

Federal Hospitals



Hospitals, clinics, and schools of health administration/public health operated by the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) play a vital role in our nation's healthcare, delivering care and providing access to essential health and social services for our military and veterans. As in the civilian sector, federal health care is

undergoing major changes primarily in response to closure of some medical facilities, budget constraints and changes to health benefits. Military and VA health leaders have said that there will be increased emphasis on wellness to address chronic conditions and changes in the delivery of care emphasizing teamwork and accountability for producing value and reducing costs. The AHA supports the unique role of these health care organizations and works for federal hospital leaders through collaboration and partnerships, leader engagement and involvement, and providing key resources and tools.

Outlined below are a few specific examples of how the AHA supports federal hospitals.

Working for Federal Hospitals

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Working for Federal Hospitals

The primary mission of the AHA is to support the nation's hospitals and health systems on issues that impact their organizations, patients and communities. The AHA ensures that members' perspectives and needs are heard and addressed by national health care leaders, with the press, consumers and in the communities they serve. Examples of how the AHA has worked for federal hospitals are outlined below.

- **Strengthening Hospitals' Ability to Serve Communities:** The AHA works across party lines – with Congress, regulatory agencies and the courts – to protect funding for civilian hospital services from arbitrary cuts and to decrease regulatory burdens that draw much needed

resources away from patient care. This promotes the ability of hospitals and health care systems to better partner with federal clinics and hospitals as communities explore new ways to optimize local resources.

- **Facilitated Improved Health Care Access for Veterans.** The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) allows qualifying veterans to elect to receive hospital care and medical services from Veterans Affairs (VA) and non-VA entities and providers. AHA worked with the VA to further improve the VCP and veterans' access to health care services.
- **Communicated with the Media.** As the national voice for hospitals, AHA uses a wide range of strategies to tell the hospital story in national and local news, traditional and social media, and print, television and radio. AHA also equips members with tools and strategies to help respond to media inquiries on difficult and challenging issues.
- **Meeting the Needs of Our Returning Military.** The AHA partnered with the Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) to help raise awareness of the medical, social and emotional challenges that the military face as they return home to their daily lives. The primary goal of this [partnership](#) was to ensure that returning service members find the support and resources they need.

Engaging Federal Hospital Leaders

Federal hospital leaders have a voice in the AHA through their active involvement in several forums.

- **A Role in AHA Governance and Policy-Making:** The AHA offers federal hospital leaders many opportunities to take an active role in shaping AHA policies and setting the direction for the association. They can play a formal role in association governance and policy formation by serving on the AHA's Board of Trustees, Regional Policy Boards, Governing Councils and committees, including the Committee on Research and Committee on Performance Improvement. In addition, the association creates short-term advisory and work groups where members weigh in on more focused, time-sensitive policy issues.
- **Federal Hospital Executive Roundtable:** A small group of federal hospital leaders are invited annually to meet with AHA's president and executive team in Washington to provide their guidance on specific and time-sensitive health care issues and to discuss strategies to strengthen federal and civilian health care partnerships.
- **Member Outreach:** Several times throughout the year the AHA's federal hospital leaders are individually contacted by the AHA and/or are invited to participate in small group conference calls to discuss key AHA initiatives. During the calls members contribute their perspectives and often receive additional tools and resources to address key challenges shared during the discussions.

Providing Key Resources for Federal Hospitals

The AHA offers federal hospital leaders and their teams tools and resources to help accelerate performance improvement and improve the health care delivery system.

- **AHA Committee on Performance Improvement (CPI).** The CPI provides guidance on AHA's strategy to support performance improvement. The Committee's 2015 [report](#), undertaken in conjunction with AHA's Committee on Research, examined the changing health care landscape and the role trustees and community leaders can play to help guide hospitals during this time of change.
- **AHA Committee on Research (COR).** The COR develops the AHA research agenda, studies topics in depth and reports out to the AHA Board and the field. A broad array of health care leaders participate on the committee and it is chaired by the AHA Board Chair-elect.
- **Hospitals in Pursuit of Excellence (HPOE) Guides and Reports.** AHA's Health Research & Educational Trust's (HRET) *Hospitals in Pursuit of Excellence (HPOE)* is a platform that shares action guides and reports on care delivery, operational excellence, safety and quality and population health to help accelerate performance improvement.

- **Veterans Hiring Resource.** *Hospital Careers: An Opportunity to Hire Veterans* is a toolkit for hospitals with guidance on recruiting veterans into hospital careers. The resource aims to assist hospitals in hiring veterans with clinical experience, as well as talent and leadership skills beyond their medical credentials.
- **Resources to Promote the Role of Hospitals.** AHA initiated a digital campaign to help patients and consumers better understand the evolving role of the nation's hospitals. The website, www.AdvancingHealthinAmerica.org, features a video and other resources showing how hospitals are creating partnerships and programs that reach beyond their walls to improve community health and access to care.



- **Cybersecurity Resources.** AHA is working with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to share important cybersecurity intelligence. The FBI has asked AHA to share specific documents with members through a secure communications channel. This members-only area also offers resources on cybersecurity leadership roles and risk and gap analysis and can be accessed at www.aha.org/cybersecurity.
- **Equity of Care.** AHA's HRET has been a leader in efforts to eliminate disparities in care and promote workforce diversity. In addition to its Disparities Toolkit, the HRET supports Equity of Care, a joint effort among national associations to disseminate key resources.

- **Reports and Analyses.** AHA research reports include the *TrendWatch* series, a periodic AHA publication that reports on the latest trends affecting hospitals and the health care system as well as other AHA-sponsored studies and Chartbook, a compendium of the latest trends impacting hospitals. Recent topics include the promise of telehealth for hospitals, health systems and their communities, and rethinking the hospital readmissions reduction program.



- **Hospital Data.** The AHA Annual Survey is completed online by most U.S. hospitals, both civilian and federal, and profiles a universe of more than 6,500 hospitals. It has more than 1,000 inputs covering an organization's structure, service lines, staffing, expenses, physician organization structures, beds and utilization. The U.S. government and other organizations that rely on accurate hospital data, including U.S. News and World Report and Leapfrog, use this data source.

- **AHA Environmental Scan.** The AHA Environmental Scan is designed to help hospital leaders better understand the health care landscape, including critical issues, key emerging trends and market forces that have a high probability of affecting the health care field
- **AHA Resource Center.** In AHA's [Resource Center](#), highly trained information specialists assist members in accessing timely and relevant health services articles and data.
- **Fellowship Programs.** The AHA-National Patient Safety Foundation Comprehensive Patient Safety Leadership Fellowship is a year-long, intensive learning experience that develops leadership competencies and promotes a transformational model for patient safety and quality improvement. HRET developed the AHA Health Care System Transformation Fellowship for C-suite executives. The six-month program provides a roadmap of how to design and plan for new care delivery models.