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2012



STORY ON  
PAGE 10

# Director's Vision



Dear Veterans, fellow employees, volunteers and friends of VISN 4:

Accessibility is one of VA's core characteristics, as defined by Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. Because we strive to be an accessible organization, all VISN 4 employees are committed to provide the Veterans we serve with engaging and welcoming services every time they visit one of our facilities; to make it easy for them to access the full range of our services; and to make sure every interaction we have with a Veteran is positive and productive.

One of VISN 4's most important goals is to enhance Veterans' access to our services. To that end, we've significantly expanded our network of outpatient clinics so that Veterans have easier access to VA services. In our cover story, you'll learn more about our Community Based Outpatient Clinics, or CBOCs. Each of our Network's 43 CBOCs is unique and valued, but, in this issue of Vision for Excellence, we'll introduce seven of them to you.

We've initiated a variety of other programs to improve access to our care, such as Telehealth services, expanded transportation services (with the help of our friends at the Disabled American Veterans organization), and mobile clinics. We'll also discuss those with you here. And, in the final pages of our cover story, you'll learn about four new programs that are improving access to health care for Veterans living in VISN 4's service area.

Besides our cover story, we've included in this issue lots of other news about what's going on in our Network. We hope you'll find the information we're presenting both interesting and useful. You can also stay in touch with VISN 4 all the time, by visiting us at [www.visn4.va.gov](http://www.visn4.va.gov).

Thank you for your continued interest in VISN 4, and in the health care services it is our privilege to provide to our Nation's heroes.

Sincerely,

**MICHAEL E. MORELAND, FACHE  
NETWORK DIRECTOR**



*Validation Building*

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MAY 2, 2012

# A MISSION ADVANCED. A LEGACY HONORED. A PROMISE KEPT.

Introducing the new standard in comprehensive, Veteran-focused care for Pittsburgh-area Veterans.

## CONSOLIDATION BUILDING GRAND OPENING

COST: \$75.8 million

ARCHITECT: Astorino/HDR

CONTRACTOR: P.J. Dick Corporation

CONSTRUCTION START: January 2009

MOVE-IN DATE: Summer 2012



### BUILDING FACTS:

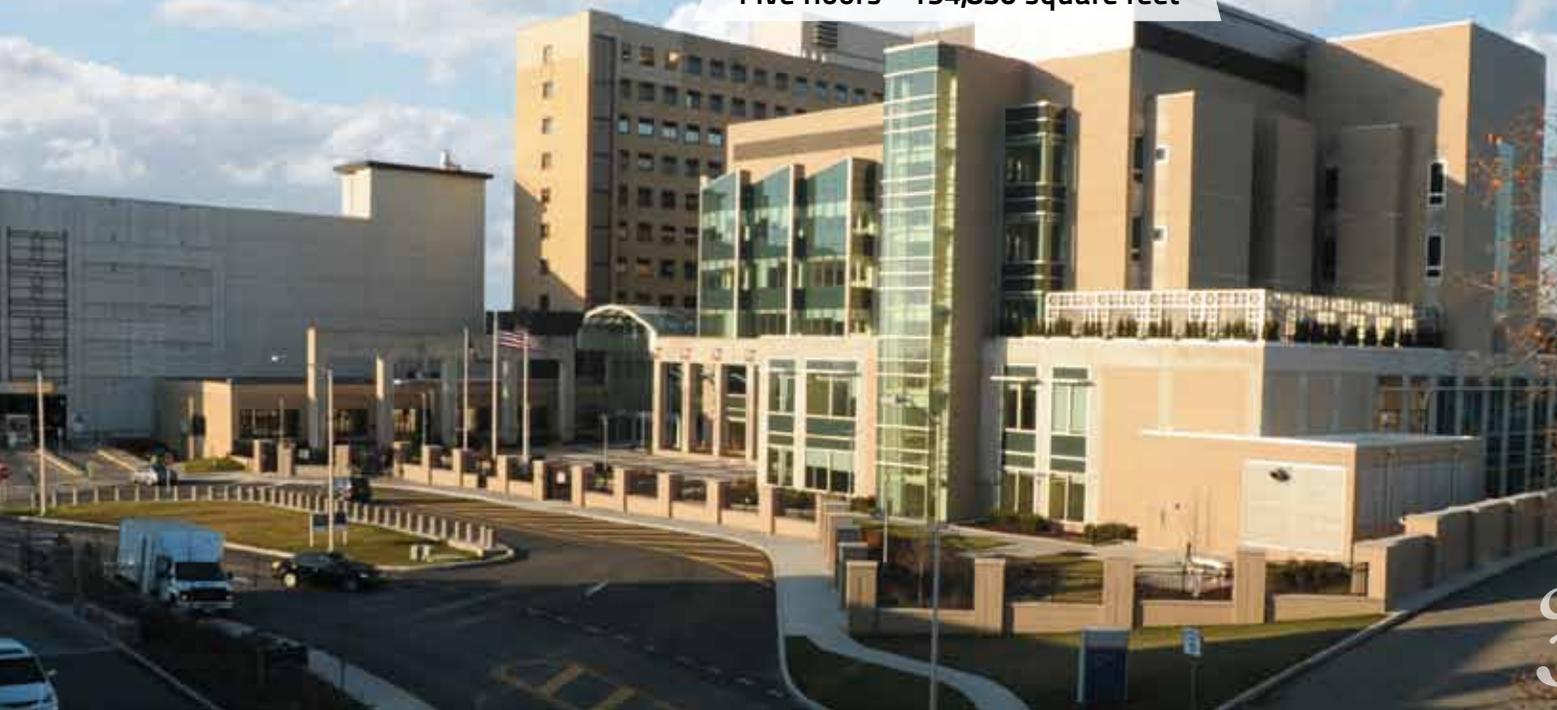
Flawlessly connected to the recently refurbished lobby of the existing medical facility (opened in 1954)

Thousands of outpatient visits each year

Seamlessly integrates behavioral health and primary care

78 inpatient psychiatric beds

Five floors - 194,850 square feet





*This project is more than bricks and mortar. It's not about building a building; it's about creating an environment to inspire these people to be hopeful in their futures. We look forward to hearing about all the miracles that are about to happen in this place.*

*We took a tour of this building this morning and it is absolutely the most up-to-date, state-of-the-art mental health facility in this country, in and outside of VA. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to all the people who have made this new building a reality, including VA staff, volunteers, and the many, many other people who have worked so incredibly hard to bring this to reality.*



**Timothy L. Powers**

President of Architecture and Principal-in-Charge of Healthcare Design, Astorino

**The Honorable Pat Toomey**  
United States Senator (Pa.)

**The Honorable Dr. Robert A. Petzel**  
VA Under Secretary for Health

**VAPHS**  
Pittsburgh Healthcare System

*Consolidation Building*

*It's tremendous the way this facility is going to enhance patient privacy, create a home for Veterans who need one, and streamline patient care in a way that will really help Veterans who are in the process of rebuilding their lives and being cared for. We have a profound obligation to care for them in their time of need. This is a facility that is reacting to the changing dynamics, the changing circumstances, the changing obligations that VA faces.*





*The story of this building has just begun. The story that is so exciting to me is the story of the employees, the volunteers and the Veterans that will breathe life into this building and see the benefits of this healing environment over the decades to come.*

*Today we are ringing in a new era of health care for Veterans in western Pennsylvania and beyond. The Department of Veterans Affairs has been serving our Nation's heroes in Pittsburgh for 87 years, and continues to honor that commitment with this stunning new facility.*



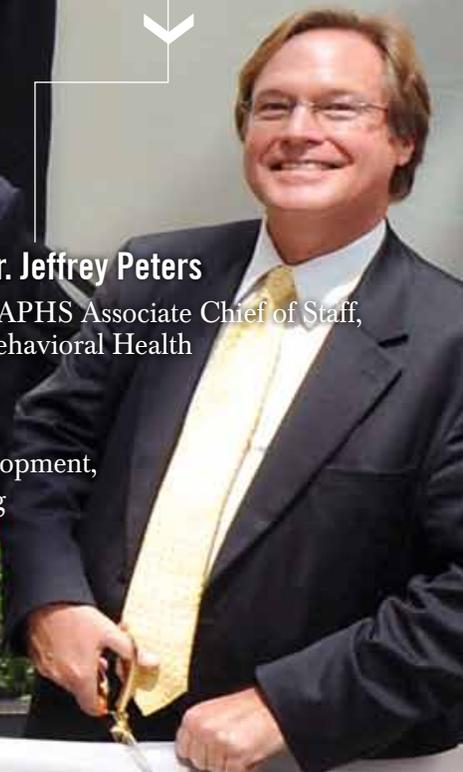
**Terry Gerigk Wolf**  
VAPHS Director and CEO



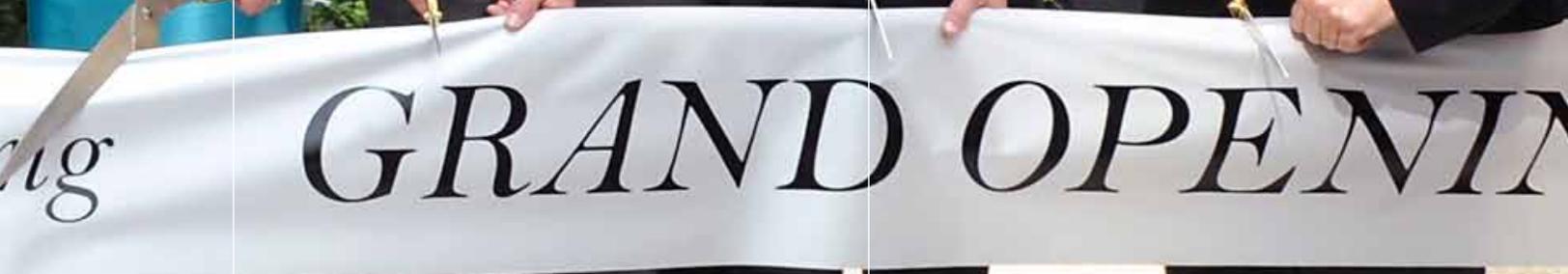
**Michael E. Moreland**  
VISN 4 Network Director



**Jake Ploeger**  
Director of Corporate Business Development,  
P.J. Dick, Trumbull, and Lindy Paving



**Dr. Jeffrey Peters**  
VAPHS Associate Chief of Staff,  
Behavioral Health



*We are reminded of our country's promise to Veterans as we view Abraham Lincoln's guiding quote on the wall, the VA seal on the floor, and the world-class medical equipment you will see as you tour the facility.*

*We are very proud of the role that our companies have played in the construction of this project. I would like to thank our Veterans, to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude and to whom this building is really dedicated.*



# AROUND the NETWORK

## WELCOME, NEW LEADERS!

New Directors, Deputy Director and Associate Director

These new leaders will oversee day-to-day operations and help determine the future paths of VISN 4 VA medical centers. They have a wide variety of expertise and experience, and we are pleased to welcome them to our leadership boards.

*Leadership to me means duty, honor, country. It means character, and it means listening from time to time.*

**George W. Bush**

43rd President of the United States of America

### Pittsburgh

David P. Cord

Deputy Director since June 3, 2012

Previously served as VA Maryland Health Care System's Associate Director for Finance

**11 YEARS OF VA SERVICE**

*VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System has an outstanding reputation, and my goal will be to do my part to continue to maintain that excellence in providing care to Veterans. After five years of active duty in the United States Air Force, I have a deep appreciation for the commitment each and every Veteran has made in service to our country.*

### Butler

Rebecca Hubscher

Associate Director since June 3, 2012

Previously served as VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System's Vice President of Community Based Care

**14 YEARS OF VA SERVICE**

*I am thrilled about this new opportunity, and am really looking forward to working with the excellent staff at VA Butler Healthcare. I am excited to meet and work with our Veterans and their families. My top priority has always been and will always be the highest quality of care and service to our Veterans.*

### Clarksburg | Beth M. Brown

Director since March 25, 2012

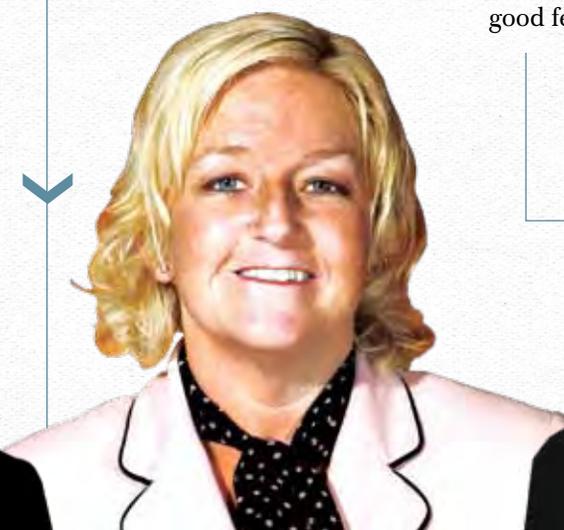
Previously served as Louisville VA's Associate Medical Center Director for Operations

