

# VOICES OF VISN 6

Excellent Care – Earned by Veterans – Delivered Here

## NEVER A DULL DAY:

## ROCK STARS LAY IT ON

# THICK

## AT HAMPTON VA



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By Ben Wocken | HAMPTON VA MEDICAL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

HAMPTON, VA. — Spray-painting monuments and memorials is fresh in people’s minds, so you’d think the controversial act would raise eyebrows at the Hampton VA. Yet spray cans are rattling routinely, hissing layers of bright colors onto federal property at the Hampton VA Medical Center — and facility management isn’t stopping it.

Grounds crew member Duane Wallace says, “There are a lot of things that get cleaned up out here that no one ever notices. But we don’t try to take credit for it; we try to stay on top of it.”

Fortunately, Wallace isn’t talking about cleaning up after vandals’ graffiti.

**TOP PHOTO:** Environmental Management Services groundskeeping crew members, a.k.a. ‘Monuments Men’, inspect their work after performing upkeep maintenance on their rock-scaped American Flag on Hampton VA’s campus Feb. 12, 2022. **(Photo by Ben Wocken)**

*(Continued on page 6)*





## MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Greetings,

The transition from winter to spring has a way of brightening the atmosphere. We just closed out the second quarter of FY22, and it was a busy one, with a lot of progress on various VA-focused initiatives.

The past 2 ½ years have been challenging for us, but they also came with a sense of renewed purpose and pride for working for VA and serving our Veterans. Since the launch of the new fiscal year in October 2021, we managed to get through the fifth and largest COVID-19 surge since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020. It wasn't until early March that we started seeing the hospital COVID inpatient numbers go below single digits for the first time in months — and what much-needed relief that brought.

While much of the nation reduces its COVID restrictions, as a health care system, we must continue providing Veterans with the utmost protection from other emerging COVID variants and viruses. So for now, the masking and social distancing requirements will remain as we monitor the situation.

Last month, the national VA strategic office published the market assessments and recommendations for the AIR commission; the

breakdown of VISN 6's recommendations can be found at this [link](#). I want to reiterate what VA Secretary Denis McDonough mentioned during a recent press conference, that these are only recommendations until approved by the AIR commission, and that no matter the outcome, VA is here to stay, and will continue to evolve with health care, our employees, and Veterans. As we get updates from the AIR commission, we will communicate them to stakeholders throughout the region.

Lastly, I want to touch upon updates in the caregiver support program. Per the Mission Act, VA was required by regulation to reassess legacy participants and legacy applicants under Caregiver Support to determine continued eligibility. On March 22, based on many national concerns surrounding the reassessments, Secretary McDonough announced that VA is not going to make changes to Veteran's status in the program until the following is complete:

- VA leaders will review and examine the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) eligibility criteria.
- VA will complete reassessments of Legacy Participants, Legacy Applicants and their Family Caregivers. Any caregiver

eligible for an increase in caregiver benefits will receive them.

- VA will not remove anyone from the program or decrease any support based on reassessments before we re-examine our current eligibility criteria. I will consider making changes if necessary.

The program is still on track to expand to include Veterans of all service eras on Oct. 1, 2022. There is a lot to do to build on the steps above, and as those details unfold, we will continue updating Stakeholders.

It is important to know that we will stop at nothing to ensure Veterans and their caregivers get the support they need and deserve. We are working diligently to develop additional information for Legacy Participants, Legacy Applicants and their Family Caregivers who have already received reassessment determinations. I want to encourage working with your local patient advocates if you have any concerns about the Caregiver Support Program — we are here to help and serve you!

As always, thank you for your continued support of our Veterans.

**PAUL S. CREWS**

*MPH, FACHE, VISN 6 Network Director*



## Drexel to Assume VISN 6 Interim Deputy Network Director Role

As of March 21, 2022, Mr. George Drexel, Associate Director for the VA Western North Carolina Health Care System in Asheville, assumed the VISN 6 Interim Deputy Network Director role.

Mr. Drexel has served as the Associate Medical Center Director for the Western North Carolina VA Health Care System since April 2020. Before that appointment, some of you may recall that he served as the Executive Assistant to the VISN 6 Network Director and Deputy Network Director from Nov. 2017. During that time, he was detailed as the Hines VA

Acting Associate Director and Assistant Medical Center Director for VA Fayetteville, Ark. Mr. Drexel began his VA career at Salisbury's W.G. "Bill" Hefner VA in November 2010, as a strategic planner. Mr. Drexel holds a Master of Business Administration from Indiana Wesleyan University and a Bachelor of Business Management from Catawba College. He is a proud U.S. Marine Corps Veteran.

We appreciate Mr. Drexel's willingness to lead in this new role while we continue to recruit a permanent VISN 6 DND.



Shelton Faircloth, a Patient Transition Advocate at the Durham VA Healthcare System, discusses possible benefits eligibilities with a Veteran at a Veterans Benefits event in Cary, N.C.

## UNDER ONE ROOF: American Legion Post Connects Veterans to Benefits

By Joshua Edson | DVAHCS INTEGRATED STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

Veterans near and far had a chance to meet face-to-face with VA Benefits and Health Care representatives at a three-day benefits event in Cary, N.C.

Organized by American Legion Post 67 and hosted by staff at the Herb Young Community Center in downtown Cary, “Veterans Benefits Live – VA in my Hometown” brought to Veterans benefits organizations from the federal, state and private sectors together under one roof to serve Veterans.

“Sometimes Veterans have difficulty navigating the benefits process,” says Richard Spyrison, Commander of American Legion Post 67, and Vietnam era Army Veteran. “Also, there’s lots of benefits out there that Veterans might not be aware of. The intent here is to bring everyone together so that Veterans get a full picture of what’s out there.”

For some Veterans, the idea of being able to “one-stop-shop” was something they didn’t want to pass up, even if that meant a trip far from home. Veterans like Nick Al-Salik, a disabled Air Force and OEF/OIF Veteran who made the trip all the way from Detroit with Doctor Zoey, his service dog.

“A friend of mine told me about this event,” says Al-Salik. “So, I’m staying with him and trying my luck here.” After struggling in the years after his discharge from the Air Force, Nick was recently awarded a 70-percent disability rating from the VA. Still struggling with his Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Al-Salik came to the Cary event to see what other benefits and ratings he is eligible for.

“It’s been a hard road, and I’ve had some

real setbacks,” says Al-Salik. “But I’m finally making my way out of the fog and getting my life back on track.”

Despite the long wait, he is upbeat about his chances. “I feel good about this,” he said. “The long wait doesn’t bother me because I think I’ll get a good outcome in this.”

The response from Veterans was overwhelming, with more than four hundred showing up on the first day. A team of local volunteers was there to greet the Veterans. Representatives from the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the Durham VA Healthcare System (DVAHCS), as well as NC Works and the Wake County Veterans Services Office joined others to offer information and help with job and education benefits, mental health services and legal services among many other services available to Veterans during their visit.

The three-day event served more than 1,000 Veterans, including 14 from out of state.



A VA Employee discusses Veterans Benefits with a Veteran at a Veterans Benefits event in Cary, N.C. Organized by American Legion Post 67, the event is an effort to connect Veterans with an array of Federal and State Veteran benefits providers.

## Ebel Named Acting Associate Director; Drexel to Serve as Interim VISN 6 Deputy Network Director

By WNC VA Health Care System Public Affairs

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — Beginning March 21, Mr. Alex Ebel, Salem VA Medical Center’s Chief of Nutrition Services, assumed duties as the Western North Carolina VA Health Care System Associate Director while our current Associate Director, Mr. George Drexel, begins a detail fulfilling duties as the interim Deputy Network Director for VISN 6.

Ebel has worked for Veterans Affairs for 15 years. He started his VA career as a Clinical Section Chief at the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center in Jackson, Miss., in 2006. He also served as Assistant Chief and Acting Chief of Nutrition and Food Services there for one year before accepting the position as Chief of Nutrition Services at the Salem VAMC in Salem, Va., in 2017.

Ebel received his BS in Nutrition 1992 and MS in Nutrition in 1995 — both from Ohio State University.

Please join us in welcoming Mr. Ebel to our mission of serving Veterans in this important role.



Alex Ebel has assumed duties as Western North Carolina VA Health Care System Associate Director in current Associate Director George Drexel’s stead.





## Working Together to Take Care of Veterans

By WNC VA Health Care System Public Affairs

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — The Western North Carolina VA Health Care System has a special working relationship with the Cherokee Indian Hospital (CIH) to ensure Native American Veterans in the area have access to care either in the VA, on the reservation at the CIH, or at both.

Tina Hendricks is a VA registered nurse on station at the CIH who assists Veterans with their care and continuity of care. According to Hendricks, Veterans can have a primary care provider at the CIH and a primary care provider in the VA — it's a special memo of understanding established between the VA and the CIH.

If a Veteran is being seen at the Cherokee Indian Hospital and needs, prefers, or requests care through the VA (such as for a specialty clinic) they're eligible to receive that care from the VA.

To set it up, the ordering provider at the CIH just reaches out to the provider at the VA to coordinate the referral and care. If that Veteran doesn't have a primary care clinic in the VA system, Ms. Hendricks has a system for getting referrals for those patients.

If you know a native American veteran who may benefit from a liaison, reach out to the advocates at the CIH and let's work together for the Veteran.

