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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4603

February 10, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Collins,

I am proud to represent more than 78,000 veterans in Hampton Roads. These veterans have served honorably and deserve our respect and care. After years of anticipation, the Veterans Affairs (VA) North Battlefield Outpatient Clinic in Chesapeake, Virginia opened last year. This clinic is meant to serve veterans in Hampton Roads more effectively and reduce significant travel times to other VA facilities.

I am inquiring about the staffing progress at the VA North Battlefield Outpatient Clinic in Chesapeake, Virginia. When the North Battlefield Outpatient Clinic first opened on April 17, 2025, with only 150 of the authorized 550 staff, I expressed concern that the clinic would be opening with only 25-30 percent of the staff needed. You have repeatedly stated that the North Battlefield Outpatient Clinic would be fully staffed and operational by January 2026.¹ Unfortunately, as of January 28, 2026, the North Battlefield Clinic has only hired 340 employees, or 62 percent, of the staff required to operate at full capacity.

This lack of focus on adequately staffing VA's clinics and hospitals in Hampton Roads comes after nearly a year of attacks on the federal workforce. In just the first 100 days of this administration, Donald Trump took radical steps to cut services to the VA and institute a hiring freeze across the system. He then further squeezed our federal workforce and fired more than 6,000 veterans from their jobs. On August 7, 2025, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it would terminate collective bargaining agreements for most VA bargaining-unit

¹ Walsh, S. (2025, March 28). *The VA is downplaying the lack of staff at new Chesapeake clinic*. WHRO Public Media; WHRO. <https://www.whro.org/military-veterans/2025-03-28/the-va-is-downplaying-the-lack-of-staff-at-new-chesapeake-clinic>

employees.² I am concerned that further efforts to diminish and reorganize the VA workforce will exert additional strain on the Department and further exacerbate ongoing hiring challenges at the North Battlefield Outpatient Clinic.

Due to these recurring and troubling circumstances, I request responses to the following questions by February 27, 2026:

1. As of today, what are the current staffing levels at the North Battlefield Outpatient Clinic? Please provide this data broken down by service line, with the number of staff currently on board and your authorized caps.
 - a. What is your plan for fully staffing this clinic, and what incentives and authorities are you utilizing to prioritize this hiring to ensure the clinic is fully staffed and operational?
2. As of the date of this letter, which of the 11 services offered for veterans at the North Battlefield Clinic are open and fully operational? For each of these services, please detail the following:
 - a. When the service opened;
 - b. The number of staff currently employed with the service, broken down by occupation;
 - c. How many vacancies, if any, the service has, broken down by occupation;
 - d. The number of veteran appointments that have been scheduled since the service opened and the average wait time for an appointment; and
 - e. If any appointments within the service have been canceled or rescheduled due to staffing shortages since they opened.
3. Do you believe that decisions made by this administration regarding hiring freezes, the termination of collective bargaining agreements, and other personnel actions have made the VA a less attractive place to work? How are the blanket hiring freezes and chaotic firings affecting your ability to staff the North Battlefield Outpatient Clinic and surrounding VA facilities? Has the VA done any assessments as to why it has been so difficult to staff this facility? How many job offers have you rescinded since the opening of this clinic? If any, please break down these offers by service line, occupation, job title, and offer status (tentative or firm).
4. How do you expect to retain current staff and fill the remaining positions at the North Battlefield Outpatient Clinic to reach full staffing capacity in light of the reports that 35,000 health care positions in the VA are slated to be eliminated?³

² U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2025, August 6). *VA terminates union contracts for most bargaining-unit employees*. VA News. <https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-terminates-union-contracts-for-most-bargaining-unit-employees/>

³ Kornfield, M., Natanson, H., & Rein, L. (2025, December 13). *VA plans to abruptly eliminate tens of thousands of unfilled health care jobs*. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/12/13/va-veterans-affairs-job-cuts-trump/?_pml=1

- a. Have any vacancies for positions at the North Battlefield Outpatient Clinic been removed as a result of the elimination of these health care positions?

Our veterans put their lives on the line, and they are entitled to quality health care. I urge your prompt attention to this request for full staffing information on the North Battlefield Outpatient VA Clinic and look forward to your detailed response.

Very truly yours,



ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Member of Congress