



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**Medical Center**  
**1 Freedom Way**  
**Augusta, GA 30904- 6285**

Dear Veteran:

This letter has been sent to you because you had an endoscopy procedure (use of a scope to check your throat) performed at the Department of Veterans Affairs January through November 2008.

During a review of diagnostic procedures in the ENT clinic at the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center for the period of January 2, 2008 to November 6, 2008 it was determined that, although the scope was cleaned, the disinfection and sterilization procedure for ENT endoscopes and other reusable instruments was not up to our standard.

Because it is not possible to rule out the possibility that one or more patients may have been exposed to infection, the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center has decided to notify patients of the situation. This conservative approach is in the best interest of our veterans and is consistent with VA's policy to disclose all significant adverse events to patients. The risk of infection is extremely small.

The Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center is offering you the opportunity to return to the VA for precautionary blood tests to ensure that you have not been exposed to any potentially infectious agent. Please be aware that your ENT examination and treatment results were not affected.

A dedicated Nurse Communication Center has been set up to assist you. Nursing staff is available to answer any questions you may have and assist you with scheduling an appointment. You can call our special contact center at **(706) 731-7229** or **1-888-483-9674** Monday through Friday, 8AM to 4PM. After these hours, a nurse is available to answer your questions by calling 1-800-836-5561. At your convenience a blood test can be performed by appointment at the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, or one of the community-based outpatient clinics located in Aiken, SC and Athens, GA. If you are located outside the facility area, you may call us to schedule an appointment to receive services at a VA facility most convenient to you. There will be no co-payment or cost associated with the appointment or testing related to this issue. I assure you that actions have been taken so this does not occur again.

Please accept my sincere apology for the situation that prompted this letter. We understand the trust you place in us, and our staff is doing everything possible to address this situation.

Sincerely,

Rebecca J. Wiley  
Director