

WINTER 2015

The Veterans Gazette

Aleda E. Lutz VAMC, Annex, and CBOC Waiting Room Newsletter



21 reasons why VA is heading in the right direction for 2015

As we continue to improve and enhance the care and service delivery to Veterans, we provide the following which was recently shared on the VA Blog, Vantage:

1. ICARE—Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence by VA staff
2. Medical appointments on track
3. Private-sector care for Veterans
4. Building for the future
5. Excellence in service
6. GI Bill turned 70, continues to change lives
7. More benefits for families and survivors
8. VA Cemeteries tops in customer satisfaction
9. VA employees continue to work on claims backlog
10. Fully Developed Claims exceeding goals
11. More Veterans and families sign up for eBenefits
12. VA goes digital
13. VA keeps reducing the number of homeless Veterans



14. VA hires more mental healthcare professionals
15. Veterans Crisis Line expanded to help more Veterans
16. VA expands care for Veterans with military sexual trauma
17. More healthcare options for women Veterans
18. VA to reorganize and improve
19. Enhancing accountability
20. VA looks to recruit the best and brightest in the medical field
21. VA listening to Veterans and VA employees

Message from the Director

Happy New Year!

We are busy here doing a multitude of things to better serve Veterans. We recently held our Annual Strategic Planning Meeting with our management team to evaluate many areas we can improve upon and enhance. Outcomes of the meeting will be evaluated and prioritized by our Value Stream Teams for Primary Care, Inpatient Care, and Community Based Outpatient Care.



We are also anticipating a visit by The Joint Commission, an accrediting body who will survey our VA, health care annex, and outpatient clinics throughout Michigan to ascertain we are meeting hundreds of quality-driven standards.

Although we strive to work under a constant state of continual survey readiness, we welcome our survey teams as we are eager to learn and grow based upon their recommendations.

-Ms. Peggy W. Kearns, Medical Center Director

Recent Achievements

- ⇒ We received three-year accreditation for CARF, Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, allowing our VA to continue to assist Veterans within the Blind Rehab, Homeless, and other specialized programs.
- ⇒ Our Medical Center has earned Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) Leader status for our programs and processes supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Veterans and employees.
- ⇒ We have received the National Center for Patient Safety Cornerstone Gold Award for the fifth year in a row by meeting several criteria required to support a successful Patient Safety Program.

Every year, Aleda E. Lutz, along with other soldiers who perished in France, are honored at a ceremony where a memorial is situated near the crash site.

Members of Aleda's family visit often and wanted to share photos from this year's ceremony.



We are honored to have our Medical Center named after such an heroic female.



Attention, Attention, Attention—Veterans are reporting a possible scam. Veterans should not be getting phone calls from anyone initially advising them they are eligible to receive non-VA health care based upon the new Veterans Choice Act and Veterans Choice Cards. They should also not be receiving these calls asking for personal information or credit card information. Instructions to Veterans will advise they are to make the initial contact with the Third Party Contract agency that will be defined in written literature they should have received.

Also, it should be noted, the VA does not call to solicit fundraising dollars. Always ask the agency calling to send you brochures and an envelope so you can research before you contribute.

What's New???

Changes to Annual Means Testing Eliminates Net Worth

The annual financial assessment (MEANS) testing will no longer include a Veteran's net worth to determine eligibility. Certain Veterans will be in receipt of a letter explaining, in more detail, what this may mean for their current eligibility and co-payment responsibilities. However, if you are asked to update your Means status, VA staff will not require you to provide your net worth. Additional information will be shared when it becomes available.



Personalized Veterans Health Benefits Handbooks Being Mailed

Mailings are still occurring for Veterans to receive their personalized VA Health Benefits Handbooks. Newly-enrolled Veterans should receive their handbooks within two weeks of enrollment.



VA Staff Learn Acupuncture Techniques

Nursing and Physical Therapy staff members attended a two-day training session to learn how to administer Auricular Acupuncture. This type of acupuncture is applied to the outer ear and helps to decrease pain, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and cravings, as well as promotes comfort and relaxation. Veterans admitted to our Community Living Center or Acute Care/Telemetry may have an opportunity to experience this alternative therapy to assist them with their healing process.



Aromatherapy with M-Technique Introduced at VA

Twenty-four staff members completed a course on Aromatherapy which utilizes a variety of essential oils to enhance the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual comfort during illness and wellness. They also learned M-Technique, manual touch therapy, which uses light and structured touch to induce relaxation and promotes comfort.

Relationship-Based Care Journey

The Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center will be embarking on a multi-year initiative to improve the various relationships at our VA which impact Veteran care and outcomes. Relationship-based care will support a variety of measures to include increasing safety, quality, patient satisfaction, and staff satisfaction, by improving relationships within our organization. We look forward to positive changes through this initiative.

Personal Photo-Taking Equipment Prohibited Unless Authorized

Personal Cameras, Phone Cameras, or Any Device That Can Take Photos or Videos Are Prohibited From Use

Our Medical Center does not allow the use of personal photography equipment which includes photos or filming on personal cell phones or any other device that can record images or voice. The only time photography or filming is permitted would be for special events or requests that are authorized by a member of the VA staff. This policy is in place to protect fellow Veterans and VA employees.



The Flu: Caring for Yourself

Steps to prevent the flu:

1. **Get the influenza vaccine.**
2. Wash your hands frequently.
3. Stay clear of individuals who appear to be sick, are coughing or sneezing, etc.

5 Steps to take if you get the flu:

1. Stay at home and rest.
2. Avoid close contact with well people in your house so you won't make them sick.
3. Drink plenty of water and other clear liquids to prevent fluid loss (dehydration).
4. Treat fever and cough with medicines you can buy at the store.
5. If you get very sick, are pregnant, or have a medical condition that puts you at high risk for flu-related complications (like asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), call your doctor. You might need antiviral drugs to treat the flu.



Health Promotion Disease Prevention

“Be Involved In Your Health Care” is the January Healthy Living Message. What does this mean, really?

You can plan an active role when you have a visit with your health care team. To get the most out of your visit, plan the questions you want to ask and the things you want to discuss. Be sure to leave the visit with information about your care. Here are some suggestions to help you be involved in your health care.

- ◆ Give your health care team complete information about your current health.
- ◆ Let your team know about your health problems, your concerns about your health, any past illnesses, and past hospitalizations.
- ◆ Be sure to tell your team about all medications you take. Remember to include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbals.

You can learn more by visiting:

http://www.prevention.va.gov/docs/VAN_CP_HL_Be_Involved_508.pdf

Veteran Events

The Nouvel Catholic Central Varsity Boys Basketball Team held a Bingo for Veterans in the Community Living Center in December 2014.



VA employees adopted 15 families for the holidays to provide gifts, food baskets, and gift cards.

Save The Date

Annual Women's
Health Fair
February 6, 2015
10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
Aleda E. Lutz VAMC
1500 Weiss Street
Saginaw, MI
Medical Center
Auditorium



January's Healthy Living Message:
Be Involved in Your Healthcare!

Special Program Points of Contact

Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Sharleen Gray

989-497-2500, extension 11778

Seamless Transition

Anne Milko-Delpier

989-497-2500, extension 11794

Former Prisoner of War Advocate

Dr. Mark Highsmith

989-497-2500, extension 11798

Women Veterans Coordinator

Sara Schroeder

989-497-2500, extension 11560

Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator

Pamela Lawrence

989-497-2500, extension 15713

Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator

Kelly Walraven-Swartz

989-497-2500, extension 11916

VA Caregiver Support Coordinator

Kim Thwing

989-497-2500, extension 11953

Multiple Sclerosis Coordinator

Samantha Wright

989-497-2500, extension 11440

Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-273-8255

Press 1

PTSD Awareness

Learn, Connect, and Share

Visit

www.ptsd.va.gov



Community Based Outpatient Clinics



Clement C. VanWagoner
Department of Veterans Affairs
Community Based Outpatient Clinic
180 North State Avenue
Alpena, Michigan 49707



Bad Axe Veterans Affairs
Community Based Outpatient Clinic
1142 S. Van Dyke Road
Bad Axe, MI 48413



Cadillac Veterans Affairs
Community Based Outpatient Clinic
1909 N. Mitchell Street
Cadillac, MI, 49601



Cheboygan County
Community Based Outpatient Clinic
14540 Mackinaw Highway
Mackinaw City, MI 49701



Clare Veterans Affairs
Community Based Outpatient Clinic
11775 N. Isabella
Clare, MI 48617



Gaylord Veterans Affairs
Community Based Outpatient Clinic
806 S. Otsego
Gaylord, Michigan 49735

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

Grayling Veterans Affairs

Community Based Outpatient Clinic
1680 Hartwick Pines Road
Grayling, Michigan 49738



Oscoda Veterans Affairs

Community Based Outpatient Clinic
5671 Skeel Avenue, Suite 4
Oscoda, Michigan 48750



Traverse City Veterans Affairs

Community Based Outpatient Clinic
3271 Racquet Club Drive
Traverse City, Michigan 49684



Veterans Affairs Healthcare Annex

4241 Barnard Street
Saginaw, MI 48603

Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center

1500 Weiss Street

Saginaw, MI 48602

1-800-406-5143

Call Center—Extension 11230

Tele-Nurse—Extension 11240

www.saginaw.va.gov

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www.facebook.com/VASaginaw

MyHealththeVet:

www.myhealth.va.gov



VA
HEALTH
CARE

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century