



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **Two VA Providers develop program to improve health care access for central Nebraska Veterans**

**OMAHA, Neb.** — Two providers from the Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility in Grand Island, Neb., completed a national geriatrics scholars program and project that directly improved the access to health care for 81 area Veterans.

Janelle Brock, a licensed independent clinical social worker, and Majrie Heier, M.D., completed a quality-improvement project that improved access to dental care for Veterans in central Nebraska.

The project was the capstone requirement completion of the Veterans Health Administration Office of Rural Health Geriatrics Scholar Program. The project was also published in spring edition of the VHA Office of Rural Health Rural Connection publication.

Brock and Heier created a geriatric team at the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System Grand Island community-based outpatient clinic. The team developed a collaborative relationship with local community agencies that provided dental care to low-income people. Information about local dental care resources was shared with area Veterans, and a referral system was established within the VA's electronic medical records.

They also coordinated the sharing of relevant medical records – such as medical imaging and medication lists – so dental care could be provided efficiently within community dental clinics.

Six months after the project was implemented, 151 Veterans were referred to community resources for dental care. Eighty-one, or 56 percent, of those referred to a specific clinic were confirmed to have been treated at that clinic.

The project is being expanded to other rural VA clinics within Nebraska.

The scholars program is an intensive course in geriatric care. The program culminates with each scholar implementing a quality improvement project to improve health care for older Veterans in a rural VA clinic setting.

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GERIATRICS PROJECT-2/2/2/2/

The VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System's mission is to honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being. VA NWIHCS employees serve more than 161,000 Veterans in Nebraska, western Iowa and portions of Kansas and Missouri. The system includes a tertiary medical center in Omaha and a Community Living Center in Grand Island, Neb. Community-based outpatient clinics are located in Lincoln, Grand Island, North Platte, Norfolk, and Bellevue, Neb., and Shenandoah, Iowa; and a contract outreach clinic in O'Neill, Neb. For more information, visit [www.nebraska.va.gov](http://www.nebraska.va.gov).

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