



VA HEALTHCARE—VISN 4 ANNUAL REPORT 2021

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Healthcare—VISN 4

MESSAGE FROM THE NETWORK DIRECTOR



Timothy W. Liezert
Network Director

Charles R. Thilges
Deputy Network Director

Timothy Burke, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer

Moira M. Hughes, FACHE
Quality Management Officer

Joseph Haverstick
Chief Financial Officer

Amber Mesoras
Chief Human Resources Officer

David E. Cowgill
Communications Manager

Jo Petro
Executive Assistant

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

I am pleased to present the 2021 VISN 4 Annual Report.

Over the past year, VISN 4 expanded access to care through virtual modalities, enhanced our commitment to mental health and suicide prevention initiatives, strengthened the Veteran experience through improved clinical structures and market collaborations, embraced holistic and integrated models of care through our whole health transformation, and made significant progress toward becoming a high reliability organization. We also expanded our VISN 4 Clinical Contact Center and Tele-Urgent Care services to better serve our Veterans with a direct line to care 24/7.

Our patients trust VISN 4 to provide them with exceptional and well-coordinated care as evidenced by our recent trust score of 92.9, which I am very proud to say was the highest of any VISN in the country. The top five compliment themes were interactions with staff, quality of care, cleanliness of facility, courtesy of health care providers, and satisfaction with specialty care.

I am also very pleased we served 319,939 total unique Veterans in FY 2021, which is a 6.5% increase over the previous year. Our goal is to care for even more Veterans in FY 2022.

With the continued dedication of our staff and the support of our VA volunteers, Veterans service officers and community partners, I know we will continue to be successful and overcome any obstacles that 2022 brings.

On behalf of our VISN 4 leadership team, I thank all Veterans for continuing to use VISN 4 for their health care. Please take necessary safety precautions, reduce your risk of contracting COVID-19 and keep yourselves healthy. Please consider getting the COVID-19 vaccine booster shot -- which is now readily available -- as well as your annual flu shot. Flu shots are available now through March 31, 2022.

It is our honor and privilege to serve you.

Sincerely,

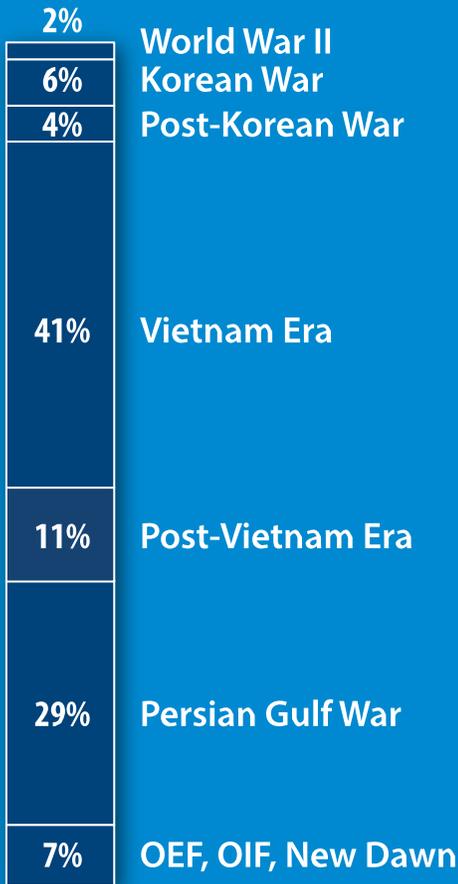
Timothy W. Liezert
Network Director, VISN 4

VISN 4 Network Director Timothy Liezert (center) greets U.S. Secretary for Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough (right) and Wilmington VA Medical Center Director Vince Kane (left) in the lobby of the Wilmington VA Medical Center on October 25, 2021.



WHO WE SERVE

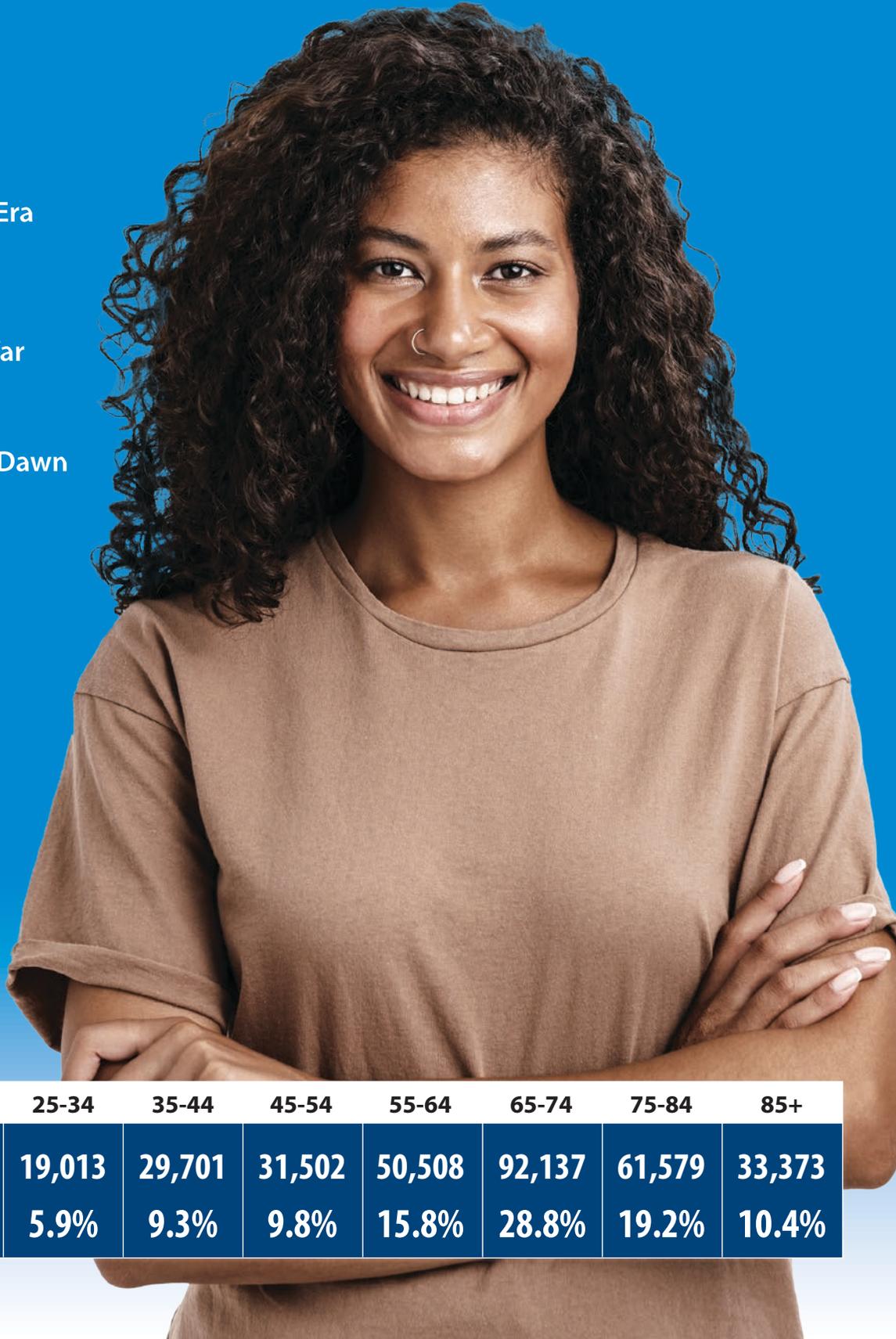
319,939 Veterans



88%
281,179 Men



12%
38,758 Women



	<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
By Age	2,124	19,013	29,701	31,502	50,508	92,137	61,579	33,373
	0.7%	5.9%	9.3%	9.8%	15.8%	28.8%	19.2%	10.4%

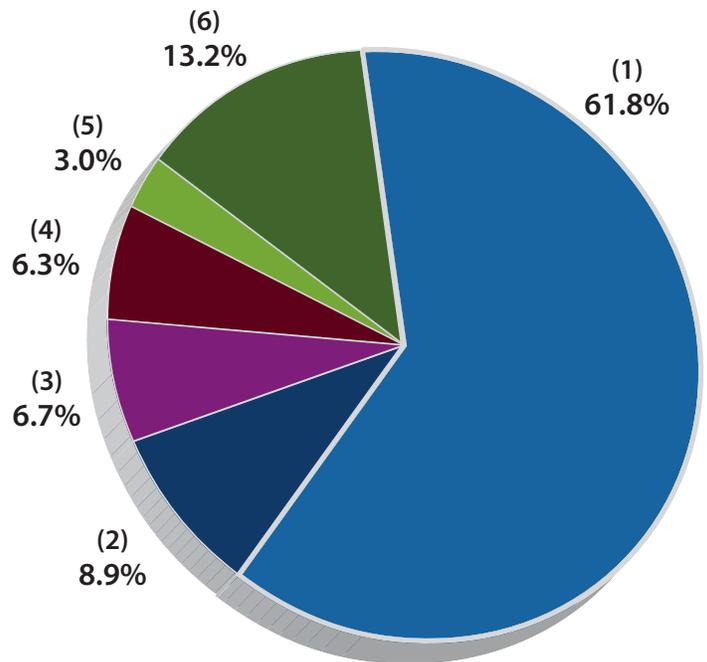
Unique Veterans, includes all Veterans, Non-Veterans and Pharmacy-only patients.



OPERATING STATISTICS

Operating Budget

1) Salary and Benefits	\$1,836,007,000
2) Services.....	\$263,137,000
3) Consolidated Mail-out Pharmacy	\$199,058,000
4) Drugs and Medicines.....	\$188,310,000
5) Equipment.....	\$89,753,000
6) All Other Costs	\$393,326,000
TOTAL.....	\$2,969,591,000
Medical Care Collection Fund.....	\$100,918,000
Lands and Structures.....	\$134,121,963



Research

Total Funding for Research	\$31,024,213
Investigators.....	245
Projects.....	624

Operating Beds

Total Number of Beds.....2,031



Workforce

Total Number of Employees.....	16,072
Physicians.....	1,159
Veterans	3,779
Nurses.....	3,374

Volunteers

Total Volunteer Hours.....	156,310
Volunteers.....	1,422
Avg. Hours	110

Workload

Inpatient Admissions.....	26,853
Outpatient Visits.....	3,681,924
Prescriptions Filled	12,735,062
Surgical Procedures	18,106

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

Monetary	\$640,305.48
Activity	\$31,880.11
Items.....	\$2,015,902.64
Total Value	\$2,688,088.23

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Voluntary Service received an exception to permit donations for VA employees working during this crisis. Items donated were mostly food items and luncheons for patient care departments, face masks, face shields, etc.

Veterans at the Coatesville VA Medical Center will be on the move in wellness activities, employment and more with the recent donation of bicycles from David's Drive 831.





ENGAGING OUR EMPLOYEES

Leadership Development Institute

On September 24, 2021, 21 students graduated from the VISN 4 Leadership Development Institute (LDI). Due to the pandemic, the program was 100% virtual, eliminating the opportunity for in-person networking and collaboration. The curriculum included completion of the Everything DiSC assessment, discussions with VISN and medical center leadership, Lean Yellow Belt Training, and several group project presentations.

Over the course of the program, the graduates also excelled with implementing process improvement projects that involved secure messaging, VA Video Connect, tele-neurology, caregiver support, whole health, clinical reminders, surgical standardization, and primary care mental health integration. These projects allow facilities to improve processes that meet the needs of our Veterans while also aligning with VHA priorities and high reliability organizational principles.

Congratulations to the VISN 4 LDI class of FY21!

All Employee Survey Results

In June 2021, 65% of VISN 4 employees completed the VA All Employee Survey. More than 10,000 employees across the network shared perceptions about their current work environment and provided feedback to help maintain or improve satisfaction in key areas.



This year's survey results show that VISN 4 employees understand what is expected of them and that their talents and skills are used appropriately in the workplace. Employees also indicate their supervisors support their development and report high levels of satisfaction with communication and collaboration within their workgroup.

The Best Places to Work Score for VISN 4 improved to 73, exceeding the overall VA and VHA averages. The score measures three areas of employee perception: overall job satisfaction; satisfaction with the organization; and likelihood of recommending VA as a good place to work.

Integrating Your Health Care

Whole health is the framework for the way that VA provides care and support to our Veterans and staff. It is a holistic approach that combines traditional medical care with self-care, skill building, and prevention. All VISN 4 facilities are implementing whole health concepts, and each site contributes unique experiences:



- Coatesville: collaborates with community partners for programs that promote a healthy lifestyle, such as Chester County Foodbank's Fresh2You mobile produce market, and programs that focus on recovery-oriented treatment, such as Paws for Valor.
- Lebanon: provides whole health introduction classes at the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to engage transitioning service members in whole health.
- Wilmington: offers a robust Tai Chi program available via hybrid face-to-face and through VA Video Connect.

An Integrative Oncology Clinic was established for Veterans diagnosed with prostate cancer, offering options to improve surgical outcomes, prevent and minimize side effects, boost morale, and optimize clinical outcomes.

We also hired a tele-whole health hub coordinator who provides clinical health coaching and shares whole health and complementary and integrative health opportunities to Veterans across VISN 4.

In addition, Veterans and staff in VISN 4 have unlimited access to Millennium Health and Fitness, an online platform that offers access to a full schedule of live, two-way fitness and wellness classes as well as a library of on-demand opportunities. For more information and to register, please visit <https://www.millenniumhealthandfitness.com/visn-4-registration/>.



ENHANCING YOUR EXPERIENCE



The VISN 4 Patient Experience Program seeks to identify and enhance opportunities to improve the health care experience for Veterans, their families and caregivers.

The program also coordinates the patient advocate program to help Veterans obtain resolution to care issues or challenges. In fiscal year 2021, we successfully integrated the White House Hotline case management into the Patient Advocate Tracking System (PATS-R), ensuring prompt response to more than 1,300 issues.

Veterans' trust in VISN 4 care has also remained among the highest three VISNs in the country, and in December, our trust score rose to 92.9, the highest of any VISN in the country.

VA Excellence in Patient Experience

As a part of the 2021 VA Excellence in Patient Experience Awards, three facilities in VISN 4 received awards for excellence in patient experience, the most of any VISN in the nation this year:

Lebanon

Best Overall Patient Experience for a Level II complexity facility

Altoona

Best Overall Patient Experience for a Level III complexity facility

Erie

Patient Experience Innovation Award





KEEPING YOU CONNECTED

Nutritional Programs through Video

Veterans can now take part in nutritional programs offered via VA Video Connect including MOVE!, Healthy Teaching Kitchen, Diabetes Management and other whole health topics. Veterans who are interested in participating with the nutrition programs should contact their primary care team at their local VA facility for further information.

Telehealth

Our connected care programs continued to be extremely valuable, and our patients and providers used virtual care more than ever before. In fact, many of our clinical services in VISN 4 now offer convenient, virtual options for patients.

The expanded use of VA Video Connect allowed Veterans to receive care from home while reducing their risk of exposure to COVID-19. By the end of fiscal year 2021, more

than 41,000 patients – or 41% of all patients served in the network – had at least one (1) telehealth visit. Compared to the previous year, 44,500 more patients completed a virtual telehealth visit.

Home Telehealth

Our Remote Patient Monitoring-Home Telehealth (RPM-HT) Program assists Veterans in managing their chronic diseases all while in the comfort of their home using in-home monitoring and/or video technology.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, our RPM-HT team has cared for more than 1,100 Veterans infected with COVID-19. For fiscal year 2021, our RPM-HT team served 7,056 unique Veterans and conducted more than 1,800 video visits to manage COVID-19 and other chronic conditions.

iPads Connect Veterans to their Appointments

Not all Veterans have access to the internet or have their own smart devices to conduct video visits. To ensure these Veterans can still benefit from virtual care, VISN 4 deployed more than 9,000 iPads free of charge to eligible Veterans over the last several years.

Thanks to this program, Veterans can connect with their providers and access their video appointments from the convenience of home, work or wherever they are located. The Office of Connected Care is working hard to ensure Veterans can access all of VA's services regardless of financial or geographic barriers.

Tele Urgent Care

The VISN 4 Tele Urgent Care Program is based out of the Emergency Department at VA Pittsburgh Medical Center. A team of experienced emergency medicine providers offer on-demand virtual visits to Veterans across the VISN 4 network to evaluate acute issues that would otherwise necessitate travel to a VA location or retail urgent care center. In addition, the program provides consult services to Clinical Contact Center Registered Nurses to identify patients with emergent symptoms and rapidly direct care. In FY21, the program served more than 7,200 Veterans.

My HealthVet

My HealthVet is VA's online personal health record that empowers Veterans, service members and their dependents to take an active role in managing their health care. Users can review, refill, and track VA prescriptions; send secure messages; view, print and download portions of their medical record; view VA lab results including COVID-19 test results; and request VA appointments.

Your Life
Your Health
Your Schedule

Get the Apps.

Visit the VA App Store to learn more:



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

mobile.va.gov/appstore

More than 145,000 Veterans or 46% of patients in VISN 4 are registered to use My HealthVet. Secure messaging continues to be one of the top virtual tools utilized, and patients and staff sent and received more than 622,800 secure messages, an increase of 28% from the prior year.

Veterans will need a premium account to communicate through secure messaging. Veterans with a My HealthVet account who need assistance upgrading or have questions may contact their local My HealthVet Coordinator listed at www.visn4.va.gov/myhealthvet.asp.



VISN 4 RN Clinical Contact Center

1-833-TELE-URGENT

(1-833-835-3874)



Scan QR code with your smart phone
to add this number to your contacts! 

If you have an **urgent** medical or
mental health question, call a
VISN 4 Triage Nurse!

— Available 24/7/365 —



IMPROVING ACCESS TO CARE

Reducing Wait Times

In fiscal year 2021, our VISN 4 medical centers scheduled more than 2.3 million primary, specialty, and mental health care appointments. More than 94% of appointments were completed within 30 days of the Veteran’s preferred date, and the average wait time was 7.0 days.

Clinics	Number of Appointments	Wait Time <30 days (#)	Wait Time <30 days (%)	Average Wait (days)
All Clinics	2,382,296	2,245,340	94.5%	7.0
Mental Health	243,491	237,012	97.7%	3.3
Primary Care	608,107	591,340	97.2%	4.0
Specialty Care	778,143	703,108	91.0%	11.2

The number of unique Veterans utilizing community care providers in VISN 4 continued to grow as the MISSION Act provided enhanced community care benefits.

Our medical centers in VISN 4 improved scheduling and access to community care providers throughout the fiscal year. Our dedicated staff routinely exceeds the VA national average in scheduling turnaround times and consult management.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS TO SCHEDULE A COMMUNITY CARE APPOINTMENT



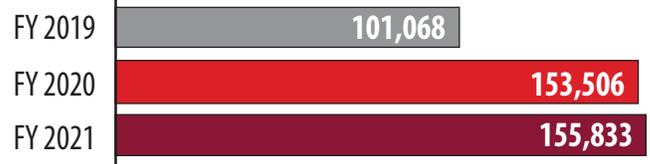
Community Collaboration

While embracing change and striving for success, our staff adopted several new practices. We implemented a community care assist team based out of Altoona. This team serves as a resource during times of staff shortages with the goal of continued coordination of community generated health records so that the local community care staff can focus on scheduling and coordination of care.

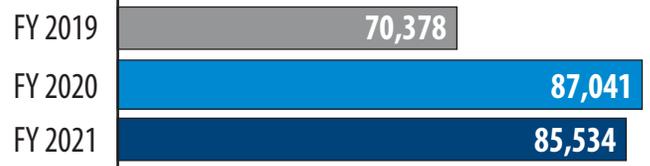
We continued to collaborate with Optum, our community care network third party administrator. Each medical center and VISN points of contact communicate regularly via scheduled monthly calls to ensure that providers and specialty care services are available within the appropriate geographic locations.

We also coordinated with large health care systems to develop specific points of contact within both VA and the community locations. This streamlines the scheduling process for Veterans even further based on their individual preferences and needs. If necessary, we will coordinate three-way calls with community care staff, the Veteran

Scheduled and Completed Consults



Unique Veterans Served by Community Care Staff



and the community provider to eliminate any delays and confusion with appointment scheduling.

Through Community Care Oversight Councils, VISN 4 Community Care programs and leadership continue to improve processes that ensures our Veterans are receiving the care they need at the right time, right place and with the right provider.



WEST NORRITON VA CLINIC

The Coatesville VA Medical Center relocated the Spring City VA Clinic to Norristown, Pa. The new clinic opened in November 2021 and is operated by Valor Healthcare.

At 10,500 square feet, the West Norriton VA Clinic is more than three times the size of the old Spring City clinic and will provide the necessary space to meet the increased demand for health care services. The new clinic offers 17 dedicated exam rooms, ample parking, and close proximity to public transportation.

The new outpatient clinic offers many of the same primary, preventative, and mental health care services that are available at the main Coatesville VA medical center campus including primary care, mental health care, women's health care, whole health, telehealth, laboratory services, social work services, a nurse 24/7 help line, and transportation services.

Planned future services include audiology, optometry, physical therapy and podiatry including marital and family counseling, PTSD and substance use disorder treatment, physical exams, weight and medication management, and laboratory services.



West Norriton VA Clinic
2495 General Armistead Ave
Norristown, PA 19403



EXPANDING MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Homeless Program Expansion

Veterans receiving VA homeless services are eligible to receive a free smartphone. This allows Veterans to remain engaged with homeless program providers to monitor safety and wellbeing, participate in preventative health care, attend virtual groups and recovery programs, and conduct virtual housing and job searches in accordance with their treatment goals.

In FY21, VISN 4 led the way by distributing 931 smartphones to homeless Veterans, and Philadelphia's model for distribution and management of the phones was recognized by VA central office as a strong practice.

Under a new national contract to improve access to VA health care services, VISN 4 is utilizing ridesharing services (UBER, Lyft, etc.) to provide homeless Veterans with easier access to transportation. In the last two months of the fiscal year, 22 unique Veterans used rideshare to attend mental health appointments.

We expect the number of Veterans and rides to increase as staff become more knowledgeable with the process and increase resources to rural areas.

Access to Mental Health Care

We committed to add 61 new staff to Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program teams across VISN 4. As a result, each medical center and outpatient clinic will be able to better address the mental health care needs of Veterans by using a team-based approach to care.

In addition, for Primary Care/Mental Health Integration (PCMHI), we also committed to add a program lead and 41 staff across the network. This will assure robust mental health programming within the primary care environment and will expand the current mental health care continuum across VISN 4.

We also expanded the use of VA Video Connect. In our mental health and homeless programs, use of VVC peaked at 31.1% in April, a 36% increase from the prior year. Likewise, the use of VVC in psychotherapy peaked at 55.5% in February, an 18% increase from the prior year.

The Virtual Integrated PCMHI (VIP) Hub is a fully virtual PCMHI program that has been successfully deployed through a hub and spoke model when a facility is struggling with PCMHI staffing and implementation at rural and smaller CBOCs.

The VIP Hub provides Veterans with equitable standards of behavioral health care including same day access through a virtual warm handoff, early identification of mental health concerns, and rapid initiation of care.

Recognized as a 2019 VISN 4 Best Practice, the VIP Hub won at the 2021 Shark Tank competition, a unique opportunity to recognize top performers solving some of the toughest challenges across VHA with the goal of changing and saving Veteran lives.

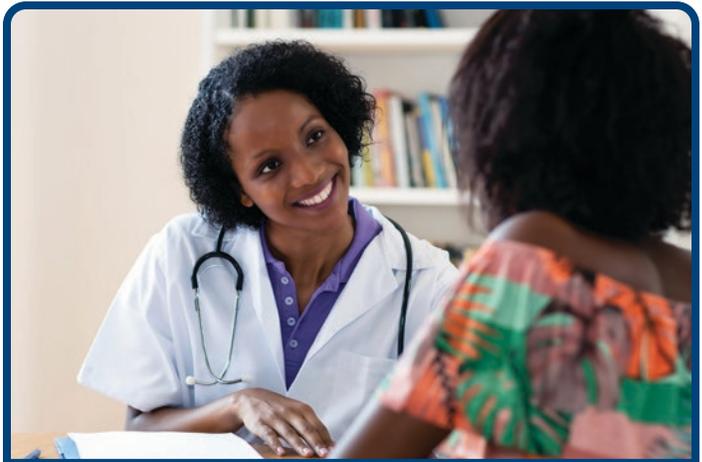
Expansion of Suicide Prevention Efforts

VISN 4 has played an active role in the Pennsylvania Governor's Challenge to prevent Veteran suicide. Each facility in VISN 4 added a full-time Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinator. CEPCs collaborate at the local, regional and state levels to support community coalition building for evidence-informed suicide prevention interventions specific to each locality's Veteran population. CEPCs established 21 active community coalitions with a goal of ending Veteran suicides.

We also hired a suicide prevention program manager who implemented a required 4-hour orientation for new facility suicide prevention staff. In addition, we re-aligned suicide prevention staff under mental health, improving communication and collaboration among clinical staff.



**Save the number in
your phone today.**



Women's Health Innovation and Staffing Enhancement Initiative

VA and VISN 4 continue to enhance services and access for women Veterans through the Women's Health Innovation and Staffing Enhancement Initiative, providing funds to VA medical centers to hire new staff, establish new and innovative programs, and purchase equipment specific for women's health care.

In FY21, the Office of Women's Health Services provided funding to seven facilities in VISN 4.

Altoona: Hired a full-time nurse navigator

Butler: Hired a nurse navigator and lactation consultant

Coatesville: Established a new patient-aligned care team with a designated women's health provider

Philadelphia: Hired a whole health coach, breast surgeon, nurse manager, nursing support and MSA for gynecology; selected a nurse navigator to serve as mammography & maternity coordinator

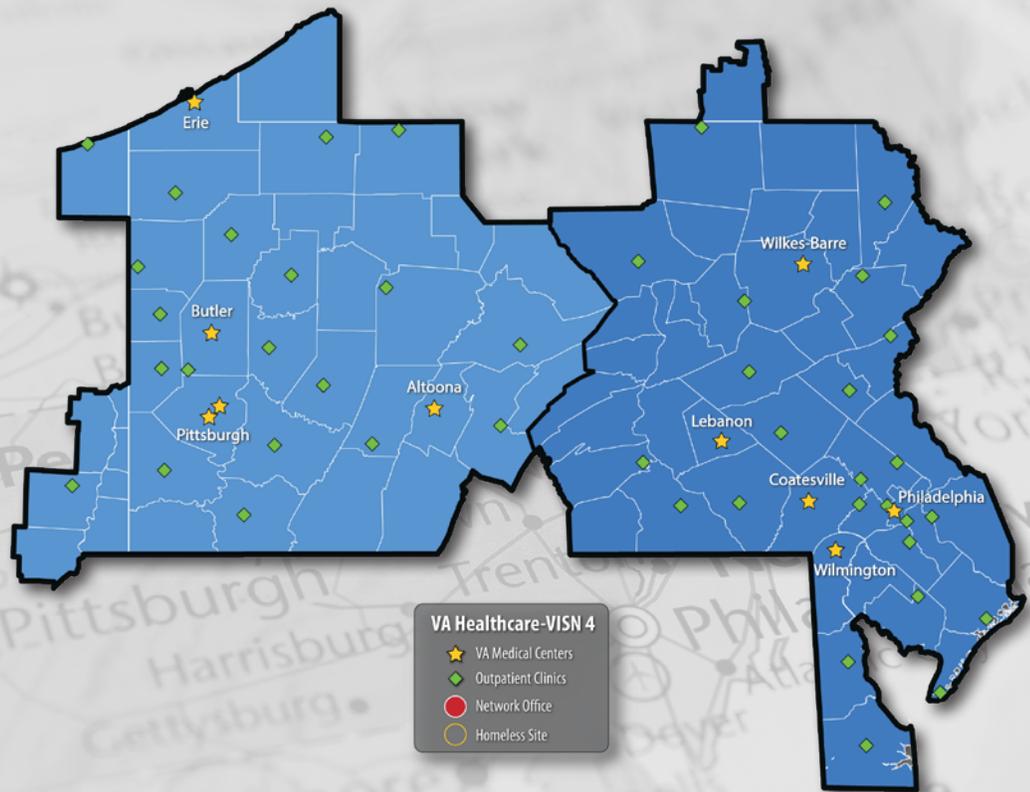
Pittsburgh: Implemented the first gender-specific Substance Use Disorder (SUD) PACT team in VHA and piloted a 12-month on-demand birth control program; hired a women's health primary care mental health integrated (PCMH) psychologist; and defined emergency department champions to enhance emergency care to women Veterans

Wilmington: Hired a nurse navigator and maternity care coordinator

Wilkes-Barre: Hired a nurse navigator, women's health psychologist, and administrative support staff

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

In fiscal year 2021, VISN 4 served 319,939 Veterans from across the nation, primarily from Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, Ohio, West Virginia and New York.



