Mission

To provide high quality, technologically current healthcare services in a compassionate, humanitarian and ethical manner within a multi-centered environment which promotes strong research and educational programs, in affiliation with our partners.

Vision

VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System will be a Department of Veterans Affairs innovative leader in providing health care and other services to our Veteran patients and other constituents.
WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System team is dedicated to taking care of our Veterans’ medical and emotional needs through health promotion and disease prevention. We treat nearly 112,600 of our nation’s heroes annually and strive to provide excellent care that is befitting of their service to our nation. We are honored to have this vital mission!

Our 5,319 employees’ tireless dedication and hard work, along with the community’s support, helps us to continuously surpass VA and private sector standards for our Veterans. As proven by our Gold Star Better Health Partnership Ratings, consistent VA Sail 5-Star ratings, our surgical outcomes, and the most recent independent study by Dartmouth, Veterans can expect the very best care when they come to any of our 18 locations throughout Northeast Ohio.

In addition to focusing on health care, we are dedicated to improving the future of medicine through our education and medical research. Each year we work with over 2,000 trainees in clinical and administrative fields through 250 academic affiliations. Our $14.7 million annual research budget supports a broad-based research program with studies featured in more than 200 publications each year.

Our outcomes and reviews are commendable, but more importantly, we are proud of the positive difference we can make in our Veterans’ lives. We are driven to continuously push the boundaries because our nation’s heroes deserve nothing less.

Thank you to our Veterans, employees, local and federal representatives, our Veteran service organizations and our many local and national partners. Your support and trust makes it possible for us to serve those who served!

Respectfully,

Susan M. Fuehrer
Director / CEO

LEADERSHIP

Andrew D. Pacyna, FACHE - Deputy Director / COO
Andrew D. Pacyna became Deputy Director in November 2015. He returned to Northeast Ohio to become the Associate Director of the healthcare system in 2014. Mr. Pacyna started his career with the VA as a Graduate Health Administration Training Program (GHATP) Resident at the Syracuse VA Medical Center. After completing his training and first position at the Syracuse VA, Mr. Pacyna went on to hold positions with VA Maryland Health Care System and the Clement J. Zablockie VA Medical Center in Milwaukee. Mr. Pacyna also served as the Acting Medical Center Director for VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System in 2017.

Beth A. Lumia, LMSW - Associate Director / COO
Beth A. Lumia became the Associate Director in July 2016. She came to Northeast Ohio from the Bath VA Medical Center in New York where she was the Care Line Manager for the Medical Service and the Diagnostics and Therapeutics Service since 2009. Ms. Lumia also served as the VA Care in the Community Program Manager since 2015. She started her career with VA in 2003 as a social worker, has accepted several national details in Washington, D.C., and served as the Acting Associate Director for the Erie VA Medical Center in Pennsylvania from July to September 2013. Ms. Lumia most recently served as the Acting Director for Chillcote VA Medical Center, in January 2019.

Brian Cmolik, MD, FACS, - Chief of Staff /CMO
Dr. Brian Cmolik became VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System Chief of Staff effective October 2018. Dr. Cmolik has been part of the Cleveland VA Medical Staff since 1993, serving most recently as Chief of Surgery Service since 2013. He began his career with VA as a cardiothoracic surgeon in 1993, and became Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery in 2006. Dr. Cmolik completed his undergraduate education at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1979 and received his medical degree in 1985 from Northeastern Ohio Medical University. He is an Associate Professor of Surgery at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine.

Innette Sarduy, DNR, MPH, RN, NEA-BC - Associate Director Patient Care Services, Nurse Executive / CNO
Dr. Innette Sarduy became Associate Director of Patient Care Services in December 2012. Previously, she served for 12 years at the James A. Haley VA Medical Center in Tampa, Florida as the Chief Nurse for Acute Care. Dr. Sarduy holds an adjunct faculty appointment with Case Western Reserve University Francis Payne Bolton (FPB) School of Nursing. She is also on the advisory council for Ursuline and Notre Dame Colleges’ Schools of Nursing.

Andrew D. Pacyna
Susan M. Fuehrer
Director / CEO

Beth A. Lumia

Brian Cmolik

Innette Sarduy

S. M. Fuehrer joined VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System in May 1986 and has risen through the ranks to become CEO in September 2010. She serves as the leader and visionary for the healthcare system, while ensuring alignment with VA strategic initiatives. Mrs. Fuehrer has over 33 years of leadership experience with VA and is a recognized trailblazer in the Veterans Health Administration, making transparent, data-driven decisions on behalf of Veterans, staff and taxpayers. Mrs. Fuehrer completed her Master of Business Administration from Case Western Reserve University in 1990. She is also a graduate of Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. Mrs. Fuehrer serves on the boards of the American Red Cross of Greater Cleveland, Cuyahoga Community College Foundation, the Center for Health Affairs, the American Hospital Association Regional Policy and Cleveland’s Federal Executive Board.
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System prides itself on providing quality care and works to prove it. Outcomes are tracked internally and externally to continuously evaluate the care provided and to better serve Veterans.

We are an active partner in the Better Health Partnership Initiative, comparing outcomes for crucial measures of care, consistently showing VA outperforms private sector participants. An independent Dartmouth Study also shows VA national performance metrics meet or exceed private sector results.

We have been a 5-Star Facility for VA Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) measuring quality and efficiency since 2011. Our Healthcare System focuses on disease prevention and health promotion to keep Veterans healthy, and uses an electronic medical record to keep Veterans' health information secure and connected across the national VA network.

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**ANNUAL KEY FACTS**

**Fiscal Year 18**

- **Unique Veterans Served**: 112,589
- **Outpatient Appointments**: 2,026,123
- **Admissions**: 12,226
- **OIF/OEF Veterans Served**: 6,390
- **Women Veterans Served**: 8,981
- **Employees**: 5,319

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**VA NORTHEAST OHIO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

On any given day at VA

- **Outpatient Appointments**: 7,982
- **Primary Care Appointments**: 1,538
- **Telehealth Appointments**: 128
- **Specialty Care Appointments**: 5,011
- **Mental Health Appointments**: 1,433
- **Inpatient Beds**: 597
- **Prescriptions Filled**: 12,938
- **Home Care Visits**: 243
- **Meals Served**: 1,600
SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

MEDICINE
- Cardiology
- Dermatology
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- Geriatrics
- Hematology & Oncology
- Infectious Diseases
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Nuclear Medicine
- Pain Medicine
- Primary Care
- Pulmonary & Sleep
- Radiation/Oncology
- Rheumatology
- Women's Health

SURGERY
- Anesthesiology
- Cardiothoracic
- General Surgery
- Gynecology
- Neurosurgery
- Ophthalmology
- Optometry
- Orthopedics
- Otolaryngology
- Plastics
- Podiatry
- Urology
- Vascular

MENTAL HEALTH
- Addiction Recovery Center
- Community Resource and Referral Center
- Homeless Services
- Intensive Case Management
- Military Sexual Trauma
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Psychiatry
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Suicide Prevention

REHABILITATION SERVICES
- Acute & Long Term Spinal Cord Injury Care
- Audiology
- Blind Rehabilitation
- Creative Arts Therapy
- Residential Treatment
- Home-based Care
- Long Term Care / Skilled Nursing
- Orthotics & Prosthetics Lab
- Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
- Polytrauma Network Site
- Recreation Therapy
- Speech Pathology
- Traumatic Brain Injury

SUPPORT SERVICES
- Dental
- Food and Nutrition
- Hospice
- Imaging
- Pathology & Lab
- Pharmacy

VIRTUAL CARE
- Clinical Video and Home Telehealth
- SCAN-ECHO
- Telemental Health
- Mobile Health
- My HealtheVet
- Online Scheduling
- VA Point of Service Kiosks
- Video-to-Home

NATIONAL & REGIONAL REFERRAL SERVICES
- Acute and Long Term Spinal Cord Injury Care
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
- Blind Rehabilitation Center
- Cardiac Surgery
- Cochlear Implants
- Comprehensive Cancer Center
- Comprehensive Rehabilitation Center
- Fecal Microbiota Transplants
- Gambling Disorders
- General Surgery
- Headache Center of Excellence
- HIV Testing and Treatment
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Neurology
- Ophthalmology
- Pain Management
- Parkinson's Disease
- Polytrauma Care
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorders
- Substance Abuse
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Ventricular Assist Device
“Whenever I come to the VA I am treated with the utmost respect and courtesy and, all of my health concerns are completely explained to me. I love the health care I receive and the staff is amazing!”

– Willie A.

VA is recognized as a world leader in the development and use of new technologies to revolutionize and expand health care beyond the traditional office visit. Telehealth, VA-Video Connect, My HealtheVet, VA Apps and VeText are just a few of the tools VA uses to ensure Veteran patients get the right care, at the right time, delivered in the most convenient setting.

Veterans can use virtual health care to connect with their providers via video, refill VA prescriptions, manage appointments, message healthcare providers and access their health records from the comfort of home or via a mobile device.

Because VA is the largest integrated healthcare system in the U.S., Veterans can receive care at their local outpatient clinic from specialists located at different facilities throughout the VA network or at their main medical center. VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System offers over 20 different telehealth programs across its catchment area, saving Veterans from making unnecessary trips.

Current telehealth services offered by VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System include; Audiology, Pain, Pulmonary Function Testing, Tele Retinal Imaging, Tele Dermatology Imaging, Sleep, Urology, Physical Therapy, Smoking Cessation, Mental Health, Suboxone, Primary Care, and many more.

Did you know VA has an App Store? Visit www.mobile.va.gov/appstore to gain access to dozens of apps, including those created specifically for Veterans and their healthcare professionals. The apps offer safe and secure mobile access to patient data, and provide more opportunities for Veterans to be active participants in their health care.
First, VA brings together comprehensive expertise on service-connected health issues in a single healthcare system. Clinicians are trained to identify, assess, and treat a wide spectrum of health issues, such as spinal cord injury and limb loss, conditions arising from environmental exposures, and traumatic brain injury. Additionally, VA specialists have expertise in the treatment of mental health issues, substance abuse, suicide prevention, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Because of this expertise, some services available to Veterans in the VA system are simply not available in the private sector.

VA’s second core strength is its team-based, Veteran-centric model of primary care that focuses on patient-driven, proactive, and personalized care. This patient aligned care team includes primary care providers, nurses, social workers, pharmacists, nutritionists, behavioral health professionals, as well as the Veteran, family members, and caregivers. They focus on health promotion, wellness, and disease prevention.

VA’s uniqueness also makes it better for Veterans. VA provides Veterans culturally competent care that is integrated, coordinated, and better than what they would receive in the private sector. This difference is demonstrated through VA’s satisfaction scores as well as the American Customer Satisfaction Index survey, which shows Veterans were more satisfied with their VA care than at private sector hospitals.

VA’s third core strength — a holistic approach to patient care — also is not uniformly seen in the private sector. All too often the private sector health care system addresses only the patient’s chief complaint, focusing on the physical manifestation of an illness or the patient’s psychological condition. Ensuring a patient’s well-being requires the integration of the physical, psychological, social, and economic aspects of health and a thorough understanding of how these factors impact treatment compliance.

In the private sector, a Veteran’s care is fragmented and their providers are likely not trained in meeting the unique health needs of Veterans.

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EDUCATION

Education is a pillar of VA Health Care. VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System's strong collaborative partnerships with Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, MetroHealth Medical Center, University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center, the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, the Breen School of Nursing-Ursuline College and VA's Office of Academic Affiliations, help prepare interprofessional learners to focus on the patient-centered, team approach to health care.

VA Northeast Ohio has 250 academic affiliations with 75 distinct educational institutions, providing training to more than 2,170 students annually. Cleveland's VA Center of Excellence in Primary Care Education is one of seven in the nation, and ranks 1st for satisfying the overall mission of educating future trainees. Additionally, VA Northeast Ohio has a Center of Excellence in Patient-Centered Specialty Care Education, focusing on VA's holistic approach to supporting Veterans.

This year, the Cleveland VA Medical Center and Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing received federal funding for a new program to help nursing students broaden their training and enhance Veteran care. A $2.2 million grant from U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) will be used to enhance the primary care registered nurse workforce by recruiting and training nursing students and current registered nurses for the program. The nursing school's program, Enhancing Nurses Roles in Community Health, focuses on undergraduate and workforce training and education in primary care.

VA trains a majority of healthcare providers across the nation, and the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing students will benefit from VA's pro-active approach to patient-centered care and quality outcomes.

"Always a professional and caring experience; the best medical care I have ever received!"
- Benedict D.

RESEARCH

VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System has numerous, large research and development programs, with funding totalling $14,780,210 in FY18, and is an active participant in VA Cooperative Studies programs, which are large multi-site studies on health issues vital to Veterans. With strong programs in both basic and clinical science, scientists focus on seeking ways to understand and combat antibiotic resistant bacteria, cardiovascular disease, sleep disorders, vision loss, restoring function to Veterans and much more.

Currently, more than 100 active research projects are being conducted in areas such as:

- Autoimmune Disorders
- Brain & TBI
- Cardiology
- Diabetes
- Hematology / Oncology
- Hypertension
- Infectious Disease
- Kidney Disease (Nephrology)
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Neurology
- Nursing
- Ophthalmology
- Parkinson's Disease
- Pulmonary Diseases
- Rheumatology
- Schizophrenia and other Psychiatric Disorders
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Stroke Rehabilitation
- Urology

Clinical Research Center

The Clinical Research Center (CRC) supports a variety of clinical research projects and allows for collaboration and cross-training among coordinators, investigators, and administrative staff. There are 24 active studies that utilize the CRC daily with six new studies currently being submitted for approval. In addition, investigators within the facility are utilizing the research space and staff for specific research patient visits. The center serves as a national VA coordinating center, coordinating multiple VA sites for three large trials in diabetes, infectious disease and lung cancer. Three local trials the center is coordinating are highlighted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLOVER Trial</th>
<th>C. Diff</th>
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<td>A phase 3, placebo-controlled, randomized, observer-blinded study to evaluate the efficacy, safety and tolerability of a Clostridium difficile vaccine in adults age 50 and over. Cleveland VA is a recruiting site in addition to coordinating a network of 18 other VA sites. The trial is currently recruiting and there are over 150 subjects enrolled at Cleveland VA and over 1,000 at all VA sites.</td>
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<th>(GRADE) Trial</th>
<th>Diabetes</th>
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<tr>
<td>The NIDDK sponsored Glycemia Reduction Approaches in Diabetes: A Comparative Effectiveness Study (GRADE) Trial, in partnership with MetroHealth Foundation. The trial overall has enrolled more than 5,000 patients at 37 centers in the U.S. GRADE and will compare the long-term effectiveness of four major diabetes medications and make available guidance for clinicians regarding the most appropriate medications. GRADE began recruitment at 37 centers in the U.S. in 2013 and continues until 2021.</td>
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<tr>
<th>(CREST-2) Trial</th>
<th>Stroke</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carotid Revascularization and Medical Management for Asymptomatic Carotid Stenosis Trial (CREST-2) is assessing treatment differences in the incidence of stroke or death between intensive medical management alone versus intensive medical management plus surgical intervention in patients with asymptomatic narrowed carotid arteries. The trial is sponsored by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) and is currently enrolling nationally and internationally.</td>
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Gait Rehab After Stroke

Stroke affects upwards of 800,000 Americans annually and has an enormous impact on the well-being of the American Veteran population with 6,000 new stroke admissions every year. Many of the stroke survivors are living with walking disabilities. Gait problems result in an inability to function independently, high risk of falls and poor quality of life. Unfortunately, current gait rehabilitation treatments are limited and many stroke survivors do not achieve full recovery.

Svetlana Pandik, MD, MSc, a Stroke Neurologist at the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center, and her team received a Merit Review from the VA Rehabilitation Research and Development Service to determine if rehabilitation outcomes can be enhanced with the addition of a non-invasive brain stimulation treatment called transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (tDCS). The study tests whether simultaneous tDCS and gait practice in a Virtual Reality environment produces greater improvement in walking abilities than gait training alone. In addition, the team is evaluating structural and functional brain changes in response to this novel intervention. If found effective, this promising treatment method would not only improve outcomes, but reduce the cost of both rehabilitation and post-stroke care. tDCS is ready to be used in neurorehabilitation clinical settings for three reasons; its safety, ease of set-up, and ability to be paired with gait rehabilitation therapies.

Pelvic Health

Dennis Bourbeau, PhD’s research focuses on using electrical stimulation to restore pelvic autonomic functions, such as bladder or bowel function, lost to spinal cord injury (SCI) and other neurological disorders. One of his active studies funded by the VA involves testing functional electrical stimulation to increase colonic motility and improve control of bowel function. The movement of stool within the colon is significantly slowed after SCI, which can cause constipation and a host of associated complications. The aim of Dr. Bourbeau’s research in this area is to understand where to apply electrical stimulation to achieve results, what nerves to target, what electrical patterns work best, and why this approach to improve bowel function is effective or not.

Hybrid Neuro-muscular Gait Assist

Commercially available, wearable robotic exoskeletons can generate stepping motions and induce several secondary physical benefits for their users with spinal cord injuries or other paralyzing conditions, but do little to exercise and maintain lower extremity muscle mass or enhance remaining voluntary control. Our “Muscle-First” Hybrid Neuro-muscular Gait Assist maximizes biological power and adds only the motor assistance necessary to enable faster walking over longer distances than commercially available alternatives.

Microfluidic/Eluting Neural Drug Delivery System

The Cleveland FES Center was established through the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Rehabilitation Research and Development Service in 1991. The focus of the Cleveland FES Center is to improve people’s lives by supporting fundamental research in the neuromuscular sciences, developing new technologies and methods, and promoting the widespread deployment of new technologies through professional education and commercial partnerships.

FES or Functional electrical stimulation is a neuromodulation technique that uses small, artificially generated electrical currents, that are safely and selectively applied to the central or peripheral nervous system to replace the actions of neurons that have been damaged by injury or disease. When applied appropriately, FES can “speak the language of the nervous system” and evoke desired actions by both activation and inactivation of various efferent of the nervous system (e.g., peripheral nerves, spinal cord, brain). Because virtually all body functions are directly controlled or indirectly influenced by the nervous system, FES is a powerful, broadly applicable technique for evoking functional muscle contractions, reducing pain and restoring balance in autonomic, spinal and brain circuits.

At the APT Center clinicians, investigators and staff work to improve the clinical needs of Veterans by developing new and emerging technologies to reduce disability, improve daily function, and enhance quality of life for patients with sensory, motor and cognitive deficits or limb loss. The APT Center is a national leader in creating and delivering innovative devices based on cutting edge technologies and is a catalyst for the discovery and development of new technologies and techniques that can be employed in the rehabilitation process to provide independence for Veterans and other individuals with disabilities.

APT stands for Advanced Platform Technology, and the transdisciplinary collaborative teams identify needs through the R&D process to translate the need into interventions that can improve the health and well-being of individuals with disabilities. The APT Center focuses on Prosthetics and Orthotics, Health Monitoring and Maintenance, Neural Interfaces, which are supported and sustained efforts to create and prototype new Enabling Technologies. To date, APT Center projects have concentrated primarily on developing new materials, connections, and microsystems for interfacing with the nervous system, accelerating wound healing, replacing or restoring natural limb, sensory and organ system function, and both monitoring and promoting neurological, genito-urinary and vascular health.

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VA Secretary Robert Wilkie hears from a research subject describing the sensations he feels in his missing leg and foot when the system in his urinary neuroprosthetic leg is activated.

High-resolution brain-machine interfaces with electrodes implanted in the brain can be used to control and move computer cursors, robotic arms, or one’s own natural limbs through detection of one’s own thoughts. Unfortunately, the brain can produce an inflammatory response that cause the implant to fail. APT investigators have created the Microfluidic/Eluting Neural Drug Delivery System (MENNDS) to deliver the antioxidant Resveratrol directly into brain tissue using a small U-turn channel designed for fluid delivery to continuously replenish the drug and control inflammation. Technologies developed through this project will improve the reliability and safety of neural implants, because they prevent the failure-inducing inflammation.

Assessing Blood Coagulation Rapidly

APT Center Investigators developed a portable sensor (the ClotChip) that can assess the clotting ability of blood in 15 minutes – 95 times faster than current methods. From only a single drop of blood, the device can determine 1) if a patient in trauma is on a blood thinner medication and 2) the effectiveness of anticoagulation therapy. This knowledge can expedite treatment in the home, emergency room, or on the battlefield and can be of great benefit in early assessment of trauma-induced coagulopathy, surgical bleeding risk, and coagulation risks to rapidly guide clinical decisions.

ClotChip technology has been patented and licensed to Cleveland-based company XaTek, and clinical trials of its safety and efficacy are being conducted to support FDA approval for marketing and commercialization.
January
Jan. 19th - SICU Opening – Maintaining a 5-star facility means we are continuously improving our infrastructure and facilities. We cut the ribbon on our new Surgical Intensive Care Unit this year, a 12-bed, state-of-the-art unit, to focus on the care of critically ill and high-risk surgical patients.

Jan. 25th - DARPA Visit – Research is one of the three pillars of VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System’s mission. The Director of DARPA, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Dr. Steven H. Walker visited to see a hands-on demonstration of a prosthetic arm and prosthetic leg with sensory capabilities, and discuss the progression of these projects. The projects total more than $20 million and are a part of the DARPA funded HAPTIX (Hand Proprioception and Touch Interfaces) program, aimed at restoring a more natural feeling to amputees.

February
Feb. 24th - Heroes’ Health Fair - VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System hosted the first Heroes’ Health Fair at the Parma VA Outpatient Clinic. The VA team welcomed more than 106 Veterans into the healthcare system as new unique patients with same-day appointments. VA’s Veterans Benefits Administration and National Cemetery Administration were also on site along with the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission and several other community and VA resources for Veterans.

A Year in Review

1716
March

Mar. 5th - Brecksville Land Transfer – VA Secretary, Dr. David Shulkin, approved the transfer of the VA Brecksville property to the City of Brecksville. The City of Brecksville plans to develop the 101 acres and will incorporate a memorial park commemorating Northeast Ohio Veterans’ service to our nation, Police Officers Decker and Wilcox who were killed in the line of duty in 1986, and the many contributions of the Brecksville VA and staff who cared for our treasured heroes for 50 years on the site.

Mar. 23rd - Greater Cleveland Fisher House Groundbreaking – VA joined with the Fisher House Foundation, City of Cleveland and community partners, for the official Greater Cleveland Fisher House Groundbreaking. Two homes with 16 suites are now in the process of construction, accommodating up to 50 family members. The homes will be located two blocks from the Cleveland VA and will allow Veterans and their loved ones to have a “home away from home” as they receive care. The homes are expected to open in late spring of 2019.

April

April 19 – 21 - Buckeye PVA Games – VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System supported the 7th Annual PVA Buckeye Chapter Wheelchair Games held at SPIRE Institute. More than 75 athletes signed up for the training competition that helps Veteran athletes learn to overcome their disabilities and train for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

April 27th - Take Your Child to Work Day – More than 120 VA employees’ children ages eight to 16 came to the Cleveland VA Medical Center for National Take Your Child to Work Day. While at VA the children learned about the routine operations in the hospital, explored VA research and prosthetics programs and engaged one-on-one with Veteran patients.
May

May 18th – *William S. Middleton Award Ceremony* - The William S. Middleton Award is the highest honor awarded annually to a senior VA research scientist in recognition of outstanding contributions and achievements in the areas of biomedical and bio-behavioral research relevant to Veterans’ health care. Dr. Robert A. Bonomo, Chief of Medicine Service, received the award this May for his seminal contributions to the epidemiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of multidrug resistant infections; which has had a broad impact on the health care of Veterans and the population at large.

August

Aug. 15th – *National Disaster Medical System Exercise* - VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System hosted a full-scale, disaster exercise to test Northeast Ohio’s National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) response. VA, along with the City of Cleveland Department of Public Health, the Center for Health Affairs, area hospitals, and other emergency management partners ran through a mock scenario of a botulism outbreak. VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System is one of 50 Federal Coordinating Centers and works with the United States Departments of Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and Defense, along with local hospitals and emergency management partners to prepare for NDMS responses to unforeseen disasters and public health emergencies.

Aug. 20th – *New Sandusky VA Outpatient Clinic* – The Sandusky VA Outpatient Clinic moved to a new location at Firelands Regional Medical Center South Campus. The facility has improved space and infrastructure that aligns with VA’s Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) model, and transforms traditional healthcare processes, providing a more centralized and individualized service to our Veterans.

Aug. 27 – *Choose VA National Filming* – VA chose the Cleveland VA Medical Center’s programs, Veterans and staff to be featured in upcoming ChooseVA publicity. The ChooseVA campaign highlights the reasons Veterans and prospective employees should “choose” VA. The Film crew was on site for three days capturing the dynamic aspects of the Cleveland VA that make us the best choice for Veterans’ health care.

Aug. 31st – *Gold Star Families Memorial Monument* - VA joined with city, community, national partners and WWII, Marine, Medal of Honor Recipient Hershel “Woody” Williams’ Foundation, to pay tribute to the mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, brothers and sisters of Cleveland Veterans who were lost in defense of freedom by unveiling Cleveland’s Gold Star Families Memorial Monument. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, U.S. Navy Under Secretary Thomas Modly, and Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson joined us for the unveiling.

Aug. 31st – *Medal of Honor Wall* - Challenged by Medal of Honor Recipient Hershel “Woody” Williams, VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System set out to construct a wall honoring Medal of Honor recipients from Ohio using donated funds. The wall also incorporates a donated POW/MIA flag that is signed by Carole Hanson Hickerson who was a founding member of the National League of POW/MIA Families. The wall includes information on the significance and history of the POW/MIA Flag and the Medals of Honor. The names of all Medal of Honor Recipients from the state of Ohio are included as a tribute to all who served.
September

Sept. 17th – New Lake County VA Outpatient Clinic – Formerly the Painesville VA Outpatient Clinic, the new Lake County VA Outpatient Clinic opened the doors to its new home in Willoughby, Ohio. The new facility is more than twice the size of the old facility, at just under 20,000 square-feet, allowing for additional services including diagnostic radiography and physical therapy.

Sept. 21st – Diversity & Inclusion Festival – The medical center hosted a special festival honoring the many diverse backgrounds of the employees and Veterans who make up VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System. The festival included entertainment highlighting different cultural experiences as well as an array of food samples from around the world.

Sept. 23rd – Women’s Health Baby Shower – Members of the Greater Cleveland Red Cross Tiffany Circle partnered with Women’s Health Service at the Cleveland VA to host a special baby shower for expectant female Veterans. Each Veteran received a basket loaded with supplies to care for a new baby, a catered lunch, and watched tutorials on basic first aid for newborns.

October

Oct. 11th – Positively Pink Breast Cancer Event – In recognition of breast cancer awareness month, employees at the Cleveland VA wore pink and gathered for a photo, highlighting VA’s commitment to being part of the fight to end breast cancer. A breast cancer health information fair was held, along with guest lecturers who discussed guidelines for breast cancer screening, and Veteran guests who shared their stories of their own journey with breast cancer.

November

Nov. 9th – Band of Brothers Visit – The Greater Cleveland Film Commission hosted a special event where cast and crew from the hit HBO mini-series, “Band of Brothers” came back together for a reunion tour. The event included a tour of the Cleveland VA Medical Center and a meet and greet with several WWII Veteran patients.

December

Dec. 7th – Pearl Harbor Day Event – VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System, the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the American Red Cross and Honor Flight Cleveland joined together to remember those who lost their lives 77 years ago in the attacks on Pearl Harbor. Residents from our Community Living Center were treated to a ceremony and refreshments. Following the ceremony, a few Veterans were treated to the Virtual Honor Flight experience, seeing the monuments like they would if they were in Washington, D.C., using virtual reality goggles. This special technology was developed to bring the Honor Flight experience to Veterans who for health reasons would not be able to make the trip.

December – VA Veteran Holiday Parties – Several of our VA Outpatient Clinics, Volunteers and Veteran Service Organizations teamed up to provide Veterans special holiday celebrations with food, comradery and laughter. Additionally, VA employees and Volunteers joined together to celebrate the holidays with a special holiday lunch for more than 100 Northeast Ohio Veterans. VA inpatients and those connected with the homeless resource programs enjoyed a holiday feast provided by the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. Veterans were also treated to a special performance by Councilman Kevin Conwell and his band.
Community Partnerships

Programs and services offered for Veterans across Northeast Ohio are enhanced through community partnerships. VA works collaboratively with Congressional Representatives, Veteran Service Officers, Veteran Service Organizations and trusted stakeholders to encourage positive internal and external experiences for Veterans and their families and connect them with care.

The second annual Veterans Experience Action Center held at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C)’s Western Campus in August is a prime example of the benefit of collaboration for our nation’s heroes. The VEAC is the most comprehensive Veteran resource event in the area and brings together on-site benefits claims and appeals assistance, health care enrollment, wellness exams, mental health counseling, women’s health services, homestead exemption assistance, Veteran ID cards and local, state, federal and community resources.

More than 930 Veterans had access to face-to-face consultations with same-day services in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Veterans were able to meet with benefits counselors, enroll in health care, and learn about their memorial benefits.

The VEAC is a collaboration between the Northeast Ohio Veterans Community Task Force Advisory Committee, the VA, state and county organizations, Cuyahoga Community College, and the broader community. Local community collaborative partners include Tri-C, American Red Cross of Greater Cleveland, United Way 2-1-1, the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission, and The Dominion Energy Foundation.

How you can help?

Monetary donations are used for the comfort and welfare of our Veteran patients. Additionally, these donations support rehabilitation program outings, participation in national adaptive sporting events, diversional activities and emergency needs such as:

- National Veterans Wheelchair Games
- Winter Sports Clinic
- National Veterans TEE Tournament
- Buckeye PVA Games
- Therapy and Reintegration Lunches & Outings
- National Salute Wedding Vow Renewal Ceremony
- Sporting Event Attendance

In-kind donations help to make our Veteran patients’ time more enjoyable. These items can be used for a specific event or project, or benefit the routine comfort and activity carts.

- Books & Magazines
- Activity Books
- Playing Cards & Games
- Refreshments
- Telephone Cards
- Spa Items
- Sewing Kits
- Denture Supplies
- Radios
- DVDs & DVD Players
- Socks & Non-Skid Slippers
- Non-Perishable Food Items
- Clothing & Undergarments (Men’s & Women’s)

Voluntary Program

Some highlights from the past year...

National Salute to Veterans:
VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System kicked off National Salute to Veteran Patients Week celebrating and honoring the Veterans. This observance allowed everyone a chance to let those who have given so much to our nation know they are not forgotten. VA encouraged people of all ages to bring Valentine’s Day cheer to patients. It was also an opportunity for visitors to learn more about the important roles volunteers play at the medical center throughout the year.

Holiday Gift Shop:
Each year, Voluntary Service collaborates with volunteers, donors and Veteran Service Organizations to pass out gifts to hospitalized Veterans. Duffle bags, jackets, winter knit kits, jogging suits, t-shirts, socks and underwear were given to all the inpatients at the Cleveland VA. The Voluntary Service staff worked very closely with the nurses from each unit to ensure that all patients received a gift for the holidays. The Holiday Gift shop program was December 11 - 14, 2018.

Why should you volunteer with VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System?

1. Serve Those Who Served
2. Explore Career Fields
3. Obtain New Job Skills
4. Earn Community Service Hours
5. Make a Difference

In this past year VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System volunteers donated 134,133 hours of their time to helping northeast Ohio Veterans.
AWARDS AND ACCREDITATIONS

- ALS Association
  - Rand Prize – Fran McClellan
- American Academy of Sleep Medicine
  - 2018 Excellence in Education Award – Dr. Kingman Strohl
- American Association of Critical Care Nurses
  - Beacon Award for Excellence, Bronze – Progressive Care Unit
  - Beacon Award for Excellence, Silver – Surgical and Medical Intensive Care Units
- American Heart Association
  - Get With the Guidelines Heart Failure Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award & Target: Heart Failure Honor Roll – Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center
- American Legion
  - 2018 Physician of the Year – Dr. Murray D. Altose
- American Red Cross Greater Cleveland
  - Hero Award – Janine Smalley
- American Therapeutic Recreation Association
  - 2018 Outstanding Professional Award – Li’Shine
- AMVETS
  - Silver Helmet Award – Dr. Murray D. Altose, Chief of Staff
- Crain’s Cleveland Business
  - Archer Award: HR Team of the Year, Nonprofit Category: VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System Human Resource Service
  - Women of Note 2018 – Innette Sarduy
- College of American Pathologists
  - Lifetime Achievement Award – Dr. Mohammad Ansari
- Elks Lodge No. 1350
  - Distinguished Citizenship Award – Lee Shepherd
- Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine
  - 2018 Ernest Bor, MD Award for Scientific Development – Dr. Kelsey Potter-Baker
- International Annual Brain Computer Interface (BCI)
  - 2018 Research Award – Bolu Ajiboye, PhD, and Robert Kirsch, PhD
- IDWeek
  - 2018 Investigator Award – Dr. Robin Jump
- Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
  - Community Impact Award – Cleveland VA Community Resource and Referral Center
- McGregor
  - 2018 Celebrating Women’ INSPIRE Award – Susan Fuehrer
- Mount Sinai Foundation
  - 2018 Maurice Saltzman Award for Health Innovation – Dr. Fabio Cominelli
- Partner for Change
  - Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center
- Practice Green Health
  - 2018 Partner for Change Award – Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center
- TH-C
  - 2018 Student Veteran of the Year – Allen Eugene Bray
- VA Office of Security and Law Enforcement
  - Police Officer of the Year – Capt. Justin Ricker
  - Chief of the Year – Chief Todd Mitchell

Joint Commission
- Hospital
  - Home Care
- Behavioral Health
- Methadone Treatment Program
- Advanced Inpatient Diabetes Care
American Diabetes Association
- National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education
American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE)
- Diabetes Self-Management Education Programs
American College of Surgeons (ACoS)
- Commission on Cancer (CoC)
The American College of Radiology (ACR)
- Radiation Oncology Department
Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)
- Comprehensive Homeless Center
- Employment Services and Psychosocial Rehabilitation
- Inpatient and Outpatient Amputee System of Care
- Pain Management Center Intensive Outpatient Program
- Spinal Cord Injury Inpatient and Outpatient Programs
- Inpatient Medical Rehabilitation
Human Rights Campaign (HRC)
- Health Equality Index (HEI) Accreditation
American Psychological Association
- Postdoctoral Residency Program in Clinical Psychology
- Clinical Health Psychology and Rehabilitation Psychology
ALS Association Northern Ohio Chapter
- Certified ALS Treatment Center of Excellence
American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education (ABPTRFE)
- Geriatric Residency Program
Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC)
- Research Laboratory
Anticoagulation Forum Center of Excellence Certification
- Anticoagulation Clinic
Coalition on Ministry in Specialized Settings (COMISS)
- Pastoral Care
College of American Pathology (CAP)
- Pathology & Laboratory Medicine Services
North Coast 99
- Northeast Ohio Top 99 Places to Work!
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses’ Beacon Award for Excellence
- The Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center’s Medical and Surgical Intensive Care and Progressive Care Units
Get With The Guidelines® American Heart Association
- Heart Failure Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award and Target Heart Failure Honor Roll
National Center for Patient Safety Gold Cornerstone Award
- Patient Safety Office
Veterans Benefits Administration

You may be eligible for VA benefits if you are a uniformed service member; Veteran; or spouse, child, or parent of a deceased or disabled service member or Veteran. VA strives to understand the unique issues you face. We are here to help you and your eligible dependents obtain compensation, education, health care, home loan, insurance, pension, vocational rehabilitation and employment, and burial and memorial benefits for which you are eligible. As you make important choices about your family, finances, and career, we encourage you to use the VA resources available to you.

Thank you for your service.
Now let us serve you.

Go to eBenefits at www.ebenefits.va.gov, your one-stop shop to apply for and learn about your benefits. Or visit the nearest VA Regional Office, call 1-800-827-1000, or go to our web site at www.va.gov/benefits for more information.

VBA counselors are on site at the Cleveland VA Medical Center across from the Business Office. Additionally, VBA counselors can be accessed by tele-benefits at the Canton and Mansfield VA Outpatient Clinics. The VBA Regional Office is located at: 10th Floor, 1240 E 9th St., Cleveland, OH, 44199.

Apply Online
Fill out the application online and electronically submit it to VA for processing. No need for additional documents to verify military service. If a Veteran was recently discharged, VA will get their military information for them.

Apply in Person
Veterans may apply in person at any local VA medical center or outpatient clinic. Locations, addresses and contact numbers are listed on the inside, back cover.

By Telephone
The telephone application option eliminates the need for a signed paper application.

- VA staff members will collect the needed information and process the enrollment application for an eligibility determination.
- To apply, call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Mon-Fri between 8 a.m.-8 p.m., EST.
- VA is unable to process applications via phone locally. Veterans must call the national line above to determine eligibility.

By Mail
Veterans can pick up an application at their local VA or download, print, and fill out the 10-10EZ, Application for Health Care. Complete the application with a signature and mail to:

Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Rd, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329-1647

Understand VA eligibility
Access to VA benefits and services depends on a Veteran’s eligibility. Eligibility is determined using different factors depending on the benefit. While a lot of information is used to determine a Veteran’s eligibility for benefits, one critical factor may be a Veteran’s disability rating.

What is eligibility?
VA uses “eligibility” to describe the benefits and services Veterans can access. Each benefit they are trying to access may require a different set of eligibility factors. For example, a Veteran may be eligible for the GI Bill but not for VA Health Care. If a Veteran is interested in a certain benefit, it is best to work with VA to determine eligibility.

Apply Online

Factors Considered

- Disability Rating
- Service History
- Medical Need
- Income Level

Veterans Benefits Eligibility

VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System Contact Information
Call today: 1-877-838-8262 or 216-791-3800 x 3910

Ohio Vet Centers Readjustment Counseling Services
Helping Veterans and their families make the transition between military and civilian life. Services are FREE to all eligible Veterans and their families. Services offered include:
- Individual, group and family counseling,
- Community education, and
- VA information and referrals.

**No information will be communicated to any person or agency, without written consent from the Veteran, except in circumstances to avert a crisis. (HIPPA, 1996)**

Contact Information
24/7 Hotline 1-877-WAR-VETS (927-8387)
Maple Heights Vet Center
5310 ½ Warrensville Road
Maple Heights, OH 44137
216-707-7901

Parma Vet Center
5700 Pearl Road Suite 102
Parma, OH 44129
440-845-5023

Stark County Vet Center
601 Cleveland Ave N Suite C
Canton, OH 44702
330-454-3120

Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery is the second national cemetery built in Ohio and the 119th in the national cemetery system. The cemetery lies approximately 45 miles south of Cleveland in Medina County. 10175 Ravina Road, Seville, OH 44273 | Phone: 330-335-3069

VA National Cemetery Administration
Burial in a VA national cemetery is open to all members of the armed forces and Veterans who have met minimum active duty service requirements, as applicable, and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Members of the reserve components of the armed forces who die while on active duty or who die while on training duty under certain circumstances are also eligible for burial, as are service members and former service members who were eligible for retired pay at the time of their death.

A Veteran’s spouse, widow or widower, minor children, and, under certain conditions, unmarried adult children with disabilities, may also be eligible for burial. Eligible spouses and children may be buried even if they predecease the Veteran.

VA provides the gravesite, grave liner, opening and closing of the grave, government headstone or marker, U.S. burial flag, Presidential Memorial Certificate and perpetual care of the gravesite at no cost to the family. Veterans and families wishing to complete advanced funeral plans may also do so by completing an application for pre-eligibility determination that is found online via the NCA website listed below. While this does not guarantee or reserve space in a national cemetery it does retain the records until the time of death.

Information on VA burial benefits is available from local VA national cemetery offices at www.cem.va.gov, or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at any open VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117.
Akron Community Resource & Referral Center
111 E Voris St
Akron, OH 44311
330-761-7054

Akron VA Outpatient Clinic
55 W Waterloo Rd
Akron, OH 44319
330-724-7715

Canton VA Outpatient Clinic
733 Market Ave
Canton, OH 44702
330-489-4600

Cleveland Community Resource & Referral Center
7000 Euclid Ave, 2nd floor, Suite 202
Cleveland, Ohio 44103
216-391-0264 Ext. 7772 or 2001

East Liverpool VA Outpatient Clinic
15655 St Rt 170, Suite A
Calcutta, OH 43920
330-386-4303

Lake County VA Outpatient Clinic
35500 Kaiser Ct
Willoughby, OH 44094
440-269-4600

Lorain County VA Outpatient Clinic
5255 N Abbe Rd
Sheffield Village, OH 44035
440-934-9158

Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center
10701 East Blvd
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-791-3800

Mansfield VA Outpatient Clinic
1025 South Trimble Rd
Mansfield, OH 44906
419-529-4602

McCafferty VA Outpatient Clinic
4242 Lorain Ave
Cleveland, OH 44113
216-939-0699

Midtown Dialysis Center
7000 Euclid Ave
Cleveland, OH 44103
216-391-0274

New Philadelphia VA Outpatient Clinic
1260 Monroe Ave, Suite 1A
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
330-602-5339

Outpatient Surgery Center
8901 Superior Ave
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-421-3133

Parma VA Outpatient Clinic
8787 Brookpark Rd
Parma, OH 44129
216-739-7000

Ravenna VA Outpatient Clinic
6751 N Chestnut St
Ravenna, OH 44266
330-296-3641

Sandusky VA Outpatient Clinic
Firelands Regional Medical Center South Campus
1912 Hayes Ave
Sandusky, OH 44870
419-609-1460

Warren VA Outpatient Clinic
1460 Tod Ave NW
Warren, OH 44485
330-392-0311

Youngstown VA Outpatient Clinic
2031 Belmont Ave
Youngstown, OH 44505
330-740-9200

www.cleveland.va.gov

@ClevelandVAMC