
A COMMUNITY OF HEALTH CARE EXCELLENCE



VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
2010 ANNUAL REPORT

FISHER HOUSE FOUNDATION » PITTSBURGH STEELERS » VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY »
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA » U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT » KNIGHTS OF
COLUMBUS » VETERANS RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF PITTSBURGH » DRESS FOR SUCCESS PITTSBURGH
» CENTRAL BLOOD BANK » PITTSBURGH PIRATES » PROJECT CHILDSAFE » GREENSBURG VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT BLOODHOUND SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM » SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY » VETER-
ANS PLACE OF WASHINGTON BOULEVARD » SHEPHERD'S HEART VETERANS HOME » COMMUNITY DESIGN
CENTER OF PITTSBURGH » AMERICAN RED CROSS » MILITARY ORDER OF THE COOTIE » AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS » GRAINGER HOUSE » SHARING AND CARING » ITALIAN AMERICAN
WAR VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES » ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR » THE CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE »
EAT-N-PARK » SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY STUDENT VETERANS CHAPTER » ASSUMPTION COLLEGE »
EXPLORER'S CLUB » MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA » BENEVOLENT & PROTECTIVE
ORDER OF THE ELKS » MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART » BOSTON UNIVERSITY » UNITED
VOLUNTARY SERVICES » GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS » DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY »
SUBMARINE VETERANS OF WWII » JEWISH WAR VETERANS » GRAY'S CREEKSIDE MANOR » CARNEGIE
MELLON UNIVERSITY » ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERIAN » UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI » LA SOCIETE DES
QUARANTE HOMMES AT HUIT CHEVAUX » WEXFORD HOUSE NURSING CENTER » OLIVER HIGH SCHOOL
JUNIOR ARMY ROTC » POLISH LEGION OF AMERICAN VETERANS » THE SALVATION ARMY » SUPREME
COOTIETTE CLUB OF THE UNITED STATES » INDIANA UNIVERSITY » GREATER PITTSBURGH LITERACY
COUNCIL » MARCONI COMMUNICATIONS » ALBERT GALLATIN HIGH SCHOOL » UNITY GOLDEN AGE CLUB »
OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY » ROLLING THUNDER » PATRIOT GUARD RIDERS » SPALDING UNIVERSITY »
CARE UNLIMITED » 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION » DUKE UNIVERSITY » CENTER FOR ORGAN
RECOVERY & EDUCATION » COMCAST » WALDEN UNIVERSITY » HILLMAN FOUNDATION » GRANE
HEALTHCARE » MARSHALL UNIVERSITY » AKOVA » CONSTRUCTION JUNCTION » PEDICONE ENGINEERING
CONSULTANTS » TRIB TOTAL MEDIA » TRANSCARE CORPORATION » ROSALIND FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY »
COLONIAL GARDENS GUEST HOUSE » PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY » THE MISSION CONTINUES
» US AIRWAYS » ROTARY CLUB OF PITTSBURGH » AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING » U.S. NATIONAL GUARD
» AMVETS » WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY » MERCY HOSPITAL » THE THORNE GROUP HOME HEALTH
SERVICES » NAVY MOTHERS' CLUBS OF AMERICA » RUTGERS UNIVERSITY » MILITARY ORDER OF THE
COOTIE AUXILIARY » INTERIM HEALTHCARE OF PITTSBURGH » U.S. MARSHALS SERVICE » WRIGHT STATE
UNIVERSITY » HELPMATES, INC. HOME CARE HEALTH AGENCY » THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL
SCHOOL OF NURSING » SPRINGDALE DISTRICT SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION » BLINDED VETERANS
ASSOCIATION » BRADFORD SCHOOL » MORIARTY CERTIFIED HOME HEALTH CARE » UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS » NATIONAL CAREER SCHOOL » THE LADIES AUXILIARY OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE
HEART » PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE » CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA »
HAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL » ALLEGHENY COUNTY COURT » H.J. HEINZ COMPANY » U.S. FEDERAL
PROTECTIVE SERVICE » AMVETS — NATIONAL LADIES AUXILIARY » VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA »
UNITED STATES STEEL CORPORATION » THE NORTHERN AREA MULTI SERVICE CENTER » ELIZABETHTOWN
COLLEGE » FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION » SAINT MARGARET MEMORIAL HOSPITAL » EASTERN AREA
ADULT SERVICES » BROOK COUNTY SENIOR CENTER » UNITED STATES AIR FORCE » TRINITY EPISCOPAL
SCHOOL OF MINISTRY » FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT » CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF HEALTH
SCIENCES » VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS USA » LADIES AUXILIARY TO THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
» GREENSBURG VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY » NURSEFINDERS OF WESTERN PA » AMERICAN GOLD STAR
MOTHERS » U.S. NAVY » MARINE CORPS LEAGUE » OHIO VALLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING
» JEWISH WAR VETERANS AUXILIARY » DREXEL UNIVERSITY » PRN HEALTH SERVICES » CARRIAGE INN
HOME CARE » DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY » HOME CARE ADVANTAGE » JOHN J. KANE
REGIONAL CENTER - SCOTT TOWNSHIP » YMCA » SAINT FRANCIS UNIVERSITY » PITTSBURGH BUREAU OF
POLICE » EVEREST INSTITUTE » NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL » ADVANCED HOME HEALTH »
BAYADA NURSES » ARCADIA HEALTH CARE » STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO » THE U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE » ALLEGHENY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE » UNIVERSITY OF AKRON » MAXIM
HEALTHCARE SERVICES » THE AMERICAN LEGION » MOUNT ALYSIUS COLLEGE » JOHN J. KANE REGIONAL
CENTER - ROSS TOWNSHIP » MEADOWS MANOR PERSONAL CARE HOME » U.S. BANK » CONCORDIA
LUTHERAN MINISTRIES » EXTENDED FAMILY CARE » MIDDLE ATLANTIC-GREAT LAKES ORGANIZED CRIME

TO ALL OUR PARTNERS:

In the last 85 years, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System has proudly served our community in many ways. We have operated as an innovative outlier, a medical authority, a charitable neighbor and a stalwart friend. Our roots have deepened through the decades and become inextricably entwined in the fabric of Pittsburgh.

Today, our commitment to community—and its commitment to us—is stronger than ever. We watch over and care for our Nation's heroes, and the nation seems to respond in kind.

Perhaps this is why, when we sat down in late 2010 to plan out this publication, one constant theme pervaded our brainstorming session: community.

As you will soon read, we spent 2010 **strengthening our community** by enhancing our medical services and facilities to ensure that Veterans received nothing short of cutting-edge care. These improvements involved investing in high technology, advancing research and streamlining services for new Veterans and female Veterans.

We also **partnered with community** in our quest to provide Veterans with the very best care anywhere (here, I invite you to check out the extensive—but by no means complete—list of our 2010 community partners, which fills the backdrop of this spread). These collaborations benefited nearly all aspects of our health care system, including providing priceless educational opportunities for tomorrow's medical experts, extra support for caregivers and targeted aid for homeless Veterans.

In short, VA Pittsburgh takes our roles as a health care leader and a community leader seriously.

Thanks to a steadfast commitment to serving our Nation's heroes, we raised the bar for Veteran-centered care—and medical care—in 2010.

I simply cannot wait to do it again in 2011.

Very respectfully,



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





LAW ENFORCEMENT NETWORK » CARLOW UNIVERSITY » BEHEL PERSONAL CARE HOME » VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION EXTENDED SERVICES » PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY » SETON HILL UNIVERSITY » AMERICAN LIVER FOUNDATION » PITTSBURGH FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD » OHIO UNIVERSITY » PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY » GOLDEN YEARS HOME HEALTH » PINE-RICHLAND HIGH SCHOOL » COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY » THE PHLEBOTOMY TRAINING CENTER » JEWISH WOMEN INTERNATIONAL » FOX CHAPEL HIGH SCHOOL » LOWE'S HOME IMPROVEMENT » NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY » CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS » PERSONAL-TOUCH HOME HEALTH SERVICES » LADIES AUXILIARY TO THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART » FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY » HOMEMAKER-HOME HEALTH AIDE SERVICE OF BEAVER COUNTY » KATEL HOME HEALTH AGENCY » GOLDEN LIVINGCENTER -MONROEVILLE » CHINA-BURMA-INDIA VETERANS ASSOCIATION » PITTSBURGH TECHNICAL INSTITUTE » 911TH AIRLIFT WING OF THE PITTSBURGH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AIR RESERVE STATION » PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL » U.S. ARMY RESERVE CENTER » DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH » ARGOSY UNIVERSITY » NATIONAL CEMETERY OF THE ALLEGHENIES » GOLDEN LIVINGCENTER - MURRYSVILLE » UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON » ARCHDIOCESE FOR MILITARY SERVICES OF THE USA » MAXIM HEALTHCARE SERVICES » CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA » ALLEGHENY COUNTY POLICE » NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY » KEYSTONE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA » UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH » ALBANY COLLEGE » GOODWILL EMPLOYMENT TRAINING CENTER » ENTENMANN'S BAKERY OUTLET » RUSSELL HOUSE ESTATE NURSING HOME » OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY » HOME INSTEAD SENIOR CARE » CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY » HOME CARE ADVANTAGE » DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS » U.S. ARMY » COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY » JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER PITTSBURGH » SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY » CECIL TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT » GOLDEN LIVINGCENTER - SOUTH HILLS » SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY » NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY » CATHOLIC CHARITIES WEST VIRGINIA » BEAVER VALLEY NURSING AND REHABILITATION » COMFORT KEEPERS » NORTH ALLEGHENY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL » PITTSBURGH JOB CORPS » THE COMMITTEE FOR HANCOCK COUNTY SENIOR CITIZENS » WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY » PROJECT HEALING WATERS » VISITPITTSBURGH » GOLDEN LIVING CENTER - MT. LEBANON » INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA » WEST PENN ALLEGHENY HEALTH SYSTEM » CINCINNATI STATE TECHNICAL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE » OAKLEAF PERSONAL CARE HOME » SUPERIOR HOME SERVICES » PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE » FALK SCHOOL » DEACONESS COLLEGE » MOUNT VERNON OF SOUTH PARK ASSISTED LIVING » HOME DELIVERY HEALTHCARE » GANNON UNIVERSITY » GOLDEN LIVINGCENTER — UNION-TOWN » ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY » DREW PERSONAL CARE HOME » VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION » LENAPE SCHOOL OF PRACTICAL NURSING » OAK HILL NURSING AND REHAB CENTER » ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COURTS » MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY » CASE WESTERN UNIVERSITY » DEPAUL UNIVERSITY MINISTRY » SHADY SIDE ACADEMY » MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY » GRACELAND UNIVERSITY » SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION & ENCOURAGEMENT OF BARBERSHOP QUARTET SINGING IN AMERICA » PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH » TOWNSHIP OF O'HARA » FERRARO PERSONAL CARE HOME » LAKE ERIE COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE & SCHOOL OF PHARMACY » KAPLAN CAREER INSTITUTE » HERITAGE COMPLETE HOME CARE » LOVING CARE AGENCY » SOUTHWESTERN VETERANS CENTER » CHATHAM UNIVERSITY » BOLGER COUNTRY CLUB MANOR » LANCIA BELMONT MANOR » CLARION UNIVERSITY » ALLEGHENY COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES » LAROCHE COLLEGE » VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION OF INDIANA COUNTY » HUMBERT LANE HEALTH CARE CENTER » BUTLER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE » CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL » SERENITY PINES PERSONAL CARE HOMES » BALDWIN HEALTH CENTER » GALLAGHER HOME HEALTH SERVICES » COMMUNITY CARE FAYETTE HOME CARE AND HOSPICE » SHUMAN JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER » PORT AUTHORITY OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY » BELMONT MANOR NURSING HOME » FOREST INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY » PAULIN'S PERSONAL CARE HOME

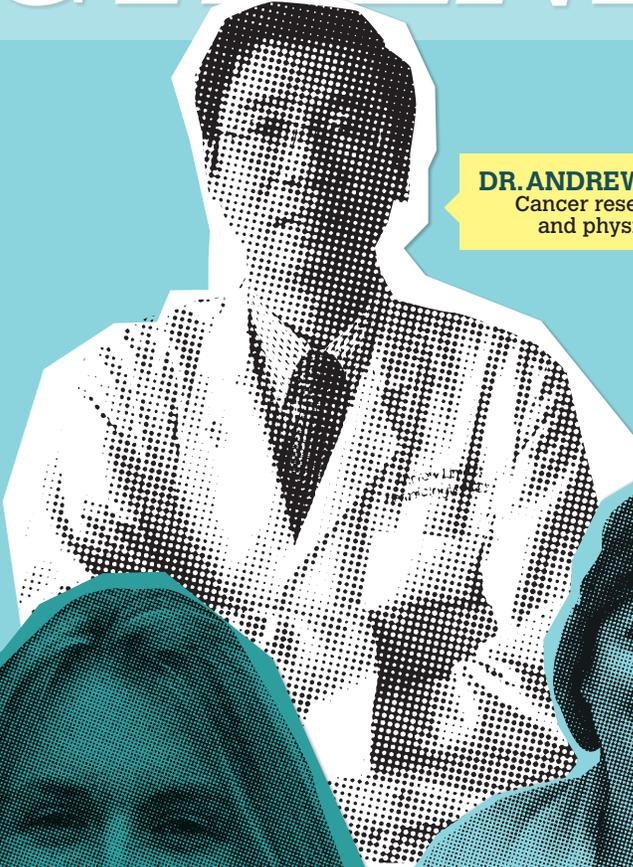
“WHAT WE ACHIEVE INWARDLY

STRENGTHENING



At VA Pittsburgh, Veterans are the heart of our health care family. Every day, we work, innovate and advocate in their honor. Everything we do—every improvement we make—fulfills one end goal: to give America's heroes the very best health care anywhere. And we do mean anywhere.

