

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1011

February 4, 2026

Mr. Kai Mentzer
Medical Center Director
Joseph Maxwell Cleland Atlanta VA Medical Center
1670 Clairmont Rd.
Decatur, GA 30033

Dear Mr. Mentzer,

I write to inquire about the implementation status of the Veterans Child Care Assistance Program (VCAP), as required by section 5107 (a) of the *Johnny Isakson and David P. Row Act of 2020*. This program will help Georgia veterans access VA medical care without having to find childcare during their appointments. With the deadline for implementation having now passed, I am interested in learning what your facility has done to support this effort.

Challenges in finding childcare often lead veterans to miss medical appointments or avoid managing their health altogether. A 2024 study showed that more than 75% of veterans surveyed indicate that they needed childcare assistance during health care appointments and 73% reported barriers to finding childcare.¹ To address these issues, the *Johnny Isakson and David P. Row Act* mandates that each VA Medical Center implement a childcare assistance program by January 4, 2026, five years after the law's passage on January 5, 2021. The law allows for the requirement to be met in a number of ways, allowing flexibility for the Department to work with individual medical facilities and determine the best path for the veterans they serve.

In 2024, VA's approach was to create either onsite drop-in childcare centers (VA Kids Care) or provide direct veteran reimbursement. In support of this effort, Congress has provided additional infrastructure funding directed to building out VA Kids Care locations, as well as fully funding Information Technology budget requests to facilitate the new programs needed to provide direct veteran reimbursement.

Given the importance of this issue and the recently passed January 4, 2026 deadline to maintain compliance with the law, I ask that you provide the following details regarding the status of your VAMC's implementation of a childcare assistance program:

1. Will there be a VA Kids Care facility onsite at your facility, or will you be providing reimbursement assistance?
2. When do you expect veterans to be able to take advantage of these childcare offerings?

¹ *Veteran Caretaker Perspectives on the Need for Childcare Assistance during Health Care Appointments*, Womens Health Issues (January – February 2024), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37838585/>.

3. Will additional staff be necessary for you to hire in order to manage this program?
4. Any barriers your VAMC is facing to implementing a childcare assistance program, including but not limited to a lack of IT support, delays in promulgation of regulations or policy changes, or lack of infrastructure.
5. Do you track the number of veterans who no-show or cancel medical appointments due to lack of childcare?

Thank you for your attention to this critical initiative. I look forward to supporting your efforts to provide this service for Georgia veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jon Ossoff', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jon Ossoff
United States Senator