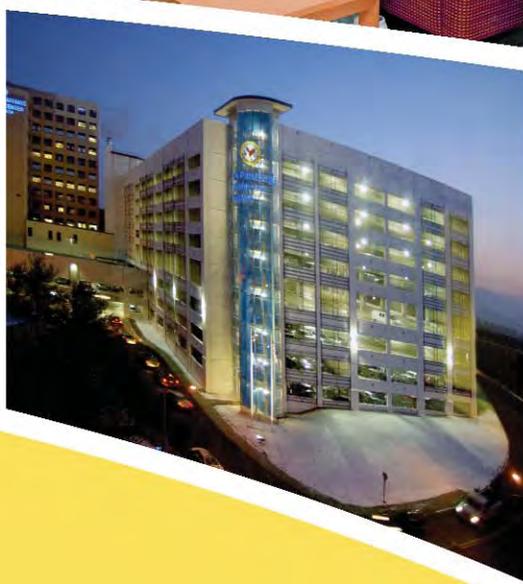


Windows of Opportunity



- VA HEALTHCARE – VISN 4 CONTINUES TO LEAD THE WAY IN PROVIDING THE BEST quality care and services to our nation's heroes. The dedication and commitment of more than 11,000 employees across the network made 2007 an incredibly successful year for VISN 4.

The publication of our 2007 Annual Report spotlights a significant accomplishment for each facility within the network and highlights some of our biggest achievements as a network working together to ensure that we are providing the best possible care to our veterans. One significant accomplishment was the allocation of \$14.6 million that was used to fund the expansion of our mental health services and programs. More than 220 new positions were created to join our staff of mental health professionals who are working to accommodate the growing number of returning service members.



In order to provide timely, coordinated care to returning service members, VISN 4 appointed four transition patient advocates, who work directly with OEF/OIF veterans to ensure they are receiving the care and services that they need, and we also implemented direct-dial phone lines for these veterans. VISN 4 supported the No Veteran Left Behind initiative, ensuring that more than 94% of existing patients were seen within 30 days and seven of our 10 facilities met or exceeded the measure.

VISN 4 demonstrated cost avoidance/savings in excess of \$6.9 million through consolidated contracting activities and we maintained an aggressive Medical Care Cost Recovery program resulting in \$108,457,300 in collections.

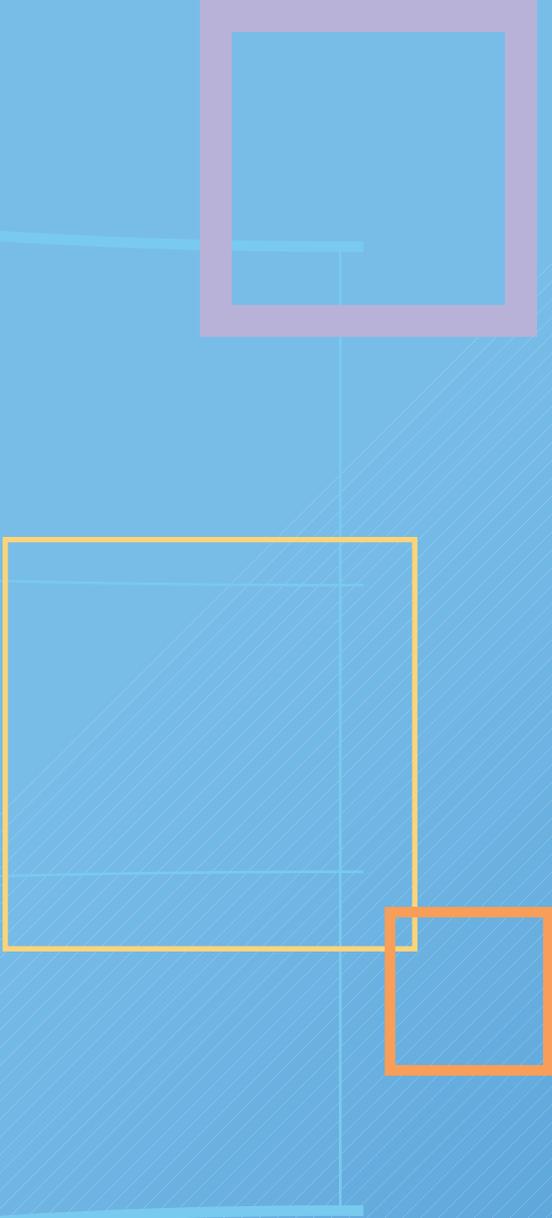
More than \$85 million was obligated in capital improvement projects through our Non-Recurring Maintenance program, which is highlighted on pages 14-15. Nearly \$95 million was used for major construction at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System for a 1,500-space parking garage, residential living villas and a new administration building.

\$1.5 million was allocated to the Employee Development Fund encouraging VISN 4 employees to further their education and we recruited seven presidential management fellows to enhance our succession planning. \$709,285.33 was collected during the 2007 Combined Federal Campaign, which is \$205,448.36 more than in the 2006 campaign (a 41% increase) and VISN 4 was number one in participation for the All Employee Survey this year, finishing with an 87% response rate – the best in the nation!

VISN 4 will continue to set high goals for our employees and for the network and we will enjoy the journey as we reach them all together! Congratulations on a great year of hard work and dedication to improving the lives of our nation's heroes by offering superior health care in superior facilities.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Moreland, FACHE
Network Director, VISN 4



Medical Centers	10
Outpatient Clinics	45
Research Projects	834
Surgeries	4,192
Volunteers	4,743
Full-Time Employees	10,577
Unique Patients	306,281
Outpatient Visits	2,736,141
Donations accepted	\$3,628,682
Research Funding	\$49,800,000
Prosthetics Costs	\$59,727,338
Medical Care Cost Recovery	\$108,457,300
Medication Costs	\$221,774,203
Budget	\$1,753,437,000

□ AS PART OF THE ALTOONA VA'S GOAL TO

enhance mental health programs, this facility implemented a Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program, including Supported Employment Services and Transitional Work Experience. The program is aligned under Social Work Service and includes two vocational rehabilitation counselors. Agreements were put into place with several services within the medical center for use of CWT patients, as well as several businesses within the community. This program will assist mental health patients in transitioning back into the workforce.

The goal of CWT is to provide realistic and meaningful vocational opportunities to veterans, and assist them in reintegrating into their community at their highest functional level. Initially, veterans enrolled in CWT are placed in various positions within the medical center. VA is also currently developing partnerships with companies who need quality work completed in a timely manner at a competitive price.

The CWT program helps match veterans' strengths to job opportunities and local industry needs. CWT can aid local businesses by providing labor services for unskilled or semi-skilled positions in manufacturing and production, warehousing, manual labor, food service, information technology,

office management, clerical, or retail. Companies can pre-screen veterans, observing them in action before making a decision regarding competitive employment.

VA provides professional rehabilitation support including staff education, job modification and task analysis, case management, and other services. Veterans are referred to the CWT program through their VA primary care provider. In 2007, 58 veterans were referred to the Altoona VAMC CWT program.



Compensated Work Therapy at Altoona VAMC

□ VA BUTLER HEALTHCARE TRANSITIONED

the Mercer County Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) from a two day a week clinic operating in shared space in a busy private practice office to a five day a week clinic located in safer, dedicated space in 2006.

In 2007 clinic services were expanded and enhanced through the addition of a second primary care team, a behavioral health nurse practitioner, and a physical therapist. The clinic also now offers telemental health technology through a psychiatrist at the main facility in Butler. Approval has been received to place state-of-the-art digital radiology equipment on site in 2008.

The successes of the Mercer County CBOC led Butler to search for a new dedicated site for the Lawrence County CBOC. On October 1, 2007, the Lawrence County CBOC began transitioning from one day a week clinics located in shared space in two separate locations in the county to having one five day a week clinic operating in dedicated, VA-leased space.

It is the goal of VA Butler Healthcare to continue to enhance primary care and behavioral health services in this location and add limited specialty services in 2008.



Expanded Mercer County Outpatient Clinic

Altoona VAMC CWT Program



Altoona VAMC CWT Worker



New Lawrence County CBOC

□ LOUIS A. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER

installed a \$2 million Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) system. Construction was completed in the form of an extension to the main hospital building designed to perfectly match the exterior with the magnet being activated on April 9, 2007. In FY07, approximately 850 veterans received this specialized type of diagnostic study at Clarksburg VAMC, eliminating the need for travel to other VAMCs or contracted providers in the area.

An average of seven to eight studies are performed each work day within an approximate 15-day scheduling wait time for non-emergent requests and immediate accommodations for emergency orders. Interpretations of MRI studies are promptly returned to the VAMC providers within 48 hours by the primary affiliate, West Virginia University Radiology Department, making this an even more significant contribution to the overall level of accessible health care options at the Clarksburg facility.

