

APPROPRIATION FUNDS INCLUDED FOR HUNTINGTON VETERANS CENTER

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) today announced that the House Committee on Appropriations has completed mark-up of the HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriation Bill which virtually assures project funding for the Huntington Veterans Administration Medical Center Clinical Addition.

According to Rahall, the Huntington facility will receive over \$40 million. "The \$43.7 million for the Huntington VAMC will help put into motion plans that have been on the drawing board for six years. In addition to correcting gross space deficiencies in surgery, medicine, radiology, laboratory and ambulatory care, plans call for an increase in bed capacity to meet the projected facility needs."

Rahall testified before the Veterans Affairs and Appropriations Committees in an effort to gain funding for the Huntington VAMC which serves over 144,000 veterans in West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio.

"Those who served our country should have their health needs cared for in a timely fashion through the use of adequate space and up-to-date medical equipment," Rahall said. "The Huntington project will allow such care."

The project will consist of a 173,000 square foot addition plus renovation of approximately 57,000 square feet of existing space. It will also cover the removal of asbestos, replacement of air conditioning systems, the installation of a sprinkler system, construction of a 500 car garage, and according to Rahall, a very important Psychiatric Unit.

"Currently patients with psychiatric conditions are transferred to Chillicothe, Ohio or Salem for care," Rahall commented. "The proposed addition includes a 30 bed Psychiatric Unit which means patients will, therefore, be treated at the Huntington VAMC, closer to their homes, families and friends."

The bill awaits consideration before the full House.