

Hill and Ponton Veterans Disability Law Firm Comments on Phoenix VA Scandal

Law firm specializing in veterans' cases weighs in on "secret" Phoenix Veterans Affairs list: "The VA is playing a numbers game here."

Daytona Beach, FL ([PRWEB](#)) May 30, 2014 -- The central Florida-based law firm of [Hill and Ponton](#) recently addressed the allegations leveled against the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care system, calling the charges "deplorable and shocking."

According to an April 24th report on [cnn.com](#), at least 40 veterans in the Phoenix area died while waiting for appointments at the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care system. A retired top Veterans Affairs (VA) doctor and several high-level sources within the system claim that between 1,400 and 1,600 veterans were placed on a "secret list," designed to disguise the fact that the actual waiting list for appointments was so long.

According to a [cnn.com](#) report, "Investigators determined one consequence of manipulating appointments for the veterans was understating patient wait times -- a factor considered for VA employee bonuses and raises." According to the same report, Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki called the findings "reprehensible" and ordered the 1,700 veterans be immediately "triaged" for care. Many in congress, including Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Va., the chairman of the house Veterans Affairs Committee, called for Eric Shinseki to resign.

In response to the release of the VA Inspector General's interim report on VHA patient wait times, [Chairman Jeff Miller said](#): "Today the inspector general confirmed beyond a shadow of a doubt what was becoming more obvious by the day: wait time schemes and data manipulation are systemic throughout VA and are putting veterans at risk in Phoenix and across the country. Right now, there are two things that need to happen. Attorney General Eric Holder should launch a criminal investigation into VA's widespread scheduling corruption and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki should resign immediately. Shinseki is a good man who has served his country honorably, but he has failed to get VA's health care system in order despite repeated and frequent warnings from Congress, the Government Accountability Office and the IG."

Today, May 30, [cnn.com](#) reported that President Obama accepted Shinseki's resignation.

Matthew Hill, Veterans Disability Lawyer at Hill and Ponton and a Director of the National Organization of Veterans Advocates (NOVA), weighed in on the story: "The VA is playing a numbers game here. It's more important to the VA that its numbers look good than giving the veterans the care they deserve."

Hill expressed a need for further investigation, not just by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), but also by the VA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG), who could act as an independent reviewer.

Hill also commented on how this would affect the day-to-day practice of firms like Hill and Ponton. "We focus on the VA benefit side," said Hill, "and have little to do with the VA healthcare side. But now we'll be asking and listening to our veterans to make sure they're getting the healthcare they deserve through the VHA."

Hill recommends that anyone who suspects they may be facing a similar situation should take immediate action, either by reporting the incident or incidents to their patient advocate at their hospital, or by writing letters to the VA secretary, VHA undersecretary, and the VA OIG.

"Veterans are often used as political props," said Chris Amidon, a veterans' advocate with Hill and Ponton. "The politicians who sing praises of their bravery the loudest are often the same who stand between our veterans and the treatment they deserve. This isn't a gift, this isn't charity -- this is a debt that must be repaid."

On the Hill and Ponton Veterans' Issues [blog](#), Amidon described his experience with the VA healthcare system and his dismay at the treatment of disabled veterans, asking, "Why is it taking so long for the government to act? Who have we become when we think nothing of sending our soldiers off to die, but are hesitant to help them heal on their return from war?"

Hill and Ponton was founded in 1986 in Orlando, Florida. The firm focuses on delivering the best client experience for every one of more than 25,000 clients. Consequently, over 40% of the firm's new clients come from client referrals.

The Hill and Ponton firm began by representing clients throughout the Central Florida and Tampa Bay area. Since taking on veterans' cases, Hill and Ponton now represents clients nationwide. Investment in technology and process management allow the firm to handle clients nationwide through the internet. Additionally, Hill and Ponton attends hearings from coast to coast.

For more information, call 386-257-2100 or visit HillandPonton.com.



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