

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3218

August 11, 2015

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

Dear Secretary McDonald:

I write regarding the Veteran Administration's Hudson Valley Healthcare System and possible consolidation of services offered at the Castle Point Campus.

In June 2015, the VA Hudson Valley Healthcare System closed the nursing home unit Heroes' Harbor (Unit B-1) at the Castle Point Campus in an effort to consolidate services. The closure resulted in the transfer of 16 veterans to other VA Hudson Valley Health Care System facilities. Following the closure of Heroes' Harbor, my office received multiple reports of plans to close additional units at the Castle Point Campus, which would transfer more veterans and services to the Montrose facility nearly 30 miles away.

When I raised these reports with Margaret Caplan, Director of the VA Hudson Valley Healthcare System, I was assured that there were no additional plans for closures or further consolidation of services. While I was happy to hear this, later public comments by Jason Tudor, spokesman for the VA Hudson Valley Healthcare System, were not nearly as definitive. When asked by reporters if the VA had plans to close the Castle Point facility, Mr. Tudor said it would be "inappropriate" to speculate, before adding, "we will continue to look for ways to improve efficiencies at both our Castle Point and Montrose campuses".

As you can imagine, the veterans who depend on Castle Point for life-saving services found Mr. Tudor's comments highly distressing. Those veterans and their families, along with the dedicated staff who care for our heroes deserve more certainty in their lives. As you know, VA facilities are more than just buildings and beds -- they are life-lines, communities, and homes for the brave men and women who have already sacrificed so much for our nation. They deserve more.

Frankly, Mr. Secretary, I write to you today in search of definitive answers. I would like to know what if any plans exist to consolidate services in the VA Hudson Valley Healthcare System, and how any "efficiencies" to which Mr. Tudor referred would impact the lives and well-being of the veterans who rely on Castle Point.

I appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress