

Lebanon VAMC

N E W S L E T T E R



MEDICAL UPDATE

Seeing is Believing...

JANIS M. ALBUQUERQUE
Public Affairs Specialist

OPTOMETRY

Stop by the Lebanon VA Medical Center (LebanonVAMC) Optometry Clinic on any day and it's easy to see how busy they are. On average, the LebanonVAMC eye clinic, along with its ancillary departments of low vision and ophthalmology, treat close to 20,000 patients a year. But the Lebanon optometry clinic, and its satellite clinics in Lancaster, Cumberland County, and York, do more than just provide—and in some cases, repair—prescription eyewear; they also screen for whole-eye health.

At all locations, the optometrists administer “routine eye exams,” which are dilated, in-depth exams for a spectrum of eye and vision disorders including cataracts and glaucoma, low vision, macular degeneration, diabetes-related vision impairment, and ocular prosthetics. The eye clinics at these facilities are the first line of defense for many Veteran’s vision care. And now, at the new Cumberland County VA Clinic, Veterans can receive treatment for early stages of glaucoma—once only available at the medical center.

“The great thing about VA, is that the patients get their medication for eye diseases,” said Rebecca Sterner, OD, Chief of Optometry at Lebanon VA Medical Center and its outpatient clinics. “So many patients who are not cared for by VA simply cannot afford to get their medications for potentially blinding eye diseases.”

When she started at LebanonVAMC in 1989, only Veterans that were 50% or more service-connected, and prisoner’s of war, could get their eyeglasses from VA. Now all Veterans have access to the eye clinics and, if they need them, are eligible for eyeglasses—most without any fees. And with the ability to schedule appointments without a referral from their primary care physician, Veterans have more flexibility and control over their own eye health.

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Lebanon VAMC is proud to provide quality care to Veterans at 7 locations in South Central PA.

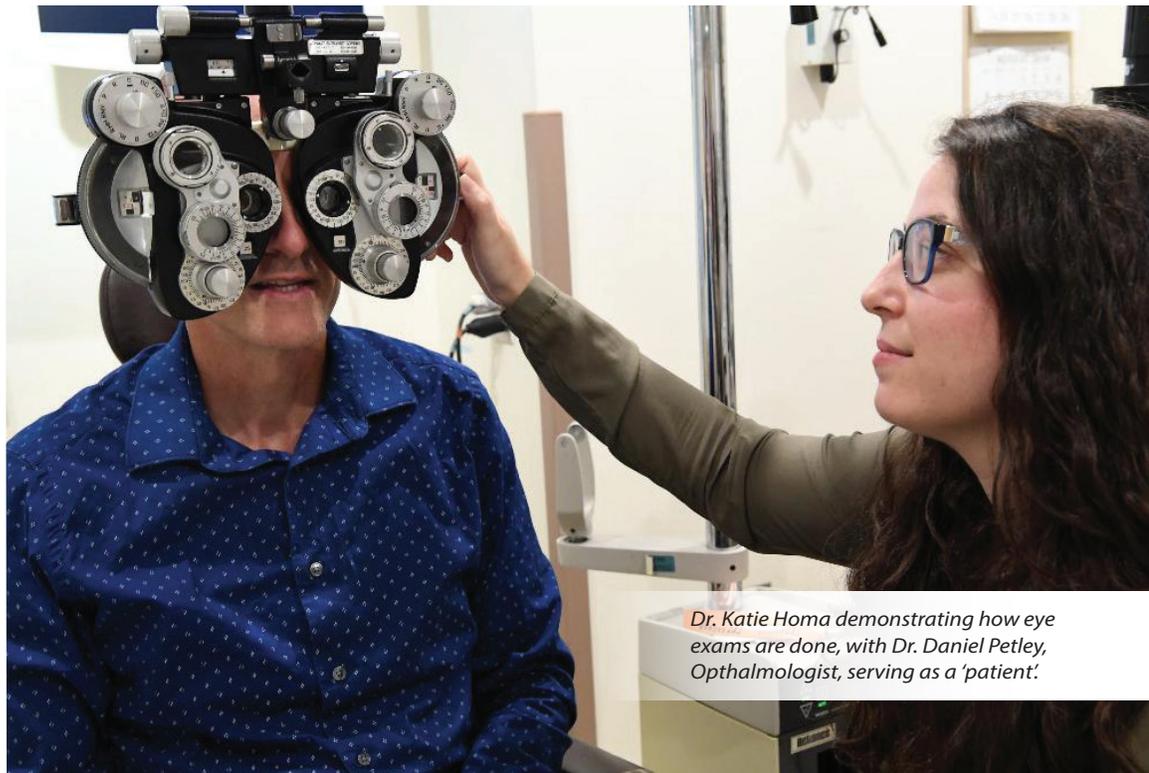
Choose VA



VA

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Lebanon VA Medical Center



Dr. Katie Homa demonstrating how eye exams are done, with Dr. Daniel Petley, Ophthalmologist, serving as a 'patient'.

From the desk of the director...

Dear Veterans, Advocates, and Fellow Employees,



There are three critical indicators of a great health care system: quality of care, access to care and satisfaction with care. VHA is the only health care system to publicly share facility quality of care, access to care and satisfaction with care results. VHA publishes these results regularly on the internet, on social media, in printed news and compares our outcomes to measures held in common with non-VA health care. Veterans who receive their health care from the Lebanon VA Medical Center and/or our community clinics traditionally rate our facility among VA's best. Compared to private sector, the quality of outpatient care was better in 19 of 19 clinical measures and Veterans rate the overall satisfaction of inpatient care in the top 10% nationally. This year Lebanon VA was recognized as a 5 STAR hospital for quality and 5 STAR overall performance in our Community Living Centers. It's important to understand that results will change from time to time, which is expected, as we continuously strive to improve through the extraordinary efforts of our dedicated and compassionate staff.

This edition of our newsletter is about extending the quality of our care by opening new doors of access to care as we modernize and innovate. Our vision is to provide Veterans more avenues to receive the high-quality care they have come to appreciate and expect. As you turn the pages, you will learn about the tremendous work our audiology and optometry services have made to achieve direct scheduling, no consult needed, serving more than 30,000 Veterans a year – helping them to hear and see their families better and to enjoy a richer and fuller life. New VA apps for smart phones are transforming care and range from text messaging care teams, canceling appointments to the next generation of VA Video Connect (VVC). VVC allows Veterans to have care appointments with their VA providers from home, work or virtually anywhere without having to travel to the medical center or a community clinic. Veterans simply download an app from the VA app store. VA provider teams can send a link for an agreed upon day and time. In just 3 months of being introduced, over 26% of our providers made use of VVC. You will read about the new community clinics which opened in Schuylkill and Cumberland Counties improving access to care and services where Veterans live. Speeding access to care, all primary care and mental health providers have appointments set aside for same day access, for when Veterans need rapid care.

There are also stories about new construction as we modernize and build capacity for future Veterans' care including a state-of-the-art intensive care unit, an acute inpatient unit, an Infusion Suite and enhanced Radiology services. Learn how our trusted volunteers compassionately support our Veterans and work behind the scenes allowing VA employees to focus on other care-giving tasks.

I am proud of the exceptional community support, collaborative partnerships that help care for Veterans and the tremendous efforts of our employees who sustain such high levels of clinical excellence and customer service. Our Veterans deserve the best care we can offer.

Sincerely,
Robert W. Callahan, Jr.
Director and CEO

These magnets are being provided to all the Lebanon VA Medical Center Veterans.

If you have not received yours, please stop by the Business Office in the lobby of building 17 and pick one up.

Lebanon VA Medical Center

Not feeling well and need to talk with a clinical care team or have a question related to your care, call
717-228-6041 or 1-800-409-8771 press 3

Make a routine appointment, change or cancel a scheduled appointment, call
717-272-6621 est. 5105 or 1-800-409-8771 press 2



Choose VA

Choose VA
Lebanon VA Medical Center
Serving Veterans Since 1947

LEBANON VA MEDICAL CENTER LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Robert W. Callahan, Jr.
Director

Linda S. Umberger, RN
Executive Assistant to the Director

Jeffrey A. Beiler II
Associate Director

Margaret G. Wilson, MSN, RN
Associate Director for Patient Care Services

Stuart A. Roop, MD, FCCP
Chief of Staff

Laine Hellein, MSN, RN
Director of Quality Management

Seeing is Believing... *(Optometry continued from page 1)*

Dr. Sterner leads a team of four staff optometrists, one optometry resident, and three-to-five optometry students. The optometrists also rotate through the low-vision (VISOR) clinic. The VA Clinics have one (Lancaster and York) or two (Cumberland Co.) optometrists on staff, and, currently, two fee-basis optometrists rotate through the VA Clinics as needed. (For VA Clinics without eye clinics, Veterans must travel to LebanonVAMC or a VA Clinic that offers optometry care.)

Ophthalmology is a partner to optometry. LebanonVAMC has a contract with the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center to provide it, not only with a technician, but also the Chief of Ophthalmology, and one additional attending ophthalmologist, with a different subspecialty each day—neuro-ophthalmology, oculoplastics, glaucoma, and cornea.

The LebanonVAMC does do ocular surgery, cataracts and some ocularplastic procedures. When a patient has cataract surgery, their cloudy lens is removed and replaced with a clear, artificial lens or ‘implant’. There are different types of implants, and when appropriate, VA does use implants for astigmatism and presbyopia.

With so many Veterans requiring advanced eye-care, laser procedures are reserved for macular edema, diabetic retinopathy, and certain cases of glaucoma.

The low vision clinic, or VISOR (Visual Impairment Services Outpatient Rehabilitation) is for Veterans who have severely deteriorated vision or are legally blind, and require rehabilitation to

improve their quality of life. Comprehensive vision rehabilitation services are available as an outpatient service, with some services also available at the VA Clinics and occasionally in the home.

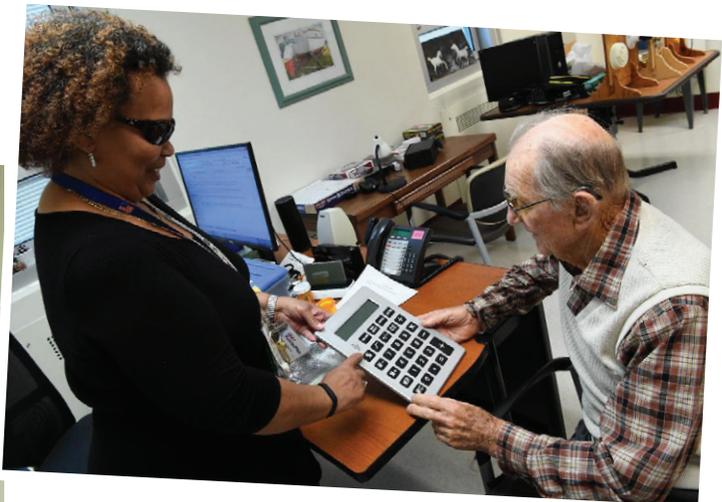
Vision rehabilitation is the process of learning new skills and adaptive techniques, to overcome the challenges caused by vision loss. The VISOR Team provides training and equipment to help the Veteran read again, manage things around the home, and safely travel within their home or community. The VISOR Team is committed to helping each veteran reach his/her potential in living as independently as possible. The VISOR Program also offers a 9 day residential vision rehabilitation program at the Lebanon VAMC for Veterans who are legally blind or severely visually impaired.

The optometry doctors and vision staff at Lebanon VAMC do everything in their power to keep the Veteran active and engaged through sight. Do not wait to get your eyes checked, make an appointment today. It could be the difference between watching the sunrise or seeing it slowly set. Take care of your eye health.

To make an appointment for a routine eye exam, please call (717) 272-6621 x6173; for VISOR, please call (717) 272-6621 ext. 4940.



Ralph Dutton practices walking with his guide stick.



WWII Veteran Warner Schlaupitz engaging in occupational therapy under supervision of VA Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Wanda Grover.



Veteran Curtis Garl using the enlarged image program.

Dr. Edwin J. Winner, Audiologist, with patient, Gene Mengle, testing new hearing aids.



...Hearing is Divine

JANIS M. ALBUQUERQUE
Public Affairs Specialist

AUDIOLOGY & SPEECH PATHOLOGY

Of all the injuries, aggravations, complaints, and ailments our Service men and women come home with after their years in uniform, hearing loss remains the number one service-connected disability afflicting them. Whether it's from firing canons in an artillery battery or rifles on the qualification range, fighter jets on aircraft carriers or a giant Hercules lifting off the tarmac, or simply just the noise of war, there's no getting around it—being in the military is hard on the ears. Tinnitus, No. 1, and general hearing loss, No. 2, are the most common service-connected conditions affecting Veterans' hearing, but many other conditions exist as well.

When a Veteran makes an appointment to get his or her hearing checked, it's a serious quality of life issue that needs to be addressed quickly. Lebanon VA Medical Center has an exceptional audiology/speech pathology department to meet those needs. With a full-time staff of eight audiologists (and one part-time audiologist), two speech pathologists, and two hearing aid technicians, these miracle workers of sound and speech treat over 10,000 Veterans a year.

The Audiology and Speech Pathology clinic provides diagnostic and rehabilitative services to Veterans demonstrating speech, language, voice, cognition, swallowing, tinnitus, or hearing disorders. Different from other medical departments, where medication is often prescribed—or surgery is performed—as a means to prevent, diminish, or repair health and body, Audiology and Speech Pathology use high-tech equipment and physical rehabilitation in its treatment practices.



Dr. Edwin Winner, Audiologist, examining with patient Gene Mengle's ears prior to be fitted for hearing aids.

The LebanonVAMC Audiology Clinic follows the VA Progressive Tinnitus Management program, and conducts balance testing—both of which begin with a comprehensive audiological evaluation. Veterans with tinnitus or balance issues are encouraged to contact the clinic for an evaluation.

Hearing aids are the most prescribed treatment for the type of hearing issues suffered by Veterans, both with and without service-connected hearing loss. Approximately 250 Veterans at LebanonVAMC are fitted for them each quarter, and of that number, 30 percent receive their devices within 20 days of order.

The devices—which are at no cost to the Veteran—are state-of-the-art, top-of-the-line models for Veterans. In addition, the clinic offers a walk-in service for hearing aid repairs, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm. It's no wonder that the LebanonVAMC Audiology department's hearing aid satisfaction level is better than the national average, and why they routinely receive letters of appreciation from their Veteran patients.

The LebanonVAMC Speech Pathologists treat upwards of 1,300 Veterans a year, which amounts to six-to-eight patients

Dr. Bridget McNeil creating ear molds for new hearing aids for Ronald Kramlich.



a day, many of whom are service-connected. Veterans who have communication, swallowing, or voice problems are referred to Speech Pathology by their primary care physicians, but can often be referred to or from the audiologists if there are overlapping issues.

Speech and swallowing disorders can arise from a variety of causes including stroke, brain or spinal cord injury, Parkinson's disease, and head and neck cancer. The most common disorder treated by our Speech Pathologists is dysphagia (difficulty swallowing). They conduct video fluoroscopic swallowing studies and develop individualized treatment plans. Depending on the type of dysphagia and the symptoms, treatment can include exercises to strengthen the muscles, sensory stimulation to increase muscle and nerve involvement, neuromuscular electrical stimulation and education/compensatory training.

One last point to make about the Lebanon VAMC's outstanding Audiology and Speech Pathology department is that most appointments can be scheduled by the Veteran without a referral from a primary care physician. That means that when a Veteran is having difficulty hearing, or another audio-related concern, they can schedule an appointment on their own. The exception to this policy is with Speech Pathology; for that clinic, one must obtain a referral before an appointment can be scheduled.

So, when the days of noise and thunder have long past and the peaceful sounds of birds and the wind in the trees are difficult to hear; when telling your stories or simply enjoying a meal has become too troublesome, do not hesitate to get help. Call the Lebanon VA Medical Center's Audiology Department and get set up for a hearing test, or contact your primary care provider to find out if you need to see a Speech Pathologist. Doing so will only give you more opportunity to live your best life, and the chance to take care of your whole self.

To make an appointment for a hearing test or other audiology concern, please call (717) 272-6621 ext. 4582.



Veteran James Cohen working with Speech Pathologist Tammy McKissick.



The Lebanon VA Medical Center's Audiology and Speech Pathology Department received the 2018 "Best of Lebanon" award for outstanding hearing aid and clinic services.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE UPDATE

Volunteers Behind the Scenes

JEREMY K. FEES
Voluntary Service, Chief

Volunteers play a key role in providing services to our Veterans. They can be seen at the information desk in Building 17 assisting people with directions, appointment times and just about any other question a Veteran may have. While these volunteers are highly visible, there are many others who work behind the scenes, completing tasks and working for Veterans.

COMFORT ITEM VOLUNTEERS:

Comfort items are necessities that Veterans use daily. In order to get the comfort items to Veteran patients, we have volunteers like Mary Bostdorf and her son, Sonny, who work in the comfort item room in building



Mary Bostdorf and her son, Sonny

18. Nursing staff will complete order sheets which Mary and Sonny use to fill and deliver items to the floors. They also sort the comfort item donations that are received in the Voluntary Service office.

Comfort items are also offered in the Veterans Activity Center every Tuesday from 8am -12pm. Ann Levorgood is there to greet the outpatient Veterans that have a need for the comfort items. Ann is responsible for handing out items such as toothpaste, socks, body wash, shampoo, etc., and making sure that the items are replenished for the following week.



Ann Levorgood

LAB/HISTOLOGY RUNNERS:

The lab runners are responsible for transporting specimens from the outpatient laboratory draw area to inpatient specimen lab. Our lab runners clock many steps during a 4 hour shift as they transport samples every 30 minutes. They also help the Veterans to check in at the draw area and give directions to their next destination.

Histology runners are located in Building 1 and travel to various floors in Building 17 and 18 to pick up and then transport specimens from the holding area back to the histology lab. These Volunteers also clock many steps as they pick up 4 times a day and each round takes 40-50 minutes to complete.



Juche Jackson

QUALITY MANAGEMENT VOLUNTEER:



Willie Kinsler

With flu season approaching, volunteer Willie Kinsler has a very important job in quality management. On a weekly basis, Willie goes to all of the hygiene stations in the facility and stocks tissues and masks. He also helps to sort the supply closets and lets staff know when to order more supplies.

FACILITIES & ENGINEERING UPDATE

Building the Future Today

THADDEUS S. KOCUBA
Facility Manager, Engineering Service

Projects continue to progress, and exciting new projects are nearing design!



The new Intensive Care Unit (ICU) on Building 104 is moving along very quickly. It is all enclosed, and drywall is being hung on the inside. The new ICU will feature 13 private rooms. It is expected to be occupied early 2019.



The new Radiology Addition is completed. The new X-ray machines are in the process of installation and the building is open for business!



A new bed unit is nearing completion in Building 1. It will be used for a “swing” unit, so that other bed units can be renovated within the hospital. It contains 16 private bedrooms, each with its own bathroom. The first unit to occupy the space will be the 1-2A Medical/Surgical area. The area is expected to be occupied 2018/2019.



The work at the YMCA, Building 24, continues to progress. The new footing for the hydrotherapy pool is installed, and the windows are being replaced in the gymnasium. The work is expected to be complete late 2019.

The Lebanon VA has been approved to start three new exciting designs!

The three are:

- A New Medical/Surgical Bed unit in Building 104 (\$8 Million)
- A stand-alone Community Living Center (\$16 Million)
- A stand-alone Primary Care/Behavioral Health Outpatient Building (\$9 Million)

Get Connected!

Veterans can now communicate with their providers via the internet and a smart device

Lebanon VA Medical Center and its community clinics now have the capability to connect securely with their patients via the internet, saving Veterans time and additional resources for a face-to-face appointment with their providers.

VA Video Connect (VVC) is a telehealth program that allows patients to communicate with their health care providers from their home or elsewhere, using a smart device—a smart phone, tablet, or computer—and an internet connection, without having to travel to the VA medical center or a community clinic to meet with their medical provider. This saves the Veteran travel time and costs, and allows the doctor to remain more closely involved in the patient's treatment and care plan.

VVC has very specific and intended uses—not all medical specialties or appointments are applicable to this service. It is primarily intended for non-emergency care and informational follow-ups regarding medication, certain medical and surgical procedures, self-care, for example at-home blood pressure checks, mental health, and questions or concerns the patient may have to determine if a face-to-face appointment is ultimately required. Like other patient-provider consultations, the video appointment must be scheduled in advance. However, these virtual appointments can be scheduled more quickly than traditional appointments, and at the behest of the provider. Veterans who wish to use VVC must first download a free app from the VA App Store at <https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>.

Lebanon VA Medical Center will implement the VVC program incrementally. All primary care and mental health providers will be trained by the end of 2019. Additionally, all new Veteran patients will be made aware of the service when they begin receiving care. Current patients will be encouraged to participate by their health care teams. Implementation of VVC has already begun. Various VA staff and Veterans are already using the system.



Enrollment & Eligibility Questions?

CALL 717-228-6000 TO SPEAK TO ONE OF OUR ENROLLMENT SPECIALISTS

The Best Care Anywhere... The Best Employees Anywhere.
Quality care at 7 locations in South Central PA.



Lebanon VA Medical Center

1700 South Lincoln Avenue
Lebanon, Pennsylvania 17042

717-272-6621 • 1-800-409-8771

www.lebanon.va.gov

Introducing Direct Access to MOVE!

Beginning October 1, 2018, Veterans enrolled for care at Lebanon or our community clinics will not need a consult to participate in MOVE! Weight Management.

MOVE! Orientation class is required prior to enrollment in MOVE! Group clinic. Scheduling for MOVE! Orientation class will be direct access, and may be scheduled with any Medical Support Assistant or by calling the scheduling line. An order or consult is *not* needed.

TeleMove! Healthy Eating Diabetes and Bariatric consults are unchanged. Nutrition Clinic will continue operating on Direct Scheduling.

Referrals are encouraged by providers and nursing staff.

MOVE! Clinics are available on a quarterly schedule at the following locations:

- Lebanon: Wednesdays 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
- Cumberland: Tuesdays 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m.
- Lancaster: Thursdays 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m.
- York: Thursdays 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. (at least 2 sessions/year alternating with Berks)
- Berks: Thursdays 12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m. (at least 2 sessions/year alternating with York)

COMMON LEBANON VAMC CONTACTS

717-272-6621 / 1-800-409-8771

Appointment Line	x 5105
Telephone Nursing Care	x 6041
Pharmacy Center	x 6009
Auto Med Refill / Acct & Appt Info Line	x 5991
Enrollment / Eligibility	x 6000
VETERANS CRISIS LINE	1-800-273-8255 Press 1