

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 22, 2022

John J. Rohrer  
Director  
William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705

Karen Long MSN, RN  
Director  
Tomah VA Medical Center  
500 East Veterans Street  
Tomah, WI 54660

Dear Directors Rohrer and Long:

Last week, I wrote to the Milwaukee Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) regarding employees expressing concerns about the facility's COVID-19 vaccine mandate.<sup>1</sup> Since I sent that letter, my office has heard from employees from your facilities raising similar concerns about the vaccine mandate.

Specifically, employees at both facilities stated that they will no longer be able to receive medical or religious exemptions from the vaccine mandate. Just like their colleagues in the Milwaukee VAMC, these employees fear that they may lose their jobs unless they adhere to the coercive mandate.

As I noted in my letter to the Milwaukee VAMC, we now know that individuals who are fully vaccinated can contract and spread COVID-19. That is what the "science" tells us without dispute. Even Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Rochelle Walensky acknowledges this fact. Given the vaccines' inability to prevent infection and spread, the COVID-19 vaccine mandates are pointless and destructive. The Milwaukee, Madison and Tomah VAMC employees that reached out to my office fear that the facilities' coercive vaccine mandate will cause staff shortages and directly effect patient care. I share those legitimate concerns.

In order to better understand how the Madison and Tomah VAMCs are addressing employees' concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine mandate, I request you immediately provide my office with a briefing on the matter and the following information:

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Ron Johnson, U.S. Senator, to Daniel Zomcheck, Director, Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center, Apr. 13, 2022, <https://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/services/files/78A3F39C-7886-49F4-93B4-75F7FDBDA5C4>.

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1. How many COVID-19 vaccine exemptions have been granted for Madison and Tomah VAMC employees?
2. How many requests for exemptions have been denied?
3. What is the purpose of requiring COVID-19 vaccination if it cannot prevent infection and spread?
4. As an alternative to vaccination, will your facilities offer weekly COVID-19 testing to employees or test for natural immunity? If not, please explain why.

Please provide the briefing and this information as soon as possible but no later than May 6, 2022. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson  
United States Senator

cc: Ms. Victoria P. Brahm  
Network Director  
VA Great Lakes Health Care System

The Honorable Michael J. Missal  
Inspector General  
Department of Veterans Affairs

The Honorable Denis McDonough  
Secretary  
Department of Veterans Affairs