VA Awards Contract For New Charlotte Health Care Center

The Department of Veterans Affairs has awarded a contract to Childress Klein-Cambridge Healthcare Solutions, LLC to design, build and provide facility management for a VA Health Care Center in Charlotte.

The 295,000 net usable square feet Health Care Center will be located on approximately 35 acres of land at the intersection of Tyvola Road and Cascade Pointe Blvd, near the Tyvola Road/Billy Graham Parkway interchange.

This location provides easy access from major thoroughfares, which was an important consideration in the VA’s selection of the site.

The Center is being constructed to meet the projected growth of the Veteran population in the Charlotte area. Construction is expected to start in early 2014 and be completed by February 2016 with the Center slated to begin seeing patients summer 2016.

The Charlotte Health Care Center will be one of two operated by the W.G. (Bill) Hefner VA Medical Center in Salisbury, N.C. The second Health Care Center will open in Kernersville about the same time.

According to Dan Hoffmann, VA’s Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network director, when compared to the nation as a whole, the Mid-Atlantic region has seen the highest and most consistent rate of growth of Veterans over the last 10 years. Responding to this growth, the VA is building new centers to better provide care to Veterans in the region.

Hampton VAMC Uses New Cancer Treatment

Hampton VAMC became the first medical center in VISN 6 to use a newly-approved medical treatment for bone cancer and pain caused by prostate cancer.

Xofigo was introduced at Hampton VAMC by Dr. Tapan K. Chaudhuri, clinical director of Nuclear Medicine VAMC in collaboration with staff members Michael T. Hopkins, M.D., medical oncologist and certified Nuclear Medicine technologists Sherry Dunn and Javanika Shah.

Xofigo is a radiation treatment that targets the tumors in bone. Xofigo (or radium Ra 223 dichloride) was approved by the FDA in May 2013 based on the results of a study of 809 men with advanced prostate cancer.

“Xofigo binds with minerals in the bone to deliver radiation directly to bone tumors, limiting the damage to the surrounding area,” said Chaudhuri.

Inside in Brief

- Working to make VA more energy efficient; SECVA visits
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- VISN 6 Sites of Care & VA Vet Centers with addresses and numbers.

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Every year, we come to a cross-road which honestly, somewhat perplexes me. We have an opportunity to help save many people from getting sick, perhaps hospitalized and maybe even save some from dying. This opportunity is easily accessible and comes at no cost to our patients or staff. What perplexes me is why anyone would not want to take advantage of it?

You’ve probably figured out that I’m talking about influenza and what people can do to avoid it for themselves and those around them.

Influenza is a serious illness that can lead to hospitalization and even death. Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu and spread it to others. According to the CDC, between 1976 and 2007, estimates of flu-associated deaths in the United States range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people with about 90 percent of deaths occurring in people 65 years and older.

The single best way to protect against influenza is to get vaccinated each year. The influenza vaccine is changed each year to provide a close match to the known circulating strains of flu viruses and those anticipated to circulate that year. So, regardless of how matched, influenza vaccines can be expected to reduce laboratory-confirmed influenza by approximately 70 to 90 percent in healthy adults less than 65 years of age. These are pretty darn good odds, and they can be in your favor because we make the vaccine so easy to get.

The flu season in the United States begins in October and runs as late as May. During this period, flu viruses circulate throughout the population. I’m hoping you will stand with me and get vaccinated. Together, we can help keep the flu from spreading to your family, friends, co-workers, and the patients we all care for.

It takes about two weeks after the vaccination for antibodies to develop and provide protection against the influenza virus. This is why it’s better to get vaccinated early in the fall, before the flu season gets under way. The more people who are vaccinated against the flu, the fewer there will be to spread influenza through the community.

And, to that, I have great news. In regards to inventory, we are in one of the best shapes that we have been in for the last 10 years. The medical centers and clinics are well supplied with almost 150,000 doses available to administer during this flu season. And, if we use these up, we should be able to purchase more.

Let me leave you with this thought: If you care about yourself, your loved ones and the Veterans we care for daily, please get a flu shot. For more information, visit www.flu.gov.

Sincerely,

Dan Hoffmann

Fixing the Phones

VHA Overhauls the “Telephone Tree”

One of the most common complaints about VHA medical centers has nothing to do with health care…it is about the phone system. VHA heard these comments and took action on a national scale. As of Oct. 1, regardless of which VHA facility a caller contacts, the caller will be greeted with a standardized, brief introduction and a simplified list of menu options.

According to Karyn Barrett, Standardized Telephone Tree Project Lead, implementation of the Standardized Telephone Tree will improve service and access to Veterans and their families. By incorporating this system nationwide, “Veterans should find the new answering system easier and more efficient to use. Because callers will receive the same telephone service, regardless of which medical center is called, the hope is to improve Veteran’s over-all experience within VHA facilities.”

Following the welcome message, which will identify the facility by city as opposed to the official VA facility name, the caller will be asked to: Press 1 for the pharmacy; Press 2 to make, change or cancel an appointment; Press 3 to determine eligibility for care; Press 4 for billing and Press 0 for operator assistance.
By Augustin Davila
Deputy Director, VISN 6

In 2009, President Obama signed Executive Order 13514 which applies to all government agencies with a fleet of 20 or more vehicles. EO 13514 mandates a two percent reduction in petroleum annually through 2020 compared to an FY2005 baseline and requires an increase in the use of alternative fuels by 10 percent annually.

While present vehicles are certainly more fuel efficient than those they replace, VHA’s significant outreach efforts over the last several years has resulted in increasing the size of the fleet by more than 200 percent since 2006.

VHA presently operates a fleet of more than 15,500 vehicles. In 2012, this fleet traveled more than 159 million miles, consuming more than 8.7 million gallons of gasoline and diesel and 1.1 million gallons of alternative fuels which included Bio-diesel, compressed natural gas (CNG), propane, E-85, and electricity.

I recently led a team which has reviewed all options available in our effort to develop a policy that will allow VA to meet the mandates of EO 13514.

We reviewed the fleet itself to ensure we are operating vehicles appropriate to the task.

As an example, it’s easy to recognize that there is no need to send one person down the road in a 15 passenger van, so by proper oversight of the vehicles themselves and the mission they are fulfilling, we have and will continue to save fuel, dollars and decrease the amount of Green House gases we generate.

We also reviewed the variety of fuels, their costs and their availabilities. Regardless of the benefits of any specific fuel, if it is not readily available, it is not a viable alternative. We even reviewed the cost and feasibility of constructing alternative fueling stations at or near VA medical centers.

Because the availability of alternative fuels varies greatly by region, the outcome of the study was to recommend regional approaches to meet the mandated goals. Each VISN will be working to develop a strategic plan to achieve the targets specified in EO 13514. In some cases, VA may be partnering with or contracting with local and private entities. In others, we will look to procuring the most efficient vehicles which will operate on the alternative.

With that said, VISN 6 has initiated steps that will greatly contribute to our success in fulfilling the challenging goals set for us. We have converted our fleet to a mix of flex fuel (E85), electric, hybrid, biodiesel and we are currently pursuing a CNG initiative at one of our Virginia hospitals. We have plans for E85 stations at several VA locations that can support the effort. In the end, by carefully mixing the right vehicles and fuels, we will help America reduce its dependency on foreign oil, improve our environment and increase our national security.

Secretary Of Veterans Affairs Visits Hampton VAMC Sept. 5

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki greets Intermediate Care Technicians Matthew Vance and Jason Martines during a visit to Hampton VAMC, after attending the Community Mental Health Summit in Hampton Sept. 5.

Vance and Martines are members of the Intermediate Care Technician program, a one-year pilot which began in August 2012 as a key priority after Secretary Shinseki asked VHA to explore hiring experienced medics and corpsmen transitioning from active service. The program was designed to promote hiring of Veterans and to serve as a pipeline for future licensed medical professionals.
Comrades In Battle, In Recovery And Rehabilitation

By Darlene Edwards
Richmond VAMC

Richmond VAMC’s Polytrauma Transitional program is proud to serve two American Heroes. Their story began over a year and a half ago when both Marines suffered injuries in separate combat incidents. Sgt. David Tupper and his canine Sgt. Yeager have served our country with multiple combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. The pair met at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina about a year ago, shortly after Tupper was wounded in Afghanistan.

Tupper, an infantry squad leader from Connecticut was blasted by a rocket propelled grenade. Yeager, a 7-year-old black lab trained to detect explosives, was injured in an IED explosion. His handler, Lance Cpl. Abraham Tarwoe was killed. Yeager was on his second deployment with Tarwoe when he suffered shrapnel wounds and lost part of an ear. Even today, shrapnel is still part of his existence, with pieces occasionally sticking through the skin on his nose. Each of these dedicated service members has been awarded Purple Hearts for their sacrifice.

Yeager was present at a memorial service for his handler. At the conclusion of the service, Yeager came forward and lay at the alter area which included Tarwoe’s boots and helmet.

After being injured, Yeager was given extensive medical treatment and returned to the United States for official retirement. Since Yeager’s handler was killed, out of respect, the Marine Corps offered the retired dog to the Tarwoe family. However, Tarwoe’s widow was unable to assume the additional responsibility of a caring for the dog since she had just lost her husband and had a new baby at home.

Tupper had experience with the dog handler program and had served earlier in the same unit as Yeager and Tarwoe. By good fortune, Yeager found a new calling, being trained by a service dog organization and ultimately placed with Tupper.

Sanford Clinic Contract Awarded

The VA Mid-Atlantic health Care Network has awarded a contract to build a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Sanford to Construction Managers, Inc. of Fremont, N.C.

Veterans residing in and around Lee County will have enhanced access to VA health care when the new 10,000 sq. feet VA clinic opens next year on Broadway Road in Sanford. The clinic is slated to provide primary care and mental health services to about 5,000 Veterans.

The award covers the construction of the clinic and a five year lease with five one year extensions. The total cost of the lease for the 10 year period is approximately $2.5 million.

Construction Managers Inc., built the new clinic in Goldsboro, N.C., which opened in July and has also been awarded the contract to build the new clinic in Jacksonville, N.C.

The Sanford clinic joins the growing number of sites of care that fall under the management of the Fayetteville VAMC. “The growth in the Veteran population in eastern North Carolina has been steady and is projected to continue for the foreseeable future,” said Elizabeth Goolsby, director of the Fayetteville VA Medical Center. “The new sites in Goldsboro and Sanford, along with a new larger clinic in Jacksonville and the Health Care Center in Fayetteville will open the door to VA health care for thousands of Veterans.”

Construction is expected to begin after the first of the year with completion expected by October. The clinic should begin seeing patients by December 2014.

Veterans currently enrolled at the Fayetteville VAMC who live closer to the new clinic will be given priority for care there. Prior to the new facility opening, the Fayetteville VA Medical Center will review their list Veterans who may benefit from transferring to the new clinic and inform them of the option.
October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and VA is committed to raising awareness and promoting the importance of early detection.

No matter what race or ethnicity, breast cancer is the number two cause of cancer death in women. In 2009 (the most recent year numbers are available) 211,731 women and 2,001 men in the United States were diagnosed with breast cancer. That same year 40,676 women and 400 men in the United States died from breast cancer.

Screenings save lives. Breast cancer screening means checking the breasts for cancer before there are signs or symptoms of the disease. Three main tests are used to screen the breasts for cancer: mammogram, clinical breast exam, and breast self-exams. Currently mammograms are the best method to detect breast cancer early. Talk to your doctor about which tests are right for you.

Localized breast cancer has a 99 percent survival rate if detected early. VA leads the nation in screenings and in line with national guidelines, VA encourages all women between ages 50 and 75 to get mammograms every two years.

Women ages 40 to 50 and those older than 75 should talk with their providers about the risks and benefits of having mammograms and make a decision based on their individual risk factors. Women are now the fastest growing subgroup of U.S. Veterans. The number of women Veterans is expected to increase dramatically in the next 10 years, and VA health care is expected to be in high demand by the women Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

VA encourages all veterans but especially women veterans to speak with their health care providers on how to take preventative measures to fight breast cancer.

Happy 238th Birthday U.S. Navy

On October 13, 1775 the Continental Congress established the Continental Navy during the Revolutionary War. After the war the Navy’s ships were sold and its seamen and officers released. However, in 1789 the Constitution of the United States was ratified which empowered Congress “to provide and maintain a navy” and on April 30, 1798 the Department of the Navy was established. In 1972, the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt authorized recognition of October 13 as the Navy’s birthday. The Navy Birthday is one of the two Navy-wide dates to be celebrated annually with April 30 celebrated as Navy Day.

VA Commemorates National Hispanic Heritage Month

VA joins the nation in commemorating National Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs from September 15 to October 15, 2013. This year’s theme is “Hispanics: Serving and Leading our Nation with Pride and Honor.”

Hispanic Heritage Month started in 1968 to honor the historical and cultural contributions that generations of Hispanics have made to our country.

September 15 was chosen as the starting date because it is the day of independence for five Latin American countries: El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Mexico won its independence on September 16, while Chile gained its freedom on September 18.

As we reflect on our nation’s rich Hispanic cultural history and traditions, let us commemorate the contributions of Hispanics to shaping and strengthening our country in Congress; on the Supreme Court; as entrepreneurs; and as brave members of the Armed Forces defending the United States in every war since the American Revolution.

The 2010 Census revealed that more than 50 million citizens in our nation identify as Hispanic, up from 35.3 million in 2000.
**Cancer Treatment continued from Pg 1**

rounding normal tissues,” said Richard Pazdur, MD, director of the Office of Hematology and Oncology Products in the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

“This new agent has less marrow toxicity than older agents as it is an alpha emitter. It is better tolerated in our Veteran patients and adds a new treatment for this common malignancy,” said Chaudhuri.

The news of an effective treatment is especially welcome because according to the National Cancer Institute more than 238,000 U.S. men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year and 29,720 will die from the disease. The Hampton VAMC treats about 1,000 Veterans with prostate cancer each year of which 10 to 12 will likely be good candidate for Xofigo treatment.

Xofigo is the first of its kind in VISN 6, for the treatment of bone pain as well as to prolong overall survival in Veterans who have prostate cancer that has spread to bone.

According to Chaudhuri, Xofigo is administered intravenously and works by targeting bone metastases - or the spread of cancer to the bone, by using alpha radiation to kill cancer cells, relieve bone pain, and minimize injury to surrounding normal tissue. Bone metastases resulting from prostate cancer is a major cause of death, disability, and decreased quality of life.

Xofigo has been shown to reduce the death in patients with bone metastases by 30 percent, extend the average survival of those affected by more than three months, and has shown a six month delay in painful bone lesions and a 10 month delay in any bone events (such as fractures and other tumors).

According to Chaudhuri, good candidates for Xofigo treatment are patients who have castration resistant cancer, who have had bone metastases with pain not relieved by morphine, and who have no visceral metastases. These patients are identified by the Medical Oncologists and are then referred to Nuclear Medicine.

Chaudhuri states that the introduction of Xofigo is “one small step for Hampton VAMC and a giant leap for our Veterans.”

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**‘Honor Flight’ Premier To Be Held In Fayetteville Dec. 8**

A special screening of *Honor Flight, One Last Mission*, will be held at the Crown Arena in Fayetteville at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8, 2013. Admission is free for all World War II Veterans and their families.

Honor Flight is a heartwarming documentary film about four living World War II Veterans and a Midwest community coming together to give them the trip of a lifetime.

The trips are called “Honor Flights” and for the Veterans, who are in their late 80s and early 90s, it’s often the first time they’ve been thanked and the last trip of their lives. The 24-hour journey is full of surprises that deeply move all who are involved. It’s uncommon for World War II Veterans to talk about the War, but the Honor Flight experience brings their stories out. Many Veterans say, with the exception of their wedding day and the birth of their children, the trip is the best day of their life.

However, success is all but ensured. Volunteers race against the clock to fly thousands of World War II Veterans to Washington, DC to see the memorial constructed for them in 2004, nearly 60 years after their epic struggle. While more than 5,000 Veterans have been flown from North Carolina, 1,000 World War II Veterans die every day and getting them on an Honor Flight is a constant struggle.

The film features Orville Lemke, a former plumber and beloved father of nine who fights to hold off terminal cancer so he can make the trip, and Julian Plaster, an 89-year-old poet who has survived almost all of his friends and family.

Honor Flight also chronicles the stories of Veterans Joe Demler and Harvey Kurz. They raise money for and promote the Honor Flight program to help fly as many of their fellow Veterans as possible. Joe, a retired postmaster, was famously pictured in Life magazine as “the Human Skeleton” upon his liberation from a German POW camp. Days from death, he weighed just 70 lbs. His comedic sidekick, Harvey, saw the iconic flag go up at the Battle of Iwo Jima, unbeknownst to the shoppers he bags groceries for at the local Pick n’ Save.

As the Honor Flight trip unfolds, Orville, Julian, Joe, Harvey and others share their stories and wisdom. While the Honor Flight program is meant to give something back to these humble heroes, the sheer goodness they embody and their profound appreciation for life in freedom, transforms the lives of everyone they meet.

The Honor Flight Network is a nonprofit organization that has flown over 100,000 Veterans to Washington, DC. It consists of 117 hubs across the country. To learn more, please visit [www.honor-flight.org](http://www.honor-flight.org).

People interested in attending the show should call 910-323-1991 or visit [www.community-concert.com](http://www.community-concert.com).
By Howard T Reitenbaugh
Pennsylvania State Director, National Coordinator
Bugles Across America

In 2000, federal legislation clarified that every honorably discharged veteran had a right to at least two uniformed military personnel to fold and present the flag, and to sound Taps for funeral honors. The law stated that a CD recording of Taps could be used if a bugler was not available. Tom Day was not in favor of sending a CD to play Taps and responded by founding BUGLES ACROSS AMERICA (BAA).

Day founded BAA believing that there were enough people who had the ability to provide a dignified and live sounding of Taps. All that was needed was a way to create and maintain a readily accessible database of these people.

Thanks to Day, that data now exists and includes more than 7,000 volunteer buglers located throughout the United States and in several overseas locations. A website has been established to provide publicity for the organization and to allow the public to request the services of a bugler.

As word spreads about BAA and its mission of honor, more and more people volunteer their time and talent to provide honors to Veterans. People interested in volunteering must complete the application form found on the official BAA website.

Bugler volunteers can be male or female. Any trumpet, cornet, bugle, flugelhorn, or field trumpet may be used to sound Taps for military funeral honors or memorial service. Digital or Ceremonial bugle employing a recording are not authorized. The bugler can be of any age so long as they can play the 24 notes of Taps with an ease and style that will do honor to the Veterans, their families, and the burial detail performing the service. There are no fees or dues to participate as a volunteer, although there are directives that must be followed which include that under no circumstance shall a member of BAA require, request, or otherwise suggest that they be compensated for their participation in a military funeral honors service. There are no exceptions to this rule.

When a member has been included on the Buglers List of registered members, they will automatically receive an e-mail message to alert them of any Bugler Request that is posted through the BAA system if the event location is within 100 miles of their listed physical address.

BAA is a registered 501(c)3 not for profit organization created for and dedicated to the purpose of providing a live bugler to serve in honoring veterans at military funerals and other memorial occasions. Since our system was put on line in mid-October, we have received almost 9,500 requests. We are currently receiving 8 to 10 requests each day, and have been running about 87 percent acceptance rate, the great majority of those within 12 to 24 hours of the posting.

For additional information, please contact me at galaxypilot@verizon.net or by telephone at 814-643-2483. Our official web site is found at www.buglesacrossamerica.org.

Sanus Veneratio ~ Veneratio Sanus

Sound the Honor ~ Honor the Sound

Comrades continued from Pg 4

his wheelchair through tight doorways and over bumps. Yeager is even trained to stand on his hind legs and put his front paws in Tupper’s lap to help slow Tupper’s wheelchair when rolling down a steep hill. He is also able to push Tupper backwards on rough terrain such as grass or gravel by using the same technique.

Yeager provides a physical barrier that allows Tupper to navigate more easily through crowds. Besides “task-based” assistance, when Tupper has a headache or becomes upset about something, Yeager provides a distraction or redirects Tupper’s attention. Yeager will come to Tupper with a ball wanting to play fetch or just be there which provides Tupper with a sense of reassurance and unconditional love.

Tupper feels the love he has for Yeager is so strong because Yeager has experienced much of what he experienced during deployment, “He lived in the same conditions we did.” Yeager spends all of his time with Tupper, going everywhere from restaurants to hospitals. Yeager wears his service dog vest which is covered in awards and patches from his military service.

When asked about how Yeager fits in with his family, Tupper said, “Yeager is a perfect match for our family. He comes on all of our family outings; he is a part of our family.” Yeager is gentle with Tupper’s small children, allowing them to pull on his ears or tail and has even pulled duty babysitting.

When you see them moving about the day’s activities, behind that wagging tail is a deeper story of dedication to service that Yeager knows and Tupper understands. Tupper and Yeager hope to leave the medical center by December. Yeager will continue to live with Tupper and his family.
VA Health Care And The Affordable Care Act: FAQ

At a glance

- VA wants all Veterans to get health care that improves their health and well-being.
- If you are enrolled in VA health care, you don’t need to take additional steps to meet the health care law coverage standards.
- The health care law does not change VA health benefits or Veterans’ out-of-pocket costs.
- If you are not enrolled in VA health care, you can apply at any time.

If I’m enrolled in a VA health care program, do I meet the requirement for health care coverage?

Yes. If you are enrolled in any of VA’s programs below, you have coverage under the standards of the health care law:
- Veteran’s health care program
- Civilian health and medical program (CHAMPVA)
- Spina bifida health care program

What are the benefits of enrollment in VA health care?

Enrollment in VA health care means you have:
- Medical care rated among the best in the U.S.
- Immediate benefits of health care coverage. Veterans may apply for VA health care enrollment at any time.
- No enrollment fee, monthly premiums, or deductibles. Most Veterans have no out-of-pocket costs. Some Veterans may have to pay small copayment for health care or prescription drugs.
- More than 1,400 places available to get your care. This means your coverage can go with you if you travel or move.
- Met the new requirement to have health care coverage that meets the minimum standard.

How do I enroll for VA health care coverage?

You may apply in one of three convenient ways.
- To enroll, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll, call 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visit your local VA health care facility.
- Are my family members (who aren’t eligible for VA or other federal health care programs) eligible for assistance to purchase health insurance?

Your family members who are not enrolled in a VA health care program may use the Marketplace to get coverage. They may get lower costs on monthly premiums or out-of-pocket costs. They could be eligible for free or low-cost coverage through Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Starting October 1, they can submit an application for health care coverage through the Marketplace, and learn the amount of assistance they are eligible for. For more information, visit www.healthcare.gov.

Where can I get more information?

For information on VA health care and the Affordable Care Act, visit VA’s website at www.va.gov/aca, or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. or Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., eastern. For information on the Marketplace, visit www.healthcare.gov.
VA Announces Award Of Patient-Centered Community Care Contracts

VA announced Sept. 19 that Veterans will have greater access to quality health care through a new initiative: Patient-Centered Community Care (PCCC).

“PCCC is an innovative solution that helps VA medical centers continue to provide quality care efficiently,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “This will be a valuable option for VA medical centers to use to expand our Veterans’ access to care.”

Under PCCC, VA medical centers will have the ability to purchase non-VA medical care for Veterans through contracted medical providers when they cannot readily provide the needed care due to geographic inaccessibility or limited capacity. Eligible Veterans will have access to inpatient specialty care, outpatient specialty care, mental health care, limited emergency care, and limited newborn care for enrolled female Veterans following the birth of a child.

“PCCC provides a regional contracting vehicle for VA to work with local community providers to give Veterans access to high quality care,” said Dr. Robert Petzel, VA’s Under Secretary for Health. “It will also help VA in our continued efforts to ensure timely and accessible services are provided to Veterans for non-VA medical care.”

New Resource Puts Veterans At The Center Of Their Health Care

Ted Slowik, Ph.D. Writer/Editor
NCP HealthPOWER!

Veterans and their families have a new place to turn for health information: The Veterans Health Library (VHL). Developed under the guidance of the Veterans Health Education and Information Program (VHEI), within the National Center of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP), the VHL will help Veterans stay well and healthy, understand their health conditions, and take a more active and informed role in making decisions about their health care.

More than just a health information Web site, the VHL is tailored to Veterans and their families in how and what it delivers.

“We want to provide health information that is designed and focused on Veterans and their families. All the information in VHL has been carefully reviewed by VA clinical experts, and because the library is available online, it’s available to Veterans and family members whenever they need it,” explained Dr. Rose Mary Pries, National Program Manager for Veterans Health Education and Information at NCP. “The Veterans Health Library is for and about Veterans and improving their quality of life, and should be an invaluable asset to both patients and their providers.”

The VHL meets the unique needs and health care issues of Veterans and their families by providing research-based information that has been reviewed by VA clinical experts. The VHL also features Veteran-specific health topics not easily found in other health Web sites.

In total, VA has awarded two contracts under PCCC, one to Health Net Federal Services LLC and another to TriWest Health Care Alliance Corp. These companies will set up networks in six regions covering the entire country. VA expects to have these regional contract networks available to its medical centers by the spring of 2014.

The awarded contracts, estimated at $9.4 billion, include one base year and four option years. PCCC is part of the overall Non-VA Medical Care Program. It will provide all VA facilities with an additional option to purchase non-VA medical care when required Veteran care services are unavailable within the VA medical facility or when the Veterans benefit from receiving the needed care nearer to their homes.

Among the many benefits to the Veterans and VA under these new contracts, VA will enjoy standardized health care quality metrics, timely return of medical documentation, cost avoidance with fixed rates for services across the board, guaranteed access to care, and enhanced tracking and reporting of non-VA medical care expenditures over traditional non-VA medical care services.

For additional information, please visit: https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=3dde670a20dee9c5a6b38d8ca53642e1&tab=core&_cview=0

DoD Job Fair To Be Held In Raleigh Oct. 17

The Department of Defense Hiring Heroes Career Fair, in partnership with the Department of Navy, will be held Oct. 17, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Hilton North Raleigh/Midtown, 3415 Wake Forest Road Raleigh, NC 27609. This event will be held in conjunction with the 4th Annual Wounded Warrior Hiring and Support Conference.

This year’s conference theme is “Hiring Our Nation’s Heroes ~ Meet the Challenge, Hire a Veteran!” and will offer employers an excellent opportunity to meet with highly skilled and talented wounded warriors, transitioning service members, Veterans and their family members as they seek employment opportunities.

For more information, call Ron Riley at 571-372-2134 or visit http://godefense.cpms.osd.mil/hiringheroes/raleigh/index.aspx
In recognition of September as Suicide Prevention Month, the VA mobilized people and organizations nationwide to support Veterans in crisis and spread the word about VA mental health services.

Throughout the month, VA suicide prevention coordinators at all 151 VA medical centers will organize community events, host health fairs, lead training sessions and work with VA Voluntary Service to improve Veterans’ lives. VA is also launching a new Suicide Prevention Month public service announcement, “Talking About It Matters” nationwide in September.

“VA’s highest priority is the mental health and well-being of the brave men and women who have served our Nation. Even one suicide is one too many,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “VA is a leader in providing high-quality mental health care that improves and saves Veterans’ lives. We know that treatment works, and there is hope for Veterans who seek mental health care.”

This year’s theme, “It Matters,” emphasizes the people, relationships and experiences that matter to Veterans and their loved ones, reinforcing their personal connections and giving their lives hope and meaning. To spark conversation about the difficult topics of suicide risk and prevention, VA will unveil a photo-sharing campaign, “Show Us What Matters,” and will invite Veterans and their loved ones to upload photos of the special people in their lives to VeteransCrisisLine.net/ItMatters.

“When a Veteran is in crisis, even one small act can make a lifesaving difference,” said Dr. Robert A. Petzel, VA’s Under Secretary for Health. “It’s up to all of us to understand the signs of crisis and look out for the Veterans in our lives. And when we are concerned, we need to reach out and tell someone.”

Throughout the summer and through September, VA held Mental Health Summits at all 151 VA medical centers to further engage community partners, Veteran Service Organizations, health care providers and local governments, and to address the broad mental health needs of Veterans and their families and show them they matter.

VA is calling on supporters to educate their networks to recognize suicide warning signs and encourage Veterans in crisis to call the Veterans Crisis Line (800-273-8255 and Press 1), chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat or text to 838255 — even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. All Veterans Crisis Line resources are optimized for mobile devices.

“We urge Veterans’ loved ones and everyone—to show support for Veterans during Suicide Prevention Month and throughout the year,” said Dr. Janet Kemp, director of VA’s Suicide Prevention Program. “Learn to recognize the risk of suicide and let Veterans know that caring, confidential support is only a call, click or text away. Families, friends and co-workers need to work together to provide a network of support for Veterans in our communities. We’re all in this together.”

Anyone can support Veterans by:
- Encouraging a Veteran who needs help to call the Veterans Crisis Line. Remind them that it takes courage to seek help.
- Connecting with a local Suicide Prevention Coordinator and taking part in a local event.
- Watching the new Suicide Prevention Month public service announcement, “Talking About It Matters”.
- Downloading an electronic toolkit to share Suicide Prevention Month web badges, banners, blog posts and social media content.
- Sharing a photo at VeteransCrisisLine.net/ItMatters.
- Tweeting your friends and loved ones with the following message: “One small act can make the difference. This #SuicidePreventionMonth, help #Veterans access the support they’ve earned: VeteransCrisisLine.net.”

VA has implemented comprehensive, wide-ranging suicide prevention initiatives, including a toll-free Veterans Crisis Line, placement of Suicide Prevention Coordinators at all VA medical centers and large outpatient facilities, and improvements in case management and reporting. The Veterans Crisis Line, online chat and text-messaging services offer free, confidential support, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, to Veterans, their families and friends.

Veterans, or anyone concerned about a Veteran, can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat or text to 838255 to receive support — even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. All Veterans Crisis Line resources are optimized for mobile devices.

Since 2007, the Veterans Crisis Line has answered more than 890,000 calls and made more than 30,000 lifesaving rescues. In 2009, the Veterans Crisis Line added the anonymous chat service, which has had more than 108,000 chats.

To further expand access to quality mental health care, VA has hired over 1,600 mental health clinical providers to meet the goal outlined in an executive order. Additionally, VA has hired over 2,005 mental health clinical providers to fill existing vacancies.

VA’s mental health workforce totals nearly 20,300. In fiscal year 2012, VA provided specialized mental health care to more than 1.3 million Veterans.

The department has an aggressive recruiting campaign underway among mental health specialists to ensure Veterans continue to receive the best mental health care anywhere.

### Commission To Identify Candidates For The Under Secretary For Health

The Secretary of the Veterans Affairs is convening a commission to recommend candidates to the President for appointment as the Under Secretary for Health for the Veterans Health Administration, the largest integrated health care system in the country.

Following a 40-year career serving Veterans as a VA physician, teacher, and administrator, Dr. Robert A. Petzel, will retire in 2014 as planned, following a four-year tenure as Under Secretary for Health.

“I am grateful for Dr. Petzel’s distinguished service to Veterans spanning four decades, and for his leadership in transforming VHA’s health care delivery system to better care for Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “Dr. Petzel has assured me that he will continue to serve in his position until the Senate confirms a new Under Secretary for Health, in order to ensure a smooth transition.”

VA is required by law to convene a commission to seek the next Under Secretary for Health. Due to the length of the process, VA is initiating the commission in advance of Petzel’s retirement.

As Under Secretary for Health since February 2010, Dr. Petzel has directed a health care system with over 286,000 employees and a medical care budget of $53.1 billion, overseeing the care of more than 6.3 million Veterans. Dr. Petzel has led VHA’s innovative efforts at moving toward a new model of care and pursuing eConnected health, in which VA providers use mobile devices and technology to extend health care beyond traditional visits.

“I have appreciated the privilege to serve Veterans by developing a healthcare system that reaches beyond simple treatment of diseases to a true partnership with Veterans,” said Dr. Petzel. “VA will continue to partner with Veteran patients throughout their lives in order to improve their health and well-being.”

The commission will be launched this fall. Suitable candidates to serve as members of this important commission will be selected based upon criteria outlined in the law and their skills, knowledge and attributes as leaders, managers and educators.
In the event of a government shutdown, all VA medical facilities and clinics will remain fully operational, including:

- Inpatient Care
- Outpatient Care
- Prescriptions
- Surgeries
- Dental Treatment
- Extended Care
- Mental Health Care
- Nursing Home Care
- Special Health Care Services for Women Veterans
- Vet Centers
- Military Sexual Trauma Counseling
- Readjustment Counseling Services (Vet Centers)
- Veterans Crisis Line
- Education Benefit Claims Processing and Payments
- Insurance Processing
- Home Loan Processing
- Vocational Rehabilitation Payment Processing
- Compensation and Pension Claims Processing and Payments
- Interments in National Cemeteries will continue, but may be on a reduced schedule. Contact NCA’s Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117
- My HealtheVet – All Services
- NCA will process applications for headstones, markers and medallions
- NCA will notify VBA of death for benefit actions
- VBA Call Centers will be operational except for education

Operational National Phone Numbers for Veterans

- VA National Call Center: 1-800-827-1000
- All VA Medical Facilities: (411 or http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/division_fish.asp?dnum=1)
- Coaching into Care Call Center for Family Members of Veterans: 1-888-823-7455
- Debt Management Center: (Collection of Non-Medical Debts): 1-800-827-0648
- Home Loans: 1-888-244-6711
- Insurance: 1-800-669-8477
- Mammography Helpline: 1-888-492-7844
- My HealtheVet – All Services
- NCA will process applications for headstones, markers and medallions
- NCA will notify VBA of death for benefit actions
- VBA Call Centers will be operational except for education

Suspended National Phone Numbers

- Billing Issues: 1-866-842-4357
- Education Benefits: 1-888-442-4551
- Children of Women Vietnam Veterans; Foreign Medical Program; Spina Bifida Health Care Program: 1-877-345-8179 (or) 1-888-820-1756
- Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA); CHAMPVA In-House Treatment Initiative (CITI): 1-800-733-8387
- Consumer Affairs: 202-461-7402
- Income Verification and Means Testing: 1-800-733-8387
- Inspector General Hotline: 1-800-488-8244
- Special Issues: Gulf War Agent Orange/Project SHAD/ Mustard Agents and Lewisite/Ionizing Radiation 1-800-749-8387
- Status of Headstones and Markers: 1-800-697-6947
- Whistle Blower Reprisal: 1-800-872-9855
- Denver Acquisition and Logistics Center: 1-303-273-6200
- Denver Acquisition and Logistics Center: 1-303-273-6200
- Denver Acquisition and Logistics Center: 1-303-273-6200
VISN 6 Sites of Care & VA Vet Centers

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

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

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

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

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

Charlotteville CBOC
650 Peter Jefferson Pkwy
Charlotteville, VA 22911
434-239-3890

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

Durham VAMC
508 Fulton St.
Durham, NC 27705
919-286-0411, 888-878-8890
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, 800-711-6106
www.fayettevillenc.va.gov

Franklin CBOC
647 Wayah St.
Franklin, NC 28734-3390
828-269-1781

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

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

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

Greenville CBOC
800 Moye Blvd.
Greenville, NC 27858
252-830-2149

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

Hampton VAMC
100 Emancipation Dr.
Hampton, VA 23667
707-722-9961, 866-544-9961
www.hampton.va.gov/

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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/

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

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

Village Green Annex
1991 Fordham Drive
Fayetteville, NC 28304
910-488-2120 ext. 4020,
Virginia Beach CBOC
244 Clearfield Avenue
Virginia Beach, VA
757-722-9961, ext. 1900

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

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

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

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

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
910-485-9727

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

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

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

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

Greensville Vet Center
1021 W.H. Smith Blvd.
Greensville, VA 23834
252-355-7920

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

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

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

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

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

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

VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network • September 2013