



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
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www.va.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 25, 2016

VA Takes Action on Allegations of Wrongdoing in Cincinnati

Network Director Proposed for Removal, and Acting Chief of Staff Reassigned Pending Further Action

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today actions against two senior leaders in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Based on preliminary results of a joint VA Office of Medical Inspector (OMI) and Office of Accountability (OAR) review conducted February 9-11, 2016 at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Sloan D. Gibson, has proposed the removal of Jack Hetrick, the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN 10) director, from Federal Service. Today, Mr. Hetrick submitted his retirement.

Additionally, VA's Undersecretary for Health, Dr. David J. Shulkin, has detailed the Cincinnati VA Medical Center Acting Chief of Staff, Dr. Barbara Temeck, out of her current duties pending appropriate administrative action.

Hetrick received a notice of pending removal today. As of today, Shulkin has summarily suspended Temeck's privileges and detailed her to non-patient-care duties while he considers appropriate additional actions.

"We are committed to sustainable accountability," said Gibson. "We will continue to use VA's statutory authority to hold employees accountable where warranted by the evidence. That is simply the right thing to do for Veterans and taxpayers."

The VA joint team conducted the site visit to investigate allegations of professional misconduct on the part of Temeck along with allegations that she directed the referral of Veterans for care in the community as a cost-shifting mechanism, resulting in poor quality of care.

The team did not substantiate any impropriety with respect to community care referrals or quality of care for Veterans. However, the team did substantiate misconduct by both Hetrick and Temeck related to Temeck's provision of prescriptions and other medical care to members of Hetrick's family. VA OIG has accepted VA's referral of the substantiated allegations for potential criminal investigation.

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