

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOLE CUTS RED TAPE, SECURES MAJOR NEW DESIGNATION FOR GREAT BEND MEDICAL CENTER; \$1 MILLION SHOT-IN THE ARM FOR KANSAS HEALTH CARE

WASHINGTON -- SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT HE HAS CONVINCED THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION TO IMMEDIATELY REDESIGNATE GREAT BEND'S CENTRAL KANSAS MEDICAL CENTER AS A "REGIONAL REFERRAL CENTER", THEREBY MAKING IT ELIGIBLE FOR APPROXIMATELY \$1 MILLION IN NEW MEDICARE FUNDS.

"THIS IS A \$1 MILLION SHOT IN THE ARM FOR QUALITY HEALTH CARE IN WESTERN KANSAS," DOLE SAID. "WE CUT THROUGH FEDERAL RED TAPE TO NAIL DOWN THIS CRUCIAL NEW UPGRADING IN GREAT BEND'S HOSPITAL STATUS. TODAY'S NEWS MEANS BETTER HEALTH CARE, BETTER FACILITIES AND A BETTER FUTURE FOR GENERATIONS OF KANSANS."

"IN FACT, IF THE RED TAPE PREVAILED, GREAT BEND WOULD NOT HAVE QUALIFIED FOR THE \$1 MILLION INFUSION FOR 1988 -- THAT'S WHY WE MOVED QUICKLY TO PUT THE PROCESS ON 'FAST FOWARD'."

THE NEW HOSPITAL CLASSIFICATION WILL HELP THE CENTER EXPAND AND IMPROVE ITS DIAGNOSTIC AND TREATMENT SERVICES FOR PATIENTS THROUGHOUT WESTERN KANSAS.

SENATOR DOLE HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS, FIRST DISTRICT CONGRESSMAN PAT ROBERTS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO SPEED UP THE HOSPITAL REVIEW PROCESS AFTER HEARING ABOUT THE MEDICAL CENTER'S NEEDS DURING A TOWN MEETING IN GREAT BEND.

THE ADMINISTRATION FINALLY AGREED WITH SENATOR DOLE THAT THE REGION COULD NOT AFFORD TO WAIT UNTIL LATE 1989 OR 1990 FOR A CERTIFICATION DECISION AND THEREFORE INFORMED HIM THIS WEEK THAT THE DESIGNATION OF THE GREAT BEND FACILITY AS A "RURAL REFERRAL CENTER" HAS BEEN MADE RETROACTIVE TO JULY 1, 1988.

"PROVIDING QUALITY RURAL HEALTH CARE IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLANGES FACING AMERICA TODAY. RURAL AMERICANS DESERVE THE BEST CARE POSSIBLE, EVERY BIT AS GOOD AS OUR URBAN NEIGHBORS HAVE COME TO EXPECT," DOLE SAID. "I WOULD LIKE TO THANK STATE SENATOR ROY EHRLICH, STATE REPRESENTATIVES FRANK BUEHLER AND BOB MEAD, AND EVERYONE ELSE IN THE GREAT BEND AREA WHO WENT TO BAT WITH ME TO GET THE JOB DONE. IT WAS WELL WORTH THE FIGHT."