



A N N U A L R E P O R T

West Palm Beach
VA MEDICAL CENTER

2020

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
West Palm Beach VA Medical Center



Mission Statement

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

Vision Statement

We earn our Veterans' trust by consistently delivering compassionate and quality care.

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The Year of Resiliency



Cory P. Price, FACHE
Director/CEO

Fiscal Year 2020 was eventful, to say the least. We faced an unprecedented public health crisis with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic which taxed our nationwide health care system. Alongside this crisis, we experienced social unrest, racial injustice, and soaring unemployment rates; a historic hurricane season, loss, separation from loved ones; and overwhelming changes to our way of life.

Though the past year has dealt us many challenges, there were some areas where we not only showed resiliency, but we improved despite the rampant coronavirus infections and extreme events impacting every corner of the globe.

Early on we made a series of strategic operational changes which allowed us to continue provision of care to patients. We successfully transitioned many of our Mental Health and Primary Care services to virtual environments for the safety of staff and Veterans – increasing our utilization of those services by 1200%. Our team established drive thru

clinics for COVID-19 testing; anticoagulant testing; outpatient pharmacy, immunization and audiology services.

In preparation for a potential surge, our dedicated engineers converted the 6th and 7th floor inpatient units to negative pressure wards. We cut the ribbon on our brand new Domiciliary Residential Treatment Program in February 2020 and sustained operation of that facility throughout the pandemic. We converted social events, to include town halls and other informational sessions from in-person to virtual events to provide transparency and continued communication on the topics that matter most to Veterans and other stakeholders.

In addition to our internal changes, we supported communities throughout the country in response to the pandemic as part of VA's Fourth Mission.

Our Veteran satisfaction and trusts scores continued to improve. This is due in part to the excellent dedication of our talented health care professionals who came to work each day to face the unknown.

We would like to thank our Veterans, community partners, donors, congressional members and others for their support and patience throughout the past year. Our team looks forward to our continued relationship with all our stakeholders as we progress in the year ahead.

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM



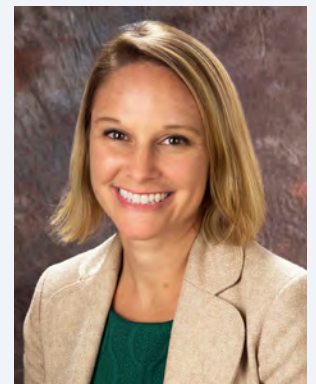
Cynthia O'Connell, MHA, FACHE
Associate Director/COO



Ronald K. Williams, Jr. DO
Chief of Staff



Lyumma Archeval, MSN, RN
Associate Director of
Patient Care Services



Julia Spence, MBA, MHA
Assistant Director

To view our executive leadership team's complete biographies visit www.westpalmbeach.va.gov/about/leadership.asp.

FACILITY OVERVIEW

The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center's health care system provides medical care and services to Veterans throughout South Florida and along the Treasure Coast. The main facility located in West Palm Beach is a 1c-complexity, general medical and surgical center providing a full range of patient care services, as well as comprehensive medical education and residency programs. The West Palm Beach VA has top Medical and Nursing Affiliations and a partnership with both Nova Southeastern University and the South Florida Veterans Affairs Foundation for Research and Education. All-inclusive health care is provided through primary care, emergency care and long-term care in the areas of medicine, surgery, mental health, physical medicine and rehabilitation, radiology, connected care (telehealth), dentistry, hemodialysis, a comprehensive Cancer Center and geriatrics and extended care. The campus includes a 13-bed Blind Rehabilitation Service, which is the referral center for blind and visually impaired Veterans

throughout Florida, a Community Living Center with hospice and palliative care, and a Domiciliary which provides residential treatment for Veterans with substance abuse and other mental and psychosocial issues. The medical center has one outpatient clinic in Port St. Lucie and six contractor-operated, community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC) located in Boca Raton, Delray Beach, Fort Pierce, Okeechobee, Stuart and Vero Beach which provide primary care, mental health and select specialty care and services. The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center's Whole Health Program focuses on Veteran centric care, providing Veterans with proactive care and incorporates more alternative medicine options.

To view our scope of services visit www.westpalmbeach.va.gov.

OUR CARE NETWORK

1. WEST PALM BEACH VA MEDICAL CENTER

7305 North Military Trail
West Palm Beach, FL 33410
561-422-8262 | 1-800-353-8262

2. Vero Beach CBOC

Mark-Lena Centre
372 17th Street
Vero Beach, FL 32960
772-299-4623

3. Fort Pierce CBOC

1901 South 25th Street, Suite 103
Fort Pierce, FL 34947
772-595-5150

4. Okeechobee CBOC

1201 North Parrot Avenue
Okeechobee, FL 34972
863-824-3232

5. Port St. Lucie Outpatient Clinic*

128 S.W. Chamber Court
Port St. Lucie, FL 34986
772-878-7876

6. Delray Beach CBOC

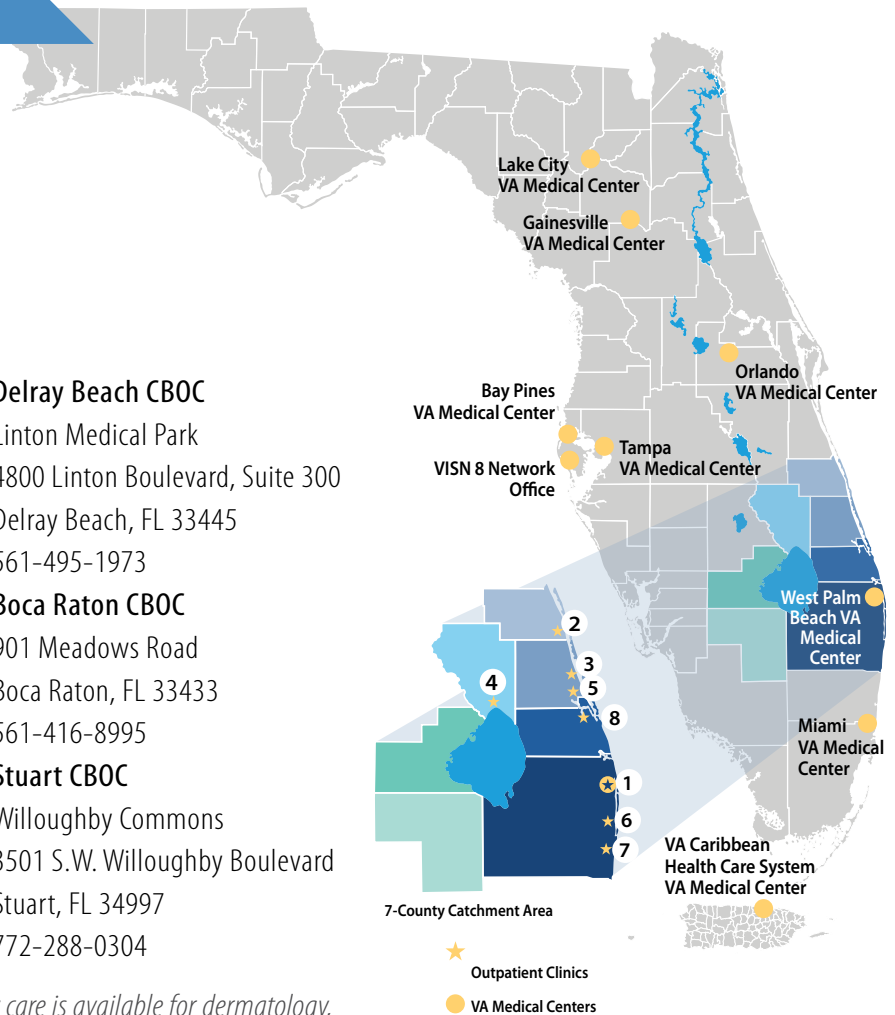
Linton Medical Park
4800 Linton Boulevard, Suite 300
Delray Beach, FL 33445
561-495-1973

7. Boca Raton CBOC

901 Meadows Road
Boca Raton, FL 33433
561-416-8995

8. Stuart CBOC

Willoughby Commons
3501 S.W. Willoughby Boulevard
Stuart, FL 34997
772-288-0304



*This clinic does not offer Primary Care. Select specialty care is available for dermatology, ultrasound, physical rehabilitation, prosthetics, pulmonary and mental health.

Operating Budget

\$626 million



Total Outpatient Visits

721,119

Inpatient Admissions

4,538

Total Veterans Served

57,106

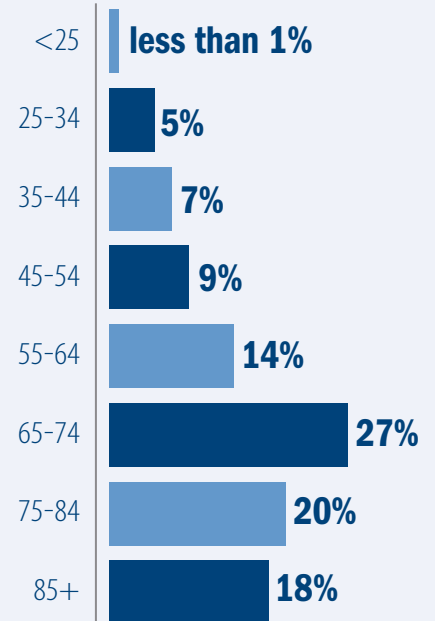


3,885

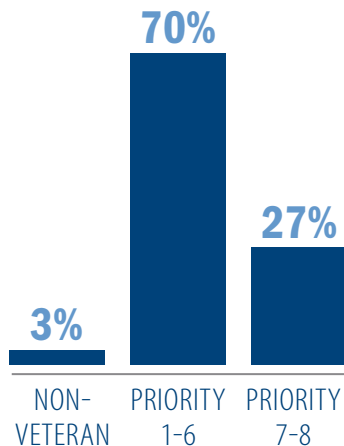


Women Veterans Served

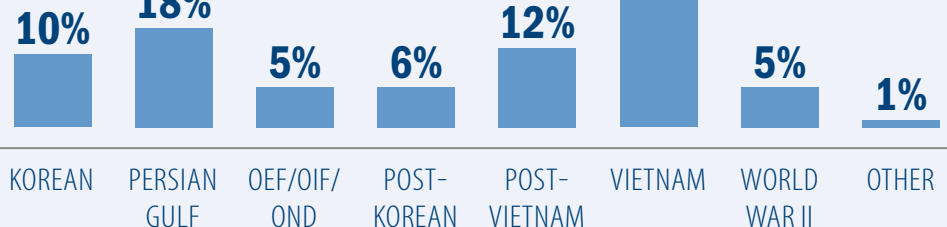
Veterans by Age



Priority Status



Veterans by Service Era



2,623

TOTAL STAFF MEMBERS

(Approx. 30% are Veterans)

362

VOLUNTEERS

Connected Care



Telephone care, Secure Messaging, and Video Connect appointments were up by 52% in FY 2020 compared to the previous fiscal year.

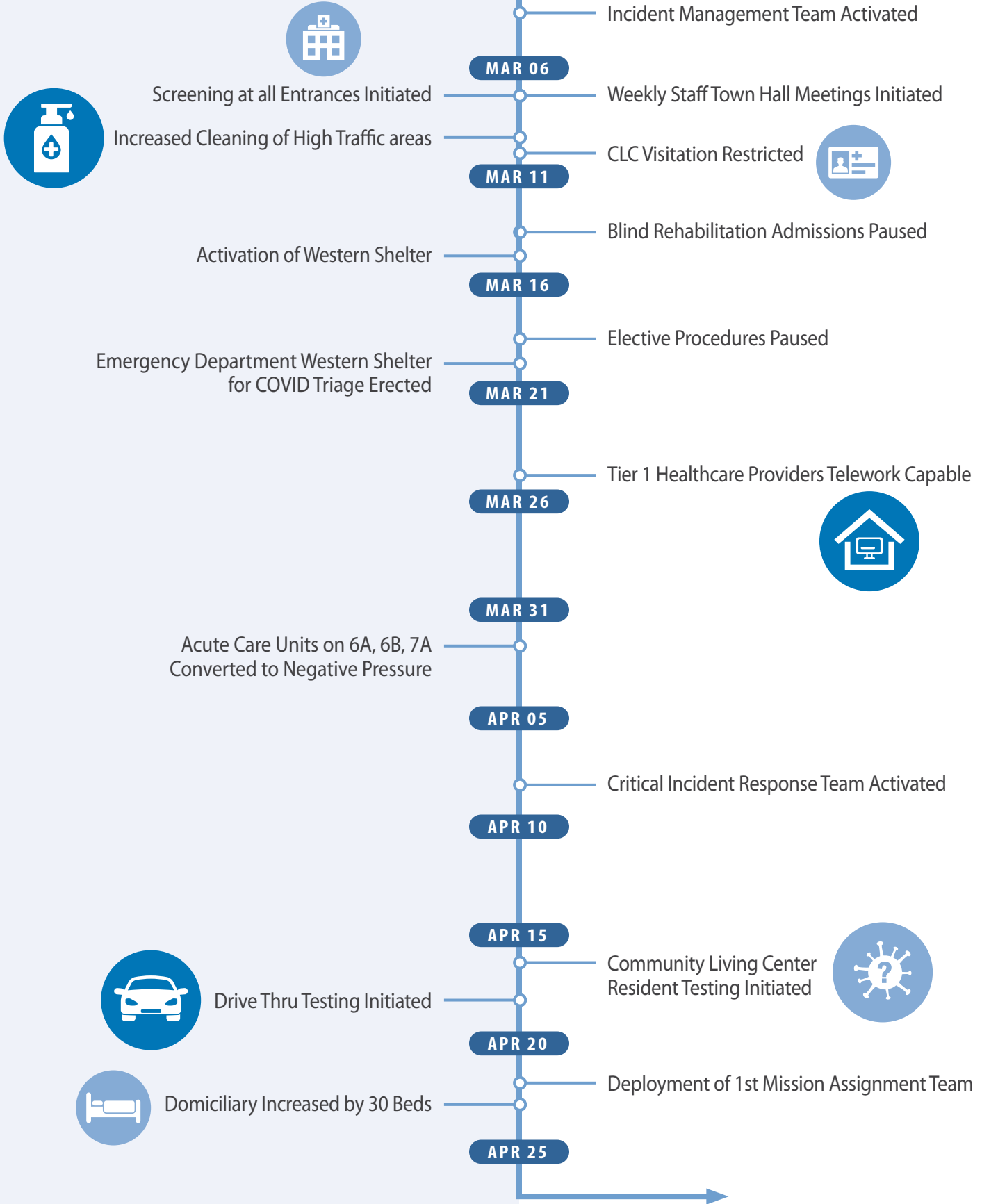
Access to Care

Average appointment wait time from date patient requests it (established patients):

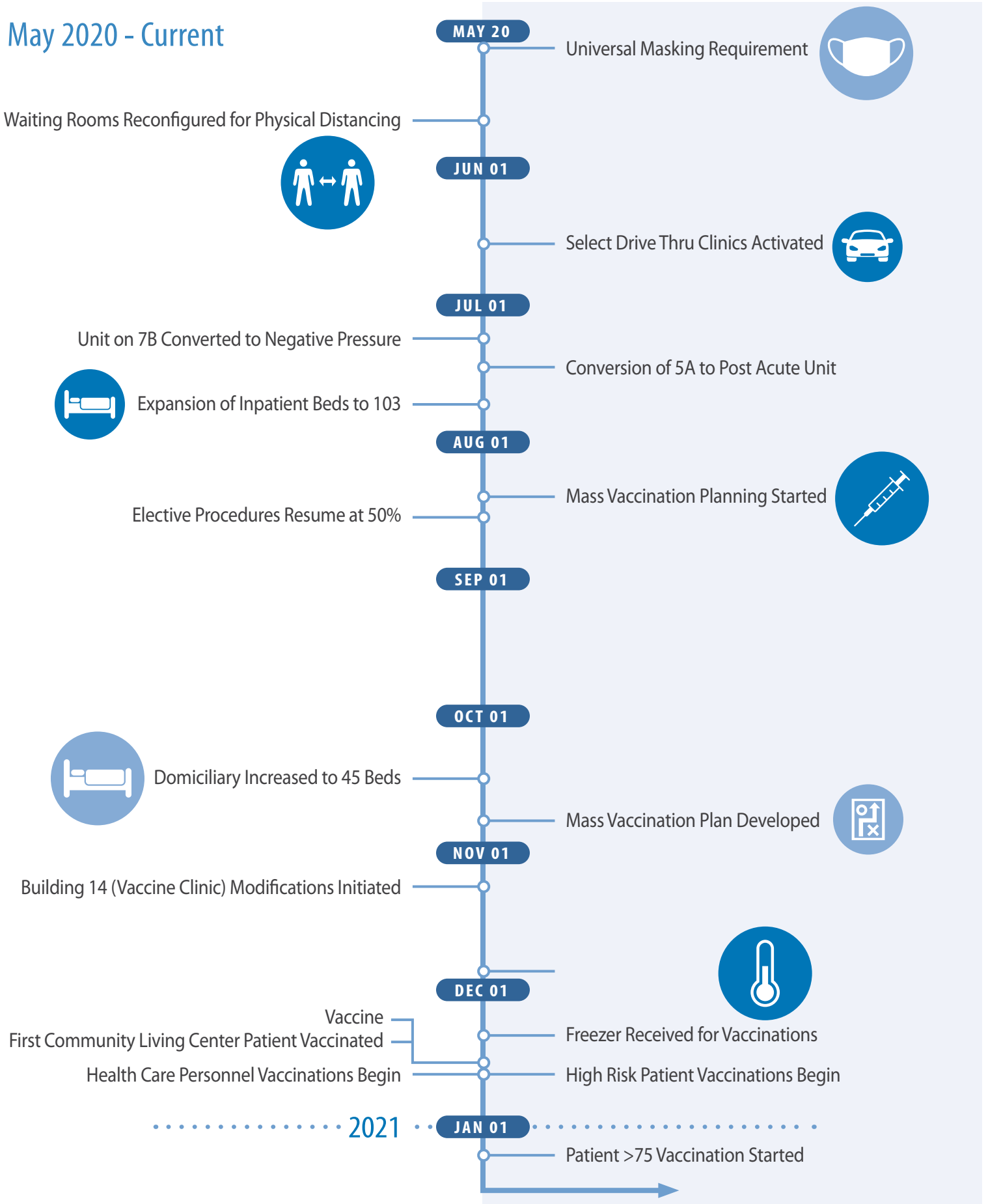
Primary Care	☺☺☺ 1.9 Days
Mental Health	☺☺☺☺☺ 4.4 Days
Audiology	☺☺ 2 Days
Cardiology	☺☺☺☺☺☺ 5.8 Days
Gastroenterology	☺☺☺☺☺☺☺ 9.1 Days
Ophthalmology	☺☺☺☺☺☺ 5.5 Days
Optometry	☺☺☺☺☺ 4.7 Days
Urology	☺☺☺ 3 Days

www.accesstocare.va.gov

March–April 2020



May 2020 - Current



Adapting to the new normal | Virtual visits, drive up clinics and more....

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center proactively took a series of actions which allowed for the successful continuation in the provision of care to Veterans. Early on, the medical center converted much of its in-person services in Primary Care and Mental health to virtual environments to ensure the safety of staff and Veterans. In FY 2020, the medical center saw a 1200% increase in the use of VA Video Connect (VVC) services and more than one third (33.65%) of Veterans had appointments by VVC with their provider. The medical center established drive thru clinics for COVID-19 testing; anticoagulant testing; and outpatient pharmacy, immunization and audiology services.



The medical center established drive thru clinics for several services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here a pharmacy service staff member documents a patient's information in preparation for international normalized ratio (INR) testing.



Nurse Gelda Pratt helps Harold Lake, U.S. Air Force Veteran, speak with his loved ones during his stay at West Palm Beach VA Medical Center's Community Living Center (CLC). The CLC staff uses VA-owned iPads and Android tablets, to help residents stay connected to loved ones who are unable to visit due to physical distancing requirements.



Throughout the day, all high-touch points are sanitized as one of the many steps taken to best protect all who walk through our doors.



Chief Nurse of Operations Amber Thomas supervises the COVID-19 testing procedure on a West Palm Beach VA Medical Center employee.



No matter the service, cleanliness is completed before and after every patient interaction from top to bottom.



Director/CEO of WPBVAMC demonstrates just how easy it is to drive right up and in a matter of minutes receive his flu vaccine on the go.



Every individual at all entry points are to complete a COVID-19 screening, of which includes checking temperatures to best prevent a potential exposure.

Converting Space in Preparation for COVID-19 | Preparation for the surge

In preparation for a potential surge, the Facilities Management Service converted the 6th and 7th floor inpatient units to negative pressure wards by disconnecting the existing return duct near the air handler and installing a plenum to connect commercial grade HEPA filtered negative pressure machines.



Our Fourth Mission | Supporting the Community in Times of Crisis

The VA traditionally provides veterans' healthcare, benefits and memorial affairs. In times of national crisis, such as the current pandemic, the VA can also provide services to the nation based on requests from states. This is known as VA's Fourth Mission. The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center supported the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs' during the COVID-19 outbreak at more than 30 long term care facilities across the state.



West Palm Beach VA staff members and community partners delivered health care services to at-risk Veterans. VA medical staff screened Veterans for COVID-19 and administered flu and hepatitis vaccinations.

Opening New Doors | New Domiciliary provides residential treatment for Veterans

In February of 2020, the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center cut the ribbon on its 60,000 square foot Domiciliary. The facility assists patients battling substance abuse and other mental health disorders by providing residential treatment to Veterans on a voluntary basis for up to 45 days at a time. The first patients were admitted to the Domiciliary during its opening week and admissions have continued throughout the medical center's COVID-19 pandemic response. The first VA facility of its kind in South Florida, the Domiciliary allows Veterans the ability to recover in a structured but home-like environment with customized treatment plans and various activities. Opening at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic presented an onslaught of challenges for health care systems and residential treatment facilities across the country. Since its opening, the Domiciliary has successfully navigated the challenges presented by COVID-19 – ensuring Veterans receive the highest quality clinical care.



Our New Research Program



In Fiscal Year 2020, the Office for Human Research Protections granted the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center's Research & Education Service approval to re-open its research program partnering with

Nova Southeastern University and the South Florida Veterans Affairs Foundation for Research and Education. Up until this point, the Medical Center's clinical teams have done Quality Assurance (QA) and Improvement studies which do not require IRB approval. The most recent QA study was successfully performed by Claudia Sotis, MD, Board Certified Anesthesiologist and Mamun Al Rashid, MD, Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon. Drs. Sotis and Al Rashid initiated a year-long quality improvement study project where they used a combination of a regional nerve block, added a longer-acting anesthetic inside the joint and used non-opioid pain medication as part of Veterans post-op treatment plans following knee replacement surgery. They formed a team that included physicians and nurses to review the data that compared opioid consumption by veterans following surgery with and without this technique. They discovered a significant reduction in opioid requirements in Veterans who received the intervention during their hospital stay. This combination of regional blocks offers optimal pain management and allows the Veteran to walk soon after surgery with minimal discomfort.

Combatting Veteran Homelessness



The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center's Homeless Program's continued efforts have resulted in a 17 percent decrease in Veteran homelessness in Palm Beach County from FY 2019 to

FY 2020. This information was based on the most recent Point-In-Time count conducted in January 2020. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has engaged community partners to help homeless Veterans receive housing in local hotels, food and supplies to reduce their risk of infection from this virus. Food Delivery systems were set up with local restaurants and food vendors to ensure no Veteran was without nutritious meals during the pandemic. Clinical teams from the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center have also continued outreach to at-risk and vulnerable populations throughout South Florida by delivering health care services to at-risk Veterans to include provision of COVID-19 screenings and administering vaccinations against influenza and hepatitis.

Physicians of the Year



Dr. Hosseinali Jafari, MD
Ear Nose and Throat Specialist
Surgical Service



Dr. Albert Ammann, MD
Interventional Radiologist
Imaging Service



Dr. Brad Dansky, MD
Psychiatrist
Mental Health & Behavioral
Science Service

CDL Graduates



Thomas "Zach" Orr, Lourdes Colon, Shrivanni Simmons, Brienne Schlenke, Jos Victor, Samuel Figueroa Rivera

PRIDE Graduates



Robert Abbott-MAS, Tanisha Ebanks-Whole Health, Karma Johnson-Domiciliary, Nancy Rufino-Decedent Affairs, and Juleen Jacobs-Logistics

DAISY Winners



*Alicia Estaris, RN and
Morreen Morgan, RN*

Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Professional Teamwork Award for work to get Veterans employed



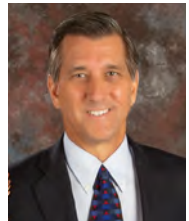
Shone Johnson



Michael Magill



Martha-Jynette Ulloa



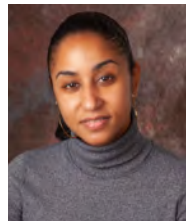
Robert Gawel



Holly Starks



Christopher McGinley



Madeline Caceres

Federal Employees of the Year

Each year, the South Florida Federal Executive Board recognizes outstanding Federal employees in Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach Counties. This is the only Federal interagency awards program in South Florida that pays tribute to all dedicated Federal employees and organizations that are a part of the public workforce.



Lyndsey Leffel, RN – Valor Award for her actions during a shooting incident on campus.



Julia Spence
Assistant Director

Administrative Award for leadership and policy and service expansion.





A kudos to the WPB-VA Social Work department... during my long road to recovery from recent surgery I found myself suddenly unemployed and hit with the double whammy of tendinitis in both feet. Finding work was futile. Frustrated and depressed the Social Work department was instrumental in helping me get back on my feet, both literally and figuratively. They connected me with job sources like Career Source and told me how I could get retraining to learn new job skills. They let me know about resources I could use while unemployed and lent an ear when things seemed impossible, I was at the point of just giving up and I just needed someone to listen to me. They have so many veterans in their caseloads and make the effort to do whatever they can. I'm on the right road again due to their assistance.

Ralph M., U.S. Veteran

This by far has been the best hospital I've ever visited. You can't say enough great things about the staff and the hospital itself.

Jason E., U.S. Veteran

During this time of the pandemic its nice to know that the VA medical staff is there on my side.

Martin, U.S. Veteran

I was a walk in first time patient this Saturday. I was seen and treated promptly and courteously. I was in and out with prescriptions in hand within 2 hours. I was not feeling well because of my illness but the professional staff here made a huge difference in my day getting much better.

Jason E., U.S. Veteran

Thank you to all of the men and women who work for the VA team. Helping all us Veterans with all of our medical issues. I hate to think of where I'd be today without your knowledge, expertise and dedicated services. I have nothing but praise for all of you. Thank you so much for giving me life.

Stephen, U.S. Veteran

For the last 11 years I've been coming to the VA for my health care and have had nothing but excellent care and have always felt respected. Thank you to all the health care providers at the West Palm Beach VAMC!

David, U.S. Veteran

These reviews have been modified for length and clarity.



Fisher House | A home away from home for Veterans families

Fisher House - FY 20 Stats

- 54% Occupancy
- 1422 nights of FH lodging provided
- 115 nights of hotel lodging provided
- 403 families accommodated – 261 inpatient/142 outpatient

Volunteer Contribution

Veterans Transportation Network (VTN)

The VTN transported over 7,000 Veterans from 5 county areas to the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center in FY 2020. Under the direction of VA Voluntary Service and DAV Coordinator Eugene Hoover, 23 dedicated volunteers drove 4,725 hours and over 117,355 miles!

Special Recognition Awards for 2020

7,500 Hours Dedicated Service Plaque

- Gent, Jackie
- Giustizia, Raymond III

10,000 Honor Award Bowl

- Decker, Nancy

17,500 Hour Superior Service Plate

- Howell, Cynthia



Ms. Shelley Prickett, WPBVA Fisher House Manager cherishes all the moments she shares with her very special guests.



Nothing like red carpet service with the ease of reliable transportation for Veterans!



The Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce of Miami donated 6300 surgical masks and N95 respirators to the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center in support of COVID-19 response efforts.



BURGERFI and Marcum LLP donated meals to our front line staff on Memorial Day.

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

The West Palm Beach VA had record setting help from our devoted Volunteers. The community came together in more ways than one this past year, with an average of almost 80 hours per Volunteer and COVID-19 Donations totaling to \$67,094.85. In addition, the healthcare system received Monetary Donations of \$140,325.05, Activity Donations of \$16,108.59, and Item Donations \$315,893.20. The kindness of all who gave back to our Veterans was a grand total of \$1,255,374.04.



Covanta Palm Beach donated various items to support Medical Center operations and the Veterans Resource Center.



Eastpoint Country Club and PGA Hope donated 200 cookies for staff working in West Palm Beach VA Medical Center's inpatient units and Emergency Department.



Feltman's of Coney Island donated hot dogs to the Fisher House to feed dozens of families.



The Red Cross donated items through a Baby Registry to contribute to the Drive-Thru Baby Shower.



Operation 120 donated toiletry bags for our Women Veterans Program & Veterans Resource Center along with assorted children's items to support at-risk, female Veterans.



Dakota Williamson of Eagle Scout Troop 132 created beautiful planter boxes for the Fisher House as part of his Eagle Service project.



Drew, a senior at American Heritage School Plantation, started the Hats Off non-profit to raise money for Veterans. He raised \$1500 and donated gift bags and pumpkins for Fisher House guests.



VITAS celebrated Nursing Assistants Day with us by arranging for the Sweet Cravings NY dessert truck to bring sweet treats to CLC staff.



Monster Energy donated 15 cases of Monster Energy drinks for our Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit front line staff.

Top Medical and Nursing Affiliations

- Florida State University
- Florida A&M University
- Florida Atlantic University
- Florida Intercontinental University
- NOVA Southeastern University
- University of Miami
- University of Florida

Graduate Medical and Dental Academic Affiliates

The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center is proud to help train future clinicians through its independent graduate education programs in General Practice Dentistry and Psychology Internship. Our Graduate Medical and Dental affiliations are with:

- University of Miami Miller School of Medicine Regional Campus: Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Cardiology and Hospice & Palliative Care.
- Nova Southeastern University: Endodontics and Preventive Medicine (through the Florida Department of Health, Palm Beach County).
- Larkin Community Hospital: Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Orthopedics.
- Broward Health Medical Center: Dermatology.

Geriatric Medicine Fellowship

The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center launched its Geriatric Medicine Fellowship Program with the Florida Atlantic University Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine in Fiscal Year 18 complementing its partnership in undergraduate and graduate medical education. The Program received initial accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education in 2019.

Associated Health Training Programs:

Associated Health training is offered in Optometry and Eye Technology, Audiology, Blind Rehabilitation, Chaplaincy, Chiropractic Care, Dietetics, Imaging, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Pharmacy, Psychology, Recreation Therapy, Social Work, Speech Language Pathology and Surgical Technology.

Medical Education Accreditation

The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center is accredited as a “CME Provider by the Florida Medical Association (FMA)” to provide AMA PRA Category 1 Credits (ID# 4006072). The medical center also works in collaboration with the VHA Employee Education System (accredited body) and the VHA Field Accreditation Services (FAS) to provide the following continuing education credits:

1. Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and or ACCME-Non-Physician: AMA PRA Category 1 Credit.
2. Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) and ACPE-T.
3. Nurse Pharmacotherapeutic Credit
4. American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).
5. California Board of Registered Nursing (CA BRN)
6. American Psychological Association (APA)
7. Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)
8. New York State Education Department (NYSED) Social Work Board
9. American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)
10. American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE)
11. American Dental Association (ADA)
12. American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
13. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
14. Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR)
15. Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC)
16. National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC)

FAS has trained VA staff nationwide as Agents in Place (AIP) to facilitate the development and application to certified courses for designated targeted audience.

ACCREDITATIONS



- The Joint Commission (TJC)
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) Blind Rehabilitation
 - » Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC)
 - » Compensated Work Therapy (CWT)
 - » Homeless Veterans Program (HUD-VASH)
 - » Mental Health Intensive Case
- Management (MHICM)
- American College of Radiology (ACR)
- Mammography, MRI, CT, Radiation Oncology
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
 - » Mammography, Transfusion Services
- American Society of Health System Pharmacist (ASHP)
 - » Post-Graduate Year 1 - Pharmacy Practice Residency
 - » Post-Graduate Year 2 - Pharmacy Specialty Residency in Cardiology
 - » Post-Graduate Year 2 - Pharmacy Specialty Residency in Pain/Palliative Care
 - » Post-Graduate Year 2 - Pharmacy
- Specialty Residency in Psychiatric Pharmacy
- American Association of Blood Banks (AABB)
- College of American Pathologists (CAP)
- American Dental Association (ADA)
 - » General Practice Dental Residency Program
- Commission on Dental Education (CODA)
- Long Term Care Institute (LTCI)
 - » Community Living Center
- American Psychological Association (APA)
 - » Psychology Internship Program
- American Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)
- Florida Medical Association
 - » Continuing Medical Program
- 2020 Healthcare Equality Leader
- 2020 Practice Greenhealth Partner Recognition Award



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