

## CHÁVEZ: CASTRO IS 'ALMOST JOGGING'

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**CARACAS** - (AP) -- Ailing Cuban leader Fidel Castro is recovering and has been up and walking -- in fact, "almost jogging" -- in recent days, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez said Wednesday.

Chávez said he was pleased to hear from Cuban Vice President Carlos Lage that the 80-year-old Castro was making a recovery. Lage, after meeting with Chávez, said: "We will have Fidel and we will have Raúl for a lot more time."

Their hopeful remarks came less than a week after Chávez said Castro was "battling for his life."

"Lage told me that Fidel walked I don't know how many minutes yesterday," Chávez said Wednesday, noting he suspected Castro was watching his speech on television. "He's walking more than me, almost jogging. Maybe he's walking while watching us."

Chávez has regularly reported in generalities on Castro's health since July 31, when the Cuban leader announced he was stepping aside while he recovered from an operation and was provisionally ceding power to his brother Raúl.

Chávez held up a letter and said, "I'm going to show you something, for those who say that Fidel is dying, that he can't talk, that he can't move."

The TV camera zoomed in on Castro's signature in black ink. "Look closely at the strokes of the signature," he said. "We are extremely happy, Fidel, about the news of your recuperation."