Welcome to the Spring 2019 edition of The Veterans Gazette.

It is with great honor I have been officially appointed as the Medical Center Director of Aleda E. Lutz VAMC in March 2019. My commitment to Veterans and their families is long-standing, as I have spent more than 25 years of my professional career within the VA.

I am also excited to announce Carol Dopp was selected as the Associate Director. Currently, however, we are recruiting for a Chief of Staff and Associate Director for Patient Care Services (Nurse Executive).

Recently, our Community Living Center (which encompasses Palliative Care) received a 5-Star Rating for quality and a 5-Star Rating overall. The staff worked diligently on process improvements to improve the care of our Veterans. We continue to move forward as a high reliability organization, better defined as maximizing safety and minimizing harm, which assures every patient receives excellent care, every time.

The VA Mission Act of 2018 empowers Veterans and enhances care options. We will continue to be a trusted, caring partner with easy to access, high-quality care. We offer care in your home with expanded telehealth opportunities, have an improved community care program, offer extra support in areas with limited services, expanded caregiver program, education on health care options, and more Veteran-to-Veteran peer specialists. With the increase in services available, and the ability to meet you where you are, with the right care at the right place and the right time, we feel confident Veterans will continue to choose VA for all their healthcare needs.

Our medical center will continue striving to serve our Veterans with the highest level of care and respect.

-Dr. Barbara Bates
Medical Center Director

“Proudly Serving All Who Have Served”

On the Cover: National Vietnam War Veterans Day is March 29. Our VA hosted an amazing event commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. We honored and paid tribute to all Vietnam Veterans. VVA Chapter 154 displayed the Michigan Vietnam Veteran Traveling Memorial Wall, Medal of Honor display, and the Missing Man Table. There was a formal opening ceremony, a welcome flag line, color guard, keynote speaker, and more. Commemoration lapel pins and Presidential Proclamations were also given.

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans!
Feature Articles

Saginaw VA Medical Center Announces Official Director

Dr. Barbara Bates is proven leader, more than 25 years of service to Veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Barbara Bates as the new Medical Center Director of the Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center in Saginaw, MI.

"We are excited to appoint Dr. Bates as the official Medical Center Director of the Aleda E. Lutz VA in Saginaw," said Denise Deitzen, Acting Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 10 Director. "Dr. Bates has an outstanding track record of more than 25 years of dedicated leadership and innovation in serving our nation’s heroes."

Dr. Bates first joined the VA Medical Center in Saginaw as Chief of Staff in December 2015, where she also served as acting Medical Center Director from May – August of 2016 and again from July 2018 to present. She has played an instrumental role in expanding Saginaw’s education mission from one to four specialties and optimizing physician staffing in both inpatient and urgent care.

Dr. Bates first joined the VA family as a staff psychiatrist at the VAMC in Albany, New York in July of 1993. She has proven herself over the past 25 years with increasing levels of responsibility, including Associate Chief of Staff for Quality Management, Chief of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, and national Deputy Director of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation at VA Central Office.

Dr. Bates is the co-author of over 30 peer-reviewed scientific publications, and the recipient of the 2008 National Institute of Health Director’s Award, the 2008 American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine’s Elizabeth and Sidney Licht Excellence in Scientific Writing Award, and the 2014 Foundation for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Best Original Research Award.

Veterans Take Health into Their Own Hands “#OwnIt”

Did you know the Aleda E Lutz VA Medical Center in Saginaw, MI has a weight management program just for you? The VA’s MOVE! Program is FREE for Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care, and for VA employees. This easy to join program offers a significant benefit which allows participants to feel better than they have in years. Joining the MOVE! Program gives you access to a free body analysis on our state of the art DEXA scanner, one-on-one and group fitness instruction, personalized health coaching, menu planning, and group education classes. The MOVE! Program provides amazing tools to help you learn how to make minor changes over a lifetime to keep the weight off and feel great!

Want to join the program? It is as easy as calling our MOVE! Team today at (989) 497-2500 extension 13846, or drop in to one of our MOVE! Informational Classes offered the 2nd Thursday or 3rd Friday of every month at 1:00 p.m. at the main facility (Room 2325, 2nd floor) or the Community Based Outpatient Clinics. No referral or consult required!

NEW FEATURE ALERT

VEText can now offer sooner appointments!

The VA text message appointment reminder system has a new feature for Veterans waiting greater than 30 days for a VA appointment. This new feature is called Open Slot Management (OSM). VEText will offer a sooner appointment if one is available. All you need to do is reply with the correct code to reschedule.

Make sure we have your current cell phone number and address listed in our records.
VA Ending Veteran Homelessness in Manistee, Wexford and Missaukee, Michigan

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has been committed to ending homelessness among Veterans. In their collaboration with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), a mission to end homelessness among Veterans was developed to guide the work of Veterans Affairs Homeless Programs. This mission includes establishing “Functional Zero” within communities. Functional Zero is reached when the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness within a community is less than the average number of Veterans being connected with permanent housing each month.

