U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Erie VA Medical Center

ANNUAL REPORT

2019

Whole Health Battlefield Acupuncture

Patient and Employee *Exceptional Experience*

I CARE
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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

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.

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.

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.

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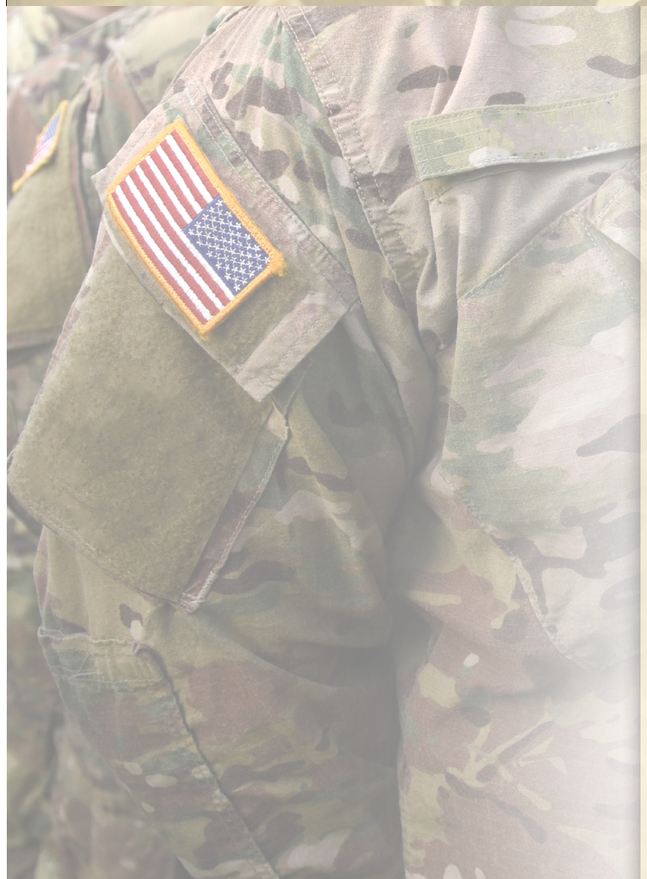
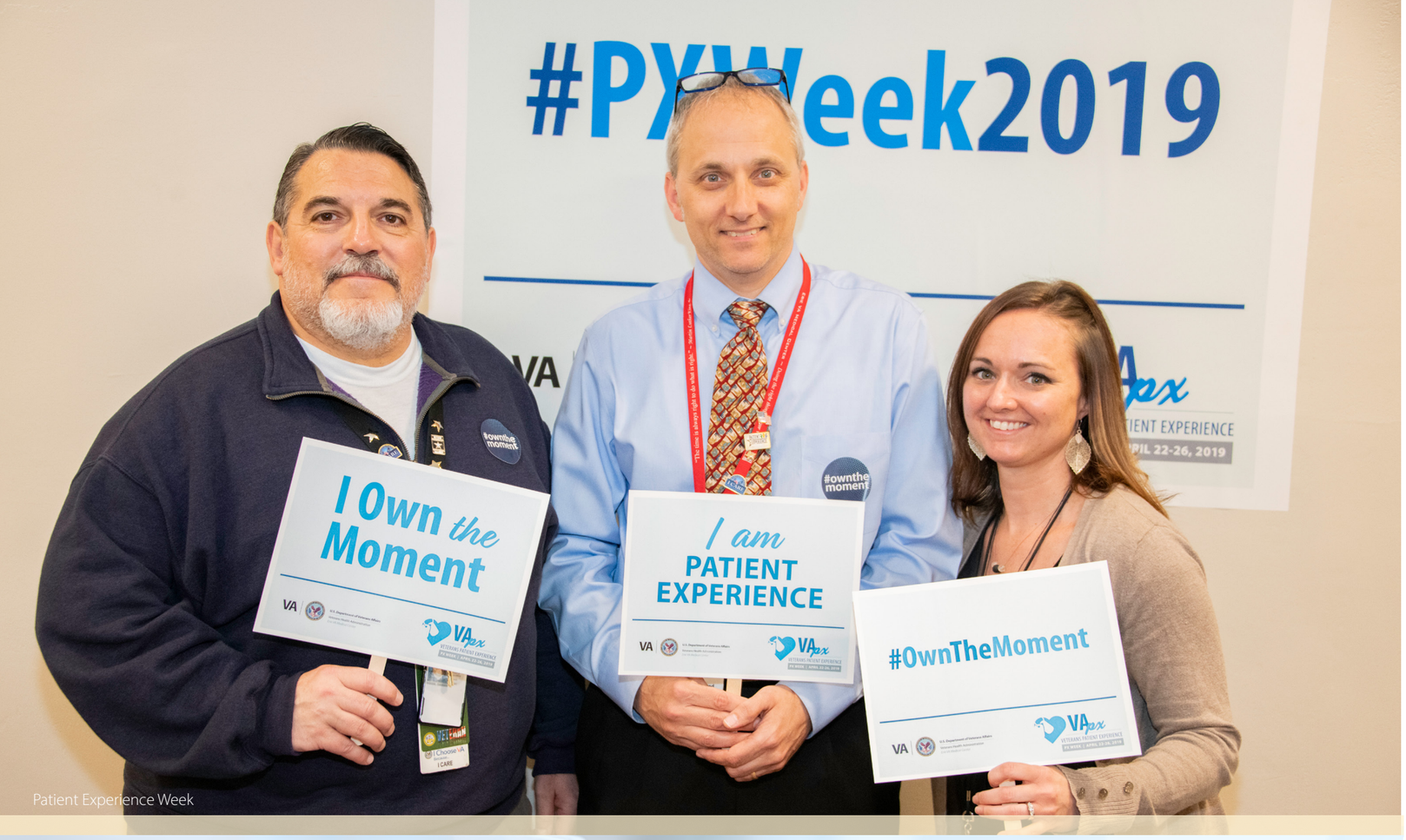
Patient Experience Week



Message from the Director

2019 was a monumental year for our Erie VA Medical Center (VAMC). As a five-star facility and High Reliability Organization, we continued to improve the way we provide care by empowering employees to make the right decisions and go the extra step for the patient experience. In 2019, we continued to lead the way in our Whole Health approach to care (pg 7-8), we opened a new psychosocial residential rehabilitation treatment program to bridge a gap in mental health care for Veterans (pg 9), we continued to strengthen community partnerships (pg 17-18), and devoted resources to expand our facility and services to help meet the unique needs of our Veterans. I'd like to thank all of you – our Veterans, stakeholders, and employees – for your continued partnership in our journey to improve the lives of Veterans with world class care.

John Gennaro
Director, Erie VAMC



Patient Experience Week

Erie VA Medical Center

2019 Practice Greenhealth ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Who We Are

Recognized as a five-star facility,
Erie VAMC proudly serves more than 22,600 Veterans throughout the tri-state area in northwestern Pennsylvania, northeastern Ohio, and western New York.

Our mission
is to improve the lives of Veterans with world class care. We are committed to ensuring Veterans and employees receive a five-star experience in quality, efficiency, and satisfaction.

Erie VAMC leads the way
as a High Reliability Organization. Our exceptional employees and volunteers are empowered to make the right decisions on behalf of patients which results in a better experience for our employees and the Veterans we serve.

TOTAL VETERANS PATIENTS SERVED

22,602 ERIE VAMC

2,313 ASHTABULA VA CLINIC

1,880 VENANGO VA CLINIC

2,914 CRAWFORD VA CLINIC

1,112 MCKEAN VA CLINIC

2,189 WARREN VA CLINIC

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND AWARDS

Top 25 Environmental Excellence Award Winner
Erie VAMC once again received the Top 25 Environmental Excellence Award and the Circle of Excellence for Water from Practice GreenHealth. These awards recognize Erie VAMC as an industry leader in sustainability performance noting our new high efficiency boiler plant that has lower emissions and energy consumption, our new 46,000 gallon potable water tank that monitors and reduces water usage, and our new Bi Fuel Generator that reduces fuel oil consumption.

DAISY AND BEE AWARDS

The DAISY Award Committee continued to recognize exceptional nurses each quarter based upon nominations from patients, visitors, and fellow employees. This year, our Nursing Workforce Development Committee also launched the new Beyond Exceptional Expectations (BEE) Award to honor outstanding achievements in the workplace by non-nursing staff who make exceptional contributions toward efficiency and effectiveness of operations, teamwork, and outstanding service to the Veterans, co-workers, family and visitors.

HIGH RELIABILITY ORGANIZATION

As one of the lead High Reliability Organization (HRO) sites, Erie VAMC is committed to achieving zero harm and to providing an unmatched patient experience through the three pillars of HRO – leadership commitment, a culture of safety, and continuous process improvement. Every staff member is a problem solver and is empowered to make the right decisions for the Veterans we serve.

PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND ACCESS

Affirming the trust of Veterans and their families is paramount. In 2019, our trust score based on patient surveys increased from 67 percent to 70 percent. Erie VAMC provides same day access for primary care and mental health care based upon patient need. Additional appointments, flexible hours, appointment reminders, and process improvements have led to shortened average wait times for scheduled appointments for both new and established patients.

2019 Average Wait Time in Days:

16.6
PRIMARY CARE
NEW PATIENT

12.7
MENTAL HEALTH
NEW PATIENT

22.8
SPECIALTY CARE
NEW PATIENT

3.7
PRIMARY CARE
ESTABLISHED PATIENT

2.0
MENTAL HEALTH
ESTABLISHED PATIENT

6.1
SPECIALTY CARE
ESTABLISHED PATIENT

WESTERN MARKET INITIATIVE

During the past two years, Erie VAMC expanded services for Veterans in collaboration with specialty providers from the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. These services include cataract surgery in Erie and a cardiology clinic at the Crawford Community Based Outpatient Clinic. We expect to add an additional cardiology clinic in Erie and enhance oncology clinic support in the coming months. These services are improving the Veteran experience through building patient and provider relationships with specialty providers and maintaining continuity in VA healthcare.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Employees have spoken that Erie VAMC is a place they want to work, a place where they feel a sense of belonging, and a place where the mission is without question. The 2019 All Employee Survey response clearly demonstrates the engagement of employees.

ERIE ALL EMPLOYEE SURVEY

	FY17	FY19
Overall Satisfaction (out of 5)	3.68	3.9 (↑5%)
Organizational Satisfaction (out of 5)	3.65	3.82 (↑3%)
Recommend my Organization (out of 5)	3.75	4.02 (↑5%)
Best Place to Work (BPTW)	61%	71% (↑16%)
Servant Leader Index	65.8%	75.5% (↑10%)

High Reliability Organization

Creating & Sustaining

the five-star experience

Western Market – Cataract Surgery

Whole Health

Empowering
patients and employees

Whole Health Tai Chi Class

WHOLE HEALTH

1,757
UNIQUE PATIENTS SERVED

9,635
VETERAN ENCOUNTERS

IN 2019, OUR WHOLE HEALTH PROGRAM

Expanded access to Battlefield Acupuncture
by offering this treatment at every Erie VAMC location including the five community-based outpatient clinics making effective pain management treatment available to rural Veterans.

Expanded community partnerships
with the YMCA, the local Vet Center, and a Cambridge Springs Reserve Unit.

Launched an Employee Whole Health Program
to support employee health goals and to diffuse the knowledge and first-hand experience of Whole Health services throughout the facility while supporting employee engagement.

Whole Health is an approach to health care that empowers and enables patients to take charge of their health and well-being and to live life to the fullest. Whole Health centers around what matters to you – your values, needs, and goals.

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Whole Health Coaching for Healthy Living
- Mindfulness & Meditation
- Battlefield Acupuncture
- Yoga
- Nutrition and Healthy Teaching Kitchen Classes
- Reiki Sound Bath
- YMCA Movement Classes
- And many more

Live Whole Health.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

5,448
VETERANS SERVED BY BH

137
VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH VETERANS

85
BH STAFF

Trauma Informed Care

Erie VAMC's Behavioral Health Clinic launched a quarterly trauma-informed care workshop for families, friends, and loved ones of Veterans. The goal is to provide a deeper understanding of trauma, how it affects all aspects of daily living and what techniques can be used to help Veterans feel physically, psychologically and emotionally safe.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION TREATMENT PROGRAM

12
PRRTP PATIENTS ADMITTED

14
PRRTP STAFF

Beyond Outpatient Care

Erie VAMC opened a new Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PRRTP) in July of 2019 to assist Veterans struggling with a mental health and/or substance use disorder that require care that is more extensive than outpatient treatment. The 8-bed PRRTP bridges the gap between inpatient and outpatient behavioral health care to help Veterans takes ownership of their own recovery while providing personalized treatment based on the Veteran's needs, diagnoses, and recovery goals.

JOB CLUB

89
TOTAL UNIQUE VETERANS SERVED

Vocational Support

To help Veterans overcome barriers to employment, Erie VAMC's vocational and employment specialists continue to host a weekly Job Club in Erie and Meadville. Nearly half of the Veterans served by the job club met their employment goals in 2019. The job club provides Veterans with support throughout the entire job searching process – from writing resumes, to searching for jobs, to prepping for interviews.

Behavioral Health

Opening the doors to *Recovery*

Job Club Workshop

#1
IN PATIENT & EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION ACROSS THE NATION!

Suicide Prevention Week Dedication

"We're proud to say that homelessness among Veterans has reached a functional zero within the western region of PA. There will always be situations which will cause homelessness. But we, as a community, have moved into a maintenance phase for ending homelessness among Veterans. The true measure of success is having the resources and availability to provide emergency, transitional, and permanent housing for all the Veterans in our area – and because of the hard work from our staff and partnership with our community – WE DO!"

– Mike Wehrer, Supervisor, Homeless Care Team

HOMELESS VETERANS CARE TEAM

11
HOMELESS VETERAN CARE TEAM STAFF

728
HOMELESS VETERANS SERVED

Sheltering our Heroes

In 2019, the Erie VAMC Homeless Veteran Care Team reached a functional zero meaning homelessness among Veterans is rare, brief, and non-recurring. Erie VAMC has the right resources in place to provide emergent, transitional, and permanent housing to homeless Veterans.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

137
SUICIDE PREVENTION OUTREACHES CONDUCTED

3
NUMBER OF SUICIDE PREVENTION COORDINATORS

Breaking Through the Stigma

Suicide Prevention remains a top clinical priority for Erie VAMC staff. To reinforce this, every VA employee, Veteran Service Organization and law enforcement official received training on suicide prevention resources.

If you are or know of a Veteran in crisis, contact the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You are not alone.

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1

Text 838255

Chat Online at veteranscrisisline.net

"The My HealtheVet program makes viewing my health care record easy. Theresa Allen [Erie VAMC's MHV Coordinator] gave me an in depth tutorial on how to use all the features, so I feel comfortable using the web to manage my VA care. I love the convenience of being able to access my health record from anywhere, making it easy to share important information with my doctors. I highly recommend My HealtheVet to any Veteran – it's easy to use and it gives me peace of mind knowing I have access to my VA care."

– Greg Turos, Erie VAMC Patient

Connected Care

Virtual

five-star healthcare at your fingertips

CONNECTED CARE

4,498
ENCOUNTERS
Encounters include Home Telehealth, Store & Forward, and Clinical Video Telehealth

2,043
TELEMENTAL
Total number of Telemental health care encounters.

420
E-CONSULT
Unique patients served via e-consult.

Virtual care continues to grow in popularity among local Veterans by providing convenient access to five-star health care. Erie VAMC's Home Telehealth services leads the way in having the highest percentage of enrollees in the entire VISN. Our team also expanded access to 12 new Clinical Video Telehealth clinics including cardiology and neurology to make specialty care more accessible.

VA VIDEO CONNECT

In 2019, Erie VAMC conducted more than 380 virtual primary care and behavioral health visits using VA Video Connect (VVC). VA Video Connect was rolled out to 95% of Primary Care and Behavioral Health Clinic providers. To help overcome barriers to healthcare, Erie VAMC primary care and behavioral health staff also launched an initiative that offers a virtual visit via VVC to Veterans who call to cancel an appointment.

MYHEALTHEVET | MYHEALTH.VA.GOV

9,100
VETERANS WITH A MHV ACCOUNT

18,276
SECURE MESSAGES MHV SENT

55,520
PRESCRIPTION REFILLS THROUGH MHV

VA APP STORE | MOBILE.VA.GOV

VA Mobile aims to improve the health of Veterans by providing technologies that expand clinical care beyond the traditional office visit.

VA Online Scheduling
Schedule, request and track VA appointments

VA Video Connect
Secure video visits with your VA care team from anywhere

RX Refill
Request, refill and track VA prescriptions

Pain Coach
Offers tools to track and manage pain

MOVE! Coach
Weight loss support

PTSD Coach
Support and tools to manage your PTSD

Visit mobile.va.gov to find VA apps for you!

Veteran-Centered Programs

Meeting the unique needs of our *Veterans*

CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

300+
CAREGIVERS SERVED

2
STAFF MEMBERS

In 2019, the Caregiver Support Program added new monthly support groups within Ashtabula and Venango counties to expand services to rural caregivers. The team also hosted several workshops and a Caregivers and Color event providing a fun, creative outlet for Caregivers. This program will add two additional staff in 2020 to further expand supportive resources.

LACTATION SUPPORT SERVICES

28
VETERAN FAMILIES SERVED IN ERIE

37
FAMILIES SERVED THROUGHOUT VISN 4

Erie VAMC provides support to new parents through the Lactation Support Program offering face-to-face visits, a lactation support group and virtual support from the comfort of their own home through a mobile web-based device. This specialty service, which is unique to Erie, also expanded to offer virtual services to families throughout VISN 4.

TRANSITION AND CARE MANAGEMENT

3,371
TCM ENCOUNTERS

2,282
POST 911 VETERANS SERVED

70+
VETERANS RECEIVING ACTIVE CASE MANAGEMENT

The Transition and Care Management (TCM) program provides case management services and readjustment support to post 911 Veterans. The TCM team screens all Post 911 Veterans to determine if the Veteran would like to participate with ongoing case management support to enhance their engagement into the VA system and aid towards civilian success.

WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

1,627
WOMEN VETERANS SERVED

The Women Veterans Program launched a monthly Women Veterans C.A.R.E. (Connecting Arts to Real Experiences) group to help women Veterans explore various creative arts to reduce stress, improve self-awareness, inspire self-discovery and promote personal development.

Caregiver Support Group

Community Partnership

Building
a community of support

VA2K Walk & Roll

Suicide Prevention Walk

ReCreation Resident Visit

VA Baby Shower

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2
VETERAN ENGAGEMENT BOARDS IN ERIE AND MCKEAN

93
OUTREACH EVENTS

85+
MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

4,170
SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

443
VOLUNTEERS

$376,322
TOTAL DONATIONS

20,218
VOLUNTEER DRIVERS HOURS

13,677
VETERANS TRANSPORTED TO OTHER VAMCS AND COMMUNITY CARE PROVIDERS

417,058
MILES DRIVEN BY VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

COMMUNITY LIVING CENTER AT THE ERIE VAMC

45
CLC LONG TERM CARE BEDS

74
NURSING STAFF

Erie VAMC's Community Living Center continues to be rated as a five-star facility providing long-term care, short-term rehabilitation, short stay skilled services, respite care, and hospice and palliative care. The CLC also focuses on restorative nursing to help maintain residents' mobility, physical strength, and independence.

Erie's CLC is pursing the Pathway to Excellence designation which is focused on creating a healthy environment – engaged employees excelling in productivity and team work that results in exceptional patient satisfaction and safety – to enhance the quality of care provided to Veterans. The Pathway to Excellence Program is the premier designation for healthy work environments recognizing a commitment to creating the foundation of a healthy workplace for staff.

NEW 22-BED COMMUNITY LIVING CENTER AT THE ERIE VAMC

24,012
SQUARE FOOTAGE

$10M
COST

The new state-of-the-art 22-bed CLC features all the comforts of home including all private rooms, private bathrooms, kitchens, and community living rooms for family and visitors. Current CLC residents are expected to move into the new facility in Summer 2020.

COMING SOON: DENTAL CLINIC

FALL 2020
EXPECTED COMPLETION

$5.1M
COST

New, state-of-the-art Dental Clinic on the third floor. This project includes remodeling approximately 7,000 square footage converting from old surgical wing into modern dental clinic that includes four general treatment rooms, one oral specific room, and one x-ray room.

New CLC Dining Area

Facility Expansion

Pursuing *Excellence*

Five Myths of VA Healthcare

Bring a *Buddy*

BRING A BUDDY TO THE ERIE VAMC

Do you know a Veteran who may be eligible for VA Healthcare, but hasn't enrolled? You can be their link to receiving five-star healthcare! Bring your battle buddy to the Erie VA Medical Center's Eligibility & Enrollment Office to see if they qualify today!

DEBUNKING MYTHS

Many Veterans don't try to enroll in VA Healthcare because they don't think they are eligible. Do not let any of these myths be the reason you or a buddy don't take advantage of our services and programs:

MYTH #1

"I DIDN'T SERVE IN COMBAT/I WASN'T INJURED IN THE SERVICE, SO I'M NOT ELIGIBLE FOR VA HEALTH CARE."

Fact: If you served in the military – even during peacetime – in the active military, naval, or air service, and are separated under any condition other than dishonorable, you may quality for VA health care benefits. Contact a VA Eligibility representative today.

MYTH #2

"I DON'T WANT TO GO TO THE VA BECAUSE I WANT TO SAVE THOSE APPOINTMENTS FOR THOSE WHO REALLY NEED THEM."

Fact: The more Veterans who use our services, the more funding and resources we receive to continue serving more and more Veterans. You do not take away from another Veteran, so see if you're eligible today!

MYTH #3

"I MAKE TOO MUCH MONEY, SO I'VE NEVER APPLIED FOR VA CARE."

Fact: it's not all about income. There are many other factors taken into consideration when applying for VA health care. Other factors include service-related injuries or illnesses (such as exposure to Agent Orange), time and location of service, former Prisoner of War status, Purple Heart Medal recipients, etc. Don't assume, speak with a VA eligibility representative today.

MYTH #4

"I WANT TO GO TO THE VA, BUT I DON'T WANT TO LOSE MY PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE."

Fact: Assuming you are eligible for VA health care, you do not need to give up your private health insurance. You can keep your own insurance and seek health care from the VA as well – the best of both worlds.

Bottom line:
If you have served in the military, you may be eligible for VA health care. Take action today!

Apply online at www.va.gov/health, in-person by stopping into the Erie VAMC Eligibility Office between the hours of 7:30a.m.-4:30 p.m. with your DD-214, or call 814-860-2970 or toll-free at 1-800-274-8387 to speak with an eligibility representative.

Facility Pulse

HOSPITAL CARE PROVIDED

268,012
OUTPATIENT VISITS
Total outpatient visits provided, including CBOCs.

1,764
SURGICAL PROCEDURES
Total Ambulatory Surgery Clinic procedures

461
ADMISSIONS
Total number of veterans admitted for care, including observations.

52
OPERATING BEDS
Total number of hospital and nursing home beds currently available.

EMPLOYEES

790
EMPLOYEES
Total number of employees: 229 nurses; 52 physicians.

235
VETERAN EMPLOYEES
Number of employees who served in the military.

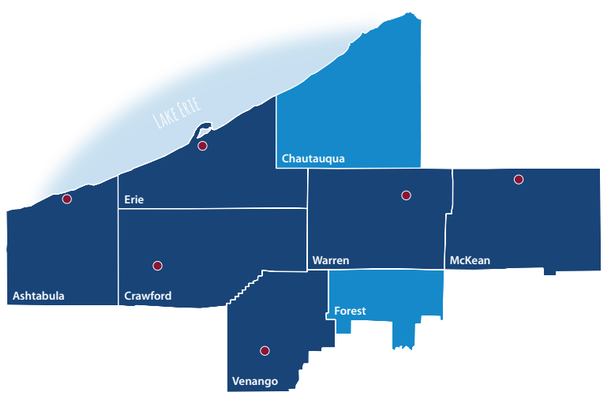
FINANCIAL

$156M
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET

$127M
MEDICAL CENTER

$29M
COMMUNITY CARE

C.B.O.C. LOCATIONS



*Disclaimer: All clinic phone numbers remain the same, but reroute to the Erie VAMC phone tree where the Erie Call Center can assist you.

Ashtabula VA Clinic
2044 Lambros Lane
Ashtabula, OH 44004
Phone: 866-463-0912

Crawford VA Clinic
16954 Conneaut Lake Road
Meadville, PA 16335
Phone: 866-962-3210

Venango VA Clinic
464 Allegheny Boulevard
Franklin, PA 16323
Phone: 866-962-3260

Warren VA Clinic
3 Farm Colony Drive
Warren, PA 16365
Phone: 866-682-3250

McKean VA Clinic
23 Kennedy Street
Bradford, PA 16701
Phone: 814-368-3019

VETERANS HEALTH CARE NATIONWIDE

9.21M
TOTAL ENROLLEES IN VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

170
NUMBER OF VA MEDICAL CENTERS (VAMC)

379.885
NUMBER OF FULL TIME VA EMPLOYEES NATIONWIDE

6.43M
TOTAL UNIQUE PATIENTS TREATED NATIONWIDE

1,269
NUMBER OF VA OUTPATIENT SITES

VA's Veterans Health Administration is the largest integrated health care network in the United States, with 1,255 health care facilities serving 9 million enrolled Veterans each year.

Choose VA

New to VA?

Let's get started.

PRINT OUT YOUR VA WELCOME KIT

Whether you're just getting out of the service or you've been a civilian for years now, the VA Welcome Kit can help guide you to the benefits and services you've earned.

Download your VA Welcome Kit here: www.va.gov/welcome-kit

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Main Line – Phone Tree
814-868-8661
1-800-274-8387 (toll free)
Press 1 Pharmacy
Press 2 Appointments & Specialty Care Providers
Press 3 Nurse Line
Press 4 Eligibility
Press 5 Billing
Press 7 Veterans Crisis Line

Behavioral Health Clinic
814-860-2038

Caregiver Support Program
814-860-2657

Eligibility
814-860-2970

Medical Social Work
814-860-2529

Medication Refills
814-868-6284
1-800-274-8387 (toll-free)

Non-VA Care Notification
Notify within 72 hours
814-860-2800 (M-F 8a-4:30p)
814-868-8661 (After hours, ask for Medical Administration Assistant)

Release of Information
814-860-2212

Transition & Care Management
(OEF/OIF/OND)
814-860-2965

Veterans Crisis Line
www.veteranscrisisline.net
1-800-273-8255 (press 1)
Text - 838255

Whole Health Program
814-860-2437

Women Veterans Program
814-860-2907

VA Mobile Applications
mobile.va.gov

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Erie VA Medical Center

138 East 38th Street | Erie, PA 16504 | 1-800-274-8387 www.erie.va.gov VAMCErie ErieVAMC

Editor-in-Chief **Sarah Gudgeon** Creative Director **Briana Cummings** Writer **Kimberly Hackbarth**

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