Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 18, 2014

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

We are contacting your office to ask again for your focused engagement on the completion of the veterans' clinics in Lake Charles, LA, Lafayette, LA and in 18 other states and territories across the country. For nearly four years, the entire delegation has been unified in our efforts to complete these projects. We have engaged the community, submitted questions at Congressional hearings, spoken with you in person, and submitted numerous letters demanding answers regarding the construction. In our latest efforts, we introduced legislation, S. 1740, in the U.S. Senate, and H.R. 3521, in the House of Representatives. Currently those bills are making their way through the Congressional process.

As you are aware, due to an unexpected change by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in how it estimates the cost of VA clinics around the country, the clinics that were ready to be built were not authorized. We have received commitments that the Veterans Administration will find a solution that allows our veterans to receive the health care they earned. In fact, you have promised several members of our delegation that you were personally committed to expediting the process of building these clinics. In May 2012, you wrote: "I am committed to opening new clinics in both Lake Charles and Lafayette to provide needed services to Louisiana Veterans within the next 2 to 2.5 years."

We urge you to maintain your commitment. Absent these clinics, more than 3,000 South Louisiana veterans must travel in excess of three hours to receive medical care. According to news accounts, some Louisiana veterans go without needed care due to financial hardships and long travel times.

Our staffs have reached out on multiple occasions asking for your support of our pending legislation. Today, we request that you provide us with information related to these clinics – either signaling your support or outlining concerns with the legislation and giving us time to address such concerns. We respectfully request that you submit this letter to us no later than March 1, 2014.

Finally, our entire delegation would like to request a meeting with you and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to discuss the pending House and Senate legislation. The veterans of Louisiana have waited long enough to have access to the quality care we have promised them, and our delegation is ready to take any action necessary to end

these needless delays. Thank you in advance for your quick response, and we look forward to continuing to work with you on behalf of Louisiana's over 300,000 veterans.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator

David Vitter
United States Senator

Charles Boustany
Member of Congress

Steve Scalise
Member of Congress

Bill Cassidy
Member of Congress

John C. Fleming
Member of Congress

Cedric Richmond
Member of Congress

Vance McAllister
Member of Congress