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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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.

¹ *COVID-19: A Second Opinion*, Rumble, Jan. 22, 2022, <https://rumble.com/vt62y6-covid-19-a-second-opinion.html> (at 4:54:35).

² See Letter from Ron Johnson, Ranking Member, Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations, to Lloyd Austin, Secretary, Dep't of Defense, Feb. 1, 2022, <https://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/services/files/FB6DDD42-4755-4FDC-BEE9-50E402911E02>; Letter from Ron Johnson, Ranking Member, Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations, to Lloyd Austin, Secretary, Dep't of Defense, Feb. 8, 2022, <https://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/services/files/07514E29-F80B-4EB6-B0F4-D7156A8C5691>.

³ The "Our Sources" section of the PolitiFact article noted that the interview with the DoD spokesperson occurred over email on Jan. 31, 2022. Jeff Cercone, *Numbers were based on faulty data, military spokesperson says*, PolitiFact, Jan. 31, 2022, <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2022/jan/31/instagram-posts/numbers-were-based-faulty-data-military-spokespers/>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Email from Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, Dep't of Defense, to Subcomm. staff, Feb. 15, 2022.

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

⁶ Defense Health Agency (DFA) - Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch, Unissant, https://unissant.us/portfolio_page/afhsb-2/, accessed Mar. 7, 2022.

⁷ Email from Unissant, Inc. employee to Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations staff, Mar. 3, 2022 (on files with staff).

⁸ "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

Mr. Manish Malhotra
Mar. 7, 2022
Page 3 of 3

cc: The Honorable Jon Ossoff
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

The Honorable Sean O'Donnell
Acting Inspector General
Department of Defense