

VOICES OF VISN 6

— Excellent Care – Earned by Veterans – Delivered Here —



Fayetteville CLC Residents FIND THEY ARE



Tonita Cromartie joins her husband, Hosea Cromartie, for the Forever Young Prom at the Fayetteville VA Medical Center. "This was one of the most beautiful events I have ever attended, and I wanted to thank everyone for this special day," she said.

Inside This Issue



COVER STORY

By Fayetteville | VAMC VOLUNTARY SERVICE

- 3 McGuire Opens New Dialysis Unit
- 4 Fayetteville VAMC Youth Volunteer Awarded Scholarship
- 5 "It Starts With You" Hampton VA Frontline Supervisors Participate in Frontline Supervisors Week
- 6 Salem VA's Women Veterans Health Offers Mindfulness Program
- 7 Time is Brain – Act F.A.S.T Back on Long Career
- 8 The Sweat Lodge: Making Spiritual Connections Through Purification and Prayer
- 9 Veteran Art Brings Tunnel to Life Fayetteville, Womack Teams
- 11 Cement Plans To Collaborate On Expanding Surgery Services

"This was one of the most beautiful events I have ever attended and I wanted to thank everyone for this special day," said Tonita Cromartie, wife of Fayetteville VAMC Community Living Center (CLC) resident Hosea Cromartie, who called to express her appreciation for a break from the ordinary that they had just shared.

Cromartie was talking about the Forever Young Prom at the Fayetteville VAMC Community Living Center, brain-child of a team of Fayetteville staff and volunteers.

Taking their cue from a quote by author Vivian Green, "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass ... it's learning to dance in the rain," the group arranged the event to turn an ordinary day for

CLC residents into something special. All afternoon Veteran patients reveled in the period music and lights; they laughed, they talked, and they danced.

James Laterza, FVAMC director stated, "Events like this aren't just good times. They bond patients and staff therapeutically. Everyone will continue to win from this festive occasion for a very long time."

"The teamwork that made this possible exceeded my expectations," said Ann Moore, American Legion Auxiliary volunteer, who also made the beautiful centerpieces that decorated the tables. "Seeing the smiles on their faces just made my day."

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 5 >>>

Message from the Network Director



So often we hear negative stories that stand out from regular VA care. It is so important to remember that they stand out because they aren't the norm. Most important to remember is that the few stories covered in media reports represent a small minority inside the multitude of successes VA achieves for Veterans every day.

Did you know that last year, through our seven VISN 6 health care systems we saw Veterans in more than 6.2 million outpatient visits? While I can't share with you that each outcome met every Veteran's and provider's expectation, I can assure you that each encounter involved

a committed team of health professionals doing the best they could for every Veteran they saw.

VA is successful providing Veteran health care in so many areas. For example, in May we focused on promoting Veteran testing and treatment for Hepatitis-C, as we have for the last few years. Treatment of the Hep-C virus (HCV) can help prevent the progression of liver disease, hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), end stage liver disease and death. VA leads the nation in screening, testing treatment, research and prevention of the virus and is committed to its eradication in our Veteran population. We are getting close to our goal. Since the advent of oral HCV in 2014 VA has treated more than 100,000 patients with a cure rate of 95 percent. While VA can't claim

credit for the development of the drug in this case, this shows our commitment to making sure Veterans always have access to the best care most immediately.

The situation is the same with suicide prevention. When we have the opportunity, VA is very good at preventing Veteran suicides. So, I encourage each of you to learn the signs of persons in crisis and what to do when you identify them in someone ([link](#)). Know the number to the Veterans Crisis Line (800-273-8255, press 1), the largest mental health crisis service Line in the world. And if you know a Veteran who hasn't enrolled for VA care, please encourage them to contact us. We are available and accessible in so many more ways than in past years, because we really do want to help. Please, help us help them.

Durham VA Develops Exercise Program

To Ease Symptoms of Older Veterans With PTSD | By Durham | VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

It's no secret that regular exercise is essential to maintaining a healthy lifestyle and is recommended for everyone, including elderly adults. Dr. Katherine Hall, a research health scientist at the Durham VA Health Care System has launched a pilot study to learn if increased physical activity among older Vets with PTSD will help ease their symptoms. The heart of the study is a supervised 12-week exercise plan called the "Warrior Wellness" program. It consists of activities focusing on strength, flexibility, balance, and endurance training.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Health Science Researcher Katherine Hall works with a Veteran on exercises that are designed to help reduce the effects of PTSD. (Photo by Linnie Skidmore)



McGuire Opens New Dialysis Unit

By Deanna Davison | MCGUIRE VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

McGuire VA Medical Center unveiled its new \$9.6 million dialysis wing to more than 200 patients, staff and the public on June 21.

The nearly 18,000 square-foot unit — built on previous rooftop space — houses 30 dialysis stations. The old dialysis space held only 13.

The new unit uses a more modern state-of-the-art treatment system for the water used in dialysis procedures. Dialysis uses machines to filter waste from blood in patients whose kidneys are damaged or failing and cannot do it on their own.

“It’s a way of keeping people alive,” said Dr. George Feldman, chief of McGuire’s renal section. “It’s a real, everyday event. This unit is going to make everything better.”

The new dialysis wing contains more space in each treatment area, which allows for better privacy and comfort for Veterans undergoing in-house dialysis treatment. Individual treatment units have televisions displaying information to educate patients and their loved ones on the dialysis process.

“It’s going to make their stay here a a less painful,” said Jim Dudley, chief engineer.

McGuire’s chief of hemodialysis, Dr. Monika Aggarwal, said the new unit provides meaningful change for patients and staff — especially for the medical instrument technicians who operate the dialysis machines.

“What we are able to do is because of the hard work [the technicians] put in every single day,” Aggarwal said.

The medical center will repurpose the old dialysis space to expand other medical services once the transition to the new unit is complete. It is estimated the old space will be renovated by May 2019.



A new 17,973-square-foot dialysis unit officially opened at McGuire VA Medical Center on June 21. More than 200 people attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new unit, which is more than double the size of the old dialysis area.

Durham VA Develops EXERCISE PROGRAM

To Ease Symptoms of Older Veterans With PTSD

Hall and her colleagues created Warrior Wellness to see if older Veterans with PTSD will participate in and benefit from a moderate-to-vigorous workout routine. It differs from other programs because it tailors activities to Veterans with PTSD symptoms, while including elements of peer support, exercise supervision, and repetition. Part of what makes the program special is its extensive exercise battery that can be adapted to individual musculoskeletal ailments.

Some Patients Have Said:

“Before this program, I checked my blood sugar once per month, if that. Now I check it every day twice a day.”

“I have been going downhill the last couple of years, maybe even longer. With this program, my depression is better. I wake up with a goal. I am able to do projects I haven’t done in years.”

“This is one of the best programs I have been in through VA.”

“A lot of Veterans like me need a program like this to prevent complacency and promote comradeship.”

Fifty-four Veterans with diagnosed cases of PTSD enrolled in the pilot study, which is expected to wrap up this summer. Participants in the study are at least 60 years old, and almost all of them are men. To be included, they had to use the Durham VA for their primary care.

“We know that PTSD is linked to adverse health outcomes,” says Hall. “And among older Veterans, some of whom have lived with this condition for decades, we see evidence of accelerated aging. The benefits of exercise on physical and emotional health are well known. Yet little research has been done on connecting Veterans with mental health conditions to health-promotion programs. When I spoke with Veterans, they stated this is something they wanted to be offered programs that didn’t focus exclusively on their PTSD diagnosis and that emphasized wellness.”

Veterans interested in scheduling interviews with our subject matter experts should contact Yves-Marie Daley, Public Affairs Specialist, at yves-marie.daley@va.gov 919-286-0411 ext. 6667 or 919-370-0040.

For the full story: <https://www.research.va.gov/currents/0418-Older-Veterans-with-PTSD-take-part-in-exercise-program.cfm>



Volunteer Korra Cline earned a 2018 Disabled American Veterans Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship for her efforts on behalf of our Veterans.

Fayetteville VAMC Youth Volunteer Awarded Scholarship

By Fayetteville | VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Korra Cline, a youth volunteer at the Fayetteville VAMC since 2015, is the recipient of a 2018 Disabled American Veterans Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship in the amount of \$5,000.

Cline has donated more than 459 volunteer hours. “It’s funny because most of my friends say that I sacrifice my entire summer to work at the hospital,” she said.

“Sacrifice — well they have never seen the sacrifices I have in the eyes of the Veterans seeking care at the medical center — that’s the real sacrifice.”

Cline aspires to become a respiratory therapist and hopes to work at the Fayetteville VA in the future. “I have no doubt that Korra will achieve any goal she sets for herself,” said Norma Fraser, chief, Fayetteville VAMC Voluntary Service. “It has been a joy to watch this lovely young lady grow and mature. I look forward to her achieving her dream and joining the VA to help take care of our Veterans.”



“IT STARTS WITH YOU!” Hampton VA Frontline Supervisors Participate in Frontline Supervisors Week

Story and photo By Jennifer Zingalie | HAMPTON VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

More than 30 Frontline supervisors attended the first-ever VA Supervisors Week, June 12-14, with the goal of improving employee engagement, a top priority of the VA.

The goal of Supervisors Week is to create a collaborative, inclusive experience that inspires and empowers all VA frontline supervisors to deliver world-class customer service while demonstrating a sense of pride and achieving their full potential.

“We know engagement starts with you,” said Ron Johnson, Hampton VA Medical Center director when he addressed the supervisors. “We want to empower you with the tools and knowledge to lead well and support

overall employee engagement.”

The VA understands that an engaged workforce leads to higher productivity and organizational performance, improved customer focus, greater innovation, lower levels of absenteeism, and higher retention. But what is an engaged employee? Supervisors at Hampton learned that engaged employees are emotionally connected to their work.

Because of this, the VA recognizes that employees will not be engaged without engaged leaders, which starts at the frontline. Gallup research indicates that supervisors account for 70 percent of an employee’s engagement. Research also shows that engaged

supervisors are more likely to have engaged employees.

“The Employee Engagement Training made me feel like I better understand my staffs’ perspectives when seeking their feedback,” said Surgery Clinic Nurse Manager Tonya Mueller, RN.

On day one, Hampton frontline supervisors heard a message from the VA Secretary and participated in learning activities to better grasp the meaning of engagement. Day two, supervisors participated in a self-learning and self-assessment activity to help them understand better their role as leaders and in inspiring engagement. On day three, Hampton supervisors participated in focus groups in which they addressed workload and priorities to help them see the importance of leadership and mentorship within their workday. Hampton will also host a supervisor celebration later in the year.

Fayetteville CLC Residents Find They Are “FOREVER YOUNG” (CONT’D FROM FRONT PAGE)

The room was decked out with flair: white linen tablecloths; flower centerpieces on mirrored squares and tea lights. Refreshments were served with sparkling cider and a beautiful cake. Corsages were available for the ladies, boutonnieres for the men. “Not only was it festive, but truly a joyful, wonderful affair. It felt just like a prom!” said Voluntary Service Chief, Norma Fraser.

They were dressed to the nines, ready for their prom. On hand were special chaperones to partner with those whose family were not able to attend. The music, spun by DJ Mario Hardy, covered eras from the ‘40s through the ‘70s.

While Cromartie’s note signified the end of the euphoric evening, staff want residents to know they can expect more, and warn against putting their dancing shoes away, because the next event is just down the road. Summing it up for everyone, Mike Gonzalez, who was there with his wife, Maura, said, *“I can’t wait for the next time!”*

(LEFT-PHOTO) Staff at the Fayetteville VA Medical Center let residents know that more toe-tapping events are on the horizon. (RIGHT-PHOTO) The Fayetteville VA Medical Center’s Forever Young Prom had nearly everyone on the dance floor.





Salem VA's Women Veterans' Health Offers Mindfulness Program

By Salem VAMC Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

The practice of mindfulness dates back to early Buddhist and Eastern traditions of practice, focused on insight, awareness, and concentration. Jon Kabat-Zinn pioneered a movement more than 30 years ago, bringing these practices to the modern mind and collective. Now, in 2018, there are a growing number of mindfulness-based groups in American communities, mental health facilities and hospital settings, including VA medical centers.

VA medical centers are endorsing complementary alternatives to supplement traditional treatments for PTSD, depression, anxiety and addictions. Practices such as meditation, yoga, breathing routines and other forms of movement help to focus the mind. They help to develop awareness about emotions, thoughts, the body, and how we relate to stress.

Mindfulness groups in VA are part of the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation's Whole Health movement. It embraces "personalized," "proactive" and "patient-driven care."

Seeing the benefits of mindfulness programs, Salem VA Medical Center created a space where women feel the safety and spaciousness of an all-women's community, to explore mindfulness within their lives. Norma Davenport shared, **"Learning to be present with whatever is happening and let it be OK, even when it is painful.** Stretching our bodies has been helpful in overcoming body pain. I would highly recommend this group for people in all walks of life."

"More than 100 women Veterans have participated in Women's mindfulness groups offered in three years at the Salem VA Medical Center since 2015," said Beth Wright, Women Health Coordinator for Salem VA Medical Center.

"While some female Veterans begin the journey of mindfulness with an intention of "I'm here to relax," many find that mindfulness does not guarantee that — its purpose is to purely engage with whatever experi-

ence is actually happening," said Nenden Stillman-Runyon, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for Salem VA Medical Center.

The experience is a reality check that can be overwhelming for some — provocative, shocking and helpful all at once. The challenge of concentrating in the moment, free

thoughts, behaviors and interpersonal relationships, and compassion practices," explained Shenekia Williams-Johnson, VISN 6 Women Veterans Program Manager. "Mindfulness has helped me to enjoy my life fully in the moment. I don't worry about the what-ifs anymore. The fellowship that I have with the



from repetitive stressors, negative thoughts and habitual unhealthy ways of being in the body is a proven contributor to healing many mental health concerns.

Female veterans of the program are invited to participate in an advanced mindfulness process group expanding on the beginner concepts. These expanded 16-week groups are based on a Jon Kabat-Zinn Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction model that teaches the women about their relationship to stress, including physiologic and mind-body responses to stress and trauma.

"They also learn and practice mindful eating, walking, awareness of emotions,

Mindfulness participants at the Salem VA Medical Center engage in guided meditation. (Photo by Beth Wright)

other women in the group gives me a sense of empowerment," chimed Betty Price.

Within each 75-minute group, participants practice various meditations and how to process and report how these practices resonate with them. For more information, please visit <https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/about.asp>

STROKE Act F.A.S.T.

By David Hodge | MCGUIRE VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

According to statistics from the American Stroke Association, someone has a stroke every 40 seconds. This is approximately 795,000 people each year. Stroke is the 5th leading cause of death in the U.S.

A stroke deprives the brain of much-needed blood flow, which leads to brain cell death at a rate of about two million each minute. The damage is irreparable, and can lead to partial or complete loss of cognitive and physical abilities. It is vital to seek immediate medical attention for anyone suspected of having a stroke.

When a stroke occurs, time is brain, said Vikki Martin, Stroke Coordinator at McGuire VA Medical Center.

Martin and members of the McGuire Stroke Team, which includes an on-staff neurologist and medical residents and students,

quickly assess any patient suspected of stroke and establish a plan of care.

"It can get hectic," said Martin, a registered nurse, recalling a recent day when three stroke patients were admitted. "We treat them from front door to discharge."

There are two types of stroke: clot and hemorrhagic. Blood clots block flow, while hemorrhagic refers to bleeding in the brain. Both have the same symptoms and can occur at any time and any age.

Veterans are trained to be tough, Martin explained. This attitude, while beneficial in the service, can lead people to ignore early stroke symptoms. An effective way to remember the key symptoms is by using the acronym F.A.S.T. It stands for: Face drooping; Arm weakness; Speech difficulty; and Time to call 911.

