



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
Washington DC 20420

November 21, 2002

Dear Veterans Legislative Assistant:

I am writing to provide you with information about an important planning process that is underway at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The project is called Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) and it is being conducted to ensure that VA's health care infrastructure and services are located in the places where veterans need them in the next 20 years, ensuring access to quality health care for the maximum number of veterans into the future. VA health care services will not be reduced.

Phase 1 of CARES was conducted last year in Chicago/Wisconsin region (Network 12) and resulted in VA's investment of \$300 million to implement the CARES recommendations. In June 2002, VA began the second phase of CARES to include all the remaining 20 Networks.

I feel it is critical that you, as an important participant in the CARES process, have appropriate resources to help educate your constituents about the CARES process and to help you answer constituent inquiries and concerns. These resources are currently available to you at VA's CARES website [www.va.gov/CARES](http://www.va.gov/CARES). When you visit our site, you will find links to several good sources of information about CARES under the "What's New in CARES" heading. The website includes a CARES brochure, a Fact Sheet, Q's & A's, an Op-Ed regarding Phase 1 of CARES, and much more.

As you become more familiar with CARES, I anticipate that you will need more information, and perhaps briefings. If you are interested in additional information, these inquiries can be directed to Danny Devine in our legislative affairs office who will respond to your questions or direct you to an appropriate contact. Mr. Devine can be reached at (202) 273-9419 or through email at [daniel.devine@mail.va.gov](mailto:daniel.devine@mail.va.gov).

I encourage you to share this CARES website information with your district offices and to discuss the program with VA employees at facilities in your district. I hope that this information, the first of several pieces on the progress of CARES, is valuable to you and helps to explain the importance of CARES to VA and America's veterans.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon H. Mansfield", is written over the typed name.

Gordon H. Mansfield