



RESOLUTION NO. 2022-18

CITY OF RATON, NEW MEXICO

SUPPORT OF VETERANS' OUTPATIENT CLINIC IN RATON, NEW MEXICO

WHEREAS, the Raton Veterans' outpatient clinic provides primary care and specialty health services, including cardiology, laboratory and pathology services, and more; and

WHEREAS, the approximately 19,300,000 veterans of the United States are a diverse group of individuals including older veterans with diseases associated with aging and disabilities associated with past wars which require frequent care and younger veterans with complex conditions related to improved battlefield medical care, and as a group contain a higher percentage of seriously wounded individuals needing complex lifelong physical and mental health care, which differs greatly from the patient mix cared for by most non-VA providers; and

WHEREAS, over 9,300,000 veterans are enrolled in the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and of this number 7,100,000 actually use the health care system for all or part of their care, which is an increase of 82 percent since 2001, showing the massive, growing need for care furnished by the VA; and

WHEREAS, the RAND Corporation examined a decade of research and found that VA-provided care is equal to or better quality than private-sector care in all forty-seven quality-of-care measurements it conducted as part of an independent assessment comparing VA outpatient care with comparable civilian facilities; and

WHEREAS, the RAND Corporation's Ready to Serve national study found that compared to non-VA mental health providers, VA mental health providers were significantly more likely to deliver both culturally competent care, which is important for engaging veterans and increasing access to care, as well as evidenced-based care that yields a clinically meaningful and significant improvement of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and major depression; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs is better equipped than most non-VA providers to coordinate complex veteran care and provide continuity of resources for veterans, an increasing number of veterans are being sent into the private sector each year, first pursuant to the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146) and now pursuant to the VA MISSION Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-182); and

WHEREAS, mental health services, including suicide prevention, are of paramount importance; and

WHEREAS, according to a bipartisan survey by Lake Research and Chesapeake Beach Consulting, 80 percent of veterans polled oppose turning health care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs into a system of private sector vouchers that may not adequately cover costs; and

WHEREAS, a Veterans of Foreign Wars survey found that 92 percent of veterans believe working to fix the VA, rather than dismantling it, is the best way to improve the care provided to America's veterans; and

WHEREAS, one of the top priorities should be the expansion of care for the more than 4,700,000 rural veterans by using rural clinics, VA mobile clinics, and telemedicine under the supervision of each veteran's primary VA doctor; and

WHEREAS, 144,977 veterans (8.8% of the total population according to the 2020 U.S. Census) live in New Mexico, making it the 9th highest concentration of veterans per capita in the U.S. Also, according to the VA recommendation to the Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission, 51% of New Mexico's veterans live in rural communities, compared to the VA national average of 32.5%; and

WHEREAS, 12.7% of the population in Colfax County are veterans and state-wide 51.7% of veterans are over 65.

NOW THEREFORE, Be it Resolved that support keeping the promise to all US Veterans that we will be here for them as they were there for us.

NOW THEREFORE, Be it further Resolved the Raton City Commission specifically supports the continued operation of the Veterans' Clinic in Raton, including providing sufficient funding and staffing to provide timely access to the high quality of healthcare our veterans deserve.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 12th DAY OF APRIL, 2022.

CITY OF RATON

James Neil Segotta Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:

Michael Anne Antonucci, City Clerk