



The Veterans Health Administration in the US: Pay and productivity issues

Anne Sales, MSN PhD RN
Faculty of Nursing
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

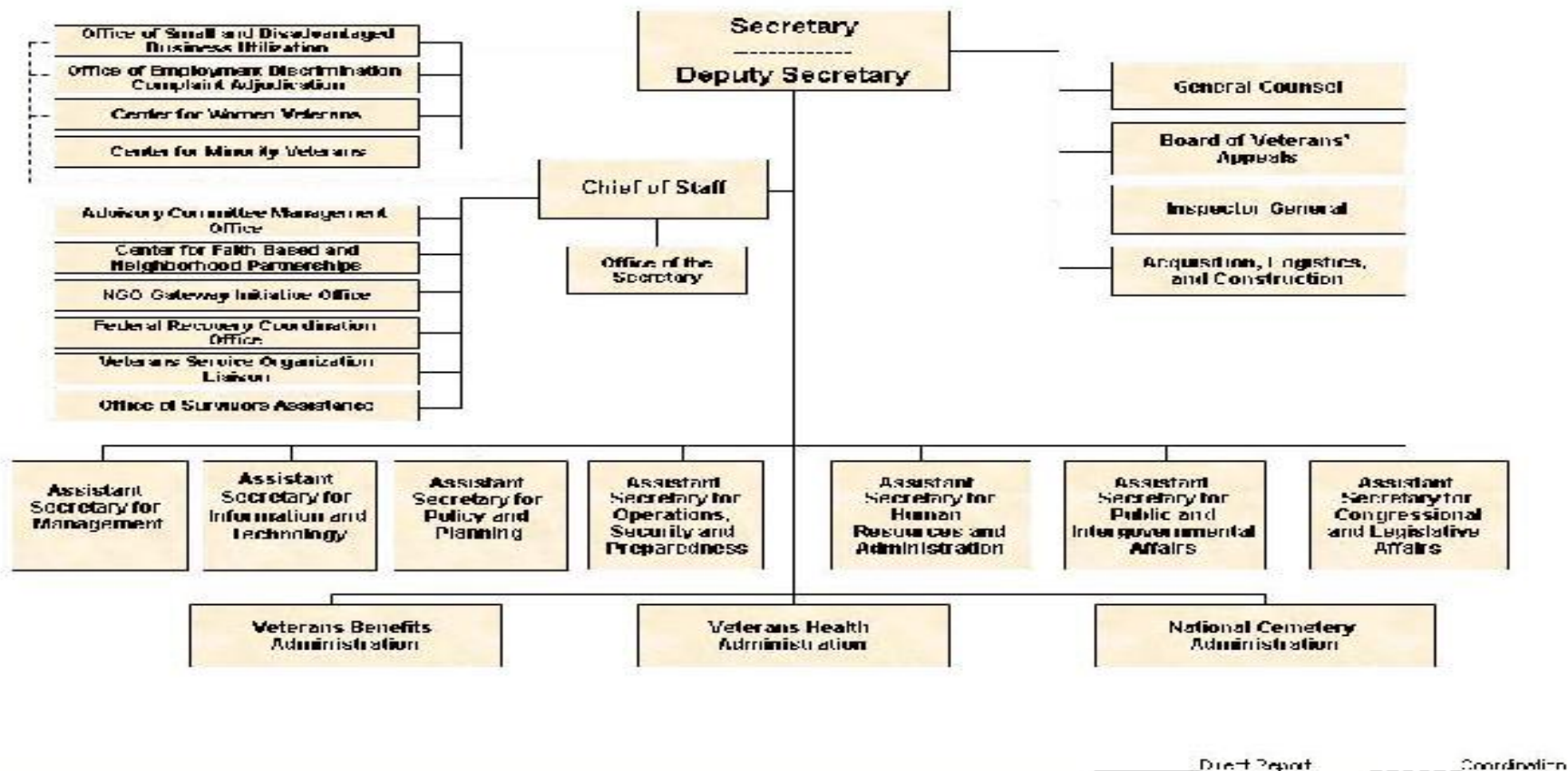


DVA as an organization

- Federal cabinet-level agency in the Executive Branch of the US government
- Second largest agency in the US government
 - Almost 300,000 employees
- Three administrations
 - Veterans Benefits Administration
 - Veterans Health Administration
 - National Cemeteries

DVA org chart

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS





The Veterans Health Administration

- Single largest vertically and horizontally integrated health care system in the US
 - 153 hospitals in each of the 50 states + District of Columbia and Puerto Rico
 - Over 900 outpatient clinics
 - 135 nursing homes (community living centers)
 - 42 residential rehabilitation treatment centers
 - Over 200 readjustment counseling centers
- Annual budget of over \$43 billion
- Divided into 21 regional networks



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS Veterans Health Administration Facilities

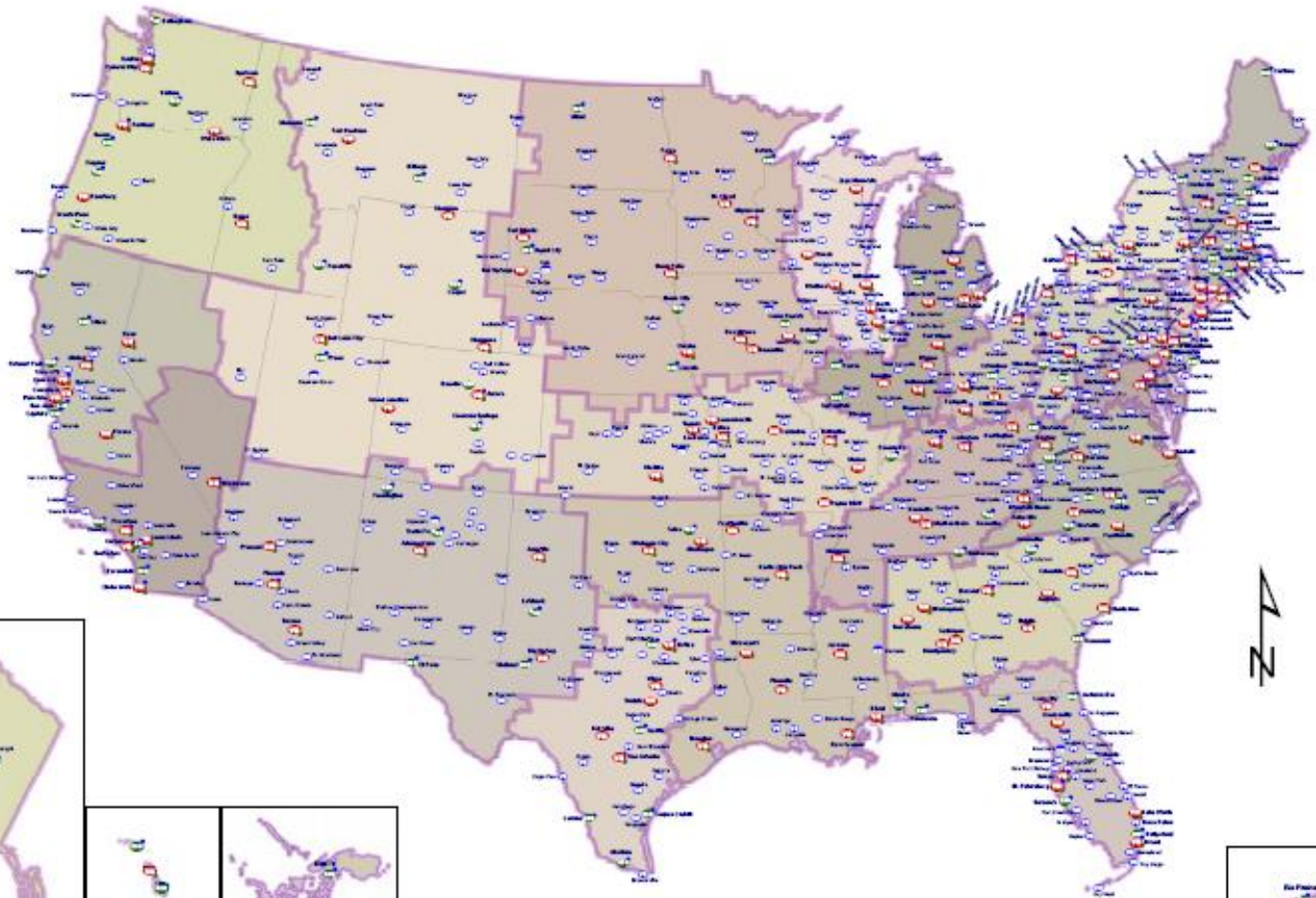
VA VISN INDEX



LEGEND

Composite symbols such as represent facilities that have one or more additional remote sites.

- Hospital w/ Vet Center & Remote Clinic(s)
- Hospital w/ Vet Center
- Hospital w/ Remote Clinic(s)
- Hospital
- Vet Center w/ Remote Clinic(s)
- Vet Center
- Clinic(s)
- VISN Boundary
- State



ALASKA



HAWAII



PHILIPPINES



PUERTO RICO

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Trends over the last decade

- VHA generally has doubled the number of veterans to whom it provides care
 - From 3 million in 1996 to over 7 million in 2006
- Lengths of stay have shortened dramatically
 - Acute care lengths of stay have been cut in half
 - Long term care LOS has also been reduced
- VHA has significantly increased volume of outpatient care compared with prior years



Probable drivers of quality improvement in VHA

- Implementation of performance measurement system in ~1997
- Major focus on guideline implementation
- Highly engaged, employed physician workforce
- Public scrutiny with periodic high profile embarrassment
- Electronic health record for over 30 years



Performance measurement and guideline implementation

- Began in 1997 as part of a major campaign for quality of care in VHA
 - Then-Under Secretary for Health Ken Kizer
 - Modeled on private sector initiatives
 - HEDIS from NCQA
 - Oryx from the JCAHO
 - Other quality initiatives



Physician involvement in VHA

- Physicians are intimately involved in the highest levels of management in VHA
 - Under Secretary for Health is always a physician
 - CEO of VHA
 - VHA Central Office is dominated by physicians with competition for domination by professional administrators
 - Professional administrators usually rise from within the agency
 - Often are health professionals from various disciplines
 - Have significant management training within VHA as well as graduate education outside
 - Career management ladder



Public scrutiny and public reporting

- Focus is almost always acute care
 - Most bricks and mortar
 - High profile events
 - High cost
- As a federal agency, DVA is required to be responsive to requests for information
 - Considerable public reporting of activities