

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2015

Mr. Michael H. Dunfee
Director
Hampton Veterans Affairs Medical Center
100 Emancipation Drive
Hampton, VA 23667

Dear Mr. Dunfee,

We write to you today about our concern for the state of the Veterans Affairs claims backlog at the Hampton VA Medical Center. Of all VA medical centers, Hampton has the fourth-highest percentage of appointment waiting times extending beyond 30 days. Of the 151,300 appointments scheduled between September 1, 2014 and February 28, 2015 7.3 percent failed to meet the VA goal of seeing patients in less than 30 days. The Virginia Beach outpatient clinic fared worse, with 18.3 percent of patients waiting more than 30 days for appointments. This was the nation's second-worst wait time average for a VA outpatient clinic. This is unacceptable. As the Congressional delegation representing nearly 368,000 veterans, we want to ensure our men and women are receiving the benefits to which they are entitled in a timely manner.

We are aware and encouraged by recent announcements of the renovated 1-East Primary Care Suite at the Hampton VA Medical Center, adding 12,000 square feet of clinical care space and 15 exam rooms. We are also looking forward to the opening of the Chesapeake community-based outpatient clinic later this year at 1987 S. Military Highway, offering primary care and mental health services. While planning continues for the 150,000 square foot facility in south Hampton, this is still at least five years away and our veteran needs are growing, as evidenced by the 30.5 percent increase of unique visits to the Hampton VA Medical Center between 2011 and 2014.

Our district staffs continuously meet with veterans who are very concerned about access and timeliness of their VA medical care. We hear it first-hand from veterans and their families in our state and our concerns are compounded by the demonstrated lack of communication our district staff receives from Hampton VA Medical Center officials concerning casework. Our offices are prepared to send you our specific casework inquiries that have received no response.

We are aware and encouraged by recent announcements of plans to add additional building space, but this does not equate to creating more access to doctors and specialists. Nor does it translate to responsiveness to the very people we owe these services to – our veterans.

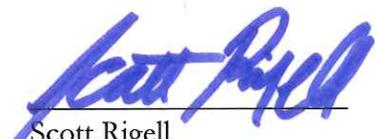
Therefore, we are requesting from you to know what immediate steps are being taken to address these concerns. Specifically, we want to know what measures you are implementing to bring wait times down to the Department's standard. We want a detailed explanation of what is being done to increase responsiveness to patient inquiries from Congressional and Senate offices. Additionally, we want to know the timetable for resolving this.

There is no higher purpose of our government than to protect those who sacrificed to preserve our freedoms. Decisive actions must be taken by you to correct these issues immediately.

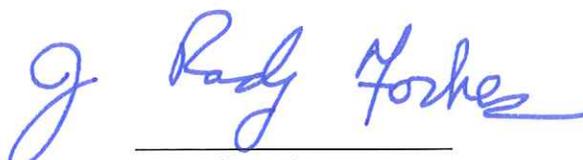
We made a promise to care for our men and women in uniform, and their families, long after their service is complete, and it is our duty to meet those obligations.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Scott Rigell
Member of Congress



J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Rob Wittman
Member of Congress