

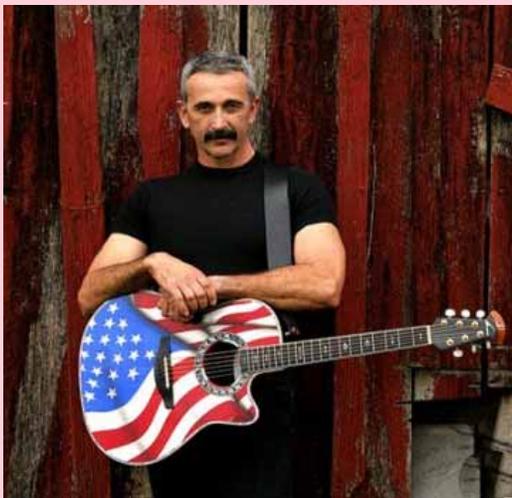


Just the Facts

VAntines for Veterans

Country music artist, **Aaron Tippin**, will perform in a FREE CONCERT at the Salem Civic Center as part of the Salem VAMC 2012 National Salute to Veterans on Thursday, **February 9**, 2012, at 7 pm. **Miss Virginia, Elizabeth Crot** will also be there to welcome Veterans to the event. The concert is being sponsored by the Salem VAMC, Help Hospitalized Veterans Organization (HHV), and others in the community.

This concert is part of the annual weeklong National Salute to Veterans celebration, specifically connected to Valentine's Day, and is an ideal opportunity for the community to express its respect and appreciation of all Veterans who have served and protected our great Nation.



In addition to this honorary concert to recognize returning service members and Veterans of all conflicts, members of the Salem VAMC staff will be available at the venue to provide information about eligibility, enrollment, VA benefits and other services available to Veterans. Voluntary Service staff will provide volunteer information to members of the community who are interested in volunteering.

Tickets are required for admission and must be obtained prior to the date of the concert. Tickets are available at the Salem Civic Center Box Office, Monday - Friday, from 10am-6pm; and

Saturdays from 10am-2pm. Doors will open at 6 pm.

To make a donation to support the 2012 Valentines for Veterans Concert, or for additional information, please call toll free 1-888-982-2463, ext. 5096.

We hope to see you there!

Miguel H. LaPuz, MD, MBA
Director

Rural Outreach

Salem VAMC has a Rural Health Team to provide information and education to Veterans in our catchment areas. The team is under Salem VAMC's Primary Care Service Line, and works closely with Home Based Primary Care, Tele-medicine, Women's Health, Mental Health, OEF/OIF/OND Coordinator, and other services.

Recently the Team shared information about VA health care services at the: Staunton CBOC, Covington VFW, and the Hillsville VFW.

Upcoming Rural Health Outreach Events:

- ◆ February 2—VFW Post 1033 from 9a-12p in Covington
- ◆ February 8—DVS/National Guard from 9a-2p in Christiansburg
- ◆ February 9—Valentines for Veterans Concert from 6-9p at the Salem Civic Center
- ◆ February 13—YMCA from 9a-12p in Alta Vista
- ◆ February 14—VFW Post 1115 from 9a-12p in Hillsville
- ◆ February 16—Municipal Building from 9a-1p in Alta Vista
- ◆ February 21—Staunton CBOC from 9a-5p in Staunton
- ◆ February 22—Franklin Center from 9a-2p in Rocky Mount
- ◆ February 28—Welcome Center from 9a-1p in Bedford
- ◆ February 28—Staunton CBOC from 9a-4p in Staunton
- ◆ February 29—Staunton CBOC from 9a-4p in Staunton
- ◆ March 1—VFW Post 1033 from 9a-12p in Covington
- ◆ March 12—YMCA from 9a-12p in Alta Vista
- ◆ March 13—VFW Post 1115 from 9a-12p in Hillsville
- ◆ March 21—Senior Center from 10a-2p in Waynesboro

More information and upcoming events open to the public are posted on our website at www.salem.va.gov in the events calendar. If you would like to invite the Rural Health Team to an event or to speak with your organization, please contact Marian McConnell at (540) 855-3460 or email at marian.mcconnell@va.gov.

QUIT TOBACCO—MAKE EVERYONE PROUD!

Submitted by Dr. Shannon Cohen

Check out www.ucanquit2.org—a website available to Veterans through a VA partnership with the Department of Defense (DoD)/TRICARE. This site is targeted to meet the needs of younger active military and Veteran populations by providing online tools to quit tobacco use, such as live chat services, personalized quit plans, and other interactive support systems. The convenience of a 24/7 resource can help meet Veterans' needs to balance the challenges of readjustment to home, work, and family, while also trying to quit tobacco use. From the homepage, Veterans enrolled for VA care can access information tailored for them by clicking on the section, "VA Veterans."



BENEFICIARY TRAVEL MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

CHANGE EFFECTIVE APRIL 15, 2012

Salem VAMC is changing beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement from a CASH reimbursement process to an electronic funds transfer (EFT) process (direct deposit to your bank), or a Treasury Check. We are making this change to better serve Veterans:

- ◆ Security of Funds (Electronic vs. Cash)
- ◆ Saves resources better spent on Veterans
- ◆ Consistent with practices used by VBA and Social Security Reduces Fraud, Eliminates Lost Checks, Ensures Address is Current, Reduces Duplicate Payments

Please complete and sign **Form SF-3881** before April 15, 2012; forms are available:

- ◆ From the Travel Office
- ◆ From the clinics
- ◆ From our website www.salem.va.gov

Once you complete and sign the form:

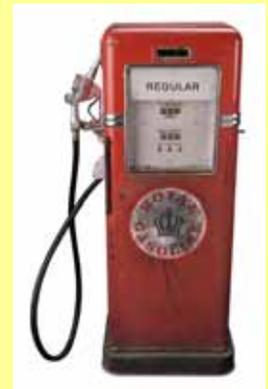
- ◆ Drop off in secure box at Travel Office (or)
- ◆ Mail to Salem VAMC (04A); 1970 Roanoke Blvd.; Salem, VA 24153 (or)
- ◆ Fax to (540) 855-5022

Once enrolled, after you submit your travel claims:

- ◆ Direct deposits (EFT) will be received within 14 days
- ◆ Reimbursement checks will be received within 21 days

Emergencies or exceptions will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Please call (540) 982-2463, ext. 1032 with questions.



VETERAN INSPIRED EMPLOYEE TO SERVE THOSE WHO SERVED

Submitted by Beverly Bellamy, Photo by Harriet Fletcher

"That flag means a lot to him," read the email I received from my friend, Harriet, with a photo of her husband Randall Fletcher attached. Knowing of Randall's current battle against cancer, the photo left a lump in my throat and tears dripping on my keyboard.

I credit Randall, a Vietnam Army Ranger, for being my inspiration to dedicate myself to helping Veterans through my career at the Salem VA. Over the years, Randall has shared his experiences of serving Veterans while Post Commander at the VFW Post 6000 in Narrows, VA and helping through other volunteer work aside from Post Commander duties. When he shared his experiences, I could tell he found it fulfilling and rewarding by the warm twinkle in his eye. He would smile and chuckle as he shared good memories of his wartime experiences; and his face would cloud over and his stare became distant when he memorialized those comrades who were injured or did not return.

As our families travelled together on various outings, I was always amazed at what I called Randall's "Vet-dar" [radar]; his ability to identify ANY service member and go out of his way to greet them with a handshake and a hearty "Welcome Home!" Those moments inspired me to do all I could to show my appreciation to our men and women in uniform.

"That old flag means a lot to him" the email read, and shouldn't it mean a lot to ALL of us as employees of the Salem VAMC. I honor the true warrior spirit, a dedication to serving others, and a true heart of gold by saluting my friend Randall in this article, and challenge each of you to pause each day and reflect upon those that we serve at Salem. Our daily dedication to the true mission of the VA, is a perfect way to exemplify those words that inspired me: "Welcome Home!" to all of our Veterans, past, present and future.



WHO KNEW?

Submitted by Mary Ellen Apgar

Who knew what treasures lay hidden in the depths of the Salem VA Medical Center? When I began an internship at the VA on January 3, I soon discovered that such treasures were not only its historical artifacts but also its people.

As a graduating senior from Hollins University, I opted for an internship rather than take another class during January's four-week short term. As luck would have it, the VHA Historian is a Hollins University alumna and led me to the Salem VA to help with their historical artifacts. This led me to the opportunity of a lifetime. Who knew?

Although born and raised in Roanoke, I never knew much about the Salem VA. I found it is a whole other world, pulsating with life and energy. I had advance notice of what to expect while working with the Archives Committee – inventory artifacts, perform origin research, photograph and catalogue existing pictures and memorabilia on display, then enter all of it into a database. To hear that I would be handling artifacts was one thing, but another to actually hold them.

On my first day I felt like a 21st century Indiana Jones, but without all the guns, fighting, and damsels in distress. When we opened a closet, I thought Jones himself would have gasped. The closet was full of artifacts – a treasure waiting to be uncovered. We loaded up a cart and wheeled it back to our office. When I catalogued the first item, an autographed picture of General Mark Clark, the significance and grandeur of this project hit me full force – I am personally helping to preserve the history of our Veterans and the people who made the Salem VA possible. Who knew?