The Cherokee Tribe has been operating an \$83 million healthcare facility in Western North Carolina since October 2015, that some enrolled Veterans proudly use today—a state-of-the-art facility providing the highest standards of healthcare, in a unique, Cherokee-infused environment meant to nurture and heal.

*Editor's note: If you are interested in more information or have questions, please feel free to email Ms. Hendricks at [tina.hendricks@va.gov](mailto:tina.hendricks@va.gov) or Angela Stone at [angela.stone@va.gov](mailto:angela.stone@va.gov).*

## Nagy-Agren Selected as Fellow of Infectious Disease Society of America

By WNC VA Health Care System Public Affairs

The Salem VA Health Care System Chief of Infectious Diseases, Dr. Stephanie Nagy-Agren, was recently selected as a Fellow of the Infectious Disease Society of America.

The status of Fellow recognizes individuals who have achieved professional excellence and provided significant service to the profession.

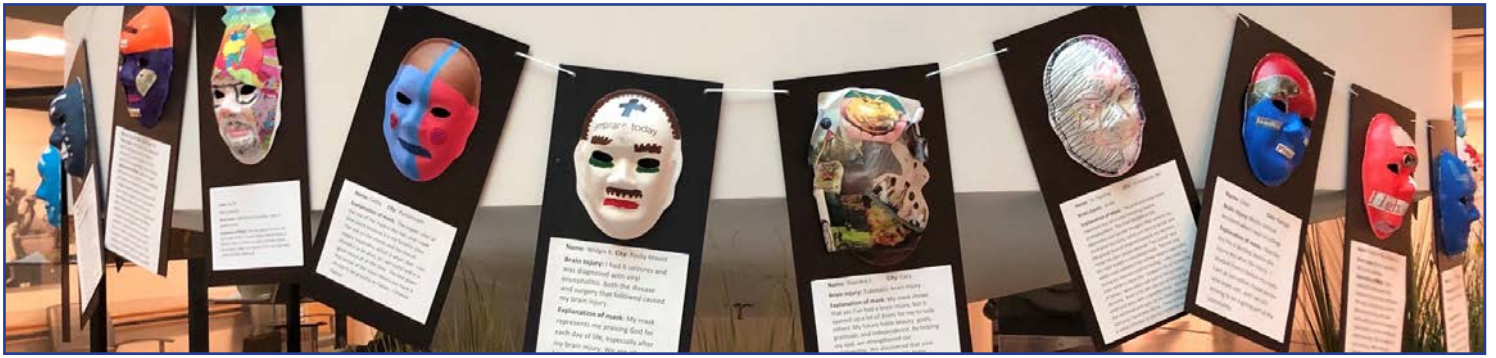
Dr. Nagy-Agren, who has worked with the VA for nearly 27 years, is also a Professor of Medicine with the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, and an affiliate Infectious Disease physician at the Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. She serves as academic faculty in the ID fellowship program, and rotates in the lecture and case conference series working with fellows, residents, and students on scholarly projects, abstracts, and publications. She has worked as a co-principal investigator on research studying cognitive and functional status of the elderly with C-Difficile infection.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Nagy-Agren served on the VISN-6 COVID-19 Incident Command and assisted with testing and management at the Virginia Veterans nursing home. She is also an investigator with the ACTIV3 TICO platform trial of monoclonal antibodies for patients hospitalized with COVID-19.



Dr. Stephanie Nagy-Agren has been selected as a Fellow of the Infectious Disease Society of America.





# March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

By WNC VA Health Care System Public Affairs

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — As a way to bring awareness of brain injuries to staff and Veterans alike, the Charles George VA Medical Center (CGVAMC) set up an exhibit in the atrium of Bldg. 47. The display consists of a variety of masks created by individuals who suffer from brain injuries.

The exhibit, titled “Unmasking Brain Injury” will be displayed until the end of the month.

According to the website <http://unmaskingbraininjury.org/>, “The mission of Unmasking Brain Injury is to promote awareness of the prevalence of brain injury; to give survivors a voice and the means to educate others of what it’s like to live with a brain injury; to show others that persons living with a disability due to their brain injury are like anyone else, deserving of dignity, respect, compassion and the opportunity to prove their value as citizens in their respective communities.”

The Mayo Clinic website, [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org) states, “Traumatic brain injury (TBI) usually results from a violent blow or

jolt to the head or body. An object that goes through brain tissue, such as a bullet or shattered piece of skull, also can cause traumatic brain injury.

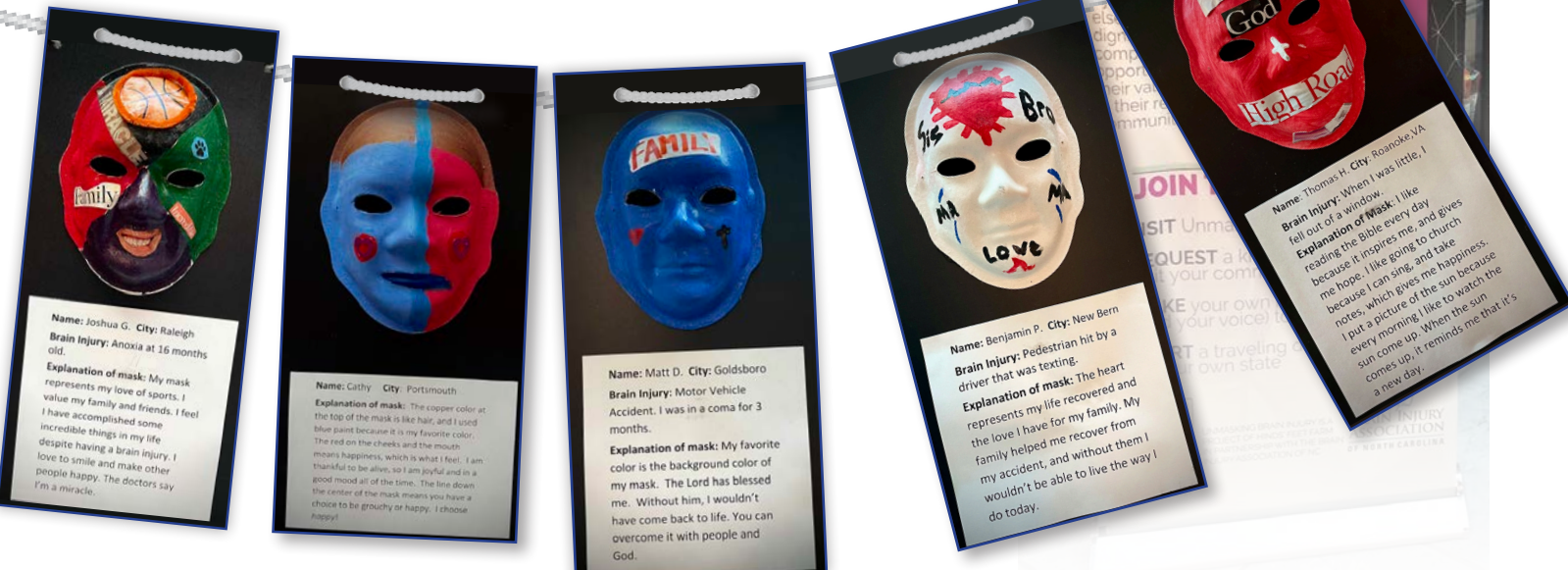
“Mild traumatic brain injury may affect your brain cells temporarily. More-serious traumatic brain injury can result in bruising, torn tissues, bleeding, and other physical damage to the brain. These injuries can result in long-term complications or death.”

While it’s no surprise that traumatic brain injury can have wide-ranging physical and psychological effects, some signs or symptoms may appear immediately after a traumatic event, while others can appear days or weeks later.

According to Alisa Early, a social worker at CGVAMC, more than 430,000 U.S. servicemembers were diagnosed with a TBI from 2000 to 2020. Studies suggest that servicemembers and Veterans who have sustained a TBI may: have ongoing symptoms and experience co-occurring health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression.

The “Unmasking Brain Injury” exhibit will hang in the atrium of Bldg. 47 near the lab at Charles George VA Medical Center until the end of the month. Veterans and staff alike are encouraged to view these masks which have an accompanying short story of each person’s personal struggles with the effects of a brain injury.

The exhibit in Building 47 is an attempt to offer a window to the experience that officials hope will spur visitors to consider the effects of TBI as well as the concept that victims are people who continue to live, grow and thrive like the rest of us.





# NEVER A DULL DAY: ROCK STARS LAY IT ON **THICK** AT HAMPTON VA

## PAINTING THE PICTURE

On a recent crisp, sunny winter day, a spray painter is caught in the act. His name is Rasado Parker. Parker is shaking a can of red spray paint and stooping to spray hundreds of landscaping rocks. Painting in plain sight, Parker explains there's nothing illegal about it: He isn't defacing ... he's refacing.

Parker, also a Grounds Laborer for Hampton VA's Environmental Management Services (EMS) department explains, "We're just touching up the flag, making the colors pop."

The flag he's referring to is a multi-colored custom rockscape feature overlooking Hampton Bay. "Over time it gets dull, so I'm adding a fresh coat."

## LAYING IT ON THICK

Known for its stick-to-it-ive-ness, the group maintains fresh coats of paint on other aggregate artwork which decorates the historic Hampton VA campus.

"EMS groundkeepers came up with the idea," painter Parker says. "We have the other monuments as well. We have the green ribbon by the Mental Health clinic, the pink ribbon where the Women's Clinic is, and we have the Gold Star which is near the entrance by MLK Blvd; and we touch all those up."

