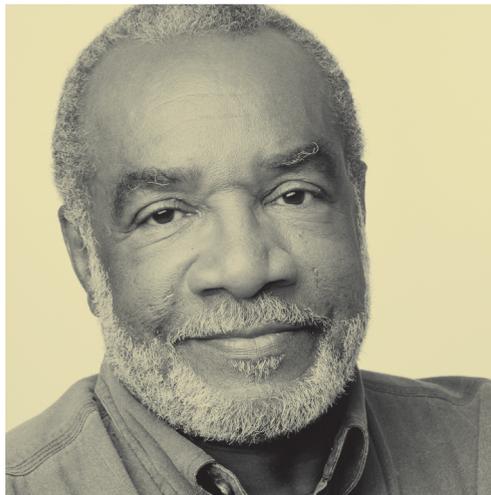


2011 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Providing Exceptional VA Health Care

*Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy,
Respect and Excellence*



Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

A Letter to Our Stakeholders



It's been a terrific year for VISN 8, the nation's largest VA healthcare network, serving 1.6 million Veterans in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. But terrific years don't just happen. Our care providers, volunteers, and staff work incredibly hard to honor the service and sacrifice of our Veterans.

We continue to provide health care for Veterans that is trustworthy, accessible, and innovative. Our service is guided by four values you will see reflected throughout the pages of this Annual Report:

Integrity: We advanced the health of our Veterans with leading edge research programs and focused on enhancing their comfort with a new hospice center in Miami and a 226-bed tower in Gainesville.

Commitment: We led the nation in women's prosthetic care, won an award for innovation in our Lake City, FL Community Living Center and completed long-awaited improvements, such as a new parking garage in Tampa.

Advocacy: We improved access to care with advances in telehealth, expanded our capacity to serve homeless Vets and opened three new rural care clinics in St. John, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Respect: We put patient health, safety and comfort first with initiatives to lower noise levels in our hospitals. We recognized the creativity and commitment of our nurses and other professionals. And our volunteers logged nearly 1 million hours serving our Veterans.

Excellence: We opened state-of-the-art cancer diagnosis and treatment centers, a new cardiac catheterization lab, and received several awards for the excellence and quality of our care.

After reading our report, I think you'll agree that we've had an exceptionally good year -- one we worked hard to create. And we'll work even harder to make 2012 an even greater success.



Nevin M. Weaver

Nevin M. Weaver, FACHE
VISN 8 Network Director

The nation's largest VA healthcare network
VISN 8

Number of Medical Centers **8**

Service area square miles
61,101

Veterans living in VISN 8 service area
1.6 Million

Our Values:

Integrity, Commitment,
Advocacy, Respect
and Excellence =
I CARE.

In VA, these values define “who we are,” our culture, and how we care for Veterans, their families and other beneficiaries.



West Palm Beach
VA Medical Center



Bay Pines
VA Medical Center - St Petersburg



Lake City
VA Medical Center



Orlando
VA Medical Center



San Juan
VA Medical Center



Malcom Randall
VA Medical Center - Gainesville



Bruce W. Carter
Department of VA Medical Center - Miami



James A. Haley
Veterans Hospital - Tampa

Our Core Characteristics:

Trustworthy, Accessible, Quality,
Agile, Innovative and Integrated.

These define “what we stand for” and help guide how we perform our mission to provide the finest health care possible to the nation's Veterans.

(Integrity)



Quality Health Care for the Rest of Your Life

Patient Aligned Care Teams are being implemented at all VA primary care sites in Florida, Southeast Georgia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Known as PACT, these interdisciplinary medical teams work together with Veterans to plan their health care throughout their lifetime. In 2011, the VA Caribbean Healthcare system implemented 31 teamlets (small groups of providers) like the one shown above. For their efforts, the VA Caribbean's PACT was recognized as a best practice by the South East PACT Collaborative.

BECAUSE
I CARE,
I WILL...



“Act with high moral principle.
Adhere to the highest
professional standards. Maintain the
trust and **confidence**
of all with whom I engage.”

Best in VA...



Cholesterol screening
in patients with
ischemic heart
disease.

Breast cancer screening
for women ages
50-69 and 50-74.

Eligible Veterans who participated in a weight management program within the last year.



A disabled Veteran at the Tampa VA's Spinal Cord Injury Center connects to the Internet by puffing on a tube. VA photo by Steve Hollingshead

Through Assistive Technology, Disabled Veterans Reconnect to the World

A state-of-the-art communications network in the James A. Haley Veteran Hospital's Spinal Cord Injury Center is being tested that gives severely disabled Veterans access to the Internet, fellow patients and caregivers. Software enables users to control a cursor with a tilt of the head, squeeze of the hand—or, for those without use of their hands, by sipping and puffing on a tube. All keystrokes normally needed to perform these tasks are now done with a single button or switch including the “Talker” program that “speaks” for people who no longer can. Funded by a VA innovation grant, this project is designed to help Veterans with serious physical and cognitive wounds have more control over their lives and in so doing, reconnect to the world through social interaction.



Dubbed “Luke” (after Luke Skywalker), the DEKA robotic arm is closer to a natural arm than ever before. Researchers at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa are testing the arm on Veterans with upper extremity amputations. VA photo by Jill Ardila

Revolutionizing Prosthetics: the Amazing DEKA Arm

Most current artificial hands basically open and close. The newest, advanced DEKA prosthetic arm has six pre-programmed hand grasps that allow users to raise, twist and bend the arm—even raise it overhead, almost as they would a natural arm. The arm is designed to be closer to a natural arm than any existing prosthetic device in its appearance, ability and connection to the body. Led by principal investigator Dr. Gail Latief at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, researchers have been testing the arm on Tampa-area amputee Veterans since 2009 through funding from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

“If this dolphin can get used to and wear a prosthetic, so can I,” Marek told the trainer.

Florida Veteran Inspires ‘Dolphin Tale’

Fictional VA Hospital in Hollywood Movie Based on Tampa/Bay Pines VA Medical Centers

When an Iraqi insurgent’s bomb burst through his tank on September 16, 2005, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Russ Marek lost his right arm and leg, suffered a traumatic brain injury, lost his right ear, and was burned over 20 percent of his body. Three of his fellow soldiers did not fare so well—all died in the blast.

The Viera, Florida resident was treated for his injuries in Germany and later arrived at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa where he began rehabilitation and was fitted for his prostheses. Progress was slow, sometimes agonizing. Little did he know then that his inspiration was to come from a very unlikely source.

During Marek’s stay at the rehabilitation hospital, VA doctors sent him on a recreational therapy outing to visit a feisty dolphin named Winter, who was recuperating from her own injury—a mangled tail that got caught in a crab trap about three months after Russ was hurt. Rescuers amputated Winter’s tail and she was learning how to use a prosthesis made especially for her—something extraordinary for a marine mammal.

During the visit, Marek watched the dolphin struggle with her new tail and observed, “If this dolphin can get used to and wear a prosthetic, so can I,” he told the trainer.

Iraq War Veteran and Florida resident Russ Marek reunites with Winter the dolphin at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium in Clearwater, Fla. Clockwise (from upper left): Marek’s brothers Todd and Adam Marek, Russ Marek and fellow Iraqi War Veteran Mark Lalli, and NBC correspondent Kerry Sanders.



Marek was one of the first Veterans to visit Winter at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium in a program that began in 2008 by members of JAHVH's Amputee VA Support Team, or AVAST. The AVAST group and the Tampa VA Hospital formed a unique partnership that would motivate many other amputee Veterans who were encouraged by the dolphin's courage and tenacity to learn how to live a new life—and would provide the inspiration for the major motion picture "Dolphin Tale" released in theaters in September 2011 and shown around the world.

Winter plays herself in the movie and a main character named Kyle (portrayed by actor Austin Stowell) who portrays an injured Veteran who walks with a cane was inspired by Marek and the other Veterans who visited Winter. The fictional VA hospital in the movie where Kyle was being treated is a composite based on James A. Haley and the Bay Pines VA Medical Center in St Petersburg, Florida.

Marek was invited and attended the Clearwater premiere of the movie which debuted in the top three at the box office and has grossed more than \$50 million since then. The movie has helped boost attendance and volunteer staff at the nonprofit aquarium which is being renovated and expanded to better focus on rescue, rehabilitation, and release of sick and injured marine animals along with public education.

