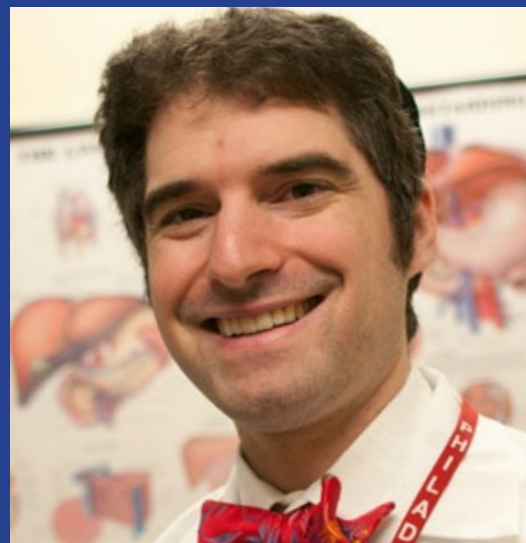


# MOVING BEYOND TRADITIONAL HEALTH CARE



Philadelphia VA Medical Center  
**2012 Annual Report**



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Philadelphia VA Medical Center  
2012 Annual Report



## 2012 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

### **Parking Garage Phase 1**

*450 new parking spaces*

### **Upgrades to Waiting Rooms**

*Home-like atmosphere*

### **Emergency Generators**

*Self-sustaining power source for up to 96 hours*

### **Renovations to Research Building**

*State-of-the-art labs for research and development*

### **CLC Courtyards**

*Beautiful green house and walking areas*

### **CLC Upgrades**

*Enhanced Physical and Recreation Therapy Areas*





# FROM THE DIRECTOR

The year 2012 was full of change for the Philadelphia VA Medical Center. Together, we committed to moving beyond traditional health care as we integrated innovation, provided facility facelifts and redesigned programs to provide our Veterans with personalized, proactive, patient driven health care.

As the Director of an organization that truly reflects the VA's core values, I am privileged to lead this transformation. In this report, you will see the many ways in which we have embraced this journey toward Patient Centered Care; moved beyond boundaries to exceed our strategic goals to better meet the needs of our Veterans.

We are creating therapeutic, healing environments and implementing new patient-centered models of care delivery throughout our organization. The expansion of surgical services for patients' continuity of care and the building of stronger affiliations to meet our educational mission, are well underway and will continue in the years to come. The Philadelphia VAMC is also completing nearly \$20 million of construction to improve the environment of care throughout the Medical Center.

We are honored to serve America's Veterans and will continue to provide the highest standard of health care that they have earned. The Philadelphia VAMC staff is committed to continuous improvements in medical care, research, innovations and customer service, and we know that our success is measured by your satisfaction.

Looking back, I am extremely proud of the many accomplishments of our staff and am assured by Veterans and their families each day that they have noticed the positive changes taking place. I want to extend my sincerest thanks to our dedicated employees, volunteers, Veterans Service Organizations and community partners who remain committed to excellence and caring for those who selflessly served our Nation.

Joseph M. Dalpiaz  
*Director, Philadelphia VA Medical Center*



# BEYOND STRATEGIC GOALS

JEFFREY BEILER

*Associate Director*



## Measuring Success

- Become a patient centered organization
- Implement patient centered care construction projects
- Improve billing, collections and workload

In 2012, we made great strides in the service areas of Facilities Management and Human Resources, hiring additional mental health professionals and moving forward on construction projects to increase access and upgrade Philadelphia VAMC systems.

Last year, we obligated 12 construction projects totaling more than \$22 million which included upgrades and renovations. We installed emergency generators that will provide us with the capability to be without outside power sources for up to 96 hours. This exceeds the basic requirement and helps to ensure continuity of care, regardless of unexpected situations. We also completed Phase I of the parking lot expansion, adding 450 new parking spaces.

We embraced the opportunity, and the responsibility, to anticipate the needs of returning Veterans. As part of the VA Secretary's mental health hiring initiative, we added 35 full-time mental health clinicians and continue to pursue additional staff. This builds on our record of service to Veterans and our commitment to becoming a patient centered care organization.

