



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

May 24, 2013

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen:

Thank you for your cosigned letter to request that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) consider colocating part-time outpatient services with a proposed telehealth site in Colebrook, New Hampshire.

The White River Junction VA Medical Center (VAMC) is committed to ensuring access to health care for all Veterans in its catchment area – a goal that continues to be a top priority for VA. Within the last 3 years, this catchment area has received 3 new Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) and 2 of the remaining 4 CBOCs were relocated to new and larger clinical sites.

Each year, this VAMC assesses its ability to meet Veterans Health Administration patient access standards for the VA New England Healthcare System's north market (Vermont and New Hampshire). The assessments were consistent for 2012 and 2013 and showed that the catchment area's primary care access standards were met. The standard is for 70 percent or more of Veteran enrollees to reside within 30 minutes travel time of a primary care site for both urban and rural areas.

The medical center has continued to expand its analysis of the northern New Hampshire region beyond its annual strategic planning application. The geographic challenges and absence of general health care services in the Colebrook region pose a potential gap in care access for Veterans in the region. The White River Junction VAMC is committed to providing enhanced access for Veterans residing in the north market, and intends to meet with existing health care organizations in northern New Hampshire to explore potential colocation of a part-time VA clinic in an existing facility.

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