



VA MID-ATLANTIC HEALTH CARE NETWORK - VISN SIX

Vol. 4, No. 7

"Excellent Care – Earned by Veterans – Delivered Here"

Voices of VISN 6

Official news from around *your* VISN

April 30, 2014

Hundreds Turn Out For First Women Veterans Summit, Expo

By Kenita D. Gordon
VISN 6 public affairs

April 17 proved to be a momentous day as hundreds of women from around the state participated in the first statewide event to focus on female Veterans in North Carolina. The North Carolina Women Veterans Summit and Expo attracted multiple generations of women from around the Tar Heel State. Some served in times of peace and many during periods of national conflict.

The event, the first of

its kind in the state, was a combined effort of the Winston Salem VBA Regional Office, VISN 6 and the North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs.

A wealth of information, warmth and celebration was experienced throughout the day as many women Veterans felt honored to have an event created solely for their benefit.

Women Veterans had direct and immediate access to federal, state and private organizations that

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Kenita Gordon

Top left: Winston Salem VBARO Director Cheryl Rawls imprints seal on the proclamation Governor Pat McCrory had just signed. Top right: Women Veterans stand for the pledge of allegiance. Bottom: Veterans from various eras and branches of the military discuss perspectives during the Service Beyond Success panel.

Voluntary Service Gains National Recognition

Asheville Brings Home Gold

VISN 6 public affairs

Alyce Knaflich is a volunteer and Darlene Laughter is chief, Voluntary Service, at the Charles George VAMC in Asheville, NC. Both were honored at the 68th Annual Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee (NAC) Meeting and Conference held in Cary, N.C., in April.

Knaflich was named the NAC Female Volunteer of the Year and Laughter received the VA Voluntary Service Award for Excellence.



Alyce Knaflich

Medical Center Director Cynthia Breyfogle remarked, "Their passion for helping others, especially Veterans, is invaluable. Their inspirational work is contagious and has made an enormous difference



Darlene Laughter

in the quality of service we offer Veterans here in Asheville."

Knaflich has logged more than 1,200 volunteer hours since 2009, primar-

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From The Director

At the end of each month, I review what took place in order to determine content for this column. Looking back, I'm often overwhelmed by the tremendous support for Veterans by communities throughout our region.

April 2014 was a banner month for events that truly demonstrate this area's goodwill and commitment to the health and well-being of Veterans.

I firmly believe that the ongoing collaborative efforts between VBA, VHA, our states and local communities are the best in the nation.

The Women Veterans Summit and Expo was an amazing event. Virtually every organization in North Carolina that is involved with Veterans turned out in a show of support.

Governor Pat McCrory raised collaboration to a new level when he invited our own Cheryl Rawls (director of the Winston Salem VBA Regional Office) to put the official North Carolina Seal on the Proclamation making April 17 North Carolina Women Veterans Day. Icing on the cake was the unveiling of North Carolina's new driver's license with the word Veteran imprinted on it.

Most importantly, more than 400 women Veterans from around the state had access to information and direct assistance from VA, VHA, VBA, North Carolina and a variety of businesses and Veteran Service Organizations – all in one day and under one roof.

While bringing this together was certainly a team effort, I want to credit the VISN's tremendous participation to our own Lead Women's Veterans Program Manager Shenekia Williams Johnson.

Building on the momentum of service was the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee meeting held in Cary, N.C.

Within VISN 6, nearly 6,000 volunteers contributed more than 580,000 hours last year. They can be found in almost every clinic and play a huge role in what sets our health care apart from our civilian counterparts.

I had the pleasure of addressing this highly-dedicated group of volunteers from around the country. In my comments to them, I shared that too often we underestimate what impact the power of a smile, a kind word, or a listening ear has with regard to the health and well-being of our Veterans.

VISN 6 hosted this meeting for the second year in a

row as a result of the excellent job Team Durham, led by Ronni Miller, did in 2013. Once again, they pulled it off in grand style demonstrating true professionalism.

Hosting the event locally was especially good as two of our Voluntary Service members; Darlene Laughter and Alyce Knaflich, both from Asheville, took home national level awards.

Talking about collaboration and volunteers allows for an easy transition for me to mention National Nurses week.

VA is the nation's single largest employer of nurses and we are proud to join the American Nurses association in honoring America's nurses May 6-12.

This year's Nurses Week theme is "Nurses: Leading the Way." During the week, VA celebrates the contributions of its more than 90,000 nurses who are dedicated to saving lives and maintaining the health of millions of Veterans.

Please join the celebration by reaching out and saying thanks to one of the more than 4,600 nurses here in VISN 6 for their continuous efforts in advocating, leading, and caring for our Veterans.

In closing, a few weeks from now, Americans everywhere will pause to commemorate Memorial Day. On Page 6 is a piece of artwork with a saying that is familiar to many Veterans:

"All gave some. Some gave all."

Please take this opportunity to reach out to your communities and help them remember what this means and why it is important to them. Contact your county Veteran Service Officer to see how you can help Americans everywhere recognize the price paid for our freedoms.

As always, to our Veterans, thank you for your service. To the VISN 6 team who care for our Veterans, thank you for your service as well.

Sincerely,
Dan Hoffmann



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Durham VAMC To Celebrate Research Week With Grand Opening Of New Research Building

VA medical centers across the nation will put the spotlight on National Research Week, May 21-28. Locally, VISN 6 will highlight the event with a formal grand opening of the new 5-story research building at the Durham VAMC.

“Research plays a vital role in providing the high-quality care Veterans deserve,” said Network Director Dan Hoffmann. “From biomedical research in the laboratory to clinical application in a doctor’s office, VA research has an important impact on treating and preventing disease and disability and, so much of what is accomplished here becomes part of our nation’s efforts to improve the health and well-being of all those who served.”

The new facility will eventually provide laboratory spaces and offices for 24 active research investigators with 26 support staff.

Currently more than 480 research projects are being conducted to include research on traumatic brain injury, PTSD, neurobiology, neurophysiology, mental illness, cancer, spinal cord injury, alcoholism, surgical oncology and infectious diseases.

“This building will provide the quality space our researchers need in their pursuit of the answers to many health related issues that impact the lives of Veterans here and around the nation,” said Durham VAMC Director DeAnne Seekins.

More than 3,400 VA researchers nationwide work

piecing together “clues,” leading to health care breakthroughs, discoveries and treatments that improve the lives of Veterans and others. VA Research has come to be viewed as a model for superior bench-to-bedside research. Overseeing this activity is VA’s Office of Research and Development (ORD), which is made up of four key divisions: biomedical (basic) research; clinical studies; rehabilitation; and health services research, which studies issues such as quality and delivery of care.

Their list of accomplishments includes: therapies for tuberculosis following World War II; the implantable cardiac pacemaker; computerized axial tomography (CAT) scans; functional electrical stimulation systems that allow patients to move paralyzed limbs; the nicotine patch; the first successful liver transplants; the first powered ankle-foot prosthesis; and a vaccine for shingles.

VA researchers also found that one aspirin a day reduces by half the rate of death and nonfatal heart attacks in patients with unstable angina. More recently, VA investigators tested an insulin nasal spray that shows great promise in warding off Alzheimer’s disease, and found that prazosin (a well-tested generic drug used to treat high blood pressure and prostate problems) can help improve sleep and lessen nightmares for those

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Stent Research Underway At Asheville VAMC

Dennis Mehring
Asheville VAMC public affairs

The Asheville VAMC is one of 25 VA medical centers involved in Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) 571 Drug-eluting Stents vs. Bare Metal Stents in Saphenous Vein Graft (SVG) Angioplasty.

Lead Site Investigator Dr. Kristine Owen and her study team are working with patients who have already undergone coronary bypass surgery which entails having a vein removed from the leg and implanted or grafted in the chest to “bypass” blockages in the coronary arteries. These grafts are called saphenous vein grafts or SVGs. SVGs often develop blockages that can cause chest pain and heart attacks.

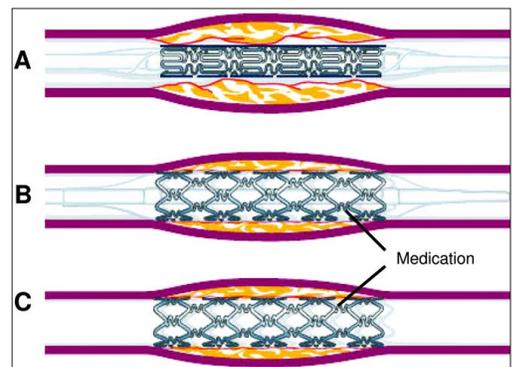
SVG blockages can be opened by using small balloons and stents (metal coils that keep the artery open). The study team is doing research to find the best type of stent to use when a SVG develops blockage after coronary bypass surgery.

The two types of stents now in use are bare metal stents (BMS) and drug-eluting stents (DES). Both stents are made of metal but DES is also

coated with a drug that releases into the wall of the blood vessel to prevent scar tissue from forming and re-narrowing the vessel. Both stents have advantages and disadvantages.

DES require taking special blood thinners longer than BMS but they are also less likely to re-narrow.

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Asheville Volunteer Receives State's Highest Award

By Dennis Mehring
Asheville VAMC public affairs

Ms. Ruby Rice Jones, a Charles George VAMC volunteer, was presented with The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, “the highest order the governor can bestow” on North Carolina citizens, April 11 during the medical center’s annual ceremony to recognize volunteers. Jones, now 87 years old and a volunteer at the Asheville medical center for 61 years, said the award “was a great surprise.”

April Riddle, Gov. Pat McCrory’s western regional director presented the award. Riddle said the award is presented to people who have a proven record of extraordinary service to the state. She said that Ms. Jones exhibits the qualities of an outstanding volunteer and human being and that her dedication, caring, thoughtfulness and willingness to help our nation’s Veterans embody what VA stands for. The Charles George VAMC has been lucky to have such an excellent volunteer and person at their facility for the past 61 years.”

The nomination letter sent to the governor described her as a dedicated woman who has sacrificed her time in order to help Veterans. When Jones began volunteering in 1953 she was singing with a group called the Sunbeams in segregated hospital wards. She has worked



Dennis Mehring
April Riddle (left), assisted by Medical Center Director Cynthia Breyfogle (right), presents Ruby Rice Jones with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

in almost every volunteer position within the hospital and now volunteers in the Community Living Center (CLC). At last count she has volunteered 5,456 hours.

A VAMC staff member said that Jones’ vibrant per-

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Volunteers continued from Pg 1

ily as an AMVETS volunteer working with homeless women Veterans, CLC residents, and hospitalized Veterans. According to Breyfogle, “Ms. Knaflich is the ultimate ombudsperson for Veterans. I know that whatever the program, ceremony, or event, I can count on seeing Ms. Knaflich there.”

Knaflich has met the needs of many Veterans, collecting home goods, escorting Veterans to appointments and serving on many committees, such as the Asheville Mayor’s Committee on Veterans Affairs.

She has chaired the Buncombe County Veterans Council and is a Past Commander of AMVETS Post 333. Knaflich is credited with planning, organizing, and executing Asheville’s first annual Women Veterans Tribute.

Addressing Laughter’s accomplishments, Breyfogle said, “Darlene is as solid a fixture in the community as she is in the hospital. She is our ‘face’ in the community, raising awareness of the value and service of Veterans, bridging gaps, building relationships, and connecting people and things.”

She adds that Laughter has developed groundbreaking programs, including the Butterfly Wish, which fulfills special wishes of dying Veterans, and a creative

wheelchair management station which has assured availability and functionality.

According to Breyfogle, one of Laughter’s signature accomplishments has been the Lodging for Outpatient Services program. This program provides patients who require multiple recurring treatments and who live more than 50 miles away the ability to stay in a local hotel with a family member or care giver if desired.

Along with being a great way to make the treatment experience more comfortable for the patient, it also frees up the inpatient beds for those who need round-the-clock care.

Laughter is also credited with building a broad Veteran Transportation Network made up of volunteers representing Veterans Service Organizations from the surrounding area, which has helped hundreds of Veterans get to and from their appointments and has saved the facility significant dollars. Overall, Laughter’s very creative efforts resulted in a total cost savings in excess of \$6.8 million in 2013.

Breyfogle declared that, “Ms. Laughter is an exceptional Chief of Voluntary Service and Service Chief in general. We are extremely fortunate to have a leader of her caliber as part of our team.”

VISN 6 Nurses On Call

By Sue Rhodes
Nurse Telephone Care Program Manager

Veterans can rest assured knowing that a Registered Nurse is just a phone call away. The VISN 6 Network Telephone Care Program (NTCP), often referred to as “the Nurse Help Line”, is a service available to all Veterans served by the VISN. The NTCP nurses are experienced, knowledgeable, and available to assist the Veteran with questions or concerns after normal business hours.

Initiated in 2008, the VISN 6 NTCP is located at the Beckley VAMC. NTCP nurses are experienced in critical care, telephone assessment, crisis intervention and the program is fully accredited by the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission.

Each VISN 6 medical center operates a local nurse triage phone line during regular clinic hours. By calling the same numbers after clinic hours, the callers are connected to the Nurse Help Line. Receiving the calls are Sue Rhodes and her staff of registered nurses. They are available to assist Veterans and their loved ones with both medical and emotional support and advice about access to care from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Monday through Friday as well as weekends and holidays.

The staff takes advantage of many resources to help Veterans and their families such as computerized patient records, physicians, pharmacists, medical administrators, triage protocols, computer and hard copy references. They assist the Veterans with a wide variety of issues and concerns that can include:

- Symptom analysis
- First aid procedures



- Stress/anxiety
- Medication questions
- Health questions
- Patient education concerning specific disease entities, such as diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Procedure preparation
- Confirm and provide information regarding appointments
- Caregiver support

It is important to note that the Nurse Help Line should not be used in lieu of 911 for emergencies.

Persons calling the Nurse Help Line will be asked for identification including name and last four numbers of the Veteran’s social security number, the VA Medical Center where Veteran receives care and the reason for calling.

The registered nurse answering the call will review the record and ask a series of questions. Based upon the information provided and assessment, the registered nurse will make an appropriate recommendation (such as, call 911; go to the nearest emergency room; call for a clinic appointment; or home care instructions; etc.).

Phone calls are documented in Veterans’ medical records and all clinical calls are forwarded to each Veteran’s provider.

In Fiscal Year 2013, the VISN6 Network Telephone Care Program averaged nearly 5,000 calls per month, with an average time of 14 seconds to answer each call.

For more information regarding the VISN 6 NTCP, Sue Rhodes can be reached by phone at 304-255-2121, ext. 4276.

VISN 6 Helpline Numbers

Asheville: 800-932-6408
Beckley: 877-902-5142
Durham: 888-878-6890
Fayetteville: 800-771-6106
Hampton: 866-544-9961
Richmond: 800-784-8381
Salem: 888-982-2463
Salisbury: 800-469-8262

Asheville continued from Pg 4

sonality and calming demeanor has had an astounding effect on patients within the CLC and Hospice unit. She feeds CLC patients during meal times and spends time talking with hospice patients one-on-one. The time spent with hospice patients has been some of her most rewarding work Jones said. She said that she enjoys the feeling she gets when she can lift the spirits of patients by talking to them individually, listening to them or singing to them.

Jones said the volunteering lifts her spirits. “Sometimes people wonder and think, ‘You’re still doing this at this age?’ This is what’s helping me get along. It’s just like medicine to me to be able to help and to see

them smile and to see that I’ve helped them,” she said.

Medical Center Director Cynthia Breyfogle said, “I just so appreciate everything that Ruby does as well as all of our volunteers.”

Jones is one of more than 600 volunteers who contributed some 100,000 hours to the CGVAMC in 2013. Darlene Laughter, director of CGVAMC Voluntary Services said, “We could not do what we do here without the volunteers. They extend the hands, the hearts, the feet, the shoulders, the ears and the soul of the staff who serve Veterans.”

The Order of the Long Leaf Pine was created in the mid-1960s.

Memorial Day Honors Sacrifice Of Those Gone Too Soon

Memorial Day, one of America's most venerated national holidays, is set aside so that we might reflect on the honor and sacrifice of those who courageously gave their lives to safeguard us and our way of life. They are forever young in our memories.

Throughout our nearly 238-year history as a democracy, time and again, Americans in uniform have had to secure the heritage of freedom and liberty for us and for the oppressed in other lands, paying a steep price in blood and suffering.

The past decade has provided reminder enough of the devotion, loyalty, and determination of the magnificent men and women who serve in our military formations.

"In harm's way" has become the cliché for those deployed on mission without really capturing the danger, stress, worry, fear, and love that keeps military families riveted to each breaking overseas news bulletin. There are no clichés for discussing the undiscussable.



America's Wars Total (1775 -1991)
U.S. Military Service during Wartime: 41,892,128
Battle Deaths: 651,031
Non-mortal Woundings: 1,431,290
Living Veterans as of May 30, 2013: 23,234,000

As we, in the Department of Veterans Affairs, go about our duties of providing America's living Veterans the care, benefits, and services they have earned, let us also remember the men and women who gave their lives for our freedom.

Their powerful legacy surrounds us each and every day all across this Nation – when we gather openly to speak our minds freely. It is found in our churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples, where worship is freely exercised. It is evident in the openness of our media, where information

is shared without fear of reprisal. It is embedded in our polling places, where ballots freely cast determine who will govern this great land.

In caring for those "who [have] borne the battle," we come to understand the consequences of war. Let us remember the families of our Fallen. And with our prayers for peace, let us also pray for the Almighty's continued blessings on this great country, for which so many laid down their lives.



Remembering Vietnam

The official end of Vietnam War occurred 39 years ago on May 7, 1975. Although many cite March 1973 as the end of the war, VA recognizes and classifies a Vietnam Veteran as a person who performed active military, naval, or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the period Feb. 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975.

Vietnam War (1964-1975)

Deployed to Southeast Asia: 3,403,000

Battle Deaths: 47,434

Other Deaths (In Theater): 10,786

Non-mortal Woundings: 153,303

May Is Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month

May is Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month – a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

Asian Pacific Americans have made lasting contributions to America's wartime efforts – serving in every conflict since The War of 1812. According to the U.S. Census, as of 2011 there were 264,695 Asian and 27,469 Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander military Veterans.

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843 and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869 by mostly Chinese immigrants.

Originally the first 10 days of May were designated



as Asian Pacific Heritage week; however, in 1992 President George H.W. Bush signed an extension making the week-long celebration into a month-long celebration. That same year, the official designation of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month was signed into law.

Stent continued from Pg 3

Both BMS and DES are routinely used in SVGs, but current data does not indicate which one is more effective.

In the study, patients who need stenting of SVG blockages and who meet study criteria will be asked to take part in the study and will then be chosen to receive either DES or BMS. All study patients will be followed in the clinic for at least one year to see if there is a difference in the rate of cardiac death, heart attack, or if a procedure is required to increase the flow of blood. The purpose of CSP 571 is to compare these outcomes after DES vs. BMS use in SVGs.

The Asheville VAMC research team for this study includes three physicians who specialize in interventional cardiology, two nurses with extensive cardiology experience and a cardiovascular laboratory technician. This study is scheduled to be complete in 2015 and the results will be published in a national medical journal to guide practice for VA and non-VA patients.



Courtesy Photo

The Asheville VAMC Stent Research team (left to right) is Dr. Holly Humphrey, Valerie Allen, RN, Dr. Kristine Owen; Richard Ziobro, RN, and Michael Bouchard, Research Assistant.

Research Week continued from Pg 3

with PTSD.

Other VA research breakthroughs include a computer system for patients on ventilators, with more accurate respirator settings, fewer medical complications, and better outcomes, and a first-of-its-kind study done at VA medical centers to optimize the design of an advanced prosthetic arm, made by DEKA Research and Development through funding from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

Similarly, VA Research has developed other collaborative work with academic affiliates, nonprofits and federal agencies. For example, recently VA and DoD

collaborated to form the Consortium to Alleviate PTSD (CAP), which will focus on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of PTSD, and the Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium (CENC), to study concussion or mild TBI, and possible links to neurodegenerative diseases.

Veterans volunteer to participate in research projects, knowing that there may not be a direct benefit to their health. They do so, in many cases, with the hope of benefiting others in the future.

For more on VA research, visit www.hsrd.research.va.gov/centers.



Womens Health

Womens Summit continued from Pg 1

provided expertise in benefits, claims, healthcare, education and training opportunities, VA home loans, foreclosure prevention, women's business opportunities and more.

The event also served as the platform for North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory to announce a proposal that will allow all North Carolina-based Veterans to pay in-state tuition for community college the first year they get out of service. "We are subsidizing your education and you deserve it," McCrory told the crowd at the N.C. National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters in Raleigh.

While there, McCrory also unveiled the new Veteran designation that will appear on state licenses, issued new licenses to the event's planning staff and signed a proclamation declaring Thursday, April 17th to be the first Women Veterans' Day in North Carolina.

In response to the questions about the states' efforts in dealing with women Veterans, the governor said, "I think we're going to have to listen to what they have to say because they may have different challenges than past Veterans coming home because they were primarily male."

Bernadette Madonna, a 20-year Navy Veteran living in Raleigh, who served between 1979 and 2000, said the event was very educational and well-planned. "The event was wonderful and very informative. I received information on new VA technology and educational opportunities as well as benefits for claims and Veterans health."

Marine Veteran Shirley John of Jacksonville, N.C., said she felt honored and appreciated at the event. She also came in contact with other Veterans with whom she shared her stories. "I was telling some other Veterans here how I graduated from boot camp 60 years ago this month and how an event like this really makes me proud that I served."

When asked what this event means to female Veterans, Women's Air Service Pilot Lillian Yonally said the event was needed and was a wonderful way to recognize women's military service by providing resources. "Things definitely have changed since my time in service (World War II). It was much different then, because we weren't recognized for our achievement, especially in the Air Force. There seems to be more recognition for women now in the military," said Yonally.

When asked what remains the same Yonally said, "We are still women and still capable. There are new fields to go in and we just have to prove we are capable of succeeding in them."

Cheryl Rawls, director of the Winston Salem VBA Regional Office said, "I couldn't be more proud of the level of planning and passion the committee put into this event. Today's turnout surpassed our expectations



Kenita Gordon

(Right to left) Bernadette Madonna (Navy Veteran), Pearl Galloway (Army Veteran), and Joe Ann Shaeffers (Army Veteran) gather information and health education materials at the Mobile Vet Center.

and we look forward to partnering with VISN 6, the state, non-profits, and our corporate partners to host more events like this in the future."

Dr. Betty Moseley-Brown, associate director of the VA's Center for Women Veterans in Washington, provided the key note address emphasizing that reducing Veteran homelessness, getting veterans access to services and reducing the benefits claims backlog were the top three initiatives for VA.

Moseley-Brown commented on how VA has changed to ensure women receive the services they have earned.

Citing VA's "Don't Call Me Mister," campaign, Moseley-Brown shared with the audience that medical staff members are now trained to look at the Veteran's information they're serving before assuming it's a man. The campaign created a culture change in VA stressing both females and males are possible patients when coming to an appointment.

The event included a Service Beyond Success panel in which successful female Veterans from various services and time frames shared their expertise on continuing their success after military service. Some of their advice included staying connected to Veterans whether through civic organizations or voluntary service; own "being a Veteran"; consider entrepreneurship in tough economic climates; become a mentor; and women Veterans should always believe in themselves.

More than 40 organizations were present including VHA, VBA, the Vet Centers; North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs and National Guard; SAS, Lenovo, North Carolina Women Who Served, State Farm, The Women's Business Center of North Carolina and a host of non-profits.

June 1 Is National Cancer Survivor's Day

By Kenita D. Gordon
VISN 6 public affairs

As National Cancer Survivor's Day approaches on June 1, Richmond VAMC seeks to highlight the excellence in which its radiation oncology clinic treats its patients.

For many Veterans, finding out they have cancer is one of the scariest things imaginable. All of a sudden one's mortality, how their family will cope, and whether or how they will be able to plan for an uncertain future is at the foremost portion of their minds.

The staff at Richmond VAMC's Radiation Oncology (RadOnc) Clinic understands these concerns all too well and strive to make their patients comfortable prior to, during and after treatment. Richmond's clinic treats Veterans for everything from breast cancer to colon cancer with prostate cancer being the most common cancer treated.

Richmond is one of 40 VAMCs that provide radiation oncology and one of six that provides brachytherapy. They are one of VA's Centers of Excellence for Radiation Oncology. The clinic administers over 6,000 radiation treatments a year, seeing over 400 new patients each year with about 300 patients completing radiation therapy. Approximately 70 patients receive brachytherapy treatment annually.

Keah Bridges, Administrative Officer for Richmond's RadOnc clinic says their staff-patient relationships differ from other clinics in the medical center where Veterans might be seen once or twice a year. The typical radiation patient comes in for a 20-minute treatment, five days a week for six to eight weeks. These Veterans are being treated so frequently that many of them form close bonds with the staff," said Bridges.

Angela Pettus of Richmond was treated at Richmond's RadOnc Clinic and says during treatment she really connected with the staff. "They gave me excellent care and I bonded with all of the nurses. I feel a strong connection with the staff there because they saved my life. They did everything to make me feel as comfortable as possible. They took care of me to the highest level," said Pettus.



Pettus said although the cancer diagnosis hurt, she wasn't surprised. "I had been through so many other things prior to it that [the diagnosis] was not a surprise to me. I expected that I would be diagnosed at some point because of my family history," said Pettus. Thanks to the life-saving treatments at Richmond, Pettus has been in remission since November 2012 and says her life is great now. She looks forward to spending time with her 14-year-old daughter. She is also considering opening a non-profit agency to support others going through treatments who are employed saying there is a gap in assistance for people like her who are employed and going through treatment.

Bonds between fellow Veterans are built in Richmond's RadOnc Clinic as well. Bridges said although Veterans come in feeling like their life stops when they receive a cancer diagnosis, hearing the stories of others who are post treatment often helps them through it.

Additionally, most Veterans who reside more than 60 miles from the medical center are lodged in area hotels. During their stay, many develop friendships and build their own support systems.

This is one of the many qualities unique to Veterans – the ease in which they can build bonds and relate to one another through service, sacrifice, treatment and remission.

Department Of The Navy To Hold 4th Annual Hiring Conference

The Department of the Navy will hold a Wounded Warrior Hiring and Support Conference May 28-29 at the Hilton North Raleigh/Midtown, 3415 Wake Forest Road. This year's theme is "Hiring Our Nation's Heroes – Meet the Challenge, Hire a Veteran!" The conference will bring together government, military, industry leaders, and their human resource professionals, who are

committed to hiring and supporting wounded warriors.

This event will promote career development and long-term employment, emphasizing the importance of education and training. Wounded warriors, Veterans and their spouses are invited to attend. For more information, please visit www.navsea.navy.mil/WWemployment/default.aspx.

Independent American Customer Satisfaction Index Survey Shows Veterans Highly Satisfied With VA Care

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), an independent customer service survey, ranks VA customer satisfaction by Veteran patients among the best in the nation and equal to or better than ratings for private sector hospitals.

The 2013 ACSI report assessed satisfaction among Veterans who have recently been patients of VA's inpatient and outpatient services. ACSI is the nation's only cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction, providing benchmarking between the public and private sectors.

In 2013, the overall ACSI satisfaction index for VA was 84 for inpatient care and 82 for outpatient care, which compares favorably with the U.S. hospital industry (scores of 80 and 83, respectively). Since 2004, the ACSI survey has consistently shown that Veterans give VA hospitals and clinics a higher customer satisfaction score, on average, than patients give private sector hospitals. These overall scores are based on specific feedback on customer expectations, perceived value and quality, responsiveness to customer complaints, and

customer loyalty. One signature finding for 2013 is the continuing high degree of loyalty to VA among Veterans, with a score of 93 percent favorable. This score has remained high (above 90 percent) for the past 10 years. Additionally, Veterans strongly endorsed VA health care, with 91 percent offering positive assessments of inpatient care and 92 percent for outpatient care. When asked if they would use a VA medical center the next time they need inpatient care or outpatient care, Veterans overwhelmingly indicated they would (96 and 95 percent, respectively).

"VA's strategy of providing a personalized, proactive, patient-driven approach to health care is positively impacting Veterans' experiences at our 1,700 sites of care nationwide," said Dr. Robert A. Petzel, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "We are transitioning to a health service focused on Veterans' personal health care goals, and this is reflected in the ACSI score."

VA provided 89.7 million outpatient visits last fiscal year and handles about 236,000 health care appointments per day.



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo

Work Progresses on Fayetteville and Kernersville Health Care Centers

(Left) Ground work is moving forward in Fayetteville with about 90 percent of the underground storm drain system completed. Sanitary sewage piping continues as does concrete filling of base perimeter wall cells. (Right) Site work continues at Kernersville. The building pad grading is complete, underground piping is continuing and concrete foundation piers are being installed for the perimeter wall.

VISN 6 Sites Of Care & VA Vet Centers

MEDICAL CENTERS

Asheville VAMC
1100 Tunnel Road
Asheville, NC 28805
828-298-7911, 800-932-6408
www.asheville.va.gov/

Beckley VAMC
200 Veterans Avenue
Beckley, WV 25801
304-255-2121, 877-902-5142
www.beckley.va.gov/

Durham VAMC
508 Fulton St.
Durham, NC 27705
919-286-0411, 888-878-6890
www.durham.va.gov/

Fayetteville VAMC
2300 Ramsey St.
Fayetteville, NC 28301
910-488-2120, 800-771-6106
www.fayettevillenc.va.gov

Hampton VAMC
100 Emancipation Dr.
Hampton, VA 23667
757-722-9961, 866-544-9961
www.hampton.va.gov/

Richmond VAMC
1201 Broad Rock Blvd.
Richmond, VA 23249
804-675-5000, 800-784-8381
www.richmond.va.gov/

Salem VAMC
1970 Roanoke Blvd.
Salem, VA 24153
540-982-2463, 888-982-2463
www.salem.va.gov/

Salisbury VAMC
1601 Brenner Ave.
Salisbury, NC 28144
704-638-9000, 800-469-8262
www.salisbury.va.gov/

OUTPATIENT CLINICS

Albemarle CBOC
1845 W City Drive
Elizabeth City, NC 27909
252-331-2191

Brunswick Outreach Clinic
20 Medical Campus Drive
Supply, NC 28462
910-754-6141

Charlotte CBOC
8601 University East Drive
Charlotte, NC 28213
704-597-3500

Charlottesville CBOC
650 Peter Jefferson Pkwy
Charlottesville, VA 22911
434-293-3890

Danville CBOC
705 Piney Forest Rd.
Danville, VA 24540
434-710-4210

Emporia CBOC
1746 East Atlantic Street
Emporia, VA 23847
434-348-1500

Franklin CBOC
647 Wayah St.
Franklin, NC 28734-3390
828-369-1781

Fredricksburg CBOC
130 Executive Center Pkwy
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
540-370-4468

Goldsboro CBOC
2610 Hospital Road
Goldsboro, NC 27909
919-731-9766

Greenbrier County CBOC
804 Industrial Park Rd.
Maxwelton, WV 24957
304-497-3900

Greenville HCC
401 Moye Blvd.
Greenville, NC 27834
252-830-2149

Hamlet CBOC
100 Jefferson Street
Hamlet, NC 28345
910-582-3536

Hickory CBOC
2440 Century Place, SE
Hickory, NC 28602
828-431-5600

Hillandale Rd. Annex
1824 Hillandale Road
Durham, North Carolina 27705
919-383-6107

Jacksonville CBOC
241 Freedom Way
Midway Park, NC 28544
910-353-6406

Lynchburg CBOC
1600 Lakeside Drive
Lynchburg, VA 24501
434-316-5000

Morehead City CBOC
5420 U.S. 70
Morehead City, NC 28557
252-240-2349

Raleigh CBOC
3305 Sungate Blvd.
Raleigh, NC 27610
919-212-0129

Raleigh II Annex
3040 Hammond Business Place
Raleigh, NC 27603
919-899-6259

Robeson County CBOC
139 Three Hunts Drive
Pembroke, NC 28372
910-521-8452

Rutherford County CBOC
374 Charlotte Rd.
Rutherfordton, NC 28139
828-288-2780

Staunton CBOC
102 Business Way
Staunton, VA 24401
540-886-5777

Tazewell CBOC
123 Ben Bolt Ave.
Tazewell, VA 24651
276-988-2526

Village Green Annex
1991 Fordham Drive
Fayetteville, NC 28304
910-488-2120 ext. 4020,

Virginia Beach CBOC
244 Clearfield Avenue
Virginia Beach, VA
757-722-9961, ext. 1900

Wilmington HCC
1705 Gardner Rd.
Wilmington, NC 28405
910-343-5300

Winston-Salem CBOC
190 Kimel Park Drive
Winston-Salem, NC 27103
336-768-3296

Winston-Salem Annex
2101 Peters Creek Parkway
Winston-Salem, NC 27127
336-761-5300

Wytheville CBOC
165 Peppers Ferry Rd.
Wytheville, VA 24382-2363
276-223-5400

DIALYSIS CENTERS

VA Dialysis and Blind Rehabilitation Clinics at Brier Creek
8081 Arco Corporate Drive
Raleigh, NC 27617
919-286-5220

VA Dialysis Clinic Fayetteville
2301 Robeson Street, Ste. 101
Fayetteville, NC 28305
910-483-9727

VET CENTERS

Beckley Vet Center
1000 Johnstown Road
Beckley, WV 25801
304-252-8220

Charlotte Vet Center
2114 Ben Craig Dr.
Charlotte, NC 28262
704-549-8025

Fayetteville Vet Center
4140 Ramsey St.
Fayetteville, NC 28311
910-488-6252

Greensboro Vet Center
2009 S. Elm-Eugene St.
Greensboro, NC 27406
336-333-5366

Greenville Vet Center
1021 W.H. Smith Blvd.
Greenville, NC 27834
252-355-7920

Jacksonville, N.C. Vet Center
110-A Branchwood Drive
Jacksonville, NC 28546
910-577-1100

Norfolk Vet Center
1711 Church Street
Norfolk, VA 23504
757-623-7584

Princeton Vet Center
905 Mercer Street
Princeton, WV 24740
304-425-5653

Raleigh Vet Center
1649 Old Louisburg Rd.
Raleigh, NC 27604
919-856-4616

Roanoke Vet Center
350 Albemarle Ave., SW
Roanoke, VA 24016
540-342-9726

Virginia Beach Vet Center
324 Southport Circle, Suite 102
Virginia Beach, VA, 23452
757-248-3665