

RON DESANTIS
6TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

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July 25, 2014

The Honorable Daniel M. Tangherlini
Administrator
General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW, Room 6120
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Administrator Tangherlini,

Last week, we sent a letter to the Acting Department of Veteran Affairs' (VA) Sloan Gibson regarding the status of the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in St. Augustine, Florida. There are over 20,000 veterans in St. Johns County and the local CBOC provides outpatient care to more than 5,000 patients. Specifically, the clinic provides a broad range of general and specialized medical, psychiatric, nursing, women's health, social work, and ancillary services for primary care patients.

We understand that the facility's lease will end after March 31, 2015, and that a finalized plan for a continuation of services in the St. Augustine area has not been specified. Furthermore, it is our understanding that an interagency dispute between the VA and the General Services Administration (GSA) has caused a moratorium on new leases nation-wide. We find this to be an unacceptable situation, given that it could cause an interruption in our veterans' care.

The VA has submitted a Request for Proposal for a new leased facility and is reportedly in the review process. Major concerns voiced by senior VA officials and County Executives have underscored the impact of the GSA leasing constraint. These constraints exacerbate the ability to move forward on an interim facility agreement and could lead to a crisis in care for our veterans. We believe your intervention in this dispute is critical for ensuring a timely solution.

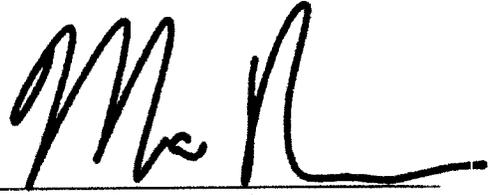
Additionally, St. Johns County has generously offered unused portions of county land for a temporary CBOC by the VA to provide services to local veterans during the time that construction of the permanent facility in St. Johns County, Florida is underway. Local VA leadership has been working closely with the St. Johns County executives in regards to these contingencies. We ask that the GSA offer an immediate exemption to the nation-wide moratorium for the St. Augustine community to allow for the construction or leasing of a temporary facility to proceed in order to ensure our former service members are not without proper medical care for any period of time.

We appreciate your attention to these matters and look forward to the VA and GSA's concrete plans to serve our constituents and veterans.

Sincerely,



Ron DeSantis
Member of Congress



Marco Rubio
United States Senator