



VA
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SNAPSHOT



Central Texas Veterans Health Care System

Vol. 2, Issue 7
Fall 2013





Letter From The Director

Sallie A. Houser-Hanfelder, FACHE

Can you believe the holidays are upon us, and we're about to start another new year? Since I became your director a short four months ago, we have faced some challenges, but I'm proud to report Central Texas Veterans Health Care System staff continues to provide Veterans with excellent medical care.

Central Texas Veterans Health Care System ended FY2013 with 93 percent of blues and greens in our performance measures. Preliminary results for the first month of FY2014 show us at 88 percent, but we have not received data for all of the measures yet. These measures reflect your commitment, and I thank you for your continued devotion in caring for our Veterans. Our common goal is to take care of the men and women who enter our doors—from World War II Veterans to the most recent Veterans of Operation New Dawn. Through the holidays, I know it's hard for some of our Veterans who are in the hospital, community living center or domiciliary to be away from their family and friends, so I encourage you to spread a little extra cheer to them this season and let them know we care about them.

To everyone at Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, I wish you a wonderful and safe holiday season as you gather with family and friends.

May you have a safe and Happy New Year!

Sallie A. Houser-Hanfelder
Director

Funny Quote of the Quarter:

"Every day I break my personal best record of consecutive days alive."

Jim Gest, Imaging Service

Quote of the Quarter:

"The greatest prison people live in is the fear of what other people think."

Author unknown
submitted by Michaela Brown, Sterile Processing Service

Do you have information to get out to employees? Do you have a story to share or an upcoming event? Get it out thru the

Snapshot Newsletter!

The CTVHCS Snapshot is an organizational newsletter of activities and a source of information for Veterans, employees and volunteers of the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System. Use the CTVHCS Snapshot to publicize activities and to recognize outstanding accomplishments. The Snapshot comes out quarterly. Submit your articles, stories and awards to CTXsnapshot@va.gov. The deadline for the next edition will be January 30th for the Winter 2014 edition.

Please submit documents in Microsoft Word and send pictures in jpg format. Include pertinent information needed for captions for pictures and author of the article. If you are contributing an announcement of an upcoming event, please include the date, time, location and contact information.

All submissions may not be included in the newsletter. The Editorial Board will make the final decision and reserves the right to edit submissions chosen for publication.

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CTVHCS Projects

Temple Campus

- Move IT Service and equipment to its new building
Status: Complete
 - Move CLC and Hospice units to new building
Status: Complete
 - Building 163 Elevator Upgrade – only one elevator will out of service at a time while the upgrade is underway. Engineering Service will post signs close to the elevator affected.
Status: In process
 - Building 163 Halls and Walls to refresh walls and upgrade flooring in the main lobby, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors
Status: In process
 - Move all services out of Building 162 to prepare for demolition of the building
Status: In process
 - Demolition of Building 162
Status: Tentatively set for second quarter FY14
 - Urgent Care Replacement
Status: Tentatively set to start construction second quarter FY14
 - Research Building 205 Addition
Status: To start construction FY14
 - Surgery Suite Replacement
Status: In Design, To start construction FY15
 - Other projects set for FY14:
Temple road repairs
Teague Hospital floor replacement
Other infrastructure improvements
- ## Waco Campus
- Building 93, Center of Excellence
Status: In process
 - New Laundry – underway and nearing completion
 - Building 8
Status: Project delayed
 - Repair Building 11 deficiencies
Status: Tentatively set for second quarter FY14
 - New Energy Plant
Status: In process
 - New Water Plant
Status: In process
 - Plus other infrastructure projects set for FY14

Brownwood employees honored for 20 Years of federal service

Congratulations to Amy Brantner, Supervisory Medical Support Assistant, and Troy Love, Facility Administrator, at the Brownwood CBOC, who were recognized and presented with their service pins for 20 years of federal service in October.

Amy started her career in the U.S. Army in 1989 and worked for Department of Defense before coming to work for VA. Troy started his career in the U.S. Air Force in 1989. After 6 1/2 years of service to our country, he joined VA. A luncheon was held in their honor. The Brownwood CBOC staff thank them for their 20 years of service to our nation, VA and the Veterans they now serve.



Brownwood CBOC celebrates 15 years of service to Veterans

Congratulations to the Brownwood Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). This past September, the CBOC marked its 15th Anniversary of service to Brownwood-area Veterans. Three of their staff members have been at the CBOC since it opened: Dr Charles Childers; Rosa Hoffman, RNC; and Sue Prince, LVN. These inaugural staff members were hired in September 1998 when the Brownwood CBOC first opened. A September 25, 2013, luncheon at the CBOC served a dual purpose—celebrating the clinic's 15 years of service to Veterans and honoring Dr. Childers, Ms. Hoffman and Ms. Prince for their service with the presentation of their 15-year pins. Thank you all for your service and congratulations to the clinic on your 15th Anniversary!



Photo by Sheila Fullwood

Congratulations to **Jessie Whitney**, Medical Administration (Temple Inpatient area) on his retirement after 45 years of dedicated military and federal service.

A bag of popcorn and a smile...courtesy of the “Popcorn Queen”

Nothing in the universe can jingle the olfactory senses quite like the alluring aroma of popcorn.

Synonymous with a night at the movies, an exciting gathering of friends, or even a cozy night on the couch, the distinct fragrance can now be associated with a greeting for employees, patients and visitors entering the Teague Hospital (Building 204) in Temple.

Fresh off an easy stop at valet parking to drop off a vehicle for complimentary parking, Veterans and guests are treated to a familiar aroma and smiling face that adds a level of comfort to their hospital visit. That smiling face is has come to be known as the “Popcorn Queen” aka Carolyn Ferguson, a faithful volunteer, who greets everyone with a smile and offers a small bag of popcorn. Carolyn chats amiably and shares anecdotes with everyone who stops and expresses an interest.

“Very seldom do I have to turn off the machine in a typical day,” she says. “Most people also ask for the movie.”

Volunteering at the popcorn stand for the past three years, Ferguson recalls with fondness the honor she feels providing this courtesy. “You see the very best people walk through these doors,” she said. “All are so sweet and caring.”

Between handfuls of golden kernels, Brian Sims, Medical Service, administration support assistant, adds, “Ms. Ferguson adds a wonderful touch to the



Carolyn Ferguson hands popcorn to a Veteran at the Temple VA Hospital

entrance to this hospital. She’s much appreciated.”

While a small tin sits off to the side for donations, Ferguson lets everyone know there is no expectation for them to drop in any money. “It all evens out,” she kindly reports. “For every person that picks up a bag on the move, there’s one that’ll stop and chat. You can see the camaraderie.”

“Carolyn is the only volunteer who does our popcorn. A lot of our employees and Veterans look forward to seeing her as much as the popcorn, Monica Smith, Voluntary Services Specialist reports. “People always ask about her when she’s not there,” says Smith. “I really enjoy her contribution. She’s a committed volunteer.”

Center for Applied Health Research

On behalf of the Center for Applied Health Research (CAHR), Drs. Laurel Copeland, John Zeber and Eileen Stock are pleased to share a summary of the FY13 research activities conducted by our Health Outcomes Core.

Created in 2010 as a jointly sponsored center between the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System and Scott & White Healthcare, our goal is to facilitate the integration of health research into clinical care focusing on the improvement of care delivery and the well-being of our community. In addition to maintaining our own independent research projects, we also provide consultation on study design and statistical methods; we encourage clinical researchers to contact us to discuss possible collaborative ideas to support grant proposals and scientific publications.

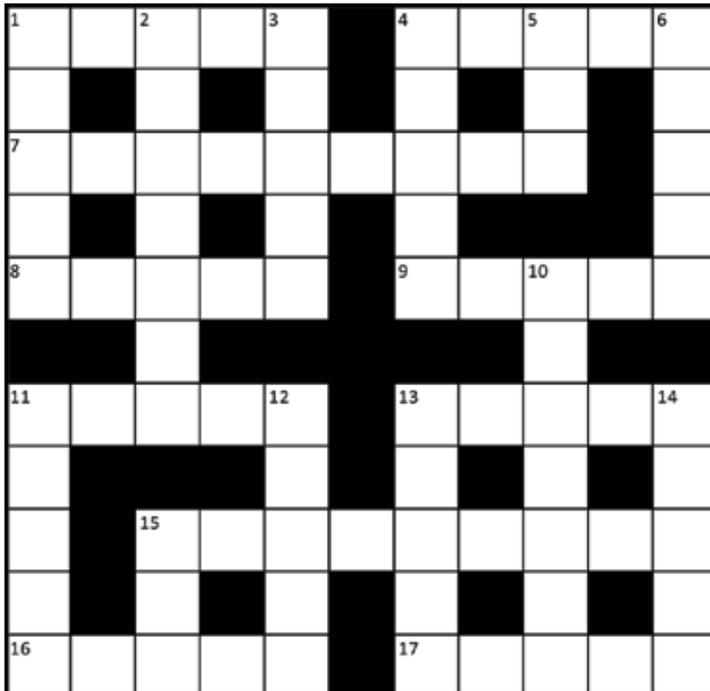
During the third fiscal year of operations (September 2012 – August 2013), our core achieved the following: 18 grant proposals submitted, seven of which were awarded funding; 19 manuscripts published with another 18 papers under review at year-end; 17 presentations at research conferences, plus the ongoing expansion in mentoring junior investigators at both institutions. Dr. Copeland was selected as Interim Associate Chief of Staff for Research in June 2013, and Dr. Zeber continues to serve as chair of the Institutional Review Board. Both investigators also assumed lead roles on several national and international research organizations, including the HMO Research Network and Academy Health.

For more information and a full copy of our FY13 annual report, please visit <http://czresearch.com/cahr> / or contact John Zeber at john.zeber@va.gov.

Waco's PRRP Program Celebrates 25 years of service to Veterans

This past October on the Waco VA Medical Center grounds, the Post-traumatic-stress Residential Rehabilitation Program (PRRP) celebrated its 25th Anniversary and invited program graduates and their families to participate in the two-day event. Activities included educational groups, a barbecue, live music, dancing, and what may have been the first ever car/truck/motorcycle show on campus! With the help of donations made to VA Voluntary Service by community partners, PRRP hosted approximately 300 attendees and 79 cars, trucks, and motorcycles. To the men and women who have passed through our doors and those who are yet to come, CTVHCS welcomes you home!

History of PRRP: On October 1, 1988, the Waco VA Medical Center opened the doors of a brand new treatment program specifically tailored to the needs of war Veterans. Over the next 25 years, the program expanded and evolved as times changed and new information about treatments became available and as Veterans' needs changed. Today, the program can brag of more than 5,000 admissions. Veterans who have been treated have served around the world and in every American combat theater from the historic liberation of Europe and Pacific Basin in World War II to the ongoing War on Terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan.



Across

- 1 Author of the Odyssey and the Iliad
- 4 A group of warships
- 7 Country of Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane
- 8 A German drinking vessel
- 9 Monies owed
- 11 Italian sauce, traditionally with garlic and basil
- 13 Tuesday in France
- 15 Greek goddess of love
- 16 Slightly cooked steak
- 17 To take aim

Down

- 1 Listen to
- 2 Adam Scott 2013 winner in the US with 9 under
- 3 Syndicated television show
- 5 To make application for
- 6 A braid of hair
- 10 ...up the wrong tree?
- 11 First wedding anniversary
- 12 Two days ago
- 13 Feelings and emotions
- 14 Immobile
- 15 Comprised mostly of 78 % Nitrogen, 21 % Oxygen

Upcoming Events for Voluntary Service in December are as follows:

- Annual Christmas Party for Austin Volunteers at the Austin OPC in the large first floor Conference Room A25 on December 21, 2013, 12 p.m.
- Voluntary Service Christmas Gift and Fruit Distribution for Temple inpatients in the Teague Hospital, on December 23, 2013, at 10 a.m. Starting location is Teague Hospital lobby near valet parking.
- Voluntary Service Christmas Gift Distribution for Waco Campus inpatients, on December 23, 2013, at 12 p.m. Starting location is Stracke Auditorium, Building 6.



FLU Season Is Here!

If you haven't gotten your flu shot yet, you can still get yours at Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Service. If you received your flu shot elsewhere, please call EH&S Service to let them know the date.

Staff Enhancement Calendar Of Events

December 2013

– Holidays

Unplugged

Fridays

December 20 – Crazy Costume Friday

(Dress as your favorite ornament, as a tree, a wreath, angel, tree topper)

December 27 – Bling Friday

(Wear some bling as we prepare to ring in 2014)

January 2014 – Get Healthy Fridays!

