



Scott R. Isaacks, FACHE
Medical Center Director

Savannah CBOC

This month we broke ground on the highly anticipated Savannah VA Outpatient Clinic that will, when completed in 2016, replace our existing clinic in that community. The 55,000 square foot facility will provide Primary Care, Mental Health, and select Specialty Care such as Optometry, Physical Therapy, Podiatry, and much more for the rapidly growing number of Veterans in this area. The new clinic will also enable us to expand to 15 Primary Care teams, add a Women Veterans' area, Prosthetics Service, and even a walking trail. As U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson, Savannah Veteran of the Year Frank Mullis and I turned the ceremonial shovel of dirt, I couldn't help but think of the impact this new facility will have on Veterans in this community. Our hope and our resolve is that they will find healing for both mind and body here, and I am excited to see our Veterans have the world-class clinic they so richly deserve.



VA | Ralph H. Johnson
VA Medical Center

109 Bee Street | Charleston, SC 29401
1 (888) 878-6884
www.charleston.va.gov

As I begin this month's update, I am very pleased to say we are rolling right along at our VA – literally! The offsite parking lot, located at 41 Folly Rd., is open and the shuttle service has been very well received by Veterans, volunteers, visitors and employees. We have received numerous comments on the convenience and timeliness of the shuttle service, as well as the courtesy and customer service of the drivers. While we are encouraging Veterans to use our complimentary valet and park on campus first, we want you to know that the offsite lot is available to serve you. The offsite lot and the new parking deck that is now in early construction stages at the VA are two vital pieces of our parking improvement strategy. The offsite lot, which offers 600 spaces, will remain in place after the deck is built. We are even trying to expand the number of spaces there as I write this message. These parking improvements are the direct result of your feedback. We are listening and I encourage you to keep sharing your ideas with us as we work every day to make your VA even better.

Strategic Plan

We have recently published our 2015 Strategic Plan on our website at www.charleston.va.gov/about/strategy/2015.asp. We are continuing to focus on key areas of access to care, quality care, communication, collaboration and efficiency. Several initiatives such as establishing a Fisher House, enhancing and expanding Women's health, installing new way-finding in the medical center, expanding palliative care beds, and enhancing community partnerships are well underway. Our goals are to improve every day, to continue to deliver the highest quality of care, and to be your health care provider of choice.

Veterans Choice Program

More than 1,900 of the 2,000 area Veterans who are eligible for the Veterans Choice program due to distance to a VA facility have, I believe, clearly told us we are their health care provider of choice. The overwhelming majority of these Veterans have chosen to continue to receive their care at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center or one of our clinics. Veterans frequently tell us they receive better care here than anywhere else, that they know our staff really care about them, and they don't want to go anywhere else for health care. It is both humbling and inspiring to be entrusted with your care, and I promise to do everything possible to continue to earn your trust and the privilege of caring for you every day. We have also hired a Veterans Choice Navigator in Charleston

and will soon add a Navigator in our Hinesville clinic to assist Veterans with questions about the Choice Program or who do choose to be seen in the community. Please contact Mariecia Smith for any Choice Program assistance you may need.



Mariecia Smith
Veterans Choice
Navigator

As many of you have read in the media, our average wait times for appointments are below the national average. Last year we were the 6th fastest growing VA in the country with a growth rate of 7.44%. So far this year, our growth rate is at 9% and we are both challenged and excited by this growth. That is why we are continuing to add new staff, open new clinics, monitor access in every area, and continually review our processes and data to ensure the utmost integrity and transparency in care delivery for our Veterans. Our goal is simple ... that you and all the other Veterans coming to our VA continue to receive the best care anywhere, and that we exceed your expectations in quality and service. Thank you for choosing the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center as your health care provider of choice. We look forward to serving your for many years to come.

Upcoming Events

Homeless Veteran Community Resource and Referral Center Grand Opening featuring VA Deputy Secretary The Honorable Sloan D. Gibson
June 5, 10:00 a.m., 2424 Mall Dr., North Charleston, SC