**35 YEARS OF VA SERVICE**

*"I am excited about this new opportunity to be the director of the Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center," said Beth Brown. "I look forward to working with the staff and volunteers to serve the 22,000 Veterans and 26 counties of north central West Virginia and surrounding states."*

Brown will work with Clarksburg VA on providing care to rural areas through outreach and telemedicine/mental health programs. Brown said she will work for more housing for homeless Veterans. She is also excited about a new cancer collaboration agreement with United Hospital Center.

VA Clarksburg welcomed Brown with a reception on May 18, at which she met volunteers and employees. She also met with Veterans and community leaders to get their views. The new director said she already has a good feel for her staff's spirit.



# Altoona | William H. Mills

Director since April 9, 2012

Previously served as Lebanon VA's Associate Director

## 38 YEARS OF VA SERVICE

William H. Mills, new director of the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center, is excited to lead Altoona VA staff during a time of change.

"I am very excited to be able to provide leadership to the staff in Altoona during this critical time. I have served in many roles throughout my VA career, and I believe this skill set will help the medical center during the exciting transformation that is taking place," he says.

Mills has also been getting to know the staff, Veterans, and volunteers by actively participating in medical center events.

Mills began his VA career in 1974 as a recreation therapist at the VA Medical Center in Memphis. He became the human resource officer for VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System in October 1996. During his tenure in Pittsburgh, Mills also served as the lead human resource officer for VISN 4. In addition, he has served extended appointments as the interim associate director at both VA Pittsburgh and at Wilmington VA Medical Center.

Mills was born and raised in Jacksonville, Fla. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and a master's degree in education from the University of Memphis.

*VA is undergoing many changes that will enable us to continue to serve Veterans of all generations.*



## "THE VA SAVED MY LIFE!"

### Telehealth aids early detection

A nurse's quick action and a simple piece of technology recently saved Vietnam Army Veteran Jim Shea's life.

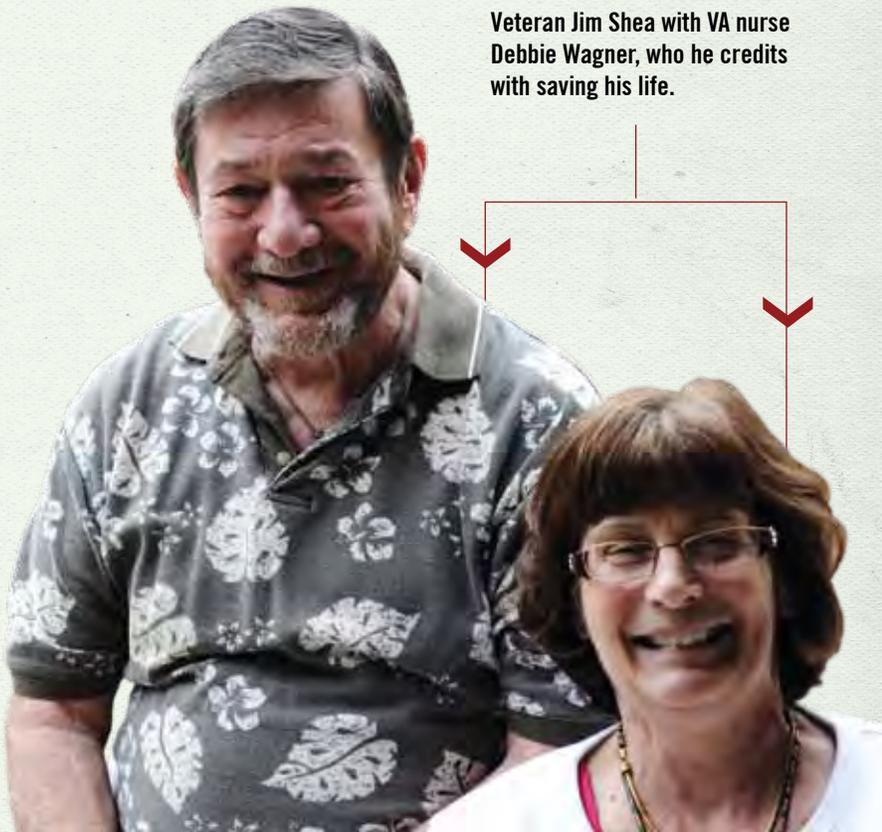
After losing his father to a heart attack, and experiencing heart problems himself, Shea enrolled for VA health care at Lebanon VA Medical Center and signed up for the Telehealth program. Even though he doesn't have to leave his home every day, VA staff monitors his vital signs and checks up on him.

In February, Shea received a phone call from nurse Debbie Wagner, shortly after he transmitted his daily report. She asked him a few questions and then instructed him to report to the emergency department immediately. Within ten minutes of his arrival, Wagner's suspicions were confirmed. Shea was having a heart attack.

Because of Wagner's quick intervention, Shea got the emergency care he needed and is now fully recovered and very appreciative of VA.

"The VA saved my life," says Shea simply.

**Veteran Jim Shea with VA nurse Debbie Wagner, who he credits with saving his life.**



## HONORABLE VISITOR

### VA Secretary Stops By VISN 4 Facilities

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, visited three of VISN 4's medical centers and one community-based outpatient clinic this April. The Secretary greeted Veterans, staff and volunteers and saw first-hand how VISN 4 provides Veterans with health care that is better than the best.

Here are the programs highlighted during his visits:

### Philadelphia

- Dialysis pilot project (scheduled to open this summer; also research to reduce the number of Veterans needing dialysis)
- Snyder House (a residential rehabilitation treatment program scheduled to open this fall)
- Improving partnership with the University of Pennsylvania
- Fighting Veteran homelessness through the use of housing vouchers and other programs
- Updated, state-of-the-art medical and surgical intensive care units and the newly expanded and renovated emergency department and gastroenterology suite

### Coatesville

- New "Housing First" model of care (which aids Veterans in getting permanent housing and employment in the community)
- Medical Foster Home (which helps patients lead healthier lives in the community)
- Nationally-recognized post-traumatic stress disorder residential treatment program
- Mary E. Walker House (temporary residential care for homeless female Veterans)

### Wilmington

- New specialty clinics for returning Servicemembers and women Veterans and renovated surgical suite
- Telehealth programs, including Teledermatology

While in Wilmington, the Secretary also participated in a Veterans' roundtable hosted by United States Senator Tom Carper (Del.).



Secretary Shinseki visiting with Philadelphia VA Medical Center patient Joseph L. Carter, a Vietnam era Army Veteran who served in Japan.



Secretary Shinseki stops to greet Iraq War Veteran Terrance Watkins on the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Residential Treatment Unit.



Secretary Shinseki shakes hands with Ralph Smith, long-time VA volunteer with more than 50,000 hours of service.

# WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

VISN 4 employees are ready to respond



VA has three disaster teams ready to go wherever they are needed in 48 hours – National Emergency Medical Response Teams (NEMRTs).

NEMRTs train to respond to emergencies. They help provide care to our Nation’s Veterans and non-Veteran citizens during times of national emergencies or when needed to support VA facilities facing an emergency.

VISN 4 employee volunteers have provided critical assistance to VA medical centers, community hospitals, special needs shelters and mobile clinic locations in response to past nationally-declared disasters.

Team members receive regular training in emergency skills and come from a wide range of medical, technical and administrative jobs. NEMRT #1 includes employees from VISNs 3, 4, 5 and 10.

*To be involved as a team member puts you in the front lines of service to your community and your country.*

Diane Bruno, Philadelphia VA’s Camden, N.J., Community-based Outpatient Clinic Nurse Manager

# WELCOME HOME!

Drive-in movie, VA style

More than 160 people, including Veterans and their family members, pitched blankets and folding chairs in front of a 40-foot movie screen at Lebanon VA Medical Center this spring.

Moviegoers enjoyed “Journey 2: The Mysterious Island,” a family-friendly action film.

The movie was part of the annual ‘Welcome Home’ event for Veterans returning from service in Afghanistan and Iraq. Along with popcorn, family activities and other food treats, VA staff provided guests with information about receiving VA benefits.

“We want Veterans and their families to take a night off from their busy schedules and just enjoy themselves,” explains Katie Reesor, Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn program manager.



*We want Veterans and their families to take a night off from their busy schedules and just enjoy themselves.*

Katie Reesor, Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn program manager

# A VISION REALIZED

Improving access to VA health care for VISN 4's Veterans

**Vision:** Ensure that at least 70 percent of Veterans receiving primary care in VISN 4 don't have to drive more than 30 minutes from home.

**Vision Surpassed:** More than 85 percent of Veterans receiving primary care in VISN 4 don't have to drive more than 30 minutes from home to visit a VA facility.

Through the use of Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) and various other programs, VISN 4 has achieved its ambitious vision of enhanced access.



On the following pages, we've highlighted a few of VISN 4's CBOCs and special programs designed to improve access. Keep reading to learn more about a variety of different ways and places that Veterans living in the VISN 4 service area can receive the quality health care they have earned.

**ACCESS** [ak-ses] *noun*

the opportunity to experience or make use of something

## VISN 4 CBOC GROWTH

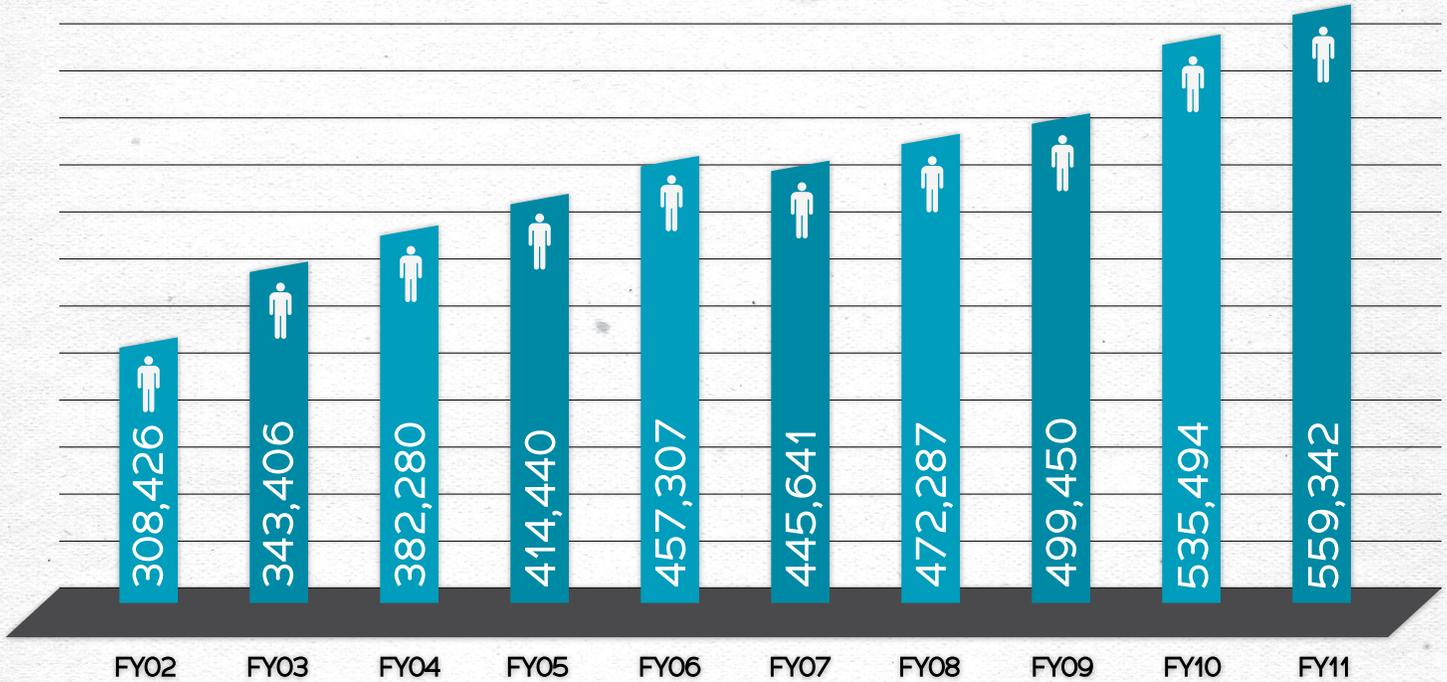
🏠 = 2 CLINICS





The total number of Veterans' health care appointments conducted at a VISN 4 CBOC increased more than 80% between fiscal year 2002 (FY02) and fiscal year 2011 (FY11).

