

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 27, 2005

The Honorable James Nicholson  
Secretary  
United States Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary,

As Members of Congress from New York, we write to urge you to keep the New York campus of the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System (Manhattan VA Hospital) open. This hospital provides easy access to patients from around the New York Metropolitan area, and it is the only tertiary care facility for numerous high technology services in a 100-mile radius.

The Manhattan VA Hospital has received an unprecedented six designations by the VA for Centers of Excellence in cardiac surgery, cardiovascular surgery, HIV/AIDS, dialysis, rehabilitation medicine and neurosurgery. The VA has cited the hospital as the premier hospital for cardiac surgery outcomes in the country. The indisputably high quality of care provided by the Manhattan VA Hospital is partially the result of its strong ties to premier medical establishments such as the NYU School of Medicine, NYU Medical Center and Bellevue Medical Center. The fine medical specialists who treat veterans because of these affiliations will no longer be available if services are consolidated in a distant location. Furthermore, the commute to another hospital would be too difficult for many veterans, particularly the disabled, causing them to delay or forego necessary medical treatment. Accordingly, any transfer of services from the Manhattan VA Hospital would be detrimental to thousands of patients from all around the New York City area, especially for tertiary care services.

The VA should not be considering consolidating services or closing either the Manhattan or Brooklyn facilities. Rather, the goal should be to strengthen the care provided at *both* hospitals so that health services for New York's veterans are better and *more* available, not harder to reach, with reduced access to some of the country's best medical facilities.

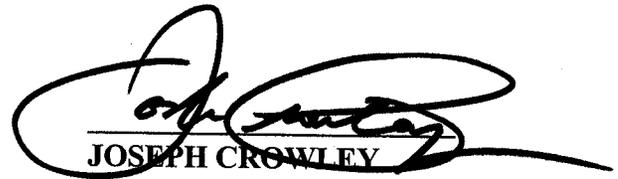
To ensure our area veterans will continue to receive the best care available, we oppose any effort to close or reduce services at the Manhattan VA Hospital. We cannot forget the veterans who helped to make this country what it is today and who have brought peace to other nations across the globe. While servicemen and servicewomen bravely fight for the principles upon which the United States was founded, we at home must not turn our backs on veterans who should have access to the quality health care that they need and deserve.

Sincerely,

  
CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress

  
CHARLES B. RANGEL  
Member of Congress

  
JERROLD NADLER  
Member of Congress

  
JOSEPH CROWLEY  
Member of Congress

  
NITA LOWEY  
Member of Congress

  
JOSÉ SERRANO  
Member of Congress

  
ANTHONY WEINER  
Member of Congress

  
CAROLYN McCARTHY  
Member of Congress