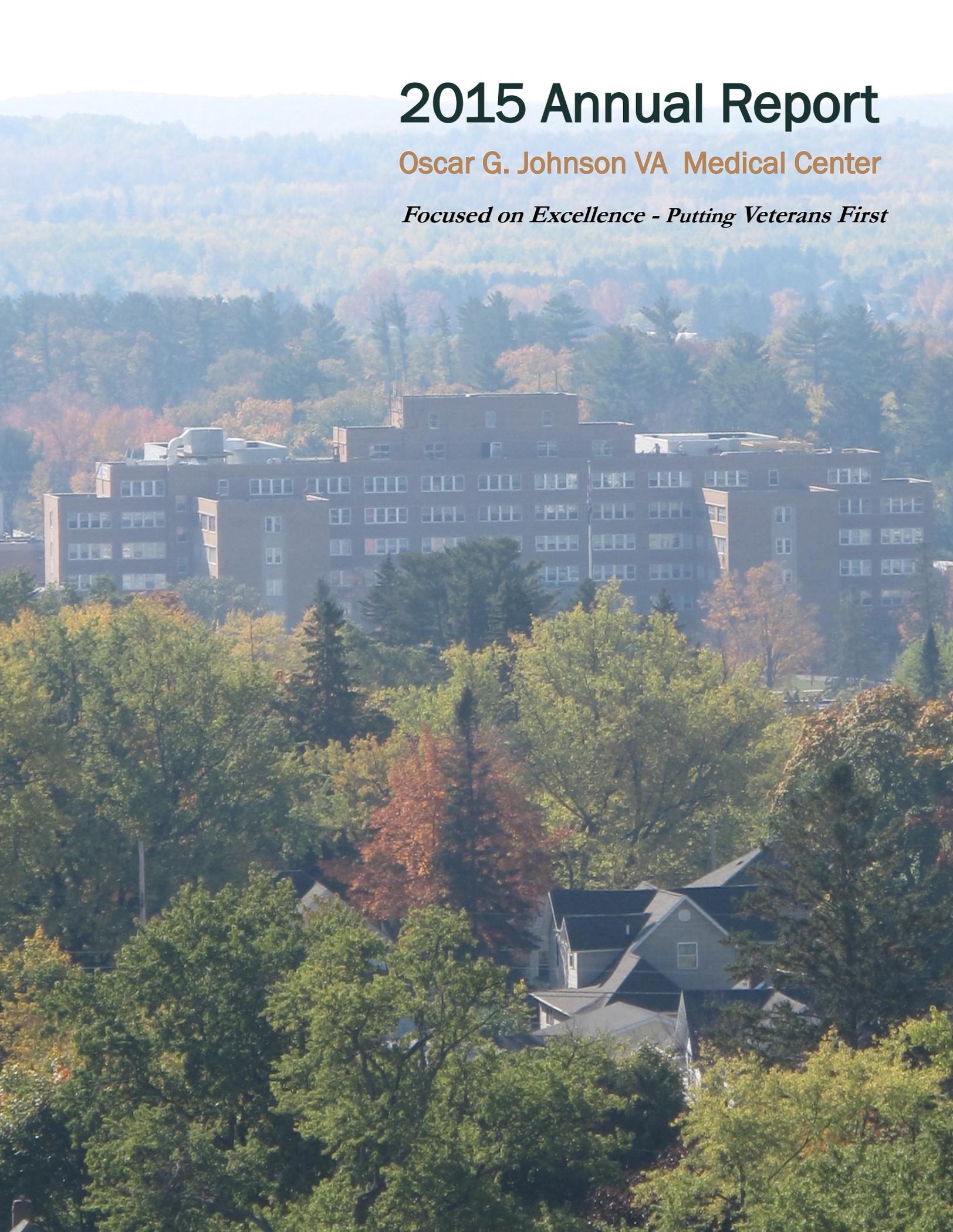


2015 Annual Report

Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center

Focused on Excellence - Putting Veterans First



Message from the Director



James W. Rice
Medical Center Director

It is my privilege to present to you the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center's 2015 annual report. 2015 marked 65 years of our VA medical center serving Veterans in the Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin. While our core mission of providing exceptional healthcare has not changed over the years, our facility's infrastructure and the technology we utilize to deliver that healthcare has. We have a state-of-the-art facility and 21st century technology to ensure that we continue to provide the best care anywhere to our Veterans.

As you read this report, you will recognize that our employees - our most valuable asset and resource - strive every day to provide the right care at the right time to all our Veterans—this is the epitome of patient-centered care. This effort is recognized by OGJVAMC being ranked in the top 25 percent nationally for Quality and in the top 10 percent for Clinical Efficiency.

Our motto, *Focused on Excellence – Putting Veterans First*, reflects our goal of being the healthcare of choice for Veterans and to be recognized as a leader in rural health care. We continue to pursue excellence and focus our energies and resources on those things we do best. To that end, we re-designated some of our clinical services in 2015 to ensure our Veterans receive the best care available whether at OGJVAMC or in the community. Additionally, the right care for our Veterans includes care in our local communities through the Veterans Choice Program, which was established in November 2014. We are also embracing VA's nationwide MyVA transformation to provide the best service to our Veterans. Notably, the foundation of everything we do to at OGJVAMC is our ICARE core values – *Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence*. Our Veterans expect and deserve nothing less.

As we move into Fiscal Year 2016, we will continue to focus on the five VHA priorities: *Access, Employee Engagement, High Performance Network, Best Practices, and Veterans First: Trust in VA Care*.

James W. Rice
Medical Center Director



Clifford A. Smith, PhD
Associate Director



Gail M. McNutt, MD
Chief of Staff



Andrea S. Collins, RN
Associate Director,
Nursing & Patient Care





Because I CARE, I will...

Integrity

Act with high morale principle, Adhere to the highest professional stands. Maintain the trust and confidence of all whom I engage.

Commitment

Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

Advocacy

Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and beneficiaries.

Respect

Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

Excellence

Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.



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Our Mission:

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well-being.

Our Vision:

Leaders in Rural Healthcare - Focused on Excellence - Putting Veterans First.

Stewardship Page 26-30

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Our Legacy: 65 Years of Serving Veterans

With many Veterans returning home from World War II with injuries, Iron Mountain, MI, was chosen in 1945 by the Veterans Administration as a site for one of the 100 new VA hospitals being built.

On March 14, 1948, construction began on 31.5 acres that had once been the site for a large sawmill and lumberyard. At a cost of \$6.5 million, it was the largest building project ever to date in the Upper Peninsula. The six-story, 265-bed hospital with 360 staff was dedicated on March 5, 1950.

The first expansion of services came in 1975 when the Nursing Home Care Unit was opened to provide long-term care.

The 1990s saw major changes at the Iron Mountain VA Hospital. With the VA's shift from inpatient to outpatient services, a new 16,000 square foot ambulatory care addition was completed in August of 1997, which provided increased primary care space and improved outpatient services. This project represented the first major construction at the Iron Mountain facility since 1950.

The shift to outpatient services also necessitated primary care clinics closer to Veterans. In 1993, the first VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) was opened in Marquette, Michigan, followed by four more

Michigan-based CBOCs in Sault Sainte Marie (1997), Hancock (1997), Menominee (1998), and Ironwood (1999), and one in Rhinelander, Wisconsin (1998). In 2009, the Rural Outreach Clinic in Manistique was opened providing care three days a week.

More changes came within the last 10 years. A brand new addition housing the 40-bed Community Living Center was opened on April 14, 2008, replacing the Nursing Home Care Unit.

On October 1, 2008, the VA Medical Center was renamed the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center to honor a local WWII Veteran and Medal of Honor recipient. Mr. Johnson was a Foster City, MI, native who was honored for singlehandedly repelling six major counterattacks in the mountains of Italy in 1944.

In June of 2012, OGJVAMC finished a \$6.5 million construction project that completely remodeled the Primary Care Outpatient Clinic and the Emergency Department on the first floor and added a second floor for specialty care clinics.

On May 25, 2013, the front circle drive was renamed the James D. Priestap Drive in honor of Sergeant First Class Priestap who was killed by a sniper's bullet in Iraq on Thanksgiving Day 2006. He was a OGJVAMC Police Officer at the time of his deployment.



Our Mission and Vision

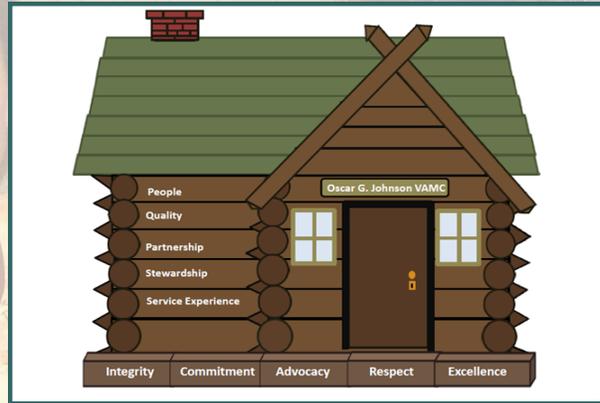
Our mission is to:

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well-being.

Our visions is:

*Leaders in Rural Healthcare -
Focused on Excellence -
Putting Veterans First.*

To achieve our mission and realize our vision, we laid the foundation of VA's I CARE core values (see page 3). These core values are who we are, the base elements of how we go about our work, how we interact with each other, and which strategies we employ to fulfill our mission. More importantly, they are the principles we use every day in everything we do.



Upon the I CARE foundation we anchored the five pillars of OGJVAMC: *People, Quality, Service Experience, Partnerships, and Stewardship* (see below). These pillars provide the strategic direction to achieve our mission and to realize our vision and, ultimately, to provide personalized, proactive, patient-centered care.

Five Pillars of OGJVAMC

People

Veterans, advocates, employees, volunteers, trainees, and vendors united by a common purpose of providing health care for our nation's heroes.

Quality

Dedicated to continuous improvement and striving to achieve a recognizable degree of excellence in health care.

Service Experience

Daily efforts contributing to the welfare of our Veterans and one another, and focused on providing the best patient experience possible.

Partnerships

Building bridges and creating new endeavors with internal and external stakeholders, and soliciting their feedback to ensure our Veterans are provided the right care, at the right time, in the right place for the right cost.

Stewardship

We are committed to responsible shepherding of OGJVAMC's assets and financial resources.

Our Patient Centered Care in Action

What our Veterans and their families are saying about our *Personal, Proactive, Patient Centered Care* demonstrated by our employees and volunteers in 2015:

"Your staff do an outstanding job. They care about their patients as much as any family member would, if not more."

"I was discharged from this VA Hospital after the best of care for bilateral pneumonia and pleurisy. They not only extended to me the best of care but they also touched my heart with their true demonstration of caring."

"The Iron Mountain VA is BY FAR the best VA or any other hospital I've ever been to. The people in all departments are the friendliest and

"I have been a client of the Rhinelander VA clinic for more than a dozen years. During every visit I made, I was always treated with the utmost respect."

"You have a great staff. I've been in all the VA hospitals east of the Mississippi and this is the best one!"

"Regarding the Marquette outpatient clinic I can say without reservation that it is outstanding."

I am writing this letter to let you know how wonderful I think your staff in the CLC is. They truly care about the residents, and this is extremely evident by the personal care that they give to each and

"Thanks for the care and compassion you have given my dad on his recent visits to the VA. Everyone wants to see what's wrong with our society. You are truly what's right!"

"I've worked in nursing homes and never saw the love, time and care the nurses were willing to share with my father."

"My husband was given excellent care in every department during his stay there. I truly can't say enough good things about your hospital and rehab."

"I was an in-patient and I cannot say enough that my stay was absolutely amazing from the time I arrived to the ER to the time I was discharged from 4 East."

"The staff at the Sault Ste. Marie VA clinic is top notch. Never have been treated better at any other place."

"I just wanted to say thank you to your Caregiver Support staff. Since your home visit a few weeks ago we have been nothing short of impressed."

"My husband was there for nearly a month and could not have asked for better treatment than what he had there. Everyone was so nice and paying so much attention to all they could do to help get him on his feet."

"My husband had a procedure done at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center. I was very impressed with the staff and volunteers' kindness, courtesy, and friendliness. The medical facility is clean, organized and updated."

"Being from out of town and on vacation, the service we received when our family member had an emergency was outstanding. The staff was very helpful and courteous."

"I'm a Marine who waited years to come to the VA, and it was the best experience at a medical facility in my entire life."

Our Locations



Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center

325 East H Street
Iron Mountain, MI 49870
(906) 774-3300

Outpatient Visits: 154,852
Veterans Served: 19,095



Hancock VA Community Outpatient Clinic

787 Market Street, Suite 9
Hancock, MI 49930
(906) 482-7762

Outpatient Visits: 10,871
Veterans Served: 1,973



Ironwood VA Community Outpatient Clinic

629 West Cloverland Drive, Suite 1
Ironwood, MI 49938
(906) 932-0032

Outpatient Visits: 6,101
Veterans Served: 1,568

Manistique VA Rural Outreach Clinic

813 East Lakeshore Drive
Manistique, MI 49854
(906) 341-3420

Outpatient Visits: 1,045
Veterans Served: 631



Marquette VA Outpatient Clinic

1414 West Fair Avenue, Suite 285
Marquette, MI 49855
(906) 226-4618

Outpatient Visits: 12,999
Veterans Served: 3,330



Menominee VA Outpatient Clinic

1110 10th Avenue, Suite 101
Menominee, MI 49858
(906) 863-1286

Outpatient Visits: 7,368
Veterans Served: 2,164



Rhineland VA Outpatient Clinic

639 West Kemp Street
Rhineland, WI 54501
(715) 362-4080

Outpatient Visits: 13,134
Veterans Served: 3,548



Sault Ste. Marie VA Outpatient Clinic

509 Osborn Boulevard, Suite 306
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783
(906) 253-9383

Outpatient Visits: 5,545
Veterans Served: 1,305



Our Most Valuable Resource

The honors and accreditations on page 14, patient satisfaction scores on page 15, and clinical measures throughout this report would not be possible without our most valuable resource – **PEOPLE**. These honors and achievements are a testament to OGJVAMC employees – from housekeepers to clinical providers - and

volunteers who live our I CARE values every day in serving our Veterans and fulfilling our motto, "*Focused on Excellence - Putting Veterans First.*" Additionally, our employees are on the front lines as we continue our journey providing our Veterans with patient-centered care (*see page 16*).



These honors and achievements are a testament to OGJVAMC employees – from housekeepers to clinical providers - and volunteers who live our I CARE values every day in serving our Veterans.

Our Most Valuable Resource



Our Employees Helping the Community



OGJVAMC employees raised \$32,250 for the 2015 Combined Federal Campaign donating to the charities of their choice to help people in the community.

VA employees from the OGJVAMC and its seven community based outpatient clinics are active in their communities individually, through the OGJ Employee Association, and established federal and local community programs, such as Combine Federal Campaign (\$32,250 pledged), Feds Feeds Families (1,732 pounds of dry foods donated), VA2K Walk for Homeless Veterans (\$590 in gifts cards), and driving meals to families in need during Thanksgiving and Easter.

OGJVAMC employees raised \$32,250 for the 2015 Combined Federal Campaign to help people in need.

Developing Current & Future Employees

OGJVAMC continues to pursue opportunities to prepare the next generation of VA employees and leaders through leadership programs, intern opportunities, and VA career fairs for local high school students (*see page 25*).

