

Dear Gregory,

June 22, 2015

Thank you for contacting my office regarding veteran access to healthcare. I appreciate hearing from you on this important issue.

I am very pleased that last year Congress passed the bipartisan Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability and Transparency Act, a critical piece of legislation to ensure prompt and accessible medical care for our nation's veterans. This bill addresses a number of shortcomings in the Department of Veterans Affairs medical system, while also affording veterans the choice to seek care outside of the VA if it is not provided in a timely manner. We owe a great debt to our nation's veterans, and I have worked continually to strengthen our programs and services for them and their families.

One provision in particular that I worked to include in this bill aims to greatly enhance health care for New Hampshire's veterans. Specifically, this provision allows New Hampshire veterans who live more than 20 miles from a full service VA hospital to seek care from certain non-VA providers using their Veterans Choice Card issued by the VA. In May, I held a forum in Manchester with officials from the VA to answer questions from New Hampshire veterans regarding the program and to hear about their experiences using the Choice Card. If you are a veteran and would like more information about using your Choice Card for care outside of the VA system, please call the VA hotline at [855-606-8198](tel:855-606-8198) or visit the VA's New England-specific website, which contains information pertinent to New Hampshire, at <http://www.newengland.va.gov/choice/>.

As we seek to improve the Choice Card program, I have also introduced legislation to make the program permanent in New Hampshire, especially given the fact that our state is the only one in the continental U.S. without a full-service VA medical center. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee, please be assured I will continue to work with the VA and Secretary McDonald to ensure these important reforms address unacceptable delays to medical care for our nation's veterans.

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts with me, and please do not hesitate to contact my office with any future concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator