

# Centered *on* Veterans

ERIE VA MEDICAL CENTER | 2012 ANNUAL REPORT



**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
Erie VA Medical Center



## *Dear Veterans, Families, and Community Partners,*

**A**t the Erie VA Medical Center, we believe in providing patient-centered health care. The focus is on the whole person, not just the illness. In 2012, I'm happy to say we took major steps toward being patient-centered by redesigning the way we provide health care.

In this annual report, you will find programs that invest in patient wellness and that empower patients to be an active member of their health care team. From introducing a new GetWellNetwork throughout all inpatient units to expanding the convenience of telehealth services, Erie VA is focused on improving services for Veterans.

VA made a commitment to expand access to mental health programs. As a result, Erie VA's Behavioral Health Clinic hired 11 new employees, expanded a job placement program for homeless Veterans, and offered extended hours in the evenings and on weekends to ensure Veterans' needs continue to be met.

The growth of our programs and services that you will see in this annual report could not have happened without your support, feedback, and dedication. For that, I express my sincere appreciation for all you have done and for all you continue to do to support us in our mission to serve Veterans. We look forward to many more years of working together to improve the lives of Veterans and their families.

Michael D. Adelman, MD  
Medical Center Director

VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki with  
Theresa Allen in Washington, DC.



**Joint Commission  
Top Performer:  
Pneumonia and  
Surgical Care**



*To be a part of  
a team that is  
“enhancing our  
Veterans’ quality of  
care is a privilege.”*

# Pursuing Excellence in Health Care

## Advancing Telehealth

Erie VA's Telehealth Technician, Theresa Allen, received the 2012 Secretary's Award for Excellence in Nursing and Advancement of Nursing Programs. Theresa was nominated for her work implementing telehealth programs at the Erie VA where more than 3,600 patients are actively using some form of telehealth services.

## Homeless Care

Erie VAMC Homeless Care Team along with the Pennsylvania Housing and Urban Development received the "Housing Hero" award from the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. This award recognized the unified team approach focused on eliminating veterans' homelessness and their tireless efforts to find permanent housing for local homeless Veterans.

## Performance

The Joint Commission named Erie VA as one of the Nation's Top Performers on Key Quality Measures for exemplary performance in improving care for pneumonia and surgical care. This is the second year in a row that Erie VA was recognized as a Top Performer. Erie VA is one of only 244 hospitals that achieved this distinction two years in a row.



# Investing in Patient Wellness

In March, Erie VA launched a new interactive patient care system, the GetWellNetwork, designed to engage patients in their health care. Each patient in our community living center, hospice and palliative care, and oncology units has bedside access to their personal health information and online entertainment.

The GetWellNetwork allows patients to educate themselves on their condition, treatment plan, and the discharge planning process. Patients can access health education videos, My HealthVet, hospital services, medication information, and entertainment such as television, movies, video games, and music through an easy-to-use touch-screen monitor.

Erie VA, along with Birmingham VA, led the way in launching this interactive patient care tool throughout the VA as a national best practice. VA medical centers across the country will begin implementing the same tool in 2013 as a result of the success of this program and our ability to enhance patient care.



## Connecting Veterans to More Resources for *their* Health Care



*Veteran John Nosko loves the new educational and entertainment options the GetWellNetwork provides him in the Community Living Center. He especially likes catching up on first-run movies and finding books for his Kindle.*

getwell:)network

# Expanding Telehealth Care to Community Clinics

More than 10,000 Veterans receive care from one of our five community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs). Erie VA made a commitment to expand telehealth services to the CBOCs so Veterans can receive easy access to speciality care services.

Last year, Erie hired 4 telehealth care technicians for CBOC support, deployed telehealth equipment to each clinic location, and increased offerings for a wide variety of specialty care services. Erie VA was the first in VISN 4 to pilot the telerderm program with a Dermatologist at Wilmington VAMC which continues to be a great success.

As the telehealth services expanded to each clinic, the popularity of the programs grew and by the end of the year almost 20 percent of the Erie VA patient population was using telehealth for their specialty care needs.



**4496 Veterans Using Telehealth for Speciality Care Needs**



**3,017 Secure Messages Sent to Providers**



**2,356 Secure Messages Sent to Patients**



Erie VA expanded premium online access to more than 5,200 Veterans through My HealthVet. With a free premium account patients have online access to lab results, clinical progress notes, secure messaging and many other features. Almost 2,000 of those active users opted-in to use secure messaging, one of the most beneficial features of My HealthVet where patients can communicate online with their health care teams with an e-mail-like system. By the end of 2012, 50 health care teams, from primary care to surgical care, were using secure messaging to communicate with patients. Erie continues to expand enrollment in My HealthVet so all patients have easy access to manage their health care online.

**work**

# Investing in Recovery: Behavioral Health programs expand to meet Veteran needs

In efforts to provide more patient centered care, the Behavioral Health Clinic expanded their hours to include evening and Saturday appointments. Now, when patients ask for help, they are met with appointment times that work around their busy schedule.

**14% Increase  
In Visits  
Compared  
to FY 2011**

**24% Increase  
In Behavioral  
Health Staff**

**4,608 Veterans  
Sought  
Behavioral  
Health Services**

## New Recovery Center

In January 2012, the Behavioral Health Clinic converted the drop-in-center into a new Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC). The PRRC is a program designed to assist Veterans with serious mental illness and limited social functioning with recovery. On average, this program serves 30-35 patients throughout the week, most patients visiting daily. Participants are able to meet other Veterans with mental illness and are offered classes that can help them reach personal goals. Some topics include strength-based recovery, anger management, stress management, and social skills.

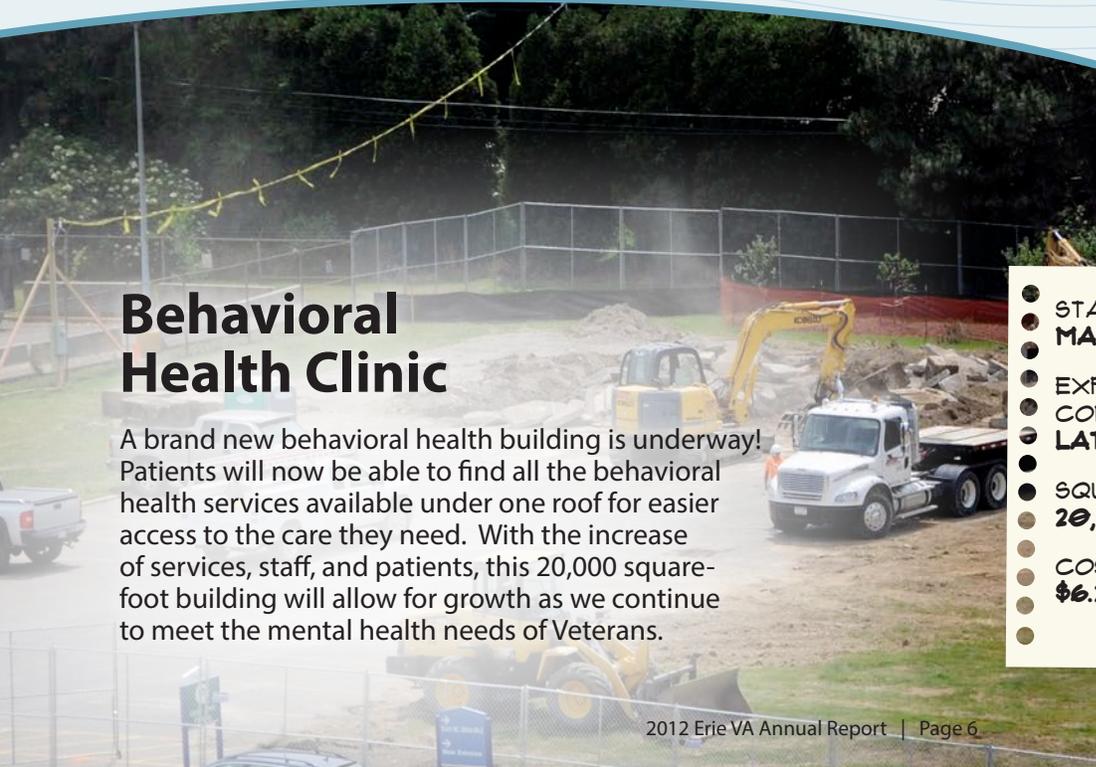
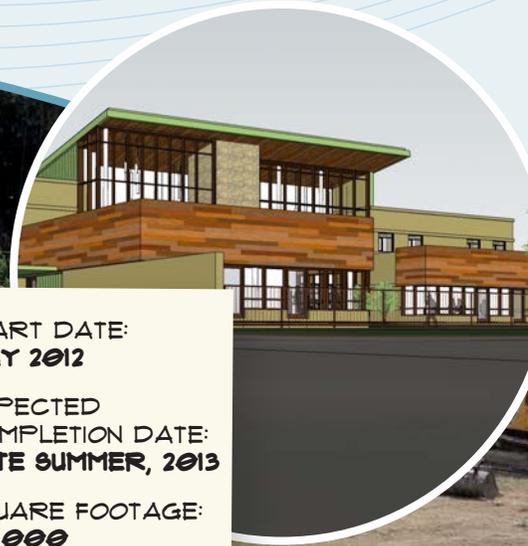
## Expanding Behavioral Health Staff

Erie VA added 11 new staff positions to the Behavioral Health team in 2012. The increase in staff is a direct result of VA's commitment to enhance mental health care for the increasing number of Veterans seeking mental health treatment. In the past five years, the number of patients receiving care in the Behavioral Health Clinic has more than doubled. The additional staff have allowed for Erie VA to expand clinic programs offered and devote more time to serving Veterans.

## Behavioral Health Clinic

A brand new behavioral health building is underway! Patients will now be able to find all the behavioral health services available under one roof for easier access to the care they need. With the increase of services, staff, and patients, this 20,000 square-foot building will allow for growth as we continue to meet the mental health needs of Veterans.

- START DATE:  
**MAY 2012**
- EXPECTED  
COMPLETION DATE:  
**LATE SUMMER, 2013**
- SQUARE FOOTAGE:  
**20,000**
- COST:  
**\$6.2 MILLION**



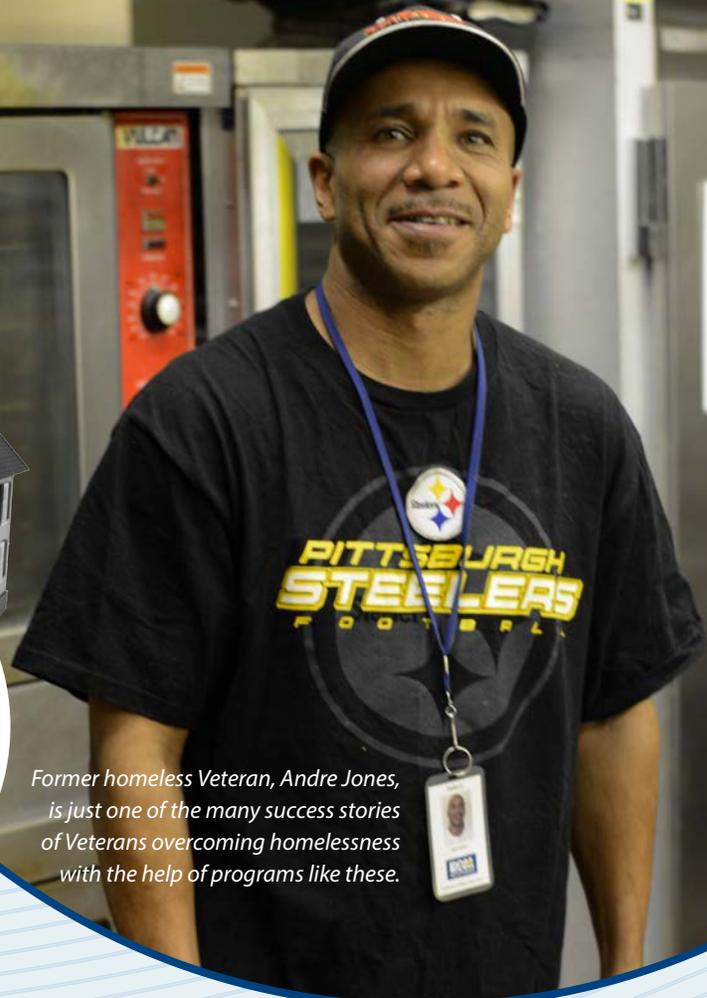
# Eliminating Homelessness

In 2012, more than 400 homeless Veterans – a record breaking high – received care from the Erie VA Homeless Care Team. With a goal to end homelessness among Veterans by 2015, the Homeless Care Team took strides in accomplishing that goal by adding 3 staff, expanding programs, and providing additional housing resources



**125+ Veterans with Permanent Housing**

**One out of three Veterans moved on to permanent employment**



*Former homeless Veteran, Andre Jones, is just one of the many success stories of Veterans overcoming homelessness with the help of programs like these.*

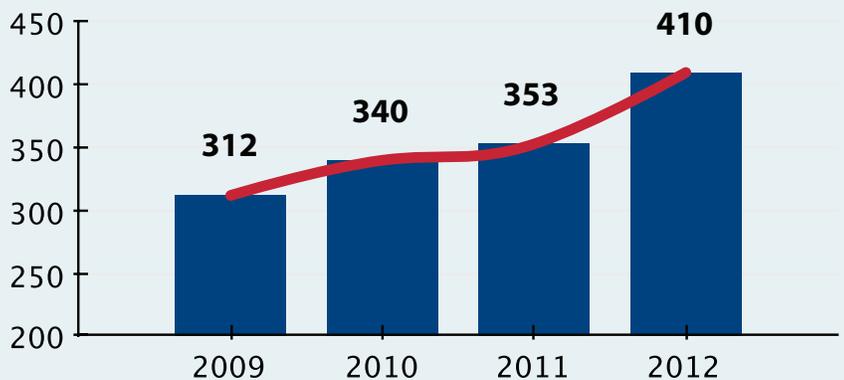
## Increasing Job Placement among Homeless Veterans

With additional staff on-board, Erie VA was able to devote dedicated resources to expand the Homeless Veterans Supported Employment Program (HVSEP). Through job placement and personal coaching, this program is designed to help Veterans develop marketable job skills so they can find and maintain a steady job.

One out of three Veterans moved on to permanent employment as a result of this program.

## Additional Housing Vouchers Provide Hope

The Homeless Care Team received additional housing vouchers creating a total of 90 vouchers available to help Veterans secure permanent housing through the Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. Once a Veteran is able to maintain permanent housing successfully on their own, these vouchers are recycled back to the Homeless Care Team and on to another homeless Veteran in need. In 2012, more than 125 Veterans benefited from these vouchers.

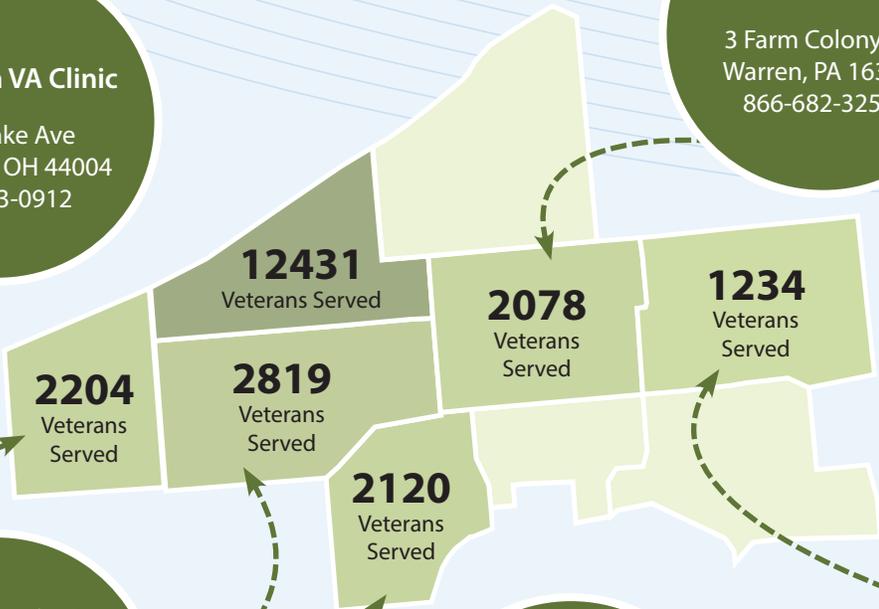


*Erie Homeless Veterans Served (2009-2012)*

# Care Closer to Home

**Ashtabula VA Clinic**  
 1230 Lake Ave  
 Ashtabula, OH 44004  
 866-463-0912

**Warren VA Clinic**  
 3 Farm Colony Dr  
 Warren, PA 16365  
 866-682-3250



**New Location!**  
**Crawford VA Clinic**  
 16954 Conneaut Lake Rd  
 Meadville, PA 16335  
 866-962-3210

**Venango VA Clinic**  
 464 Allegheny Blvd  
 Franklin, PA 16323  
 866-962-3260

**McKean VA Clinic**  
 23 Kennedy St  
 Bradford, PA 16701  
 814-368-3019

## Crawford VA Relocated to New Clinic

Erie VA began serving Veterans in Crawford County in 1998. At that time, we operated out of another medical office and were open one or two days a week. Since then, the clinic has continued to expand significantly offering more programs and services to more than 2,800 Veterans in the Crawford area. In October 2012, we moved into the new 6,300 square-foot clinic which has allowed for additional on-site behavioral health and telehealth services. This new space also allows for growth as the Erie VA expands efforts to provide specialty care services in a local, convenient setting.



**START DATE:**  
**APRIL 2012**

**COMPLETION DATE:**  
**SEPTEMBER 2012**

**SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 6336  
**NEW SPACE**

**COST:**  
**\$650,000**

# Constructing a Better Future



**\$26.5 Million Spent on Current or Future Projects**



- EXPECTED START DATE: **MARCH 2014**
- EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE: **MARCH 2015**
- SQUARE FOOTAGE: **24,000**
- COST: **\$1.8 MILLION**

## Community Living Center

Erie VAMC's 26-bed community living center should make residents feel right at home. That's the primary focus of our design team – to create a home-like environment with more space, more comfort, and more home-like amenities.

## Ambulatory Surgery Addition

Erie VAMC's Surgical Department is one of our busiest areas with more than 3,000 outpatient procedures performed last year. Our team is designing an addition to the Ambulatory Surgery Suite to accommodate for future growth in this area and to improve access for patients.



- EXPECTED START DATE: **JUNE 2013**
- EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE: **JUNE 2014**
- SQUARE FOOTAGE: **10,000**
- COST: **\$5.6 MILLION**

## Erie VA Parking Garage

What's one thing that would improve our patients VA experience? More parking! Plans are currently underway to build a parking garage that will provide ground floor and upper deck parking. The current design allows for future expansion to the parking garage if needed.



- EXPECTED START DATE: **MAY 2014**
- EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE: **MAY 2015**
- SQUARE FOOTAGE: **280-SPACE GARAGE**
- COST: **\$6.9 MILLION**

