

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 22, 2019

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Wilkie:

We write to encourage you to expeditiously consider the potential for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to acquire a recently closed 470,000 square foot hospital in Garland, Texas. We understand the hospital is valued at \$400 million and could be donated to VA. As we learned from the behavioral health center in Denton, private entities can help the VA fulfill its mission, if there is a clear path forward and cooperation throughout the donation process. This donation could provide the North Texas Health Care System a unique opportunity to expand its footprint and serve up to an additional 184,000 Veteran enrollees.

With a 3.5 percent annual growth rate, North Texas is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country for Veterans. Yet the reality is that the VA health care system is stretched thin. Even Dallas-Fort Worth community hospitals are operating at full capacity, leaving 40-80 Veterans per day in temporary community care awaiting a bed at a VA facility. The North Texas Health Care System simply must expand to meet this demand.

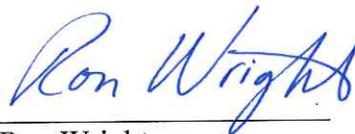
We believe the acquisition of the Garland hospital ultimately could save VA and taxpayers money. We recognize there likely will be costs associated with retrofitting the hospital, but we know the cost to build a similar facility is between \$800 million and \$1 billion. Without a new facility, the ability to care for Veterans in North Texas will present a major challenge in the future.

We are excited about this opportunity for the North Texas Health Care System. It would help it continue its 79-year history of caring for those who have borne the battle and call North Texas home. As VA evaluates and analyzes the potential donation of the hospital, we pledge to work with you and ask that you keep us informed as decisions are made.

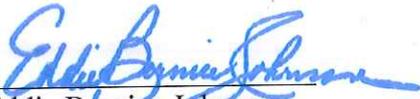
Sincerely,



Colin Allred
Member of Congress



Ron Wright
Member of Congress



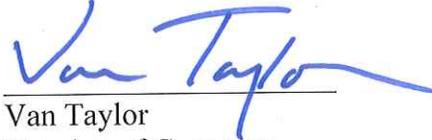
Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Kay Granger
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



Van Taylor
Member of Congress



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Member of Congress