Erie Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Annual Report to the Community

Fiscal Year 2015

VA erie medical center

Honoring Service

I CARE
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Integrity

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

Commitment

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.

Advocacy

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

Respect

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

Excellence

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.

Executive Leadership Team
Dr. David Lavin, Chief of Staff; Dorene Sommers, Associate Director, Patient Care Services; Melissa Sundin, Interim Medical Center Director; Brian Melewski, Interim Associate Director

Dear friends,

I'd like to start by saying thank you—thank you to our partners for standing by our side in support of our mission; thank you to our staff for your unrelenting pursuit of excellence; and most importantly, thank you to our Veterans for your selfless and courageous service to your country. We are honored to be your VA.

This year, Erie VAMC was recognized as one of the Highest Performing Hospitals in Healthcare Quality within the VA. While the VA as a whole is in a period of transition, Erie VAMC remains on the forefront of providing patient-centered care by adapting to change and embracing a culture of continuous improvement.

Our approach to healthcare is to put our Veterans first in all we do. Despite facing many challenges, our commitment to providing exceptional health care to our nation's Veterans has never been stronger.

I am pleased to present our 2015 Annual Report—a glimpse into all that we have accomplished together. As you will seen in this report we have made significant progress in enhancing access to care, expanding Connected Health (virtual care), eliminating homelessness among Veterans, and improving the landscape of our campus. None of this would have been possible without your support, and I thank you.

Melissa A. Sundin
Interim Medical Center Director

Facility Accomplishments

GreenHealth Emerald Award

Erie VAMC received a GreenHealth Emerald Award by Practice Greenhealth which recognizes health care facilities that go above and beyond in regards to environmental stewardship. Erie VAMC was recognized as a leader in excellence in efficiency and sustainability in two categories: energy efficiency and sustainability; and, water conservation and efficiency.

2015 Practice Greenhealth GREENHEALTH EMERALD AWARD

Melissa Sundin, Interim Director; Sean Henry, Chief of Facilities Management Services; John Poshka, GEMS Coordinator/EPC; David Cord, former Director

Facility Statistics

713 total employees

8,610 Urgent Care Center visits

263,999 total outpatient visits

60 operating beds

21,797 unique Veterans served

1,110 women Veterans

1,992 unique OEF/OIF/OND Veterans

Personnel & Benefits **$ 64,472,000**	State Veterans Home **$ 5,108,000**	Utilities **$ 2,708,000**
Medical Services **$ 45,620,000**	Grounds & Construction **$ 4,525,000**	Other **$ 2,233,000**
Supplies **$ 14,385,000**	Equipment **$ 2,782,000**	

Total Operating Budget | $ 144M

Analytics for Strategic Improvement and Learning

A Highest Performing Hospital in Healthcare Quality for 2015

Erie VAMC received recognition from Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson for being ranked by the VA Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning Program as one of the Highest Performing Hospitals in Healthcare Quality for 2015. The 5-Star rating for the Erie VAMC was based on many factors including excellence in patient safety, patient satisfaction, efficiency, length of stay, infection prevention and control, mental health experience of care and population coverage, and wait times for primary care, specialty care, and mental health care noting same day access for mental health appointments.

Decentralized Call Center to Improve Communication between Veterans & Healthcare Teams

In response to patient feedback, Erie VAMC decentralized the Call Center to allow patients to contact their Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) directly by phone. As a result of the decentralization of the Call Center, PACTs are fully staffed making those teams a stronger health care asset for patients. Communication between Veterans and their PACTs has significantly improved, especially those seeking care at the community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs). Many Veterans have commended this new change for improving communication and access to their personal healthcare providers and support.

VACAA Hiring Initiative Increased Access for Vets

Erie VAMC hired a total of 34 additional staff—22 in primary care, nine in specialty care, and three in mental health care—to further enhance patient access as part of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014. With the additional staff, Erie VAMC added a pain clinic and increased a number of specialty care services, specifically in home-based primary care, optometry, on-site chiropractic care and non-VA care consult management. These additional services and staff have aided in our efforts to maintain excellent access to care.

Incredibly Satisfied Veteran Patients

Erie VAMC leads the nation in inpatient satisfaction receiving an average of 9.1% greater scores than the national average in all 12 measures. Overall satisfaction with the medical center is 16.8% higher than VA centers nationally.

- ✓ Cleanliness of the Hospital – **99.4%**
- ✓ Communication with Nurses – **99.3%**
- ✓ Responsiveness of Staff – **97.7%**
- ✓ Communication with Doctors – **97%**
- ✓ Pain Management – **96.4%**

Improving Access

Connected Health (Virtual Care)

the right care, at the right time, in the right place

Expanding Telehealth Services

In 2015, nearly one out of every two Veterans at the Erie VAMC used some form of Connected Health for their health care. Connected Health combines virtual care, secure messaging, VA mobile apps, and Telehealth services all under one umbrella. The popularity of Connected Health continues to grow.

This year, Erie VAMC added several new clinical video telehealth (CVT) programs including a rheumatology clinic, a visual impairment service clinic, and a psychology and psychiatry clinic to ensure Veterans receive excellent, timely care. Using CVT technologies, Veterans can connect with a specialist who is located at a different VA, such as Pittsburgh or Butler, from the comfort of their own VA clinic.

Coming soon! Next year, we are planning to expand CVT to include social work, sleep studies, physical therapy and occupational therapy, prosthetics, and telewound clinics.

3,946 Clinical Video Telehealth

14,510 local Veteran accounts

5,550 Home Telehealth encounters

11,119 in-person authenticated Veteran accounts

1,932 Store & Forward (Teleretinal & Teledermatology)

7,876 users of secure messaging

My Health*e*Vet

manage your health care—anywhere, anytime

This year, thousands of Veterans took an active role in managing their health care on-line through My Health*e*Vet. With this program, Veterans can:

- Refill medications
- View lab results & VA medical records
- View provider notes
- Send Secure Messages to their provider and healthcare team

My healthevet
www.myhealth.va.gov

Behavioral Health
opening doors to recovery

Erie VAMC's Behavioral Health Clinic (BHC) was ranked first in the Nation by the VA Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning Program. This ranking was based on a composite of scores that covered a variety of metrics including quality of care, job satisfaction, Veteran satisfaction, continuity of care, and timely access.

The BHC has also maintained *same day access* to their services to ensure Veterans are getting timely treatment and excellent access to mental health care.

Mental Health Summit
Erie VAMC hosted the annual community-wide Mental Health Summit to engage community agencies in addressing the specific mental health care needs of Veterans and their families. This summit focused on educating community agencies about VA services and on pooling resources to provide a better network of support in the community for Veterans and their families.

Part of the success of the BHC can be attributed to their focus on helping Veterans successfully reintegrate back into their community. Throughout the year, the BHC hosts a variety of behavioral health related education programs, remembrance ceremonies, and events open to the community to aid in their recovery process.

Military Sexual Trauma Awareness Walk
During Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Awareness Month in April, Erie VAMC invited staff, Veterans, and community members to join VA staff for a MST Walk to honor MST survivors, to help build awareness, and to help break the silence that is associated with MST.

Suicide Prevention Awareness Walk
Every September, VA staff join with Veterans and community members in the annual Suicide Prevention Awareness Walk to remember those who were taken by suicide and to further build awareness of suicide prevention programs available to Veterans and their families.

#1
ranking in nation for behavioral health

50,582
behavioral health visits

↑ 10%
increase in unique patients

5,128
unique patients

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1

Promoting Recovery

Ending Veteran Homelessness
one Veteran at a time

Securing Veterans
Erie VAMC's Homeless Care Team continues to lead the way in providing quick, permanent housing to homeless Veterans. On average, it takes 44 days from the day a Veteran enrolls in the HUD-VASH Program to the day they have permanent housing which puts Erie in the top 10 percent in the Nation for helping Veterans secure permanent housing quickly.

In 2015, Erie's Homeless Care Team helped 86 Veterans find a place to call home. The Homeless Care Team continues to provide regular weekly, even daily, outreaches to community shelters and homeless agencies in efforts to help identify homeless Veterans and connect them with services designed to help get them back on their feet.

These services have proven to be very effective in the fight to end and prevent homelessness. Since 2006, the Homeless Care Team has worked with more than 1,000 unique Veterans. Today, the team is pleased to say that homelessness among Veterans in the Erie and surrounding areas is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
va.gov/homeless | (877) 424-3838

212
VJO Veterans Served in 2015

30
VJO Veterans Served in 2012

Veterans Justice Outreach & Veterans Court

The Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program continues to grow as more and more services are added to help Veterans who are involved in the criminal justice system. In 2015, the VA VJO Coordinator was instrumental in launching a Veterans Court in Erie County that aims to connect Veterans with VA treatment and mentoring. Often times, the invisible wounds of war can influence the decisions that land Veterans in trouble with the legal system. Through the Veterans Court, VA is able to intervene early and assist Veterans in getting the help they need in order to reintegrate back into the community successfully.

