

2014

VISN 20 Annual Report



WWW.VISN20.MED.VA.GOV



Message from the Network Director



To all employees, friends and volunteers in VISN 20,
and of course, to the Veterans we serve:

It is a privilege to share our 2014 Annual Report. Within the pages of this document, you can learn about the work our facilities have accomplished during a most challenging year. In 2014, staff joined the entire Department of Veterans Affairs in reaffirming our commitment to VA's core values: *ICARE*. First introduced in 2011, *ICARE* stands for Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence. Our values define who the VA is as an organization, and who we are as members of this organization. Our culture, our character, our dedication to serve.

These values have helped us integrate one of the most massive changes to VA's way of doing business in recent history – Veterans Choice. They have united us in our mission, and reflect our commitment to Veterans and their family members to offer the best care, in the most timely and convenient way possible.

Every one of the 11,000+ employees of VISN 20 are responsible for ensuring that everyone we come in contact with understands the depth of our commitment to our values and our Veterans. We must, in order to accomplish our mission of providing exceptional and timely service.

I am so proud of our employees and the work they do. And I thank you, most sincerely, for your continued support of the VA.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. H. Carroll".

Lawrence H. Carroll
Network Director, VISN 20

Introduction

VISN 20, the VA Northwest Health Network, includes the states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, most of Idaho and one county each in Montana and California. Our 135 counties cover 817,417 square miles, approximately 23% of the United States land mass, making it the largest VISN geographically. As of the end of FY14, approximately 39% of enrollees and 41% of patients reside in rural or highly rural areas. In FY14, we provided services to 299,841 unique patients, a 1.4% increase over FY13. VISN 20 is also home to 273 federally recognized American Indian/Alaskan Native tribes, 229 of which are located in Alaska.

VISN 20 is comprised of five geographic markets: Alaska, Inland North, Inland South Idaho, South Cascades and Western Washington. Our network of healthcare facilities includes the Alaska VA Healthcare System (Anchorage); Boise VA Medical Center (Boise, ID); VA Portland Health Care System (Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA); VA Puget Sound Health Care System (Seattle, WA and American Lake Division in Tacoma, WA); VA Roseburg Healthcare System (Roseburg, OR); Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center & Clinics (White City, OR); Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center (Spokane, WA); and Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center (Walla Walla, WA).

Outpatient Clinics are located at the following sites, listed by VISN 20 parent facility/healthcare system

Alaska VA Healthcare System: Fairbanks, Kenai, Mat-Su (Wasilla), Juneau and Homer.

Boise VA Medical Center: Canyon County (Caldwell), Twin Falls, Burns (OR), Mountain Home and Salmon.

VA Portland Health Care System: Bend, East Portland, Hillsboro, North Coast (Warrenton), Salem, West Linn, The Dalles, Newport and Lincoln City.

VA Puget Sound Health Care System: King County (contract clinics in Seattle, Federal Way and Bellevue), Bremerton, Mount Vernon, South Sound (Chehalis), and Port Angeles.

VA Roseburg Healthcare System: Eugene, North Bend and Brookings.

Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center & Clinics (SORCC): Klamath Falls and Grants Pass.

Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center: Coeur d'Alene (ID), Sandpoint (ID), Wenatchee, Republic, Tonasket, Colville and Libby (MT).

Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center: LaGrande (OR), Lewiston (ID), Grangeville, Richland, Yakima, Enterprise (OR) and Boardman (OR).

The VA Portland HCS operates a Community Resource & Referral Center (CRRC) in downtown Portland. This storefront facility offers mental health and primary care services, enroll-

ment and Compensation & Pension exams, housing assistance, and various community-based services to homeless Veterans in the Portland metro area.

VA Puget Sound HCS, the Mann-Grandstaff VAMC and SORCC have Mobile Medical Units, which travel periodically to rural communities within their service areas.

The Alaska VA Healthcare System's inpatient care is provided via a VA/DoD joint venture with Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, adjacent to the Anchorage parent facility. The Fairbanks CBOC is embedded in Bassett Army Community Hospital under a VA/DoD interagency sharing agreement.

The Fisher House program is a private-public partnership that supports military and Veteran families in their time of need. VA Puget Sound's 20-suite Fisher House, located on the Seattle campus, opened in 2008 and has served more than 4,100 families. On September 19, 2014, VA Portland HCS held a ground breaking ceremony with the Fisher House Foundation to commemorate the construction of a donated 16-suite house located on the Vancouver campus. The facility is expected to open in summer 2015 and will provide lodging for the families of patients being treated at the Portland and Vancouver divisions.



VISN Structure

Our offices are located on the Vancouver, WA campus of the VA Portland HCS. Through an enhanced use lease (EUL), VISN staff occupies space on the fourth floor of the Clark County Center for Community Health. The space is part of the EUL consideration VA receives from the county.

VISN 20 has an approved core staff of 59 FTEE. In addition, we have established consolidated/centralized units for Human Resources, Accounting, Managerial Cost Accounting and Prosthetics functions in order to increase efficiencies and ensure consistency in operations.

An Executive Leadership Council (ELC), chaired by the Network Director and composed of senior leaders from the VISN and facilities across the network, serves as our governing body. Subordinate boards of the ELC guide operations – the Clinical Services Board; Quality, Safety and Values Board; the Administrative Services Board; Resource Management Board and the Organizational Health Board. Additional committees and workgroups report up to each board.



Mission/Vision/Values



The mission and vision of VHA and VA's core values are integral to VISN 20's purpose and focus:

Mission

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well-being.

Vision

VHA will continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in healthcare and benefits by providing exemplary services that are both patient-centered and evidence-based. This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning discovery and continual improvement. It will emphasize prevention and population health and contribute to the nation's well-being through education, research and service in national emergencies.

Values

As an integral component of VA and VHA, VISN 20 recognizes the need for a clear understanding and practice of VA's core values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence: *ICARE*. We will act with high moral principle, adhere to the highest professional standards and maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom we engage. We will work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries, be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission, and fulfill our individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities. We will be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering and appropriately advancing

the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries. We will treat all those we serve, and with whom we work, with dignity and respect and show respect to earn it. We will strive for the highest quality and continual improvement, and be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for our actions, willing to admit mistakes and rigorous in correcting them.

VISN 20 leadership identified the following key themes in our strategic planning process as we move forward in achieving excellence in healthcare, providing timely access and a positive Veteran experience:

- Facilities will work together as an integrated healthcare network as we strive to become more patient-centered.
- We will continue to integrate *ICARE* values into our daily work.
- We will focus on improving access to care and in assisting Veterans to realize better health outcomes.
- We will expand use of technology to deliver care in nontraditional ways.
- We will facilitate training programs to enable staff to successfully deliver patient-centered care.
- We will streamline internal administrative processes to work more efficiently.

These themes are aligned with the VHA Strategic Plan and the Blueprint for Excellence, and are broadly supported across VISN 20.

Leadership & Statistics



Lawrence H. Carroll

Network Director since 2012

Mr. Carroll directs operations, finances and clinical programs for 8 Health Care Systems and 50 Community Clinics.



John Mendoza

Deputy Network Director since January 2014

Mr. Mendoza oversees operational aspects of VISN 20 including finance, logistics and capital assests.



Frank Marré **DO, MS, FAOCOPM**

Chief Medical Officer since October 2007

The CMO oversees clinical programs as well as research. Dr. Marré retired from the VA in March 2015. Recruitment for a replacement is in process.

***Operating Budget* \$2,250,994,242**

***Employees* 11,321**

***Donations* \$2,993,150**

***Health Care Systems* 8**

***Community Clinics* 50**

***Outpatient visits* 3,403,264**

***Surgeries* 18,704**

***Volunteer Hours* 601,218**

***Volunteer Impact Value* \$12,842,016**

***Research Funding* \$74,000,000**

***Research Funding (VA)* \$34,500,000**

***Research Funding (Non VA)* \$39,500,000**

FY14 Accomplishments

Last year, four major focus areas were identified by VISN and facility leadership team as key strategic objectives to lead us to a more effective and efficient delivery of healthcare:

- Improving access in all clinical services, but especially in primary care
- Expanding the use of telehealth for both primary and specialty care
- Enhancing the VISN surgery program and reducing the backlog
- Standardizing processes to reduce the need and expense of purchased care

These focus areas and other key issues were addressed through strategies championed by multiple committees and supported by leadership at all facilities. Positive

- Recruitment process redesign team established
- Training developed and deployed for PACT teamlet members
- Increasing the number of clinics connected to our Virtual Call Center
- 19 of 22 Nurse Navigators were recruited in support of the Cancer Care Platform
- Redirecting surgical cases between Puget Sound, Portland, Boise and Spokane to increase access and reduce wait times for surgical patients
- The Northwest Innovations Center developed new registries for ALS and lung cancer
- Meeting all VHA's homeless measures
- Expanding the use of Secure Messaging



FY14 Accomplishments

- Continuing the development of standardized processes for non-VA care, led by the Purchased Care Advisory Council.
- Expanding access in rural areas was also a focus in FY14. VISN 20 received funding from the Office of Rural Health to support 44 projects that provided outreach and promoted increased access to healthcare services for Veterans in rural areas across the network. Some of those projects are highlighted below:
 - Expansion of Home Based Primary Care services in rural areas near Boise, ID; Roseburg, OR; Coeur d'Alene, ID; Yakima, WA; and Klamath Falls, OR
 - Operational support for an Outreach Clinic in Port Angeles, WA and two Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinics (PCTOC) in Enterprise and Boardman, OR
 - Contract providers for the Emergency Department and hospitalist services at the Roseburg, OR VA
 - Expansion of SCAN-ECHO programs for infectious disease, hepatitis C, chronic kidney disease and congestive heart failure
 - A VISN-wide primary care telehealth hub
 - Telehealth programs for prosthetic fittings for amputees, treatment of sleep problems, diabetes education, chaplain services, inhaler training for COPD patients, and pre- and post-op surgical consultations
 - Outreach and collaboration with Tribal organizations in rural Alaska to increase enrollment and access to benefits for Native and non-Native Veterans
 - Blind Rehab services using VA Puget Sound's Mobile Medical Unit
 - A cycling program to improve health and wellness for homeless Veterans in Douglas County, OR
 - Equine therapy for OEF/OIF/OND Veterans in southern Oregon
 - Transportation services for rural Veterans
 - Expansion of dental services to Veterans living in rural southern Oregon



During FY14, we executed reimbursement agreements with two Tribal Health Programs (THP). These agreements reimburse participating THPs for direct care services provided to American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans. Since many of the clinics in the Tribal system are located in remote areas of our network, these agreements offer a unique opportunity to provide culturally competent care closer to Veterans' homes. Adding these to the agreements executed in FY12 and FY13; at the end of FY14, we had a total of 38 agreements in place.

To strengthen our commitment to fully implement the PACT model, a process was instituted for review and input by the Primary Care Committee on the design of new, leased outpatient clinic space to ensure it aligns with PACT requirements. The Capital Asset Manager, with the support of the Administrative Services Board, developed a methodology for prioritizing NRM projects so that the limited pool of funds would be allocated to the most critical projects.

A key element in providing clinical care in the large geographic area we serve is telehealth. Approximately 65 different clinical services are available via telehealth modalities. Some of these programs are leading the way for VHA, such as Tele-Neurology, Tele-Sleep, Tele-Dermatology, Tele-Pace Maker, Tele-Retinal, Tele-Amputee and Home-Based Tele-Mental Health. As we consider more innovative ways to deliver healthcare across our large geographic area, telehealth will continue to play a key role.

Our Research Program

VISN 20 is home to world-class research programs, conducted at VAMCs in Puget Sound, Boise and Portland. Our researchers hold academic appointments at the University of Washington, Boise State University and Oregon Health & Science University.

At VA Puget Sound, there are more than 600 active research projects, representing virtually every major clinical department. Examples include Traumatic Brain Injury and Multiple Blast Exposures, PTSD and Deployment Health, Memory Improvement and Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Diabetes, and Cancer. In addition, the following VA Centers of Excellence and special emphasis programs are located there:

- Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC)
- Northwest Center for Outcomes Research in Older Adults
- Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC)
- Multiple Sclerosis Center of Excellence
- Primary Care Center of Excellence
- Center of Excellence for Limb Loss Prevention and Prosthetics Engineering
- Epidemiologic Research & Information Center (ERIC)
- Center of Excellence for Substance Abuse Treatment and Education (CESATE)
- Alzheimer's Research Center
- Diabetes/Endocrinology Research Center

The VA Portland HCS has approximately 150 funded investigators and supports programs in basic science, clinical research, health services, cooperative studies, and epidemiology and outcomes research. Programs of special note include:

- Portland Alcohol Research Center (PARC)
- National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR)
- Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC)
- Parkinson's Disease Research Education and Clinical Center (PADRECC)
- Multiple Sclerosis Center of Excellence
- Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Resource Center
- Methamphetamine Abuse Research Center (MARC)
- NIH-funded Cancer Center with affiliate, OHSU
- Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care (CIVIC)

The research program at the Boise VAMC includes studies in biomedical research, health services, clinical and cooperative studies, and rehabilitation. Research projects are being conducted in areas such as infectious disease, cardiology, hypertension, diabetes and oncology. The Boise VAMC is one of five facilities in the nation chosen to participate in the VA Centers of Excellence in Primary Care Education. The goal of this program is to foster transformation of clinical education by preparing graduates of professional health programs to work in and lead patient-centered interprofessional teams that provide coordinated longitudinal care.



Education and Academic Affiliations

VISN 20 takes pride in its role as a leader in training future healthcare professionals, and all medical centers participate in professional health education at various levels.

- The VA Portland Medical Center is connected both physically and functionally to the Oregon Health & Sciences University. More than 1,200 university residents, interns, and students are trained at the VA Portland HCS each year in 33 different specialties. VA Portland HCS has nursing student affiliations with the Oregon Health & Science University, University of Portland, Linfield College and Walla Walla College, as well as with other teaching institutions involving dentistry, pharmacy, social work, psychology, chaplaincy, nuclear medicine, physical and occupational therapy, dietetics, audiology and speech pathology, alcohol and drug treatment, radiology, laboratory, and dental assisting. In 2014, VA Portland HCS's Graduate Medical Education (GME) program hosted more than 733 interns, residents, and fellows, including 179 full-time medical and 6 full-time dental residents.

In 2014, VA Portland HCS's Graduate Medical Education (GME) program hosted more than 733 interns, residents, and fellows, including 179 full-time medical and 6 full-time dental residents.

- In June 2013, the Department of Veterans Affairs selected the VA Portland HCS and Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU) as one of six sites in the nation to participate in a five-year VA Nursing Academic Partnership (VANAP). This VA-funded partnership prepares OHSU nursing students to promote health, healing, and social justice for Veterans and their families through culturally based clinical practice. In 2014, the second year of partnership, the program increased designated FTEE from 1.5 to 6.0 faculty and student cohorts from 24 to 32. More than 50 Veteran-centric curricular modifications occurred in the first academic year. Student rotations include acute medical and surgical, the Community Living Center, as well as, observations in specialty areas.
- VA Puget Sound is primarily affiliated with the University of Washington Medical Center and also maintains affiliations with more than 50 other educational institutions. They train hundreds of medical residents and allied health professionals each year in audiology and speech pathology, dietetics, HSR&D, radiology, optometry, podiatry, occupational therapy, physical therapy, recreation therapy, psychology, health information management, information technology, medical

informatics and other healthcare programs. Additionally, they train between 15-20 dental residents each year. VA Puget Sound is also affiliated with several nursing schools, annually hosting more than 500 nursing-auxiliary students and more than 300 nursing-professional students. Each year, VA Puget Sound funds more than 700 medical and dental resident slots. Training is also provided to more than 100 nursing and associated health trainees.



- The Boise VAMC has partnered with the University of Washington in offering internal medicine and psychiatry residency programs. As part of its Primary Care Education Center of Excellence, Boise utilizes VA primary care settings to develop and test innovative approaches to prepare physicians, nurses, and associated health trainees for primary care practice. The Boise Psychology Training Program offers

internships to students who are pursuing a doctoral degree in clinical or counseling psychology.

- Alaska VAHS offers psychology internships and supports programs in radiology, laboratory, pharmacy and social work.
- Roseburg HCS offers a one-year postgraduate pharmacy residency program, providing experiential education in both ambulatory and inpatient clinical practices. Roseburg also has affiliations for training and internships in nursing, psychology, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, imaging technology, dietetics, laboratory, optometry, social work, pharmacy tech and phlebotomy.
- Mann-Grandstaff (Spokane) VAMC jointly operates a psychology internship program with Walla Walla VAMC, rotating two interns between facilities. Spokane also has multiple academic affiliations for training in dental, nursing, radiology, pharmacy, psychiatry, surgery, geriatrics, HBPC and CLC/rehab. In FY14, Spokane hosted seven residents and 16 medical students.
- SORCC offers internships in psychology and educational programs in nursing, clinical nurse leadership, clinical nurse specialists, pharmacy, optometry and social work.
- In addition to psychology internships, Walla Walla VAMC supports programs in laboratory, optometry, pharmacy, physician assistant training and social work.



Education and Assistance for Native American Veterans

On July 28, 2014, leadership from the VA Alaska HCS and the Veterans Benefits Administration signed a Native American Direct Loan (NADL) Agreement with the Mayor of Metlakatla, Alaska. More than 40 Veterans and the Village of Toosok Bay were educated on the NADL, and received assistance on completing health benefit applications (1010ezs) and other various documents.

Veterans Stand Down

On July 30, 2014, leadership from the VA Alaska HCS and the Veterans Benefits Administration traveled up the Kuskokwim River to the Akiak, Tununak and Kwethluk villages to sign Letters of Intent with the tribes for future Memorandums of Understanding for the Native American Loan Program. While there, they also assisted Veterans with various VA services to include completing 1010ezs.

Tribal Veteran Representative Program

The AVAHS held a Veterans Stand Down (VSD) in Bethel, Alaska on August 1, 2014. Service providers were on hand offering assistance regarding employment, VA benefits, Social Security and other programs. Representatives from the Alaska Territorial Guard, Department of Labor and the Alaska National Guard also attended, as did the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation and the Bristol Bay Native Association. More than 300 Veterans and community personnel attended the stand down. Between traveling to four villages and the Bethel Veteran Stand Down, up to 100 Veterans completed 1010ezs.

The Tribal Veteran Representative (TVR) Program is a shared program between VBA, VHA and Memorial Affairs, the goal of which is to develop a volunteer network to organize a dependable means of outreach to rural Alaska communities. Individuals appointed by village leaders, Native tribal health programs,

and Native corporations serve as liaisons between Alaska Native and Non-Native Veterans and the VA. TVRs are volunteers, not employees or certified service officers. The VA provides training regarding program eligibility requirements, assistance with initiating applications for services and coordination of placement for services. The AVAHS has held biannual trainings since 2007. Currently, more than 200 individuals from 33 communities have been trained. A teleconference is held each month to provide updates and to answer questions.

USAF Surgeon General Award

The VA/DOD Joint Venture Hospital at the 673rd Medical Group, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), once again received the USAF Surgeon General Award for Best Hospital of the Year 2014. The Air Force Surgeon General Award for Best Hospital is presented annually to the active-duty hospital or clinic that was accomplished in or made significant contributions to the areas of mission support and customer service during the course of a year.



FY 2014 STATS

Medical Care Budget \$211,500,000

Veterans Served 18,148

Total Beds 74

Employees 545

Outpatient Visits 163,319

Clinics 4

Volunteer Hours 15,631

Surgeries 740

Inpatient Bed Days 14,301

Budget	\$204,388,000
Veterans Served	29,134
Total Operating Beds	92
Employees	1,061
Outpatient Visits	327,965
Clinics	5
Volunteer Hours	58,046
Surgeries	1,951
Inpatient Bed Days	22,244

Boise OFL

The Boise Optical Fabrication Laboratory continues to produce exceptional eyeglasses for Veterans in VISN 20 and VISN 22. In these two VISNs, there are 18 major VA facilities and numerous clinics. During FY14, the Boise OFL produced more than 127,000 pairs of glasses, with an average production of 11,000 pairs of glasses per month. The average wait time for glasses from the time of being ordered is approximately 6.5 days.

Mail-Out Center

Started in March of 2014, the VISN 20 Mail-Out Center first piloted with the Boise facility. The purpose of the mail-out center was to provide commonly ordered prosthetic devices



to Veterans faster with a more streamlined internal process. Today, the Mail-Out Center is serving Veterans at the Boise, Portland, Walla Walla, Puget Sound and Spokane facilities, with the prosthetic devices they need at a much faster rate, and at less expense to the VA. On average, the Mail-Out Center sends out 150 prosthetic orders each day.

Boise Telehealth

In FY 2014, Boise was selected as a Telehealth Hub by the Office of Rural Health. Currently, Boise is standing up the site by remodeling existing space, leasing space, and hiring more than 30 providers to provide remote telehealth to clinics and other sites of healthcare. Boise hopes to be up and fully operational by October 2015.



Medical Care Budget	\$624,673,976
Veterans Served	88,331
Total Beds	277
Employees	3,550
Outpatient Visits	905,321
Clinics	9
Volunteers	766
Volunteer Hours	108,672
Donations	\$752,583.23
Surgeries	7,444
Inpatient Bed Days	84,514

Awards

VAPORHCS received the VA Secretary’s Robert W. Carey Trophy Award in May 2014 following a site visit in October 2013. The Robert W. Carey Trophy Award recognizes VA organizations that implement management approaches resulting in high levels of performance and service to our nation’s Veterans and quality leaders and champions for excellence in the federal government.

VAPORHCS is proud to have been recognized as a “Leader in Healthcare Equality” in the Healthcare Equality Index for the second year in a row in 2014. This recognition is determined by an annual survey conducted by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, the educational arm of the country’s largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organization. VAPORHCS earned top marks for its commitment to equitable, inclusive care for LGBT patients and their families, who can face significant challenges in securing adequate healthcare. VAPORHCS was one of a select group of 427 healthcare facilities nationwide, and one of only four healthcare facilities in the state of Oregon, to be named Leaders in LGBT Healthcare Equality in 2014.



Expanding access to care

VAPORHCS opened the new Salem Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) for services on June 25, 2014, providing 26,000 square feet of space, compared with the 10,000 square feet at the previous facility. New or expanded services at this facility include audiology and physical therapy, eye care, podiatry, dermatology and clinical pharmacy, including a resident pharmacist. Expanded telehealth services include video conferencing or video appointments for Veterans (e.g., compensation and pension), rural mental health, cardiology, MOVE program, PTSD counseling, speech pathology and nutrition. Today, VAPORHCS has 55 employees at the Salem CBOC providing about 20 services for nearly 9,000 Veterans.



VAPORHCS opened a new CBOC in Lincoln City with service starting in June 2014 to more than 250 local Veterans. It provides primary care and laboratory services one day per week.

Fisher House Program

In September 2014, VAPORHCS broke ground on the Vancouver Division campus with construction of a 16-suite Fisher House. The Fisher House Program provides no-cost temporary accommodations to America’s military Veterans and active duty service members’ families and caregivers while Veterans are getting treatment. VAPORHCS was selected to participate in the program and build a home to support the Portland and Vancouver facilities. A shuttle service will provide transportation between the two locations. Construction is anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2015.

Design Finalized on Freedoms Path

In FY14, VAPORHCS finalized the design and lease of Freedoms Path, a 50-unit, three-story apartment building that will provide housing to our homeless Veterans. Freedoms Path is part of a Building Utilization Review and Repurposing (BURR) strategic effort to identify and repurpose underutilized VA land and buildings nationwide in support of VA’s goal to end Veteran homelessness. The BURR initiative uses existing real estate assets with the potential to develop new housing opportunities for homeless Veterans or Veterans and their families at risk for homelessness through public-private partnerships and VA’s enhanced-use lease (EUL) program.

Awards



The VA Puget Sound Health Care System Patient Safety Office was recognized with a 2014 Gold Cornerstone Award by the VA National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS) for the quality, timeliness, and quantity of its Individual Root Cause Analyses (RCA) and Aggregate Reviews. Only 68 of the 111 facilities to receive the Cornerstone Awards for Fiscal Year 2014 held the highest honor of Gold standard.

VA Puget Sound Health Care System's Chief of Staff for the Mental Health Service, Dr. Joel Mitchell, was awarded the prestigious National Association of VA Psychology Leaders (AVAPL) Leadership Award for his exceptional leadership abilities, and the Outstanding Administrator Award from the American Psychological Association.

One of only 19 selected from 1,500 submissions, Puget Sound research associate Lauren Summers received a 2014 VHA Employee Innovation Competition Award from the VA's Center for Innovation. Her idea involved creating a data collection tool in CPRS for family health history, allowing care providers to more easily enter, track, and view a Veteran's family health history, make appropriate screening and treatment recommendations, and provide an opportunity to better research and understand the relationships of family health history among Veterans.

VA Puget Sound Health Care System's Linda Brandeis, ACSW, LICSW, was awarded the Hyman J. Weiner award by the Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care. This award recognizes Brandeis's work for the advancement of the practice of social work in healthcare settings and for her reflecting the qualities of an outstanding teacher, scholar, advocate, change agent, and humorous and compassionate person.

Strategic Plan Recognized

VA Central Office Women's Health recognized the Puget Sound Women's Health Program Strategic Plan in both 2014 and 2015 as one of two national models to emulate. This model improves continuity of care, reduces the number of medical appointments needed for women to receive the full range of primary care services, and enhances the patient-provider relationship.

Housing and Outreach

VAPSHCS Community Housing and Outreach Services Program utilized 93% of its allotted HUD-VASH vouchers to place Veterans in permanent supported housing in 2014, 71% of whom were identified as "most vulnerable and chronically homeless." Extensive community collaborative and outreach work resulted in our staff serving more than 1,215 Veterans and their families in FY14.

Outstanding Program for Women's Health

Puget Sound Women's Health Program provides continuity for routine gender-specific services and primary care with trained, designated providers for 94% of more than 6,900 women Veteran patients at the two main divisions (Seattle and American Lake) and all seven of its clinics. By maintaining this level of continuity of care for more than 28 consecutive months, this program is recognized as one of the top 10 in the nation.



FY 2014 STATS

Medical Care Budget \$762,623,606

Veterans Served 89,721

Total Beds 421

Employees 3,351

Outpatient Visits 978,265

Clinics 7

Volunteers 766

Volunteer Hours 156,346

Surgeries 5,637

Inpatient Bed Days 105,569



New Dental Clinic

A ribbon cutting and open house took place on March 5, 2014, to commemorate the opening of a new dental clinic. This

state-of-the-art building will be used to provide general dentistry, dental implants, endodontics, dental hygiene, periodontics, dentures, crowns, bridges and oral surgical procedures.

