



**“VA State of the Art in  
Rural Health Conference”**

# **Veterans Community Engagement in the Pacific Through VCP**

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# Today's Presentation

- Provision of VA Health Care in the Pacific
- Introduction of Patient Centered Community Care (PC3) Followed by Veterans Choice Program (VCP) in the Pacific
- The Guam VCP Story
- Residual VCP Issues and Other Veteran Concerns in the Pacific



# Mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

*“...to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and orphan...”*

*- Abraham Lincoln, 1865*

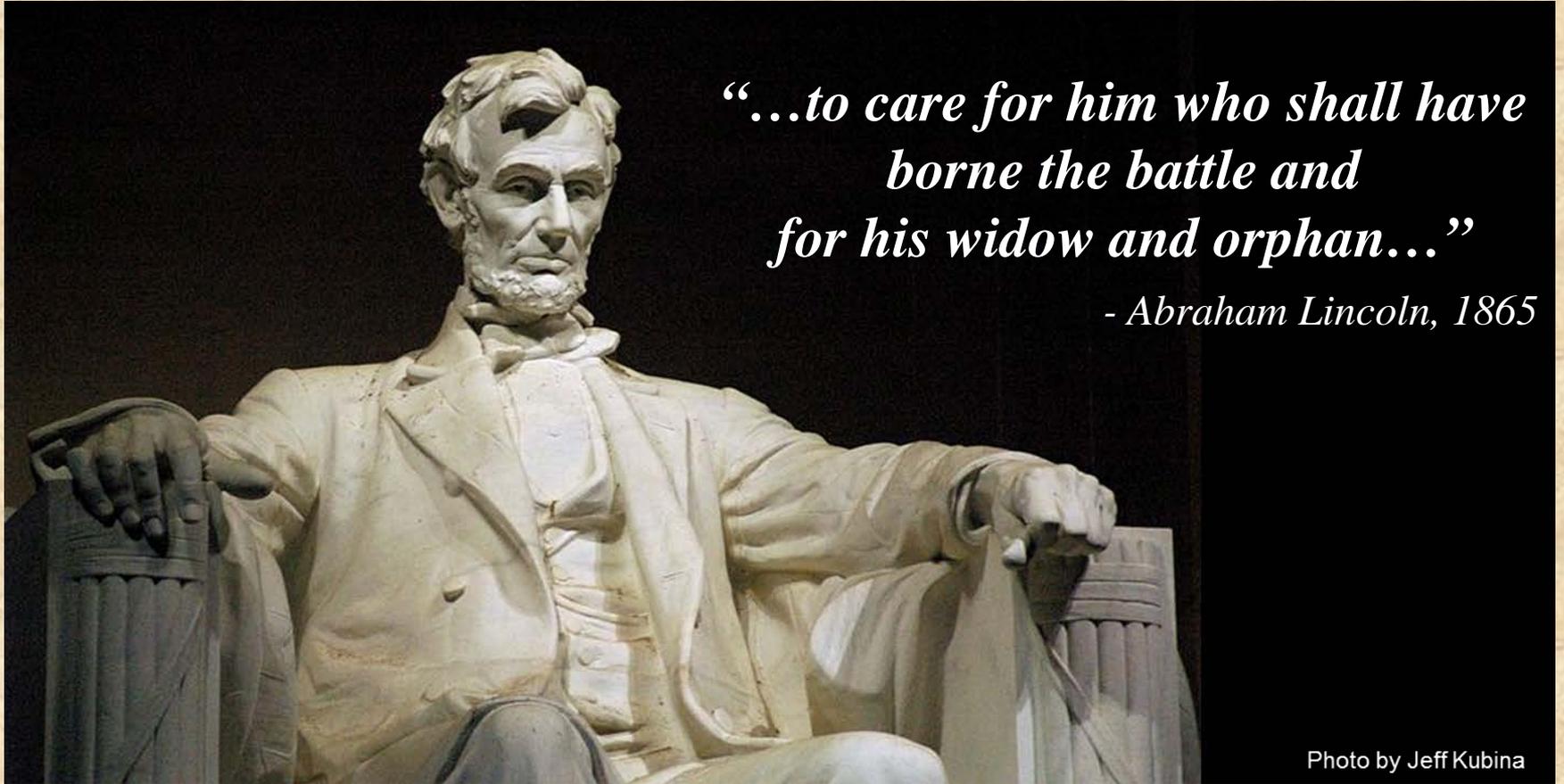


Photo by Jeff Kubina



# Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Mission, Core Values & Characteristics

## VA Mission:

“...to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and orphan...”

## VA Core Values:

“I CARE” - Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect & Excellence

## VA Characteristics:

Trustworthy, Accessible, Quality, Innovative, Agile and Integrated

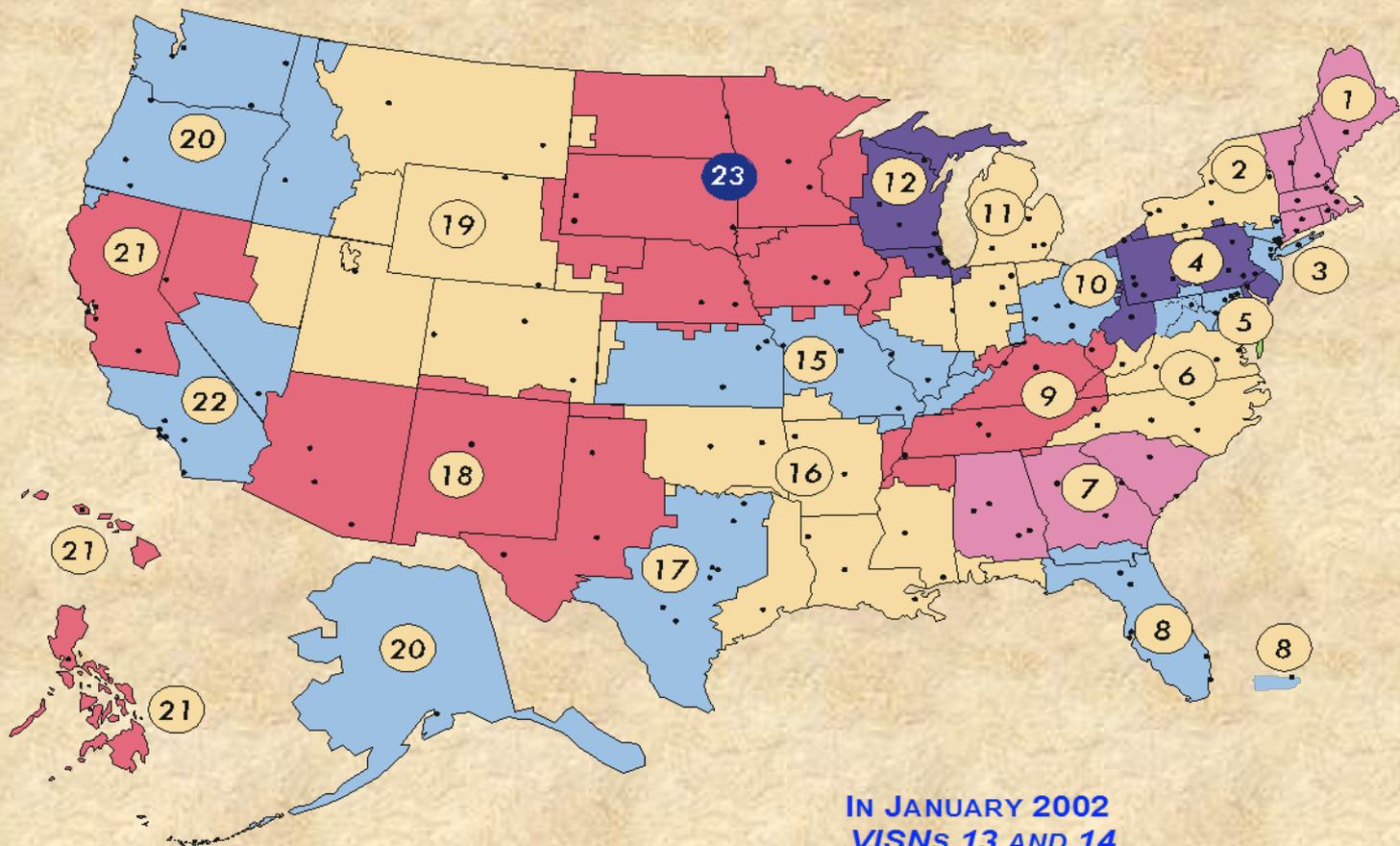




# **Provision of VA Health Care in the Pacific**



# 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks – Moving to 18



IN JANUARY 2002  
VISNs 13 AND 14  
WERE INTEGRATED AND  
RENAMED VISN 23

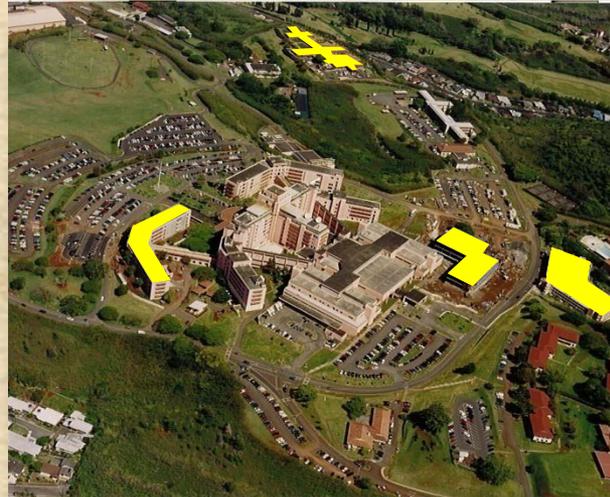




# VA Facilities on TAMC Campus



**Community Living Center**



**Ambulatory Care Center**



**Administrative Offices**



**Parking Structure**



# VAPIHCS CBOCs



Lihue



Kaua'i



Kahului



Oahu

Moloka'i

Lana'i

Maui



Hilo



Hawai'i (Big Island)



Hagåtña

(Guam Naval Hospital)



Saipan



Guam

American Samoa



VA Outreach Clinics



Pago Pago



Kona



Leeward



# VAPIHCS Services

- Outpatient primary medical care
- Outpatient mental health care
- Inpatient mental health care
- Specialized outpatient treatment
- Dental care
- Geriatrics, rehabilitation & extended care, palliative care
- Audiology
- Optometry
- Dialysis
- Home Based Primary Care (Oahu, Kona, Hilo, Kauai, Maui, Guam , Molokai, Lanai)
- PTSD Residential treatment /Outpatient PTSD
- Ancillary Services (lab, radiology, pharmacy, occupational health)
- Care for special populations: SCI, Blind Veterans, Women Veterans and Homeless Veterans
- Hospice



# Overlay North America on the Pacific

## PACIFIC ISLANDS IN PERSPECTIVE



Reference Only

Image not to be used for analysis or interpretation.

French Polynesia  
Henry Wolter, [hwolter@usgs.gov](mailto:hwolter@usgs.gov)  
Connie Hoong, [choong@usgs.gov](mailto:choong@usgs.gov)  
December 22, 2003



# **Compact of Free Association (COFA) Three Sovereign States**

- **What about Palau, Republic of Marshal Islands (RMI) & Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)?**
- **UN Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Palau, RMI, FSM and CNMI)**
- **Administered by DON 47-51 and DOI 51-86**
- **COFA first signed in 1986, renewed in 2003**
- **Administered by US Office of Insular Affairs**
- **Economic and Military Provisions (Kwajalein Atoll separate)**



# **Introduction of Patient Centered Community Care (PC3) Followed by Veterans Choice Program (VCP) in the Pacific**



# **VAPIHCS “Prior” to Introduction of Patient Centered Care (PC3)**

- **\$250M annual operation**
- **\$78M annual community care**
- **\$55M annual fee to community**
- **\$20M annual Tripler Army Medical Center Joint Venture**
- **\$ 3M annual USN Hospital Guam Master Sharing Agreement**



# **Patient Centered Community Care (PC3)**

- National VA contract with TW and HN
- Region 5B is in VAPIHCS Area of Operations
- Region 5B contractor- TriWest
- Region 5B implementation on 2 January 2014
- Focus on inpatient/outpatient Specialty, Mental Health and Primary Community Care



# **Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act (VACAA)**

- **Effective 7 Aug 2014 / Implemented 5 Nov 2014**
- **VA, Office of General Counsel (OGC) Opinion**
  - **Different Rules for States with no VA hospital**
  - **Different Rules for Guam and Am Samoa**
- **Veterans Choice Cards Mailed Out**
- **Section 103–VAPIHCS/Papa Ola Lokahi Collaboration**
- **VA, OGC Opinion Reversal**



# **The Guam VCP Story**



# **The Guam VCP Story:**

- **OGC Opinion Dec 2014**
- **Tommy D Brief Guam / AS Veterans Jan 2015**
- **Congressionals Start to Roll In**
- **Tommy D Start Work as 0.5 FTE for Dir, ORH, VHA, Feb 2015**
- **Support by Gina Capra and Regan Crump in Discussion w OGC on Guam / AS, Feb – Apr 2015 – “US Territory is same as a State”**
- **OGC Opinion Reversed Apr 2015**



## **The Guam VCP Story Cont:**

- **TriWest Opens Pacific Office on Oahu Apr 15**
- **VA Health Eligibility Center (HEC) Fails to load Guam / AS Veterans into Veterans Choice List Apr – Jun 2015, More Congressionals**
- **HEC Eligibility for Guam / AS Corrected Jul 15**
- **Third Chief Business Office (CBO) Member Services Mass Mail Out to Pacific Veterans Jul 2015, corrected first two Mass Mail Outs**
- **Subsequent Town Hall Meetings, Social Media, Advisory Committee, Local Trifold, Congressional Support ongoing in and effort to diffuse confusion**



# TriWest Healthcare Alliance PC3/Choice Providers

State/Territory	PC3 Providers	Choice Providers	Total
Hawaii	2,902	585	3,487
Guam	405	105	510
CNMI	24	5	29
American Samoa	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,331</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>4,027</b>



# **TriWest Health Care Alliance Pacific Office**

- **Apr 2015 - Office opened on Oahu**
- **Jun 2015 - Office fully operational, 46 staff**
- **Sep 2016 - Office is currently operating with 63 staff**
- **Basic Hours of Operation 7am-8pm M-F**
- **Guam Hours of Operation 11am-Midnight Sun-Thur HST to Match GST**
- **Approximately 5000 calls per month**



# **Residual VCP Issues and Other Veteran Concerns in the Pacific**



# **VCP Residual Issues in the Pacific**

- **Limited # and Type of Providers in some areas**
- **Bene-Travel associated with Choice, who's eligible, who approves, how to handle Non-Medical Attendant travel approval???**
- **In spite of TriWest Guam Time Office and Local Coverage, After hours and weekend calls are still pushed to TriWest mainland Call Centers**
- **Choice 1st, Choice 40, Other Health Ins (OHI)**
- **Introduction of VA VCP Provider Agreement for same providers already in TriWest network**



# **Other Veteran Concerns**

- **VA Implementation Time Constraints Precluded Proper Veteran Education (VA Staff and Providers too) BEFORE the Choice Card Mail Out resulted in mass confusion upon receipt of card**
- **This confusion was further exacerbated by Jan 2015 and May 2015 incorrect information mail outs in the Pacific**
- **Veterans are afraid if they use their Choice Card that they will be banned from the VA and / or receive a huge bill for community care**
- **Continued and further Veteran, VA staff and provider education is essential**



# Contact Information

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**Are there  
any  
questions?**