

United States Senate

July 02, 2014

The Honorable Sloan Gibson
Acting Secretary
Veterans Affairs Department
810 Vermont Ave, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Gibson,

I appreciate your willingness to discuss the pilot project known as Access Received Closer to Home or ARCH – an issue that is incredibly important to me as it supports hundreds of rural veterans in my home state of Kansas. During our conversation on Friday, June 27, 2014, we had the opportunity to address the success of ARCH and my growing concern that rural veterans who currently benefit from access to care in their communities through ARCH will soon experience a lapse in care due to the decision by the Veteran Health Administration (VHA) to unnecessarily end medical services accessed through ARCH for veterans in the five pilot locations.

I am pleased you understand that access to quality care is vital for the health and well-being of all veterans; particularly those who are underserved and struggle to receive the care they deserve in rural areas. As we continue to work together to make certain rural veterans have access to quality care, I'd like to confirm the assurance you offered during our conversation that veterans currently receiving medical services through ARCH will continue to receive those medical services.

Veterans from the five ARCH pilot sites are overwhelmingly satisfied with the care they receive through ARCH, and are counting on you to make certain they continue to receive quality care closer to home. No veteran should struggle to access and receive timely, quality care just because of where they live, which is why ARCH is so critical. Hundreds of veterans are anxious about the VHA's plans to end ARCH, and are concerned their medical care will suffer as a result.

I strongly urge you to put an end to their worries by confirming your plan to use existing authorities, or whatever means available, to ensure the continuation of their medical services through ARCH. I look forward to our next conversation and your timely response to this request.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran