



Healing Hope & **Honor**

Zablocki VA Health Care System

Milwaukee, Green Bay, Appleton, Cleveland, Union Grove, Oconomowoc

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Zablocki VA Health Care System

ANNUAL REPORT **2025**

DIRECTOR'S Message

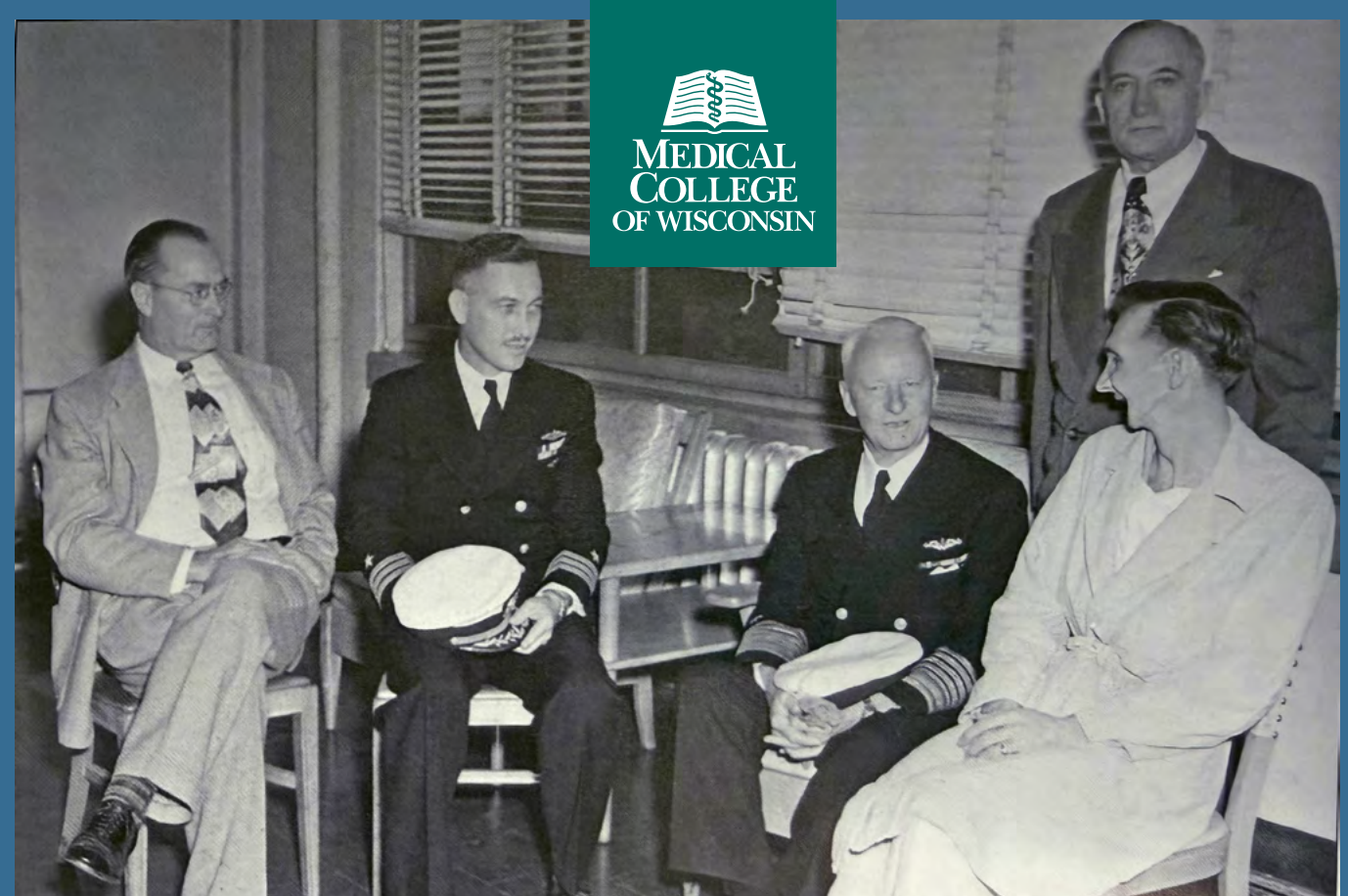
First and foremost, I want to thank our staff and volunteers for the incredible accomplishments achieved during a very challenging year. These efforts improved quality of care, Veteran satisfaction and access to services. The team continues to ensure that the Clement J. Zablocki VA Health Care System remains a leader in clinical excellence across eastern Wisconsin. Our Veterans deserve the very best, and at Zablocki, we aim to make that the daily reality for the heroes in our care and throughout our community.

This annual report celebrates the many accomplishments and achievements of our staff and their innovation as well as Veterans' health care triumphs. And while we have much to be proud of in 2025, our focus remains on the future through modernization of our facilities and implementing the new Federal Electronic Health Record.




James D. McLain
Executive Director

James McLain was appointed as the Executive Director in April 2023. The retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel served in Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom.



A patient visits with U.S. Navy Adm. Chester Nimitz, second from right, at the Milwaukee VA in this undated photo.

MCW Partnership marks 80th anniversary



**Associate Director
Laurie Vail**

Laurie Vail was appointed as Associate Director in August 2023. She has been an employee of the Milwaukee VA for more than 25 years, starting in pathology and laboratory medicine in 1998.



**Chief of Staff
Dr. Andreea Anton**

Dr. Andreea Anton was appointed as Chief of Staff in February 2024. She has been on staff at the VA and Medical College of Wisconsin since 2005 and has worked most recently as chief of medicine.



**Assistant Director
Dr. Christina Orr**

Dr. Christina Orr was appointed as Assistant Director in October 2017. She began her VA career as a physical therapist at the Hunter Holmes VA Medical Center in Richmond, Va., before coming to the Milwaukee VA.



**Associate Director for
Patient Care Services
Dr. Sarah Garven**

Appointed on May 18, 2025, Dr. Sarah Garven oversees the nursing practice as well as Nutrition and Food Services, Sterile Processing Services, Social Work, and Rehabilitation Services.

On Jan. 22, 1946, the predecessor institutions of the Medical College of Wisconsin and the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center formalized a partnership that remains vibrant and effective 80 years later.

The agreement, one of the first of its kind in the U.S. between a Veterans Administration (VA) hospital and medical school, was developed by Dr. Eben J. Carey, dean of the Marquette University School of Medicine (1933-1947); Lt. Col. Glenn Mullens of the VA hospital staff; and Dr. Paul Magnuson, chief of research and education at the VA Central Office. It was established two days after Public Law 79-293 was enacted, which allowed VA to expand its physician workforce to meet the needs of the many Veterans returning from World War II.

VA hospitals "were being filled up to the windows ... and were critically short of doctors,"

noted Dr. Magnuson in his autobiography, "Ring the Night Bell." "There were not nearly enough residencies in the civilian hospitals to meet their needs."

Public Law 79-293 worked in tandem with Policy Memorandum No. 2, which authorized clinical and research affiliations between the VA health care system and medical schools to improve the quality of health care at VA medical centers.

The memorandum laid out the responsibilities of the various parties and placed medical schools in charge of resident training programs. Within the year, half of Marquette Medical School's senior class trained at the VA hospital.

Dr. John S. Hirschboeck, who succeeded Dr. Carey as dean of the medical school in 1947, described the affiliation as a win-win. It "created an outstanding teaching hospital" for Marquette,

and for the Wood VA Hospital, "it provided proof that patient care is best in hospitals inspired with educational and research ideals."

The effects of these policy decisions and their swift implementation led to significant local and national changes, both rapid and long-term. In 1951, the Milwaukee Journal reported that the health care provided by VA had garnered the reputation as the highest quality care offered "anywhere in the world."

VA has become the top provider of health care training in the U.S., with more than 124,000 medical students and residents conducting rotations at VA medical centers. VA trains in over 60 different disciplines.

Milwaukee VA Leadership

Zablocki VA Health Care System



Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center
5000 W. National Ave., Milwaukee, Wis.
414-384-2000



Green Bay Milo C. Huempfer Health Care Center
2851 University Ave., Green Bay, Wis.
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday
920-431-2500



Appleton John H. Bradley VA Clinic
10 Tri-Park Way, Appleton, Wis.
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday
920-831-0070



Cleveland VA Clinic
1205 North Ave., Cleveland, Wis.
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday
920-693-5600



Union Grove VA Clinic
Shemanske Hall, 21425 Spring St., Building C,
Union Grove, Wis.
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday
262-878-7000



Oconomowoc VA Clinic
1289 Olympia Fields Drive, Oconomowoc, Wis.
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday
262-628-6969

Clinic Highlights

Milwaukee VA's community-based outpatient clinics celebrate major milestones

The namesake of the **Milo C. Huempfer VA Outpatient Clinic in Green Bay** was celebrated in December 2024 with a new display recognizing Huempfer's heroics in World War II.

Huempfer was a private first class when he single-handedly waged war against the enemy during the Battle of the Bulge, earning him the Distinguished Service Cross — one of our nation's highest military honors for valor.

The new permanent display features some of Huempfer's artifacts, including his medals and replicas of his service uniform and combat helmet. A restored plaque from the clinic's original dedication ceremony was also unveiled.

"Eighty years ago, he went above and beyond his call of duty in service to his country," said U.S. Rep. Tony Wied. "It's stories like Milo's that make me proud to be an American and to call Green Bay home."



In March 2025, a plaque was unveiled at the **Oconomowoc VA Clinic** honoring 10 service members from Oconomowoc who died in service to their country during the Vietnam War: Walter Chatos Jr., Curtis Tremaine, Terry Williams, Robert Lutz, Stephen Westphal, David Price, Steven Sticks, Larry Schmidt, Lloyd Howie and Michael Bohrman.

And in June, the clinic celebrated its first anniversary with a cookout and open house. Veterans who would like to transfer or enroll in VA health care at the Oconomowoc VA Outpatient Clinic can call 414-384-2000, ext. 44255.

On Aug. 5, 2025, the **John H. Bradley VA Clinic in Appleton** marked the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II by unveiling a new plaque and display in honor of the facility's namesake.

Bradley, who was born in Antigo and grew up in Appleton, was a hospital corpsman who was awarded the Navy Cross for treating wounded Marines during the battle on Iwo Jima.

He also was one of the Marines who participated in the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima, although he wasn't featured in the iconic photo.

"He represents the best of America, and as a combat veteran medic, he is someone I looked up to with great pride," said James McLain, executive director of the Milwaukee VA Medical Center.



Research and Innovation

National Cancer Trials Network Studies

Of the 132 VA facilities that contribute to the Cancer Registry, the Milwaukee VA ranks in the top three for the number of Veterans enrolled in National Cancer Trials Network studies. And that's due in large part to a dedicated team that integrates the trials into ongoing treatment discussions, emphasizing the benefits to not only other Veterans but to the world at large. The team is dedicated to doing whatever it can to boost cancer research that will improve cancer care for Veterans.



Million Veteran Program (MVP)

The Milwaukee VA has been at the forefront of the Million Veteran Program, and in 2025 enrolled its 21,000th participant. Melody Carranza, a Milwaukee VA patient for more than 40 years, said she was happy to join the program in order to benefit other Veterans. MVP works to improve Veteran lives by studying how genes, lifestyle, military experiences and exposures affect health. More than 1,085,000 Veterans across the nation have joined MVP.



100 Years of VA Research

In May, we celebrated 100 years of VA research with displays and informational booths looking back at the many scientific breakthroughs that have benefited not just Veterans but the entire world. VA research has tackled cancer, hypertension and spinal cord injuries, and VA was a pioneer in liver transplantation and cardiovascular treatments, including pacemakers.



Clevercap developed by MPU

When a hurricane knocked out a major supplier of medical fluids to hospitals across the country, the Milwaukee VA stepped up, implementing fluid conservation strategies that led to an award-winning innovation known as Clevercap. The adapter, developed by the Medical Procedures Unit, reduced the need for sterile water bottles, which were in short supply. This resulted in saving some 60 liters of sterile water per month in Milwaukee at the height of the shortage. For its work, the MPU earned a National HeRO Award, spotlighting the team's commitment to High Reliability Organization principles.



CDCE Roundup

The Center for Development and Civic Engagement at the Milwaukee VA marked a momentous year in FY 2025, with volunteers earning recognition and stepping up in numerous ways to serve our Veterans.



CDCE STATS

Total Volunteers
Includes the Milwaukee hospital and clinics in Appleton and Green Bay

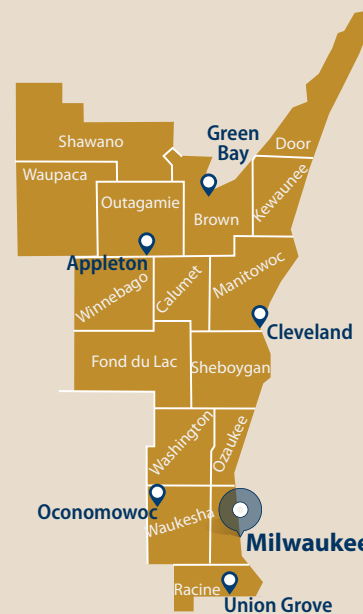
450

Volunteer Hours

77,524

Donations

\$1.2 million



No Veteran Dies Alone

The "No Veteran Dies Alone" program ensures that Veterans nearing the end of life have a comforting presence by their side.

Frank Steffel has been a compassionate volunteer with the program and exemplifies the dedication of the NVDA team, providing solace to more than 40 dying Veterans.

"It's definitely touching," he said. "It's still kind of traumatizing, and it bothers me a little bit, especially when you get to know them ... but it's nice to see (an end to their suffering)."



Veteran Connection Corps

In March, CDCE launched the Veteran Connection Corps, which connects Veteran volunteers with hospitalized Veterans requiring companionship or minor intervention.

"The goal is to reduce some of the behavioral concerns that crop up, and one of the big pieces (to do) this is offering one-on-one interactions," said CDCE chief Jessica Serdyski.

Volunteers engage with the patients through games, conversations and music, or simply by being present for those feeling lonely.



Driven to serve

Patty Davis, who leads the DAV Transportation Service, was honored for accumulating more than 45,000 volunteer hours helping Veterans find transportation to their appointments with VA.

Davis has worked with the DAV since 1997. Her drivers average 100,000 miles yearly just in the Milwaukee area.

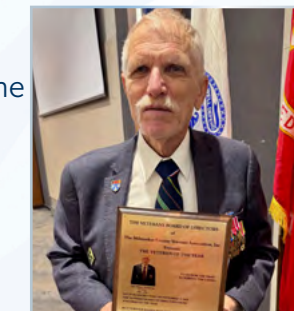


Volunteer of the Year

Glen "Rusty" Armstrong, a volunteer at the Milwaukee VA's Fisher House, was named Veteran of the Year by the Milwaukee County Veterans Association.

Armstrong served on the committee that helped bring the Fisher House to Milwaukee, and continues to assist Veterans' families at the facility, a home-away-from-home for family members of Veterans being treated at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center.

The award recognizes Armstrong's "community involvement, service to Veterans and loyalty to family."





'If I'm unconscious, take me to VA'

Like many women Veterans, Sharon Bayless used to think she didn't deserve VA health care.

But after beating breast cancer, having a tumor removed and losing over 100 pounds with the help of the Milwaukee VA, she has advice for other female Veterans: "You've earned it, you deserve it and it's the best care anywhere."

Dr. Amy Farkas, the women's health medical director for the Milwaukee VA, agreed. "We know women are less likely to identify as Veterans and less likely to seek out VA services because they don't feel like it's for them," she said. "They can talk to us about their mammograms and their diabetes. We can talk to them about reproductive health plans and their migraine headaches. And we can do that all together."

Bayless bristles at Veterans who believe VA care is lesser care. "I love the care here," she said. "At other hospitals, you're treated like a number. Here, they treat you like a person, like an individual. The

doctors take time to listen to you.

"I always tell my son I should get a tattoo on the front of my head: 'If I'm unconscious, take me to VA.'"

Beating cancer, losing weight

Bayless, 69, first came to VA in 2011 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her ongoing treatments lasted for five years, but she's now cancer free and has nothing but praise for VA doctors who helped her through it.

As Bayless' treatment drew to a close, Dr. Sarah Nickoloff encouraged her to enroll in a research study for prediabetic women. "I was very overweight," she said, noting she was 237 pounds. The study required changes to her diet and taking part in online sessions. She lost 65 pounds on the study and was able to keep it off. And recently, she lost another 42 pounds, thanks to medication and working with a dietitian and life coach. "It's easier not having the weight," she said.

Tumor removal

About 10 years ago, she discovered something in her cheek. A biopsy revealed that the mass was a tumor, and part of the tumor had wrapped around her eye muscles.

Surgery to remove the tumor took over five hours but was successful.

Giving back

Bayless began volunteering at Milwaukee VA about three years ago, inspired not only by the care she has received, but also the care her partner, Dick Matt, received.

"When Dick was here, I would come and visit him and play games with everyone," she said. "Some people had nobody who would visit them. So, I told myself that when I retire, I was going to start volunteering.

"I need a purpose in life, and this is my purpose," she said. "I'm giving back some of what I got. I like giving back to an organization that's given so much to me."

Prosthetics from Milwaukee VA help Vet achieve fitness goals

When Ben Shortreed lost his hand in a fireworks accident in 2020, his life changed dramatically. That brought the Marine Veteran to the Prosthetics Service at Milwaukee VA Medical Center.

Working with prosthetist Justin Heck and the team, Shortreed was fitted with a prosthesis and began the long, arduous process of learning how to live life as an upper-limb amputee.

Heck noted that many upper-limb amputees — who comprise only 8% of all Veteran amputees — reject prostheses because the learning curve can be difficult.

But Shortreed was determined, realizing that learning how to use a prosthesis was as much a mental exercise as a physical challenge.

"There's a period where you don't think you can do something," Shortreed said. "Then the realization pops, and you're like, 'Why couldn't I? Let's find a way.'"

Shortreed said the key is making conscious decisions to use the prosthesis, but it isn't easy.

"I say to myself, 'Should I do this

left-handed?' I have to force myself to do that," he said. "This whole process has taught me a lot of patience, and every day, even now, it's like a puzzle."

Physical transformation

One of the life-changing decisions Shortreed made after the accident was to focus on his physical health. That led him to the Supra Human program, which focuses on physical fitness, nutrition, accountability and mental health.

