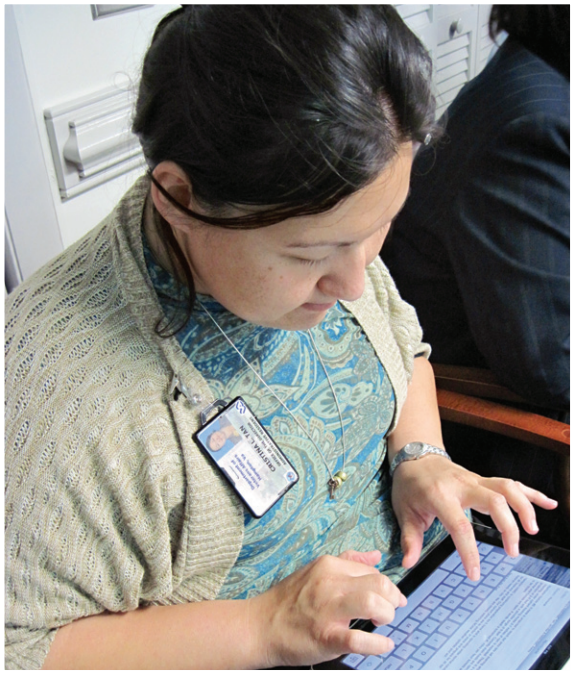


2011
annual report

Hampton Veterans Affairs Medical Center

h a m p t o n , v i r g i n i a

Transforming *Veteran lives*

(From left) Eastern Virginia Medical School resident Ophthalmologist Richard Moore, M.D., receives mentoring from Hampton VAMC attending staff Ophthalmologist Samuel Tyson, M.D., during surgery.

every day

2 Leadership

4 January - March

13 April - June

17 July - September

28 October - December

26 Awards

29 Financial report

VA HEALTH CARE | Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

2011 represented another outstanding year for the Hampton VA Medical Center/

It is my pleasure to share with you a few of the highlights through stories of Veterans and staff at the Hampton VAMC. In looking back over 2011, I am proud of the many accomplishments that we have had at the Hampton VA Medical Center (VAMC).

I am proud to serve as the director of an organization that truly reflects the VA's newly defined core values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence. Throughout the year, our primary mission has remained the same: To Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

During 2011, the Hampton VAMC experienced a 7-percent growth rate and our women enrollees increased to more than 17 percent of our total Veteran population. To better meet their needs, the Hampton VAMC celebrated the opening of the Albemarle Primary Outpatient Clinic in Elizabeth City, N.C., expanding health care and mental health care services to Veterans who reside in the northeastern parts of the state.

In addition, we officially opened our new Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Clinic building specifically designed to assist our service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Hampton VAMC staff also officially opened its new mammography service for women Veterans.

This past year we also successfully completed the Joint Commission Survey, received national Housing Urban Developement-VA Supported Housing (HUD-VASH) program recognition, implemented Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) and launched the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Records (VLER) program ~ becoming the first VA facility to promote a secure, three-way exchange of Veteran medical data.

As our Veteran population continues to grow, we will continue to be a patient-centered, service-oriented health care facility which stands ready to serve our Nation's Veterans. I want to extend my sincerest thanks to our dedicated staff, volunteers, Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and community partners who remain committed to excellence and caring for those who served our Nation.

DEANNE M. SEEKINS, MBA
Director, Hampton VA Medical Center

(From Left) 1. Dr. G Arul, M.D., Chief of Staff ; 2. Shedale Tindall, RN, MSN, Associate Director for Patient Care Services; 3. DeAnne Seekins, MBA, Director; 4. Benita Stoddard, MHA, FACHE, Associate Director for Operations; 5. Terry Grew, Chief of Fiscal Service.

(From Left) 1. Dr. Priscilla Hankins, Psy.D., Chief of Mental Health; 2. Scott Brown, Chief of Facilities Management Service; 3. Dr. David Tompkins, M.D., Chief of Medicine; 4. Kevin Marlowe, Chief of Information Resources Management; 5. Dr. Terri Lockhart, M.D., Chief of Primary Care Service.

Dr. Lockhart, M.D.
Primary Care Service

Keeping the PACT with our Veterans /

Today, VA is transforming into an organization that defines Excellence in the 21st Century! Our mission is to provide value by delivering health care that is patient-centered, data-driven, team-based,

continuously improving, and population based. The Primary Care Service is at the forefront of this transformation in health care delivery. The department provides comprehensive healthcare to over 38,000 Veterans yearly.

Our goal is to be accessible to our Veterans when they need us and where they need us. Most recently we have implemented Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) to meet this goal. The PACT concept is Veterans working together with health care professionals to plan for whole-person care and life-long health and wellness. The focus is on:

* Partnerships - between Veterans and health care teams

* Access to care - enhanced through a variety of methods

* Coordinated care - among all team members

* Team-based care - with Veterans in the center

"Veterans are looking for a better health care experience, better coordination of health care services, more economical use of time, improved patient safety and more satisfaction with the health care services they receive," said Dr. Terri Lockhart, chief of Primary

Barbara Ray, RN, PACT nurse displays team colors for the newly adopted system for Veterans.

Care Service. "We have made a PACT with our Veterans to deliver excellence in every aspect of their patient care."

VA's PACT approach to health care will result in healthier and more satisfied patients, coordinated and holistic care, streamlined delivery of services, and lower costs for health care. This model for health care integrates with VA's overriding principles to be people centric, results oriented and forward thinking. Within the Primary Care Service, several core factors have been identified as essential to the success of enhancing the healthcare experience for our Veterans.

Partnership between Veterans and their health care teams is the first core factor of the PACT approach to ensure whole-person care. This is personalized and comprehensive, and focuses on all aspects of the individual's health. The emphasis is on prevention and health promotion.

Enhanced access to care through a variety of methods is the second factor. This includes visits to primary care professionals and other members of the care team as well as group sessions. Veterans may also have access to group clinics and educational seminars, plus a wealth of information on the Internet through MyHealtheVet (www.myhealth.va.gov). In addition, Veterans and members of the PACT can communicate by telephone or through Secure Messaging via MyHealtheVet.

Coordinated care among team members is the third factor. Collaboration and open frequent communication are key. Each PACT member has a clearly defined role and knows how to relate to others on the team. The focus is on forging trusted, personal relationships, and the result is coordination of all components of the Veteran's health care.

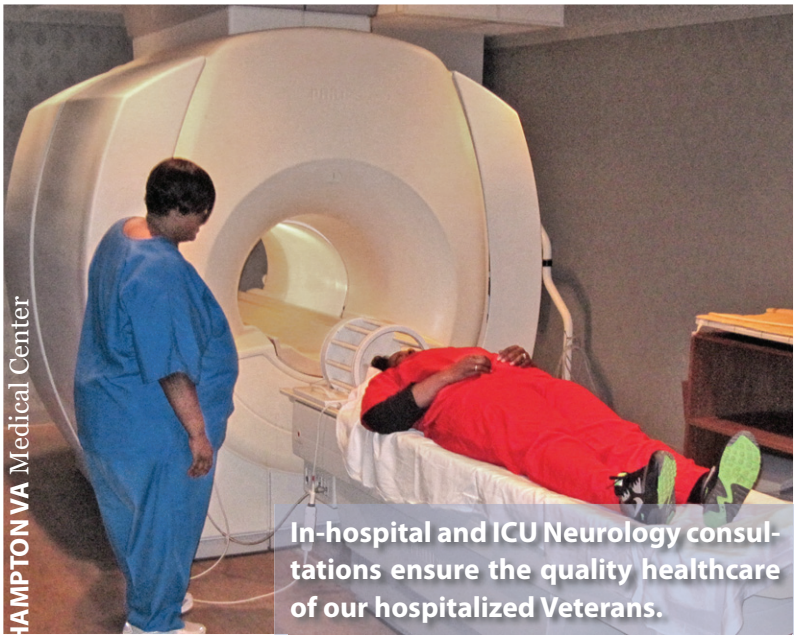
Team-based care is the fourth factor. Veterans are the center of the PACT, which also includes family members, caregivers and health care professionals. This includes the primary care provider, nurse care manager, clinical associate, and administrative clerk. When other services are needed to meet the goals and needs of the Veteran, another team may be called in to assist. The Primary Care Service has pledged to bring dramatic improvements to the health care delivery system through PACT. All of these initiatives symbolize the commitment of the Primary Care Service team at the Hampton VAMC to provide patient-centered, accessible and high-quality healthcare in honor of our Veterans who are so deserving.

Eliminate Exam Backlog/

As part of the VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network, the Hampton VAMC in 2011 eliminated the backlog of Compensation and Pension (C&P) exams as active-duty military members left the service. VA medical centers in Virginia, North Carolina and southern West Virginia dedicated up to 80 percent of their Primary Care appointment schedules during weeks in March, April and May to accomplish the task.

Like many areas of the country, VA medical centers throughout the region have experienced a high volume of requests for C&P exams. These exams are used to determine levels of disability and compensation due to medical conditions associated with military service. The goal is to complete these exams within 30 days from the date VHA receives the exam request.

There were many contributing factors for the backlog, including the approval of the new presumptive conditions tied to Agent Orange. This ruling alone enabled more than 200,000 Veterans nationwide to open new claims and required the VA to re-adjudicate previously denied claims for Ischemic Heart Disease, Parkinson's Disease, Hairy Cell or other B-cell leukemia. The Mid-Atlantic region, and North Carolina in particular, had experienced sustained and



In-hospital and ICU Neurology consultations ensure the quality healthcare of our hospitalized Veterans.

Board-certified Neurologists with the latest MRI, Electroencephalogram (EEG), and sleep study equipment diagnose and treat Veterans. The on-site MRI scanner is used for brain, neck, and back problems. On-site Electromyography (EMG)/Nerve Conduction Velocity (NCV) studies of peripheral nerves help diagnose the pain and tingling of neuropathy. Video-EEG assist with seizure control. In-hospital and ICU Neurology consultations ensure the quality healthcare for Veterans.

dramatic Veteran population growth which is tied to the fact that this region is home to some of America's largest military installations.

Completed exams are forwarded to the appropriate Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Regional Office where specialists make determinations and mail notifications to the Veterans. VBA Regional Offices are located in Roanoke, VA; Winston-Salem, N.C., and Huntington, W.Va.

Frances Ellison, RN Primary Care

Veteran reviews medical records during live demonstration of VLER

Sleep Medicine Studies/

The Hampton VAMC offers a number of diagnostic and therapeutic services in Sleep Medicine, overseen by a board-certified physician.

The centerpiece of the Sleep Service is the Sleep Laboratory, which has a two-bed laboratory that operates six nights per week. During fiscal year 2011, the lab performed 426 studies and the Sleep Service participates in academics, research and teaching.

The most common sleep disorder studied in the Sleep Lab is sleep apnea. Other sleep related conditions include narcolepsy, periodic limb movements and REM sleep behavior disorder are evaluated.

Other sleep problems that do not require sleep studies, such as insomnia, circadian rhythm disturbances and restless legs syndrome, are treated at the Hampton VAMC Outpatient Clinic. Veterans diagnosed with sleep apnea may require therapy with Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) or Bi-level Positive Airway Pressure (Bi-level PAP) can be treated in their Primary Care Clinic. Additional conditions are treated in the outpatient clinics with pharmacologic agents, cognitive therapy and behavior modification techniques.

Hampton VAMC Pilots Data Sharing To Improve Care /

The Hampton VAMC is leading the way to improving patient care with the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Records (VLER) pilot program. VLER is the VA's data sharing program to improve electronic medical records sharing with its community partners. This innovative medical data exchange program enables clinicians from the Hampton VAMC, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Bon Secours and Kaiser Permanente in San Diego, to obtain a more comprehensive view of a patient's health issues, medications and allergies by using electronic health record information.

The program provides a technology "gateway" to support interoperability standards and a legal framework for the secure exchange of health information between treating physicians, when autho-

Terry Guyton-Smith, nurse practioner for the Renal Dialysis Unit at the Hampton VAMC.

Renal Dialysis Unit/Nephrology Division

Hampton VAMC currently provides in-center hemodialysis services to over 75 Veterans who require dialysis.

Chronic kidney disease is recognized as being highly prevalent and increasingly seen in the aging adult population in this country. We offer all modalities of kidney replacement therapies, including home dialysis; renal transplantation referral to the VA transplant centers.

There is outpatient care, in our nephrology clinic, for patients with all stages of chronic kidney disease.

rized by a patient. Clinicians from participating organizations can electronically, securely, and privately share authorized patient data, ensuring around-the-clock access to critical health information.

Primary Care Physician Dr. Zewditu Tekleberhan and Nurse Practitioner Carmen Roaquin agreed that VLER is on the mark when it comes to the next step in health care. Both are excited that the Hampton VAMC was selected as a pilot site and happily awaited the full launch of the program in April 2011. The medical staff continues to be trained and become familiar with the process.

"VA providers are able to quickly see certain medical tests and a list of medicines that Veterans receive from outside providers," Tekleberhan said as she guided Roaquin step-by- step through the computer software. "This immediate electronic access supports increased accuracy, efficiency and safety and helps to avoid redundant care and testing."

Roaquin pointed out that during these challenging economic times, everyone is looking for ways to save, and avoiding redundancy in testing is one more way of saving Veterans out of pocket costs. She also noted that VLER supports the "going green" concept through the reduction of paper records.

In 2011, the Hampton VLER team invited more than 5,500 Veterans to participate in the new program. Those who enrolled are enabling

Dr. Katherine Gianola, Hampton VAMC Clinical Informatics community coordinator spearheads the pilot program at Hampton VAMC.

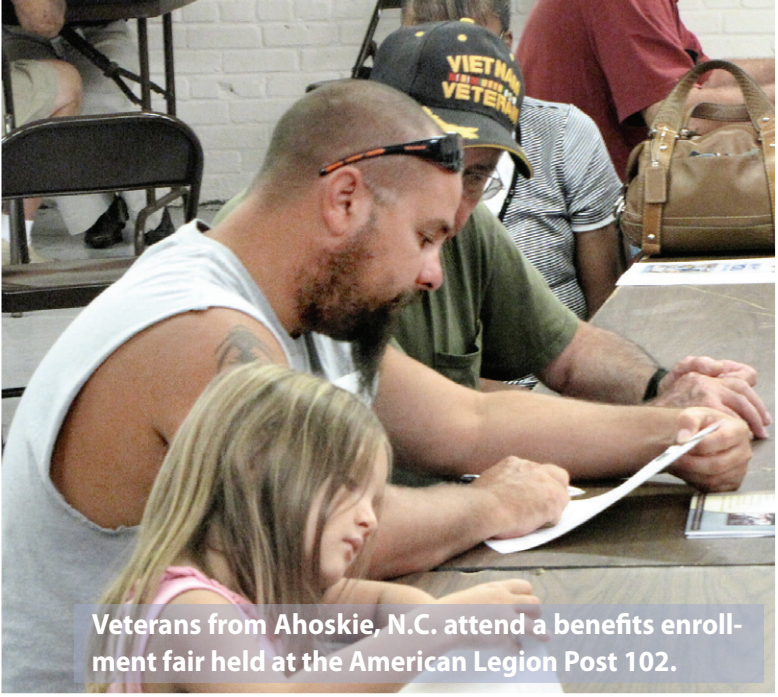
their public and private sector health care providers and doctors to share specific health information electronically, safely, securely and privately.

"Doctors have recognized the importance of sharing medical information for years but the technology didn't exist," said Dr. Katherine Gianola, Hampton VAMC Clinical Informatics community coordinator for the VLER project. "VLER now gives us the technology to cross systems securely and makes it possible to share these sensitive records so that our Veterans are better served."

Gianola explained that the program puts the highest priority on patient privacy and data security, and no exchange of information will occur without the explicit permission of the individual patient. She pointed out that Veterans' access to care will in no way be affected at institutions if they choose not to participate.

"The healthcare of our Veterans is our first priority at the Hampton VA and so we are excited about leading the effort in this pilot program," said DeAnne M. Seekins, Hampton VAMC's director, noting that the facility is the second site in the entire country to offer this healthcare without boundaries program. "This program just furthers our commitment to providing our Veterans with safe, quality care, and provides us an opportunity to create stronger alliances with the private clinicians in the Hampton Roads area who serve our Nation's heroes."

Veteran Pete Fairchild discusses the future of VLER with Charlie Stanton, Senator Webb's congressional liaison, and Darlene Mays-Tittman.



Veterans from Ahoskie, N.C. attend a benefits enrollment fair held at the American Legion Post 102.

Taking Roads Less Traveled To Bring Health Care Benefits to Veterans/

When driving south of Virginia Beach, Va., it takes only a few miles before fruit stands start popping up along the roadside. Fields overflowing with corn crops, ripened cantaloupes and peanut plants dominate the landscape. Accessing health care can be a major issue for Veterans who live in these areas.

The American Legion Post 102 in Ahoskie, N.C., routinely partners with the RHI team to host enrollment fairs.

According to the VA Web site, more than 837,000 service members have been mobilized since 2002. Out of these, only 39 percent have used VHA health care. For this reason, several outreach programs were initiated which provide the nation's Veterans and their families with vital information about their VA benefits and the health care services they are eligible to receive.

Reaching out into the rural communities surrounding the Hampton VAMC is the main mission of the hospital's Rural Health Initiative (RHI) team. The pilot program is an ambitious plan to improve access to health care to Veterans geographically located in rural areas.

At an outreach event in Ahoskie, N.C., local Veterans and family members turned out in astounding numbers to apply for VHA benefits. More than 45 individuals from this small, rural farming community showed up for the RHI two-hour workshop hosted by local American Legion Post 102. The RHI team realized early in development of their pilot program that in order to have Veterans attend their events, they were going to need to partner with local Veteran organizations ~ such as Post 102 ~ the heart and soul of the Ahoskie community.

Since the Hampton VAMC Rural Health team began its outreach events in June 2010, more than 1200 Veterans have applied for health care benefits with their assistance. Continuing down those less traveled dirt, gravel and paved roads each week. The RHI team participates in outreach events throughout Virginia and North Carolina to reach all Veterans.

From left: Alexander Jakimjuk, biomedical engineer, Barbara May, patient safety officer, DeAnne M. Seekins, medical center director

Hampton VAMC Meets the Gold Standard for Patient Safety/

The Hampton VA Medical Center (VAMC) Patient Safety Improvement program was named the recipient of a 2010 VA Patient Safety Cornerstone Recognition Award recognizing the health system as meeting the gold-standard as established by the VA National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS). This award is given each year by the VA for patient safety based on the quality; quantity and timeliness of a health system's root-cause analysis (RCA) process which helps improve safe patient care.

Hampton VAMC Patient Safety Officer Barbara May said she was excited upon receiving the news. She said this award is a well-deserved recognition for the Hampton VA staff.

"The Patient Safety staff is extremely proud to receive this national recognition," said May. "This just validates all the hard work and concerted efforts of all our staff at Hampton VAMC."

Each year NCPS recognizes VA healthcare systems in three categories of gold, silver or bronze. HVAMC received gold-level recognition this year. Medical center leadership feels this trend of national recognition will become the patient safety standard here as the healthcare system positions itself as the leader in patient safety practices for VA healthcare.

"This award says our patient safety-improvement program is extremely viable, very active and focused on effectively improving safe care provided for our Veterans," said May. "We are continually striving to deliver the safest possible care for all the Veterans at Hampton VA."

Cardiology Staff Committed to Veteran Mission/

Hampton VA Medical Center Cardiology staff members are committed to identifying patient lifestyle behaviors that increase the risk for cardiovascular complications. A patient-friendly approach is used to assist Veteran interested in making changes that will lead to improved heart health.

Outpatients are seen on consultation in the General Cardiology Clinic by cardiologists for a variety of reasons including preoperative cardiac risk assessment, evaluation of abnormal heart rhythms,

abnormal valve function and for coronary artery disease.

Inpatients are seen on consultation by cardiologists for those who require expert assessment for cardiovascular status. The cardiologists are available for clinical evaluation of a inpatients and emergency room patients 24 hours, seven days a week.

Patients with implanted electronic devices receive preoperative management of their pacemakers and defibrillator and Cardiologists provide close supervision of a patient's implanted devices during surgery or special procedures.

Patients who have a diagnosis of heart failure can be seen in the Heart Failure Clinic by request of their Primary Care Physician. This clinic is helpful for patients who require additional education and support to best control their symptoms of heart failure.

David Tompkins, MD
Chief of Medicine

Joyce Johnson prepares medicine for disabled Veteran George Kimble, Jr. at her home in Portsmouth, Va. (Courtesy Daily Press)

Foster Home Nice Fit For Disabled Vet/

Disabled Vietnam Veteran George Kimble Jr. spends his days taking walks in his quiet neighborhood, listening to music and getting what he wants for breakfast. But this is no exclusive retreat.

The Medical Foster Home program is a relatively new approach from the Department of Veterans Affairs, aimed at disabled Veterans in Hampton Roads and elsewhere. Patients help defray costs in exchange for an environment that is more personal and relaxed than any institution can hope to offer. The Veteran gets medical care in a stress-free home setting and doesn't suffer for attention with family and friends dropping by from time to time.

For Mr. Kimble, his entry into the program represented a return to his roots. A native of Virginia Beach, he spent 17 years in an assisted living facility in Roanoke. His sister, described as a staunch advocate for him, wanted her brother closer to home.

For the VA, the foster program is less expensive than institutionalized care. The Veteran's financial benefits cover the cost of placement, and the amount is based on the level of care required.

The atmosphere has rubbed also rubbed off on the foster care provider. Recently, a doctor told her that bone density problems of concern two years ago had improved

New Caregiver Program enhances VA services for Family Caregivers/

Department of Veterans Affairs published the interim final rule for implementing the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act 2010. This new rule provides additional support to eligible post-9/11 Veterans who elect to receive their care in a home setting from a primary Family Caregiver.

The new program builds on the foundation of Caregiver support now provided at the VA and reflects what families and clinicians have long known; that Family Caregivers in a home environment can enhance the health and well-being of Veterans under VA care.

65th Annual Volunteer Recognition/

Roaring 20s "flappers" wrapped in red boas and "gangsters" sporting stripes and snazzy hats, streamed into the Hampton Convention Center as the Hampton VA Medical Center volunteers embraced the theme of 2011's 65th annual volunteer awards and recognition ceremony.

Before the "speak easy" ballroom doors opened for the luncheon, volunteers tried their luck by playing slots with plastic coins and attempting to beat the odds at the black jack table with play money. Once inside, the sounds of the Peninsula Retired Men's Band big band tunes greeted attendees as they made their way to their seats.

Over 280 dedicated volunteers attended the event, and were congratulated for their team effort of helping others. In Fiscal Year 2010, the Hampton VAMC volunteers generously donated 60,748 hours.

Volunteer Larry Granish, a 24-year retired Air Force Veteran, has been providing assistance in the medical facility's Spinal Cord Injury Unit for five

Volunteers are honored during Annual Volunteer Awards Ceremony

years. Granish, who received an award for 1,000 hours of service, shared that he was both impressed with the event and proud to be a volunteer at the facility.

During the celebration, Sybil Morgan was recognized for her 26 years of service totaling 12,218 hours. Morgan said she began her volunteer work in the Hampton VAMC library but is now lending a hand in the pharmacy. Morgan said that as long as she can drive to the VA, she'll be volunteering there.

Annie Randolph was recognized for more than 25,000 hours of service in the Voluntary Service and Recreation Therapy Office. As she came forward to receive her Jade Crystal Award, she shared her smiles and her gratitude for the honor. Randolph said she's been volunteering for 33 years because it's the right thing to do and she loves it.

Volunteer service to the Nation's heroes drives home the important message that Veterans are never forgotten.

Annie Randolph, recognized for more than 25,000 hours of Voluntary Service at the Hampton VA Medical Center

Bins fill up with snacks and personal item donations to be given to Veterans.

VA2K Walk and Roll Event Promotes Employee Wellness /

In early June, the Hampton VAMC hosted a 2K "walk-n-roll" event in support of Employee Wellness Month.

"Worksite wellness activities enhance employee engagement and contribute to a more productive and healthy workforce," said DeAnne M. Seekins, medical center director.

The VA2K Walk and Roll event was just one of many 2Ks that took place that day at VA facilities across the country. Although there was no registration fee, employees and others participating in the event were asked to donate an item for a homeless Veteran. Participants filled bins that were lined-up behind registration tables to overflowing.

After the event, the donated items were taken to Voluntary Services to be distributed to Veterans at the Hampton VAMC.

The VA's employee wellness program, known as WIN (Wellness is Now), empowers employees with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to create a culture of health and wellness. The group encourages employees to then use their wellness appreciation to inspire Veterans to live healthier lifestyles. WIN integrates traditional occupational safety and health programs with health promotion activities, addressing both workplace and worker health, which assist VA employees to do their important work of serving the Nation's Veterans.

Staff members support the walk with enthusiasm and patriotism.

Veterans join staff in the event, enjoying the breeze coming off the Chesapeake Bay.

Incident Commander Orchestrates Preparation, Social Media Keeps Thousands Informed /

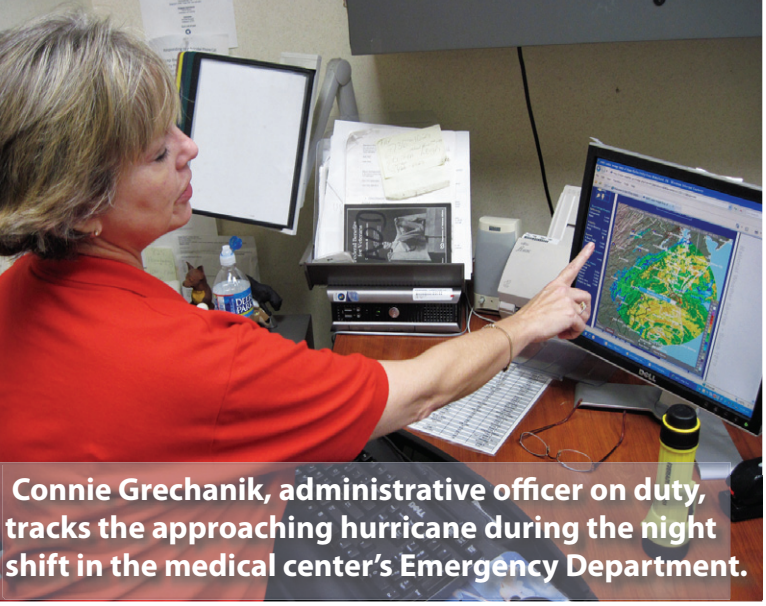
On Aug. 23, the Hampton VAMC began hearing ominous weather forecasts concerning the arrival of Hurricane Irene. Hampton found itself in a predicament, one repeated from years past. Perched on the banks of the Chesapeake Bay, the beautiful and historic campus is vulnerable to Mother Nature's destructive powers faced a direct hit from Irene.

With Hurricane Irene's predictions of landfall as a category 3 hurricane, Hampton Director DeAnne Seekins activated the Incident Command. Associate Director of Operations, Benita Stoddard, stepped up to serve as Incident Commander and orchestrate emergency operations.

Understanding the severity of a category 3 hurricane, the Incident Command swung into full operation and additional personnel were requested from everywhere to assist in what was going to be a major weather event for the U.S. East Coast. The Incident Command sent out a call to VA sister facilities in VISN 6 and to the VHA Office of Emergency Management to assist Hampton VAMC and brace for Irene's impact.

"My call came on Tuesday morning," said Deneen Carter-Coleman, VHA Office of Emergency Management, area emergency manager. "I work as the onsite liaison between local community emergency managers, VA Central Office and state level organizations."

Benita Stoddard, MHA, FACHE
Associate Director for Operations



Connie Grechanik, administrative officer on duty, tracks the approaching hurricane during the night shift in the medical center's Emergency Department.

Coleman, a 14 year veteran as an emergency manager, said that each VA facility is different the way they handle emergencies. She said that Hampton's approach to handling Irene was well coordinated. The decision was first made to decompress the facilities census by conducting a partial evacuation that included the Veterans housed in the Spinal Cord Injury Unit and 143 Veterans in the Domiciliary. They were all safely evacuated and Coleman said that the plan was executed flawlessly.

"By decompressing the campus, we were able to focus our attention on the remaining patients and keeping everyone safe," said Stoddard. "Our number one goal was to make sure that the staff and Veterans at the Hampton VA were safe and kept out of harm's way."

Sister VA facilities in Richmond and Salem, VA and the VAMC in Martinsburg, WV, prepared to receive over 185 of Hampton's Veterans.

"Hampton did it right," said Coleman. "The one thing that I have ever seen done before was how Hampton used Facebook to communicate throughout the entire storm. It was like having our very own news station onsite during the whole thing."

Coleman shared that in all of the emergency events she had participated in during the past 14 years, she

Veterans from the Spinal Cord Injury Unit (SCI) were first to be evacuated from the medical center in preparation for the storm.

VA Police patrol the medical center throughout the duration of the storm.

had never seen the level of engagement with staff, Veterans, family and friends of the VA who followed the entire event on Facebook. The Hampton Facebook site had over 39,000 impressions during the week of the storm. A significant number of Hampton's Facebook followers were staff and their family members. During the hurricane emergency, there were 46 posts and over 150 photos published during the event.

"My brother in Boston said that he followed everything that was going on at the hospital," said Coleman. "He said that for the first time, he wasn't worried because he could see exactly what was happening," said Coleman.

Others relayed the same information from family members who shared because they were kept up-to-date with Facebook they could rest a little easier knowing that everyone was safe.

Understanding how people want to get their information is helping the VA to move forward. As our Nation's Veterans become younger, the way that the VA communicates with them must keep up with trends. Social media is here to stay.

"We know our staff at Hampton has proven on numerous occasions their ability to pull together as a team," said Stoddard. "The integrity, commitment to serve our Veterans, advocacy, respect and excellence was truly evident."

The morning after the storm, Hampton VAMC weathered Irene with patients, staff and facility safe.

Nearly 500 Veterans and family members attended the Albemarle Primary Care Outpatient Clinic grand opening ceremony on Veterans Day

Hampton VA Medical Center Expands Health Care Services to Veterans/

As the saying goes ~ if you build it, they will come. Veterans Day came early for Veterans in rural North Carolina when the Hampton VA Medical Center opened the doors to the Albemarle Primary Outpatient Clinic (POC) on Nov. 10, 2011, more than 400 community members were in attendance to confirm it.

"When I arrived this morning and looked across the seats, I could hardly believe that we could really fill this tent," said DeAnne Seekins, Hampton VAMC director. "It shows how much this clinic means to the Veterans who live in this area and the pride North Carolinians have."

The Elizabeth City, N.C., site was little more than a field located next to a pasture when the January ground breaking took place in the highly rural area. For nearly two years, members of the Hampton VAMC Rural Health Initiative team had been canvassing the eight counties surrounding the site for the new clinic, hosting events at such places as Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6060 to educate Veterans from all eras about Veterans Health Administration benefits and services.

"This will save many local Veterans from that all inspiring 'white knuckle' combat experience of driving to Hampton ... ," joked local Veteran BMCM T.C. Oneyear as he stood at the podium during the clinic's ribbon cutting ceremony. "Since the ground breaking, I ~ as many others ~ have followed along

and watched it go from a plot of land to a fine looking building and at a great location. How exciting it is to now have this going into operation."

The Albemarle POC will serve 2,400 Veterans who reside in northeastern North Carolina providing primary care, telehealth and mental health service to Veterans within the region.

"This clinic will serve eight counties in northeastern North Carolina who previously had to drive hours to receive their health care," said Daniel Hoffmann, Mid-Atlantic Veterans Service Network director. "Our goal is not only to provide health care closer to where Veterans live, but also engage them in preventative health care so they can live healthier lives."

Hoffmann, the keynote speaker at the event was greeted with warm applause amongst the pomp and circumstance provided by the U.S. Fleet Forces Band from Norfolk Naval Base that entertained the community leaders, Veterans and their family members who gathered to celebrate the delivery of the facility the day before Veterans Day.

"When they broke ground here in January I finally knew it was a reality," said Phyllis Kondracki, a strong and tireless Veteran advocate and a driving force behind the Elizabeth City location of the clinic. "I have been raising awareness within the community, driving outreach programs with Veteran Services Organizations, and working with local government officials and congressional offices to expand VA services in the area since 2007. With more than 17,000 Veterans in northeastern North Carolina, it's very exciting to open this new facility."

North Carolina Senator Kay Hagan praised the clinic opening. In her letter applauding the VA's commitment to providing essential health services to the Veteran population in the greater Elizabeth City area, she wrote that North Carolina is committed to creating opportunities for Veterans to seek quality, affordable medical support. She also thanked the leaders, staff and volunteers for their contributions to the safe, independent and healthy lives of Veterans.

U.S. Fleet Forces military band provided much of the pomp and circumstance during the days event.

Hampton expands service to Women Veterans with the opening of the Mammography Service

Mammography Service/

Looking toward the future, the Hampton VA Medical Center staff opened new state-of-the-art facilities Nov. 18, 2011, with a ribbon cutting and community and military leaders, staff, Veterans and their families cheering the way ahead.

"One of our fastest growing populations of Veterans we serve at Hampton is our female population," said Hampton VAMC Director DeAnne Seekins during an early morning celebration opening of the facility's new Mammography Program. "Of the nearly 40 thousand Veterans that we serve annually, nearly 17 percent are women. Because of the large population, it's more than appropriate that the Hampton VA Medical Center was selected to stand-up this mammography unit."

Seekins said that the mammography service is projected to provide more than 1,200 mammography screenings and diagnostics annually, bringing more comprehensive health care services to women Veterans receiving their care at the facility.

"This is just great to see that this has finally come to fruition," said Dassa Carvey of WAVES National ~ Women of the Sea Services, who proudly stood next to the new machine with her fellow women Veterans for some photos. "This is something our Veterans Services Organizations have been working and pushing for at Hampton VA for a long time and we're thrilled!"

Hampton VAMC is proud to expand in-house mammography services to Veterans.

Newest Generation of Veterans/

The Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn clinic officially opened expanding services to our newest Veterans.

Just across the campus on Nov. 18, 2011, and following a Mammography Program grand opening earlier that morning, the Hampton VA Medical Center staff hosted another ribbon cutting for the newly constructed Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn Clinic building which took place under a clear blue sky and included patriotic medleys from the U.S. Fleet Forces Band.

"With the anticipated draw-down of the military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, the number of Veterans we serve here at the medical center is growing each day," said DeAnne Seekins, Hampton VAMC director. "We anticipated the influx of newly separated service members. Our goal is to be ready to provide these new Veterans with the services and health care that they are going to need to make the transition back into civilian life.

Seekins explained that with the Hampton VAMC situated in the heart of one of the largest active-duty military communities in the country, the new facility opening was more than appropriate. In addition, she pointed out that the OEF/OIF/OND Veteran population at the Hampton VAMC accounts for more than 23 percent of the nearly 40,000 Veterans who receive the health care at the medical center.

"As an Army Reserve chaplain and an OEF Veteran myself, I have experienced first-hand the transitions from civilian to soldier ~ and back to civilian," said Chaplain (Capt.) James Fowler, who explained that as a chaplain, he has seen the struggles which this generation of Veterans is facing.

Fowler, who proudly led the Pledge of Allegiance during the clinic ribbon cutting, said that the unique clinic opening serves as an acknowledgment of the Hampton VAMC staff's dedication and desire to serve those who have served so faithfully in this most recent conflict.

"We are here today because past generations of Veterans found the transition from military duty to be a lone effort," said Hoffmann, who explained that the clinic staff will be advocates for this generation of warriors and that this newest generation of Veterans is receiving the care and assistance necessary to help set each one of them on the path for success. "This clinic is another way for a grateful Nation to say 'thank you' to our Veterans."

The services offered to OEF/OIF/OND Veterans are aimed at providing an entry point into the VA. The clinic staff assisted Veterans with services such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) counseling, health care, social services and more.

"For all here today, I ask that you help spread the word that this clinic is up and running," Hoffmann said. "Help get the word out that we are here to serve. Most importantly, help spread the word that no Veteran who has served America stands alone."

Sharon Durio, telehealth program coordinator, demonstrates teleretnal imagery equipment during recent health fair at the Hampton VAMC.

Home Telehealth Technology for Veterans

Veterans with chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, post traumatic stress disorder, congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pain management or even weight control issues have a new tool in their arsenal to help with their health.

Care Coordination/Home Telehealth (CCHT) technology has been available to help Veterans at the Hampton VAMC since 2005. The Hampton VAMC, Telehealth program can provides Veterans with the coordination and support needed to successfully manage healthcare from home.

Through an easy-to-use device that connects to the Veteran's home telephone line (POTS), they can communicate daily results to a Telehealth Care Coordinator ~ a registered nurse ~ who will work closely with the Veteran's primary care provider to ensure success.

Home Telehealth provides a home messaging device at no cost to Veterans. Veterans who participate in the program, use the device daily to send data such as weight, blood sugar and blood pressure to a registered nurse who reviews the information, documents findings in the patient's medical records and assists the primary care provider with care management. Non emergency healthcare advice and treatment can be obtained without having to drive to the Hampton VAMC.

Typically, Veterans who qualify for Telehealth may have an elevated hemoglobin A1C, or need some extra monitoring of their blood pressure or other conditions, have the ability to use and care for the easy-to-use equipment, a working telephone line and has communicated a strong commitment to managing their health.

Women Veteran Health Care Forum/

At this year's Women Veteran Health Care Forum, Operation Desert Storm Veteran Jameela Ridley settled into a seat across the aisle from Women's Army Corp (WAC) Veteran Mary Beamer. Ridley, in her professional office attire and smart phone, smiled to her comrade-in-arms Beamer, who was outfitted in a conservative suit complete with cap with "DAV" boldly embroidered on the side.

Though generations apart, these women bridged the years for several hours Oct. 18 at the Hampton VA Medical Center (VAMC) for a program that was both informative and healing. With topics such as Challenges to Women Veterans and Post Traumatic and Stress Disorder/Military Sexual Trauma (PTSD/MST) as well as a special session for voicing concerns, the event brought together Veterans of varying conflicts who were all dealing with similar situations. And attending Veterans agreed, they had found a place to share their stories and find support through others.

"We have come so far but we still have miles to journey," said Beamer, who has been one of the most vocal Veterans dedicated to working closely with Hampton VAMC leadership to improve the care and services provided by the VA for more than 30 years. "Raising women's issues is extremely important and is the very reason we are having forums like this. We have come a long way in a

Information and conversation were on the agenda at the Hampton VAMC 2011 Women Veterans Forum in October.

short period of time and I commend their efforts."

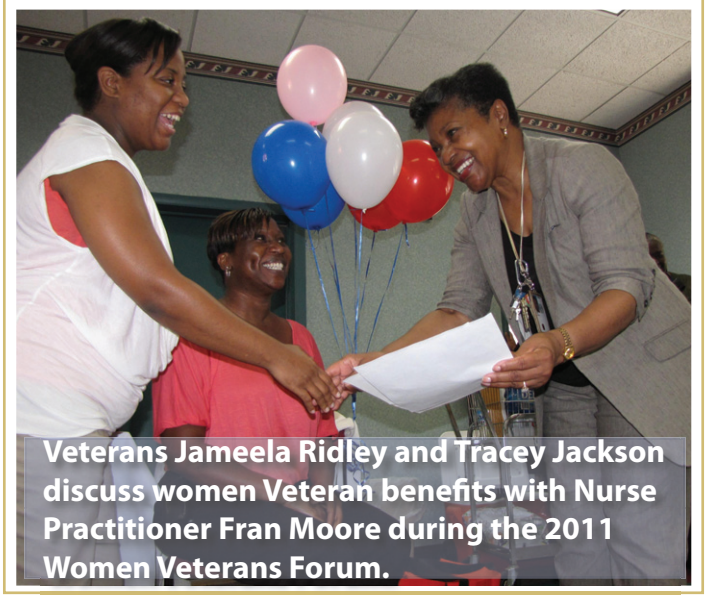
Beamer, who entered the WAC in 1954, praised the efforts of the Hampton VA Medical Center and the attention they have been giving to women Veterans. Female patient numbers have jumped to 17 percent at the Hampton VAMC. In addition, women Veterans now make up more than 23 percent of the Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OEF/OND) workload.

Guest speaker Robin Whitehead, Women Veterans Department of Virginia Committee Chair, told of her own personal journey and encouraged the women to find courage and seek information.

"My goal is to see that our Veterans coming home have the best care and services possible," said Whitehead, who prides herself on being a strong advocate. "But we're asking female Veterans to keep seeking advice about their rights and services. We are asking you to keep seeking advice for all that you have sacrificed."

Construction underway on the campus updates were on the agenda, as leadership shared . Projects included a new Women's Health Care building to meet the robust influx of Women Veterans, and is meeting the needs of this growing population of female Veterans with expanded comprehensive Women's Health Care. Women are afforded a full array of services to include women's primary care, military sexual trauma services, specialized treatment for PTSD and limited reproductive care services. Hampton also offers state-of-the-art surgical procedures to provide high-quality, minimally invasion surgical options for our female Veterans.

Hampton VAMC continues to make significant improvements to the facility infrastructure with 36 projects in progress. Noteworthy projects include a construction project to build a new-free standing Women's Clinic, and the addition of a new building to support the Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) program. Other significant capital improvement projects include a project to renovate space resulting in (40) inpatient beds for our Inpatient Psychiatry Unit, a project to expand the Spinal Cord Injury unit (SCI), a project to renovate and expand the Operating Suite, and additional construction to further renovate the existing SCI Unit to further expand and address current VA space criteria issues.


Veterans Jameela Ridley and Tracey Jackson discuss women Veteran benefits with Nurse Practitioner Fran Moore during the 2011 Women Veterans Forum.

DeAnne M. Seekins, medical center director, joins the 11-member HUD-VASH team which was honored with the Secretary of the VA's award for outstanding work placing Veterans in permanent housing.

VA Recognizes Outstanding Achievements in Homeless Programs Hampton VA Medical Centered Honored/

Department of Veterans Affairs recently announced that the Hampton VA Medical Center HUD-VASH Program has been named as an "Outstanding

VA Organization" recognized for its work to eliminate homelessness among Veterans. Only two facilities were bestowed the honor nationwide, with the other being VISN 23 Regional taskforce in Iowa City, Iowa.

During the annual Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Service to Homeless Veterans ceremony, the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs W. Scott Gould remarked that the VA's commitment to end homelessness among America's Veterans is being fulfilled by the hard work, innovation and dedication of thousands of VA employees and civilian partners. The awards single out the top achievers in the categories of VA team or organization, individual VA employees and community organization or individual.

"Our Hampton HUD-VASH team has been extremely proactive in its mission of locating and assisting Veterans in transitioning and placement to permanent housing," said DeAnne Seekins, Hampton VAMC director. "Since the program's installation at the Hampton VA our staff has worked tirelessly to help in excess of 300 homeless Veterans and over 200 family members they continue to seek opportunities to assist them every day."

Seekins explained that with Hampton VAMC located in the heart of one of the most densely populated active-duty and retired military areas in the country, the demand for assistance is significant. "It's a team effort ~ every one of our employees is

committed to our Veterans and the VA's mission of ending homelessness," Seekins said, pointing out she believes the HUD-VASH outreach has been successful because all Hampton VAMC staff members embrace the responsibility of spreading the word to Veterans about the program.

Dr. Priscilla Hankins, Hampton VAMC's chief of Mental Health, explained that in order to tackle the task at hand, VA staff committed itself to implementing the VA strategic plan by incorporating the six pillars. Those pillars are outreach and education, treatment access, relapse prevention, housing placement, employment and vocational rehabilitation and partnering with community agencies.

"Homelessness is a complex issue," Hankins said. "But Homelessness is not a VA issue, it's a community issue and it takes all hands on board to help our Nation's Veterans."

In fact, the Hampton HUD-VASH team has been so successful in placing Veterans that when the facility has exceeded its housing voucher quotas, staff has gone back to the VA to request additional vouchers to respond to the Hampton-Tidewater area demand.

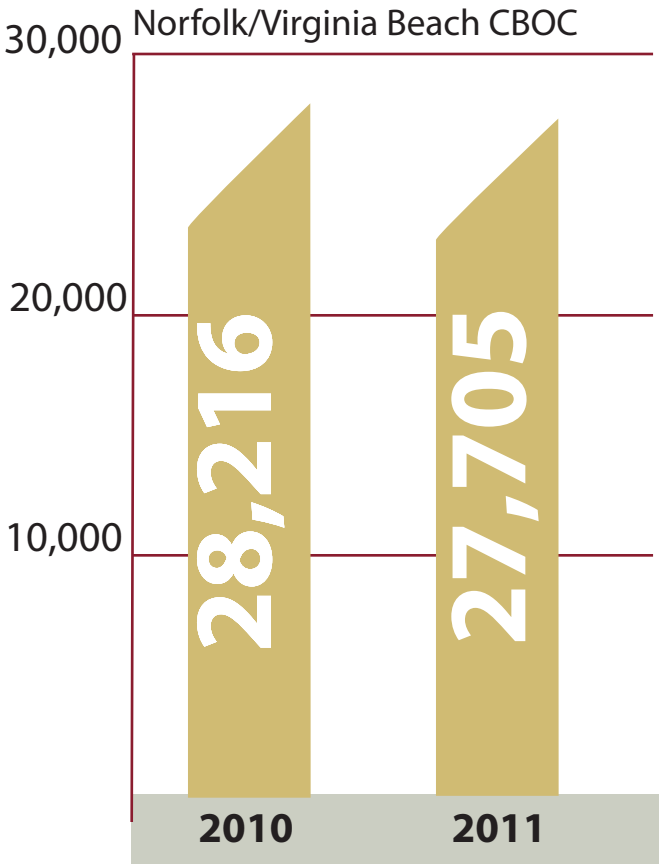
In Fiscal Year 2011, homeless Veterans received approximately $3.5 billion in VA health care and approximately $800 million in specialized homeless programs. VA estimates about 76,000 Veterans are homeless on a typical evening. At-risk Veterans, the families of homeless Veterans and the families of at-risk Veterans are also being helped by educational, vocational, counseling and job-search programs to deal with the factors that lead to homelessness.

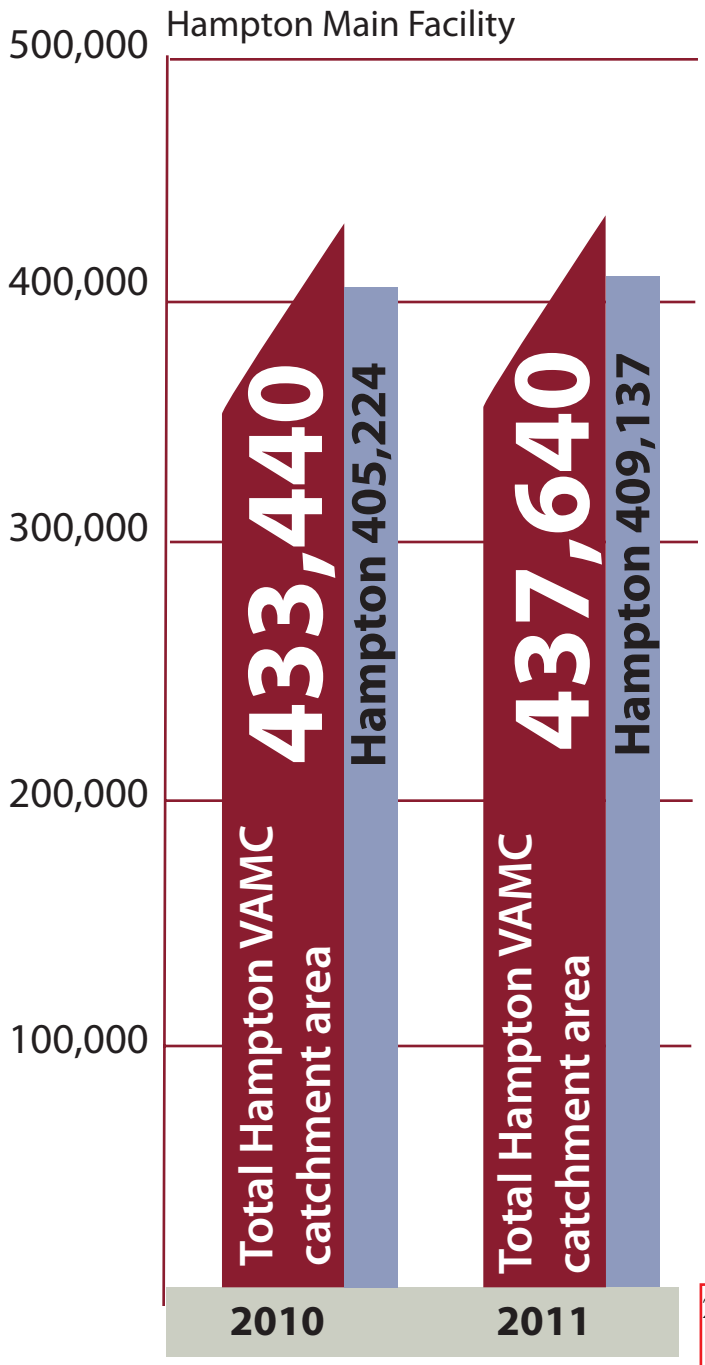
Dr. Priscilla Hankins, chief of Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences, was presented the Secretary of the VA's HUD-VASH award by Peter Dougherty, associate executive director of the Homeless Veterans Initiative Office. The award honors the Hampton VAMCs HUD-VASH team's outstanding work of placing more than 300 homeless Veterans in permanent housing.

I CARE
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Resource	EOFY 2010	EOFY 2011
Medical Care Budget	$230,125,760	$249,963,485
Medical Care Cost Recovery Funds (MCCF) Collections	$11,486,666	$12,046,378
Medical Care Full Time Employees (FTEE)	1,514.6	1,596.1

Outpatient Visits





Hampton VA Medical Center

"Proud to Serve"

Hampton VA Medical Center
100 Emancipation Drive
Hampton, Virginia 23667
Phone: (757) 722-9961

Visit us on the web: www.hampton.va.gov
Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/hamptonvamc