From Our Director

Changing lives. One Veteran at a time.

This theme provided the foundation of our efforts in 2013 and continues to do so as we move forward into 2014. We are blessed to have a great team of more than 4,000 staff members and 1,600 volunteers who are meeting the needs of over 100,000 Veterans who call VA North Texas Health Care System their health care home.

We honor our Veterans by providing quality health care that is second to none. This annual report provides just a glimpse of our many accomplishments and achievements.

In 2014 we will move forward to reach new heights with a steadfast focus on three strategic pillars:

• Quality, Safety and Value
• Patient-Centered Care
• Servant Leadership

In the year ahead, we will continue our efforts to meet the needs of Veterans in North Texas and southern Oklahoma with compassion and dedication. They deserve nothing less. This is our commitment!

Sincerely,

Jeff Milligan, Director
Our Mission
Honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

Our Vision
To be a patient-centered, integrated health care organization for Veterans, providing excellence in health care, research, and education; an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner and a back-up for National emergencies.
Voluntary Service coordinates and integrates community volunteer participation as a way to add value to the health care experience and to assist VA staff. Anyone in the community is welcome to volunteer and lend a helping hand to help fulfill our mission.

Volunteer or Donate: www/northtexas.va.gov/giving

1,645 Volunteers
Volunteers are important to our mission.

FISHER HOUSE
Home Away from Home
Safe, comfortable housing is available for families of Veterans receiving health care at Dallas VA Medical Center. Fisher House, similar to Ronald McDonald House, provides free temporary lodging for families of VA patients.

Fisher House has 21 suites. Common areas include a kitchen, laundry facilities, spacious dining room, living room, library, picnic pavilion and an outdoor kitchen with a relaxing water feature.

Veterans serving Veterans
35% of our employees are Veterans

Veterans served
More than 115,000

Health Care Services
Medical Services
• Dialysis Unit
• Telemetry
• Interventional Cardiology
Intensive Care Units
• Cardiac Care
• Critical Care
Mental Health
• Domiciliary
• Electroconvulsive Therapy
Surgical Care
• Cardiothoracic
• Bariatrics
• Robotics
Hospice & Palliative Care
Spinal Cord Injury Center
Advanced Imaging Services
• Radiology
• Nuclear Medicine

Dedicated - Committed - Proud
FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES
4,687

2nd in bed days of care

in bed days of care

Largest VA in the Nation

Operating Budget
$862 million

2nd in outpatient visits

Over 3,800 outpatient clinic visits each day

1.4 million outpatient visits a year

90% Occupancy rate
Families accommodated 752
9 days Average length of stay

VA North Texas Annual Report | 2013
We support VA’s efforts in ending the claims backlog. **Completed 13,725 compensation and pension exams**

**Unresolved consults greater than 90 days dropped from 36,259 to 6,388**

**Awards & Accomplishments**

VA North Texas Health Care System is a high performing organization. Remarkable gains in clinical performance are evident. **We met or exceeded 92% of the goals given to us nationally that measure quality of care, preventive care and access to care.**

Over the past several years, we earned recognition by a number of external governing bodies and VA Central Office for being leaders and high performers among other VA medical centers and health care systems.

**Sensitivity to Diversity Workshops**

A success to build on

As VA public servants, we have an obligation to act with courtesy, dignity and respect, especially toward our Veterans. To foster and promote diversity across our organization, Sensitivity to Diversity Workshops were conducted for all employees. Staff received information and training to learn how to interact with people from diverse backgrounds and demographics. Trainers presented strategies to effectively interact with our customers and each other in a kinder and more respectful environment free of discrimination.

More than 98 percent of employees completed diversity training and found workshops to be engaging and thought provoking.

**We serve without personal judgment regarding race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or genetic information.**

**VHA Systems Redesign Champion!**

**Systems Redesign**

A systemic approach for the design, redesign and improvement of processes utilizing Lean Six Sigma methodology

- Creates a culture of learning and improvement
- Utilizes existing resources to develop a support service aligned with the Strategic Plan to:
  - Improve access to healthcare
  - Enhance work processes
  - Eliminate waste
  - Focus improvement on customer needs
  - Empower the workforce to make improvements

**Systems Redesign Successes**

- Emergency Department
  - Reduction in triage and wait times
  - Reduction in >6 hour stays
  - Improvement in throughput and efficiency
- Pharmacy
  - Streamlined process for medication renewals
- Pathology and Laboratory
  - Reduction in wait times for blood draw
- FWOPC Primary Care
  - Reduction in telephone call abandonment rate
  - Streamlined new patient appointment process

**Cornerstone Award for Patient Safety**

Awarded Bronze in 2008

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The New Polytrauma Suite

North Texas Veterans with multiple injuries now have a single location for treatment and recovery. Once located in a four-room suite, the Polytrauma team worked diligently and patiently to meet Veterans’ needs. The $6 million project was well worth the investment, and certainly worth the wait. The new facility provides:

- Clinical Video Technology provides Veterans in rural areas with improved access to health care by reducing travel time.
- Annually, we serve more than 14,000 Veterans with Polytrauma.

Clinical Advancements

- Cardiology: Our Advanced Interventional Cardiology is one of the premier high-risk and complicated coronary and peripheral arterial intervention programs.
- Physical and occupational therapy assessment and training for amputees
- Vision and balance assessment and treatment
- Treatment room for biofeedback and relaxation training
- Traumatic Brain Injury day program and support group
- Clinical Video Telehealth services for Veterans in rural areas
- Same-day assessments for Veterans from the post-deployment clinic

Telehealth

- On the cutting edge of health care delivery
- More than 100 Telehealth clinics and counting
- Programs include:
  - Mental Health
  - Polytrauma/Traumatic Brain Injury
  - Physical Therapy
  - Spinal Cord Injury
- Nearly 10,000 Veterans are using Telehealth resources.

Because our Vets deserve the best...
Personalized Health Plan

Personalized Health Plans piloted at Polk Street VA Annex Clinic focus on the whole person—not just a Veteran’s disease or condition. This proactive, personalized and patient-driven approach treats Veterans individually, concentrating on his or her ability to heal and inspire changes within, to improve their health and quality of life.

Personalized Health Plan implementation goals include measuring and tracking Veteran health outcomes about basic areas of health. Health care teams coach Veterans to consider what really matters to them and what they want health for in life. Providers and Veterans partner to form health and life goals in line with Veterans’ values.

Polk Street is one of the Nation’s leaders in developing and implementing Personalized Health Plans for Veterans.

Continuing the Journey to Cultural Transformation

Integrative Health Strategies
- Tai Chi
- Qigong
- Pet Therapy
- Mindfulness - the practice of present-moment focus and awareness; helps reduce anxiety, depression and stress
- Massage Therapy
- Music Therapy
- Acupuncture

Patient-Centered Care

As a center of innovation, we serve as a model for other VAs in the Nation. Our patient-centered care journey began four years ago and since then, we have enhanced our delivery of care across a broad spectrum of programs and services. From the time our Veterans enter our doors, they should notice a different look at feel, not only compared to the VA they once knew, but to the private sector as well.

We are moving forward to reach new heights in providing patient-centered care with a steadfast commitment to continuous quality improvement and personal touch.

Customer Service Initiatives

Monthly focus groups for Veterans
Each month, our customer service team randomly selects Veterans to attend focus groups with Executive leaders present. Veterans provide feedback on their health care experience.

Truthpoint
On the spot surveys are performed regularly to gather real-time information. Truthpoint surveys provide instant feedback. Data collected in 2013 shows Veterans are satisfied with their care and treatment.
- Less wait times
- Attentive nurses
- Courtesy, dignity and respect are displayed

Our Executive leaders are focused on ensuring the Voice of the Veteran is heard.
Our continuing mission is to provide Veterans with the high quality health care they've earned and deserve. Our health care system is responsible for a monthly governance system and committee metrics to ensure quality of care. A thorough review of quality of care is done daily.

**QUALITY OF CARE**

Our leadership performs routine rounding to stay aware of health care system strengths and challenges as well as connect with front line staff. Leadership rounding is a systematic approach to confirming that policies and procedures are being enforced and applied.

It is our goal to provide health care that is comprehensive, compassionate and timely.

**PATIENT SAFETY**

Patient safety is our number one priority.

Patient safety measures are always being refined so we can be certain Veterans are receiving the best care possible in a safe and comfortable environment.

Patient safety is monitored on various programs and services — daily, weekly and quarterly.

Recognized by the VA National Center for Patient Safety for outstanding achievement in identifying, analyzing and resolving patient safety issues.

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Helping Veterans’ Families Heal

Memorial Services serve to honor and remember our Veterans who pass away. Families find solace to heal as well as staff who provided care.

Feds Feeds Families

Back-to-School Supply Drive

Holiday Toy Drive

Welcoming Veterans Home

Mentoring Community Youth
The Department of Housing and Urban Development VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)
A joint effort between HUD and VA to move Veterans and their families from homelessness to permanent housing.

More than 750 homeless Veterans served

VA North Texas leased 96.08% of HUD-VASH vouchers

**Homeless Stand Downs**
Providing a Hand Up, Not a Hand Out

Veterans seen:
- Dallas 343
- Fort Worth 183
- Sherman 23

**Ongoing Outreach**
- Health Care for Homeless Veterans in Dallas, Bonham and Tyler
  2,623 encounters
- Fort Worth Homeless Veteran Program
  2,430 encounters
- Peer Housing Locator Assistance Group
  26 Veterans achieved independent housing

**New Outreach Initiatives**
- Mobile Unit - Medical and mental health evaluations
- Drop-in Center - Wide range of services and assistance

**Homeless Hotline**
Ranked 6th nationally in VA
2,140 referrals for support and services

**Transitional Work and Supported Employment**
47% employed

**Homeless Veterans Supported Employment**
55% employed

**partnering** with community organizations
and **working independently**
to help homeless Veterans

striving to end Veteran homelessness

doing what it takes
Renovations to the cafeteria and dining area in the basement began in September. Although food services are presently limited to One VA Café and food carts in the Spinal Cord Injury gym, the new space will be well worth the wait. Several new options will be introduced, including:

- Rotisserie chicken
- Chef’s choice - Italian, Asian and Mexican
- Enhanced salad concept

Present seating capacity of 100 will double with an expanded doctor’s dining room and additional checkout stands. The barber shop will get a new ‘do to include an internet lounge.

Moving Forward

Tyler VA to expand its services to better serve East Texas area Veterans

Tyler VA became a VA-staffed clinic in 2007. Eligible Veterans in Smith, Henderson, Van Zandt, Rains and Wood counties have access to primary care, mental health services and specialty consults without making the long drive to Dallas.

Increased enrollment at Tyler has prompted VA North Texas to look at sites for an expansion clinic that can meet the growing demand for VA care in East Texas.

Veterans Canteen Service

Enhancing the dining experience at Dallas VAMC

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Long Term – Spinal Cord Injury Unit

Because of its size and geographical area, the DFW metroplex is experiencing growth in population of Veterans with spinal cord injuries. Estimates project a shortfall of 130 long-term SCI beds by 2022 due to aging Veterans with both quadriplegic and paraplegic conditions, aging caregivers and limited community resources. VA North Texas is addressing this gap and will be among the first VAs in the country to provide a long-term SCI facility. Construction includes a 60-bed unit with associated clinical and administrative support spaces. The new facility will complement the existing 30-bed acute and rehabilitative SCI Center on campus and be accessible by a connecting corridor.

Dallas is one of the largest and busiest Veterans Canteen Service in the continental U.S.
Dallas VA Medical Center is the largest facility within VA North Texas Health Care System, covering 84 acres in South Dallas.

VA North Texas Health Care System has a Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) program to provide health maintenance and preventive health care within 30 miles or 30 minutes of a Veteran’s home. CBOCs reduce travel time and shorten waiting times for Veterans who need outpatient care.

CBOC Locations:
- Bridgeport
- Denton
- Granbury
- Greenville
- Sherman
- Tyler VA Primary Clinic
- Fort Worth Outpatient Clinic
- Polk Street VA Annex Clinic in Dallas
- Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center in Bonham
- VA North Texas Annual Report | 2013
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