



**VA Heart of Texas
Health Care Network**
Keeping Veterans at the HEART of it all

November 2010

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November 11, 2011



Network news

Our Three Promises to Veterans



As the VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network's Director, I'd like to share our three promises to Veterans:

- 1. Provide care second to none,**
- 2. Maintain and expand services, and**
- 3. Every Veteran will be personally satisfied based on outcome.**

Our Network will focus on the following outcomes to meet our promises:

- ◆ **Improved quality of life,**
- ◆ **Improved functional status, and**
- ◆ **Personal Veteran satisfaction.**

What is quality? I believe there are two aspects to quality. One aspect is technical quality, the hands-on provision of care. The second aspect is perceived quality, that is how the Veteran, their family and significant others see their care.

Technical quality has several components, such as:

- ◆ **Assurances** — Certification, licensures, credentialing, privileging, education, training, and external review findings.
- ◆ **Data** — Performance improvement and quality indicators/measures.
- ◆ **Safety and Reliability** — Data on patient incidences, root cause analysis conducted and systematic issues related to safety.
- ◆ **Program Integrity** — Gold standard benchmarks and peer reviews to ensure our programs are second to none.

Perceived quality is defined as:

- ◆ Staff demonstrates respect and dignity for the Veteran,
- ◆ Cleanliness of facility,
- ◆ Patient-centered scheduling,
- ◆ Respect for the Veterans time, and
- ◆ Sharing information in ways that are meaningful to the Veteran and their family members.

Veteran-centered care is:

- ◆ A fully engaged **partnership** of Veteran, family and healthcare team.
- ◆ Established through **continuous healing relationships**.
- ◆ Provided in a **optimal healing environment**.
- ◆ In order to **improve health outcomes** and the Veteran's **experience of care**.
- ◆ People are treated with **respect and dignity**.
- ◆ Health care providers communicate and share complete and unbiased **information** with patients and families in ways that are affirming and useful.
- ◆ Individuals and families build on their strengths through **participation** in experiences that enhance control and independence.
- ◆ Patients, families, health care practitioners, and hospital leaders **collaborate** in policy and program development, implementation and evaluation; in healthcare facility design; and in professional education, as well as in the delivery of care.

It is also important to be efficient by being good stewards of the funds we receive and look for continuous improvement in both quality and efficiency.

Continued on Page 2

Health care systems bring home coveted VA Carey awards

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Award is an annual award sponsored by the Secretary. The **South Texas Veterans Health Care System, San Antonio**, is one of two recipients of the 2010 Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Trophy. South Texas shares the trophy with the Central Arkansas Healthcare System, Little Rock.

At a VA ceremony, in Washington D.C, South Texas received the award that recognizes organizations within the VA that have implemented management approaches

"I thank God for my VA health care here in San Antonio! I have had private, expensive health care that doesn't come close to this."

*Monica Ruis Morton
South Texas Facebook
[http://www.facebook.com/
SanAntonioVAMC](http://www.facebook.com/SanAntonioVAMC)*



that result in sustained high levels of performance and service to Veterans.

The **VA North Texas Health Care System** received the Performance Excellence Award and the **Central Texas Veterans Health Care System** received the Performance Achievement Award.

The award is named in memory of Robert W. Carey, a publicly recognized VA quality leader and a champion for excellence in the federal government. He was the Director of the Philadelphia Regional Office and Insurance Center from 1985 until 1990.

VA celebrates National Family Caregiver Month

November is National Family Caregiver Month, a chance to honor the 65 million selfless family caregivers who assist and support chronically ill, disabled or aged family members or friends. Among these devoted men and women are those who ensure that Veterans have emotional and physical support, access to health care and the

opportunity to remain in their homes when they can no longer completely care for themselves.

The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010, signed into law by President Obama on May 5, allows VA to provide unprecedented benefits to family caregivers of Veterans. Throughout November, family caregivers

and VA employees will participate in events at VA medical centers, including resource fairs, special education program and wellness programs. All events are VA's way to thank and honor those who make life better for Veterans and other Americans.

More information is available at www.caregiver.va.gov.

Our Three Promises to Veterans Cont. from Page 1

Our four health care systems will align their goals under nine areas:

Goals

- 1. Maintain Services**
- 2. Expand Services**
- 3. Promote innovations in health care**
- 4. Identify/Implement management efficiencies**
- 5. Identify/Implement clinical efficiencies**
- 6. Determine hiring priorities**
- 7. Maximize alternate revenue streams**
- 8. Manage enrollment**
- 9. Enhance access**

The Network has established a toll-free, 24/7, phone number for Veterans to call with their issues and concerns. The number is **1-877-823-3907**. We are also developing a **Veteran Advocacy Program** with experienced advocates to assist Veterans to resolve their concerns. Listening to and addressing Veteran concerns will facilitate the changes we need to make to meet our goals and promises.

1-877-823-3907

