

MAKE AN IMPACT



*Butler VA
Health Care
System 2022
Annual Report*

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Butler VA Health Care System

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HOW WE MADE A POSITIVE IMPACT IN 2022

So much of our society right now is instant, a quick click, “like,” or swish on our phone. It’s fast and it’s fleeting. Speed can be impressive, and certainly timeliness is important, but what the Butler VA Health Care System strives for is long-lasting, positive and impactful ways to serve and support our nation’s Veterans.

2022 was about making a positive impact in the lives of our Veterans, their families, and caregivers.

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Always a positive response from the Butler VA. Empathy and professional attributes always shown with patience and knowledge. Always a positive experience in total.

- D. Cowin, Army Airborne Veteran

A Letter from the **DIRECTOR**

Many people go their entire lives wondering if they made a difference. Veterans do not have to wonder. Their service and sacrifice **makes an impact**. The Butler VA Health Care System and its mission to **“to fulfill President Lincoln’s promise “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan”** by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s Veterans” **makes an impact**.

The Butler VA’s 2022 Annual Report highlights many accomplishments from an exceptional year—from providing permanent housing to Veterans and offering care closer to home with expanded telehealth programs to adding 10 new community partnerships to improve Veterans’ physical and mental health. I encourage you to read through this year’s Annual Report and learn about the many ways we made a lasting impact in 2022.

Thank you Veterans for trusting us and choosing us for your health care. We appreciate the support and look forward to serving and seeing you at the Butler VA in 2023.

Sharon Coyle

Sharon Coyle
Director

Butler VA’s **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

(From left to right)

Melissa Achtziger

Associate Director for
Patient Care Services

Sharon Coyle

Director

Rebecca Wolfe

Associate Director
for Operations

Dr. Aref Rahman

Chief of Staff



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The Impact of the PACT



This year, the PACT Act was signed into law...the **largest** health care and benefit expansion in VA history. The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act, and it is already making an impact for our Veterans.

The day after the PACT Act was signed into law (August 11), Veterans set an all-time record for filing online disability compensation claims. And to date, VA has already received more than 175,000 PACT Act-related claims from Veterans.

On October 1, VA expanded and extended eligibility for VA health care for certain Veterans of the Gulf Wars and post-9/11 era. This expansion increases health care eligibility for hundreds of thousands of toxic-exposed Veterans. Additionally, VA expanded health care eligibility for certain Veterans of the Vietnam War.

As a part of the PACT Act, VA is providing 5-minute toxic exposure screenings to all Veterans enrolled in VA health care. The Butler VA officially implemented the Toxic Exposure Screening Navigators this year and has **performed 1,674 screenings** since early November.

The Butler VA's Eligibility staff enrolled 358 new Veterans into the Butler VA Health Care System this fiscal year, serving a total of 22,997 Veterans for 2022. With the signing of the PACT Act, the Butler VA plans to serve even more Veterans next year, providing them with the health care they have earned and deserve.

VA encourages Veterans and survivors to apply for PACT Act-related benefits and care. All Veterans and survivors can go to [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT) or call 1-800-MYVA411 to learn more about what this legislation means for them.

During my rather long affiliation with the VA, I have found the organization to be outstanding from every aspect of treatment that I have had the honor to have received.

— William Martin, Air Force Veteran

Implementing New Programs for **VETERANS**

From prescriptions and long-term care to virtual volunteer support and nutrition education, the Butler VA Health Care System implemented new programs for Veterans in 2022. All new programs focused on making a difference for Veterans physically, mentally, and emotionally.



I am thankful for the VA and have many reasons for utilizing them. I completely entrust them for all of my health care needs. Specifically, the pharmacy and their personnel are great. If I have a question or concern, they address it immediately. They do everything possible to ensure my prescriptions are correct and up to date. Also, I always receive my prescriptions by mail, and receive them in a timely manner. They do a great job!

— Lisa Waugaman, Marine Corps Veteran

New COPD Management Program

Veterans are at a higher risk of being diagnosed with COPD, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a group of diseases that cause airflow blockage and breathing-related problems. To better address this disease in local Veterans, the Butler VA implementing a new COPD Management Program this year with all Primary Aligned Care Teams (PACT).

As a result of this new program, PACT Clinical Pharmacy Practitioners can intervene to ensure Veterans receive the best medication for the treatment of COPD, meet guideline directed therapy, and meet treatment goals. *Why does this matter?* It can ultimately improve quality of life, decrease hospitalizations, and decrease morbidity and mortality as it relates to the diagnosis of COPD. Prior to this new program, pharmacy was able to assist 2 Veterans.... that increased to 76 Veterans this year!

Compassionate Contact Corps Initiated

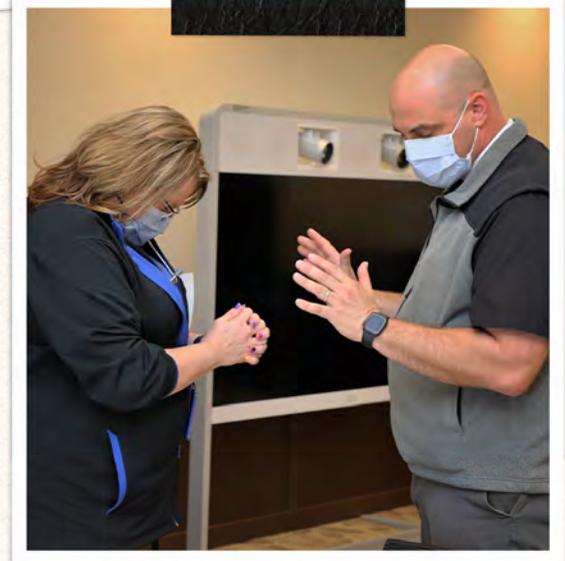
Voluntary Services initiated the Compassionate Contact Corps (CCC) program this year, a virtual visitor program where trained volunteers are matched with Veterans that are experiencing loneliness or are socially isolated.

The volunteer typically calls the Veteran weekly for about 30 minutes to provide socialization and companionship via phone or video calls.

The Butler VA has over 100 active volunteers who provide many important functions throughout the facility and help make our Veterans' visit more enjoyable. Now, we are matching volunteers with Veterans in need to make an impact virtually too. The CCC program currently has three volunteers trained but plans to expand in 2023.

Medical Foster Home Program Launched

In August, the Medical Foster Home (MFH) program was officially launched at the Butler VA Health Care System. The MFH program is a voluntary program that offers safe, long-term care in a homelike setting. MFH is an affordable, comprehensive-care housing alternative for Veterans. All Veterans are visited by the Butler VA's Home-Based Primary Care Team, who provide primary care case management in the foster home. The new program covers a 5-county radius (Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Lawrence, and Mercer counties).



Developed Healthy Teaching Kitchen Classes for Women Veterans

The Butler VA Clinical Nutrition Team showed their cooking skills and provided nutrition education through a Healthy Teaching Kitchen (HTK) throughout 2022. They also developed new classes and series specifically for women Veterans.

A 4-week virtual cooking series was conducted every other month for Women Veterans, which included Highlight Ingredients, One Pot Meals, and Meals in Minutes. Veterans received handouts, recipes, and grocery lists. First time participants even received a gift card to purchase the ingredients. In the summer months, Women Veterans were able to take food production from seed to plate in multiple formats.



Utilizing a garden at the Butler campus, Veterans learned to grow, harvest and cook the produce when it was ripe. Veterans who lived a distance were able to virtually participate in a container gardening group. Plant potters, soil, and plants were provided and used for the monthly education piece, in which Veterans provided updates on their container garden growth. Once produce was ready for use, the Women Veterans conducted virtual Healthy Teaching Kitchen classes utilizing their fresh herbs, tomatoes and cucumbers to make refrigerator pickles, salsa, and pesto.

A Whole Health Approach to Diabetes

The diabetic education class was completely redesigned in 2022. The focus shifted from ‘what’s the matter with you’ to ‘what matters TO you.’ This change allowed the class to go beyond the diagnosis of diabetes and launch the conversation with Veterans: What do you want your health for? A Whole Health cooking demonstration was added, as well as a mindful eating practice.

Since the revamped class kicked off, 37 Veterans have participated. A new, quarterly evening class was also added to better accommodate Veterans’ schedules.

Several Veterans chose to participate in Whole Health Coaching along with the class and the results were outstanding. One Veteran’s A1C started at 9.2, and after the class and coaching is now 6.6. Another Veteran lost over 28 pounds during the course of the class and working with a Whole Health coach.

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Cultivating Community

PARTNERSHIPS

The Butler VA Health Care System has 12 Veteran Community Partnerships, 10 new for 2022. Veteran Community Partnerships (VCPs) are organized partnerships that bring together VA staff and community organizations to build relationships, exchange information, educate each other and the public on resources available to Veterans and collaborate to reduce barriers that impede Veteran's access to care or services.



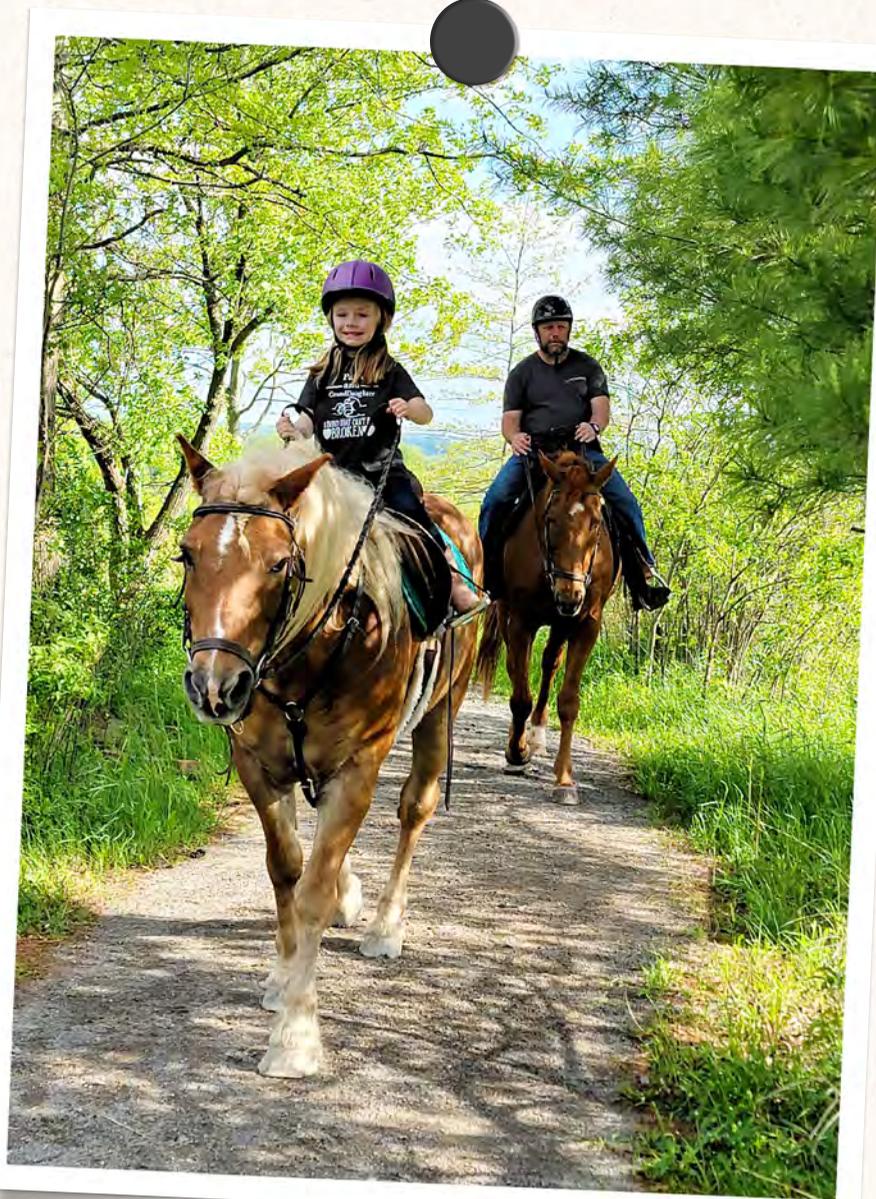
Whole Health at the Butler VA has helped me reintroduce activities that I had lost interest in for several years due to anxiety and depression. I have been given opportunities to meet and converse with peers that have had similar experiences and interests as myself, which made me feel normal again and not like an outcast.

*— Tiffany Howes,
Navy Veteran and local first place winner
for the 2022 Creative Arts Festival*

Kira Hillyard, U.S. Air Force Veteran, participates in equine therapy thanks to a partnership with Heavenly Gaits Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc. Without riding, she isn't sure where she would be now.

Kira was medically discharged from the Air Force with PTSD, depression, anxiety, and joint issues and torn muscles. After moving back in with her family and getting help from VA, things were slowly getting better... until she experienced more loss in her life. Kira felt lost until she learned about the Veterans program at Heavenly Gaits.

"I went from being nearly non-verbal, a-social, untrusting of anyone that wasn't family, or I didn't already know, to opening up and regaining my self-confidence," Kira shared. "I began to socialize more and was able to get a job at a local company and made many friends there. I don't know where I would be without that opportunity, but I'm glad I'm here now."



Community collaboration is essential to effectively meet the needs of Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. Through partnerships, the Butler VA is working to better support Veterans and their families. In addition to the equine therapy partnerships (4 total), the Butler VA partners with YMCAs for health and wellness classes, a local art studio, music programs, and more.

Thanks to the ongoing partnership with Steele's Brushes and Ceramics (as well as many volunteers), the Butler VA was able to host 20 free Creative Arts workshops in 2022. In addition to the health benefits of creative arts, Veterans were also encouraged to use these workshops as a starting point for creating submissions for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Held in August, the Butler VA's local creative arts competition yielded 52 art submissions, with 35 first-place winners moving on to the national competition.

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Housing Veterans and their **FAMILIES**

The Butler VA's homeless team was a part of a national challenge to house 38,000 Veterans in 2022, and we exceeded our target by 128%. **105 local Veterans and their families were welcomed into permanent housing this year.**

The Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program made a significant impact for our female Veterans this year—providing 1,909 bed days of care for homeless female Veterans in transitional housing programs as well as 623 bed days of care for the minor children of female Veterans in transitional housing. The HCHV team at the Butler VA had over 250 referrals triaged through the year, ultimately meeting Veterans in a housing crisis where they were in the moment and developing a plan for permanent housing with each and every one.



10. FILM400H

CAM100H 144

MEMORIES 007-413

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MEMORIES 007-413

10. FILM400H

The VA saved my life and got me turned around mentally from the residual memories of the Vietnam War. I still have daily maintenance to tend to in my mind but with the help I've received, I now know that I can overcome the never-ending dark clouds of depression, anxiety, and memories of war that continue to pay their visits. I'll be forever grateful. Love my VA! So many great people!

— Mike Kirsch, Vietnam Veteran

Veterans enrolled in the Butler VA's homeless program may be eligible for transportation now thanks to a new program called Rideshare. The national program rolled out in 2021, but it did not work well in the rural Butler VA community. Butler VA's Homeless Team approached the national VA team with their concerns and were given permission to research (and then implement) a program with a local agency. In fiscal year 2022, a contract was secured with Alliance for Nonprofit Resources (ANR) – the first VA facility in our region to set up a contract with another entity besides Uber/Lyft.

In fiscal year 2022, over 649 rides were provided with the new program. It has received positive feedback from both Butler VA homeless case managers and Veterans, including Robert Persin, U.S. Army Veteran. Persin now owns a car and does not need the program, but at the time it was extremely helpful for him.

“It was a godsend,” said Persin. “I was able to get to work and back home and didn’t have to walk in the rain.”



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The Value of **TIME**

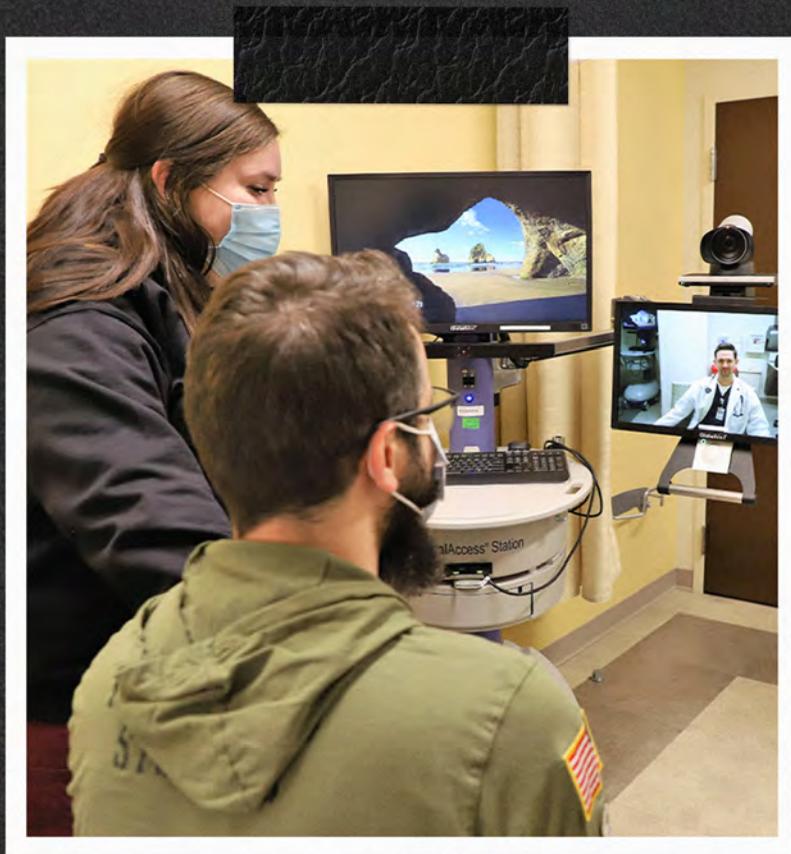
Time is perhaps the most valuable resource because it is not something you can get back. The Butler VA understands the impact time makes on a person's day, week, and year. We strive daily to provide quality and **timely** health care to America's Veterans and their families.

New and Expanded Services

By providing health care closer to home, and sometimes in the home (telehealth), the Butler VA has reduced or eliminated travel for Veterans, saving them time and money.

In 2022, the Connected Care Department initiated two new programs: a Rheumatology Hub and Diabetes Care Network. Neither of these services were previously available at the Butler VA, but now save Veterans a trip to the Pittsburgh VA. The department also introduced a new Virtual Health Resource Center through a hotline offering direct access to Telehealth Clinical Technicians for Veterans to provide troubleshooting and education.

The Specialty Care Department hired a dedicated Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner in 2022 to expand access to both Urology and Cardiology services for Veterans. Additionally, a full-time Gynecology Provider was hired to provide local gynecological services for women Veterans. This also resulted in enhanced maternity care services and new local services, such as pelvic floor therapy.



I recently moved across the state and established care at Butler. I could not be more pleased. Everyone is so pleasant, respectful, timely, and helpful. That is what I fought for. A country where we appreciate one another. Thank you.

— Ed Zilinski, U.S. Army 1967-70

For the first time in the history of the Butler VA Health Care System, the dental team restored two dental implants. This new advancement provides a great, new service to Veterans in their dental health with less travel.

More Time and Support for Caregivers

VA expanded the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) to include caregivers of eligible Veterans of all service eras. Previously, PCAFC was only available to eligible Veterans who served on or after September 11, 2001.

PCAFC provides specialized services to caregivers. For example, at least 30 days of respite care per year is provided. Respite allows someone else to care for the Veteran while the caregiver takes time for themselves.

Caregivers are heroes who often sacrifice their own time and needs to those they are caring for. This expansion helps VA ease some of that burden by offering a range of services and support so they can take care of themselves while still caring for their loved one.

Smartphone Convenience

The Butler VA allows Veterans to check-in for their appointments in-person, but to save time, smartphone check-in was implemented this summer. The new mobile check-in process replaces the kiosks and can save Veterans some time with just a few simple steps.

The Butler VA was also the first in our region to pilot a new VeText cancellation program. It was initiated in Behavioral Health in April, and then in Primary Care in July. This successful new program resulted in 117 Veterans switching their visits to virtual instead of canceling all together.

The Pharmacy at the Butler VA started two new text messaging services as well: AudioRxReady and AudioRenewal. RxReady sends a text message to a Veteran 15 minutes after a Window pickup prescription is verified by a pharmacist. AudioRenewal sends a text message to Veterans 15 days prior to any active medication needing to be refilled. In fiscal year 2022, over 13,000 AudioRxReady texts were sent, and over 6,000 AudioRenewal messages sent.



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The People Make the **DIFFERENCE**

Having a dedicated, supportive, and hardworking team available to serve Veterans when and where they need care is important. After all, it's the people who truly make an impact.

New Executive Leadership Team

Effective March 2022, **Sharon Coyle** was appointed as the new executive director of the Butler VA Health Care System. "I have been a committed team member at the Butler VA for the past 15 years. I love our mission and the Veterans we serve. I am humbled to serve those who have served—there is no greater mission," said Coyle.

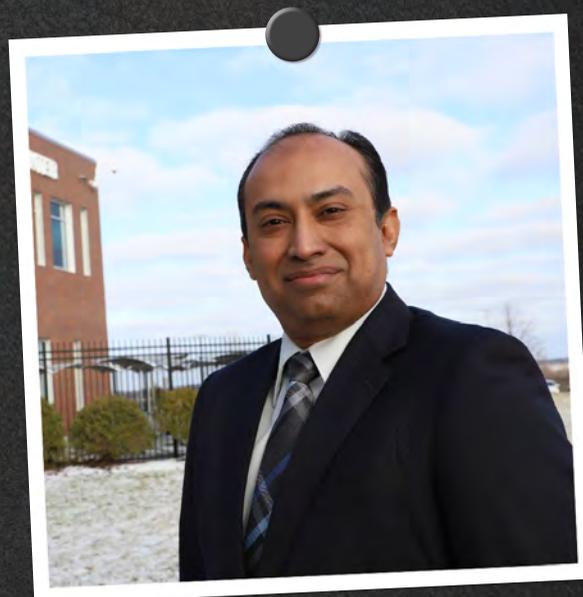


Ms. Coyle previously served as the Interim Executive Director as well as the Associate Director of Patient Care Services at the Butler VA. She served as the Nurse Executive since 2007, having direct supervisory responsibility for multiple clinical programs including the 60 bed Community Living Center. In addition, she maintained clinical oversight for nursing practice throughout the facility.



Melissa Ahtziger was appointed to serve as the Associate Director for Patient Care Services for the Butler VA this July. She came to the Butler VA Health Care System as an RN Care Manager in 2010, and in 2011 took the role of Associate Chief Nurse of Ambulatory Care. She began her VA career in 2001 as a staff RN at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. She served in multiple positions during her VA career at VA Pittsburgh—staff RN, clinical manager, and nurse manager.

In September 2022, **Dr. Aref Rahman** was appointed to serve as Chief of Staff at the Butler VA. Dr. Rahman previously served as Director of VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System's Cardiac Cath Lab and Medical Director of its Clinical Trials Center. He has also previously served as Acting Chief of Staff at the Butler VA. His specialties include internal medicine, cardiovascular disease, interventional cardiology, and peripheral vascular disease. Dr. Rahman joined VA in 2009 and brings 13 years of clinical experience to the Veterans of Western Pennsylvania.



More Staff to Support Mental Health

A new Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinator (CEPC) was hired this year to support the Suicide Prevention Program. In addition to participating in three successful community Stand Downs in Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties, this individual also distributed 575 gunlocks.

RISK ID Champions were implemented in all service lines this year to provide direct care and proactive screening for suicide in an effort to get Veterans the appropriate level of care in a timely manner and ultimately decrease any attempts.

Additionally, mental health social workers were added to the Butler VA's Community-Based Outpatient Clinics to expand face-to-face access to mental health programs and services this year.

Post 9/11 Military 2VA (M2VA) Program Sets up New Team

The M2VA staff were tasked to roll out the national Care Coordination & Intensive Case Management (CC&ICM) process at Butler VA. CC&ICM is a holistic approach to Veteran care coordination with goals to improve patient experience by reducing fragmentation and duplication of services. At the Butler VA, this process will work to identify those Veterans who have complex needs and are frequently utilizing Emergency Departments and will be connecting them with a Lead Coordinator to help streamline communication, coordinate care and collaborate across the system to improve the Veteran's overall health and wellness. A CC&ICM workgroup was created in August of 2022 and will continue to work together to develop an education and implementation plan in FY 2023.

New Staff to Support Veterans' Health and Wellness

The Butler VA's Whole Health program added a new, dedicated Whole Health Manager and a Nationally Certified (with the National Board for Health and Wellness) Whole Health Coach. Whole Health supports Veterans' health and well-being. It centers around **what matters to you**, not what is the matter with you.

The Butler VA also welcomed two new Patient Advocates to better assist Veterans. Patient Advocates are available to listen to Veteran compliments, concerns, suggestions, and answer questions. Each department at the Butler VA also has a Service Level Advocate (SLA) that is the first line for inquiries and issue resolution.

Everyone, and I mean everyone associated with the Abie Abraham VA Clinic are the best and most helpful and respectful people we have ever dealt with.

*- John (Jack) Lyons, U.S. Army,
Vietnam 1965-66*

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A Lasting IMPACT

Each November, the country sets aside a day to pay tribute to and thank all Veterans for their service. But that's what the Butler VA Health Care System does every day. This year a new piece of artwork was installed on our campus to serve as a lasting reminder of the lives and sacrifices of all Veterans.

Clarence Hasenflu, better known as Pistol Pete, was the inspiration behind this artwork. One night, Clarence thought about everything the VA had done for him over the past 20 years and wanted to do something in return. He wanted to honor his fellow Veterans.

Clarence joined the U.S. Marine Corps when he turned 18 in 1954. He served as an armor and battalion prison chaser. He was honorably discharged in 1957 at the rank of Corporal.

“Some people can go their whole life wondering if they made a difference. Marines don't have that problem,” said Hasenflu. ***“We also think about things, and then do them.”***

And that's exactly what Pistol Pete did – he had a vision to honor Veterans, and he made it a reality. Our Veterans ***make an impact.***



I am continually amazed by the quality of the service and the quality of the people associated with the VA. I am without a doubt blessed. I have nothing but gratitude for the care that has been made available to me.

— Tim Shick, Marine Corps Veteran

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Clarence worked with Swartfager Welding in Knoxville to make his vision come to life—a piece of artwork that would honor all Veterans. Specifically, he wanted an image of the iconic flag being raised on Mount Suribachi by six Marines. Swartfager donated the time, all material, and the final piece to the Butler VA Health Care System.

Right beside the depiction of the flag raising (which includes an actual flag) is this inscription:

In memory of the life and service of Abie Abraham.

This memorial is dedicated to all Veterans, of all branches, who served this great nation with honor and pride during times of war or when at peace. From the Revolutionary War to today, brave men and women have answered the call to defend our country against our greatest enemies and to preserve the liberties for which this country was founded.

Thank you Veterans, past, present, and future, for your service and sacrifice.



On October 25, 2022, the final metal artwork piece (weighing 750 pounds) was officially dedicated on the Butler VA's New Castle Road campus.

Making an Impact **EACH MONTH**

The impact Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) has had on me is vast and changed parts of my life I never thought it would or imagined it could. My personal relationships have improved in almost every aspect. VTC has improved my mental clarity and stability as well.

— Veterans Treatment Court Graduate 2022

January

5-County Coverage for Veterans Treatment Courts

The Butler VA's Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) program worked with Lawrence County on the development of a Veterans Track as part of their already established treatment court. It was officially established in January 2022. This addition means treatment court options for justice-involved Veterans are now available in all five of the counties the Butler VA serves.



February

Educating about Heart Health

For American Heart Month in February, the Butler VA held a special women Veteran's event at Steele's Brushes & Ceramics (a community partner). Women created art while meeting new women Veterans and learning about the many heart health and wellness programs available to them at the Butler VA.

A special "Go Red for Women" Day was also celebrated. Veterans were educated on ways to be heart healthy and shared their reasons on why they choose to Go Red.



March

Honoring Vietnam Veterans

The Butler VA, along with members of the Daughters of the American

Revolution (DAR)-Butler Chapter presented lapel pins to Vietnam Veterans at the Abie Abraham VA Health Care Center as part of the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration.

The Butler VA is one of the more than 11,000 commemorative partners throughout the nation that conducts events to recognize Vietnam Veterans and their families. While Vietnam War Veterans Day is March 29, events occur throughout the year.



April

Modernizing the VA Campus

The Butler VA's Engineering Department works behind the scenes year-round to ensure the campus and facilities are safe, comfortable, and up-to-date. In April, the iconic 143-foot water tower (built in 1944) located at the New Castle Road campus was dismantled. The water tower was used to store potable water and maintain water pressure on the campus. Infrastructure improvements over the years made the need for the water tower obsolete. The tower was safely taken down in one day.





May

Over \$2,500 for Homeless Veterans

The Butler VA held its 12th annual VA2K Walk & Roll event in May with goals of moving the body in support of whole health and well-being, while also helping homeless Veterans. This year the Butler VA raised a total of \$2,567 (monetary and good donations) to support local homeless Veterans. Since 2011, more than \$2.7 million in donations have been raised nationally to help homeless Veterans from this annual event.

June

New Ambulance to Meet Veteran Needs

Butler VA's Fire and Emergency Services held a "Push-in" and Blessing of the Helmets ceremony to officially place a new ambulance into service. The new ambulance was designed and built to meet the needs of our local Veterans and community.

The "Push-in" ceremony dates back more than 100 years and honors the history and traditions of fire service and their commitment to serving the community in which they reside. Butler VA's Fire & Emergency Services operates a basic life support ambulance and responds to over 500 medical emergencies each year.



July

Veteran-led Writing Group Kicks Off

Army Veteran Rich Riley experienced the difference Whole Health makes after participating in several Whole Health offerings. As a result, he began a new Veteran's writing group called 'Pen & Pencil' at the Butler VA this July. Creative arts, like writing, is a great way to feel good and improve your mental health. "Being creative is part of feeling good about yourself and your mental well-being. It's a way of being able to work through your problems in your life.

I want to get the word out—come be a part of our group! It's a supportive group, and a great way to put down in words how you are feeling."

August

Caregiver and Family Resource Fair

The Butler VA's Caregiver Support Program hosted its 3rd Annual Caregiver and Family Resource Fair aimed at increasing awareness about the many services and supports available to caregivers and families. In addition to 17 resource tables, workshops such as live cooking demonstrations, CPR for Caregivers, Whole Health wellness, and more were held. The team also held a special Caregiver Tea in the fall for National Family Caregivers Month.



September

Suicide Prevention Month

The Butler VA's Suicide Prevention Team presented at multiple community events throughout September to spread the word about available resources and programs available to Veterans. Some key outreach events included: Teaching courses at Butler County Community College on Suicide Prevention and Lethal Means safety, presenting on S.A.V.E. Training and Lethal Means Safety at the annual International Nurses Society of Addictions Conference, and hosting an informational booth at the Kevin Hine's Talk (suicide survivor).

In addition to participating in special events throughout Suicide Prevention Month, the Butler VA offers assistance for Veterans all year round. And the Veterans Crisis Line provides support 24/7/365 with a new number as of July: **Dial 988, then Press 1.**

October

Intimate Partner Violence Program promotes Relationship Health

Educating staff, Veterans, and families on the importance of relationship health was the focus of this year's Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention Month in October. The Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Program had informational tables throughout the building to share key resources and offer support.

Throughout the year, the IPV program implemented new trainings and hosted its first White Ribbon Challenge. It focused on education and making a pledge to end sexual harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence against all who work, visit or receive care at VA.

November

VA Deputy Secretary visits Butler

A week-long, nationwide Onboarding Surge Event (OSE) was held in November, a fast tracking of selectees' onboarding experience by coordinating all required pre-employment actions into a single-day event. Every VA facility across the nation participated. At the end of the week, each regional office (VISN) held an in-person after action review and participated in the national OSE celebration. Butler VA hosted Deputy Secretary Donald Remy, VISN 4 Network Director Timothy Leizert and VISN 4 medical center leadership and human resource staff to visit with staff and celebrate the accomplishments of the week. Outcomes from the event will enable the VA to put lessons learned into action to improve efficiency of the hiring process.

December

Veteran Portrait Project Completed

The Veteran Portrait Project, a year-long project collaboration between the Butler VA and The Art Center in Butler, PA wrapped up at the end of the year. Butler VA Veteran Volunteer and The Art Center representative, Terry Hagen, initiated the idea for his project. Together with the Butler VA's Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Program Manager, they organized artists for 25 Veteran portraits to be completed over the course of a year. The portraits were displayed at The Art Center in November with a special reception for Veterans on Veteran's Day.

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Not Just Numbers

FACILITY RECOGNITIONS, ACCREDITATIONS, AND STATISTICS

The Butler VA Health Care System finished out the year with the **highest overall trust rating in the nation**, with a score of 95.5% (VSignals online survey platform). This score is not just a number to us. It's confirmation that we made an impact for our Veterans this year, and we will continue doing so in the years to come.

Recognitions

1. 5-Star Rating for the Sergeant Joseph George Kusick Community Living Center on VA's Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) Report
2. Outstanding Facility Performance (100%)
Butler also achieved excellence in quality and performance related metrics, including:
 - **#1** in the Nation on Overall Provider Rating
 - **#1** in the Nation on Primary Care Mental Health Care Coordination
 - **#1** in the Nation on Cardiovascular Risk Management
 - **#2** in the Nation on Primary Care Average Wait Time for New Patients
 - **#2** in the Nation on Primary Care Average Wait Time for Established Patients
 - **#3** in the Nation on Primary Care Mental Health Survey Access
3. Connected Care Department received national recognition for: Recognition as Innovators in Connected Care for development and implementation of bi-annual refresh classes with providers in our facility, and recognition in home telehealth as Leaders in Connected Care for Behavioral Health Laboratory-Touch pilot and a peer review process

ANY time I have had the need for care from the Butler VA, I have been treated with a high amount of dignity and respect. All services from the people there have been above and beyond. I drive over an hour to use THAT FACILITY mainly because it has always been fast and reliable and has my trust.

— Eddie Robinson, Army Veteran



4. Department of Quality and Patient Safety won 1st place in the 2022 VISN 4 Quality Showcase.
5. **Andrew Gryskewicz** received a 2022 Gold Excellence in Government Award in the **Outstanding Administrative Employee** category and Louella Anne McKee received a 2022 Bronze EIG Award in the Outstanding Service to the Public category from the Pittsburgh Federal Executive Board

Accreditations

- American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Accreditation was achieved for the Butler VA Health Care Postgraduate Year One (PGY1) Pharmacy Residency Program
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) completed their triennial survey with zero (0) findings in the five (5) programs reviewed

STATISTICS

- ★ **Employees: 752**
- ★ **Employees who are Veterans: 213**
- ★ **Volunteers: 106 (active)**
- ★ **Volunteer hours: 11,429**
- ★ **Donations: \$96,356.64**
- ★ **Veterans Served: 22,997**
- ★ **Veteran Outpatient Visits: 199,048**
- ★ **Visits completed via Telehealth: 21,528**
- ★ **Operating Budget: \$191,550,172.00**
- ★ **Operating Beds: 126**

MAKE AN IMPACT



ABOUT US

The Butler VA Health Care System, located in Butler County, Pennsylvania has been attending to Veteran's total care since 1947. We are the health care choice for over 22,000 Veterans throughout Western Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio and are a member of VA Healthcare VISN 4 under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Butler VA provides comprehensive Veteran care including primary, specialty, and mental health care — as well as management of chronic conditions and social support services to our nation's Veterans. We proudly serve America's Veterans at our main campus on North Duffy Road, our facilities on New Castle Road, as well as at our five Primary Care VA Outpatient Clinics in Armstrong, Southern Butler County (Cranberry Township), Clarion, Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

ADDRESS

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Butler VA Health Care System