

THE DENTON COUNTY VETERAN
DEDICATED TO INFORMING THE VETERANS OF DENTON COUNTY
OF ISSUES WHICH CONCERN THEM

*County Judge Scott Arme, Commissioner Cynthia White Pct. 1, Commissioner Sandy Jacobs Pct. 2,
Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell Pct. 3, Commissioner Jim Carter Pct. 4*

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VA Plans for the Future Health Care Needs of Veterans

<http://www.va.gov/pressrel/caresfs.htm>

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has taken a major step in its continuing effort to transform its health care system to meet the future needs of veterans. Over the last 10 years, VA has changed the way it delivers health care, shifting from a hospital-based system to an integrated system focusing on: prevention, early detection of disease, the promotion of better health care and easier access to care. Following on these efforts, in October 2000, VA initiated a new planning process called **CARES** -- Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services. Through **CARES**, VA is evaluating the health care services it provides, identifying the best ways to meet veterans' future health care needs, and realigning its medical facilities and services to meet those needs more effectively and more efficiently.

Why Was CARES Initiated?

CARES was initiated for several reasons. VA's health care system was designed and built decades ago when inpatient care was the primary focus, with long admissions for diagnosis and treatment. Changes in geographic concentrations of veterans and new methods of medical treatment also meant that VA's medical system was not providing care as efficiently as possible, and medical services were not always easily accessible to some veterans.

Like other health care providers, VA began to redesign a system to treat more veterans in community-based clinics closer to where they live. The majority of medical care is provided in outpatient clinics. Currently, VA operates more than 800 ambulatory care and community-based outpatient clinics.

A General Accounting Office (GAO) report also found that VA spends one of every four dollars on maintaining and operating unneeded, outdated medical buildings. GAO recommended, and VA agreed, that these funds could be better spent on treating more veterans in more locations.

In addition, VA needed a process to address the projected changes not only in the veteran population but also in their medical needs and determine the best way to meet those needs.

How Do Veterans Benefit?

Once the **CARES** process is completed, VA will be able to provide accessible care to more veterans in the most convenient and appropriate setting. Any savings that result from the **CARES** process will be put back into the community to provide higher quality care and more services to more veterans.

Outpatient and inpatient care will be enhanced, as well as special disability programs and long-term care. Changes will affect *only* the way VA delivers care -- health care services will *not* be reduced.

Changes recommended through the **CARES** process will not be immediate but will be carried out over a period of years.

VA will measure the progress of **CARES** through increased access to VA health care; the reduction in vacant, underused or excess space, and the success in matching health care services to veterans' locations and needs.

How Does the CARES Process Work?

types VA's medical system is divided into 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs). VA first conducted a pilot **CARES** study of one regional health care network, VISN 12, which covers the Chicago area, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

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CARES

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VA contracted with a national consulting firm, Booz-Allen & Hamilton (BAH), in November 2000. BAH collected and analyzed a variety of information on VISN 12, such as the projected number of veterans, the current location of VA medical facilities, their sizes and the of services offered. The contractor also assessed VA's ability to support its other missions, such as VA's contingency role as medical backup to Defense Department in the event of war and as a federal support organization during national and local disasters. BAH evaluated this information against criteria designed to ensure a system that best serves veterans today and in the future.

Nine options for delivering health care to veterans in VISN 12 were announced in June 2001. Following an extensive evaluation, three preliminary preferred options were selected, one for each market in VISN 12. VA then initiated a 60-day public comment period, seeking comments from veterans, veterans' service organizations, VA employees, Congress and other interested parties. These comments were reviewed, tabulated and evaluated by staff and discussed by the National CARES Steering Committee. The Steering Committee made a final recommendation to the Under Secretary for Health. The Under Secretary for Health then made his recommendation on the options to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, who made the final decision, which was announced in February 2002. A reassessment of the pilot study process was conducted. Subsequent CARES studies will be conducted throughout the VA health care system. This process is expected to be completed in two years.

Information on CARES is available on the CARES Web site: <http://www.va.gov/CARES>



<http://www.va.gov/volunteer/>

What is VAVS?

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) was officially founded in 1946 as a program to provide for our nation's veterans while they are cared for by VA health care facilities.

VAVS is the largest volunteer program in the Federal government. More than 350 national and community organizations support VAVS. Since 1946, VAVS volunteers have donated 495 million hours of service.

As VA has expanded its care of veteran patients into the community, volunteers have become involved. They assist veteran patients by augmenting staff in such settings as end of life care programs, foster care, community-based volunteer programs, hospital wards, nursing homes, and veteran outreach centers.

VAVS volunteers are special and generous people. They and their organizations annually contribute an estimated \$40 million in gifts and donations. In FY2000, all VAVS volunteers contributed a total of 13,190,568 hours of service to veterans.

Monetary estimates aside, it is impossible to calculate the amount of caring and sharing that these VAVS volunteers give to veteran patients. VAVS volunteers are a priceless asset to America's veterans and to VA.

How do I sign up to be a VAVS Volunteer?

Contact the Department of Veterans Affairs facility nearest you. Ask for Voluntary Service. Tell their staff of your interest in becoming a VAVS Volunteer. The staff will take care of everything else including your interview, orientation, and assignment! To find out which facility is nearest you, [click here](#).

Or click on the Volunteer NOW! button, <http://www.va.gov/volunteer/page.cfm?pg=1>, find your state and nearest city, fill out the email form with your name and contact information and click send. Someone from that office will then contact you to set up the initial interview. (continued on page 4)



Burial & Memorial Benefits

Veterans Benefits & Services

Headstones and Markers

New Law Concerning Eligibility for Headstones and Markers

www.va.cem.gov

On December 27, 2001, President Bush signed Public Law 107-103, the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001.

This law includes a provision that allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to furnish an appropriate marker for the graves of eligible veterans buried in private cemeteries, whose deaths occur on or after December 27, 2001, regardless of whether the grave is already marked with a non-government marker.

VA is now accepting applications for markers under the provisions of Public Law 107-103. [VA Form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker for Installation in a Private or State Veterans' Cemetery](#), must be submitted by the next of kin, funeral director or cemetery representative, along with a copy of the veteran's military discharge documents, to request a Government-provided headstone or marker. Do not send original documents, as they will not be returned. Until this form is revised, applicants should ignore references to "unmarked graves" and should note in Box 27, Remarks that this will be a second marker to mark a veteran's gravesite. This new provision will be codified at 38 U.S.C. § 2306(d).

Headstones and Markers

General Information

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) (VA) furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a Government headstone or [marker](#) to mark the [unmarked](#) grave of an eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world.

FOR LOCAL HELP

DENTON COUNTY
VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE
306 N. LOOP 288, SUITE 146
DENTON, TX 76209
(940)349-2950

MONDAY – FRIDAY 8:00 AM TO NOON
1:00 PM TO 5:00 PM

hank.scheible@dentoncounty.com

james.wheeler@dentoncounty.com

barbara.nance@dentoncounty.com

are provided for eligible spouses and dependents of veterans only when buried in a national, military post/base, or State veterans cemetery. Spouses and dependents buried in a private cemetery are not eligible for a Government-provided headstone or marker.

Flat markers in granite, marble, and bronze, and upright headstones in granite and marble are available.

The style chosen must be consistent with existing monuments at the place

of burial. Niche markers are also available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains.





<http://www.va.gov/volunteer/>

"I don't have the time to volunteer."

Many individuals have a desire to help but not the time. Because of work, family and other responsibilities people are unable to provide the needed assistance. There are other ways to help.

Many of our facilities need more than just your presence. Each VA inpatient facility needs assistance in providing personal care items to veterans. Others need monetary assistance to provide funding for coffee programs, inpatient televisions, off-station trips, patient welfare funds... the list goes on.

If you are unable to volunteer your time at a Veterans Affairs medical center but still want to help, contact a facility near you. By working with the Voluntary Service Program Manager at that facility you will be able to determine the most appropriate means by which to assist America's Heroes. Click here to find a city in Texas

<http://www.va.gov/volunteer/page.cfm?pg=51>

This will take you to a listing of cities that have a VA medical facility. When you click on the name of the city where you wish to help, an email box will open. Simply type in your name and telephone number, explain that you cannot give of your time, but you want to help in other ways. A representative from the Voluntary Service office will contact you with opportunities.



Volunteers enter their ZIP code on the VolunteerMatch web site (www.volunteermatch.org) to find volunteer opportunities posted by nonprofit and tax-exempt organizations. The ease and simplicity of the service have already resulted in hundreds of thousands of connections between volunteers and organizations, providing real-world community assistance nationwide. Working with thousands of local nonprofits, VolunteerMatch has become the web's largest database of volunteer opportunities.



The Foundation's mission is to engage more people more effectively in volunteer community service to help solve serious social problems.



Motivated by the urgent need to collect the stories and experiences of war veterans while they are still among us, the U.S. Congress created the Veterans History Project in October 2000. The legislation calls upon the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to collect and preserve audio- and video-taped oral histories, along with documents such as letters, diaries, maps, photographs, and home movies, of America's war veterans and those who served in support of them during World War I, World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars