



Durbin, Duckworth call on Illinois Public Health Director Nirav Shah to resign over botched response to Legionnaires' outbreaks

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today called for Illinois Public Health Director Nirav Shah to resign following [reports](#) that the Rauner Administration botched a water-system repair at Illinois Veterans Home (IVH) Quincy, which was in violation of state health codes, and then chose to deliberately withhold that information from the public and not cite the facility for a mistake. In newly released documents, Shah detailed the dangers present at the facility, noted that the violations warranted a citation, yet chose not to issue one. Additional [reports](#) indicate that Shah and other staff at the Illinois Department of Public Health found Governor Rauner's office to be an obstacle in ensuring a prompt and comprehensive response to the deadly outbreaks and more focused on public perception.

“There was definitive evidence that a serious public health crisis was underway at the veterans' home in Quincy in 2015, and the Rauner Administration and Director Shah chose to sit on their hands as veterans and staff at the home fell victim to these deadly bacteria. It's an outrage that time after time the Governor and his team prioritized public relations over protecting vulnerable veterans, their spouses, and staff at IVH Quincy. Director Shah's response to this tragedy reflects the height of irresponsibility and negligence, and it's time for him to go,” said Durbin and Duckworth.

Since 2015, Rauner Administration officials have been unable to contain an ongoing Legionnaires' disease crisis at the 132-year-old IVH facility in Quincy, which has already claimed the lives of more than a dozen Illinoisans who served our nation in uniform and their spouses. In October, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan

announced that her office had opened a criminal probe into the Rauner Administration's response to the multiple Legionnaires' disease outbreaks at Illinois Veterans' Home (IVH) Quincy since 2015.

Durbin and Duckworth have worked together to hold the Rauner Administration accountable for its response to the Legionnaires' disease outbreaks at IVH Quincy. In letters to Gov. Rauner in [January](#) and [March](#), Durbin and Duckworth repeatedly pressed for a detailed plan of action for ensuring the safety of residents, family, and staff at IVH Quincy. They also successfully secured additional federal funding in the Fiscal Year 2018 omnibus that was passed this year, which could be used for funding construction projects at state-run veteran health facilities like IVH Quincy. Recently, Durbin and Duckworth invited the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to IVH Quincy for a review and consultation on how to better prevent outbreaks in the future at the State-run facility.