

VA clinic breaks ground at Center for Health and Wellness



With some attendees holding the same type of shovels used to dig foxholes, veterans and other community leaders broke ground Monday on the Veterans Affairs Permian Basin Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Odessa.

In addition to several speeches, the ceremony Monday afternoon at the Center for Health and Wellness also featured a flyover by two planes from the Commemorative Air Force Museum, songs by the Nimitz Junior High Choir, Orchestra and Band and a posting of the colors by the Odessa High Junior ROTC.

Two of the veterans in attendance approved of the facility, with its 10,000 square feet of clinic space, which is scheduled to open in early 2014.

“It’s a step in the right direction,” Veteran and Odessa VFW honor guard commander Luis R. Lopez said.

Lopez, who has dealt with physical and psychological issues since his time in the Army’s Special Forces, said that driving to the clinic location in Odessa was often stressful due to the traffic.

Meanwhile, Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran and ER doctor Sudip Bose spoke at the event and said afterward that he appreciated seeing the groundbreaking take place.

“It’s rewarding,” Bose said.

When people think about medical care for soldiers they often think of the emergency care that takes place in war zones, Bose said.

But that is really like a sprint, Bose said.

“After that, there’s a full marathon,” Bose said, referring to the care veterans receive after they come home.

Bose said one of the biggest positives for veterans at the relocated clinic will be access.

However, veterans will also be able to receive the same services they receive at the current clinic along with some new services such as audiology.

And the new facility will also be larger, since the current clinic for veterans, located in the 4100 block of Tanglewood Lane, is about half the size of the new facility at about 4,500 to 5,000 square feet.

Planning for the project has been a long process and West Texas VA Health Care System Director Daniel Marsh said they got the project approved by their own network in early 2009.

"We're very anxious to get it open," Marsh said.

Reference: http://m.oaqa.com/news/local/article_cb075dca-2d2b-11e2-a4ce-0019bb30f31a.html?mode=jqm