

SCOTT DESJARLAIS, M.D.

4TH DISTRICT, TENNESSEE

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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-4204

March 9, 2026

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The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Secretary Collins,

I write to you today to express my concern over the announcement of the closure of the McMinnville, TN VA Outpatient Clinic in my district.

Tennessee's Fourth Congressional District is home to over 46,000 veterans. Most of my district is rural, and the closure of the McMinnville VA Clinic will force many veterans in our area to commute more than an hour and a half to access the essential health care services provided to them by the VA.

Secretary Collins, it has been evident that you are committed to your pledge to improve VA services and ensure that every veteran receives the high-quality care they deserve. After visiting hospitals in the VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System, you yourself noted that "Providing this level of care across the department requires a workforce that can meet veterans' growing needs. That's why VA aligns staffing with evolving needs to ensure we are best positioned to serve veterans – now, and in the future. And our commitment goes beyond staffing; it extends to resources, innovations, and systems that position VA to be a leader in health care."¹ I applaud the work your administration has done to improve patient outcomes. However, I am extremely disappointed and concerned about how the VA has handled the closing of this rural healthcare clinic.

My office received no notice prior to the public disclosure that this facility was experiencing staffing shortages or that these shortages would lead to the shuttering of this important VA Outpatient Clinic in my district. Leaders at the McMinnville VA Clinic did not consult with or inform my staff or myself about the challenges facing this clinic, and the answers they gave as to why this was happening and the information they have provided to the community have been woefully inadequate. If we had been given advance notice and included in these discussions, our office could have assisted in finding appropriate solutions and resources for those who rely on the VA and the care provided to them by the McMinnville VA Clinic.

¹ <https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/contributors/2025/03/26/veterans-affairs-secretary-doug-collins-tennessee-valley/82651163007/>

The rollout of this announcement has left those who utilize this clinic with more questions than answers. Many constituents in my district have reached out to express their concerns about this closure, not knowing how to prepare for this event, and worried that they will be left without vital health care services.

It is imperative that we work together to quickly find adequate healthcare options and solutions for our Nation's heroes and their families. As a doctor who has worked at VA facilities, I have seen firsthand how important these Medical Outpatient Clinics are for our veterans and their families in rural and underserved communities.

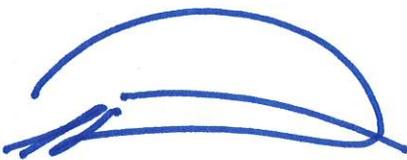
I request that you provide answers to the following questions by Wednesday, March 11, 2026.

Questions for the United States Department of Veterans Affairs:

- When did discussions surrounding the closure of the McMinnville VA Outpatient clinic first begin?
- Were any local, state, or federally elected leaders involved in the discussion surrounding the closure of the McMinnville VA clinic? If no, why not?
- What is the official closure date of the clinic?
- What is the plan to provide healthcare to those who utilize the clinic without requiring them to drive long distances to receive services from the VA?

I am gravely concerned for my district's veterans and eagerly await your response. I look forward to working together to find a commonsense solution that does not disrupt the quality or efficiency of care for those who receive services at the McMinnville VA Clinic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, sweeping arch over a series of horizontal strokes.

Scott DesJarlais, M.D.
Member of Congress