

## Message from the Acting Network Director

Greetings,

As summer comes to a close, staff at the Network office are looking forward to opportunities for reflection, change and accomplishing new goals – possibilities that each new year seems to make possible. With that in mind, in late August, we hosted the annual Director's retreat where strategic planning was the focus.

In an effort to set a clear direction for the future and align ourselves with the rest of our organization, we first reviewed VHA goals, which are:

- Provide Veterans personalized, proactive, patient-driven health care.
- Achieve measurable improvements in health outcomes.
- Align resources to deliver sustained value to Veterans.

Key themes that were identified in the two days that followed were:

- Facilities working together to make our health care system more patient-centered;
- Continuing to integrate ICARE values (Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence) and components of VA's transformational initiatives into our daily work;
- Focusing on improving health outcomes;
- Expanding the use of technology to deliver care to patients in non-traditional ways;
- Tailoring training programs to better meet employee needs;
- Streamlining internal administrative processes to work more efficiently.

We spent the bulk of our time together identifying priorities and action items, aligning them within 6 categories:

Staffing and Organizational Health, Elevating the Patient Centered Experience, IT/Technology, Maximizing Health Value in Purchased Care and Maximizing Current Assets

In the coming months, many workgroups will be chartered and charged with action items that will help accomplish the numerous goals and strategies that resulted from the meeting. A VISN 20 Strategic Planning Committee will be identified and our Strategic Plan finalized. I look forward to sharing our progress and realizing positive impacts for Veterans and employees.

Around the Network, we have several vacancies in key leadership positions including the VISN Director. The selection process for Dr. Pendergrass's successor is in the final stages, and we hope to be able to make an announcement in the near future.

Until then, thank you for the work you do on behalf of our nation's Veterans. I am looking forward to seeing you in the upcoming weeks and months as I travel throughout the VISN. In the meantime, it has been an honor to serve as Acting VISN Director and I am extremely optimistic about our future.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Fisher  
Acting Network Director, VISN 20