In short, Veterans deserve world-class care, and we move medical mountains to give it to them.



DR. ANDREW LIMAN
Cancer researcher
and physician



DR. MELISSA MCNEIL
Medical director
of the Healthy
Women's Center



ANGELA GROVE
Veteran



SANDY CRAVEN
Major construction coordinator

WILL CHANGE OUTER REALITY.” PLUTARCH

OUR COMMUNITY

DR. ALI F. SONEL

Cardiologist and
associate chief of
staff of research
and development

**PRACHI
ASHER**
Chief of
biomedical
engineering

DR. VIDA PASSERO
Cancer researcher
and physician

**DR. MICHAEL
BONINGER**
Medical director of the
Human Engineering
Research Laboratories



STRENGTHENING

→ BY ENHANCING SERVICES



James Martorella

Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Program Manager

This current war is unlike any other. Our troops are returning home with financial, marital and behavioral health issues. Many have served multiple tours, and the jarring transition from civilian life to deployment has taken its toll. Thanks to advancements in armor and medicine, men and women are surviving combat, but coming back with severe injuries like amputations, vision loss and traumatic brain injury.

Our clinic operates as a one-stop shop for this new era of troops. We give all new Veterans post-deployment clinic screenings for traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. We take their military history and give full psychosocial and medical assessments. If necessary, we offer behavioral health care or arrange for specialty consults.

Our clinic helped Richard Green in this way. When I first met Richard, he was frustrated and scared. So, we worked quickly. We set him up with our social worker and introduced him to therapy groups both here at VA Pittsburgh and at a local Vet Center. We also connected him to a wide variety of specialty VA services.

Our goal is to advocate on behalf of Veterans like Richard, so that they do not have to navigate the VA system on their own. We have contacts throughout the health care system, and we use these contacts to help expedite services and assist with convenient scheduling.

Today, Richard is doing great. He is enjoying life. He likes to garden and cook. I am proud of him—of how far he has come. And the best thing is, he can always come back. We are always happy to see him walk through our door.

OUR COMMUNITY FOR NEW VETERANS

Richard K. Green, 48
Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran

When I left Walter Reed Army Medical Center in 2008, I was ill. I had just learned that I had multiple sclerosis. I was frustrated because I was not ready to leave the military after 28 years. And I was depressed from having a disease that could not be cured.

I arrived at VA Pittsburgh a total wreck. I was scared. I had nowhere to live. I did not have enough funds to get myself going. I was alone. Suicide was my next answer.

The OEF/OIF clinic gave me the help that I needed.

James and his colleagues connected me with outside organizations, like Rolling Thunder, who loaned me money to find a place to live. The OEF/OIF clinic also helped me get a scooter and adaptive equipment for my car. They made sure that I had ramps added at home and that my benefits were all straight. I began seeing a psychiatrist and that was a big, big help. They even arranged to get my family Christmas presents this year...**I have relied on the clinic for everything, and, thanks to them, things are looking up.**

Today, I have a wonderful fiancée. She stays behind me no matter what I do. We are moving to California this spring. James and his team gave me the inspiration to stay healthy. So, now I go the gym to keep my limbs limber....These guys have been my family. They have helped me to the extreme.

And I am still here today because of them.

EMPLOYEES

make up the OEF/OIF post-deployment primary care clinic.



3,000

(and counting)

VETERANS

currently use the OEF/OIF clinic.

HOURS SPENT

on average, with each OEF/OIF Veteran during their initial clinic visit.



25,512

OUTPATIENT VISITS by OEF/OIF Veterans using VA Pittsburgh in 2010.

STRENGTHENING BY PIONEERING



» **10 PATENTS** held by VAPHS's Human Engineering Research Laboratories. ■ **1,194 VETERANS** involved in research in 2010, up from 846 in 2009. ■ **812**

» **VAPHS OUTPERFORMS VA FACILITIES NATIONWIDE IN TERMS OF** • ensuring that outpatients ages 50 and older receive their annual flu shot.

OUR COMMUNITY

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Jerry “Bull” Baylor, 64

Vietnam Veteran and Research Participant for the Human Engineering Research Laboratories (HERL)

I have played wheelchair sports for about 30 years—as long as I have been in my chair. And for the last decade, I have participated in about 15 studies for Dr. Cooper and HERL. Everybody here knows me; we are like a family.

I have helped out with studies examining seat cushions, push rims and power assist wheelchairs. The best thing I have learned at HERL is how to push your chair. Researchers hooked me up with sensors to develop my stroke. I learned to do longer strokes instead of shorter strokes, and this is now a skill that I use every day.

As a wheelchair athlete, I do rugby, field events and long-distance racing. Last year, I had the chance to give my input on a competitive throwing chair that HERL developed for shot put, discus and javelin users. This chair sits higher and its seat pivots. It also allows you to edge closer to the throwing line. All of this makes a difference and enables athletes to throw farther.

Thanks to HERL, I have options. I used to have to do my own research and modify my chair on my own. Now, men and women with new injuries do not have to go through the same trial and error. **Without this group, I think advancements in wheelchair technologies would totally freeze up.** No new ideas would be coming in to make our lives better.

I plan to do everything I can to continue my relationship with HERL. It is that important, and it feels good to do my part to help other Veterans and wheelchair users.



Rory Cooper

Senior Career Scientist and Director of HERL

Jerry is right. HERL is unique. We are the only VA research center focused on wheelchairs and related technologies and, beyond the VA, there is nothing equivalent in terms of our size and scope.

One of our biggest strengths is the diversity of our staff. We have engineers, physiatrists, therapists, social workers and counselors. At any given time, we support about 50 protocols to better understand topics like wheelchair propulsion or the influence of sports clinics on self-esteem. We created the throwing chair after noticing that previous chairs made people unstable, which limited their throwing ability. To develop the chair, we used our seating and positioning research and what we already knew about the biomechanics of propulsion and transfers. We also tested the chair out at events and spoke with Veterans like Jerry to get their feedback. Now, after some improvements, we are working to bring it to market.

On an individual level, our work changes a wheelchair user’s quality of life. On a larger level—the world stage—HERL helps drive the field of assistive technology. It is gratifying work, to say the least.



pages in “Care of the Combat Amputee”, a book co-edited by VAPHS researcher Rory Cooper as part of the Textbooks of Military Medicine series.

3,776 RESEARCH VISITS with Veterans; up from 2,279 in 2009.

- giving surgery patients timely antibiotics to prevent infection and to prevent the formation of blood clots in the legs.
- providing tobacco counseling to inpatients receiving care for pneumonia, congestive heart failure or a heart attack.

STRENGTHENING

➔ *BY EXCELLING IN
HEART FAILURE CARE*



» **\$80 MILLION** awarded for the Consolidation Building at University Drive; construction is 65 percent complete.

■ **8.7 PERCENT**

» **13,615 VIEWS** of Director Terry Gerigk Wolf's internal blog.

■ **5,328 HEALTHY WOMEN'S CENTER** clinic appointments. ■

OUR COMMUNITY

Debbie Mackey

Nurse in Charge of the
Congestive Heart Failure Clinic

Dr. Matthew Suffoletto

Cardiologist and Director of
Congestive Heart Failure Services

Suffoletto: Congestive heart failure can be a very manageable chronic medical condition, but it requires vigilance. It is important for patients to make healthy lifestyle decisions; this means watching their diets, restricting fluid intake, taking medications on time, staying active and giving us constant feedback.

Mackey: We have 92 patients, and we see each Veteran often—about every six to eight weeks. Each visit starts with a physical and a weight and blood pressure check. I also check for excess fluid in a Veteran's legs or lungs, and I pass along health tips, such as how to avoid high-sodium foods. If a Veteran is having problems and they are at home, they can call our clinic hotline. This allows me to take action and make any necessary medication changes right away.

Suffoletto: Such personalized attention is hard to find in modern medicine. But, if we do things right, we have a tremendous ability to positively influence—and improve—the lives of Veterans.

Mackey: And we are making a positive impact. The average patient with congestive heart failure is frequently readmission to the hospital...but not at VA Pittsburgh. In 2010, our readmitted rate was just 8.5 percent. By partnering with patients and their families, our clinic is helping Veterans live longer, healthier and more independent lives.



BY IMPROVING OUR FACILITIES

In 2010, VAPHS devoted roughly \$13.4 million in stimulus funds to enhance services and care at University Drive. These five projects, which are in various stages of completion, involve:

- excavating and preparing the future site of the VAPHS Fisher House
- renovating and expanding intensive care and critical care units
- upgrading an aging emergency power generator system
- replacing the main plumbing system
- integrating facility alarms into a centralized computer system



BY ADVANCING VETERAN-CENTERED RESEARCH

With a budget of \$29.4 million, VA Pittsburgh's research department is one of the largest programs of its kind in the country. Home to four VA Centers of Excellence, the department boasts 149 researchers participating in more than 350 studies, including two national clinical trials through the VA Cooperative Studies Program. Some topics VAPHS researchers investigated in 2010 include:

- assessing neurobiological changes during initial smoking abstinence in chronic smokers
- comparing laboratory versus at-home testing for Veterans with sleep apnea
- evaluating the effectiveness of telehealth monitoring in patients with schizophrenia and suicidal behavior



BY ADDING TOP-NOTCH TECHNOLOGIES

VAPHS invested nearly \$19.6 million in high-tech equipment in 2010. Top additions include:

Intuitive Surgical's da Vinci Surgical System \$2.02 million

This surgical wonder replaces its first generation cohort in VAPHS's operating room and consists of four remotely controlled robotic arms paired with a high-resolution monitor. The end result? Maximum precision for surgeons and quicker recovery times for Veterans.

Siemens's Axiom Sireskop SD fluoroscopy and radiography unit \$526,450

This unit digitizes X-rays, which enables physicians—and Veterans—to get results faster.

Planmeca USA's PRO-MAX 3D Cone Beam Volumetric Tomography X-ray machine \$265,384

This machine cuts radiation exposure and scan times by giving dentists a more complete, 3-D view of the mouth.



BY LISTENING TO FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES

In 2010, VAPHS leadership held 142 focus group sessions and met with 1,515 employees from all service lines. The goal? To discuss All-Employee Survey results and brainstorm long-term opportunities for improvement. After the sessions wrapped, Director and CEO Terry Gerigk Wolf identified pervasive staff issues—like calls for improving communication, training opportunities and customer service expectations—and integrated them into VA Pittsburgh's strategic planning initiatives.



BY ENHANCING WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES

VA Pittsburgh's Healthy Women's Center experienced major growth spurts in 2010. Construction wrapped on a new clinical space, complete with a children's play station, a wellness resource area and three treatment rooms. The center also added staff: a psychologist experienced in treating trauma, an attending physician, three women's health fellows and a designated female chaplain. In addition, the center expanded gynecological services to two days per week and added urogynecology care to help treat women with incontinence.

more female Veterans using the women's clinic relative to 2009.

\$32 MILLION

estimated funds, to be awarded in early 2011, to build a new 65,000-square-foot research building at University Drive.

2,502 WOMEN VETERANS

enrolled in VA Pittsburgh's Healthy Women's Center.

\$38 MILLION

awarded for the Ambulatory Care Center at H.J. Heinz; construction is 90 percent complete.

“ A THOUSAND FIBERS CONNECT
PARTNERING WITH



VA Pittsburgh is at the heart of a community that is passionate about Veterans. We reach out, connect, give back and receive in the name of enhancing Veteran-centered care. And make no mistake: Our roots run deep. Our edges blur into neighborhoods. Non-profits. Private companies. Individual homes. The more ties we forge, the stronger we become.

Thank you for letting us lead and—when we need it—cheering us on.

NORMAN SAMPSON
Veteran

CHARLES WEIS
Veteran

JAKE NOTOVITZ
Volunteer with the
Jewish War Veterans

RAY WEBB
Veteran and mentor
with the Veterans Justice
Outreach Program

BRANDON VESELY
Youth volunteer



US WITH OUR FELLOW MEN." HERMAN MELVILLE

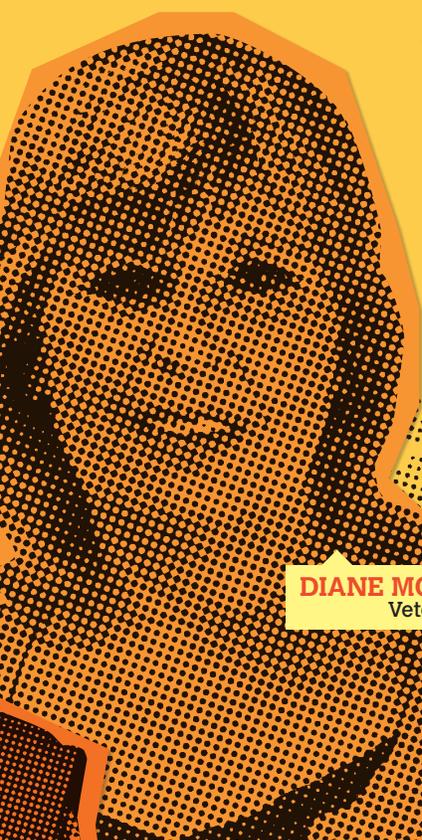
OUR COMMUNITY



TOM MATUSKY
Social worker



MIKE FRISBY
Veteran and VAPHS nursing
assistant and escort



DIANE MCCLOSKEY
Veteran



AISLINN MURPHY
Duquesne University
nursing student

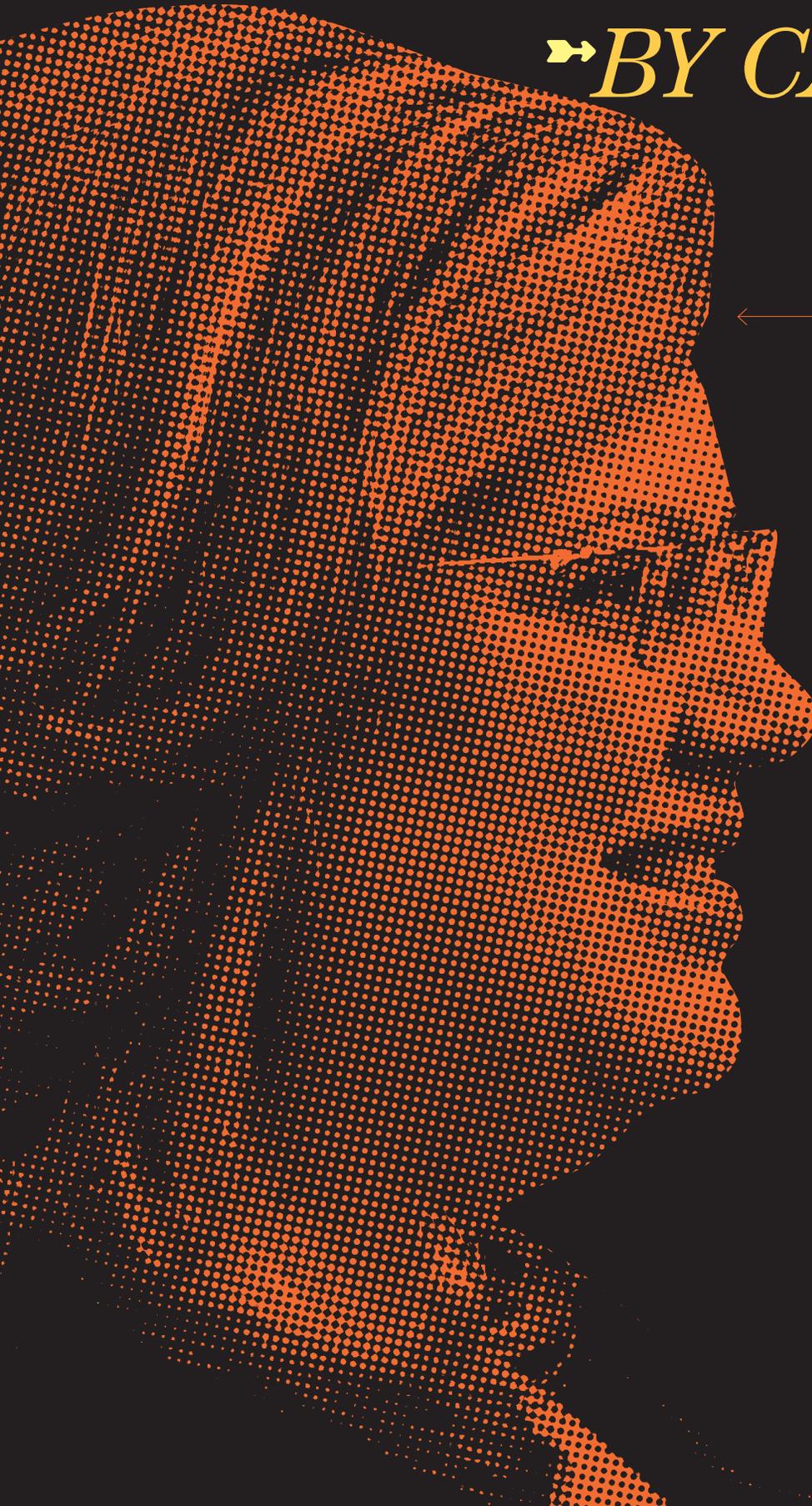


WILL WHEATON
Veteran and Wheelchair
Games athlete



MARY FRANCES PILARSKI
Health Care for Homeless
Veterans coordinator

PARTNERING WITH → BY CARING FOR



Jennifer Husted Social Worker

The Dementia Caregiver Support Program formally recognizes the crucial role that caregivers play in a Veteran's care team. Our goal is to decrease stress and burden on caregivers. In doing so, we hope that the Veterans they care for are able to live longer in their own homes and avoid early institutionalization.

Elaine Kopecky is one of our caregivers in the program. She is caring for her dear friend with dementia, and it is a 24-hour job. When we first met her, she was exhausted. But she had made a commitment, despite the huge sacrifices it involved.

Part of my role in this program is to connect caregivers to the many VA and community resources that are available to them. I was able to do this for Elaine.

We offer a twice-monthly telephone-based support group to anyone enrolled in our program. We also have a psychologist who counsels caregivers—over the phone or in person—when needed.

In addition, we install a telephone-based health buddy device in each caregiver's home. Every day, caregivers like Elaine use this device to check in with us, and they answer a quick round of questions, such as "what is your stress level like?" and "how is your mood?" Our nurses receive the feedback and follow up right away if necessary.

Our main focus in this program is to know how our caregivers are doing, and they seem excited to have our support. **It is a great feeling, because I know that if we can enhance the caregiver's quality of life, then the Veteran that they are caring for will benefit, too.**

OUR COMMUNITY

CAREGIVERS

Elaine Kopecky, 80

Caregiver for Charles Broadhead, 90

Mr. Broadhead has dementia related to Parkinson's. There is very little that he can do independently. But, he is a kind, gentle man. His neighbors think the world of him. I want his dignity to remain, and he deserves every consideration that I can give him.

He spent most of the month of May in the hospital, and when they sent him home, they said he may live five minutes or five hours, but that he probably would not live five days. That was seven months ago.

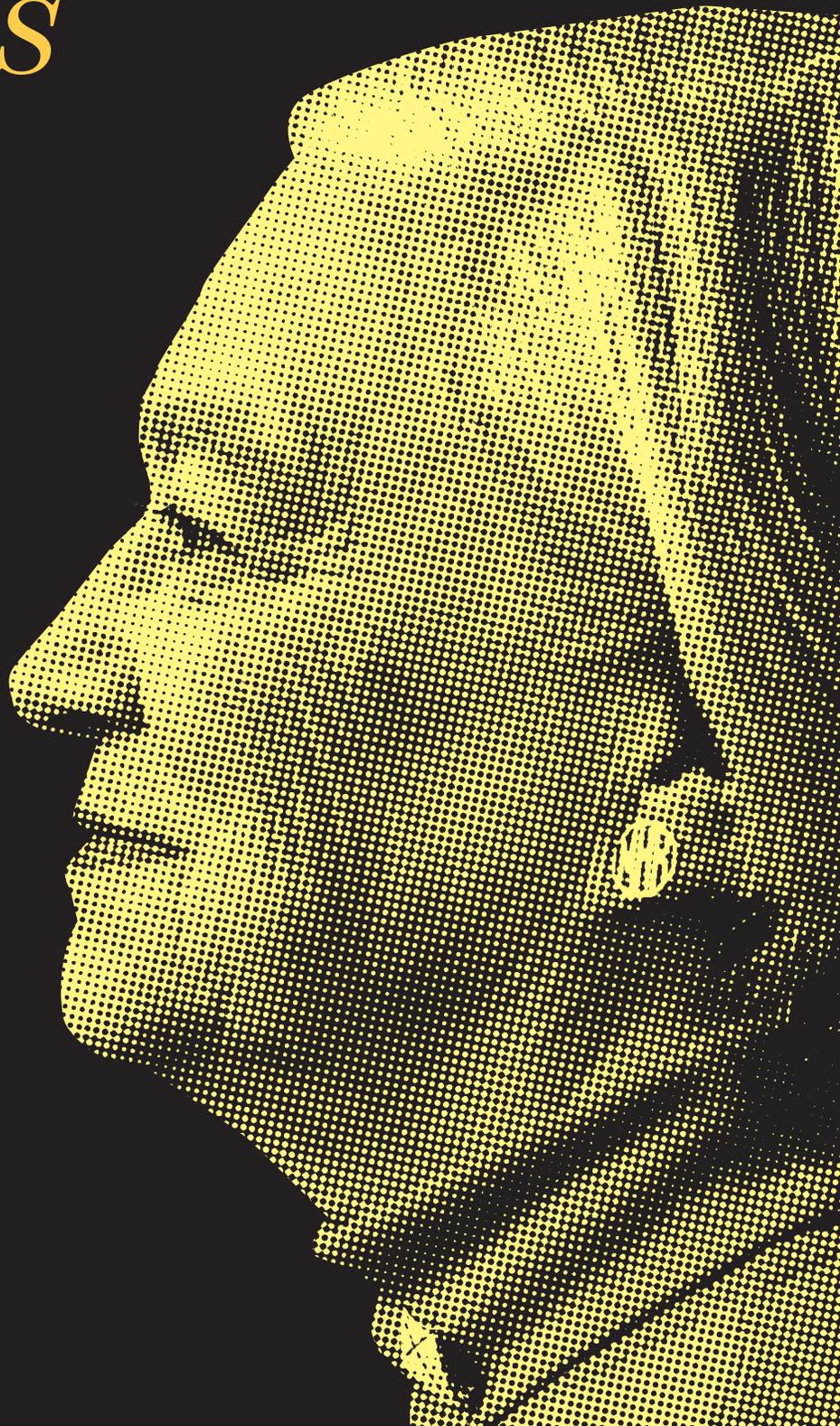
I operated on the premise that I would get no help at all in terms of his care. A few months in, I was totally frantic. Exhausted. Mr. Broadhead was waking up almost every hour throughout the night. Then, in September, someone called me and told me about this new VA program for caregivers. Suddenly, it was like Christmas! I could not believe my ears!

This program was able to connect me with a home care respite service. Now, a woman comes in three times a week to help me with my morning care. She vacuums and washes the floor. She stays in the home while I go out and shop. It is an enormous help.

Now, I feel much calmer because I know that there is help if I need it. And I am rested.

Most importantly, I am not alone anymore.

I have a half dozen people that I can call if I am upset or worried, or if a situation comes up and I am unsure what to do....I am not alone. And that is very important.



» **SEPT. 2010** launch date of the Dementia Caregiver Support Program. ■ **4 VAPHS EMPLOYEES** dedicated to the program—two nurses, a social worker and a psychologist.

» **20 CAREGIVERS** enrolled in the program as of December 2010. ■ **150 CAREGIVERS** projected to enroll by the program's one-year anniversary, September 2011.

PARTNERING WITH ➔ *BY TRAINING TOMORROW'S*



» **391** NURSING STUDENTS.
» **1,599** TRAINEES

OUR COMMUNITY

MEDICAL EXPERTS

Sarina Dumbleton

Physical Therapy Student,
Duke University

I am required, as part of my doctoral program in physical therapy at Duke, to complete a neuromuscular clinic rotation. When it came time to select programs, I marked VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System as my top choice. I wanted an opportunity to give back to Veterans; it was my small way of saying “thank you” for all the freedoms and opportunities that I enjoy today. **I also knew that working at VA Pittsburgh would give me the opportunity to see many different types of patients, not just hip, knee and shoulder injuries.**

I was right.

I have had the chance to work with all kinds of patients. Liver transplant patients. Patients with amputations. Patients who have survived stroke. Orthopedic patients. Patients with total knee and total hip replacements. Not many of my classmates will get an opportunity to see these types of injuries.

Throughout it all, I have worked alongside a very knowledgeable physical therapy team. They support me and encourage me to shadow other medical disciplines. My supervisor has even taught me about the challenges of managing a physical therapy practice.

Thanks to these opportunities, I feel that I will leave here a little ahead of my colleagues. And while this was not an easy rotation—I have been challenged every single day—it has helped reinforce everything that I learned in the classroom and opened my eyes to the many different fields of physical therapy. If I had to do it all over, I would choose VA Pittsburgh again. Definitely.



Corrie Odom

Director of Clinical Education
for Duke University's Doctor of
Physical Therapy Program

Our program draws high-caliber students from all across the country, and our goal is to provide these students with a first-class education. **The clinicians and the administration at VA Pittsburgh share our deep commitment to educating learners.** Our academic partnership with the VA offers graduate students like Sarina a chance to witness quality care while also receiving quality instruction. In addition, it places them in a wonderful part of the country and exposes them to a patient population that is both incredibly diverse and unique. We are thankful to give our students this chance to grow and excel, and we look forward to sending more students to VA Pittsburgh in the future.



164 ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS with colleges and universities in 23 states across America.

650 MEDICAL RESIDENTS.

with academic affiliations rotated throughout VAPHS in 2010.

57 ASPIRING DENTAL PROFESSIONALS.

300 MEDICAL STUDENTS.

PARTNERING WITH

➔ **TO STREAMLINE
THE BENEFITS
CLAIMS PROCESS**



» **\$645,119** the 2010 salary-equivalent contribution of Disabled American Veteran drivers, who voluntarily transport Veterans to and from VAPHS.

■ **15 PERCENT**

» **20 VETERANS A MONTH**, on average, introduced to VAPHS via the Veterans Justice Outreach Program.

■ **\$595,221.67**

OUR COMMUNITY

Beth McCoy

Director of the Pittsburgh VA Regional Office Veterans Benefits Administration

In June 2010, we became one of just a few regional offices in the nation to pair with a local VA health care facility, VA Pittsburgh, by inviting their medical experts into our workplace to review cases needing medical opinions or clarification.

The goal was simple: improve our claims process to better serve Veterans seeking disability benefits.

To meet this goal, a clinician from VA Pittsburgh visits our office once a week to personally review cases. Previously, unanswered questions would hold up our claims procedure. To fill in the necessary blanks, we would have to ship claims folders back and forth between our facilities. This resulted in additional costs and wait times. Sometimes, we would even ask a Veteran to return to VAPHS so that the clinician could gather more information to help us finalize a claim.

If our staff has a question now, they can ask the visiting VA Pittsburgh clinician and get an immediate answer. On the flip side, the clinician can place calls or review health records to provide necessary medical documentation. They can also talk with us to better understand our claims processes. Nine out of every 10 times, this clinician can provide medical opinions on the spot.

As a leader, I feel lucky to have such a willing partner in VA Pittsburgh. Our collaboration has enabled us to obtain relevant medical evidence faster—16 days faster—with an average turnaround time of just seven days. By working together, we generate new, innovative ideas, and Veterans receive high-quality services for both their health care and benefits needs.



TO END HOMELESSNESS

VA Pittsburgh has teamed up with a long list of community partners—local jails, shelters, Veterans service organizations and more—to advance VA Secretary Eric Shinseki's pledge to end homelessness among Veterans by 2014. Some of the ways VAPHS expanded homeless aid in 2010 include:

- secured five new beds for emergency, temporary placement of homeless Veterans and two additional grant and per diem beds for transitional housing at Shepherd's Heart Veterans Home in Pittsburgh, Pa.
- dispersed 155 vouchers (up from 105 in 2009) through the Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program, which helps homeless Veterans rent a permanent residence
- connected with 323 Veterans—twice as many as last year—at Stand Down 2010, which links homeless Veterans with VA and community resources
- piloted a new national, 24-7 hotline to connect homeless Veterans to VA aid and responded to 38 referrals via this hotline



TO LINK UP WITH LOCAL VETERANS

VA Pittsburgh's Outreach Program expanded to a designated staff of four and connected with Veterans at 67 community events in 2010. "We collaborated with organizations like the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Susan G. Komen Foundation and the First Niagara Pavilion music venue....If we thought an event would interest Veterans, we tried to be there," says Community Outreach Coordinator Heather Frantz. The team's hard work paid off; since the program's launch in late 2009, VA Pittsburgh has treated 1,609 new Veterans.



TO OFFER JUSTICE-INVOLVED VETERANS A SECOND CHANCE

The Veterans Justice Outreach Program marks a unique collaboration between VA Pittsburgh, the Allegheny County courts, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and the Veterans Leadership Program, a nonprofit devoted to helping Veterans find housing and jobs. The shared goal? To identify eligible Veterans and connect them with needed VA resources, like substance abuse treatment and behavioral health services, in lieu of incarceration or other criminal sanctions. To date, 155 Veterans have participated in the program, which celebrated its one-year anniversary in November 2010.



TO THROW THE BEST WHEELCHAIR GAMES YET

VAPHS has partnered with the Sharpsburg, Pa.-based Keystone Paralyzed Veterans of America to host the 31st National Veterans Wheelchair Games Aug. 1-6, 2011. To prepare for this event, which will draw some 550 wheelchair athletes to Pittsburgh, VAPHS has joined forces with more than 75 community organizations to date.

"We are excited to welcome Veterans to our city, and we have planned special events—like a ride on the Gateway Clipper, fishing trips and a Pittsburgh Pirates game—to ensure that they leave here feeling like champions," says Games Coordinator Bill Leuthold.



TO HELP VOLUNTEERS HELP VETERANS

In 2010, 1,149 individuals from at least 92 organizations—such as the Boy Scouts Troop 111 and the McKeesport Sportsmen's Association—offered VAPHS a helping hand in everything from greeting and transporting patients to assisting newly returned combat troops with health screenings. Some volunteers, like Margaret Ferraro, a member of the Allegheny County Chapter of the American Gold Star Mothers, play a quieter role. "I like to listen," says Ferraro, 85. "Everybody has a story. I have the patience and time to hear what they have to say."

increase in the number of health benefits claims filed by Veterans under the jurisdiction of the Pittsburgh Regional Office in 2010 relative to 2009.

126 YOUTH VOLUNTEERS.

in community gifts and donations received in 2010.

114 GRANT AND PER DIEM TRADITIONAL HOUSING BEDS

available in the community for homeless Veterans.

2010 STATS

AN AVERAGE DAY...

2,100

VEHICLES CYCLE THROUGH
THE UNIVERSITY DRIVE GARAGE

86 TONGUE DEPRESSORS USED

1,891

HOSPITAL MEALS PREPARED

2,846

CLINIC APPOINTMENTS
COMPLETED

69 EYE EXAMS
PERFORMED

689

PHARMACY ORDERS FILLED IN-HOUSE

241

X-RAY
EXAMS
COMPLETED

20

MEDICATION DELIVERIES BY
THE PHARMACY ROBOT "TUG"

3,713

trips taken by the visitor elevators at University Drive

573

DISPOSABLE
HOSPITAL
GOWNS USED

960

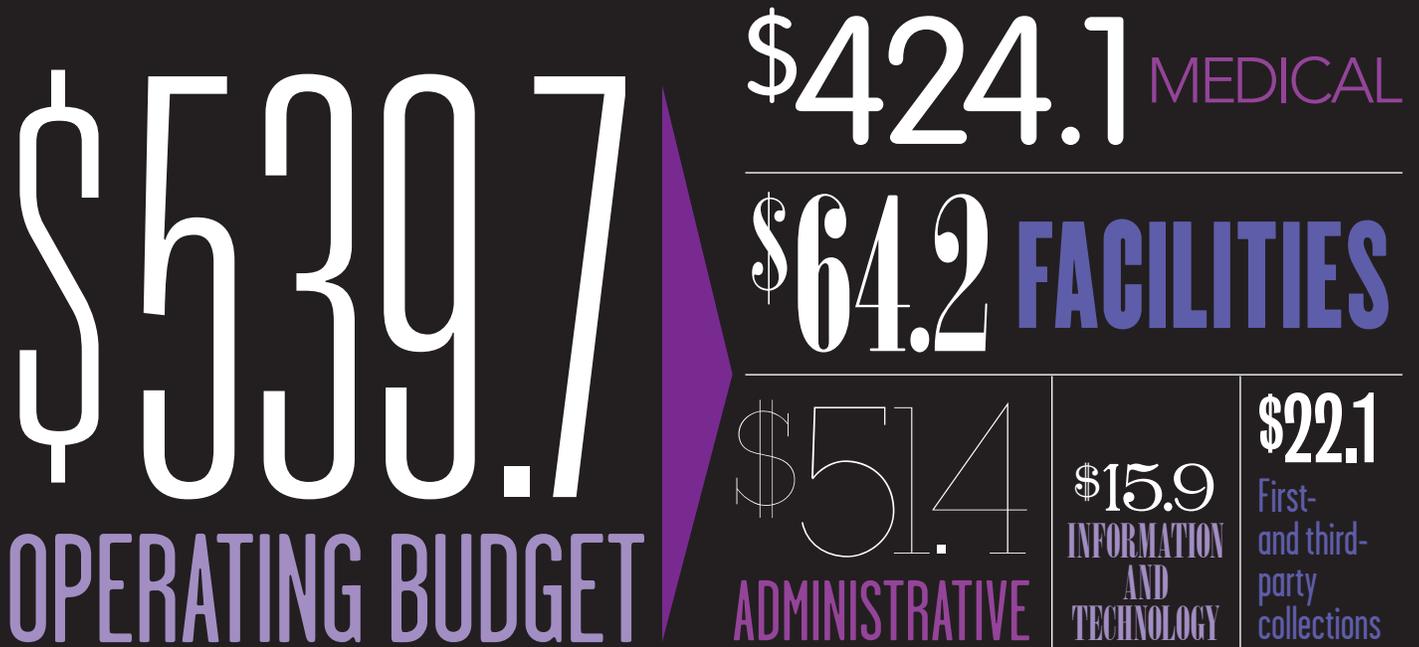
calls
received
by
telephone
operators

3,930

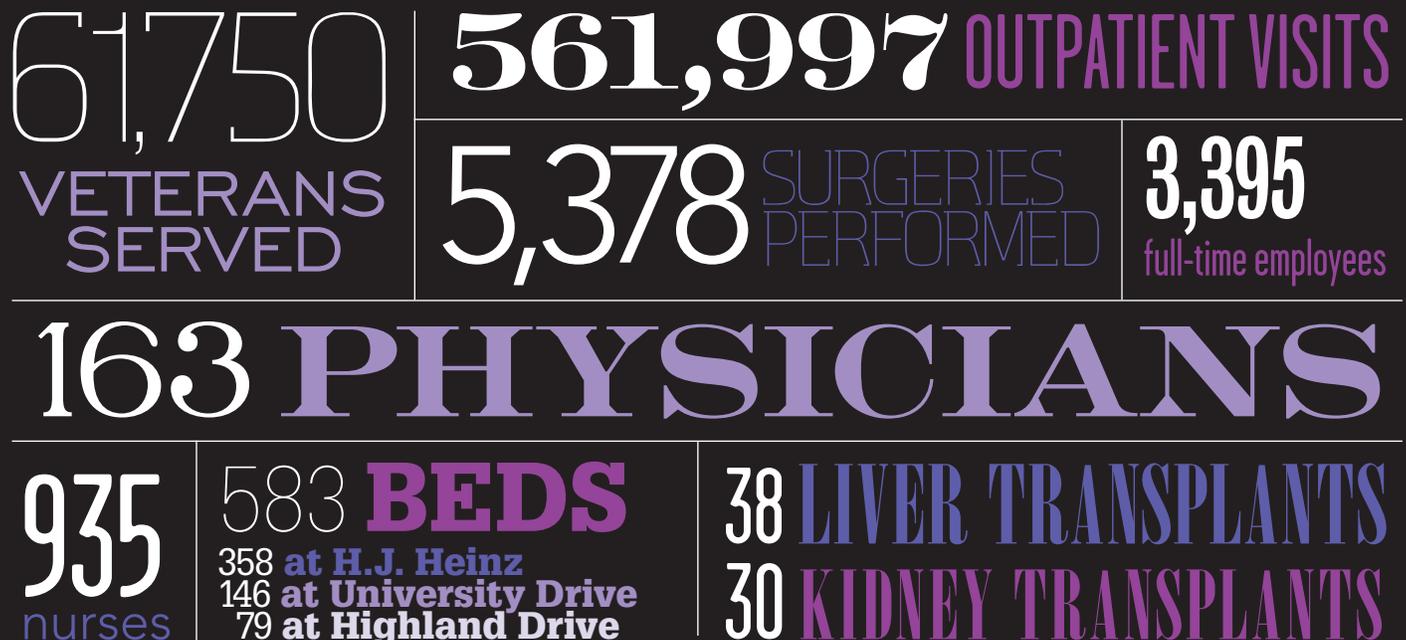
WEB PAGE VIEWS

AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR

FINANCIAL STATISTICS (IN MILLIONS)



OPERATIONAL STATISTICS



“THE EAR OF THE LEADER MUST RING
EXECUTIVE LEA



OUR SHARED VISION is to partner with Veterans and their families to optimize their health and quality

OUR MISSION is to honor America's Veterans with world-class health care, train their future providers

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES are safety, passion, civility, integrity, excellence and innovation.

WITH THE VOICES OF THE PEOPLE." —WOODROW WILSON

LEADERSHIP BOARD

TOP LEADERS LEFT TO RIGHT

Rebecca Hubscher, Acting Associate Director

John Gennaro, Deputy Director

Terry Gerigk Wolf, Director and CEO

Ira Richmond, Associate Director
for Patient Care Services

Ali Sonel, Acting Chief of Staff



of life through integrated, innovative and compassionate care.

and advance medical knowledge through research.

VAPHS 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

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