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**End of fiscal year hospital Star rating shows large improvement in overall quality of services at VA Western New York Healthcare System**

BUFFALO, NEW YORK — Today, as part of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) efforts to remain transparent and hold VA facilities accountable, VA released its [end of fiscal year 2018 (FY2018) hospital Star ratings](https://www.va.gov/QUALITYOFCARE/measure-up/End_of_Year_Hospital_Star_Rating_FY2017.asp), which evaluate and benchmark quality of care delivery at VA medical centers (VAMCs) across the nation.

VA Western New York Healthcare System was one of the facilities that made positive strides in the benchmarks and is striving to continue progress. VA Western New York Healthcare System improved from a three star rating to four star rating, placing Western New York in the top 20% of all VA Hospitals for overall quality measures.

“VA Western New York Healthcare System continues to be a leader in inpatient and outpatient mental health services,” said Michael J. Swartz, Executive Director. “We continue to make improvements using electronic medical records and analytics to identify patients who could benefit from additional services to improve their quality of life, such as home based primary care and home health services. In addition, VA staff continues to make strides to improve hospital outcomes in the areas of reducing readmissions and infections.”

The Star rating designation is designed to help VA identify best practices of its top performing hospitals and share them across VA’s health care system to achieve system-wide improvements.

Compared with data from the same period a year ago, the release of VA’s Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) report shows 66 percent of VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) have improved in overall quality in the third quarter— with the largest gains seen in areas where there were VA-wide improvement initiatives, such as mortality, length of stay and avoidable adverse events. Six VAMCs had a decrease in quality, and improvement activities are underway at each of these facilities.

Additionally, of the medical centers placed under the Strategic Action for Transformation program (StAT), an initiative that monitors high-risk medical centers and mobilizes resources to assist them, eight are no longer considered high risk and 80 percent (12 medical centers) show measurable improvements since being placed under StAT in January 2018.

“There’s no doubt that there’s still plenty of work to do, but I’m proud of our employees, who work tirelessly to move VA in the right direction for Veterans and taxpayers,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

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