

MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR



Ronnie Smith, MSHA, MBA
Acting Medical Center Director

CHECK IT OUT-
[CHARLESTON VAMC](#)
[VIRTUAL TOUR](#)

Upcoming Events

Due to concerns over coronavirus, and the importance of social distancing, all upcoming events are postponed indefinitely. We will announce events as they are rescheduled.

Recent Media Coverage

[Hospital Heroes](#)
[Co-Zone](#)
[3D Printer Makes Face](#)
[Masks](#)
[Volunteer Curbside](#)
[Delivery](#)

SUICIDE PREVENTION TAKES EVERYONE!

#BeThere

Veterans Crisis Line:
1-800-273-8255 and Press 1

Online chat at:
www.veteranscrisisline.net

Text: 838255



Choose VA
1, 856 FAMILIES
SERVED

Coronavirus Update

The past six weeks have been an unprecedented time for our community, our nation and our world. As coronavirus spread from Asia to Europe and across the U.S., we witnessed the strength of the human spirit — the American spirit — rise to meet one of the most daunting unseen enemies to attack our land. Like you, I stand in awe of our health care workers and first responders, our volunteers and particularly our VA team. We banded together to protect our Veteran patients and each other, instituting screening of all visitors and staff and establishing multiple inpatient care negative pressure Co-Zones to safely care for patients who have or might have COVID-19.

Our VA team has shown their innovation by creating face shields for clinical staff and protective barriers for eye exam equipment with our new 3D printer. We proactively relocated our Infusion Clinic to minimize possible exposure to some of our most vulnerable patients and set up outside triage at the Emergency Department to allow for COVID testing in the open air under safer conditions for patients who need urgent care. We partnered with MUSC to provide drive-through testing for Veterans experiencing symptoms of coronavirus, and we transitioned to providing unprecedented levels of virtual care to keep safe those patients who do not need to be seen in person while still making sure their medical needs are met. For those who need to be seen in person, we are avail-

able and working endlessly to create the safest care environment possible at each of our sites. Our team trains tirelessly, is taking every precaution, and is working through each challenge along the way for one reason ... to make sure every Veteran receives the highest quality, safest care when and where they need it.

We implemented new initiatives – pivoting to meet Veteran needs in this unique situation. Our Volunteer Curbside Delivery service brings non-perishable goods from our Veteran Food Pantry and other donated items to Veteran's doorstep with no touch to minimize any risk. This has been a great way for some of our volunteers to continue serving their fellow Veterans. And although we can't gather for our traditional Volunteer Week recognition events, we have celebrated virtually with this [video](#) to thank them for their service and let them know we are excited for their return at the right time.

In the days and weeks ahead, we look forward to returning to more normal operations once it is safe to do so. We also look forward to having our volunteers back with us. In the meantime, stay safe and be well.

Sincerely,

Ronnie Smith, MSHA, MBA,
Acting Director & CEO

COVID-19 Care & Testing

Veterans experiencing symptoms – fever, new or worsening chronic cough, new or worsening chronic shortness of breath – should call our Telephone Advice Program (TAP) line at (843) 789-6400 or 1-888-878-6884 to speak with a nurse. If the Veteran needs to be tested for Coronavirus, they will be referred to MUSC and given an appointment to come to the MUSC drive-up testing site. In addition to calling first, consider using virtual care options such as telehealth or My HealtheVet Secure Messaging. Read VA's latest information on the new coronavirus at <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/>.



VA | Ralph H. Johnson
VA Medical Center