

March 16, 2020

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Wilkie,

We must ensure that we are taking every step possible to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is treating and preventing the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 a pandemic and across our country and the world our brave health care providers and public health officials, including VA providers, are on the frontline both with regard to prevention and treatment.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has put forth guidance that instructs older Americans and those with underlying medical conditions to stay home as much as possible and take precautionary measures. Colorado has more than 400,000 veterans, and many who qualify for an additional level of caution per the CDC's recommendation. This is particularly important as there are already three presumptive cases at the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center in Aurora, Colorado.

We owe our former service members and their families an immeasurable debt, and there is no more important time to remember the solemn responsibility of ensuring they get quality medical care than during a time of national crisis such as this one. With that in mind, I request answers to the following questions:

- What steps is the VA taking to ensure the health and safety of veterans, their families, and your staff during this outbreak?
- How is the VA leveraging telehealth networks to ensure that veterans are able to follow social distancing guidelines and remain in their homes while also receiving the medical care they need?
- What coordination has the VA had with the third-party administrators to ensure care continuity and public health best-practices as veterans receive care in the community?
- Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) play a critical role in veteran outreach and communication. How is the VA coordinating with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, County Veterans Service Officers, and VSOs to ensure veterans their families have the most up-to-date public health best practices?

- How is the VA collaborating with state and federal partners to ensure veterans have access to COVID-19 testing?
- What is the VA containment and contact tracing strategy for when a veteran tests positive in a VA facility?
- Does the VA have a sufficient number of supplies on hand to both treat the immediate and potential projected future need?
- Has the VA run a funding need projection to ensure sufficient levels both now and in the future?

These are critical matters and I appreciate your immediate attention.

Sincerely,



Cory Gardner
United States Senator