



VA Office of Rural Health (ORH) Overview

David Huffman, MS
Associate Director
Tomah VA Medical Center



VA Defining
HEALTH **EXCELLENCE**
CARE in the 21st Century

About Rural Veterans



- ▣ There are approximately 6.1 million Veterans residing in rural areas (defined by US census).
- ▣ Currently there are 3.4 million rural Veterans enrolled in the VA system. This represents 41% of the total enrolled Veteran population.
- ▣ Men and women from rural and highly rural areas make up a disproportionate share of service members and comprise about 39% of the enrolled Veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) and Operation New Dawn (OND); many of these soldiers are returning to their rural communities.

More About Rural Veterans...

- Enrollment of rural Veterans into the VA health care system has increased 15% since 2006
- The geographic regions with the largest rural Veteran enrollment into the VA health care system include almost the entire South Eastern and South Central United States as well as the Upper Midwest.
- Nearly half of enrolled rural Veterans are between the ages of 55 and 74. Approximately 26% are 75 years of age or older. As a group, they are older than their urban counterparts.



Rural Veteran Health Care Needs



- Rural Veterans report lower health-related quality of life scores and they experience a higher prevalence of physical illness than their urban counterparts.
 - Research indicates that about 1 in every 4 or 5 Veterans will return from war with some serious mental illness.
 - Many Veterans have unique health conditions associated with combat including mild Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and amputation.
-
- The five most common diagnosis in rural Veterans seen as an outpatient include:
 - Hypertension
 - Diabetes Type II
 - Hyperlipidemia
 - PTSD
 - Depressive Disorder

VISN 12 – VA Great Lakes Health Care System

- The VA Great Lakes Health Care Network (VISN 12) - Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Northwest Indiana and one county in Southeast Minnesota
 - Covers 73,000 square miles

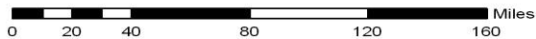
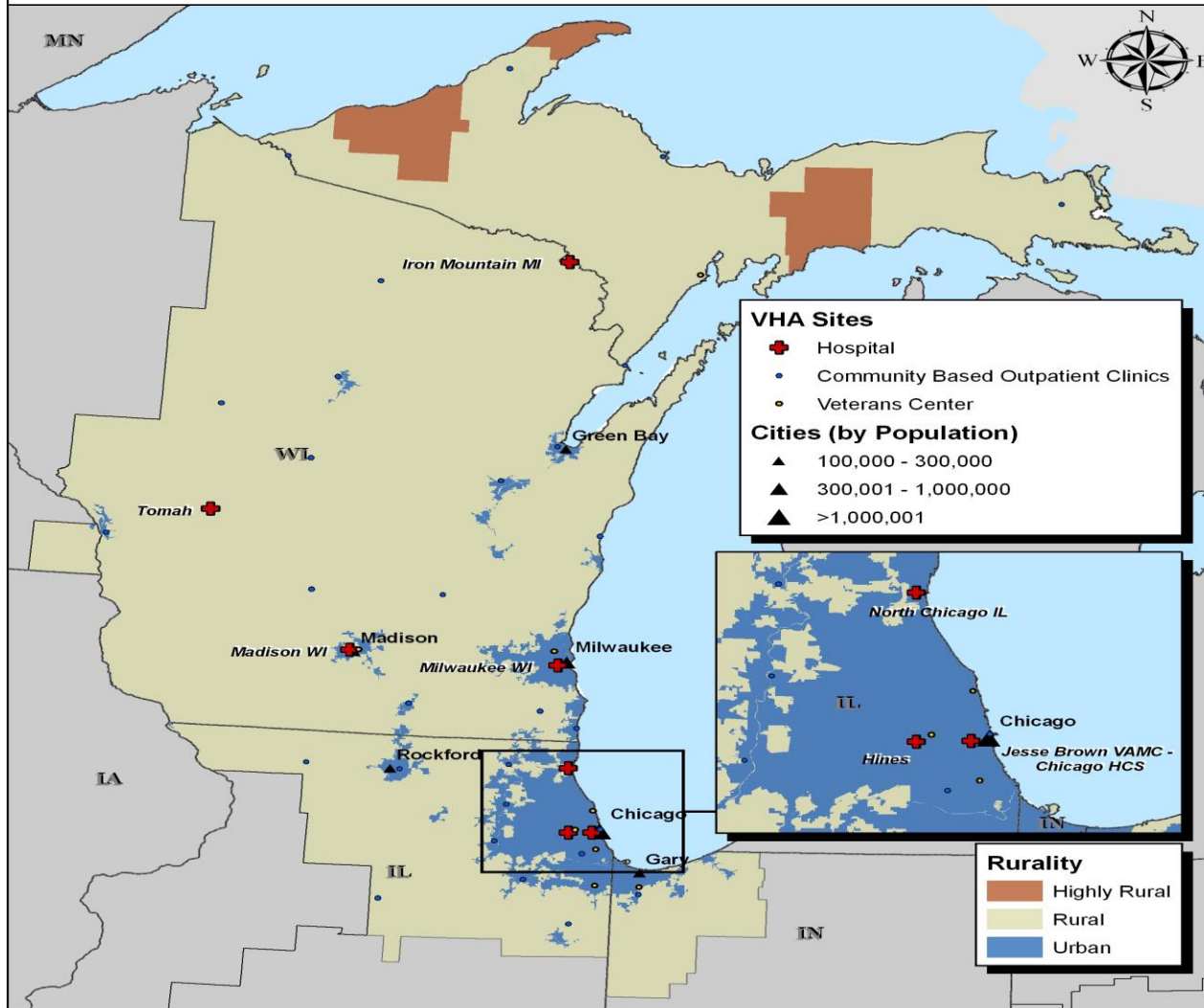
Facilities	Number
Health Care Systems	7
Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC)	32
Outreach Clinics	1
Vet Centers	12

