



Just the Facts

WRAPPING UP A SUCCESSFUL YEAR AND LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT

The year 2011 has been one of many accomplishments; successes that we can be proud of and make us grateful for our wonderful Veterans, Volunteers, staff, and community partners.

The **Staunton CBOC** ribbon cutting ceremony was held on October 21 on a brisk, sunny day. The clinic is located on 102 Business Way [formerly Natasha Way] in Staunton, Virginia. Presentation of Colors was provided by the VFW Post 10826. The Invocation was given by Harold D. Bryant, Salem VAMC Chaplain. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Orville Byers, a WWII Veteran. The National Anthem was sung by Ms. Sierra Losh of Buffalo Gap High School. I shared information about the clinic, and Congressman Bob Goodlatte shared his remarks as well. The Key-note Speaker was Mr. Daniel F. Hoffmann, FACHE, VISN 6 Network Director. Dr. Thomas Eldridge, Chief, Primary Care Service Line of Salem VAMC, introduced the VA clinic staff. Special thanks to all the Veterans Service Organizations, volunteers, and other organizations and individuals who made the event a success.



The **Country Store**, sponsored by VA Voluntary Service, the Work Life Improvement Team (WIT) and EEO Committee on October 28, raised \$3,095 to benefit the Volunteer Service program, our inpatient Veterans, and the upcoming Valentines for Veterans Concert. The Halloween costume contest was a big hit, with over 40 contestants this year. 1st place went to the Office of Information



and Technology (OIT); 2nd place went to the Music Therapy Section, and 3rd place went to Tony Clayton of Human Resources. The winners of the Pumpkin carving contest were: 1st place— Jeanette Niday, 2nd place — Lindsay Hardy. All the Services did a wonderful job creating beautiful and creative baskets for the event.

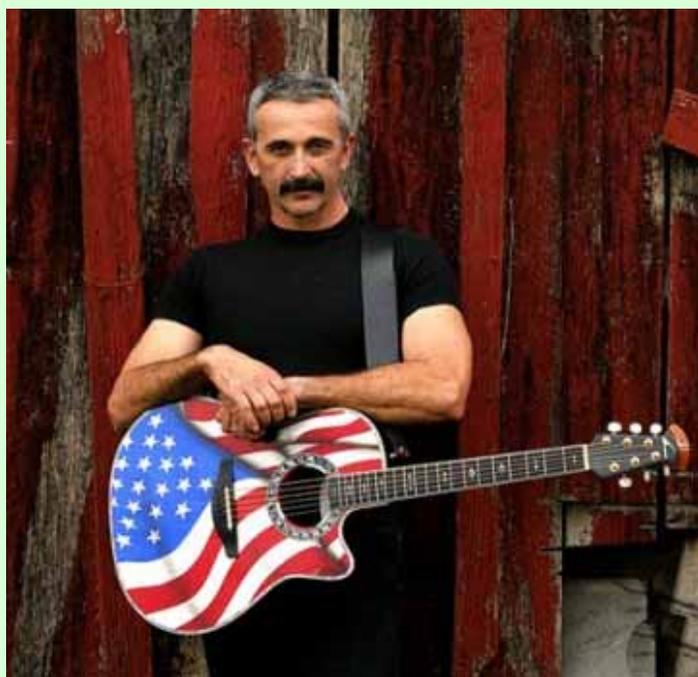


We had a great turnout for the **2nd Annual Veterans Day Parade** in Roanoke on November 5. Thanks to all the staff who came out to say “thank you” to Veterans!



Upcoming Events: We have many special events planned in the near future; be sure to check our Calendar of Events at www.salem.va.gov often! Here are some to “save the date!”

- 👉 **Holiday Extravaganza**—Thursday, **December 15** at 1:30p in the Auditorium — Annual holiday program directed by the Music Therapy and Veterans and our staff.
- 👉 **Holiday Open House for Salem VAMC Staff and Volunteers**—Friday, **December 16** from 1-4p in the Auditorium.
- 👉 **Valentines for Veterans Concert** featuring Country Music Star **Aaron Tippin**— Thursday, **February 9**, 2012 (time and location to be announced).
- 👉 Re-Creation presents: **“Everyday People”** musical revue — Thursday, **March 1**, 2012 from 2-4p in the Auditorium.



The best to you and your family, and our sincerest gratitude and commitment to our Veterans, volunteers, staff, and community partners for a wonderful, happy New Year in 2012.

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: Virginia State Fair in Richmond, Craig County Fall Festival, VFW Post in Hot Springs, Danville CBOC Outreach Event, Staunton CBOC Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, Apple Dumpling Festive in Stuart, Car Show at the Danville Tank Museum, the Veterans Day Parade in Roanoke, the Homeless Veterans Stand Down in Salem, and Piedmont Mall in Danville.

Upcoming Rural Health Outreach Events:

- ◆ November 30—Clifton Forge Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) from 9:30a-3:00p
- ◆ December 7—Covington VEC from 9:30a-3:00p
- ◆ December 9—Galax VEC from 9:00a—2:00p
- ◆ December 13—Lexington VEC from 9:00a—1:00p
- ◆ December 18—Roanoke Annual Career and Lifestyle Fair at the Roanoke Civic Center from 9:00a—1:00p

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.

National Rural Health Day
2011
Celebrating the Power of Rural!



**November 17th is
National Rural Health Day!**

**Approximately 41% of enrolled
Veterans live in rural or
highly rural areas.**

Today, take a moment to think of ways that we can reach out to rural and highly rural Veterans, and how we can improve their access to high quality VA health care. For the latest information on VA's rural health initiatives, please visit the VHA Office of Rural Health (ORH) at www.ruralhealth.va.gov.

For information about rural health initiatives in this VISN, please contact:

Marian McConnell
Salem VAMC Public Affairs
Marian.mcconnell@va.gov
(540) 855-3460



A LITTLE TRAINING GOES A LONG WAY

Article and Photos by Nancy Short

Little did Staff SGT. Seyward McKinney know that when she was training a Golden Retriever named Whitney to provide assistive services to veterans, that she would benefit from this training. Seyward began training Whitney as part of the Paws for Purple Hearts program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and then she became Whitney's partner.

Seyward is an Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran who served 8 years in the US Army, where she was an Operating Room Technician. She grew up in the Salem area and began her treatment at the Salem VAMC in 2009, while rehabilitating from a stroke caused by an arteriovenous malformation. She was then stationed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where rehabilitation continued as she went through the Disability Evaluation System (DES), a pilot program between VA and DoD.

During this time, Seyward was afforded the opportunity to be a part of the Paws for Purple Hearts program. Paws for Purple Hearts is the first program of its kind to offer therapeutic intervention for our military servicemen and women through training service dogs. Under the guidance of Rick Yount, founder of Paws for Purple Hearts, service dog training provides service members the ability to reintegrate into civilian life. Once training is complete, the service dogs are paired with veterans who have sustained mobility-limiting injuries—thus building on the time-honored tradition of veterans helping veterans.

Seyward began working with younger Golden Retrievers and Labs, teaching skills such as sitting, bracing, heeling, pushing doors open, and other tasks that would assist disabled veterans. However one of the main benefits of a service dog is companionship. Having a service dog improves the veteran's outlook on life and gives them a bond that can help the veteran not think about their disability. A bond began to develop; however Seyward knew that her time with Whitney was limited as Whitney had to move on for more advanced training. Seyward had hopes of being reunited with Whitney, as Seyward had placed an application to receive a service dog through Paws for Purple Hearts. On March 31, 2011 Seyward attended the graduation of Whitney from preliminary training at Walter Reed which was coincidentally Seyward's separation date from the army and her last day at Walter Reed. Four months later, it was time for Seyward to take the trip to California to receive her service dog. Once Seyward arrived she was happy to learn that the service dog with which she was matched was none other than Whitney. Seyward brought Whitney home the end of July, 2011 and they have been an inseparable pair. Whitney provides that companionship and support that Seyward needs to get through her seemingly never-ending therapy appointments and everyday life tasks.

Do's and Don'ts with Service Animals:

- 🐾 Don't pet or distract the dog
- 🐾 Don't offer the dog food or other distracting treats
- 🐾 Don't offer the dog toys
- 🐾 Don't tease the dog
- 🐾 Don't attempt to grab the dog's harness
- 🐾 Do offer your assistance to the dog's owner, if needed



NEW TO MY HEALTHEVET: VA CHEMISTRY/HEMATOLOGY

Submitted by Donna Lambert

Direct from your VA Health Record to your My HealtheVet account! Attention VA patients! You are now able to see your VA Chemistry/Hematology laboratory results in your My HealtheVet Personal Health Record. This feature allows you to view results of your VA Chemistry/Hematology tests. This information comes directly from your VA health record.



Chemistry is when a sample of blood or body fluids is checked for amounts of certain elements made in the body. Chemistry lab tests can include hundreds of tests. The most common tests include blood sugar, cholesterol, calcium, liver function, thyroid, and pancreatic tests.

Hematology is when a sample of blood is checked for factors in the blood and blood-forming tissues. Hematology lab results include blood cell counts and clotting tests.

To view the results of your VA lab tests, you will need to:

- ◆ be a Veteran enrolled at a VA health care facility
- ◆ be registered as a VA patient in My HealtheVet
- ◆ have an upgraded account *

With your upgraded account, you can view your VA Chemistry/Hematology results on My HealtheVet. Simply select the Track Health tab, then Labs + Tests tab. There you will see VA Chemistry/ Hematology. It is easy, convenient and free.

Use the VA Blue Button to download, save and print your Labs + Tests information. This can be information you self-entered or information from your VA health record. You can choose to share with family members, caregivers or others. All My HealtheVet registered users can access the VA Blue Button 24/7.

* To get an upgraded account, you must complete a one-time process called In-Person Authentication (IPA). You can upgrade your account at your VA Medical Center or VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic.

If you are a VA patient and have not registered, or do not have an upgraded My HealtheVet account, do not wait. For more information contact Donna Lambert, the My HealtheVet Coordinator at (540) 982-2463, ext. 3272. The My HealtheVet link is www.myhealth.va.gov/

ELECTRONIC SPEED LIMIT SIGNS

Submitted by Dale Hendley, Chief of Police, Salem VAMC

As some of you may have noticed there have been several electronic speed limit signs placed throughout the campus. These signs were put into place for the safety of patients, visitors and staff. The signs will display your current speed as you pass. If the digital sign starts to flash, this means that you are now driving faster than the posted speed limit and you need to slow down. Remember, the speed limit on station is 20 mph and these signs are closely monitored by the Police Service. As you know speeding endangers all of us (pedestrians and motorist). Please be mindful of your speed as you travel our roadways. Be especially watchful for pedestrians in the crosswalks and obey all stop signs by coming to a complete stop.



The members of the Police Service would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your actions which will assist us in keeping the facility a safer place as we move about both on foot and/or in our vehicles from day to day.

KIDNEY WALK

Submitted by Tracie Dickson

"Veterans & Company" participated voluntarily on October 23, 2011 in the 4th Annual Kidney Walk sponsored by the National Kidney Foundation to raise awareness about chronic kidney disease. Salem VAMC dialysis patients and transplant patients, along with Renal staff, family, and friends, joined other teams across the Roanoke Valley to raise money to support the NKF's ongoing programs.



The team has been a top fund raiser in years past and this year was no exception. William Horne, one of Salem's VAMC transplant veterans took honors for one of the top fund raisers for the event with a total of over \$2,200; overall team donations totaled at \$5,500.

Salem Renal staff walked in honor of veterans who daily face the challenges of having chronic kidney disease and dialysis and celebrate with those who have received kidney transplants.

Left to right: front row scooters: Floyd Brown, Gary Gwynn; Back row: Tracie Dickson, Marvin Zimmerman, Linda Harris, Beth Wooldridge, Patrick Brown, Ronnie Saunders, David Harris, William Horne, Veronica Gwynn, Annie Gray, Nathan Brown

DAV-LADIES AUXILIARY DONATION

The DAV-Ladies Auxiliary donated \$1,500 to Voluntary Service. Ms. Linda King presented the check on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary to Dr. LaPuz, Director, and Dr. Hutchins, Extended Care Service Line Chief.

We sincerely thank them and *all* organizations and individuals who so generously donate their time and resources to our Veterans.



Salem VAMC "Just the Facts"

CODER KUDOS FOR 100% ACCURACY

Submitted by Beverly Bellamy

On October 26, Salem Coders gathered at a local restaurant to celebrate Coder Appreciation Day! Salem Coders were recently recognized for 100% outpatient coding accuracy for the National E/M Coding Audit.



Front row, left to right: Betsy Weaver, Pat Webb, Lori Hall, Valerie Lavra. Back row left to right: Beverly Bellamy Coding Supervisor, Kathie Sackett, Donna Brubaker, Carolyn Paige, Tequita Akers, Eva Pugh and Delores White. Not pictured: Janice Damewood, Teresa Willoughby, Anita Phifer, Ann Soyars, Cindy Killian, Mary Paige and Tammy Kendrick, Chief of HIMS.

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MHICM—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 and require support, advocacy, and professional mental health services to assist them to maintain living in the community. The overarching goal is to help the veteran live in his/her own residence and decrease the need for inpatient psychiatric care.

Veterans enrolled in MHICM are provided with case management services to assist them with appointment and medication compliance. This is accomplished by MHICM staff reminding them of appointments and providing transportation to appointments if needed. The MHICM LPN assists with medication management which can include filling medisets in the veteran's home. Other services include advocacy, information and referral to hospital and community resources, collaboration with other VA personnel, the veteran's family, or other community agencies.

In order for a consult to be considered with MHICM, the veteran must have a SMI diagnosis, have been in the inpatient psychiatric unit three time or a total of 30 bed days in the past year. Once the veteran is enrolled in the MHICM program he/she is seen by MHICM staff on a weekly basis. After a psycho/social assessment a holistic recovery plan is developed with the input of the veteran. The MHICM staff work with the veteran to assist him/her to reach individualized goals that have been set.

Current MHICM staff at Salem are Rita Cone, LCSW; Sandra McCoy, RN,MSN; and Kim Butler-Beckford, LPN. Consults can be sent to Rita Cone.



ALERTING STAFF, RECENT VETERANS ABOUT POTENTIAL RABIES

VA's Public Health office has alerted VA's medical staff about possible rabies exposure for Veterans who had animal contact during the previous 18 months while serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. The precaution follows the death in August 2011 of an Army soldier who had been bitten by a dog while serving in Afghanistan and died months later in the US of rabies.

Veterans who sustained unreported and untreated rabies risk exposures should go to their health care provider or local VA facility immediately. Those who received incomplete rabies treatment while deployed also should be evaluated. Rabies is preventable with the proper medical care before symptoms develop. The rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin used to treat rabies are available at VA medical facilities.

Rabies is transmitted through the saliva of a rabid, warm-blooded animal, such as a dog, cat, bat, fox, skunk, raccoon, mongoose, or jackal. The risk of being exposed to rabies is much higher in less developed countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan as rabies is more prevalent.

For more information on rabies, visit <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/rabies/>



HEALTHY HOLIDAY EATING

Submitted by Stephanie Ong, Virginia Tech Dietetic Intern



It's that time of year again; the holidays are just around the corner. Each of us looks forward to the festivities associated with family gatherings and with all of the yummy food that the season brings! Unfortunately, for many it also becomes a time of year for over-eating and weight gain. The holidays don't have to mean weight gain, though. Focus on the healthy balance of food, activity, and fun. Implement a few simple tips that will help keep you healthy throughout the holiday season.

It's not hard to understand why people fall into bad habits during the holiday season. Everywhere you go there is someone waiting to thrust a glass of wine or a piece of pie in front of you. Surely it would be rude to refuse? Right?! On the contrary, do not let yourself be coerced into eating something you don't want. Try a low calorie snack before heading out to a big feast; munch on carrots, celery or apple slices to hold you over from scavenging the appetizer platters. Keep in mind, eating wise doesn't mean you have to miss out on your holiday favorites. Have a little of everything, but try to fill your plate with lots of fruits and vegetables. You can still savor your favorite treats, just aim for smaller portions. This way you'll get to indulge, while still focusing on receiving valuable nutrients and vitamins. Don't forget that alcohol contains calories too. Try to control your alcohol intake and similar to your food, try not to over-indulge regularly. Also remember, that just because it's the holidays doesn't mean you should throw exercise out of your daily routine. It will help relieve some holiday stress and keep extra pounds from sneaking up on you!

Food will always be a major part of the holiday season – and there is certainly nothing wrong with that. Enjoying the holidays and keeping your weight under control is possible! If you practice some of these tricks, in the long run, your body and mind will thank you!

NOVEMBER is “**STRIVE FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT**” month. Being overweight or obese increases your risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol problems, heart disease, gallbladder disease, arthritis, cancer, and sleep apnea. Eat wisely and choose a variety of low calorie, high nutrition foods such as colorful fresh fruits and vegetables. Select foods that will limit your intake of fats, cholesterol, added sugars, salt, and alcohol, and be as physically active as possible. **Check our the display on November 22nd from 10-11a in the main lobby for more information.**



DECEMBER is “**LIMIT ALCOHOL**” month. Alcoholic drinks contain calories, which matter if you are trying to lose weight. If you choose to drink alcohol, drink in moderation. For women this is no more than 1 drink per day and for men no more than 2 drinks per day. Avoid “binge drinking” and remember that drinking and driving do no mix. Alcohol dependence can be treated. Effective treatments include counseling, medications to reduce craving or prevent relapse, and inpatient or residential treatment. Talk to your health care team about the resources VA has that can help. What counts as a drink? 12 ounces of beer (regular or light, 150 calories) — or — 5 ounces of wine (100 calories) — or — 1-1/2 ounces of whiskey (100 calories). **Check out our display on December 12 from 10-11:30a in the main lobby.**

PINK OUT!

About 100 Salem VAMC employees showed their support for breast cancer awareness by wearing PINK on October 19th ; the Wytheville Community Based Outpatient Clinic staff also sent in a photo. Thanks for all your support, and congratulations to all Breast Cancer Survivors!

(Editor's Note: I just celebrated 17 years of being a survivor!)



BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE MONTH

Submitted by Dr. Shannon Cohen

The HPDP and MOVE Programs celebrated “be physically active” month October 24th from 1-2 pm in the lobby of B143 with Veterans, visitors, employees, and volunteers. We enjoyed playing Wii bowling and magnetic darts and discussed ways to increase daily physical activity. We invited Veterans to join the MOVE and MOVE telehealth national weight management programs.



KEEPING VETERANS AND EMPLOYEES SAFE

Article and Photo by Ann Benois

Some of the most common health care work related injuries are often attributed to musculoskeletal injuries to the back, neck, and arms due to patient handling tasks. This is particularly true in the field of nursing but extends to all caregivers where the risk is high.

At the Salem VAMC, many programs have been put in place to reduce these types of injuries to include proper body mechanics, extensive training in proper lifting techniques, and use of safe patient handling equipment.

Led by Sonya Stokes, RN, Safe Patient Handling Program Facility Coordinator, a kickoff was held to heighten knowledge and awareness of our program and demonstrate some of the equipment currently installed and utilized at the facility. Training was also provided to staff on the proper use. The more familiar manual transfer of patients was demonstrated by Tamicha Terry, RN, Unit Peer Leader (“patient”); Crystal Harrington, RN, Patient Safety Manager, Lori VanNess, RN, Unit Peer Leader, and Tierra Wilder, RN, Unit Peer Leader. As seen in the photo, patient transfers using the older method could easily cause injury and required additional staff to manage. “Requiring more staff for patient transfers means taking away from other patients who may need care – not to mention the higher risk of an injury,” explained Ms. Stokes.

“Many different forms of equipment may be used to decrease the risk of injury. Typically the transfer process is much smoother for the patient, time-saving for staff and significantly lowers the risk,” added Ms. Stokes.

The medical center uses a variety of equipment throughout inpatient and outpatient settings. Lifting equipment, including ceiling-mounted, wall-mounted, portable and power-assisted, lateral transfer devices, and floor based designs with slings help to assist in lift and transfer of patients, transporting, repositioning, and other tasks.

“Lateral transfer devices aid in moving patients horizontally from stretcher to bed and vice versa. Special beds, motorized stretchers, hydraulic gurneys and transfer chairs are all great assets in keeping our patients safe and employees at minimal to no risk for injury. We have identified staff members who serve as Unit Peer Leaders or ‘Super Users’ and are on hand to provide expertise in use of equipment specific to their work areas as well as those who accept the challenge of being knowledgeable of all acquired equipment facility-wide,” said Ms. Stokes.

This is the first of what will be an annual event. “Our goal is to continue to use the most innovative, state of the art technology and equipment available in order to provide high quality care to our Veterans and focus on the safety of both the Veterans we serve and our employees,” stated Ms. Stokes, “Creating a culture of safety is our collaborative effort, because WE CARE.”

Left to right: (squatting in front) Crystal Harrington, Patient Safety Officer; Lori VanNess, RN, UPL Surgery Clinic; (back row) Pam Grogan, LPN, UPL Specialty Clinic; Lori Bishop, LPN, UPL Primary Care; Tierra Wilder, RN, UPL 4J; Tamicha Terry, RN, UPL 4H; Sonya Stokes, RN, SPH Facility Coordinator; Karen Flinchum, Biomed; Katrina Redd, CNA, 2-3; George Davis, RN, UPL Emergency Dept.; Tenna Saunders, LPN, UPL 2-3; Renee Crosier, RN, UPL SICU



? 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).



October's Question: Why do we spend so much time and money renovating administrative buildings and offices when we know we should be cutting spending?

Answer: Administrative areas that have been renovated were primarily due to program expansion needs. Due to space requirements, previously private offices were converted to double, and sometimes triple occupancy. We have found this process is more cost-effective than adding space. Some recent examples include Building 12 — converting a single office to double occupancy for Prosthetics; Building 74 — converting a conference room to a 4-person workroom for VISN staff; Building 2 — converting a single occupancy room to multiple person workroom; and Building 7 — converting a Social Work conference room to a multi-person office space.

November's Question: Why do we provide heaters and air conditioners for individual employees when patients are too hot or cold?

SALEM VAMC REACHES OUT TO ROANOKE VALLEY CLERGY

Submitted by Chaplain Quentin White

Dr. Miguel LaPuz, Director, welcomed 49 Roanoke area clergy from many denominations to a presentation on November 2nd in the Auditorium. The purpose of this gathering was to inform clergy about the unique challenges of returning Veterans and their families and to enlist their support.

The overwhelmingly positive response of the clergy who attended was a hopeful indication of future support for our Veterans from some of the most important leaders in our community. One VA chaplain commented that the months of preparation and planning really paid off in this event. The Salem VA Chaplain Service invited Chaplain John Oliver, Chief of Chaplain Service at the Durham VAMC, who gave an expert three hour presentation on transition problems, PTSD, relationships, alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, depression, anxiety, suicide and many other topics. Attendees received literature and study materials covering all these subjects. Discussion about the Veterans in local congregations and how they can be assisted followed the presentation. Jennifer Holland, RN, MA.Ed outlined the services and benefits available to Veterans at the Salem VAMC. Many local religious leaders indicated their willingness to stay in contact with the VA chaplains and other professionals here.

The Chaplain Service, including Chaplain Quentin White (Lead Chaplain), Chaplain Harold Bryant, Chaplain Ronald Michaux, Chaplain Vern Jordahl, and Chaplain Rene Castillo, wish to thank the Canteen Service, Voluntary Service, Office of Patient Care Services and all who helped make this event a success.



FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS/CONSTRUCTION NEWS

Submitted by Wayne Johnson, FMS

As winter approaches, exterior construction work will curtail while interior work will continue relatively unaffected. The on-going work most affected by the approach of winter is the roof work on Building 143. This Project has been impacted by weather and is currently being impacted by shortages of matching replacement slate. Renovation of Building 7, 2nd floor for Mental Health Service Line (MHSL) has begun and is progressing well. The design effort for the Building 8 Addition for MHSL should resume very soon, with design completion expected in the spring of 2012.

The following Projects will also see progress during the November/December timeframe:

- ◆ Construction of New Education Center in Building 75: A required contract modification is in process, but has slowed the construction effort. The Office wing is essentially complete, but remaining construction will likely continue through December followed by installation of furnishings, architectural features, and audio visual equipment.
- ◆ Energy Saving Improvements: Project includes re-commissioning of the Building 143 HVAC system and is nearing completion. Additional energy-saving projects are scheduled for FY12.
- ◆ HVAC System Replacement in Buildings 11 and 12: Building 11 installation is nearing completion. Similar work in Building 12 will follow.
- ◆ SPD Renovation for Scope Processing: This work will continue into the November timeframe. A contract modification is in progress and has affected completion of this contract.
- ◆ High Efficiency Heating Systems for Buildings 17, 18, 19, and 25: Construction is underway.
- ◆ HVAC Humidification Corrections in Building 143: Work is nearing completion.
- ◆ Front Accessible Entrance for Women's Health Clinic: Construction has initiated.
- ◆ Building 76 Renovations for Relocation of Research: Construction has initiated.
- ◆ Emergency Water Storage Project: The construction schedule is being developed by the contractor for VAMC approval.
- ◆ Buildings 74 and 75 basement corridor floor finish: Decision in process between two existing floor samples.

Projects planned for or currently in design:

- ◆ Community Living Center Dining Room Addition for Building 2: Design effort will continue.
- ◆ Upgrades to Emergency Electrical System: Design effort will continue.
- ◆ Replacement of Primary Electrical Feeders: Design effort has initiated.
- ◆ Upgrade and Modernize Utility Plant: Design procurement will continue.
- ◆ Projects completed within the last month include:
 - ◆ MRI Addition/ED Expansion.
 - ◆ Reroofing of the Building 1 to Building 2 Corridor.

Several other substantial Projects are in process for Fiscal Year 12. These new projects will be added to the construction update as their schedules become better defined. As always, we appreciate your patience with this heavy construction workload and your help in maintaining a safe environment by reporting any unsafe conditions. If you see unsafe actions or conditions, please immediately report details of the situation to Safety (Ext. 2292) or FMS (Ext. 2700).

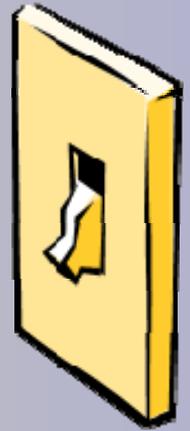


SAVING ENERGY

Submitted by Robert Rossbacher

October was Energy Awareness Month. We have continued to reduce our energy intensity about 5% per year for the last three fiscal years (FY2009, FY2010 and FY2011). Keep up the good work! The following “green” practices will help keep the Salem VA Medical Center on the course of reducing energy usage:

- ◆ Turn off lights and monitors when not in use
- ◆ Reduce printing—and print double-sided
- ◆ Put copiers and fax machines into energy saving mode
- ◆ Recycle plastic, paper and cardboard
- ◆ Carpool or use public transportation



SAFETY FAIR

Submitted by Sandra Vest

Salem VAMC's inaugural Safety Fair was held on October 17 in the Auditorium to remind staff that prevention of injuries calls for everyone's active participation. The majority of the training was awareness followed by training of management on the second day. The event was a success, with 16 private sector vendors available and 10 Salem VAMC committees that were represented. Training was provided on: asbestos awareness, compressed gas cylinders, confined space entry, emergency planning, ergonomics, fire prevention and extinguisher use, ladder safety, personal protective equipment (PPE), and injury statistics. The mobile Medical unit, Disaster bunk trailer and portable toilets were on display. Also a demonstration of how Salem can make medical gas was available. Always here to help, Salem Fire Department conducted fire extinguisher training as they have done in years past.

On October 18, Safety met with the Quad and Supervisors to implement initiatives and goals (saving the number of on-the-job accidents, etc.) into place and to provide supervisors with the tools they need in order to ensure their staff are properly trained in the appropriate safety topics that pertain to their work areas.

Special thanks go to Voluntary Service, Salem VAMC Federal Credit Union, and Salem Canteen Service for their donations to this event. **Remember, SAFETY** is everyone's responsibility!



TOWN HALL AWARDS

Awards were presented at the September 30th Town Hall meeting to the following employees.

SERVICE PINS (25 years and more)

Enda M. Toliver—40 years	Eldridge N. Lark, Jr.—35 years	Almeda W. Conner—30 years
Kimber Beckford-Butler—30 years	Edith F. Austin—30 years	Danny Lee Hodge—30 years
Anthony W. Hull—25 years	Robin N. McGeorge—25 years	Carol B. Fisher—25 years
Earnest E. Jones—25 years	Delmar D. Short—25 years	Nabil F. Jarmukli—25 years
Susan E. Murphy—25 years	Joseph B. Woolwine—25 years	Dorothy E. Rizzo—25 years
Barbara C. Anderson—25 years		



Top row left to right: Hull, Fisher, Hodge, Short, Austin, Murphy
Bottom row left to right: Jones, Woolwine, Jarmukli, McGeorge

GEM (GOING THE EXTRA MILE) AWARDS (*pictured)

Jeffery Adams—Fiscal	Grace Alexander* - CFU	Haftiz Ali—Pharmacy
Jennifer Anders—Nursing	John Berry* - FMS	Patricia Bohannon—Nursing
William T. Brooks—FMS	Brian Campbell—OIT	Paul Clayton* - Human Resources
James Cooke—FMS	Valerie Coston* - Human Resources	David Dodson—FMS
Cindy Nicholas—FMS	Barbara Fasnacht—Logistics	Rebecca Golder* - PM&RS
Marcy Hernandez* - Fiscal	Barry Joyce—Nursing	Carolyn Jones—PM&RS
Sandra Lane—Psychology	Lauren Lehmann, MD—MHSL	Lorriane Looney—Nursing
Janet McClain—Nursing	Michelle Nicholson—Nursing	Luise Spencer—Psychology
Karen Terry—FMS	Doug Dockery, DPM—Surgery	Kim Motley—Nursing
Dawn Bennett—Nursing	John Trent—FMS	





COMPLIMENTS CORNER

- ☺ **“Ward 2-3 Palliative:** Thanks for the care and concern shown to our brother while he was in your care. We appreciate all you did for him.”
- ☺ **“Ward 2-2 Nursing:** Thanks to the Nursing staff for the excellent care they gave our precious father... we love you guys.”
- ☺ “Thanks for the level of care rendered by **Dr. Suzanna Hanna**; I appreciate that she did not just give me ... a pain pill and tell me to go.”
- ☺ “I just wanted to thank you for the good job and good service you provide for us Veterans.”
- ☺ “Thanks to **Barbara Holmes** for going above and beyond to change my appointment.”
- ☺ “The **doctors, nurses, and staff** treat me so wonderfully — they are angels! The care is the best.”
- ☺ **Angela Jenkins** in Radiology did a phenomenal job assisting to get x-rays and other scans in a couple of emergent situations. The families of the Veterans were grateful.
- ☺ “We commend **Dr. Madhoun** and the **staff in the ER** for making our first visit to the ER a wonderful experience.”
- ☺ “I think **Dr. Goldwasser** is top notch. She’s a ‘keeper.’ She assisted me and spent quality time with me.”

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.

VETERANS HONORARY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS



Veterans Honorary High School Diplomas recognize the life experiences of honorably discharged Veterans who were unable to complete their high school education because of service in the armed forces during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Since the first honorary diplomas were issued in 2001, more than 2,000 have been awarded to Veterans of the three wars.

To obtain an honorary diploma, a Veteran may submit a statement to the Virginia Department of Education describing his or her service, the location of the last school attended, and affirming that he or she was unable to complete high school upon return to civilian life. The guidelines also allow for the submission of information by family members and Veterans' organizations.

Contact:
 Veterans Honorary High School Diploma Program
 Virginia Department of Education
 P. O. Box 2120 Richmond, Virginia 23218
 Ph: 804-225-2924 / Fax: 804-225-2524

DENTAL TREATMENT RESOURCE

The 2012 Roanoke Mission of Mercy will be held March 30-31, 2012 at the Roanoke Civic Center. This dental treatment is free for anyone, but especially those who have no other resources. Licensed dentists, hygienists, dental assistants, and others volunteer their time and skills to support this program.

For more information contact Barbara Rollins at (804) 228-5750, or email rollins@vadental.org or see www.roanokemom.org



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—2011/2012

(Also see on Intranet and Internet Calendars)

Nov 2	Diabetic Health Fair from 9a-2p in the main lobby and BB103 and BB 104
Nov 2	Chaplain Service Veterans Community Outreach from 11:30a-1:30p in the Auditorium
Nov 5	Veterans Day Parade downtown Roanoke
Nov 9	Stand Down for Homeless Veterans from 8:30a-3p at the Salem Civic Center
Nov 16	3rd Annual Caregiver Health Awareness Day from 10a-2p in the Main Lobby
Nov 17	Great American Smokeout from 9a-2p in the Main Lobby National Rural Health Day
Nov 20	Veterans Memorial Program from 2-3p in the Auditorium (Building 5)
Nov 22	Strive for a Healthy Weight demo from 10-11a in the Main Lobby Thanksgiving Service 10-11a in the Chapel
Nov 30	Computer Security Day Display from 8a-4p in the Main Lobby
Dec 1	World AIDS Day Display from 9a-1p in the Main Lobby
Dec 7	Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
Dec 12	How Much is Too Much? Limiting Alcohol Use info from 10-11:30a in the Main Lobby
Dec 15	Holiday Music Extravaganza from 1:30-3:30p in the Auditorium
Dec 16	Holiday Open House for Employees and Volunteers from 1-4p in the Auditorium
Dec 21	Chanukah Begins
Dec 25	Christmas Day
Dec 26	Christmas Holiday Kwanzaa Begins
Dec 31	New Year's Eve
Jan 1	New Year's Day—Happy 2012!
Jan 2	New Year's Day Holiday