



TRUST



MODERNIZE



LEARNING



VA HEALTHCARE—VISN 4 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Healthcare—VISN 4

www.visn4.va.gov

MESSAGE FROM THE VISN 4 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dear Veterans, fellow employees, volunteers and friends of VISN 4:

In fiscal year 2018, we proudly served more than 311,000 Veterans from across the Nation. With an operating budget of more than \$2.4 billion and a dedicated staff of more than 13,000, VISN 4 is working hard to transform toward personalized, proactive, patient-driven health care. Major achievements in 2018 included significant expansion of the use of virtual care and continued efforts to function as a fully integrated health network covering the entire state of Pennsylvania and parts of Delaware and southern New Jersey.

In 2018, we focused on continuing to rebuild trust, modernizing our Network and continuing advancement toward being a truly learning organization. In working to accomplish these goals, our dedicated staff provided Veterans safe, high-quality, personalized, and timely care wherever they received services. In this report, you can read about some of the work our facilities have been doing to provide excellent care for Veterans, and about a few of our many achievements during the past year.

We want to thank our Veteran patients and their families for choosing VISN 4 to be their health care provider. And we thank all of our network's employees as well as dedicated volunteers and stakeholders for your dedication in caring for and serving our patients. It truly takes a team effort to provide our Veterans with the best possible care.

It is our pleasure to present VISN 4's 2018 annual report.

Sincerely,

VISN 4 Leadership Team

Michael D. Adelman, M.D.

Network Director
Since January 2016

Charles R. Thilges

Deputy Network Director
Since January 2018

Timothy Burke, M.D.

Chief Medical Officer
Since March 2016

Beth Howard

Chief Financial Officer
Since April 2018

Moira M. Hughes, FACHE

Quality Management Officer
Since April 2014

Teneal Caw

Human Resources Officer
Since August 2012

David E. Cowgill

Communications Manager
Since January 2007

Jo Petro

Executive Assistant
Since January 2018



WHO WE SERVE

311,449 Veterans

World War II	4%
Korean War	9%
Post-Korean War	5%
Vietnam Era	40%
Post-Vietnam Era	11%
Persian Gulf War	23%
OEF, OIF, New Dawn	8%

91%
283,844 Men



9%
27,594 Women

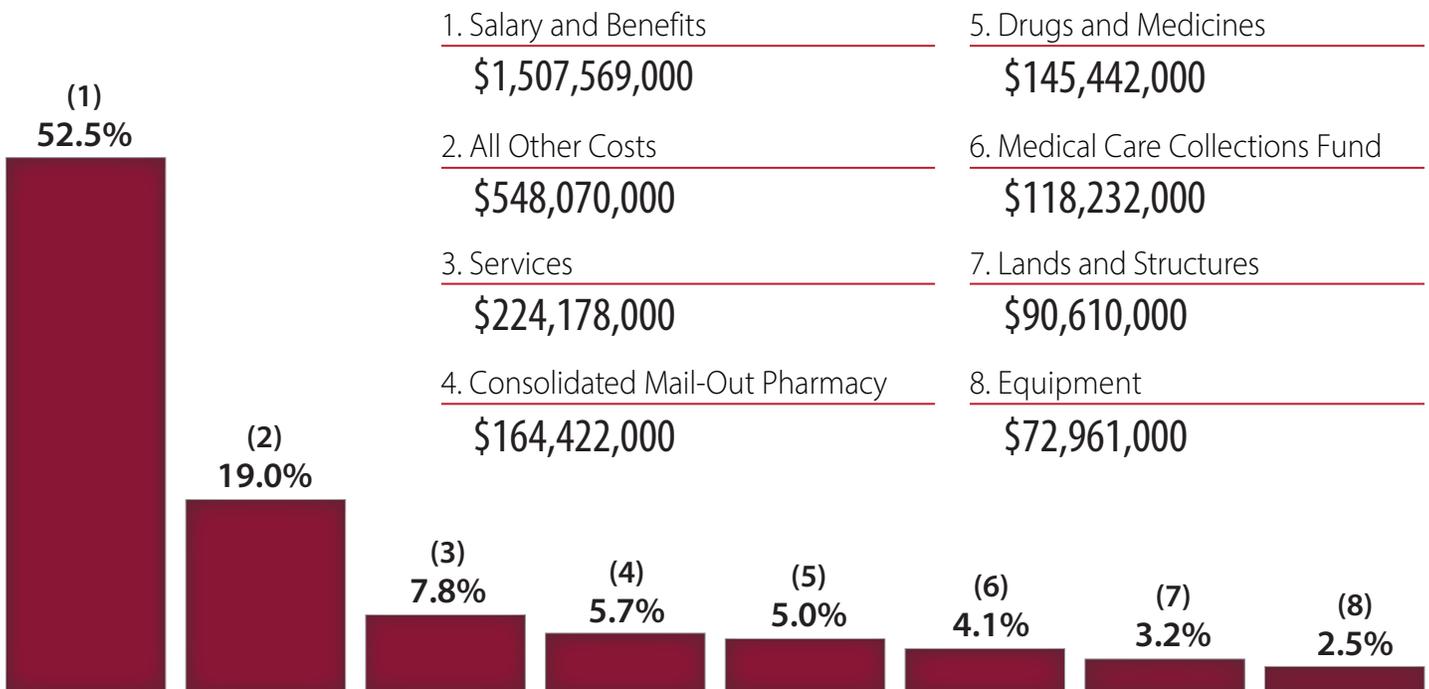


	<25	25-34	35-44	45-44	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
By Age	2,338	20,304	22,844	31,105	49,262	100,437	48,968	36,190
	0.8%	6.5%	7.3%	10.0%	15.8%	32.2%	15.7%	11.6%

Unique Veterans, includes all Veterans, Non-Veterans and Pharmacy-only patients.



OPERATING STATISTICS



Workforce

Total Number of Employees.....	13,132
Physicians.....	889
Veterans	4,114
Nurses.....	2,476



Research

Total Funding for Research	\$42,439,599
Investigators.....	238
Projects.....	563



Workload

Inpatient Admissions.....	26,588
Outpatient Visits.....	3,565,534
Prescriptions Filled	10,640,030
Surgical Procedures.....	24,777

Volunteers

Total Volunteer Hours.....	441,978
Volunteers.....	3,115
Avg. Hours	142

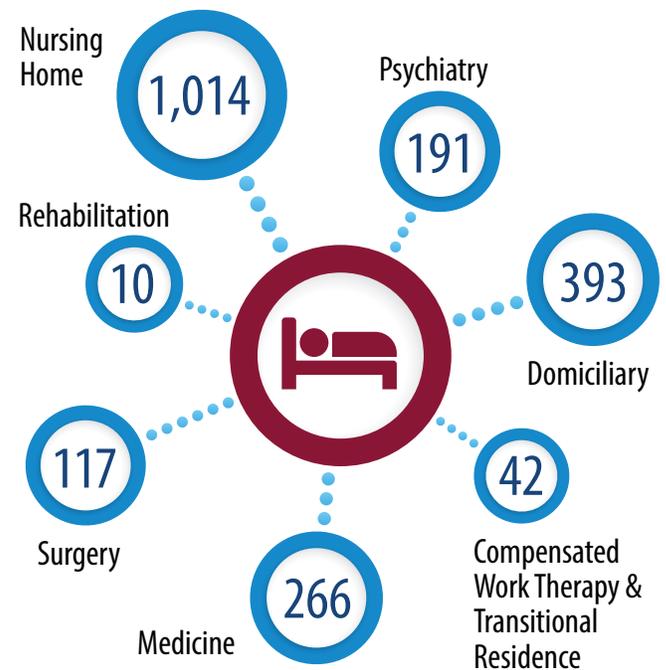


Gifts and Donations

Total Value of Gifts and Donations:.....	\$4,647,054.29
Items	\$2,732,956.81
Monetary	\$1,332,617.01
Activity	\$581,480.47

Operating Beds

Total Number of Beds.....	2,033
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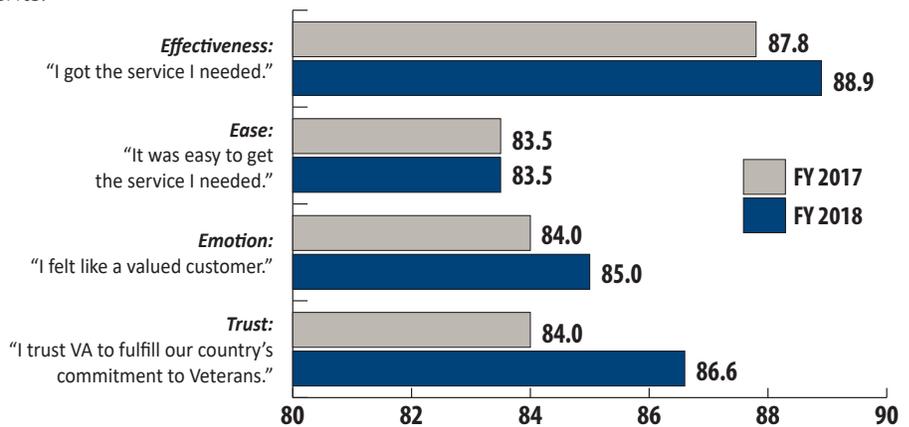
BUILDING TRUST



We continue to monitor Veterans' responses to questions related to effectiveness, ease, emotion, and trust on VA surveys. Our goal is to have 90% of Veterans respond that they agree or strongly agree with these four statements. We continue to show improvement over past fiscal years, but we still have work to do, especially with our outpatients.

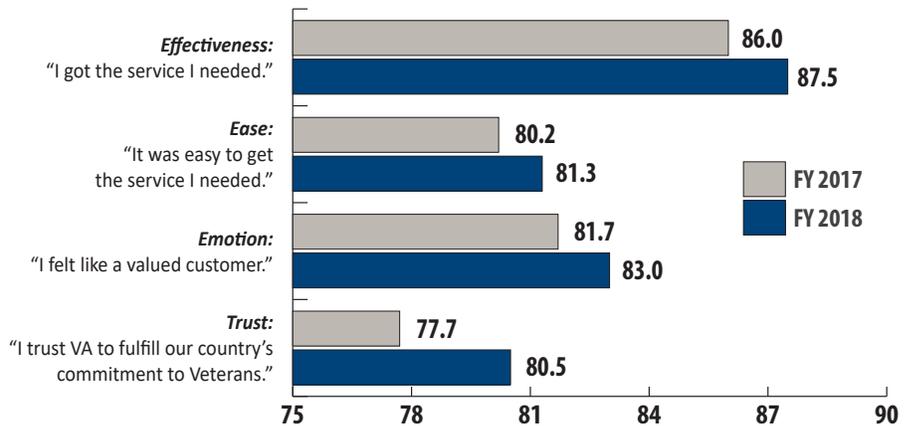
Inpatients

Currently, 86.6% of inpatients trust VISN 4 to fulfill our country's commitment to Veterans, which is an improvement over last fiscal year.



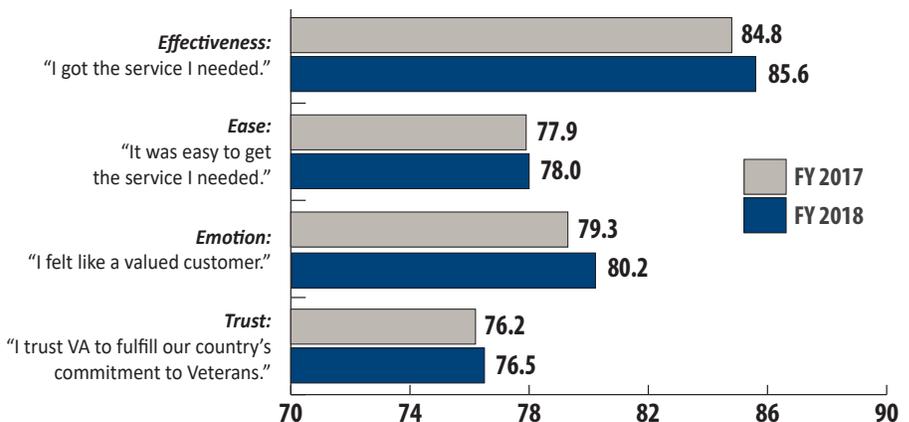
Outpatients

About 80.5% of outpatients trust VISN 4 to fulfill our country's commitment to Veterans, which is also an improvement over last fiscal year.



Specialty Care Outpatients

About 76.5% of specialty care outpatients trust VISN 4 to fulfill our country's commitment to Veterans, which is another improvement over last fiscal year.





EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

All Employee Survey Results

In FY18, 60% of VISN 4 employees completed the All Employee Survey, surpassing last year's response rate. As a result, more than 8,200 employees across the network shared perceptions about their current work environment as well as provided feedback to maintain or improve satisfaction in key areas.

The survey results indicate that VISN 4 employees understand how their daily work relates to the agency's goals, and feel that their work gives them a sense of personal accomplishment. In addition, employees feel respected by their supervisor and that employee growth and development goals are supported.

The Best Places to Work Score (BPTW) for the network improved by almost three percentage points from the FY17 score. The BPTW score measures three areas of employee perception:

- Overall job satisfaction
- Satisfaction with the organization
- Likelihood of recommending the VA as a good place to work

VISN 4 employees and instructors gather for a group photo following the 2018 Leadership Development Institute graduation ceremony. ▶

Leadership Development Institute

In FY18, eighteen high-performing emerging leaders participated in the VISN 4 Leadership Development Institute (LDI). This year-long intensive training initiative consisted of multiple face-to-face and virtual opportunities, where the participants interacted with peers from medical centers across the network, and with differing job responsibilities and career aspirations.

Under the guidance of experienced program facilitators, participants were given the opportunity to collaborate with every member of the class on various projects. In addition, they applied process improvement techniques, worked with others whose leadership styles differed from their own, and learned about the career paths of current leaders in VISN 4. We expect great things in the future from the LDI class of 2018!





YOUR HEALTH CARE...ANYWHERE

VISN 4 has one of the largest and most diverse telehealth programs in VA. In fiscal year 2018, VISN 4 served more than 47,000 Veterans using telehealth, and 16% of Veterans had at least one telehealth visit, the 2nd highest percentage of any VA network in the country.

Overall, VISN 4 served almost 3% more patients and offered more programs through telehealth than the prior year. Some examples of the telehealth programs that had the greatest impact include:

- **TeleDermatology Hub** – served more than 7,500 Veterans from 120 VA facilities and outpatient clinics across four VISNs.
- **TeleMental Health Hub** – served nearly 2,500 Veterans from 48 facilities across four VISNs, providing access to mental health services when there are local gaps in coverage.
- **TeleRetinal Program** – screened 6,400 Veterans for diabetic retinopathy and freed-up time slots for Veterans who required in-person appointments.
- **Home Telehealth** – served 6,100 patients and improved clinical outcomes and access to care while reducing complications, hospitalizations and clinic or emergency room visits.
- **TeleSleep Program** – served 3,370 Veterans in four VISNs by providing sleep medicine services and interpretation of diagnostic sleep studies.
- **TeleCardiology Program** – Cardiologists served 550 Veterans in four VISNs by providing care to heart transplant patients and interpreting echocardiograms.
- **TeleChemotherapy Program** – supported 200 patient visits and reduced travel times for Veterans who travel to Pittsburgh frequently for chemotherapy.

VA Video Connect

VA Video Connect (VVC) enables Veterans to virtually meet-up with their VA health care providers securely and privately using encrypted video. VVC makes VA health care more convenient and reduces travel times for Veterans, especially for those in very rural areas with limited access to VA health care facilities. In fiscal year 2018, all VISN 4 medical centers implemented VVC in primary care and mental health clinics, and nearly one-half of primary care and about one-third of mental health providers completed at least one patient visit using VVC.



“We are on the cusp of the most transformative period in the history of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Virtual care is the future of medicine. It is our most powerful emerging tool.”

~Robert Wilkie, Secretary of Veterans Affairs

My HealtheVet

My HealtheVet is VA's online personal health record that allows Veterans to access their lab results and diagnostic images, renew prescriptions, and send secure messages to their providers and care teams. More than 115,000 Veterans or 36 percent of patients in VISN 4 are registered to use My HealtheVet. These Veterans sent more than 46,000 secure messages to their care teams and providers, a 22 percent increase compared to the previous year.

VA Online Scheduling

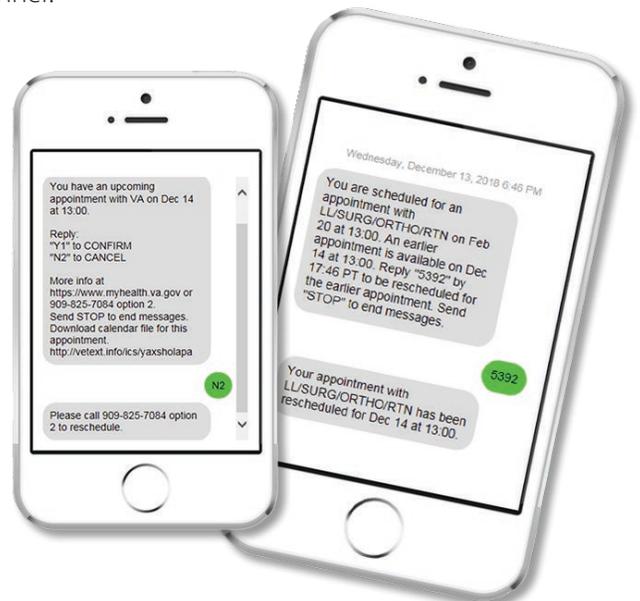
Veterans with a Premium My HealtheVet Account are now able to manage their primary care and certain specialty care VA appointments online. In VISN 4, Veterans directly scheduled or requested more than 5,300 appointments through VA Online Scheduling in the past fiscal year.

Annie

Annie is VA's automated texting system that sends reminders to Veterans between appointments to perform self-care activities like take medications and record blood pressure readings. Automated texting to and from Annie allows Veterans to track and monitor their own health, and clinicians can assign automated protocols and view individual Veteran responses. VISN 4 began implementation in fiscal year 2018 and will expand use to more Veterans and clinics in fiscal year 2019.

VEText

VEText is an interactive mobile solution designed to remind Veterans of upcoming appointments via text messaging. VEText offers a quick and easy way to confirm and/or cancel appointments, enabling VA clinicians to schedule other Veterans into canceled time slots. In fiscal year 2018, 47% of appointments canceled in VISN 4 through VEText were filled with other appointments which increased Veterans' access to needed care in a timely manner.





IMPROVING YOUR ACCESS TO CARE

In fiscal year 2018, more than 96% of appointments in VISN 4 were completed within 30 days of the Veteran's preferred date. We scheduled more than 2.3 million appointments, and the average wait time was 4.3 days.

Clinics	Number of Appointments	Wait Time <30 days (#)	Wait Time <30 days (%)	Average Wait (days)
All Clinics	2,376,487	2,264,437	96.7%	4.3
Mental Health	343,164	331,711	98.3%	2.9
Primary Care	535,701	525,771	98.2%	3.7
Specialty Care	925,032	846,725	94.3%	6.4

Outpatient Clinic Relocations

Coatesville VA Medical Center relocated the Springfield outpatient clinic from the Crozer-Keystone Health System Complex to Newtown Square near the Marville Shopping Plaza.

Roughly doubling in square footage, the 9,300 square foot new clinic site will provide the space needed to meet the demand for health care services, offer ample parking, and is close to public transportation. The space will allow for the expansion of current services, which includes primary care, mental health care, women's health care, social work services, home-based primary care, telehealth, laboratory and transportation services.

- Delaware County CBOC
4883 West Chester Pike
Newtown Square, PA 19073

◀The new Cumberland County Community Clinic located in Mechanicsburg, Pa. opened in September. The new 25,000 square foot clinic features 40 exam rooms, two women's health rooms, two group therapy rooms and 12 behavioral health treatment rooms.

Lebanon VA Medical Center relocated the multi-site outpatient clinic located in Pottsville and Frackville to a single-site clinic located in Pottsville, Schuylkill County. The expanded location will increase the usable square footage from 3,500 to 9,160 and will accommodate additional primary care, women's health, laboratory and behavioral health care.

- Schuylkill County VA Clinic
1410 Laurel Boulevard, Suite 2
Pottsville, PA 17901

Lebanon VA Medical Center also relocated the Camp Hill VA Clinic. Services include primary care, telehealth, laboratory services, health education, support services and behavioral health.

- Cumberland County VA Clinic
5070 Ritter Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-4824

Whole Health Program

In 2018, Erie VA Medical Center launched Whole Health, a new approach to health care that goes beyond illnesses, injuries, or disabilities and instead focuses on a individuals values, goals, health and well-being. The Whole Health approach integrates alternative therapies to complement conventional medical care. These alternative therapies are especially beneficial to Veterans suffering from chronic pain.

Erie VA Medical Center is one of only 18 medical centers across the country to launch a Whole Health Program. Current offerings include battlefield acupuncture, bio-feedback sessions, Osteopathic & Chiropractic manual treatments, cupping, smoking cessation, prolotherapy, nutritional live cooking demonstrations and classes, mediation, mindfulness, Tai-Chi and Qi-gong classes in addition to whole health coaching.

National Center for Patient Safety Cornerstone Recognition Program

The National Center for Patient Safety initiated the Cornerstone Recognition Program to recognize leadership and staff in patient safety and to enhance the Root Cause Analysis process. The recognition is based on patient care services and process improvement initiatives that resulted in safe, reliable and high-quality care for Veterans.

VISN 4 facilities receiving Gold Level status include:

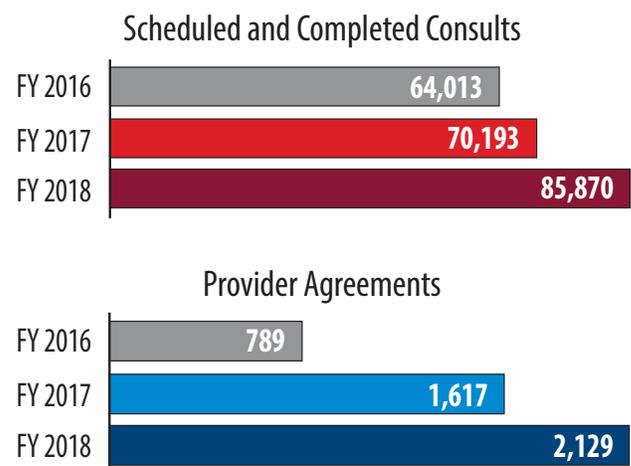
- Altoona
- Butler
- Coatesville
- Erie
- Philadelphia
- Pittsburgh



Care in the Community

Beginning in FY 18, VA Medical Centers began enhancing their scheduling and care coordination processes by incorporating the implementation of the Office of Community Care Operating Model. The operating model structure keeps the scheduling and care coordination responsibilities within the Veteran's primary VA.

VISN 4 medical centers expanded their community partnerships by continuing to grow provider agreements in their local communities to improve access to health care for Veterans.





SUICIDE PREVENTION

VISN 4 facilities in 2018 strengthened suicide prevention programs, improved access to mental health care and expanded medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders.

Suicide Prevention

All nine sites improved outreach through Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health – Veterans Enhanced Treatment (REACH VET) compared to FY17, consistently achieving 90 percent for REACH VET tasks within two weeks of dashboard updating. Staff actively reviewed care plans for at-risk Veterans and addressed unmet treatment needs.

VISN 4 improved its quality metrics for care for Veterans flagged as high risk for suicide, including timely safety planning, flag reviews and frequent visits with mental health providers: SAIL HRF7 increased from 0.81 to 1.82 in FY18.

Facilities worked together to transition Veterans' care, ensuring mental health staff used patient-focused dashboards to track/engage care transitions. To strengthen discharge planning for Altoona patients admitted to acute psychiatry at Pittsburgh, the two facilities established a recurring call to review patients' progress. Wilmington and Coatesville established a similar practice.

Lebanon initiated quarterly mental health summits to bolster outreach efforts and community partnerships. Altoona and Wilmington adopted similar practices in FY18. All nine facilities implemented Introduction to Whole Health groups for Veterans transitioning from active duty to civilian life.

A VISN 4 demonstration project between Erie, Pittsburgh and Altoona to encourage new or service-connected Veterans with mental health concerns who were not seen in three months to seek care was rolled out nationally. The partnership collaborates with VA's Serious Mental Illness Treatment Resource and Evaluation Center (SMITREC) and VBA.

Access to Mental Health Care

Based on the findings of a VISN 4 mental health services' gap analysis, the Operations Board (6/14) agreed to establish a Behavioral Health Lab hub in Philadelphia and expand Pittsburgh's Telemental Health Hub.

Four VISN 4 medical facilities recruited virtual psychiatrists to mitigate recruitment challenges. To expand delivery of virtual mental health care to Veterans, facilities ensured providers could reach Veterans through VA Video Connect. VISN 4 in FY18 conducted 24,513 virtual mental health encounters, including 7,732 virtual visits and 9,532 provider-to-home visits.

Philadelphia and Lebanon began issuing positively framed appointment letters based on MIRECC's findings the practice reduces no shows.

Although mental health programs grew across VISN 4, the number of Veterans who waited over 30 days for appointments dropped by 6% between the beginning of the fiscal year (October) and the end of the calendar year (December). All VISN 4 facilities except Coatesville and Pittsburgh saw growth in FY18. VISN 4 facilities saw

patients new to mental health care within 30 days ranging from 87% of the time in Wilkes-Barre to 97% in Erie. VISN 4 facilities with residential programs streamlined admission processes and improved safety initiatives.

Access to Medication Assisted Treatment for Substance Use Disorders

The national Psychoactive Drug Safety Initiative in FY18 focused on medication-assisted treatment for Substance Use Disorder (SUD). On a measure of the percentage of patients with an opiate use disorder who received an indicated medication (SUD16), 7 of 9 facilities performed better than the national average by the end of the year. Philadelphia outperformed the nation by 22%.

VISN 4 also developed tracking reports for patients prescribed naltrexone. From FY17 to FY18, VISN 4 facilities increased the number of patients prescribed naltrexone tablets from 1,533 to 1,714 and naltrexone injection from 740 to 956. Wilmington developed an ambulatory detox protocol and presented it to other VISN facilities.

Consistent with national requirements, VISN 4 launched Stepped Opiate Care, starting with providers at Philadelphia.



#BeThere
for Veterans and Servicemembers

 **Learn the signs of crisis.**

 **Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

AROUND VISN 4

VA Healthcare—VISN 4 is a fully integrated network of 9 VA campuses, 44 outpatient clinics, 1 mobile clinic, and 17 Vet Centers.

In fiscal year 2018, VISN 4 served 311,449 Veterans from across the nation, primarily from Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and Ohio.

WESTERN MARKET

Altoona, PA

James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center
2907 Pleasant Valley Blvd.
Altoona, PA 16602
877-626-2500
www.altoona.va.gov
www.facebook.com/VAAaltoona
twitter.com/VAAaltoona

Total Veterans Served	25,948
Female Veterans Served	1,866
Operating Budget	\$160,516,000
Admissions	697
Outpatient Visits	246,750
Employees	839

Butler, PA

Butler VA Health Care System
353 North Duffy Road
Butler, PA 16001
800-362-8262
www.butler.va.gov
www.facebook.com/VAButlerPA
twitter.com/VAButlerPA

Total Veterans Served	25,579
Female Veterans Served	1,415
Operating Budget	\$97,930,911
Admissions	437
Outpatient Visits	209,741
Employees	685

