

**CARES Commission
Site Visit Report**

**VISN 20 VA Northwest Health Network
White City, Oregon**

Date of Visit: October 3, 2003

Sites Visited:

VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics, White City, Oregon

CARES Commissioners/Staff in Attendance:

Commissioner John Vogel
Commissioner Richard McCormick
Commission Staff Member Ron Bednarz
Commission Staff Member Katy McBride
Commission Staff Member Carolyn Adams

Overview of Visit:

The Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinic (SORCC) provides residential comprehensive bio-psycho-social rehabilitation services for veterans referred from throughout the Network and from out of network referrals. A variety of residential programs are offered, including programs for veterans with substance abuse, homelessness, and serious mental illness. Short term rehabilitation and reentry into the community are stressed. Due to its location, the facility has worked to develop a robust system for referral of patients into the programs and for connecting them to ongoing outpatient care when they return to their home city.

Additionally an active outpatient program providing primary care and mental health services is in place for veterans living within the Medford/White City catchment area. The SORCC has one CBOC located in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

Commissioners were provided with a tour of the campus and taken through the Primary Care Clinics, the Rehab Center Dormitories, and the Experiential Learning Program. This program consists of unique behavioral programs designed to enhance self esteem and personal competence, including a rope climbing course.

While on the tour, facility management stressed that work therapy programs are utilized to offset the cost of maintaining the large facility.

The facility has many sharing agreements, including one whereby the private community utilizes the golf course and proceeds are deposited in the General Post Fund. Additionally, various community groups use the baseball field.

Many buildings do not meet earthquake safety standards. The VISN has a plan to remodel certain building to bring them up to standard and to demolish others.

A tour of the Camp White Historical Association Museum, located in one of the facility buildings, was also provided.

Names and Titles of Attendees:

Leslie Burger, MD, Network, Director
James Tuchs Schmidt, MD, Director VA SORCC
Max E. McIntosh, PhD, MBA, Deputy Medical Center Director, VA SORCC
Andrew H. Mebane, MD, Chief of Staff, VA SO"RCC
Karen Allen, MSN, CNA, Assoc. Director, Patient/Nursing Services, VA SORCC
Steve Broskey, Chief, Facilities Management Service, VA SORCC
Carol Bogedain, MS, RD, CPHQ, Exec. Asst. for Quality Management
Liz Dye, President, AFGE Local 1089, VA SORCC
Troy Ferguson, Congressional Aide to Congressman Greg Walden
Jean Allen, Planner, VISN 20
Megan Streight, Health Systems Specialist, VISN 20

Summary of Meeting:

The meeting focused on the role of the rehab center and issues related to domiciliary care. Dr. Burger has touted this model as something that would have value across the entire VA system in treating chronic homelessness in veterans. The rehab program is the only long-term bio-psycho-social rehabilitation facility west of the Rockies. The VISN leadership stressed that the center concentrates on outcomes. After a six month follow-up the center documented the following:

- 506% reduction in days incarcerated
- 51% increase in days employed

- 488% reduction in drink/drug days
- 93% reduction in medical hospital days
- 163% reduction in Psych hospital days

The VISN leadership stressed that dividing the beds and placing them at other facilities in the Network decrease the quality of care provided, since the staff at SORCC have developed unique programs that are effective.

A complete briefing packet was provided to the Commissioners and is attached to this report

Open Items/Question/Follow-up:

None

- Attachment: VA SORCC Documents Binder