



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

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# News Release

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## **VA Announces Modernization Plans for Canandaigua Campus Facility Also Named “Mental Health Center of Excellence”**

WASHINGTON – To provide better health care into the 21<sup>st</sup> century for New York state veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced several major enhancements at the Canandaigua VA Medical Center, to include new construction and renovation, the opening of a national suicide prevention hot line center and the facility’s designation as a “Mental Health Center of Excellence.”

“These new facilities and programs show VA’s commitment to provide world-class care for veterans using the Canandaigua VA Medical Center,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. “By their service, veterans have earned the very best, and VA is ensuring they get it.”

Nicholson said VA will develop modernization plans for the Canandaigua campus that include construction of a new single-floor 120-bed nursing home, a new 50-bed residential rehabilitation facility and a renovated outpatient building to meet the current and anticipated needs of Finger Lakes area veterans.

The new facilities will be designed to preserve the historic core of the campus by renovating buildings in one of the historic courtyards to retain the ambiance of the 171-acre campus. VA will also explore partnerships with the private sector to generate revenue and complementary services for veterans by leasing under-used buildings and land at Canandaigua.

Nicholson also announced Canandaigua is being designed as a “VA Mental Health Center of Excellence,” working in collaboration with the department of psychiatry at the University of Rochester. In this capacity, the facility will oversee a broad range of efforts -- locally, regionally and nationally -- to improve mental health care for veterans.

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## **Canandaigua 2/2/2/2**

As a Center of Excellence, the facility will focus on suicide prevention, post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues.

Finally, VA has officially opened its National Suicide Prevention Hot Line at Canandaigua, which will provide round-the-clock national assistance for veterans. The hot line is staffed by mental health professionals at Canandaigua taking toll-free calls from veterans across the country. The number is 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Veterans in need of assistance are connected with on-call professionals, then referred for follow-up treatment at their local VA facility.

The program is an important collaboration between VA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in the Department of Health and Human Services.

The new construction and modernization at Canandaigua was a result of the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) review process, which began in 2004 to upgrade VA health care facilities across the country.

Plans for the Canandaigua VA Medical Center will be integrated into the Secretary's nationwide capital plan so that a timetable and budget can be established, followed by congressional consideration for authorization and funding. As VA develops construction plans for the future of the facility, the Department will examine the potential use of portions of the 171-acre campus to assist in the delivery of other complementary services for veterans.

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