

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD  
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER S. BOND  
HOUSE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
HEARING ON KANSAS CITY VAMC  
JUNE 17, 2002

Thank you, Chairman Moran for holding this important hearing at the Kansas City Veterans Affairs Medical Center. I personally applaud you for your leadership on veterans issues and for your dedication and hard work in addressing the important needs of our veterans in Kansas and Missouri. I am especially thankful for your work in resolving the terrible problems identified at the Kansas City VA Medical Center. As you know, I have been following the problems surrounding this facility and appreciate your efforts in ensuring that these problems do not happen again in Kansas City or any other VA facility across our Nation.

As the former Chairman and now, Ranking Member of the Senate VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, it has been one of my top priorities to improve the quality of health care received by our nation's veterans.

That is why in the wake of the disturbing reports of the conditions at the Kansas City Veterans Hospital, I formally requested a thorough review by the VA Inspector General. Unsanitary conditions at any VA facility are simply unacceptable.

When the Archives of Internal Medicine medical journal report was made public, some within the VA said the sanitary conditions that led to the situation where resolved. We now know that those statements were not accurate! Not only were those statements inaccurate, they were not in the best interest of the patients this hospital serves.

**Secretary Anthony Principi is taking action and I applaud his responsiveness. His leadership and decisiveness is sending the right message: our veterans deserve the highest quality care.**

On a recent visit to the hospital, I witnessed first-hand the upgrades being made to assure our veterans received the highest quality of care, in a clean, well maintained hospital. The Kansas City VA leadership outlined the new sanitation procedures, and the new canteen agreement. Additionally, I personally spoke to the quality control director, who now has the authority to shut down any part of the hospital if it does not meet sanitary requirements.

It is clear that we have some serious work to do, but we must do this together. Under the hospital's new leadership of Mr. Norby and Mr. Hill, the VA has made great strides in a short period of time. We are working with veterans, the staff of the hospital, and Secretary Principi and his able staff at the Department of Veterans Affairs to restore the confidence of our veteran population in our VA facilities and to ensure that safeguards are in place to guarantee that our veterans receive the highest standard of care. Our veterans deserve nothing less.