

VIA EMAIL TO FRANK CRISTINZIO AND ANDRE COLEMAN

November 24, 2010

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
United States Senate
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ben Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Walter Reed National Naval Medical Center

Dear Senator Mikulski and Senator Cardin:

On behalf of the thousands of citizens, businesses and employees we represent throughout the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase area and Montgomery County, thank you and your staff for all that you're doing on our behalf. We appreciate the time that Frank Cristinzio, Jahantab Siddiqui, Andre Coleman, and Ken Reichard spent yesterday in meeting with us to explain the current status of federal funding for the Walter Reed National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda.

We walked away with a much better understanding of the situation and an even larger concern that we are now in a "make or break" situation. If in the next few weeks we don't receive the federal funding you once promised, one year from now and in the years to come, areawide gridlock will compromise the new Walter Reed's mission to serve warriors and their families who have sacrificed so much to protect us.

We understand that Congressman Van Hollen and members in the House are working diligently to get the funding package to the Senate. We look forward to partnering with you to convince your colleagues in the Senate that this national priority is reflected in your allocation of funds and that Congress will do the hard work necessary to pass the omnibus appropriations bill before adjournment.

We realize that in a time where fiscal discipline is tantamount, money to support the new Walter Reed is difficult to secure. However, fiscal restraint is a short-sighted consideration in this case. We know that you will help convince your colleagues to consider the following:

- Constituents from every district in the country are served by this facility and benefit from its success.
- The additional infrastructure investment contributes to the success of the new Walter Reed. Tax payers have made an enormous investment totaling over \$1.5 billion for the new Walter Reed in the name of efficiency and cost savings and the care and recovery of those wounded in war. Failure to provide the funding for access to the base will mean that this is not the world class facility we are looking to create.

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- Addressing the mobility needs outside of the hospital's gates is the necessary follow through to do the job right and to make the new Walter Reed work. It is money well spent.

This BRAC is unique in many ways, not the least of which is that it involves a major expansion in a severely congested urban metro area. While BRAC expansions typically bring new economic development to an area, this is not the case here where the current hospital is a mere six miles away. This is all the more reason to mitigate what will be a tremendous strain on the system. As the Washington area has grown, traffic from suburbs and exurbs traveling in and around the metro area has increased. It is important to note that the *worst point of congestion in the metro area is immediately north of the site* of the nation's premier military medical facility, which we are all working so hard to enhance. Gridlock is a common occurrence at most times during the day and will surely have an impact on operations at the facility in terms of loss of productivity and stress and anxiety created for patients and visitors trying to access the hospital for appointments and to be with loved ones.

With a mix of state and county roads, Metro, and federal installations all operating within the same vicinity, the task of creating a coordinated and thoughtful strategy has been daunting. Real progress has been made but we lack the resources to get the job done. We look to you and your colleagues to find the funding mechanisms to finish the job you started a year ago. Without access to the base for patients, visitors and staff, the tremendous investment by the Department of Defense will be lost and our wounded warriors – coming from every state in this country - will be the ones who ultimately pay the price.

We appreciate your leadership and again offer our assistance in helping to secure the funding necessary for the future of Walter Reed.

Sincerely,

Patrick L. O'Neil, Chairman, The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
Ginanne M. Italiano, President, The Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Association and Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors
Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village HOA and Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors
Ed Krauze, Parkview Neighborhood Association
George Milne, The Stone Ridge School
Seth Maiman, Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board
Bailey Condrey, Jr., Parkwood Citizens Association
Susan Buffone, Office of Councilmember Roger Berliner

cc:

The Honorable Christopher Van Hollen, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Anthony Brown, Lt. Governor, State of Maryland
The Honorable Ike Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
The Honorable Roger Berliner, District 1 Councilmember
John Carman, Chairman, Bethesda BRAC Implementation Committee