

2024 Annual Report



VA

**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health
Administration
VA Great Lakes Health
Care System (VISN 12)





NETWORK DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Greetings! As the proud Executive Director of Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 12, it is an honor to present the VISN 12 2024 Annual Report.

VISN 12 offers healthcare services to over 800,000 Veterans in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan's Upper peninsula, and Northwest Indiana. Over the past year, we have remained steadfast in our mission to deliver exceptional care—expanding access, enhancing services, and ensuring Veterans receive the high-quality healthcare they have earned.

Our team has worked tirelessly to provide timely, compassionate, and Veteran-centered care through a variety of initiatives. We expanded telehealth services, strengthened mental health resources, advanced preventive care and improved processes to ensure Veterans receive care when and where they need it most. We fostered strong partnerships with community organizations to bridge gaps and address disparities, and took significant strides in Veteran Whole Health initiatives. We also prioritized employee well-being, reinforcing our commitment to those who serve Veterans every day.

A major milestone in FY24 was the successful launch of VISN 12's first facility on the new Oracle Health Federal Electronic Health Record (FEHR). This marked a significant step toward modernizing our healthcare system, improving data integration and enhancing care coordination for our Veterans.

As we look ahead, we remain firm in our commitment to lead the way in Veterans' health care, embracing innovation, new technologies and workforce empowerment. We will continue listening to Veterans and their families to ensure our services reflect their needs and expectations.

Our deepest gratitude to all our partners, stakeholders and the dedicated professionals who make this mission possible. We will continue to honor the service of those who have given so much for our country by providing them the care they have earned and deserve.

Sincerely,
Daniel S. Zomchek, Ph.D., FACHE
Executive Director



FY 2024 Leadership Team

Executive Director
Daniel S. Zomchek, Ph.D., FACHE

Deputy Network Director
Ike Lusk

Chief Medical Officer
Gregg Meekins, MD

Chief Nursing Officer
Shavetta Williams, MSPH, RN

Quality Management Officer
Barbara R. Kelly, MS, RN

Our Philosophy

Mission

To serve the health care needs of America's Veterans. This is accomplished through a comprehensive, integrated health care delivery system that provides excellence in health care value, excellence in service as defined by customers, and excellence in education and research.

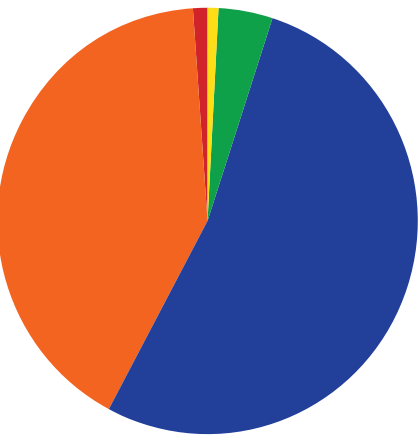
Core Values

Integrity
Commitment
Advocacy
Respect
Excellence

Vision

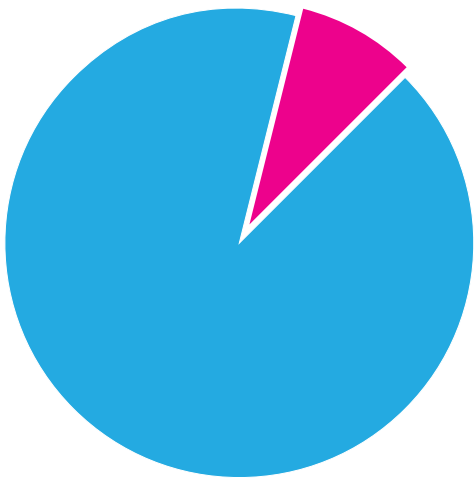
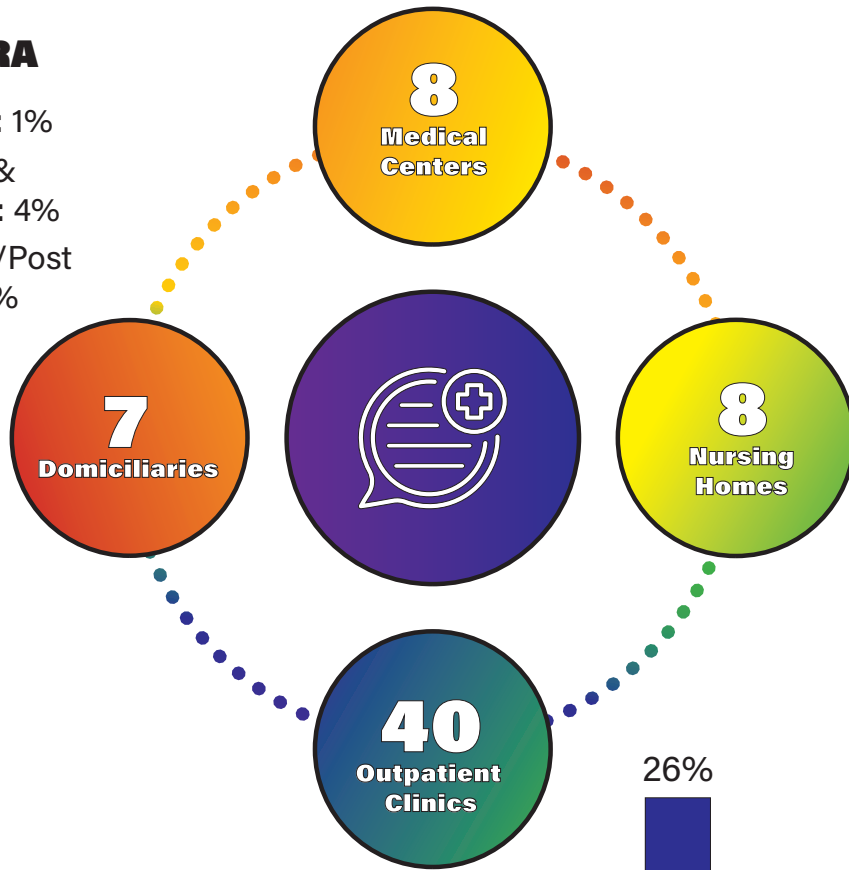
To be a Veterans' health care system that supports innovation, empowerment, productivity, accountability, and continuous improvement. Working together, a continuum of high-quality health care is provided in a convenient, responsive, caring manner.

VISN 12 AT A GLANCE



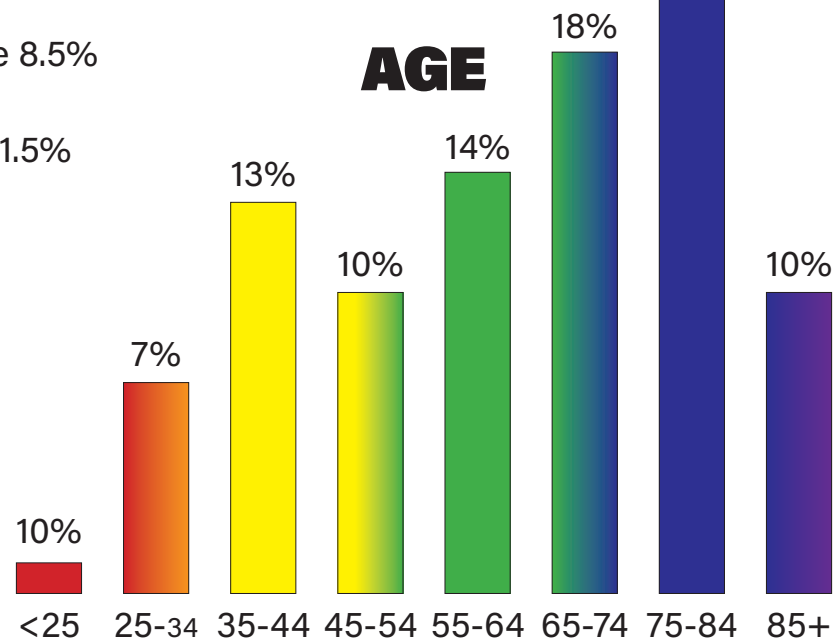
SERVICE ERA

- World War II: 1%
- Korean/Pre & Post-Korean: 4%
- Vietnam Era/Post Vietnam: 53%
- Persian Gulf War: 41%
- Other: 1%



GENDER

- Female 8.5%
- Male 91.5%



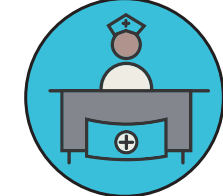
AGE

Operating Budget (FY2024):

↑ Total Operating Budget (7.44%)	\$6,095,388,474
↑ Salaries & Benefits (12.96%)	\$3,147,985,946
↑ Community Care (18.91%)	\$1,261,376,286
↑ Supplies & Equipment (1.08%)	\$410,118,911
↑ Contract Services (4.02%)	\$340,904,666
↑ Consolidated Mailout Pharmacy (16.8%)	\$308,478,986
↑ In House Drugs & Medicine (13.53%)	\$283,802,879
↓ Lands & Structures (65.1%)	\$130,378,257
↑ All Other (3.78%)	\$212,342,542



**314,030
VETERANS
SERVED**



**31,187
TOTAL
ADMISSIONS**

Workforce:

↑ Total Employees (2.02%)	22,416
↓ Veterans (2.73%)	4,091
↓ New Hires (27.71%)	2,280
↑ Physicians (2.76%)	1,751
↑ Nurses (3.88%)	5,360
↑ Other (15.29%)	8,934



**4,001,327
OUTPATIENT
VISITS**

Volunteers:

↑ Total Regular Volunteers (22.3%)	1,810
↑ Total Occasional Volunteers (144%)	4,778
↑ Total Volunteer Hours (10.43%)	215,598.54 Hours

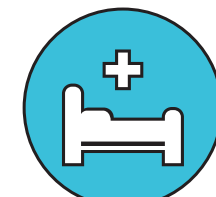
Donations:

↑ Total Value Monetary Donations (30.17%)	\$1,352,600.48
↑ Total Value Activity Donations (45.2%)	\$200,245.69
↑ Total Value Non-Monetary Donations (1.17%)	\$2,648,868.68
↑ Total Value All Donations (10.71%)	\$4,201,714.85

*↑↓ Indicates an increase (↑) or decrease (↓) from FY2023 to FY2024



**18,269
TOTAL
SURGICAL
CASES**



**2,020
OPERATING
BEDS**

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD MODERNIZATION (EHRM)

On March 9, 2024, Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC) successfully went live with the new Oracle Health Federal Electronic Health Record (FEHR), becoming the sixth medical facility to go live within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the first facility in VISN 12.

The successful go-live was made possible due to several success factors including:

- Using lessons learned from both VHA and the Department of Defense (DoD)
- Regular huddles at multiple levels
- Change Management
- Communication
- Culture of reporting incidents and patient safety events
- Patient Safety Command Center
- Increased surge support (National EHRM Staffing Support Unit, Details from other facilities and DoD Pay It Forward Program)

VISN 12 supported Lovell FHCC to ensure a successful go-live. Nationally, the EHRM-Integration Office has been focused on improving the Federal Electronic Health

Record (EHR) as part of its comprehensive program Reset. VA is seeing measured improvement with the current implementation of the Federal EHR in VA, however, there continues to be work ahead. VA is now preparing to restart pre-deployment activities in fiscal year 2025.

This EHR transformation, and the accompanying modernization of the technologies that connect to it, will support VA's mission into the future, enabling the continued provision of high-quality, safe, and efficient health care to those who have served our nation.



A common system to bring together health records from DOD, USCG, NOAA, community care providers and VA



Faster, smarter care decisions powered by data analytics that take a broad view of a Veteran's entire medical history



Standardizing the care VA delivers and developing consistency across the nation.



Advanced cybersecurity measures to ensure data privacy



The ability to leverage industry-leading technology and add new functionality so providers can best serve the unique needs of Veterans

PACT ACT

Ongoing implementation of The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act - or the PACT Act - allows VISN 12 to continue to expand health care and service offerings to more Veterans. The PACT Act extended eligibility, added multiple service connection presumptive conditions and locations, and provided for toxic exposure screening for every Veteran enrolled in VA health care.

The PACT Act Performance Dashboard highlights key accomplishments since the Act was signed into law on August 9, 2022. Almost six million Veteran enrollees have been screened for toxic exposures. In about 46% of those screenings, Veterans endorsed at least one potential exposure. In VISN 12, the number screened is over 243,000 with 44% of those screened indicating at least one exposure.

Also, because of new eligibilities codified in the PACT Act, over 183,00 Veterans newly enrolled in VHA and almost 870,000 current Veteran enrollees moved to higher Priority Groups. In VISN 12, over 46,00 Veterans saw Priority Group increases.

Outreach and community event continued to get the word out to Veterans about PACT Act opportunities available to them. Whether at VA townhalls, community events, or in partnership with Veteran Service Organizations, we work proudly every day to connect Veterans to the benefits they've earned.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) heralded a major milestone in PACT Act

implementation in 2024. As of March 5, 2024, all Veterans who met the basic service and discharge requirements and who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving our country—at home or abroad—were able to enroll directly in VA care under the PACT Act. This eligibility expansion was originally slated to be executed using a phased-in schedule between October 2024 and October 2032. By eliminating the phased-in approach, we are providing more Veterans with the care and benefits they have earned sooner. This will lead to more new enrollees and Priority Group changes. VISN 12 is ready and willing to meet the needs of all our Veterans. More information can be found at www.va.gov/PACT.

COMMUNITY CARE

During fiscal year 2024, VISN 12 medical centers processed over 340,000 VA Community Care consults.

The Community Care Program has continued to ensure Veterans have access to care. The VISN 12 Community Care Program remains committed to providing eligible Veterans with the care they need when and where they need it.

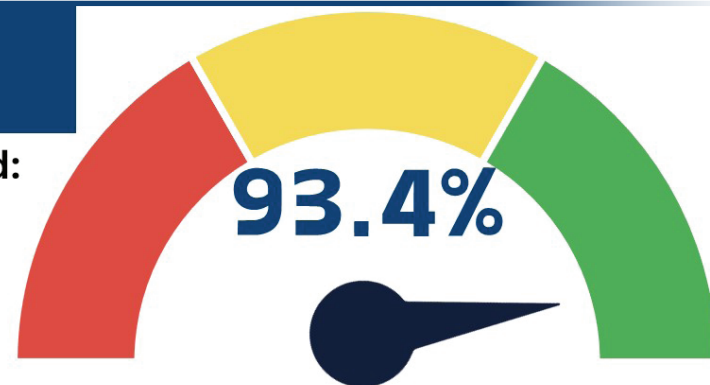
The top types of care sought by Veterans in 2024 were:

- Emergency Care
- Cardiology
- Orthopedic
- Dermatology
- Skilled Home Health Care
- Ophthalmology
- Chiropractic
- Gastroenterology
- Complementary and Integrative Health
- Dental

What Veterans are Saying

Top Five Areas Veterans Complimented:

- Quality of Care
- Interactions with Staff
- Cleanliness of Facility
- Ear Clinic Services
- Satisfaction with Specialty Care



93.4% of Veterans report trusting VA Medical Centers across VISN 12 for their health needs!

Based on 78,900 responses received in VSignals in year 2024, our trust score is 93.4%, which is above the national average of 92.3%.

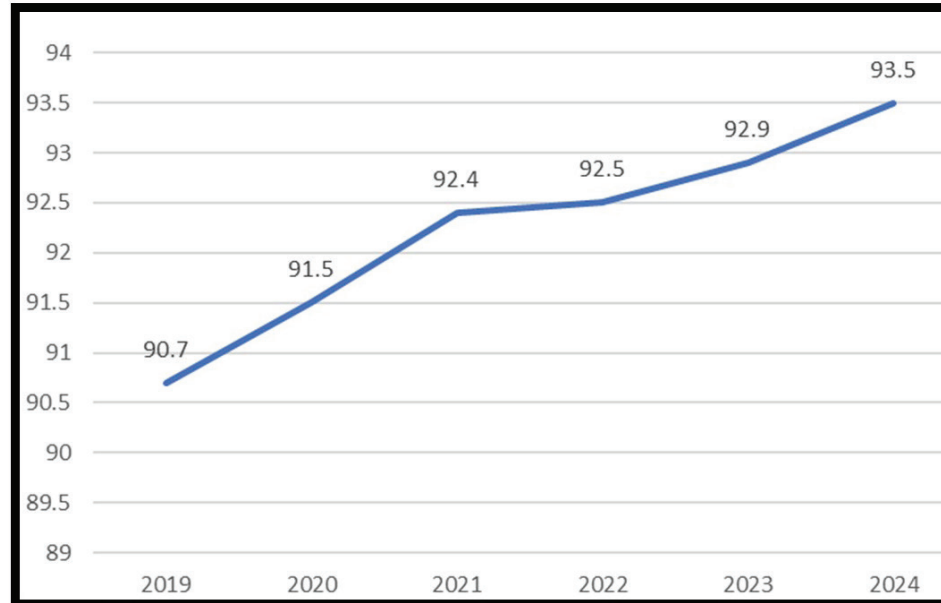
CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (CDCE)

In FY 2024, VISN 12 enhanced services and support for Veterans through impactful volunteer initiatives and strategic partnerships. Volunteers played a crucial role in fostering social connections, reducing isolation, and strengthening bonds through programs like No Veteran Dies Alone, Compassionate Contact Corps, Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN), and Recreation Therapy. VISN 12 also launched Centenarian Programs to honor Veterans aged 100 and above.

The implementation of the VA Buddy System supported the continuum of care for DAV passengers attending VA appointments, while the Jesse Brown VA Emergency Ride Share program improved patient safety by providing 25-40 monthly rides for stranded patients. VISN 12 continued to combat food insecurity by supporting local VA food pantries and partnering with the Hinsdale Humane Society to provide pet supplies to veterans at weekly pantry events. The growth of corporate and community partnerships led to new volunteer assignments and support for additional departments.

Madison VA's CDCE Chief established a Purple Heart Hall of Honor, showcasing local Purple Heart recipients. Illiana VA launched the Old Glory's Rest Flag Retirement Service in collaboration with the American Legion and Boy Scouts of America, expanding ceremonial services for veterans and the community. Milwaukee VA received national recognition for its innovative Diva Day event, and VISN 12 contributed to a Government Accountability Office audit of VTN/DAV, providing essential insights into rural healthcare transportation.

Volunteers also supported the crucial My VA Health program by increasing the availability of iPads for veteran use. Additionally, the region participated in outreach events, PACT Act initiatives, veteran benefits events, blood drives, and community-based activities. These accomplishments reflect VISN 12's commitment to enhancing Veteran care and strengthening community connections.



VSignals Trust Score "I Trust VISN 12 for My Healthcare Needs" 2019-2024

"I Trust VISN 12 For my Health-Care Needs"

HIGH RELIABILITY ORGANIZATION

High reliability organizations (HROs) are characterized by their commitment to minimizing errors, enhancing patient experiences, and promoting a culture of safety. VISN 12 has embedded these principles into its core operations to ensure the best possible care for over Veterans, strategically implementing structural processes to weave high reliability into the fabric of its operations. This effort is not just about meeting standards but transforming the way healthcare is delivered.

Across VISN 12, innovative initiatives demonstrate the power of high reliability in action. For instance, at the VA Illiana Health Care System, the dental team's "The Daily Wrap" debriefs revolutionized communication, leading to more efficient processes. Meanwhile, the physical and occupational therapy team at Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center used regular debriefs to explore additional care opportunities, particularly for Veterans with amputations.

The focus on high reliability extends to leadership practices as well. Facilities like Jesse Brown VA Medical Center host monthly safety forums to tackle critical issues such as Veteran suicide and racial inequalities, fostering open dialogue and actionable solutions. These initiatives are complemented by robust communication systems, including employee listening sessions and safety huddles, which empower staff to report concerns before they escalate into adverse events.

The commitment to high reliability has yielded impressive results. VISN 12 boasts Veteran

satisfaction levels that consistently surpass national averages, with outpatient, inpatient, and emergency medicine trust scores leading within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These outcomes are a testament to the dedicated efforts of VISN 12's staff and leadership in fostering an environment where Veterans feel valued and cared for.

The journey toward high reliability is ongoing, requiring continuous commitment and adaptation. VISN 12's efforts exemplify how healthcare systems can evolve to meet the needs of their patients while maintaining the highest standards of safety and quality. By prioritizing open communication, data-driven decision-making, and innovative problem-solving, VISN 12 is not only meeting but exceeding the expectations of its Veteran population.

In honoring our Veterans, the commitment to high reliability reflects a deep respect for their service and a promise to provide the exceptional care they deserve. As healthcare continues to evolve, VISN 12's pioneering efforts serve as a model for others striving to achieve high reliability and transform patient care for the better.

VHA'S JOURNEY TO

HIGH RELIABILITY

Your Care is Our Mission.

VA VIDEO CONNECT (VVC)

Whether it's bad weather, a busy day, or chronic pain, VA is here for you! VA Video Connect (VVC) appointments eliminate many of the issues that keep Veterans from making their appointments. VISN 12 is committed to increasing access to Veterans and caregivers by providing care where the Veteran chooses, including in their home!



VVC is a VA solution that is private and secure, using encrypted video. It allows Veterans to receive healthcare from anywhere, making VA more convenient and reducing travel.

Some Veterans already have the equipment to participate in VVC - a laptop, desktop, tablet, or smart phone - the ability to see with a camera, speak with a microphone, speakers to hear, and a quality picture with high-speed internet. For Veterans who do not have equipment, they can participate through a VA loaned device. When Veterans require peripheral equipment, there are stethoscopes, pulse oximeters, weight scales, blood pressure cuffs, and thermometers.

VVC allows Veterans to get their healthcare at the time and place that's most convenient to them. VVC eliminates travel, including traveling in inclement weather. It is more convenient for those who work, are in school, and live in rural areas with limited access to VA healthcare facilities. Employed Veterans can have their appointments during break or lunch time. For Veterans who find it difficult to walk, VVC gives them access to the help they need.

VVC is easy to use - just ask one of the 58,00+ Veterans in VISN 12 who had a VVC appointment in 2024! The scheduler makes the appointment. The provider and Veteran receive an email or text with a link to a secure connection. At the time of the appointment, each clicks the link to enter the virtual medical room.

Veterans like and trust VVC appointments. In 2024, nearly 1 out of every 4 Veterans in VISN 12 had a VVC appointment. Research shows no differences in mental health treatment for in-person or telehealth. VA providers determine which services are clinically appropriate for VVC. Veterans can then choose VVC or in-person care.



VVC has increased healthcare access to Veterans. There are many clinical areas that provide care to Veterans in their homes. In 2024, the most common VISN 12 clinics were:

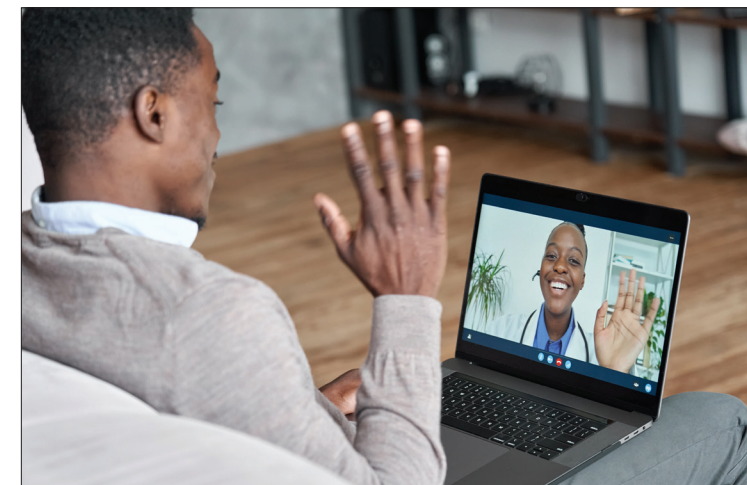
- Mental Health
- Whole Health
- Weight Management and MOVE!
- Primary Care and Women's Primary Care
- Caregiver Support Program
- Clinical Pharmacy
- Specialties: Pain, Endocrinology, Nutrition/Dietetics, Sleep Medicine, Neurology, Gastroenterology, and Diabetes
- Rehabilitation: Physical Therapy, Recreational Therapy, Speech Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Blind Rehab Center, Polytrauma/TBI, SCI, and Physiatry
- Remote Patient Monitoring-Home Telehealth
- Social Work Service
- Surgery: Podiatry, General Surgery, and Urology



VVC groups are also available. In 2024, almost 75,000 Veteran appointments in VISN 12

occurred in groups on Substance Use, Weight Management, Mental Health, Nutrition, and PTSD, among others.

In 2024, VISN 12 had over 120,000 VVC visits with Veterans who live in rural and highly rural areas. Contact your VA health care provider or team for more details!



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



VISN 12 Behavioral Health (BH), including Mental Health (MH), Suicide Prevention (SP), and Homeless operations, thrives through eight integrated programs serving a geographically diverse Veteran population. From urban centers to one of the nation's most rural VA Medical Centers, VISN 12 BH staff consistently delivers prompt, safe, and high-quality care, consistently outperforming other VISNs in MH SAIL metrics, wait times, staffing and access. In FY 2024, VISN 12 also excelled in BH care quality, as shown by successful Joint Commission and CARF surveys.

VISN 12 began the year with a BH leadership training for administrative officers, focusing on operational efficiency and MH service management. Throughout the year, suicide prevention remained a top priority, with efforts like the Aggregate Root Cause Analysis process, the Lethal Means Campaign distributing 150,000 gunlocks, and Project Life Force providing group treatment for high-risk Veterans. Under the COMPACT Act, VISN 12 provided emergent care to Veterans released from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable. VISN 12 also offered a specialized, trauma-informed Postvention program for survivors of suicide loss.

VISN 12 consistently prioritized hiring MH clinicians, surpassing national staffing requirements. In FY 2024, the VISN emphasized efficiency and fiscal responsibility, realigning clinical staff to essential areas. The stepped care and FLOW initiatives transitioned low-acuity Veterans to Primary Care, improving access to MH specialty care for those with higher needs.

Peer Specialists, Veterans with personal recovery experience, are integral to treatment teams, helping Veterans engage in VA healthcare. VISN 12's Peer Support Specialists are recognized as among the best in the nation. VISN 12 leads the nation in implementing the innovative, recovery-oriented, Veteran-centered Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP).

VISN 12 exceeded all VA goals for reducing Veteran homelessness, with Madison VA ranking first in preventing homelessness recurrence and VA Illiana recognized for

low return rates. The VISN also developed the HUD-VASH Geriatric Program for aging homeless Veterans, and its Veterans Justice Outreach was recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for successful collaboration with Cook County Jail in transitioning Veterans to VA care.

In FY 2024, VISN 12 also focused on training clinicians in Evidence-Based Psychotherapies, including through the Clinical Resource Hub; improved suicide screenings, ensuring timely evaluations for those at risk; and expanded Whole Health Integration in MH care.

VISN 12 leads in MH treatment and research, embodying President Lincoln's promise "to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors." We remain committed to providing the best care and support to America's Veterans.



**Veterans
Crisis Line**
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

 **Chat online**

 **TEXT 838255**

CAREGIVER SUPPORT



Since 2010, the VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP) has been dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of caregivers who support our nation's Veterans. Today, CSP serves over 74,000 caregivers across all VA facilities, including more than 3,000 in VISN 12. As the program continues to grow, it remains committed to providing innovative services, education, and resources to caregivers. CSP operates through two key programs: Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) and Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC).

in VA health care who have a serious injury (or illness) and require in-person personal care services, among other requirements. This program includes a monthly stipend, respite care, mental health services, and health insurance for eligible participants. In FY24, VISN 12 processed 2,597 PCAFC applications, approving 550 new Family Caregivers, with 97% of applications processed within 90 days. The program supported 1,875 Veterans, completing 33,820 clinical encounters and 4,900 wellness check-ins.

PGCSS is the core of CSP and is available to all caregivers of Veterans enrolled in VA health care. It offers skills training, peer support, coaching, mental health counseling, and respite care. In FY24, VISN 12 CSP increased PGCSS enrollment by 37%, exceeding the national benchmark, and successfully enrolled 602 new caregivers, bringing the total to 1,193. V12 CSP enrolled 100% of general caregivers within 45 days, which is above national standards.

PCAFC offers enhanced clinical support and services for caregivers of eligible veterans enrolled



Throughout FY24, CSP advanced several key initiatives to enhance caregiver support. In partnership with the Clinical Resource Hubs (CRH) and the Office of Mental Health (OMH), CSP offered the Virtual Psychotherapy Program for Caregivers (VPPC) across the nation and provided over 1,030 VPPC encounters/visits within VISN 12.



To expand access to respite care, CSP designated subject matter experts at every VA medical facility and piloted a Veteran Directed Care-Respite initiative at 11 sites, including two within VISN 12. Approximately 23% of Veterans enrolled in the PCAFC received referrals for respite care during FY24, providing essential support for caregivers. Additionally, recognizing caregiver need for emergency preparedness, CSP partnered with the Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE) and SimLEARN to offer CPR training at 80 VA sites nationwide, including three in VISN 12, with plans to expand at all VA sites in FY25. Caregiver satisfaction remains a top priority, and VSignal survey results reflect CSP's impact. In FY24, 95% of caregivers expressed satisfaction with CSP services, 93% found staff helpful, and 90% trusted CSP's commitment to Veterans and their families. With a dedicated team of 91.5 staff members, VISN 12 CSP continues to provide essential support, ensuring caregivers have the resources they need to care for themselves and the Veterans they serve.



VETERAN WHOLE HEALTH



VISN 12 remains dedicated to supporting the whole health of Veterans, their caregivers, and survivors. To further advance the Whole Health System of Care, more than \$1.9 million in special purpose funding was distributed to VISN 12 medical centers in FY 2024.

This funding resulted in new hires, including an acupuncturist, Whole Health partners, chiropractors, a Health & Well-Being coach, a Whole Health coordinator, and administrative staff. Additionally, funds were used to acquire supplies and equipment that enhance Whole Health services, including laptops for biofeedback, massage chairs, fitness center equipment, under-desk pedals, VR headsets, two meditation pods, a rejuvenation station, VARIDESKs, Chiropractic Hylo tables, wellness carts, massage chair pads, MP3 players, and headsets.

During FY 2024, 30.67% of all Veterans receiving care at VISN 12 medical centers also accessed Whole Health services. This amounted to 250,949.2

Whole Health encounters, with 76,972 Veterans participating—an impressive 58% increase from FY 2023.

The expansion of Tele-Whole Health services was also significant. In FY 2024, 11,405 unique Veterans utilized Tele-Whole Health, resulting in 79,254 encounters. This marks a 38.7% increase in unique patient participation and a 29.9% rise in total encounters compared to the previous year.

VISN 12 continued its participation in the *Discover What Matters – Live Whole Health* campaign, an innovative marketing effort that involved wrapping 22 vehicles across the network, including one at the VISN 12 Network Office. These mobile billboards provided continuous, high-visibility promotion of Whole Health services across five states, covering 127 counties and 109,139 square miles. Unlike static messaging or short-term broadcasts, these vehicles offered long-term engagement by participating in targeted outreach events such as Veterans Day parades and VA/Veteran community events.

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

In FY24, VISN 12 remained committed to fostering a supportive and engaged workforce through various well-being programs.

The VISN 12 2024 employee culture workshops focused on enhancing communication, trust, and inclusivity. Held in May, the workshops covered 10 key topics, including leadership, wellness, and psychological safety, with nearly 900 employees attending live and an additional 114 viewing recordings.

The VISN 12 Behavioral Wellness program provided employees with up to three free virtual wellness sessions through the Whole Health Clinical Resource Hub. These confidential sessions included health and wellness coaching, meditation, guided imagery, and stress management techniques. In FY 2024, 12 staff reached out for services and, of those 12, 100% completed the pre and post perceived stress scale (PSS), showing an average 17.5% decrease in their stress levels. Employees seeking support can schedule sessions by contacting VHAVISN12StaffBehavioralWellness@va.gov.

The VISN 12 Decreasing Employee Burnout Community of Practice (CoP) call series provided a monthly platform for discussing strategies to foster a thriving work culture.

VISN 12 offered free virtual fitness classes through Millennium Health & Fitness, including yoga, Pilates, and Zumba, available to both employees and Veterans. With over 3,300 participants, this program promoted physical and mental well-being.

The VISN 12 Patient Safety Forum, held in March 2024, emphasized Just Culture, psychological safety, and strategies to reduce employee burnout. To enhance workplace culture, the Listen, Sort, Empower (LSE) initiative helped teams address

everyday challenges and improve professional satisfaction.

The Reduce Burnout and Optimize Organizational Thriving (REBOOT) movement provided leadership resources to combat burnout and strengthen workplace engagement. The movement supports every VISN 12 employee's ability to give their best in serving our nation's Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.



Employees also participated in Take 15, an initiative where they shared meaningful experiences with a volunteer writer who crafted personalized poems in return. Employees interested in participating can contact Take15@va.gov.

Additionally, the Chief Well-Being Officer (CWO) Intervention Request Portal offered leadership consultations on burnout prevention, workplace safety, and employee engagement strategies.

These initiatives collectively reinforced VISN 12's dedication to improving employee well-being, fostering a culture of trust, and ensuring a supportive work environment where every employee could thrive.

STRATEGIC PLANNING



Strategic planning is a structured approach to defining a desired future and mapping out the actions needed to achieve it. At VISN 12, our strategic and operational planning is rooted in our mission: "...to serve the health care needs of America's Veterans. This is accomplished through a comprehensive, integrated health care delivery system that provides excellence in health care value, excellence in service as defined by customers, and excellence in education and research."

Our planning framework is guided by three core strategic priorities—collaboration, standardization, and innovation—which shape our approach to improving Veteran care. Collaboration ensures facilities share best practices and optimize VISN-wide resources. Standardization enhances efficiency, productivity, and communication across our system. Innovation drives the adoption of cutting-edge clinical, operational, and healthcare advancements.

With our mission and priorities as our compass, VISN 12 has focused on developing tools and methods to deliver seamless care—ensuring Veterans and VHA staff have real-time access to critical information to make informed healthcare decisions. This means Veterans can receive the

right care, at the right time, and in the right place, aligned with top clinical standards.

To achieve this, we have prioritized key initiatives to enhance the Veteran care experience. One such initiative is the Referral Coordination Initiative (RCI), which is transforming the way we coordinate referrals to ensure Veterans remain at the center of their healthcare decisions. This initiative establishes dedicated referral coordination teams to guide Veterans through their healthcare options, improves scheduling efficiency to offer timely access to care at VA facilities or, when eligible, with community providers, and empowers Veterans to make informed choices about their care based on their needs and preferences.

Another focus area is transfer coordination, where we are implementing a centralized bed availability system covering acute care, long-term care, domiciliaries, and Emergency Departments. This effort ensures accurate, real-time visibility of available beds across facilities, facilitates safe, timely, and clinically appropriate patient transfers, and improves access to care while optimizing resource utilization across the network.

Additionally, VISN 12 has developed a comprehensive clinical inventory cataloging the services and treatment modalities available at each care site. This tool enhances care coordination by providing staff with a clear view of available resources, improves referral efficiency by ensuring Veterans receive care at the most appropriate location, and supports strategic decision-making in resource allocation and service expansion.

VISN 12 is dedicated to providing excellent care and services. Through a robust, data-driven planning process, we continuously refine our strategies to deliver industry-leading healthcare to Veterans.

Veteran Voices

"I have never had any problems when I have to deal with the VA. Everyone I ever dealt with is very courteous and respectful. In fact I would like to compliment them for the job they do with us veterans. Thank You!"
~76 Year Old Male, Madison VA

"I was shocked with how kind everyone was. It was genuine, from the guy at the table, the ladies at the check in, the nurse who took my information, the doctor who tool over an hour with me, the nurse who helped me afterwards. I walked out to my car and cried. They listened to me! They cared about me!"
~51 Year old Female, Kenosha WI

"Everyone is extremely professional, polite, and helpful. I am very appreciative of the work they all do to help me and fellow veterans".
~31 Year Old Male, Iron Mountain VA

"Every time I go to the clinic, my experience has been always pleasant from the ladies at the front desk to the doctors I see, including the young lady in the lab exceptional, and less not forget the janitor, she is always keeping the clinic clean have not had a bad experience yet."
~ 70Year old Female, Jesse Brown VA



Jesse Brown VA Medical Center



Iron Mountain VA Medical Center



VA Illiana Health Care System



William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans' Hospital



Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center



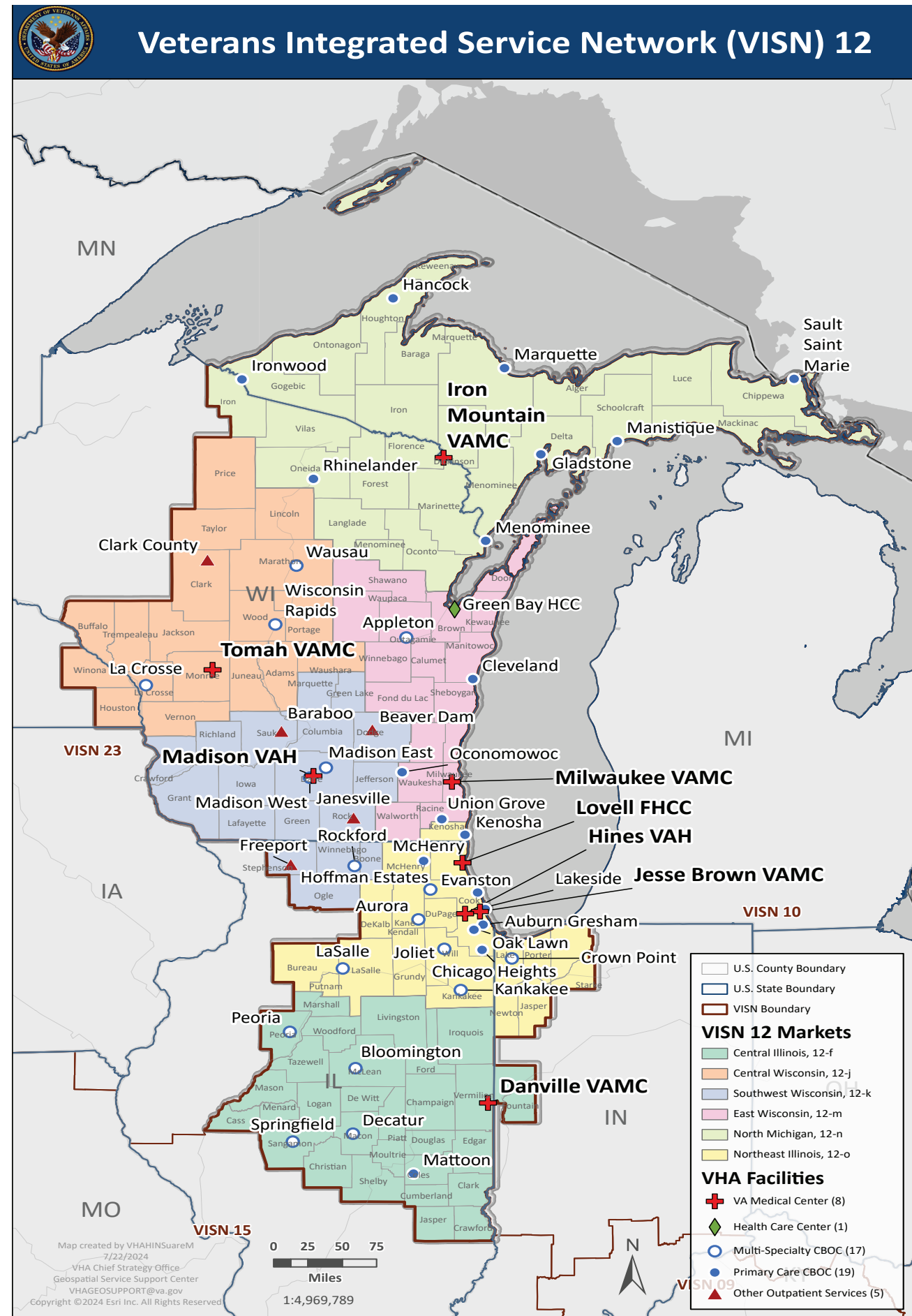
Tomah VA Medical Center



Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital



Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center





“To fulfill President Lincoln’s promise to care for those who have served in our nation’s military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors.”

VA Mission Statement