

**Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs
Committee Field Hearing
April 12, 2004 - Walla Walla, Washington**

**Mr. Morrie Dean, President
Adventist Hospital
Walla Walla, WA**

Today I speak from two standpoints. One as a resident of the Walla Walla valley, and the second as the President of Walla Walla General Hospital in Walla Walla, Washington.

As a concerned community member, I do not support the closure of the VA Medical Center. Not only is this a huge negative for the local community, but more importantly, for the veterans who reside in this section of the Northwest.

Historically, the VA Medical Center and the Walla Walla medical community have integrated well together. Specialties that have been existent in the local market have serviced the VA Medical Center and its veterans. These include:

- Urology
- General Surgery
- Otolaryngology
- Orthopaedics
- Radiology
- GI

Due to decreasing reimbursement in acute care and to a greater extent, psychiatric care, private physicians and hospitals are unable to take care of the demand posed by veterans. This is true in Walla Walla and most communities in the region. The demand for psychiatric care would not be able to be handled by the health care system currently in place.