



VA MID-ATLANTIC HEALTH CARE NETWORK • VISN SIX

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“Excellent Care – Earned by Veterans – Delivered Here”

# Voices of VISN 6

Official news from around *your* VISN

September 30, 2014

## Veterans Voice Concerns At VISN 6 Town Hall Meetings

VA medical center leaders around the VISN listened to hundreds of Veterans in a series of town hall meetings in September prompted by the recent concern about Veterans access to care.

From Hampton VAMC Sept. 10 to the final meeting at Richmond VAMC Sept. 25, facility directors met with Veterans, family members, stakeholders from the community and congressional representatives to hash out local issues in the Veteran Health community. But mostly they listened.

One by one, Veterans in Asheville, Beckley, Durham, Fayetteville, Hampton, Richmond, Salem and Salisbury approached the microphone to serve up criticisms, praise and queries to medical center executive leadership and other key staff about access to care, attitudes in the facilities, slow payment to non-VA providers, wait times, parking, phone service, PTSD and other aspects of mental health, services for women Veterans, re-

[Continued on Pg 4](#)



*Steve Goetsch*

*Veterans attending a Town Hall meeting at Richmond VAMC spoke to medical center leadership who listened to their concerns about the service Veterans receive at the facility.*

## Fayetteville Leases Temporary Clinic Space

Addressing space shortfalls – a primary contributor to longer wait times for primary care appointments – Fayetteville VAMC officials have leased temporary clinic sites in Fayetteville and Jacksonville, increasing their capacity to see as many as 3,600 more Veterans in each area.

The Jacksonville site at 308 Brynn Marr Road, which spans just over 3,720 square feet, opened Sept. 29 and is already seeing patients.

At nearly 3,900 square feet, the Fayetteville clinic (3919 Breezewood Avenue, Suite 101) is scheduled to begin seeing patients in the first week of

November.

Plans are underway to staff each location with three providers and associated team members, under VA’s Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) model.

Each PACT consists of a health care provider, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse and a medical support assistant and can provide care for up to 1,200 Veterans per team.

“The acquisitions of these leased spaces allow us to provide immediate primary care services to Veterans who have been waiting beyond VA’s goals,” said James Galkowski, Fayetteville VAMC associate director of operations.

The leases for the clinics were awarded for up to three years and medical center officials are confident that once both of the new temporary clinics open, reduced wait times will follow.

Galkowski said the Electronic Wait List (EWL) for primary care services in Jacksonville is already lower since June.

“We anticipate that the majority of Veterans on the EWL (currently 374) will be scheduled for new patient exams over the next month.” The appointment times will be spread over the next few months.

The medical center in

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## From The Director

VA is in the midst of addressing issues that, once implemented, should mean improved customer service and access to care for Veterans in VISN 6 and around the nation.

You'll be pleased to know that the staff and leadership in VISN 6 have moved with agility to develop improved scheduling processes; hiring additional staff and implementing short term leasing arrangements to bridge the gap for much needed space until our Health Care Centers currently under construction come to fruition.

The advent of the Veteran's Choice Act paralleled a VISN 6 strategic planning summit held in August, just two days after the legislation was signed into law. At the conference we acknowledged the need to shift planning to a more tactical focus on organizational change. The integrated actions we take as medical centers and VISN to accommodate the newly legislated requirements remain consistent with our long term strategic goals of strengthening the trust Veterans have in the care we provide.

Among those changes, we are collaborating to better share sub-specialty services and resources in the network and the community more effectively. Use of telehealth technology to bring specialty services closer to our Veterans without the need to travel long distances; utilization of our medical school affiliation resources; specialty care and primary care contracts in our rural areas; and enhanced utilization of our local private sector providers are all in play as we focus on access throughout the VISN.

In town hall meetings over the last month, Veterans took advantage of an unprecedented opportunity to let us know where we can adapt to improve our service. These meetings should not be considered idle gestures. We are listening.

For example, a recent promise for immediate help by then-Acting Secretary Gibson at an earlier meeting is being realized now, with the opening of temporary space in Fayetteville and Jacksonville, North Carolina. I expect the temporary leased space to help stem the



tide of increased volume that has bottlenecked our ability to serve more Veterans in Jacksonville and in Fayetteville.

Medical center directors are already implementing changes responding to the feedback from those meetings. Your message is being taken to heart and will affect the way we engage Veterans tomorrow. The town halls have demonstrated their value and will be continued on a quarterly basis, for our directors to hear Veteran concerns and further identify local challenges to improve facility operations.

But let's not lose sight that change has already occurred. MyHealthVet and the Blue Button have enhanced access to care. Kiosks help simplify attending appointments and PACT teams address the needs of individual Veterans with premium, interactive customer care. These and other innovative changes will help restore Veteran and public trust.

On another subject as we move into October, I'd also like to remind each of you of the importance of flu shots. The inoculation will not only make a difference to you, but it can mean that your co-workers, family, and others with whom you come into contact are also safer, and you have done your part to help diminish the spread of the disease. All of our VISN 6 facility providers are well stocked to meet this need for you. Please see the walk-in flu shot clinic schedule on page 6.

Sincerely,

Dan Hoffmann

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

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



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Who needs a flu vaccine?

Even healthy people can get the flu, and it can be serious. Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine. This means you. This season, protect yourself—and those around you—by getting a flu vaccine.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Center for Disease Control and Prevention

For more information, visit: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

**EXCELLENT SERVICE**  
Earned by Veterans. Delivered Here.  
VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network VISN 6

## New MRI Wing, Adult Day Health Care In Beckley

By Kenita D. Gordon  
VISN 6 public affairs

Veterans receiving care at the Beckley VAMC will soon have access to more convenient radiological services and expanded geriatric care. Construction of a new magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) addition and an Adult Day Health Care wing is underway at Beckley, with the MRI addition expected to open in early FY15. The medical center's new 2,300 sq. ft. MRI addition will be located on the second floor above the Emergency Department. The \$4.4 million building addition will allow for the installation of a permanent magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner within the medical center. Beckley is currently using a mobile unit that is housed on the medical center grounds.

According to Andrew Burluson, chief of Medical Imaging at Beckley VAMC, the new Optima 450W 1.5 Tesla MRI Scanner, has a wider opening to accommodate larger patients and will reduce scan times up to 15 minutes. Once installed, the medical center will be able to accommodate more patients, easing access to care and reducing the need for Non-VA Care referrals for the service.

The medical center's Adult Day Health Care addition will add 8,000 sq. feet of much needed space to



Kenita Gordon

New MRI addition at Beckley VAMC.

the medical center. In addition to an enhanced day care program, the additional space will house telehealth and compensated work therapy programs. The \$5.8 million addition is set to open in June 2015 and will be attached to the main medical center. Veterans will access the space through a hallway.

## Fayetteville VAMC Transitions ED To Urgent Care

Due to contract provider staffing issues with the contractor currently operating the Fayetteville VAMC Emergency Department (ED), the medical center is temporarily converting its ED to a 12-hour daily Urgent Care Clinic (UCC). The UCC will operate daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. until issues with the contractor are resolved. Other functions of the medical center will proceed as normal without interruption.

"The Fayetteville VAMC has traditionally relied on local community hospitals as health partners and will continue to collaborate closely with these hospitals to assure that our patients receive seamless care when we are not able to serve them at our facility," said Elizabeth Goolsby, medical center director. "Ensuring high quality care is always at the forefront of facility decisions and this change will ensure that Veterans continue to receive the high quality care they have earned and deserve."

VA has begun communicating directly with Veterans regarding these changes.

All Veterans reporting to the Fayetteville's UCC will be triaged and given the appropriate care. The UCC will operate with ancillary service such as laboratory and x-ray facilities and will treat patients without a scheduled

appointment who are in need of immediate attention for an acute medical or psychiatric illness or minor injuries.

Patient care will not be available in the UCC after 8 p.m.

Currently, the medical center is not accepting ambulances and ambulances will be directed to local hospitals. Depending on a Veterans' eligibility, coverage for the care provided may be covered.

All Veterans who are having a medical emergency such as stroke or heart attack should call 911.

If you are having an emergency such as a stroke or heart attack and are taken to another hospital by ambulance, have the hospital contact the local VA as soon as possible at 800-771-6106 ext. 7002 or 800-936-7540.



# Asheville VAMC Staff Receives National Honor

The Asheville VAMC Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) operations was recently recognized as “Canteen of the Year.” The award officially recognizes the medical center food, drink and retail operations as one of the 10 best in the entire VA, which has more than 200 canteens.

The Asheville Canteen was chosen because it passed a demanding evaluation process outlined by VCS Regional Manager Danny Mannlein. The Asheville Canteen had to be ranked in the top 30 percent of all VA canteens for financial profitability; and sales increases for food, retail, coffee and vending were tracked. The canteens were also evaluated on employee productivity, customer service survey scores, retail accountability results, and inventory turns. Employees were rated on their courtesy, knowledge and friendliness, and stores were rated for their appearance and operating standards. The results of unannounced visits by VCS Central Office staff were also used to select winners.

Erik Sandborg, chief of the Asheville VCS, said, “I am so proud of my team. They deliver great service to our Veterans and the medical center staff every day. To be recognized as a top 10 service in the country is quite an honor. It takes the combined efforts of many people to earn this award. During the month of July the VCS team served more than 26,700 customers. They served more than 171,000 so far this year. That is incredible for a staff of 12.”

Medical Center Director Cynthia Breyfogle said, “Your service to the employees, volunteers, visitors and Veterans who come to Charles George VAMC is invaluable,



*Dennis Mehring*  
Accepting the “Canteen of the Year” award were Medical Center Director Cynthia Breyfogle (left), and Erik Sandborg (center), chief of medical center Veterans Canteen Services. Regional VCS Manager Danny Mannlein (right) presented the award.

able, and is recognized by more people than you realize. Thank you for your service to America’s heroes, our Veterans, and the people who serve them.”

The canteen staff was presented with a commemorative plaque for permanent display and each VCS employee received a Special Contribution “team award” in recognition of their accomplishments.

## Town Hall continued from Pg 1

ductions in opiate prescriptions and VA’s proliferation of alternative pain therapies, benefits claim processing and barriers to smooth receipt of prescriptions.

At each event, staff members were on hand to assist Veterans on the spot with personal issues. Veterans were also assisted after the meetings and still more were promised contacts from facility staff, when time or resources did not permit a response at the event. Members of the Veterans Benefits Administration were also available to help with difficulties in claims processing and to help initiate claims in the system. Veterans were engaged by patient advocates, service chiefs and program managers, along with extra VBA staff.

As each leadership team heard from Veterans they gained valuable feedback that will be used to improve the health system intended to help Veterans. The town hall events were so well received by Veterans and staff that VA Secretary Robert McDonald directed facility leadership to continue the listening mode by holding the meetings on a quarterly basis at each VA medical center nationally.



## DAV Donates Two Passenger Vans To Richmond VAMC

By Stephen Goetsch  
Richmond VAMC public affairs

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) organization donated two brand-new 12 passenger vans to the Richmond VAMC on Sept. 10.

The vans are a resource of the DAV Transportation Network, and will be used to transport patients who for medical reasons cannot drive themselves to and from medical appointments at the medical center and its community based outpatient clinics (CBOC's) in Emporia, Charlottesville and Fredericksburg.

The vans came at no cost to taxpayers since DAV relies on donations and fundraising for financial support.

Virginia DAV Commissioner Bob Bent was on hand for the handover ceremony and said the transportation program is even more important as transportation demand has increased. Bent praised two local DAV officers for getting the vans. "These are all locally raised funds," said Bent. "Roger Overstreet and Keith Jones, both DAV representatives pulled together a big coalition of local businessmen to make this happen."

Many Veterans use the program and last year, the transportation program logged over 412,000 miles. With the increase in appointments at Richmond and its



*Photos by Steve Goetsch  
John Brandecker, Richmond VAMC director, accepts keys to two brand-new 12 passenger vans from DAV representative and volunteer driver Lee Everton, as volunteer driver Ed Cole looks on.*

CBOC's, DAV has seen an increase in usage this year – in August the organization logged 102,000 miles.

The transportation program currently has seven drivers and is always looking for more. Volunteer driver and Marine Corps Veteran Cecil McNair says there are just a couple of basic requirements to get started. "It's an easy process, so if your health is good, and you have a good driving record, you're in there."

In order to reduce liability, only Veterans who are ambulatory (those who are able to board and disembark the van on their own) are allowed transportation.

If you would like more information, or are interested in becoming a volunteer driver, please call the Voluntary Services office at 804-675-5107 or 804-675-5135, or visit their website at [www.richmond.va.gov/giving/index.asp](http://www.richmond.va.gov/giving/index.asp).



### Fayetteville continued from Pg 1

Fayetteville could then offer earlier appointments to those with existing appointments scheduled beyond 30 to 90 days.

"That will have a significant impact on the access list. Coupled with our new providers coming on board, we will gain capacity for up to 2,000 additional new patients to enroll and get their health care from VA," said Galkowski.

Galkowski points out that although the annual Veteran enrollee growth rate is about 1 percent VA-wide, Fayetteville VAMC's Veterans patient population is growing at a staggering 7.2 percent annually.

"We're experiencing tremendous growth and we are working to accommodate more Veterans," Galkowski said, pointing to construction projects including a 10,000 sq. ft. CBOC in Sanford and a 15,000 sq. ft. replacement CBOC in Jacksonville, as well as a 250,000 sq. ft. health care center in Fayetteville (due in 2016). He added, "The construction projects are intended to help satisfy a Veteran population that will continue to grow over the next 10 years. Space constraints will be an issue for the foreseeable future; however, this is a positive development that we're extremely pleased to share with area Veterans."

# Flu Shots Available At All VISN 6 Medical Centers

The flu vaccine is now available at all VISN 6 medical centers, and VA is encouraging all Veterans and staff to get vaccinated.

Influenza (flu) is a contagious disease which affects the lungs and can lead to serious illness and hospitalization. The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone six months of age and older.

Pregnant women, young children, older people, and people with certain chronic medical conditions like asthma, diabetes and heart disease are at increased risk of serious flu-related complications, so getting a yearly flu vaccine is especially important for them.

Flu shots should be given every year to protect

against the virus because:

- Flu viruses are constantly changing; therefore, flu vaccines may be updated from one season to the next to protect against the viruses research indicates may be most common during the upcoming flu season.

- Annual vaccination is recommended since a person's immune protection from the vaccine declines over time.

Enrolled Veterans can receive the vaccine during their next scheduled primary care appointment, as a walk-in to their primary care clinic or flu shot walk-in clinics throughout VISN 6. Veterans should bring their VA ID card to walk-in clinics.

### Walk-In Flu Shot Clinic Schedule By Facility

<b>Asheville VAMC and surrounding locations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Princeton Friday, Oct. 3 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Location: Princeton Rescue Squad, Education Center, 701 Stafford Drive, Princeton, WV 24740</li> <li>• Summersville Thursday, Oct. 9 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Location: City Hall, 400 North Broad Street, Summersville, WV 26651 (Basement Floor)</li> <li>• Union Friday, Oct. 10 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Location: Union Rescue Squad Building (building is across from the Union Town Hall)</li> <li>• Welch Thursday, Oct. 28 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Location: Workforce Office</li> <li>• White Sulphur Springs Friday, Oct. 24 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Location: EMS Building, 2 Bobwhite Lane (Route 92)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goldsboro CBOC Monday – Friday (Closed Federal Holidays) 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.</li> <li>• Hamlet CBOC Monday – Friday (Closed Federal Holidays) 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.</li> <li>• Jacksonville CBOC Monday – Friday (Closed Federal Holidays) 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. (Note: Same procedures will apply at the new temporary Jacksonville Clinic at 306 Brynn Mar Road)</li> <li>• Robeson County CBOC Monday – Friday (Closed Federal Holidays) 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.</li> <li>• Wilmington Health Care Center Monday – Friday (Closed Federal Holidays) 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.</li> </ul>	<b>Salem VAMC Flu Vaccine Drive Thru Clinics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Center Monday - Friday, Oct. 6-17 (Closed Oct. 13 - Columbus Day) 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Location: Laboratory conference room in the lower level atrium.</li> <li>• Cleveland County Flu Shot Clinic Thursday, Oct. 2 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Location: Veterans Service Office, 311 East Marion St, Shelby, NC, 28150</li> <li>• Henderson County Flu Shot Clinic Thursday, Oct. 9 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Location: Pardee Education Center, 1800 4 Seasons Blvd, Hendersonville, NC, 28792</li> <li>• Haywood County Flu Shot Clinic Thursday, Oct. 23 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Location: Senior Resource Center, 81 Elmwood Way, Waynesville, NC, 28786</li> <li>• Caldwell County Flu Shot Clinic Thursday, Oct. 30 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Location: American Legion, (828) 850-7390, 401 Main St. NW, Lenoir, NC, 28645</li> <li>• Burke County Flu Shot Clinic Thursday, Nov. 6 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Location: Morganton Senior Center, (828) 439-4376, 501 North Green St., Morganton, NC, 28655</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Center Monday – Friday (Closed Federal Holidays) 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Location: Building 110B, Second Floor</li> <li>• Women's Clinic (Medical Center) Monday – Friday, Oct. 1 – Mar. 31 (Closed Federal Holidays) 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.</li> <li>• Virginia Beach CBOC Monday – Friday, Oct. 1 – Mar. 31 (Closed Federal Holidays) 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.</li> <li>• Elizabeth City CBOC Monday – Friday, Oct. 1 – Mar. 31 (Closed Federal Holidays) 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Center Monday – Friday, Oct. 6 to 31 (Closed Oct. 13 - Columbus Day) 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 pm Location: Entrance near Bldg. 17</li> <li>• Danville CBOC Monday – Friday, Oct. 6 to 31 (Closed Oct. 13 - Columbus Day) 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 4 p.m.</li> <li>• Tazewell CBOC Monday – Friday, Oct. 6 to 31 (Closed Oct. 13 - Columbus Day) 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.</li> <li>• Lynchburg CBOC Monday – Friday, Oct. 6 to 31 (Closed Oct. 13 - Columbus Day) 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.</li> <li>• Staunton CBOC Monday – Friday, Oct. 6 to 31 (Closed Oct. 13 - Columbus Day) 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.</li> <li>• Wytheville CBOC Monday – Friday, Oct. 6 to 31 (Closed Oct. 13 - Columbus Day) 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. (*Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.)</li> </ul>	
<b>Durham VAMC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Center Monday – Friday, Oct. 1- Nov. 21 (Closed Oct. 13 - Columbus Day) 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Location: Main lobby of the medical center</li> </ul>	<b>Hampton VAMC and Outlying Clinics</b>	<b>Salisbury VAMC and Outlying Clinics</b>
<b>Fayetteville VAMC and Outlying Clinics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Center Monday – Friday (Closed Federal Holidays) 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Location: Room 0048 (basement level near Bravo/Dogwood Clinic)</li> <li>• Village Green Annex Monday – Friday (Closed Federal Holidays) 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.</li> <li>• Brunswick County Outreach Clinic Monday – Friday (Closed Federal Holidays) 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.</li> </ul>	<b>Richmond VAMC and Outlying Clinics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Center Monday – Friday, Oct. 1 to Nov. 30 (Closed Federal Holidays) 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</li> <li>• Salisbury, Winston-Salem &amp; Charlotte CBOCs Monday – Friday, Oct. 1 to Nov. 30 (Closed Federal Holidays) 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Saturdays 8:00 a.m. – Noon</li> <li>• Hickory, Winston-Salem Annex Monday – Friday, Oct. 1 to Nov. 30 (Closed Federal Holidays) 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</li> </ul>
<b>Beckley VAMC and Surrounding Locations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Center and Greenbrier Outpatient Clinic Monday - Friday, Oct. 6-17 (Closed Oct. 13 - Columbus Day) 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Location: Primary Care</li> <li>• Bluefield Wednesday, Oct. 1 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Location: Bluefield Youth Center, Bluefield City Park Complex, 1780 Stadium Drive, Bluefield, WV 24701 Bluefield, WV 24701</li> </ul>		

# October Is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

This October, VA is observing National Breast Cancer Awareness Month by reminding all Veterans that early detection and screenings with mammography saves lives.

Breast cancer is the second most common cause of cancer deaths in women. However, the numbers of deaths have declined over the last decade partly because of increased screening.

Although they are recommended for women starting at age 50, some Veterans may need a mammogram at an earlier age due to symptoms indicating other risk factors.

Risk factors such as family and personal history of cancers are important aspects in detection. If you have a mother, sister, or daughter with breast cancer, ask your provider about your risk of getting breast cancer and how you can lower your risk.

VA recommends taking the following steps to lower your risk of breast cancer:

- Controlling your weight and exercise;
- Understanding the risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy;
- Limiting the amount of alcohol you drink.

Although breast cancer is mostly associated with women, it also develops in men. According to the Na-



tional Institute of Health, about 2,000 new cases are expected to be diagnosed in 2014.

Each of the VISN 6 medical centers will have events scheduled throughout the month of October to raise awareness and honor breast cancer patients and survivors.

For more information on breast cancer prevention and awareness, visit [www.va.gov/QUALITYOF-CARE/education/breast-cancer-awareness-month.asp](http://www.va.gov/QUALITYOF-CARE/education/breast-cancer-awareness-month.asp).

## Election Hatch Act Reminder

With the midterm elections rapidly approaching, we would like to take this opportunity to remind Federal employees about the restrictions on partisan political activity imposed by the Hatch Act.

Violations of the Hatch Act may result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal.

Here is a list of some Do's and Don'ts under the Hatch Act.

### **You may:**

- Register and vote as you choose;
- Serve as an election clerk, judge or similar officer at polling places;
- Contribute money to a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political organization;
- Be a member, or serve as an officer, of a political party or political group;
- Be a candidate in a nonpartisan election;
- Listen to radio programs or watch TV programs discussing partisan politics or candidates for partisan political office, or read a book about politics or political candidates while in the federal workplace, if permitted;

- Actively participate in partisan political campaigns and activities, as long as you are not: on duty, in a federal workplace, using government resources, or a career member of the Senior Executive Service.

### **You may not:**

- Take any action for or against any political party or candidate for partisan political office, such as scheduling activities as a partisan political volunteer while at work, or in a government building, or using government resources (including VA e-mail);
- Solicit, accept, or receive political contributions at any time – a narrow exception applies to members of a federal labor or employee organization;
- Use your official title, or trade on your VA position, while participating in any political activity;
- Ask a subordinate employee to volunteer on behalf of a political party or partisan candidate;
- Solicit or discourage the political activity of any individual who has business before VA;
- Be a candidate for partisan political office.

For more information, VA employees should direct any questions about the Hatch Act to their compliance officers or visit the U.S. Office of Special Counsel website at [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov).

## VA Scientists Honored For Spinal Cord Injury Work

For years Veterans have suffered with complications from spinal cord injuries and the debilitating effects they can have on one's quality of life. But thanks to the work of two VA scientists, many paralyzed Veterans now have a reason for hope.

Drs. William A. Bauman, M.D., and Ann M. Spungen, Ph.D., Director and Associate Director of VA's Rehabilitation Research & Development National Center of Excellence for the Medical Consequences of Spinal Cord Injury were awarded the prestigious Samuel J. Heyman Science and Environment Medal, also known as the "Sammies."

Sammies are awarded to federal employees who have made a significant contribution to the nation.

Bauman and Spungen, who have worked together for 25 years, were presented their awards by VA Secretary Robert McDonald during a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

"Many of our facilities perform groundbreaking work, which serves as a model for healthcare research across the nation," said McDonald. "I am proud of William and Ann. Any research institution would be proud to have these leading scientists, but they have chosen to dedicate their careers to serving Veterans at VA, and we are proud to call them our own."

In 2001, Bauman and Spungen established the VA's Rehabilitation Research & Development National Center of Excellence for the Medical Consequences of Spinal Cord Injury in Bronx, NY.

As part of their collaboration, Bauman and Spungen have made great progress in understanding the effects of spinal cord injury on the body.

Their work led to the conclusion that persons with spinal cord injury are at a markedly increased risk for heart disease.

They were also the first to describe, and then treat, an asthma-like lung condition common in those with higher levels of paralysis.

With other researchers in their unit, Bauman and Spungen formulated novel drug combinations to raise low blood pressure, and they have overseen the development of treatments to reduce bone loss shortly after spinal cord injury.

Their work has advanced understanding and treatment of chronic, non-healing pressure ulcers. Researchers under their direction also are making strides toward improving understanding of body temperature regulation and the effect of swings in body temperature on one's ability to think.



*Bronx VA Courtesy Photo*

*Drs. Ann M. Spungen and William A. Bauman were recognized for their work to understand the effects of spinal cord injury on the body.*

Bauman has worked at the Bronx VA hospital for 35 years and said he made up his mind from the start to devote himself to patients with spinal cord injury.

He said, "Prior to our work, many of these problems were not realized to be important, or were ignored because it seemed that nothing could be done to improve them."

Spungen was inspired by his work, saying, "I got to the VA and met these incredible scientists and investigators who were here working for the Veterans and who were so intelligent, so open, and so kind. I just became enamored with the entire atmosphere and dug in, and I have been here ever since."

Robert Ruff, national director for neurology at VA, said Bauman and Spungen's work has had a wide-ranging impact. "The research is relevant not only to people with spinal cord injury, but to a larger population who are immobilized, from those with ALS to cancers, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, dementia or Parkinson's disease," Ruff added.

The Service to America Medals are presented by the Partnership for Public Service. This year, eight award winners were chosen from 33 finalists and almost 400 nominees.

The 2014 selection committee included CEO Alberto Ibarguen of the Knight Foundation, Maryland Senator Benjamin Cardin, and Georgetown University President John DeGioia.

# Sound The Honor ~ Honor The Sound

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 data base of these people.

Thanks to Day, that data now exists and includes more than 5,000 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.

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. 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 volun-

teer, 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 will be 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.

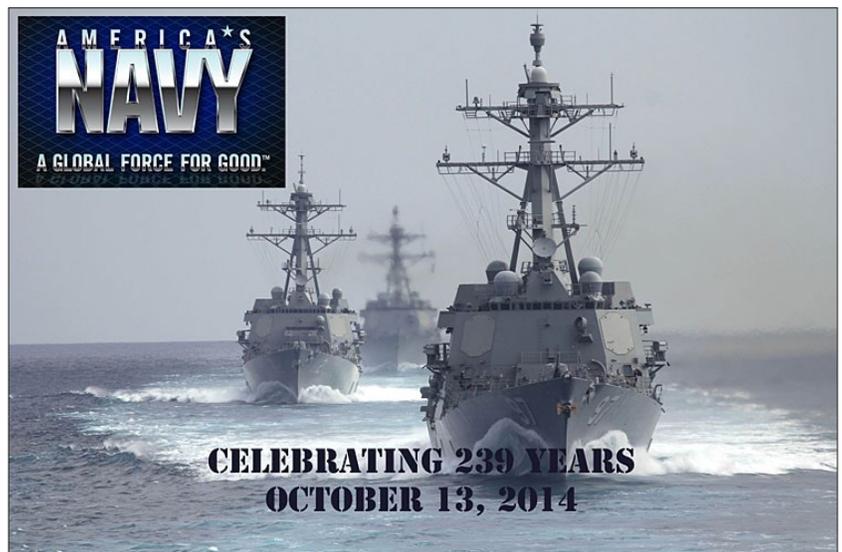
BAA is a registered 501(c)3 not for profit organization created for and dedicated to the purpose of providing a live bugler to serve in honoring Veterans at military funerals and other memorial occasions. Since the system was activated October 2013, almost 14,000 requests have been received. BAA has been running about 93 percent acceptance rate, the great majority of those within 12 to 24 hours of the posting.

For additional information, visit the BAA website [www.buglesacrossamerica.org](http://www.buglesacrossamerica.org) or bi-monthly newsletter at [www.buglesacrossamerica.org/BuglersPost.aspx](http://www.buglesacrossamerica.org/BuglersPost.aspx).



*Sanus Veneratio ~ Veneratio Sanus*

*Sound the Honor ~ Honor the Sound*



### VA Develops Mobile Concussion App

To better meet the needs of Veterans and others who have suffered mild to moderate concussion associated with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), VA has developed a mobile application with portable tools to recognize concussion symptoms and to identify and make use of coping strategies.

The Concussion Coach app educates users about concussions, related symptoms, and treatments to help them recognize and assess symptoms. It also provides access to crisis resources, including personal support contacts and ways in which the user can obtain professional health care.

Concussion Coach was collaboratively developed by the VA's Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services and the National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, and the Department of Defense National Center for Telehealth and Technology.

"In developing the Concussion Coach, we applied the science and the clinical recommendations that have emerged from the recent efforts of researchers and practitioners across many agencies, organizations and institutions to better understand the nature and consequences of injury to the brain," said Dr. Micaela Cornis-Pop, Speech Pathologist and lead subject matter expert for the application. "We are looking forward to the Concussion Coach becoming a trusted resource among self-help tools for Veterans and others to manage the troubling symptoms of concussion."

"The development of the Concussion Coach application shows how work conducted by VA also helps the general public," said Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy, VA's

interim undersecretary for health. "VA is taking innovative approaches and making use of technology to provide personalized health care for Veterans, and this app is an example of that."

The application will be helpful to everyone who suffers from mild to moderate concussions. While combat injuries to Servicemembers and injuries to

professional athletes gain media attention, TBI is most often caused by falls, vehicle accidents and violence. TBI is a major cause of death and disability worldwide, especially in children and young adults.

The application is a useful tool, and is not intended to replace professional diagnosis, medical treatment or rehabilitation therapies for those who need them.

Concussion Coach is available for mobile Apple devices (iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch) from the App Store and will be available to Google Play for Android devices later in 2014.

For additional information, visit [www.polytrauma.va.gov](http://www.polytrauma.va.gov).



### VA Announces Proposed Pay Increases For Physicians, Dentists

As part of VA Secretary Robert McDonald's nationwide recruitment initiative to hire more clinicians and expand Veterans' access to care, VA plans to increase the maximum annual pay rates for in-coming VHA physicians and dentists.

"We are committed to hiring more medical professionals across the country to better serve Veterans and expand their access to timely, high-quality care," said McDonald.

Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy, Interim Under Secretary for Health echoed the Secretary's comments. "With more competitive salaries for physicians and dentists, VHA is in position to attract and hire the best and brightest to treat Veterans."

The proposed pay tables would increase physicians and dentists pay by \$20,000 to \$35,000 annually. There will be no change to the pay tables for physicians who serve in leadership roles.

This proposed increase is just one aspect of the re-

cruiting initiative that McDonald has directed to bring the best and brightest health care professionals to VA.

VA will also take additional steps to enhance provider recruitment that includes collaborating on a new nursing academic partnership (VA Nursing Academic Partnerships or VANAP) focused on psychiatric and mental health care; partnering with the Department of Defense Health Affairs, Army, Navy, and Air Force to improve recruitment of recently or soon to be discharged health care professionals; expanding a pilot program to bring combat medics and corpsmen in to VA facilities as clinicians; improving the credentialing process for VA and DoD health care providers which will involve sharing credentials to speed up the process and expanding the loan repayment program, as included in the recently passed Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act.

For more information about working in VA health care, visit [www.vacareers.va.gov](http://www.vacareers.va.gov).

### GI Bill Benefits Offered For Alternative Work Programs

VA and the Department of Labor are partnering to ensure that Veterans working in Registered Apprenticeship programs gain easier access to GI Bill benefits by making the approval process for education benefits more seamless.

Registered Apprenticeship is a training system that produces highly skilled workers to meet the demands of employers competing in a global economy by combining on-the-job training with theoretical and practical classroom instruction.

According to VA Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity Curt Coy, companies that participate in the Registered Apprenticeship Program are investing in their workforce through high quality training

and career opportunities.

“Industries are on the lookout for talent and our Nation’s Veterans have proven to be knowledgeable and talented – linking them with apprenticeship opportunities will help get our Veterans on the road to a new career,” said Coy.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are qualified to be “Approved for GI Bill.” Upon registration of a position with the DOL, companies are provided the necessary paperwork to allow Veterans to receive a monthly stipend in addition to their wages.

For more information on the Registered Apprenticeship Program please visit [www.doleta.gov/oa/apprenticeship.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/oa/apprenticeship.cfm).

### VA Announces Accelerated Learning Programs

Each year, more than 250,000 service members take off their uniform for the last time. And for those transitioning Veterans, among the first questions they ask is: What’s next?

To help answer the “what’s next” question, VA is introducing a plan to incorporate Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP) as a way to bridge the gap between Veterans’ separation from service and successful civilian employment outcomes. In general, ALP learning is a non-traditional form of education that employs, and incorporates, varied learning styles. Individuals pursue intensive or self-paced learning in curricula that focus on developing career and industry skills.

In September the White House and VA held a roundtable discussion which brought together key government agencies, education entrepreneurs and thought leaders, social impact subject matter experts and pri-

vate sector employers to discuss the potential benefits of ALPs.

“We must do all that we can to make sure our Veterans who were ready for war are also ready for life outside the military,” said VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson, who participated in the joint discussion, as part of the White House Skills and Demand-Driven Training Initiative.

VA is developing a strategy to leverage accelerated learning and test its effectiveness for Veterans in projects over the next two years, targeting communities where VA can best support Veterans and transitioning service members.

VA will continue to work with education innovators and employers to share leading practices and define the economic outcomes that indicate long-term success for Veteran and transitioning service member participants.

### Intimate Partner Violence: Let VA Help

Intimate partner violence (IPV), which is often called domestic violence, occurs when a current or former intimate partner (e.g., boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse) harms, threatens to harm, or stalks their partner.

Domestic Violence/IPV can be physical (hitting, punching, using weapons), emotional (cursing, name calling, threatening) sexual (forcing a partner to engage in sexual activities) and financial (controlling income or damaging credit). Some people experience only one of these forms of violence, while others may experience more than one over several years.

IPV can happen to anyone no matter their age, income, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability. Domestic Violence/IPV occurs in heterosexual, LGBT, cohabitating and dating relationships.

One in three women and one in four men will experience

Domestic Violence/IPV in their lifetimes.

If you or a Veteran you know are at risk for

or have been victim to IPV, the VA can help.

For assistance, please contact your primary care provider, local VA medical center’s Women Veterans Program Manager or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 or visit them online at [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org).

#### WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE



One in Three Women Veterans are Hurt by Someone They Love.  
**Let VA Help.**

The National Domestic Violence  
**HOTLINE**  
800-799-7233 • [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

# 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/)

**Beckley VAMC**  
200 Veterans Avenue  
Beckley, WV 25801  
304-255-2121, 877-902-5142  
[www.beckley.va.gov/](http://www.beckley.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 Outreach Clinic**  
20 Medical Campus Drive  
Supply, NC 28462  
910-754-6141

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Goldsboro CBOC**  
2610 Hospital Road  
Goldsboro, NC 27909  
919-731-4809

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

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

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

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

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

**Jacksonville CBOC**  
241 Freedom Way, Suite 1  
Midway Park, NC 28544  
910-353-6406

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## DIALYSIS CENTERS

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

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

## VET CENTERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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