



Durbin, Duckworth Urge Dept Of Veterans Affairs To Support Illinois VA Medical Facilities

March 20 2020 11:43 AM

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert Wilkie urging the agency to ensure that all VA medical facilities in Illinois are well equipped to promptly respond to the coronavirus pandemic and provide for the wellbeing of Veterans as well as VA employees. Durbin and Duckworth noted reports of potential medical supply shortages in Chicago-area VA medical facilities and urged the VA to help address any possible shortage of these critical resources. As of March 20, the VA has also confirmed at least 130 positive cases of Veterans with COVID-19 across the country, including one in Chicago.

“There are nearly 600,000 Veterans throughout the state of Illinois, with half of them over the age of 65. This population also has underlying health conditions and tends to be more susceptible to severe illnesses such as COVID-19,” wrote Durbin and Duckworth. “Shortages of such key resources at Chicago-area VA medical facilities puts both patients and staff at risk, and the VA must act immediately to address any possible shortages of resources.”

Durbin and Duckworth also requested that the VA provide information about whether the agency is prepared to fulfill its “fourth mission” to support civilian health care systems if needed. The Senators requested as part of this assessment the number of acute-care and ICU beds currently available within VA medical facilities in the State of Illinois.

“It is important that the VA continues to preserve and protect the safety of all Veterans and staff in Illinois VA medical facilities across the country, and provide support to the civilian health care system if called upon,” wrote Durbin and Duckworth.

The full letter is available [here](#) or below: