

April 6, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
412 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
412 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Tester,

Just like Veterans and family members across West Virginia, I am outraged and disgusted by the newly revealed details of sexual abuse and deprivation of civil rights of Veterans by a former doctor at the Beckley, WV Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC). It is unthinkable that someone in a position of power would exploit our brave Veterans and I am glad the FBI acted to remove this former doctor and deliver justice for those who were abused.

In September 2019, I called for a criminal and VA Office of Inspector General (VAOIG) investigation after learning of allegations of sexual abuse of more than a dozen Veterans. While this arrest is an important first step towards obtaining justice for victims, in the interest of restoring public confidence across West Virginia, I urge the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, under your leadership, to immediately investigate how these assaults went undetected for so long and the VA hiring practices that put a serial abuser in a position of power.

West Virginia Veterans deserve answers and Veterans across our country deserve the assurance these abuses will not occur at their local VA facilities. The ongoing Inspector General investigation has been underway for at least seven months. I have called on the VA, the VAOIG, and the Department of Justice to use all resources available to quickly conclude their investigations and reviews and asked if they needed any new authorities or additional resources to make that happen. We must ensure that justice is served and transparency is prioritized. We have a responsibility to ensure that something like this could never happen again.

As you know all too well, Veterans have made unimaginable sacrifices and they deserve answers when the facilities they trust to take care of them fail. It is our responsibility to use every tool at our disposal to get to the bottom of what has happened to Veterans under the care of the Beckley VAMC.

Throughout this investigation, let us not forget that there are Veterans who are suffering because of this terrible situation. Finally, I ask that you do everything possible to ensure the VA provides these Veterans and families with support, and any resource they may need during this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin III