



THE DESERT SUN

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Phoenix VA Health Care System

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We're Celebrating Our Success as a Joint Commission Top Performer

VA Also Takes Steps to Reenergize Our Mission, Vision and Values

WASHINGTON – Twenty Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers from across the Nation were recognized by The Joint Commission as Top Performers on Key Quality Measures for 2010.

“We at VA are very pleased with the recognition from The Joint Commission and proud of the medical centers that made this list, proving VA’s dedication to performance measurement and accountability are placing Veterans’ health care among the top tiers of the country,” said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. “I hope this news confirms American Veterans’ confidence in the care they receive or convinces others to decide to try VA health care for the first time.”

While all VA medical centers are accredited by The Joint Commission, today’s list recognizes medical centers that are top performers in using evidence-based care processes closely linked to positive patient outcomes. The 405 facilities on the list were identified for attaining and sustaining excellence in accountability measure performance for the full previous year (2010) and **represent approximately 14 percent** of The Joint Commission-accredited hospitals and critical access hospitals that report core measure performance data.

Based on performance related to 22 accountability measures for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical care, The Joint Commission report singles out hospitals in 45 states. The list of

top performing hospitals and the measure set or sets for which each hospital was recognized are available online at www.jointcommission.org/topperformers.

“VA health care has been a leader in performance measurement, electronic health records, research and clinical quality for more than a decade now,” said Dr. Robert A. Petzel, VA’s Under Secretary for Health. “I am proud of the staff that have enjoyed such sustained success and I fully expect to see more VA medical centers making this list next year.”

Reenergizing our Mission, Vision and Values

Nationally, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Health Administration updated its Mission, Vision, Business and Values Statements. In order to ensure you have an update version, we are sharing them with you.

VHA Mission

Honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

VHA Vision

To be a patient-centered, integrated organization for Veterans providing excellent health care, research, and education; an organization where people choose to work; and a community partner and a back-up for national emergencies.

VHA Key Business Drivers

Our key business drivers are quality, financial integrity, patient satisfaction, and employee satisfaction.

VA Values



We value I Care: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence

Integrity: Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

Commitment: Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA’s mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

Advocacy: Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Respect: Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

Excellence: Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

We thank you for your efforts in providing high quality health care to our nation’s Veterans and providing Veteran Centered Care. ■

VHA Mission: Honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

What is the Veterans History Project?

By Bridgette Henness

The Veterans History Project (VHP) is a volunteer effort to collect and preserve American war Veterans' memories. These first-hand accounts are archived at the American Folk Life Center in the Library of Congress.

This year, the Phoenix VA Health Care System has partnered with the Tempe Public Library Volunteers who coordinate our local VHP to provide ease of access for this program. Therefore, on the second Wednesday of each month in Medical Media, VHP Volunteers gather to conduct the screening interview with our Veterans and then set up a time for the actual recording of their story.

These are war memories of Veterans from World War I, World War II, the Cold War, Korean War, Vietnam, Gulf War (1990-1995), or Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts (2001-present). Civilians who actively supported war efforts (industry workers, USO workers, flight instructors, medical volunteers, defense contractors, etc.) are also invited to participate.

The Library of Congress and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) created a joint initiative in gathering wartime first-hand narratives. This public outreach campaign goes beyond Ken Burns' film "THE WAR". This film reiterates the Library of Congress' message of "help us build the historic record by



interviewing a veteran in your family or community."

To schedule an appointment at our VA, Veterans may call 480-350-5565 in advance so that a one-on-one interview can be set up, or you can just stop by. The interviews are a minimum of 30 minutes.

Your memories can be written (at least 20 pages) as well. The Memoir Guidelines has tips on how to accomplish this. Original collections of diaries, letters, maps, home movies, and photographs are also accepted.

If submitting additional data after your interview has been processed, include

a note or letter indicating your name and that you are sending an addition to an existing collection. The Library of Congress guarantees the Veterans' legal copyright to their materials.

You can use the VHP online database for research. Use any of the following facts: Veteran/civilian name, interviewer/donor name, war, branch, unit (such as battalion, regiment, ship, etc.), medals, or service locations.

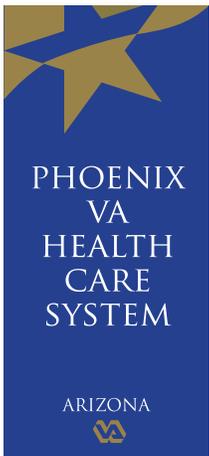
If you're interested in learning more about the Veterans History Project, you can join them at their Open House on Nov. 5 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Tempe History Museum, located at 609 E. Southern Avenue in Tempe. ■

The Desert Sun is a bi-monthly printed publication for VA staff, volunteers, our Congressional members, Veterans Service Organizations and the Phoenix community.

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- Dr. Sylvia Vela Interim Chief of Staff
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Space Was the Frontier for CLC Resident Robert Jordan

By Michelle Roberts

The Community Living Center (CLC) has the great privilege of having one of the men, who worked on the projects that led to all of the Apollo missions, as one of our newest residents.

Robert Jordan has been in the CLC since August 2011. He had worked eight years for NASA as a consultant for testing the metal and welding used, and performed non-destructive testing on the projects connected with the space program.

The Apollo missions were designed to land humans on the moon and bring them safely back to earth. Six of the missions (Apollos 11, 12, 14, 15, 16 and 17) achieved this goal. The missions

that landed on the moon returned photography of the lunar surface and a wealth of scientific data and lunar samples.

Jordan served in the U.S. Army for six years, enlisting when he was 17. He worked as a drill sergeant for part of his tour and helped to train troops headed for Vietnam. He injured his leg and was in traction four months, then left the service.

He was asked to join the work on the space program as a consultant while visiting the site with his oldest brother. A true testament to his excellent work ethic is seen in the letter he received from the Apollo astronauts in 1965. This letter is signed by all of the astronauts in the



Apollo space program and thanks him for his dedicated efforts. There were only two of these kinds of letters ever sent.

When I asked for his permission to interview him, he said, "Why, I was only doing my job."

I can only imagine what it must have been like to be part of that historic period and work with the people who made manned space exploration possible. ■

VA Offers Signature Therapies in Dealing with PTSD

By Tess Casey, Summer PA Intern

Imagine living every day of your life desperately trying to escape a horror of your past. Sleeping doesn't help because you experience nightmares of the event that changed your life. You remain hyper-vigilant and even everyday noises and sounds remind you of that horrible event. You seek numbness, but the result is a loss of important relationships. The National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) states this is what many Veterans face when they return from war. Fortunately, VA has found two very successful ways to help.

Psychologist Dr. Karen Kattar calls this "an exciting time for the VA," because it can now offer healing through Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure (PE) Therapy.

During CPT, Veterans spend 12 weeks working through the mental aspect of their trauma. According to Dr. Kattar, "Many Veterans are telling themselves it was their fault;" CPT helps them understand what actually happened.

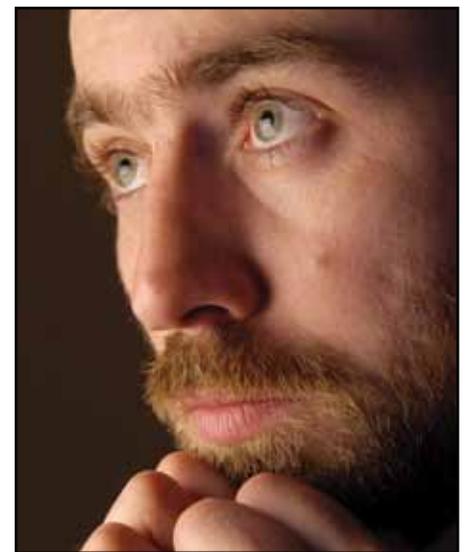
Veterans deal with avoidant tendencies through PE. Those who suffer from PTSD try to avoid situations that may remind them of what happened. In PE,

the Veterans are given assignments to expose themselves to the situations they are most afraid of. Dr. Kattar used the example of a Veteran who is afraid of the grocery store: the first assignment may be to go to the parking lot, then the next week going into the store itself. Each week the challenge is increased, until the Veteran is comfortable in that original situation.

While VA offers these therapies, the struggle of convincing Veterans to seek treatment remains. Veterans returning from active combat have been living a hardened lifestyle where the display of feelings is not encouraged. To end the suffering and provide them with necessary services, the VA reaches out through events, emails, and advertisements, trying to show them that asking for help is not a failure. After completing treatment, many Veterans ask themselves why they waited so long.

If you know a Veteran who refuses to acknowledge their symptoms, Dr. Kattar recommends offering support, but avoiding asking probing questions about the traumatic event.

The doors at the Phoenix VA Health



Care System are open to those paying the psychological price of war; if the person affected is not ready for treatment, alternative support is available via self-education on the VA and National Center for PTSD websites.

Additionally a mobile application has been created called PTSD Coach. It offers more information, websites about PTSD, and ways to get help. ■

Changing Faces in Nursing Leadership

By Carol L Dunaway, MSN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC
Nurse Manager, Outpatient Mental Health

The Phoenix VA Health Care System (PVAHCS) is fortunate to have the depth of experience and dedication our nurse leaders bring to their new positions. Universally our nursing leadership feels as Caroline Rosemond, RN, says, "I am lucky enough to be able to care for Veterans" and as Cheryl Roberts points out "We are here to take care of the Veterans, all else is second." Many of our professional staff are Veterans, and we feel there is no greater calling than providing care to our fellow Veterans. I'd like to introduce you to our new leadership and to those who have new roles in the PVAHCS.

Nancy Clafin, RN, PhD, CCRN, CPHQ, FNAHQ, VHA-CM, was selected Associate Director of Patient Care Services (ADPCS)/ Nurse Executive after the departure of **Cindy McCormack** who went to the VA in Cheyenne, Wyoming, as the facility director in August of 2010. The ADPCS is responsible for Clinical Informatics, Social Work, Compliance, and Quality Management, including Risk Management, Infection Control and Utilization Management, Privacy Officer, Patient Safety Specialist, Research Compliance Officer, and all of Nursing Services. Dr. Clafin was the Associate Chief of Nursing Operations (ACONS) prior to accepting this new position. She is an invaluable mentor and leader for nursing at the PVAHCS and now as a member of the Pentad, a crucial resource for patient care services.

Stepping into the position of Deputy Nurse Executive (DNE) from the Associate Chief/ Nursing Service (ACNS) of Ambulatory Care is **Marva Greene**, RN, MSN, MBA.



Mental Health Services: India Caldwell-Cox, Cheryl Roberts, Carol Dunaway



Outpatient Services: Cathleen Gibson, Caroline Rosemond, Ralph Gonzales, Kathy Gale, Marilyn Tabamo, Manolo Moneda, Lon McCarthy



Inpatient Services: Cindy DeWaters, Merlyn Garcia, Judy Spinner, Matilde Cangco, Michelle Bagford

The DNE is responsible for oversight of the day-to-day nursing operations for all of the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center, including the seven VA Health Care Clinics located in the valley. In addition, this position supervises the evening and night shift nursing

supervisors, the research department, and six Associate Chiefs/Nursing Services.

The ACNS of Mental Health is **Cheryl Roberts**, RN. This position has the global responsibility of all Mental Health Services in the Phoenix VA Health Care System. Roberts is assisted by **Monique Rivers**, RN, Nurse Manager for inpatient services, along with Assistant Nurse Manager for inpatient services, **India Caldwell-Cox**, RN. **Carol Dunaway**, NP (US Air Force), is the Nurse Manager for outpatient mental health services, including the community clinics, Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Recovery Treatment Program, CSTAT, Mental Health Intensive Case Management, and the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team clinic.

Michelle Bagford, RN, is the ACNS for Inpatient Medical Services and also manages the Discharge Education, Case Managers and Massage Therapy functions. She is assisted by **Judy Spinner**, RN, Nurse Manager of 2C; **Matilde Cangco**, RN, Nurse Manager of 3B/Short Stay Intensive Unit, **Jess Fowler**, RN (US Army ret); Nurse Manager of 4C/ Telemetry; **Cindy DeWaters** RN (US Marine Corps); Nurse Manager of 4D/ Pre-procedure clinics; **Merlyn Garcia** RN, Nurse Manager of Intensive Care Unit (ICU); **Randy Belieu**, RN, Assistant Nurse Manager ICU and **Lisa Warner** RN Nurse Manager of Operating Room, Post Anesthesia Care Unit. The newly-remodeled ICU is a combined Medical and Surgical Intensive Care Unit just finished in February. This is a state of the art 20-bed unit with all private rooms, furnished with ceiling lifts, articulating arms, and computer accessibility inside and outside of the rooms. We have

created a team of specialists to provide the best intensive medical and surgical intensive care for our Veterans.

Gail Smith, RN (US Navy) is the ACNS of Specialty and Support services. This includes the specialty departments of Endocrinology, Surgery/Ear Nose Throat, Hematology/Oncology, General Surgery, Pain Management, Radiology, Rheumatology, Nephrology, Orthopedics, Urology, Pre-procedure, Endocrine, Utilization Management, and the MDRO coordinator. Smith is assisted by **Cindy Scott**, NP, Nurse Manager in Cardiology, and **Sandy Rowe**, RN, Nurse Manager in Gastroenterology. **Karen Walenga**, RN, is the ACNS for Geriatric Services. She has oversight of the Community Living Center (CLC) and Homebound Services, and is assisted by **Jimmie Ivy**, RN, Nurse Manager in Homebound, **Valentin Rivish**, RN, Nurse Manager of the CLC 1 and **Jim Brezinski**, RN, Nurse Manager CLC2.

Kathy Gale, RN, is the ACNS for Ambulatory Care. Her scope of supervision extends to the Spinal Cord clinic, the community clinics; our Returning Warriors from Iraq and Afghanistan, Emergency, Women's Health, Tele Health, the Helpline, Occupational Health and Specialty clinics. Smith is assisted by **Marilyn Tabamo**, RN, Nurse Manager for the Diamond, Emerald, and Gold clinics; **Cathleen Gibson**, RN, Nurse Manager for the ER; **Ralph Gonzales**, RN, Nurse Manager for the Helpline; **Caroline Rosemond**, RN, Nurse Manager for East Valley community clinics; **Denise Creydt**, RN, Nurse Manager for West Valley community clinics; **Manolo Moneda**, RN (US Air Force), Nurse Manager for



Specialty and Support Services: Sandy Rowe, Gail Smith, Leora Jacober, Susan Wyatt



Geriatric Services: Jim Brezinski, Jimmie Ivy, Karen Walenga, Valentin Rivish



ACNS Services: Kathy Gale, Gail Smith, Cheryl Roberts, Michelle Bagford, Marva Greene, Karen Walenga, Leora Jacober

Specialty clinics.

Lon McCarthy, RN (US Army), Nurse Manager of Tele Health. Ambulatory Care has implemented the Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT). This program is designed after national models to provide

patient-centered care, and involves every aspect of primary care for Veterans. In addition to having their own primary care provider, Veterans now have an assigned registered nurse, patient care technician or nurse aid, and a scheduling support specialist. Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) is also based in the ambulatory care clinics. We currently have two psychiatrists assigned full time to see Veterans in the primary care clinics. PACT serves Veterans with short term medication management for stabilization and brief counseling services right in their own PACT area. Implementation of PCMHI is being rolled out to the CBOCs this fall.

Leora Jacober, RN, is the ACNS for Education. The Education department is responsible for nursing scholarships, patient education, employee wellness, and safe patient handling.

Susan Wyatt, RN, is the Safe Patient Handling Coordinator, who assists with our designated educational unit partnership with ASU (located on 4C).

Tina Simmons provides administrative support and has been working for the Phoenix VA since September 2007. She is in the Air Force Reserves and is assigned to the 944th FSS, at Luke Air Force Base.

Our nursing leadership and support staff is a dedicated and talented group focused on bringing the very best of care to our nation's heroes. We encourage you to seek any one of us out if you have concerns, comments, or ideas for improving our service. ■



WP Carey School of Business Teams Up With VA to Service Veterans

By Debbie Freeman, ASU, Reprinted with Permission

As Americans, we thank our Veterans for all they do to ensure our security and freedom. We also have the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs working to make sure our Veterans get high-quality, cost-effective health care. To further improve efficiency and support the best possible medical care for our vets, the Phoenix VA Health Care System is now joining the Health Sector Supply Chain Research Consortium at the W. P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University.

The consortium is an impressive group of health sector companies and academic researchers focused on how to better manage health care, boost the performance of hospitals, and support patients in getting the most for their money and well-being. Major private companies, such as Boston Scientific, Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) and Novation, are among the members. The VA becomes the first public-sector member, and it's clear this may be an opportunity to apply lessons from the private sector to care for our Veterans.

"This could have a big impact on a group of people that really deserves great health care," says W. P. Carey School of Business professor Eugene Schneller,

co-director of the Health Sector Supply Chain Research Consortium. "The VA is persistently examining its supply chain model to make sure it's supporting the best care possible, and this is an extraordinary chance for interaction between top companies in the public and private sectors to learn from each other for the benefit of the patients."

Schneller points out that VA has an especially difficult role in making sure the right treatments and facilities are available, in a timely manner, for Veterans. Unlike hospitals, which can somewhat predict how many patients and what types of ailments they'll have during certain times of year, the military often has to deploy to unexpected places and conditions with very little notice. The result is the VA needing to manage readiness under conditions of extreme uncertainty.

"Sometimes there's only so much they can do to plan, so they're always looking for the best practices to utilize for our Veterans," says Schneller. "They're also dealing with shifting demographics, as more vets are females and/or younger than in the past few decades, so medical needs change. The VA appears to be handling these challenges with outstanding clinical results."

Natalia Wilson, also co-director of the

Health Sector Supply Chain Research Consortium, notes that the VA is the largest integrated health care system in the United States. VA hospitals are often affiliated with academic institutions and are well-respected for their clinical training opportunities and research. Joining the consortium also brings an academic focus to VA supply chain management and allows the private-sector members of the consortium to be exposed to models successfully utilized in VA hospitals.

"We know the VA has been quite progressive," Wilson says. "The VA was ahead of its time in creating a pharmaceutical formulary and utilizing electronic health records. We look forward to the VA perspective as we develop future research projects."

It's possible some of the lessons learned may also be used by the federal government as it delves deeper into the issues of health care reform.

"For example, as the VA learns from other health systems, it will learn more about efficiencies and how to best achieve value for the money," says Schneller. "The more you save in supply chain, the more money can go toward patient care, instead of just moving goods from the manufacturer to the point of use."

Tobacco Use and Women

By Abby Harris, Ph.D.

Tobacco use has been identified as the single most preventable cause of death in the United States. The World Health Organization demonstrated that health care workers are one of the largest groups of smokers, with up to 20% of health professionals identifying as smokers in some countries. Additionally, more female Veterans smoke than female civilians, with almost one third of female Veterans reporting that they smoke.

If you have been thinking about quitting, now is the time. Join us for the Great American Smokeout on November 17, 2011.

To help you quit, Employees are eligible for **FREE** Nicotine Replacement Therapy through Occupational Health. Please see Occupational Health for more information, extension 7317.

Veterans can obtain the therapy patches through their Primary Care Provider.

Additionally, Veterans and employees

are eligible to attend Tobacco Cessation classes. Classes start on the first Wednesday of each month in D540 at 9 a.m. Please join us.

Special Issues for Women

- ◆ Women who smoke are more likely to die pre-maturely with more than 170,000 women dying each year of a smoking-related illness.
- ◆ Cigarette smoking is the cause of more than 90% of lung cancer deaths among women in the U.S.
- ◆ Smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke increase the risk for cervical cancer and breast cancer in women.
- ◆ Women who smoke are at an increased risk of painful menstruation and earlier menopause.
- ◆ Pregnant women who smoke are more likely to have complications, premature labor, and higher risk for sudden infant death syndrome.



PR PROVIDERS

Public Affairs Officer Paula L. Pedene APR often has to garner media assistance from staff for interviews and other information on a short turnaround basis for media queries. When staff assist our VA with media and other PR requests, Pedene recognizes them as PR Providers. This helps us provide our four-hour turnaround for media queries, and helps to support other special needs for public relations assistance. PR Providers earn recognition in this column and they receive a special token of appreciation for their PR efforts.

- ◆ The Gold Clinic especially Dr. Thirn Roopan, Jennifer Combs, RN, Rochelle Williams, RN, 4D staff especially Dr. Michael Chesser, and ACS staff Rickie Howard for your assistance with the Arizona Republic story for our 60th Anniversary.
- ◆ To Linda Beaton, John Flowers, Kevin Hardaway, Yusuf Batua, Marzette King and Leo Borquez, Gerald Johnson and Kimberly Corke for your assistance with the set up for the 60th Anniversary Event.
- ◆ Dr. Michael Chesser and Kevin Ivory for your contribution to the Channel 12 story.
- ◆ Dr. Leslie Telfer, Andrew Hill and Hugh Edwards for your assistance with the Channel 5 story on PTSD.
- ◆ To Raymond Hopkins for your assistance with the setup for the Vietnam Moving Wall.



Paula L. Pedene APR with a Silver Anvil Award presented by the Public Relations Society of America

We thank you all for being PR Providers!

HIGHLIGHTS

Around the Medical Center

Paula L. Pedene, APR, Public Affairs Officer

- Congratulations to **Carlos J. Carrera**, MD, Associate Chief of Staff for the Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Service of the Phoenix VA Health Care System, who has been recognized by Cambridge Who's Who for showing dedication, leadership and excellence in mental health services.



Carlos J. Carrera

Dr. Carrera has spent more than two decades refining his expertise in two related areas: the interface of mental health and addictions, and the medical management and administration of mental health services. As an associate chief of staff for the Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Service, he plans, develops, coordinates, directs and evaluates the operational aspects of a large integrated mental health program and community-based outpatient clinics. He also provides a variety of mental health services to both Veterans and active military personnel. These include outpatient, inpatient, residential rehabilitation, and consultative services.

Dr. Carrera has been a clinical assistant professor in psychiatry at the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix Campus since 2008. His numerous accomplishments over the years include having been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in Brazil. In recent years, Dr. Carrera has been appointed as an examiner for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award twice, and has also served as an examiner for the Carey Quality Award. He attributes his success to having a long-term vision to provide the best quality care to his patients and to continuously pursuing personal and professional improvement.

When asked to identify the most gratifying aspect of his career, Dr. Carrera replied that receiving training in ecological science and oceanography was instrumental in helping him understand systems and how they all connect; this has proved invaluable to him in providing health care at both individual and population levels.

- **Michael Owens** LCSW was selected as the new Program Manager for the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation New Dawn (OND) Program. Owens served in this capacity for several months and prior to this was a Social Worker at the South East VA Health Care Clinic. He is excited about the upcoming move to the new OEF/OIF/OND clinic, located on the first floor of the Medical Center, and continuing to offer extensive services to our Returning Warriors.



Michael Owens

- **Andra Batie**, was selected as the new Chief of Prosthetics. The Prosthetics Service is responsible for providing adaptive equipment to Veterans for service connected disabilities. This includes prosthetic limbs which are crafted in the prosthetics lab, hearing aids, white canes for the visually impaired and other services. Batie has been acting chief in this position for the past several months.



Andra Batie

- **Eric Guyton** of the South East VA Health Care Clinic was recognized by the Officers and Members of the American Legion, District 12 for the valuable service he is providing to our Veterans. Guyton received an award from the Legion at their meeting on Sept. 18. ■



Eric Guyton

Adding Mental Health Services Means Giving Veterans the Care They Need

By Victoria Miller

There is a continuing stigma in our current society in general and even more amongst Veterans about seeking mental health treatment. Many experience feelings of embarrassment, shame, fear, denial, and are unsure about how they will be viewed and treated if they ask for help; thus symptoms of depression often go untreated or under-treated. Veterans that were being seen by their primary care providers might have been referred to the mental health clinic (Jade/Opal clinic) but they never appeared at the clinic because of the stigma associated with mental health treatment in general.

VA is aware of this situation and wants to solve this problem so that Veterans can get the best possible treatment for both their medical and mental health issues. So VA created the Primary Care Mental Health Integration team (PCMHI), which institutes the concept of integrating (additional) mental health services into the primary care clinics. Currently at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center, there is a psychiatrist assigned to the Emerald Clinic (Dr. Coira); a psychiatrist assigned to the Diamond Clinic (Dr. Cattellino); and a Depression Care Manager (Lydia Green R.N.) located in the Gold Clinic. Other members of the team include Dr. Munshi (Administrator), Abby Harris and Karen White, along with other members of social work. The VA Health Care Clinics are eager to get on board with the integration process.

Every Veteran who visits the CTHVAMC for services receives an annual depression screening (PHQ-9 screen) during the appointment. If the screen is positive for symptoms of depression, then the primary care provider will speak with the Veteran, and together they will determine the

next step of care. Often the provider will make an appointment for the Veteran to see a member of the PCMHI team or send a consult to the Jade/Opal clinic to establish mental health services.

A Special Focus on Suicide Prevention

In support of the 37th Annual National Suicide Prevention Week (Sept. 4-10, 2011) the Carl T. Hayden VAMC sponsored \$1,000 toward the 4th Annual Suicide Prevention Conference on October 6 and 7, 2011. This conference is held by the Arizona Suicide Prevention Coalition (azspc.org), and is a two-day opportunity for professionals, survivors, and advocates (any persons dedicated to preventing suicide in our community) to come together and exchange ideas while learning from the leading experts. This year's theme was "Changing the Legacy of Suicide." So how can we take part in this change? We can start by learning how to recognize symptoms of depression and suicide in ourselves and others. Although Suicide Prevention Week was in September, the promotion of awareness should continue throughout the year. If you or someone you know (a patient, friend, family member or even someone you barely know) needs to talk to someone, here are some free, confidential, and easy-to-use options.

1-800-273-TALK

The Veteran's Crisis Line (Press 1) is available at all hours, seven days a week. This line is staffed by caring professionals at the Veteran's Crisis Line, who are trained in helping Veterans of all ages and circumstances. Many of the responders are Veterans themselves and understand what Veterans and their families have been through and the challenges Veterans of all ages and service eras face. The



Phoenix VA Health Care System has its own local Suicide Prevention team that works closely with the Veteran's Crisis Line. The Suicide Prevention team provides Veterans the option of a follow-up phone call or appointment on the next business day to offer additional resources.

Veterans Confidential Live Chat:

When you visit the Veterans Crisis Line website (veteranscrisisline.net) you will find many resources including information on how to identify signs and behaviors and where to find help. You can also use the Confidential Live Chat as a way to anonymously begin to seek help. You can access this service even if you are not currently registered with the VA or enrolled in VA health care.

Together we can help reduce the number of suicides and reduce the stigma of Mental Health care amongst our Veteran population. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal. ■

Phoenix VA Hospital Celebrates 60th Birthday

By Maria Polletta, Arizona Republic (Reprinted with Permission)

Editor's Note: This story is reprinted from the Sept. 9 edition of the Arizona Republic. Our celebration was held Sept. 9 and you can now see the beautiful historic display at our VAMC on the second floor of the ACC across from the specialty clinics and near the large guitar.

When the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs began providing care to Veterans in Phoenix in 1946, it did so at what the *Chicago Tribune* called the “smallest, ugliest” temporary hospital in the VA system - a converted prisoner-of-war camp at Papago Park.

The Phoenix VA Health System has come a long way.

After decades of service, two name changes and a long list of structural upgrades, the hospital, which officially opened in 1951, will celebrate its 60th birthday Friday.

At Seventh Street and Indian School Road, the hospital spans 700,000 square feet. The Phoenix system also includes seven community clinics and an in-home care program, serving about 80,000 Veterans a year.

When it opened, the hospital cared for about 1,000 patients a month. A perpetual shortage of space coupled with growing need led to multiple expansions: a 328-bed addition in 1976, a 120-bed nursing addition in 1978 and an ambulatory-care clinic in 1999.

With the structural changes came upgrades in equipment and advancements in care. The facility provides pharmacy, internal-medicine, surgery, mental-health, radiology and rehabilitation services, among others.

Despite the facility's constant

evolution, the hospital still maintains the same spirit of its founding, according to spokeswoman Paula Pedene.

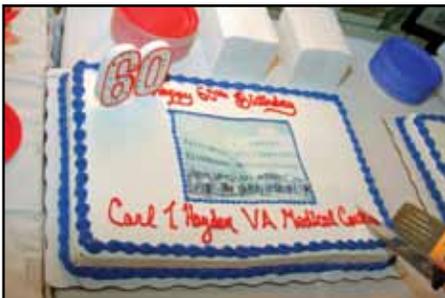
“The way we deliver our health care may have changed,” she said. “But our mission and who we care for? That will never change.”

Timeline: 1945

After Arizona experiences an influx of Veterans following the Second World War, there are reports of disabled Veterans sleeping in Arizona jails for lack of hospital space.

1946

After the War Department decides to deactivate Arizona's Papago Park prisoner-of-war camp, the Phoenix community requests to use the facility as a temporary Veterans hospital. The Veterans Administration takes over the



celebrates 60th Anniversary

Papago facility, which has 125 beds and barrack-style buildings, until 1951.

1946

The temporary hospital at Papago becomes the first VA facility to open a ward for female Veterans.

1947

After Sen. Carl T. Hayden arranges a meeting with President Harry Truman, bringing along a petition signed by 100,000 voters requesting to build a VA hospital in Phoenix, Truman signs an agreement authorizing the transfer of 27 acres from the Phoenix Indian School Reservation to the VA for construction of the new medical center.

1951

About 2,500 people attend dedication ceremony of the new VA

hospital, at Seventh Street and Indian School Road. About 7,000 people take advantage of public invitation to inspect the new facility after the dedication ceremony.

1976

A shortage of beds and a steadily increasing Veteran population leads to the construction of a 328-bed addition.

1978

As the population of retired Veterans in the area increases, the hospital sees a heightened demand for hospice care, which it meets by constructing a 120-bed nursing home addition.

1987

Facility is renamed Carl T. Hayden Veterans Medical Center for Sen. Hayden.

1999

An ambulatory-care clinic is added.

2008

The facility is renamed the “Phoenix VA Health Care System,” incorporating the main hospital, the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center and community clinics under the new name.

2011

Today’s roughly 700,000-square-foot facility offers internal medicine, mental-health and rehabilitation services, among many others, to Veterans from throughout Greater Phoenix. It also serves as a teaching hospital and research institution. ■



Our Patients Tell Us

Dr. Clafin,

On August 8, 2011, a patient waiting in the Prosthetics Department told me of his recent hospital stay. Mr. Larry Bryan's stay included ICU, 4C and 2C. As he sat in his electric scooter, Mr. Bryan expressed appreciation of the level of care he had received on all units.

Prompted by the lift sling I was holding, he then described his experience with our ceiling lifts and wanted to convey his message to our nurses in the attached letter. Mr. Bryan wanted the nurses to know what it was like for him and not to be afraid of using the lifts. This kind Veteran explained that his handwriting wasn't as good as it once was, so we agreed upon dictation and the signed letter was drafted. Signed Susan Wyatt, RN

To the Nurses: The lift that lifts the whole body is the most comfortable. The doctors took me off my water pill so I was up to 350 pounds. Can you imagine those nurses trying to handle me at that weight? With that lift, they didn't have to.

The new ceiling lifts made a difference in my stay because they were easier for them to move me and easier on me. They were comfortable and I felt secure. I was a mechanic for 40 years so I've built a lot of things like this in my own shop.

Many thanks, to the nurses, for using the lifts on me.
Larry Bryan

Finding Your Starting Point for Physical Activity

from the American Institute for Cancer Research



You may have heard about that new Pilates class at the community center, or noticed your neighbor out jogging in the mornings. But are these activities you should try? First, here are a few pointers on finding your fitness level so you can get at least 30 minutes daily for cancer prevention.

The questions below can help you to start with a look at how well you can do everyday tasks. Knowing how easy everyday movements are for you give you a starting point for an individualized physical activity program that will meet your specific goals. Are two 15-minute walks daily a place for you to start – or do you need something more challenging, like jogging for 30 minutes per day? You can return to these questions every few months to gauge the effectiveness of your program.

Score your answers using the following scale:

Rarely – 1 point; **Sometimes** – 2 points; **Usually** – 3 points; **Always** – 4 points.

Mobility and Daily Activities Score

1. I find it easy to walk up or down two or more flights of stairs. ____
2. I have no trouble taking out the trash. ____

3. I easily do chores such as vacuuming and dusting. ____

4. I can do other sorts of housework on my own without difficulty. ____

5. I don't need help with daily activities. ____

6. I have little trouble reaching into high cupboards or reaching down to pick up something from the floor. ____

Mood, Energy Level and Mental Health

1. I feel younger than my age. ____

2. I feel independent. ____

3. I feel energetic. ____

4. I live an active life. ____

5. I feel strong. ____

6. My arms and legs work as well as they used to. ____

7. I am as active as other people my age. ____

Total ____

Evaluate Your Score

Your general level will fall into the following categories:

10–19 points: Indicates a low fitness level, with significant room for improvement in mobility, ability to complete daily activities, mood and mental health.

20–26 points: Indicates a low to moderate fitness level, with room for improvement in most areas.

27–33 points: Indicates a moderate fitness level, with room for improvement in some areas.

34 and above: Indicates a high level of fitness.

Quiz adapted from *Growing Stronger: Strength Training for Older Adults* published by the Centers for Disease Control and Tufts University, 2002.

If you are currently active and scored 35 or above: Keep up the good work. You could challenge yourself by adding types of activity, like strength training, that you may not have concentrated on. Try setting aside 20 minutes every other day to lift free weights (dumbbells), resting your muscles on the days in between when you don't lift weights. Or try expanding your muscle stretches after a walk into a 20-minute session of stretching, with the help of a videotape, book or health magazine. To gauge the intensity level of your program, ask yourself if you can complete your routine with ease. If it's too easy, it is probably time to increase the intensity by lifting slightly heavier weights or speeding up the pace of your walking or other aerobic exercise.

If you are currently inactive and scored below 35: Start to work more physical activity into your life. Begin slowly – add 5 to 10 minutes of physical activity to your current routine each day. Work toward the current recommendations of 30 to 60 minutes a day. Stick with moderate exercise, such as walking briskly for 10 minutes three times a day, so you meet AICR's 30-minutes-a-day recommendation for cancer prevention.

If you are an older adult or recovering from a health condition: Before adding any physical activity, ask your health-advisor. ■

We Are All Brothers

(Presented in song at the 60th Anniversary Event)

A Song by the Phoenix VA Community Living Center Residents

Spoken:

This is a song that tells a story
Of our feelings about the VA.

We started out at the VA,
Some of us very sick,
We came here hoping for the best

We had many sufferings
All that differed
But there is one thing
That unites as one

Chorus:

We are all brothers
We've made many friends
Some of us didn't expect it when we got here.

The VA is like a phoenix
Rising from the ashes
Leading us from despair (2x last time)

This is a continuation
Of a never-ending story
It keeps going and changing
We will not quit
Here over the years,
There have been
Many improvements
And very few backwards steps.

Chorus

The VA gives you room to improve.
We are willing to go on to whatever lies ahead
In this life and beyond.
Best wishes to the ones who leave.

Chorus

Veteran on the Road to London

By: Eva Gergely

Navy Veteran Christopher Clemens has set the bar high in hopes of making it to the 2012 Paralympics Games in London as a T36.

Clemens a former NCAA high jumper and hurdler competed competitively throughout college ranking 17th in the nation. Clemens suffered a TBI in Afghanistan and thought he would never be able to run or do any competitive sports again.

But in May, Clemens attended a Paralympics Military Sports Program for wounded Veterans at Luke Air Force Base sponsored through the US Paralympics. It was there he realized that he could get back out on the track and run again through the Paralympics program. While at the camp, Cathy Sellers, the Director of US Paralympics High Performance and Elite Athletes program, saw a raw talent in Clemens. As a result he began to train, and focused on sprinting to complete the 100m run in his first competitive meet, called The Desert Challenge Games in Mesa, Arizona.

The Paralympics Games, which is overseen by the International Paralympics

Committee (IPC), is an internationally recognized event. It hosts a variety of sports where athletes with physical disabilities such as mobility disabilities, amputations, blindness, TBI, and cerebral palsy, are able to compete.

The games are held in both the summer and winter following Olympic Games. Due to the wide variety of disabilities that Paralympics athletes have, to be classified according to the disability and how it affects them when they perform, in an effort to make it an equal playing field for all.

Clemens is T36 for track and F36 for field events in the cerebral palsy and TBI category.

Since May, Clemens has been training daily with a trainer focusing on strength, and block training. This has not been easy for him.

“One of the biggest challenges is my weight, trying to shed the pounds quickly and find enough hours in the day to train.”

Clemens has had the opportunity to participate in many meets the past few months to continue improving his times and strength competing both nationally



and internationally. Recently at a meet in Canada Clemens broke a personal record of 14.39 seconds for 100m and set a new American record for long jump as a F36.

When asked how this success has made him feel, Clemens said “It makes me humble, but I still take my success in strides.”

Next month Clemens will be sent to the Czech Republic to represent the USA competing in the Czech Open. ■

October is Healthy Lung Month

By Angela Kuramoto, RT, MHA, CCRC

October is healthy lung month. I had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Joseph Yusin, an allergy specialist, to go over some helpful hints on keeping healthy lungs all year round.

Dr. Yusin says that as October arrives there is an inversion layer that accumulates and causes irritants that cause people with asthma to have increased symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, tightness in the chest and the feeling of not being able to take a full breath. There are triggers in the environment that include the pollution factor. Many of these symptoms are caused by allergies to different things in the environment. In the fall, the weeds pollinate, so there is an increase in symptoms for those people who have allergies

to weeds. To find the current pollen count, you can visit pollen.com; for up to date information. In the spring, the trees are blooming, so people with those allergies typically have more trouble then. Summer is when the grass is growing and many individuals with an allergy to grass will find summer most symptomatic.

Some triggers are located indoors; these include irritants such as dust mites, mold and pets. When suffering with these symptoms most people will take allergy medication and use other remedies to alleviate their symptoms. Some triggers include environmental allergens, which include irritants such as smoke and pollution. Dr. Yusin recommends when the pollution levels are high, people should make an effort to stay in the house and

shut the windows and use the air conditioner.

The majority of Veterans that Dr. Yusin treats have already been diagnosed with asthma. Dr. Yusin encourages all individuals who have asthma to take their medications on schedule and follow up with their primary care providers as required. This is even when you are feeling great. Awareness is the best way to keep healthy throughout the year. Become aware of the triggers that affect you most and take steps to reduce or prevent your exposure. Dr. Yusin also encourages a healthy life style which includes eating right and making time for activities. Even with asthma it is recommended to get physical activity as prescribed by your physician.

Now that the weather is starting to cool down, find out what activities are right for you and are approved by checking with your physician. Let's get ACTIVE and make this fall the best one yet! ■

Medical Staff Services Week is Early November

In 1992, President George Bush issued a proclamation designating the first week of November as “National Medical Staff Services Awareness Week,” to acknowledge Medical Staff Services Professionals (MSPs) for playing “an important role in our nation’s health care system.”

What role do these professionals play? They are the people behind the scenes who ensure that the credentials of all practitioners caring for patients are correct and have been verified. MSPs are experts in provider credentialing and privileging, medical staff organization, accreditation and regulatory compliance, and provider relations in the diverse health care industry. They credential and monitor ongoing competence of the physicians and other practitioners who provide patient care services in hospitals, managed care organizations, and other health care settings.

The American Medical Association-Organized Medical Staff Section also recognizes the medical services

profession in a resolution that formally acknowledges “the importance and value of medical services professionals to the healthcare organization and its physician members, and recognizes their contribution and dedication in preserving quality patient care.”

Here at the Phoenix VA Health Care System, the Medical Staff Office consists of two Licensed Independent Practitioner Credentialers, one Dependent Credentialer and a Medical Staff Supervisor. Together, they are responsible for the initial credentialing and privileging, renewal of Clinical Privileges and Scopes of Practice and changes in Privileges and Scopes of Practice for more than 1600 physicians and allied health practitioners. In addition, the Medical Staff Office ensures that licenses and certifications are current, free of adverse actions and in good standing.

The Medical Staff Office interacts with various state and federal agencies, licensing boards and accrediting bodies in order to assure that qualifications

and criteria for credentialing are met. The staff is also responsible for enforcing medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations that govern the activities of the medical staff.

MSPs gather and verify practitioner information that is presented to the Professional Standards Board (PSB) for review of credentials, education and qualifications. After approval from the PSB, the practitioners are then presented to the Clinical Executive Board (CEB), which is the final approval board. Each time there is a renewal or change of appointment and modification of privileges, the practitioners are presented to both boards again.

Medical Staff Services Professionals are a vital part of the VA’s health care team. They are dedicated to making certain that all Veterans receive care from practitioners who are properly educated, licensed, and trained in their specialties. ■

More Than a Number Campaign to Help VA Prevent Identity Theft

Chances are, every one of us knows someone who has been the victim of identity theft – a friend, a neighbor, a family member, perhaps even you. This faceless crime affects as many as 10 million people a year, and victims of identity theft spend significant time and money trying to repair the damages that result.

Identity theft is preventable, however. That’s why OIS’s Office of Identity Safety is launching an aggressive and proactive new identity theft prevention campaign this September. The More Than a Number Campaign aims to raise awareness about the reality that every piece of personally identifiable

information (PII) is more than just a number — it’s the key to a person’s identity, livelihood, and well-being.

“We’re employees at VA because we’re here to care for Veterans,” said VA Assistant Secretary, Office of Information and Technology, Roger Baker in a recent on-camera interview. “This is part of a sacred trust. And as we care for them, we have to care for the information *about* them. Every VA employee has to do his/her job to protect their identities.”

Remember, it takes just one extra moment to prevent identity theft. Take the time to double-check a mailing address, encrypt an email, and lock your computer when you are not at

your desk.

This fall, visit the campaign’s Web page on the Information Security Portal at bit.ly/morethananumber and learn more about how you can help prevent identity theft. You can watch informative videos, including a special message from Assistant Secretary Baker. You also can download fact sheets, posters, and other identity theft prevention tools to share with end users in your facility.

Remember, there’s a Veteran behind every number, so take advantage of these resources and honor our sacred trust to our Veterans and their families by preventing identity theft. ■



MORE
THAN A NUMBER
DEFEND VETERANS' IDENTITIES



VA Celebrates our Physician Assistants During National PA Week

By Donna Seton, MS, PA-C

Physician Assistants are health care professionals licensed, or in the case of those employed by the federal government they are credentialed, to practice medicine with physician supervision. We recognize them the first week in October for their efforts.

As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions. Within the physician-PA relationship, physician assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision making, and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. A PA's practice may also include education, research, and administrative services.

PAs are trained in intensive education programs accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA).

PAs must undergo rigorous training that involves both clinical and classroom components. The average length of a PA program is 27 months, and PA students complete, on average, more than 2,000 hours of supervised clinical practice prior to graduation. There are more opportunities to join this profession than ever before,

with 150 accredited PA educational programs located at academic medical centers, colleges and universities, and most of these programs offer a master's degree.

Because of the close working relationship the PAs have with physicians, PAs are educated in the medical model designed to complement physician training. Upon graduation, physician assistants take a national certification examination developed by the National Commission on Certification of PAs in conjunction with the National Board of Medical Examiners. To maintain their national certification, PAs must log 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years and sit for a recertification every six years. Graduation from an accredited physician assistant program and passage of the national certifying exam are required for state licensure.

Some important points regarding PAs:

- There are more than 74,000 PAs providing care across America. PAs are medical professionals licensed to examine, test and treat patients with the supervision of a doctor as part of the health care team.
- Resident hours may be reduced again this year. PAs are a critical element to maintaining the continuity

of patient care during and after this transition.

- PAs provide high-quality patient care and maintain continuity of care, which are essential components of the new Primary Care Medical Home model of care.
 - PAs practice in general practice settings as well as in specialty settings, such as emergency medicine and oncology. The federal government is the largest employer of PAs.
 - Accredited PA programs in universities and academic health centers produce nearly 6,000 graduates a year. They are entering the medical work force faster than physicians, and already play a role in offsetting the physician shortage.
 - In Iraq, a typical Army PA serves as the primary health care provider for about 400 to 750 soldiers. When a wounded soldier returns home, military PAs are on the front lines as key members of the transitional care team, providing critical assessments and determining treatment plans.
- At The Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center there are 20 Physician Assistants practicing in a widespread and diverse selection of specialties ranging from mental health to research to urology. ■

VA Veterans Day Parade



Set for Friday, Nov. 11, 2011

11-11-11 this only happens once every 100 years!

**Designated by National Committee
as Model Event for Celebrating Veterans Day**

Kicking off at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center grounds at Seventh Street and Indian School Road in Phoenix, the VA Veterans Day Parade will start at 11 a.m. on Nov. 11 and head north on Seventh Street from Montecito to Camelback Road, west on Camelback Road to Central Avenue, and then north again on Central Avenue to Montebello, ending at the North Phoenix Baptist Church.

The Phoenix VA Health Care System's annual VA Veterans Day Parade honors our nation's Veterans and service members, who have served in combat, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief efforts and peacetime. The parade is supported by the City of Phoenix and General Dynamics C4Systems, this year's presenting sponsor.

The national committee commissioned by President Barack Obama who oversees the planning and coordination of the Veterans Day observance, has selected the Phoenix VA Health Care System's VA Veterans Day Parade as a Regional Site to honor America's Veterans.

With a theme of "Veterans, Our Resilient Heroes," the parade boasts 100 entries, including several large helium balloons like the Bald Eagle and Uncle Sam. Veteran Grand Marshals are those who have fought in all the various conflicts over our history including World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Peacetime (Cold War) and Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. Veterans' organizations, floats, bands, military vehicles, color guards, a military flyover

and the 108th Army National Guard Band are also part of this family friendly activity.

The VA Veterans Day Parade is an educational forum to highlight the significance of the more than 300,000 Veterans in Maricopa County who defended our freedoms. An essay contest for middle and high-school students is part of the educational component of this large-scale event.

Leading up to the parade are several additional educational events. These include:

- **VA Veterans Day Parade Grand Marshals Display Opening** set for Oct. 6 at 10 a.m. in the ACC Lobby near the coffee cart. This display highlights the service of this year's Parade Marshals.
- **VA Veterans Day Parade Essay Breakfast** set for Oct. 27 at 8 a.m. in the ACC lower level conference rooms. Here the students who wrote the winning essays will assemble to read their essays to patients and staff.
- **VA Veterans Day Parade Float Decorating**, the last few Saturdays in October near building 21 on the West Side Parking Lot. Here we will gather together to create our float that will highlight this year's theme, Veterans Our Resilient Heroes.
- **VA Veterans Day Parade Awards Banquet** set for Dec. 2 which will be held at the East Valley Institute of Technology Culinary School. This event recognizes the top three entries in each category of the parade and is by invitation only.

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

By Victor L. Nickson, PSA Turquoise Clinic

August

Joseph Garcia, of the Dental Clinic, is the August 2011 Employee of the Month.



Joseph Garcia

Garcia has been described as an unsung hero in the mold of a John Wayne for the Dental Clinic rather than for Westerns.

Joseph Garcia displays trust in his work ethics.

He completes all tasks professionally, efficiently, effectively, and either on or ahead time. He is a self-starter, not waiting to be told what comes next,

anticipating the event and taking action as necessary. In addition, he is charged with providing guidance to the Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health's students, enhancing their work experience with his treasure-trove of dental knowledge.

Chair-side assisting is Joseph Garcia's primary responsibility, but he often volunteers to work in the Dental Lab, expanding his knowledge base by learning new skills. Furthermore, Veterans continually express their thanks to him for his compassion towards them, especially the oral cancer patients for his taking the extra time to detail their unique requirements.

Joseph Garcia is patient-centered. His patients trust and respect him implicitly because they know he is dedicated to their best interests and committed to their well-being. Comments from Veterans and coworkers alike range from "he's always there for us," to "we can give him a challenging lab case to work on and he accepts it with a smile."

Finally, he keeps striving to be better, pursuing excellence in all of its forms, including participating in the VA's School at Work program, and Gateway Community College where he is studying to improve his math skills. Congratulations Joseph Garcia. ■

September

Christine Crawford, Lead Radiologic Technologist, is September Employee of the Month.



