It was another busy year at the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System. We improved wait times and access for our Veterans, held the first annual Louisiana Veterans Health Care Symposium, started seeing patients in the new 1.6 million sq. ft. replacement Veterans medical center, and we strengthened our workforce by rolling out new staff training opportunities and hiring more than 300 new employees.

Our health care system is a patient-centered organization focused on serving Veterans first and foremost. With community based outpatient clinics in Baton Rouge, Bogalusa, Franklin, Hammond, Houma, Slidell and St. John Parish, as well as a new Veterans medical center in New Orleans, we delivered 553,821 outpatient appointments to our Veterans in fiscal year 2016. We conducted roughly 50,000 more appointments in 2016 than we did two years ago and we’re also taking care of about 7 percent more Veterans now. We are delivering health care around the life of the Veteran, offering more robust services at our community clinics and expanding telehealth modalities at these locations. We’ve expanded rehabilitation services to four of our community clinics, and we are working toward strengthening the Veteran community by strengthening our partnerships with local health care providers, academic institutions and private sector businesses, as well as through our MyVA Community Council, which is chaired by Veterans and has been recognized as a national best practice.

In October, we held our Annual Stand Down for Homeless Veterans for the first time at the new Veterans medical center. Over 300 volunteers and approximately 20 Veterans service organizations and community partners were on hand to deliver food, clothing and health care screenings, including medical, pharmacy, dental, podiatry and mental health care, as well as information about other resources available to homeless Veterans throughout the region. Throughout the day, we saw 286 Veterans and in many ways, these were our first patients at the new Veterans medical center. They are among our most vulnerable patients and it’s only right that they were the first to receive care here.

On November 18 we cut the ribbon for the new Veterans medical center during a ceremony with approximately 1,200 guests in attendance to hear the VA secretary, Senator Cassidy, Governor John Edwards and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu give remarks. The program was a celebration of serving Veterans and expanding our services by using a state-of-the-art Veterans medical center. The ribbon cutting ceremony is one way we honored the thousands of heroes who live in southeast Louisiana.

In December we began seeing patients daily at the new location and in the first month we had over 4,000 patient visits.

Like Louisiana Governor Edwards said at the ribbon cutting, “We ask our Veterans to risk everything, literally everything, so that our nation might remain free. And because we ask everything of them, the least we can do is give them the very best care and respect in return.”

We are excited for the future and in 2017, we will continue to carry out our sacred mission, “to care for him who have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan,” and we will do it with pride in this new facility.

Fernando O. Rivera, FACHE
SLVHCS Medical Center Director
FY 2016 Focus Areas: Access, Activation and Workforce

**Access**

**My HealtheVet:**
Signed up 3,298 Veterans in FY16, No. 1 in nation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered Veterans</td>
<td>32,736</td>
<td>80.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure Messaging Users</td>
<td>19,261</td>
<td>47.42%</td>
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</table>

**Voluntary Service:**
- 198 regularly scheduled volunteers
- 12,584 hours of service
- More than doubled the size of the summer youth program
- $150,274 in donations
  - $133,682 in kind
  - $16,562 monetary

**Medical Appointments**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY14</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>553,821</td>
<td>535,172</td>
<td>510,171</td>
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**Purchased Care**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY14</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$93,348,719</td>
<td>$92,244,739</td>
<td>$85,216,532</td>
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**Total Veterans served**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43,149</td>
<td>41,788</td>
<td>40,412</td>
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</table>
FY 2016 Focus Areas: Access, Activation and Workforce

Activation

- This year we successfully began daily operations in the new Veterans medical center, starting with Mental Health, Pharmacy, Outpatient Lab/Specimen Collection, Sleep Lab and Compensation & Pension. In that first week alone we served more than 850 Veterans. Not long after that, we transitioned Dental and Eye clinics to the new spaces and by the end of the year, more than 4,000 patients were seen at the new Veterans medical center, paving the way for more transitions in 2017.

Workforce Strengthening

- To deliver outstanding health care, we must retain our great employees and recruit and hire the most talented in the health care industry. We want to be the employer of choice and make the VA’s workforce the best it can be so as to be the preferred health care choice for Veterans. In FY2016, we hired 189 Veterans to support the mission.

Awards:

- Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Erica Joseph; 2015 Culture of Health: Breakthrough Leaders in Nursing Award
- Elena McSwain, Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System Psychology Intern, 1st Place for Louisiana Psychological Association Graduate Student Poster competition
- Glenn Brousseau, respiratory therapist, won Louisiana Pulmonary Disease Camp Incorporated Outstanding Medical Staff of the Year award
- Semi-finalist for 2016 Employer Support Freedom and Secretary of Defense Fernando O. Rivera, SLVHCS Medical Center Director
- Federal Executive Agency Head Award
- Dr. Randy Roig, 2016 Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism Award
- Recognized for accomplishments in the 25 cities initiative for significantly contributing to the federal goal to end Veteran homelessness
January 2016

- TriWest (3rd party Choice administrator) employees working in SLVHCS spaces. Regional customer service center opened in Harahan, La., on Jan. 25 with 250 TriWest employees.

- Medical center construction about 85% complete
  - Took ownership of central energy plant on Jan. 15 and began outfitting with equipment and furniture

- Medical center construction about 85% complete
  - Took ownership of central energy plant on Jan. 15 and began outfitting with equipment and furniture

- Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Service passed an unannounced College of American Pathologists inspection. Passing this bi-annual event allows SLVHCS to maintain their testing capability with no degradation of services.

- The awards shirt program was instituted, where SLVHCS employees can nominate employees to show appreciation for their hard work and positive attitudes.

- SAIL, the Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning Value Model, is a web-based, balanced scorecard model that the Department of Veterans Affairs developed to measure, evaluate, and benchmark quality and efficiency at VA medical centers. SLVHCS moved from a two star to a three star facility in FY16.

- The awards shirt program was instituted, where SLVHCS employees can nominate employees to show appreciation for their hard work and positive attitudes.

Patriot of the Month
Christine Davis-Dehesa
Research Pharmacist
February 2016

- Employee Education move into the new Veterans medical center
- Nursing Hiring fair – 300 potential candidates participated
- Second National Access Stand Down held to update patient records, schedule appointments and see patients
- SLVHCS celebrates diversity and inclusion by honoring Martin Luther King Jr. and Black History Month

Patriot of the Month
Wendy Rachel
Acting Assistant Chief of Social Work Services
March 2016

- Received main computer room at the new Veterans medical center
- Began installing telephones and computers in inpatient building and central energy plant.
- Dr. James Zadina recognized as 2016 New Orleans City Business Health Care Hero.
- SLVHCS commemorates 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War event at Gretna VFW
- Kick off of the first teaching kitchen class to provide 7 Veterans, that are homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless, culinary job skills
- Lt. Gen. Rex McMillian, Marine Forces Reserve/Marine Forces North Commander visit and Mayor’s military advisory committee tour new Veterans medical center
• HR moved into the new Veterans medical center

• Leadership Council signed the MyVA Access Declaration, agreeing to provide timely care, including same day services in Primary Care and Mental Health, as needed, to Veterans.

• Voluntary Service Awards luncheon, celebrating 11,333 hours served and the 70th anniversary of VA voluntary service

• Leadership council signed MyVA access Declaration
SLVHCS received the outpatient tower from the construction contractor and began installing equipment and furniture.

44 employees from HAS, Fiscal, Managerial Cost Accounting, Compliance and Business Integrity Office, Consolidated Patient Account Center, personnel moved into their spaces in the new medical center.

Received the outpatient tower.

Held the annual VA2K walk with 177 participants, donating 1,594 items to homeless Veterans.

Rehabilitation clinic added at Slidell CBOC.

American Legion National Commander Dale Barnett visit

Patriot of the Month Deborah Lepre Infection Control Manager
June 2016

- Emerging VA Leaders Graduation

- VA Chief of Staff visits to check out the progress of the new Veterans medical center

- Houma is the second city in Louisiana to effectively end Veterans homelessness

- SLVHCS celebrates diversity and inclusion with LGBT Pride month observance

- SLVHCS moved from 2 to 3 stars in the SAIL model.

Patriot of the Month
Mariel Paciera
Clinical Engineer
• July 4, Flag Raising

Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System hosted a morning ceremony to celebrate the inaugural flag-raising at the new Veterans medical center in New Orleans July 4. Veteran and My VA Community council co-chair Larry Jones gave the invocation.

The ceremony featured guest speaker Maj. Gen. Glenn Curtis, Adjutant General for the Louisiana National Guard. SLVHCS Medical Center Director Fernando O. Rivera opened the ceremony with some perspective for the hundreds of visitors who had come to observe this historic event. WWII Veteran Joe Loyacano raised the flag for the first time at the new Veterans medical center and attendees were offered tours of the inpatient and outpatient buildings.

Patriot of the Month
Jennifer Berry
New Orleans Community Based Outpatient Clinic Secretary
August 2016

- First Veterans experience simulations take place at new Veterans Medical Center.
- SLVHCS receives the highest VHA response rate on the All Employee Survey and improvements in several measures.
- New Orleans East Town Hall – 35 in attendance; Baton Rouge Town Hall - 200 in attendance.
- Baton Rouge and Hammond clinics closed due to flooding. SLVHCS employees provide services in shelters for Veterans displaced by flooding in the region.
  - 30 disaster housing assistance applications
  - 137 Veterans received care from Mental Health staff and social workers at shelters
  - 37 employees impacted by flooding
- Received Transitional Living and Rehabilitation building. Facility Management Services moved to new office spaces inside central energy plant.
- SLVHCS hosted the VFW Regional Advisory Committee. Representatives from Houston, Birmingham and New Orleans present.
- First Veterans experience simulations take place at new Veterans Medical Center.
- SLVHCS receives the highest VHA response rate on the All Employee Survey and improvements in several measures.
- Patriot of the Month Jennifer Hannon social worker.
September 2016

- Mental Health Summit: Mental health professionals from non-profit groups, local medical centers and other affiliates and non-affiliates came together to share professional information and inform non-VA organizations about Veterans rights when being provided mental health care and together improve suicide prevention efforts.

- 402 pieces of equipment including MRI and CAT scanners were delivered to the Diagnostics and Treatment building.

Ponchatoula Town Hall – 65 in attendance

In FY16, 776 staff members participated in Lean training and five employees are black belt trained to mentor other project teams.

Patriot of the Year
Mariel Paciera
Clinical Engineer
October 2016

- Construction significantly complete: Received Diagnostic & Treatment building and the main concourse to begin furnishing and equipping.
- Full campus employee orientation tours begin Oct. 19 to help staff become acquainted with their new surroundings.
- Homeless Veterans Stand Down. 286 homeless Veterans received assistance. 130 flu shots provided.
- SLVHCS is among the best in the nation within VA for quality of care measures.

Patriot of the Month
Anne Marino
Medical Media Chief
November 2016

Ribbon Cutting

Nov. 18: Ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Veterans medical center with approximately 1,200 guests in attendance. Guest speakers included VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald, VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, Senator Bill Cassidy, and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu.

Lawrence Brooks, a 106 year old Army WWII Veteran who has been receiving VA health care in New Orleans since 1945 said of the new Veterans medical center, “it feels wonderful. It feels great! After the ribbon cutting, Veterans, their families and other guests toured the new, state-of-the-art Veterans medical center’s first floor and second floor inpatient rooms where they got to see how their ideas and input were implemented. During his comments to the assembled Veterans and guests, Senator Bill Cassidy said, “Veterans helped drive this facility… it was your advocacy, it was your input that put together a facility that provides a wonderful built environment as dedicated to your health as the aides, the nurses, the doctors and the technicians.”
In celebration of Veterans Day, Veterans were recognized by SLVHCS leadership with patriotic pins and thank yous.

Hundreds of staff members gathered in the new Veterans medical center concourse to thank our Veterans and get jazzed about the impact the new facility will have on their ability to care for Veterans.

Outpatient building open houses were held on Wednesdays throughout November where 120 Veterans and their families learn how to navigate their new VA medical center.
Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System moved its Bogalusa CBOC to a new and larger location.

The new medical facility will greatly expand SLVHCS’s capabilities to provide state-of-the-art medical treatment services.

Louisiana state senator Beth Mizell, Bogalusa mayor Wendy O’Quin-Perrette, SLVHCS’ leaders, elected officials and Veterans cut the ribbon on December 6, 2016 to formally celebrate the official opening of the Bogalusa clinic.

Activation at new medical center
- Ambulatory Mental Health
- PTSD
- Family Mental Health Program
- Outpatient Lab/Specimen Collection
- Pharmacy
- Compensation and Pension
- Sleep Lab
- Dental
- Eye Clinic

Out of 126 facilities, SLVHCS ranks No. 10 for telephone response rate.

December 2016

3,977 Patients seen in the new Veterans medical center

Patriot of the Month
Dana Burkart
Executive Assistant to the Deputy Director
New Leadership

Chief of Emergency Medicine Service
Dr. Julie Slick

Associate Chief of Staff for Clinical Operations
Dr. Reginald Labossiere

Associate Chief of Staff for Clinical Informatics
Dr. John Murphy

Associate Chief of Staff for Education
Dr. Randolph Roig

Chief of Neurology Service
Dr. Amparo (Amy) Gutierrez

Associate Nurse Executive Ambulatory Care for Outpatient Tower
Diane Sparks

Associate Chief Nurse Ambulatory Care for CBOCS
Gerald Ubaka

Chief of Anesthesiology Service
Dr. Armando Ariza Giammaria

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