## VISN 4 CBOC VISITS



\*NOT ALL CBOCs ARE REPRESENTED BELOW

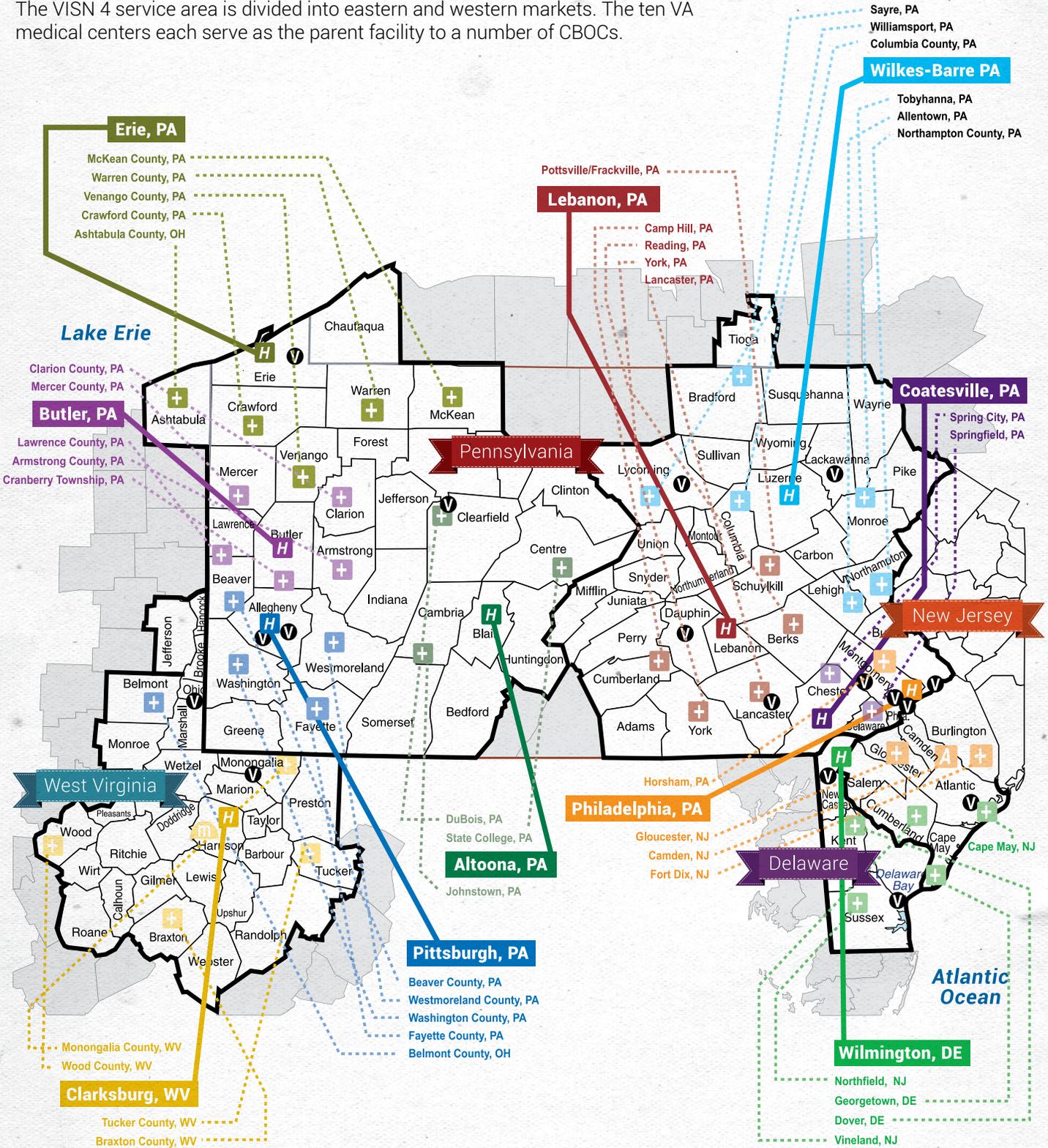
### VISITS BY THE NUMBERS

CBOC	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Georgetown	3,536	3,719	5,441	6,994	6,347	6,259	7,781	7,604	9,570	10,692
Dover	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,973	6,755	9,003	9,226
Cape May	--	--	--	--	--	5,118	4,614	4,676	4,756	5,513
Vineland	1,712	2,914	3,861	7,258	7,532	8,528	9,253	8,549	9,225	9,585
Johnstown	16,522	18,062	20,295	19,181	23,036	15,206	15,815	15,416	16,863	18,390
Dubois	10,070	9,239	13,753	15,030	18,080	10,731	10,541	10,287	10,337	11,965
State College	8,759	12,019	15,276	16,345	15,696	8,228	8,820	9,810	9,602	9,949
Mercer County	960	1,124	1,410	1,465	875	4,679	5,356	5,221	6,267	7,906
Lawrence County	704	719	1,349	1,443	1,500	1,367	3,336	3,869	4,400	5,529
Armstrong County	1,796	1,691	1,302	1,429	1,483	1,548	1,614	1,824	2,134	2,520
Clarion County	1,656	1,372	936	509	1,431	1,573	1,974	1,972	1,818	2,558
Tucker County	5,598	4,151	4,098	4,087	4,723	5,776	6,723	6,272	6,373	5,018
Wood County	11,774	9,844	10,305	11,824	12,004	11,914	12,632	13,670	14,295	16,021
Springfield	11,987	12,438	14,607	13,956	12,380	11,400	11,102	10,497	11,244	14,204
Spring City	6,696	7,147	10,712	9,776	8,266	8,452	7,760	7,764	8,697	9,998
Venango County	--	--	--	2,392	5,417	4,471	6,744	5,814	6,470	9,719
Allentown	56,690	62,092	64,244	65,088	67,112	74,324	72,492	71,105	72,368	68,226

\*

# MAPPING OUR VISION

The VISN 4 service area is divided into eastern and western markets. The ten VA medical centers each serve as the parent facility to a number of CBOCs.





# CRANBERRY CBOC

## VA Butler Healthcare

VISN 4 opened its newest clinic in Cranberry Township, Pa., after Veterans voiced their need for a VA clinic in this area.

“There are a high concentration of Veterans living and working in this area,” says James Torok, VA Butler Healthcare outpatient coordinator. “For most of them, driving to the clinic is much quicker and much less hectic than driving into Pittsburgh.”

Officially opened on May 7, 2010, the clinic has quickly become an integral part of the Veteran’s community in Beaver, northern Allegheny, and southern Butler counties.

For Veterans with more complex needs, the clinic is able to connect the Veteran with a provider at VA Butler Healthcare via secure video conferencing.

“We want to provide Veterans all the services possible at each of our clinics,” says Torok, who is seeing the role of outpatient clinics grow.

Torok also views the hometown touch as an essential part of the CBOC experience.

“Our staff knows most of the Veterans they serve by name, and we all have a stake in their wellbeing.”



To learn more, scan this QR Code with a smartphone app or visit [www.butler.va.gov/visitors/CBOC.asp](http://www.butler.va.gov/visitors/CBOC.asp)



Candee Zendron, a nurse at the Cranberry CBOC



## FORT DIX CBOC

Philadelphia VAMC

“We do today’s work today.” That’s how Dr. Jonathan Sirkin described the secret to his clinic’s success in reducing waiting times for 5,500 southern New Jersey Veterans.

The Fort Dix CBOC is the only VISN 4 facility located on a United States joint military base.

“When Veterans come to see us, we take care of as many issues as we can during their visit,” he explains. “This allows us to push back their next visit from three months, say, to six months.”

The clinic also uses telephone care to keep the number of outpatient clinic visits down. “By getting blood glucose levels from our diabetes patients by phone, we save many of them trips to the clinic. We do the same with blood pressure readings for patients with hypertension,” says Sirkin.

In addition, the clinic strongly encourages Veterans to use the secure messaging feature on My Health@Vet, allowing them to e-mail back and forth with their health care providers.

As a result of these initiatives, the average waiting time for the next available clinic appointment has been reduced from 40 days in 2010 to 15 days today – and nearly all Veterans needing a same-day appointment can be accommodated without difficulty. It’s a remarkable success story!

*We do today’s work today.*

Dr. Jonathan Sirkin, Fort Dix CBOC physician



To learn more, scan this QR Code with a smartphone app or visit [www.philadelphia.va.gov/visitors/ftdix.asp](http://www.philadelphia.va.gov/visitors/ftdix.asp)



## TUCKER COUNTY CBOC

Louis A. Johnson VAMC



“Tucker County is a very rural CBOC,” according to Ron Sandreth, operations manager for community and rural health for the Louis A. Johnson VAMC in Clarksburg, W.Va. “And driving on winding mountain roads isn’t like driving on I-70, especially in the wintertime!”

To minimize the need for more extensive travel, the CBOC offers the 1,200 Veterans of West Virginia and Maryland it serves an extensive network of telehealth services, including telemental health, teleretinal eye examinations, social work services assessments, and a number of education programs. When roads are bad, or people can’t drive, the DAV Transportation Network Van helps out.

The CBOC’s four full-time employees work together as a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT), enabling them to partner with Veterans in aligning the services the facility provides, based on mutually-negotiated needs and goals. Clinic staff works extensively on the phone with Veterans, solving problems that once required trips to the clinic.

*The staff follow two of the most important principles of the PACT program: they handle problems at the lowest possible level, and they use people to the fullest extent of their licensing and abilities.*

Ron Sandreth, Clarksburg VA operations manager



To learn more, scan this QR Code with a smartphone app or visit [www.clarksburg.va.gov/visitors/Tucker.asp](http://www.clarksburg.va.gov/visitors/Tucker.asp)



# NORTHFIELD CBOC

Wilmington VAMC



Where better to locate VISN 4's newest outpatient clinic than on a street called New Road? The 11,000 square foot Northfield, N.J. clinic cost \$1.4 million to construct and is nearly four times the size of the previous clinic in the area, located in nearby Ventnor.

"It is much more accessible here, and it's also closer to public transportation. Everything is much newer, and there's a lot more space in the waiting room," Veteran Chris Homme told the Atlantic City Press at the clinic's formal opening on January 9, 2012.

The new clinic offers a wide range of services including primary care, behavioral health, podiatry, blood and lab work, and electrocardiography. The clinic has an examination room designed especially for women Veterans, and the waiting room has a separate section for patients with young children. It is also linked to the Wilmington VA Medical Center for telemedicine purposes.

*I love it. It's a great improvement.*

**Chris Homme, Veteran**



To learn more, scan this QR Code with a smartphone app or visit [www.wilmington.va.gov/maps/northfield.asp](http://www.wilmington.va.gov/maps/northfield.asp)



# STATE COLLEGE CBOC

Altoona VAMC

Because the State College CBOC is near Penn State University, younger Veterans make up a disproportionate share of the 4,000 men and women the clinic serves. According to Dr. Jennifer Delozier, these young people are leading the way in using My Health eVet, VA's electronic gateway to health benefits and services for Veterans.

About 20 percent of Delozier's patients are authenticated for secure messaging, allowing them to keep in touch with her on non-urgent issues in a safe and secure manner, and to provide her with information such as blood pressure and blood sugar readings. She sends them lab results and answers basic health care questions through e-mail, including information on medication side effects, and whether or not their symptoms warrant a visit to the clinic.

"I answer about four to six questions a day," she says. "It only takes me about fifteen minutes to keep current – and our clinic nurse and I save a lot of time compared to responding to phone calls."

"Anything that can make my job easier, I embrace," she concludes. "Secure messaging has made my job much easier!"

*It's much easier for young Veterans — and many older ones — to do simple things like medication refills online, and they don't have to wait.*

**Dr. Jennifer Delozier, State College CBOC physician**



To learn more, scan this QR Code with a smartphone app or visit [www.altoona.va.gov/visitors/StateCollege.asp](http://www.altoona.va.gov/visitors/StateCollege.asp)

S U M M E R 2 0 1 2



## ALLENTOWN CBOC

### Wilkes-Barre VAMC

VISN 4's largest CBOC in square footage is also its oldest. The Allentown CBOC, opened in 1979, serves approximately 10,000 Veterans every year – nearly one-fourth of all of the patients seen by the entire Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center, the CBOC's parent facility.

