

the link

November
2012



VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System



8 Imaging Technology Gives a Look Inside



On Sunday, Nov. 11, we honor America's Veterans as a nation.

Here at NWHCS, we have the privilege and opportunity to honor them every day. We do that through exceptional customer service, high-quality health care, and compassionate interactions that demonstrate our respect for their service.

At NWHCS, we have systematically been focusing on improvement of our performance over the past several years. This improved performance honors Veterans by focusing on our mission to *honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.*

I encourage you to take time to thank Veterans for their service and their sacrifice. As we celebrate Veterans Day, together, let's use our considerable ingenuity to continue to think of ways to improve what we do for Veterans. Pick one action that you can do to improve the service to Veterans.

**And to all of our employees who served in our armed forces,
Thank you for your service!**

Marci Mylan

DIRECTOR AND PUBLISHER

Marci Mylan, Ph.D., MHA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Will Ackerman

THE LINK EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor | Anna Morelock

Photographer | Bruce Thiel

Designer | Becky Brown

Writer | Kate O'Dell

FACT: EACH YEAR, VA'S SPECIALIZED HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMS PROVIDE HEALTH CARE TO ALMOST 150,000 HOMELESS VETERANS AND OTHER SERVICES TO MORE THAN 112,000 VETERANS.

Cover: An imaging technician uses the magnetic resonance imaging machine to capture pictures of a patient's neck at the Omaha VA Medical Center.
(Photo by Will Ackerman)

“I've always liked working with people, and I really believe that Veterans are especially worth supporting. They have put a lot on the line; and we, as a society, have a responsibility to them. Veterans have sacrificed heavily for our country, our freedoms and the democratic ideals we all stand for. I like working here and knowing that what I'm doing has an impact.”

Paul West, IT specialist



the link

CONTENTS

Meet an Employee | American Indian Heritage Month



Computer Security: Every VA Employee's Job



Vet Centers: A Crucial Resource Outside of VA Medical Centers



Imaging Technology Improves Picture of Veterans' Diseases



Community Collaborates to Help End Veteran Homelessness



The Omaha VA Says Goodbye to a Chaplain and a Friend



VA Views | Patient-Centered Care Grapevine



This magazine is an authorized publication for VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (VA NWIHCS). Contents of The Link are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, or the Department of Veterans Affairs. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the VA NWIHCS Public Affairs Office.

CONTACT US

Have a story idea? Call the VA NWIHCS Public Affairs Office; Will Ackerman at 402-995-4719, Anna Morelock at 402-995-5547, or email vhanwipublicaffairs@va.gov.

VISIT US ONLINE

Scan with your smart phone to view more issues of The Link online.



meet

desiree kochen

HUD/VASH Housing Specialist
Mental Health | Omaha VAMC

Q: How long have you worked at the VA?

A: Since 2004.

Q: What does your job entail?

A: I work with the Homeless Veterans Program. When Veterans join the program, I help them to find a place to live in the community. I work with local property managers and housing agencies to find Veterans homes. Also, I work with their case managers to help them set up and get to appointments with other resources such as the food pantry and other available resources for the Veterans.

Q: What is your favorite thing about your job?

A: Being able to place Veterans in their own place: getting them to sign that lease and seeing the joy it gives them to have their own space and their own stuff.

Q: When not at work, where can you be found?

A: I have five kids, so I'm at home. They keep me busy, between music lessons, soccer games and whatever sports they are in that season. 📞



American Indian

HERITAGE MONTH

The Department of Veterans Affairs proudly joins the nation in observing American Indian Heritage Month during November. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are nearly 2.5 million American Indians in this country. Their rich history speaks to Americans through the names of the nation's cities, lakes and rivers; the magnificent ruins of ancient communities; and most important, the lives of the people who retain the cultural, spiritual, linguistic and kinship bonds that have existed for millennia.

American Indians who have served in the armed forces:

Approximately **12,000** served in the U.S. military during World War I. More than **44,000**—of a population of less than **350,000** Native Americans—served in European and Pacific war theaters between 1941 and 1945. Approximately **42,000** American Indians, **90** percent of them volunteers, fought in Vietnam.

Medal of Honor Recipient

Jack C. Montgomery, a Cherokee from Oklahoma, and a first lieutenant with the 45th Infantry Division Thunderbirds. On Feb. 22, 1944, near Padiglione, Italy, Montgomery's rifle platoon was under fire by three echelons of enemy forces. He single-handedly attacked all three positions, taking prisoners in the process. As a result of his courage, Montgomery's actions demoralized the enemy and inspired his men to defeat the Axis troops.



160,471 The number of American Indian and Alaska native Veterans of the U.S. armed forces.

29 percent Percentage of American Indians and Alaska natives 5 and older who spoke a language other than English at home.

8.6 million The projected population of American Indians and Alaska natives, including those of more than one race, on July 1, 2050. They would comprise 2 percent of the total population.

For more information visit www.diversity.va.gov/programs/na.aspx.



Computer Security: EVERY VA EMPLOYEE'S JOB

Kate O'Dell | Public Affairs

Computer security is a serious matter at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Employees are not only responsible for protecting their own information, they are responsible for keeping Veterans' information safe. Consequently, the VA requires all new employees to attend a training orientation about computer safety. During the training, new employees are taught best practices and informed about the risks involved with computer use.

As technologies advance and software evolves, it is especially important for VA employees to keep up with the latest security measures, said Lawrence Green, information security officer for VA NWIHCS, and Region 2, VISN 23. Employees are required to keep current with training through the VA Talent Management System.



“It's a continuous education process.”

— Lawrence Green, ISO | VA NWIHCS

As part of the efforts to keep information secure, the Department of Homeland Security issued a directive for all federal employees to obtain and use a Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card to log into their work computers. This process ensures only the employees have access to their information; it also streamlines the login process, said Gino Rodegheir, VA NWIHCS Police Services security assistant.

The PIV cards require new employees to pass background checks. Soon, the only way employees will be able to logon to a government computer will be using a PIV card. Rodegheir issues PIV cards to employees and encourages them to become familiar with the process.

(continued on page 15) ▶



Photos by Kate O'Dell



Photo by Kate O'Dell

Above: Adam Baxter, computer technician, Office of Information and Technology (OI&T) Services, works with Hope Wilkinson, Voluntary Services, on a computer in the training room at the Omaha VA Medical Center.

Left: Gino Rodegheir, security assistant, VA Police, fingerprints an employee and runs a criminal background check before issuing a PIV card.

Middle: Tyler Bowley, IT specialist, OI&T, works on encryption for a VA laptop. Encryption is necessary to protect information should a laptop be misplaced.

Do:

- Logoff before you leave any computer
- Turn off the wireless network on your personal equipment
- Protect sensitive information
- Respect privacy
- Use VA resources for official purposes
- Back up your data
- Become alert to potential abuses and fraud
- Report suspicious activity immediately

Do Not:

- Connect personal computing equipment to the VA network
- Share your access codes and passwords
- Use someone else's access codes and passwords
- Use or download unapproved software
- Eat or drink around computer equipment
- Abuse government resources
- Attempt to bypass log-on procedures

For more information, visit the VA Office of Information Security webpage at www.ois.oit.va.gov/helpful_resources.asp.



VET CENTERS:

A crucial resource outside VA medical centers

Kate O'Dell | Public Affairs

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Vet Centers were established in the wake of the Vietnam War.

During that time, many Vietnam Veterans didn't get the hero's welcome after returning from war. In 1979, Congress established the centers to respond to the Vietnam Veterans who were having difficulties readjusting to life after their service.

There are more than 300 Vet Centers in the United States and surrounding countries, and 47 centers in Region 2, including a center in Omaha and Lincoln, Neb.

The centers' mission is to provide readjustment counseling for all combat Veterans and their families: this includes individual, marriage and family counseling. Vet Centers also host group meetings for Veterans to find support in those with similar backgrounds. Vet Centers also provide bereavement counseling for families who lost a Servicemember while on active duty.



Photo by Kate O'Dell

OMAHA VET CENTER

The Omaha Vet Center has served Veterans for more than 40 years. During fiscal year 2012, the staff saw 218 unique clients, of which 124 were new, for a total of 1,423 visits.

The center opened its doors Oct. 16 at a new location at 3047 S. 72nd St.

“We needed more space, our staff was expanding.”

Ed Licht, team leader | Omaha Vet Center

The new location is centrally located off of Interstate 80. This gives easier access to Veterans in Sarpy County, he said. The additional space allows for two group rooms and the ability for Veterans to bring their entire family.

Robert Forsman, a U.S. Navy Veteran, has been going to the Omaha Vet Center once a week for more than a year. He has seen counselors and attended group therapy sessions for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression. Forsman said he is happy with the new location.

“It feels more professional; it looks nice, it's brighter, more inviting and easier to find,” Forsman said. ▶

Left: Carrie Anderson, LMFT, LMHP (right) talks to Georgina Hansen a U.S. Army Veterans at the Omaha Vet Center.

Above: The Mobile Vet Center was available for counseling outside of the Pershing Center in Lincoln, Neb., during the Stand Down Oct. 11.



Photo by Kate O'Dell

▶ LINCOLN VET CENTER

The Lincoln Vet Center is located in a mini mall at 3119 O St., Suite A. During 2012, the staff saw 372 unique clients, of which 157 were new for a total of 3,531 visits.

In January 2009, Lincoln acquired a Mobile Vet Center – it looks like a recreational vehicle – they use it for outreach. The mobile center allows Veterans access to services in unique settings such as stand downs, fairs and other community events.

“It’s a good way to get the Veterans (services) and to help them recognize that there are services available at the VA.”

LeRoy Schoen, team leader | Lincoln Vet Center

VET CENTERS VS. VA MEDICAL CENTERS

Nine of the 14 employees at the Lincoln and Omaha Vet Centers are Veterans.

“Because I am a Veteran, I can look at (Veterans) and know we have a common bond. They’ve gone through a lot,” Licht said.

Vet Centers offer many of the same counseling services as VA medical centers, with a few differences. The wait times are sometimes shorter and the environment is close-knit.

“It’s more personal and you get to know who you’re talking to,” Forsman said. ▶

▶ Also, the centers can provide an additional sense of privacy that some Veterans may desire. Although the centers are part of the VA, visits and information shared there by Veterans during readjustment counseling is not shared with the VAMC without the client’s consent.

“We emphasize the confidentiality nature of our work. Unless the client wants us to give their records to someone else, we don’t release them.”

LeRoy Schoen

Georgina Hansen, a U.S. Army Veteran, was referred to the Omaha Vet Center by her therapist at the Omaha VAMC. Hansen not only visits the center for her scheduled appointments, she calls there when she has questions.

All war zone Veterans are eligible to use the services at Vet Centers. Veterans do not have to be service connected to use the Vet Center. All they need is copy of their DD 214 to prove eligibility. ⓘ

COMBAT CALL CENTER

1-877-WAR-VETS is a confidential call center available 24 hours a day for combat Veterans and their families to talk about their military experience or any other issue they are facing in their readjustment to civilian life. The staff is comprised of combat Veterans from several eras, as well as family members of combat Veterans.

AREA VET CENTERS

Omaha Vet Center

Phone: 402-346-6735 or
877-927-8387

Lincoln Vet Center

Phone: 402-476-9736 or
877-927-8387

Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday, except federal holidays

For more information about Vet Centers, including locations and services, visit www.vetcenter.va.gov.



Imaging Technology

IMPROVES PICTURE OF PATIENTS' DISEASES

Will Ackerman | Public Affairs

to the untrained eye, the images appear like an undefined mass with various light and dark shapes. To radiologists, the view helps give physicians a clearer picture of a potentially diseased organ or internal damage.

“Through imaging, we help clinicians figure out what might be wrong with patients.”

Dr. Erin Masada, Radiologist | Lincoln CBOC

Medical imaging includes many processes that provide a view inside the human body. Many people are familiar with X-rays, ultrasound, and magnetic resonance imaging; however, there are other technologies NWHCS uses including computed tomography, fluoroscopy and nuclear medicine.

Masada said imaging services narrows the diagnoses to a specific issue physicians cannot confirm without looking inside the body.

“Sometimes a clinician will call and ask what tests we should run based upon the patient’s symptoms,” she said. “We are consultants to the physicians by suggesting the right imaging tests.

William Peters, a 61-year-old U.S. Navy Veteran, recently had his annual physical with his physician, Patricia Cronin, M.D., at the Grand Island VA clinic. The laboratory tests indicated his liver enzymes appeared higher than normal. Consequently, ▶

▶ Cronin sent Peters to the Grand Island VA imaging department for an ultrasound.

Carrie Hansen, a Grand Island VA sonographer, used ultrasound to take pictures of Peters’ liver to look for abnormalities that might indicate why his enzymes were elevated. The ultrasound emits sound waves into the tissues and reflects an image into the monitor.

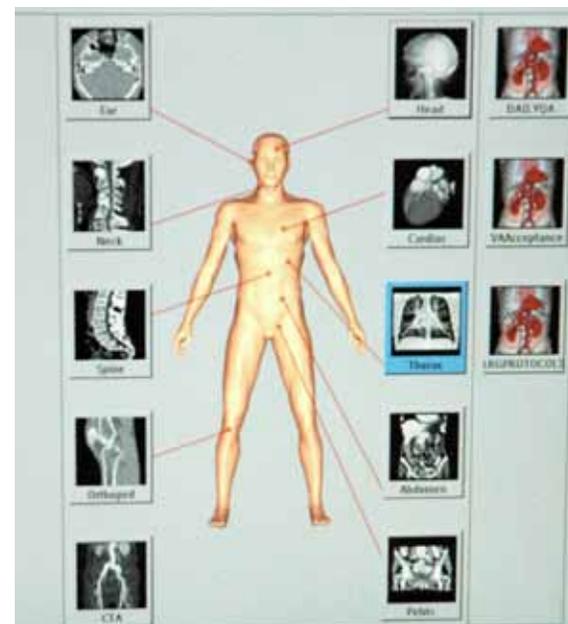
“We look at the structure of the liver. We make sure we don’t see anything abnormal, and see if we can see a cause why the liver enzymes might be elevated.”

Carrie Hansen,
sonographer | Grand Island CBOC

Technicians have specific lists of images called protocols they take based upon the specific exam. However, if technicians see something suspicious on the monitor during the exam, Hansen said they will capture ▶



Photos by Will Ackerman



► additional images. These are sent via computer to the radiologist, who reads the imagery, interprets the results and reports to the physician who ordered the exam.

“We can tell them that based upon what we see that it is most-likely ‘A,’ ‘B’ or ‘C.’ They can then order additional laboratory tests to confirm, if necessary.”

Dr. Erin Masada

A newer radiology subspecialty uses less-invasive techniques to help physicians better diagnose and treat patients. Interventional radiology uses minimally invasive procedures with equipment including X-rays, CT, ultrasound and MRIs to obtain images to direct instruments including catheters or radio contrast agents.

“To recognize a pulmonary embolism previously took two hours. With our new CT scanner, it takes 30 seconds,” said Bill Boyd, NWHCS Imaging Services supervisor. “It affords the radiologist the opportunity to give a diagnosis to the ordering clinician immediately.”

Boyd said an important imaging specialty NWHCS has upgraded recently is nuclear medicine. This uses radiopharmaceutical isotopes administered intravenously or orally into the patient that can be localized to specific organs. The external nuclear medicine equipment captures and forms images from radiation emitted by what was injected into the body and uptaken by patients’ organs.

Far Left: An imaging technician uses the Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine to capture pictures of a patient’s neck at the Omaha VA Medical Center.

Left: A computed tomography protocol selector allows the technician to capture images of specific parts of the patient’s body.



Photo by Will Ackerman

Carrie Hansen, a sonographer, checks Veteran William Peters’ liver using an ultrasound at the Grand Island VA imaging department.

NWHCS’s newer nuclear medicine equipment includes a Positron Emission Tomography camera and Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography scanners.

“Nuclear medicine explores new ways to extend people’s lives. It allows for better and earlier detection of diseases.”

Bill Boyd, Imaging Services supervisor | VA NWHCS

“This technology is exciting, because it was not well utilized or available 10 to 12 years ago.”

Technology also allows NWHCS to provide more imaging services away from the Omaha VA Medical Center at Lincoln and Grand Island CBOCs. Digital imaging allows technicians at these two sites to perform tests and send them immediately over computers to a radiologist who is located in Lincoln or Omaha.

Grand Island does not have a radiologist assigned. Technologists like Joy Quinn operate the imaging equipment for tests on the patients there, but she sends the digital images to Lincoln or Omaha to read. On a recent day, Quinn obtained images using a CT scanner on a Veteran who fell to help determine if he had internal head bleeding.

Although Lincoln and Grand Island VA clinics don’t have as much redundant imaging equipment as the Omaha VAMC, Grand Island has in-house CT scanning, ultrasound, (continued on page 15) ►

Community Collaborates

to help end Veteran homelessness

Will Ackerman | Public Affairs

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Erik C. Shinseki set a daunting goal in 2009 – end Veteran homelessness by 2015.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates there are about 76,000 homeless Veterans nationally, down from about 135,000 in 2009. Although the numbers are about 30 percent fewer than 2009, there are about 500 homeless Veterans in Omaha on any given night.

Omaha took a major step toward reaching the VA Secretary's goal with the ground breaking for Victory Apartments Oct. 12. When it opens in August 2013, the 80 apartment units will provide Omaha-area homeless Veterans permanent supportive housing.

"It's a tiny, tiny thank you to our Veterans," said Thomas McLeay, vice president and general counsel for the housing developer and owner, America First Real Estate Group, during the ground breaking event.

The apartments are for homeless Veterans who are eligible for VA health care benefits through the use of Section 8 housing choice vouchers, which are administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, said Linda Twomey, VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System mental health specialty programs director. The vouchers provide the maximum housing assistance minus 30 percent of the Veteran's adjusted monthly income.

VA will lease about 10,000 square feet on the second floor and relocate services that include primary and mental health care, vocational rehabilitation, substance abuse



Photo by Will Ackerman

Representatives from organizations that were part of the Victory Apartments development break ground in Omaha Sept. 7. (L to R): Mike Dahir, Omaha State Bank; Steve Bodner, U.S. Bank; Rep. Lee Terry (R-NE), Second District; Lisa Roskens, Chief Executive Officer, Burlington Capital Group; Brandon MacLean, U.S. Army Veteran; (on stage) Tom McLeay, Vice President, America First Real Estate Group; David Barnes, President, Grace University; Joan Bertolini, Douglas County Housing Authority; and Robin Ambroz, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority.

► and dependency prevention and treatment; and a community resource and referral center. The idea is to co-locate VA services in the same building as the apartments so the Veterans have easy access.

The genesis for the development occurred when Al Washko, the immediate former director of the VA NWIHCS, approached Mike Yanney, founder and chairman emeritus, Burlington Capital Group, about a public-private partnership. America First Real Estate Group is a subsidiary of BCG. Washko said the development came to fruition because of the commitment of community leaders like Yanney and his group. ►

"I have not seen a community like Omaha that has a philanthropic, unselfish infrastructure that I've found here. That infrastructure picked us up when we were having major difficulties carrying out this project."

Al Washko, former director of VA NWIHCS

► Yanney's staff eventually found the empty building at 9th and Dorcas in south Omaha, that was previously the six-story Our Lady of Victory Wing of the former St. Joseph Hospital. The building was owned by Grace University. When completed, the apartment development will have cost about \$16 million.

Grace University will also lease 11,000 square feet on the first floor to house its clinical graduate program and counseling center.

“It fits with our institution’s mission. It’s a solution to a formidable social problem.”

James Eckman, President Emeritus | Grace University

A former homeless Veteran, who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, told the audience when MacLean said this development is just a tiny thing, he was wrong.

“It’s not a tiny thing,” said Brandon MacLean. “It’s so huge.”

MacLean left the U.S. Army two years ago, “on cloud nine,” he said. He faced unexpected challenges that resulted in him becoming homeless. The construction company he started fell apart, resulting in lost income, and he had to sell all he owned to survive. He lost his girlfriend, and he was dealing with post-traumatic stress and a minor traumatic brain disorder.

“I lost everything that was on my back,” he said. ►

An architect’s rendering shows the anticipated finished appearance of Victory Apartments.

► He found help through Mike Johnson, an NWHCS homeless outreach employee, who was brutally honest with MacLean, and told him to “be a man and admit defeat.”

“Everything went up from there. I found shelter, comfort, and the ability to know I was not alone,” MacLean said.

His story’s message was simple; because of people like Johnson, VA homeless support programs, and community help, MacLean said two years later, he’s the proud owner of an apartment and car.

“For us as a community in Omaha alone to step up and give this opportunity to Veterans is remarkable.”

Brandon MacLean, U.S. Army Veteran

Marci Mylan, Ph.D., the VA NWHCS director, said Victory Apartments “represents the best of what Secretary Shinseki has asked of us.”

“Public-private partnerships require the patience of Job. You really have to work hard to get them done,” Mylan said. “Thank you so much for the care of our ‘national treasures,’ which are our Veterans.” 🗣️



Graphic Courtesy of America First Real Estate Group

The Omaha VAMC

SAYS GOODBYE TO A CHAPLAIN AND A FRIEND

Kate O'Dell | Public Affairs

Chaplain John Besancon retired at the end of September after 13 years of service at the VA medical center in Omaha, Neb.

Besancon grew up on a farm in Kansas. His father served in the U.S. Army during World War II. His parents divorced when he was very young, and he was raised by his mother and his grandparents.

The decision to become a minister did not come easily to Besancon, he said.

"Initially, I was going to be a mad chemist," he said. "But I did feel a call to ministry."

Besancon said he was not sure of the idea of being called directly by God to the ministry. However, he had a lot of support from his church and ministers who had been encouraging him since high school.

"They saw in me things that I didn't see in me," Besancon said.

Besancon was ordained as a minister at 25 years old. His work in ministry moved him from Kansas to South Dakota to Missouri, and then to San Francisco, Calif., for a seminary. He earned a Master of Sacred Theology from Dubuque, Iowa, and a Master in Counseling from University of Nebraska, Omaha.

In 1984, he became a pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Omaha, where he stayed for 23 years. He began working part time as a contract chaplain for Chaplain Ernest Gutha at the Omaha VAMC in 1999. When Gutha retired five years ago, he began working full time.

Chaplain Shane Van Dorin worked with Besancon for five years.



Left: Chaplain John Besancon was joined by his wife, Kathy, and his son, Richard, during his farewell event in the Omaha VAMC Dental Clinic Conference Room Sept. 27.

Right: Both VA employees and Veterans attended the farewell event to personally thank Besancon for his years of service at the Omaha VAMC.

"He has a real genuine heart for Veterans and doing what he can to care for them."

Shane Van Dorin, chaplain | Omaha VAMC

Since 2003, Besancon has worked with spirituality groups for patients on the 11th floor who are being treated for substance abuse.

"Spirituality is a very real part of addictions treatment," he said.

Steve Watkins, a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, has known Besancon since 2009. Watkins said he believes spirituality is an important part of substance-abuse treatment.

"Talking to the chaplain helped remind me of the things I used to value," Watkins said. "When an alcoholic, or a person addicted to drugs comes back to reality and decides to get help, they will be thankful when a chaplain is available to help them."

Besancon's mission at the Omaha VAMC included overcoming the challenges involved with reaching a variety of people with different backgrounds and educational levels while remaining relevant for that broad spectrum of people.

Employees hosted a farewell event for Besancon Sept. 27. Along with employees, Veterans attended the *(continued on page 15)*

What are YOU thankful for?

“To be as blessed as I am and to be able to use that and give back to others.”

Benjamin Dumas
Research Assistant, Mental Health | Grand Island



“For my family, and for the opportunity to work for Veterans and serve them the way they served us.”

Wendy Iselman
Program Support Assistant, Research
Omaha VAMC



“For the VA providing services that they have for the homeless Veterans that we work for.”

Jana Jacobson-Langhorst
HUD/VASH | Lincoln CBOC



“For my family, my job and the wonderful Veterans who have sacrificed so much for us.”

Jodi Manley
Patient Advocate
Lincoln CBOC



“For my family, my children and my husband; and my health and my career. I enjoy working in a helping field, being able to help Veterans maintain stability, whether it is eliminating homelessness or gaining employment.”

Kelly Arends
Readjustment Counselor,
Substance Abuse
Grand Island CBOC



“Our Veterans and our Soldiers, family and friends, and the freedoms that we have that our military has fought for.”

Jan Hanon
Office Manager
Omaha Vet Center

Patient-Centered Care Mission

On Veterans Day, we are given an opportunity to reflect on our mission to care for our nation's Veterans by providing health care that is personalized, proactive and patient-driven. This patient-centered approach ensures the Veteran will be the captain of his or her health care team by recognizing they are the experts regarding their individual health status and desired health outcomes.

We accomplish this by being present for the Veteran and making a personal connection with them. This can be as simple as making eye contact and saying hello as we pass anyone in the hall or step onto the elevator, assisting patients and visitors in finding a clinic or unfamiliar part of the medical center and walking with them to that location rather than pointing and giving verbal directions.

Veterans and their families may not remember us by name, but they will certainly remember how we made them feel when we welcomed them into our medical center or outpatient clinics. ▶

▶ When we include Veterans and their families as an active member of their health care, we empower them to become informed, to share their desires, and ultimately we create that personalized, proactive and patient-driven plan of care.

This Veterans Day, as we remember those who have served us, let's make a commitment to continue to provide the best in quality care, safety and service. We are the right choice for Veterans because we care. 🇺🇸



The Patient-Centered Care Grapevine is a feature to highlight activities and training. Watch the Daily Briefs and the Intranet for this logo.

HELLO

Sept. 9 to Oct. 6

Anthony Agnes,
*Nurse Executive's Office***Jerry Bockoven,** *Mental Health***James Brown,**
*Primary Care and Specialty Medicine***Kathleen Byorth,** *Mental Health***Wallace Carter,**
*Environmental Management Service***Susan Clemons,** *Mental Health***Laura Cornelius,** *Mental Health***Steven Davis,** *Mental Health***Julia Delcour,**
*Primary Care and Specialty Medicine***David Driscoll,** *Research***Joy Egan,** *Research***Alexander Forehead,**
*Student Trainee***Sally Haferbeier,**
*Nurse Executive's Office***Lindsey Heliman,**
*Primary Care and Specialty Medicine***Michelle Hough,** *Mental Health***Yvonne Howland,** *Surgery***Mac McLaughlin,**
*Primary Care and Specialty Medicine***Daniel Loge,**
*Environmental Management Service***William Myers,**
*Environmental Management Service***Shannon Nelson,**
*Grand Island Police***Fred Pecha,**
*Environmental Management Service***Thomas Price,**
*Biomedical Engineering***Stephanie Rainge,** *Mental Health***Kristin Uher,**
*Nurse Executive's Office***Nancy Willcockson,** *Mental Health*

GOODBYE

Jamie Brandt, *Surgery***Janna Cornelius,**
*Grand Island Prosthetics***Joyce Gradoville,**
*Primary Care and Specialty Medicine***Melissa Galvan,** *Surgery***Justin Maltagliati,**
*Grand Island Police***Patricia Moffatt,**
*Nurse Executive's Office***Deborah O'Reilly,** *Surgery***Shannon Parkison,**
*Veterans Canteen Service***Melissa Peterson,** *Mental Health***Sandra Plantenga,**
*Primary Care and Specialty Medicine***Henry Schaben,**
*Information Technology***Theresa Soucy,**
*Primary Care and Specialty Medicine***Amanda Weber,** *Human Resources***Susan Wilson,**
Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

EVENTS

what's going on?

- Nov. 1** Urology Nurses and Associates Week
CFC Basket Raffle Drawing, Lincoln
CFC Hotdog Lunch and Raffle, Omaha
Federal Benefits Open Season Fair, Lincoln
- Nov. 2** Volunteer Orientation, Omaha
- Nov. 4** Daylight Saving Time ends
- Nov. 4-10** Radiology Week
- Nov. 5** Veterans Day Program, Lincoln
CFC Popcorn Sale and Raffle, Omaha
- Nov. 6** Election Day
Federal Benefits Open Season Fair, Omaha
- Nov. 8** Ancient Greeks, Modern Lives book group, Lincoln
- Nov. 11** Veterans Day
- Nov. 12** Federal holiday
Open Season for benefits begins
- Nov. 14** Veterans Forum, Lincoln
- Nov. 15** Federal Benefits Open Season Fair, Grand Island
- Nov. 16** Volunteer Orientation
- Nov. 17** Stand Down for Homeless Veterans, Omaha
Great American Smokeout
- Nov. 22** Thanksgiving
- Nov. 28** Ancient Greeks, Modern Lives Book Group, Lincoln
- Nov. 30** Computer Security Day

2012 Federal Employee Benefits Open Season

Open Season Will Run Nov. 12 to Dec. 10

During Open Season Employees Can:

- Enroll in a Flexible Spending Account (FSAFEDS Program). Current FSAFEDS participants MUST re-enroll each year.
- Enroll in, change or cancel existing FEDVIP (dental and vision) enrollment and/or FEHB health plan

View benefit options at www.opm.gov/insure/openseason



For more information
about VA NWIHCS events,
visit www.nebraska.va.gov.



► *Information Technology continued from page 5*

"It provides a more secure workplace," he said.

Threats to be aware of include identity theft and malicious software. Employees should not open any emails from unknown senders, should not attempt to download from websites that are not trusted and should always bring any suspicious occurrences to the attention of their OI&T team.

Information security officers work to keep people aware of their roles and responsibilities to safeguard Veterans' information.

"The biggest battle is that good security practice is inconvenient for people."



— Stephen Quinn, ISO, VA NWIHCS

Employees in all different job titles must take the time for precautions to best serve Veterans.

"If we can't protect them after all they've done for us, I feel we've failed," Green said.

► *Chaplain Besancon continued from page 12*

event to say their goodbyes and offer their gratitude for his service. Near the end of the event, a gentleman handed Besancon a sheet of folded-up notebook paper and said, "Somebody dropped this." While Besancon was home opening his cards and gifts, he unfolded the note and enclosed was a \$20 bill with a note that read, "Saluting you" and the Veteran's signature. This was perhaps the most memorable gift he received, Besancon said.

"I don't expect great accolades or trumpets," Besancon said. "Sometimes the simplest and the most unexpected things are also the most touching."

► *Imaging Service continued from page 7*

general radiology and a mobile MRI service three days per week. Lincoln has the same as Grand Island, plus a nuclear medicine service. The primary difference in services is that Omaha provides round-the-clock capability with an emergency department and surgery services.

Imaging is also training many of tomorrow's technicians at the three locations through allied health student programs from the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Clarkson College and Methodist Hospital. NWIHCS imaging technologists train more than 70 students each year, Boyd said. The students learn imaging techniques, exam processes and equipment. NWIHCS provides advance training in CT, MRI and nuclear medicine. The Lincoln VA recently added Bryan Memorial students in ultrasonography.

Two major benefits of training affiliate medical students at the VA are that it reduces misperceptions about the quality of care at the VA, and it helped NWIHCS recruit many of these individuals for a career.

"There was often a perception that we didn't have good imaging equipment," Boyd said. "Students in our program see our great equipment and see how hard our staff here are working to provide quality care to our Veterans."

Imaging staff are trying to change the perception that it is not an integral part of the whole patient-care process, Boyd said. Interdisciplinary communication with other specialties regarding procedures, recommendations on future imaging needed for Veterans and communicating this to patients is a critical element to a modern-day imaging service department.

VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System

STANDDOWN

for Homeless Veterans Eligible for VA Health Care

Saturday, November 17, 2012

Exhibition Hall at Civic Auditorium

(East Entrance to Civic Auditorium)

9 am – Noon

Registration Encouraged at Your Nearest VA Business Office

FREE Health Care and Other Services Offered

*No Alcohol, Drugs or Weapons Allowed

Sign Up to Volunteer:

Desiree Kochen, 402-210-0321 or Desiree.Kochen@va.gov

Leave message with the number in your group.

VETERANS DAY



HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

WWW.VA.GOV



VA
HEALTH
CARE

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

402-346-8800 | 1-800-451-5796

www.nebraska.va.gov