Partnership Agreement for Native American Veterans

The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and the VA Roseburg Healthcare System signed a direct care services reimbursement agreement on July 28, 2014. This agreement allows the VA to reimburse Cow Creek for healthcare services they provide to Native American Veterans. Services include primary care, specialty care, mental health care and pharmacy. This is a valuable resource for our Native American Veterans and will ensure Cow Creek is able to continue to provide exceptional services.

New Pain Clinic

Roseburg was able to recruit an interventional pain anesthesiologist and establish a new pain clinic for Veterans. This is a significant resource for Veterans, which will allow many to reduce pain medications. This clinic provides anti-inflammatory injections, nerve blocks, nerve ablations and evaluations for higher-level procedures, and has received high marks from those who have already benefitted from this new service.

FY 2014 STATS

Medical Care Budget \$170,342,955

Veterans Served 26,792

Total Beds 112

Employees 855

Outpatient Visits 266,606

Clinics 3

Volunteer Hours 53,359

Surgeries 1,614

Inpatient Bed Days 25,307

Eugene Health Care Center

The Eugene Health Care Center held a ground breaking ceremony on April 21, 2014. The new clinic will replace the two existing buildings currently utilized in Eugene and surrounding areas. The building will increase the overall available healthcare space from 25,000 square feet to more than 100,000 square feet. The additional space will allow VA to significantly increase services that are currently not available at the existing clinics. Anticipated opening date is January 2016.



Creative Arts Festival

Recreation Therapy staff submitted photos of a wide range of art mediums, including short stories and even one original song, into this highly competitive Veteran-only annual National Creative Art Festival competition in March. A metal sculpture that was shipped to the judges in Wisconsin upon their request had been placed in the top three in the metal sculpture category. This, in itself, is an amazing honor as several thousand Veterans enter the contest each year. It was later announced the dragon won first place!





Improving Access

The Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center continues to focus on improving access to healthcare. Through the use of telehealth technologies, Primary Care added visit capacity through the Boise VA Medical Center's telehealth hub. Specialty care offered education opportunities by partnering with other medical centers, including

bariatric education (Palo Alto), spinal cord injury (Cleveland) and plastic surgery and pulmonary education (Puget Sound). Veterans also experienced increased access to Pharmacy needs by utilizing MyHealthvet for medication renewal requests. Mental health programs increased access by continuing the integration of mental health in primary care, resulting in nearly doubled access to mental healthcare for Veterans, an increase of 42% over 2013. Mental health also expanded through Tele-Mental Health and partnered with other sites in the VISN. A combination of these efforts improved wait times for mental healthcare; they are now better than the national average.



Excellence in Nursing

Our Patient Care Services Team is aspiring to nursing excellence. In 2014, the Associate Director for Patient Care Services, supported creating a Just Culture; an atmosphere of trust in which people are encouraged, even rewarded, for providing essential safety-related information, but in which they are also clear about where the line must be drawn between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Spokane has embraced a Just Culture for patient safety through policy and staff training.

The Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center has been on an exciting patient-centered care journey, working with the National Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation. Veterans have a voice by participating on committees and in engagement sessions, submitting comment cards and attending Town Hall Meetings. In addition to engaging with Veterans, this year, residents of the Community Living Center enjoyed a serene and peaceful healing garden (pictured) and the opportunity to grow their own vegetables. Veterans also enjoyed the addition of

guided imagery privacy curtains to promote healing and reduce anxiety in our inpatient areas, and in areas such as oncology and hospice. Thanks to the efforts of the Patient Experience Committee, Veterans were provided with guided imagery and soothing sounds CDs to relax them before and after procedures. Special attention was given to those with small children and child-friendly play areas were created in waiting areas.

Awards

The Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center was proud to be awarded The Joint Commission Top Performer Award for a third consecutive year for excellence in pneumonia care and other quality indicators. This recognition acknowledged facilities that were top performers in using evidence-based care processes closely linked to positive patient outcomes. Other quality achievements included receiving the National Center for Patient Safety Gold Award for Excellence in Patient Safety.

FY 2014 STATS

Medical Care Budget \$189,814,733

Veterans Served 31,293

Total Beds 70

Employees 894

Outpatient Visits 326,679

Clinics 2

Volunteer Hours 54,955

Surgeries 1,318

Inpatient Bed Days 18,580

PACT Call Center Update

The Walla Walla VA continues to expand the VISN 20 Pilot PACT Call Center, with 30 employees to date. This number is expected to expand to 90 when fully implemented. In FY14, VISN and Walla Walla team leaders completed the rollover of all PACT teams for Portland VA's clinics into the call center, along with the PACT teams of the main Walla Walla VA campus and one of its CBOCs. The joint team works to meet the national goal of answering calls within 30 seconds and keeping the abandonment rate to approximately 5%. The long-term goal is to "answer that call" with a live voice for all VISN PACT teams.

