

OPENING NEW DOORS



VA Butler Healthcare's Annual Report

2017



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VA Butler Healthcare, located in Butler County, Pennsylvania has been providing Veterans' care since 1947. We are the health care provider of choice for over 22,000 Veterans throughout Western Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio. VA Butler Healthcare is an integral part of VA Healthcare VISN 4 under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

VA Butler Healthcare provides comprehensive Veteran care including primary, specialty, and mental health care — as well as management of chronic conditions and social support services to our nation's Veterans. We proudly serve America's Veterans at our main campus on North Duffy Road, our facilities on New Castle Road, as well as at our five Primary Care VA Outpatient Clinics in Armstrong, Southern Butler County (Cranberry Township), Clarion, Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

FRONT COVER

The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony included remarks from VA Leadership and Cambridge Healthcare Solutions PA, LP, and the keynote address was provided by U.S. Representative Mike Kelly. Additionally, former Pittsburgh Steeler and longtime friend of Abraham, Rocky Bleier, provided a special tribute to Abraham as the new facility sign was officially unveiled.

VA BUTLER HEALTHCARE'S Leadership Team

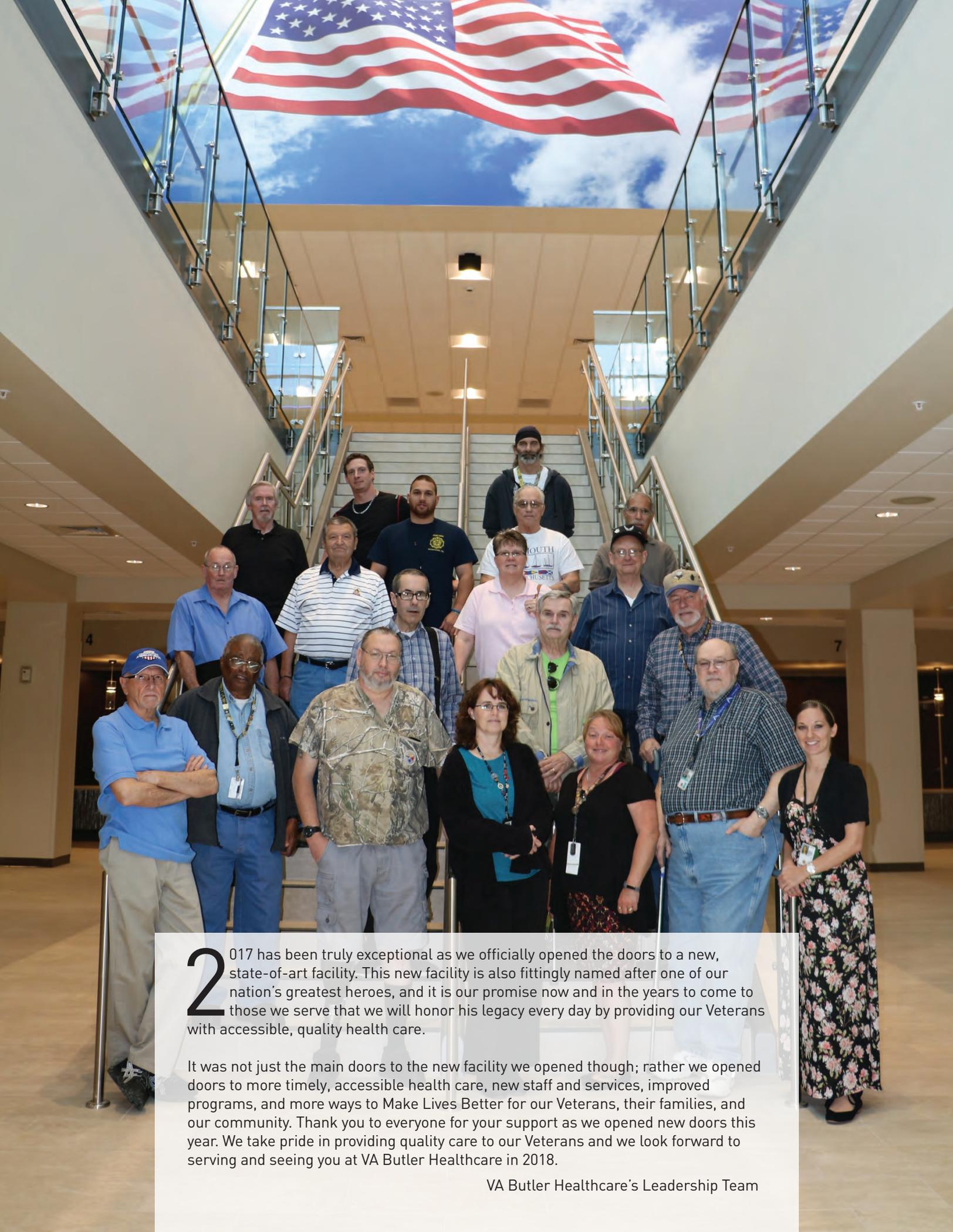
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VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Butler Healthcare



2 017 has been truly exceptional as we officially opened the doors to a new, state-of-art facility. This new facility is also fittingly named after one of our nation's greatest heroes, and it is our promise now and in the years to come to those we serve that we will honor his legacy every day by providing our Veterans with accessible, quality health care.

It was not just the main doors to the new facility we opened though; rather we opened doors to more timely, accessible health care, new staff and services, improved programs, and more ways to Make Lives Better for our Veterans, their families, and our community. Thank you to everyone for your support as we opened new doors this year. We take pride in providing quality care to our Veterans and we look forward to serving and seeing you at VA Butler Healthcare in 2018.

VA Butler Healthcare's Leadership Team

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Opening the Doors to the New *Abie Abraham Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Center*



On September 5, 2017, VA Butler Healthcare officially opened the doors to Veterans to the new Abie Abraham Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Center (HCC). The HCC is named after WWII hero, Bataan Death March survivor, and former POW Sergeant Major Abie Abraham. Abraham volunteered at VA Butler Healthcare for 23 years, spending 36,851 hours caring for fellow Veterans.

The new HCC located at: 353 North Duffy Road, Butler, PA 16001 includes primary care, specialty care, mental health, dental, diagnostic, laboratory, pathology, radiology, podiatry, optometry, pharmacy, physical rehabilitation, including a new hydrotherapy pool, and a dedicated women's health clinic. It is also fully equipped to continue as well as expand the technology used by VA to provide care. This includes telemedicine equipment for telehealth, clinical video telehealth, teledermatology, teleretinal exams, and teleaudiology.

The HCC is a two-story building with 168,000 square feet, and more than 1,300 parking spaces. It was built specifically to meet Veterans' needs in a state-of-the-art design that optimizes patient and staff flow and safety and offers the latest in medical equipment and technology. It is also silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified. VA will lease the HCC facility from Cambridge Healthcare Solutions PA, LP (Cambridge), of Vienna, Virginia for a 20-year term.

VA Butler Healthcare was selected for an HCC because of its mission as a large outpatient clinic — with a need for significant capital improvements — to support the health care needs of local Veterans into the future. VA Butler's new Health Care Center received Congressional approval and was authorized as Public Law 111-82 on November 24, 2009 as a major lease.





Opening the Doors to *Quality, Accessible Health Care* in Butler, PA

PATIENT-ALIGNED CARE TEAM (PACT) FOCUS

The new Health Care Center has a significantly different and innovative layout. It was strategically designed to efficiently support the Patient-Aligned Care Team, or PACT, health care delivery model. Private exam rooms surround the separate clinical staff work area that Veterans health care teams use to communicate and collaborate with one another.

The overall layout enhances privacy and safety, optimizes processes like appointment check in and out, and simplifies navigation through the clinic. For example, all clinical services are provided on the ground floor for Veterans.

CARE IN THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS

In response to the demand and shift to the community of specialty services provided to Veterans, VA Butler invested Care in the Community (CITC) support staff. The facility added a manager, seven Medical Support Assistants (MSAs), and two Registered Nurses (RNs). The investment immediately resulted in the ability to process the consults more efficiently, eliminate the backlog, and realize improved health outcomes for the Veterans.

Improvements included:

- ★ Veterans being called within two days: Improved from average of more than two weeks to less than two days.
- ★ Veterans scheduled within 22 days: Improved from average of greater than 30 days to less than 22 days.
- ★ The backlog in consults was improved from over 600 consults to zero.

PARTNERING WITH PITTSBURGH

VA Butler Healthcare, in working with VISN4's Western Market Initiative, has expanded (and continues to expand) specialty medical services at VA Butler locations through the shared employment of VA Pittsburgh Clinicians. Currently, partnerships are in place for Cardiology and Urology Care. Additionally, VA Butler is looking to better integrate Ophthalmology between our two facilities so that the Ophthalmologist who sees Veterans in Butler will also be the same Ophthalmologist who would perform procedures for these Veterans at VA Pittsburgh.

In looking towards the future, VA Butler plans to continue to make additional VA Pittsburgh-shared specialty services at Butler locations and as well as expanding into partnerships with community health care providers to enhance the convenience of care options available to our Veterans.



DEDICATED WOMEN VETERANS CLINIC

The new HCC has a separate clinic just for Women Veterans; it includes a private waiting area with a kiosk. In addition, women Veterans with an appointment may also utilize designated parking spaces by the employee entrance. Any female Veteran with an appointment may park in the back and enter through the employee entrance by calling the Women's Clinic on the phone outside of the building.

In addition to a new, private space for women Veterans, TeleGyn (New GYN Telehealth Clinic) was developed for women Veterans this year to allow them to call for consultations with Women Health providers for medication follow-up as well as follow-up visits not requiring physical exams.

VA Butler served 1,300 women Veterans in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, 112 of them new to VA Butler Healthcare.



Opening the Doors to *Connected Care*

Connecting with Veterans from where they are and in real-time

TELEHEALTH TECHNOLOGY EXPANDS

VA Butler Healthcare led VISN 4 in the highest percentage of Telehealth utilization this year, and out of all VA Medical Centers, VA Butler ranked 3rd in overall Telehealth utilization nationally! VA Butler's Teledermatology Hub grew by 62% this year compared to last, improving timeliness of service and expanding to several sites nationally with high utilization.

With the opening of the new Health Care Center, VA Butler acquired advanced level Telehealth technology in group rooms and for 1:1 Veteran Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) care. 17 New Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) programs and clinics were also developed in FY 2017 to reduce and eliminate Veterans' travel for their health care needs. For example, VA Butler partnered with VA Pittsburgh to initiate CVT Cardiology, CVT IMPACT, CVT Sleep, CVT Speech PIRATE, CVT Pharmacy Medical Management for CBOCs, and CVT Dementia.

CVT services were also added at VA Butler's five Outpatient Clinics to reduce travel to the main VA Butler facility in Butler, PA, including: Sleep Studies, Women's Health, and Diabetes Self-Management Education.





- ★ My HealthVet Authenticated Unique Patients: **10,080**
- ★ Secure Messaging Active Unique Senders: **2,813**
- ★ Online VA Prescription Refills: **30,756**
- ★ **Lowest percentage (7.59%)** of registered/not In-Person Authenticated unique patients in VISN 4!
- ★ **Less than one day** to complete Secure Messages for past four consecutive years
- ★ **Less than 1.05%** escalation rate for past two consecutive years

MY HEALTHVET HELPS PREPARE FOR HCC MOVE-IN

As part of the new VA Butler Health Care Center’s Communication Plan, the Primary Care PACT Teams created distribution groups in Secure Messaging to announce the move to our new Health Care Center (HCC). In Secure Messages to patients, staff included information about the new facility and asked Veterans to reply to the Secure Message should they have any questions or comments about our new location.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION EFFORTS

VA Butler Healthcare increased its digital outreach efforts, and had a monthly digital reach of over 100,000 users this year, largely due to the new tool, GovDelivery.

GovDelivery has enabled VA Butler to be at the forefront of digitally communicating with Veterans, in addition to My HealthVet. VA Butler's GovDelivery Platform (which won a national award) has over 70,000 users to date.

Social media continues to play a vital role in digital communications as well, with over 2,000 Facebook Fans and over 1,500 Twitter followers. In FY 2017, VA Butler began using Facebook Live as a way to connect with Veterans in real-time, for instance, the HCC Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was hosted live on Facebook for any interested Veterans and community members.



VIRTUAL LIFETIME ELECTRONIC RECORD (VLER) INITIATES IMED CONSENT

VA Butler became one of the first in the country to use iMed consent in production to enroll Veterans in VLER this year. Epads at the new HCC helped make this achievement possible.



5,820
authorizations
from Veterans in
FY 2017 were
received,
bringing the
total to
9,421.



Opening the Doors to a *Healthier YOU*

NEW REHABILITATION SPACE AND NEW SERVICES

VA Butler's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) Department moved into the new HCC this year, and with that move came a large gym space with updated and new rehabilitation equipment. The new, open gym plan encourages various rehab disciplines to work collaboratively on direct patient care.

The new rehabilitation space also includes a hydrotherapy tub to offer a new service to Veterans, aquatic therapy. VA Butler hired two new physical therapists this fiscal year, one of which was hired to perform aquatic therapy & is ATRI-certified (Aquatic Therapy & Rehab Institute).

PM&R also developed a Pain Workshop this year to teach self-management techniques to Veterans with chronic pain. The workshop is an eight-week program and offers education from various disciplines, including physiatry, physical therapy, chiropractic, pharmacy, behavioral health and nutrition.



NEW WELLNESS CENTER AND MORE FITNESS CLASSES

When the doors to the new HCC officially opened, so did the doors to the new Wellness Center. The new Wellness Center includes new fitness equipment, new space for group exercise, and a personal trainer available to assist Veterans in their fitness goals. In FY 2017, there were 5,514 total attendances (averaging 118 per month) at the Wellness Center.

242 fitness classes were held during FY 2017 with 47 unique participants and 1,339 participant attendances, with 608 of those being Veterans. New fitness classes for 2017 included: Basic Mindful Yoga & iRest Inspired Meditation Classes, Grounded Warrior Yoga, and Martial Arts.

BE ACTIVE AND *MOVE!*

VA Butler's *MOVE!* Groups had close to 300 participants in FY 2017 for a total **weight loss of 1,191 pounds!** Be Active & *MOVE!* (BAM) was added as a new program to the Armstrong Community-Based Outpatient Clinic to support Veterans interested in becoming more physically active. BAM consists of group activity (aerobic fitness, strengthening exercises, balance and flexibility training) along with education about the new skills all performed with the support of fellow Veterans.





Opening the Doors to *Mental Health Recovery*

SUICIDE PREVENTION IS TOP PRIORITY

VA Butler Healthcare served as a pilot site for the new REACH Vet Initiative and in June 2017 officially hired a REACH VET Coordinator and successfully began the new program aimed at reducing Veteran suicide. A total of **65 Veterans** have been identified through REACH VET since the inception. Approximately **20-21 Veterans are identified each month** as at statistical risk on the REACH VET dashboard.

In addition to efforts through REACH VET, VA Butler's Suicide Prevention Coordinator participates in a minimum of five outreach events each month in the community to promote suicide prevention and awareness. In FY 2017, 80 events were held/attended. "We Care" Cards (suicide prevention mailings) are also mailed to Veterans on the facility's high risk for suicide list each month. In FY 2017, 335 cards were mailed.

RECOVERY EFFORTS GO NATIONAL

VA Butler Healthcare hosted a week long, national Veteran 'X' Facilitator Training Program in July to help expand the Veteran 'X' program throughout the Veterans Health Administration, providing an additional service for Veterans in mental health recovery. VA Butler was selected to host this training because of the ongoing, successful Veteran 'X' program, which first started here in 2014. This year, an average of **56 Veterans** are present every Monday night for the group.

VA Butler also recognizes the recovery efforts of local efforts each year at the Recovery Recognition Event. This year **27 Veterans were celebrated** for their progress in mental health recovery.

PARTNERSHIPS ARE INITIATED AND STRENGTHENED TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH

VA Butler's Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) Recovery Team, AmeriCorps (Suit Yourself) and Dress for Success partnered in 2017 to host the first Fashion Show for Veterans at VA Butler. The show helped educate Veterans on how-to dress for formal events, interviews, work, and casual situations. Attire was modeled by Veterans, and Veteran models learned about proper grooming prior to the event. The purpose of the fashion show was to promote mental health recovery and success in the community for local Veterans.

VA Butler Healthcare also hosted its fifth annual Mental Health Summit in September to strengthen its partnerships with the community in an effort to enhance mental health care for Veterans and their family members. The Mental Health Summit brings together key stakeholders in our local community with the goal of enhancing access to mental health services and addressing the mental health care needs of Veterans and their family members in Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

Opening the Doors to *Support*

We do more than JUST health care

ELIMINATING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

In January, VA Butler Healthcare's homeless team joined its community partners throughout five counties (Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Lawrence, and Mercer) to count the local homeless population during the annual Point-in-Time Count (PIT). The PIT Count is an annual effort led by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to estimate the number of Americans, including Veterans, without safe, stable housing. On a local level, the count significantly informs the activities of VA Butler's homeless team throughout the year with individual follow-up and community outreach events (such as the annual Stand Down Events).

This year, VA Butler participated in three Stand Down events in Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer counties, and hosted an annual Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALENG) Event which reached approximately **200 Veterans** and involved over 100 community partner organizations across our area.

VA Butler's homeless team and its community partners throughout the Pennsylvania Western Region Continuum of Care work with approximately 100 homeless Veterans in various programs and transitional housing sites, as well as about 150 Veterans who were formerly homeless and now receiving case management to maintain independent housing. During the course of the year, about three to four Veterans per week are identified as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and then engaged in services. The goal of ending homelessness among Veterans is within reach — and in fact, is happening right here in the communities we serve.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT

VA Butler Healthcare hosted its annual National Caregiver Month Event at Brushes and Barstools on November. 21 Caregivers gathered for lunch, a painting class, and time for support and networking.



FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR

11 former Prisoners of War were honored at VA Butler's annual POW/MIA Recognition Event in September. VA Butler has dedicated staff serving our former POWs.

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT SERVICES TEAM

Veterans traveled to the VA Cleveland Blind Rehabilitation Center for the 6th Anniversary Reunion. In 2017, eight Veterans graduated from the VA Cleveland Blind Rehabilitation Center.



OUTREACH TO JUSTICE-INVOLVED VETERANS

VA Butler's Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) served about 150 Veterans in FY 2017 and celebrated its fifth-year anniversary in November 2017. The VJO program is heavily involved in jail outreach in all five counties VA Butler serves, and this year completed nearly **400 jail outreach visits** in the five county jails.

VA Butler is involved in two, well-established Veterans Treatment Courts, with 24 Veterans enrolled in Butler County's Treatment Court and 30 in Mercer County's Treatment Court. Four graduation ceremonies were held at each of the Courts between November 2016 and November 2017 with a total of **22 graduates**.

VA Butler participates in regular meetings with county representatives for Veterans Treatment Courts being planned for Armstrong and Lawrence Counties, and they are projected to be established in FY 2018.

WELCOME HOME

Every VA Medical Center has a Transition & Care Management Team ready to welcome Post 9/11 Veterans and help coordinate care. In FY 2017, VA Butler's TCM Team served **139 female Veterans**, and **1,962 male Veterans**.

TCM partnered with Behavioral Health and Vocational Rehabilitation staff members to start a new program at VA Butler this year called the Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL). VITAL's mission is to provide world-class healthcare and improve the overall mental health of Veterans, while supporting their successful integration into college and university campuses. VA Butler's VITAL team provides support to Veterans on campus as well as training for faculty and staff. VA Butler is currently targeting Slippery Rock University, Butler County Community College, and Clarion University for on-campus support, but the team is available to assist any student Veteran.

Additionally, the TCM Team participated in two annual events for Veterans. First, the annual Welcome Home Event was held at the new HCC and it was the largest Welcome Home Event to date at VA Butler! Heroes at Heinz was held in September where **15 Veterans and guests** from VA Butler were invited to Heinz field for an event with the Pittsburgh Steelers.





Opening the Doors to *Honor our Vietnam Veterans*

VIETNAM VETERANS COMMEMORATION EVENT

In accordance with Public Law 110-181 SEC.598, Congress authorized the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War and "in conducting the commemorative program, the Secretary shall coordinate, support, and facilitate other programs and activities of the Federal Government, State and local governments, and other persons and organizations in commemoration of the Vietnam War." To that end, The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration was formed.

VA Butler Healthcare is an official partner with the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration, and one of the ways VA Butler showed its appreciation for our local Vietnam Veterans was at the second annual Appreciation Breakfast in March, sponsored by American Legion Post 778.

TRAVELING WALL COMES TO VA BUTLER

In August, VA Butler had the honor of hosting the American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT) on its campus. The AVTT is an 80% replica of the Vietnam Wall in DC. Across its 360-foot length the Wall contains every single name etched on the original. At its apex, the Memorial is an impressive eight feet tall. It is the largest traveling wall owned and operated by Veterans.



The wall was available for viewing 24 hours a day while on VA Butler Healthcare's campus and multiple ceremonies, speakers, and events took place as a tribute to Vietnam Veterans.

The mission of the project is to travel the nation to honor, respect, and remember men and women who served and to pay specific tribute to those who gave all in that service.



COMMUNITY LIVING CENTER NAMED AFTER VIETNAM HERO



VA Butler Healthcare hosted a naming ceremony this year to officially name the Sergeant Joseph George Kusick VA Community Living Center (CLC). Sergeant Joseph George Kusick of Bruin, Pennsylvania was assigned to the command and control detachment of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) of the Army during the Vietnam War. In December of 1967, Kusick was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action. The citation to accompany the Silver Star Medal stated: *Kusick's gallantry in action, at the cost of his life, was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.*



Our *Volunteers* Open Doors for our Veterans Every Day

FOCUS ON THE HCC MOVE

VA Butler's 223 Volunteers served **33,535.75 hours** in FY 2017. Additionally, **\$163,243.70** was received in donations. This year, Voluntary Services worked to support the new HCC, and new Voluntary space. Nine volunteers were trained to serve as tour guides for the new HCC for all pre-opening activities and they continue to support this function at the present time. New for this year, volunteers are now **available at all five** of VA Butler's Community-Based Outpatient Clinics.

VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

During National Volunteer Week in April, VA Butler held its annual Volunteer of the Year program. The 2017 Volunteer of the Year nominees were Helen Fisher, Mary Heilman, Sandy Wilder, James Caldwell, William Heilman, Richard Mealy and Don Swartzfeger. The 2017 winners were... **Damian Hambley** and **Donna Croft!** Hambley served in the U.S. Navy and is a Korean War Veteran. He has volunteered at VA Butler Healthcare for 17 years and accumulated 13,171 hours of service. Croft is the daughter of a WWII Navy Veteran. She has volunteered at VA Butler for more than two years and has accumulated 289 hours of service.





U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Butler Healthcare

Employees: **682**



Employees who are Veterans: **178**



Volunteers: **223**



Volunteer hours: **33,535.75**



Veterans Served: **22,504**



Veteran Outpatient Visits: **198,854**



Visit completed via Telehealth: **12,011**



Operating Budget: **\$93,226,006**



Operating Beds: **126**



FACILITY AWARDS AND ACCREDITATIONS

Cornerstone Recognition FY 2017 — **Gold Award**
Presented By the VA National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS)

Long Term Care Institute Survey — **Successful Compliance**
Annual Survey for Community Living Center

Joint Commission **Accreditation**
Three Years for Ambulatory Care, Behavioral Health and Home Care

National VHA Communications Competition — **2nd Place**
Same Day Access Project





This uniform was worn by WWII hero, Bataan Death March survivor, and former POW, Master Sergeant Able Abraham of Butler, PA. Abraham received numerous medals for his service, including the Purple Heart, had several documentaries on the Discovery Channel and History Channel, and wrote two books to give the public a better understanding of what happened to our brave men at the hands of the Japanese as POW's. Abraham volunteered at VA Butler Healthcare for 23 years, spending 36,851 hours caring for fellow Veterans.



PUBLIC LAW 115-9—MAR. 13, 2017

An Act

To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, as the “Abie Abraham VA Clinic”.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Abie Abraham of Lyndora, Pennsylvania, was stationed during World War II with the 18th Infantry in New York; 3 years with the 14th Infantry in Panama; 15th Infantry, unassigned in China, while the U.S.S. Panay was sunk; 30th Infantry, Presidio, San Francisco; and the 31st Infantry, Manila, Philippines, for 9 years.

(2) During World War II, Abraham fought, was captured, endured the Bataan Death March and as a prisoner of war for 31/2 years, was beaten, stabbed, shot, survived malaria and starvation to be rescued by the 6th Rangers.

(3) Abraham stayed behind at the request of General Douglas MacArthur for 21/2 more years disinterring the bodies of his fallen comrades from the Bataan Death March and the prison camps, helping to identify their bodies and see that they were properly laid to rest.

(4) After his promotion in 1945, Abraham came back to the United States where he served as a recruiter and then also served 2 years in Germany until his retirement with 30 years of service as a Master Sergeant.

(5) Abraham received numerous medals for his service, including the Purple Heart, and had several documentaries on the Discovery Channel and History Channel.

(6) Abraham wrote the books “Ghost of Bataan Speaks” in 1971 and “Oh, God, Where Are You” in 1977 to help the public better understand what our brave men endured at the hands of the Imperial Japanese Army as prisoners of war.

(7) Abraham was a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Purple Heart Combat/Infantry Organization, the American Ex-POWs, the Disabled American Veterans, and the American Defenders of Bataan.

(8) Abraham was a volunteer at Veterans Affairs Butler Healthcare for 23 years from 1988 to 2011 and had 36,851 service hours caring for our veterans.

SEC. 2. ABIE ABRAHAM VA CLINIC.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the “Abie Abraham VA Clinic”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the health care center referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Abie Abraham VA Clinic”.

Approved March 13, 2017.

ABIE ABRAHAM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE CENTER

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