

# VOICES OF VISN 6

— Excellent Care — Earned by Veterans — Delivered Here —



## *Veterans Access to Care* HIGHLIGHT OF MARCH HVAC HEARING

VISN 6 Director DeAnn Seekins (third from right) is flanked by (l-r) Fayetteville HCC Administrator Mike Nichols, U.S. Rep. Richard Hudson (R-N.C. -8th Dist.), U.S. Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn. 1st Dist.), U.S. Rep. Neal Dunn (R-Fla. -2nd Dist.) and James Laterza, newly appointed Director of the Fayetteville VA Medical Center during a tour that followed a House Veterans Affairs Committee hearing in Fayetteville, N.C. **(Photo by Steve Wilkins)**

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### FEATURE COVER STORY

Veterans Access to Care was front and center during a local House Veterans Affairs Committee Hearing March 24 at Fayetteville Technical Community College in Fayetteville, N.C.

HVAC Chairman Phil Roe (R-Tenn. 1st Dist.), joined by fellow committee member Neal Dunn (R-Fl. 2nd Dist.) and co-hosts Rep. Richard Hudson (R-N.C. 8th Dist.) and Robert Pittenger (R-N.C. 9th Dist.) told a panel of five witnesses — including VISN 6 Network Director DeAnne Seekins, supported by VHA Veterans Choice and VA Timely Payment Initiative Program Manager Joe Enderle — and a packed audience that he hoped their work with VA would help to build relationships with local health care organizations and strengthen partnerships to be used in teaming with local providers.

Seekins offered a commitment to continuous improvement in the system,

[STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 4 >>>](#)



## Network Director Comments

I want say thank you for your dedication to the mission which focuses on the care of our Veterans. VISN 6 is the fastest growing Veteran network in the Country. Over the past 10 years we have increased Veterans receiving care by 118%.

Amazing! This speaks volumes regarding how our Veterans view their care, and your commitment to them as they pick up the phone, walk through our doors, or come in through our emergency rooms. A lot is happening politically around us, however, I am confident we will remain focused on what we do best, which is providing outstanding high quality and safe care to our Veterans. I want to take a minute to remind staff and stakeholders that no matter what happens outside our hospitals and clinics, the bottom line is that we still are here to care for Veterans.

While changes in leadership or administrations might impact long-term processes, remember that in the field, day in and day out, we are devoted and dedicated to making sure Veterans receive the best care we can give them. As easy as it is to be distracted by the drama and gossip, often sensationalized by our media, we have not and recognize that we cannot afford to lose our focus on the Veterans who depend on us to alleviate their pain and suffering, to accelerate their healing, to help them continue to live their best lives.

I am so thankful for each and every one of you, doing what you do, earnestly working to make Veterans' lives better, regardless of what goes on outside our walls. Your devotion has been inspiring. Keep the faith, because you know, as I do, our Veterans will be better for it.

*Sincerely,*

**DeAnne M. Seekins**  
VISN 6 Network Director

# Women Veterans HONORED WITH QUILTS OF VALOR

By Dr Sharon K West | ASHEVILLE VAMC WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

On March 20, the Asheville VAMC celebrated Women Veterans during Women's History month in a very special way.

Twelve women Veterans were recipients of the prestigious Quilt of Valor. The program was opened with the presentation of the flags by the Steve Youngdeer Post 143 of Cherokee.

An engaging welcome was provided by Asheville VAMC Associate Director Robert D. Evans, followed by the keynote address from VISN 6 Lead Women Veterans Program Manager Shenekia Williams-Johnson.

Quilts of Valor recipients Cheryl Logan, Rebecca Hughes, Joy Faith Dietle, Diana Hixenbaugh, Virginia Lee Golden, Deanna Goode, Sandra Robinson, Mary Joan Dickson, Ernestine Goodine, Dani'El

Garvin, Patricia Lambert Malcolm, Shenekia Williams-Johnson and Sharon Kelly West were nominated to the Smokey Mountain Quilters Guild.

The quilts were presented by Smokey Mountain Quilters Chair, Charlie Nichols, who was assisted by The Rutherfordton Quilters Guild.

The mission of the Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover our veterans and service members touched by war with comforting, healing Quilts of Valor.

A quilt was also presented to 102 year-old WWII Veteran Winnie Sanders, who resides in the Asheville VAMC CLC.

On March 20, during a Women Veterans' event, a dozen Charles George VAMC Women Veterans were presented with Quilts of Valor by the Smokey Mountain Quilters Guild in honor of Women's History Month and the women's military service. (Photo: Rod Doty)



# Live Whole. MIND | BODY | SOUL

## Whole Health: A New Pathway for Veterans in VISN 6

By Christina L. Vair, Ph.D.

ACTING DIRECTOR – WHOLE HEALTH SYSTEM OF CARE, HEALTH PROMOTION DISEASE PREVENTION PROGRAM MANAGER

The Salisbury VA Health Care System was selected to lead VISN 6 in ensuring Veterans access to the Whole Health System of care. The term “Whole Health” has been popping up more and more frequently, likely leaving many people wondering what it means. Put simply, Whole Health is a health and wellness approach, empowering and equipping Veterans to take charge of their health. It supports Veterans collaborating with clinicians to achieve their best health. Whole Health doesn’t focus on a disease or diagnosis, but it connects the importance of self-care to what’s most important in Veterans’ lives — to live better.

*“It’s about what matters to you, not what’s the matter with you.”*

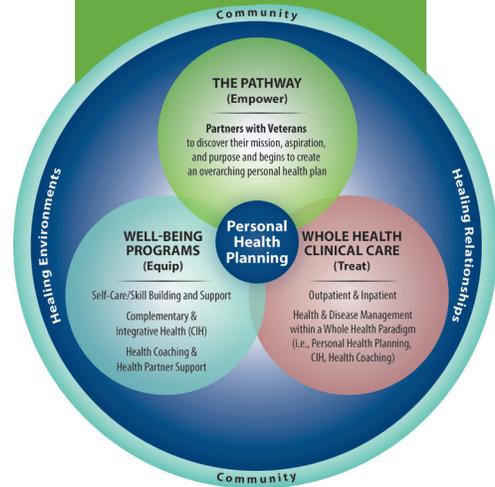
In a Whole Health approach to care, each Veteran is at the center of his or her own healing process. The illustration shows how VA is using the Whole Health System to provide that care.

A core element of Whole Health is development of a personal health plan to help Veterans identify areas in their lives that affect their health; then they are encouraged to connect with support teams and resources to develop strategies that address these areas.

Rather than focusing only on the challenges in a Veteran’s life, the Whole Health approach supports Veterans to think about what encourages them to work through such challenges. This holistic model looks at the many areas of life that can affect health and wellbeing, from the work environment, relationships, diet, sleep patterns and more.

*“Personal health plans give Veterans the opportunity to identify the areas in their life that are affecting their health.”*

### The Whole Health System



Currently, Salisbury VAHCS is introducing Veterans to the first of several components in the Whole Health System known as The Pathway. Through Pathway services, Veteran peers help fellow Veterans explore their mission, aspiration and purpose.

These services include an Introduction to Whole Health course, a Whole Health Retreat for Veterans, and a nine-week Taking Charge of My Life and Health group curriculum. Offering these services enables Veterans to think differently about managing their health. The Pathway engages Veterans in developing a plan for their personal mission for life, health and wellbeing.

Over the next year, Salisbury VAHCS will expand services to provide Wellbeing Programs and Whole Health Clinic Care. They will help support skill building for self-care and provide complementary and integrative health approaches to Veterans.

Whole Health represents a significant change from traditional medicine. It demonstrates VA’s investment in improving Veterans’ lives, by creating healing environments, engaging Veterans in healing relationships, and partnering with them in their journeys to health and wellness.

VA’s Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation supports VA leaders and clinicians implementing this approach in facilities across the country. To learn more, please visit [www.salisbury.va.gov/wholehealth](http://www.salisbury.va.gov/wholehealth).

## Wilmington VAHCC Hosts Whole Health Event

Fayetteville VAMC’s Wilmington Health Care Center (WHCC) recently invited coastal area transitioning military, Veterans and VA employees to a 2-hour introduction to VA Whole Health Workshop March 29.

Veterans were welcome to bring their spouses or significant others to learn more about the Whole Health approach to wellbeing and healing.

“VA facilities across the country are shifting from a health care system focused primarily on treating disease to a Whole Health approach rooted in forming continuous healing relationships and partnerships that support Veterans in achieving their greatest overall wellbeing,” said Fayetteville VAMC Local Recovery Coordinator Dr. Sita Kanithi, one of the event’s organizers. Dr. Kanithi, a clinical psychologist, also supervises Fayetteville VAMC’s Peer Support Specialists who play key roles in the implementation of this innovative approach.

In addition to learning about the Whole Health approach to care, workshop attendees heard about the unique challenges of transitioning from the military and why a Whole Health approach can be helpful in meeting challenges.

More Whole Health training sessions will be available through the Fayetteville VAMC and its Community Based Outpatient Clinics. Announcements will be posted in the medical center, on the website and Facebook.

To learn more about Whole Health, visit:

<https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/explore/about-whole-health.asp>



# Veterans Access to Care Highlight of March HVAC Hearing



House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Phil Roe talks with Veteran Jackie Dove during an HVAC member tour of the Fayetteville VA Health Care Center March 23. (Photo by Steve Wilkins)

and efforts to be more “nimble,” as Rep. Roe put it. As a new network director, she promised vigorous attention to integrating service in the community, with partners including Cape Fear Health Care and Womack Army Medical Center, and expanding facilities to meet the region’s growing Veteran population — Seekins pointed out that VISN 6 has led the nation in Veteran population growth, with a 118 percent increase since 2010. She also assured the use of new technology, like telehealth, which is already a force within VISN 6 and Fayetteville’s health care arsenal.

Seekins indicated that 96 percent of appointments have been completed on or before the patient indicated date, meaning that Veterans have not been waiting for care as long as they might have in the past. She referred to the addition of new facility staff, expanded hours and increased efficiency — citing a 25 percent increase at Fayetteville HCC primary care — through a clinic redesign. Seekins acknowledged the work has just begun, and that there is a lot to do. But she looks forward to new construction that creates more space, new partnerships and sharing agreements with DoD partners, including Seymour Johnson AFB, Womack ARMC and Camp Lejeune, and affiliates like Campbell University.

She and Enderle were enthusiastic about the potential improvements the new Choice program offers, pending Congressional legislation. The most glaring impediment to Veteran care in the community now is payment to providers. The group spent a great deal of time discussing opportunities to increase efficiency and methods that also eliminated barriers to communication and transfer of records.

The Committee then toured the new Fayetteville Health Care Center, a 300,000 sq. ft. multi-service outpatient facility that opened in late 2015. Noting the innovations in organization and utilization of technology, the Committee saw vast opportunities for the HCC to act as model for the pending construction of Health Care Centers in Raleigh, N.C., Chesapeake and Fredericksburg, Va.

## VA Announces New Fayetteville VAMC Director

The Department of Veterans Affairs is pleased to announce the appointment of James Laterza as the new director of the Fayetteville VA Medical Center. Laterza will oversee delivery of health care to nearly 74,000 Veterans with an operating budget of \$332.8 million.

“We are thrilled to bring Mr. Laterza on board as the new medical center director for Fayetteville,” said DeAnne Seekins, Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network (VISN 6) Director. “He has more than two decades of health care experience with the United States Army, and his passion to serve our Veterans is unmatched.”

Mr. Laterza led service members in numerous capacities during his 32 years of military service. His most recent appointment before retiring from the U.S. Army was commander of Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, and six health care clinics in Italy and Belgium where he oversaw a budget of \$250 million and 3,200 staff serving 209,000 beneficiaries. Prior to that role, he was the Chief of Staff for Europe Regional Medical Command.

Mr. Laterza is a proven and trusted health care leader with formidable executive experience in forging community, governmental, business,

and clinical bonds that innovate and inspire organizational leading performance. He has served as a preceptor and mentor of nine Baylor University residents seeking Masters in Health Administration in his career, and he is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

The Fayetteville Medical Center serves nearly 74,000 Veterans living in a 19-county area of southeastern North Carolina. The medical center specializes in general medicine, surgery and mental health in conjunction with its 10 community clinics.

To learn more about the Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network, please visit [www.visn6.va.gov](http://www.visn6.va.gov).



James Laterza has been appointed new director of the Fayetteville VA Medical Center. (File photo)

# Salem VA to Deliver Mental Health Services at Home

**Brett Robbins** | SALEM VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Veterans Health Administration, working to improve Veterans' access to mental health services, now offers service to Veterans through telemental health technologies.

In mid-2018, Salem VAMC will begin providing telemental health services to Veterans in their homes. Veterans and mental health providers will be able to use computers, tablets and smartphones with Internet connections for secure mental health encounters.

"The ability to provide this service to a Veteran in their home enhances patient access to care," said Lindsay Gill, Salem VA Medical Center's telehealth coordinator.

For many Veterans, arrangements can be challenging. Some Veterans have multiple medical diagnoses that make it difficult to attend lots of appointments. Others living in remote regions risk lost wages when they must drive several hours over long distances to make their appointments.

Fortunately, the innovation of telemental health technology can be used to treat nearly every mental health diagnosis, in nearly every treatment modality traditionally delivered face-to-face. It will save Veterans the trip for mental health care.

"As we continue to improve access and deliver quality care to our Nation's Heroes, delivering telemental health services to Veterans will play a critical role here at the Salem VA Medical Center," said Neuropsychologist Neena Cassell. "Offering this technology enables Veterans to engage in shared decision-making, as they decide where to receive their care, and affords them the opportunity for self-management."

Gill and Cassell expect telemental health to be an efficient and beneficial mode of treatment, reducing delays in care and improving patient satisfaction.



Salem VAMC Telehealth Coordinator Lindsay Gill (left) and Neuropsychologist Neena Cassell have worked to make telemental health a reality for Veterans receiving care through Salem VAMC. (Photo: Greer Sullivan)

# ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY: Small things making big impact for Veterans

By Melissa Oliver | RICHMOND VAMC ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Navy Corpsman Malik Jones, 22, has always enjoyed playing billiards. For years, he played every weekend with his friends. That changed, as with most everything else in his life, on July 29, 2017. While stateside in Virginia Beach, Jones suffered a traumatic brain injury and was left paralyzed on the left side of his body.

Jones, who enlisted at age 19, is still on active duty. However, his treatment and rehabilitation is being coordinated in partnership with VA. When he arrived at Richmond VAMC's Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center, Jennifer Vass, a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, immediately started working to engage him, urging him back into recreational activities he enjoyed.

He wanted to play pool, but trying to manage a traditional pool bridge and

felt playing surface, and rolls from front to back. It acts as a replacement for a bridge stick, which is traditionally used to extend a player's reach when the ball is far away.

"Nicole came up with the concept by putting a toy train on the pool stick to see if it would work, and it did," said Hills, an AT rehab engineer. "She asked us to further develop the idea." There is a similar product on the market, but it is too narrow to get on and off the pool cue. Hills designed the concept, which took about five hours to print in nylon using the AT program's 3D printer.

"We went through three versions before finally coming up with the one that Malik is using," said Vass. "Malik is really excited to play again."

Motivated by this, Jones is doing much more than playing pool. He's

Navy Corpsman Malik Jones, a sailor recovering from a traumatic brain injury, is able to play pool again, thanks to a device built by an assistive technology rehab engineer at the Richmond VAMC. (Photo: Melissa Oliver)



the pool stick was virtually impossible. Vass heard about the 3D-printed rolling pool bridge the Assistive Technology (AT) Rehabilitation Engineering team had developed, so she tried it with Jones.

"He picked up on it really quickly and immediately had strategy on how to use it," Vass said.

"It is awesome!" said Jones. "How far away the cue ball is will determine where I place the rolling pool bridge on the pool stick."

The device is the brainchild of Seth Hills and adaptive sports recreational therapist Nicole Shuman. The rolling pool bridge clips onto the pool cue and provides stability, allowing Jones to play with one hand. It holds the tip of the cue a couple inches above the

working hard with staff of the Polytrauma Transitional Rehabilitation Program to regain his lost strength and skills. He takes regular trips into the community for both leisure and community reintegration, and he recently enrolled in the VA's Driver Rehabilitation Program with the goal of regaining the skills to drive a car again.

"I am so happy with the progress that I see with Malik," Vass said. "His speech and comprehension are great, and he is walking every day. He has made tremendous physical progress and maybe more importantly, he is far more outgoing and happy these days. Working hard with the right attitude makes all the difference in the world — for all of us."

# With New Hearts, Patients Become Family

By Yanitz Irizarry | RICHMOND VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Richmond VA Medical Center is the only VA hospital to conduct in-house heart transplant surgeries and one of four facilities to implant Ventricular Assist Devices (VAD).

According to Dr. Gundars Katlaps, chief of cardiothoracic surgery, McGuire provides the most comprehensive list of heart enhancement options in VA healthcare. Nearly all cardiothoracic services are performed on-site, with success rates higher than the national average.

“The key to this success is caring for the whole patient,” said Lisa Martin, lead coordinator of McGuire’s VAD program. “Not only do we use VAD as a bridge to transplant, we also bring the family on board to provide positive support from all angles.”

In summer of 1995, McGuire became the first VA facility to successfully implant a VAD. For 20 years, McGuire remained the leader for VAD placement and heart transplants. Only within the last few years, did other VA hospitals begin offering VAD surgery.

The lifesaving VAD devices are most often implanted into the left ventricle of the heart, leading to the more commonly used term: LVAD. When a patient’s heart function fails, the VAD helps provide a continuous flow of blood to rest of the body. The increased blood flow helps condition the body for heart transplant, restore organ function, and improve overall health.

“Life can change in a minute,” Martin said. “As a team, we do what we can for our patients. We don’t put a lot of restrictions on them so they can live the best life they can.”

In 2001, Navy Veteran Merrick Bunstone experienced how quickly life can change after a near death experience left him with



Brothers and Navy Veterans Merrick and Timothy Bunstone both received cardiothoracic care at McGuire VA Medical Center. Over the course of 17 years, the two Veterans have each had a Ventricular Assist Device and heart transplant surgery at McGuire. (Photo courtesy of Merrick Bunstone)

only three percent heart function.

“The doctor’s diagnosis — I only had 72 hours to live,” he said. “I was this close to dying. I still have the death certificate locked away in my lock box — not signed, of course.”

Struggling to recover, Bunstone eventually arrived at McGuire. He received one of the first generations of LVAD. Early on, the device was a sizable machine requiring inpatient stay and continuous access to power. Now, modern technology allows patients to return home with limited restrictions.

“I was in the hospital for seven weeks,” he said. “I couldn’t come home, I couldn’t be unplugged for more than 30 minutes. The first generation was like a washing machine — everyone knew I was coming.”

Bunstone became the youngest patient ever to receive a heart transplant patient at McGuire.

“At 21, spending several months sick in the hospital,” he said, “I couldn’t have asked for a better place to be.”

After witnessing the excellent care received by his brother 15

years prior, Navy Veteran Timothy Bunstone turned to McGuire when his own heart failed him. During his stay, Timothy learned a few of the same nurses helped both brothers recover from their LVAD surgeries and heart transplants. According to Katlaps, the Richmond VAMC has been performing heart transplants since 1980.

“[My wife and I] knew what this hospital can do; we already saw the results,” said Timothy. “We felt very comfortable coming here. They obviously know what they are doing and do it well.”

After working with our cardiac team, patients become more than just patients — they are family, Martin said.

“When Veterans work with us, we let them know right away they are joining one big family,” Martin said. “We stay in touch with not only the Veteran, but their family as well.”

Pictures of the Bunstone brothers and other heart transplant recipients at McGuire are on display entering the cardiothoracic surgery wing. Each portrait represents more than just the Veterans we have served — it represents family.



Merrick (left) and Timothy Bunstone (Photos: Medical Media, McGuire VA Medical Center)

## VA Hosts First Women-Owned, Small Business Industry Day

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it will host an industry day on March 28 in Springfield, Va., aimed at attracting Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSB) to learn more about initiating and conducting business with VA.

VA WOSB Industry Day, also open to **Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses** (SDVOSB) and Veteran Owned Small Businesses (VOSB), will include presentations, panel discussions and one-on-one sessions with VA program and small-business experts.

Presenters will include representatives from **VA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization**, General Services Administration and the **U.S. Small Business Administration**.

"VA is committed to expanding contracting opportunities to Women-Owned Small Businesses," said then VA Secretary David Shulkin. "It is fitting that we hold this event during National Women's History Month in March as we celebrate the significant contributions of women and reflect on VA's proud history of serving women Veterans."

The event is sponsored by VA's **Customer Advocacy and Vendor Advisory Service** in conjunction with the Strategic Acquisition Center.

For more information, visit **Federal Business Opportunities**.

## VA Awards More Than \$496,000 to Improve IT Infrastructure

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the award of a \$496,405.35 task order to Favor TechConsulting (FTC) LLC to provide Identity and Access Management (IAM) services to improve and maximize cost savings to VA's current information technology (IT) infrastructure.

The task order, which was awarded Feb. 1, enables VA's "Buy vs. Build" initiative, the result of a challenge from then VA Secretary David Shulkin to work with private industry to find creative contracting approaches to save money by purchasing commercially available IT products for less money, versus having VA develop its own.

"This award is representative of the innovative contracting approaches VA needs to achieve our goal of Buy vs. Build," Shulkin said. "As we continue VA's transformation, we will look for managed service offerings from which VA can benefit. This allows VA to focus its attention and resources on providing health care and benefits to Veterans."

VA determined that FTC's proposal to implement Okta Inc.'s Identification as a Service (IDaaS) IAM solution, an alternative to its current IAM solutions, has the potential to result in short-term cost savings of approximately \$350,000 and even greater long-term savings once fully implemented in a production environment of over \$25 million a year.

The task order was awarded under VA's Transformation Twenty-One Total Technology Next Generation (T4NG) Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity Contract, which delivers contractor-provided IT service solutions, including technical support and cybersecurity among other IT and health-related IT requirements. The T4NG contract awards support the department's modernization effort, improving the way VA serves Veterans.

## Applications Opening Soon for 2018 National Veterans Golden Age Games

### Albuquerque, New Mexico, event kicks off Aug. 3

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will begin accepting applications April 2 from Veterans interested in competing in the 2018 National Veterans Golden Age Games in Albuquerque, N.M., Aug. 3-8.

Veterans aged 55 and older who are eligible for VA health care benefits may complete applications online through May 2 at [www.veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov](http://www.veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov).

"The Golden Age Games empower our nation's senior Veterans to lead active, healthy lives," said then VA Secretary David Shulkin. "After more than a week of competition, many participants have boasted of an overall improvement to their quality of life and a rejuvenation to stay active and fit."

Nearly 800 athletes are expected to compete in the national multi-sport competition for senior Veterans. The event encourages participants to make physical activity a central part of their lives, and supports VA's comprehensive recreation and rehabilitation therapy programs.

Competitive events include air rifle, badminton, basketball, bocchia, bowling, cycling, blind disc golf, golf, horseshoes, nine ball, pickleball, powerwalk, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis, and track and field. Exhibition events include air pistol, archery and floorball.

The games encourage participants to continue in local senior events in their home communities, and every other year serve as a qualifying event for competition in the National Senior Games.

The New Mexico VA Health Care System, which provides care for more than 59,000 Veterans throughout New Mexico and Southern Colorado, will host this year's games.

For more information, visit [www.veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov](http://www.veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov). Follow VA Adaptive Sports on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram [@Sports4Vets](https://www.instagram.com/Sports4Vets).



# VISN 6 Recognizes Geriatric Scholars Program Graduates

By integrating geriatric medicine into primary care practices, VA Geriatric Scholars Program has a multiplier effect, creatively promoting function and independence in older adults. Photo by Linnie Skidmore

VISN 6 is pleased to recognize graduates of the VA Geriatric Scholars Program.

Now in its 10th year, with 800 Scholars in more than 370 clinics, the VA Geriatric Scholars Program is a workforce development program offered by VA's offices of Rural Health, and Geriatrics and Extended Care, to integrate state-of-the-art geriatric health care into primary care practice.

The program trains providers who may treat elderly patients in typical or emergency medical settings, to be alert for and prepared to handle health conditions they may not see as often with younger patients. Currently, 22 VISN 6 providers have graduated from the program and are clinically active.

The opportunity is available to a limited number of primary care clinicians, pharmacists, and psychologists, working in Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) or Home Based Primary Care (HBPC).

Geriatric Scholars study an intensive, accredited, didactic education course in geriatric medicine offered through prominent universities or VA Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Centers (GRECC).

They also participate in an intensive quality improvement (QI) workshop led by the widely-acclaimed VA / Robert Wood Johnson National Quality Scholars program. Each Geriatric Scholar is then required to initiate their own QI project, that will help local facilities in meet performance improvement goals required of all PACT programs.

Some examples are included with the list of participants below, for categories: timely screening and treatment of common Geriatric diagnoses, Veteran access to care, and Caregiver Support.

Primary Care staff who become Geriatric Scholars can recognize, evaluate, and provide referral and/or treatment for common geriatric medical issues, such as cognitive impairment, falls, and maintaining independence in the home setting.

By integrating geriatric medicine into primary care practices, VA Geriatric Scholars Program has a multiplier effect, spreading geriatric medicine expertise to many more Veterans. The program encourages an inter-professional team approach toward innovation and creatively promoting function and independence in older adults. It is an example of VA's commitment to high quality care for all Veterans.

Six VISN 6 employees, listed below, recently completed the core course of the VA enterprise-wide Geriatric Scholars Program and are now eligible to continue the program to gain additional skills. They are joined by six more VISN 6 staff just starting participation, beginning in March 2018:(Kia Livingston (Salisbury VAMC), Rhonda Weinhold (Staunton VA CBOC), April 2018: Emmeline Cook (Richmond VAMC), and Ashley Mosely (Asheville VAMC), September 2018: Abigail Ellis (Hampton VAMC), Beth White (Staunton VA CBOC).

Additional information about the Geriatric Scholars Program can be found at: [www.GeriScholars.org](http://www.GeriScholars.org). Nominations are generally accepted once a year in the fall; nomination is made through your facility and the VISN Geriatrics and Extended Care Clinical Lead, Dr. Judy Brannen ([judy.brannen@va.gov](mailto:judy.brannen@va.gov), 804 675-5481).

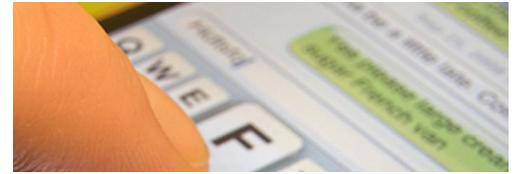
CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Scholars Name	Discipline	Facility	QI Project Title
Marie Barker	PhD	Rutherford County Community Based Outpatient Clinic	Improving Dementia Screening for HBPC Older Veterans
Diane Hancock	GNP	Hunter Holmes McGuire Hospital	Post-Hospital Follow Up Visits in Geriatric Health Care Center
Mary Jacobs Dodson	PsyD	Salem VA Medical Center	Dementia Screening and Triage in Primary Care
Tabitha Sierra	PsyD	Hampton VA Medical Center	Increasing Group Attendance in a Veterans Affairs CLC
Tasha Simmons	PsyD	Chesapeake Community Based Outpatient Clinic	Education and Support for Caregivers of Veterans with Major Neurocognitive Disorder
Jennifer Wartella	PhD	Charlottesville Community Based Outpatient Clinic	Increasing Detection and Treatment of Anxiety Disorders in a Geriatric HBPC Program

## VISN 6 Recognizes Geriatric Program Graduates (Cont'd)

In addition, we would like to recognize prior alumni of the Geriatric Scholars Program, who remain clinically active and share their geriatric expertise with their Veteran Patients and their co-workers:

Alumni FY Enrolled	First	Last	Degree(s)	CBOC/Facility Name
2009	Karen	Austin	MD	Biloxi VA Medical Center
2010	Holly	Harris	MSW	Rutherford County VA Clinic
2012	Shubhada	Iruvanti	DO	Hampton VA Medical Center
2013	Mary	Caputi	PharmD	Hickory VA Clinic
2013	Mary	Morehouse	DO	Fayetteville VA Medical Center
2013	Laura	White	LCSW	Charles George Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
2015	Karen	Grindstaff	MSN	Rutherford County VA Clinic
2015	Devin	Kelly	MSN	Charles George Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
2016	Vicki	Dull	MD	Staunton VA Clinic
2016	Diane	Hancock	GNP	Hunter Holmes McGuire VA
2016	Tabitha	Sierra	GNP	Hampton VA
2016	Tasha	Simmons	PsyD	Chesapeake CBOC
2017	Lynn	Telford	MD	Charles George Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
2017	Angela	Lucas	MSW, LCSW	Greenville VA Clinic
2017	Marie	Barker	PhD	Rutherford County VA Clinic
2017	Jennifer	Wartella	PhD	Charlottesville VA Clinic
2017	David	Benthall	MSOT	Hillandale Road VA Clinic
2017	Ronda	Hensley	FNP, DNP	Charles George Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
2017	Carvin	Harmon	LCSW	Albemarle VA Clinic
2017	Felicia	Jones	MS	Chesapeake CBOC
2017	Tony	Curry	BS	Robeson County VA Clinic



## VEText Arrives in Asheville, Due Throughout VISN Soon

The Asheville VAMC launched VEText, March 13 to provide veterans with an appointment text reminder, as well as an opportunity to cancel their upcoming appointment if necessary. All that patients need to do is to ensure their cell phone numbers are correct in the CGVAMC computer system. An appointment reminder will be sent out, via text, one week and one day prior to respective appointments, and, at that time, patients are given an option to accept or cancel the appointment.

VEText was originally deployed at the Loma Linda VAMC in 2016 and is now a national initiative. The Asheville VAMC is proud to be an early adopter site of technology that will help improve appointment attendance and decrease “no show” rates in order to ultimately improve access to care for our veterans. The service is also currently available at Fayetteville VAMC and will be ready for use by Veterans at other VISN 6 facilities in late April.

**2018**

**Women MilVets Summit & Expo**

**EMPOWER. EDUCATE. ENRICH.**

**SAVE THE DATE** Registration opens February 1, 2018. Reception on May 1.

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 2<sup>nd</sup> MCKIMMON CENTER | NCSU RALEIGH**

919.895.2256 • ncwomenvets@nc.gov • <http://women.nc4vets.com/>

# VISN 6 Sites Of Care & VA Vet Centers

## MEDICAL CENTERS

### Asheville VAMC

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

### Durham VAMC

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

### Fayetteville VAMC

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

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

### Charlotte CBOC

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

### Charlotte HCC

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

### Charlottesville CBOC

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

### Chesapeake CBOC

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

### Danville CBOC

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

### Emporia CBOC

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

### Fayetteville HCC

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

### Fayetteville Rehabilitation Clinic

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

### Franklin CBOC

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

### Fredericksburg CBOC

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

### Fredericksburg at Southpoint CBOC

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

### Goldsboro CBOC

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

### Greenville HCC

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

### Hamlet CBOC

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

### Hickory CBOC

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

### Hillandale Rd. Annex

1824 Hillandale Road Durham  
North Carolina 27705  
919-383-6107

### Jacksonville CBOC

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

### Kernersville HCC

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

### Lynchburg CBOC

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

### Morehead City CBOC

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

### Raleigh CBOC

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

### Raleigh II Annex

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

### Raleigh III CBOC

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

### Robeson County CBOC

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

### Rutherford County CBOC

374 Charlotte Road  
Rutherfordton, NC 28139  
828-288-2780

### Sanford CBOC

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

### Staunton CBOC

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

### Tazewell CBOC

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

### Virginia Beach CBOC

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

### Wilmington HCC

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

### Wytheville CBOC

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

## DIALYSIS CENTERS

### VA Dialysis and Blind Rehabilitation Clinics at Brier Creek

8081 Arco Corporate Drive  
Raleigh, NC 27617  
919-286-5220

### VA Dialysis Clinic Fayetteville

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

## VET CENTERS

### Charlotte Vet Center

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

### Fayetteville Vet Center

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

### Greensboro Vet Center

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

### Greenville Vet Center

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

### Jacksonville, N.C. Vet Center

110-A Branchwood Drive  
Jacksonville, NC 28546  
910-577-1100

### Norfolk Vet Center

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

### Raleigh Vet Center

8851 Elstree 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

## VISN 6 Newsletter

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

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

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