

Wilmington VA Medical Center



Annual Report

2023



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Our Mission

- **Putting Veterans first by providing quality care every day in every service.**
- **Ensuring our employees have a good place to work.**
- **Developing and sustaining a culture of safety, quality, and excellence.**
- **Walk the talk in a respectful and collaborative manner.**
- **Leadership focused on creating a culture that is passionate about innovation and continuous learning.**

www.wilmington.va.gov

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Vamsee Potluri Director



It is my distinct honor to present to our esteemed Veterans and key stakeholders an annual update showcasing the noteworthy accomplishments of the Wilmington VAMC in 2023, alongside our strategic priorities for 2024 and beyond. In our steadfast pursuit of becoming a high-reliability organization, our unwavering focus remains on delivering exceptional healthcare that fosters the health and well-being of the more than 41,000 Veterans entrusted to our care at the Wilmington VAMC and our five community-based outpatient clinics located in Delaware and southern New Jersey.

Our commitment to expanding patient care volume has yielded commendable growth, enabling us to extend our exceptional healthcare services to a greater number of Veterans. Across our locations in Delaware and southern New Jersey, we have enriched our array of care offerings, ensuring convenient access for Veterans closer to their homes. A significant milestone is the introduction of the DaVinci Surgical Robot to our program—a cutting edge addition symbolizing a substantial leap forward in precision and effectiveness in surgical interventions. Additionally, the establishment of an Endovascular Suite and the augmentation of inpatient capacity underscore our continual commitment to embracing state-of-the-art medical technology, assuring our Veterans receive the most advanced and comprehensive care available.

In consonance with our mission under the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring

our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act, we take pride in announcing the successful screening of nearly 27,000 Veterans for toxic exposure. This achievement lays the foundation for comprehensive care for those exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. It marks a pivotal step in our journey to safeguard the health and well-being of generations of Veterans and their survivors, reaffirming our dedication to addressing the unique challenges posed by toxic exposures.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without the dedicated civil servants who constitute our organization. Over the past year, our team grew to over 1400 members. Our all-employee survey scores have improved by 7%, reflecting our unwavering commitment to ensuring that our organization remains an exceptional place to work and receive care.

As we look forward to 2024, we continue to remain laser-focused on the people that make up this organization and the quality and services we provide. Our commitment to excellence extends beyond the achievements of today, driving us to continually enhance our organization for the well-being of our Veterans.

It is both my honor and privilege to serve you, and I am confident that together, we will continue to make a positive impact on the lives of those who have served our nation.

Executive Leadership Team



Kim Butler
Associate Director



Pamela LeDeaux
Chief of Staff



Matthew Morris
Associate Director of Patient Care Services



Tracey Schoen
Director of Quality Management

Our Vision

Our shared vision is to partner with Veterans and their families to optimize their health and quality of life through integrated, innovative, and compassionate care.

Who We Serve

We offer comprehensive services ranging from preventive screenings to long-term care. Wilmington VAMC proudly serves Veterans in multiple locations for convenient access to the services we provide. In addition to the Medical Center, Community Based Outpatient Clinics are located throughout Delaware and southern New Jersey.

Awards and Accomplishments



Practice Greenhealth recognized the Wilmington VA Medical Center with a 2023 **National Greenhealth Emerald Award** and **National Circles of Excellence Award**. The Green Health Emerald Award recognizes outstanding hospitals from within the Partner for Change applicants. This competitive award recognized the Wilmington VA Medical Center as part of the top 20 percent of applicants focused on advanced sustainability programs and exemplary scores in a range of categories.

The Circle of Excellence Awards celebrates hospitals who have not only earned an award for all around sustainability achievement, but who have also been identified as the top scoring programs for each category of sustainability. Wilmington VA Medical Center had a top 10 nationwide performance for a sustainable approach.



Amanda Normile and Edward Strouse graduated from the VA Leadership Development Institute, a competitive program for emerging leaders.



World War II Veteran Ray Firmani was recognized for his service during his 102nd birthday celebration by Associate Director, Kim Butler.

The Best in Wilmington Team Awards



Best in Wilmington 2023 Clinical Team Connected Care



Best in Wilmington 2023 Non-Clinical Team Logistics

In addition to the team awards Wilmington VA presented 65 Star awards to individuals recognized as high performers at the employee picnic on September 20.



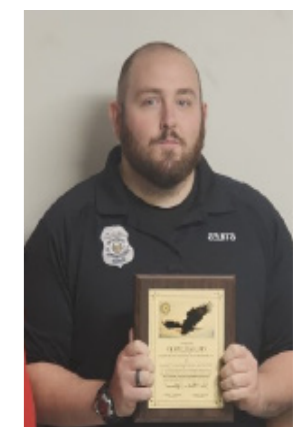
VA Deputy Secretary Tanya Bradsher coined six Kent County Clinic employees for their exceptional customer service on November 3.

Coined recipients were Advanced Medical Support Assistant Wendy Garcia, Licensed Practical Nurse Nanette Vaughn, Licensed Practical Nurse Roxanna Gonzalez, Lab Technician Lakeisha Hill (not pictured), Licensed Practical Nurse Lois Parks (not pictured), and Registered Nurse Paula Ammar (not pictured).

Two Wilmington VA police officers received awards in 2023. Major Stephen Thayer received the **National Alliance on Mental Illness Crisis Intervention Team Officer of the Year Award**. Major Thayer was recognized for his work training local law enforcement teams on how to engage a Veteran in crisis. Corporal Paul Stiles received the **American Legion Lifesaving Award** for lifesaving efforts performed when responding to a medical emergency.



Major Stephen Thayer
Wilmington VA Police



Corporal Paul Stiles
Wilmington VA Police

New at Wilmington in 2023

Endovascular Suite

In March 2023, we activated a new Endovascular Suite. In this suite, surgeons can assess blood vessel conditions and blood flow to extremities. They can then remove occlusions as needed to improve circulation.



MOHS Micrographic Surgery

We now offer MOHS Micrographic Surgery on-site at Wilmington in collaboration with Thomas Jefferson Hospital. This surgical method facilitates the removal of skin cancer with minimal impact.



Robotics

Wilmington VA began using the Da Vinci Robotic Surgical System in 2023. With this technology the surgeon uses a console to view detailed anatomy and operate the surgical instruments, allowing minimally invasive procedures and faster recovery time.



Prosthetics



Wilmington's prosthetics services expanded significantly this year. We welcomed to our team a certified Prosthetist Orthotist who can prescribe prosthetic devices and design custom braces, as well as a certified orthopedic fitter to complete shoe fittings.

In 2023, prosthetics issued 1,178 pairs of orthopedic shoes, which can improve a Veteran's gait, balance, and energy efficiency. Clinically appropriate shoes can also prevent limb loss in patients suffering from diseases such as diabetes.

Nutrition

Our registered dietitians can help you maintain or improve your health with good nutrition tailored to your needs. Through group, individual, and tele-health sessions, we provide nutrition education and counseling to help you with:

- Cardiovascular and heart health
- Chronic kidney disease
- Diabetes (including short-term diabetes during pregnancy)
- Eating disorders and digestive health problems
- Pregnancy and postpartum nutrition
- Weight management



We also offer a weight management program. **MOVE!** offers weight loss support groups, healthy eating tips, cooking classes, and behavioral change strategies for a healthier lifestyle.

Workload, Budget and Staffing

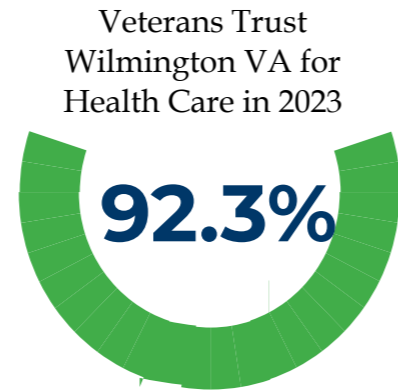
Operating Budget: \$462,000,000

VA Employees: 1,473

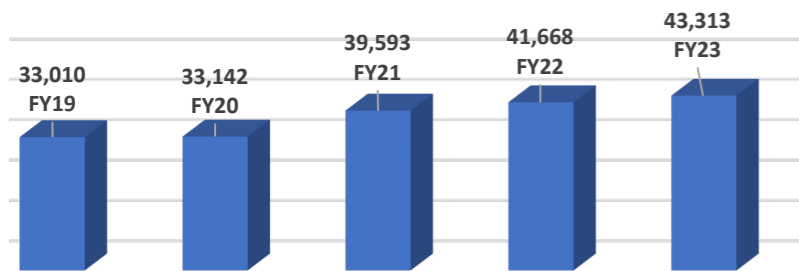
Veteran Employees: 316

Physicians: 93

Nurses: 429



Veterans seen at Wilmington & Clinics



Over 31% Growth in 5 years

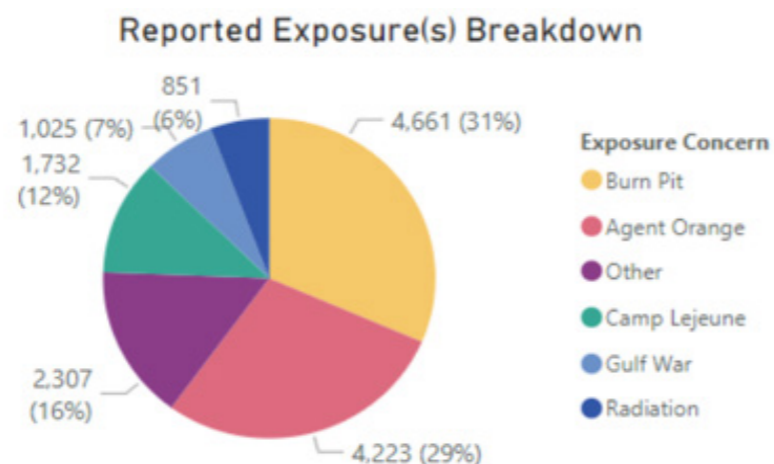
Total Veterans: 43,313
Women Veterans: 3,051

Video Telehealth Visits: 14,042
Outpatient Visits: 383,773
Total Encounters: 456,651
ER Visits: 8,280
Admissions: 1,100

Community Living Center Beds: 40
Total Inpatient Beds: 42

PACT Act: The PACT Act is a law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve.

Toxic Exposure Screenings:
26,357
Claims Processing: 1,654
Claims Granted:
1,080
Net Awarded:
\$4,995,968



Leading the Way in Community Outreach

Our outreach teams attended or provided VA resources to around 200 community outreach events or community partners in 2023. Our outreach programs assist



Veterans who may need access to services for the criminal justice system, long-term care or financial planning, at risk of homelessness, or academic or community-based settings. In addition, enrollment, education, connection and referral, and advocacy resources are provided.

We encourage Veterans, their families and caregivers, and community partners to contact the outreach team if you need VA resources or would like an Outreach Specialist to participate at a community event.



John Richter
U.S. Army Veteran

Delaware Outreach Specialist
Cell: (302) 332-1888
Email: john.richter@va.gov



Patrick "Mick" Devlin
USMC/U.S. Army OIF/OEF
Combat Veteran

SNJ Outreach Specialist
Cell: (302) 304-5509
Email: patrick.devlin2@va.gov



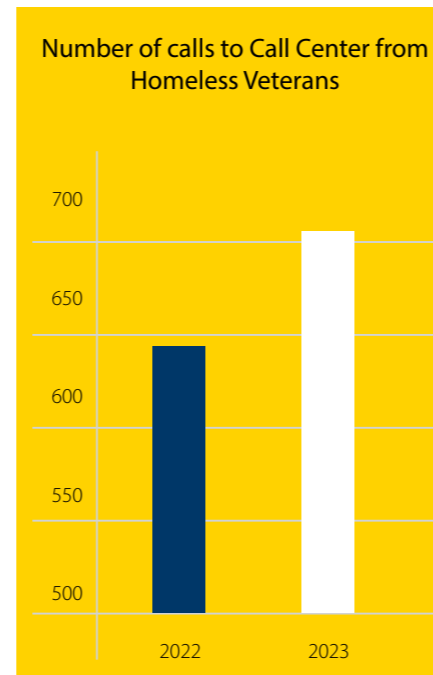
We continue to reach out to all OIF/OEF, 55+, rural, low-income, female, LGBTQ+, Native Americans and homeless Veterans, thier families and caregivers to provide the much needed services they've earned.

Homeless Program

Wilmington's Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program provides contract emergency shelter beds, transitional housing beds, the Supportive Services for Veterans and Their Families Program, National Homeless Call Center for Homeless Veterans, and other outreach events like community Stand Downs.

VA Wilmington Health Care held more than 10 stand down events which has helped enroll 50 to 200 Veterans per event in VA healthcare. Stand downs directly connect to the homeless populations in at-risk communities. Services include immediate food and shelter, health and dental care, treatment for addiction and depression, financial support, job training, life skills development, and education.

The Veterans Justice Program, which falls under Healthcare for Homeless Veterans, works closely with community members to provide services to Veterans that are Justice-involved. This program ensures Justice-involved Veterans don't end up homeless and can improve their situation.



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Suicide Prevention

In February of 2023, Wilmington launched a **Veteran Peer Suicide Prevention Program** in southern New Jersey that uses crisis intervention, Veteran Peer Specialist support, advocacy, and education, and comradery events to improve each Veteran's unique mental health needs within the program. This program is a first of its kind nation wide!

Our Veteran Peer Suicide Prevention Program in the south Jersey VA Clinics utilizes Veteran peers as the frontline of VA Suicide Prevention. Our team of Veteran Peer Specialists utilize their own lived experiences to

support, advocate, and empathize with the Veterans in the program. Peer Specialists are actively engaged in their own recovery and have been trained and certified to help other Veterans.

This new approach empowers Peer Specialists to lead those who are still stuck behind internal enemy lines.





Alicia Chopyk, Music and Neurologic Music Therapist at Wilmington VA Medical Center, talks about music, uses songs and instruments to help Veterans in the Community Living Center as an alternative medicine technique to heal.

Wilmington VA Medical Center

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www.wilmington.va.gov

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Wilmington VA Medical Center

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