



# White River Junction VA Medical Center

Healthcare for Veterans in Vermont

Overview of White River Junction VA Medical Center

January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015



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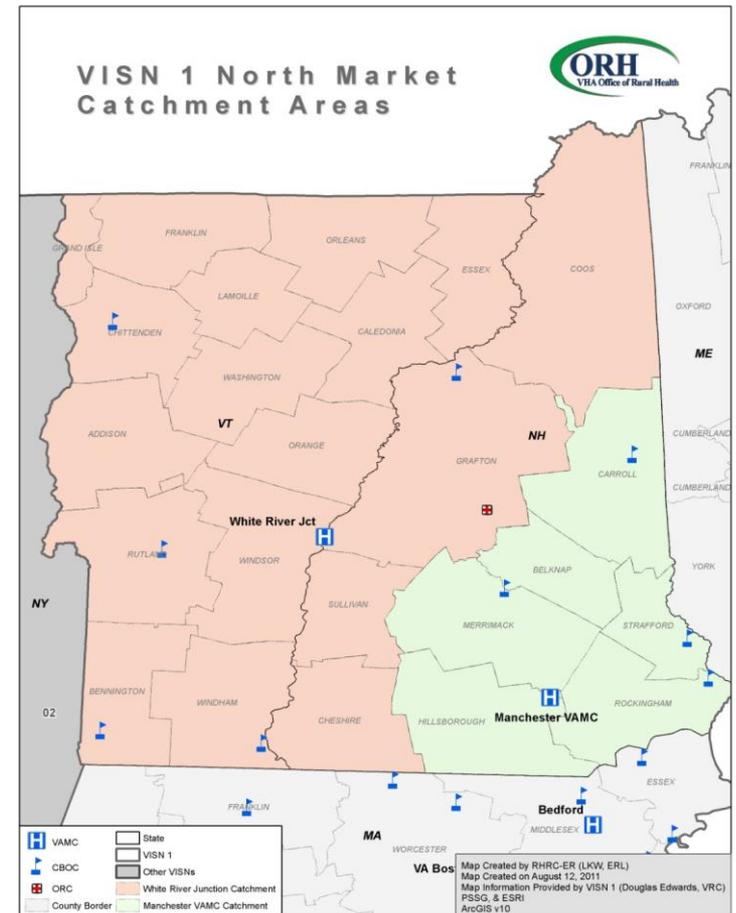
# White River Junction VA Medical Center

- Opened October 17, 1938
- Level 2 Acute Care Facility
- 60 bed capacity
  - 43 bed Med/Surg capacity
  - 7 bed ICU
  - 10 bed inpatient Mental Health Ward
- 14 bed Residential Recovery Center
- 7 Community Based Outpatient Clinics & Extensive Telehealth
  - 5 in Vermont and 2 in New Hampshire
  - Over 5680 TeleHealth visits FY14
- Affiliations with over 60 Academic Institutions



# WRJ VAMC Operations

- **Treats over 25,500 Veterans a year**
  - Approximately 17,300 from Vermont
  - Approximately 8,200 from New Hampshire
- **Approximately 72,250 total Veterans in catchment area**
  - 49,900 in Vermont
  - 22,350 in New Hampshire
- **Sees approximately 3500 OEF/OIF/OND Veterans annually**
- **Over 263,000 outpatient visits in FY14**
- **Annual Budget ~ \$186 million**
- **Home to 5 national VA Centers**
  - National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
  - Field Office to the VA National Center for Patient Safety
  - VA National Quality Scholars Fellowship Program
  - VA National Outcomes Program
  - The New England Healthcare Engineering Partnership



# Access

## **White River Junction VA access:**

- Overall access is very good
- 23,976 pending appointments as of January 1, 2015
- Percent of appointment scheduled 30 days for less – 97.3
- Prospective Wait Times (waiting time for a future appointment):

<u>Primary Care</u>	<u>Specialty Care</u>	<u>Mental Health Care</u>
3.92 days	3.87 days	1.11 days

- Enhancing Access to Care
  - Expanded hours at Medical Center and Community Based Outpatient Clinics
  - Expanded Saturday Clinics
  - MRI Services available until 8 p.m. weekdays
  - Audiology available 6 days per week
  - Physical Therapy available 6 days per week

# WRJ VAMC Major Initiatives

- Access for Veterans in Rural Areas:
  - Expansion of Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs)
  - TeleHealth Program Expansion
- Focus on Health and Wellness
- Comprehensive Women's Health
- Specialized Mental Health Services
- Veteran Homeless Program
- Comprehensive Pain Management Program
- Research Program

# Major Initiative

## *Expanding Access: Increasing Points of Care*

- Expanded Community Based Outpatient Clinics: 7 CBOCs  
**Vermont:** *Burlington, Bennington, Rutland, Newport, Brattleboro*  
**New Hampshire:** *Littleton, Keene*
- VA sites of care be established in Colebrook, Berlin, NH
  - To serve over 2100 Eligible Veterans in Coos County
  - Primary Care, Mental Health and TeleHealth services
- Explore collaboration with Federally Qualified Healthcare Center (FQHC) in Barre/Montpelier area
- Conversion of Littleton Community Based Outpatient Clinic to VA-run

# Major Initiative

## *Expanding Access: TeleHealth Program*

- Specialty Services available in CBOCs via TeleHealth
- Available at all CBOCs, and some use in Veterans Home
- Over 5680 encounters in FY14 – 64% increase over FY13
- Continue to add new Specialty Services
- Over 600 WRJ Veterans Benefitted from Rehabilitation Services without having to Travel to the Medical Center

# Major Initiative

## *Expanding Access: TeleHealth Program Offerings (continued)*

- Mental Health
- Podiatry
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Diabetes 1:1 Visits
- Nutrition 1:1 Visits
- Weight Loss Group
- Weight Loss Women's Group
- Weight Loss 1:1
- Ear Nose and Throat
- Wound/Ostomy
- Neurology
- Nursing Preop
- Pain Management
- Audiology (Hearing Aid Mgmt)
- Cardiology
- Tele-Retinal Imaging
- Tele-Dermatology

# Major Initiative

## *Focus on Health and Wellness*

- Primary Care Provided through Interdisciplinary Teams
- Partnership between Veterans and Healthcare Team
- Health Coaching
- Integration of Diet and Exercise Programs
- Healthy lifestyle: Farm to Table Program
- Yoga, Mindfulness, Meditation available at the WRJ VAMC and some CBOCs

# Major Initiative

## *Woman's Health Program*

- Comprehensive Women's Care Center open October 2012
  - *Designed and Built with Direct Input from Women Veterans Task Force*
- Range of Services in Setting Designed for Women Veterans
- WRJ VA provides care for 1438 Women Veterans
- Working to increase number of Women Veterans
- Each Community Based Outpatient Clinic has a Women's Health Provider

# Major Initiative

## *Mental Health Program*

- Mental Health Integrated into Primary Care
  - Same-Day Access to Psychiatrist/Psychologist
- Community Integration
- Expanding Mental Health Services at CBOCs
- Peer Support
- Use of Alternative Treatments: Mindfulness/Yoga
- Access to the Medical Center's Specialized Coordination Team:
  - Suicide Prevention Coordinator
  - Justice Outreach Coordinator
  - Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator

# Major Initiative

## *Mental Health – RRC Program*

- 14-Bed Residential Recovery Program
- Plans to Expand
- Six week intensive Substance Abuse Treatment Program
- Over 255 graduates to date
  - 50 from New Hampshire
  - 34 from Massachusetts , Maine & New York
- Referral center for other VISN1 facilities
- Recidivism rate: < 20%



# Major Initiative

## *Eradicating Veteran Homelessness*

- No 'Wrong' Door Approach - Community Integration
- White River Junction has Multiple Access Points
  - Stationed throughout Two-State Catchment Area – Medical Center & CBOCs
- 13 Dedicated Staff: 10 Social Workers, 2 Peer Counselors, and 1 Psychologist
- Strong Partnerships with State and Local Service Providers in VT & NH
- Over 1100 Veterans Served by WRJ Homeless Team in FY14

# Major Initiative

## *Eradicating Veteran Homelessness (continued)*

- Full array of VA based housing interventions throughout our rural 2 state catchment area to include:
  - 140 HUD/VASH permanent housing vouchers (140 granted/140 issued for FY2008-2013)
    - 24 additional vouchers granted in FY2014 with 13 being issued
  - 5 Grant Per Diem voucher programs (66 Beds)
  - 4 contracted shelters
  - Emergency hotel voucher program
  - National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV)
  - Veterans' Justice Outreach Program (works with Veterans involved in the Criminal Justice System)
- Close collaboration with community based housing resources to offer more resources for homeless Veterans to choose their options.

# Major Initiative

## *Comprehensive Pain Management Program*

- Program Goals:
  - Improve management of Veterans on high doses of Opioid Therapy
  - Reduce use of opioids where feasible
  - Provide alternative options for pain management
- Program Accomplishments:
  - Hired specialist in Pain Management
  - Developed special clinic for management of Veterans requiring Opioid Therapy
  - Expanded Pain Treatment Options to include interventional Pain Procedures (i.e. pain blocks)
  - Complimentary Alternative Medicine Options: acupuncture, yoga, mindfulness, meditation, aqua therapy

# Major Initiative

## *Research & Educational Programs*

- Strong Teaching and Research Missions
- \$4.5M in Direct Grant Funding for FY14
- Northern New England Research Consortium (NNERC)
  - Consortium of 4 VA Rural Sites (Togus, Manchester, Northampton, & WRJ)
  - Enhance participation in collaborative research/clinical trials
    - Now Participate in the National Million Veteran Program (MVP)
- Closely Affiliated with the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth and University of Vermont Medical School
- Expanding services in Burlington CBOC with Support of UVM

# WRJ VAMC New Programs

- Ophthalmology
- Sleep Study
- Mobile PET Scan
- General Dentistry
- Veterans with Hepatitis C
- Complex pulmonary services
- Multi-modality cardiovascular imaging

# Increasing Acuity

- Expanding Programs:
  - Nephrology
    - Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy
    - Peritoneal/Home Dialysis
  - Outpatient Cardiovascular Care- Diagnostic Imaging
  - Additional Surgical Capabilities
    - Complex shoulder surgeries
    - Foot and Ankle Specialist
    - Additional General Surgeon brings new level of minimally-invasive laparoscopic surgery for example very complex gall bladders, colon removals, reflux procedures.

# Virtual Life-time Electronic Record (VLER)

The VLER Health Program includes two primary types of health information exchange:

- **VLER Health Exchange** – allows VA providers and the non-VA partner providers to query and retrieve Veterans' health information with each other's organizations for treatment
  - Standards Based Exchange of relevant clinical information
- **VLER Health Direct** – allows VA users to send and receive specific information to non-VA partners (point to point) via secure email under a trusted Network
- Because most Veterans who receive VA care also receive non-VA care, there are significant opportunities to share health information
  - VLER Health Direct Secure Messaging is designed to be more secure and efficient than faxing, mailing or hand-carrying health information
  - Simply put, Direct is a *secure email-like service*



# Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act Update

## Veterans Choice Program



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# General Information

- ❑ Veterans Access Choice and Accountability Act went into effect November 5, 2014.
- ❑ Choice Program is **not** managed locally
- ❑ VA has contracted with a Third Party Administrator (TPA) to manage overall operations of the program: Includes mailing of cards, authorization for care and claims processing.
- ❑ The TPA for New England States is Health Net Federal Services
- ❑ Approximately 9M Eligible Veterans will or have received a Veterans Choice Card by the end of February 15, 2015.
- ❑ **Veterans can still choose to receive their care from the VA**
- ❑ In order to be eligible to receive a Choice Card the Veteran must:
  - ❑ Have been enrolled by August 1, 2014, **or**
  - ❑ Have served in a theater of combat operation, and applied within 5 years of deployment

# General Information

- ❑ Veterans must meet one of two criteria to use the card - either geographic residence or 30 day wait times
  - **Based on Wait Time**
    - Has a scheduled appointment, with a VA healthcare provider and is unable to receive an appointment within 30 days of the date that an appointment is deemed clinically appropriate by a VA health care provider
  - **Based on Geographic Distance**
    - Reside more than 40 miles from the closest VA facility **or**
    - Reside in a state without a full-service VA medical facility that provides hospital care emergency services and surgical care and reside, **MORE** than 20 miles from such a facility.

# Use of Veterans Choice Card (eligibility requirements)

- ❑ Choice program covers hospital care and medical services under the Medical Benefits Package, which includes pharmacy and beneficiary travel.
- ❑ Eligible Veterans are authorized for a course of treatment, which must be considered medically necessary, for up to 60 days. The treatment will include any follow-up appointments, as well as any ancillary and specialty services.
- ❑ To be eligible, all Veterans are covered by other health insurance (OHI) must provide that information upon request for care under the Choice Program.
- ❑ Eligible Veterans are responsible for any copayments, deductibles or cost shares as required by their other health insurance.
- ❑ White River Junction Veterans Choice Care Champions
  - ❑ Camille Olmstead – Business Office Manager
  - ❑ Wendy Decoff – Associate Chief of the Business Office



*Questions?*



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