



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**Under Secretary for Health**  
**Washington DC 20420**

June 21, 2024

Mr. Mark Ames  
Chief Advocacy Officer  
American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)  
3120 Fairview Park Drive, Suite 360  
Falls Church, VA 22042

Dear Mr. Ames:

Thank you for your May 23, 2024, letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), regarding Opposing the Proposed Pay Downgrade for Industrial Hygienists at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. I am responding on behalf of the Department.

On May 13, 2024, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) completed an evaluation of VA's human capital operations. The review covered activities from February 2007 to the present, with a focus on the compliance of VA's classification program under its delegated classification authority. One required action of OPM's evaluation was that VA submit six outstanding consistency review reports of specific positions, and one of those positions was the Industrial Hygienist. VA submitted the six outstanding consistency review reports to OPM, including a report for the Industrial Hygienist position, by the May 31, 2024, due date.

We appreciate your concern about the impact potential classification downgrades may have on the workforce. However, VA must ensure classification decisions are consistent with OPM appeal certificates and classify positions consistent with classification standards published by OPM. VA is developing a strategy to implement appropriate actions resulting from the consistency review, including advance coordination with our labor partners before any bargaining unit employee is impacted, and leveraging all appropriate pay authorities to mitigate any impact on employees.


Supervisors and managers depend on accurate classification to have the right employee skill set to accomplish VA's mission. VA will continue to strategically hire in several key areas to ensure we have the overall staffing needed to deliver care safely for the Nation's Veterans.

Page 2.

Mr. Mark Ames

Thank you for your continued support of our mission.

Sincerely,

 for  
Shereef Elnahal, M.D., MBA