



# CONNECTING VETERAN HEALTH CARE

2015 REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITIES

**WILMINGTON** VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER



3 A MESSAGE FROM ROBIN C. AUBE-WARREN

4 LEADERS DEVELOPING LEADERS

6 TESTIMONIALS FROM AMERICA’S VETERANS

8 PATIENT CENTERED CARE

10 IMPROVING ACCESS TO CARE FOR VETERANS

12 CARING FOR VETERANS: A HIGHER CALLING

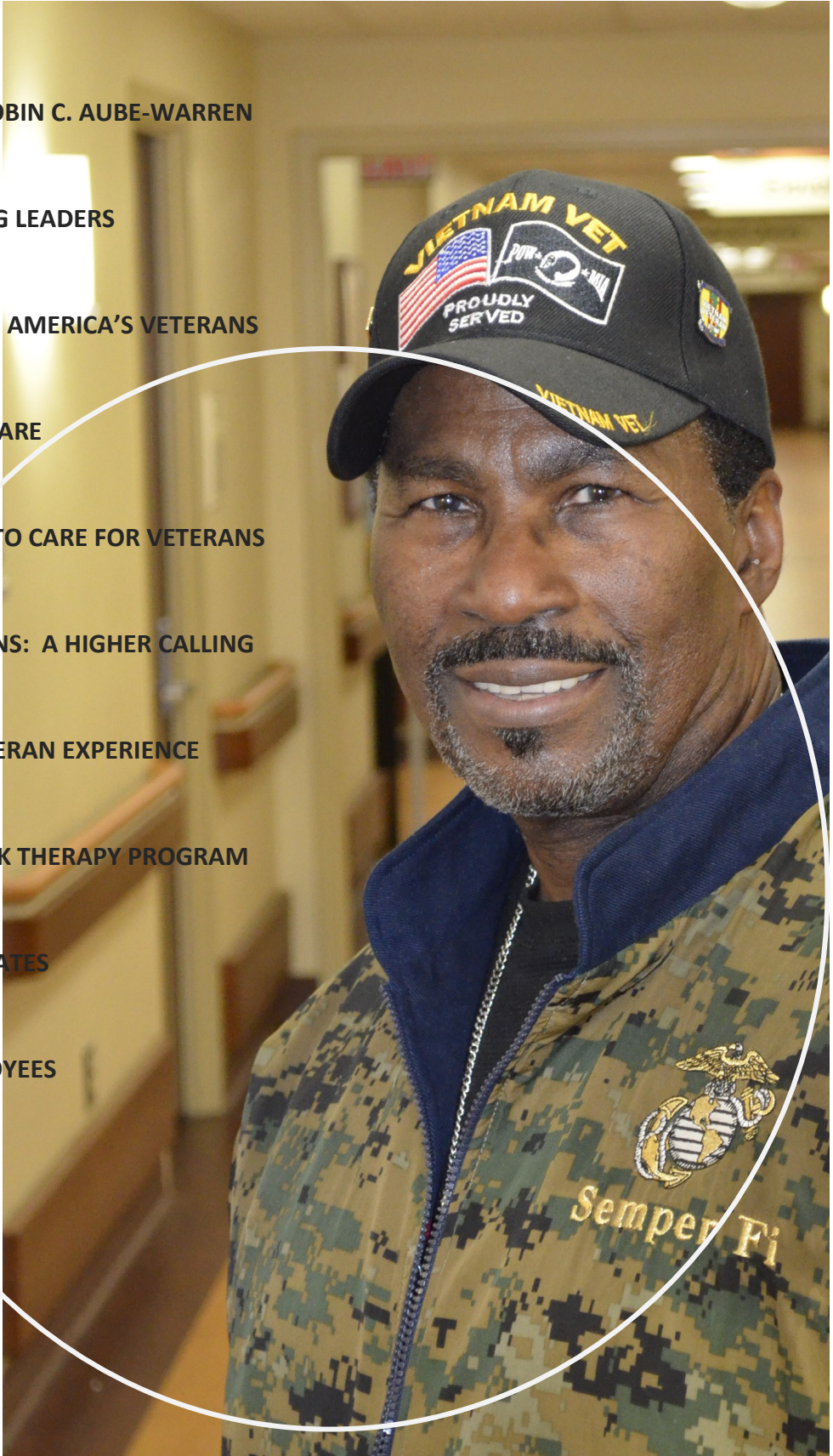
14 IMPROVING THE VETERAN EXPERIENCE

16 COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY PROGRAM

18 CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

20 RECOGNIZING EMPLOYEES

23 BY THE NUMBERS



*Above: Bobby S. Baldwin, USMC, Vietnam Veteran, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Division, Member of Wilmington VAMC Veteran Advisory Council*

# A MESSAGE FROM ROBIN C. AUBE-WARREN



To our Veterans, families, friends and partners,

As I review the Wilmington VA Medical Center's achievements in the **2015 Annual Report**, I am truly proud to reflect on the work of our talented and dedicated staff, volunteers, and community partners who have helped us throughout the year.

During 2015, our attentions were focused on improving access to quality health care and improving customer service for our Nation's Veterans. I am proud of the effort and countless hours our staff have spent ensuring Veterans have access to the high quality care they have earned and deserve. Our administrative, clinical staff, and dedicated volunteers joined together and focused on our primary mission, to serve America's Veterans. As a result, I can report throughout all our clinics, there were over 296,000 outpatient visits of which nearly 96 percent were scheduled within 30 days of the Veterans desired date.

During 2016, we will continue to focus on ways to improve the Veteran's Experience through improving communication, increasing access, and improving our customer service. While more work remains to be done, we will continue to focus on the key drivers of staffing, space, productivity, and enhancing our community partnerships.

I am excited for what 2016 holds for us and look forward to continued improvement across the organization.

ROBIN C. AUBE-WARREN, FACHE

Director, Wilmington VAMC



# CONNECTING OUR PURPOSE

Leaders Developing Leaders (LDL) is a program designed to be proactive transforming the VA - moving from rules based organization to principals based.

## A COMMON TEACHABLE POINT OF VIEW

Leaders from the Wilmington VAMC participated in a two-day training conference focused on improving processes within VA. The training was focused on Noel Tichy's "Teachable Point of View."™

The training originally presented by the Secretary of the

VA to senior leaders from around the country, was cascaded down to leaders at the Wilmington VAMC. During Wilmington's conference, leaders focused on three areas: IDEAS, VALUES and EMOTIONAL ENERGY. The three areas when connected create the basic conceptual outline for the teachable point of view. The framework is designed to be the foundation for moving our organization forward.

During the conference, participants discussed everyday processes impacting the experience of Veterans and employees. Identifying perceived issues and opportunities for improvement were discussed.

One of the initiatives discussed at the training was the MyVA initiative aimed at improving the Veteran and employee experience, improving internal support services, establishing strategic partnerships within the community, and creating a culture of continuous improvement.

Community involvement is key to the success of the transformation effort. MyVA brings together resources and advocates to improve outcomes for Veterans, transitioning service members and their families. In 2016, there will be two MyVA community groups—one for southern New Jersey and the other for Delaware.



*Above: Barbara Willey, Associate Chief Nurse and Kim Sivak, Associate Chief of Staff for Behavioral Health during a LDL breakout session.*





Above: Robin C. Aube-Warren facilitates the Leaders Developing Leaders training session.



Right: Vanessa Covington, Interim 4East Nurse Manager, Armelia Brown, Chief of Sterile Processing Service, and Damon Taylor, Chief of Logistics work during one of the many breakout sessions during the training.





## TESTIMONIAL LETTERS TELLING US ABOUT YOUR HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCES AT THE WILMINGTON VAMC

Ms. Robin Aube-Warren:

I arrived at your location on Monday, Feb. 9 with symptoms of a stroke. I was immediately greeted and subsequently treated by your very professional and courteous emergency room staff. I was diagnosed with recently having experienced a stroke, resulting in my admission in your fine facility.

Over the subsequent four days, the care, compassion, education and comfort that I experienced was second to none. The respect, attention to detail, concern and care exhibited by each and every member of your professional staff was superior in ALL aspects! You should be commended for your efforts. Your exemplary staff brings great credit upon, not only yourself, but the entire VA hospital system as well. Keep up the GREAT work!

Semper Fi,  
A Proud Veteran

Ms. Robin Aube-Warren:

I just returned from a three day emergency stay at your facility. I wanted no time to go by, without notifying you of the outstanding professionalism and dedication of your staff, demonstrated during my treatment.

From the moment I presented my ID credentials at admissions, to my discharge, three days later, I was continually overwhelmed at the speed and efficiency of the VA's administrative and medical skill sets and systems. The manner in which the systems and your staff were deployed, was nothing short of flawless.

The urgency in contacting you is my hope, that you will convey to the many people involved in my care and treatment, without delay, the profound gratitude I have for their compassion and commitment to excellence.

Again, please pass along my sincerest appreciation to the medical staff and their support staff, who cared for me, as well as, you and your admin and staff, for making my stay and follow up attention, the best I could imagine.

With profound appreciation,  
U.S. Army Veteran



# OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

WILMINGTON VAMC &  
COMMUNITY BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS

**437**  
VOLUNTEERS

**45,067**  
HOURS OF SERVICE

Unique assignments have generated opportunities in many areas.

**112**  
NEW VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a special part of our connection to the Veterans we serve. In 2015, more than 437 individuals gave of their time and talent to support Veterans and their families. We are fortunate to have these volunteers as part of our health care team.



*Above: Dawn Martz-Porter, Interim Associate Director of Operations, Robin C. Aube-Warren, Director, and Pat Caldwell, Chief of Voluntary Services attend the Annual Volunteer Recognition Banquet.*

# CONNECTING VETERANS TO PATIENT CENTERED CARE

Health care goes beyond managing disease; we are making the patient goal's central to every decision we make concerning health care needs.

Staff at the Wilmington VAMC and its five Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) are striving to fulfill the mission of the Veterans Health Administration: To honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

In recent years, the VA has expanded the development of Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT). These teams work together to coordinate all of a Veterans health care needs. This shift in the way care is provided has increased VA's ability to react quickly to a patient's needs.

A patient's health goes beyond merely managing diseases. Patient centered care does more than align itself with a patient's needs; it makes the patient's goals central to every decision. This comprehensive approach to living well can be thought of as "Health for Life."



Health for Life builds on VA's robust history of clinical practice to transform care to be truly patient centered. We must learn our patients underlying motivations, interests and values in order to partner with them in developing a personalized approach to care.

At the Wilmington VAMC, Community Based Outpatient Clinics, and Mobile Outreach Clinic we are focusing on Patient Centered Care. Through the deployment of the Get Well Network (GWN), we are able to learn what our inpatient Veterans need through an interactive television monitor. The GWN allows Veterans to communicate their needs in real-time allowing staff to be more responsive to their needs. Wilmington has also reached out to Veterans to assist in the design and location recommendations during the relocation of two CBOCs.

The VA has reached a critical moment in the history of medicine, and is uniquely positioned to transform the way health care is delivered to provide personalized, proactive, and patient-driven care. Our goal and guiding principle is to help everyone experience and practice Health for Life.

*Left: Community Living Center (CLC) resident Carl M. Mazzarelli, WWII Army Veteran makes his choice for lunch with Chef Matt Emerson of Nutrition and Food Service. Patient Centered Care means Veterans in the CLC choose what they want to eat.*





All the areas in the circle are important and connected. Improving one area can benefit other areas in the circle so each person can experience Health for Life!

During a visit to the Wilmington VAMC, the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural (PCCC) Transformation from VA Central Office (VACO) in Washington, D.C., noted that the medical center had many programs in place reinforcing efforts to provide more Patient Centered Care in our approach to serving Veterans. The consultants noted programs in the Community Living Center, Social Work, and Behavioral Health for having strong PCCC programs.

# IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

**29,207**

Veterans enrolled for VA Health Care. An increase of 7.4% from 2014.

**296,991 visits**

During 2015, improving access to care has been among VA's top priorities. More Veterans are not only coming to VA for care, they are also using VA for more care. At the end of Fiscal Year 2014, there were 27,976 Veterans who chose the Wilmington VA for their health care needs.

At the end of this fiscal year, that number increased to 29,207. At Wilmington VAMC and our five Community Based Outpatient Clinics, total appointments were up 11.8 percent over the previous 24 months. During 2015, there were 296,991 outpatient visits; 15,682 more than the same period in 2014.

The most recent data shows 95.74 percent of those appointments were completed within 30 days of the clinically indicated or Veteran's preferred date.

Data also shows that in September 2014, Veterans waited an average of 8.88 days for Primary Care appointments which improved to 4.37 days in August 2015. Wilmington VA continues to strive to improve access to care. Veterans are responding to and seeking VA care at higher rates.

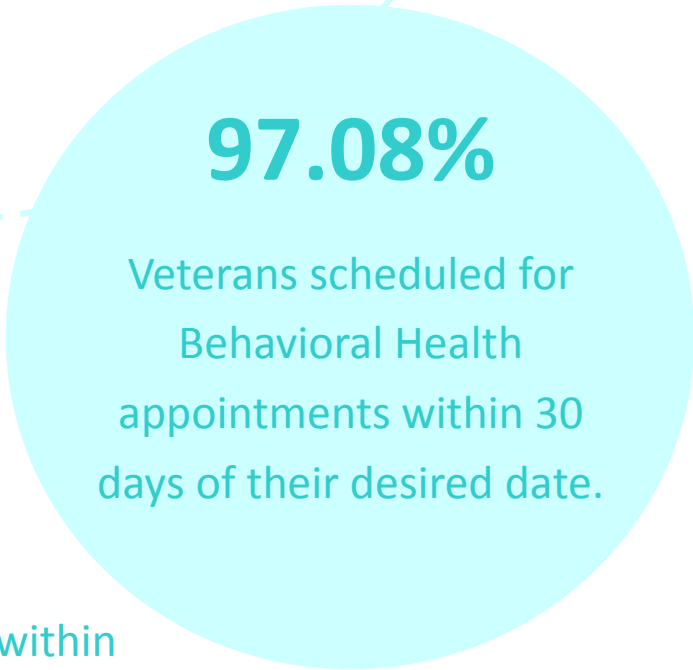
To improve access to care, Wilmington has taken specific actions to increase access for our Veterans. Among those actions, Wilmington has optimized primary care clinic appointment schedules to better assess scheduling capacity





*Improving access to health care and improving customer service remains one of the top priorities for frontline staff.*

which allows us to see more Veterans. We have increased the use of telehealth. Frontline staff have been properly trained on scheduling practices, and we have expanded the use of care in the community through VA's Accelerating Access to Care Initiative. To improve communication we have created a new Call Center to help answer incoming phone calls from Veterans trying to contact the CBOCs.



**95.74%** of appointments completed within 30 days of the clinically indicated or Veteran's preferred date.





*Above: While visiting the Wilmington VAMC, Secretary Bob McDonald toured the newly remodeled Eye Clinic. Dr. Brian Mahoney explained the new waiting areas. The new waiting areas provide better flow of patients through the clinic during treatment procedures improving patient satisfaction.*





## CARING FOR VETERANS — A HIGHER CALLING

### SECVA VISITS WILMINGTON VAMC

“We are immensely fortunate to work in an organization with the noblest and most respected mission in Government—serving this Nation’s Veterans, said Secretary McDonald.

We have strong institutional values—Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence (I CARE).

We will all need to depend on and live by our values as we rise to meet the challenges ahead.

Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson—my West Point classmate, a trusted friend, and a great leader—had it right in his recent statement to Congress: “We can turn these challenges into the greatest opportunity for improvement in the history of the Department.”

I am proud of the work you do and the mission we share, and I am determined to move forward to ensure that VA is the provider of choice for care and benefits for every generation of America’s Veterans.”

Secretary McDonald, at the request of Senator Carper, was in Delaware for the summit the Senator holds with Veterans Service Organizations annually. While visiting the medical center, the Secretary toured the facility, spoke with Veterans Service Officers, and held a Town Hall style meeting with medical center staff.

*of the clinics improvements which include a laser suite and sub-  
suction.*

# IMPROVING THE VETERAN EXPERIENCE



*Above: Maureen Combatti, MSA and Pat Sullivan, RN are staff at the Cape May County Community Based Outpatient Clinic.*



*Lisa DiMatteo  
Nurse of the Day*



*Jannie Cromleigh  
Nurse of the Day*

*During 2015, Hospitalists and Nurses of the Day were added to the staff at the Wilmington VAMC. The goal is to increase better clinical oversight during off-tours.*

**87.57%**

Veterans currently registered on MyHealthVet

**Ranked #1 in VISN 4**

**53.49 %**

Veterans who opted in to use Secure Messaging





*Above: Cheryl Brown, Medical Support Assistant working in the new Call Center assisting a Veteran scheduling appointment at the Cumberland County CBOC. During 2015, the Call Center's average call volume was 120 calls per day with an average answer rate of 10 seconds.*

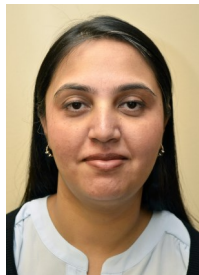
## CONNECTING COMMUNICATION TO ENHANCED CARE DELIVERY

Helping Veterans receive the care they need and want, how and where they need and want it. These are more than just words. When it comes to communicating with Veterans, Wilmington VAMC is creating new avenues through which we can listen, observe, learn and improve.

From comment cards to bedside electronic surveys, the Wilmington VAMC is continuously looking at ways to improve Veteran feedback. By hearing the needs of our patients we can improve their experience.



*Daniel Hoberman, MD  
Hospitalist*



*Saira Shah, MD  
Hospitalist*



*Christen Pirkle, MD  
Hospitalist*



*Shailja Patel, MD  
Hospitalist*



*Nkiruka Nnebe, MD  
Hospitalist*

# CONNECTING VETERANS WITH JOB TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY PROGRAM

Wilmington's Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program assists Veterans in meeting their employment needs.

In 2015, A Memorandum of Agreement was signed with the National Record Center (NRC) in Philadelphia to create a Transitional Work Therapy program (TWT). Veterans begin TWT at the Wilmington VAMC and graduate to the NRC. The Compensated Work Therapy program established TWT worksites with three additional local businesses providing employment opportunities and training for Veterans.

The Veteran Benefits Administration Regional Office Vocation and Rehabilitation and Employment Services and the Delaware State Division of Rehabilitation are two agencies that work closely with Veterans as they are nearing the end of their program.

The Supported Employment (SE) program job placement rate was greater than 75 percent. CWT's computer lab helped Veterans learn basic computer skills including how to search and apply for jobs online.

CWT staff also administer the VA Work Study program. CWT has more than 15 worksites throughout the medical center. Efforts are made to place Veterans in fields they are studying. Currently 12 students work 25 hours a week in Engineering, Physical Therapy, Behavioral Health, Community Living Center, and assisting in the administration of the CWT program.

During their 2015 survey, The Office of Mental Health Operations and the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) commended the Wilmington CWT program for having unique vocational programs for Veterans.

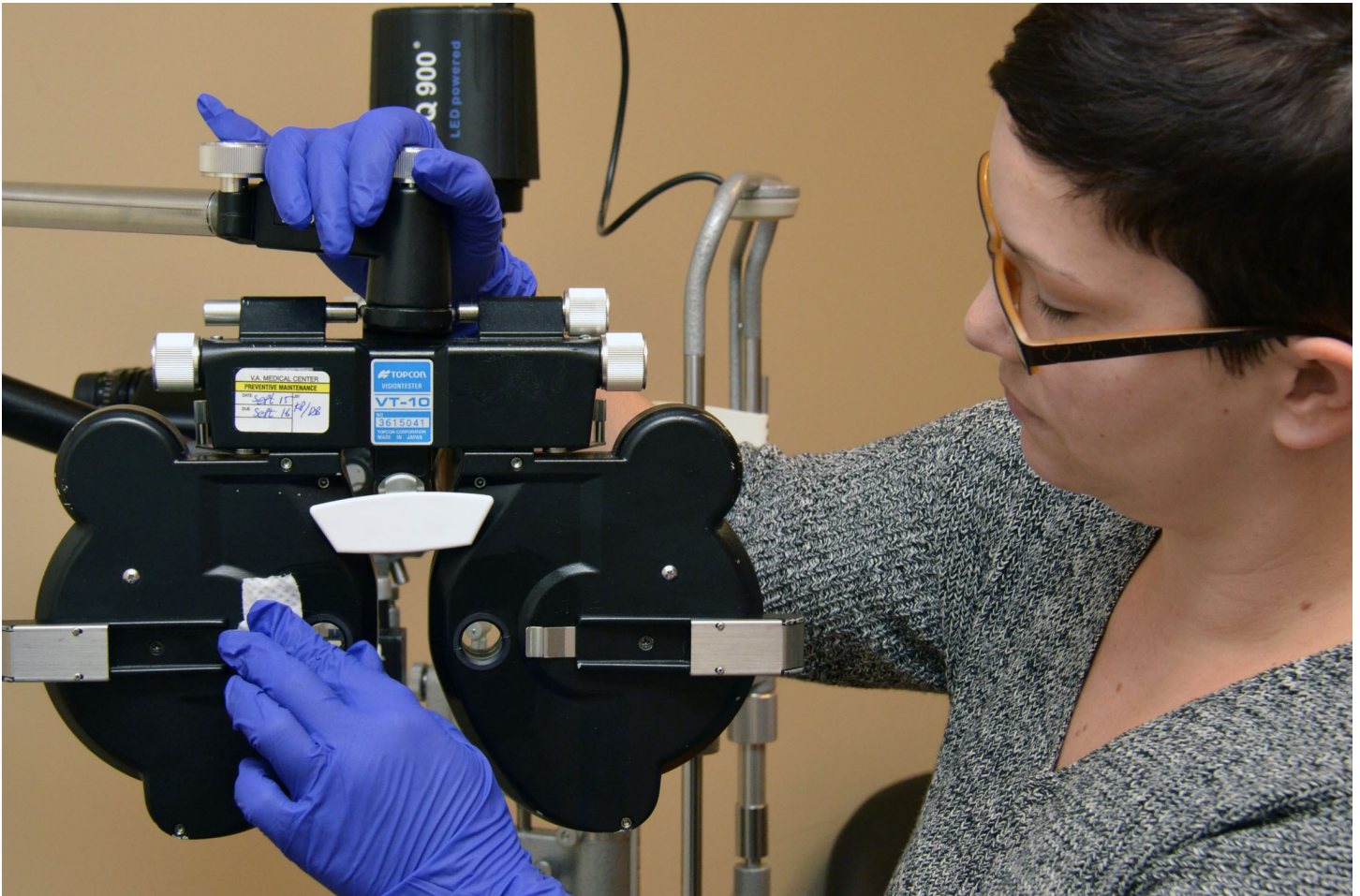
We are proud to say that based on the survey results, the Wilmington CWT program successfully earned a three year accreditation!





*Above: Veteran Robert Butler participates in the CWT program in the kitchen at the Wilmington VAMC. The Compensative Work Therapy program assists Veterans through job training and placement opportunities both inside and outside the VA.*





*Above: Veteran Dawn Duman working in the CWT program helps maintain equipment in the newly renovated Eye Clinic.*

## CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS CONNECTING VETERANS TO CARE

2015 saw the opening of the new Eye Clinic which was relocated to 5 West. The 10,800 square foot renovation significantly increased clinical space with 12 new exam rooms, a laser suite, and improved patient flow with an easily identifiable check-in area, and waiting rooms.

In 2016 the medical center anticipates opening a new specialty clinic wing on 6 West. The new clinic area will have 20 exam rooms for use by all specialties.



*Above: Examination Room in the new Eye Clinic*



The new Loop Road project connecting to Kirkwood Highway will improve traffic flow and is part of the new parking garage project.

A new entrance facing the West parking lot is also anticipated to open in 2016. The entrance will provide an additional entry point to the main hospital by providing a natural first-stop for guests parking in the western parking area and future parking garage and become the new main entrance to the facility. The new entry will include a check-in and reception area.

Additional completed construction projects include renovated office space for Human Resources located on 8 West.

We are anxiously awaiting the relocation of two Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). To address the increased enrollment of Veterans in Cumberland County, NJ and Sussex County, DE, the existing CBOCs are being relocated to larger facilities which will improve access for Veterans. The new clinics are further evidence that the VA recognizes the growing number of Veterans in lower Delaware and southern New Jersey who are seeking their health care through the VA. The new clinics will have larger exam rooms and new layouts will create efficiencies in patient flow improving access for Veterans. Wilmington is committed to providing them the best medical care in modern and convenient locations.



*Above: Jayne Benfer, RN and Chris Dion, RN at the Cumberland County CBOC discuss design plans for the new clinic. The new facility will be larger than the existing clinic providing better patient flow and increasing the clinic's capacity for area Veterans.*



# CUSTOMER SERVICE & RECOGNITION AWARDS

Throughout the Medical Center and at each CBOC there are “Tell the Director” comment card drop boxes. During 2015, we received over 700 comment cards from Veterans and family members. Many cards were about employees who exhibited the I CARE values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence. You asked for staff to be recognized for outstanding customer service. More than 750 Magical Moment and I CARE Awards were presented to staff for exceptional Customer Service. Your feedback helps us recognize many of our dedicated staff who are living the VA’s I CARE values everyday!







Magical Moments  
Recognition Award  
In recognition of outstanding  
Customer Service for America's Heroes,  
*Sandy Hard-Shull*  
is hereby recognized for  
compassionate care shown to  
America's Veterans

Magical Moments  
Recognition Award  
In recognition of outstanding  
Customer Service for America's Heroes,  
*Barb Wiley*  
is hereby recognized for  
compassionate care shown to  
America's Veterans

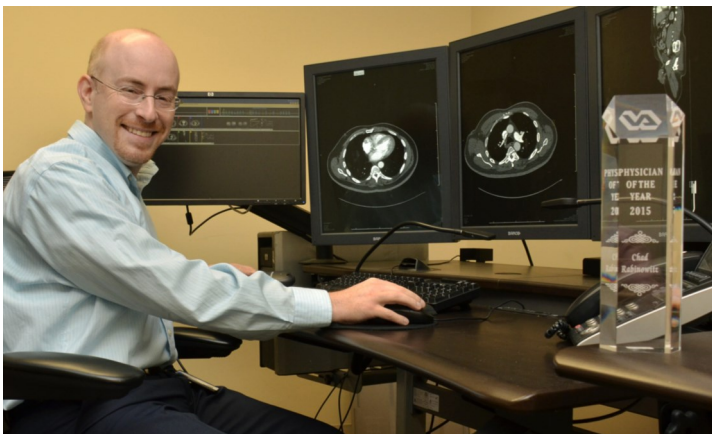
Magical Moments  
Recognition Award  
In recognition of outstanding  
Customer Service for America's Heroes,  
*Stephanie Beaman*  
is hereby recognized for  
compassionate care shown to  
America's Veterans

Magical Moments  
Recognition Award  
In recognition of outstanding  
Customer Service for America's Heroes,  
*RENEE SICKLER*  
is hereby recognized for  
compassionate care shown to  
America's Veterans

CERTIFICATE  
OF COMMITMENT  
*Barb Wiley*

CERTIFICATE  
OF COMMITMENT  
*Kelley Owens*





## PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR:

Dr. Chad Rabinowitz,  
Chief of Radiology



## TEAM OF THE YEAR:

Emergency Department



## EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR:

Susan Needham, Clinical Psychologist  
Home Based Primary Care

## PATIENT SAFETY AWARD

The Wilmington VAMC Patient Safety Improvement program was recognized for meeting the gold-standard established by the VA National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS). This award is given each year by the VA for patient safety based on the quality, quantity and timeliness of a health system's root-cause analysis (RCA) process which helps improve safe patient care.





# WILMINGTON VA MEDICAL CENTER

Medical Care Budget	\$191,836,073
MCCF Collections	\$8,874,560
Non VA Care	\$16,852,872

Location	* Users at each location	Outpatient Visits
All Wilmington locations	29,207	
Wilmington VAMC	26,165	220,952
Atlantic County CBOC	2,820	14,395
Cape May County CBOC	1,896	4,877
Cumberland County CBOC	2,900	13,553
Kent County CBOC	3,629	24,950
Sussex County CBOC	3,486	18,264
<b>Total FTEE</b>	<b>920.3</b>	
RN Medical Care FTEE	169.5	
MD Medical Care FTEE	63.1	

Women Veterans Enrolled 2,013

\* Users at each location may include Veterans enrolled at more than one location

## **WILMINGTON VA MEDICAL CENTER**

1601 Kirkwood Highway  
Wilmington, DE 19805  
(302) 994-2511 or (800) 461-8262  
<http://www.wilmington.va.gov>

## **COMMUNITY BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS**

### **Kent County CBOC**

1198 S. Governors Avenue  
Suite 201  
Dover, DE 19901  
(800) 461-8262, ext. 2400

### **Sussex County CBOC**

15 Georgetown Plaza  
Georgetown, DE 19947  
(800) 461-8262, ext. 2300

### **Atlantic County CBOC**

1909 New Road  
Northfield, NJ 08225  
(800) 461-8262, ext. 2800

### **Cape May County CBOC**

1 Munro Avenue  
Cape May, NJ 08204  
(800) 461-8262, ext. 2850

### **Cumberland County CBOC**

1051 W. Sherman Avenue  
Building 3, Unit B  
Vineland, NJ 08360  
(800) 461-8262, ext. 6500