The hope is to administer the drug Activase tPA through infusion. It is considered the gold standard in stroke treatment for its ability to dissolve blood clots quickly.

This greatly improves the chance of full or near full recovery, Martin said.

The catch to tPA is that it can only be administered within the first 4.5 hours after

symptom onset. If a person does not reach a hospital in time, tPA will not be considered.

During the first four months of 2018, McGuire VA treated 49 Veterans for stroke, Martin said. Of the 49, only one met the criteria to receive tPA.

In about 66 percent of cases, someone other than the patient makes the decision to seek treatment, Martin stated.

During Stroke Awareness Month in May, Martin worked to educate Veterans and family members about the symptoms of stroke and stroke prevention.

"I just want to make things better," Martin said. "Even if things are great, I want to improve it."

Approximately 80 percent of all strokes in adults can be prevented. Making simple healthy lifestyle changes can decrease your chance. Some of these recommended changes include proper sleep (about 7-8 hours per day), exercise for at least 30 minutes per day, remaining socially active, reducing sodium intake, and quitting smoking. Smoking increases the risk of stroke between 2-4 times versus nonsmokers.

Veterans can contact their Primary Care Provider for more information about stroke and stroke prevention.

Vikki Martin, who is from Chester, Va., received her Bachelors of Science in Nursing five years ago and began work at McGuire in January. She has worked in various positions in the medical field for the past 25 years. While not a Veteran, Martin's dad, grandfather and father-in-law all served.

Use the letters in "Fast" to spot stroke signs and know when to call 9-1-1

F

FACE
DROOPING

A

ARM
WEAKNESS

S

SPEECH
DIFFICULTY

T

TIME TO
CALL 911



Jimmy “Thunder” Ortiz performs a sweat lodge ceremony at McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond. Typically, sweat lodge ceremonies are conducted in silence with drums or other music before or after the ceremony.

By Sydney Dudley | MCGUIRE VAMC SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The sweat lodge at Richmond’s McGuire VA Medical Center serves as a location where Native Americans and others can search their souls and open up to the Great Creator. According to Chaplain O. Dewane Stone, chief of chaplain services, the sweat lodge cleanses the evils and toxins of life.

The establishment of the sweat lodge on VA grounds in 1995 by Veteran Bobby Bartlett provided Native American Veterans with a place where they can commune with the Great Creator.

A dome made from freshly-cut saplings is covered by canvas tarps, then gradually heated to heal the body, mind and spirit. A fire pit full of rocks maintain the heat during the ceremonies, or sweats, as they are called.

The entire structure is surrounded by a cedar privacy fence.

The Medicine Man, also referred to as a Native American Spiritualist, helps to maintain a peaceful environment while participants engage in deep meditation meant to cleanse their bodies.

Before ceremonies in the sweat lodge begin, certain steps must be taken. A fire must be prepared, stones placed upon the fire, then carried into the lodge by a fire-tender.

Smoke from sage and grasses are burned to cleanse the lodge. As heat gradually builds, participants sweat in sauna-like conditions for several hours.

Typically, sweat lodge ceremonies are conducted in silence with drums and other

music before or after the ceremony.

The sweat lodge is similar to religious fasting traditions, said Stone, both actions encourage the cleansing of the body to strengthen a person’s connection with the Creator.

“It was important to bring a sweat lodge here because it is sacred to Native Americans, and they need a place to commune with the Great Creator,” said Stone. “The sweat lodge provides a place where Native Americans preparing for combat can cleanse and ready for deployment.”

Veterans interested in participating in a sweat or learning more about Native American Sweat Lodge events may contact Native American Spiritualist Jimmy Thunder at (804) 774-0457.

Veteran Art Brings Tunnel to Life

By Scott Pittillo | CHARLES GEORGE VAMC COMMUNICATIONS

Many VA campuses are covered with buildings and winding, seemingly endless passages. One such passage is at the Charles George VA Medical Center in Asheville, connecting the main hospital to its Community Living Center (CLC). It is a long, industrial-looking tunnel covered in white paint. Until recently it couldn't it was just white - until our Veterans brought life to it. Luckily, Veterans and a local artist have brought that tunnel to life, with patriotic paintings honoring Veterans' service.

Before semi-retiring to Western North Carolina, volunteer Jim Stilwell was an Architectural Illustrator for more than 40 years. He worked with businesses, drawing images from blue prints, to help market their properties. Since he left the industry Stilwell has transitioned from using art to make a living, to using art that fills a purpose and tells stories. His need to make meaningful art brought him to volunteer at the Charles George VAMC, where he teaches a story art class to Veterans.

During a class, someone mentioned there was "just this big ugly wall down in the basement," in a tunnel they thought needed a mural. So, Stilwell took that idea home and drew up some drafts. He later presented them to the medical center's Voluntary Service.

"It's really amazing, the amount of talent out there, especially among these Veterans," Stilwell said. "I imagine these murals kind of like cave paintings made thousands of years ago. It tells a story that people can point at and respond to for years to come."

Just as important as creating a meaningful work of art to Stilwell, was giving Veterans the opportunity to participate. It began with a couple Veteran friends he knew, but it expanded to include Veterans from the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center, Community Living Center and others. With Stilwell's experienced eye looking over their shoulders, Veterans have helped bring the murals to life.

"You can't make a mistake," said Vietnam Veteran Terrance Clanton. "You just paint over it."

Clanton estimates he has spent at least 75 hours working on the murals. At first Clanton thought he would just try helping out because he had retired and didn't have much to do, but he found it was so much fun, he wanted to keep doing it.

"I show up at 9 a.m. and before I know it three hours are gone," Clanton said.

"It's something I can point at and say, I helped, I did that part."

Ownership is a common theme among the many painters. They say projects like this make them feel like the facility is really theirs; Much in the way people feel they really haven't moved into a home until they have hung a few of their favorite paintings or family photos on the wall.

For employees walking through the tunnel every day for work, the murals are a nice distraction and many say the patriotic theme reminds them of the importance of VA's mission.

Other murals are already planned for the tunnel that will reflect different branches of service and different periods of conflict. Fortunately, the walls of this once plain service tunnel have plenty of blank canvas for future artists.



The first mural painted in the CLC service tunnel. Photo by Scott Pittillo



Vietnam Veteran Terry Clanton, top, and Jim Stilwell work on painting a mural in a tunnel of the basement of the Charles George VA Medical Center, April 2018. Photo by Scott Pittillo

Miss North Carolina USA VISITS SALISBURY VAMC

By Salisbury | VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS



“Is that really Miss North Carolina?” a Veteran whispered with a big smile. Miss North Carolina USA Caelynn Miller-Keyes brought smiles to many Veterans’ faces when she visited the Salisbury VA Medical Center on June 18.

Miller-Keyes’ visit began with a meeting with the Salisbury VAMC Director, Joseph Vaughn. Vaughn, himself a Veteran, said, “I know that our Veterans appreciate Caelynn taking time out of her busy schedule to visit with them and besides that, she’s a whole lot prettier than me.”

Vaughn can often be seen after hours visiting with Veterans in the Salisbury Community Living Center (CLC), sharing a meal together and listening to their war stories.

Miller-Keyes said that her grandfather served in Vietnam, so Veterans have always been important to her. During her tour of the CLC, she greeted both Veterans and staff with a beautiful smile and a heartfelt thank you for their service.



Miss North Carolina USA Caelynn Miller-Keyes greets Donald Atkins, a patient at the Salisbury VA Medical Center, on June 18. (Photo by Luke Thompson)



VA and PsychArmor Institute Offer

SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in collaboration with PsychArmor Institute, a national nonprofit that provides online education and support to Americans who work with, live with or care for military service members, Veterans and their families, recently launched an online suicide-prevention training video, titled “SAVE,” which is designed to equip anyone who interacts with Veterans to demonstrate care, support and compassion when talking with a Veteran who could be at risk for suicide.

SAVE which stands for Signs, Ask, Validate, Encourage and Expedite, offers simple steps anyone — whether a treatment provider, clinician, friend or family member — can take when talking with Veterans at risk for suicide.

“VA is leading efforts to prevent suicide among Veterans, but VA alone cannot end Veteran suicide,” said VA Acting Secretary Peter O’Rourke. “We need strategic partners, care providers and communities to join us in this effort. Resources such as SAVE are crucial in helping all Americans support Veterans in their community.”

VA suicide prevention coordinators have led the SAVE course at VA facilities and community centers across the nation. VA officials said extending and promoting this important training outside VA is critical in helping everyone play a role in suicide prevention.

The free training video can be viewed at <https://psycharmor.org/courses/s-a-v-e/>. The 25-minute online training course covers three main topics:

Suicide as a public health issue in the U.S.
Signs that a Veteran may be at risk for suicide

Actions people can take if they identify a Veteran at risk.

Veterans in crisis or having thoughts of suicide — and anyone who knows a Veteran in crisis — should call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. Call 800-273-8255 and press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat or text to 838255.

Fayetteville, Womack Teams Cement Plans

TO COLLABORATE ON EXPANDING SURGERY SERVICES



VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network Director DeAnne Seekins, center, oversees discussion among Fayetteville VA Medical Center and Womack Army Medical Center teams to make full integration of surgical services between the medical centers a reality. She is flanked by WAMC Commander Col John Melton, left, and FVAMC Director James Laterza, right. (VA Photo by Brad Garner)

A few weeks after Fayetteville VA Medical Center and Womack Army Medical Center celebrated the one-year anniversary of the Fayetteville Joint Rehabilitation Clinic, which has been lauded as a model of VA/DoD cooperation, about 60 representatives from Fayetteville VAMC, Womack, Durham VAMC and VA's Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network met to continue momentum on an ongoing initiative for expanded health care services to area VA and DOD beneficiaries through shared staff, resources and facilities.

VA's Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network or VISN 6 hosted the May 30th whiteboard session whose primary focus was continuing progress to full integration of surgical services between WAMC and FVAMC.

This meeting, Fayetteville VAMC Director James Laterza said, was held to "identify and remove existing barriers that have previously hindered true seamless clinical integration."

Director Laterza noted that the two organizations have partnered for some time to deliver healthcare to Veterans and Active

Duty personnel through the joint rehabilitation clinic, Fayetteville VAMC surgical staff use of Womack's operating rooms while VA's ORs have been closed for renovation, and the sharing agreement VA shares with Womack for services including general, orthopedic (knee ligament and complex shoulder cases), GYN (hysterectomies) and general surgery as well as reconstructive wound work and cardiac catheterization.

"Seeing all these VA and Womack professionals collaborating and publicly committing to making it better for our Soldiers and Veterans and their families is inspiring," said Womack AMC Commander Col. John Melton, who is excited about the expanding partnership. "We are going to accomplish so much together in our community. It is very exciting to be part of this."

The teams spent the morning in a variety of workgroups on specific topics, mapping the processes involved to include staff, resources, and barriers. Action plans and timelines for solutions were developed with a proposed

implementation targeted for July 2018.

Colonel Melton and Director Laterza, former Army colleagues, opened and closed the event, reminding staff of the importance of this partnership and pledging their commitment to its success.

Coincidentally, on the same day of the whiteboard session, a Womack AMC orthopedic surgeon performed two same-day surgeries at the Fayetteville VA Health Care Center. VA officials say they performed 70 surgeries at Womack this fiscal year.

Defense Health Agency officials also were on hand to discuss the future collaborations between VA and DoD, prompting VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care VISN 6 Network Director DeAnne Seekins to comment, "I am truly excited to work with DHA as we partner to create a health care system which supports Veterans, our Active Duty members and their families, while working side by side with our community health care partners."

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.fayettevilenc.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. 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
910-272-3220

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 Ellstree Lane
Raleigh, NC 27617
919-856-4616

Roanoke Vet Center

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

Virginia Beach Vet Center

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

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