



# Annual Report 2013 Focusing on the Veteran



PHILADELPHIA  
VA MEDICAL CENTER  
*Serving those who served.*

*Cover Photos:*

*(Top left) Dr. Siddharth Shah and Veteran Gary Roundtree at the Outpatient Dialysis Center*

*(Bottom left) Nurse Practitioner Assumpta Nwachukwu and Veteran Trisha Vincent at the Gloucester Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)*

*(Right) Amputee Rehabilitation Coordinator Kate Weisbond and Veteran Tom Lee in Rehabilitation Medicine*

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

In Fiscal Year 2013 staff of Philadelphia VA Medical Center embraced patient centered-care and turned the focus on the Veteran. Patient centered care prioritizes the needs of the Veteran patient and results in decisions and improvements that take those needs into consideration above all else. Extended hours, including nights and weekend appointment times, upgraded and soothing patient and family waiting rooms, and a consolidated patient call center are just a few examples of changes instituted in 2013.

This year we opened a free-standing outpatient dialysis center to better meet the needs of a special group of patients, and provide better coordination with the care they are already receiving from the VA. Upgrades to the computer system and boiler plant, while unseen, ensure smoother care for all patients, reduce environmental impact, and cut costs.

The addition of new staff, including medical specialists, expands the care we provide to patients. Increased use of telehealth services makes it more convenient for patients at the community based outpatient clinics to interact with providers, while remaining closer to home.

This year we also kicked-off the 2014 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, which Philadelphia will host August 12-17, 2014. In addition to their regular duties, our staff is working hard to put on the best Games ever.

These are just a few of our successes in 2013, which would not have been possible without our dedicated staff, many of whom are Veterans themselves, and hundreds of dedicated volunteers. We strive every day, during every encounter, to provide the best care to our Veterans. I am personally very proud to have become a part of this committed Philadelphia staff this year.

We sincerely thank our patients and look forward to continuing to provide the best possible care in 2014.

DANIEL D. HENDEE, FACHE  
Medical Center Director



# PATIENT CENTERED CARE

## Pain Management

In FY 2013 the Pain Service experienced great success in expanding its bio-psycho-social treatment options for chronic pain. Our goal, to provide a holistic, multimodal approach to pain management, has been achieved with the addition of a full-time pain psychologist to our interdisciplinary team. We have developed groups for mindfulness meditation and acceptance and commitment therapy and a yoga class to round out our established Pain School and Pain Support Group. The response has been so strong and positive from our Veterans that Yoga for back pain is now offered twice a week.

Interventional Pain procedures moved from the OR to the Procedure Room under the direction of Joanne Seppelt, CRNP. This move has allowed us to expand the number of procedures we can do on a weekly basis.

VISN funding has been granted to assist with the expansion of the pain service into a tertiary level Pain Care Center for the VISN 4 eastern market referring facilities. This center will include: a Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Services (CARF) certified Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation Program (IPRP), and advanced diagnostics and treatment through clinic visits and virtual care including Tele-Health, E-Consults, and Scan/ECHO.

## Call Center

In 2012, Health Administration Services engaged in a phone system improvement process by implementing the Centralized Call Center in an effort to reduce patient access waiting times. The roll out of this new initiative began with providing services for Primary Care and the Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

Over the past year, we have worked diligently to expand services to other product lines and increase services. The number of calls received has increased by 65 percent from the inception of the center and our speed of response per call has increased by 95 percent with the speed of response being less than 11 seconds per call for the past 12 months.

We have expanded service to include automated appointment cancellation for most outpatient services including many Surgical and Medicine services. Veterans can also leave messages for their providers and expect to receive a response within 72 hours. The Call Center has also expanded the hours of operation and is staffed Monday through Friday 7 a.m.-7 p.m., and on Saturday from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.





*Drucilla Green, Call Center*





# PATIENT CENTERED CARE

## ◀ **Waiting Room Renovations**

In 2013, the Philadelphia VAMC renovated patient waiting rooms as part of its Patient Centered Care initiative. Upgrades included new wood-look flooring, warmer and deeper paint color schemes, and new furniture and counters. In addition, new lamps were provided which create a softer atmosphere. Artwork and accessories inspired by nature adorn the walls. These improved features create a calming, welcoming and home-like atmosphere.

