



# 2019 Annual Report





## Celebrating Our Military at the Battleship New Jersey



Fall Fest 2019 Volunteers

### *Grants Received from:*



*Changing Systems, Changing Lives*

HeroCare Connect™ is a partnership between Deborah Heart and Lung Center and Cooper University Health Care that delivers timely specialty medical care appointments to veterans, active duty military, retirees and their families.

**Welcome...**

## **To the 2019 HeroCare Connect™ Annual Report!**

When we first launched the HeroCare Connect program in 2017, we had high expectations. We are proud that HeroCare Connect continues to grow and fill a previously unmet need in the community. In 2019 we had a 26% increase in patient volume and touched 418 more families than the year before, reflecting the need for this unique program and the commitment both Deborah and Cooper have made to serve the nation's military.

HeroCare Connect is a first-of-its-kind collaboration between two nationally renowned medical centers: Deborah Heart and Lung Center and Cooper University Health Care and was designed to provide prompt, seamless access to specialty care appointments for active duty, retired military, their dependents, and veterans in New Jersey and the surrounding region.

HeroCare Connect is ideally positioned to meet the needs of those stationed at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB MDL) by supporting the on-base primary healthcare providers and providing specialty care when needed. As the country's only tri-service base, JB MDL has an extremely diverse and fluid military population that rotates in and out, bringing a new set of unique medical needs with every soldier, sailor, airman, marine, coast guard, reservist and family member that comes to the Base. In addition to meeting these medical needs, HeroCare Connect is positioned to make sure each and every serviceman and woman is medically mission-ready to perform their job and deploy at a moment's notice.

Additionally, with more than 60,000 military retirees living within 50 miles of JB MDL, there is a vast group of former military service members looking for specialty medical care delivered by a team that understands their needs, including retiree insurances and referrals. HeroCare Connect has been the answer.

And for the more than 150,000 veterans in the region, the HeroCare Connect team's ability to navigate the Veterans Administration system on their behalf – especially in light of the significant changes in that system – has proved a critical resource.

We are pleased to report that in 2019 HeroCare Connect continued to serve as an award-winning model for effective, timely, and personalized healthcare delivery for our nation's heroes. We look forward to building on our success in 2020 and beyond.



Joseph Chirichella  
President/CEO  
Deborah Heart and Lung Center



Anthony J. Mazzairelli, MD, JD, MBE  
Co-President/CEO  
Cooper University Health Care



Kevin M. O'Dowd, JD  
Co-President/CEO  
Cooper University Health Care



## Serving Active Duty Military

HeroCare Connect is uniquely positioned to serve the needs of active duty military and their families stationed at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB MDL).

The HeroCare Connect team understands the challenges families face when first arriving to a new assignment – a new job, home, school, community and doctors.

Outstanding primary, gynecological, and pediatric care is available on JB MDL. When other specialty health services are needed, HeroCare Connect provides the critical link connecting military families with that care. Whether it be an important pediatric specialist visit, a neo-natal specialist to assist through a difficult pregnancy, or a needed cardiovascular clearance for mission readiness – HeroCare Connect is the answer.



### When Experience Matters

- **Deborah Heart and Lung Center**, an affiliate of the Cleveland Clinic Heart, Vascular & Thoracic Institute – is a nationally-ranked cardiac center rated in the top 7% of the country by the Society for Thoracic Surgeons, and is highly respected for its research and Fellowship programs. Located one mile from JB MDL, Deborah combines expert quality with nearly 100 years of experience serving the military.
- **Cooper University Hospital**, founded over 130 years ago is now the largest academic health system in South Jersey. Cooper is the only Level I Trauma Center, and Level II Pediatric Trauma Center in the region. Cooper's medical team is crucial to the region's health and well-being. Cooper's designation by the federal government as an elite medical team training flagship site for Special Operations Combat Medics (SOCM) reflects Cooper's deep knowledge of the military's needs.

