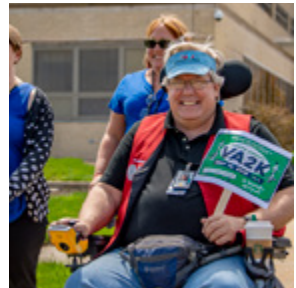


*Healthcare for Heroes*

# 2018



# ANNUAL REPORT



ERIE VA MEDICAL CENTER

**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**  
Veterans Health Administration  
Erie VA Medical Center

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## Accreditations

In 2018, Erie VAMC received accreditations from the Joint Commission, Long Term Care Institute, OIG Comprehensive Healthcare Inspection Program (CHIP), and the Triennial Environmental Compliance Audit.

## The Erie Quad Members



**Left to Right:** David Lavin, David DiGiacomo, Dorene Sommers, John Gennaro



### **Integrity**

*Act with high moral principle.  
Adhere to the highest  
professional standards.  
Maintain the trust and  
confidence of all with whom I  
engage.*

### **Commitment**

*Work diligently to serve Veterans  
and other beneficiaries. Be  
driven by an earnest belief  
in VA's mission. Fulfill my  
individual responsibilities and  
organizational responsibilities.*

### **Advocacy**

*Be truly Veteran-centric by  
identifying, fully considering,  
and appropriately advancing  
the interests of Veterans and  
other beneficiaries.*

### **Respect**

*Treat all those I serve and with  
whom I work with dignity and  
respect. Show respect to earn it.*

### **Excellence**

*Strive for the highest quality  
and continuous improvement.  
Be thoughtful and decisive in  
leadership, accountable for  
my actions, willing to admit  
mistakes, and rigorous in  
correcting them.*



## *MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR*

Every year, Erie VA Medical Center (VAMC) strives to provide the best care and customer service to our Veterans and to be the best place to work for our employees. With our 5-star SAIL rating and VA moving up as a best place to work in 2018, we are continuing in the right direction. I am grateful to be a part of a facility with employees who are committed to caring for our Nation's heroes and to be a part of a community that is equally as dedicated.

This Annual Report is our way of staying accountable to you, our community. It reflects the combined efforts, achievements, and support of our employees, Veterans, volunteers and community partners toward creating the best environment of care for Veterans.

Part of that environment includes the continuation of our 5-year VA Modernization to help us stay at the forefront of Veteran care. With the reopening of the

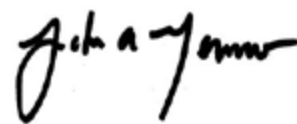
Patriot Café and Retail Store, we now provide an upgraded space where employees, Veterans, and visitors can relax and enjoy a meal. We unveiled our new boiler plant last spring which powers our facility and ensures safe and efficient running of operations. Great things lie ahead of us as we continue to make progress on the new Community Living Center project to provide a more homelike environment for our Veterans over the next several years.

Our programs continue to raise the bar for what the VA standard of care looks like. The Behavioral Health Clinic remains one of the top Behavioral Health Clinics in the Nation and has established multiple best practices (see page 10). We successfully launched our Whole Health Program, one of 18 flagship facilities in the Nation to do so, to help more than 600 Veterans take charge of their health and well-being

through the use of alternative therapies (see page 12). Erie was also designated as a High Reliability Organization and will serve as a lead site focusing on leadership commitment, culture of safety, and continuous process improvement (see page 21).

I would like to thank everyone involved in making the Erie VA Medical Center the outstanding facility it is. Our successes are your successes and we couldn't do what we do without your support and dedication to our Veterans. I have no doubt 2019 will be another year of achievements and milestones for our facility and Veterans!

John Gennaro,



Director  
Erie VA Medical Center

# FACILITY PULSE

## By The Numbers

### Vital Statistics

255,963	Outpatient Visits
1,588	Surgical Procedures
449	Admissions
52	Operating Beds

### Patient Population

Unique Patients	21,486
Male Patients	19,845
Female Patients	1,641

### Virtual Care

4,095	Telehealth Encounters
1,658	Telemental Encounters
8,110	Unique Veterans Using Secure Messaging
60	Unique Patients Served Via e-consult

### Volunteers

Volunteers	460
Volunteer Hours	71,485
Youth Volunteers	13
Total Donations	\$1,026,316.88

### Primary Care Appointment Times

8 Days	Erie VAMC
2 Days	Ashtabula CBOC
8 Days	Crawford CBOC
1 Days	McKean CBOC
4 Days	Venango CBOC
2 Days	Warren CBOC

### Mental Health Appointment Times

Erie VAMC	2 Days
Ashtabula CBOC	2 Days
Crawford CBOC	2 Days
McKean CBOC	2 Days
Venango CBOC	2 Days
Warren CBOC	1 Day

### Patient Satisfaction

93%	Erie VAMC
88%	Ashtabula CBOC
94%	Crawford CBOC
95%	McKean CBOC
100%	Venango CBOC
92%	Warren CBOC

### Sources

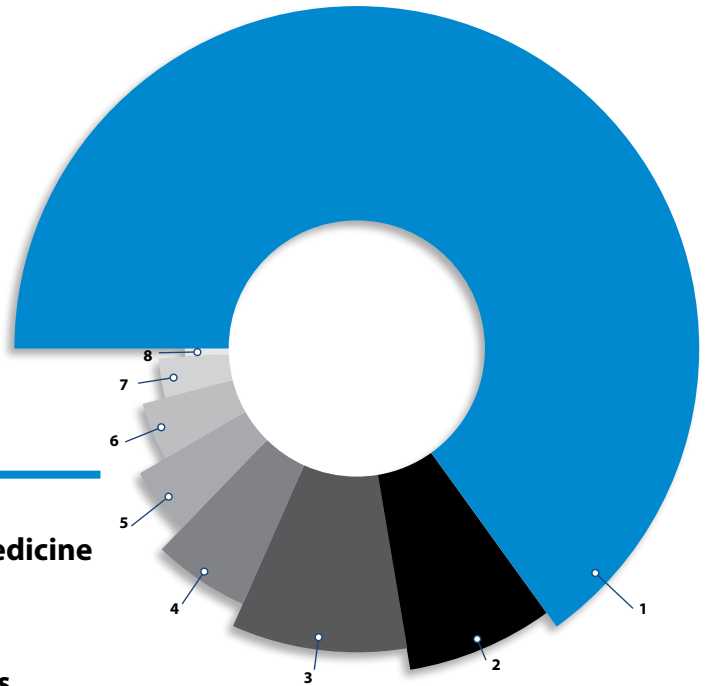
[www.accesstocare.va.gov](http://www.accesstocare.va.gov) (as of Jan. 2019)

All primary care and mental health appointment wait times are based on Veterans actively using VA healthcare.

# FY2018 Operating Budget

## Budget Breakdown

<b>1 Salary and Benefits</b> \$74,399,877 64.4%	<b>5 Drugs and Medicine</b> \$5,273,272 4.3%
<b>2 Supplies</b> \$8,293,350 7.2%	<b>6 Miscellaneous</b> \$5,153,589 4.2%
<b>3 Mail Out Pharmacy</b> \$10,505,224 9.1%	<b>7 Equipment</b> \$3,998,160 3.3%
<b>4 Services</b> \$6,903,876 5.6%	<b>8 Utilities</b> \$1,046,047 0.9%



## Totals

### Total Operating Budget

\$122,678,145

### Recurring Maintenance

\$115,573,395

### Lands and Structures

\$7,104,750

## Employees



809  
Employees



234  
Veteran Employees



210  
Nurses



46  
Physicians

# PATIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Honoring All Who Served



VA



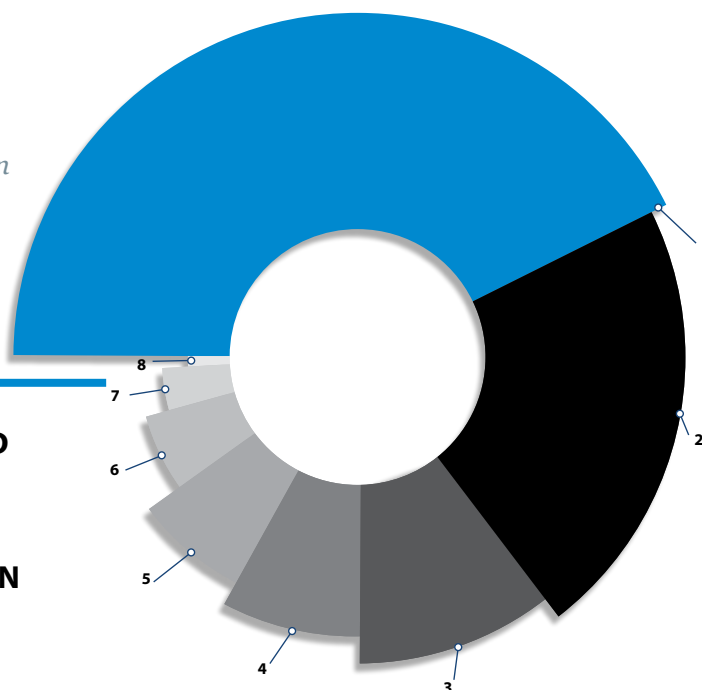
U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Active Patients by Service Era

*\*Chart organized by patient population; Not service era.*

*\*\*Total percentage of Veterans is >100% because of overlap in Veteran service across eras.*

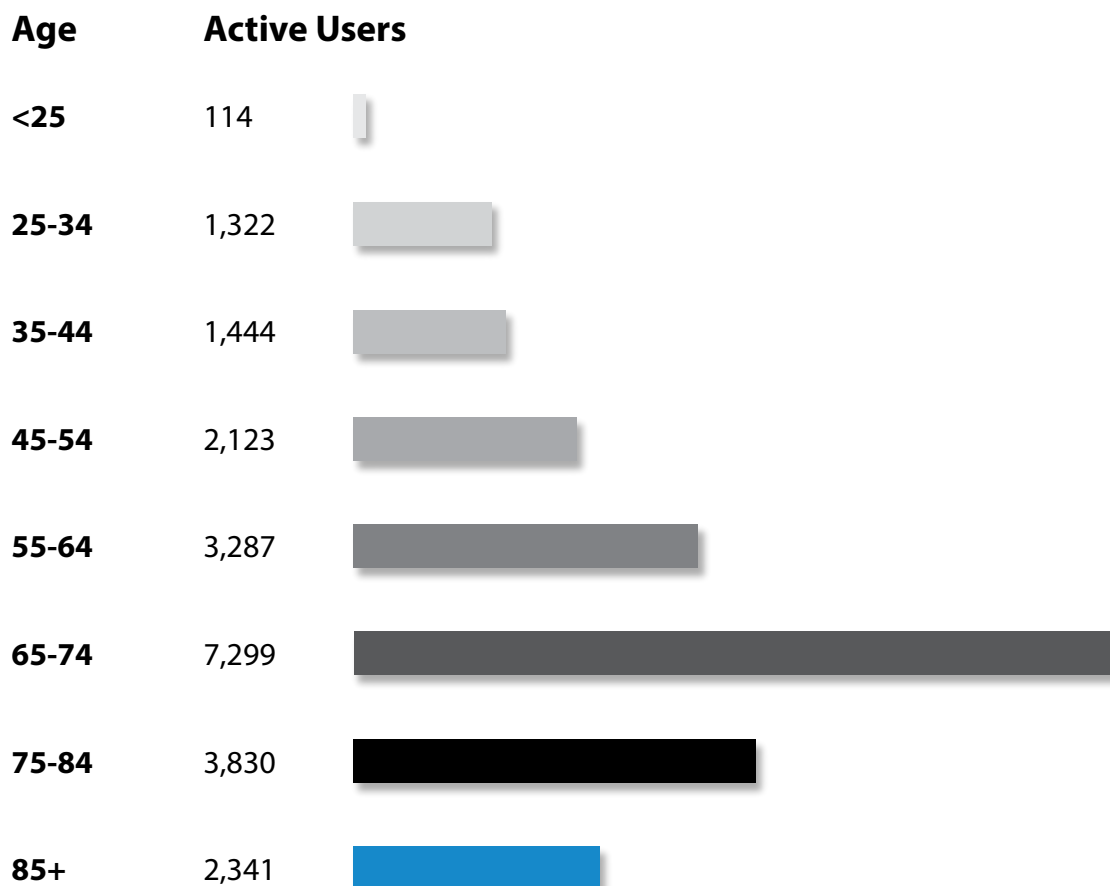
<b>1 VIETNAM</b> 9,713 Patients 44.6%	<b>5 OIF/OEF/OND</b> 1,612 Patients 7.4%
<b>2 PERSIAN GULF</b> 5,036 Patients 23.1%	<b>6 POST-KOREAN</b> 1,274 Patients 5.8%
<b>3 POST-VIETNAM</b> 2,368 Patients 10.8%	<b>7 WWII</b> 792 Patients 3.6%
<b>4 KOREAN</b> 1,828 Patients 8.4%	<b>8 OTHER</b> 211 Patients 0.82%