Life Goals Program & Recognition

VA Walla Walla's Richland CBOC received the 2014 National Primary Care PACT Best Practice Award in June 2014 for the Life Goal Project, a program piloted at this clinic that enhanced Veterans' participation in preventive programming; provided guidance for the primary care provider, allowing for selective treatment options; increased access to care; and the opportunity for and support in reaching their optimal level of wellness. The program is being expanded to all VA Walla Walla teams.

BURR Project

Through a BURR (Building Utilization Review & Repurposing) & EUL (Enhanced-Used Lease) project, the winning bidder, Catholic Charities of Spokane, is moving forward to renovate four existing officers' quarters buildings and construct two additional like structures on the VA Walla Walla campus to provide 40 units of housing for homeless Veterans. Renovation efforts for the four buildings, originally built in the 1850s, will preserve them and their important history. The four units, along with the two additional structures, will honor and reflect the exterior façade of the historic officers' quarters, offer full kitchens, bathrooms, and a washer/dryer, and many will be fully handicap accessible for homeless Veterans.



Expansion of HPBC to Yakima

Expanded the Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC) program to the Yakima CBOC area to continue to provide in-home instruction and care to Veterans, their families, and caregivers, to help Veterans become more independent in daily living skills and disease management. HBPC services are currently offered in Walla Walla and La Grande.

Development of Mindfulness CAM Project Supporting Veterans

Expanded Walla Walla VA's Complementary & Alternative Medicine (CAM) program to include a twice-weekly class on mindfulness, emphasizing proven stress reduction techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation and seated meditation. Other CAM programs being offered include yoga, tai chi, creative expression, horticulture therapy, aromatherapy, and guided imagery.

FY 2014 STATS

Medical Care Budget \$89,143,502

Veterans Served 18,820

Total Beds 36

Employees 488

Outpatient Visits 206,428

Clinics 4

Volunteer Hours 19,685

Inpatient Bed Days 9,974



Horses for Heroes

Horses for Heroes Equine Assistance Therapy Program through the Office of Rural Health completed its third consecutive year of programming where 24 OEF/OIF/OND Veterans were approved to participate in the program in 2014. The OEF/OIF/OND Program Manager presented the Horses for Heroes Equine Therapy Program at the 27th Annual Northwest Regional Rural Health Conference last March in Spokane, WA.

Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics

1,305 women are enrolled at the VA SORCC with 879 women Veterans receiving primary care. Women overall grew by 12% with 93% of VA SORCC women Veterans receiving care from designated women's health providers.



New Care Unit

The New Behavioral Health Transitional Care Unit (BH TCU) at the VA SORCC is a 64-bed personalized care unit that aims to assist Veterans in need of continued monitoring of their general health and medication needs. The BH TCU staff closely monitor progress on integrated treatment goals, such as improved mental health, nutrition and chronic illness status, fostering Veterans' abilities to transition to a more independent setting.

Home Based Primary Care

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) makes 600-800 visits per month. There are currently 185 Veterans actively enrolled in the program. The expansion of HBPC services to Veterans in Klamath County, with the creation of a full team, is currently in process with 25 Veterans enrolled.

VA SORCC has CBOCs in Klamath Falls and Grants Pass, and an Outreach Clinic in Lakeview. At 10,000 square feet, the current Grants Pass CBOC is more than three times larger than the previous building, and more than 900 new Veterans have come to the clinic, an average of about 135 new Veterans a month. There are three primary care teams and room for a fourth. The clinic has added or expanded several services, from lab work to dermatology, cardiology, psychological counseling and telehealth.

FY 2014 STATS

Medical Care Budget \$105,116,848

Veterans Served 18,048

Total Beds 525

Employees 577

Outpatient Visits 228,681

Clinics 2

Outreach Clinic 1

Volunteer Hours 134,524

Inpatient Bed Days 160,967



VA NW Health Network – VISN 20

1601 East 4th Plain Blvd., Building 17, Suite C402

Vancouver, WA 98661

Phone 360.619.5925

www.VISN20.med.va.gov

VISN 20 publishes an annual report for patients, employees, volunteers and all those interested in Veterans Health Care in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. For questions, please contact Megan Crowley at 360.619.5934 or at megan.crowley@va.gov.



WWW.VISN20.MED.VA.GOV

