



CARES COMMUNIQUÉ

AUGUST 26, 2002

VISIT THE CARES WEBSITES

NATIONAL: www.va.gov/CARES

NETWORK 2: www.va.gov/visns/visn02/cares

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Canandaigua VA Medical Center

400 Fort Hill Avenue, Canandaigua, NY 14424

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Kathleen Hider (585) 241-2037

More Accessible, Quality Care for Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is continuing its efforts to improve the quality and delivery of health care to America's veterans. The VA's health care system was designed and built decades ago when inpatient care was the primary focus. Today, health care is delivered in an outpatient setting and focused on prevention. New technologies help provide care efficiently and effectively in new locations.

If the VA is to meet the future health care needs of veterans - especially its aging veteran population, resources will need to be directed where they are most needed. This will enable the VA to treat more veterans at convenient points of care, as well as meet the challenges of tightening budgets and increasing health care costs.

In an effort to insure that this happens, the VA is nationally implementing its Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) planning process.

What is CARES?

CARES is a data driven process that looks at veteran demographics - where veterans are living, their age, income, gaps and duplication of services being provided at VAs, and access points to care. Reviewing unused space and investing in additional capital is also part of the data being reviewed. (A 1999 General Accounting Office report indicated that the Department of Veterans Affairs spent one million dollars per day maintaining buildings which were outdated and under utilized.)

Through the CARES process, the VA will be able to put health care workers and financial resources where veterans need it most and not in bricks and mortar.

What stage of the CARES process are we in now?

Presently, the VA is reviewing and analyzing data from each of its Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISNS) also known as Networks and developing marketing initiatives for each market area. In October 2002, the VA will distribute marketing initiatives so that each Network can develop solutions to them. This/these initiatives will address issues such as: inadequate access, excess capacity, what is needed to meet projected outpatient care needs, and gaps or duplication in services.

How is CARES rolling out in Upstate New York?

The VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York, which consists of the Albany, Syracuse, Bath, Canandaigua and the VA Western New York Healthcare System (Buffalo and Batavia) facilities have defined four market areas: Eastern, Central, Finger Lakes/Southern Tier and Western markets (see map on back). We have completed a capital assessment of building space by facility and we are currently doing an analysis of need, which is necessary in identifying planning initiatives.

How will stakeholders be kept informed?

It is vital that we solicit comments and suggestions throughout the CARES process. Our Network will be keeping you informed and up-to-date on the CARES process by using town meetings, letters, newsletters, the internet, and the media to communicate new developments and solicit your input in the CARES process.

continued on back

More Accessible, Quality Care for Veterans continued

CARES will positively affect the way VA delivers care - health care services will be enhanced not reduced.

Reducing vacant, underused and excess space and matching health care services to veterans' demographics and needs will insure more veterans will get care that is accessible, appropriate and convenient.

CARES Timetable

June 2002	CARES roll-out begins Networks establish market segments
July - August 2002	Networks roll-up data on space, new care sites
September 2002	VA Central Office identifies planning initiatives based on data
October 2002	VA Central Office distributes planning initiatives to the Networks
January 2003	Networks submit completed solutions to marketing initiatives
February 2003	VA Central Office reviews all plans
March/April 2003	All drafted plans are published CARES Commission reviews
April 2003	Public comment period begins
June 2003	Commission completes hearings
August 2003	Recommendations to Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs

Upstate New York Market Segments

Network 2 has been divided into four Market Segments (illustrated in the New York State map at right). Medical centers and numerous outpatient clinics are located within each segment. The Western Market Segment contains the Buffalo and Batavia facilities, the Finger Lakes/Southern Tier market has the Bath VA Medical Center (VAMC) and Canandaigua VAMC, the Central Market Segment has the Syracuse VAMC, and the East market contains the Stratton VAMC at Albany.

