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(UPDATE)

DC VA Medical Center Demonstrates Significant Improvement

VA Makes System-Wide Enhancements to Prevent Future Issues

Washington, DC – Today, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) outlined a series of major improvements undertaken at the DC VA Medical Center (DCVAMC) in the 11 months since the VA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released an interim report critical of the Medical Center.

In April 2017, the Secretary immediately began replacing key members of the leadership team; bringing in Larry Connell as the Acting Medical Center Director. In addition to Connell, the facility has a new acting deputy director, acting assistant director; a new Nurse Executive and a new Chief of Logistics.

"We appreciate the work of the OIG," stated VA Secretary David J. Shulkin. "Their report is a critical step in improving the overall performance of this facility; further, it is especially valuable as VA strives to markedly improve the care we provide to our Veterans and as we move forward in restoring Veterans' confidence in the medical care they receive," Shulkin continued.

Among the important actions taken and progress made at the DCVAMC:

- Eliminated all pending prosthetics consults greater than 30 days – from 9,000 to zero.
- Established the Incident Command Center (ICC), providing for a robust oversight process that identified and promptly addressed new supply or equipment shortages and instituted a 24-hour hotline for ordering urgent and emergent medical supplies.
- Awarded a contract to construct a 14,200-square foot space for the Sterile Processing Service; the \$8.9 million project will be completed in March 2019.
- Transitioned inventory to the General Inventory Package and the periodic automatic replenishment levels are validated to ensure stock outages do not occur.
- Off-site, warehouse secured with restricted access to protect medical equipment and supplies.
- 36 Logistics, Sterile Processing Service vacancies have been filled and 7 positions remain under recruitment.

UPDATE:

Secretary Shulkin made very clear following a news conference this morning, that the IG's interim report demonstrated failures on a number of levels including; medical facilities, hospital networks, and the VA Central Office. He has pledged to immediately take action and implement several proactive steps to help correct and prevent similar problems, including tasking independent healthcare management experts to begin making unannounced on-site audits at VA facilities, conduct VA-wide staffing reviews, restructure logistics to centralize accountability, and establish new control and oversight for medical center performance, including at VA Central Office. To this end, Secretary Shulkin announced leadership changes at two VISN networks. Network 1 and 22 directors, Dr. Michael Mayo-Smith and Ms. Marie Weldon respectively, will retire in the coming weeks. In addition, VA's Dr. Bryan Gamble will oversee a significant restructuring effort involving VISN's 1, 5, and 22. Additional information will be available in the coming weeks.