

CARES History and Background



- A March 1999 GAO report concluded that if VHA restructured its capital assets it could significantly reduce the operating and maintenance costs of its facilities.
- In response, VHA initiated development of the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Program.
- The CARES process was piloted in VISN 12 (Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison and parts of Michigan) using a contractor to objectively assess health care needs and recommend optimal Service Delivery Options.
- CARES Phase 2 extended the CARES Program to all 21 Networks within VHA.
- Phase 2 relied primarily upon VA staff and resources to develop the Network CARES Market Plans.

CARES History and Background



- The Under Secretary for Health used the Networks' CARES Market Plans to prepare a Draft National CARES Plan (DNCP) with recommendations to the Secretary.
- After review by the Secretary, the final DNCP was submitted to the CARES Commission in August 2003.
- The Secretary appointed a National Commission of non-VA executives to review the DNCP to provide an objective and external perspective.
- The Commission made recommendations to the Secretary to consider in his review of the Draft National CARES Plan.
- The final report of the CARES Commission was submitted in February 2004 and the Secretary announced his decision in May 2004.

Secretary's May 2004 Decision for Muskogee VAMC



- Assess the demand for health care in the Muskogee/Tulsa region, including the potential for expansion of inpatient psychiatry, and recommend a plan to best meet the health care needs of veterans, while maximizing resources.
- Develop a strategy to more effectively manage the vacant space at Muskogee VAMC and enhance services in the region.
- While the study is underway, plan for the closure of the Muskogee VAMC's five-bed inpatient surgery program. Muskogee VAMC will retain ambulatory surgery and have observation beds available.
- The study will be solicit views of stakeholders to ensure that their comments are included in the process.