

# [IAVA Statement on Resignation of VA Under Secretary for Benefits Allison Hickey](#)

**WASHINGTON (October 16, 2015)** – This afternoon, VA Secretary Bob McDonald announced the resignation of Under Secretary for Benefits Allison Hickey, whose leadership was seriously questioned after the release of a recent inspector general report connecting her to the misuse of hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars. For well over two years IAVA has called for serious action around veterans' inability to access care through the VA and the ongoing backlog. While the VA backlog has been reduced from over 600,000 in March of 2013 to 75,000 earlier this month, there is little chance the VA will meet former Secretary Shinseki's goal of reducing the backlog to zero by the end of 2015.

"While IAVA is committed to working with Secretary McDonald and urges people to not politicize this announcement, this latest news within the VA does little to inspire confidence within our membership that the backlog will ever reach zero," said Paul Rieckhoff, Founder and CEO of IAVA. "The news is troubling given the ongoing challenges in reducing the backlog and the impacts this has on veterans, including a growing backlog of appeals. We urge Secretary McDonald and Congress to work together to find an immediate replacement to fill this vital position."

IAVA has been [sounding the call for reform](#) at the VA since 2013 with its Storm the Hill Campaign and most recently the creation of the interactive infographic [The Weight We Carry](#), which illustrates veteran's direct experiences waiting for health services at the VA.

"Unfortunately as the VA continues to struggle to reduce the backlog, it is up to organizations like ours to take up the slack. In the past two years, more than 6,000 vets have come to us for help in obtaining services through our [Rapid Response Referral Program](#). With the resignation of Allison Hickey, more than ever, we call upon our lawmakers, the President, and those hoping to be Commander in Chief to take coordinated action to truly reform the VA. Beyond this, we call on members of the media to pose this one question to each of the presidential candidates: What, specifically, would you do to impact reform at the VA and assure every returning service member is guaranteed the benefits they risked their life to earn," Rieckhoff concluded.