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Navy Awards Contract for New Walter Reed Facility

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BETHESDA, Md., March 3, 2008 – A joint venture of Clark Construction of Bethesda, Md., and Balfour Beatty Construction, based in Atlanta, today received a \$641.4 million from the Naval Facilities Engineering Command to design and build the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda.

The Navy command will oversee the planning and construction.

“I am confident that the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center will be the crown jewel in an already illustrious military medical system. The most important mission for us is to provide the highest levels of care, comfort and convenience to our wounded heroes so they can focus on the most important mission of all, healing,” said Dr. S. Ward Casscells, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

The establishment of the new center on the grounds of the National Naval Medical Center was congressionally mandated under the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act, which recommended the realignment of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, including the relocation of all tertiary medical services to the Bethesda campus and the renaming of the facility as the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. The law requires that all services be relocated by Sept. 15, 2011.

For the contractor to complete construction in accordance with BRAC legislation while minimizing impacts on ongoing patient care operations at the Bethesda complex, critical activities, most notably environmental issues, must be completed well in advance to the start of construction, officials said.

The final environmental impact statement is scheduled for release in early April. The required comment period under the National Environmental Policy Act ended Jan. 28, officials explained, and the official response to public comments will be included in the final economic impact statement.

Officials said the Defense Department is aware of the increased traffic concerns of the surrounding communities, and continues to consider measures to mitigate traffic issues that could arise during the period of construction, and work with local civilian leadership.

Plans call for the new, 345-bed medical center to have the full range of intensive and complex specialty and subspecialty medical services, including specialized facilities for the most seriously war injured. It's expected to become the U.S. military's premier tertiary referral center for casualty and beneficiary care, to provide postgraduate education and other training, and to serve as a critical medical research center.

Concurrent to this project will be the construction of a new 120-bed military medical treatment facility at Fort Belvoir, Va.

"This is the next step in building the world-class medical center at the hub of the nation's premier regional health care system," said Navy Rear Adm. (Dr.) John M. Mateczun, commander of Joint Task Force Capital Region Medical. "The department intends to meet its obligation to ensure our service members and families receive the highest quality of care. There is nothing more important than taking care of our wounded warriors."

The new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center complex will include a mix of new outpatient and inpatient facilities as well as extensive renovations and upgrades to the existing hospital facilities. New circulation pathways, utility tunnels, and a parking structure are also included in the plans. Supporting facilities to be built under a separate contract include non-clinical and Warrior Transition administrative spaces, barracks, a gymnasium and additional parking.

About 2,200 staff positions will be added to the Bethesda campus; most of the new personnel added to the future facility will transfer from other DoD locations, officials said. Additionally, the Fisher House Foundation will build two new Fisher Houses and a National Intrepid Center of Excellence for Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health Diagnosis, Treatment, Clinical Training, and Related Services to support wounded veterans and their families.