According to Wilkes-Barre VA Director Margaret O'Shea Caplan, the clinic is a major resource for the Allentown community. "We get a lot of support from all of the area's Veterans Service Organizations, and also from the Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council," she explains. The Council, located in Allentown, unites organizations serving Veterans to work together for a common cause to improve the lives of active duty Servicemembers and Veterans living in the area.

Access to the CBOC is easy, as it is located on Hamilton Boulevard, a major road in Allentown that is well served by public transportation. DAV's Veterans Transportation Network also provides transportation services for those unable to drive to the facility or use public transportation. The clinic is located just over 60 miles from the Wilkes-Barre VA.

Besides the primary care, mental health, and dental clinics, Allentown offers women's health, physical therapy, podiatry, and other services. It is fully accessible for persons with disabilities.

Quality of care at the clinic is also outstanding, says Caplan. "Jan Kloin, Allentown's director, does an excellent job," she says. As an indication of the facility's dedication to Veterans, she proudly pointed out that the room in which group therapy sessions are held is decorated with memorabilia donated by combat Veterans, proud of the help they receive from their hometown CBOC.

*We've got a large mental health support team, a full dental clinic, and a number of other important programs to serve Lehigh Valley Veterans.*

**Margaret O'Shea Caplan**, Wilkes-Barre VAMC director



To learn more, scan this QR Code with a smartphone app or visit [www.wilkes-barre.va.gov/visitors/AllentownClinic.asp](http://www.wilkes-barre.va.gov/visitors/AllentownClinic.asp)

VA recently announced the creation of two new CBOCs in VISN 4 – in Huntingdon and Indiana counties. Both will be aligned under the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center in Altoona, Pa.



**This is good news for the more than 10,000 Veterans living in Indiana, Huntingdon, and surrounding counties.**



## TOBYHANNA CBOC

### Wilkes-Barre VAMC

Wilkes-Barre VAMC not only has the distinction of hosting VISN 4's oldest and largest CBOC, it also has the Network's smallest clinic. Located within Tobyhanna Army Depot, the CBOC is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, providing primary care and telehealth services for Veterans living in the Pocono Mountains area of northeastern Pennsylvania.

"This part of the state has a lot of winding mountain roads that are difficult to travel on, especially in the winter," explains Wilkes-Barre Director Margaret O'Shea Caplan. "Maintaining a clinic at Tobyhanna is a convenience we provide for Veterans in the area, who would otherwise have to drive more than 40 miles to reach our VA medical center."



To learn more, scan this QR Code with a smartphone app or visit [www.wilkes-barre.va.gov/visitors/Tobyhanna.asp](http://www.wilkes-barre.va.gov/visitors/Tobyhanna.asp)

# FORT INDIANTOWN GAP OUTREACH CLINIC

Lebanon VAMC

PENNSYLVANIA  
**NATIONAL GUARD** 

Lebanon VA Medical Center, in partnership with the Pennsylvania National Guard, opened an outreach clinic in January 2010 at Fort Indiantown Gap (FTIG). Sharing space with the FTIG Medical Clinic, this Lebanon VA clinic is supported by three employees, including a primary care provider, a nurse and a clerk. After a Veteran's initial history is obtained and a physical is administered, ongoing follow-up visits are scheduled as needed for any medical conditions identified as well as preventative care. The clinic aims to provide accessible and convenient health care services for Pennsylvania National Guardsmen who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. All Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Veterans are able to receive five years of free VA health care for any possible deployment-related injury or illness, along with a number of other services upon their return home. The Pennsylvania National Guard is the most deployed Guard in the Nation.



*It's great that E-RANGE makes us better able to serve Veterans in rural areas.*

**Jamie Zewe**, Erie VAMC assistant chief of behavioral health



## **E-RANGE** | ErieVAMC

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki has committed VA to ending homelessness among Veterans by 2015. “Those who have served this Nation as Veterans should never find themselves on the streets, living without care and without hope,” he said recently.

VISN 4 has many programs designed to help homeless Veterans throughout the Network. Most of them are located in the cities within our region. Erie VAMC, however, has developed a first-in-the-Nation program to help rural Veterans who are seriously mentally ill, homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.

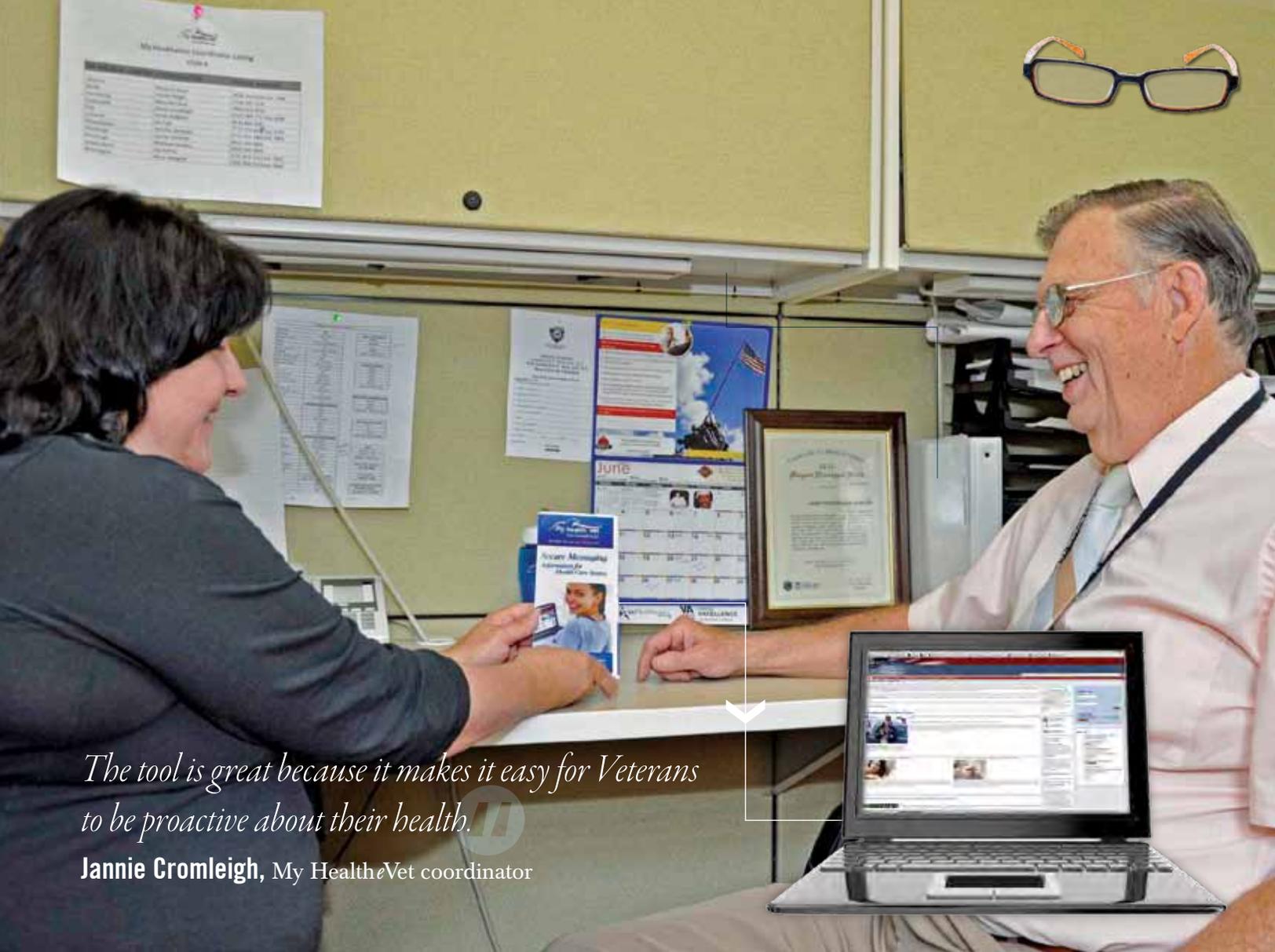
The program called Enhanced RANGE (Rural Access Network for Growth Enhancement), or E-RANGE for short, has been serving Veterans living in the rural Pennsylvania counties of Warren, Venango, and Crawford since 2010.

The aim of the program is to allow Veterans with serious mental illness to recover and maintain their ability to function in their communities. The program also provides services to homeless Veterans within the three counties.

According to Jamie Zewe, Erie’s assistant chief of behavioral health, 30 Veterans at a time are enrolled in the program. “Our team members wear two hats,” she explains. “They provide intensive case management services to our patients with serious mental illnesses, and they connect homeless Veterans with community-based and medical center services.”

E-RANGE was recently featured in a video prepared by VA Central Office’s Office of Rural Health, which can be found at the Office’s Website ([www.ruralhealth.va.gov](http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov)). The video tells the story of two Veterans – one formerly homeless, the other living in a drafty, broken down trailer – both of whom found stable housing and employment thanks to the dedication and persistence of E-RANGE counselors.

The program, staffed by two social workers and a nurse, is an important aspect of Erie’s efforts to ensure that all Veterans, including homeless Veterans, have easy access to the health care they need.



*The tool is great because it makes it easy for Veterans to be proactive about their health.*

**Jannie Cromleigh**, My Health $\text{e}$ Vet coordinator

## MY HEALTH $\text{e}$ VET | CoatesvilleVAMC

Edward Gaudreau, a 71-year-old Vietnam-era Veteran from Exton, Pa., is healthy and fit, and plans to stay that way. He receives health care both at the Coatesville VA Medical Center and from a private physician.

This past fall, Gaudreau started using My Health $\text{e}$ Vet, an online health management tool for Veterans. He began by merging medical records from his private physician to the portal. Since he can access the tool anytime, anywhere the Internet is available, it fits right into his active lifestyle – he can usually be found volunteering, golfing, riding a bike or traveling.

He also uses secure messaging to communicate with his VA health care providers about non-urgent needs, even while going about his day. “I don’t play phone tag,” says Gaudreau. “I don’t have to be standing by the phone.”

He views laboratory and test results, and tracks and even graphs his vital signs and activities. In fact, since he began using My Health $\text{e}$ Vet, Gaudreau has dropped 38 pounds.

He notes that the tool helped with that. “Not only did My Health $\text{e}$ Vet help me meet my goals, it helps me maintain them,” he says.

### GET STARTED WITH MY HEALTH $\text{e}$ VET!

SECURE MESSAGING IS CONVENIENT AND EASY.

1. Register at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) as a VA Patient.
2. Complete the In-Person Authentication process.
3. Agree to the Terms and Conditions by Opting-In to Secure Messaging.

Then you’ll be ready to communicate with your provider and health care team about non-urgent, health-related matters from the comfort of your home!

# ASK THE STAFF!

*What does your Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) mean to the Veterans in your community?*

## LINDA FLEESON | NURSE CARE MANAGER

Michael A. Marzano CBOC | Hermitage, Pa.

*"It means providing our Nation's heroes with more comprehensive health care services closer to their homes and families."*

## MICHELE MILLER | NURSE MANAGER

Wood County CBOC | Parkersburg, W.Va.

*"Many of our Veterans like to see familiar faces when they come to the clinic and sometimes this makes them feel more comfortable. Having the CBOC close to their homes means more services are available to them such as lab, x-ray, mental health and social work."*

## KENIA GANDIA | PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Springfield, Pa. CBOC

*"Our CBOC provides easy health care access for Veterans who would otherwise have to spend a lot of time traveling to a VA main campus. This has made it much easier for Veterans to proactively manage their health, leading to happy, healthy lives. I am honored to be part of that."*

## TIM FLORIAN | CBOC MANAGER

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

*"Many of these Veterans simply can't make the trip to Pittsburgh and these community clinics provide the essential medical care our Veterans deserve, very near to where they live. Our Veterans truly appreciate the CBOCs and routinely express their gratitude and love for our CBOC staffs. I heard one Veteran sing a song of gratitude to a CBOC nurse manager...as the saying goes 'priceless.'"*

## DR. PREETI MALHOTRA | PHYSICIAN

York, Pa. CBOC

*"My CBOC means a safe haven to the Veterans in the community. They feel they can always turn to us if they want a true, unbiased opinion about their medical condition."*

# VISION

for Excellence

SUMMER | 2012

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## WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

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