- Susan Wentzell



Honor & Sacrifice: New Hospice Unit Opens in Miami

A new Hospice and Palliative Care Services unit opened at the Miami VA Hospital in 2011 to better serve Veterans and families coping with life-limiting illness and end of life care. The 10-room unit provides comfort-oriented and supportive services to Veterans and families at their loved ones' end-of-life.



New Bed Tower is First in VA with All Private Rooms

The \$130 million bed tower at the Malcom Randall VAMC in Gainesville, Florida is the nation's first VA facility to offer all private rooms. The new five-story, 226-bed addition was completed in June 2011 and was dedicated on September 24, 2011 in a ceremony on the hospital campus.

Commitment

VISN 8 Leads Nation in Womens' Prosthetics Care

Did you know that women are the fastest growing group within the Veteran population? The VISN 8 network of hospitals and clinics provided primary and specialty health care to 32,543 women Veterans in 2011 – the most in the country. And VISN 8 led the nation this year in the care of women Veterans receiving prosthetic services – 5,715.

VA photo by Steve Hollingshead



Mammograms
12,675
the highest number in VA

BECAUSE
I CARE,
I WILL...



“Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA’s mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.”



Long-Awaited Parking Garage at Tampa VA Hospital Opens

A 1,500-space parking garage at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa opened to patients and staff in November 2011. Haley is one of the nation’s busiest VA hospitals with a bustling medical campus that has about 4,000 outpatient visits a day and more than one million outpatient visits a year. The garage is Phase I of a major expansion of the hospital’s Polytrauma Center which includes a two-story, 150,000 square-foot addition to be built over the main therapy area of the current Spinal Cord Injury Center.



VA photo by David Gould

Lake City Community Living Center Wins VA Award for Innovation

Shown above, Jodi, the resident therapy dog at the Lake City VA’s Community Living Center (CLC), has done much to brighten the lives of the residents there. The addition of Jodi to the CLC was among the many initiatives by VA staff that transformed the culture of the facility, winner of the VA’s 2011 Under Secretary for Health Award for Innovation. The Lake City VA is part of the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System.

“Our Veterans, staff, visitors and community partners have waited many years for a parking garage.”

- Kathleen Fogarty, hospital director.

VISN 8 employs **4,912** nurses.
More than any other VA network in the country.

Veterans treated **534,054**

Outpatient visits **7.3 million**

Number of clinics **55**

(Commitment)

Progress on Orlando VA Medical Center Continues

The new Orlando VA Medical Center will be located on a 65-acre campus in southeast Orange County, Florida. The 1.2 million square foot facility will cost \$665 million to construct. The medical center will have a large multispecialty outpatient clinic, 134-inpatient beds, 120-community living center beds, a 60-bed domiciliary and administrative and support services. The VA will be co-located with the University of Central Florida College of Medicine, the Sanford-Burnham Institute, the University of Florida Academic and Research Center and Nemours Children's Hospital in the Lake Nona area known as the "Medical City."

“I was diagnosed with Systemic Lupus in September 2000. After getting care in the Bay Pines VA system, I am in remission and have been since July 2002. I receive such wonderful treatment—I am especially proud to talk about this success story of great VA care.”

-LaWanda Spencer

U.S. Army Veteran and VA employee, VISN 8, Patient at Bay Pines VA Hospital



Women Veterans Treated
32,543

WHO
SERVED

Focus on Women Veterans: We're Having a Baby Shower!

A few years ago, no one would ever have dreamed that a baby shower would be held at a VA facility. But that's all changed. In 2011, 40 female Veterans were “showered” with appreciation for their service. The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center now holds semi-annual baby showers for our women Veterans and their family members. Expectant mothers receive vital knowledge and resources to support their new family.



Advocacy



Reaching Out to Returning Veterans

During 2011, we contacted Veterans at 247 outreach events, provided transition assistance to 20,106 military service members and 7,313 family members, and provided VA healthcare for 34,330 Veterans returning from combat areas—18 percent more than the year prior.

DoD photo

BECAUSE I CARE, I WILL...



“Be truly **Veteran-centric** by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.”



Expanding Capacity to Combat Veteran Homelessness

VISN 8 provides specialized homeless services at its medical centers and through community-based partners with a goal that no Veteran will have to become or remain homeless.

In 2011, VISN 8 increased its Grant and Per Diem transitional housing beds from 740 to nearly 900 throughout its service area. These beds help homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and obtain greater self-determination.

Also this year, six community providers in Florida were awarded grants for the new Supportive Services for Veterans Families program. In this program, grants to nonprofits provide supportive services to very low-income Veterans residing in or transitioning to permanent housing.

Almost 900 Veterans in Florida, South Georgia and the Caribbean received help in 2011 through Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO), a program that ensures eligible Veterans have timely access to mental health and substance abuse services as well as other VA benefits and services. The goal of VJO is to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans.

Once a Veteran is released from prison, they need help reentering their communities. That's the purpose of the VA's Health Care for Re-Entry Veterans (HCRV) program. In 2011, 523 Veterans received VA reentry services through the HCRV program.



A New Way to Treat Depression Improves Care, Provides Better Access

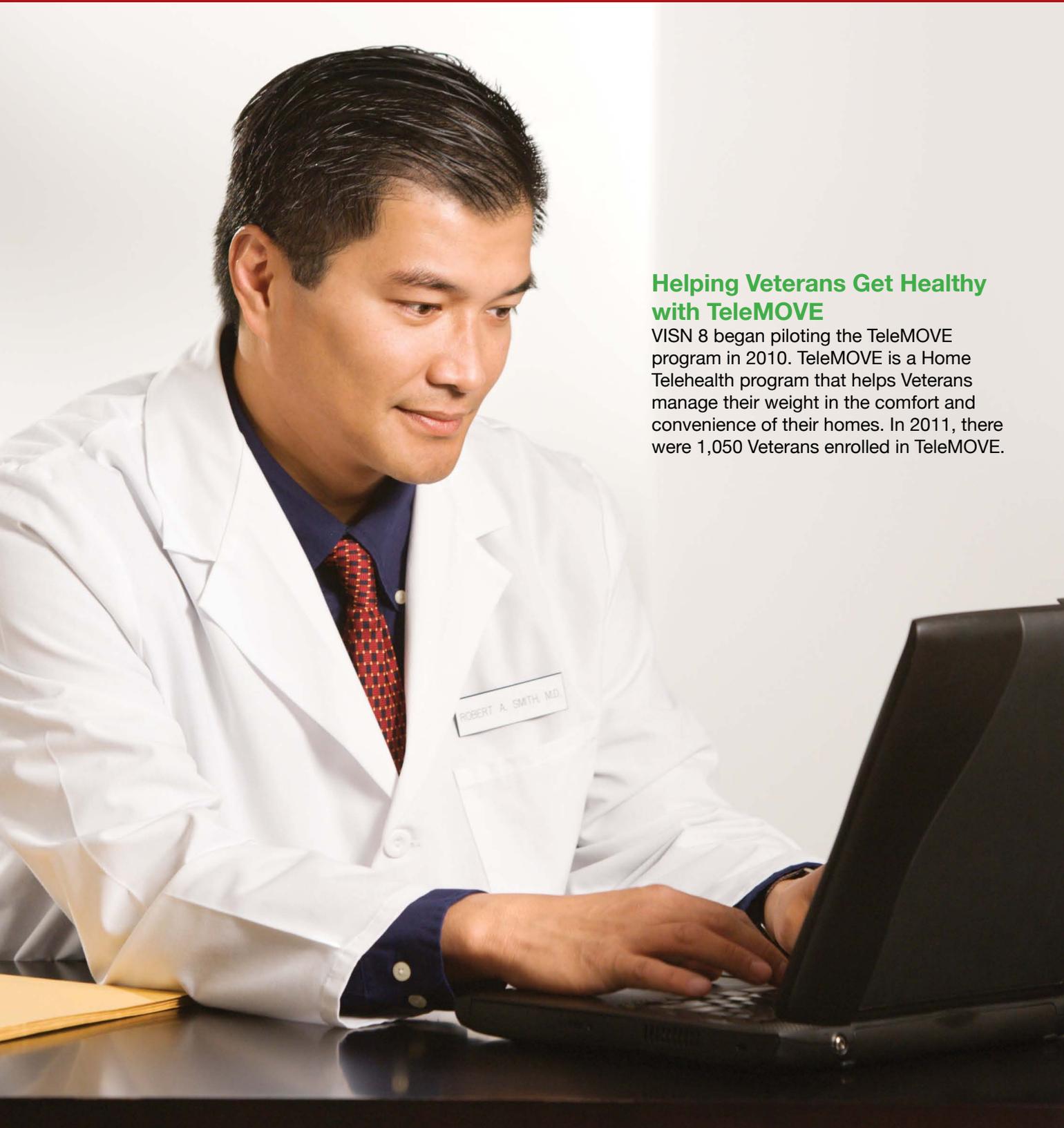
Depression is a leading cause of disability in the U.S. and 33 percent of Veterans have depressive symptoms typically treated in the Primary Care setting. The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System developed a nurse-led Depression Care Management program that has dramatically helped providers treat patients, improved their access to care, and decreased wait times for appointments in the Mental Health Clinic.

Veterans are contacted by telephone over a six month period and asked a series of questions to monitor suicide risk, safety, medication effects, and symptoms while providing education. If the nurse has any significant findings during the call, the provider is alerted. A patient health questionnaire is administered to track patient improvement. Patients who completed the program saw a decrease from “moderate depression” to “mild depression” and the program has been expanded to include other mental health conditions.

Percentage of VISN 8 employees who are Veterans

33% ←

Advocacy



Helping Veterans Get Healthy with TeleMOVE

VISN 8 began piloting the TeleMOVE program in 2010. TeleMOVE is a Home Telehealth program that helps Veterans manage their weight in the comfort and convenience of their homes. In 2011, there were 1,050 Veterans enrolled in TeleMOVE.

“In 2011, three new rural health care clinics opened in St John, U.S. Virgin Islands, and in Vieques and Comerio, Puerto Rico.”

Home Telehealth – Helping Veterans Manage Chronic Conditions

VISN 8 has the nation’s largest home telehealth program and many Veterans who live in the service area are in remote areas. In 2011, there were 142,928 Veterans enrolled for care who are living in rural areas of Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Of these, nearly 8,900 managed chronic health conditions like diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, chronic kidney disease, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder – all from the comfort of their homes.

Using a simple monitoring device that connects via a telephone landline, Home Telehealth allows Veterans to check in with their medical providers who manage their patients’ care from a distance. It’s a proven way to help staff closely monitor and ultimately improve a Veteran’s medical and behavioral health, while cutting down on travel time and reducing medical costs.

How do we know it works? In 2011, when we followed up with newly enrolled VISN 8 Home Telehealth patients after 12 months, there were 28 percent fewer hospital admissions and nearly 50 percent lower hospital bed days of care compared with currently enrolled patients.

Face to Face Consultation with VA Experts From Miles Away

Expanding the reach of expert care, almost 6,900 Veterans took advantage of Clinical Video Telehealth technologies in 2011 to receive care from and consult with their doctors and medical providers in VISN 8 hospitals and clinics. Almost 40 percent of these 15,865 encounters were with patients who live in rural areas. And nearly half of all encounters were with Veterans who received services from VA mental health providers located at a distant VA Medical Center.

And the program is expanding to meet Veterans needs. More than \$6 million was allocated in 2011 for clinic-based telehealth services in VISN 8. The funds were used to purchase new clinical video telehealth equipment and to hire additional staff to provide the services.

‘Distance No Longer Matters’

At the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System (NF/SGVHS), the Rural Veterans Tele-Rehabilitation Initiative (RVTRI) Team won a Veterans Health Administration Systems Redesign Champion Award using telehealth technology to deliver physical, occupational and recreational therapies directly to rural patients in their homes using real-time, two-way video.

The team uses Tandberg E-20 videophones that are placed in Veterans’ homes and connected to VA therapists, physiatrists and other healthcare providers by a secure, encrypted Internet network. At the appointed time, the provider at the VA medical center receives and accepts the incoming “call” from the Veteran. The NF/SGVHS covers territory roughly the size of West Virginia. “With this initiative, distance no longer matters; I can reach Veterans wherever they are,” said Dr. Charles Levy, RVTRI team lead and Chief of the VA healthcare system’s Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service.

