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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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December 12, 2014

General Frank Grass
Chief
National Guard Bureau
111 S. George Mason Drive
Arlington, VA 22204

Dear General Grass:

I am writing in regards to my June 19, 2013, request regarding contracts for the coordination of mental health services at Air National Guard Wings and National Guard bases across the country. I thank you for your July 31, 2013, response and the subsequent briefings your office provided to my staff.¹

As you are aware, in March 2013, the National Guard awarded a \$200 million firm-fixed-price contract for psychological health support services at National Guard bases, including Air National Guard Wings, to Goldbelt Glacier Healthcare Services, LLC, a subsidiary of Goldbelt Inc., an Alaska Native Corporation, and National Sourcing Inc.² The Subcommittee received information showing that the National Guard's management and oversight of the contract may have resulted in inadequate mental health care services for members of the National Guard. According to this information, it appeared that the National Guard failed to ensure proper transfer of patient files from a previous contractor which may have left ongoing cases vulnerable. It also appeared that the responsibilities of the Directors of Psychological Health positions had been reduced, which may have affected the level of service and care that National Guard members received.

I was pleased to learn that the National Guard is now addressing many of the deficiencies in contract management and oversight by converting these contracted positions to federal positions. The National Guard's psychological health program has informed the Subcommittee

¹ Briefing by RADM Joan Hunter, Assistant Joint Surgeon at the National Guard Bureau, Joint Surgeon General's Office (Oct. 8, 2014); Briefing by RADM Joan Hunter, Assistant Joint Surgeon at the National Guard Bureau, Joint Surgeon General's Office (Sept. 4, 2013); Letter from General Frank J. Grass, Chief, National Guard Bureau to Chairman Claire McCaskill (July 31, 2013).

² Department of Defense Contract Award Announcement W9133-13-D-0002/W9133L-13-D-0003, March 21, 2013 (online at www.defense.gov/contracts) (accessed Dec. 9, 2014).

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that, after a review of the program, they have found that converting contract positions to federal positions would provide advantages over the current contracted structure, as well as provide projected cost savings of between \$6 million and \$7 million per year across the program.³ The National Guard has also found that converting the contracted workforce to a federal workforce will, “provide increased capability versus contracted providers,” as well as, “enhance provider stability and longevity.”⁴ It is encouraging that the National Guard is performing cost benefit analyses of their contracted programs and finding savings for taxpayers while also increasing the services they will be able to provide to members of the National Guard.

As the National Guard continues to expand the psychological health program, I ask that you continue to keep my staff informed of your progress. Please contact Sarah Garcia with the Subcommittee at (202) 224-5602 with any questions. Please send any official correspondence relating to this letter to Kelsey_Stroud@hsgac.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting
Oversight

cc: Ron Johnson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight

³ National Guard Psychological Health Program Information Paper sent to Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight Staff (Dec. 2, 2014).

⁴ National Guard Psychological Health Program Information Paper sent to Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight Staff (Dec. 2, 2014).