

**VA Black Hills Health Care System
Fact Sheet
January 7, 2014**

*Subject: National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Impact Statement
And National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Consultation*

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) federal agencies are required to “determine if their proposed actions have significant environmental effects and to consider the environmental and related social and economic effects of their proposed actions.” The VA Black Hills Health Care System (VA BHHCS) proposed reconfiguration that was announced on December 12, 2011 is of sufficient size and scope that VA is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify the potential environmental effects. EIS preparation includes:

- Public involvement
- Publication of Notice of Intent
- Formal scoping process
- Mandated timelines for public comment, review and wait periods

At the conclusion of the process, the Record of Decision (ROD), which is reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), is a legally binding document.

VA is also required to conduct consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) that is focused on the reconfiguration because the VA BHHCS’ Hot Springs campus is an historic property and a National Historic Landmark. The Section 106 process is carried out in consultation with:

- State Historic Preservation Officers
- Tribal Historic Preservation Officers
- Local governments
- Other interested parties

Section 106 requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of projects on historic properties. VA BHCCS held an initial Section106 consultation meeting regarding the proposed reconfiguration on May 31, 2012.

36 CFR 800.8(c) of NHPA grants federal agencies the latitude to substitute incorporation of the NHPA Section 106 process into the NEPA EIS process, in lieu of a more common stand-alone NHPA Section 106 Consultation effort. Requirements of both laws will be met by and recorded in the Environmental Impact Statement and the Record of Decision.

Coordination of the processes will:

- Improve decision-making
- Avoid delays
- Avoid duplication of efforts and save costs

VA BHHCS will engage a contractor to assist with all aspects of the NEPA and NHPA processes, including scoping, consultation, public involvement, EIS preparation and finalization. As additional information is available it will be posted to

www.blackhills.va.gov.