

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System

Next Level Road Map

Celebrating 80 Years of Excellence (1939-2019)



On the path towards high reliability health care

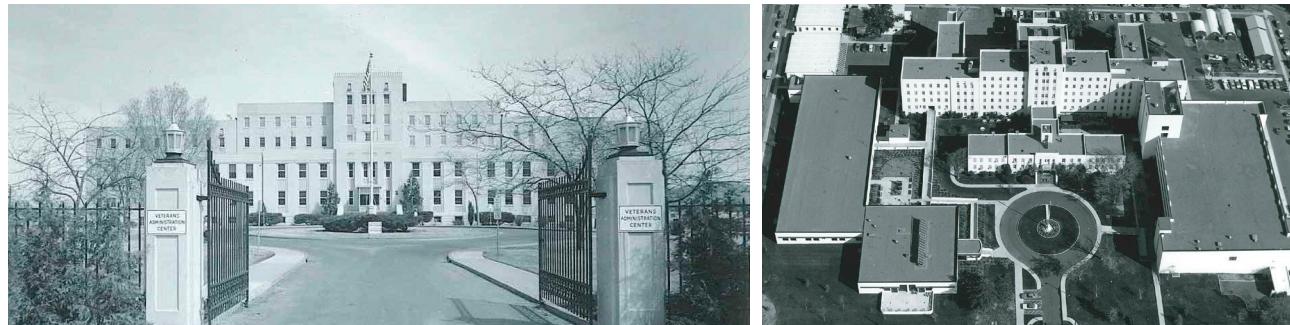


Choose VA



Letter from the Director

The VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System has been a story in the making for 80 years and our story continues.



In 1939, Mr. Ioannis "John" Lougaris, a World War I U.S. Army Veteran and a Greek immigrant to America, realized his vision of providing a way to serve other World War I Veterans who lacked medical aid after the war, especially in Nevada. Today, the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System continues to enhance Veteran experience and elevate care and services to the *Next Level*. I am privileged to state that, after 80 years, Mr. Lougaris' legacy lives on.

As the Director of this remarkable facility, I marvel at how far we have come since 1939, when a lone building of 26 beds was made possible by a \$100,000 Federal grant. Over the decades, our facility has grown to meet the complex needs of our Veterans from every era. We will soon embark on our next major construction project, Project Nevada's Heroes, which will expand the facility by over 100,000 square feet and represents an investment of more than \$200 million.

The VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System serves tens of thousands of Veterans each year throughout northeastern California and northern Nevada. Our incredible and dedicated staff are a testament to why our Veterans feel that this facility is the best VA they have ever experienced. As we implement measures to become a High Reliability Organization, our staff members will continue their commitment to provide world class care and service to America's heroes.



To our wonderful Veteran partners, affiliates, stakeholders and the community-at-large, we thank you for your support and passion to help us fulfill our mission. We look forward to forging ahead as our organization grows in parallel with the region.

To all Veterans who the Ioannis Lougaris Medical Center has served and cared for since 1939, we are forever grateful for your military service to ensure our freedom. To all Veterans who have yet to enter our doors, we cannot wait to meet you, to serve you and to express how indebted we are – as a community, a state and a nation – for your continued commitment to freedom.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your story.

Lisa Howard

Celebrating 80 Years of Excellence (1939-2019)

VA ICARE Core Values



INTEGRITY

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



Ivan Correa, MD, Chief of Staff

Commitment is to give your best time and energy to what you believe in. We can decide to work on a great idea but without commitment, we will not be able to make dreams become a reality. Commitment allows for sustainment and excellence. It has been my honor to dedicate my career and service at VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System, committing to provide the best quality care possible to our Veterans.¹¹

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.



Charles Benninger, RN, MN, MHA, CFAAMA, Nurse Executive

As VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System employees, we have an important obligation to look out for the interests of the Veterans by being an advocate for them. **Advocacy** is a vital part of the service we provide to our Veterans each day.¹¹

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.

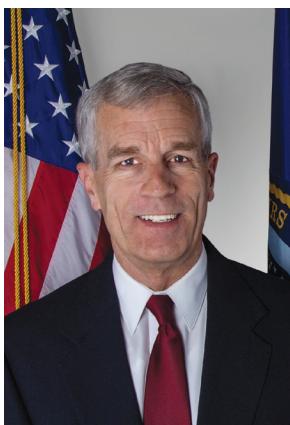


Maisha Moore, RN, MSN, CNL, VHA-CM, Deputy Nurse Executive

I strive to set an example of **Respect** through connecting with patients, staff and volunteers. I acknowledge their potential and encourage opportunities to grow. I value diverging opinions and actively listen to concerns because soliciting and acting upon feedback is essential to becoming a High Reliability Organization.¹¹

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.



Jack Smith, Associate Director

Integrity to me means several things: making sure my actions match my words; earning the trust that our Veterans and the taxpayers have placed in us to provide outstanding patient care; and leading by example, ensuring ethical and professional standards are maintained.¹¹



Amy Sanguinetti, MD, PhD, Deputy Chief of Staff

Excellence describes the commitment we make to our Veterans, to each other as VA employees and to the community that we as a team serve each day by providing unsurpassed care to our Veterans and building a culture of trust, safety and camaraderie.¹¹

Executive Leadership Team

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Organizational Direction

Who We Are



MISSION

Provide World Class Care and Service to America's Heroes



STRATEGIC GOAL

Provide Veterans Personalized, Proactive and Patient-Driven Health Care



VISION

We Are Next Level



CORE VALUES

Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence (ICARE)

Zero Harm: The Path Towards High Reliability

The VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System (VASNHCS) is embarking on a journey to achieve a simple, yet elusive objective: eliminate preventable patient harm. Maintaining consistent excellence in a health care organization is a daunting task. However, through applying high-reliability science currently used in the commercial aviation and nuclear power industries, VASNHCS aims to produce predictable and desirable quality and safety outcomes while operating in a high-risk and high-complexity environment.

To successfully meet this objective, the health care system must analyze errors and close calls to determine root causes and adapt processes and policies to mitigate future vulnerabilities. A preoccupation with failure and a reluctance to oversimplify situations and solutions are key principles of high reliability. Failure is avoidable – not inevitable. In fact, preventable medical errors rank behind heart disease and cancer as the third leading cause of death in the U.S.

VASNHCS is performing an honest and comprehensive assessment of its current state and encouraging staff at all levels to identify and report unsafe conditions. To that end, VASNHCS is focusing on:

- » **Establishing trust.** By establishing clear performance expectations among employees in a psychologically safe environment in which there is no fear of negative consequences for reporting mistakes, leaders can help create personal responsibility.
- » **Encouraging reporting.** Leadership will clearly inform staff on what can and should be reported.
- » **Eliminating fear of punishment.** It is important to reinforce the idea that reporting allows an organization to learn from mistakes and make improvements.
- » **Examining errors, close calls and unsafe conditions.** All reports will be investigated and data gathered will be included in these studies.

Committing the necessary resources to ensure success, VASNHCs is creating a High Reliability Organization Service. The new service will guide Executive Leadership in creating and sustaining a High Reliability Organization (HRO). The team, comprised of administrative and clinical staff, will be responsible for planning, developing, overseeing and executing actions to ensure the successful design and implementation of high-reliability practices and programs. The health care system has already built a strong foundation through systems redesign processes, patient safety programs and Just Culture training, all of which are in line with the HRO philosophies.

VASNHCs will serve as a pilot site to help the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) bring high-reliability health care to fruition. The health care system was selected to represent the Sierra Pacific Network based on readiness factors, such as safety, performance, leadership commitment and staff engagement. The HRO journey began in February 2019, although VHA has been adopting HRO practices since the 1990s. VHA's Richard Stone, MD, Executive in Charge, states, "Among so many exciting things I see happening every day at VHA, our evolution towards becoming an HRO is the one I am most excited about – because it will dramatically improve the way we deliver care to our Veterans. Hospitals that strive toward high reliability are those where harm prevention and process improvement are second nature to all employees."

Just Culture

Fostering a Just Culture by allowing employees to focus on improving care for Veterans and providing a safe environment to voice concerns is integral to becoming an HRO. The Just Culture and HRO rollout will include training and coaching activities, lessons learned and best practices for VHA staff. The training will also provide reference materials, resources and communities of practice. Forums will be created to solicit questions, obtain answers and acquire knowledge. Staff members at all levels of VHA will have access to training sessions on Just Culture and HRO. Through these activities, VASNHCs will create an environment in which all staff members are mindful about safety risks and work towards a safer, more reliable health care system.

An example of Just Culture includes the Stop the Line initiative, which empowers VHA employees to report behaviors that might result in errors or patient harm. In reporting these concerns, employees will be protected from retribution.



LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

Safety and reliability is reflected in leadership's vision, decisions and actions.



SAFETY CULTURE

Throughout our organization, safety values and practices are used to prevent harm and learn from mistakes.



CONTINUOUS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Across the organization, team use effective tools for continuous learning and improvement.

VA Strategic Priorities

1. Customer Service

The number one priority at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is customer service. VA will reaffirm its commitment to excellent customer service for all Veterans, Service members, their families, caregivers and survivors in the delivery of care and services. Interactions with stakeholders will result in a consistently positive experience in terms of ease, effectiveness and emotional resonance. Together, VA staff and volunteers will **OWN THE MOMENT** and make each encounter an opportunity to be supportive to those who have served and their families, caregivers and survivors.

2. MISSION Act Implementation

The VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Network (MISSION) Act of 2018 is the foundation that will fundamentally transform elements of VA's health care system while fulfilling the President's commitment to helping Veterans live healthy and fulfilling lives. The MISSION Act supports the creation of a health care system that will:

- » Ensure easy and reliable access to the care Veterans need when they need it.
- » Provide exceptional care to Veterans anytime, anywhere.
- » Serve as a trusted, caring partner, helping Veterans and their families be healthy and well.

3. Business Transformation

VA is modernizing human resource management, finance and acquisition, as well as supply chain. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie is giving medical centers more leeway to manage budgets and recruit, retain and relocate staff needed to serve Veterans. VA will also forge more robust partnerships with state and local communities to address challenges such as Veteran homelessness and suicide prevention.

4. VA/DoD Collaboration

VA will work collaboratively with the Department of Defense (DoD) to provide quality care for the Nation's Service members and Veterans. VA will adopt the same electronic health record as the DoD, creating a seamless transfer of medical information for Veterans leaving the Service.

