

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 23, 2013

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

We have shared with you our concerns regarding the challenges New Hampshire's North Country veterans face in accessing VA medical care and the steps we believe the VA can take to address those challenges. In response to some of these concerns, in a May 24, 2013 letter, you wrote that the VA is aware of a "potential gap in care access for veterans" in the Colebrook region of New Hampshire's North Country and intends to "explore potential co-location of a part-time VA clinic" in the North Country to enhance veterans' access to medical care.

Additionally, at an April 23, 2013 Senate Budget Committee hearing, Undersecretary for Health Robert A. Petzel testified that the VA might be interested in setting up a health contract agreement with Androscoggin Valley Hospital. He also promised to follow-up on VA plans to establish a telehealth technology partnership to better serve veterans in the North Country.

We are grateful to hear that White River Junction Director Deborah Amdur recently visited Androscoggin Valley Hospital. We are encouraged about the possibility of better serving our North Country veterans with a telehealth partnership and a part-time VA clinic. We ask that you please provide an update on the VA's progress regarding these important priorities.

We appreciate your continued attention to these issues and the VA's efforts to ensure that New Hampshire veterans have access to the care they need and deserve. Thank you for your service to our country and to our veterans. We look forward to hearing from you.

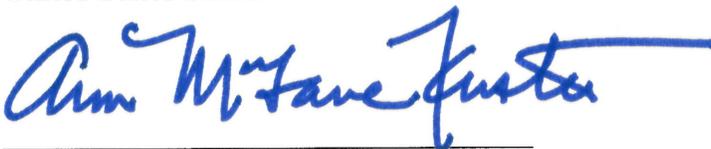
Sincerely,



Kelly A. Ayotte
United States Senate



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate



Ann McLane Kuster
United States Senate



Carol Shea-Porter
United States Senate