

VOICES OF VISN 6

— Excellent Care — Earned by Veterans — Delivered Here —



CHARLOTTE VETERAN WINS 2019

Spirit of the Games Award

Inside This Issue



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by Amanda Reilly | SALISBURY VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Salisbury's W.G. "Bill" Hefner VA Health Care System's Charlotte Health Care Center (HCC) Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) clinical team hosted a celebratory luncheon to honor Army Veteran Twila Adams. Ms. Adams won the esteemed Spirit of the Games Award at the 2019 National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) competition in Louisville, KY.

Initiated in 1987, the Spirit of the Games Award is presented at the annual NVWG event to Veterans who exemplify leadership, superior athletic achievements, character, sportsmanship, and support for other Veterans. Contenders for this award are nominated by their peers.

Adams has been receiving care and treatment through the Salisbury VA

Health Care System for almost 30 years. At a 2002 SCI appointment, she was approached about sports, at which point she discovered the National Wheelchair Games. She was never an athlete in high school, but now participates in shot put, discus, javelin, air rifle, air pistol, bowling, bocce ball, power-lifting, table tennis, and 9-ball from her own manual wheelchair.

She is an active member of the Paralyzed Veterans of America Southeastern Chapter (PVA). PVA's mission is to ensure Veterans with disabilities have the same opportunities as other Veterans and civilians. PVA became co-sponsor in 1985 to help with expanding the event's mission. Both organizations offer programs that assist Veterans with disabilities in

TOP PHOTO: Twila Adams, winner of the Spirit of the Games Award at the 2019 National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) competition in Louisville, KY.



Message from the Network Director

I am sure many of you will agree that this year has really flown by fast. VA has literally transformed itself in so many ways in 2019. We implemented the MISSION Act, giving Veterans and their care team more options within VA or in the community, such as the recent coordination of care for a Durham Veteran who became the recipient of a DCD heart transplant at Duke. We transitioned our entire Community Care Network region to OPTUM, a company that has the same network of providers as United Health Care. We implemented the smoke-free policy throughout VA, making our facilities safer and healthier for all who visit. We continue to roll out major cultural and care transformation initiatives, such as Whole Health and High Reliability. Suicide Prevention remained our number one clinical priority in 2019, with hundreds of outreach events, media articles, and life-saving interactions with Veterans expressing suicidal ideation, major life stressors or overall sadness. We did all this, and much more, but most importantly, we served 412,292 Veterans this year, a 3% increase from FY18, and had more than 6.7 million visits, with a 4.4% increase from the year before — still making

VISN 6 one of the fastest growing regions for Veterans health care.

The coming year is going to bring more care opportunities for our Veterans as we continue to meet the increasing need for telehealth, with clinics like: tele-allergy, tele-flu, tele-mental health, tele-dermatology, and tele-primary care. In the beginning of the year we will open pilot tele-hubs in Charlotte, Asheboro, Richmond, Durham, and more to come. By January we expect to award Priority Leases in space-driven access restricted areas in Jacksonville, Raleigh, and Tidewater, Virginia; and in the next 5-7 years we will continue to increase our space and access throughout the region, adding 41.4% clinical space in North Carolina and Virginia. We are moving at a fast and furious pace to ensure that all of our Veterans have the convenient, reliable, high-quality health care they deserve wherever they are located.

Health care is ever evolving, and so is VA. Thank you for your patience and partnership as we continue to transform VA to meet the needs of today's Veterans.

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



Dr. Neil Lewis, Director of the Central Virginia VA HCS heart transplant program.

Central Virginia VA Health Care System Heart Transplant Program Director Accepts National Opportunity

Dr. Neil Lewis, Heart Transplant Program Director for Central Virginia VA Health Care System, recently accepted a three-year appointment to be a member on the national Transplant Surgery Surgical Advisory Board for VHA.

As of Dec. 1, Dr. Lewis serves within the National Surgery Office, providing input to VA transplantation policy, since provisions of transplant services within VHA have undergone changes due to the MISSION Act.

I hope my involvement will help ensure transplant services provided to Veterans remain at the highest standard possible, Lewis said.

The Central Virginia VA HCS heart transplant program was the first in VA, and is still the only in-house program across VA.

"I have worked with the program for a little under half of that time, about 17 years," Lewis said. "Richmond has provided advanced heart failure, Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD) and heart transplant services for Veteran patients from all over the United States. This length and breadth of experience places us in a very strong position to understand the needs of Veterans with advanced heart failure and how best to continue to evolve the system to optimally serve their needs."

Congratulations to Dr. Lewis, who will continue to serve at Central Virginia VA HCS during the appointment.

Fayetteville VA Whole Health Program Advances

Fayetteville VA's expanding Whole Health program is poised to merge into the fast lane as a result of training conducted here Sept. 24-26 to teach peer support specialists and staff to facilitate Take Charge of My Life and Health or TCMLH groups for Veterans.

Twenty-one Fayetteville VA Coastal Health Care System employees and volunteers representing seven sites of care were joined by 17 VA participants hailing from as far and wide as California, Texas, Florida, Tennessee and Pennsylvania.

The focus of the three-day Whole Health Facilitator Training is on effective group facilitation skills and exposure to the 9-week TCMLH curriculum through actual practice with feedback.

TCMLH 9-week group is a life changing and life-saving program for assisting Veterans to:

- Explore their life mission, aspirations and purpose
- Learning the practice of mindfulness to reduce stress and PTSD
- Learn and practice goal setting, skill-building, and
- Create plans for self-management of their health and health care, with the support of a group of their peers
- Support the Veterans through the change process

One peer facilitator, Okpahrah Fennerson, said attending a TCMLH course fundamentally changed and saved his life. "I took this course. It changed my life. New chapter, page 1," said the retired Marine, who quipped, "God turned a roughneck into a leatherneck."

"Previously our enterprise had only four peer supports qualified to offer this course. Now we are increasing this 500 percent," said Occupational Health and Wellness Family Nurse Practitioner Christine Anne, facility Whole Health Education Champion. "Now our Veterans from Wilmington, to Jacksonville, to Sanford, to Goldsboro, to Fayetteville, will have access to engage in this powerful life-shifting course."

Peer Facilitators are an essential part of the Whole Health transformation of VA health care. Trainers and staff from the VHA Office of Patient-Centered Care and Cultural Transformation program office OPCC&CT, assisted by Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation contractors, conducted the training for the group-based program that allows Veteran participants to become more proactive in their own health.

OPCC&CT team praised the course and the Fayetteville Coastal HCS team.

"I just wanted to reach out to thank you all for hosting a very successful TCMLH Course — it was a huge success thanks to all involved," said OPCC&CT, Whole Health/Field Implementation Team Consultant Joy Fealy-Kalar. "I love coming to Fayetteville because of the love and dedication that is demonstrated every single day by the employees!"

The VA currently has more than 1,675 Whole Health Peer Facilitators nationwide, bringing this innovative approach to care to its fellow Veterans. To learn more about Whole Health and Whole Health Peer-Facilitator training, visit <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/veteran-resources/Peer-Facilitator-Materials.asp>.



Fayetteville VA Coastal Health Care System employees and volunteers were joined by 17 other VA participants from across the nation for Whole Health Facilitator Training Sept. 24-26.



Salem VA Medical Center is Modernizing to Meet the Needs of Our Nation's Heroes



(GRAPHIC DEPICTION ABOVE) Inside Salem VA Medical Center's new Dialysis Department

The Salem VA Medical Center in Virginia is modernizing and improving its facilities, programs and services for the more than 38,000 Veterans it serves.

Across the medical center, several key projects and initiatives have been completed or are underway. The improvement efforts are the result of intensive strategic planning undertaken by the medical center's leaders and frontline employees, with input from Veterans and other external stakeholder groups.

Physical Changes at the Medical Center

The most substantial and visible change on the Salem VA Medical Center campus is the construction of a new 11,294-square-foot Dialysis Center. The new facility will provide improved and more convenient access for our Veterans who typically make multiple visits to the dialysis clinic every week.

Space that was previously used for dialysis will be renovated and converted into new clinical space that will be used based on the medical center's master planning analysis.

According to lead project manager Eric Carpenter, Chief of Salem VA Medical Center's Facility Management Service, the new facility will feature 16 dialysis stations, including two private rooms for isolation patients.

Construction is expected to be complete in November 2020. When the building is activated, that part of the campus will effectively become a "one-stop shop" for Veterans that receive dialysis treatment.

In addition to the new dialysis center, Salem VA Medical Center is also expanding its Emergency Department. The expansion includes 7,700 square feet of additional space and renovation of 2,200 square feet of existing space to provide a modern Emergency Department. The expansion will enable the emergency department to have more private rooms and improved patient and staff flow. The highlight of the new ED is the inclusion of dedicated Life Support Exam Room, equipped to stabilize critical patients. The estimated completion date is August 2020.

Another major improvement project in progress is the expansion of guest Wi-Fi services. Veterans can now log on to Wi-Fi services to access the Internet throughout the medical center.

Looking Ahead

According to Salem VA Medical Center officials, the organization will continue developing improvement initiatives aimed to modernize facilities, programs and services while

meeting the needs of our nation's Veterans.

"We want to change the dynamic so we can provide health care based on Veterans' needs, values, and how they want to live," said Rebecca Stackhouse, Director, Salem VA Medical Center. "Much of what we are doing today is a result of direct feedback from the Veterans we serve across southwest Virginia and the thousands of professionals we employ, many of whom are Veterans."

Stackhouse explained that the medical center has received a wonderful feedback from Veterans, their family members and other stakeholders from an array of methods available to capture "the voice of our Veterans." Compliments, constructive comments, recommendations and complaints are all viewed as potential opportunities for improvement.

"Anticipating, acting and advocating in the best interests of Veterans are at the forefront of our efforts to modernize our organization. That is how we conduct business. The Veterans we serve deserve nothing less," she said.



Start Your Engines!

Charles George VA Medical Center Car Show Draws Hundreds

By Vance Janes | CHARLES GEORGE VA PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — If there's one thing most young service members love, it's their cars. Well, Veterans aren't much different, as was evidenced by the recent turnout for the 9th Annual Saluting Our Veterans Car and Bike Show at the Charles George VA Medical Center Nov. 2.

According to Kat Marsh, Voluntary Service Specialist here, the parking lot in front of the hospital was closed to make room for the cars. She also said the turnout and the money raised was unprecedented.

"We had to stop taking reservations at car number 308," she said. "To have over 300 cars is just phenomenal. A lot of the people who brought their cars were Vets who just want to give something

back. They want to give back to other Veterans. They came from as far away as Florida, Georgia and Tennessee."

The event brought in more than \$10,000, which will be used by the Veteran Affairs Voluntary Service for Veteran activities such as items for the nursing homes, off-site trips and recreational activities like bowling.

According to Marsh, Barry Robb, Beverly Bradigan and Jeff Doggett — who all work at the Charles George VA Medical Center — were involved in the first show nine years ago and volunteered to help with registration and parking cars. There were also 15 volunteers from various Service Organizations such as the Marine Corps League, who helped make this event a success.

Hot dog lunches were provided, there was a DJ who played music for the crowd, and 10 top best-in-show awards and 12 individual awards were presented.

From Porsche to Chevy, Ford to Mopar and everything in between, there was something for everyone. There were 25 different

The 9th Annual Saluting Our Veterans Car and Bike Show at the Charles George VA Medical Center brought in more than \$10,000 for the Veteran Affairs Voluntary Service, to be used for Veteran activities.

car clubs in the mix, and one Veteran brought a 1950s model fire engine with the American flag painted on it.

Kim Roberts and Jackie Kitchen both attended the event and were taken with the machines on display.

"It was an awesome car show," Roberts said. "Beautiful cars and bikes, for a great cause."

Kitchen agreed and said her favorite was the Army Jeep.

A special guest appearance from Freightliner trucking company showcased a tractor-trailer that was wrapped to honor all Veterans.

Marsh said this is just one of the many things Voluntary Service does to honor Veterans at the Charles George VA Medical Center. Other recent events include the holiday tree lighting at the hospital on Dec. 6, and a holiday gift distribution where more than 600 inpatients will receive special items.



More than 300 cars went on display at the 9th Annual Saluting Our Veterans Car and Bike Show at the Charles George VA Medical Center Nov. 2.

Veterans Can Now Access Information Through Health Records on iPhone

In honor of Veterans Month this November, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has rolled out nationwide access for Veterans to their VA health data, alongside their health records from other health care providers in one place — in the Health Records section of the Health app for iPhone.

Now patients will be able to see their medical information from various participating institutions, including VA, organized into one view. The view covers allergies, conditions, immunizations, lab results, medications and

procedures and vitals. Veterans will also receive notifications when their data is updated.

"We have delivered Veterans an innovative new way to easily and securely access their health information," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Veterans deserve access to their health data at any time and in one place, and with Health Records on the Health app, VA has pushed the Veterans experience forward."

This capability was developed through VA's Veterans Health Application Programming Interface (Veterans Health API), first

revealed in February, and has topped 2,000 users. The Veterans Health API allows private sector organizations to create and deploy innovative digital applications that help Veterans access their health records in new ways. Health Records data is encrypted and protected with the user's iPhone passcode, Touch ID or Face ID.

Beyond this effort with Apple, VA plans to partner with other organizations to bring similar capabilities to other mobile platforms.



Six women Veteran artists took part in an exhibition held recently at Fayetteville VA Health Care Center.

Women Veterans' Exhibit Showcases Art's Healing Power

Fayetteville VA hosted an art exhibit showcasing artwork by six local women Veterans Nov. 7 through Dec. 2 at the Fayetteville VA Health Care Center.

HCC staff and visitors got a chance to meet the artists and see their artwork during a special unveiling event Nov. 7.

The project is a collaboration between the Women Veterans Art Project (WVAP), an organization seeking to honor Women Veterans and educate the public about their service through art, and the Community Patriot Art Connection (CPAC), a local nonprofit whose mission is to offer creative workshops to encourage Patriots and their families to connect, create and use their gifts and interests to cope with disabilities and difficulties in life.

The exhibit was arranged to coincide with Veterans Month, November 2019.

The women Veterans who created the artwork spoke glowingly about art's healing power and its positive impact on their lives.

Air Force Veteran Marguerite "Marzie" Brousseau said she was homeless before she started going to occupational therapy that included creating artwork.

Initially doubtful because fear made her shake any time she tried to concentrate, she said she managed to train her brain not to feel fear when she is focusing on her artwork. Her drawing of a raven and poem about how far she has come were on display.



Army Veteran Nadia Salamea with some of her work displayed at a recent exhibition for women Veteran artists at the Fayetteville VA Health Care Center.

Karen Lassiter, who served in the Army for 25 years, has a passion for nature photography. She said she was especially proud of one of her pieces that includes the message "even in your brokenness your beauty radiates," which she says she sees in all female Veterans. "Photography has helped me escape my

mind, my world, my anxiety and my brokenness and allow me to capture beauty through my lens."

Also contributing to the exhibit were Bernadine "Bernie" Donato, Nadia Salamea, Andrea Tolbert and Rosemary Turner.

Donato, a visual artist, served in the Navy Nurse Corps and as a tactical C-130 flight nurse with the California Air National Guard.

Salamea, an Army Veteran who served in South Korea for eight years, said painting helped her deal with depression.

Tolbert, an Army Veteran also, said artwork helped her deal with claustrophobia, so she was recently able to board a plane and travel to London with her daughter.

Turner, who served in the Navy, is a poet who has a podcast and said she wants to be a voice for the voiceless.

Community Patriot Art Connection founder Tess Holtzapfel introduced the artists. She said she was inspired to create CPAC, which she described as a creative ministry, by talks she had with Veterans during visits to the health care center as a physician liaison for a home health hospice agency.

VA Uses Innovative Means to Help Reduce Diabetic Limb Loss

For National Diabetes Month — and as part of broader efforts by VA to confront diabetes — VA will begin regional implementation of the Podometrics Mat, a new medical device that has the potential to prevent limb loss in Veterans with diabetes.

The technology, now in use at 15 VA medical centers, uses thermographic monitoring of a patient's feet to identify early onset of diabetic foot ulcers (DFUs). DFUs can lead to limb loss if not detected early.

Known as thermal imaging, the non-invasive test involves no radiation and uses a special camera to measure skin temperature. This allows clinicians to develop plans for preventing added deterioration of a patient's health.

"VA's early adoption of cutting edge,

innovative solutions to combat a disease that impacts so many Veterans is another example of how VA is aiming to be a leader in health care innovation," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "VA is uniquely positioned in its ability to test and quickly scale new solutions throughout its health care system, which can drastically change Veteran lives."

VA's use of the Podometrics Mat builds on a 2017 VA-led study at the Phoenix VA and the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare Systems. The study showed the in-home foot-temperature monitoring device was able to detect 97% of DFUs as early as five weeks before the onset of symptoms, with 86% of participants using the mat an average of three days per week. With more medical centers offering use of the mat, VA has continued to observe

similar outcomes.

One VA facility found that 84% of Veterans are using the mat almost daily, allowing preventative clinical interventions to take place.

The mat will be available to all Veterans across the country through their local Prevention of Amputations for Veterans Everywhere clinic providers. In addition, VA's Veterans Health Administration Innovation Ecosystem is implementing a pilot program of the mats at VA facilities in the southeast, where some of the highest DFU rates exist.

Through the effort, VA will be able to further evaluate best practices and optimize care models, ultimately improving the effectiveness of the technology in the VA health care system. Last year, VA treated more than 75,000 cases of DFUs across the country.

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.fayettevilleenc.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

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Elizabeth City, NC 27909
252-331-2191

Brunswick County CBOC

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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

Jacksonville 2 VA Clinic

306 Brynn Marr Road
Jacksonville, NC 28546
910-353-6406

Jacksonville 3 VA Clinic

4 Josh Court
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

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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

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Pembroke, NC 28372
910-272-3220

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 Ellistree Lane
Raleigh, NC 27617
(919) 361-6419

Roanoke Vet Center

1401 Franklin Rd SW
Roanoke, VA 24016
540-342-9726

Virginia Beach Vet Center

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

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