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Legion National Commander calls for further investigation at Overton Brooks

American Legion to provide comfort items for Shreveport VA

INDIANAPOLIS (October 2, 2014) -- Angered by an Internet report that patients at the Shreveport, La., VA Medical Center lack basic essentials such as clean linens, toothpaste, tooth brushes and pajamas, the leader of the nation's largest veterans organization promised immediate assistance from The American Legion.

"I have directed my staff to provide $5,000 of comfort items to the facility through our Operation Comfort Warriors program," American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm said. "If more is needed, more will be provided. While The American Legion family is more than happy to provide this assistance, it is very disturbing that such help is needed. I plan to share my concerns with VA Secretary McDonald and ask the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct a full investigation and correct any deficiencies that exist."

According to a report on Watchdog.org, the Overton Brooks VAMC spent approximately $3 million on a solar project, while patients and nurses have to search for toiletries. Moreover, the report stated that laundry is outsourced to a facility 125 miles from the hospital, leading to shortages of clean serviceable linens.

"The American Legion has repeatedly said that VA care is very good if you can get access to it," Helm said. "I certainly hope that situations like what is being reported about Overton Brooks are rare."

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