CYNTHIA M. HEIDT, MSN, RN

*Associate Director for Nursing/Patient Care Services*



## Measuring Success

- Become a patient centered care organization
- Expand telehealth/in-home services
- Improve hospital throughput

This past year, Nursing/Patient Care Services, one of the significant accomplishments of 2012 was the number of Veterans who signed up for, and utilizing, My HealtheVet. Through dedicated staff efforts, we successfully registered more than 9,500 Veterans. This exceeded our expectations by more than 4,000 Veterans. Veterans now have an additional way to communicate with their health care team and providers.

Last year, we implemented state-of-the-art information technology with the installation of the Picis system, in anesthesia, post anesthesia and critical care units, as well as other areas. The system interfaces with anesthesia machines, patient monitors, and automatically uploads clinical patient data to the patient electronic medical record. As the second facility to go live in this VISN4-wide initiative, lessons we learned assisted others in the project implementation.

Our Home Based Primary Care staff has responded to the increasing and complex needs of Veterans and families with the care coordination of home ventilator patients.

These initiatives demonstrated a team effort involving multiple Philadelphia VAMC departments and represented 21st century innovation in patient care delivery. As a result of such collaboration, we were recognized by the VA Office of Nursing Services for "Using Simulation with Interprofessional Team Training to Improve Rapid Response Team/Code Performance."

RALPH M. SCHAPIRA, M.D.  
*Chief of Staff*



#### Measuring Success

- Rebuild business and academic relationship with affiliates
- Expand Critical Care Services
- Reduce reliance on non-VA (purchased) care

In 2012, a major focus was on improving the relationships with the Philadelphia VAMC's affiliate organizations and improving the scope of surgical services to our patients. Both areas will have lasting, positive effects when it comes to the care and treatment of our Veterans.

Our relationship with our primary academic affiliate, the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, is better than it has ever been, due to cooperative program development and excellent communications, including sharing of ideas and concerns. We revitalized the Deans Committee, conducted co-recruitment of staff physicians to capture the most talented, and enhanced the experiences of our students and residents. In addition, we capitalized on the growing opportunities presented by VA biomedical research programs. As a result, the relationship across the VA missions - clinical care, research and education - is prospering.

We worked diligently to expand services and now can offer our Veterans expanded specialty surgical procedures through the addition of VA specialists such as a shoulder and spine surgeon, a breast surgeon, and a surgical oncologist, and have expanded gynecological services. We are planning an integrated approach to critical care, medicine and surgery in a single intensive care unit to ensure excellence in the care we provide to our Veterans.

ELIZABETH S. HELSEL, BSN, MBA  
*Associate Director for Clinical Operations*



#### Measuring Success

- Become a patient centered organization
- Utilize systems redesign techniques to address and sustain processes
- Improve performance metrics

In 2012, we focused on streamlining processes and improving our services to Veterans at the Philadelphia VAMC. In the areas of Health Administration Service (HAS) and Pharmacy Department, we looked for ways to reduce waiting times for Veterans when calling the Medical Center.

Our HAS team engaged in a phone systems redesign, reviewing the challenges faced by patients in making appointments and reaching staff by telephone. Determined to improve phone call waiting times, we implemented our Centralized Call Center to improve our Veterans' access to care and ensure that calls were being answered in a timely manner. We continue to roll out the call center to our Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

Last year, we also addressed our Veterans' concerns about wait time to receive prescriptions. Pharmacy staff dedicated countless hours to reviewing documentation, processes and responsibilities. This resulted in several initiatives, including contracting with VA's Virtual Pharmacy Services to assist in prescription processing, which has significantly improved turn-around time. In addition, we continue to pursue ways to restructure our outpatient processes to reduce overall patient wait time at the pharmacy window.

Our commitment remains steadfast as we pursue excellence in providing the best health care possible for our Nation's heroes.



# MOVING BEYOND WALLS

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Moving beyond walls refers to the ability of Veterans to receive health care outside traditional systems. In 2012, a number of initiatives were introduced to increase Veterans' access to health care. In addition to ongoing construction to modernize and improve our clinics, Philadelphia VAMC opened a new off-site dialysis center which allows VA to provide Veterans with dialysis care in a brand-new state-of-the-art facility with a seamless connection to the rest of their VA health care. In our journey to become a patient-centered organization where care revolves around Veterans, certain clinics provided expanded access by introducing evening and weekend hours. We further incorporated family, friends and staff volunteers as an integral part of our Veterans' physical and emotional well being. In addition, we continue to expand across physical boundaries through increased use of telemedicine and in-home services.

## 2012 Strategic Goals

- Provide Veterans personalized, proactive, patient-driven health care
- Become a patient-centered organization where care revolves around the Veteran
- Expand internal and external boundaries to bring health care to the Veteran
- Embrace technology through Telehealth and in-home services
- Commit to customer service and welcoming physical environments



## CLC Events

The Philadelphia VAMC Community Living Center (CLC) aligns itself with Cultural Transformation initiatives by providing a homelike environment for the Veterans during their stay. The Recreational Therapy Department has partnered with a number of disciplines throughout the year to provide events that bring the Veterans, their families, volunteers and staff together in celebration.

In July 2012, the Veterans participated in a "Celebration of Marriage" which included a vow renewal ceremony officiated by Chaplain Services, for four Veterans and their wives. All CLC Veterans, their families, and staff were invited to attend the event and enjoy a beautiful wedding cake and hors d'oeuvres provided by Nutrition & Food Service. Dedicated volunteers and live music provided by staff from various departments helped make for a truly memorable event. It was a time to celebrate the Veterans, their marriages, and their cherished memories.

In October, the CLC hosted its 2nd annual CLC Carnival in the courtyard. The event featured music, carnival games, prizes and refreshments. Local community volunteer groups from the University of the Sciences and Pfizer Pharmaceuticals partnered with the recreational therapists to set up and run the day's events. Family members and staff were invited and encouraged to participate with the Veterans. The goal of the event was to bring the CLC community together for a day of multi-sensory reminiscence and enjoyment.





### **Outpatient Dialysis Program**

The Philadelphia VAMC opened its new Outpatient Dialysis Center in 2012. The Medical Center was selected as one of four pilot sites across the country to provide outpatient dialysis services to Veterans who were previously being served outside of the VA.

The \$1.2 million state-of-the-art dialysis center significantly improves access for Veterans in the Philadelphia area. Increasing internal capacity to provide outpatient ambulatory chronic dialysis care allows more Veterans treatment in a comprehensive care environment integrated with the other care they receive from VA.

This effort ties directly into the new Patient Aligned Care Team approach, and allows for a consistent and integrated oversight of the Veterans' medical care. The Veteran's entire health care team has the ability to maintain continuous, comprehensive awareness of each Veteran's treatment and status.

The 12,000 square-foot facility has 12 dialysis treatment stations which allow 48 Veterans to receive life-saving treatment each week.

The free-standing Philadelphia VAMC Dialysis Center is located a few blocks from the Medical Center in University City.



### **CBOC Telehealth**

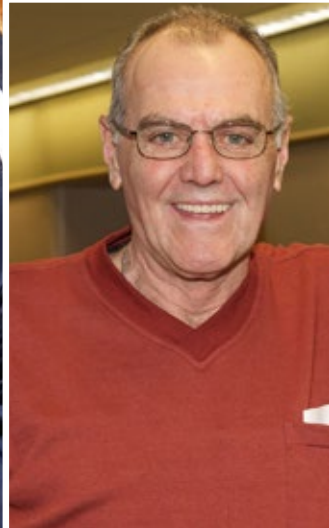
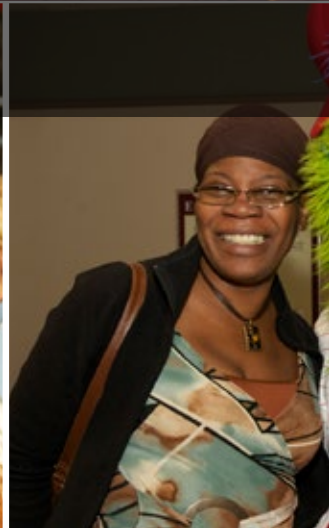
Through the use of technology, Telehealth allows Veterans to "see" their provider without the need to travel to the Medical Center. Telehealth adds a new paradigm in healthcare, where the Veteran is monitored between physician office visits in order to significantly reduce hospitalizations and visits to the Emergency Room, while improving the patients' quality of life.

Telehealth also benefits patients where traditional delivery of health services is affected by distance and lack of local specialist clinicians to deliver services. Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) are ideal for using Telehealth and providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time. Telehealth allows Philadelphia VAMC doctors to treat and care for their patients through computers and video cameras without the need to be in the same room.

Presently, Philadelphia VAMC and its CBOCs have over 20 clinics engaged in Telehealth working with Weight Management, Social Work, Rehabilitation, Behavioral Health, Parkinson's Disease, Diabetic Retinal Imaging, Dermatology, Geriatrics, Sleep Medicine and Genetic Counseling.

