

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 6, 2015

Mr. Barry Bahl  
Director/Chief Operating Officer  
St. Cloud VA Health Care System  
4801 Veterans Drive  
St. Cloud, MN 56303

Ms. Jane Nygaard  
National Vice President, 8<sup>th</sup> District  
American Federation of Gov't Employees  
2950 Metro Drive, Suite 315  
Bloomington, MN 55425

Dear Mr. Bahl and Ms. Nygaard:

Thank you for meeting with us separately last Friday to discuss the workplace culture and labor-management issues at the St. Cloud VA Health Care System. As a result, we believe we have a better understanding of the situation.

During our visit on Friday, we heard concerns about strained relationships, lack of trust, and unresolved grievances, among other issues. After hearing concerns from several employees and listening to both of your perspectives, we believe federal mediation can be helpful in this situation.

We are pleased that both of you agreed in principle to federal labor-management mediation in an attempt to address the problems that have been identified by the parties. Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) is an independent agency created in 1947 whose mission is to preserve and promote labor-management peace and cooperation.

After consulting with the FMCS Regional Office after our visit, we bring to your attention two of the services the agency offers that may be of benefit. The first service is grievance mediation and the other is "Relationship by Objective" assistance, which aims at bringing the parties together to rebuild relationships and restore trust. FMCS offers other services that may be of interest.

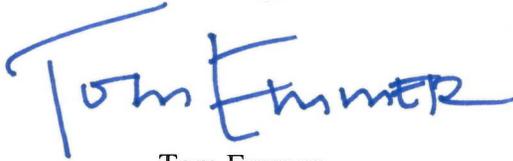
Mr. Lane Harstad, Regional Director of the FMCS, has informed us that his agency stands ready to be of service and if you indeed want to pursue mediation that you'll need to work together to jointly and voluntarily request it. You may write to the FMCS at:

Lane Harstad, Regional Director  
Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service  
Broadway Place West, Suite 3950  
1300 Godward Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55413  
(612) 331-6670  
Fax: (612) 331-5272

We are hopeful that by immediately pursuing mediation that it can help to start rebuilding relationships, restoring trust and promoting collaboration among the parties with the shared goal of putting the needs of veterans and their families first.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this important matter. We look forward to learning of your decision in the very near future.

Sincerely,



Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



Tim Walz  
Member of Congress

CC: Dr. Steven Julius, Acting Network Director, VISN 23  
Mr. Lane Harstad, Regional Director, Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service