



# **FIGHTING** for our **VETERANS**

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
Fiscal Year 2022

**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System



*Clockwise from front left: Prachi Asher, Ali Sonel, Kaneen Allen, Brooke Decker, Alan Petrazzi, Donald Koenig and Brenda Shaffer.*

**You fought for us. Now, we fight for you.** Taking their cue from VA Secretary Denis McDonough who pledged to “fight like hell” for Veterans, **our Executive Leadership Team is committed to fighting for Veterans, their families and caregivers.**

“I fight for Veterans by ensuring an inclusive, welcoming culture of professionals sustaining a high reliability organization mindset for safe, optimal care with a great experience.”

**Donald Koenig | Director**

“I fight for Veterans by ensuring our VA Pittsburgh team has the tools and resources necessary to deliver great care, each and every time.” **Prachi Asher, FACHE | Deputy Director**

“I fight every day for our Veterans — regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation and preferences — to be able to access, receive and benefit from the highest quality health care available, and to ensure they are satisfied with their care.” **Ali F. Sonel, MD | Chief of Staff**

“Although I may not fully understand the sacrifices that Veterans like my son and son-in-law have made, I do know that I will keep fighting for Veterans for their commitment to ensure our freedom.” **Brenda Shaffer DNP, RN-BC, NE-BC | Associate Director Patient Care Services**

“I fight for Veterans by being present and available to actively listen to their concerns, whether they are Veteran patients or Veteran employees. Acting on Veterans’ concerns, along with ensuring staff in our service lines and departments have the tools they need for success, is essential to our clinical providers’ ability to deliver top-notch care.” **Kaneen Allen, MHA, DHCE | Associate Director**

“I fight for Veterans by expanding clinical care to rural areas where Veterans can receive a range of specialty care closer to home.” **Alan Petrazzi, MPT, MPM, FACHE | Assistant Director**

“I care about health care quality, fixing problems the first time, and fighting for Veterans to make the health care we provide exceptional. I fight for Veterans by chasing perfection and in continuing to strive, grow and attain excellence in everything I do.” **Brooke Decker, MD | Deputy Chief of Staff**



# VITAL STATISTICS

Totals for FY22 (Oct. 1, 2021-Sept. 30, 2022)



## BUDGET

### **\$822.7 Million Allocation**

- » \$689.2M Medical
- » \$69M Facilities
- » \$64.5M Administrative

### **\$104.4M Community Care**

*(paid to non-VA providers for Veterans' care)*

### **\$31.3 Million Dedicated Collections**

*(revenue from third party private insurance, patient copays, etc.)*



## HOSPITAL CAPACITY

### **500 Patient Beds**

#### **UNIVERSITY DRIVE**

- » 87 Medicine
- » 78 Psychiatry
- » 59 Surgical

#### **H.J. HEINZ III**

- » 188 Community Living Center
- » 88 Veterans Recovery Center



## PATIENTS SERVED

### **84,910 Unique Patients**

- » 74,516 Men
- » 10,393 Women

### **7,095 Admissions**

### **753,245 Outpatient Visits**

### **5,895 Surgeries**

- » 29 Kidney transplants  
*(10 living donors)*
- » 24 Liver transplants



## NETWORK OF CARE

### **2 Medical Centers**

- » University Drive (Oakland)
- » H.J. Heinz III (O'Hara Township)

### **5 Outpatient Clinics**

- » Beaver, Fayette, Washington, Westmoreland counties in PA; Belmont county, OH



## WOMEN'S HEALTH

### **89,128 Women Veteran**

### **Appointments**

- » 824 Mammograms
- » 54 Expecting moms received maternity care

### **265 Newly Enrolled Women Veterans**



## VOLUNTEERS

### **239 Volunteers**

### **27,661 Volunteer Hours**

### **\$464,020 in Donations**

*Money, goods and services*



## TELEHEALTH

### **89,247 Telehealth Encounters**

### **57,739 Telemental Health Encounters**

### **80,540 VA Video Connect Appointments**

### **103,817 Specialty Telehealth Encounters**



## RESEARCH

### **\$15.5 Million Funding**

### **133 Investigators**

### **373 Projects**



## EMPLOYEES

### **4,395 Employees**

- » 1,084 Nurses
- » 313 Physicians

### **1,126 Veterans**

*25% of all VAPHS employees*

### **226 Academic Affiliations**

# EXPANDING WHOLE HEALTH INITIATIVES



## Housing Homeless Veterans

### *Exceeding Goals*

**A**fter two years of pandemic shutdowns, our Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program faced numerous challenges in getting Veterans into housing. Our biggest issues, according to VAPHS HCHV Program Coordinator Mary Frances Pilarski, was lining up landlords and transportation.

But we met the challenge by meeting — and then exceeding — our goals.

VA in 2022 set a national goal of finding permanent housing for 38,000 Veterans. Our goal as part of that initiative was to place 224 Veterans using programs such as Grant and Per Diem (GPD) transitional housing, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) permanent housing, and Supporting Services for Veterans/Families (SSVF) for the Pittsburgh region.

By the third quarter of 2022, we had met our initial goal. By the end of the calendar year, we surpassed

it by 33 percent. In all, we used VA's GPD, HUD-VASH and SSVF programs to place 298 homeless Veterans in permanent housing.

Nationally, the total number of Veterans experiencing homelessness has decreased by 11% since January 2020. In total, the estimated number of Veterans experiencing homelessness in America has declined by 55.3% since 2010.



VAPHS staff helped  
**298 homeless Veterans  
find permanent housing**

*VAPHS Health Care for Homeless Veteran (HCHV) staff who participated in the October 2022 Stand Down Pittsburgh event in the city's Strip District included Ashley Reckner, left, Ombrea Askew, Todd Hryckowian, Sean Tyler and HCHV Program Coordinator Mary Frances Pilarski. Not shown are participants Becky Vozar, Rich Pirozzi and Desiree Cokel.*



VAPHS since 2013 has earned the **highest Healthcare Equality Index rating** possible for federal facilities.



### What is Whole Health?

VA's Whole Health Program empowers and equips Veterans to take charge of their health and live life to the fullest by focusing on their personal values, aspirations and health and well-being goals.



Pittsburgh VA has helped me in all aspects of my health care. Whether it be physical health or mental health, they have had the resources to help me. I would recommend them to anyone. Thank you.”

**Veteran's Compliments on VAPHS Care**



## Long COVID Clinic Established

### *Treats Debilitating Post-COVID Symptoms*

We established a multi-specialty clinic to treat Veterans with long COVID, a condition in which debilitating symptoms linger after infection has passed. Ten to 30 percent of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 report new, returning or worsened symptoms known as post-COVID conditions. They include sleep loss, heart and lung issues, and trouble with mental processes such as thinking, learning, problem-solving and memory.

The clinic's multidisciplinary team includes physicians, psychologists, nurses, physical therapists, social workers, researchers and hearing and speech specialists who address Veterans' psychological, physical and mental health needs. The team also gathers information on post-COVID conditions for research.

*Clinic staff include Dr. Anjali Das, front, left, Dr. Erika Hoffman and Lisa Reinhardt. In back, from left, Christine Matthews, Lynn Baniak, Kimberly Eichhorn, Eric Dykstra, Jonna Morris and Austin Brown.*



## Reducing CHF Readmissions

Veterans who are hospitalized with congestive heart failure (CHF) are now less likely to return to us within 30 days of discharge for inpatient treatment. We made improvements in 2022 in patient and staff education, required scheduling of all CHF follow-up appointments within 14 days of discharge, and created policies mandating home-telehealth and outpatient CHF consults.

The changes saw the percentage of unadjusted CHF readmissions drop from 20.37% in fiscal year 2019 to just 9.52% in fiscal year 2022.



# IMPROVING THE VETERAN EXPERIENCE



## New Observatory Opens the Galaxies to Our Veterans

**O**ur H.J. Heinz III campus now houses the first observatory for Veterans at a VA medical center.

We dedicated the observatory during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Oct. 14. Its telescope features two cameras, an autofocus feature and a remote-controlled base. It is preprogrammed with the locations of over 200,000 stars. Volunteers assist Veterans in the telescope's use and operation.

The observatory is compliments of Astronomy for Disabled Veterans, a combined effort by the Western Pennsylvania Knights of Columbus, the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh (AAAP) and Carnegie Mellon University. Over 400 Knights of Columbus members from 28 Western Pennsylvania councils and assemblies raised \$31,000 to build the observatory. The AAAP donated materials and provided training.



*TOP: Jim Fisher of the Knights of Columbus Assembly #9054 leads the Pledge of Allegiance at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.*

*BOTTOM: Rich Dollish of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh demonstrates the telescope's features.*



## Goggles Help Diagnose Dizziness

Diagnosing dizziness in patients can be difficult when the problem doesn't happen in the doctor's office. In 2022, our clinicians began to test take-home goggles their patients can put on when a dizzy spell happens.

Created by a neurologist at VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System, the prototype goggles record the eye movements needed to establish a cause for dizziness. Patients don the goggles at the start of a dizzy spell. The goggles record and save up to 10 minutes of their eye movements. VA Pittsburgh providers later download the recordings to identify a cause for each patient's dizziness.

The trial will help determine whether the goggles will work on a larger scale, to the benefit of the 7 million people in the U.S. affected with episodic dizziness.

*Neurologist Islam Zaydan of VA Pittsburgh demonstrates innovative goggles designed to capture eye movements during a dizzy spell. Clinicians can study the recordings to diagnose the cause of a patient's dizziness.*



## Improving Diabetes Care

In 2022, VHA's Office of Health Equity awarded \$100,000 to Dr. Archana Bandi to further her ELEGANT-DM2 collaborative approach to diabetes care aimed at eliminating disparity.

Endocrinologists, clinical pharmacists and primary care providers work together to proactively implement effective therapies without separate referrals to specialists. Bandi works to ensure providers consider newer diabetes medications in a timely manner to preserve kidney function, help with weight loss, and better manage congestive heart failure, all commonly seen with diabetes.



The ER and step down unit were amazing. They showed genuine care and concern for me. Went above what was needed at times. The transplant team has been beyond helpful before and after the surgery. The one nurse that took me into surgery was a blessing to have in there."

## Veteran's Compliments on VAPHS Care



**93%**  
**TRUST SCORE**

VAPHS patients surveyed trust us to fulfill our nation's commitment to Veterans.



## Laser-Based Device Finds Veins

We adopted a vein-visualization device in our Community Living Center that uses near-infrared technology to help clinicians see Veterans' veins when drawing blood. The laser-based device identifies a vein's location if it cannot be seen or felt. It allows us to draw blood on the first try, reducing the number of needle sticks and improving the Veteran's experience.



# RESEARCH AND INNOVATION



## Changing Maternity Care for Women Veterans

*Study aims to improve pregnancy outcomes*

**T**he Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion (CHERP) on our University Drive campus is using data from a CHERP pilot study to identify ways to improve the health of women Veterans before pregnancy.

The pilot study of more than 31,000 pregnancies found a high rate of short- and long-term pregnancy-related complications among women Veterans nationwide who used VA maternity benefits between fiscal years 2010 and 2017. It found that Black Veterans had higher odds than their white peers of serious complications during pregnancy or within a year of the end of pregnancy.

Previous research suggests more than 60% of pregnancy-related deaths and near deaths are preventable. The key may be improving women's health before pregnancy. Women Veterans have high rates of chronic medical and mental health conditions, and many fall into vulnerable groups at

a greater risk for pregnancy-related complications. Forty-eight percent identify as non-white, and 25% live in rural areas.

Dr. Deirdre Quinn, a CHERP core investigator who has a doctorate in family science, in 2022 expanded the pilot study to gather numerical data on possible pre-pregnancy health risks and the connection between vulnerable groups and adverse maternal outcomes.



### IMPROVING MATERNAL OUTCOMES

VAPHS resources to improve maternal outcomes include our Reproductive Health Clinic offering preconception counseling and pregnancy services. In 2022, the clinic implemented an emergency protocol to lower complications to mother and baby from severe maternal hypertension, or high blood pressure during pregnancy.





## VHA Innovation Ecosystem SNAPSHOT

6  
YEARS

**Spark-Seed-Spread  
Investors**



### **Two VA Shark Tank Winners**

VHA's Shark Tank Competition spotlights staff-developed promising practices and provides a platform for sharing the innovations throughout the VA health care system (see pages 11 and 13).



### **Expanding Our Telehealth Reach**

Dr. Lynn Baniak, an associate chief nurse for research who has a doctorate in nursing science, developed patient-centered training to improve telehealth-visit usage among Veterans. Through her Learning Information Network Connection Tools (LINCT) project, Baniak and her team spoke to Veterans to understand what would make a successful telehealth visit. Using what they learned, they developed the training for staff and Veterans. Future plans include providing the training at Vet Centers and in rural communities.



My hospital stay was an awesome experience. It went above and beyond what I expected. The staff and doctors were very helpful and very personable. Everything was well done."

**Veteran's Compliments on VAPHS Care**



## **Looking for Cancer with a Blood Draw**

*Pilot program aims for early detection*

We began piloting a new cancer-screening tool in 2022 that requires only a simple blood draw for testing.

VA and the Veterans Health Foundation partnered with GRAIL, LLC, to provide Veterans access to GRAIL's groundbreaking Galleri multi-cancer early detection (MCED) blood test. GRAIL has made its MCED test available to 10,000 Veterans across approximately 10 sites, starting here at VA Pittsburgh.

We offer the blood-screening tests as part of the REFLECTION clinical real-world evidence study. The study will review if Galleri, along with other standard cancer screenings, can find cancers at an early stage when treatment is most likely to be successful.

In fiscal year 2022, we provided the test to 27 Veterans.



## **VA Post-Surgery Outcomes Better Than Private Sector**

A Department of Veterans Affairs study that included VA Pittsburgh data found that Veterans who undergo non-cardiac surgery at VA hospitals have a 40% lower adjusted risk of 30-day mortality than in the private sector. For frail and very frail patients, the risk of death within 30 days of surgery was even lower.

Senior author Dr. Daniel E. Hall of VA's Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion on our University Drive campus said VA's wraparound services and integrated care networks "might go a long way to explaining" the study's findings. VA is uniquely positioned to care for Veterans' additional needs, taking mental health, addiction treatment, transportation and housing into consideration when providing surgical care.



# MAXIMIZING VETERANS' ACCESS

## Monroeville Clinic Construction Nears Completion

*Grand Opening Set for 2023*

**C**onstruction on our new Monroeville VA Outpatient Clinic continued in earnest in 2022 with an eye on a summer 2023 grand opening. We will staff and operate the clinic, which is located on Mall Circle Drive, near Monroeville Mall.

The new state-of-the-art facility will improve Veterans' access to primary and specialty outpatient services and reduce drive times for many Pittsburgh-area Veterans enrolled in VA care. Moving Veterans' primary care teams to the Monroeville location will open space on our University Drive campus to expand our Emergency Department and specialty care services.

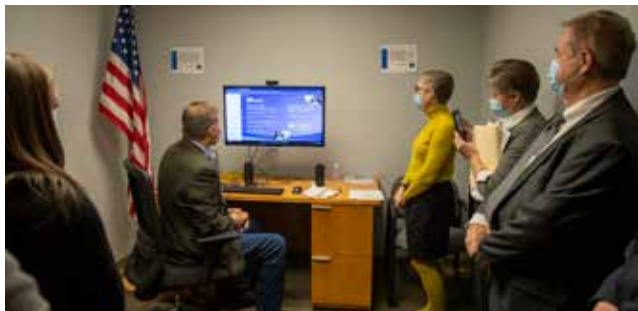
The U.S. General Services Administration in 2021 awarded the \$92 million build-to-suit lease for the clinic. The lease includes 64,000 square feet of parking and supports VA's Strategic Capital Investment Planning process.



### Available Services

- **Primary/Mental Health Care**
- **Hematology/Oncology**
- **Imaging**
- **Eye Clinic**
- **Radiology**
- **Physical Medicine/Rehab**
- **Pathology/Lab Services**
- **Eligibility and Enrollment**
- **Telehealth**
- **Rotating Specialty Care:** Acupuncture, Chiropractic, Dietary, Echocardiogram, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Infectious Disease, Massage Therapy, Palliative Care, Pain Management, Podiatry, Pulmonology, Renal, Rheumatology, Social Work





## ATLAS Site Brings Telehealth to Veterans

We partnered with Greene County and the Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center in Clarksburg, West Virginia, to open an Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Station (ATLAS) site in Waynesburg.

ATLAS sites include all equipment needed for telehealth visits in Veterans' communities, reducing travel times and addressing barriers such as poor internet connectivity at home. The ATLAS site at the Greene County Office Building, 93 East High Street, allows Veterans to connect virtually with their VA Pittsburgh or Clarksburg providers.

*VAPHS Director Donald Koenig, right, joins Greene County Commissioner Blair Zimmerman, seated, Greene County Veterans Affairs Director Kathy Cipicic and others for an ATLAS demonstration.*



## Contraception on Demand

Our Contraception on Demand innovation allows VHA pharmacists to dispense a year's supply of hormonal contraception — most often birth control pills — to women Veterans. With the number of women Veterans using VA increasing, giving them easy access to contraceptive services is a top priority for VA's Office of Women's Health.

Contraception on Demand expands Veterans' access to contraceptives and improves their experiences with reproductive health care at VA. It also trains clinical pharmacists in patient-centered contraceptive counseling and improves their job satisfaction. VHA named the innovation, developed at the Center for Health Equity Research and Development on our University Drive campus, among its 10 Promising Practices for 2022.

The practice is easy to adopt and implement at very low cost to individual VA facilities, resulting in an estimated cost savings for the health system at large. Among the first to adopt it was VISN 8 in Florida, which includes VA medical centers in Orlando, Tampa, Miami and West Palm Beach.

*Deirdre Quinn, Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion core investigator at VAPHS, pitches her Contraception on Demand innovation to VA sharks Brynn Cole, Leandro DaSilva and Michael Kilmer during VHA's 2022 Shark Tank Competition.*

## NEW IN 2022



### Vet Tech Center

Teaches Veterans and staff how to use VA virtual health care technology and applications.

*LOCATION: University Drive Atrium*



### Orthotic and Prosthetics Lab

Uses the latest 3D technology to custom manufacture artificial limbs and orthoses for Veterans served by VISN 4's nine VA medical centers.

*LOCATION: H.J. Heinz III campus*



The nurses and staff were awesome, and the rehabilitation department was perfect. Thanks to them all."

**Veteran's Compliments on VAPHS Care**

A photograph showing two elderly men in teal scrubs sitting in wheelchairs at a table, playing a game of chess. A nurse in blue scrubs and a face mask stands behind them, observing the game. The setting appears to be a community living center with flags and a framed picture on the wall.

# HIGH RELIABILITY ORGANIZATION

## CLC Recognized for Age-Friendly Care

### *Initiative Focuses on Individual Needs and Goals*

**O**ur H.J. Heinz III Community Living Center (CLC) achieved recognition as a Level 2 Age-Friendly Health System through the Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative. The recognition assures VAPHS's CLC Veterans they are receiving evidence-based care tailored to their individual needs, preferences and goals.

The Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative focuses on four essential elements of care for older patients called the 4Ms:

- **What Matters:** Know and align care with each older adult's specific health outcome goals and care preferences including, but not limited to, end-of-life care, and across settings of care.
- **Medication:** If medication is necessary, use age-friendly medications that do not interfere with what matters to the older adult, mobility, or mental activity across settings of care.

- **Mental Activity:** Prevent, identify, treat and manage dementia, depression and delirium across settings of care.
- **Mobility:** Ensure that older adults move safely every day in order to maintain function and do what matters.

Joining the age-friendly initiative provides us with a framework of evidence-based care that puts what matters to the older Veteran at the forefront. Our Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC) program also participates in the initiative. Annually, we provide care to some 200 older Veterans in our CLC and 150 in our HBPC program.

*Community Living Center residents Ernest Rivers, left, and Joseph Graham play a game of chess with support from nurse manager Scott Rebarchak.*





## Surgical Safety Net Prevents Post-Operative Readmissions

Our Preventing Post-Operative Readmissions with Surgical Safety Net innovation reduces hospital readmissions and enhances Veterans' overall surgical experience from admission to recovery. It uses a high-reliability process to identify at-risk patients before their surgeries. The Surgical Safety Net combines nursing, physical therapy, telehealth and social work, plus a 24/7 staffed phone service, to give Veterans wraparound surgical care.

VHA named the innovation, developed through our Interdisciplinary Medical, Preoperative, Assessment, Consultation and Treatment (IMPACT) Clinic, among its 10 Promising Practices for 2022. VISN 16's Central Arkansas VA Healthcare System elected to adopt the innovation, with plans to use existing resources such as physical therapy, social work, etc., to coordinate with the practice.

*VAPHS's Dr. Visala Muluk pitches her Surgical Safety Net innovation to VA sharks Brynn Cole, Leandro DaSilva and Michael Kilmer during VHA's 2022 Shark Tank Competition.*



I just wanted to say that the nurses of 3 East that took care of me when I was a patient there were awesome. Special shout out to Janet, Chrissy, Ryan and Jessika for the good care and their awesomeness.”

**Veteran's Compliments on VAPHS Care**



## Age-Friendly Emergency Department

Our Emergency Department (ED) received a Level 3 Geriatric ED (GED) accreditation from the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) in 2022. The accreditation assures older Veterans we have age-friendly policies, training and equipment in place to meet their specific needs and elevate the level of their care.

ACEP-accredited GEDs follow evidence-based policies, protocols and procedures that improve health care delivery for older adults. As an ACEP Level 3 accredited GED, we have training and programs in place to treat older Veterans with complex conditions; identify unmet needs; and better coordinate follow-up care. We also provide mobility devices such as canes and walkers, and easy access to food and drink.

VA in 2021 launched a geriatric emergency department initiative that aimed to establish 70 VA EDs as GEDs by December 2022.



## New Leaders Join VA Pittsburgh Team

New members who are focused on guiding our transformation to a high-reliability organization (HRO) joined our Executive Leadership Team (ELT). As leaders of an HRO, they instill a culture in which high reliability, safety and process improvement are second nature to all staff, improving the care we provide to Veterans. In an HRO, every staff member anticipates risk, feels empowered to speak up, and is a problem solver.

- **Prachi Asher, FACHE** | Deputy Director
- **Kaneen Allen, MHA, DHCE** | Associate Director
- **Brooke Decker, MD** | Deputy Chief of Staff

# AWARDS *and* ACCREDITATIONS



## Awards

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### Nurse Executive Earns Secretary's Award

#### *National Recognition for Nursing Excellence*

Dr. Brenda Shaffer received the national 2022 VA Secretary's Award for Excellence in Nursing — Nurse Executive. Shaffer, who has a Doctor of Nursing Practice, serves on VAPHS's Executive Leadership Team as the facility's Associate Director Patient Care Services.

The Secretary presents the annual awards to individuals who were nominated by their colleagues for outstanding service to Veterans and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Recipients demonstrate nursing excellence and the highest level of dedication to their profession.

The award recognizes Shaffer for her leadership in facilitating, implementing and directing programs and initiatives that improve safe patient care; recruit, retain and mentor staff; and advance the nursing practice.

*VA Secretary Denis McDonough, left, with Dr. Brenda Shaffer, VAPHS Associate Director Patient Care Services, Steve Lieberman, then-Acting Under Secretary for Health, and Beth Taylor, Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer.*

**Jason Fay, DPT, MS** | *Group Practice Manager and Ambulatory Care Operations Director*

**2022 Veterans Health Administration Employee of the Year** | Disabled American Veterans, Department of Pennsylvania

**Robin Jump, M.D., Ph.D.**

**2022 Antimicrobial Stewardship Award** | The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America

**Franca Cambi, M.D., Ph.D.**

**2021 Italian American Spirit of Medicine Award**

**John Blosnich, Ph.D., MPH** | *Research Scientist, Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion*

**Director's New Innovator Award** | National Institutes of Health

**James Ibinson, M.D.** | *Chief of Anesthesia*  
**Outstanding Physician of the Year** | VAPHS

### 2022 Excellence in Government Awards

Pittsburgh Federal Executive Board

- **Gold**

- » Dr. Charles Atwood, Heroic Act
- » Lovetta Ford, Outstanding Supervisor/Manager, Administrative

- **Silver**

- » Katie Suda, Pharm.D., Outstanding Contribution to Science (Medical)

- **Bronze**

- » Kristen Lyons, Diversity and Inclusion
- » Kimberly Schmidt, Outstanding Clerical Employee





## Accreditations

### Commission on Cancer

The Commission on Cancer (CoC), a quality program of the American College of Surgeons, granted our cancer program a three-year accreditation in 2022. As a CoC-accredited cancer center, we take a multidisciplinary approach to treating cancer as a complex group of diseases that requires consultation among surgeons, medical and radiation oncologists, diagnostic radiologists, pathologists and other cancer specialists. This multidisciplinary partnership results in improved patient care. The voluntary accreditation assures Veterans our cancer program meets 34 CoC quality care standards, is evaluated every three years through a survey process, and maintains levels of excellence in the delivery of comprehensive patient-centered care.

### FDA Mammography Quality Standards Act

#### The Joint Commission:

Hospital, Home Care, Behavioral Health, Opioid Substitution Therapy

**Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International:**  
Research program

### Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF):

Behavioral Health, Employment and Community Services, Intensive Rehabilitation, Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation, Intermediate Low Vision programs

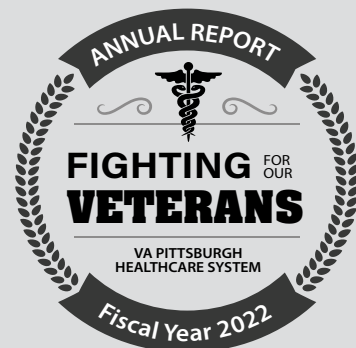
**American College of Radiology:**  
Radiation/Oncology Department



In fiscal year 2022, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System served Veterans from all 50 states, plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

From as few as three from Idaho to as many as 4,943 from Ohio, Veterans from all over America trusted VAPHS for their health care.

- 4,450 from West Virginia
- 2,359 from Florida
- 2,052 from New Jersey
- 1,619 from Delaware
- 769 from New York
- 423 from Georgia



### Our front cover:

James Ibinson, M.D., left, VAPHS Outstanding Physician of the Year, see p. 14; Deirdre Quinn, Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion (CHERP) core investigator and VHA Shark Tank finalist for her Contraception on Demand innovation, p. 11; Daniel Hall, M.D., CHERP core investigator and senior author of report showing VA post-surgery outcomes are better than private sector outcomes, p. 9; and Visala Muluk, M.D., VAPHS physician and Shark Tank finalist for her Surgical Safety Net innovation, p. 13.



Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors are the heart of America, having dedicated their lives to serving and sacrificing for this country — for all of us — in the times when we've needed them most. Now, **it's our job to serve them as well as they have served us** by delivering timely access to world-class health care and earned benefits. **And we're fighting like hell to do exactly that."**

**The Honorable Denis Richard McDonough,  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs**

Connect  
with us!



VAPHS



VAPittsburgh

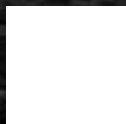
VA



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