Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
2013 Report to the Community

Providing Personalized, Proactive, Patient-Driven Care
To All of Our Partners

The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) had an incredible year in 2013 – and as you will soon read – we made every moment count! As the pages in this publication illustrate, we’ve grown to serve even more Veterans across southwest Florida by building larger clinics, expanding existing facilities, hiring additional clinical and administrative staff and through the expansion and improvement of existing programs. From the opening of our new 220,000 square foot VA healthcare center in Cape Coral, Fla. and expansion of services – to receiving national recognition from The Joint Commission for health care quality – we showed our Veterans and their families that we are truly committed to delivering personalized, proactive and patient-driven health care. We would be remiss if we did not mention the more than 3,800 employees who make up our great Bay Pines’ team. Every day they come to work to provide the very best care to our nation’s heroes. Many of them, nearly 40 percent, are Veterans themselves. They are truly committed to providing Veterans with quality, patient centered care that is grounded in partnership. In conclusion, 2013 was an exciting time for our healthcare system and for the more than 101,000 Veterans we served. Throughout it all, we made our Veterans’ health and happiness our focus. As we continue forward in 2014, Veterans and their families can count on us to continue delivering the highest standards of excellence in health care and our staff can expect to receive the resources they need to deliver that promise.

Sincerely,
The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System Leadership Team
The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is at a critical moment in history due to advances in health research, health technology, and new health care options being made available to Veterans and all Americans with the implementation of health care reform. Partnering with patients and providing proactive, personalized and patient-driven health care is the direction the health care sector is taking. As Veterans are presented with new health care options the Bay Pines VAHCS is making the shift to being more innovative and Veteran-centric through our people, our facilities, and our online services in order to become a provider of choice. As part of the VHA’s strategic plan, we are focused on the following goals:

**Goal 1:** Provide Veterans personalized, proactive, patient-driven health care

First, we want to change the Veterans’ experience.

**Goal 2:** Achieve measurable improvements in health outcomes

Second, to support that goal, VHA is rethinking how we measure health outcomes and also beginning to measure the Veteran’s experience. Rather than devoting resources to meeting hundreds of unconnected outcome measures, VHA will reduce the number of measures and focus on those relating to personalized, proactive, and patient-driven care.

**Goal 3:** Align resources to deliver sustained value to Veterans

Third, we are committed to aligning resources in ways that support our shift to personalized, proactive, patient-driven care by focusing on staffing, training, technology, and facilities improvements.

The Bay Pines VAHCS is committed delivering health care services that are centered around the patient and which promote Veteran well-being and productive living. It is an integral part of our mission, as well as the mission of the VHA, to provide this level of care to our Nation’s heroes.

"As employees, we are all part of a team that must recognize opportunities to improve the Veteran experience both inside and outside the walls of the medical center..."

Lisa Campbell
Chief Technologist, Radiology
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
**ACCESSIBLE HEALTH CARE**

Our established patients, on average, are seen within 4 days of their preferred appointment date.

- All Appointments: 4 days
- Primary Care: 3.5 days
- Mental Health: 3 days
- Specialty Care: 5.5 days

Percentage of patients seen for appointments within 14 days of preferred appointment date:

- All Appointments: 93.2%
- Primary Care: 93.7%
- Mental Health: 94.3%
- Specialty Care: 90.7%

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**Health Care Access Increased Through Extended Appointment Hours**

Starting in April 2013, the Bay Pines VAHCS began offering extended appointment hours for Veterans requiring primary care, including women’s health and mental health services, at select locations across southwest Florida. We became the first VA system in Florida to offer extended appointment hours. Extended hours for primary care services within the healthcare system became available on Wednesdays from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center in Bay Pines, Fl, and outpatient clinics located in Cape Coral, Port Charlotte, Bradenton and Sarasota. What does this mean for our Veterans? We are giving Veterans more options to access VA health care services when and where they need them.

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**Health Care Equality for All Veterans**

In July 2013, the Bay Pines VAHCS was recognized nationally as a “Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality” in the Healthcare Equality Index 2013, an annual survey conducted by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, the educational arm of the country’s largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organization. The healthcare system earned top marks for its commitment to equitable, inclusive care for LGBT patients and their families, who can face significant challenges in securing adequate healthcare. The Bay Pines VAHCS was one of a select group of 464 healthcare facilities nationwide to be named Leaders in LGBT Healthcare Equality. Facilities awarded this title meet key criteria for equitable care, including non-discrimination policies for LGBT patients and employees, a guarantee of equal visitation for same-sex partners and parents, and LGBT health education for key staff members.

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**Women Veterans Health Care**

Women are the fastest growing population of Veterans, and we are making a number of changes to offer the more than 8,000 enrolled women Veterans quality health care in an environment that fosters respect and courtesy. In addition to offering women Veterans health care at all its facilities, in 2013 the healthcare system expanded services specifically for women to include point-of-care pregnancy testing, emergency contraception, designated women’s health providers and clinics, dedicated women’s health care teams, and more. The healthcare system also improved care coordination with community women’s health providers to enhance maternity care services and began using Telehealth, or telemedicine, technologies to deliver genetic counseling.
Strengthening Partnerships to Improve Mental Health Services for Veterans

In September 2013, the Bay Pines VAHCS hosted its first annual Mental Health Summit titled “Working Together to Improve Veterans’ Mental Health.” The event took place at the St. Petersburg College Library Conference Center in Seminole, Fla. The purpose of this summit was to enhance positive working relationships between the healthcare system and community mental health agencies to better address the broad mental health care needs of Veterans and their families. The summit provided an opportunity for direct dialogue and active engagement between VA and community partners. The event was one of more than 100 mental health summits conducted by VA medical centers across the country.

Assisting Homeless and At-risk Veterans

The Bay Pines VAHCS is working to reach VA’s collective goal of ending homelessness among Veterans by the year 2015 through innovative agency and interdepartmental partnership programs and outreach services. Since 2008, we have housed 747 Veterans through the U.S. Housing and Urban Development – Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program which combines rental assistance from HUD with case management and clinical services provided by VA. HUD-VASH is a critical part of the President’s commitment to end Veteran and long-term chronic homelessness by 2015. In addition, we actively partner with the community to plan and conduct the annual “point in time” survey - a mechanism used to estimate the number of homeless persons living in the community. The healthcare system also conducts extensive outreach in the community to include hosting and participating in community homeless stand downs and conducting annual homeless summits. In 2013, nearly 4,650 homeless and at-risk Veterans were cared for by the system's mental health and the Health Care for Homeless Veterans teams.

“From housing and health care to rehabilitation and employment – we are here to support Veterans in a recovery oriented manner gain back living productive and meaningful lives.”

- Suzanne M. Klinker, Director
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

THE VA has saved my life in many ways over the years and the employees here need to be recognized. I cannot say thank you enough. They make me proud to be a Veteran.”

- “B.J.” Ellie Elimon, 73
U.S. Air Force Veteran
Speeding Up the Disability Claims Process

In March 2013, the Bay Pines VAHCS partnered with the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office (VARO) to implement a new pilot program to speed up the disability claims process for Veterans. The new initiative, or Fully Developed Claims (FDC) Program, is an ongoing, innovative Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) enterprise designed to provide swift and expeditious adjudication of eligible “fully developed” compensation or pension claims. How does it work? VA, traditionally, after it receives a claim from a Veteran will only then provide the Veteran notification of what is required from him/her to substantiate the claim. The FDC program is unique in that it provides notification of the evidence necessary to substantiate an eligible claim at the time of application, allowing the Veteran to understand what is required at that time. A Veteran participating in the FDC program will send the required evidence with the claim and certify that he or she has nothing further to provide. By doing this, a Veteran dramatically reduces the processing time of the claim by eliminating the time VA would normally spend developing for evidence to substantiate the claim.

To support and streamline the program, our Compensation and Pension clinical team worked with the VARO to setup a dedicated FDC office on the medical center campus. The new office was staffed by VARO representatives who reviewed claims and evidence provided by Veterans to validate eligibility. If claims were deemed eligible for the program, the FDC representative then referred Veterans directly to the Compensation and Pension clinic located inside the medical center. Veterans could complete required exams the same day or were scheduled for the next available appointment. From March - September 2013, we completed 565 individual exams from FDC program referrals. On average, Veterans who participated in the program received a disability rating in 47.8 days versus the regular national average of 199.6 days. In addition, the quality of compensation and pension exams completed within the healthcare system were nearly 100 percent accurate – a true testament to the quality within the system. Due to the success of the partnership, the Bay Pines VAHCS and VARO continue to operate the program at the medical center.

Improving Our Work IS Our Work!

Since 2012, the Bay Pines VAHCS has been committed to spreading the use of Lean Six Sigma (LSS) performance improvement principles across the organization. LSS is a combination of two highly effective improvement disciplines used in business today. Lean, simply stated, is an improvement methodology used to eliminate all non-value-added activities and waste to improve efficiency and flow of a business process. Six Sigma is a fact–based, data–driven philosophy of quality improvement that values defect prevention over defect detection. In 2013, the healthcare system completed 12 significant performance improvement projects. One project completed reduced unused inventory items in the catheterization laboratory. This project alone is projected to save more than $200,000 annually. The Bay Pines VAHCS continues to expand the use of LSS principles and complete projects that ultimately improve health care services for Veterans.
Shaping the Future of Medicine

Education is the foundation for developing the hearts and minds of teachers and students who dedicate themselves to delivering personalized, proactive, patient-driven care; enhancing medical practice and shaping the future of health care. Along with providing the very best health care to our nation’s heroes, the Bay Pines VAHCS is also a teaching hospital. We actively maintain 200 academic affiliation agreements with institutions of higher learning all over the country. In 2013, the healthcare system completed 1072 clinical rotations, 269 resident rotations and 481 nursing clinical rotations. Some of our major local university affiliations include the University of South Florida, University of Tampa, South University and Saint Petersburg College.

Advancing Research

The Bay Pines VAHCS has an active Research and Development (R&D) Service that aspires to discover knowledge, develop VA researchers and health care leaders, and create innovations that advance health care for Veterans and the nation. In 2013, 39 Bay Pines VAHCS investigators conducted 191 research protocols, or studies, and produced more than 70 presentations and peer-reviewed publications. Additional R&D highlights included:

- Health science researchers from the Medical Foster Home Project developed high-level computer architecture for a knowledge acquisition system (KAS) to be used with text mining applications that includes the ability to accurately predict a patient’s functional status based on analyzing clinical notes and comparing them with expert provided textual evidence.

- Basic Science researchers made advances in the study treatment strategies for future use in veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury, memory loss, depression, cancer, post-traumatic stress disorder and aging.

- Clinical researchers increased their focus on evidence-based practice that includes empirical evidence from randomized controlled trials; use of information from case reports, scientific principles, and expert opinion; as well as evidence from other scientific methods such as qualitative and descriptive research.

GOING GREEN!

In early 2013, a new 1.48 megawatt Solar Photovoltaic System was activated on the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center Campus. It is estimated that the carport-like design will reduce Bay Pines' energy bill by about $189,000 a year while providing 773 shaded parking spots for Veterans and VA staff that reduce the temperatures inside vehicles as much as 35 degrees Fahrenheit—a welcome relief in Florida’s heat, especially in the Summer. In 2012, the organization received several Green Globe awards from the Green Building Initiative for environmental friendly buildings and construction on the main medical center campus.
Expanded Parking!

In September 2013, the Bay Pines VAHCS activated a new 500-space parking facility on the healthcare system’s main medical center campus. The new five-level garage increased parking capacity at the medical center to about 3,000 spaces. The structure was opened for patients and visitor use. The parking facility is one of several projects completed or ongoing across the healthcare system. The most notable ongoing project happening on the medical center campus is the construction of a new $194 million Mental Health Center addition which is expected to be completed by the end of 2015 or early 2016. Located on the southeast side of the main medical center building, the 156,000 square foot addition is a multi-phased venture requiring several smaller projects to be completed before major construction can begin. The construction may seem like an inconvenience now, but in the long run, the improvements will pay off in expanded health care services for Veterans and a better working environment for staff.

Lee County VA Healthcare Center Completes First Year of Operation

A little more than one year ago, the Bay Pines VAHCS celebrated the activation of the Lee County VA Healthcare Center – a new 220,000 square outpatient facility located in Cape Coral, Florida. The center replaced the VA clinic formerly located in Fort Myers. Since officially opening the doors to Veterans on December 17, 2012, the new center has treated about 35,000 Veterans and has completed nearly 255,000 appointments. Services have also continued to expand to meet the diverse needs of the Veteran population in southwest Florida. The facility has added advanced imaging services to include magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computed tomography (CT); physical therapy and occupational therapy; and new outpatient surgery services for ophthalmology, podiatry and urology. Future surgical program expansions, as well expansions in dentistry, urgent care and women’s health are expected in 2014. The center continues to hire new employees as services expand. Currently the facility employs more than 490 clinical and administrative professionals.

New Sebring, Fla. Clinic a Reality for Veterans

To better meet the needs of Veterans in Highlands County, the Bay Pines VAHCS relocated and expanded its Sebring VA Clinic. The new 9,500 square foot clinic opened to Veterans in November 2012 at nearly twice the size of its previous location. About 3,100 Veterans are served at the facility in a spacious, patient-centered environment. Services offered to Veterans include primary and mental health care, an anticoagulation clinic, EKGs, pharmacist consultation, phlebotomy, social work, and referrals to specialty care offered at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center in Bay Pines or Lee County VA Healthcare Center in Cape Coral.

Specialty Care Services Added, Expanded at Bradenton, Fla. VA Clinic

In June 2013, the Bay Pines VAHCS expanded the Bradenton VA Clinic from approximately 12,500 square feet to nearly 17,000 in an effort to bolster and expand services for Veterans residing in Manatee County. Along with the increased space, the facility added Audiology and expanded Optometry services. About 13,000 Veterans are served at the clinic every year.

Voice of the Veteran

“VA very much adopts a total care concept. My doctors are not just trying to fix my injuries, they are treating the whole me and improving my quality of my life.”

- Johnny Holmes, 40
U.S. Army Retired
Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran
National Leader in Health Care Quality

In 2013, the Bay Pines VAHCS was named a Top Performer on Key Quality Measures® by The Joint Commission, the leading accreditor of health care organizations in America. We were recognized by The Joint Commission for exemplary performance in using evidence-based clinical processes that are shown to improve care for certain conditions. Our organization was one of only 1,099 hospitals in the U.S., and the only VA facility out of the 104 public and private hospitals in Florida that earned the distinction for attaining and sustaining excellence in accountability measure performance. The healthcare system was specifically recognized for its achievement on the following measure sets: heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, and surgical care.

Providing the Very Best Care to Patients Diagnosed with Chronic Heart Conditions

In 2013, we received the “Get With The Guidelines”–Heart Failure Silver Quality Achievement Award from the American Heart Association. The recognition signified that Bay Pines VAHCS reached an aggressive goal of treating heart failure patients according to the guidelines of care recommended by the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology: Following Get With The Guidelines–Heart Failure treatment guidelines can improve the quality of care for heart failure patients, save lives and ultimately, reduce healthcare costs by lowering the recurrence of heart attacks. Heart failure patients are started on aggressive risk-reduction therapies if needed, including cholesterol-lowering drugs, beta-blockers, angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor (ACE) inhibitors, aspirin, diuretics and anticoagulants while in the hospital. Before discharge, they also receive education on managing their heart failure and overall health, including lifestyle modifications and follow-up care. Hospitals must adhere to these measures at a set level for a designated period of time to be eligible for the achievement awards.

Patient Safety Always a Top Priority

The Bay Pines VAHCS was named a Cornerstone Recognition Award gold winner by the VA National Center for Patient Safety in 2013. Our organization was one of 119 VA facilities nationwide to receive recognition, and one of only 63 that received the gold award. The award recognizes facilities for work and efficiency completing work related to the root cause analysis (RCA) process, health care quality and patient safety.
Investing In State-of-the-Art Technology

A new TrueBeam linear accelerator (LINAC) was installed in the Bay Pines VAHCS’s Radiation Oncology Center in 2013. It is expected to be fully commissioned and operational in early 2014. With a price tag of approximately $3.4 million, this state-of-the-art technology will provide the highest quality radiation cancer treatment for Veterans. The Varian TrueBeam is a newer version of the Varian Trilogy which has been used in the radiation oncology clinic since it opened in March 2011. This cutting-edge technology allows physicians to specifically target tumors and cancerous tissue down to the millimeter, significantly limiting the adverse effects to the patient.

When the second machine is fully operational, the Bay Pines VAHCS Radiation Oncology Clinic will be able to treat upwards of 50-60 patients per day, which equates to approximately 400-500 patients per year, doubling the current patient load. Since 2010, the Bay Pines VAHCS has invested more than $34 million in high tech equipment in order to provide advanced and modern healthcare treatments to Veterans. Some of the other equipment purchased includes computed tomography (CT) scanners, a positron emission tomography (PET)/CT scanner, five new X-radiation (x-ray) rooms, five nuclear medicine cameras, two mammography units, 14 ultrasound units and eight portable x-ray units.

My HealtheVet

In 2013, more than 65,542 Bay Pines VAHCS Veterans were enrolled in My HealtheVet, VA’s web based health management tool. My HealtheVet helps Veterans monitor their weight, blood pressure, glucose, order prescriptions and partner with their health care providers to make informed decisions about their health care. Almost half of these Veterans (42.6%) were using advanced features of the tool to view appointments, selected diagnostic tests and lab work, progress notes, and other items in their official medical record. About 17.5% of Veterans enrolled in MHV were also using Secure Messaging, a feature of My HealtheVet, which gives Veterans the ability to communicate with their providers about non-urgent health matters via secure emails.

Virtual Health Care Delivered in the Home

Telehealth offers Veterans direct, personal and virtual access to clinicians and services at home or in a VA clinic in their community. Currently, 1293 Veterans with chronic health conditions are enrolled in the Bay Pines VAHCS Home Based Telehealth program. From their homes, Veterans use VA-supplied equipment to enter vital health information which is instantly received by a Home Telehealth nurse and sent to their electronic medical records. Having this information means health care providers can change a Veteran’s medications or treatments and prevent the development of serious health problems, reducing the possibility of a hospital stay. The national goal in 2013 was to have 1.5% of Veterans using primary care services to be enrolled in Home Telehealth. The Bay Pines VAHCS exceeded that goal and continues to expand the use of virtual health care services.

“Investing in state-of-the art technology not only helps us provide 21st century care to the Veterans we serve, it also mitigates costs associated with paying for care in the community for patient services that would not be available otherwise.”

- Dominique A. Thuriere, M.D.
Chief of Staff, Bay Pines VAHCS
### Operating Statistics at a Glance

#### Operating Budget

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>Total Revenues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Care Appropriations</td>
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<td>Medical Care Collections Fund</td>
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<td>Total Expenditures</td>
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<td>Capital Asset Expenditures</td>
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<td>Supplies and Services</td>
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<td>Salaries</td>
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#### Workload

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<tr>
<td>Total Veterans Served</td>
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<td>Total Outpatient Visits</td>
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<td>Inpatient Admissions</td>
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<td>Emergency Dept. Visits</td>
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<td>Surgeries Performed</td>
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#### Volunteers

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<td>Fiscal Year 2013 Volunteers</td>
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<td>Total Volunteer Hours</td>
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#### Staffing

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<td>Doctors</td>
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<td>House Keeping</td>
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#### Beds

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<td>Domiciliary</td>
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<td>Medicine &amp; Surgery</td>
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<td>Rehabilitation</td>
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<td>Community Living Center (Nursing Home)</td>
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