Veterans Administration Health Care

The VA system in Western Pennsylvania is diverse in that it covers acute care to extended care and psychiatry. Northwestern Pennsylvania is served by the VA Medical Center in Erie. The Erie VAMC contains 40 nursing home beds out of its 159 bed total. All of the VAMC facilities are accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO), and are members of the American Hospital Association.

Southwestern Pennsylvania is served by a VAMC in Butler County. This is approximately 30 miles north of Pittsburgh. This center contains 172 nursing home beds out of a total of 333 beds. The mission of this center is extended and primary care. The Pittsburgh region is served by two VAMCs. The largest, at 698 beds, is located directly behind the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC). Termed the University or Oakland VAMC (the name of that section of Pittsburgh), the medical coverage is provided, by contract, by the UPMC resident and attending physician staff. This facility contains 240 nursing home beds. The other VAMC, located on Highland Drive, concentrates on extended and psychiatric care, and has 574 beds.

Recent proposed legislation will increase outpatient services at the VAMCs in the U.S. As with all hospitals, admissions are decreasing or expenses are increasing. Current regulations allow for treatment of a multitude of problems, but only on an inpatient basis. The University and Highland VAMCs see approximately 133,000 and 101,000 outpatients a year, respectively. This will certainly increase.