

Department of Veterans Affairs



Working Together

Spring 2004

Issue Sixteen



Warren Park

\$200 Million Major Construction Project for VAPHS Approved

Mr. Moreland, Director VAPHS (right) accompanies Secretary of Veterans Affairs Principi (center) and Senator Specter (left) to a press conference to discuss the approved \$200 million major construction project.

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A Message from the Director

Dear Fellow Employees, Volunteers, Veterans and Friends of the VAPHS,

On May 7, 2004, I had the pleasure of conducting a press conference to announce that the \$200 million major construction/consolidation project for the VA Pittsburgh has been approved. This announcement will mark the beginning of a new era for the VAPHS and will enable our staff to continue to provide care that is second to none well into this new millennium.

The recently approved \$200 million major construction/consolidation project for the VAPHS features building 310,000 sq. feet of new mental health, clinical and research space at the University Drive Division and 250,000 sq. feet of clinical and support space at the Heinz Division. The plan also includes building a 1,200-space parking garage at University Drive to improve access roads and parking delays. This major construction and consolidation project has been designed to improve and enhance the care and services we provide to our veterans. Improvements resulting from this project will include:

- Improved veteran satisfaction because of improved privacy, access, convenience, and aesthetic enhancements compared to the 50-year-old space.
- More efficient and effective treatment can be provided in space designed to meet modern service delivery modalities and standards of care.
- Behavioral health clinics will be designed to support more efficient clinic flow, resulting in reduced wait times for new appointments.
- Construction of inpatient units with all private and semi-private rooms will meet community standards and improve patient privacy and satisfaction.
- Long wait times for a parking space will be eliminated through the construction of a parking garage and a new access road eliminating traffic congestion.

After this major construction project is completed and the new buildings are furnished and equipped, we will gradually move the Highland Drive



Mr. Moreland at Press Conference May 7, 2004

Glenn Hangard

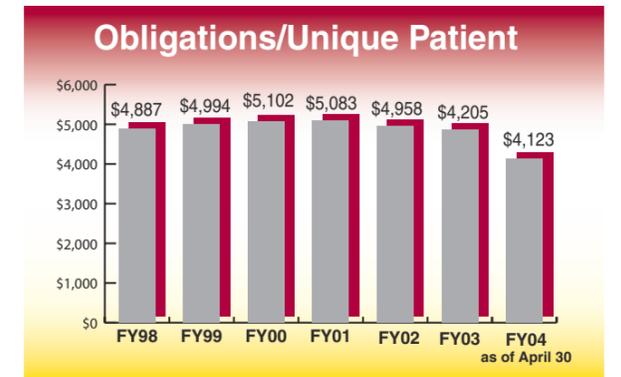
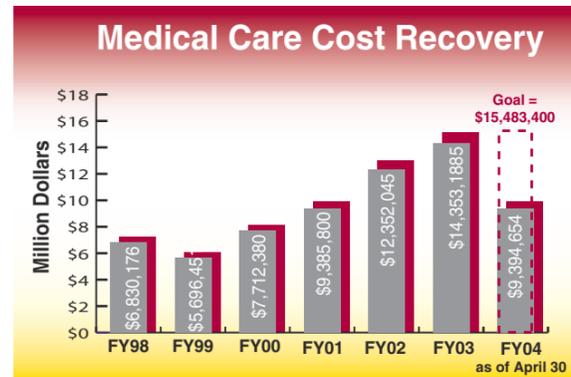
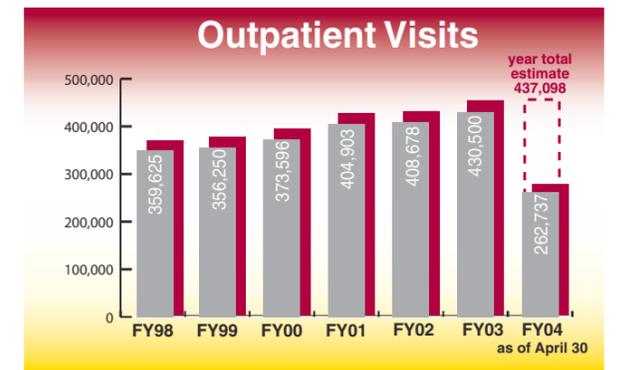
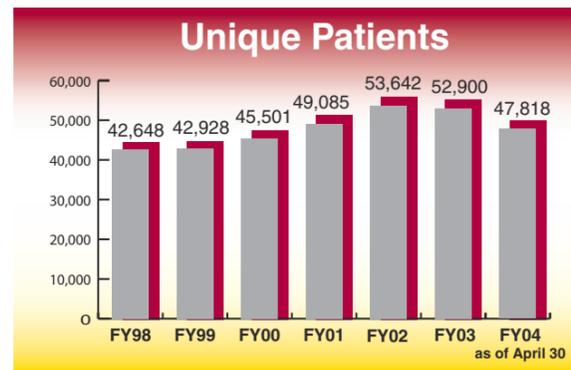
programs into new state-of-the-art treatment space as construction is completed.

