Gulfport VA Medical Center

In 1922, the Veterans Bureau (later Veterans Affairs) established the Gulfport Medical Center (GVAMC) as a Neuropsychiatric Division in the eastern limits of the City of Gulfport, approximately nine miles west of the BVAMC. Early development of the GVAMC property began in 1916 when the site was selected for a Centennial Exposition to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mississippi’s admittance into the Union. Scheduled to open on December 10, 1917, the Centennial Exposition never occurred due to the onset of World War I. The U.S. Navy briefly occupied the site during the war for use as a training camp.

Gulfport’s hospital buildings were designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style similar to the Centennial buildings. GVAMC used the Centennial Exposition’s Administration Building until 1951. In 1955, the Biloxi and Gulfport facilities were merged under one administration.

Hurricane Katrina

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast Region. A catastrophic tidal surge caused by the hurricane ravaged GVAMC prompting the facility’s closing and ultimate transfer of its services to the BVAMC. VA transferred the GVAMC site to the City of Gulfport in 2009.

Biloxi National Cemetery

“IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO SERVED THEIR COUNTRY.”

Founded in March 1934, the original 24-acre Biloxi Cemetery was cleared and graded from the vast, oak-shaded acreage of the BVAMC reservation. In May 1941, VA erected a 30-foot tall war memorial monument at the south end of the Cemetery Boulevard. This impressive limestone monument serves as a historical and visual landmark of the cemetery. In 1973, the cemetery became part of the National Cemetery Administration.

Biloxi National Cemetery
P.O. Box 4968, Biloxi, MS 39535-4968
(228) 388-6668
www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/biloxi.asp

VA GULF COAST VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

BILOXI VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER
A Historical Perspective
Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System

The VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System (GCVHCS), originally established as the BVAMC, is a large, sprawling complex of buildings arrayed in a campus-like setting on approximately 109 acres of land along the scenic southern shore of Back Bay in the City of Biloxi.

BVAMC was achieved by the efforts of a Mississippi Congressional delegation consisting of Congressman Robert Samuel Hall (1879-1941), Senator Byron Patton ‘Pat’ Harrison (1881-1941), and others who helped to initiate appropriations for several soldiers’ homes in the South. In 1931, General Frank T. Hines, Director of the Veterans Bureau, recommended the Naval Reserve Park for the construction of a veterans medical care facility.

Biloxi VA Medical Center Site History

In 1932, construction of a new United States Veterans Hospital began on an initial 640-acre site consisting of mostly undeveloped land with dense stands of oak and pine trees. VA architects created a picturesque setting for the hospital campus by integrating the distinctive natural sub-tropic environment of the Mississippi Gulf Coast with elements of formal landscape design.

When the new VA Hospital opened on August 10, 1933, Biloxi leaders praised it as “the greatest accomplishment in the city’s history.” The hospital’s opening during the Great Depression ushered in a period of invigorated civic pride and morale on the Mississippi Coast.

Designed by VA architects in the Late Southern Colonial Revival Style, the BVAMC campus buildings were laid out to complement the natural forested setting of the Back Bay of Biloxi. The architectural style adopted for BVAMC was inspired by Southern plantations with high ceilings, white woodwork, wrought-iron balconies, wide porches, and low-pitched roofs.

BVAMC is one of 50 medical centers constructed from the 1920s through the early 1940s according to a prototype plan which VA architects adapted for each specific hospital site. In 1980, the Biloxi Veterans Medical Center Historic District was determined eligible for listing in National Register of Historic Places, and was formerly listed in 2002. VA recognizes the architectural and historical significance of the Biloxi campus and is committed to ensuring sympathetic design to preserve the architectural character of the Biloxi campus.

Since 1933, the Biloxi VA Medical Center has been committed to fulfilling our pledge to provide care close to the Veterans’ home. The recently organized VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System continues to provide primary care and specialty services along the Alabama and Mississippi Gulf Coast, and the Florida Panhandle.

VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System
400 Veterans Avenue, Biloxi, MS 39531
(228) 523-5000 or 1-800-296-8872
www.biloxi.va.gov

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