Legion to VA: Find the Missing $54 Million Documentation

WASHINGTON (June 16, 2015) - “Unbelievable,” was how American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm described a report that more than $54.4 million of prosthetics were purchased by VA employees in the Bronx using government credit cards.

“Nothing here passes the smell test,” Helm said. “Each time the government cards were used for this purpose, it was for $24,999. This is just under the limit for the contracting guidelines. It’s either a remarkable coincidence or an orchestrated effort to get around contracting requirements. The president promised to preside over ‘the most transparent administration in history.’ Apparently VA didn’t get the memo.”

Helm pointed out that for the total to be so high, the Bronx VA must be providing an extraordinarily high amount of prosthetics. “By my math it comes out to 2,177 transactions. Moreover, we hear that VA officials wanted to tell Congress that documents were destroyed by Hurricane Sandy when the dates don’t even match up. What next, the dog ate my homework? The American Legion has long supported the Department of Veterans Affairs because we believe the government has a solemn obligation to care for our veterans. But every day – with each scandal – it becomes more and more difficult. This is not just a slap in the face to our heroes who need prosthetics, but a complete disregard for the taxpayers who fund such purchases. We call on Congress and the administration to insist that VA document how this money was spent or refer this case to the Justice Department for possible prosecution.”

With a current membership of 2.3-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through nearly 14,000 posts across the nation.