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April 28, 2020

Mark Upton, M.D.
Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care
VHA Office of Community Care
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20571

Dear Dr. Upton:

On behalf of the veteran constituents of my district, I would like to thank you for your efforts in ensuring that America's veterans have access to timely, quality, health care. The work you are undertaking to transition the community care programs to ensure the more than 9 million veterans enrolled in the VA health programs have access to care in their own communities is laudable indeed.

My district, Minnesota's 1st congressional district, spans all of southern Minnesota, and the need for local care is acute as much of the district is rural and veterans have to travel some distance to reach a VA medical center. The 1st district is also fortunate to be home to the Mayo Clinic and Mayo Clinic Health System, which provides care to constituents in local communities and at its destination practice in Rochester. I am aware you are in ongoing conversations with Mayo leaders to secure the organization's participation in the community care program enacted under the MISSION Act. I also understand that Mayo Clinic's unique role as a destination provider for patients with serious and complex conditions also means that the most appropriate arrangements may require an innovative approach under the new program. I appreciate the work both your team and Mayo Clinic's team are undertaking to develop a reasonable solution and commend your commitment as a good steward of VA funding. Ultimately, the most important consideration is finding a pathway to care for veterans in need of convenient, high quality care.

I do not doubt that both the VA and Mayo Clinic are strongly committed to reaching an agreement and I would implore you to use the resources and capabilities at your disposal to do so. Furthermore, I ask that you expedite your efforts to ensure that quality care for the veterans of my state and our country is not delayed or interrupted.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance in helping the VA reach an agreement with Mayo Clinic.

Respectfully,



Jim Hagedorn
Member of Congress