

A photograph of the Tomah Wisconsin Veterans Affairs Medical Center building. The building is a large, multi-story red brick structure with a prominent classical portico on the ground floor. The portico features four tall, white columns supporting a triangular pediment with a decorative relief. Above the columns are several windows with decorative lintels. A central entrance is visible at the bottom, with a set of stairs leading up to it. The building has a distinctive cupola on the roof. The sky is clear and blue, and there are green trees in the foreground and background.

**Tomah Wisconsin
Veterans Affairs Medical Center
2013 Annual Report**

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2013 Annual Report

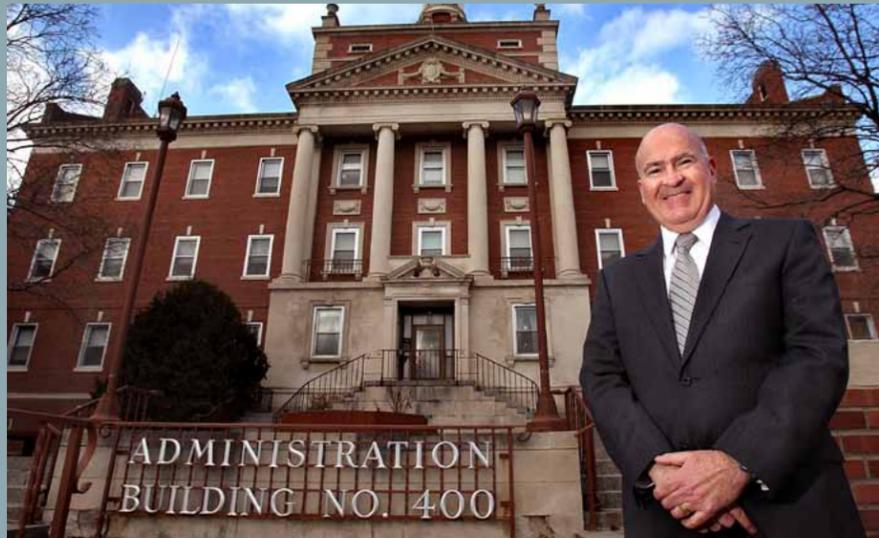
Mario V. DeSanctis, FACHE, was appointed as director of the Tomah VA Medical Center on Feb. 12, 2012.

As director, he is responsible for planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling medical, administrative and supporting operations of the Tomah VA and its four outpatient clinics. This includes managing resources, 1066 staff members and 380 volunteers to provide medical care and treatment to more than 25,000 patients. He is responsible for the operation of a 266-bed inpatient facility located on the 171-acre historical campus.

This includes operation of an acute medicine unit and serving as a network referral site for acute mental health; residential treatment for post traumatic stress disorder; substance abuse and compensated work therapy; and a comprehensive range of long-term care services including rehabilitation, hospice, dementia, and mental health.

Prior to becoming the director, DeSanctis served in the U.S. Air Force Medical Service Corps, retiring as a colonel. His distinguished career spanned 30 years and 11 military assignments. DeSanctis served in key leadership positions in the U.S. Air Force Medical Service at Air Force medical facilities, intermediate command and headquarters.

He is a native of Lewiston, Maine and received his bachelor's degree at the University of Southern Maine in Portland, Maine; master's degree from Saint Joseph's College in Standish, Maine in 1999. DeSanctis is also a board certified fellow with the American College of Healthcare Executives.



Quality, Compassionate Care, Every Veteran, Every Day

These are not just words from our mission statement. These are the words we live and work by at the Tomah VA. You can see it on our campus and in the care our Veterans receive.

I am extremely proud of the staff and volunteers here and of all we accomplished in 2013. My focus has been on building a Veterans Medical Center of Choice based upon employee engagement, cultural transformation and operational excellence.

There's no doubt that people who choose health care careers are a special kind of people. It's not about punching a clock. It's not about getting rich. It's not about glory and public recognition. It's about a commitment to caring.

We have enhanced our environment of care by engaging Veterans, staff and community partners to impact patient-centered care initiatives. Environmental and Facility Management Services are transforming our historic campus into a 21st century medical center. I see these changes in operation each day and it creates enthusiasm and a sense of pride in how far we have come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mario V. DeSanctis".

Mario V. DeSanctis, FACHE
Medical Center Director



David W. Huffman was named associate director of the Tomah VA Medical Center Jan. 28, 2013.

Prior to this appointment, he served as the Chief of Environmental Management Service, EEO Manager, Public Affairs Officer, Specialty Care Service Line Administrative Officer, Compliance Officer and Staff Assistant to the Director at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System in Des Moines, Iowa.

Most recently, he served as the Acting Associate Director for Resources and Operations at VA Central Iowa.

Huffman began his career at the Columbia, S.C. VA Medical Center in 1985 and has served in leadership positions at VA Medical Centers in Pennsylvania, Nebraska and Iowa.

Huffman earned a Master's Degree in Environmental Health from East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tenn., and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from Mars Hill College in Mars Hill, N.C.



David J. Houlihan, MD, was appointed chief of staff at the Tomah VA Medical Center on Aug. 21, 2005.

Houlihan is responsible for all clinical operations at the medical center.

He has direct line authority over the four clinical service lines, providing services for the facility's 266 inpatient beds, as well as outpatient primary and specialty services, and the four community based outpatient clinics.

Houlihan received his M.D. degree from the University of Iowa College of Medicine, Iowa City, Iowa. He completed his internship and residency at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, Pittsburgh, Penn.

In October 1995, he received Board Certification from the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc.

Houlihan received recertification in July 2005 with added qualifications in psychosomatic medication in August 2005.



Judith E. Broad, RN, BSN, MSN, PhD was appointed as the associate director for patient care services on Dec. 18, 2011. She retired from the VA in February 2014.

She was responsible for the nursing services at the Tomah VA and four outpatient clinics. She had authority for nursing, social work, respiratory therapy, and medical equipment reprocessing.

Prior to this appointment, she had been the Tomah VA Performance Improvement Director and Clinical Chief for Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing at the University of Rochester Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, N.Y.

Broad received a bachelor of science degree in nursing from Capital University, Columbus, Ohio; a master of science degree in psychiatric nursing from the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University, and a philosophy of science doctoral degree from the University of Rochester, Rochester, N.Y.



Program provides mental health care closer to home

In 2013, the Tomah VA was one of 15 VA pilot sites working with community-based mental health providers to help Veterans access mental health services in a timely manner.

“Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center is proud to partner with the Tomah VA on mental health care. We do this as part of our commitment to assuring health care access for our area”, said Mari Freiberg, Executive Director of Scenic Bluffs, a private non-profit Community Health Center. “We are especially proud to be able support our veterans and their families because of all they’ve done to serve us.”

Freiberg added the Health Center has found an exemplary partner in the Tomah VA and staff, and is excited by future possibilities of services beyond mental health care.

“If there is a way to improve primary care access for veterans in the community, we are happy to be a part of those efforts led by the Tomah VA staff,” said Freiberg.

The president’s executive order requires VA and Health and Human Services to establish pilot projects whereby VA develops formal arrangements with community-based providers such as community mental health centers, community health centers, substance abuse treatment facilities, and rural health clinics, to explore the use of community partnerships in helping to meet the mental health needs of Veterans.

Pilot programs were varied and included provisions for inpatient, residential, and outpatient mental health and substance abuse services over time. Additional elements for some

sites included tele-mental health, staff sharing and space utilization arrangements to allow VA clinicians to provide services directly in communities that are distant from a VA facility. This partnership gives Veterans in the area additional options for mental health coverage in southern Monroe and Vernon Counties.

Tomah VAMC offers a range of treatments and services for the mental health of Veterans at the medical center campus in Tomah and at outpatient clinics in Wausau, La Crosse, Wisconsin Rapids, and Owen.

Inpatient mental health services include an acute psychiatric hospital program, short and long term inpatient mental health recovery programs, and residential treatment programs.

2013 Hall of Heroes inductees

The Tomah VA inducted two new members into its Hall of Heroes during the annual Veterans Day observance on Nov. 8 in the chapel.

Glenn M. Olstad of Black River Falls, Wis., and Joseph F. Taylor, of Whitehall, Wis., were inducted into the Hall of Heroes during the annual Veterans Day ceremony.

Chief Master Sgt. Gregory Cullen, the Wisconsin Air National Guard State Command Chief, delivered the keynote speech for the program that included patriotic music from Creative Arts Festival winner and Army Veteran Dan Krehbiel and the Tomah High School Select Choir.

To be inducted into the Hall of Heroes, Veterans should have been decorated with a personal award and/or citation for heroism or valor.

Awards are ranked according to military ranking, i.e., Congressional Medal of Honor being the highest possible decoration.

Multiple awards for bravery, receipt of a Purple Heart and prisoner of war status are also considered.

Veterans currently in the Hall of Heroes are:

- Einer H. Ingman, Jr. of Tomahawk, Wis., inducted May 2005
- Kenneth E. Murphy of Necedah, Wis., inducted May 2005
- Robert W. Teeples of Black River Falls, Wis., inducted February 2006
- Wilbert “Bill” Sorenson of La Crosse, Wis., inducted February 2006
- John Steele of Sparta, Wis., inducted November 2006
- Mitchell Redcloud, Jr. of Black River Falls, Wis., inducted November 2006
- Joseph B. Kube of Tomah, Wis., inducted November 2007
- Robert M. Roth of Lyndon Station, Wis., inducted November 2007
- Peter Quirin of Sparta, Wis., inducted November 2008
- Henry Weinberger of Tomah, Wis., inducted November 2008
- Steven Pappas of Grand Marsh, Wis., inducted November 2009

- Robert Witzig of Fennimore, Wis., inducted November 2009
- Peter Wirth of Spring Grove, Wis., inducted November 2010
- Leonard Jasinski of Chippewa Falls, Wis., inducted November 2010
- John I. Gerzel of Warrens, Wis., inducted November 2011
- Ronald R. Niles originally of Mauston, Wis., inducted November 2011
- Clarence Suchon, of Stevens Point, inducted November 2012
- Reynold J. Bourgord, of Necedah, inducted November 2012
- Glenn M. Olstad, of Black River Falls, inducted November 2013
- Joseph F. Taylor, of Whitehall, inducted November 2013

Submissions of potential honorees are being sought. In order to be considered for the the calendar year’s induction, nomination packets are due by Oct. 19, but submissions can be sent year round.

For more information or nomination forms, please contact the Tomah VA Office of Public Affairs at (608) 372-7759.





2013 A year in numbers

Total Budget	\$155,895,641
Medical Care Cost Fund	\$2,059,246
Medical Services	\$123,820,794
Medical Support and Compliance	\$12,524,439
Medical Facility	\$19,550,408
Total Expenditures	\$155,895,641
Capital Asset Expenditures	\$7,279,762
Supplies and Services	\$49,536,167
Salaries	\$88,840,764
Grants, Fixed Charges	\$1,126,670
Capital Asset Expenditures	
Furnishings, Equipment	\$2,512,995
Station, VISN Funded Construction	\$2,512,995
Minor Construction	\$4,403,034
Employees	1,032

Encounters

Encounters	
2012	440,271
2013	457,760
Enrollees	
2012	31,227
2013	31,668
Women Veterans	
2012	1,950
2013	2,012
Active Enrollees	
2012	25,795
2013	26,105

Voluntary service

The figures on this page tell the volunteer story in numbers, yet one cannot begin to put a price tag on the impact volunteers make at the Tomah VA Medical Center.

Volunteers bring so much to the Tomah VA. They share their time, talents, ideas, and spirit, while they are touching the lives of Veterans, families and employees.

Whether a volunteer is staying by the bedside of a dying Veteran, calling bingo, driving a Veteran to their VA appointment, helping with meals, serving coffee in a waiting room, opening the library on the weekend,

or preparing a Veteran's income tax return, volunteers touch and enhanced our lives.

Volunteers also assist VA employees.

Volunteers file paperwork, answer telephones, enter data, type letters, scan documents, deliver supplies, and prepare mail, to name a few.

Volunteers represented 36 organizations in Fiscal Year 2013; yet 33 percent of volunteer hours contributed by nonaffiliated volunteers.

Volunteers make a difference every day at the Tomah VA.



Volunteers on Rolls

Volunteers on Rolls	380
Total Volunteer Hours	34,032
Item Donations	\$215,368.41
Activities Donations	\$31,034.32
Cash Donations	\$80,749.46
Total Donations	\$327,152.19
Volunteer Hourly Value	\$22.14 per hour, by Independent Sector.org
Total Resource Impact	\$753,468.48
	\$980,620.67





Communication reaches generations of Veterans

The Tomah VA Medical Center recognizes the importance of information reaching Veterans where they are and when they need it through, not only interpersonal communication, but electronic means.

In 2013, the Tomah VA Facebook page had surpassed 1000 "Likes"

remaining steady as the fastest growing page in Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN 12) and again doubling its reach to Veterans and the community since the previous year.

The Tomah VA also branched out further into electronic and social media in 2013. The Tomah

VA expanded its social media reach with a Twitter and Flickr pages to compliment the facelift to the public internet site.



Go check them out!

- <http://www.tomah.va.gov>
- <http://www.facebook.com/TomahVAMC2>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/Tomahvamc>
- <http://twitter.com/TomahVAMC>

Community living centers, courtyard unveiled

The Tomah VA celebrated its remodeled community living centers in Building 401 and the courtyard with grand openings in 2013.

The \$8.7 million CLC remodeling project of the second and third floors of Building 401 included 40 private rooms for Veterans that feature private baths, built-in wardrobes, desk, private 32-inch televisions, and each room has at least one window.

The remodeled courtyard was broken in during the July 4th carnival.

The celebration included a variety of activities for Veterans including checkers, chess, horse shoes, lawn darts, and a dunk tank.





Stand Downs bring services to Wausau, La Crosse Veterans

Hundreds of Veterans received access to benefits they may not even have known they had during Stand Downs in La Crosse and Wausau, Wis. in September and October.

La Crosse American Legion Post 52 hosted the 15th Annual La Crosse Stand Down in October and the Wausau Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 388 hosted the first Wausau Stand Down.

The Stand Down made many of the resources Veterans are entitled to available to them in one place.

During the Stand Down, Veter-

ans had the opportunity to learn about the resources that VA and other community providers can offer. The resources include VA benefits and enrollment, employment programs, credit counseling, social security, health screenings, PTSD, drug and alcohol treatment, financial counseling, housing and shelter information/referrals, and legal assistance through community partnerships. Flu shots were also offered to Veterans.

La Crosse County Veterans Service Officer Jim Gausmann said a stand down is a military tradition and the name is fitting for the event.

“When a unit’s been in combat, they come back to go to a safe area, and their commander will say, ‘Alright men, stand down. Forty-eight hours before we’ve got to go back out in combat.’ It’s a safe place. It means you can relax, get some food, get some water, get cleaned up ... and then go back out and do what you’ve got to do,” said Gausmann.

According to Health Care for Homeless Vets, there are about 700 homeless Veterans in Wisconsin. More than 100 of them are in the La Crosse and Wausau areas.

Veterans from Wausau and La Crosse took part in comradery, flu shots and other Veteran services, during stand downs in September and October.



Mental health summit enhances Veterans' care access

The Tomah VA Medical Center held a mental health and homelessness summit on July 25 at the Cranberry Country Lodge in Tomah, Wisc.

The summit included representatives from numerous groups, including businesses, law enforcement, hospitals, and volunteer organizations.

The purpose of the summit was to bring together stakeholders in the area to enhance access to mental health services and addressing the mental healthcare and homeless needs of Veterans and their support network residing in the counties served by the Tomah VAMC.

“We all wanted to come together to find if there are ways we can better coordinate to serve veterans and families,” said Dr. David Skripka, the Tomah VA Associate Chief of Staff of Mental Health.

Tomah VA staff from mental health case management, psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery center, homeless program, primary care, and social work, were in attendance.

Representatives from local law enforcement, Vet Centers, Veteran service organizations, elected officials, County Veteran Service Officers, and other stakeholders have also been invited to the summit.

“(We are) Looking for very specific actionable items and one example of that is some of the community members said they’d appreciate having a clear one point of contact to let us know of events that might be available,” said Skripka.

The mental health summit included overviews of local mental health and homelessness and identified VA and non-VA resources for addressing the mental health care and homeless needs of Veterans and their family members.

It helped identified the gaps and or challenges in meeting the mental health care and homeless needs of Veterans and their family members.



Tomah VA pays respect to service in ceremonies

The Tomah VA held its annual ceremonies to recognize Memorial Day, Veterans Day and POW/MIA Day on the medical center campus.

More than 300 Veterans, employees, volunteers, and local military attended ceremonies to honor America's heroes are serving and who have served in our nation's military forces.

In May, over 200 people gathered on the front steps of Building 400 for the Memorial Day observance in which the 32nd Infantry Brigade Commander Col. Tim Lawson delivered the keynote speech.

In September, service members and civilians who are still missing in action were remembered in a candle lighting ceremony during the annual POW/MIA Day ceremony.

In November, a standing-room only crowd gathered in the chapel as Wis. Air National Guard Command Chief Master Sgt. Michael Murphy talked about his experiences as a Veteran and helped induct the newest members into the Hall of Heroes.





27th Annual Platoon Run automobile rally

Cars and motorcycles from all over Wisconsin converged on the Tomah VA in August for the 27th Annual Platoon Run and Car Show in August.

Displays included antique and classic cars, trucks and motorcycles from multiple generations.

The event started at Tomah Recreation Park with a parade line-up. The parade of vehicles and motorcycles traveled to the Tomah VA campus. The parade procession traveled down Superior Avenue (downtown

Tomah) making its way to the VA Medical Center grounds off East Veterans Street.

Automobiles and motorcycles from all around the area came to Tomah Sunday for the 27th annual Platoon Run Car and Motorcycle Show at the Tomah Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

The show is sponsored by Wizards of Rods, Abate of Wisconsin, Root River Rods and Kustoms, and Boy Scout Troop 146 of Monona, Wis.

Tomah Veterans experienced the area's best classic automobiles and motorcycles during the 27th Annual Platoon Run in August.



Lemonweir students give thanks on Veterans Day

Students from Lemonweir Elementary School, led by their principal, teachers and chaperones, took part in a parade, walking around the Tomah VA grounds and visiting Veterans on Nov. 13, in honor of Veterans Day.

“The Veterans thought it was awesome,” said Debbie Lindley, a vol-

untary service specialist. More than 300 students gathered in front of the main administration building at the Tomah VA to release red, white and blue balloons in the air before parading the grounds.

The students and faculty walked around the campus and through numerous patient areas to show

awaiting Veterans appreciation for their service. The first to fifth grade students carried patriotic signs and flags during the parade.

The students also carried hand-made cards that were given to Veterans as they were stopping to shake hands and say thanks as they greeted them.





Veterans honored at Snowflake Ski Jump Tournament presentation

Clear skies and mild weather was the perfect backdrop for Veterans from the Tomah VA to watch the 90th Annual Snowflake Ski Jump Tournament on Feb. 4, in Wesby, Wis.

Veterans were recognized at the event with a small ceremony to thank them for their service. Several from the Tomah VA were on hand to watch.

Vietnam Veteran Bruce Barseth, 66, braved the cold and was front and center for the competition.

Barseth, a La Crosse native, said he has attended the competition many times in the past.

“It’s been a few years, but when I was young and crazy, we came down to the ski jump all the time,” said Barseth.



Recreation therapy promotes quality of life

Research shows people with satisfying lifestyles will be happier and healthier.

Recreational therapy aims to improve an individual’s functioning and keep them as active, healthy and independent as possible in their chosen life pursuits.

Recreational therapy services develop the skills needed to enhance functional independence for community

living and to promote a higher quality of life for the individual and their family.

Recreational therapy services provide individuals with disabilities mechanisms to prevent declines in physical, cognitive, and psychosocial functioning and as a result reduce the need for health care services. Recreational therapy services reduce secondary disability and associated higher health care costs.



Hospital History

The Tomah Veterans Affairs Medical Center is a 266-bed facility nestled in the heart of Wisconsin's cranberry country in Tomah, Wis.

The Tomah VA operates four outpatient clinics located in La Crosse, Clark County, Wausau, and Wisconsin Rapids, which serves 16 counties in West Central Wisconsin and Houston County, Minn. In fiscal year 2014, 1066 employees and more than 380 volunteers served approximately 25,000 Veteran patients.

Resting on 171 acres, the Tomah VA plays host to a campus of historical buildings and landmarks, a volunteer-run nine-hole golf course built in the late 1940s and a fishing pond built from a donation by District 7 of the Department of Wisconsin American Legion in 1959.

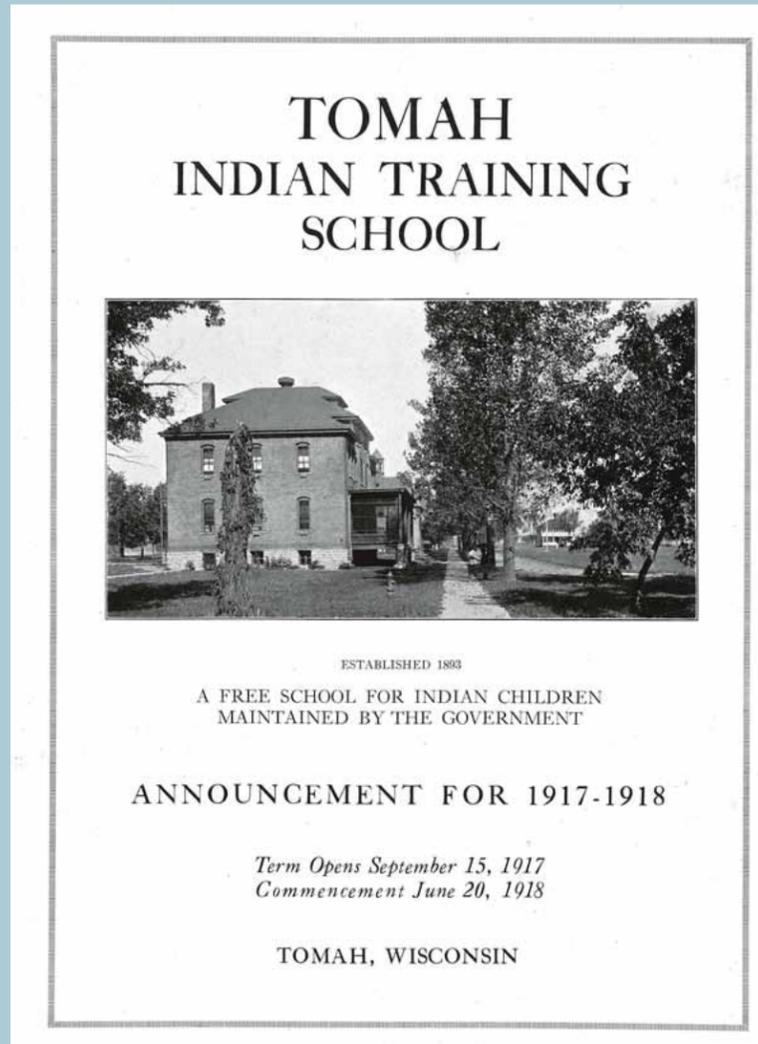
In 1891, the U. S. Government built and established an Indian School operated by the Department of the Interior from 1891-1933 and located on land donated by the town of Tomah. The oldest building, still standing on campus, Building 23, was completed in 1892 as the boy's dormitory.

During World War II, the grounds were transferred to the Department of War and operated as a radio training school for the Army Air Corps from 1943-1944.

Near the end of the war, on February 13, 1945, the property was transferred again, this time to the Veterans Administration. In the fall of 1946, a new \$4.5 million neuro-psychiatric hospital was completed.

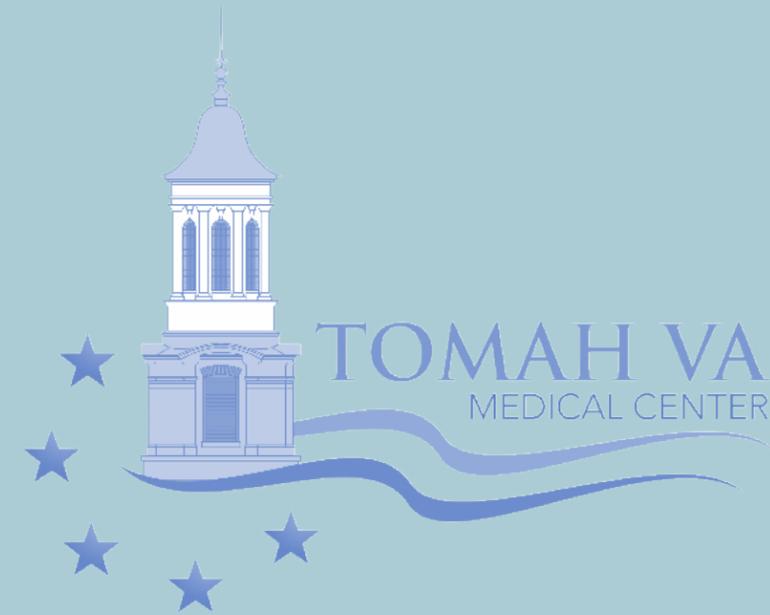
On March 4, 1947, the new hospital in Tomah officially became the 123rd operational medical facility in the VA when it accepted 63 World War I Veterans from the VA hospital in Mendota, Wis.

During the last 63 years, the Tomah VA has continued to be an essential part of the Tomah community and along with the Army's Fort McCoy and the Air Force's Volk Field forms the basis of a proud and distinguished military and Veteran heritage.



In 2010, the Tomah VA demonstrated its commitment to Veterans by completing more than \$15 million in construction projects dedicated to improving the quality of care for its patients. Some of those projects included an \$8.8 million renovation to Building 403 for acute mental health and long-term mental health living quarters, a \$2.6 million medical imaging clinic and a \$1.6 million physical medicine and rehabilitation clinic.

The Tomah VA Medical Center is a part of the VA Great Lakes Veterans Integrated Service Network 12, which includes six other VA medical centers (North Chicago, Edward Hines Jr. and Jesse Brown in Illinois, Clement J. Zablocki and William S. Middleton in Wisconsin, and the Oscar G. Johnson in Michigan), 32 outpatient clinics, six nursing home care units and two domiciliarys located throughout a five state region in Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota.



Tomah Veterans Affairs Medical Center

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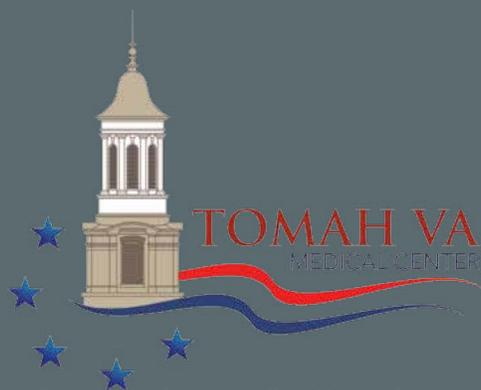
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