FY 17 Accomplishments - aligned Under SECVA’s top Five Priorities

Greater Choice for Veterans
Empower Veterans through Transparency of Information

Suicide Prevention
Getting to Zero & Other than Honorable Expansion

Modernize our System
Infrastructure Improvements and Streamlining, Electronic Health Record Interoperability and IT Modernization

Focus Resources More Efficiently
Deliver on Accountability and Effective Management Practices

Improve Timeliness of Services
Access to Care and Wait Times, Accelerating Performance on Disability Claims and Decisions on Appeals

Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center
As we look back at 2017, we note it was a year marked by successes in healthcare delivery, breakthroughs in telehealth and virtual treatment modalities, and it was a year in which the dedicated employees of the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center again displayed their commitment to serving our Nation’s Veterans. The leadership team and I continue to be impressed by the staff and volunteers who constantly rise to the challenges presented, and deliver results for the Veterans we serve.

The strategic focus for 2017 centered on VA’s five priorities: Greater Choice for Veterans, Modernizing our Systems, Focusing Resources more Efficiently, Improving Timeliness of Service and of course, Suicide Prevention. The facility made great strides and significant progress toward all of these priorities, and further enhanced the healthcare delivery, teaching, research missions of VA together with the Academic Affiliation at University of Pennsylvania. In fact, I’d like to take a moment to point out the tremendous value of the close partnership between CMCVAMC and UPenn as it impacts all of VA’s missions.

The healthcare delivery mission is enhanced on a daily basis through the strength of the partnership as our Veterans receive the same world-class physician expertise as the patient of UPenn. Of the 194 physicians who hold dual appointments between UPenn and CMCVAMC, 81 are in Medicine, 55 in Surgery, and 15 in Behavioral Health. This means the Veterans are receiving the very best from renowned experts in their respective fields. This translates into breakthroughs such as implanting the world’s smallest pacemaker, the Medtronic MICRA, which was accomplished at CMCVAMC this year. We’ve tapped into the major technology breakthroughs, and noted breakthroughs such as the face-to-face virtual appointment Veterans are having with their providers now via smartphones, expanded Telehealth to new locations and specialties, and observed the modernization of VA in action firsthand.

The teaching mission was advanced through substantial medical education at the facility. 2017 saw 675 residents at the CMCVAMC and 261 medical students. Not only is VA contributing to the future of healthcare in the United States via training invested in these individuals, it has also been demonstrated that medical students completing programs at VA Medical Centers are more likely to pursue careers within VA. Therefore, our education is not only sound practice, it also assists in recruiting in key areas in the future. As a result of this, our facility is able to recruit in critical specialties that simply aren’t available in other parts of the country. It is for these reasons that the Eastern Market of VISN 4 is increasingly looking to the CMCVAMC to meet the needs of Veterans across the entire region.

Research is an integral component to the Mission of VA and 2017 was another year in which research achieved many notable accomplishments at the CMCVAMC. With the advent of the Million Veteran Program, the largest collection of genomic data in existence is now available to the world-class researchers of VA and UPenn. We have moved into a sustainment phase with homelessness prevention, as Philadelphia declared a functional end to homelessness in 2016. 2017 was about maintaining this success, and using the existing partnerships that we forged through our dedicated outreach staff in Social Work and other key areas, we housed 169 Veterans through VA’s continuing partnership with Housing and Urban Development in 2017. Together with our community partners in the Grant & Per Diem and Shelter Programs, we provided beds for 607 Veterans who would otherwise have faced homelessness. And to point out the success of these programs, we had 323 Veterans exit from shelters to permanent self-supported housing.

To our Veterans, we reaffirm our commitment to providing you the high quality care you earned through your service, and we will continue to advocate for Veterans and ensure we are at the forefront of technology and developments in healthcare delivery. We further reaffirm our commitment to continuous improvement, and are constantly looking for ways to do even better. You deserve no less, and I look forward to another exciting and engaging year.

