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April 18, 2007

Major General Daniel J. Darnell
Director of Legislative Liaison
Department of the Air Force
1160 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1160

Dear Major General Darnell:

I am writing to express to you my concerns regarding plans to cut staffing levels at the Hanscom Air Force Base medical health clinic in Bedford, Massachusetts.

It has come to my attention that the Air Force is proposing to downsize this clinic and limit services to only active duty personnel. I am very concerned that this will result in thousands of retirees and dependents of active duty members being barred from accessing military health care at the base. As you know, the Hanscom Clinic is the only major military medical facility within Massachusetts. Those retirees and family members that would be shut out of the clinic will now have to drive out of state to access health care at a military facility.

The decision to restrict access to health care at Hanscom will also have a detrimental effect on the medical readiness of both Army and Air National Guard troops being deployed in 2007 and 2008, as well as those soldiers returning from deployments who may need to make use of the clinic's services after deactivation. The sacrifices that our National Guard and Reserve soldiers have made and will continue to make in support of their duty to America are well documented. We should be expanding access to military medical services, not restricting access based on budgetary concerns.

With this in mind, I am writing to urge the Air Force to cease any planning to cut services at Hanscom Air Force Base's medical clinic and to work with members of the Massachusetts delegation to expand access to health care for our military. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and I look forward to your reply to me at 1250 Hancock Street, Suite 802N, Quincy, MA 02169.

Sincerely,


William D. Delahunt