Current State

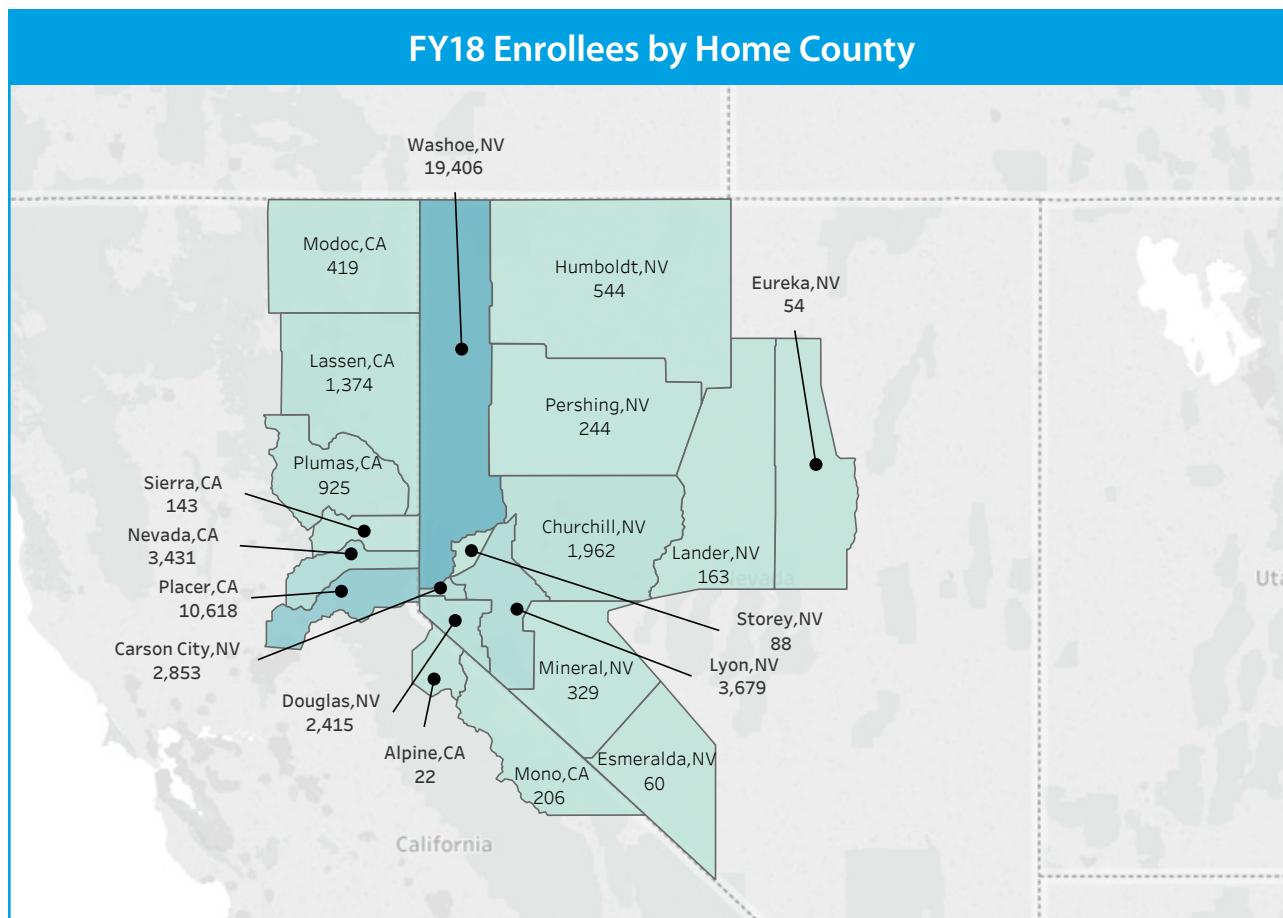
Health Care System Overview

VASNHCS provides primary and secondary care to a large geographical area in northern Nevada and northeastern California. Approximately 100,000 Veterans reside in this region, with Reno/Sparks representing the largest urban area.

The Reno campus is the site of the Ioannis A. Lougaris VA Medical Center, which operates 64 hospital beds and 60 Community Living Center (CLC) beds. VASNHCS provides a broad array of inpatient and outpatient care including medicine, surgery, mental health, rehabilitation, diagnostic, extended and home-based care.

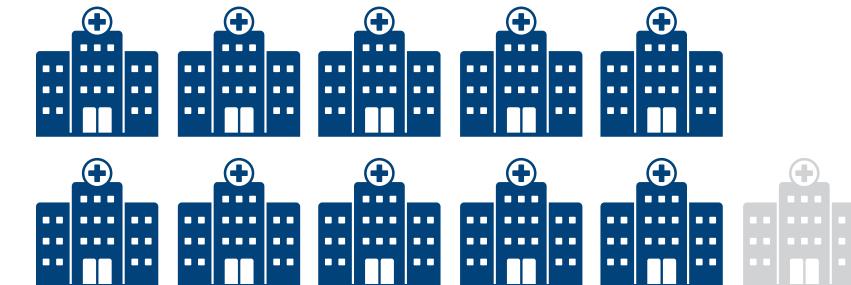
Sierra Nevada Market Overview

- » 20 counties
- » 110,000 square miles
- » 48,935 enrollees
- » 33,980 users



FY18 market data from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Support Service Center data warehouse

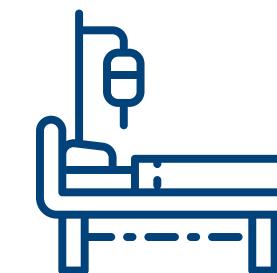
Health Care System Profile



10 sites of care (with an additional site, North Campus, opening Fall 2019)

550,000+
square feet of medical center facilities

85,000+
square feet of leased space



124
Hospital beds

38 Medical/surgical acute care beds
12 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds
14 Inpatient mental health beds
60 CLC beds

FY18 patient care data:

 **31,883**
Veterans seen

 **18,420**
Emergency Department encounters

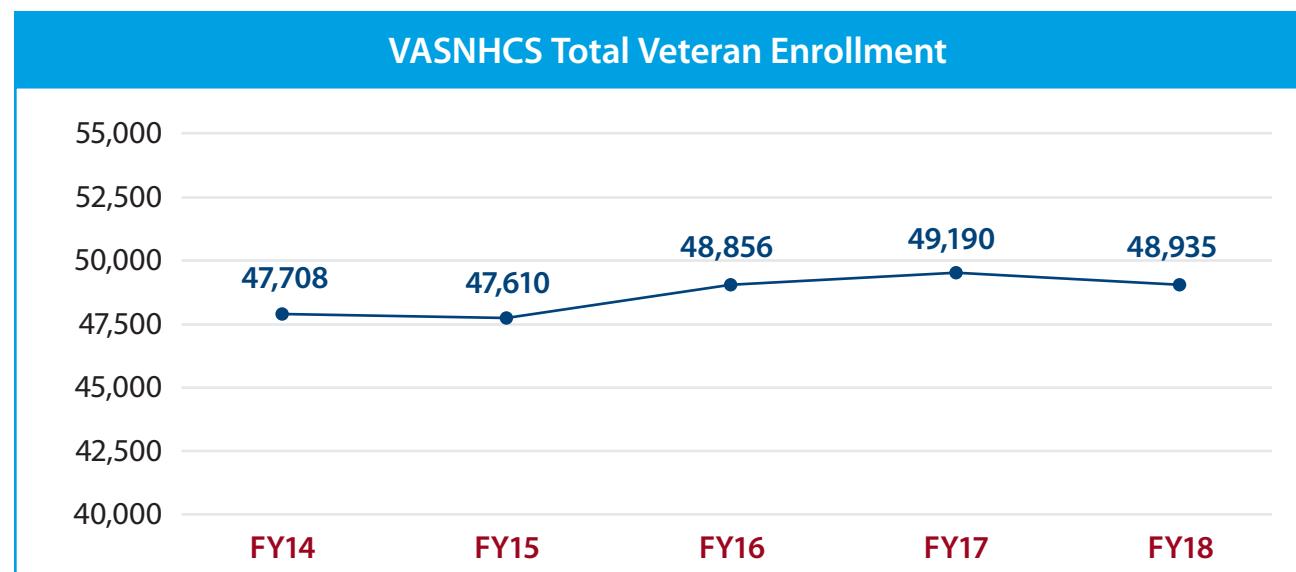


3,302
Inpatient discharges
37,253
Bed days of care

569,252
Outpatient encounters
37,727
Inpatient encounters

Health Care System Profile (cont'd)

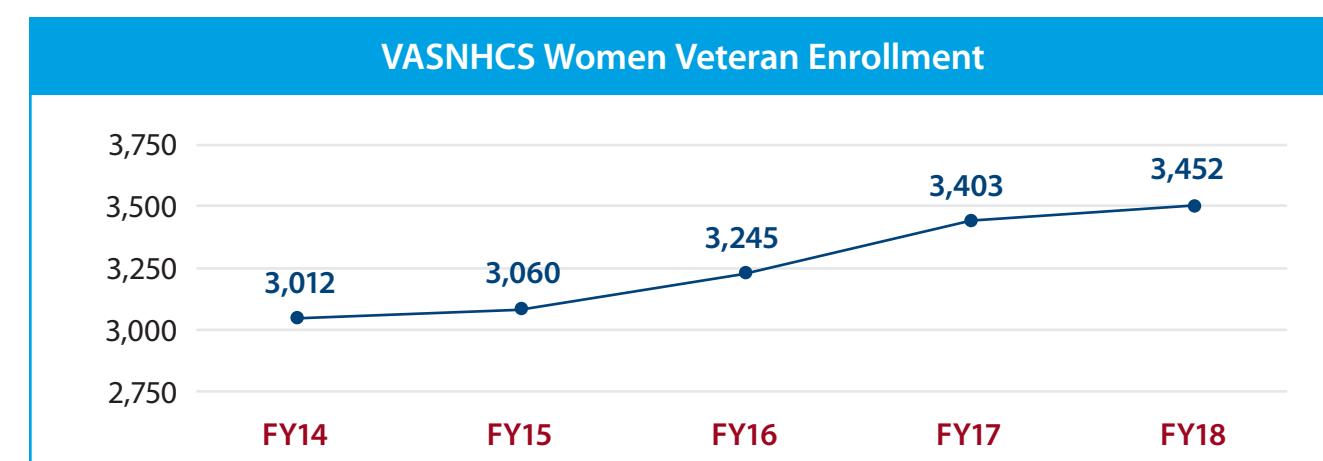
VASNHCS Total Workload Comparison (Annual)							
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	1-Year Change	5-Year Change
Unduplicated Encounters	601,099	612,791	598,584	590,285	606,979	2.8%	1.0%
Unique Patients	31,398	31,710	31,992	31,992	31,883	-0.3%	1.5%



Women Veterans

In 2016, women represented 56% of the U.S. population but only 10% of the Veteran population. Since 2007, the number of women using VA services nationwide has increased by over 45% while the number of women Veterans has increased by less than 8%. At VASNHCS, women Veteran enrollment increased by 14.6% over the past five fiscal years. Women Veterans represented 7.1% of total VASNHCS enrollment in FY18 versus 6.3% of total enrollment in FY14.

The VASNHCS Women's Health Program's mission is to support the health and well-being of women Veterans by providing comprehensive health care that honors their privacy and dignity. This team of dedicated professionals supports the VHA's directive to improve access, services, resources, facilities and workforce capacity to make health care more accessible, more sensitive to gender-specific needs and of the highest quality for women Veterans.



Rural Veterans

There are 4.7 million rural and highly rural Veterans in the U.S., and 2.8 million are enrolled in VA. Rural Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system are older compared to urban Veterans; 56% of rural Veterans are over the age of 65. The next generation of rural Veterans also has multiple medical and combat-related issues, which will require significant ongoing access to care.

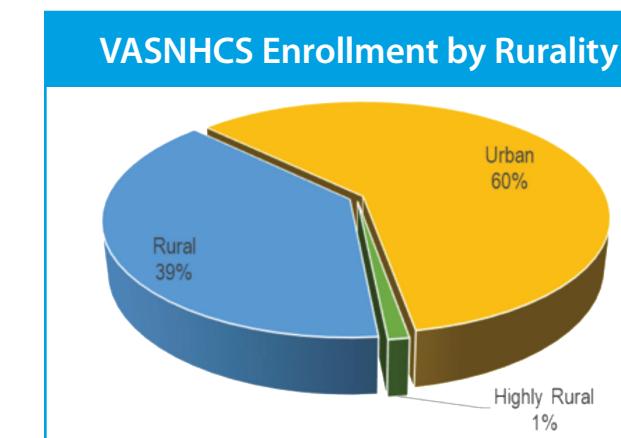
40% of enrollees in the Sierra Nevada Market are defined as rural or highly rural. VASNHCS participates in multiple Office of Rural Health (ORH) programs, including Enterprise-Wide Initiatives (EWI), which increase access to care for rural Veterans by extending program office access efforts to sites serving this important Veteran population. VASNHCS also participates in Rural Promising Practices, which are field-tested, innovative projects meeting ORH criteria and demonstrating increased access to care for rural Veterans.

