

VA PUGET SOUND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Annual Report



Fiscal Year **2019**

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Puget Sound Health Care System





“At VA Puget Sound Health Care System,
our mission is to provide world-class care to
improve the health and well-being of our nation’s
Veterans, driven by a culture of innovation,
collaboration, respect and learning.”

*Michael Tadych, FACHE
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Director*



“We’ve experienced growth in unique population in last 10 years while space essentially unchanged. To address the space constraints, we continue to invest in renovations and new construction projects to bring our facilities on par with the expert patient-centered care our VA Puget Sound has been delivering for almost 100 years.”

Kathryn Sherrill, MSW, LCSW, BSN
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Deputy Director



“We use data to improve the care we provide to patients, monitor use of important resources, and to identify novel ways to enhance the health of veterans and people around the globe.”

Catherine Kaminetzky, MD, MPH
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Chief of Staff



“Throughout VA Puget Sound Nursing Services, we are laser-focused on providing qualified, competent and compassionate care to those we care for.”

Geraldine L'Heureux, MBA, MHA, BSN, RN
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Deputy Director of Patient Care Services

“We want each Veteran we care for, and the staff who care for them, to know how important they are, whether they are in Seattle, Tacoma, or one of our seven Community Based Outpatient Clinics.”

Simon Kim, PhD
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Associate Director



“We continually strive to meet and exceed the expectations of our Veterans and their families.”

Connie Morantes, MD
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Deputy Chief of Staff



“Our compassionate and dedicated VA Puget Sound nursing staff helps ensure the best health outcomes for our Veterans.”

Pamela Popplewell, DPN, RN, ANP-BC
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Assistant Director of Patient Care Services



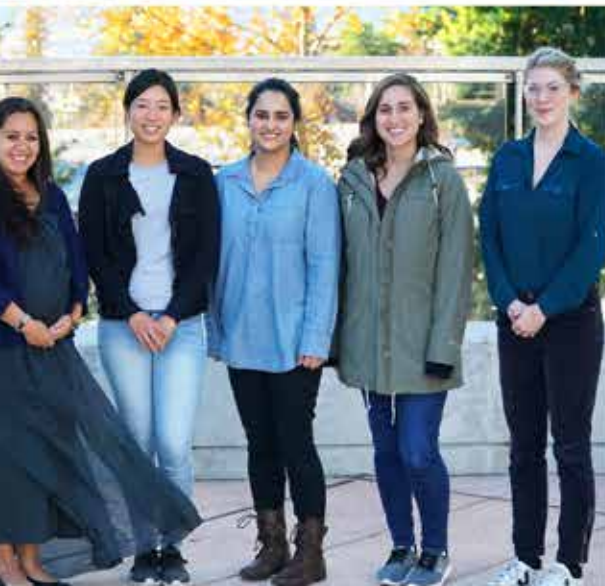




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SNAPSHOT

Patient
Population:
112,000

Patient
Growth:
6.4%
over last
2 years

Women
Veterans:
13%
growth over
2 years

Admissions:
5,995
Average
Daily Census:
255

Operational Beds:
414

Bed Days of Care:
92,990

Surgeries
Performed:
5,710





Outpatient Visits: **1,027,291**

Seattle	–	578,121
American Lake	–	336,715
Mount Vernon	–	38,836
Bremerton	–	19,409
South Sound	–	16,173
Federal Way	–	10,505
North Olympic	–	11,376
North Seattle	–	9,284
Bellevue	–	6,872

Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) Performance Measures:

32% of our Veterans see same primary care provider each visit

24% of Veteran visits received care by phone

13.5% of same-day appointments

76% of patients get an appointment within 7 days of preference



Improving Health Outcomes through Clinical Research



Research and Development plays a vital role in the Department of Veterans Affairs mission, and nowhere is this more evident than in the VA Puget Sound Health Care System. The R&D program – the 5th largest in the VA – reflects VA Puget Sound’s commitment to providing the highest quality care to its Veterans.

Currently we have over 700 active research projects. And our affiliation with the University of Washington School of Medicine and collaboration with Seattle Institute for Biomedical and Clinical Research (SIBCR) are integral to the ongoing discoveries that improve care to our Veterans.

Principal Investigators represent virtually every major clinical department, including: Traumatic Brain Injury & Multiple Blast Exposures, Memory Improvement & Alzheimer’s Disease, PTSD & Deployment Health, Parkinson’s Disease, Diabetes, Cancer, Substance Abuse, Lower Limb Prosthetics, Genomics, and Health Services. Funding includes sponsors from VA, National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, private industry and the non-profit sector.

The effects of a strong R&D program go well beyond recruitment of high-quality clinical staff. Patients at this institution have access to the latest pharmaceutical therapies and diagnostic techniques; the quality of “routine” care is enriched by the personal commitment of staff to increase their professional capabilities and to actively contribute to the advancement of their fields.

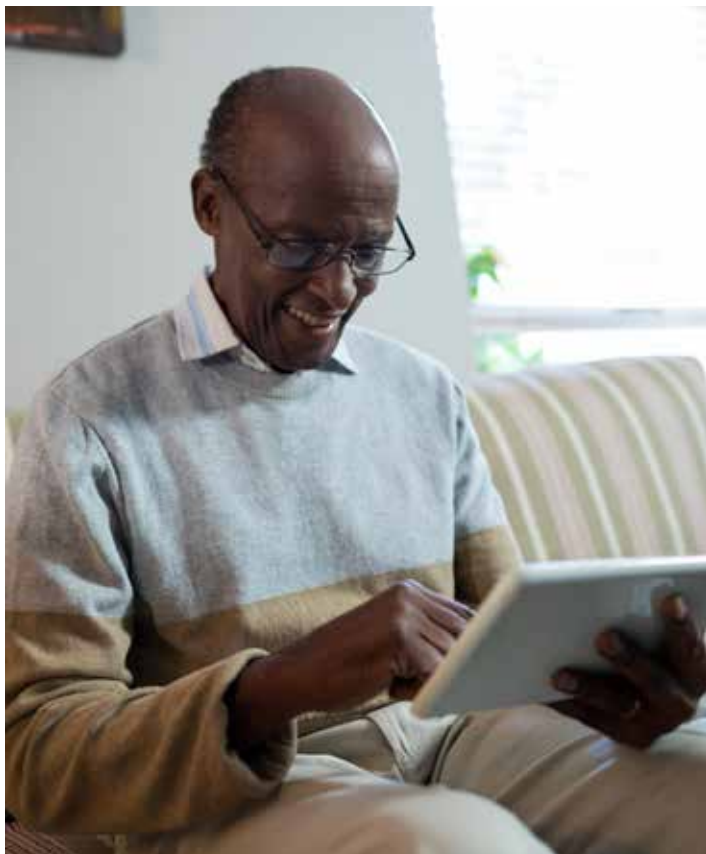
Award-winning researchers:

2019 European Association for the Study of Diabetes Claude Bernard Medal | Dr. Steven Kahn for his innovative strategies to improve the lives of Veterans who have diabetes and is working to develop better ways to prevent or treat diabetes.

2019 Jack Michaels’ Award for Excellence in Research | Dr. Charles Maynard for his cardiovascular health services research and administrative databases.

2019 Larry Searle Lifetime Achievement Award | Dr. Thomas Bird for his work for his contributions in identifying new and unusual genetic diseases of the brain and neuromuscular system.

Expanding Access with Telehealth Services



VA Puget Sound offers Telehealth Services at all our facilities to improve access to care and health outcomes for our Veterans in more than 50 telehealth areas from mental health, pain and podiatry to amputee and lung transplant care.

- 20,915 of unique telehealth users
- 27,689.5 Encounters
- 6,086 Home Telehealth
 - 11,014 Clinical Video Telehealth
 - 10,589.5 Store and Forward Telehealth
- 19.70% of our patients who participated in at least one virtual care modality
- 136,202 secure messages sent

Volunteers: a Critical Part of our Team

During fiscal year 2019 alone, VA Puget Sound Voluntary Service provided oversight of more than 650 volunteers at both VA Puget Sound and the Tahoma National Cemetery. Our volunteers delivered more than 80,000 hours of supplemental and support service, the equivalent totaling more than \$2 million. Voluntary Service also received more than \$846,000 in monetary and non-monetary donations. Together these volunteer hours and community partner donations equaled nearly \$3 million for the direct benefit of our Veterans.

Voluntary Service is really about volunteers and community partners striving to enhance the experience of our Veterans. Whether it's our Red Coat Ambassadors greeting and assisting new arrivals on campus, providing travel vouchers and gift cards for homeless and at-risk Veterans through social work, funding community reentry outings for rehabilitation patients, providing Veterans transportation to medical appointments, or delivering military honors at the Tahoma National Cemetery, VA Puget Sound Voluntary Service is an integral part of the mission to serve our Veterans in the Pacific Northwest.





Fisher House: Home Away from Home

The Fisher House is a very important part of the support VA Puget Sound provides to the families of the Veterans we care for across our nine facilities in the Pacific Northwest. In addition to that, our specialty services such as Spinal Cord Injury expands our footprint of care across five states. Guests of VA Puget Sound's Fisher House have come from 48 states, across 14 countries, to be near their loved ones and to provide support during hospitalization. And it's especially heartwarming to know that we are a home away from home for families. Since opening our doors, here is how we provided support:

- 7,800 families served
- 11,000 house guests
- 66,422 nights stayed
- Average family stay is 10 days
- Greatest length of stay is 470 days
- Oldest guest was a 98-year-old WWII Veteran | youngest guest was only a day old
- \$12 million savings in hotel expenses for families



Nurturing our Nation's Future Health Professionals



As a teaching hospital, VA Puget Sound provides a full range of services, with state-of-the-art technology as well as education and research. Our academic partners play an invaluable role in driving innovation and collaborative research to improve health outcomes for not only the Veterans entrusted to us, but to help people worldwide.

We are primarily affiliated with the University of Washington Schools of Medicine and Nursing. We maintained over 150 active associated health, graduate medical education, nursing undergraduate, graduate and research affiliations in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Our main local affiliates include the University of Washington, Seattle Pacific University and Pacific Lutheran University.

Each year more than 1,700 trainees walk through our doors because of the innovative and progressive training opportunities at VA Puget Sound. For example, VA Puget Sound selects outstanding Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students to participate in the VA Learning Opportunities Residency (VALOR) program during their final year of nursing school. In 2019, we received over 15 applications and selected six students to join the program. The students are paired with a preceptor to gain nursing experience on inpatient units at the VA. Historically, 90 percent of VALOR students have chosen to stay at the VA after obtaining their registered nurse license, making this an excellent recruitment and retention tool.

June 13, 2019

UW MEDICINE NEWSROOM

No downside but cost to Hep C antivirals, hepatologist says

“For the approximately 2.4 million U.S.

individuals currently infected with the

hepatitis C virus, the study gives them and

their caregivers peace of mind over safety.”

Spotlight

Center of Excellence in Substance Addiction Treatment & Education | CESATE

Seattle CESATE serves as a national resource, with a mission of improving the quality, clinical outcomes and cost-effectiveness of health care for Veterans with Substance Use Disorders (SUDs). The Center is alert to national trends in substance misuse (e.g., the opioid epidemic), related consequences (e.g., overdose) and gaps in healthcare services, as well as new treatments and VA priorities (e.g. measurement-based care). We are partnering with the VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention to evaluate the national roll-out of the Stepped Care for Opioid Use Disorder Train-the-Trainer (SCOUTT) program, which aims to increase access to medication treatment for opioid use disorder.

Seattle CESATE's goals are to develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate best clinical practices and educational initiatives along the continuum of care for SUDs; provide education and training in treatment of SUDs; provide consultation and technical assistance to program managers, medical center leadership and VA Central Office on issues relevant to quality care of Veterans with SUDs; and conduct clinical, health services, and educational research to improve the health of Veterans with SUDs.

Program Highlights:

Expanding access to treatments for substance use conditions in primary care clinics, mental health clinics, and Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

Improving identification and prevention of suicide among patients with substance use conditions.

Developing and disseminating knowledge, educating providers about effective care, and improving Veteran quality of life.

Models of Excellence

7 Nationally Recognized Centers of Excellence:



VA Puget Sound has seven nationally recognized Centers of Excellence (in areas from limb-loss prevention and prosthetic engineering to primary care education and substance abuse treatment):

- Multiple Sclerosis Center of Excellence West
- Center of Excellence in Substance Abuse Treatment & Education
- Epilepsy Center of Excellence
- Center of Excellence in Primary Care Education
- Center of Excellence for Limb Loss Prevention and Prosthetic Engineering
- Center of Innovation for Veteran-Centered and Value-Driven Care
- ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) Association Certified Treatment Center of Excellence

Spotlight

Center of Excellence for Limb Loss Prevention and Prosthetic Engineering | CLiMB

The primary mission of VA Puget Sound's Center for Limb Loss and Mobility (CLiMB) is to improve the quality of life and functional status of Veterans who are at risk for lower extremity amputation and Veterans and service members who have undergone lower extremity amputation. To accomplish this mission, its research teams work collaboratively to address research questions of importance to Veterans and the Veterans Health Administration and by focusing on preserving and enhancing mobility in Veterans and others with foot and leg impairments or amputations.

Program Highlights:

The Extremity Amputation Decision Enhancement Research (LEADER) program is translating research to clinical care. The LEADER program's primary goal is to enhance amputation level shared decision making between the physician and patient. The LEADER team received the award for best presentation for the greatest contribution to advancing the clinical management of clients at the 17th World Congress of the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics in Kobe, Japan Oct. 2019. Additionally, they recently developed and validated a novel single item self-report measure for evaluating the functional mobility of patients experiencing limb loss. The Amputee Single Item Mobility Measure (AMPSIMM) was the product of an eight-year effort across multiple VA centers. Over 200 Veterans undergoing their first amputation as a result of diabetes or peripheral artery disease participated in the study. A proposed benefit of the AMPSIMM is the ability to quantify mobility with a single question throughout the continuum of amputee rehabilitation including individuals who use a combination of mobility aids, prosthetic limbs, and wheeled mobility. Preliminary testing of the AMPSIMM demonstrates excellent clinical utility because of its brevity and use of clinically descriptive conceptual terms. It is currently included as an outcome measure in the VA Amputee Registry and will soon be implemented as part of the electronic medical record across rehabilitation centers in Singapore.

Comfort while walking with a lower limb prosthesis is essential to the long-term mobility of individuals with a lower limb amputation. CLiMB researchers

have created a new, carbon-fiber prosthetic foot that moves like the natural limb, mimicking off-axis rotations resulting in greater comfort. To design this prosthetic foot, researchers first built a robotic limb to test different motions with the help of Veteran volunteers. The results from these tests, conducted in its new motion analysis laboratory at VA Puget Sound, are helping create new technologies for Veterans with lower limb amputation.

Women with limb loss represent a relevant and growing patient population with unique prosthetic and rehabilitation needs. They experience greater dissatisfaction with prosthetic fit and appearance and have more footwear limitations than men. Having the choice to wear footwear perceived as appropriate for a given occasion can be an important part of community reintegration after an amputation. Dr. Elizabeth Russell Esposito has been leading a study to characterize perceived limitations in footwear among female prosthesis users and compare how different women's footwear may compromise the rigorously engineered design characteristics of adjustable prosthetic feet. The results of this study are important for informing prosthetic prescription and the incorporation of different footwear into rehabilitation efforts for women with lower limb amputation.

Custom carbon fiber ankle-foot orthotics have enabled many individuals with lower extremity injuries to return to high levels of physical function. Proper training on their use is viewed as important for optimizing the mechanical features of the design but is not always part of the prescription of these devices. A training study was initiated after seeing widespread variability in how individuals were using custom carbon ankle-foot orthoses. Real-time biofeedback on running mechanics teaches individuals to make contact with the ground towards their forefoot, as opposed to their heel, to use the orthotic's rigid footplate as a lever to bend and store energy in the posterior strut. When this energy is released at push-off, it helps propel the user forward. This intervention was developed with a physical therapy team to be able to be incorporated as part of clinical care.

On Forefront of Innovation

As the largest integrated health care system in the country, the VA not only cares for our nation's heroes, but is in a unique position to advance change and positively disrupt the way America delivers health care. VA Puget Sound is part of the VHA Innovators Network, helping frontline employees develop innovative ideas and diffuse those ideas across the enterprise to provide superior care and the best health outcomes to our Veterans. 3D printing is just one of the many innovations we are focused on. 3D printing solutions help radiologists better visualize patient anatomy and disease for diagnosis, surgical and treatment planning – improving health outcomes, reducing time to treatment and enhancing the patient experience.

This year, VA Puget Sound staff were well-represented at the annual VHA Innovation Experience in Washington D.C., an event with over 500 attendees spanning two days, held at the National Press Club.

- Eli Kaufman (research prosthetist) was chosen for one of only two Entrepreneur in Residence Fellowships out of a large national candidate pool
- Three out of thirteen featured national talks at the event were given by VA Puget Sound staff. Eli Kaufman and project partner Daniel Abrahamson of prosthetics presented their innovative program called Mobile Orthotics and Prosthetics, or Mobile OPS, which brings prosthetics care to Veterans in their homes. Dr. Jeffrey Heckman (physical medicine and rehabilitation) and Dr. Beth Ripley (radiology) were also chosen to give featured talks.
- Invited poster presentations from Dr. Gregg Hyde (dental), Archie Jugarap (dental), and Mary Matthews-Brownell (occupational therapy) and an oral presentation from Dr. Patrick Aubin (research) rounded out the strong showing from Puget Sound.

VA Puget Sound staff embraced emerging technologies to envision new solutions for Veterans this year.

- Virtual reality was one of the featured technologies, spanning multiple aspects of health care. Dr. Greg Reger (Mental Health) continues to innovate in this space, with virtual reality software that helps patients with post-traumatic stress through immersion treatment. The work was piloted by Dr. Reger in Iraq,

in collaboration with University of Southern California Research Professor Dr. Skip Rizzo and team and is now spreading to multiple VA hospitals through a partnership with Soldier Strong. Dr. Eric Rombokas (research) and David Boe (research) debuted a new virtual reality treatment for phantom limb pain, which was featured in a write-up by GeekWire magazine. Virtual reality for presurgical planning was also a focus of VA Puget Sound staff, with Puget Sound presenting this work at the annual Department of Labor Tech Day in Washington D.C.

3D printing continues to be a focus for VA Puget Sound, which expanded printing capabilities this year to include ten 3D printers.

- Medical imaging coupled with 3D printing can play a role in surgical planning by allowing physicians the opportunity to see and interact with patient anatomy before a patient goes to the operating room. This allows VA Puget Sound surgeons to anticipate and prepare for any potential challenges, plan less invasive treatment strategies for diseases like cancer and heart failure and communicate effectively with patients about treatment options. Patient-specific 3D printed models were created for 13 VA Puget Sound surgical patients this year. In addition, Puget Sound provided 3D printed models for Veterans at 3





additional VA hospitals across the country, fulfilling our role as a hub site for presurgical planning. These numbers are expected to grow exponentially in the coming year.

- VA Puget Sound is now one of only four VA hospitals in the country with a Bioprinter, a specialized 3D printer that can print living cells and tissues. The team here is working with partner Advanced Solutions Life Sciences to create a recipe for living bio-printed bone, with the hope that soon Veterans who need bone grafts can receive a custom-built bone made specifically for them from their own cells.
- Dental 3D printing was an area of rapid growth, spearheaded by Archie Jugarap (dental technician) and Dr. Gregg Hyde (chief of Dental Services). Over 300 VA Puget Sound Veterans received custom-designed crowns through the aid of 3D printing this year.
- Mary Matthews-Brownell (occupational therapy) continued to innovate with 3D printed hand braces especially designed for patients, including a brace that would allow a veteran to participate in Karate, as well as a brace that allowed an active father to get back to picking up his baby girl and gardening.

Expanded Care through our Regional Hubs



Along with caring for Veterans enrolled at one of its nine facilities, VA Puget Sound offers Veterans from a five-state area in the Pacific Northwest specialized care through its regional hubs:

- Regional Amputation Center
- Regional Spinal Cord Injury Hub
- Marrow & Lung Transplant Unit
- Polytrauma Network Site

Spotlight

Marrow Transplant Unit

VA Puget Sound's Marrow Transplant Unit was founded in 1982. Together with VA programs in San Antonio and Nashville, it provides comprehensive hematopoietic stem cell transplantation services for Veterans with a variety of malignant and nonmalignant hematologic disorders.

Since its inception, the Marrow Transplant Unit has surpassed 1,700 transplants, including close to 250 from unrelated donors. Utilizing eight inpatient beds and one outpatient suite, approximately 70-80 transplants are performed annually. Seattle patients receive either their own (autologous) stem cells or products from a matched or closely-matched relative or unrelated donor (allogeneic). Allogeneic transplant recipients, especially those with mismatched and unrelated donor sources, require prolonged immunosuppression and are at risk for a variety of complications. Immunologic tolerance requires close medical surveillance for months to years. The longitudinal follow-up care and clinical advice provided by the Seattle program is key to successful outcomes for patients referred by VA centers throughout the country.

The largest proportion of Veterans treated in Seattle have received transplants for multiple myeloma, followed by a number of hematopoietic malignancies and less commonly autoimmune diseases. Multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukemia can be service-connected conditions for Veterans with prior Agent Orange exposure.

Clinical research performed at the Marrow Transplant Unit in conjunction with Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center has led to improved efficacy and safety of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, making curative treatments available to a broader number of patients. Outcome data for Veterans transplanted at VA Puget Sound compares favorably to published data in the medical literature and national registries.

Spotlight

Lung Transplant Program

The Lung Transplant Program at VA Puget Sound Health Care System provides comprehensive evaluation and management of veterans with advanced lung disease referred for transplantation. It is a collaborative program with the University of Washington Lung Transplant Program. Veterans are referred to the VA Program from VA institutions throughout the entire U.S. and are listed for lung transplantation at the University of Washington. The actual lung transplant procedure occurs at the University of Washington and patients are typically transferred to VA Puget Sound to complete inpatient care within five days after transplantation, for a minimum of 3 months. Longer term follow-up occurs in collaboration with each Veteran's home VA with periodic return visits to VA Puget Sound.

Care at the Seattle VA is multidisciplinary and relies upon outstanding local expertise and collaboration by pulmonary medicine, thoracic surgery, internal medicine, medical and surgical specialties, radiology, pathology, laboratory medicine, social work, and nursing.

Since inception in 2012, 44 patients have undergone transplantation through the Seattle VA program. During the most recent 12 months there were: 78 patients referred; 30 patients evaluated, 12 patients listed; and eight patients were transplanted. Common indications for lung transplantation in the VA program are pulmonary fibrosis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Approximately 2,500 lung transplants are performed annually in the United States. Nationally, survival after lung transplantation, as reported in the surgical registry of transplant recipients (SRTR), is 89 percent at one year and 71 percent at three years with median waiting time for transplant of 3.1 months. Survival in the Puget VA Program has been 100 percent at one year and 100 percent at three years with median waiting time for transplant of 3.3 months. VA Puget Sound's ability to provide continuous, unfragmented post-transplant care throughout the country is a major contributor to outstanding outcomes for our Veteran population. The outcomes of this program are also attributed to the local support and expertise involving medical and surgical services, radiology, lab medicine, pathology, nursing, and social work at VA Puget Sound.

June 10, 2019

KIRO TV

Groundbreaking technology helping veterans who've lost limbs

"In a virtual world of a stadium, a sitting man and soccer balls, each kick comes for a purpose: easing pain for Judy Baldwin-Mohn. She's in the final stretch of trying a new therapy at VA Puget Sound for the pain left after losing part of her right leg."

Committed to Both Physical and Mental Health of our Veterans

VA Puget Sound Health Care System is committed to caring for both the physical and mental health care needs of our Veterans. In fiscal 2019, we supported more than 24,000 Veterans with over 215,000 mental healthcare-related encounters. Additionally, our Suicide Prevention Team members annually assist over 2,500 Veterans, their families and their concerned friends located around the Puget Sound region.

We offer a wide array of services, including acute inpatient, residential, ambulatory care programs, addictions treatment, emergency and urgent care, and vocational rehabilitation services. Our mission is to provide an appropriate level of support and treatment to assist Veterans in recovery from mental health and addictive disorders and to maximize their overall level of function and satisfaction with life. Care is patient-focused, culturally sensitive, cost effective and supported by our clinical, education and research programs.

Clinical programs and services range from inpatient, psychiatric care with acute substance abuse detoxification (Seattle only), to residential rehabilitation programs to address substance use disorders and PTSD (American Lake only), to evidence-based, individual, family and group psychotherapy for the evaluation and treatment of mental health disorders (both campuses). Our primary care teams at our main medical centers and throughout our Community Based Outpatient Clinics are supported by on-site mental health staff including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurse practitioners, nurses, technicians and peer support staff, who work together to provide care for the patients in our primary care clinics. Additionally, many of the mental health services at VA Puget Sound are offered via telehealth to Veterans, who receive care at one of our seven Community Based Outpatient Clinics, or in non-VA locations, such as a Veteran's homes. Telehealth equipment with Internet access can be provided to Veterans as needed at no cost.



An Inclusive Work Environment

Through our diversity and inclusion programs, VA Puget Sound is growing a diverse workforce and cultivating an inclusive work environment, where our staff are fully engaged and empowered to deliver the outstanding services to our nation's Veterans and their families. We continue to achieve this through the following Special Emphasis Programs that are integrated into our overall mission. These programs include Federal Women's, Hispanic Employment, African Americans (Black Employment), American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Asian American-Pacific Islanders, and People with Disabilities Employment Programs. Our Veteran centric programs like our LGBT Program and Women Veterans Health Committee are also an integral part of our patient centered care initiatives which encourage a diverse and inclusive organizational culture.

We promote a positive, continuing affirmative program designed to eradicate barriers to employment of minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and disabled Veterans. Our Veteran employment rate of more than 30 percent and our onboard disability is approximately 11 percent.

November 30, 2019

GEEKWIRE

A Positive Veterans Experience in the Center of All We Do

Ensuring our Veterans and their families are empowered to engage in their own whole health journey built on safe, timely and excellent quality care remains at the core of our mission at VA Puget Sound. We remain committed to doing everything possible to make VA Puget Sound the place our Veterans choose for their health care.

- 1,160 Veterans assisted by our four Patient Advocates
- 105 I-CARE Champions are embedded throughout every outpatient clinic, service line and inpatient ward at Seattle to provide onsite, timely resolution of any patient concerns and issues to support the best experience.

Fostering Ideas to Better Serve Veterans

2019 Sleep Medicine Care Routing Program (under consideration for national implementation)

VA Puget Sound's Sleep Medicine was selected by the Office of Veterans Access to Care (OVAC) to pilot for the first time within the VA, a care routing model previously used by the Department of Defense. This virtual care program trained nurses to triage and then implement certain facets of sleep medicine care while integrating real-time scheduling. The initial pilot program was funded by OVAC for implementation at VAPS, and demonstrated improved time to care delivery, reduced community care utilization, cost reduction, and greater Veteran satisfaction. After completion of the pilot, the program data was presented to VISN-20 and subsequently funded for VISN-wide expansion which is currently in progress. The program was selected for presentation at the 2019 National Program Director/Field Advisory Chair Specialty Care Summit in Washington D.C. in September 2019.

'Imagine holding your own heart':
GE teams with U.S. Veterans Affairs in Seattle to accelerate 3D printing in health care

"Ripley is a driving force behind the VA's rollout of 3D modeling software from GE Healthcare, under a new partnership announced this week. The technology takes arcane radiological scans and translates them into printable files to become plastic organs, bones and tumors that physicians can use in planning patient care and treatment."

Our Goal: Zero Homeless Veterans



Helping our Most Vulnerable Veterans

The Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team (HPACT) has seen a lot of change in the last year. What started as part of a national pilot in 2012, has matured into a program that cares for close to 800 Veterans at any given time, always driven by our desire to “meet people where they’re at.” A tight-knit crew of providers, nurses and social workers work to care for patients in a walk-in clinic, through weekly visits to five shelters/outreach sites throughout Puget Sound, at home for those struggling in housing, and now at the new Community Resource and Referral Center, where VA Puget Sound partners closely with our colleagues in Community Housing and Outreach Services to connect with Veterans at the front door to care. A couple of program highlights have been the continuation of a Hep C Street Cure program by Dr. Terry Chen with the help of Hepatology Clinic, a new VASH home visitation program by VA Puget Sound Doctors, Sheida Aalami and Courtney Tuegel, and the support of a Hospital to Housing program by HPACT Nurse Brian Hopps and Social Worker Jelani Jackson.

Staff: 100+ full-time multi-disciplinary team including Social Workers, Licensed Mental Health Counselors, Nurses, Housing Specialists, Social Service Assistants and others.

Grant and Per Diem: 9 grant-funded transitional housing programs located across four counties.

Emergency Housing: 32 contracted beds in Seattle and Forks.

Drop-In Services: New, centrally-located Community Resource & Referral Center for homeless Veterans (Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle).

HUD-VASH: 2,500+ HUD-VASH vouchers distributed by 12 Public Housing Authorities in 12 WA counties.

Veterans Justice Outreach: Outreach and support services to justice-involved Veterans, including via 7 therapeutic Veterans Courts.



VA Puget Sound Wall of Heroes



Join us
as we honor
U.S. Coast Guard
Signalman 1st Class
Douglas A. Munro

2019 Wall of Heroes
Recipient

November 12, 2019, 10:30 a.m.

Honoring our Heroes

On Nov. 12, 2019, Coast Guard Signalman 1st Class Douglas A. Munro of Cle Elum, Wash., will be inducted to the VA Puget Sound Health Care System Wall of Heroes as part of its annual Veterans Day celebration. Born in 1919, Munro engaged in the evacuation of a battalion of 500 U.S. Marines trapped by enemy Japanese forces at Point Cruz, Guadalcanal Sept. 27, 1942. His courageous efforts saved the lives of many, while they tragically took his own. Munro was the first, and remains the only, member of the U.S. Coast Guard to receive the Medal of Honor, the U.S. military's highest honor.

During the event, Commander, Thirteen Coast Guard District, Rear Adm. Anthony "Jack" Vogt expressed the nation's gratitude to Veterans like Munro. Munro's family members, along with representatives from U.S. Coast Guard, Veterans Service Organizations, local congressional offices and VA Puget Sound staff attended the ceremony.

Petty Officer Munro became the 15th VA Puget Sound Wall of Heroes honoree.



October 13, 2018

KOMO NEWS

Improving Quality of Life



VA Puget Sound has a long history of supporting national, regional and local recreation therapy events and programs to improve Veterans' physical, social, cognitive, emotional function and quality of life every day. This year, VA Puget Sound staff took teams to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic and the National Veterans Golden Age Games. Regionally and locally, VA Puget Sound Recreation Therapy staff co-hosted Adaptive Curling Clinics at Granite Curling Club and organized Veteran participation in the Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic, adaptive golf clinics and Team River Run kayaking activities. We also partnered with Salle Auriol Seattle for adaptive fencing which will begin in 2020.

VA Puget Sound is committed to exploring new ways to improve the quality of life for injured Veterans.



VA hospitals embrace 3D printing to help veterans

“One of the lab’s top projects is to develop same-day custom orthotics to protect the feet of diabetics. Eventually, doctors will be able to scan a patient’s foot and feed specific measurements into the 3D printer, which will then build the unique orthotic, adding one thin layer at a time.”

Committed to Reducing the Harms of Opioids

VA Puget Sound Health Care System Pain Clinics at its Seattle and American Lake locations offer comprehensive pain-care offerings to address complex chronic pain. Treatment options available to Veterans include co-disciplinary visits with a medical provider and psychologist simultaneously, pain skill groups, complementary and alternative approaches, pain procedures, opioid tapering, and intensive pain rehabilitation services through the outpatient and residential Functional Restoration Programs.

Collaboration across VA Puget Sound Health Care System clinics and specialties is an important tenet of both comprehensive pain care and opioid safety. VA Puget Sound has developed innovative programs to meet the complex needs of Veterans with co-occurring pain, substance use disorder and mental-health concerns. The Opioid Safety Review Board provides tailored opioid-safety recommendations, and Veterans undergoing opioid tapering can choose to engage in the Opioid Safety Program for support in maximizing their safety and functioning. The Collaborative Addictions, Mental Health and Pain Program provides flexible care coordination, staffing and expedited referral among the Addictions Treatment Center, Pain Clinic, Mental Health Clinic, Primary Care Clinic, Telehealth Program and Suicide Prevention Coordinator.

VA Puget Sound also implemented the VHA Stepped Care Model for Opioid Use Disorder Train the Trainer model at both American Lake and Seattle Pain Clinics. The Primary Care Clinics have also increased the number providers able to provide Suboxone (Buprenorphine/Naloxone) therapy for patients with opioid use disorder.

A comprehensive Tele Pain program was rolled out to all VA Puget Sound Community Based Outpatient Clinics and serves as a pain care hub for VISN 20.

Additionally, the Pain Clinic Team has worked closely with the regional Academic Detailing team to provide Opioid Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) for Veterans. Additionally, it has an electronic consultation program (called Stratification Tool for Opioid Risk Management) to help ensure that risk-mitigation strategies are delivered to the patients most likely to experience adverse outcomes.

Caring for nation's Veterans is paramount to VA. When it comes to their care and treatment, our goal is simple: to provide the appropriate and thoughtful care our Veterans deserve. And through these initiatives and others such as participation in state prescription monitoring programs, the VA remains committed to reducing the harms of opioids and doing everything possible to ensure Veterans live longer, safer and healthier lives.

January 19, 2019

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Can Suicide Be Prevented?

"A core part of Dialectical Behavior Therapy, says Dr. Melanie Harned, is teaching patients to live in the present moment with awareness and without judgment."

Enhancing our Facilities to get them on Par with our Expert Staff



We've experienced growth in unique population in last 10 years while space essentially unchanged. To address the space constraints, we have many facility renovations and new construction projects across our facilities—115 active design/construction projects, leases and agreements in Seattle and American Lake alone:

Highlights

- Seattle Division New Mental Health & Research Building (101): VA Puget Sound Health Care System opened its new \$121.6 million, 220,000-square-foot building March 15, 2018
- American Lake Division improvements include seismic modernization and renovation to some of the historic buildings: (1) Phase 1 of Building 18 renovations was completed on July 24, 2019—more than a month ahead of schedule and within budget; (2) Building 2 Canteen (1st Floor) had its grand opening May 3, 2019; and (3) Starbucks Coffee shop opened in August 2019.
- Silverdale Community Based Outpatient Clinic (replaced Bremerton): The \$9.7 million, 15,000-square-foot outpatient clinic opened Nov. 26, 2019.
- Seattle Community Resource and Referral Center: The \$4.3 million, 14,000 sq. ft. new building, (7,860 sq. ft. is dedicated to the CRRC, 3,633 dedicated to Seattle Vet Center), which is conveniently located in the Georgetown neighborhood in Seattle, opened Dec. 10, 2019.
- Seattle Women's Health Clinic and Radiology Oncology both received new flooring.

Our Women's Health Program Largest in Region



VA Puget Sound's Women's Health Program is the largest in VISN 20, with 15,584 women Veterans enrolled for care.

A team of 53 women's health primary care providers (physicians, advanced registered nurse practitioners and physician assistants) deliver women's health services across all our sites of care.

Comprehensive services by a multi-disciplinary team, including internal medicine physicians, gynecologists, mental health experts, social workers, pharmacists and nurses are provided at our Women's Health Clinics at Seattle and American Lake campuses.

We also have a robust network of community providers we partner with in care areas such as mammography, maternity, specialty breast care and infertility treatment (includes IVF - infertility must be related to a service-connected condition).



March 13, 2019

SEATTLE TIMES

In the new \$122M building, Seattle VA hospital hopes to push frontiers of medicine for PTSD, brain injuries and more

“Through the years, the Puget Sound VA also has emerged as the fifth largest research program within the national Department of Veterans Affairs system. It has been a focal point for studying PTSD and head injuries from blasts, which took on increased urgency as veterans returned from the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

Mobile Primary Care

Mobile Medical Units (MMU) have been used by the VA for more than 20 years to deliver primary care and other services to eligible Veterans who have limited access to VA health care services due to factors such as remoteness or limited specialized services. VA Puget Sound's MMU serves Veterans enrolled into one of our MMU

locations: Shelton, Aberdeen, Raymond, Ocean Shores and Snohomish. And in Fiscal Year 2019, we supported approximately 2,300 Veteran MMU appointments—this in addition to the 1,033,673 outpatient visits supported at VA Puget Sound facilities.

VA Puget Sound Provides Comprehensive Care

VA Puget Sound provides comprehensive care to more than 112,000 Veterans enrolled at one of its 10 facilities in the Pacific Northwest (two divisions in Seattle and Tacoma; seven Community Based Outpatient Clinics in Bellevue, Federal Way, Mount Vernon, North Olympic, North Seattle, Silverdale (replaced Bremerton) and South Sound; and a Community Resource and Referral Center in Seattle). As the VA's 5th largest research program, VA Puget Sound has research in virtually every major clinical

department, including: TBI & multiple blast exposures; memory improvement and Alzheimer's Disease; PTSD and deployment health; Parkinson's Disease, diabetes; cancer; substance abuse; lower limb prosthetics; genomics; and Health Services. Additionally, it has seven nationally recognized Centers of Excellence (in areas from limb-loss prevention and prosthetic engineering to primary care education and substance abuse treatment).

VA Puget Sound Health Care System

DIVISIONS

- 1 VA Puget Sound Health Care System - American Lake Division**
9600 Veterans Drive
Tacoma, WA 98493
253-582-8440 | 800-329-8387
- 2 VA Puget Sound Health Care System - Seattle Division**
1660 South Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108
206-762-1010 | 800-329-8387

COMMUNITY BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS

- 1 Bellevue CBOC**
13033 Bel-Red Road Ste 210
Bellevue, WA 98005
425-214-1055
- 2 Federal Way CBOC**
34617 11th Place South Ste 301
Federal Way, WA 98003
253-336-4142
- 3 Mount Vernon CBOC**
307 S. 13th St., Ste 200
Mount Vernon, WA 98274
360-848-8500
- 4 North Olympic Peninsula CBOC**
1114 Georgiana St
Port Angeles, WA 98362
360-565-7420
- 5 North Seattle CBOC**
12360 Lake City Way NE, Ste 200
Seattle, WA 98125
206-384-4382
- 6 Silverdale CBOC**
9177 Ridgeway Blvd NW
Silverdale, WA 98383
360-473-0340
- 7 South Sound CBOC**
151 NE Hampe Way
Chehalis, WA 98532
360-748-3049

COMMUNITY RESOURCE AND REFERRAL CENTER

- 1 Seattle (Georgetown Neighborhood)**
305 S. Lucile St.
Seattle, WA 98108
206-764-5149



Modernizing the Electronic Health Record

In 2019, VA Puget Sound made significant progress towards the implementation of our new electronic health record (EHR). VA Puget Sound is an initial operating capability site as part of VA's Electronic Health Record Modernization and began the transition in 2018. Our staff participated in eight national workshops that brought together VA staff from across the country to collaborate and make design decisions about our new EHR. Additionally, almost 500 VA Puget Sound staff participated in local Seattle workshops where they made decisions about local workflows and design.



In preparation for our new EHR, VA Puget Sound also received some technology upgrades including new Windows 10 powered devices and the upgrade of 105 IT closets throughout VA Puget Sound.

As part of the transition to our new EHR, our staff participated in change management activities that educated and empowered them with information and tools they will need as we work towards a successful implementation. These activities included a Capabilities Showcase, which provided demos of the Cerner EHR; Supervisor Launch, which introduced how supervisors will be involved in implementation; and Show and Tells, which provided an in-depth view at service line specific solutions.

This is challenging work, but we know our efforts will improve the way we serve our nation's Veterans as we get closer to providing them with a lifetime of seamless care.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Puget Sound Health Care System



www.PugetSound.VA.gov



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