



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Battle Creek VA Medical Center

- Benton Harbor • Lansing
- Muskegon • Wyoming

During 2023, we worked to look towards the future. We conducted our first in-person strategic planning meeting in several years to develop plans to better serve Veterans of the 21-counties in Southwest Michigan. We are focused on innovation, expanding outpatient specialty service where practical, and continuing to enhance our partnerships across the Michigan market for resource sharing and best practices.

The PACT Act was signed into law which expanded benefits to Veterans with toxic exposures. It also required us to ensure enrolled Veterans receive Toxic Exposure screening. Our team worked very hard to get over 26,000 Veterans screened in the fiscal year. They also conducted extensive outreach to make unenrolled Veterans aware that they may be eligible for VA healthcare under the PACT Act.

We will continue to look at ways to deliver the best care possible to Veterans in our 21-county service area. Each day, I am thankful that I get to serve our nation's heroes. As we continue to make positive strides to deliver great experiences for our Veterans, our focus will remain on daily improvements in the new year.

Our staff plays a crucial role in delivering exceptional care. We have expanded our team to meet the growing needs of Veterans. I want to express sincere appreciation for their efforts to deliver the best care possible for the Veterans we serve. Their feedback, dedication, and efforts help us on our journey to becoming a High Reliability Organization.

As we progress into Fiscal Year 2024, we will continue to implement new ideas from the feedback of all our stakeholders. I appreciate Veterans trusting us to deliver the care that they have earned. I look forward to working with our staff, stakeholders, and Veterans during the upcoming year. I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2023.

Michelle Martin



**Michelle Martin, Medical Center Director
Battle Creek VA Medical Center**



**Doug Dusenberry
Associate Director**



**Ketan Shah
Chief of Staff**



**Natasha Watson
Associate Director
for Patient Care Services**



**Stephen Dotts
Assistant Director**



Learn, Inquire and Improve

Respect for People



The VHA mission to “Honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being,” would not be possible without our dedicated staff. We get many compliments from patients and their families throughout the year. Together, we all make a difference in the lives of Veterans. These are just some of the many exceptional staff recognized during the year for their efforts.

We held several successful hiring events this year to fill our needs as Veterans continue to choose VA for their care. If you know someone who would like to join our team of dedicated professionals, they can learn more at:

<https://www.va.gov/battle-creek-health-care/work-with-us/>

Along with delivering exceptional care, we continually look for ways to improve and upgrade our facilities. Veterans deserve the best care possible in modern facilities geared toward the whole health of our patients.

The Facilities Management Service has worked on various renovation projects including Building 2 renovation, halls, walls and windows projects, technology infrastructure upgrades, heating and cooling, gym floor, and many other projects. The projects totaled over 69 million dollars in construction awards for Fiscal Year 23. There are plans to expand the Community Living Center, renovate Audiology and other projects in the coming years which will total an additional investment of 68 million dollars.

This year leaders from the Medical Center were able to gather in person to brainstorm ideas and look toward the future. The 2023 Strategic Planning Summit was held on August 9, at Fort Custer, bringing together some of the Service Chiefs, Program Supervisors, and other key staff. They had the opportunity to brainstorm and have open discussions around four key categories: Customer Perspective, Internal Perspective, Learning and Innovation, and Financial Perspective. This helped to develop the 2024 Tactical Plan items that will be put into action.

We also continue to collaborate with our partners at the Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Saginaw VA Medical Centers on Michigan Market initiatives to enhance resource sharing and best practices. All of this will help to drive better outcomes and better service for the Veterans we serve.



Summer VetFest Rocks the Battle Creek VA

Veterans, family members, VA employees and community partners gathered at the Battle Creek VA Medical Center July 15, to enjoy some live entertainment, and learn a little more about the benefits available to those who sacrificed so much for our country. The Toby Keith tribute band "American Ride" entertained hundreds of guests who spread blankets and lawn chairs all over the VA baseball field, to watch the show.

This event was one of more than 50 Summer VetFest events across all 50 states, Washington DC, and Puerto Rico. The events brought Veterans, their families, Veteran advocates, and the VA health care and benefits professionals together in a casual summer environment to learn more about the PACT ACT and other Veteran programs.

Enrollment staff were busy enrolling Veterans in VA health care, or scheduling them for their toxic exposure screening. Veteran Service Officers were present, assisting with applications for service-connected disability benefits (or submitting an intent to file). Other Veteran Support Groups from across west Michigan were also present to help provide resources to Veterans. Community and Volunteer Service coordinated the concert and provided water to the audience who enjoyed the sounds of summer under a beautiful Michigan sky.



Our VA Volunteers provide tremendous support all year!

We have the pleasure of working with so many community partners, Veterans Service Organizations, and other volunteers throughout the year. Volunteers continue to find ways to help us enhance the Veteran experience. These individuals and organizations help to connect Veterans to community services, host special events, offer their talents, expand whole health opportunities, and serve the needs of Veterans in many ways. If you or your group would like more information on volunteering to serve Veterans, contact the Community and Volunteer Service at (269) 223-5497.



Volunteers
326
Volunteer Hours
24,036
Donations & Gifts
\$334,622

Enrollment in the Community

VA Healthcare eligibility has been expanded under the PACT ACT of 2022, so we wanted to make sure Veterans were aware of their eligibility and knew how to enroll! That's why our eligibility/enrollment team hit the streets this year, visiting senior centers, special events, and Veterans Service Organizations throughout our 21 counties to help Veterans get the benefits they have earned.

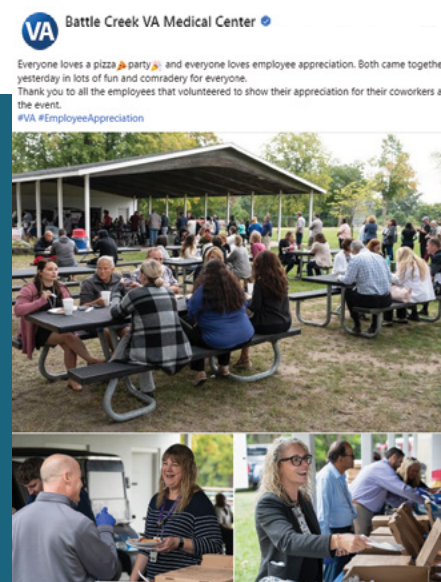
We held movie events, and ice cream socials, as well as general enrollment events. We have also partnered with the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, County Veteran Service Offices, and the Veteran Community Action Teams in our area to organize mailers and events to educate Veterans on benefits and the process for filing claims if needed. Overall, we were able to enroll over 2,000 new Veterans and increase enrollment by over 600 new Veterans from the previous year. Help us spread the word to Veterans that you know and who are not enrolled in VA healthcare. They can find out more at:

(269) 966-5600
ext. 33887

We conducted more than 70 events in the community at various locations. We plan to expand to do additional enrollment events throughout 2024 as well. We want to ensure all Veterans are aware of the healthcare they have earned. If you know of a location that would like to host a VA enrollment event, you can contact us at (269) 223-6212.



Clear Communications



Awards & Achievements

- 2023 Top Performer in LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality
- Community Living Center 5 Star Overall Rating
- Greenhealth Environmental Excellence Award

Facebook Followers:
6,858



Our goal is to keep you informed about your health, current events, and updates in a variety of ways. While we continue to use bulletin boards, flyers, and other brochures to distribute resources on campus, we have also increased the use of social media and e-mail to widely distribute events, healthy living topics, and other key knowledge for Veterans to know. Veterans can look for monthly updates in their e-mail or follow our social media for regular information about the Medical Center and their health. Caregivers and other supporters of Veterans can also follow our social media and sign up for our e-mail. We encourage people to read the materials and to share it with Veterans who may not have access. We continue to use your feedback to enhance communication and look for the best way to deliver information to the diverse group of Veterans that we serve.

E-mail Subscribers: 44,996

Veterans and other stakeholders can join our e-mail newsletter list on the bottom of our homepage under "get updates from the VA Battle Creek health care." Our goal is to keep you informed about current events and important items. It is our honor to be your choice for the healthcare that you have earned.

It's About the Veteran:

Mental Health Summit Brings Together Community Partners

Battle Creek VA hosted a Mental Health Summit at Western Michigan University's Grand Rapids location on Friday, September 29. The theme for the summit was 'Improving Health Care for Aging Veterans' which provided 12 breakout sessions that delivered information on how to approach and deliver care to older Veterans. The Summit was done in partnership with Western Michigan University and the Alzheimer's Association.



It allowed individuals and representatives from community partners to learn what services can be offered and the eligibility requirements for various healthcare programs. Care for aging Veterans takes a community of committed people, inclusive of providers, caregivers, family members, and community agencies. The more coordinated we are, the better the care outcomes for our Veterans.

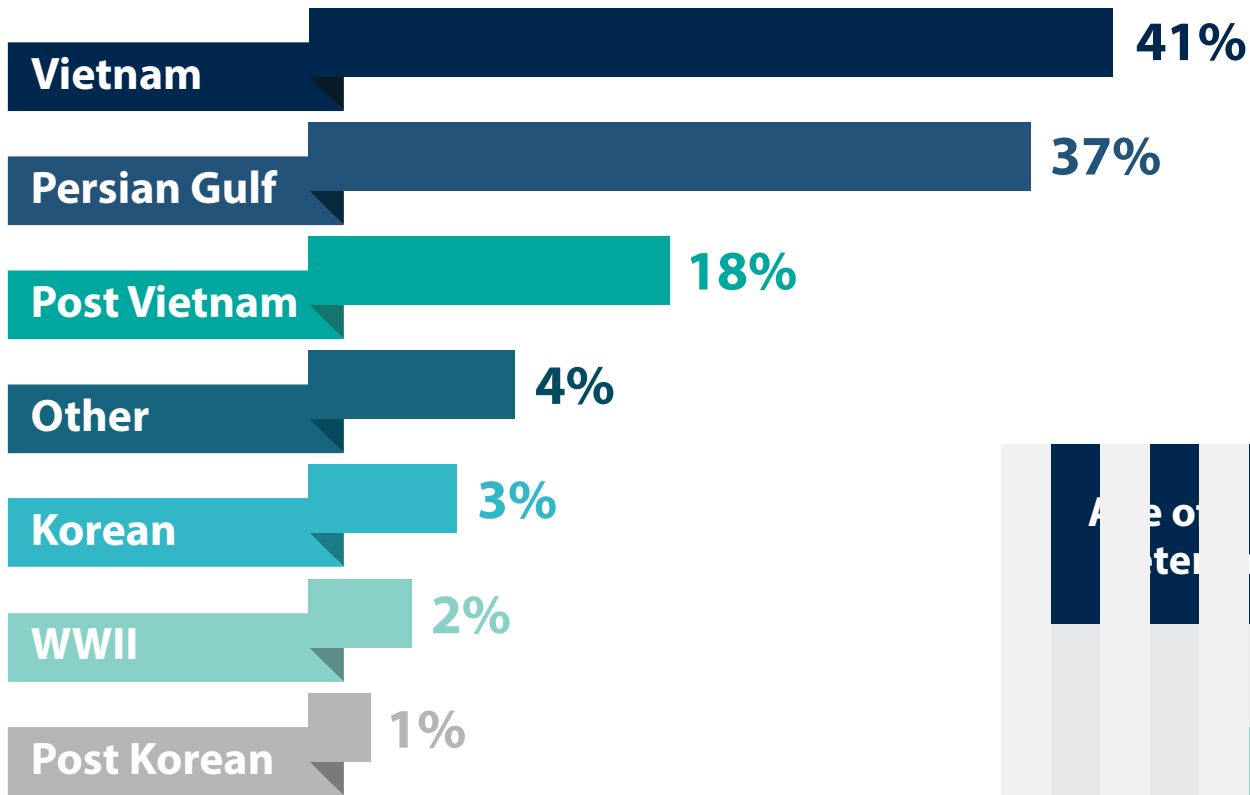
Improving Patient Experience Highlights

- Implemented 100% of the fifteen element Patient Experience Action Plan
- 103 Service Level Advocates and 89 Service Level Users were appointed and trained
- Electronic Health Record education on Department of Defense demographic database and My HealtheVet (MHV) education and conversion to MHV premium accounts completed, which resulted in 20,605 MHV premium account conversions
- Process improvement projects for care coordination and provider rating show promising initial results to create improved SHEP and SAIL scores
- Provider rating improved from 5th quintile to a sustained 4th quintile
- Care Coordination metrics improved from 48.9% to 66.5%
- Patient Experience data identified a national best practice regarding stress discussed
- Trust Score is over 90%

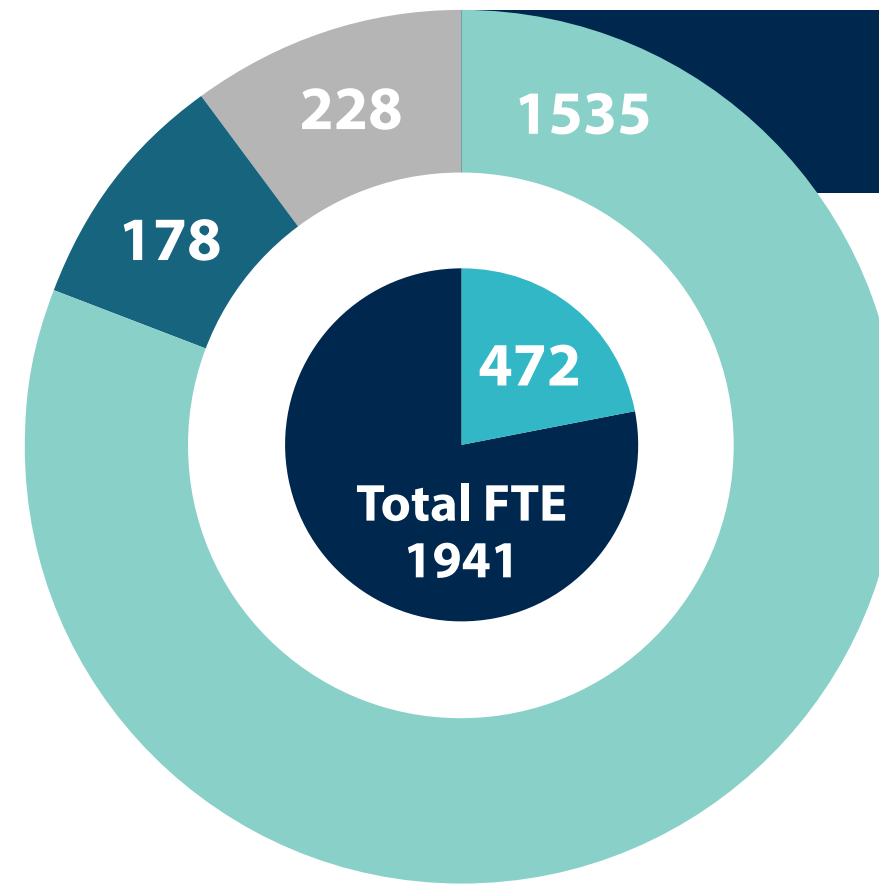


Mental Health Recovery is our business!





Our Battle Creek VA Employees

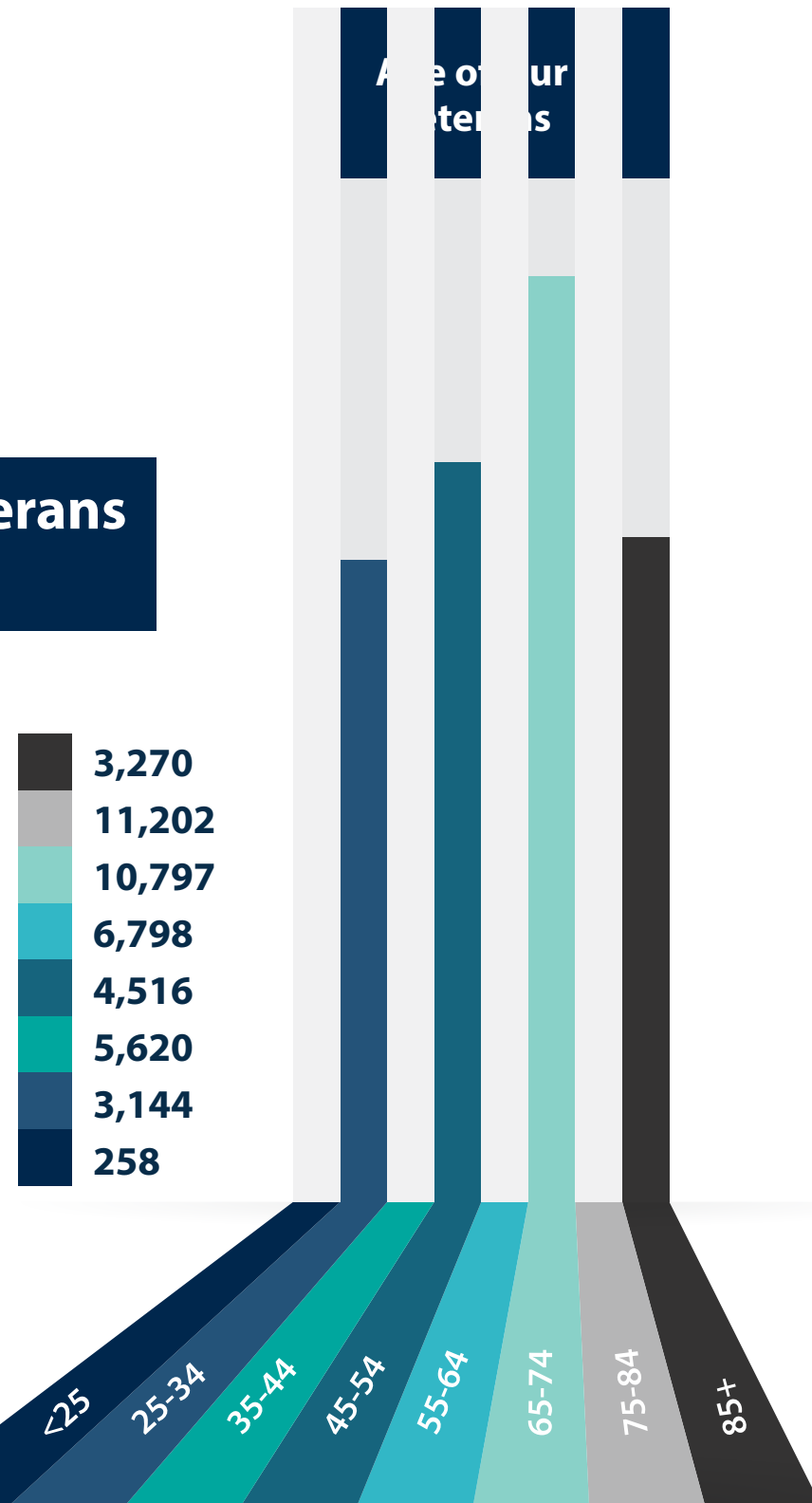


- Admin FTE
- Facilities FTE
- Medical FTE
- Full Time Equivalent (FTE)*
- Veteran Employees
- Total Employee FTE

Our Battle Creek VA Veterans 45,605 Total



We proudly served 3,531 Women in 2023



Prudent Use of Resources

Salary and Benefits	242,873,334
Care in the Community	189,352,828
Non-Recurring Maintenance	62,454,843
Pharmacy and CMOP	43,217,281
Supplies and Materials	42,281,181
All Other	17,722,079
Rent and Utilities	13,753,044
Grants	10,876,309
Equipment	8,880,280
Total	631,411,179

The Battle Creek VA Medical Center had a balanced budget this year focusing on the prudent use of resources. We continue to conduct a strategic evaluation of our programs and services to ensure the effective use of resources. As a Michigan Market, we meet regularly with our partners at the Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Saginaw VA Medical Centers to develop strategies and share resources for efficient and exceptional care. The Battle Creek VA Medical Center is working to continuously improve and modernize our business practices and infrastructure while being good stewards of our nation's resources to deliver the most value to our Veterans.



 **Veterans
Crisis Line**
DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**



Suicide Prevention is our Top Clinical Priority

Veterans are driven and resilient, but everyone needs help sometimes. Veterans have been trained to carry the heavy stuff, but don't have to go through it alone. It is important that Veterans know they can Reach Out and it is okay to ask for help through life's challenges. **Don't wait for a crisis.**

The Battle Creek VA Medical Center takes a community approach to suicide prevention. Our team has developed many coalitions and community partnerships throughout

the counties we serve. Our Suicide Prevention and Community Engagement Partnership Coordinators work with community partners to raise awareness of this important priority. As an individual, you can also make a difference in the life of a Veteran. **Take a moment today to reach out.** If you find a Veteran in need, the Veterans Crisis Line can also be a resource to you. Anyone can call to help a Veteran. **You can act now to help prevent Veteran suicide later.**

11th Annual Alive and Running VA5K for Suicide Prevention Awareness

One example of the community approach to raising awareness for Veteran Suicide Prevention has been the Alive and Running VA 5K. In its 11th year, more than 300 people joined to run or walk. Even more people participated virtually to help let people know they can Reach Out to Veterans and make a difference. The event held on September 16, 2023, was supported by the following community partners: • *Calhoun County Veteran Services* • *Calhoun County Suicide Prevention Coalition* • *Gryphon Place* • *Summit Pointe*

The event encourages Veterans, their families, the military community, and supporters to reach out to help prevent suicide. It is designed to emphasize that one small act could save the life of a Veteran or service member in crisis. Small acts may include a text, a phone call, a smile, or a conversation. The Veterans Crisis line is always available to assist by dialing 988 and pressing 1.



Events Enhance Veteran Experience

Events play an important role in socialization and camaraderie. This was clearly emphasized when we had to cancel many events at the beginning of the pandemic. Learning to operate through the COVID-19 pandemic involved conducting events in a safe manner with precautions in place. This year, we were able to bring back many in-person annual events. We also worked to develop partnerships in the community to host many events and activities closer to where Veterans live. As we continue to move forward, we plan to expand those relationships and enhance the experience of Veterans at the Medical Center, our Out-patient Clinics, and in the community.



Annual Juneteenth Celebration



Easter in the Veteran Canteen



Annual Recovery Film Festival



Last Roll Call Bi-Annual Memorial



Women Veterans Recognition



WMU Football Team & Coaches



Golden Age Game Team & Staff



Model A Car Event for CLC

Working to End Veteran Homelessness



VA's 38,000 goal not only helps more Veterans find safe and stable housing but it also helps our communities' homelessness service systems get "back in shape" doing what they do best:

Ending Veteran Homelessness

How you can help (or get help)

If you are a Veteran who is homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at

(877) 4AID-VET
(877-424-3838)

It's staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with trained counselors who will connect you to your nearest VA medical center for help.

This year, Secretary Denis McDonough announced VA's goal to place at least 38,000 homeless Veterans into permanent housing by December 31, 2023. Great progress has been made toward that goal and the Battle Creek VA Medical Center's Healthcare for Homeless Veterans team has been doing its part by exceeding targets for housing Veterans this year.

VA's homeless program outreach staff and our Supportive Services for Veteran Families grantees engaged 28,135 unsheltered Veterans, representing 100.5% of the goal. These providers serve as the front door connecting Veterans to care and services provided through VA homeless programs and the broader VA health care system.

Virtual Care

The Battle Creek VA Medical Center is committed to providing high-quality care when and where it is needed. Receiving care from the comfort of home or other locations using a phone, tablet, or computer is often a convenient solution for many Veterans.

While not all clinical care can be done virtually, using virtual appointments, groups, and classes have proven to be easy and convenient for many types of care. Through VA's virtual care tools, we are able to leverage available technology to make sure that our patients are able to get the care that they need when and where they want it.

Virtual Group Sessions:

We host a variety of Veteran groups, activities, and town halls in a virtual format using different technology and methods to reach a wide range of Veterans.

See updated classes online at:

www.va.gov/battle-creek-health-care/programs/groups-and-classes/



Telephone or Video Appointments:

Veterans can receive care at home, either over the phone or video using VA Video Connect on their computers, smartphones, or tablets.

To set up telephone or video appointments, Veterans can send their provider a secure message on

My HealtheVet by visiting:
www.myhealth.va.gov



Mobile Apps:

Veterans can use a variety of VA Mobile apps specifically created for them. These apps can help with scheduling, health coaching, prescription refills and more. Some even send text reminders to assist Veterans in their personal health goals.

Learn more at:
www.mobile.va.gov/appstore



Secure Messaging:

With My HealtheVet, VA's online patient portal, Veterans can send online secure messages to your VA health care team to ask them non-urgent health questions.

Register at:
www.myhealth.va.gov



Battle Creek VA Medical Center Sites of Care

The Battle Creek VA Medical Center opened in 1924 and was called Veterans Hospital Number 100 because it was the 100th VA hospital built in the United States. Today it consists of one medical center located in Battle Creek, Michigan, and four VA Outpatient Clinics located in Benton Harbor, Lansing, Muskegon, and Wyoming, Michigan.



Muskegon VA Clinic
5000 Hakes Drive
Muskegon, MI 49441
(231) 798-4445



Wyoming VA Clinic
5838 Metro Way SW
Wyoming, MI 49519
(616) 249-5300



Battle Creek VA Medical Center
5500 Armstrong Road
Battle Creek, MI 49037
(269) 966-5600



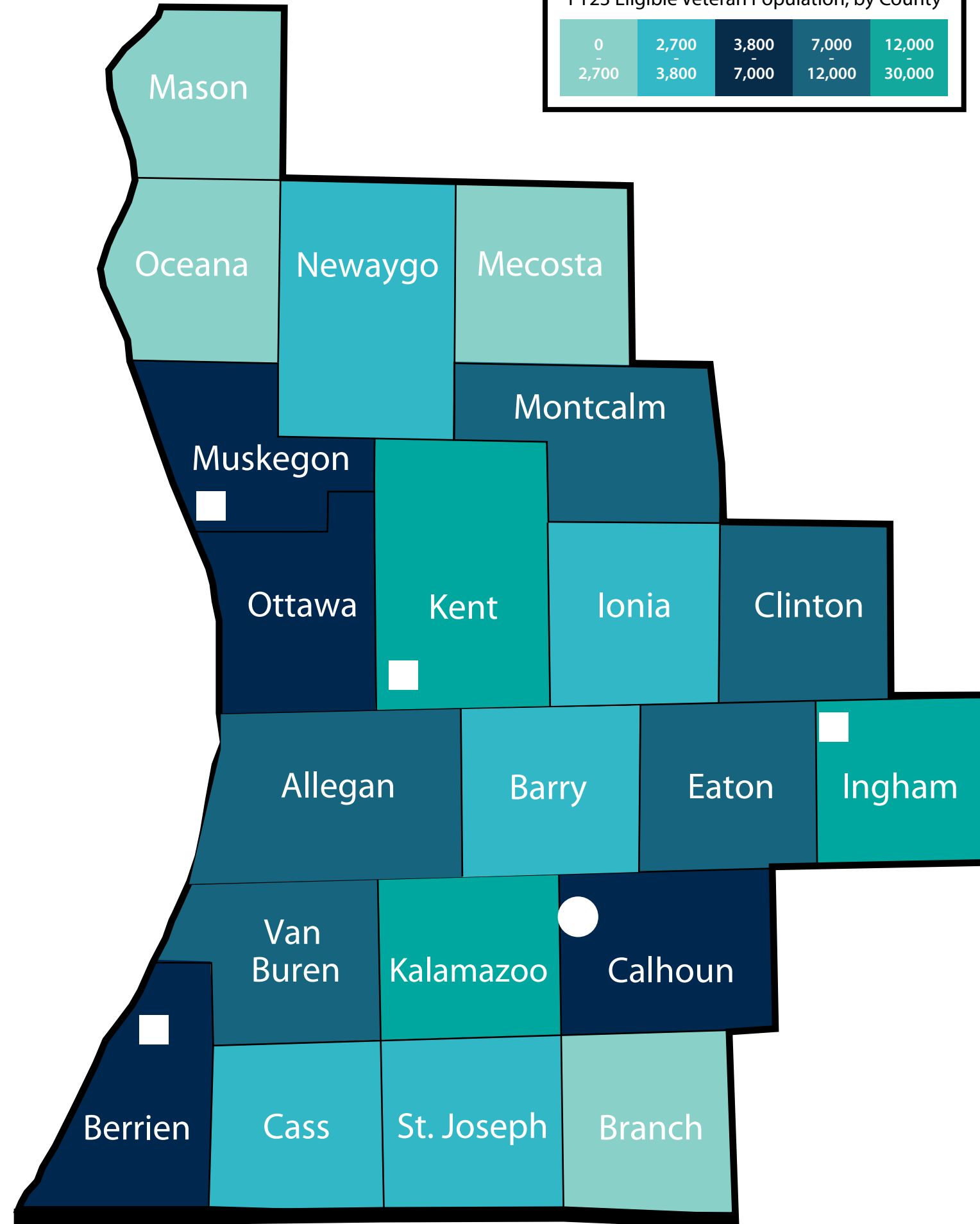
Benton Harbor VA Clinic
1275 Mall Drive
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
(269) 934-9123



Lansing VA Clinic
5656 South Cedar Street
Lansing, MI 48911
(517) 267-3925

FY23 Eligible Veteran Population, by County

0	2,700	3,800	7,000	12,000
2,700	3,800	7,000	12,000	30,000



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Battle Creek VA Medical Center

Battle Creek VA Medical Center

5500 Armstrong Road, Battle Creek, MI 49037

(269) 966-5600

www.va.gov/battle-creek-health-care