



"Excellent Care – Earned by Veterans – Delivered Here"

# Voices of VISN 6

Official news from around *your* VISN

Vol. 7, No. 8

June 30, 2017

## Womack, VA Open Fayetteville Rehabilitation Clinic

Community members and local officials joined Fayetteville VAMC Director Elizabeth Goolsby, Womack Army Medical Center Commander Col. Lance Raney and Acting VISN 6 Director Dr. Mark Shelhorse June 7 for the official opening of a new joint venture between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

Providers in the Fayetteville Rehabilitation Clinic began seeing patients May 16 at 4101 Rafeord Road, Suite 100-B.

"One of the constant

challenges we face is increasing access to care for a steadily growing patient population, so we're delighted to move forward with this joint venture with Womack AMC that increases capacity while also providing the added bonus of continuity of care for new and seasoned Veterans alike," said Goolsby.

The new clinic provides expanded and increased access to physical therapy, speech language pathology and occupa-

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*Joe Harlan, Womack AMC Surrounded by VA and Army officials, Fayetteville VAMC Director Elizabeth Goolsby and Womack AMC Director Col. Lance Raney cut the ribbon to open the Fayetteville Joint Rehabilitation Clinic.*

## New Director Appointed To Hampton VAMC

VA is pleased to announce the appointment of James R. Johnson, Jr., FACHE, as the new director of the Hampton VAMC.

Johnson will oversee delivery of health care to more than 50,000 Veterans at the medical center, which is currently experiencing a 21 percent growth rate (more than 4 times the national average) and an operating budget exceeding \$350 million.

"We are excited to bring Mr. Johnson on board as the new director of the Hampton VA Medical Center," said Dr. Mark Shelhorse, VISN 6 Acting Director. "His experience will be a valuable asset

for facility staff and volunteers, and most importantly, for the Veterans we are honored to serve. We anticipate he will begin his duties there within the next 45 to 60 days."

Johnson joined the VA more than 24 years ago and has held progressive leadership positions at the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System in Pensacola, Fla.; The South Region VA-DoD Sharing Office and TRICARE Regional Office in San Antonio, Tx.; and Frank M. Tejada and South Bexar VA Outpatient Clinics and the U.S. Army Medical Command, also in San Antonio; VA Health Care System of Ohio (VISN



*James R. Johnson, Jr.*

10), and the South Texas Veterans Health Care System. Most recently, he served as the medical center director at the Mann-Grandstaff VAMC

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## From The Director

Recently and through the coming months you will hear a lot about changes in providing and funding VA Health Care.

A top priority for VA is making sure that Veterans have access to high quality care when and where they need it. The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is one pathway among several for accessing the community care network, and is being used at an increased rate. Subsequently, VA is increasing the flexibility needed to optimize resources locally, so that Veterans who need community care will continue to be able to receive it when and where they need it.

Currently, two accounts are used to pay for VA community care—one can only be used to pay for VCP and the other for what is known as traditional VA community care. In the first quarter of FY2017, VA observed a more than 30 percent increase from the same period in FY 2016 in the number of VCP authorizations. At the same time, VA has observed a decrease in authorizations for traditional VA community care. So, VA has adjusted its processes to accommodate the shifts in demand from these accounts.

Federal law currently requires VA to have multiple accounts for VA community care, to include the additional account for the Veterans Choice Program. The law also prohibits VA from moving money between these accounts. Because VCP has a limited amount of funds appropriated to it, VA is working internally and with Congress to ensure Veterans continue to receive the care they need through VA's community care network.

VA staff will continue to send eligible Veterans, as identified in the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act to VCP appointments. Veterans not eligible for VCP can still receive community care through the traditional community care program when care is not available in the VA.

VA and Congress are and will continue to be partners as VA continues to define and build an integrated healthcare network, including a community care pro-



*Mark Shelhorse, M.D.,  
Acting VISN 6 Director*

gram that is simple to understand, easy to administer and meeting the needs of Veterans and their families, community providers, and VA staff. This will include streamlining the funding on VA community care into one account or ensuring flexibility between accounts.

VA is currently working with Congress to evaluate and review VA's requested legislation.

Sincerely,

Mark Shelhorse



### *Hampton VAMC Public Affairs*

#### **VA Secretary Visits Hampton VAMC**

*(From right) VA Secretary David Shulkin, U.S. Rep. Robert "Bobby" Scott (Va. - 3rd Dist.), VA Chief of Staff Vivieca Wright-Simpson, Acting VISN 6 Director Dr. Mark Shelhorse, Hampton VAMC Chief of Staff Dr. Priscilla Hankins, Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe and U.S. Rep. Scott Taylor (Va. - 2nd Dist.) prepare for a facility leadership briefing during the Secretary's visit to the Hampton VAMC June 6, when he noted the medical center's Veteran Primary Care appointment wait times improved from more than 30 days in December 2014 to below 10 days by mid-2016.*

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



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# Asheville VAMC Director Assumes Lead Role In VISN 9

After seven years, the director of one of the country's top VA Medical Centers has been appointed Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs MidSouth Healthcare Network (VISN 9), effective July 23.

Cynthia Breyfogle served as Director of the Charles George VAMC in Asheville, N.C., since 2010. Under her leadership, the medical center earned numerous accolades for quality of care and patient satisfaction.

Under her direction, the medical center earned and maintained a 5-Star Quality rating based on the VA's Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) Model since October 2014. SAIL mirrors the Truven model that is known in the private sector. In addition, the facility is in the top 3 percent of all VHA medical centers for quality of care and efficiency. "The facility has become a jewel under Cindy's leadership. So many programs and departments have benefitted from her vision and discipline, resulting in greater care for Veterans when they need it," said Acting VISN 6

Director Mark Shelhorse.

Reflecting on her time in Asheville, Breyfogle stated, "It has been my honor to serve the 48,000 plus Veterans in Western North Carolina. I would like to thank the employees and volunteers for their hard work and dedication over the years. It has been a pleasure working with them and their commitment to Veterans is inspiring."

The MidSouth Healthcare Network covers nearly 105,000 square miles of rural, suburban, and urban



*Cynthia Breyfogle*

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## Human-Centered Design Training

By David Hodge  
Richmond VAMC Public Affairs

In 2016, the Richmond VAMC became one of 22 sites to join the national VA Center for Innovation as part of its Innovators Network. With the VACI's investment program, new innovations in Veteran health care transform from concept to reality.

In its first year, the facility received funding for 10 projects to develop innovative ideas in areas of software applications, process automation, 3-D printed products, and more. A combination of national funding and local training opportunities aim to foster in-house innovation and improve the Veteran experience.

Three-D printing workshops and classes in Human-Centered Design (HCD) are some innovation-related competencies offered to designers, many of whom work closely with Veterans at the facility each day. Projects and processes are developed by participants on a small scale with the hope the design can be developed enough to be spread to other VA facilities.

David Chen, Coulter Program Director at the University of Virginia, recently led a two-day class to teach HCD to Richmond VAMC staff members who are currently engaged in design projects.

"With HCD, the goal is to not assume you know the solution," said Natalie Maixner, co-lead for Richmond VAMC's Innovator's Network. "The design process must involve the user. If you design something for the

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## Brunswick County Clinic Moves

Effective Monday, June 26, Fayetteville VA's Brunswick County Outreach Clinic has a new name and a new location. Now called Brunswick County Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), VA will see patients at 18 Doctors Circle (Units 2 & 3), Supply NC 28462, less than ½ mile from the old clinic.

When all three suites are utilized, the new clinic will be approx. 9,500 sq. ft., almost five times the size of the clinic it is replacing.

Veterans patronizing the clinic will appreciate the enlarged space which will allow the recruitment of an additional provider, increasing the patient capacity from 2,100 to around 3,300.

"The increased size brings capacity to serve more Veterans and the potential for additional services in the future," said Fayetteville VAMC Director Elizabeth Goolsby. "We opened the original Brunswick Clinic to give area Veterans greater access to quality health care closer to their homes. We started on a small scale because quite frankly we didn't know what the demand would be. Fortunately, the clinic has been well-received and we've been looking to acquire expanded space to better serve our Veterans and ensure the health care they have earned."

The clinic will initially offer primary care services, Mon thru Fri, from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Telehealth services will be available as well as mail order Pharmacy. Care is provided using VA's team-based Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) model. A PACT consists of a health

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### STRIDE Discusses Walking Patients To Improve Recuperation

By Steve Wilkins  
VISN 6 Public Affairs

For several years, Veterans at Durham VAMC have been recovering from their health conditions more quickly than in the past. Since October, Veterans across the VISN have been taking advantage of the same program that helps accelerate patient recovery by getting out of bed and moving around. Just a couple of weeks ago, those VA staff responsible for implementing the Assisted Early Mobility for Hospitalized Older Veterans (STRIDE) program in medical centers across the VISN got together to discuss their progress.

“We were able to talk about the common successes and challenges across sites,” according to Ashley Choate, a member of the Durham HSR&D Function QUERI team and one of the VISN 6 STRIDE face-to-face meeting coordinators. Choate said the issues of

[Continued on Pg 9](#)



**Alicia Singleton**

*Jantene Johnson, VISN 6 Leadership, Effectiveness, Accountability and Development (LEAD) program coordinator welcomes STRIDE members from across the VISN to the new VISN 6 headquarters, in Durham, N.C.*

### Community Groups Recognized For Helping Homeless Vets

By Steve Wilkins  
VISN 6 Public Affairs

Celebrating their efforts to eradicate Veteran homelessness, two community partners within VISN 6 received the Secretary’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Service for Homeless Veterans.

Family Endeavors of Fayetteville, N.C., is a supportive service for Veterans and their families (SSVF) that has been recognized for taking a leadership role in the area and making a significant contribution through their efforts in helping the Fayetteville community achieve functional zero Veteran homelessness.

Functional zero recognizes that while there will continue to be homeless Veterans, resources and processes are set within regional boundaries, to place them in homes off the street within 30 days of discovery.

Virginia Veteran and Family Support Program, headquartered in Richmond, Va., is a component of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and has been instrumental in establishing a statewide network that coordinates services with local entities working to eliminate Veteran homelessness in Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Keith Harris, VHA’s national homeless program director recently offered his congratulations to VISN directors and their network homeless program coordinators, as well as the honorees “on your exemplary leadership and dedication to making a difference in



**Courtesy VISN 6 Homeless Pgm**

*VISN 6 Homeless Coordinator Jeff Doyle presented the Secretary’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Service for Homeless Veterans to (l-r) Fayetteville’s Family Endeavors’ Mary John-Williams, Michelle Blanding, Michelle Bates and Jessica Maples.*

how VA and the Nation serve homeless Veterans and their families.”

The annual VA award honors VA employees, VA organizations and community partners who have made great impacts reducing homelessness among Veterans and breaking the cycle of Veteran homelessness.

# VA Nurse Honors Elderly Veterans With Rememberences

By Paul Waldrop  
Asheville VAMC Public Affairs

For many Veterans, the term shadow box conjures up an image of a cherished, large wooden box with a glass front, filled with insignias of the ranks they achieved and the medals and awards they received while serving their country.

Kristie King, chief Nurse of Geriatrics and Extended Care at the Asheville VAMC, recently gave elderly Veterans in the long-term care unit, her own unique interpretation of the shadow box.

“I first came up with the shadow box idea because I am interested in representing the elderly Veterans we have the privilege of serving in a light that shows they were not always the 80-year old man in the room down the hall that needs help eating,” she said.

King, a proud wife and mother of two Veterans, said a “Vet’s” contributions should always be honored and respected. “They might be different now, but we have to remember that just because patients get old doesn’t mean they aren’t important. They deserve the same honor and respect as any other Veteran,” she stressed.

According to King, an avid photographer and scrap booker, every 10” x 12” shadow box is unique, contain-



**Rodney Doty**

*Kristie King with WW2 Veteran Wayne Carringer displaying Carringer’s shadowbox June 22.*

ing several items representing important aspects of a Veteran’s life, and is displayed on the wall outside the patient’s room. “I began by getting to know each patient and interviewing them about what has brought their lives joy and meaning,” she said. I also interviewed our

[Continued on Pg 9](#)

Dress for Success Triangle  
& Durham VA Health Care System

*Presents:*

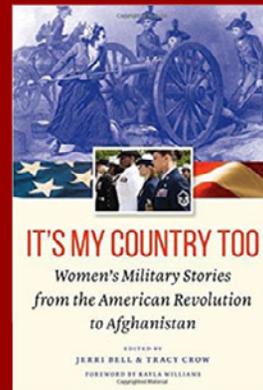
## Writing to Heal: *A Veteran’s Perspective*



