



Daschle: Hot Springs VA not on hit list

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WASHINGTON - A commission advising the Department of Veterans Affairs has reversed its earlier recommendation to scale back services at the Hot Springs Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., said Friday.

The Hot Springs VA should keep its current services, according to the final recommendation of the VA's Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services Commission.

The commission, which has been evaluating the department's medical facilities nationwide, has recommended closing three VA hospitals - none in South Dakota -and reducing services at other medical facilities.

The commission recommended adding services to some facilities and even building some new ones.

"I am pleased that the CARES Commission's final report recognizes the importance of the Hot Springs facility," Daschle said in a written statement. "Now, more than ever, we should be enhancing - not cutting - veterans' health care. This final report represents a victory for the many veterans who rely on Hot Springs for critical medical services."

Congress will have 45 days to review the commission's recommendations.

Daschle said the Hot Springs VA provides essential services to veterans in rural areas.

He also said the VA was developing new standards for its rural hospitals.

http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/article_55a6864a-428e-58b5-af19-d3fff2ed298e.html