In the project’s first year, rehabilitation care has been provided to 40 of 137 rural zip codes, according to Dr. Levy. The average Veteran served lives 93 miles away from a VA medical center and receives seven visits. Some Veterans, like those who have long-lasting combat-related cognitive impairments, are followed indefinitely. “With over 2000 encounters, our initial quality measures are looking quite good,” Dr. Levy said.

Respect

REST is Good Medicine:



What We're Doing About Noise

It's a proven fact that rest is good medicine; a quiet environment is a healing environment. And if you've ever been a patient in the hospital, you know it can be anything but quiet. People shout down the hallway, carts thump and rattle, doors bang, and overhead announcements blare. It's hard enough to rest in a strange bed without the added challenges that hospitals pose.

In patient-centered hospitals, protecting the sleep of patients is a top priority. Initiatives to reduce noise levels help build awareness among staff and make for a better overall hospital experience for patients.

Hospitals in VISN 8, which include VA medical centers in Florida and the Caribbean, have undertaken campaigns that significantly reduce noise on in-patient units. Here's a snapshot of some of the initiatives being taken.



The stoplight-style “Yacker Tracker” is an audio-visual reminder to staff and others to reduce the noise in a patient area. It monitors noise levels and alerts staff when they exceed an acceptable level.



Yacker Trackers are being tested on in-patient wards at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa, FL., West Palm Beach VA Medical Center in West Palm Beach, FL., and the Bay Pines VA Medical Center in St Petersburg, FL.

Shhh...Staff at the Malcom Randall VA Hospital in Gainesville, FL closely monitor noise levels with designated quiet times and adjusted medical and treatment times so patients get the rest they need. A common patient complaint is the noise associated with cleaning which often takes place during hours Veterans are trying to sleep. At Malcom Randall, housekeeping tasks are done at times other than in the early morning or at night. Likewise, respiratory therapy services are provided at times that minimize night-time disturbances. Since these initiatives were implemented, Veterans are significantly less bothered by noise on these units and they are more satisfied with their in-patient experience. How do we know? We asked them.

Lowering telephone ring volumes at nursing stations, making changes to the way meals are delivered, providing headphones for Veterans who want to watch television, and replacing noisy wheels on carts are all ways VISN 8 hospitals protect patients' sleep. At Bay Pines, generous donors help the VA provide comfort kits to patients that include ear plugs and sleep masks.

On selected wards at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, overhead pages are limited to emergency communication due to Vocera, a hands-free, voice-controlled device that caregivers wear around their necks to communicate between staff and patients quickly and quietly. At Haley, Vocera is just one aspect of the hospital's multi-faceted “Shhhh” Campaign to reduce noise.

In VISN 8 hospitals, caregivers are focused on respecting Veterans' need for quiet. Some of the other ways VA reduces night time noise and distractions include the following:

Hallway lights are dimmed at night--lower lighting levels encourage softer speaking. Cell phones and pagers are placed on vibrate, and TVs in patient rooms are tuned to soothing music on the relaxation channel.

Caregivers use their “inside” voices--they don't shout down the hallway and they watch how loudly they talk to those on the telephone. They ask patients for permission to close their door when leaving their rooms. Heavy doors block a lot of noise from the hallway.

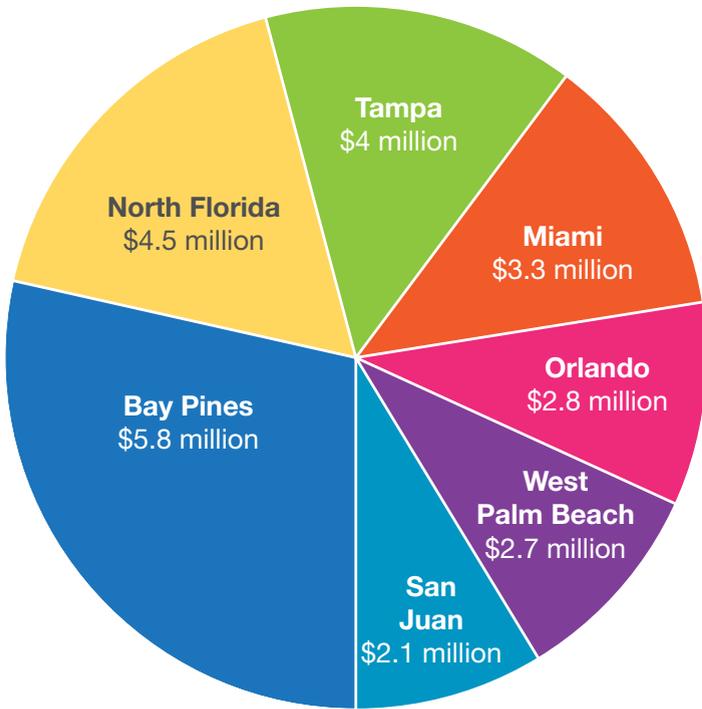
- Susan Wentzell

BECAUSE
I CARE,
I WILL...



