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News Release

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VA to Expand Muskogee Psychiatric Services, Maintain Surgery Unit *Decision Ends Review of Medical Center*

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson announced today that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has reaffirmed support for inpatient surgery beds at the Muskogee, Oklahoma, VA Medical Center and will proceed with expansion of psychiatric services.

The Secretary's announcement ends a more than year-long review of the facility and follows the recommendations of a local advisory panel. The study considered the cost and quality of services available in the local community and at other VA facilities and rejected the idea of transferring patients to other facilities.

The study has been part of VA's Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) program, a VA initiative to modernize facilities by matching projected demand for health services with programs and facilities through a comprehensive review of veterans' health care needs.

"I thank the veterans, community leaders and citizens from around Muskogee, and the Oklahoma congressional delegation, who participated in this process. Their work with the local advisory panel and our consultants ensures we will maintain efficient, world-class health care for local veterans," Nicholson said.

The study concluded that the Muskogee VA Medical Center is in good condition and that moving services from Muskogee would result in inefficient use of resources with no improvement in access for veterans. In addition, local options for services from non-VA health care providers did not demonstrate any potential gain in quality.

The expansion of psychiatric beds called for in today's decision will be undertaken under normal planning processes.

The Muskogee medical center is located on 14 acres of land and includes 23 buildings.

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