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December 13, 2017

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Daniel R. Levinson
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Inspector General Levinson:

I have previously written to you in regards to news reports that raised significant examples of wrongdoing at Universal Health Services (UHS) facilities, the country's largest psychiatric hospital chain. The continued reporting on UHS facilities shows a disturbing trend of behavior. The most recent allegations cause significant concern about whether UHS has the ability to adequately manage the facilities under its control.

On November 11, 2017, another report was released focusing on the Hill Crest Behavioral Health facility in Alabama.¹ The investigative report cites specific incidents of abuse at the hands of Hillcrest staff that were caught on video.² The investigation notes that improper restraints, sometimes even chemical restraints, were used by Hill Crest staff putting some patients at serious risk of injury. Allegedly, even more egregious acts occurred off camera, sometimes physical beating resulting in significant injury.³ The investigation also noted that some patients were given chemical sedatives five or six times a week and that some children were so sedated that they had to miss school.⁴ One patient in particular missed so many days that he had to attend summer school in order to make up for time lost.⁵

¹ Rosalind Adams, *A Prescription For Violence*, BuzzFeed (November 11, 2017). Available at https://www.buzzfeed.com/rosalindadams/videos-show-uhs-hospital-staff-assaulting-young-patients?utm_term=.lwLxEVVE#.uvaRDzzD.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

The investigation also raises concerns over the death of a patient after being physically and chemically restrained.⁶ And finally, the investigative report alleges UHS employees falsified patient records, defrauded insurers, and withheld information from government regulators.⁷

These are serious allegations and the continuing reports further show an alarming pattern of conduct surrounding UHS facilities and its apparent inability to adequately manage its staff. Please explain what steps your office is taking to investigate UHS for the aforementioned abuses at Hill Crest Behavioral Health. If you have any questions, please contact Josh Flynn-Brown of my Judiciary Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*