

VOICES OF VISN 6

Excellent Care – Earned by Veterans – Delivered **Here**

VA Employees Experience

Rebirth of Cultural Roots

Inside This Issue



By Megan Kon | RICHMOND VA, CVHCS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- 3** Fryar Appointed Interim Director at Durham
- 4** Tasting Success, "Chopped" Chefs Compete in The Kitchen
- 5** Randall D. Gehle DO, FAAFP, Was appointed Chief of Staff for the W.G. (Bill) Hefner VA Medical Center effective Sept. 12, 2021.
- 6** Western North Carolina VA Health Care System to Join City of Asheville for Virtual Veterans Day
- 8** Salisbury VA to Bring "Awake" Hand Surgeries to Charlotte VA Health Care Center
- 9** VA Adopts New Artificial Intelligence Strategy to Ensure Trustworthy Use of Technology for Veteran Care

As the smoke clears and the last bead of sweat drops from his brow, Corey Newman feels a sense of rebirth. For him, attending a ceremonial Native American sweat is entering a sacred space.

"The reasons people go to a sweat lodge vary from person to person," Newman explained.

Newman, a registered nurse at Central Virginia VA Health Care System (CVHCS) in Richmond, Va., attends sweats regularly to help him with chronic back pain. During a sweat, a spiritual leader guides participants in a ritualistic meditation to promote healing, restore hope and renew the spirit.

According to Native American tradition, a sweat lodge is described as a small, dome-like structure made of natural materials, and it represents the womb of Mother Nature. Inside, stones are heated to intense temperatures, and as the heat rises, participants are said to become more emotionally vulnerable. Darkness consumes the sweat lodge which is believed to strengthen the meditation. After surrendering to the process, the hope is to emerge reborn.

"It is round, dark and hot like a mother's womb and when a baby is born it is free," Newman shared. "That is how you are supposed to feel when you come out of a

TOP PHOTO: Jimmy "Thunder" Ortiz leads a Native American ceremonial sweat at the Central Virginia VA Health Care System each month at the Richmond campus. His wife, Marilyn Sanford, is a women's leader in the Native American community. (Photo courtesy of Marilyn Sanford)

(Continued on page 5)



MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Happy November,

This is my third week as the VISN 6 Network Director, and I am excited to be here and grateful for the opportunity to serve you in this role. I've met many of you during my time as the Durham Director, and I look forward to continuing past relationship and building new ones.

I want to thank Ms. Young for her leadership over the last 10 hard months, and credit her for my seamless transition. I am particularly privileged to be stepping into a position with such high-performing and talented VISN and facility leadership teams who have demonstrated their readiness to work and put Veterans at the center of all our decisions.

For those who may not know me, let me share a few things about me, my career and my philosophy of care. I have more than 30 years of health care experience. After working in the private sector for some time, I started my journey with VA in 2010 as the Associate Director of the Tennessee Valley Health Care System. In 2016, I moved across the country to join the San Francisco VA Medical Center as their Associate Director. Before working as the Executive Director of the Durham VA Health Care System, I was the Interim Director of the Western New York Health Care System. I have seen what Veterans need and how VA facilities operate from coast to coast for the last 12 years, and I am excited to continue our incredible mission at the regional level.

I have to say, I am happiest when I am listening to our Veterans' stories, collaborating with fellow VA employees, and partnering with our community stakeholders to move our mission forward. It's a reminder of the larger purpose of VA and the vital role we play in people's lives.

Yes, we provide health care, but our health care systems mean so much more to our Veterans. Not just anyone can sign up and get care at a VA facility; that's why providing honorable and timely care is so important. When you see a VA facility or a VA employee, they stand as a reminder of the small and honorable population of people who have served in the U.S. Forces.

I believe that employees are more driven to make bold changes when they can see the bigger picture and are really connected to the "why." I also believe that we must continue aggressively transforming the way we provide health care to meet the needs of all the generations of Veterans we serve today, so that in the future, they will

continue to choose VA for their health needs.

So, let's quickly look at a snapshot of the current and future Veterans we serve. The information is pulled from VA's population model and the U.S. Census (I've linked them below if you want to read more):

Veteran Populations:

- The Veteran rate has declined from 26.4 million people to roughly 18 million people since 2018. In a U.S. population of 329.5 million people, less than 7 percent are Veterans.
- Veterans who have served anytime between Aug. 1990 to present (outside of peacetime) are more likely to have served in a combat zone multiple times, have a higher disability rating, with more military-related health concerns than other cohorts of Veterans.

Age:

- Thirty-seven percent of our Veterans are 70+, 36 percent are between the ages of 50-69, and 27 percent are under 50 years old.
- By 2046, the percentage of age groups we serve will be almost equal.

Gender:

- Eighty-nine percent of Veterans are male, and 11 percent are female.
- The female population is expected to increase to 18 percent by 2046.

Race/Ethnicity:

- Seventy-four percent of Veterans are Non-Hispanic White, 8 percent are Hispanic, 13 percent are Black, and 2 percent are Asian.
- By 2046, 62 percent of the Veteran population will be Non-Hispanic White, 16 percent Hispanic, 15 percent will be Black, and 4 percent will be Asian.

Our Veteran demographics are becoming more diverse than ever before and will continue diversifying — diversity in age, gender, race and ethnicity. How we offer care now and in the future needs to be just as diverse as our Veteran population.

The good news is that there is less of a societal stigma for Veterans to get the care and disability benefits they have earned compared to in the past. With quicker access to VA benefits, Veterans are getting the care they need earlier.

VISN 6 is uniquely positioned to really change the way Veterans here and all over the U.S. receive care for years to come. Behind VISN

17, VISN 6 has the second-largest enrollee Veteran growth since 2017. In 2020, Virginia's Veteran population ranked 7th in the U.S. while North Carolina ranked 8th. By 2040, Virginia is projected to be the 4th-largest Veteran population and North Carolina will be 6th.

Since joining VA and being a Navy Veteran myself, I have been passionate about building strategic plans to modernize our mission and harness the power and relevance of what VA offers.

Veterans have more health care options outside of VA, which means, now more than ever, that we need to provide our Veterans with a health care team they trust, and assistance with navigating all of their care and delivery options, all while creating a space of patient empathy and sensitivity. This care framework doesn't start with our patients; it starts internally with us, modeling it with one another.

As we continue to work through the ever-changing dynamics of COVID, I intend to refocus our goals toward really listening to our Veteran customers, our employees and our stakeholders to understand their needs and concerns of today. From there, we can continue transforming health care delivery and focus intently on providing timely, relevant care. We must retain the Veterans whom we care for now, regain those we have lost, and gain the trust of Veterans who have a less-than-favorable impression of VA — this is where the work is.