January 3 – Pedometer Friday

(get a pedometer and set a goal to walk at least 1 mile today)

January 10 – No Elevator Friday

(use the stairs to get some cardio going)

January 17 – Sneaker Friday

(wear your sneakers so your feet are happy taking those extra steps)

January 24 – Fruit Tray Friday

(reward your healthy goals and activities by snacking on healthy fruit)

January 31 – Healthy Friday

(wear your pedometer and sneakers, don't use the elevators, and eat more fruit!!!)

Holiday Ethics Reminder

Gifts, Celebrations, and the Ethics Laws from the VA Designated Agency Ethics Official

NOTE: A gift includes any gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, or other item having monetary value, but does not include modest items of food or light refreshments offered other than as part of a meal.

Gifts between Employees

Generally, a Federal employee may not give a gift to an official superior or accept a gift from an employee who receives less pay.

However, on an occasional basis, including any occasion on which gifts are traditionally given or exchanged, such as the holidays, the following individual gifts to a superior are permitted:

1. Gifts other than cash valued at \$10 or less (e.g., a \$10 box of chocolate). Note: Gift cards constitute cash if they can be redeemed for other than store credit (i.e., change is given in cash).
2. Food and refreshments shared in the office (e.g., a holiday pot luck luncheon),
3. Personal hospitality in the employee's home of the type that is customarily provided to personal friends (e.g., supervisor attends an employee's holiday open house), and
4. Gifts given in connection with the receipt of personal hospitality that is customary to the occasion (e.g., employee brings a \$17 bottle of wine to a holiday dinner party at his supervisor's home).

Employees may not solicit monetary contributions from other employees for such an "occasional basis" gift to a superior.

There are NO legal restrictions

on gifts given to peers or subordinates (unless the supervisor is giving cash awards out of his or her own pocket), although common sense and propriety apply.

Gifts from Outside Sources

Generally, employees may not solicit gifts or accept gifts offered because of their official position or offered by a prohibited source (any individual or organization that does or seeks to do business with VA), including contractors, vendors, Veterans, and Veterans Service Organizations. Exceptions to this general rule include those that permit an employee to:

1. Accept unsolicited gifts (other than cash) not exceeding \$20, as long as the total amount of gifts that the employee accepts from that source does not exceed \$50 for the calendar year,
2. Accept gifts based on a bona fide personal relationship,
3. Attend an open-house or reception or other event, and accept any gift of food or entertainment offered there, if an "agency designee" determines that it is a widely attended gathering and that it is in VA's interest that the employee attend (please contact the Ethics Specialty Team for legal review of an event that you believe is a widely attended gathering), and
4. Accept invitations that are open to the public, offered to a group or class in which membership is unrelated to government employment, or offered based on an employee's or his spouse's outside business.

Office Holiday Celebrations

Supervisors holding or permitting VA office holiday parties must con-

form to the ethics rules by following these guidelines:

1. Participation must be voluntary. Employees must not feel coerced to participate in any way, including planning, preparation, financing, cleanup, or attendance.
2. Supervisors must not solicit contributions. Employees may pool funds for the purchase of office party supplies and refreshments. To prevent any appearance of coercion, however, non-supervisory employees should do the soliciting and collecting. A contribution amount may be suggested, but a required contribution amount may not be set. (e.g., \$5 for GS-12 and under but \$10 for GS-13 and up, is not permissible.)
2. Employee gift exchanges must follow the gift rules. Gifts to supervisors from subordinates are generally prohibited, but the exception for gifts of \$10 or less, given on an occasion when gifts are traditionally given, applies to holiday parties. Peers may exchange appropriate gifts, but an employee may not accept a gift from another who earns less.

Outside Holiday Parties:

Generally, employees may host holiday parties and attend parties of their choosing. If an outside party does not implicate any of the rules above, enjoy!

For Further Information: Contact the OGC Ethics Specialty Team at GovernmentEthics@VA.gov

Remember: Obtaining advice from an ethics official can protect you from disciplinary action and criminal prosecution. Happy Holidays!

CTVHCS Employee Holiday Recipes



Perfect Pumpkin Pie submitted by Sarah Garcia

Prep Time: 15 Minutes
Cook Time: 55 Minutes
Ready In: 1 Hour 10 Minutes
Servings: 8

Ingredients

- 1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin
- 1 (14 ounce) can EAGLE BRAND® Sweetened Condensed Milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 (9 inch) unbaked pie crust

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Whisk pumpkin, sweetened condensed milk, eggs, spices and salt in medium bowl until smooth. Pour into crust. Bake 15 minutes.
2. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees F and continue baking 35 to 40 minutes or until knife inserted 1 inch from crust comes out clean. Cool. Garnish as desired. Store leftovers covered in refrigerator.

