Annual VA report shows Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center has improved over past year in quality of services provided to Veterans

Saginaw, MI— Using an annual web-based report scorecard that measures, evaluates, and benchmarks quality and efficiency at its medical centers, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently released data that showed significant improvements at the majority of its health care facilities.

The Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center (VAMC) was one of the VA facilities that made positive strides in the benchmarks and is striving to continue progress. They improved .77 percent since last year by being 1 of 37 VA medical centers showing statistically-significant improvement for the 2nd Quarter, Fiscal Year 2018.

The Aleda E. Lutz VA has made improvements to decrease readmission rates. Enhanced communication, education, cooperation amongst interdisciplinary departments, and more intense case management activities have all attributed to success.

Additionally, several improvements have been made at the Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center to decrease Registered Nurse turnover, which is important in providing continuity of care for Veterans. Nurse managers meet with new nursing staff during orientation and timely surveys with new hires are completed periodically to identify areas where integration to the VA and other issues or concerns can be addressed. Nursing staff are also provided the opportunity to meet with the nurse executive when needed and they are also invited to engage in Unit Practice Councils to engage in workplace improvements and collegial activities.

Although the Aleda E. Lutz VA strives to improve processes and care delivery on a daily basis, they also promote activities to support a High Reliability Organization (HRO) ensuring a culture where patient safety and prevention of harm is a top priority.

Compared with data from the same period a year ago, the July 2018 release of VA’s Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) report showed 103 (71 percent) VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) have improved in overall quality — with the largest gains seen in areas where there were VA-wide improvement initiatives, such as
mortality, length of stay, and avoidable adverse events. Seven (5 percent) VAMCs had a small decrease in quality.

“This is a major step in the right direction to improving our quality of services for our Veterans,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Over the past year, we were able to identify our problems and implement solutions to fixing the issues at 71 percent of our facilities. I’m extremely proud of our employees and the progress they have made to raise VA’s performance for our nation’s heroes.”

Additionally, of the 15 medical centers placed under the Strategic Action for Transformation program (StAT), an initiative that monitors high-risk medical centers and mobilizes resources to assist the facilities, 33 percent (five medical centers) are no longer considered high-risk and 73 percent (11 medical centers) show meaningful improvements since being placed under StAT in January 2018.

The quarterly SAIL report, which has been released publicly since 2015, assesses 25 quality metrics and two efficiency and productivity metrics in areas such as death rate, complications and patient satisfaction, as well as overall efficiency and physician capacity at 146 VAMCs. It is used as an internal learning tool for VA leaders and personnel to pinpoint and study VAMCs with high quality and efficiency scores, both within specific measured areas and overall. The data is also used to identify best practices and develop strategies to help troubled facilities improve.

The Aleda E. Lutz VAMC in Saginaw, Michigan operates an 81-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation Community Living Center, with an additional 8-bed acute medicine and telemetry wing. It provides care to over 36,300 Veterans in a 35-county geographic area, from mid-Michigan to the Mackinac Bridge. Veterans also receive care at one of our nine VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics located throughout Michigan. More information about this VA can be found at www.saginaw.va.gov.

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