

As Secretary McDonald said, the President has received the Commission on Care report and VA will continue to work with Congress, the Commission, other federal agencies and Veterans organizations as we review each recommendation very closely. The President will release his assessment within 60 days from the release of the report.

Here at the Durham VA Health Care System, we are proud of the changes we have put in place to increase access to and the quality of care for the nearly 70,000 Veterans we serve. We created the Ambulatory Care “Veterans First Clinics” on Saturdays and implemented direct scheduling for routine audiology and optometry appointments so that Veterans no longer have to see their Primary Care physicians prior to scheduling non-emergent ear and eye appointments. We used Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA) funding to hire additional staff, lease new space, and expand our academic affiliations with Duke and Eastern Carolina University.

The Durham VA is also planning a number of construction and renovation projects during the next five years to increase access and improve the patient experience, including expanding our Community Living Center to allow for more single occupancy rooms, as well as expanding several of our operating rooms and our parking garage. We have also proposed the construction of the Raleigh Health Care Center, which would replace and consolidate clinical leases in the Raleigh area and better accommodate the outpatient needs of the rapidly growing Veteran population within the greater Triangle region.

Thank and please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

V/r,

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