

# CONGRESSMAN CUELLAR: ‘ SOUTH TEXAS VETERANS ONE STEP CLOSER TO HAVING FULL-SERVICE VA HOSPITAL’

*House directs South Texas VA hospital project to be placed on list of VA Improvement Plan*

**Washington, D.C.** – Congressman Henry Cuellar (TX-28) included legislation in the fiscal year 2012 Military Construction and Veterans funding bill that would bring south Texas one step closer to having a full-service VA hospital. The bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives Tuesday afternoon by a vote of 411 to 5.

“Our veterans have served our country with great distinction and honor and we owe it to them to have a full-service VA hospital in south Texas ,” Congressman Cuellar said. “This legislation allows us to place the project on a high-priority list. This is a big step, but it is also long overdue. I will continue to work hard until the health care needs of our veterans are met.”

Congressman Cuellar’s legislation calls for the expansion of veterans’ health care access and urges the VA Administration to prioritize the construction of a VA hospital in south Texas by placing it on the VA Strategic Capital Improvement Plan, designed to place the project on a priority list. Additionally, Congressman Cuellar has introduced a bill to expand the existing VA health care center in Harlingen to provide in-patient care, urgent care services and a full range of services for women veterans as well as other support services.

In the bill, Congressman Cuellar indicated the veterans’ community in south Texas is rapidly growing and that a need for adequate health care exists in the region. Presently, veterans wanting to receive care from a VA hospital have to travel approximately five hours to the Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital in San Antonio .

Earlier this year, the VA opened a new \$40 million health center in Harlingen to accommodate the needs of south Texas veterans. The health center, which offers outpatient care, is a first step toward full-service health care to the region.

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs funding bill now moves to the Senate for consideration.

*Congressman Henry Cuellar is a member of the U.S. House Homeland Security and Agriculture Committees. Job creation, accessibility to constituents, education, economic development, and national security are his priorities. Congressman Cuellar is also a Vice Chairman of the Steering and Policy Committee, Senior Whip, and member of the Blue Dog Coalition.*

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