

Washington, DC — Today Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) issued a statement to the Department of Veterans Affairs, urging them to preserve vital services for veterans as part of the National Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) restructure. This proposal includes closing two regional veterans' hospitals: one in White City, Ore. and the other in Vancouver, Wash.

“It is my fear – and the fear of many of my constituents – that closing these facilities will result in an increased reliance on fee-based care as well as longer waiting periods for primary care,” said Blumenauer. “Surely our veterans, who have fought and sacrificed for our country, deserve better than this.

“With the number of veterans seeking care through the Department of Veterans Affairs projected to rise in the coming years,” Blumenauer continued, “We should be strengthening, not reducing, our facilities and resources.”

The Vancouver V.A. Medical Center, built in 1998 at a cost of over \$30 million, is a relatively new facility. Located on the Interstate 5 corridor, it is easily accessible to veterans from both Oregon and Washington. The White City facility provides important in-patient care and treatment for chemically dependant and homeless veterans, offering both medical and vocational rehabilitation.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is holding a hearing on the proposed CARES restructure at 9:00 AM on Friday, September 26 at the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay in Vancouver, Wash. Blumenauer has submitted a statement in support of veterans' services as official testimony for this hearing.

Since being elected to Congress in 1996, Blumenauer has taken an active interest in veterans' affairs in his district, hosting two Veterans Forums, assisting veterans who experience difficulty with federal bureaucracy, and helping them receive service medals that were earned but never awarded.