Shortreed's success in the program led to him being named "Supra Human Man of the Year" in 2025 — quite an accomplishment for someone with one hand.

Shortreed's exercise regimen has meant constant tweaking and adjustments for his prosthesis. Heck said Shortreed is easily in the top 1% of Veterans when it comes to physical activity and the stress put on his prostheses.

Heck estimated that Shortreed has been through five sockets over five years because of his body changes and how hard he works his prosthesis.

Working together

Shortreed's relationship with Heck and the team has been more than just provider-patient.

"It's a friendship, and you have to have that relationship," Shortreed said. "They really dive deep into my lifestyle and activities and design around it."

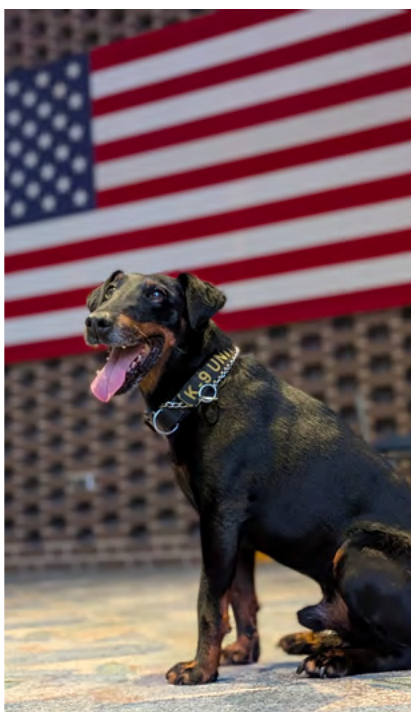
About four months after the accident, Shortreed was in a "darker place," struggling to figure out life with one hand.

"We're empathetic if not always sympathetic," Heck said. "We're here to push you and to be your cheerleader. The relationship that Ben and I have has been phenomenal. ... We work together."

"I'm truly grateful for the high level of attention and care this team gives me," Shortreed said. "I feel very fortunate, because I feel that with private insurance, I wouldn't have these opportunities. ... I wouldn't have the fitness journey I have now. I know I'd be a different guy, but for the negative."

Milwaukee VA *happenings*

Atilla, the Milwaukee VA's police dog, hung up his collar in September, retiring after 10 years — or 70 dog years — of service.



U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Robert Strong and Cynthia Tomasello were married in the Intensive Care Unit in May.



Guitars for Vets provides Veterans with structured guitar sessions with an experienced tutor.

Clarence Hale Jr., a U.S. Army Veteran of World War II and resident of one of our Community Living Center homes, celebrated his 103rd birthday in June.



Paralyzed U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Cpl. Skyler Correia talks with Col. Morina D. Foster, left, Wounded Warrior Regiment Commanding Officer, in our Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder Center.

On Sept. 17, we celebrated Constitution Day.



Awards & Achievements



American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Recognition

The Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Unit, part of the Medical Procedures Unit, was granted a three-year recognition for quality and safety by the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, a leading gastrointestinal medical society. This national recognition is awarded to units that demonstrate a commitment to delivering high-quality, safe and patient-centered care in endoscopic procedures.



American Diabetes Association Accreditation

The Diabetes Self-Management team earned renewal of its accreditation from the American Diabetes Association. The requirements for accreditation include assessing Veterans' diabetes education and supporting them via needs assessment, while educating Veterans on the disease process through an interactive class.



Double Honors for ED: Accreditation for Geriatric Care and the Human Experience Guardian of Excellence Award

In 2025, the Milwaukee VA Medical Center's Emergency Department received two noteworthy honors: accreditation for geriatric care from the American College of Emergency Physicians and the Human Experience Guardian of Excellence Award from Press Ganey. The accreditation signals a focus on caring for older adults, while the award goes to departments in the top 5% of health care providers in delivering patient experience.



Silver Beacon Award for Excellence for PCU

The Progressive Care Unit was awarded the silver-level Beacon Award for Excellence by the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. Only a handful of VA health-care systems have achieved such a distinction, and the Milwaukee VA's PCU is the only non-ICU in Wisconsin with an active Beacon Award for Excellence.

Honoring Milwaukee VA's outstanding performers

Accreditation Program for Excellence

The Radiation Oncology Unit was re-accredited by the American Society for Radiation Oncology through the Accreditation Program for Excellence. This means that the department has demonstrated compliance with APEx safety and care standards and will continue to use those standards in Veteran care.



Age-Friendly Health System by Institute for Healthcare Improvement

The Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder Center was designated as an Age-Friendly Health System by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. This distinction requires working toward reliable practice of a set of four evidence-based elements of high-quality care for all older adults, known as the 4Ms: What Matters, Medication, Mentation and Mobility.



Individual Awards

International College of Dentists Nomination

Chief of Dental Service Dr. Ankur Patel was nominated to the International College of Dentists, the preeminent honor society of the world's dentists involved in serving others. Only about 3% of dentists worldwide are nominated and selected for this distinction.



Rising Star Award

Zachary Wargolet, an operating room nurse, earned the Rising Star Award during the Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses Global Surgical Conference and Expo in April. The award, presented to only one nurse a year, recognizes individuals who demonstrate outstanding commitment to the perioperative profession. Nominees must have fewer than five years of experience and demonstrate accomplishments that distinguish themselves as potential leaders in the future.



Homeless Initiatives

In 2025, the Milwaukee VA continued its push to find housing for homeless Veterans. This included three surge events as part of VA's "Getting Veterans Off the Street" nationwide initiative.

During the surge events, Milwaukee VA homeless program workers and its community partners focused on engaging unsheltered Veterans through proactive street outreach, enrolling them in a same-day interim housing program, and enrolling them in a permanent housing program.

"The goal of the national initiative is getting Veterans off the street, so we're just working to engage with as many Veterans as we can and offer them same-day housing and get them a plan for permanent housing," said Amy Mael, Milwaukee VA's Homeless Prevention Programs Manager.

Meeting Veterans where they are

During one of the surge events in July, Milwaukee VA Medical Center Executive Director Jim McLain accompanied Bobbie Zerfas, assistant program manager for the Milwaukee VA homeless program, and Matt Fetrow, Health Care for Homeless Veterans outreach coordinator, as they visited with known unsheltered Veterans and attempted to connect with others.

Zerfas said that finding and connecting with homeless Veterans is what she and her staff do every day. The difference with the surge events was the confluence of other programs and community partners.

"We're really trying to bring all the parts of our program together," Zerfas said, noting the involvement of numerous social workers as well as Housing and Urban Development-Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing, Center for Veterans Issues, Veteran Justice Outreach and Supportive Services for Veteran Families, among others.

The surge events also aimed to bring homeless Veterans to the Community Resource and Referral Center, 1818 N. Martin Luther King Drive in Milwaukee, where they have access to showers, a food pantry, computer stations and a host of other resources, including social workers and mental health specialists.



VA making progress against homelessness

In December, VA announced that it permanently housed 51,936 homeless Veterans across the country in fiscal year 2025.

That number is 4,011 more Veterans than VA housed the previous year.

Locally in FY 2025, the Milwaukee VA:

- Permanently housed 394 Veterans
- Had fewer than 5% of Veterans who returned to homelessness (4.1%)
- Exceeded goal of engaging 211 unsheltered Veterans, at 245 (116.1% of goal)
- Hosted three unsheltered surge events
- Exceeded goal of moving 106 unsheltered Veterans to interim or permanent housing at 174 (164.2% of goal)

Where to go for help

Visit the VA Homeless Programs website to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for Veterans exiting homelessness.

In Milwaukee, contact the **Community Resource and Referral Center** at **414-263-7673**.



National Call Center
for Homeless Veterans
877-424-3838
www.va.gov/homeless

Facility Updates

Ambulatory Infusion Center

The new Ambulatory Infusion Center opened in February. The service was originally part of the Zablocki Integrated Health Program — or ZIHP clinic — which opened in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years, many of ZIHP's functions were relocated or integrated elsewhere in the hospital. But the infusion center — ZIHP's one remaining service by the end of 2024 — grew to such an extent as to warrant its own space.



Lake Wheeler Pavilion

In June, the Lake Wheeler Pavilion on the Milwaukee VA grounds was rededicated after being refurbished and restored thanks to a more than \$200,000 donation from the trust of the late Paul F. Hugo and the help of the Milwaukee Preservation Alliance. Originally opened in 1987, the pavilion has served as a healing space for Veterans as well as a gathering place for VA staff and events. The project restored the original red cedar in the pavilion, replaced the roof and installed new fascia boards and gutters.



SCI/D Center Gazebo

A ribbon-cutting ceremony took place in June for a new gazebo outside the Spinal Cord Injury/Disorders Center. The new space was made possible by a generous donation from the Milwaukee Brewers Community Foundation and provides our SCI/D Veterans a shaded area where they can enjoy the outdoors.



Tree Planting

In September, a beautiful oak tree — donated by We Energies — was planted near the parking structure on Washington Street where the old gravel lots used to be. This collaborative effort between We Energies and the Milwaukee VA symbolizes our commitment to maintaining a green, healthy environment for our Veterans and community members.



Noteworthy Events Special outings, programs and services for our Veterans

The annual **Breast Health Awareness Walk** in October drew hundreds of participants, including Veterans, their families and friends and Milwaukee VA staff. "Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among American women," said Katie Wisniewski, Women's Health program manager. "Although no direct link has been found between military service and breast cancer, VA continues to study the effects of service on Veteran health."



Milwaukee native Gary Wetzel, a Medal of Honor recipient for his heroic actions in the Vietnam War, was the guest of honor during Medal of Honor Day in March. During the event, Wetzel met with Veterans and staff, taking the time to connect with each individual. We are grateful for the stories, wisdom and dedication he shared.



The **38th Annual "Christmas with the Vets"** in December saw Vietnam Veteran Jeff "Doc" Dentice and his crew deliver \$33,000 worth of donations to the medical center. The delivery ensured that in-patient Veterans and residents at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center had gifts and holiday treats for Christmas.

Wood National Cemetery's annual Memorial Day celebration in May drew hundreds of attendees on a picture-perfect day. "Let us rededicate ourselves to doing what we can to honor the service and sacrifice of all our Veterans," U.S. Rep. Gwendolyn Moore said during the ceremony. "We should be thankful for those who have paid the ultimate price. ... So today, on behalf of a grateful nation, thank you for your sacrifice."



In June, staff, Veterans and visitors learned CPR as part of **CPR Week**. Participants were taught what to do when they find someone who is unresponsive, how to do compressions and how to use an AED (automated external defibrillator). There was also information about using Narcan (naloxone) for someone who has overdosed.



We marked **Navy Week** in July with a visit from U.S. Navy Adm. Matthew Pottenbaugh, commander of Naval Service Training Command. A reception included a performance by the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard and the U.S. Navy Brass Quintet. Pottenbaugh also took time to meet with Veterans in our Community Living Center.



In September, the **Everyone On Digital Learning Lab** was launched at the Milwaukee Soldiers Home. The lab gives residents of the home access to computers, internet and digital skills training and allows them to manage daily life, stay connected and build brighter futures.

Current and former **Green Bay Packers players** Tucker Kraft, Lukas Van Ness, Tony Fisher, Ahman Green, John Michels, Marco Rivera, Bill Schroeder and President/CEO Mark Murphy stopped for a visit with Veterans and family members at the Fisher House in April. Fisher House provides free lodging for the families of active-duty service members and Veterans while their loved ones receive medical care.

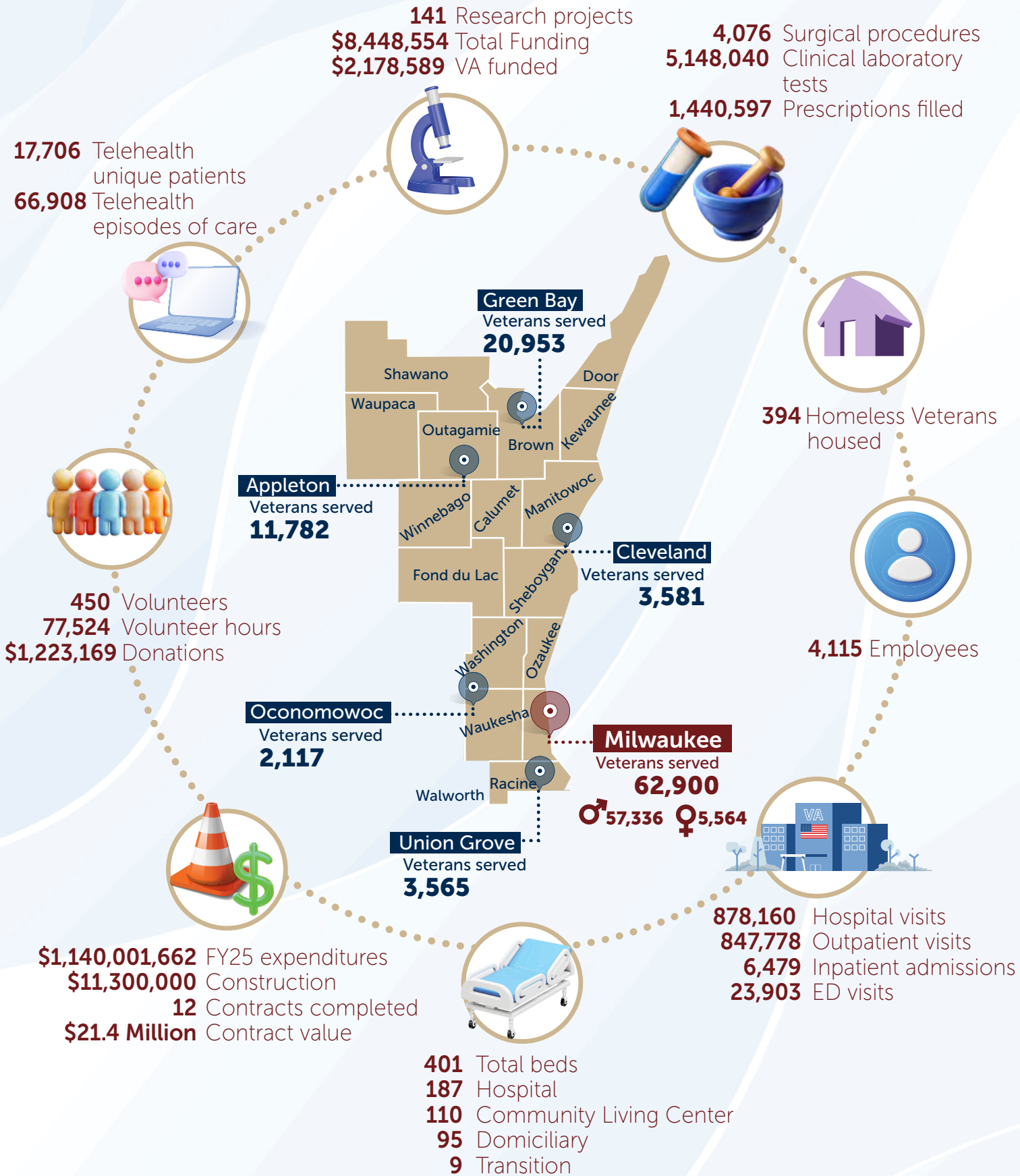


The annual **Diva Day** brought a little pampering to over 100 of our female Veterans in June. This fun-filled event put on by Milwaukee VA's Center for Development and Civic Engagement and Women's Health included light refreshments, complimentary items, self-care activities, free haircuts and entertainment.



The fish were jumping during the annual **Disabled Veterans Fishing Outing** in June in Port Washington. Local boat captains volunteered their time, boats and expertise to take Veterans onto Lake Michigan, where some snagged big catches while others remembered the ones that got away. An awards ceremony and seafood buffet at the American Legion post followed the fishing.

2025 Stats



Zablocki VA Health Care System

Social Media



Post of the Year



Our social media post about Anna Mae Robertson was the post of the year for the Milwaukee VA.

A former nurse's aide here at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, she was also one of the last surviving members of the famed 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only all-black female unit stationed overseas during World War II. The story of the "Six Triple Eight" was chronicled in an Oscar-nominated Netflix movie released in December 2024. She died May 30, 2025 at the age of 101.

- 4,423
- 882
- 335
- 219,208

Over the past year, our social media channels have become a more powerful tool for reaching and supporting Veterans.

1,586 new followers – a 54% jump from the previous year, growing our online Zablocki Veteran, caregiver, and staff community.

3,109,300 content views – important messages about the services we provide are reaching our Veterans and other Zablocki VA Health Care System stakeholders.

97,645 content interactions – engagement on our posts increased by 104%, showing that Veterans, their families, and the community are not only seeing our messages but actively connecting and joining the conversation about information, services, and support we share.

Link clicks: **7,517** (up 56.4%)

Visits: **69,527** (up 14.8%)

Connect to our social media: <https://www.va.gov/milwaukee-health-care/> and scroll to bottom of page.

What Veterans say about the Milwaukee VA

"The service and attention we're now getting from the VA deserves an A+ rating and an award for excellence. Thank you for all you do for us aging Vietnam veterans." – **Green Bay VA enrolled Veteran**

"The program works, if you want it to. You have to stick to it. I would recommend it to anyone." – **John Adamski, U.S. Air Force Veteran**, talking about the TeleMOVE! program through the Milwaukee VA

"I love the care here. At other hospitals, you're treated like you're a number. Here, they treat you like a person, like an individual. The doctors take the time to listen to you. I always tell my son I should get a tattoo on the front of my head: 'If I'm unconscious, take me to the VA.'" – **Sharon Bayless, U.S. Army Veteran**

"The people are so nice. They legitimately care about you. I'm treated like I'm special. The care and the detail is just overwhelming." – **Dan Aumend, U.S. Navy Veteran**, on his care received on 4C for chemotherapy

"I've been there hundreds of times over the years. If I have a headache, a toothache, I go right to the VA." – **Gene Wagner, 98 year old U.S. Navy Veteran** who plays ice hockey

"The Dom is one of the best places I've ever been. It took me out of a bad environment and gave me a lot of opportunities, which are starting to happen. The Dom is helping me find my purpose. I'm looking forward to a brighter future." – **Nicholas Oakley, U.S. Air Force Veteran**

"This is a great facility with wonderful people. I started using it for the convenient location and now I am thrilled to have them. Great job everyone!" – **Oconomowoc VA enrolled Veteran**



Learn more at
www.va.gov/milwaukee-health-care

Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center
5000 W. National Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53295
414.384.2000

