

WALLA WALLA

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Director, VISN 20
Testimony before the VA CARES Commission
Friday, September 26, 2003

MONDAY, SEPT 29, 2003

Members of the CARES Commission, on behalf of the Directors seated before you, the 7,900 employees they represent, and the more than 190,000 veterans they serve, welcome to the Pacific Northwest, and the VA Northwest Network, VISN 20. We are pleased to have the opportunity to speak with you this morning. Please allow me to introduce the Directors and Deputy Directors from our 8 facilities: Mr. Tim Williams, Director of the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, that includes both the Seattle and American Lake Divisions, and the VA Medical Center in Walla Walla, WA; Mr. Bruce Stewart, Deputy Director for Walla Walla; Mr. Joe Manley, Director, Spokane VA Medical Center; Mr. Alex Spector, Director, Anchorage, AK, VA Medical Center; Mr. Wayne Tippetts, Director, Boise VA Medical Center; Dr. Jim Tuchs Schmidt, Director, Portland VA Medical Center that includes the Vancouver, WA, division, and the Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics in White City, OR; Dr. Max McIntosh, Deputy Director, at the Rehabilitation Center in White City; and Mr. George Marnell, Director, Roseburg VA Health Care System.

Outline for Presentation

In my remarks this morning, I will:

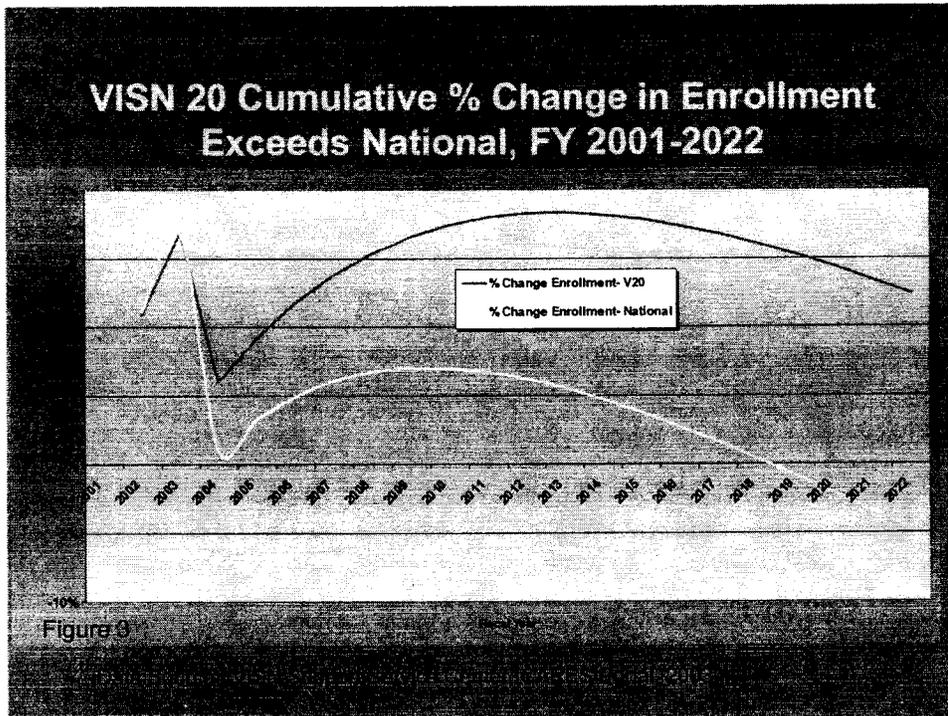
- briefly describe the Northwest Network, and our 5 markets,
- briefly mention the CARES projections,
- discuss the process that was employed in developing the market plans,
- and present to you our recommendations and initiatives.

Introduction to VISN 20

VISN 20 is comprised of the states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and much of Idaho, and serves some patients from northern California and western Montana. With the geographic expanse of our nation's 49th state, our network encompasses 23% of the land mass of the United States (figure 1).

of veterans we serve continues to grow in our mostly rural network, we will continue to be challenged with how best to provide care.

I would like to point out a few other characteristics of our demographics. One is that, while nationwide enrollment for veterans is projected to decrease by 2022, VISN 20 enrollment, after a slight decrease in FY04, will increase such that in 2022, it will be significantly higher than currently (figure 3).



Second, is that our veterans are somewhat younger, i.e., approximately 40% of those veterans we are currently serving are age 65 and older.