



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3807

March 27, 2015

The Honorable Allison Hickey
Under Secretary for Benefits
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20420

Dear Under Secretary Hickey,

Thank you for your service to our nation's veterans. Our veterans deserve the very best care at home after serving our nation. I write to you today to seek clarification on the Department's changes to its claims and appeals filing system.

On March 25, 2015, the VA announced a new policy of using standardized claim and appeal forms, part of an effort to streamline claims processing, reduce wait-times and better serve America's veterans. Prior existing claims, or "informal claims," will be transferred to a new "intent to file" process. I appreciate how using standardized claims forms can improve future claims processing. But I am concerned with how this transition will affect congressional oversight and transparency. Please confirm how claims filed under both the standardized process and the "intent to file" system will be accounted for and reported to Congress. Will claims now classified as "intent to file" be included in claims backlog statistics?

This information is essential so that I may provide accurate information to constituent veterans seeking my office's assistance. It is also critical to on-going congressional oversight into the claims backlog and reports of mismanagement, particularly at the VA Philadelphia Area Regional Office.

Thank you very much for your prompt attention to this matter. Please contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patrick Meehan".

Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress