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GREENE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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VISION STATEMENT

Greene County Veterans Service Agency is dedicated to providing the highest quality of service to the Veterans and their families.

MISSION

- Educate Greene County Veterans and their eligible or advocating family members, about the various benefits Veterans have earned
- Represent and guide our Veterans and their eligibly family members, in obtaining benefits and services through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and other state, local, community, and private sources
- Make our Veterans an economic force through education, employment and business development

SUMMARY

Our Agency provided services to 13,880 veterans, veteran family members and veteran advocates in 2018—showing approximately a 380% increase in total services. Though we have observed large rates of increase each year, this is many times higher than any given year in the past decade. The vast percentage of this increase is likely attributed to increased presence in our community, increased presence on social media, and overall accountability by our Veterans Benefits Representative between July – December 2018. Our full time staff included our Director, one Veterans Benefits Representative, one Veterans Services Assistant, and one Veterans Services Driver. Additionally, we employ one part time and one per diem driver. All of our programs and services are provided directly through our agency; while, all benefits and payments received by our clients are provided directly from federal and state sources. The operating cost of this agency for 2018, remains at almost 1% of the total federal, health, education, pension, life insurance, and low income pension benefits, which are afforded our Veterans and their eligible family members, per annum. The most recent full data set for VA Expenditures available to render this calculation, is for 2017; however, there has been no significant flux over the past five (5) years.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the US Department of Veterans Affairs' current 30 year veterans estimated population model, utilizing statistics and projections based on the 2010 and earlier US Census reports; there are now approximately 776,522 veterans in New York State, and approximately 4000 of these veterans are estimated to live in Greene County. While Greene County's total population only represents 0.25% of the total estimated New York State population, our veterans represent nearly 1% of the total state veteran population. The veteran population density of Greene County is approximately 86 veterans per 1000 residents, or 8.6% of our total Greene County population; which, includes us among some of the highest of New York State's rural counties, as well as many other regions of the United States, in veteran population density.

As of December 31, 2017, the most current data available, approximately 17.1% of Greene County's estimated veteran population are receiving VA Disability Compensation for service-connected disability or VA Disability Pension for nonservice-connected disabilities, a 0.6% total increase from 2016.

The most recent data set available for VA Healthcare is between 2016 and 2017. Approximately 30% of our veterans continue to utilize VA Healthcare, this statistic has held fast from our previous dataset. Unfortunately, this is the same data provided for last year; as, the Department of Veterans Affairs has not released 2018 statistics, as they typically do in April – May, annually.

Though the VA statistical model still shows Greene County's veteran population declining, it is only a hypothetical model. Regardless, we continue to see a rise in the number of unique veterans seeking and receiving VA benefits in Greene County; and the Catskill Community Based Outpatient Clinic, continues to expand services to meet the needs of its growing patient base.

2018 GOALS

The Agency goals for 2018 were:

- Continue eliminating unnecessary paper files
 - We continue to review files for unnecessary and/or redundant documents, and archive files which are no longer active
- Digitize approximately 13,000 existing paper files

2018 GOALS (cont)

- This goal is a joint service effort with Records Management, it is continued for 2020, or until it is met.
- Continue to increase overall productivity, ensuring as many Greene County veterans as possible are aware of and obtaining their VA and other veterans benefits under our representation
 - Unfortunately, we were unable to meet this goal for 2018 due to unexpected staff turnovers. Though, we only missed this by a narrow margin; and, we have every confidence, with new staff gaining experience, that we will meet this goal for 2019.
- Continue to streamline interagency services, by coordinating with other local agencies and departments who refer clients.
 - This is an ongoing goal, most often met by contacting outside agencies and prompting them to modify, correct, or include necessary information, that we can serve our Veteran and eligible family clients to our best capacity.
- Proudly honor two deserving veterans in our Honor a Vet Memorial and Veteran of the Year ceremonies
 - This year Greene County Veterans Service Agency, with the assistance of the existing Honor a Vet Committee members, we successfully held our traditional Honor a Vet Memorial Ceremony on May 19th, honoring Alfred Daoust of Cossackie; and, we held our Honor a Vet Veteran of the Year Award Ceremony on November 3rd, honoring Alfred VanSchaack of Athens.
- Implement a Greene County Peer to Peer program for veterans who need additional support transitioning to civilian life

2018 GOALS (cont)

- This goal is a long term goal, which requires extensive planning. We are currently in the pre-planning phase and are working with the Veterans Connect Center on this project.
- Complete the veterans work station within the office, allowing Veterans seeking employment, to access a computer, printer, resume building software, and the internet.
 - This project goal remains unmet due to unmet digital file goal. At this time, we continue to require this space for records storage.
- Continue to partner with local businesses and the County Clerk in maintaining and expanding the Greene County Return the Favor Program
 - Through collaborative efforts with the Greene County Clerk's office, local businesses, and Greene County's Veterans Service Organizations, we have at least 97 local businesses participating in the F.A.V.O.R (Find and Assist Veterans of Record) Program, offering various discounts to local veterans.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- VA Disability Compensation Claim Representation
 - Represent veteran clients against the Department of Veterans Affairs in Disability Compensation claims
 - Provide guidance to veterans obtaining necessary medical evidence
 - Develop and submit each claim to American Legion Department Service Officer for review
 - Submit accepted claims to the appropriate Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office for rating or approval

PROGRAMS & SERVICES (CONT)

- Interact with Congressional office to ensure all viable claims are accurately rated
- VA Educational Benefits
 - Assist veterans in obtaining their Certificate of Eligibility for the GI Bill
 - Assist eligible veterans' dependents in applying for Chapter 35 Survivor and Dependents Assistance for Education
 - Advise veterans of potential education benefits for self and dependents
 - Advise higher education institutions of CFR Title 38 Part III Chapters 30 through 36 regulations as necessary
- VA Pension Claim Representation
 - Represent eligible wartime veteran clients or their surviving spouses in VA Disability Pension claims
 - Assist veteran, family members and advocates in obtaining necessary financial information
 - Assist same in obtaining necessary medical information
 - Develop and submit claims to American Legion Department Service Officer for review
 - Submit accepted claims to the appropriate Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office for approval
- VA Healthcare and Enrollment
 - Guide veterans through application process
 - Provide explanation of benefits
 - Assist veterans in disclosing their financials to the VA
 - Screen applicants for potential VA Disability Compensation claims
 - Assist veterans who were denied VA Healthcare

PROGRAMS & SERVICES (CONT)

- Help veterans navigate VA Healthcare benefits and billing
- Advocate for veterans who are not receiving appropriate care at VA medical facilities
- County Veterans Transportation Program
 - Provide daily (weekday) transportation for county veterans to VA medical facilities
 - Pick up and drop off veterans at their homes
 - Provide transportation as requested for disability compensation assistance
 - Transport veterans after hours or weekends for special events as requested
 - Create and maintain eligibility requirements and standard operating procedure
 - Ensure vehicles, staff, and services meet all federal, state and local standards
- Events
 - Hold two Honor a Vet Ceremonies each year
 - One memorial ceremony in May for a chosen deceased veteran
 - One Veteran of the Year Ceremony in November for the chosen living veteran
 - Supervise a nine member panel of committee members
 - Create and disseminate submission packets annually
 - Review and assess submissions for accuracy and eligibility
 - Coordinate with Buildings and Grounds, Sheriff's Department, Catskill Police Department, and Greene County Courthouse for location set up and traffic control.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES (CONT)

- Coordinate with local entertainers, clergy, and veterans service and other organizations to ensure each ceremony is tailored to the honoree and his/her local community
 - Began planning for a large-scale one-time event. We chose and began planning the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall exhibit, to be held in 2019.
- Coordinate with Greene County Agencies and Departments
- Coordinate with County Clerk's office in obtaining and submitting veterans discharge documents
 - Coordinate county's Return the Favor program, periodically canvassing local businesses to provide discounts to area veterans and/or update their existing offers with County Clerk's office who maintains accurate listing

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Personnel

GCVSA Director	04/11/2011 to present
Veterans Benefits Representative	06/25/2018 to present
Veterans Service Assistant	12/28/2015 to 11/09/2018
Veterans Service Driver – Full Time	10/11/2011 to present
Veterans Service Chauffeur – Part Time	Vacant
Honor a Veteran Committee Chairman (Volunteer)	01/01/2013 to present

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

COMPARATIVE OPERATING EXPENSES

	2018
Salaries	\$154,354.98
Rent	\$25,233.64
Office Supplies	\$2,987.13
Postage	\$160.13
Repairs	\$27.64
Travel	\$14,862.70
Employee Benefits	\$73,108.42
Events	\$747.76
Vehicle Insurance	\$2,546.87
Telephone	\$2,591.98
Total	\$276,720.53
NYS Reimbursement	\$8529.00
Total Operating Expenses to County	\$268,191.53

CLAIMS & BENEFITS

Claims Filed Directly By Greene County Veterans Service Agency Staff

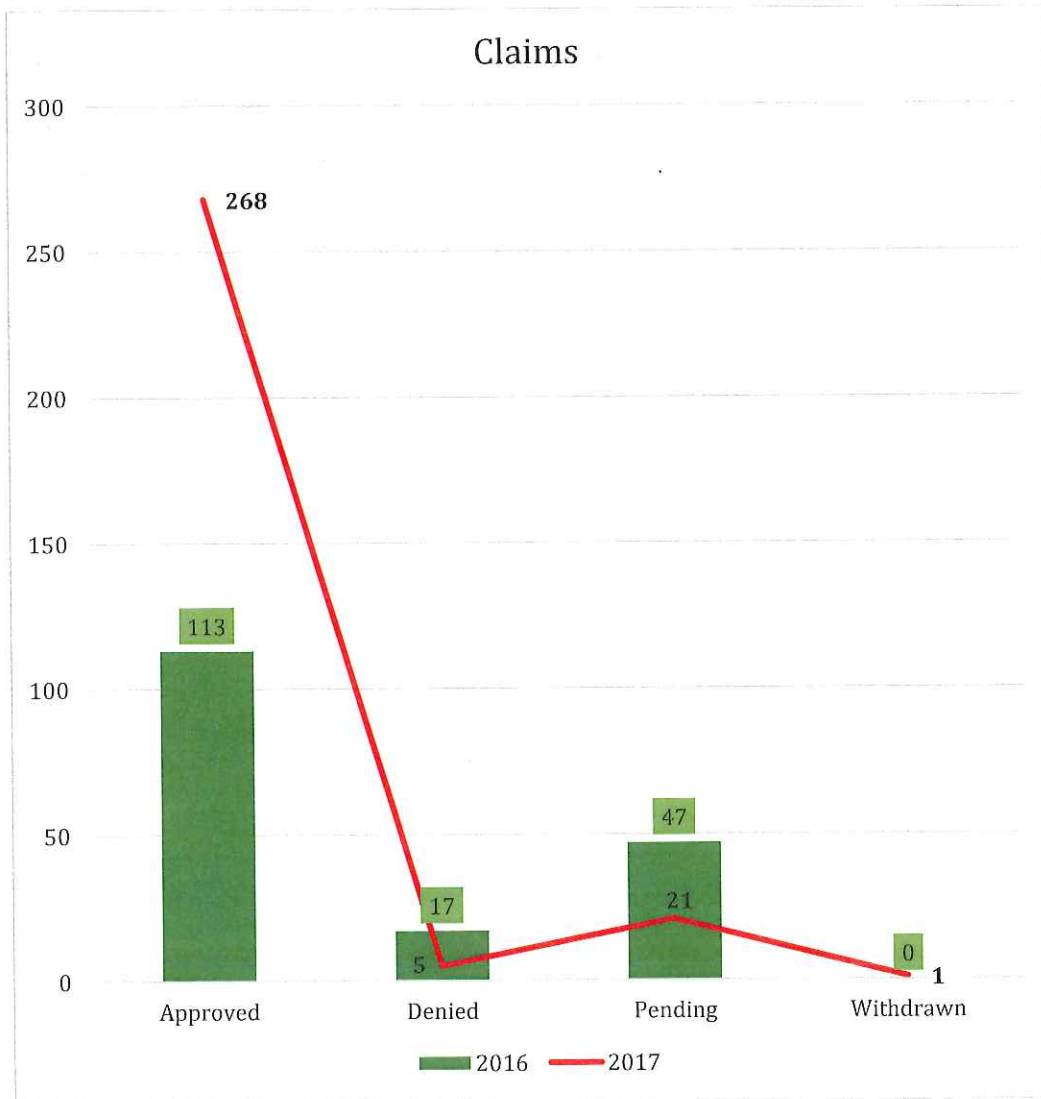


Figure 1

CLAIMS & BENEFITS (CONT)

In 2018 the agency filed 12% fewer VA claims than 2017. Of those claims, 78% have been approved, a 20% decrease from last year, by the Department of Veterans Affairs for payment of benefits, while less than 10% remain pending (static from last year), and 18% were denied, approximately a 600% increase from 2017, directly attributed to staffing turnover between December 2017 and November 2018; Lastly, 99% of those denials, are currently in appeals, or have been reopened.

CLAIMS & BENEFITS (CONT)

2017 & 2018 COMPENSATION & PENSION GREENE COUNTY RECIPIENTS

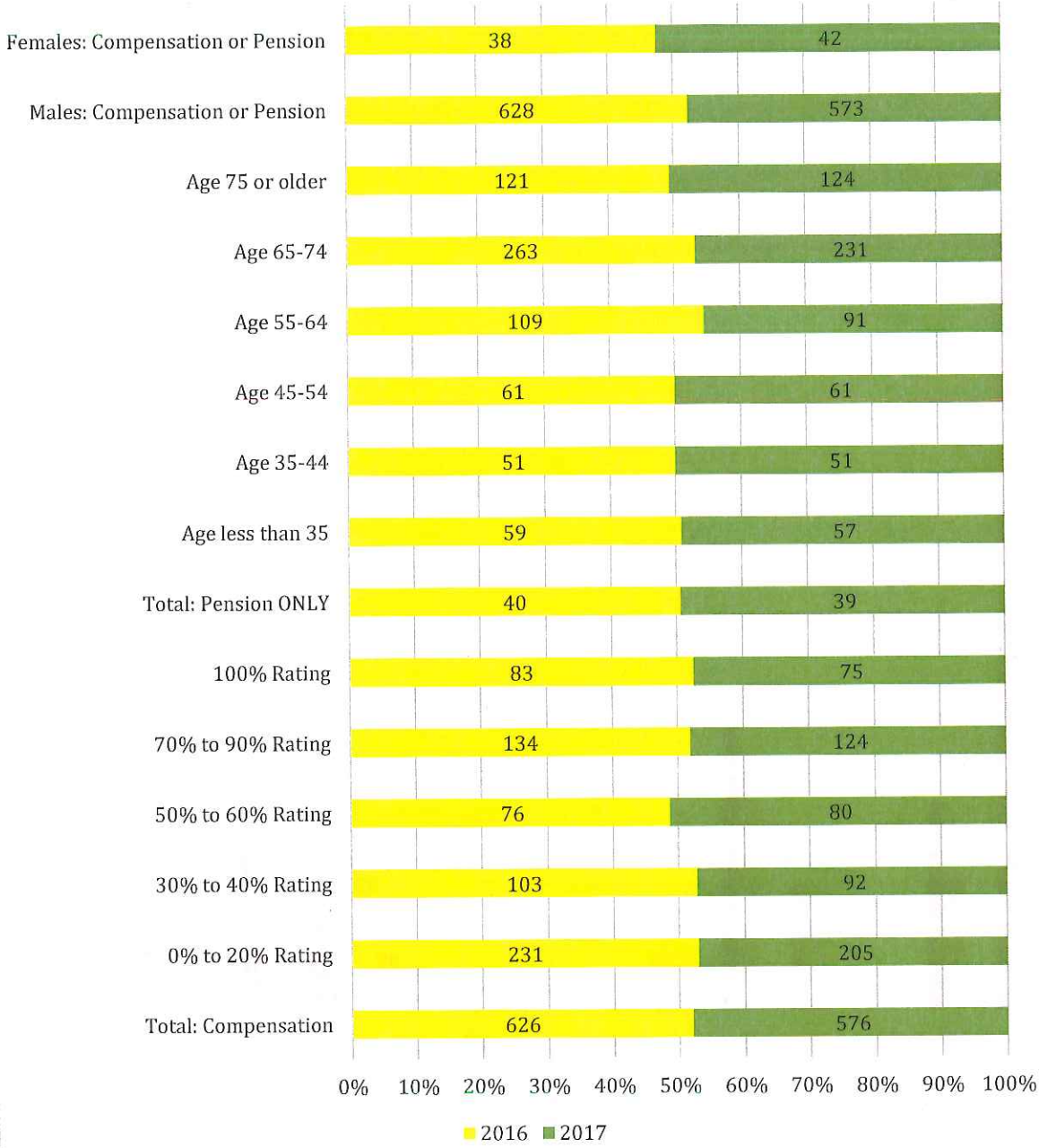


Figure 2

STATISTICAL REPORTS

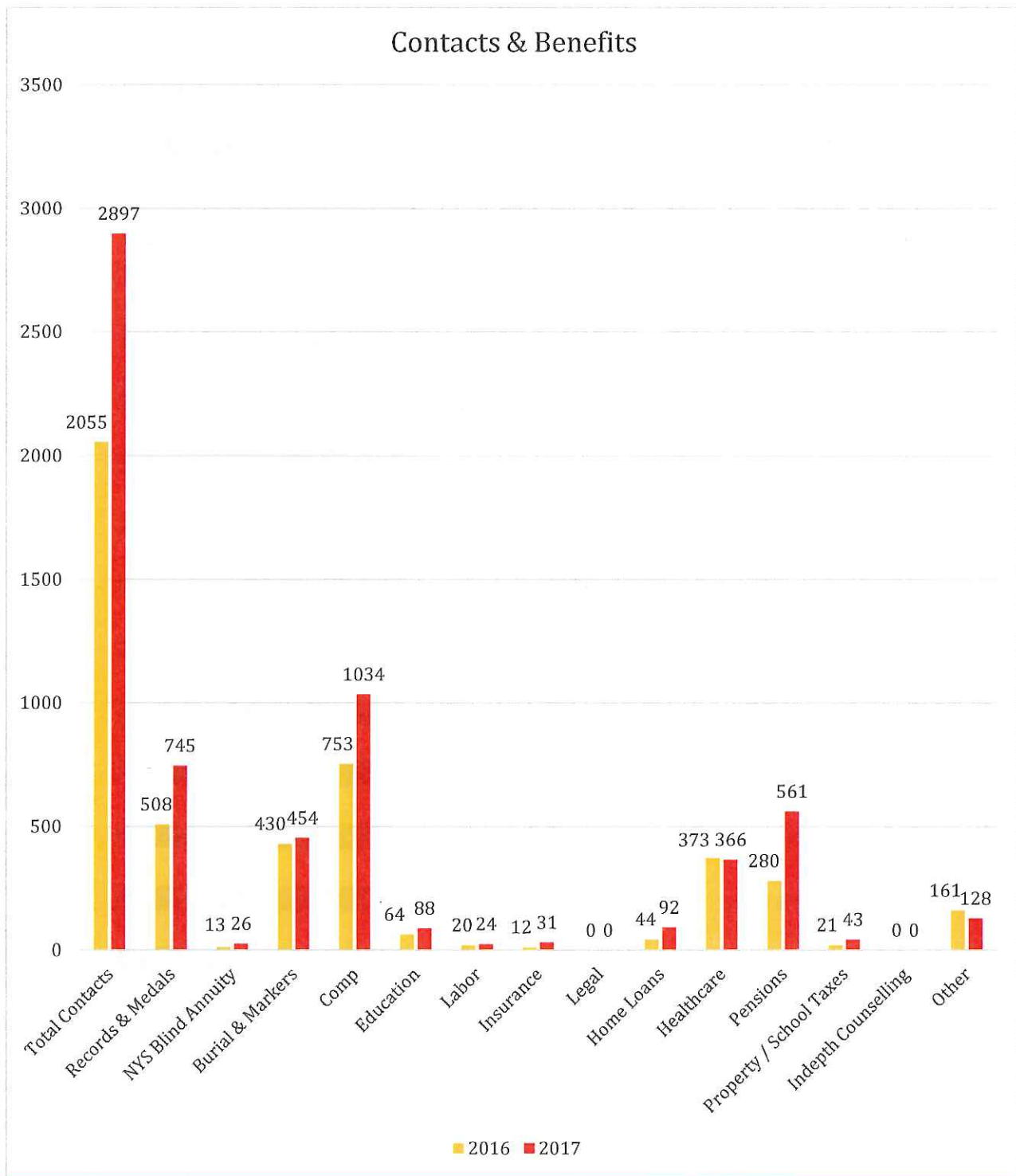


Figure 3

STATISTICAL REPORTS (CONT)

2018	Claims Filed	World War II	Korea	Vietnam	Persian Gulf	Afghanistan	Other	Veteran	Dependent/Other	Telephone	Walk-In	Mail	Fax	Other
Jan	18	43	20	115	51	33	96	90	193	118	58	61	46	283
Feb	13	38	40	80	25	14	85	66	162	78	54	51	45	228
Mar	10	27	38	65	17	11	96	53	152	73	47	56	29	205
Apr	12	36	20	49	22	8	86	56	130	74	47	42	23	186
May	10	38	28	75	27	19	79	59	155	87	44	57	26	214
Jun	12	18	15	86	53	15	84	64	143	73	51	48	35	207
Jul	34	25	26	110	55	24	111	66	205	95	72	56	48	271
Aug	26	26	32	157	67	17	151	137	221	140	90	71	57	358
Sep	23	31	24	102	45	25	157	85	210	131	55	77	32	295
Oct	12	31	34	93	53	20	116	99	178	117	69	72	19	277
Nov														
Dec														
TOTALS	170	313	277	932	415	186	1061	775	1749	986	587	591	360	2524

Disability Compensation	Pension	Healthcare	Education	Insurance	Home Loan	Burial	Medals	Military Records	Gold Star Parent Annuity	Blind Annuity	Supplemental Burial	Home Loan	Park Passes	Hunting/Fishing License	Employment	State Vets Home	Medals	Property Tax	Other
101	34	31	4	0	4	34	4	104	0	15	0	4	1	1	5	3	4	2	38
57	39	27	6	0	4	37	2	80	0	2	0	4	0	0	1	4	2	2	19
71	41	11	7	0	3	45	4	62	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	4	2	4
45	48	12	3	1	4	40	2	39	0	0	1	4	4	4	4	0	2	15	8
60	39	29	5	0	0	33	1	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	4	14
71	16	21	8	4	8	32	0	78	0	0	2	8	1	4	1	0	0	13	9
99	48	9	5	2	8	51	5	60	0	0	6	8	3	2	0	0	5	16	11
171	44	24	7	2	2	50	1	84	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	10	10
115	48	11	5	6	8	43	2	69	0	0	0	8	2	1	1	0	2	11	25
115	35	24	9	0	3	40	0	46	0	5	2	3	1	1	2	0	0	9	26
905	392	199	59	15	44	405	21	683	0	23	13	44	12	13	20	7	21	84	164

Figure 4

STATISTICAL REPORTS (CONT)

FY 16 & FY17 SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES (IN\$000'S)

■ FY 16 ■ FY 17

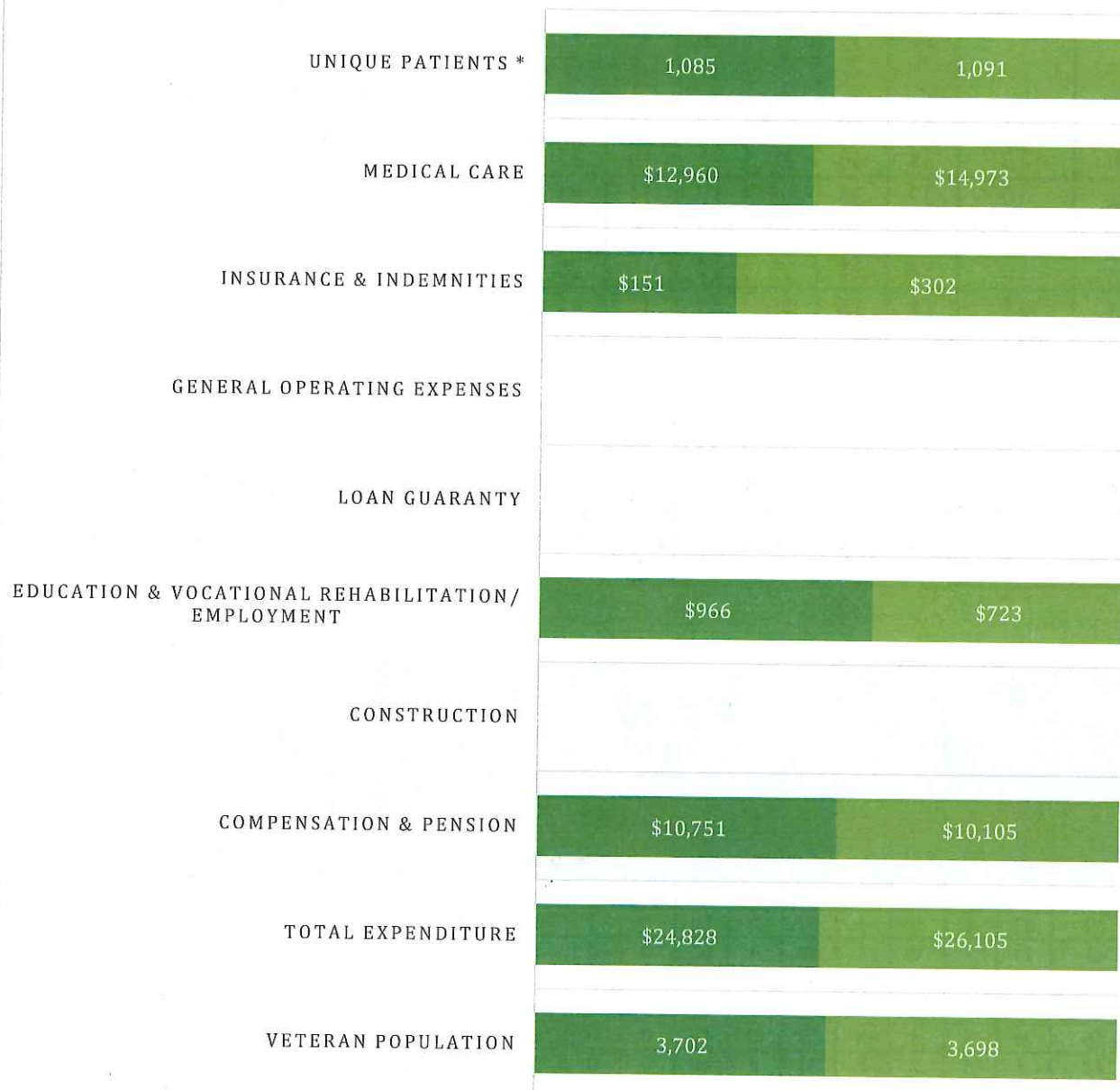


Figure 5

STATISTICAL REPORTS (CONT)

