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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

COMMITTEE ON
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INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS
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TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
REPUBLICAN
POLICY COMMITTEE

June 16, 2015

The Honorable Bob McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Mr. Secretary,

I would like to thank you for accepting the President's nomination to serve as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. An Army veteran myself, I know the great efforts you and your team are doing to care for our nation's veterans. I appreciate your willingness to serve and the actions you have already done to reform the broken VA System.

As you are aware, the Alaska VA Healthcare System is facing serious issues as a result of the poor implementation of the Veteran's Access Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 and a shortage of funds in the VA's Purchased Care accounts. Both Governor Bill Walker and Senator Lisa Murkowski have described in great length the issues Alaskan veterans currently face, and I too share their concerns. My staff and I are committed to working with members of the VA, the Congressional Veterans Affairs Committees, and my colleagues in the Alaska Delegation to find solutions to these problems.

To help us find a solution to this crisis, can you please reply with answers to the following questions:

General

What is the VA doing to ensure all Alaskan veterans are able to receive the medical care and other services they need?

What is the VA's plan to ensure this kind of situation does not arise in future fiscal years?

What is required for the VA to fix this problem?

VA Choice Act

What steps are being taken by the VA to ensure a sufficient number of Alaskan health care providers register to provide health care via the VA Choice Program? What obstacles does the VA face in recruiting Alaskan health care providers to register for the VA Choice Program?

What efforts are the VA undertaking to ensure VA Choice Program-eligible veterans in Alaska understand exactly how to use the program?

What is required to ensure the VA Choice Program is successful in Alaska?

VA Purchased Care

Why is the VA Purchased Care account empty in June of 2015, with four months remaining in Fiscal Year 2015?

Why did the President's FY16 budget request not include additional funds for the VA's Purchased Care accounts?

Based on the amount of purchased care funds used in FY15, how much will the VA need for the entirety FY16?

Would the VA support using VA Choice Act funds to fund other purchased care accounts?

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer my questions. I look forward to working with you to ensure all Alaskan veterans are able to receive the quality health care they earned through service to our great nation.

Sincerely,



DON YOUNG
Congressman for All Alaska