



# 2009 Annual Report

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# MEDICAL CENTER DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

## A YEAR OF PROGRESS



It's my pleasure, once again, to share with you a year-in-review snapshot of achievements of the Washington DC VA Medical Center. In the year 2009, the "Flagship of VA Health Care" took significant steps in enhancing quality and access to patient care, improving business practices, developing a Veteran-centered environment and building upon our position as a community partner in the capital city.

Our outreach to OEF/OIF Veterans through special events, DoD collaborations, television and Metro messaging has been second to none. Our clinical leaders have, again this year, achieved wide national acclaim for their innovative technology applications, patient safety methods, and creative research studies. We take pride in the regional partnerships we've established and the progress made in reducing homelessness. Our facility is changing and upgrading to respond to our significant growth in enrollees. Construction underway reflects our determination to provide a welcoming, comfortable, and compassionate environment for Veterans.

These achievements have not gone unrecognized. We were honored to receive the 2009 "Medallion of Excellence", the Senate Quality and Productivity Award for Virginia's highest recognition and VA's Robert W. Carey Award for Performance Achievement. For the fifth time, DCVAMC was named a Top 100 "Most Wired" hospital in the nation. None of this could have been accomplished had it not been for our determined and dedicated employees and volunteers. I commend them for leading the Flagship to another year of pride and progress.

Sincerely,

Fernando O. Rivera, FACHE  
Medical Center Director

## ON THE COVER:

- (Front) Angelo B. Degree, Sr., U.S. Navy, 1976-81
- (L to R standing) Marcus J. Adolphus, OIF, DC Army National Guard
- Steven D. Fyfe, OIF, MD Army National Guard
- Randa Y. Reyes, OIF, U.S. Navy

## JANUARY



### CFC AWARD

Fernando Rivera and Executive Leaders fulfilled their pledge to impersonate Elvis Presley when DCVAMC beat its Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) goal. The Flagship raised \$110,791.40, surpassing its goal by 20% and earning the CFC Summit Award.



### INAUGURATION WEEKEND

Nearly 400 DCVAMC employees volunteered to work inauguration weekend. Doctors, nurses, clerks, housekeepers, plumbers, pharmacists, and administrators were "sheltered in place". Inaugural events created a formidable planning task for capital city hospitals due to predictions of record-breaking crowds.



## EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHTS

### ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS DAY

Staff and volunteer artwork was on display on Artistic Expressions Day. The Employee Association and Voluntary Service sponsored the event to showcase staff talent and to raise funds for Veterans.

### QUALITY FAIR

Staff proudly shared their units' performance success at the third annual Quality Fair held in July. This year's theme, "Inspired Innovations", promoted positive health care outcomes, innovative Veteran-centered initiatives and quality of care.

### OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES



2008 Employee of the Year  
Rosetta Allmond-Hart, Ophthalmology Clinic



2009 Employee of the Year  
Rayforde Rimando, Nursing Service

### FLAGSHIP NURSES ARE EXTRAORDINARY

Twenty-four DCVAMC nurses were recognized by the Gamma Beta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Inc., the Honor Society of Nursing, to be among the "Top 100 Extraordinary Nurses" in the metropolitan DC area for 2009.

### GIVING BACK



On Veterans Day, DCVAMC staff members put on their jeans and t-shirts and together with the non-profit, Yachad, repaired and painted a transitional house for homeless Veterans. McDermott House got the spit and polish it needed and Veteran residents received the appreciation they deserve.

DCVAMC is an active community member contributing to families in need around the beltway through our Care and Share program and supporting young people at DC city schools. This Fall, we held a "Partnership Kickoff" at the Shaed Educational Campus. Our staff collected and delivered much-needed school supplies and students presented a program honoring Veterans.

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## FEBRUARY



### WINTERHAVEN FOR THE HOMELESS

More than 300 homeless Veterans received medical care, employment advice, clothing and counseling at the 15th annual Winterhaven Homeless Veterans Stand Down. Former and present VA leaders attended the event.



### NEW SECRETARY ENROLLS

Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric K. Shinseki, hit the ground running. During his first visit to a VA Medical Center, he enrolled for medical care, joining more than five million of his fellow American Veterans.

# MEDICAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## HEALTH CARE TECHNOLOGY LEADER

DCVAMC is a leader in health technology including electronic health records, bar coding for patient safety, EKGs on Blackberries, and the growing field of Telehealth. More than 425 Veterans participated in our Care Coordination Home Telehealth Program (CCHT) this year.

## HEALTH CARE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

Accessing health care and stable residences for homeless Veterans are among our highest priorities. Working with the HUD/VA-Supported Housing Program, DCVAMC's Health Care for Homeless Veterans Unit (HCHV) housed 120 Veterans in 2009 and helped many more with transition housing assistance. HCHV operates a weekday walk-in health clinic for homeless Veterans. On an average day in 2009, the HCHV team saw 44 Veterans.

## PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION SERVICE

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service (PMRS) rolled out new programs in 2009 to enhance services for combat Veterans. PMRS is now the Network (regional) Polytrauma Amputation Rehabilitation Site providing amputees with the most cutting-edge prosthetic limbs and rehabilitation. DoD's Walter Reed Army Medical Center and DCVAMC will use Joint Incentive Funds to coordinate lifelong rehabilitation services and amputee care. The hospital's Interdisciplinary Day Treatment Program offers Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) patients daily sessions aimed at supporting functional independence and reintegration into the community.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Our professional Mental Health Service team employs creative and innovative techniques. Their most recent initiative is not "high-tech", it is Gilbert, the Mental Health therapy dog. Pets are a great source of comfort for Flagship patients. New services in Mental Health include 24/7 Mental Health evaluations in our Emergency Department, a Suicide Safety Plan progress note in patients' Electronic Health Records; a Tele-Mental Health program serving the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) at Alexandria and Charlotte Hall; extended hours for Mental Health at the Greenbelt and Alexandria CBOCs; and a Mental Health clinician supporting Compensation and Pension (C&P) evaluations.

## OEF/OIF PROGRAM

The Medical Center's multi-disciplinary OEF/OIF Task Force supports returning combat Veterans in accessing VA's "best care anywhere". This Task Force developed a best-practice case management tool used by VA nationwide. Our OEF/OIF Program coordinates case management to ensure all 12,000 currently enrolled OEF/OIF Veterans receive appropriate treatment. Seven Flagship staff members are assigned to Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the National Naval Medical Center helping transition Veterans to VA care.

## FRESH APPROACHES

DCVAMC has expanded primary care clinic hours and initiated a variety of specialized therapeutic treatments including; equine-assisted riding therapy, water/kayak therapy, video gaming, acupuncture, yoga, massage and pet therapy.



## APRIL



## COST AND CONSERVATION AWARENESS

Environmental awareness is an important Medical Center goal, as is business efficiency. In 2009 it took the form of an expanded recycling program, a "Lights Out" campaign, and a one-of-a-kind event sponsored by the Employee Suggestion Committee. Open to the public and emceed by W\*USA 9 TV

Meteorologist, Howard Bernstein, the "Cost and Conservation Awareness Festival" offered a variety of stations providing cost and "earth-saving" tips for Medical Center operations and for the home. Representatives from PEPCO, Commuter Connections, DC Metro Transit Authority, and AAA participated. More than 300 attended. The Medical Center's electricity costs decreased 15.1% in FY 09.

# COMMUNITY OF CARING

## Flagship Volunteers and Supporters

We value our more than 800 Flagship volunteers who work side-by-side with employees to ensure excellent service. Volunteers provided more than 86,000 hours of service and nearly one-million dollars in generous contributions and in-kind program support in 2009.

## Outreach to Veterans

Flagship staff participate in many special events and health fairs, engaging with active duty military at their bases and communicating our "We Take Care of Veterans!" message whenever the opportunity presents itself.

## RADIOLOGY IN THE NEW AGE OF MEDICINE

Radiology Service at DCVAMC reflects the most recent innovations through the use of Linear Accelerators, the most advanced Cardiac CT scanners and the upcoming high-field strength wide-bore magnet planned for 2010. This year, Radiology began providing services to Veterans at the Martinsburg, West Virginia VAMC. To meet increased demand for PET/CT scans, MRI studies are now provided on weekends.

## WOMEN'S HEALTH



The Women's Health Clinic now provides women comprehensive primary care in addition to their gender-specific care. More than 3,500 women were seen this year. In July, the Charlotte Hall CBOC began offering gender-specific health care.

## RESEARCH LEADER

The Infectious Diseases (ID) section competed successfully for a 10-year, estimated \$30-million award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to participate in clinical research in TB. DCVAMC is leading a consortium of five VA and U.S. university sites and, for the first time, international sites in Lima, Peru and Cape Town, South Africa. ID is responsible for two international H1N1 (swine) flu trials, enrolling patients at our own VA and 25 other cities.



## MY HEALTHeVET

VA's award-winning personal health management tool, My HealthVet, offers patients anywhere, anytime, one-stop access to manage medical appointments, refill prescriptions, check co-pays, view health information and more. Over 3,000 DCVAMC patients enrolled in the system in 2009 bringing the Medical Center's total My HealthVet participants to 11,552.



Our outreach team includes staff members from the OEF/OIF program office, the Business Office, Mental Health Service, Primary Care and Public Affairs. We participate in an average of five outreach events each month, such as Time Out for Men's Health at Fed Ex field, Maryland county Veterans' musters, Easter Seals Military Initiative meetings, National Capital Area Inter-Service Family Committee meetings, and local school events. We also host events such as our quarterly Congressional/VSO meetings, our bi-annual Clergy Days, the Welcome Home Celebration for Returning Combat Veterans, the Winterhaven Homeless Stand Down and numerous Veterans' focus groups.

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JUNE



## WELCOME HOME

Over one-thousand Veterans participated in DCVAMC's Welcome Home celebration for returning combat Veterans at Bowie Baysox Stadium in Prince George's County. The Veterans and active-duty military personnel of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom

(OIF) appreciated this one-stop venue for valuable health care and benefits information and were treated to a day of family-friendly fun complete with a carousel, boardwalk games and an all American picnic. In October, DCVAMC partnered with one of the Eastern Seaboard's leading festivals, the St. Mary's County Oyster Fest, for a special Welcome Home Celebration for returning combat Veterans in Southern Maryland.

# DCVAMC 2009 ACHIEVEMENTS



## PLANTING A PLANETREE

This year marked the affiliation of the DC VA Medical Center with Planetree, a national organization that seeks to transform hospital care delivery into an entirely patient-centered experience. The Flagship's journey toward this cultural transformation included appointing a Planetree Coordinator, Army Veteran, Diane Phillips, RN. Planetree affiliated hospitals create environments where patients are treated holistically, recognizing that compassion, comfort and hope are key to improved health outcomes and patient satisfaction. Every staff member of the Medical Center is being trained in the Planetree philosophy.



## SPQA MEDALLION OF EXCELLENCE

The Medical Center received the highest honor presented for organizational achievement by the U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Awards of Virginia (SPQA), the "Medallion of Excellence". DCVAMC is the first to receive this top honor since 2006. SPQA uses the national Malcolm Baldrige Award criteria to rate organizations.

Cornerstone Award from VA's National Center for Patient Safety for continuously improving its RCA team. In 2009, DCVAMC completed 16 RCAs and three Aggregate Reviews within 45 days (a patient safety goal).

## COMMUNICATIONS AWARD



The Public Affairs team was honored with the 2009 Ace Achievement Communications Award for its innovative television takeover program on Veterans Day. Outreach to Veterans is a strategic communications effort to educate and enroll Veterans for VA care. Enrollment at the Medical Center increased significantly in FY 09. The team's 2009 "We Take Care of Veterans" outreach campaign included television and web messaging, public awareness posters on Metro rail and buses.

## CAREY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

DCVAMC was honored with the Robert W. Carey Performance Award (Achievement Level). The Carey Award is one of the most prestigious national awards VA bestows. Based on the National Baldrige Award criteria, it recognizes organizations with management resulting in outstanding service to Veterans.

## CORNERSTONE AWARD

Understanding events that lead to interruptions in patient care is vital to ensuring patient safety. DCVAMC leads in patient safety initiatives and one tool it employs is the Root Cause Analysis (RCA). The hospital was recognized with the Silver

## JUNE



### UNITED WE SERVE

DCVAMC hosted the kick-off of President Obama's "United We Serve" initiative, welcoming VA's senior leadership as hospital volunteers. Secretary Shinseki helped transport patients. Asst. Secretary of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, L. Tammy Duckworth, was a patient escort and addressed a group of youth volunteers.



### OPERATION SUMMER HEAT

DCVAMC participated in a city-wide emergency preparedness exercise dubbed Operation Summer Heat. The exercise, played-out at area hospitals, nursing facilities, clinics, and DC's health and emergency management agencies, was a realistic test of the city's emergency preparedness.

## NURSING INNOVATION AWARD

Nurses from DCVAMC and Walter Reed Army Medical Center were recognized with the VA Office of Nursing Services' Innovation Award for developing a DoD/VA Collaborative Nursing Electronic Hand-Off Communications Tool. This tool contributes to enhanced quality of care for severely wounded military members by standardizing methods for reporting information when patients are transferred from Military Treatment Facilities to VA centers of care.

## DCVAMC IS A TOP 100 "MOST WIRED" HOSPITAL

*Hospital & Healthcare Networks (H&HN)*, a publication of the American Hospital Association, has designated DCVAMC as among the top 100 "Most Wired" hospitals in the nation. *H&HN* examines business processes, customer service, workforce management, public safety and quality of hospitals around the country. This is the fifth time DCVAMC has been recognized as a "Most Wired" hospital.

## CLINICAL LEADERS



### PROSTATE CANCER

*Cancer Prevention Research* published "Endocrine-Immune-Paracrine Interactions in Prostate Cells" co-authored by Dr. Marc Blackman, DCVAMC Associate Chief of Staff, Research Service. The study suggests that herbal supplements may have a preventive effect on prostate cancer. Dr. Blackman has distinguished himself with groundbreaking research on aging.

### MASTERSHIP IN MEDICINE

Dr. Kenneth L. Becker, DCVAMC's Chief of Endocrinology, a highly-regarded author, researcher and educator, was honored with a Mastership by the American College of Physicians.

### MEDICAL STUDENTS ONLINE

DCVAMC hospitalist, Dr. Katherine Chretien, led a study published in *The Journal of American Medical Association* that explored the use of social media (Web 2.0) by medical students. The article garnered national media attention.

### EXERCISE AND MORTALITY

The results of several studies co-authored by Dr. Peter Kokkinos, Director, Exercise Testing and Research Lab, and

colleagues, were published in several leading health journals. His findings show a significant reduction in mortality rates (50%) in persons 70-92 years old who maintain a physically active lifestyle.

### HYPERTENSION

A study by Dr. Peter Kokkinos, Dr. Ross D. Fletcher, Chief of Staff; Dr. Charles Faselis, Associate Chief of Medical Service; Dr. Vasilius Papademetriou, Co-Director of Catheter Lab; and Dr. Steven Singh, Chief, Cardiology, found that the progression from pre-hypertension to hypertension in African-American men was almost twice as high in low-fit individuals compared to high-fit persons.

### CARDIAC SURGERY

A study led by Dr. Gregory Trachiotis, Chief, Cardiac Surgery, evaluated outcomes of heart bypass surgery using the off-pump or "beating heart" technique. Published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the study of 2,203 Veterans from 18 VA Medical Centers showed that the low-risk group of males did not have outcome advantages in off-pump versus on-pump procedures.

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JULY



### PAINTFEST

DCVAMC celebrated the 4th of July with active-duty Soldiers serving in Iraq, participating in the Great American PaintFest. From these distant locations, Soldiers and Veterans created a mural comprised of 40 canvases. The materials were provided by the Foundation for Hospital Art.

OCTOBER



### SHARING TALENT AND SPIRIT

To uplift patients and staff, Chaplain Service and the Spirituality and Wellness Committee sponsored "VA's Got Talent". The talent show featured Veterans, volunteers and staff showcasing their creative and musical skills to a jubilant, standing-room only crowd.

# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## DISEASE MANAGEMENT

**FY09**

Hypertension Well Controlled  
 Veterans Health Administration 76%  
 Washington DC VA Medical Center 80%

Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension Well Controlled  
 Veterans Health Administration 79%  
 Washington DC VA Medical Center 86%

Cholesterol, After Heart Attack Well Controlled  
 Veterans Health Administration 67%  
 Washington DC VA Medical Center 68%

Community Acquired Pneumonia, Timely Treated with Antibiotics  
 Veterans Health Administration 93%  
 Washington DC VA Medical Center 95%

## RECOGNIZED IMPROVEMENTS

MOV - Outpatient-Obese patients screened/offered weight mgmt  
 Veterans Health Administration 86%  
 Washington DC VA Medical Center 96%

Offered Medication to Assist with smoking cessation  
 Veterans Health Administration 91%  
 Washington DC VA Medical Center 100%

OEF/OIF SISI Vets contacted w/i 7 days of transfer to VA  
 Veterans Health Administration 85%  
 Washington DC VA Medical Center 92%

Pneumococcal Vaccination Outpatient  
 Veterans Health Administration 95%  
 Washington DC VA Medical Center 96%

Screened for PTSD at regular intervals  
 Veterans Health Administration 96%  
 Washington DC VA Medical Center 99%

## ACCESS TO CARE

Patients (New) Seen Within 30 Days of Request Audiology  
 Veterans Health Administration 92%  
 Audiology - Washington DC VAMC 98%

Cardiology  
 Veterans Health Administration 94%  
 Washington DC VAMC 94%  
 Dermatology  
 Veterans Health Administration 90%  
 Washington DC VAMC 89%

Eye  
 Veterans Health Administration 90%  
 Washington DC VAMC 92%

Primary Care  
 Veterans Health Administration 93%  
 Washington DC VAMC 93%

# 2009 REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

**Revenues**

Medical Care appropriations	\$ 336,463,248
Medical Care cost recovery	\$ 21,559,526
Selling agreements	\$ 1,218,912
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>\$ 359,241,686</b>

**Expenditures**

Salaries	\$ 240,235,987
Supplies and services	\$ 95,223,998
Capital Asset Expenditures	\$ 23,781,701
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 359,241,686</b>

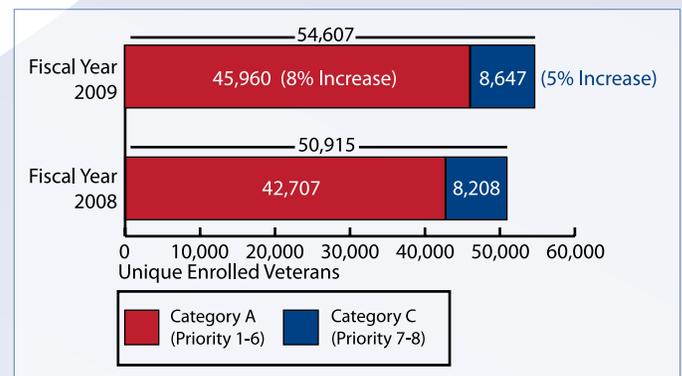
**Employees**

Mental Health Initiatives Staff	58
<b>Total Staff at Year End</b>	<b>2,014</b>

**Capital Asset Expenditures**

Furnishings	\$ 2,833,045
Equipment	\$ 7,692,074
NRM Construction	\$ 12,381,382
Minor Construction	\$ 875,200

# UNIQUE ENROLLED VETERANS AT THE DCVAMC



# SUICIDE PREVENTION

Our full time Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator oversees Veterans deemed to be at high risk for suicide and provides education to staff, Veterans' family members and community agencies. In 2009, the Suicide Prevention team provided crisis management care to over 480 Veterans of which 142 were referred from the VA's National Suicide Hotline.

# NEW EXECUTIVE LEADERS WELCOME NEW CHIEFS



**Dr. Joel Scholten**  
 Dr. Joel Scholten joined our team from Tampa VAMC. He is Associate Chief of Staff, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service. Dr. Scholten is a national leader in the treatment of Traumatic Brain Injury.



**Dr. Raya Kheirbek**  
 In addition to her role as Medical Director of the Community Living Center, Dr. Kheirbek was appointed Associate Chief of Staff, Performance Measures, to provide physician leadership in performance improvement initiatives.