



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

December 14, 2004

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Waxman:

I am responding to your letters regarding the scope, organization, and membership of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) for the West Los Angeles campus. You also wrote forwarding the names of individuals interested in serving on the advisory committee. Please accept my apology for the delay in responding.

I appreciate your concerns and the intense interest in the master plan for the West Los Angeles campus. Establishing a FAC for this study will ensure that all parties' opinions are heard and taken into account.

I also appreciate your complimentary comments regarding my appointment of Mr. Harry Corre and Ms. Flora Gil Krisiloff to the committee for the CARES feasibility study. Enclosed is a fact sheet providing details related to the process that will be used for the upcoming feasibility studies.

VA recognizes the importance of this matter to you as well as to Senators Feinstein and Boxer. There will be combined briefings for your offices at key steps in the process. These briefings, in addition to the public advisory meetings, will keep you fully apprised and provide additional opportunity to participate in the study process.

I am forwarding the names of Supervisor Yaroslavsky, Councilwoman Miscikowski, Laura Shell, Administrative Vice Chancellor Blackman, and other constituents who have expressed interest to the Veterans Integrated Service Network 22 to ensure they receive information and notifications of public meetings and other opportunities to participate in the process.

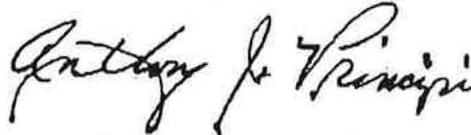
As always, I appreciate your concerns and recognize the importance of ensuring that this is an open and fair process for all stakeholders. The credibility and validity of the study depends on it.

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The Honorable Henry A. Waxman

Should you or your staff have any further questions or concerns, please have them contact Ms. Kathleen Sullivan, Congressional Relations Officer, Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, at 202-273-5615.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Anthony J. Principi in cursive script.

Anthony J. Principi

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)
West Los Angeles CARES Feasibility Study Fact Sheet

The fact sheet furnishes Representative Henry Waxman with additional details concerning the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) for the West Los Angeles campus.

Committee Scope

The scope of the advisory committee reflects the parameters of the master plan and is limited to the development of the capital plan for the campus and not the future management of the facilities. Specifically, the CARES plan for West Los Angeles does not address any patient care or health care delivery issues identified for further study. What the feasibility study will address is the need to replace or renovate buildings on the campus and the potential for developing a better footprint that maximizes an appropriate reuse of underutilized portions of the campus.

Committee Composition

The composition of the committee reflects a balance of interests necessary to provide well developed recommendations to the contractor and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Ultimately, the Secretary will issue a decision. In order to be effective there must be a limit to the number of committee members. The FAC is an appropriate mechanism for soliciting public input and discussion through public meetings, submission of information, position papers, statements, and other input from all stakeholders. The CARES business plan contractor is required to gather and consider this information and provide it to the advisory committee. This ensures that the public comments are analyzed and considered by both the FAC and the consultant.

Business Study Contractor

The selected contractor will have the appropriate skills to provide the best technical advice for master plan options including long-term land use plans as well as the capital requirements for delivering health care services. In addition, the contractor will be responsible for supporting the advisory committee logistically and seeking input from the advisory committee and the public through a variety of means including public meetings. The contractor will consider and forward advisory committee recommendations and input from the public that were received in formulating the options to be developed into master plan proposals. Subsequent to the Secretary's decision, the contractor will seek the same input regarding which of the options developed are recommended for approval. The contractor will include the advisory committee recommendations and other public input for both decisions.

Advisory Committee Requirements

The advisory committee is technically a subcommittee of a single federal chartered federal advisory committee and will operate under all of the requirements of the FAC Act. These requirements have been communicated to the Veterans Integrated Service Networks and several training sessions will be held to ensure that all requirements of the Act are clearly understood. Mr. Jay Halpern, the Federal Advisory Committee Designated Officer, VA Central Office, and a local designee from the VA advisory committee will serve to ensure these requirements are met.

December 2004