



## Media Release

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### Furlough ends, CRDAMC embraces 'new normal'

By Brandy Gill, CRDAMC Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas – Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center will return to regular operations and normal business hours beginning Aug. 23 with the exception of the Weekend Acute Care Clinic (WACC), which will not be reinstated at this time.

This decision follows Department of Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's announcement last week that civilian workforce furloughs were being cut from 11 to six days.

"As we look ahead to fiscal year 2014, less than two months away, the Department of Defense still faces major fiscal challenges. If Congress does not change the Budget Control Act, DoD will be forced to cut an additional \$52 billion in FY 2014, starting on October 1. This represents 40 percent more than this year's sequester-mandated cuts of \$37 billion. Facing this uncertainty, I cannot be sure what will happen next year, but I want to assure our civilian employees that we will do everything possible to avoid more furloughs," Hagel said in a statement released by the U.S. Department of Defense.

"I want to thank our civilian workers for their patience and dedication during these extraordinarily tough times, and for their continued service and devotion to our department and our country. I know how difficult this has been for all of you and your families. Your contribution to national security is invaluable, and I look forward to one day putting this difficult period behind us," Hagel said.

Col. Patricia Darnauer, CRDAMC commander, said she's thankful furloughs have been shortened and pleased with the medical center staff and providers for ensuring operations were only minimally impacted.

"The furlough period has been a challenge, but CRDAMC's Soldiers, Civilians and Contractors really pulled together to keep our medical center running while ensuring our beneficiaries continued to receive the superior healthcare they deserve. I am proud of the staff's commitment and resourcefulness," she said.

While the medical center gets ready to return to normal hours and operations, the WACC won't be back at this time. That decision was made after taking a hard look at the bottom line and anticipated long-term budget cuts Darnauer said.

“At this point in time, it was determined the WACC couldn’t be sustained,” she said. “In order to maintain our stringent standards of care during this challenging time we need to embrace changes that have the least impact on direct patient care.”

Alternative resources will still be available for those who need acute care over weekends. Those resources include the CRDAMC Emergency Department where beneficiaries can receive care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Nurse Advice Line at 254-553-3695, is another resource which allows beneficiaries to speak one-on-one with a registered nurse to receive guidance on care that can be given at home and/or when to seek care at a medical facility.

“Above all, I want to thank our beneficiaries for their patience and continued support during these trying times,” Darnauer said. “Our fiscal environment is changing, but we will work to remain flexible, adaptable and responsible to continue to meet our patients’ healthcare needs.”