

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Congressmen Jason Altmire (PA-04), Mike Doyle (PA-14), and Tim Murphy (PA-18) voted last night to provide more than \$295 million for the consolidation of the Pittsburgh VA Facility. The funding was included in the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Authorization and Lease Act of 2008 (H.R. 5856), which incorporated legislation Congressmen Altmire, Doyle and Murphy introduced last year to provide the authorization necessary to keep the renovation of the Pittsburgh VA facilities on track (H.R. 3102). Senator Specter has introduced similar legislation in the Senate (S. 1392).

The Department of Veterans Affairs initially released \$130 million for this project in February after Congressmen Altmire, Doyle and Murphy lobbied the VA to ensure the Pittsburgh VA Consolidation project received the funding it needed. In 2007, funding initially authorized for the project in the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006 was diverted to other initiatives, leading to costly delays and increasing overall costs.

“Ensuring the Pittsburgh VA receives the necessary funding to complete this consolidation project has been a long fight but now there is light at the end of the tunnel,” Altmire said. **“I am hopeful that this funding will help speed up the consolidation process so our veterans can get the high quality facilities they need as soon as possible. I will continue working with Congressman Murphy and Congressman Doyle to make sure the VA delivers all the funding needed to complete this project.”**

“Completing the construction of these new facilities is essential for ensuring that our local veterans get the services they deserve,” Doyle said. **“That’s why we’ve been bird-dogging this project since the beginning. Last night’s vote in the House was an important step forward, but we won’t stop pushing until the new facilities are open for business.”**

“Our Pittsburgh area veterans deserve state-of-the-art medical facilities promised by the VA,” Murphy said. **“Working together, we ensured our veterans will get the care they deserve at better facilities. We’ll keep working on this until the doors open to serve our veterans in Pittsburgh.”**

In 2004, the VA adopted a plan to close the Highland Drive Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) and shift that facility’s psychiatry, mental health, research, and administrative functions to the University Drive VAMC and the H. John Heinz III VAMC in Pittsburgh. This consolidation will provide veterans with better service and save the VA money in the long run, but it requires new construction to be completed at the University Drive and Heinz facilities.