



LOCAL 2440 A.F.G.E. A.F.L. - C.I.O.

Montrose V. A. Hospital
Montrose, New York 10548

CARES COMMISSION

Kevin Konco
President,
A.F.G.E. Local 2440
Montrose Campus, Hudson Valley Health Care System

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I have already given testimony at the Bronx hearings on September 17, 2003 and would like to make this brief statement.

Today is not about Montrose, Canadagua, Waco or the other Veterans Administration Hospitals that are about to be restructured or closed, today is about the care that our veterans will receive tomorrow when these heroes come home from a far off conflict or some other type of horror that may have been inflicted upon them.

As we sit here today the number of wounded and killed in Iraq and other part of the world are mounting. The number of non-combatant and suicides are also on the rise. The morale for the troops abroad is at an all time low or non-existent. How will these soldiers feel when they seek help at the Veterans Administration Hospital near their homes and now learn that they have to travel 25, 50 or more miles away to seek help. This care was promised to them for their duty to our great country.

Where is the duty of this great country to them?

I urge the commission to move slowly and cautiously on any and all plans to restructure or close any of these facilities.

I also urge the president to keep his promise to our troops and keep the Veterans Administration Hospitals opened and fully staffed and to remember that many of the dedicated employees that work at these facilities are veterans themselves.

Thank you
Kevin Konco
Kevin Konco
President,
A.F.G.E. Local 2440