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News Release

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VA Knoxville Outpatient Clinic under New Management *Effective October 1, 2007: Better Access to World-Class Care*

NASHVILLE -- To provide easier access for East Tennessee veterans to the world-class health care of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the VA MidSouth Healthcare Network has announced plans to realign the Knoxville Outpatient Clinic under the James H. Quillen VA Medical Center in Mountain Home, Tennessee.

"This is a management decision that makes access to care easier and more convenient for veterans and also makes good business sense," said John Dandridge, Jr., Director of the MidSouth Healthcare Network. "This facility realignment is tangible proof of our determination to honor our commitment to veterans."

The plan to transition operational oversight of the clinic was recently approved by VA Secretary Jim Nicholson and calls for the Knoxville outpatient clinic to make the transition October 1, 2007 which is the beginning of the new fiscal year for VA.

The outpatient clinic is currently aligned under VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System located in Murfreesboro and Nashville, Tennessee. Knoxville area veterans and political leaders previously expressed a desire to make this transition, suggesting there would be a benefit to veterans, their families and the VA and provide the necessary leadership and reduce the travel distance between the clinic and the parent facility. Knoxville is 114 miles distance from Mountain Home, while travel distance to the Murfreesboro/Nashville area is approximately 175 miles from the clinic.

"A different approach is required to ensure that the Knoxville clinic is operationally and clinically effective and is in a position to serve the needs of area veterans," Dandridge said. "Mountain Home VA is significantly closer to Knoxville and both sites will now be in the same time zones."

Some benefits of the management transition include:

- Shorter travel time and distance between facilities.
- Scheduling and keeping appointments in the same time zone (Eastern).
- The shift of parent facility designation will relieve some of the capacity pressures at VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System (Murfreesboro/Nashville).

VA MidSouth Healthcare Network
1801 West End Avenue
Suite 1100
Nashville, TN 37203

Contact: Sandra L. Glover
Sandra.Glover@va.gov
(615) 695-2195

The Knoxville clinic has a staff of approximately 50 employees with an annual budget of \$16 million. In addition to primary care, there is on-site support in the areas of laboratory, radiology, optometry and pharmacy, but the majority of outpatient sub-specialty services previously were referred to the Nashville VA campus. During the last fiscal year, FY '06 there were 13,145 patients enrolled at the Knoxville clinic with 10,833 unique patients seen. These patients accounted for 45,477 visits, 103,948 clinic encounters and over 11,000 consults. Over 65 percent of the patients enrolled in the Knoxville area already receive their acute inpatient care services at the James H. Quillen VA Medical Center in Mountain Home.

The VA MidSouth Healthcare Network operates an integrated health care system with parent facilities in Huntington, West Virginia; Lexington and Louisville, Kentucky; and Memphis, Mountain Home, Murfreesboro and Nashville, Tennessee.

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