MISSION DRIVEN—VETERAN FOCUSED HEALTH CARE

To fulfill President Lincoln’s promise—
"To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan"
by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s Veterans.
JAMES E. VAN ZANDT VA MEDICAL CENTER:

Veterans Served: 26,162
Homeless Veterans Assisted: 359
Outpatient Visits: 231,341
Inpatient/CLC Admissions: 605
Appointments Within 30 Days*: 99.98%
Employees: 755
New Veterans Enrolled: 321
Outreaches: 97
Total Operating Budget: $152,126,000

* Completed appointments through September 30, 2016 from the Pending Wait Time Report-VHA National Audit
Dear Stakeholder:

I am pleased to share this annual report highlighting your VA Medical Center’s achievements in Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16).

It has been my honor to serve as Associate Director, and Acting Director of the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center, and to work with so many of you to move our mission forward.

Our mission to provide Veteran-focused health care has taken on new meaning in the past year as we continue to serve over 26,000 Veterans in 14 counties. We continue to treat patients through our VAMC, our five outpatient clinics, and in partnership with the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. In addition, our care in the community program has created new partnerships with non-VA health care providers and HealthNet (contractor for VA Choice program).

As we move into a new year, under a new Administration, and new leadership at the national and local level, your VAMC will continue to be mission driven and Veteran focused. We have over 700 employees who are committed to providing the best health care for Veterans and we will all continue to seek new and innovative ways to serve America’s Heroes.

To all of our Stakeholders, thank you for your service to Veterans and your partnership with and support of your VAMC. Our community is very fortunate to have a team working together for the greater good.

Sincerely,

Charles T. Becker
Acting Director
VIETNAM VETERANS

Thirty eight percent of enrollees for VA health care in the United States are Vietnam era Veterans. At the Altoona VAMC, we are committed to giving honor and recognition to this generation of Veterans who did not receive a Welcome Home all those years ago. This is why we joined the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration and held several events in 2016 to honor this group of our Nation’s Heroes. We will continue to hold events and ceremonies that will honor these Veterans through Veterans Day 2025.

The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act [Public Law 110-181 § 598] empowers the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program on behalf of the nation that commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. This law also authorizes the Secretary to coordinate, support and facilitate federal, state and local government commemorative programs and activities. To that end, The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration was formed. By presidential proclamation on May 25, 2012, the Commemoration extends from Memorial Day 2012 through Veterans Day 2025. Congress articulated five objectives for this Commemoration:

1. To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war, or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.

2. To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.

3. To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.

4. To highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War.

5. To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, 9 million Americans served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces during the period of the Vietnam War; approximately 7 million are living today. To reach these large numbers, the Commemoration has enlisted the assistance of many thousands of Commemorative Partner organizations at the local, state and national levels to conduct hometown-centric events and activities that thank and honor Vietnam veterans and their families in their local communities.

ALTOONA VAMC VIETNAM VETERAN COMMEMORATION EVENTS

As Acting Director, Charles T. Becker knows first-hand; Vietnam Veterans did not receive a warm welcome when they returned from duty.

“When I was returning back home from service in Thailand, I was told that I should change into my civilian clothes before exiting the airport,” says Mr. Becker. “Those were very tense times, and all of us know now what a disservice we did to our Nation’s Heroes by not giving them a welcome home and saying thanks.”

Our VAMC hosted several events to thank the men and women who served during Vietnam. The Wall that Heals, a 50% scale model of the Vietnam Veterans Wall in Washington, D.C., was the location for some of these events.

VETERANS DAY – NOVEMBER 11, 2015
We joined with the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 967 to host a ceremony for Vietnam Veterans at the Wall that Heals.

COMMEMORATION CEREMONY – MARCH 29, 2016
We joined with the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 967 to host a ceremony and welcome home for all Vietnam era Veterans at the Wall that Heals, followed by refreshments, displays and a video presentation in the VAMC auditorium.

ARMED FORCES DAY CEREMONY – MAY 21, 2016
The Wall that Heals is the location for the annual Armed Forces Day Ceremony, planned and presented by a group of volunteers. Veterans from all generations, friends and family, and community members come together to honor those who are currently serving in our Armed Forces.

ALTOONA CURVE GAME- AUGUST 30, 2016
We invited over 9,000 Vietnam Veteran patients of the VAMC to join us at an Altoona Curve baseball game, resulting in more than 2,000 Veterans and guests attending. Five Vietnam Veteran volunteers participated in the ceremonial first pitch and Acting Director, Charles Becker, gave an official welcome home to the Veterans on behalf of the VAMC.
Visit www.vietnamwar50th.com to enjoy photographs, videos and compelling Commemoration stories.

Published: August 2016 www.vietnamwar50th.com
INPATIENT SATISFACTION
FY 2016

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OUTPATIENT SATISFACTION
FY 2016

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<td>62.1</td>
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FROM OUR VETERANS

“I had a phenomenal experience with my physical therapy. The therapists were professional knowledgeable and thorough. They were also very kind and considerate.”

“Great communication and coordination from Red Team with Pittsburgh on Hep C treatment.”

“I have been with the VAMC since I was discharged from the Navy in 1988. The VAMC has treated me very well and I am happy to say that you are doing a great job.”

“Just want to state I am completely satisfied with my therapy.”

“The staff on the fourth floor was amazing. Everything I needed was taken care of with a smile. They made me feel as comfortable as possible while keeping me informed.”

