



*News From The ...*

## **COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

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### **More Promises, Slow Progress in Orlando**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—Differences over timelines and planning continue to plague the construction of the new Orlando VA Medical Center. At a House Committee on Veterans' Affairs field hearing today in Orlando, Florida, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the prime contractor, Brasfield and Gorrie, both promised to continue efforts to reach consensus on how best to move forward to complete the new facility, which would offer VA medical care to veterans of Central Florida.

“My single interest is the expeditious completion of this facility for the veterans of Central Florida who have been waiting over a decade for this medical center,” stated Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. “It is clear from today's hearing both VA and the contractor still have quite a long way to go to come together and figure out how to work together, which is what needs to happen. But I am cautiously hopeful that will become the goal moving forward, as it should have been all along.”

The hearing, entitled “The New Orlando VA Medical Center: Broken Ground, Broken Promises,” was an effort to bring the two parties together to map out a path forward. Ground was broken for the center in October 2008, but construction has been overwhelmed by change orders and design issues since, resulting in numerous delays and eventually a [Cure Notice being issued to the contractor](#). Originally scheduled to open in October 2012, new timelines estimate the facility will not be open until late 2013 at the earliest, but some estimates push the date back to 2014. Although the exterior appearance of the facility indicates otherwise, the building is estimated to be only 40 percent complete.

“Since the Cure Notice was issued in June, we have seen progress and a renewed commitment from the contractor to get this project back on track,” Miller said. “But VA needs to be a willing partner in this effort and stay focused on the end goal—a state-of-the-art facility that will treat hundreds of thousands of veterans. This building will be part of a larger medical hub in Central Florida, but it is one of the last buildings still under construction, many of which have been completed even though they broke ground later than the new VA. I see no reason why the issues discussed today cannot be resolved. I encourage both VA and the contractor to renew their commitment to come to an agreement, and do what is in the best interests of our veterans.”

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