

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 13, 2020

Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza West, S.W.
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster DeJoy,

Millions of veterans rely on timely deliveries from the United States Postal Service (USPS) to receive their prescription medications from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Recent operational changes you ordered at USPS are needlessly delaying veterans' access to life-saving prescriptions, when the health and lives of Americans are already at high risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

VA fills about 80 percent of veteran prescriptions by mail, due to the high accuracy and lower processing costs of the Department's mail-order pharmacy service, the Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP). The VA CMOP fills almost 120 million prescriptions a year, with deliveries arriving daily to about 330,000 veterans across the country. Veterans and the VA rely on USPS for timely delivery of these prescriptions, since approximately 90 percent of CMOP packages are shipped to veterans by the Postal Service. VA's mail-order pharmacy service is also extremely popular among veterans, with an "among the best" rating in customer satisfaction according to the J.D. Power U.S. Pharmacy Study.

However, since you directed USPS to institute harmful operational changes that have restricted mail movement and limited carriers' ability to timely deliver mail, we have received many troubling reports from veterans waiting weeks for their prescriptions to arrive due to delays at USPS. VA's website states that "prescriptions usually arrive within 3 to 5 days." Veterans and VA staff have said that as of recently, these medications are often taking weeks to be delivered and causing veterans to miss doses of vital medications. Most troubling is that these delays appear to be entirely avoidable. Veterans and the VA should be able to count on USPS for the timely delivery of essential prescription drugs.

Access to prescription medications is especially integral during the COVID-19 pandemic when routine health care appointments may be delayed or cancelled. No veteran should have to wonder when their antidepressant or blood pressure medication may arrive – and the effects can be devastating if doses are missed. Thousands of veterans, including more than 2,300 veterans who were VA patients, have already died from the novel coronavirus. USPS needs to immediately cease operational changes that are causing mail delays so that veterans do not needlessly suffer from illnesses exacerbated by delayed medication deliveries.

Those who gave so much to serve this country should be able to count on the nation's Postal Service to deliver their medications in a timely manner. We request that the Postal Service examine the impact of its recent operational and policy changes on veterans' access to prescription drugs, and work with VA to ensure no veteran suffers from further medication delivery delays.

Sincerely,

_____/s/
Jon Tester
United States Senator

_____/s/
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

_____/s/
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

_____/s/
Patty Murray
United States Senator

_____/s/
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

_____/s/
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

_____/s/
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

_____/s/
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

_____/s/
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

_____/s/
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

/s/

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

/s/

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

/s/

Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

/s/

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

/s/

Tom Udall
United States Senator

/s/

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

/s/

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

/s/

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

/s/

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

/s/

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

/s/

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

_____/s/
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

_____/s/
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

_____/s/
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

_____/s/
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

_____/s/
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

_____/s/
Tina Smith
United States Senator

_____/s/
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Robert Wilkie