

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 20, 2018

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Wilkie,

We would like to convey our strong support for the application submitted by Oklahoma State University (OSU) to the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to be accepted as a participant in the VA's CHIP-IN Program. The proposal as presented in the application would provide, through a true public-private partnership, greater access to and increased quality of needed medical care to the over 115,000 veterans in the Northeast Oklahoma Veterans Affairs service area. We also appreciate that the CHIP-IN program creates an investment by our community and the VA to provide veterans with the access to the healthcare needs of their choice without growing the VA bureaucracy.

OSU's proposal would provide a much needed new, state-of-the-art veteran's hospital facility in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This would allow better access for veterans and their families and, in collaboration with the OSU Medical Center, provide increased medical services and improved quality of care. Of the over 115,000 veterans in the northeast region of Oklahoma, 68,000 are not readily served by a nearby VA hospital who would be well served by a new hospital in Tulsa. Further, 47,000 additional veterans in the Tulsa area would be served by this facility. Additionally, this new facility would reduce travel by approximately 1.6 million miles annually for veterans and their loved ones, reducing the amount of taxpayers money currently spent on reimbursements for VA's Beneficiary Travel program.

In terms of care, the new hospital would benefit tremendously by its geographic proximity to and partnership with the OSU Medical Center. OSU, as a teaching university hospital, will have the capability to add 50 medical residents to the new VA Hospital. As a result, wait times will decrease for veterans to receive needed medical care and medical treatment will be more progressive. A VA hospital in Tulsa near the OSU Medical Center, one of the largest in the country, means new facilities that can benefit from shared resources like catheterization labs and other diagnostics already located at the university's medical center, as well as the potential to recruit and retain a higher level of physician specialists. More residents and prestigious physician specialists mean higher quality medical treatment with shorter wait times.

OSU, in partnership with the State of Oklahoma, the City of Tulsa, The Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation, and other private benefactors, has put forward a solid proposal for participation in the VA CHIP-IN Program. This proposal represents a true public-private partnership that will have the ability to accelerate the process of construction, by potentially building the hospital in less than one-third of the typical VA schedule, direct proper site selection, and ensure the highest quality of medical care for Oklahoma veterans in need.

Letter to VA Secretary Wilkie re Tulsa VA Hospital
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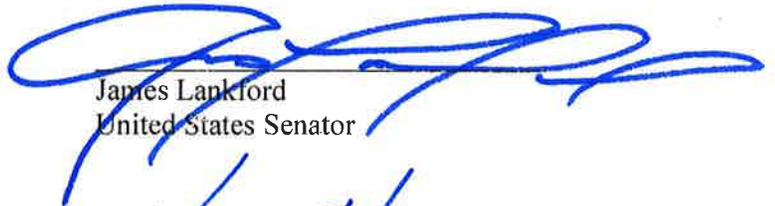
We also believe that this could create a great opportunity to expand the behavioral health and substance abuse mission at the Muskogee facility. Behavioral health will only continue to grow as a vital health service to our veterans and Muskogee could serve as a regional center of excellence for this growing population.

We enthusiastically support OSU's application and ask that it receive strong consideration in your decision-making process. Should you or any member of your staff have any questions at all, please contact Adrienne Jackson, of Senator Inhofe's staff, at 202-224-1615 or adrienne_jackson@inhofe.senate.gov.

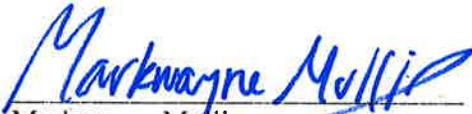
Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



Markwayne Mullin
Member of Congress



Kevin Hern
Member of Congress

CC:
Anthony Costa
Acting Executive Director
Office of Construction and Facilities Management