

The Washington Times

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1,700 vets not on official wait list at Phoenix VA facility, preliminary report finds



**** FILE **** This May 15, 2014, file photo shows Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki testifying on Capitol Hill in Washington. The Department of Veterans Affairs says it will allow more veterans to obtain health care at private hospitals and clinics. Shinseki announced the change Saturday. (AP Photo/Cliff Owen, File)

By [Jacqueline Klimas](#) - The Washington Times

Wednesday, May 28, 2014

A preliminary report released Wednesday found “serious conditions” at the Phoenix Veterans Affairs facility, including hundreds of veterans who were never placed on an official wait list and faulty scheduling practices that meant some veterans would never see a doctor.

“We identified an additional 1,700 veterans who were waiting for a primary care appointment but were not on the [electronic wait list,]” [the report](#) from the VA inspector general said. “Most importantly, these veterans were and continue to be at risk of being forgotten or lost in Phoenix [healthcare system’s] convoluted scheduling process. As a result, these veterans may never obtain a requested or required clinical appointment.”

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The department launched the investigation after reports surfaced last month that at least 40 veterans died while awaiting care on a secret wait list at the facility. Since then, staff members at other facilities around the country have raised similar concerns, making some believe the problem is systemic.

The IG is currently investigating or is scheduled to investigate 42 VA facilities, the report said.

VA Secretary Eric Shinseki said that he has already placed the leaders of the Phoenix facility on administrative leave and that he will quickly act on the report’s other recommendations to get veterans the care they need as soon as possible.

“I have reviewed the interim report, and the findings are reprehensible to me, to this department, and to veterans,” he

said. "I am directing that the Phoenix VA Health Care System immediately triage each of the 1,700 veterans identified by the OIG to bring them timely care."

The report also found real wait times different drastically from what was reported by the Phoenix facility. Of 226 veterans, the data from Phoenix showed the average wait time to be just 24 days for their first primary care appointment. The inspector general, however, found the average wait time was 115 days.

The preliminary report does not determine if delays in care resulted in delayed treatment or death, as all the necessary records have not yet been reviewed.

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Three top VA officials are expected to testify before the House Committee on Veterans Affairs Wednesday night after failing to appear before the committee last week. If they don't show, the committee will subpoena them to testify on Friday.

Rep. Jeff Miller, Florida Republican and chairman of the committee, said the report's findings should spur two actions: the launch of a criminal investigation into the VA's scheduling practices and the resignation of VA Secretary Eric Shinseki, who many veterans groups have asked to step down.

"Today the inspector general confirmed beyond a shadow of a doubt what was becoming more obvious by the day: Wait time schemes and data manipulation are systemic throughout VA and are putting veterans at risk in Phoenix and across the country," Mr. Miller said in a statement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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4. There is not a smidgen of corruption involving the IRS targeting.
5. If four Americans get killed, it is not optimal.
6. If somebody wants to build a coal plant, they can. It's just that it will bankrupt them.
7. Under my plan of cap and trade system,electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket.
8. ObamaCare will be good for America.
9. Your health insurance will be cheaper than your phone bill
10. You can keep your family doctor.
11. Premiums will be lowered by \$2500
12. You can keep your current healthcare plan
13. Just shop around, for that healthcare I claimed you wouldn't lose.
14. I am sorry you lost your healthcare, (you know the health care you have to shop around for, ya the same health care I said you could keep, yup, that's the one).
15. I did not say you could keep your health care. (Regardless that 29 recorded videos show I did)

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