



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0523

October 7, 2019

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Wilkie:

I write to you to express my deep frustration with the VA's unacceptable delays regarding the construction of a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Bakersfield, California, which Congress authorized over a decade ago in Public Law 111-82.

A new CBOC in Bakersfield would provide the veterans in this community and the region, which I represent, with a state-of-the-art facility and expanded services, thus reducing the need for them to travel to Los Angeles to receive care. All other clinics authorized by Public Law 111-82 have been built, but unfortunately the new clinic in Bakersfield remains subject to delay. While my constituents and I were pleased that the VA awarded a lease for a new CBOC in October 2018, we are extremely disappointed and frustrated by the recent announcement to terminate this lease and start the solicitation over again because the VA failed to follow its own regulatory requirements when selecting the site of the new CBOC on Knudsen Drive.

I appreciate our conversation last week and was pleased to confirm that the new CBOC in Bakersfield is a top priority of yours and that the VA would provide me with a timeline for the new solicitation notice, actual solicitation for proposals, groundbreaking, construction, and activation of the new facility. I have yet to receive a timeline. As such, I am requesting the VA provide me a timeline on the new Bakersfield CBOC as soon as possible, but by no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Time on Friday, October 11th.

Receiving a timeline is all the more urgent as VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System Executive Director Robert McKentrick sent a letter, dated September 30, 2019, to stakeholders announcing the cancellation of the Knudsen Drive lease award. My office was not provided a copy until Friday, October 4th. The lack of any schedule or timeline regarding a new Bakersfield CBOC, as the VA restarts the solicitation process following the cancellation of the recent lease award, is resulting in confusion and anger in the local veteran community. A timeline detailing when a CBOC will be opened in Bakersfield will provide our veterans

community with assurance the VA remains committed to this project, that there will no more delays, and that the clinic will come to fruition as soon as possible.

I look forward to receiving your timely reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "M".

KEVIN McCARTHY
House Republican Leader