

Changing the Face of Health Care...

One Veteran at a Time



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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



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Terry Gerigk Wolf, FACHE
Director and Chief Executive Officer
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

Dear VAPHS Partners,

In many ways the mission of VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System remains the same as it was when our three facilities first opened in 1925 (Heinz), 1953 (Highland), and 1954 (University). It's true that we have evolved into a world-class healthcare system with physicians, researchers, and front-line staff involved in groundbreaking medical advances each year.

With the trust of our Veterans earned over the decades, along with investments in people, technology and infrastructure, VAPHS has consistently provided the best care anywhere in state-of-the-art facilities with the most modern technology available. Evidence of our growth surrounds us, and all of it is a reflection of our commitment to those we serve—our Nation's Heroes.

During our 83-year tradition of excellence in Veterans' health care, our greatest resource by far has always been our mission-driven staff, whose dedication and commitment are without parallel. This past year several VA Pittsburgh staff members received prestigious national awards, including Dr. Paul Rogers, Vice President of Critical Care, who received the Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Award. In addition Dr. Gerald Goldstein, Research Career Scientist, received a Distinguished Lifetime Contribution to Neuropsychology Award and John J. Crawford, Chief of Police, became the first Chief of Police of the Year. VA Pittsburgh's Sgt. Luke Cassidy, a veteran injured in Iraq, received national attention for becoming VA's first amputee police officer.

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System sent eight employees, including an information technology professional, chaplain, psychologists, pharmacy staff, nurses, therapists, and police officers to San Antonio, Texas, in September to aid our fellow Americans in the relief efforts during Hurricane Ike.

In January we dedicated our brand new, modern parking garage. I was very pleased throughout the year to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from Veterans and their families who have enjoyed more efficient access to our University Drive Division. Late in the year we also debuted a redesigned Web site with a new address, www.pittsburgh.va.gov, and a total enhancement of our entire phone system.

Impressive? Yes. Finished? No. Our strategic plan has laid out even more aggressive goals for the next three years, with the four key goals of providing veteran-centered care; creating a comprehensive customer support center; building a culture of innovation, safety and transformation; and becoming a responsive referral center for all Veterans in the western market of VA Healthcare - VISN 4. We will also be excitedly preparing for the 2011 National Veterans Wheelchair Games, which will be hosted by VAPHS in Pittsburgh.

Thank you to all of our Veterans, employees, and other partners for another successful year at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System and for working together to achieve even more success in 2009.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads 'Terry Gerigk Wolf'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

NUMBERS TO KNOW 2008



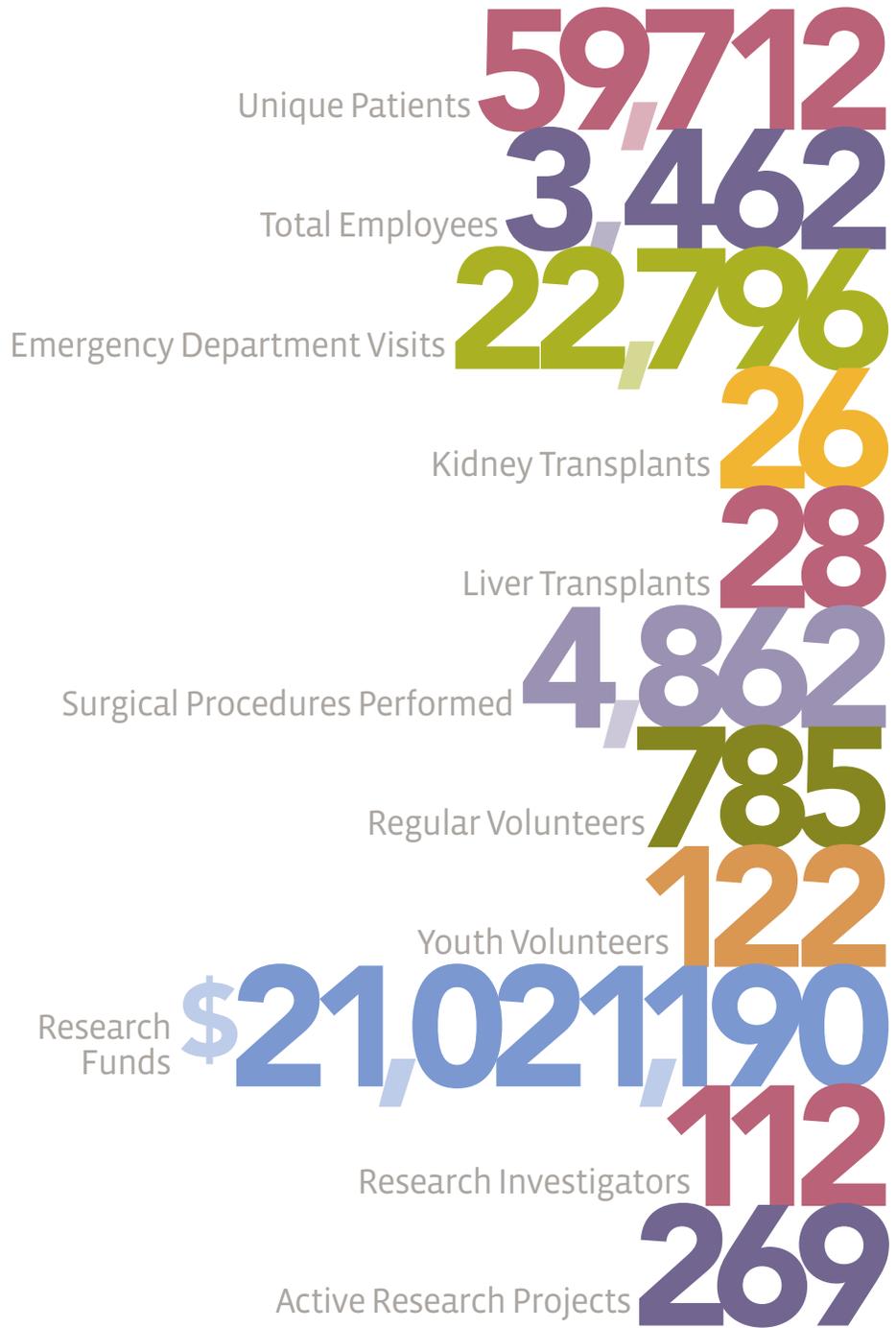
Marty Cleypool | Navy

“They treat me as good as any doctor on the outside. They treat me better than the doctors on the outside. They show compassion, interest and care.”



John Brooks | Army

“Excellent. Real nice. When you come in, there’s pretty much no waiting at all. Everyone’s real friendly. The doctors, the patients, too.”



2008 TOP TEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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Enriching inpatient psychiatry... one Veteran at a time.

In 2008 VAPHS renovated three inpatient behavioral health units and added a brand new, outdoor inpatient psychiatry patient area at the Highland Drive Division. These renovations



meet enhanced requirements for patient safety and suicide prevention as well as co-locating the units into one building, which has enhanced our abilities for cross coverage by psychiatric staff.

The continual programming development and revision are resulting in a dynamic shift in unit organizational culture, enhancing the focus on recovery. The substantial collaboration between inpatient nursing and the Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center has sustained and supported ongoing research and treatment advancements.

Providing a dignified end of life... one Veteran at a time.

The VAPHS Palliative and Hospice Care Program provides a continuum of care to Veteran patients who are making the transition into end-of-life. During the past year, renovations have created more patient privacy and more homelike patient bedrooms. This included



removal of the traditional nurses' station to add a full living room with fireplace, bookshelves and a large mural. A full kitchen with comfortable adjoining seating area was designed in the old patient lounge. This is now referred to as the Great Room where residents, families, staff, and volunteers can cook, serve and enjoy a variety of items requested and preferred by the residents.

Changing the world... one charity at a time.

Our community is at the heart of the work we do here. The people who live in the neighborhoods around our facilities are our families, friends, business colleagues, and our current and future workforce. We are dedicated to improving Veterans' lives through innovation in health care while we're at work, and committed to improving the world around us by making the Combined Federal Campaign a top priority. This year's campaign was the most successful CFC in



Jennifer Haun | Army

"I've been treated just like the same as when we were active duty. The caregivers have been real good; informative and they've been helpful to me with the problems I've been having."

VAPHS history. More than a quarter of a million dollars was raised for charity by VA Pittsburgh employees, including more than \$87,000 pledged for a VAPHS Fisher House. 126 employees compassionately gave their time to serve as team leaders, keyworkers, or campaign coordinators in addition to fulfilling their regular job duties. Good health, better quality of life—these are things all of us want for our Veterans and our community.

- Top Charities VAPHS Employees Chose to Pledge To:**
1. Fisher House Foundation
 2. Animal Friends
 3. Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
 4. Little Sisters of the Poor
 5. Western PA Humane Society
 6. (tie) Make-A-Wish Foundation of America
(tie) American Red Cross of Southwestern PA
(tie) Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pittsburgh
 7. (tie) Susan G. Komen for the Cure
(tie) Gilda's Club Worldwide
(tie) Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh

Achieving recognition for leading modern health care delivery... one award at a time.

VA Pittsburgh's Chief of Staff also serves as a Professor of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh and the Program Director for the VHA MRSA Prevention Initiative. During 2008 Dr. Rajiv Jain received two prestigious, national awards for leading health care modernization throughout the Nation.

On May 29, 2008, Dr. Jain received the 2007 Mark Wolcott Award for Excellence in Clinical Care Leadership. The award was established in 1996 to recognize outstanding Veterans Health



PHOTO COURTESY | Sam Kittner – Kittner.com

Administration health care practitioners who are deserving of special recognition for their contributions in enhancing clinical care. The recipient of the Excellence in Clinical Care Leadership award is a health care practitioner in a leadership position who has demonstrated excellence through exceptional support for direct patient care providers, including support of innovations enhancing the quality of direct patient care.

Dr. Jain was also presented with the Citizen Services Sammies award on September 16, 2008. The Partnership for Public Service presented eight Service to America Medals (Sammies) to outstanding public servants whose remarkable work is making the world safer, healthier and greener. The Citizen Services Medal recognizes a federal employee for a significant contribution to the Nation in activities related to social services.

Dr. Jain implemented and continues to lead a national initiative that began at VAPHS to reduce and prevent Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). Since his appointment as Chief of Staff at VAPHS in November 2000, Dr. Jain has led numerous clinical improvement initiatives.

“Doctors are excellent. All the nurses, everybody. The treatment has been phenomenal. Everybody knows what’s going on with my treatments and everything else. There’s no miscommunications, everything’s right up front. They let me know absolutely everything that’s going on. It’s a great facility, it’s clean. Everything’s really, really good.”



Arne Dahlgren | Navy

2008 TOP TEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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Refining health care practices to achieve better quality of life and best possible outcomes... one research project at a time.

Paul M. Palevsky, MD, Chief of the VAPHS Renal Section, was the principal investigator and study chairman for the first VA Cooperative Study chaired by a VAPHS physician/investigator. The results of this study were presented at the annual meeting of the American Thoracic Society on May 20, 2008, with simultaneous online publication of the primary study manuscript by the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

This VA/NIH (National Institute of Health) Acute Renal Failure Trial Network Study included a multi-center, randomized controlled trial comparing a strategy of intensive renal replacement therapy to a more conventional strategy of less-intensive renal replacement therapy. 1,124 patients enrolled in the trial at 27 VA and university-affiliated medical centers between November 2003 and July 2007. The study demonstrated that intensive renal support in critically ill patients with acute kidney injury did not



Clarence Dickerson | Army

decrease mortality, improve recovery of kidney function, or reduce the rate of non-renal organ failure as compared with the less-intensive management strategy.

Utilizing smooth communications to fine-tune specialty care... one Veteran at a time.

A Centralized Consult Management Office opened in April 2008, and currently consists of two registered nurses and one program analyst. The goal of this new program is to improve the flow of consults from spoke hospitals and improve communication between primary care providers and consulting practitioners. These three staff members review and eliminate unnecessary consults utilizing a standardized review process based on national criteria and facilitate the scheduling of consult appointments.



Creating state-of-the-art facilities... one construction project at a time.

During the fall of 2008, VA Pittsburgh activated and dedicated an administration building and Veterans Recovery Center at the Heinz Division. U.S. Senator Arlen Specter served as the keynote speaker for a dedication ceremony held on November 25, 2008, after the buildings opened for use. Both buildings, worth \$34 million, were designed by Astorino and constructed by P.J. Dick, Incorporated.

“I love the VA. I get very good care. When I have a problem, they take care of it right away. The doctors are excellent. The nurses are excellent also.”



office (fiscal, accounts, medical records), police service training center, contracting, and credentialing & privileging. The environmentally-friendly administration building is certified in the Leadership in Energy and Environment Design Green Building Rating System.

Facilitating fluent staff communications... one employee at a time.

On April 7, 2008, Terry Gerigk Wolf's new Director's Web Page was launched. This internal Web page was created to open up communication lines between the Director and all VAPHS employees. Three components (a personal Blog, message board, and an archival page to store all e-mail messages sent to all employees from the Director) work together to facilitate interactive communications and address many different types of issues.

The Veterans Recovery Center includes a revolutionary style of domiciliary in individual residential living villas as well as housing vocational services, Health Care for Homeless Veterans, and Psychiatric Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program. This innovative design concept will create an environment of "Veterans living in the community," and provide improved resources for homeless and vocational Veterans.

A contemporary two-story administration building encompasses most VAPHS business functions including the following: recruitment center, human resources, public affairs, business



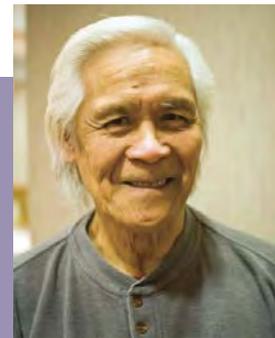
Between the spring launch and the end of the fiscal year,



23 VAPHS-related entries and one personal entry from the Director were posted on the blog. In addition three guest entries from other leadership staff were added. 35 employees

became subscribers and 171 comments were submitted. The blog received more than 40,000 views. In addition 268 questions were addressed on the Q&A Message Board. Workgroups and teams have been formed to address issues and questions revealed through the Director's Web Page and staff utilizing these resources have expressed positive and appreciative feedback.

"The staff, the doctors and health care professionals, are tremendous. I used to work here and the renovations that have taken place are some of the best in the country. I had a massive heart attack and the care that I got and the professionalism on all levels was superb."



Samson Paguia | Air Force

2008 TOP TEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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Futuristic technology reforming results... one Veteran at a time.

The first procedure at VAPHS utilizing the Hansen Sensei Robotic System was performed by Dr. Alaa Shalaby on November 6, 2008, in the Cardiac Electrophysiology Lab. VAPHS is the only medical center in Pennsylvania that has a robotic system designed for cardiac mapping/ablation procedures. The Sensei Robotic Catheter System is designed to allow physicians to place mapping catheters in hard-to-reach anatomical locations within the heart easily and with stability during the diagnostic phase of cardiac arrhythmia treatment. The Sensei system is compatible with fluoroscopy, ultrasound, 3D surface map and patient electrocardiogram data, and is adaptable to any existing electrophysiology procedure room.



Perfecting efficient processes... one project at a time.

A VAPHS Systems Redesign Project Team was initiated in 2008. Systems Redesign is a national project designed to reduce the wait times for Veterans waiting to see a VA clinician. This national project has the support of VHA physicians and administrators from around the nation.

The VAPHS Systems Redesign project team is supervised by the Associate Director and led by Robert Monte, Systems Redesign Director. During the next year Systems Redesign Committees will be evaluating and redesigning the following systems: Document Tracking & Processing; Human Resources Recruitment; Acquisitions & Contracting; Communication Center; Post-Discharge Follow-Up; Customer Support Center; Work Order Process; Medical Trainee Processing; Surgical Supply Management.



Ralph Golford | Navy

“I think it’s phenomenal. Everybody’s always so nice. It seems like they don’t dilly dally around. They keep me real informed as to what’s going on. Everybody’s just great. It’s almost like they become friends after awhile. Everybody’s on a first-name basis. It’s nice.”

2008 ACHIEVEMENTS

Customizing services to the needs of our newest heroes... one Veteran at a time.

VAPHS has expanded our Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Clinic and increased outreach to returning Veterans. VA Pittsburgh has identified staff at each division working in a coordinated effort to reach military personnel returning from OEF/OIF to help them make a seamless transition to Veterans' health care. VAPHS outreach efforts include sending letters and placing phone calls to recently discharged servicemen and women, sending representatives to guard and reserve units to meet with returning personnel, and coordinating the continuity of ambulatory and inpatient care upon discharge or transfer from military hospitals such as Walter Reed and Bethesda. Programs available to our newest Veterans include behavioral health, primary care, dental and vision care, psychological, rehabilitation, polytrauma, social work and family benefits counseling, community resource information and referral assistance services.



Modernizing our healthcare system infrastructure... one building at a time.

In December 2008 the Department of Veterans Affairs awarded a \$75.8 million contract to P.J. Dick, Incorporated (a Pittsburgh-based company), for the construction of the Consolidation Building at our University Drive Division. The Consolidation Building is a six-story building providing outpatient services and 79 secure, private psychiatric beds. It will also include an education center, library, and chapel. By co-locating medical and behavioral care, it will streamline patient care

and improve patient safety. The new facility will enhance patient privacy and create a home-like environment for Veterans in recovery-based treatment.



Bringing quality health care closer to home... one clinic at a time.

During April 2008 VAPHS hosted ribbon-cutting & dedication ceremonies for the relocation of two community-based



outpatient clinics, Monaca and Greensburg. Congressman Tim Murphy was the keynote speaker for the Greensburg event while Congressman Jason Altmire was the keynote speaker for the Monaca event.

Access to care for Veterans continues to be a top priority for VAPHS. Our Veterans deserve not only the best health care available but also care that is easily accessible and convenient.



Commanding professional recognition of highest quality care... one accreditation at a time.

On May 21, 2008, VAPHS received notice from The Joint Commission that they granted our healthcare system full accreditation for all services surveyed under the applicable manuals: Behavioral Health Care, Home Care, Hospitals, and Long Term Care. The Joint Commission is an independent, not-for-profit organization which sets the standards by which health care quality is measured in America and around the world. To maintain and earn accreditation, organizations must have an extensive on-site review by a team of Joint Commission health care professionals at least once every three years to evaluate the quality and safety of care provided.

The Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs reviewed VAPHS during a visit in February 2008 and granted VAPHS full accreditation in September. Through the rigorous accreditation process of the independent, non-profit accrediting body, organizations must demonstrate that they have built extensive safeguards into every level of their research operation and that they adhere to the highest standards for research.

Being honored for first-class patient care... one award at a time.

VA Pittsburgh received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines-Coronary Artery Disease Silver Performance Achievement Award in April 2008. This award recognized VAPHS' commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of cardiac care that effectively improves treatment of patients hospitalized with coronary artery disease.

2008 STATISTICS

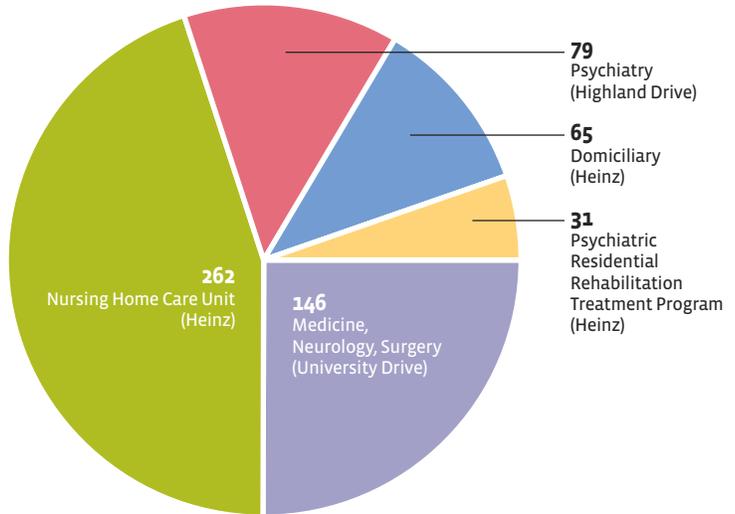
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Numbers Achieved... One Veteran at a Time

Total Outpatient Visits	521,635
University Drive	285,189
Highland Drive	145,833
Heinz Division	30,853
Westmoreland County	15,363
St. Clairsville, Ohio	12,905
Washington County	12,513
Beaver County	11,068
Fayette County	7,911
Total Inpatients Treated	10,252
Hospital	8,003
Extended Care	946
Behavioral Health	1,303

Providing Specialized Care... One Bed at a Time

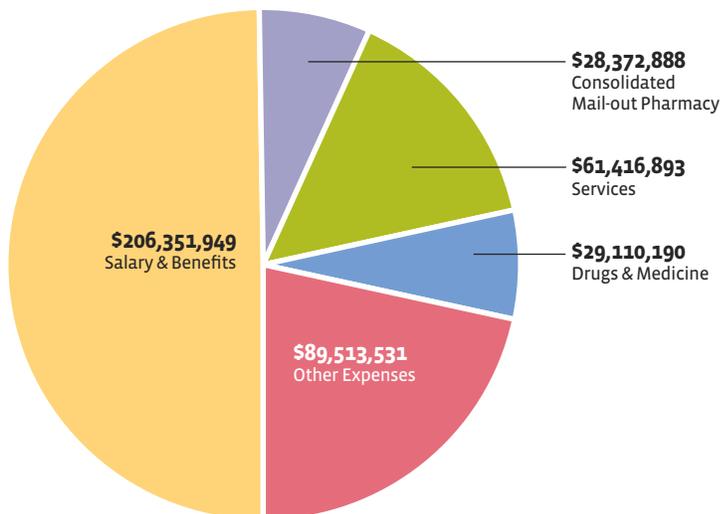
Total Operating Beds 583



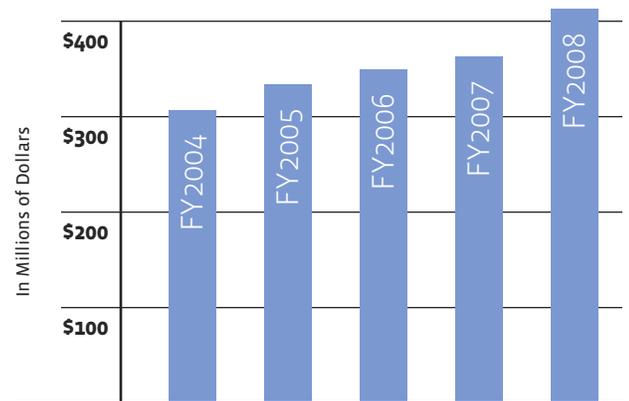
Veterans from 48 states, Guam and Puerto Rico received treatment at VAPHS during fiscal year 2008.

Financing the Best Care Anywhere... One Dollar at a Time

Operating Expenses \$414,765,451



Total Medical Care Collections Fund \$20,471,779
Community Gifts & Donations \$956,617



Operating Expenses Comparison by Fiscal Year



Bonnie S. Graham, MBA
Associate Director
Since December 2007

Terry Gerigk Wolf, FACHE
Director and
Chief Executive Officer
Since April 2007

Rajiv Jain, MD, FACP
Chief of Staff
Since November 2000

Ira J. Richmond, RN, MS, CS, CNAA
Associate Director for
Patient Care Services
Since March 2002

John Gennaro, FACHE, MBA, MHSA
Associate Director for
Site Management
Since May 2008

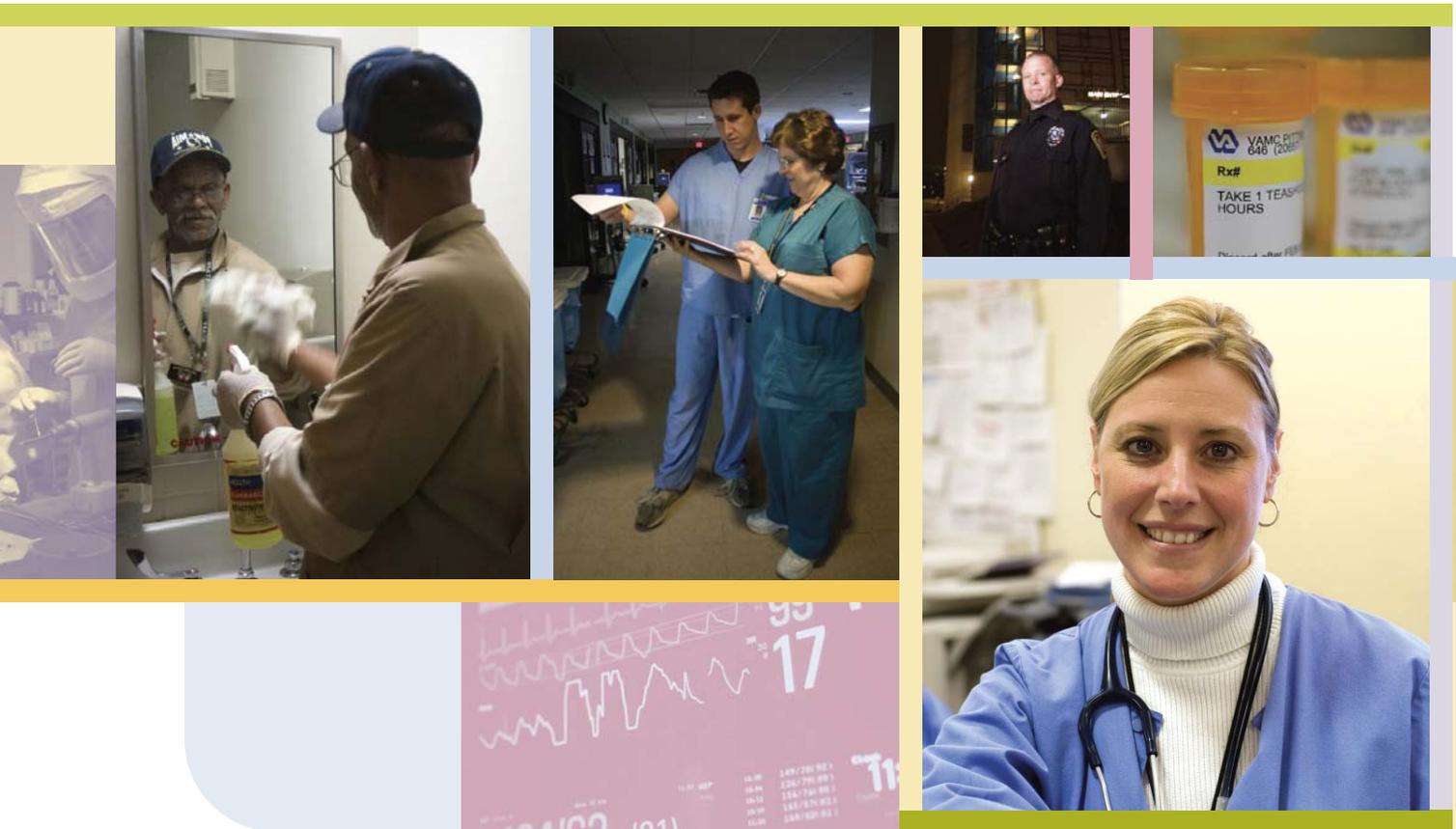


To serve our Veterans, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System is creating the healthcare system of the future. The foundation of this healthcare system model is to be a leader in modern health care delivery and cutting-edge technology while serving our Nation's Heroes.

VAPHS consists of three divisions, primarily serving Veterans throughout the tri-state area of western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. VA Pittsburgh also supports five community-based outpatient clinics and three Veterans Outreach Centers. Furthermore VAPHS is the specialized care referral center for the western half of VA Healthcare - VISN 4. VAPHS is a national liver and kidney transplant center and a bariatric referral center as well as a regional referral center for several specialty programs.

VA Pittsburgh provides a full range of state-of-the-art patient care services, as well as education and research, and is earning international distinction for leading national initiatives to drastically reduce hospital-acquired infections and rejuvenate the way health care is provided all across the world. VAPHS is planning boldly for the future with a multi-million dollar major construction project to consolidate the three-division health care system into two divisions and provide a state-of-the-art, improved care environment.

At VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, we know Veterans.



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