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## Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0916

March 2, 2017

The Honorable David Shulkin  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shulkin:

I'm concerned that Florida veterans may be at risk following press reports of a shocking spike in drug thefts at VA health facilities across the country. I ask that the VA minimize the danger to our communities and veterans by fully investigating the drug losses and quickly releasing information on specifically how Florida VA facilities and veterans were affected.

I'm worried that veterans across the country are now not able to receive the treatment they need because their medication has disappeared or been stolen. I also am concerned at any reports of missing drugs given that drugs now kill more Americans than car accidents.

I fully support your efforts to get to the bottom of these disgraceful thefts. The perpetrators are stealing directly from veterans who need help. In addition, those VA employees may be using the stolen drugs at work, endangering the veterans they're supposed to be caring for.

It's important that we learn the following, within the limitations imposed by any ongoing investigations: How many facilities were affected by these losses? Where in Florida were they? What types of drugs are missing, and in what amount? What was the street value of the missing drugs? How many VA employees were involved in Florida? What actions to date have been taken to hold them responsible?

And, most importantly, how many veterans were affected? How so?

I'm particularly disturbed by this report because my district is the epicenter of Florida's drug crisis. In one county, the problem is so bad that the morgue ran out of space and had to store bodies in other facilities.

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Given Florida's high rate of drug abuse and large number of veterans, we need to know how Florida has been impacted. In addition, please be sure that any responsible parties are disciplined thoroughly and swiftly. VA employees who are using, pocketing or trafficking prescriptions meant for our veterans should have to answer for their actions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vern Buchanan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vern Buchanan  
Member of Congress