

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2023

Dr. Lester Martinez-Lopez
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health
Affairs
Defense for Health Affairs
1200 Defense, Pentagon, Room 3E1070
Washington, DC 20301

Major General Telita Crosland
Director
Defense Health Agency
7700 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 5101
Falls Church, VA 22042-5101

Dear Assistant Secretary Martinez-Lopez and Major General Crosland:

We write to you today to express our serious concerns regarding medical support at Cannon Air Force Base (AFB), an Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) installation located near Clovis, New Mexico. Cannon AFB hosts the Air Force's second largest special operations wing and boast very favorable air space and year-round flying conditions that ensure the highest level of training for our Airmen. However, limited access to critical medical care and services in this remote location significantly impacts personnel, their families, and their missions.

We, therefore, request the Defense Health Agency (DHA) to utilize the tools at your disposal to place highly-needed medical specialty providers at Cannon AFB. In particular, the need for pediatric psychiatrists, dermatologists, and gastroenterologists has resulted in many families driving four to five hours to receive care at regional medical centers in Albuquerque, Lubbock and Amarillo. DHA has the resources to alleviate this problem through personnel manning or contracting at the on-base hospital. We respectfully request that you do a comprehensive review to identify any barriers to timely civilian hiring, manning assistance, and contract funding, and provide a briefing to our offices on your findings.

Our concerns stem from reports indicating that 19% of all dependents and a staggering 44% of pediatric dependents with special medical needs cannot receive the medical care they need should their family be stationed at Cannon AFB. In addition, basic pharmacy services are not readily accessible, requiring our beneficiaries to drive thirty minutes or more. Consequently, the Air Force also reports that there is an estimated annual loss of 25,000 duty days and an expenditure of approximately \$750,000 in travel reimbursements due to the limited availability of care in the local area. We understand that the DHA and Air Force cannot rectify this situation on its own which is why we are working with the State of New Mexico to identify ways the state can also help sponsor graduate medication education in the Clovis area or incentivize medical personnel to reside near Clovis.

We appreciate your leadership and commitment to providing ready, reliable care to our service members and their families. We are confident that with your assistance, we can find effective solutions to meet the healthcare needs at Cannon AFB.

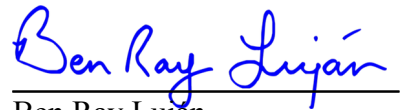
We look forward to your timely response and stand ready to work with you to address these critical issues.

Thank you for your service and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



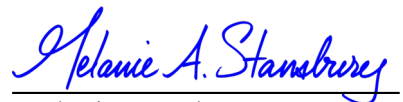
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



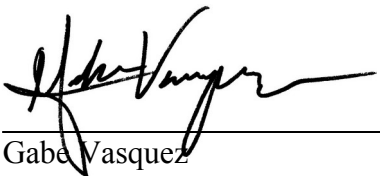
Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress