



VA MID-ATLANTIC HEALTH CARE NETWORK - VISN SIX

Vol. 1, No. 9

"Excellent Care – Earned by Veterans – Delivered Here"

Voices of VISN 6

Official news from around *your* VISN

July 12, 2011

Salem VAMC Opens Center For Traumatic Stress Bldg.

By Dr. Dana Holohan
Salem VAMC

Just nine years ago, the Salem VAMC had a well-regarded inpatient treatment program for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. However, there was no outpatient mental health complement to this program. Several providers treated PTSD as well as Military Sexual Trauma, but there was no organized program for this care at that time. This began to change in 2002 when the Salem VAMC became the first VA medical center to specifically fund an outpatient treatment program for MST.

I came on board in 2002 to develop this program, and in 2005, the Medical Center applied for and was granted funding to develop a PTSD Clinical

Team and to create an integrated Center for Traumatic Stress to incorporate both MST and PTSD services.

In 2007, Salem VAMC was awarded funding to develop an outpatient mental health program for recently deployed Veterans. This funding provided the foundation for Program RISE (Readjustment Intervention Support and Education).

Today, the Center for Traumatic Stress is an active clinical, research, and educational center. Our mission is to provide true excellence in outpatient mental healthcare for Veterans impacted by military-related traumas, as well as those affected by the strains of deployment. The dedicated and talented staff as-

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Marian McConnell

Salem VAMC Director Dr. Miguel LaPuz and CTS Director Dr. Dana Holohan cut the ribbon to the new facility June 13 as members of the CTS staff look on.

Wytheville CBOC Dedication Ceremony Held

By Marian McConnell
Salem VAMC Public Affairs

A new Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Wytheville, Va. was dedicated with a ribbon cutting ceremony June 16.

Veterans, visitors, volunteers, and staff, along with American Legion Post 9 (who provided the Honor Guard and Posting of Colors) and VFW Post 2719 were present along with representatives from the offices of

Senator Mark Warner, Senator Jim Webb, and Congressman Morgan Griffith. Also in attendance were Wytheville Town Manager C. Wayne Sutherland, Jr.; Wytheville Mayor Trenton G. Crewe, Jr.; City Councilman Jim Hunley; Wytheville Wal-Mart Manager Tim Walsh (who donated refreshments); and other community business leaders. Special music was provided by Mr. Carl Hamm.

The clinic is located at 165 Peppers Ferry Road. VA staff at this new site of care provide primary care and general mental health services to Veterans from Bland, Carroll, Giles, Grayson, Pulaski, Smythe and Wythe counties in Virginia and Mercer county in West Virginia. The management and staffing of the Wytheville CBOC are the responsibility of the Salem VAMC. VA estimates that about 13,500 Veterans reside in this service area and that about

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Marian McConnell

Network Director Dan Hoffmann; Wytheville Acting Clinical Practice Manager Christina Beaver; and Salem VAMC Director Dr. Miguel LaPuz, cut the ribbon at the Wytheville CBOC June 16.

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VISN 6 Sites of Care with addresses and phone numbers for each location.

From the Director

Greetings,

This month I'd like to focus on two issues: eliminating homelessness and the growing use of telehealth.

Veterans continue to suffer disproportionately high rates of homelessness compared to the general population. Those who have served this nation should never find themselves on the streets, living without care and without hope. VA is committed to eliminating homelessness by marshaling the resources of government, business and the private sector, and VISN 6, as part of VA's nationwide effort, is committed to making available treatment, assistance and services to every eligible homeless Veteran in our area. During FY10, VISN 6 Homeless coordinators served more than 6,400 Veterans.

VA's plan to eliminate homelessness is built on six pillars: Outreach/Education; Treatment; Prevention; Housing/Supportive services; Income, employment, benefits; and Community Partnerships.

The outreach effort with Stand Downs hosted by the medical centers worked to encourage Veterans in need to come forward and receive the care they have earned. Between now and the end of the year, each VISN 6 medical center will host another Stand Down.

New programs like Veterans Justice Outreach and Supportive Services for Veterans Families are growing and gaining momentum to support the prevention of homelessness. The Grant and Per Diem Program and Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs have provided housing for hundreds of our Veterans and the HUD-VASH Program has resulted in more than 1,000 vouchers, of which more than 95 percent are in use.

The point is that we have

many programs available to assist those who need it the most. Please help get Veterans off the street by sharing this information with your communities. I encourage you to contact your local Homeless Coordinator for specific dates and times of Stand Downs and help spread the word.

The second topic is telehealth. VA is working to increase services closer to where Veteran's live, and to increase both convenience and continuity of care. We look to new technologies that will allow us to serve more Veterans, more efficiently and more effectively. In the coming years, you will see VA champion and implement new electronic health management platforms, information sharing tools and knowledge content systems, all focused on building internal capacity to serve, and making it easier for Veterans to receive the best care anywhere.

The VISN has just purchased \$5.8 million dollars of telehealth equipment consisting of clinical video conferencing equipment, webcams, total examination cameras, specialty and primary care mobile video carts with digital capture stethoscopes, LCD displays, handheld abdominal ultrasound machines, clinical management systems, and peripheral devices. These new technologies will allow Veterans to interface with specialists who may be hundreds of miles away, creating the ability to share information which should contribute to the speed, quality, and continuity of care.

From the medical centers, to the outpatient clinics and into our most rural areas, the VISN 6 team is actively pursuing ways to increase and enhance services, all while doing so within our budget.

Sincerely, Dan Hoffmann

Voices of VISN 6 is published monthly by VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network.

Questions or comments about the newsletter, e-mail Bruce Sprecher@va.gov or call 919-956-5541.



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Newsletter Survey

Your Input Is Needed!

Dear Readers,

As we prepare content for this, the ninth issue of *Voices of VISN 6*, it's time to take stock of what we have been providing you each month and what we can do to improve.

As important as it is to inform you of the national-level changes and advancements in VA health care, we also strive to bring you a balance of entertaining and informative articles about the people, programs and characters you're liable to encounter in and around VISN 6.

Because you, our readers, comprise a diverse audience with a wide range of interests and needs, it's time you tell us how we are doing. This newsletter is just one of the tools VISN 6 uses to augment the many benefits of VA health care and its success depends upon you. What are we getting right? What do you think needs to be improved upon?

By responding to the questions below, you will be helping us customize this, *your* tool, to better provide the information you need, when you need it. You are also encouraged to add your comments and suggestions to help us better expand the scope of this survey.

Your response can be printed and sent through the U.S. Postal Service, or you can also fax or e-mail it. All of the contact and delivery information is listed below.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey. We look forward to continuing to serve you with this, *your* newsletter.

Sincerely, Bruce Sprecher

Voices of VISN 6 Survey

I would like to see:

- More national news Less national news
 More local news Less local news
 Maintain the current mix of news

- More photos Fewer photos
 Maintain the current photo and artwork content

- More feature stories Less feature stories

- Publish earlier in the month
 Continue to publish on or about the 10th

Comments:

Email input to: Bruce.sprecher@va.gov
Fax input to: Bruce Sprecher at 919-956-7152
Mail input to: Bruce Sprecher, VISN 6, 300 W. Morgan St., Durham, NC 27701

Adult Day Care Serves Veterans & Caregivers

By Steve Wilkins
VISN 6 public affairs

Each morning for the last five years, Robin Bradford has kissed his Alzheimer's stricken mother goodbye before exchanging greetings and instructions with her care giver and heading off to work.

When he walks through the front door at work, he can immediately relate to the travails of his charges. Bradford manages the Adult Day Center at the Beckley VAMC.

"We are able to provide care givers with some time off, well deserved time for themselves they can use to run errands or give themselves some down time to regenerate their energy levels," Bradford said.

Beckley's Adult Day Care Center was initiated in 2006. It is the only on-site Veteran day care in VISN 6 and Bradford, a 30-year VA employee, has been its only director. The center cares for Veterans who are ambulatory, but have difficulty caring for themselves and cannot be left alone.

"If not for the Adult Day Health Care at Beckley, I wouldn't be able to live at home. I would be in a nursing home," claimed 92-year-old Veteran Berta "Bert" Lambert. Lambert visits the Day Care regularly. His care giver drops him off in the morning after the trip from his home in Mount Hope, W. Va.

Bradford said all Day

Care Veterans are referred by their primary care doctors. Some attend daily, but most are scheduled intermittently.

"We can only take six at a time," Bradford said, adding, "We try to meet the needs of those with appointments or therapy." Often times the patients are scheduled for half-day visits, allowing the center to accommodate more than six Veterans a day.

"Our participating Veterans and their families love it. They continue to be excited and express gratitude for the program," said Beckley VAMC Director Karin McGraw. She said the facility is trying to meet the increasing demand for this type of care. Presently, the facility is bound to a six patient capacity by regulation. According to Bradford, the requirement is 128.5 square feet per patient. Lamenting the situation, McGraw added, "We are limited by space constraints;" but adds happily, "We have a project in the design phase that will allow us to expand this much needed and desired program for many Veterans that we currently are unable to accommodate."

Utilizing a staff that includes a registered nurse, an LPN, a social worker, and a part time recreation therapy assistant, the center provides activities throughout the day. Depending on their cognitive abilities, the Veterans can play



Debbie Voloski

Wildman Adams and his wife Elisa, clowns from the Gesundheit! Institute in Hillsboro, W. Va., playfully hug Veteran Hubert "Red" Bennett who attends the Beckley VAMC Adult Day Care. The Gesundheit! Institute is run by Wildman's brother, Dr. Patch Adams, whose effort to establish the institute was featured in a major motion picture.

games, do puzzles, participate in crafts, or just sit and talk. Many of the special activities Veterans take part in are offered by the Beckley Community Living Center. The center also has games to sharpen thinking and prompt nostalgic memories. Occasionally the center will take eligible Veterans on field trips in the community.

For some Veterans, transportation is an issue. Care givers may not have the means to get them to the facility all the time, or the distance they must travel is prohibitive, and for that, Bradford said he is thankful for the support of DAV

and the United Mine Workers Union. He said the union can provide support for a limited time for Veterans who have worked in area mines.