Investing in our Community

VA Veteran Town Halls

In 2015, Erie VAMC made a commitment to actively seek out feedback from Veterans and to regularly engage community members in their VA health care by hosting Veteran Town Halls. Erie VAMC hosted nearly a dozen Veteran Town Halls throughout our catchment area. The feedback we have received from these Town Halls has been invaluable in helping us enhance our services.

76 outreach events

117 media exposures

Building Partnerships

VA2K Walk & Roll to raise awareness of Homelessness among Veterans and to raise funds to support Homeless Veterans.

Behavioral Health staff use their extreme couponing skills to provide personal care bags to Veterans in need.

592 volunteers

83,162 volunteer hours

$376K in donations received

Welcome Home Veterans Appreciation Event
Erie VAMC hosted the annual Welcome Home Veterans Appreciation Event at the Erie Zoo with more than 850 Veterans and their families in attendance. VA program representatives and other Veteran-related service organizations were on-site throughout the evening to meet with Veterans and provide them with information about VA services and other Veteran-related community resources. This event offered a one-stop-shop to connect Veterans with a number of VA and community resources and was the largest Welcome Home event yet!

The Orville H. Frank Post 742 and SAL squadron 742 donated $10,000 in gift cards to local Veterans in need through the Erie VA Medical Center Behavioral Health Clinic over the holiday season. The Fairview Legion also hosted a holiday luncheon for some of the recipients.

Erie VAMC MOVE! weight management program hosts live healthy cooking demonstrations for Veterans and their families.

As part of VA's Summer of Service initiative, Erie VAMC hosted an Open House with more than 150 Veterans, their families, and community members in attendance. Erie VAMC staff provided tours of the facility, informed community members of volunteer opportunities, and hosted a health and information fair for Veterans and their families.

The annual Veterans Day Parade drew a large crowd with community members waving flags, holding "Thank You" posters, and cheering on all Veterans in attendance.

During the annual National Salute to Veterans week, Community members are invited to visit Veterans and spread Valentine's Day Cheer.

Changing Landscape

***Opened!* Ambulatory Surgery Center**

Cost
$6.2M

Construction Start
December 2013

Move-in Date
November 16, 2015

Size
9,500 sq ft

Highlights
Easy access to care.

Impact for Veterans
Ability to expand surgical services offered and providing innovative pain management.

Parking Garage

Cost
$6.9M

Construction Start
Contractor started South lot work in September 2014. Parking Lot structure started in March 2015.

Move-in Date
Summer 2016

Size
280 spaces

Highlights
Energy efficient VRF HVAC and LED lighting

Impact for Veterans
Will significantly improve patient satisfaction and the overall patient experience by enhancing ease of access and parking to the facility.

Community Living Center

Cost
$7.8M

Construction Start
TBD, Winter 2017

Size
24,114 sq ft

Highlights
Energy efficient design with Hi-efficiency VRF HVAC and LED lighting

Impact for Veterans
The stand along Community Living Center will provide a more home-like environment for residents.

Important Contacts

Eligibility
814-860-2970

Release of Information
814-860-2212

Veterans Experience Officer
814-860-2500

Hospice Unit (Unit 5)
814-860-2480

Community Living Center (Unit 4)
814-860-2332

Transition & Care Management (OEF/OIF/OND)
814-860-2965

Medication Refills
814-868-6284
1-800-274-8387 (toll-free)

