

2 Banner Health hospitals among nation's top facilities

Banner Boswell Medical Center in Sun City and Banner Heart Hospital in Mesa were named two of the nation's 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals for 2017 by Truven Health Analytics, an IBM company.

Both Banner Boswell,

10401 W. Thunderbird Blvd., and Banner Heart, 6750 E. Baywood Ave., have been recognized through the years for their superior care and treatment of heart patients, and have recently invested in a number of important enhancements,

including state-of-the-art surgical suites and transcatheter aortic valve replacement surgery.

The annual study uses a national scorecard of hospital performance metrics identifying the nation's best providers of cardiovascular

care. The 50 hospitals that won this designation were singled out from more than 1,000 others. Criteria included significantly higher inpatient survival rates; fewer patients with complications; higher 30-day survival and

lower readmission rates for acute myocardial infarction, heart failure and coronary artery bypass grafting patients; shorter length of stay for coronary artery bypass grafting patients; and \$1,200 to \$6,000 less in total costs

per patient case.

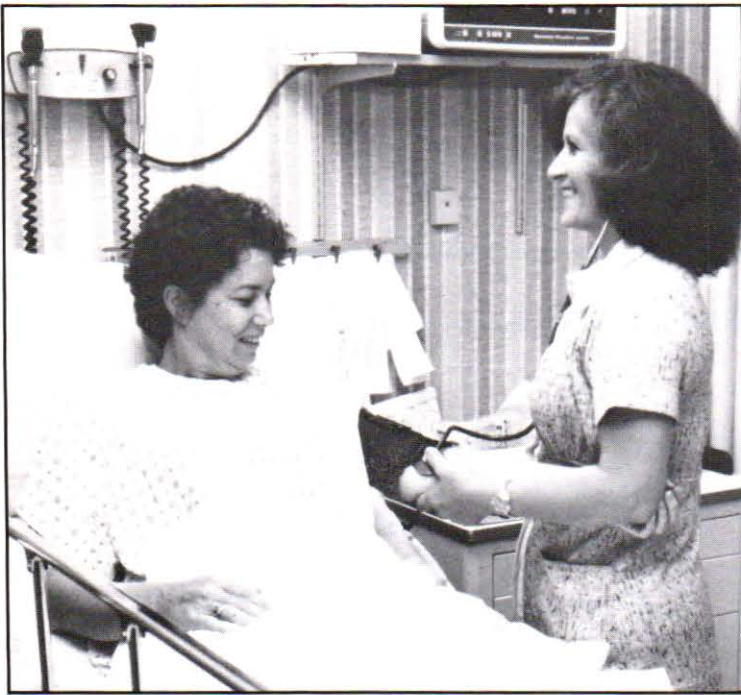
The Truven study bases its analysis on care patients, state all cardiovascular performed at the level year's Truven winner than 9,000 additional could be saved, more 6,000 heart patients be complication-free more than \$1.4 billion be saved.

"Being honored innovation and investments for cardiovascular care shows we're committed to our patients and to those we serve every day," said Banner President and CEO Fine. "This is great recognition for our health care providers who are dedicated saving lives and improving the quality of life for heart patients."

This marks Banner Boswell's eighth year as one of the nation's 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals.

Valley View View Community Hospital





Valley View Community Hospital is a fully accredited, 104-bed, acute care hospital, that serves acutely ill patients of all ages.

A well equipped 24-hour emergency department, with a physician and nursing staff on duty at all times, a modern six-bed intensive/coronary care unit and a newly remodeled surgical department featuring a state-of-the-art laminar air flow operating room are just a few examples of Valley View's commitment to meeting the health care needs of the Northwest Community.

Valley View Community Hospital is fully accredited by the

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH), and is a member of the American Hospital Association, the Arizona Hospital Association, the Phoenix Regional Hospital Council and Arizona Blue Cross. The hospital is a member of the Central Arizona Health Systems Agency (CAHSA) and is certified for participation in Medicare.

24-Hour Emergency Care Department

Valley View has a modern, fully-equipped 24-hour Emergency Department that is staffed around-the-clock, every day of the year, by emergency physicians, specially trained nurses, and ancillary personnel.

The Emergency Department is an

Arizona State certified paramedic base station and provides highly professional emergency care to acutely injured and ill patients.

Critically ill or injured patients requiring the services of a medical emergency helicopter are received at Valley View's Survival Flight Helipad.

Survival Flight is the nation's first civilian medical helicopter and fixed-wing emergency service, and is owned and operated by Arizona Medical Transport, an affiliate of Baptist Hospitals and Health Systems, Inc.

Surgery

Major general and orthopedic surgical cases are performed in Valley View's modern surgical department.

The department features a state-of-

the-art laminar air flow operating room, a second major procedure operating room, and a specially equipped room for cystoscopy and urological procedures.

The recovery room is staffed by specially trained surgical nurses who assist each patient immediately, after their surgical procedure is completed.

ICU/CCU

The intensive/coronary care unit is a modern, six-bed unit, each bed in a private room, featuring modern electronic patient monitoring equipment.

Most importantly, patients receive highly skilled, professional nursing care from registered nurses with extensive training in critical care, 24-hours a day.



Cardiopulmonary

The cardiopulmonary department provides 24-hour service to the emergency room, inpatients and outpatients for electrocardiograms, electroencephalograms (EKG's, EEG's), and respiratory/pulmonary therapy.

EKG's and EEG's are used in the diagnosis and treatment of lung and heart problems and neurological diseases. Staff cardiologists and neurologists review each report.

Radiology

The radiology department provides a full range of modern x-ray services for procedures and examinations for inpatients and outpatients.

In addition to daily routine requests and procedures, x-ray provides services to the emergency room, and for scheduled and emergency surgical procedures. Diagnostic x-ray services include nuclear medicine, ultrasound and a CAT scanner.

Comprehensive Rehabilitation Programs

The hospital offers a comprehensive range of rehabilitation programs for inpatients and outpatients. Physicians are an integral part of the rehabilitation team and they facilitate evaluation and treatment of patients. Among the services provided are:

*Rehabilitation Nursing
Physical Therapy
Occupational Therapy*

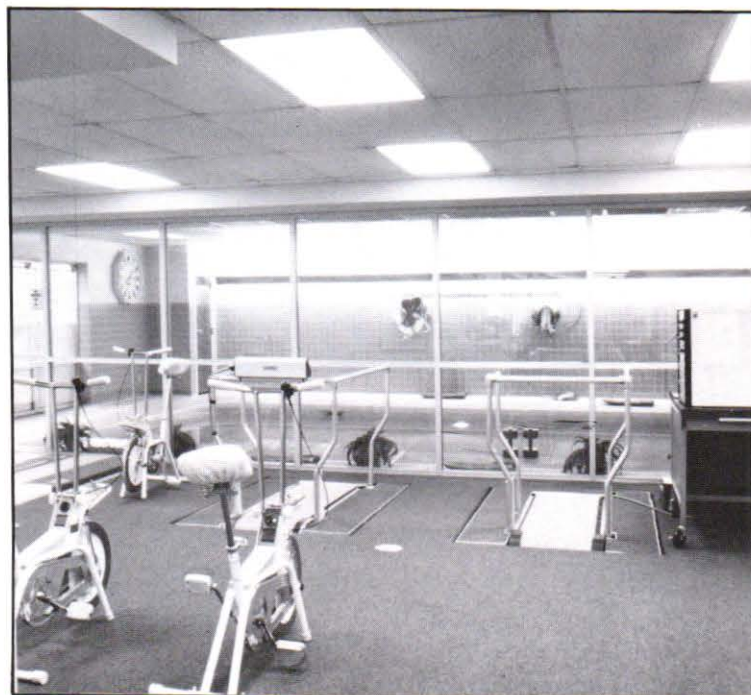
*Nutritional Counseling
Social Services
Speech Therapy*

Health Center

The Valley View Community Hospital Health Center is an outpatient facility devoted to a variety

of rehabilitation programs.

Rehab programs such as cardiac rehabilitation, pulmonary (lungs) rehabilitation, and sports medicine programs are ongoing programs supervised by an exercise physiologist and each patient's physician.



The Health Center also offers an indoor, environmentally controlled swimming and exercise pool. The pool is a key part of the rehabilitation process.

Free community health lectures and blood pressure readings are held on an ongoing basis at the Health Center.

Alpha Center Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling

Inpatient and Outpatient Programs

Valley View maintains a special program for the care, treatment and rehabilitation of people, on both an inpatient and outpatient basis, who are dependent upon alcohol or drugs.

A 20-bed unit, complete with private lounge area, is equipped and staffed to ease the inpatient detoxification process.

Patients who do not require intensive treatment or hospitalization, and patients who have been discharged from the inpatient detoxification program, may be referred to the hospital's outpatient rehabilitation program.

Both programs are staffed by medical professionals who are specially trained in alcohol and drug abuse detoxification and rehabilitation.



Valley View Hospital Auxiliary

The hospital auxiliary volunteers thousands of hours each year to help make Valley View a warmer, friendlier place. These men and women donate valuable time to help meet the hospital's need.

Auxilians provide assistance in many areas of the hospital, including the information desk in the main lobby.

The auxiliary also operates a gift shop and a thrift shop in the hospital lobby. All proceeds are donated by the auxiliary to purchase new equipment and needed items for the hospital.

Our People Make It Better

The employees of Valley View Community Hospital are part of a medical family that includes not only the nursing staff, but maintenance, environmental services and clerical personnel as well.

Our family extends beyond the hospital to the physicians that are on staff and the many auxiliaries that donate their time.

But most importantly, we try to make it better for every patient who visits us. After all, our patients are the heart of our hospital family.

Valley View is eager to share a dynamic future with the residents of the communities of Youngtown, Sun City, Sun City West, Peoria, Glendale, El Mirage, Surprise, Tolleson, Litchfield Park, Avondale, Goodyear and other areas of Northwest Maricopa County

Services provided by Valley View Community Hospital

24-Hour Coverage:

Emergency Room

X-Ray

Laboratory

Cardiopulmonary

Alcohol and drug abuse counseling: individual, group, and family

Nuclear Medicine

Surgery Department

Occupational Therapy

Physical Therapy

Psychiatric Services

Social Services

Nutritional Counseling

Special programs available at Valley View

Information and referral about health care costs (876-ECON)

Inpatient rehabilitation teaching program

Alcohol and drug abuse inpatient and outpatient detoxification and rehabilitation program

Comprehensive inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services

Community health lectures sponsored by Valley View Community Hospital

Comprehensive surgical and rehabilitation services

Psychiatric services - human development

Health Center

Cardiac rehabilitation program

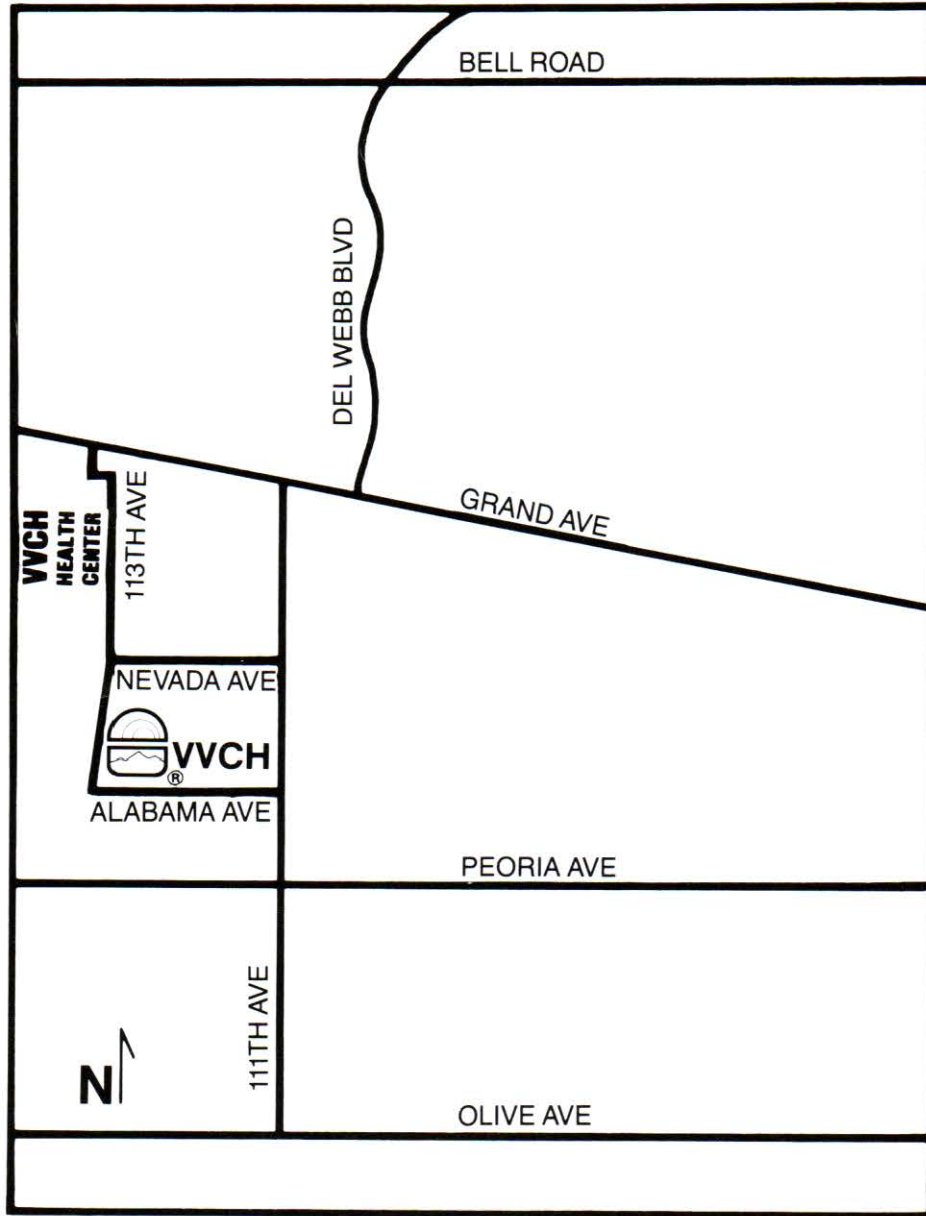
Sports medicine

Pulmonary rehabilitation program

Swimmercise classes

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation classes

Orthopedic rehabilitation program



Valley View Community Hospital
 12207 North 113th Avenue
 Youngtown, AZ 85363
 (602) 933-0155

An affiliate of Baptist Hospitals and Health Systems, Inc.

VALLEY VIEW COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

12207 North 113th Avenue / Youngtown, Arizona 85363 / (602) 933-0155



MED-VET FACT SHEET

Valley View Community Hospital's Med-Vet Program provides general acute care services to Medicare-eligible veterans who do not require long term care. Medicare-eligible spouses, widows and widowers are also eligible for this program.

BENEFITS

1. Hospital services in close proximity to your home and more expedient service.
2. 100% assignment on Medicare benefits and writing off all deductible requirements.
3. Selection of own physician who may give special financial consideration after \$75.00 annual Medicare deductible has been met.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. Valley View Community Hospital retains the right to bill supplementary insurance, if available.
2. Physician financial considerations are an independent decision between the physician and the patient.
3. If you elect to use a non-participating physician, you will maintain personal financial responsibility for medical expenses incurred.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Verification of veteran status:
 - a. V.F.W. card
 - b. D.A.V. card
 - c. V.A. card
 - d. American Legion card
 - e. Discharge papers
 - f. Merchant Marine card
2. Verification of Medicare status with Medicare card indicating:
 - a. Hospital insurance only
 - b. Medical insurance only
 - c. Hospital insurance and medical insurance

PROCEDURE

1. Phone the Med-Vet Coordinator at 876-ECON for an appointment to assess appropriateness of needs.
2. Present eligibility status.
3. Issuance of Med-Vet card.
4. Med-Vet card serves as verification of membership in the program.

VALLEY VIEW COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

12207 North 113th Avenue / Youngtown, Arizona 85363 / (602) 933-0155



CARDIOLOGY

Joseph Caplan, M.D.
Ed Schwartz, M.D.

DENTISTRY

Thomas Lim Chong, D.D.S.
Stephen Folson, D.D.S.

DERMATOLOGY

Robert Thompson, M.D.
Jeffrey Grant, M.D.

FAMILY PRACTICE

Reynaldo Vito, M.D.
Gary Gaffield, D.O.

GASTROENTEROLOGY

John Phelps, M.D.

INTERNAL MEDICINE

Cesar Maderazo, M.D.
Alan Miles, M.D.
Mervyn Ross, M.D.
Bienvenido Simuangco, M.D.

NEUROLOGY

Stephen Hempelman, M.D.
Vito DelDeo, M.D.

OB/GYN

Richard Jaynes, M.D.
Geraldine Paul, M.D.

OPHTHALMOLOGY

Charles Hofer, M.D.

PODIATRY

Gary Friedlander, D.P.M.
James Stocker, D.P.M.

PROCTOLOGY

Vicente Mortel, M.D.
Paravasthu Ramanujam, M.D.

PSYCHIATRY

Paul Butzine, M.D.
Anna DeNovellis, M.D.
William Malone, M.D.

PULMONARY

John Donaldson, M.D.
Edward DuBrow, M.D.

RHEUMATOLOGY

Arthur Colwell, M.D.
Alan Mallace, M.D.

CARDIOVASCULAR SURGERY

Michael Daftarian, M.D.
Robert Rankel, M.D.

GENERAL SURGERY

Robert Rankel, M.D.
Guy Kenneth Terrell, M.D.
Eugene Tsai, M.D.
Wayne Wertz, M.D.

HAND SURGERY

Martin Sterusky, M.D.

MICROSURGERY/PLASTIC

Daniel DeLaPava, M.D.

NEUROSURGERY

Thomas McNaughton, M.D.
Chan David Pootrakul, M.D.

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY

Jon Gelsey, M.D.
Robert Wilson, M.D.
Joseph Dupont, M.D.

UROLOGY

Barry Stern, M.D.
Paul Papoff, M.D.
Louis Ciardullo, M.D.

* * * * *

* To schedule an
* appointment
* contact:

* Kendra Sabol
* Physician Services Manager
* 876-3286

5630 W. Thunderbird

M E D - V E T

Program

VALLEY VIEW COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

12207 NORTH 113TH AVENUE

YOUNGTOWN, AZ 85363

(602) 876 - ECON

VALLEY VIEW COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

12207 North 113th Avenue

Youngtown, AZ 85363

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United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 99th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 131

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 1985

No. 27—Part II

Senate

VALLEY VIEW COMMUNITY HOSPITAL, YOUNGTOWN, AZ

● Mr. DECONCINI. Mr. President, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues an outstanding public service program which was recently instituted at Valley View Community Hospital in Youngtown, AZ. To my knowledge, this program is the first of its kind in the country and represents the positive results which can ensue from a partnership between the Government and the private sector. I commend the hospital and its staff for undertaking this initiative and hope it will be replicated in other hospitals throughout the country.

Valley View Community Hospital has undertaken a program, called Med-Vet, to assist the Veterans' Administration in providing general acute care services to Medicare-eligible veterans. All of us in Congress are painfully aware of the stress being placed on the Veterans' Administration health care system to provide services to eligible veterans. The current problems of funding and resources will only become exacerbated as the veteran population continues to age. Therefore, Valley View Hospital's initiative could not have come at a more opportune time.

Under the Med-Vet Program, Valley View Community Hospital will provide general acute care services to veterans not requiring long-term care. They will be provided to any Medicare-eli-

ble veteran at no cost to the veterans. This will be accomplished by Valley View taking a 100-percent assignment on Medicare benefits and writing off all deductible requirements to the veteran. This, according to Larry A. Mullins, executive vice president and administrator of Valley View, will mean that most of these veterans will receive medical care at no cost to them.

Mr. Mullins indicated that the hospital's rationale for taking this action was in response to the Veterans' Administration's valiant efforts to serve all veterans:

The number of veterans is so large that existing resources may not be fully capable of meeting the demand. Our premise is that by simply shifting those veterans who are eligible under another program for benefits, that space and resources will be made available to those veterans not eligible for this program.

If this initiative is adopted by other hospitals, it should result in more expedient and efficient services to veterans as well as a better distribution and allocation of health care resources.

Again, I commend Valley View Community Hospital for undertaking this initiative. Not only will the Med-Vet Program allow a significant number of veterans to receive free health care services, it will, hopefully, alleviate some of the demand at the overcrowded Phoenix Veterans' Administration Medical Center.●

UPDATE
CONTINUED

BBHS hospital program aids veterans, VA

A small hospital in Arizona has initiated a creative program that provides health care to veterans, eases overcrowding at a local Veterans' Administration hospital, and boosts the facility's own census rate.

Valley View Community Hospital, a 104-bed facility in Youngtown, is offering free hospital services to Medicare-eligible veterans and their dependents who don't require long-term care. Just six months after the program's inception, there were more than 950 enrollees, according to Larry Mullins, the hospital's executive vice-president and administrator.

Under the Med-Vet plan, Valley View, which is owned by Baptist Hospital and Health Systems (BHHS), Phoenix, waives the \$400 Part A Medicare deductible for veteran enrollees, Mullins says. In addition, veterans in Med-Vet can receive information identifying physicians who are willing to give special consideration to their cases and financial status;



Valley View Community Hospital is offering free hospital services to Medicare-eligible veterans and their dependents: Mullins.

about 100 physicians are participating in the program at Valley View, Mullins says. Enrollees can also receive treatment from their own physicians if their doctors have privileges at the hospital.

The response to the program has

been gratifying, Mullins says. Because most Veterans' Administration hospitals are overcrowded, many veterans must wait months to get treatment. "Our program should have the impact . . . of shifting veterans from a Veterans' Administration medical system that might be operating in excess of its capacity, to private sector hospitals that are operating under their capacity," Mullins explains. The hospital comes out ahead as well: the increased volume as a result of the program has compensated for the Medicare deductible waivers, he says.

Two other BHHS hospitals have initiated Med-Vet programs: Phoenix (AZ) Baptist Hospital and Medical Center and Bullhead Community Hospital, Bullhead City, AZ; two hospitals in California outside of the BHHS system have also started similar programs. In addition, BHHS' Manatee Memorial Hospital, Bradenton, FL, and hospitals in Wisconsin and New Mexico are considering starting programs. □

Impressed with Med-Vet

To The Editor:

About five months ago, I attended the monthly meeting of the Post 94 American Legion in Sun City West.

The guest speaker was a lady representing Valley View Community Hospital in Youngtown.

She explained a new health program called "Met-Vet," which entitles all veterans to be treated at Valley View on the same scale as Veterans Hospital. All hospital-related services will be paid by Medicare if the person qualifies for Medicare.

At 10 a.m. on June 22, my 69th

birthday, I had strong chest pains. I called my son Stan and asked him to take me to Valley View. I felt like I was having a heart attack.

Within six minutes I was in the emergency room being treated, which I believe saved my life.

I was a patient at Valley View for 10 days and the treatment I received was excellent.

After discharge from the hospital my cardiologist prescribed medication to be taken three times per day for the rest of my life. One's own physician may treat him at Valley View.

As the former service officer of Post 94 American Legion, I feel it is the duty of all the veterans organizations (especially in the Sun City, Peoria, El Mirage, Surprise and Youngtown areas) to inform each member of this program offered at Valley View.

I also urge the newspapers to print more about this program for the benefit of their families. They don't have to be members of any organization but have to have their Honorable Discharge and be on Medicare.

Rudolph J. Stobierski



VFW



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

PEORIA POST 2135 BOX 905 PEORIA, AZ., 85345

October 7, 1985

Larry A. Mullins
Administrator
Valley View Community Hospital
12207 N. 113th Ave.
Youngtown, AZ 85363

Dear Mr. Mullins:

We, the members of VFW Peoria Post 2135, are uniquely qualified to identify the meaningful service the Med-Vet program provides through its active contributions of service in health care to the Medicare eligible veterans in the community.

All comrades of the Post enthusiastically support this valuable community resource of expertise, talent and creativity developed for the concern and care of the Medicare eligible veterans.

To those who have served and sacrificed for their country, to know that affordable medical care is available is a blessing. Your foresight in establishing the Med-Vet program will have far-reaching effects in improving the health care services for the Medicare eligible veterans all over the nation. Med-Vet represents a cost effective alternative to the overburdened VA Hospital system. It has the potential to assure the hospital and health care needs of the large population of residents of Arizona who are 65 years and older, and who are forecast to double in population by the year 2000.

VFW Peoria Post 2135 feels that you and Valley View Community Hospital could mark a milestone in the history of veterans benefits in having created the Med-Vet program.

On behalf of VFW Peoria Post 2135 and unanimous approval of the comrades, especially those that have utilized the Med-Vet program, we pledge to you, Valley View Community Hospital and the Med-Vet program, our fullest support.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken McLaughlin
Post Commander

Mullins honored by merchant Marine Veterans

Larry A. Mullins, executive vice president and administrator, Valley View Community Hospital, Youngtown, was recently named an honorary member of Desert Mariners Chapter, American Merchant Marine Veterans.

According to John A. Forsberg, executive officer of the organization, this is the first time honorary membership has been given to a person who has been given to a person who is not a member of the Merchant Marine Veterans organization.

Mullins received the honor at a dinner commemorating National Maritime Day, May 22, 1985. Mullins was honored because of his creation of the Med-Vet program which provides hospital services free of charge to Medicare-eligible veterans.

Valley View Community Hospital is an affiliate of Baptist Hospitals and Health Systems which is a non-profit, multi-unit health care parent company headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona. Its other

affiliates include Phoenix Baptist Hospital and Medical Center Inc.; Manatee Memorial Hospital Bradenton, Florida; Arizona Medical Transport, including Survival Flight helicopter and fixed wing air ambulance service and Associated Ambulance; Glen Ridge Villige, an extended care center in Glendale; Bullhead Community Hospital in Bullhead City, and Gila Bend Valley Primary Care Center in Gila Bend.

Valley View Med-Vet program

Valley View Community Hospital enrolled its 500th veteran in the Med-Vet program today. The Med-Vet program provides free hospital services at Valley View Community Hospital to any veteran who is Medicare-eligible.

Kathryn and Francis Sherlock of Sun City, husband and wife, became the 499th and 500th veterans to enroll in the Med-Vet program when they were registered at 2 p.m. Friday, May 24. Mrs. Sherlock served in the Women's Army Corps. (WAC) during World War II. Mr. Sherlock also served in World War II in military intelligence for the U. S. Army. The Sherlocks met while they were serving in the military.

Larry A. Mullins, executive vice president and administrator, Valley View Community Hospital, congratulated Mr. & Mrs. Sherlock and presented them with a certificate for dinner for two at The Lakes Club, Sun City.

Mullins used the occasion to announce further expansion of the Med-Vet program. "Beginning immediately, the program will be open to spouses, widows, and widowers of Medicare-eligible veterans," he said.

"Veterans' groups throughout the state have requested that their spouses be included in the program," Mullins explained. "We want to be sure the program was a success before we extended it to spouses. During the three months since its inception, the response has been tremendous, so we now can confidently include spouses."

Mullins added that spouses

may register for the program by bringing their own Medicare cards and proof of their husbands' or wives' veteran status to the hospital. "Spouses will then be issued their Med-Vet cards," he said.

For additional information, phone the hospital at 876-ECON.

Of the 500 Med-Vet enrollees at Valley View Community Hospital, 60 have been admitted to the hospital; 75 have visited the emergency room for treatment, and more than 45 have received outpatient services.

Two other hospitals of Baptist Hospitals and Health Systems, of which Valley View is an affiliate, have instituted the Med-Vet program. Phoenix Baptist Hospital, Phoenix, has offered the program for one month and Bullhead Community Hospital, Bullhead City, announced the program in mid-May.

Valley View Community Hospital is an affiliate of Baptist Hospitals and Health Systems which is a non-profit, multi-unit health care parent company headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona. Its other affiliates include Phoenix Baptist Hospital and Medicare Center, Inc.; Manatee Memorial Hospital, Bradenton, Florida; Arizona Medical Transport, including Survival Flight helicopter and fixed wing air ambulance service and Associated Ambulance; Glen Ridge Village, an extended care center in Glendale; Bullhead Community Hospital in Bullhead City, and Gila Bend Valley Primary Care Center in Gila Bend.

Hospital is pleased by response to program for vets

By VICTORIA M. STEVENS
Northwest Valley Bureau

YOUNGTOWN — The response to a program giving free acute health care to Medicare-eligible veterans over 65 has been overwhelming, a hospital official said.

Larry Mullins, executive vice president of Valley View Community Hospital, said since the Med-Vet program was announced Feb. 14, five veterans have been admitted to the hospital and at least 50 have applied for the program.

Under the Med-Vet program, the hospital will pay all hospital costs and the Medicare deductible. Mullins said.

Veterans also can get a list of physicians in the northwest Valley who have staff privileges at Valley View and accept Medicare assignment, he said.

"The problem confronting us today is the increasing demand with the rising number of veterans and budget constraints," Mullins said. "The existing resources already are out there. If we can shift the percentage of older veterans here, that opens beds up for others at the Veterans Administration Medical Center."

Mullins, who served in the Marines during the Vietnam War, said that before introducing the concept, he approached several veteran's groups to determine if it would be acceptable. He also has introduced the program to members of Veterans of Foreign Wars posts in Glendale and Peoria.

The program is designed to give veterans expedient service and to improve business at Valley View, he said.

Mullins said the hospital will be taking an initial loss by waiving the deductible. But, he said, he hopes to overcome the loss by increasing the number of patients treated.

The hospital is reimbursed by Medicare. The cost shift from the Veterans Administration to Medicare "comes down to the same wallet," he said.

"The veteran already paid twice: once into Medicare and once as a veteran, so why shouldn't he get prompt medical care?"

Mullins said many veterans hesitate to go to private hospitals because they aren't assured cooperation.

The program will eliminate the "bureaucratic paper work" many veterans encounter when they enter private hospitals, Mullins said.

He said with the hospital's program, veterans eligible for Medicare can register for a Med-Vet card, which they present when they enter the hospital for treatment.

Members of the Peoria VFW were enthusiastic about the program but expressed some reservations.

"The only thing we're concerned about is it's only going to help the veteran over 65," said Ben Christofferson, program chairman for the newly chartered post with 130 members.

"But if they can ease some space in the (Veterans Administration Medical Center), then those not eligible can indirectly benefit."

Ray Bourne, director of the VA Medical Center — the only veterans hospital in the Valley — said the 104-bed hospital in Youngtown won't make a great impact on the increasing number of veterans moving to the area who need medical treatment.

Last year, the VA Medical Center, which has 470 general-medicine and surgery beds and 120 nursing-home-care beds, treated 43,000 veterans.

"We're estimating 1,000 veterans a month settle in Arizona," he said. The median age is 52.2.

As of 1982, 78,700 of the 197,210 veterans in Maricopa County were from World War II, most of whom are eligible for Medicare, Bourne said.

The *American Medical News* reported that by 1990, one of every two American men older than 65 will be eligible for free medical care in VA hospitals or nursing homes.

Bourne said the Valley View program is a "positive response on the part of the private sector."

It offers veterans a choice and allows the Phoenix hospital to treat more patients, he said.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20-26, 1985

THE SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

Program provides health aid for vets

By BRET McKEAND

Valley View Community Hospital has started a new program which is designed to boost patient use at Valley View Community Hospital while at the same time improve health services guaranteed to veterans.

The program, called "Med-Vet," provides general acute care services to any Medicare-eligible veteran at no cost to the veteran.

Announcing the new program at a recent meeting of the Peoria V.F.W. at the Peoria Community Center, Larry Mullins, executive vice president and administrator at Valley View Community Hospital, stated the program will be limited to services presently available at Valley View and to veterans not requiring long term care.

"It's not an insurance plan," says Mullins.

"The program is being accomplished by the hospital taking a 100 percent assignment on Medicare benefits and writing off all deductible requirements to the veteran."

Mullins adds that Valley View does reserve the right to bill supplemental insurance policies if the veteran has additional insurance available.

According to Mullins, the hospital's rationale for taking the action is in response to the Veterans Administration's effort to serve all veterans. An effort, which Mullins says "isn't feasibly possible."

"The time is right to get veterans out of a very busy system (VA Hospitals) and into a system which is not so busy (private hospitals). We are making it possible for veterans to use their veterans benefits in the private sector."

Mullins hopes the hospital's program will spur other hospitals to adopt similar programs. The long

range effect would be to shift veteran health care — presently limited to VA Hospitals — to the private sector and thus reducing overcrowded conditions in VA Hospitals.

"The net result of this should be expedient and more efficient service to the veteran as well as better distribution and allocation of health care resources," says Mullins.

Veterans can receive more information on Med-Vet by calling 876-ECON. Mullins says the hospital will assess the need of each veteran individually and whether or not their needs can best be met by entering into Valley View's program or remaining with the VA system.

Mullins says the only opposition may come from other private hospitals who may lose patients that opt to take advantage of the Valley View program.

Med-Vet will cover costs of Valley View services (emergency, inpatient, outpatient) as well as physician charges (as long as the physician has privileges at Valley View. If a veteran uses a physician not associated with Valley View, then the patient would be responsible for those particular physician charges.)

According to Mullins, the number of veterans at least 65 years of age will triple during the next 10 years to 9 million nationally, making it nearly impossible for the government to care for all veterans.

"This may not be the answer but at least it's a starting point. Something has to be done," says Mullins.

"If this program is carried out to its potential, we can help honor the commitment for health care we have made to the 387,000 veterans in Arizona, and as well as to the 3 million veterans nationally."

BRET MCKEAND

INDEPENDENT

2-20-85

SCI Editor

Honoring our nation's commitments

Another round of applause is in order for Valley View Community Hospital.

A few months ago the Sun Cities Independent applauded them for their efforts in trying to curb rising health care costs.

Last week, Larry Mullins, Valley View administrator, introduced a new program called "Med-Vet," a program designed to not only improve the quality of care provided to U.S. veterans, but also one that hopefully will relieve the federal government of some of its burden to care for military veterans.

When we think of the promises made by our nation throughout its history, we take pride in the fact that we, as Americans, have kept most of our commitments. We have stood by our friends. We have fought wars defending not only our own interests, but those of our allies as well.

And when we think of war, we tend to think of the modern wars -- the World Wars, Korean War and Viet Nam.

But it was Abraham Lincoln, right after the Civil War, that made a promise to military veterans -- a promise this nation has been determined to keep ever since. He felt a nation should care for those who risked their lives to defend it. It was he who established the policy to care for veterans as they become older, a policy which is now handled by the Veterans Administration.

And the VA has done a good job with what they have to work with, there's no argument about that. But with each passing year the number of retiring veterans continues to increase while the amount of money the VA has to work with continues to steadily decrease.

The statistics are alarming. Veterans at least 65 years of age will triple in number during the next 15 years, from the present 3 million to 9 million nationwide. In 1990, the American Medical Association states that one of every two

American men older than 65 will be eligible for VA medical benefits.

President Reagan is already feeling the pressure of federal deficits. In the years ahead, our country may have no other choice but to begin cutting until it hurts in all areas of the federal budget.

And try as they may, the VA will just not be able to care for this nation's veterans.

The VA is already denying some veterans needed health care because of overcrowded VA hospitals. In some VA hospitals, veterans are being accepted on a priority basis -- severeness of illness, age, etc.

The answer lies in cooperation between the government and private sector. The government must be willing to apply their VA benefits to private sector hospitals; and private sector hospitals must be willing to accept VA benefits.

Valley View has taken that step. It may work and cause other health care facilities to do the same. Whatever their motives for introducing such a plan, whether it be sincere interests or just good business sense, it is a step in the right direction.

One reason may be that Mullins himself is a war veteran. A highly decorated Marine who fought in the Viet Nam war, Mullins is sincere in his desire to see that all veterans are taken care of, as their nation promised they would be.

And that is an interest we should all concern ourselves with -- regardless of whether we are veterans or not.

These men made a commitment to their country when they went to war. Their country, in turn, made a commitment to them.

Now we must all work together if we have any hopes of fulfilling that commitment.

Editorials

Caring, Valley View style

While the federal government is planning to trim its funds for Veterans Administration hospitals and cut veterans' benefits, Valley View Community Hospital in Youngtown is giving older veterans a real break.

Valley View will offer general acute-care services to veterans, accept 100 percent assignment on their Medicare benefits—and write off the deductible requirements. (Only in cases where there's supplemental insurance will the hospital submit a bill to help cover costs; and the offer, of course, doesn't apply to long-term care.)

It's probably the first program of its kind in the country, but it may not be the last. Med-Vet, as it's called, should find its imitators. It's the kind of thing hospitals

can do not only to help the over-65 veteran in an acute-care situation, but to relieve their own under-utilization.

As far as we're concerned, Valley View's Med-Vet program deserves praise from President Reagan himself for enabling many area veterans over 65 to have the short-term acute care they might not have been able to afford before—and for offering them the care they can seldom get at overcrowded, short-staffed and underfunded VA hospitals.

It's the kind of private sector response to the president's austerity program that we consider admirable—and it's the kind of pioneering effort in caring cost-effectiveness that we have come to expect from Valley View and its administrator, Larry Mullins.

Program aids vets on Medicare

Free stays at Manatee Memorial part of plan

JOSEPH PALMER
Herald Staff Writer

Manatee Memorial Hospital launched a program Friday that is designed to relieve Medicare-eligible veterans of all out-of-pocket hospital expenses.

Under the Med-Vet Program, veterans on Medicare can be hospitalized and not worry about being billed for hospital services, Gerald Wissink, Manatee Memorial's executive vice president, told a group of area veterans.

"As long as you can present your Medicare card, that's the ticket to getting in," he said.

Not covered under the Med-Vet Program are outpatient services, medications, long-term

care, such as nursing homes, and physicians' fees.

"We can't control the physicians' participation," Wissink said.

Wissink gave the hospital's first Med-Vet card to 90-year-old A.C. Smith. Smith is a World War I veteran and served with the 85th Division, 310 Field Signal Battery, Company B.

Hospital officials said this is the fifth such program in the country. Other programs are in effect in California and Arizona, and each state will recognize the others' programs should a person move, officials said.

U.S. Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Arizona, who has championed the program in his home state, was scheduled to speak at Friday's gathering,

but had to cancel because of a last-minute commitment in Washington. He is a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

DeConcini telephoned the hospital and apologized for his absence, expressing his satisfaction with the program's results in Arizona.

"I'm very excited about it and I mean that sincerely," he said.

Hospital officials said the program will help relieve area veterans' hospitals of the burden of World War II veterans who are now falling in the Medicare age group.

In addition, the program will help boost sagging hospital admissions by attracting patients that might otherwise go to a VA hospital for treatment, officials explained.



World War I veteran A.C. Smith, hospital executive Gerald Wissink attend reception honoring new program.

Manatee Memorial Unveils 'Med-Vet:' Free Care for Qualified Veterans

By JULIE ROSS
Staff Writer

A new program to provide hospital care at no cost to honorably discharged veterans qualified for Medicare will begin Monday at Manatee Memorial Hospital.

Known as Med-Vet, the local program will be the fifth of its kind in the nation.

"The Med-Vet program has been established to provide acute-care hospital services to Medicare-eligible veterans," said Gerald Wissink, executive vice president of the hospital. "All hospital services are included in this program and are available at no cost to any Medicare-eligible, honorably discharged U.S. veteran."

According to Wissink, who spoke Friday at a reception to inaugurate the program, "The veteran pays nothing as Manatee Memorial will be accepting 100 percent assignment of Medicare hospital benefits and writing off all deductible requirements to the veteran."

The Med-Vet program covers hospital costs only, not physicians' or prescription costs. Hospital representatives have identified some physicians who will give financial consideration to veterans, but not all physicians do.

A hospital spokesman said Med-Vet is not a replacement for the VA medical services, but a 'supportive alternative.'

Wissink said there are 26,000 veterans in Manatee County, and the number is expected to grow as more veterans retire and move to the area.

U.S. Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., was scheduled to speak at Friday's reception, but he stayed in Washington, D.C., to vote on an immigration bill. He called during the reception and spoke briefly over the intercom.

Judy Leiby, the senator's administrative assistant, delivered his remarks.

"This is the fifth Med-Vet program to be initiated across the country," she said. "Very successful programs are in place already in Arizona and California."

Baptist Hospitals and Health Systems, which purchased Manatee Memorial last year, is headquartered in Arizona.

Added Ms. Leiby, "It is an unfortunate fact that the Veterans Administration's Department of Medicine and Surgery has been inundated by a flood of World War II veterans who are now experiencing the health problems associated with aging."

"Our premise," said Wissink, "is that by simply shifting those veterans who are eligible under another program for benefits, space and resources will be made available to those veterans who are not eligible for this program."

Wissink said the Med-Vet program is not a replacement for the VA medical services, but a "supportive alternative."

Veterans who require long-term care would not be covered under the program, but emergency and outpatient services are covered.

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'Med-Vet' Care Unveiled

Continued from 1B

First to sign up for the program was 90-year-old A.C. Smith, a World War I veteran. Smith, who moved to Manatee County in 1959, is a retired railroad worker active in local veterans' affairs.

"I am very grateful for this signal honor," Smith said about receiving his card.

On Nov. 10, Wissink said, an 80-foot flagpole with a 20-by-30 flag and plaque will be dedicated to veterans at the hospital's north-side parking lot. He said it is anticipated that additions will be made to the spot in the future.

Veterans who wish more information about the Med-Vet program may contact Carol Whitmore at Manatee Memorial Hospital.