This new state-of-the-art mental health space, clinical space and parking garage will allow staff to continue to provide our patients with the highest quality health care that can be provided anywhere in the nation and to be able to continue to accommodate our growing number of patients. This major construction project/consolidation plan is in the best interest of our veteran patients who have entrusted their care to us and will ensure that our heroes will continue to receive the level of care that they have earned and deserve for serving their country.

This Spring issue of **Working Together** features a profile on the approved major construction/consolidation plan for Pittsburgh, appointment of our new VISN Director, appointment of our new Vice President for Geriatrics and Site Manager for the Heinz Division and our "Performance Vital Signs." It also spotlights the many outstanding achievements and awards that our staff has received in the past quarter.

Michael E. Moreland
Director

Performance Vital Signs



Clinical Indicator	VA 2002	VA 2003	Best Non-VA or Medicare	VAPHS 2003
Advised Tobacco Cessation (VA x3, others x1)	69	75	68	74
Beta Blocker after MI	97	98	94	90
Breast Cancer Screening	80	84	75	88
Cervical Cancer Screening	89	90	81	95
Cholesterol Screening (all pts)	91	91	73	No Facility-specific Data Available
Cholesterol Screening (post MI)	92	94	79	No Facility-specific Data Available
LDL Cholesterol <130 post MI	74	78	61	70 (<120)
Colorectal Cancer Screening	64	67	49	68
Diabetes Hgb A1c checked past year	94	94	83	No Facility-specific Data Available
Diabetes Hgb A1c > 9.5 (lower is better)	17	15	34	85 (<9.0)
Diabetes LDL Measured	94	95	85	No Facility-specific Data Available
Diabetes LDL < 130	70	77	55	73 (<120)
Diabetes Eye Exam	72	75	52	67
Diabetes Kidney Function	78	70	52	No Facility-specific Data Available
Hypertension: BP ≤ 140/90	55	68	58	71
Influenza Immunization	74	76	68	77
Pneumococcal Immunization	87	90	63	85
Mental Health F/U 30 D post D/C	81	77	74	No Facility-specific Data Available

Performance Measurement
Setting the U.S. Benchmark for 18 Comparable Indicators
Table shows how VAPHS compares to the VA nationally and Non-VA facilities.

New Director Named for the VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network

Charleen R. Szabo has been appointed network director of the VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network, VISN 4, where she will be responsible for overseeing VA Medical Centers in Pennsylvania, Delaware and Northern West Virginia.

Ms. Szabo has been serving as the network's acting director since October 2003. Prior to her appointment as acting network director, Szabo served as director of the Lebanon, PA, VA Medical Center (VAMC).

Ms. Szabo, who is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, began her VA career in 1974 at the Batavia, New York VA Medical Center where she was supervisor

of the occupational therapy department. Other positions she has held include special assistant to the associate deputy chief medical director at VA Central Office in Washington, DC, and associate medical center director at the Richmond (VA) and Newington (CT) VAMCs.

Ms. Szabo earned her bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from Utica College of Syracuse University and a master's degree in public administration from State University College of New York at Brockport.



Major Construction Project Approved

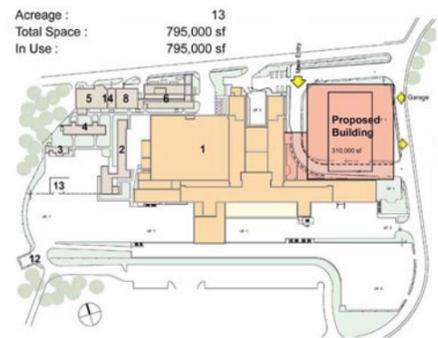
HEINZ DIVISION

Acreage : 51
 Total Space* : 425,000 sf
 In Use : 425,000 sf



UNIVERSITY DRIVE DIVISION

Acreage : 13
 Total Space : 795,000 sf
 In Use : 795,000 sf



Services Relocated to Heinz Division:

- Primary Care
- Domiciliary/ PR RTP
- VISN Consolidated Laundry
- Administrative Support Services
- Clinical Education
- Veterans Benefit Administration

Services Relocated to University Drive Division:

- Inpatient Psychiatry
- Outpatient Mental Health
- Research

Note:
 All figures are rounded.

* Current sq. footage is decreased to account for the buildings being demolished under the proposal.



Left: Architectural drawing of proposed new construction - in dark orange - at UD and Heinz.

Right: Photos from the Press Conference on April 22, 2004.



All photos this page - Warren Park

Benefits of the \$200 Million Dollar Major Construction Project

- ◆ Anticipate improved veteran satisfaction because of improved privacy, access, convenience, and aesthetic enhancements.
- ◆ More efficient and effective treatment can be provided in space designed to meet modern service delivery modalities and standards of care.
- ◆ Behavioral health clinics will be designed to support more efficient clinic flow, resulting in reduced wait times for new appointments.
- ◆ Consolidation and expansion of audiology will result in improved access and satisfaction as wait times are decreased.
- ◆ Construction of inpatient units with all private and semi-private rooms will meet community standards and improve patient privacy.
- ◆ Patient safety will be enhanced when patients have more private space and staff can monitor them more readily with improved behavioral health unit design.
- ◆ Infection rates will be extremely low when patients have all private and semi-private rooms and baths.
- ◆ A community-style domiciliary offers a home-like setting, rather than the hospital-like environment currently available, improving veteran satisfaction.
- ◆ A residential setting will better prepare residents for successful return to the community and will improve employability.
- ◆ Better preparation to reintegrate into the community that can occur in a home-like environment will reduce readmission rates.

- ◆ Long wait times for a parking space will be eliminated through the construction of a parking garage.
- ◆ As a result of the parking garage and roadway expansion, public transportation access will improve.
- ◆ Area residents will no longer be inconvenienced because of traffic on area roadways.
- ◆ No-show rates to clinics will decrease when patients can expect easier facility access.
- ◆ Increased capacity and access to primary and specialty care clinics will occur through expansions and redesigns, reducing wait times and improving clinical outcomes.
- ◆ Emergency response times will be improved as behavioral health and medical patients will no longer have to travel across town for specialty care, but instead will have access to care within the same facility.
- ◆ Adjacency of behavioral health programs to the affiliate University will enable recruitment of additional nationally renowned providers.
- ◆ This adjacency will also expand the behavioral health residency program.
- ◆ Location of behavioral health programs closer to the University will increase the amount of funded, veteran-related research at the VA Pittsburgh. The substantial funds freed from the maintenance of aging, partially vacant infrastructure will be invested into improved and expanded services.

FM

Congratulations Mike:

I am very pleased to learn that "Pittsburgh Consolidation of Campuses Phase 1 - Design" is one of the Secretary's priority FY 04 Major Construction projects in VA's Five Year Capital Plan.

Although further Congressional review is required on CARES, the Secretary's decision allows us to begin preliminary planning. **Office of Facilities Management staff is now eager to support you with planning, design, and construction expertise that will help to bring your project to successful completion.**

Steve Hobbs, Eastern Team Project Director, will be in contact with you shortly to begin the process. Then at the earliest time practical, we would like to visit your facility to further advance project planning with you and your senior management team.

In the meantime if you have any questions, please contact me directly at 202-565-5009.

Again congratulations on your project's selection.

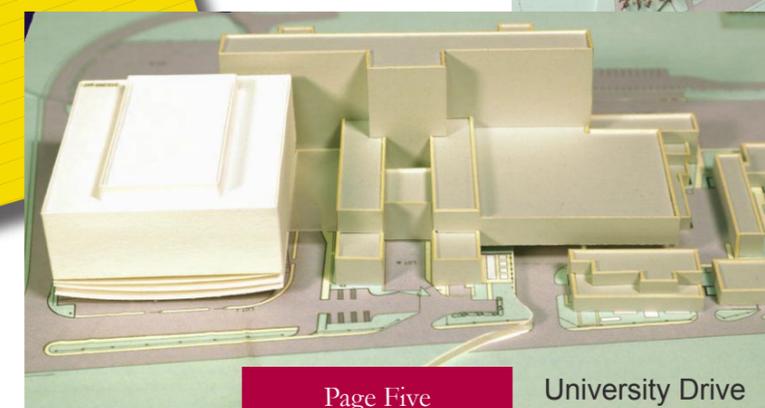
C.V. Yarbrough
 Chief Facilities Management Officer
vawww.va.gov/facmgt

FM ... Delivering Quality Facilities to Serve Those Who Served Us

Models of architectural renderings of the major construction project. Buildings in white indicate new construction.



Heinz



University Drive

Dear Mr. Moreland:

January 26th ... the Allegheny County Sheriff evicted me from my home of fifteen years. This happened in part because my state of depression was so severe that I had been unable to leave the house much less hold a job for about a year. My house had been sold at a Sheriff's Sale...at 56 years old, I was homeless.

On January 30th a friend brought me to the Highland Drive facility. I was admitted to the third floor in building one. The staff "on the ward" at 1-3 were kind and compassionate most of the time and tough when I needed it. I was started on medication to help my depression. Life started to get a little better for me.

Then on February 17th I checked into "The Dom." Mr. Glacken, the nurses, social workers, vocational specialists and Dom-Techs are the finest, most genuine and dedicated group of professionals I have ever met.

I will be starting at the Pittsburgh Technical Institute this month. This was made possible by the Domiciliary program, through the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program and funded by CareerLink. Through the Domiciliary I have found and applied for several jobs.

Not only have I encountered consummate professionals, I have made some genuine friendships. How do you thank someone for giving back your dignity, pride and sense of self-worth? How do you thank someone for giving you a future? How do you thank someone for your life?

After I graduate from the Domiciliary program, I will tell everyone I meet how I received an opportunity to turn my life around. And I will tell them who gave me this opportunity. I want to tell you how much I treasure this chance. I do not have the words to completely express my gratitude.

F.B.

Mail Box



Dear Sir:

On February 10, 2004, I was treated in the Same Day Surgical Unit for a cataract problem in my left eye. Dr. Venkatesh and his surgical team performed the surgery to remove the cataract.

This being the second such surgery that I had in the past three years, the surgery on the right was performed in a military hospital, I can attest to the excellent care that I received during this last operation.

Please express to Dr. Venkatesh, his surgical team, the staff in the Eye Clinic, and the nurses and others in the Same Day Surgical Unit, my sincere appreciation for their courtesy and attention to my care and well being, both during the operational phase and the after care period in the thirty day period after surgery. Everything has gone quite well and I am delighted with the outcome and the overall improvement in my vision.

Sincerely,
R.L.

Dear Mr. Moreland,

On February 5, 2004, I came to your hospital for a rather unpleasant operation. Overall, I would have to rate your staff and the procedure as excellent.

However, one of your nurses, Ms. Darlene Dietrich in 4-West, was so far above all the others that I felt compelled to write and let you know. I actually felt fortunate to be under her care during my recovery. Besides being a delightful young lady, she is always willing to do whatever is necessary to make certain that her patient's needs are met pleasantly and completely.

I feel she is an excellent example of how all nurses should be and I hope you will commend her officially for doing a terrific job.

Thank you,
W.H.

Dear Michael Moreland,

This letter is to inform you and your staff of the outstanding person that I believe saved my life. Nurse Denise Ward of the 5-East Surgical Clinic is my life saver.

Back in September of 2003 while at the VA in the Foot Clinic on the 5th floor, I casually mentioned that I was experiencing pain on the left side of my chest. Upon hearing the statement, Nurse Ward looked me in the eye, walked away and returned with a wheelchair. I feel that she knows her job very well from just looking me in the eye and knowing that something was wrong. When she asked me to sit down in the wheelchair I informed her that I could walk. Nurse Ward was then very persistent in saying I must get in the wheelchair so she could take me to the Emergency Room because there was something wrong. While in the Emergency Room they concluded something was wrong, so they admitted me to the Heart Surgical Ward. After many tests they concluded that I had suffered a heart attack, which ended up leading into a 4-way bypass surgery.

I feel Nurse Ward's generous actions truly saved my life. I am very grateful to this day of the wonderful job that Nurse Ward did to save my life. So now I can enjoy my wife, children, grandchildren, and my great-grandchildren.

Respectfully yours,
J.A.

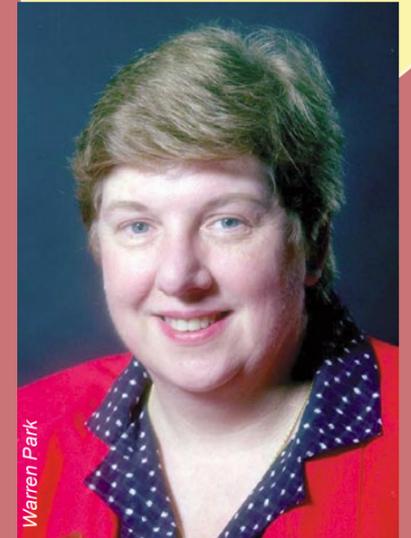
Spotlight on Carolyn E. Bechtold

Carolyn E. Bechtold, new Heinz Site Manager & Vice-President for Geriatrics and Extended Care

Carolyn E. Bechtold began working at the University Drive VA on September 9, 1969, one day after graduating from the Saint Joseph Hospital School of Nursing with a Diploma in Nursing. She has held various positions here, including Staff Nurse, Public Health Nurse Coordinator, and Associate Chief Nurse. Before becoming the New Heinz Site Manager and Vice-President for Geriatrics and Extended Care, she served as the Vice-President for the Surgical Specialty Service Line.

In 1978 she achieved a Bachelor of Science in Nursing after working full-time and going to school part-time. Ms. Bechtold obtained a Masters in Nursing Administration in 1982. She was certified in Nursing Administration in 1986 and recertified in 1991 and certified in Nursing Administration, Advanced in 1991. Both certifications were from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

Ms. Bechtold also attended and graduated from Leadership VA in 2002 and received Enhanced Access Training nationally and within the VISN in 2002 and 2003.



Warren Park

She has been married to her husband, Paul, a Program Analyst for Bank of America, for over 35 years. They have one son, Adam, who will be attending Penn State University in June.

Congratulations

Employees with 20 years or more of service!

The employees listed have reached a benchmark in their years of government service during the period **January - March 2004**

Name	Department	Years	Name	Department	Years
Edward Bialobok	Readjustment Counseling	35	Karen L. Harrell	Human Resources	20
William R. Jackson	Business Service	35	Carol E. Higgins	Patient Care Services	20
Reginald Davis	Information Management	30	George B. Kantes	Facilities Management	20
Donald M. Hatter	Facilities Management	30	Carla Lemons	Clinical Support	20
Melvyn D. Hayes	Business Service	30	Dale W. Logue	Information Management	20
Minda D. Ramirez	Nutrition & Food Service	30	Ruthe A. Lombardo	Information Management	20
Clyde L. Williams, III	Facilities Management	30	Linda B. Mitchell	Patient Care Services	20
Patricia M. Wurgler	Surgical Specialty	30	Kathleen E. Moore	Patient Care Services	20
Sandra L. Griffiths	Medical Specialty	25	Richard L. Norman	Facilities Management	20
Marcia Ann Park	Medical Specialty	25	Carol G. Ramsey	Patient Care Services	20
William N. Leuthold	Facilities Management	25	Ronald P. Shore	Nutrition & Food Service	20
Andrew P. Wyant	Business Service	25	Tanis B. Smith	Community Based Care	20
Mary L. Bossio	Surgical Specialty	20	Michele A. Stehle	Patient Care Services	20
Katherine M. Flood	Clinical Support	20	Timothy J. Stewart	Facilities Management	20
			Walter E. Twyman	Facilities Management	20
			Daniel C. Ziff	Behavioral Health	20



National Salute Pen Pals

The National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans is VA's annual patient recognition program that takes place the week of February 14. Each year the public pays tribute and expresses appreciation to hospitalized veterans.

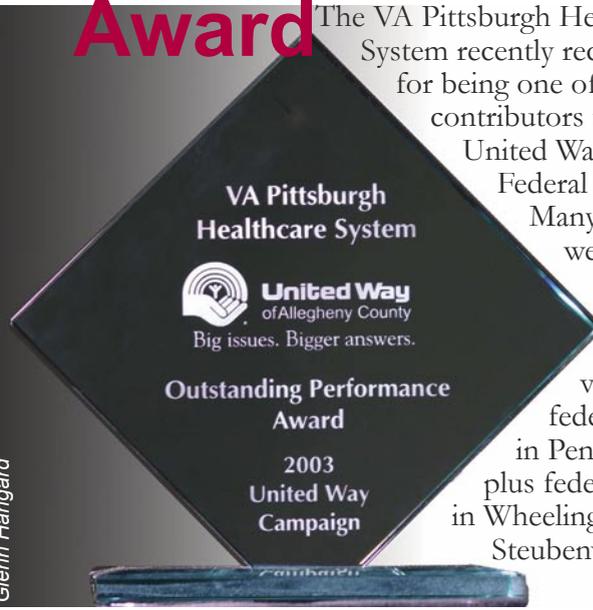
Every year the VAPHS receives hundreds of valentines from school children that our Voluntary Service distributes to patients. Three years ago, veteran John Williams received a valentine with an address. He decided to send a thank you note to the sender, Courtney, who became his pen pal. This year they decided to meet in person. During the Salute, Courtney's mom brought her to the University Drive Division for a heartwarming meeting.

VAPHS wins CFC Award

The VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System recently received an award for being one of the Top Ten contributors to the 2003 United Way/Combined Federal Campaigns. Many organizations were eligible for this award, including over 100 various federal agencies in Pennsylvania, plus federal agencies in Wheeling, WV and Steubenville, OH.

The VAPHS also had to compete against all private companies that participate in the United Way Campaigns.

In a year when most federal agencies saw a decline in giving from previous years, the VAPHS saw contributions increase by 5% for a total of \$90,783, while the number of employees pledging increased by over 17% from the previous year.



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Check out our Website at:

www.va.gov/pittsburgh

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The VA Pittsburgh WorkingTogether is published for the employees, volunteers, patients, and friends of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. To submit articles, editorials, letters, or story ideas for possible inclusion, please contact David Cowgill at 412-688-6224.

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National Smoking Cessation Initiative

So..... You are in the hospital...
Why are you still smoking ?



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