



Veterans Affairs Montana Health Care System and Billings Clinic PACE Partnership

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PACE and Veterans

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PACE is priceless for the veteran, touching their lives in a personal way—something you rarely see in a nursing home.



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Veteran Affairs Montana Health Care System and Long-Term Care Program

Available Services Area

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- Montana is fourth largest state in the nation, with services spread across large distances



VA Montana Health Care System

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- VA Montana Health Care System (VA Montana) is part of VISN 19-Rocky Mountain Network that serves Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado
- VA Montana provides services across Montana through series of community-based clinics, community living center, and acute care medical center



VA Montana Long-Term Care Services

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- **VA Medical Center at Fort Harrison**
 - ▣ 50-bed acute care medical/surgical facility
 - ▣ Specialty care
- **Community Living Center**
 - ▣ 30-bed long-term care and extended rehab care facility
 - ▣ General, ventilator-dependent care
- **Montana Veterans' Home**
 - ▣ 105-bed nursing facility
 - ▣ 15-bed specialty care unit
 - ▣ State owned and operated
- **Eastern Montana Veterans' Home**
 - ▣ 80-bed intermediate/skilled care facility
 - ▣ 15-bed Alzheimer's unit
 - ▣ Oversight by State of Montana



VA Montana Home- and Community-Based Services

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- VA Montana lags behind rest of nation in development and implementation of HCBS
- Existing VA-sponsored HCBS services include:
 - ▣ Skilled and unskilled home health care
 - ▣ Respite
 - ▣ Hospice
 - ▣ Home IV therapy
- Especially high unmet need for HCBS in rural areas of Montana



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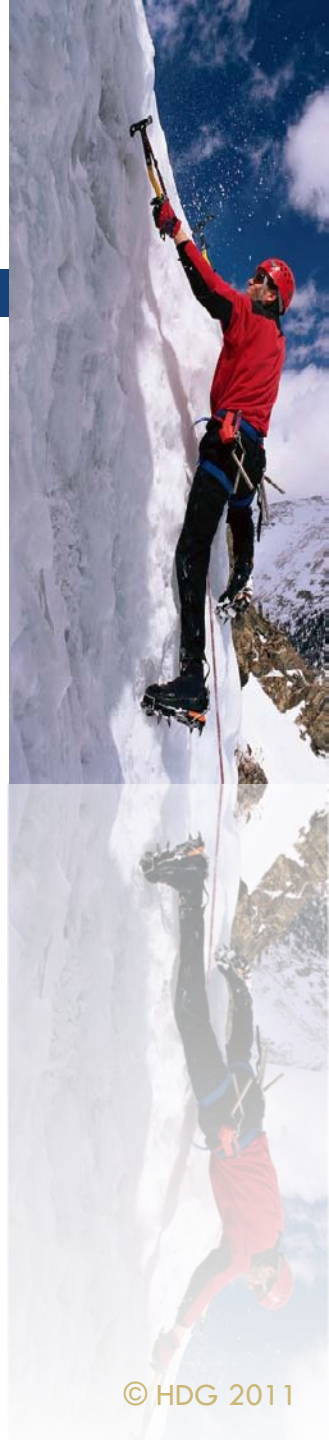
Challenges

Serving Aging Montana Veterans in their Homes
and Communities

Montana's Challenges

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- ❑ Ranks as one of top 10 oldest states; its aging population expected to explode through 2030
- ❑ One of largest per capita veteran populations in U.S.
- ❑ 7% of state's veterans over age 65 reside in Yellowstone County
- ❑ Few aging veterans qualify for Medicaid; of those that do, HBCS not readily available due to long waiting lists (100+ in Yellowstone County)
- ❑ VA Montana attempts to establish adult day care across state were unsuccessful
- ❑ Significant proportion of veterans served in nursing homes (at 3–4 times the cost of PACE) prematurely due to lack of HCB care and of caregiver support available in veteran's community of residence



VA Expansion of HCBS in Montana

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- VA Montana was awarded funding for two HCBS proposals submitted under the VA's Transformation-21 initiative:
 - Home Based Primary Care in Frontiers of Montana (Western Montana)
 - VA Montana Billings Clinic PACE Partnership (Yellowstone County)



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VA Montana and Billings Clinic PACE Partnership

PACE Partnership Overview

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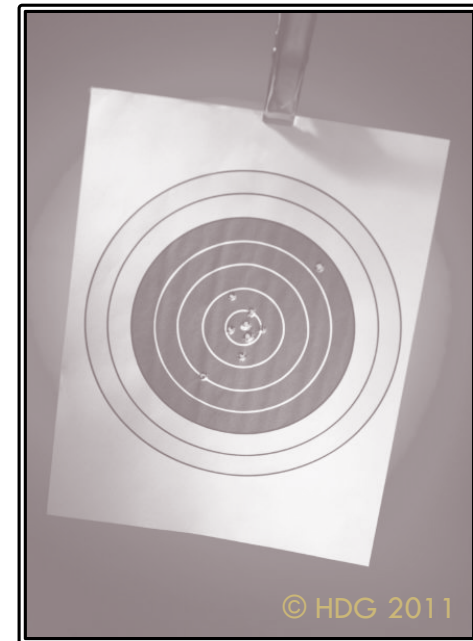
- VA Initiative for Patient-Centric Alternatives to Institutional Extended Care PACE awards
 - 12 VA Medical Centers applied
 - 7 VA Medical Centers were selected
- VA Montana partnered with Billings Clinic to purchase PACE services
- Billings Clinic PACE opened in 2008 as one of 14 rural PACE programs, serving:
 - Yellowstone County
 - Livingston (90 miles distant)



PACE Partnership Goals

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- Goals of VA Montana and Billings Clinic PACE partnership:
 - Prevent premature institutionalization by providing the community care and services necessary for aging veterans to remain living safely in their home and communities
 - Expand HCBS to rural areas with no services
 - Protect veterans' assets and income by providing access to PACE services without requiring Medicaid eligibility
 - Serve a new population in PACE



PACE Partnership Enrollment

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- Demand from both the VA and the veteran public for PACE services was overwhelming
- Billings Clinic PACE served more veterans than any other VA/PACE collaborative pilot program in the nation!
 - 15 veterans enrolled in Billings Clinic PACE and paid for through VA/PACE collaborative funding
 - Due to program success, VA Montana chose to enroll additional 15 veterans and pay for services out of their own funds



Billings Clinic PACE Veteran Profile

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- Average age = 80 years
- 94% male, 6% female
- 90% dually eligible VA/Medicare
- 10% VA only (not eligible for Medicare)
- Only one veteran eligible for Medicaid
- One veteran had mandatory VA nursing facility eligibility



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Nuts and Bolts of VA/PACE Development and Implementation



Understanding the VA

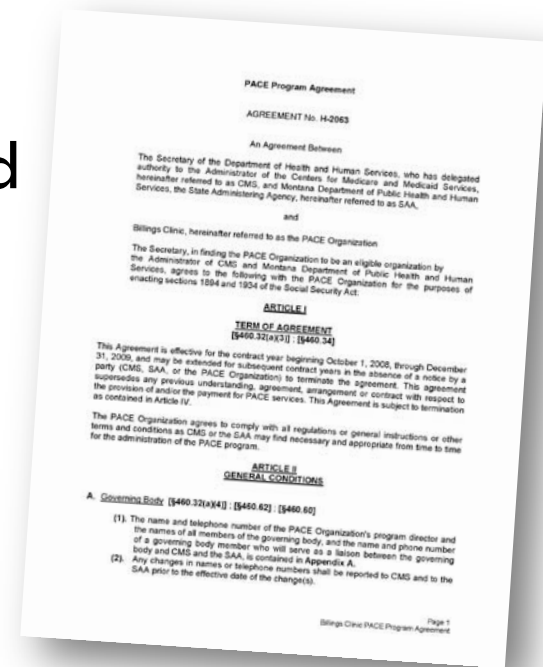
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- VA as a system does not operate in a resource-rich long-term care environment
- While the VA is not entitled to provide long-term care (except for veterans who have a 70% or greater service-connected disability), veterans are provided as many services as possible
- Each VA medical center (VAMC) is a complex entity with its own culture, directives, and ways of operating

VA/PACE Provider Agreement

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- VA/PACE is dependent upon an active three-party PACE provider agreement
- Separate provider agreement required between VA and PACE program for PACE to be VA-purchased service
- VA Central Office developed and CMS/SAA's approved a provider agreement developed for pilot project
 - Considered addendum to PACE program agreement



Eligibility Criteria

- Veterans must meet PACE eligibility criteria
- In addition to PACE eligibility criteria, VA may target veteran populations for enrollment:
 - Veterans without access to such services from community resources due to Medicaid ineligibility
 - Veterans without access to such services from the VA due to lack of available community-based services in veteran's community of residence
- VA may choose to offer PACE to any veteran they believe would benefit from the program
- VA Montana chose to only enroll veterans who were active VAMC patients for at least six months prior to enrollment

Intake Process

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- Determine how veterans will be referred to PACE:
 - ▣ Will referrals only be made by the VAMC?
 - ▣ Will community referrals be considered?
- In the VA/Billings Clinic PACE partnership, referrals were made to PACE by the VA, as well as from the community
- Community referral sources included veterans, families, DAV, VFW, etc.



Veteran Enrollment

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- Once VAMC approves enrollment, activities proceed toward enrollment to commence services on first day of the month
- VA developed VA-specific addendum to PACE enrollment agreement, in which veteran:
 - ▣ Agrees to receive all health care and LTC services through PACE
 - ▣ Retains their ability to receive services from their VA medical center
 - ▣ Will notify PACE if they receive care at a VA medical center
 - ▣ Is notified of a choice of drug coverage through the VA or PACE
 - ▣ Is informed that PACE will notify the veteran at least 60 days in advance of any changes that would result in the VA medical center ceasing to provide prescription drugs to PACE participants
- CMS and SAA must approve VA addendum to the enrollment agreement

Provider Network

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- VA can accept existing PACE provider network or may limit the network to VA-approved providers
- In the VA/Billings Clinic PACE partnership, existing PACE provider network was approved by the VA without restriction
 - ▣ This decision expanded existing VA provider network within PACE service areas!



Operating Policies and Procedures

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- VA long-term care service directives should be reviewed in order to understand VA operations
- VA reviews PACE program's operating policies and procedures
- Both parties jointly determine modifications for serving veterans
- In the VA/Billings Clinic PACE partnership, the VA reviewed and adopted all existing PACE operating policies and procedures, which streamlined implementation



Coordination

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- PACE is responsible for providing all care to the veteran; however, VAMC retains medical responsibility for the veteran
- VAMC will require copies of PACE records for ongoing coordination of care
- VA/Billings Clinic PACE partnership provided selected medical records to VAMC quarterly



Medications

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- CMS waivers allow veteran participants to obtain their drugs through the VA
- Processes must be established to coordinate with the VAMC to obtain drugs
- VA Montana chose to pay the PACE Part D drug premium so veteran participants could obtain their drugs from PACE
 - Eliminated veteran co-pays for drugs
 - Veteran formulary not applicable
 - Improved access to drugs in rural areas



Billing and Payment

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- Invoices for payment must be submitted to VAMC by 15th calendar day following end of the month in which services are rendered
- VA payment based on PACE program's Medicaid capitation rate
- Payment made via electronic funds transfer



Oversight and Reporting

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- Oversight provided by VAMC in addition to CMS and SAA
- VA required data collection and quarterly reporting
 - Diagnoses as reported by PACE program
 - Home Based Primary Care Assessment Form completed by VAMC
 - Clinical outcomes reported by PACE program
 - Number of ED visits and observation status less 24 hours
 - Hospital admissions greater than 24 hours
 - Nursing facility admissions
 - Skilled nursing facility placement less than 90 days
 - Long-term living placement greater than 90 days
 - Respite less than 30 days
 - Inpatient hospice
 - Disenrollments
 - Deaths
- VA/PACE participant and caregiver satisfaction assessed by VAMC annually

VA Montana/Billings Clinic PACE Partnership Successes

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- By purchasing PACE, VA Montana was able to make patient-centered, comprehensive community-based services available to eligible Montana veterans and allow them a means to remain living safely and successfully in their community
- 100% of veterans continued living in their homes and community as a result of PACE services
- Veteran and family satisfaction extremely high



Afterword

- Due to a loss of Montana State PACE funding, Billings Clinic PACE program ceased operations on July 1, 2011
- Decision by the Governor's Office, the SAA, and State Legislature to eliminate PACE funding was aimed at reducing short-term expenditures
- VA advocacy group lobbied the Legislature to use state Veterans Home funding to fund continued PACE operations—their efforts were unsuccessful
- VA and VA Montana are extremely disappointed with closure of Billings Clinic PACE program and the resulting impact on veterans, many of whom placed in nursing homes

Thank You

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