

VETERANS'

healthy living

Embracing
change





Message from the Network Director

Ryan Lilly, MPA

Dear Veterans,

Like the seasons, change is inevitable and a sign of renewal. The implementation of the VA MISSION Act of 2018, rolled out this June, brings a new season of change for VA. New processes and partnerships will improve Veteran access to healthcare. It will also help VA deliver the right care at the right time in the right place to every veteran, every time.

What will never change is our dedication and immeasurable gratitude to our Veterans. The MISSION Act exists to improve the healthcare and lives of our Veteran patients, their families, our employees and community partners. Read about four major components of the MISSION Act, and how they affect Veterans, on pages 4-5.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie discussed the MISSION Act with Veterans and staff during his tri-state tour of New England in April. He toured the medical centers in Togus, White River Junction, and Manchester, visiting patients and delivering an important announcement to White River Junction. Read more about his visit on page 3.

The spirit of change was an ongoing theme this spring with the appointment of three new leadership positions at VA Maine, Manchester VAMC, and White River Junction VAMC. See page 6 for biographies of our outstanding new staff.

In the end, change is about the people we serve and the lives we touch. Enjoy three examples of how we touch lives at a personal level on page 7.

We could not be prouder of our Veterans, staff, and partners.

With thanks for your service,

Ryan Lilly, MPA
Network Director



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Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie visits VA New England



The Honorable Robert Wilkie, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, speaks to staff and Veterans at White River Junction VA Medical Center

On April 19, the medical centers in Togus, ME, White River Junction, VT, and Manchester, NH enjoyed a visit from the Honorable Robert Wilkie, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Secretary Wilkie began his visit to New England at the VA Medical Center in Togus, ME before traveling to White River Junction, where he met with the local AFGE President and White River Junction VAMC staff. While there, the Secretary visited staff and Veteran patients on inpatient units, where he presented both with challenge coins.

His visit to White River Junction culminated in an employee town hall where he addressed topics such as the MISSION Act, budget, and the excellent work of the staff. He also presented several awards and challenge coins. He concluded his visit by announcing the appointment of Dr. Brett Rusch as the new Medical Center Director.

At the Manchester VA Medical Center, Secretary Wilkie recognized staff improvement work as part of the Department's efforts to transform the integrated health care system into a high reliability organization (HRO). HROs adopt procedures and protocols to maximize safety, promising even higher quality care for our Veterans.

Manchester VAMC was selected as the first VAMC to lead the HRO journey based on high performance. Seventeen additional VAMC's will join Manchester in leading the effort to adopt HRO principles and values, which include preventing patient harm, reducing errors, and deference to expertise whether staff, Veterans, or caregivers. VA recognizes that becoming an HRO will not only create a safer environment with continuous process improvements, but will also empower employees, Veterans and their caregivers to positively impact patient care.

The Honorable Robert Wilkie was nominated by President Trump to serve as the tenth Secretary of Veterans Affairs. He was confirmed by the United States Senate on July 23, 2018 and sworn in on July 30, 2018. Mr. Wilkie previously served as the acting Secretary of VA from March 28 to May 29, 2018.

MISSION Act 2018

strengthens VA commitment to Veterans



*Did you know?
A study from
Dartmouth found
that VA hospitals
outperform
private
healthcare in
most of the
country.*

More Veterans are using VA healthcare — and are happier with their VA healthcare — than ever before. Veterans trust VA care. The MISSION Act of 2018 honors that trust, and recognizes that our Veterans deserve the very best, by enacting plans to strengthen the quality and timeliness of care across VA.

The VA MISSION Act of 2018, contains over 50 sections of legislation to improve VA's delivery of timely, quality healthcare. The four major components include improved access to healthcare from anywhere and more community-based options, with the larger goal of providing more healthcare access to more Veterans, where and when they need it.

Community care programs provide more access to care

The VA has recently earned a patient trust score of 87.7 percent by giving Veteran patients access to the healthcare they need, when they need it. Past improvements to access have resulted in VA wait times that are shorter than private wait times in a number of areas, same day services available in primary care and mental health, and direct scheduling without a referral in a number of services.

Remote care through telehealth

The MISSION Act authorizes the use of telehealth technologies to provide care to Veterans in their homes, even across state lines. New telehealth technologies let VA offer enhanced accessibility, capacity, and quality of care to more Veterans.

More community healthcare options

Veterans currently have a number of community care options, including Veterans Choice. The MISSION Act consolidates Choice into a single program that is easier to manage. A consolidated program is also easier for Veterans, their families, VA employees, and community providers to navigate.

Veterans using community care will see a familiar process improved with a new urgent care benefit, expanded eligibility criteria, and improved care.

Community providers will benefit from new IT systems, improved communications, and more timely payments.

For more information on the MISSION Act, visit www.missionact.va.gov.

Expanded Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The MISSION Act expands eligibility for VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) under the Caregiver Support Program. Under the MISSION Act, benefits will be extended to caregivers of Veterans from all eras. Expansion of these benefits can begin after VA implements a new information technology system as required by the Act.

To learn more about the support and programs available through the Caregiver Support Program, visit www.caregiver.va.gov or contact the Caregiver Support Line toll-free at 1-855-260-3274.

Strengthen VA's workforce

The MISSION Act provides for access to education debt reduction and allows for flexibility for bonuses for recruitment, relocation and retention. These incentives will help attract and retain top health care professionals in a time where there is a shortage of healthcare professionals nationwide.

Incentives also include a pilot scholarship program to provide medical training to eligible Veterans in return for a service commitment of four years in a VA hospital or clinic.

Strengthen VA's infrastructure

The MISSION Act will better align VA's property portfolio and infrastructure with the needs of America's Veterans. To achieve this, an Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission will be established to hold public hearings regarding the modernization or realignment of VHA facilities.

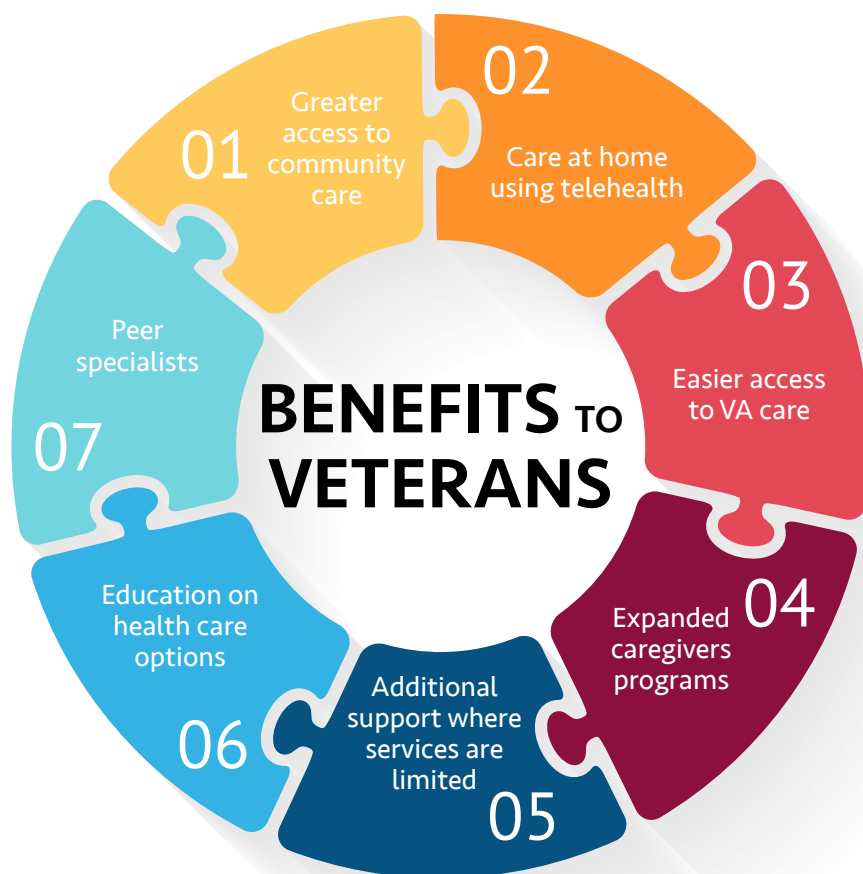
Looking ahead

Improvement is a continuous process, and one VA does not take lightly. Our Veterans deserve the very best. The MISSION Act of 2018 opens new avenues to improved healthcare and support, leading us solidly into a better future for all Veterans.

The VA MISSION Act, endorsed by more than 30 Veterans Service Organizations, was signed into law in June 2018.

VA MISSION Act for Veterans

The right care at the right place at the right time



Tracye Davis, Medical Center Director



Tracye B. Davis was appointed Medical Center Director of VA Maine Healthcare System in April.

Ms. Davis began at VA as a health administration fellow at VA Pittsburgh Health Care System in 2004. From 2013-2015 she served as Associate Director for VA Maine Healthcare System.

Her most recent positions have included Deputy Director, VA Portland Health Care System and Interim Director at Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in Spokane, Washington and at VA Long Beach Health Care System.

Ms. Davis is a board-certified health care executive and Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE). She is a graduate of VHA's Health Care Leadership Development Program and the Office of Personnel Management's Senior Executive Assessment Program.

She holds degrees from Washington School of Medicine and Trinity University.

Nancy Bedard, Patient Experience Coordinator



Nancy Bedard was appointed Patient Experience Coordinator of Manchester VA Medical Center in April.

Ms. Bedard brings with her more than 15 years of varied and valuable experience in the greater Manchester area in management, case management, surgery, and labor and delivery.

Together with Patient Advocate Liaisons in each department, the Patient Experience Coordinator helps patients navigate the system and ensures that their ideas, complaints, and compliments are addressed.

She will also work to ensure the medical center meets its strategic goals associated with delivery of care and quality outcomes, advocacy and customer service.

Ms. Bedard holds degrees from Walden University, the University of Maryland, and Nichols College.

Dr. Brett Rusch, Executive Director



Brett Rusch, MD, was appointed Executive Director of White River Junction VA Medical Center in April.

Dr. Rusch is a practicing psychiatrist and mental health expert and has been providing care to Veterans throughout his medical career.

He is active as an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Dartmouth's Geisel School of Medicine and, as White River Junction's Executive Director, he represents VA as an ex-officio member of Geisel's Board of Advisors.

Dr. Rusch joined White River Junction VA in 2015 as Chief of Mental Health and Behavioral Science Services. He then served as Chief of Staff from December 2016 through April 2019.

Dr. Rusch completed his medical degree and residency at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

Ask me about my cap



Rita Gambrell, Voluntary Service Specialist, visits Ask Me About My Cap at the Bedford VA.

Bedford VA recently featured a moving photographic exhibit called *Ask Me About My Cap*. Featuring over 100 service hats worn by Veterans, the exhibit is a powerful tribute to our Veterans and their stories.

Teresa Harrington, Voluntary Service, developed the concept while hosting activities for Veterans and noticing their responses to being asked about their caps, pins or medals. She was moved by their gratitude at being recognized for their service, and not just as patients.

The display has proven equally moving to staff, Veterans and their families. Many Veterans have proudly posed for photos in front of their cap display with their families.

Ask Me About My Cap has built trust, honor, respect, pride and engagement with Veterans, their families, staff and visitors. The exhibit exemplifies the VA mission "...to serve him who has born the battle."

Creating community in the kitchen



Patricia Thomas peels sweet potatoes during meal prep as residents create a community meal together.

Residents of VA Boston's Spinal Cord Injury unit in Brockton are enjoying a program that combines community, nutrition and home cooking.

Several residents are taken on a shopping trip every other Friday to buy ingredients needed to make a meal for their entire community. The shopping trip is a new twist to the previously established program, which combined nutrition, education and cooking.

And while grocery shopping and cooking might not seem like a treat to some, for Veterans with spinal cord injuries those everyday activities are a welcome change to their daily routine and an opportunity to interact with people outside the residence.

Veterans in the program contribute as they are able. Together, they choose a dish to cook, shop for the ingredients, and then prepare the meal along with staff and volunteers.

The program promotes community, nutrition, cooperation, and independence.

Delivering healthcare to your door



Several VA New England Healthcare System services have adopted telehealth technology to deliver care at home via video. And the reviews are overwhelmingly positive.

Appointments are delivered through secure video chat to enabled devices. Video chat is especially helpful for Veterans in rural areas that are not near VA facilities or those who have mobility issues. It can also be used to triage issues that may require additional care.

Telehealth is also being used for remote chronic condition management. By providing a patient with a specialized tablet and peripheral devices like an electronic scale, pulse oximeter, or 1-lead EKG, providers can assess a patient's condition remotely and receive real-time data.

VA's in New England are using telehealth successfully, saving time and resources, and making healthcare accessible to more Veterans.

VETERANS'

healthy living

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200 Springs Road
Bedford, MA 01730

VA MEDICAL CENTERS

CONNECTICUT

VA Connecticut Healthcare System

Newington Campus
555 Willard Avenue
Newington, CT 06111
(860) 666-6951

West Haven Campus
950 Campbell Avenue
West Haven, CT 06516
(203) 932-5711

MAINE

VA Maine Healthcare System

1 VA Center
Augusta, ME 04330
(207) 623-8411
(877) 421-8263

MASSACHUSETTS

Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hosp.
200 Springs Road
Bedford, MA 01730
(781) 687-2000

VA Boston Healthcare System

Brockton Campus
940 Belmont Street
Brockton, MA 02301
(508) 583-4500

Jamaica Plain Campus
150 S. Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02130
(617) 232-9500

West Roxbury Campus
1400 VFW Parkway
West Roxbury, MA 02132
(617) 323-7700

VA Central Western MA Healthcare System

421 North Main Street
Leeds, MA 01053
(413) 584-4040

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Manchester VAMC
718 Smyth Road
Manchester, NH 03104
(603) 624-4366
(800) 892-8384

RHODE ISLAND

Providence VAMC
830 Chalkstone Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
(401) 273-7100
(866) 590-2976

VERMONT

White River Junction VAMC
215 North Main Street
White River Junction, VT 05009
(802) 295-9363

COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS

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7 Germantown Road
Danbury, CT 06810
(203) 798-8422

New London CBOC
4 Shaw's Cove, Suite 101
New London, CT 06320
(860) 437-3611

Stamford CBOC
Stamford Health System
1275 Summer Street
Stamford, CT 06905
(203) 325-0649

Waterbury CBOC
95 Scovill Street
Waterbury, CT 06706
(203) 465-5292

Willimantic CBOC
1320 Main Street
Tyler Square (next to Social Security Office)
Willimantic, CT 06226
(860) 450-7583

Winsted CBOC
115 Spencer Street
Winsted, CT 06098
(860) 738-6985

MAINE

Bangor CBOC
35 State Hospital Street
Bangor, ME 04401
(207) 561-3600

Lincoln CBOC
99 River Road
Lincoln, ME 04457
(207) 403-2000

Calais CBOC
50 Union Street
Calais, ME 04619
(207) 904-3700

Caribou CBOC
163 Van Buren Road, Ste. 6
Caribou, ME 04736
(207) 493-3800

Fort Kent CBOC
Medical Office Building
197 East Main St.
Fort Kent, ME 04743
(207) 834-1572

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Houlton Regional Hospital
20 Hartford Street
Houlton, ME 04730
(877) 421-8263, ext. 2000

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15 Challenger Drive
Lewiston, ME 04240
(207) 623-8411 Ext. 4601
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Bingham, ME 04920
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144 Fore Street
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Rumford, ME 04276
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Lynn, MA 01904
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Martha's Vineyard Hosp.

One Hospital Road
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557
(508) 771-3190

New Bedford CBOC

175 Elm Street
New Bedford, MA 02740
(508) 994-0217

Pittsfield CBOC

73 Eagle Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 499-2672

Plymouth CBOC

116 Long Pond Road
Plymouth, MA 02360
(800) 865-3384

Quincy CBOC

110 West Squantum St.
Quincy, MA 02171
(774)-826-3070

Springfield CBOC

25 Bond Street
Springfield, MA 01104
(413) 731-6000

Worcester CBOC

605 Lincoln Street
Worcester, MA 01605
(508) 856-0104

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Conway, NH 03818
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(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

Keene CBOC

640 Marlboro Street
Keene, NH 03431
(603) 358-4900

Littleton CBOC

264 Cottage Street
Littleton, NH 03561
(603) 575-6700

Portsmouth CBOC

302 Newmarket Street
Portsmouth, NH 03803
(603) 624-4366, ext. 3199
(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

Somersworth CBOC

200 Route 108
Somersworth, NH 03878
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(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

Tilton CBOC

630 Main Street, Ste. 400
Tilton, NH 03276
(603) 624-4366, ext. 3199
(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

RHODE ISLAND

Middletown CBOC

One Corporate Place
Middletown, RI 02842
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VERMONT

Bennington CBOC

186 North Street
Bennington, VT 05201
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Brattleboro CBOC

71 GSP Drive
Brattleboro, VT 05301
(802) 251-2200

Burlington Lakeside CBOC

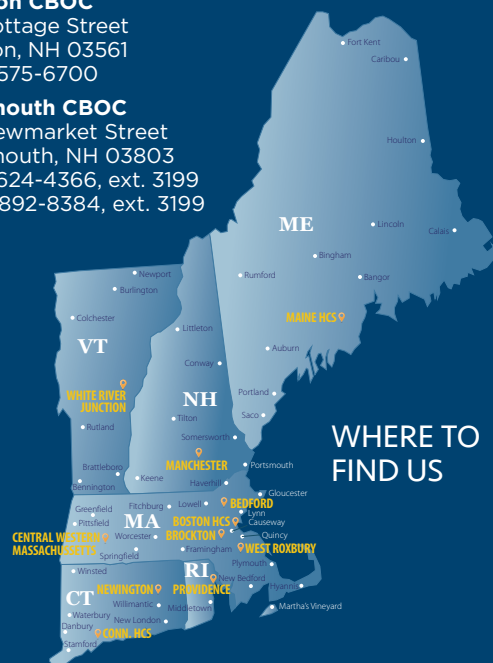
128 Lakeside Ave., Ste. 260
Burlington, VT 05041
(802) 657-7000

Newport CBOC

1734 Crawford Farm Rd.
Newport, VT 05855
(802) 624-2400

Rutland CBOC

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Rutland, VT 05701-2850
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