

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 7, 2017

The Honorable Johnny Isakson
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Isakson and Ranking Member Tester:

As you develop legislation to ensure our nation's veterans are able to utilize the Veterans Choice Program for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2017 and for FY 2018, we ask that you include in that legislative package authorization of 27 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility leases. Authorization of these leases has strong bipartisan support from multiple states and is necessary to enable VA to deliver vital care and services to veterans across the United States.

A 2012 change in budgetary scoring of VA's major medical leases by the Congressional Budget Office has hampered the authorization of these important leases. Due to the change, the lease authorizations receive large, up-front direct spending scores covering the entire life of the lease, even though actual spending would not increase and the leases are subject to annual appropriations. This scoring issue has prevented Congress from easily authorizing major medical leases for the past several years. The last VA medical facility leases authorized by Congress were in 2014, with the enactment of the *Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act*, which established the Choice Program.

The full list of leases needing authorization is below, each of which is justified in the President's FY 2018 budget request:

1. Ann Arbor, MI – Outpatient Clinic
2. Birmingham, AL – Outpatient Mental Health Clinic
3. Boston, MA – Research Space
4. Charleston, SC – Research Space
5. Corpus Christi, TX – Outpatient Clinic
6. Daytona Beach, FL – Outpatient Clinic
7. Denver, CO – Chief Business Office Purchased Care
8. Fredericksburg, VA – Outpatient Clinic
9. Gainesville, FL – Outpatient Clinic
10. Gainesville, FL – Outpatient Mental Health Clinic
11. Hampton Roads, VA – Outpatient Clinic
12. Indianapolis, IN – Outpatient Clinic
13. Jacksonville, FL – Outpatient Clinic
14. Missoula, MT – Outpatient Clinic
15. Northern Colorado, CO – Outpatient Mental Health Clinic

16. Ocala, FL – Outpatient Clinic
17. Oxnard, CA – Outpatient Clinic
18. Pike County, GA – Outpatient Clinic
19. Pittsburgh, PA – Outpatient Clinic
20. Portland, ME – Outpatient Clinic
21. Raleigh, NC – Outpatient Clinic
22. Rochester, NY – Outpatient Clinic
23. San Diego, CA – Research Space
24. Santa Rosa, CA – Outpatient Clinic
25. Tampa, FL – Outpatient Mental Health Clinic
26. Tampa, FL – Outpatient Clinic (Lakeland)
27. Terre Haute, IN – Outpatient Clinic

We owe our veterans the timely and quality health care benefits they have earned through their service. As such, we ask that you work to include authorization for these leases in any forthcoming legislation to supplement funding for the Choice Program. We thank you for your continuing dedication to our nation's veterans and look forward to working with you to ensure their timely access to VA health care. If you have any questions about this request, please contact us directly or have your staff contact Mike Wakefield (Collins) at 202-224-3913 or William Ellis (King) at 202-228-1544 or Rosie Heiss (Warner) at 202-224-2418.

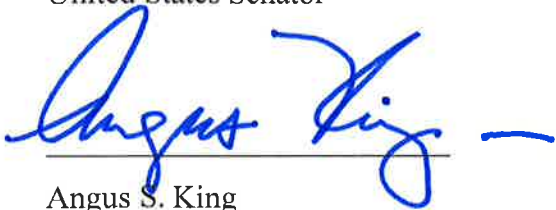
Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Angus S. King
United States Senator