



Just the Facts

MID-YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW

All the recent talk about the government shutdown puts a spotlight on the spending of all federal dollars including our own. It is no doubt the uncertainty of the federal budget has many concerned and I felt this was an appropriate time to shed some light on what we are doing here. As with your household budgets, it is important to know how much we have (income, revenue), and how much we must spend (expenses) to meet our mission of serving Veterans and taking care of our staff. This fiscal year is certainly a challenge as funding has decreased, while expenses have increased.

Managing our budget is a never-ending process, and it's certainly easier when the environment allows for growth of income. During the first half of the fiscal year, we have actively been pursuing cost-cutting and revenue-increasing initiatives. April marks the half way point for the fiscal year and we need to work together as a team; staff members, service chiefs, and management, to be innovative and find new and better ways to increase efficiency and meet our budgetary challenges.

Make one thing certain, we will continue to provide safe, quality and accessible patient care. I want to touch on staffing, because I know that many are concerned about whether we are hiring, and if so, if the budget is so tight, why are we filling those positions that we are.

It is imperative that staffing levels are appropriate and adequate across service lines. Our recruitment strategy for fiscal year 2011 is to ensure critical positions are reviewed and placed in the patient care areas that have the highest need to ensure safe, quality, and accessible patient care. Staffing to fill critical positions will continue while staffing in other areas will be restricted. Since October 2010, we have filled 29 critical positions in patient care areas and we are currently working to fill 54 additional critical positions. Each position has been closely scrutinized to ensure it is essential to our mission. There is no doubt that some people will be frustrated while we work through our clinical priorities and staffing levels. Please know that your cooperation is highly appreciated through this transition period.

Even though our 2011 budget is nearly 2 percent less than 2010, our budget principles continue to guide us as we work to maintain quality of care, provide a safe patient environment, and protect the livelihood of our employees, all while increasing patient enrollment. The following are some ways everyone can help.



Employees can help reduce costs and increase revenue by:

- ★ Turning off lights when leaving a room or area unoccupied.
- ★ Obtaining/verifying Veterans' insurance information, address and phone number.
- ★ Keeping overtime to a minimum.
- ★ Accurately coding and vesting patients.
- ★ Encouraging Veterans to enroll them for VA health care – the best care anywhere!
- ★ Encouraging Veterans already enrolled to register for My HealtheVet.
- ★ Suggesting ways to work efficiently and effectively, and reduce waste. To submit suggestions, please refer to MCM 658-05-03, Employee Awards and Recognition Program. "Suggestions must be submitted in writing using Automated VA Form 5-3951, Incentive Awards Program, Employee Suggestion, (Appendix C). This form may also be found in the Forms folder on the public drive in the folder 5-3951.DOT. Employees may submit suggestions directly to their service HRMS Specialist."

Veterans can help by:

- ★ Enrolling for VA healthcare; whether you feel you need it "right now" or not. It's for YOUR benefit.
- ★ Encouraging other Veterans to enroll for care at Salem VAMC.
- ★ Keeping personal information such as your address, phone number and insurance up to date.
- ★ Keeping your scheduled appointments. Please let us know ASAP if you must cancel or reschedule an appointment so another Veteran may use the appointment slot. An appointment that goes unfilled wastes a great deal of money.
- ★ Registering for My HealtheVet and getting authenticated so you can get your refills (and eventually other information) online.

Changes in programs throughout the medical center must be aligned within our resources and how we meet these challenges will make a powerful statement about our commitment to our Nation's Veterans. I know that pulling together, our Salem team of dedicated and motivated professionals will succeed.

Carol S. Bogedain, FACHE
Interim 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.

The Team recently shared information about VA health care services at the: Staunton Senior Center, Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Galax VFW Post 7568, Rural Retreat American Legion, Highland County Maple Sugar Festival, Smyth-Bland Regional Library, Marine Corps League Meeting in Pulaski, Roanoke Gun Show, Floyd Library, Military Support Fair at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Galax VEC, VFW Post 6000 in Narrows, Rockbridge Community Services Board, and the Life Center in Galax.

Upcoming Rural Health Outreach Events:

(Also posted at www.salem.va.gov)

- ☆ April 2—Health Fair at Hollins Road Baptist Church on 3502 Old Mountain Rd. in Roanoke from 9a-2p.
- ☆ April 8—Giles County Senior Center on 1320 Wenonah Ave. in Pearisburg from 10a-2p.
- ☆ April 14—Veterans Job Fair at Crossroads Mall in Roanoke from 10a-3p.
- ☆ April 21—American Legion Post 7 on 338 N. Washington Ave. in Pulaski from 2-6p.
- ☆ April 22—Galax VEC on 963 Stuart Drive in Galax from 10a-2p.
- ☆ April 26—Bastian Union Church on 29 Bear Trail Road in Bastian from 2-6p.
- ☆ April 29—Valley View Mall in Roanoke from 4-7p.
- ☆ April 30 & May 1 – Military Extravaganza on 3401 US Highway 29; Danville, VA from 10a – 5p.
- ☆ May 6-7—Magic in the Mountains on 501 East Ridgeway Street in Clifton Forge from 5-10p on Friday and 8a-6p on Saturday.
- ☆ May 25—Staunton Senior Center on 300 Churchville Ave. in Staunton from 10a-1p.

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.

Ms. Morina Lamb (left) served in the 123rd Signal Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, during Desert Storm. She received information about how to enroll for VA health care from Kathryn Null at the Military Support Fair held March 23rd at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. Photo by Marian McConnell.



Home Based Primary Care (HBPC): “Staying home, staying healthy”

Submitted by Donna Angle, RN, HBPC Coordinator

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) admitted its first patient in October, 2007. Our enrollment capacity is 125. HBPC is a program which delivers primary health care in the home, through a VA hospital based interdisciplinary team, to homebound and often bedridden eligible Veterans whose caregivers are capable and willing to assist in their care. Operating under the Extended Care Service Line, the core HBPC Team is comprised of Providers, Nurses, Social Worker, Occupational Therapist, Pharmacist, Psychologist, Recreation Therapist and Dietitian.



It is an outpatient program providing health services to individuals who require continuing care and for whom follow-up in an outpatient clinic is not feasible. The Veteran must live within a thirty (30) mile radius or one hour driving time from the VA facility to meet the criteria for admission.

Veterans for whom routine clinic-based care is NOT effective may include those with:

- (1) Impaired mobility due to disability or functional limitation making it difficult to leave home without the assistance of a device or another person.
- (2) Inability to cope with clinic environment due to cognitive, physical, or psychiatric impairment.
- (3) Need for frequent coordinated interventions from multiple disciplines.
- (4) Recurrent hospitalizations or urgent care episodes.

Some comments received from Veterans and Caregivers have been:

"I get the best care in the state."

"I think it's a great program, I'm so glad I'm in it."

"The program is so good, please don't take it away."

"The staff performs above my expectations."

"The care is a God send. It has saved his life."

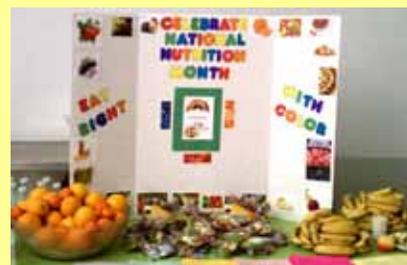
"It is convenient and we look forward to their visits. They are upbeat. We have nothing but high regard for the service."

If you know a Veteran who would benefit from this program, call (540) 982-2463, ext 3707.

SALEM CELEBRATES NUTRITION MONTH

Article and Photo by Dr. Shannon Cohen

Registered dietitians Ann Hoover, Magna Brito, Bonnie Harbourt, Kristy Suhr, Kara Kielmeyer, and Pam Mooreland answered nutrition questions with a focus on healthy eating, portion sizes, and adding color (fruits & vegetables) to the diet on March 18, 2011 in the main lobby of building 143. Nutrition handouts, fresh fruit, and bottled water were provided for patients, employees, volunteers, and visitors in partnership with the Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program.



ID BADGES: The VA Police remind all employees to always wear their employee ID badges while on duty. This is a Medical Center and Joint Commission requirement. If you lose your ID badge, please report to Human Resources, Building 74, Room 109, Monday-Friday between 8a-4p.

BONK RECEIVES RECOGNITION FOR BEDSIDE MANNER

Article and Photo by Marian McConnell, Public Affairs Officer

John H. Bonk, DPM, FACFAS, DABPS, Salem VAMC Staff Podiatrist, received an Honorable Mention in “Our Health” magazine’s Best Bedside Manner awards for Podiatry. (*“Our Health” magazine is a locally owned and operated publication dedicated to serving Southwest and Central Virginia as the premier resource for healthcare and healthy living information for its residents, physicians, non-physician providers, clinical professionals and healthcare leaders and executives — www.ourhealthvirginia.com*)

Dr. Bonk has been Podiatrist at Salem for 4 years, working with two other Podiatrists – Dr. Douglas Dockery and Dr. Paul Shearer.

He has a particular interest in helping Veterans with diabetic peripheral neuropathy – problems Veterans with diabetes (and sometimes chemo patients) have with numbness, pain, tingling, and/or balance in their feet. Sometimes these problems result in ulcers, infections, and even possibly amputation. Over the past two years they have done a surgical procedure, “nerve decompression surgery,” for about 200 Veterans with these issues; the results have been significantly positive: approximately 85% satisfaction rate in increased feeling in their feet and/or decrease in pain. This means an improvement in the quality of life for these Veterans. He mentioned, for example, a Veteran who wanted to ride his motorcycle but could no longer feel the pedals; since the surgery he is able to ride again. “I love working with Veterans, it’s my way of giving back.”

As for the Bedside Manner award; he says, “Veterans tell me they appreciate the fact that I take the time to listen to them. I treat the whole person, not just their feet. I look at each Veteran as not just a patient but a friend.”

Dr. Bonk enjoys golf, woodworking, and reading when he’s not taking care of Veterans. He even sang for 15 years in a Barbershop Quartet Chorus! His wife of 4 years, Mary-Margaret (Margie), works at the VA Regional Office in Roanoke. Congratulations, Dr. Bonk, on receiving this honor and recognition!



WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

Article and photos by Dale Hendley, Chief, VA Police

On Sunday, March 20, 2011, members of the Blue Ridge Bloodhounds Search and Rescue participated in a training session at the Salem VAMC. The training was held at the lake area and they were escorted by Chief Dale Hendley. They had about a dozen various types of canines performing search techniques. Many of the dogs are trained in tracking people (such as a missing child, missing person, or someone wanted by the Police) and for cadavers.

The dogs were amazing. In one exercise, a person hid behind a tree in an area the size of 12 acres. One dog named “Auggie” was able to locate the person in under 3 minutes. In another exercise, a participant left the picnic shelter, walked across the bridge over the lake, and hid in one of the buildings. “William,” a bloodhound, was given the scent of the person and tracked the participant down in about 4 minutes.

The Blue Ridge Bloodhounds Search and Rescue, which is a volunteer group and assist with the State of Virginia Emergency Management, has agreed to assist us if we ever need help with a missing Alzheimer’s or dementia patient.



GEM (Going the Extra Mile) AWARD RECIPIENTS—2nd Quarter

Submitted by Angela Cooper, Human Resources

The following employees received \$50 GEM awards in the 2nd Quarter. This award recognizes consistent exceptional courtesy and responsiveness, positive and friendly attitude, and willingness to pitch in and help others. Employees who “go the extra mile,” display courtesy to patients, and/or staff, in responding to their needs on a consistent basis. Other examples are: an employee has a positive attitude and offers assistance to help others who may be behind in their tasks; convinces others in making a work environment more pleasant through their positive, friendly and courteous attitude; unusual courtesy or responsiveness to customers, which clearly demonstrates performance beyond the call of duty and reflects favorably on the organization and VA. NomiNations may be submitted at any time of the year. Award forms are located on the network drive and in patient care areas (located with the nurse manager). Congratulations!

William Crotts	Carolyn McKeller	Mary McInnis
Leo Griffiths	Kim Butler-Beckford	Lisa Gillis
Thomas Martin, MD	Sharon Zimmerman	Bill Day
Sean Sheehan	Ray Klimuszka	Kenneth McBroom
Larry Fitzgerald	Dennis Enoch	Marcus Claussen
David Kolar	Rickey Johnson	James Alexander
Mike Harr	Dennis Morgan	Evelyn Sayers
Janice Taylor	Judy Turner	Phyllis Shelton
John Rowland	Jennifer Helms	Susan Asberry
Julia Caplick	Nancy Short	Ann Benois
Wendy Murphy	Karen West	David Wray
Susan Ridenhour	Carolyn Tasco	Aruo Vilgats
Shirley Levesy-Martin	Keath Hampton	Annie Saunders

STEPPING OUT FOR HEALTH

Article and photo by Dr. Shannon Cohen

The “Stepping out for health” walking group meets Mondays and Thursdays from 12:15-12:45 pm in the main lobby of building 143 near the entrance. We welcome new walkers to join us. The group walk is free and open to patients, employees, and volunteers.

Pictured from left to right: Dr. Shannon Cohen, Jane Harrison, RN, Dr. Vance Gill, Barbara Zicafoose, NP, Marsha Garrison, RN, Cindy Stephens-Pugh, RN, and Dr. Kristina Bulas.



? ASK ETHEL?

The Integrated Ethics Committee will pose a question each month in *Just The Facts*. Questions and Answers will address boundaries 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).



March Ethel Question: What happens if a former patient "Friend Requests" you on Facebook? Also, if a friendship with a Veteran pre-dates a recent hospitalization can I still communicate with him on Facebook?

Answer: Balancing the use of social media and ethics in our day to day practice is something we have to be mindful of. Two Salem VAMC experts were consulted concerning your questions and provided the following guidance referring to policy and also a recent literature reference:

As an employee of the VAMC Salem, you need to clearly define "What your relationship to the Veteran is." If your relationship is strictly a result of your business, providing care to the Veteran, then you would probably not want to "friend" the Veteran on Facebook.

If you have a personal relationship with the Veteran (a relationship that pre-dates your business relationship or a relationship that results from non-VA business activities such as church/neighbor/child's sport group/etc), then you may certainly friend the Veteran on Facebook if you so choose. Just remember, when the patient seeks care in VAMC Salem, you should recuse (not be involved) yourself from direct patient care services; and if you are a personal friend and Facebook, be sure you do not share PII/PHI of other patients on Facebook. — David C. Hoover, Compliance Officer

Issues with social media have caught healthcare organizations by surprise. The Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics (SCCE) and the Health Care Compliance Association (HCCA) have not caught up with the social media explosion. A survey was conducted by the SCCE and HCCA in 2009 to assess how health care organizations are managing the use of social media. The results indicate there is no consistent approach managing employee behavior throughout organizations. Twenty-five percent of the 800 people who responded to the survey indicated the employer has had to discipline employees for their use of social media (News survey, 2009). All healthcare employees have to remember they are obligated to keep patient information private, adhere to professional boundaries, and respect patient privacy rights. If patient information is discussed on social media it breaks confidentiality issues and leads to unprofessional conduct. Remember, as a health care employee taking care of patients all postings on a social media site must be in compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996. Using social networks can result in civil liability to patients, job loss, and disciplinary action by state licensing boards (Hader & Brown, 2010). You may want to keep your friendship off social media sites. — Debra Shipman, Office of Employee Education

References:

Hader, A., & Brown, E. (2010). *Patient privacy and social media*. *American Association for Nurse Anesthetists*, 78(4), 270-274.

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Compliance: What are companies doing? (2009, September 23). News survey results from the Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics and Health Care Compliance Association.

April Ethel Question: My doctor recently referred me to another doctor for treatment that happens to be their spouse. My doctor did not tell me this information, but I was informed inadvertently by someone else. Should I have been informed of this by my doctor?

FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS/CONSTRUCTION NEWS

Submitted by Wayne Johnson, FMS

Following several months of construction, we are nearing completion of five of our six American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) projects. These include Replacement of Building 143 Fire Alarm System, West Loop Steam Repairs, various Energy Savings Improvements, Elevator Renovations in eight locations, and Exterior Renovations for Environmental Compliance. The sixth ARRA project will replace exterior lights with energy efficient Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights. By mid-April, most of our awarded construction projects should be in full construction mode as the weather improves.



In addition to the ARRA projects noted above, the following projects will progress during the April-May timeframe:

- ☆ MRI Addition to Building 2A: Building Addition will be substantially completed.
- ☆ Construction of a new Education Center in Building 75: Work will continue.
- ☆ Building 9, 2nd Floor Renovation for Mental Health Service Line: Will be substantially completed.
- ☆ Basement corridor floor restoration in Buildings 74 and 75 will be completed (April).
- ☆ Replacement of Roofs: Should complete East Loop corridor roofs, continue work on the Corridor between Buildings 2 and 4, and resume work on Buildings 74 and 143/2A roofs.
- ☆ HVAC Systems Replacement in Buildings 11 and 12: Construction should initiate.
- ☆ Installation of Lighting in Parking Lots H and I: Should be completed in April.
- ☆ SPD Renovation for Scope Processing: Construction work has begun and will continue.
- ☆ High Efficiency Heating Systems for Buildings 17, 18, 19, and 25: Contract has been awarded.
- ☆ HVAC Humidification Corrections in Building 143: Work will resume and should be completed.
- ☆ Re-Commissioning of Building 143 HVAC System: Re-commissioning will continue.
- ☆ Front Accessible Entrance for Women's Health Clinic: Design will be completed.
- ☆ Building 76 Renovations for Relocation of Research: Contract has been advertised.
- ☆ Building 8 Addition for Mental Health Service Line: Contract procurement will initiate.
- ☆ Emergency Water Storage Project: Design work will be completed.

Projects which are essentially complete include:

- ☆ Installation of Shuttle Bus Shelters.
- ☆ Partial Renovation of Emergency Department.
- ☆ Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure Security and IT HVAC corrections.

FMS will continue our efforts to coordinate construction activities and design efforts with directly-affected personnel and services. We will continue to strive for delivery of safe and efficient construction projects providing optimal facilities for our deserving Veterans. If you see unsafe conditions, please immediately report details of the situation to Safety (Ext. 2292) or FMS (Ext. 2700).

MY HEALTHuVET CONNECTION

The My HealthuVet Connect is now open to Veterans, visitors, volunteers, and staff who wish to register for this online program. Veterans must be authenticated in person to be able to access their individual, protected data (please bring a photo ID). The hours are on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 12:30-4:00p in the My HealthuVet Connection office, just inside the front doors of the main lobby. For more information contact the MHV Coordinator at (540) 982-2463, Ext. 2503.



NATIONAL VA RESEARCH WEEK 2011

Submitted by Dora Szilagyi



The **2011** National VA Research Week will be celebrated **May 2-6**. This is a prime opportunity for VA to showcase its investigators' significant discoveries and innovations that have led to advancements in Veterans' care and the Nation's medical knowledge.

The theme for 2011 is "**Discovery & Collaboration for Exceptional Health Care**" highlighting both the collaboration among VA research, academic partners and other federal agencies; and the translation of research findings into advancements in health care.

This year the Salem VAMC R&D Office and Salem Research Institute are planning several local events. On Thursday, May 5th and Friday May 6th there will be a scientific research poster display in the Auditorium, Bldg 5, 1st floor open to the public for Veterans, employees and visitors. The posters showcase the hard work and dedication of our local medical staff, residents and students. They will be special giveaways for Veterans and VA employees. On that Thursday, in the Lobby of Bldg 143 research study coordinators will man display tables, provide brochures and answer questions regarding the general research study process, how to volunteer, and the Human Subject Protections Program.

On Friday, May 6th in the morning, residents and their mentors will present their research finding during the Medical Grand Rounds and at noon we will be pleased to present our special guest speaker: Dr. Daniel K. Nelson, Director Office of Human Research Ethics; Professor of Social Medicine; Adjunct Professor of Pediatrics from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This lecture on research ethics is for Researchers, IRB and R&D Committee members and R&D staff as well as invited guests – advance registration is required.

To learn more about VA Research, please visit <http://vaww.research.va.gov> or our local R&D Office on the second floor of Building 12.

VALU ADVANCE CLASSES AT SALEM

Article and Photo by Rod Hiduskey, HTM Coordinator

On March 3-4, Salem VA hosted the first of several VALU Advance classes for 2011. Due to the popularity of this class, a second class date was added. More than 50 employees attended the sessions that were lead by course Advance facilitator Carl Baldwin. The all day sessions focused on teaching employees to be better communicators by understanding different communication styles, interpreting verbal and non-verbal communication clues, being an active listener, and understanding cultural and generational differences in communication. Salem VAMC has scheduled additional on-site Advance classes for this year. The class schedule is listed on the Salem webpage under Salem events, along with registration instructions. All registration must be done through LMS. Please note, if the class you are attempting to register does not post in LMS, it means the class is full and the vendor has pulled the course from the LMS catalogue listing. Register early for classes because many classes are already full. If you have any questions about the classes, please contact Rod Hiduskey, HTM Coordinator, ext. 3599.



VA POLICE INFORMATION

Submitted by Dale Hendley, Chief, VA Police



CODE ADAM ALERT:

On occasion we have children that are escorted to our facility with parents or other relatives. If a child becomes missing, a Missing Child /Code Adam Alert may be activated.

Here are a few things that will assist you should a Code Adam Alert is activated:

The employee is to obtain the name and contact information of the person reporting the child missing and ask that person to remain with them until the arrival of the VA Police. Employees will obtain a detailed description of the child to include the name, age, eye and hair color, approximate height and weight, and a description of the clothing and shoes that the child may be wearing and have that information available upon the arrival of Police. (Please include any known marks or scars which may stand out and assist in making identification easier). Follow instructions given by law enforcement personnel immediately. These may include but not limited to securing doors, forming search parties and organizing searches. A search will be conducted for the missing child. The first steps of a search will include a detailed preliminary search of the area in which the reported missing child was last seen. If a child cannot be found during the preliminary search, the Chief of Police or their designee may authorize a full search of the facility. If a decision is made to conduct a full search, the procedures commonly used for locating a missing patient through a full search procedure will be carried out using the grid search process identical to that used for missing patients. Remember, the first step in avoiding this type of situation is always prevention. Let's remain vigilant for children who appear to be alone or not accompanied by an adult in their work area.

MISSING PATIENTS:

As we know it is everyone's responsibility to give patients a safe environment while here at the facility. An important part of our responsibility is to keep abreast of the whereabouts of patients so they do not become "missing patients". Here are a few things to remember:

An "At Risk Patient" is at-risk when they have wandered or gone missing and they are at-risk for harm to themselves or others if not found and returned to a safe treatment environment. A patient's cognitive ability, the ability to make rational decisions, is a major feature of the assessment of risk in such situations. A "Missing Patient" is an at-risk patient who disappears from the patient care areas (on VA property), or while under control of VHA, such as during transport.

As soon as it is determined that an at-risk patient is missing, a preliminary search, coordinated by locally-designated staff in each clinical area must be initiated to include: nearby ward, unit, clinic areas, or offices and adjacent areas, such as: lobbies, stairwells, elevators, the Veterans Canteen, or smoking areas. The VA Police will assist in the Preliminary search by search. If a missing patient is not located during the preliminary search, a full search/Code Green is authorized by the Medical Center Director or designee. Only the Director can authorize a Code Green.

Everyone can do their part to help stop "missing patients". If you see a patient with or without an armband wandering through the facility, stop and ask them if they need assistance and the ward or area they are assigned. Contact the area and ensure the staff knows the location of the patient. The little steps you take now may save several steps later toward avoiding a "missing patient" situation.

TAKE CRIME PREVENTION TO WORK:

When you go to work, don't leave your crime prevention sense at home. Almost any crime that can happen at home or in your neighborhood can happen in the workplace. But common-sense prevention skills can help make life at work safer for all.

Help Prevent Office Theft and Other Crimes:

- Keep your purse, wallet, keys, or other valuable items with you at all times or locked in a desk drawer, filing cabinet or wall locker.
- Check the identity of any strangers who are in your office -- ask whom they are visiting and if you can help them find that person. If this makes you uncomfortable, inform VA Police or your supervisor about your suspicions.
- Always let someone know where you'll be -- whether it's coming in late, working late, and going out to lunch or a meeting.

- If you bring personal items to work such as a coffee pot, a radio, or a calculator, mark them with your name or initials and an identification number. Remember to get your coffee pot checked out by Safety before using it in your area.
- Report any broken or flickering lights, dimly lit corridors, doors that don't lock properly, or broken windows. Don't wait for someone else to do it.
- Be discreet. Don't advertise your social life or vacation plans and those of your coworkers to people visiting or calling your place of work.

Take a Look at Common Trouble Spots:

- Stairwells and out-of-the-way corridors -- Don't use the stairs alone at night. Talk to the Safety or FMS about improving poorly lighted corridors and stairways.
- Elevators -- Don't get into elevators with people who look out of place or behave in a strange or threatening manner. If you find yourself in an elevator with someone who makes you nervous, get off as soon as possible.
- Employee Restrooms -- Attackers can hide in stalls and corners. Make sure restrooms are locked and only employees have keys. Be extra cautious when using restrooms that are isolated or poorly lighted.
- After hours -- Don't work late alone. Create a buddy system for walking to parking lots or public transportation or ask VA Police to escort you.
- Parking lots -- Always lock your car and roll the windows up all the way. If you notice any strangers hanging around the parking lot, notify VA Police. When you approach your car, have the key ready. Check the floor and front and back seats before getting in. Lock your car as soon as you get in -- before you buckle your seat belt.

New Policy to help with the crime prevention measures:

Medical Center policy (MCM 658-07-03) now requires that during an employee's tour of duty, when an employee leaves their office, the employee will secure their office door. All employees will also secure their work areas/offices at the end of their tour of duty. This measure is taken to ensure that government records, patient medical records, and government and/or personal property are secured. By securing the areas, it will help eliminate the unauthorized access to patient or employee personal data; prevent the thefts and/or pilferage of government or private property; and prevent unauthorized personnel from loitering/trespassing in the work space, especially after normal business hours. Employees are instructed to report unlocked areas to FMS at extension 2238 or to VA Police at extension 2225. All employee lockers must have locks on them at all times in order to prevent theft and the attraction of a criminal element.

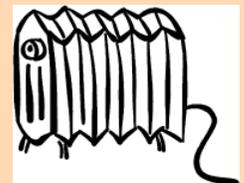
PORTABLE HEATERS - RESTRICTED USE

Submitted by Bob Rossbacher, FMS

This type (picture at top) of radiant type heater is not allowed at the Salem VA Medical Center because of the fire hazard of placing the heater too close to an object or wooden door thereby possibly starting a fire. This prohibition is stated in the NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION ASSOCIATION (NFPA 101) not allowing any appliance to be above 212 degrees Fahrenheit.



This is a sketch (picture at bottom) of a portable electric oil-filled heater which operates at lower temperatures than the radiant heaters. At times this type oil-filled heater is used when the heating system is not producing enough heat to provide comfortable temperatures. Please call engineering at 2238 to allow adjustments to the heating system before resorting to a portable heater. These portable heaters use a considerable amount of electrical energy and therefore raise the cost of Salem's electric bill. Most of the portable heaters have two levels of heat (two switches). If it becomes necessary to use a heater, turn on only one switch. This lower level of heat draws only half of the electrical power and will be less likely to overload an electrical circuit and cause an electrician to come and correct the problem. Also one half of the power helps the Salem VA meet our energy saving goals.



Any personal appliance (heaters, lamps, radios, coffee makers, etc.) must have an electrical check (green tag) before it is put into operation. Place an electronic work order in VISTA to accomplish this before using the appliance.

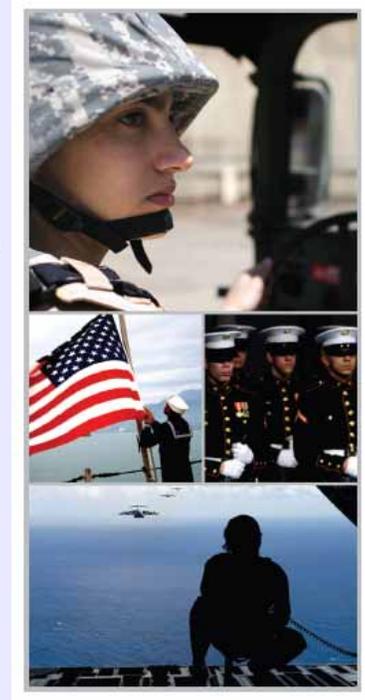
MST AND CLOTHESLINE PROJECT

Submitted by Dana Holohan, PhD

Did you know April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month? About one in five women and one in a hundred men seen in VA medical facilities report that they experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST); that is, sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that occurred during military service. MST can affect Veterans' physical and mental health many years afterwards. VA offers a variety of services designed to assist Veterans who have experienced MST. For example, treatment for physical and mental health conditions related to MST is available at every VA facility and is provided to Veterans free of charge, regardless of service-connection status. Veterans may be able to receive this free MST-related care even if they are not eligible for other VA care. Our VA's MST Coordinator is Dana R. Holohan, Ph.D., who serves as a point of contact for Veterans and staff. It's important to remember that every VA employee has the power to help Veterans recover from MST by responding sensitively to inquiries about MST, remaining knowledgeable about VA's MST-related services, and ensuring that information about Veterans' MST status is kept confidential. For more information, contact Dr. Holohan at ext. 2934 or visit the MST Resource homepage at <http://vaww.mst.va.gov>. Veterans can access information at <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp>.

In support of SAAM, the Salem VA MST Treatment Program in the Center for Traumatic Stress is sponsoring a "Clothesline Project" at the Medical Center. The event will be held from 8:30 am – 3:00 pm on April 26-27 in the main lobby. Our clothesline project will be display of T-shirts made by men and women who have been impacted by sexual violence. The T-shirts allow each individual to tell their story of violence and abuse in their own unique way, using words and/or artwork. Also included will be messages of support to sexual assault survivors. Please come by and find out more about this very moving display.

Also, please wear teal on Tuesday, April 27th to provide your support to survivors of sexual trauma and to focus on the prevention of sexual assault. The Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Treatment Team and members of the other organizations will be available in the lobby of Building 143 to answer any questions and distribute materials about sexual assault.



Did you know?

- Both men and women are victims of rape and sexual assault. In fact, based on the VA's screening for MST, equal numbers of men and women have reported experiencing Military Sexual Trauma while they were in the service.
- Only 38% of sexual assaults are reported. Men are much less likely to report a rape than women. Estimates suggest that only 5-10% of male rapes are ever reported.
- 73% of reported sexual assaults were committed by someone known to the victim. This includes a friend, acquaintance, intimate partner, and a relative
- Victims of sexual assault are: three times more likely to suffer from depression, six times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol, 26 times more likely to abuse drugs, and 4 times more likely to consider suicide.

What can I do to help?

If someone you know has been sexually assaulted, it is important to listen with sensitivity and compassion. It is also essential that we each understand that sexual assault can happen to anyone, of any gender, of any race, and that it is not the victim's fault. Fault belongs to the rapist or perpetrator. No one deserves to be raped. Victims or family members can call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE. Veterans can also call the MST Coordinator, Dr. Dana Holohan, at (540)982-2463 x2934. Men and women who experienced a sexual trauma while in the military are entitled to free services from the VA for issues related to this trauma. The MST Treatment Program provides confidential assessment and treatment for both men and women.

COMPLIMENTS CORNER

"I really appreciate the attention I got from my Nurses on **4J**. The care was excellent! The Nurses went beyond the call of duty to take care of me, especially **Melissa** and **Tawanna**."

"**Marie Gibbs** does an outstanding job on my teeth. Having pictures on the lights to look at is a huge improvement. Thanks."

"**Greta Estacio**, NP in **Cardiology** is top notch and would bend over backwards to help Veterans."

"I had a very pleasant experience in **Audiology**; **Amy Cox** was very efficient and professional."

"**Cheryl Peevey** is excellent in the **Cardiac Cath Lab**... she was calm and patient-oriented. The entire unit was family-oriented... **Greta Estacio**, NP, and Cheryl's attitude is what makes this stressful situation almost a pleasant event."

"**Pam Williams**, LPN, **Ward 2-3**, was right there, on the spot, when my wife needed some special reassurance when I was disoriented and upset. She had the right words to comfort and reassure me, and for that I am very grateful."

"**Pam Braun** (Pharmacy) went above and beyond to assist the Patient Advocate regarding medications for a Veteran. She located a shipment of the medications the Veteran needed when he was out, and filled the prescription while he was in the Patient Advocate's office."

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



BILLING OFFICE NEWS

Submitted by Tracy Turner



The Mid-Atlantic Consolidated Patient Accounts Center (MACPAC) Facility Revenue Office here commonly referred to as the "billing" office has made organizational process changes that have resulted in a reassignment of specific functions. The staff at Salem are no longer the primary points of contact for Veterans with "billing" questions or concerns. Please refer any Veterans with inquiries concerning all billing related activities, including payment plans, waivers, IVM (Income Verification Matching) audits, service-connected billing, etc. to the Health Revenue Center (HRC) at 1-866-290-9438.

Thank you for your cooperation and you may contact (540) 982-2463, ext. 2733 with any questions.

Frank Buckles, Last Known U.S. Doughboy, Dies

WASHINGTON (February 28, 2011) - Frank Woodruff Buckles, who lied about his age to enlist in the Army in 1917 and became the last known U.S. Veteran of World War I, died on February 27, 2011 at the age of 110.

"We have lost a living link to an important era in our Nation's history," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "But we have also lost a man of quiet dignity, who dedicated his final years to ensuring the sacrifices of his fellow 'Doughboys' are appropriately commemorated."

Burial with full military honors was held at Arlington National Cemetery.

A long-time resident of Charles Town, West Virginia, where he had a farm, Buckles was born in Bethany, Missouri. He enlisted shortly after his 16th birthday and served in France and Germany.

At the start of World War II, he was a civilian working with a steamship company in the Philippines. He was imprisoned in a Japanese prisoner of war camp for three and a half years.

In his later years, Buckles became an advocate for the expansion of a little-known memorial to World War I Veterans from the District of Columbia into a National memorial.



REPORTING SAFETY & QUALITY ISSUES

Submitted by Quality Management



Any employee of the 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 homepage.

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

Now posted online at:

www.salem.va.gov



EVENTS CALENDAR

(Also see events online on the Salem homepage, and in the Weekly Bulletin)

Apr 1-7	Testicular Cancer Awareness Week Medication Safety Week National Public Health Week
Apr 2	World Autism Awareness Day
Apr 6	National Day of Hope
Apr 7	Alcohol Screening Day—8:30a-3p in the Main Lobby
Apr 8	POW Memorial Wreath Laying Ceremony—2p at the POW Monument in front of Bldg. 143
Apr 9	National Former POW Recognition Day
Apr 10-16	National Environmental Education Week Health Information Privacy & Security Week National Volunteer Week
Apr 12	National Radiology Nurses Day
Apr 16	National Healthcare Decisions Day
Apr 17-23	National Minority Cancer Awareness Week Medical Fitness Week
Apr 22	Earth Day—9a-2p in the Main Lobby
Apr 22	Good Friday Service—12p in the Chapel
Apr 24	Easter
Apr 24-30	Administrative Professionals Week National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week
Apr 27	Administrative Professionals Day
Apr 29	Arbor Day
May 5	Research Week—"Discovery and Collaboration for Exceptional Health Care" — Poster Display from 8a-4:30p in the Auditorium.
May 5	Research Week displays in the main lobby from 9a-2p
May 6	Research Week Poster Exhibit from 9a-2p in the Auditorium
May 20	Caring for Veterans at the End of Life—7:30a-3p in the Auditorium; Guest Speaker Deborah Grassman, NP
Jun 2	VA 2K Walk and Roll at 12 noon around the perimeter of the VAMC