

April 5, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to you today expressing our extreme concern with the VA's recommendations to the Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission, as prescribed in Subtitle A of Title II of the VA MISSION Act. The recommendations are overly focused on quantitative data that does not do enough to consider the impact the proposed changes would have on our Veterans, particularly elderly Veterans. We request that when you receive the final recommendations from the AIR Commission you consult our offices on a state by state basis for our feedback before you decide to approve or deny them.

For many elderly Veterans, VA facilities are the only place they seek care. The reasons Veterans often cite are that they are better understood, respected, and cared for at their local VA Medical Center (VAMC). VA facilities often serve as the crux for elderly Veterans' community. Time and time again, we have been told by elderly Veterans that they enjoy visiting their VAMCs. They build networks of friends and VA staff that serve as support groups and keep them connected with their service. In an increasingly digital world, we cannot discount the importance of the human interaction and connection our Veterans find at VA facilities, particularly with in person services.

We have been disappointed and concerned by the VA's lack of assessment of qualitative data and how its recommendations will specifically impact elderly Veterans. Receiving feedback from Congress, local VA staff, and most importantly local Veteran communities must be a crucial step in your assessment of the AIR Commission's final recommendations. Veterans have put their lives on the line to protect this country. They deserve consistent, accessible, quality care when they return. That's the promise we made to these brave men and women when they took their oath to serve, and that's the promise we intend to keep.

We look forward to collaborating with you further on how we can maintain quality care for Veterans across the nation without cutting services or access in our states.