



Annual Report 2010

Letter from the Director

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) is extremely grateful for the pleasure of having worked with such dedicated and helpful supporters this year. VAVS enjoyed numerous successes and faced new challenges, all with the invaluable help of our community dedicated to serving America's Veterans.

The 2010 Annual Report includes the VAVS mission, our program statistics, and our current priorities and accomplishments, in addition to our future goals. This information alone does not encompass the full impact of volunteers in VA. Volunteers, along with other members of our community, dedicate themselves to bettering the lives of Veterans by assisting with projects as varied as improving health care services and accessibility and increasing quality of life.

I would like to extend the sincerest thanks to those who make the goals of VAVS a reality. Without the help of the volunteers, our staff, our community partners and organizations, and the generous contributions of all our supporters, our work at VAVS would not be possible. The future of VAVS, and the care of our nation's Veterans, relies on the continued dedication of our network of allies.

Thank you again for all you do to better serve America's heroes.

Laura B. Balun
Director, Voluntary Service Office



Laura B. Balun, Director
Voluntary Service Office

What Is VAVS?

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program, one of the largest volunteer program in the Federal government, has provided 64 years of service to America's Veterans seeking care in VA health care facilities. Since 1946, VAVS volunteers have donated over 724 million hours of service. With more than 350 national and community organizations supporting the program, VAVS is also advised by a National Advisory Committee, composed of 60 major Veteran, civic, and service organizations.

Our Mission

To provide a structured Volunteer Program under the management of VA compensated employees in cooperation with community resources to serve America's Veterans and their families with dignity and compassion.

VAVS volunteers and their organizations contribute gifts and donations, which supplement VA appropriations to medical centers, clinics, and community living centers. These significant contributions allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist direct patient care programs, as well as support services and activities that may not be fiscal priorities from year to year. In the past, volunteer contributions and donations combined have exceeded \$368,728,913 yearly.

As VA has expanded its care of Veteran patients into the community, volunteer roles have also expanded. They assist Veteran patients by augmenting staff in medical care foster homes and respite programs, as well as hospital units, community living centers, outpatient clinics, community-based activities, and palliative care programs. Volunteers are also providing assistance at our VA national cemeteries, Veterans outreach centers, and VA regional offices.

VAVS National Advisory Committee

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service was established by VA Circular No. 117, May 17, 1947, and became a Federally chartered advisory committee on February 5, 1975.

The NAC provides advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, through the Undersecretary of Health, on the coordination and promotion of volunteer activities within VA health care facilities, along with other matters relating to volunteerism. It also keeps the officers and members of participating organizations informed of volunteer needs and accomplishments.

The NAC Executive Committee is made up of 19 member organizations that monitor and perform oversight of the NAC membership policies and procedures. Members of the Executive Committee are appointed by the Chairman of the NAC.

Training and Orientation Materials

Continue to coordinate training and orientation materials for volunteers on the Internet.

Working closely with local facility Learning Management System (LMS) Coordinators, VAVS has increased the number of volunteers that are able to accomplish mandatory trainings. Most volunteers may now log into the LMS package via Internet and complete trainings such as Computer Security, Privacy Act and Prevention of Sexual Harassment.

Outpatient Inclusion

Encourage field facilities to include outpatients when planning their National Salute to Veterans programs

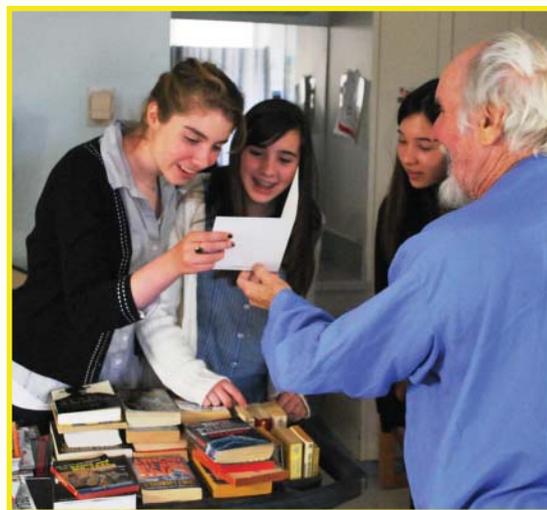
With the creation of the Valentines for Veterans concert series two years ago, the National Salute to Veteran Patients program's inclusion of VA outpatients has grown exponentially. From one concert featuring Little Anthony and the Imperials in 2009 to 17 concerts in 2011. Local VAVS offices and their volunteers worked long hours in preparation for these concerts and over 41,433 individuals attended. This is just one of the many ways VAVS includes VA outpatients in our program. Through this program 358 individuals signed up as volunteers.



Develop Recruitment Materials

Develop additional recruitment materials for VA facilities and NAC members.

VAVS continues to develop unique and forward thinking volunteer recruitment tools. Besides the creation of pamphlets, brochures and handbooks, we are investigating how the Internet can continue to be part of our recruitment. Through guest articles on Facebook and Twitter to video spot on VA's YouTube channel, we are exploring every avenue.



Impact of Volunteers

Develop a dashboard to show the impact of volunteers in their assignments at local VA facilities.

Although the impact volunteers have on patient care and our Veterans wellbeing can be intangible, VAVS has been working to create tools for field staff to assist them in showing the value and impact volunteers have on their medical center and Veterans. Through patient surveys, volunteer task groups and patient, volunteer and staff committees, VA volunteers impact on VA can be measured.

Automate NAC Activities

Cultivate abilities to automate NAC activities.

VAVS Central Office continues to work with other services to garner support for the upgrade and development of a more robust Voluntary Service System (VSS). This web-based time-keeping package is integral to the management of VA's volunteers.

Veterans Concerts

A Veterans Appreciation and Welcome Home Celebration



In 2010, 11 concerts were held across the nation as part of National Salute to Veteran Patients, an annual recognition by the Department of Veterans Affairs to honor men and women who served this country. National Salute honors Veterans and promotes volunteerism at VA medical centers and clinics across the country.

A Valentines for Veterans Concert was held in Baltimore and featured a performance by Anthony and the Imperials. The concert also served as the fourth annual Welcome Home Celebration for returning Veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan in the Baltimore area.

In addition to honoring Veterans, the events provide important information about VA health care services and volunteer opportunities.

- **With patient-centered care in mind, develop volunteer assignments around concierge services.**
- **Develop tools for VAVS to have a standard look to the volunteer folder.**
- **Provide opportunities for volunteers to assist in Veterans Benefits Administration.**
- **Develop assignments to support Patient Aligned Care Teams(PACT).**

FY 2011 Priorities



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