

Ranking Member Richard Burr

## Committee Holds Construction Oversight Hearing Stimulus spending addressed

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held an oversight hearing on VA construction, backlogs, and the proposal of three health care centers, state-of-the-art facilities which will eliminate the need for many veterans to drive to far away hospitals for their care, and stretch VA's construction dollar far more than it otherwise would, to be built in North Carolina.

“In his budget, the President states that he wants a VA that is ‘veteran-centric, results-driven, and forward-looking’ and that such a transformation ‘is demanded by new times, new technologies, new demographic realities, and new commitments to today’s veterans,’” Senator Richard Burr said. “It is the responsibility of VA and Congress to think of innovative ways to meet the needs of veterans and I am pleased we had a panel of witnesses today who can help us try and chart that path forward.”

Senator Burr also addressed stimulus spending allocated to VA. Last February, one billion dollars were allocated to VA maintenance projects as part of the stimulus bill. According to the Administration's website, however, just over three one hundredths of one percent (0.03%) of the one billion dollars have actually been spent to date.

“It has been four months since the stimulus bill was signed into law and I question the delay in spending for projects that were said to be ‘shovel-ready’ and had been identified as part of a VHA-wide backlog of maintenance in the billions of dollars,” Senator Burr added. “VA Construction could provide employment and provide veterans with easier access to care. What is VA doing to speed up the implementation of these projects?”