Pumpkin Maple Pecan Cheesecake

submitted by Sarah Garcia
-- courtesy Anne Thornton

Prep Time: 20 min
Inactive Prep Time: 8 hr 30 min
Cook Time: 1 hr 35 min
Level: Intermediate
Serves: 1 (9-inch) cheesecake

Ingredients for cheesecake:

- 10 graham crackers, finely ground (1 1/3 cups crumbs)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 5 tablespoons butter, melted
- 3 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, at room temperature
- 3 large eggs, at room temperature for 30 minutes
- 1 (15-ounce) can pure pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 3 tablespoons pure grade B maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt



Maple Pecan Glaze:

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2/3 cup pure grade B maple syrup
- 3/4 cup pecan pieces

Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F.
For the crust: Here's a super-easy no-fuss way to make this crust. Break the graham crackers into a food processor with the sugar. Pulse until the crumbs resemble fine meal. Pour the crumbs into a 9-inch spring-form pan. Pour the melted butter over the mixture, bring together with your fingers and press into the bottom of the pan.

Cook's Note: Feel free to experiment with other graham crackers or cookies. Swap cinnamon or chocolate graham crackers for the original graham crackers for a tasty twist.

For the cheesecake: In a stand mixer with the paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese on high speed until fluffy. Reduce the speed and, with the mixer running, add the eggs. Increase the speed to incorporate the eggs. Add in the pumpkin puree, sweetened condensed milk and



maple syrup. Next, add in the cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Beat the mixture for awhile; this will make the cheesecake light and fluffy. Pour the pumpkin mixture into the prepared crust. Tap the pan lightly on the work surface to remove any air pockets.

Bake until the center appears nearly set, but jiggles a little when shaken, 1 hour and 15 minutes. Cool for 1 hour. Cover and chill at least 4 hours, or overnight.

For the glaze: In a medium saucepan, combine the cream and maple syrup and bring to a boil. Boil until slightly thickened, 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in the pecan pieces. Cover and chill. Stir together before serving.

To serve: Spoon the maple pecan glaze over the cheesecake.



Cindy's Pineapple Upside Down cake submitted by Cynthia Barber *"Pretty much safe for diabetics"*

Items needed

- 24 slices of canned pineapple drained and patted dry (Please use pineapple in juice, NOT syrup)
Save juice drained from pineapple; it will be used later
- 24 cherry halves, if maraschino rinse well

- 2 boxes Angel Food cake mix
- Brown Sugar Twin (optional)
- Pam or other spray
- Rectangle cake pan 9 in by 13 in

Place the 2 Angel Food mixes into a large mixing bowl. Add the liquid from the drained pineapples up to the amount listed on back of boxes, add water if needed. (Remember you are using 2 boxes of mix) Mix per package instructions.

Spray ONLY the bottom of the cake pan with Pam type spray. Optional: dust bottom of pan with Brown Sugar Twin, dump excess out of pan.

Place the 24 pineapple rings on bottom of pan. Place Cherry halves in center hole of each pineapple slice.

Pour mix over pineapple slices. Bake per cake mix instructions, after 20 minutes check cake to see if done.

This makes 24 servings if cut so that each pineapple slice equals 1 serving. I estimate this to be relatively safe for a diabetic with approximate exchange of 1 carb (starch) and 1 carb (fruit).

This was teen tested and approved. First time I made this for my Type 2 diabetic the teens at a party ate all of it before my husband got to taste it. It also will freeze well if wrapped in plastic wrap and then placed in a baggie.

Grandpa's Recipe: French Toast for Little Girls

submitted by Jeff McCasson

Ingredients or what goes in this excellent meal:

- 2 @ little girls - must be happy & hungry & wearing funny pajamas – it's the rules, lots of rules - sorry, (Note: little boys can be substituted for little girls at a 2 boys-to-1 girl ratio...)
- 1 puppy or kitten or both
- 12 slices of thick cut bread
- 5 large eggs - 3 for the French toast, one each for the little girls to drop
- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon banana extract
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- Maple syrup or fruit topping - [Uncle Al likes peanut butter ☹ he is so weird...]



