

DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

# Memorandum

Date: OCT 04 2016

From: Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N)

Subj: Request for Assignment to a "No Engagement" Status re: Mr. Carlton Hooker

To: Secretary (00)

Thru:

1. This memo is a request to assign Mr. Carlton Hooker to a "No Engagement" status with the Bay Pines VA Health Care System (BPVAHCS), its Director, Ms. Suzanne Klinker, and to transfer Mr. Hooker's VA care to the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital and clinics in Tampa, Florida.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hooker is a former employee of BPVAHCS and is also a Veteran. He was terminated from his position as a Police Officer in January 2010. We believe that the nature, duration, and escalation of disruptive behaviors by this former employee since his termination warrant this level of response.<sup>2</sup>
2. Mr. Hooker has exhausted all legal remedies concerning his termination<sup>3</sup> and has been enjoined from filing further actions in any legal forum, without permission from the Court.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, Mr. Hooker has shifted to other means to attempt to regain his employment with BPVAHCS and to personally and professionally damage individuals who he believes have been obstructing his efforts. BPVAHCS leadership, staff, and attorneys who represent BPVAHCS have been subjected to increasing levels of intimidation and harassment which no means of intervention by federal law enforcement officials have served to de-escalate.<sup>5</sup>
3. Since his termination, Mr. Hooker has continually occupied local, regional, and national VA resources. BPVAHCS staff have diligently and exhaustively responded to Mr. Hooker's near-daily complaints, emails and calls requesting administrative, legal, and criminal actions against BPVAHCS staff. Thorough reviews of Mr. Hooker's allegations have been completed and on most occasions did not substantiate Mr. Hooker's allegations. In the few instances that allegations were substantiated, appropriate actions were taken. Nonetheless, Mr. Hooker continually makes variations of the same allegations, despite efforts from BPVAHCS staff, the Office of

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<sup>1</sup> The difference between these two locations is 26.8 miles.

<sup>2</sup> To our knowledge, VHA has never sought to place a former employee/Veteran into a "No Engagement" status outside of the Disruptive Behavior Program for patients, thus this action may set precedence.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Hooker has unsuccessfully pursued over 20 legal cases against the VA since his termination. He has also filed personal lawsuits against OGC and DOJ attorneys, Judges, and individual staff of BPVAHCS including its former Director. An EEOC Judge described his behaviors as "contumacious, antagonistic, and very aggressive." [Attachment A](#).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. District Court Order, [Attachment B](#).

<sup>5</sup> For example, VAOIG and U.S. Marshal's Service previously responded to veiled threats made by Mr. Hooker to government attorneys by interviewing Mr. Hooker at his home and issuing an Advisory. [Attachment C](#). See also, Police Report filed by OGC attorney at [Attachment D](#).

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Counsel to address his concerns.

4. More recently, Mr. Hooker has escalated his actions directly towards Director Klinker. Prior to her physical arrival at BPVACHS, he began to contact her. Since her appointment as Director, he has contacted her at her personal residence and has made inappropriate comments about members of her family. He has scheduled appointments at community based outpatient clinics on days when she was scheduled to speak. He continues to send several emails to her on a near- daily basis; including nights and weekends. Although his communications include no overt references to criminal activity, the nature and tone of each message threatens the safety and security of Ms. Klinker, her family, and her staff. She has consulted with VAOIG officials, the Office of Security and Law Enforcement (OSLE), and the Workplace Violence Protection Program for assistance. Additional physical safety precautions were implemented in the Director's work area, Human Resources, and the on-site Office of Chief Counsel; however, Mr. Hooker's near-daily communications have become increasingly aggressive, intimidating, and erratic.

OSLE has analyzed this situation with input from the VAOIG and has determined that although at this time Mr. Hooker has not committed a crime, he is obsessed with Ms. Klinker. This gives VA Law Enforcement cause for very serious concerns regarding Mr. Hooker's unpredictable behavior. VA Law Enforcement believes Mr. Hooker could immediately resort to criminal acts directed against Ms. Klinker without warning. Moreover, they recommend a proactive approach to avoid and mitigate unforeseen criminal situations that could be mounted against Ms. Klinker that cannot be forecasted.

5. In March 2016, Mr. Hooker engaged in disruptive behavior with another Veteran during a BPVAHCS Town Hall Meeting, which caused the panel to immediately depart the area under police escort. As a result, Mr. Hooker received a letter restricting his access to BPVAHCS.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, Mr. Hooker's pattern of behavior has not lessened since the issuance of the property restriction notice, and in some respects it has increased. Mr. Hooker is overtly refusing to comply with the physical restrictions, engaging in 'bait and switch' tactics with VA Police, and he has begun to solicit other VA patients to allow him to "represent" them in claims against the VA so that he can gain personal access to BPVAHCS property and staff.<sup>7</sup>
6. In sum, this "No Engagement" status request would modify current restrictions and completely prohibit Mr. Hooker from all BPVAHCS sites, to include the St. Petersburg VBA Regional Office<sup>8</sup> and the National Cemetery located on the main campus. It would also prohibit Mr. Hooker from contacting Ms. Klinker, as well as other BPVAHCS staff by any other means. The BPVAHCS Privacy Officer stands ready to initiate the transfer of

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<sup>6</sup> Attachment E.

<sup>7</sup> See composite at Attachment F.

<sup>8</sup> The Interim Director(s) of the St. Petersburg Regional Office have expressed willingness to engage with Mr. Hooker by telephone and mail regarding benefits issues.

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Mr. Hooker's healthcare to Tampa and to notify Mr. Hooker of the transfer and provide an opportunity for him to express his preferences about his primary care and other ancillary services. Should Mr. Hooker have questions or concerns relating to his care in Tampa, his correspondence will be answered by Tampa VA personnel. However, the VISN 8 Network, along with their respective VISN 8 facilities, requests approval to assign Mr. Hooker's previously reviewed and dispositioned requests to a "No Reply" status.

Thank you for your consideration.

*for Steve Young*  
Steve Young

Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management

Concur/Non Concur

*Don*

David J. Shulkin, M.D.  
Under Secretary for Health

Concur/Non Concur

Kevin T. Hanretta *Kevin T Hanretta*  
Assistant Secretary Office of Operations, Security and Preparedness

Concur/Non Concur

Leigh A. Bradley  
General Counsel

Approve/Disapprove

*Leigh A. Bradley (I concur.)*

Robert A. McDonald  
Secretary

Attachments  
Supporting Documentation