



"Excellent Care – Earned by Veterans – Delivered Here"

Voices of VISN 6

Official news from around your VISN

Vol. 7, No. 4

February 28, 2017

Charles George VAMC Opens Sleep Disorders Center

By Scott Pittillo
Asheville VAMC
Public Affairs

Any doctor will tell you, if asked, that sleep is central to your overall health and well-being.

The demand for sleep health services has been growing and it has been hard for the healthcare industry to keep up. The Charles George VAMC recently took a big step toward meeting the sleep health needs of its Veterans by opening a Sleep Disorders Center (SDC) on Jan. 9.

The center consolidates sleeps services into one convenient place for Veterans and adds the capability to conduct all night sleep studies in-house. Four rooms will be available for the sleep studies and have been designed to make Veterans as comfortable as possible to get the most accurate results from the studies.

"In the past we were sending all of our Sleep Studies out into the community, where there was also a considerable wait,"

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Scott Pittillo
Dr. Muhammad Sayed and Asheville VAMC Director Cynthia Breyfogle cut the ribbon on the new Sleep Disorders Center at the Charles George Medical Center Jan. 9.

Week Of Valentines Celebrations In Richmond

By Yanitz Irizarry
Richmond VAMC
Public Affairs

Richmond VAMC honored Veteran patients with several events during the annual National Salute to Veteran Patients week, Feb. 13-17.

Known in Richmond as "Salute Week," the National Salute to Veteran Patients, encourages people to express their appreciation to hospitalized Veterans. It also increases community awareness of local VA medical centers throughout the nation, inspiring people to get involved as volunteers.

Referring to the week's festivities, "It was abso-

lutely awesome," said Gerald Westry, voluntary service chief. "We had terrific volunteers, our music groups were outstanding. Overall, this week was a great success."

Festivities for Salute Week included a visit from Miss Virginia, balloon deliveries from local stars, a trip to a tractor museum and a visit from Gov. Terry McAuliffe. Different musical acts performed each day, playing a variety of musical styles including swinging, oldies and jazz.

Guests, staff, and vol-



Jason Miller
Rob Desir, WTVR CBS 6 reporter, poses with Airman Kashe Moss, U.S. Air Force, a polytrauma patient at Richmond VAMC.

unteers worked together to make Salute Week a spe-

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OIG Releases Report On Veterans' Access To Care In VISN 6

VISN 6 takes its mission to provide our Veterans timely, top quality care very seriously. With more than 377,000 Veterans receiving care through more than 4.4 million visits annually, providing Veterans timely access to healthcare has long been our top priority. Currently, more than 97 percent of our Veterans are within an hour's drive of a VA Primary Care appointment and 94.6 percent of our patients are seen within 30 days of their desired appointment date.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently released a report on its Audit of Access to Health Care at all VISN 6 Medical Centers in the Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network, conducted almost one year ago. Much of the data covered in the audit captures a period extending back into 2014, offering a refracted portrayal of our care for Veterans, since the environment has been in a state of continual regulatory and operational change.

In summary, VISN 6 leadership has worked diligently with the OIG auditors for months to develop a methodology that accurately captures the proficiency and value of our efforts to meet Veteran needs for care when they need it, at their convenience. While the audit team continues to hone its audit process for evaluation of Veterans' access to care, VISN appointment scheduling will keep pace with Veterans Health Administration (VHA) standards and policies being implemented here and nationwide over the past year, many which have already addressed several findings and subsequent recommendations contained in the report.

"To ensure our growing Veteran population receives the care they need, when they need it, our leadership is continuously monitoring electronic wait lists, reviewing wait times, managing scheduling practices, and the clinical status of patients waiting for care," said Mark Shelhorse, M.D., acting Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network (VISN 6) director.

New VHA directives implemented in recent months detail:

- standards for outpatient appointment scheduling processes and procedures;
- updated guidance and use of appointment scheduling trigger tool data elements;
- provide for standard staff scheduler policy, monitoring and training;

Also during 2016, VHA re-accomplished contract

requirements with third party administrators (Health Net in VISN 6) for VA care in the community, with revised controls that assure greater timeliness, verified through Performance Management Reviews (PMR) conducted by the VHA Office of Community Care.

In addition, VISN 6 facilities now offer same day services for Primary Care and Mental Health.

"We recognize that there is always opportunity for improvement," said Shelhorse, who pointed out that Veterans' access to care drives every decision he and his leadership team make. "Since 2014, we have continually taken steps to ensure proper scheduling practices and have made substantial investments to apply the right combination of staff, facilities, and tools to increase access to care for Veterans in the VISN."

Within the last two years, five Community Based Outpatient Clinics and three Health Care Centers have been opened to help meet the growing demand. In fact, VISN 6 has opened more than one million square feet of clinical space over the last year. Subsequently, more than 97 percent of our Veterans are currently within an hour's drive of a VA Primary Care appointment and 94.6 percent of our patients are seen within 30 days of their desired appointment date. According to Press Ganey, an independent analyst, upwards of 87 percent of Veterans surveyed are satisfied with the care they receive in VISN 6 health care facilities.

Leadership across the VISN 6 region believe Veterans deserve to have full confidence in their health care system and are continuously striving for outstanding results in care delivery to meet the high standards of excellent patient centered care according to industry standards.

VISN 6 staff throughout the network continue to collaborate with community partners at a variety of levels to enhance the overall Veterans' experience, from long-standing relationships with state Veterans Service representatives to the new Community Engagement Boards being developed around the VISN and throughout the country intended to enrich Veteran transitions to civilian life by simplifying access to Veteran benefits and services for them in their respective communities.

"Our commitment is to ensuring access," said Shelhorse. "That means getting Veterans the care they need, when they need it, while operating with integrity. This drives our daily operations and every choice we make."

VISN 6 is comprised of seven VA Medical Centers and 34 associated community-based outpatient clinics spanning North Carolina and Virginia. The network utilizes more than 13,500 clinical and support staff members, and about 4,000 volunteers to serve greater than 377,000 Veterans annually.

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

Questions or comments about the newsletter, e-mail stephen.wilkins2@va.gov or call 919-956-5541.



Mark Shelhorse M.D., Acting Network Director
Joseph Edger, Deputy Network Director
Kim Voss M.D., Acting Chief Medical Officer
Steve Wilkins, Acting Chief Public Affairs
Patrick Schuetz, Chitra Productions

Dr. Shelhorse Assumes Role Of Acting Network Director

The Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management would like to welcome Dr. Mark Shelhorse to the role of Acting Network Director, VISN 6, effective Feb. 6. Dr. Mark Shelhorse was appointed Chief Medical Officer for VISN 6 in 2000. Dr. Shelhorse has responsibility for all clinical work provided in the States of North Carolina and Virginia at 7 VA medical centers, 28 Community Based Outpatient Clinics, 4 health care centers, and 2 free-standing dialysis clinics.

Dr. Shelhorse joined VHA in 1981 as a resident in training, and post training joined the staff at the Tuscaloosa VAMC as a staff psychiatrist on an Acute Psychiatric Unit. During the next four years, he served as Research and Development Coordinator, lead physician on the Substance Abuse Care Unit, Electroconvulsive Therapy Consultant, and Consultation Liaison Psychiatrist.

Dr. Shelhorse left Tuscaloosa to become the Chief of Psychiatry at the Knoxville, Iowa VAMC in 1989, and subsequently became Chief of Staff there in 1991. In 1993, he was appointed Chief of Staff at Beckley VAMC, West Virginia. In April 1995 he became Chief of Staff at Hampton, Va., VAMC and concomitantly served as the VISN 6 Service Line Manager for Mental Health. In 1998 he moved to the position of Executive Medical Director of Mental Health for VISN 7 and served the collateral role of Medical Director for Tus-

caloosa VAMC. In 2000, he moved to the position of Deputy Network Director for Clinical/Chief Medical Officer for VISN 6 in Durham, North Carolina. From May of 2004 until May of 2006, Dr. Shelhorse served as Acting Deputy Chief Officer for the Office of Mental Health for Patient Care Services for VHA.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Shelhorse to our mission of serving Veterans in this important role.

- Steve Young, VHA Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management



Dr. Mark Shelhorse



Fayetteville VAMC Gets New Associate Director Of Operations

By Jeff Melvin
Fayetteville VAMC Public Affairs

Donna Fagan was appointed Associate Director of Operations, Fayetteville VAMC effective Feb. 5.

Ms. Fagan is an Illinois native. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Healthcare Leadership with a minor in Business and her Masters of Arts in Organizational Leadership from Lewis University, located in Romeoville, Ill.

She joined VA in 1988, as a Medical Clerk at the Edward J. Hines Jr. VA Hospital (Hines, Ill.) and rising through the ranks to Chief, Patient Administration Service before leaving there in 2013.

Prior to her appointment as Associate Director of Operations, Fagan served as Chief, Health Administration Service, VA San Diego Health Care System, San Diego, Calif., from March 2013 to February 2017.

Ms. Fagan will be responsible for providing leadership and oversight to the Fayetteville VA Medical Center Enterprise's operational services such as En-

gineering, Financial Management, Health Administration, Human Resources, Logistics, Environmental Management and Voluntary Service.

"In my new role I would like to ensure that Veterans continue to receive the medical care and services they deserve as seamlessly as possible," she said.

While she never served in the armed forces, she comes from a long line of military personnel with many uncles, a brother and a niece who have served.

A new arrival to the region, she commented, "As I settle into the Fayetteville area, I can't help but notice how wonderful the people and the weather are."



Donna Fagan

FVAMC Patient Advocate Featured In MyVA Campaign

By Jeff Melvin

Fayetteville VAMC Public Affairs Officer

Fayetteville VA's Tennie Williams-Harris is featured in a short video produced for the February/March 2017 MyVA/VA transformation internal communications campaign entitled "Improving the Employee Experience: MyVA, My Workplace."

The February/March campaign spotlights employee engagement and improving the employee experience, by showcasing VA staff members who demonstrate engagement through their passion, energy, and ultimately, contributions to the workplace around them and to the experiences of the Veterans VA serve.

Williams-Harris and Teresa Turner, patient advocates at the Fayetteville VA Health Care Center, were recognized in the MyVA Stories collection for their engagement, passion and collaboration in the workplace.

The narrative recognizing Williams-Harris and Turner, who has since relocated to another VA, described how the duo took it upon themselves to conduct customer service rounding with a different service line every Friday morning before 8 a.m. to ensure each employee they encountered received a bottle of water, a breakfast bar and a motivational statement.

They reasoned starting the staff's day with motivation, a cheerful customer friendly attitude and a morning snack would flow into great customer service engagements with the Veterans when they arrived for their appointments.

"Terrie and Tennie also hand out a small prize to staff who can present an ICARE values card that they may have presented at previous rounds for that service. Their can-do attitude of great customer service to the staff has resulted in great experiences for the Veterans and our staff," read the conclusion of the nominating narrative.

Sleep Center continued from Pg 1

said Dr. Muhammad Sayed, chief of Sleep Medicine. "In the community we were unable to control quality or costs, but now we will have the best possible environment for Veterans."

Sayed came to Asheville from Seattle, Wash., where he had experience opening sleep centers in the private sector. At the Charles George VAMC he was able to oversee the design of the clinic from the ground up incorporating the latest technologies for the best possible care.

The SDC is located at "3 East" at the medical center, where older inpatient areas were renovated for the new space. The SDC will see more than 6,000 Veterans



Jeff Melvin

Tennie Williams-Harris, right, interacts with registered nurse Funmilayo Audu during one of the periodic 'rounds' she conducts dispensing water, snacks, and inspirational words to colleagues.

As a result of the MyVA Stories recognition, Williams-Harris was asked to share the story in a videotaped response. In the video, she talks about going above and beyond in the workplace, helping colleagues improve Veteran experiences, gives advice about being a passionate and engaged employee and shares a best practice on showing dedication and commitment in the workplace.

"Smile, smile, smile" is the best practice she recommends before closing with an appeal to others to visit the MyVA News Blog and "share what you and your colleagues are doing to create an even better work environment at VA and how it positively impacts Veterans."

Take a look at the video on the VA YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/embed/6JuUVxiimD4?ecver=1.

who are currently using sleep services and will be part of taking care of more than 2,000 new consults for sleep studies. In a normal year, the SDC will provide around 1,200 in-house sleep studies and will begin a home sleep testing program within the next few months. The SDC will also be the one-stop shop for Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) monitoring and supplies.

"I want to thank all of our staff for all of their hard work in making this a reality," said Asheville VAMC Director Cynthia Breyfogle. "Especially, our professionals in the Sleep Disorders Center who have done so much behind the scenes work to get ready to serve Veterans."

Gov. McAuliffe Visits Veterans/Staff For Salute Week

By Patrick Gordon,
Richmond VAMC Public Affairs Office

On Friday, Feb. 17, Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe visited the Richmond VAMC to meet with Veterans and thank them for their service. Joining him was Adm. John Harvey (Ret.), the Virginia Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs.

McAuliffe visited the 4D wing of the hospital, during National Salute to Veteran Patients week, bringing carnations and Valentine's Day cards to each Veteran on the unit. He also met Bella, the facility's police dog. After touring the patient wing, the governor went to the Mall area and listened to some music from the Hanover High School Jazz Band, who was performing that day. He greeted Veterans and employees throughout the Mall area, took photos with several of them, and listened to their numerous, positive comments about both the VA Medical Center and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Following a brief interview with the local ABC news affiliate, McAuliffe turned to everyone on 4D to tell them McGuire is the best VA in the country.



Anderson Grant
Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe poses with a group of Richmond VAMC staff during VA's National Salute to Veteran Patients week.

Salem VAMC Honors Veterans During Salute Week

By Brett Robbins
Salem VAMC Public Affairs

The week of February 11-18 is designated as National Salute to Veterans. The week has been packed with a wide variety of events for Salem VAMC Veterans. Thousands of valentine cards were received and distributed throughout the week - thanks to the great support and love shown by our community for America's heroes.

Patrick Henry High School Junior ROTC Drill team Joined the festivities by offering a demonstration of their precision marching performance. Deputy Commander Audreanna Bentley, a senior this year who plans to pursue a career as a pediatrician said the nine member team practices twice a week for about two hours. Freshman drill team member, Donavon Huynh, plans to become a Navy Seal.

Led by Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boyd, the team hopes to do well in the upcoming local competition and move on a state event in April. The local competition will be hosted by Patrick Henry on March 25 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. and is open to the public. "This is a great group of students and I am very proud of the work they have done. It is a great honor to come to Salem VAMC and be part of the National Salute to Veterans," he said as the students greeted the crowd following their performance.



Ann Benois
The Patrick Henry High School Junior ROTC Drill team visited with Veterans like Col. Gordon Thomas during Salem VAMC's recent salute to Veterans.

The students were invited to join Veterans for a light dinner followed by a competitive Lego building contest. It was a fun evening of entertainment, good food and spirited competition - all part of this year's salute to the men and women who are so deserving!

Fayetteville's Efforts To Stem Opioid Addiction Praised

Reprinted from the Fayetteville Observer
By Greg Barnes, Staff Writer

Newly elected state Attorney General Josh Stein told Fayetteville leaders Tuesday that the city's efforts to combat prescription drug and heroin abuse are "inspiring and impressive."

Stein sat in on the city's opioid roundtable, a collective body of officials from diverse backgrounds who have been working for months to fight what Cumberland County District Attorney Billy West called an epidemic affecting everyone from teenagers to the elderly. Most of the roundtable discussion was held in private because city officials said they wanted "to foster a freely flowing discussion."

The news media was allowed into the last 15 minutes of discussions and to ask questions of Stein after the roundtable adjourned.

Stein said it took 15 to 20 years for prescription drug and heroin abuse to reach a crisis, one that now kills more people each year than car accidents.

Stein said it will take hard work and more resources to reverse the problems. But he said Fayetteville's holistic approach hasn't gone unnoticed in Raleigh.

"Everybody has a role to play," Stein said. "If we all do our part, we can turn this crisis."

Fayetteville's roundtable brought together leaders in the governmental, judicial and health professions, including Mayor Nat Robertson, who led the discussions, West, Dr. Michael Zappa of Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, Judge Lou Olivera, nonprofit Communicare Director Sarah Hallock and Elizabeth Goolsby, director of the Fayetteville Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

The roundtable is an offshoot of the Opioid Abuse & Awareness Task Force, which Robertson and Goolsby formed in May.

The primary goals of the task force were to define strategies to educate opioid providers about the dangers of overprescribing, educate the public about opioid addiction and rescue people who are addicted to opioids.

That work wrapped up in August with the announcement of a public service awareness campaign and a new opioid-addiction hotline operated through Communicare and funded by Cumberland County.

So far, Hallock said, the hotline has fielded 124 calls for help.

Fayetteville and Cumberland County have been leaders - both in the state and nationally - in fighting an opioid epidemic that one study identified as the 18th-worst in the country.

Stein said he came to Fayetteville because he was intrigued by the progress the city and county are making.

Besides the hotline and a Communicare center that



Steve Wilkins

Fayetteville VAMC Director Elizabeth Goolsby, at a meeting of the North Carolina Governor's Working Group on Veterans, Service Members and their Families, discusses the progress of the facility's partnership with the Fayetteville community in stemming an opioid abuse crisis.

directs people to resources, Fayetteville has become the first in the Southeast and the fourth in the country to adopt the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program, also known as LEAD, which aims to divert low-level criminals from prosecution into stable housing and educational and job-skills programs.

Police Capt. Lars Paul, who heads the program, said 10 people are now enrolled in it.

The Police Department was among the first in North Carolina to equip officers with Naloxone, a drug that can reverse opioid overdoses.

Lars said police have saved 55 lives in the city since they began using Naloxone in the spring of 2015.

Officials credited the county's drug and Veterans courts with helping to curb addiction problems.

But everyone agreed that the city and county need more resources, especially more inpatient-recovery beds.

Stein said he is working with policymakers to reduce opioid prescriptions and with lawmakers to provide more resources for treatment and recovery.

Miss North Carolina Visits Asheville Veterans

Miss North Carolina Mckenzie Faggart stopped for a moment to talk with POW Veteran Wayne Carringer during a visit to the Asheville VAMC Community Living Center. Mckenzie was at the medical center Feb. 27 as part of the Salute to Hospitalized Veterans week. Mckenzie was unable to visit during the actual week which was from Feb. 13 to 19 but didn't want to miss her chance to honor Veterans, people she says she considers to be heroes. According to the VA's Voluntary Service website, the National Salute is used to say thank you to the more than 98,000 Veterans who are cared for at VA facilities every day. The VA invites Veterans groups, military personnel, civic organizations, businesses, schools, local media, celebrities and sports stars to participate in a variety of activities in honor of hospitalized Veterans.

Rod Doty



Richmond continued from Pg 1

cial event. It took three organizations a week to build the wall of Valentines displayed in the mall area. Every year, Richmond VAMC receives Valentines cards from local schools and organizations, thanking Veterans for their service.

Salute Week kicked off with bejeweled 21-year-old aspiring broadcast sports announcer Michaela Sigmon, Miss Virginia. Sigmon graced the halls with her beauty, charm and award-winning smile as she presented Veterans with gift bags created by USO volunteers, signed autographs and posed for pictures.

"You are so beautiful with all those diamonds and such," said Airman Kashe Moss as she took a picture with Sigmon. "That is my style."

Red heart-shaped balloons were hand delivered to inpatient Veterans on Valentine's Day by local stars like Rob Desir from CBS Channel 6, Phil Liles WCVE radio host, and newscasters from ABC Channel 8.

Cupcakes donated by Disabled American Veterans were distributed in the mall area during lunch, Wednesday, Feb. 15, while the Fort Lee Jazz Band played patriotic tunes.

Later in the week, 50 inpatient Veterans went on a field trip to Keystone Tractor Works Museum in Colonial Heights to experience agricultural heritage and classic cars.

Gov. McAuliffe was so intrigued by the Hanover High School Jazz Band that he stopped his tour to attend their live performance. "He stayed and listened to them play a couple of songs," said Hope Kumme, board certified music therapist. "The students were very excited to shake hands with the governor and have their picture taken with him."



Patrick Gordon
Michaela Sigmon, Miss Virginia, pauses to take a picture with Veterans during National Salute to Veteran Patients week.

VA Honors Women's History Month Throughout March

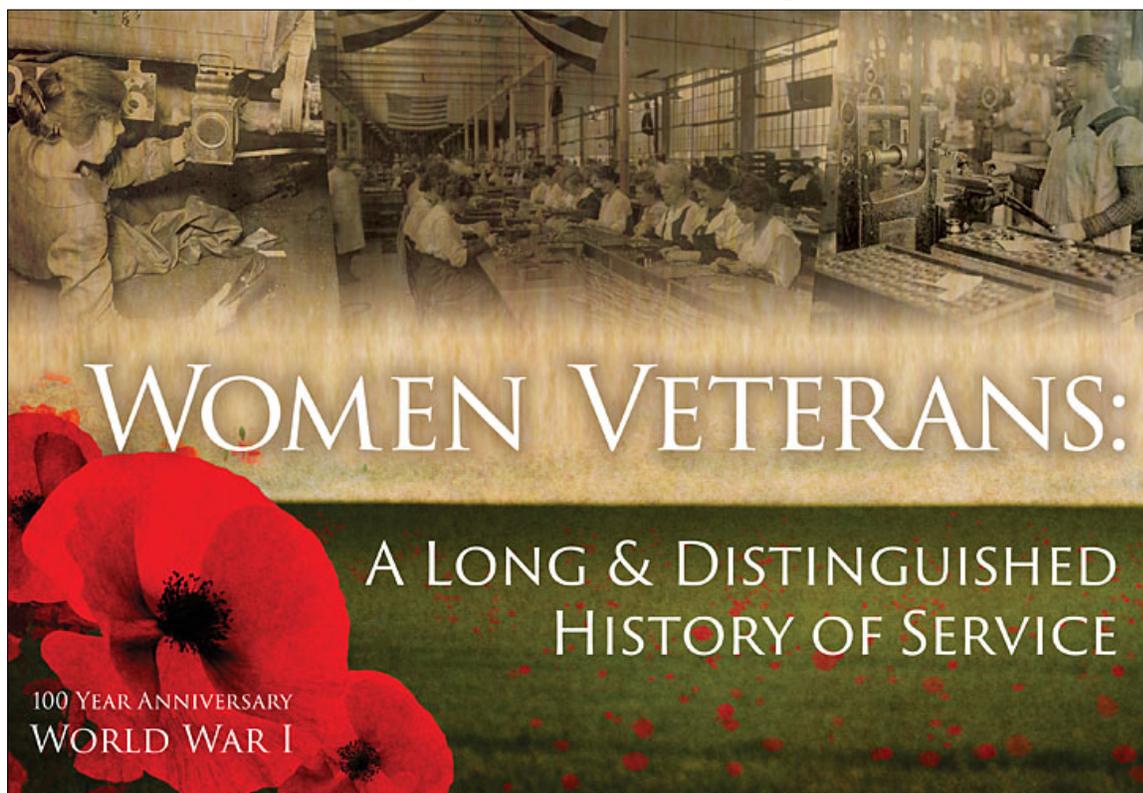
March is Women's History Month. Throughout March, VA is proud to salute women Veterans for their accomplishments and contributions to the United States military and society.

Generations of women Veterans have honorably served in the military. They have become four star generals, commanded ships, earned the Medal of Honor, and piloted space shuttles.

Their success does not stop when they take off their uniform. They continue to serve as leaders of non-profits, government, businesses and communities.

As we celebrate women Veterans, we want to 'Respect, Reflect, Recognize' the long and distinguished history of their service to our country. Women have served in the United States military since 1775. During the Revolutionary War, courageous women served in combat. More than 400 women fought in the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War.

During World War I, approximately 35,000 women served. In World War II, 140,000 women served in the



U.S. Army and the Women's Army Corps, and over 1,000 women flew aircraft for the Women's Airforce Service Pilots.

During the Vietnam War, 7,000 American military women served in Southeast Asia, the majority of them nurses.

Some 40,000 American military women were deployed during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. About 280,000 women have served in Afghanistan or Iraq since Sept. 11, 2001.

VA is grateful for their service and committed to providing women Veterans the care and services they have earned and deserve.

There are more than two million women Veterans. Women are the fastest growing group in the Veteran population.

VA's approach to health care is unique for women Veterans. Women Veterans are assigned one Designated Women's Health Provider to coordinate care, and provide primary care and gender specific care.

VA's medical staffs are experts in providing medical care and services beyond primary care, including mammography, gynecology, breast and cervical cancer screening, military sexual trauma-related care, and counseling. In addition, VA offers maternity care coordination and maternity and newborn services through care in the community.

VHA Women's Health Services 'Stories Of Service'

VA has built a library that documents women's experiences in the United States Armed Forces, from their significant contributions to national safety and security to the ongoing challenges faced during their service and after returning to civilian life. Click on the following link to see and hear these Stories of Service from women Veterans, in their own words: www.womenhealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/latestinformation/videos/stories.asp.



Camp Lejeune Presumption Of Service Connection

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has published regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The presumption of service connection applies to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between Aug. 1, 1953 and Dec. 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with adult leukemia, aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, liver cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma or Parkinson's disease.

Environmental health experts in VA's Technical Workgroup conducted comprehensive reviews of scientific evidence, which included analysis and research done by the Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the Environmental Protection Agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the

National Toxicology Program, and the National Academies of Science.

Veterans with 30 or more cumulative days of active duty service at Camp Lejeune during the contamination period are already eligible for certain medical benefits, following passage of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012.

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene (TCE), a metal degreaser, and perchloroethylene (PCE), a dry cleaning agent, as well as benzene and vinyl chloride, were discovered in two on-base water supply systems at Camp Lejeune. The contaminated wells supplying the water systems were shut down in February 1985.

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas. The rule will be effective either 60 days after publication in the Federal Register, or following conclusion of the 60-day Congressional Review, whichever is later.

VA Partnership Provides Path To Support Homeless Veterans

Military Outreach USA, a partner of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), recently launched a program to encourage communities to connect with local VA facilities and help VA provide support to homeless or recently homeless Veterans and their families.

The Adopt-a-VA program, which began in February, connects individuals and community organizations, such as schools, faith-based groups and businesses, with a local VA Homeless Program case manager at the VA Medical Center or community-based outpatient clinic in their area to help meet Veterans' non-medical needs.

"VA remains committed to preventing and ending Veteran homelessness, but we cannot achieve this goal alone," said Anthony Love, senior advisor and director of Community Engagement for VHA's Homeless Programs Office. "Partnerships are critical to providing the support needed to help Veterans exit homelessness, and to identifying local housing and employment opportunities that help them remain stably housed. Military Outreach USA's Adopt-a-VA program makes it easier than ever for everyone to get involved and support Veterans in their communities."

In 2016, to help formerly homeless Veterans successfully transition to permanent housing, VA formed a partnership with Military Outreach USA, a national, community-based organization that celebrates and supports military and Veteran families.

During the first year of the partnership, Military Outreach USA secured donations of services, beds

and household items valued at more than \$700,000 for homeless and at-risk Veterans in all 50 states.

Building on those successes, Military Outreach USA streamlined the process of securing and distributing donations from faith-based, nonprofit and other organizations to Veterans who are transitioning from homelessness.

"Adopt-a-VA gives those who want to help our Veterans a way to help," said Joseph Palmer, executive director of Military Outreach USA. No financial obligation is required for community organizations interested in participating in the Adopt-a-VA program.

Forms of assistance can include donating household items and assisting with collection drives for move-in essentials, such as cleaning products and small appliances.

Since 2010, VA's efforts to end Veteran homelessness have resulted in a nearly 50 percent reduction among this at-risk population across the country.

Between 2015 and 2016, Veteran homelessness decreased nearly 17 percent, four times the previous year's decline.

The efforts of state and local governments, federal partners and nongovernmental organizations have been instrumental in producing these outcomes.

For more information about how to help Veterans through Adopt-a-VA, visit www.adopt-a-va.com. To learn more about VA programs and services that support homeless and at-risk Veterans, visit www.va.gov/homeless.

Changes In VHA Leadership Continue Under Sec. Shulkin

In January, President Donald J. Trump appointed former VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David A. Shulkin VA Secretary. In the succeeding weeks, since his confirmation Shulkin has filled several leadership positions with his own appointments, including Dr. Poonam Alaigh to the role of Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health effective Feb. 26, 2017. In this role, she will perform the duties of the Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration.

Dr. Alaigh previously served as the Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Health (USH), and the executive sponsor of the MyVA access initiative. Through her leadership and guidance, she has been a core member of the VHA executive leadership team executing the largest transformation to meet the top priority of the USH, improving access to care for all Veterans.



Dr. Poonam Alaigh

Dr. Alaigh has a multifaceted background in health care administration and delivery, including clinical practice, hospital practice, hospital administration, managed care, pharmaceutical medicine, and healthcare policy. Her previous roles include co-founder of one of the largest Accountable Care Organization (ACO) in the country, the Atlantic ACO in New Jersey. She was also responsible for health care policy, public health, senior care and quality with regulatory responsibility of all the healthcare institutions in N.J. Dr. Alaigh has served as National Medical Director for GlaxoSmithKline where she was working with health plans on a number of national issues, including better use of health care technology, the reduction of disparities in health care and healthcare access to the under and uninsured population.

Dr. Alaigh continues her clinical work at the New Jersey Veterans Administration at Lyons providing direct patient care. She is a board certified internist with a specialty in vascular diseases having received her MD and her Masters in Health Care Policy and Management at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, NY. She is a certified black belt in six-sigma business management strategy and has a number of publications, achievements and is a recognized national healthcare leader.

Also, Shulkin has selected Ms. Vivieca Wright Simpson for the Senior Executive Service position of Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary, Washington, D.C. She previously served as the Chief of Staff, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Washington, D.C.

In addition, Shulkin recently appointed a former VISN 6 leader to the role of Acting VA Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health. Dr. Miguel LaPuz will fill the position effective March 13. LaPuz has served in various leadership roles within VA,

and the experience he brings will be a valuable asset as we continue on our path of transforming VA.

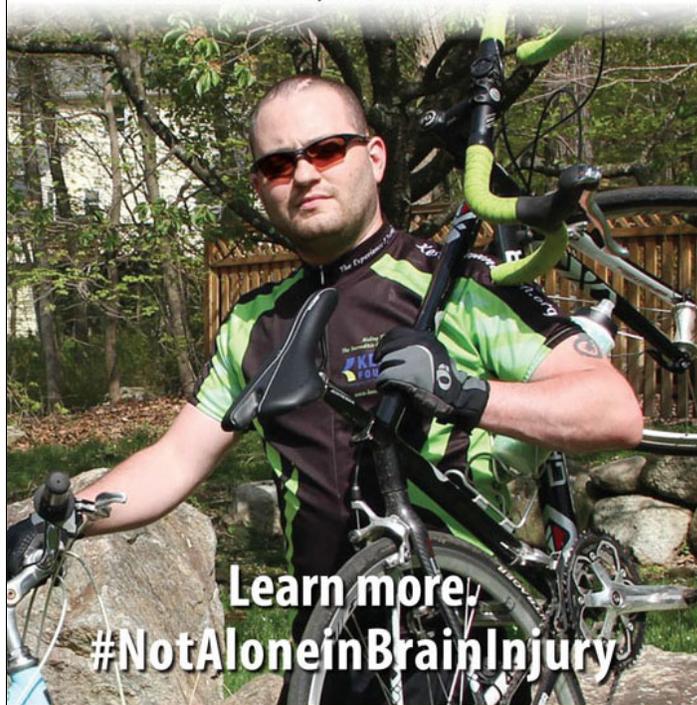
LaPuz was appointed as Director of the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network, VISN 8, effective Feb. 21, 2016, and prior to that served as the Director of the Salem VAMC from 2011 to 2015. As Director of VISN 8, he oversees healthcare delivery through a system of eight hospitals (two of which are integrated) and nearly 60 primary care and specialty outpatient clinics; eight nursing homes; and five domiciliaries.

His previous VA experience includes serving as Chief of Staff at the Salisbury VAMC, in Salisbury, N.C from 2009 to 2011; in 2010, he also served there as the VAMC's interim Director. From 2005 to 2009, he was the Chief of Staff at the Chalmers P. Wylie VA Ambulatory Care Center, Columbus, Ohio, and from 2000 to 2005, he served as Chief of Medicine Service at the Dayton VAMC in Dayton, Ohio.



Dr. Miguel LaPuz

5.3 million people living with brain injury want what everyone wants: a good job, a nice home, someone to love, and fun in their lives.



Learn more.
#NotAloneInBrainInjury



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National News

Free smoke alarms and installation for military and veterans' families.



More lives are lost every year to home fires than to all major disasters.

The American Red Cross wants to help keep our military and veterans' families safe. Allow us to install new smoke alarms or replace your old ones. It's easy and free.

To schedule a date and time, Email your name, address and phone number to

Judith.Ross@redcross.org

Learn more at redcross.org/homefires



VISN 6 Sites Of Care & VA Vet Centers

MEDICAL CENTERS

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

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

Fayetteville VAMC
2300 Ramsey St.
Fayetteville, NC 28301
910-488-2120, 800-771-6106
www.fayettevillenc.va.gov/

Hampton VAMC
100 Emancipation Dr.
Hampton, VA 23667
757-722-9961, 866-544-9961
www.hampton.va.gov/

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

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

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

OUTPATIENT CLINICS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jacksonville CBOC
4006 Henderson Drive
Jacksonville, NC 28546
910-353-6406

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rutherford County CBOC
374 Charlotte Road
Rutherfordton, NC 28139
828-288-2780

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

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

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

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

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

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

DIALYSIS CENTERS

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

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

VET CENTERS

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

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

Greensboro Vet Center
3515 W Market Street, Suite 120
Greensboro, NC 27403
336-333-5366

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

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

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

Raleigh Vet Center
8851 Ellstree Lane
Raleigh, NC 27617
919-856-4616

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

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