

# Specialty Care in the Veterans Health Administration

A Presentation for the  
Paralyzed Veterans of America Summit

Robert L. Jesse, MD, PhD  
Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health

September 16, 2011



# Disclosures

- Robert L. Jesse, M.D., Ph.D.  
Has no financial interest or relationships to disclose
- CME Staff Disclosures  
Professional Education Services Group staff have no financial interest or relationships to disclose.

# VHA Mission

Honor America's Veterans  
by providing exceptional health care  
that improves their  
health and well-being.



# The VHA Vision

VHA will continue to be the **benchmark of excellence** and value in health care and benefits by providing exemplary services that are both **patient centered** and **evidence based**.

This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative **teams** in an **integrated environment** that supports learning, discovery and **continuous improvement**.

It will emphasize **prevention and population health** and contribute to the nation's wellbeing through **education, research and service in National emergencies**.

# New Health Care Delivery Model

- Patient Centered
- Team Care
- Continuous Improvement
- Data Driven, Evidence Based
- Value
- Prevention / Population Health

# The Principles of Quality

In patient-centered health care:

Quality must always be for an “n” of one

# Principled Quality

- **The organizational will to improve**
  - Strategic alignment
  - Integration across disciplines/departments/facilities
- **Leadership is engaged and committed**
  - Visible passion and tangible involvement
- **Well articulated improvement initiatives**
  - Alignment with institutional goals/expectations
  - Appropriate resource allocations

# The VHA Health Care Delivery Model

- Patient Centered
- Team Care
- Continuous Improvement
- Data Driven, Evidence Based
- Value
- Prevention / Population Health

# VHA Transformation Initiatives

1. New Health Care Models
2. Enhancing the Veteran Experience and Access to Healthcare
3. Improving Veteran Mental Health
4. Ending Veteran Homelessness
5. Improving Healthcare Efficiency
6. Improving Healthcare Through Informatics

# Integration of Care

## Primary Care versus Specialty Care

# Complexity in Healthcare

## Demographics

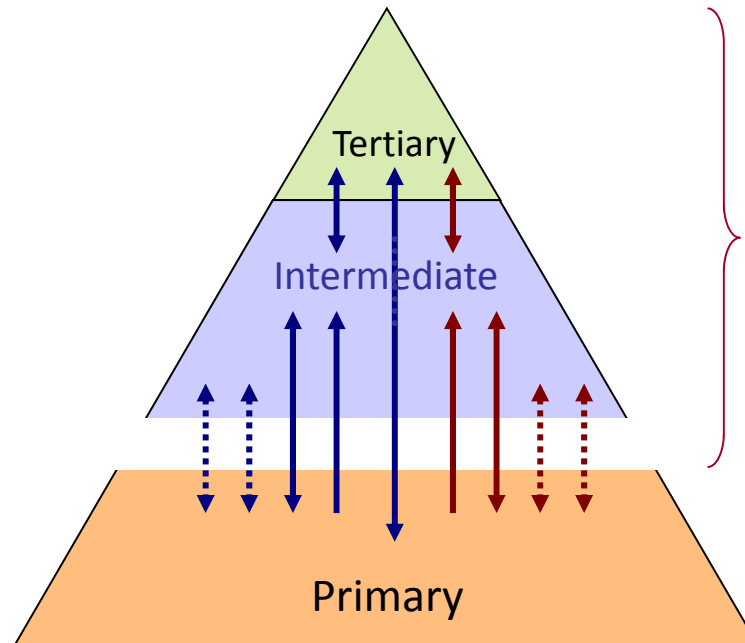
Lower Volume  
High Risk



Primary  
Care

Higher Volume  
Low Risk

## Patients



Patients can move between complexity levels quickly and be co-managed by multiple services across complexity boundaries.

## Specialty Care

**Clinical Programs**  
Surgery  
Anesthesia  
ED  
Medicine  
SCI/D

**Patient Support**

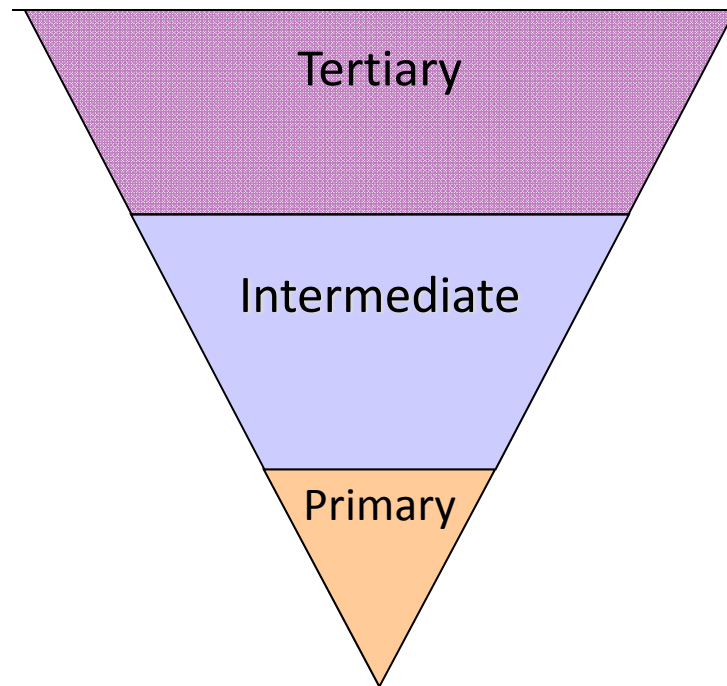
Nutrition  
Chaplains  
Pain  
Prosthetics

# Complexity in Healthcare

7

## Resource Utilization

Procedures  
Hospitalization  
Imaging  
Testing  
Labs  
Personnel  
Clinic visits



Specialty  
Care

Primary  
Care

# Specialty Care Services

- Higher risk and more complicated patients
  - Outpatient specialty care
  - Emergent and urgent care
  - Procedures
    - Medical, e.g. cardiac cath, endoscopy
    - Surgical, both inpatient and outpatient
  - Hospital-based care
    - Medical, surgical, mental health
    - All intensive care unit patients
- SCI care includes all the above domains

# The Future of Specialty Care Services

- Changing the dynamic with primary care
  - New models for consultation
  - More effective knowledge exchange
  - Ensuring appropriateness
- Changing the dynamic with patients
  - Access to specialists is critical to success
  - Supporting the PACT model
  - Managing transitions and ensuring consistency

# VHA Spinal Cord Injury/Disorders Service

- VHA SCI/D - Most comprehensive and coordinated health care available
- Mission: promote the health, independence, quality of life, and productivity of individuals with spinal cord injury and disorders
- Integrated team approach with the Veteran at the center of all care:
  - Hub (SCI Centers) and Spoke (SCI Primary Care sites)
  - Veteran patients active partners in managing own care

# VHA Spinal Cord Injury/Disorders Service

- Outcomes measurable through Spinal Cord Injury and Disorders Outcomes (SCIDO) software
- Telehealth initiative:
  - Spans Hubs, Spokes, community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), and home settings
  - Full implementation scheduled for FY 2012
- Vocational Rehabilitation:
  - Team concept
  - PVA support and guidance greatly appreciated

# Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT)

- PACT model principles:
  - Patient-centered focus
  - Interdisciplinary team led by primary care provider
  - Full integration with other VHA health services and community resources
  - Established and continuous relationship with personal primary care provider and team
  - Respectful, reliable, and culturally sensitive communication
  - Coordinated care across and between systems

# Patient Aligned Care Team

- Core PACT team:
  - Primary care provider
  - Registered Nurse Care Manager
  - Clinical associate (LPN or health technician)
  - Clerical associate

***“A pact with Veterans to promote their health and better manage illness...”***

# Patient Aligned Care Team

- PACT implementation:
  - Assessment and Readiness
  - Building Staffing Infrastructure
  - Training and Education
  - Innovation
  - Measurement

# Telehealth

- Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) programs
  - Link, by video, VA clinicians and Veteran patients
  - SCI Veteran patients: across 12 VISNs, more than 160 patients during 268 telehealth encounters
- Current Home Telehealth (HT) programs
  - FY 2011: over 2,000 SCI Veteran patients
- TeleSCI Video-to-Home piloting
  - From five SCI centers
  - Secure encrypted high-quality broadband video link
- \$2.65M+ FY11 and FY12 Transformational Initiative funding
  - Dedicated TeleSCI staff
  - Decrease travel requirements for Veteran patients and caregivers

# Specialty Care Access Network Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes

- Live video-telephone consultation
  - Primary care provider presents patient's case to specialist
  - Specialist provides medical advice
- VHA piloting SCAN ECHO clinics for Endocrinology, Cardiovascular, Liver disease, and Pain management
  - Outreach to smaller facilities and CBOCs
  - Provides additional options for specialty care services for Veterans, especially those with SCI/D for whom travel is difficult

# VHA Mission

Honor America's Veterans  
by providing exceptional health care  
that improves their  
health and well-being.

**VA**  
HEALTH  
CARE

Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

# VHA Values – I Care

- **I-ntegrity**
- **C-ommitment**
- **A-dvocacy**
- **R-espect**
- **E-xcellence**

# Questions

September 16, 2011