

Celebrating
70 Years
of Service

2016

Annual Report

THEN AND NOW



Wilmington
Department of Veteran Affairs
Medical Center

70
years

WELCOME TO THE WILMINGTON VA MEDICAL CENTER 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center located in Wilmington Delaware serves Veterans across Delaware, southern New Jersey, and portions of Maryland and Pennsylvania. It is a teaching facility providing a full range of inpatient and outpatient services including comprehensive primary care, behavioral health, and specialty care. The medical center is accredited by the The Joint Commission (TJC) and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Wilmington VA is also surveyed by the Long Term Care Institute (LTCI) .

The medical center is located at 1601 Kirkwood Highway, Wilmington, Delaware and has Community Based Outpatient Clinics located in Kent and Sussex Counties in Delaware, as well as, Atlantic, Cape May, and Cumberland Counties in New Jersey. A Mobile Health Clinic provides services traveling throughout Delaware and Southern New Jersey.

The Wilmington VAMC campus consists of the medical center, a Community Living Center, and a Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Regional Office. Wilmington VAMC is a part of VISN 4, which includes eight other facilities; Altoona, Butler, Coatesville, Erie, Lebanon, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Wilkes-Barre all in Pennsylvania.



Photograph of the front of Wilmington VAMC in the day.

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To our Veterans, families, and partners:

As I review the 2016 Annual Report, "Then and Now" for the Wilmington Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, I am truly proud our talented and dedicated staff and volunteers who have helped us reach significant milestones over the past 70 years.

We began building a new foundation this year built upon employee inspired solutions, continuous improvement and proven strategies to improve the Veteran experience:

- 1) Focus on People
- 2) Simplify and Standardize Processes
- 3) Enhance Structure and Support
- 4) Hardwire Quality

Each of these strategies will rely heavily upon listening to Veterans, leveraging our employee inspired solutions and making principle based decisions.

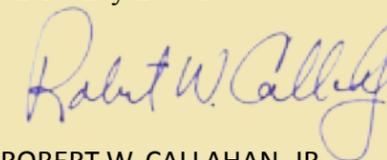
This past year, our employees worked hard to improve access and ensure Veterans receive urgent care when they need it and where they want it. We've partnered with more than 250 private healthcare organizations throughout Delaware and New Jersey to expand our network of community care options when travel to a VA facility is a burden. Veterans are now able to schedule routine appointments for the Optometry and Audiology clinics without a primary care referral – a change that simplifies administrative efforts and gets Veterans into appointments quicker. Same day access appointments for urgent care needs are now available in Primary Care and Mental Health. Our

Emergency Department proudly announced "Nurse First Triage" to improve our door to treatment times and improve our Veterans' experience. These accomplishments are among the many you will read about in this annual report.

One of the most significant accomplishments this past year, we celebrated Delaware being recognized as the third state in our great nation to effectively end homelessness among Veterans. By building partnerships, closing gaps, collaborating and working together as an entire community, we put the pieces together to completely change how Delaware responds to the factors that cause Veterans to fall into homelessness.

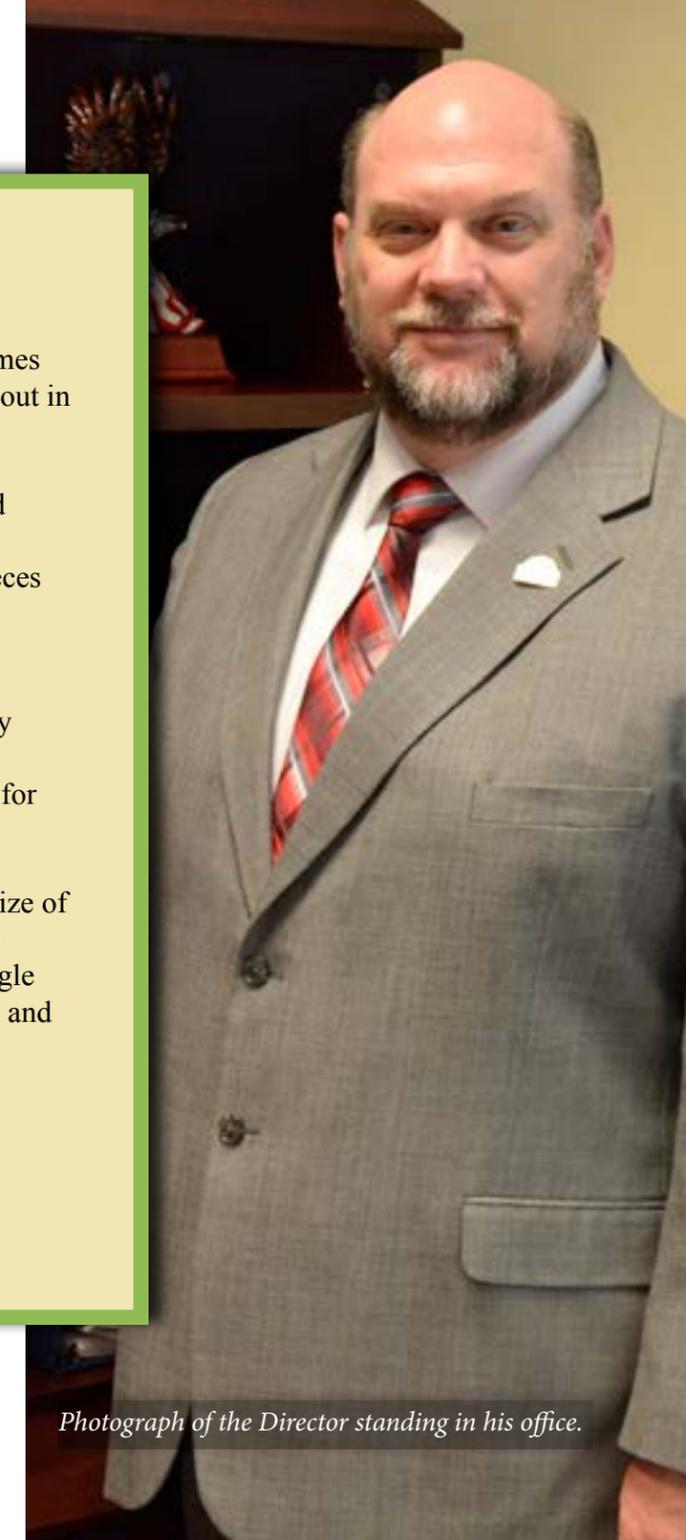
We are also extremely proud of our employees when the Long Term Care Institute completed a survey of the Wilmington VAMC Community Living Center and reported no findings! Further, in 2016 our community living center was also identified as one of the 10 highest performing centers in the nation for Quality and Patient-Centeredness.

Our 2016 achievements are the benefits realized from listening to our Veterans, integrating the expertise of our employees and embracing continual improvement throughout our organization. What defines the Wilmington VAMC and our community based clinics? An incredible group of people united by a single goal, to do everything in our abilities to help Veterans receive the care they earned and deserve, when and where they need it.



ROBERT W. CALLAHAN, JR.
Interim Director

Photograph of the Director standing in his office.





Aerial photograph of the Wilmington VA Medical Center located in Elmsere, Delaware shortly after it's opening in 1949.



Aerial photograph of the Wilmington VA Medical Center prior to the construction of the new Emergency Department addition.

HISTORY OF WILMINGTON VAMC 1946

President Harry S. Truman approved establishment of a Veterans Administration hospital at Wilmington, Delaware in May 1946. Shortly thereafter, the former Army Air Corps Hospital at New Castle Air Base (today the New Castle County Airport) was taken over by the VA as a temporary installation. On August 26, 1946, the first patients were admitted and were treated by a staff itself comprised of 77 percent Veterans of the Armed Forces. By February 1947, bed capacity had increased to 150 beds. Approximately 75 percent of the patients treated were World War II participants. Meanwhile, activity continued toward construction of a permanent building, with groundbreaking in March 1948.

Formal dedication of the new 336-bed VA hospital was held on April 2, 1950. The ninth VA hospital to open after World War II ended, Wilmington's facility at the 32-acre site on the edge of Elsmere, DE, was but one of 32 new VA hospitals or major additions scheduled for completion in 1950 alone. A few months later, the Korean War began. In 1954, residual outpatient activities conducted at downtown Wilmington's Dravo Building were relocated to the hospital. Remaining VA Regional Office (VARO) non-medical benefit processing completed the transfer to the hospital site by November 1960. Complete administrative consolidation occurred on January 24, 1971, when medical and regional office functions were joined under a single Director to become the Wilmington VA Medical and Regional Office Center. Consolidated one-stop service was now possible for war Veterans throughout Delaware, eastern Maryland, southern New Jersey, and southeast Pennsylvania. The Nursing Home Care Unit was opened in September 1978. The 60-bed Nursing Home Care Unit adjoins the hospital with private lounges, rehabilitation therapy and recreation areas, an attractive dining room, and homelike environment for residents.

Photograph of the main entrance taken outside of the hospital prior to new entrance construction.

In 1980, Readjustment Counseling Services initiated storefront Vet Centers for Veterans of the Vietnam War. A Vet Center opened in Linwood, NJ in 1985 and was soon joined by a VA Health Screening Clinic in 1986. In 1987, Wilmington became the only facility in the system to provide health, benefits, and readjustment counseling services at a single site.

In 1991, outreach efforts in New Jersey extended into Vineland when the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home provided space for a VA presence. This clinic provided health screening to Veterans in that area. In 1995, the site of the Vet Center and Health Screening Clinic was moved from Linwood to Ventnor. This location was more convenient to public transportation and was located more closely to a population of Veterans currently not using VA services. In 1998, Wilmington opened its first congressionally approved Community Based Outpatient Clinic in southern Delaware.

Today the Wilmington VAMC operates five Community Based Outpatient Clinics (three in southern New Jersey and two in southern Delaware) as well as a Mobile Outreach Clinic which travels to rural areas in southern New Jersey and lower Delaware to bring health care services to area Veterans who may otherwise be unable to travel to the medical center or CBOCs for Primary Care.

Along with the changing Veteran population, medical advances and changes in treatment modalities have made significant alterations in the way care is provided. Initially supporting 5,000 outpatient visits a year in addition to its 336 inpatient beds, the medical center now operates 22 acute inpatient beds (16 medical and 6 ICU) and 40 longterm care beds in the Community Living Center. The medical center and its five associated Community Based

Photograph of the main entrance of the hospital facing Kirkwood Hwy., from the 5th floor.



Historic photographs form top to bottom: (top) Photo of Vietnam era Veterans near a helicopter (middle) Photograph of Service Members near humvees (bottom) Veterans Celebration at the hospital. Background photograph of the hospital and regional office from Kirkwood Highway.

HISTORY OF WILMINGTON VAMC

(Continued from pg. 2)

Outpatient Clinics provide health care to nearly 30,000 registered Veterans. They accounted for over 297,000 outpatient visits during fiscal year 2016.

To meet the changing health care needs, construction and renovation have been the bywords over the last 10 years. Patient privacy, renovations, halls and walls, negative pressure rooms, and dietetic projects completely refurbished most of the main hospital building. Bedside telephones and televisions were installed throughout the hospital. In early 1997, Wilmington opened its Outpatient Clinical Addition, a 66,000 square foot addition to manage the increasing outpatient activities. An additional 33,000 square foot of existing space was renovated as primary care came into practice.

Medical technology has also grown by leaps and bounds. A digital radiology system eliminates the need for x-ray films and provides the image for providers to see on their clinical workstations. Computerization has also been fast paced, as the medical record is now computerized. Orders are entered into the computer, as are consults, progress notes, and all lab and radiology test results. Medications are administered using a computerized bar code medication administration system to enhance patient safety.

Wilmington is proud of its medical affiliations with top medical schools, supporting the VA's educational mission. Major medical affiliations are maintained with Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. Jefferson University provides support for Psychiatry, Urology, and Internal Medicine programs. Wilmington VAMC provides training for Arcadia University PA students. Students from other schools receive training at the medical center including VA Optometry, and Temple University Ophthalmology. Allied affiliations support programs in nursing, dental technology, dietetics, social work, and pharmacy. More than 200 medical residents receive part of their training at this facility every year.

The facility maintains accreditation by The Joint Commission, documenting Wilmington's commitment to quality care. In June 2003, the Veterans Benefits Administration functions in the Regional Office were administratively realigned under the Philadelphia Regional Office and Insurance Center, returning Wilmington to its Veterans Health Administration designation as a Medical Center, rather than the combined VHA/VBA designation as a VAMROC. This realignment should be transparent to the Veterans served as Wilmington continues to work closely with the Regional Office to provide quality services in a timely manner.

Recent photograph of hospital and regional office from Kirkwood Highway.

Leadership Team



Robert W. Callahan Jr.
Interim Director



Vincent Kane
Interim Associate
Director for Operations



Robert M. Boucher, MD, MPH, FACS
Chief of Staff

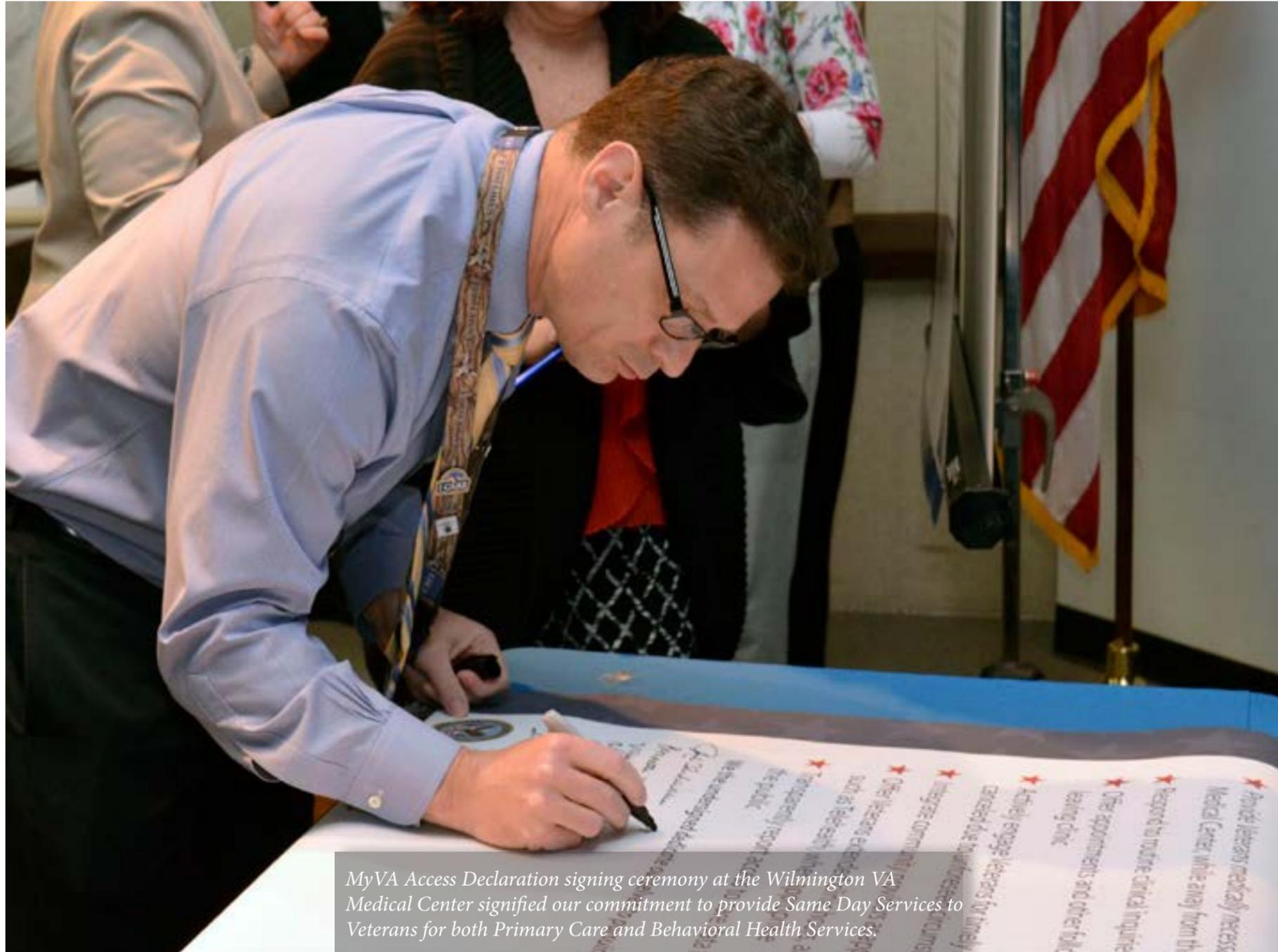


Bernadette Y. Jao, DNP, MSN, RN-BC
Associate Director for Patient Care Services

PRIMARY CARE SERVICES



Historic photograph of a Nurse working with a Veteran at Wilmington VAMC



MyVA Access Declaration signing ceremony at the Wilmington VA Medical Center signified our commitment to provide Same Day Services to Veterans for both Primary Care and Behavioral Health Services.

Same Day Services

SAME DAY SERVICES

In an effort to improve the Veteran experience, VA embarked on the largest access transformation to occur in VA history by establishing MyVA Access.

The Wilmington VAMC is improving access to care for our nation's Veterans. Central to this vision is the commitment to enhanced access and a consistent set of expectations regarding what a Veteran experiences when coming to the Wilmington VAMC. On April 18, 2016, leaders from the Wilmington VAMC, along with Veterans Affairs Under Secretary for Health, David J. Shulkin, M.D., held MyVA Declaration signing ceremony at the medical center. The declaration is the VA's foundational principles for access improvement. It is a pledge that provides a guide to the goal of same day access to primary care and behavioral health appointments for Veterans with a clinical need, a goal that was one of former Secretary McDonald's MyVA breakthrough priorities.

These expectations are summarized in the MyVA Access Declarations and include:

- Timely care including same day services in Primary Care.
- Timely mental health care, including same day services.

Wilmington VAMC is fully committed to this and has achieved Same Day Services.

Ultimately, when Veterans require primary care right away during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), week-days), they are able to get services the same day or if after hours, Veterans may call the Nurse Call Center at (888) 558-3812.

If a Veteran is in crisis or has another need for care right away in mental health, they will receive immediate attention from a health care professional. Additionally, any Veteran new to mental health with a non-urgent need will receive an initial screening evaluation by the next business day.

To help achieve Same Day Services, we've included open access appointments in our clinic schedules, opened a regional Nurse Call Center, staffed a local scheduling center, placed an emphasis on team care concepts and increased staffing in our primary and mental health clinics.

When a Veteran contacts us, we will address their need that day, or schedule appropriate follow-up care, depending on the urgency.



December 27, 2016 the Cumberland County Community Based Outpatient Clinic officially opened at the new location at 79 W. Landis Ave., Vineland, NJ.

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

The VA Cumberland County Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) located at 1051 West Sherman Ave., Vineland, NJ officially moved to 79 W. Landis Ave., Vineland, NJ on Dec. 27, 2016.

The new facility nearly doubles the size of the former clinic and allows for future expansion of services to meet the growing needs of area Veterans.

The new location has eight primary care exam rooms, eight behavioral health consultation rooms, three dedicated telehealth rooms, two medical specialty rooms, two clinical procedure rooms, two dedicated women's health rooms, as well as audiology and optometry suites. Services offered include Primary Care, Comprehensive Women's Health, Laboratory Services, Telehealth Services (including tele-retinal, tele-dermatology), Podiatry, Psychiatry, Behavioral Health counseling, Social Work, Optometry and Audiology.



Artist rendering of Sussex County CBOC.



Coming in 2017, the Sussex County Community Based Outpatient Clinic will relocate to a much larger state-of-the-art facility, improving access and the Veteran Experience.



Photograph of Tabitha Purdy at her work station in Telehealth.

Telehealth

The Wilmington VA Medical Center Telehealth programs have continued to evolve with dynamic innovation and improved access to care.

Telehealth is the use of Telehealth technologies to provide clinical care in circumstances where distance separates those receiving services and those providing services. The value of telehealth is not in the implementation, but how we use health informatics, disease management, care and case management to facilitate access to care and improve the health of Veterans by providing the right care in the right place at the right time.

Telehealth advancement over the past 10 years has seen the program evolve from a resource to support Veteran's at home with disease specific chronic conditions to now being able to offer Clinical Video connection of clinicians with Veterans from inter-facility locations to Veteran's homes and non-VA sites. Clinical Store and Forward allows for Optometry and Dermatology imaging to allow remote specialists to provide appropriate consultation to Veteran's within the primary care setting.

Home Telehealth has allowed Registered Nurse Care Coordinators to help Veterans with chronic conditions maintain outpatient setting longer and support them in healthy decision making and proactive maintenance of their self-care. Home Telehealth has been able to achieve reductions in hospital bed days of care, reduction of hemoglobin A1c, and reduction in total number of hospitalizations related to acute chronic conditions. Home Telehealth technology allows Veterans to connect wirelessly and report biometric results over a cellular or network connection. More importantly the collaboration of the Care Coordinator and Primary Care improves care delivery to be more Veteran centric.

Clinical Store and Forward allows Veteran to have optometry and dermatology come to the patient rather than have the patient travel to where the specialty is located. With state-of-the-art technology, clinical photography is used to deliver imaging to a specialist for prognosis and recommendation for care. The high quality imaging is reinforced by our National Conditions of Participation for Clinical Store and Forward. Each person is held to these stan-

dards; which incorporate patient safety and quality care into each patient encounter.

Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) is a medium that allows Veterans to have a clinical encounters with their provider without being in the same room. These encounters are delivered with the same quality as traditional face-to-face encounters. CVT services are being used in Behavior Health, Social Work, Endocrinology, Dietitians, and others. The technology has allowed for more invasive clinics such as Tele-Pre-Op, Tele-Audiology, Tele-Bariatrics, and Tele transplant. This medium brings the service to the Veteran and has been pivotal in Wilmington VA's ability to increase accessibility and improve patient satisfaction.

Wilmington VA continues to strive for excellence in the use of Telehealth services assessing the latest technology, identifying possible collaborations to allow for the best customer experience for Veterans.

PATIENT CARE SERVICES



Historic photograph of nurses at Wilmington VAMC.

Patient Care Services

Today, the Acute Care, Surgical, and Community Based Outpatient Clinic clinical divisions of Patient Care Services demonstrates a dynamic response to the changes in the health care landscape.

Continuing our commitment to providing the “Best Care Anywhere,” Wilmington VA’s Emergency Department staff developed and implemented a “Nurse First” triage program so the first point-of-contact for Veterans is a Registered Professional Nurse. This ensures the Veteran receives the right care at the right time, all the time. The addition of the Nurse First process means Veterans are being seen faster and provided the right level of care.

The Nursing Department's dedication to innovative care extends throughout acute care, where the ICU is preparing to launch a Tele-ICU program, guaranteeing our

Veterans have access to board-certified intensivists around-the-clock. This team of consultants will provide support to our expert critical care clinicians to ensure we are meeting the needs of critically ill Veterans 24/7.

Technological advances are consistent at Wilmington VAMC, as seen in our Medical, Surgical, and Telemetry unit, with upgraded cardiac monitoring equipment that was installed this year. The unit nurses are specially trained in rhythm recognition and advanced cardiac life support. In addition to the skilled bedside care, Wilmington VAMC is investing in enhanced staffing to provide dedicated monitoring of the cardiac patients on the unit.

The Dialysis unit is proud to announce the adoption of the Veterans Health Administration National Standards and

Criteria for Dialysis programs. These guidelines cover staffing and quality reviews, providing a framework for safe and effective management of chronic kidney disease. Wilmington VAMC is proud to announce we have added a transplant coordinator to the team, whose expertise will help Veterans access the life-saving organ transplants available from VA and community facilities.

The quest for improvement never stops for the Patient Care Services. Veterans remain the center of all we do, and when one improvement is achieved, the response from our staff is “What’s next?”

As our Veterans’ needs change, we want to be there to respond in the safest, most compassionate way possible. It’s what we do in Patient Care Services. We care for those who served and we do so proudly.



Photograph of Nursing Team, 6 Center at the Wilmington VAMC.

PHARMACY SERVICE



Historic Photograph of Pharmacy Service at the Wilmington VA Medical Center.



Photograph of Margorie Nicely, Pharmacy Technician working at the Wilmington VA Medical Center Pharmacy.

Pharmacy Service

The Wilmington VA Medical Center Pharmacy in 2016 has 47.5 Full Time Employees (FTE) providing complete, state-of-the-art inpatient, outpatient, and clinical pharmacy services including:

- Outpatient Pharmacy (12.8 FTE)
The Outpatient Pharmacy processes more than 480,000 prescriptions per year

The dispensing process is efficient and highly automated utilizing state-of-the-art ScriptPro automated dispensing machines.

- Wait time for prescription pick up at the Outpatient Pharmacy window is approximately 16 minutes (National Goal < 30 minutes).
- More than 80 percent of prescriptions are electronically transmitted to CMOP, a VA regional pharmacy center, and then rapidly dispensed via an automated system and mailed directly to Veterans.
- CMOP turnaround time is approximately 32 hours (National Goal less than 48 hours).

The Inpatient Pharmacy at Wilmington VAMC:

- Provides unit-dose, cart fill drug distribution service to acute care and

long term care primarily via Automated automated dispensing machines.

- Provides ward stock medications via Omnicell automated dispensing cabinets.
- Prepares sterile products and chemotherapy in 797 compliant clean rooms.

Wilmington provides PACT services to all Wilmington and CBOC Veterans, and many specialty areas. Clinical Pharmacy Specialists (CPS) areas of practice include: Acute Care including ICU, Infectious Disease, and Oncology, Primary Care, Diabetes, Hypertension, and Hyperglycemia, Pharmacist-run Anticoagulation Clinic, Behavioral Health, Home-Based Primary Care, Chronic Kidney Disease and Pain.

CPS provide medication therapy management services via face-to-face clinics, telephone clinics, Telehealth clinics, consults, and E-consults

CPS have been shown to improve clinical outcomes in diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia.

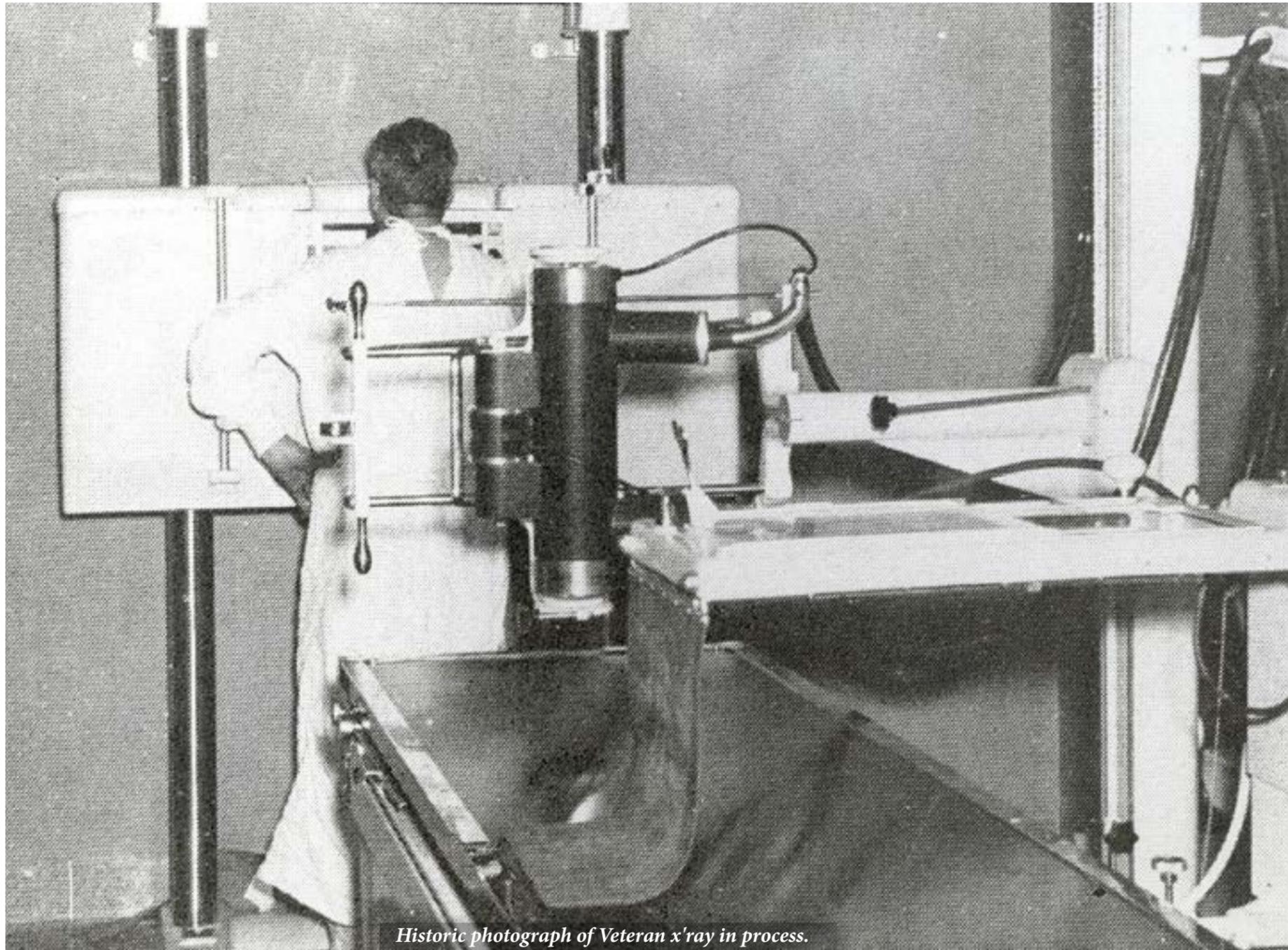
CPS also improve access to Veterans to these medication therapy management services and also reduces the time

Primary Care Providers need to review them – which also increases Veteran access to Primary Care

The Wilmington VAMC Pharmacy has come a long way from the Pharmacy 20 years ago primarily in three areas:

- Pharmacy staff
Pharmacy has grown to a total of 47.5 FTE and is now able to provide much more comprehensive pharmacy services
- Technology
Pharmacy has state-of-the-art medication dispensing technology to efficiently support the medication distribution process which allows pharmacists and technicians to spend more time directly with the Veteran and their medication needs.
- Clinical Pharmacy Services
A significant increase in CPS staff allows the Pharmacy Service to provide comprehensive PACT and specialty medication therapy management services to many more Veterans which improves their clinical outcomes.

RADIOLOGY



Historic photograph of Veteran x'ray in process.



Photograph of Justin Reidy, nuclear medicine technician at the Wilmington VAMC conducting Scintigraphy scan with the Gamma camera designed to read the blood flow of the patient's heart as one step in the Stress Test procedure in the Nuclear Medicine department.

Radiology

The Wilmington VA Medical Center Imaging Service continues to make great strides providing the very best in imaging care to our Veteran population.

Radiologic imaging is a dynamic specialty that has rapidly evolved in the last half century. No longer present are the days of hand-developing radio-graphs in a darkroom. Digital imaging allows film to be processed immediately, and cases are available for interpretation within minutes of the exposure.

With the development of MRI and CT in the 1970s and their continued advancement and refinement, radiologists are accurately and quickly diagnosing disease and allowing for rapid clinical decision making.

With the advent of CT, which is over 40 years old, we can complete CT scans in seconds as opposed to minutes. Anatomical information is displayed with increased clarity, and allows for outstanding clinical accuracy. CT scanners are faster than ever. Currently

Wilmington VA is in the process of installing a new scanner which will not only increase patient throughput, but it will ensure our Veterans are able to experience the very latest in imaging technology. This will include significant radiation dose reduction and dose tracking.

Advances in MRI capabilities have allowed radiologists at Wilmington to resolve lesions never before possible. Research now allows us to exploit MRI sequences previously only reserved for certain types of examinations so that we can be more specific about the pathology we are viewing. Our MRI upgrade will enable increased throughput with shorter scan times, increased tissue resolution, and the ability to fuse images with other modalities such as ultrasound for improved localization during biopsies.

Ultrasound technology has made significant advances in the past few years to include tissue elastography. This modality allows the user to measure tissue stiffness within

the organ of interest, which may have treatment ramifications in patients with liver fibrosis, as well as with focal lesions in other organs.

Nuclear medicine made great strides with the development of novel radio-tracers allowing for more accurate disease staging, and implementation of targeted radiotherapies. Wilmington is able to provide routine thyroid radio-ablations, with more advanced therapies being planned for the very near future.

The Wilmington VA Imaging Service continually reassesses imaging protocols, processes and procedures, and is closely working with our service partners and referral base to provide optimum care to Veterans.

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
SERVICE**





Photograph of Behavioral Health Service nurses left to right: Amy West, Carol Stanley, Joshua Menard, Brian Wayland.

Behavioral Health

THEN

The first Mental Hygiene Clinic (MHC) was established at the VA Regional Office in Los Angeles, California in 1945 to reduce hospitalization of psychiatric patients. By late 1954 the Department of Veterans Affairs was operating 62 MHCs staffed with 165 psychiatrists, 151 clinical psychologists, and 162 social workers. Also included were 45 psychiatry residents, 160 psychology trainees, and 42 social work students.

The median number of staff in these clinics was three psychiatrists, three psychologists, and three social workers.

In the early years, typical activities in a MHC included screening and intake, therapy, teaching, and research. Of particular note was the fact that 25 percent of the patient load included work with psychotic patients kept functioning in the community without hospitalization.

Counseling psychology was officially established as a service in 1952. The early on contributions from VA psychologists were substantial, including activity in what were called work therapy programs. These programs employed patients to work in the hospital as part of their rehabilitation goals.

The inpatient Behavioral Health Unit was closed in the 1990's during a period when the Wilmington VAMC was downsizing.

Today, the Wilmington VAMC provides outpatient behavioral health services and employs 75 behavioral health staff including the departments of social work, BHS nursing, psychiatry, and psychology with numerous, varied disciplines within these departments such as Compensated Work Program (CWT) and peer support specialists; today's staffing has vastly increased from 9 providers in 1954 as well as the vast increase in the variety of services offered to Veterans.

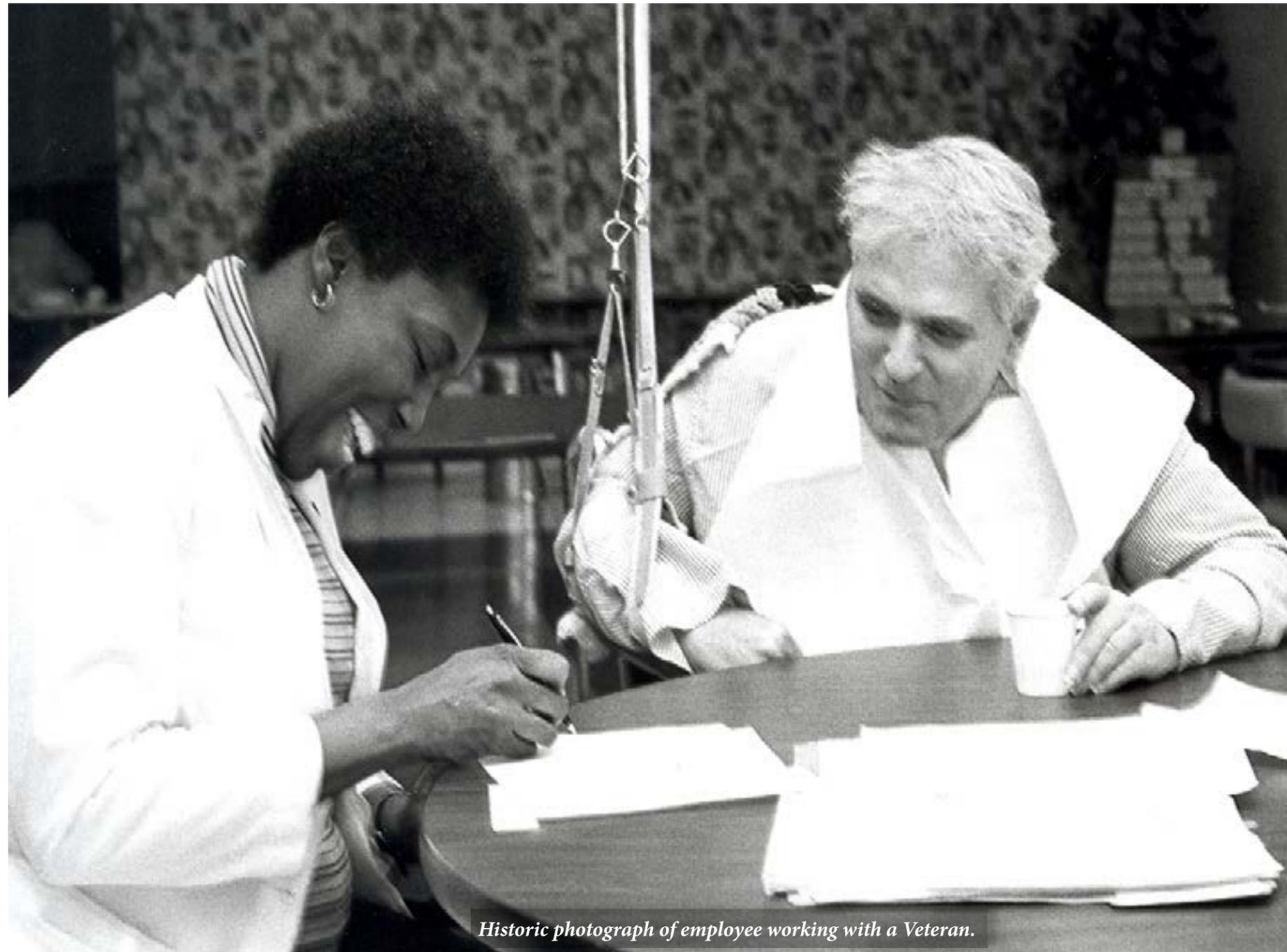
Today's Behavioral Health Services include: Assessment/Intake clinic/Re-engagement coordination of post inpatient treatment; Acute intervention services-emergency room and facilitation of inpatient treatment; Supportive counseling and peer support services; Non-specialty evidence based psychotherapy; Suicide prevention; Psychotherapy groups; SMI Recovery; Psychological/neuropsychological assessment; Trauma recovery programs: PTSD and MST; Primary care mental health integration and behavioral health lab; Marriage and family therapy; Health psychology services; Telemental health; Substance use treatment and counseling,

Intensive outpatient program (IOP), Outpatient opiate substitution program, ambulatory detox program; Mental health intensive case management; Compensated work therapy/transitional work/supportive employment

The Compensated Work Therapy program is among the strongest of our services. We continue in our efforts to provide treatments that are grounded in a solid evidence base that emphasize empowerment and self-sufficiency over dependency.

As of November 10, 2016, a new Recovery Based Clinic offering same day access to Behavioral Health Services was created. This 90-day program is for patients new to BHS that combines orientation classes with a variety of options for interacting with staff including a weekly drop-in clinic, telephone clinic, and secure messaging which are all designed to improve access to psychotherapy with maximized flexibility. The goal is to establish the disposition of patients to determine whether more intensive or specialized services are needed.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICE



Historic photograph of employee working with a Veteran.

Social Work

THEN

On June 16, 1926, Veterans Bureau Administrator, General Frank T. Hines authorized the first Social Work department in VA. On Sept. 1, 1926, the Veterans Bureau formally took over social work in its neuropsychiatric hospitals and at 2-3 general hospitals with the goal of doing so at all of its hospitals by July 1, 1927.

By the 1950s, social workers were essential members of the professional medical team. The expansion of modern Social Services at VA began in 2000 with the efforts to provide a seamless transition for wounded, ill and injured Service members from DoD to VA. Further growth included the establishment of the VA Office of Seamless Transition in 2005; the establishment of the National Center on Homelessness and the implementation of the Caregiver Support Program in 2011.

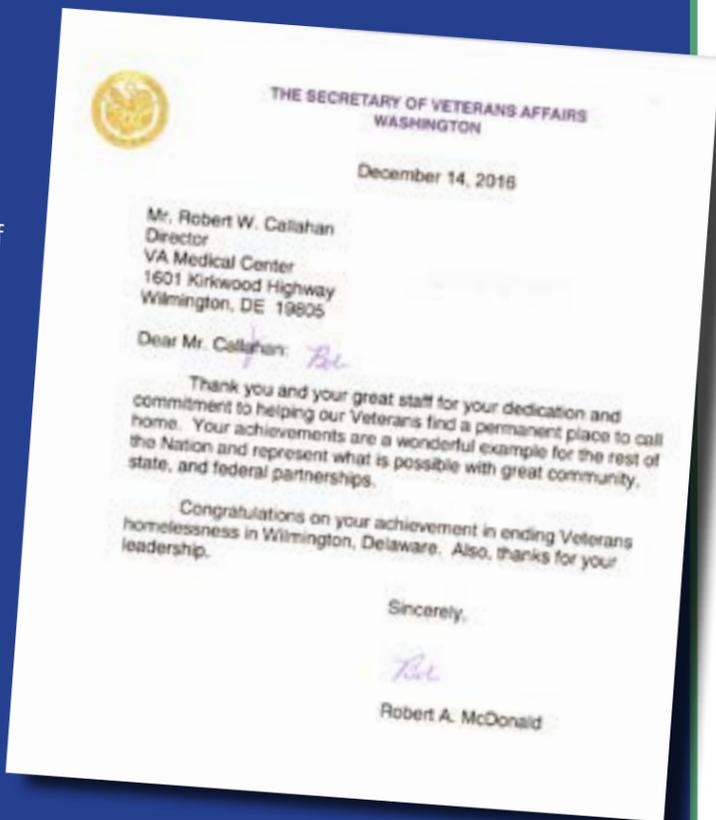
Today, Social Work has become an independent Service Department with approximately 50 Social Workers. The Social Work department was renamed Care Management and Social Work Services (CM/SWS) to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of programs led by Social Work.

Wilmington VA CM/SWS has administrative oversight of: Transition and Care Management (formerly OEF/OIF/OND); Caregiver Support Program; All Homeless programming including Veterans Justice Services; Polytrauma/TBI; and VIST coordination.

Social Workers support many medical services including home-based primary care, dialysis, acute medical and surgery, nursing home care, behavioral health and outpatient primary care.

Ending homelessness among Veterans began an unprecedented campaign to dramatically increase successful outcomes for Veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless by the end of 2015. In 2016, Delaware became the third state in the country to effectively end Veteran homelessness.

Today, Social Workers are stationed in every patient care area of the medical facility



and CBOCs to provide assessments, care coordination, specialized case management, crisis intervention, counseling, advocacy, outreach, and discharge planning. Social Workers aim to fulfill the mission of the VA and help to improve the quality of lives for Veterans and their families.



Photograph at Delaware Memorial Bridge on Veterans Day, 2016.



Photograph of Volunteer during Patient Carnival at the Wilmington VAMC.

Voluntary Service

Volunteers: 305
Volunteer hours: 41,966
Youth volunteers: 19

At the Volunteer Recognition Ceremony, VA Volunteers celebrated 70 years of service to our Veterans in 2016. Of the 346 registered volunteers, 138 received milestone awards for their volunteer hours, ranging from 100 hours to 10,000 hours. Two Volunteers, Rick Edwards and Dave Hodgkins received the "Shining Star Award" which is an award recognizing and honoring volunteers who set a high standard of community service, encourages a sustained commitment to civic participation and inspires others to make a service a central part of their lives. The Wilmington VA volunteers contributed 42,657 hours in 2016 which would be the equivalent of 21 full time employees to assist our Veterans. In 2016 many additional assignments were added to include coverage on weekends and evenings.

The Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN) increased services by 45 percent, in New Castle County, Delaware. Voluntary Services accomplished the increase by adding additional drivers and adding Fridays to the schedule. A new van which can accommodate two wheelchairs was added to the fleet in the spring of 2016. Wilmington VA received a grant for the Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) which enabled the Medical Center to hire additional drivers and provide additional vans to improve the transportation available to Veterans. Voluntary Service has embraced VTS working together to expand service in Delaware and New Jersey.

Voluntary Service is dedicated to Veterans; young and old, showing Veterans America cares, honors, and remembers their service.

Chaplain Services

THEN

Chaplains have been serving Veterans at the Wilmington VAMC for 66 years. The first chapel was established in a Quonset hut when the hospital started its operation in 1946 in the former Army Air Corps Hospital at New Castle Air Base.

The construction of the Chapel in its present location began in 1948. Under the guidance of Chief Chaplain Father S. Connery, the Chapel underwent a major renovation in 2011 with new stone walls, pews and carpets. Continuing the impetus to provide a “spiritual haven and place of worship” for any and all religious preferences, the Wilmington VA has a serene Chapel and a Prayer & Meditation room for people of all faiths.

When Chaplain Paul P. Buck was hired as the new Chief Chaplain (2012) he furthered the work of Father Connery to enhance the accouterments of the Chapel. From 2013 to 2014, open floor space was added to the main Chapel for wheelchair bound patients and CLC (Community Living Center) residents as well as installing state-of-the-art audio visual equipment.

Today Chaplains provide religious, spiritual, and pastoral care to Veterans receiving inpatient or outpatient care and care for their families. At the Wilmington VA, Chaplains provide comprehensive spiritual/religious pastoral and clinical care for our Veterans, their families, staff and visitors.

All of Wilmington VA’s Chaplains provide inpatient and outpatient spiritual support and counseling. Beginning in 2012, Chaplains Buck and Igwilo began utilizing telehealth counseling for outpatients.

Veterans who are able to come to their nearest Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). Chaplain Buck is a member of the Substance Abuse Treatment Team and provides Spirituality Groups at the Medical Center.

Chaplain Azuka Iwuchukwu coordinates all Catholic programs and provides spiritual support and prayer to those going into surgery. He is a member of the Palliative, Hospice, End of Life Care treatment team

and participates in the Cancer, Tumor, Cultural Competency committees.

Chaplain Peter Igwilo is the lead Mental Health Chaplain. His services include mental health spiritual support for Veterans at the Delaware and southern New Jersey CBOCs as well as Spirituality Group counseling. He is a member of the Preventive Ethics Committee and the Patient Centered Care Service Committee.

Chaplain Joy Carrington is the Women’s Health, Telehealth and Home Based Primary Care Chaplain. She provides mental health spiritual support to Veterans at the southern New Jersey CBOCs as well as leading the 4x2W Groups and Community Living Center Spiritual Expressions Groups.



Photograph of Chaplain Services standing at podium (left to right): Peter Igwilo , Paul Buck, Joy Carrington and Azuka Iwuchukwu.

Compensated Work Therapy

THEN

The Wilmington VAMC Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) began in 2005 with the hiring of two Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists (VRS's).

The goal was to build a Transitional Work Experience (TWE) and Supported Employment (SE) program for Veterans with mental health issues.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists collaborated with the Lebanon VA Medical Center to learn how to start and maintain a successful Transitional Work Experience program.

2006 marked the official start of the program with the first Veteran being placed in a job within the Food and Nutrition service. The Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists began building a caseload of Veterans who were interested in obtaining community employment.

Veterans began to receive direct community job placement services under the Supportive Employment evidenced based model.

Today, the Transitional Work Experience program's operating budget is over \$500,000 with four community Transitional Work Employment partnerships.

There are 30 Veterans who participated in Transitional Work Experience at the Wilmington VAMC as well as in the community.

The Wilmington Transitional Work Experience program permanent job placement rate was 63.8 percent.

The Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program established a computer lab and is utilizing Work Study students to teach CWT Veterans basic computer skills.

Veterans participating in CWT attend a monthly Job Club meeting where they learn job seeking skills and techniques.

Collaborations have been established with the State Division of Vocational

Rehabilitation and the Veteran Benefits Administration Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Office.

The SE Program has 25 Veterans participating in the program with a job placement rate of 70 percent.

The Wilmington Supported Employment program fidelity rating is 63 which is one of the highest in VISN 4.

Veterans are employed in various occupations in the community such as painters, printing, security and food service.

In 2015, the CWT program earned a three year program accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation from Rehabilitation Facilities.



Photograph: (left) Patrick Lewdandowski, CWT. (right) Mike Merrill, CWT program coordinator.



Photograph of MyHealthVet worker helping a Veteran at a computer work area.

MyHealthVet

In the 1950's when the Wilmington VA opened, there was no Release of Information Office for Veterans to request a copy of their medical records.

Today, Veterans can use MyHealthVet, a one-stop electronic healthcare resource center.

MyHealthVet started on Veterans Day 2003. Since its inception, My MyHealthVet has become a key access portal for Veterans to access their VA health care services.

Using the Blue Button feature, Veterans can access their VA health records for the past three years. Records can be downloaded in the privacy of the Veteran's home using their own personal computer. Veterans can view Radiology studies, pathology results, cardiology and, endoscopic studies among others using the Blue Button.

Veterans can request prescription refills online and receive the medication at their home within five business days. Veterans can also use MyHealthVet to view upcoming appointments and view lab work results.

The secure messaging feature is encrypted two-way communication between the Veteran and their care team. The Wilmington VAMC began using secure messaging with Veterans over five years ago. Veterans use secure messaging for non-urgent communication such as requesting an appointment, changing an appointment, asking a question or requesting a renewal of their medications.

Many Veterans communicate their blood sugars, blood pressures, heart rates, or weights weekly to their secure messaging provider teams to stay healthy. Patients have communicated the effectiveness of a new medication they have been prescribed

or if a medication is causing side effects to their providers on secure messaging.

We currently have over 170 Secure Messaging Teams at the Wilmington VAMC and at our five CBOC locations. All of the clinical staff and providers, including Primary Care, the Medical and Surgical Specialties, Pharmacy, Behavioral Health, Social Work, Nutrition, and Rehabilitation Medicine are using secure messaging to communication with Veterans.

MyHealthVet empowers our Veterans to take control of their health and partner with their care givers. MyHealthVet has many other features including the Veterans Health Library (VHL) where Veterans can research health topics using Medline Plus and Krames on Demand, a patient education tool, on VHL. Knowledge of your health and care is energizing for our Veterans to become informed consumer about their healthcare.



Photograph of a doctor and nurses working with patient.

STAFF RECOGNITION



PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR:
BERNARD HAIMOWITZ MD



TEAM OF THE YEAR:
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES



WE ARE VETERANS
PROUD TO SERVE OTHER
VETERANS



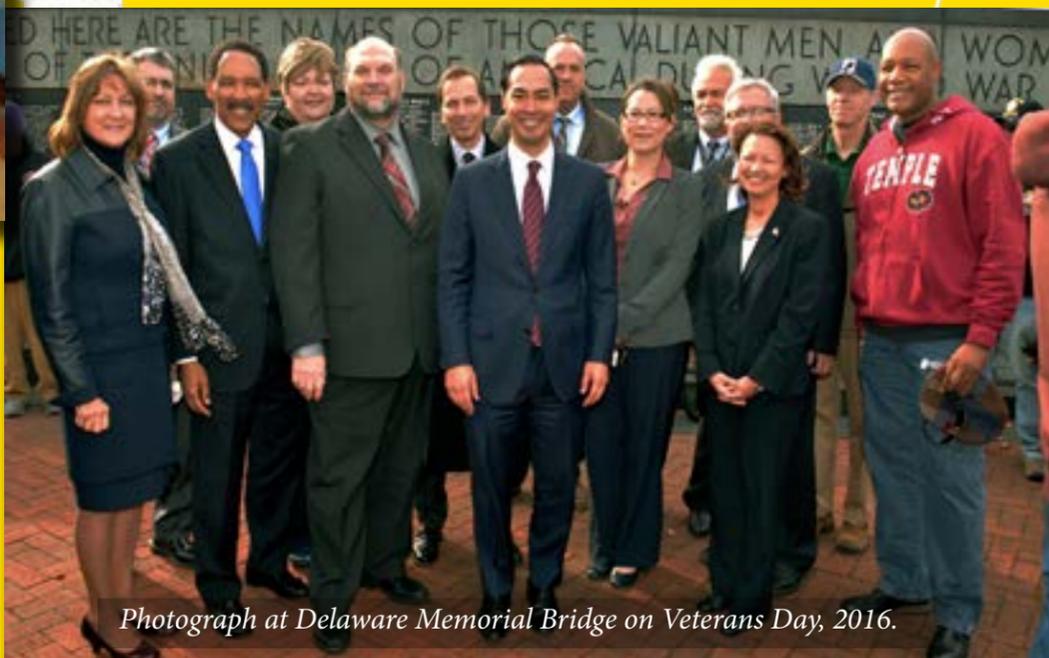
WILMINGTON VA NOTABLE



Photograph of the CLC staff with Dr. Bernadette Jao.

Delaware Effectively Ends Veteran Homelessness

On Oct. 25, 2016, the Wilmington VAMC was officially notified that the State of Delaware has effectively ended all homelessness among Veterans. By building partnerships, closing gaps, collaborating and working together as a community, Wilmington VAMC has put the pieces together to completely change how the State of Delaware responds to the factors that cause Veterans to fall into homelessness.



Photograph at Delaware Memorial Bridge on Veterans Day, 2016.

Community Living Center Survey Success

The Long Term Care Institute (LTCI) surveyed the Wilmington VAMC Community Living Center. LTCI exited the survey early and had no findings! The CLC was identified as one of the 10 highest performing CLCs in the nation for quality and patient-centeredness.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2016

Direct Scheduling helps to get Optometry and Audiology Appointments Quicker

Veterans receiving care at the Wilmington VA Medical Center (VAMC) are now able to schedule routine appointments for the Optometry and Audiology clinics without a primary care referral – a move that eliminates multiple steps and gets Veterans into appointments quicker.

Previously Veterans seeking appointments at the Optometry or Audiology clinic had to first make an appointment with a primary care provider and then they would be referred to one of these clinics for routine appointments.

This is a win-win for Veterans receiving care at Wilmington. Veterans can pick-up the phone and directly schedule an appointment allowing primary care providers more time to concentrate on direct patient care.

The Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative is one of a number of efforts underway at Wilmington VA to improve Veterans' access to care.



Photograph of audiologist Dr. Joseph Chiarello testing a patients hearing.



Photograph of (left to right) Mike Merrill, Miguel Marcos and Pat Woosley at Annual Veterans Day Breakfast.

CWT and OEF/OIF/OND

The Wilmington VAMC OEF/OIF/OND and CWT teams were honored at the Annual Veterans Day Breakfast at Delaware Technical Institute for their continued support of students who are Veterans providing and enrolled at Del Tech, providing them with opportunities in the VA Work Study program and connecting them through the Del Tech workforce development program.

2016 by the Numbers

Budget: \$224,201,000
Enrolled Veterans at Wilmington: 26,948
Total Employees: 996
Employees who are Veterans: 276
Nurses: 289
Physicians: 117
Unique Patient Total: 29,917
Male: 27,714
Female: 2,203

Operating Beds: 16 inpatient, 6 ICU, 40 CLC
Outpatient Visits: 297,750
Admissions (including observation): 1,259
Surgical Procedures: 890
Total Operating Budget: \$224,201,000

Community Based Outpatient Clinics by the numbers



Atlantic County CBOC
Enrolled: 2,943
Patient Encounters: 16,863

Cape May County
Enrolled: 1,833
Patient Encounters: 5,133

Cumberland County CBOC
Enrolled: 2,854
Patient Encounters: 13,452

Kent County CBOC
Enrolled: 3,744
Patient Encounters: 26,748 Behavioral

Sussex County CBOC
Enrolled: 3,607
Patient Encounters: 22,379



WILMINGTON VA MEDICAL CENTER

1601 Kirkwood Highway
Wilmington, DE 19805
(302) 994-2511 or (800) 461-8262
<http://www.wilmington.va.gov>

COMMUNITY BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS

Kent County CBOC

1198 S. Governors Avenue
Suite 201
Dover, DE 19901
(800) 461-8262, ext. 2400

Sussex County CBOC

15 Georgetown Plaza
Georgetown, DE 19947
(800) 461-8262, ext. 2300

Atlantic County CBOC

1909 New Road
Northfield, NJ 08225
(800) 461-8262, ext. 2800

Cape May County CBOC

1 Munro Avenue
Cape May, NJ 08204
(800) 461-8262, ext. 2850

Cumberland County CBOC

79 West Landis Avenue
Vineland, NJ 08360
(800) 461-8262, ext. 6500

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration