



# Just the Facts

## Over 500 Veterans Turn out for Job Fair!

The Regional Veterans Job Fair held on April 25th in our Auditorium was a huge success, with over 500 Veterans attending. Thirty-eight employers provided employment information, and five colleges/schools shared information about educational opportunities. Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) Programs, Rural Health, Salem VAMC Human Resources, VA Police Service, and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserves (ESGR) were available to offer Veterans information about resources available to them. Five local reservists helped with traffic and escorted Veterans to and from the event.



Veterans — Did you know that there is a VEC resource booth in our main lobby? Mr. Chris Simmons, VEC Representative, is here on Monday-Friday from 9a-4:30p. Let him show you how to register online with the Virginia Workforce Network to receive notices about available employment opportunities.

**Miguel H. LaPuz, MD, MBA**  
Director

*Job Fair Photos by Shelby Assad. See more on our Facebook page.*





# 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: VFW Post 1033 in Covington, YMCA in Alta Vista, Rural Clergy Training in Staunton, VFW Post 115 in Hillsville, VFW in Bluefield WV, Virginia Employment Commission in Galax, County Library in Floyd, VFW Post 1944 in Lexington, Volunteer Fire Department in Clifton Forge, the Danville CBOC, the Sexual Assault Awareness Walk at the Salem VAMC, the Bedford Welcome Center, and the Regional Veterans Job Fair at Salem VAMC.

## Upcoming Rural Health Outreach Events:

- ♦ May 3—VFW Post 1033 in Covington, VA from 9a-12p
- ♦ May 8—VFW Post 1115 in Hillsville, VA from 9a-12p
- ♦ May 16—VA 2K Walk & Roll at Salem VAMC from 12-1p
- ♦ May 22—Bedford Welcome Center in Bedford, VA from 9a-12p
- ♦ June 7—VFW Post 1033 in Covington, VA from 9a-12p
- ♦ June 9—Farmer's Market in Martinsville, VA from 7-11a
- ♦ June 12—VFW Post 1115 in Hillsville, VA from 9a-12p

More information and upcoming events open to the public are posted at [www.salem.va.gov](http://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](mailto:marian.mcconnell@va.gov).

## DECISION HEIGHT

DECISION HEIGHT is an original historical drama written by Hollins University Senior, Meredith Dayna Levy. The play traces the lives of six women as they undergo training to become members of the Women Airforce Service Pilots program, which was active in the United States from 1943-44. Here, at the only female Airforce Academy in American history, these women learn the strength of sisterhood and awaken to a deeper sense of purpose as they discover exactly why it is they fly.

DECISION HEIGHT will be presented in the Upstairs Studio Theater at Hollins University May 9-12 at 7:30 pm. The production is free; however there is limited seating so please contact (336) 848-8318 or email [lbuie@hollins.edu](mailto:lbuie@hollins.edu) to reserve your ticket.



## ? ASK ETHEL?

The Integrated Ethics Committee poses a question each month in **Just the Facts**. Questions and answers beginning in March's issue will address resources available to employees and other ethical issues in the workplace. Customer centered agencies, like Salem VAMC in which improved customer service is important to the overall mission of quality healthcare, tend to offer various opportunities for all employees which promote career and self growth. 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).



### **April's Question:** What kinds of cultural awareness activities are available at Salem VAMC?

Salem VAMC is committed to continuously promoting diversity through on site educational events, social awareness events, and upward mobility opportunities. The Equal Employment Opportunity, EEO Specialist, Mr. Patrick Zimmerman, reviews Salem VAMC data annually specific to jobs held at all GS levels and the cultural composition for jobs held in these wage grades. Efforts are made to encourage employees to seek upward mobility by offering various training opportunities throughout the year.

Another function of the EEO committee is to provide culturally based educational/social functions for employees annually which include, but are not limited to: Asian Pacific Heritage Month; Black History Month; Disability Awareness Month; Federal Women's Program/Women's History Month; Hispanic Heritage Month; and Native American Heritage Month. The EEO Committee welcomes employee participation through help with research for specific events, helping with set-up and volunteering time during the special events, and they also accept donations, which in large part support young teens of employees through scholarship opportunities each year.

If you have ideas about future programming or would like to seek information about membership of the EEO Committee, please contact Mr. Patrick Zimmerman, EEO Specialist at extension 2727, or Loretta Welch, EEO Chair at extension 3027.

**May's Question:** I recently submitted an Ethics Referral on behalf of a Veteran. Since submitting the Ethics Referral my co-workers seem to be treating me differently. Should I have submitted the Ethics Referral anonymously?

## **SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS**

During the month of April, the "Clothesline Project," — t-shirts created by sexual assault/military sexual trauma survivors — was displayed in the main lobby. Mental Health providers were available to answer questions and provide information about resources. Everyone was encouraged to wear "Teal on Tuesdays" in April to show support for survivors of sexual assault.

On April 20, a Sexual Assault Awareness Walk around the campus was held with about 100 Veterans, volunteers, visitors, and staff participating.

*(Photo by Ann Benois—see more photos on our Facebook page.)*



## PHARMACY RECOGNIZED AS CUSTOMER SERVICE CHAMPION

Submitted by Francine Farnsworth, PharmD, BCPS, CPE

*VA Pharmacy Services is recognized as a J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Customer Service Champion! J.D. Power looks at the customer service scores across all of the surveys they do to identify the top providers of customer service. VHA Pharmacies customer service performance put us in the highest group. An amazing accomplishment! This announcement and award clearly demonstrate the hard work, dedication, and collaboration pertaining to the distribution processes within VHA Pharmacy Services and our Consolidated Mail Out Pharmacy (CMOP) distribution centers.*

At Salem VAMC, this a part of the recent premise of our Pharmacy Systems Redesign team/ Pharmacy management -- to revisit, re-implement, and re-educate our staff, providers, and Veterans about the 'no refill' window pick up policy (effective 4/2/2012). It is our hope that with supporting this policy, our CMOP penetration rate will increase (and remain above) the benchmark of 80%...with the hopes of reaching 90% (which other VISNs have achieved)

We are sharing this information to advertise the well deserved recognition of the VA mail-order pharmacy program in the hopes it will encourage Veterans to ask the Pharmacy staff about our CMOP facility and also for the pharmacy staff to ask our Veterans: "Have you CMOPed today?"

## *Congratulations!* United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Pharmacy Services

VA Pharmacy Services Recognized as a J.D. Power  
2012 Customer Service Champion

The Department of Veterans Affairs pharmacy program has been recognized by J.D. Power and Associates (JDPA) as one of only 50 companies in the United States to receive the J.D. Power 2012 Customer Service Champion designation.

In 2011, the VA mail-order pharmacy program was recognized as one of 40 companies in the U.S. to earn the distinction as a Service Excellence Champion. This year, that recognition was expanded to include the outpatient pharmacy programs at VA Medical Centers. According to JDPA, the VA pharmacy program is the only federal agency ever named as a Service Excellence Champion.



## SACKETT RECOGNIZED BY BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION

On April 30, Stephanie Sackett, Visually Impaired Service Team (VIST) Coordinator at Salem VAMC, was recognized for her services to Veterans by the Roanoke-Salem Chapter of the Blinded Veterans Association.

She is shown (center) with Clyde Compton (left), President, Mid-Atlantic Regional Group of the BVA; and Mike Doyle (right), President, Roanoke-Salem Chapter of the BVA.

*Photo by Marian McConnell*



## **GUITARS FOR VETERANS** *Submitted by Beth Woodward*

The Salem VA Chapter of the national Guitar For Vets (G4V) organization graduated its first class of students: John H. Stickley, Jr., John P. Wadle, Guy Reed, Gary W. Lowe, Earnest E. Jones, Shenandoah Clay, Americo Amicucci, Jr., and Edward Pasley on April 30, 2012. The students participated in 10 weekly guitar lessons, free of charge, beginning February 27, 2012. With their successful completion of the program, each student received a free guitar and an accessories kit from G4V. The primary instructor was David Bowen (USA, Ret.) with associate instructors: Bobby Wheeler, John Stickley, Jenny Moyer, MT-Intern, and Tatyana Martin, MT-Intern.



Guitars For Vets is a 501c(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance the lives of injured and ailing Veterans through the healing power of music. The purpose is to promote positive social interaction, provide an avenue for self-expression, build focus and confidence, and create bonds of fellowship with other like-minded Veterans.

Veterans who are interested in enrolling must complete a G4V Student Application. The application contains a section for referral by a care professional. Care provider referral is mandatory. If interested, please contact Lisbeth Woodward, Music Therapist, at 540-982-2463 ext. 2781. Currently, there is a waiting list. The next class will begin this September.

You can learn more about Guitars For Vets by visiting [www.guitars4vets.org](http://www.guitars4vets.org) or find various G4V Chapters by searching Facebook. *Photo by Marian McConnell — see more photos on Facebook.*

## **WORKLIFE IMPROVEMENT TEAM (WIT)**

*Submitted by Julie Manico*

What is the WIT? The WIT is the Worklife Improvement Team. It was established at the Salem VAMC in Fiscal Year 2007 with the purpose of improving employee satisfaction and morale. The WIT is composed of clinical and nonclinical staff from various services within the medical center. The WIT works closely with the Employees Association (EA) and EEO committee to support activities and events for the medical center staff throughout the year.



In 2011 the WIT supported numerous projects and events. WIT members worked to develop and distribute an awards brochure featuring available awards at the Salem VAMC in order to increase staff awareness and participation. WIT members reviewed unit-specific All Employee Survey scores with services throughout the medical center to share information as well as identify best practices and challenges. WIT members supported the employee Halloween Party, All Employee Picnic, Pink Out for Breast Cancer, VA 2K, Walk & Roll, and participation in the Roanoke Veteran's parade. The WIT sponsored a holiday turkey giveaway and employee Zumba exercise classes. The WIT worked with the Salem VA Credit Union to sponsor 7 monthly sessions of the \$ave Watchers Academy from December 2011 to June 2012. Topics include Managing Income and Expenses, Credit Reports, and Building Savings. In February 2012 the WIT sponsored free yoga exercise classes for employees. WIT members partnered with the Recycling Committee to sponsor an Earth Day event on April 20, 2012.

The All Employee Survey is not the end all to the WorkLife Improvement Team's goals and achievements but it is certainly a great tool to understand how effective the program is and where we are going as an organization and continuing to strive to become an "Employer of Choice." For more information about the WIT contact Tim McGuigan, Chief, Human Resources, at ext. 2813.



## SAFE PATIENT HANDLING (SPH) CORNER

Submitted by Sonya Stokes, BSN, RN

The Unit Peer Leader of the Month campaign winner for March 2012 from Salem VAMC was awarded to Lori VanNess, RN, ANM, of Ward 2H, for her dedication to our quest to prevent staff injuries. Congratulations, Lori, for a job well done!

### SPH Unit Peer Leader Highlight — Tamicha Terry, RN, Ward 4H

“Hello. My name is Tamicha Terry. I have worked at Salem VAMC for 4 years. I am currently working on 4H (medical/surgical ward) as an RN. I am also the Safe Patient Handling Unit Peer Leader for my area. I collaborate with various facility disciplines and the Safe Patient Handling Program Coordinator as we strive for creating a culture of safety for our employees as well as our patient population. Our shared goal is substantially reducing the on-the-job injury rates that occur while performing daily patient care tasks. We have made available to our staff a variety of innovative equipment that enables recruitment and retention of staff by decreasing time away from work from injury, and exhaustion from the normal wear and tear of push-pull effort used to care for many of our Veterans. I also maintain competencies of my peers regarding SPH equipment.”



**May SPH Question of the Month:** What are the names of the two sit-to-stand devices utilized at Salem VAMC? What is particularly important to assess prior to selecting either device for transfer?

### POWS HONORED AT WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY

On April 9, Salem VAMC and the Roanoke Valley Ax-POW Chapter held a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the POW Monument in front of the main building, commemorating the end of the Bataan Death March.

Robert Gray, Allan Owen, and Claude Hodges; ex-POWs, were present to lay the wreath, along with Dr. Miguel LaPuz, Salem VAMC Director (in white coat).

Veterans, visitors, volunteers, and staff were in attendance.

*Photo by Marian McConnell. See more photos on Facebook.*



### EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

On April 20, Salem VAMC's Recycling Committee and Worklife Improvement Team (WIT) sponsored an Earth Day Celebration in the main lobby to share information about recycling and supporting green initiatives.

Left: Jonathan Honchar from RDS Recycling & Disposal Solutions.

Right: Nathan Rivers and Beverly Bratton.

*Photos by Marian McConnell.*



## SAFETY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Submitted by Cary Schlitz, CIH, CSP

Sometimes you just have to close your eyes, shake your head, and sigh in disbelief. Look at this guy, trying to keep a brand-new computer from falling out of the trunk! What does he think will happen if he falls off? The laws of Physics dictate if you fall from a vehicle in motion onto the pavement, your chances of just walking away without injury are not good — regardless of what you've seen on television.

Maybe he'll end up using that new computer (if they both survive) to log on the internet and see his picture. OK everyone, all at once, let's tell this guy what he should do next time. Ready? "Transport your item safely, and ride *inside* the car!"



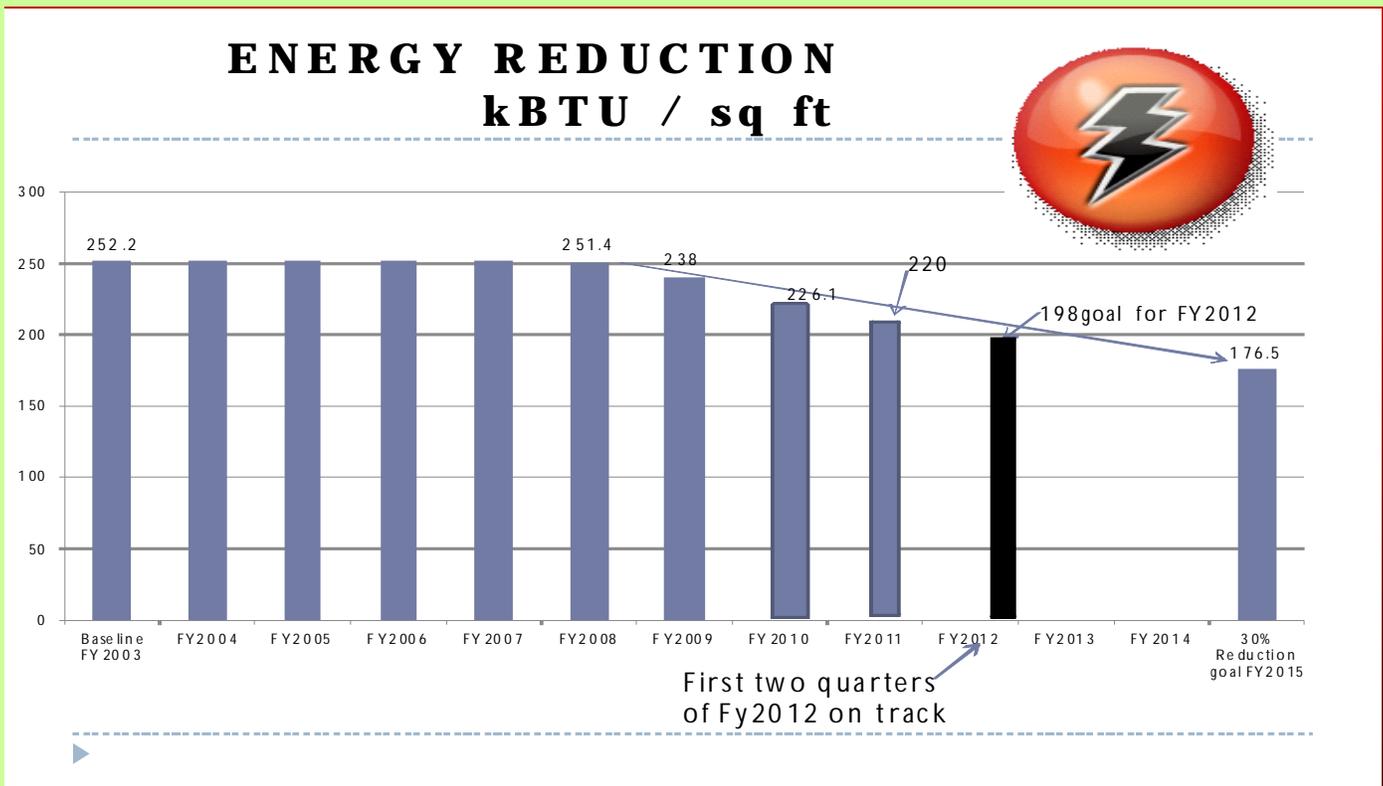
## ENERGY REDUCTION HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Submitted by Robert Rossbacher

The graph below shows the steady progress we are making in reducing our energy intensity. That is, the amount of energy (thousands of btus / square foot) is decreasing each year, Some of the reasons for the reduction include:

- ◆ Upgrading equipment in the Building 14 Laundry
- ◆ Repairing water & steam piping
- ◆ New heating systems for Buildings 17, 18,19 & 25
- ◆ Turning off lighting, copiers, appliances, etc. during unoccupied hours

Keep up the good work!



## MENTAL HEALTH INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT

Submitted by Rita Cone

Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) is a national program that provides case management services to Veterans diagnosed with a serious mental illness who require support, advocacy, and professional mental health services. The overarching goal is to help the Veteran live in his/her own residence and decrease the need for inpatient psychiatric care. At Salem VAMC, the MHICM staff focus on helping the enrolled Veterans reach holistic recovery goals. Holistic goals encompass the following areas: Mental/Emotional well being, Physical Health, Occupational Health, Social/Recreational/Relational Health, Intellectual Stimulation and Growth, Financial Stability and Spiritual Well Being.



MHICM held a March Marathon which included activities from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. Holistic events were provided including an oral health presentation by Kim Butler-Beckford, LPN. Relationship skills were developed the last part of the morning followed by a healthy lunch provided by VA Canteen. An afternoon movie was viewed in collaboration with Veterans enrolled in PRRC. Following the movie, Dr. Katie LeSavage processed the movie's themes with the Veterans and how it applied to their recovery goals. MHICM staff was pleased to have 71% of enrolled Veterans involved in one to all of these activities throughout the day. In April, MHICM will re-start their Victorious Women Veterans program to provide specific educational information for the female Veterans enrolled in the program. The Veterans will be empowered to co-facilitate the group along with Ms. Butler-Beckford, LPN, and Ms. Fidler, LCSW. The monthly Lunch Bunch is in its third year and is organized by one of the MHICM "graduates."

MHICM is currently accepting consults. Eligibility involves a serious mental illness diagnosis, three admissions to the acute psychiatric unit or 30 total bed days of care on 8-2 in the past year, and reside within 30 miles from VA. Consults may be submitted to Rita Cone, LCSW, MHICM Coordinator. Besides Ms. Cone, MHICM staff is comprised of Sandy McCoy, RN/MSN, Kim Butler-Beckford, LPN, and Ocie Fidler, LCSW.

## LET'S BE FRIENDS! SALEM VAMC USES SOCIAL MEDIA TO REACH OUT TO VETERANS

Salem VAMC uses social media to reach Veterans and their families. At last count our Facebook page had 491 likes and our Twitter account had 94 followers. We expect the program to enhance the relationship Veterans have with us, and provide them with news about events, clinics and other resources.

The hope is that Veterans who are not enrolled in the VA health care system will use these social media sites to find out about their eligibility for care and attend screening events that our Rural Health Team organizes in Southwest Virginia.

Veterans are also encouraged to use a secure online site called MyHealthVet that allows registered patients to view their lab results, refill prescriptions, check their appointments, and communicate with their health care team through secure messaging.

Links to all three of these sites can be found at [www.salem.va.gov](http://www.salem.va.gov)



## SUPPORT OUR TROOPS RALLY AT MONUMENT TERRACE

Article and Photos Submitted by Rebecca Roberts, Lynchburg CBOC

A group of Veterans from the Lynchburg CBOC have been supporting our troops for over 13 years. They meet every Friday from 12-1pm at Monument Terrace in downtown Lynchburg. They are dedicated and have never missed a Friday since it all began.

Veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan show their support for our men and women currently in the military and remember those that have sacrificed their lives for our great country.

The Lynchburg staff thank these Veterans for supporting the troops, and are proud to serve the community by taking care of our Veterans who so proudly served in the military.

*Top left: Malcolm Perry and Steve Bozeman. Top right: Malcolm Perry and Edwin Burt. Bottom left: William Britt, Steve Bozeman, Malcolm Perry, Edwin Burt, David Stokes, and Jerry Walker; photo by William Bagley. Bottom right: Terry Jamerson, David Stokes, Edwin Burt, and Jerry Walker.*



# Lipid Clinic Educates Women Veterans On Cholesterol

Dr. Shannon Cohen  
Nurse Practitioner and Health Promotion  
Disease Prevention Program Manager  
Salem VAMC

Women are less likely than men to treat their high cholesterol, placing them at risk for heart disease and other health problems. At the Salem VAMC, we found that women were reluctant to take medications to lower cholesterol, reported more side effects from these types of medications, and preferred to join health education classes with other women.

Armed with our gender-specific discoveries and cognizant of the potentially significant degradation of an individual's health over time posed by high cholesterol, we began a special clinic for female Veterans with high cholesterol in May 2011.

We used shared medical appointments to reach our facility's goals. A shared medical appointment is an appointment in which multiple patients are seen together as a group.

I led the group along with Dr. Sarah Hartley, in our capacities as nurse practitioner and Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program Manager and psychologist Health Behavior Coordinator, respectively.

Registered dietician Bonnie Harbourt gave the Veterans nutrition counseling. Jane Tabb, a registered nurse, checked in patients, reinforced education, and coordinated follow up. Others who assisted included: Dr. Christina Shook, resident in psychology, Barbara Zicafoose (retired women Veteran program manager), Dr. Jasbir Mavi, and Dr. Ashraf Iranmanesh, pharmacy.

During each one and a half to two hour visit, four to 10 female Veterans participated in group discussions, voiced their health concerns, received counseling on diet, exercise, and recommended lifestyle changes, and set goals with the health care team.

Veterans who attended this group lowered their harmful LDL cholesterol levels and lost weight. The average LDL cholesterol dropped 28 points with the highest loss of 41 points, and the average weight loss was 2 pounds with some participants losing up to 4 pounds.

The women Veterans informally shared the benefits of participating in the clinic and what they learned. Among the lessons learned, expressed by the clinic participants in their own words, were lessons such



*Dr. Shannon Cohen Registered nurse Jane Tabb takes a patient's blood pressure as part of the Lipid Clinic check-in procedures.*

as "getting back to the basics and preparing your own meals; making adjustments in lifestyle and making healthy food choices; [being] part of the decision making process; food choice advice, portion control, and reading labels; different things that affect cholesterol; accountability and not feeling alone; camaraderie and companionship; and I have lost weight and reduced my stress."

By January 2012, the gender difference related to cholesterol management improved significantly with 74 percent of females and 78 percent of males with a diagnosis of heart disease reporting reaching the goal of an LDL cholesterol level less than 100. Previously the figures were 48 percent for women and 77 percent for men.

Due to the success of this clinic, we are now in the process of expanding the focus to include hypertension, obesity, and diabetes, in addition to cholesterol management for our female Veterans.

<b>Total Cholesterol</b>	<b>Under 200</b>	Desirable
	<b>200 - 239</b>	Borderline High
	<b>Over 240</b>	High
<b>HDL Cholesterol</b> The GOOD kind	<b>Over 60</b>	Optimal
	<b>Under 40</b>	Low for Men
	<b>Under 50</b>	Low for Women
<b>LDL Cholesterol</b> The BAD kind - a lower number is better	<b>Under 70</b>	Optimal for those with heart or blood vessel disease
	<b>Under 100</b>	Optimal (also for diabetics & those with risk factors for heart disease)
	<b>100 - 129</b>	Near Optimal
	<b>130 - 159</b>	Borderline High
	<b>160 - 189</b>	High
<b>Triglycerides</b>	<b>Under 150</b>	Normal
	<b>150 - 199</b>	Borderline High
	<b>200 - 499</b>	High
	<b>Over 500</b>	Very High

## MAY IS "BE TOBACCO FREE" MONTH

Thinking about quitting? Here are some reasons to stop smoking: You will feel better right away! You will breathe better and have more energy. Your sense of smell and taste will improve. You will lower your risk for heart attack, stroke, lung disease, cancer, and early death. You will have more money to spend. Your family and friends will be happy when you quit.

When you are ready to stop smoking, contact your health care team for assistance.



## FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS/CONSTRUCTION NEWS

Submitted by Wayne Johnson, FMS

During the May/June timeframe, a number of substantial construction projects will initiate while other significant projects will draw near to completion. The Building 8 Addition for Mental Health Service Line (MHSL) which will be located in the East Courtyard, should see initiation of construction during this timeframe. Construction should also begin on the water tower replacement project, with initial work likely to begin near Roanoke Boulevard.

Several building and building system renovation projects will continue during the May/June timeframe including:

- ◆ Renovation of Building 7, 2nd Floor for MHSL: Should be essentially completed during this timeframe, but some contractual differences must be resolved prior to completion.
- ◆ New Education Center in Building 75: Work for audio/visual system has resumed and construction work will resume after completion of a supplemental agreement for finish changes.
- ◆ Community Living Center Dining Room Addition: Construction procurement will continue.
- ◆ Roof Work on Buildings 143 and 144 (Chapel): All required supplemental slate has been produced and the contractor will return during the May/June timeframe to complete this work .
- ◆ Buildings 74/75 Basement Corridor Floor Finish: The required contract supplemental agreement has been processed and the floor work is scheduled to begin in May.
- ◆ HVAC System Replacement in Building 12: Work will be essentially completed.
- ◆ Replace HVAC System in Building 74: Construction procurement will continue.

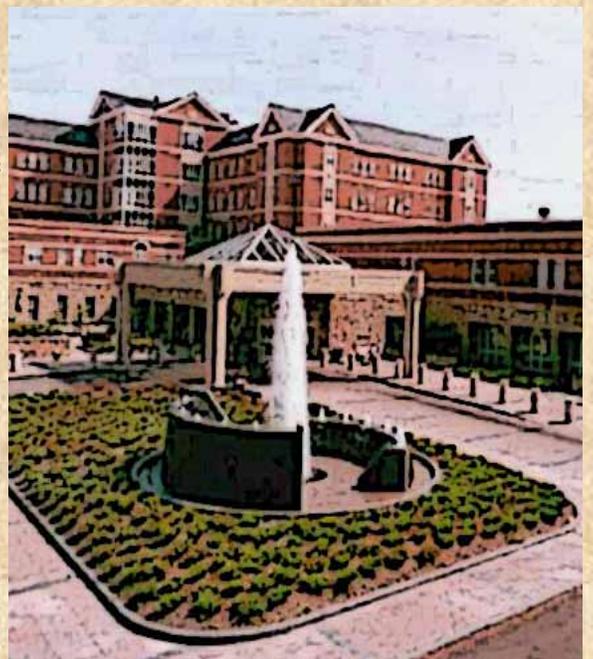
Several energy or site-wide utility projects are also in various stages and will continue to progress as noted below during the May/June timeframe:

- ◆ Additional Energy Conservation Measures (light replacement, corridor and warehouse roll-up doors, water heater replacement): Installation of warehouse rollup doors is complete, rollup doors for corridor drive-through locations will initiate construction, and other components of this project will continue in procurement.
- ◆ Upgrades to Emergency Electrical System: Construction contract should be awarded.
- ◆ Replacement of Primary Electrical Feeders: Design effort will continue.
- ◆ Upgrade Underground Water Distribution System: Construction procurement will continue.
- ◆ Upgrade and Modernize Utility Plant: Design procurement will continue.

Procurement of construction for the site wide security fencing project will also continue during the May/June timeframe, and the construction contract for this work should be awarded. Projects which have recently been substantially completed include:

- ◆ Energy Saving Improvements: Re-commissioning of Building 143 HVAC systems for more energy efficient operation (installation of a water meter for Building 2 will be moved to another Project).

Other projects currently in procurement or various stages of construction include Canteen renovation (thank you for your patience during this process!), Dental area renovation, completion of marquee signs at the front gates, and additional security enhancements for limiting access under emergency conditions. Please avoid construction areas to the extent possible, but if you observe safety concerns please report them immediately to Safety (Ext. 2292) or FMS (Ext. 2700).



## EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

Many employees were recognized at the April 16 Town Hall meeting. Congratulations to all!  
*Photos by Marian McConnell*

### 2011 Annual Heart of Gold Awards:

**Ann Benois**—Administrative - [*excerpt of nomination:*] “Ann is truly the embodiment of “I CARE” in her work at Salem VAMC. In fact it’s more than work to her; it’s her life. She demonstrates by her behavior, every day in every way: her integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence always show. She seems to be here 24/7, and is *always* an ambassador for Veterans. This has historically been the case, but most emphatically this past year as she has served in *many* high demand and high workload roles as Chief of Voluntary Service, Customer Service Manager/Patient Advocate, Public Affairs Officer, and POC for the Vet Link Kiosk project. Each one of the positions could easily be full-time, and entails countless tasks, knowledge, skills, abilities, diplomacy, and an understanding of the VA as a whole as well as the minute details of what it takes to get things done.”



**Luise Spencer** (*photo at left*)—Clinical—[*excerpt of nomination:*] “To say that ‘Weezie’ goes the extra mile in this position is an understatement. She personally knows and understands each Veteran in our program and continually provides them with support and encouragement for their recovery. She works one-on-one with Veterans to help them identify and work toward recovery goals. She has a contagious smile and a laugh that can break even the most stoic of consumers. She demonstrates appropriate boundaries and is a consummate professional.”

### VHA Mentor Certifications

**Lindsay Hardy**, Primary Care Nurse Manager  
**Elbert Jackson**, Medical Equipment Repairer

### Completion of Level 2 for Sterile Processing

**Debra Teske**, LPN, Nursing Home Care Unit  
**Samuel Robertson**, Medical Supply Technician

### Citation from the National Commander of DAV (Disabled American Veterans)

“Awarded to **Dr. John H. Bonk** in appreciation for devotion to the cause of America’s Disabled Veterans and all of our country’s handicapped people. “

### Patient-Centered Care Awards



**Stephanie Brooks** (*photo at left*)—  
Core Principle 3: Solicit and respect the Veterans’ values, preferences, and needs.

**Nancy Short** (*photo at right*) - Core  
Principle 4: Systematize the coordination, continuity, and integration of care.

**Dr. Mark Detweiler** (*not pictured*) -  
Core Principle 5: Empower Veterans through information and education.



## GEM (GOING THE EXTRA MILE) AWARDS:

Forty-seven GEM awards announced at the April Town Hall meeting. Not all employees were able to be at the meeting to receive theirs, but those who were are in the photo, along with Ms. Stackhouse (Associate Director), Dr. McCarthy (Chief of Staff), Ms. Holland (Acting Nurse Executive), and Dr. LaPuz (Director).



## GEM AWARD RECIPIENTS:

Annie Grause	Sherry Secret	Pam Moreland	Ashley O'Dell
Wilson Light	George Bolden	Jamie Cook	Carroll Copen
Kathy Godbey	Suzanne Hanna	Dana Hawkins	Suzette Hile
Susan Hunley	April Lopez	Regina Saul	Victor Stockton
Kathleen Wood	Cecila Kirtley	John Ratcliffe	Tony Richards
Mike Richards	Rusty Short	Stonewall Humphreys	Joe Wilder
Joe Davis	Karen Flanary	Susan Duma	Kenneth Anderson
Mazon Madhoun	Andre Fischiel	Ron Anderson	Dave Collins
Phyllis Cooper	Barbara Fasnacht	Ruth Davis	Kim Dayton
Matt Barnette	Neeraj Gupta	Louise Hodges	James Hudson
Valerie Leftwich	Purial Mesadieu	Benjamin Sackett	Michelle Richard
Anita D. Smith	Tim Tuttle	Naymon Mack*	

\*A wonderful sample nomination was submitted by a Veteran on behalf of **Naymon Mack**:  
"Please allow me a moment to sing the praises of Mr. Naymon Mack, Patient Advocate. From the first time I met with him I have been confident that he was in my corner and would make sure that my best interest would be served. I am a Vietnam Veteran suffering from PTSD and I must tell you that for the first time in my life I thought about ending it all - then I met Mr. Mack. He made me feel comfortable and treated me as if I were his only client by giving me his full attention. While meeting with him if the phone rang unless it was of dire emergency he never allowed anyone to interrupt his time with

me. That means more than I can say. Mr. Mack knew how important my situation is to me and never took no for an answer as he pursued my case. Because of his tenacity, I believe that I am finally on my way to recovery. I thank God for a Veteran who pursues his job as if he is still on the battlefield and has vowed not to leave a fellow soldier behind. The Salem VAMC has an asset in Mr. Naymon Mack.”

**SERVICE PIN AWARDS (FEBRUARY-APRIL 2012)**

*\*Photograph below*

**10 Years**

Alphonso Brooks  
Ronnie Kaplan  
Raquel Swann

Demries Maxton  
Robin Murphy  
Sonya Gwinn

Victor Stockton  
Rudolph King

Jeffrey Brown  
Susan Asberry

**15 Years**

Mark Goodson  
Mary Willoughby

Julia Ewen  
Joseph Dooley

Leslie Hindle  
Frank Johnson

Judy Schram

**20 Years**

Carol Via  
Surindra Singh

Genalvin Johnson

William Woodfield

Debra Ann Walker

**25 Years**

William Paxton  
George Bolden

Janet Johnson  
Elsa Francisco\*

Della Martin\*  
Janet Yost\*

Valerie Coston\*  
Mary Ann Workman

**30 Years**

Elizabeth Pingle  
Joseph Leonard  
Julie Francis

Cynthia Baker  
Thomas McDaniel, Jr.  
Frances Castelee

Mary K. Brumfield\*  
William Majors, Jr.  
Robert Cox\*

Christine Schroeder\*  
Margarite Smith  
Martha McDearmon\*

**35 Years**

Jonathan Barton\*

Robert Fetzer\*

Robert Bierly\*

**40 Years**

Hervey O. Davis



*Top to Bottom, Left to Right:  
Chris Schroeder,  
Elsa Francisco, Martha  
McDearmon, Della Martin,  
Jon Barton, Valerie Coston,  
Mary K. Brumfield, Robert  
Fetzer, Bob Cox, Robert  
Bierly, and Janet Yost.*





## COMPLIMENTS CORNER

- ♥ “**Wayne Truman** was so amazing yesterday in helping this Veteran. He helped me when I had exhausted almost all of the avenues I had to get this man home.”
- ♥ “**Ocie Fidler** did a wonderful job in offering the Hoptel and transportation to the Veteran for the next day.”
- ♥ “**Nutrition & Food** — the food here is delicious! I clean my plate each meal.”
- ♥ “CLC — **Sherry Booth**, CNA, 2-2, and **Angela Hickman**, CNA, give excellent care and it is so genuine; no pretense about them. They certainly need to be commended for their care they give all the Veterans up there.”
- ♥ “**Margaret Mulcahy**, SW — thank you for all the guidance and assistance you provided working our way through the VA system and referring us to the Adult Day Care Center.”
- ♥ “**Nutrition & Food** — the food here was delicious, wonderful! It was presented in an appetizing manner. I have saved my meal tickets to take home to use as a reference guide.”
- ♥ “The staff was more than willing to make an effort to go the extra mile to help me. Gold stars for everyone in the **Radiology** department. **Kathy Paddock** deserves a gold star with clusters.”
- ♥ “I would like to [recognize] the professionalism of this **Radiology** department. They have always treated me with concern and respect.”
- ♥ “I’d like to thank all the workers at the **Step Down Unit** for the care given to our loved one... they were kind and helpful to my mother, my husband, and me as visitors.”
- ♥ “**Edward Forest** came in to clean the waiting area and went above and beyond to be helpful and caring. I really appreciate a clean hospital and some love and compassion goes a long way when you need it.”
- ♥ “I am a new employee and Veteran at the Salem VAMC. I am prior Navy and DoD, but have never taken advantage of my medical benefits having lived quite a distance from a VA hospital. I recently went to the front desk and **Brenda Scott** walked me through the process and gave excellent guidance. She was upbeat, knowledgeable, and made the process an ease. I truly appreciate her assistance...”
- ♥ “I spent some time at [Salem VAMC] for the first time in my life (I have 11 years of service) and what I saw was incredible. The dedicated staff and volunteers who showed such caring compassion for the Veterans who were there through no choice of their own really moved me. The love and devotion these kind people showed to our wonderful Veterans was astounding. Some of these great men and women are missing parts of their bodies, some have serious mental and emotional issues from what they did for us, and some have no one else in the world besides those wonderful staffers and volunteers. If you have a conscience and a soul, go volunteer and help bring a little sunshine into the life of one of those Veterans who gave so much for us.” (*Roanoke Times* 3/29/12 by Jerry G. Roberts of Roanoke).
- ♥ “The Veteran involved in the Code Blue in the Eye Clinic called ... to give a heartfelt thank you to all who came to his assistance.”
- ♥ “**Dr. Sameh Hanna** has been a blessing for me and my health. As far as I am concerned, he is the only Doctor in and outside of the VA system for me.”
- ♥ “You’re the best, **Donna Lambert**, and a true professional. Thank you for assisting me and going the extra mile to help a Vet!”

## REPORTING SAFETY & QUALITY ISSUES

Submitted by Quality Management

Anyone may report safety and quality of care issues to the Joint Commission (TJC); and any criminal activity, waste, abuse, mismanagement, as well as safety issues may be reported to the Office of Inspector General (OIG). (Concerns can be reported without fear of retaliation or disciplinary action against a reporting employee.)



The Joint Commission (TJC):  
Office of Quality Monitoring, The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Blvd.  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
Phone: 1-800-994-6610  
Fax: 1-630-792-5636  
Email: [www.complaint@jointcommission.org](mailto:www.complaint@jointcommission.org)

OIG:  
VA OIG Hotline  
PO Box 50410  
Washington, DC 20091-0410  
Phone: 1-800-488-8244  
Fax: 1-202-565-7936  
Email: [vaoighotline@va.gov](mailto:vaoighotline@va.gov)

**Be sure to check out our website**  
[www.salem.va.gov](http://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](mailto: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.*

Posted online under "Resources" at:  
[www.salem.va.gov](http://www.salem.va.gov)



## EVENTS CALENDAR—2012

Also see [www.salem.va.gov](http://www.salem.va.gov) Events Calendar and Employees can view Intranet Events Calendar

May 6-12	Nursing History Display 8a-4:30p in the Main Lobby Building 143
May 7	Nursing Excellence Awards Ceremony 9a-10:30a in 77-130D
May 7-11	Nursing Essay Contest Winners Announced
May 8	Nurses Week—Chaplains Blessing of the Hands 10-11a in the Chapel (and throughout the day on the Wards beginning at 7a)
May 9	Personal Finance Training for Employees, "Building Savings" 12-1p in the Auditorium
May 10	Nurses are the Sweetest Bake-Off Contest from 11:30a-12:30p in the Auditorium
May 11	Breakfast with the Director for night tour employees 4-5a in Building 143- 1C-129CS
May 16	2nd Annual National VA 2K Walk and Roll at 12:00 noon at the Salem VAMC Ball field Stadium (and Lynchburg CBOC). Employees enroll on Intranet; all others can obtain waivers at <a href="http://www.salem.va.gov">www.salem.va.gov</a>
May 19	12th Annual Armed Forces Day Parade at 10a beginning at the Virginia Veterans Care Center and through the Salem VAMC campus. Sponsored by the VVCC, Salem VAMC, American Red Cross, Commando Supply, and Vabizic.com
May 20	Memorial Program for Community Living Center (CLC) Veterans 2-3p Auditorium
May 23	Be Tobacco Free—12:30-1:30p in the main Lobby of Building 143
May 24	Asian-Pacific American Heritage Celebration featuring India — from 11a-2p in the main Lobby Bldg. 143
May 28	<b>Memorial Day Holiday</b>
May 31	Improving Our Work Is Our Work (IOW/IOW Retreat) from 8a-4:30p in the Auditorium for selected employees
May 31— Jun 5	National Veterans Golden Age Games in St. Louis, MO