Our Mission, Vision, & Core Values

Our Mission

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise – *"To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan"* – by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.

Our Vision

To provide Veterans the world-class services they have earned

Our Core Values

The core values that motivate us are:

Compassion
Commitment
Excellence
Professionalism
Integrity
Accountability
Stewardship

Who We Are

The VA Rocky Mountain Network (VISN 19) office is located in Glendale, Colorado and was established in March 1996 as one of 21 (VISNs) in the Veterans Health Administration. VISN 19 functions as the responsible structure for the planning, budgeting, and health care delivery 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 serves an area covering the states of Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and portions of Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada and North Dakota. The topography includes the Rocky Mountains, arid regions and areas are subject to extreme winter weather. Significant travel distances exist between VA health care facilities throughout VISN 19. It is estimated over 764,000 Veterans reside within VISN 19's geographic boundaries.

To provide medical care, VISN 19 operates 3 Health Care Systems (HCS) - VA Montana HCS, VA Eastern Colorado HCS and VA Salt Lake City HCS; 3 medical centers - Cheyenne VAMC, Grand Junction VAMC and Sheridan VAMC; 40 community based outpatient/outreach clinics, and nursing homes. In addition to providing health care, VISN 19 also has missions to provide training for health care professionals; to conduct medical research; to serve as a contingency backup to DoD medical services; and, during national emergencies, to support the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS).

Whom We Serve

A Demographic Profile

Approximately 764,595 Veterans live in VISN 19

Male Veterans – 703,387
Female Veterans – 61,208

Veteran Age Groups in VISN 19

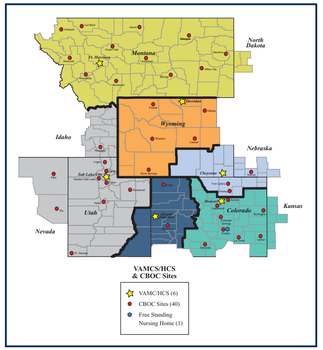
Over 85 – 36,177
65-84 – 243,300
45-64 – 328,715
17-44 – 156,403

Our medical centers currently operate 781 beds for acute medical/surgical, domiciliary, mental health, nursing home and rehabilitative care. In FY 2008, VISN 19 served 160,704 Veterans to include 17,464 hospital admissions and 2,368,668 outpatient visits. Of these, over 8,000 Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans were seen in FY 2008 which included 1,703 female OEF/OIF Veterans. This health care is accomplished by 5,910 dedicated VA employees in VISN 19.

Finance

Our FY 2008 network budget allocation (excluding research) was $985,499,000. To ensure sound financial performance, revenue reports and financial indicators are reviewed with senior executives at monthly Executive Leadership Council meetings. Each medical center benchmarks against five other VA facilities in cost factors related to clinical care to ensure fiscal responsiveness. Examples of cost effectiveness in VISN 19 include the Pharmacy Benefits Program which saved approximately $5.9 million dollars in FY 2008 and the use of consolidated contracting and purchasing which resulted in a cost savings of approximately $5 million.

VA Rocky Mountain Network - VISN 19



Providing care closer to where Veterans live . . .

Clinical Excellence

Access

- Activated 3 new Community Based and/or Outreach Clinics (Logan, UT, Havre, MT, Lewistown, MT).
- Established a Medical Foster Home Program at the Salt Lake City Health Care System. This program finds caregivers in the community who are willing to take a Veteran into their home and provide 24 hour supervision as well as needed personal assistance.
- Enrolled in excess of 18,000 OEF/OIF Veterans.
- Maintain fulltime VISN 19 Transition Patient Advocates (stationed at Denver, Salt Lake City and Fort Harrison) to provide outreach services to returning OEF/OIF Veterans.
- Coordinated transfers of OEF/OIF service members and Veterans from a military treatment facility to a VA medical facility.
- Participated in Post Deployment Health Screenings Events for returning OEF/OIF soldiers.
- Rank first in the VA access and wait time clinical performance measures in FY 2008, where 99% of patients receive appointments when they desire them, resulting in high patient satisfaction ratings.
- Partner with many communities, other government agencies, and nonprofit organizations across the VISN 19 to augment resources in rural areas. For example an innovative project, the Civilians for Veterans Fund, combines federal, state and public sector resources in southern Colorado. This project allows VA mental health clinicians to educate clinicians in rural areas in the appropriate treatment of mental health issues for Veterans. A charitable foundation augments care with funding assistance to Veterans' families.
- VA facilities in Montana and Wyoming have negotiated sharing arrangements with small rural hospitals for Mobile MRI services, bringing these services to rural areas in those states.
- To foster community cooperation, the VA Medical Center, Cheyenne, Wyoming, is providing a building site for Volunteers of America to construct a community homeless shelter.
- A contracting arrangement in Montana provides access to mental health services for Veterans across the state through three large community mental health consortiums.
- Uniform Mental Health Services Package (UBMHP) requirements are being implemented at all medical centers and clinics. The UBMHP ensures uniformity of mental health services regardless of location.
- Suicide Hotline & Suicide Prevention: VA continues to maintain a National Suicide Prevention Hotline established in 2007.

Quality

- VA outperforms private sector hospitals in all measures of quality.
- Care provided when needed.
- Appointments offered within 30 days.
- Welcome Home Outreach Events held for new Veterans.
- Screened new combat Veterans for depression, brain injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- Increased Suicide Prevention Coordination staff in all facilities.
- Combined mental health services with primary care to provide improved access to care.
- Conducted Fresh Eyes on Service (a secret shopper program) site visits to facilities and large clinics to assess customer service.

Clinical Excellence

Satisfaction

- Improved inpatient satisfaction scores.
- Conducted real-time inpatient and outpatient surveys measuring provider satisfaction.
- Conducted quarterly focus groups on new OEF/OIF Veterans.
- Improved telephone systems in Montana.

Accreditation

Our facilities maintain compliance with the following national accreditation organizations:

- Joint Commission (JC)
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)
- Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC)
- College of American Pathologists
- Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP)

Rural Health

- Cheyenne Rural Health Mobile Health Care Clinic pilot project was established to improve access to primary care and mental health care services to Veterans in predominantly rural counties.
- Two grants from the Office of Rural Health established a National Rural Health Center in Salt Lake City and provided for a Rural Health Planner position.
- Telemedicine technology is used to treat Veterans living in rural areas and Native American Indians on reservations.
- Several collaborative efforts have been established with the Indian Health Service (IHS), with tribal governments and VA health care systems on reservations. This has resulted in the expansion of mental health programs to ten reservations with future plans for seven other Nations.

Telehealth

- VISN 19 has undertaken an aggressive schedule for improving access to care for rural Veterans and in the use of Telemedicine technology.
- VISN 19 has developed one of the largest telemedicine programs in the country with over 16,000 telemedicine visits per year, to include psychiatry, ophthalmology, home health, rehabilitation and polytrauma, nutritional counseling, and dermatology.
- In FY 2008, over 1,000 Veterans have interactive devices in their homes to assist them to better manage their chronic illnesses and reduce the need to travel for care.

Capital Infrastructure Improvements

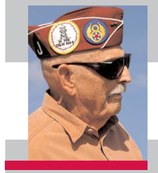
New facilities:

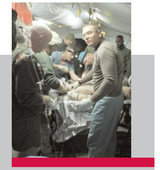
- Planning Colorado Springs Health Care Center
- Planning Billings Health Care Center
- Denver Replacement Medical Center

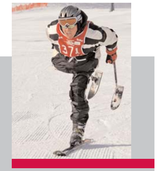
Special Programs

VISN 19 is proud to support a wide variety of special programs designed to provide quality care and services to Veterans. Our medical centers provide a wide range of patient care services, with state of the art technology, as well as education and research. Although our facilities vary in size and complexity, across the VISN 19, a continuum of services are currently being offered in the following areas:

- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**
- **Prosthetics**
- **Serious Mental Illness**
- **Spinal Cord Injury**
- **Traumatic Brain Injury**
- **Diabetes/Endocrinology**
- **Ex-Prisoners of War Programs**
- **Native American Veterans Outreach**
- **Polytrauma Care**
- **OEF/OIF Care for the Returning Soldiers**
- **Education and Research**
- **Homeless Veterans Domiciliary Treatment and Rehabilitation Program**
- **National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic**







Our Facilities

Cheyenne

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

Fort Harrison

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

Salt Lake City

Director: Steven W. Young, FACHE
500 Foothill Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84148
http://www.saltlakecity.va.gov
801-582-1565 307-778-7300

ECHCS (Denver)

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

Grand Junction

Director: Terry Atienza
2121 North Avenue
Grand Junction CO 81501
www.grandjunction.va.gov
(970) 242-0731

Sheridan

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

VA Rocky Mountain Network VISN 19

2008 Annual Report

Department of Veterans Affairs

VISN 19 Rocky Mountain Network

Message from the Network Director

The role of the Department of Veterans Affairs - VA Rocky Mountain Network (VISN 19), as health care provider, educator, and resource for quality veteran healthcare has never been more important as the world changes — in terms of demographics, politics, health care delivery, and how information is transmitted. The VISN 19 leadership strives to understand today's challenges and innovate tomorrow's solutions to better serve our patients while at the same time focusing on the needs of increasingly diverse urban and highly rural Veterans across our Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN).

Our 2008 Annual Report offers an overview of changes and accomplishments made in VISN 19. This report documents VISN 19's progress toward meeting its performance goals, which are aimed at providing America's Veterans with the best health care services in the country. As you will read in this year's report, we continue to reach more Veterans. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, our health centers served 160,704 women and men providing the services Veterans have come to rely on us for.

As the world has moved online, so has VISN 19. In the last year, we expanded public websites to create a health care resource that is available to our Veterans 24 hours a day, seven days a week ensuring Veterans ability to reach us online and increasing our ability to coordinate patient care through electronic medical records. Last year, we also continued to develop our Veteran Centric approach, with a focus on bringing care closer to where Veterans live throughout VISN 19.

Thanks to the unwavering commitment and advocacy of Veterans, volunteers, supporters, and staff, the past year has been a time of great change and growth. I look forward to addressing new challenges and making additional gains and, as always, I welcome the input of patients, staff, volunteers, congressional representatives and community members. Together, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of our nation's Veterans.

Sincerely,

Glen W. Grippen