Christine Crawford

She can be trusted, goes above and beyond the call of her daily duties, answering all Veterans questions, training students rotating through the radiology department,

insuring the correct transport for patients is provided. Additionally, she will often transport the Veterans herself to the next department.

Christine Crawford is respected within the department as a radiological subject matter expert. In addition she has earned the respect of Veterans, their friends and family members by providing all the information necessary for the care of the Veteran; updating their current status where needed.

She is committed to excellence in

training the new students, managing the other technologists, and with the recent addition of mammography services at Radiology, Christine Crawford has taken on this added work in stride.

She is a negotiator and a mediator. Christine Crawford can be counted on to solve disagreements among coworkers when the lines of communication have been severed, combining logic and compassion to both sides so that each can win.

Congratulations Christine Crawford ■

Education Update: Medical Media Assists with Training Room Setups and Multi-Media

With three primary areas of responsibility – digital imaging, design services, and equipment – the Medical Media team works with customers to find creative ways to meet the multi-media needs of the facility.

The design services function is responsible for art, graphics, and illustration projects. “Customers come to us with an idea and we help them develop that message and identify their target audience,” said Toini Esmay, Medical Media’s visual information specialist.

“We do everything we can to work with the customer to determine the best way to communicate that message, but the best thing customers can do to help themselves in this process is to ensure their message is already approved by their leadership. Once we have a finalized message and have discussed the requirements with the customer, we start to design the tools to communicate that message.”

The visual information tools include alignment with national and local public affairs policies and include brochures, posters and poster sessions, booklets, and PowerPoint presentations.

Medical Media’s digital imaging role refers primarily to the photographic work – patient photography, surgical photography, official portraits, and public affairs photography. It also includes “copy stand” image duplication, meeting and event documentation, and VHS and DVD duplication and transfer.

“We can support a variety of photographic projects,” said Bruce Bowens, medical photographer. “We’re continually looking for ways to expand our capabilities so we can work smarter using current technology.”

Bowens, who holds certification as a registered biological photographer, explained that just a few years ago Medical Media here was doing all photographic work on film. Digital cameras were on the market, but good cameras and the software needed to support them were prohibitively expensive. As the resolution of digital photography surpassed the

quality of film and the price of digital cameras came down, it was a clear choice to make the switch to digital.

“In much the same way we migrated from film to digital, we continually look for ways to improve all of our products. We still have to consider cost and quality, but this is what we specialize in and we want to ensure our customers get the best of our capabilities,” Bowens said.

Medical Media also supports PVAHCS’s audiovisual equipment needs. “We have equipment available for staff members to reserve and sign out,” said Sundra Millsaps, visual information assistant. The equipment available includes laptops and LCD projectors, telephone conferencing equipment, TVs, VCRs, and DVD players. “We also support the AV equipment in conference rooms around the facility, set up AV equipment for events in the ACC “quad” conference room, and even have a video teleconference room available for staff use in Medical Media,” she said.

“In this high-tech age, people are tempted to think having design programs and a digital camera makes them a designer and a photographer,” said Paul Coupaud, chief of Medical Media. “Those are just tools though. Just because a person has a sharp blade doesn’t mean he or she is a surgeon – it takes training and skill to effectively use the tools of our trade. We look at every work request as a challenge to find an impactful way to use our education and experience to make high-quality products that convey the best possible image of this facility to our customers.”

Regardless of project type, the Medical Media staff relies on specialized knowledge, skills and abilities they’ve developed throughout the years to assist their consumers.

The Medical Media Department is located in the basement of the main hospital, adjacent to elevators four and five. The department is open from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and can be reached at (602) 222-6413. ■



Short of Office Supplies? CLC I Has a Great Fix for You!

By Erma Loft

I want to let you in on something that I did here at the first floor of the Community Living Center. We were experiencing a shortage of office supplies. Since I am in charge of ordering these supplies I remembered an effort I established when I worked for the Civil Engineering Squadron at an Air Force Base.

So I sent an email to some of my coworkers and talked to others about going through their Junk Drawers or What Not Drawers at home and bringing in any extra pens, pencils or other office supplies that they did not need there.

Within a couple of days our drawers were overflowing thanks to the generosity and good will of our staff. I was able to organize drawer full of supplies at my desk.

We at CLC-1 now have plenty of supplies and I am very grateful that we have employees that care enough to take the time to provide us with their support.

Meet VA's Special Emphasis Program Managers

By Jennifer Russoniello, EEO Program Manager

The Phoenix VA Health Care System has several new Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Managers who serve on the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Advisory Committee.

These individuals join the committee as a collateral duty in efforts to assist management in creating and maintaining a work environment based on principles of EEO, trust, dignity, respect, and removal of barriers, to enable employees to achieve their highest potential, thereby providing excellence in service to our nation's Veterans.

Please welcome Native American Program Manager (NAPM), Trina Carre, who is charged with eliminating discriminatory practices and assuring that Native Americans are appropriately represented throughout the VA. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Program Manager (GLBTPM), Rachel James is excited to deliver educational support and ensure cultural competency and respect for all employees. People with Disabilities Program Manager (PWDPM), Wayne Carroll has the specific purpose of eliminating discriminatory practices towards individuals with disabilities, as well as educate employees on reasonable accommodations available, and other opportunities for qualified applicants to become our future employees. Black Employment Program Manager, Nadine Beauvais, embraces the challenge of increasing the over-all representation of African-Americans especially in higher-graded positions and in the Senior Executive Series (SES). Asian/American Pacific Islander Program Manager (AAPIPM) is devoted to reach beyond barriers and make efforts to strengthen the VA capacity to provide high quality education and increase opportunities for AAPI employees and future employees. Currently the SEP Committee does not have a Program Manager for AAPI, and if you are interested in this opportunity please contact the EEO Program Manager.

Of course, we acknowledge our Hispanic Employment Program Manager, Toni Cole, who has continued the mission of increasing opportunities and benefits for Hispanic employees. As well, our Federal Woman's Program Man-

ager, Dianne Bruns, continues to increase representation of women especially in SES levels. Our Minority Veteran Program Coordinator (MVPC), Toni Malgrat, takes on the responsibility of assisting the VA by acting as a facilitator, change agent, strategic thinker, honest broker, and cheerleader to the men and women of the VA in executing its mission, which is to ensure all Veterans receive equal service regardless of race, origin, religion, or gender.

We invite and encourage all of you to join as committee members and help assist each program with reaching these goals. If interested, contact either the SEPM or EEO Program Manager, Jennifer Russoniello, at extension 6573. Visit the EEO website for additional information on current/past events, policies, career-building opportunities, and more. <http://vawww.phoenix.med.va.gov/Templates/Inner.aspx?pid=110555> ■



Wayne Carroll, 7022
People with Disabilities



Toni Cole, 2316
Hispanic Employment



Rachel James, 3054
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender



Dianne Bruns, 6968
Federal Woman's



Trina Carre, 3019
Native American, Employment



Toni Malgrat, 6325
Minority Veteran
Program Coordinator



Nadine Beauvais, 5334
Black Employment

Asian/American, Pacific Islander
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