

# Pulse

SUMMER 2016 EDITION 9

Proudly Serving Veterans  
of North Texas and  
Southern Oklahoma  
from locations in

Bonham  
Bridgeport  
Dallas  
Denton  
Fort Worth  
Granbury  
Greenville  
Sherman  
Tyler

**MyVA: Top  
Organizational  
Priority**

**EVERYONE**  
*is family*

**COVER STORY:**

**Veterans move  
trauma aside for a  
new life at Bonham**





Changing lives.  
One Veteran at a time.

# inside



VA North Texas served more than 117,000 Veterans in FY2015 with almost 1.4 million outpatient visits. It is the second most complex VA facility in the nation, and our world-renown clinicians and researchers drive the technical quality of our health care services and programs.

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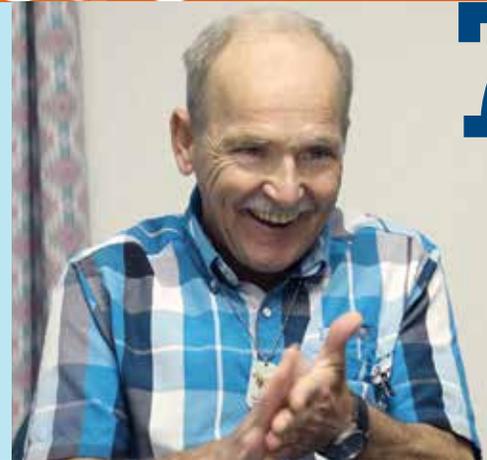
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**Pulse** is published for Veterans living in North Texas and Southern Oklahoma. We welcome your story ideas and suggestions. Send to: [ntxpublicaffairs@va.gov](mailto:ntxpublicaffairs@va.gov).

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**VA HEALTH CARE** | Defining **EXCELLENCE** in the 21st Century

## Director's Message

# We want to earn your highest rating



**WE** spend a tremendous amount of time here in VA North Texas Health Care System (VANTHCS) improving quality, access, satisfaction and efficiency of our services and employees. We do this because providing world-class healthcare each and every day to our 119,000 patient Veterans who have given so much to our country is a job we take very seriously.

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***We believe that every employee is a caregiver and empowered to provide compassionate care to our nation's heroes. We want to earn your trust and let you know that your service and sacrifice are honored here by providing quality health care when you need it at the highest possible standard.***

Through our Strategic Analytics for Improvement & Learning (SAIL) program, we collect data on our daily actions to measure how VANTHCS is doing in providing high quality health care to our Veterans. We work each day to sure ensure every employee understands his or her role in providing high quality and timely care to each of our Veterans and their families, because no other health care organization understands health conditions and illness directly related to military service better than VA.

We believe that every employee impacts the quality of care we provide to Veterans, every employee impacts the timeliness of care provided to Veterans and every employee plays a significant role in the satisfaction of patients, families and fellow employees.

Access and accessibility are also extremely important to our Veterans. We're excited and on track to open up the new Plano VA Outpatient Clinic in early September with Patient-Aligned Care Teams to accommodate 6,000 Veterans. This new clinic will provide Collin County Veterans access to primary care, mental health, laboratory, basic radiological and telemedicine services.

The relationship between the Veteran and VA employee is inextricably linked and we are committed to being exceptional by providing efficient, effective, world class health care that exceeds Veteran expectations and earns the highest rating.

Thank you for your service and thank you for choosing VA North Texas for your health care needs.

Sincerely,  
**Jeffery L. Milligan**  
Director

## MyVA: Top Organizational Priority

Veterans deserve timely, appropriate and convenient care and VA North Texas Health Care System (VANTHCS) has made the pledge to fully meet these needs and ensure that their experience is the best in the nation. The ability to meet the urgent health care needs of Veterans is currently VANTHCS number one priority. Realizing that Veteran and employee relationships are inextricably linked, transformational training and tools were developed to ensure VA staff is exceptionally effective, efficient and successful in providing world class health care to our nation's heroes.

VA will meet these needs through the Under Secretary for Health's new initiative:

# myVAaccess

On April 21, 2016, VANTHCS Director Jeffery L. Milligan and senior leadership signed a formal MyVA Access declaration and call to action for all employees to actively participate in improving patient access through best practices. MyVA Access is a long-term, multi-phased national improvement and sustainment initiative that ensures the urgent health needs of Veterans is the number one priority. The MyVA Access Declaration is a set of guiding principles and renewed commitment to putting Veteran first and improving access to health care now and into the future.

My Access initiatives will have a phased deployment and will require full accountability of facility leaders and all staff. MyVA Access aligns with the MyVA vision, to include providing same day access to primary care for those with urgent needs by the end of 2016.

"Our Veterans deserve nothing less than our superior efforts and best practices," says Milligan. "MyVA Access is truly a team effort and we know that achieving timely access and world-class healthcare for our Veterans requires everyone's engagement from employees and community partners, alike."

**MyVA Access' deployment strategy includes an actionable plan with measurable outcomes to fully meet Veterans' health needs in three focus areas.**

1. Create standard Veteran entry service channels to enhance active participation in the process of scheduling, rescheduling, or canceling an appointment.
2. Ensure robust clinic operations management through appropriate and convenient care, including same day access and prompt responses to all patient questions concerning care.
3. Facilitate alternative care modality options when timely local care is not available.

VANTHCS is now providing same day access in primary care and optometry. By the end of 2016, same day access will be available in mental health and audiology.

"We want to improve the Veterans experiences by achieving excellence in our support services and fostering a culture of continuous performance improvement," says Milligan. "Our focus on finding the best solutions will empower our employees and partners to best serve our Veterans."

**To explore Secretary McDonald's full MyVA plan and overview and view MyVA video stories, visit: <https://myva.va.gov/>.**





## Your Health Matters

### Skin Cancer: A little bit of prevention goes a long way

**T**he bright rays and warm temperatures of summer can make one nostalgic for the carefree times of youth; free of school and sporting the well-earned, but ill-advised, sunburn. Adult summertime activities still lend themselves to leisure with quality time outdoors at the lake, pool, on the trails, or even just mowing the lawn. But this leisure can come with consequences, especially for those who wore their well-earned sunburns as a badge of honor in their early years. And these consequences can catch up with you at any age.

Skin cancer is the most common and rapidly increasing type of cancer in the United States. Studies show that about 50 percent of all people who live to age 65 will develop at least one form of skin cancer. The primary cause is ultraviolet (UV) radiation—the sun—and you soak it up daily with reflections off water, sand and snow, regardless of cloud cover and cool temperatures. It can be divided into two major types: nonmelanoma and melanoma. Over 7,600 people will die this year from malignant melanoma, the most deadly type.

The good news is that skin cancer can be prevented and is highly curable if caught early.

It's imperative to use sunscreen and take proper precautions before spending any amount of time in the sun. Burns can occur with as little as 20 minute's exposure, and the subsequent damage to your skin is cumulative and potentially dangerous.

The best preventative measures include wearing appropriate protective attire including long sleeves and hats, use sunscreens, wear sunglasses with UVA and UVB protective lenses and do regular self-examinations to spot any irregularities or abnormalities with existing moles. Just one single blistering sunburn in your childhood doubles the risk of developing a skin cancer.

Veterans should do regular skin self-inspections and ask their primary care provider about cancer risks every three years for those age 20 to 40 and every year for those over 40.

More information about skin cancer risk and prevention is available from the CDC at [www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin)

## Get the 4-1-1



### Mobile app helps Veterans manage stress

**A**n application available for desktop computers and iOS and Android mobile devices is providing free self-help tools that build coping skills for Veterans with PTSD battling anger, sleep and trauma issues. PTSD Coach was created by VA's National Center for PTSD in partnership with the Department of Defense's National Center for Telehealth and Technology.

The app provides trusted resources to those who have, or think they might have PTSD. Veterans can find reliable information on PTSD and treatments that work, tools for screening and tracking symptoms, easy-to-use tools to help handle stress symptoms and direct links to support and help when you need it. Veteran family and friends can also learn about PTSD and healthy coping mechanisms on the app.

PTSD is a serious mental condition that often requires professional evaluation and treatment, thus those who use the app should supplement with provider visits and professional care.

**For more information and to download the PTSD Coach app, visit: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/treatment/cope/index.asp>**





## Feature Story

# Everyone is family:

## A tale of three VA nurses

CRYSTAL CREWS • EMMA STEWART • IRA MITCHELL

**B**uilding 2 hallways of Dallas VA Medical Center are relatively quiet at 6 a.m. save for a couple of Veterans and their spouses making their way to the closest elevator.

Dressed in comfortable clothes and perhaps a bit tired from a lack of morning caffeine, Veterans make their way to the 4th floor and Same Day Surgery. From the 28-bed suite, Veterans wait their turn for a variety of medical procedures that do not require an overnight stay.

"In the morning, it can get pretty hectic with so many moving parts," said Crystal Crews, RN. "We do everything in the clinic on any given day of the week, from minor cardiology, gastro intestinal and orthopedic procedures to blood transfusions and other general surgeries."

Crystal is a critical part of the same-day inter-disciplinary health care team as an RN and seasoned VA medical professional. Her daily clinical activities as a caregiver require critical thinking skills, collaboration, medication administration, patient advocacy and the ability to monitor and formulate a treatment plan for Veterans undergoing necessary medical procedures. Crews began her career with VA nearly 10 years ago as an operating room technician. A motivated VA employee, she became eligible for the Education Initiative Scholarship Program (EISP) and pursued her dream of becoming an RN. The program covered tuition and related educational expenses while she earned a nursing degree and secured her current clinical position upon graduation. VA is also paying for Crews to pursue an advanced degree while she works twelve hour days as a Veteran care giver.

"It was an easy transition. I come from a military family and knew I wanted to continue my career with VA since I didn't serve in uniform. To be able to give back is an honor and a privilege," said Crews. The need for nurses is growing rapidly. By 2020, it is estimated that the U.S. will face a shortage of some 800,000 nurses. VA is a natural draw to many transitioning Veterans, and programs like EISP help VA attract the talent and dedication needed to support the 9 million Veterans who use its health care services.

It was VA's high standards for healthcare application and education that attracted Emma Stewart, RN to a career serving those who had served their country. "I served in the U.S. Air Force during the Gulf War and knew of VA's practice of viewing the needs of the patient rather than treating a single, one time, issue," said Stewart, a primary care case manager.

As a Veteran, Stewart is cognizant of the unique needs of those who have worn a uniform and the emotional rehabilitation essential in helping Veterans live and thrive. It's often much more than assisting Veterans regain and maintain their health.

"Some of my best moments have been when my fellow Veteran feels comfortable enough to share real issues that affect their overall health and well-being," said Stewart. "We are in some respects their voice and VA does a great job of tracking Veteran health concerns to ensure they get what they need, when they need it."



## New Plano clinic to provide holistic healing environment

Integrated holistic VA health care services will soon be available in Plano.

**A** healing environment interior design, custom construction, patient centered care, whole health and cutting-edge hiring practices were implemented to create the Plano VA Primary Care Outpatient Clinic at 3804 W. 15th Street. The Patient-Aligned Care Team (PACT) functional facility is a 10,000 square foot community based clinic that will offer primary and specialty care to 6,000 Veterans who live within 15 miles of the clinic. The clinic is on track to open in early September.

Dr. Jennifer Sippel, VANTHCS's Clinical Director for Cultural Transformation, secured a grant to fund health coaches and complimentary integrative health services for Veterans at the new clinic. The clinic also received \$635,000 from the national Office of Patient Centered Care & Cultural Transformation to implement the Plano Whole Health Pathway. The Plano Clinic is the first primary care facility to have a health coach assigned to each PACT.



The clinic will feature healing environment design elements and services that will enrich physical applications through artistic displays, a woman's clinic room, acupuncture, clinical massage and dedicated clerks to greet and situate Veterans without the interruption of phone calls or other clerical necessities.

Veteran users, advocates, service officers and other stakeholders were consulted to develop eligibility criteria. Eligible Veterans were notified by letter and invited to enroll 90 days in advance of clinic opening, which is scheduled for early September.

**“The health coaches will provide Plano Whole Health Pathway new patient orientation and 9-week Whole Health Group Based Programs,”** said Sippel. **“By making group and individual health coaches available to Veterans, we’re enabling and supporting their overall health goals and empowering them to be more integrated into their communities.”**

Charge nurse Ira Mitchell relocated to Same Day Surgery after Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans in 2005. Much has changed in Mitchell's 20 years with VA, and these changes are critical to continuing world class patient care. Nationwide, over 90,000 VA nurses provide inpatient care to 650,000 and manage more than 75 million outpatient visits. Team work and flexibility are essential.

“We work together and care for Veterans as best we can,” said Mitchell. “It’s never just one person and having the luxury of state of the art technology truly helps facilitate a great patient experience.”

Mitchell started her VA career as a clerk and like Crystal Crews, took advantage of EISP to earn her Bachelor of Science in nursing while continuing to serve Veterans as an employee. Attending to a ward full of rehabilitating Veterans and twelve hour work shifts is hard work, but the rewards are great.

“Our patients have great memories,” said Mitchell. “I often run into them throughout the hospital or out and about after their stay in the clinic, and knowing you had an impact on their health feels good.”

“In many ways, working for VA is like living in a small town,” said Crews. “That’s why I like to think of every Veteran I come across as my grandpa, dad or brother. Everyone is family here.”



# Veterans move trauma aside for a new life at Bonham



The act of experiencing trauma isn't rare. In fact, 60 percent of all men and 50 percent of all women will experience at least one traumatic event. Trauma can be physical, mental or a combination of the two. Military Veterans are more likely to experience trauma during their tenure in uniform. Some 30 percent of Vietnam Veterans, 12 percent of Desert Storm Veterans and about 20 percent of Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and New Dawn Veterans will have Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) as the result of trauma at some point in their lives.

**N**ot all PTS is caused by combat. Any life-threatening experience can cause a reaction or contribute to other mental health problems. For those who have served and returned to civilian life lost in depression, fear and anxiety from their trauma, the Bonham Domiciliary at VA North Texas Health Care System offers hope where seemingly none existed. The Bonham program offers healing through encouragement, counseling, communication and motivation. VA Peer Support Specialists engage with their fellow Veterans to offer strength and support to uncover layers of darkness and help the healing process.

Allen Rancourt spent three years as a combat engineer in the U.S. Marine Corps. It was during his tour at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina that anger, guilt and alcohol abuse began to build and harden the native of Lewiston, Maine. Already reeling from childhood sexual abuse, Rancourt was depressed, angry, bankrupt, alcoholic, suicidal, and unable to see beyond the next 24 hours. Rancourt battled these demons for nearly 40 years before a program and a dedicated peer gave him hope for a new tomorrow.

Diagnosed with PTS, Rancourt became a perfect candidate for the 9-week PTS program at the Bonham Dom designed to serve Veterans experiencing active PTS and in need of short or long term rehabilitation for drug and alcohol abuse. "I was so dysfunctional, angry and suicidal when I came to Bonham," said Rancourt. "I had beaten my body into the ground, lived in constant isolation and blamed myself for the deaths of

several close friends over many years. But when I came here to the program, the door opened for me."

The PTS program includes 18 beds in the Bonham Domiciliary and is structured as a closed cohort or team model. Veterans can be accepted prior to starting the cohort where they can engage in initial treatment prior to more intensive services. Since its inception in 2013, the program has seen 19 cohorts enter and graduate.

"The cohort model augments the structure and routine that each Veteran must embrace to make progress and establish a healthy future," said Alicia Wright, interim Bonham Domiciliary chief and Social Work supervisor. "Because of this, Veterans enter the program as strangers but leave as family."

Rancourt was able to strip away hardened layers he had worn for so many years. The leader of his cohort was Christina Meek, peer support specialist and U.S. Army Veteran. "I like challenges --they keep me busy," said Meek. "Being part of a Veteran's progress and seeing them put in lots of hard work to get past their barriers is very rewarding."



Veterans with PTS are often reluctant to revisit the roots of their trauma. For 40 years Rancourt didn't tell anybody, anything and was suicidal. He said, "I finally came out of my head and started to deal with everything. I now feel as if I have a future."

The future is certainly bright for Veteran Peer Support Specialist Christina Meek. After leaving the military in 2001, Meek worked in medical coding and later mental health career fields. “The conversion from military policeman to medical professional required two keys provided in the Bonham PTS program to push through struggles I had lived with her for several years: encouragement and motivation,” Meek said.

“I was not someone who ever thought I could go back to school but managed to complete both an undergraduate and graduate degree while working full time.”

Completing her education was not the hardest struggle Meek would face.

“I’ve had my share of struggles,” said Meek. “I experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and was depressed, isolated and full of anxiety. I wasn’t the same person that enlisted in the military.” Meek said, “I just shut down and told nobody. I didn’t even tell my family.” But a move to Texas in 2009 got her in the VA system and on the path to moving past the many symptoms of PTS that she had lived with for years. Seeking a way to blend her love for the medical profession and helping her fellow

PTS and MST Veterans, Meek was the natural choice to assume a newly created position in the Bonham PTS program as peer support specialist.

The role of a peer support specialist is beneficial to both program participants and staff alike.

“Working here has really helped me with being around large crowds,” said Meek. “Even when I have bad days, being around those who have experienced similar traumas helps push me through those temporary barriers.”

The Bonham PTS program is just the first step on a new journey for Veterans who have decided to make a life-long change. But the step is significant for the nearly 200 Veterans who have graduated from the program to pursue a new life in the society they selflessly served in the military.

“Veterans can recover from experiences of trauma and we have the effective services to help them do this,” said Wright. “We truly believe we are the hidden gem in the VA North Texas system.”



## Emotion, art and ceiling tiles

Plain ceiling tiles and industrial overhead lighting are ubiquitous throughout VA North Texas Health Care System (VANTHCS) facilities. But 263 of these ceiling tiles have been upgraded since 2013 through the artistic efforts and passion of Bonham Domiciliary PTS program Veterans.

Popularly known as the Tile Project, Veterans have a chance to express their emotions and thoughts about their illness and recovery through an artistic venue, working as a team to build their confidence and realize the goal of turning something plain into something beautiful. The brainchild of Bonham recreational specialist Gilbert Martinez, who secured the support of VANTHCS leadership to launch the effort and give Veterans a larger canvas, the Tile Project didn’t immediately strike a chord with program participants. In fact, many of the Veterans were very reluctant to express their experiences and emotions for public viewing. But through the individual bravery of a few Veterans with artistic backgrounds, other program participants began to use the tiles as a type of journal.

“The tiles tell their individual stories and allow them to express joy and pain,” said Christina Meek, Bonham peer support specialist. “It’s been wonderful to see how this art has touched different Veterans and inspires others on a daily basis.”

The ultimate goal of the Tile Project is to fill all the classrooms and hallways with the colorful and expressive art.

“The tiles put a smile on most faces that see them and it has also inspires hope in those who sometimes struggle to take the first steps needed to put PTS behind them,” said Meek.

**EDITORS  
NOTE**

*Walking through the classroom areas and viewing the art was also an experience for this editor. As a combat Veteran of multiple Enduring Freedom and Iraq Freedom tours of duty, I felt immediately connected to the art work that featured many familiar emblems, unit patches, jargon and visual descriptions of life in theater and at home. Though some six years removed from the battlefield, I can still find myself very quickly back among my memories when seeing articles and talking with people that shared familiar ground and experiences. Healing is a never ending process and the Tile Project is a significant outlet for those who have served and are building a new future.*

# Clinic Updates



## ① Tyler celebrates one year with new clinic, expanded services

It's been one year since the Tyler VA Primary Care Clinic opened with a new 10,000 square foot serving Veterans from Smith, Henderson, Rusk, Rains, Wood and Van Zandt counties that augments an older, smaller facility still in use for specialty care.

Since the opening, over 6,000 Veterans have used the available primary care, mental health, diabetic laboratory, telehealth, social work and homeless services for some 20,000 patient visits at two facilities. Those visits are handled by six Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) which contain a physician, registered nurse, licensed vocational nurse and a clerk. These six teams have the capacity to serve 7,200 Veterans per year with the addition of new staffing including a pharmacist, social worker and optometry professionals and are designed to enable world-class total health care for the Veteran.

A combined 40,000 square foot facility has been approved for the Tyler area pending a utilization study and would merge the primary care and specialty clinics while adding radiology and other services.

## ② Bonham celebrates new community center living rooms

The Bonham VA Medical Center held a ribbon cutting celebration on June 23 to debut two new resident living rooms in the Community Living Center (CLC).

The CLC provides Veterans long-term and restorative care, nursing home style, care. The care is provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and focuses on providing

short or lifetime care that restores a sense of well-being, stabilizes health and provides comfort at end of life. Treatment includes options in pain and palliative care, anxiety and depression, dementia, Alzheimer's disease and delirium, osteoporosis and other genitourinary issues.

The new CLC family rooms are part of new cultural transformation efforts used to promote a relaxing and therapeutic, homelike environment for residents, family members and family members.

"The staff is very excited at the new changes," said Karen Goldman, Geriatrics and Extended Care Administrative Officer. "Our residents and visitors can watch fish swim in huge tanks, birds in their natural habitat or just watch their favorite television programs on flat screen TV's."

## ③ Physician and nursing hires up as enrollees increase 10 percent

Over 181,000 North Texas Veterans got their healthcare at VANTHCS in FY15 according to a recent patient trend report, representing a 10 percent increase from the previous fiscal year. These Veterans completed 1.4 million outpatient visits throughout VANTHCS facilities. To meet this surging demand for quality healthcare services, VANTHCS hired 2,196 employees from FY14-FY16, including 115 physicians and 520 nurses. These critical new hires in key need areas contributed to an independent assessment of health care capabilities and resources finding that VA as the nation's largest integrated health care system often performed better than other systems of care with regard to safety and effectiveness of care.

Over 19 million Veterans live in the United States, with 1.5 million residing

in Texas and 3.8 million holding a service-connected disability rating. VANTHCS operates under a \$950 million budget with over 5,600 full-time employees and 1,400 dedicated volunteers.

## ④ Bonham selected for Greenhealth Emerald Award

VA North Texas Health Care System's Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center (SRMVC) in Bonham received the prominent Greenhealth Emerald Award for environmental excellence and innovative improvement in health care sustainability practices on May 19.

Presented by Practice Greenhealth, a leader in health care community transformation and environmental health and justice, the competitive award is given to health care facilities that foster and practice sustainable improvements in waste reduction, recycling, mercury elimination and source reduction programs.

SRMVC was selected for the award through the diligent efforts of Green Environmental Management System (GEMS) Coordinator, Melissa Bracco, who drove making the Bonham facility mercury free, and reducing biohazard and municipal solid waste. In addition, the facility increased recycling efforts and hosted multiple green awareness events and activities throughout the year.

"One of the VA's core values is excellence through continuous improvement," said Angela Nix, SRMVC administrator. "So it made perfect sense to focus efforts on reducing our environmental footprint wherever possible as we provide world-class medical care to our nation's Veterans."

**More about Practice Greenhealth and the award program at: [www.practicegreenhealth.org](http://www.practicegreenhealth.org).**

# VA Health Care Near You

Dallas VA Medical Center 800-849-3597 or 214-742-8387  
Bonham – Sam Rayburn 800-924-8387 or 903-583-2111  
Memorial Veterans Center

## Outpatient Clinics

Bridgeport 940-683-2538  
Dallas – Polk Street 214-372-8100  
Denton 940-891-6350  
Fort Worth 800-443-9672 or 817-730-0000  
Granbury 817-326-3902  
Greenville 903-450-1143  
Sherman 903-487-0477  
Tyler Primary Care 855-375-6930 or 903-266-5900  
Tyler Specialty Care 855-375-6930 or 903-590-3050

## Vet Centers

Dallas County Vet Center 972-288-8030 or 972-288-8030  
Dallas Vet Center 214-361-5896 or 877-927-8387  
Fort Worth Vet Center 817-921-9095 or 817-921-9095  
Tarrant County Vet Center 817-274-0981 or 817-274-0981

## Telephone Care

Prescription Refills 888-364-5227 or [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)  
Telecare 800-677-8289  
Telenurse 888-252-9970

## Outpatient Pharmacies

Dallas 214-857-0556  
Bonham 903-583-6255  
Fort Worth 817-882-6000  
Tyler 903-583-6255  
Spinal Cord Injury 214-857-1782

## More VA Services

VA Benefits 800-827-1000  
Health Care Benefits 877-222-8387  
VA Health Resource Center 866-393-9132  
Dallas Fisher House 214-857-4401 or 214-854-4400  
Chaplain Service  
Bonham 903-583-6280  
Dallas 214-857-1070  
Fort Worth 817-335-2202 (x23330)  
Recreation Therapy  
Bonham 903-583-6396  
Dallas 214-857-1270  
Fort Worth 817-730-0000 (x23327)  
Social Work 214-857-0388 or 214-857-0367  
Women's Clinic  
Dallas 214-857-4800  
Fort Worth 817-730-0000 (x23126)  
Voluntary Services  
Bonham 903-583-6283  
Dallas 214-857-1060  
Fort Worth 817-730-0078  
Comprehensive Homeless Center 214-857-4182

## Crisis Hotlines

Veterans Crisis Line 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255)  
Women Veterans Hotline 855-VA-WOMEN (829-6636)  
Combat Call Center 877-WAR-VETS (877-927-8387)  
National Call Center for Homeless Veterans 877-424-3838

 [www.northtexas.va.gov](http://www.northtexas.va.gov)

# How many Veterans work at VA North Texas Health Care System?

**1,586 Veterans**  
(30.81% of workforce)

**594 Disabled Veterans**  
(21.21% of workforce)

**119 Veterans hired in FY15**



## New Plano VA Clinic Coming Soon

A new Community Based Outpatient Clinic for Veterans living in Collin and surrounding counties will open in Plano in 2016. The 10,000-square-foot facility near the Medical Center of Plano will provide primary care, mental health, telemedicine, imaging, and laboratory services closer to where Veterans live.



**ONE THING I'D LIKE TO SAY TO ALL OF YOU IS YOU'RE NOT CRAZY.**

I had a complete meltdown with PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder). I thought I was losing my mind. I'd never been out of control before, and it was hard to admit I needed help, but I wanted my old self back. I've gotten that and more. I'm strong. I'm healthy. I have tools, I have knowledge, and I have strength and courage to deal with it. I'm doing just fine.

RON WHITCOMB: 507 US ARMY 1988 - 1989 SQUAD LEADER, VIETNAM

**ABOUTFACE**

PTSD TREATMENT CAN TURN YOUR LIFE AROUND.  
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [WWW.PTSD.VA.GOV/ABOUTFACE](http://WWW.PTSD.VA.GOV/ABOUTFACE)