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September 11, 2023

Commissioner James McDonald
Department of Health
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza,
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Commissioner McDonald,

Thank you for your service in the US Navy.

Assemblyman Blankenbush and I wrote a letter to the Governor in 2021 to address a specific and dire need in the North Country. While I do appreciate the administration finally acknowledging the correspondence: your response is unacceptable.

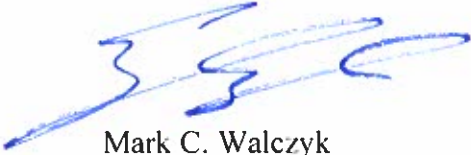
We specifically asked what the Governor is doing to address the need for a Veterans Home in Northern New York.

August 29th, you responded by saying that the administration is addressing our concerns by securing funding in this year's budget to help the facilities in Batavia, Oxford, Montrose and Queens.

Sailors, Soldiers, and Marines who served their country honorably are in high concentration in the North Country but not all are as fortunate as you are. They need our help. Commissioner, there's 20,000 veterans in St. Lawrence and Jefferson County alone. The vouchers your department provides are completely inadequate in making any difference for our retired service members and your closest Veterans Home can be up to 4 hours away for some of them.

On their behalf, I formally request your department build a Veterans Home in a logical location in Northern New York. I further request you educate the Governor on the reasons this is necessary and appropriate so that she may include funding in her proposed 2024/2025 budget. Finally, please keep my office informed of any progress.

Very Respectfully,



Mark C. Walczyk
Senator
New York SD-49

MCW/ogp

CC: Governor Kathy Hochul
Commissioner Viviana DeCohen
Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush