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25 November 2013

File: 65-6

The Honourable Julian Fantino
Veterans Affairs Canada
14th Floor - 66 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0P4

Dear Minister Fantino,

I am sending you this letter to express my frustration with the lack of effective communication to our Veterans and their families in the areas impacted by the upcoming closure of the eight District Offices. It is time that you take immediate action.

Veterans and their families need to understand that their needs will be looked after even with these closures and that Veterans Affairs Canada cares. A media campaign focussed on Letters to the Editor highlighting programs and benefits is not an effective communication plan.

It is time to be proactive and reach out to our Veterans and their families in the areas impacted by these closures. I am asking that as priority for each case managed Veteran that the current case manager personally calls and advise the Veteran of the new case manager, offer a home visit and provide reassurance that their care will not be impacted by the closure. Secondly, each VAC client in the affected area should be sent a letter advising them of the closure, which District Office will be re-assigned their file and also be provided reassurance that their care will not be impacted by the closure. This is proactively communicating to our Veterans.

Veterans and their families need to know that Veterans Affairs Canada cares and that their needs will be met despite the closure of the District Office in their area. I trust that you will take the necessary immediate action on behalf of our Veterans.

Yours truly

Gordon Moore
Dominion President

Minister
of Veterans Affairs



Ministre
des Anciens Combattants

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0P4

Ottawa, 28 November 2013

Mr. Gordon Moore
Dominion President
Dominion Command
86 Aird Place,
Ottawa, ON K2L 0A1

Dear Gordon,

I want to thank you for your letter of November 25 and the opportunity to demonstrate to you and your members of our efforts to inform Veterans of Kelowna, BC, Saskatoon, SK, Brandon, MB, Thunder Bay, ON, Windsor, ON, Sydney, NS, Charlottetown, PEI and Corner Brook, NL are well underway and how the impending transfer of services from the District Offices will affect them. It is my understanding that, last week, my Chief of Staff gave you and your Dominion Secretary specific insight in our communication plans for this important matter. I therefore ask that you please excuse me if I repeat some of the information that he has provided related to our efforts to ensure Veterans have the information when and where they need it.

On November 9th, 2013, letters were sent to each case-managed Veteran in the surrounding regions noted above. In addition to these letters, case managers personally phoned each and every case-managed Veteran to discuss how these expected changes will occur over the coming weeks and months. Officials from Veterans Affairs assured Canadian Veterans and their families that home visits will continue with a case manager or registered nurse as they have come to expect from my department.

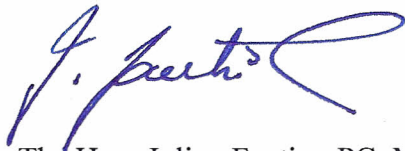
Furthermore, this coming Friday, November 29th, letters will be mailed to each and every Veteran who is in receipt of a Veterans Affairs benefit or service in the above mentioned regions. These letters will advise that the District Office in their region will be transferred officially on January 31st, 2014 and that our Government has enhanced the Veterans Affairs/Service Canada partnership by assigning a Veterans Affairs Client Service Agent to the nearest Service Canada in the 8 corresponding cities. This measure is part of our commitment to strengthen the Service Canada partnership, which has already greatly expanded the opportunity for Veterans to get information on the benefits and services they need.

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In addition to these personalized measures, my department has taken out advertising space in each region so that Veterans can learn of the changes occurring in their regions in addition to the personalized letter and calls that have and will occur. We announced this change well over a year ago, giving as much advanced notice to Veterans and employees as possible. This was designed to allow us to roll out our enhanced partnership with Service Canada and to ensure Veterans and Canadians have the information well in advance.

I thank you for your letter and hope that this information helps to demonstrate how our Government has worked to ensure Veterans have the information when and where they need it. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to let me know Sincerely,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Fantino", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

The Hon. Julian Fantino PC, MP