

Erie VA Medical Center

*Annual Report
to the Community*



Dear Partners,

In 2010, Erie VA Medical Center took great strides in ensuring Veterans received health care second to none. I am pleased to present you with the 2010 *Report to the Community* giving you a glimpse of what we've accomplished.

As you flip through the *Report to the Community*, you will notice four common themes surrounding our accomplishments: **building partnerships, improving access to care, coordinating care, and serving Veterans in a team-based approach.** These themes stem from the Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) model (page 10) that we have been diligently working to roll out throughout the facility.

From the new specialty and primary care expansion project (page 11) to participating in more community outreaches (page 9), to using new technology to improve health care reach and communication (page 8) – the Veterans we serve have been at the center of everything we do. With your help and support, this has truly been a productive year.

Thank you for your continued partnership and unwavering dedication in helping us fulfill our noble mission – to serve Veterans. We look forward to a new year of enhancing services, meeting challenges, building partnerships, and exceeding the needs of Veterans.

Michael D. Adelman



Our Leadership Team

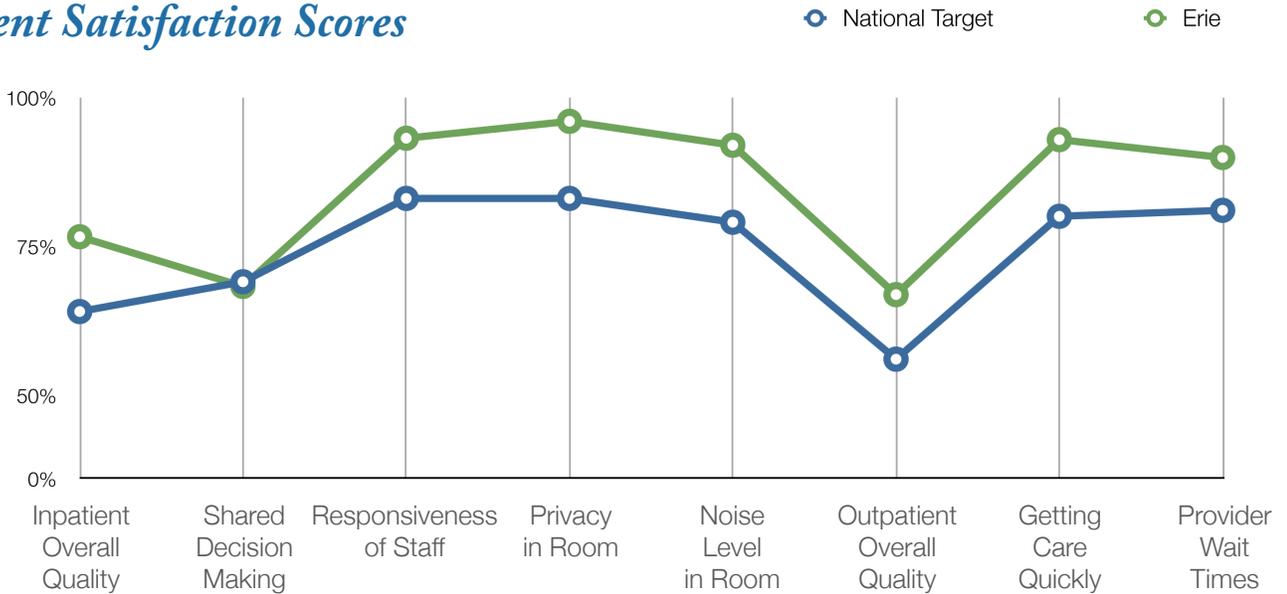
Melissa Sundin
Associate Director

Dorene Sommers, RN, MBA
Acting Nurse Executive

Michael D. Adelman, MD
Medical Center Director

Anthony Behm, DO
Chief of Staff

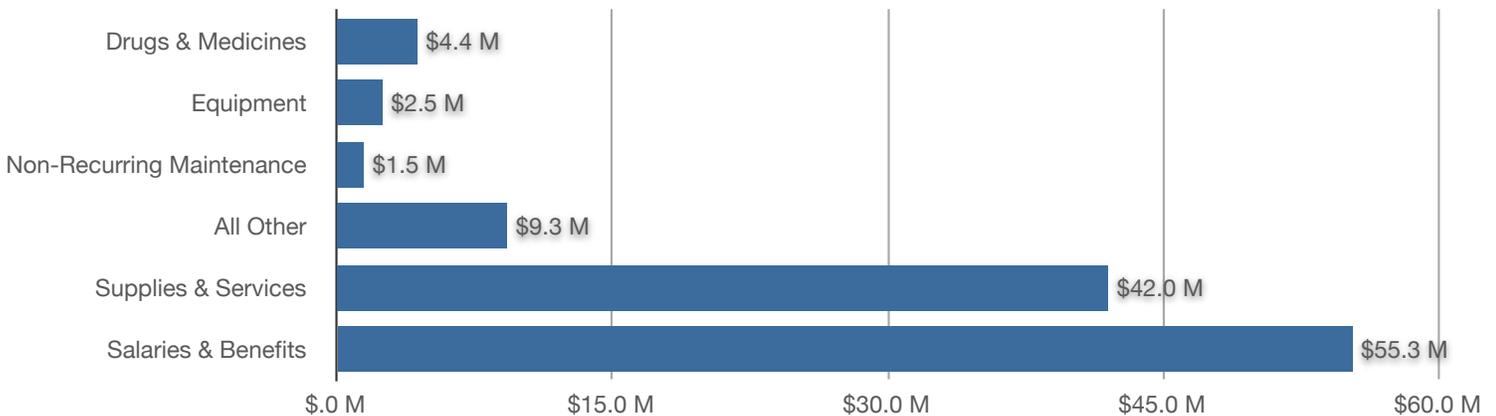
FY10 Patient Satisfaction Scores



FY10 Resources and Utilization

	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10
Total Beds	78	65	65	65
Inpatient Stays	1,480	1,388	1,260	1,179
Outpatient Visits	218,836	234,378	243,396	243,158
Veterans Served	20,024	20,744	21,167	21,821
Volunteers	464	375	545	570
Employees	570	659	711	715
Donations	\$253,620	\$335,235	\$279,930	\$336,031
Operating Budget	\$83,391,000	\$99,739,000	\$108,655,000	\$115,000,000

FY10 Operating Budget



Women Veterans

Erie VA's Women's Health Program continues to expand, adding new patients, new staff members, and new programs!



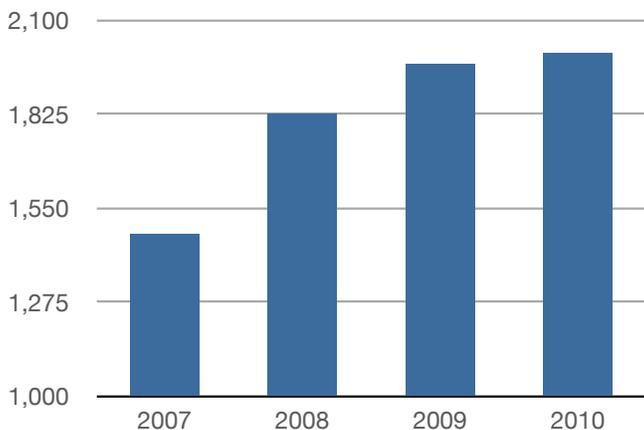
Nadean Sitter, Women Veterans Program Manager visits with an expectant mother discussing the new baby program

New Programs and Initiatives

By providing support and education through community outreach, the program has grown to serve over 2,000 women. During the Celebrate Women's Health Luncheon outreach, more than 110 women Veterans attended for information about the program and a laughter yoga session.

In collaboration with Veterans service organizations, the Women Veterans Program started the New Baby Program providing education, baby care essentials, and much needed support to new mothers.

Women Veteran Enrollment



New Staff

Carol Bliss, Women's Health Case Manager – works closely with each primary care provider and team member to coordinate care for women patients including follow up with patients on screening tests, lab results and assisting in scheduling specialty appointments.

Julia Roussos, Women's Health Clinical Champion – is a resource for primary care providers and teams on women's health issues.

Each of these women's health professionals works directly with the Women Veterans Program Manager to enhance services and the quality of care for women Veterans.

Next Steps

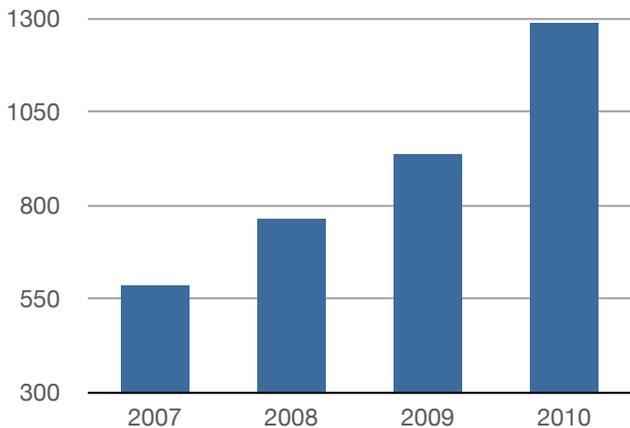
The Women Veterans Program is pleased to announce the opening of a Women's Wellness Center for patients in 2011. Women Veterans will benefit from the health promotion, acute care, and educational services that will be offered in the Wellness Center. The Women's Wellness Center will also have two designated women's health providers who specialize in women's health issues while ensuring privacy, dignity, and top quality care.

Erie VA Welcomes the 56th Stryker Brigade

In collaboration with the PA National Guard, Erie VA held a Post Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) on Saturday, January 23 for more than 300 Soldiers from the 56th Stryker Brigade who returned from Iraq.

During the PDHRA, Erie VA staff enrolled service members in VA healthcare, conducted and scheduled primary care assessments and provided information about firearm safety, safe driving initiatives, and a full range of Federal and State benefits. Returning service members were screened for traumatic brain injuries, post traumatic stress disorder, and readjustment issues to ensure appropriate follow-up care.

Returning Veteran Enrollment



Returning Veterans

The transition home after deployment can be difficult, but the Returning Veterans Program can help. This program ensures coordination of care – from connecting patients with appropriate benefits to providing comprehensive health screenings – in order to meet the unique needs of each patient.

Welcome Home Event

The annual Welcome Home Veterans Appreciation event was another home run with almost 1,000 Veterans and their families in attendance. Representatives from Erie VA, Vet Center, Veterans service organizations and local community organizations lined the entrance to the event providing resources to serve Veterans and their families.

Reaching Out

To help Veterans transition after returning home, Erie VA and the Erie Vet Center hosted a weekend retreat for returning service members and their significant others. During the retreat, Veterans and their spouses focused on communication, relationships, and readjustment issues and were provided tools to continue on their road to recovery.

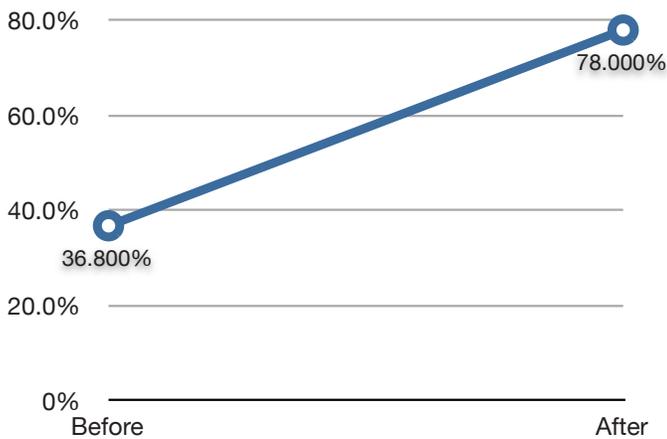


Redesigning the Way We Serve

The Systems Redesign team focused efforts on redesigning processes in the behavioral health and primary care settings. The ultimate goal is to find out what Veterans value in their care and redesign our processes to meet those expectations.

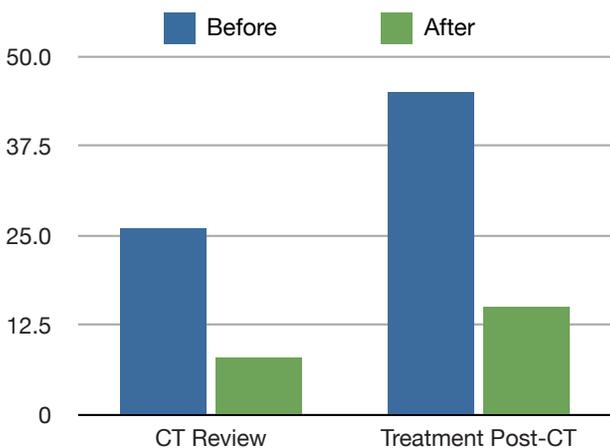
With the addition of two new Systems Redesign Coordinators in 2010, Erie VA continued to pursue excellence in health care through systems redesign initiatives.

Bedside Care Systems Redesign Project



As a result of a Systems Redesign project, providers and nurses now spend almost 80 percent of their time at the bedside with patients.

Lung Disease Systems Redesign Project



The lung cancer Systems Redesign project reduced the amount of time it takes for patients to receive a diagnosis and to receive treatment for abnormal lung screenings to ensure patients receive quick and accurate care.

Systems Redesign

Behavioral Health Projects

- Homeless Veteran Program
- PTSD Referral Process
- Medication Management

Primary Care Projects

- Telephone Access
- Patient Aligned Care Teams

Primary Care and Mental Health Integration

In 2010, Erie VA initiated a new program that incorporates mental health treatment within the primary care setting. The purpose of this program is to integrate care for Veterans' physical and mental health conditions, improve access and quality of care, and allow treatment in the mental health specialty setting to focus on people with more severe symptoms.

Part of the aim of this program is to direct patients expressing emotional or mental distress to the appropriate clinical service depending on individual patient needs. Distress can be anything from situational stressors such as relationship or financial issues to depression to post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Some Veterans shy away from asking for help because of the negative stigma often associated with mental health,” said Tammy Breter, Primary Care and Mental Health Integration Clinician. “So when patients are able to meet behavioral health staff in a regular primary care setting they feel more comfortable opening up about even moderate issues. It’s a great way to bridge the gap between asking for help and receiving the care they need.”

Innovating Care & Redesigning Lives

Expanding Rural Mental Health Services

Erie VA was the first VA in the nation to launch a new program that provides behavioral health intensive care management for Veterans with a serious mental illness. This new Enhanced RANGE (Rural Access Network for Growth Enhancement) program provides services to Veterans who were previously under-served due to their rural location and lack of available community programs.

Since the Enhanced RANGE program started this past February, 21 Veterans have enrolled in the program, 596 encounters were logged, 25 Veterans were provided with direct homeless-related assistance, and dozens of homeless outreach visits have been made to both individuals and community organizations.

“I think I speak for the entire team when I say, the progress our program and patients have made this past year has been amazing to witness,” says Enhanced Range Social Worker Health Hess-Chatterjee.

Services provided include homeless outreach, individual and group counseling, crisis planning and intervention, family support and education, social skills training, physical and mental health care coordination, medication management assistance, assessment and monitoring, housing referrals, and multiple weekly visits with Veterans, community contacts, and clinics.

The aim of this program is to allow Veterans with serious mental illness to recover and maintain their functioning within the community in which they live.

Ending Homelessness

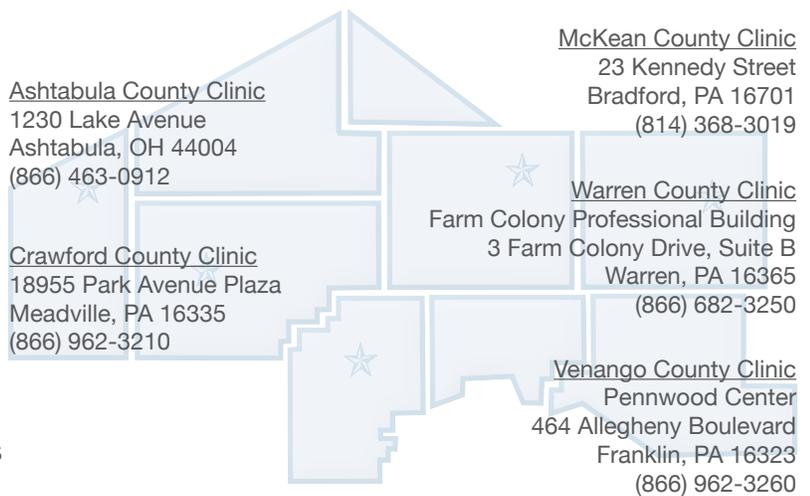
One year down – four years to go in the fight to end homelessness among Veterans and the Erie VA Homeless Veterans Program has made great strides in this direction. In 2010, this program welcomed more than 100 new Veterans requesting homeless services in addition to hundreds of Veterans who already use these services.

In addition, Erie VA’s Housing and Urban Development’s Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program screened over 300 Veterans for case management and housing needs this year. The HUD-VASH program received 25 additional vouchers, making a total of 60 housing vouchers available to assist Veterans and their families find and maintain permanent housing. All of the vouchers are currently in use giving 60 Veterans and their families a place to call home.



Enhanced RANGE Staff:
Heather J Hess-Chatterjee, Marilyn Kingston,
and Amanda Wellner

Coordinating Care Close to Home



Improving Access to Care

Patients no longer have to travel long distances for some speciality care services. In 2010, Erie VA expanded telehealth services using video-conferencing technology to connect patients located at Erie VA with speciality care services provided at other facilities.

While Erie VA does not have a dermatologist on site, patients are able to visit their regular clinic in Erie and video-conference with the VA Dermatologist from Clarksburg. Lab work, prescriptions, x-rays, and even biopsies are done right at the Erie VA providing patients with easy access to dermatology care.

Patients with diabetes are also seeing benefits from telehealth services. Erie VA provides teleretinal imaging to screen for diabetic retinopathy, the most common diabetic eye disease and a leading cause of blindness in American adults. Teleretinal Imaging is a quick and easy way to check for this condition and has helped prevent or slow the severity of diabetic retinopathy.

Not only are telehealth services convenient for patients, but they also serve as valuable monitors to help detect and treat health issues, preventing unnecessary hospitalization and enhancing the Veteran's quality of life.

My HealthVet - www.myhealth.va.gov

In 2010, more than 1,200 Erie VA patients accessed My HealthVet (MHV) to manage their health online.

Through MHV, patients can refill prescriptions online, view wellness reminders, track health, and communicate with their health care team online through a new MHV feature called secure messaging.

After piloting this feature for two years, Erie VA rolled out secure messaging to 21 primary care clinics and select specialty care clinics in 2010.

With My HealthVet, Veterans are engaged in becoming active members of their health care team.





In Partnership with the Community

Building Partnerships

One year, 56 outreaches, and 20,827 patients later, Erie VA is still as committed to our community as ever. In 2010, outreach staff attended events - everything from County Fairs to the For Women Only Expo - to raise awareness of health care services entitled to Veterans. Members of the Erie VA's Speakers Bureau also attended community and Veteran service organization events to promote new services and programs Erie VA offers to Veterans. Additionally, employees raised \$35,517 for charities through the Combined Federal Campaign.





Erie VA primary care is revamping how care is delivered.

Access to Care

Veterans now have more choices when it comes to how and where they want to receive their care.

- Primary Care visits
- Telephone follow ups
- Telehealth services
- Online prescription refills
- Secure Messaging
- Enhanced RANGE
- Community Based Outpatient Clinics

Team-Based Care

Veterans have a nurse, health care technician, and provider - known as a teamlet - who consistently provide comprehensive care for each patient focusing on each Veterans unique health care goals.

Veteran-Centric Partnerships

Patients and teamlets work together to monitor their health so serious issues can be detected early in order to prevent further complications and hospitalization. Primary Care and Mental Health integration is one example of how the team approach ensures Veterans' needs, both physical and emotional, are met through a seamless transition.

Coordinated Care

PACT teamlets oversee transitions from primary care to specialists or private doctors and from hospital care to ambulatory care. Coordinators from each Erie VA program ensure continuity of care, coordination of care, quality and patient satisfaction.



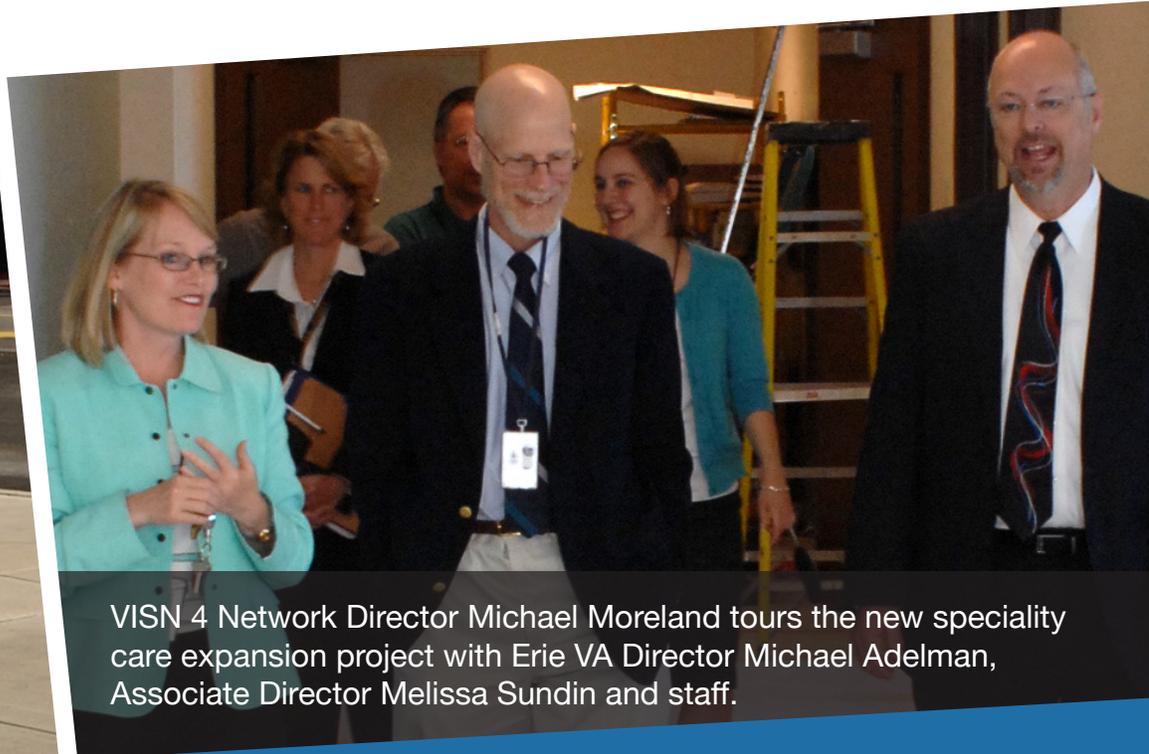
Speciality Care Expansion Project

In 2010, Erie VA stepped closer to completing the Specialty Care Expansion project. This \$4.74 M project provides additional specialty care clinic space and a new front entrance which serves as a centralized check-in area for patients and visitors.

Future Projects

More construction to improve the Erie VA facility is on its way! Behavioral Health, Ambulatory Surgery and Nutrition and Food are the next areas to be renovated. Construction is expected to start in 2011.

Redesigned Care & Renovated Facilities



VISN 4 Network Director Michael Moreland tours the new specialty care expansion project with Erie VA Director Michael Adelman, Associate Director Melissa Sundin and staff.

Proud to serve America's Veterans,
America's Heroes.



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