Medical Social Work
814-860-2529

Women Veterans Program
814-860-2907

MOVE! Weight Management
814-860-2554

Caregiver Support Program
814-860-2657

Behavioral Health Clinic
814-860-2038

Homeless Care Team
814-860-2038

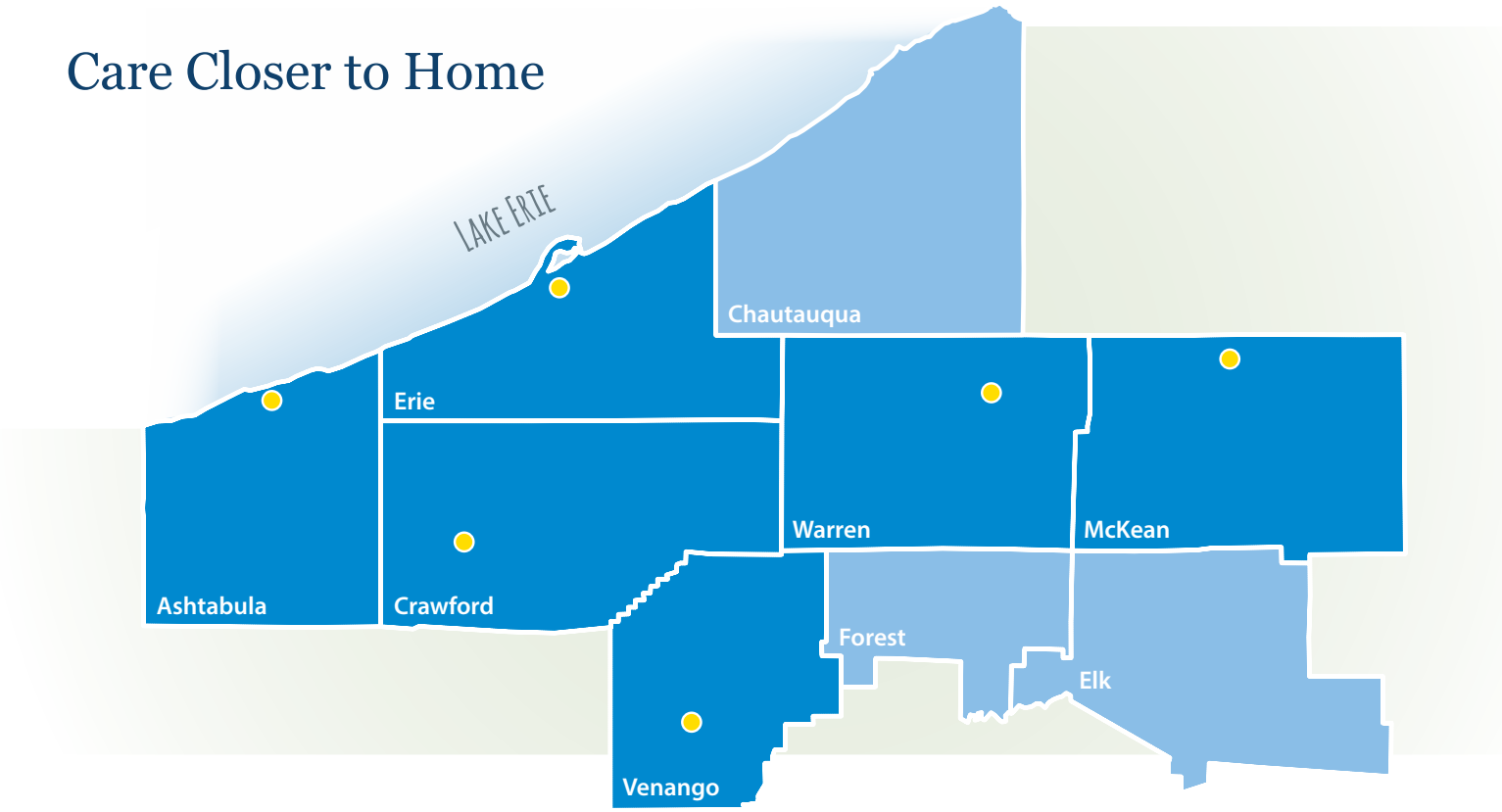
My HealtheVet Program
www.myhealth.va.gov
814-860-2821

Billing Inquiries/Non-VA Care
814-860-2800

VA Billing
1-899-408-2657

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Care Closer to Home



Ashtabula VA Clinic
2,247 Veterans

2044 Lambros Ln
Ashtabula, OH 44004
Phone: 866-463-0912

Crawford VA Clinic
2,756 Veterans

16954 Conneaut Lk Rd
Meadville, PA 16335
Phone: 866-962-3210

Venango VA Clinic
1,865 Veterans

464 Allegheny Blvd
Franklin, PA 16323
Phone: 866-962-3260

Warren VA Clinic
2,229 Veterans

3 Farm Colony Dr
Warren, PA 16365
Phone: 866-682-3250

McKean VA Clinic
1,146 Veterans

23 Kennedy St
Bradford, PA 16701
Phone: 814-368-3019

VA erie medical center

ERIE VA MEDICAL CENTER
138 East 38th Street
Erie, PA 16504
1-800-274-8387

www.erie.va.gov
VAMCErie
ErieVAMC

HONORING SERVICE
EMPOWERING HEALTH

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