



System Worth Saving Site Visit Report

- **Date:** November 16, 2020
- **Location:** Virtual Meeting (via Microsoft Teams)
- **Attendees:**
 - Rehab Committee Members*- Chairman Wilson Spence, Gary Munkholm, Daniel Tengwall, Lynn Lyons and Jim Finley
 - *Department Service Officer*- Jeremy Wolfsteller.
 - Sioux Falls VA Health Care System*- Director Lisa Simoneau and Public Affairs Officer Erin Bultje.

- **Purpose**

The American Legion Dept. Rehabilitation Committee is tasked with staying engaged with agencies that aid Minnesota veterans. The committee does this by conducting System Worth Saving Site Visits throughout the year. These locations include Sioux Falls, Fargo, St. Cloud and Minneapolis VA Health Care Systems, St. Paul Regional Offices, Minneapolis, Hastings, Luverne, Fergus Falls and Silver Bay Veterans Homes. Additional Site Visits are conducted at VA CBOC's, Vets Centers, and Minnesota nonprofits that serve veterans when the budget allows.



Sioux Falls VA Health Care System Overview

The Royal C. Johnson Veterans Memorial Hospital includes a 98-bed medical center and five Community Based Outpatient Clinics. It provides inpatient and outpatient care for Veterans in eastern South Dakota, southwestern Minnesota, and northwestern Iowa. Services include primary and specialty medical care, mental health services, and rehabilitation. Affiliated with The Sanford School of Medicine of the University of South Dakota, it supports residency programs in internal medicine, psychiatry, and pathology, plus a fellowship in geriatrics. In addition, the facility also has a pharmacy residency. The Dakotas Regional Office is co-located with the medical center.

In addition to our main facility, we offer services in five community-based outpatient clinics which are in: Aberdeen VA Clinic, Sioux City VA Clinic, Spirit Lake VA Clinic, Watertown CBOC & Wagner Outreach Clinic.





Currently both North and South Dakota have coronavirus outbreaks that far surpass the rest of America. South Dakota COVID-19 cases have a direct effect on Sioux Falls VA Healthcare staffing operations.

Meeting Minutes:

- **Panel Sizes:** VA Health Administration patient centered management module (PCMM) standard via Directive 1406 for primary care range 1,000-1,400. Recommended baseline for FTE Physician PACT is 1200. For mid- level FTE PA or NP, recommended range is 800-900. Panel sizes refer to the assigned veterans a PCP has per year.
 - o **Primary care** access in March 2020 prior to COVID-19 was 15 days and currently at 18 days. These numbers include telehealth virtual appointments. Some of these longer wait times can be contributed to pulling providers for in-patient COVID surge.
 - o **Mental Health** access in March 2020 was 5 days, and currently at 10 days. This includes virtual appointments.
 - o **Medical Services with Longer Wait Times:** Spinal Cord Injury 89 days, Rheumatology 75 days, GI Endoscopy 63 days, Genomic care 59 days, Optometry 46 days. Due to all these specialty care services wait times being over the MISSION ACT requirements, veterans have the option to receive care in the community although wait times may be longer.
- *A new expansion of Primary Care is expected to open sometime in 2021. By adding more PCP, this will help reduce veteran wait times.
- o **Community Contract Specialty Care Provider:** Sioux Falls primarily uses Sanford and Avera Hospital for Specialty Care services. Either services are not offered internally or under the MISSION Act Access Standards.
- **Panel Sizes:** VHA patient centered management module (PCMM) standard via Directive 1406 for primary care range 1,000-1,400. Recommended baseline for FTE Physician PACT is 1200. For mid-level FTE PA or NP, recommended range is 800-900. Panel sizes refer to the assigned veterans a PCP has per year.

**Panel sizes are especially important as they can contribute to physician burnout and or shortened appointment times.*

- o **Sioux Falls VA Health Care System:** MD's, NP, PA panels. Based on FTE, MD's can be up to 1400 and mid- level NP, PA's 800-900. Currently at the medical center MD's are at 89% capacity based on 1,000 patients. NP/PA's are at 93% capacity based on 900 patients.
- o **CBOC's:** These Clinics are above the recommended panel capacity; Sioux City NP/PA's are at 109%, Spirit Lake NP/PA's are at 125% capacity. Spirit Lake does not have MD's.





Meeting Minutes Continued:

- **VIP Staff Vacancies:** *Currently there is 5 VIP vacancies:*
 - o Chief of Care in the Community Retired (6 months)
 - o Chief Financial Officer promoted to Associate Director (8 months)
 - o Gastroenterologist (3 months)
 - o 2 oncologists (1+ year) competitive market
 - o Mental Health Psychologist/psychiatrist (1+year) challenging to recruit in this area.
- **Enrollment:** *SFVAHCS has approximately 66,000 veterans within their geographical market, although not all may be eligible for VA health Care.*
 - o 50+ counties in catchment area. 36 counties in South Dakota, 20 in Minnesota and 2 in Nebraska.
 - o Enrolled veterans: 34,392. Veterans enrolled that used the VA at least once in FY20, was 20,984. Total outpatient visits were 411,000.
 - o Enrollment consists of 2,138 females and 33,245 males.
- **Facility Demographics:** *Authorized and Operating Bed Capacity, daily census for all inpatient programs:*
 - o Operating Bed Capacity Breakdown: *14 CLC beds are currently used as a COVID-19 isolation area.*
 - Authorized: 98
 - Operating: 74
 - ICU: 6
 - Med/Surg: 28
 - Mental Health: 6
 - CLC: 34 (Halls & Walls Project currently underway that effects 24 CLC beds from being used). *Although the CLC is being remodeled and expanded in 2022.*
 - o FY20 Average Daily Census
 - Inpatient: 16
 - Mental Health: 3
 - CLC: 39





Meeting Minutes Continued:

- **Funding (last three fiscal years):** (Salaries, maintenance & repair funds, construction and unspecified) Because of COVID and VA's 2-year budget we can anticipate a budget issue in 2022.
 - FY18: \$237,078,624
 - FY19: \$246,318,068
 - FY20: \$297,927,067

- **Non-VA Community Care:** *FY20 Purchased care budget \$90,524,139*
 - Pre-authorized care (TriWest/Optum):
 - \$88,763,313
 - Millennium Bill Emergencies: **Notify VA with 72 hours of emergency by calling 844-724-7842 or emailing VHAEmergencyNotification@va.gov*
 - \$1,760,826

- **Women Veteran Program:** *FY20 631 used the Women's Clinic*
 - Women's Clinic Staffing
 - 1 FTE Women's Health PCP
 - 1 Part Time Gynecologist
 - There is dedicated mental health providers for the Women's Clinic
 - Women Veteran Events
 - Annual Women Veteran Conference
 - 2 Baby Shower Events
 - Open House Women's Health Clinic
 - Female Veteran Mural Project (I am not invisible campaign) National Recognition.

Department Rehabilitation Chairman: Wilson Spence III

Department Service Officer & Committee Secretary: Jeremy Wolfsteller

