

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Requests information from company that manages DoD Health Database

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WASHINGTON — On Monday, U.S. Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), ranking member of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, sent a letter to Manish Malhotra, the Chairman and CEO of Unissant, Inc., the company that manages the Department of Defense's (DoD) Defense Medical Epidemiology Database (DMED).

To date, the senator has sent [three letters](#) to DoD regarding DMED following allegations from three DoD whistleblowers that the database showed significant increases in registered medical diagnoses in 2021, compared to a five year average from 2016-2020. After these whistleblowers came forward, DoD [reportedly](#) claimed that the data in DMED "was incorrect for the years 2016-2020." DoD added that the DMED system was taken offline to "identify and correct the root-cause of the data corruption."

The senator has not received complete responses from DoD to his previous letters other than confirmation that, "[o]n January 26th, after receiving Ranking Member Johnson's letter, the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division of the Defense Health Agency immediately created (and preserved) a full backup of the DMED."

The senator wrote, "Given DoD's lack of transparency, I asked my staff to contact Unissant to discuss its awareness of potential data problems in DMED. Unissant's website notes that the company has a 'prime contract' to 'provide [information management/information technology] support' for DMED. Last week, after my staff emailed the company, a Unissant employee responded, 'This request will need to be

made to our government customer. We are not in a position nor are we willing to engage in this discussion.”

Read more about the letter in [Breitbart](#).

The full text of the letter can be found [here](#) and below.

March 7, 2022

Mr. Manish Malhotra

Chairman and CEO

Unissant, Inc.

12901 Worldgate Dr.

Suite 600

Herndon, VA 20170

Dear Mr. Malhotra:

I write to request Unissant Inc. (Unissant) provide information regarding its management of the Department of Defense’s (DoD) Defense Medical Epidemiology Database (DMED).

In late January 2022, three DoD whistleblowers came forward with information that showed significant increases in registered medical diagnoses on DMED in 2021, compared to a five year average from 2016-2020.[1] I sent DoD a record preservation request for all data relating to DMED as well as two letters requesting information about the database.[2] On January 31, 2022, shortly after the whistleblowers’ allegations became public, a DoD spokesperson reportedly stated that data in DMED “was incorrect for the years 2016-2020.”[3] That spokesperson added that the DMED system was taken offline to “identify and correct the root-cause of the data corruption.”[4]

On February 15, 2022, DoD informed my staff that, “[o]n January 26th, after receiving Ranking Member Johnson’s letter, the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division of the Defense Health Agency immediately created (and preserved) a full backup of the DMED.”[5] DoD has yet to provide complete responses to my previous letters including a detailed explanation regarding the data issues in DMED.

Given DoD’s lack of transparency, I asked my staff to contact Unissant to discuss its awareness of potential data problems in DMED. Unissant’s website notes that the company has a “prime contract” to “provide [information management/information technology] support” for DMED.[6] Last week, after my staff emailed the company, a Unissant employee responded, “This request will need to be made to our government customer. We are not in a position nor are we willing to engage in this discussion.”[7]

I was disappointed to hear of Unissant’s refusal to provide information informally about its management of DMED. Because of the concerns and unanswered questions relating to the potential increases of medical diagnoses in DMED, as well as the alleged data issues on the system, I hope Unissant will cooperate with this Senate examination and respond to this formal request for information:

1. Please explain Unissant’s contractual obligations with managing data in DMED. Please provide all contracts with government entities concerning this relationship.
2. Is Unissant aware of data issues on DMED? If so, what are those issues, when were those issues uncovered, who uncovered those issues, and to what extent did Unissant communicate those issues to DoD?
3. Please list all other instances where issues were found in DMED (e.g. data corruption).
4. Please provide all documents and communications between Unissant and DoD referring or relating to DMED from Aug. 1, 2021 to present.

Finally, I request Unissant preserve all records referring, relating, or reported to the Defense Medical Epidemiology Database.[8] Please immediately

confirm to my office the completion of the records preservation and provide all other responses by March 21, 2022.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Ron Johnson

Ranking Member

Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

cc: The Honorable Jon Ossoff

Chairman

Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

The Honorable Sean O'Donnell

Acting Inspector General

Department of Defense