

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 29, 2021

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough:

Congratulations on your recent confirmation to become our nation's 11th Secretary of Veterans Affairs. We thank you for your willingness to serve and support the men and women who have defended our nation in uniform.

We write concerning an urgent matter affecting some of our nation's most vulnerable veterans. Following unanticipated changes in the processing and treatment of domiciliary care claims by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), many veterans with early-stage dementia, who for nearly 20 years had been ruled eligible for per diem payments for care in State Veterans Homes, began to be deemed ineligible for care and denied per diem. In light of the severe impact on this group of veterans, your predecessor provided limited equitable relief for many veterans who would have previously been deemed eligible for this benefit.

In December 2020, Congress unanimously passed, and the President signed into law, the provisions of the *State Veterans Homes Domiciliary Care Flexibility Act*. This legislation provides VA with the flexibility to waive certain eligibility requirements for domiciliary care for veterans with early-stage dementia when in the veteran's best interest. This congressionally-granted flexibility, provided in Section 3007 of Public Law 116-315, is intended to ensure that this vulnerable group does not fall through the cracks.

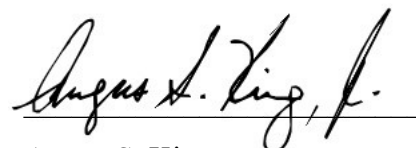
We urge you to implement immediately and delegate this waiver authority to regional Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN) and local VA hospital systems so that newly eligible veterans may begin to receive the care they so desperately need. We respectfully request that you expedite this implementation, and we ask that you provide us with an update on VA's efforts to do so.

Again, thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or have your staff contact our respective offices.

Sincerely,



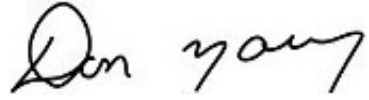
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