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**(S.D.)-Meeting In DC Addresses Hot Springs VA**

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 01/29/2013 07:47 AM

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) - Supporters of keeping Veterans Affairs medical facilities open in Hot Springs have made their case directly to the agency's head.

The state's congressional delegation, Gov. Dennis Daugaard and representatives of the "Save the VA" group on Monday met with VA Secretary Eric Shinseki in Washington, D.C.

Save the VA spokesman Rich Gross tells the Rapid City Journal the group was encouraged that the meeting was scheduled for 45 minutes but lasted twice that long. Sens. Tim Johnson and John Thune and Rep. Kristi Noem said in a statement they also were pleased with the meeting, though Shinseki made no decisions.

The VA says an economic analysis shows that restructuring its facilities in western South Dakota would be cheaper and more efficient than trying to fix aging facilities in Hot Springs.

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