

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

April 17, 2015

The Honorable Robert McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

I am writing to ask for your help on an issue in West Virginia that needs immediate attention and more importantly, a quick resolution. The Greenbrier County Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Maxwelton, WV has closed three times since June 2014 for air quality issues. In the past when the clinic has closed, the 2,400 veterans who receive treatment there have had to travel to the Beckley VA Medical Center for care. The distance between the two facilities is 60 miles, but many veterans have to travel much farther.

On Monday, the director of the facility again closed the Greenbrier CBOC for an "undetermined timeframe" because of high levels of formaldehyde in the air. This action was based on air quality testing performed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

I ask for your immediate attention to ensure that there are no long-term effects from these air quality issues on our veterans, family members, or employees. I also request that you review VA resources to find and locate a mobile clinic, or find a temporary space in Greenbrier County until the CBOC can reopen. Our veterans should not be required to travel long distances to obtain necessary health care, and I also encourage you and your staff to make maximum use of all available non-VA options, including the Choice Card.

We must find a permanent solution to this ongoing issue. I am adamant that this health care facility remain in Greenbrier County, but it needs to be a functioning clinic that is not in danger of continuous closings or that potentially threatens the health of our veterans, family members, and employees. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, and I ask that you update me within the next week with a way forward.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator