



**THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON**

January 15, 2026

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for your November 13, 2025, letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) about wait times for new patient mental health appointments at VA medical facilities in Connecticut.

VA reviewed the mental health wait times that you raised as a concern. Currently, the wait time for the VA Connecticut Healthcare System (VACHS) is 32.1 days, while the national average is 33.5 days. However, the wait times for new appointments in New London, Waterbury, and Danbury (93.8, 40, and 55 days, respectively) are outside acceptable ranges. To address the challenges in New London, Waterbury, and Danbury, VA offers in-person, VA Video Connect, telephone appointments, and referrals to community providers and is also recruiting staff.

In contrast to New London, Waterbury, and Danbury, clinics in Winsted and Stamford have 16-day wait times. Some clinics are affected by unique circumstances. For instance, the wait times for the Orange VA clinic reflect eight Veterans who are scheduled to see a psychologist within our MOVE! Weight Management Program for Veterans Clinic. MOVE! is the national VA weight management and health promotion program. Although MOVE! is not a mental health program, VA has a health psychologist who assists and provides comprehensive lifestyle interventions. VA is collaborating with clinical practice management experts to ensure proper clinic structure for optimal functionality and reallocating staff to improve capacity in the MOVE! Clinic.

However, thanks to the work of Congress over the past several years, such as the Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act, Veterans facing high wait times are also eligible for access to care in the community. Many Veterans seeking mental health care have been able to access that care through the community care network with widespread success. I look forward to working with you and the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs to continue building on this success, expanding availability in the community care network, and streamlining the referral process.

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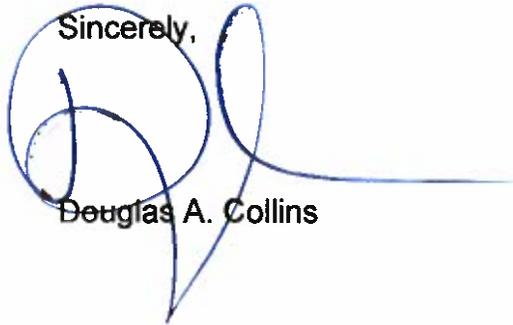
The Honorable Richard Blumenthal

Further, across Connecticut and the Nation, there is ongoing recruitment for vacant positions and staff reassignments to meet needs – especially in mental health. VA Connecticut has a robust telehealth program, offering access across all sites of care, including same-day access for anyone experiencing a mental health emergency. We are further supported by the Clinical Resource Hub, centered at VA Connecticut, for additional mental health support. VA trains schedulers to offer all appointment modalities (in-person, VA Video Connect, telephone, community care) across all campuses with availability to maximize Veteran access.

VA will continue to make data-driven decisions to optimize care for Veterans. We are committed to remaining focused on continuous process improvement and providing world class care for our Veterans.

Thank you for your continued support of the Nation's Veterans.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. Collins

Cc: The Honorable Jerry Moran