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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

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April 14, 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,

On December 9, 2016, I wrote to you regarding a December 7, 2016, BuzzFeed article summarizing the main findings of its yearlong investigation into the country's largest psychiatric hospital chain, Universal Health Services (UHS), and allegations of pressuring patients into unnecessary admittance and prolonged hospitalizations, potentially defrauding the government via Medicare and Medicaid as a result. The alleged conduct raised in the article was particularly troubling and raised serious questions about UHS's ability to properly care for its patients.

On April 11, 2017, BuzzFeed issued another article about its investigation into UHS focusing specifically on the Shadow Mountain UHS facility in Oklahoma.¹ Based on BuzzFeed's investigation, the state of Oklahoma reportedly opened an investigation into the facility and its director. The state has also reportedly placed the facility on probation multiple times due to low nurse staffing, medication errors, and reports of sexual misconduct.² For example, the report indicates that one of Shadow Mountain's units had only one third of the staff it needed.³ The reporting further states,

...police records, state inspection reports, and lawsuits, as well as interviews with more than 15 current and former employees, including administrators and psychiatrists, reveal that Shadow Mountain is a profoundly troubled facility where frequent violence endangers patients and staff alike, where children as young as 5 are separated from their parents and held in dangerous situations, and where wards lack adequate staffing and staff lack adequate training.⁴

¹ Rosalind Adams, *The Trash Can Unit*, BuzzFeed (April 11, 2017). Available at https://www.buzzfeed.com/rosalindadams/shadow-mountain?utm_term=.dbn82dBeYB#.tkE6eoZVOZ

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

BuzzFeed's investigation also notes that many staffers have placed unwarranted physical restraints on children or completely neglected to prevent self-injury. For example, the reporting states that the manager of the facility "looked on, chatting with an employee, as an agitated child repeatedly banged his head against a wall."⁵

Both the December 2016 and April 2017 news reports portray a pattern of conduct that is extremely concerning and casts a dark cloud over UHS's ability to properly care for its patients and whether it is properly billing federal programs. By April 28, 2017, please explain what steps your office is taking to investigate UHS for the aforementioned abuses at Shadow Mountain. 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

⁵ Rosalind Adams, *The Trash Can Unit*, BuzzFeed (April 11, 2017). Available at https://www.buzzfeed.com/rosalindadams/shadow-mountain?utm_term=.dbn82dBeYB#.tkE6eoZVOZ