New programs that are in the process of being established include Pre-Op Surgery, Dental, Chaplain Service and Neurology.









# A YEAR IN REVIEW



# MOVING BEYOND TECHNOLOGY

Advances in technology allows VA to provide the best possible care to Veterans, analyze data and keep in constant contact with patients, their family members, and staff.

In 2012, Philadelphia VAMC used advanced equipment in many clinics, including Radiation Therapy and Laboratory & Pathology, to provide the most clinically accurate, least invasive care. Technology reaches into all aspects of health care, from electronic medical records, which VA pioneered years ago, to today's advanced equipment used to diagnose, monitor or treat diseases or medical conditions affecting our Veterans.

Not only does today's technology assist in improving health care, it also helps us stay in touch with our patients. Secure messaging through My Healthe Vet is a safe and secure way to communicate with providers, and through real time postings on Facebook, information is easily communicated during weather emergencies, like last fall's Hurricane Sandy.

## 2012 Strategic Goals

- Align resources to deliver sustained value to Veterans
- Increase services to reduce costs and maintain continuous care within VA healthcare system
- Advance technology to improve performance



## Reaching Out with Social Media

During Hurricane Sandy, the Philadelphia VAMC reached new heights of engagement with Veterans and staff through social media.

Leadership recognized that the emergency event would require a high level of engagement with all stakeholders and that Facebook was their ticket. Beyond routine announcements, Facebook became the “go to” resource for Veterans and staff for emergency updates and information. They embraced studies that supported social media outlets as a way to get the word out during times of major disasters and an ideal way to provide a forum for people around the world to keep abreast of the latest updates affecting their loved ones. Hurricane Sandy provided the weather event to test it out.

A staff member's friend watched the medical center activities in Stuttgart, Germany. A Veteran's brother in California followed everything that was going on within the hospital. An employee's parents checked Facebook from time to time in Pennsylvania.

The Philadelphia VAMC communications team generated 26 posts, 7 videos and more than 150 photos to ensure communications were flowing both within the facility and out in the community. With Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) encouragement to medical centers to use social media as a tool in their communication kits, the Philadelphia VAMC pulled out those tools and got to work.





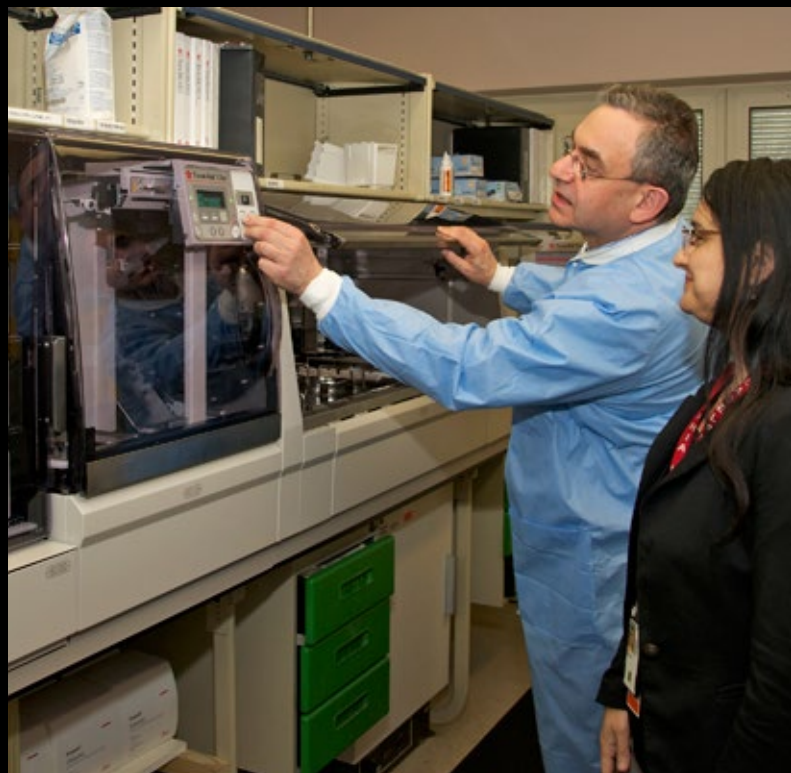
### Radiation Therapy

Each year, the Philadelphia VAMC Department of Radiation Therapy provides care to more than 11,500 Veterans diagnosed with cancer. Approximately 400 Veterans will be newly diagnosed each year and will travel to Philadelphia VAMC to receive treatment. These Veterans come from Philadelphia, Wilmington, Coatesville, Wilkes-Barre and Lebanon VAs.

