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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness,
Response, and Communications

Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure
Protection, and Security Technologies

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health,
Global Human Rights, and
International Organizations

Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere

<http://donovan.house.gov>

June 18, 2018

Martina Parauda
Director of VA NY Harbor Health Care System
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
800 Poly Place
Brooklyn, NY 11209

Re: Closures and Issues Plaguing the Brooklyn VA Medical Center

Dear Director Parauda:

I write to express my serious concerns regarding news that the Brooklyn VA Medical Center (VAMC) has closed its Lab facility, plans to shutter its ear, nose, and throat (ENT) Clinic, and that the site has faced staff shortages and broken equipment. Further, due to the lack of communication regarding important announcements, including planned closures and changes in service, I am also inquiring about your long term plans for the Brooklyn VAMC.

Veterans from my district rely on the facility to easily access the quality care, rehabilitation programs, and medical support they not only earned, but deserve. Unfortunately, constant closure threats and termination of certain services has caused hardships for many Staten Island and Brooklyn veterans. Year to year, they worry about having services dwindle or even worse, seeing the facility close completely. Let me be clear, any modification to the Brooklyn facility that limits or changes the services offered to thousands of local veterans will be extremely harmful.

Recent reports have stated that the recent termination of the Brooklyn ENT Clinic was caused by the VA's lack of ability to fill staffing vacancies. No matter the reason, it is unacceptable that the unit will be closed, and it's the VA's responsibility to properly staff and maintain services for veterans in need.

Given past and current issues, I respectfully ask that you or an appropriate representative share with my office answers to the following questions:

- How does the Brooklyn VAMC plan to address staffing vacancies and what can be done to prevent issues like this in the future?
- What immediate steps can be taken to swiftly reopen the Brooklyn VAMC ENT Clinic?
- What steps does the Brooklyn VAMC take to properly alert veterans and elected representatives of closures and changes in service?
- What are the future plans for the Brooklyn VAMC? Additionally, what were the results of the recent evaluation done on the facility?

The Brooklyn VAMC allows veterans from Staten Island and Brooklyn to easily access the quality care and medical services they earned through their heroic service. The brave men and women who have sacrificed to protect the freedoms we enjoy each day deserve to know that they will be taken care of.

Thank you for your time on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel M. Donovan, Jr." in a cursive style.

Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
Member of Congress