**Saturday, July 15, 2017  
9am – 11am @ Durham VA**



**Stories from other Veterans that  
used writing to facilitate their  
Road to Recovery.**



**Book Launch & Signing  
Tracy Crow & Jerri Bell  
Saturday, July 15, 2017  
9am – 11am**

Durham Veterans Affairs Medical Center  
508 Fulton St., Durham, NC 27705  
(Event will take place in the Atrium with a  
continental breakfast.)

RSVP Requested / FREE ADMISSION  
[bidpal.net/veteransevent715](http://bidpal.net/veteransevent715)  
Choose “Purchase Ticket” tab to register

# Army Vet, Appalachian Trail Hiker Grateful For VA Health Care

By Brett Robbins  
Salem VAMC Public Affairs

On April 1, Army Veteran, Bonita “Mother Goose” (Bonita’s trail name) Curtner began her 6th journey hiking the Appalachian Trail.

Mother Goose sat down with me on June 12, during her visit to Salem VAMC to tell me about her hiking experiences. She explained, “I hike somewhere every year trying to do 2,000 miles per summer.” She also said she has completed three hikes on the Pacific Crest Trail and many other trails through the years. Since Mother Goose’s first Appalachian Trail hike-through in 1988, she has backpacked over 45,000 miles.

As I was listening to Mother Goose tell her story, I kept wondering what makes this hiker so much different than other hikers, then it dawned on me, she is 69 years old, a female U.S. Army Veteran and according to Mother Goose, she was the “first female to “yoyo” the Appalachian Trail,” meaning she hiked from northern Georgia to Maine and then back to northern Georgia. She has now completed five hike-throughs on the Appalachian Trail. This is what set Mother Goose apart from other hikers.

During our interview, she told me her home base VA, Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health Care System in Lake City, Fla., keeps her knees working through periodic gel injections to cushion where the knee cartilage is worn away. She explained, “I work with the best team in Florida, Matt Holsbake in orthopedics and his assistants. When I’m traveling on my hikes, my Florida VA coordinator, Ruth Davis, offers a valued service as my liaison with out-of-state VA hospitals.”

During her last visit to North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health Care System, Mr. Holsbake advised her she needed to have knee injections every three months for optimal effectiveness. “I told him I was about to go back on the Appalachian Trail in Georgia and hike north until September. Referring to my taking over four months to get an appointment, Mr. Holsbake replied, “This won’t happen again. Where will you be in June?” I told him, Virginia. “Keep me abreast of your progress, and we’ll get the shot you need at the VA hospital closest to your Appalachian Trail location.” This was when Ruth Davis contacted Mandy Price at Salem VAMC to coordinate a knee injection. “Ms. Price had to go through several administrative steps to have the shot sent to the Salem VAMC. In addition, I received regular updates via phone conversations and text messages from Ms. Price regarding her success in obtaining the needed medication. By the time I arrived to Salem VAMC, we were looking forward to meeting each other.”



**Donalee White**

*“Mother Goose”, is a US Army Veteran and served from 1965 to 1967 as a Telecommunications Equipment Operator.*

Mother Goose further explained her experience with North Florida/South Georgia Veteran Veterans Health Care System and the Salem VAMC have been a rewarding experience. Not only did she receive the needed medication in an unusual situation, she felt everyone treated her with sincere kindness and she has made some new friends. She wanted to ensure that everyone knew, “In a time when the Veterans Administration may receive complaints and negative publicity, I

**Continued on Pg 11**

# 2017 Virginia Women Veterans Summit Offers Empowerment

Advocates from around the state of Virginia are boasting proudly of the state's success in producing what has become an annual event, promoting the empowerment and achievement of Women Veterans.

The 2017 Virginia Women Veterans Summit, featuring networking opportunities, topical and self-help forums and speakers, including Army Capt. and Miss USA 2016 Deshauna Barber and Ms. Kayla M. Williams, director of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Center for Women Veterans took place June 23 in Chesapeake, Va.

The Summit's purpose is to empower Women Veterans with knowledge and resources effecting a smooth transition into civilian life and encouraging their overall wellness.

Proclaiming the motto, "Achievement, Empowerment & Wellness: Virginia's Women Veterans Lead the Way," the event has been designed to speak to Virginia's women Veterans who have, currently are, or will be transitioning into civilian life.

It brings those women in contact with others like themselves, representatives from government agencies and private support organizations and employers in the community.

It provides an opportunity for the Veterans to learn about the services offered, but also puts them directly in touch with those community leaders most beneficial to their needs.

"Virginia is proud to be the home of nearly 800,000 veterans, and of those more than 100,000 are women," said Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe. "All Veterans, including women, face challenges such as balancing family life with their duties and successfully transitioning to the civilian workplace."

More than 400 women Veterans registered to attend the 2017 Virginia Summit at the Delta Marriott Chesapeake, Va.

It was organized by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) and community partners, including Dominion Energy, VA, Disabled American Veterans, the Virginia Employment Commission, and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Attendees received a keynote address from Ginger Miller, President and CEO of Women Veterans Interactive, an author, mother and Women Veterans' advocate who is a subject matter expert on transitioning from military to civilian life and minority Veterans affairs. Several breakout speakers' panels included topics ranging from "Boots to Suits," to Veteran Entrepreneurship and Women's Wellness.

"Events like this one are so important in helping to get the word out to Women who served, that they are Veterans, too. They are eligible for the same benefits



**Manhattan Royal**  
*Army Capt. and Miss USA 2016 DeShauna Barber addresses the audience during a discussion at the Virginia Women Veterans Summit June 23 in Chesapeake, Va. More than 400 participated in the Women Veterans' Empowerment Conference.*

and services as their male counterparts, but other programs specifically address women's needs, too," VISN 6 Women Veterans Coordinator Shenekia Williams-Johnson claimed.

Williams-Johnson added that a growing number of Women Veterans are taking advantage of VA benefits, especially in health care, where many new facilities, equipment and programs have been added at VA health care centers across the country in recent years.



**Manhattan Royce**  
*Audience members listened intently as presenters speak at the Virginia Women Veterans Summit June 23 in Chesapeake, Va.*

### Clinic continued from Pg 1

tional therapy services for VA and Department of Defense enrollees in the greater Fayetteville area, in a state-of-the-art rehabilitation outpatient clinic.

“This clinic is an excellent example of how patients can benefit when we as the VA and DoD consolidate our efforts in support of service members, former service members and their Families. It is truly a win-win with improved access, continuity and convenience,” said Col. Raney, commander, WAMC. “We look forward to working together with the VA on this and other opportunities in the future.”

The joint initiative allows both agencies to work together to promote efficient and cost-effective resource

sharing ideas. Additionally, it will increase access to care for patients and help improve the level and quality of service provided.

“The Fayetteville Rehabilitation Clinic is another example of the great dividends our medical centers reap from working together to improve access to care, patient satisfaction and provide cost effective resource sharing,” Goolsby concluded.

The 10,000 square-foot facility will house eight physical therapists, three occupational therapists, one speech language pathologist and 13 therapy assistants. The facility will offer evidence-based rehabilitative care and services.

### Hampton continued from Pg 1

in Spokane, Wash., a facility with more than 1,200 staff and a budget exceeding \$240 million, where he led the successful construction and activation of two outpatient clinics valued at more than \$95 million.

Johnson holds a Master of Health Administration from the Medical College of Virginia at Virginia Commonwealth University and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of William and Mary. He is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and a graduate of the VA Senior Executive Leadership Course.

Johnson has also been recognized as University of South Alabama’s Mentor of the Year and was nominated for Veterans Health Administration Certified Mentor of the year recognition in 2012.

With a staff of about 1,800, the Hampton VAMC is a 438-bed teaching facility serving Veterans in eastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina.

The medical center, 4th oldest in the nation, is located on 85 acres overlooking the Chesapeake Bay, and includes outpatient clinics in Virginia Beach, Va. and Elizabeth City, N.C.

### Breyfogle continued from Pg 3

communities in Tennessee and Kentucky and their surrounding areas. Once in Nashville, Tenn., Breyfogle will oversee the five VA medical centers that comprise VISN 9: TN Valley Healthcare System, campuses in Nashville and Murfreesboro, Tenn.; James A. Quillen VAMC, Mountain Home, Tenn.; Memphis VAMC, Robley Rex VAMC, Louisville, Ky., and Lexington VAMC, Lexington, Ky. Regarding Breyfogle’s selection, “We anticipate excellent leadership and continued commitment to America’s heroes,” said Steve Young, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management.

Prior to her appointment as Medical Center Director, she was the Acting Network Director and Deputy Network Director for the VA Midwest Health Care Network, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23 in Minneapolis, MN.

Breyfogle extends her appreciation to the members of Congress, Veteran Service Organizations, and the Western North Carolina community for their continuous support of America’s heroes. “As I transition into my new role, I hold close many special memories of my time in these beautiful mountains and the wonderful people who live here,” she stated.



*Courtesy VISN 6 Homeless Pgm  
In Service To Homeless Veterans*

*Virginia Veteran and Family Support Program representatives on hand to receive the Secretary’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Service for Homeless Veterans include (l-r) Steven Combs, Virginia Department of Veteran Services Commissioner John Newby; Matt Leslie; John Harvey, Virginia Secretary of Veteran and Defense Affairs with award presenter, Jeff Doyle, VISN 6 Homeless Program Coordinator. See full story on Pg. 4.*

### Brunswick continued from Pg 3

care provider (doctor, physician assistant or nurse practitioner), registered nurse, licensed practical nurse and a medical support assistant (MSA) who work together to provide the best possible health care for Veterans. Each PACT team consists of a medical provider (doctor, nurse practitioner or physician assistant), a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse and a medical support assistant. The PACT team works closely with the patients and their families to ensure trusted, personal relationships are developed to coordinate all aspects of the Veterans health care. When additional services are needed to meet their goals and needs, other care team members will be consulted.

Veterans who need specialized health care can get a consult at the Brunswick CBOC and then be referred to VA's Wilmington Health Care Center to receive the specialized services they need such as Mental Health, Urology, Women's Health, and more.

Health care services for the clinic's patrons were not uninterrupted as the move took place over the weekend. "Veterans are being notified of the move. Until new phone service and numbers are available, we suggest callers continue to dial 910-754-6141 to reach the clinic," said Shannon Godwin, the clinic's nurse manager.

For information on Health Benefits eligibility, call 910-822-7016 or visit [www.vets.gov/healthcare/](http://www.vets.gov/healthcare/).

### STRIDE continued from Pg 4

greatest concern dealt with staffing STRIDE programs short of funding, creating program awareness among staff in the facilities and properly accounting for each patient's activity in the program. Initially offered in a 2014 paper published in the Journal of American Geriatrics and implemented by Dr. Nicole Hastings at Durham VAMC, the program was presented to then VISN 6 Director Dan Hoffmann, who established it as a network priority under the VISN's set of 100 Day projects to immediately improve Veteran care, mandated by then VA Secretary Robert A. "Bob" McDonald.

STRIDE is "a clinical demonstration program of supervised walking for older adults admitted to the hospital with medical illness," according to the paper, "Assisted Early Mobility for Hospitalized Older Veterans: Preliminary Data from the STRIDE Program," (Hastings, Sloane, Morey, Pavon and Hoenig, 2014, NIH Manuscript). The program should help reduce hospital stay associated disability in aging patients through supervised walks with trained staff. Patient success in the program inspired Hoffmann to establish the program

VISN-wide.

Now, after eight months in all facilities, staff came together to better understand the practice of early mobilization; share best practices and address challenges together; identify strategies to measure and optimize success, and to begin looking at improvement of the team implementation model in the VISN.

After going through the two-day dialogue, Choate said she thinks team members "felt less isolated in their implementation challenges," heading back to their home facilities, "energized with new ideas and contacts" to share their experiences, going forward. The meeting sessions were engineered to give teams opportunity to share their success, troubleshoot challenges, and get to know each other so the conversation could continue after the meeting.

With the successful implementation and feedback on the program in VISN 6, the stage has now been set to plan a national Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) incremental rollout of the STRIDE Program over the next few years.

### Boxes continued from Pg 5

staff and the Veteran's family members to get their take on who our patients are and what they like to do."

King used her natural creativity to personalize each of the boxes. "I wanted the boxes to be two dimensional. I tried to think about dimension and what the Veterans like. For instance, I drew a Peterbilt truck for a guy who was a long-distance truck driver, but I also found a tiny tyke truck in a toy store that I mounted in his box. One of our Veterans was a huge Carolina Panthers fan, so I found some of their logos at a sports store for him. Another Veteran loves frosted flakes, so I bought a box and cut the labels off and put them in his box."

The shadow boxes act as an "ice breaker," she said, a topic for casual conversation and a good brain exer-

cise that helps patients prioritize what is important to them and what they are most proud of. "We should stop for a second and think if I had to show what was important to me in a 10" x 12" box, what it would be."

It's also good for Veterans with dementia or mental decline to have reminders to help them think about things that produce good memories. "Positive memories help improve quality of life," King said, "and in many cases this is the final leg of their lives, so we want it to be filled with good memories and quality care."

King said her hope was that the boxes would initiate conversation, and help patients feel like they had made a real contribution. "In the end, everyone wants to feel like they have contributed to this world."

### Emergency Mental Health Care Expanded To OTH Discharges

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today released finalized plans that lay the framework for providing emergency mental health coverage to former service members with other-than-honorable (OTH) administrative discharges.

This is the first time a VA Secretary has implemented an initiative specifically focused on this group of former service members who are in mental health distress.

“Suicide prevention is my top clinical priority,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin, also a physician. “We want these former service members to know there is someplace they can turn if they are facing a mental health emergency — whether it means urgent care at a VA emergency department, a Vet Center or through the Veterans Crisis Line.”

Effective July 5, all Veterans Health Administration (VHA) medical centers will be prepared to offer emergency stabilization care for former service members who present at the facility with an emergent mental health need. Under this initiative, former service members with an OTH administrative discharge may receive care for their mental health emergency for an

initial period of up to 90 days, which can include inpatient, residential or outpatient care.

During this time, VHA and the Veterans Benefits Administration will work together to determine if the mental health condition is a result of a service-related injury, making the service member eligible for ongoing coverage for that condition.

Since Secretary Shulkin announced his intent in March to expand VA mental health coverage to service members with OTH administrative discharges, VA has worked with key internal and external stakeholders, including members of Congress, Veterans Service Organizations and community partners on the issue.

Veterans in crisis should call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 (press 1), or text 838255.



### HCD continued from Pg 3

patient, then the patient needs to be a part of the process and development.”

Chen, who will teach another two-day course on HCD in late August, used a series of interactive exercises to demonstrate how insights from the consumer can be woven into the design process.

John Miller, rehabilitation technician with Richmond VAMC’s Assistive Technology team, attended Chen’s workshop on HCD. Miller has worked on a clip to hold a walking cane securely in place when stowed on a mobility scooter. Miller said throughout the development process, HCD factored into the design as he sought to maximize the simplicity of the device, while expanding its practicality.

“One of the main things I took away from the HCD course was the importance of making designs intuitive,” Miller explained.

Since the HCD class, Miller has tested several iterations of his cane clip, and the design has changed after receiving feedback from Veterans.

“One Veteran suggested adding a second clip head so that the cane was more stable and less wobbly,” Miller explained. “So, I listened to his suggestion and did just that. When I gave him the updated clip to try, it locked the cane in perfectly.”

Richmond VAMC will hold its first ever Demo Day, July 26, to showcase projects currently in the develop-



**David Hodge**

*David Chen, Coulter Program Director at the University of Virginia, teaches aspects of human-centered design to members of the McGuire VA Medical Center’s Innovators Network during a recent two-day training course. Chen will return in late August to give the same class to more VA Innovators.*

ment phase. At the event, a panel of experts will offer feedback to help grow the projects into a design that can possibly be spread across the VA.

For information on submitting a project idea to the Innovators Network or to participate in the August HCD training, contact Melissa Oliver or Natalie Maixner.

### VA Expands Transparency, Accountability Efforts

U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking a further step on transparency and accountability as a follow-on to the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act signed by the president less than two weeks ago.

The department is making public a list of adverse employee actions taken since Jan. 20. This information is posted at [www.va.gov/accountability](http://www.va.gov/accountability) and will be updated weekly. Shulkin pointed to the move as another step in long-sought transparency and accountability actions at VA, and noted that VA is the first federal agency to make such data public.

“Under this administration, VA is committed to becoming the most transparent organization in government,” Shulkin said. “Together with the Accountability bill the president signed into law recently, this additional step will continue to shine a light on the actions we’re taking to reform the culture at VA.

“Veterans and taxpayers have a right to know what we’re doing to hold our employees accountable and make our personnel actions transparent,” he continued. “Posting this information online for all to see, and updating it weekly, will do just that.” For privacy reasons, the adverse action list will not include employee names, but will give information on the position, VA region or administration and type of adverse or disciplinary action taken.

The list includes terminations, demotions and suspensions over 14 days since the new administration came into office Jan. 20. Additional categories of accountability actions will be included in upcoming releases.

In addition to posting the adverse action information, Shulkin announced that he is requiring approval by a senior official of any monetary settlement with an employee over the amount of \$5,000. Any settlement above this amount will require the personal approval of the Under Secretary, Assistant Secretary or equivalent senior-level official within the organization in which the dispute occurs.

“Taxpayers need to know that we will engage in good faith settlement negotiations, where required by third parties, but will look to settle with employees only when they clearly have been wronged or when settlement is otherwise in Veterans’ and taxpayers’ best interests, and not as a matter of ordinary business,” Shulkin said. “We’re changing to a culture of accountability at VA, and this is an important step in that direction.”

#### 5 ways to protect your eyes at home:

- 1 Use protective eyewear.
- 2 Remove debris before mowing.
- 3 Point spray nozzles away from you.
- 4 Secure rugs and railings.
- 5 Don't mix cleaning agents.

July is  
Eye Injury  
Prevention Month



### Hiker continued from Pg 6

would love Washington to know there are VA teams going over and beyond the call of duty for one appreciative Army Veteran long-distance hiker.” This, by itself, shows the type of dedication and selfless support and interest in a Veteran’s wellbeing.

I asked Mother Goose if she has plans to continue hiking after this year, just like any other Veteran I have spoken to in the past, her response, “I have the blood pressure of a 20-year-old and if my knees permit, be back on some trail next year which one I’m not sure, but my goal is to backpack 50,000 miles by the time I’m 80!” Given her determination, I would imagine she would reach 50,000 miles before she turns 80 years old!

So why does she hike, “Why I do it, I couldn’t tell you maybe I’m a glutton for punishment!” Sounds like the standard response most Veterans would say, if it’s not difficult, why do it!



**Brett Robbins**  
(L-R) Donalee White (friend), Mother Goose, and Mandy Price, Salem VAMC Veterans coordinator, meet at the medical center.

# 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/](http://www.asheville.va.gov/)

**Durham VAMC**  
508 Fulton St.  
Durham, NC 27705  
919-286-0411, 888-878-6890  
[www.durham.va.gov/](http://www.durham.va.gov/)

**Fayetteville VAMC**  
2300 Ramsey St.  
Fayetteville, NC 28301  
910-488-2120, 800-771-6106  
[www.fayettevillenc.va.gov/](http://www.fayettevillenc.va.gov/)

**Hampton VAMC**  
100 Emancipation Dr.  
Hampton, VA 23667  
757-722-9961, 866-544-9961  
[www.hampton.va.gov/](http://www.hampton.va.gov/)

**Richmond VAMC**  
1201 Broad Rock Blvd.  
Richmond, VA 23249  
804-675-5000, 800-784-8381  
[www.richmond.va.gov/](http://www.richmond.va.gov/)

**Salem VAMC**  
1970 Roanoke Blvd.  
Salem, VA 24153  
540-982-2463, 888-982-2463  
[www.salem.va.gov/](http://www.salem.va.gov/)

**Salisbury VAMC**  
1601 Brenner Ave.  
Salisbury, NC 28144  
704-638-9000, 800-469-8262  
[www.salisbury.va.gov/](http://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

**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 St.  
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 27909  
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**  
4006 Henderson Drive  
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  
910-521-8452

**Rutherford County CBOC**  
374 Charlotte Road  
Rutherfordton, NC 28139  
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  
919-856-4616

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

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