

VA OIG Podcast Transcript Episode 20171107-3

OIG Highlights October 2017

October 2017

[Pete Prabhakar Host] Hi, I'm Pete Prabhakar with the VA Office of Inspector General headquarters in Washington, D.C. and this is the VA OIG, October 2017 Highlights.

October was a productive month and included recognition for our work from the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (or CIGIE) at their 20th Annual CIGIE Awards ceremony in Washington, DC.

Inspector General Michael Missal joined with senior staff and the IG community to honor representatives from the VA OIG and other IG teams receiving awards. Our office was honored to receive eight Project Excellence Awards, which is the most the OIG has ever received. This peer recognition was a meaningful endorsement of the quality of our work, our impact on VA, and the professionalism of our staff.

The OIG's Office of Investigations recognized the Kansas City Resident Agency with the case of the month award for their investigation of a former Leavenworth VA medical center physicians' assistant charged with sexual assault crimes. The joint OIG–Leavenworth County Sheriff's Office investigation resulted in a guilty verdict of all counts. The defendant faces up to 10 years in prison.

Additionally, the DOJ issued several news releases highlighting OIG investigations and successful prosecutions of drug diversion, VA education benefits fraud, racketeering, and False Claims Act Allegations.

The OIG's Comprehensive Healthcare Inspection Program staff held a national briefing with leaders from the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Integrated Service Networks, and the VA medical centers. They presented the clinical topics, objectives, and evaluation criteria that will be used for fiscal year 2018 unannounced site visits at randomly selected VA medical centers and community outpatient clinics. Some of the inspection areas include post-traumatic stress disorder screening and follow-ups, and leadership and organization risks.

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In October, the Office of Contract Review examined seven contracts and provided recommendations to VA. If these recommendations are implemented, the VA could save \$367 million dollars over the next five to ten years and recover overcharges of \$24,000.

The OIG also published two oversight reports in October. The first was a healthcare inspection *Opioid Agonist Treatment Program Concerns at the VA Maryland Health Care System*. In this report, the OIG substantiated that the treatment program lacked effective quality controls for ensuring patients consistently received required treatment planning and monthly counseling, and also lacked controls for appropriate cardiac monitoring.

In the second report, *Review of Potential Misuse of Purchase Cards at Veterans Integrated Service Network 15*, the OIG substantiated that purchase cardholders made 18 split purchases valued at nearly \$73,000, which resulted in unauthorized commitments and improper payments.

For more information on all of these activities or to report fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, or possible criminal activity, visit the OIG website at V-A dot G-O-V backslash O-I-G.