Using Advanced Technologies

Providing a Seamless Transition to Returning Veterans

Practicing Complementary Care: Tai Chi Classes

Providing a Positive Health Care Experience in a Healing Environment

Adaptive Surf Clinic for Injured Veterans
According to the GLA All Employee Survey, employee satisfaction grew three percent over the last three years. Our commitment to employee satisfaction will continue to translate into improving our patients' experience.
The VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (GLA) had numerous successes in 2009. Among those were accomplishments in five goal areas identified for special emphasis at the beginning of the year as well as our dedication to GLA’s research and education mission.

The five 2009 GLA strategic goals included enhancing mental health services, advancing patient-centered care, improving access to care, expanding outreach efforts, and redesigning human resources practices. Some of the achievements in these areas are highlighted in this report:

**NATIONAL AWARDS**

- **Nikki Baker**, Public Affairs – VHA Communications Award.
- **Crystal Barker**, Nursing – Military/VA Case Manager of the Year.

We have completed a very successful 2009 year at GLA with many exciting new and redesigned programs to better meet the needs of our growing Veteran population.

Early in FY 09, we embarked on an important journey by implementing a new model of health care at GLA, a “patient-centered care” focus. This exciting journey is already showing improvement in both patient and staff satisfaction. We have also made many positive environmental improvements that contribute to patient comfort and healing, which will continue into 2010.

In February, we celebrated the opening of a new Fisher House on our West Los Angeles campus. Later in the year, we opened a new Community Clinic in Oxnard, and many other unique programs and services have been created in 2009.

Our staff members strive to provide the highest quality care to our Veterans. This past year, several GLA employees received prestigious awards – a mark of their commitment to serving Veterans exceptionally well.

In 2010, we will continue to improve our performance measures and keep providing safe and excellent patient-centered care to our Veterans.

Our success at GLA is due to the support from our Veterans, staff, volunteers, and community partners, so thank you for working close together to provide “the best care anywhere.”

Sincerely,

Donna Beiter
Director, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System; VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network

**CELEBRATING GLA’S 2009 SUCCESSES**

The VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (GLA) had numerous successes in 2009. Among those were accomplishments in five goal areas identified for special emphasis at the beginning of the year as well as our dedication to GLA’s research and education mission.

The five 2009 GLA strategic goals included enhancing mental health services, advancing patient-centered care, improving access to care, expanding outreach efforts, and redesigning human resources practices. Some of the achievements in these areas are highlighted in this report:

We Improved Access to Care

GLA pushed its goal of providing timely patient care. GLA reduced wait times for our most active clinics to ensure that at least 99 percent of our Veterans were able to schedule appointments at the time they wanted.

GLA also expanded systems to help support Veterans in getting to their scheduled appointments. This was achieved through extension of clinic hours, expansion of health education, and upgrades to systems for appointment reminders.

We Advanced Patient-Centered Care

GLA’s patient-centered care model is a philosophy committed to improving medical care from the patient’s perspective. We aim to provide an optimum healing environment for the body, mind, and spirit.

In 2009, GLA jump started this cultural transformation by recognizing that “everyone is a caregiver” and educated 30 percent of employees in the elements of patient-centered care.

GLA invested in new patient services including: concierge desks, a “Stairway to Wellness” to encourage physical activity, guided imagery for pre-operative patients, extensive health education resources at clinics, taught Veterans how to access their health information on “My HealtheVET,” and enhanced spiritual resources such as the meditation garden and chapel.

We Enhanced Mental Health Services

Serving the largest mental health patient population within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), GLA made significant progress in 2009 toward redesigning its mental health program to promote personal recovery and societal reintegration by providing Veteran-centered, evidence-based, coordinated and comprehensive treatment in de-stigmatized and safe healing environments.

Achievements were made in 2009 as part of the action plan, fondly called MH CARES:

**Management:**
Approved for three mental health site directors

**Housing:**
Authorized for two non-abstinence residential programs for OEF/OIF and chronically homeless Veterans

**Coordination:**
Selected for a $1.3 million capability grant to develop innovative mental health treatment plans

**Access:**
Established Post Deployment Clinic in an integrated care environment for OEF/OIF Veterans

**Recovery:**
Established complimentary alternative services, such as surf camp and tai chi, for Veterans residing in the Domiciliary

**Environment:**
Submitted proposals for redesign of environment for a number of mental health care sites

**Safety:**
Developed policy for suicide risk assessment for all Veterans

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We Furthered Our Commitment to Research

With $45 million in funding, 237 Principal Investigators, and 615 active projects, GLA’s Research Service had numerous notable successes in 2009. The Research Service also received accreditations for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International and the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs for three years each.

We Redesigned Human Resources Practices

Using automated tracking mechanisms and focusing on the customers’ needs and performance standards, GLA was able to develop timely recruitment practices to ensure firm job offers are provided to applicants within 30 days of a job announcement.

GLA reduced the timeline for processing other common human resources actions by over 75 percent.

In addition, an automated Position and Organizational Management System was implemented to help improve coordination and communication between human resources staff and operational managers throughout the healthcare system.

We Expanded Our Outreach Initiatives

GLA ramped up its outreach efforts and enrolled 1,754 more Veterans in 2009, a 3 percent increase, from last year.

A special emphasis was placed on connecting with Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans. GLA participated in:

- 5 Welcome Home events where GLA connected with over 350 Veterans
- An IRR Marine Muster where GLA enrolled 74 percent of the OEF/OIF Veterans
- Over 30 Demobilization Events

We Continued our Dedication to Education

GLA educated 1,500 medical residents, 400 medical students, and 1,250 associated health trainees. GLA underwent an institutional site visit by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and received reaccreditation for three years.

GLA also received reaccreditation for four years from the Institute for Medical Quality/California Medical Association (IMQ/CMA) Continuing Medical Education.
Our Mission:
To honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

Our Vision:
To be a patient-centered, integrated health care organization for Veterans providing excellence in health care, research, and education, as well as an organization where people choose to work an active community partner, and a back-up for National emergencies.

We Value:
Trust, respect, excellence, compassion, and commitment.

Our Executive Leadership Team:
Leading patient-centered care now and in the future.

GLA continues to develop its services with a focus on designing the environment and care models around the needs of our Veterans. In 2009, GLA opened the West Los Angeles 21-suite Fisher House and the Oxnard Community Clinic, thus expanding the range of services GLA offers to support Veterans and their families.

GLA will expand services for patients and their families in 2010. Plans include clinical advances such as the installation of state of the art equipment for robotic surgery as well as the implementation of the patient-centered medical home model, a team-based model of care led by a personal physician who provides continuous and coordinated care throughout a patient’s lifetime to maximize health outcomes. GLA will be piloting this model with a focus on OEF/OIF Veterans’ needs.