The completed installation and activation of an in-house MRI suite at Clarksburg VAMC represents a cost avoidance

of approximately \$300,000 annually. The previous arrangement for the performance of non-emergency MRIs yielded an average wait time of four to six months, which was almost immediately reduced to 15 days with on-site services.

Reduced waiting times, increased access to specialized diagnostic studies, and improved customer satisfaction are the obvious outcomes of these advances and improvements.

□ THE COATESVILLE VA MEDICAL CENTER'S

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder program has been providing comprehensive assessment and treatment services for combat veterans since 1981. Treatment is coordinated by a team of mental health professionals, social workers, nurses, and support staff that work with the veteran to develop a plan of care that is individualized to the veteran's unique and specific needs. The veteran's length of stay in the program is variable and individualized to the needs of the veteran.

The program is now providing these services to a new generation of soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines that have served their country in Iraq and Afghanistan. Approximately 40 percent of veterans treated in the program this year have been veterans with recent service in OEF/OIF and the Global War on Terrorism.

The treatment team is actively involved in research in the field of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and provides educational programs for VA as well as private sector mental health professionals and various elements of the Department of Defense. The results of an independent review conducted by the Northeast Program Evaluation



Improved Psychiatry Unit at Coatesville VAMC



New Clarksburg MRI System

Center in 2006 revealed that the Coatesville PTSD program was rated as number one in terms of treatment outcomes when compared to similar VHA PTSD programs across the country.

In fiscal year 2007, the Coatesville VA Medical Center Substance Abuse Treatment Unit (SATU) modified its treatment programs to offer more individualized care and decreased its length of stay to allow greater access for veterans. Domiciliary services were enhanced and length of stay was

MRI Construction at Clarksburg VAMC



Expanded PTSD Program in Coatesville



Coatesville VAMC PTSD Program Staff



Clarksburg VAMC MRI Construction

also monitored more closely resulting in improved turnover. Efforts were made within the long-term psychiatry unit to improve case management and discharge more veterans to the community. PTSD was modified to improve access to a greater number of returning OEF/OIF veterans.

□ ERIE VA MEDICAL CENTER FORMED AN ALL

Employee Survey (AES) Employee Committee comprised of ten front-line staff. Their goal was to increase staff participation in this year's All Employee Survey to 90%. They achieved 100% participation in the FY07 AES.

- Worked closely with the National Center for Organizational Development in gathering, analyzing, and translating specific employee feedback into actionable items to improve employee satisfaction.
- Conducted departmental-specific focus feedback groups and used the data to determine issues that were department-specific versus more global organizational issues.
- Conducted several Communication Focus Groups composed of a random sampling of employees across all service lines and shifts which discussed major communication

issues/themes that Leadership in turn could address with specific action plans. Erie VAMC is currently implementing several of those recommendations.

- Launched several departmental Action Groups made up of employees. The groups each selected a specific topic to work on in their department relative to their department's AES results.

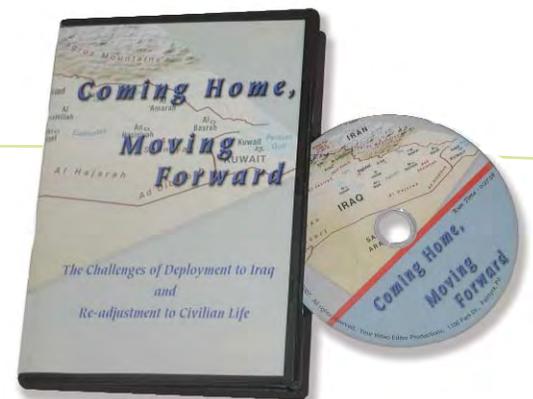


Erie VAMC All Employee Survey Team

□ LEBANON VA MEDICAL CENTER PRODUCED

a video, "Coming Home, Moving Forward: The Challenges of Deployment to Iraq and Re-Adjustment to Civilian Life", for employee Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) awareness training.

This professionally-produced, 28-minute video provides first person education for all Lebanon VA employees about the challenges faced by our returning veterans. Six OEF/OIF veterans relate their experiences in their theater of operation (including Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Bosnia), and the physical, mental and emotional injuries they suffer, and their return home. They describe the culture shock of seeing how poverty stricken these areas are and the overwhelming atmosphere of hot temperatures and being scared. They discuss their feelings about returning home including anger, loss of authority, personality changes and the feeling of being more mature and separated from their peers. The veterans explain injuries they received during their service and how much they missed their fellow soldiers upon their return home.



Lebanon VAMC Staff Education Video

Also included is information about the services offered to our returning veterans. The OEF/OIF Coordinator explains how the goal of the video is to help VA employees know that there are more to these returning veterans than meets the eye. The veterans also express their gratitude for the services and care received at the Lebanon VAMC.

Erie VAMC Departmental Action Group



Three Returning Veterans Seen in Lebanon Video



□ IN SEPTEMBER 2007, THE PHILADELPHIA VA'S

Behavioral Health Inpatient Service held a dedication announcing the opening of their newly renovated acute admission ward.

The ward is an up-to-date and professionally-designed facility featuring the latest advances in safety and privacy for veterans. For example, innovative "sentinel doors" have been installed to prevent the risk of suicides.

The ward renovation is the first phase of a multi-million dollar project to fully renovate the inpatient psychiatric facilities in Philadelphia, which will significantly enhance the delivery of high quality psychiatric care to veterans with serious mental illness.

The Inpatient Service has traditionally served as the primary site for evaluation and management of acutely ill veterans with diverse conditions and significant medical co-morbidity. Between 800 and 900 veterans are treated annually, drawn from Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey.

□ AT THE VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM,

approximately 10,000 square feet of space was completely renovated for the VAPHS Emergency Department, doubling its space. The new department includes attractive waiting and reception areas, 16 patient rooms, an ambulance bay large enough to accommodate three vehicles, office space, a conference room, a supply room, a private room for staff to meet with families, and a break room for staff.

While all 16 patient rooms can be used for the general patient population and are equipped to support minor procedures, some of the rooms were designed with special features. A respiratory isolation room was designed to treat patients who may have an infection such as tuberculosis that can be transmitted through the air. Two rooms designed to treat psychiatric patients feature doors that can be lowered to prevent patients from accessing equipment that could harm them or others. A "major" room was built slightly larger than the other rooms to fit additional equipment and personnel for the treatment of critically ill patients. The Emergency Department also has a room designed specifically for obstetrics and gynecology.



VA Pittsburgh (University Drive)
Emergency Department

Construction of the Emergency Department began in October 2005 and was completed in June 2007 at a cost of \$3.74 million. Staffed by attending physicians, residents, nurse practitioners, nurses and clerks, the Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day and treats an average of 65 patients a day with approximately 75 percent of those patients being treated and released in about two hours while the remaining 25 percent are admitted to the hospital.

New Emergency Department Treatment Room at University Drive



University Drive Expanded Ambulance Bay



Dedication of Renovated Philadelphia Behavioral Health Inpatient Ward



Acute Behavioral Health Admission Ward in Philadelphia

□ WILKES-BARRE VA'S ONCOLOGY SERVICES

were collocated to the fourth floor to enhance patient safety and the quality of care provided to our veterans who require oncology services.

Prior to this endeavor, the oncology service suite was located in the primary care service area. The chemotherapy unit was located in one small area with challenges for patient privacy.

The Oncology Service Team designed the new space and thus were able to address key operational issues. This organizational move permitted the same standard of care to be delivered to inpatients and outpatients. Prior to this move, chemotherapy was delivered on the inpatient unit. In order to ascertain the same standard of care, nurses reviewed the administration of chemotherapy throughout

the organization and identified same standard of care issues. These were addressed with the transition of Oncology services to the fourth floor.

The chemotherapy staff now has oversight for all of the chemotherapy administered. This move also improved the patient satisfaction and enhanced the patient flow.

□ WILMINGTON VA MEDICAL CENTER HAS

significantly decreased patient waiting times in the Gastrointestinal (GI) Clinic and Lab this year. The GI Team has shown initiative and worked together diligently, resulting in significant improvement in access and the quality of GI care.

The GI Clinic now sees 82 percent of its new patients within 30 days compared to 33 percent in October 2006. In addition, the GI lab improved from 21 percent new patients seen within 30 days in October 2006 to 81 percent new patients seen in July 2007. The median wait time from time of positive fecal occult blood tests to colonoscopy decreased from 118 days in October 2006 to 34 days in August 2007.

The achievements made by this GI Team first support the usefulness of collecting data in order for staff to understand the need for change.

Each of the changes implemented in the GI Service has been a building block separately to bring about positive improvement for the medical center as a whole.



