



Department of Veterans Affairs
Health Care System
3710 SW U.S. Veterans Hospital Road
Portland OR 97239



In Reply Refer To: 648/P1DIR

January 13, 2015

Ms. Deborah Kafoury
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd Suite 600
Portland OR 97214

Dear Chair Kafoury:

Over the past few months as the Director of the VA Portland Health Care System (VAPORHCS) I have had an opportunity to learn about the very strong support provided for our homeless Veterans by the Portland community. On December 18, 2014 I had the honor of meeting with several community leaders involved with the 25 City Initiatives to End Veteran Homelessness and ongoing efforts through Operation 424. During this meeting I heard concerns about current VA staffing levels in the homeless programs.

I have reviewed our internal hiring processes, and have asked my staff to develop a tactical plan to ensure we fill all homeless program as quickly as possible and that all VASH vouchers are utilized during this fiscal year. In that regard, we have already made some good progress.

I am pleased to report that our Community Resource and Referral Center in downtown Portland now has all social work positions filled, as is our Home Forward HUD-VASH Supervisor position, we have two new Home Forward Team social workers starting in early February, and we have a job posting for additional vacancies scheduled to close next week. These staffing developments are encouraging, and we expect to be fully staffed by March 1st.

I understand that ending blight of Veteran homelessness will require marshalling all of our resources, and I assure you that we at the VAPORHCS are fully committed to doing just that. We are on track to refer 20 Veterans to Home Forward for HUD-VASH vouchers during the month of January, and if the historical housing success rate of 76% continues to hold, we expect to successfully utilize all Home Forward HUD-VASH vouchers by September 30th, as planned.

I want to thank you again for your continued support and advocacy for homeless Veterans. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated community partners and the very skilled and dedicated staff of the homeless programs who represents our core ICARE values: to act with Integrity and Commitment, to advocate for Veterans, to show Respect to all and to pursue Excellence.

Sincerely,


JOANNE M. KRUMBERGER
Director