Erie, PA

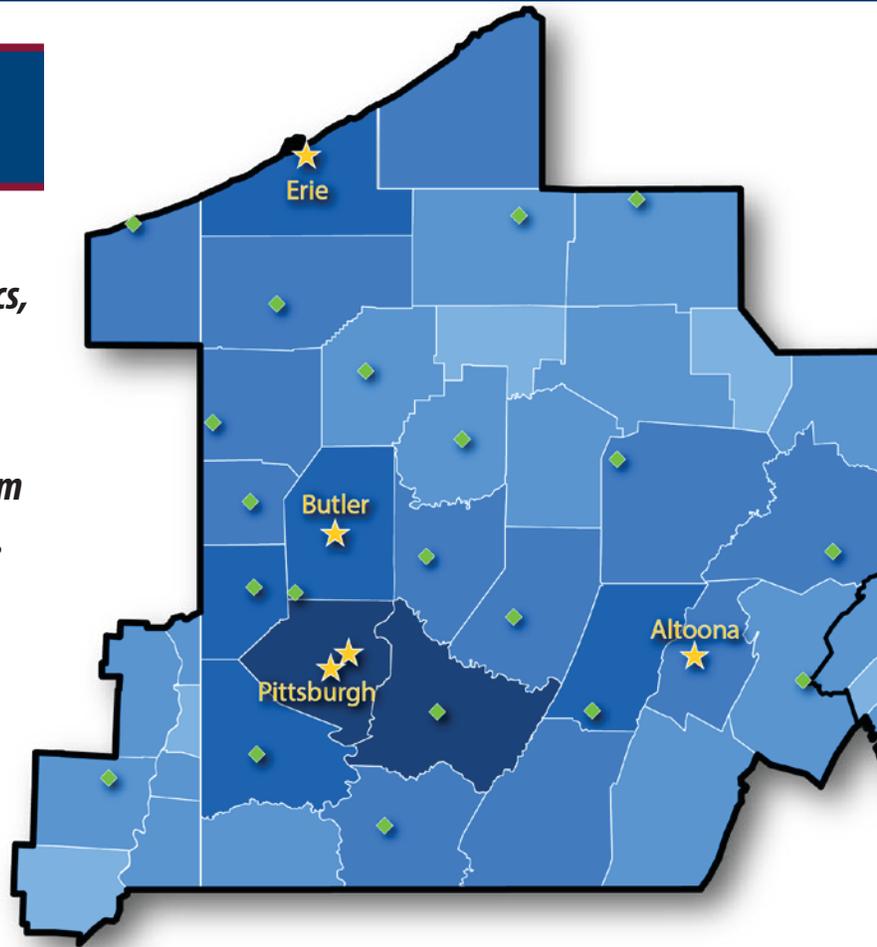
Erie VA Medical Center
135 East 38th Street Blvd.
Erie, PA 16504
800-274-8387
www.erie.va.gov
www.facebook.com/VAMCErie
twitter.com/ErieVAMC

Total Veterans Served	21,486
Female Veterans Served	1,641
Operating Budget	\$122,678,145
Admissions	449
Outpatient Visits	255,963
Employees	809

Pittsburgh, PA

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
University Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15240
866-482-7488
www.pittsburgh.va.gov
www.facebook.com/VAPHS
twitter.com/VAPittsburgh

Total Veterans Served	78,652
Female Veterans Served	7,453
Operating Budget	\$652,329,000
Admissions	10,237
Outpatient Visits	737,778
Employees	3,792

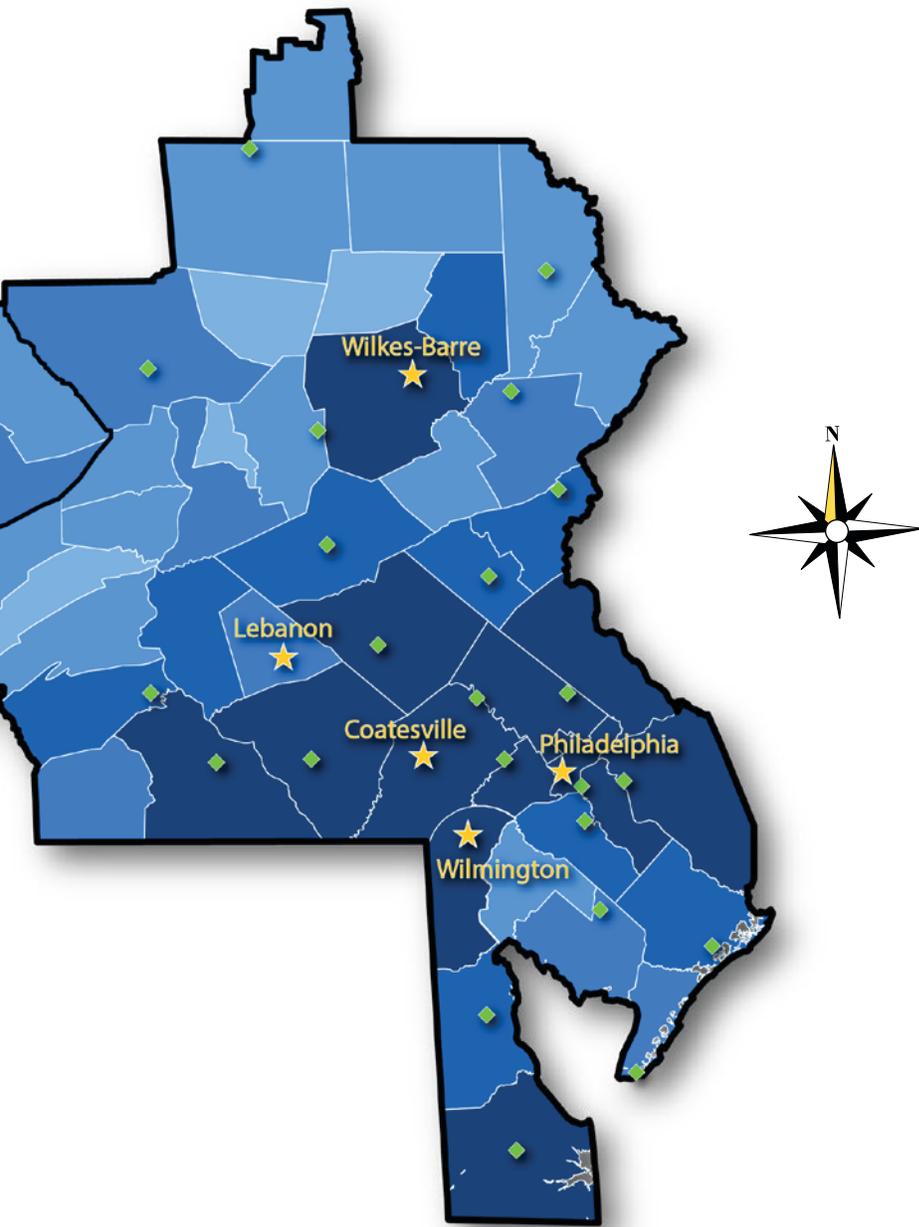


Veteran Population by County
Fiscal Year 2018



★ VA Medical Center ◆ Outpatient Clinic

EASTERN MARKET



Lebanon, PA

Lebanon VA Medical Center
1700 South Lincoln Avenue
Lebanon, PA 17042

800-409-8771

www.lebanon.va.gov

www.facebook.com/VALebanon

twitter.com/VALebanon

Total Veterans Served	45,493
Female Veterans Served	3,843
Operating Budget	\$367,981,471
Admissions	3,122
Outpatient Visits	484,721
Employees	1,620

Philadelphia, PA

Corporal Michael J. Crescenz
VA Medical Center
3900 Woodland Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104

800-949-1001

www.philadelphia.va.gov

www.facebook.com/PhiladelphiaVAMC

twitter.com/VAPhiladelphia

Total Veterans Served	57,987
Female Veterans Served	5,882
Operating Budget	\$559,728,000
Admissions	6,308
Outpatient Visits	530,864
Employees	2,744

Wilmington, DE

Wilmington VA Medical Center
1601 Kirkwood Highway
Wilmington, DE 19805

800-461-8262

www.wilmington.va.gov

www.facebook.com/WilmingtonVAMC

twitter.com/WilmingtonVAMC

Total Veterans Served	31,277
Female Veterans Served	2,497
Operating Budget	\$195,000,000
Admissions	1,323
Outpatient Visits	338,184
Employees	1,078

Coatesville, PA

Coatesville VA Medical Center
1400 Blackhorse Hill Road
Coatesville, PA 19320

800-290-6172

www.coatesville.va.gov

www.facebook.com/CoatesvilleVAMC

Total Veterans Served	19,250
Female Veterans Served	1,074
Operating Budget	\$214,141,085
Admissions	2,511
Outpatient Visits	234,350
Employees	1,284

Wilkes-Barre, PA

Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center
1111 East End Blvd.
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711

877-928-2621

www.wilkes-barre.va.gov

www.facebook.com/VAWilkesBarre

Total Veterans Served	38,562
Female Veterans Served	3,269
Operating Budget	\$255,085,000
Admissions	3,068
Outpatient Visits	414,544
Employees	1,360

We'd Like to Hear from You

This annual report is published for the employees, volunteers, patients and friends of VA Healthcare-VISN 4. For more information about this publication, contact David Cowgill at 412-822-3318.

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Pittsburgh, PA 15215
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VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Healthcare-VISN 4