



VA Portland Health Care System Press Release



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VA Portland Health Care System

3710 SW U.S. Veterans Hospital Road
Portland, Oregon 97239

National VA analytics report released

[Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning \(SAIL\)](#) report put into perspective for Portland

In an effort to be as transparent as possible, Veterans Affairs releases a national report summarizing hospital system performance within Veterans Health Administration (VHA) that includes data specific to the VA Portland Health Care System (VAPORHCS).

[Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning](#) Value Model or ‘SAIL,’ is a system for summarizing hospital system performance within Veterans Health Administration (VHA). SAIL assesses 27 quality measures in areas such as death rate, complications, and patient satisfaction, as well as overall efficiency at individual VA Medical Centers (VAMCs).

SAIL’s basic framework was developed to be able to benchmark VA to the private sector. Each facility is provided information on their own performance and that of VHA’s national performance. This tool provides each VA facility with information on its own progress, independent of how others do, and quickly identifies potential areas for improvement in terms of both clinical quality and efficiency.

"We have the outcomes to show that we are providing high quality care," said Michael Fisher, Director VAPORHCS. "It's access — and convenient access — that we're not doing as well as we need to, but we are making great strides in these areas and expect this report to indicate that in the near future."

Quality of care

According to the most recent report, VAPORHCS earned exceptional ratings in inpatient performance measures (94.5 percent) which are above the national VA average of 90.9 percent. Portland scores in the top 10th percentile for inpatient quality measures. The Portland VA also scores well related to adjusted length of stays and mortality rates. Both adjusted length of stays and mortality rates were better than the national average, with Portland having some of the best 30-day standardized mortality ratios in the VHA system.

VAPORHCS was lauded with its third [American Nurses Credentialing Center Magnet](#) Hospital Designation in 2014, a rating derived from a comprehensive, whole-organizational look at quality. Strong, high-performing nursing staff are a key focus of the Magnet program and are a key reason of why VA Portland’s length of stays are shorter and the mortality rates better.

Mental Health

Due primarily to an incredible increase in demand for services, some scores have lagged in mental health, but VAPORHCS has made recent improvements in timeliness which should help drive Portland towards a three-star or higher rating in the near future. According to the latest [VHA "Patient Access Data,"](#) for the month of Oct. 2016, the average wait time for Mental Health services within VAPORHCS was 2.1 days.

VAPORHCS is a leader in integrating mental health with primary care. With a goal of January 2017, Veterans identified as needing mental health assistance during a primary care visit, then the Veteran will be able to see a mental health provider while they are already at the clinic at the time of identified need.

In addition, currently, if a Veteran is in crisis or has another need for care right away in mental health, the Veteran will receive immediate attention from a health care professional at the VA medical center or other VA facility. Additionally, if a Veteran is new to mental health in the VA and has a non-urgent need, they will receive an initial evaluation screening by the next calendar day.

Primary Care

One of the biggest contributors to the less than desirable SAIL 'Access' ratings in within VAPORHCS is a shortage of providers. As of today, VAPORHCS is short 13.5 primary care providers and 39 support staff. The good news is we have seven providers and 16 support staff selected to be hired in the near future. VAPORHCS has open and continuous recruitments for all positions and continues to make progress in this area. The latest average [wait time data](#) for primary care services across VAPORHCS is 6.2 days for completed appointments ending Oct. 2016.

Options for Care

VAPORHCS continues to build strategic relationships with community partners to provide care through the [Veterans Choice Program](#) and other [VA community care programs](#) when they cannot be seen internally at the VA within the clinically indicated timeframes. VAPORHCS conducts daily reviews of patients, identified through consults or scheduled appointments, where their care is deemed time sensitive. This review ensures these patients are being seen timely that meets their health care needs.

Space and Growth in Demand

Space continues to be a strategic challenge, exacerbated by the fact that VAPORHCS has seen tremendous growth following a decade of war and high utilization of the Oregon National Guard in Iraq and Afghanistan. To help mitigate this, over the past few years, VAPORHCS expanded the Bend, Salem and Fairview area clinics by more than tripling the size of those facilities with brand new clinics; VAPORHCS opened a new clinic in Lincoln City; a new primary care clinic is under construction now in Vancouver set to open next summer; a new leased 10,000 square foot Specialty Care Clinic is opening in Vancouver over the next two months. We continue to look at options and opportunities to best serve and meet the demand of our Veterans while being good stewards of the tax payer funding we are provided.

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[The VA Portland Health Care System \(VAPORHCS\)](#) serves more than 95,000 Veterans in Oregon and Southwest Washington. VAPORHCS consists of the main tertiary care medical center located near downtown Portland, Ore., the Vancouver Campus located near downtown Vancouver, Wash., a Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) in downtown Portland, as well as nine community outpatient clinics across Oregon that support our Veterans. These clinics are located in Bend, Fairview, Hillsboro, Warrenton, Newport, Salem, The Dalles, West Linn, and Lincoln City Oregon.



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