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**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

**Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations**

**Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov**

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 30, 2010

VA Announces Sites for “Project ARCH” *Pilot Program Brings Health Care Access to Local Community*

Togus, ME –Northern Maine was chosen as a pilot location for the newest Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) initiative to provide Veterans with greater access to quality health care.

The pilot program, Project ARCH (Access Received Closer to Home), intends to improve access for eligible Veterans by connecting them to health care services closer to their home. Under this program, Veterans will gain local convenience without sacrificing the quality of care VA provides Veterans within its system. VA will ensure that participating Veterans’ medical records are shared between participating providers and VA so Veterans in the program experience seamless, quality health care whether receiving that care in their community or at VA medical facilities.

“Project ARCH intends to expand VA’s ability to serve our Veterans who live far from VA facilities,” VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said. “This pilot program will also provide critical information about the role of contracted care in the future of VA’s health care delivery system.”

According to the law enacting Project ARCH, Veterans are eligible to participate in the program if they reside in a location where a pilot site is located and are enrolled for VA health care when the program starts. In addition the law requires Veterans meet any of the following criteria:

- Live more than 60 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing primary care services, **or**
- Live more than 120 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing acute hospital care, **or**
- Live more than 240 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing tertiary care

The Northern Maine proposal targets specific acute and tertiary care services not currently available through the VA in that portion of Maine. The VA will contract for such services with a single provider in central Aroostook County. All primary care services will continue to be provided through VA providers at existing locations in Caribou, Fort Kent, Houlton, Calais, and Lincoln. The VA is specifically targeting Aroostook County, northern Washington County, and northern Penobscot County for this pilot program.

For additional information about Project ARCH, please contact Ryan Lilly, Associate Director, Togus VA Medical Center, at 207-623-5710. In accordance with the law, the Project ARCH pilot will be operational for three years.

“We at VA will continue to work diligently to implement this program and to find the best ways to improve access for eligible Veterans by connecting them to health care services closer to their homes,” Shinseki said. “Veterans traveled the globe in defense of this great Nation. They shouldn’t have to for the health care they earned with their service.”

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VA Announces Sites for “Project ARCH” *Pilot Program Brings Health Care Access to Local Community*

Billings, Montana was chosen as a pilot site for the newest Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) initiative to provide Veterans with greater access to quality health care.

The pilot program, Project ARCH (Access Received Closer to Home), intends to improve access for eligible Veterans by connecting them to health care services closer to their home. Under this program, Veterans will gain local convenience without sacrificing the quality of care VA provides Veterans within its system. VA will ensure that participating Veterans’ medical records are shared between participating providers and VA so Veterans in the program experience seamless, quality health care whether receiving that care in their community or at VA medical facilities.

“Project ARCH intends to expand VA’s ability to serve our Veterans who live far from VA facilities,” VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said. “This pilot program will also provide critical information about the role of contracted care in the future of VA’s health care delivery system.”

According to the law enacting Project ARCH, Veterans are eligible to participate in the program if they reside in a location where a pilot site is located and are enrolled for VA health care when the program starts. In addition the law requires Veterans meet any of the following criteria:

- Live more than 60 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing primary care services, **or**
- Live more than 120 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing acute hospital care, **or**

- Live more than 240 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing tertiary care

The contractor will provide acute inpatient care for medical and surgical specialties for those Veterans living in highly rural counties in Eastern Montana. With secondary care provided in Billings, Veterans in Eastern Montana will reduce their travel time significantly, up to four hours one way when compared to their current choice for VA hospitalization at Fort Harrison VAMC. This pilot will supplement VA Montana's Intermediate Complexity Surgical Program, allowing Veterans access to providers experienced in complex surgical procedures without traveling to Salt Lake or Denver VAMCs. This pilot will meet the intent of Project ARCH by providing secondary care closer to Veterans from highly rural counties who meet the criteria outlined above. There are currently 7368 Veteran patients and 10,709 enrollees residing in the counties involved in this pilot.

For additional information about Project ARCH, please contact VA Montana Health Care System Director, Robin Korogi, at 406-447-7300. In accordance with the law, the Project ARCH pilot will be operational for three years.

“We at VA will continue to work diligently to implement this program and to find the best ways to improve access for eligible Veterans by connecting them to health care services closer to their homes,” Shinseki said. “Veterans traveled the globe in defense of this great Nation. They shouldn't have to for the health care they earned with their service.”

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VA Announces Sites for “Project ARCH” *Pilot Program Brings Health Care Access to Local Community*

(Wichita, Kansas) – Pratt, Kansas was chosen as a pilot site for the newest Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) initiative to provide Veterans with greater access to quality health care.

The pilot program, Project ARCH (Access Received Closer to Home), intends to improve access for eligible Veterans by connecting them to health care services closer to their home. Under this program, Veterans will gain local convenience without sacrificing the quality of care VA provides Veterans within its system. VA will ensure that participating Veterans’ medical records are shared between participating providers and VA so Veterans in the program experience seamless, quality health care whether receiving that care in their community or at VA medical facilities.

“Project ARCH intends to expand VA’s ability to serve our Veterans who live far from VA facilities,” VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said. “This pilot program will also provide critical information about the role of contracted care in the future of VA’s health care delivery system.”

According to the law enacting Project ARCH, Veterans are eligible to participate in the program if they reside in a location where a pilot site is located and are enrolled for VA health care when the program starts. In addition the law requires Veterans meet any of the following criteria:

- Live more than 60 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing primary care services, **or**
- Live more than 120 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing acute hospital care, **or**

- Live more than 240 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing tertiary care

For additional information about Project ARCH, please contact Ken Allensworth, Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center Strategic Planner at (316) 651-3695. In accordance with the law, the Project ARCH pilot will be operational for three years.

“We at VA will continue to work diligently to implement this program and to find the best ways to improve access for eligible Veterans by connecting them to health care services closer to their homes,” Shinseki said. “Veterans traveled the globe in defense of this great Nation. They shouldn’t have to for the health care they earned with their service.”

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News Release

Contact: Ame Callahan, Public Affairs Officer
(928) 776-6013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 1, 2010

VA Announces Sites for “Project ARCH” *Pilot Program Brings Health Care Access to Local Community*

The Northern Arizona VA Health Care System (NAVAHCS) was chosen to implement a pilot program for the newest Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) initiative to provide Veterans with greater access to quality health care. This is one of the only five pilot programs in the country.

The pilot program, Project ARCH (Access Received Closer to Home), intends to improve access for eligible Veterans by connecting them to health care services closer to their home. Under this program, Veterans will gain local convenience without sacrificing the quality of care VA provides Veterans within its system. VA will ensure that participating Veterans’ medical records are shared between participating providers and VA so Veterans in the program experience seamless, quality health care whether receiving that care in their community or at VA medical facilities.

The NAVAHCS will begin the process to identify a contract care arrangement with a centrally located, accessible facility offering a wide array of specialty and surgical care within Northern AZ and thus closer to the Veterans’ homes. This pilot for contracted care improves access for highly rural Veterans within Northern Arizona for secondary (acute) and tertiary care. Quality care not available locally would be provided in a much more accessible and timely manner for Veterans.

“Project ARCH intends to expand VA’s ability to serve our Veterans who live far from VA facilities,” VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said. “This pilot program will also provide critical information about the role of contracted care in the future of VA’s health care delivery system.”

According to the law enacting Project ARCH, Veterans are eligible to participate in the program if they are enrolled for VA health care when the program starts. In addition the law requires Veterans meet any of the following criteria:

- Live more than 60 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing primary care services, **or**
- Live more than 120 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing acute hospital care, **or**
- Live more than 240 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing tertiary care

In accordance with the law, the Project ARCH pilot will be operational for three years.

“We at VA will continue to work diligently to implement this program and to find the best ways to improve access for eligible Veterans by connecting them to health care services closer to their homes,” Shinseki said.

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October 1, 2010

VA Announces Sites for “Project ARCH” *Pilot Program Brings Health Care Access to Local Community*

RICHMOND – Farmville, VA has been chosen as a pilot site for the newest Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) initiative to provide Veterans with greater access to quality health care.

The pilot program, Project ARCH (Access Received Closer to Home), intends to improve access for eligible Veterans by connecting them to health care services closer to their home. Under this program, Veterans will gain local convenience without sacrificing the quality of care that the VA provides Veterans within its system. VA will ensure that participating Veterans’ medical records are shared between participating providers and VA so Veterans in the program experience seamless, quality health care whether receiving that care in their community or at VA medical facilities.

“Project ARCH intends to expand VA’s ability to serve our Veterans who live far from VA facilities,” VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said. “This pilot program will also provide critical information about the role of contracted care in the future of VA’s health care delivery system.”

According to the law enacting Project ARCH, Veterans are eligible to participate in the program if they reside in a location where a pilot site is located and are enrolled for VA health care when the program starts. In addition the law requires Veterans meet any of the following criteria:

- Live more than 60 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing primary care services, **or**
- Live more than 120 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing acute hospital care, **or**

- Live more than 240 minutes drive time from the nearest VA health care facility providing tertiary care

For additional information about Project ARCH, please contact Julie Beales, MD – (804) 675-5181, Bruce Sprecher, (919)-956-5541 In accordance with the law, the Project ARCH pilot will be operational for three years.

“We at VA will continue to work diligently to implement this program and to find the best ways to improve access for eligible Veterans by connecting them to health care services closer to their homes,” Shinseki said. “Veterans traveled the globe in defense of this great Nation. They shouldn’t have to for the health care they earned with their service.”

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