



VA
HEALTH CARE | Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center

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Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2013

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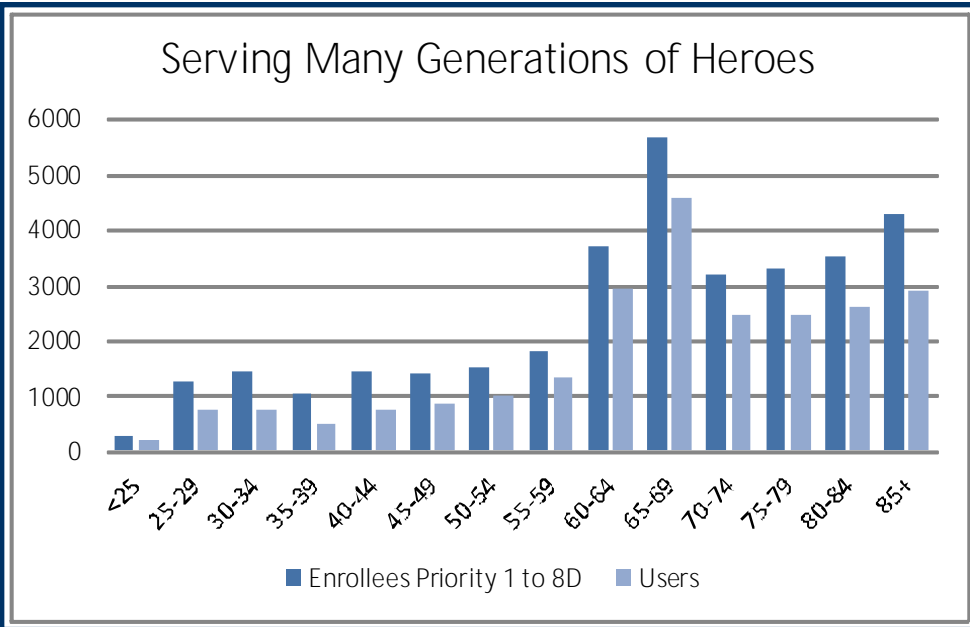


Health for Life

James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center—Altoona
Annual Report 2013



Honoring Service. Empowering Health.



“Over the next several years, we will align resources to deliver sustained value to Veterans, enhance access to services in high demand program areas, evaluate low demand program areas for efficiency, ensure patient satisfaction, increase the use of virtual care, and expand outreach activities to educate the Veteran community about the services we provide.” - William H. Mills

A message from the Director in the Strategic Plan Update for FY2015–2017

Dear Stakeholder:

I am pleased to share the fiscal year 2013 (FY13) Annual Report for the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center. It is an honor to work closely with employees, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 1862, volunteers, community leaders, and our partners in VISN 4 and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to continue to improve the practice and experience of health care for Veterans in our 14 county region.

Our goal is to provide Veterans with the health care they need in the most accessible and convenient fashion. Going into FY14 and beyond, we are poised to meet the needs of all generations of Veterans. It is a time of tremendous change in the health care delivery system in the United States, and our Veterans deserve the best health care in the Nation.

Because we serve Veterans from their early twenties to their late eighties, our expert clinical staff get to know each patient as an individual and learn what is meaningful to each Veteran. Knowing what matters to patients allows our staff to guide them to make health care choices that allow them to continue to enjoy the activities that give their lives meaning. This is the key to Patient Centered Care.

In FY13 we aligned our resources and efforts to achieve goals driven by VHA’s mission to “honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.”

In this report you will learn more about what the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center is doing to follow the national strategic initiatives set by the Veterans Health Administration. These initiatives are designed to help us provide health care to Veterans well into the future. In these pages you will also see the many faces of the Veterans, volunteers, family members, employees, and community leaders who make up the team of our medical center.

Again, thank you for your support and investment in the health and well-being of our Nation’s Heroes. It is my distinct pleasure to work with a team that is committed to improving the lives of those who gave so much to preserve our freedom.



William H. Mills

William H. Mills

Expanding Options—new points of access and virtual care



Improving access has been one of the cornerstones of the Veterans Health Administration's strategy. Access to inpatient, outpatient, long-term care, and procedure-based services can be enhanced by offering new points of access for Veterans, especially those living in rural areas. My HealthVet (MHV), Secure Messaging (SM), clinical video telehealth (CVT), home telehealth (HT) and store and forward telehealth (SFT) services are a way to bring resources closer to where our Veterans live. Additionally, expansion of Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) and Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) allow us to serve Veterans where they live, work or go to school. The Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) program is reaching Veterans who are involved in the judicial system in an effort to help them receive medical care and treatment. The Homeless Veterans program aims to eliminate Veteran homelessness.

Virtual Medicine:

Early data from the Veterans Health Administration suggests that we can reduce visit rates (particularly for urgent care and hospitalizations) by improving access using telehealth technologies and SM. Building on our success with SM in Primary Care settings, in FY13, we trained practitioners in specialty care and behavioral health clinics to communicate with patients via SM. By the end of FY13, over 8,000 Veterans enrolled for MHV and more than 3,000 authenticated to send and receive SM.

In FY13 telehealth was expanded to physical medicine and rehabilitation, and mental health, including psychiatry and psychology. Other telehealth programs including teledermatology, teleradiology, MOVE, and group clinics continue to expand and gain in popularity among Veterans who reside in rural areas. Equipment and technology continue to expand the infrastructure of this growing treatment option.

Home Based Primary Care:

A second HBPC team in Blair county is now serving patients with primary care and some specialty services in their homes. The Veterans served by HBPC are those who are chronically ill and require continuity and coordination of care. Their quality of life is enhanced significantly by having a visiting team of clinicians who know them, and provide them with one-on-one care.

Expansion of Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Specialty Services:

In FY13 we expanded the DuBois CBOC, almost doubling its size and equipping the clinic with full telehealth capabilities. We began the process of expansion of the State College and Johnstown clinics to mirror the improvements made in DuBois, and we began the process of contracting for two additional CBOCs in Huntingdon and Indiana counties.

Physical medicine and rehabilitation and behavioral health services took a front seat in FY13 with the investment in staffing, infrastructure, and equipment. More than 40 percent increase in demand for both services is expected over the next ten years, and both represent treatment programs that Veterans from all generations are utilizing.

Enrollment, Veterans Justice Outreach, Homeless Veterans Program:

We reached thousands of community members in FY13 through more than 40 outreach events throughout our 14 counties. With the Veteran population projected to decrease over the next ten years, and the importance of health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act, it is critical that we are able to reach all of the Veterans in our region who qualify for VA health care. Connections with the Department of Defense allow us to reach out directly to returning service members through Post Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) events.

We are reaching more Veterans who are involved in the criminal justice system through our Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) program. VJO offers some Veterans who are involved with the legal system an opportunity to seek treatment through VA instead of incarceration. In FY13 we helped to establish Veterans Courts in Centre and Cambria Counties, and have partnered with many other counties in support of establishing Magisterial level Veterans Courts. The VJO coordinator works with court administrators, law enforcement agencies, and other community support programs to assist Veterans to receive treatment.



Whole Health: Personalized, Proactive, Patient Driven Care



We provide more than health care, we provide a place for Veterans to celebrate, remember, connect, and enjoy the rewards of being called our Nation's Heroes.



PACT and Patient Centered Care, FY13:

- Dedicated service chief was assigned to lead PACT.
- Patient Centered Care committee was formed with membership from multiple disciplines, Veteran patients and front line staff.
- Extended hours in evenings, early mornings and weekends were initiated.
- Instituted a Voice of the Veteran patient feedback program.

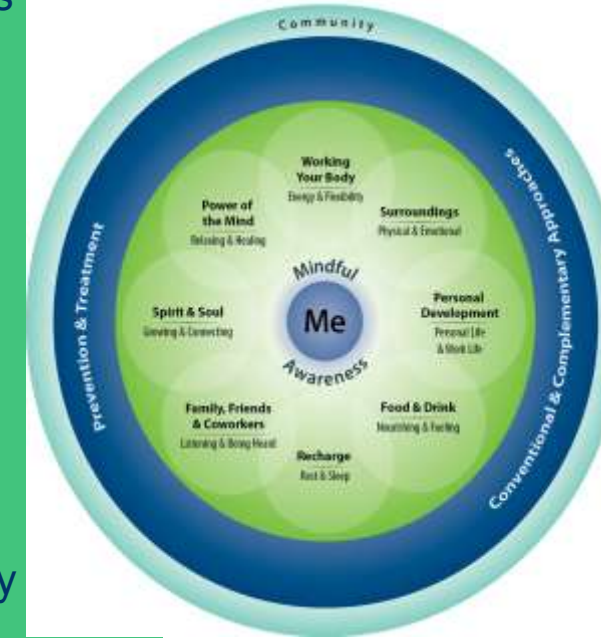
In FY14 we will continue to refine and introduce PACT and Patient Centered Care initiatives.

A PACT with patients:

A Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) is a Veteran working together with his/her health care professionals to plan for the whole-person care and life-long health and wellness.

How does a PACT function?

PACT is a partnership between the Veteran and health care team to make sure the Veteran receives whole-person care. This is personalized care to meet individual health care goals. PACT looks at all aspects of health with the emphasis on prevention and health promotion.

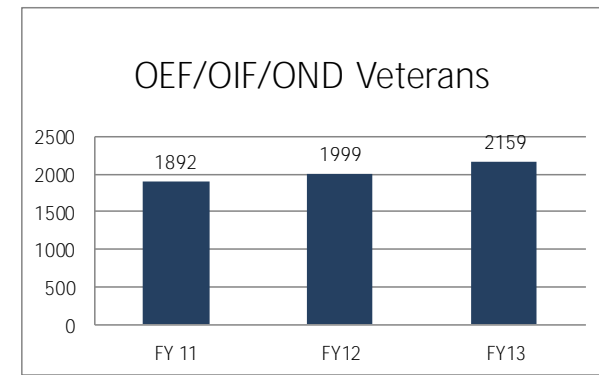
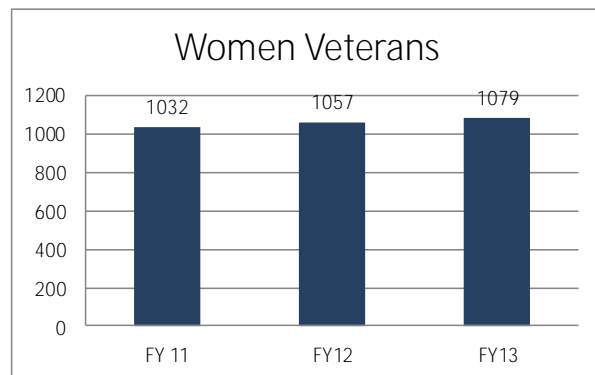
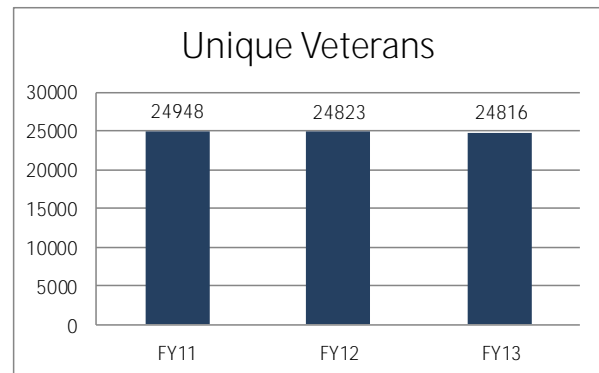
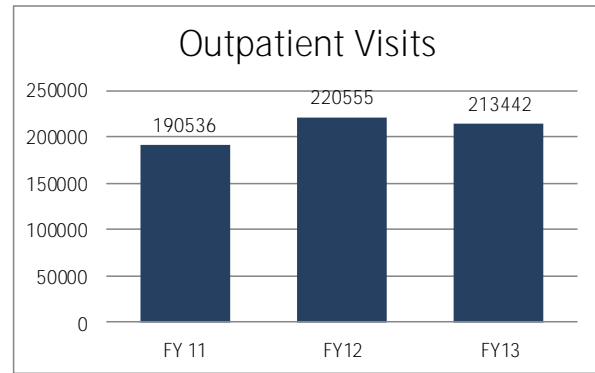


PACT offers many ways to access care. In addition to personal visits with a primary health care provider, Veterans may schedule visits with other members of the team. They may have access to group clinics and educational seminars, plus a wealth of information on the Internet through My HealtheVet. Communication can be done with members of the PACT by telephone or through Secure Messaging via My HealtheVet.

PACT achieves coordinated care through collaboration. All members of the team have clearly defined roles. They meet often to talk with the Veteran and each other about progress toward achieving health goals. The focus is on forging trusted, personal relationships, and the result is coordination of all aspects of a Veteran's health care.

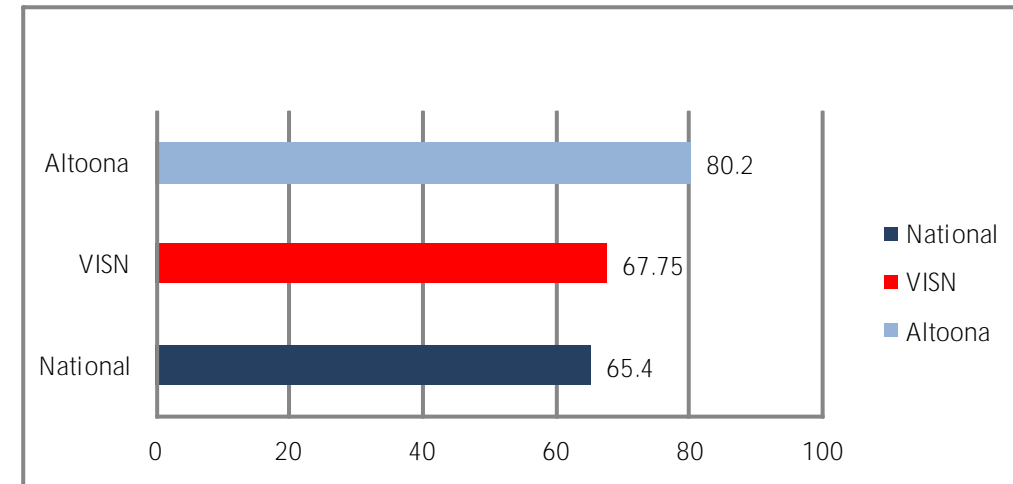
A PACT uses a team-based approach. The Veteran and his/her chosen family members are the center of the care team. The team includes health care professionals—primary care practitioner, nurse care manager, clinical associate, and administrative clerk. When other services are needed to meet the Veteran's goals and needs, a specialty care team are also available.

Performance & Measurements by the Numbers



Operating Budget: \$119 million
 Construction Budget: \$8.2 million
 Volunteers: 391
 Volunteer Hours: 38,786
 Donations: \$129,370

Inpatient Satisfaction*



Respondents to the Inpatient Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients for FY13:
 321 Responses
 310 Male/11 Female
 30 World War II
 79 Korea
 197 Vietnam
 10 Gulf War
 2 OEF/OIF
 1 Other

*Overall Rating of Health Care—Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP)

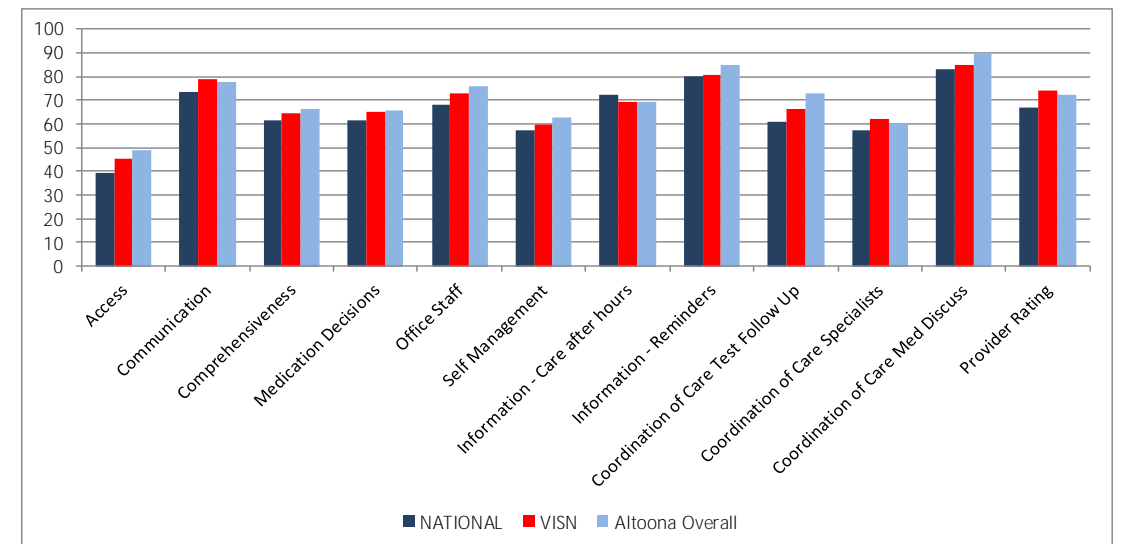
The James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center was named *Top Performer on Key Quality Measures*® by The Joint Commission, the leading accreditor of health care organizations in America. The medical center was recognized by The Joint Commission for exemplary performance in using evidence-based clinical processes that are shown to improve care for pneumonia.

Through strategic planning sessions each year the medical center develops strategies and milestones aligned with VHA strategic goals and objectives to better serve Veterans.



A physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) building was completed in FY13. This building houses OEF/OIF/OND, Caregiver Support, Prosthetics, traumatic brain injury clinic and PM&R staff. The hall of maps is a popular spot for Veterans to recall their time serving our Nation.

Outpatient Satisfaction**



**Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Survey

Organizational Health and Community Engagement



Organizational Health = Better outcomes for patients

A culture of teamwork in a hospital setting has been directly correlated to patient satisfaction according to the National Center for Organizational Development (NCOD). In FY13, the focus of organizational health, team work, leadership, and mentoring were elevated in our organization. Working closely with the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) we introduced many new programs and recognition opportunities for employees.

Star of the Month—Employees nominate fellow employees for their service above and beyond the job. Our stars of the month are given a monetary award, a certificate, recognition on a plaque, photograph, and information on their achievement sent to all employees, and publicized on our FaceBook page.

Voice of the Veteran—Introduced in FY13, this program recognized staff who provide excellent customer service. Cards were made available in all clinic areas and staff and Veterans were encouraged to compliment staff who offered superior service to Veterans or to other staff. Between June and September 40 people were awarded prizes in drawings for recognition given to them.

Civility, Respect and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW)—Through NCOD we were able to train five facilitators for the Civility, Respect and Engagement in the Workplace program. Two separate work groups were given the opportunity to strengthen relationships within their own work area by participating in team building and problem solving exercises, led by facilitators over a six-month period.

Leadership Effectiveness and Accountability Development (LEAD) and Leadership Development Institute (LDI)— Two staff participated in the VISN's LEAD program and one participated in the LDI program. These programs are designed to train and support leaders in VA.

Mentoring classes were held for employees and 16 new mentors were trained to work with other employees and help them to develop leadership skills.

Employee appreciation events included a fall luncheon and a spring ice cream social, both served by leadership staff.

Employee association was started by a small group of interested employees and several group activities were offered for employees and family members, including a children's Easter Egg hunt.

Community Engagement = Employer of Choice in the Region

With an annual payroll of over \$52 million, we provide excellent job opportunities, support local municipalities, and offer one of the most stable sources of economic growth in the community. We also support the community in many other ways, measurable and immeasurable.

In FY13 our Feds Feed Families Food Drive donated 1,615 pounds of food to local food pantries and our Consolidated Federal Campaign (CFC) raised \$51,689 for local, state, national, and international charities. Events at the medical center attracted hundreds of local citizens to our grounds. These included; Armed Forces Day, POW/MIA ceremony, CFC Agency Fair, VA2K Walk, and a concert honoring Vietnam Veterans. We participated in the local Memorial and Veterans Day parades. The Director and other VAMC leadership are involved in the Blair County Chamber of Commerce, local Veteran Service Organizations, charity and community groups.

We participate in all local emergency operations drills through the South Central Mountains Regional Task Force in combination with the Hospital Association of Pennsylvania (HAP).

We provided internship and work experience opportunities for 146 students in FY13 in the areas of Nursing, Pharmacy, Physical and Occupational Therapy, Social Work, Physician's Assistant, Optometry, Medical Assistant, Criminal Justice, Dietetics, Business Administration, Dental Technician and Recreation Therapy.