# By the Numbers



**\$125,000,000**  
Operating budget



**279,000**  
Outpatient visits



**22,668**  
Veterans served



**1,450**  
OEF/OIF/OND Veterans



**1,721**  
Women Veterans



**700**  
Employees



**1,546**  
Surgical procedures



**6,835**  
ER/UCC visits

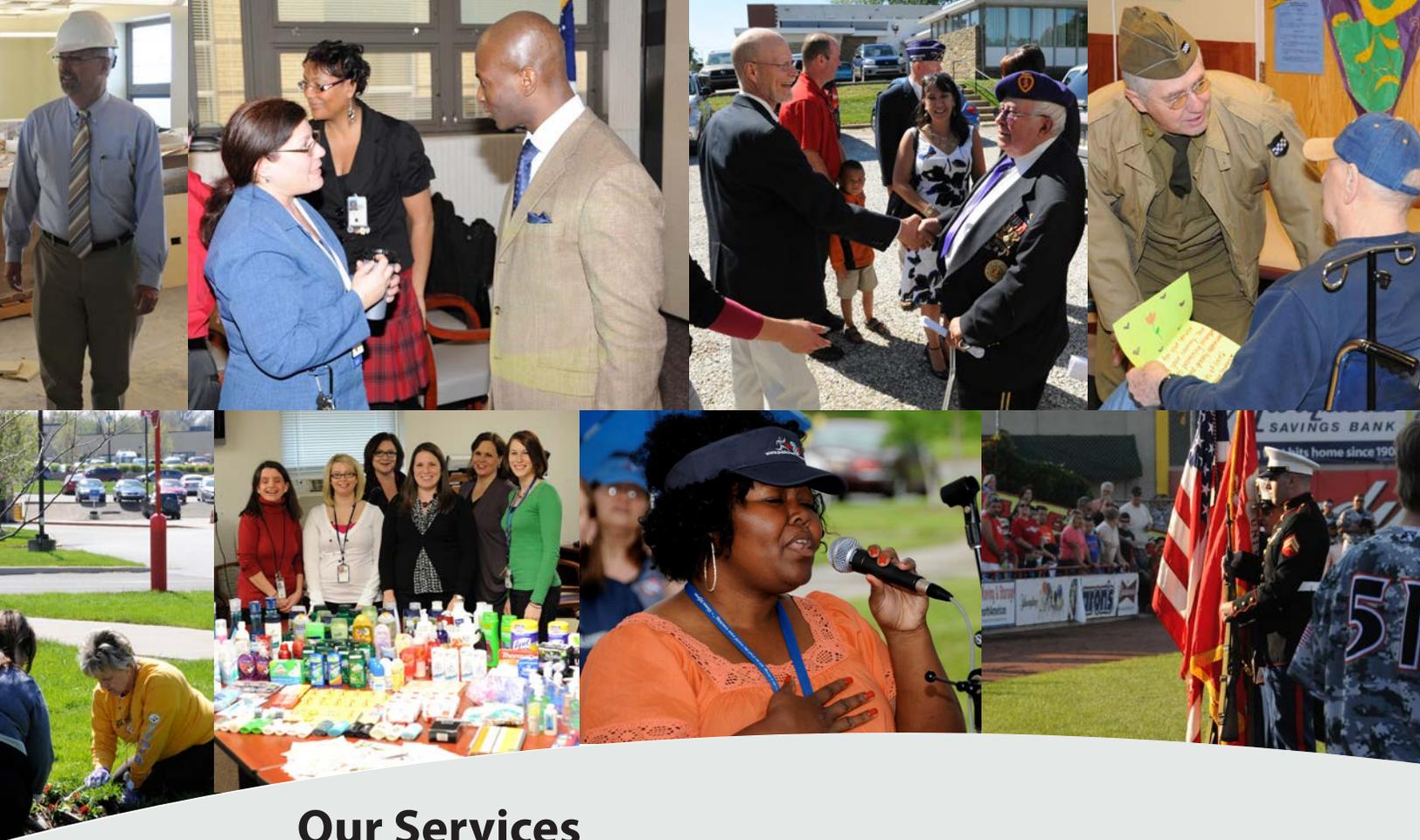


**\$458,000**  
Donations



**614**  
Volunteers





## Our Services

### General Information

814-868-8661  
1-800-274-8387 (toll free)

### Appointments/Pharmacy

814-860-2124

### Eligibility

814-860-2970

### Release of Information

814-860-2212

### Patient Advocate

814-860-2500

### My HealthVet Program

[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)  
814-860-2821

### Caregiver Support

814-860-2657

### Returning Service Members (OEF/OIF/OND)

814-860-2965

### Women Veterans Program

814-860-2907

### MOVE! (Weight Management)

814-860-2554

### Behavioral Health Clinic

814-860-2038

### Homeless Care Team

814-860-2481

### Homeless Veterans Hotline

1-877-424-3838

### Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255  
Text to 838255  
[www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)



718  
Likes



519  
Followers



2156  
Subscribers

**OPEN**

**7 Days a Week  
8 am - 8pm  
Even Holidays!**

## Urgent Care Center Now Open

Erie VA transformed the former emergency room into an Urgent Care Center that is now open 7 days a week from 8am-8pm. Since the change, Erie VA has seen a slight increase in the number of patients seen per day in the Urgent Care Center compared to the 24-hour per day Emergency Room. The Urgent Care Center continues to be available for the majority of non-emergent medical issues.



**VA**  
HEALTH  
CARE

Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

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Erie, PA 16594  
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 VAMCErie

 ErieVAMC

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