

2/28/2007 Roberts, Brownback and Moran: Locate New Veterans Affairs Clinic in Goodland

Senators Roberts, Brownback and Congressman Moran: Locate New Veterans Affairs Clinic in Goodland

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Senator Pat Roberts, U.S. Senator Sam Brownback and First District U.S. Congressman Jerry Moran today called for a proposed Veterans Affairs outreach clinic to be located in Goodland. The Senators and Congressman sent a letter outlining their support to both Jim Nicholson, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs and James Floyd, Acting Network Director of Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 19.

"The location of a clinic in Goodland is a logical and more important, a local solution to the increasing need for veteran health care services in Western Kansas," Senator Roberts said. "Driving 150 miles to see a doctor is not ideal for anyone, let alone one who has given their service to our nation. I called Secretary Nicholson personally to highlight the many attributes that the community of Goodland has to offer our nations' veterans. He assured me that Goodland would be given full consideration."

Senator Brownback said, "I thank our veterans who have sacrificed so much to ensure that all Americans can enjoy the benefits of living in a free nation. Opening a clinic in Goodland will allow us to provide much needed services to veterans living in rural Kansas. It is important to ensure our veterans have access to the highest quality health care. I am certain that Goodland will offer vital access to health care services for our veterans."

Congressman Jerry Moran said, "Goodland is the right place for this clinic and we are working to make sure the VA recognizes this. The Denver VA officials I hosted during my 2004 Goodland veterans' forum were welcomed by hundreds of veterans, demonstrating the strong community support for a clinic. The VA's commitment to open an outreach clinic in the area is good news for rural veterans and we will continue to advocate a Goodland location during the selection process."

The following is the text of the letter (an identical letter was sent to Acting Director Floyd) dated February 28, 2007:

The Honorable Jim Nicholson

Department of Veterans Affairs

810 Vermont Ave NW

Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Nicholson:

We write regarding the December 2006 announcement of a new Veterans Affairs (VA) outreach clinic in the Eastern Colorado/Western Kansas region and to express our strong support for locating the facility in Goodland, Kansas.

There is a real need for veteran health care services in this rural part of the country. The community of Goodland and the Goodland Regional Medical Center (GRMC), in particular, are committed in their efforts to answer the growing need and lack of access to veterans health care.

Many veterans in this area currently must drive at least 150 miles to the nearest Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Hays, Kansas. Goodland is centrally located for many of these veterans, and it also provides easy access due to its location at the intersection of Interstate 70 and U.S. Highway 27.

The Goodland Regional Medical Center is fully capable of providing a wide range of health care services beyond primary care. The GRMC has a telemedicine infrastructure in place that can be expanded. A fixed wing ambulance service is also available for transporting patients in emergency situations to medical facilities that can provide the appropriate care. However, what is most compelling is that the members of the Goodland community have been steadfast and enthusiastic in their support of providing the care to our nation's veterans. The community's dedication to veterans, coupled with the strategic location and ample medical resources, makes Goodland an ideal location for a VA outreach clinic.

We appreciate your strong support of our nations' veterans and respectfully request that you give the proposal offered by Goodland your full consideration. As members of the Kansas Congressional delegation, we look forward to working with you on this endeavor.