TRANSPORTATION

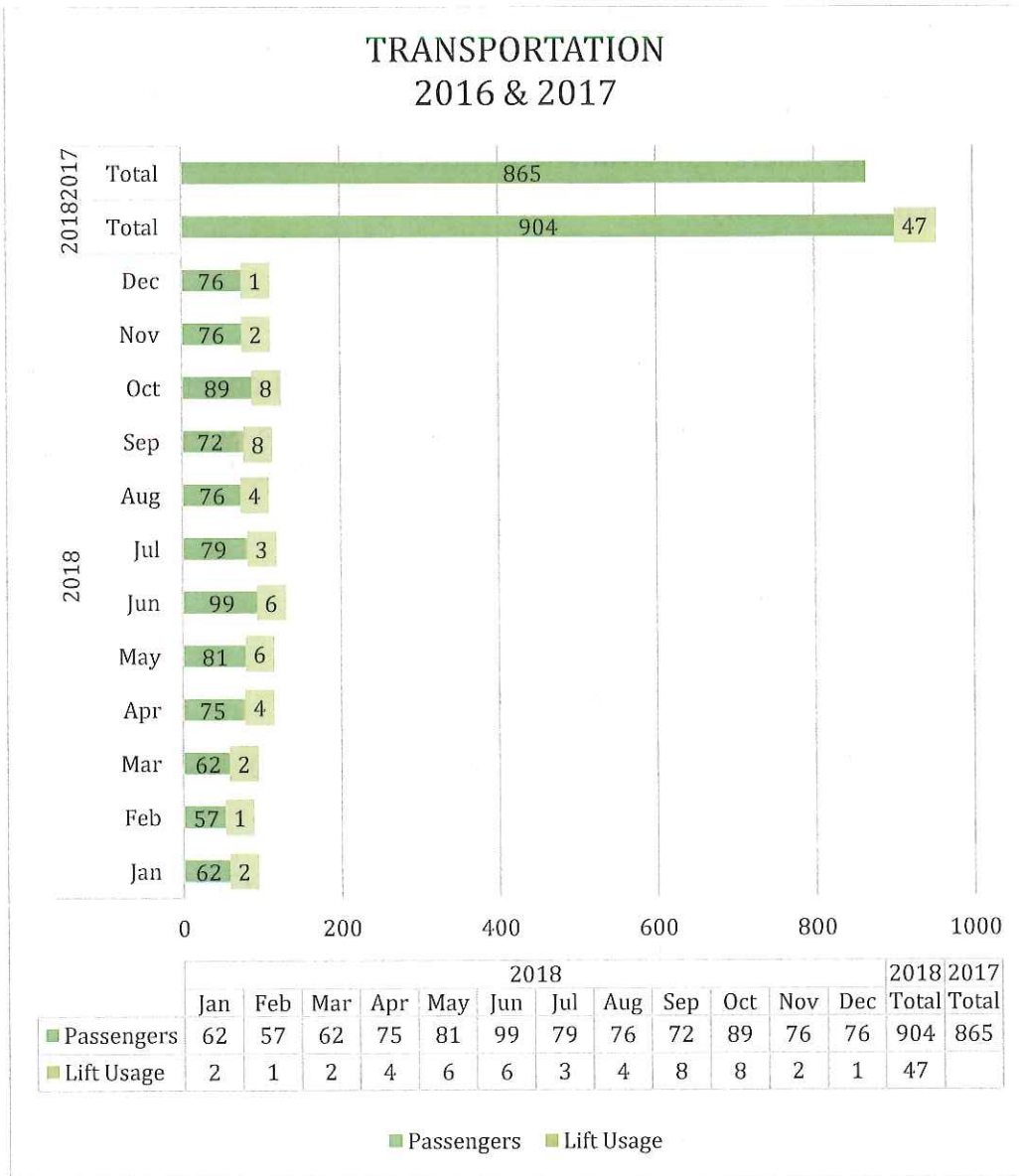


Figure 6

STATISTICAL REPORTS (CONT)

TRANSPORTATION (CONT)

We maintain a fleet of three vehicles: 2006 Ford Focus, 2010 Chevy Van, 2016 Ford Transit Van with Wheelchair Lift. Our overall transportation service increased slightly (2.5%) from 2017 to 2018. This service is provided to ensure our Veterans are able to obtain healthcare provided by the federal government, at little to no direct cost to our Veterans, and at no cost to Greene County.

OPERATION GREENE HOLIDAY

The Operation Greene Holiday mission for 2018, was to assist the local chapter of the Blue Star Mothers, NY13, raise funds for their annual Holiday Packages to the Troops. According to President Peggy Snyder, our assistance yielded approximately \$3000; and, the Blue Star Mothers enjoyed a record year.

The Agency goals for 2018 are:

- Continue eliminating unnecessary paper files
- Continue to digitize the remaining sections of approximately 13,000 existing paper files
- Continue to increase overall productivity, ensuring as many Greene County veterans as possible are aware of and obtaining their VA and other veterans benefits under our representation
- Continue to streamline interagency services, by coordinating with other local agencies and departments who refer clients
- Continue to partner with local businesses and the County Clerk in maintaining and expanding the Greene County Return the Favor Program
- Proudly honor two deserving veterans in our Honor a Vet Memorial and Veteran of the Year ceremonies

LONG TERM GOALS

- Implement a Veterans Assistance Fund, by coordinating with other agencies within Greene County Government as well as local Veterans Service Organizations and other non-profit and for-profit companies conducting business in Greene County, as well as local leadership to:
 - Continue to advise, support, and interact with our local Veterans Service Organizations
 - Continue to advise and support our veterans in obtaining 100% compliance with the NYS Veterans School Tax Exemption; regardless of NYS reimbursement. Currently, only four out of ten school districts within or overlapping Greene County townships, have approved the exemption; we are advised on each status solely by members of the respective veterans' communities for each district.
 - Implement a Greene County Veterans Service Dog training program.

