



AFGE Local 781
American Federation of Government Employees
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VA Reopens Investigation Into Harmful Cardiac Treatments At Hines VA Hospital

The Department of Veterans Affairs is conducting a renewed internal investigation into allegations of [improper cardiac care and failures to notify victims](#) following improper treatments that resulted in injury veterans and even death. This is similar to a second investigation conducted by the agency in Tomah, Wisconsin after its [internal watchdog failed to address harmful health care practices](#) that were linked to deaths of numerous veterans.

On March 30, 2015, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [Office of Medical Inspector](#) (VA OMI) sent out [written notice of the upcoming VA OMI investigation](#). Monday, VA OMI showed up at Hines VA Medical Center to conduct its impromptu investigation of allegations against VA Office of Inspector General (VA OIG) and deficiencies in cardiac care possibly effecting 100's of veterans. Its investigation will last from April 6-10, 2015.

The allegations claim VA OIG failed fully investigate a matter involving the deaths and injuries of numerous veteran patients while receiving cardiovascular care at Hines VA Medical Center.

They further claim that after the first VA OIG investigation, Hines VA Hospital did not notify the victims.

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) local 781 believes the root causes of potential errors were not investigated by VA OIG and what resulted was a Tomah VA Medical Center style white wash. Local 781 is calling on VA OMI to investigate the failures at the facility level and the failures of VA OIG to properly investigate wrongdoing.

Local 781 was asked to facilitate the investigation process by encouraging all witnesses to come forward and provide statements to VA OMI about potentially harmful health care received at the facility that resulted in death or injury. This includes VA employees, veterans, family members of veterans, or anyone in the community who may have information about wrongdoing at the Hines VA hospital.

Specifically, in a report from the VA OIG, dated April 8, 2014, the OIG substantiated patients had questionable indications for coronary bypass surgery, that coronary interventions may have been inappropriate for nine patients who had undergone cardiac catheterization and that the degree of coronary stenosis had been over-estimated and patients did not have symptoms that warranted bypass surgery. The root cause of these errors has not been addressed, nor have patients been notified.

In February 2015, VA reopened the investigation at Hines VA Hospital in response to numerous medical staff whistleblowers. The VA OMI is now at Hines this week conducting interviews with witnesses.

Germaine Clarno, social worker and President of Local 781 has requested a meeting with the OMI staff so she can bring additional concerns to them from employees that are too afraid to come forward. The OMI has not responded to her request.

“We need a thorough investigation to appropriately address these serious issues of questionable cardiology care at Hines. We are still in a culture of fear for those that are truth tellers. I have very important information to give them and when they don’t agree to meet with me I am even more concerned.

If you were a witness, please contact Ms. Clarno at germaineclarno@gmail.com or 630-258-5489 to schedule a time to come in to speak with her and OMI about your experience.