



## VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network

Keeping Veterans at the HEART of it all

March 2010

### News briefs

#### Women's History Month

##### Thank you Women Veterans!

Of the **1.8 million U.S. women veterans**, more than 450,000 have enrolled in the VA health care system. That number is expected to grow by 30 percent in the next five years

More than **212,000 women service members have been deployed** to Iraq and Afghanistan; 11 percent of the deployed force -- 120 have been killed in action and more than 600 wounded.

**The average age of women veterans is 48 years old**, compared to an average age of 61 for male veterans. Nearly all newly enrolled women veterans using VA health care are under 40 and of childbearing age.

All VA Medical Centers have appointed a full-time **Women Veterans Program Manager**. These managers support and coordinate increased outreach to women veterans, improve quality of care provisions and develop best practices.

**Network News** is a publication of VISN 17, the **VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network**. Contact:

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# Network news

## 2010 Budget Includes Transformation Initiatives

The VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network has received the first two quarters of its 2010 budget, which totals more than \$2 billion for the entire fiscal year.

The funds are allocated to the network according to a formula known as the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA) System.

VERA allocates the Veterans Health Administration's budget (\$44.2 billion for 2010) to the 21 integrated service networks based on complexity of care and forecast workload for the coming year. The VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network then distributes the funds to its four health care systems (VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend HCS becomes fully independent from South Texas Veterans HCS in October 2010) based on workload and other factors.

The network received about 4.56 percent of the VHA budget for 2010. New for 2010 are funds set aside for the "Transformation into the 21st Century Initiatives," or "T-21" initiatives.

T-21 reflects Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki's guiding principles for the VA: that it will be people-centric, results-driven and forward-looking.

As a result, Veterans can look for-

ward to innovative new programs aimed at reducing complications associated with health care, improving access for Veterans in rural areas, increasing investment in Mental Health services, and transforming VHA's culture through patient-centered care to improve Veteran and family satisfaction, among other things.

One such initiative, for which the network has received \$8 million this year, is the "Medical Home Model."

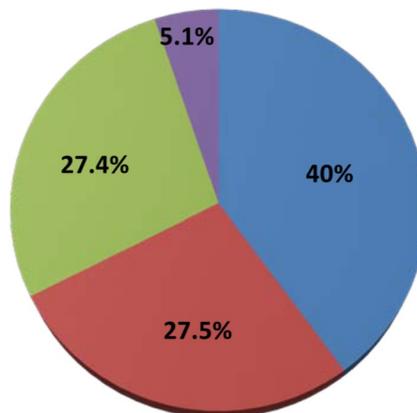
The Medical Home Model replaces care that is driven by a patient's ailments on a given visit ("episodic care") with coordinated care and a long-term healing relationship.

When it is fully implemented, the Medical Home Model will provide Veterans with ongoing relationships with their personal physicians, enhanced access and a team of health care providers from clerks to pharmacists.

In this model, the team's work literally revolves around the patient, rather than requiring the patient to navigate a system that sometimes seems to be set-up for providers' convenience.

Pilots of the model have shown improved patient satisfaction, and, more importantly, much better than normal clinical outcomes.

### VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network 2010 Budget: \$2.017 Billion



- VA North Texas HCS: \$807 million
- Central Texas Veterans HCS: \$553.8 million
- South Texas Veterans HCS: \$552.7 million
- VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend HCS: \$103.6 million

# Stimulus Funds Go to Work for Texas Veterans

*Nearly \$8 million slated for patient care and infrastructure improvements*

Funds from the President's Economic Stimulus Plan, officially known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), are being used in the VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network for construction and maintenance projects.

The **VA North Texas Health Care System** received \$7.9 million to:

- Expand the primary care unit at the Sam Rayburn Memorial VAMC at Bonham, for \$2 million;
- Renovate a medicine bed unit to enhance patient privacy at the Dallas VAMC for \$2.2 million; and
- Design and upgrade the fire alarm system at the Dallas VAMC for \$3.7 million.

The **Central Texas Veterans Health Care System** received \$7.9 million, which will be used for projects at the Waco VAMC, including:

- Modifying air conditioning and extending the chilled water loop for \$2.5 million;
- Relocating Canteen dining and retail store for \$500,000;
- Upgrading electrical feeder for \$760,000;

- Upgrading the water system to replace the water tower, main pump house and ground water storage tank for \$745,081;
- Improving site drainage for \$800,000;
- Improving roads, including parking lots, sidewalks and curbs, for \$900,000;
- Upgrading windows for \$747,000; and
- Renovating the Recreation and Music Building for \$1 million.

The **South Texas Veterans Health Care System** received \$7.96 million to:

- Purchase and renovate 25,000 square feet of Department of Defense space for the South Bexar Outpatient Clinic for \$3,525,000.
- Refurbish the an operating room at the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital (San Antonio VAMC) for \$600,000;
- Replace the air handler at the Kerrville Division for \$1.9 million;
- Replace roofs on four buildings at the Kerrville Division for \$1,184,000; and
- Upgrade the boiler plant at the Kerrville Division for \$756,173.



Artist Rendering

## Polytrauma Center Funded

The VA announced in February the award of two contracts totaling \$41.5 million to fund the construction of the Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center and to improve the existing wards at the San Antonio VA Medical Center.

One contract announced by Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki provides \$37.2 million to Robins and Morton of Birmingham, Ala., to build the three-story, 84,000 square foot Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center on the San Antonio VAMC campus.

The center will offer physical medicine, rehabilitation services, prosthetics services and research. It will be the fifth polytrauma center in the VA system.

A \$4.3 million contract, awarded to Strategic Perspectives Development of San Antonio, provides for upgrades and expansion to a surgical inpatient ward at the San Antonio VAMC.

## New: Online Help for Wounded Warriors

[www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov](http://www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov)

The federal departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor and Defense recently unveiled an improved one-stop Web shop for wounded warriors.

The National Resource Directory is a comprehensive, free, online tool for wounded, ill and injured service members, Veterans and their families.

Visitors to the site can find an extensive range of information about Veterans' benefits, including disability and pension benefits, VA health care and educational opportunities.

The site also offers access to emotional, financial and community assistance for Veterans' caregivers.

## March 2010 Priority 8 Outreach Events

- **4:** National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) Waco VA Art Show & Awards Program, 4800 Memorial Drive (Stracke Auditorium), Waco, TX – Sharon White, 800-423-2111, ext. 42002.
- **6:** Veterans Benefit and Health Care Seminar, First Baptist Church, 209 N. 6th, Teague, TX – Sherley Mitchell, 800-423-2111, ext. 40681.
- **9:** Hiring Heroes Workshop & Career Fair, Fort Sam Houston, TX – Genevieve Josen, 210-617-5300, ext. 15735.
- **13:** Texas Veterans Land Board, 1721 E. Central Expressway, Killeen, TX – Joshua Bailey, 800-423-2111, ext. 40683.
- **19-21:** Yellow Ribbon Event, DFW Metroplex (TBD) – Master Sgt. Harold Starkey, 318-218-1099.
- **20-21:** Yellow Ribbon Event, San Antonio (TBD), TX – Ron Acon, 210-617-5300, ext. 14298.
- **25:** NVCAF Music Video Taping, 4800 Memorial Drive (Medical Media Studio), Waco, TX – Dianne Thompson, 800-423-2111, ext. 42225.
- **27:** Veterans Benefit Fair, 2120 West Irving Blvd., Irving, TX – Michelle Davis, 214-498-8174.