

# VISN 19 Network Director Monthly Update

## Glen W. Grippen

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Retired Army General Eric K. Shinseki took the oath of office January 21, 2009 as the Nation's seventh Secretary of Veterans Affairs. His key issues thus far include smooth activation of an enhanced GI Bill education benefit, streamlining the disability claims system, leveraging IT to accelerate and modernize services and opening VA's healthcare system to veterans previously unable to enroll. We look forward to working with the new Secretary.



At the Fitzsimons campus, we have spent over \$55 million dollars to purchase land and plan to finalize arrangements for the last remaining parcel of land 2/09. A plan for the site demolition work has been completed. The demolition construction contract is expected to be awarded 3/09. The contract for the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of design for a VA facility project will be awarded end of 1/09. This phase will include design of outpatient buildings and "center spine" of the project which will cost \$2.4 million and will keep the project moving forwarding a timely manner until a final decision is made on inpatient beds.



The VA Montana Health Care System has awarded a contract to expand the Billings CBOC to increase access to primary care, specialty med/surgery care and mental health. Design build plans have been approved and the contractor has broken ground. We anticipate meeting the move in date of September 2009. The clinic will be expanded to include same day surgery by 2010.



For the Colorado Springs (COS) HCC, we are in the process of analyzing options and cost benefits between leasing of an existing building and a build-to-lease construction. The A/E will meet with the ECHCS planning team late January to attempt to get final approval to move forward with a single concept design. The request for a space plan increase remains pending. The COS HCC will include primary care, med/surgical specialty, mental health, same day surgery, specialty procedures, dental care and will allow for collaboration with VBA, Ft. Carson AMC, Peterson and Buckley AFBs and the Air Force Academy.



Cheyenne VAMC has been approved for an expansion in operating room capacity which should be completed in 2010 at which time they can expand orthopedic, general and eye surgery capability. They have already hired an orthopedic surgeon.



Grand Junction VAMC currently has two construction projects funded and started expansion of the OR's and recovery room. Completion is expected in 2010. They have hired a new ophthalmologist.



Emphasis continues to be placed on Home Care and telemedicine. In VISN 19, telemedicine is now used in primary care, rehab/PT; nutrition, surgery, radiology, mental health, cardiology, pathology, dermatology, psychiatry, for retinal imaging, for American Indian telehealth, for wound care, for education clinics, and in home teleconsultations for spinal cord injury pts. and for pts. with other chronic conditions.