

Questions for the Record

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Subcommittee on Health

“Dignity Denied: The Case for Reform at State Veterans Homes”
April 29, 2025

Questions for Dr. Scotte R. Hartronft, M.D., Executive Director, V.A. Office of Geriatrics & Extended Care, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (V.A.)

Chairwoman Mariannette Miller-Meeks (IA)

1. We recently learned that residents had to evacuate a state veterans home in Enterprise, Alabama, because of a kitchen fire. I am grateful no one was harmed. What is the status of the relocated veterans? Does V.A.'s annual audit include requirements for protocol when residents and staff need to evacuate in times of emergency?
2. Does staffing retention at state veterans homes follow the same trends as staffing retention at V.A. health care facilities? What are notable differences, if any?
3. A November 2022 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that between July and September 2022, V.A. completed 69 percent of annual state veterans homes inspections in-person, and 31 percent virtually. What is the percentage of in-person inspections for 2024?
4. A state veterans home in Holyoke, Massachusetts, saw at least 76 veteran deaths and over 160 infections during a COVID-19 outbreak in Spring 2020. Please provide a copy of V.A.'s corrective action plan for this home for the applicable time period the year before the outbreak, the year during the outbreak, and the year following the outbreak.
5. As indicated in the statement by GAO, V.A. provided evidence of a plan for improving its data system used to analyze state veterans home survey data. Please provide a copy of this plan. Has V.A. implemented the plan yet? What is its status?
6. As GAO's statement indicated, V.A. has implemented a process to follow up with homes soon after deadlines passed with corrective action plans. Has V.A. continued to use this process? How many homes currently have unresolved deficiencies past the due date indicated in the corrective action plan? Are any of these deficiencies rated as causing actual harm or immediate jeopardy?