

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 5, 2023

Shereef Elnahal, M.D.  
Under Secretary for Health  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Dr. Elnahal,

It has come to my attention that the Missoula Vet Center is promoting a pride parade on June 17, 2023. An organization called Missoula PRIDE is sponsoring the event.<sup>1</sup> This is yet another example of the VA promoting woke identity politics that does nothing to help veterans.

Under your leadership, the Veterans Health Administration has amplified leftist causes at the expense of veterans - focusing your attention and resources on causes that do not actually help them. For example, regional medical centers are still enforcing an outdated mask mandate. The pandemic has long been over, and it remains unacceptable that I am still hearing from veterans whom the VA is turning away. It bewilders me that you find it appropriate to allow for the promotion of events that have nothing to do with the mission of the VA while willfully neglecting the core function of the VA; providing healthcare to veterans. Moreover, you have implemented and defended the VA's abhorrent abortion rule – and refuse to answer questions from Members of Congress in congressional hearings and then ignore my follow-up letter on the topic. I believe your time would be better spent actually caring for veterans instead of pushing outdated and harmful policies. I know that our veterans in Montana feel the same.

As you know, the Missoula Vet Center is tasked with providing confidential help for Veterans, service members, and their families at no cost in a non-medical setting. The services include counseling for depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the psychological effects of military sexual trauma (MST).<sup>2</sup> The core mission of the Missoula Vet Center is paramount to ensuring that veterans receive the care they deserve. The Missoula Vet Center straying away from its intended mission is a great disservice to veterans. I hope that the Missoula Vet Center will not promote events like this in the future and instead stay focused on the critical mission of providing counseling for veterans and their families.

The Veterans Health Administration, under your leadership, continues to fail to live up to its promise. I request answers to the following questions by June 12, 2023.

- How does promoting divisive identity politics advance the mission of the Missoula Vet Center?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.missoula-pride.com/event-details/2nd-annual-missoula-pride-parade>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.va.gov/missoula-vet-center/>

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- How does promoting this event help veterans?
- How much did the VA spend to promote the Missoula PRIDE event on June 17, 2023?
- How much money has the VA spent promoting and hosting LGBT events since January 20, 2021?
- What was your role in approving the promotion of this event?

The American taxpayer deserves transparency from the VA about its promotion of events that are unrelated to its core mission. I look forward to hearing back from you on this matter.

Sincerely,



Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr  
Member of Congress

CC: Michael Fisher, Chief Readjustment Counseling Officer, Veterans Health Administration,  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs