



Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

2015 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

*Kick Starting the
Pace of Change*



Accelerating the Pace of Change & Increasing Veterans' Access to Care

“Providing the best care for our Veterans is why we are here, now and into the future.”

*– Dr. Michela Zbogor,
Chief Medical Officer, VISN 8*

A LETTER TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

The VA is undergoing a continuous transformation to ensure the treatment of and service to our Veterans is veteran-centric, personalized and proactive. Our connection with the Veteran starts the minute they seek care in one of our eight major hospitals or 60 community clinics – and it lasts through final honors. The foundation of our relationship is built on trust and respect – and it must last a lifetime.

This year, we provided direct care for more Veterans than any other VA healthcare network in the nation. More than 600,000 patients were treated in 2015—and of those, 74,500 were new users of our healthcare system.

VISN 8 has made significant strides in tackling this ever-increasing workload by aggressively increasing Veterans' access to care. We have hired more clinical providers, nurses and support staff; increased our clinic hours; piloted new and innovative programs; expanded specialty care services; invested in new, high tech equipment; modernized infrastructure; expanded existing facilities; and opened four new community clinics.

For Veterans who required care outside VA, we provided more care in the private sector than ever before. In 2015, we made almost 192,000 referrals for outside appointments. In total, \$655 million was spent on community care this year.

It's also worth noting that, according to a study this year by the VFW service organization, Veterans prefer VA services because they receive such high quality care, even though almost 80 percent have other forms of insurance.

Our health care in VISN 8 is outstanding. Just read through the pages of this report and you'll see examples of it on each and every page. You'll hear the voices of Veterans pleased with their care—and also from our employees whose dedication to their patients keeps them motivated and inspired day after day.

We will strive to continue to provide such excellence in health care, with a clear focus on services that meet our patients' unique needs and personal health goals. Placing the Veteran at the center of everything we do is our mission and passion.



Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

WE SPECIALIZE IN

Debbie.

At the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network of hospitals and clinics, we practice patient-centered care – one Veteran at a time.

That means we strive to put the Veteran first in everything our team of doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers do as they work together to provide individualized, coordinated care. The connection begins the moment a person walks through our doors and lasts through final honors.

Patient-Centered Services include:

- Compassionate care at 8 large VA hospitals and 60 Community Clinics located near where Veterans live and work
- A focus on prevention and well-being
- Nearly 400 combined years of service to Veterans in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands



“When Veterans come to Puerto Rico and visit the San Juan VA Medical Center, they are surprised by how warm and kind the staff is. As a patient in the Spinal Cord unit, I have direct access to everything and everyone I need... they are my family.”

– Deborah Dones, U.S. Army Veteran



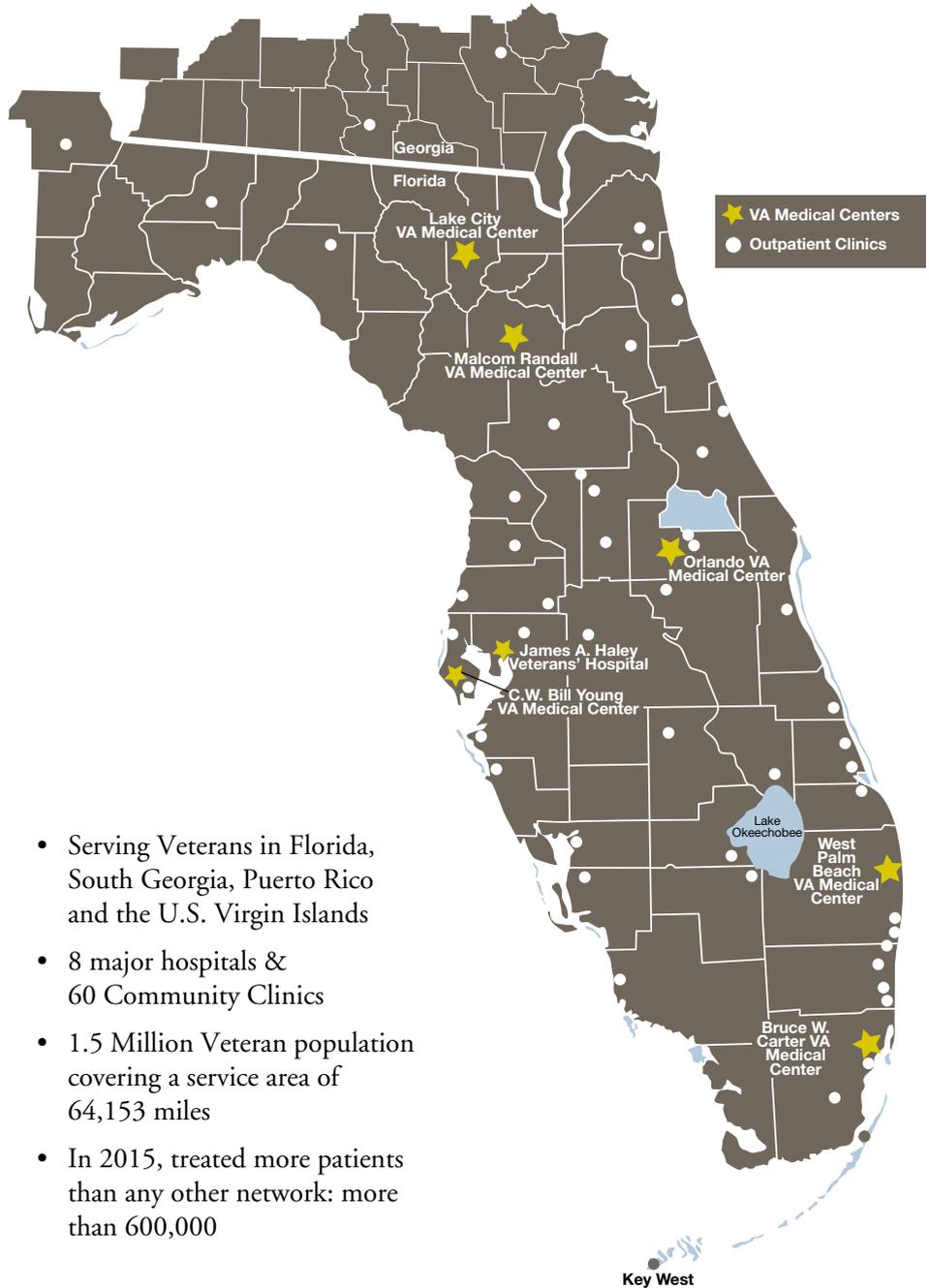
VISN 8 The VA Sunshine Healthcare Network



We are listening hard to what Veterans, Congress, employees and Veteran Service Organizations are telling us. What we hear drives us to a historic, department-wide transformation, changing VA's culture and making Veterans the center of everything we do.

We call it **MyVA** and it entails many organizational reforms to better unify the VA's efforts on behalf of Veterans. Here's what's happening across the country and at each of our Medical Centers and community clinics in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network. We are:

- ✓ Improving the Veteran Experience to be seamless, integrated and responsive
- ✓ Improving the employee experience, focusing on people and culture to better serve Veterans
- ✓ Establishing a culture of continuous improvement
- ✓ Enhancing strategic partnerships



- Serving Veterans in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands
- 8 major hospitals & 60 Community Clinics
- 1.5 Million Veteran population covering a service area of 64,153 miles
- In 2015, treated more patients than any other network: more than 600,000

2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

Health Care Services

-  **2,699**
Operating Beds
-  **603,198**
Patients Treated*
-  **8.3 Million**
Total Visits to our Facilities*
-  **22,804**
Average Daily Outpatient Visits*
-  **74,555**
First-Time Users of Our Health Care Services*
-  **13.2 Million**
Prescriptions Filled in 2015
For the 5th consecutive year, VA's Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy received the highest customer satisfaction score among the nation's public and private mail order pharmacies.
-  **328,856**
\$247.3 Million*
Patients Receiving Prosthetics and Sensory Aid Services & Prosthetics Budget
(VISN budget is 10% of VA's overall Prosthetics spending)
-  **154,241/1.31 Million**
Mental Health Patients & Outpatient Visits
-  **1,489**
Veterans Receiving Mental Health Residential Care
-  **99,809**
OEF/OIF/OND Returning Veterans provided care since 2002. *(Represents 8.4% of all Returning Veterans nationwide.)*

Dollars & Cents

-  **\$4.7 Billion**
Total Network Budget
(Includes \$407 Million in Traditional Non-VA Care)
-  **\$2.6 Billion**
Employee Payroll
-  **\$1.85 Billion**
Construction Projects
-  **\$349 Million**
M.C.C.F. Collections*
-  **\$3.4 Million**
Green Projects

**Funds collected by VA for copayments and health insurance reimbursements which are then returned to local health care facilities to provide additional services for Veterans receiving care at their hospital or clinic.*

Workforce

-  **7,380**
Nurses
-  **2,575**
Physicians
-  **2,069**
Mental Health Professionals
-  **3,715**
New Hires
-  **27,835**
Employees
-  **32%**
Employees Who Are Also Veterans

Aggressively Increasing Access to Care

Almost **90%**
of Veterans in our service area
HAVE ACCESS
to Primary and Mental Health Services
within a 30-mile drive time of their homes.

Of the nearly
600,000
patients treated in
2015, OVER **74,500**
Veterans were **NEW USERS**
of VISN 8 health care – more than
any other network.

Made almost
192,000
referrals for Veterans to
receive care in the private sector.

Spent
\$655 MILLION
for Care in the Community*

*\$529 Million on traditional Community Care and \$126 Million in supplemental CHOICE funds

*** #1 in nation**



Proudly Serving Veterans Since 2006

Orlando VA Medical Center at Lake Nona **OPEN FOR BUSINESS**

On May 26, in conjunction with the Memorial Day holiday, the \$616 million Orlando VA Medical Center at Lake Nona was dedicated and formally activated, making it the first VA hospital to open in the Orlando area. The other major VA facility in Orlando--the Lake Baldwin Outpatient Clinic (OPC)--was activated in 2006 and will continue as a large OPC.

On February 24, the first primary care clinic opened at the new Lake Nona Hospital and Clinic campus with an early morning flag raising. The 1.2 million square foot facility includes a 134-bed hospital, advanced diagnostic and testing facilities, a 120-bed Community Living Center (nursing home) and a 60-bed Domiciliary which is a residential mental health treatment center.



New Orlando VA Medical Center



With the 2015 opening of the new Orlando VA Medical Center at Lake Nona, the Lake Baldwin facility becomes Orlando's third Outpatient Clinic, bringing its points of patient care to 12 throughout central and east central Florida.

Strengthening Partnerships with Stakeholders

Lake Nona Impact Forum: As part of Orlando's Medical City community, the Orlando VA Medical Center hosted attendees of the 2015 Lake Nona Impact Forum this year. Annually, the Lake Nona Impact Forum brings together the nation's top CEOs, health care innovators and thought leaders to discuss advancing quality of life by exploring the intersections of wellness, sustainable living, and education.

BY THE NUMBERS



180*
Operating Beds



106,585
Total Patients Treated



3,458
Employees



3,648
Average Daily Outpatient Visits



38%
Employees Who Are Also Veterans



1.33 Million
Total Outpatient Visits

**In FY16, there are plans for an additional 134 beds at the new Orlando VA Medical Center at Lake Nona (total beds=314).*

Concierge Service PROVIDES HELPING HANDS

The Orlando VA Medical Center (VAMC) Customer Service section formally put its Concierge Service into operation in 2015, first at the Lake Baldwin facility and then on the Lake Nona campus.

RED VESTED VOLUNTEERS, many of whom are Veterans, *provide services and support* to Orlando's more than

110,000
enrolled Veterans.

The Red Vest concept dovetails with Lake Nona's many architectural wayfinding enhancements, providing Veterans with a much needed assist in navigating the 1.2 million square foot campus.



Employees Making a Difference A Leader in LGBT Health Care



Five years ago, **Orlando VA Medical Center (OVAMC) Social Worker Keri Griffin** (pictured) noticed an absence of services for Lesbian, Gay, BiSexual, Transgender (LGBT)

Veterans and created a support group. The group meets twice a month and provides an opportunity for attendees to discuss topics from health care needs to relationships. Griffin also educates staff about the needs of LGBT Veterans and developed "safe-space" cards for providers to display, letting LGBT Veterans know it's a safe space for them. Her continued efforts have led to the Orlando OVAMC being designated a leader in LGBT health care by the Human Rights campaign for the past three years.

Orlando VA Is Top 100 Company for Working Families

For the fourth consecutive year, and 5th year overall, the Orlando VA Medical Center (OVAMC) has been named a Top 100 Company for Working Families by the Orlando Sentinel.

The OVAMC was commended for leading Orlando businesses in providing core benefits, family-related services, excellent work environments, and benchmark communication, training, and planning services that combine to make the medical center one of the most sought after workplaces in central Florida.



Proudly Serving Veterans Since 1968

Caring for Veterans For 30 Years

Dr. Gerald J. Botko, dental services chief at the Miami VA Healthcare System, is a Desert Storm and Operating Enduring Freedom (OEF) combat Veteran. He has been caring for Veterans at VA for more than 30 years. He says, "I always do my best to express to my patients that they are special, and that I care about their well-being."



Razor Focus on Access To Care

Improved Access. This year, the Miami VA Healthcare System improved Veterans access to appointments, seeing patients on average within five days of their desired appointment for primary care, and same-day access for mental health appointments. As of September 30, almost 97 percent of appointments were completed within 30 days of the patients' desired date.

Quality of Care Leader. The Miami VA Healthcare System continues to be a national leader in quality of care, ranked 4 stars by Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) data and is a top performer for mental health services among comparable VA facilities. The healthcare system was recognized as a 1A Classification VA Healthcare Facility. This is the highest level of complexity in the Veterans Health Administration and is a reflection of the high quality and breadth of care available to South Florida Veterans.

Joint Physical Medicine and Rehab Center Opens

With our U.S. Navy partners, the Miami VA Healthcare System opened a joint physical medicine and rehabilitation center at the Key West VA Outpatient Clinic this year. This clinic will support the Veterans and military personnel living in the lower Florida Keys.



Bruce W. Carter VA Medical Center

BY THE NUMBERS



372
Operating Beds



3,013
Employees



32%
Employees Who Are Also Veterans



58,864
Total Patients Treated



2,171
Average Daily Outpatient Visits



792,543
Total Outpatient Visits



WE SPECIALIZE IN **Karen.**



“The staff are very compassionate and provide excellent care.”

– Karen Wiggins, U.S. Army Veteran Patient, Bruce W. Carter VA Medical Center, Miami

Ground-Breaking Work in Schizophrenia

Phillip Harvey, Ph.D., from the Bruce W. Carter VA Medical Center in Miami was awarded the 2014 Barnwell Award recognizing his groundbreaking work in our understanding of patients with schizophrenia. His work has led to new discoveries in the diagnosis and treatment of dementia, Alzheimer’s, memory disorders, and other mental health issues affecting not only Veterans, but people around the world. His research has been described as the most significant advance in schizophrenia research since the introduction of antipsychotic drugs.

Lactation Room for New Moms

To better serve our female Veterans and employees, the Miami VA Healthcare System celebrated the opening of its new Lactation Room this year. The room provides a private location for mothers to pump breastmilk or breastfeed. The room is beautifully decorated with a changing table, chairs, electrical outlets, and access to a sink and clean water for washing hands and rinsing equipment.



Proudly Serving Veterans Since 1972

NEW FACILITIES Enhance Patient Care

Several projects were completed in 2015 that enhance the services and care offered to patients and visitors at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital. One was the complete renovation of the lobby restrooms in the main hospital. The construction project took aging, cramped restrooms and reimagined them to make airport-style facilities that created 50 percent more capacity in a modern design.



A new, 4,600 square foot Aquatic Center, located in the new Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation building in the main hospital, features two pools for Aquatic Therapy. One is an Olympic size therapy pool and the other is an underwater treadmill with therapy jets, hydro massage, a moveable floor for accurate and variable water depth, and underwater cameras for Gait Training. Clinical staff considers this new Aquatic Center a game changer in the rehabilitation of our Veteran and Active Duty patients.



VFW: Veterans Prefer VA Care

More Veterans are coming to VA for their care even though 78 percent have Medicare, Medicaid, Tricare or private insurance.

A report issued by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) in September 2015 found that of those Veterans surveyed by that organization, most prefer to use the VA because they receive high quality care, they regard VA health care as an earned benefit, and they consider VA's ability to treat service-connected conditions to be unmatched anywhere in the private sector. To learn more about the report, visit <http://goo.gl/13moRJ>.



James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Tampa

BY THE NUMBERS



499
Operating Beds



5,117
Employees



32%
Employees Who Are Also Veterans



92,950
Total Patients Treated



3,446
Average Daily Outpatient Visits



1.257 Million
Total Outpatient Visits

IN TAMPA: *More Space, Staff & Appts*



Rock climbing wall at the Tampa VA's Polytrauma and Rehabilitation Center.

For more than a year, improving access to care for Veterans has been among VA's top priorities, including the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital & Clinics (JAHVH). Several initiatives have enabled access improvements, including activating more than 300,000 square feet of space which allowed specialty services to expand into the vacated space. To care for patients in the new space, JAHVH hired 128 new full time employees including doctors and other providers, nurses and support staff. Also, over the last year, by extending clinic hours and adding Saturday clinics, there were 23,000 additional appointment hours for Veterans.

Virtual Care Helps Boost Access.

JAHVH has also focused on maximizing non-traditional appointments to improve access efforts through technology. In 2015, more than 60 percent of patients had access to secure messaging with almost 100,000 incoming and outgoing messages exchanged between staff and patients, saving them the time and trouble of calling or visiting a VA health care facility.

Teledermatology and teleretina screening was also added this year and overall clinical video telehealth was up about eight percent. There has also been a dramatic increase – about 800 percent – in the use of E-consults, resulting in quicker care and treatment for Veterans.

WE SPECIALIZE IN *Lequan.*

"I love the VA. I don't think I could have gotten the same care and rehab anywhere else."

– Lequan Taylor, U.S. Navy Veteran Patient, James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Tampa



Proudly Serving Veterans Since 1920

Getting Veterans Seen Is Serious Business at NF-SGVHS

At the North Florida-South Georgia Veterans Health System (NF-SGVHS), we take our responsibility to improve clinic access for Veterans very seriously.

We continue to provide the Choice Program as a third option to in-house and traditional non-VA care and have established Choice Champion staff at each of our 14 facilities.

Also this year, an Appointment Scheduling Unit opened, averaging 320 calls per day. Also, to increase efficiency and proper placement of Veterans when they are admitted to the hospital, utilization management advisors have been deployed in the Emergency Departments at Lake City and Gainesville and ICare rounds have identified and addressed barriers to discharge early in the hospital stay.

Meanwhile, NF-SGVHS Compensation and Pension staff continues to work closely with the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) to help Veterans receive timely, accurate decisions on Veteran Disability claims. At the end of FY2015, it took an average 23.9 days to process requests from VBA. This is lower than the network and national VA target rates.





Malcom Randall
VA Medical Center



Lake City VA
Medical Center

BY THE NUMBERS



586
Operating Beds



5,957
Employees



34%
Employees Who Are Also Veterans



136,635
Total Patients Treated



4,605
Average Daily Outpatient Visits



1.68 Million
Total Outpatient Visits

Extremity MRI Now Available at Malcom Randall

For Veterans who need an exam of an arm, including elbow, wrist and hand, or the leg, the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center in Gainesville now offers Veterans the Extremity MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) specialty scanner, an option not many hospitals offer. Instead of having to enter a full body MRI scanner if just a limb study is needed, the extremity MRI allows the patient to place an arm or leg into the scanner while lying comfortably next to the machine. Designed to be quiet and comfortable, this state-of-the-art scanner is a huge benefit to patients who are claustrophobic, who have PTSD, who suffer from anxiety and have other conditions.



Performance Improvement: Seizing The Initiative When Something Isn't Working

In January 2014, there were more than 2,000 patients waiting for Sleep Studies at the North Florida-South Georgia Veterans Health System. A NF-SGVHS Systems Redesign team was chartered and through the teams' efforts, the waitlist for Sleep Studies was eliminated in June 2015, greatly improving Veteran access. In addition, the overall cycle time from initial consult to patient treatment was reduced from over two years to 90 days. Sleep lab utilization rates increased and the sleep lab is being scheduled at more than 100 percent of capacity. Cost savings is significant – more than \$525,000 annually.

For their efforts, the “Sleep Studies Access” team was selected as the VISN 8 winner of the 2015 LEAN FORWARD recognition and award program. The Lean-Six Sigma Belts from that team were presented their award at the VISN 8 Improvement Forum held October 27 to 28 in Orlando.

New Community Clinics Open

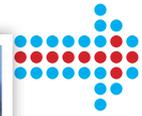
Two new clinics opened this year in the North Florida-South Georgia Veterans Health System. The first is the Perry Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) which provides health care for Veterans residing in surrounding rural areas. Services include Primary Care, Mental Health, Social Work, Laboratory and various specialties via TeleHealth.

The second is the St. Augustine Interim Clinic, a full-service CBOC located in St. Johns County. Intended as a temporary facility while a permanent structure is being planned, it provides a broad range of general and specialized medical, psychiatric, nursing, women's health, social work, and ancillary services for the primary care patient in a community setting. A full-time podiatrist also provides wound care services.



Members of the NF-SGVHS Sleep Study
Access Systems Redesign Team

Proudly Serving Veterans Since 1933



Bay Pines was originally established as a National Soldiers Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. When the home officially opened on March 16, 1933, there were 250 employees on duty and facilities capable of providing health care services for about 159 Veterans. Today, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System treats more than 100,000 Veterans annually, employs over 4,000 clinical and support staff and provides healthcare at nine facilities to include the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center in Bay Pines, Florida.

New Services, Pilot Programs, Initiatives

90+ New Hires

This year, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System hired more than 90 additional positions in primary and specialty care as part of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2015. These hiring efforts expanded capacity in chiropractic, dermatology, endocrinology, geriatrics, imaging, neuropsychology, oncology, optometry, orthopedics, otolaryngology, pulmonary, anesthesiology, and psychiatry in 2015 and beyond. Also hired was an Access Coordinator/Group Practice Manager who routinely works with clinical and administrative services on access to care, consult management, and clinic utilization.

'Float Provider' Model

To increase access and improve continuity in Primary Care, float providers were hired who are temporarily dispatched to cover

for staff on leave, vacancies and the seasonal influx of Veterans. Float providers are augmented with nursing staff who operate in the same capacity to provide short-notice coverage. The float model significantly improved access to Primary Care services for Veterans enrolled for VA health care at Bay Pines.

Growing the New Spine Program

In July 2015, a neurosurgeon and Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner came on-board to lead and grow Bay Pines' new spine care program. The added service will help enrich the range of treatment options for Veterans experiencing back pain with a focus on improved physical function. The healthcare system expects to begin performing surgical interventions in early 2016 for patients suffering from degenerative disc disease—a painful condition caused from a damaged disc in the spine.

MyVA Direct Scheduling Pilot

This pilot program allows Veterans to see audiologists and optometrists without first seeing a Primary Care physician. This expedited care enhances the Veterans health care experience. Due to the success of the pilot at Bay Pines and two other sites, VA is considering system-wide implementation of direct scheduling in Audiology and Optometry and other specialty services. In April 2015, the Pittsburgh Veterans Engineering Resource Center (VERC) recognized the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System as one of the nation's best 1A facilities for health care access practices, including provision of open access through direct scheduling pilots (Audiology, Cardiology, Prosthetics) and initiation of an additional same-day access pilot for Primary Care.



C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center

BY THE NUMBERS



397
Operating Beds



4,324
Employees



36%
Employees Who Are Also Veterans



108,316
Total Patients Treated



3,882
Average Daily Outpatient Visits



1.4 Million
Total Outpatient Visits

WE SPECIALIZE IN

Tina.



“The health care I receive in the VA is fantastic. I especially like that VA operates women’s clinics that are private and staffed with women doctors. As a woman Veteran, it’s comforting to know I can visit a clinic made just for me.”

– Tina Rapaport, U.S. Coast Guard Veteran Patient, C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center



“We focus on creating an environment where Veterans and their loved ones feel safe and informed. We want them to know they’re in the right hands and can count on us to deliver high quality surgical care on par with the country’s top tertiary care centers.”

– Edward Hong, M.D.
Chief, Surgery Service
C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center



Expanding & Improving

Radiology and Lab Expansion/Renovation. In early 2015, Bay Pines expanded radiology space in the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center from about 18,300 square feet to nearly 21,500 square feet. The renovation improved patient flow and expanded clinical areas for imaging procedures (x-ray, ultrasound and CT). We also moved and expanded our laboratory and anticoagulation clinic at the main medical center, growing from 4,300 square feet to 9,300 square feet.

New CT Scanner. In September, a new Revolution CT scanner was installed. The \$1.9 million device delivers state-of-the-art image quality and clinical capabilities through temporal, spatial and coverage resolution.

Serving Women Veterans in VISN 8



3,104
Women Veterans Receiving Housing Assistance



24,000
Mammograms Performed in VISN 8 facilities



57,064
Women Veterans Receiving Health Care Services (#1 in nation)



146,898
Women Veterans in VISN 8 (4th largest population in nation)

Proudly Serving Veterans Since 1995

Letter from a Veteran: Local VA hospital belies national image

In light of all the negative press being espoused about the veterans' health care system, I felt it was time for the people of Palm Beach County to hear some positive news and to start taking pride in the health care provided by the West Palm Beach Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

I have had the privilege of receiving health care at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center for over 10 years.

During my travels, I have had emergencies which required treatment from civilian hospitals in various states. None compared to the care provided by the West Palm Beach VA. Last year, I was diagnosed with a fatal illness and could have gone to any hospital of my choosing. I chose the WPBVA for treatment, with complete faith in its medical staff's capability.

I have found the treatment to be superior on many levels. Everyone at the WPBVA, from the parking-lot bus driver to the administrators, gives you the assurance that they care about you. They care about your well-being — medically, physically, spiritually — and always take time to treat you like you were their only patient. The people of Palm Beach County should take pride in the service provided to veterans here. I, for one, owe my life to the expert professional care the WPBVA has provided.



- PHILLIP E. SHERIDAN, FORT LAUDERDALE

Palm Beach Post, April 27, 2015

New Rural Clinics Provide Care Closer to Home

Two new Primary Care Clinics opened this year – one in Glades County (Moore Haven) and the other in Hendry County (Clewiston). Collaborating with the Glades/Hendry Counties and the Florida Department of Health, we were pleased to establish these clinics that will better serve the needs of Veterans residing in these rural areas, providing them with health care closer to home.

Vocera Wireless Communication

New this year at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center, the VOCERA communication system is now being used on inpatient units, in the Community Living Center, and in other areas of the hospital. This wireless device is worn around the neck. It allows nurses to instantly communicate with patients and staff anywhere inside the facility. It has greatly improved internal communication and responsiveness to patient requests. The hospital plans to expand VOCERA to other areas on the hospital campus in the future.





West Palm Beach VA Medical Center

BY THE NUMBERS



243
Operating Beds



2,710
Employees



32%
Employees Who Are Also Veterans



63,031
Total Patients Treated



2,072
Average Daily Outpatient Visits



756,341
Total Outpatient Visits

Audiology, Heart Care, ALS Services Expanded

Audiology Services Expansion.

Audiology is one of the most in-demand services by Veterans. To improve access, audiology booths were installed this year at the Boca Raton, Delray, Stuart and Ft. Pierce Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). For the Vero Beach and Okeechobee clinics, teleaudiology hearing aid services are also offered. Also, the clinic in West Palm expanded its walk-in hearing aid services and added audiologists to do hearing aid programming and re-evaluation. The CBOCs offer walk-in clinics several days a week.

New ALS Clinic Created. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a fatal neuromuscular disease. Veterans, particularly from the Gulf War era, are twice as likely to develop ALS. ALS patients require comprehensive

care for their complex medical and psychosocial needs and the interdisciplinary model has been proven to be the best way to manage their care.

