



**THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON**

February 10, 2023

The Honorable Jon Tester  
Chairman  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with the requirements of P.L. 115-46 § 210(e), enclosed is the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Semiannual Report to Congress on Hiring Directors of Medical Centers. The report provides an updated list of each VA Medical Center that lacks a permanent director as of the date of the report. VA remains committed to honoring the Nation's Veterans by ensuring a safe environment to deliver exceptional health care.

In addition, as required by 38 U.S.C. § 116, a statement of cost for preparing the report is included. This report has been sent to the leaders of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DMcDonough", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Denis McDonough

Enclosures

# **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**



## **Congressionally Mandated Report: Semiannual Report on Medical Centers at the Department of Veterans Affairs Currently without a Permanent Director**

**February 2023**

## **Citation P.L. 115-46 § 210(e)**

Semiannual Reports - Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than 180 days thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report containing a list of each medical center of the Department that lacks a permanent director as of the date of the report.

## **Background**

Historically, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has had difficulties filling Medical Center Director (MCD) positions due to compensation challenges, the lack of a robust recruitment strategy, redundancy in the recruitment process, lack of transparency and the lengthy time it took to fill these positions. In previous years, the MCD vacancy rate was as high as 25% and the time to fill these critical positions ranged between 2.8 months and 19.2 months with an average time to fill of approximately 6 months, or 180 days. The agency has since adopted a 120-day time-to-fill standard for its MCD positions. Within the last year, the average MCD vacancy rate was 12%.

VHA's progress can be attributed to the implementation of a robust national recruitment strategy, which includes the use of existing legal authority to fill MCD positions such as:

- The Senior Executive Service authority and Title 38 physician hiring authorities.
- Leveraging Critical Pay Authority to adjust the rate of pay up to the Executive Level 1 (\$226,300) for 39 Complexity Level 1A MCD positions and 4 Complexity Level 1B MCD positions.

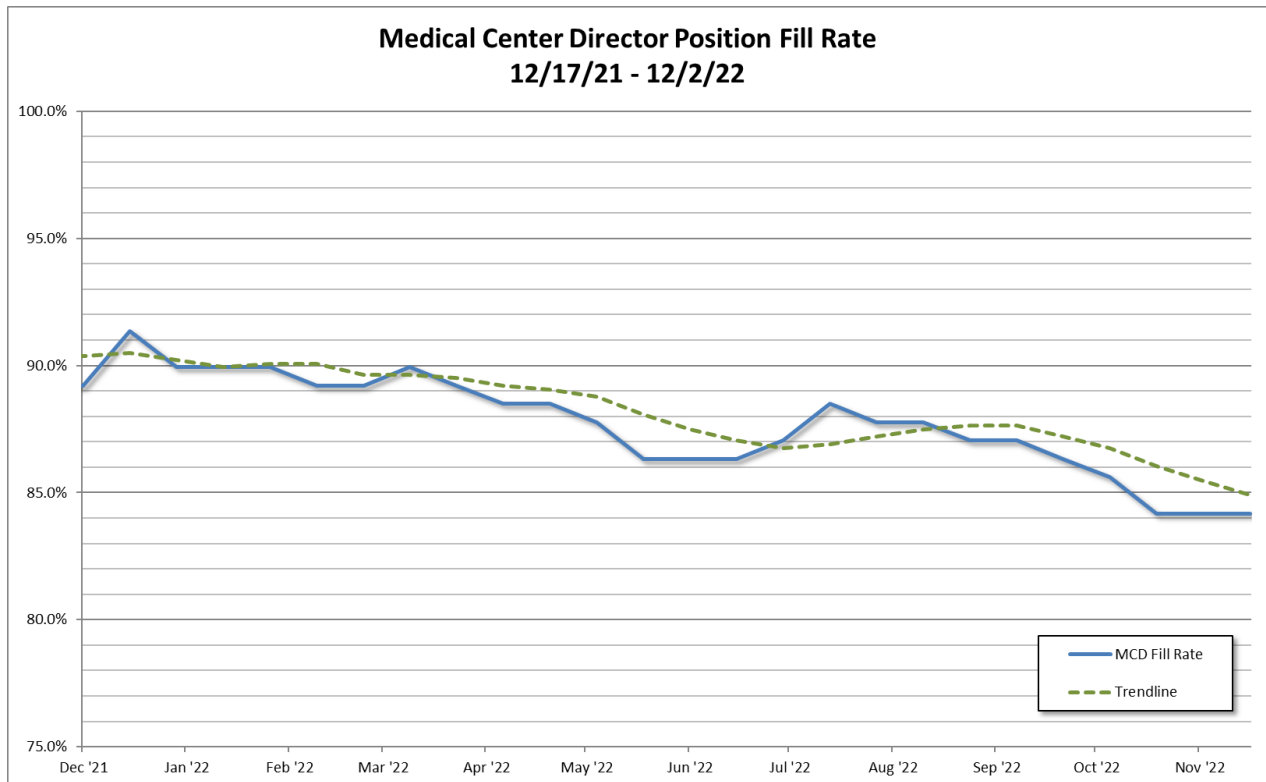
VHA's national recruitment strategy to fill MCD positions also includes posting national vacancy announcements for multiple locations across the country and leveraging social media outlets and other venues to increase the public's awareness of these leadership roles. A corporate approach has been used to make selections and obtain approvals, which includes:

