

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3817

January 24, 2025

Mr. Donald Koenig
Director, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
Pittsburgh VA Medical Center
University Drive C
Pittsburgh, PA 15240

Dear Director Koenig,

I am writing to learn from you how President Trump's recently announced hiring freeze on federal employees is affecting the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS) and our community of veterans in Western Pennsylvania. To that end, I request answers to the following questions no later than January 30, 2025:

1. Is VAPHS affected, or likely to be affected, by the hiring freeze?
2. Yesterday, the VA released a memo on hiring freeze guidance, which included a list of occupations exempt from the freeze. Are any positions that VAPHS was planning to fill for occupations excluded from that list? If so, what positions are VAPHS now unable to fill? (Please describe how many positions are affected.)
3. The VA memo on hiring freeze guidance implements a new "request for exemption" requirement to hire positions subject to the freeze. Does VAPHS intend to submit requests for exemption for every occupation that VAPHS is no longer able to hire? Does this new requirement make it easier or harder for VAPHS to fill positions?
4. I am concerned that this hiring freeze will further push veterans out of VA care and into more costly and less accountable fee-for-service (or "community") care. Do you expect that this hiring freeze will affect VAPHS's ability to provide direct VA care for eligible veterans?

Thank you for your service to this country and veterans across Western Pennsylvania. I look forward to your prompt reply.

Very respectfully,



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress