



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

July 5, 2012

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen:

Thank you for your cosigned letter of support for a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Colebrook, New Hampshire.

VA routinely reviews its requirements for health care delivery to ensure health care access for Veterans nationwide. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) annual strategic planning guidance includes a process review, the crucial component of which involves the evaluation of patient access. VHA access standards for primary care services are that 70 percent of Veteran enrollees reside within 30 minutes travel time of a primary care site for both urban and rural areas.

VISN 1's north market (Vermont and New Hampshire) did not surface as a shortfall in meeting the access standard. As a result, additional CBOCs in VISN 1's north market were not authorized. These reviews are routinely conducted, and the needs of the Colebrook Veterans community will continue to be assessed.

To this end, the White River Junction leadership team is considering establishing a telehealth site in the Colebrook area. Using telehealth technologies in partnership with a community provider would provide primary care services to Veterans in Colebrook. If White River Junction decides to go forward with a telehealth site, some additional time will be required to develop the concept, which would follow established Federal contracting regulations.

Should you require further assistance, please have a member of your staff contact Mr. Tim Embree, Congressional Relations Officer, at (202) 461-5552 or by e-mail at Timothy.Embree@va.gov. A similar letter has been sent to the other cosigners of your letter. Thank you for your continued support of our mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eric K. Shinseki", is positioned above the printed name.

Eric K. Shinseki