

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 12, 2020

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

The COVID-19 pandemic has strained the U.S. health care system in unprecedented ways and significantly impacted the Department of Veterans Affairs, the largest integrated health system in the nation. A severe disruption to global medical supply chains coupled with historic demand spikes has wreaked havoc on VA's already strained procurement and logistics operations. We have prioritized reform of such administrative processes because of their direct, measurable impact on the quality of care provided to veterans, and we commend GAO on its prior work on these issues. However, the unique and immediate challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic warrant extraordinary focus by GAO.

In accordance with Congress' direction to the Comptroller General in section 19010 of the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136) to monitor the exercise of authorities and use of funds provided to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the pandemic, we request a sustained focus on VA. We request that GAO gather information on the effectiveness of VA's management and expenditure of these funds for procuring necessary, time critical medical supplies, the department's implementation of the financial controls outlined in its COVID-19 response plan, the ability of the VA procurement enterprise to obtain clinically necessary items and by what means, the ability of VA's medical supply chain to meet its COVID-19 response needs and any obstacles that may have prevented VA from relying on its usual partners, the organizational relationship between VA and other agencies to include the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security with respect to procurement and logistics, the effectiveness of procedural or policy modifications for obtaining necessary medical supplies made during the pandemic response, and any related VA medical supply chain or contracting issues stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic response that GAO determines to be important. We also ask that GAO provide recommendations on how VA can improve any of the aforementioned processes, relationships or responses moving forward.

We will coordinate with GAO on the priority, timing, reporting format, and specific nature of work conducted under this request.

Should you have any questions about this request, please do not hesitate to contact Peter Tyler for the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs majority at (202) 225-9756, Chris McNamee for the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs minority at (202) 225-3527, Brian Newbold for the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs majority at (202) 224-9126, and JC Henry for the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs minority at (202) 224-2074.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Jon Tester
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs



Mark Takano
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs



David P. Roe, M.D.
Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs