

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 15, 2015

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Re: Mississippi Congressional Delegation Opposition to the Appointment of Dr. Skye McDougall

Dear Secretary McDonald:

We, the undersigned members of the Mississippi congressional delegation, write to express our disappointment in the selection of Dr. Skye McDougall to be the Network Director for the South Central Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care Network. In Mississippi, Dr. McDougall would be responsible for the network's headquarters in Ridgeland, the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center in Jackson, the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System in Biloxi, and the Jackson Regional Benefits Office.

It is well documented that on March 13, 2015, Dr. McDougall misled Members of the United States House of Representatives when she testified to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs that wait times for veterans to receive care at VA facilities that she oversaw in Southern California averaged only four days. In actuality, the wait times were at least ten times longer. In view of her deplorable record in the VA system and her questionable testimony to Congress, Dr. McDougall has proven to be, at the very least, untrustworthy as it relates to the vitally important task of providing for the health care needs of our veterans.

It seems that the Department of Veterans affairs has been "hopscotching" Dr. McDougall around the country – from Southern California to New Mexico and from Arizona to Mississippi – searching for a soft landing for her. We are determined to see to it that her soft landing is not in Mississippi.

Mississippi veterans deserve more. In recent years, Mississippi veterans have suffered due to mismanagement in the VA system including, but not limited to, understaffing of essential care stations, problems in meeting established health care standards, and prevalent medical errors leading to serious harm to our veterans and, in some cases, death. The VA system in Mississippi is making progress in addressing recent problems but we believe the appointment of Dr. McDougall would only impede this progress and exacerbate existing issues.

Given Dr. McDougall's track record and the VA's ongoing effort to earn back the trust of veterans in Mississippi and across the country, we strongly urge you to rescind this selection and, instead, appoint a senior leader who will work to provide the best possible service for our veterans.

We thank you in advance for your full consideration of our request.

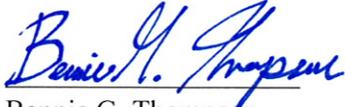
Sincerely,



Thad Cochran
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Gregg Harper
Member of Congress



Steven Palazzo
Member of Congress



Trent Kelly
Member of Congress