

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2003

Richard E. Larson
Executive Director
CARES Commission
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Larson:

We write to express our thoughts on the CARES Commission's planning initiatives for the VA North Texas Health Care System. Given the significant projected increases in demand for both primary and specialty care over the next two decades, we believe it is critically important to address the gaps between current service capacity and the service capacity that local veterans will require in North Texas by 2012 and 2022.

We strongly support upgrades for medical and psychiatric nursing units in Dallas VAMC. In addition, the initiative that would activate seven VA staffed Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) in the greater Metroplex area between 2005 and 2012 outlines a merited response to the anticipated workload increase. These CBOCs would improve access for patients and alleviate pressure on the increasingly congested facilities in the VA North Texas Health Care System. A clinical expansion for the Dallas VAMC in 2006 is also necessary to close capacity gaps in primary care, specialty care and increased bed days of care.

On behalf of our veteran constituents, we express our appreciation for your ongoing efforts. We believe that the data will support the provision of all necessary resources to meet the needs of our veteran community in this dynamic and growing geographic area.

Sincerely,

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ralph M. Hall
Bill Saxton
John Dingell

Max Baucus
Joe Barton
Nick Burgess