- » VASNHCS recently implemented the Advance Care Planning via Group Visits (ACP-GV) Program, a National Diffusion of Excellence Gold Status Practice Initiative, which uses group discussion to help Veterans increase understanding, perception of relevance and feelings of self-efficacy related to Advance Care Planning. Nationwide, the ACP-GV program has served more than 10,000 Veterans.
- » To improve rural Veteran access to the essential services of a Clinical Pharmacy Specialist (CPS) provider, VASNHCS participated in the CPS Rural Veteran Access (CRVA) Initiative and stationed a total of six CPS providers across three rural sites of care located in Carson Valley, Nevada; Fallon, Nevada; and Auburn, California. The CPS staff also offers Clinical Video Telehealth services to Winnemucca, Nevada and Susanville, California. The CPS staff works in collaboration with primary and specialty care providers to offer care, including medication management and chronic disease state management services. In addition, a substantial percentage of CPS care is provided virtually. Between January 2018 and January 2019, the six CRVA CPS positions completed 11,874 total encounters for 5,206 patients.

Rural Veterans (cont'd)

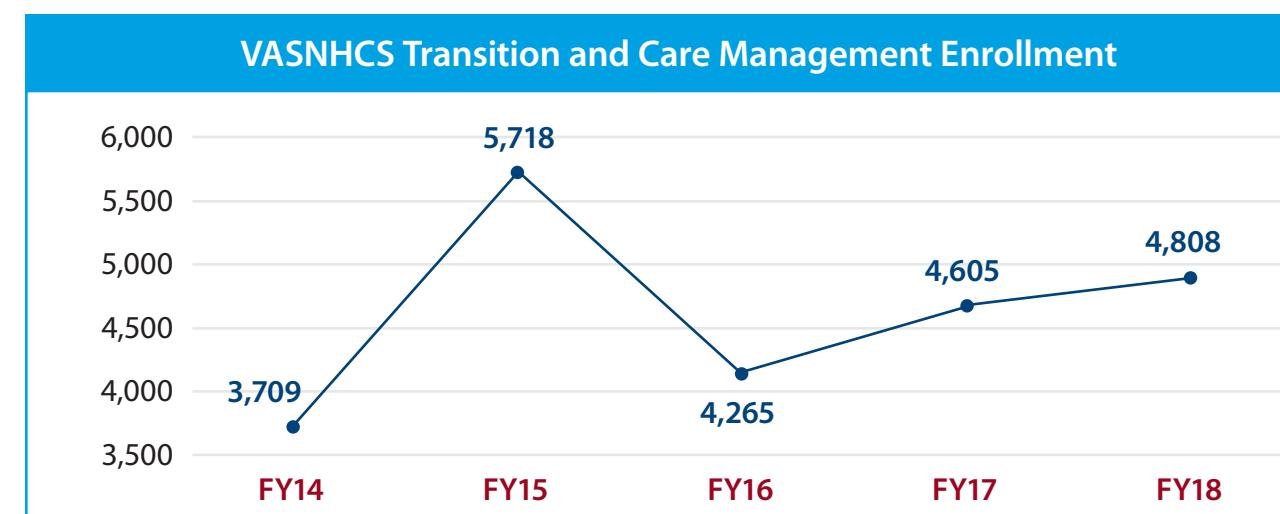
- » VASNHCs established the Nurse Transitions program, which is responsible for bridging the gap for Veterans shifting from inpatient VA care to outpatient VA care, with an emphasis on serving rural Veterans. The program staff ensures follow-up appointments are established and patients are closely monitored prior to a warm handoff to primary care.

This team works in collaboration with discharge planners, home-based primary care, hospital clinicians and Patient-Aligned Care Teams (PACTs). Additionally, the team assists Veterans being discharged from inpatient care to establish primary care at their nearest VA facility.



Transition and Care Management

The VASNHCs Transition and Care Management (TCM) Program addresses the needs of Post-9/11 Service members and Veterans as they return from deployment and/or transition from the DoD health care system to the VA health care system. The TCM team members coordinate care to meet the distinct needs of Veterans from this era. In response to the changing needs and demands of a new generation of Veterans, the practices of the TCM Program remain dynamic and continually evolve.



Veterans identified as being Post-9/11 include those deployed to an Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and/or Operation New Dawn (OIF/OEF/OND) location, and/or any other subsequent military operations.

Sites of Care

Please visit www.va.gov/find-locations to obtain directions, hours of operation and additional information on each VA site of care.

Ioannis A. Lougaris VA Medical Center (main campus)

975 Kirman Avenue
Reno, NV 89502
775-786-7200



Capitol Hill VA Homeless Clinic

350 Capitol Hill Avenue
Reno, NV 89502
775-324-6600

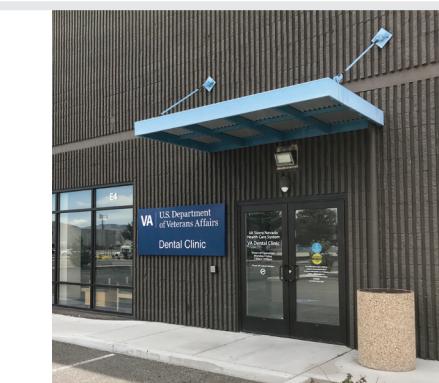
The Capitol Hill Clinic provides a full range of housing and supportive services. The clinic was recently expanded to house the VASNHCs Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC).



VA Dental Clinic

3674 South Virginia Street, Unit E4
Reno, NV 89502
775-786-7200

The VA Dental Clinic provides comprehensive dental care, oral surgery and oral implantology. Inpatient dental procedures are performed at the main campus, including operating room oral surgery services.



VA Eye Clinic

2295 Kietzke Lane
Reno, NV 89502
775-786-7200

The VA Eye Clinic offers complete optometric and ophthalmic care, including medical retinal care (laser treatment of diabetic retinopathy and retinal tears, and intravitreal injections), cataract surgery, and minor in-office oculoplastic and glaucoma laser procedures.



East Campus VA Clinic

1201 Corporate Boulevard, Suite 100
Reno, NV 89502
775-786-7200

Services:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Blood Draw |  Primary Care |
|  Mental Health |  Social Work |
|  Nutrition |  Telehealth (various services) |
|  Pharmacy (consultation) |  Women's Health |



Carson Valley VA Clinic

1330 Waterloo Lane, Suite 101
Gardnerville, NV 89410
775-782-5265

Services:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Blood Draw |  Primary Care |
|  Mental Health |  Social Work |
|  Nutrition |  Telehealth (various services) |
|  Pharmacy (consultation) |  Women's Health |



Lahontan Valley VA Clinic

1020 New River Parkway, Suite 304
Fallon, NV 89406
775-428-6161

Services:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Blood Draw |  Primary Care |
|  Mental Health |  Social Work |
|  Nutrition |  Telehealth (various services) |
|  Pharmacy (consultation) |  Women's Health |



Winnemucca Rural Outreach Clinic

3298 Traders Way
Winnemucca, NV 89445
775-623-9575

Services:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Blood Draw |  Primary Care |
|  Mental Health |  Social Work |
|  Nutrition |  Telehealth (various services) |
|  Pharmacy (consultation) |  Women's Health |

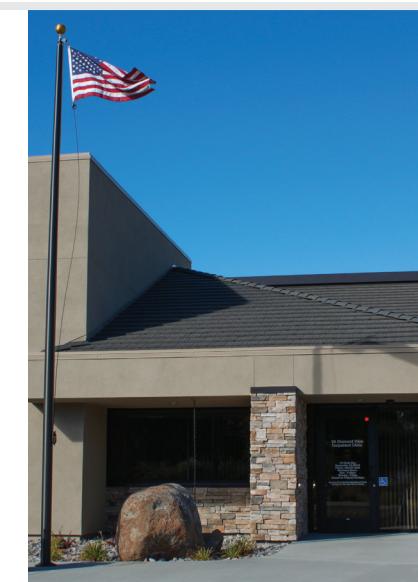


Diamond View VA Clinic

110 Bella Way
Susanville, CA 96130
530-251-4550

Services:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Blood Draw |  Primary Care |
|  Mental Health |  Social Work |
|  Nutrition |  Telehealth (various services) |
|  Pharmacy (consultation) |  Women's Health |

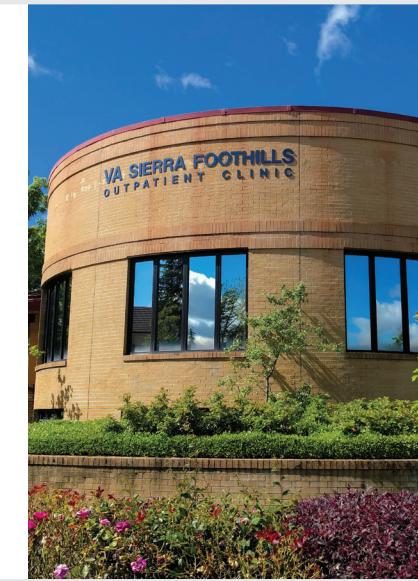


Sierra Foothills VA Clinic

11985 Heritage Oaks Place, Suite 100
Auburn, CA 95603
530-889-0872

Services:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Blood Draw |  Primary Care |
|  Mental Health |  Social Work |
|  Nutrition |  Telehealth (various services) |
|  Pharmacy (consultation) |  Women's Health |



Quality

Access

VASNHCS outperformed the VA national average on four of six critical patient access measures in FY18. Completing 85.3% of 8,864 new appointments within 30 days across primary care, specialty care and mental health evidences the health care system's commitment to providing timely services. Moreover, 91.9% of 65,559 appointments for established patients were accomplished within 30 days.

FY18 Percent of Patients seen within 30 days*			
	Metric	VASNHCS	VA National
Primary Care	New	91.04%	76.49%
	Established	95.10%	97.14%
Specialty Care	New	84.81%	73.14%
	Established	94.94%	94.48%
Mental Health	New	87.79%	90.34%
	Established	97.94%	97.60%

*Access for new patients is compared to the Create Date, which is the date the appointment is created. Access for established patients is compared to the Patient Indicated Date (PID), which is the date the patient wants to be seen.

Recent VASNHCS Accomplishments

Supporting VA Strategic Priorities

Customer Service

- » Launched "Cook Serve" to provide inpatient and resident Veterans with fresh menu options prepared daily, as well as alternative meal options catering to individualized diets.
- » Adopted the use of VEText to allow Veterans to easily cancel or change their appointments through their smart devices.
- » Established the Community Living Center Ambassadors Volunteer Program.

- » Within the first two months of implementing the Telestroke program, VASNHCS prevented 12 patients from being transferred unnecessarily to a primary stroke center, thereby improving patient experience and saving the medical center over \$227,000.
- » Created two Community Care Coordination Nurse positions to help navigate Veterans' transition of care from non-VA Choice facilities or other community care settings, while ensuring follow-up VA care is reestablished in a timely and cost-effective manner.
- » Stationed a provider in triage to write orders and provide diagnoses, facilitating timelier care in the Emergency Department.
- » Procured an ultracentrifuge, allowing for the testing of high lipemic samples in-house, reducing testing turnaround times and increasing efficiency.

Supporting the VA MISSION Act

- » Major components of the VA MISSION Act went into effect on June 6, 2019. The MISSION Act will enhance health care for America's Heroes through streamlining the community care process, establishing a new urgent care benefit and expanding the use of telehealth. VASNHCS recently established the Community Care Service, led by a physician service chief, to support local MISSION Act implementation strategies. This team is actively establishing Veteran Care Agreements (VCA) with community providers. Currently, there are 18 urgent care centers in the Reno area available to Veterans as part of the new benefit, and the Community Care Service is working diligently to bolster the health care system's community network in outlying areas to support rural Veterans.
- » Continue to provide same-day access to primary care services for new patients. Successfully recruited multiple primary care providers in FY18.
- » Provided MyHealtheVet direct access to the Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACTS).
- » Began offering direct scheduling for audiology, dental, laboratory, mental health, optometry, primary care social work and prosthetics services.
- » Increased access to outpatient and inpatient physical therapy services through expanded service hours, including weekends and holidays. Began offering direct scheduling to physical therapy seating and mobility assessments.
- » Continue to expand use of telehealth, improving convenience and reducing patient travel. Increased use of store-and-forward* and computer video telehealth services by over 50% between FY17 and FY18. Over 25% of primary care providers utilize VA Video Connect (VVC).

*Store-and-forward telehealth involves the acquisition and storing of clinical information (e.g., data, image, sound, video) that is then forwarded to (or retrieved by) another site for clinical evaluation.

- » Increased Telederm utilization by over 400% between FY18 and FY19.
- » Ranked first out of all VA medical centers for birth cohort hepatitis C virus (HCV) screening. Treated over 500 Veterans with HCV with a 98% cure rate.
- » Directly assisted with significantly reducing the state's opioid overdose death rate. Nevada improved from the fourth highest opioid overdose rate in the U.S. in 2012 to the 26th in 2016.
- » Decreased the facility fall rate by 21% between FY17 and FY18.
- » Restructured the ICU to incorporate six stepdown beds to ensure patients receive the appropriate level care and to better focus clinical resources.

Business Transformation

- » Across the health care system, new and creative ways to leverage the Light Electronic Action Framework (LEAF) to digitize and streamline work processes are being created. LEAF is an in-house VA Web application allowing users to develop electronic forms and workflows to efficiently accomplish tasks previously coordinated via hard copy forms and email traffic. VASNHCs has converted over 30 processes into LEAF and successfully managed over 12,000 paperless requests.
- » Chartered a multi-disciplinary Health Care Failure Mode Effects and Analysis (HFMEA) team facilitated by the Patient Safety Manager to address the handling of Veteran belongings in the Emergency Department, CLC and inpatient units. This effort led to a reduction of police reports filed for "Larceny – Theft" in these locations by 61.4%, as well as a reduction in small tort claims by 70.6%.
- » Achieved the lowest Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP) average prescription cost per patient in the VA Region, while increasing the total number of CMOP prescriptions and improving patient convenience.
- » Decreased pharmaceutical drug costs by over \$1.5 million since FY11 through the concerted efforts of the Antibiotic Stewardship Program.
- » Transitioned clinical staff away from traditional transcription services to voice-activated software usage, allowing medical notes to be available immediately in the patient's record.
- » Converted a paper-based admissions process to an electronic process to improve customer service for Veterans and clinical staff.
- » Implementing new computer-assisted clinical documentation and a coding software project to help clinicians document patient care using high-quality medical notes.
- » Established uniform hospital-wide position descriptions for nursing assistants and licensed practical nurses, facilitating better cross-coverage across clinical areas.

- » Reinforced a culture of continuous improvement and aligned business practices to support the creation of a high-performance health care network. Six VASNHCs best practices were submitted to the VHA Shark Tank Diffusion Hub: Partnership for Free Legal Services; CLC Partners Against Pain; Housekeeping Cart Cleaning Attachment; Innovation Academy; Patient/Resident Transition from Acute Inpatient Mental Health Unit to CLC; and Telework Standard Work.

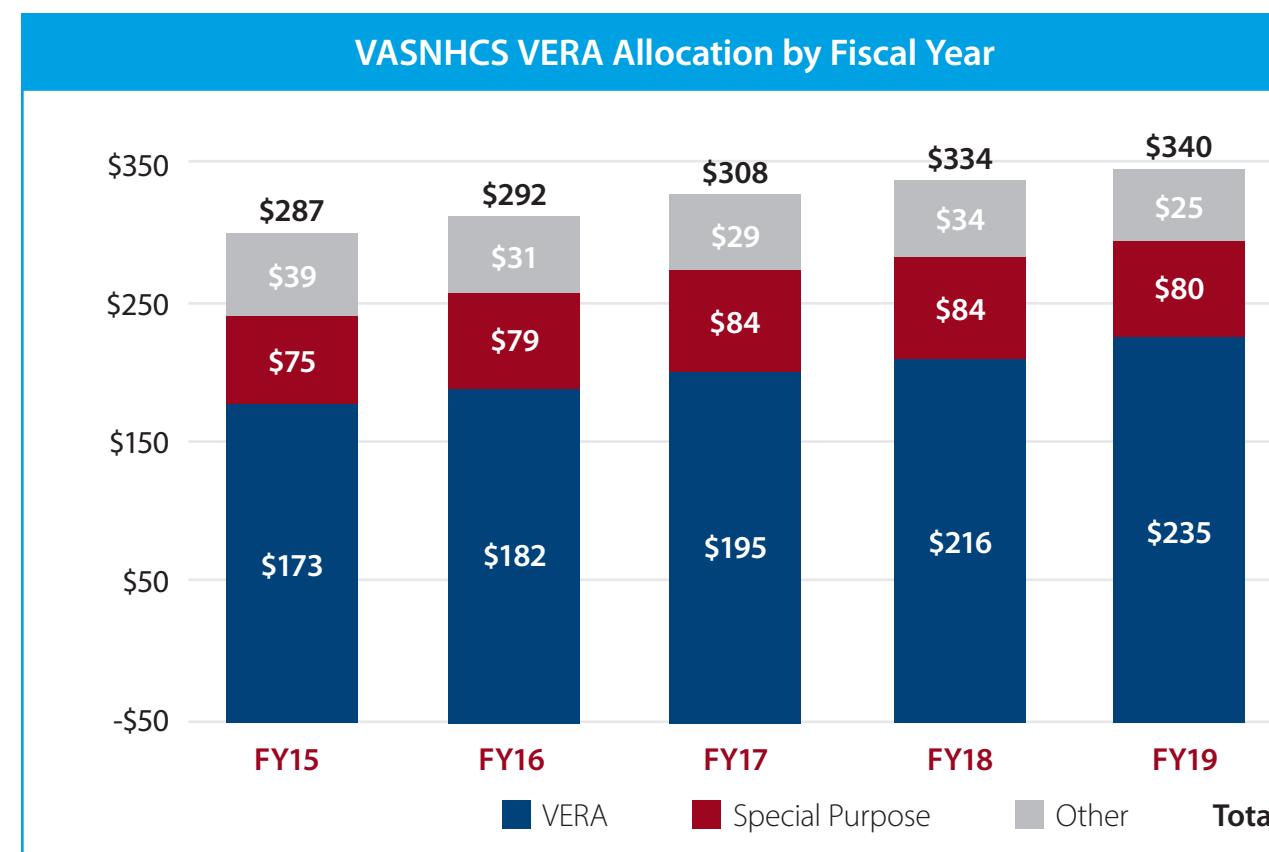
VA/DoD Collaboration

- » Expanded the Navy Corpsmen Training Program, which was identified as a benchmark program by the Navy Surgeon General. The program allows Navy Corpsmen to increase and maintain clinical proficiency through temporary assignments in the VASNHCs Emergency Department, inpatient units, operating rooms, mental health service and dental clinic.
- » Sustained the DoD sharing agreement with Naval Hospital Lemoore, providing orthopedic, mental health and dental services to active-duty Service members.
- » Earned GOLD Cornerstone Recognition in Patient Safety for FY18. The rigorous national scoring criteria includes patient safety event reporting numbers, completion of risk assessments and action planning, education, and sustainment of improved quality projects. VA health care systems across the country vie for this recognition award every year. This achievement represents a true commitment to excellence and a critical step towards becoming an HRO.
- » Adopted the Joint Patient Safety Reporting (JPSR) system in April 2018, in collaboration with DoD. Since implementation, the numbers of reported events and near misses continue to climb.
- » Hosted the first ever Northern Nevada National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Federal Coordination Center Full Scale Exercise in coordination with the United States Air Force (USAF). Coordinated the East Coast USAF C-130 patient transport capability and patient movement in conjunction with community partners to facilitate acute care transfer from a disaster-affected region within 600 miles of the Ioannis A. Lougaris VA Medical Center. The mission was then carried out in the "real world" just one week later by the same USAF unit in response to evacuation orders issued for Hurricane Florence.
- » Continue to collaborate with DoD helping to supply a cadre of volunteers who visit with hospitalized Veterans; activities include luncheons, field trips, ice cream socials, car shows and room visits.

Resources

Budget

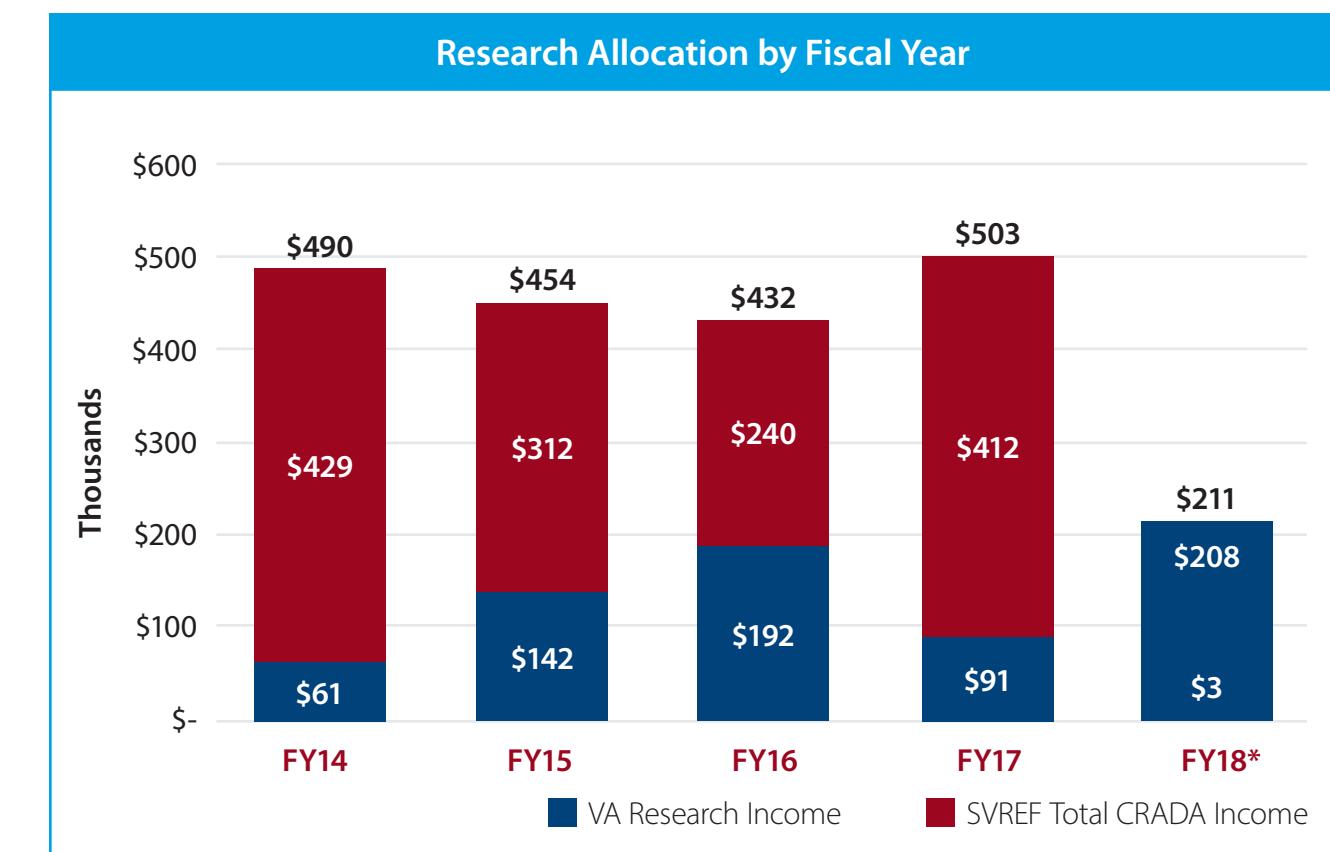
VA medical center budgets are primarily funded by the Veteran's Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA) model. Fiscal allocations are made to each of the regional networks based on where the Veterans go for their care. Resources for the coming year are allocated according to the number of Veterans seen in the respective region in previous years. Regional networks then determine appropriate fiscal distribution to the individual health care systems within the network. For FY19, the VASNHCS budget totaled \$340 million, consisting of \$235 million in VERA dollars along with a total of \$105 million in special purpose and other funding.



Research

The VASNHCS Research and Development (R&D) Program supports research funded through the VA Central Office of Research and Development (ORD), including the Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) and multisite VA-funded studies. Research funded through external sources, such as the pharmaceutical industry, the DoD, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), specialty foundations and the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), is managed through the Sierra Veterans Research and Education Foundation (SVREF). Research managed through SVREF is usually performed under a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA). VASNHCS Research Service also supports investigator-initiated research conducted by staff and students, such as medical and pharmacy residents, graduate nursing students and members of other health care disciplines.

Major areas of focus include oncology, pulmonology, cardiology, women's health, neurology and mental health. Both the VASNHCS research program and its affiliate UNR Institutional Review Board are fully accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs. VASNHCS also maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with the VA Central Institutional Review Board, SVREF and UNR.



*FY18 funding dipped due to the closeout of an FY17 study titled, "A Double-Blind Placebo-Controlled Study of Lithium for Preventing Repeated Suicidal Self-Directed Violence in Patients with Depression or Bipolar Disorder."

VASNHCS has formally joined the Million Veteran Program (MVP), which establishes a centralized infrastructure to collect and curate several types of data on participants, such as genomic, health, lifestyle and military exposure data, and allows the use of such data for a broad spectrum of previously undefined research. Users of the VA health care system nationwide will be invited to participate in a longitudinal study with a key aim of better understanding the interrelation of genetic characteristics, behaviors, environmental factors and Veteran health.

Willing participants will provide a blood sample for banking, responses to brief questionnaires, consent to allow access to clinical data from VA electronic medical records and other sources, and permit re-contact as part of future data-collection activities. A key goal of the program is to advance health care for Veterans by incorporating their genetic information in clinical decision-making.

The capability to develop the infrastructure and capacity for the application of clinically validated genetic tests across the VA system for the benefit of Veterans is essential. Also essential is the development of a leading-edge genomics research program within VA, which will enable genomic discoveries that can translate to improvements in the health care of Veterans as well as the Nation.



Partnering today for a healthier tomorrow.

Million Veteran Program



Robert Brown
Veteran, United States Army

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Finding new ways to prevent and treat illnesses in Veterans



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Veterans Health Administration
Office of Research & Development

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866-441-6075



Workforce

1,503

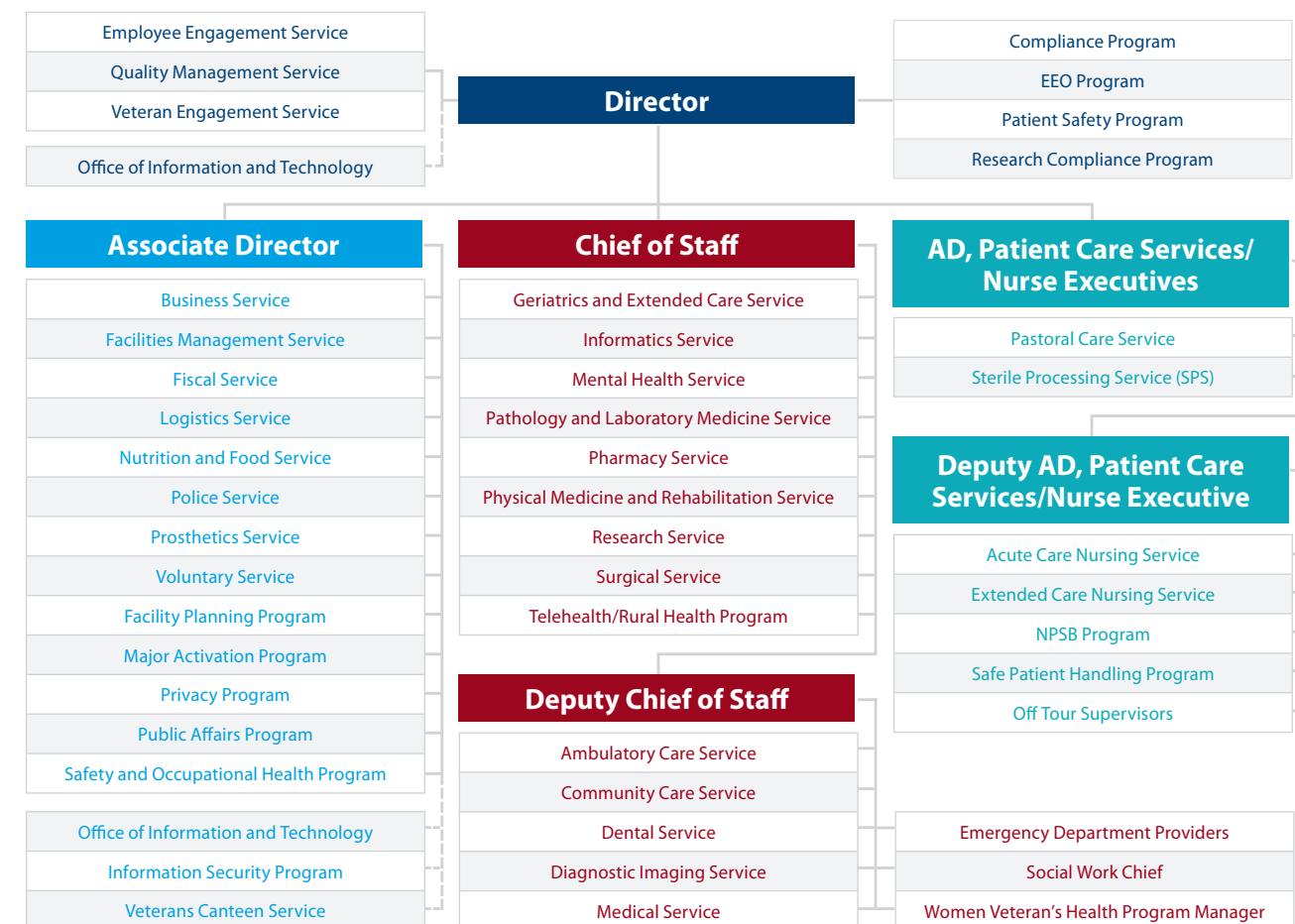
onboard employees as
of December 2018.

- 31.7% of health care system staff members are Veterans.
- 22% of the workforce is retirement-eligible.
- 56.1% of all service/section chiefs are women.

Workforce Diversity

By Ethnicity/National Origin		By Age	
White	1,071	24 and under	11
Black	81	25-29	65
Hispanic	96	30-34	147
Asian	198	35-44	387
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	17	45-54	411
American Indian	34	55-64	375
Other	6	65+	107

VASNHCS Organizational chart



Training and Development

482 trainee requests were processed in the 2018 calendar year (including students, interns, residents and fellows). VASNHCs trainee programs include:

Student Programs:

-  Audiology
-  Medical Imaging
-  Medicine
-  Nursing (registered nurse, clinical nurse leader, nurse practitioner)
-  Optometry
-  Pharmacy
-  Physical Therapy
-  Physician Assistant (new program)
-  Social Work

Internship Programs:

-  Dietetics
-  Employee Engagement
-  Psychology (doctoral)

Residency Programs:

-  Family and Internal Medicine
-  General Surgery
-  Optometry
-  Pharmacy
-  Psychiatry

Fellowship Programs:

-  Geriatrics and Extended Care/Hospice and Palliative

Affiliated Schools:

-  A.T. Still University
-  California Northstate University
-  California School of Professional Psychology, Los Angeles
-  California School of Professional Psychology, Sacramento
-  California School of Professional Psychology, San Francisco
-  Career College of Northern Nevada
-  Carrington College
-  Idaho State University
-  Indiana State University
-  Kaplan University School of Nursing
-  New Mexico State University – Doctor of Nursing Practice
-  Oregon State University
-  Pacific Graduate School of Psychology – Stanford Consortium
-  Pacific University – College of Optometry
-  Pacific University – School of Physical Therapy
-  Roseman University of Health Sciences
-  Truckee Meadows Community College
-  University of California, Berkeley
-  University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine – East Bay Surgical Program
-  University of Nevada, Reno – Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine
-  University of Nevada, Reno – Orvis School of Nursing
-  University of Nevada, Reno – School of Medicine
-  University of Utah

Notable Training Achievements

- » Expanded academic affiliations with the University of Nevada, Reno to incorporate mental health nurse practitioners and clinical nurse leaders.
- » Implemented a pathways program to train nurses for future critical care positions.
- » Seven registered nurses achieved national certifications in their areas of specialty.
- » Launched a training and development program for new supervisors to enable success and foster a culture of high employee engagement among all work teams. Offerings include *Next Level Coaching*, *Foundations of Change Management*, *Coaching Connection* and *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*.
- » Included a “Port a Catheters” skills station at Professional Development Day to teach clinical staff the proper techniques for appropriately administering central lines, thereby enhancing patient safety and mitigating risk of infection.
- » Developed the Chemotherapy Seminar hosted by infusion nurses, which employs evidence-based practice education material to familiarize nurses with cancer, chemotherapy and biotherapy. This effort is creating a safer environment for patients, while reducing costs and increasing patient satisfaction.



Workforce Development

Servant Leadership

VASNHCS is embracing the servant leadership philosophy. As a participant in the Third River Partners' pilot program, VASNHCS is on the forefront of embedding servant leadership principles within VA and transforming leadership behaviors at all levels. The Executive Leadership Team and Employee Engagement Service are facilitating training opportunities to ensure all frontline supervisors are exposed to the Serving Leader Development Experience.

Each interactive training session covers one (or more) of the five powerful actions of the serving leader, while engaging and challenging supervisors to transform their teams, organization and community. Introducing servant leadership into VASNHCS represents a shift for the organization and an important milestone on the path towards high reliability.

The health care system is sustaining its momentum by qualifying for the next phase of the pilot; it has already surpassed the program's gold standard. As of April 2019, 70% of VASNHCS frontline supervisors have completed the Serving Leader Development Experience.

Systems Redesign

The VASNHCS Systems Redesign Team created Innovation Academy, a homegrown employee training program, which integrates LEAN techniques at the Yellow and Green Belt levels and matches students with strategically aligned facility improvement projects. The program curriculum was selected as the national model for VA LEAN training and has been recognized by the University of Nevada, Reno School of Business for credit towards a Master of Business Administration degree. The Systems Redesign Team spread the adoption of LEAN improvement methods through mentoring staff at the VA Pacific Islands Medical Center, providing on-site leadership coaching and assistance with implementing a local Innovation Academy.

The team also hosted two sessions of Innovation Academy training for various medical center representatives across the VA Heartland Network, which included train-the-trainer for Black Belt staff members.

VASNHCS was awarded funding by the VA Innovators Network to adopt the spread of two exciting innovations: robotic pets for dementia patients in the CLC and 3D printing in Prosthetics Service. The health care system is also spreading an innovation developed

by the VASNHC Environmental Management Service to three other VA sites: a sweeping attachment that connects to the bottom of housekeeping carts, passively cleaning floors as the carts move throughout the facility.

All Employee Survey (FY18)

VA issued the annual All Employee Survey (AES) in June 2018 to its workforce of more than 375,000 employees. 235,884 employees (62% of all employees) completed the assessment, surpassing the national response rate goal of 60% for this voluntary workplace survey. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie stated, "VA employees are talented and committed professionals who rally behind a great mission. Veterans deserve a VA workforce that demonstrates pride in its work that results in strong customer service, and the survey shows we are making important progress in that direction."

The VASNHC response rate exceeded the national rate with 78% of staff taking the opportunity to provide important feedback to the health care system.

This is the highest AES response rate in the history of the health care system. VASNHC staff identified Accountability, Communication and Growth as their top priorities for the health care system.

70.7% of the 8,002 aggregated scores, spanning 57 factors across 143 workgroups, **were rated as "Good to Great" by VASNHC staff.** Seven workgroups rated VASNHC as "Good to Great" for all 57 factors:

1. Associate Director's Office – Direct Reports
2. Fiscal Service
3. Ambulatory Care – Admin, Supervisors, Managers
4. Geriatrics and Extended Care – Direct Reports
5. Medicine – Special Procedures Unit – RN/Tech/CNA
6. Mental Health – HUD-VASH
7. Director's Office – Direct Reports

100% of workgroups with reported data identified VASNHC Extra Effort¹ as "Good to Great." 99.3% of workgroups with reported data identified VASNHC as "Good to Great" for More than Paycheck², and 93.7% rated VASNHC as "Good to Great" for Workplace Customer Satisfaction³.

Breakdown of FY18 All Employee Survey Results	
Score Category	# of Responses
Good to Great	5,659
Okay	1,540
Needs Attention	803
Total	8,002

VASNHC excelled in the FY18 AES and the health care system is continuing to invest resources in further improving employee satisfaction. VASNHC is chartering additional process-improvement initiatives, coordinated through the System Redesign Team. VASNHC is aiming to increase AES scores in several areas, including *Employee Exhaustion*⁴, *Promotion Opportunity*⁵ and *Staffing*⁶. Executive Leadership tasked each workgroup supervisor with creating an AES action plan, tailored to their specific areas and based upon identified priorities suggested by the workgroup staff. Many AES factors have been incorporated into the Director's executive appraisal to ensure awareness, buy-in and follow-up across the health care system.



¹Extra Effort: I always do more than is actually required.

²More Than Paycheck: My job is more than just a paycheck to me.

³Workplace Customer Satisfaction: I believe Veterans and their families are satisfied with the products and services we provide.

⁴Employee Exhaustion: I feel burned out from my work; symptoms include exhaustion (physical), depersonalization (emotional) and reduced achievement (cognitive).

⁵Promotion Opportunity: I am satisfied with the number of opportunities for promotion.

⁶Staffing: We have enough staff in my workgroup to meet workload demands. We have the right mix of staff in my workgroup to meet workload demands.

Spotlights

Employee Spotlight

Tashianna Ragar is a Registered Nurse in Surgical Service who demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to the VA ICARE values through her exemplary work habits and interactions with Veterans, their family members and coworkers. Tashianna can always be seen with a smile and a positive outlook towards any situation. Her sunny disposition is helpful in elevating a difficult day or encouraging a Veteran who is struggling to have a positive experience.

When Tashianna calls patients to schedule urodynamic testing in the Specialty Clinic, she ensures the Veteran is fully aware of what the testing entails. Many aspects of urodynamic testing sound intimidating and often the patient becomes distressed during this discussion. Tashianna encourages Veterans to voice their feelings, asks politely if they would like to continue discussing the procedure, then respectfully inquires whether they are open to scheduling an appointment. She always encourages Veterans to make their own decisions, while appropriately educating them about how accomplishing the testing will allow the urologist to gather additional information and better guide their treatments.

Tashianna always strives to define processes in the most efficient and consistent manner. Recently, the orthopedic providers began using a new product that was unfamiliar to the clinical staff. Tashianna insisted on helping address the issue through speaking with the vendor and reading educational materials to gain a full understanding. Tashianna then created a workflow document with detailed instructions available to all staff. She ultimately made a daunting procedure seem less intimidating by going the extra mile. Tashianna provides World Class Care and Service to America's Heroes through her remarkable professionalism and dedication, and she is the very deserving recipient of the 2018 VASNHCs Employee of the Year Award.



Tashianna Ragar, Registered Nurse, accepting her 2018 VASNHCs Employee of the Year Award presented by Charles Benninger, Nurse Executive.

Voluntary Service

FY18 Voluntary Service Statistics

Volunteers	332	Regularly scheduled volunteers; 90 new volunteers joined in FY18
Volunteer Hours	41,297	Number of hours of service provided by volunteers
Volunteer Value	\$1,378,465	Total donation value plus hourly value
Volunteer Driving	212,423	Total miles driven by the Voluntary Transportation Network
Ambassadors	4,285	Number of hours served providing Next Level Customer Service training

Notable Achievements:

- » VASNHCs received the 2018 American Spirit Award for Student Recruitment, a national recognition for successful volunteer recruitment initiatives within VA Voluntary Service.
- » VASNHCs also served as the lead pilot site for the VA Central Office Voluntary Service survey to evaluate and improve volunteer onboarding experience.

Volunteer Spotlight

Mr. Jim Mort was named the 2018 Volunteer of the Year for the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System. While all of the volunteers are wonderful and the medical center could not function without them, Jim earned this recognition through his devoted commitment to giving so much of his personal time to help Veterans. If ever a need arises or a volunteer is needed at the last minute, you can always count on Jim to step up at a moment's notice to help. Jim is always looking for opportunities to do more for Veterans and he feels grateful that the Chief of Voluntary Services, Ms. Stephanie Torian, is always supportive of his new ideas for how to do more.



Jim Mort, U.S. Army Veteran, accepting his VASNHCs Volunteer of the Year Award presented by Lisa Howard, Director.

Jim moved to Reno with his family when he was 4 years old. He was later drafted into the U.S. Army and deployed to Vietnam for one year until he was injured. Jim was a driver on Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) and hit a mine, which caused severe injury to his ears and hearing. When Jim returned to Reno, he went to the University of Nevada, Reno to receive a degree in Secondary Education. While going to school, he sold women's shoes to make money. Jim has no regrets about selling shoes because it was how he met the love of his life, Penny. Jim and Penny have been married for 46 years. They have two daughters and two grandchildren.

Jim wanted to be a teacher but discovered quickly after completing his university degree that his hearing loss made it very difficult to manage a classroom. His supervisors urged him to go to VA and in 1973, he came to VASNHCs to seek his care. Jim discovered that he was very talented at helping people with their money and ended up working in the finance industry for over 20 years. He retired three times and was repeatedly asked to come back to work because of his high level of skill.

After his third retirement, Jim decided that he would like to spend his time helping other Veterans. As a member of the Benevolent Order of the Elks in Reno, Nevada, Jim has served on the Elk's Veterans Committee for 14 years. It was through the Elk's Club that Jim spent more and more time at the Reno VA and eventually decided that he wanted to also volunteer at our facility. On Tuesdays, Jim spends seven to eight hours driving Veterans to and from their VA appointments. On Thursdays, he spends two hours with the CLC residents to facilitate "Trivia Thursdays." He shared how he loves to slowly engage Veterans who have been reclusive by challenging them with trivia conversation starters. Now he claims, "Veterans who would never speak with anyone are talking with me and others about all of the fun trivia that I bring to them for the day." On Fridays, Jim staffs the complimentary coffee cart for Veterans who want to enjoy a hot cup of coffee and a sincere smile.

To say that Jim has been invaluable to Veterans and to VASNHCs would be an understatement. What makes Jim so special is that he cares deeply for our Veterans and his humility is inspiring. Jim shared what he likes most about volunteering:


I served my country but now I get to serve others who have also served this Nation. ■■■

—Jim Mort, 2018 Volunteer of the Year

Community Engagement

Partnerships

VASNHCs partners with the following organizations:

★ A Better Place	★ Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
★ Alliance for Therapy Dogs	★ Alzheimer's Association
★ American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)	★ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
★ American Iron Sports Foundation Incorporated	★ American Legion
★ American Psychological Association	★ American Red Cross
★ American Veterans (AMVETS)	★ Assistance League of Reno-Sparks
★ Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks	★ Blue Star Mothers of America
★ Boy Scout Pack 15	★ Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada
★ City of Carson City	★ City of Reno
★ City of Sparks	★ Conservatory of Movement - Royal Academy of Dance
★ Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary	★ The Drakulich Art Foundation for Freedom of Expression
★ Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada	★ Fit But Not Forgotten, partnership with City of Reno
★ Fleet Reserve Association and Ladies Auxiliary	★ Food Bank of Northern Nevada
★ Guardianship Services of Nevada, Inc.	★ Guitar for Veterans
★ Indian Health Services	★ Job Connect
★ Keller Williams Group	★ Kiwanis Bike Program
★ Knights of Columbus	★ Marine Corps League
★ Masonic Service Association of North America	★ Military Order of the Purple Heart
★ The Million Veteran Program (MVP)	★ National Alliance on Mental Illness (Reno and Western Nevada Chapters)
★ National Society Daughters of the American Revolution	★ Naval Air Station Fallon

★ Naval Hospital Lemoore, Naval Branch Health Clinic	★ Navy League of the United States, Reno and Carson City Councils
★ Nevada Air National Guard	★ Nevada Army National Guard
★ Nevada Attorney General's Office	★ Nevada Coalition for Suicide Prevention
★ Nevada Department of Health and Human Services	★ Nevada Department of Veterans Services
★ Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health	★ Nevada Humane Society's General Infantry (G.I.) Dogs Program
★ Nevada Fiduciary Solutions	★ Nevada State Fire Marshal
★ Nevada Legal Services	★ Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention
★ Nevada Senior Guide Account Executive	★ Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
★ Nevada State Lands	★ Nevada Veterans Coalition
★ Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services	★ Northern Nevada Classic Cars
★ Northern Nevada Medical Center	★ Northern Nevada Physician Wellness Coalition
★ Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery	★ Northern Nevada Veterans Resource Center
★ Paralyzed Veterans of America	★ Reno Air Racing Association
★ Reno Valley Assisted Living and Retirement Center	★ Renown Medical Center
★ Sanford Center for Aging	★ Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center
★ The Salvation Army	★ Shultz Financial Group
★ Sierra Donor Services	★ Sierra Nevada Transportation Coalition
★ State Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Suicide Prevention Task Force	★ ThinkFirst of Northern Nevada
★ Truckee Meadows Veteran Community Collaborative	★ United Blood Services
★ United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	★ United Veterans Services
★ University of Nevada, Reno – Veteran Services	★ Verdi Elementary School
★ Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Reno Regional Office	★ Vet Center

★ Veterans Guest House	★ Veterans Helping Veterans for Bikes
★ Veterans Memorial Elementary School	★ Veterans of Foreign Wars and Axillary
★ Veterans Resource Centers of America	★ Veterans Upward Bound Program
★ Vietnam Veterans of America	★ Washoe County
★ Washoe County Human Services Agency Senior Advisory Board	★ Washoe County Public Guardian Office
★ Washoe County School District	★ Washoe County Welfare
★ Washoe Legal Services	★ Welcome All Veterans Everywhere (WAVE), Douglas County
★ Wild Whimsical Women	★ The Yoga Center Reno

Recent Partnership Activity

- » Supported Sierra Donor Services of Nevada's mission to enhance lives through donation and transplantation by maintaining 100% compliance with no missed referrals in 2018. The average time from death to referral exceeded the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services recommendation of 60 minutes with an average of 46 minutes.
- » Hosted the Office of Military Legal Assistance (OMLA) Community Resource Fair, providing free legal advice to Veterans and family members on issues ranging from establishing wills and Powers of Attorney (POAs) to understanding disability ratings.
- » Coordinated the Annual Diversity Fair alongside City of Reno Adaptive Sports, City of Reno Police and Fire Departments, Nevada Department of Veterans Services and Reno VA Regional Office (VARO).
- » Participated in Reno's first Fleet Week celebration, honoring the U.S. Navy and its proud history of protecting our country.
- » Held VA Training for 1st Sergeants of the Nevada Air National Guard.
- » Participated in the Nevada County All Veterans Stand Down at the Nevada County Fairgrounds in Grass Valley, California.
- » Hosted the VA Fall Meal for Veterans, during which staff and volunteers served meals to Veterans.
- » Presented an overview and updates on VASNHCs Telehealth and Rural Health Programs at the October Healthy Communities Coalition of Lyon and Storey Counties breakfast meeting.

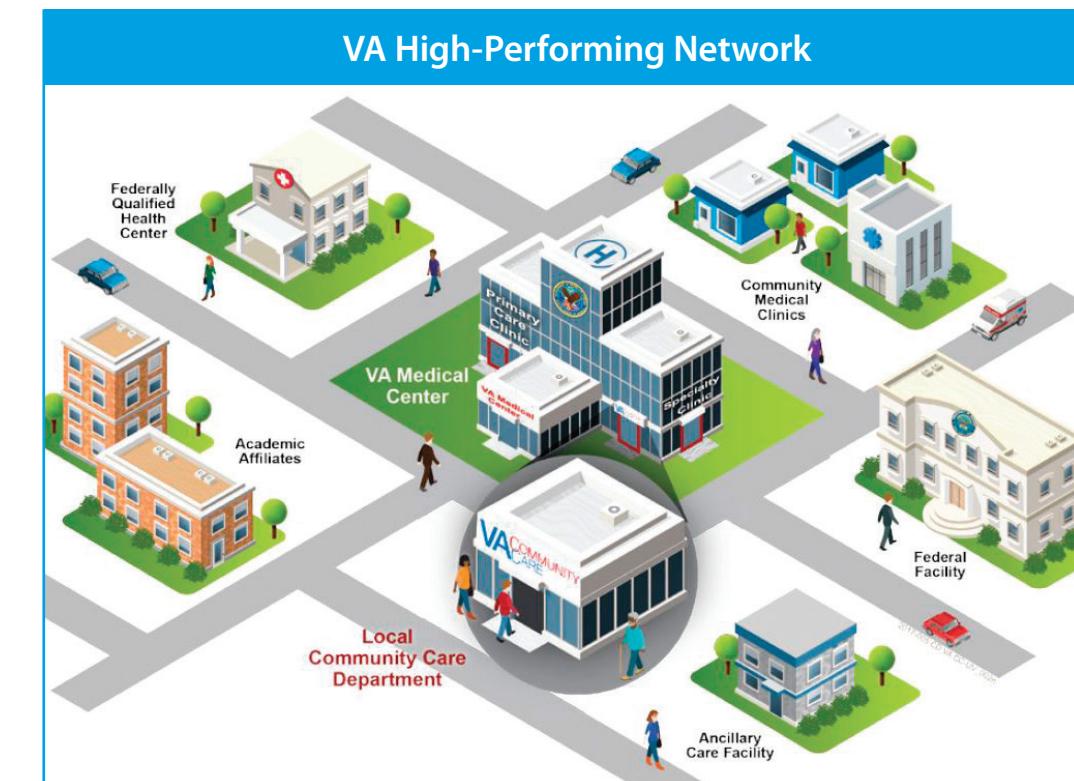
- » Joined the City of Reno and multiple homeless organizations at the Reno Event Center for the Reno Homeless Connect to provide the homeless community with food, clothing and supplies along with assistance for Veteran enrollment and support services.
- » Participated in Military Day at the Legislature by exhibiting Women Veteran portraits at the Nevada State Legislature Building in Carson City.
- » Supported Military Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The medical center hosted a showing of *The Invisible War* and facilitated subsequent panel discussion with Military Sexual Trauma (MST) survivors.
- » Displayed t-shirts designed by survivors of Military Sexual Violence at the main campus as part of the Clothes Line Project.
- » Hosted the second annual Veteran Baby Shower coordinated by Women Veterans Program Managers.
- » Helped orchestrate the Reno Art Town project “Through Her Eyes” with support from the VASNHCs Recreation Therapy Photography Group, the Acting Secretary of VA and the National Commander of Disabled American Veterans (DAV).
- » Sponsored the first community-wide meeting for local pastors to receive training on issues related to post-deployment challenges for Veterans.
- » Invited the community-at-large to attend multiple town hall events, where VASNHCs Executive Leadership presented an overview of the ongoing and upcoming construction projects, and welcomed comments, questions and concerns.
- » Oversee the Fit But Not Forgotten Program, a weekly fitness program for Veterans coordinated through the City of Reno to encourage a healthy lifestyle. The program offers aquatics, weight training and aerobics, and recently expanded to include yoga and tai chi.
- » Started the Lifting with Lisa program in partnership with American Iron Gym, which welcomes Veterans to participate in a six-month training program with the VASNHCs Director and ultimately compete in a weight-lifting competition.
- » Established a memorandum of agreement with the Upstate Nevada CrossFit gym to provide therapeutic training twice per week as part of a substance abuse recovery program.
- » Furthered VA's goal to end Veteran suicide through hosting the second annual Spartan Day Pledge. This noteworthy event engages a younger Veteran population and invites all Veterans to take the pledge: *I will not take my own life by my own hand until I talk to my battle buddy first.*

Preparing for the Future

Workload Projections

VHA's Office of Policy and Planning requires the use of utilization projections to inform market planning. Planning data at the market level are made available through the VA Enrollee Health Care Projection Model (EHPM), developed in partnership with a contracted health care actuarial firm. EHPM projections incorporate 20 years of extensive research and analyses, trends, and leadership input in developing projected demand. The data are used to support VA budget development, strategic planning, service delivery and site planning, as well as workforce budget and capital planning.

Over the next 5, 10 and 20 years, the forecasting model predicts significant increases in Veteran demand for outpatient primary care, mental health and specialty services, as well as both inpatient and outpatient long-term support and services. Total demand for services in the Sierra Nevada market is expected to increase by 20.1% between baseline FY17 and FY22, and then continue to increase for the foreseeable future, driven primarily by increased demand for VA outpatient services. VASNHCs will meet expanding Veteran demand through multiple channels, including renovation and expansion efforts, as highlighted in the Capital Projects section of this report, along with establishing a local high-performance network to provide high-quality, accessible, cost-effective care through VHA, Federal partners, academic affiliates and private sector providers.



Actual and Projected Utilization for the Sierra Nevada Market							
	FY2017 Actual	FY2022 Modeled	5-Year	FY2027 Modeled	10-Year	FY2037 Modeled	20-Year
	Utilization	Utilization	Percent Change	Utilization	Percent Change	Utilization	Percent Change
Acute Inpatient Medicine	14,871	15,364	3.2%	14,340	-3.6%	11,486	-22.8%
Acute Inpatient Mental Health	5,401	5,012	-7.2%	4,393	-18.7%	3,587	-33.6%
Acute Inpatient Surgery	8,339	8,617	3.3%	8,051	-3.5%	6,228	-25.3%
Inpatient Blind Rehab	274	409	49.3%	460	67.9%	437	59.5%
Inpatient Long-Term Support and Services	34,702	41,384	19.3%	45,912	32.3%	47,458	36.8%
Inpatient Residential Rehab	2,508	2,512	0.2%	2,307	-8.0%	1,948	-22.3%
Inpatient Spinal Cord Injury	324	357	10.2%	340	4.9%	274	-15.4%
Inpatient Encounters	85,975	89,662	4.3%	89,771	4.4%	81,390	-5.3%
Inpatient Total	152,394	163,299	7.2%	165,574	8.6%	152,808	0.3%
Dental Clinic	42,676	55,245	29.5%	61,158	43.3%	66,510	55.8%
Outpatient Long-Term Support and Services	37,878	52,222	37.9%	59,835	58.0%	66,425	75.4%
Medical Specialties	173,303	212,359	22.5%	230,817	33.2%	236,742	36.6%
Mental Health Programs	89,342	109,296	22.3%	124,692	39.6%	146,541	64.0%
Pathology	616,909	732,415	18.7%	801,231	29.9%	837,252	35.7%
Primary Care	225,283	273,304	21.3%	304,660	35.2%	323,139	43.4%
Radiology	73,994	89,014	20.3%	97,686	32.0%	101,950	37.8%
Rehab Therapies	48,840	62,228	27.4%	72,631	48.7%	80,016	63.8%
Surgical Specialties	81,162	101,621	25.2%	113,655	40.0%	119,410	47.1%
Outpatient Total	1,389,387	1,687,704	21.5%	1,866,365	34.3%	1,977,985	42.4%
Grand Total	1,541,781	1,851,003	20.1%	2,031,939	31.8%	2,130,793	38.2%

The above data reflect the combined total of VA in-house and community care projected demand for the Sierra Nevada Market. Utilization is measured in clinic stops for outpatient care and a combination of clinic stops, bed days of care and discharges for inpatient care.

Capital Projects

In FY18, VASNHCs published a comprehensive Master Plan to support the health care system's robust capital portfolio. The health care system's high-profile construction projects are highlighted in this section.

For questions, comments or concerns regarding VA construction, please call **1-877-736-7764** or visit www.reno.va.gov for continuous updates.

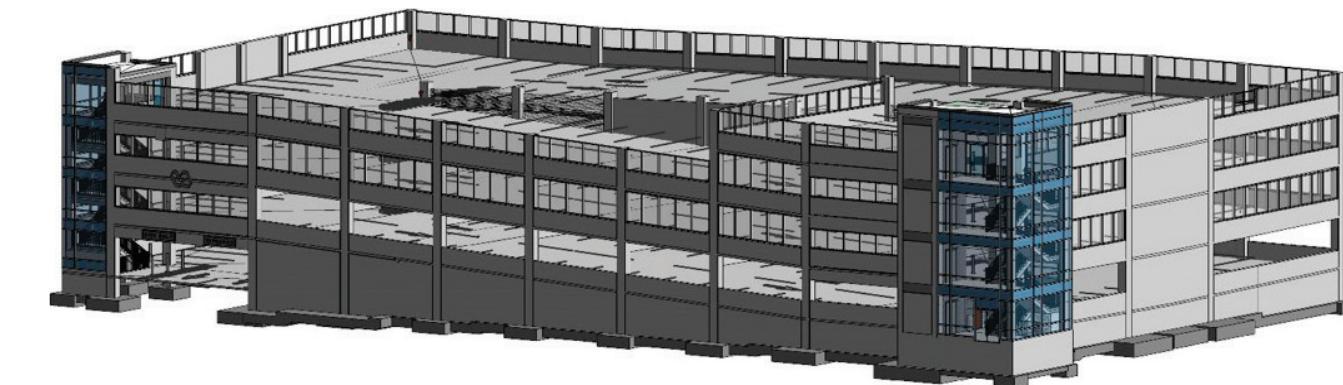
Project Nevada's Heroes

VASNHCs is modernizing and expanding its medical center through a \$200 million major construction project dubbed "Project Nevada's Heroes." The undertaking will accomplish critical seismic, utility and life safety upgrades to Building 1 and construct a new clinical expansion, Building 100, designed to meet growing Veteran demand for outpatient care. Building 100 will support primary care, compensation and pension, transition and care management, laboratory as well as specialty services for audiology, speech pathology, dental and eye care. The project will also create a new Veterans Business Center.



Parking Garage

Construction of a new four-story parking garage is underway and will provide over 300 stalls of much needed parking on the medical center main campus. The structure will be located on the southeast corner of the campus, adjacent to the existing parking garage.



Palliative Care Center

The Palliative Care Center will provide a comfortable homelike environment tailored to the needs of hospice and palliative residents. The home will boast 12 spacious single-resident rooms, each with a private bathroom. The concept was provided by the VA Small House Design Guide, where the model of care is resident-centered, driven by the resident, and involves the resident and his or her family members in decisions regarding care. The Palliative Care Center is currently in design and will be located on the north end of the main campus at the corner of East Taylor Street and Kirman Avenue, across from the Specialty Clinic.



Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

The new ICU is located on the third floor of the hospital's bed tower and consists of 11,400 square feet of renovated space plus a 2,000 square foot addition. The new ICU features a spacious state-of-the-art design including 12 patient rooms, each with a private bathroom for use by the patient and his or her family members. The unit features the latest design concepts with decentralized nursing stations (one nurse station per two patient rooms) to allow for more effective patient care. The new ICU is planned to activate in 2020.



North Campus

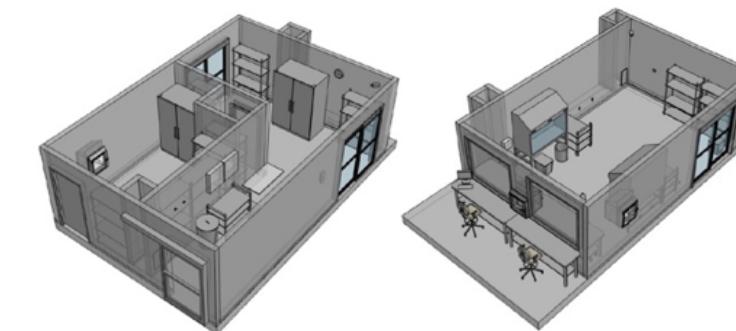
At 19,500 square feet, North Campus will be the health care system's largest offsite clinic. The new site of care will improve access, provide ample parking and offer care closer to home for many Veterans. The outpatient clinic will offer audiology, primary care, laboratory and X-ray services, as well as a variety of outpatient specialty care provided via telehealth. North Campus will occupy separate buildings located in a commercial complex near the intersection of Sutro Drive and North McCarran Boulevard. North Campus construction is steadily progressing, and the clinic will welcome Veterans in 2020.



Pharmacy Compounding Hood

VASNHCs proactively assesses and adapts clinical systems to support the safe delivery of patient-centered care. Aligned with this principle, the health care system is renovating and upgrading the existing inpatient pharmacy compounding hood to ensure all compounded sterile preparations are prepared and stored in accordance with United States Pharmacopeia National Pharmacy (USP NP) requirements. The construction project was recently awarded and will start in 2019.

VASNHCs is also initiating a separate project to construct a pharmacy chemotherapy compounding hood in the Specialty Clinic, which will reduce transportation distances for hazardous drugs and shorten compounding turnaround times. This project will ultimately improve patient and staff safety while decreasing patient wait times.



Renderings of the Anteroom, Sterile Compounding, Storage, Hazardous Drug, Housekeeping, Sterile Compounding and Sterile Hazardous Drug Buffer Room are courtesy of the VA Pharmacy Service Design Guide.

Central Utility Plant and Parking Garage Replacement

Approved for design in FY19, this project will replace the hospital's central utility plant, which has been identified as seismically deficient, with a new structure designed to meet existing and future system demands on all utilities supported by the plant. The project will also replace the existing parking garage with a larger garage.

Honoring Service

Voice of the Veteran

Serving as a prime example of honoring service and celebrating the voice of the Veteran, the My Life My Story Writer/Editor assists Veterans with capturing their firsthand experiences, memorialized in the form of first-person short stories, which are published in each edition of the all-employee newsletter, as well as in the patient's medical record. The Veteran and Family Advisory Committee is comprised of Veterans who receive care at VASNHCs. At monthly meetings, the Veteran Engagement Team seeks feedback from the Committee members regarding planning and evaluating services, programs, and policies. Similarly, the Veterans Health Education and Information Committee obtains valuable input from end users regarding educational and informational materials.

VASNHCs also hosts a local Veterans Mental Health Council to provide a forum for Veterans and family members to share their unique perspectives and offer their input regarding mental health programs and services. The Council affords an opportunity for both VASNHCs staff and Veterans to learn from each other, to collaborate, and to promote greater understanding of VA and use of VA mental health services by Veterans and their families.

The CLC Resident Council is a monthly opportunity for CLC residents to offer their input regarding their overall care and treatment environment through open and constructive dialogue. The Council helps ensure CLC residents are informed of upcoming changes within the CLC, and throughout the facility, and gives the residents an opportunity to voice suggestions and concerns.

Honors Escort Program

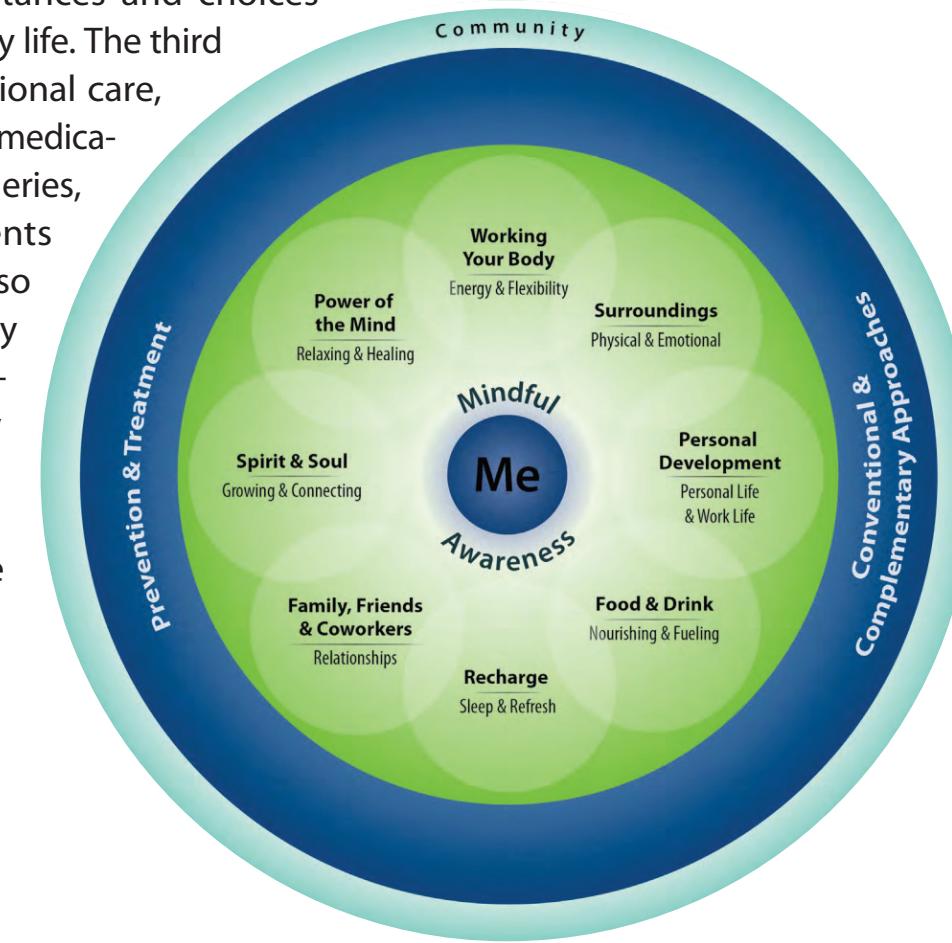
To pay tribute to Veterans who pass in a manner reflecting the nobility of their service, VASNHCs initiated the Honors Escort program. Recognized as a VA Best Practice, this program touches the hearts of Veteran families and VA staff due to its military bearing and protocol. The coordinator recruits and trains staff to provide a dignified transfer of the recently deceased Veteran from his or her hospital room to the facility morgue.

Upon receiving notice that a Veteran's passing is imminent or has suddenly occurred, the escorts are notified and preparations commence. A special gurney is prepared, which supports a draped American flag. After the procession, the family is given the opportunity to assist with folding the flag. To help expand the acclaimed program across VA, the health care system developed a training program to assist other VA medical centers with implementing their own Honors Escort programs.

Whole Health

Whole Health is an approach to health care that empowers and equips Veterans to take charge of their health and well-being and live their lives to the fullest. The road to better health rests within the individual. The first step is to know what a person wants from his or her health care and why. Knowing one's health goals may not be a simple task, yet it is an important step towards reaching one's full potential. Living life fully and optimizing health and well-being goes beyond not being sick; it means understanding what matters and looking at all aspects of life that contribute to a sense of well-being.

The graphic below illustrates the components of proactive health and well-being. All of the areas in the circle are important. They are all connected. Improving one area can benefit other areas in one's life and influence overall physical, emotional, and mental health and well-being. The human body and mind have tremendous healing abilities and they can strengthen these healing abilities. The inner circle represents the individual, his or her values and what really matters to him or her. The next circle is self-care. These are the circumstances and choices people make in everyday life. The third ring represents professional care, which may include tests, medications, supplements, surgeries, examinations, treatments and counseling. This also includes complementary approaches such as acupuncture and mind-body therapies. The outer ring represents the people and groups to whom the person is connected.



Thanks to staff embracing the Whole Health model, the new program continues to blossom at VASNHCs. Offerings include Healthy and Tasty cooking, MOVE! weight management, yoga and meditation; as well as sleep management, Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) support, chronic pain management and chiropractic services. In addition, VASNHCs hosts Job Club, cognitive behavioral therapy and tobacco cessation classes. Whole Health supports personal development via Brain Boosters, Building Emotional Skills Today and Mindfulness trainings.

Group sessions include anger management, trauma recovery, bereavement support and gender diversity. The health care system will soon facilitate a peer-led group program titled "Intro to Whole Health" and a more in-depth program titled "Taking Charge of My Life and Health." Select staff members who are Veterans, as well as Veterans using these programs, will be leading these courses. The two-day Warrior to Soul Mate workshops, initiated in FY17, support Veteran couples through teaching enhanced communication, empathy, emotional connection, understanding and love.

Recreation Therapy has cultivated community partnerships to expand Whole Health offerings to include yoga, reiki, meditation and guitar classes. To improve utilization of services, the Veteran Engagement Team is finalizing a comprehensive Whole Health Resource List detailing all the services to which Veterans may self-refer.

VASNHCs is serving as a Whole Health 101 pilot site, an initiative coordinated through the national VA Office of Patient-Centered Care and Cultural Transformation. The health care system is participating in training sessions and contributing valuable feedback to help inform the development of future nationwide training and resource material. To formalize the VASNHCs Whole Health program, the health care system is chartering a Whole Health Steering Committee to be co-chaired by the Medical Center Director and Deputy Chief of Staff. The committee membership will be comprised of interdisciplinary leaders across the organization and will be charged with overseeing implementation of a purposeful Whole Health program. These efforts represent initial steps in the organization's cultural transformation towards high-reliability health care and reaffirms the VASNHCs commitment to health and wellness.



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