- Filling multiple positions across the country with one announcement;
- Reducing redundancy in recruitment efforts; and
- Improving hiring timelines for making selections for MCD positions to within 120 days of the vacancy.

In addition, VHA used the Direct Hiring Authority (DHA) to streamline the hiring process, which allows the Secretary to appoint qualified individuals without the Office of Personnel Management's approval. To date, DHA has been used only four times to hire an MCD.

VHA solicits applicants from a wide range of potential candidates, including the general public and all current Federal employees, by posting announcements on the USAJobs website, on-line job boards, health care magazines and research journals.

As shown in the chart below, the fill rate over the last year has been between 84% and 91%.



## Conclusion

As of December 13, 2022, VHA has 22 MCD vacancies. Sixteen of those vacancies have a nominee identified. The hiring approval process is underway and will be completed by March 2023. VHA anticipates completing the hiring process for the other six positions by mid-fiscal year 2023. Specific locations with vacancies are listed in the table below.

**List of Medical Centers Lacking a Permanent MCD**

<b>Facility Location</b>	<b>Days Vacant</b>	<b>Status</b>
HCS Northern Indiana (Ft. Wayne) (610)	94	Position will be announced
SORCC White City, Oregon (692)	66	Position will be announced
HCS Connecticut (West Haven) (689)	51	Position announced
HCS North Florida-South Georgia (Gainesville, Florida) (573)	65	Position announced
VAMC Chillicothe, Ohio (538)	24	Position announced
VAMC Milwaukee, Wisconsin (695)	79	Position announced
HCS New Jersey (East Orange) (561)	347	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
VAMC Fayetteville, North Carolina (565)	247	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
VAMC Lexington, Kentucky (596)	206	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
VAMC Columbia, Missouri (589CA)	108	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
HCS Roseburg, Oregon (653)	108	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
HCS Sioux Falls, South Dakota (438)	136	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
HCS St. Louis, Missouri (657)	43	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
HCS North Texas (Dallas) (549)	51	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
VAMC Muskogee, Oklahoma (623)	319	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
HCS South Texas (San Antonio) (671)	187	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
VAMC Altoona, Pennsylvania (503)	135	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
HCS of the Ozarks, Fayetteville, Arkansas (564)	254	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
HCS Central California (Fresno) (570)	194	Nominee selected, awaiting VA approval
HCS NY Harbor, New York (630)	347	Nominee approved, awaiting Entry on Duty
HCS Phoenix, Arizona (644)	206	Nominee approved, awaiting Entry on Duty
HCS San Diego, California (664)	166	Nominee approved, awaiting Entry on Duty