

Butterfield visits GCHC for groundbreaking

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News Editor

Greene County Health Care held a groundbreaking celebration Monday for a new dental and administrative expansion project.

Rep. G. K. Butterfield, D-NC, toured the facility and spoke about President Barack Obama's healthcare plan as part of his healthcare tour.

The expansion and other improvements are funded by a \$1.95 million stimulus grant designed to create jobs and improve health services.

The \$1.2 million expansion will include 950 square feet of additional space, three

dental chair operatories to total seven, and storage and office space. A digital x-ray and mammography machine was recently purchased for about \$.25 million, said Doug Smith, GCHC director.

"It interfaces directly into our electronic health records," Smith said.

The architectural plans should be finished by the end of the month and bids let out shortly after, he said.

This week, work will begin at the 40-year-old Walstonburg Medical Center to update the exterior and purchase a generator. Costs are estimated at about \$70,000.

Butterfield said the benefits of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act are beginning to be seen now.

"We have put people to work in Greene County. It's a good investment," he said. "Had we not invested so boldly, we would not be where we are today."

While some programs are at risk of being cut because of the economy, community healthcare is not, he said. That's because of the efficiency of the program and its core mission to provide quality healthcare to those who would not otherwise be served, he said.

Smith said that community healthcare is ranked nationally at the top in grant programs and in the top 10 for effectiveness.

Butterfield went on a

of those is healthcare."

The congressman talked about escalating insurance rates at an average of \$150 a month while coverage decreases. He said Obama's plan is a bipartisan option that is proposed to give coverage to the 47 million people who don't have health insurance but instead increase costs by utilizing more emergency services.

It will also benefit those with minimal coverage, he said.

"Next year, the cost of health coverage is going to double," he said.

Butterfield said the new government healthcare option could be available by October 2012.

"We want to create a government-run option," he said. He said the bill allows for cheaper premiums and

