



**VA Health Care Upstate New York
VA Western New York Healthcare System**
3495 Bailey Avenue | Buffalo, NY 14215
222 Richmond Avenue | Batavia, NY 14020
www.buffalo.va.gov

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Contact: Evangeline Conley, Public Affairs Officer
Phone: (716) 862-8753 Cell: (716) 512-9338
E-mail: Evangeline.Conley@va.gov

State of the Art Inpatient Psychiatry Unit for Veterans at VA

BUFFALO, NY - VA Western New York Healthcare System is proud to announce the opening of a newly renovated inpatient psychiatric treatment unit. The 10,000-square-foot unit located on 10A reflects state-of-the-art Department of Veterans Affairs design standards for inpatient mental health care. The construction contract was awarded to the U.S. Veterans Construction and Management Corp – a service-disabled Veteran-owned company. The total project cost was approximately four million dollars.

The space was carefully designed to create an optimal healing environment for mental health recovery and meets the high standards outlined in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook for Inpatient Mental Health Services. Key components of recovery-oriented care are evident in the construction design and in new treatment programming. Veteran consumers of mental health services have been instrumental in the project planning and design from its inception, and in the selection of unit color schemes, furnishings, artwork, and accessories.

Improvements and innovations include private or semi-private rooms, many private baths, a secure six person suite for female Veterans with a dedicated nurses' station, accommodations for Veterans needing Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) equipment, a meditation room, multiple rooms for individual and group treatment, two web-enabled computers for Veterans' use while hospitalized, and a large dining room. All new furniture, accessories, and decor are in compliance with VHA standards to ensure the environment is comfortable and home-like. "It's been a pleasure working with a dynamic interdisciplinary team focusing on the wellness and recovery model for patients. We look forward to meeting the individual needs of Veterans throughout the course of their recovery" stated Dr. Carol Ann Hayes, Associate Chief Nurse for Behavioral Health. "This space provides a place where Veterans can have a comfortable, safe, homelike environment to focus on their individual recovery" stated Jill Murray, Behavioral Health Care Line Manager. "Many key stakeholders including Veterans, Mental Health clinicians and Engineering professionals, collaborated closely throughout the project to ensure the new environment meets the safety and clinical needs of patients."

The unit is managed and staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, psychologists, recreational therapists, pharmacists, and peer support staff. In addition, the new unit is a training site for medical students and psychiatry residents from Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, nursing students from D'Youville College, Daemen College, Master of Social Work students from UBs School of Social Work and pharmacy students from UB School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. New treatment programming will be recovery-oriented and person-centered to reflect the best practices in mental health care, utilizing evidenced-based treatments and interventions to assist Veterans to return to their lives quickly and safely.

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