Leadership Prepares and Serves Lunch to Veterans and Staff in Honor of National Nutrition Month

Kay Bower (left) AD/PCS and Roxanna Campbell (right) dietician, story on page 2

photo by: Patrick Gault
Battle Creek VA Medical Center
The VISN 11/12 Optical Laboratory located in Indianapolis began in 2002 with a mission to better serve our Veteran population. Initially, the lab only served Veterans within VISN 11’s catchment area and had just four employees who worked in a small 900 square foot area in the basement of an administration building. In 2004, VISN 12 joined forces with VISN 11 to serve in this mission and that partnership continues today. The demand for eyewear continued to grow and by 2007, it had grown to 200 pairs per day; in order to meet this new demand, the lab was moved to a 4,000 square foot facility and fitted with production equipment.

In January of 2013, new state-of-the-art semi-robotic equipment was installed that increased production capabilities, dramatically improved turnaround time, improved service, and quality. The lab now produces 450 to 500 pairs per day and on average, it takes less than three days to ship an order. This equipment has extremely high precision; it can hold tolerances less than 1/100th of the thickness a human hair. These capabilities mean Veterans receive world class quality in their eyewear. The lab processes all styles of lenses in most materials and Veterans have a choice of over 60 different frame styles. The frame and lenses are warranted for one year from the date of dispensing. In addition, the lab realized a total cost avoidance of over $4 million in FY12 and FY13; the lab will fabricate an estimated 120,000 pairs of eyewear in FY14.

Demand for eyewear in VISN 11 & 12 has continued to grow and it had become apparent that the lab had again outgrown its facility and a larger facility would be necessary to continue to meet this growing demand. Discussions between VISN 11 & VISN 12 and the Optical Board of Directors resulted in the decision to move to a new larger facility that will allow the lab to double the amount of robotic equipment. The $2.5 million will enable the lab to fabricate 1,000 jobs per eight-hour shift. This increased capacity will also provide the capacity for additional VISNs to be served, resulting in increased cost effectiveness. Other plans for the laboratory include an agreement to offer eyewear through the Canteen Service and industrial eyewear for our engineering departments.

Cover Photo — Kay Bower, Associate Director for Patient Care Services, prepares a healthy shrimp fried rice recipe with Registered Dietician Roxanna Campbell in honor of National Nutrition Month held in March. Senior leadership spent the day serving Veterans and staff lunch in the Canteen. Dr. Ketan Shah, Chief of Staff (pictured right) served pizza to Veterans.
As our workforce continues to grow, so does VISN 11’s Workforce Development Board. VISN 11 recently solicited new members and were overwhelmed with the response and now have a total of 22 members from across the VISN. This includes representatives from senior leadership, clinical services, administrative services, supervisors, nurse recruiters, human resources, education, diversity and AFGE.

VA’s Key Initiatives for Workforce Development are:

- Hire the Best Talent
- Respect & Engage the Workforce
- Expect the Best from Employees

In April 2014, the Workforce Development Board will meet to develop and focus on ways to support VA’s Key Initiatives, as well as VISN and National Strategic Goals and objectives.

The following topics provide information and updates from the Board:

**Workforce Succession Strategic Plan** – Facilities have been hard at work for the last few months updating their Workforce Succession Strategic Plans for 2014, which outlines strategic initiatives for the year. The VISN 11 Succession Plan was due to VA Central Office by March 31.

**Diversity** – Are you aware of your facility’s MD-715 report? Management Directive 715 (MD-715), which reflects recent and significant changes in the law—including recent Supreme Court decisions, supersedes earlier Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) management directives and related interpretative memoranda on this subject, and provides new guidance on the elements of legally compliant Title VII (of the Civil Rights Act) and Rehabilitation Act programs.

This directive requires agencies to take appropriate steps to ensure that all employment decisions are free from discrimination. It also sets forth the standards by which EEOC will review the sufficiency of agency Title VII and Rehabilitation Act programs, which include periodic agency self-assessments and the removal of barriers to free and open workplace competition. Contact your facility Equal Employment Opportunity Manager to review the latest MD-715 report.

**Education** – Have you heard of MyCareer@VA? This is an interactive, online career development experience that empowers you to create a personalized career plan. You can achieve new professional goals, hone your skills, and map a personalized path toward career fulfillment.

MyCareer@VA was developed by experts at VA Learning University and subject matter experts from all VA administrations who share a commitment to helping you advance your career.

This one-of-a-kind website represents VA’s commitment to supporting employees throughout their careers with training, education, and developmental opportunities—all customized to your chosen career path. Check out MyCareer@va to find out how it can help you at www.mycareeratva.va.gov.

On February 7, employees from OI&T Region 3 and VISN 11 wore red in support of “Wear Red Day” and “Go Red for Women,” an American Heart Association initiative.
On January 16, VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAAHS) celebrated being the first healthcare organization in North America to receive Planetree Silver Merit recognition for Significant Advancement in Patient-Centered Care with a special award ceremony featuring presentations by Veterans and their loved ones who have received health care at VAAAHS. The event also featured presentations from Janet P. Murphy, Veterans Health Administration’s Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management and Dr. Tracey Gaudet, Director of VHA’s Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation.

VAAAHS celebrated National Salute to Veteran Patients Week this year with visits from Senator Sherrod Brown, Congressman Tim Walberg, Bob Latta and Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur. Others also visited, including the Eastern Michigan University football and softball teams, as well as the University of Michigan baseball and women’s basketball teams.

120 physicians affiliated with the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAAHS) appear on the Best Doctors in America® List for 2014. Only five percent of doctors in America earn this prestigious honor, decided by impartial peer review. VAAAHS experts listed in the database includes world-class specialists in Geriatric Medicine, Neurology, Surgery, and many other specialties.

Pictured left to right: Drs. Robert Werner, Bruce Richardson, Charles Ellis, Seema Saini, Clare Duvernoy, Robert Hogiyan, and Marcos Montagnini. A few of Ann Arbor’s Best Doctors in America® List recipients.

Pictured left to right: VISN 11 Network Director Paul Bockelman, VAAAHS Director Robert P. McDivitt, Planetree Representative Jeanette Michalak, VAAAHS Veteran Centered Care Coordinator Linda Harrison and VHA Acting Deputy Undersecretary of Health for Operations and Management Janet P. Murphy.
Cheff Center Receives Certificate of Appreciation in Honor of Therapeutic Program Offered to Veterans

Dr. Mary Beth Skupien (left), Medical Center Director, Battle Creek VA Medical Center, presented Tara East, Executive Director, Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center, with a Certificate of Appreciation for the work done at the Cheff Center in support of Veterans. The Recreation Therapy Service from Battle Creek works closely with the Cheff Center to use horses as a part of the treatment plan offered to Veterans. Also pictured are Kimberly Ziel, lead recreation therapist, and Gary Decker, recreation therapist (right). On the horses are Veterans who are involved with the program.

GO RED FOR WOMEN!

Leadership and staff at Battle Creek VA Medical Center participates in “Wear Red Day.”

On February 7, employees wore red in support of “Wear Red Day” and “Go Red for Women,” an American Heart Association initiative. “Go Red” information and healthy recipes were also available at CBOCs and medical center displays.
PACT Recognition for VAIHCS

Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) recognition began in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 with the first awards being presented in 2012. For FY 2013, PACT recognition was based on the thresholds and benchmark targets for the following metrics:

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<th>Threshold</th>
<th>Benchmark Target</th>
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<tr>
<td>Continuity</td>
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<td>77%</td>
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<td>Ratio of Non-Traditional Encounters</td>
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<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Same Day Access with PCP</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Day Contact Post Discharge</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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VA Illiana Health Care System (VAIHCS) has a total of 33 PACTs located in Danville, Peoria, Decatur, Mattoon and Springfield, Ill., as well as West Lafayette, Ind.

There have been a growing number of VAIHCS PACTs that have received recognition over the past three years. In FY 2011, seven of the 33 PACTs received recognition. FY 2012 yielded 18 teams that received this recognition. In FY 2013, VAIHCS received a greater portion of the award recognitions for VISN 11 with 23 teams receiving these prestigious recognitions. Several of the 33 VAIHCS PACTs have received recognition consistently over the past three years.

ILLIANA WELCOMES NEW MEDICAL CENTER DIRECTOR

On March 9, Japhet C. Rivera became the Director for VA Illiana Health Care System (VAIHCS). Prior to arriving at VAIHCS, Rivera was the Deputy Director for the Caribbean Healthcare System. Rivera also served in the U.S. Army Medical Department for 20 years.

Highlights

- Recently, VISN 11 Network Director Paul Bockelman visited the VA Illiana Health Care System and toured the PACT Clinics. He also visited the Peoria Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

- Resident of the Freedom House, Walter Jacob Tatar, celebrated his 100th birthday with family and staff.

- VAIHCS celebrated Black History Month in February with a program that included a musical performance by “VA Voices” (Illiana’s employee choir).
Hiring Fair and services offered March 1st for Veterans.
The Suicide Prevention Team was recently awarded the 2013 Patient Safety Hero Award by the Indianapolis Coalition for Patient Safety. This group manages the Suicide Prevention program at the Indianapolis VA Medical Center, which was created in response to statistical evidence showing high rates of suicide among returning service members. This group works across interdisciplinary lines to ensure that Veterans are identified as “high risk” for suicide when appropriate and that their care and condition are monitored and tracked. Team members include Travis Field, Judi Green, and Christina McNeely.

The Suicide Prevention Team manages the case load of Veteran patients designated as “high risk” for suicide, which requires frequent monitoring of mental status and suicide risk, and assessment of risk or mitigating factors. They liaison with Pharmacy Service to set limits on refills and the actual numbers of pills dispensed to “high risk” patients to reduce the availability of medication for overdose purposes. They also respond to Veterans served by the medical center in instances in which Veterans have called the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255, press 1) asking for help when in distress.

Over the past few years, the Indianapolis VA Medical Center has had several actual situations where the rapid response and coordinated intervention of this team has resulted in saving the life of the Veteran in crisis. Suicide Prevention is an important patient safety endeavor and the medical center salutes their award winners.

Highlights

- Specialty medical and surgical care recently expanded into new space. Over 14,000 square feet of space was renovated to expand specialty outpatient services such as pulmonary, podiatry, urology, and many more. The medical center celebrated the activation with a ribbon cutting on March 19.

- “Shout Out” to the Million Veteran Program (MVP) team! The team recruited 56 patients on February 28. Veterans from Indy West and Blood Draw station joined the national effort, which is at or close to a quarter million Veterans in this research program. The number puts Indianapolis at the top of all sites for a single day of recruiting. This is a heroic effort. MVP and the phlebotomy team have partnered frequently throughout the course of the campaign, along with Indy West, which has been an integral part of the campaign’s success.
Eric Dungan, Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator and Dr. Jim Lowery, Psychologist from VA Northern Indiana Health Care System, and the Honorable John Feick, Delaware County Circuit Court #4 Judge, presented at the Ball State University Criminal Justice and Criminology Department’s first Professional Development Seminar of the Spring 2014 semester. The presentation was given to more than 300 participants, comprised of students, faculty and staff members. The presenters discussed the Delaware County Veterans Court and its mission to help justice-involved Veterans gain access to needed treatment programs offered by the VA for PTSD, TBI, substance abuse and other military related mental health issues. Dungan gave a brief description of PTSD and TBI for the audience and how both can lead a Veteran to turn to self-medication through alcohol or other illicit substances.

The request for the three men to present at the Professional Development Seminar came from Jerome McKeen, Ph.D. Associate Professor and Interim Chairperson Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology. Dr. McKeen, along with Delaware County Veterans Service Officer Janet Davis, were presented with a Delaware County Veterans Court Challenge Coin by Judge Feick at the conclusion of the presentation. The Delaware County Veterans Court team made Indiana news when featured on an evening report for Indianapolis television station FOX 59 News, shown on Veterans Day.
The MOVE! program has been a progressively successful program for several years at the Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center (VAMC). To continue and expand upon this success, the MOVE! Intensive Outpatient Program (MOVE! IOP) was developed and implemented to provide a more intensive, interdisciplinary weight loss program for Veterans. MOVE! IOP is a relatively new concept that originally began in Saginaw as a pilot project in August 2012. Since the pilot phase, MOVE! IOP continues to assist Veterans in achieving weight loss success.

Veterans succeed due to the use of an interdisciplinary approach that combines experts in nutrition, physical activity, and mental health (among other disciplines) to provide support and guidance for Veterans enrolled in MOVE! IOP. During each session, four Veterans are admitted for a 12-day stay (in a lodge status) within the Aleda E. Lutz VAMC Community Living Center. Each Veteran receives individualized care, counseling, fitness and health planning, and engages in therapeutic activities, group education classes, and supervised fitness; these are just a few aspects of their busy stay.

Veterans follow a very low calorie diet of only 800 calories per day. Although the calorie intake is tremendously restricted, many Veterans quickly adjust and generally feel quite satisfied, due largely to the nutritional adequacy and high fiber content of the food they receive, as well as the close supervision and constant support provided from a number of Registered Dietitians.

Some Veterans who have completed the program are logging major weight loss of more than 20 pounds, with an average loss of 15 pounds. The opportunity to learn and experience such excellent healthcare outcomes in such a short period of time provides Veterans with that extra boost of confidence and motivation they need to continue their weight management pursuits at home and actively engage in outpatient MOVE! group sessions and other sessions as well. Such personal gains, along with support and encouragement from dedicated health care professionals, are two invaluable benefits of Veteran participation in MOVE! IOP. MOVE! continues to expand venues for Veteran participation to include Tele-MOVE! and on-line applications.
The VISN 11 Leadership Development Program (LDP) is offered annually to build a mentoring relationship that is beneficial for both the mentee and the mentor. This program expands the understanding and skill set for each member during the course of a year, while participating in three face-to-face meetings and a long-term project. Participation is based on a competitively-based selection process and incorporates the High Performance Development Model to build future leaders within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Recently, the VISN 11 LDP class of 2014 participated in the University of Michigan Challenge Program consisting of group-oriented activities designed to help members to get to know each other and build the foundations for working together. As the Challenge Program progressed, the group was presented with more difficult and complex team-based challenges such as the High Ropes Course and Climbing Tower, enhancing leadership skills as the group worked together to set goals, determine roles, and developing strategies.
Employee Retention Incentive Education Debt Reduction Program

The Employee Retention Incentive Education Debt Reduction Program (EDRP) may be authorized as a retention incentive when the VISN and medical facility management determines that the unusually high or unique qualifications of the employee or a special need of the medical facility for the employee’s services make it essential to retain the employee. The EDRP program authorizes VA to make debt reduction payments to certain permanently appointed employees in VHA facilities, community-based outpatient clinics or Consolidated Mailout Pharmacies who have outstanding qualifying educational loans. This program endeavors to assist VISN 11 facilities in meeting its current or anticipated staffing needs in certain direct-patient care or health care occupations for which retention is difficult.

The maximum amount of an EDRP award is $60,000 for five years of service. An award may be provided in one to five payments, with no more than $12,000 awarded in any service period of an employee’s participation in the program. Certain exceptions to the award cap may be made by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or designee. Evidence of need may be based on some or all of the following:

a. Unique or high qualifications,
b. the likelihood the employee would leave for employment outside the Federal service if the employee does not receive EDRP, and
c. the extent to which the employee’s departure would affect the agency’s ability to fulfill its mission.

Each EDRP award is considered for approval by the Healthcare Retention and Recruitment Office based on a facility’s difficulty to recruit and retain qualified personnel for a specific position at the particular VHA facility where the EDRP applicant was permanently appointed. For additional information about the program’s requirement, contact your facility’s coordinator: Theron Allen (VISN 11), Patrick Daul (Ann Arbor), Valerie Rich (Battle Creek), Renea Bogan (Indianapolis), Jeff Grayson (Northern Indiana), LaDonna Franklin (Detroit), Rebecca Diskin (Illiana), and Beth Keyser (Saginaw).

Fast Facts About ICD-10

Why will VISN 11 be updating our coding system from International Classification of Diseases, 9th Revision (ICD-9) to ICD-10 code sets next year?

ICD-9 was released in 1979. It is old for a classification system, is not specific enough, and is no longer able to be expanded. It cannot keep up with current disease processes and the technological practice of medicine. With ICD-10, VISN 11 will have expanded capabilities for specific morbidity (disease) and mortality reporting; plus, we will be able to compare our data from the U.S. to world-wide data, as the U.S. is the last developed country to adopt ICD-10.

What are the differences?

ICD-9

> 3-5 characters
> Mostly numeric
> Separate E & V code categories
> No code extensions or laterality
> +/- 16,800 codes total

ICD-10

> 3-7 characters
> All Alpha-numeric
> Contains code extensions & placeholders
> Codes are laterality specific (L vs. R)
> +/- 140,000 codes

What are we doing to prepare?

Each facility, including the VISN office, has an ICD-10 Implementation Team preparing for this change. Each team is responsible for assessing current encounter forms, clinical reminders, contracts, databases, interfaces, and clinical documentation where ICD-9 is currently in use. Provider training is being prepared to assist clinicians with this change.

Training and Resources can be found here:

• From your facility’s ICD-10 POC
• From the VISN 11 ICD-10 Implementation Share Point site https://vaww.visn11.portal.va.gov/sites/ VISN11/icd/SitePages/Home.aspx
• From the VHA Health Information Management site http://vaww.vhaco.va.gov/him/icd10.html
• From VA eHealth University (VeHU) site http://vaww.vehu.va.gov/