Ray’s Questions:

1.       Reno is tied for 2nd highest in the nation in the percent of veterans who had to wait longer than 30 days to get an appointment to see a doctor at 11 percent.

2.       The Reno and Las Vegas offices are ranked in the bottom third in the nation on the average wait time for new patients to see a doctor. Reno’s average wait time, 53.14 days is worse than Las Vegas.

3.       I was also wondering about Ed Russell. Sen. Heller has called for his resignation. Has there been any movement on that?

Proposed answer for your review:

Here is a statement from Senator Heller for your use in this story:

“There are many men and women working within the Department of Veterans Affairs who aim to serve our nation’s veterans with excellence. I am grateful for the quality care that my father received at the Reno hospital. However, veterans should be able to access the care that they earned while in service to this country. Lengthy wait times are simply unacceptable. I have pressed VA officials at the local and national level for answers about how they plan to tackle these issues, and will continue to keep a close eye on the situation moving forward.” – Senator Dean Heller

And an update on Mr. Russell, which you can attribute to me:

“Although Mr. Russell remains in his post, Senator Heller continues to believe that he should resign. In fact, Senator Heller pointed to the leadership problem at the Reno VA Regional Office as recently as this week during a hearing of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.”

Additional information:

Heller has written Secretary Shinseki on multiple occasions about this issue.

You can read the May 8th letter here: <http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=61064567-6235-4a20-aba5-9ed956649856>

You can read the May 27th letter here: <http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=e52b1549-59da-477b-bc6b-f32c8452506e>

I also wanted to flag this statement for you from June 9th regarding the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System:

#### June 9, 2014

# [Heller: VA Can and Must Do Better](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=f1318046-f536-44be-8453-927844b17f43)

**(Washington, D.C.) –** Today, U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) issued the following statement after the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reported that facilities within VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System are in need of further investigation and follow-up:

“Poor management at the VA has been a problem that veterans have faced for far too long,” said Senator Dean Heller. “The VA can and must do better to ensure that those who served our country receive the outstanding care they were promised.  I am concerned that new patients are having a difficult time securing appointments, as well as the fact that ongoing investigations are needed at Nevada facilities.  I will be speaking with the Director of the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System later today, and look forward to a frank discussion about what more must be done to address Nevada’s veterans’ healthcare concerns,” said Senator Dean Heller.

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