

## Chavez says Castro almost all better

*by UPI*

CARACAS, Venezuela - Cuban leader Fidel Castro is almost "completely recovered" from an illness that required surgery last July, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said Friday.

Chavez told reporters in Caracas, Venezuela, that a reliable source assured him Castro is nearly ready to resume his full workload, Globovision TV reported.

The 80-year-old Cuban leader handed over authority to his brother Raul Castro last summer after announcing he was suffering from a gastrointestinal illness that required surgery.

For weeks and months after the announcement, there was much speculation that Castro was terminally ill and suffering from cancer. Officials in Havana have vehemently denied the rumors.

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