A Narrative of Quality Care
Veteran & Caregiver

WASHINGTON DC
VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER
2016 ANNUAL REPORT

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC VA Medical Center
Located within sight of the Nation’s Capital, the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center is the dedicated health care system for providing care to Veterans who reside in the District of Columbia and areas of Maryland and Virginia. The facility was originally dedicated in 1965 and was heralded by Vice President Hubert Humphrey as “one of the most automated in the world.”

Over 50 years later, the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center’s story continues to unfold and expand. Evidenced by the words of the Veterans we serve and the stories shared in their “Testaments to Excellence,” quality care for Veterans of all eras and branches is a priority. We have a compelling narrative that is driven by a professional team and committed caregivers. It is a story of quality, integrity, commitment and respect for the Veterans we serve. We are honored to highlight the progress and achievements and present the Annual Report 2016.
Access to Care

Mission

The 2,423 team members of the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center accomplish the mission of respecting and serving Veterans by honoring them with excellent health care at our main facility, four community-based outpatient clinics as well as the 24/7 Community Resource and Referral Center.

Vision

The 97,554 Veterans enrolled receive world-class health care in an environment that fosters compassion, commitment and service. Conveniently located under one roof, Veterans have access to comprehensive primary and specialty care, general and surgical specialties, geriatric and extended care as well as medical research.

The medical center has 175 acute care beds, 30 Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment beds, an adjacent 120-bed Community Living Center, and a 20-suite Fisher House.

We are working hard each day to fulfill President Lincoln’s promise: “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan” by honoring, respecting and providing DC-area Veterans with quality health care, services and resources.

Executing VA Core Values

These values — Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence — define our culture and strengthen our dedication to those we serve.

Care in the Community: Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

At the medical center’s four community clinics, Veterans have closer-to-home access to a wide variety of services including primary care, mental health, telehealth and some specialty care. In December 2017, VA health care services will expand as a new community clinic will open to provide closer to home care for Veterans in Montgomery County Maryland.

Montgomery County Community-Based Clinic: In September 2016, the medical center held a “Golden Hammer” ceremony to mark the creation of the new Montgomery County Community-Based Clinic which will provide primary, specialty and telehealth care to area Veterans.

Southeast DC

820 Chesapeake Street, SE
Washington, D.C. 20032
202-745-8685

2016 Patient Visits

Walk-ins
Scheduled
Total

3,801
21,931
25,732

Southern Prince George’s County

5801 Allentown Road
Camp Springs, Md 20746
301-423-3700

2016 Patient Visits

Walk-ins
Scheduled
Total

3,549
28,161
31,710

Medical Affiliations

The Washington DC VA Medical Center is committed to developing future health care professionals through its robust residency program.

- Georgetown University
- Howard University
- The George Washington University
- Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
Anne Reeside, RN
102-year-old WWII Veteran

As an Army nurse, Anne Reeside cared for WWII Soldiers preparing to deploy overseas as well as German POWs housed at Camp Crowder, Mo. Taking care of others comes naturally to her, she often checks on her fellow residents in the medical center’s Community Living Center where she lives. “As long as there is something that needs to be done, or someone who needs help, use this love in your heart and extend a helping hand. Even if it’s only to listen.”

The secret to her long life she says is staying busy and appreciating the small things. “When we’re young, we like to do amazing things and think these amazing things will make us happy. But when we’re older and believe that our time is limited, we’re happy enjoying the ordinary experiences of our daily lives.”

Raya Elfadel Kheirbek, MD, MPH
Geriatrician and Palliative Care Physician

For the past 17 years, Dr. Raya Elfadel Kheirbek has been privileged to care for Veterans of all ages. “The wounds of war are most always invisible”, she notes. “Veterans face more challenges than the general population, and many of them, like Ms. Reeside, impart a message of hope and resilience.”

Dr. Kheirbek employs empathetic and attentive listening to help Veterans set their own goals and become active participants in their own health. She especially appreciates the direction the VA is taking toward, in her words, “a more proactive system of caring focused on wellness and disease prevention, and, most importantly, a system centered upon the relationship between patient and caregiver.”
Access to Care

Virtual Care for Veterans
Virtual Care, including clinical and home telehealth, consults and secure messaging, is improving Veterans’ access to VA health care and communication with providers. In 2016, over 79 percent of the medical center’s Veterans received a form of virtual care and most are very satisfied with the service. The VA estimates that for each Veteran enrolled in telehealth for a year, the cost reduction is about $2,000.

High Veteran Satisfaction Scores in FY16
- 92 percent for Clinical Video Telehealth
- 88 percent for Home Telehealth
- 94 percent for Store and Forward Telehealth

Home Telehealth Non-institutional Care Needs in FY16
- Veterans enrolled in Home Telehealth for non-institutional care needs and chronic care management had a 59 percent decrease in VA bed days of care and a 31 percent decrease in VA hospital admissions.
- Mental Health services provided to Veterans via Clinical Video Telehealth (TeleMental Health) reduced Acute Psychiatric VA bed days of care by 39 percent and a 32 percent decrease in VA hospital admissions.

Mobile Health
Veterans Appointment Request (VAR): The use of mobile devices has revolutionized Veterans’ access to health care. In 2016, the DC VA Medical Center was one of the initial pilot sites for the VAR application which is now available for Veterans to self-schedule their primary and mental health care appointments.

Annie Text Messaging App
The DC VA Medical Center was one of four initial pilot sites for “Annie”, an exciting text messaging program which offers Veterans the opportunity to secure text message with their health care providers between office visits. Annie is named after Annie Fox, the first woman awarded the Purple Heart – for service during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Emergency Department
The professionals of the medical center’s Emergency Department treated 25,809 patients in FY 2016 and have made a number of improvements to reduce Veterans’ wait times and length of Emergency Department stay including:
- “Fast Track” – to assess non-life-threatening conditions
- Our own ambulance transport service – to expedite patient transportation needs
- Radiology and CT services – localized within the Emergency Department for efficiency
- Point of Care Labs - have cut lab test turnaround times to under 10 minutes instead of the usual 30-60 minutes for formal labs

The medical center’s door-to-triage time is now 11 minutes which is better than the VA national goal of 12 minutes.
Vincent Short
Iraq War Veteran

Vincent Short is one of the medical center’s best success stories when it comes to exercise, recreation therapy, and community reintegration while recovering from a traumatic brain injury. In spite of the seriousness of his injuries, Mr. Short has gone back to school to work on his bachelor’s degree in criminal justice while serving as a volunteer at the medical center. “I want my teenage son to see me contributing to society; he can never use me as an excuse for coping out.”

Sreelatha Katari, MD
Staff Physician, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service

For the past 10 years, Dr. Sreelatha Katari who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation has been instrumental in helping Veterans who’ve suffered traumatic brain injuries while serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom and the Afghanistan War. Dr. Katari, who left the civilian sector after talking to friends who were working at the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center, says she finds working with Veterans and helping them get better, provides her with the satisfaction she couldn’t get from private practice.
### Access to VA Health Care

**Transition to VA Health Care**

The Transition and Care Management (TCM) Program, formerly known as the OEF/ OIF/OND Program, received a new name; but its mission remains the same: to provide expert care coordination services to Veterans returning from Iraq, Afghanistan, and other “hostile fire” areas from 11/11/1998 to current, as well as to Post 9/11-era Veterans. It’s a busy place: in FY 16, the team held 27 outreach events in the community including the annual Welcome Home Celebration, reviewed 867 Veterans for case management needs and scheduled an estimated 500 unique Veterans for initial Primary Care appointments. At any given time the TCM and Polytrauma case managers are coordinating the care of 400 Veterans. The new TCM Welcome Center is scheduled to open in April 2017.

### Health Care for Homeless Veterans

The medical center’s Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program partners with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to offer housing vouchers to homeless Veterans in the DC Metropolitan Area. Since 2008, the HUD/VA Supportive Housing program has housed 1,381 Veterans. According to the most recent national Point-in-Time survey, there are 484 homeless Veterans in the DC area. The DC VA Medical Center’s HCHV Program specifically provides health care, case management and services for homeless and at-risk Veterans to help propel them forward to a better life.

### VA Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC)

The CRRC, located in the heart of the District of Columbia, provides homeless and at-risk Veterans with 24/7 access to VA health care and services as well as community resources.

**Community Partners:**
- Offering services to combat homelessness, unemployment and under employment among Veterans
  - Friendship Place
  - Easter Seals
  - Housing Counseling Services, Inc.
  - Prince George’s County Department of Social Services
  - US VETS
  - Psychiatric Center, Inc.
- Partnering to Provide Total Care

### Partnering to Provide Total Care

**Winterhaven**

The DC VA Medical Center hosted its 22nd Annual Winterhaven Homeless Veterans Stand Down January 30, 2016. The event provided 677 veterans, 608 male and 69 female, access to VA and community services including: medical and mental health care; benefits counseling; housing, education and employment support; as well as warm meals, haircuts and care packages. The impactful outreach effort was supported by 547 volunteers representing over 70 community partners including public-private stakeholders and federal, state and local government entities.

### Pop-up Legal Clinics

Addressing legal issues is a critical facet of helping at-risk and homeless Veterans. The six free legal clinics held at the CRRC in 2016, provided 115 Veterans with access to legal advice on matters such as family law, housing, and military discharge reconsiderations for those who have received other than honorable discharges.

### Mental Health Summit

The Mental Health Summit held at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in D.C., September 15, 2016, helped open the lines of communication between mental health care providers of the medical center and the local community to expand health care options and treatment for Veterans.
Veteran & Caregiver

Edward Parada
Vietnam War Veteran

U.S. Army Airborne Ranger Edward Parada served honorably during the Vietnam War and never had a need to utilize his entitlement to health care until the diagnosis of an Agent Orange exposure-related illness. After losing his job and access to civilian healthcare, he is grateful for the second-to-none treatment he receives at the medical center. “I’ve been coming [to the medical center] for the past six years or so and the treatment has been very good and I’m very happy with the nursing and doctors staff. I just want to say thanks to the VA and the staff for the wonderful medical treatment I’ve received.”

Joao Ascensao, MD
Chief of Oncology and the Chief of Hematology

Dr. Ascensao has been treating Veterans with cancer and blood diseases, since completing his training at the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis VA Medical Center in 1981. He has seen a lot of changes and improvements in VA health care and believes this is an exciting time for cancer research and treatment. “We’re imaging tumors in different ways, revving up the body’s immune system to enhance natural defenses, and integrating care for better outcomes. Prevention and healthy living are having positive effects and Veterans are becoming more active partners in their own treatment. We don’t treat cancer, we treat Veterans with cancer.”
## Operating a High Performance Organization

### Enrollees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY14</td>
<td>98,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY15</td>
<td>96,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY16</td>
<td>97,154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Voluntary Service

#### Monitory and In-Kind Donations FY16

- Monitory Donations: $298,513.06
- Activity Donations: $19,504.67
- Item Donations: $708,254.33
- Total Donations: $1,026,272.06
- Volunteer Hourly Value: $1,974,328.00
- Total Resources Impact: $3,000,600.06

### Volunteering is Vital

Community partnerships with Veteran Service Organizations and local and national non-profit and corporate organizations help make many of the medical center’s ongoing programs and major outreach events successful. The 1,029 volunteers and numerous donations are an integral part of the medical center’s mission and prove the community’s commitment to caring for and serving DC-area Veterans.

### Fiscal Revenue and Expenditures

#### Revenue

- Reimbursements: $1,227,661
- Medical Care Cost Recovery: $31,718,488
- Medical Care: $359,166,398

#### Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NRM (VERA)</td>
<td>$3,206,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$6,547,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies and Services</td>
<td>$89,990,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>$301,014,424</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Capital Asset Expenditures

- Furnishings: $5,058,208
- Equipment: $1,488,920
- NRM Construction: $3,206,603
- Minor Construction: $663,175

### The Community Veterans Engagement Board

The Community Veterans Engagement Board, formed in 2016, is one of several community-led panels located across the nation. Members are Veterans, local leaders, community stakeholders, and VA leaders who are dedicated to bringing local resources together to improve outcomes for Veterans. The Community Veterans Engagement Board hosts public forums quarterly to engage Veterans, caregivers, and family members to address concerns and gather valuable feedback.

**Mission Statement:** To be the Washington, DC area leader advocating on behalf of the Veteran community such that they achieve full and efficient access to services.

**Casey Tree Donation and Community Volunteer Tree Planting**

The Office of Public Affairs and Voluntary and Facilities Management worked collaboratively to draw more than 100 people from the medical center, the community, and Casey Trees volunteer roster for a major tree-planting event, April 16, 2016. Casey Trees donated 50 trees, from evergreens to shade trees, in commemoration of the medical center’s 50 years of caring for Veterans. The living legacy will honor Veterans and beautify the campus for generations to come.

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**Casey Trees**

- **Anthony Cancelosi**
  - President and CEO
  - Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind

- **Wilbert B. Forbes, Sr.**
  - Deputy Secretary
  - Veterans Support Centers of America

- **David J. Shaffer**
  - Access Policy Officer
  - Office of ADA Policy and Planning, Department of Access Services

- **Charles Eggleston**
  - U.S. Army veteran
  - Veterans Advocate

- **Dennis Shine**
  - CPA
  - Raffa

- **Christopher Slawinski**
  - National Service Director
  - Fleet Reserve Association

- **Roderick Thomas**
  - Interim Director
  - Quantico National Cemetery

- **W. Scott Brunner**
  - National Cemetery Administration
  - Department of Veterans Affairs

- **Carl Salzano**
  - Consultant

- **Julie Carle**
  - Acting Director
  - Appeals Management Center, National Capital Region
  - Benefits Office

- **Jennifer Pitcher**
  - Founder
  - MilitaryOneClick

- **Tricia Mininger**
  - Vice President
  - Commercial Banking
  - PNC Bank
Joyce Matthews
U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

Former heavy equipment operator for the Marine Corps in the 1980’s, Joyce Matthews often heard good things about the Women’s Health Center and echoed the sentiments since becoming a patient. “The women’s clinic is set up well and very organized. Ms. Bell is caring, the nurses are nice and the mammography area is great.”

L. Gale Bell, MSN, RN
Women Veterans Program Manager

Army Veteran Gale Bell has spent the last 32 years caring for active duty members and Veterans. In her role as Women Veterans Program Manager, she serves as the chief advocate for women Veterans. In collaboration with the Women’s Health Medical Director, she helps coordinate quality health care services for women Veterans in the D.C. area. “I’m blessed to be part of all the changes here that prove to women Veterans that we respect and honor them; from the major improvements like the newer 7,800 square-foot Women’s Health Center and in-house mammography, to the smaller but important changes like having women’s pajamas and gowns available.”
VA Care for Women Veterans

The Women’s Health Clinic

The Women’s Health Clinic offers comprehensive health care in a safe environment where the health, welfare and dignity of women Veterans are at the forefront. Women are the fastest growing population of Veterans receiving VA care and services. As the number of women Veterans increases so do the services offered.

The team has made a number of service improvements including: the addition of mental health services, two new maternity coordinators and a new gynecologist to care for the gender-specific needs of the growing population.

Since its opening in 2014, the clinic has completed more than 5,000 breast images in its on-site mammography suite.

Female Enrollees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female enrollees (Priority 1 to 8)</th>
<th>Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY14</td>
<td>14,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY15</td>
<td>14,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY16</td>
<td>14,621</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ladies’ Night

Ladies’ Night is no typical outreach event. The highly-successful annual event brings together the Department of Veterans Affairs, local and state resources under one roof and introduces women to the VA system in a unique, fun and comforting environment. The event demonstrates the VA’s commitment to caring for all Veterans.

Keeping Veterans, the Community and Employees Connected

Public Affairs and Community Relations

The award-winning Office of Public Affairs once again distinguished itself this year with a number of positive internal and external communications campaigns including: a multi-media campaign for Suicide Prevention, Excellence in Action, Community Connections, Testament to Excellence, Our Doctors, Our Nurses and myVA-an educational Social Media campaign.

The office produced more than 200 stories for web and social media as well as fielded 68 media queries which resulted in 48 positive stories on radio, television and in print.

Social Media: Leading the Way

The medical center’s Facebook page leads the nation in “Likes” among all VA medical centers which have a Facebook page. Twitter rankings in FY16 grew from 3rd to 2nd in the nation among all VA medical centers which have a Twitter account.

(Ref: VHA Social Media Reports)

Increase in Facebook Likes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Likes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>14,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>23,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>25,799</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase in Twitter Followers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Followers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3,033</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NBC 4 Health and Fitness Expo

The Office of Public Affairs takes wellness to Veterans and the community by hosting and participating in health and wellness expos throughout the DC Metropolitan Area to bring awareness to VA health, benefits and services.
U.S. Army paratrooper Cornelius Manderson got his wish to see the world when he joined the Army in 1974. However, his view was a lot different from most people. Mr. Manderson spent his post-Vietnam War enlistment as a paratrooper jumping out of airplanes. “It was exhilarating every time I did it and I really enjoyed it.” The Airborne soldier who has been coming to the medical center for nearly six months says, “Everyone has done a great job taking care of me and I’ve had no issues at all.”

Retired Army psychiatrist and internationally-recognized expert on military trauma, Dr. Ritchie, has been working with active duty members and Veterans for the past 34 years. She specializes in treating those with PTSD, depression, substance abuse and TBI using what she terms the “three bucket approach” to help Veterans: medication, psychotherapy and ‘everything else’. “The everything else is yoga, acupuncture or exercise; activities Veterans like to do help release neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine and make them feel better. So many Veterans’ conditions are complicated by pain and disability, I recommend exercise, even fishing and crabbing.”
Keeping Veterans, the Community and Employees Connected

Sunday Magazine Radio Roundtable

Veterans, their families and the general public enjoy weekly roundtable discussions on Veterans and Community Health Sunday Magazine on WMAL Radio 105.9 FM and AM 630. The Washington DC VA Medical Center’s Public Affairs Office hosts the 30-minute radio show featuring VA subject matter experts as well as representatives from neighboring government agencies and community organizations on VA health and wellness initiatives, benefits and services, personal and career development and community resource topics. From step-by-step information on enrollment for VA health care to resume writing to starting a small business to learning to meditate, it’s all being discussed Sundays at 5 a.m. Veterans and community members can hear podcast segments on iTunes or from the medical center’s website making it easier to listen from a mobile device anytime.

Average Audience for Sunday Magazine

- 2015: 1500
- 2016: 3100

Outreach: Music in the Park

The Office of Public Affairs team also coordinates the award-winning Music in the Park mini-concert series featuring Veterans performing on the Washington Mall, monthly during the summer and early fall. The concerts allow Veterans to showcase their talents and provide a public venue to reach new Veterans and their family members.

Managing Crisis and Eliminating the Stigma

In 2016, the medical center’s Suicide Prevention team went well beyond its traditional comprehensive plan that includes: handling referrals from the Crisis Line, accessing high-risk Veterans, keeping close contact with Veterans, maintaining an open-door policy and educating staff to recognize warning signs of suicide. The team placed advertising on local buses, held awareness walks and information fairs, hosted formal lectures featuring renowned subject-matter experts and launched a web and social media campaign aimed to reduce the stigma of asking for help.

DC VA Medical Center Employees Association

In 2016, the Office of Public Affairs in collaboration with the medical center’s Activity Committee implemented the DC VA Medical Center Employees Association to encourage social wellness and recreational activity amongst medical center employees at all levels and in all disciplines. The Employees Association engages employees and increases recognition by offering diverse team-building activities to improve communication, morale and satisfaction.

The Employee Experience

Inpatient Quiet Hours Study

The nursing staff on the 2D Surgery inpatient unit implemented a quiet hours study which has been very well received by Veterans and staff. The team is now working to expand the quiet hours, 2:00 to 4:00 a.m. and 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., to all units of the hospital to encourage wellness and healing and to improve the patient experience.

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“Inside DCVAMC”

An improved employee intranet, “Inside DCVAMC”, offers an internal communications platform for all staff. The platform is a centralized information source offering easy access to view calendars and electronically schedule major conference space, stay abreast of local features including: Testaments to Excellence from Veterans offering kudos to employees who demonstrate the I CARE model; the Irving Street Journal which is the daily electronic employee newsletter, Flu Shot Registry, the Employee Wellness newsletter and many other tools and opportunities of engagement and training.
Awards

Top Doctors
Several Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center physicians were named “Top Doctors” by Washingtonian Magazine. The following doctors were named by their peers as among the best in their specialties in the Washington, DC area:
- Dr. Fred Brody
  Chief Bariatric Surgery
- Dr. Elizabeth Cobbs
  Chief, Geriatrics Long Term Care
- Dr. Charles Faselis
  Chief of Staff
- Dr. Jessica Korman
  Gastroenterology
- Dr. Louis Korman
  Gastroenterology
- Dr. Christian Nagy
  Cardiology
- Dr. Gregory Trachiotis
  Chief Cardiothoracic

VHA Communications Awards
The Office of Public Affairs team was recognized by Veterans Health Administration with three national-level awards.
- 1st Place – Initiatives
  “Ending Homelessness”
- 1st Place – Campaign
  “50 Years of Caring” Engagement Campaign
- 2nd Place – Publication
  “Annual Report 2015” A Commitment to Caring

AMVETS 2016 Rehabilitation Award of the Year
Music Therapist Nicollete Rubin was recognized for her extraordinary contributions to Veterans with the AMVETS 2016 Rehabilitation Award of the Year. For the past eight years, she has been helping Veterans use music as therapy in the Community Living Center.

FedHealthIT 100
Dr. Neil Evans, Chief Officer for the Office of Connected Care was recognized as one of the top 100 information technology health professionals in the nation. Nominees are chosen by their peers for their willingness to challenge conventions and drive health care innovations while contributing to the larger Federal Health IT community.

ICare Award
Nurses on Unit 3E were recognized with a “VA Honor Award for ICARE” for above and beyond to help Veterans. Once a week, the staff prepares bag lunches, at their own expense, and delivers them to a local homeless shelter which assists homeless and at-risk Veterans.

GEM Award (Giving Excellence Meaning)
Anna Liza Fernandez, Chief of Sterile Processing Service, was recognized by Nurse.Com and the Johnson & Johnson Company with a 2016 Giving Excellence Meaning (GEM) award in the Management category.

Jonas Scholar
The medical center’s Director of Nursing Excellence & Innovation Leslie Rowan was named a Jonas Scholar by Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing and the American Association Colleges of Nursing. The Jonas Scholar Program aims to increase the number of advanced practice nurses who are trained specifically in the unique needs of Veterans.

Patriotic Employer Award
The Director of Public Affairs and Community Relations, Gloria Hairston, was recognized by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, with the “Patriotic Employer Award” for her extraordinary efforts in support of the Maryland Army National Guard.

Physician of the Year
VFW Maryland District 2 named Washington DC VA Medical Center Podiatrist Dr. Janette Thompson “Physician of the Year”. Dr. Thompson was recognized or her commitment to serving Veterans and for serving as an outstanding mentor for young physicians.