

# VA Annual Update for COM-T Spring GFM (2024)

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Chief of Staff

## Introduction

The Southern Arizona VA has had a successful collaboration with the University of Arizona for over 50 years.

As a reminder about our system, we are a 289 bed, Level 1a facility. We have 7 Community Based Outpatient Clinics, extending from Yuma to Casa Grande, to Green Valley and out to Safford.

Unlike many other communities, Tucson has seen sustained growth in the Veteran population. We have an enrolled patient population of over 60,000 Veterans.

## Medicine and Subspecialties

- Telehealth Rheumatology services are underway to Prescott, and Infectious Disease services started in 2023.
- Rheumatology continues to support same day access (in contrast to 3-9 month wait in the community for an appointment).
- Neurology has periodic Saturday clinics, starting May 2023.
- Neurology has collaborated with inpatient Nursing to initiate inpatient EEG and video monitoring services for patients with unexplained symptoms.
- Nephrology is collaborating with Nursing on resuming acute peritoneal dialysis services.
- Dr. Lin serving two weeks annually at the University to enhance integration in Neurology.
- Utilizing more virtual providers (a rheumatologist in Cincinnati, an oncologist in Seattle, a sleep medicine provider in Denver and an endocrinologist in Cleveland).

## Medicine and Subspecialties Cont.

- SAVAHCS ranked first in the nation on Observed minus Expected Length of Stay.
- VA Dermatology is collaborating in the start of a Mohs fellowship.
- Medicine has commenced participation in the CSP IMPACT trial for patients with prediabetes and established atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease.
- Medicine and PM&R worked collaboratively to implement a Long COVID Clinic at the end of calendar year 2023.



# SAVAHCS Graduate Medical Education

- OB GYN Fellow started rotation in January 2024.
- Orthopedic Surgery rotation started July 1, 2023; 1 -> 2 FTE: Scope: Mastery of basic Orthopedics
- Pain Medicine Fellowship rotation starts July 1, 2025; 1 -> 2 FTE; Accepts all specialties
  
- New VA Account Provisioning/Deprovisioning System (APDS) Training for Onboarding POCs and principals underway. Starts April 10, 2024. In-Service completed with University POCs on March 11, 2024. Angel Lassiter is SAVAHCS GME POC.

## Research

- SAVAHCS actively and effectively participated in VA Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) studies:
  - Participated in 6 VA CSP (25%)
  - Began participating in two new VA CSP:
    - CSP#2002 “Investigation of Metformin in Pre-Diabetes on Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Outcomes Trial” (VA-Impact), PI Punit Goel MD
    - CSP#2015 “Multicenter-Randomized, Double-blind Comparator Study of Antipsychotics Pimavanserin and Quetiapine for Parkinson’s Disease Psychosis”, PI Tanya Lin MD
- SAVAHCS VA Research funding increasing:
  - FY2023 VA research funding 20% higher than FY2022 VA research funding

## Research, Cont.

- SAVAHCS participated in multiple key national VA programs:
  - VA CSP (above)
  - Continued funding of the VA Brain Bank Biorepository, storing brains from deceased Veterans affected by ALS and Gulf War disease, PI Haining Zhu PhD
  - Ongoing funding for VA Biorepository, “VA Science and Health Initiative to Combat Infectious and Emerging Life-Threatening Diseases (VA SHIELD)”, currently focusing on samples from COVID-19 positive and comparator negative patients, PI Jason Wertheim MD PhD
  - Expanded contribution to VA SHIELD biorepository program by participating in the broader VA SHIELD Sweep protocol
  - SAVAHCS investigator Ian Robey PhD named as the Associate Director Biospecimens for VA SHIELD Coordinating Center
  - SAVAHCS VA SHIELD staff Osmara Molina De Rodrigues recognized by the VHA Chief Research & Development Officer (CRADO) for her contribution to VA SHIELD
  - New funding for VA Office of Research & Development (ORD) pilot Summer Research Program to enhance student participation in VA research, PI Jason Wertheim MD PhD

## Electronic Health Record Modernization

- Oracle acquired Cerner in June 2022 for \$28 billion
- 5 VAMCs have gone live since EHRM program inception in 2018
  - On April 21, 2023 Undersecretary Dr. Shareef Elnahal halted future deployments
- IT infrastructure (i.e. Cat-6 cable & IT Closet upgrades) for Tucson began in 2020 and was completed in March 2024.
- While go live for Tucson has yet to be scheduled, preparation for pre-deployment activities began in 2023.



# New Inpatient Bed Tower

- Approximately 104,000 square feet bed tower to replace existing Intensive Care, Step Down, and 3 inpatient acute care units
- All private patient rooms with ensuite bathrooms
- To include support services, such as imaging, pharmacy and food services kitchen
- Total Cost: \$180M
- Current Status
  - Phase 1: Approved for FY24 construction



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Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS)

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