

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4303

September 29, 2020

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Wilkie,

I write to highlight a critical issue facing veterans in Texas' Third Congressional District: the need for additional Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare facilities to meet growing demand and increasing wait times.

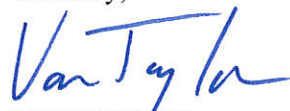
My District encompasses most of Collin County, which is currently experiencing a population boom and is expected to exceed 1.8 million residents by 2040 - up from just over one million today. According to the VA's National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, the population of veterans in my Congressional District will increase from 38,000 today to approximately 50,000 over the next twenty years - an increase of approximately twenty-four percent. Additionally, the population of veterans over age 65 in my district will increase by over forty percent during the same period. These veterans will need and expect access to quick, safe, and reliable care at a local VA facility.

While wait times at most VA North Texas medical facilities have decreased over the last year, the Third District's sole VA medical facility in Plano, has experienced increased wait times - a situation which will only worsen unless new VA facilities are established to provide needed medical care in our community. Furthermore, the statewide population of veterans in Texas is expected to decrease by approximately seventeen percent during the same twenty-year period in which the Third District's veteran population is expected to rapidly expand. It's clear from the statistics a significantly greater concentration of Texas' veterans will be moving to, or living in, Collin County over the next two decades.

Even without traffic, a veteran living in the northern portion of the Third District, can easily spend over an hour driving to and from VA facilities, including the Plano Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). Furthermore, as wait times and space limitations at the Plano CBOC increase, it's clear that new facilities will be needed in the northern portions of Collin County to meet this rapidly growing demand for VA services. To highlight these points in more detail, I am attaching a report from the Congressional Research Service (CRS) which incorporates both current and projected VA and Census population data. The report provides additional information on local facilities, wait times, the current enrollee population, projected veteran population over a twenty-year time horizon, and a map of current facilities within a forty-mile radius of the Third District.

Mr. Secretary, creating additional VA capacity in Collin County is absolutely necessary. Veterans in my district already face higher wait times as compared to other portions of North Texas, and veterans will increasingly face difficulty accessing medical care until new capacity is added to the system. Thank you for considering the needs of Collin County's rapidly growing and distinguished veterans community. I look forward to working with you to ensure tomorrow's veterans have access to reliable and well-serviced VA facilities.

Sincerely,



VAN TAYLOR
Member of Congress