

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

September 21, 2015

Mr. Ryan Lilly  
Director, Maine VA Healthcare System  
1 VA Center  
Augusta, Maine 04330

Dear Mr. Lilly:

We write to express grave concern about staff vacancies at the Veterans' Center in Lewiston, Maine. As you are aware, Maine's five Vet Centers provide vital health care and counseling services to local communities throughout the State. To ensure these services meet the high standard of excellence our veterans deserve, it is essential that the Vet Centers are sufficiently staffed. Unfortunately, based on our conversations with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) officials and members of the Lewiston community, it is clear that existing vacancies are affecting veteran service and care.

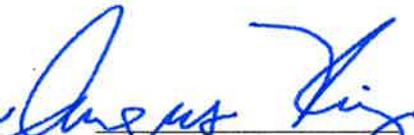
VA staff advised our offices that the Lewiston Vet Center currently has two positions vacant: a team leader and a counselor. While we understand that no veterans have been denied services due to the lack of staff availability, we are troubled by the continued vacancies. The absence of these health care professionals has a direct effect on the quality of care our veterans have earned, and we request that a high priority be placed on filling these positions.

We realize that you share our concerns and ask that immediate action be taken to fill these vital positions as soon as possible. Finally, we request that you keep us apprised of any corrective plan and implementation of systemic fixes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator

  
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

  
Bruce Poliquin  
Member of Congress