

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 4, 2015

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

We write today to follow up on our letter of October 31, 2014, to express our continued interest in the rule making process for Section 101 of P.L. 113-146, the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014.

While we are pleased that the rule making process has proceeded in a timely fashion, we are concerned that the Interim Final Rule established a very narrow interpretation of the geographic-based eligibility criteria with regard to a veteran's residence. Most notably, the 40 mile distance is measured from a veteran's resident to any VA medical facility, even if that facility cannot provide the care that the veteran requires.

Numerous veterans in Northwest Indiana must travel to Chicago to obtain necessary services, even though local non-VA hospital care and medical services are readily available. The intent of this law applies to these veterans, and we urge you again to do your utmost to ensure that the final regulation affords these veterans the benefits they deserve.

Sincerely,



Joe Donnelly
United States Senator



Peter J. Visclosky
Member of Congress