**Total Enrolled Patients**  
21,760 Patients



## Active Patients by Age



### Million Veteran Program (MVP)

MVP is a national, voluntary research program funded entirely by the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Research & Development. The goal of MVP is to partner with Veterans receiving their care in the VA Healthcare System to study how genes affect health. Researchers study diseases like diabetes and cancer, and military-related illnesses, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. By participating, you can help Veterans get better healthcare in the future!

For enrollment information call toll-free at: [866-441-6075](tel:866-441-6075).

# RECOGNITION & AWARDS

*The Daisy Awards  
Presented at Erie VAMC*

5,276  
Unique Patients

68  
Employees



## **Erie VAMC's DAISY Award Committee Recognized Extraordinary Nurses**

Erie VAMC implemented the DAISY Award Committee in FY18 to recognize extraordinary nurses who demonstrate exceptional compassion and care to patients. Nominations are submitted by patients, visitors, and employees. As part of Erie VAMC's commitment to creating a "best place to work" atmosphere, the DAISY Awards Committee honors nurse nominees and aware winners during a ceremony each quarter. The DAISY Award Winners for FY18 included Margaret Mason, Christina Giannamore, Katelyn McKibben, and Karen Yeane.

## **Erie VAMC Receives Gold Cornerstone Award**

Erie VAMC was recognized by the VA National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS) with a Gold Cornerstone Award for continued commitment to creating a culture of patient safety. The recognition is based on Erie VAMC's patient care services and process improvement initiatives that resulted in safe, reliable, and high-quality care for Veterans.

## **Excellence in Government Awards**

Erie VAMC proudly participated in the annual Pittsburgh Federal Executive Board (FEB) Excellence in Government Awards Program where 31 Erie VAMC employees were recognized for excellence

in service. Of the 31 nominees, Erie VAMC brought home nine medals and tied as one of the top two facilities that won the most awards. Gold medal award winners include Ed Jackowski for Outstanding Professional Administrator, Jan Barclay for Outstanding Supervisor Technical Series, Richard Doray, Outstanding Clerical Employee, and Sean Henry for Community Service. Silver and bronze award winners include Jennifer Stefano for Chairman of Excellence, Dan Hopson for Outstanding Supervisor in the Admin Series, Nicole Marcinko for Outstanding Clerical Employee, Victoria Groetzinger for Heroic Act, and Ann Muczynski for Community Service.





## Erie VAMC Named as a Top 25 Environmental Excellence Award Winner

In recognition for groundbreaking achievement and innovation in health care sustainability, Erie VAMC received the Top 25 Environmental Excellence Award from Practice Greenhealth. Award winners, including Erie VAMC, are recognized as leading the industry with innovation in sustainability, demonstrating superior programs and illustrating how sustainability is entrenched in their culture. As Practice Greenhealth's highest honor, this award recognizes the best of the best in health care environmental stewardship.

*In addition to receiving the Top 25 Environmental Excellence Award, Erie VAMC also received:*

**Circle of Excellence – Energy Award:** Celebrates hospitals that are leading the sector in energy efficiency.

**Circle of Excellence – Water Award:** Recognizes hospitals for exemplary programs in water conservation and efficiency.



**Want to Thank Your Nurse?**

**The DAISY Award honorees are announced quarterly.** You can nominate the extraordinary nurses at the Erie VA Medical Center and CBOC's.

Nomination Forms are available on each unit, in the main lobby, and at each CBOC.

**Forms are available online at:** [www.erie.va.gov/services/caregiver/daisy-award.asp](http://www.erie.va.gov/services/caregiver/daisy-award.asp)

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINIC

Meet Your Erie VAMC  
Behavioral Health Team

68 Employees  
5,276 Unique Patients



Erie VAMC's Behavioral Health Clinic (BHC) continues to be rated as **one of the best in the Nation** in the Experience of Care SAIL measure which focuses on Veteran and employee satisfaction.

As one of the Nation's leaders in the delivery of mental health care, Erie VAMC continues to develop and share best practices. Several best practices include the launch of a Veteran Job Club to help Veterans find meaningful employment, the rollout of a SoloProtect contract to enhance the safety of mobile Homeless Care Team employees, and the offering of Peer Support services on-site at a local technical school to provide convenient behavioral health support for student Veterans. Erie VAMC's Behavioral

Health Clinic also offers same day services for Veterans who have an urgent mental health need.

## Development of the Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Program

In 2018, Erie's Behavioral Health Clinic developed a new Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Program (PRRTP). The PRRTP is an 8-bed, voluntary residential treatment program designed to treat serious mental health issues and/or substance use disorder diagnoses. Veterans will develop recovery goals within the structured programming. The PRRTP is expected to launch in 2019.

## Job Club Expands

Meaningful employment plays a critical role in the overall well-being of Veterans. However, finding and maintaining meaningful employment can be a significant challenge, especially for Veterans struggling with a serious physical or mental illness. To help Veterans overcome employment barriers, VA's Compensated Work Therapy team started offering a Job Club in 2017 to provide Veterans with support through the entire job searching process – writing resumes, searching for jobs, preparing for interviews and everything in-between. After witnessing the success and impact this club had on Veterans, Erie VAMC's CWT team launched an additional Job Club for Veterans within

## ***Rated #1 VA Behavioral Health Clinic in the Nation***

the Crawford County area. In 2018, Erie's Job Clubs helped place 33 Veterans in competitive employment and helped support an additional 30 Veterans through Job Club events in the Erie and Meadville communities.

For more information, visit [www.erie.va.gov/services/jobclub.asp](http://www.erie.va.gov/services/jobclub.asp).

### **Homeless Care Team**

Erie's Homeless Care Team created a national rollout plan for the Homeless Clinical Reminder, a tool that was developed in Erie in collaboration with the VISN data warehouse. This Homeless Clinical Reminder tool develops an automatic report and email reminder that prompts local VA teams to take action whenever a Veteran screens positive for homelessness or risk of homelessness. This tool has already been rolled out within our VISN 4 network, and field testing has occurred nationally. The official national rollout will be in 2019.

Veterans within the Erie VAMC Housing and Urban Development - VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) are housed within 30 days of being enrolled in the program, well above the national average of 70 days. In addition, employment rates among Veterans enrolled

in the HUD-VASH program were more than twice the national average showing that four out of five homeless Veterans found meaningful employment.

For more information about our Homeless Care Team, visit [www.erie.va.gov/services/homeless](http://www.erie.va.gov/services/homeless).

### **Suicide Prevention**

Suicide Prevention remains a top clinical priority for Erie VAMC. Erie's three Suicide Prevention Coordinators have conducted more than 160 outreach events to help educate Veterans, family members, and community members about the resources available to help prevent suicide. For more resources on how you can #BeThere for Veterans in need, visit [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net).

## **Veterans Crisis Line**



*In the past 10 years, the Veterans Crisis Line has answered over 3.5 Million calls, 413,000 online chats, & 98,000 text messages.*

*If you are or know of a Veteran in crisis, contact the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*

---

### **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

**#BeThere**

**Call 1-800-273-8255**  
and press 1

**Text 838255**

**Chat Online at**  
[veteranscrisisline.net](http://veteranscrisisline.net)



# WHOLE HEALTH

Meet Your Erie VAMC  
Whole Health Care Team

618 Unique Veterans  
3,561 Encounters



## Erie VAMC Launches Whole Health Program

In 2018, Erie VAMC launched Whole Health, a new approach to health care that goes beyond illnesses, injuries, or disabilities and instead focuses on an individual's 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.

More than 600 Veterans have actively engaged in Whole Health treatment and this alternative approach is quickly gaining popularity among Veterans.

Erie VAMC is one of only 18 VA 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, and YMCA movement therapy classes in addition to whole health coaching.

Erie's Whole Health Program has expanded movement therapy services – Tai Chi, Qi-Gong, water therapy, and meditation – through the YMCA with additional community services coming soon.

*Betsy Martin, Veteran & Whole Health Coach demonstrating how to reach a coherent state through biofeedback meditation.*



## Whole Health Course Offerings



*Dr. Evanoff-Jurkovic provides Battlefield Acupuncture Treatment.*

In addition to treatment options, the Whole Health team also provides a number of course offerings to help educate Veterans on Whole Health therapies and engage them in treatment. Course offerings include:

- Introduction to Whole Health class open to all Veterans, family members, and caregivers
- Mindfulness, Stress Reduction, and Biofeedback Group I open to all Veterans
- Mindfulness, Stress Reduction, and Biofeedback Group II open to all Veterans who have completed the initial 6-week course
- Taking Charge of My Life and Health open to all Veterans
- Whole Health Smoking Cessation Class open to all Veterans
- Whole Health/YMCA



*Dr. Peng leads a Qi-Gong Class.*

Movement Therapy Classes open to Veterans who are referred by their primary care provider

Erie VAMC Dietitians also offer monthly Whole Health Nutrition courses to teach Veterans how to improve their health through healthy living. The nutrition course series includes:

- Tame the Flame of Inflammation with Diet
- Food and Mood – You Are What You Eat
- Your Kitchen Pharmacy – The Health Benefits of Herbs and Spices

For more information, visit [www.erie.va.gov/services/Whole-Health-Program.asp](http://www.erie.va.gov/services/Whole-Health-Program.asp) and download the most recent Whole Health Course Offerings handout.

### What is The Whole Health Approach to Healthcare?

Whole Health, also known as “Personalized, Proactive, Patient-driven Care,” is an approach to health care that empowers and equips people to take charge of their health and well-being and to live their life to the fullest.

“Before Whole Health, I had multiple surgeries on my lower back. I had to use a walker and was on multiple pain meds. I thought my life was just sitting at home not being able to go outside because I was hurting so bad. But this program for me has been a life changer. It’s turned my life around. I’m getting real health instead of just covering it up and masking it. I’m being treated for things that are actually hurting. [Whole Health] has gotten me off of all but one pain med. Whole Health got me away from my walker. I can go out, hunt, fish and do some of the things I haven’t done for years. Today, I’m in a good place.”

-Darryl, Army Veteran

# CONNECTED CARE

*Tele-Dermatology at your  
Erie VA Medical Center*

**4,095** Telehealth Appts.  
**1,658** Telemental Appts.



Erie VAMC's Connected Care program is designed to deliver high-quality, Veteran-centered care that is personalized and proactive to enhance the health care experience through virtual methods of care. These services allow for Veterans to receive certain primary care, mental health care, and specialty care services close to home, and in some cases, right in their home for convenient access to health care.

Home Telehealth (HT) allows Veterans to receive in-home monitoring for certain chronic illnesses. Through the use of special equipment, RN Care Coordinators can monitor vitals and track health of Veterans daily which ultimately decreases the need for Emergency Room visits and hospital admissions.

Telehealth services include E-consults, Store and Forward, and Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT). Store and Forward allows tele-retinal or tele-dermatological images to be taken in one location and forwarded to a specialty physician at another location within or outside the Erie VAMC. Using CVT, patients can see VA specialty care providers who are located outside of their clinic through video conferencing equipment.

## **Telehealth Services Include**

- Endocrinology (Pittsburgh)
- Rheumatology (Pittsburgh)
- Gastroenterology (Pittsburgh)
- Tele-Sleep Apnea Clinic (Pittsburgh)
- Tele-Dermatology (Pittsburgh)

- Interdisciplinary Medical Preoperative Assessment Consultation and Treatment Clinic (IMPACT)
- Tele-Pharmacy D Transplant Program (Pittsburgh)
- TeleGynecology Consultative Services (Wilkes-Barre VAMC)
- TeleGenomics (VA Salt Lake City Health Care System)

My HealtheVet allows Veterans to schedule and cancel appointments online, refill prescriptions, view and track prescription shipping, view and share health records with other doctors, send secure messages to health care teams, and more. Visit [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) for details.

For more details, call 814-860-2547 or visit [www.erie.va.gov/services/connected-care.asp](http://www.erie.va.gov/services/connected-care.asp).



## Online Scheduling Available

Veterans enrolled at the Erie VAMC or one of our five community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) can schedule or request appointments and some specialty care appointments online via [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) or at [mobile.va.gov](http://mobile.va.gov).

## New VA Text Messaging Program Coming Soon!

“Annie” is a text messaging program developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that Veterans can use with either a basic cell phone or smartphone to help Veterans take a more active role in their health care. Annie sends personalized self-care text messages to remind Veterans of health tasks from their mutually agreed personal health care plan. Veterans will be able to start, pause, resume and stop Annie at any time. For more information please visit [mobile.va.gov/appstore](http://mobile.va.gov/appstore).

## Cataract Surgeries Now Available through New VISN 4 Initiative

In FY2018, Erie VAMC partnered with Pittsburgh VAMC to offer on-site cataract surgeries allowing Veterans to receive

care closer to home rather than driving to and from Pittsburgh. This program launched as part of the VISN 4 Network Western Market Collaboration where VA facilities within VISN 4 shared resources to support Veteran needs. Through this partnership, an Ophthalmologist from the Pittsburgh VA travels to the Erie VAMC once a month to provide on-site cataract surgeries. More than 80 cataract surgeries have been completed since the launch of this new initiative.

## Erie VAMC Expands Lactation Support Program

In 2018, Erie VAMC expanded the Lactation Support Program in Erie and launched two virtual sites in Pittsburgh and Wilkes-Barre to serve more women Veterans throughout VISN 4. The Lactation Support Program offers face-to-face visits, a lactation support group, and virtual support so new moms can connect with lactation support in the comfort of their own home through a mobile web-based device (smartphone, tablet, or computer). Erie VAMC is committed to providing exceptional health care to women Veterans and is planning to expand virtual sites to include Butler and Philadelphia in 2019.

## Connect With Your Provider Using Video Conferencing



### Get the App

Visit the VA App Store to learn more:

[mobile.va.gov/appstore](http://mobile.va.gov/appstore)

VA Video Connect (VVC) uses a video conferencing platform to connect Veterans to their health care teams through secure and private virtual medical rooms. It allows Veterans to see and talk with their health care team from anywhere, making VA healthcare more convenient and accessible. Through VVC, VA clinicians connect with Veterans in live video visits to provide the right care in the right place at the right time.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*Meet Larry Schaller,  
A Volunteer at Erie VAMC*

71,486  
Volunteer Hours

460  
Volunteers



## Community Partnerships

We can accomplish more together. Period. In 2018, Erie VAMC remained actively invested in two Community Veteran Engagement Boards (CVEBS) – McKean County CVEB and Erie County CVEB - to further our mission of being a united community of support for Veterans, servicemembers, and their families. CVEBs operate under a warm hand-off policy where community agencies are educated and on VA and community resources available to help support Veteran's needs. The collaboration of these CVEBs has led to numerous Veteran initiatives and success stories – a new Veteran Flight Program with Bradford Regional Airport to provide discounted, convenient transportation to and from

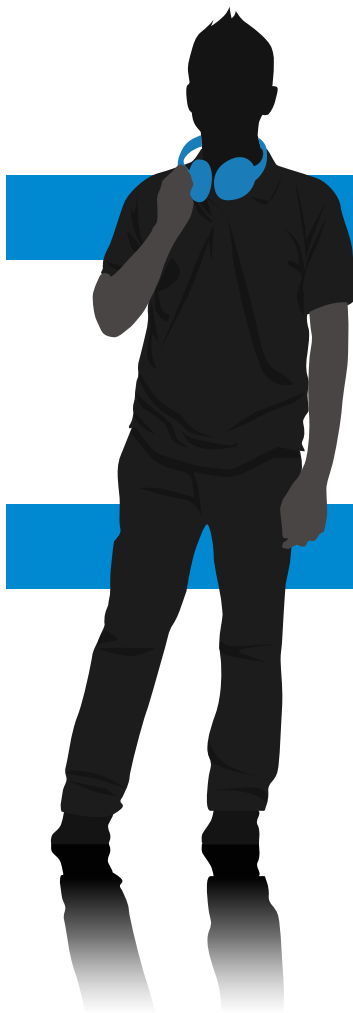
Bradford and the Pittsburgh VAMC, the availability of Veteran-related public forums to help connect Veterans to needed resources, and a number of Veteran job opportunities.

Community partnerships also continued to thrive. In 2018:

- Erie VAMC Dietitians partnered with the **Second Harvest Food Bank** to provide 10 Military Share Produce Express events – three in Warren and seven in Erie – to more than 600 low-income Veterans.
- The **Elks Lodge Post #67** provided more than 175 Thanksgiving Dinner Food Baskets to Veterans in need.
- **UE Local 506 Sport Committee** raised over \$30,644 through sport-based fundraisers to

support Erie VAMC and Vet Center patient needs.

- The **Behavioral Health Council** sponsored numerous events including a picnic dinner for more than 1,000 attendees at the annual Welcome Home Veterans Appreciation Event.
- **TOPS** teamed up with our Caregiver Support and Women Veterans programs to host a Veteran Children's Christmas Project to provide holiday gifts for more than 65 Veteran families. Tops also hosted a School Supplies Drive and donated 128 bookbags filled with school supplies to children of Veterans in need. Fairview Middle School and Dickey's BBQ hosted a free holiday luncheon for nearly 200 Veterans and their families.



## Community Engagement

Community Outreaches	89
Media Engagements	107
Website Subscribers	8,395
Social Media Followers	3,847

## Connect with Us Online

**[www.erie.va.gov](http://www.erie.va.gov)**  
subscribe for email updates



**VAMCErie**  
Follow us on Facebook



**ErieVAMC**  
Follow us on twitter



## Calling all Volunteers

Looking to give back to local Veterans? Become an Erie VAMC Volunteer! Erie VAMC volunteers play an important role in providing exceptional care to Veterans.

Join our team – we have a number of volunteer opportunities available to help make patient visits more enjoyable. Call our Voluntary Service Office at 814-860-2454 today to learn more, or visit: [www.erie.va.gov/giving](http://www.erie.va.gov/giving).

## VET CENTERS



*"WALK ON IN"*

**EXCELLENCE \* SERVICE \* COMMITMENT**

### Erie Vet Center

240 W 11th Street, Suite #105  
Erie, PA 16501  
814-453-7955

The Erie Vet Center provides readjustment counseling, family counseling, bereavement counseling, military sexual trauma counseling, outreach and referral services to combat Veterans and their families. The Erie Vet Center, comprised of 7 full-time staff members, conducted more than 5,100 visits throughout Erie, Ashtabula, Crawford, Mercer, Venango and Warren counties in FY2018.

# MODERNIZING ERIE VAMC

*The VCS Canteen Service  
Grand ReOpening at Erie VAMC*

**\$35M**

Total Budget



## **Erie VAMC Continues its \$35M Modernization Plan**

As a 5-star facility, Erie VAMC is committed to creating a holistic and healing environment for Veterans. In 2018, Erie VAMC continued to invest in key infrastructure, facility renovations and health care expansion projects as part of the 5-year modernization plan to improve the Erie VA campus and enhance Veteran care.

### **Boiler Plant Completed Summer 2018**

**Square Footage:** 11,383

Added a new boiler house and three new fire-tube boilers with quality controlled steam production system and an energy-efficient design. The new boiler

plant is the backbone of Erie VAMC's modernization plan as it powers our entire campus while allowing us to continue to expand our services for the Veterans we serve.

### **Emergency Power Generator Completed Spring 2018**

Updated the emergency power generator with a new low-emission, energy-efficient back-up generator to ensure safe and reliable power coverage for the Erie VAMC.

### **VCS Patriot Café Renovations Completed Fall 2018**

Renovated the VCS Patriot Café' within approx. 10 months which now features a more efficient

serving line layout, expanded self-serve selections, updated beverage and condiment counters, and new flexible, comfortable seating options to enhance the patient experience.

### **Traffic Flow Improvement Project Expected Completion Date: Summer 2019**

Constructed a new drive way entrance off 38th Street. This project includes a new traffic light and left turn lane to increase traffic safety for all Veterans, visitors, and neighbors.





## Community Living Center

**Square Footage:** 24,114

**Expected Completion**

**Date: Fall 2019**

This new state-of-the-art 22-bed, stand-alone Community Living Center facility features private rooms, private bathrooms, more community living rooms for visitors, and a kitchen to provide a more home-like feel for residents.



## Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program

**Expected Completion Date: Summer 2019**

This new eight-bed Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PRRTP) will provide comprehensive evidence-based recovery-oriented support for Veterans who have complex mental health and/or substance use disorders. The PRRTP will provide a therapeutic environment to help Veterans improve functioning, stability, and prepare Veterans to re-enter the community and pursue recovery.

# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

*Driving Change, Building Trust,  
Improving Outcomes.*

234

Veteran Employees

809

Employees



## Erie Engaged

Erie VAMC is committed to creating a 5-star experience for the Veterans we serve. That 5-star experience begins by cultivating a culture where inspired and engaged employees feel empowered to drive change. In 2018, Erie VAMC invested in transforming our culture in efforts to be best place to work and a best place to receive care.

## Veteran Employee Recognition

Erie VAMC launched an internal Veteran Employee Portal to identify Veteran employees and recognized them for their service. Veteran employees were encouraged to share their service details and military photos which

are included in a weekly rotating Veteran Employee Screensaver and Veteran employee recognition events throughout the year.

## Veteran Centric Newsletter

Erie VAMC Patient Advocacy Office publishes a monthly newsletter. This newsletter features patient experience stories, tips to improve service recovery and customer service, monthly customer service star awardees, service level patient advocate listing, process changes and more to recognize the impact employees can have on the Veteran experience.

## Customer Service Committee Restructuring

To engage more front-line employees, the Customer Service Committee recruited highly-

motivated, ambitious front-line staff who want to help drive change within the facility to be on the committee. This problem-solving committee incorporated Systems Redesign Coordinators and Clinical Nurse Leaders to help facilitate small action workgroups.

## Lunchbreak Summer Events

Erie VAMC put a spin on summer lunchbreaks by providing a series of employee engagement events in partnership with Veterans Canteen Service (VCS). VCS brought food trucks on campus throughout the summer for employees and Veterans. VCS also hosted "Grill and Chill" Fridays for hot off-the-grill food options while hosting a mini-employee-talent series.



## Erie VAMC Designated as High Reliability Organization (HRO)

### Lead Site for VISN 4

Erie VAMC was selected as one of 18 medical centers across the nation as a lead site in high reliability which focuses on leadership commitment, culture of safety, and continuous process improvement. As a lead site for VISN 4, Erie VAMC will share and adapt best practices and lessons learned in efforts to collaborate with other VA medical centers and ultimately, transform VA. The High Reliability Organization vision is to affirm the trust of Veterans and their families through the achievement of Zero Harm and to provide an unmatched patient experience.

"Our journey as a High Reliability Organization (HRO) began over the past decade with the implementation of a system wide approach to problem solving utilizing Lean principles. Since then, we have expanded the problem solving approach to include servant leadership, employee engagement, just culture, and patient experience. The culmination of our daily work in all these areas inclusive of quality, safety, and value have made us the premier organization we are today."

-John Gennaro,  
Erie VAMC Director



### Erie "Stars" Program

Our "STARS" Program recognizes employees & volunteers who truly demonstrate our core values of serving those who have served. These are the individuals who exemplify customer service and who make Erie VAMC a better place to receive health care, and a better place to work.

Nomination Forms are available on each unit, in the main lobby, and at each CBOC.



### Increased Job Satisfaction

Best Places to Work increased by 10.7%  
Engaged Profile increased by 5%  
Servant Leader Index increased by 9.4%

### Improving Employee Engagement

In FY2018, Erie VAMC's All Employee Survey scores improved significantly in employee engagement measures.

The ripple effects of small changes driven by inspired employees is transforming the way we provide health care for Veterans.

# 4 ENROLLMENT MYTHS

Erie VA Medical Center (VAMC) is proud to provide exceptional health care to America's Heroes, America's Veterans. With a commitment to serving Veterans, the Erie VAMC provides a wide range of patient-centered care services including primary care, specialty care, mental health care and everything in between.

Erie VAMC and its community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) serve more than 21,000 Veterans, yet many Veterans still don't know that they may be eligible for care. We'd like to address some of the most common myths we hear about enrolling, so we can set the record straight.

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## Bottom Line, Talk to an Eligibility Representative Today:

If you have served in the military, you may be eligible for VA health care. Take action today! Apply online at [www.va.gov/health](http://www.va.gov/health), in-person by stopping into the Erie VAMC Eligibility Office between the hours of 7:30a.m.-4:30 p.m. with your DD-214, or call 814-860-2970 or toll-free at 1-800-274-8387 to speak with an eligibility representative.

## Common myths about enrolling for VA health care:

- **Myth 1:** *"I didn't serve in combat/I wasn't injured in the service, so I'm not eligible for VA health care."*

If you served in the military – even during peacetime – in the active military, naval, or air service, and are separated under any condition other than dishonorable, you may qualify for VA health care benefits.

- **Myth 2:** *"I don't want to go to the VA because I want to save those appointments for those who really need it."*

The more Veterans that use our services, the more funding and resources we receive allowing us to continue serving more and more Veterans. You do not take away from another Veteran!

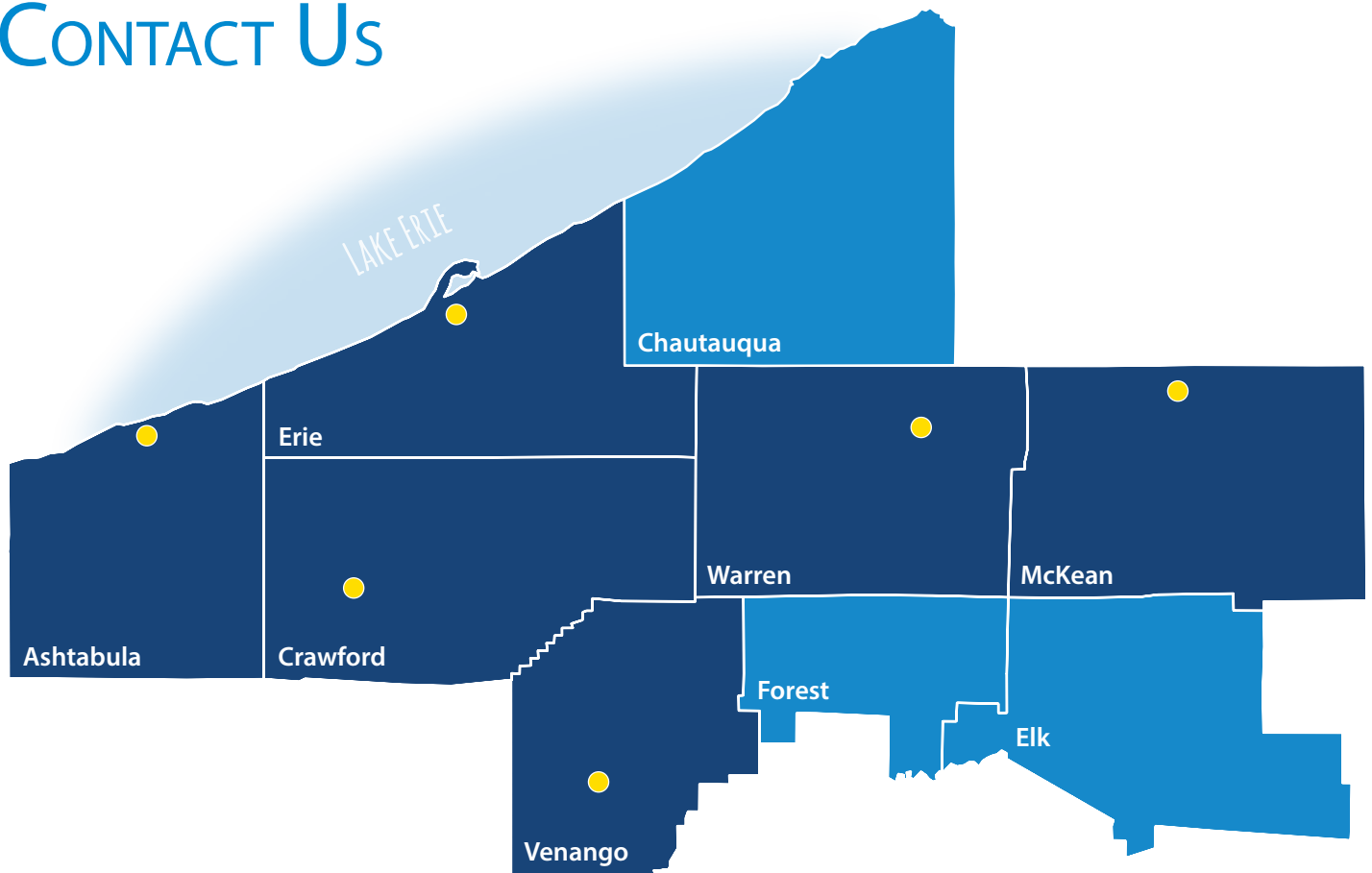
- **Myth 3:** *"I make too much money so I've never applied for VA care."*

It's not all about income. There are many other factors taken into consideration when applying for VA health care. Other factors include having a service-related injury or illness (such as exposure to Agent Orange), when and where you served, if you are a former Prisoner of War, if you received a Purple Heart Medal, etc.

- **Myth 4:** *"I want to go to the VA but I don't want to lose my private health insurance."*

Here's some great news – assuming you are eligible for VA health care, you do not need to give up your private health insurance. You can keep your own insurance and seek health care from the VA as well – the best of both worlds.

# CONTACT Us



## Important Contacts

### Main Line – Phone Tree

814-868-8661

1-800-274-8387 (toll free)

- Press 1 - Pharmacy
- Press 2 - Appointments & Specialty Care Providers
- Press 3 - Nurse Line
- Press 4 - Eligibility
- Press 5 - Billing
- Press 7 - Veterans Crisis Line

### Eligibility

814-860-2970

### Veterans Crisis Line

[www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)

1-800-273-8255 (press 1)

Text - 838255

### Release of Information

814-860-2212

### Behavioral Health Clinic

814-860-2038

### Transition & Care Management

(OEF/OIF/OND)

814-860-2965

### Medication Refills

814-868-6284

1-800-274-8387 (toll-free)

### Medical Social Work

814-860-2529

### Women Veterans Program

814-860-2907

### Caregiver Support Program

814-860-2657

### Non-VA Care Notification

Notify within 72 hours

814-860-2800 (M-F 8a-4:30p)

814-868-8661 (After hours, ask for Medical Administration Assistant)

### VA Mobile Applications

[mobile.va.gov](http://mobile.va.gov)

## C.B.O.C.s

### Ashtabula VA Clinic

2044 Lambros Ln

Ashtabula, OH 44004

Phone: 866-463-0912

### Crawford VA Clinic

16954 Conneaut Lk Rd

Meadville, PA 16335

Phone: 866-962-3210

### Venango VA Clinic

464 Allegheny Blvd

Franklin, PA 16323

Phone: 866-962-3260

### Warren VA Clinic

3 Farm Colony Dr

Warren, PA 16365

Phone: 866-682-3250

### McKean VA Clinic

23 Kennedy St

Bradford, PA 16701

Phone: 814-368-3019

*\*Disclaimer: All clinic phone numbers remain the same, but reroute to the Erie VAMC phone tree where the Erie Call Center can assist you.*

**ERIE VA MEDICAL CENTER**

138 East 38th Street  
Erie, PA 16504  
1-800-274-8387

[www.erie.va.gov](http://www.erie.va.gov)   
**VAMCErie**   
**ErieVAMC** 

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