- Currently Veteran population is 951,000
 - Most of the Veteran population concentrated in the Chicago-Milwaukee area
 - The entire Michigan Upper Peninsula and northwestern Wisconsin is considered rural or highly rural.



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VISN 12: VA Great Lakes Health Care System - Rurality



Veteran Demographics

Veteran Categories (does not include unknowns)	Enrollees		Users	
	Urban	Rural (R+HR)	Urban	Rural (R+HR)
Total	244,690	109,833	183,558	79,555
Male	230,530	104,737	157,366	74,364
Female	14,143	5,076	13,080	4,686
Age				
<45	43,992	15,391	42,460	8,835
45-64	76,675	32,596	57,250	24,820
65-84	94,687	50,715	66,107	38,797
85+	29,316	11,111	17,703	7,092
Priority Status				
P1-P6	161,835	72,378	109,203	52,797
P7-P8	82,855	37,284	47,029	24,835

VA Office of Rural Health (ORH) Mission

To improve access and quality of care for enrolled rural and highly rural Veterans by developing evidence-based policies and innovative practices to support their unique needs.

- Collaborate with VA program offices, other Federal and state partners, and rural health community organizations to build partnerships.
- Engage in studies and analyses and share best practices in rural health.
- Since 2009, VA ORH has funded over \$1 billion for initiatives across VA to improve services to rural Veterans including:
 - 51 new CBOCs
 - 40 Outreach clinics
 - Adding specialty care to rural clinics ie: physical therapy, audiology, podiatry, pharmacy
 - Significantly increasing VA's telehealth program
 - 8 new transportation programs including providing Tomah with NAs to accompany Veterans
 - Training for rural providers

VISN 12 funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 201 & 2014

In FY 2013 and 2014, ORH approved funding for 35 projects for a total of \$9 million.

- Expansion of Home Based Primary Care in Tomah's Rural Areas
- Addition of Podiatry services at Tomah's Rural Clinics
- Nursing Assistants for Tomah's VTS Program
- Tele-specialty care via Madison and Milwaukee for rural Veterans across Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Illinois and Indiana
- Implementing Transitional Care via Madison for Tomah and Iron Mountain VAMCs

Services Offered in Rural WI VA Facilities

- Tomah VA Medical Center (rural medical center)
 - Dental
 - Imagine
 - PTSD
 - Mental Health
 - Primary Care/Women's Health
 - Audiology/Speech Pathology
 - PT/KT/OT
 - Optometry
 - Podiatry
- Clark County CBOC
 - Mental Health
 - PTSD
 - Primary Care/Women's Health
- Wisconsin Rapids CBOC
 - Mental Health
 - PTSD
 - Pharmacy
 - Primary Care/Women's Health
 - Audiology
 - Physical Therapy
 - Optometry

Services Offered in Rural WI VA Facilities

- Baraboo CBOC (Madison VA)
 - Mental Health
 - PTSD
 - Primary Care/Women's Health
- Beaver Dam CBOC (Madison VA)
 - Mental Health
 - PTSD
 - Primary Care/Women's Health
 - Audiology
- Rhinelander CBOC (Iron Mountain VA)
 - Mental Health
 - PTSD
 - Primary Care/Women's Health
 - Pharmacy

Rural Health Points of Contact

Mary Kay Campbell

VISN 12 Rural Health
Consultant

Iron Mountain VAMC

906-774-3300 ext. 32055

Marykay.campbell@va.gov

Toby Lane

Administrative Assistant to
Associate Director

Tomah VA Medical Center

608-372-3971 ext. 61129

Toby.lane2@va.gov