



NWV Messenger

For the week of February 22, 2010

Petzel Sworn-In to Head Veterans Health Care System

Dr. Robert A. Petzel has taken the oath of office as the Under Secretary for Health within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), stepping up to lead the nation's largest integrated health care system.

"Dr. Petzel brings to this position a strong leadership background in caring for Veterans as a longtime health system manager in VA," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "His commitment to outstanding medical quality and access for Veterans will be critical to leading VA in its 21st century transformation."

Petzel had been Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health since May 2009. Previously, he directed the Midwest Health Care Network, which includes the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System.

The network includes eight medical centers and 42 community based outpatient clinics serving Veterans in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, western Illinois and western Wisconsin.

During his decades of service to Veterans in VA, he has served on numerous advisory committees that guided development of new and improved health care programs. Board certified in internal medicine, Petzel also has served previously as chief of staff for the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.



Right: Dr. Robert A. Petzel is sworn into office by Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

Dr. William Marcil Recognized as a Hero in the Heartland

Dr. William Marcil, staff psychiatrist at VA NWIHCS, Omaha and Medical Director for Mental Health, Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) and PRTP has been selected by the American Red Cross Heartland Chapter as a "Hero in the Heartland". Nominated for his work with the Magis Psychiatry Clinic, Dr. Marcil will be recognized in the Good Samaritan category at an upcoming awards luncheon in March. He

is also the supervising psychiatrist for Creighton University's Magis Clinic.

Dr. Marcil has played an active role in the work of the Magis Psychiatry Clinic since its opening in 2007. The clinic is the only one operating in the Omaha area where one can receive free psychiatric care and medications with no waiting time. Dr. Marcil serves as the clinic supervisor as well as a mentor to student volunteers at the center.

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CALENDAR

February

- Black History Month*
- American Heart Month*
- Cancer Prevention Month*

March

- American Red Cross Month*
- National Nutrition Month*
- National Kidney Month*
- Social Work Month*
- Women's History Month*
- Ethics Awareness Month*

- 1-7 Dental Assistants Week
- 14 Daylight-Saving begins
- 14-20 National Pulmonary Rehabilitation Week
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 Spring Begins
- 28-April 2 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic
- 30 Doctor's Day

April

- Alcohol Awareness Month*
- National Donate Life Month*
- Physical Wellness Month*
- Occupational Therapy Month*
- 1 April Fools Day
- 1-7 Medication Safety Week
- 4 Easter
- 9 POW Recognition Day
- 11-17 Health Information Privacy and Security Week
- 11-17 Patient Advocacy Week

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Dr. Marcil is credited as the one essential keystone of the clinic and praised by his nominators for his unfaltering presence, non-judgmental attitude, and the life changing difference he has made in the lives of others.

Home-Based Primary Care Starts at Grand Island Division

Extended Care and Rehab announced the start of Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) at the VA NWIHCS, Grand Island Division. Primary care services will be provided to Veterans within a 60-mile radius.

Providers can refer Veterans to the HBPC program by completing a consult to Grand Island's HBPC.

About half of the HBPC team is hired and they are located in Building #3 (NE building).

The staff and phone numbers are as follows (all Grand Island extensions):

Dr. Heidi Beckett MD, ext. 2026
Phyllis Gundersen, APRN, ext. 3004
Toni Brooks, RN, ext. 3006
Dale Pearson, RN, ext. 3003
Amy Walker, RD, ext. 3007

Voice of VA Winter Survey

The 2010 Winter Voice of VA (VOVA) survey has been extended for one additional week. The survey will now close March 1 at 4 a.m.

The VOVA Survey is designed to reduce the survey burden of VA employees since it will be administered quarterly. The 2010 VOVA consists of three surveys that provide employees an opportunity to respond to questions that measure various aspects of an organization and its employees. The 2010 VOVA survey includes questions on learning, employee health, and business practices. Employees will be randomly selected to take only one of the three surveys.

Some VA NWIHCS employees have received an e-mail from the National Center for Organization Development (NCOD) requesting their voluntary participation in the 2010 VOVA Survey. The e-mail provided a link to the survey.

Survey questions cover learning, employee health and business practices. Responses are confidential and anonymous and cannot be linked to individuals. In order to maintain individual confidentiality, no data from groups smaller than ten will be released.

The All Employee Survey (AES) will continue to be administered annually in the spring.

National Nursing Education Initiative (NNEI) Scholarship

Announcement Related to Nurse Practitioner Pursuit

Are you a bachelor's of science nursing registered nurse interested in earning a master's degree with a nurse practitioner focus, or post master's credit hours with an NP focus (adult practice NP for placement in a medicine, surgery or mental health service line practice area)?

VA offers the NNEI scholarship program to support nurses with such an interest.

Application packets will be accepted through June 1 for consideration of scholarship support starting with the August 2010 school term.

To be eligible, the employee applicant must:

- Have been continuously employed a minimum of one year with VHA at the time of signing the NNEI application. Applicant must meet this one-year requirement by June 1.
- Have a record of employment that demonstrates a high likelihood that the employee will be successful in completing the education and employment in the field.
- Submit written evidence (on school letterhead paper, signed by the nursing program dean) of being unconditionally accepted for or enrolled in an accredited school of nursing, dated by June 1.
- Submit a semester-by-semester, written plan of study that was developed in collaboration with the school's nursing academic advisor.
- Apply for all and be willing to be placed in any VA NWIHCS medicine, surgery, or mental health service line vacancy for NP upon completion of the degree/credit hours in order to meet a calculated service payback obligation of up to three years; placement will be at any VA NWIHCS division or CBOC, depending on the need at the time of the participant's graduation. Relocation fees will not be paid.

NWI Executive Leadership Update

You are invited to attend a presentation, led by the VA NWIHCS Executive Team, on recent accomplishments as well as our roadmap into the future. Below is a listing of the session dates, times and locations. All employees are encouraged to attend. Pre-registration is not required.

Norfolk CBOC; March 1, 9-10 a.m., Conference Room
Shenandoah CBOC; March 4, 1-2 p.m., Conference Room
Lincoln Division; March 5, 1-2 p.m., Auditorium
Grand Island Division; March 11, 1-2 p.m.; March 12, 12-1 p.m., Bldg. 6
Omaha Division; March 12, 9-10 a.m., Education Conference Room
Bellevue CBOC; March 12, 1-2 p.m. Conference Room
North Platte CBOC; March 15, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Conference Room
Holdrege CBOC; March 15, 1-2 p.m., Conference Room
For more information, contact Tom LaFontaine at Omaha ext. 4096.

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- Not be obligated under any other federal program to perform service upon completion of the course of education.
- Be willing to incur a liability to the VA for failure to successfully complete the program of study and/or licensure examination.
- Be willing to remain at VA NWHCS for the duration of the academic program.
- Be willing to be interviewed for the limited scholarship positions available. Only those who submit a complete application packet by the deadline will be interviewed.

If interested, apply by:

- Contacting Sharon Fusco at Lincoln ext. 6717 by March 30 to obtain a scholarship application packet and to set up a discussion time to review the packet/forms.
- Submitting an accurate, complete application packet to Sharon Fusco at 142E/Lincoln by June 1.

Qualified applicants will be considered regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, marital status, non-disqualifying disabling condition, age, membership/non-membership in a labor organization, or other non-merit factors.

Brush Up on Dental Health

The American Dental Association recognizes February as Children's Dental Health Month. The Dental Clinic at VA NWHCS, Omaha Division is taking this opportunity to highlight some important additions to dental care for Veteran this year.

In November 2009 a patch was added to our Dental Records Management portion of CPRS that allows for monitoring the need for fluoride. When a patient is recognized as having two or more decayed surfaces in a 12-month period, the system automatically alerts staff to the need for fluoride in the management of his/her dental health.

The patient's level of need is determined by the provider and is based

on the problem and its causes. Increased decay can result from side effects of medication, medical treatment, diet, or medical disease management. Other times it is the result of the individual's home care management which can also be complicated by physical issues.

Although VA initiatives have resulted in close monitoring of VA patients, these initiatives originated from World Health Organization's dental health findings that showed the increased benefits of fluoride's role in strengthening in adult teeth and well as developing children's teeth.

H1N1 Vaccine is Available for Eligible Veterans

All eligible Veterans are encouraged to receive the H1N1 flu vaccine at a VA NWHCS facility. Veterans can find their local facility at www.nebraska.va.gov. Vaccinations are available free to any eligible Veteran in regularly scheduled clinic appointments, or upon request.

"This is an especially challenging influenza season this year," stated **Dr. Marvin Bittner**, epidemiologist for VA NWHCS. "Many people have suffered severe consequences from the flu. It is important for Veterans to get the 2009 H1N1 flu shot, especially those who might be pregnant, or have medical conditions such as asthma, chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, or weakened immune systems."

This season, flu may pack more of a punch than usual because of the 2009 H1N1 flu virus (sometimes called "swine flu"). Many people do not have immunity to this virus so more people are likely to get sick or suffer severe illness which could result in death.

Stay healthy during the flu season by:

- Having a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues and other related items on hand to help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are contagious.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing

or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick and staying home when you are sick
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue away after use.
- Using personal protective equipment when appropriate.
- Getting a seasonal flu vaccine and a H1N1 flu vaccine, if you are in the target groups identified by the CDC.

We are doing everything we can as a health care system to prevent influenza and are implementing these safety measures for employees and patients.

For more information about VA and flu, check out www.publichealth.va.gov. The main federal Web sites are www.flu.gov and www.cdc.gov/flu. If you have any questions, contact **Lesley Royal** at Omaha ext. 4226.

Diversity/Special Emphasis Programs

VA NWHCS Special Emphasis Programs are seeking members and champions to lead and participate in these groups.

The **Black Special Emphasis Program** meets the second Thursday of every month at 11:30 a.m. in the Director's Conference Room (DCR) in Omaha. If you would like to participate from any other site, e-mail Bradley.shaff@va.gov.

The **Women's Special Emphasis Program** meets the second Tuesday of every month at 11 a.m. in the DCR in Omaha and on Site 1 in Lincoln and Grand Island. This program is currently recruiting for a co-chair. If you would like to participate from any other site, email Bradley.shaff@va.gov.

The **Persons with Disabilities Committee** meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at 11 a.m. in the DCR in Omaha and on Site 1 in Grand Island. If you would like to participate from any other site, email Bradley.shaff@va.gov.

The **Hispanic Special Emphasis Program** is recruiting a chairperson and members.

The **Asian/Pacific Islander Special Emphasis Program** is currently recruiting a chairperson and members.

Share Your Favorite Recipes

Do you have a healthy recipe you would like to share? Send it in and be included in the VISN 23 employee healthy cookbook. Entries must be received by close of business Feb. 26.

Employees are encouraged to submit recipes for light and nutritious main dishes, healthy ethnic recipes, side dishes, beverages, appetizers and desserts. Recipes can be low or reduced calorie, low salt, reduced fat, gluten free or vegetarian. You may enter more than one recipe.

E-mail recipes to judith.thomes@va.gov. Include the name of the recipe as well as your full name, duty station, telephone number, including area code and e-mail address with each entry. Be specific with measurements, directions, and size of cans, packages and pans so others can successfully make your recipe.

If duplicate recipes are submitted, the recipe with the earliest time and date will be considered. No hand written recipes will be accepted. Everyone who submits a recipe that is published in the cookbook will receive a copy of "The WINning Cookbook". For more information, contact **Quin Kelly**, Employee WIN Coach, at Lincoln, ext. 7902.

Emergency Closure Information on the Internet

Information regarding impacts on VA NWIHCS operations due to inclement weather or other unusual situations is available on the Web. Veterans, stakeholders and employees can access emergency information through the "Emergency Response and Information link on the VA NWIHCS Web Site at <http://www.nebraska.va.gov>.

The emergency page is also accessible directly at <http://www.nebraska.va.gov/emergency/index.asp>. Similar information is also available on the VA NWIHCS official Twitter account at <http://twitter.com/VANWIHCS>.

Employee information is also available through the VA NWIHCS Web page <http://www.nebraska.va.gov>, which is accessible from non-VA computers. Employees should also follow the "Emergency Response and Information" link, and then access "Emergency Information for VA Employees", the first link on the top right.

The emergency page for employees is also accessible directly at http://www.nebraska.va.gov/emergency/employee_emergency.asp.

Pertinent employee information is also posted on the Intranet at <http://vaww.visn23.med.va.gov/nwi/index.asp>.

2010 Mandatory Review Flyer

All employees should have received a blue, three-page flyer that describes the 2010 mandatory review requirements. These requirements are to be completed in the national Learning Management System (LMS) and the My Peak System.

Employees who have not received the flyer should check with their service or section program assistant who distributes mail.

Employees who are unsuccessful in obtaining a flyer should contact **Kelly Loftus**, Omaha, ext. 5333; **Judy Janovec**, Grand Island, ext. 2456 or **Sharon Fusco**, Lincoln, ext. 6717.

WIN VA Activities

Wellness is Now (WIN), the VA Employee Wellness Program will offer a number of healthy eating and fitness activities this year. Activities include: Tobacco cessation classes; E-MOVE for weight loss; yoga and Tai Chi classes; nutritional lunch and learns; new fitness centers with personal fitness trainers; 21 day club for stress mastery; and chair massages.

Employee fitness centers are scheduled to open in February in Grand Island, Lincoln and Omaha. Several requirements must be met prior to use, including attending

employee fitness center orientation, signing a fitness consent form and a VA NWIHCS liability waiver for the fitness center and completing a personal wellness profile and StressMap grid at <http://vaww.portal.va.gov/sites/EmpWell/default.aspx>.

Upon completion of these items, print off your personal wellness profile and your StressMap scoring grid. Send both surveys to **Quin Kelly** in Lincoln: Mailing code 11AC.

Below: Employees at the Lincoln Division enjoy a session of Tai Chi.



This newsletter is for VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha, Norfolk, Holdrege, North Platte, Bellevue, Nebraska and Shenandoah, Iowa). It is published weekly to provide employees, patients and visitors with information about VA programs and activities. This newsletter may be found on the Intranet at <http://vaww.visn23.med.va.gov/nwi/index.asp>. Submit news items through e-mail to G. POSTINGS in Vista or to VHANWI MESSENGER in Outlook by close of business each Tuesday.

For further information, call **Maggie Oldham** at (402) 995-5547.