

News from Senator

# BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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V.A. SEEKS TO ADD 21 NURSES TO COLMERY-O'NEIL HOSPITAL STAFF  
FOLLOWING MEETING WITH DOLE;

SENATOR ENCOURAGED, WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR STAFFING  
AT TOPEKA FACILITY

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole said he was pleased with a Veterans Administration announcement that a request for 21 new Registered Nurses at Colmery-O'Neil V.A. Center in Topeka will be submitted for approval to the V.A.'s Allocation Committee in Washington.

The announcement is a result of a meeting with V.A. officials yesterday in Senator Dole's Washington office. Dole called the meeting to voice his continuing concerns about staffing adequacy at Colmery-O'Neil.

"I am pleased that the V.A. has responded quickly to our concerns," Dole said. "The announced proposal of 21 new R.N.'s is a big step in the right direction."

Dole pointed out that the 21 new nurses would be added to 7 already made possible by an earlier supplemental allocation, thereby bringing to 28 the potential number of new nurses at the Colmery-O'Neil facility. Funding for these positions, approximately \$500,000, will be allocated from existing resources at the V.A.

"Although a V.A. nurse consultant who inspected the Topeka hospital recommended 91 new nurses, in our meeting yesterday the same consultant told us the 28 new positions would go a long way to improving services at this important V.A. facility," Dole said. "Obviously, I am encouraged."

Dole took action after receiving a field report prepared by the American Legion in July which alleged inadequacies in staffing and other areas including fire safety.

On July 29, Senator Dole sent a letter and the Legion report to Veterans Administrator Harry N. Walters. Dole directed Walters to immediately look into the matter.

Mr. Walters responded that a full report would be on Senator Dole's desk within a few weeks. The Veterans Administration then sent an on-site inspection team to tour Colmery-O'Neil. The team agreed that staffing inadequacies exist at Topeka's Colmery-O'Neil V.A. Hospital.

"I will continue to monitor the adequacy of services at Colmery-O'Neil," said Dole. "This V.A. proposal represents reasonable immediate relief for the staffing concerns. As we discuss future needs at Colmery-O'Neil, we will remember that limited federal funds must be allocated effectively and used efficiently toward meeting the needs of veterans in the area."