



VA San Diego
Healthcare
System

2009
Annual Report



Transforming
Health Care
in the 21st
Century



Director's Message

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our outstanding staff and volunteers this year, we continue to provide the highest quality health care and service for our Veterans. The number of Veterans we served in fiscal year 2009 grew by 7.5% for a total of 64,132 patients, including more than 19,000 enrolled Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans. Our OEF/OIF Transition Team of 22 staff works daily with returning Veterans and their family members to create the critical "safety net" for troops transitioning to civilian life. We continue to work on several projects to improve access to health care, including adding "same day" clinics for new Veterans.



VA San Diego Healthcare System has one of the largest research programs within the VA, including our Center for Excellence for Stress and Mental Health. Through our extensive and diverse research, we continue to explore medical advances to improve physical and mental health care and treatment for Veterans.



To meet the needs of our growing Veteran population, we have numerous construction projects, including the remodel of the Canteen dining area and Retail Store. In addition, we are creating more patient care space through the construction on the second floor of the Spinal Cord Injury building and moving administrative services into off-campus office space. Our large, two-story Oceanside Clinic is scheduled to open in Summer of 2010 and will improve access for North County Veterans.

Executive leadership: (l – r)

Robert M. Smith, MD
Acting Chief of Staff/
Medical Director

Janet M. Jones, RN, EdD
Chief Nursing Officer

Jean Sobczak, MBA,
Assistant Director

Cynthia E. Abair, MHA
Associate Director

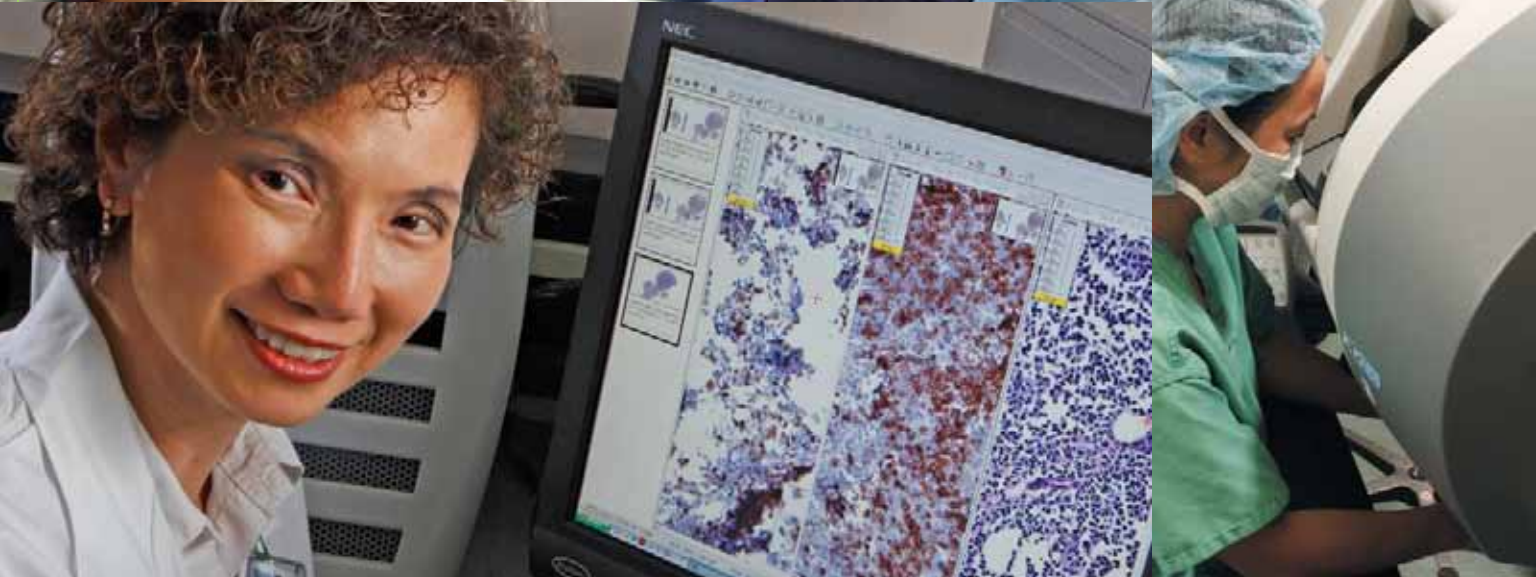
Stan Johnson, FACHE
Director

Through our Patient-Centered Care program, we have embarked on a program of "organizational transformation" to focus even more on meeting the needs of our patients through enhancing health care from the patient's perspective. Staff education, environmental and nutritional projects are already underway this year.

VA San Diego Healthcare System was once again honored to host the 2009 National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic. We had 65 participants with a variety of disabilities, including PTSD, traumatic brain injury, amputations and spinal cord injury. Volunteers from across the nation came to San Diego to make this sports and rehabilitative Clinic a fun and life-changing week for recently injured Veterans.

As a member of the Veterans Health Administration, we are leading health care in the 21st century. On behalf of our leadership team, I want to express our commitment to continuous improvement in medical care, innovation and technical advances, research and customer service. We are honored to serve America's Veterans and we strive to achieve the highest standards for each and every Veteran, every day.

Stan Johnson, FACHE
Director, VA San Diego Healthcare System
VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network

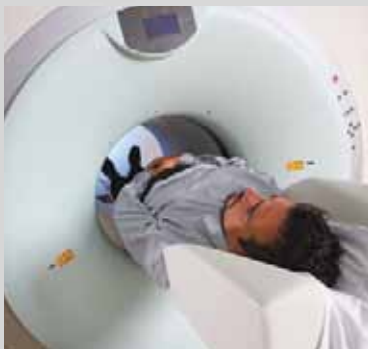


Patient-Centered Care and Advanced Technologies

Digital pathology allows doctors to scan, view and share electronic images of patient tissue samples. Because each sample is converted into a digital image, specialists in distant locations may view and magnify each sample right from their own desktop, which increases efficiency and helps improve health care outcomes.

VASDHS is engaged in a pilot project with Kaiser Permanente and the Department of Defense to share clinical patient records information electronically. Sharing data across organizations, from wherever Veterans receive treatment, will promote continuity and quality of patient care.





Our Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Computed Tomography (CT) scanner is a powerful imaging modality providing detailed three-dimensional images of the body. PET scans accurately image the cellular function of the human body while CT scans assist with anatomical localization. PET/CT scans enable physicians to more accurately diagnose and identify cancer, heart disease and brain disorders.

▲ Pharmacy Service utilizes the most current and innovative technologies available to maintain the highest level of patient safety and quality assurance for our Veterans.



1. SEAMLESS TRANSITION FOR OEF/OIF VETERANS

VA San Diego Healthcare System provides comprehensive care and services for Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans, including health screening (PTSD, traumatic brain injury, etc), case management and outreach. The leadership team participated in an in-depth study of enrollment and care processes for new Veterans that led to improved services.

2. OUTREACH

- VASDHS conducts extensive outreach to assure that Veterans know about their health care benefits.
- Our full-time Transition Assistance Program (TAP) coordinator teaches classes on health care benefits at military installations for separating combat Veterans.
- VASDHS hosted a successful Welcome Home event at the medical center for returning OEF/OIF Veterans, providing information on Veterans' benefits to recently discharged Veterans and their families. More than 800 Veterans and family members attended the event on August 1, 2009.
- VA San Diego Healthcare System supported 101 Transition Initiative programs (total attendance of 4,755) for reservists and National Guard to provide information on their VA health care benefits.

3. IMPROVED ACCESS

Improving access to care remains one of the highest level priorities for VA San Diego Healthcare System. We have been working to improve this on many different fronts. Some of these include:

- An initial physical exam at the time of enrollment for the Veteran's convenience

A Biograph PET scanner is shown in the background, with the brand name 'Biograph' and 'TRACER PET 123' visible on its white surface. The scanner's circular opening is prominent, and a small digital display is visible on the top edge.

Accomplishments

- Timely medical appointments: new OEF/OIF patients are scheduled within 30 days of their desired appointment date and usually within less than two weeks
- An improved appointment scheduling system, which enabled us to markedly decrease our “no show” and “same day” appointment cancellation rates and improve clinical efficiency in cardiology, audiology and primary care
- Exceeding national standards in key (performance measure) clinics for seeing new patients in less than 30 days in cardiology, primary care, orthopedics, audiology, eye and urology

4. AWARDS & RECOGNITION

VASDHS received the 2009 Silver Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Cornerstone Recognition Award. The Cornerstone Recognition Program was initiated by the National Center for Patient Safety (NCPs) in 2008 to enhance the RCA process and to recognize the work done in the area of patient safety at the facility level. VA San Diego Healthcare System received the Bronze Award in 2008.

VASDHS Public Affairs (Leila B. Rubio and Cindy C. Butler) received the 2009 Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Communications Award for excellence in communications for using the “VA Headline News” electronic information boards to provide information to patients, visitors and staff.

Nonnie Artero, Voluntary Service Specialist, received the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Department of California’s Outstanding Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration Employee of the Year 2009 award. She received the award for her development of a student volunteer program.

Steven V. Edelman, MD, received the American Diabetes Association (ADA) 2009 Outstanding Educator in Diabetes Award at the ADA Association’s 69th Scientific Session, June 5 – 9, 2009.

Beth Palmer, DNP, RN, ANP-BC, CNS, received the Advanced Placement Nursing Award, CNS Medical Surgical Award at the 2nd Annual Advanced Practice Nursing Celebration on May 9, 2009, at Point Loma Nazarene University.

Amanda Higginbotham, RN, received the 2009 San Diego Psychiatric Nurse of the Year Award in direct practice. She was presented the award at the San Diego Psychiatric Nurse Award Dinner on May 11, 2009.

VASDHS, as a member of the VISN 22: VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network, received the fiscal year 2007 Under Secretary for Health’s Diversity Level 1 Comprehensive Diversity Management Program Diversity Award.

The VASDHS Pharmacy received the team award for the Under Secretary for Health Pharmacy Award for Pharmacy Benefits Management Innovation Award. This prestigious award honors pharmacy staff who have demonstrated exceptional leadership to positively influence practice locally, regionally and nationally. The VASDHS team included: Victoria E. Aldridge, PharmD; Helen K. Park, PharmD; Mark Bounthavong, PharmD; Jessica Harris, PharmD; Andrea Nguyen, PharmD; Trisha Ung, PharmD; and Anthony Morreale, PharmD.

Ken McAndrews, PharmD, was selected as 2009 Navy Reserve Pharmacist of the Year.

The San Diego Patient Safety Taskforce received the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) 12th Annual Cheers Award at the American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists meeting on December 8, 2009, in Las Vegas, NV. The VASDHS Pharmacy Service was a key member of the San Diego Patient Safety Taskforce which was recognized.

Accreditation & Certification

The Joint Commission 2007-2010

Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF): Spinal Cord Injury, Medical Rehabilitation, Wellness and Vocational Rehabilitation Enhancement, and Homeless Programs

College of American Pathologists

Comprehensive Cancer Center (American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer)

American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC)

Nuclear Regulatory Commission

American Association of Blood Banks

FDA Registered Blood Bank

Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA)

National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)

Research Accreditations

5. CONSTRUCTION

The Engineering Service team worked on the following construction projects this year:

- The Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) Retail Store and cafeteria dining area were remodeled to improve convenience and customer service.
- Internal construction is underway on the second floor of the Spinal Cord Injury Unit to create additional patient care space.
- The construction of the VA Oceanside Clinic is on schedule and is expected to open in the Summer of 2010.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

- The VASDHS launched new "VA Headline News" electronic information boards, including 16 screens throughout the medical center hallways and patient waiting rooms. The new system has improved communications and sharing of information for patients, visitors and staff.
- The Web Content Coordinator and Web Advisory Board launched a new, professional VASDHS intranet site in April 2009. The new site is completely updated and offers improved navigation and content as well as the internal news bulletin, "E-News."

7. PATIENT-CENTERED CARE (PLANETREE)

Through our Patient-Centered Care program, we have embarked on a program of "organizational transformation" to focus even more on meeting the needs of our patients through enhancing health care from the patient's perspective. Staff education, environmental and nutritional projects are already underway this year.

8. ALTERNATIVE REVENUE

VASDHS collected \$18.4M, comprising the Cost Fund (MCCF), plus external services. We exceeded our collection goal at a local facility to enhance services for patients.

9. CARE & SHARE

For the 21st year, the VA San Diego employees packed holiday food baskets for our employees and their families in San Diego County. Baskets included canned and boxed foods, grocery items and toys for children. Baskets were customized to meet the needs of each family. To raise awareness, employees held bake sales, a silver food drive. In addition, they received donations from vendors. VA employees delivered baskets to homes in mid-December.

10. DONATIONS RECEIVED

VASDHS received donations totaling \$1.2M in year '09. Major donations included Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV), vans from Disabled American Veterans, accessible buses from AmVets and International Inc. for patient programs. These donations provide invaluable support for patients and staff for San Diego Veterans.



Profile

The VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) provides a wide range of inpatient and outpatient health services at the medical center in La Jolla, and at six community clinics located in Chula Vista, Escondido, Imperial Valley, Mission Valley, Mission Gorge, and Vista. We provide medical, surgical, mental health, geriatric, spinal cord injury, and advanced rehabilitation services. VASDHS has 236 operating hospital beds, including skilled nursing beds, and operates several regional referral programs including cardiovascular surgery and spinal cord injury.

We are affiliated with the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine and provide training for 1,437 medical interns, residents and fellows, as well as 64 other teaching affiliations for nursing, pharmacy, dental and dietetics. VASDHS has one of the largest research programs in the VA nationally, with a budget of \$48.5 million (FY 2009), 189 principal investigators, and 506 projects.

Financial Report & Statistics

FY 2009 (10/1/08 – 9/30/09) BUDGET

Total Medical Care Appropriations	\$439,278,928
Operating Expenses	\$439,278,928
Salary, Wages & Benefits	\$262,113,089
Supplies	\$54,934,987
Services	\$83,160,219
Other Expenses	\$39,070,633

STAFFING STATISTICS

(FTE = Full Time Equivalent)

Employees (FTE)	2,403
Physicians (FTE)	186
RNs (FTE)	509
Other (FTE)	1,708
Medical Residents & Students	1,437
Other Clinical Trainees	998

VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

Volunteers	1,093
Volunteer Hours	93,537
Donations (cash and non-cash)	\$617,397

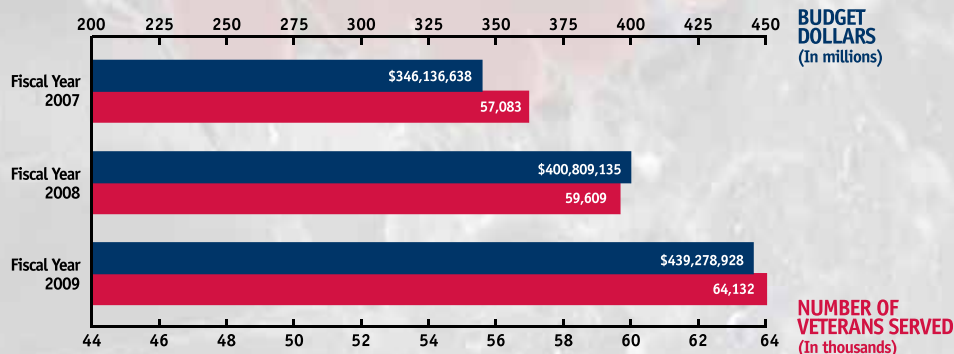
RESEARCH STATISTICS

Total Research Funding	\$48,521,521
Principal Investigators	189
Research Projects	506

WORKLOAD STATISTICS

Medical Center Beds Total	236
Acute	167
Community Living Center	43
Spinal Cord Injury	26
Admissions Total	7,558
Acute	7,085
Community Living Center	473
Patient Days Total	65,471
Acute	54,460
Community Living Center	11,011
Average Length of Stay	8 Days
Acute	8 Days
Extended Care	22 Days
Surgeries Total	5,030
Inpatient	2,402
Outpatient	2,628
Outpatient Visits Total	636,191
Chula Vista Clinic	17,127
Escondido Clinic	16,397
Imperial Valley Clinic	4,006
La Jolla Medical Center	482,621
Mission Valley Clinic	123,720
Vista Clinic	38,037
Patients	64,132
Number of Veterans in San Diego and Imperial Valley (estimate)	247,227

BUDGET & VETERANS SERVED



A critical link in the patient safety chain: using the highest-quality automated decontamination and sterilization systems in the health care industry. The competent Central Service Team is dedicated to the safety of our Veterans.

Preventing health care-associated infections is a high priority goal and our health care providers understand that washing hands with soap and water or using an alcohol sanitizer will help stop transmission of disease and keep our patients safe.



Services

Alcohol/Drug Treatment Center
 Ambulatory Care
 Audiology & Speech Pathology
 Cardiac Care
 Combat Veteran Services
 Chaplain Services
 Comprehensive Women's Clinic (FIRM)
 Critical Care
 CT Scanner
 Dental Service
 Diabetes Care Team
 Extended Care Center

Former POW Program
 Geriatrics
 Gulf War Registry Program
 Hemodialysis Center
 HIV/AIDS Treatment (Special Infectious Disease Program)
 Home Based Primary Care
 Homeless Veterans Program
 Home TeleHealth
 Magnetic Resonance Imaging
 Mammography
 Medication
 Neurology

Nuclear Medicine
 Nutrition Counseling
 Oncology
 Optometry
 Ophthalmology
 Pain Management
 PET Scanning
 Pharmacy
 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Clinic
 Primary Care (FIRM)
 Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service

Psychiatry
 Psychology
 Rehabilitation Services
 Research Opportunities
 Sexual Trauma Counseling
 Spinal Cord Injury Center
 Surgery
 Traumatic Brain Injury Care
 Ultrasound
 Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST)

VA San Diego Healthcare System

MEDICAL CENTER

VA San Diego Healthcare System
 3350 La Jolla Village Drive
 San Diego, CA 92161
 (858) 552-8585
 1 (800) 331-VETS (8387)

WEB ADDRESSES

For more information, visit us at:
www.sandiego.va.gov

FREQUENTLY CALLED PHONE NUMBERS

TeleCare (24-hour Nurse Advice Line)
 1 (877) 252-4866

Enrollment & Eligibility Questions
 (858) 552-7523

Appointment Scheduling (Medical Center)
 (858) 552-7475

VET CENTERS

San Diego Vet Center
 2790 Truxtun Road, Suite 130
 San Diego, CA 92106
 (858) 642-1500

San Marcos Vet Center
 One Civic Center Drive, Suite 150
 San Marcos, CA 92069
 (760) 744-6914

OUTPATIENT CLINICS

VA Chula Vista Clinic
 835 Third Avenue
 Chula Vista, CA 91910
 (619) 409-1600

VA Escondido Clinic
 815 East Pennsylvania Avenue
 Escondido, CA 92025
 (760) 466-7020

VA Imperial Valley Clinic
 1600 South Imperial Avenue
 El Centro, CA 92243
 (760) 352-1506

VA Mission Gorge Clinic
 4525 Mission Gorge Place
 San Diego, CA 92120
 (619) 228-8000

VA Mission Valley Clinic
 8810 Rio San Diego Drive
 San Diego, CA 92108
 (619) 400-5000

VA Oceanside Clinic
 1300 Rancho del Oro Road
 Oceanside, CA 92056
 (Opening Summer 2010)

VA Vista Clinic
 1840 West Drive
 Vista, CA 92083
 (760) 643-2000



VHA Mission Honor America's veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

VHA Vision To be a patient centered integrated health care organization for veterans providing excellence in health care, research, and education; an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner and a back up for National emergencies.

We Value Trust, respect, excellence, compassion, and commitment.



MEMBER OF THE VA DESERT PACIFIC HEALTHCARE NETWORK VETERANS INTEGRATED SERVICE NETWORK 22