Wilmington VAMC GI Staff



Wilmington GI Team Makes Vast Improvements

Patients Receiving Oncology Care in Wilkes-Barre



Improved GI Care at Wilmington VAMC



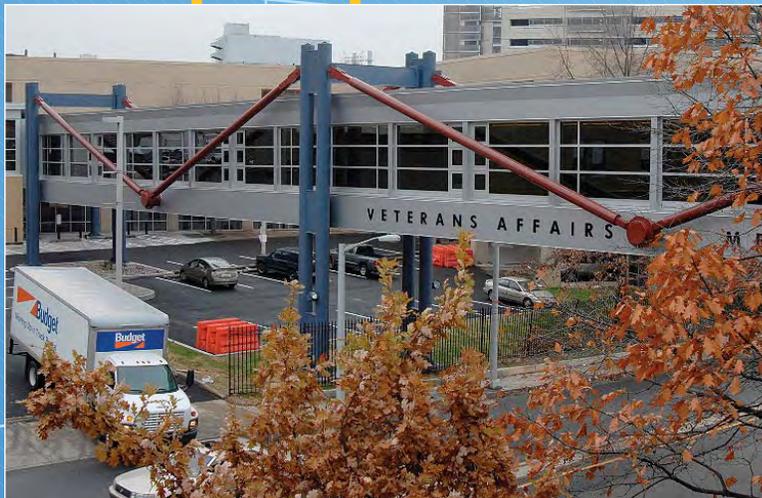
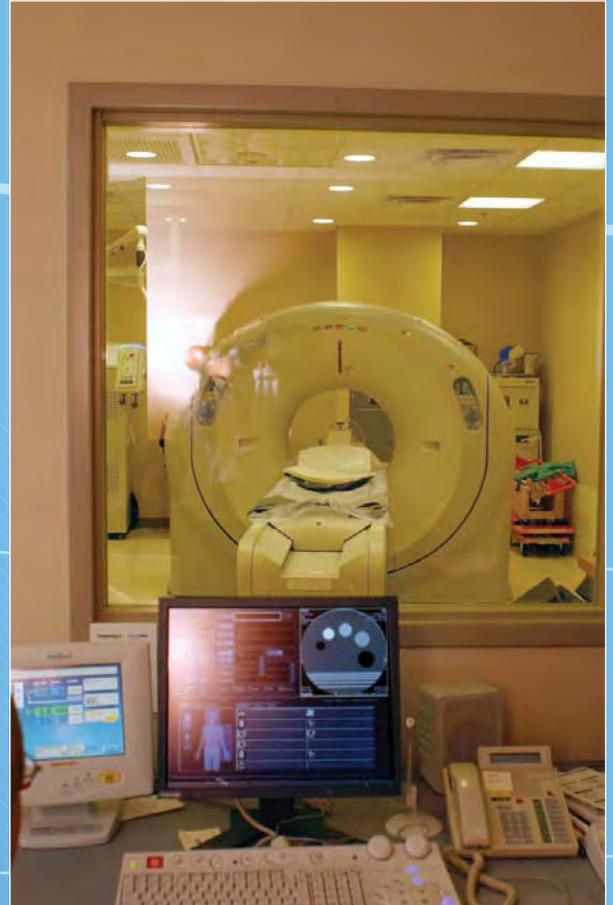
New Oncology Service Area at Wilkes-Barre VAMC

□ MORE THAN \$85 MILLION SPENT on Facility Maintenance and Modernization Projects

Renovated Behavioral Health Unit in Coatesville



New CT Scanner in Erie



New Philadelphia VAMC Pedestrian Bridge



Consolidated Diagnostic Imaging Suite in Philadelphia



New VAPHS Parking Garage

VA HEALTHCARE – VISN 4

VA Healthcare – VISN 4 funded several construction projects to improve and enhance the facilities throughout our area in order to continue the quality of world-class health care that veterans have come to expect and deserve.

These construction projects include a multi-year, more than \$200 million major construction project at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS). Just a few of the other projects include the following: a \$4,150,000 Pedestrian Bridge and \$2,497,000 consolidated diagnostic imaging suite at the Philadelphia VAMC; \$3.4 million Behavioral Health Unit in Coatesville; Lebanon VAMC’s state-of-the-art \$3.4 million Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit; and a \$1.5 million renovated and expanded Radiology Suite and expanded \$1.5 million Laboratory at the Erie VAMC.

Residential Living Villas Being Constructed at VAPHS



Construction of new Administration Building at VAPHS



Expanded Laboratory at Erie VAMC



Lebanon VAMC Intensive Care Unit

Leadership Staff

Michael E. Moreland, FACHE
Network Director

Bradley P. Shelton
Deputy Network Director

David S. Macpherson, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer

William E. Boyle
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