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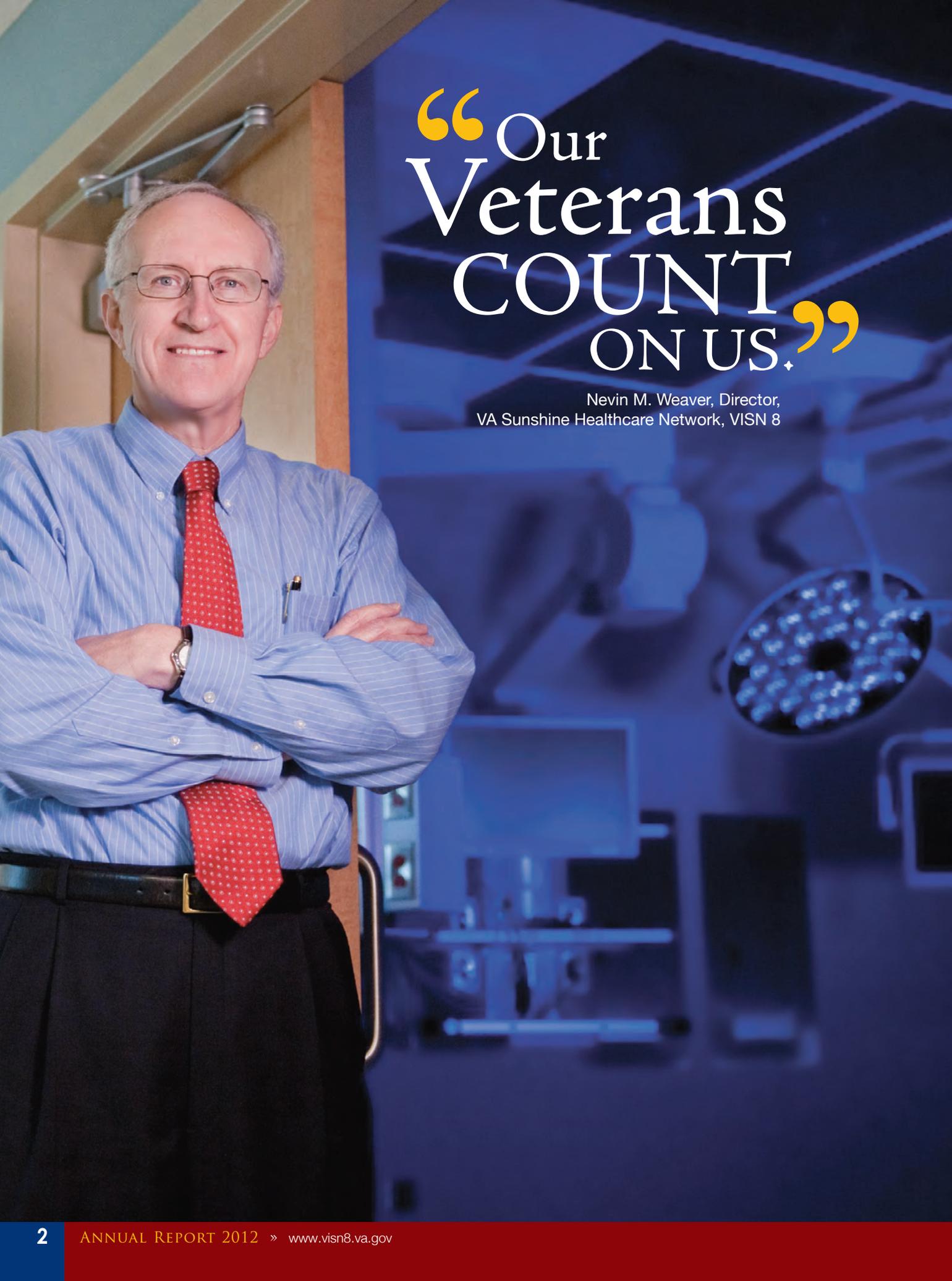
# 2012 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

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*Committed to Exceptional VA Health Care*



Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century



“Our  
Veterans  
COUNT  
ON US.”

Nevin M. Weaver, Director,  
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network, VISN 8

**Dear Veterans, Families and Friends,**

THIS ANNUAL REPORT IS MORE THAN A COLLECTION OF FACTS AND FIGURES. IT TELLS OUR STORY OF POSITIVE MOVEMENT FORWARD WITH A FOCUS GROUNDED IN SERVING OUR PATIENTS IN THE LARGEST, BUSIEST VA HEALTH CARE NETWORK IN THE NATION.

During 2012 in VISN 8, we saw more patients, filled more prescriptions, and performed more mammograms than any other network in the VA.

We've grown to serve even more Veterans with larger clinics that replaced older ones, expanded existing facilities and services, and created new specialty programs to better meet our patients' expectations.

We're putting every dollar to work--investing in new equipment, technology and employee training so our patients benefit from the latest medical advances.

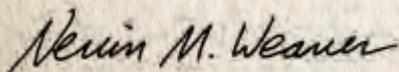
We're committed to being greener across our network of hospitals and clinics and we're getting recognized for these efforts with "Green Globe" awards for environmental and energy efficiency.

Special populations like women, homeless and returning Veterans and those living in rural areas are getting the specialized services they need and deserve--when and where they need it most.

Having the Veteran truly at the center of their health care is central to our efforts. We are engaged in a Cultural Transformation to do just that by empowering our employees to improve patient experiences through learning, discovery and continuous improvement.

As we continue this journey, we need to stay a step or two ahead in an ever-changing health care environment. In 2013, I see even more positive changes on the horizon as we continue to provide exceptional health care for Veterans in the same way they have worked tirelessly to preserve the freedom we all enjoy.

With gratitude,



Nevin M. Weaver, FACHE  
VISN 8 Network Director



The busiest VA healthcare network in the country. We care for more Veterans than anyone else.

570,309

Patients Seen  
(highest in nation)

# THE VA HEALTHCARE

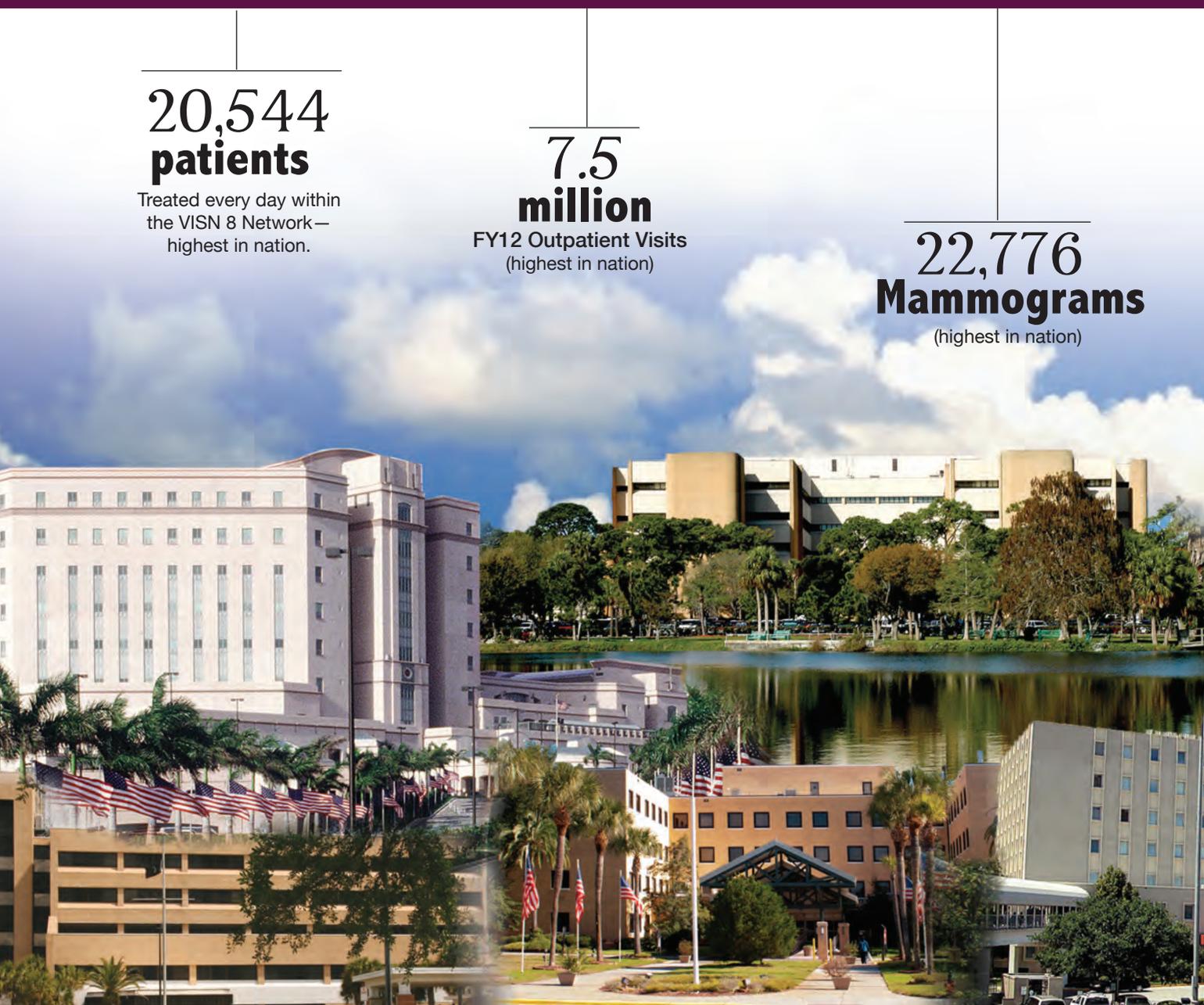
20,544  
patients

Treated every day within the VISN 8 Network—highest in nation.

7.5  
million

FY12 Outpatient Visits  
(highest in nation)

22,776  
Mammograms  
(highest in nation)



805,807

Veterans enrolled for Care  
(highest in nation)

886,408

Inpatient Bed Days of Care  
(highest in nation)

126,297

**Flu Shots**  
(2nd highest in nation)

**BEST IN VA:  
Cholesterol Screening**  
(in patients with ischemic heart disease)

# NETWORK YOU COUNT ON

2,856

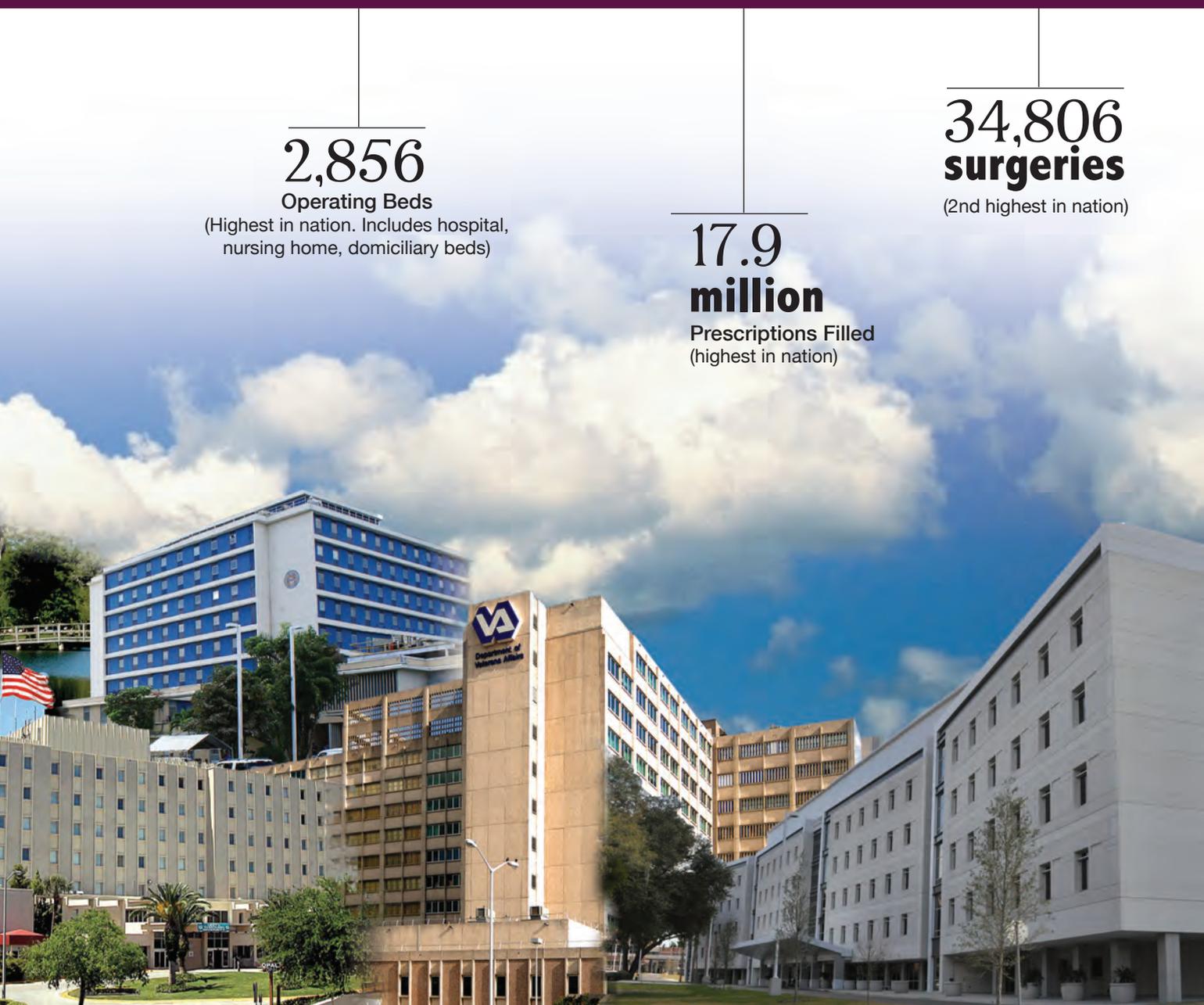
Operating Beds  
(Highest in nation. Includes hospital,  
nursing home, domiciliary beds)

34,806  
**surgeries**

(2nd highest in nation)

17.9  
**million**

Prescriptions Filled  
(highest in nation)





## Who We Are & What We Stand For

VA has adopted Core Values and Characteristics that apply universally across the Department. The five Core Values define “who we are,” our culture and how we care for Veterans, their families and other beneficiaries. The Core Characteristics define “what we stand for” and help guide how we perform our core mission.

**The Values are Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence (“I CARE”).**

### The Core Characteristics:

**Trustworthy:** We earn the trust of those we serve – every day – through the actions of our employees who provide care, benefits, and services with compassion, dependability, effectiveness, and transparency.

**Accessible:** We engage and welcome Veterans and other beneficiaries, facilitating their use of the entire array of VA services. Each interaction will be positive and productive.

**Quality:** We provide the highest standard of care and services to Veterans and beneficiaries while managing the cost of programs and being efficient stewards of resources entrusted to us by the American people.

**Innovative:** We prize curiosity and initiative, encouraging creative contributions from all employees, seeking continuous improvement, and adapting to remain at the forefront in knowledge, proficiency, and capability to deliver the highest standard of care and services to those we serve.

**Agile:** We anticipate and adapt quickly to current challenges and new requirements by continuously assessing the environment in which we operate and devising solutions to better serve Veterans and others we serve.

**Integrated:** We link care and services across the Department; other federal, state, and local agencies; partners; and Veterans Services Organizations to provide useful and understandable programs to Veterans and other beneficiaries.



## Critical Care Nurses Put Their Patients First

The Beacon Award for Critical Care Excellence is given annually by the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) to recognize the nation’s top hospital critical care units. In 2012, a Beacon Award went to a group of dedicated nurses at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center. In particular, the hospital’s Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU) and Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU) units were recognized for their efforts to improve every facet of patient care—a process that took five years and involved many staff. The Malcom Randall team is one of three VA facilities nationwide to receive the prestigious award.

## Bay Pines Recognized as ‘Senior Friendly’

In September 2012, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System was recognized by the Nurses Improving Care for Health system Elders (NICHE) as a “Senior Friendly” health care facility. This is the fourth consecutive year the St. Petersburg, Fla.-based system has been recognized for its commitment to meeting the needs of hospitalized elderly Veterans. As part of the organization’s ongoing patient-centered care initiatives, Bay Pines is dedicated to providing safe, quality care for seniors while achieving high patient, family and staff satisfaction.



A program of the Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing at New York University College of Nursing, the goal of NICHE is to provide principles and tools to stimulate and support systemic change in the culture of health care facilities to achieve patient-centered care.

# TRUSTWORTHY

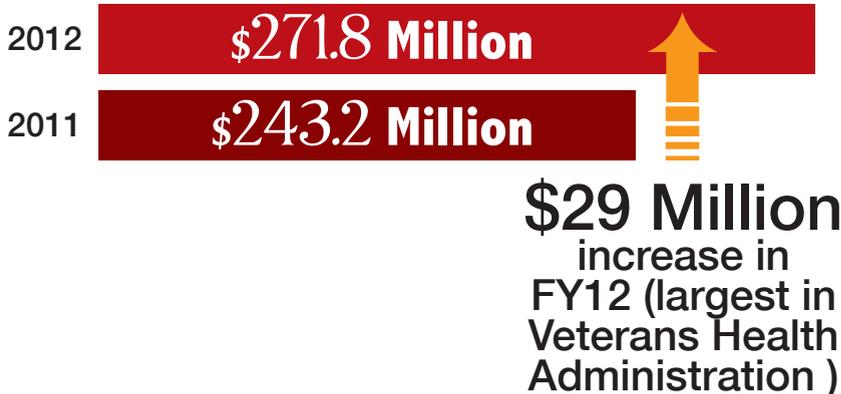


“Dr. Andria Klioze and her nurse Jennifer Traverso are real jewels. I am proud to live in a country that treats its Veterans as well as this country does.”

- Henry J. Billings  
Vietnam Veteran & Patient  
at the Daytona Beach VA Outpatient Clinic

## Medical Care Collections Fund (MCCF)

MCCF are funds collected by VA for copayments and health insurance reimbursements which are returned to local VA health care facilities to provide additional services for Veterans receiving care at that facility. This substantial one-year increase was the largest of any VA health care network.



## 1.6 Million Veterans

Live in a service area spanning 61,101 miles

## 20,000

Average Daily Outpatient Visits  
(highest in nation)



# ACCESSIBILITY

## We're **Expanding & Improving:**

Providing

Veterans Access to **Quality Health Care**

When and Where They Need It.



### Lee County Clinic Opens For Southwest Florida Veterans

In December 2012, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System opened the Lee County VA Healthcare Center. The 220,000 square foot outpatient facility replaced the VA clinic formerly located in Fort Myers, Fla. The new facility has greatly expanded the healthcare system's ability to provide primary and specialty outpatient health care services to the Veterans of southwest Florida.



### Garage Expansion Accommodates Growth in West Palm Beach

When the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center opened in 1995, only about 31,000 Veterans were expected. Today, the facility sees more than 61,000. That's why patients and staff were so happy with the Medical Center's garage expansion of an additional 400 parking spaces this year.

## 92% of **Veterans**

live within 30 minutes of travel time to a VA facility for primary care and mental health services.

### New Eye Treatment and Ambulatory Surgery Center in St. Petersburg

The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System completed construction of a two-story building that houses a new Eye Treatment Center on the first floor and an Ambulatory Surgery Center on the second floor. The new Eye Center opened its doors to Veterans in October 2012. Full activation of all surgical services is expected in 2013. The new facility on the main St. Petersburg, Fla. campus offers diagnostic, examination, and treatment services for eye conditions such as specialized low vision, cataracts, glaucoma, and medical retina conditions (including diabetes and macular degeneration), as well as eye problems related to traumatic brain injury.





## Larger Sebring Clinic a Reality for Highlands County Veterans

To better meet the needs of Veterans in Highlands County, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System relocated and expanded its Sebring Community Based Outpatient Clinic. The new 9,500 square foot clinic opened to Veterans in November 2012 at nearly twice the size of its previous location. About 3,100 Veterans are served at the facility by 17 primary care staff in a spacious, patient-centered environment. Services offered to Veterans include primary and mental health care, an anticoagulation clinic, EKGs, pharmacist consultation, phlebotomy, social work, and referrals to specialty care offered at the Bay Pines VA Medical Center in St. Petersburg or at the Lee County VA Healthcare Center.



## New Clinic in Puerto Rico Brings Care Closer to Home

The VA Caribbean Healthcare System (VACHS) opened its 10th outpatient clinic on Sept. 13, 2012. "Providing world class health care close to where our Veterans live has long been a goal of the VA and the VA Caribbean Healthcare System," said Wanda Mims, former VACHS director. "Through the efforts of many and especially the Municipality of Ceiba, we are now able to provide needed services here in Ceiba and its surrounding municipalities." The clinic will serve Veterans of the municipalities of Canóvanas, Luquillo, Río Grande, Fajardo, Ceiba, Humacao, Yabucoa, Naguabo Vieques, Culebras and Las Piedras.



## Dermatology Clinic in Gainesville Serves Specialized Needs

In January 2012, the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System opened a primary care dermatology outpatient clinic in Gainesville, Fla. The clinic provides diagnostic and therapeutic services to Veterans with skin-related problems or diseases, including a full spectrum of general dermatological consultations, evaluations and treatments. The clinic also offers Mohs Micrographic Surgery for advanced treatment of skin cancer.



## \$6.3 Million Expansion of Viera Outpatient Clinic

A \$6.3 million project to add an additional 30,000 square feet to the Viera VA Outpatient Clinic (OPC) expands care to accommodate the rapid growth the clinic has experienced since it opened in 2002. Originally built to accommodate 119 employees and 12,000 patients annually, the OPC is now 140,000 square feet and is currently staffed by more than 365 dedicated VA employees. More than 25,000 Veterans are treated there each year.

## Expanding Services for Women Veterans

### New Mammography Units in San Juan and New Port Richey

Two new mammography units opened at VISN 8 facilities in 2012 including one at the San Juan VA Medical Center along with a unit at the New Port Richey VA Outpatient Clinic. This brings the number of mammography units in the network to nine with plans for additional units at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, the Jacksonville Outpatient Clinic, and the Lee County VA Healthcare Center. Breast cancer is the disease many women fear the most, and early detection and treatment can dramatically improve the chances of survival. This equipment represents the most advanced in Digital Mammography available on the market today.

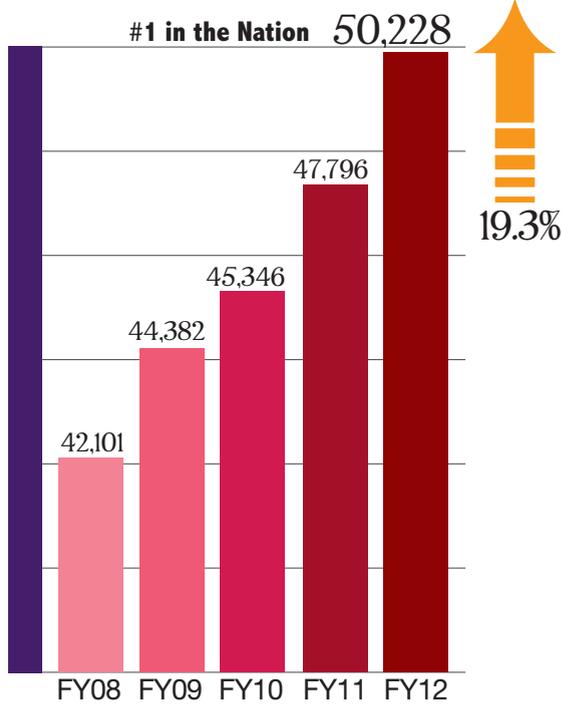
### Remodeled Women's Clinic Is Private and Child-Friendly

The Women's Health Clinic at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center is a place for women Veterans to get the care they earned. In 2012, the Women's Clinic was remodeled to include a new waiting room with a children's area and bathrooms with infant changing tables.

The updated clinic is wheelchair accessible and the enclosed clinic area provides more privacy for female Veterans. With the largest population of female Veterans in VISN 8, the North Florida South Georgia Veterans Health System has two other Women-Only clinics located at the Lake City VA Medical Center and the Jacksonville Outpatient Clinic.



## Health Care Provided to Women in VISN 8



"I have cried many rivers in my life. However, the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center has given me the tools to build a bridge to move forward on my life's journey. I am grateful for my engineers: my Patient Aligned Care Team at the hospital; my Primary Care provider, RN, case manager, clinical nurse, and clerk to social workers, chaplains, specialty clinic staff, specialty psychologists, benefits advisors, and even other Veterans. They are all there for me."

- Violet Galloway, Veteran  
U.S. Army, 1978 - 1985



## BEST IN VA: Breast Cancer Screening for Women Ages 40-69

## CARING FOR VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES - PROSTHETICS

**\$222  
Million  
Budget**

(10% of VA's total  
prosthetic budget)

Prosthetics in  
**VISN 8**  
the  
**nation's  
largest**  
program

**280,000  
Patients**



Prosthetics Boutique

## Just for Women: 'Your New Camouflage Boutique.'

Molly Boyle (left), a certified VA orthotist and fitter of mastectomy devices, is the proprietor and catalyst behind the creation of 'Your New Camouflage Boutique' located at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center's Women's Health Clinic. Thought to be the only one of its kind in the VA—the boutique offers all major brands of compression wear as well as custom garments designed especially for disabled women. Besides offering personalized fittings, Boyle issues limited maternity supplies to pregnant women Veterans.



# ACCESSIBILITY

BRINGING QUALITY VA HEALTH CARE TO VETERANS IN RURAL AREAS



“My Care is excellent at the Miami VA. It’s especially convenient to have a clinic near where I live.”

- Merlene Isler, U.S. Air Force Veteran Patient at the Community Based Outpatient Clinic, Hollywood, Fla.

108,600 Patients live in rural areas

43,536 Veterans Served via telehealth

## TELEHEALTH: VA Doctor Will See You Now

Your Choice: drive hours to your nearest VA medical facility OR connect via video from your closest community-based outpatient clinic.

Some Veterans live many miles from a VA medical center, making visits to the doctor an all day event. Others, those with chronic conditions, require constant monitoring but opt to stay at home rather than in the hospital.

In both cases, VA’s telehealth program provides greater access to health care through the use of telecommunications and videoconferencing. VA patients are finding telehealth to be just what they need to receive personalized care from their VA medical center.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is the nation’s leader in telehealth technologies, which means doctors and patients can meet for health services without physically being in the same place.

“With telehealth, our Veterans can connect with VA specialists in mental health, cardiology, dermatology, gastroenterology, rheumatology and urology,” said Patricia Ryan, Associate Chief Consultant for VHA Telehealth services.

The Be Active and MOVE! preventive health care program provides a physical activities group class to multiple VA outpatient clinics in the VISN 8 healthcare system via Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT). The classes are an extension of the MOVE! Telehealth program and are held for one hour weekly for eight weeks.



“This is important, because a large percentage of our rural Veterans are advancing in age. They have chronic health conditions that require constant monitoring. If it wasn’t for Telehealth, we’d be hard pressed to deliver the kind of day-to-day observation they require,” Ryan said.

Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) gives patients and providers the opportunity to conduct several aspects of medical examinations that do not require in-person visits. Veterans are able to visit a VA clinic near their home, connect to medical centers through videoconferencing, and transfer medical information by way of specially-designed telecommunications equipment.

*Serving Those Who Served*

**33%**  
staff who  
are Veterans

**24,109**  
Employees

**4,991**  
Nurses  
(20.7% of workforce)

**2,224**  
Physicians  
(9.2% of workforce)

### **A VETERAN ON A MISSION:**

## **Taking Charge of His Health**

Gene Liboy Rivera is a Veteran on a mission—to take charge of his health. And with some help from his friends at the VA Caribbean’s Telehealth program in San Juan, PR, he’s doing just that. Since 2005, Gene has received coordinated patient care from the comfort of his home. Here’s what he says about VA’s home telehealth program:

*“We are a team. The Telehealth program coordinators work hand to hand with me on a daily basis—they are like family to me. They have showed me how to take care of my health—and their dedication and support is like no other in my life. I’ve done my part for seven years and my Telehealth team has been there all the way.”*

*“I’ve had situations in which my program coordinators work hand to hand with my primary care doctor to provide the care I need. It’s the best feeling in the world for me, knowing I have a team of such excellent professionals taking care of my health. If you ask me to rate them from 1 to 10—I give them a 15.*

*They represent a new life for me.”*

*Veteran Gene Rivera enjoys short walks after his morning report to his Telehealth team at the San Juan VA Medical Center.*

## GOING GREEN: Reducing Our Energy Footprint

Providing Veterans with safe, high quality and accessible health care while focusing on innovations that reduce our energy footprint in a sound, fiscally responsible way is a top priority. Here are “green” highlights from two of our VA healthcare systems—one in Florida and the other in the Caribbean.

### Bay Pines VA Recognized With Green Globe Awards

In 2012, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System received the Green Globe Awards for environmental and energy efficiency campus-wide. In total, 16 of the major buildings on the St. Petersburg, Fla. campus (to include the main hospital) received Green Globe certification. The Bay Pines VAHCS is one of only 11 VA campuses across the country recognized for “campus-wide sustainable certification.” The Green Globe Awards are a project of the Green Building Initiative (GBI) for environmental and energy efficiency.

### Going Green with Cost Saving, Energy Efficient Projects

The VA Caribbean Healthcare System has a large energy and resource footprint in the Caribbean with one major hospital in San Juan and 11 smaller facilities in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In 2012, VA Caribbean invested \$4.5 million in innovative energy efficient projects on its main campus including a Photovoltaic System-Renewable Energy in a Special Intensive Care Unit; a Site Solar Renewable-Energy Multilevel Parking Garage, and a Vertical Wind Turbine System in a state-of-the-art patient tower. The San Juan VAMC also has Green Building Initiative certification.



**Solar Carport:** On the Bay Pines VA Medical Center’s St. Petersburg, Fla. campus, construction was completed in 2012 on a 1.48 megawatt Solar Photovoltaic System. The carport-like design will reduce Bay Pines’ energy bill by about \$189,000 a year while providing 773 shaded parking spots for Veterans and VA staff that reduce the temperatures inside vehicles as much as 35 degrees Fahrenheit—a welcome relief in Florida’s heat, especially in the Summer.



## Healing Day in the Everglades

The power of nature to help heal is well documented and in South Florida, nature is nearly synonymous with one of the largest protected natural wonders in the United States – The Everglades. In February 2012, the Airboat Association of Florida hosted a “Day in the Everglades” celebration for Veterans and their families that included games, food, music and of course – airboat rides.



*“Because of the incredible medical care I received from Dr. Heather Hockman, I’m casting my vote for her to be ‘Doctor of the Year.’ She virtually saved my life.”*

*- Matthew James Hennessy,  
Veteran, U.S. Navy  
Patient, Orlando VA Medical Center*

*Dr. Heather Hockman, M.D.*

## Tampa VA’s Pain Center Is Changing Lives

The Comprehensive Pain Center (CPC) at the James A. Veterans Hospital in Tampa serves over 7,200 Veterans annually offering a wide range of treatment options through its outpatient clinics, integrated interventional medicine, and interdisciplinary pain rehabilitation programs. All services are focused on improving functioning and increasing quality of life for Veterans living with chronic pain.

In May 2012, the CPC received its second Clinical Center of Excellence Award from the American Pain Society (APS) recognizing its outstanding and innovative pain services.

## LEADERS AND EDUCATORS IN Ankle Joint Replacement Surgery

Total ankle replacement surgery is an exciting and remarkable procedure used to treat post traumatic and degenerative arthritis of the ankle joint. This operation represents a viable alternative to ankle fusion which until the past decade has been the only surgical option. The podiatric surgeons at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa are leaders and educators in ankle joint replacement surgery. In 2012, the podiatric surgeons at the hospital performed 85 ankle replacements—more than any other VA in the nation.





# ACCESSIBILITY

## 51,122

Number of military service members provided transition assistance

## 30,000

New enrollees in VA health care (#1 in nation)

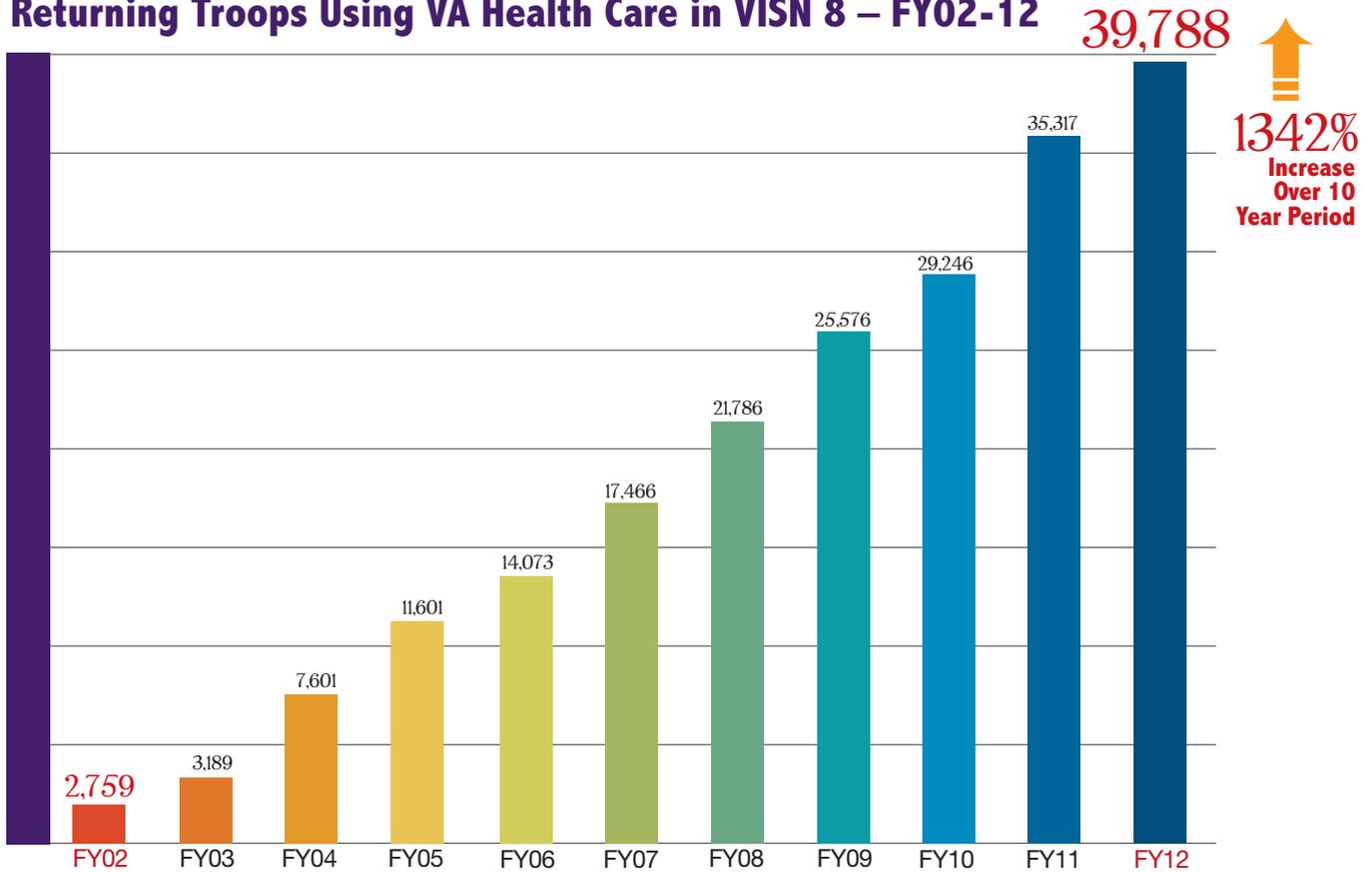


## 350

Number of Outreach events held (103 more than in 2011)

## REACHING OUT TO RETURNING TROOPS

### Returning Troops Using VA Health Care in VISN 8 – FY02-12



### Providing End-Of-Life Care & Compassion

Chuck Mirasola, a volunteer at the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System received an award from the National Council of Hospice and Palliative Professionals (NCHPP) during the organization’s clinic team conference in Orlando, Fla. on Nov. 6, 2012. The 71-year-old U.S. Army Veteran was one of only three volunteers recognized nationally for receiving the NCHPP’s “Volunteers are the Foundation of Hospice Award,” for his commitment and service to Veterans and their families during his time as a volunteer in the facility’s hospice and palliative care unit.



**\$24.7  
Million**

**Monetary Value of all Donations**  
(Money, items, activities & volunteer hours)

**8,470**  
Volunteers

**912,631**  
Volunteer Hours

## VOLUNTEERS



### TAMPA VOLUNTEER Goes Above & Beyond

U.S. Navy Veteran Mary Ann Keckler of Valrico, Fla. is one of the amazing volunteers at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital. Using a motorized wheelchair to get around, Mary Ann volunteers at the hospital seven days a week on the spinal cord injury and polytrauma units and also during recreation therapy special events. Over the last 15 years, she has accumulated nearly 6,000 volunteer hours in the hospital and in the community as an advocate and volunteer ambassador for Veterans, wounded active duty service members and their families. For her exemplary service and tireless dedication, she was awarded the 2012 George H. Seal Memorial Trophy by the Disabled American Veterans service organization.

### A 'Thank You' from Paralympic Gold Medalist Brad Synder

***"It is a testament to the high caliber of care that I received that I was able to make an incredibly quick recovery. In a few short weeks, I was recovered enough to be transported to the James A. Haley VA Hospital near my home in Tampa, FL. There the amazing support continued. My physical therapists Lindsay and Jenny were quick to get me up and running on a treadmill, the two of them pushing me straight on either side of my hips."***

Brad Synder Blog, August 24, 2012

A year after being blinded by an Improvised Explosive Device he stepped on during duty in Afghanistan, former Special Forces U.S. Navy lieutenant Brad Synder went on to win two swimming Gold medals at the London Paralympics in 2012. Synder, of St. Petersburg, Fla., is one of many Veterans who use sports as part of their medical recovery from severe injuries. In his Blog, this world-class swimmer writes a "Thank You" to those who had been instrumental in helping make his journey to London a reality. Among those he thanked were the staff at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital where he received care after his injury.



Brad Synder  
U.S. Navy photo

Helping Patients

# SURVIVE HEART SURGERY



Tampa VA heart surgeon Dr. Ernesto Jimenez, M.D. (right) and anesthesiologist Dr. Paulino Nunez, M.D. are using a state-of-the-art device to help cardiac patients survive surgery. The hospital is one of only a few places nationwide using the Impella 5.0 device for left ventricular support after aortic valve surgery.

A team of highly trained doctors at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital are using a state-of-the-art heart assist device to help save the lives of seriously ill cardiac patients. And Haley is one of the only places in the country where the device is being used in this procedure.

In January 2012, Tampa VA heart surgeon Dr. Ernesto Jimenez, M.D., and anesthesiologist Dr. Paulino Nunez, M.D. used a novel, minimally invasive left ventricular support device called the Impella 5.0 to perform high-risk surgery on a 62-year-old cardiac patient who had been considered not suitable for surgery. The procedure, which required close cooperation between anesthesia, cardiology and surgery, featured a precision effort to place the device into the patient's left ventricle from the subclavian artery, where it remained for six days post-surgery to support the patient's heart function.

The surgery was a challenge for the surgical team, however, according to the physicians, the procedure went flawlessly and the patient was discharged without complications.

Ultimately, the success of the operation was due to the high quality, post-operative care provided by the perfusionist, cardiology, and the Surgical Intensive Care nurses and physicians who all share equally in the patient's good outcome.

Prior to its recent use at the Tampa VA, the Impella 5.0 device had been used for left ventricular support after aortic valve surgery in only a few patients nation-wide.

## PROFILE: (FORMERLY) HOMELESS VETERAN

**Name:** Lamont P. Garner

**Military Service:** U.S. Air Force, 1974-1977

This formerly homeless Veteran was addicted to drugs and in and out of prison for 30-plus years.

In 2011, he went through the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System's Substance Abuse Treatment program.

**Today:** He still lives in VA-supported housing in the local community and is going to school to be a Substance Abuse Counselor.



"After years of homelessness and addiction, I woke up one day and realized I was going to die if I didn't make a change. That same day, I borrowed \$450, caught the bus to the Bay Pines VA Medical Center, and asked for help. The VA not only helped me beat my addiction, they also gave me skills to help me be successful. Today, I'm enrolled in college to be a substance abuse counselor so I can help those who struggle with addiction like I did. It's the way I want to help - like VA helped me."

- Lamont Garner, Veteran

# Caring For Our Most Vulnerable Veterans

If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to end homelessness. Nowhere is this more evident than in Miami, Fla., where the number of homeless living on the streets has dropped from the thousands into the hundreds in just a few years. In 2012, the Miami VA Healthcare System was selected to host a National Homeless Outreach Event that highlighted the Miami staff's success in identifying and helping Veterans without homes find housing, health care and employment.



## New Rehab/Recovery Center in Orlando Helps Those Struggling with Mental Illness

In 2012, the Orlando VA Medical Center opened a new Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC), an outpatient transitional learning center designed to support recovery and community integration for Veterans challenged with serious mental illness and severe functional impairment. Programming is curriculum-based and specifically designed to teach the requisite skills for realizing Veterans' self-chosen roles and goals in all domains of life. PRRC services are part of VA's mental health continuum of care and are coordinated with other services in the Orlando VAMC and in the community.

## HELPING THE HOMELESS & OTHERS AT RISK

**2,023**

**Patients Receiving Veterans Justice Outreach Services**  
(82% increase over FY11)

**18,636**

**Homeless Veterans Helped**  
(2nd highest in nation)

**131,677**

**Veterans Provided Mental Health Services**

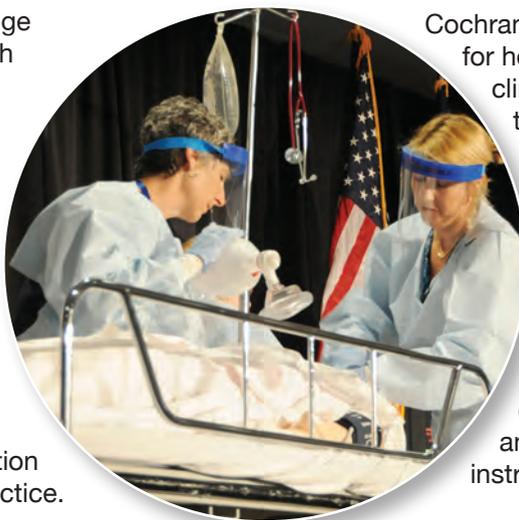
**133**

**New Staff**  
Hired to support Mental Health Services

## VA NURSE EDUCATOR Helps Others Manage Tough Situations

Clinical Simulation advances knowledge and confidence about managing tough situations—it helps health care practitioners provide better care and outcomes for their patients. A nurse-educator who is the Simulation Center Coordinator at the VA Medical Center in Gainesville, Fla. has made major strides in this area and was recognized nationally for her contributions.

Denise Cochran, RN, BSN, received the 2012 VA Under Secretary for Health's Excellence in Clinical Simulation Training, Education and Research Practice.



Cochran was recognized with the award for her contributions in the field of clinical simulation to include leading the creation of the Interdisciplinary Simulation Education Center (ISEC), a simulation center for medicine, nursing, surgery, anesthesia and respiratory therapy. She also developed simulation-based education and training to address patient safety issues, assists in the development of simulation-based curriculum for training residents, staff and students, and provides simulation instructor training.

## PUTTING EVERY

## New PA Residency Program in Primary Care

A new Physician Assistant (PA) Residency Pilot Program in Primary Care at the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System that began in fall 2012 is one of only six in the country. The program is a collaboration between the NF/SGVHS, the University of Florida College of Medicine and the University of Florida School of Physician Assistant Studies. The program establishes two residency positions which will advance the mission of UF's College of Medicine to provide better patient-centered medical care.



## Veterans Benefit From State-of-the-Art Dental Equipment, Technology

Imagine you need a crown. For most people, that means several trips to the dentist. However, for eligible Veterans receiving dental services at the Tampa VA Hospital, it's one-stop shopping at the clinic where patients can leave their appointments with their final tooth restoration in place.

The dental experts at the Tampa VA are using the state-of-the-art CEREC System (CEramic REConstruction) onsite. With CEREC, teeth can be restored in a single sitting with the patient, rather than the multiple sittings required with earlier techniques. The dental staff work with the system's 3-D imaging capture and computer assisted technologies to fabricate porcelain restorations such as crowns, veneers, onlays and inlays using different types of ceramic material.

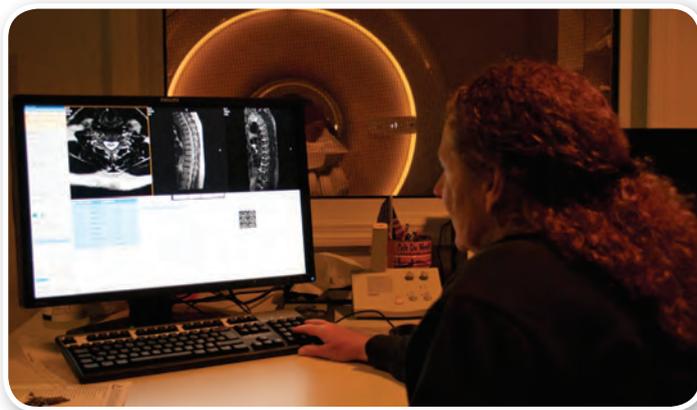


## DOLLAR TO WORK



### New Telehealth Equipment Expands Specialty Care

An investment in new Telehealth equipment installed at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center's Community Based Outpatient Clinics expands delivery of health care for several specialties including pharmacy and pain management, speech therapy consultations, surgery, wound care and rehabilitation therapy. In 2012, the West Palm Beach VA provided telehealth services to nearly 6,800 Veterans—98 percent more than the year prior.



### Imaging Advances at Daytona Beach Clinic

A Phillips Ingenta MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scanner installed at the Daytona Beach VA Outpatient Clinic in June 2012 helps make the procedure more pleasant for larger patients and those who are mildly claustrophobic. An MRI machine uses a magnetic field and radio waves to create detailed images of the body. With this new equipment, more patients have access to MRI services at the clinic.

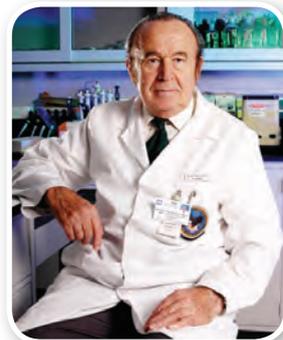
## Working on a Cure for Diabetes

Dr. Robert V. Farese, M.D., a researcher at the Tampa VA Hospital since 1973, received the 2012 William S. Middleton Award for outstanding achievement in biomedical research. The Middleton Award is the Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development's highest honor for scientific achievement. The award recognizes Dr. Farese's service to the VA and to the biomedical profession as well as his contributions to the scientific body of knowledge about insulin action and the pathogenesis of Type 2 diabetes. Among Dr. Farese's research is a potential cure for Type 2 diabetes that blocks production of a protein, using compounds found in treatments for rheumatoid arthritis.



## Honoring a Lifetime of Research Achievement: the Miami VA's Dr. Andrew Schalley

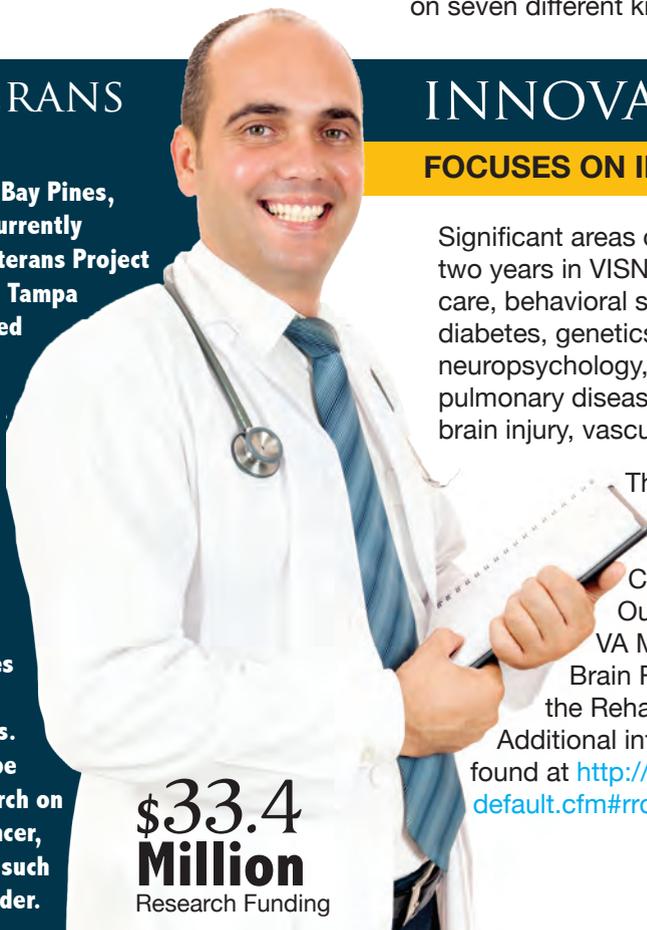
He's a Nobel Prize Winner tackling cancer, heart disease and other research while devoting five decades to serving medicine with VA. What Dr. Andrew Schally has done with those 50 years is nothing short of extraordinary. This extraordinary man has published more than 2,400 papers, hosted hundreds of professional lectures, discovered new techniques in medicine and, to cap it off, received the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1977.



Surrounded by fellow researchers and VA officials from around the world, the Miami VA Medical Center hosted a commemoration of Dr. Schally's 50th anniversary with the VA on Oct. 19, 2012. And although the celebration was a look back at a career of achievement, what most people are talking about isn't Dr. Schally's award-winning breakthroughs. Rather, it was the excitement over what he will discover next. Just this year, he has published papers on seven different kinds of cancer and heart disease.

## MILLION VETERANS PROJECT

The VA healthcare systems of Bay Pines, Miami and North Florida are currently participating in the Million Veterans Project (MVP) with plans for Orlando, Tampa and VA Caribbean to be involved as well. The Million Veterans program is a national, VA-run voluntary research program that partners with Veterans receiving VA health care to study how genes affect health. To do this, MVP will build one of the world's largest medical databases by safely collecting blood samples and health information from one million Veteran volunteers. Data collected from MVP will be stored anonymously for research on diseases like diabetes and cancer, and military-related illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder.



**\$33.4 Million**  
Research Funding

## INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

### FOCUSES ON IMPROVING VETERANS HEALTH

Significant areas of research added over the last two years in VISN 8 include aging, ambulatory care, behavioral science, clinical epidemiology, diabetes, genetics, health economics, neurobiology, neuropsychology, obesity, ophthalmology, PTSD, pulmonary diseases, respiratory, rheumatology, traumatic brain injury, vascular surgery, virology, and wound repair.

The network has three Research Centers of Excellence (COE). The James A. Haley Veterans Hospital's COE is "Maximizing Rehabilitation Outcomes." Also, the Malcolm Randall VA Medical Center has two COEs: the Brain Rehabilitation Research Center and the Rehabilitation Outcomes Research Center. Additional information on these centers can be found at <http://www.research.va.gov/programs/default.cfm#rrd-ctr>

**693**  
Active Research Projects



General Jackson

**“The CARE**  
at the  
**West Palm Beach VA**  
is **SUPERB.**  
The service  
couldn’t get  
any better.”

Major General Wayne P. Jackson, U.S. Army retired  
**Military Service:** 1946-1984, World War II & Korea

## Tampa to Host Veterans Wheelchair Games

Would you like to be involved in an exciting event to draw more than 500 Veterans from across the United States, Puerto Rico and Great Britain? If so, thousands of volunteers are needed for the [33rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games](#) (NVWG), the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. The Games will be held in Tampa July 13 to 18, 2013. This is only the second time the Games have been held in Florida; Miami hosted the event in 1991.

During the Games, Veterans participate in 18 competitive rehabilitative sport events which include air guns, archery, basketball, boccia, bowling, field events, handcycling, a motorized wheelchair rally, nineball, power soccer, quad rugby, slalom, softball, swimming, table tennis, track, trapshooting and weightlifting. The event is open to all U.S. military Veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, neurological conditions, amputations or other mobility impairments. All events are free and open to the public.

With the theme, “Seize the Day in Tampa Bay,” the 33rd Games will be hosted by the [James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital](#) along with the [Paralyzed Veterans of America’s Florida Gulf Coast Chapter](#).



Volunteers are needed in all areas and can be as young as 14 to participate. Anyone interested in serving as a volunteer during the week of the Games, please visit James A. Haley’s homepage at [www.tampa.va.gov](http://www.tampa.va.gov). You can also contact Camilla Thompson, Tampa Volunteer Coordinator at (813) 972-2000, ext. 6580 for additional information.

If you or a Veteran you know may be interested in competing, go to [www.wheelchairgames.va.gov](http://www.wheelchairgames.va.gov).



VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

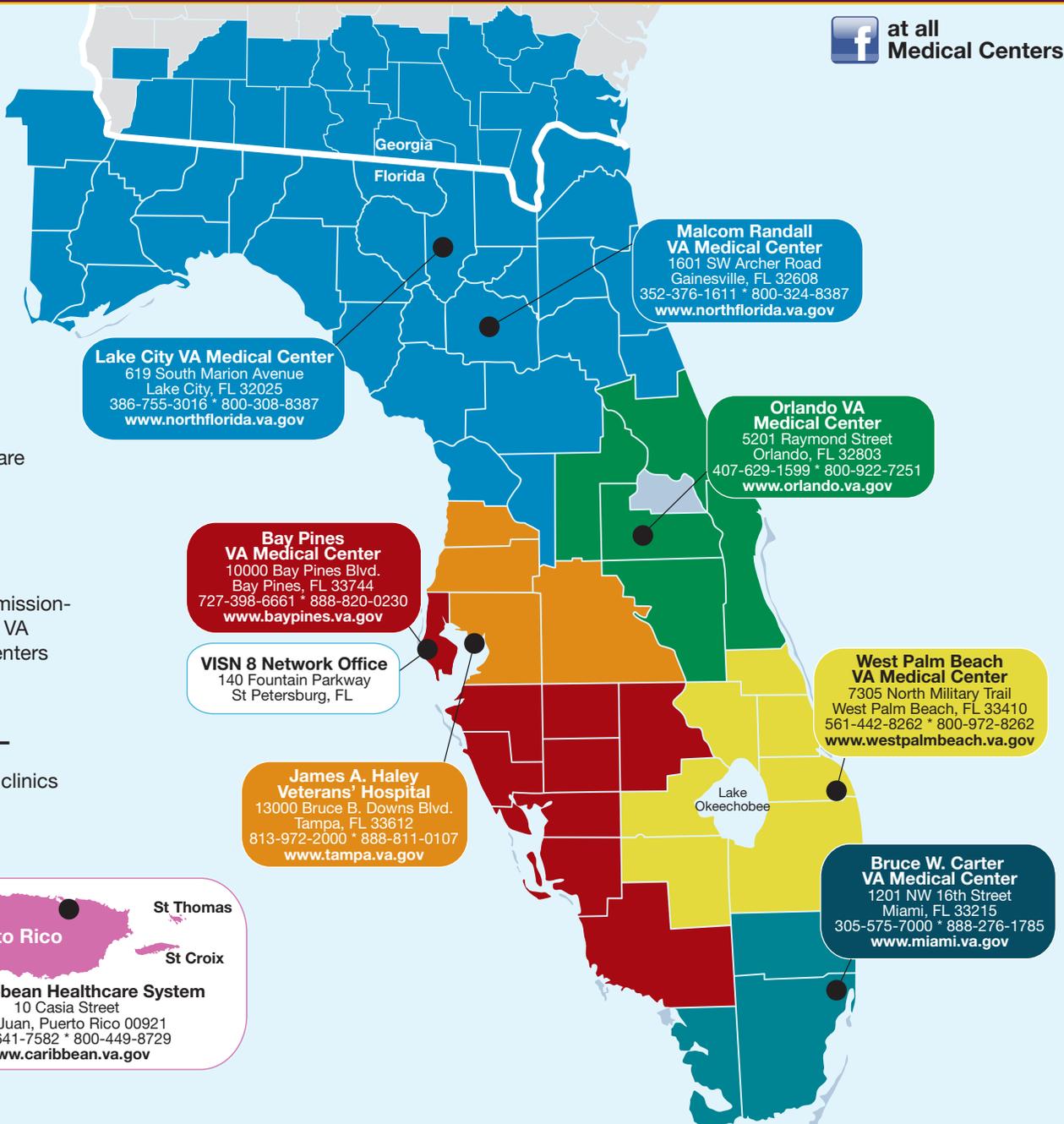
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 and Managing Editor, Annual Report

## VA Sunshine Healthcare Network » [www.visn8.va.gov](http://www.visn8.va.gov)

 at all  
 Medical Centers



7  
 VA healthcare  
 systems

8  
 Joint Commission-  
 Accredited VA  
 Medical Centers

55+  
 Outpatient clinics