

ANN McLANE KUSTER  
SECOND DISTRICT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

WWW.KUSTER.HOUSE.GOV

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

RANKING MEMBER:

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION & FORESTRY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMODITY EXCHANGES,  
ENERGY, AND CREDIT



## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

July 17, 2017

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
137 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2902  
P: (202) 225-5206

CONCORD OFFICE:  
18 NORTH MAIN STREET, 4TH FLOOR  
CONCORD, NH 03301  
P: (603) 226-1002

NASHUA OFFICE:  
184 MAIN STREET, UNIT 222  
NASHUA, NH 03060  
P: (603) 595-2006

NORTH COUNTRY OFFICE:  
33 MAIN STREET, SUITE 202  
LITTLETON, NH 03561  
P: (603) 444-7700

Dear Chairman Bergman,

On July 16, 2017, the *Boston Globe* released an incredibly concerning report about patient safety and access to quality care of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Manchester, NH. The report was based on a whistleblower complaint filed with the Office of Special Counsel by a group of physicians at the facility. Among the concerns identified by the report were:

- Patient safety concerns with the Spinal Cord Injury/Disease (SCI/D) outpatient unit,
- Sanitation and sterilization concerns with both operating room facilities and available medical supplies,
- Delays in acquiring and installing important medical equipment,
- Ineffective management of the Manchester, NH VAMC by leadership, specifically the Medical Center Director and the Chief of Staff.

The deficiencies of the Manchester VAMC as described by the *Boston Globe* share qualities with many of the national issues currently under consideration by the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations. In recent hearings, we examined the impact of outdated electronic medical records, delays in procurement for important medical equipment, and the budget overruns with VA's current community care programs.

These concerns are especially troubling to me because New Hampshire is the only state, except Alaska and Hawaii, which does not have a full-service medical center. As the *Boston Globe* explained, that means New Hampshire *must* send veterans to private-sector community providers or other VAMCs. Given the realities of veterans' medical care in a state without a full-service facility, we must examine the Manchester VAMC's usage of these critical programs.

Consequently, I respectfully request that the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations hold a field hearing in New Hampshire on the Manchester Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the issues presented by the *Boston Globe*.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Ann McLane Kuster

Ranking Member

House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations