

Administrative Closure
Alleged Unsanitary Environment
San Bernardino Vet Center
(2008-01704-HI-0125)

The Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General, Office of Healthcare Inspections reviewed allegations regarding unsanitary conditions at the Vet Center in San Bernardino, CA. The complainant wrote a letter to the Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee requesting a review of the allegations.

The complainant alleged:

- Rat infestation.
Flooding.
- Restrooms not operational
- Inadequate distribution of air flow.

Review Results

We conducted an unannounced inspection on April 24, 2008. The Vet Center occupies leased space on the first floor of a two-story office building. The building's grounds appeared to be adequately maintained. We inspected all areas except the group therapy room, which had an active therapy session in progress. We did not note any current flooding, evidence of rats, or air flow problems.

We inspected the restrooms used by clients of the businesses on the first floor, including the Vet Center. We noticed a moldy odor but found the restrooms to be operational and adequately maintained.

The Vet Center Business Manager told us that all four allegations had been previously identified during annual safety inspections conducted by the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System's Safety Officer. We reviewed the past three inspection reports and validated this assertion. The Business Manager told us that he had been working with the Veterans Integrated Service Network Business Center's Contracting Officer (CO) to compel the landlord to address the safety inspection findings.

We contacted the CO who shared evidence of multiple contacts with the building landlord from May 2006 through March 2008. The four allegations were included in these contacts and were addressed by the landlord to varying degrees over this time period. Several repairs were made as recently as March 3, 2008.

The plan is for this Vet Center to relocate. The CO told us that they have identified a site and are in the process of negotiation with the landlord. The new site is a building that is under construction and scheduled to be completed by June 2008. The goal is to relocate the Vet Center in November 2008.

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Conclusions

We found that the conditions in the complaint had been previously identified and adequately addressed. The environment of care at the time of our visit was acceptable. Therefore, we are closing this case without making recommendations or issuing a formal report.

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Approved by: Pat Christ Date: 5-15-
Pat Christ
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