Dear Reader,

As I complete my first year here as the Medical Center Director, I have to admit, this has been another exceptional year of overcoming the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with its Delta and Omicron variant. Our dedicated Coatesville VAMC team, which includes our Volunteers, has repeatedly demonstrated our flexibility and capability to adapt business and clinical practices to ensure the safety of everyone coming to the medical center.

I’m proud to say several of our staff were able to assist other VA facilities in response to the pandemic. We opened one of our units to accept the transfer of Veterans from Pittsburgh, Wilmington, and Lebanon VAMC, as those medical centers responded to surges in COVID-19 cases and needed to create additional medical bed capacity. We also provided neuropsychology and substance abuse services support to other VA facilities. Additionally, our CVAMC fire department assisted community partners over 63 times in responding to fires, vehicle accidents, rescues, and other emergencies.

Our well-planned COVID-19 vaccine clinic and the excellent coordination effort between the clinic and pharmacy ensured that vaccines were available to all who wished to be vaccinated. By mid-year we began taking steps to open the campus safely. We even took a quick breather to celebrate our 90th anniversary. However, we never let down our guard, so screening, masking and social distancing procedures remained in place. While we retained telehealth services, we began emphasizing more in-person (face-to-face) care. Today, whenever possible our clinics offer Veterans the choice to receive trusted care in a manner that is convenient to them. Our Veterans have access to more specialty services because we continue to coordinate with other community and VA hospitals within our region.

Significant progress has been made to expand services and our construction projects are the result of our desire to expand programs and modernize our campus and outpatient clinics. Our Veterans will see more improvement as we head into FY22. We remain focused on providing outstanding care to our Veterans and remain committed to our four priorities: Patient Satisfaction & Quality Care, Employee Satisfaction, Workload Expansion, and Campus Modernization.

As we move forward into 2022, I encourage everyone to help spread the word to other Veterans that the Coatesville VA Medical Center is the place to receive exceptional health care.

Jeffrey A. Beiler II, Medical Center Director
Following the delivery of the first limited supply of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, Coatesville VAMC immediately began the vaccination process on December 21, 2020. The vaccine was first offered to medical center health care personnel and to at-risk Veterans, such as those residing in our Community Living Centers. Bob Jackson, U.S. Navy Veteran and CLC resident, was the first Veteran-resident to be vaccinated and Unit Manager Shenita Clark was the first frontline health care worker to receive her vaccination.

In January, the COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic began offering the Moderna vaccine to eligible outpatients. The clinical team was augmented by vaccinated volunteers who assisted with the clinic flow, screening, wayfinding and wheelchair service. Positive comments were received from Veterans and staff regarding the care, safety, and well-run vaccination clinic.

Gary Giorno, a Vietnam era Veteran commented that “the whole process was very professionally done and efficient. I can’t say enough good things about it. I was impressed with the whole procedure.”

By mid-March, the medical center had vaccinated nearly 45 percent of Veterans in its care.

Additionally, the shipment of the Johnson & Johnson Janssen (J&J) vaccine in March, gave everyone coming to the vaccination clinic the option to choose either the J&J or the Moderna vaccine. Many families, such as the Phipps and Gardiner family took advantage of the opportunity to get vaccinated under the SAVES LIVES Act, which expanded VA’s authority to offer COVID-19 vaccination to all Veterans, their spouses, and caregivers. With the steady delivery of vaccines through the remainder of the year, the main campus and its two outpatient clinics remained capable of administering the COVID-19 vaccination. By late summer, the third dose was authorized for immunocompromised Veterans. By the fall the Vaccine-Booster was made available for everyone eligible under the SAVES LIVES Act.
Moving Forward Safely Through The Pandemic

We started FY21 by maintaining the control measures and operations that existed since the beginning of the pandemic with a single point of vehicle access onto the campus, screening procedures, masking, social distancing, and no visitations. With the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccines, we immediately began the vaccination process and by March, under the authority of the SAVES LIVES Act, we were able to expand the vaccination beyond our Veterans to family and caregivers. By Spring our COVID-19 vaccination clinic had been running for several months and we began to safely move the facility forward by transitioning our campus back to an open access campus, moving all screenings to building entrances and welcoming Veterans back for in-person appointments. As part of the Moving Forward process, Veteran transportation resumed its operations to shuttle Veterans to their appointments, selected volunteer slots opened up to allow vaccinated volunteers to return in small numbers, the CLC resumed in-person visitations, and we began hosting Veteran outreach and nursing recruiting events. All of us look forward to the day we can safely operate the medical center to pre-pandemic operations; until then, we will continually adapt to respond to the changes of this pandemic to ensure the safety of everyone.

Helping Out:

Our medical center provided support to other VA facilities. When other medical centers experienced surges in COVID-19 cases in November and needed to create additional medical/surgical bed capacity, CVAMC opened a unit at the Community Living Center to accept the transfer of Veterans from Pittsburgh, Wilmington, and Lebanon VAMCs. CVAMC also deployed 2 staff to support FEMA funded remote COVID vaccination efforts in Pleasantville/Vineland NJ. CVAMC also provided specialty services for clinics in need, including neuropsychology and substance abuse.

DAV Transportation & Veteran Service Officer-Claims Representation are back in Operation:

After a year of being at a standstill due to the pandemic, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation program resumed operations in April, at a limited capacity. Volunteer drivers, such as Dennis Kukulka, provide transportation for Veterans who have a scheduled VA medical appointment at one of three VA medical facilities (Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Lebanon). DAV transportation requests are made through the Veteran’s care team.

Veteran Service Officer-Claims Representation resumed services in August to assist Veterans with their need to file a service connection application or help navigate the VA benefit system. Presently, VSOs representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and DAV are providing services each Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Veterans requesting to see the VSO must schedule and appointment by calling 610-383-0239.

Resuming Visitations with CLC Veterans:

As COVID-19 restrictions were loosened, the medical center resumed face-to-face family visitations in the Community Living Center (CLC). The CLC staff coordinated visitation requests with family members. In late March, the first such visit was hosted.

“Seeing families reunited is the product of a lot of work and a lot of hope,” said Shireen Bennett Director of the Geriatrics and Extended Care Unit.

“They have been waiting a long time for this and being able to provide face-to-face visitation is a testament to the strict adherence to the personal protective equipment standards of the staff and Veterans in our CLC.”

The CLC staff has been helping Veterans stay in contact with loved ones throughout the pandemic with purchased and donated tablets and other mobile devices. Window visits had also provided a safe way for loved ones to see each other while using telephones to communicate through the glass.

“There is no comparison, [the window visit] wasn’t a visit to me,” said John Anker Veteran and CLC-resident. “This is a big improvement.”
The hospital officially opened to admit patients on November 11, 1930, with the official dedication held the following May. At the time, the hospital was specifically designed to treat Veterans with “mental and nervous diseases.” Today, the medical center offers urgent care, primary care, specialty care, mental health care, long term care, pharmacy and numerous supportive services to outpatient, inpatients, and residential patients.

On May 12, 2021, the medical center celebrated its 90th anniversary. This anniversary celebration was our first public event since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Attendees were required to observe the masking and social distancing regulations. The event featured the participation of an all-service color guard, a bag piper, bugler, and presentations from local political offices. Each attendee walked away with the CVAMC Anniversary booklet as a memento. The celebration focused on the achievements and services of the medical center, which has stood as a pillar, not only in service to our Veterans, but also as one of the largest employers within the Coatesville community for the last 90 years. A lot has changed over time, but what remains the same is our desire to remain a strong community partner as we provide our Veterans with the best health care possible. During the past 90 years, the medical center has made vast and wide-reaching contributions to improve the health of Veterans by providing services and technologies that have changed the way health care providers across the country practice medicine. The VA's academic partnerships began in 1946 and Coatesville VAMC continues to take pride in its partnerships and achievements of training health professionals in collaboration with many outstanding affiliates, including Villanova, Eastern, West Chester, Millersville, Immaculata, Temple, Drexel University and the State of Delaware's Health and Social Services Division. Coatesville VAMC began partnering with Delaware Psychiatric Center and Drexel University Medical School, primarily in the field of psychiatry in 2010, which eventually expanded to include Temple University Health psychiatry residency in 2020 and Tower University/Chestnut Hill Hospital in 2021 for Primary Care.

In 2013, the medical center was listed in the National Registry of Historic Places as an excellent intact example of a Period II Neuropsychiatric Second-Generation Veterans Hospital. The standard design associated with Period II neuropsychiatric hospital included a large campus to accommodate farming operations to be performed by patients as a form of therapy, a monumental main building, and H-shape buildings constructed around courtyards with connecting corridors. The architecture incorporated elements of a classical revival style that were nationally popular in the early to mid-twentieth century. The medical center takes pride in its efforts of positive advancements and cutting-edge efforts to include planned and ongoing construction projects, such as a larger community clinic in West Norriton to replace the Spring City Clinic.
CVAMC Part of 75 Years of VHA
As the medical center celebrates its 90th anniversary, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) commemorated 75 years of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Originally established in 1946 as the Department of Medicine & Surgery to care for Veterans returning from World War II, VHA has evolved to meet the unique challenges and care needs of our Veterans. The staff and volunteers at the Coatesville VA Medical Center are honored to have shared in VA’s 75-year legacy of service to America’s Veterans, especially this year during the COVID-19 pandemic, that has served as a testament to our commitment of providing efficient, quality health care in any setting. VA has provided training to nearly 70% of all U.S. physicians. Approximately 120,000 health professions trainees help care for more than 9 million Veterans at clinical sites around the country. The VA is affiliated with more than 1,800 academic institutions, including 97% of America’s medical schools, and the VA trains future health professionals in over 40 disciplines including physicians, psychologists, nurses, pharmacists and social workers.

Dedication of Historical Panels
The medical center’s history is now on permanent display in building 3, waiting room (once a former dining facility). Five wall mounted display panels commemorate and recognize the 90 years of historical significance of the Coatesville VAMC.

90th Anniversary Contest Winner Claims Prize
“Guess That Building” - Photo Contest Winner Jerry Panza, Biomedical Equipment Support Specialist, claims his prize for identifying all buildings correctly from archived photos during a photo-contest honoring the 90th Anniversary of the CVAMC. A selection of archived photos was shared with employees bi-monthly from November 2020 thru May 2021, totaling 14 photos presented by the end of the contest.

SPECIAL EVENTS
Bronwyn Morris, RN
VISN 4 Director’s FY21
I CARE Award Recipient

Bronwyn (Wendy) Morris, RN care manager of the Home-Based Primary Care program, is the recipient of the VISN 4 network director’s 3rd quarter I CARE award. This award recognizes employees who not only demonstrate Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence values (I CARE), but who go above and beyond our I CARE ideals.

Over the past year, Wendy worked with a particular Veteran who has had a history of homelessness and was in danger of being evicted for neglecting to pay his rent. Wendy found an advocacy agency and assisted with the application for the Representative Payee Program by helping him compile all necessary documentation and signatures. She made weekly visits to help him pay his bills. She volunteered to serve as an emergency contact for Meals on Wheels since he has a hearing impairment and often cannot hear his phone ring. She also assisted him in obtaining a new pair of hearing aids. When the cleanliness of his home deteriorated to the point that no home health aide agency would come into the home for housekeeping, Bronwyn reached out to many community cleaning agencies and eventually found an agency to clean the Veteran’s home so that home health aide services could be obtained. When he needed a new washer and dryer, Bronwyn found a Veteran’s service group who agreed to provide minor repairs and installation of new flooring in the home so that the appliances could be delivered and safely installed. Due to Wendy’s advocacy, this Veteran escaped homelessness.

Pharmacy Recognized a National HeRO Award Winner for 4th Quarter

Coatesville VA Medical Center Pharmacy was recognized nationally for their contribution to VHA’s Journey to High Reliability. The Journey to High Reliability aims to continuously improve processes by maximizing patient safety and reducing harm to restore trust and ensure every Veteran receives the high-quality care they deserve. More than 6,600 Veterans who had selected the “do not mail” option and preferred to pick up their prescriptions in person, lost the ability to refill their medications at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pharmacy team recognized the serious potential impacts that the stay-at-home order would have on these Veterans and developed an aggressive plan to contact every Veteran on the list. Pharmacists called Veterans daily to query their needs for medication refills and educating each Veteran on the need to adjust plans by offering their prescriptions to be delivered by mail. Within a few months’ prescriptions delivered by mail increased from 63% to an impressive 83%. Most importantly there were no instances of Veterans without medication and no reported medication errors.
2021 Employee of the Year, Toni Thorpe

Our August Employee of the Month, Toni Thorpe, was also selected as the employee of the year. Toni's work consistently demonstrates a positive and pleasant demeanor towards everyone she encounters. She is a true team player and readily offers her assistance whenever and however needed. Toni ensures that all of the Veterans residing in the Community Living Centers (CLC) have the clothing items they need daily and for special occasions. She assists with keeping Veterans engaged in activities at the CLC. Toni embodies all the VA ICARE values and always goes above and beyond her standard duties to ensure our Veteran residents are well cared for. When she offers her trademark “I got him/her” promise, you can depend on that issue being resolved in a timely, professional manner that ensures the best outcome for our residents.

Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) is a community-based program, which focuses on the whole health of our Veterans by offering individualized care and treatment plans that meet the Veteran where they are in their recovery process.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation & Recovery Center (PRRC) is a transitional education center with the aim of promoting recovery, education, and community integration for Veterans who are diagnosed with a severe mental illness. PRRC is curriculum-based, designed to teach Veterans the skills necessary for their mental health recovery and community goals.

2021 Environmental Excellence Award from Practicing Green Health

For the second year in a row the medical center was recognized for making a mission-aligned impact on community wellness through tree education, investment, and community engagement.

To be recognized for this national award, the medical center had to demonstrate continuous improvement and expansion of programs intended to lower energy and water consumption, reduce and recycle waste, and establish environmentally preferable purchasing criteria.

A big contributor this year was the tree management and storm water project which included installing infiltration trenches to redirect excess water and revitalizing local aquifers. Five rain gardens were created, 35 trees were removed and replaced with 120 trees and more than 2000 new plants.

Krista Lewis, a Recreational Therapist added that “beyond the green practice benefits, organic gardening provides anger and stress management opportunities.” Veterans grew their own fruits and vegetables in the Victory Garden and donated 302 pounds of fresh produce to the Chester County Foodbank. This creates a sense of self-worth for the Veterans by allowing them to give back to the community.

We also replaced 13 vehicles with more greenhouse gas efficient models and reduced the environmental impact of shipping costs. “We are constantly looking for what comes next and trying to take it to the next level, said Beth Ramsey, Green Environmental Management System Program Manager, CVAMC.

Great Achievement by Mental Health Intensive Case Management and Psychosocial Rehabilitation & Recovery Center

In January 2021, these two programs were surveyed by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). CARF examined the programs’ conformance to their standards, which monitor the value of care being delivered. There were no findings from the survey, which is only achieved on three percent of CARF surveys. The result of the survey is that CARF accredited both programs for three years, which is the highest level of accreditation offered.

FY 21 Employees of the Month:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October 2020</th>
<th>April 2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laura Henry, Whole Health Coordinator</td>
<td>Sherri Viola, Registered Nurse</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Miller, Electrician Leader</td>
<td>Ethan Stump, Firefighter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steven Madonna, Housekeeping Aide</td>
<td>June 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2021</td>
<td>July 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakeya Norris, Advanced Medical Support Assistant</td>
<td>Andrea Hall, Education Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2021</td>
<td>August 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Pratt, Registered Nurse</td>
<td>Antoine &quot;Toni&quot; Thorpe, Laundry Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2021</td>
<td>September 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance Qualmann, Chaplain</td>
<td>Kimberly Mack, Licensed Practical Nurse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Coin of Excellence is presented to an employee for sustained superior performance or performing above and beyond normal expectations.

**Recipients**
- Lori Heun - January 2021
- Charleen Messner - January 2021
- Audrey Ameigh - March 2021
- Amy Bieryla - March 2021
- Tricia DiFerdinando - March 2021
- Ganesh Dixit - March 2021
- Mark Gillespie - March 2021
- Melinda Grear - March 2021
- Alyssa Isenberg - March 2021
- Brent Jenkins - March 2021
- Joseph Miller - March 2021
- Ijeoma Okafor - March 2021
- Daniela Pulcini - March 2021
- Angela Berthau - March 2021
- Linda Hoffman - March 2021
- Susan Fitzgerald - March 2021
- Ian Pasko - May 2021
- Bronwyn Morris - May 2021
- Nathan Romig - June 2021
- Charles Krause - June 2021
- Kyle Vaughn - June 2021

African American/Black Employment Program Committee Recognizes JUNETEENTH with Commemorative T-shirts

**Total Unique Patients**
- Male: 17,491
- Female: 1,013

**Outpatient Visits**
- 201,654

**Total Employees**
- 1,212
  - Employees who are Veterans: 308
  - Nurses: 180
  - Physicians: 35

**Delaware County CBOC**
- Uniques: 3,336
- Outpatient Visits: 13,072

**Spring City CBOC**
- Uniques: 2,820
- Outpatient Visits: 10,087

**Operating Beds**
- 302
  - Acute Mental Health: 28
  - RRTP/DOM: 148
  - CLC: 126

**Research**
- Total Funding: $339,095
  - Number of Projects: 10

**Virtual Care**
- Encounters completed via Telehealth: 47,686
- Tele-mental health care encounters: 31,157
- Unique Veterans using secure messaging: 2,608

**Voluntary Service (CDCE)**
- Volunteers: 90
  - Volunteer hours: 6,001
  - Monetary donations: $78,527
  - Tangible donations: $365,140

**Total Operating Budget**
- $184,621,000
Blood Donation Milestone

U.S. Navy Veteran-Employee Richard Wilson, Supervisory Pharmacy Technician, was recognized in September by the medical center and the Red Cross, for reaching the donation milestone of five gallons of blood over a 20-year period.

Richard who served as a Navy Hospital Corpsman from 1975 to 1979, emphasized the importance of donating blood, “I know how much that pint of blood can mean to someone who’s suffering.” Richard has no plans to stop donating, “hopefully, I can make it to 10 gallons.”

Project Healing Waters

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing is a nationwide dedicated volunteer program, providing Veterans the opportunity to learn and enjoy the art of fly fishing. Tying flies and fly fishing requires a high level of concentration that many Veterans working through addiction or Post-Traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD) learn to enjoy.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Project Healing Waters hosted weekly in-person sessions on the grounds of the medical center. For nearly 18 months the program has been hosted virtually.

When Navy Veteran Tom Marchetti arrived at the CVAMC, he began attending the online fly-tying sessions. Then in July, as restrictions loosened, Mr. Marchetti was able to place a fly-fishing rod in his hands during a face-to-face training session. “I suffer from PTSD and I needed something to take my attention away from that,” said Marchetti. “Hopefully, I’ll get out on a lake or river soon with these dedicated volunteers of Project Healing Waters.

VA Voluntary Service has a New Name

To reflect the scope of its services more accurately VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) has been realigned and renamed to VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE), by the Office of the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations.

The realignment to CDCE will support:

- Improved efficiency through the development of standardized operational processes across VHA
- Improved cooperation and collaboration across the VA who are engaged in similar work or key initiatives
- Enhanced communication and visibility of the program for awareness of the role the community plays in support of quality health care
- Increase efficiency in recruitment, retention and marketing efforts of volunteers, donors and partners
- Consistent evaluation of data to measure impact and Veteran satisfaction

David’s Drive 831 Wins VHA National 2021 Community/Spirit Award

From over 60 nominations nationally, our philanthropist organization, “David’s Drive 831,” was selected and awarded the 2021 Community/Civic Spirit Award by the Veterans Health Administration.

David’s Drive 831 (DD831) has supported Veterans at Coatesville VAMC for over 11 years, providing over $1,000,000 of donations. Donations included everything from beds, clothing, to fishing trips and Philly sporting events. DD831 has always been a reliable organization to provide for the needs of our Veterans.

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One of the VA national innovations developed in keeping Veterans connected during the pandemic in 2021, is the Compassionate Contact Corps (CCC) initiative. Volunteers and Veterans are matched to regularly stay socially in contact by phone or by video-chat to overcome the social isolation experienced by so many of our homebound Veterans. The medical center’s Voluntary Service called on our dedicated volunteers to participate in the CCC for our local area. Approximately 25 volunteers make weekly calls to homebound Veterans who have served 50 Veterans through this virtual volunteer program. Jennifer Frederick, volunteer, connects weekly with three Veterans, “It is an honor for me to listen and offer a friendly visit. Occasionally she will write letters if she is unable to connect via phone. “I can hear in their voice how happy they are to receive my call. We have a good time and their stories have an impact on my life”, stated Jennifer. The CCC continues to grow with our volunteers as an extension of the care team and serves as a reminder of the importance of a simple phone call to say we care.

Summer Festival with Fireworks
After a long year of COVID-19 restrictions, the Coatesville VA Medical Center organized, with the help of David’s Drive 831, an on-campus outdoor “Summer Festival” event. Our Veterans, especially our CLC Veterans enjoyed a change of pace from the pandemic restrictions and isolations, by enjoying an outdoor BBQ meal, ice cream, a visit from the Eagle Swoop, topped-off by an impressive Fireworks display.

Compassionate Contact Corps

Recently Completed Projects

- Tree Management and Sidewalk Repair Oval 1
- Life-Safety Door Replacements
- Installed Guest Wi-Fi

Ongoing Projects

- Renovating the basement and first floor of building 2 to provide Patient Aligned Clinical Team (PACT) space
- Renovating Building 1 for new dental clinic and administrative office on ground and 3rd floor
CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Ongoing Projects

- Renovating Building 4 to accommodate new outpatient mental health clinic
- Demolished quarters and Hoptel to construct two parking lots (150 space gain)
- Renovation of West Norriton Clinic (scheduled opening November 2021)

Helpful Contact Guide

Medical Center ................................................................. 610-384-7711
Call Center for Appointments ............................................. 610-383-0239
Nurse 24/7 Helpline .............................................................. 610-384-7711, Press 3
Clinical Contact Center for 24/7 urgent medical or mental health questions ...... 1-833-835-3874
Life-Threatening Emergencies ............................................. 911
Veterans Crisis Line .......................................................... 1-800-273-8255, Press 1

Audiology .......................................................... 610-383-0217
Community & Congressional Affairs .................................. 610-380-4348
Eligibility & Enrollment ..................................................... 610-383-0265 or 0266
My HealtheVet (to obtain account) ...................................... 610-384-7711 ext. 5055
Patient Experience Advocate ........................................... 610-384-7711 ext. 2101 or 2103
Pharmacy Prescription Refill ............................................. 610-380-4357
Veterans Transportation Service ................................. 610-383-0254
Voluntary Service/CDC ............................................. 610-383-0228 or 0272
Women Veterans Program ............................................. 610-384-7711 ext. 6242

Contact us on Facebook or visit www.va.gov/coatesville-health-care