U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VA Pittsburgh named 'LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Leader' for 8th year

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System was named a 2020 "LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Leader" by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC). The designation is the eighth time in as many years and is listed in the 13th edition of the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI).

VA Pittsburgh is one of only six health care systems in the Pittsburgh region to earn the designation, and the only system that serves veterans exclusively.

"We are so proud to be a leader," said Kristen Lyons, LGBT veteran care coordinator. "We know that many LGBT+ veterans have unfortunately faced discrimination and stigmatization that can impact health and create hesitancy to access care at VA. Veterans who use the index as a tool when deciding on whether to consider VA for their care will see that VA Pittsburgh is a leader in this regard and has been for many years."

The equality leader designation requires facilities to meet benchmarks in LGBT+ policies and practices including non-discrimination and staff training, patient services and support, employee benefits and policies, and patient and community engagement.

"We not only meet the Healthcare Equality Index benchmarks, since 2012 we have developed unique support services and programs for our LGBT+ veterans and staff," said VA Pittsburgh Director Donald Koenig. "We have two dedicated LGBT veteran care coordinators; we partner with the White Oak Vet Center and PERSAD Center for support groups; and we're one of only a handful of VAs across the nation with an interdisciplinary transgender treatment team."

Veterans Health Administration health systems, like VA Pittsburgh, are well represented in the index. One-hundred five VA facilities nationally earned leader or top performer designation, out of a total of 765 facilities that participated.

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About VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System is one of the largest and most progressive VA health care systems in the nation. More than 3,700 employees serve nearly 80,000 veterans every year, providing a range of services from complex transplant medicine to routine primary care. It is a leader in virtual care delivery through telehealth technology; a center of research and learning with more than 300 active research projects and $30

million in funding; and a provider of state-of-the-art health care training to some 600 residents and students annually.

VA Pittsburgh provides veterans' health care services at its medical centers in Oakland and O'Hara Township and its outpatient clinics in Beaver, Fayette, Washington and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania and Belmont County in Ohio.

Veterans can call 412-822-2040 to check their eligibility and enrollment. Stay connected and up to date on the latest VA Pittsburgh news and events at pittsburgh.va.gov, @VAPHS on Facebook and @VAPittsburgh on Twitter.