Veteran participation in the program allows care givers a chance to take some time off, to do some things for themselves, according to Bradford. "They can go shopping, get their hair done and take care of other difficult to accomplish things while at home with their Veteran." He claims the service can provide those care givers with a healthy chance to recharge their batteries while offering Veterans a social setting appropriate to their needs.

AFGE Master Agreement Training Held In Charlotte

By Sheila Bailey
Hampton VAMC

Ninety-eight staff members representing labor and management from across VISN 6 participated in a three-day training session focused on the new Master Agreement between VA and the American Federation of Government Employees Jun. 27 - 29 in Charlotte, N.C.

The AFGE Master Agreement is the result of 7-year, interest-based negotiations be-

tween VA and the union. The new agreement, which went into effect March 15, will remain in place for three-years. Each field facility is scheduled to receive joint labor-management training.

In the spirit of shared collaboration, the training provided management and labor union members with a common understanding of the agreement and outlined changes resulting from negotiations. Participants received an understanding of

employee and management rights and responsibilities through interactive exercises and open discussions.

A portion of the training included a panel discussion by VISN 6 Labor Management Forum leaders, Network Director Dan Hoffmann, Robert Fetzer, President AFGE NVAC, Region 4, Sheila Elliott, Pharm.D. Co-Chair, VISN 6 Labor Management Forum and DeAnne M. Seekins, VISN 6 Labor Management Forum Co-Chair.

The panel discussion led by Hoffman included the roll-out of VA Core Values and Characteristics. He explained that these core values define who we are and how we will care for our Veterans, their families and other key stakeholders.

Also highlighted, was the VISN 6 decision to include labor leaders as part of the Executive Leadership Council, where our labor partners will be active, pre-decisional participants.

Nurse Helpline Available Around The Clock

By Debbie Voloski
Beckley VAMC public affairs

Veterans in North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia can rest a little easier knowing they have a resource available during weekends, holidays and evenings.

The VISN 6 Network Telephone Care Program is a service available to all Veterans served by the VISN. Initiated in 2008, the VISN 6 NTCP is located on the grounds of the Beckley VAMC.

While each medical center operates a nurse help line during regular business hours, calling the same numbers during non-business hours will connect callers with the NTCP helpline in Beckley where Carla Raynes, and her staff of registered nurses assist Veterans and their loved ones with both medical and emotional support, and advice about access to care.

The program is fully accredited with all the nurses having experience in critical care, telephone assessment and crisis intervention.

In Fiscal Year 2010, Ms. Raynes and her staff handled 68,189 calls, averaging of 5,682 calls per month. The average time to answer a call was 22 seconds.

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 help with a wide variety of problems and concerns that can include, but are not limited to:

- symptom analysis
- first aid procedures
- stress/anxiety
- medication questions
- lab test results
- patient education concerning specific disease entities, such as diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- preparation for certain procedures
- check appointments
- caregiver support

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

Those individuals calling the NTCP helpline will be asked for identification including name and last four numbers of the sponsor's social security number, which VA Medical Center is typically used for treatment, and the reason for calling.

One of the registered nurses will review the record, ask a series of questions, and then advise the caller to either call 911, go to the nearest emergency room, call for a clinic appointment, or they may provide home care instructions to see the person through until their next scheduled appointment.

Phone calls are documented in Veterans' medical re-



Debbie Voloski
Members of the VISN 6 Network Telephone Care Program, (L-R) Debbie Turner, Suzanne Bowles, Carla Raynes and Rhonda Adkins, assist callers with after-hours health related issues.

ords and all clinical calls are forwarded to each Veteran's provider.

With nurse triage, we direct members to the proper facility at the right time, saving everyone time and money," said Carla Raynes. "Using nurse helpline to triage issues reduces claims and costs like unnecessary ER visits, relieves stress, and increases productivity. In fact, over 30 percent of the calls to our nurse triage line are resolved with at-home treatment."

It's easy to see why easy access to a nurse's advice is a win-win for everyone.

For more information regarding the VISN 6 NTCP, please contact Carla Raynes via email at carla.raynes@va.gov; by phone at 304-255-2121, ext. 4276.

Helpline Numbers

Asheville
800-932-6408

Hampton
888-869-6060

Beckley
877-902-5142

Richmond
800-784-8381

Durham
888-878-6890

Salem
888-982-2463

Fayetteville
800-771-6106

Salisbury
800-469-8262

Outreach to Providers: Group Supervision For Clinicians Listening to Trauma Histories

Therapists treating PTSD often find themselves in parallel turmoil as they react to the patient's inner and outer worlds. Good clinical supervision is essential. In addition to receiving guidance and support from an experienced colleague during these training sessions, having the opportunity to share one's often turbulent emotions and learning how these can be used to better understand the case are also important.

Participation in an upcoming session is available in person at the Durham VAMC or by audio-teleconferencing.

Register to participate or present a case at an upcoming session by contacting Jaimie Marinkovich at jaimie.marinkovich@va.gov or call 919-286-0411 ext 5554.

Upcoming sessions: July 20, Aug. 17, Sept. 28, Oct. 12, Nov. 9, and Dec. 28.

Facilitator: Dr. Harold Kudler, Psychiatrist & MIRECC Associate Director - Clinical

Purpose: Assist presenter in processing a case that is particularly disturbing and hard to let go.

Audience: Trauma clinicians and staff who routinely hear disturbing trauma histories.

Objectives: After participating, attendees will be able to:

- Develop new personal and professional strategies and new clinical understanding.
- Recognize the potential effects of trauma narratives on therapists and staff.
- Identify the importance of on-going clinical supervision in work with trauma.

North Carolina Dedicates New State Veterans Park

By Ed Drohan
Fayetteville VAMC public affairs

With the snip of a giant pair of scissors, North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue officially opened the new North Carolina Veterans Park in Fayetteville July 4.

Fayetteville VAMC Director Elizabeth Goolsby attended as a special invited guest for the ceremony, while Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security and Preparedness Jose D. Riojas was a guest speaker.

The park, located on five acres next to Fayetteville's Airborne and Special operations Museum, includes a visitors center highlighted by a chandelier made of more than 30,000 dog tags, as well as water

features and an amphitheater where the Fort Bragg's 82nd Airborne Chorus performed for some of the more than 3,000 people who braved 90-plus degree heat to attend the opening ceremony.

Perdue told listeners that the new Veterans park is just one more proof that North Carolina is the most military friendly state in the country. North Carolina ranks number three in the nation in the number of military personnel stationed here.

According to Riojas, the state has set the bar high for others looking to honor Veterans.

"I won't be shy about putting (the Veterans park) out as an example for the world to follow."



Ed Drohan

North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue, with help from other special guests, cuts the ribbon to officially open the North Carolina Veterans Park in Fayetteville July 4.

Safe & Convenient Exchange Of Medical Data Grows

By Jennifer Askey
Hampton VAMC public affairs

On April 20, the Hampton VAMC joined partners with local Department of Defense medical facilities and Bon Secours in the first substantial three-way exchange of Veteran medical data during an event held on the facility campus. Since the kick-off event, the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record program is growing rapidly at the Hampton VAMC as well as other pilot sites across the country.

"By September 11, pilot sites around the nation will be up and sharing VA medical information with private providers," said Dr. Katherine Gianola, Hampton Clinical Informatics Community Coordinator, explaining that the Hampton VAMC team is beginning open enrollment of Veterans through the new enrollee orientation program.

"We are very excited to announce that also in September, information that physicians are sharing through VLER will be expanded to include discharge summaries, history and physical notes, surgery reports, radiology reports, lab pathology



Jennifer Askey

Physicians from the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, the Hampton VAMC and Bon Secours Virginia Health System share health information through VLER during a live demonstration.

reports, consults and referrals, and many diagnostic study results," Gianola said.

In the Hampton area, this VLER innovative enables clinicians from the VA, DoD and Bon Secours Virginia Health Systems, in coordination with MedVirginia, to obtain a more comprehensive view of a patient's health using electronic health record information.

Clinicians from the participating organizations can now electronically, securely, and privately share authorized patient

data to ensure around-the-clock access to critical health information. This immediate electronic access supports efficiency and safety and helps to avoid redundant care and testing.

Gianola said that every day the VLER team encourages more Veterans to sign authorization forms for sharing their medical information with the local Bon Secours Hospital providers, as well as in anticipation of the other local hospitals that will agree to participate in the VLER program in the near

future.

"We embrace this opportunity with our partners to be on the cutting edge of a technology that will ultimately contribute to the quality of care for our Veterans," said DeAnne M. Seekins, Hampton VA Medical Center director. "The Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record program allows the patient to seamlessly move between providers with no loss in continuity of care."

Since many of America's Veterans and active-duty service members receive some portion of their health care outside of VA or DoD facilities, interoperability between federal agencies and the private sector is essential to provide the best care for Veterans, service members, and their dependents.

"Our goal is to always provide the highest quality care," say Michael K. Kerner, CEO, Bon Secours Hampton Roads Health System. "The ability to electronically share health records allows our physicians to better serve those who have so proudly served our country."

With the new health data exchange capability, when a

Continued on Pg 6

Dr. Paul Lucha To Lead Hefner VA Surgery Service

By Carol Waters
Salisbury VAMC public affairs

Dr. Paul A. Lucha, Jr. has been appointed as the new associate chief of staff of surgery service at the W.G. (Bill) Hefner VA Medical Center in Salisbury, N.C.

Dr. Lucha comes to Salisbury from the United States Navy, where he served as department head for the general surgery department at the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va., from August 2007 until his retirement from military service in 2011 at the rank of Captain.

Dr. Lucha is a Veteran with a distinguished military service record which includes designations as a Fleet Marine Force Qualified Officer and a Combined Amphibious Task Force Surgeon.

He deployed to Haiti in

support of Operation New Horizon, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Dr. Lucha earned his bachelor's degree in biology/marine biology from Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1981, obtaining his medical degree from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, School of Osteopathic Medicine in 1986. Additionally, he earned his Master's Degree in Medical Education Leadership from the University of New England in 2010.

Dr. Lucha is board certified in surgery and proctology and is a Fellow of the American Osteopathic College of Surgeons and the American Osteopathic College of Proctology. He has published 24 original manuscripts in 10 different scientific journals.

Marking A Milestone In Veteran Hiring

VA recently reached a major milestone in the number of veterans making up its workforce. The Department now has more than 100,000 Veterans in the workforce, representing 32 percent of VA's 315,000 employees.

Leading the effort to increase the number of Veterans in VA's workforce is the Veterans Employment Coordination Service, located in the Office of Human Resources Management. VECS, and its team of 13 regional Veterans employment coordinators located throughout the country, work collaboratively with HR offices, managers and supervisors nationally to link qualified Veterans to VA career opportu-

nities.

"As the agency entrusted with the care of our nation's more than 23 million Veterans, we take pride in knowing that many of our employees who provide services, benefits and health care are representative of the customers we serve," said VECS Director Dennis May. "Having a workforce comprised of over 100,000 Veterans shows VA is not only committed to providing the best service to our Veterans, but also to employing them."

To learn more about VECS, visit www.va.gov/vecs or contact a member of the VECS staff at 1-866-606-6206.

Reprinted courtesy VANGuard.

Wytheville CBOC continued from Pg 1

3,500 Veterans will seek care at the Wytheville Clinic.

Veterans currently enrolled in the Salem or Beckley VAMCs who reside within close proximity to the Wytheville clinic will be given an option to enroll for their care at the new

site. Veterans not enrolled with VA, but interested in receiving VA health care, should contact either the VA Medical Center in Salem or Beckley for registration and enrollment information. For more information please contact 276-223-5400.

Salem CTS continued from Pg 1

signed to the CTS make mission success a reality. CTS focuses on the provision of evidence-based clinical care to Veterans, the integration of science and practice so that both inform one another, and the education of providers, the community, Veterans and family members so that we may reduce barriers to seeking care and eliminate the stigma associated with mental health treatment.

To accomplish these goals, each Veteran's treatment plan is personalized, offering individual, group, or couples counseling as appropriate.

At the CTS, we offer skills-based treatments, such as Dialectical Behavior Therapy, as well as trauma focused treatments, such as Prolonged Exposure and Cognitive Processing Therapy. We not only offer services in the clinic, but when appropriate and available, we also use telemental health technology to reach Veterans closer to their homes.

Since October 2007, the CTS team has participated in more than 50 outreach events, making contact with 1,154 returnees and 1,157 family members. In Fiscal Year 2010, CTS treated more than 1,100 Veterans of which 608 served in Iraq or Afghanistan. Additionally, our staff serve as national consultants and educators, publish and present research, and are regarded as leaders in the field of trauma and post-deployment mental health.

At CTS, our mission is clear and simple—provide true excellence in mental health care each and every day. We believe that mental health care can pro-

mote one's natural recovery from trauma and from deployment. We offer evidence-based care to do so. We believe in respecting the Veteran's time and resources, and make a commitment to offering the best treatment for the person. We offer the gold standard of treatments for sequelae from traumatic stress and believe our Veterans deserve nothing less. There really is no prouder mission for us than that, and we appreciate the staffing and facility to be able to accomplish this mission.

CTS also emphasizes the importance of scientific investigation and dissemination of research findings. We are actively engaged in a number of research studies, including cutting edge research on a potential new treatment for PTSD. We are also currently investigating predictors of treatment response, the effectiveness of PTSD treatments for different populations, and the role of PTSD and shame in interpersonal violence.

The dedication of Building 168 has greatly enhanced our capabilities for accomplishing our mission. We have dedicated group room space, telemental health technology in offices and group rooms, observation equipment for training clinical staff and students, and dedicated computers for research endeavors. We have expanded our group offerings as a result, and plan to make use of telemental health groups in the near future. We also will be expanding our evening hours beginning in August, 2011.

For more information about the CTS please call 540-982-2463, ext. 2934.

VLER continued from Pg 5

Veteran visits a private health care clinician, prior history data will be available instantly to help guide the best possible treatment in any location that participates in this program.

Prior to this program, patients frequently consented to sharing this information; however, it regularly took weeks or even months to receive paper health care documents. Now this information can be transmitted electronically within minutes.

Because of the sensitivity of the information being exchanged, the program puts the highest priority on patient privacy and data security. Patients choosing to participate will benefit by allowing their doctors at any one of the institutions to obtain key health record information from other participating institutions.

Those with questions should call 877-771-VLER (8537) or e-mail DoD at VLER-info@osd.pentagon.mil.

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

*You served, you deserve
★ the best care anywhere.*



VA Creates National Women Veterans Call Center

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs has embarked on a major initiative to solicit input from women Veterans on ways to enhance the health care services VA provides them.

“We are taking a proactive approach to enhancing VA health care for women Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We are seeking the input of women Veterans so VA can continue to provide high quality health care to the growing numbers of women Veterans.”

Representatives at VA’s Health Resource Center are placing calls to women Veterans nationwide, asking them to share their experiences with VA and suggest potential enhancements that will further VA’s mission to provide the best care anywhere.

Women Veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the Veteran population. Of

the 22.7 million living Veterans, more than 1.8 million are women. They comprise nearly eight percent of the total Veteran population and six percent of all Veterans who use VA health care services.

