



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**VA Connecticut Healthcare System**  
**950 Campbell Avenue**  
**West Haven CT 06516**

*JUL 29 2008*

In Reply Refer To:

689/00

Honorable Susan Bysiewicz  
Secretary of State  
State Capitol  
210 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Secretary Bysiewicz,

I am writing in response to your letter of July 18, 2008. I had thought that our letter to you of the same date had provided a cooperative approach to the questions surrounding voter registration, and we regret your disappointment.

Let me restate the efforts being made with regards to voter information and assistance in the hope of resolving your concerns.

In outpatient areas, we are posting the attached general flyer (A) on the location of Voter Information and Registration materials, as well as your 1-800 Voter Information contact number. At the patient education area, we have the voter registration form (B) and voter registration office locations (C) that we downloaded from your website. We are providing similar voter information packages, including registration forms, at all of our outpatient locations.

For inpatients and residents, we are giving them the following informational flyer on admission as to who they can contact for voter information and assistance (D). By calling the number, they will contact the VA Voluntary Service who has volunteers trained to provide voter information and assistance, including voter registration, and support in doing absentee ballots.

To ensure all existing inpatients and residents have this information, on Monday July 28<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday July 29<sup>th</sup> we have contacted every inpatient and resident to provide this information and assistance as needed, what I consider a blitz. We currently have approximately 10 residents of a program on the Newington Campus, 6 residents of a program near the West Haven Campus, and 176 inpatients and residents at the West Haven Campus.

While all inpatients and residents should have been provided the information already, to ensure no one is missed, between 14-21 days before the election we will again contact every inpatient and resident and reconfirm that they have either received or do not want voter information and assistance, including voter registration and support with absentee ballots.

On Election Day, we will again canvas every inpatient and resident to ensure they are offered assistance with absentee ballots and provide any assistance as needed.

**MEMBER OF THE VA NEW ENGLAND HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

Any inpatient who is clinically able to leave the facility on Election Day and wishes to go home to vote will be allowed to go home to vote.

We welcome your assistance in a number of areas:

If you have some voter registration information and posters that you believe would be better to use, we would be happy to look at them and consider using them in addition to, or instead of, the planned documents.

If you believe some additional training on voter information might be useful for our regular volunteers, such as training on completing the forms, we would be happy to have you or your staff provide them with additional training.

If you would like to participate in our efforts to re-canvas every inpatient and resident 14-21 days before the election and on election day, we would be happy to have a location for you or your staff where we can have other volunteers either lead you to the inpatients or residents who need assistance, or lead them to you, depending on the patient's condition.

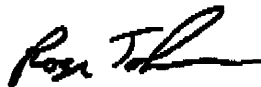
It would also be useful to have a point of contact in your office, someone our volunteers could call on specific questions, particularly on the day of the election. Again, we assume that it will be very difficult for your office to provide support on that day, so we plan to reach out to another non-partisan voter assistance group to ensure we are in a position to provide that assistance.

It is our understanding that there is voter assistance at every polling place, so we have made a determination that it is not necessary to conduct a demonstration of the polling devices at VA Connecticut. The volunteers at the polls can provide assistance if needed. Moreover, the focus of our efforts is our residential inpatients and veterans who, because of their disabilities, may not be able to access voter registration sites available to the general public and regular polling locations.

Our Chief, Voluntary Service has been in contact with your office and is prepared to work with you and your staff as outlined above.

We will provide general voter information to our outpatient Veterans as outlined above, as well as provide specific assistance to every inpatient and resident. We wish to work with you in a collaborative fashion to accomplish this support. The Chief, Voluntary Service will re-contact your office in another attempt to work on this activity in a collaborative manner.

Sincerely,



Roger Johnson  
Director, VA Connecticut Healthcare System