

Resources and Services Directory for Head Injury and Other Conditions

Section 7: Military and Veterans Health Care in the Nation and Oklahoma

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O K L A H O M A S T A T E D E P A R T M E N T O F H E A L T H

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Military/Veterans Health Care in the Nation and Oklahoma

(Contact information subject to change.)

Because of the interest in veterans' lives and injury outcomes by health professionals, patients and families, and the people of Oklahoma, this section includes a brief summary of the organization of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the VA health care system, other national agencies/organizations, and Oklahoma VA services.

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov>

The Veterans Affairs (VA) was established as an independent agency under the President by Executive Order 5398 on July 21, 1930 and was elevated to Cabinet level on March 15, 1989 (Public Law No. 100-527). The mission is to serve America's veterans and their families with dignity and compassion and to be their principal advocate in ensuring that they receive medical care, benefits, social support, and lasting memorials promoting the health, welfare, and dignity of all veterans in recognition of their service to this nation. In September 2007, the estimated total veteran population was 23,816,000. VA is the second largest Federal department and has over 260,000 employees, among them physicians, nurses, counselors, statisticians, architects, computer specialists, and attorneys. Services and benefits are provided through a nationwide network of 153 hospitals, 895 outpatient clinics, 135 nursing homes, 47 residential rehabilitation and treatment programs, 209 readjustment counseling centers, 57 veteran's benefits regional offices, and 125 national cemeteries.

The overall goal of the VA is to provide excellence in patient care with prompt and seamless service, veterans' benefits, and customer satisfaction. Of the nearly 25 million veterans currently alive, about three of every four served during a war or an official period of hostility. Approximately 70 million people – about a quarter of the nation's population – are potentially eligible for VA benefits and services as veterans, family members, or survivors of veterans. Almost half of the VA budget, \$44.5 billion, goes to veterans and their families in the form of checks (disability payments, income support, etc.) and the remaining \$45.5 billion is discretionary; 39.6 billion out of 45.5 billion support the medical care system.

Five broad goals of the VA Strategic Plan to improve services and Department management are to:

- Restore the capability of veterans with disabilities to the greatest extent possible and improve the quality of their lives and their families;
- Ensure a smooth transition for veterans from active military service to civilian life;
- Honor and serve veterans in life and memorialize them in death for their sacrifices on behalf of the Nation;
- Contribute to the public health, emergency management, socioeconomic well-being, and history of the Nation; and
- Deliver world-class service to veterans and their families by applying sound business principles that result in effective management of people, communications, technology, and governance.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, which address all aspects of veterans care, are located in Washington, DC, and include:

- **Veterans Health Administration (VHA)**
VHA manages one of the largest health care systems in the United States with 157 hospitals nationwide, conducts research and education, and provides emergency medical preparedness. The medical centers (VAMCs) within a Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) work together to provide efficient, accessible health care to veterans in their areas.
- **Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)**
VBA provides benefits and services to the veteran population through 58 VA regional offices. Services provided to veterans and their dependents include compensation and pension, education, loan guaranty, and insurance.
- **National Cemetery Administration (NCA)**
NCA is responsible for providing burial benefits to veterans and eligible dependents which involves managing 120 National Cemeteries nationwide, providing grave markers worldwide, administering the State Cemetery Grants Program that complements the National Cemeteries network, and providing Presidential Memorial Certificates to next of kin of deceased veterans.
- **Office of Inspector General (IG)**
The IG provides services to veterans, VA employees, and citizens concerned with good Government.
- **Board of Contract Appeals (BCA)**
BCA considers and determines appeals from decisions of contracting officers pursuant to the Contract Disputes Act of 1979.
- **Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA)**
The Board of Veterans Appeals reviews benefit claims determinations made by local VA offices and issues decisions on appeals. The Board members, attorneys experienced in veteran's law and in reviewing benefit claims, are the only ones who can issue Board decisions.

Additional VA organizations include the Center for Women Veterans, which ensures women veterans have access to VA benefits and services that includes gender-specific needs, outreach, and advising the Secretary for Veterans Affairs on all programs and issues affecting women veterans, and 14 Offices that handle all specialty areas.

Veterans Health Administration

Since 1995, VHA has worked to bring staff closer to patient care and moved to an outpatient model where care is provided at more than 1,400 sites in communities throughout the United States. The ratio of outpatient visits to inpatient admissions was 29 to one in 1995 and is now 100 to one. Twenty-two regional networks were established, each one charged with conducting daily operations and decisions affecting hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and readjustment counseling centers within their regions. In 2007 VHA provided health care for 5.5 million veterans. It is one of the largest providers of health professional training in the world and maintains affiliations with 107 academic health systems, operates one of the largest and effective research organizations, is a principal federal asset for providing medical assistance in major disasters, and serves as the largest direct-care provider for homeless citizens in the United States. The Computerized Patient Record System is an

integrated system serving all VA facilities where providers can update a patient's medical history, review test results, submit orders, and access patient health information. The VHA conducts more than 400,000 consultations annually via telemedicine.

Blind Rehabilitation Service - Provides a continuum of care for blinded veterans extending from their home environment to the local VA facility and appropriate rehabilitation setting. Services include adjustment to blindness counseling, patient and family education, benefits analysis, comprehensive residential inpatient training, outpatient rehabilitation services, provision of assistive technology, and research. The purpose is to provide high quality care in a timely and appropriate manner enabling veterans to acquire the skills and capabilities necessary for development of personal independence and emotional stability. The Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST) Coordinator located at local VA medical centers is the initial contact person for getting help for vision loss.

VA Combat Vet Outreach. The VA has telephoned veterans potentially identified as being ill or injured from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF-OIF) and is currently calling over 500,000 veterans who have been discharged from active duty but have not contacted VA for health care. They are being called with an offer to appoint a care manager if they do not have one to help them receive appropriate care and know about their VA benefits. These combat veterans have special access to VA health care for five years after discharge from the military, including screening for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). VA personnel have been deployed to the military's major medical centers to assist wounded service members and their families during the transition to civilian lives.

Current Conflicts

Presently, a major concern of the VA is providing care for service men and women returning from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF), especially those with multiple major injuries. Approximately five percent of patients who receive VA health care are veterans of current conflicts. Although veterans also obtain services in the overall health care system, this section describes the VA System of the nation and state.

Organization of Care for Veterans of Current Conflicts

Briefly, the system of care for severely injured service members usually involves emergent care at stations in Iraq and Afghanistan, transfer to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, and then transfer to Walter Reed Army or Bethesda Naval Hospital. Depending on the injuries and member's status, he/she may be admitted into the VA Polytrauma System of Care. The Veterans Administration Hospital in Minneapolis, one of four facilities in the nation where service members injured in Iraq and Afghanistan receive comprehensive evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation, serves Oklahoma service members as they return from one of the three major facilities. When two or more injuries occur, one of which is life threatening, patients are shipped to a polytrauma center. Treatment is provided to active duty personnel with combat injuries, active duty with non-combat injuries, and veterans. Forty to fifty percent of all troops currently deployed to combat zones are National Guardsmen and Reservists.

Veterans Affairs Polytrauma System of Care

The philosophy and purpose of the polytrauma system of care is to provide quality, coordinated, and comprehensive medical care and rehabilitation for the severely wounded with complex injuries in OIF/OEF to obtain the highest level of independent functioning possible. Service members treated

include active duty with combat injuries and those in training, active duty with non-combat injuries (e.g., stateside training accidents), and veterans. Patients with multiple trauma are treated as well as those with monotrauma such as TBI or amputation. Polytrauma is defined as two or more injuries to physical regions or organ systems, one of which may be life threatening, resulting in physical, cognitive, psychological, or psychosocial impairments and functional disability. TBI frequently occurs in polytrauma in combination with other disabling conditions such as amputation, auditory or visual impairments, spinal cord injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, or mental health conditions. Injury to the brain primarily guides the rehabilitation course in polytrauma.

Definitions

The following terms relate to the VA Polytrauma System of care and are not included in the definition of terms in Section 1 of the Resource Directory.

- **Benefits Counselor** - Works with veterans and their families to identify resources available in the VA system to help with employment, education, health and financial support.
- **Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit (BIRU)** - An outpatient program that provides cognitive retraining and community re-entry rehabilitation to patients with TBI.
- **Center for the Intrepid, San Antonio, TX** - Financed and constructed by the Fisher House Foundation as a non-profit rehabilitation center to care for service members and veterans with amputations, severe trauma, and serious burns.
- **Compensation and Pension (C&P) Examination** - Conducted by a VA physician specializing in rehabilitation medicine and includes a self-reported medical history and current complaints, and a complete physical examination.
- **Electronic Health Record (EHR)** - integrates all elements of a patient's health history, including medications, laboratory work, x-rays, scans, EKGs, and medical diagnoses. It is accessible at any secure station in any VA medical facility.
- **Military Liaisons** - Represent the military and assist communication between the VA, service members and family members. They function as subject matter experts on all issues related to the military transfer of soldiers. They help resolve administrative issues involving travel for family members, lodging, reimbursement and pay issues, and transportation/shipment of household or personal goods.
- **Polytrauma Network Sites (PN)** - Provide specialized post-acute rehabilitation in consultation with the rehabilitation centers in a setting appropriate to the needs of veterans, service members, and families. They provide proactive case management for existing and emerging conditions and identify local resources for VA and non-VA care.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** - A psychological condition that affects those who have experienced a traumatizing or life-threatening event such as combat, natural disasters, serious accidents, or violent personal assaults.
- **Public Affairs Officer** - Represents the Department of Veterans Affairs at the facility level, respond to public inquiries, and coordinate media events.
- **Readjustment Counseling Services (RCS)** - Available free of charge at VA Centers to all veterans who served in any combat zone. Services also available for their family members for military related issues.
- **Tricare** - A health care plan that uses military health care as the main delivery system and a civilian network of providers to provide care for service members (active and retired) and their families.

- **Vet Centers** - Locations that provide readjustment counseling and outreach services free of charge to all veterans who served in any combat zone. Services are also available to family members for military related issues.

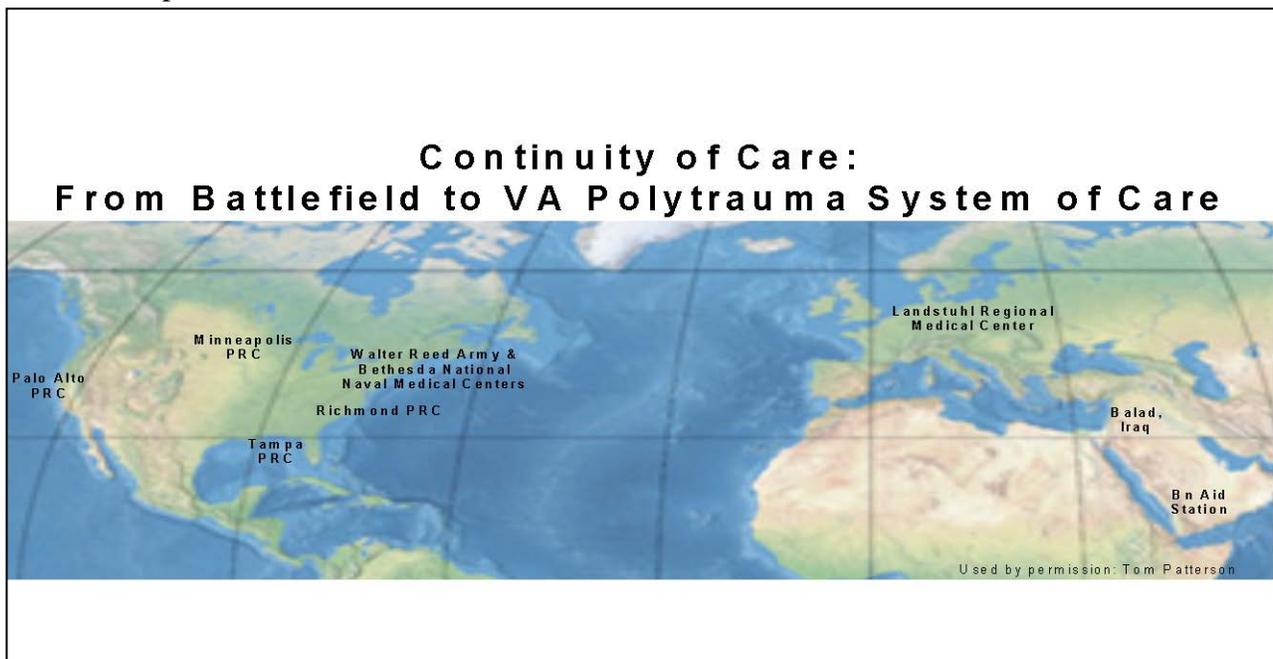
Polytrauma System of Care

Component I. Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers provide acute, comprehensive medical and rehabilitative services for patients with complex medical and disabling injuries through a team of professionals and consultants from other specialties that includes physiatry, rehabilitation nursing, speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, recreational therapy, blind rehabilitation, audiology, psychology, neuropsychology, social work/case manager, and prosthetist/orthotist. There are four Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers located in Minneapolis, MN, Palo Alto, CA, Richmond, VA, and Tampa, FL. Each Center also houses a Polytrauma Network Site

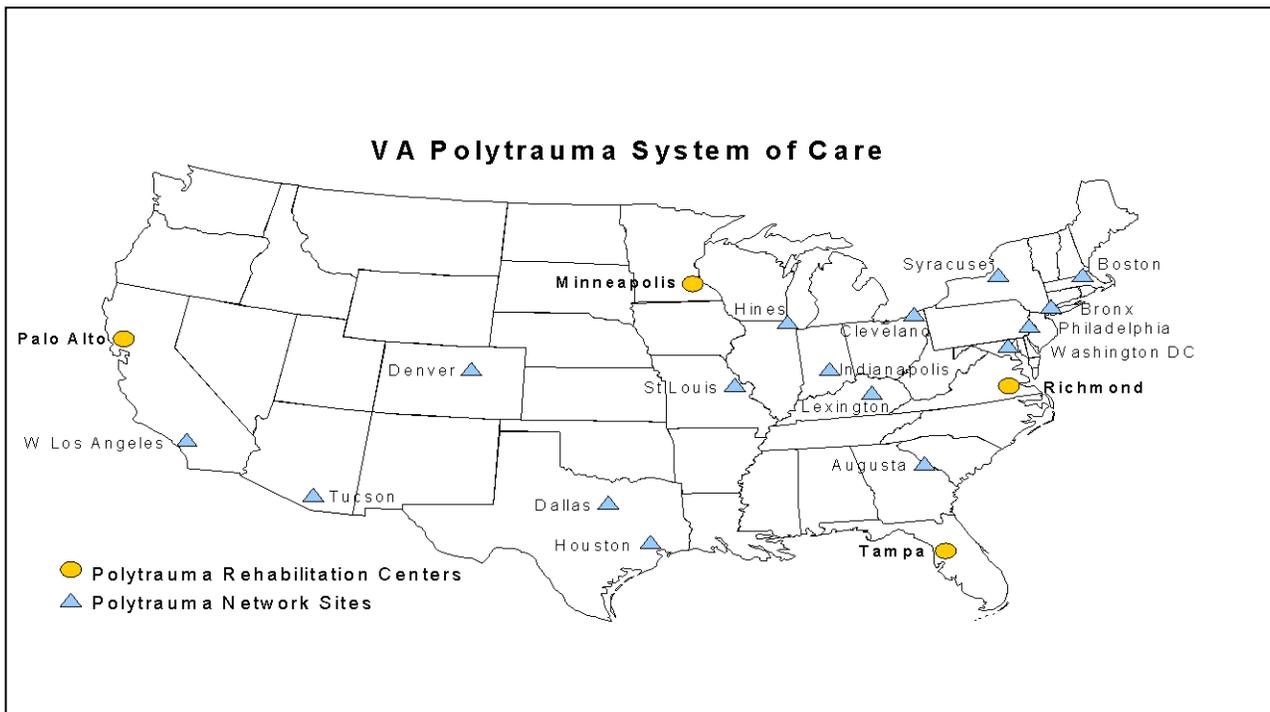
Component II. Network Sites total 22 and are located in Augusta, Boston, Bronx, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Hines, Houston, Indianapolis, Lexington, Philadelphia, Seattle, St. Louis, Syracuse, Tucson, Washington DC and West Los Angeles. The team of providers are similar to the Centers but focused on inpatient and outpatient services, management of long-term effects, managing the rehabilitation plan, identifying VA and non-VA resources for care, continued support for families, providing regular follow-up care and check ups, and coordinating service between the local VA, Veterans Benefit Administration, DoD, and the private sector.

Component III. Polytrauma support clinics total 72 and utilize groups of rehabilitation providers who deliver follow up services in consultation with regional and network specialists. They perform routine follow-up of stable effects and treat new problems in consult with regional sites. The regional networks develop applications for new clinics in consideration of reducing veterans’ travel to the nearest VA or clinic.

Component IV. Polytrauma points of contact are located in 60 VA Medical Centers including the two VA hospitals in Oklahoma. Professionals refer patients to an appropriate component in the system of care, coordinate services provided in the community, and consult with other professionals for follow-up.



The majority of patients are discharged to home as they leave a Polytrauma Center and receive specialized follow-up at a Polytrauma Network Site, or another facility in the Polytrauma System of Care. Some patients may require ongoing sub acute or long term care. Others may return to a Military Treatment Facility for follow-up after VA discharge and some patients may return to Active Duty within the military. Polytrauma Rehabilitation Teams develop follow-up plans for each patient with patients and families that are communicated to the receiving medical facilities and military case managers. Facilities in the system of care participate in regular conference calls that address clinical and administrative issues. The Sites consult with the Centers by tele-conferencing, phone, and email, and VA's system of electronic health records allows physicians to consult with each other on any case.



Background and Predominant Sources of Injury

Recent advances in emergency medicine and protective armor technology have increased survivability of military on the battlefield and during troop transport. Body armor reduces the frequency and severity of injuries to vital organs within the torso region, leaving face and limbs exposed. Helmets reduce penetrating injury from projectiles but give limited protection against nonpenetrating forces from impacts, falls, and explosive blasts which cause coup-contra coup, torsion, and pressure wave trauma to the brain. The head remains susceptible to concussive forces from vehicle accidents, blast injuries, and falls.

Blast injuries are the principal mechanism of injury and are caused by improvised explosive devices, grenades/rocket propelled grenades, landmines, missiles, mortar/artillery shells, gunshots, and motor vehicle accidents. The most common injuries sustained are traumatic brain injury (TBI), fractures, burns, chest/lung trauma, spinal cord injury, hearing loss or injury, traumatic amputations, visual impairments or blindness, and soft tissue injuries. Primary blast injury occurs from an interaction of the over pressurization wave and the body with differences occurring from one organ

system to another. Air-filled organs such as the ear, lung, and gastrointestinal tract and organs surrounded by fluid-filled cavities such as the brain and spinal cord are especially susceptible to injury. In a blast, brain injuries can also occur by impact from blast-energized debris, the individual being physically thrown, burns, and/or inhalation of gases and vapors. Treatment requires long-term follow up and/or life time case management which is provided across all episodes and sites of care and includes coordination of services, evaluation of ongoing rehabilitation and psychosocial needs, family education and support services, and assistance with community integration.

Military/VA Health Care in Oklahoma

The health of all military and veterans of past and current wars is of great interest and a priority in Oklahoman communities and the legislature. There are five military bases in the state. Veterans constitute 12% of the Oklahoma population 18 years and older. Oklahomans are well represented within active duty, reserves, and particularly the National Guard segments of the military. Veterans health care follows the system as described generally under the federal VA Health System. The veteran population served in Oklahoma during 2007 was 338,086; medical care costs were \$434,379,000.

Military Hospitals

There are two hospitals in Oklahoma that provide care to service members, families, and people in the communities:

Reynolds Army Community Hospital

4301 Wilson Street
Fort Sill, OK 73503
Telephone 580/558-2800

Jackson County Memorial Hospital

1200 E. Pecan
Altus, OK 73521
Telephone: 580/379-5000

Veterans Administration Medical Centers

Oklahoma has two VA Medical Centers; both are affiliated with the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine and have newly established neuro-rehabilitation units. The Centers collaborate and contract with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and satellite centers statewide to transition veterans to employment and to provide needed services.

The **Oklahoma City Veterans Affairs Medical Center (OC-VAMC)** is a 169-bed (245 authorized) facility that serves as a primary, secondary, and tertiary care center for eligible veterans in the OKC metropolitan area and western two-thirds of the state, and two counties in north central Texas with a veteran population of 224,696. The OC-VAMC also provides care at six outpatient clinics in western Oklahoma. It is a teaching hospital and is part of VA network 16, which includes facilities in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. The Center's Special Programs include Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Repair, Tri-Fab, which builds state-of-the-art prosthetic devices for amputees, and a Nuclear Medicine Triple Head Coincidence system which allows for PET-like imaging studies on patients.

The **Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center (JCM-VAMC)** is a general medical/surgical facility that provides primary and secondary care and three outpatient clinics that provide primary care and consultation care in medicine, surgery, and mental health. As part of the South Central VA Health Care Network, the hospitals and clinics have ready access to nine sister facilities for referral and use the VAMCs in Oklahoma City and Little Rock for most tertiary services. JCM-VAMC

provides services for more than 45,000 enrolled veterans in three locations. The center operates 88 hospital beds (187 authorized beds) and an outpatient clinic opened in 1998. The Center also has a new 15-bed Inpatient Behavioral Health Unit and a 20-bed Rehabilitation Unit. Special Programs include audiology, behavioral medicine, PTSD, Homeless Veterans, Hospice, spinal cord injury, Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST), and the Women Veterans Clinic. The Center was named the 2007 Champion of Oklahoma, the highest honor of the Champions of Health for their commitment to help veterans, including those who have served in Operations Iraq and Enduring Freedom, achieve their highest level of functional independence through the new rehabilitation unit and prosthetic services program.

Oklahoma VA Regional Office is located in Muskogee with a satellite office in Oklahoma City, and has out-based representatives in Tulsa, Lawton, and Ada. There are Education Liaison Representatives in fourteen western regional states. The Office provides administrative support and services to three jurisdictions.

Outpatient Clinics of the network include:

Central Oklahoma Outpatient Clinic

527 W. 3rd St/PO Box 358

Konawa, OK 74849

Telephone: 580/925-3286

Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic

9322 E. 41st Street

Tulsa, OK 74145

Telephone: 918/628-2500

The clinic offers primary care, laboratory, physical rehabilitation, nutrition and food service, and radiology services to veterans. Special clinics include dental, ear-nose-throat, gastroenterology, optometry, prosthetics, pulmonary, rheumatology, and address spinal cord injuries.

Community Based Outpatient Clinics in the network are:

Ardmore Community-based Outpatient Clinic

2002 12th Street N.W., Suite E

Ardmore, OK 73401

Telephone: 580-226-4580

Lawton/Ft Sill Clinic

4303 Pittman and Thomas Bldg

Ft Sill, OK 73505

Telephone: 580/585-5600

Internal Medicine

10005 W. Doolin

Blackwell, OK 74631

Telephone: 580/363-3288

McAlester Community Based Outpatient Clinic

1429 Pennsylvania Ave.

Hartshorne, OK 74547-3839

Telephone: 888/878-1598

Fax: 918/297-2563

The clinic provides primary care, mental health, social work, and lab onsite to enrolled veterans who live in Atoka, Coal, Hughes, Latimer, Pittsburg, and Pushmataha counties.

Care System. Service members seriously injured in current conflicts may be cared for at various stations in Iraq, transferred to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, then transferred stateside to Walter Reed, Bethesda, Minneapolis, or any of the four polytrauma centers. The majority of TBI cases have polytrauma. Brain injury primarily guides the course of care and rehabilitation in these centers. Treatment is provided to active duty personnel with combat injuries, active duty with non-combat injuries, and veterans.

The VA service system is, and will continue to be, changing in response to organization and treatment advances, legislative mandates, policy-making, available funding, and new protocols based on evaluation of the system. Following deployment, all veterans from OIF/OEF are seen either at the VA Medical Centers or Community Based Outpatient Clinics for initial screening which includes screens for risk for TBI and mental health problems in addition to a comprehensive preventive health evaluation by a primary care provider. If a veteran has a positive TBI screen, he/she is referred to the TBI Clinic for a comprehensive level two evaluation. Twenty-two percent of veterans screened have indication of a TBI; 60-70% of those with a second evaluation are diagnosed with TBI. This evaluation is standardized across the nation to assess types of injury and exposures, and types of problems veterans relate to their injury or exposure. After a comprehensive neurologic and cognitive

evaluation, veterans know if they meet the criteria for TBI, and are referred to a specialized program, such as a headache management program or cognitive retraining/learning program to address their primary needs. Readjustment programs are also available to veterans, which involve the use of mental health and vocational services to complement general health care. TBI care includes primary, mental health, and neurologic rehabilitation services. The plan is to set up a centralized post-deployment clinic based at the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center to expedite care and timely screening, and refer to community-based outpatient clinics when fewer services are needed. The Oklahoma City VA Medical Center is opening a new community based clinic in Ardmore and in Enid. The Oklahoma City VA Medical Center has been proactive in establishing a group of professionals in neurology, rehabilitation, mental health and primary care to address the variety of needs of their population. There continue to be challenges in recruitment of professionals and increasing timeliness of services to meet needs as they are defined.

Organization of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Mental health and substance abuse services for veterans are provided collaboratively by health professionals in the general health care and mental health and substance abuse systems of care. The scopes of all services in Oklahoma are linked to the OC-VAMC (mid and western sections) and JCM-VAMC (eastern section).

VA Medical Center Mental Health/Substance Abuse Services, Oklahoma

(405/456-1000)

(Contact information subject to change)

Mental Health Service (405/456-5138). Mission: To provide: excellent care for all eligible veterans; education for residents and medical students and; opportunities to staff for research. Uses a biopsychosocial model within inpatient/outpatient psychiatric services addressing mental health needs.

Psychology Service (405/456-1000 Ext 63139). Works with psychiatry and other services to provide excellence in clinical care, education, and research.

Employees Assistance Program. Provides short-term counseling services to associates of the medical center and consultation to supervisors regarding needed skills.

Associate Education Programs. Staff develops associate education programs in the medical center including prevention and management of violent behavior, stress management, Women's Health Program, and Critical Incident Debriefing.

Ambulatory Mental Health Clinic (405/456-1000 Ext 64106). A multidisciplinary outpatient mental health clinic works with affiliated units of Family Mental Health, REACH, Crisis, and Primary Care Mental Health; there are over 20,000 outpatient visits in 2007. Services include medication consultation/management, psychotherapy, biofeedback/stress management, psychological assessment, trauma treatment for combat/sexual trauma, walk-in emergency consultation service, telemedicine/telepsychologist staff, and provider training.

Suicide Crisis Intervention (405/456-3139). An alternative to hospital admission provides psychiatric treatment of eligible veterans with acute problems who need intensive treatment.

Family Mental Health Program (405/456-1000 Ext 65183). Provides family/other therapies, consultation, and psychoeducational workshops for family members of veterans with mental illness.

Primary Care Mental Health (PCMH) (405/456-1000 Ext 64106). Addresses mental health needs of veterans within a primary care setting; provides immediate access to mental health care and diagnostic evaluation, depression classes, and medication, sleep, anxiety, and diabetes management.

Women's Trauma Team (405/456-1000 Ext 65183). Helps integrate women in the VA Medical System.

Extended Care Unit (405/456-4545). A 25-bed inpatient unit providing rehabilitative services to veterans who have suffered a loss in function and wish to return to the community.

Health Psychology Clinic (405/456-5183). Focused on emotional/behavioral needs of inpatients and outpatients.

Mental Health Intensive Case Management. Multidisciplinary approach to ambulatory case management of veterans with severe and chronic mental illness; coordinated with community services.

Neuropsychology (405/456-3365). Provides psychotherapy, psychological/neuropsychological evaluation, and stroke recovery.

Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Readjustment Program (405/456-2855). Provides easy access/brief intervention for veterans, comprehensive assessment to identify strengths and needs. The focus is on readjustment including counseling, education, trauma processing therapy, and referral to comprehensive mental health services as needed, or to other specialized treatment programs within VA.

Post-traumatic Stress Recovery Program (405/456-2855). This is for veterans who have experienced some traumatic event (usually combat related); an outpatient, day hospital format is used. The program deals with social alienation, hyper-vigilance, and poor anger management. It helps develop a group social support system.

Psychiatry Inpatient Unit (405/456-5183). This 32-bed unit is for veterans diagnosed with depression, anxiety, bipolar, PTSD, or personality disorder. It offers multiple services/therapies.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (405/456-5183). Outpatient program in the form of a structured day treatment program for eligible veterans.

Substance Abuse Treatment Center (405/456-3278). The Center provides eligible veterans with a substance abuse continuum of care. It offers comprehensive, integrated medical, psychiatric, nursing, psycho-social treatment.

Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs

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Tel: 405/521-3684 FAX: 405/521-6533

www.odva.ok.gov

Mission. To ensure all Oklahomans and their families receive all possible benefits and also provide excellent health services and long-term skilled care in a residential environment to all qualified wartime veterans residing in the state.

The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) is the sixth largest state agency in Oklahoma. The central administrative office is in the Oklahoma City Capitol Complex and the Claims and Benefits Division has offices in Muskogee, Lawton, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City.

Since statehood, Oklahoma has spent millions of dollars on the education, health care and counseling of veterans and their dependents. The War Veterans Commission is responsible to the Governor for carrying out the laws passed by the Oklahoma Legislature, and to administer the veterans program in Oklahoma through a director who exercises operational oversight of the two principal operations of the department: The Oklahoma Veterans Centers and the Claims and Benefits Division. The veterans program is supported by Oklahoma citizens, Governors, and legislators and has been developed as a complete service that includes nursing and domiciliary care, financial assistance in emergencies, education accrediting, and field service counseling in filing of claims for VA and State of Oklahoma benefits. The VA's network of independent and community based clinics allow veterans to maintain regular contact with doctors in specialties from cardiac care to mental health at VA regional hospitals linked for video consultations coupled with telemetry of health data or images. These clinics focus on primary treatment, prevention, early detection, and health promotion.

Oklahoma Veterans Centers

Oklahoma is nationally recognized for the seven domiciliary and nursing care centers serving wartime veterans located in Ardmore, Claremore, Clinton, Norman, Sulphur, Talihina and Lawton. The centers operate much like private communities, situated on spacious, landscaped acreages. Each has its own history and character. All have to meet an annual inspection by the U.S. Veterans Administration and follow the guidelines established by other health and safety agencies. This comprehensive program was created to administer care not otherwise available to over 1,400 Oklahoma war veterans. To be eligible for admission to a Center, the Oklahoma veteran must have served in the active Armed Forces of the United State during wartime and discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Specific wartime theatres and dates are required:

(1) Rules follow 72 O.S., Sec 224

(2) Veterans must have served at least 90 days, except where discharged due to or as a result of a service connected disability, with one or more days being during a wartime period as prescribed in (1).

(3) A veteran must be disabled by age, disease or other reason determined through physical examination by an Oklahoma Veterans Center physician to be eligible for admission. For domiciliary, must be ambulant, dress himself, and perform necessary bathroom needs. For nursing care, the veteran must be disabled or diseased to a degree that requires intermediate or skilled nursing care.

Oklahoma Veterans Center, Ardmore Division
1015 South Commerce
P.O. 489
Ardmore, OK 73402
Tel: 580/223-2266 FAX: 580/221-5606

Oklahoma Veterans Center, Claremore Division
3001 West Blue Starr Drive
P.O. Box 988
Claremore, OK 74018
Tel: 918/342-5432 FAX: 918/342-0835

Oklahoma Veterans Center, Clinton Division
Highway 183 South, P.O. Box 1209
Clinton, OK 73601
Tel: 580/331-2200 FAX: 580/323-3752

Oklahoma Veterans Center, Lawton Division
P.O. Box 849, 501 S.E. Flower Mound Road
Lawton, OK 73502
Tel: 580/351-6511 FAX: 580/351-6526

Oklahoma Veterans Center, Norman Division
1776 E. Robinson, P.O. Box 1668
Norman, OK 73070
Tel: 405/360-5600 FAX: 405/364-8432

Oklahoma Veterans Center, Sulphur Division
304 East Fairlane
Sulphur, OK 73086
Tel: 580/622-2144 FAX: 580/622-5881

Oklahoma Veterans Center, Talihina Division
Highway 63A, P.O. Box 1168
Talihina, OK 74571
Tel: 918/567-2251 FAX: 918/567-2950

Online Resources for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

VA provides a wide range of benefits including disability, education and training, vocational rehabilitation and employment, home loan guaranty, dependant and survivor benefits, medical treatment, life insurance and burial benefits.

Website: www.va.gov

Telephone: 800/827-1000

eBenefits

eBenefits is a one-stop shop for online benefits-related tools and information. This portal is designed for Wounded Warriors, Veterans, Service Members, their families, and their caregivers.

Website: www.ebenefits.va.gov

Military OneSource

Military OneSource is a service provided to service members and their families to help with a broad range of concerns including money management, spouse employment and education, parenting and child care, relocation, deployment, reunion, and concerns of families with special-needs members. Services also include issues like relationships, stress, and grief. Many staff members have military experience and all receive ongoing training on military matters and military lifestyle. The program can be especially helpful to service members and their families who live far from installations.

Website: www.militaryonesource.com

Telephone: 800/342-9647

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC)

Serves active duty military, their dependents, and veterans with traumatic brain injury through medical care, research and educational programs.

Website: www.dvbic.org

Email: info@dvbic.org

Telephone: 1-800/870-9244

Military Homefront

Military Homefront offers support services to service members and families. Tailors services to meet unique needs during recovery and rehabilitation. There are nurses, researchers and counselors working as case managers who answer questions and provide national assistance.

Website: www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil

Warrior Transition Command (WTC)

The WTC ensures that non-clinical processes and programs that support wounded, ill, and injured soldiers are integrated and optimized throughout the Army and supports rehabilitation of wounded, ill, and injured soldiers and successful transition back to active duty or to veteran status.

Website: www.wtc.army.mil

E-mail: WarriorCareCommunications@conus.army.mil

Telephone: 703/428-7118

TurboTAP Transition Assistance Program

A Department of Defense website to provide information and assist service members on transitioning from military service to civilian life. This site is also supported by the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs.

Website: www.turbotap.org

E-mail: TAPHelpDesk@Calibresys.com

National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

A center within VA that has the mission to advance clinical care and social welfare of veterans through research, education, and training in the science, diagnosis, and treatment of PTSD and stress-related disorders.

Website: www.ptsd.va.gov

Email: ncptsd@va.gov

Telephone: 802/296-6300

U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2)

AW2 provides severely disabled soldiers and families with a system of advocacy and follow-up with personal support and liaison to resources to assist in transition from military to civilian life.

Website: <http://wtc.army.mil/aw2>

Telephone: 800/984-8523

U.S. Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR)

The WWR provides and facilitates assistance to wounded, ill, or injured marines, sailors attached to or in support of Marines units, and their families, throughout the phases of recovery.

Website: www.woundedwarriorregiment.org

Telephone: 877/487-6299

Navy Safe Harbor

Navy Safe Harbor is the Navy's lead organization for coordinating the non-medical care of wounded, ill, and injured Sailors, Coast Guardsmen, and their families. Navy Safe Harbor provides a lifetime of individually tailored assistance designed to optimize the success of our shipmates' recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration activities.

Website: www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/safe_harbor

E-mail: safeharbor@navy.mil

Telephone: 877/746-8563

Air Force Wounded Warrior (AFW2)

AFW2 provides a wide range of services, including financial counseling, job-placement assistance, and counseling about veterans benefits.

Website: www.woundedwarrior.af.mil

E-mail: afwounded.warrior@randolph.af.mil

Telephone: 800/581-9437

Center for Minority Veterans

The Center ensures all veterans receive equal services regardless of race, origin, religion, or gender. Program coordinators are located at Regional Offices, Health Care Facilities and National Cemeteries.

Website: www.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans

Telephone: 202-461-6191

Center for Women Veterans

The Center monitors and coordinates with internal VA offices on their delivery of benefits and services to women Veterans.

Website: <http://www.va.gov/womenvet>

E-mail: 00W@va.gov

Telephone: 800/827-1000

Homeless Veterans

Prevention Services includes the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, the Veteran Justice Outreach Program, and the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program. Housing Support Services includes information and resources to provide housing, case management and treatment services for homeless Veterans. Treatment includes healthcare for homeless Veterans, healthcare and other services for Veterans exiting prison, information on Veteran Stand Downs, Drop-In Centers, and Homeless Veteran Dental Assistance Program. Employment/Job Training includes information on a VA program where homeless Veterans earn pay while learning new job skills, relearning successful work habits, and regaining a sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

Website: <http://www.va.gov/homeless>

Telephone: 877/332-0334

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)

IAVA is the nation's first and largest group dedicated to troops and veterans of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and civilian supporters. Ensures enactment of policies that provide for troops, keep military strong, and guarantee national security.

Website: <http://iava.org>

Blinded Veterans Association (BVA)

The Blinded Veterans Association was established specifically to help veterans and their families meet and overcome the challenges of blindness.

Website: www.bva.org

Telephone: 800/669-7079 or 202/371-8880

Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

Disabled American Veterans is dedicated to building better lives for all of our nation's disabled veterans and their families. This mission is carried forward by providing free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service and VA and other agencies of government; and providing outreach concerning its program services to the American people generally, and to disabled veterans and their families.

Website: www.dav.org

Telephone: 877/426-2838

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV)

NCHV is the resource and technical assistance center for a network of community-based service providers and local, state, and federal agencies that provide emergency and supportive housing, food, health services, job training and placement assistance, legal aid and case management.

Website: www.nchv.org

E-mail: info@nchv.org

Telephone: 202/546-1969

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV)

NCHV is the resource and technical assistance center for a network of community-based service providers and local, state, and federal agencies that provide emergency and supportive housing, food, health services, job training and placement assistance, legal aid and case management.

Website: www.nchv.org

E-mail: info@nchv.org

Telephone: 202/546-1969

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)

PVA focuses on veterans living with spinal cord injury and disease.

Website: www.pva.org

E-mail: info@pva.org

Telephone: 800/424-8200

U.S. VETS

U.S. Vets was created to fill gaps in the continuum of care for homeless veterans. Primary goal is to provide safe, sober, clinically supported housing, and employment assistance for homeless veterans.

Website: www.usvetsinc.org

Telephone: 213-542-2600

Returning Service Members (OEF/OIF)

The VA has stationed personnel at major military hospitals to help seriously wounded service members returning from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) transition from military to civilian life. Provides information on: Health Benefits and Services; Dependents; Medical Active Duty; Reservists/National Guard; and Transition Assistance.

Website: www.oefoif.va.gov

Telephone: 800/827-1000

Veterans' Guide to Getting Hired

Resources, tips and advice for veterans returning to the workforce.

<http://www.learnhowtobecome.org/veterans-guide-to-getting-hired/>

VetSuccess

Online tools to assist service members, veterans, and their families during transition from active military service, to work, on campus, at home, and in the community.

Website: www.vetsuccess.gov

Vet Center

Vet Center provides free adjustment counseling and outreach services to all veterans.

Website: www.vetcenter.va.gov

Telephone: 800/905-4675

VETS

We provide resources and expertise to assist and prepare them to obtain meaningful careers, maximize their employment opportunities, and protect their employment rights.

Website: www.dol.gov/vets

E-mail: contact-vets@dol.gov

Telephone: 866/487-2365

e-VETS Resource Advisor – National Resource Directory

The e-VETS Advisor was developed by the U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS). It integrates with the National Resource Directory (NRD), a Web-based directory of more than 11,000 national, state and local services and resources for Veterans, Service Members and their families and caregivers. The NRD is a collaborative effort between the Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs.

Website: www.dol.gov/elaws/evets.htm

Website: www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov

E-mail: info@nrd.gov

Telephone: 800/342-9647

Veterans Workforce Investment Program

A grant program conducted through state or local agencies to provide employment and training services to eligible veterans to help place them in gainful employment.

Website: www.dol.gov/vets/programs/vwip/main.htm

Telephone: 202/693-4700 or 1-866/487-2365

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service

Website: www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre

Telephone: 800/827-1000

Always a Soldier

An Army Material Command initiative which provides information regarding the program, employment opportunities, and important links.

Website: www.amc.army.mil/AlwaysASoldier

Email: alwaysasoldier@hqamc.army.mil

Telephone: 703/806-8140

Career Center at the Military Severely Injured Center

Military.Com helps benefits earned in the service be easier to access and helps members make the most of military experience throughout life, including career and educational opportunities for service members, veterans and military spouses.

<http://www.military.com/support>

Job Accommodation Network

JAN offices help secure employment through job searches and other methods.

Website: <http://askjan.org>

Telephone: 800/526-7234

Additional websites for helping veterans are provided in Section 12.