AROUND VISN 4



Altoona, PA

James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center
2907 Pleasant Valley Blvd.
Altoona, PA 16602
877-626-2500

www.va.gov/altoona-health-care
www.facebook.com/VAAaltoona
twitter.com/VAAaltoona

🚩 Total Veterans Served	26,500
👤 Female Veterans Served	1,800
💰 Operating Budget	\$258,381,000
🏢 Admissions	566
🏠 Outpatient Visits	330,694
👥 Employees	1,040



Butler, PA

Butler VA Health Care System
353 North Duffy Road
Butler, PA 16001
800-362-8262

www.va.gov/butler-health-care
www.facebook.com/VAButlerPA
twitter.com/VAButlerPA

🚩 Total Veterans Served	22,974
👤 Female Veterans Served	1,369
💰 Operating Budget	\$163,831,269
🏢 Admissions	199
🏠 Outpatient Visits	214,110
👥 Employees	744



Coatesville, PA

Coatesville VA Medical Center
1400 Blackhorse Hill Road
Coatesville, PA 19320
800-290-6172

www.va.gov/coatesville-health-care
www.facebook.com/CoatesvilleVAMC
twitter.com/coatesvillevamc

🚩 Total Veterans Served	18,504
👤 Female Veterans Served	1,013
💰 Operating Budget	\$184,621,000
🏢 Admissions	1,237
🏠 Outpatient Visits	201,654
👥 Employees	1,212



Erie, PA

Erie VA Medical Center
135 East 38th Street Blvd.
Erie, PA 16504

📞 800-274-8387

🌐 www.va.gov/erie-health-care
 📘 www.facebook.com/VAMCErie
 🐦 twitter.com/ErieVAMC

🇺🇸 Total Veterans Served	22,146
♀ Female Veterans Served	2,362
💰 Operating Budget	\$143,293,000
🏢 Admissions	206
🏥 Outpatient Visits	270,074
👥 Employees	875



Lebanon, PA

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

📞 800-409-8771

🌐 www.va.gov/lebanon-health-care
 📘 www.facebook.com/VALebanon
 🐦 twitter.com/VALebanon

🇺🇸 Total Veterans Served	47,443
♀ Female Veterans Served	3,534
💰 Operating Budget	\$515,149,191
🏢 Admissions	2,526
🏥 Outpatient Visits	547,879
👥 Employees	1,909



Philadelphia, PA

Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VAMC
3900 Woodland Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104

📞 800-949-1001

🌐 www.va.gov/philadelphia-health-care
 📘 www.facebook.com/PhiladelphiaVAMC
 🐦 twitter.com/VAPhiladelphia

🇺🇸 Total Veterans Served	65,730
♀ Female Veterans Served	8,835
💰 Operating Budget	\$645,401,000
🏢 Admissions	6,715
🏥 Outpatient Visits	577,518
👥 Employees	2,906



Pittsburgh, PA

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
University Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15240

📞 866-482-7488

🌐 www.va.gov/pittsburgh-health-care
 📘 www.facebook.com/VAPHS
 🐦 twitter.com/VAPittsburgh

🇺🇸 Total Veterans Served	75,421
♀ Female Veterans Served	5,697
💰 Operating Budget	\$740,032,891
🏢 Admissions	7,910
🏥 Outpatient Visits	754,994
👥 Employees	4,089



Wilkes-Barre, PA

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

📞 877-928-2621

🌐 www.va.gov/wilkes-barre-health-care
 📘 www.facebook.com/VAWilkesBarre

🇺🇸 Total Veterans Served	38,525
♀ Female Veterans Served	2,338
💰 Operating Budget	\$417,695,000
🏢 Admissions	2,673
🏥 Outpatient Visits	427,005
👥 Employees	1,475



Wilmington, DE

Wilmington VA Medical Center
1601 Kirkwood Highway
Wilmington, DE 19805

📞 800-461-8262

🌐 www.va.gov/wilmington-health-care
 📘 www.facebook.com/WilmingtonVAMC
 🐦 twitter.com/WilmingtonVAMC

🇺🇸 Total Veterans Served	39,593
♀ Female Veterans Served	5,247
💰 Operating Budget	\$234,432,411
🏢 Admissions	789
🏥 Outpatient Visits	233,247
👥 Employees	1,198

We'd Like to Hear from You

This annual report is published for the employees, volunteers, patients and friends of VA Healthcare-VISN 4. Fact and figures represented in this report are fiscal year 2021 data. For more information about this publication, contact David Cowgill at 412-822-3318.

VA Healthcare-VISN 4
1010 Delafield Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15215
412-822-3316

www.visn4.va.gov

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA Healthcare-VISN 4