



THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VA MID-ATLANTIC HEALTH CARE NETWORK (VISN 6) REGIONAL OFFICE
3518 WESTGATE DRIVE,
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27707

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4, 2022

**Dr. Alyshia Smith Appointed Executive Director
of the Durham VA Health Care System**

DURHAM, N.C. – North Carolina native and alumna of UNC School of Nursing, Dr. Alyshia Smith, returns home as the newly appointed Executive Director of the Durham VA Health Care System, effective May 23, 2022.

Since 2019, Dr. Smith has served as the Executive Director for the Phoenix VA Health Care System. During this time, she provided strategic leadership and oversight for an \$850 million operational budget, five major academic affiliations with 166 resident positions, a non-profit research foundation, ten outpatient clinics, and a 166-bed metropolitan hospital with 104 long-term care beds and a 24-bed Rehabilitation Treatment Program.

“Dr. Smith has 33-years of accomplished health care experience that has prepared her to lead one of the largest and fastest-growing health care systems in VA, of which 75,000 Veterans depend on for their health care,” said Paul Crews, Network Director of VA's Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network (VISN 6). “Since 2020, she successfully led 3,600 employees and 110,000 Veterans through five COVID-19 surges in one of the hardest-hit states in the nation. Her knowledge and experience as a health care administrator and a nurse executive will help ensure our operations focus on reliable, safe, and accessible health care for all Veterans.”

“I am privileged and honored to carry on VA's mission in my home state of North Carolina and serve the Veterans, employees, and volunteers of the Durham VA Health Care System,” said Dr. Smith. “I am grateful to have served the Veterans and employees of the Phoenix VA Health Care System, and I am proud of all that we have accomplished together during this incredibly challenging time.”

Ensuring that Veterans remain the core priority has driven all Dr. Smith’s decisions and initiatives. Her priorities have resulted in the highest Veteran Trust Scores Phoenix VA has ever seen, an increase of the Veteran experience overall hospital rating by five percent, and a 12 percent increase in the Best Place to Work score.

During the COVID-19 response at the Phoenix VA, virtual appointment capability increased by 127 percent, and hospital beds were added to care for more Veterans and private citizens when local facilities met their inpatient capacity. Leadership continued prioritizing collaborative partnerships with Arizona’s Indian Health Service to provide critical clinical care, inpatient beds, and protective gear for the devastatingly impacted Native American Veterans and communities of the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe.



THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VA MID-ATLANTIC HEALTH CARE NETWORK (VISN 6) REGIONAL OFFICE
3518 WESTGATE DRIVE,
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27707

In 2020, Vietnam Veterans of America acknowledged Dr. Smith's progress in Phoenix, and she was awarded the Vietnam Veterans of American Achievement Medal.

"I believe, whole-heartedly, we are at our strongest when we keep the voice of the Veteran in front of us," said Dr. Smith. "I have full faith and confidence that the leaders of Phoenix VA Health Care System will continue building on our progress of finding new and innovative ways to provide exceptional health care for the honorable Veterans of Arizona."

Before Dr. Smith was appointed Executive Director of Phoenix VA Health Care System, she was their Associate Director of Patient Care Services from 2015 to 2019, leading 1,350 employees in Nursing, Social Work, Sterile Processing Service, and Chaplain Services. From 2010 to 2015, she was the Deputy Chief Nurse of the Washington DC VA Medical Center.

In June 2019, she held a 90-day assignment as the Acting Deputy Chief Nursing Officer for VA's national program office in Washington, DC. During this time, she provided guidance and leadership to more than 100,000 members of the nursing corp.

As a daughter and a niece of four Vietnam Veterans, service to others has been in Dr. Smith's family legacy, and from a young age, she knew that she wanted to carry on that tradition of service in her life. Before starting with VA in 2010, Dr. Smith made her way through the nursing leadership ranks from 1989 to 2010 at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, a not-for-profit, 912-bed academic and research center and one of the largest and busiest level 1 trauma hospitals in the greater Washington, D.C., metropolitan region.

Dr. Smith holds both a Doctor of Nursing Practice and a Master of Science from the University of Maryland and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has served as clinical faculty with nursing programs at Georgetown University and the University of Maryland. She is board certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center as a Nurse Executive, Advanced, and is an active member of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

For regional queries, please contact Tara Ricks, Communication Director for VA's Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network, at tara.ricks@va.gov. For local queries, please contact, Chris Camacho, Deputy Chief of Public Affairs for Durham VA Health Care System, at Christopher.camacho@va.gov.

###