## **New Modules**

In 2013, the Philadelphia VAMC began renovations on Modules A through D, where Primary Care and portions of the Sub-Specialty Clinics are located. Approximately 18,000 square feet were renovated and designed to help implement the patient centered care medical home model, the Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT).

The renovations include construction of a new same-day appointment module and a new business suite which allows patients better access to the staff who are serving them. Waiting rooms were upgraded with new flooring, ceiling and wall finishes, and new furniture. Layout of space in the waiting areas was made to provide patients with increased privacy.

The result of these changes is to provide a more friendly and comfortable home-like seating area.

## **BH Services in ED**

The Philadelphia VA Medical Center proudly opened the Behavioral Health Emergency Care Unit (BhECU) in June 2013. The BhECU was conceived as an integral part of the Emergency Department (ED) renovation that took place over the past several years. It was designed to accommodate the growing number of Veterans being seen in the ED with behavioral health-related concerns by providing a dedicated, secure space for evaluating and providing emergency treatment for these patients. The BhECU is connected to the ED and can serve up to five patients at any given time in four rooms. The unit was constructed to comply with Joint Commission standards for a safe and secure environment of care for patients with acute psychiatric conditions.

The BhECU is staffed 24 hours per day, seven days per week by a psychiatrist and 2-3 nursing staff members with specialized experience in Behavioral Health, at least one of whom is a Registered Nurse. Social Work support is provided by two full-time licensed social workers who have overlapping shifts, resulting in coverage from 7 a.m. - 11 p.m. on weekdays. All patients in the BhECU receive both medical and psychiatric assessment. The unit represents an ongoing collaborative effort by the Behavioral Health Service, Patient Care Services, Social Work Service, and ED.

Early experience from patients and staff alike indicates that the BhECU is providing a high quality of care for Veterans with Behavioral Health concerns, and has been a valuable addition to the Emergency Department.

# CONSTRUCTION



*Paul Robinson, FCIO*

## **Computer Room Consolidation**

In 2013, the Philadelphia VAMC consolidated its Computer Room operations. The new data center represents a major milestone to the Philadelphia's goal to improve the efficiency, reliability and security of information technology assets. The move offers modern enhancements for greater security and reliability including a state of the art physical environment used by most modern data systems. This also adds consolidated services which improves information technology resiliency. Among these features are smart, uninterruptible power supplies, fire protection, cabling overhead, raised flooring, redundant heat, ventilation and cooling, and a smart monitoring system that provides an alert for a proactive response.



## **Boiler Plant Upgrade**

In 2013, the Philadelphia VAMC upgraded its boiler plant as part of a "Go Green" initiative that converted operations from oil to natural gas, and included the installation of high efficiency burners.

Greenhouse gas and carbon emissions will be reduced by at least 25 percent through the use of low nitrogen oxide burners. The new boilers are also equipped with variable speed drives that adjust the gas fire per load demand. In addition, the project will eliminate the use of heavy oil, reduce maintenance costs, and increase the life expectancy of the boilers. Payback on the project will take approximately three years.

These efficiencies will significantly reduce utility costs, saving the Medical Center money.



# NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

The Philadelphia VAMC staff is preparing for the 2014 National Veterans Wheelchair Games which will be held in Philadelphia August 12 -17, 2014.

Sponsored annually by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), the Games is the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. Open to all U.S. military Veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, neurological conditions, amputations or other mobility impairments. 2014 will mark the 34th year of the event.

Competitive events will take place in and around Philadelphia, and will feature 18 medaled events including swimming, basketball, quad rugby, handcycling and wheelchair slalom, which is a timed obstacle course. The athletes compete in all events against others with similar athletic ability, competitive experience or age.

In addition to the competitions and the opening and closing ceremonies, the Games will include a “Kids Day at the Games” where local children with disabilities will have the opportunity to interact with the athletes, participate in sporting events, and watch the Veterans compete.

The public is invited to attend all of the sports competitions throughout the week of the Games, and admission is free. More information is available at [www.wheelchairgames.va.gov](http://www.wheelchairgames.va.gov).



*National Veterans Wheelchair Games Sponsorship Breakfast*



*Gov. Edward Rendell and Veteran athlete Bruce Husted*



*2013 Philly Phever athletes and Philadelphia VAMC Local Organizing Committee members*











# INCREASED SERVICES TO VETERANS

## The Daily Plan

The 5-East / 5-West Medical and Surgical Units practice “The Daily Plan,” a system that provides each patient with a written plan of their scheduled activities, including clinical tests and studies for the day, as well as a list of their current medications. Delivery of the plan is followed by a discussion with a health care professional, usually the nurse assigned to the patient.

The Daily Plan enhances patient safety by involving patients in their daily care. It is a road map that lets patients see, in black and white, what is going to happen to them on a particular day. The Daily Plan can include diagnostic tests the patient will undergo; medications to be administered; nutrition issues; appointments with providers; and any allergies the patient may have.

By reviewing the plan together, patients and nurses recognize and correct any discrepancies in their plan of care, such as changes to their medications. Patient safety is increased through this regular and daily communication.

Philadelphia VAMC won a Gold Achievement Award from the National Center for Patient Safety for its use of the Daily Plan in 2011, and a Silver Achievement Award for the program in 2012.

## Dialysis Center Opening

Dr. Robert Petzel, Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, was the keynote speaker when the Philadelphia VA Medical Center officially cut the ribbon on its off-site Outpatient Dialysis Center on May 14, 2013.

The Philadelphia VAMC 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 to be treated 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 (PACT) approach, and allows for a consistent and integrated oversight of Veterans’ medical care. The Veteran’s entire health care team has the ability to maintain continuous, comprehensive awareness of his or her 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 at 4219 Chestnut Street in West Philadelphia.



*Veterans (from left) Sonny Smith, Richard Bright and Earl Maze*



# INCREASED SERVICES TO VETERANS

## Telehealth

In early FY13, the Virtual Care section was established to incorporate Telehealth, the Secure Messaging portal of MyHealtheVet and eConsults. In addition to our Home Telehealth (HT) program, there are currently over twenty Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) programs in place, along with two Store and Forward (SF) programs. In FY13, we enrolled over 30 percent of our patient population into some type of Virtual Care, meeting our VISN goal.

The Virtual Care staff is supervised by the Facility Telehealth Coordinator and includes Home Telehealth Care Coordinators, a Home Telehealth Program Support Assistant, two Telehealth Clinical Technicians, a TeleRetinal Imager, and the MyHealtheVet Coordinator.

During the past year, we hired Telehealth Clinical Technicians at each of our Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC), Fort Dix, Gloucester, Saracini, and Camden.

We instituted Clinical Video Telehealth into the home modality of care, which is a form of CVT whereby patients connect with their providers via their own computer and webcam. We ended the fiscal year with ten patients enrolled in this program.

There has been an increased participation by our Mental Health providers in Telehealth. Each day, more and more providers and staff are getting trained in the Telehealth modality of care.

## The Operating Room

Collaboration between Anesthesia, Surgery and operating room nursing staff has resulted in improved efficiency of the operating room, thereby increasing the hours of operating room utilization and the number of surgical procedures performed at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center.

Improvements in efficiencies have allowed us to introduce new surgical services, including colorectal surgery, plastic surgery, breast surgery and gynecological surgery. We have also been able to reestablish spine surgery, and expand surgical oncology. We have also expanded orthopedic surgery through the introduction of revision hip and knee surgery, and shoulder and hand surgery. We hope to be adding foot and ankle surgery very soon.

In the area of Urology, we have introduced catheter-based surgical interventions and are in the early stages of a robotic prostatectomy program, scheduled to start in the spring of 2014.

The introduction of these more comprehensive service lines and new surgical service lines has increased the financial health of our institution and augmented the quality of care provided to our Veterans, both local and regional, as we become the true regional referral center for surgical care in the eastern portion of the VISN.



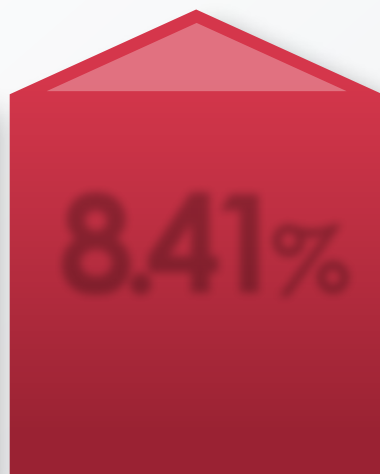
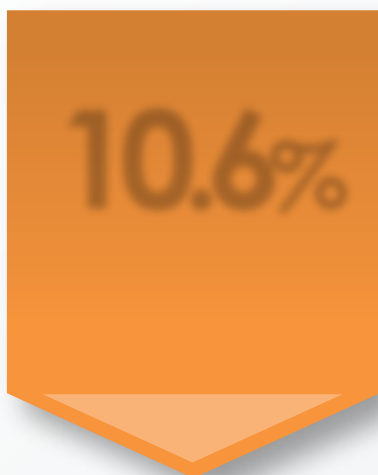


*Dr. Raymond Roginski, CRNP Michael Polites, and Veteran Marilyn Ann Warmerdam*

# STATISTICS AND DATA



- Personnel Services: \$232,717,000
- Travel & Transportation: \$8,990,000
- Land & Structures: \$19,927,000
- Equipment & Interior Design: \$18,899,000
- Supplies & Materials: \$53,028,000
- Contractual Services: \$125,596,000
- Rent & Utilities: \$7,896,000
- Grants, Subsidies, Contributions: \$7,620,000
- Other: Printing \$7000  
Transport of Things \$14,000  
Insurance Claims \$157,000



## Community Based Outpatient Clinics

|            | FY11     |             | FY12     |             | FY13     |             |
|------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|            | Veterans | Total Vists | Veterans | Total Vists | Veterans | Total Vists |
| Fort Dix   | 5,240    | 23,827      | 5,375    | 25,961      | 5,012    | 24,415      |
| Saracini   | 9,365    | 26,130      | 9,877    | 29,561      | 10,569   | 30,212      |
| Gloucester | 5,256    | 20,007      | 5,599    | 23,792      | 5,693    | 24,951      |
| Camden     | 1,901    | 8,333       | 2,050    | 7,400       | 2,058    | 8,474       |

Number of Veterans Served

**58,503**

Percent Male Veterans

**90.2**

Percent Female Veterans

**9.8**

Number of  
Medical Center Visits

**463,847**

Inpatient Admissions

**5,758**



# ACCREDITATIONS AND RECOGNITION

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Philadelphia VAMC has received a number of accreditations and awards. Some of our recent notable accomplishments include:

**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 is expected in 2014.

**Opioid Treatment Center:** TJC conducted an unannounced survey in July 2011; OTP received a three 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 September 2016.

**Compensated Work Therapy (CWT)** received a three year accreditation from CARF through September 2016.

**Research:** The Association of Accreditation for Human Research Protection Programs granted full accreditation through September 2016.

**Animal Accreditation Program:** A survey team from the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care visited to assess the animal program in Research, and accredited the program through July 2015. The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare accreditation is effective through May 2016.

**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 2016.

**Blood Bank** acquired American Association of Blood Bank accreditation through January 2016.

**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 through June 2014.

**Behavioral Health:** The American Psychological Association accredited Behavioral Health through 2020.

**Oncology:** The American College of Surgeons accredited Oncology through October 2014.

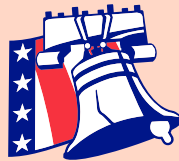
**Community Living Center:** The Community Living Center was accredited by the Long Term Care Institute through May 2014.

**Recipient** of a Silver Cornerstone Recognition Award for 2013 from the National Center for Patient Safety.

**Recognized** by Orthopedic Surgery Improvement Patient Flow Process by Office of Inspector General.







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8th & Alabama  
Joint Base McGuire-Dix, NJ 08640  
609-562-2999

Gloucester County VA Outpatient Clinic  
211 County House Road  
Sewell, NJ 08080-2525  
877-823-5230

VA Outpatient Clinic Annex  
300 Broadway, Suite 103  
Camden, NJ 08104  
877-232-5240

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