Pathways & National Diversity Internship Programs

OGJVAMC hosted 11 student interns in 2015, providing hands on experience in clinical and administrative careers. Both [Pathways](#) and National Diversity internships allows students to intern in career positions that emphasize long-term development. Both programs also provide opportunities to become a VA employee.

For more information on internships:

mycareeratva.va.gov/Careerpath/Internships



RN Transition-to-Practice Program

OGJVAMC graduated five nurses from its Registered Nurse Transition-to-Practice Program in 2015. The 12-month program uses a comprehensive VA curriculum designed to assist the post-graduate nurse in the transition from entry-level nurse to competent nursing professional.



Psychology Internship Program

OGJVAMC is accredited with the American Psychological Association (APA) for its Pre-Doctoral Internship in Psychology program and graduated its third class of Pre-Doctoral Interns in Psychology.

For more information, check out the following links:

www.ironmountain.va.gov/careers

www.psychologytraining.va.gov/eligibility



OGJVAMC continues to pursue opportunities to prepare the next generation of VA employees and leaders.

Our Volunteers are a Force Multiplier

OGJVAMC volunteers are a force multiplier, providing 32,152 hours of service in 2015, which is the equivalent of 16 full-time employees and \$741,747 in labor costs.

These volunteers provide invaluable support to program areas such as Recreation Therapy, Nursing and Patient Care, Out-patient, Chaplain Service, Pharmacy, Library, Human Resources, Voluntary Service, Veteran Transportation, Pet Therapy, Volunteer Escorts, and Butterfly Wish Program.

The 147 volunteer drivers in the Veterans Transportation Network logged 250,008 miles transporting 2,229 Veterans to and from their VA appointments.

Volunteers have been instrumental in conducting over 30 special events, outings, and ceremonies for the benefit of Veteran patients. These include the annual Patient Carnival, Memorial Day Tribute Ride,



Holiday Gift Shop, VA2K Walk, Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies, and numerous activities and outings for the CLC residents.

For more information on volunteering:

www.ironmountain.va.gov/giving

2015 OGJVAMC Volunteers

- 455 Volunteers
- 102 Youth Volunteers
- 32,152 Hours served
- \$741,747 Equivalent labor costs
- 16 Equivalent full time employees
- 250,008 Miles driven by volunteers transporting 2,229 Veterans.



OGJVAMC volunteers are a force multiplier, providing 32,152 hours of service in 2015, which is the equivalent of 16 full-time employees and \$741,747 in labor costs.



Our Services Recognized



Quality and Efficiency

OGJVAMC has consistently scored 4 and 5 stars in *Quality* and *Efficiency* in the Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) Model each quarter, ending Fiscal Year 2015 with 4 stars in *Quality* and 4 stars in *Efficiency* and nationally ranked 30th for *Quality*, 12th for *Clinical Efficiency*, and 14th for *Total Efficiency* out of 146 VA Medical Centers.



Best Place to Work

OGJVAMC was identified as the 23rd best place to work among all facilities in the Veterans Health Administration in 2015.



Accreditation from The Joint Commission

OGJVAMC received accreditation from The Joint Commission for the Hospital, Home Care Program, Behavioral Health Care Program, and Long Term Care Program. The Joint Commission is the leading accreditor of health care organizations in America.



Accreditation from CARF International

OGJVAMC's Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program received accreditation from CARF International, an independent nonprofit organization that accredits specialized services. The CARF inspection and survey made no recommendations, which is an extraordinary achievement as only three percent of CARF surveys result in no recommendations.

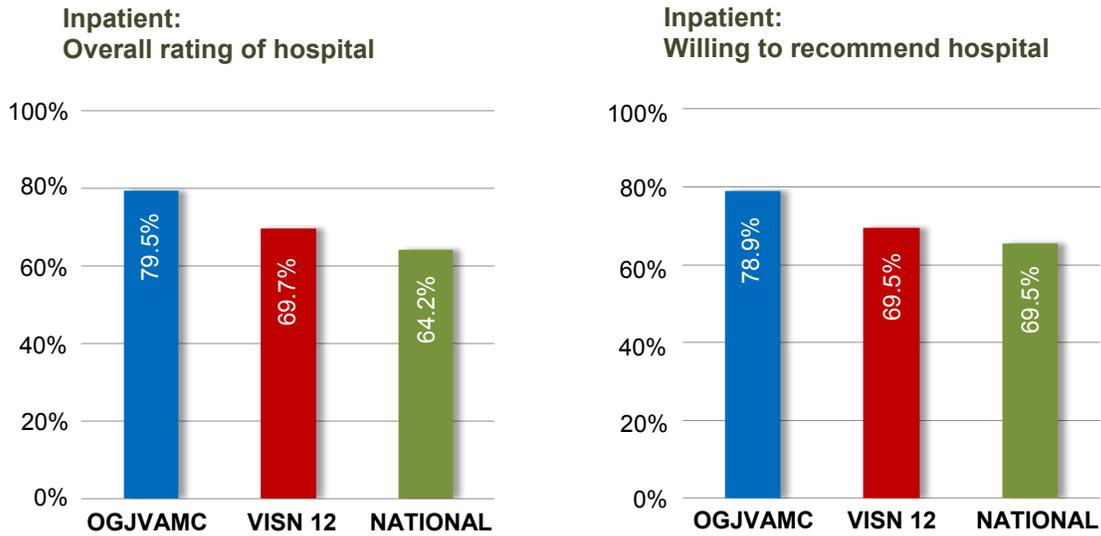


Accreditation from College of American Pathologists

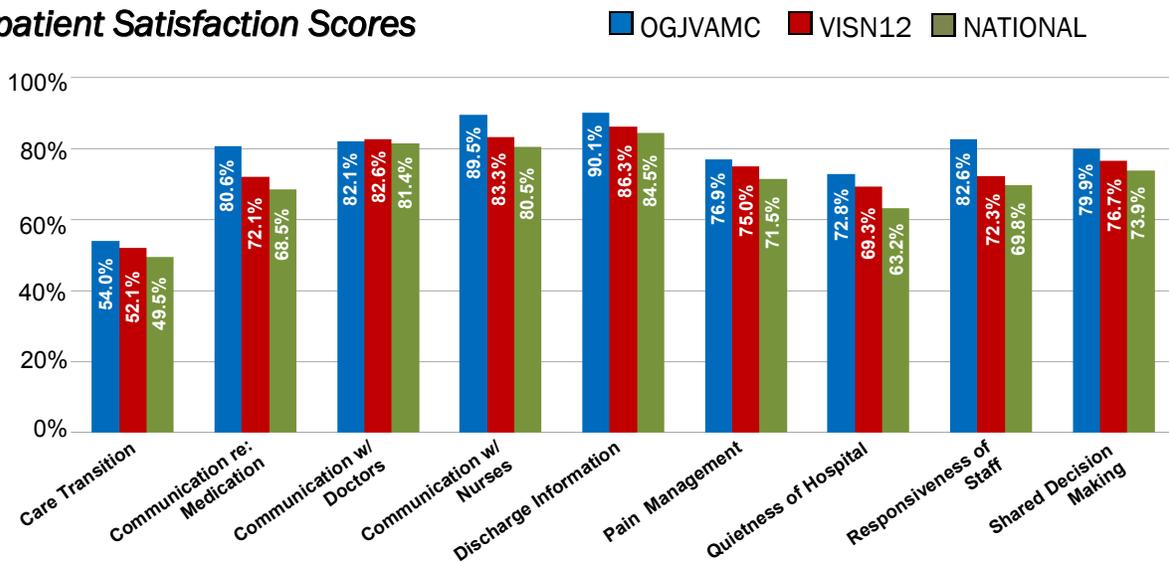
OGJVAMC's Pathology and Laboratory Service received accreditation from the College of American Pathologists (CAP), and is now one of more than 7,000 CAP-accredited facilities worldwide. The U.S. federal government recognizes the CAP Laboratory Accreditation Program as being equal to or more stringent than the government's own inspection program.

Our Patient Satisfaction in 2015

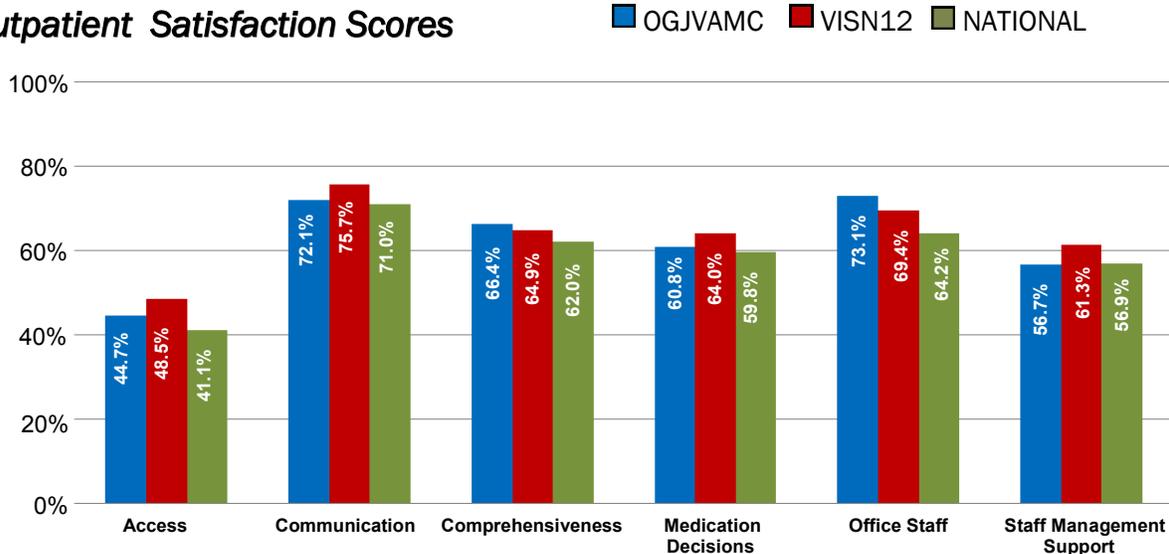
Overall Rating of OGJVAMC



Inpatient Satisfaction Scores



Outpatient Satisfaction Scores



Our Journey To Patient-Centered Care

OGJVAMC is in its third year on its journey to provide *personalized, proactive, patient-centered care*. Patient-Centered Care (PCC) is built on VA's core values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence (I CARE). Patient-centered care combines the clinical practice of medicine with personalized, proactive care. Care is provided through a patient-driven health care team within healing environments and relationships.

We believe in a Veteran's whole health - physical, mental, emotional and spiritual - and taking into account self-care, professional care, and community relationships.

Our journey has been exciting and activity-filled. Twenty-four staff engagement sessions were completed by 419 employees (61%) who are now well-versed in the PCC model. Over the next year, the goal is to educate all remaining employees and thus, all staff will be champions of PCC.

OGJVAMC has already initiated programs to improve the experience of Veterans, and provide care for their whole health. Some recent initiatives include hiring a full-time Chaplain for spiritual support, Tai Chi classes, kiosks for easy check-in, personalized video options for inpatients, and offering menu choices for inpatients.

In 2016, OGJVAMC will continue to implement the PCC model with local



initiatives that are focused on enhancing clinical *practice* and the overall *experience* of Veterans. Our goal is to design a system where we partner with our Veterans to optimize their health in ways that matter to them most.



In 2015, the VA embarked on a historic, department-wide transformation to change its culture and place the Veteran at the center of everything we do. This transformation is called **MyVA**, and it is driving the VA to reorganize for success and implement organizational reforms that will unify VA's efforts to best serve our Veterans.

To achieve this transformation, **MyVA** has five primary focus areas being embraced across VA and at each of our VA health care facilities, including OGJVAMC. These are:

- ◇ Improving the Veteran's experience to be seamless, integrated, and responsive every time
- ◇ Enhancing strategic partnerships to consistently meet the needs of our Veterans
- ◇ Improving the employee experience and focusing on people and culture to better serve Veterans
- ◇ Improving internal support services to eliminate duplication and increase efficiency
- ◇ Establishing a culture of continuous improvement

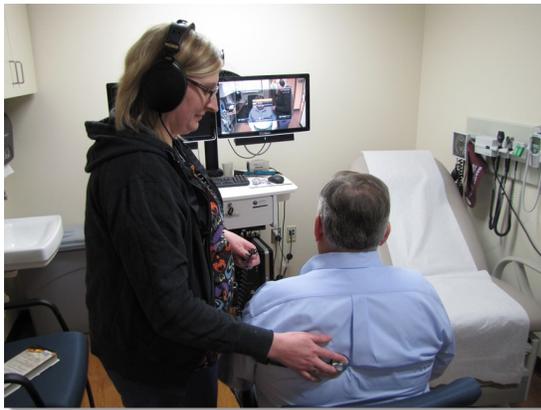


Twenty-four staff engagement sessions were completed by 419 employees (61%) who are now well-versed in the PCC model.

Telehealth Bringing Care Closer to Home

In spite of its small size, OGVAMC was the first VAMC in the nation to develop and use telehealth technology when, in 1996, pathologists in Milwaukee controlled microscopes to view specimens at the Iron Mountain facility.

OGJVAMC has since vastly expanded its use of state-of-the-art telehealth technologies to over 34 primary and specialty care clinics to serve rural Veterans not close to a VA health care specialty provider. Telehealth services include Clinical Video Conferencing, Store and Forward, and Home Telehealth (see page 19).



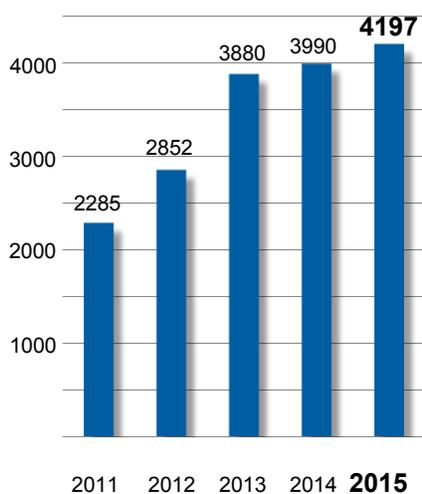
The benefits of telehealth appointments include increased access to specialty care not available locally and the reduced travel time and costs for the Veteran. However, telehealth is not meant to replace face-to-face care but rather to enhance the overall health care experience in a convenient, efficient and cost effective manner.

Feedback received from patients has been positive. Working Veterans voice that it is much more convenient to take off one hour from their job to attend a telehealth appointment close to their home, rather than take a full vacation day off to travel to Iron Mountain or Milwaukee. The alternative for some is to postpone their health care. Telehealth is helping to bridge this gap.

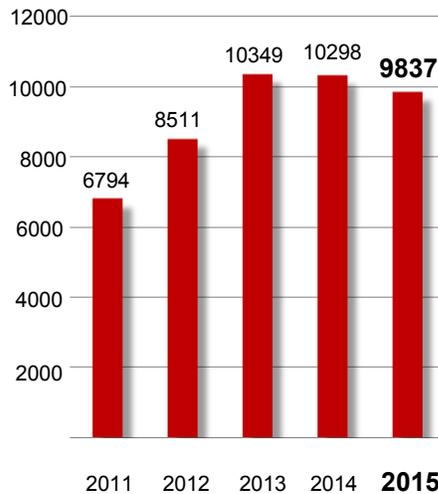
34 clinics provide telehealth services:

- Behavioral Health (Gen)
- Cardiac Device
- Cardiology
- Cardio Arrhythmia
- Comp & Pension (MH)
- Dermatology
- Diabetes
- Diabetic Education
- Endocrinology
- Epilepsy
- Home Based Care
- Infectious Disease
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Nutrition
- Nutrition-Diabetes
- Occupational Health
- Peripheral Vascular Surgery
- Pharmacy
- Post-Op Surgery
- Pre-Natal
- Pre-Op Anesthesia
- Primary Care
- Prosthetics
- Psychiatry
- PTSD
- Pulmonology
- Retinal Imaging
- Rheumatology
- Social Work
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Thoracic Surgery
- Vascular Surgery
- Weight Management
- Hematology (2016)
- Multiple Sclerosis (2016)
- Pathology (2016)
- Substance Abuse (2016)

Patients using telehealth*



Telehealth appointments*



* Does not include Home Telehealth

The benefits of telehealth appointments are increased access to specialty care services not available locally and the reduced travel time and costs associated with going to Iron Mountain or Milwaukee.

Health Care for Our Women Veterans

OGJVAMC and its seven community outpatient clinics offer clinically trained, gender specific health care providers to all female Veterans to ensure comprehensive care is available in a single visit. OGJVAMC has continued to enhance its women’s health programs in 2015.

- Enrollment of female Veterans is increasing. In Fiscal Year (FY) 15, there were 1,226 female Veterans enrolled and 1,002 unique female Veteran who sought care at OGJVAMC or one of its Community Based Outpatient Clinics. OGJVAMC also served 161 female CHAMPVA spouses in FY15.
- Many gender specific health campaigns are conducted throughout the year including breast cancer awareness, women’s heart health awareness, women’s history month, and cultural sensitivity campaigns.
- A full continuum of care for female Veterans includes: comprehensive primary and specialty care, mental health services, disease prevention and screening, and urgent care.
- Enhanced maternity care coordination services are offered through our Maternity Care Coordinator.

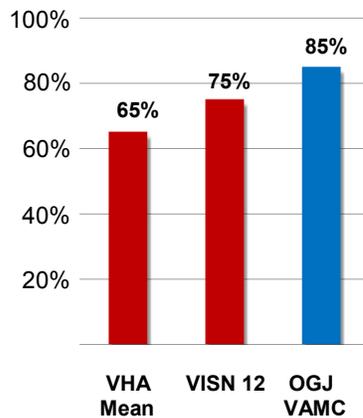


- OGJVAMC’s women’s health services have continued to demonstrate excellence in clinical practices. This is evidenced by the External Peer Review Program (EPRP) clinical measures in breast cancer and osteoporosis screenings (see below).
- A strategic plan was developed by an interdisciplinary team to guide the efforts of the Women’s Health Services and to ensure the delivery of the highest quality, evidence-based, comprehensive health care to our female Veterans.

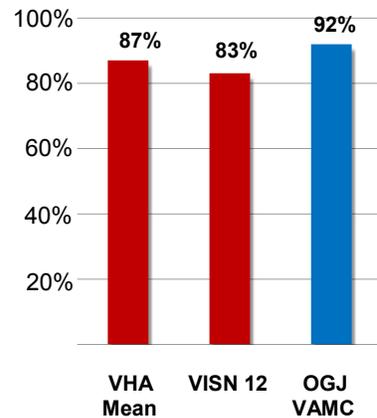
For more information on Women Veterans Health Care: www.womenshealth.va.gov



Osteoporosis Screenings (age 65 and over)



Breast Cancer Screenings (age 50-74)



A full continuum of care for female Veterans includes comprehensive primary and specialty care, mental health services, disease prevention and screenings, and urgent care.

Helping Our Veterans Stay at Home

OGJVAMC has a comprehensive Home and Community Based Care (H&CBC) program that provides needed services to enable Veterans to remain in their home setting as long as possible. H&CBC programs may be provided singularly or in combination with other programs. Over 900 Veterans received H&CBC services in Fiscal Year 2015. The H&CBC target of providing services to 844 Veterans was surpassed at 107%. There was a 12% growth in the H&CBC provided from FY 2014 to FY 2015.

Home Based Primary Care Care brings health care to the comfort of the Veteran's home, providing routine care and continuous services for complex chronic disabling diseases. HBPC was started in 2008 and expanded to a second satellite team at Watersmeet, MI, in 2009. To date, the program has served over 400 Veterans.

Home Telehealth Program provides in-home monitoring and care coordination for Veterans with chronic diseases such as CHF, COPD, diabetes, and hypertension and several behavioral health diagnosis. The



program has further expanded into supporting Veterans with Dementia and Palliative Care and their caregivers through a Caregiver Support Program. Over 450 Veterans used the Home Telehealth Program in 2015. Care coordinators assist Veterans with navigating their healthcare and promoting self-management skills through education and case management.

Coordinated-Transitional Care is a newer program designed to reduce 30-day re-hospitalizations and to improve care transitions of patients who may not be accessible via post-hospital home visits. The goals of the program are to educate and empower the Veteran in medication management, ensure the Veteran has medical follow-up, educate the patient on possible issues, and ensure the Veteran knows whom to contact if questions arise.

- H&CBC Services**
- Home Base Primary Care (HBPC)
 - Home Telehealth
 - Purchased Skilled Home Care
 - Outpatient Respite
 - Home Hospice
 - Homemaker/Home Health Aide
 - Contract Adult Day Health Care
 - Veterans Directed Home Care
 - Contract Nursing Home
 - Coordinated-Transitional Care
 - Home Infusion Therapy

Over 900 Veterans received Home and Community Based Care services in FY 2015 and over 450 Veterans used the Home Telehealth Program.

Our Peer Groups are Impacting Recovery

Mental health recovery is a journey of healing and transformation enabling a person with a mental health problem to live a meaningful life in a community of his or her choice while striving to achieve his or her full potential (*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)/Center for Mental Health Services*).

One of the effective treatments used today by OGJVAMC in its Mental Health Recovery Program is peer-led, peer support recovery groups. Peer support services in the VA are specifically designed to offer hope for recovery and role models for successful management of mental illness. Peer Support Providers help Veterans develop skills to manage their recovery, improve their quality of life, support their personal goals, and achieve independence from institutional settings.

At the end of FY 2015, there were more than 80 Veterans participating in 11 Veteran peer groups and one peer spouse group. There are four types of peer groups hosted by OGJVAMC:

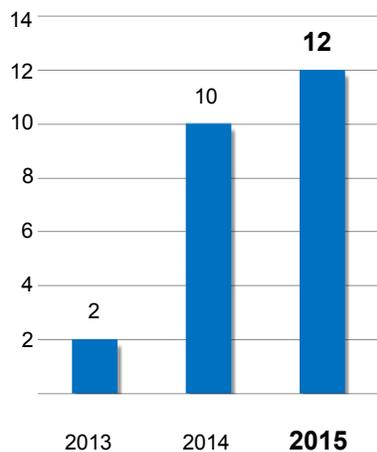
- **Peer Support Groups** normalize the Veterans' experience and let them know they

are not alone. The group environment also gives Veterans a chance to consider alternative behaviors and approaches to strengthen their recovery through artistic means.

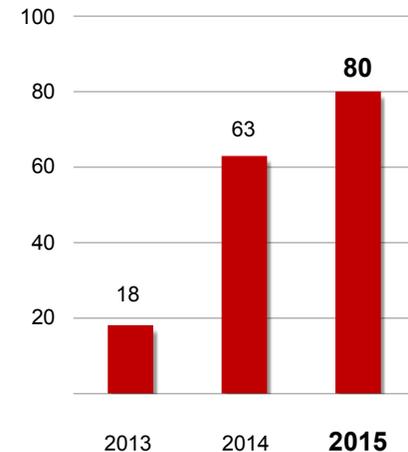
- **Peer Social Groups** integrate Veterans who are struggling with social skills into community events and activities.
- **Creative Writing / Journaling Groups** normalize the Veterans' experience and gives them a chance to consider alternative behaviors and approaches to strengthen their recovery through artistic means.
- **Peer Spouse Groups** are open to any spouse or significant other of a Veteran to help them understand their Veteran better so that they can enjoy a healthier partner and familial relationship.

Studies have demonstrated the positive impact peer groups have in improving social functioning and the quality of life for Veterans while reducing hospitalizations and use of crisis services. Veterans participating in peer groups are also engaged in individual therapy. Peer support groups and evidenced-based therapies are both part of the VA's mental health recovery model.

No. of Peer Groups



No. of Veterans in Peer Groups



OGJVAMC Peer Groups:

- **9 Peer Support Groups:** Iron Mountain, Escanaba, and Menominee
- **1 Peer Social Group:** Iron Mountain
- **1 Writing/Journaling Group:** Iron Mountain
- **1 Peer Spouse Group:** Escanaba

An effective treatment used today by OGJVAMC in its Mental Health Recovery Program is peer-led, peer support recovery groups.

Reaching Out to Our Veterans

OGJVAMC continues to make outreach to Veterans throughout its large geographic area a priority. The Veteran Outreach Team was chartered in 2012 to increase awareness of benefits and services, promote VA's high quality of care, receive

feedback on Veteran's needs and services, and address access gaps. The team includes representatives from Nursing, Behavioral Health, Women's Health, OEF/OIF/OND, Patient Administrative Service, Care in the Community, and Public Affairs.



Working with local Veteran Service Officers, Veteran service organizations, and tribal and community representatives, the Outreach Team coordinated and participated in 28 outreach events in FY2015, including three at area tribal nations, with over 2,900 people in attendance. These events included 11 health and benefit fairs, five OGJVAMC-hosted Veteran Town Halls, and 12 community and Veteran-centric events.

OGJVAMC Hosts Celebrating Wellness Fair & Adaptive Sport Clinic

OGJVAMC hosted a Celebrating Wellness Fair and Adaptive Sports Clinic on September 15, 2015, in conjunction with National Recovery Month and Wellness Week. The fair was open to the public and featured over 40 wellness booths, demonstrations, and speakers highlighting VA and community resources that promote wellness and healing to include healthy cooking, women's wellness, vocational rehabilitation, and adaptive hunting to name a few.

OGJVAMC and the Spinal Cord Injury Center at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center teamed up to conduct the Adaptive Sports Clinic for Veterans at the same venue. The sports clinic featured instructions and demonstrations of various adap-

tive bicycles and sports chairs for sports such as tennis, basketball, rugby, and lacrosse that will help Veterans suffering from physical limitations to live a more active lifestyle. Check out TV story [here](#).

To contact OGJVAMC's Recovery Program Coordinator: 800-215-8262, extension 32777

For more information on the VA Adaptive Sports Program: www.va.gov/adaptivesports



The fair was open to the public and featured over 40 wellness booths, demonstrations, and speakers highlighting VA and community resources that promote wellness and healing.

Veterans Justice Outreach

A Veteran's court record is often a contributing factor to Veteran homelessness. As a result, in 2009 the VA established the Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program and assigned a VJO specialist to every VA medical facility.

The VJO Program partners with local law enforcement and the judicial system to implement intervention plans and provide necessary treatment to those Veterans whose military service is a mitigating factor in their legal problems. The program entails three operating principles: (1) outreach and liaison with the judicial and law enforcement community, (2) training judicial and law enforcement entities on Veteran specific topics, such as PTSD, and (3) reaching out to and linking Veterans with VA services.

In 2015 the VJO Program and local courts worked together and established Veterans Courts in five counties: Dickinson, Alger, and Schoolcraft in Michigan and Ashland and Iron Counties in Wisconsin. In those other counties where Veterans Courts are not yet established, the principles of a Veterans Court are still applied by implementing intervention plans and providing necessary treatment to those Veterans.

The number of Veterans referred to the VJO Program by local law enforcement and the courts doubled in 2015 over 2014. While the VJO specialist typically focuses on criminal matters, there were also referrals on civil matters, such as divorce, and bankruptcy.

For more information on VA's Homeless Prevention Program:

www.va.gov/homeless/vjo

OGJVAMC Hosts Mental Health Summit

OGJVAMC held the third annual informational Mental Health Summit on August 18, 2015. The purpose for the summit was to bring together key stakeholders in the local community with the goal of enhancing access to mental health services and addressing the mental health care needs of Veterans and their family members.

Key topics discussed included: Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014; the National Resource Directory; military cultural competence; and the needs of Veterans and families to include Veteran

caregiver and peer support programs, employment, and wellbeing.

The Summit was well attended by OGJVAMC's community partners, Veterans, family members, and VA staff.



In 2015 the VJO program and local courts worked together and established Veterans Courts in five counties.

Ending Veteran Homelessness

The Homeless Prevention Program Team at OGJVAMC continues to work with community partners to end homelessness among Veterans. OGJVAMC’s Homeless Prevention Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) to provide coordination and community referral services to Veterans throughout the OGJVAMC patient service area. OGJVAMC’s Homeless Prevention staff served 247 Veterans in FY2015.

Housing Assistance

OGJVAMC’s Homeless Prevention staff work closely with community partners in order to identify resources available within the community. OGJVAMC continues a successful partnership with the Great Lakes Residential Recovery Center (GLRC) to provide contract transitional housing services to homeless Veterans.

OGJVAMC’s Homeless Prevention Program partners with GLRC-Adult Residential Services in Marquette MI, and has recently expanded to include the New Hope House for Women and the New Hope House for Men, both located in Sault Ste. Marie, MI. The Contract Emergency Residential Services Program served twelve Veterans in 2015.

The Homeless Prevention Program also assists Veterans with referrals and coordination of services in order to obtain and maintain independent living within the community. The VA, in partnership with the De-

partment of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), provides vouchers to subsidize rental housing for homeless Veterans and their immediate families. The OGJVAMC’s HUD-VASH Program recently expanded and now has the capacity to assist 31 families with obtaining independent living utilizing the HUD-VASH voucher program..

National Veteran Homeless Call Center

The VA established the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans Hotline to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for homelessness have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors.

OGJVAMC’s Homeless Prevention Program Team addressed 37 crisis calls to the National Veteran Homeless Call Center.

Homeless or at risk Veterans can call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at: 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838).

For more information on VA’s Homeless Prevention Program:

www.va.gov/homeless

www.ironmountain.va.gov/services/homeless

Homeless or At Risk Veterans - 2015

- 247 Veterans served
- 12 using Contract Transitional Housing
- 31 using HUD-VASH vouchers.
- 37 called National Veteran Homeless Call Center

OGJVAMC’s Homeless Prevention staff served 247 Veterans in FY2015. . . and addressed 37 crisis calls to the National Veteran Homeless Call Center.

Veterans Information Radio Show

Since December of 2011, OGJVAMC has partnered with WJNR Radio, 101.5 FM, for a monthly live radio show called *Veterans Information Hour*. In 2015, the format changed to the *Veteran Information Minute*, where a show on a specific VA service, program or event is taped and aired in portions over the next month on three different 100,000 watt radio stations to capture a larger audience. Hosted by long time radio personality and Vietnam Veteran, Aaron Harper, OGJVAMC has provided subject matter experts each month to talk about the various benefits and service.



Virtual Lifetime Electronic Records



VA Health Living Workshops



VA Pharmacy & Med Refills



Veteran Homelessness



Veteran Intern & Job opportunities

- Programs Not Pictured:
- OGJVAMC's Wellness Fair & Adaptive Sports Clinic
 - OGJVAMC Clinical Re-designations
 - VA's Summer of Service Initiative
 - Veterans Transportation Service
 - Flu Vaccinations
 - Medical Center Leadership Initiatives



In 2015, the format changed to the Veterans Information Minute, where a show on a specific VA service, program or event is taped and aired in portions over the next month on three different 100,000 watt radio stations.

Students Learn About VA Careers

The Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center hosted over 250 high school sophomores and juniors from three area high schools on May 12, 2015. It was the fifth annual VA Career Day, where the students get a first-hand look at various VA careers.

“There are a lot of careers that I really did not know existed, and maybe someday I’d like to pursue some of those careers,” said Nicci Hofer, a sophomore at Kingsford High School.

Students were able to browse at 19 career booths, where VA staff explained their career field and what interested students should do to prepare. They were exposed to a variety of professions including nursing, medicine, social work, psychology, medical technology, rehabilitation medicine, nutrition, engineering, law enforcement, and finance to name a few.



“It takes a lot of different careers to make this Medical Center successful in serving out Veterans and not just clinical careers,” said MaryAnne Gibler, VA Career Day Coordinator.

Students also participated in hands-on demonstrations such as checking vitals of a fully computerized, life-like mannequin.

“This inspires the students to do research and really think about the classes they take that can help them pursue a certain career,” said Nancy Jayne, a guidance counselor at Kingsford High School.

“By the time these students graduate from college there will be a projected 255 retirements from OGJVAMC, which is 255 potential job openings,” added Gibler.

Check out the TV story [here](#).

To see more photos of this event please [click here!](#)



“There are a lot of careers that I really did not know existed, and maybe someday I’d like to pursue some of those careers.”

~ Nicci Hofer, Kingsford High School sophomore.

OGJVAMC By The Numbers in 2015

Health Care Provided

Workforce

-  **20,335*** Veterans Served
-  **211,915*** Outpatient Visits
-  **5,836**** ED/Urgent Care Visits
-  **1,498** Surgical Procedures
-  **33,677** Mental Health Outpatient Visits
-  **562,988** Clinical Laboratory Tests
-  **927** Inpatient Stays
-  **15,725** Bed Days of Care
-  **43** Average Daily Census
-  **901,353** Prescriptions Filled
-  **7,148** Patients Received Prosthetics Services

- ★ **686** Employees
- ★ **217** Nurses
- ★ **39** Physicians
- ★ **28** Social Workers
- ★ **25** Mid-level providers (DNPs, NPs, PAs)
- ★ **17** Licensed Psychologists
- ★ **9** Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Providers (PTs, OTs, SLPs, Chiropractor)
- ★ **6** Clinical Pharmacy Specialists
- ★ **3** Dentists
- ★ **3** Optometrists
- ★ **3** Audiologists

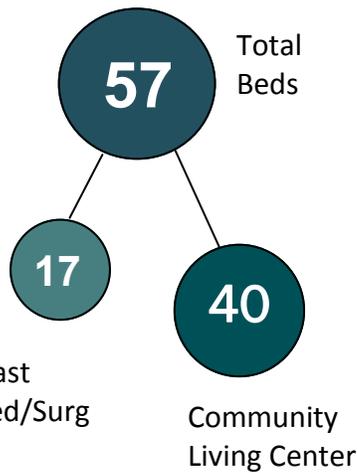
* Includes Community Outpatient/Rural Outreach Clinics
 ** ED was converted to an Urgent Care Clinic on 7/13/15

Dollars Spent*

- \$129.8M** Operating Budget
- \$ 8.7M** Construction Funds
- \$ 1.2M** Rural Health Funds

* See page 27 for complete details of 2015 Financial Expenditures.

Operating Beds

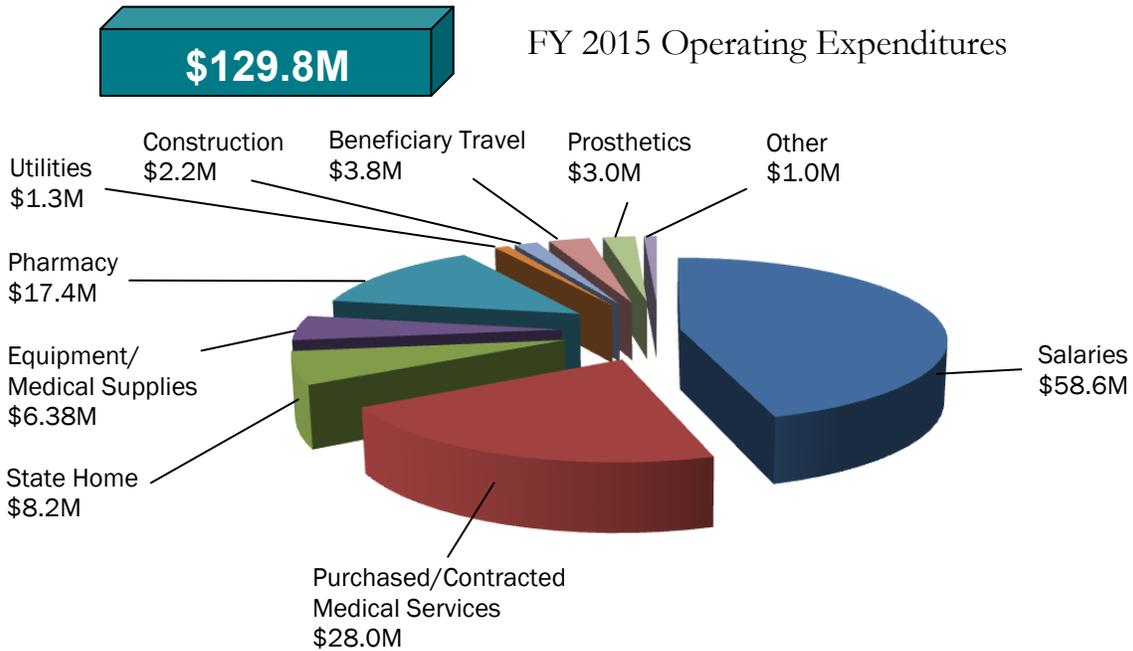


Demographics

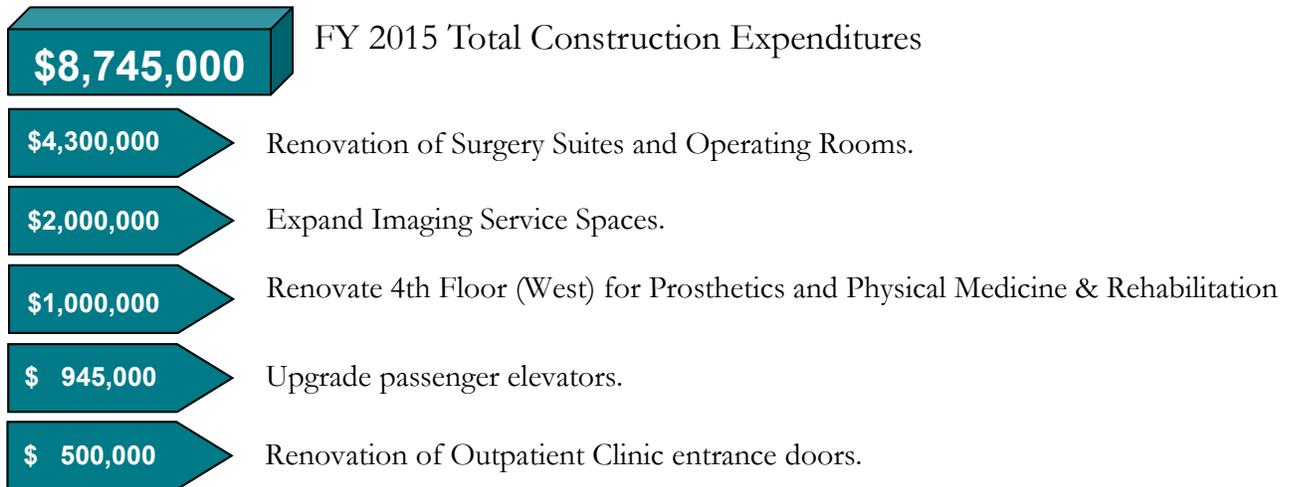
- 25,864** Square Miles
- 25** Counties Served
- 27,533** Vets Enrolled in VHA
- 7** Community Outpatient Clinics

Our Financial Expenditures

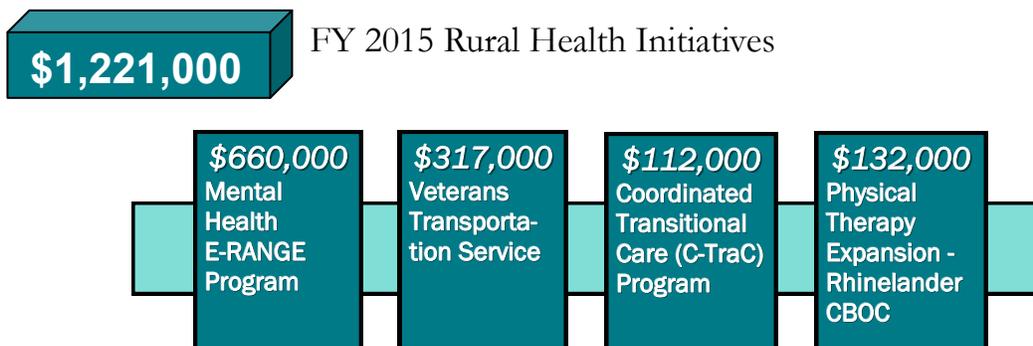
Operating Expenditures



Construction Expenditures *(includes funds obligated in previous fiscal years)*



Rural Health Expenditures



Our Clinical Services Re-designated

The Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center is committed to providing Veterans access to timely, high-quality care they have earned and deserve. To best serve area Veterans OGJVAMC re-designated some clinical services effective July 13, 2015, to ensure the level of care it provides matched the capability and capacity of OGJVAMC.

These designation changes were:

- (1) Converting the surgical program to Ambulatory Surgery Basic, however OGJVAMC continues to do the vast majority of surgeries previously done;
- (2) Converting the Emergency Department (ED) to an Urgent Care Clinic (UCC), with no change in staffing or operating hours; and
- (3) Converting four underutilized Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds to general medicine/surgery and hospice beds, where there is a higher demand for services.

These designation changes came about after considerable discussion during strategic



planning sessions in 2012 and 2014 on aligning the care at OGJVAMC to position it as a leader in rural medicine.

These changes more accurately reflected what the Medical Center was already doing. In 2014, over 98 percent of all ED cases at the OGJVAMC were classified at the Urgent Care level, and the average daily census in the ICU was less than one.

“I believe these designation changes are in the best interest of our Veterans because for higher level emergency and inpatient care, we believe they are best served at hospitals that have more capacity and capability to provide that level of care on a more routine basis,” said Jim Rice, Medical Center Director.

OGJVAMC continues to coordinate higher level emergency and critical care with hospitals in both the local community and at larger VA medical centers that provide that care at a higher volume and can better serve Veterans.

Ambulances transporting Veterans are diverted to the nearest hospital that is capable of providing the emergency care needed. The UCC sees patients who believe their condition is not life-threatening. Veterans experiencing life-threatening symptoms are advised to call 911.

“For higher level emergency and inpatient care, we believe they [our Veterans] are best served at hospitals that have more capacity and capability to provide that level of care on a more routine basis.”

~ Jim Rice, Medical Center Director

The Veterans Choice Program

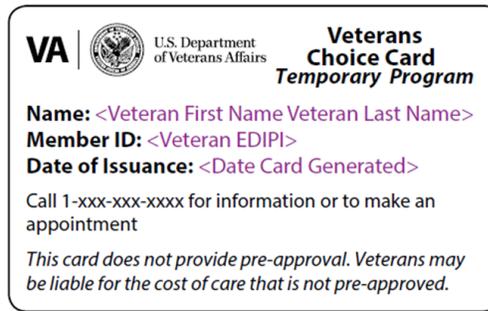
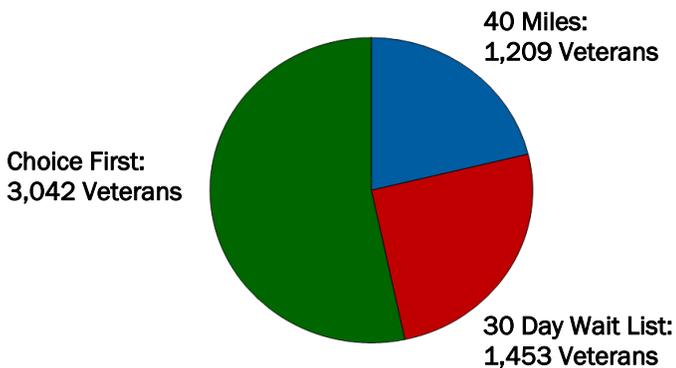
The Veterans Choice Program was implemented nationwide in November 2014 to improve Veterans’ access to health care by allowing certain Veterans to elect to receive health care from eligible community providers outside of the Veterans Health Administration. The program was established by section 101 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act (VACAA) of 2014.

The Choice Program is managed by a third party administrator, which is Health-Net for Veterans in OGJVAMC’s geographic area. Initially, all Veterans enrolled in VA health care prior to August 1, 2014, received a Veterans Choice Card. VACAA was amended in July 2015 to remove the August 1, 2014, requirement.

Veterans *may* elect to use the Choice Program if they meet one of the first two criteria, and must use it for the third criteria:

✓ **40 Miles** - The Veteran resides more than 40 miles driving distance from any VA medical care facility without a full-time physician. These Veterans may call the Choice Program to schedule appointments without

OGJVAMC Fiscal Year 2015 Consults for Veterans Choice Program:
Sent to Choice: 6,743 Accepted: 5,704



VA authorization or referrals for any care the VA would otherwise provide them.

✓ **30 Day Wait** - The Veteran’s appointment is more than 30 days from the provider’s or patient’s preferred date. The VA will provide a consult to the Choice Program for the specific episode of care that cannot be accomplished within 30 days of the desired appointment date. The Choice Program will call the Veteran to schedule the appointment, if the Veteran chooses to use Choice.

✓ **VA Unable to Provide Care** - The Veteran’s requested care is not available within the VA at that time, and therefore the Veteran will use the Choice Program first if Choice providers are available prior to using any of the VA’s other non-VA care programs, such as Fee Basis. Like the 30 day criteria, the VA will provide a consult to the Choice Program for the specific episode of care that cannot be accomplished by VA providers, and the Choice Program will call the Veteran to schedule the appointment.

The VA will continue to provide medications and prosthetics prescribed by Choice Program providers. **The Choice Program (and Choice Cards) are not to be used for emergency care.**

For more information:
www.va.gov/opa/choiceact

The Veterans Choice Program was implemented nationwide in November 2014 to improve Veterans’ access to health care.

Our Construction Projects

The Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center is committed to being a state-of-the-art facility to provide Veterans the best care possible. Since 2012 there were many upgrades and renovations to the facility including renovated primary care, specialty care, surgical, dental, and emergency department spaces.

In FY 2015, OGJVAMC completed construction projects that would improve patient and visitor experiences as well as health care for our Veterans. These included:

- New, state-of-the-art OR rooms
- Expanded and renovated Imaging Clinic
- New elevators



- Renovated Prosthetic Service offices
- Renovated Veterans Canteen Service cafeteria and store
- Renovated outpatient entrance with heated slab



In FY 2015 OGJVAMC continued construction projects that would improve patient and visitor experiences as well as health care for our Veterans.

Oscar G. Johnson
VA Medical Center

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