacting quality of care to the veteran and professional burnout to the employee. We are concerned that the inability to supply personnel to the increase in demand for services will mean greater wait times for basic medical appointments, inability to access critical mental health services, and diminished outreach programs for our homeless veterans.

It is important that we understand the impacts of President Trump's federal hiring freeze to our local veterans so that we can better plan for potential increases in demand for City of Spokane services and programs offered by our community partners. Please respond to us at your earliest convenience, and please let us know how we can partner with you in advocating for high quality care for our veterans.

Sincerely,

Ben Stuckart
President, Spokane City Council

Candace Mumm
Council Member, District 3

Karen Stratton
Council Member, District 3

cc: Washington Congressional Delegation