

VA Rocky Mountain Network VISN 19



2007 ANNUAL REPORT



Mission, Vision and Values

Our Mission

VA Rocky Mountain Network will honor American's veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well-being.

Our Vision

To be a comprehensive, integrated healthcare system providing excellence in healthcare value, excellence in service as defined by our veteran patients and excellence in education and research.

Our Values

The core values that motivate us are:

- Commitment
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Customer Service
- Excellence
- Trust and Respect



Letter from the Network Director

It is a privilege and honor to have been appointed by the Secretary to serve as the new Network Director of VA Healthcare in VISN 19. In this position, I have the exciting challenge of directing the operations, finances, and clinical programs of a healthcare network that serves veterans throughout Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Montana as well as parts of Nebraska, Kansas, Nevada, Idaho and North Dakota.

I began my service with the Department of Veterans Affairs as a fiscal officer 35 years ago and have had the privilege of serving in various leadership capacities throughout my career at a number of VA facilities. Most recently, I served as the Director of VA Milwaukee for the past 10 years. I am appreciative of this new opportunity to make an impact on the lives of so many veterans. VISN 19 has excelled in many areas over the past several years, from delivering the best possible healthcare to improving patient safety and satisfaction.

As the new Director, I welcome the opportunity to take VISN 19 to an even higher level of service to our veteran stakeholders. Improving VISN 19's performance will take the dedication and commitment of over 5,000 employees across the network. Each day we strive to honor each veteran that receives care at all facilities in VISN 19 for all they have done to preserve the freedom that we all enjoy.

With this strong sense of purpose, I am pleased to present our 2007 Annual Report that provides a snapshot of our many efforts to provide exceptional healthcare to the veterans we serve. As we begin a new chapter in VISN 19's history, I look forward to working with you all and meeting many of you during my travel throughout the VISN.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glen W. Grippen".

Glen W. Grippen, FACHE
Director, VA Rocky Mountain Network

Who We Are

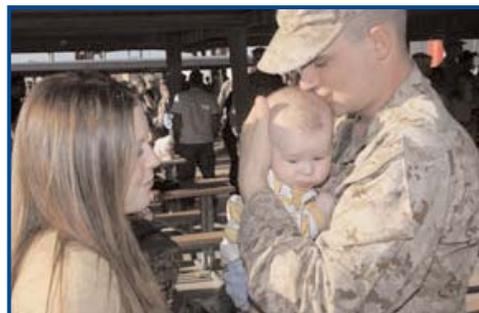
The VA Rocky Mountain Network (VISN 19) is located in Glendale, Colorado, and was established in March 1996 as one of 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) in the Veterans Health Administration. VISN 19 functions as the responsible structure for the planning, budgeting, and service delivery in the provision of healthcare to veterans within our geographic region.

VISN 19 spans a geographic area of 470,000 square miles across nine states and is the largest VISN in terms of geographic area in the 48 contiguous states. VISN 19 covers Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and portions of Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada and North Dakota. The topography includes the Rocky Mountains, arid regions and areas subject to extreme winter weather. Significant travel distances exist between VA healthcare facilities throughout the VISN. We estimate that over 700,000 veterans live in VISN 19.

To provide medical care, VISN 19 operates:

- Three Health Care Systems in Fort Harrison, Montana, Denver, Colorado and Salt Lake City, Utah
- Three medical centers in Cheyenne, Wyoming, Grand Junction, Colorado and Sheridan, Wyoming
- 36 outpatient clinics across the VISN
- Five nursing homes in Denver, Colorado; Pueblo, Colorado; Grand Junction, Colorado; Cheyenne, Wyoming and Sheridan, Wyoming
- Three residential rehabilitation treatment programs in Sheridan, Wyoming, Denver, Colorado and Salt Lake City, Utah

In addition to providing healthcare, VISN 19 also provides training for healthcare professionals, conducts medical research, serves as a contingency backup to Department of Defense (DoD) medical services and during national emergencies, supports the National Disaster Medical System with the Salt Lake City Medical Center serving as a Federal Coordinating Center.



Who We Serve

National Veteran Population

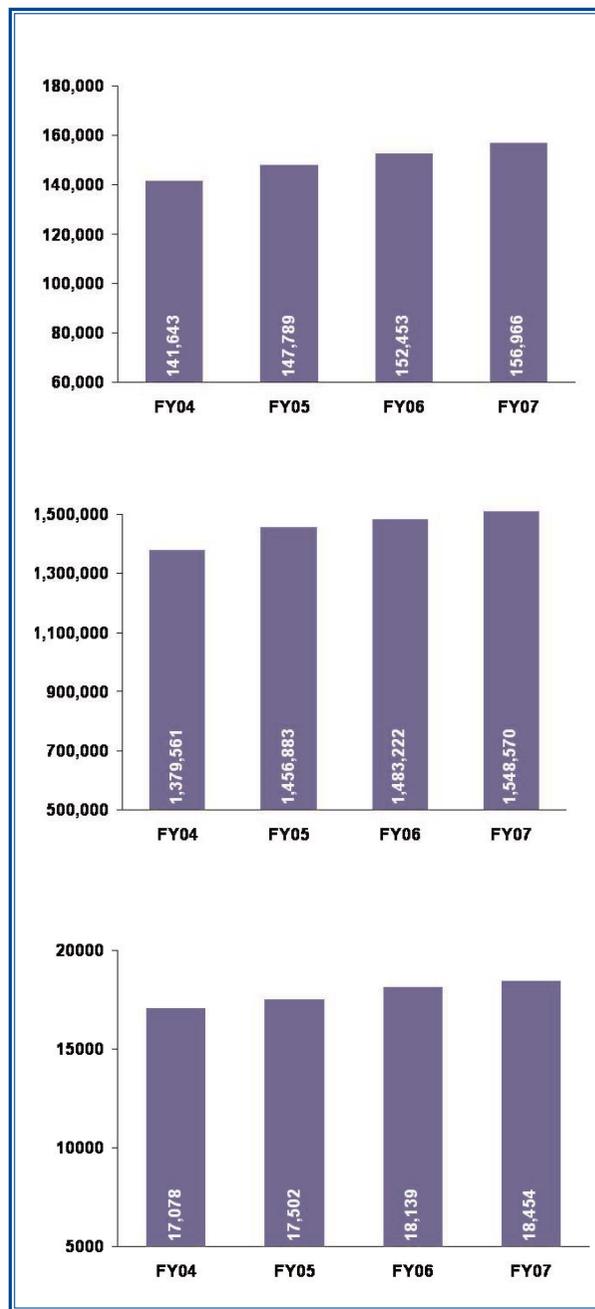
There are about 23.8 million living veterans, 7.5% of whom are women. There are about 37 million dependents (spouses and dependent children) of living veterans and survivors of deceased veterans. Together they represent 20% of the US population. Most veterans living today served during times of war.

The Vietnam Era veteran, about 7.9 million, is the largest segment of the veteran population. In 2007, the median age of all living veterans was 60 years old, 61 for men and 47 for women. Median ages by period of service: Gulf War, 37 years old; Vietnam War, 60; Korean War, 76; and WW II 84. Sixty percent (60%) of the nation's veterans live in urban areas.

National OEF/OIF Veterans' Statistics

- 48% are Active Duty, 52% are Reserve/National Guard
- 88% are men, 12% are women
- 65% Army; 12% Air Force; 12% Navy; 12% Marine
- 34% were deployed multiple times
- 52%, largest age group, is 20-29 years old
- 69% of those who filed disability claims received service-connected disability compensation award

VISN 19 Utilization Statistics



How We Serve

Our Network continually focuses on ensuring the veterans we serve have accessible, high quality, cost effective healthcare. We target areas to ensure our healthcare system is meeting the needs of today's veterans as well as the needs of our new veterans tomorrow. Our successes are reflected by veterans who are served by VISN 19 continuing to communicate very high satisfaction in national surveys. Major program achievements and highlights are described in the following sections:

Mental Health

VISN 19 provides mental health services in all medical centers. Four facilities have inpatient units. Outpatient mental health services include outpatient counseling, medication prescription, substance abuse treatment, consultation to medical care services and intensive management of patients with serious mental illness. Because of the vast geography, telehealth programs are also used to provide services. VISN 19 received supplemental funding for staffing in the provision of mental health services for veterans in VA Central Office (VACO) funded initiatives for specialty programs in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF), Substance Abuse, Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), Homeless Grant and Per Diems, Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment, support for Home Based Primary



Care (HBPC), Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Peer Support, Incarcerated Veterans and Long-term Psychiatric Care. Each facility also has hired Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPC).

Seamless Transition

VISN 19 proudly served returning U.S. combat veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan during FY07 as they made a seamless transition from active duty to veteran status. Each VISN 19 medical center has designated Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) program managers and case managers to provide ongoing case management services to returning service members, veterans, and their families over the course of time VHA healthcare services are being provided. VISN 19 OEF/OIF program staff has also performed extensive outreach, attending numerous post-deployment events. At these events, organized in conjunction with the Department of Defense, they inform soldiers about VA benefits and help them apply for VA healthcare services. VISN 19 OEF/OIF Program Managers are:

Cheyenne: Marti Salas
ECHCS: Jeriann Ascione
Grand Junction: Cathleen Angelica
Montana: Phay Lloyd
Sheridan: John Slaughter
Salt Lake City: Maria Fruin

VISN 19 also has three OEF/OIF Transition Patient Advocates (TPA) that serve as a liaison between the medical centers, the patients, employees of the medical center and the community regarding patient's rights and advocacy. The TPA acts as a communicator, a facilitator and problem solver. They ensure that severely injured service members have a personal advocate as they move throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs Healthcare System.

How We Serve

Polytrauma System of Care

The VA has established a Polytrauma System of Care for veterans and active duty personnel with lasting disabilities due to polytrauma and traumatic brain injury (TBI). VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS) has been designated as the VISN 19 Network Site and works with the Palo Alto VAMC as our Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center. Grand Junction and Salt Lake City VA Medical Centers have been identified as VISN 19 Polytrauma Support Clinics with Sheridan, Fort Harrison, and Cheyenne VA Medical Centers being designated as Polytrauma Points of Contact. These Polytrauma programs are designed to manage the life long post-acute rehabilitation needs and functional impairments of veterans returning from Iraq/Afghanistan. They assist in the transition of these patients to their homes and communities, and ensure continuity of care as these veterans transfer among healthcare systems. The Polytrauma team is also actively involved in education activities throughout the VISN for all involved staff in Polytrauma. With all VISN 19 facilities providing a high level of care, a full range of clinical and ancillary resources, and life long case management, these patients are afforded the best of healthcare.



Telemedicine

VISN 19's Care Coordination Telehealth, (CCT) Program facilitates improved access to care, continuity of care, quality of life and healthcare outcomes for our veterans. Our program includes: Home Telehealth; Telemental Health; Teleophthalmology/Diabetic Retinal screening; American Indian Telehealth Outreach; Primary Care Telehealth; Telerehabilitation and Wound Care; Telesurgery; Teledermatology and Telenutrition/ TeleMOVE. During 2007, our major achievements included:

- Approximately 330% increase in unique veterans served over the last two years
- Added teledermatology, telesurgery, telerehabilitation, telenutrition and telemental health
- Publication of a VISN wide CCT directive that standardizes terminology, establishes oversight committees at each facility, requires telehealth coordinators at either the program or facility level and requires use of service agreements for programs
- Expanded CCT staff in Denver, Salt Lake and Sheridan
- Met or exceeded all national telehealth performance measures/monitors

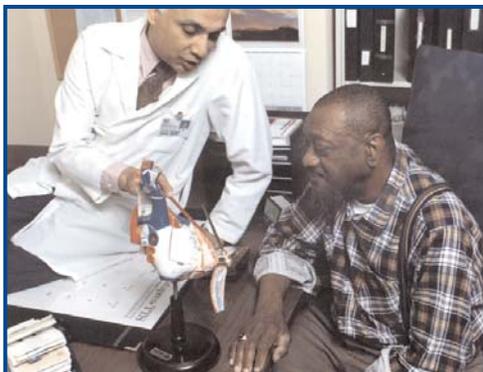


How We Serve

Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center (GRECC)

This is an internationally recognized program supporting geriatric research, education and clinical care of veterans with dementia, hospice care and adult day healthcare. The GRECC is located in Salt Lake City.

- Recruitment of Russell Richardson, Ph.D. an accomplished senior investigator in exercise physiology, as Research Investigator and Associate Director for Research
- Launch of a new educational program – Advancing Geriatrics Education through Quality Improvement, AGE QI – for providers in VISN 19 CBOCs (Ogden and St. George begun to date) focused on geriatric medicine education and assistance with a quality improvement project
- Initiation of a new clinical demonstration project – a collaborative dementia treatment monitoring clinic



Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC)

This program's focus is research, education and clinical care of the treatment of dually diagnosed veterans, to increase knowledge of the problems facing veterans with psychiatric disorders and co-morbid substance abuse or dependence with a goal of improving the overall quality of care. Denver MIRECC's significant accomplishments include:

- More than 1000 hours of clinical work and consultation while treating 350 unique patients
- Professional presentations at national and international meetings on suicide, neuropsychiatry, neuropsychology, traumatic brain injury, suicidology, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), deployment issues to OEF/OIF National Guard/Reserve units, to police and sheriff groups, to VA facilities and at national VA meetings
- More than 40 papers submitted for publication
- Collaborative research projects initiated with DoD, the U.S. Army at Fort Carson, Colorado, VA Center of Excellence in Canandaigua, New York and other VISNs
- Reviews for top journals conducted in the mental health field including Archives of General Psychiatry and American Journal of Psychiatry
- Dr. Peter Gutierrez, VISN 19 MIRECC Research Psychologist, published new book on Adolescent Suicide: An Integrated Approach to the Assessment of Risk and Protective Factors

How We Serve

VA ECHCS Research Program

VA ECHCS hosts a large research and development program, which enhances the facility's ability to provide state-of-the-art medical techniques and treatments to our veteran patients. Major areas of biomedical laboratory and clinical sciences research include Oncology, Pulmonology, Cardiology, Substance Abuse and Diabetes/Endocrinology. The VA ECHCS Health Services Research & Development Research Enhanced Award Program (REAP) was awarded October 1, 2006. The VA ECHCS REAP to Improve Care Coordination for Veterans provides VA HSR&D with a center devoted to researching the critical problem of poor care coordination. The Schizophrenia Research Center is one of three in the VA system nationwide, and in FY06, funding was renewed for four years. Major accomplishments during FY07 include:

- VA merit review funding totaled \$7,388,936, a 16.5% increase from FY06 funding level
- Extremely successful career development program continued with seven funded awards and three pending reviews
- Collaboration among principal investigators initiated to compete for DoD research funds for TBI/PTSD related studies



Minority Outreach Program

VISN 19 increased its outreach to all of the 23 Native American Nations across the VISN. Tribal Veterans Representative (TVR) training held in February 2007 was attended by 47 TVRs. We partnered with the Wounded Warriors Project to complete Project Odyssey for returning OEF/OIF Veterans. The first project was held in Park City, Utah July 2007. Nineteen returning veterans and several Vietnam veterans who are VA's Readjustment Counseling Service staff attended. This project was helpful to returning veterans, particularly the ceremony conducted by the American Indian Veterans and Elders.

Expansion of the telepsychiatry program continues. There has been an increase in the number of veterans being reached through the Tribal Outreach Worker (TOW) program. The TOWs work closely with the TVRs to bring information on benefits and services to all veterans and their families. Together, VA, the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Tribal Health Organizations are working to expand programs to the rural areas of our VISN.

National presentations on the TOW, TVR and Telehealth program were made at conferences in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Portland, Oregon, the National Minority Veterans Program Coordinators Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, and the 477 National Conference in Reno, Nevada. In January 2007, VISN staff worked with the IHS and the VA Regional Counseling Service to introduce the program "OEF/OIF Welcome Home American Veteran" to the VA and IHS for continued outreach. This program has proven to be beneficial to all veterans. The IHS has adopted this outreach program for their agency.

How We Serve

National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic

Each year, VISN 19 and the Grand Junction VAMC are proud hosts to the Annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic - the world leader in promoting rehabilitation by instructing veterans with disabilities in adaptive Alpine and Nordic skiing, and introducing them to a number of other adaptive recreational activities and sports. For many newly injured veterans, including increasing numbers injured in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Clinic offers their first experience in winter sports and gives them the inspiration to take their rehabilitation to a higher level.

Participation is open to U.S. military service veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological problems and other disabilities. Veterans who receive health care at a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility have first priority. In addition, a number of active duty military personnel from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom have attended in recent years.

In 2007, 124 newly injured military personnel participated in the Winter Sports Clinic. VISN 19 is honored to host the Winter Sports Clinic as we believe our long-standing participation demonstrates our commitment to never forget the battles our military men and women have fought and continue to fight as they overcome their disabilities.



Our Facilities' Highlights

Cheyenne

Director: David M. Kilpatrick, MD
2360 E. Pershing Blvd
Cheyenne, WY 82001
www.Cheyenne.va.gov
307-778-7300

- Hired pulmonologist – new Pulmonary Clinic
- Hired neurologist – new Neurology Clinic
- Started a Congestive Heart Failure Clinic
- Improved automation in the pharmacy
- Through a joint venture with the Air Force, established a local MRI
- Implemented Outpatient Wound Care Team
- Patient Fall Prevention Program was in the best top 10 VHA wide
- Further automated medical records in the Extended Care Unit using a touch screen kiosk
- Expanded on-site lab testing at CBOCs
- Integrated Library Service with Denver
- Opened a new clinical building locating physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy and speech therapy on one floor and the Surgical Specialty Clinic on another
- Joined with the City of Cheyenne to use recycled water for landscaping

Total staff: 520
Number of volunteers: 280
Operating beds: 71
Outpatients visits: 137856
Unique veterans enrolled: 19,894
Budget: \$71,982,827

ECHCS

Director: Lynette A. Roff
1055 Clermont Street, Denver, CO 80220
www.denver.va.gov
303-399-8020

- Leased space for the new ECHCS Polytrauma/Low Vision Clinic/Telephone Call Center was awarded. The location is 14400 E. Jewell Ave in Aurora, Colorado. The clinic is slated to open in Fall 2008.
- The ECHCS was selected to host one of the most strenuous and spirited athletic competitions in the world July 2010 - The National Veterans Wheelchair Games. More than 500 disabled athletes from across the United States, Puerto Rico and Great Britain will arrive to compete in the 30th National Veterans Wheelchair Games, "Games with Heart a Mile High."
- Move to Fitzsimons continued to progress in 2007:
 - Acquired the Fitzsimons Credit Union
 - An agreement between the Department of Interior, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the City of Aurora has been reached that will allow the transfer of the City of Aurora pool deed to ECHCS.
 - Project has received \$168.3 million in funding.
 - Hearings are being held with the House Veterans Affairs Committee to discuss funding for the VA construction in the FY09 budget.

Total staff: 1,770
Number of volunteers: 540
Operating beds: 150
Outpatient visits: 191,407
Unique veterans enrolled: 84,876
Budget: \$ 351,501,274



Our Facilities' Highlights

Fort Harrison

Director: Joseph M. Underkofler
3687 Veterans Drive, PO Box 1500
Fort Harrison, MT 59636
www.montana.va.gov
(406) 447-7900

- Liberty House opened as a building to lodge spouses of hospitalized veterans
- TVs for Vets Program started to raise money to purchase TVs for hospitalized veterans
- Ambulatory Care addition completed and occupied
- New parking lot for veterans near the front entrance
- New VBA Building occupied
- New boilers installed in Miles City
- Mental Health staff expanded
- Kalispell Clinic relocated to new building with more space
- Glendive CBOC opened
- New Cardiac Cath Lab installed
- Teleretinal Camera program expanded to three new locations
- Telemental Health expanded to CBOCs
- Compensated Work Therapy program started

Total staff: 784
Number of volunteers: 500
Operating beds: 50
Outpatient visits: 251,405
Contract mental health visits: 25,633
Unique veterans enrolled: 30,590
Budget \$89,509,751

Grand Junction

Director: Michael W. Murphy, Ph.D.
2121 North Avenue
Grand Junction CO 81501
www.grandjunction.va.gov
(970) 242-0731

- Achieved full accreditation from the Joint Commission
- Opened a Telehealth Outreach Clinic in Craig, CO
- Established a VACO approved VISN 19 Bariatric Surgery program
- Completed an upgrade project to the first floor, main building
- Led VISN19 on Inpatient Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP) scores and above national average in all categories. Had the highest score for Overall Inpatient Satisfaction
- Expanded telesurgery services to the Montrose CBOC
- Within Mental Health, added five full-time staff; expanded after hours and weekend clinics
- Authorized local funding to place a 5,000 sq. ft. modular building on campus to gain clinical space in main building
- Leased MRI unit to increase services from 3 to 5 days/week

Total staff: 426
Number of volunteers: 240
Operating beds: 23 hospital and
30 community living center
Outpatient visits: 94,668
Unique veterans enrolled: 13,737
Budget: \$58,829,738



Our Facilities' Highlights

Salt Lake City

Director: James R. Floyd, FACHE
500 Foothill Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84148
<http://www.saltlakecity.va.gov>
801-582-1565

- Three year Accreditation by the Joint Commission
- Three year Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)
- Three year accreditation of the Pharmacy Residency Program
- Nationally #1 for all healthcare facilities (public and private) in managing length of stay and patient flow
- One of four facilities nationally awarded a five year grant for VA Nursing Academy
- Elko Outreach Clinic established
- Graduate medical training program significantly expanded
- Established a Chaplain Residency Training Program
- Emergency Preparedness program recognized by Governor State of Utah
- Equal Employment Opportunity complaints among the lowest in VA
- Enhanced Use II proposal for joint VA (VBA, VHA, Office of Information and Technology) space completed

Total staff: 1324.4
Number of volunteers: 568
Operating beds: 121
Outpatient visits: 415,379
Unique veterans enrolled: 40,727
Budget: \$181,715,986

Sheridan

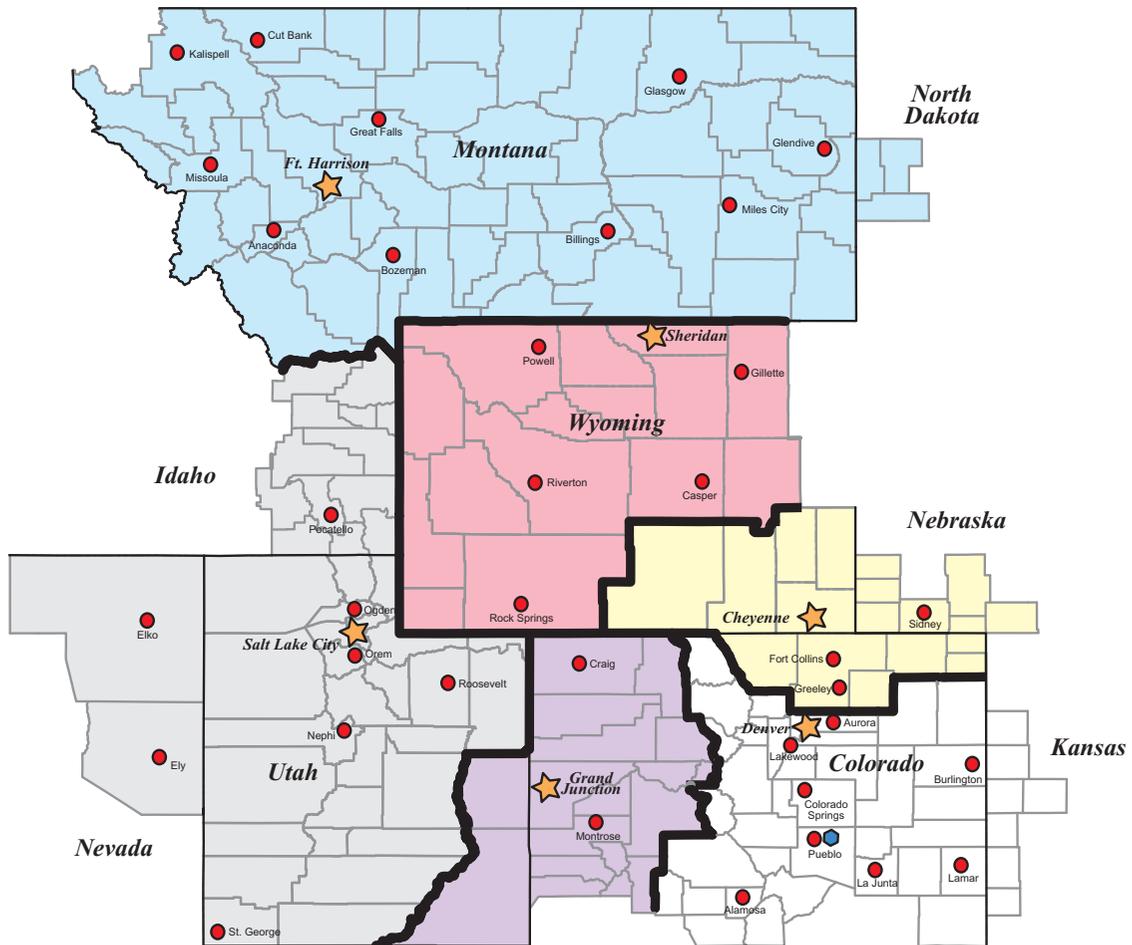
Director: Debra L. Hirschman
1898 Fort Road, Sheridan, WY 82801
www.sheridan.va.gov
307-672-3473

- Received full accreditation from the Joint Commission
- Achieved excellent patient satisfaction scores
- Participated in Welcome Home events for returning veterans in Sheridan and Rock Springs
- Expanded the Mental Health Intensive Case Management program into the Casper CBOC by adding 1.5 positions
- Remodeled the Radiology suite for new equipment
- Hired Teleretinal Screening Coordinator position to serve two CBOCs
- Hired an additional physician in the Rock Springs CBOC
- Secured funds to renovate and expand the Endoscopy Suite
- Secured funding to implement Cultural transformation at Mountain View Living Center
- Collected \$6.4 million in Medical Care Cost Recover funds which exceeded the assigned goal
- Replaced over \$2 million of equipment
- Established a public web site for the Medical Center

Total staff: 525
Number of volunteers: 111
Operating beds: 199
Outpatient visits: 98,663
Unique veterans enrolled: 11,465
Budget: \$64,390,000



VA Rocky Mountain Network - VISN 19



VAMCS/HCS & CBOC Sites

- ★ VAMC/HCS (6)
- CBOC Sites (36)
- Free Standing Nursing Home (1)



Our Thanks to You

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