Over the next 90 days, my goal will be to observe the operations and then work with VISN and facility leadership to develop a clear strategic roadmap to meet the needs I mentioned above. I am excited to get to work and can't wait to see what we accomplish together.

Thank you for your commitment to our Veterans and to one another. As Veterans Day is upon us, please accept my appreciation for all that you do to support our Veterans, and my gratitude to all my fellow Veterans for their loyal devotion to our nation's sanctity and spirit. Let's continue to lean on one another to push through the tough times, changing VA's future for our Veterans' benefit.

***Together we can accomplish anything.
Let's get started!***

PAUL S. CREWS

MPH, FACHE, VISN 6 Executive
Network Director



Fryar Appointed Interim Director at Durham

Mr. Paul Crews, Executive Network Director for VISN 6, welcomes Marri Fryar, Associate Director of Patient Care Services and Chief Nurse Executive for the Durham VA Health Care System, to the position of Interim Executive Director for the Durham VA Health Care System. Mrs. Fryar's detail officially started on Oct. 10, 2021.

"She has demonstrated her exceptional talent for leading change and building solid professional coalitions in all areas of health care operations over the last 31-years with VA," said Mr. Crews. "We are excited to welcome her into the position of Interim Director for the Durham VA Health Care System."

Mr. Crews was recently appointed as the VISN 6 Executive Network Director effective Oct. 10, 2021. The Durham VA Health Care System Executive Director position, is currently in Human Resources under recruitment.

Mrs. Marri "Nicki" Fryar's Executive Biography:
Marri "Nicki" Fryar, MBA, MHA, BSN, NE-BC, VHA-CM, has proudly served America's Heroes for more than 31 years in various positions in the Veteran Health Administration. She was named Durham VA Health Care System's Associate Director of Patient Care Services and Chief Nurse Executive in January 2019; before being selected, she served as the acting for this role since January 2018.

Mrs. Fryar is well versed in all areas of health care operations, both clinical and administrative, and has served in various VA leadership roles: Associate Chief Nurse for Performance Improvement and Research, and the nurse manager for numerous clinical settings, including cardiovascular/electrophysiology laboratories, interventional radiology, and critical care.

Mrs. Fryar is a native of North Carolina and holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from North Carolina Central University, and both a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Health Administration from Pfeiffer University. She is a 2021 graduate of the Federal Executive Institute. Mrs. Fryar is a board-certified Nurse Executive through the American Nurses Credentialing Center. She is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives, and the American Organization of Nurse Leaders.

Mrs. Fryar enjoys cooking, serving others, and spending time with her family and friends. She is married to Marcus Fryar, and they have two daughters.

Please join me in congratulating Mrs. Fryar!

PAUL S. CREWS

MPH, FACHE, VISN 6 Executive Network Director

Switching Gears Mid-pandemic, Clinic Continues Veteran Therapy

By Ben Wocken | HAMPTON VA MEDICAL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

HAMPTON, Va. — For Veterans with high health risk, safety comes first. But where does that put "fun"?

Before COVID-19, most Hampton VA Recreation Therapy (RT) programs were in group settings on and off campus. Volunteers brought vivacity to community trips and nature experiences.

As the pandemic wears on, public health precautions continue to restrict or postpone most group activities. Seeking to stay connected, Hampton VA's Community Living Center Hampton Roads Estates Geriatrics and Extended Care units have gotten creative delivering inpatient Veterans' clinical Recreation Therapy.

Synching Safety and Fun

Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) Recreation Therapists Kay Kerr and Andrew Hunter put their heads together this summer rethinking how to keep fun and meaningful experiences going for senior Veterans.

Kerr and Hunter quickly credit others, "Veterans gave input as to what they wanted and needed during this difficult time, and we listened."

The solution? The duo came up with a program pivot minimizing the risk of spreading virus while maximizing fun. Staff and patients have adjusted to a new one-on-one-style clinical Recreation Therapy program.

Beating Boredom

"Recreation Therapy is not just meant to help pass the time, but improves overall quality of life," said Hunter. "The RT interventions help our Veterans be involved socially, be independent, engage physically, emotionally, spiritually and cognitively."

New ventures held on the unit include manicures, horseraces, indoor fishing game, happy hour, courtyard gardening, cookie bake, robotic pets, music and art, virtual worship services, iPad video virtual family visits, phone calls, virtual and window visits.

Rolling computer carts enhance virtual bedside visits with large, easy-to-see screens.

"These new programs offer opportunities for improving memory, cognitive

functioning, fine-motor skills, self-confidence and self-esteem," Kerr says, adding that Veterans say the activities decrease their feelings of isolation, stress, depression and anxiety.

"Veterans experience a sense of purpose, community, family, relaxation and pleasure," she says. "And in these uncertain times it is very important."

Fred Sandoval is a patient and U.S. Army Veteran who enjoys the program's new recreation opportunities. "It makes me feel good, gives me something to do and look forward to," he says. "And I've learned to program RT group times that I enjoy with an alarm in my watch that my wife got me so I don't miss out."

Geared for Success

Whenever the COVID-19 positivity rate in the Tidewater community is over 10 percent, no RT group activities are conducted. Veterans and staff are tested twice weekly; to date, no Veterans have tested positive for COVID-19.

Putting safety — and fun — first, staff and Veteran patients look forward to being able to interact in groups again.



Veteran Harvey Bray maintains his garden, planted during the COVID-19 pandemic, as VA Recreational Therapist Andrew Hunter looks on. (Photo by Ben Wocken)



Veteran Michael Judkins chats with his family at the Hampton VA CLC during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Photo by Ben Wocken)



LEFT-PHOTO: Food Judges provide feedback to cooking competition chefs during Hampton VA's "Chopped" event celebrating National Healthcare Food Service Week. **(photo by Ben Wocken)** **RIGHT:** Top three Chefs with winner Michael Ervin (middle) holding the "Golden Spatula" trophy during Hampton VA's "Chopped" event celebrating National Healthcare Food Service Week. **(photo by Ben Wocken)**



Winning dish created by chef Michael Ervin during Hampton VA's "Chopped" event celebrating National Healthcare Food Service Week. **(Photo by Ben Wocken)**

Tasting Success, "*Chopped*" Chefs Compete in The Kitchen

By Ben Wocken, HAMPTON VA MEDICAL CENTER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

HAMPTON, Va – Hampton VA Medical Center celebrated National Healthcare Food Service Week was celebrated in October, using the theme, "Healthcare Food Service: Teamwork is our Secret Recipe."

The Healthcare Food Service Week recognizes the importance of food services staff and nutrition in patients' recovery process. Food Service staff celebrated big this year - each day featuring different approaches with activities and prizes.

The 2021 "Chopped" competition drew a crowd, as appetite-whetting aromas wafted through hallways. Like the television show, contestant chefs received a mystery box of ingredients to prepare, a pantry of stock items - including spices to complement their concept -- and a time limit to plate the final culinary concoction.

The mystery box contained shrimp, chicken, broccoli, spinach, green peppers, and rice. With staff cheering them on, the chef contestants relied on their creativity -- creating dishes ranging from Asian fare to Panama City street food.

Eight contestants vied for the "Golden Spatula" award. With allotted time up, the chefs stopped cooking and began describing their creation to a panel of judges. The judges determined scores for appearance, creativity and flavor. The judges had a lot to chew over, before declaring Michael Ervin this year's winner. Ervin has been a chef at Hampton VA for over 20 years.

The annual National Healthcare Food Service Week wrapped up with a lively game of "Hampton Family Feud," and a socially distanced ice cream social.

Lynchburg affiliate visits Salem VAMC

By Rosaire Bushey, SALEM VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Lynchburg Family Medicine Residency Affiliate (Centra Medical Group) traveled to the Salem VA Medical Center recently to meet with the Education-Academic Affiliations Department, Simulation Staff, Attendings, Providers and our Salem VA Health Care System Leadership Team.

The Lynchburg Family Medicine Residency was established in 1975 to improve the health of central Virginians, decrease the risk of hospital admissions, and contribute to the growth and education of future family physicians. The residency is affiliated with Centra Health, Inc. Most of the first-year residency is spent caring for patients in a hospital setting in multiple rotations. Second year residents

have similar rotations as their previous year but focus on outpatient management and common office issues. Third year residents focus primarily on outpatients and looking to teach and supervise.

Lori Nelson-Madison, MD, Faculty and Program Director, along with Patty Irwin, Residency Coordinator, joined the group to visit the Salem Simulation Center and discuss changes in the onboarding process, disbursement agreements, and other topics related to Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) on clinical education and work hours.

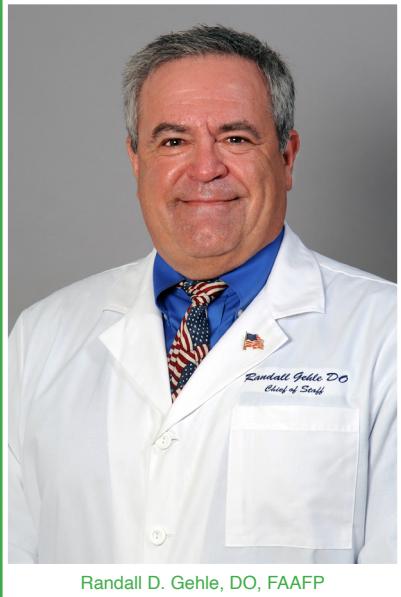
Stephanie Beheler, Salem's Simulation Nurse, guided the visitors through the



Lynchburg Affiliate Visit participants from left: Drew Tokarsky, PA, Lori Nelson-Madison, MD, Lynchburg Family Medicine Residency Faculty Program Director, Patty Irwin, C-TAGME, Lynchburg Residency Coordinator, Jamie Lee, Salem Simulation Technician, and Mehdi Kazemi, MD, Salem Associate Chief of Staff for Education, DEO. **(Photo by Stephanie Beheler)**

Simulation Center where they also met with providers, attendings, the Education-Academic Affiliations staff and Simulation Staff.

Randall D. Gehle DO, FAAFP, Was appointed Chief of Staff for the W.G. (Bill) Hefner VA Medical Center effective Sept. 12, 2021.



Randall D. Gehle, DO, FAAFP

Dr. Randall Gehle has been a board-certified family physician since 1992 and served as the Medical Director for the Charlotte Health Care Center (HCC) since December 2016. He joined VA in 2013 as a PACT Physician, also serving as the Assistant Chief for Primary Care, and has been the Flagship Education Champion for Whole Health within the Salisbury VA Health Care System since 2015.

He also graduated from the VA Health Care Leadership Development Program (HCLDP) in 2017. Prior to working for VA, Dr. Gehle spent 17 years with Caromont Medical Group (CMG) in the McAdenville, N.C., office, and was the co-chair for Physician Governance at CMG, as well as their Physician IT Champion.

Dr. Gehle received his Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology/Post-Baccalaureate Studies at the University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla., in December 1984, and his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine from the Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine, North Miami Beach, Fla., in June 1989. He served as Battalion Surgeon for 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

CONTINUED FROM COVER

VA Employees Experience Rebirth of Cultural Roots

sweat."

Newman didn't find out about his heritage until he was grown. Now, he is a member of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe.

"The elders in my family told me they had to label us Black or African American on our birth certificates to protect us," said Newman. "They said Native Americans were hated more than any other race."

As Newman's cultural roots became more exposed, he branched out into his newfound native traditions.

Trian Hammie, a supervisory medical support assistant at the VA clinic in Emporia, leads the [American Indian and Alaska Native Special Emphasis Program](#) at CVHCS. Hammie and Newman volunteer to support VA employees in their efforts to celebrate and acknowledge diversity.

Hammie says he will now take the opportunity to get involved in the Native American community.

"My family was among those who refused to register for the [Dawes Act](#), and rejected the pressure of assimilation, which resulted in the loss of my family's cultural identity," Hammie said. "Through the oral testimony of my family, specifically my grandmother, I now know I am a clandestine descendant of either the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation or Tuscarora Nation."

Both Hammie and Newman are eager to share their cultural identity with the CVHCS employees and community.

"I am excited to have a role in helping the staff recognize and understand that we all have different values shaped by our diverse cultural backgrounds," Hammie said.

One Mission

The mission of CVHCS employees is to care for those who have served, their caregivers and their families. No matter a Veteran's race, gender or sexual orientation, our focus is to provide world-class customer service to all.

Upcoming Events

In honor of National Native American Heritage Month, CVHCS is hosting two Native American events, including a Sweat Lodge Lakota Ceremony on Saturday, Nov. 13 and a Native American Appreciation Day on Monday, Nov. 15. For event details, visit our website at: <https://www.va.gov/richmond-health-care/>.

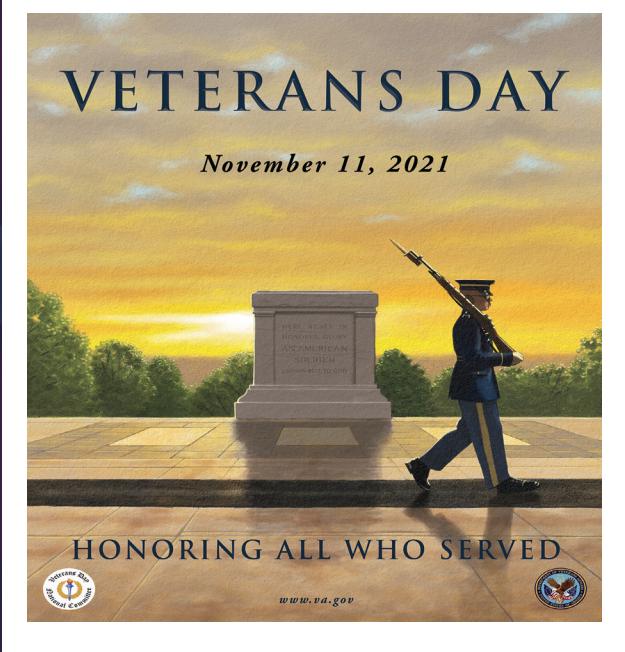
For more information about the AIAN SEP, visit: <https://www.va.gov/ORMDI/DiversityInclusion/AIAN.asp>

American Indian and Alaska Native



Special Emphasis Program

Trian Hammie and Corey Newman, employees at Central Virginia VA Health Care System, look forward to attending upcoming ceremonial sweats and recognizing National Native American Heritage Month. Hammie and Newman volunteer for the American Indian at the hospital. (Photo by Megan Kon)



VA Honors Vets on Veterans Day – and Every Day

VA is proud to lead the nation in observing Veterans Day 2021. All Veterans sacrifice to serve the United States — physically, emotionally or by being away from family and other loved ones. We must continue to put Veterans first, honoring all who served and maintaining a vision for the future.



Grounded in Tradition Resilient in Spirit

NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH
NOVEMBER



National American Indian Heritage Month

The observation of National American Indian Heritage Month has its roots in Public Law 99-471. Over several years, the observation was moved to different months but in 1990, Public Law 101-343 set the monthlong observance in November. Each year, the president issues a proclamation in recognition of the observance. National American Indian Heritage Month is observed from Nov. 1-30 of each year. The observance month recognizes American Indians for their respect for natural resources and the Earth, having served with valor in our nation's conflicts, and for their many distinct and important contributions to the United States. Please note that the title of this observance varies between the various documents listed, and DEOMI uses that title set forth in the 1990 and subsequent Public Laws. The theme for this event changes each year.

Western North Carolina VA Health Care System to Join City of Asheville for Virtual Veterans Day

By Vance Janes | ASHEVILLE VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Western North Carolina VA Health Care System Chief of Mental Health Services Dr. Laura Tugman, Ph.D., will be the keynote speaker during this year's virtual Veterans Day Ceremony which will be streamed on the City of Asheville's YouTube Channel ([youtube.com/cityofasheville](https://www.youtube.com/cityofasheville)).

The ceremony will be held Nov. 11, at 11:00am, and will be streamed live from the American Legion Post 70 in Asheville.

Dr. Tugman will speak about an Army Veteran and her military family. As Chief of Mental Health Services at Charles George VA, Dr. Tugman is the caretaker of 12,000 veterans who receive mental health services at Charles George.

Stephanie Young, Executive Director of the WNC VA Health Care System, will also speak, and there will be two readings from the **Brothers and Sisters Like These** Veteran writing group — Veterans in this group write to heal the wounds of war.

The readings are dedicated to an Air force pilot who was killed in Vietnam, and a Marine Corps sniper who recently passed away.

Join us on Veterans Day as we honor those who have served our country in war and in peacetime.

Western North Carolina VA Health Care System Fills Three Key Positions

By Vance Janes | WNC VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — The Western North Carolina VA Health Care System has recently filled three key positions.

The positions include Facility Management Service (FMS) Chief, Quality Management Service Chief, and Privacy Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officer.

"We are very pleased to announce that Ms. Nadia Elkaissi has been selected as the Chief of FMS," said George Drexel, WNC VA Health Care System Associate Director.

Elkaissi graduated from Case Western Reserve University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biomedical Engineering. She worked one year in the private sector engineering and designing cochlear implants before joining the VA Healthcare System in Pittsburgh as a Biomedical Engineer.

After serving more than three years there, she joined the Charles George VA Medical Center in December 2018 as the Supervisory Biomedical Engineer.

Throughout her role here in Asheville, she has directed the Healthcare Technology Management Department by managing and implementing everything from network devices to constructions projects, including providing technical responses to incidents in the hospital.

"She has successfully served as the Interim Chief of FMS since July of this year," Drexel said. "We're excited and confident in the experience and knowledge Ms. Elkaissi brings with her to this new role."

Kim Pierce, MSN, RN was selected as the chief of Quality Management Service for the Health Care System.

Pierce has been a registered nurse for 27 years and is a graduate of Western North Carolina Nursing School. She earned her MSN in Nursing Administration from Gardner Webb University.

She came to Charles George VA Med-

ical Center as a Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) nurse before moving in her role as the facility's Risk Manager in 2013. Prior to joining CGVAMC, she held nursing positions that included Medical/Surgical Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Neuro/Trauma ICU and Perioperative Nursing.

Pierce also worked as a private sector Healthcare Risk Manager.

"Kim has a passion to teach and inspire new nurses to be their best as they work to provide the highest quality of care to our Veterans," Stephanie Young, Executive Director, said. "We congratulate Ms. Pierce as she embarks on this new journey. Her experiences, abilities and commitment to our mission will be instrumental in our future success."

Renita Chastain has completed a two-year Veterans Health Administration Privacy/Freedom of Information Act Officer Technical Career Field (TCF) Program, and she has assumed duties as a second facility Privacy/Freedom of Information Act Officer for the Western North Carolina VA Health Care System. It's a role she shares with James Snelgrove.

"During the past two years, Ms. Chastain has received extensive training in federal privacy laws, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and all Privacy-related duties to prepare her for her role as a VHA Privacy/FOIA Officer," Young said.

She began her career with VHA in 2009 and previously served as a Program Support Assistant for Facility Revenue with the Mid-Atlantic Consolidated Patient Account Center (MACPAC).

"Ms. Chastain is dedicated to our Veterans and staff, and building a culture of Privacy awareness," said Young. "Congratulations, Renita."



Nadia Elkaissi

Nadia Elkaissi is the new Charles George VA HCS Facility Management Service Chief.



Kim Pierce

Kim Pierce was recently selected as the chief of Quality Management Service for the Health Care System.



Renita Chastain

Renita Chastain has assumed duties as a second facility Privacy/Freedom of Information Act Officer for the Western North Carolina VA Health Care System.



**DISCOVER
WHAT MATTERS
Live Whole Health.**



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

LEARN MORE

Salisbury VA to Bring “Awake” Hand Surgeries to Charlotte VA Health Care Center

By Todd Goodman | SALISBURY VA PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A Salisbury VA Medical Center surgeon performed the first-ever “local” carpal tunnel surgeries at the Charlotte VA Health Care Center on Monday, Oct. 4. Veterans now will be able to avoid operating room procedures such as anesthesia and coordinating a ride home and instead be in and out in under 30 minutes.

“It’s been a tremendous help for our patients,” said Dr. Jeffrey Baker, Salisbury VA section chief of Orthopedic Surgery. “Once you give the patient the option to do the procedure wide awake, they are quick to choose it. They’ve been coming up here to the Salisbury VA site to get it done, but opening this up in Charlotte will allow us to capture the patients that don’t want to drive to Salisbury.”

Baker, who will operate out of Charlotte one day per month, already has nearly 10 cases scheduled for his opening day. With more than a third of surgical referrals coming from the Charlotte area, demand for these procedures should remain consistent.

“Since we began doing these, I would guess we’ve done more than any VA in the country,” said Baker. “It really is a revolutionary thing that we’re doing.”

Baker has simplified things and made

it a “band aid surgery” and at 10-15 minutes per procedure, he can help a high number of Veterans.

“It’s a very quick procedure,” said Baker. “And that’s because we’ve stripped away all of the operating room procedures. It takes time and additional staff to accommodate OR patients. I can do three or four of these procedures in the time it would take to do one such surgery in the OR.”

Gone are the days of splinting and bracing of the repaired hand. Patients leave with a band aid and get things moving quickly. They tend to progress very well — a far cry from just several years ago.

“A friend had a carpal tunnel surgery done five years ago and you would have thought she’d had a total knee replacement,” said Salisbury VA Medical Center Chief of Staff Dr. Randall Gehle. “It was so uncomfortable for her that she canceled the opposite hand which was just as symptomatic because she didn’t want to go through that again.”

Thankfully, hand surgeries have come a long way. And bringing them to Charlotte is another way that Salisbury VA is improving patient access.



Close-up of wide-aware hand surgery operation taken earlier at the W.G. “Bill” Hefner VA Medical Center in Salisbury. Dr. Jeffrey Baker, Salisbury VA section chief of Orthopedic Surgery has begun performing wide-aware hand surgeries at the Charlotte VA Health Care Center. (Photo by Luke Thompson.)



Dr. Jeffrey Baker, Salisbury VA section chief of Orthopedic Surgery, has begun performing wide-aware hand surgeries at the Charlotte VA Health Care Center. (Photo by Todd Goodman.)

“We’re going to do whatever we can to improve access to care,” Salisbury VA Health Care System Director Joseph Vaughn said, “whether that’s streamlining a procedure or bringing the care to another facility like we’re doing in Charlotte.”

VA Pushes for Employment Inclusivity During Compensated Work Therapy Vocational Rehabilitation Week

WASHINGTON — In recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the Department of Veterans Affairs is observing Compensated Work Therapy Vocational Rehabilitation Week, Oct. 17-21, at its facilities nationwide as part of its efforts to increase employment inclusivity and vocational rehabilitation services for Veterans with disabilities.

The services provided through the CWT program are integrated with clinical care to assist Veterans with serious mental illness, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, polytrauma and traumatic brain injury, substance use disorder, homelessness, and other psychosocial issues that may interfere with securing meaningful employment.

“The core philosophy of compensated work therapy is that given the right support, all persons with a disability can contribute productively to the workforce,” said National

Director of Veterans Health Administration Vocational Rehabilitation Service Shana K. Bakken, Ph.D. “VHA’s vocational rehabilitation teams are working to ensure every Veteran who has a goal of employment has the opportunity to make a worthwhile contribution in their local communities through meaningful work.”

Veteran and VA File Clerk Mike Onrubia credits VA Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist Holly Starks with helping him get a job at the Hampton VA Healthcare System, which he says helped turn his life around.

“I applied for the File Clerk/Scanner position at Hampton VA and started work the day after Labor Day and I love my job,” said Onrubia. “For the first time in over a decade, I feel like I can work toward my dream of working as a social worker and then a psychologist, helping out my fellow Veterans and giving them hope like Ms. Starks did for me. My daughter is in school, and I look forward

to going back myself, all thanks to Ms. Holly Starks.”

This is an example of how VA’s integrated care positively affects a Veteran’s whole well-being, including even financial independence.

Often, individuals with disabilities have been placed in sheltered workshops and sheltered employment, which may separate them from workers in the general population. In August, VA discontinued operations of prevocational programs, including sheltered workshops and programs that pay sub-minimum wage.

CWT programs are located at all VA health care systems across the nation, and VA staff have developed partnerships with local, regional and national businesses, industry and government agencies to provide Veteran candidates for employment.

VA employs more than 800 rehabilitation counselors, vocational rehabilitation specialists, managers and peer support specialists who provide services to more than 52,000 Veterans each year within the VA health care system.

Learn more about [VA’s CWT program](#).

VA Expands Offering of COVID-19 Booster Vaccines

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs is now offering Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine booster shots under Emergency Use Authorization, expanding on last month's authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech booster.

This decision follows the recent Food and Drug Administration's authorization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation for a booster dose using the Moderna or J&J vaccines.

"Booster shots are an important step forward in the fight against COVID-19," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "With the authorization of additional COVID-19 vaccine booster options, VA is helping more Veterans maximize their protection, continuing our work to keep people safe and save lives during the COVID-19 pandemic."

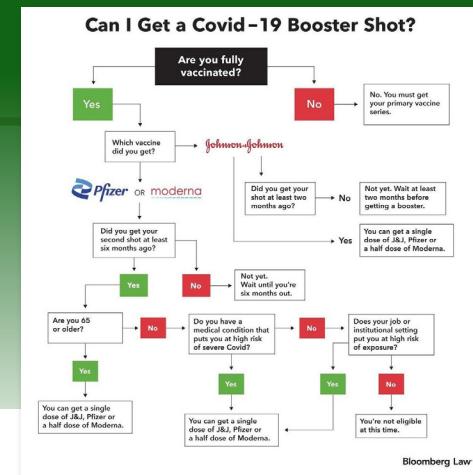
VA will follow CDC guidance in offering COVID-19 booster shots:

- For individuals who completed a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine series, the following groups are eligible for a booster shot at least 6 months after their second dose:

- 65 years and older.
- Age 18+ who live in long-term care settings.
- Age 18+ who have underlying medical conditions.
- Age 18+ who work or live in high-risk settings.
- People 18 years and older are eligible to receive a COVID-19 booster shot at least 2 months after their initial J&J vaccine.

Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type that they originally received, and others may prefer to get a different booster. CDC's recommendations now allow for this type of mix-and-match dosing for booster shots.

The safety and care of Veterans is VA's top priority, as well as ensuring the health and welfare of its workforce. Many sites in VA are open for walk-ins during hours when vaccine clinics are operational, and where booster vaccines are available. Booster shots are being offered to Veterans receiving care at VA and employees. VA is also offering the booster to Veterans, their spouses, caregivers and CHAMPVA recipients under the authority



of the Save Lives Act, as supply and capacity permits. The Save Lives Act, which was signed into law in March 2021, expanded VA's authority to offer vaccine to include Veterans not traditionally eligible for VHA care, and others, including spouses and caregivers of Veterans.

CDC advises that people can get both the COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccine at the same time. Veterans receiving care at VA who wish to get a booster shot can get both shots together during the same visit.

Veterans who would like additional information can visit the VA COVID-19 vaccines webpage, visit their local facility's website or contact their care team. Visit VA's Questions webpage for questions and answers regarding COVID-19 vaccine.

VA Adopts New Artificial Intelligence Strategy to Ensure Trustworthy Use of Technology for Veteran Care

WASHINGTON — As part of the Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to explore the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the delivery of health care and benefits, VA implemented a new AI strategy late September, to serve as a guideline for ethical use of the technology throughout its enterprise.

While AI can offer advantages over traditional analytics and clinical decision-making techniques to help improve Veteran care, the department wants to ensure that any implementation of the technology is trustworthy and protects Veteran information.

"VA understands the significance of creating a balance between innovation, safety and trust," said VA National Artificial Intelligence Institute Director Gil Alterovitz, Ph.D. "To this end, VA leadership, practitioners and relevant

end-users will be trained to ensure all AI-related activities and processes are ethical, legal, and meet or exceed standards."

Aligned with the mission of serving Veterans and benefiting from VA's unique data infrastructure, the strategy is designed to deliver on four major strategic objectives:

- Use existing AI to improve outcomes and experiences for Veterans.
- Increase VA AI capacity and capabilities.
- Increase Veteran and stakeholder trust in AI.
- Build upon VA's existing partnerships across agencies and industry.

"AI has the capability to transform how

our Veterans access the critical care they need," said National AI Initiative Office Director Lynne Parker, Ph. D., with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. "VA's new roadmap will help realize AI's full potential building trust in future technology and creating more effective, efficient systems for patients."

The development of the comprehensive AI strategy was designed in support of [executive orders on AI](#), [National AI Research and Development Strategic Plan](#) and aligns with the [National Artificial Intelligence Initiative Act of 2020](#) that launched the NAIIO.

Visit NAIIO for more information or sign up for the latest announcements via [AI@VA Community](#).

Environmental Program Services Supervisor of the Year, Corey Sales: A Passionate Leader

Environmental Management Services (EMS) is not just about cleaning. EMS is about leadership, passion, knowledge, protection and confidence, and there is one leader who has stood out amongst several great leaders in EMS. Corey Sales was recently named the 2021 Environmental Program Services (EPS) Supervisor of the Year.

"When I come to work, I come to work, to provide real leadership and motivation, education, and training," said Sales. "And when I leave, I like to leave feeling that I did my job. I am always passionate about it."

Sales is currently a Technical Career Field (TCF) Trainee for Environmental Management Services and previously worked as a supervisor for EMS at the Durham VA Health Care System (DVAHCS).

"Cleaning is so important," said Sales. "A lot of times you don't — and likely won't — get credit for cleaning, but if you don't clean, everybody recognizes it."

Corey Sales is an Army Veteran with a passion for leadership. He attributes his dedication and commitment to excellence to his father. As a native of Durham, N.C., Sales admits that there was a lack of good role models, but he found stable leadership in his father.

"My father is the most influential leader in my life," said Sales. "He's the guy. Even to this day, he is a hard charger."

As a child, his father taught him how to mow lawns on the weekend. Sales would spend the morning learning how to repair lawn mowers, and mowing lawns the other half of the day. Back then, no one paid for cutting the grass. Sales believes it was at this critical time in his life that passion and leadership were instilled into his paradigm.

"The training I received with my father created a good work ethic and a drive to ensure things were completed in a professional and orderly manner," said Sales. "My father, my military training, and being under a great leader like Mr. Robinson has helped me develop as a leader."

Sales attributes a portion of his leadership style, leadership ability and success to the Chief of EMS for the Durham VA, Jeffrey Robinson.

"We actually got to success through the guidance and leadership of Mr. Jeffrey Robinson," said Sales.

Robinson is the chief of EMS at the Durham VA and a previous recipient of the Chief and Supervisor of the Year awards.

Under his leadership, in 2019, Eric Heard, who was then the deputy for EMS, won the EPS New Manager of the Year award. In addition, Robinson is one of the few preceptors for the TCF trainee program for Environment Management Services in VA. No other VA has had as many winners.

"Mr. Robinson is an outstanding leader that has set the example for me and the other leaders on the team," said Sales. "He is always pressing for high standards. It is easy to follow that type of leader because you see them being the example for the next generation."

Sales is adamant that being a leader is about passion and creating future leaders for EMS. He states that ensuring the cleanliness of the facility is a great way to support hospitals and that developing leaders in the field is the best way to ensure continued success for hospitals, enhancing a facility's culture, and transferring the knowledge of environmental management services.

"I feel I can offer value, and of course I enjoy working with the EMS team and being around other Veterans," said Sales. "Being a leader takes someone who is willing to be passionate about what they do. If you put passion into the things you do, you are going to be successful."

Passion is a motivating force for Sales. He states that passion caused him to prepare himself, caused him to take the initiative to educate himself, and is the primary factor for remaining disciplined and successful.

"Passion should be a continuous motivator for leaders," Sales said. "You will get in early and leave late, and the sacrifice won't matter because you are passionate about having things ready to go."

Like most essential workers, Sales states that the most significant challenge to his career has been the COVID-19 pandemic.

"At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were a lot of new responsibilities and I just felt the need to lead as much as possible," said Sales. "There was a lot of fear in the air, for everyone. You could see the fear on the faces of the nurses."

It was during the pandemic that Sales' passion and leadership came to the forefront. Sales states that the EMS team at the Durham VA had to develop cohesiveness between the chief of EMS, the supervisors, and the team while also establishing rapport and confidence throughout the healthcare system by servant-leadership and excellent EMS skills.



Environmental Management Services Supervisor and Technical Career Field Trainee Rufus Corey Sales has been named the 2021 Environmental Program Supervisor of the Year.

"My chief, Mr. Robinson, he just trusted me," said Sales. "He put trust in my ideas and allowed me to take care of business. So, I accepted the responsibility and did whatever we needed to do to provide Veterans and DVAHCS staff with the physical cleanliness and psychological safety needed to receive and give medical care."

It is the little things that keep a team strong during a global pandemic like COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, Sales trained the DVAHCS EMS team on cleaning hospital rooms where there may have been a patient with COVID-19. In addition, he helped develop a training plan for cleaning the COVID-19 patient rooms and kept staff motivated.

"We continuously discussed ways to enhance the cleaning of the facility, to keep people safe, and to increase our cleaning efficiency," said Sales. "It has been challenging throughout the pandemic, but we found creative ways to motivate and train the EMS staff.

The year 2020 was critical for environmental management services. Sales states that one of the most significant assignments for the DVAHCS EMS team was to provide confidence, and who more important in whom to have confidence than the people who do the cleaning? To ensure that the EMS team provided confidence, he would study Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) standards, regulations and guidance on subjects such as handling biohazardous materials.

"There was little known about the virus at the initiation of the pandemic, so being knowledgeable and providing confidence were top priority tasks that helped us to navigate the pandemic," said Sales. "We couldn't walk into the environment of the hospital fearful; that was not an option because we are the protectors."

The DVAHCS EMS team used the most up-to-date technology to fight the Coronavirus. The UV Tru-D Light Disinfectant is one of the

STORY CONTINUE ON PAGE 11

most effective cleaning tools, which empowers EMS to build confidence and safety for Veterans and staff. Sales credits the DVAHCS EMS chief and executive leadership with the vision and faith in the team to permit the purchase of that equipment, and to trust their expertise and ability to get the job done.

"The equipment was pivotal, but we also

came up with systems that enhanced the capabilities of the technology, and tools we were using to clean," said Sales.

When asked about his plans, Sales states that he plans on being an influencer and a change agent. He has plans to advance as far as he can but intends to provide value at whatever position he finds himself.

As a note to future leaders, Sales stated, "Future leaders, the greatest advice I could give is to be passionate. It will take some sacrifice but be passionate. Keep your motivation and passion high, and when you run out of motivation, find some discipline."

Campaign Hopes to Decrease Veteran Suicide by Firearm

By Matthew Miller | Ph.D., MPH

Suicide is a national public health issue that affects all Americans, including Veterans, their families and their friends. Earlier this year, VA brought together the work of PREVENTS and VA Suicide Prevention in the shared implementation of the [VA National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#). This National Strategy is a public health approach combining community prevention and clinical intervention strategies to reach all Veterans.

Combining PREVENTS Roadmap recommendations that focus on national public health campaigns and lethal means safety, VA launched a Lethal Means Safety public health campaign in September 2021 during Suicide Prevention Month, with a specific focus on suicide prevention and safe firearm storage. This campaign has had tremendous success — [public service announcements have been broadcast nationally reaching millions](#), and several NASCAR racers placed KeepItSecure.net on their race cars in two major races in September!

Increasing time and space between the thought and the trigger saves lives

Firearms are the most common lethal means used by Veterans who die by suicide. In 2019, approximately 70 percent of Veteran suicide deaths were due to a self-inflicted firearm injury. Importantly, firearm sales continue to rise, with a significant sales increase in 2020 compared to 2019. Additionally, large surveys found that approximately 1/3 of Veterans store their firearms loaded and unlocked.

Increasing the time and space between someone in a suicidal crisis and a firearm (lethal means) can reduce the risk of suicide and save lives. While many Veterans own firearms and feel very comfortable with them, there is a disconnect between access to a gun in the home and increased risk of harm.

To learn more about how securing your firearms can prevent suicide, visit [KeepItSecure.net](#).

VA is Committed to saving Veteran Lives

It's important that Veterans know they're not alone and that support is available. To learn more about lethal means safety, including how to talk to a Veteran or where to get a free gun lock, visit [KeepItSecure.net](#).

If you are a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, connect with our caring, qualified responders for confidential help by calling the Veterans Crisis Line at (800) 273-8255 and select 1, or text 838255. You can also access additional resources at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](#).

Suicide prevention coordinators (SPCs), specifically trained licensed mental health providers, are also available at all VA medical centers across the country. [Find a local SPC here](#).

If you are a Veteran or a Caregiver, VA is committed to connecting you with the mental health and wellness services and support you need. VA has a variety of mental health resources, information, treatment options and more at [mentalhealth.va.gov](#).

Matthew Miller, Ph.D., MPH, is executive director of the VA Suicide Prevention program and acting executive director of PREVENTS.



Cable Lock A cable lock is placed through the gun chamber or magazine well to prevent loading and firing. It is unlocked with a combination or key. Price range: \$10 to \$50



Trigger Lock A trigger lock goes through the trigger guard behind the trigger, preventing the trigger from being pulled. It can be unlocked with a push-button keypad, combination or key. Price range: \$5 to \$35+



Lock Box Lock boxes are small safes that use a key or combination lock. Some lock boxes use a digital keypad or biometric sensors, such as fingerprint readers, so that they may be opened quickly. Price range: \$40 to \$200+



Firearm Safe Firearm safes vary in size and level of protection with some large enough to store rifles and shotguns as well as handguns. Safes may have a key, combination lock, or digital keypad. Price range: \$100 to \$2,000+

SUICIDE PREVENTION

BeThere
YOUR ACTION COULD SAVE A LIFE

Pivot Point Video

The seconds it takes to open a lock are just a small barrier between the thought and the trigger, but it can change your life. Learn how securing your guns can prevent suicide, because crisis can happen to anyone. Learn more at [KeepItSecure.net](#). Watch this video for more on [Suicide Prevention](#).

Veterans: Four Steps to Get Your Community Flu Shot

By Jonathan Ludwig | VHA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY CARE

It's that time of year: Flu season is here. With [COVID-19](#) circulating in our communities, getting a flu shot is more important than ever.

In addition to your local VA medical facility, flu vaccines are available at no cost to eligible Veterans at more than 70,000 in-network community care providers nationwide.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), you can even get your flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine [during the same visit](#).

Here are the four steps to getting your community flu vaccine:

1. Check your eligibility

Community flu vaccines are available to eligible Veterans who, both:

- Are enrolled in the VA health care system.
- Received care through VA from either a VA or community provider within the past 24 months. (This requirement is new for 2021-2022 flu season.)

To check your eligibility (for the community urgent care benefit, which includes the flu vaccine), either:

- Call 800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411), select option 1 (for urgent care information), then option 3 (for urgent care information), and then option 1 again (to check urgent care eligibility).
- Contact your local VA medical facility.

A great part of this benefit is that you can get a community flu vaccine without prior authorization. Flu vaccines provided are standard (quadrivalent), high dose and preservative-free.

2. Find a participating provider

To find an in-network provider, go to the [VA Facility Locator](#):

- City, state or postal code: Enter the appropriate ZIP code for your area.
- Facility Type: Select "Urgent Care" or "Community pharmacies (in VA's network)." If you select "Urgent Care," choose "In-network community urgent care."
- Click "Search."
- Choose provider.

You can also call 877-881-7618 or your local VA medical facility for help locating an in-network provider. Make sure the provider is in-network to avoid being charged for the flu vaccine.

The billing information card contains information you might need when getting your flu vaccine, similar to an insurance card.

3. Go to the provider

Before going to the provider:

- Call ahead to make sure the provider offers the flu vaccine through this benefit.
- Print the [Billing Information Card](#) (or have it viewable on your mobile device) and take it with you to the provider.

When you arrive:

- Tell them you're a Veteran enrolled in VA health care, and
- You would like to get a flu shot, paid for by VA.
- Show your government-issued ID and the [Billing Information Card](#).

4. Get the vaccine - Get your flu vaccine!

Copayments

There is no copayment charge if your visit consists only of a flu vaccine. In addition, flu-vaccine only visits don't count towards visits and/or copayments associated with using VA's community [urgent care benefit](#). If you are charged for the flu vaccine, call 877-881-7618 for assistance.

Documentation

Documentation of the flu vaccination is sent to VA by the community provider to update your medical record. You can also request a copy of the documentation showing you received the flu vaccine.

Support

For help with eligibility and general questions, call 800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411), select option 1, then option 3, and then select option 1 again. For help when receiving a community flu vaccine, call 877-881-7618 or your local VA medical facility.

More information

- [Flu Shots – Community Care](#)
- [Influenza \(Flu\) – VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention](#)
- [Influenza \(Flu\) – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

Jonathan Ludwig is a senior communications specialist for the VHA Office of Community Care.

Billing Information Card



INFORMATION FOR VETERANS

Bring this card when you visit an in-network retail pharmacy or urgent care location to (1) fill a prescription and/or (2) receive a flu or COVID-19 vaccine.

Eligibility

- You MUST verify your eligibility before using pharmacy benefits or receiving a flu or COVID-19 vaccine.
Visit <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/>
- DISCLAIMER: This card does not guarantee authorization of service. You MUST meet VA eligibility requirements and be enrolled for health care to use this benefit.

Choosing a pharmacy

- You must visit an in-network pharmacy located in the same state as your urgent care or referred care visit to fill your prescription.
- Use the VA Facility Locator to find an in-network pharmacy or urgent care provider at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>

When you arrive at the pharmacy

- Present a valid government-issued ID (i.e. Veterans Health ID Card, DoD ID Card or other valid government ID).
- You SHOULD NOT have to pay a copayment at the time you receive your prescriptions, flu and/or COVID-19 vaccine.

For more information

- To determine what Community Care Network (CCN) region you are located in, go to: <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/CCN-Veterans.asp>

INFORMATION FOR PHARMACIES

Community Care Network Regions 1-3

AL, AR, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, PR, RI, SC, SD, TN, VA, VI, VT, WI, WV

Billing information for OPTUM providers in these states or U.S. territories listed above: Enter Community Care Network/Veteran's pharmacy claims using the following information:

Step 1: Enter BIN: 004336

Step 2: Enter PCN: ADV

Step 3: Enter Rx Group

- Referred Care: Rx3839
- Urgent Care/VA Provider: Rx4136
- Flu Shot or COVID-19 Vaccine: Rx3841

Step 4: Enter Veteran ID: 10-digit Veteran ID or SSN

Step 5: Enter Veteran's date of birth (YYMMDD format)

For questions, please call the CVS Caremark™ Pharmacy Help Desk at 800-364-6331 (24/7).

Community Care Network Regions 4-5

AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, TX, UT, WA, WY

Billing information for TriWest providers in the states listed above: Enter Community Care Network/Veteran's pharmacy claims using the following information:

Step 1: Enter BIN: 003858

Step 2: Person Code: 01

Step 3: Enter PCN: A4

Step 4: Enter Rx Group

- Referred Care: VETERAN
- Urgent Care: VAPC3RX
- Flu Shot or COVID-19 Vaccine: VAPC3RX

Step 5: Enter Veteran ID: 10-digit Veteran ID or SSN

Step 6: Enter Veteran's date of birth (YYYYMMDD format)

For questions, please call the Express Scripts Pharmacy Help Desk at 800-922-1557 (24/7).

INFORMATION FOR URGENT CARE PROVIDERS

- Call 888-901-6609 to confirm Veteran's eligibility for urgent care services

- Call 833-4VETNOW (833-483-8669) to confirm Veteran's eligibility for urgent care services

VISN 6 Sites Of Care & VA Vet Centers

MEDICAL CENTERS

Asheville VAMC

1100 Tunnel Road
Asheville, NC 28805
828-288-7911 | 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 Cl., 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. Tyrola 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

Clayton CBOC

11618 US Hwy 70 Business Highway West,
Suites 100 & 200
Clayton, NC 27520

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

2580 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

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
910-272-3220

Rutherford County CBOC

2270 College Avenue, Suite 145
Forest City, NC 28043-2459
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

PRODUCTION TEAM

Fanning Communications

John Fanning // President + CEO

DeAnna Clark // Graphic Designer

Karl J. Paloucek // Editor + Copywriter

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) 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



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 or call 919-956-5541

VISN 6 EDITORIAL

Stephanie Young // Acting VISN 6 Network Director

Tara Ricks // Director of Communications

Steve Wilkins // Editor