



VA Salt Lake City Health Care System Annual Report 2009



Our Mission

“To Serve the Veteran Who Served Us”

The VA Salt Lake City Health Care System (VASLCHCS) is made up of compassionate employees committed to caring for Veterans whose sacrifices know no limit. We are part of the Rocky Mountain Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN 19). Our health care system consists of the George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Salt Lake City, Utah and nine community clinics across Utah, Idaho and Nevada. We provide healthcare to over 45 thousand eligible Veterans across one of the largest geographical areas in VA. We are a teaching hospital, providing a full range of patient care services, holistic medicine as well as education and research in partnership with the University of Utah and other institutions of higher education. Comprehensive health care is provided through our primary care providers and tertiary care is offered in areas of medicine, surgery, psychiatry, physical medicine and rehabilitation, neurology, oncology, dentistry, geriatrics, and extended care.

Our community clinics provide the same primary care services that the main facility does, which includes women’s healthcare and mental health service. We also provide diabetes and nutrition education along with our *MOVE* (Managing Overweight/Obese Veterans Everywhere) program. Our Telehealth program allows Veterans in remote areas to access the services they need. The VASLCHCS is committed to bringing VA health care to where our Veterans live.

Our 2009 Accomplishments

The VASLCHCS prides itself on leading the way when it comes to excellence in patient care. Our dedicated employees, volunteers and partners in the community consistently go above and beyond in the name of our Veterans. We have accomplished a lot in the last year and continue to look for ways to improve and grow.

- Earned the 2009 Silver Award under the Cornerstone Program for patient safety.
 - Awarded new eight year accreditation from the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy to provide Clinical Pastoral Education
 - Opened New Clinical Spaces: Dental, Audio/Speech, Western Salt Lake Clinic, Orem Clinic, Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Post Deployment Integrated Care Clinic, and a remodeled Emergency Department.
 - Broke ground on a new, state of the art Mental Health Outpatient building to handle a double digit increase in Veterans seeking mental health services.
 - Adding 42 more beds to inpatient mental health
 - Obtained funding for 21 additional research studies most notable:
 - a. VINCI (Veteran's Informatics, Information and Computing Infrastructure)
 - b. CHIR, the Consortium for Health Informatics Research
 - Achieved almost 9% growth in the number of Veterans served
 - Started our Magnet Journey
 - Established Holistic Medicine Group
 - Achieved 86% of mission critical performance measures
- **Here at the VA we pride ourselves on accountability when it comes to quality of care for our Veteran patients. As VA employees and public servants we are held to a higher standard. We know that, we expect that and we like it that way. In fact, we excel because of that.**

Director's Message . . .

"It is an honor and a privilege to lead this extraordinary group of passionate employees who are dedicated to serving Veterans and their families. We are constantly striving for excellence and will accept nothing less for those men and women who so bravely served our nation. 2009 saw its share of challenges and triumphs and in this report we will share them with you. The best is yet to come."


Steve Young



Our Medical Center



George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Medical Center Patient Satisfaction

	Inpatient Overall Quality	Outpatient Overall Quality	Provider Wait Time	Getting Care Quickly — Established Patients	Getting Care Quickly — New Patients
Goal	60%	51%	81%%	80%	79%
Satisfaction Rating	64.4%	57.2%	80.3%	64.5%	81%

- The information is from the Survey of Health Care Experience of Patients (SHEP). It is the VA national survey sent out to patients to receive their feedback on perceptions of their care.
- The numbers are based on the percentage of Veterans that rated their satisfaction as a 9 or 10 on a scale of 1-10.
- Data is cumulative October 2008 through September 2009.

Growth Chart

	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09
Total Medical Care Budget (Millions)	\$155.76	\$210.46	\$234.69	\$288.38	\$261.56
Total Outpatient Visits	397,928	401,077	415,377	428,401	496,287
Unique Patients	38,044	39,085	40,727	41,363	45,629

Performance Measures

FY2009	Met	Goal	%Met
Clinical Quality Measures	18	21	86%
Business Practices	9	9	100%
Customer Service	6	6	100%
Performance Measures	65	85	76%
Totals	98	121	81%

Community Clinics



Ogden, UT
982 Chambers Street
Ogden, UT 84403
801-479-4105



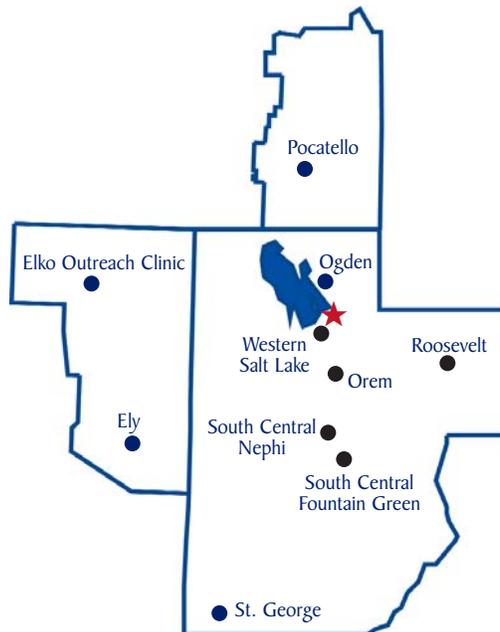
Orem, UT
1443 West 800 North, St. 302
Orem, UT 84057
801-235-0953



Roosevelt, UT
245 West 200 North
Roosevelt, UT 84066
435-725-1050



St. George, UT
1067 E. Tabernacle, Ste. #7
St. George, UT 84770
435-634-7608



Western Salt Lake, UT
2750 South 5600 West
West Valley, UT 84120
801-417-5734



Nephi, UT
48 West 1500 North
Nephi, UT 84648
435-623-3129



Fountain Green, UT
300 West 300 South
Fountain Green, UT 84632
435-623-3129

★ George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center



Elko, NV Outreach Clinic
762 14th Street
Elko, NV 89801
1-800-613-4012, ext. 2575



Ely, NV
#6 Steptoe Circle
Ely, NV 89301
775-289-3612



Pocatello, ID
444 Hospital Way, Ste. 801
Pocatello, ID 83201
208-232-6214

Community Clinic Patient Satisfaction

Clinics	Unique Patients '08	Unique Patients '09	Overall Quality Goal: 51%	Provider Wait Time Goal: 81%
Nephi, UT	676	680	47.1%	94.3%
Ogden, UT	3,730	4,318	55.6%	95.3%
Orem, UT	2,065	2,102	58%	91.6%
Roosevelt, UT	511	715	55.1%	96.4%
St. George, UT	2,471	2,600	56.6%	94%
Western Salt Lake, UT	N/A	6,108	54.9%	89.6%
Elko, NV	136	345	56.1%	92%
Ely, NV	326	287	57.2%	82.3%
Pocatello, ID	4,325	4,554	86%	86%

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- Data is cumulative October 2008 through September 2009.



“Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For, indeed, that’s all who ever have.”

We are a Teaching Hospital

Education continues to be a strong focus at the VASLCHCS. We teach and train some of the best doctors and nurses in the health care industry. We have a major affiliation with the University of Utah School of Medicine and numerous colleges and universities throughout the United States with an emphasis on institutions in the intermountain west. Over 500 University of Utah residents, interns, and students are trained in our system each year. We also have extensive training in our associated health training program which includes nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, social work, psychology, occupational and physical rehabilitation, audiology, physician assistant, dietetic and podiatry training programs, among others. Many of these training programs have been integrated into our Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC).



Additional Resident Physician positions. Right now there are 126.5 funded physician/resident positions with six more to be added July 1, 2010 and beyond. The awarded positions are in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Radiology, Cardiology, Gastroenterology, Hospice and Palliative Care, Infectious Diseases, and Otolaryngology.

VA Nursing Academy (VANA). A long and positive history of innovative collaborations is the foundation for the VANA in Salt Lake City, Utah, one of only 15 in the nation. The Academy centers on Education, Practice and Research, increasing VA recruitment and retention through enhanced clinical experiences for nursing students and expanded teaching opportunities for VA nurses. The VANA in Salt Lake City increases College of Nursing faculty presence at the VASLCHCS while increasing VA nurse presence at the College of Nursing. In 2009 this alliance boosted our enrollment by 16 students in our combined nursing program.

Research

It is an exciting time for research within the VASLCHCS. We are currently working on 69 projects funded by VA. We are particularly excited about the growth in the health services research field, with several large projects and consortia initiating activities in 2009. These include:

- The Veterans Informatics Information and Computing Infrastructure
- Consortium for Health Informatics Research

Together these projects allow VA researchers to access national patient data and provide a secure computing environment, which prohibits removal of individual patient information. Future uses of these resources will include real time surveillance for disease clusters and new syndromes.



- **Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC).** The VASLCHCS Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC) is one of 21 “centers of geriatric excellence” located throughout the United States. GRECCs are the cornerstone of VA’s strategy to focus attention on the aging Veteran population, to increase the basic knowledge of aging, to transmit that knowledge to our providers, and to improve the quality of care to our older Veterans. GRECC research funding resulted in a total of \$6.6 million in research expenditures in 2009, a 140% increase from the year before .
- **Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC)** is one of 23 sites nationwide with the goal of researching the causes and treatments of mental disorders. The ultimate goal of the center is the development of rapid and effective interventions that may be implemented with potentially suicidal patients. It also includes a multi-disciplinary research program focused on suicide, traumatic brain injury, mood disorders, and substance abuse. In 2009, MIRECC investigators published 18 peer-reviewed journal articles, initiated a rapid review suicide consult service for the VASLCHCS, and received three additional multi-year grants totaling over two million dollars. The ongoing research programs are aimed at improving the quality of life for our returning Veterans.
- **Rural Health.** The VASLCHCS is proud to have one of the three regional centers for rural health care based on our campus. The Veterans Rural Health Resource Center-Western Region (VRHRC-WR) hosted by the VASLCHCS conducts studies and analyses on rural issues, functions as a field-based laboratory for pilot projects, houses regional rural health experts, and serves as an educational repository. The center builds strong community collaborations and integrates various technologies including telehealth and web-based systems to provide a more connected, more individualized comprehensive healthcare mechanism for rural Veterans.



“In war, there are no unwounded soldiers.”

Emergency Management

The VASLCHCS is on the forefront of Emergency Management. We recently completed our Emergency Management Joint Training Center building. We are the Emergency Management Training Hub for VISN 19 which includes five medical centers across the intermountain west. We also provide training for 40 private hospitals throughout the state of Utah, 23 of which are part of the region’s National Disaster Medical System. We have a 25 bed portable disaster hospital tent to be deployed in the event of an emergency at our medical center or at any other VA medical center within the United States.



Telemedicine

We can now treat people via two way video link. Our doctors and nurses in Salt Lake City can look inside a patient's ear or listen to the heartbeat of a Veteran in Elko, Nevada. Our telemedicine capabilities are increasing all the time and proving to be a very efficient way to provide non-urgent primary care to Veterans at our outreach clinics. A primary care provider in Salt Lake City conducts the visit with support of a registered nurse who staffs the clinic on the other end. Services also include telepsychiatry and teleretinal. In the coming year we plan to increase our telehealth capabilities in our existing community clinics while adding three new outreach clinics in Idaho Falls, Price and Logan. These telehealth clinics will be modeled after the Elko Clinic.



Our Newest Veterans

The VASLCHCS wants to make sure our Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans are taking advantage of the benefits they have earned. Our OEF/OIF team is eager to assist them in accessing and navigating the VA system and has just moved into their brand new Post Deployment Integrated Care Clinic. Our case managers are dedicated, compassionate and knowledgeable, giving tailored information and critical one on one time to each Veteran that walks through the door.



- There are an estimated 11,418 OEF/OIF Veterans within our catchment area
- 7,005 have enrolled for health benefits
- Up from 5,818 last year
- 92% are male, 8% are female

Two Unique Mental Health Programs

- Our Mental Health Service has a wonderful program for psychosocial rehabilitation through a contract with Alliance House in Salt Lake City. Alliance House is a “clubhouse model” program that provides job training and skill building to its members. Ranked as one of the top ten clubhouse programs worldwide, the relationship between Alliance House and the VASLCHCS offers mentally ill Veterans a unique opportunity to achieve recovery.
- The Federal Court in Utah has the only Mental Health Court at the Federal level in the country. This gives the VASLCHCS a unique opportunity to track and help our Veterans in the system. As part of our Justice Outreach Program, this relationship with the court leads to more effective and coordinated mental health treatment for our Veterans in trouble with the law.

Our Volunteers

The Veterans we serve at the George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center and throughout the VASLCHCS would not receive the level of care that they do without our extraordinary cast of volunteers. 879 people (a 28 percent increase over last year) gave of their precious time racking up a grand total of 113,191 volunteer hours and bringing in a total of \$808,000 in donations (monetary and in kind).



My Health_eVet

My Health_eVet is an online personal health record offering Veterans anywhere, anytime internet access to VA health care. It is a tool that allows our Veterans to store important health information while maintaining an active role in managing their health. Currently we have over a thousand active users of MyHealth_evet, three times as many as last year, and through New Patient Orientation and a constant presence in the pharmacy that number continues to grow.



My Health, My Care: 24/7 ^{Online} Access to VA

Women's Program

The VASLCHCS is responding to the unique needs of our female Veterans. Women now make up over 15 percent of our military and 11 percent of the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. We offer our women Veterans a private clinic featuring female primary care providers committed to a woman's physical, psychological and holistic needs. In the past year greater emphasis has been placed on our female Veterans to include the hiring of a full-time Women Veterans Program Manager. Other accomplishments include:

- Increased enrollment: 938 new enrollees over the past year bringing our total to 3,000 female Veterans
- Appointed an active Women's Health Taskforce/Advisory Board
- Completed a five year plan to prepare for the influx of women Veterans, change culture and offer comprehensive primary care at every site
- Identified Women Champions in the majority of our community clinics
- Held a successful Women's Health Mini-residency where we trained VA providers in our three state area on women's health care



Clinical Pastoral Education

The VASLCHCS has a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Program which recently graduated 20 chaplains from a variety of faiths. The training program stretches beyond VA into our surrounding community where these graduates will work in a variety of clinical settings providing much needed spiritual guidance to patients, families and employees. A unique aspect of the CPE program is a more holistic approach to healing body, soul, and mind. One of our graduates is a nurse and now combines her clinical expertise with her spiritual side in helping our Veterans recover. The VASLCHCS is an approved Clinical Placement training site for CPE approved by the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy.



2009 Year in Pictures



Our Audiology/Speech Pathology and Dental Clinics have a brand new home.



Our 2009 Homeless Veterans Stand Down served 204 Veterans, more than ever before.



The VASLCHCS broke ground on a new Mental Health Outpatient Clinic to be completed January 2011.



We opened a new Community Clinic on the west side of Salt Lake City in January 2009.



We met countless Veterans and heard their amazing stories at our State Fair outreach event.

We Salute Our Namesake and Humble Hero

George E. Wahlen ~ 1924-2009

We lost a big part of our family this past year. Medal of Honor recipient George E. Wahlen died June 5, 2009, in the very hospital that bears his name. He was 84 years old. This reluctant hero truly exemplified the meaning of patriotism, commitment to service and love of country. His tireless service to our Veterans was remarkable.

He was awarded the Medal of Honor as a Navy Corpsman for his actions at the battle of Iwo Jima where he is credited for saving countless lives. He was injured on three separate occasions but refused to leave the battlefield. Many who witnessed his heroics remain dumbfounded he survived. President Harry S. Truman presented the Medal of Honor to Mr. Wahlen in 1945. He later re-enlisted in the United States Army, where he served during the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He retired a highly decorated officer with the rank of Major. He then went on to a career with The Veterans Benefits Administration where he continued to serve our country and other Veterans for fourteen years. His story of gallantry as a Navy Corpsman and subsequent years of dedicated service is truly inspirational.

In 2004, President George W. Bush signed legislation authorizing the naming of the George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Salt Lake City. As federal buildings cannot bear the name of a living person, Congress approved special legislation allowing for an exemption in the case of Mr. Wahlen.

Everyone has a story about George. At his memorial service at the medical center so many were compelled to stand, share stories, laugh, and cry. We learned a lot about this remarkable man beyond his war hero status. He was an adoring husband and father. He was a grandfather, and great grandfather many, many times over. He was funny; he was competitive and could take just about anybody on the racquetball court. Our hearts were in our throats as we all watched an old Veteran, his VFW hat proudly perched on his head, struggle to speak. His hands were shaking violently, his words caught in his throat, but nothing was going to stop him from talking about his friend. Some things just need to be said.

George Wahlen went from saving the lives of his fellow marines 64 years ago to affecting the lives of every Veteran, every person he would ever meet after that. Mr. Wahlen we can all learn from you and we are all better people for having known you. For the final time, thank you for your service.



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 American's Veterans

Our Vision

To provide Veterans the world-class
services they have earned

Our Core Values

The core values that motivate us:

Commitment

Excellence

People

Communication

Stewardship



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