Veterans receive state-of-the-art radiation therapy offered in the conventional 3-dimensional radiation therapy, Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) and Image Guided Radiation Therapy (IGRT). In 2012, RapidArc therapy, a technique delivering IMRT/IGRT in shorter duration on a daily basis, was added and has improved comfort for patients receiving treatment.

In 2012, Radiation Therapy improvements centered on renovations of the waiting room that provide Veterans and their families with a home-like environment. Amenities include recliners, a TV room, and a reading area equipped with computers donated by the Radiation Department of the University of Pennsylvania.

In November, technology also played an integral role in Radiation Therapy treatment, as the second treatment room was equipped with the VARIAN Trilogy, which allows staff to provide Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT) to Veterans. SBRT has a more precise and targeted radiation beam and an improved treatment schedule.



### Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Services

Performing more than 2 million tests each year, the Philadelphia VAMC Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Services supports all VISN 4 medical center facilities with services they require to care for Veterans.

With the goal being to provide the very best services for all Veterans, 2012 brought some exciting changes to the service. The Pathology Department joined forces with endocrinologists and now pathologists go to the clinics to provide diagnosis in real time. Similarly, pathologists also go to operating rooms to provide a real-time interpretation on cells obtained from a pancreatic mass and from deep seated lesions. This unique Point of Care Fine Needle Aspiration service has brought pathologists out from behind the microscopes to the bedside. These changes improve patient care and assist in reducing purchased care outside of the VA.

Pathology now integrates the use of an array based molecular pathology test, performed on few cells to determine if a patient needs surgery. The department has also acquired new technology that can help identify an underlying genetic code of abnormal cells.

Laboratory Services has made several key changes in the areas of blood collection, biochemical testing and transfusion services to reduce utilization of blood products. As a result, in 2012 the laboratory easily passed two very stringent inspections, the American Association of Blood Bank for the medical center's blood bank and College of American Pathologists for the entire laboratory.

# MOVING BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

In 2012, the Philadelphia VAMC engaged Veterans socially, culturally, physically, and mentally in activities designed to encourage improved awareness and identity. The goal of challenging Veterans on these levels is to promote healing and wellness. Activities such as the First Swing Golf Clinic for amputee Veterans, the “From War to Home” Photovoice project, and Stand Down, provide safe environments in which Veterans can explore other facets of themselves and achieve a new sense of personal accomplishment.

All of these efforts could not be accomplished without the involvement of our dedicated community partners. Through the building of bridges and their donations of resources and time, our Veterans are open to opportunities and innovative treatments.

## 2012 Strategic Goals

- Achieve measurable improvements in health outcomes
- Engage Veterans socially, physically, mentally and culturally so that they are in a better place to ultimately improve overall health
- Enhance and expand research capacity and capabilities



## From War to Home

The exhibit *From War to Home: Through the Veteran's Lens*, was on display at the Philadelphia VAMC from Nov. 13, 2012, through Feb. 6, 2013. It was a result of VA funded work completed by Gala True, PhD, a researcher at the Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion.

Using a method called PhotoVoice, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Veterans were given cameras and asked to tell their stories of service, deployment, and homecoming. The purpose of the project was to explore four main areas: the impact of deployment on Veterans' well being; the challenges faced by Veterans returning home; the Veterans' experiences of care; and finding strength and support.

Veterans took photos and contributed pictures from their personal collections. Through individual interviews, Veterans described the meaning behind each image. Overall, Veteran participants contributed over 900 photographs and 40 hours of narrative to the project. Important themes and common experiences were selected for the exhibit.

Dr. True is analyzing data to determine whether participation in the project led to a decrease in social anxiety and self-stigma, and an increase in health communication self-efficacy for Veteran participants. In addition, she is reviewing the impact that viewing the exhibit had on health care providers' understanding of issues facing returning OEF/OIF/OND Veterans.





### Voluntary Donations

Voluntary Service currently has over 775 volunteers assisting staff in meeting our Veterans' needs. These volunteers contributed over 69,480 hours in 90 different volunteer assignments in clinical, clerical and community settings in the Medical Center as well as the Washington Crossing National Cemetery.

Voluntary Service looks to supplement formal education and encourages high school students, college students, as well as change of career adults, who may be interested in pursuing a career in healthcare and have a desire to serve Veterans, to volunteer and obtain hands-on experience.

In addition to the variety of volunteer opportunities, Voluntary Service also maintains strong relationships in the community for donations and events. In Fiscal Year 2012, the Medical Center received over \$208,083 in cash donations and gifts, such as Philadelphia Phillies tickets donated by Hamel's Heroes. Local organizations such as American Red Cross of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Preferred Automotive, and the Philadelphia Tribune, continue to provide needed donations for our Veterans throughout the year.



### Amputee Veteran Golf Clinics

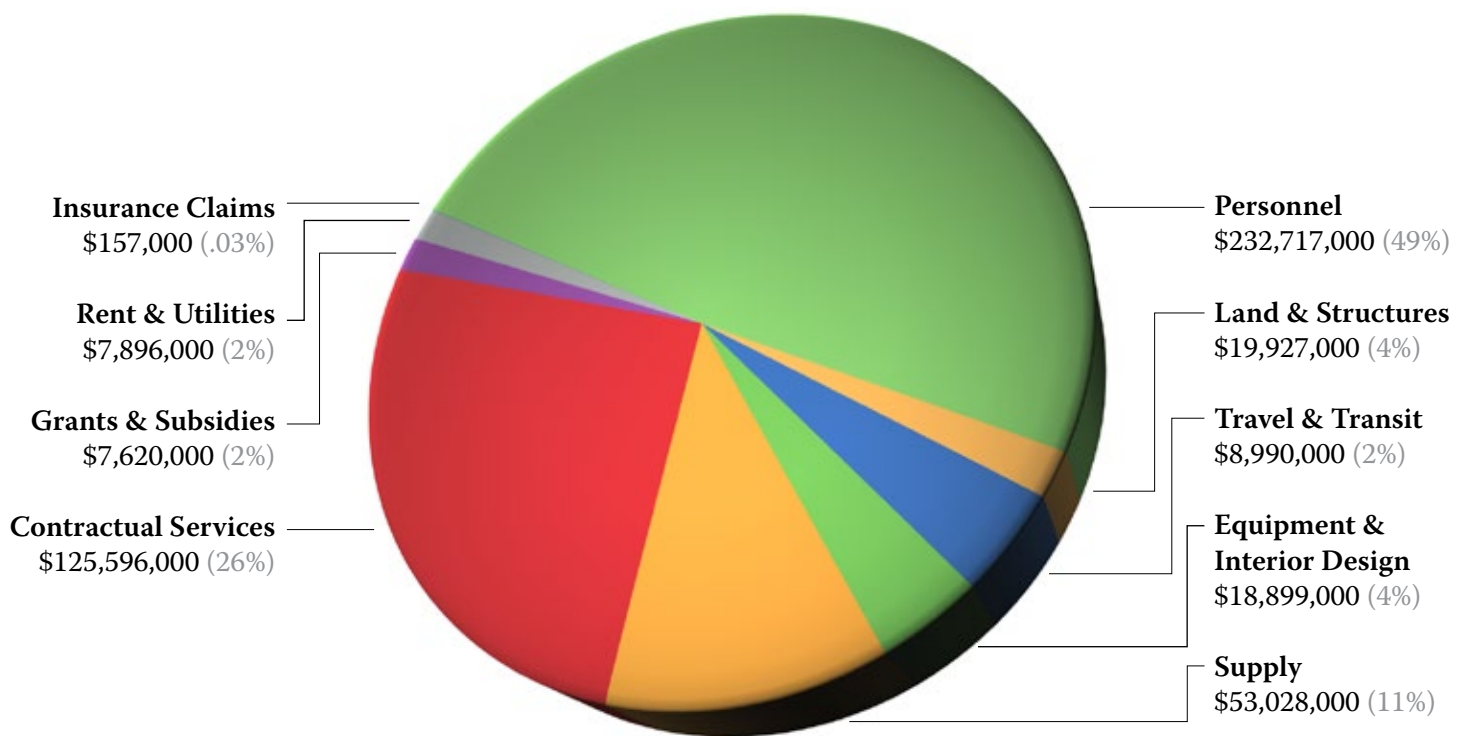
The Philadelphia VAMC once again hosted the annual spring Amputee Veterans' First Swing Golf Clinic and the Amputee Veterans' Next Step Golf Clinic in the fall. These programs were developed to encourage Veterans to be more physically active through the game of golf.

In April 2012, approximately 30 Veteran amputees attended the fourth annual Amputee Veterans' First Swing Golf Clinic, a one day program, in Marlton, NJ. This clinic partners with local PGA professionals, VA Rehabilitation Staff, and local sponsors to introduce basic golf techniques to amputee Veterans in order to encourage physical activity through a sport that focuses on the use of multiple muscle groups, gait, balance, grip, and range of motion.

In September, the third annual Amputee Veterans Next Step Golf Clinic took place in Sewell, NJ. The primary focus of this 9-hole, scramble-format tournament is to challenge Veterans to take the "next step" in their rehabilitation. Teams are comprised of two Veterans with limb loss, one Golf Professional and a dignitary from the VA or local government. The integration of these community-based sporting opportunities into our Veterans health care and life-health plan plays an important role in their overall rehabilitation and wellness.

# DATA & STATISTICS

Fiscal Year 2012 Budget **\$474,830,000**



Total Employees in FY2012 **1,997**



**Decline in Fee Basis**

FY2012: \$47,816,053  
FY2011: \$58,857,038

**18.8%**



**10.1%**

**Increase in Collections**

FY2012: \$18,863,000  
FY2011: \$16,951,000



## By The Numbers

Total Veterans Served 57,598

Percentage of Male Veterans 90.7%

Percentage of Female Veterans 9.3%

Total Number of Visits 463,213

Total of Inpatient Admissions 6,073

## Workload by Community Based Outpatient Clinic

	Total Unique Users	Total Visits
Camden, NJ	2,050	7,400
Ft. Dix, NJ	5,375	25,961
Gloucester, NJ	5,599	23,792
Victor J. Saracini CBOC, Horsham, PA	9,877	29,561

## Our Veterans by Age

Less than 25 years old 0.8%

25 to 34 years old 5.8%

35 to 44 years old 5.7%

45 to 54 years old 12.8%

55 to 64 years old 25.5%

65 to 74 years old 23%

75 to 84 years old 16.8%

Over 85 years old 9.6%



# ACCREDITATIONS

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The Joint Commission (TJC) conducted an unannounced triennial visit (to survey the Hospital, Home Care, Long Term Care, and Mental Health Intensive Case Management) in June 2011 with Philadelphia VAMC receiving a three year accreditation through June 2014. TJC can come as early as December 2012 and anytime thereafter.

Opioid Treatment Center: TJC conducted an unannounced survey in July 2011; OTP received a 3 year accreditation through July 2014.

Rehabilitative Medicine and Amputee Programs: Accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF); which surveyed the facility in October 2011, receiving a three year accreditation. The Medical Center expects its next CARF survey for these programs in 2014.

HUDVASH, Grant per Diem, and Outreach Programs: (Homeless programs) Accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF); which surveyed the facility in November 2011, receiving a three year accreditation. The Medical Center expects its next CARF survey for these programs in 2014.

Psychosocial Rehab - Veteran Empowerment Center (PRRC-VEC) received a three-year accreditation from CARF through October 2013.

Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) received a three-year accreditation from CARF through October 2013.

Research: The Association of Accreditation for Human Research Protection Programs granted full accreditation in re-accredited in September 9th, 2011 for a period of five years.

Animal Accreditation Program: A survey team from the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care visited on March 17, 2009, to assess the animal program in Research, and earned re-accreditation through June 15, 2012. The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare accreditation became effective in May 2008 and expires in May 2012.

Commission on Cancer granted three year accreditation in October 2011; accredited through June 2014.

Pathology and Laboratory Service received the College of American Pathologists' accreditation into January 2013.

Blood Bank acquired American Association of Blood Bank through January 2013.

Radiation Oncology: Accredited by the American College of Radiation Oncology. Surveyed in November 2011 and accredited through November 2014.

Mammography Program: Accredited by the American College of Radiology into February 2015.

Sleep Program: The VISN 4 Eastern Region Sleep Center was surveyed in June 2009 by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and was re-accredited for a period of five years.

Awarded a Office of Nursing Services Award for "Using Simulation with Interprofessional Team Training to Improve RRT/Code Performance"





PHILADELPHIA VA MEDICAL CENTER  
*Serving those who served.*

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