



erievamedicalcenter

2011 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence

Integrity — Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

Commitment — Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

Advocacy — Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Respect — Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

Excellence — Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

Core Characteristics

The Core Characteristics define “what we stand for,” and help guide how we will perform our core mission; they shape our strategy, and will influence resource allocation and other important decisions made within VA.

Trustworthy — VA earns the trust of those it serves – every day – through the actions of all employees. They provide care, benefits, and services with compassion, dependability, effectiveness, and transparency.

Accessible — VA engages and welcomes Veterans and other beneficiaries, facilitating their use of the entire array of its services. Each interaction will be positive and productive.

Quality — VA provides the highest standard of care and services to Veterans and beneficiaries while managing the cost of its programs and being efficient stewards of all resources entrusted to it by the American people. VA is a model of unrivalled excellence due to employees who are empowered, trusted by their leaders, and respected for their competence and dedication.

Innovative — VA prizes curiosity and initiative, encourages creative contributions from all employees, seeks continuous improvement, and adapts to remain at the forefront in knowledge, proficiency, and capability to deliver the highest standard of care and services to all of the people it serves.

Agile — VA anticipates and adapts quickly to current challenges and new requirements by continuously assessing the environment in which it operates and devising solutions to better serve Veterans, other beneficiaries, and Service members.

Integrated — VA links care and services across the Department; other federal, state, and local agencies; partners; and Veterans Services Organizations to provide useful and understandable programs to Veterans and other beneficiaries. VA's relationship with the Department of Defense is unique, and VA will nurture it for the benefit of Veterans and Service members.



A Message from the Director

In 2011, we celebrated 60 years of distinguished service to America's Veterans. We have come a long way since opening in 1951, and it has been a privilege for me to be a part of this transformation. What I am most proud of is where we are headed. This *Report to the Community* gives you a framework of what we have done and where we are going as we embrace community partnership, patient and visitor feedback, and new health care technologies.

Every day, we strive to serve Veterans in a way that reflects integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence (I CARE). These are the new VA core values that were created and rolled out to VA's across the

country in 2011. While these values may be new, our employees have been reflecting I CARE for years because we know it's that personal touch that truly matters.

I CARE is more than just words; it's a call to action. Throughout this report, you will see a glimpse of the actions taken on behalf of local Veterans to advance services, enhance communication, and to be, at our very core, a model of what Veteran-centric health care should look like.

Over the past couple of years, we have been redesigning systems and processes to be more efficient. To be clear, we are not cutting programs or services; in fact we are adding many new programs and services,

as you will see in this report. What we are doing is taking a systematic approach to eliminate waste in processes, so we get the most value out of resources we have been given. We believe that is what integrity looks like in action.

It has been an exciting year and we look forward to many years of service to come.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael D. Adelman".

Michael D. Adelman, MD
Medical Center Director

erie cares.

integrity.

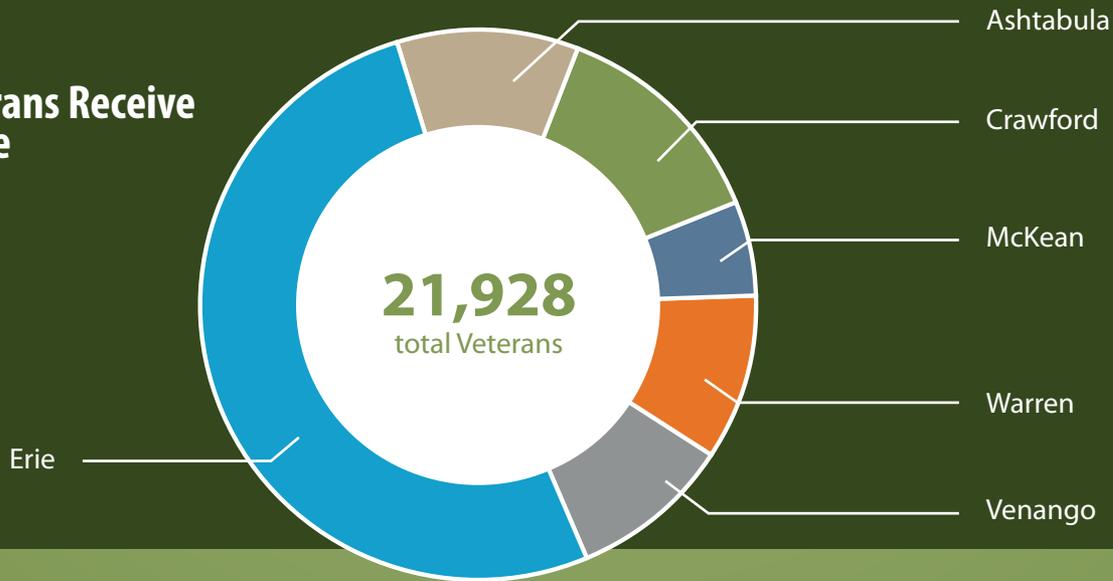
high moral principle; highest professional standard

Local Community Clinics

Erie VA's five community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) provide health care to more than 10,500 Veterans, nearly half of our entire patient population. These community clinics provide primary care, behavioral health, home-based primary care, and telehealth services. Behavioral health and telehealth services will continue to expand at the CBOCs over the next couple of years as we work to provide better primary care and specialty care services to Veterans in rural areas.

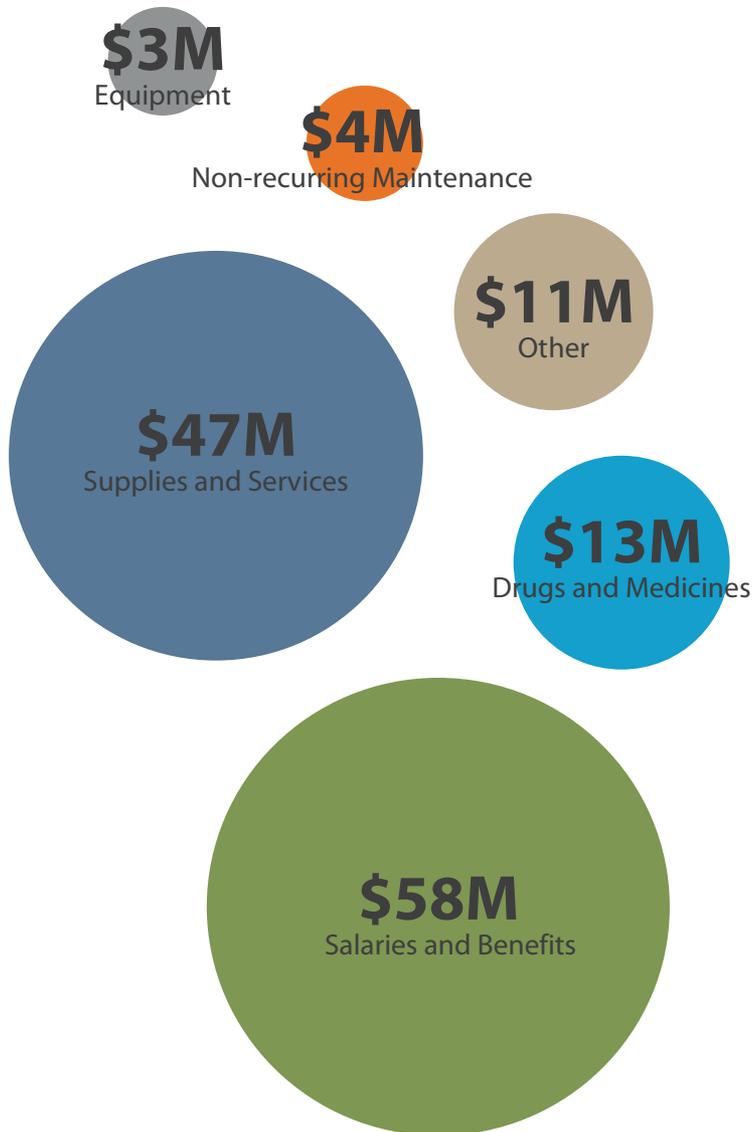


Where Veterans Receive Primary Care



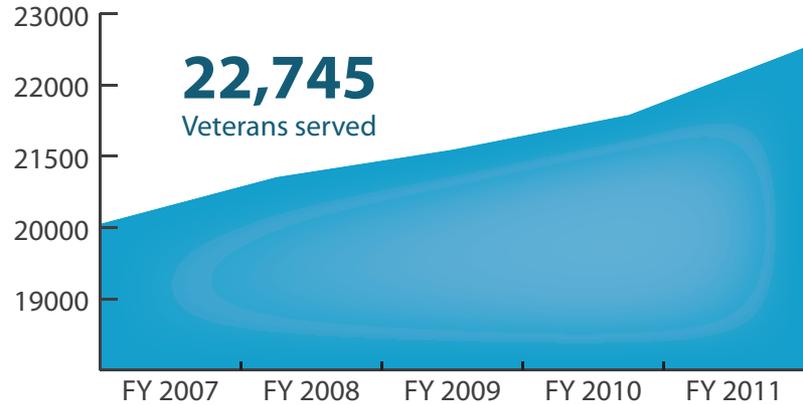
Find out more about our clinics, scan this code.

FY 2011 Operating Budget

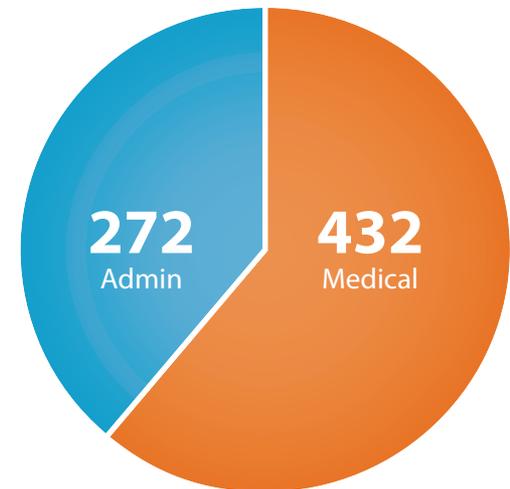


Erie VA is committed to providing exceptional health care. Using systems redesign tools, we've been able to cut waste and add more value in the way we care for Veterans. Making the most of our resources is a priority and it's one way we strive to serve with integrity.

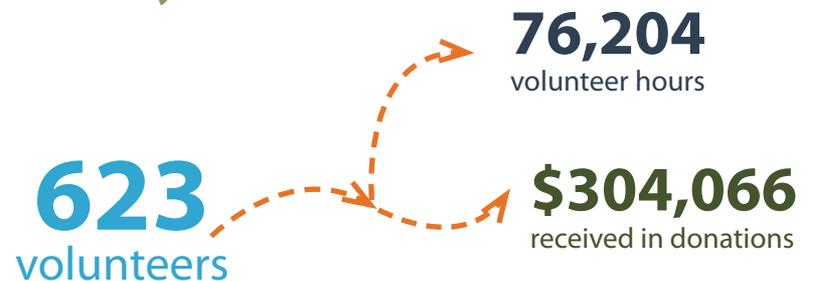
Unique Veterans Served by Fiscal Year



Workforce Composition



Voluntary Services



commitment.

diligent service to Veterans; earnest belief in VA's mission

Building a Legacy of Care

In 2011, we celebrated 60 years of distinguished service to America's Heroes.

Erie VA Medical Center opened its doors to more than 1,300 Veterans in 1951. In the early days, there were only two roll-about televisions on each ward, one pay phone on wheels, and patients shared rooms with seven to 15 other patients.

Today, patients can send secure electronic messages to their doctors, refill their prescriptions online, and receive home-based primary care from the comfort of their own home.

Many things have changed over the past 60 years, but one thing stays the same: Erie VA Medical Center remains committed to providing exceptional care to Veterans.

Erie VAMC History

- Construction began in June 1948
- First patient admitted April 1, 1951
- Opened with 204 beds: 130 medical, 66 surgical and 8 psychiatric; today we have 65 operating beds
- In the 1950's, the medical center served 2,200 Veterans, today we serve more than 21,000 Veterans
- Total cost for construction was \$6.5 million

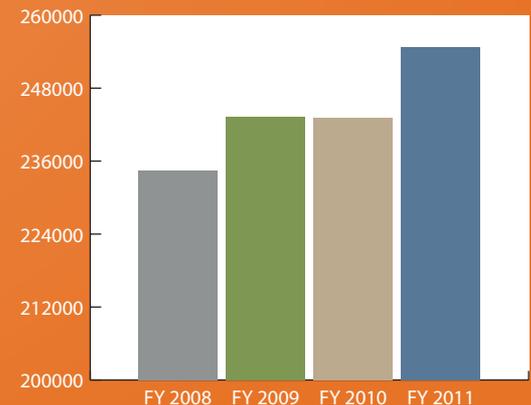


Making Visits Count

Erie VA is a busy place. In addition to the 254,720 outpatient visits and 6818 emergency room visits, we held many activities that drew in visitors including the bimonthly Veterans Advocate Advisory Committee. This committee was created to obtain Veteran feedback on VA programs

and services to ensure our day to day operations are convenient and effective for patients. Parking is a common theme that presented from feedback. To address this, Erie VA is planning to open a parking garage.

Outpatient Visits



Under Construction

Environment matters. Over the next couple of years, we are making room for more patients, more services, and more parking!

Crawford County CBOC

Expected Start Date
Spring 2012
Expected Completion
Late Fall 2012
Square Footage
6,500 new

New Behavioral Health Building

Expected Start Date
Spring 2012
Expected Completion
Spring 2013
Square Footage
20,000 new
Cost
\$7,000,000

Community Living Center

Expected Start Date
Summer 2013
Expected Completion
Summer 2014
Square Footage
20,400 new
Cost
\$9,500,000

Parking Garage

Expected Start Date
Spring 2013
Expected Completion
Winter 2013
Parking Capacity
240 spaces
Cost
\$8,500,000

Meeting Behavioral Health Needs

Erie VA behavioral health clinic saw an increase of more than 1000 new patients in just four years. Since then, Erie VA has more than doubled the amount of behavioral health staff and has expanded programs and services to meet the unique needs of this rapidly expanding population. In 2011, the behavioral health clinic added a new PTSD group education program, made significant progress in providing behavioral health services to more Veterans living in rural areas through the ERANGE program, and expanded homeless case management and prevention services to more than 300 Veterans and their families. The new behavioral health clinic, expected to be ready in 2013, will help us better meet the needs of area Veterans.



An artist's rendering of the new behavioral health clinic.

2,851

Patients in FY07

9

Employees in FY07



4,463

Patients in FY11

50

Employees in FY11

advocacy.

Veteran-centric; identifying and advancing interests of Veterans

Compensation & Pension Results

A team of Erie VA staff worked to improve the timeliness and quality of compensation and pension exams and reports. As a result, 100 percent of the exams were completed in full in an average of 18 days, far better than the national goal of 30 days, from the time a request for a compensation and pension exam came in to the time the final report is sent to regional office.



Golf Cart Shuttle Program

Monday through Friday, rain or shine, patients and visitors can hop on board our Golf Cart Shuttle for a ride to any part of the Erie VA campus. Erie VA's customer service team created the Golf Cart Shuttle program after receiving feedback from patients and visitors about having to park a long distance from the entrances. Since February of 2011, the volunteer-driven Golf Cart Shuttle has been transporting patients and visitors from parking lots to the Erie VA Medical Center and back making everyone's health care experience more convenient and enjoyable. This is patient feedback in action.



New Caregiver Support Program

Erie VA launched the Caregiver Support Program in May 2011. This program provides support to more than 90 caregivers and 11 Post 9/11 caregivers. Tricia Stritzinger, the program coordinator, works with families to assess the needs of Veterans and their caregivers and connects them with the right resources.

Services provided include respite care, home hospice care, a monthly stipend, counseling services and more. Caregivers receive comprehensive VA caregiver training and continued education on a variety of topics such as traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder, and Alzheimer's disease. The program coordinator developed a monthly caregiver support group offering peer-to-peer support which has been invaluable to the group members.



Tricia Stritzinger
Program Coordinator



The hardest part of becoming a **caregiver** is that you become the sole support system for the entire family. Now I have a **support** system. Now we have a place we can **trust**; a team of people we can go to for answers and resources. This program saved our family.

*Brianne Stiffler,
Post 9/11 Caregiver.*

Brianne's husband was left with several TBIs and PTSD after two deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. Serving as a wife, mother, and caregiver, she is thankful to have someone to turn to for answers, resources, and support.

respect.

treat those we serve with dignity and respect

Vet Center

The Erie Vet Center started several new programs in 2011 in partnership with community providers that provide combat Veterans with unique hands-on counseling. These include Guitar Therapy, Craft & Chat Therapy, and Couples Retreats.

Another such program is the Equine Therapy Program where Veterans and their family members work on building relationships with horses to enhance non-verbal communication skills, develop trust, and improve self-esteem. The behaviors learned in working with horses carries over into other personal relationships.



Erie Homeless Summit

Dozens of key city officials and community members attended a Homeless Summit to collaborate on VA's goal to end homelessness among Veterans. During the summit, participants discussed opportunities to improve collaboration, remove VA and community barriers, and explore avenues for additional homeless program funding. Erie VA's Homeless Care Team continues build awareness throughout the community in efforts to end homelessness by 2015.



Telephone Care Clinics

Most follow-up appointments, education, and consult scheduling can be done without a physical exam. Instead of making patients come in for a visit, we decided to simplify things.

Every PACT team created a telephone clinic so these types of follow-up issues can be taken care of over the phone rather than face-to-face. The telephone care clinics provide timely and effective care while saving patients a visit. Now, 7.1% of all Primary Care encounters are via telephone care clinics.

Telehealth Care

Telehealth services continued to grow and now serves more than 5,900 patients. Erie VA offers 11 different telehealth programs providing specialty care services such as dermatology, retinal imaging, dietary support, behavioral health, and palliative care. Telehealth programs use videos, cameras, and in-home monitors to make specialty care services more convenient for the Veteran. The goal of these programs is to prevent or manage disease by connecting patients with the right care, at the right place, at the right time.

The TeleMOVE program held me accountable for my weight loss goals and it's the only thing that has worked for me. It was **informative** and **personal**. I want to be around a long time for my eight grandkids. My youngest grandson said he likes having more room to sit on my lap now that my belly is smaller – that's enough motivation for me. It's simple, successful, and at \$3.39 per gallon it's **easier** to do this in my own home without having to travel.

*Lloyd "Cliff" Boyer
Air Force and Vietnam Veteran
TeleMOVE participant
lost 36 pounds*

excellence.

the highest quality and continuous improvement



2,808
Veterans enrolled in My HealthVet

2,785
prescription refills/month

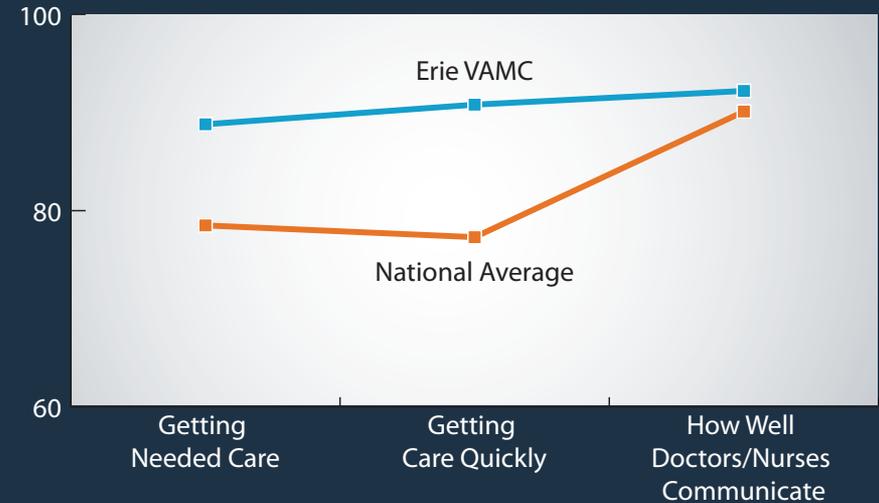
1,676
Veterans authenticated

301
Veterans in secure messaging

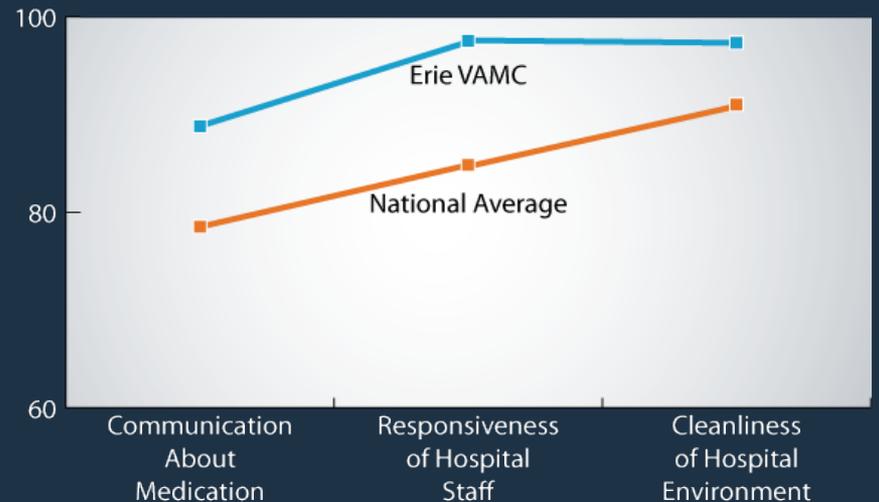
31
secure messaging teams

More than 2,800 Veterans are taking control of their health with My HealthVet. All 22 PACT teams and several specialty care teams went live with secure messaging giving patients online access to communicate with their health care teams. Now, My HealthVet users can send messages to their health care team, view appointments, refill prescriptions, view lab results, and more online.

Outpatient Satisfaction Scores



Inpatient Satisfaction Scores





New Ambulatory Surgery Center

Expected Start Date
Winter 2014

Expected Completion
Winter 2014

Square Footage
8,000 renovated / 6,000 new
Cost
\$9,000,000

Erie VA's surgical clinic performed more than 1,700 procedures and another 1,800 exams. To ensure the highest quality of care, Erie VA is planning to open a new Ambulatory Surgery Center that includes a centralized check-in area and state-of-the-art surgical elements.

Surgical Team Advances

Erie VA Medical Center was one of the first facilities in the area to offer a new endoscopic method of carpal tunnel release surgery. This new method allows for a faster recovery time, averaging about six weeks for recovery because less tissue is disturbed during the surgery. This method also lowers risk of infection, inflammation, and strain on the stitches from movement. Launched in July of 2011, the endoscopic method of carpal tunnel release surgery demonstrates Erie VA's commitment to excellence by improving care through early adoption of cutting-edge methods.

In 2011, Erie VA Medical Center was named one of the nation's top performers on key quality measures for surgical care by the Joint Commission. Erie VA was one of only 405 U.S. hospitals and the only hospital in northwestern Pennsylvania to earn the distinction of top performer for attaining and sustaining excellence in key performance measures.

community.



"It is my sincere belief that this hospital will become an integral part of this community."

GENERAL GRAY, 1951
AT THE OPENING OF THE ERIE VAMC

- 1 50 Year Masonic Service Emblem presented to CLC Veteran by Dr. Ishwar Bharwani
- 2 VISN 4 Director, Michael Moreland, FACHE visits Erie VA
- 3 Erie VA's Annual Memorial Service
- 4 Veteran Volunteer, Gary Orlando at the Annual VAVS Conference
- 5 Community members at the Annual Hometown Heroes Bowling Tournament
- 6 Annual Welcome Home baseball game at Jerry Uht Park
- 7 Erie VA's "Pink Out" for Breast Cancer Awareness

- ① Erie VAMC Staff in the Erie Zoo Parade
- ② Veterans visiting with community members during National Salute to Veterans Week
- ③ CLC Unit "M*A*S*H" Party
- ④ National Suicide Week Walk at Erie VAMC

- ⑤ Carol Goodman, Karen O'Neal, & Bonnie Lee Mikula at the Voluntary Service Recognition Banquet
- ⑥ Arbor Day tree planting
- ⑦ Produce from the monthly Farmer's Markets held on station



Social Networking



This year, Erie VAMC began focusing on using social media to connect with our community of Veterans and their families. By the end of 2011, we had 493 friends on Facebook, 211 Twitter followers, and 1,728 subscribers to our GovDelivery e-mail mailing list. Join us online on Facebook and Twitter.



Like us on Facebook

Educational Affiliations

Erie VA Medical Center has academic affiliations with more than 94 trade-schools, colleges, and universities. Edinboro University, Mercyhurst College, Gannon University, Tri-State, University of Pittsburgh, Slippery Rock, and Penn State University are among those. In 2011, more than 153 people have received training at Erie VA through academic affiliations.



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VA
HEALTH CARE | Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century