Since that first photograph, other items I catalogued included thousands of photographs, newspaper articles, letters, leaflets, postcards, pamphlets, and complete photo albums. While every artifact is important in its own right, a few items really caught my attention; such as an original, 1934 general use key similar to general purpose keys used today. Of particular interest to me was a 120-page album full of newspaper articles from 1966-1973; belonging to Dr. Thomas Stage who was the Salem VA Director at that time. I found many articles on the medical treatment of alcoholism; such as the experimental use of LSD utilized at the Sheridan, Wyoming VA. These articles were of great interest to me since they related to my senior thesis – “A Supply and Demand Historical Approach to Alcoholism: From the Temperance Movement to Alcoholics Anonymous.” Other articles referred to Salem's application of a new, self-governing program designed to teach responsibility and accountability. The program proved beneficial. In fact, that program greatly resembles recovery programs currently in use today. Who knew?

Since I began my VA internship, I have felt welcomed and appreciated. Discovering the hidden treasures was an amazing experience. Meeting and working with the staff was equally wonderful. They truly appreciated my presence here and valued my work. As I continued the inventory process and shared my progress notes with the Archives Committee, I became a part of something greater than myself. I felt like a member of the Committee rather than just an intern. This internship was the best exposure and experience I could receive for a future career. Not only did I get to discover and hold the history of our Veterans and the Salem VA, and given the opportunity to work with wonderful and supportive people, I also gained new skills and experiences to help me in future endeavors. Who knew?

If you would like more information about the Archives Committee, please contact Jace Walters, the Committee Chair at (540) 982-2463, ext. 3396, or Marian McConnell, Co-Chair ext 1400. Watch this newsletter for more updates from the Archives Committee.



Mary Ellen Apgar received a certificate of appreciation from Dr. LaPuz for her contributions to the Salem VAMC Archives Committee. Left to Right:: Patricia O'Toole, Dean of Students, Hollins College; Darlene Richardson, VA's National Historian; Mary Ellen Apgar, Intern; and Dr. Miguel LaPuz, Salem VAMC Director. Photo by Marian McConnell

EMPLOYEE EDUCATION FAIR

Submitted by Marsha Garrison, Photos by Marian McConnell

The Office of Employee Education (OEE) presented the 2012 Education Fair on January 18th in the auditorium. Over 250 medical center employees participated in the event, which offers employees the opportunity to their mandatory education for the year. Posters are developed for each mandatory topic and a packet is provided with accompanying questions. Participants move from poster to poster and answer the questions. OEE later enters this information in Talent Management System (TMS) to document the training.

Some of the Services that developed the posters were Safety, Infection Control, Patient Advocate, Social Work and OEE. Thanks to the Veterans Canteen Service for providing door prizes and snacks.



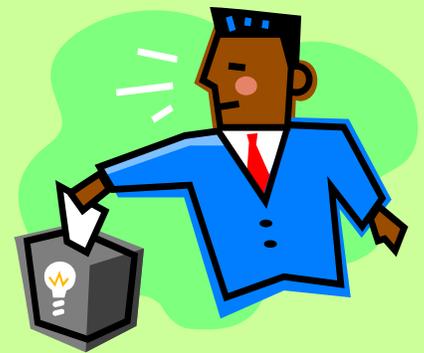
“TELL VERA”: SEEKING EFFICIENCY & COST SAVINGS IDEAS FROM EMPLOYEES

Submitted by Kristy Suhr

We are privileged to serve as federal employees. One thing we all share in common is a commitment to ensuring appropriate use of government resources—both as taxpayers and workers of the VA. Throughout the year, and at various town hall meetings, Dr. LaPuz has addressed the importance of “VERA” (Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system) and has discussed recent changes in resource allocation as well as funding structures for the VA. As our resources are reduced, we are challenged with finding ways to save money and with creating efficiencies in the day-to-day work that we perform.

In response to this challenge, the Medical Center has created a “Tell Vera” workgroup which is looking for concrete ways to improve our current processes and to capture any cost saving suggestions generated by front line staff. Salem VAMC Leadership values your ideas, and have implemented many suggestions such as... requesting that staff turn off their computers or lights when leaving the work area, minimizing printing or paper use unless absolutely necessary, recycling cardboard, relying on virtual conferences versus travel to transmit important information between sites.... these are just a few of the many ways we are already making a difference. We are confident that Salem VAMC staff will generate many more ideas.

We want to share with staff that the “Tell Vera” workgroup has undertaken a pilot study with three services—Police, Social Work, and Quality Management Services wherein we are asking employees to submit suggestions for improving efficiencies for the Medical Center. We hope to start with a small pilot group of services in order to iron out a tracking mechanism and meaningful way to sort and respond to each and every submission before rolling out this initiative to the entire Medical Center. We don't want anyone to feel left out. Should you have an immediate suggestion or question, please send it to VHASAMTellVera@va.gov. Also be on the lookout for additional information. We anticipate a full roll-out to the entire Medical Center this spring. Until then, please brainstorm, talk to your co-workers, and think of ways we at Salem VAMC can work more efficiently, save some money, and be strong leaders and stewards who pave a path for the entire federal government.



INPATIENT PTSD PROGRAMS FOR FEMALE VETERANS

Submitted by Kay Montgomery, MSW

Hope — Integrative — Holistic — Empowering — Creative!

Two 6.5-week recovery-oriented PTSD programs for female Veterans are being offered in 2012. The first session is April 9—May 23; the second session is October 8—November 20.

This program is open to female Veterans who are experiencing PTSD related to combat or military sexual trauma (MST). The Salem VAMC PTSD program is holistic and addresses both physical and psychological well-being. All treatment takes place in a closed group setting and consists of community building, education, acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and exposure therapy. Thirteen (13) spaces are available. Submitting an application, meeting criteria, and participating in an evaluation process is required prior to acceptance in the program. Veterans must be in outpatient treatment for PTSD prior to participating in this program, and willing to return to outpatient treatment upon completion of the program. For more information please call (540) 982-2463, ext. 2548.



NEW HEALTH ELIGIBILITY CENTER HEALTH BENEFITS WEBSITE

VHA Health Eligibility Center (HEC) is enhancing its ability to communicate with the Veteran community by launching a new Health Benefits website at www.va.gov/healthbenefits. This site replaced the old website (www.va.gov/healtheligibility/), and is designed for easier navigation and is more interactive to enhance the user's experience. The new site is an online portal for Veterans, family members and care givers to learn about eligibility, enrollment options and benefits offered by VHA. It also provides detailed information about how to apply for VHA health services, cost of care, accessing VA health care and VA's Medical Benefits Package. The Health Benefits website provides the following new features:

- Simple, easy instructions on how to obtain and access health benefits
- Organized informational flow
- Medical benefits package and priority group information
- Income threshold determination widget
- Copay mapping

Check it out!
You can even
apply for VA
health benefits
online...



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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VA Health Benefits News

Traumatic Injury Benefits Now Payable for Genitourinary Injuries
updated December 2, 2011

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

Submitted by Connie Azar/Human Resources

Photos by Marian McConnell



Many employees were recognized at the January 19, 2012 Town Hall meeting. Congratulations to all who received awards — thanks for your exceptional service to Veterans!

GEM (GOING THE EXTRA MILE) AWARDS (1st Quarter FY12).

Joe Ferrell, Prosthetics	Kari Wygal, Nursing	Mary Lou Barritt, Nursing
Geralyn Yost, Social Work	Jeffrey Lowe, FMS	Miracle Carner, Social Work
Bertha Anderson, Nutrition & Food	Lisa Bradford, Social Work	Patrick Zimmerman, Directors' Office
Michael Lyle, Facility Management	Taci Fletcher, Pharmacy	Kim Slaughter, Pharmacy
Joseph Smith, Pharmacy	Kathleen Brightwell, Nutrition & Food	Hervey Davis, Facility Management
Kim Dayton, Nursing	Susan Evans, Pathology & Lab	Andre Fieschel, Police
Kirsten Funk, Education	Elizabeth Gum, OI&T	Jane Harrison, Nursing/Education
Wanda Henry, Canteen	Walter Jennings, Facility Management	James Kelly, Logistics
Courtney Lane, Mental Health	Naymon Mack, Patient Advocate	Stanley Malek, Police
James Markey, OI&T	Aubrey Barnette, Facility Management	Francisco Estrada, Facility Management
James Randolph, Nutrition & Food	Lavonne Smith-Brown, Nutrition & Food	Mary Smith, LPN, Nursing
Diane Watkins, Health Administration	Frank Wilkins, Office of Chief of Staff	John Ratcliffe, Facility Management
Anthony Richards, Facility Management	James Cooke, Facility Management	Alvin Mundy, Facility Management
Gerald Killian, Facility Management	Edward MacCready, Facility Management	Joseph Wilder, Facility Management
Joseph Davis, Facility Management	Ronald Calloway, Facility Management	Nathan Rivers, Facility Management
Phyllis Cooper, Facility Management	Cristina Chewing, Facility Management	Rebecca Bayne, Nursing
Renee Crozier, Nursing	Michelle Thomas, Nursing	Lori Bishop, Nursing
Tamicha Terry, Nursing	Cozette Jeffries, Nursing	Julie Manico, Nursing
Lori VanNess, Nursing	Cherron Eaton, Nursing	Angela Jenkins, Imaging
Rebecca Moore, Nursing	Bonnitza Fusco, Nursing	Pamela Grogan, Nursing
George Davis, Nursing	Edward Brown, Nursing	Molly Camper, Nursing
Shannon Doby, Nursing	Michelle Duncan, Nursing	Kathleen Fitzpatrick-Moran, Nursing
Tierra Wilder, Nursing	Dr. Joseph Abate, Dental	Ronald Clark, Facility Management
Dr. Bernard Dunne, Primary Care	Thomas Gregg, Nursing	Dr. Suzanne Hanna, Primary Care
Sarah Hartley, Mental Health	Suzanne Holladay, Pathology & Lab	Tanyia Jones, Social Work
Phil Lehman, Mental Health	Keith Lewis, Social Work	Kathy Lynd, Social Work
William Paxton, Facility Management	Joyce Rasnake, Nursing	Jasmine Robinson, Nursing
Milisa Schnieder, Mental Health	Hani Shabana, Mental Health	Russell Short, Facility Management
Colette Strother, Physical Med & Rehab	Jace Walters, Health Administration	Jeff Webster, Facility Management
W. C. Wilkerson, Pathology & Lab	Latara Willis Johnson, Nursing	Dr. Karen Wilson, Primary Care
Monica Wilson, Pharmacy	Stella Jeanne Wilson, Nursing	Dena Wright, Centralized Fee Unit
Mary Wright, Nursing	David Buyck, Mental Health	William T. Brooks, Facility Management

Here are some of the 95 GEM Award recipients:



PATIENT-CENTERED CARE AWARDS:

Core Principle 1: Honor the Veterans' expectations of safe, high quality, accessible care. Awarded to MICU-A and staff. (Photo at right.)

Core Principle 2: Enhance the quality of human interactions and therapeutic alliances. Awarded to Substance Abuse Liaison Team. (Photo at right.)



OTHER AWARDS:

Brad Looney—Completion of Flow Academy Course

Dr. Rizwan Ali—1st Place in Bedside Manner in Psychiatry for Roanoke, *Our Health Magazine*

Michael Weaver—Chief, Prosthetics Service—VHA Mentor Certification

Tammy Kendrick—Acting Chief, Health Administration—VHA Mentor Certification



SERVICE PIN AWARDS (November 2011—January 2012)

10 YEARS

Amar Sawh	Susan Evans	Dakshinamur Gullapalli	Natasha Phanelson
Christina Beaver	Barry Bonds	Eric Carpenter	Bessie Howard
Andrea Lawrance	Kenneth Jones	Dana King	Harriette Williams
Ronald Abbott			

15 YEARS

Gary Markulic	Greta Estacio	Cherron Eaton	Michele Thomas
Marie Gibbs	Sandra Vaughan	James Markey	Tony Yancey
Dwayne Moore			

20 YEARS

Marie Pettis-Tibbs	Kathleen Struble	Mary Kathleen Burton	Doris Riggins
Ronald Clark	Alice Hamblin	Tracy Surface	

25 YEARS

Mohammad Khan	James Northern	Debbie Jordan	Roger Alls
Lesley Poff	Robert Bidwell	David Hoover	Peter Campbell
Roger Thomas	Teresa Robertson	Sybil Cooley	Mohammad Khan
James Northern	Lesley Poff	Roger Alls	Debbie Jordan
Alvin Mundy			

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS (continued...)

30 YEARS

Carolyn Tasco	Patty Hoover	Linda Meadows	Joan Taylor
Eleanor O'Connor	Theressa Dodson	Cindy Stephens-Pugh	

35 YEARS

Susan DuGrenier	Thomas Hrinia	Robert Dore	James Bono
Rebecca Harpold	Leslie Jones	Claytor Davis	Roger Jenkins
Jenae Patsell	Susan DuGrenier	James Bono	Robert Dore
Tom Hrinia			

40 YEARS

Barbara Zicafoose	Kay Mundy	George Lyle	William Brooks
Herbert Warren			



Alvin Mundy—25



Bob Dore—35



Cindy Stephens-Pugh—30



David Hoover—25



Ellie O'Connor—30



George Lyle—40



Jenae Patsell—35



Kay Mundy—40



Lesley Poff—25



Mohammad Khan—25



Susan DuGrenier—35



Sybil Cooley—25



Teresa Robertson—25



Tom Hrinia—35



William Brooks—40

Employees with 25 or more years of service were invited to receive their certificates and pins from Dr. Miguel LaPuz, Director; Dr. Maureen McCarthy, Chief of Staff (or) Mr. Robert Brooks, Acting Associate Director (or) Jennifer Holland, Acting Nurse Executive, as well as their Supervisor. Congratulations for many years to service to Veterans and the Salem VAMC!

? ASK ETHEL?

The Integrated Ethics Committee will pose a question each month in *Just the Facts*. Questions and answers will address resource allocation and other ethical issues in the workplace. Answers will appear in the following month's issue. Employees are encouraged to submit questions to Ethics (122). Please include your name and extension if you want a personal response (all responses are confidential).



January's Question: Why were some positions at GS 6 and lower grades downgraded in certain departments?

January's Answer: The VISN 6 Classification Unit was established to conduct all classification actions within VISN 6. Local Human Resources are no longer responsible for this HR program. In an effort to ensure position descriptions are accurate the VISN Centralized Classification Unit (CCU) requires local medical centers to send forward all position descriptions that are 2+ years old, or positions that require review based upon a change in duties and responsibilities for reclassification. If the VISN 6 Classification Unit (CCU) classifies a position different from the original position description classification the CCU instructs the local medical centers to take appropriate action within regulations. This appropriate action can be an upgrade of the position description, a title change, a downgrade of the position or no change. The intent of this cyclical review and change in duties and responsibilities is to ensure all positions are consistent in grade and pay throughout VHA.

February's Question: Why can't we pave the parking lots and build a parking garage to accommodate employee and Veteran parking?

FEBRUARY IS "MANAGE STRESS" MONTH

Submitted by Dr. Shannon Cohen

February is "manage stress" month. If you are having difficulty coping with life's demands, this may be considered stress. A life without some stress would be boring. Most of us like some challenges; but too much stress creates problems. People who are overly stressed report difficulty concentrating, feelings of worry and fear, tense muscles, irritability with others, and exhaustion. Too much stress over a long period of time can put your health at risk.

Our Stress Management Clinic meets on Thursdays from 12:30-1:30 pm in the main Building 143, Room BB-103 (Diabetic Education Room). Veteran walk-ins are welcome! Learn several ways to manage and reduce the stress in your life. You are also encouraged to talk with your Primary Care healthcare team or Mental Health Integration team member for more information.

If you, or someone you know, is in an emotional crisis, call the Veterans Hotline at 1-800-723-TALK and press "1" for Veterans.



PERSONALIZED VETERANS HEALTH BENEFITS HANDBOOK

VA is producing a new, *personalized* Veterans Health Benefits Handbook for Veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system. The handbooks are tailored to each Veteran, providing a current and understandable description of the benefits and responsibilities that specifically pertain to them. National production of the Veterans Benefits Handbook will begin February 6. Handbooks will be mailed in priority group order, starting with priority group 1, directly to the Veterans. The process is expected to take 16 months to complete.

Information will soon be available at: www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhbh.



SAFE PATIENT HANDLING (SPH) CORNER

Submitted by Sonya Stokes, BSN, RN

SPH QUESTION OF THE MONTH: "What is the recommended 'safe' lifting weight for healthcare professionals, without the use of SPH equipment?" (Watch next month's issue for the answer.)

SPH PEER LEADER:

"Hello, my name is Tenna Saunders. I have worked at the Salem VAMC for 3 years. I currently work on unit 2-3 as a LPN. I am also the Safe Patient Handling Unit Peer Leader for my area. Along with the Safe Patient Handling Facility Coordinator, Sonya Stokes, our team tries to prevent work related injuries to staff and to keep the patient population safe at all costs. To do this, we have made available to our staff a variety of innovative equipment to aid in the daily tasks of performing patient care.

I am available to assist you with any questions, concerns or suggestions regarding SPH and can be reached at ext. 2844, or contact the SPH Coordinator, Sonya Stokes, RN at ext. 3013.



SAFE PATIENT HANDLING VA FEDERAL SUPPLY FAIR

Submitted by Sonya Stokes, Photos by Marian McConnell

A Safe Patient Handling (SPH) Vendor Fair was held in the Auditorium on January 31st to present new, innovative equipment that can decrease injuries to staff while providing care to our patients, such as motorized stretchers, wound care products, power tables, exam tables, motorized beds/wheelchairs, bed and wheelchair movers, bariatric items, and more. Many products were on display that are already in use in our facility.

The event was coordinated by Sonya Stokes, SPH Coordinator (on right in photo); with Erica Guillama and Dianna Dore of the Office of OAL Contractor Support Team, Government Expo (on left and center in photo).

Some of the companies represented were: ICP Medical, Stryker Medical, Sizewise, Ferris/Polymem, Biogel, Joerns, Molnlycke Healthcare, and Handi-Move International.

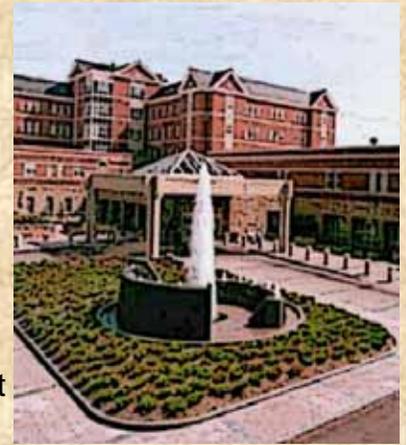


FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS/CONSTRUCTION NEWS

Submitted by Wayne Johnson, FMS

A number of substantial construction/renovation projects continue to progress which will ultimately result in improved patient care and privacy, better energy efficiency, enhanced security, and improved emergency response capability.

Renovation of Building 7, 2nd floor for Mental Health Service Line (MHSL) is progressing well and is now beyond 50% complete. Design of another substantial MHSL project, Building 8 Addition, will resume in February with construction anticipated to begin in the East Courtyard during the summer of 2012. Renovation work in Building 76 for relocation of Research is progressing well, and should be completed near the end of April, 2012. Construction of a new accessible front entrance for Women's Health Clinic should be completed in February.



The following Projects will also progress during the February/March timeframe or as noted:

- ◆ New Education Center in Building 75: Portions of the space have been essentially completed, and remaining components are awaiting processing of a contract supplemental agreement.
- ◆ Energy Saving Improvements: Re-commissioning of Building 143 HVAC systems for more energy efficient operation is nearing completion.
- ◆ HVAC System Replacement in Building 12: Work will continue.
- ◆ Roof work on Buildings 143 and 144 (Chapel): Will resume in the spring of 2012.
- ◆ SPD Renovation for Scope Processing: Project is essentially complete, with some final work dependent on completion of a contract supplemental agreement.
- ◆ Emergency Water Storage Project: March, 2012 initiation of construction is anticipated.
- ◆ Replace HVAC System in Building 74: Design/construction procurement is in progress.
- ◆ Buildings 74/75 basement corridor floor finish: Decision has been made on floor finish, and a supplemental agreement to the construction contract is in progress.
- ◆ Additional energy conservation measures (light replacement, corridor roll-up doors, water heaters): Design and procurement continue.
- ◆ Community Living Center Dining Room Addition for Building 2: Design effort is nearing completion and construction procurement should initiate during the March timeframe.
- ◆ Upgrades to Emergency Electrical System: Design effort will continue.
- ◆ Replacement of Primary Electrical Feeders: Design effort will continue.
- ◆ Installation of perimeter fence for security: Design will be completed in early February and construction procurement will initiate.
- ◆ Upgrade underground water distribution system: Design effort will continue.
- ◆ Upgrade and Modernize Utility Plant: Design procurement will continue.

Projects completed within the last two months include:

- ◆ HVAC System Replacement in Building 11.

As noted previously, there are additional projects earlier stages of development which are not listed above. These will be added to the update as they progress.

We continue to request your patience as we work to improve patient care and environmental conditions at the Salem VAMC. Please help us in maintaining a safe environment by reporting any unsafe conditions. If you observe unsafe conditions, please immediately report details of the situation to Safety (Ext. 2292) or FMS (Ext. 2700).



COMPLIMENTS CORNER

- ♥ “The best staffed **Nurses** are on **H and J** — they really know how to care for the Veteran when my husband was in the hospital. The **Emergency Room doctors** were great and staff on H and J wards were fantastic...they take the time to listen and make you feel better...overall the VA Hospital is an excellent hospital.”
- ♥ “...the care my son got at the **Pain Clinic** compares with nothing I have seen. Everyone is caring, compassionate, and just outright wonderful. Everyone goes out of their way to put both him and his family at ease. Thank you for being there for him.”
- ♥ “The reason that I am writing you is to let you know what one disabled Veteran has observed over a very long period. In regards to your immediate **office staff**, I have found that both ladies have always been courteous, professional and team players in meeting the needs of the Veterans... I receive regular services from... **Ophthalmology, Cardiology, PPCII, and Mental Health Services**. In my opinion, I have found these departments have been enhanced by the team concept and are exceptional in meeting my ongoing needs. I feel that the staff's morale in these areas are at all time high... The staff works diligently at their assignments and are able to distinguish themselves through their selflessness. With that in mind, I would like to mention that my daughter is presently employed as a **RN** in the **Surgical ICU**. This month,

she has been at the VAMC for 4 years. She absolutely loves her job and the people that she works with... Her mother and I are quite proud of her and her concern for Veterans.”

- ♥ “Thanks to all the staff of **12-2** for your wonderful care I received while was there. A lot of people don't realize how hard that you all work, but I do since this is my second and last trip here. You all get my respect and appreciation.”
- ♥ “We need more doctors like **Dr. Justine Crowley** in **Orthopedics**.”
- ♥ “To all the staff of **12-2**: Thank you for all of your support. Without all of you all's help I never could have made it. It was fun and I really enjoyed myself. I have never had so much fun getting clean and sober and serene. It was a joy to know that someone cares enough to go such measures to reach out to so many of us and never once complain. It was a pleasure just being around such kind hearted and loving people. You all will never be able to imagine how much this has meant to me... Thanks again for all the love that everyone showed me during my stay at Salem VAMC. You all really made a positive impact on my life and it really gave me the insight on how to love myself. All the warm caring saved my life. Thank you all.”
- ♥ “I was astounded by the friendly, prompt helpful quality. All medical facilities should follow this example. **Ms. Alderson** and the **staff** of the VA are to be complimented, on my viewing of the Veteran traffic using the facility.”
- ♥ “I appreciate the atmosphere and honor/respect shown the Veteran through the care given, through an excellent program helping those who have served.”

Veterans and Visitors: Do you have a compliment or suggestion to help us exceed your expectations? Our goal is to provide excellent service. Please ask to speak to the STAR (Service Level Patient Advocate) in the area to share your feedback. You may receive a survey in the mail; please complete it and return it to us with your feedback.

REPORTING SAFETY & QUALITY ISSUES

Submitted by Quality Management



Any employee of Salem VAMC may report safety and quality-of-care issues directly to the Joint

Commission, our accrediting agency. Concerns may be reported without retaliation or disciplinary action against the reporting employee. Reports may be reported to the Joint Commission through several means:

Mail:

Division of Accreditation Operations
The Joint Commission
One Renaissance Blvd.
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60180

Phone: 1-800-994-6610

Fax: 1-630-792-5636

Email: complaint@jointcommission.org

Be sure to check out our website
www.salem.va.gov
For events, articles, photos, this
newsletter, and more!

JUST THE FACTS

The newsletter is published around the 1st of each month.

If you have ideas for *Just the Facts* articles (250 words or less), photos, or suggestions, please contact Marian McConnell at (540) 982-2463, Ext. 1400; or email vhasampublicaffairs@va.gov at least 10 days before the first of the month.

Remember, you can read current and past issues on the Salem VAMC Intranet home-page.

Disclaimer: We reserve the right to edit/condense articles and information as appropriate. We will make every attempt to notify the author(s) first.

Posted online under "Resources" at:

www.salem.va.gov



EVENTS CALENDAR—2012

(Also see on Intranet and Internet Calendars)

Feb 9	Valentines for Veterans Concert with Country Music Star Aaron Tippin at the Salem Civic Center at 7pm (see page 1)
Feb 13	Healthy Ways to Manage Stress —from 11a-12p in the Main Lobby
Feb 16	Annual Salute to Hospitalized Veterans in the Auditorium from 1:30-2:30p
March	Women's History Month National Nutrition Month National Kidney Month National Eye Donor Month National Colorectal Awareness Month Multiple Sclerosis Education Month National Social Worker's Month Irish-American Heritage Month Save Your Vision Month American Red Cross Month Hemophilia Month Ethics Awareness Month Chronic Fatigue Awareness Month Deaf History Month Brain Injury Awareness Month
Mar 1	"Everyday People" Musical Performance from 2-4p in the Auditorium
Mar 4-10	Patient Safety Awareness Week
Mar 8	International Working Women's Day World Kidney Day
Mar 9	Registered Dietitian Day
Mar 11	Daylight Savings Time Begins
Mar 12-18	International Brain Awareness Week
Mar 16	Freedom of Information Day
Mar 17	St. Patrick's Day
Mar 18-24	National Poison Prevention Week
Mar 20	Spring Begins
Mar 24	World Tuberculosis Day
Mar 25-30	National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic—Snowmass, CO
Mar 27	Diabetes Alert Day World Water Day
Mar 30	Doctor's Day