

Scripps–WCPO investigation reveals Cincinnati VA in state of disarray

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CINCINNATI – A four-month joint investigation by the Scripps Washington Bureau and WCPO in Cincinnati has uncovered inappropriate conduct and conflicts of interest involving high-ranking officials at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Cincinnati, right in the backyard of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Bob McDonald, the former chief executive of Cincinnati-based Procter & Gamble Co.

The bureau team and WCPO pored over numerous documents and heard from dozens of whistleblowers who came forward to our reporters to say the Cincinnati VA is in a state of disorder.

The investigation finds that the VA’s pattern of cost cutting forced out experienced surgeons, reduced access to care and put patients in harm’s way. At the center of the turmoil are two VA leaders with a work relationship that dates back more than a decade. The investigation also reveals evidence of one of those leaders prescribing medication, including controlled substances, to her regional boss’ wife. The physician does not have a valid license to prescribe controlled substances privately.

The findings of the joint Scripps–WCPO probe have already triggered two federal investigations and prompted VA headquarters to remove oversight of the Cincinnati hospital from the top regional VA official.

“Our team’s thorough reporting brought these very serious issues to light and has now caught the attention of federal authorities,” said Ellen Weiss, chief of Scripps Washington Bureau. “This story represents the important work our journalists do in holding public officials accountable for acting in the public interest.”

The full story is available now on WCPO.com. It also aired on WCPO Channel 9 and is available across Scripps TV stations and their digital platforms.

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