

# Veterans get first look at new, bigger VA clinic in Rosedale, replacing Fort Howard office

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Veterans Affairs Maryland Health Care System held an open house on Saturday for their new outpatient clinic in Rosedale.



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**A** new clinic for veterans is offering outpatient medical services in Rosedale at a site designed to be more convenient than the old location.

A steady stream of veterans toured the Eastern Baltimore County VA Outpatient Clinic on Saturday morning and signed up for benefits during an open house and enrollment fair. The site at the Franklin Square Professional Center replaces a shuttered clinic at **Fort Howard**, which was out of the way for many patients and which closed in 2016 because of water damage and structural issues.

At 14,000 square feet, the new clinic is nearly twice the size of the one it replaced, according to the VA Maryland Health Care System, and features 16 exam rooms. It has a coffee lounge and multiple waiting areas.

“It’s just overall a better experience being here,” said Dr. Eugene Craig, an internist and lead physician at the clinic.

The Fort Howard clinic flooded after a water heater exploded — and then, workers found mold and other problems, officials said at the time. Fort Howard patients were transferred to other locations after the closure.

Traffic backups could also be an issue there, Craig said, because it was located on the North Point peninsula with “one street in and one street out.”

Joppatowne resident Tom Knoerlein visited the clinic to check out what services were available. He normally travels to the [Perry Point VA Medical Center in Cecil County](#), which is about a 45-minute drive for him. The new one is only about 10 minutes from his home.

“I think this is fantastic,” said Knoerlein, a Navy veteran. “I wouldn’t have to travel as far.”

Convenience was also a factor for Army veteran Carrie Everett, 59, who visited the clinic to sign up for benefits. She said it’s minutes away from her home.

“This is close to where I live, so I love it,” said Everett, a retired Baltimore police lieutenant. “I’m glad they’re here.”

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is leasing the space at 5235 King Ave., near MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, from Cignal Corp. The government has a 10-year lease on the building, officials said.

“We’ve got a lot of veterans that actually live in this area,” between the [Loch Raven VA Medical Center](#) in Baltimore and the Perry Point location, said Dr. Dhruv Gadhia, deputy associate chief of staff for the VA Maryland Health Care System. “There’s been so much development in this White Marsh and Rosedale area, and so this allows us to really bring primary care closer to veterans we serve.”

The clinic’s offerings include primary care, social work assistance, mental health services and [women’s health care](#), as well as referrals to specialized programs.

It has a dedicated women’s health waiting area, and the women’s exam rooms have their own attached bathrooms for privacy.

“The reason for that is our sensitivity towards our female veterans that have suffered from military sexual trauma,” Gadhia said.

This month, the Trump administration proposed a \$220.2 billion budget for the VA in the coming year. Although it’s a 9.6 percent increase above this year, the spending plan is drawing criticism from the groups Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The three groups say the budget plan isn’t enough when taking into account the rising costs of health care and the cost of the VA Mission Act, a new policy meant to let more veterans get care from private doctors and

expand eligibility for caregiver benefits. In a statement this month, the organizations said the budget request would not let the VA fully implement the act, “nor will it fully meet the rising demand by veterans for care within VA hospitals and clinics.”

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