

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

March 26, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Collins:

We write to express serious concerns and demand immediate answers regarding the sudden announcement to close the community-based outpatient clinic in Schenectady, NY, on August 28 and transition veterans to care at other VA facilities in the coming months. Any closure would impact healthcare access for the more than 1,500 veterans who rely on the personal care and relationships they have built at the facility by threatening their continuity of quality care. This sudden plan to shut down the clinic cannot move forward until Capital Region veterans have the answers and assurances that the high-quality, local, and accessible care they need will continue without disruption or inconvenience.

The new plan has raised concerns among the local Capital Region veterans' community. The VA has said that patients based in the Schenectady VA clinic will be redirected to clinics in Albany, Clifton Park, Fonda, or Oneonta. In addition, the Albany VA clinic already receives a higher volume of requests, and local veterans fear being forced to wait months before they can access medical attention. With further drives and longer waits, Capital Region veterans are worried about accessing the same quality of care they are used to and deserve in a timely manner.

Our nation's veterans experience a wide range of health issues due to their military service and other factors, all of which require accessible, high-quality, and continuous care. Some veterans have ongoing relationships with providers at the Schenectady VA clinic dating as far back as 1998. Disruptions and closures can prevent the VA from delivering continuous care to our veterans. The Capital Region veterans' community deserves assurances that their care will not be impeded before any transition can take place. Anything else would be an abdication of responsibility to those who have served our country most honorably.

Please provide answers to the following questions by April 10, 2026:

1. Please provide all studies done to justify the decision to close the Schenectady VA outpatient clinic.
2. How did the VA decide that redirecting veterans to other local clinics would better serve local veterans than maintaining access for these same veterans to the Schenectady clinic?
3. With veterans expected to be redirected to four other clinics across the Capital Region, how will the VA decide which patients will be redirected where?
4. Though the VA has stated it will increase staff and services at the Clifton Park VA clinic, what is the VA's plan to ensure wait times and strained emergency services do not get worse at other remaining clinics which could expect hundreds of new patients?

5. What steps will the VA take to ease this transition for local veterans who may find this disruptive now having to travel far distances for care? Will the VA provide transportation for veterans unable to travel to other clinics?
6. How many veterans will be impacted by the closure of the Schenectady clinic? How many and what types of jobs are expected to be lost?
7. Does the Schenectady clinic provide any specialty care that is not offered at the nearby Clifton Park VA clinic? If so, how does the VA plan on assuring veterans can continue accessing that specialty care?

We firmly believe this plan should not move forward until our local veterans receive assurances that the quality of their care will not be impacted. Local providers and veterans can attest to the importance of the Schenectady VA clinic to the community. Our nation's veterans deserve efficient access to the highest quality of care at VA facilities. We cannot risk disrupting their access to care, and we request an explanation for this decision and answers about the VA's plan. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator