



**Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Inspector General**

Office of Healthcare Inspections

Report No. 16-00012-251

**Review of Community Based
Outpatient Clinics and Other
Outpatient Clinics
of
Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center
Augusta, Georgia**

April 19, 2016

Washington, DC 20420

To Report Suspected Wrongdoing in VA Programs and Operations

Telephone: 1-800-488-8244

E-Mail: vaoighotline@va.gov

(Hotline Information: www.va.gov/oig/hotline)

Glossary

CBOC	community based outpatient clinic
EHR	electronic health record
EOC	environment of care
FY	fiscal year
HT	home telehealth
lab	laboratory
NA	not applicable
NM	not met
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OOC	other outpatient clinic
PC	primary care
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
VHA	Veterans Health Administration

Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	i
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	1
Objectives	1
Scope.....	1
Methodology	2
Results and Recommendations	3
EOC	3
HT Enrollment.....	8
Outpatient Lab Results Management.....	9
PTSD Care	10
Appendixes	
A. Clinic Profiles.....	11
B. Patient Aligned Care Team Compass Metrics	12
C. Veterans Integrated Service Network Director Comments	16
D. Facility Director Comments	17
E. Office of Inspector General Contact and Staff Acknowledgments	21
F. Report Distribution	22
G. Endnotes	23

Executive Summary

Review Purpose: The purpose of the review was to evaluate selected patient care activities to determine whether the Community Based Outpatient Clinics and other outpatient clinics under the oversight of the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center and Veterans Integrated Service Network 7 provide safe, consistent, and high-quality health care. The review evaluated the clinics' compliance with selected requirements for home telehealth enrollment, outpatient lab results management, and post-traumatic stress disorder care. We also randomly selected the Statesboro VA Clinic, Statesboro, GA, as a representative site and evaluated the environment of care on January 28, 2016.

Review Results: We conducted four focused reviews and made recommendations for improvement in the following review areas:

Environment of Care: Ensure that:

- Employees at the Statesboro VA Clinic receive annual training on the Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens.
- Managers ensure that Statesboro VA Clinic staff participate in emergency management training and exercises.
- The clinic manager ensures that Statesboro VA Clinic employees receive the required hazardous communications training.

Home Telehealth Enrollment: Ensure that:

- Providers sign Home Telehealth assessments and treatment plans.
- Clinicians document monthly monitoring notes for each month of Home Telehealth program participation.
- Clinicians document the Home Telehealth enrollment process prior to the entry of monthly monitoring notes.

Outpatient Lab Results Management: Ensure that:

- Clinicians consistently notify patients of their laboratory results within 14 days as required by local policy.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Care: Ensure that:

- Providers complete diagnostic evaluations for patients with positive post-traumatic stress disorder screens.

Comments

The Veterans Integrated Service Network and Facility Directors agreed with the Community Based Outpatient Clinic and other outpatient clinic review findings and recommendations and provided acceptable improvement plans. (See Appendixes C and D, pages 16–20, for the full text of the Directors' comments.) We will follow up on the planned actions for the open recommendations until they are completed.



JOHN D. DAIGH, JR., M.D.
Assistant Inspector General for
Healthcare Inspections

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Objectives

The CBOC and OOC reviews are an element of the OIG's efforts to ensure that our Nation's veterans receive high-quality VA health care services. As such, the CBOC and OOC reviews are recurring evaluations of selected outpatient care activities that focus on patient care quality and the EOC. In general, our objectives are to determine whether:

- The selected CBOC is compliant with EOC requirements.
- The CBOCs/OOCs are compliant with selected VHA documentation requirements for the enrollment, assessment, and monitoring of HT patients.
- The CBOCs/OOCs are compliant with VHA requirements for the patient notification and follow up of selected outpatient lab results.
- The CBOCs/OOCs are compliant with selected VHA requirements related to PTSD screening, diagnostic evaluation, and treatment.

Scope

To evaluate for compliance with requirements related to patient care quality and the EOC, we conducted an onsite inspection, reviewed clinical and administrative records, and discussed processes and validated findings with managers and employees. The review covered the following four activities:

- EOC
- HT Enrollment
- Outpatient Lab Results Management
- PTSD Care

The scope of this review is limited to the established objectives. Issues and concerns that come to our attention but are outside the scope of this standardized inspection will be reviewed and referred accordingly.

Methodology

The onsite EOC inspection was conducted at a randomly selected outpatient site of care that had not been previously inspected.¹ Details of the targeted study populations for the HT Enrollment, Outpatient Lab Results Management, and PTSD Care focused reviews are noted in Table 1.

Table 1. CBOC/OOC Focused Reviews and Study Populations

Review Topic	Study Population
HT Enrollment	All CBOC and OOC patients screened within the study period of July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015, who have had at least one “683” Monthly Monitoring Note and did not have Monthly Monitoring Notes documented before July 1, 2014.
Outpatient Lab Results Management	All patients who had outpatient (excluding emergency department, urgent care, or same day surgery orders) potassium and sodium serum lab test results during January 1, 2014, through December 31, 2014.
PTSD Care	All patients who had a positive PTSD screen at the parent facility’s outpatient clinics during July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015.

In this report, we make recommendations for improvement. Recommendations pertain to issues that are significant enough to be monitored by the OIG until corrective actions are implemented.

The review was performed in accordance with OIG standard operating procedures for CBOC and OOC reviews.

¹ Each outpatient site selected for physical inspection was randomized from all PC CBOCs, multi-specialty CBOCs, and health care centers reporting to the parent facility and was operational and classified as such in VA’s Site Tracking Database by August 15, 2015.

Results and Recommendations

EOC

The purpose of this review was to assess whether CBOC managers have established and maintained a safe and clean EOC as required.^a

We reviewed relevant documents and conducted a physical inspection of the Statesboro VA Clinic. The table below shows the areas reviewed for this topic. The areas marked as NM did not meet applicable requirements and needed improvement. Any items that did not apply to this facility are marked NA.

Table 2. EOC

NM	Areas Reviewed	Findings	Recommendations
Document and Training Review			
	Managers monitored clinic staff’s hand hygiene compliance.		
X	Clinic managers provided training for employees on the Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens within the past 12 months for those newly hired and annually for others.	At the Statesboro VA Clinic, 5 of 10 employees did not receive training on the Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens within the past 12 months.	1. We recommended that employees at the Statesboro VA Clinic receive annual training on the Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens.
	The clinic had a policy/procedure for life safety elements.		
	The clinic had a policy for the management of clinical emergencies.		
	The clinic had a policy for the management of mental health emergencies.		
	The clinic had a documented Hazard Vulnerability Assessment to identify potential emergencies.		
	The Hazard Vulnerability Assessment was reviewed annually.		
	The clinic had a policy that requires staff to receive regular information on their responsibilities in emergency response operations.		

NM	Areas Reviewed (continued)	Findings	Recommendations
X	Clinic staff participated in regular emergency management training and exercises.	Three of 10 clinic employees did not participate in regular emergency management training and exercises.	2. We recommended that managers ensure that Statesboro VA Clinic staff participate in emergency management training and exercises.
	The clinic conducted fire drills at least once every 12 months for the past 24 months with documented critiques of the drills.		
	The clinic had a policy/procedure for the identification of individuals entering the clinic.		
	The clinic had a Workplace Behavioral Risk Assessment in place.		
	The alarm system or panic buttons in high-risk areas were tested during the past 12 months.		
	The clinic had written procedures to follow in the event of a security incident.		
X	Clinic employees received training on the new chemical label elements and safety data sheet format.	Four of 10 clinic employees had not received any hazardous communications training on the new chemical label elements and safety data sheet format.	3. We recommended that the clinic manager ensures that Statesboro VA Clinic employees receive the required hazardous communications training.
	The clinic had a policy/procedure for the cleaning and disinfection of telehealth equipment.		
Physical Inspection			
	The clinic was clean.		
	The furnishings and equipment were safe and in good repair.		
	Hand hygiene facilities and product dispensers were working and readily accessible to employees.		
	Personal protective equipment was available.		
	Sharps containers were closable, easily accessible, and not overfilled.		

NM	Areas Reviewed (continued)	Findings	Recommendations
	Clinic staff did not store food and drinks in refrigerators or freezers or on countertops or other areas where there is blood or other potentially infectious materials.		
	Sterile commercial supplies were not expired.		
	The clinic minimized the risk of infection when storing and disposing of medical waste.		
	The clinic had unobstructed access to fire alarms/pull stations.		
	The clinic had unobstructed access to fire extinguishers.		
	For fire extinguishers located in large rooms or are obscured from view, the clinic identified the locations of the fire extinguishers with signs.		
	The exit signs were visible from every direction.		
	Exit routes from the building were unobstructed.		
	Staff wore VA-issued identification badges.		
	The clinic controlled access to and from areas identified as security sensitive.		
	The clinic had an alarm system or panic buttons installed in high-risk areas.		
	The clinic's inventory of hazardous materials was reviewed for accuracy twice within the prior 12 months.		
	The clinic's safety data sheets for chemicals were readily available for the staff.		
	The clinic provided visual and auditory privacy for veterans at check-in.		
	The clinic provided visual and auditory privacy for patients in the interview areas.		

NM	Areas Reviewed (continued)	Findings	Recommendations
	Examination room doors were equipped with either an electronic or manual lock.		
	A privacy sign was available for use to indicate that a telehealth visit was in progress.		
	Documents containing patient-identifiable information were not visible or unsecured.		
	Clinic staff locked computer screens when they were not in use.		
	Information was not viewable on monitors in public areas.		
NA	Window coverings, if present, provided privacy.		
	Clinic staff protected patient-identifiable information to maintain patient privacy on laboratory specimens during transport.		
	The clinic had examination room(s) for women veterans which were located in a space where they did not open into a public waiting room or a high-traffic public corridor.		
	The clinic provided adequate privacy for women veterans in the examination rooms.		
	The clinic provided feminine hygiene products in examination rooms where pelvic examinations were performed or in bathrooms within close proximity.		
	Women's public restrooms had feminine hygiene products and disposal bins available for use.		
	Multi-dose medication vials were not expired.		
	All medications were secured from unauthorized access.		
	The information technology network room/server closet was secured/locked.		

NM	Areas Reviewed (continued)	Findings	Recommendations
	Access to the information technology network room/server closet was restricted to personnel authorized by Office of Information and Technology, as evidenced by a list of authorized individuals.		
	Access to the information technology network room/server closet was documented, as evidenced by the presence of a sign-in/sign-out log.		

HT Enrollment

The purpose of this review was to determine whether the facility's CBOCs and OOCs are compliant with selected VHA documentation requirements for the enrollment, assessment, and monitoring of HT patients.^b

We reviewed relevant documents and 48 EHRs. We also validated findings with key managers and staff. The table below shows the areas reviewed for this topic. The areas marked as NM did not meet applicable requirements and needed improvement.

Table 3. HT Enrollment

NM	Areas Reviewed	Findings	Recommendations
	Clinicians entered a consult for HT services.		
	Clinicians completed the HT enrollment requests or "consults."		
	Clinicians documented contact with the patient to evaluate suitability for HT services.		
	Clinicians documented the patient or caregiver's verbal informed consent for HT services.		
	Clinicians documented assessments and treatment plans for HT patients.		
X	Providers signed HT assessments and treatment plans.	Providers did not sign 6 of 48 patients' HT assessments and/or treatment plans (23 percent).	4. We recommended that providers sign Home Telehealth assessments and treatment plans.
X	Monthly monitoring notes were documented for each month of HT program participation.	Clinicians did not document monthly monitoring notes for each month of program participation in 5 of 48 EHRs (10 percent).	5. We recommended that clinicians document monthly monitoring notes for each month of Home Telehealth program participation.
X	Documentation of HT enrollment (consult, screening, and/or initial assessment notes) was completed prior to the entry of monthly monitoring notes.	Clinicians did not document the enrollment process prior to the entry of monthly monitoring notes in 7 of 48 EHRs (13 percent).	6. We recommended that clinicians document the Home Telehealth enrollment process prior to the entry of monthly monitoring notes.

Outpatient Lab Results Management

The purpose of this review was to determine whether CBOCs/OOCs are compliant with VHA requirements for the patient notification and follow up of selected outpatient lab results.^c

We reviewed relevant documents and 41 EHRs. We also validated findings with key managers and staff. The table below shows the areas reviewed for this topic. The area marked as NM did not meet applicable requirements and needed improvement.

Table 4. Outpatient Lab Results Management

NM	Areas Reviewed	Findings	Recommendations
	The facility has a written policy regarding communication of lab results from diagnostic practitioner to ordering practitioner.		
	The facility has a written policy for the communication of lab results that included all required elements.		
X	Clinicians notified patients of their lab results.	Clinicians did not consistently notify 5 of 41 patients (12 percent) of their lab results within 14 days as required by local policy.	7. We recommended that clinicians consistently notify patients of their laboratory results within 14 days as required by local policy.
	Clinicians documented in the EHR all attempts to communicate with the patients regarding their lab results.		
	Clinicians provided interventions for clinically significant abnormal lab results.		

PTSD Care

The purpose of this review was to assess whether CBOCs/OOCs are compliant with selected VHA requirements for PTSD follow up in the outpatient setting.^d

We reviewed relevant documents and 48 EHRs. We also validated findings with key managers and staff. The table below shows the areas reviewed for this topic. The area marked as NM did not meet applicable requirements and needed improvement.

Table 5. PTSD Care

NM	Areas Reviewed	Findings	Recommendations
	Each patient with a positive PTSD screen received a suicide risk assessment.		
	Suicide risk assessments for patients with positive PTSD screens are completed by acceptable providers.		
	Acceptable providers established plans of care and disposition for patients with positive PTSD screens.		
	Acceptable providers offered further diagnostic evaluations to patients with positive PTSD screens.		
X	Providers completed diagnostic evaluations for patients with positive PTSD screens.	Providers did not complete clinical diagnostic evaluation in one of nine EHRs.	8. We recommended that providers complete diagnostic evaluations for patients with positive PTSD screens.
	Patients, when applicable, received mental health treatment.		

Clinic Profiles

This review evaluates the quality of care provided to veterans at all of the outpatient clinics under the parent facility's oversight.² In addition to PC integrated with women's health, MH, and tele-health services, the CBOCs provide various specialty care and ancillary services. The following table provides information relative to each of the outpatient clinics and lists the services provided at each location.³

Location	Station #	Rurality	Outpatient Classification ⁶	Outpatient Workload / Encounters ⁴			Services Provided ⁵	
				PC	MH	Specialty Clinics ⁷	Specialty Care ⁸	Ancillary Services ⁹
Athens, GA	509GA	Urban	Primary Care CBOC	10,063	9,741	33	NA	Audiology Diabetic Retinal Screening Electrocardiography Home Based Primary Care MOVE! Program ¹⁰ Pharmacy Social Work
Aiken, SC	509GB	Urban	Primary Care CBOC	7,873	4,347	0	NA	Diabetic Retinal Screening MOVE! Program Nutrition Pharmacy Social Work

² Includes all CBOCs in operation before August 15, 2015. We have omitted 509QA (Statesboro), as no workload/encounters or services were reported.

³ <http://vssc.med.va.gov/>

⁴ An encounter is a professional contact between a patient and a practitioner vested with responsibility for diagnosing, evaluating, and treating the patient's condition. Encounters occur in both the outpatient and inpatient setting.

⁵ The denoted Specialty Care and Ancillary Services are limited to Primary Clinic Stops with a count ≥ 100 encounters during the October 1, 2014, through September 30, 2015, timeframe at the specified CBOC.

⁶ VHA Handbook 1006.02, *VHA Site Classifications and Definitions*, December 30, 2013.

⁷ The total number of encounters for the services provided in the "Specialty Care" column.

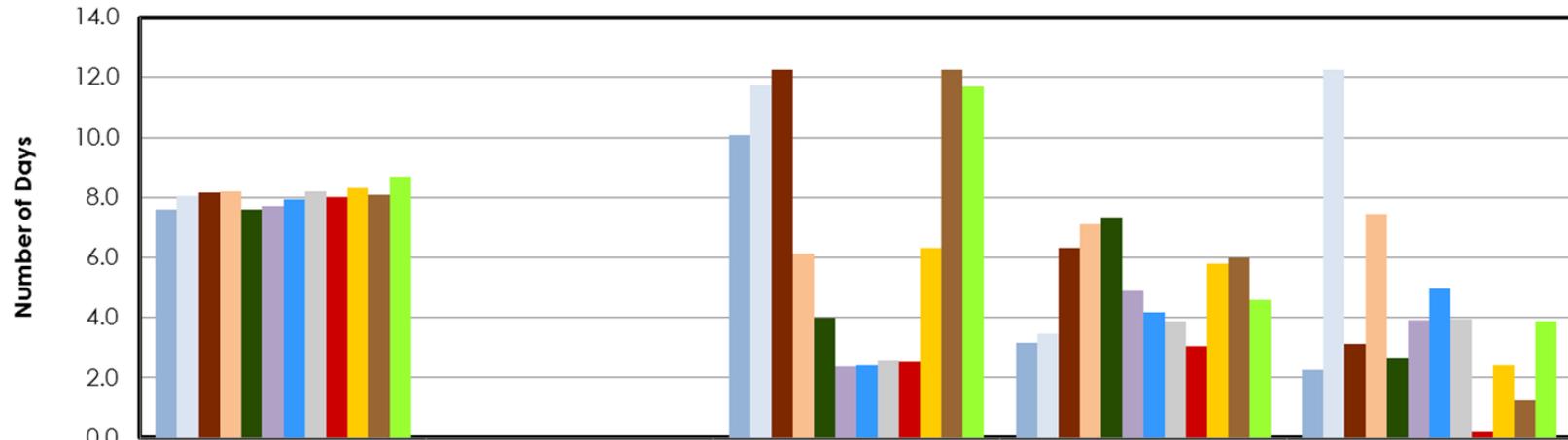
⁸ Specialty Care Services refer to non-Primary Care and non-Mental Health services provided by a physician.

⁹ Ancillary Services refer to non-Primary Care and non-Mental Health services that are not provided by a physician.

¹⁰ VHA Handbook 1120.01, *MOVE! Weight Management Program for Veterans*, March 31, 2011.

Patient Aligned Care Team Compass Metrics

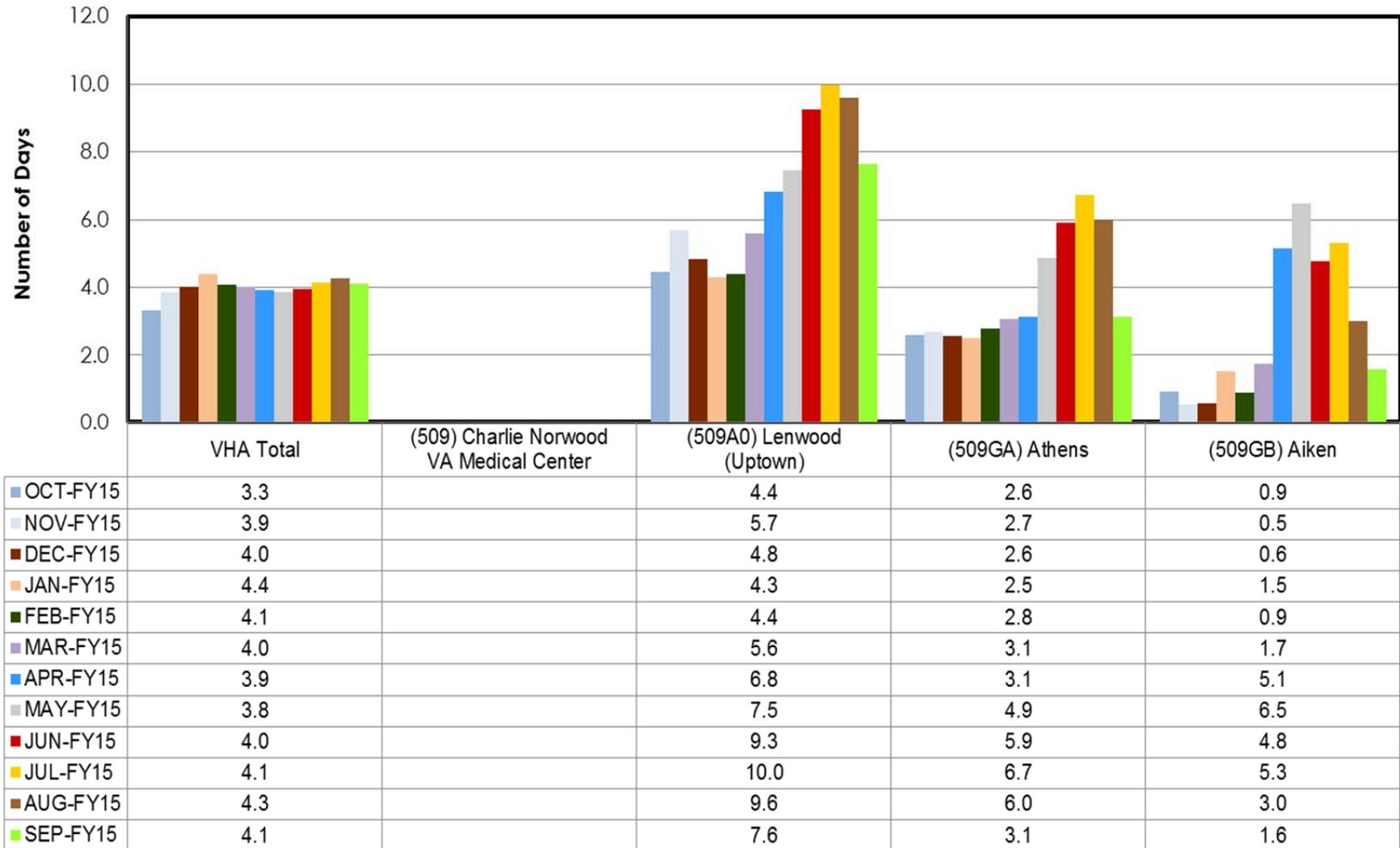
FY 2015 New PC Patient Average Wait Time in Days



	VHA Total	(509) Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center	(509A0) Lenwood (Uptown)	(509GA) Athens	(509GB) Aiken
OCT-FY15	7.6		10.1	3.1	2.3
NOV-FY15	8.1		11.7	3.4	12.2
DEC-FY15	8.1		12.3	6.3	3.1
JAN-FY15	8.2		6.1	7.1	7.4
FEB-FY15	7.6		4.0	7.3	2.7
MAR-FY15	7.7		2.4	4.9	3.9
APR-FY15	7.9		2.4	4.2	5.0
MAY-FY15	8.2		2.6	3.9	4.0
JUN-FY15	8.0		2.5	3.0	0.2
JUL-FY15	8.3		6.3	5.8	2.4
AUG-FY15	8.1		12.3	6.0	1.3
SEP-FY15	8.7		11.7	4.6	3.9

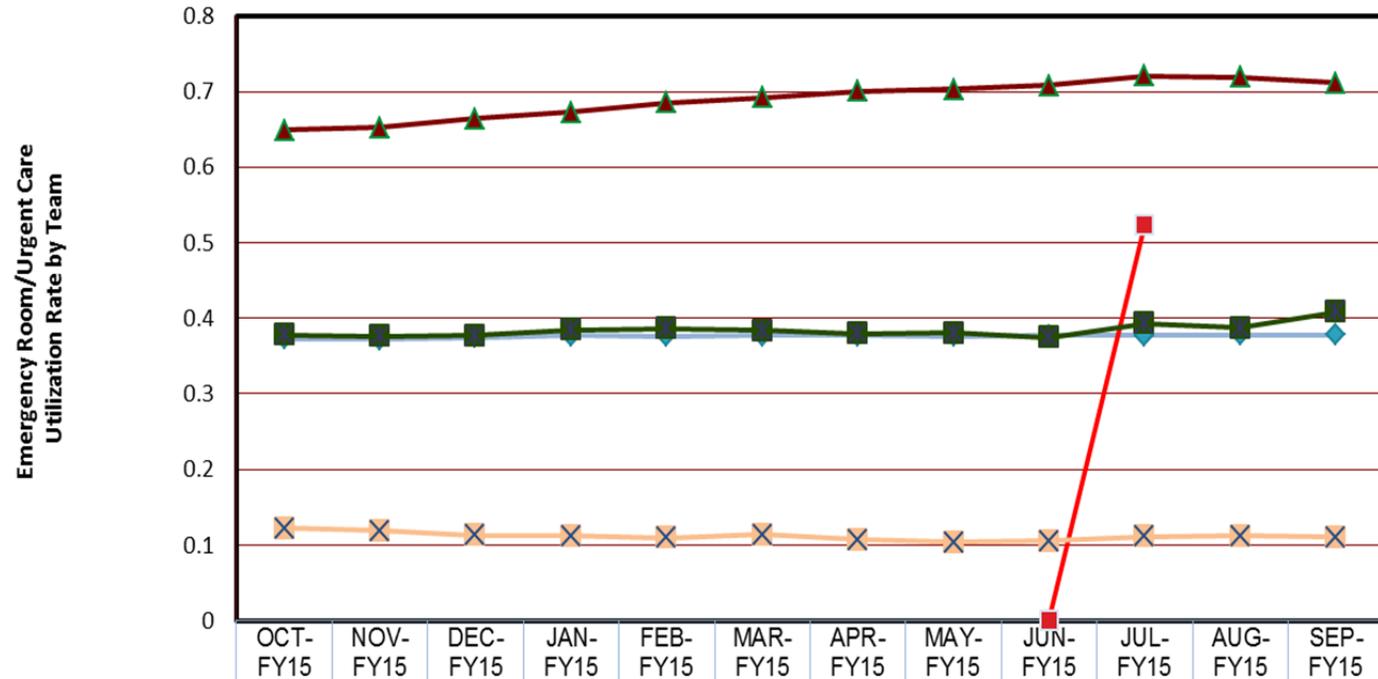
Data Definition.^e The average number of calendar days between a New Patient’s PC completed appointment (clinic stops 322, 323, and 350, excluding Compensation and Pension appointments) and the earliest of three possible preferred (desired) dates (Electronic Wait List (EWL), Cancelled by Clinic Appointment, Completed Appointment) from the completed appointment date. *Note that prior to FY15, this metric was calculated using the earliest possible create date.* Blank cells indicate the absence of reported data.

FY 2015 Established PC Patient Average Wait Time in Days



Data Definition.^e The average number of calendar days between an Established Patient’s PC completed appointment (clinic stops 322, 323, and 350, excluding Compensation and Pension appointments) and the earliest of three possible preferred (desired) dates (Electronic Wait List (EWL), Cancelled by Clinic Appointment, Completed Appointment) from the completed appointment date. Blank cells indicate the absence of reported data.

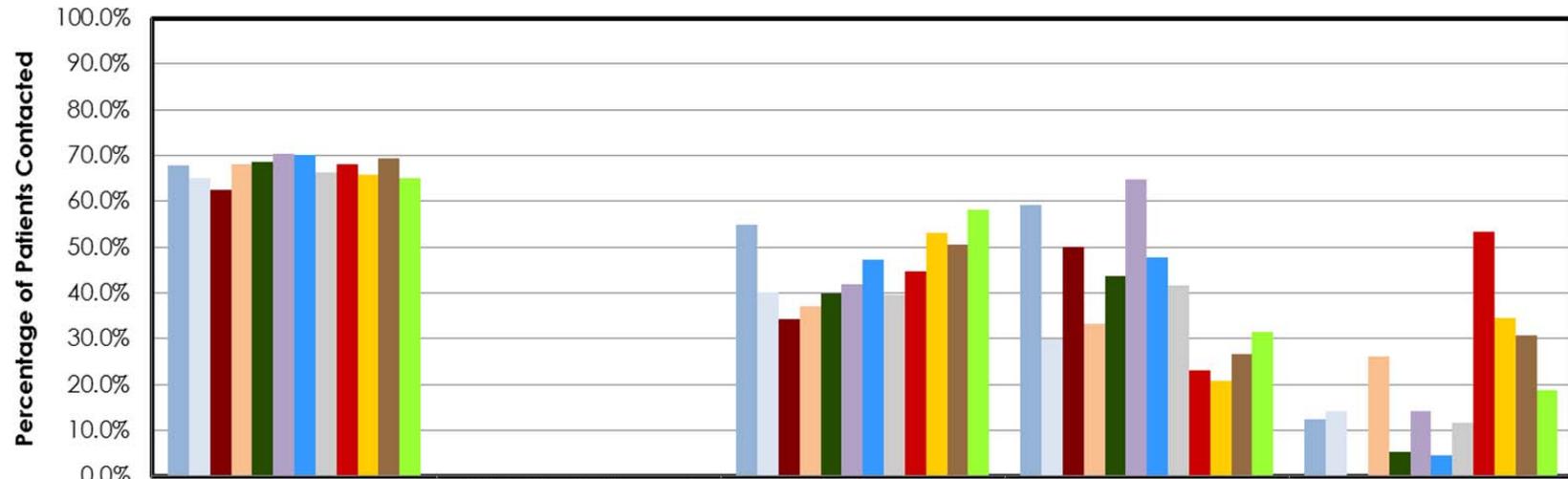
FY 2015 Emergency Room/Urgent Care Utilization Rate for Assigned PC Patients



	OCT-FY15	NOV-FY15	DEC-FY15	JAN-FY15	FEB-FY15	MAR-FY15	APR-FY15	MAY-FY15	JUN-FY15	JUL-FY15	AUG-FY15	SEP-FY15
VHA Total	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38
(509) Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center									0.00	0.52		
(509A0) Lenwood (Uptown)	0.65	0.65	0.66	0.67	0.68	0.69	0.70	0.70	0.71	0.72	0.72	0.71
(509GA) Athens	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.11
(509GB) Aiken	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.39	0.39	0.41

Data Definition.^e The total Emergency Room/Urgent Care encounters for assigned PC patients in the last 12 months divided by the Team Assignments. VHA Emergency Room/Urgent Care encounters are defined as encounters with a Primary Stop Code of 130 or 131 in either the primary or secondary position, excluding encounters with a Secondary Stop Code of 107, 115, 152, 311, 333, 334, 999, 474, 103, 430, 328, 321, 329, or 435 and the encounter was with a licensed independent practitioner (MD, DO, RNP, PA). Blank cells indicate the absence of reported data.

FY 2015 Team 2-Day Post Discharge Contact Ratio



	VHA Total	(509) Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center	(509A0) Lenwood (Uptown)	(509GA) Athens	(509GB) Aiken
OCT-FY15	67.9%		54.8%	59.3%	12.5%
NOV-FY15	64.9%		40.2%	30.0%	14.3%
DEC-FY15	62.6%		34.3%	50.0%	0.0%
JAN-FY15	68.0%		37.1%	33.3%	26.1%
FEB-FY15	68.6%		39.9%	43.8%	5.3%
MAR-FY15	70.4%		42.0%	64.7%	14.3%
APR-FY15	70.1%		47.3%	47.8%	4.5%
MAY-FY15	66.3%		39.6%	41.7%	11.8%
JUN-FY15	68.2%		44.6%	23.1%	53.3%
JUL-FY15	65.9%		53.0%	20.8%	34.6%
AUG-FY15	69.4%		50.6%	26.7%	30.8%
SEP-FY15	65.1%		58.2%	31.6%	18.8%

Data Definition.^e The percent of assigned PC patients discharged from any VA facility who have been contacted by a PC team member within 2 business days during the reporting period. Patients are excluded if they are discharged from an observation specialty and/or readmitted within 2 business days to any VA facility. Team members must have been assigned to the patient’s team at the time of the patient’s discharge. Blank cells indicate the absence of reported data.

Veterans Integrated Service Network Director Comments

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: March 11, 2016

From: Director, VA Southeast Network (10N7)

Subject: **Review of CBOCs and OOCs of Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Augusta, GA**

To: Director, Atlanta Office of Healthcare Inspections (54AT)

Director, Management Review Service (VHA 10E1D MRS OIG CAP CBOC)

1. Please find the response to the community based outpatient program review by the Office of the Inspector General Healthcare Inspection, conducted January 28, 2016, entitled, "Review of Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Other Outpatient Clinics of the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Augusta, Georgia."
2. I concur with the report and recommendations. Attached is the facility's Corrective Action Plan.
3. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Donna Schnider, Quality Management Officer, at 678-924-5700.

(original signed by:)

Leslie Wiggins

Facility Director Comments

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: March 10, 2016

From: Director, Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center (509/00)

Subject: Review of CBOCs and OOCs of Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Augusta, GA

To: Director, VA Southeast Network (10N7)

1. Please find the response to the community based outpatient program review by the Office of Inspector General Healthcare Inspection, conducted January 28, 2016, entitled, "Review of Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Other Outpatient Clinics of the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Augusta, Georgia."
2. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Clare O'Geary, RN, MSN, FACHE, Acting Chief, Quality Management at (706) 733-0188, extension 2105.

(original signed by:)

Maria R. Andrews, MA, FACHE
Medical Center Director

Comments to OIG's Report

The following Director's comments are submitted in response to the recommendations in the OIG report:

OIG Recommendations

Recommendation 1. We recommended that employees at the Statesboro VA Clinic receive annual training on the Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens.

Concur

Target date for completion: March 31, 2016

Facility response: All employees and contract staff at Statesboro VA Clinic will have completed the annual training on the Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens within expected time frame.

Requirements for completion of the Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne Pathogens training will be added to current and future contracts in which the contracted employee will be working in a clinical setting or where there is significant risk of exposure. Requirements will include completion of the VA annual training or by the contractor providing documentation of completion of training provided by the contracting agency in compliance with OSHA guideline 29 CFR 1910.1030 (g)(2) & 29 CFR 1910.1200 (h).

Recommendation 2. We recommended that managers ensure that Statesboro VA Clinic staff participate in emergency management training and exercises.

Concur

Target date for completion: June 30, 2016

Facility response: The facility will ensure that all employees including contract staff at Statesboro VA clinic staff complete annual emergency management training and participate in emergency management exercises. An annual emergency management exercise is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2016.

Recommendation 3. We recommended that the clinic manager ensures that Statesboro VA Clinic employees receive the required hazardous communications training.

Concur

Target date for completion: March 31, 2016

Facility response: All employees and contract staff at Statesboro VA Clinic will have completed the annual training on hazardous communications within the expected time frame.

Requirements for completion of the hazardous communication will be added to current and future contracts in which the contracted employee will be working in a clinical setting or where there is significant risk of exposure. Requirements will include completion of the VA annual training or by the contractor providing documentation of completion of training provided by the contracting agency in compliance with OSHA guideline 29 CFR 1910.1030 (g)(2) & 29 CFR 1910.1200 (h).

Recommendation 4. We recommended that providers sign Home Telehealth assessments and treatment plans.

Concur

Target date for completion: July 31, 2016

Facility response: Additional training was provided to providers and Home Telehealth staff with emphasis on co-signing of assessments and plans of care on 2/17/16 and 3/2/16 during staff meetings. Monthly chart audits will be conducted until 90% compliance is achieved for 3 consecutive months and compliance will be reported to senior leadership.

Recommendation 5. We recommended that clinicians document monthly monitoring notes for each month of Home Telehealth program participation.

Concur

Target date for completion: July 31, 2016

Facility response: Additional training was provided to providers and Home Telehealth staff with emphasis on documenting monthly monitoring notes for each month of Home Telehealth program participation on 2/17/16 and 3/2/16 during staff meetings. Monthly chart audits will be conducted until 90% compliance is achieved for 3 consecutive months and compliance will be reported to senior leadership.

Recommendation 6. We recommended that clinicians document the Home Telehealth enrollment process prior to the entry of monthly monitoring notes.

Concur

Target date for completion: July 31, 2016

Facility response: Additional training was provided to providers and Home Telehealth staff with emphasis on documenting the Home Telehealth enrollment process prior to the entry of monthly monitoring notes on 2/17/16 and 3/2/16 during staff meetings.

Monthly chart audits will be conducted until 90% compliance is achieved for 3 consecutive months and compliance will be reported to senior leadership.

Recommendation 7. We recommended that clinicians consistently notify patients of their laboratory results within 14 days as required by local policy.

Concur

Target date for completion: July 31, 2016

Facility response: Primary Care Physicians were re-educated on VHA Directive 1088-Communicating Test Results to Providers and Patients during the 1/20/16 staff meeting and via an email PowerPoint presentation on 12/30/15 and 1/20/2016. Monthly chart audits will be conducted until 90% compliance is achieved for 3 consecutive months and compliance will be reported to senior leadership.

Recommendation 8. We recommended that providers complete diagnostic evaluations for patients with positive post-traumatic stress disorder screens.

Concur

Target date for completion: July 31, 2016

Facility response: Primary Care Physicians were re-educated on compliance with documenting of care coordination related to positive PTSD screens during the 1/20/16 staff meeting. Monthly chart audits will be conducted until 90% compliance is achieved for 3 consecutive months and compliance will be reported to senior leadership.

Office of Inspector General Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

Contact	For more information about this report, please contact the OIG at (202) 461-4720.
Inspection Team	Tishanna McCutchen, DNP, MSPH, Team Leader Darlene Conde-Nadeau, MSN, ARNP Martha Kearns, MSN, FNP
Other Contributors	Shirley Carlile, BA Lin Clegg, PhD Marnette Dhooghe, MS Jennifer Reed, RN, MSHI Larry Ross, Jr., MS Marilyn Stones, BS Mary Toy, RN, MSN Joanne Wasko, LCSW Toni Woodard, BS Jarvis Yu, MS

Report Distribution

VA Distribution

Office of the Secretary
Veterans Health Administration
Assistant Secretaries
General Counsel
Director, VA Southeast Network (10N7)
Director, Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center (509/00)

Non-VA Distribution

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and
Related Agencies
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and
Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
National Veterans Service Organizations
Government Accountability Office
Office of Management and Budget
U.S. Senate: Johnny Isakson, David Perdue
U.S. House of Representatives: Rick Allen; Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.; Buddy Carter;
Doug Collins; Tom Graves; Jody Hice; Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.; John Lewis;
Barry Loudermilk; Tom Price; Austin Scott; David Scott; Lynn A. Westmoreland;
Robert Woodall

This report is available at www.va.gov/oig.

Endnotes

^a References used for the EOC review included:

- International Association of Healthcare Central Services Materiel Management, *Central Service Technical Manual*, 7th ed.
- Joint Commission, *Joint Commission Comprehensive Accreditation and Certification Manual*, July 1, 2015.
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), *NFPA 10: Installation of Portable Fire Extinguishers*, 2013.
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), *NFPA 101: Life Safety Code*, 2015.
- US Department of Health and Human Services, *Health Information Privacy: The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Enforcement Rule*, February 16, 2006.
- US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), *Fact Sheet: Hazard Communication Standard Final Rule*, n.d.
- US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), *Regulations (Standards – 29 CFR), 1910 General Industry Standards, 120 Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response*, February 8, 2013.
- US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), *Regulations (Standards – 29 CFR), 1910 General Industry Standards, 1030 Bloodborne Pathogens*, April 3, 2012.
- VA Directive 0059, *VA Chemicals Management and Pollution Prevention*, May 25, 2012.
- VA Handbook 6500, *Risk Management Framework for VA Information Systems – Tier 3: VA Information Security Program*, March 10, 2015.
- VHA Center for Engineering, Occupational Safety, and Health (CEOSH), *Emergency Management Program Guidebook*, March 2011.
- VHA Directive 2011-007, *Required Hand Hygiene Practices*, February 16, 2011.
- VHA Directive 2012-026, *Sexual Assaults & Other Defined Public Safety Incidents in VHA Facilities*, September 27, 2012.
- VHA Handbook 1006.1, *Planning and Activating Community-Based Outpatient Clinics*, May 19, 2004.
- VHA Handbook 1101.10, *Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) Handbook*, February 5, 2014.
- VHA Handbook 1160.01, *Uniform Mental Health Services in VA Medical Centers and Clinics*, September 11, 2008.
- VHA Handbook 1330.01, *Health Care Services for Women Veterans*, May 21, 2010.
- VHA Handbook 1605.1, *Privacy and Release of Information*, May 17, 2006.
- VHA Handbook 1907.01, *Health Information Management*, July 22, 2014.
- VHA Telehealth Services, *Clinic Based Telehealth Operations Manual*, July 2014.

^b References used for the HT Enrollment review included:

- VHA Office of VHA Telehealth Services Home Telehealth Operations Manual, April 13, 2015.
Accessed from: <http://vaww.telehealth.va.gov/pgm/ht/index.asp>

^c References used for the Outpatient Lab Results Management review included:

- VHA, *Communication of Test Results Toolkit*, April 2012.
- VHA Handbook 2009-019, *Ordering and Reporting Test Results*, March 24, 2009.

^d References used for the PTSD Care review included:

- Department of Veterans Affairs Memorandum, *Information Bulletin: Clarification of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Screening Requirements*, August 2015.
- VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for Management of Post-Traumatic Stress, Version 2.0, October 2010.
- VHA Handbook 1160.01, *Uniform Mental Health Services in VA Medical Centers and Clinics*, September 11, 2008.
- VHA Handbook 1160.03, *Programs for Veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*, March 12, 2010.
- VHA Technical Manual – PTSD, VA Measurement Manual PTSD-51.

^e Reference used for Patient Aligned Care Team Compass data graphs:

- Department of Veterans' Affairs, *Patient Aligned Care Teams Compass Data Definitions*, accessed: June 25, 2015.