



# VISN 12 Annual Report



2007

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## Message from James W. Roseborough, Network Director



On behalf of the employees of the VA Great Lakes Health Care System (VISN 12) I am pleased to present our 2007 Annual Report.

2007 was a challenging and fruitful year for all of us in VISN 12. Our budget situation improved and allowed us to eliminate our wait list. We continue to seek out getting the most value for our veteran patients by looking for ways to improve our care and to adapt to the needs of the many generations of veterans we care for from World War II to Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In VISN 12, we are proud of the many accomplishments that demonstrate our commitment to our mission of providing the veterans with excellence in health care, education and research. These accomplishments were achieved through a comprehensive, integrated health care delivery system so that veterans receive timely, compassionate, high quality care along with a seamless continuum base in primary care.

The VISN continues to address health care issues important to our veterans in the areas of patient access, quality, cost, and satisfaction. As previously stated, our facilities eliminated the electronic wait list, remained a leader in a number of quality areas, and our patient satisfaction scores remained high despite the issues faced with increasing workload throughout the year.

Among the many accomplishments achieved by our individual facilities, the Great Lakes Acquisition Center was the recipient of the Secretary's Socioeconomic Achievement Award for exceeding five of the Secretary's 7 socioeconomic goals. October 5, 2007, a ceremony was held at the North Chicago VA Medical Center to announce the full integration of North Chicago VA Medical Center and Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes partnership. That occasion marked the first time VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) have fully integrated 2 of their facilities into one. Once the project is completed in 2010, it will be the first fully integrated Federal Health Care Center between VA and DoD. The facility will be named the "Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center." Edward Hines Jr. Hospital applied and has been approved as a site for a future Fisher House. The Fisher House will provide short term on-campus lodging for patient families as they accompany their loved ones. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2008-09.

VISN 12 was proud to host, along with the Wisconsin Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of American, the 27<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Wheelchair Games. The Games were held June 19-23, 2007, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The event brought together over 500 athletes and more than 2,700 volunteers, without whom, the Games could not have taken place. We had an overwhelming response from the community, volunteers, media and corporate support.

Measurement is a vital part of delivering quality health care services. Our commitment to ensure safe, effective, efficient and compassionate care to our nation's heroes remains a primary focus for us in the coming year. We acknowledge and appreciate the support of our VISN 12 employees, service organizations, and volunteers who remain committed to our mission, knowing we have made a difference in the lives of the over 220,000 veterans we serve throughout the Network. We remain ready to meet the challenges of 2008 and beyond.



James W. Roseborough, FACHE  
Network Director

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## About Us

### Serving Our Veterans

The VA Great Lakes Health Care System, VISN 12, includes seven VA medical centers, 32 outpatient clinics, 5 nursing homes, and 2 domiciliaries located throughout the states of Illinois, Northwest Indiana, Upper Peninsula of Michigan and Wisconsin. Edward Hines Jr. Hospital has been designated as a Level II Polytrauma Center for VISN 12. In addition, VISN 12 supports 7 Readjustment Counseling Centers.

### Who We Are

The VA Great Lakes Health Care System is an integrated health care delivery system that provides comprehensive, highly quality, innovative care, in a compassionate manner to all the veterans it serves. Care is provided along a seamless continuum base in primary care. We employ more than 11,500 individuals.

The VA Great Lakes Health Care System includes seven VA medical centers and 32 Community Based Outpatient Clinics located through the four states. Access to primary care sites throughout Network 12 is available within 30 minutes (urban and rural) and 60 minutes (highly rural) to veterans that we serve. The VA Great Lakes Health Care System is located on the campus of the VA Medical Center, Edward Hines, Jr. Hospital, Hines, Illinois.

### Who We Serve

The VA Great Lakes Health Care System's mission is to improve the health of veterans through clinical care, education and research. The veteran population in the Network area consists of over 220,000 veterans that account for over 30,000 admissions and 2.5 million outpatient visits per year. Facilities in VISN 12 operate 920 medical, surgical, and psychiatry hospital beds, as well as 789 nursing home beds and 461 domiciliary beds. Varying in size and complexity, VISN 12 facilities play a fundamental role in training thousands of physicians and allied health care personnel each year.

### Education and Affiliations

VISN 12 is involved in the training of a wide variety of health professions including physicians, nurses, social workers, dentists, eye professionals, occupational therapists and more. In FY 2007, the educational mission of VISN 12 was evidenced by our participation in the training of medical residents, medical students and other allied health professionals:

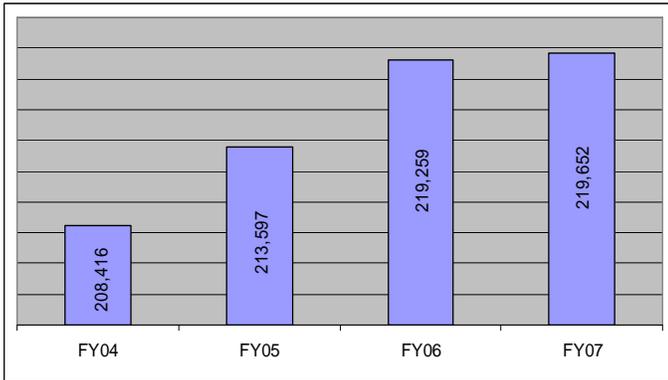
674 - graduate medical education  
230 - allied health professionals

VISN 12 maintains strong academic affiliations with many colleges and universities throughout the area, including:

- Loyola University of Chicago, Stritch School of Medicine
- University of Illinois at College of Medicine
- Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
- University of Wisconsin Medical School
- Medical College of Wisconsin
- Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science

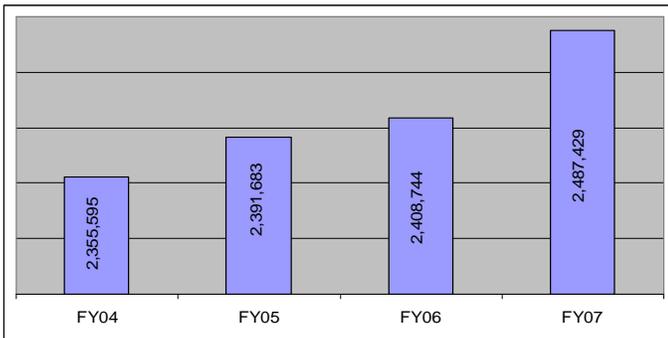
## VISN 12 Statistics

### Unique Veteran Patient Growth



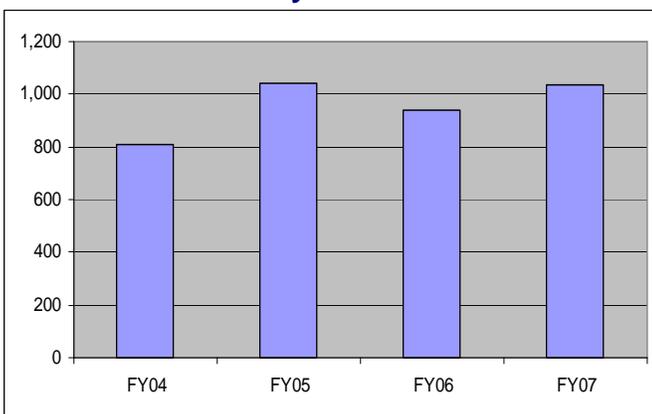
VISN 12 saw an increase in veteran patients of 5.4% from FY04 to FY07.

### VA Outpatient Visits



VISN 12 had an increase of 5.6% in the number of outpatient visits from FY04 to FY07.

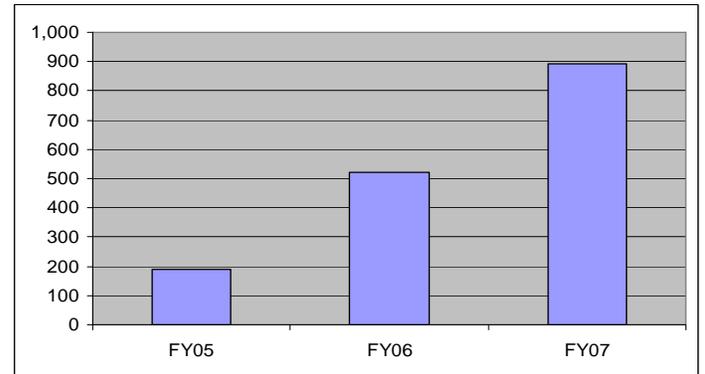
### Home and Community Based Care Census



The VISN is committed to expanding non-institutional alternatives for veterans desiring care at home or in the community. The VISN now provides skilled home care through VA and

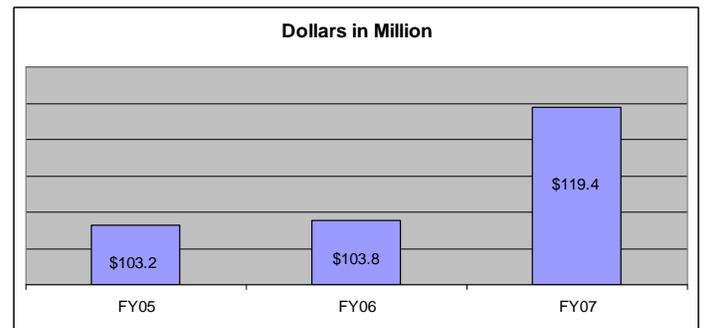
community providers, adult day health care, home respite, home hospice, homemaker and home health aid services. The VISN is expanding home based primary care programs so that veterans from each medical center can access these services in their community.

### Care Coordination Home Telehealth Care



Over the past 3 years, VISN 12 has been improving care to veterans by aggressively expanding technology assisted care coordination into veteran's homes. These services provide close monitoring of veterans with complex illness, allowing for early medical intervention when necessary.

### Medical Care Collection Funds



VISN 12 had an increase of 15.7% in collections from FY05 to FY07.

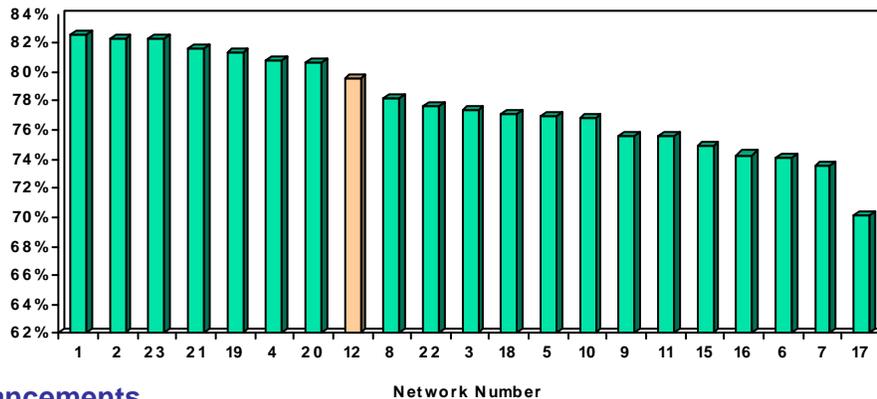
### VISN 12 Performance Measures

The VISN 12 performance measures summary includes the access, quality, functional status (non-institutionalized care), healthy communities, financial, and patient satisfaction results. VISN 12 has increased its over all performance from 62% in FY06 to 71% in FY07. Our mental health performance report shows that VISN 12's overall ranking is 6<sup>th</sup> out of 21 Networks.

VISN 12 - Performance Measures Summary				
	FY 06		FY 07	
	#	%	#	%
Exceptional	32	36%	54	58%
Fully Successful	23	26%	12	13%
Under Performing	34	38%	27	29%
<b>Total</b>	89	100%	93	100%
<b>Exceptional &amp; Fully Successful</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>71%</b>

### Veteran Patient Satisfaction

In FY07, VISN 12 ranked the 8<sup>th</sup> highest in the Nation for Veteran Satisfaction



### Mental Health Enhancements

Over the past two years, VISN 12 has increased mental health staffing by 162 FTEE. These additions have been targeted primarily to improve screening and treatment of returning combat veterans. Centrally funded positions have been used to enhance PTSD, substance abuse, suicide prevention, vocational rehabilitation and other mental health services. Significant improvements have also been made to mental health access throughout the VISN. Each full time CBOC now has onsite or telemental health services available.

### Veterans Waiting

The VISN has successfully eliminated the wait list for new patients wanting a primary care (PC) outpatient appointment. We are currently scheduling 94% of new PC patient appointments and 94.5% of new mental health clinic appointments within 30 days. We hope to reduce that to over 90% of these appointments to within 14 days of when desired. The VISN has also improved access to other specialty clinic appointments with 94.8% of patients seen within 30 days.

### Access Clinics

At certain locations, clinical space limitations impact patient access and timeliness of appointments. The VISN has requested and been approved to lease clinic space in close proximity to the Madison VAH, Milwaukee VAMC and the Appleton CBOC. All are expected to open later this year.

### Green Bay Clinic Expansion

The Milwaukee VAMC has started the process to implement a new capital lease for the Green Bay CBOC that would increase the annual patient capacity from 2,500 to 15,000. With collaboration from the Iron Mountain VAMC, Milwaukee assessed the need to incorporate specialty care services for the proposed clinic. In addition to primary care, the expanded clinic will have laboratory, radiology, physical therapy, pharmacy, mental health, dietetics and social work. This expansion will improve access and convenience for veterans receiving care at Green Bay, Appleton, and Cleveland CBOCs, as well as the Iron Mountain VAMC.

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## Transition Patient Advocates

**Customer Satisfaction**  
**Meeting the Needs of Veterans....Today and Tomorrow**



**Darlene DeMario**  
**North Chicago VAMC**



**Lela Vance-Glover**  
**Jesse Brown VAMC**

VISN 12 is proud to introduce its newest public service employees, **Transition Patient Advocates**.

Based on the population of returning OEF/OIF soldiers to the VISN 12 catchment area, a total of seven TPA's were assigned to VISN 12 facilities to assist with providing support and guidance to patients transitioning from the military into the VA system.

Acting as a liaison on behalf of service members and their families, TPA's work closely with Combat Case Managers, Regional Office Representatives, and Military Treatment Facilities, coordinating all aspects of care and benefits, ensuring service member's transition from military is smooth and hassle free.



**Jeanne Button**  
**Tomah VAMC/  
Madison VAH**



**Cristine Mabrito**  
**Hines VA Hospital**



**David Flynn**  
**Milwaukee/Iron Mountain  
VAMC**



**Will Johnson**  
**Milwaukee/Iron Mountain  
VAMC**

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## Honoring and Serving our Newest Veterans

VISN 12 continues to strive to honor and improve our services to our newest veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Following are some highlights on the amount of OEF/OIF veterans being served in VISN 12 and the new and improved programs being provided.

- Nationally, the utilization rate of the 799,791 separated OEF/OIF veterans using VHA health care is at 37% with 299,585 enrolled. Of the 25,000+ OEF/OIF veterans residing in the VISN 12 geographic area, over 18,000 are utilizing VA healthcare. This represents the highest utilization rate (71%) in the country. This is a direct reflection of the excellent outreach efforts by VA staff and the quality healthcare we provide.
- In Fiscal Year 2007, VISN 12 treated over 8,000 OEF/OIF veterans.
- 97% of all combat veterans seeking primary care are scheduled within 30 days of their desired appointment date.
- All facilities in the Network conduct numerous outreach events in the community to provide newly returning veterans important information on VA services they are entitled to.
- Each VA facility also has an annual 'Welcome Home' event to further outreach to combat veterans and their families to assist them in becoming familiar with a specific medical center.
- Once enrolled and receiving care at a medical center, OEF/OIF veterans and their families are invited to attend Focus Group meetings to provide feedback on their experiences to facility and VISN leadership. Information and suggestions they provide is used to improve services.

VISN 12 is very proud of the many staff members and programs dedicated to not only our newest veterans but all our veterans who answered the call to serve their country.

## Polytrauma and Traumatic Brain Injury

VISN 12 Hines VA Hospital has been designated a Level 2 Polytrauma Center. Implemented in 2007, the Polytrauma Program has been formally established and successfully treating service members returning from active duty with traumatic brain injuries. Program directors, Dr. Steiner and Dr. Querubin, who specialize in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, report Hines is currently conducting TBI screening for all returning veterans who present to the facility or one of the community based outpatient clinics for treatment. If the screening is positive, a consult is placed to the Polytrauma team. Veterans are also referred to the Polytrauma nurse for detailed screening and directly to the Polytrauma Clinic. The team includes many specialized disciplines, including but not limited to, rehabilitation nursing, physical/occupational therapy, speech/language pathology, recreational therapy, prosthetics, neuropsychology, blind rehabilitation, psychiatry and a chaplain.



From Left, members of the Hines VA Hospital Polytrauma team pictured: Arnold Canete, Laura Kulawiak, Amanda Sobel, Gerald Schutter, Debbie Johnson, Amanda Urban, PhD., Melanie Querubin, M.D., Joanne Milas. Also on the team, but not pictured are Ron Balogh, David Labash, Emily Garza, Denise VanKoevering, Nimisha Collins, MD, Fr. James Burnett, Dinah Banks, Theresa Pape, PhD, Roger Kelsch and Ivy Bryant.

## Capital Asset Realignment

VISN 12 went through the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Service (CARES) review back in June of 2001. This review was a restructuring process to provide veterans the right care at the right place, at the right time. It developed strategies for meeting current and future veterans needs for accessible quality health care and align capital assets to meet those needs.

August 2002, the final decision document was signed, which invested more than \$300 Million in realigning Chicago area hospitals to ensure better services for veterans in the region.

Some of the construction projects identified under CARES were:

- New comprehensive Rehabilitation Center at Hines VAH (Blind Rehab Center building and Spinal Cord Injury Center building)
- Modernized inpatient units at hospitals in North Chicago, Hines, Iron Mountain, Madison, Milwaukee and Tomah
- Modernized outpatient and emergency room facilities at the Jesse Brown, Hines, and Tomah sites
- New energy plants at North Chicago and Jesse Brown
- New VBA Regional Office combined with a new parking structure at Jesse Brown
- New 200 hospital bed inpatient tower at Jesse Brown
- Consolidated Intensive Care Units at Iron Mountain
- Renovation of the 40 bed Rehab and Extended Care Center/Nursing Home Care Unit at Iron Mountain
- Consolidated Intensive Care Units at Milwaukee
- Modernized acute psychiatry and Nursing Home Care Unit 9A at North Chicago
- Design and construction of a 38 bed Spinal Cord Injury 2 story building at Milwaukee

The following includes some of the construction projects that have been accomplished through the CARES process.

### **Jesse Brown Auburn Gresham Community Based Outpatient Clinic**

Jesse Brown VAMC has relocated its Beverly Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) to the Auburn Gresham community on Chicago's south side to improve access to care for the 63,000 veterans who live in that area. The clinic is located at 7731 S. Halsted Street, adjacent to the new St. Leo's transitional housing center. This St. Leo's Center was developed in partnership with Catholic Charities and the Jesse Brown VAMC as a national pilot to develop transitional housing to serve chronically homeless and mentally ill veterans. The center houses up to 141 homeless veterans.

The first floor of the Beverly CBOC provides primary medical care, diabetes education, podiatry and mental health services, including addictions treatment.

The second floor includes a job counseling and training center, including a computer lab, along with a Veterans Resource Center and offices for the Veterans Benefits Administration and the U.S. Department of Labor.



Former VA Secretary R. James Nicholson, VISN 12 Network Director James Roseborough and JBVAMC Director James S. Jones provided ribbon-cutting honors to officially open the new Auburn Gresham Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

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## For Enhanced Services



### Jesse Brown Medical Center Bed Tower

Ongoing construction of JBVAMC new 200 bed inpatient tower, a replacement for the medical center's current inpatient structure, anticipates admitting patients in late May 2008. It will include 200 patient beds, seven operating rooms, a cystology room, inpatient dialysis center, SPD, outpatient surgical center and a chapel. The seven-floor 224,000 square foot, 'bed tower' was designed by two of the premier architectural and design firms in the world, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and Ellerbe Beckett, and used input from 17 separate user groups comprised of VA employees that worked with the architectural firms for over a year to design a building that best met the needs of veterans and hospital staff.

The building's unique design allows it to fit in among existing buildings on the 13-acre urban medical center campus that includes a Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office, a 1560-space parking garage and an energy center. The bed tower, constructed by Walsh/DeMaria Joint Venture, is environmentally friendly and utilizes recycled materials for woodwork and flooring, thermal windows for temperature control and a green roof that controls storm water runoff and returns oxygen to the atmosphere.

Jesse Brown VA Medical Center continues to be one of the most active medical centers in the VA system. In FY07, it served over 6,000 inpatients and accommodated over a half million outpatient visits at its main campus (820 S. Damen Avenue) and four community based outpatient clinics located at Lakeside, Auburn Gresham, Chicago Heights and Crown Point, IN.

JBVAMC is a tertiary care facility with bed services in acute medicine, surgery, psychiatry, neurology, and rehabilitation medicine. It provides a full range of patient care services, with state-of-the-art technology as well as education and research, in the areas of medicine, surgery, psychiatry, radiology, physical medicine and rehabilitation, neurology, oncology, dentistry and geriatrics.



Other major construction projects that were completed in FY07 include the modernization of Emergency Services (photo above), Research Lab, Outpatient Radiology, ENT Clinic, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Service (photo below) and the medical center's main entrance.



### Iron Mountain Extended Care Center/Nursing Home Care Unit

Renovation of the 40-bed Rehab and ECC/NHC Unit at Iron Mountain VA Medical Center will be completed in March 2008.



### Hines VAH Rehabilitation Centers

Thanks to the CARES process, Hines VA Hospital constructed 2 new buildings for the Blind and Spinal Cord Injured. Each of the two new buildings feature a private courtyard area lined with bricks inscribed with names or messages from veterans, family members or employees who donated money in support of the new facilities. The Central Blind Rehabilitation Center (CBRC) pictured below, is a 34-bed residential facility who receives applicants from over 50 VA hospitals in 10 Midwest states.



The CBRC is one of ten VA Blind Centers located across the US and in Puerto Rico. Veterans develop the skills and attitudes required for coping with vision loss. Personnel include medical staff, teachers (blind rehab specialists), support staff and management. Altogether, the group brings over 500 years of blind rehab experience to the center.

The Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder (SCI/D) Center provides state-of-the-art specialty care to veterans from an eight state area. The facility is over 58,000 square feet and has the most modern equipment and indoor/outdoor rehabilitation therapy areas. The program provides rehabilitation services for paraplegic, quadriplegic, as well as care of ventilator-dependent spinal cord disorders, as well as care for veterans with non-traumatic spinal problems, such as ALS, MS and spinal infections resulting in paraplegia or tetraplegia. The Center, pictured below, offers a range of outpatient services, including psychology and a hospital based home care program including telemedicine consultations and follow up.

Unique to the Hines campus and the SCI/D Center is a free-standing long term care facility, the Robert C. Fruin Residential Care Facility which was created in 1991.



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## For Enhanced Services Continued

### VHA/DoD Partnership

In October 2002, VHA and DoD signed an Executive Council Decision Memo which created the partnership between North Chicago VAMC and then Naval Hospital Great Lakes. The first phase of the partnership was accomplished in October 2003, when Navy shifted their inpatient mental health to North Chicago VAMC.

Phase II of the partnership was a \$13 million VA renovation and modernization project to expand the emergency and surgery departments at North Chicago VAMC. Completed in June 2006, Navy shifted all their inpatient medicine, surgery and emergency services to North Chicago VAMC. This is a milestone since no where else in the country is there such a relationship between VA & Navy. This partnership means VA & Navy personnel are working together to provide the best quality care to veterans, active duty and their family members. Navy and VA providers are working alongside each other and for the first time in a VA, there is pediatric care provided for DoD eligible family members.

With implementation of Phase II of Partnership, NCVAMC now provides all acute inpatient, psychiatric, medical, and surgical care for a Navy catchment area of 67,000 active duty, Navy dependants and retirees, and another 50,000 recruits and students each year. Since activation in June 2006 through September 2007 unique patients treated increased 42% to 35,000, outpatient visits increased 14% to 244,000, admissions increased by 8% (while at the same time bed days of care decreased 18%) and outpatient pharmacy fills went up by 17%. TriCare collections were \$14,500,000; almost 5 times greater than the next closest VA billing TriCare.

In 2007, DoD broke ground on a \$130 million construction project (Phase III) on the campus of the NCVAMC to build a new ambulatory care clinic, parking garage, surface parking and expansion of existing VA space. The VA/DoD partnership efforts of NCVAMC and GLNHC are a model for other VA/DoD joint ventures. The complexity and impact of this joint venture exceeds any other joint venture initiative to date.

Once the project is completed and activated in October 2010, North Chicago VAMC and Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes will become the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, after the famous Apollo 13 astronaut and Navy aviator. Over the past few years, North Chicago VAMC and Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes have received over \$9 million from the VA/DoD Joint Incentive Fund Program. Some of these initiatives include a joint women's health center, contemporary mammography and stereotactic equipment, MRI, a hematology/oncology clinic and expansion of North Chicago's hospitalist program. In FY 07, North Chicago VAMC had numerous visits by VA & DoD Officials to see firsthand the work being done towards the partnership.



- A naming ceremony for the institution was held on October 5, 2007
- Construction contract for the west entrance at Green Bay Road, patient parking garage, and staff parking lot was awarded and completed May 25, 2007. Mobilization and construction was completed July 23, 2007

### National Veterans Wheelchair Games

In June 19-23, 2007, the 27<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Wheelchair Games were hosted by the Milwaukee VA Medical Center and the Wisconsin Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of American. All of the 17 core and 2 exhibition competitions were free and open to the public.



◀ While curling is a sport growing in popularity worldwide, wheelchair curling only recently received full medal status at the 2006 Paralympics.



▲ Two teams, with four members each, launch a 40-pound stone with a delivery stick down the ice towards a bull's eye-125 feet away. Opposing teams take turns launching their stones, trying to knock the opponent's stone farther from the bull's-eye.

➤ Standing room crowd of over 1,300 watched as the torch was passed on Saturday night (June 23) at the closing ceremonies of the 27<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Wheelchair Games



## Events

### Reclaiming Our Heritage

The first week-end in June of 2007, the Milwaukee VA Medical Center and the surrounding community celebrated the re-enactment of the Civil War during their “Reclaiming Our Heritage” activities. This celebration honors veterans of all military eras and educates the public about the sacrifices and contributions veterans have made—and continue to make—to American society.



▲ A stop on the Lantern tour through the historic Wood National Cemetery, a Reclaiming Our Heritage highlight, 29<sup>th</sup> US Colored Troops re-enactment unit, most of which are VA Milwaukee employees.

► Civil War School Day gives students an opportunity to participate in ‘living history.’



▲ Positively Patriotic Parade puts veterans enrolled in the Medical Center’s ‘Walk a Mile or More’ walking group, to the test.





**Knights of Columbus**

◀The National Wheelchair Foundation and the Knights of Columbus donated 500 wheelchairs to Edward Hines VA Hospital. The wheelchairs are used by Escort Service to assist Hines patients.

At Tomah VA Medical Center, the program featured the induction of two veterans into the facilities Hall of Heroes, Robert Roth and Captain Kube ▶

▼Captain Joseph Kube's family shown below



**Family of Captain Joseph Kube**



**Robert Roth**

▶ North Chicago VAMC Veterans Day Program. Colonel David F. Aumuller of MACG 48 cutting the cake honoring Veterans Day and the 232nd birthday of the Marine Corps.



**Marine Air Control Group 48**

## Day Celebrations



Lake County Detachment 801

◀The Marine Corps League Detachment 801 and the Marine Air Control Group 48 joined with the North Chicago VA Medical Center to salute veterans this past Veterans Day 2008



▲Jesse Brown VA Medical Center was privileged to lead the 81st Annual Veterans Day Parade, sponsored by the George Giles American Legion Post #87

## Our Locations

### Hines VA Hospital

5000 S. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Hines, IL 60141  
708-202-8387

### Madison VA Hospital

2500 Overlook Terrace  
Madison, WI 53705  
608-256-1901

### North Chicago VA Medical Center

3001 Green Bay Road  
North Chicago, IL 60064  
847-688-1900

### Iron Mountain VA Medical Center

325 East "H" Street  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801  
906-774-3300

### Milwaukee VA Medical Center

5000 National Ave  
Milwaukee, WI 53295  
414-384-2000

### Tomah VA Medical Center

500 East Veterans Street  
Tomah, WI 54660  
608-372-3971

### Jesse Brown VA Medical Center

820 S. Damen Ave  
Chicago, IL 60612  
312-569-8387



**On our front Cover:** Major Stewart McCabe, left, pins the Bronze Star on Lt. Col. Edward A. Perez-Conde, a physician at Iron Mountain VAMC.