



2023 Annual Report

VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM OF THE OZARKS



A Message from the Director

Dear Veterans, employees, stakeholders and community members,

I am pleased to present the 2023 Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks (VHSO) Annual Report.

As I enter my second year as the Medical Center Director, I am thrilled with the progress we've made. Over the past year we've faced challenges head-on, embraced opportunities and achieved significant milestones as a team.

VHSO continues to fulfill our noble mission "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors." VHSO also carried out the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act. I am proud to say 21,920 Veterans received toxic exposure screenings by the end of 2023. We continue to make it a priority to educate Veterans about the care they've earned and deserve.

VHSO continues our journey to become a high reliability organization (HRO). HRO establishes trust amongst leaders and staff creating a Just Culture that balances individual accountability with systems thinking. HRO leaders empower all staff to lead continuous process improvements within their own workspace.

The work to become a HRO not only unleashes the incredible talent and commitment within our system to do great things, but it also supports our efforts to strengthen the trust of Veterans and our community. These efforts are paying off. Patient Trust Scores are over 90% higher than regional and national averages. In April 2023, VHSO was ranked #3 in the Top 25 Best VA Hospitals in the nation and #1 in VISN 16 according to Veteran satisfaction scores.



We received a 5-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in July 2023 and Strategic Analysis for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) data showed that VHSO has shown great improvement.

In May of 2023, our VHSO top leaders completed the creation of a comprehensive five-year strategic plan to guide our health system's efforts to achieve our VHSO vision of becoming the healthcare destination of choice for our Veterans. The strategic plan encompasses five overarching goals that will guide our efforts to achieve our mission. Our driving forces will be the four Statutory Missions of the VA: Healthcare, Education, Research and Emergency Management. Our strategic plan will guide us in creating lasting change in how we ultimately serve our Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors and our communities.

It is our honor and privilege to serve our nation's heroes, our Veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "G. Velez".

George Velez DHA, MBA, FACHE
Medical Center Director
VA Fayetteville Arkansas Health Care

Executive Leadership Team



Embra K. Jackson III, MPH, VHA-CM
Associate Medical Center Director



Jim Slezak, MD, FACS
Chief of Staff



Amy Huycke, RN, MS
Associate Director, Patient Care Services



Jeremy L. Caviness, MAOL
Assistant Medical Center Director

2023–2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

VHSO Strategic Vision

To become the healthcare destination of choice for our Veterans.

VHSO Mission Statement

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors.

5 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

1. High Reliability Organization

Create and sustain a culture of High Reliability at VHSO

2. Growth

Increase access to healthcare for Veterans at VHSO

3. Education

Provide high quality education and research to improve Veteran care

4. Resources

Improve efficiency of internal operations
Maximize release of information for service optimization and expansion

5. Emergency Management

Become more relevant with the emergency management community on the local, regional and national level



Awarded Gold Certification for Excellence in Person-Centered Care by Planetree International in May 2022. Only VA awarded this distinction.



Named one of four 5-star facilities in Arkansas for patient experience by Becker's Hospital Review



Received a 5-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in July 2023



VHSO was ranked **#3** in the **Top 25** Best VA Hospitals in the nation and **#1** in **VISN 16** according to Veteran satisfaction scores



Who We Serve

Veterans Health Administration (VHA) implemented Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) to make access to health care easier. These CBOCs can provide primary, specialty, sub-specialty, mental health, or any combination of health care delivery services that can be appropriately provided in an outpatient setting. The clinics provide care for more rural locations, making access to care closer to home.

CBOCs are a VA-operated, VA-funded, or VA-reimbursed site of care, which is located separate from a VA medical facility. VHSO has 7 CBOCs residing in 3 states, Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma.



VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

52,976



88.7% MEN VETERAN PATIENTS

\$336,394,329

OPERATING BUDGET

4,682



11.3% FEMALE VETERAN PATIENTS

660,645

OUTPATIENT VISITS

57,458

TOTAL NUMBER OF VETERANS

834,675

TOTAL UNIQUE ENCOUNTERS

183

WWII VETERANS

1100 N College Ave
Fayetteville, AR 72703
Main phone: (479) 443-4301

17,371

VIETNAM ERA VETERANS

1,299

KOREAN WAR VETERANS

7,369

POST 911 NOT DEPLOYED VETERANS

3,399

PRE 911 GULF WAR ERA VETERANS

17,233

ERA UNKNOWN VETERANS

14,083

POST 911 DEPLOYED VETERANS

The Joint Commission

- Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Behavioral Health Care and Human Services
- Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Home Care
- Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals
- Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Laboratory and Point-of-Care Testing



BRANSON VA CLINIC

5571 North Gretna Road
Branson, MO 65616-7287
Main phone: (417) 243-2300



Total Veterans Served
6,308



Female Veterans Served
466



Outpatient Visits
39,779



FORT SMITH VA CLINIC

Fort Smith VA Clinic
5700 Phoenix Place
Fort Smith, AR 72903
Main phone: (479) 441-2600



Total Veterans Served
9,680



Female Veterans Served
811



Outpatient Visits
76,497

HARRISON VA CLINIC

814 US Highway 62-65 North, Suite 8
Harrison, AR 72601-2149
Main phone: (870) 704-6300



Total Veterans Served
1,608



Female Veterans Served
113



Outpatient Visits
7,843



JAY VA CLINIC

1569 North Main Street
Jay, OK 74346-2903
Main phone: (888) 424-8387



Total Veterans Served
1,998



Female Veterans Served
162



Outpatient Visits
10,631





OZARK VA CLINIC

2713 West Commercial Street
Ozark, AR 72949-3409
Main phone: (877) 760-8387



Total Veterans Served
1,339



Female Veterans Served
97



Outpatient Visits
7,281



JOPLIN VA CLINIC

3015 South Connecticut Avenue
Joplin, MO 64804-3035
Main phone: (800) 691-8387



Total Veterans Served
6,693



Female Veterans Served
502



Outpatient Visits
38,220



GENE TAYLOR VETERANS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

1850 West Republic Road
Springfield, MO 65807-5730
Main phone: (844) 501-8387, ext. 64500



Total Veterans Served
18,322



Female Veterans Served
1,518



Outpatient Visits
122,792



Veteran Experience

Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks fosters patient-centered care for Veterans. The Veteran's Experience Office's primary role is to ensure that Veterans receive high-quality care, have their concerns addressed promptly, and get the support they've earned and deserve at the VA.

VA measures patient satisfaction with Survey of Healthcare Experience of Patients (SHEP) statistics with Veterans Signals (V-Signal). This real-time feedback enables VHSO to resolve Veteran's concerns immediately. This year, Veterans ranked VHSO with a 92.4% trust score. The V-Signal scores have a 98% completion rate within 7 days of using VHSO services. The Patient Experience Office attributes the high satisfaction rates to the Veteran's Experience Committee (VEC). VEC collaborates with VA Primary Care staff, Veterans Service Organization and Veterans.

The VA introduced the VA Online Scheduling app for veterans to improve scheduling and appointment reminders. The Online Scheduling app offers a secure, online way for Veterans to request and to self-schedule appointments at VA facilities and to ensure that they receive high-quality care.

Veterans can also download appointment dates to their personal calendars. This app has proven to enhance patient satisfaction, engagement and communications.

Locally, the VHSO Experience Office has added escort/concierge service and two new trollies to assist Veterans in getting to their appointments in a timely manner. Additionally, patient advocates have joined the team to assist Veterans with inpatient hospital stays and congressional inquiries.

Overall, the Patient Experience Office continues to help make VHSO the Veteran's destination of choice.



98%

COMPLETION RATE WITHIN 7 DAYS

92.4% 97.2%

TRUST SCORE

RESPECT SCORE

94.2%

AGGREGATE TRUST SCORE

Civic Development and Community Engagement

The Civic Development and Community Engagement (CDCE) mission is to strategically integrate volunteers, donations and community partners into VA operations so they may supplement and sustain the care and services provided to America's Veterans, their families and caregivers. CDCE recruits and places volunteers throughout the medical center and CBOC's. CDCE is the acceptance point for donations (exceptions are the Chief of Chaplain Service and the Medical Center Director.)

Gifts and Donations Monetary	\$10,541.25
Items	\$146,303.52
Total Value	\$157,894.77

Highlights

- Partnered with the NW Arkansas Foodbank to distribute over 1,000 food boxes to food-insecure Veterans. Secured donations (monetary & in-kind) for the Veterans Food Pantry (\$16,583)
- Successfully planned, funded, and executed the PACT Act VETFEST in less than 3 weeks. Estimated over 500 guests in attendance – Confirmed 271 Veterans in attendance with 242 Veterans screened, 17 new Veterans enrolled in the VHSO.
- Ensured that those Veterans that are with us over the long weekends (Federal holidays) and other celebrated events (Superbowl, Halloween, Flag Day, etc.) are not forgotten. For our Veterans participating in alcohol and drug rehabilitation we provide special occasion appropriate snacks, beverages, and games. We also ensure that our inpatients have something to brighten their bedside tables and tempt their tastebuds.



“The Jay VA clinic providers are awesome. They really care about patients and always treat me with dignity and respect. I am very thankful and fortunate to receive care there.”

“As usual, Fayetteville VA hospital did an outstanding job of taking care of me.”

“I've been associated with this VA since 1979. This hospital is fabulous, bright and a hospitable place. One all Veterans could be proud of. Thank you for what you do!”

“The Pharmacist I've dealt with (Team 3) is a true professional. She's smart, personable and easy to communicate with. I truly appreciate her.”



Specialty Care

VHSO's specialty care provides a crucial role in providing advanced medical service tailored to Veterans' specific needs. These areas of care include medicine, surgery, mental health, physical therapy, neurology, audiology and speech pathology, dentistry, ophthalmology, oncology, and women's health. VHSO supports the mission to ensure that all Veterans (men, women, LGBTQ+, race, national origin, age) receive equitable, high-quality and comprehensive health services in a sensitive and safe environment. The women Veteran population at VHSO is now at 4,682 Veterans. In response to this growth, VHSO applied for, and was awarded multiple grants to fund 17 women's health positions and to purchase equipment specific to improving health outcomes for women and children. These positions have been an integral part in improving women Veteran access to care. VHSO now has gynecology clinics in three locations with plans to add another.



Whole Health

Whole Health is more than a department, specialty, discipline, or even a collection of all of them - it is an entirely new system of living a healthier life. It is revolutionary because it departs from the traditional question that medicine asks, which is: "what is the matter with you?". Rather, it asks: "what matters TO you?". In responding to each person's individual answer, it then provides individualized plans to optimize health, well-being, and satisfaction. It does this by providing a MAP: Mission, Aspiration, and Purpose, and then surrounding the individual with a community of caring professionals. It taps into each person's priorities, whether it is self-improvement, self-awareness, family, hobbies, or pursuing their interests and passions. In doing so, it ties all these aspects of an individual's defining characteristics, and

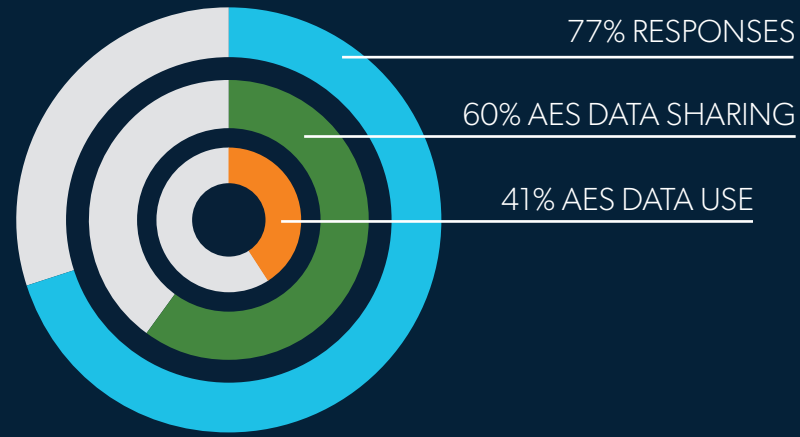
gives them personalized tools to take charge of their own well-being. Examples of these tools are yoga, meditation, tai-chi, healthy cooking, exercise, group activities, acupuncture, massage, chiropractic care, and much more. Adherence to these simple, intuitive activities have been shown to underpin the extreme longevity seen in the world's 'blue zones', and these principles are now being used to scientifically enhance the lives and well-being of our Veterans.



2023 ALL EMPLOYEE SURVEY (AES)

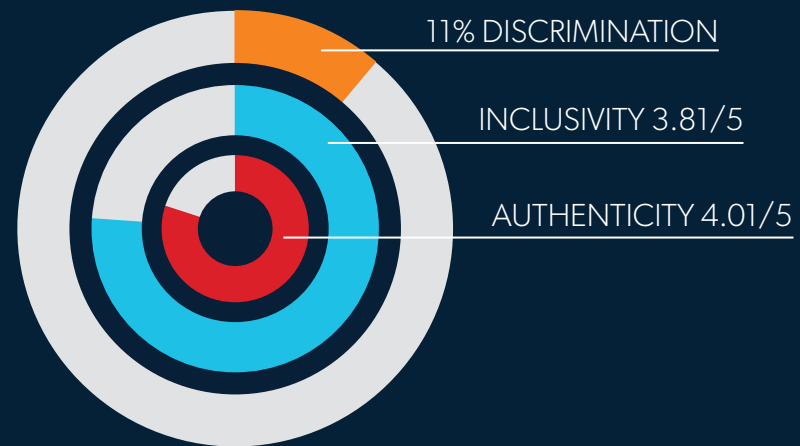
SETTING THE STAGE

Before we get to the most important data, a little context helps. Response rates, data use and sharing, Best Places to Work, and Organizational Health Index help show how people perceive the AES and their jobs overall. Higher scores are better.



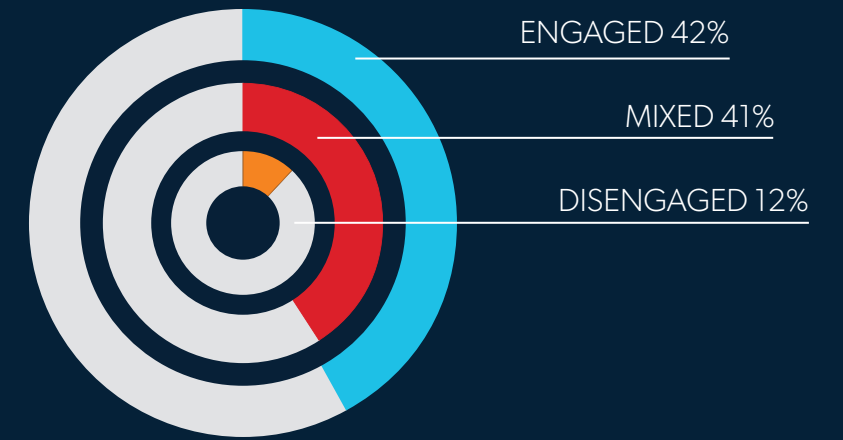
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION (DE&I)

If there are DE&I concerns, then it means everyone can't focus on VA's mission. These scores show whether people have felt discrimination (lower is better) and how they feel about five key aspects of equity and inclusion (higher is better). Inclusivity, Authenticity, and Opportunity focus on employee experience. Practices and Commitment focus on perceptions of organizational and supervisor effectiveness around DEI.



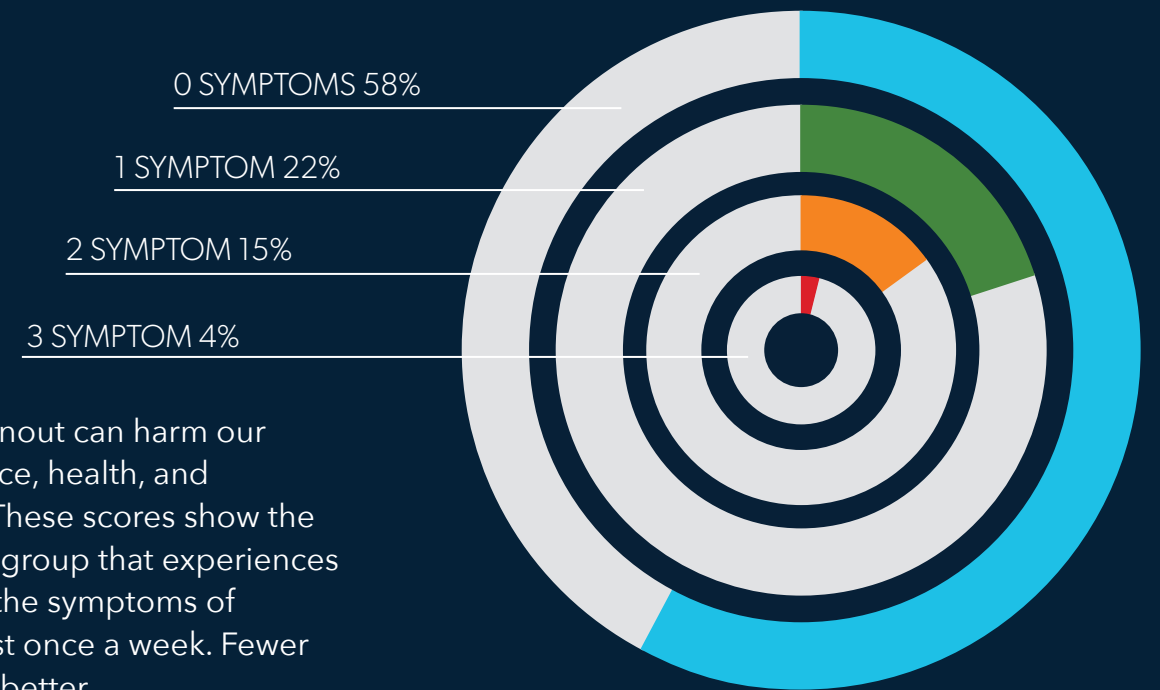
ENGAGEMENT

Engaged groups tend to perform better and are more satisfied with their work. These scores show the percent of people that fell into the engaged, mixed, and disengaged profiles. Higher engagement & lower disengagement is better.



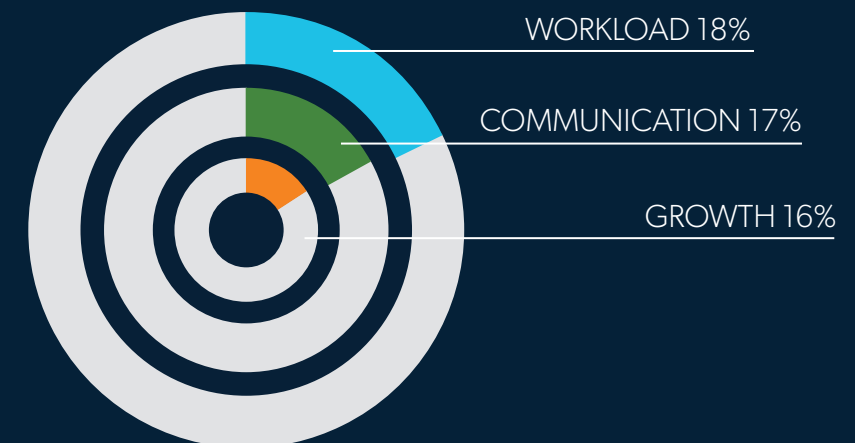
BURNOUT

Over time, burnout can harm our job performance, health, and relationships. These scores show the percent of the group that experiences 0, 1, 2, or 3 of the symptoms of burnout at least once a week. Fewer symptoms are better.



PRIORITIES

AES Priorities show which general aspects of the workplace that people in your group said they most wanted to work on over the next year. Priorities could be things people want to improve or things people want to maintain.



PACT ACT FACTS 2023

TOXIC EXPOSURE SCREENING (TES)

46,262

Unique Veterans Screened

21,920

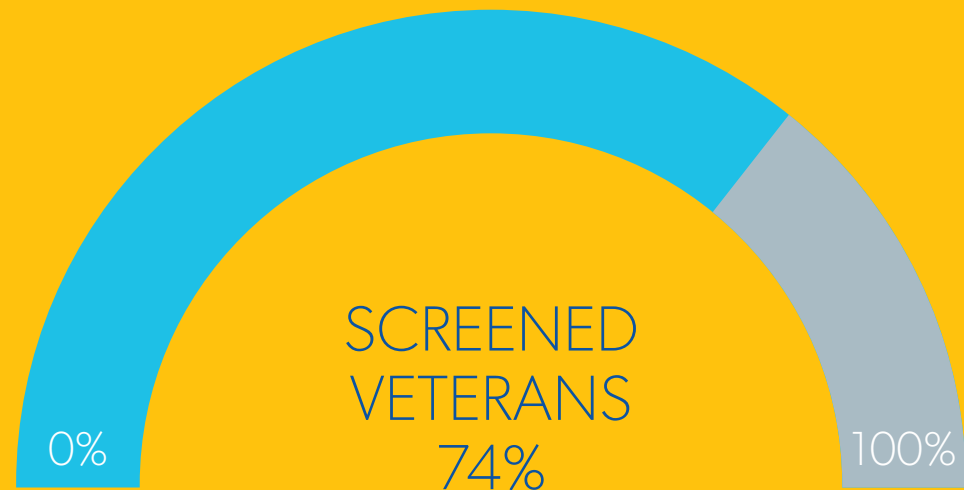
Unique Veterans Reporting at Least One Exposure Concern

47%

Percent of Veterans Reporting Exposure



> = 1 Endorsed Exposure	21,920	47%
Burn Pit	9,325	20%
Gulf War	1,868	4%
Agent Orange	7,626	16%
Radiation	1,867	4%
Camp Lejeune	1,272	3%
Other	5,208	11%
Declined	355	1%
Doesn't Know	2,366	5%
None	22,632	49%
Total	46,261	100%





VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks

www.va.gov/fayetteville-arkansas-health-care

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