**26% increase in patient volume over 2018**

## Seamless and Coordinated Care

The HeroCare Connect team works very closely with the 87th Medical Group at JB MDL, which provides primary care, obstetrics, and pediatrics. When other services are needed, HeroCare Connect is a personalized, one-stop resource accessed by patients with a single phone call. HeroCare Connect links service members to over 75 specialty providers in the community. Appointments are scheduled within 24 to 48 hours and coordinated through personal concierge navigators who handle all aspects of a referral call – clearing insurances, filing paperwork, scheduling appointments, and following up by making sure the right reports are sent to the appropriate physician.

## Supporting Mission Readiness

HeroCare Connect's team is expert in scheduling necessary medical clearances for rapid deployment and readiness, enabling the Base to complete its mission responsibilities. In fact, the HeroCare Connect Program has been federally identified as a civilian medical partner able to provide physicals, specialist appointments, and diagnostic testing with rapid turnaround time capability to assess the deployment ability of a service member. The HeroCare Connect patient service center team is managed and staffed by a seasoned, caring professionals who work with the Base to create an efficient and comprehensive medical processing system for mobilization and demobilization out of JB MDL for our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and guardsmen. Every HeroCare Connect team member has direct experience with the mobilization/demobilization missions in Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan.

*“HeroCare Connect has just been wonderful to me in so many ways. They take care of everything, from approvals to my records and everything in between. It makes it a lot easier, especially if you’re real sick. You’ve got a lot on your mind, and the last thing you need is more stress.”*

Ray Wylie, Erial, NJ; Sergeant E-5, Army; 1968-71, Vietnam



## Serving Veterans

Deborah Heart and Lung Center and Cooper University Health Care have long been in the forefront of delivering outstanding medical care to the region's veterans. These century-long compassionate missions have culminated in HeroCare Connect, a partnership evidencing the hospitals' unwavering commitment to our country's heroes.

With the organizations' extensive expertise, HeroCare Connect delivers timely, specialized medical care along with a deep understanding of the unique needs of veterans who often have multiple health issues, and who must sometimes navigate a complex system of veteran care. Most importantly, the personal navigators at HeroCare Connect have experience and empathy to support the needs of veterans who may have felt "forgotten" and "left behind."



### Care When it Matters Most

As our country's veterans age, their health issues increase, often compounded by service-related conditions. HeroCare Connect's linkages to over 100 medical specialties and more than 75 locations – coordinated by a personal, concierge navigator – can make a real difference in a patient's experience and outcome. HeroCare Connect's navigators work to ensure that specialists are engaged for the patient's care, and that resources and other information are available to them.

Important to the HeroCare Connect team is making sure veterans receive care close to home, so that driving and transportation aren't barriers to accessing a doctor. Working with an extensive network of specialists in over 100 office locations, the team can tailor specialist appointments to those closest to where the veteran lives.

### Partners with the VA in Community Care

The Veterans Administration (VA) is undergoing changes to guarantee veterans the opportunity to receive care in a timely manner close to home. As longstanding partners with the VA in programs such as PC3 and



Veterans Choice, as well as building strong and respected relationships with the local VA offices in Philadelphia, PA; East Orange, NJ; and Wilmington, DE, HeroCare Connect was designated as an approved preferred national network provider through the Veteran Affairs Community Care Program in 2019.

The Community Care Program is part of a sweeping overhaul at the VA to improve access to private care for veterans who have lengthy wait times at a VA hospital or clinic for specialty healthcare services, and falls under the umbrella of the 2018 MISSION Act. During this time of transition, many veterans will have questions about the new program. The HeroCare Connect Patient Service Center team is able to assist veterans who are seeking medical care in the community.

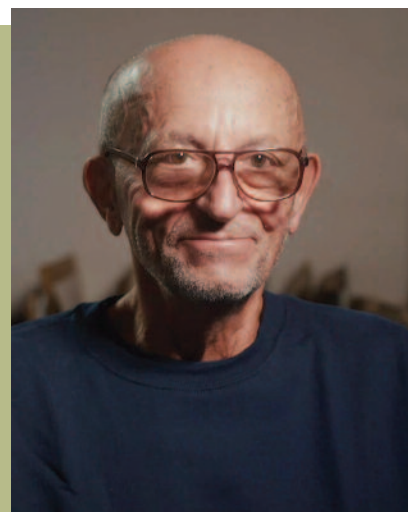
## A Team that Cares

**Program Manager, Maggie Mary:** “This is welcome news for veterans. With our concierge navigators and patient scheduling services, we can connect veterans with the specific medical care they need at locations close to their homes.”

**Patient Service Specialist Gwen Cotton:** “Every day when I come to work I know that TODAY I will make a difference in a military service member’s life. I have the most gratifying job in the world.”

*“From the first person you meet to the ‘top doc’ they’re packing a ton of love and that’s what makes HeroCare Connect a part of my life. My care is superb.”*

Lance Morton, New Egypt, NJ; Petty Officer, 2nd Class, Navy, 1968-74; Staff Sergeant, Air Force, 1975-78; North Africa, Western Sahara





## *Serving Former Military and Their Families*

South Jersey is home to more than 50,000 retired military members. Serving for a short time – or an entire career – former military members and their dependents (spouses and children) are offered the full concierge services of HeroCare Connect. Whether TRICARE, commercially insured through a current employer, or part of the Medicare program – HeroCare Connect team members are here for you.

When it comes to our former active duty military members and their families, each and every one deserves elite care and support. Although no longer serving in an active branch of the US military, former active duty and their family members share a military culture and bond that we understand, acknowledge and respect.

Healthcare providers who understand military lifestyle and the unique health needs of those who have served are critically important in building confidence with their patients.

HeroCare Connect fills this need.

All of the concierge navigators on the HeroCare Connect team have a military connection. Some grew up trekking the globe with their military parents. Some have military spouses. Some have extensive work experience with the military and military insurers. All of them understand and value service to country, and understand that military service never leaves a family history.

### **Navigating the System**

Military families each have their own set of circumstances, and insurance coverage can span a wide variety of situations. Some families are strictly TRICARE. Some families use Medicare. Some families have private insurance. Some families use combinations of several insurances. Understanding these various coverage options and finding what makes the most sense for a particular family is a HeroCare Connect specialty.





Our navigators are well-versed in these insurances, and will confirm coverage, acquire the appropriate referrals and authorizations needed to access the very best specialty medical care.

HeroCare Connect navigators bring their own military background into each and every interaction. They know the struggle that retirees often face when piecing together a comprehensive medical team that can address their various health issues, and keep them healthy as they get older.

Retirees who still feel part of their former military community deserve the respect and care that their service has earned them. At HeroCare Connect, we are happy to help make this a reality.

## Part of the Family

**Patient Service Specialist Angeline Wiesniewski:** “When we receive a call from a retiree we automatically welcome them into our HeroCare Connect family. As active duty, they were part of an extended military family. We recognize that, and want to keep that relationship alive. And, if they are recently settled in South Jersey, we know how bewildering all the various medical options can be, especially since they may not know the doctors or hospitals or the geography of a new area. We sort this out for them, and put together a plan that makes sense, and that puts their health first.”

**Outreach Nurse Sara Ridger, LPN:** “Every time I do an outreach event, I am so thankful to have an opportunity to be one-on-one with our military, meeting with them and their families out in the community.”

*“The VA sent us to a Choice Program at HeroCare Connect – which was fantastic. It’s a pleasure to be treated so good. The program is available for all vets and it’s closer to home. You can get taken care of quickly, which is important.”*

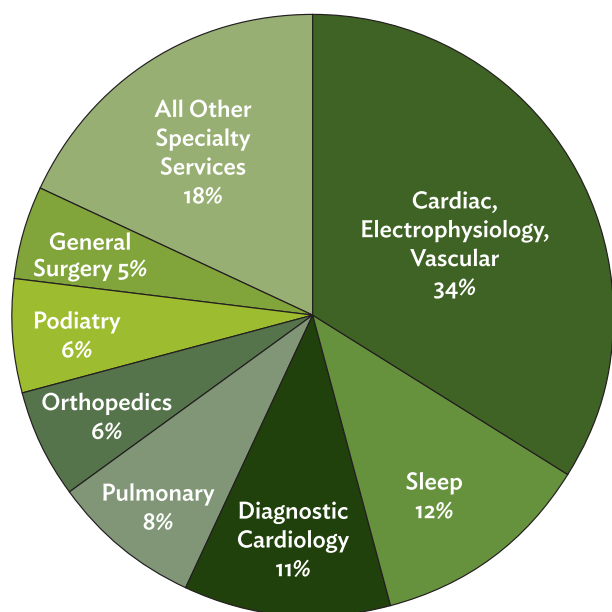
Joseph J. Lionetti, Pennsauken, NJ; E-4, Army; 1966-67, Vietnam



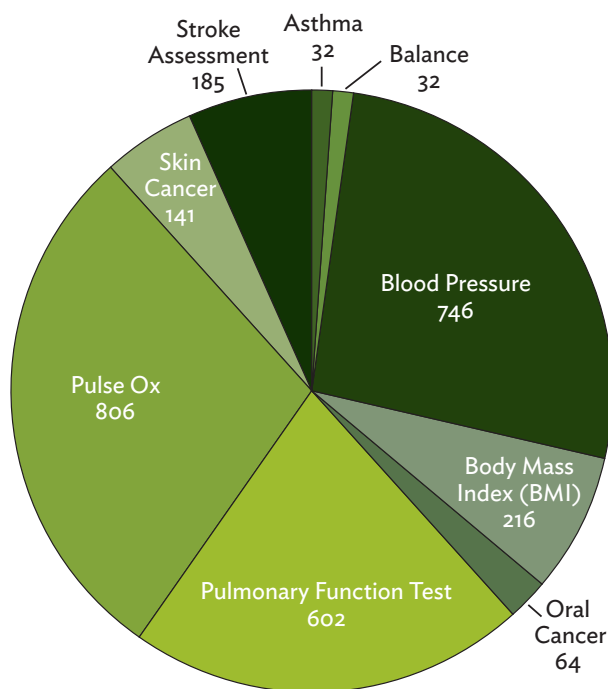
## Services Provided

- Ambulatory Surgery
- Balance issues
- Bariatric Surgery
- Behavioral Health
- Cardiology
- Dermatology
- Diagnostic Radiology Imaging
- Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT)
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- Hematology
- Infectious Disease
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Neuropsychology
- Neurosurgery
- Ob/Gyn
- Oncology
- Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
- Orthopedics
- Pain Management
- Palliative Care
- Pediatrics
- Perinatology
- Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
- Podiatry
- Psychiatry
- Pulmonology
- Rheumatology
- Sleep Center
- Trauma
- Urology
- Vascular Medicine
- Vein Center
- Wound Care

## 2019 Appointments by Specialty



## Screenings



## 2019 Provider Presentation Topics

- Suicide Prevention
- Colorectal Cancer
- Nutrition & Exercise to Prevent Heart Disease
- Sleep Apnea
- Preventing/Treating Lower Back Pain
- Concussion: Diagnosis & Treatment
- Allergies
- Diabetes
- Cultural Competency - *Treating the Military Patient and Family Member*
- Thor Ringler - *My Life, My Story: Listening to Veterans, Honoring Their Stories, Changing VA Healthcare*

### Care in the Community



## 2019 Community Events

- JB MDL – Retiree Appreciation Day
- JB MDL – Health/Safety/Wellness Expo
- Radwell International Health and Wellness Expo, Willingboro
- VFW Annual Convention, Wildwood
- JB MDL – Installation Picnic
- JB MDL – June Concert
- JB MDL – July Concert
- JB MDL – Installation Picnic
- Vietnam Veteran Commemorative Event, Pennsauken
- NJ State Firemen's Association Annual Convention, Atlantic City
- Stand Down 2019-Serving Homeless Veterans, Chery Hill
- 2nd Annual Veterans Expo, Westampton
- Fall Fest-Battleship New Jersey, Camden
- Military Appreciation Day, Lakehurst
- Veteran Family Resource Fair, Long Branch

**HeroCare Connect is  
a Recipient of  
These Prestigious  
Awards**



**2019**

Burlington County  
Military Affairs Committee  
Corporate Sponsor Member  
of the Year Award



**2019**

Southern New Jersey  
Development Council  
Veterans Health  
Initiative Award



**2018**

HRET Community  
Outreach Award



**HeroCareConnect.org**

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