

 **Pittsburgh**
Healthcare System
Heinz • Highland Drive • University Drive



Traditions of Caring

*History of the VA Pittsburgh
Healthcare System
1925 - 2003*

A Message from the Director



Mr. Michael E. Moreland
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System
2000 - present

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

I am proud to present this publication, which highlights the 78-year tradition of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System in providing excellent health care to the veterans of the Pittsburgh area. The lives of hundreds of thousands of veterans have been enriched and benefited by the care, compassion and commitment of the thousands of employee's who have dedicated their careers to caring for our nation's veterans at one of our three facilities since 1925.

Michael E. Moreland
Director

**Directors not
pictured on right:**

Aspinwall 1925 - 1934
1934 - 1936
1936 - 1944
1944 - 1946
1946
1946 - 1950

University Drive 1958 - 1959
1959 - 1960

Dr. Henry Rolf Brown
Dr. William E. Park
Dr. Robert C. Cook
Dr. Kelso A. Carroll
Dr. William A. Bradford
Dr. H.R. Lipscomb

Dr. Horace D. Smith
Dr. C.P. Henke

Throughout the history of the three veteran's hospitals in Pittsburgh, we have recognized the debt that we owe to our nation's veterans and have committed ourselves to providing our veterans with the best possible health care that can be found anywhere in the country.

As we reflect on the rich tradition of excellence at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, we look to our history to gain a deeper perspective on our vision for the future. Even though the buildings look different, and methods of treatment modalities have dramatically changed, our primary mission to provide our patients with outstanding care has remained the same over the years. Health care and the way it is delivered will continue to change, our commitment to excellence will not.

Our veterans have earned and deserve the best possible health care and services for protecting the freedoms that we all enjoy. It is a privilege and honor for us to have the opportunity to serve our nation's heroes.

Aspinwall



Dr. Peter A. Volpe
Aspinwall 1930-1953



Dr. Raymond F. Smith
Aspinwall 1933-1954 &
University Drive 1954-1958



Mr. Willis O. Underwood
University Drive 1960-1962



Mr. Dan F. Macer
University Drive 1962-1969



Mr. J.L. Moore
University Drive 1969-1971



Mr. Bernard E. Phillips
University Drive 1972-1975



Mr. Thomas A. Cagliotti
University Drive 1973-1994
Longest serving Director - 19 years

Highland Drive



Dr. Stewart T. Ginsberg
Highland Drive 1953-1955



Dr. Leo G. Sewij
Highland Drive 1955-1957



Dr. Edward B. Bennett
Highland Drive 1957-1965



Dr. Frederick S. Ranno
Highland Drive 1965



Dr. Victor C. Webb
Highland Drive 1965-1968



Dr. Daniel Ataman
Highland Drive 1968-1971



Dr. V.B. Radnaitis
Highland Drive 1971-1973



Dr. Peter J. Stajduhar
Highland Drive 1973-1976



Mr. Harold Byers
Highland Drive 1976-1980



Mr. Carl Cosca
Highland Drive 1980-1985



Mr. Borden Hart
Highland Drive 1986-1994



Ms. Lynn Miller
Highland Drive 1994-1995



Mr. Thomas A. Cappello
University Drive 1994-1996
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System 1996-2000
Director during consolidation

Leadership



The only items carried from the old facility to the new facility were the chapel's magnificent stained-glass windows - 1993

Evolution into a Modern Long-Term Care Facility

When the Oakland Division opened in 1954, general medical and surgical services were transferred there. A decade long decline in patients reduced Aspinwall to a ghost of its former self. The patient census shrank to as low as 40 and the hospital was scheduled for closure.

In 1964 the Veterans Administration responded to the changing health care needs of the aging veteran population by beginning a nursing home initiative. Aspinwall responded to a new challenge - the long term care of the elderly patient. In June 1966, Aspinwall unveiled a new, \$110,000 70-bed nursing care unit.

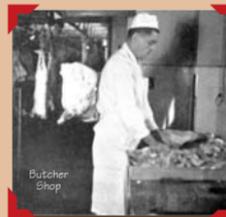


Amphitheatre Building #44

- ◆ Presented to the hospital as a project of the American Legion Auxiliary
- ◆ Construction began in July 1947
- ◆ Total cost was \$25,000
- ◆ Dedicated on November 15, 1947
- ◆ Was used constantly for presentation of band concerts, boxing matches, variety shows, big name bands and entertainers, bingo, sports shows, dramatic productions, etc.
- ◆ In 1959 a large sum of money became available in the General Post Fund - \$17,000 was expended to provide light, gas, water, showers, and toilet facilities at the amphitheatre
- ◆ Last time used was June 30, 1960



Delivering Christmas packages on the ward



Butcher Shop



Dental Clinic 1950



1950 fire fighting equipment



Bakery



Neurosurgical x-ray

A New Hospital

Conceptual planning for a new facility began in 1981.

In 1987, Congress and the VA approved the funding to begin the project in three phases. Phase I began in 1988 when the older of two water towers and the research building were demolished. In 1989 extensive excavation was completed for utility lines and steam tunnels to support a new boiler and air conditioner plant. The old boiler and smokstack were then demolished. The amphitheatre was filled in to ground level to provide additional parking and easier access to the hospital. A warehouse was constructed on the site that had been the softball field.

Phase II began in the Spring of 1991 with the construction of the state-of-the-art Aspinwall Replacement Facility. Several buildings were demolished, including vacant nurses' quarters, storage buildings, garages, and the generator building. Phase III was the demolition of the old hospital.

Replacement Facility. Several buildings were demolished, including vacant nurses' quarters, storage buildings, garages, and the generator building. Phase III was the demolition of the old hospital.

The construction of the replacement hospital cost \$68 million with an additional equipment acquisition cost of \$10 million. The design of the facility was innovative, with two special purpose buildings integrated into a complete long-term care center. The replacement facility was dedicated on Friday, October 15, 1993, under the direction of Director Thomas A. Gigliotti. Patients were moved to the new hospital on Saturday, November 5, 1994.

On Monday, March 22, 1999, a dedication ceremony was held to rename the Aspinwall VA the H. John Heinz III Progressive Care Center, after the late U.S. Senator John Heinz. Without the efforts of Senator Heinz, the new hospital would not exist. Sadly, Senator Heinz died in a plane crash on April 4, 1991, before he could see the completion of this great facility. His wife, Teresa, spoke at the ceremony.



Later that year, on May 15, 1999, a new outdoor pavilion was dedicated in a formal ceremony to recognize the efforts of all veterans who have served to protect the freedom we all enjoy. The Mason's Pavilion was a \$720,000 gift from the Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania. The 64x40 foot covered pavilion will accommodate 160 people and has a fully equipped kitchen and handicapped accessible rest rooms, in addition to walking paths and gardens, a fountain and reflecting pool, a granite veterans memorial monument, permanent benches, safety precautions for patients, and more. The facility provides a quiet setting for outdoor recreational activities, cookouts and parties for patients.

Today the Heinz Division is a 336-bed Geriatric Center of Excellence, including a Dementia Unit, hospice care, palliative care and primary care. The administration offices of VSN 4 are also located on the grounds of the Heinz Division.



Boxing Match in Rec Hall



H.J. Heinz III

Mason Pavilion



1966



Pharmacy

Testing PT equipment 1973



Eye exam



Mrs. F.P. Tarnapowicz ("Tarny") with shovel at ground breaking ceremony - spring 1950. Mayor Lawrence second from left.

Highland Drive

The History

In the late 1700's, people settled on a site with high elevation overlooking the Allegheny River and named the site "River Hill." The hill had 27 natural operating springs and tall pampas grass. During the Revolutionary War, this site also looked down on Old Fort Pitt, giving the land strategic importance as a lookout post. A distillery was placed in the area, so whiskey and coal could be sent down the hill on horse-drawn wagons to the banks of the Allegheny and then taken by boat out to the fort.

In 1790 the large tract of ground was granted to a "Mr. Ross" by the British. Here Mr. Ross developed the "Campania Plantation" which he later divided and sold to the Hartman Family, who operated a large dairy farm, and the Leech Family who also maintained a large farm.

On March 22, 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed administrative authorization for the Veterans Administration to acquire land for construction of a neuropsychiatric hospital. On December 8, 1948, a deed to land - including a large dairy farm and a number of individually owned farms and Victory Gardens located on top of "River Hill" - was acquired through purchase of 34 parcels of land owned by 31 individuals. The total cost for this acquisition of land was \$1,501,315. This land would become the Highland Drive VA Medical Center (VAMC).

The Beginning

VA Project #2447 was started in the Spring of 1950. The hill on which they were building had an elevation of 1,234.04 feet above mean sea level. The high point of the land, known to the locals as "The Peak," was about 87 feet higher than the highest point is now. Much cutting and filling of earth was required to suit the layout of the hospital buildings. The construction included a land clearing process which removed over 650,000 cubic yards of overburden and 6,000 tons of coal. The total cost of construction for this hospital was \$19,447,176, part of which was raised with Series E War Bonds sold by

Mrs. F.P. Tarnapowicz, and included five patient treatment buildings, roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and a 500,000 gallon water tower.

The Leech Farm Road Hospital was dedicated on November 29, 1953, under the direction of Stewart T. Ginsberg, M.D. The first patient was admitted on November 25, 1953. The original hospital had 951 operating beds and an average daily census of 900 patients.

The Early Years

In 1954 VA Central Office (VACO) approved plans to commence research activities. The director appointed a research committee at the "Leech Farm Road Hospital" and their first meeting was held on March 17. Early research studies included physiological, psychological, and sociological aspects of schizophrenia and problems in the area of neurological disorders.

That same year a long history of education and affiliation with community education programs was begun. The American Medical Association approved a two-year Neurology Residency Training Program. Neurology had been started that year as a separate service, had 120 beds, and performed neurosurgical procedures.

In 1956 Korean War casualties began arriving in Pittsburgh and 17 Leech Farm psychologists interviewed, classified, and assigned many of these patients to the appropriate nursing units.

Jean Felly in Medical Library



Bowling alley - building 8



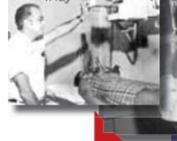
Sign & Printing shop



Sorting mail



X-ray



Folding "wet pack" sheets



View from building one front entrance - UD on the horizon



1953



Inhalation Therapy



Telephone operators



Dental Clinic

A decision was made to integrate all the various specialties in psychology. The Surgical Service was also established with one part-time surgeon, six surgical beds, and four recovery beds.

Evolution into a Regional Psychiatric Referral Center

In 1965 the Psychiatric Service was reorganized with the installation of the "Unit System." One year later outpatient services were begun as well as a pilot project, an alcohol treatment program.

Several new buildings were built and dedicated in the 1960's.

On Thursday, November 29, 1973, the Leech Farm Road Hospital celebrated its 20th Anniversary. In honor of this, Pittsburgh Mayor Pete Flaherty declared the date "Leech Farm Veterans Administration Hospital Day" in the City of Pittsburgh. In 1975 another ceremony was held. This ceremony dedicated the name change of the hospital from Leech Farm Road to Highland Drive. Three years later all VA hospitals were designated as VA Medical Centers.

Many programs, which give the Highland Drive facility its current identity, were implemented in the late 80's. In 1986 a regional center for the evaluation and treatment of former POWs was opened at Highland Drive. The following year the Compensated Work Therapy Program was established. 1988 brought healthcare for homeless veterans and in 1989 the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Center was opened. Later, in 1993, the Homeless Domiciliary was established.

The Human Engineering Research Laboratories (HERL) officially opened its doors at Highland Drive in the spring of 1994. It became a Center of Excellence for Wheelchair and Related Technology in July 1999, which is a five-year appointment. In June of 2004 this award will be renewed. The center has also been renamed "VA R&D Center of Excellence for Wheelchairs and Associated Rehabilitation Engineering (WARE)."

In October 1999 a Center of Research Excellence for Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center was established.

The Consolidation and Transition

On October 1, 1996, the Highland Drive VAMC consolidated with the University Drive VAMC and the H. John Heinz III Progressive Care Center to become the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System under one management.

The Highland Drive Division provides comprehensive acute and extended psychiatric treatment, including comprehensive substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), schizophrenia, and a comprehensive homeless program. Highland Drive has 210 operating beds which includes a 101 bed homeless domiciliary. The Highland Drive Division is also a Regional Center for the Treatment of former Prisoners of War.

The Highland Drive Medical Service was relocated to the University Drive Division in 1997.

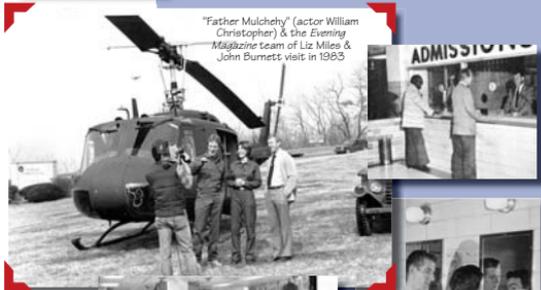
Many of the administrative functions of the VAPHS were relocated to the Highland Drive Division in the late 1990's including Human Resources, Fiscal, Coding, and Billing.



Key punching computer cards



Pittsburgh Pirates Bill Verdon & Director Kaulin on the HD ball field



"Father Mulchehy" (actor William Christopher) & the Evening Magazine team of Liz Miles & John Burnett visit in 1983



Radio Station



Lobby building one





1967



Flag raising dedication 1954



"Uncle Sam" Bob Richmond shakes hands with County Commissioner Tom Forester



Equilibrium



Chemistry in the Lab



Sewing in the laundry



dedication -1954



Pharmacy filling IV bottles



University Drive

The History

In June of 1946 the Veterans Administration acquired 14 acres of land from the University of Pittsburgh and local residents for a total of \$708,519. The VA was planning to build a 1200-bed tuberculosis hospital. Plans were subsequently revised to call for a 1248-bed medical and surgical hospital with added recreational and occupational therapy facilities as well as living quarters for personnel. Throughout the design and construction period, the bed number was gradually reduced.

Plans were temporarily halted when VA officials realized that an abandoned mine shaft lay underneath the land, requiring extra foundation work and causing the estimated construction cost to rise.

In February of 1947, General Omar Bradley, veterans' administrator, approved "the Hill" as the site for the new Oakland VA hospital, despite the added cost. He cited four primary advantages of this site:

1. Readily accessible to veterans and relatives, with easy access to downtown section
2. Part of the developing Pittsburgh medical center, now established in Oakland
3. Adjacent to University of Pittsburgh Medical School
4. Will draw interested, resident physicians and consultants from the nearby Medical School and Medical Center

The Beginning

Plans were approved for the new VA Hospital in Pittsburgh on April 4, 1949. In October of 1950, ground was broken for a new general medical and surgical veterans hospital. Due to a newspaper strike during this time, the groundbreaking did not receive as much attention as officials would have liked. So on June 12, 1951, a steel-erecting ceremony was held. Another ceremony - a silent flag raising - was held to celebrate the erection of the final piece of steel.

Many cubic feet of concrete had been pumped into the old mine to provide a solid foundation for the supporting footers. The building frame was designed to support 18 additional stories if rapid and economical expansion of facilities should ever be made necessary by a national emergency. The hospital was designed and constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The cost of construction for this facility was \$15 million with an additional \$2.5 million in equipment acquisition. The University Drive VA Hospital was the 17th hospital in the VA system and the largest general medical and surgical hospital in the Pittsburgh area. It had 742 operating beds with a plan for the hospital to be fully operational as qualified staff became available and in accord with patient demand.

James F. McCarthy reported in a newspaper article that at the time of its opening, the hospital's chief mechanical inspector, Louis J. Shriver, called this new facility the finest in the country. A byline in the article declared University Drive hospital "Most Modern in World."

On September 12, 1954, the dedication and formal opening of the University Drive VA Hospital took place. The dedication took place on the flagstone terrace of what was then the front of the hospital, despite worries of enthusiastic noise from PITT stadium interfering. In September of 1954, The Oakland VA was combined with the Aspinwall VA under one director, Dr. Raymond F. Smith, and approximately 1300 employees.

The Early Years

In the 1960's the University Drive Division had 700 beds on 16 wards. Patients enjoyed many types of leisure-time activities including radio and TV, movies, variety shows, parties, a canteen and a general library. A chapel was located within the hospital and Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish and Protestant chaplains were on the staff.

The hospital was accredited for residency programs, conducted training in numerous medical subspecialties and offered student training programs in affiliation with the University of Pittsburgh and other institutions in the area. A Blood Bank was operated at the hospital on weekdays where relatives, volunteers or the general public were invited to contribute blood for use of the hospitalized veteran.



X-ray viewer-1956



Senator Arlen Specter interviewed by reporter Lauren Mann during construction of the clinical addition



Radiology



Physical Therapy



Surgery-1964



Biochemistry Research Lab

In 1978 one management controlled the University Drive's 27 bed general medical and surgical facility in addition to Aspinwall's 432 medical, intermediary, and nursing home care facility. Also under this management were an outpatient clinic on Liberty Avenue in downtown Pittsburgh, a Wheeling, West Virginia, outpatient sub-clinic, and a drug dependency treatment clinic on Baum Boulevard.

Evolution into a Nationally Renown Medical and Surgical Center

In the late 1970's a 20-year legacy of discovery and prevention began at the University Drive Division that has combated the bacterium, Legionella pneumophila, the cause of Legionnaires' disease. Warm water distribution systems were identified as the source of the bacterium and developing disinfection methods to control the organism at its source - thus preventing the disease. The effort has been a multidisciplinary one - involving engineering personnel, nurses, physicians, and microbiologists. This group of professionals pioneered the control of Legionella in hospital water systems, which has been adopted nationwide. These investigators are now recognized nationally and internationally as authorities on Legionnaires' disease. They are now working with the Environmental Protection Agency and have shown that Legionella can infect individuals through the home water supply.

On Veterans Day of 1984, an Alaskan stonemason received the first heart transplant at the Oakland VA, marking the start of a general organ transplant program. At the time, only two other VA hospitals had performed heart transplants. In December of 1987 a new wing was dedicated at University Drive. It created an increase in examining rooms in the new ambulatory care section including an emergency room section, a radiology service area, operating room, recovery room, state-of-the-art monitoring, critical care, pharmacy, prosthetic and sensory aids, and supply area.

University Drive has become a National Liver and Renal Transplant Center. The Liver Transplant Program was initiated in October 1989. Since program inception, they have performed 274 liver transplants. In 2002 a 52-year-old Vietnam veteran received the first kidney transplant at the VAPHS from a live donor - his son. To date, a total of eight kidney transplants have been performed, three from live donors.

In 1963 the Oakland VA parking lot boasted 350 parking spaces. As the hospital grew that was not enough. A Valet Parking initiative was implemented on February 13, 1995.

The VAPHS was selected as a National Center of Excellence for Renal Dialysis in 1997, 1999, and 2002.

Hospitalized Veteran Donat Kise



Director Gagliotti with Pittsburgh Steeler Jack Lambert - 1978



OK prep room

These awards are for a two-year period. On April 8, 2003, a new state-of-the-art dialysis unit was opened to provide more comfortable, efficient care to dialysis patients. It was dedicated on April 16, 2003.

The VAPHS is a Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion. The comprehensive Women's Health Program at VAPHS has twice been honored as a national Clinical Center of Excellence in Women's Health.

In March of 1999 construction began on a new Bed Tower addition. The cost of construction was \$12,868,673. Because of equipment acquisition, the final cost reached \$21 million. In 2002 the Bed Tower was dedicated and patients began moving in. The renovations and new addition provide our veterans a health care setting with a level of privacy and comfort that they deserve and have earned by serving our nation. This addition is one of many projects that were completed in order to position our health system for the future.

University Drive also serves as a Center of Research Excellence in Geriatric Research Educational and Clinical Center (GRECC). The Center also operates a mobile unit - a 31-foot vehicle equipped with an exam room, a conference room, and a wheelchair lift. Today University Drive is the major medical and surgical tertiary care facility for veterans in Western Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio and West Virginia with 146 operating beds.



Clinical Chemistry 1975



Canteen Retail store



Pipetting in the lab



Food tray preparation



Director Cappallo & Congressman Doyle break ground for bed tower addition - 1999



Remodeled Dialysis Unit 2003



First kidney transplant patient with his living donor son.

Bingo

Through the years



Aspinwall/H.J. Heinz



Highland Drive



University Drive



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