

*“This (Community Based Outpatient Clinic) is **extremely convenient** for me. I don’t have to drive an hour and a half to Martinsburg, compared to just driving like 20-30 minutes to here. **My health care providers are extremely nice** which to me makes a world of difference.*

— F. Scheib, Veteran

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Caring for Veterans in Rural Communities

Vision

America’s Veterans thrive in rural communities.

Mission

To improve the health and well-being of rural Veterans by increasing access to care and services.

Strategic Goals Office of Rural Health — 2015-2019

- ▶ Promote health and well-being in the rural Veteran population
- ▶ Generate and diffuse knowledge regarding rural Veterans’ health
- ▶ Strengthen community health care infrastructure where rural Veterans reside
- ▶ Inform health care policy that impacts rural Veterans and rural health delivery

Sources Produced April 2015

- ▶ Rural Health Research and Policy Centers
- ▶ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs — 2013 and 2014 Surveys of Veteran Enrollees
- ▶ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs — Office of the Actuary, end of FY 14
- ▶ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs — Support Service Center

Learn more at www.ruralhealth.va.gov



VA Office of Rural Health

Caring for Veterans in Rural Communities



Rural Health

77%
rural communities

currently experience shortages in primary care providers which impacts the health care received by nearly 25 percent of Americans. There are also shortages in specialty providers, for example only 16 psychologists per 100,000 patients. Compounding this issue are rural residents' long drive times to care facilities, limited options for integrated health care options, lack of public transportation, limited broadband access and socioeconomic challenges. Combined, these factors can impede the wellness of local individuals, and ultimately the community.

Rural Veterans

5.3
million

Veterans reside in rural America — a quarter of all Veterans nationwide. These Veterans range from young men and women who have served in recent conflicts, to Vietnam Veterans and elderly Veterans from World War II. Following active military careers or debilitating injury, they often opt to return to rural communities for a variety of reasons — cost of living, proximity to friends and family, open space, or independence. But while they enjoy the benefits of rural living, these Veterans experience typical rural health care barriers that are exacerbated by their combat-related injuries and illnesses.

57%
(3 million)

rural Veterans are enrolled in and rely on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system. To meet the health care needs of a growing rural Veteran population, VA's Office of Rural Health (ORH) collaborates with public and private sector organizations to improve the health and well-being of rural Veterans by increasing their access to care and services. Simply put, ORH works to see that America's Veterans thrive in rural communities.

Rural Solutions

614 VA programs were funded by ORH in fiscal year 2014 (FY 14) to support the health and well-being of our Veterans in rural communities. ORH funding priorities are set through current rural VA patient demographics and research findings, as well as input from Veterans and rural health advocates. ORH's diverse portfolio increases care for mental health, transportation, specialty care, mobile clinics, rehabilitation, and women's health, as well as address provider workforce shortages through education, recruitment, and training.



Patient Care: Nearly **650,000 Veterans** received service from an ORH program in FY 14, such as **primary care home visits** for complex, chronic, disabling conditions.



Providers: More than **1,000 providers** delivered local care and services to rural Veterans, plus more than 1,000 were trained through ORH programs in FY 14.



Transportation: More than **30,300 Veterans** used transportation services provided by ORH in FY 14 — of which 25,100 lived in rural communities, and covered 453,000 miles.

Additionally, ORH Promising Practices provide a platform for peer mentoring to spread the use of successful emerging programs and models of care that improve rural Veterans' wellness within VA and beyond.

Our Enrolled Rural Veterans in FY 14

- ▶ 56% 65 or older
- ▶ 6 % women
- ▶ 41% service-related disabilities
- ▶ 12% OIF/OEF service
- ▶ 26% telehealth care recipients
- ▶ 8% minorities (African-American, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native)
- ▶ 43% without home broadband internet access (FY 13)
- ▶ 43% \$26,000 income annually
- ▶ Texas, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York had the highest number of enrolled Veterans in rural communities
- ▶ Top diagnoses high blood pressure, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Type II Diabetes, depressive disorder and at least one service-related disability