

the link

OCTOBER
2015



VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System



CHAPLAINS AT VA
ASSIST VETERANS
WITH SPIRITUAL
JOURNEY

6

During October, we shine the spotlight in The Link how our health care system employees excel delivering patient-centered care for Veterans at VA Nebraska-Western Iowa. Every day, our employees work to achieve what the Secretary of Veterans Affairs recently said is our “noble mission to provide the best possible care and service to those ‘who shall have borne the battle.’”



This can be challenging when it is an aging medical facility. You may have read stories in the media recently regarding one of these buildings; our 65-year-old Omaha VA Medical Center. The VA Chief of Staff, Mr. Rob Nabors, and Rep. Brad Ashford (D-NE) met with Veterans, stakeholders and community leaders in recent months to evaluate options for future improvements of the Omaha VA Medical Center. There have also been two studies completed since last October that offered six options for consideration.

The VA Chief of Staff said we should expect a decision in early October by the Secretary about which option will drive the way forward for infrastructure and health care delivery in the Omaha area.

To ensure Veterans who receive care at the Omaha VA Medical Center have their voices considered in the Secretary’s decision, a team hired by the VA and NWIHCS leadership recently met with Veterans to gather the “Voice of the Veteran,” and others completed an online survey.

As a Veteran and consumer of services at NWIHCS myself, I am excited to move forward to improve the environment where we deliver YOU excellent patient-centered care.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B. Don Burman".

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FACT: DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HAS MORE THAN 1,000 CHAPLAINS AVAILABLE TO ENSURE VETERAN PATIENTS – INPATIENT AND OUTPATIENT – RECEIVE APPROPRIATE CLINICAL PASTORAL CARE, AS DESIRED OR REQUESTED BY THE VETERAN. – VA NATIONAL CHAPLAIN CENTER

Cover: Rev. Shane Van Dorin prays with Veteran Arlinn Gushee, and his wife Pamela, during his stay at the Omaha VA Medical Center. (Photo by Lori Bultman)

“I honestly look forward to coming into work every day. As a Veteran, serving fellow Veterans, I feel my job is very rewarding.”

Robert W. Durham,
Advanced Medical Support Assistant
SUDP 11th Floor, Omaha VA Medical Center
U.S. Navy “Seabee’s”



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This magazine is an authorized publication for VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (VA NWHCS). 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 NWHCS Public Affairs Office.

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MEET

megan hollibaugh

Administrative Officer for the Associate
Chief of Staff for Education | Omaha VAMC
9th floor (stop by and get your chocolate fix!)

How long have you worked for the VA?

"I started working at the VA in 2004 as a without compensation employee through Creighton University, then became a "real" VA employee in 2007, so I've been with the VA about 11 years total."



What does your job entail?

"As part of the Education Office, I work with the Graduate Medical Education offices at UNMC and

Creighton. I facilitate and support education and training for residents and students completing rotations at the Omaha VA. I also support the contracting and purchasing needs for Education and Learning Resources."

What do you like best about your job?

"I have always loved working with the Veterans. The VA has such a unique culture and clientele, different from any of the other medical facilities in Omaha. Now that I am in an administrative role, I love being able to welcome the new residents and students to the VA and ensure they have what they need to provide great patient care to our Veterans."

When not at work, where can you be found?

"I keep myself busy! When I'm not at work I'm usually out and about with my three kiddos, organizing social events for the Nebraska Multiples Organization or studying at Panera with my classmates." 📍

Psychology interns focus on RURAL HEALTH

Dr. Pam Hannappel | Psychologist

The Norfolk VA Clinic was recently awarded funding to support a pre-doctoral psychology internship for the 2015-16 internship year. This new internship is in addition to the five already existing intern positions at the Lincoln and Grand Island VA Clinics.



Courtesy Photo

To embrace the rural nature of the internship, the Norfolk VA Clinic staff members hosted a rural culture day involving all of the interns, and select supervising psychologists Dr. Todd Fleischer, Dr. David Duke, and internship director, Dr. Jocelyn Ritchie. The interns participated in a rural culture and mental health issues didactic presented by Dr. Pam Hannappel and toured the Norfolk VA Clinic. They also visited surrounding rural towns to get a better feel for the environments in which many VA patients live.

The new interns in attendance included: Courtney Stufflebeam, Norfolk VA Clinic; Luke Davidiuk, Jonathan Feinberg and Alexander Rakhshan, Lincoln VA Clinic; and Keri Johns and Megan Klock, Grand Island VA Clinic. They began their internships on Aug. 22 and will complete them in August of 2016. 📍

Patient-Centered Care Empowers Veterans

Lori Bultman | Public Affairs

Health for Life is bringing patient-centered care to VA. VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care

System (NWIHCS) has partnered with the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation to bring Whole Health Training to employees here, said Gayla Jerrell, coordinator, NWIHCS Patient-Centered Care.



Photo by Bruce Thiel

Above: Anita Uldrich, LPN, Grand Island VA Clinic checks a Veteran's blood pressure.

In conventional medicine, clinicians focus on treating diseases and managing their patients' health. Patient-centered care is more; it starts by putting the Veterans and their goals, not a disease, at the center of care, according to the VA Patient Centered Care website. That means health care providers will get to know each patient as a person and work with that patient to develop a personalized plan for whole health based on the patient's values, needs and goals.

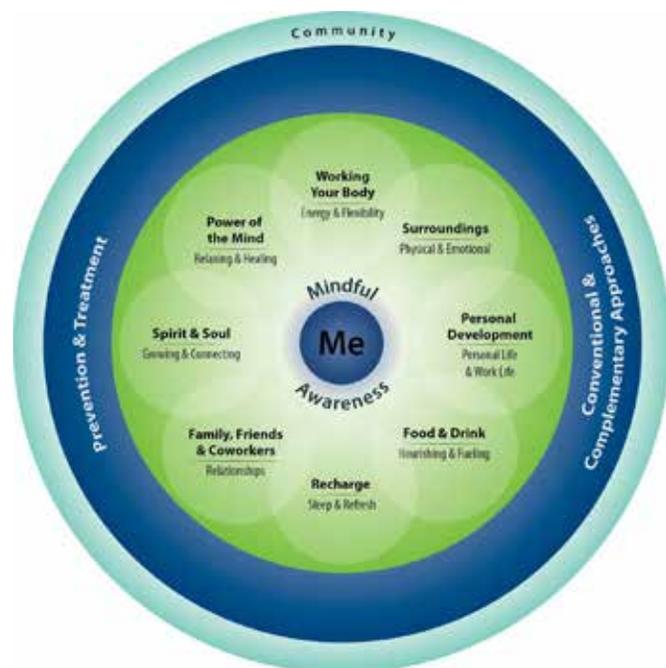
VA has developed tools and courses to assist providers and Veterans with learning the whole-health approach.

"We offered a course titled 'Whole Health: Change the Conversation' to clinicians back in January of 2015," Jerrell said. "The purpose of this training was to provide clinicians the tools they need to optimize their relationships with patients and to move out of the 'fix this problem' mode of the current medical culture. The goal was to change the conversation toward whole health and identify clinical and community resources for a sustainable patient-centered practice."

The VA's Components of Proactive Health and Well-Being is geared toward Veterans and illustrates how each area of self-care is connected. Veterans can learn how improving one area can benefit all other aspects of their life – including their overall physical, emotional and mental health and well-being. The Circle of Health and Well-Being can help Veterans think about their whole health, Jerrell said. "All of the areas in the circle are important. They are all connected."

The Personal Health Inventory (PHI) helps Veterans and their care teams talk through what matters most to *(continued on page 10)*

COMPONENTS OF PROACTIVE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING "Circle of Health"



Chaplains at VA assist Veterans

When Veterans have medical ailments, they need health care. However, they might also need spiritual guidance.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Chaplain Service fills that need.

Chaplains at VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (VA NWIHCS) are located at the Omaha VA Medical Center and Grand Island Clinic and Community Living Center (CLC).

There are weekly Protestant and Roman Catholic chapel services at both locations. Throughout the year, there are special worship services at these facilities and the Lincoln VA Clinic, said Rev. Lonnie Logan, chief, VA NWIHCS Chaplain Service. "The chaplains also offer bedside memorial services for Veterans who have passed away."

The chaplains at Grand Island have a different kind of mission than those in Omaha, Logan said.

"We get to know the Veterans and their families very well at both locations. However, at Grand Island, we have patients who are here for longer periods of time at the CLC, Transitional House and Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program," Logan

"One blessing in this ministry is that I meet a lot of people and give them the opportunity to tell their stories. Sometimes people are struggling with pain, suffering, or life-threatening illnesses, while other times our Veterans would rather talk about how great their families are. They share about their passions, or maybe even talk about the great golf shot they made last week."

Rev. Shane Van Dorin, Chaplain, Omaha VA Medical Center | U.S. Air Force Veteran



Photos by Lori Bultman



s with spiritual journeys

In addition to helping Veterans, VA chaplains are available for employees.

“We do the blessing of the hands at our medical facilities on a regular basis,” Logan said. “We are available to anyone who needs us. If Veterans’ family members, or employees want to talk to a chaplain, they can call the operator and a chaplain will be located for them.”

Becoming a VA chaplain can take a lot of work; however, it can be very rewarding.

“To be a VA chaplain, you have to be endorsed by the (VA) National Chaplain Center,” Logan said. “That can be a long process. Then, you can apply for an open chaplain position.”

said. “We are here to help them through very difficult situations.”

Chaplains in Omaha tend to see Veterans who are inpatients at the medical center for a shorter time period than Grand Island.

“In Omaha we tend to see a lot of new faces each week,” said Rev. Shane Van Dorin, a U.S. Air Force Veteran. “It seems like the majority of our Veterans are here for a couple of days and then gone.

“One blessing in this ministry is that I meet a lot of people and give them the opportunity to tell their stories,” Van Dorin said. “Sometimes people are struggling with pain, suffering, or life-threatening illnesses, while other times our Veterans would rather talk about how great their families are. They share about their passions, or maybe even talk about the great golf shot they made last week.”

Logan, who has been a VA chaplain for 23 years, considers helping Veterans a privilege.

“For chaplains in the VA setting, we are dealing with people with medical conditions, spirituality related to death and dying and just being sick,” Logan said. “It is an honor for all of the chaplain staff to be able to be involved in our Veterans’ lives and with their families. We consider it a real privilege to be involved in their spiritual journeys, in times of health, sickness, life and death.”

visit with a chaplain

Omaha: 800-451-5796

Lincoln: 402-489-3802

Grand Island: 308-382-3660

Left: Rev. Dave Reesen blesses Dr. Praveen Fernandes’ hands in the Omaha VA Medical Center Chapel.

Above: Rev. Cliff Short visits with Veteran Delbert Mendlik at the Omaha VA Medical Center Sept. 24.

Right: Rev. Lonnie Logan and Rev. Sid Bruggemann visit with Veteran Dan Steburg at the Grand Island Community Living Center.



Courtesy Photo

Fisher House Coming to the Omaha VA Medical



A Fisher House is a home away from home for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers. Omaha was selected for a future Fisher House on Aug. 12, 2011.

Typically, Fisher Houses are 5,000 to 16,800 square feet and are donated by the Fisher family and Fisher House Foundation. Each house is designed to provide eight to 21 suites. All are professionally furnished and decorated in the tone and style of the local region, according to the Fisher House website.

"This house will be donated to VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (NWIHCS) by the Fisher House Foundation for use by Veteran's families and caregivers to stay in while Veterans are

"This house will be donated to VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System by the Fisher House Foundation for use by Veterans' families and caregivers to stay in while the Veteran is receiving care and treatment."

Amy Rosauer, executive assistant to the VA NWIHCS director, Fisher House project coordinator

receiving care and treatments," said Amy Rosauer, executive assistant to the NWIHCS director, and coordinator of the Fisher House project.

"The Omaha house will have 16 suites to accommodate families living more than 50 miles away from the medical center," Rosauer said.

Dave Coker, president, Fisher House Foundation, and Jennifer Koget, director Veterans Health Administration Fisher House Program, visited the Omaha campus on Aug. 31 to discuss the site preparation timeline and view the proposed location for the Fisher House. The proposed location, which is on the northwest corner of NWIHCS's Omaha campus, was approved by Coker during the visit, Rosauer said.

The next step in the process will be to prepare the site, as required, to accommodate the construction of the

Center

Lori Bultman | Public Affairs

Fisher House, Rosauer said. "This will include moving two modular buildings (A and B) to another location on the campus and demolishing Building 3."

The site preparation for the Fisher House will be completed on or before April 2017, Rosauer said. "Once this is completed, the Fisher House Foundation will begin building NWHCS's Fisher House. Then, when the house is donated to the VA, it will be VA's responsibility to maintain the house and staff it with a full-time manager and support staff members."

When the Fisher House is opened, sometime in 2018, there will be no cost to Veterans or their caregivers to stay there, Rosauer said. 📍

Above: The Salt Lake City Fisher House kitchen is available for guests to use.

Right: Walter Reed Fisher House bedrooms are decorated with local styles and available for Veterans and their families to stay in while receiving care or treatments.

What do you think would make families at the Fisher House feel more at home

I know what the Fisher House is. I know it is a place for families to stay while a loved one is being cared for. They are to have suites to stay in, kitchens, laundry and so on. I believe it is a wonderful thing and the right thing to do.

Gloria Kortum, AFGE President | Grand Island CBOC



They might like care packages (refreshments, snacks, movies, video games, board games, local maps etc.).

Erika Tucker Program Support Assistant
Police Services | Omaha VA Medical Center | U.S. Air Force Veteran

You could provide them with home-cooked meals and comfort items, entertainment, activities, crafts, books, magazines or television.

Michael Chaney, Item Manager | Logistics
Omaha VA Medical Center | U.S. Air Force Veteran



Give the family prayer shawls or quilts. The small gestures to the families sometimes mean the most. You could provide toys for children, if they will be staying with the families.

Amy Patten, Research Compliance Officer
Omaha VA Medical Center



Courtesy Photos

HELLO

JOHN ALBERS, Engineering**ANDREW ARENDS**, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine**ANDREW BECKMANN**, Pharmacy**SHANNON BOONE**, Surgery**LUKE DAVIDIUK**, Mental Health**DAWN DAVIE**, Finance**MICHELLE DOUGLAS**, Imaging**JONATHAN FEINBERG**, Mental Health**SARAH FUSSY**, Pharmacy**ANDREW GAGHAGEN**, Lincoln Vet Center**GAYLE GILLISPIE**, Nursing**KIMBERLY GORMAN**, Nursing**CHRISTOPHER HAGEMANN**, Office of Information Technology**CHRISTINA HARRIS**, Surgery**JENNIFER HAWKINS**, Nursing**KURT HEIMBRECHT**, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine**TIMOTHY HOWLAND**, Sterile Processing Service**TOMMY HULETT**, Lincoln Vet Center**KERI JOHNS**, Mental Health**CAROL KERNS**, Surgery**MEGAN KLOCK**, Mental Health**LO VONDA KNIGHT**, Nursing**DENISE LAURITSEN**, Pathology and Lab**MARY LEWIS**, Mental Health**JEFFREY MCGREGOR**, Nursing**DANIELLE MUIR**, Nursing**EUNITTA PAYTON**, Nursing**ANGELA PHILLIPS**, Nursing**ALEXANDER RAKHSHAN**, Mental Health**MELISSA ROBERTS**, Surgery**VILMA RODRIGUEZ-CLINE**, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine**COURTNEY ROGERS**, Surgery**BRITTANY ROMERO**, Surgery**VANESSA SALTZGABER**, Surgery**ELIZABETH SAMUELS**, Nursing**LISA SEMANKO**, Nursing**JEANNIE SONG**, Nursing**COURTNEY STUFFLEBEAM**, Mental Health**CRAIG SVOBODA**, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine**SEAN TEPER**, Office of Information Technology**RISA URBAUER**, Pathology and Lab**KAREN WARREN**, Nursing**LISA WATKINS**, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine**LISA WATSON**, Mental Health**JOHN WELTER**, Engineering

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RETIRED

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► Patient Centered Care continued from page 5

the Veteran. Then, they can work together to find the right kind of care for the Veteran's needs, Jerrell said. Instead of starting the conversation with 'What's the matter?', providers will begin with 'What matters to you?' Together, Veterans and their care teams can find a personalized care plan that achieves the Veteran's goals.

"We at NWIHCS have developed Whole-Health teams in the areas of specialty medicine – which included the pain program, Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/

OIF/OND) Clinic, women's health and the homeless primary care clinic; inpatient medicine, this includes the hospitalists, and is focused on bed coordination, rounding at the bedside and end of life/spiritual care and the MOVE! program. MOVE! staff members use the PHI extensively as part of their weight management program," Jerrell said.

"Whole Health really is an incredible movement that allows us to become partners with the Veterans and their caregivers – guiding them to the resources they need; not only in VA, but in the community, to achieve their health goals," Jerrell said. "It affirms the importance of the relationship between a patient and their 'community' of health care providers/support systems." 

To learn more about Patient Centered Care and get started on a Personal Health Inventory, go to www.va.gov/patientcenteredcare.

Living with Courage



Courtesy Photo

Thanks to generous donations through VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System's Voluntary Service, Infusion Clinic staff members in Omaha were recently able to start giving out "Living with Courage" shirts to Veterans who complete chemotherapy. Veteran Carl Hall said he was very appreciative of the shirt he was given to honor the end of his chemotherapy regime. He is pictured here with oncology staff members (from left): Teresa Burks, RN; Jenne Stack, RN; and Jo Buechler, RN.

VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System

STANDDOWN

for Homeless Veterans Eligible for VA Health Care

Stand Down is a military term meaning Servicemembers are removed from the field of combat to receive rest and rehabilitation.

GRAND ISLAND

Thursday, October 22

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Held in conjunction with Project Homeless Connect at:

Evangelical Free Church

2609 South Blaine Street
Grand Island, Nebraska

OMAHA

Friday, November 13

3 to 6 p.m.

Grace University Field House

820 Pine Street
Omaha, Nebraska

Registration Encouraged at Your Nearest VA Business Office

FREE Health Care and Other Services Offered Including:

Drug and Alcohol Counseling | Suicide Prevention | OEF/OIF/OND | Veterans Assistance Agencies | Clothing Health Screening | Eye Exams | Glaucoma Screening | Benefit Info | Chaplains | Foot Care | Lunch

*No Alcohol, Drugs or Weapons Allowed

events

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Oct. 1-31** Domestic Violence Awareness Month
National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Oct. 5** Food Pantry, Lincoln VA Clinic
- Oct. 7** Wellness Walk for Breast Cancer Awareness, Omaha VAMC and Lincoln VA Clinic

Pink Out Day-Wear Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness

Food Pantry, Community Resources and Referral Center, 825 Dorcas St., Omaha
- Oct. 12** Columbus Day (federal holiday)
- Oct. 15** VA Benefits Fair, Central Community College, 3134 West Hwy. 34, Grand Island, Neb.
- Oct. 16** VA Coffeehaus, Lincoln VA Clinic
- Oct. 21** Food Pantry, Community Resources and Referral Center, 825 Dorcas St., Omaha
- Oct. 22** Stand Down, Evangelical Free Church, 2609 S. Blaine St, Grand Island
- Oct. 28** VA Community Book Club, Lincoln VA Clinic

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





One in Three Women Veterans are Hurt by Someone They Love.
Let VA Help.

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HOTLINE
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