“Everything went fine clerks, nurse, doctor exceeded (State College) expectations. Very impressed. You all are doing a fine job.”

“My Yellow Team and Radiology are just great, great, great!!! Friendly, courteous and helpful. Glad I have them!”

“Dental #1 second to no outside dental office. Thanks!”

“The entire medical staff has pulled together to get me through some rough times.”

“Thank you for making a room on 4th floor for infusion patients private time for themselves.”

“I wanted to let you know how much I appreciate the bus drivers taking us to Pittsburgh. Very courteous and professional. It is a relief that I don’t have to drive in heavy traffic.”

“ROI have been the most patient, kind and best department that I have ever dealt with at the VA.”

“Good food, good doctors, good nurses.”

“Our appointments are on time. We don’t have to wait for appointments. We love and trust my husband’s doctor and have had the best of care.”

“WOW! I can’t say enough good things about everyone. From the cleaners to nurses. Thank you! All the staff that I deal with are excellent.”
1. ACCESS — PROVIDE TIMELY ACCESS TO VETERANS AS DETERMINED BY THEIR CLINICAL NEEDS

Encounters completed via Telehealth:
- Home Telehealth: 4,632
- Store and Forward: 1,493
- Clinical Video Telehealth: 6,797
- Telemental health care encounters: 2,206

Same Day Appointments in Primary Care and Mental Health:
In FY16, we, along with all other VA Medical Centers in the Nation, worked toward the goal of Same Day Appointments within Primary Care and Mental Health which was achieved in November, 2016. Veterans can also use systems like MyHealthVet to contact their providers if they need help or have a question about their health care needs.

New Building and Expanded Behavioral Health Services:
A ribbon cutting for the two-story, 24,000 square foot Behavioral Health building was held at the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center (VAMC) on March 11.

The building features 16 therapy offices and 27 treatment, conference, testing and group therapy rooms.

Psychiatrists, psychologists, and therapists treat over 4,000 patients with over 35,000 appointments each year. Demand for behavioral health services is expected to grow by 40% over the next twenty years.

2. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT — SEEK A WORK ENVIRONMENT WHERE EMPLOYEES ARE VALUED, SUPPORTED AND ENCOURAGED TO DO THEIR BEST FOR VETERANS

Initiatives supporting employee engagement:
- Star of the Month
- I CARE certificates and recognition at Employee Forum
- Employee Ambassador program
- Employee Association

3. BUILDING A HIGH PERFORMANCE HEALTH CARE NETWORK — ENSURE THAT VETERANS RECEIVE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF COORDINATED CARE WITHIN VA OR FROM PARTICIPATING PROVIDERS

Choice and Care in the Community
12,206 episodes of care for Veterans outside of our VA Medical Center
- 6,454 Choice
- 5,752 Non-VA Care Coordination program

Over 100 provider agreements signed with non-VA providers.
BEST PRACTICES — USE BEST CLINICAL PRACTICES. WE ALSO SEEK BEST PRACTICES IN RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT

Recipient of Prestigious Environmental Awards:

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced in July that the James E. Van Zandt Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Altoona, Pa. was selected for a national Federal Green Challenge Award for its electronics recycling efforts.

“The recycling accomplishments at the James E. Van Zandt Veterans Affairs Medical Center demonstrate how federal facilities can be leaders in reducing their environmental footprint,” said EPA’s Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin.

- Top 25 Environmental Excellence Awards by Practice Green-health, the nation’s leading health care community dedicated to transforming health care worldwide so that it reduces its environmental footprint, becomes a community anchor for sustainability, and a leader in the global movement for environmental health and justice.

- In addition, The James E. Van Zandt facility won Top 10 Circles of Excellence in four of 10 categories (Chemicals, Energy, Water, and Climate.)

- Our staff was instrumental in the Department of Veterans Affairs winning three System for Change Awards, the first time in history that a health care system has won three awards in one year.

SATISFACTION WITH ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

FY 2016
It is impossible to measure the caring and sharing that is offered to Veterans through the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) and the support of the Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) who offer their time and talents.

The people who make up the VAVS bring so much to Veterans. Whether they volunteer regularly to escort patients, deliver mail, play games with Veterans, or assist with special events, their time is precious and is appreciated.

VSOs in our 14 counties are very generous with donations of cash and items that bring comfort and recreation to Veterans. We are grateful for all that our VAVS friends do to help Veterans.

THREE VSOs have office space in the VA medical center to better support Veterans.

- VFW — Provided assistance with VBA claims to 452 people
- VVA — Provided assistance with 410 VBA claims and assisted 105 Veterans with their emergency assistance, furniture and household items program
- DAV — Provided close to 3,000 rides to Veterans for medical appointments

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

| VOLUNTEERS | 264 |
| YOUTH VOLUNTEERS | 12 |
| VOLUNTEER HOURS | 32,926 |

DONATIONS

| MONETARY | $35,262.66 |
| ACTIVITY | $ 16,650.00 |
| ITEMS | $145,277.84 |
| TOTAL | $197,190.50 |
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www.altoona.gov  
www.facebook.com/VAAltoona

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Network Director  

CHARLES T. BECKER,  
MBA, CPA, CGFM  
Acting Director

SANTHA KURIAN, MD  
Chief of Staff

JOAN M. PEROVE, RN  
Associate Director for Patient/Nursing Services

JAMES E. VAN ZANDT VA MEDICAL CENTER – ALTOONA  
2016 ANNUAL REPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS

Editor/Writer: Andrea Young | Photographers: Andrea Young, Susan Sommers