The art rock images appeared over the past year, passion projects bringing beauty during a dark pandemic.



Rasado Parker, Environmental Management Services (EMS) Grounds Laborer, applies spray paint to federal property during site maintenance and beautification on the Hampton VA campus Feb. 16, 2022. (Photo by Ben Wocken)



(LEFT PHOTO) Landscaping rocks painted and arranged in the shape of the American Flag overlook the Hampton Bay. Located on Veterans Affairs Medical Center property, the military service branches memorial encourages visitors to reflect on the sacrifices and heroism of American servicemembers (ABOVE PHOTO) The green ribbon, located in front of Hampton VA's Behavioral Health Center, is the international symbol for mental health awareness. (Photos by Ben Wocken)



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(LEFT PHOTO) Aggregate art depicting the iconic Pink Ribbon for breast cancer awareness adds contextual and visual elements to the Hampton VA Women's Clinic lawn. (RIGHT PHOTO) Landscaping rocks placed in the shapes of large alphabet letters welcome visitors entering Hampton VA's main entrance. (Photos by Ben Wocken)



Located at the north entrance of the Hampton VA, a sloped rockscape image honors Gold Star Families who have lost a servicemember through military service. (Photo by Ben Wocken)

### LOW-MAINTENANCE LIFESTYLE

As well as being pieces of art, rockscapes are also practical. ThisOldHouse.com states: Rock landscaping is becoming increasingly popular thanks to its undeniable eco-friendly benefits. Unlike grass or other water-guzzling plants, rocks require little to no maintenance, don't need water, and are instantly satisfying — no need to wait for them to mature like a shrub or tree.

### MONUMENT MEN

Wallace, Parker and fellow EMS Grounds Crew stand back to inspect their glistening flag. They seem satisfied with the latest layer of maintenance. Designing and building the rockscaping, with its custom-designed metal shape, stars and brightly painted bold stripes, was surely a monumental task; these are Hampton VA's Monument Men. Or rather, Monuments Men.

*“We hope Veterans see this and get some kind of nostalgia or good feelings from it, a morale boost. Get some pride out of it, pride in the country,” says Parker.*

Adds Wallace, “I call us Phantoms — you might not see us, but when you're walking around here and the place is looking good, we've been there. You know what I mean?”

Call them Phantoms, Monuments Men or Aggregate Artists — either way, these Rockers are on a roll.

Thanks to their passion for paint, at the VA by the Bay, it's never a dull day.



A paint locker stores supplies used to maintain color vibrancy on Hampton VA's aggregate rockscapes. UV rays, rainfall and fluctuating weather dulls paint over time. (Photo by Ben Wocken)





Customer service manager Carmen Quinones and supervisory MRI technologist Tara Morton show the functionality of new gowns available to Veterans through a collaborative initiative at Central Virginia VA Health Care System. (Photo by Megan Kon)

## Veteran Feedback Prompts Small, But Impactful, Change in Radiology

By David Hodge

Women Veterans have a couple of new garments to choose from in the radiology department at the Central Virginia VA Health Care System (CVHCS) thanks to the coordinated effort of a few departments.

During a past focus group for women Veterans, Carmen Quinones heard about their experiences while receiving an MRI. As the facility's customer service manager and supervisor to a cadre of patient advocates, she noticed a trend of comments regarding the thinness of the garments used by the facility and how some women felt the items were too revealing. One Veteran, a survivor of military sexual trauma, stated the gowns made her feel unsafe.

"After hearing the experiences of several women Veterans, I checked out the garments for myself," Quinones explained. "It was understandable the gowns we were using might not be suitable for everyone and could make women Veterans feel exposed or vulnerable."

Quinones worked closely with staff in radiology to seek additional garments to improve the Veteran's experience and meet all quality and safety measures required for use around MRI machines.

"This was a group effort through a multitude of services here at CVHCS," Quinones said. "Cooperation among facility leadership, the radiology department, patient advocates,

laundry service and environmental management all contributed to this initiative."

There are two new garment options available to Veterans. The first is a pajama set with a jacket utilizing plastic snaps that button down the front of the garment. The material is considerably thicker, so it aids in warmth and helps to conceal. The second is a micro-suede robe in case the jacket alone is not enough.

"I hope these items bring peace of mind to our women Veterans," Quinones stated. "Patient safety, both physical and psychological, are very important to the work we do every day at this hospital."



Carmen Quinones, customer service manager and patient advocacy supervisor, hopes these new gowns will provide women Veterans comfort and peace of mind during their clinical procedures at the Central Virginia VA Health Care System. (Photo by Megan Kon, Public Affairs Specialist)

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VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [va.gov/wholehealth](http://va.gov/wholehealth)





# VA Celebrates National Healthcare Decisions Day

## Advance Care Planning More than Just Thinking... What Matters to You?



### Get Ready



WHO might be a good choice to be your decision maker?



### Get Set



WILL the person make decisions that are in line with your wishes?



### Go



WHAT is the most important thing you want your decision maker to know about your wishes?



[www.socialwork.va.gov/ACP\\_GV.asp](http://www.socialwork.va.gov/ACP_GV.asp)  
[www.ethics.va.gov/for\\_veterans.asp](http://www.ethics.va.gov/for_veterans.asp)



For more information contact:



# FROM HYPNOSIS TO ACUPUNCTURE, HOLISTIC Approach Works Wonders for Veterans

By Todd Goodman | SALISBURY VA PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

A holistic approach to patient care has gained traction with Veterans as a complement to medication. With treatments like acupuncture, yoga, tai chi, meditation and chiropractic care, it's no wonder so many are choosing Whole Health.

"Some people see these practices as non-traditional," said Dr. Christina Vair, Whole Health director for Salisbury VA Health Care System. "However, yoga and tai chi have been around thousands of years. It's just not something we've incorporated into Western health care."

One therapy, which has been around since the 18th century, is clinical hypnosis.

"Hypnosis is a tool that has been used for many years within VA," said Vair. "Data suggests that about 70 percent or more of the population is hypnotizable."

Some folks respond quickly and deeply to hypnosis, while some are not quite as responsive. When many people think of hypnosis, they imagine a Las Vegas show with someone clucking like a chicken.

"For entertainment purposes, people are in some state of being controlled," said Vair. "Those sorts of performances are not an accurate representation of how we use hypnosis in the clinical setting. That's not what real hypnosis is."

In the clinical environment, providers focus more on trance, or focused attention. Many people go into a trance on a regular basis — like driving a car while being on mental autopilot, with the mind somewhere else.

"A lot of our Veterans have hobbies that are trance-based," said Vair. "Woodworkers, artists and musicians can get so engaged in an activity that they look down at the clock and see several hours have passed. They didn't realize it because they were so engaged in what they were doing ... that's trance."

Vair was exposed to hypnosis 11 years ago. She trained with the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis as well as VA's national training program. VISN 6 was the first network to hold a regional training in clinical hypnosis.

Research has shown hypnosis to be effective for chronic pain, post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety, as well as tobacco cessation.

"It's an interaction between someone trained in hypnosis and a patient who is interested in using that focused attention to reach a goal," she said. "We use it quite a bit with Veterans who have chronic pain."

Overall, Whole Health is a different approach

to care. It puts the patient at the center. It asks what's important to them and shows Veterans an alternative to conventional methods of healing.

"The Veterans are the expert of what's happening in their mind and body," said Vair. "The goal is to make them feel empowered and equipped, rather than feeling like they don't have a voice in their care."

Army Veteran Donna Tibbetts, who has taken five different Whole Health classes, got off to a rocky start with the service.

"I have to admit I was not a great fan of Whole Health in the beginning," said Tibbetts. "Oh, heck no, there's no way this is going to work. However, I have since changed my mind."

Tibbetts said the biggest shock was that her Whole Health coach didn't just give her the answers she was looking for. She was used to going to a doctor and being told what to do to get better.

"That's not the way it works," she said. "When you're talking, they give your ideas back to you to fix yourself. It's a totally different mindset. It will dawn on you slowly. It's up to you to fix yourself."

Tibbetts, who is nearing the end with her coach, has fond memories of her time in Whole Health. She said she knows that other Veterans would benefit from this service.

"I just hope this helps get other Veterans interested," she said. "I'm telling you, it's a lot of fun, and Whole Health coaches are really good at what they do."

At the Salisbury VA, Whole Health sees more midlife and older Veterans, but the pandemic — and the virtual modalities that followed — has allowed more young Veterans to participate.

"Younger Veterans are working or going to school," said Vair. "They don't have the ability to come from one of the 21 counties we serve, spend an hour in class, then drive back. But now we can meet them where they are. As a result, we are seeing more of them."

Vair would like to see this trend continue, and one of the most important steps is to ensure that providers communicate facets of this program to their patients.

"We've been at this since 2018," she said. "We have so many initiatives within VA that it can be an uphill battle to stand out. I don't know if we'll get to the point where every Veteran will hear about Whole Health at every visit, but that's the goal we are working toward. Whole Health is for everyone."



Hypnosis is just one of the tools of the Whole Health approach that is gaining traction with Veterans as a complement to their traditional medical treatment. (Photo by Luke Thompson)



# VA Publishes Interim Final Rule for Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program

WASHINGTON — As part of the Department of Veterans Affairs' and national suicide prevention efforts, VA is publishing an Interim Final Rule March 10, 2022, implementing section 201 of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act, known as the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program.

Publishing this rule will specify grant eligibility criteria, application requirements, scoring criteria, and other elements necessary

to implement this grant program.

The SSG Fox SPGP is a 3-year, community-based grant program that will provide financial assistance to eligible entities to provide or coordinate the provision of suicide prevention services for eligible individuals and their families.

"Communities play an important role in ending Veteran suicide," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "This grant program will invest in and seek to strengthen local community capacity to conduct outreach to Veterans,

other eligible individuals and their families, and provide them with suicide prevention services and resources."

VA anticipates publishing a Notice of Funding Opportunity in April with instructions on how to apply for a grant under the SSG Fox SPGP. ([Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide prevention grants](#) information.)

The official version of this rule is scheduled to publish in the Federal Register March 10, 2022. However, the document is available for [reviewing](#).

## National Healthcare Decisions Day 2022

National Healthcare Decisions Day is April 16, 2022. To mark the day, VA encourages you to start a conversation about what matters most. Talk with your loved ones and consider writing your decisions in an advance directive. To learn more visit: [https://www.ethics.va.gov/for\\_veterans.asp](https://www.ethics.va.gov/for_veterans.asp)



## VA Promotes Greater Access to Voter Information to Veterans and Families

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs unveiled a series of measures March 24, promoting greater access to voter information for Veterans and their families as part of the department's proposed designation as a voter registration agency under the National Voter Registration Act.

In accordance with Executive Order 14019: Promoting Access to Voting, these steps are part of VA's "whole health" approach to care, ensuring that Veterans and their families are able to exercise the right to vote, for which Veterans fought and served to protect.

"We're doubling down on the voting sup-

port we already provide — expanding access where we can, and looking to do even more," said Deputy Secretary for Veterans Affairs Donald Remy. "We're providing assistance with the voting process for tens of thousands of inpatients and residents at our hospitals, nursing homes and treatment centers, along with homebound Veterans and their caregivers. This is a major undertaking as VA expands this effort, putting voting access right at the fingertips of all Veterans who may need it."

VA launched a survey to over 12 million Veterans and their families in a first-of-its-kind effort to better understand Veterans' experi-

ence with the voter registration process, and to better assist Veterans in addressing and overcoming any challenges. VA also developed a website for Veterans with nonpartisan information about voter registration and elections.

By summer 2022, VA plans to seek designation, by state officials in six states, as a voter registration agency under NVRA, and to launch a pilot voter assistance program at VA facilities in those states, with an eye to the geographic and demographic diversity of the Veteran population.

To learn more or to take the survey, please visit [VA.gov/vote](https://va.gov/vote).



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# VA Shares Implementation Plan and Locations of PAWS Act Pilot Program

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs published a Federal Register Notice March 30 on its plan for implementing the pilot program required by the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers for Veterans Therapy Act.

The PAWS Act, signed into law Aug. 25, 2021, requires VA to conduct a 5-year pilot program to provide canine training to eligible Veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder as an element of a complementary and integrative health program.

“Our pilot will help us explore the benefits of service dog training and give us the data we need to make recommendations to Congress on the way forward,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “There are many effective treatments for PTSD, and we’re looking at service dog training as an adjunct to those options to ensure Veterans have access to resources that may improve their wellbeing and help them thrive.”

Veterans participating in the program will have the opportunity to train potential future service dogs with the goal of helping Veterans manage their PTSD symptoms. The pilot program will be offered at the following five VA medical centers:

- Anchorage, Alaska
- Asheville, N.C.
- Palo Alto, Calif.
- San Antonio, Texas
- West Palm Beach, Fla.

Clinicians at the pilot sites will determine the eligibility of Veterans interested in the pilot program. Agreements with the participating organizations that will furnish the training have not yet been finalized. Visit [Implementation of the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act](#) for information on the PAWS Pilot program and timeline.

# VA Releases Asset and Infrastructure Review Report

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs released its Asset and Infrastructure Review report March 14, which includes recommendations by the VA Secretary to cement the department as the primary, world-class provider and coordinator of Veterans health care for generations to come.

The VA MISSION Act requires Secretary McDonough to publish the AIR report in the Federal Register and submit it to Congress and a presidentially appointed AIR Commission.

The AIR Commission will conduct public hearings as part of its review of VA’s recommendations before submitting its own recommendations to the president for further review in 2023.

The report’s release marks the beginning of an in-depth deliberative process. The AIR report is the result of years of research and analysis intended to help VA build a health care network with the right facilities, in the right places, to provide the right care for all Veterans, including underserved and at-risk Veteran populations in every part of the country — making sure our facilities and services are accessible to Veterans in their communities.

The recommendations center

around improving access to and quality of care for Veterans by ensuring that the department’s infrastructure in the decades ahead reflects Veterans’ needs and 21st-century design standards. VA is investing heavily in its number-one asset — its employees — strengthening its public/private strategic partnerships, and elevating its role as the leading health care research entity and the leading health care workforce training institution in the country.

“VA came to these recommendations by asking ourselves one question above all else: What’s best for the Veterans we serve?” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “Because that is our number-one goal, today and every day. That’s what our Asset and Infrastructure Review recommendations are all about. We’ve spent the last several weeks and months communicating about this with VA employees, union partners, state partners, Veteran service organizations, Congress, and more. I’m continuing to consult with our unions, and will do so moving forward, because I so appreciate the strong partnership we have with them.”

Visit [AIR Commission report](#) for more information. View the [Federal Register notice](#).



**DISCOVER  
WHAT MATTERS  
TO YOU.**

**Live Whole Health.**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

[va.gov/wholehealth](https://va.gov/wholehealth)



# 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

### Durham VAMC

508 Fulton Street  
Durham, NC 27705  
919-286-0411 | 888-878-6890  
www.durham.va.gov

### Fayetteville VAMC

2300 Ramsey Street  
Fayetteville, NC 28301  
910-488-2120 | 800-771-6106  
www.fayettevilleenc.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 County CBOC

18 Doctors Cl., Units 2 & 3  
Supply, NC 28462 | 910-754-6141

### Charlotte CBOC

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

### Charlotte HCC

3506 W. Tyvola Rd.  
Charlotte, NC 28208  
704-329-1300

### Charlottesville CBOC

590 Peter Jefferson Pkwy  
Charlottesville, VA 22911  
434-293-3890

### Chesapeake CBOC

1987 S. Military Highway  
Chesapeake, Va 23320  
757-722-9961

### Clayton CBOC

11618 US Hwy 70 Business Highway West,  
Suites 100 & 200  
Clayton, NC 27520

### Danville CBOC

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

### Emporia CBOC

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

### Fayetteville HCC

7300 So. Raeford Rd  
Fayetteville NC 28304  
910-488-2120 | 800-771-6106

### Fayetteville Rehabilitation Clinic

4101 Raeford Rd. Ste 100-B  
Fayetteville NC 28304  
910-908-2222

### Franklin CBOC

647 Wayah Street  
Franklin, NC 28734-3390  
828-369-1781

### Fredericksburg CBOC

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

### Fredericksburg at Southpoint CBOC

10401 Spotsylvania Ave, Ste 300  
Fredericksburg, VA 22408  
540-370-4468

### Goldsboro CBOC

2610 Hospital Road  
Goldsboro, NC 27809  
919-731-4809

### 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

2580 Henderson Drive  
Jacksonville, NC 28546  
910-353-6406

### Jacksonville 2 VA Clinic

306 Brynn Marr Road  
Jacksonville, NC 28546  
910-353-6406

### Jacksonville 3 VA Clinic

4 Josh Court  
Jacksonville, NC 28546  
910-353-6406

### Kernersville HCC

1695 Kernersville Medical Pkwy  
Kernersville, NC 27284  
336-515-5000

### 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

### Raleigh III CBOC

2600 Atlantic Ave, Ste 200  
Raleigh, NC 27604  
919-755-2620

### Robeson County CBOC

139 Three Hunts Drive  
Pembroke, NC 28372  
910-272-3220

### Rutherford County CBOC

2270 College Avenue, Suite 145  
Forest City, NC 28043-2459  
828-288-2780

### Sanford CBOC

3112 Tramway  
Road Sanford, NC 27332  
919-775-6160

### Staunton CBOC

102 Lacy B. King Way  
Staunton, VA 24401  
540-886-5777

### Tazewell CBOC

141 Ben Bolt Ave.  
Tazewell, VA 24651  
276-988-8860

### Virginia Beach CBOC

244 Clearfield Avenue  
Virginia Beach, VA  
757-722-9961

### Wilmington HCC

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

### 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

### Charlotte Vet Center

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

### Fayetteville Vet Center

2301 Robeson Street  
Fayetteville, NC 28305  
910-488-6252

### Greensboro Vet Center

3515 W Market Street, Suite 120  
Greensboro, NC 27403  
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

### Raleigh Vet Center

8851 Ellstree Lane  
Raleigh, NC 27617  
(919) 361-6419

### Roanoke Vet Center

1401 Franklin Rd SW  
Roanoke, VA 24016  
540-342-9726

### Virginia Beach Vet Center

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

## VISN 6 Newsletter

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Questions or comments about the newsletter, email [stephen.wilkins2@va.gov](mailto:stephen.wilkins2@va.gov) or call 919-956-5541

## VISN 6 EDITORIAL

Paul S. Crews // VISN 6 Network Director  
Tara Ricks // Director of Communications  
Steve Wilkins // Editor

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Fanning Communications  
John Fanning // President + CEO  
DeAnna Clark // Graphic Designer  
Karl J. Paloucek // Editor + Copywriter