Systems Redesign Initiative:

Congestive Heart Failure Clinic. Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) is one of the top medical conditions of patients enrolled for care at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center. To better manage this serious, chronic condition and improve Veterans' quality of life, a new CHF clinic is staffed by three dedicated Cardiology clinical professionals plus a pharmacist who specializes in CHF.



Pictured: A team of West Palm Beach VA clinic professionals is specifically focused on serving Veterans afflicted with ALS, a fatal disease.

Home-Like Environment in New Hospice

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held in August to open a 12-bed Hospice Unit in a 12,000 square foot building adjacent to the West Palm Beach Community Living Center (nursing home). The unit contains private rooms with baths and overnight accommodations for families; a family room with TV, Wi-Fi and activities; a family kitchen and dining area; a meditation room and a multipurpose room. Patients and families are thrilled with the new home-like environment.



Enhancing Strategic Partnerships: Collaborating To Battle Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's Community Care (ACC), a Florida-based not-for-profit organization, and the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center are collaborating to address the developing epidemic of Alzheimer's Disease and related neurocognitive disorders in Veterans and the community at large. The ACC is partnering with VA on a three-year plan to educate VA staff on the disease and its impact on patients and families.



Proudly Serving Veterans Since 1969

San Juan VA Medical Center



Patient Safety

A Top Priority at VA Caribbean



For four consecutive years since 2012, the VA Caribbean Healthcare System has been recognized with a Gold Cornerstone Award by the VA National Center for Patient Safety. This award recognizes VA leaders in patient safety whose staff take the initiative to report adverse events and close calls in order to prevent accidents, minimize risks, and support a robust, effective patient safety program.

We Take Being Prepared Seriously

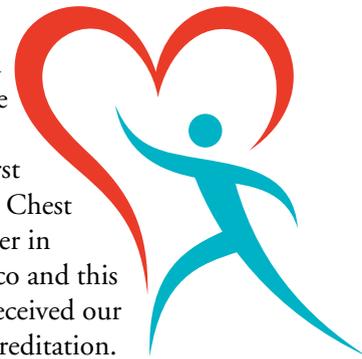


The island of San Juan is known for its beautiful beaches and tropical weather. It's also known for hurricanes and other weather-related events. This year, we partnered with local government and the community, participating in 14 events and emergency response exercises. The VA Caribbean Emergency Management Office is the lead agency on the island to facilitate healthcare-affiliated emergency management.

An Expert In Caring for Veterans With Heart Problems

The VA Caribbean Healthcare System had the first accredited Chest Pain Center in Puerto Rico and this year, we received our fourth accreditation.

This distinction is awarded by the Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care to hospitals that provide evidence-based care to patients with acute myocardial infarction through the most effective care delivery model with a focus on improving patient outcomes. VA Caribbean serves as the leading example on the island and has helped other neighboring hospitals with the process of achieving accreditation.





San Juan VA Medical Center, 1969

BY THE NUMBERS



422
Operating Beds



3,862
Employees



24%
Employees Who Are Also Veterans



64,158
Total Patients Treated



2,978
Average Daily Outpatient Visits



1.1 Million
Total Outpatient Visits

WE SPECIALIZE IN Radames & Awilda.



Pictured: Veteran Radames Irizarry, of San German, Puerto Rico, talks with his nurse in his hospital bed at the San Juan VA Medical Center. The Interactive Patient Care System (IPC) he is operating is installed in all patient rooms at the VAMC. Using the IPC system, hospitalized Veterans receive customized health education as dynamic, on-line entertainment including Internet access, television programming, movies, video games and music.



"The Interactive Patient Care System on the TV in my hospital bed is a great idea. I can navigate the web and can even connect my cell phone to it. It makes the time here pleasant."

– Veteran Radames Irizarry

"To me, the most important element in healing is not medication. It's when you're treated by a nurse that you wholeheartedly believe has the experience and enthusiasm to treat veterans. At VA Caribbean, we are treated with respect and always with a smile. The smile is the pill that treats my illness."

– Veteran Awilda Torres Santiago



Thank You Caregivers

...for all you do to support our Veterans

VISN 8's Caregiver Support Program continues to grow and offer support to our Caregivers throughout their caregiving journey. We offer a variety of support services including Adult Day Health Care Centers; Home-Based Primary Care; Skilled Home Care; the Homemaker and Home Health Aide Program; Home Health; Respite Care; and Home Hospice Care.

This year, 2,510 Caregivers participated in the Comprehensive Family Caregiver Program and another 3,720 were approved for the General Caregiver Program. The Comprehensive Program involves additional services for Caregivers of post-9/11 injured Veterans which may include a stipend, comprehensive training and medical coverage.

Also this year, VA mental health professionals provided 332 supportive counseling sessions to Caregivers as a consequence of caring for a Veteran with a service-connected condition. To alleviate Caregiver burnout, 281 respite days were arranged in addition



to 173 referrals to the Hero Miles program. This program provides flights for family members or friends to travel to stay with the Veteran in order to provide respite. Seventy Caregivers were also offered an online workshop on how to manage their own emotions, stress and physical health.

Each facility in VISN 8 has made positive changes to improve how they

process applications and support Caregivers. Examples include establishing an Eligibility Advisory Team to expedite the Caregiver application process, participating in a Veteran Directed Respite Pilot program; creating support groups and running a weekly dual dementia Caregiver support group/Veteran memory care group.

Caring for Our Aging Veterans



50%

Veterans over age 65



958

Veterans placed in Medical Foster Homes



3,965

Veterans receiving Home Health Care
(Services provided in the home by VA-contracted providers.)



4,829

Veterans Enrolled in Home Based Primary Care
(Primary care services provided in the home by VA.)



6,074

Veterans Served in Community Living Centers
and Community Nursing Homes



6,230

Veterans receiving Family or General
Caregiver Support Services

MEDICAL FOSTER HOMES:

A Safe and Healing Home Setting for Veterans



Pictured: Dr. June Leland (flowered blue shirt, center) and members of the Home Based Primary Care Team and Medical Foster Home Coordinators at the Tampa VA.

“I just got an email that Mr. S died under the care of hospice last night. If you will allow me a little excursion down memory lane, we got notice of this Veteran’s plight from the Prison Outreach Service and JM. You located his pensions and other entitlements and followed him through to the end of his life with dignity and compassion. You have demonstrated to me that when we take risks for our fellow human beings whose circumstances are under the influence of mental illness that the rewards may not be tangible, but they are high. You took care of his medical and psychiatric needs (and there were many). You found him a home. And he never went back to jail. At the end of his life, he chose not to go to the VA hospice and palliative care unit, but to die in his home--the Medical Foster Home you found for him. I have no doubt that without you, he would have died in jail with severe, untreated mental illness. So, any time you think what you’re doing doesn’t make a difference--and the difference doesn’t ripple out to our community--take a look at the difference you made for Mr. S--and for me. Thank you for pointing us all in the right direction.”

– Note from June LeLand, M.D. to her colleagues on the Home Based Primary Care Team, James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital, Tampa

The Medical Foster Home (MFH) Program provides Veterans with an option to nursing home placement. These are private homes in which a trained caregiver provides services at the Veteran’s expense and or that of his/her family or legal representative. VA inspects and approves all Medical Foster Homes.

Each MFH has a trained caregiver on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week, providing care including assisting with activities of daily living such as eating, bathing, dressing and supervision; all meals; transportation to appointments; plus social and recreational activities. While living in a MFH, Veterans receive Home Based Primary Care services. Many Veterans and their families consider MFHs more convenient, comfortable and affordable than traditional nursing home care.

In 2015, the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network had 958 Veterans in MFHs -- the nation’s largest number of placements. The network also boasts several best practices including partnering with the VA’s Community Residential Care Program for annual caregiver training; developing a caregiver mentorship program; creating volunteer ID badges for all caregivers; requesting caregivers meet Veterans and family in person before the Veteran moves in; and requesting all caregivers routinely visit hospitalized Veterans. In addition, MFH coordinators work closely with the VISN 8 Education Foundation to sponsor training events for VA staff and community partners.

Veterans Use Of Virtual Care Skyrockets in VISN 8



The teleaudiology program at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System started in 2014 and a year later, it has grown to serve nearly 1,000 Veterans.

With more Veterans seeking health care, telehealth is rapidly becoming an attractive option—especially for those who don't have a VA health care facility close to home. VISN 8 telehealth programs served nearly 277,000 Veterans during fiscal year 2015--an astounding 203 percent increase in patients utilizing the services since 2012.

The growth in all Virtual Care services at network hospitals and clinics is exploding. Between 2012 and 2015, there was a 24 percent increase in telehealth services; a 376 percent increase in Secure Messaging where Veterans communicate directly with their VA health care teams; and a 482 percent increase in e-consults.

Currently, there are more than 50 clinical specialties offered to Veterans through VA's telehealth programs in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network, including those at the North Florida South Georgia Health System (NF-SGVHS). Examples of NF-SGVHS telehealth programs include speech pathology, podiatry, nutrition and dietetics, orthotics, dermatology and mental health.

One tangible example of the success of NF-SGVHS telehealth is its flourishing TeleAudiology Program because of the large population of Veterans living with hearing loss. The NF-SGVHS Teleaudiology program started in 2014 and a year later, it has grown to serve nearly 1,000 Veterans.

Virtual Care Statistics

54,154

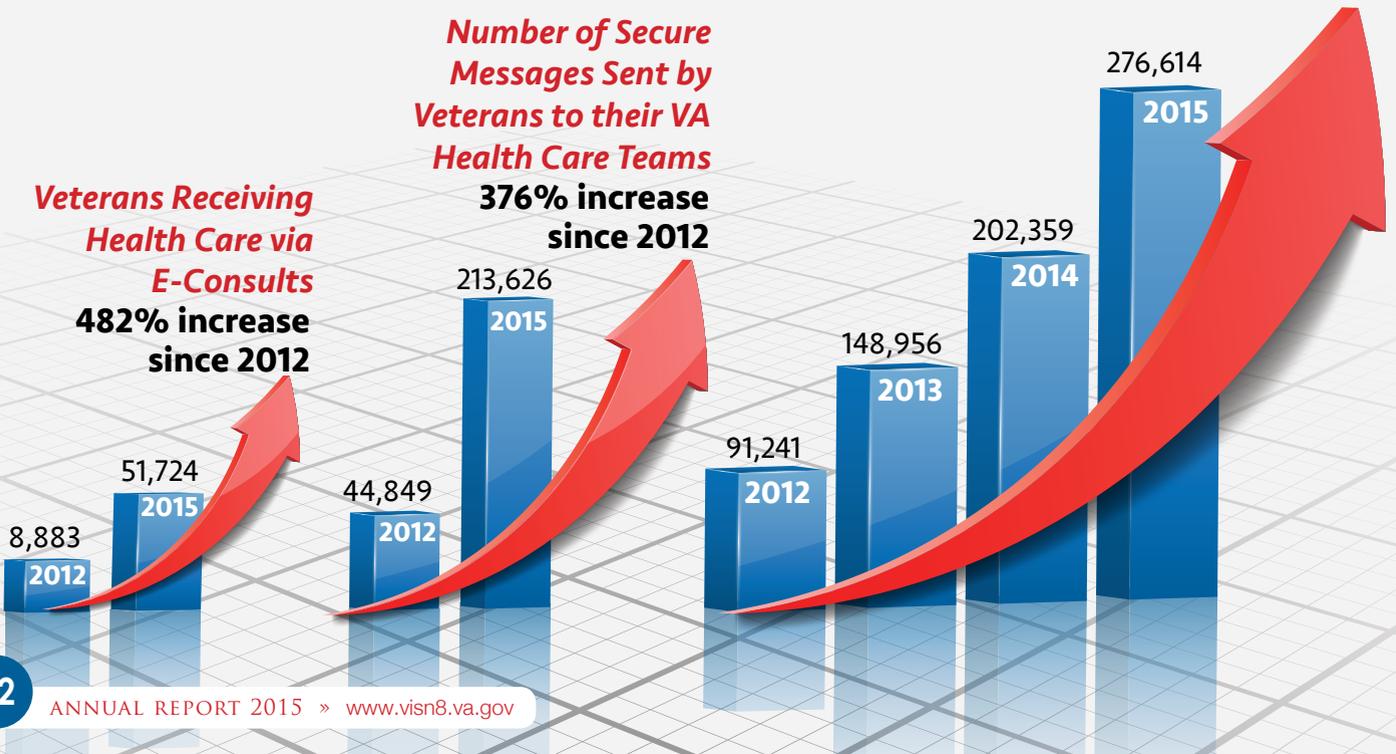
Veterans Using Telehealth

Veterans Using Virtual Care

203% increase since 2012

Number of Secure Messages Sent by Veterans to their VA Health Care Teams
376% increase since 2012

Veterans Receiving Health Care via E-Consults
482% increase since 2012



WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS



9,431 #2 in nation
Number of volunteers
across the network



870,306 #1 in nation
Hours Contributed



528
Number of Additional VA
Volunteers – Summer of Service



\$3.7 Million
Monetary Value of Donations
(money, items & activities)



\$20 Million (463 FTE)
#1 in nation
Monetary Value of volunteer
time and equivalent full-time
employees (FTE)



\$23.8 Million #2 in nation
Total Resource Impact (total
donations plus total value of
volunteer time)

Youth Volunteers' Efforts Benefit S. Florida Veterans, Children



Miami VA Healthcare System summer student volunteer Alain Carles was recognized for his 2nd prize award in the 2015 Disabled American Veterans Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship. This \$15,000 national scholarship recognizes his ongoing philanthropic activities that resulted in donations worth more than \$10,000 to Veterans and children in South Florida. Carles, who entered his senior year of high school in fall 2015, also received a \$5,000 James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship with a nomination supported by AMVETS, a Veterans Service Organization.

Pictured: Youth volunteer Sharadyanne Salomon logged more than 800 hours escorting patients to their appointments at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center. Recognized for her efforts, she was selected as a 2015 James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship award winner. Sharadyanne, who plans to become a physician, will use the \$20,000 award to further her education.

Fighting Homelessness Homeless Veteran Program a Model at Bay Pines

Since November 2014, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System has been operating a very successful Patient Aligned Care Team or H-PACT for the homeless Veteran population. In the H-PACT, Veterans can be seen without an appointment and receive medical care, case management, housing placement support, substance abuse and mental health treatment, community referrals, triage services, benefit counseling and other services. Nationally, this model has been shown to reduce homeless Veterans' trips to the emergency room visits by 31 percent and hospitalizations by 24 percent.

NUMBER OF VETERANS HELPED BY HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS NETWORK-WIDE



1,215
Healthcare for Re-Entry
Veterans*



3,778
Justice-Involved
Veterans Program*



5,299
Formerly Homeless Veterans
Placed in Permanent Housing



24,810
Homeless Assistance Program

* Veterans Justice Outreach



Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

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Susan J. Wentzell – Deputy Communication Manager
and Managing Editor, Annual Report



VISN 8 Community Clinics

BAY PINES VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Lee County VA Clinic
Sarasota VA Clinic
St. Petersburg VA Clinic
Palm Harbor VA Clinic
Bradenton VA Clinic
Port Charlotte VA Clinic
Naples VA Clinic
Sebring VA Clinic

NORTH FLORIDA/SOUTH GEORGIA VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Jacksonville VA Clinic
Jacksonville 2 VA Clinic
Valdosta VA Clinic
Ocala VA Clinic
St. Augustine VA Clinic
Tallahassee VA Clinic
Lecanto VA Clinic
The Villages VA Clinic
St Marys VA Clinic
Marianna VA Clinic
Palatka VA Clinic
Waycross VA Clinic
Perry VA Clinic

CARRIBEAN VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Ponce VA Clinic
Mayaguez VA Clinic
St Croix VA Clinic
St Thomas VA Clinic
Arecibo VA Clinic
Ceiba VA Clinic
Guayama VA Clinic
Utuaodo VA Clinic
Comerio VA Clinic
Vieques VA Clinic

MIAMI VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Broward County (Sunrise) VA Clinic
Miami VA Clinic
Key West VA Clinic
Homestead VA Clinic
Pembroke Pines VA Clinic
Key Largo VA Clinic
Hollywood VA Clinic
Deerfield Beach VA Clinic

ORLANDO VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Viera VA Clinic

Daytona Beach VA Clinic
Kissimmee VA Clinic
Orange City VA Clinic
Leesburg VA Clinic
Clermont VA Clinic
Lake Baldwin VA Clinic

JAMES A. HALEY VETERANS' HOSPITAL & CLINICS

Tampa Primary Care Annex
New Port Richey VA Clinic
Lakeland VA Clinic
Brooksville VA Clinic
Zephyrhills VA Clinic

WEST PALM BEACH VA MEDICAL CENTER

Clewiston VA Clinic
Fort Pierce VA Clinic
Delray Beach VA Clinic
Stuart VA Clinic
Boca Raton VA Clinic
Moore Haven VA Clinic
Vero Beach VA Clinic
Okeechobee VA Clinic
Port St. Lucie VA Clinic