To achieve Functional Zero, communities must have practices in place to ensure all Veterans experiencing homelessness are identified and sheltered immediately, if the Veteran chooses. In addition, communities have the ability to quickly place Veterans experiencing homelessness into permanent housing, only using transitional housing programs on rare occasion. Communities achieving Functional Zero have shown evidence of chronic and long-term homelessness among Veterans dissolving.

Efforts are coordinated by the Aleda E. Lutz Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) Homeless Program and Community Homeless Service providers. Veterans experiencing homelessness have received outreach services and case management, in addition to public housing subsidies. VA and Community Homeless services have been efficiently and promptly provided to any Veteran in need. As a result, Manistee, Wexford, and Missaukee counties have achieved the benchmarks for Functional Zero among Veterans experiencing homelessness. These areas are the second in Michigan to meet this goal and the first within the Michigan Balance of State Continuum of Care.

The Aleda E. Lutz VAMC Homeless Program encompasses three services.

1. The Grant and Per Diem Program is comprised of two contracts to provide Veterans with transitional housing placement for up to two years.

2. The Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program provides outreach services to homeless Veterans, as well case management to those Veterans in emergency shelter beds with one of the five contracted providers.

3. The Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program provides permanent housing placement through rental subsidies and case management for Veterans to prevent the recurrence of homelessness. There are currently 229 HUD-VASH vouchers managed by the Aleda E. Lutz VAMC Homeless Program.

The VA is committed to serving all its Veterans and is proactive in ensuring homeless Veterans transition to stable housing and help them on the next phase of their lives.

VLER Health Exchange is a program that securely shares certain parts of your VA health record with community care providers. To learn more or to sign up, visit www.va.gov/VLER
Information You Can Use

Hazardous Materials Exposure
Veterans who have served may have been exposed to hazardous materials, which could have resulted in illness. Examples include burn pit or agent orange exposure. To learn more about hazardous materials exposure and the registry, visit the following link: https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/ Please note, you will need to complete the registry paperwork before you can make an appointment at a VA Medical Center. The phone number for the Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center’s Specialty Exam Clinic is 989-497-2500, Ext. 11349. If you have any questions about the specialty exam for burn pit, agent orange, or other hazardous materials exposures, please be sure to call that number. Thank you!

Introduction to Whole Health Classes
Take control of your health. Classes are now available at the Clare Community Based Outpatient Clinic on Thursdays from 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m. Contact Michael Ritchings at 989-306-1306 for more information or to schedule a class.

Dental Services
We often hear Veterans asking questions about how they may be able to obtain community dental care if they are not eligible for VA dental care. We’d like to share information on this topic. Please visit our Health Care Services A-Z listing and click on Dental to learn more by visiting https://www.saginaw.va.gov/services/index.asp.

Veterans and Their Families Invited to VA Health Fair and VA2K Walk for Homeless Veterans on May 15, 2019
The Aleda E. Lutz VA would like to invite Veterans in the community, and their family members, to the Annual VA Health Fair and VA2K Walk to support our Homeless Veterans Program on May 15, 2019. The Health Fair will be held at the Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center, 1500 Weiss Street, Saginaw, Michigan from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Activities will occur at the Pavilion which is located at the north parking lot of the Medical Center grounds.
During the health fair, participants are encouraged to join VA staff on one of three walks being offered on the VA campus beginning at 11:30 a.m., Noon, and 12:30 p.m. Please visit the registration table and you will be directed to the walking path.
Donations of toilet paper, dishwashing soap, laundry soap, dryer sheets, personal hygiene items, towels, washcloths, household cleaning supplies, socks, sleeping bags, paper towels, Kleenex, STARS Bus Passes, and Gas Cards are welcomed for the VA2K to help the Homeless Veterans Program. Please join us for this great event with a cause!!! For more information you may contact the Homeless Veteran Program Manager at 989-497-2500, Extension 11694.

On May 15, 2019, at 11:30 a.m., Noon, and 12:30 p.m., the following VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) will host the VA2K Walk to support the Homeless Veteran Program.
- Clement C. Van Wagoner VA Outpatient Clinic in Alpena at 180 N. State Avenue
- Bad Axe VA CBOC at 1142 S. Van Dyke Road, Suite 100
- Cadillac VA CBOC at 1909 N. Mitchell Street
- Clare VA CBOC at 11775 N. Isabella Road
- Gaylord VA CBOC at 806 S. Otsego
- The Traverse City VA CBOC, 3217 Racquet Club, will have a walk at 12:30 p.m. only.
**Candids**

**Black History Month Program**

**2018 Employee of the Year**

**Great Catch Awardees**

**Team spirit throughout our VA!**

---

*Choose VA*
Congratulations to the Community Living Center (CLC) on their Five Star Rating for Quality and Overall!

Kudo’s to Occupational Health and the Flu Prevention Team for achieving nearly 100% compliance for our medical center!

**Employee Flu Vaccines at 80%**
Declinations: 19.98%
Non-compliant with Appendix B: .02%

We celebrated our Veterans February 10 -16, 2019 during National Salute to Veteran Patients Week with visits from students, local media, and Veteran Service Organizations, as well as a Sweetheart Dinner Dance, and more!

Best Places to Work Survey
Employees rated our VA as follows:

- 79% of those who responded would recommend our organization as a good place to work.
- 75% of those who responded are satisfied with the organization.
- 76% of those who responded are satisfied with their job.
Program Highlights

**VEText**
Text Message Appointment Reminders
New Feature Alert—for Veterans waiting greater than 30 days for an appointment. VEText will offer sooner appointments when available. Make sure your current cell phone # and address is listed in our records.

**Suicide Prevention**
If you know a Veteran who may experience thoughts of suicide, getting them the assistance they need, as quickly as possible, is crucial. The “BeThere” campaign offers information on how you can help.
Visit [www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/BeThere](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/BeThere)

**Veterans Crisis Line:**
1-800-273-8255 Press 1

Are you a caregiver of a Veteran and need assistance? Call the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274

**VA Transportation**
1. They transport Veterans FROM the Aleda E. Lutz VA in Saginaw TO Ann Arbor and Detroit VA Medical Center’s. Call 989-497-2500, Extension 13108 to schedule a ride.
2. They transport Veterans FROM Gaylord, Grayling, West Branch, and Standish TO Saginaw, Ann Arbor, and Detroit. Call 989-497-2500, Extension 13125 to schedule a ride.

**Construction Project Update**
The ambulance bay for drop off is still temporarily closed. The new Urgent Care is open. Drop off is currently located at the CLC entrance, located at building 22. The Building 1 (main VA Medical Center facility) renovations are still underway.

**Introduction to Whole Health Classes**
Take control of your health and wellbeing.
Contact: Michael Ritchings 989-306-1306
Or Willie Howell at 989-482-9347

**Community Care**
Learn about Community Care and the Mission Act by visiting the links below:
[www.va.gov/communitycare](http://www.va.gov/communitycare)

**National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention**
Learn more at [www.prevention.va.gov](http://www.prevention.va.gov)
Special Program Contacts

Suicide Prevention Coordinator
989-497-2500, Extension 11778

Caregiver Support Coordinator
989-497-2500, Extension 11686

Former Prisoner of War Advocate
989-497-2500, Extension 11798

Homeless Veteran Program
989-497-2500, Extension 11773

LGBT Veteran Care Coordinator
989-497-2500, Extension 11783

Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator
989-497-2500, Extension 15713

Multiple Sclerosis Coordinator
989-497-2500, Extension 11440

Patient Advocate
989-497-2500, Extension 13012

Spinal Cord Injury Coordinator
989-497-2500, Extension 11783

Transition Care Management
989-497-2500, Extension 11794

Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinators
989-497-2500, Extension 11916 or Extension 11694

Women Veterans Program Manager
989-497-2500, Extension 11560

Office of Inspector General—1-800-409-9926
Joint Commission—1-800-994-6610

VET Centers for Readjustment Counseling Services

Saginaw—5360 Hampton Place, Phone (989) 321-4650

Traverse City—3766 N. US 31 South, Phone (231) 935-0051
CONTACT US

Community Based Outpatient Clinics:

**Alpena** 180 N. State Avenue
989-356-8720

**Bad Axe** 1142 S. Van Dyke Rd, Ste. 100
989-497-2500, Ext. 15602

**Cadillac** 1909 N. Mitchell Street
231-775-4401, Ext. 11410

**Cheboygan County (Mackinaw)**
14540 Mackinaw Highway
231-436-5176

**Clare** 11775 N. Isabella Road
989-386-8113, Ext. 13530

**Gaylord** 806 S. Otsego
989-732-7525, Ext. 13520

**Grayling** 1680 Hartwick Pines
989-344-2002

**Oscoda** 5671 Skeel Avenue, Ste. 4
989-747-0026, Ext. 11411

**Traverse City** 3271 Racquet Club
231-932-9720, Ext. 11412

**Grand Traverse VA Clinic**
(Physical Therapy and Mental Health)
880 Munson
800-406-5143, Ext. 13653

---

Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center
1500 Weiss Street, Saginaw, MI

VA Healthcare Annex
4241 Barnard Road, Saginaw, MI

800-406-5143
Call Center, Extension 11230
Tele-Nurse, Extension 11240

---

Connect With Us At:
www.saginaw.va.gov
www.facebook.com/VASaginaw
www.va.gov

---

We invite you to sign-up for our periodic e-mail and website updates by visiting our webpage and subscribing with your e-mail address.