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“Honoring America’s Veterans by Providing Exceptional Health Care”
Clinical Operations

Cardiology

August 15, 2017, Dr. Sanjay Dixit, MD Cardiac Electrophysiologist implanted the world’s smallest pacemaker, the Medtronic MICRA. The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center (CMCVAMC) was the first VA Medical Center in the nation to perform this procedure. The MICRA pacemaker is unique, as it does not require an incision, and it is delivered to the heart through a catheter system that is inserted in the femoral vein then implanted into the right ventricle of the heart. This tiny pacemaker has a life cycle of 12 years, which is an improvement over the traditional pacemaker that usually requires replacement in five years.

Dr. Dixit has also begun working with the CMCVAMC MOVE program to see cardiac patients in the cardiology clinic for the management of their atrial fibrillation. The MOVE program provides weight management counseling to overweight and obese Veterans. Dr. Dixit has requested the MOVE program screen cardiac patients being seen for the management of their atrial fibrillation and of that group identify patients with a body mass index (BMI) greater than 27 indicating an overweight or obese status. Dr. Dixit and Dietitian Elizabeth Korb see cardiac patients on Wednesday’s to provide weight management counseling to all Veterans meeting the overweight or obese criteria. Education is provided on strategies for weight loss and heart healthy eating. Each participating Veteran is provided with handouts summarizing the information discussed and is offered an outreach phone call two weeks after their appointment to check in on their progress. To date, MOVE has provided weight management counseling to over 150 Veterans participating in this initiative. The joint participation between Dr. Dixit and Elizabeth Korb gives the Veteran greater access to health care and increases the opportunity for the Veteran to recover or live longer.

The Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory initiated a PCI (percutaneous coronary intervention) program in January of 2011. Diagnostic cardiac catheterization and PCI volume has grown steadily since that date with a very low complication rate. In FY 2017, the Cardiac Cath Lab under the guidance of Jay Giri, MD, Cath Lab Medical Director, performed 130 PCI procedures and 457 diagnostic cardiac catheterizations. This is unique because it was accomplished in a three day per week program. The volume rivals that of VA Medical Centers of similar size with a five day per week programs. Cardiology will be expanding diagnostic and interventional cardiac catheterization services to a five day per week program beginning FY 2019, which will improve access to this service not only to the Veterans served by this Medical Center, but also improve access and care for the Veterans of the Eastern Market of VISN 4.

Finally, the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory renovated one Cath/EP suite and installed a state of the art, bi-plane imaging system with approved plans to undergo renovations on the second cath lab in FY 2018.
Women’s Health

In February 2017, the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center (CMCVAMC) opened a new Women’s Health Center. The Women’s Health Center was located on the Seventh floor in a high traffic area. In an effort to provide a private area to treat the growing population of women Veterans, the decision was made to relocate the clinic to the Ninth floor. In relocating the clinic, the CMCVAMC provides a private entrance with a quiet waiting area; separate children play area, and small book lending library. With 87% of our women, Veteran population already assigned to a Woman’s Health primary care provider, the CMCVAMC conducts outreach events and takes advantage of every educational opportunity to inform women Veterans of the programs offered in the new Women’s Health Center.

As with Suicide Prevention, it is important to target the women Veterans who have never crossed the threshold of a VAMC and the women who are unfamiliar with the services being provided. Some of the services provided by the CMCVAMC include 3D mammograms on the state of art tomosynthesis machine along with diagnostics and screenings. The Women’s Health Center has a Gyn procedure room reducing time a Veteran must wait to complete the procedure.

In June 2017, the CMCVAMC Women’s Health Center implemented the Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) program. The CMCVAMC offers services and support to Veterans who experience IPV as well as those who are at risk of using violence in their intimate relationships. With the new space, the CMCVAMC Women’s Health Center is able to host larger scale events. The CMCVAMC Women’s Health Center hosted an official ribbon cutting ceremony in May 2017. The opening of the CMCVAMC Women’s Health Center was enthusiastically attended by Veterans, clinical staff, the acting Undersecretary for Health, Dr. Alaigh, and the Director for the Center for Women Veterans, Kayla Williams. The Women’s Health Center hosted the Women’s Health Art Exhibit in August 2017. Over 150 people visited the remarkable exhibit.

Curing Veterans with Hepatitis C

Description of Accomplishment: One aspect of focusing resources means investing in areas where groundbreaking medications are allowing for cure of diseases which have never before been curable. Philadelphia faced a unique challenge in this area with a large Veteran population diagnosed with Hepatitis C.

New medications, and the ability to provide them to Veterans, have made a permanent cure, once unthinkable, reality. At the CMCVAMC, in the last 12 months, 498 patients have initiated antiviral therapy, of whom 418 have completed treatment and 237 Veterans, of a total of 256 with a known outcome, have been confirmed as cured—a cure rate of 92.5%.

For most individuals the treatment regimen is manageable—taking one to three pills once per day for 8 or 12 weeks. Side effects are minimal and treatment is effective more than 95% of the time.

Over the past three years 1703 patients have initiated therapy and 1350 Veterans of a total of 1440 have been cured, based on known outcomes. The estimate is that 75% of the total HCV-infected populations who receive care at the CMCVAMC have been treated, and the goal is to reach 85% by the end of the current fiscal year. The national VA goal is to eradicate Hepatitis C infection for all Veterans, and we are on the way to meeting that goal.
Partnership with UPenn

The Corporal Michael Crescenz VA Medical Center (CMCVAMC) employs the absolute top tier, world class physicians and clinicians. This is made possible through the close partnership between the CMCVAMC and the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn). With over 194 dually-appointed physicians who serve both institutions, the Veterans receiving care at the CMCVAMC truly see the world’s best doctors. This partnership truly represents a close academic affiliation where the respective strengths of VHA and the Academic Affiliate collaborate seamlessly and positively to deliver meaningful and significant impact to Veterans every day. The partnership benefits VA’s healthcare delivery, education, and research missions in a major way, as VA benefits from cutting-edge technologies and education, hands-on education through the residency and teaching programs, and research into the cures and miracles of tomorrow. Some examples of that are highlighted below as the relationship impacts VA’s healthcare, research, and teaching mission.

Through the branding and expertise of UPenn, CMCVAMC is able to recruit in critical areas that many other VA Medical Centers have difficulty. Dual appointed physicians can be found in all areas of CMCVAMC, including Behavioral Health, Surgery, Medicine, Diagnostic Imaging, and more. The same clinicians, surgeons, and scientists who provide highly complex procedures at UPenn are the same individuals providing services at VA. This is an asset and benefit to the Veterans of Philadelphia that is truly unique and valued.

Unit Tracking Boards

In 2016, the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center (CMCVAMC) implemented the use of Unit Tracking Boards. The newly implemented program was adopted as a best practice subsequently being selected in 2016 as a Gold Status Practice in the VA’s first Shark Tank process. The goal of the Unit Tracking Board is to provide education and communication about data on quality measures and safety to the frontline staff that are most able to impact health outcomes.

Unit Tracking Boards - These were adopted because they were selected in 2016 as a Gold Status Practice in the VA’s first Shark Tank process. Goal is to provide education and communication about data on quality measures and safety to the frontline staff that are most able to impact health outcomes. The boards were piloted on 5EW, 6EW, MICU, and SICU and simultaneously provided education to all nursing staff in those areas on what each quality measure on the board meant in relation to their everyday work. Also we provided training to the nurse managers on those units including basic graph interpretation and how to lead a process improvement/quality improvement conversation with their team. All other disciplines were also invited to join in daily safety huddles located at Unit Tracking Boards. Expansion is planned to other departments and the CLC.
Suicide Prevention

The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center (CMCVAMC) have expanded the Suicide Prevention program by creating a Suicide Prevention Team that encompasses staff across multiple disciplines. Expanding this Outreach Program allows the team to attend more events reaching a wider audience increasing the opportunity to lower the Veteran suicide rate or simply bringing Veterans to health care.

Twenty does not appear to be a huge number but when we are talking about Veterans lives it is an unacceptable number. In 2014 there was an average of 20 Veteran deaths from suicide with 14 of those never receiving treatment from a VA facility. The staff at the CMCVAMC is committed to ensuring ALL Veterans know where to turn for help and know that we are dedicated to stop immediately, listen and engage our Veterans to better assess their needs.

At the CMCVAMC we are working in line with the #BeThere Campaign to draw the community into our efforts to make suicide prevention a priority. The CMCVAMC has created an original #BeThere campaign video which is posted on our Facebook page, broadening the VISN mandated social media campaign along with the traditional printed material. We have signed declarations from CMCVAMC leadership and our external partners and we continue to expand our efforts in partnering with the local community to combat the suicide rate.

At the CMCVAMC we are ensuring our employees are well versed in addressing suicidal thoughts and have established a goal of 8-10 outreach events per month. We have created an outreach committee to increase outreach efforts because we can all work to prevent suicide by knowing the warning signs, and connecting Veterans with the tools and resources that address their needs and recovery. You never know when you will need that number to save a life.

In keeping with Secretary Schulkin’s request, The Suicide Prevention Coordinator is establishing Community Partnerships with all CBOCs in our counties, Vet Centers, Mobile Crisis Units, Hospitals that service our Veterans, Universities, and others.
Growth in Genomic Medicine

Million Veteran Program (MVP) and associated MVP beta and MVP-DOE studies

Beyond the Veterans’ recruitment to VA Cooperative Studies Program (CSP), the MVP (Co-local site investigators: Drs. Darshana Jhala and Kyong-Mi Chang) have been instrumental. The MVP is the largest collection of genomic data in existence and assess factors within areas of Cardio-metabolic diseases (e.g. lipid disorder, diabetes, obesity, peripheral arterial disease and metabolic liver disease) (Dr. Kyong-Mi Chang). Addiction (e.g. alcohol, smoking) (Dr. Henry Kranzler). Cardiovascular diseases (Dr. Scott Damrauer), and Suicide (Dr. David Oslin).

Precision Medicine in Mental Health Care (PRIME Care)

CMCVAMC is the coordinating site for VA’s innovative multi-center Prime Care Study (Primary Investigator: Dr. David Oslin) that examines the pharmacogenetics of depression among Veterans.

Research Building Renovation, Upgrade and Updates

The renovations for the research building covered 5 floors including basement. This completion enables expansion of existing TMRC (Translational Musculoskeletal Research Center—Co-PI: Drs. Robert Mauck and George Dodge), CNNR (Center for Neurotrauma, Neurodegeneration and Restoration—Drs. D. Kacy Cullen and John Duda) and Immunity/Inflammation Affinity Group as well as an emerging Genomic Research Lab.

The research program applied for and received $1.1 million from the VA Central Office of Research and Development to refresh/upgrade shared lab instruments for the VA researchers. We have also received VISN 4 funding for significant research equipment that will continue to advance the research program. A phlebotomy lab is being remodeled to support MVP and other clinical studies as well.

There are tremendous groundbreaking research underway and the CMCVAMC and UPenn researchers will no doubt deliver studies that shape the future understanding of these sorts of diseases.
Army Veteran Finds Sleep Apnea Relief with REVAMP App

The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center (CMCVAMC) is piloting the Remote Veteran Apnea Management Platform (REVAMP) application. REVAMP is a VA-developed web platform designed to facilitate the remote diagnosis and management of Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA). Veterans use a Positive Airway Pressure (PAP) machine to collect sleep data and interact with their VA Sleep Care team through the REVAMP app to continually diagnose and update treatment plans.

Estimated to be the third most common chronic disease in Veterans, OSA is associated with an increased risk of hypertension, heart attacks, strokes, depression, and driving accidents.

Army Veteran Walter Broadnax, a patient at the CMCVAMC, registered with REVAMP after being recommended by his sleep care team. His initial home-study indicated that he would benefit from using a PAP machine. Broadnax said he is feeling better and enjoys studying his sleep metrics with the REVAMP app.

“I did my initial home sleep study and learned that I had 51 breath pauses in an hour, which was very disturbing,” Broadnax said. “People do not realize that this PAP machine revitalizes you. I cannot say any more than that because it is a life saver. This condition could get worse if it is not treated. I’m grateful that my doctors recommended this tool to me.”

Veterans receive ongoing support from their care team through several important functionalities within the app. The care team assigns questionnaires that are answered and submitted directly through the app, which leads to customizable care by soliciting the Veteran’s experience with the PAP machine, the care team, and the REVAMP web app.

“The questionnaires are easy to answer,” Broadnax said. “Any questions I have, my care team members are accommodating and ready to help.”

Accessible from phone or computer, REVAMP allows Veterans to play a primary role in tracking sleep data and adjusting sleep habits to mitigate the effects of OSA. Veterans can contact or receive notifications from their care team regarding sleep metrics that lead to restful sleep, like breathing rate, position, and keeping to a consistent schedule.

Veterans have access to several other app components offering further education on OSA and the ability to exchange secure messages with their sleep care team. Care teams routinely upload Sleep Apnea FAQs to the app for Veteran awareness, and care teams can schedule overnight Sleep Tests to focus on specific sleep metrics. Veterans can also schedule in-person or over-the-phone appointments, or read care team progress notes that outline achievements to date and map the road ahead.

“The VA support teams walked me through the process and any questions I had,” Broadnax said. “It’s a really satisfying experience.”

REVAMP was launched as a pilot at 10 VA Medical Centers in August 2017. In the first five months of operation, more than 310 patient accounts were created, more than 166 diagnostic questionnaires were completed, 39 home sleep test results and 124 initial consults were logged.

https://mobile.va.gov/app/revamp-veterans
Research Funding: $13,600,000
Research Investigators: 112
Research Projects: 276 active studies

Total Monetary and Gift-In-Kind: $334,872.79
Volunteer Service
Volunteers: 426
Volunteer hours: 54,181
Total Unique Veterans Served: 58,370

Percentage Female: 9.8%
Percentage Male: 90.2%

Total Visits: 526,641
- Total Inpatient Admissions: 7,413
- Surgical Procedures: 2,980

Telehealth Encounters: 10,548
- Unique Virtual Care: 5,111

Community Based Outpatient Clinic - Total Veteran Visits

- Burlington: 19,980
- Camden: 9,213
- Saracini: 32,889
- Gloucester: 29,676

Residents: 675
Medical Students: 261

Total Employees: 2,757
CMCVAMC Accreditation and Recognition for FY 2017

Accreditations and Recognition
In an effort to continuously improve the health care provided to our Veterans, Corporal Michael Crescenz VAMC (CMCVAMC) seeks evaluation from external review program agencies such as: The Joint Commission, (TJC), Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), College of American Pathologists (CAP), Long Term Care Institute (LTCI) and Office of Inspector General (OIG) etc. These agencies evaluate the care processes of CMCVAMC and inspire the facility to provide excellent, safe, and effective care of the highest quality and value. CMCVAMC has received and sustained a number of accreditations and awards. Some of our notable accomplishments include:

The Joint Commission (TJC) conducted an unannounced triennial visit in July 2017 to survey the Hospital, Home Care, Long Term Care, and Behavioral Health Programs such as Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM), Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (RRTP), Psychosocial Rehabilitation Recovery Center (PRRC), and Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) with CMV AMC receiving a three-year accreditation through July 2020.

Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF):
Medical Rehabilitation-Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehab Program (CIIRP) and Amputee Program-Polytrauma/Amputation Network Site (PANS) accredited through August 2020.
Employment and Community Services-Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV), HUD-VASH, and Grant & Per Diem, accredited through October 2020.
Behavioral Health-Residential Recovery Treatment Program (RRTP)/Snyder House, accredited through October 2018.
Behavioral Health-Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC)-BH Community Integration Standards VEC (Veterans Empowerment Center) accredited through October 2019.
Behavioral Health-Compensated Work Therapy (CWT), accredited through October 2019.

The Joint Commission/VHA Focused Reviews related to Access and Coordination of Care: The Joint Commission surveyed the organization October 7-8, 2015.

Opioid Treatment Center (OTP): TJC conducted an unannounced survey in August 2014; OTP received a 3 year accreditation through August 2019.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): SAMHSA Certification for OTP accredited through August 2019.

Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care: The Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC) was onsite July 2015 and awarded accreditation for three years. The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare accreditation is effective through July 2018.

Commission on Dental Accreditation: Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) surveyed CMCVAMC Post–Doctoral General Residency Practice Dentistry Program in June 2015 and awarded accreditation through June 2022.


Radiation Oncology: Accredited by the American College of Radiation Oncology. Surveyed in October 2017 and accredited through October 2020.

Mammography Program: Accredited by the American College of Radiology through January 2018.

Sleep Program: The VISN 4 Eastern Region Sleep Center was surveyed in August 2014 by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and was re-accredited through August 2020.


Community Living Center: The Community Living Center (CLC) was surveyed by the Long Term Care Institute in July 2017 accredited and is inspected annually.

VHA National Health Physics (NHPP): Received accreditation through August 2020.
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