Ann Arbor Healthcare System
Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report

Honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well being.
Thank you for supporting the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAAHS); I am pleased to share with you the Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11) Annual Report. This report is an opportunity to share our accomplishments of the past year as well as our initiatives and goals for the future.

FY11 proved to be an exciting year as we broke ground on our new Toledo Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), celebrated the opening of our new Flint and Jackson CBOC’s, as well as our Acute Inpatient Mental Health (AIMH) and Outpatient Mental Health units.

VAAAHS has been actively engaged in the campaign to end Veteran Homelessness. In fact, last year we served more than 1,000 Homeless or At Risk Veterans, we participated in several Stand Downs, and distributed 155 housing vouchers to Veterans for permanent housing. Our Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) program has been providing case management services to Veterans involved in the Justice System. VJO has been instrumental in the creation of Veteran Treatment Courts throughout the area with more to be established this year.

Over the last year, we have diligently worked to improve access to quality healthcare for Veterans. One example is the Telehealth Clinics, where Veterans can now have their appointments over the phone or via video-conferencing. Veterans can send secure messages to their care team and reorder their prescriptions online through My HealtheVet. Providers in remote areas can now communicate via video clinics with specialists through the SCAN-ECHO project.

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and Veterans Health Administration (VHA) have partnered to streamline the process for service-connected disability claims with a pilot program in Toledo called “Click 2 Benefits.” Click 2 Benefits allows Veterans to speak directly with a VBA claims specialist through instant messaging available at the facility.

We thank you for your support in helping us Honor America’s Veterans and look forward to partnering with you in the future.

Robert P. McDivitt, FACHE/VHA-CM
Director

From Left to Right: Associate Director Randall E. Ritter, MBA, FACHE; Associate Director for Patient Care Services Stacey B. Breedveld, RN, MSN; Director Robert P. McDivitt, FACHE/VHA-CM; Chief of Staff Eric W. Young, M.D.; and Assistant Director Ginny L. Creasman, PharmD., FACHE/VHA-CM.
VETERAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICE (VTS):
*Getting our Veterans where they need to be...on time!

One of only four sites selected for this national two-year pilot project, VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System rolled out its newly designed Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) in May of 2011.

Free Transportation for Veterans with Scheduled Appointments

VTS provides **free round-trip transportation** for Veterans traveling to and from the VA Ann Arbor Medical Center for scheduled appointments. There are pick-up locations in Toledo, Monroe, Dundee, Jackson, Chelsea, and Flint, and Livingston, Southern Oakland, and Western Wayne counties. VTS fosters a patient-centered culture by creating healthcare access for Veterans who are visually impaired, elderly, or having difficulty with mobility. 97 percent of users surveyed said the VTS helped them make their appointments and 99 percent would recommend the VTS to another Veteran, even those eligible for travel pay.

Telehealth

With VA’s Telehealth initiative, Veterans can now receive high-quality healthcare from the comfort of their own homes or local clinics. Care Coordination Home Telehealth (CCHT) provides care and case management to Veterans in their homes, using technology to receive disease management information about symptoms, behaviors, and patient knowledge. CCHT activates and engages patients in self management through ongoing education and reinforces Veteran self-care skills. Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) provides real-time Primary and Specialty care to Veterans using videoconferencing technologies. CVT encourages “virtual huddles” between CBOC’s and medical facilities, specialists and PACT teams, and providers and patients/families. Store and Forward (SF) Telehealth provides Veterans access to specialty eye care, dermatology, pathology, and wound care using images obtained by technicians who then forward them to a provider for review.

**SCAN-ECHO**

**SCAN-ECHO,** Specialty Care Access Network Extension of Community Healthcare Outcomes, is a specialty care transformative initiative where many providers come together in conferences to present their own patients for discussion. In this “one-to-many” knowledge network, specialists are able to share information with different providers at once, thus affording them the opportunity to become “champions” in the treatment of complex chronic diseases. For our Veterans, this means improved access to specialty care, decreased costs for Veteran travel, and improved Veteran and provider satisfaction.

**My HealtheVet**

With My HealtheVet, users access trusted and secure VA health information to better manage their healthcare as well as facts about other VA benefits and services. MyHealtheVet helps Veterans partner with their healthcare teams and provides them opportunities and tools to make informed decisions. Some of the tools available are the ability to fill prescriptions online and communicate electronically with their healthcare teams through “Secure Messaging.” For more information go to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).

The bottom line is that our Veterans will receive better access to high quality health care!
HEALTHCARE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS (HCHV):
Giving hope to our Veterans facing extraordinary difficulties

According to Veteran Homelessness: A Supplemental Report to the 2010 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, on any given night in January 2010, there were 76,329 Veterans living in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or in an unsheltered place such as a car, abandoned building, or on the street. As a result, the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System has taken an aggressive approach to Secretary Shinseki’s pledge to end Veteran homelessness by 2014. Our HCHV Program served 1095 Veterans in 2011 throughout an 18-county area in Michigan and Ohio. The HUD/VASH program has experienced significant success, providing 155 vouchers to homeless Veterans for supportive permanent housing.

How it works:

- Veterans are connected with the program through one of five avenues, including street level outreach/Stand Downs, National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, medical center walk-ins, medical center consults, and community provider referrals.
- HCHV staff “walk the line” to engage our homeless Veterans and provide them opportunities to identify barriers to housing and assist them in removing those barriers. In 2011, we began weekly Homeless Services Information Sessions that provide education and information to Veterans about programs offered by the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System’s HCHV program.
- In spite of increases in volume on all fronts, we remain committed to following best practices to ensure “No Veteran slips through the cracks.” Our staff has devoted 100% of their time, talent, and resources to this fight because the words “homeless” and “Veteran” should not be in the same sentence.

VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH (VJO):
Serving Veterans in the Justice System

The VJO program marks a unique collaboration for the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, community court systems, and Veteran service agencies devoted to providing treatment and support to Veterans who find themselves involved with the criminal justice system. The purpose of the Veterans Justice Outreach initiative is to avoid the unnecessary criminalization and extended incarceration of Veterans with mental health problems.

The shared goal? To identify eligible Veterans and connect them with needed VA resources, such as substance abuse treatment and mental health services, in lieu of incarceration or other criminal sanctions. In 2011, 1037 Veterans were touched in some way by VJO services, and of that number 198 Veterans were served.

VAAAHS believes that both the Veteran and the community are better served by treating Veterans’ mental health problems rather than putting them behind bars.
The acronym “AIMH” is most fitting for our new inpatient mental health unit. One could even say that our AIMH unit exemplifies our overall philosophy to Veteran-centered healthcare.

However, we consider our AIMH unit as but one example to illustrate our level of commitment to our Veterans by providing them with the most healing of environments, both physically and psychologically. Jay Miller, Chief Engineer, and his staff really pulled out all of the stops for this project!

This mental health clinic project consisted of **18,000 square foot of interior renovations** to an existing area into an 18 bed inpatient unit, including adjacent outpatient clinic spaces, a new group dining room, a day room, and a combination of private and semi-private rooms. In fact, their commitment and dedication to “aim” for the highest standards of excellence was recently recognized by the Grand Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) with an Honorable Mention for Interior Architecture.

**Outpatient Mental Health**

The newly renovated **20,000 square foot, $5.3 M Outpatient Mental Health Unit** project was an extension of the award-winning Acute Inpatient Mental Health (AIMH) Unit design. In response to the fact that 17% of our 56,000+ patients utilize mental health services, we knew that the Outpatient Mental Health Unit had to be special. That’s why when we opened it in August 2011, we ensured that it had the same warmth and luxury as our AIMH unit. Our patients couldn’t be happier; there is plenty to look at including a big screen TV and a glass waterfall. There is also plenty of room for specialty care groups like the PTSD, Tele-mental Health, and Substance Abuse clinics. When Veterans come to the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, they not only receive high quality healthcare, they also have access to a state-of-the-art facility, one example of which is the new Outpatient Mental Health Unit.

**AIMH – Acute Inpatient Mental Health Unit**

**Outpatient Mental Health**

**33 construction projects**  **Totaling over $18 M**

**13,526 Work orders**  **Gallons of paint: over 1,500**

# of moves completed: 1,380
Excellence in Research

With a budget of $18.4 M, VA Ann Arbor’s research department is a leader in innovative research, employing innovative strategies for improving care with a focus on self-management and use of Web-based technologies. These projects are particularly significant to VHA because they focus on systems to improve care without major resource requirements.

- 85 unique research projects published
- 205 journal articles published
- 103 presentations at regional, national, and international conferences

Promising interventions from our published manuscripts include peer-to-peer support for patients with diabetes, telephone counseling, plus a walking program for patients with depression.

Dr. Christine Freeman was one of only four researchers to be honored nationally for the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers. Dr. Freeman studies chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). We expect more great things from Dr. Freeman, and we know her work will positively impact the way we care for our Veteran Population.

Nuclear Medicine

We are excited to have the only PET/CT Scanner in Michigan which also provides services to Veterans in Northern Indiana, and Northern Ohio. This sophisticated machine is used to identify and stage cancer, and to plan therapy. Always mindful of limiting radiation to patients, this machine has within it a special computer program that uses an individual patient’s weight to calculate the lowest radiation dose necessary to get the best results. When you’re performing over 800 patient scans a year, this is an important fea-

John Kinzinger — VAVS National Male Volunteer of the Year

John Kinzinger’s loyalty and dedication to serving our Veterans won him the 2011 VA Voluntary Services’ National Male Veteran of the Year Award. Thanks to John, our VA was able to purchase an electric transport cart used to shuttle patients within our medical center. Everyone says, “If there is a situation, John’s there.” Our Chapel needed additional funding in order to make it more accessible to our Veterans, and John led the charge. Thanks to his “Car Show for Vets,” which is combined with the Welcome Home Celebration, John helped raise nearly $33,000 for state-of-the-art renovations in our Community Living Center.

Then our Community Living Center needed a large flat screen television for our Veterans and John made that happen. “At the VA, or elsewhere, if a Veteran needs help, you can count on John to come through,” says VVA Chapter 310 members. There he served as the Chairman of the Volunteer Services’ Executive Committee for six years, providing insight and leadership to others having the same passion to serve our Veterans and healthcare system. John embodies integrity, dedication to mission, and self-sacrifice through his compassionate care to Veterans.
Going Above

Emergency Department

The new Emergency Department (ED) scheduled to open in the summer of 2012 will be more than double the size of the current ED. It was designed along the Planetree model with a focus on comfort and privacy for Veterans. The ED will have its own entrance and parking lot, providing easy access for Veterans; it will also be accessible through the main hospital. All patient rooms are private and have a standardized design to allow staff to work more effectively and efficiently. All rooms will be monitored and in full view of the nursing station, which is located in the center of the unit. The new design will make it easier for staff to navigate between patient rooms and through the department. Clinicians will have office space separate from the patient care areas, creating a team-friendly, Veteran Centered Care environment.

Radiation Oncology

VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System has invested in the newest technologies, leading to improved levels of care for our Veterans. For example, in an effort to meet current demands for radiation therapy services, our Radiation Oncology Department is being expanded to include a second linear accelerator, including the addition of a new “TrueBeam System.”

The TrueBeam system is a radically different approach to cancer treatment and gives our oncologists and multidisciplinary teams the power to manage challenging cancers with unparalleled ease anywhere within the body. This is great news if you are a Veteran receiving cancer treatment at the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System. This $2.7 M project broke ground in December 2010 and will be completed in March 2012. “With this second accelerator we anticipate an increase in productivity, from our current 8,300 treatment procedures per year, to that of the growing demands brought in from other referring hospitals like Saginaw or Battle Creek,” says Dr. Shruti, Radiation Oncology Service Chief.
Hematology-Oncology Infusion Center

Being diagnosed with cancer can be a frightening experience; receiving treatment for it shouldn’t be. Our newly-designed 4,200 square foot Hematology-Oncology Infusion Center is replete with all of the “added touches” that make our Veterans feel at home while undergoing Infusion therapy.

This 16-chair treatment area is spacious enough to accommodate patients needing wheelchair access. Veterans can choose to gaze out of their window during their treatment or pull the privacy curtain for a more personal experience.

Each station is outfitted with oversized chairs, complete with heat and massage-settings for comfort, individual lighting, a personal TV, an individual open wardrobe area, and plenty of space for family members to relax while the Veteran is receiving infusion therapy. We’ve even installed computers in the check-in area, all with internet capa-

Toledo Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)

On March 28, 2011, Director Robert P. McDivitt, accompanied by Congresswoman Kaptur, representatives from the offices of Senators Brown and Portman, and Mayor Michael Bell, celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony of what will be our new 99,367 square foot Toledo CBOC. The Toledo CBOC’s number of outpatient visits has increased from 70,000 in FY’10 to 80,000 in FY’11, so we will be expanding several clinical areas to accommodate this increase.

- Primary Care, Mental Health, Dental, Ophthalmology, Physical Therapy, and Complementary/Alternative Medicine all will have more space to better serve our Veterans
- There will be a two-story Resource and Activity Center, complete with computers, to allow our Veterans easy access to “My HealtheVet” and various patient education classes.
- Our Veterans will be able to socialize in the coffee shop or gaze at the “Wall of Heroes,” community art project comprised of photos of Veterans and active duty military.
- Our academic affiliation with the University of Toledo will continue to grow as we participate in the most robust of teaching programs. We see it as investing in the future of the VA.
“NO VETERAN DIES ALONE”

No Veteran Dies Alone (NVDA) is a program in which specially trained volunteers provide companionship and assistance to Veterans at the VA Ann Arbor Medical Center who are entering the final stages of life. These NVDA volunteers are compassionate, loving “fill ins” who provide constant comfort bedside whenever family and friends are unable to be near their loved ones. NVDA helps ensure that no Veteran should have to face the challenge of death alone.

In FY2011, NVDA volunteers provided **more than 2,200 hours** of hand-holding, companionship, and support to Veterans and their families. Our NVDA volunteers read to our Veterans, play music, and whatever other activities will assist in making them as comfortable as possible.

Reema Kadri (below) of HSR&D, was recently honored with the Volunteer of the Quarter Award for her work with NVDA. Her tender heart and soothing compassion for our Veterans in this crucial time embodies the dedication of all our NVDA volunteers.

“NO VETERAN DIES ALONE”

To Care For Him Who Shall Have Borne The Battle And For His Widow And His Orphan

— Abraham Lincoln

PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAMS (PACT)

A PACT is an innovative approach to ensure our Veterans receive whole-person care. Each Veteran is the center of the care team surrounded by their primary care provider, nurse care manager, clinical associate, administrative clerk, family members, and caregivers. With a strong emphasis on prevention and health promotion, a PACT uses the most up-to-date, evidence-based information to determine patient care.

Some of the tools for delivering whole-person care include educational materials, preventive care services, lifestyle coaching, early detection screening, group clinics and seminars. Veteran access to health services is an important measure tracked very carefully. In their PACT, Veterans can communicate with their team over the telephone and through My HealtheVet’s on-line secure messaging system.

PACT allows patients to have a more active role in their health care and is associated with increased quality improvement, patient satisfaction, and a decrease in hospital costs due to fewer hospital visits and readmissions.

“I’ve been here at least 30 times in four months and I’ve never had a bad experience. I am just blown away by the care here” — John Dunn, patient in Radiation Oncology

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VA Jackson Community Based Outpatient Clinic

VA Toledo Community Based Outpatient Clinic
375 active research studies

1,300 students trained

158,633 Documents Scanned

56,645 Veterans served

Visits to the emergency room

17,909

# of Heart Catheterizations 969

$770,117 in donations!

13,561 newly enrolled Veterans

4.6 miles/ day The number of miles our Pharmacy Technicians walk per day!

78,261 volunteer hours

1000 volunteers

455,075 # of outpatient visits

138,056 Travel Claims Processed

# of surgeries 4,662

Admissions 5,662

80 Educational Affiliations

105 hospital beds

519 meals per day

Budget $370 M

Over 1M prescriptions processed

Prescriptions filled 2,600 per day

40 CLC beds