Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 16, 2013

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

We write to express our deepening concern regarding the construction of the new stand-alone U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) replacement medical center in Aurora, Colorado. We know you are committed to this critical project that will provide high quality care to the over 700,000 veterans in the Rocky Mountain region. However, we continue to hear about unacceptable project cost overruns and delayed payments to subcontractors that must be addressed immediately.

In our previous letter, dated May 30, 2013, we outlined a number of concerns about this project and requested a site visit with senior representatives from both the VA and the lead contractors. Although we have worked closely with VA officials over the last several months, our most pressing questions remain unanswered, and our concerns continue to grow regarding the management of the payment process to sub-contractors. For example, in a conference call on August 15, 2013, delegation staff requested an update on how much of the $23 million in unprocessed change orders remains to be processed, and the VA has yet to provide this information. Now, due to payment delays, local businesses and subcontractors on this project are failing or are in danger of failing. With Coloradans' livelihoods on the line, we cannot accept further delays in the processing of change order requests and payments to companies who have completed work in good faith and in some cases within the scope of the project.

We request a meeting with senior representatives from the VA for an in-depth discussion of ongoing issues. Specifically, we would like to discuss the VA's plan for paying subcontractors for work completed and what will be done to prevent subcontractor non-payment issues from arising in the future. We would like to meet as soon as possible in Washington, D.C.

We are eager to continue working with you to ensure completion of the replacement medical center on schedule so the VA can provide the high quality care our veterans deserve.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Mark Udall
United States Senator

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