

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2004**

May 19, 2021

The Honorable Robert McDonough  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough:

Thank you for your service to America's veterans, their caregivers, and families. It has come to our attention that the Department is now developing national practice standards for its health care practitioners, as outlined in Authority of VA Professionals to Practice Health Care (38 CFR 17.419). Knowing the significant impact these new standards could have on veteran access to care, we are writing to gain further insight into VA's planned process and goals.

We applaud VA's persistent pursuit to improve healthcare quality and access for all our nation's Veterans. We also recognize that the VA's efforts to standardize clinical processes through uniform standards of practice for each health care specialty are part of those pursuits. However, we are concerned to hear from several concerned practitioners that veterans could experience a VA-induced shortage of available practitioners if the VA adopts overly restrictive standards, limiting access to needed treatments.

Ensuring improved veteran access to care is an ongoing priority for Congress. Veteran access to care could be significantly impacted by the level of care VA includes or fails to include in national practice standards for various practitioner types with differing states scopes of practice. It is critical that as new standards are aligned, VA considers the potential for delayed care and consequently decreased access and level of health care for VA beneficiaries due to impacts from increasing restrictions on the scope of practice for each provider type.

As the Department continues working to develop these national practice standards, we urge you to engage with medical practitioners who treat our Veterans. We also request that the VA provide more information regarding the planned timeline and process for development, how VA intends to engage stakeholders, including Veteran Service Organizations and practitioners, and how the Department plans to address the issue of ensuring veteran access to care as national practice standards are created for various provider types with differing state scopes of practice.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your service to America's veterans, caregivers, and families.

Sincerely,



Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress



Susie Lee  
Member of Congress