VA estimates by 2020 women Veterans will constitute 10 percent of the Veteran population and 9.5 percent of VA patients. The HRC, which started placing calls on June 1, is contacting women Veterans who have enrolled, but have not begun using VA services.

“Through this contact center, we are placing friendly, conversational calls to women Veterans,” said Patricia Hayes, chief consultant of the VA’s Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group. “We want these Veterans and their caregivers to talk candidly about why they are not using VA, whether they are aware of the gender-specific services we offer, and what additional ser-

vices they would like to see VA offer.”

The HRC representatives making the calls are informing women Veterans about the services VA offers and quickly connecting them with appropriate departments if they are interested in trying VA health care. Veterans who have complaints about VA are connected to a patient advocate who will help resolve issues.

VA has trained professionals in all aspects of women’s health, including general primary care, osteoporosis management, heart disease, mental health care, menopausal services and obesity-related issues, such as diabetes. Preventive screenings for breast and cervical cancer are also areas in which VA excels. Soon, all VA facilities will offer comprehensive primary care for women from a single provider.

The Women Veterans Health Care program has made

significant changes in the last few years to enhance the health care offered to eligible women Veterans. This progress includes:

- Adopting key policies to improve access and enhance services for women Veterans.
- Implementing comprehensive primary care for women Veterans.
- Conducting cutting-edge research on the effects of military service on women’s lives.
- Improving communication and outreach to women Veterans.
- Providing mental health, homelessness and other services designed to meet the unique needs of women Veterans.

For more information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, please visit: www.va.gov/womenvet and www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth.

Durham To Offer MIRECC Research Lecture Series

There are currently 10 Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Centers focusing on mental illnesses or conditions that are common in Veterans. MIRECCs investigate the causes of mental illness, develop new treatments for mental illness, and evaluate both established and new treatments with the goal of identifying best practices. The MIRECCs also develop educational and training initiatives to implement best practices into the clinical settings of VA. Each MIRECC works with all the facilities in its network on research, education and clinical initiatives and help the networks implement improved treatments, services, or practices.

Below are several seminars that will be presented live at the Durham site. Occasionally a lecture is opened up for live participation by audioconferencing. Lectures are also archived as webcasts at <http://mireccweb.biacc.duke.edu/Mediasite/Viewer/>. Contact Jaimie Marinkovich via e-mail at jaimie.marinkovich@va.gov or by phone at 919-286-0411 ext. 5554 with any questions.

July 21 Magnetic Resonance Microscopy : Applications in Neuroscience - G. Allan Johnson, Professor of Radiology and Physics, Duke U, Durham. N.C.

August 11 Involuntary Outpatient Commitment: A View Post-Tucson - Marvin Swartz, MD, Division Head, Social and Community Psychiatry, Duke U, Durham, N.C.

September 29 Treatment of Teen Depression and Its Impact on the Mental Health of Veteran Parents - John Curry, PhD, Dir. Clinical Psychology Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, School of Medicine, Duke U, Durham. N.C.

October 20 iRest Yoga Nidra Meditation for Combat Stress Conditions - Robin Carnes, E-RYT 500, MBA Certified iRest® Meditation and Yoga Instructor, DOD & Karen Soltes, LCSW, E-RYT, Washington D.C. VAMC. (Available for audio conferencing.)

November 10 Compassion Fatigue & Caregiver Burden - Literature Review, What’s Missing, How Does it Apply to OEF/OIF Veterans & Family Members - Mira Brancu, PhD, Psychologist, VISN 6 MIRECC, Durham N.C.

December 15 Meta Analysis of Neuropsychological Functioning in Euthymic Bipolar Disorder: An Update & Investigation of Moderator Variables - Monica Mann-Wrobel, PhD, VISN 6 MIRECC, Durham, N.C.



TSA Expands Program For Veterans

Courtesy PN Magazine.

Many Paralyzed Veterans of America have complained about problems with airport security. Some have been asked to get out of their wheelchairs, remove their shoes, or display personal medical devices. An existing TSA program for injured service members has been expanded to allow all Veterans to proceed through security safely and with dignity.

Initially, the Transportation Security Administration worked with DoD to create a program to ease the airport screening process for injured service members. Since 2005, DOD's Military Severely Injured Joint Service Operations Center Program included TSA staff on a 24/7 basis.

When an injured service member provided flight information to the center, TSA staff would guide the passenger through the security process. The TSA liaison officer notified the appropriate Federal

Security Director at relevant airports to ensure TSA experts would conduct security screening required at those sites with empathy and respect.

Recently this program became available to all Veterans, so anyone who has served in the military can take advantage. The Veteran or service member should contact the Operations Center at 888-262-2396 and give flight information 24-72 hours before a confirmed flight.

The passenger may also e-mail his/her information to the call center at msijsoc.dhs.gov. Callers will be connected to a TSA liaison officer who will notify security officials as described above. The hotline cannot assist if the call is more than 72 or less than 24 hours before the flight is scheduled to leave.

If you have questions regarding this program, contact PVA Advocacy at 800-424-8200 or log on at www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/special-needs/index.shtm.

Major Technology Contracts Awarded

WASHINGTON – Fourteen major contracts to transform information technology in VA have been awarded for an estimated \$12 billion. The Transformation Twenty-One Total Technology program, known as T4, will consist of 15 prime contracts, including seven awards reserved for service-disabled Veteran small businesses and Veteran-owned small businesses.

"This five-year program will help VA transform into a 21st century organization and enable us to deliver the high-quality health care, benefits, and services Veterans have earned," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "In addition, it opens an opportunity for Veterans in business to grow and claim a share of VA's business."

Calling the program T4, VA awarded 14 prime contracts together as a tool to close gaps in acquiring IT services to integrate systems, networks and software. A fifteenth contract is pending resolution of a protest filed with the Government Accountability Office. The companies selected will have a fair

opportunity to compete for work under T4 over five years. Their services and products may cover the life cycle of a computer system, and include program planning and management, systems and software engineering, cyber security, operation and maintenance, and support to facilities.

One of VA's main goals is to provide timely access to benefits and high-quality health care to Veterans over their lifetimes, from the day they enter military service until the day they are laid to rest. T4 will be a major tool enabling VA to meet those goals by closing gaps in transforming programs.

The combined contracts will provide the most efficient use of technology to reduce the backlog of benefit claims and deliver real value to America's taxpayers.

The T4 program will be a single focal point for managing the multiple contracts; give VA access to the best industry capabilities without the traditional long acquisition lead time; and help the department meet its Veteran small-business goals.

VBA ASPIRE Website Expanded

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs has expanded its performance and productivity website by making additional data available to the public.

"In keeping with our commitment to deliver timely and high quality benefits to our Nation's Veterans, VA strives to keep Veterans, their families, and the public informed about the performance and productivity of VA's regional offices, which administer benefits," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "This new effort expands the Department's commitment to public transparency by sharing performance and productivity data in the delivery of benefits, including compensation, pension, vocational rehabilitation and employment, education, home loans, and insurance."

VA announced last year its ASPIRE for Quality initiative,

aimed at making data and outcome information available to the public in such areas as acute care, ICU, outpatient, safety and annual process measures, and how each Medical Center measures up to quality goals.

"VA is committed to making performance and productivity data available to ensure VA is accountable for the timeliness and quality of the benefits we provide to our Nation's Veterans," said VA Under Secretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey.

The expanded ASPIRE for Productivity website provides information on how VBA and its regional offices are doing in relation to Department goals. The site specifically depicts how each of the regional offices measures up to productivity and other claim processing goals.

The new ASPIRE performance and productivity data can be accessed on the VA website at www.vba.va.gov/reports/.

Mail-Order Pharmacy Pgm. Recognized

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs' mail-order pharmacy program has been recognized as a J.D. Power 2011 Customer Service Champion - one of only 40 entities in the United States to earn the distinction this year.

"We are honored to receive this distinction and be included in this elite group of companies that focus on customer service excellence," said Rita Brueckner, national quality management officer for VA's Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy program. "Customer satisfaction is our top priority, and we appreciate this external recognition of our efforts."

VA's Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP) functions as a virtual extension of VA medical center pharmacies by mailing prescription medications and supplies directly to Veteran patients. Local VA medical center pharmacies frequently process and dispense the initial prescription; after that, the vast majority of refills are handled via mail-order.

The goal is delivery of medication or supplies to the patient within 10 days of provider or patient request. VA

typically gets the prescription delivered in less than five days.

CMOP processed nearly 107 million prescriptions in fiscal year 2010. Every workday, 300,000 Veterans receive medication or supplies from VA.

To qualify for inclusion as a J.D. Powers Customer Service Champion, companies must not only excel within their own industries, but also must stand out among leading brands in 20 major industries evaluated by J.D. Power.

Among the five key customer "touch points" measured - including people, presentation, process, product, and price - VA's mail-order pharmacy program was noted for standing out in price, product, and process among the group.

To identify the J.D. Power 2011 Customer Service Champions, J.D. Power evaluated more than 800 brands. Companies were identified based on customer feedback, opinions, and perceptions gathered primarily from J.D. Power's syndicated research. This year's group of 40 represents the highest-performing organizations that deliver service excellence to U.S. customers.



The Department of Veterans Affairs Presents

NATIONAL VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS Conference and Expo

Building Partnerships - Veterans, Businesses, and Government

SAVE THE DATE

August 15 – 18, 2011

**Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, Louisiana**

The largest nationwide conference of its kind, with 4,000 attendees expected this year, the National Veteran Small Business Conference provides Veteran-Owned and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs and SDVOSBs) an opportunity to learn, network and market their businesses.

This year's event is composed of three venues:

- **Small Business Conference** – Attendees will participate in training sessions on a variety of topics including managing small business finances, compliance, business development, marketing and selling to the Federal Government, navigating the Federal acquisition process, developing successful business strategies, contract management, human resources, technology, and program management.
- **Exhibit Hall** – Leaders from Federal agencies, VOSBs, SDVOSBs, and large businesses will network with each other in a 500+ booth exhibit hall and through one-on-one matchmaking sessions.
- **VA Open House** – Veterans from both the conference and local community will join us to learn and experience the wide range of resources available to the Veteran community.

To register and for more information, please visit
www.nationalveteransconference.com

VISN 6 Sites of Care

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

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

Beckley Vet Center
1000 Johnstown Road
Beckley, WV 25801
304-252-8220
<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5634>

Charlotte Vet Center
2114 Ben Craig Dr.
Charlotte, NC 28262
704-549-8025
<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=485>

Charlotte CBOC
8601 University East Drive
Charlotte, NC 28213
<http://www.salisbury.va.gov/visitors/charlotte.asp>

Charlottesville CBOC
650 Peter Jefferson Pkwy
Charlottesville, VA 22911
434-293-3890
<http://www.richmond.va.gov/visitors/charlottesville.asp>

Danville CBOC
705 Piney Forest Rd.
Danville, VA 24540
434-710-4210
<http://www.salem.va.gov/visitors/Danville.asp>

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

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

Fayetteville VAMC
2300 Ramsey St.
Fayetteville, NC 28301
910-488-2120, 800-771-6106
<http://www.fayettevillenc.va.gov/index.asp>

Fayetteville Vet Center
4140 Ramsey St.
Fayetteville, NC 28311
910-488-6252
<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=486&dnum=All&stateid=NC&v=1>

Franklin CBOC
647 Wayah St.
Franklin, NC 28734-3390
828-369-1781
<http://www.asheville.va.gov/visitors/franklin.asp>

Fredricksburg CBOC
1965 Jefferson Davis Highway
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
540-370-4468
<http://www.richmond.va.gov/visitors/fredricksburg.asp>

Greensboro Vet Center
2009 S. Elm-Eugene St.
Greensboro, NC 27406
336-333-5366
<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=719&dnum=All&stateid=NC&v=1>

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

Greenville CBOC
800 Moye Blvd.
Greenville, NC 27858
252-830-2149
<http://www.durham.va.gov/visitors/greenville.asp>

Greenville Vet Center
1021 W.H. Smith Blvd.
Greenville, NC 27834
252-355-7920
<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=720&dnum=All&stateid=NC&v=1>

Hamlet CBOC
100 Jefferson Street
Hamlet, NC 28345
910-582-3536
<http://www.fayettevillenc.va.gov/visitors/hamlet.asp>

Hampton VAMC
100 Emancipation Dr.
Hampton, VA 23667
757-722-9961, 888-869-9060
<http://www.hampton.va.gov/>

Hickory CBOC
2440 Century Place, SE
Hickory, NC 28602
828-431-5600
<http://www.salisbury.va.gov/visitors/hickory.asp>

Hillandale Rd. Annex
1824 Hillandale Road
Durham, North Carolina 27705
919-383-6107
<http://www.durham.va.gov/visitors/hillandale.asp>

Jacksonville CBOC
241 Freedom Way
Midway Park, NC 28544
910-353-6406, 910-353-6406
<http://www.fayettevillenc.va.gov/visitors/jacksonville.asp>

Lynchburg CBOC
1600 Lakeside Drive
Lynchburg, VA 24501
434-316-5000
<http://www.salem.va.gov/visitors/lynchburg.asp>

Morehead City CBOC
5420 U.S. 70
Morehead City, NC 28557
252-240-2349
<http://www.durham.va.gov/visitors/morehead.asp>

Norfolk Vet Center
1711 Church Street
Norfolk, VA 23504
757-623-7584
<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?id=403>

Princeton Vet Center
905 Mercer Street
Princeton, WV 24740
304-425-5653
<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/keystaff.cfm?id=400>

Raleigh CBOC
3305 Sungate Blvd.
Raleigh, NC 27610
919-212-0129
<http://www.durham.va.gov/visitors/raleigh.asp>

Raleigh II CBOC
3040 Hammond Business Place
Raleigh, NC 27603
919-899-6259
<http://www.durham.va.gov/visitors/raleighII.asp>

Raleigh Vet Center
1649 Old Louisburg Rd.
Raleigh, NC 27604
919-856-4616
<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=5442&dnum=All&stateid=NC&v=1>

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

Roanoke Vet Center
350 Albemarle Ave., SW
Roanoke, VA 24016
540-342-9726
<http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?ID=405>

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
<http://www.asheville.va.gov/visitors/rutherfordton.asp>

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

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

Tazewell CBOC
123 Ben Bolt Ave.
Tazewell, VA 24651
276-988-2526
<http://www.salem.va.gov/visitors/tazewell.asp>

Virginia Beach CBOC
244 Clearfield Avenue
Virginia Beach, Virginia
757-722-9961, ext. 1900
<http://www.hampton.va.gov/visitors/cboc.asp>

Wilmington CBOC
736 Medical Center Drive
Wilmington, NC 28401
910-763-5979
<http://www.fayettevillenc.va.gov/visitors/wilmington.asp>

Winston-Salem CBOC
190 Kimel Park Drive
Winston-Salem, NC 27103
336-768-3296
<http://www.salisbury.va.gov/visitors/winstonsalem.asp>

Winston-Salem Annex
2101 Peters Creek Parkway
Winston-Salem, NC 27127
336-761-5300
<http://www.salisbury.va.gov/visitors/winstonsalem.asp>

Wytheville CBOC
165 Peppers Ferry Rd.
Wytheville, VA 24382-2363
276-223-5400
<http://www.salem.va.gov/visitors/wytheville.asp>