“ Treat all those I serve and with whom I work
with **dignity** and **respect**.
Show respect to earn it.”

Total Impact of Volunteers & Donations at VISN 8 facilities



Miami Volunteer Wins National Youth Scholarship Award

MAKING A DIFFERENCE -- The Miami VA Healthcare System congratulates Eliana Hernandez, 17, winner of the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship for 2011. Eliana has been a student volunteer at the Miami VA since the 8th grade and has donated more than 800 hours in service to our nation's Veterans. She competed with over 100 candidates for this national scholarship which is co-sponsored by the Disabled Veterans of America and VA Voluntary Service. Eliana will receive \$15,000 to help with her future educational needs.



Monetary value of all donations & voluntary hours totaled more than
\$25 million

Volunteers contributed more than
966,000 hours during the year

Monetary value of donations (money, items, etc.): more than
\$4.9 million

VISN 8 had
9,171 Volunteers during FY11

Respect

VA photo by Greg Westlye



The 'Grand Cru Nurse Managers' of the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System were the winners of a national 2011 VA Innovation Award.

Capturing the Fire of Nursing Innovation

Each year, the VA's Innovation Awards program recognizes 10 hospital programs and/or initiatives, and each winning team receives a \$10,000 group award. The program strives to identify new and innovative ideas that are best practices recognized as nurse-led, quality improvement initiatives across the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

Two dynamic teams of VA nurses in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network were recognized in 2011 with a VHA Nursing Innovation Award for projects they developed that improve the quality of life of disabled Veterans at one Tampa hospital and the synergism of medical care provided at outpatient clinics spanning 31,800 square miles and 50 counties in two states and time zones.

An interdisciplinary team at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital (JAHVH) in Tampa, FL is the first group to be recognized. They put into place a comprehensive, medically-approved Personal Pass program that allows wheel-chair bound, ventilator-dependent Veterans with spinal cord injuries who are in long-term care at JAHVH's SCI unit the opportunity to expand their social environment and attain more independence by attending more events and community/family activities visits outside the Tampa facility.

Meanwhile, north of Tampa, the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System Outpatient Nursing Team called the "Grand Cru Nurse Managers" developed protocols, guidelines and procedures that unified the nursing staff into a collaborative team at 11 VA clinics of various sizes, complexity and distances, including the start-up of four new clinics.

The result: a high standard of patient-centric clinical care and a coordinated medical system that means the delivery of quality care for our Veterans.

“The people here, they really **care about you.**
When they ask how you’re doing, they mean it.
And that means a lot to me.”

– Vernon Hanson
U.S. Navy Veteran & Patient of the Miami VA Healthcare System



Putting Patient Safety First

The VA Caribbean Nursing Service was recognized by the Certification Board for Sterile Processing and Distribution, Inc., as the only hospital in Puerto Rico to have Certified Sterile Processing and Distribution (SPD) Technicians. The CBSPD plans, develops and administers competency-based International certification examinations for personnel performing cleaning, disinfection, sterilization and inventory management. Having clean, disinfected instruments and procedures is important to prevent healthcare associated infections.



Veterans to the Rescue

A small group of Veterans joined staff from the Miami VA Healthcare System to help a pod of pilot whales that beached themselves in early May 2011 off Cudjoe Key in the Florida Keys. This unique opportunity provided the Veterans the therapeutic benefits of being in nature combined with helping distressed animals. “Helping the beached pilot whales to overcome death symbolized how soldiers work together to save and look after each other, especially during war time,” said Veteran Alejandra Sierra. “I enjoyed the experience -- it helped me understand the struggles our soldiers face every day.”

Laundry processed **11.9 Million Pounds**

Nurses
make-up
20%
of the total
workforce

Number of employees
23,800

Veterans
enrolled for care
739,448

Budget
4.2
Billion

Excellence

Wellness visits
18,038

761 ←
active research
projects

Heart
surgeries
→ **934**

A Holistic Approach to Cancer Care

Veterans who receive their care at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center now have a state-of-the-art facility offering a holistic approach to cancer care. The center provides complete cancer diagnosis and evaluation, as well as a full range of cancer treatment, including surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy. Having a dedicated Cancer Center with Radiation Therapy and Chemotherapy services on-site increases the quality of care provided to Veterans.

BECAUSE
I CARE,
I WILL...



“ Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.”



Anthony Torres
“I get my care at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital because they specialize in Traumatic Brain Injuries. The healthcare here is excellent--better than other facilities.”

- Sgt. Anthony Torres,
Injured in Combat in Afghanistan, May 2011; Patient at Tampa VA's Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center



Intelligent OR Comes to the Caribbean

The VA Caribbean Healthcare System invested more than \$6.5 million to improve the San Juan hospital's healthcare services to become one of the first medical facilities on the Island to launch fully integrated voice-controlled, high-definition digital operating rooms. The Medical Center's newly remodeled operating rooms are outfitted with state-of-the-art booms, lights, and voice-activated, high-definition cameras and offer significant patient care benefits, including reduced time in the operating room.

Excellence



Radiation Oncology Clinic

The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System opened a new Radiation Oncology Clinic on its main campus in St. Petersburg this year. The 13,800 square foot facility features cutting edge technology and equipment. A Varian Trilogy linear accelerator (treatment machine) uses Intensity-Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) and RapidArc technologies to provide the highest standard of care to our Veterans. The clinic has plans to expand its services and staff next year.

New Cath Lab Enhances Cardiac Care

With a total of 6,700 square feet and two procedure rooms, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System's state-of-the-art Cardiac Catherterization Lab provides enhanced cardiac care for Veterans. The new \$4.1 million system uses digital x-ray detectors to take very high quality images that are stored electronically and can be accessed by other VA physicians. Besides catherterizations, laboratory staff will perform a full range of cardiac interventions providing timely, highly specialized care.

VA Outpatient Clinic Expands in Viera, Florida

The Viera VA Outpatient Clinic was expanded by 30,000 square feet this year providing additional space and health care services to Veterans in Brevard, Volusia and Indian River Counties. The clinic is located about 10 miles from Patrick Air Force Base in Brevard County; more than 10,000 Veterans reside in the catchment area. At the clinic, comprehensive health care is provided through primary and specialty care in the areas of medicine, outpatient surgery, psychiatry, physical therapy, neurology, orthopedics, dentistry, optometry and audiology. A full range of diagnostics are also available to include radiology, nuclear medicine, and laboratory services.

Miami Stroke Care Program is Quality Award Winner

The Miami VA Healthcare System has earned the Silver Plus Performance Award by the American Stroke Association/American Heart Association's Get With the Guidelines—Stroke Award for Miami's commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care. By using evidence-based protocols to quickly and efficiently treat acute stroke patients, the Miami's VA's stroke team is committed to saving Veterans' lives and improve the quality of life for stroke survivors.

The Tampa VA Hospital's Surgical Intensive Care Unit received the **2011 Beacon Award for Excellence** from the American Association of Critical Care Nurses.

\$92 Million Mental Health Center Breaks Ground

Work has begun on a new \$92 million Mental Health Center at Bay Pines. The new space will provide inpatient and outpatient mental health services and will incorporate the latest in safety and healthcare delivery models, including specific accommodations for women Veterans. Scheduled completion is fall 2014.



Artist rendering of the new Mental Health Center under construction at Bay Pines.



VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

VA Sunshine Healthcare Network - VISN 8
Office of Communication
140 Fountain Parkway, Ste 600
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

Questions/Comments? E-mail us at
VISN8OfficeofCommunication@va.gov

Nevin Weaver – Network Director
Mary Kay Hollingsworth – Communication Manager
Susan J. Wentzell – Deputy Communication Manager
and Managing Editor, Annual Report
Jason Dangel – Public Affairs Specialist

VA Sunshine Healthcare Network » www.visn8.va.gov

 at all
Medical Centers

