

Rensselaer County

Is The Troy Veteran's CBOC Closing?

by Doug La Rocque

CBOC stands for a fixed healthcare site that is geographically distinct or separate from its parent VA medical facility. Such a site has been operated for Rensselaer County area veterans on River Street in Troy since its establishment in 1999. According to a press release sent out by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, it appears the facility may be targeted for closing.

While not said in so many words, the release cites a declining service level, "from a high of 1,460 Veterans to 1,133 Veterans currently." It also projects a 20.6% decrease by 2038.

By way of explanation, the release goes on to say "at the expiration of the Troy CBOC contract, VA successfully negotiated contract extensions in order to allow additional time for a full review of the viability of the CBOC while continuing to provide services to Veterans at the Troy CBOC location. The review accounted for Veteran demographics including both VA enrolled and non-enrolled Veterans, the viability of the clinic, accessibility to Veterans and the CBOC's ability to provide the same level of services provided Veterans at other VA CBOCs.

Under the realignment plan, Troy CBOC patients will receive personal letters from Medical Center Director Darlene DeLancey with information regarding how to transfer care to the CBOC of their choice. Veterans receiving care at the Troy CBOC are encouraged to transfer their care to the nearby medical center located within 9-miles of the Troy CBOC or one of the nearby CBOCs including Clifton Park and Schenectady, which are located within 15-miles of the Troy CBOC, each offering primary care services in addition to integrated behavioral health services, Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACTs), have Telemedicine and Telehealth capabilities and appropriate staffing and physical space to absorb the current Troy workload."

The release ends by stating the realignment of services will maximize access, enhance services and local reinvestment.

The Eastwick Press has reached out to the Department of Veterans Affairs for clarification on the future of the Troy CBOC, and asked whether the travel distance for veterans in the rural section of Rensselaer County was considered. As of press time, there has been no response.

Rensco Swears In Four Corrections Officers And Promotes Two

Submitted by the Rensselaer County Sheriff's Office

The Rensselaer County Sheriff's Office is pleased to announce the promotion of two correctional officers to the rank of Correctional Sergeant and the hiring of four new correctional officers. A formal swearing in ceremony was held at the Sheriff's Office on Monday May 24. The correctional officers being promoted to sergeant are Kevin M. Owens and Daniel C. Simmons. Officer Owens began his career in March of 2014 and Officer Simmons began his career in October of 2016. Both of these officers have displayed proven leadership qualities as well as dedication and commitment to the citizens of Rensselaer County and the Sheriff's Office.

The newly hired correctional officers that were sworn in are: Charles T. Binning, Michael D. Howes, Andrew T. O'Brien and Phonnah Yen.



The newly sworn in officers and those attending the ceremony. From left to right they are: County Legislators Dan Casale and Tom Grant, with new correctional officers Charles Binning, Michael Howes, Phonnah Yen and Andrew O'Brien. Also present were County Legislator Bob Loveridge, County Clerk Frank Merola, Sheriff Pat Russo and Undersheriff P.J. Higgitt Jr. Photo by Amy Modesti.

The RCSO wishes to congratulate those promoted as well as the newly hired officers and wishes them well in their new titles. Upon their hiring and promotion all parties shall receive the due respect, support and considerations entitled to their rank.

Legislation Helping Vets Gain Legal Immigration Status Moves Forward

Submitted by the Office of Assemblyman Ashby

A bill sponsored by Assemblyman Jake Ashby and Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz to create the Alex R. Jimenez New York State Military Immigrant Family Legacy Program has unanimously passed the Assembly Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The legislation would establish a program to help secure legal immigration status for the families of NYS Veterans and active military personnel. The bill will now move to the Committee on Ways & Means before being put up for a vote before the entire Assembly body.

"Today was a great first step in making the Alex R. Jimenez NYS Military Immigrant Family Legacy Program a reality," said Ashby. "I am proud that the bill was unanimously approved by the Veterans' Affairs Committee, highlighting the bipartisan support of this outstanding and essential program. The tremendous sacrifices our armed forces personnel make



Staff Sgt. Alex R. Jimenez

are shared burdens. The sacrifices are made as a family, and this program rightfully honors military families and will fulfill the dream of citizenship for countless New Yorkers."

Ashby noted that this legislation was a collaborative effort with Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz, who co-introduced the legislation. "I am honored to partner with Assemblywoman Cruz in developing this legislation," said Ashby. "Her expertise and experience in helping immigrant families navigate the often-cumbersome immigration process is unmatched

— without her insight and dedication this legislation would not be possible." The bill's namesake, Staff Sgt. Alex R. Jimenez, was born in New York City to parents from the Dominican Republic. After the September 11, 2001 attacks, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was deployed as part of the 10th Mountain Division to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom. His unit was attacked in 2007, and he was taken as a prisoner by insurgents and listed as missing, but was later found killed. While he was missing, his wife was without documentation and removal proceedings had begun. Jimenez was in the process of trying to seek legal status for his wife before he was deployed, but was denied because of her illegal entry. However, Homeland Security had granted her discretionary parole in honor of Jimenez's sacrifice and service to the country. She has since secured permanent residency.

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