

## REGION 8 REPORT

April 11, 2024

I want to begin by extending Region 8's heartfelt appreciation to our National AVVA and VVA chapters for their overwhelming prayers and support for Ruth Feliciano, Region 8 Deputy Director, and her family who not only lost most of their possessions by fire but tragically their 13 year old grandson, Alex, who was irreplaceable. The support pouring in has been outstanding and humbling not only for Ruth but also for myself as I am witnessing the genuine love and generosity being given to them. Material things can be replaced, though some pieces carry significant memories, yet as some of us well know, losing a child is excruciatingly painful and takes endurance through time to begin to heal. Ruth's family has been an integral part of AVVA Chapter 805 for many years and through her steadfast servant's heart she has dedicated herself to the care of veterans and their families for years. Unfortunately, tragedy can hit anyone at any time. Again, thank you for your response to our AVVA/VVA Feliciano family.

Region 8 has experienced victories and setbacks but all in all we are steadily growing in membership both regular and dual, encouraging consistency with promoting our AVVA programs ie: From Heartbreak to Hope, Spousal & Survivor Benefit Seminars and Agent Orange Town Halls.

I want to draw your attention to the continued efforts of our Veteran Community here in Oregon regarding the minimizing of care and possible closure of our Roseburg VA Medical Center here in VISN 20 which includes Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Idaho. To summarize, as this facility is regrettably referring our veteran patients many miles away for care and those that need hospitalization are sent to the local hospital that is now overwhelmed, unable to sustain the influx of patients. This of course affects the remaining population who are now affected by the saturation of veterans into the medical community. Within the last couple of years we have made

progress as our State has recently allocated 35 million dollars from the general fund for a veterans home providing 154 beds, here in Roseburg, OR, to be constructed on the Roseburg VA Medical Center campus. We are presently awaiting funds to be released from the Federal Government Veterans Affairs Budget Committee of \$65 million dollars. This effort has been in the works for over 10 years and now that it is becoming a reality it is very exciting. The RVAMC hospital which services over 62,000+ Veterans in the catchment area will now need to be restored to its full operating capacity as this new home will need full medical support, especially a fully restored operating ER Department.

We are grateful for Jack McManus, VVA National President and Sharon Hobbs, AVVA National President for submitting letters of support (attached) to the Honorable Ron Wyden, United States Senate, which spoke volumes as to the unacceptable quality of healthcare our veterans are receiving. We have a responsibility to stand with them and advocate for them to receive care in a timely manner and with reasonable travel time.

My goals as Region 8 Director are to continue to encourage the expansion of AVVA membership, both regular and dual, to encourage S&SB seminars and Agent Orange Town halls so that we educate our members as to their benefits and available support.


Thank you,  
Jennifer Ellis  
Region 8 Director



## VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100

Silver Spring, MD 20910

(301) 585-4000  vva.org

*NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER.*



September 21, 2023

Honorable Ron Wyden  
United States Senate  
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

On behalf of Vietnam Veterans of America, our Board of Directors, and our members, I am writing regarding the Roseburg VA Medical Center (RVAMC), the only Oregon VA Hospital between Portland and the Bay Area, currently serving 62,000+ veterans.

The RVAMC building has gradually "hollowed out" over the previous 12 years, leaving behind a glorified outpatient clinic with diminishing amenities for veterans in need of high-quality, easily accessible healthcare. Moreover, veterans now must travel more than sixty miles one way to Eugene or White City, where the RVAMC specialty clinics have gradually moved. Elderly veterans may find this excursion challenging, especially in the winter.

The RVAMC Urgent Care Department offers few treatment choices, has sporadic operating hours, and is closed on weekends. Veterans must receive emergency care at Mercy Hospital, the only local hospital with an emergency room. Mercy Hospital frequently has twelve-hour or longer wait times for care. In addition, veterans report that they are frequently wrongly charged for care after emergencies.

It is wholly unacceptable for veterans to lack access to primary care physicians. Obtaining an appointment can take up to three months and, in some situations, much longer. Nevertheless, the lack of a full-service hospital may jeopardize the future establishment of the state veteran's retirement home which will need accessible emergency care.

Veterans do not know what the future holds, and considering recent clinic closures, the VVA thinks the VHA's focus should be on providing reliable, quality healthcare for veterans. The conversion of the RVAMC back to a full-service hospital would restore healthcare to the level veterans were promised and earned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack McManus".

Jack McManus  
National President



## **ASSOCIATES OF VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC.**

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March 4, 2024

### **Mission Statement**

**To provide support to veterans and their families through programs, projects and education.**

### **Vision Statement**

**To create a better everyday life for veterans and their families.**

**AVVA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.**

**Make your donation today.**



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Senator Wyden:

On behalf of the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA), the Board of Directors, and our membership, I am writing in regards to the Roseburg VA Medical Center (RVAMC), the only Oregon VA Hospital between Portland and the Bay Area, currently serving 62,000+ veterans.

The RVAMC building has gradually hollowed out leaving veterans to travel over sixty miles one way to either Eugene or White City, where the RVAMC specialty clinics have steadily moved. Elderly veterans may find this jaunt challenging, especially in winter.

The RVAMC Urgent Care offers few treatment choices with sporadic operating hours and is closed on weekends, leaving veterans who need emergency care to be seen at Mercy Hospital where there is often a 12-hour wait time to be seen. In addition, veterans report that they are wrongly charged for emergency care.

The lack of a full-service care is totally unacceptable for veterans to lack access to a primary care physician. Obtaining an appointment can take up to three months or longer.

The conversion of the RVAMC back to a full-service hospital would provide veterans with the quality of healthcare they were promised and deserve.

Respectfully,

Sharon Hobbs  
AVVA National President

### **2023-2025 Board of Directors**

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