

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1803

June 11, 2012

The Honorable Eric Shinseki
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

Thank you for your letter dated May 24, 2012. However, I found this letter to be lacking specifics. As such, I am making further inquiries about the proposed timeline for the Lake Charles and Lafayette Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) and what specific steps are being done to expedite this process.

In the aforementioned letter, you stated that you have instructed the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Real Property Service (RPS) to expedite the projects, and they are being monitored at a high level. You have continued to state in your letters that you are committed to an expedited process but you have not been able to show me specifics of such a process. I have said from the beginning that your Department's proposed timeline is wholly unacceptable. As such, I ask:

1. If the VA was not using an expedited process, how long would this process have taken, how does this compare to the expedited timeline being used for construction of the Lake Charles and Lafayette clinics?
2. What steps has the Administration taken to expedite this process?
3. As the VA has stated that it is unable to employ the truly expedited procedures I have suggested, what efforts have been made by VA officials to find a process that can be used and delivers the Lake Charles and Lafayette clinics sooner than under the current timeline?
4. If VA officials have in fact examined other authorities which could be used to hasten the process, why are these steps not being used?
5. Define "high level," what steps are senior officials taking to monitor this process and what are they doing to ensure the Lake Charles and Lafayette clinics are completed as soon as possible?

Additionally, many of my constituents have stated the VA is missing an opportunity to use existing facilities that could lessen the construction time significantly. As such, I ask the following questions:

6. Has the VA considered existing facilities as potential sites for these clinics or are you only looking at new construction?
7. If existing facilities were considered, why has the Administration chosen not to use these facilities?
8. If existing facilities were not examined, who made this decision, why and if this is the case do you believe a truly complete examination was completed?
9. Does the use of existing facilities prove to be a better use of the taxpayer's dollars? If so, what methodology has the Administration used to make this determination?

I continue to believe that the veterans of this community are best served by receiving their clinic as soon as possible. We must ensure that this happens. We have a responsibility to our brave men and women who sacrificed much. I thank you in advance for your complete and timely responses to these questions.

Respectfully,



Jeff Landry
Member of Congress