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COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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Miller: New Orlando VA is a Multi-Million Dollar Debacle

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, issued the following statement regarding the construction of the new Orlando Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, which will serve approximately 300,000 veterans and is already two years behind schedule:

“VA has painted a rosy picture for the public and the veterans of Florida for the past two years regarding the construction of the long-overdue Orlando Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. VA’s confidence in the timely and on-budget completion of this project was so great that it devoted ‘bid savings’ from this project for use elsewhere around the country. Needless to say, that confidence has given way to a somber reckoning of serious delays and potential cost-overruns.

“A Contract Cure Notice issued today by the Department of Veterans Affairs has the potential to stop construction at the Orlando site and increase the costs moving forward exponentially, if a resolution is not reached. The Committee was assured by VA officials on March 27, and again on May 18 of this year, that VA was working collaboratively with the contractor to ensure issues surrounding the construction of the facility would be resolved and the new timeline set forth by VA would be met. That was clearly not the case.

“This project has been a multi-million dollar debacle, and a failure of this magnitude deserves accountability at the highest level. Unfortunately, we have seen this pattern before. VA management and oversight of large construction and IT projects across the country has been sorely lacking and fraught with incompetence.

“The current situation in Orlando is inexcusable. Pointing fingers and laying blame will not build the medical center the veterans of Central Florida deserve. I expect answers immediately from VA on the status and cost of this project, and the implication of today’s decision on the delivery of care and services to our veterans.”

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