



The Phoenix VA

Heartbeat



New VA Southwest Clinic

Phoenix VA Health Care System opens two new outpatient clinics

By Cindy Dorfner
Chief, Medical Media, PVAHCS

The Phoenix VA Health Care System continued its progress to increase access recently with the opening of two new Community Based Outpatient Clinics – one in the Southwest Valley and one in the heart of Phoenix.

Veterans in the southern portion of the West Valley don't have as far to drive for care since the Southwest CBOC opened Jan. 23. With a growing staff of currently around 22 employees dedicated to serving Veterans through primary care, mental health, social work, nutrition, and laboratory services, as well as clinical pharmacy consultation, Nurse Manager Phillip Hinkel said things at the new CBOC are going well.

"This clinic's opening is a huge

step in bringing VA health care to the Veteran," Hinkel said. "Our presence here, in this shared medical complex, signifies that we're a core part of the West Valley health care community."

Additionally, Hinkel said the aesthetically pleasing environment provides a calm experience to the Veterans, who seem happier overall.

The Midtown VA Clinic opened Jan. 31 with nearly 100 employees, and offers the same services as the Southwest CBOC. Additionally, the entire Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Clinic is now located at the Midtown location.

"At Midtown, we have a beautiful new clinic and a full staff providing services to our Veterans in the areas of primary care, primary care mental health integration, and

(See *New CBOCs*, Page 11)

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Working together to build a better Phoenix VA

RimaAnn Nelson
Medical Center Director



Welcome to the first issue of the “Heartbeat” newsletter. This newsletter is for you and about you, and the hard work that you put into making a difference to the 90,000 Veterans who receive their care here at the Phoenix VA Health Care System.

We’ve started the year much like we ended the last one, with the goal of continuing the progress of improving access to care. The ICARE values we work by: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence help keep the focus on how we should serve and care for our Veterans through the work we do every day.

There is still much work to be done. As we enroll more and more Veterans into our health care system, we continue to work on keeping the balance between our capacity to provide these services with the demand for them. I thank you all – Veterans and employees alike – not only for bringing your ideas forward on how we can keep improving, but also for identifying areas that need our immediate attention in order to improve.

It takes **Integrity** to stand up and be honest when you see something that doesn’t seem right, but it’s important that you do so.

I’ve always said: We can’t fix what we don’t know.

We will continue to prioritize and support a culture of continuous improvement, utilizing system redesign concepts and methods to assess where we are and what we can do better. We’ve made the **Commitment** to make sure we have the right tools in place to give the Veterans we serve the care they have earned. We want Veterans to have the best experience possible when they come to the Phoenix VA, and this can be achieved when we all – each and every one of us – make and live the commitment to serve those who have served our country.

Our VA is continuing to expand our capacity to serve through the opening of our two new Community Based Outpatient Clinics. They are located in the Southwest Valley and in Midtown, right here in the heart of Phoenix. As we enroll more Veterans into the Phoenix VA Health Care System, **Advocacy** and advocating on behalf of our Veterans becomes critical as we coordinate their care not only throughout our health care system, but also with the health care systems we are engaged with through the Choice program.

From last year to this year, we enrolled more than 4,000 new Veterans into the Phoenix VA Health Care System. We had more than 1 million outpatient clinic visits and served more Veterans

using telehealth modalities compared to the previous year. Leveraging this technology allowed us to improve access to care especially in the rural areas. To ensure access is available to our Veterans when they want it, we are continuously reviewing the processes that manage the 1,400 consults a day that are generated which equates to over 350,000 consults per year.

As you walk through our health care system, whether in the main hospital or in the clinics, I urge you to keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities to show Respect to our Veterans. We can show respect for their time and experience while at the VA by providing them directions to clinics, answering questions, or taking the time to listen to their concerns. You will hear me say, if you are late for a meeting because you stopped to help a Veteran, then you can be late every time.

As we continue this journey together, I want to thank you all for your dedication and commitment to serving our Veterans with **Excellence**. I know there are many places to work and the staff here have chosen the Phoenix VA. We would not be able to accomplish all the things we do if we have not set the bar as high as we have, but we all know that Veterans deserve no less!



The Heartbeat is a quarterly publication for Veterans, VA staff, volunteers, Congressional members, Veterans Service Organizations and the Phoenix community. The Heartbeat is supported by:

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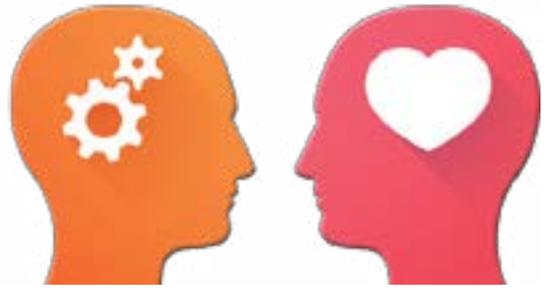


VA

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Emotional intelligence provides insight to behaviors of self, others

By Lisa Burgess, Ph.D.
Health Behavior Coordinator, PVAHCS



Emotional intelligence is what helps us to understand and respond well to both ourselves and others in nearly every social interaction. Toxic individuals are a fact of life in organizations. Some individuals are toxic most of the time; most individuals are toxic some of the time.

In the end, knowing how to deal with people when they are being rigid, aggressive, self-centered or performing poorly helps everyone from patients to other members of the team. Having positive emotional intelligence helps us develop positive relationships and limit the impact of toxic relationships.

We all have a natural ability to focus on emotions in ourselves and those around us, but we can all also benefit from reflecting on difficult feelings and interactions and learning from them.

- Label your emotional reactions and those of others
- Think about the events that led up to that reaction and the thoughts that you had about the situation. What thoughts might the others in the situation have had?
- There are always different perspectives on an event. What are alternative ways of interpreting this event?
- Find ways of letting go of stress – distract yourself, talk to someone, or lay out steps to deal with the problem.
- Observe the effects of the actions you take.

Personal Competence

Self-Awareness

- Accurately label your own emotions and their impact
- Knowing your own strengths and weaknesses

Self-Management

- Ability to cope with emotion
- Ability to express emotion effectively (having a good poker face when necessary)
- Adaptability: flexibility in adapting to changing situations and obstacles

Social Competence

Social Awareness

- Empathy and insight
- Ability to accurately label emotions others are having
- Appreciation of others' strengths/weaknesses

Relationship Management

- Ability to show respect for others
- Ability to help others cope with negative feelings

Contact us

Phoenix VA Health Care System.....602-277-5551
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/PhxVAhealthcare
 Twitter: PhxVAhealthcare
 Web: www.phoenix.va.gov
 Veterans Crisis Line / Suicide Hotline.....1-800-273-8255, press 1
 National Center for Homeless Veterans.....877-424-3838
 Veterans Benefits Administration.....1-800-827-1000
 MyVA311.....1-844-698-2311
 (Resource for Veterans and families who don't know what VA number to call)

At Phoenix VA

Appointments/VA Helpline.....602-222-6550
 Audiology.....602-222-6412
 Beneficiary Travel.....602-277-5551, ext. 7650
 Billing/Collections.....602-277-5551, ext. 3072
 Community Mental Health.....602-277-5551, ext. 7887
 Compensation & Pension.....602-277-5551, ext. 5804
 Chronic Pain Clinic.....602-277-5551, ext. 2449

Dental Service.....602-277-5551, ext. 6424
 Enrollment & Eligibility.....602-222-6508
 Geriatrics/Extended Care (CLC) ..602-277-5551, ext. 7260/7634
 Human Resources.....602-277-5551, ext. 7594
 Medical Records.....602-277-5551, ext. 2619
 Mental Health..... 602-277-5551, ext.2752
 Military Sexual Trauma..... 602-234-7157
 MyHealthVet602-277-5551, ext. 3934
 Patient Advocate.....602-222-2774
 Pharmacy602-222-6598
 Public Affairs..... 602-200-6279
 Recreation Therapy602-277-5551, ext. 7250
 Tobacco Cessation..... 602-222-6414
 Transportation602-277-5551, ext. 7642
 Transportation Desk602-277-5551, ext. 6272
 Special (wheelchair, visually impaired) ..602-277-5551, ext. 7650
 DAV/Out of town602-277-5551, ext. 7451
 Veteran Justice Outreach602-277-5551, ext. 6965
 Women Veterans Health Program602-277-5551, ext. 6764

Phoenix VA HBPC team brings care right to Veterans

By Paul Coupaud, Ed.D.

Public Affairs Officer, PVAHCS

Home Based Primary Care offers health care services provided to Veterans in their homes when complex health care needs reduce the effectiveness of clinic-based care. A VA physician supervises the interdisciplinary health care team who provides these services.

The Phoenix VA Health Care System's Home-Based Primary Care team is often among the primary reasons many Veterans are able to live out their final years comfortably in their homes, surrounded by friends and loved ones. For others, the team helps support the transition into independent care facilities, assisted living, and other higher level of care settings that serve our community's aging and otherwise in-need populations.

"The later years in life can be fraught with anxiety and grief due to significant life changes and losses of loved ones, function, and/or independence, said Elicia Nademin, Ph.D., ABPP, HBPC Psychologist. She added, "We're here to walk this journey with other patients."

The HBPC team is an interdisciplinary team of providers who exist in VAs (and community agencies) throughout the world. Nademin said HBPC tends to function behind the scenes, which is why so few know they exist, "but we most certainly do, and we're privileged to serve our nation's Veterans in a wonderfully unique way." She explained that the team steps in to help enhance quality of life and to help patients not only extend their lives, but hopefully enjoy an easier life with the consistent support of multiple skilled providers in the home.

The Veteran's initial admission into the program is based on a demonstrated need for



Veteran having blood pressure checked by HBPC team member

interdisciplinary care by a team who can optimally and safely manage care in the home. To benefit from home care does not mean a Veteran is house-bound, but rather that a Veteran has a medical condition or injury that restricts his or her ability to leave the home without use of an assistive device (cane, wheelchair, walker, etc.); may require use of special transportation; may require the assistance of another person; or for whom leaving the home is medically ill-advised due to safety, medical, or fall risks.

The multidisciplinary care team who serves HBPC patients includes a physician, primary care provider, nurse, pharmacist, rehabilitation professional, registered dietician, social worker, and psychologist. In addition to this team of experts, HBPC also offers the advantage of electronic access to countless other multidisciplinary specialists with whom HBPC team members can collaborate care in the outpatient setting, including psychiatrists, oncologists, pulmonologists, cardiologists, recreational therapists, low vision experts, audiologists, and

administrative supports.

Nademin offered, "Not only has HBPC been invaluable in serving the medical needs of house-bound Veterans, but through the rapport and trust we build with Veterans, we have also helped many accept psychosocial supports they may otherwise not have considered. These have included mental health supports and educational groups and classes, exercise groups, senior and adult day healthcare centers, grief support groups, and other incredible resources that have significantly enhanced their quality of life that they may otherwise not have pursued."

Nademin added that Veterans are regularly surveyed regarding their satisfaction with home care services and consistently rate the program and staff exceptionally high, highlighting the excellence of care that the entire team provides.

Veterans interested in transferring their primary care services to this service should consult their primary care provider to support a consult to GECS Outpatient HBPC RN Case Management.

Veterans: Need assistance with medical appointments? The Veteran Appointment Request app can help!

As part of VA's focus to ensure Veterans receive timely access to health care, the web-based Veteran Appointment Request (VAR) mobile app is now available at the Phoenix VA Health Care System.

If you are a Veteran currently receiving VA care at PVAHCS, VAR makes it possible for you to manage medical appointments while on-the-go. You can access VAR from any device with an internet connection, including smartphones, tablets or other mobile devices.

In addition to scheduling appointments, you can use VAR to track appointment details and the status of requests, send messages about requested appointments, receive notifications and cancel appointments. Through VAR, you can clearly designate preferred times and dates when you would



like to make primary care appointments with your VA care team.

The VA is continuing to expand VAR's functionality to include additional clinics across the country and will incorporate appointments with specialists in the future, including audiology, optometry and others.

"VAR allows you to manage your medical appointments with

flexibility and ease," said Dr. Deyne Bentt, Chief Health Informatics Officer at the Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center and Clinical Director of Mobile Health Deployment and Evaluation within the Veterans Health Administration's Office of Connected Care. "VA hopes the ability to submit a request at any time of day helps simplify scheduling for Veterans."

The app is now available from the VA App Store at <http://mobile.va.gov/app/veteran-appointment-request>, where you can also find more information about how to use the app. If you have questions, please contact the VAR Help Desk at (877) 420-5947 weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For more information about other VA mobile apps, visit <http://mobile.va.gov/appstore>

Training humans how to behave with service animals

By Paul Coupaud, Ed.D.
Public Affairs Office, PVAHCS

The general rule in regard to service dogs is: don't touch or distract. Interacting with a dog that is working could put the other half of his team — his owner — in harm's way. The animal's primary focus is completing tasks and assisting its handler and outside influences could interfere with that focus. It could also interfere with the dog's focus and inhibit his ability to pick up commands.

Here are some general guidelines in regard to service dogs:

- DO speak to the owner/handler rather than the dog. (The service dog and owner are a team. If you want to talk to them, always speak to the person first rather than automatically approaching the dog. Remember, the animal is working.)

- DON'T touch the dog without asking permission first. (Touching or petting a service dog is a distraction and may prevent the dog from tending to his human partner.)

- DON'T offer food to a service dog. (According to Canine Companions for Independence, "Food is the ultimate distraction to the working dog and can jeopardize the working assistance dog team.")

- DO treat the owner/handler with sensitivity and respect. (Assume the service dog team can handle things

themselves. If you sense they could use your help, ask first. And don't take it personally if your offer is rejected; there's usually a good reason.)

- DON'T assume a napping service dog is off duty. (All dogs nap.

When the dog's owner is sitting or standing for some length of time, it's perfectly natural for a service dog to catch a few winks.)

- DO give way to service dog teams. A disability may not always be visible, but the team is likely less mobile than you are.

Service dogs are protected under law. The Code of Federal Regulations is the primary federal law, but the Americans with Disabilities Act, Fair Housing Amendments Act, and the Air Carrier Access Act all build on the CFR foundation to further protect the rights of a service dog and handler.

Most people don't like to have other people stare, point, or hear personal comments from strangers. Health is a private issue. In addition, making comments to others about the handler and its dog could be hurtful for the handler to hear.



Veteran with service dog

'Berlin Bill' — to the Berlin Wall & back again

By Paul Coupaud, Ed.D.
Public Affairs Officer, PVAHCS

It took Army officials more than four hours to figure out exactly what to do with 18-year-old Private Bill Hatley after he arrived in Germany in 1962.

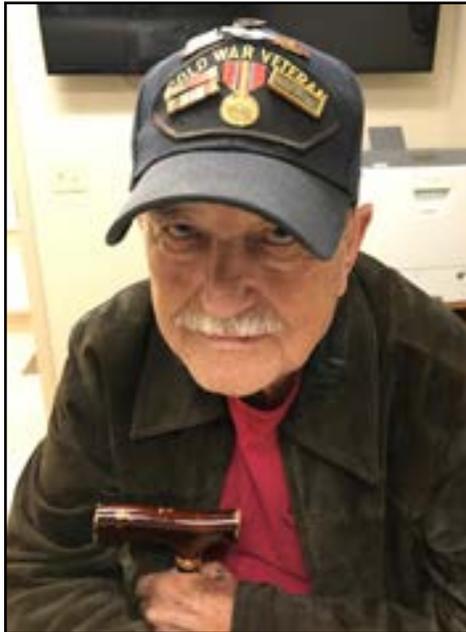
The Phoenix native said he joined the Army in the midst of the draft because he wanted to go to Europe, because he thought he'd have a better chance getting there and getting a good job if he enlisted before being drafted.

"When I went into the Army, I put down that I wanted to go to Europe," said Hatley. "And the Army sent me to Europe, they just didn't seem to know what to do with me when I got there."

After all the other troops with whom he'd arrived to Bremerhaven dispersed in other directions, the Army finally figured things out – Hatley was on his way to West Berlin. Assigned to the Company C of the 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry, Hatley learned he'd become part of the Army's infamous Berlin Brigade, a unit considered at that time to be one of the most prestigious and unique in the history of the U.S. military.

With political tensions in Europe high, Hatley said being young and in a foreign country made him feel like he was in a whirlwind and he didn't know what to expect. He remembered being greeted by his commander when he arrived.

"We were told early that this assignment was different than any other," he said. "The commander asked me what my job was and I told him I was a cook. He said that was great, but because we were assigned to the Berlin Brigade, we



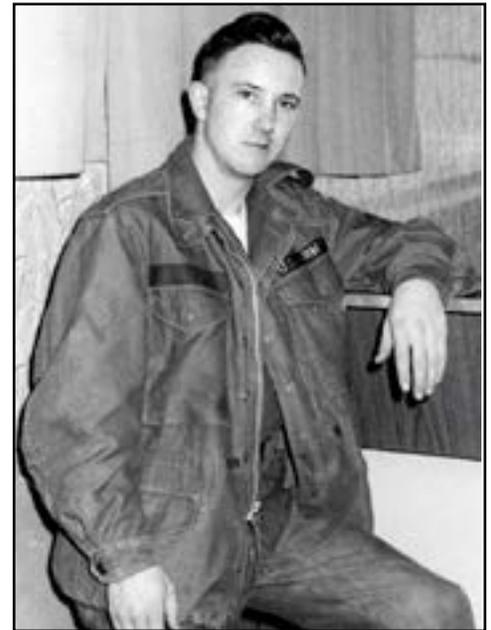
Bill Hatley

were all also infantry. We had our day job, but we trained differently because we were essentially on the front line there. We were the symbol of America's protection for the people of free Berlin."

Construction on the Berlin Wall began in 1961, and a lot of the barrier wasn't even technically a wall yet. Some stretches were constructed of concrete blocks, while other portions consisted of barbed wire or temporary wooden barriers. The nearly 100-mile-long barricade made an island of West Berlin, cutting it off from Soviet-controlled East Berlin and East Germany.



According to historical records, to intimidate those in West Berlin and to show Soviet strength, armored personnel carriers



Private Bill Hatley in Berlin

would regularly try to enter West Berlin and Soviet jet fighters would deliberately buzz the city and created sonic booms. Also during that time, many U.S. and Allied personnel experienced lengthy detentions.

"One of my first memories in Berlin was getting stared down from an East German guard," Hatley said. "I was out walking toward the Brandenburg Gate and I see this soldier step out with a rifle. He shook his head and said 'No more' in English, so I turned back around and got out of there – We learned quickly to be very careful of where we went. We never knew what the East Germans were going to do."

The East German soldiers had orders to shoot anyone who attempted to cross the barricade, and Hatley said the guards seemed to be everywhere. He said tanks were a common sight behind the Brandenburg Gate and Checkpoint

(See *Berlin Bill*, Page 9)

VHA stands up for Veterans at Maricopa County StandDown



Veteran volunteers provide free haircuts and beard trims.

The Maricopa County StandDown is Arizona's largest outreach event targeting Veterans experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. This year, organizers and volunteers served 2,109 Veterans, more than in 2016 when 1,850 requested assistance.

Over the course of the event, homeless and at-risk Veterans are offered shelter beds and other basic needs items such as meals, clothing, shoes, hygiene products, shower and restroom facilities among other care items needed to recuperate from the conditions of life on the streets.

In addition to the several departments from the Phoenix VA Health Care System, other major service providers include the Arizona Department of Transportation's

Motor Vehicle Division, City of Phoenix Municipal and other Court systems, the Social Security Administration, and the Department of Economic Security.

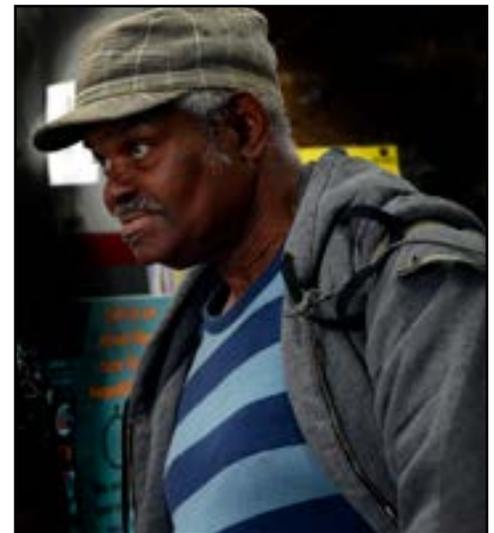
Some data from this year's StandDown includes:

- 1,204 Veterans received legal services
- ADOT completed 1,034 transactions
- Social Security served 309 Veterans
- 5,250 meals served during first day
- 1,200 Veterans received clothing resources
- Veterans Benefit Administration assisted 436 Veterans
- 622 glasses prescriptions given
- 476 dogs, 113 cats, one ferret and one guinea pig received care
- 1,640 hygiene kits were distributed
- 462 haircuts given
- 332 Veterans received acupuncture

*Photos by Kimberly Parish
Assistant Visual Information Specialist*



Volunteers preparing lunches for attendees.



A Veteran at the stand down.



Above: A Veteran shows his appreciation to a VHA volunteer. Left: Donna Dawley, VHA employee, checks a Veteran's eligibility.



Thank you letters from our Veterans:

The Phoenix VA Heath Care System receives many letters and calls each month. Below are a few sections of some of the most recent ones received.

• I am writing you about the doctor and MSA I had the personal interface with in Cardiology. **Doctor Duffey**, what a physician, no walk about but direct and caring with the patient. I can't say enough about him. Dr. Duffey is always there to solve and resolve the issue. The MSAs in Cardiology responded to my request and allowed me to obtain the proper medication that day from the Pharmacy.

Debra Hauseholden, Jeffrey Milliones, and Michael Friend listened to my issue and asked me to wait until the request could be resolved. Debra contacted the doctor and had the medication request forwarded to the pharmacy right away.

I also want you to know the EKG tech **Vivian Epps** was wonderful, I was in and out, no waiting, with a great attitude and work ethic.

• I am a Veteran with Parkinson's Disease, and am dependent on the VA hospital for my health care. I am very appreciative to the VA for the care I have received. I would like to call to your attention the outstanding therapy and guidance I have received from the Physical Therapy Department. I had a series of PT sessions with **John Bargus** last fall and I am now given the opportunity to receive his guidance in another series of sessions this summer.

John Bargus is an outstanding

therapist, and the VA is very fortunate to have his service, as am I.

• Earlier this year, I was in Mesa, Arizona spending time with a friend. I experienced a blood clot and visited the VA hospital in Phoenix as part of my treatment. I am 92 years old and a WWII combat veteran. I want to tell you what a wonderful experience I had at your hospital.

The service was first rate and prompt. I was delighted with the valet parking in that these old legs of mine aren't quite what they used to be. Everyone was kind and helpful and I did not have to wait very long to see the doctor.

• I felt compelled to write you on how much I appreciated the care I received during my recent stay; April 21 to 24. I came in with a kidney stone that gave me considerable pain. The staff in the emergency area to the staff in Ward 4D were caring and made every effort to make me comfortable.

The team of doctors: **Dr. Voss, Dean and McCarty** as well as the nurses: **Anne, Shaina and Allie** were kind and cheerful, as well as the others assigned in this area. This is not the first time I visited the VA.

• **Ben**, in the **Copper Clinic** where my dad goes for Palliative Care is absolutely wonderful. He always remembers names, appointments, and is never anything short of friendly and helpful. He is a very patient man.

I work for Banner and while I do love my employer, I wish we had a

couple of people like Ben around, too. Thank you, Ben, for being such a great person.

• I went to Cardiology for a procedure to receive a pacemaker. I wanted to say that **Marcia Else, Dean Laveen and Joseph Mansfield** did an outstanding job. Everyone asked if I needed anything, explained the process and asked if I had any questions. I wanted to provide positive feedback because of all the negative press.

• I am a 69 year old U.S. Combat Marine Veteran with PTSD and major depression from the extreme violence in the Vietnam War. The pain I was experiencing lately was severely excruciating to the point I could only walk or stand for a few minutes then would have to crouch down to relieve it. If I coughed or sneezed, lightning bolts would shoot down my legs and almost traumatize me. In six months, the lower back pain went exponentially from aching to unbearable. I had no idea what was wrong, but through the VA found that I had lumbar stenosis and it could be fixed with surgery. The surgery, which **Doctor Hawkins** performed, was a complete success from day one. There has been no pain from that day forward. Doctor Hawkins and his staff are very efficient and caring people. The VA has been very responsible from the very first day to the finish with either meeting appointments exactly on time or taking me in early. I am extremely thankful to Doctor Hawkins, his

(See Letters, page 9)

(Letters from Page 8)

staff and the VA for giving me my life back. I would also like to acknowledge **Doctor Choy** at the Gilbert VA Clinic for getting the ball rolling.

- I am writing in regard to a Veteran Affairs employee named **Linda Gilbert**, doctor of nurse practitioner. I am a patient of Doctor Gilbert and have been for approximately four years now. Doctor Gilbert actually takes the time to listen to what I have to say and is a good listener. When going over the results from my lab work, she explains in laymen's terms the results from the panels and what they mean and how it can affect my health. When Dr. Gilbert transferred from Carl T. Hayden VAMC to Thunderbird VAHCC, I immediately transferred to Thunderbird Clinic so Dr. Gilbert would continue being my primary care physician. She is the best physician that I've ever had and the first physician that I can recall that has been the most sincere, compassionate and respectful.

- Too often people are willing to criticize the staff at the VA, but are not willing to take the time to share the many times they experience caring and professional attention at the VA. I have been counseled and taught weight management by **Rich Kutt** in the Kinesiology Department. Rich has always espoused his knowledge and suggestions with a caring and professional attitude. He goes to great lengths in not just prescribing necessary exercises, but explaining the "whys" in simple to understand terms for me. I never felt rushed even when he was obviously loaded down by the number of vets needing help. His "bedside" manner is truly commendable.



Checkpoint Charlie between East and West Berlin- Photo by Bill Hatley

(Berlin Bill, from Page 6)

Charlie, and he said he could hear gunshots throughout the night.

"We were always on guard and tried to be ready for the unexpected," he said. "Even though nothing truly bad ever happened to me while I was there, I still have bad dreams about some of my experiences."

Hatley left the Army in 1965, and explained the America was going through a lot of changes at that time. President Kennedy had been assassinated, the conflict in Vietnam was escalating, and the Civil Rights movement was in full swing.

"Being in Germany at that time was a huge learning experience for me," he said, "but it was a very different time and a very different Army. I'm damn proud that I served my country, and I was fortunate to be in Germany at such a historic time. I learned a lot, the biggest lesson being that Freedom must be respected, as the meaning of it comes from your heart."

Among his medals, Hatley was also awarded the Army of Occupation Medal (Berlin) and the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. He also qualified as a sharpshooter on the M-14 during his time in the service. He wears his "Cold War Veteran" hat and ribbons with pride on a daily basis.

Back home, Hatley said he only came to the Phoenix VA a couple times between 1965 and 1971, but was generally healthy and sometimes had good health insurance through jobs he had.

"I've been coming here regularly now since 1990, and I've seen a lot of growth and change," he said. "The doctors and nurses here have always treated me as if I were a cash customer with \$100 million in my pocket."

"And even with the VA issues in the news the past few years, I'm thankful for the care and kindness I've received. Nothing is ever perfect all the time, but to me the Phoenix VA has gotten better over the years."

Honor Flights provide Vets with memorable experiences

Honor Flight was started by a retired Air Force physician assistant who met many Veterans who had not seen the Washington DC memorials associated with the wars they served in. As a pilot, he flew Veterans himself so they could see them.

Eventually, the effort became a national program and has approximately 128 branches. David Murray, a PVAHCS physician assistant, started volunteering nearly five years ago to escort Veterans on their three-day trip to DC. Originally,



boarding process and ground crew and volunteers line up to salute the Veterans as their aircraft taxis out to the runway.”

When the Veterans arrive in DC, firetrucks greet them with water hoses spraying water in an arch over the plane. Upon deplaning, airport staff announce the Honor Flight is arriving, and request military personnel to come greet the Vets.

Rising early the next day, the Veterans have breakfast and head to the WWII memorial where they are often met by local Congress members. They also visit the Vietnam Memorial, Lincoln

Arlington National Cemetery.

In the evenings, the Veterans return to the hotel to rest and visit. Murray said one night some of the Veterans went to the hotel bar with some volunteers and a 93-year-old Veteran outlasted most of the much younger volunteers!

The final day, the Veterans visit Fort McHenry then head back to airport. On the trip back, they have “last time mail call,” where family and school kids have composed and sent to Honor Flight a reminder of the good times during the military days. As they exit the plane, they are greeted by local groups, such as the Patriot Riders, who celebrate their return.

“The Veterans enjoy the monuments and especially the time to reminisce with other Veterans and others about their experiences,” said Murray. “Many Veterans spent time in prisoner of war camps, others were on ships sunk by torpedoes and bombs. It’s an amazing honor to hear what these heroes have endured for this country.”

Murray said that more than half of the Veterans are accompanied by family members, but the rest rely on volunteer guardians. “Some of these Veterans are cared for by staff from our own VA,” he said, “but we can always use more help.”

Visit www.honorflight.org to download and application to volunteer or for a Veteran who is interested in participating.



Veterans at WWII Memorial from Angel Flight

he started as a “guardian” to escort the Veterans, then moved to a medical staff position. He later advanced to become a board member and medical coordinator.

“At the airport, security staff arranges for Veterans to board the flights first,” said Murray. “Their boarding is often accompanied by cheering airport passengers waving flags. Volunteers from the local area also help with the

Memorial, and Korean Memorial.

Back on the bus afterward, they travel to the Capitol and the FDR Memorial. Murray said other visits have included stops at the U.S. Naval Academy (with cadets all in uniform and lined up to honor the Veterans). The Veterans also visit the Women’s Veterans Memorial, Navy Memorial, Air Force Memorial, Marine Memorial, and the changing of the guard at

(New CBOCs, from Page 1)

PTSD services,” said Rob Goldy, nurse manager at the Midtown VA Clinic. “Additionally, we have a pharmacist for teaching and education, and social workers who link our Veterans with resources they need.”

The opening of these two CBOCs helps provide Veterans with access to the care they’ve earned.

Roger Woody, a 9-year Navy Veteran who lives in Avondale, said he couldn’t be happier with the new Southwest CBOC.

“This place is convenient and close to my home,” he said. “I don’t have to fight traffic to get downtown (to the main VA hospital), and I don’t have to fight for a parking space.

“Here, there might be three or four other people in the waiting room, but (at the main hospital), there are so many people, you might have to wait for a long time. I just don’t have to deal with that here. So far, I’ve got a very good impression,” said Woody, who’s been receiving care through the Phoenix VA Health Care System since 1986.



Southwest Clinic check-in



Midtown Clinic wall mural

PVAHCS Action Line

The PVAHCS Action Line gives Veterans, employees, families and community members a direct link to PVAHCS leadership. The Action Line can be used to express constructive points of view on the policies and procedures of the Phoenix VA; discuss issues; and address problems, concerns, or suggestions. Some responses will be published to inform of Veterans of changes.

Blue boxes are located throughout the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center campus and at each Community Based Outpatient Clinic. Additionally, employees can provide feedback online through the PVAHCS intranet at <http://intranet.visn18.med.va.gov/phoenix/677584/>.



Salutes



Physical Medicine Rehabilitation Services' Electromyography Lab at the Phoenix VA was accredited by the American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine Dec. 16, 2016.



Dr. Stephen Ferrara was recently published in the Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology. His article was entitled "The Elegance of Structure."



Dr. Elicia Nademin, published a paper in the Archives of Suicide Research. The paper was "An Examination of United States Air Force Suicide Decedents based on Documented Suicide Attempt Histories"



Dr. Hamed Abbaszadegan, Chief of Health Informatics, was recognized by the Arizona Chapter of the American College of Physicians, as the Early Career Physician of the Year



Dr. Mitch Harman, Chief of Endocrine, was recognized by the Arizona Chapter of the American College of Physicians as the Researcher of the Year.



A member of our Infection Prevention team submitted an idea to the VA Shark Tank on a bundle to prevent CAUTIs and was a finalist in a very tough pool of competition.



The PVAHCS process for tracking Emergency Department workload and patient flow was recognized as a best practice and adopted nationally.



The PVAHCS Radiology Department was the first and only VA recognized by the American College of Radiology as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence. The department had this certification since January 2014.



Six more housekeepers received their Certified Healthcare Environmental Services Technician (CHEST) certification for excellence in housekeeping technician knowledge and skill.



Our facility was asked by the University of Arizona College of Medicine to participate in the recruitment of their new dean, a sign of positive academic partnership.



The Mayo Hospital has requested additional trainee rotations at the Phoenix VA, another sign of outstanding relationships with our academic and community partners.



We are working with the University of Arizona Research Department to house VA researchers on the U of A campus. This not only improves our relationships with the research community, but also frees up space on our VA campus to expand laboratory operations for clinics.



More than 18,000 Veterans have been enrolled in the Million Veteran Project through the Phoenix VA.



Health Administration Service and Clinical Services have developed a collaborative partnership to review and schedule consults in the queue for specialty care. Service leaders say they are excited about the progress they're making so far.

**Phoenix VA
Health Care System**
850 E. Indian School Rd.
Phoenix AZ 85012
(602) 277-5551

**Southeast VA
Health Care Clinic**
(480) 397-2800

**Globe-Miami
Health Care Clinic**
(928) 425-0027

**Payson VA Health
Care Clinic**
(928) 468-2100

Midtown VA Clinic
(602) 234-7080

Southwest CBOC
(623) 772-4000

**Thunderbird VA
Health Care Clinic**
(602) 633-6900

Northeast CBOC
(480) 579-2200

**Show Low VA
Health Care Clinic**
(928) 532-1069

**Northwest VA
Health Care Clinic**
(623) 251-2884