



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON

May 4, 2015

The Honorable Charles Boustany  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Boustany:

Thank you for your March 20, 2015, cosigned letter regarding your continued concerns related to delays in the construction of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) in Lafayette and Lake Charles, Louisiana. I am responding on behalf of the Department.

On February 23, 2015, I visited the Lafayette, Louisiana CBOC. Alexandria VA Health Care System (AVAHCS) leadership and I agreed on a plan to lease additional temporary space in order to alleviate capacity concerns at the current Lafayette CBOC in the short term. When I met with the Veterans Coalition on that same day, I pledged that AVAHCS would immediately pursue temporary lease space, in addition to the larger replacement CBOC project already underway.

Actions are underway to competitively procure temporary lease space in Lafayette; issuance of a formal Request for Lease Proposal is planned for this spring. Delegation from the General Services Administration has been secured. We estimate lease award by the end of summer 2015. Local AVAHCS, Veterans Integrated Service Network 16, and VA Central Office officials are working collaboratively to identify space with minimal build out to ensure speedy occupancy and activation. Since our meeting on February 23, 2015, VA awarded the lease for the replacement CBOC in Lafayette.

In fiscal year 2014, Congress authorized VA to obtain 24,008 net usable square feet for the Lake Charles CBOC, which will serve Veterans from the surrounding counties and reduce the need for Veterans to travel up to 2 hours each way to seek treatment at the AVAHCS in Pineville, LA. The new facility is designed to address quality, access, and capacity needs for Primary Care, Specialty Care, Dental, Laboratory, Mental Health, and will also provide limited Pharmacy access. The new CBOC will replace a mobile clinic currently stationed in Lake Charles.

VA experienced delays in our timeline for the Lake Charles CBOC relating to its operating lease status. However, VA requested proposal revisions from offerors and has identified a prospective successful offer that qualifies as an operating lease. A lease will be awarded after VA completes its pre-award review, approval, and notification process, which is anticipated by the end of summer 2015. Construction completion for the Lake Charles CBOC is targeted within 14 months after the lease award, with first patients to be seen approximately 2 months after construction is complete.

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VA is committed to delivering the Lake Charles CBOC project as quickly as possible, while complying with all Federal procurement laws and regulations. I am personally monitoring the status of this project and we will provide updates as progress is made. Although there have been unexpected challenges in awarding this lease, I assure you that VA remains committed to delivering the Lake Charles CBOC as expeditiously as possible for South Louisiana Veterans.

Should you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact [redacted] Professional Relations Officer, & [redacted] by email at [redacted]. A similar letter has been sent to Senator Vitter.

I appreciate your continued support of our mission.

Sincerely,



Sloan D. Gibson