How to or what to do:

Break three eggs in a large bowl – drop one egg on the floor, throw one egg at Daddy – again, rules

Add the vanilla and banana extract, and the milk to the bowl

Take turns and beat the mixture (not the children) together - spilling only a little bit on the floor and counter top (here is where the puppy or kitten is used – for clean-up)

Have Mommy or Daddy turn on the stove and get the griddle hot

Dip each piece of the thick bread in the bowl - both sides - quickly - don't let the bread get really soaked - just wet

Stand back 3 feet and throw each piece of battered bread at the hot griddle on the stove - try to hit the griddle with at least 10 of the pieces of battered bread – rules again (Daddy and the puppy/kitten get whatever hits the floor)

Flipping the bread as necessary to achieve a nice golden brown color

Cut the finished pieces of French toast corner-to-corner and arrange on plate in a pretty pattern

Add butter to taste

Sift the powdered sugar on top (of the French toast - not Mommy! unless she is still in bed, then go for Mommy...not a rule, but worth the effort – she's mad at Grandpa anyway...)

Cover French toast with the syrup (warmed, but not hot) the fruit or peanut butter

Eat...and enjoy

Little girls (or boys) are encouraged and expected to eat with their fingers; they can eat it right off the plate if they like

Parents must use a fork! Don't know why, but it's the rules.

Children are allowed to feed Mommy and Daddy if they like - no forks though

Chew with your mouth open and talk while you eat - rules again - sorry

Whatever the little ones don't eat can be buttered and syrup added then put in their pockets for later.

It is also acceptable to put the left over French toast in Mommy's purse if you are going somewhere – just in case you get hungry and need a snack. Believe me – she's had worse in that purse...just sayin'...

Grandpas love the little ones – for limited durations of time - so practice making French toast so you can make me some while we're still on good terms - TTFN!

Feds Feeding Families



The Brownwood CBOC staff partnered with their local VFW Post 3278 Ladies & Mens Auxiliaries to collect 629 pounds of food. This food was donated to Good Samaritan Ministries, a food pantry in Brownwood. Pictured from left to right are Billy Masters, Fred Fernandez, Rosa Hoffman, Betty Reigle, Jane Masters, Mary Lou Cisneroz, Barbara Fabianke, Amy Brantner, James Masters, Margaret Kerby, and Mark Mayo.

THANK YOU to everyone who donated items to this worthwhile food pantry program!

From June 24-August 31, 2013, CTVHCS staff overall collected 2,295 pounds for Feds Feeding Families.

Two individual employees will be inducted into "The Office of Personnel Management's Hall of Fame" for donating more than 250 pounds:

Ester Logiudice – 387 pounds
Laurel Copeland – 295 pounds



CTVHCS Service Spotlight: Utilization Management

Utilization management (UM) is the evaluation of the appropriateness, medical need and efficiency of health care services, procedures and facilities according to established criteria or guidelines. The evaluation is conducted by experienced, trained registered nurses as required by VHA regulation.

UM has two review aspects within the VA system. The two aspects consist of prospective and retrospective utilization management. Prospective utilization management monitors health care cases for the efficiency and cost effectiveness before and during health care administration using Inter-Qual criteria. An example of this type is in our own Veteran inpatient cases.

At Central Texas UM nurses review the care of acute medical, surgical and behavioral health inpatients against Inter-Qual criteria to determine if the inpatient is being seen at the right level of care, at the right time, and for the right reason. Efficient and quality health care delivery is the desired outcome.

The other aspect of UM is retrospective. Retrospective monitors whether health care was appropriately applied after it was administered. An example of retrospective utilization management is in reviewing the care our Veterans have received from facilities outside of VA such as emergency room visits. Again, Central Texas UM nurses review the care to assure the Veteran received quality services at the right setting, right time, right reason and right level in an efficient way.

While the CTVHCS UM program is nationally mandated by VA regulation, it goes the next step to ensure as many Veterans as possible receive the best quality of care. If you have questions about UM, call Patient Administration Service and speak to Tonia Arris at ext. 41340 or Cindy Matl at ext. 42725.

What is Utilization Management (UM)?

UM is a process for assessing the delivery of healthcare services to determine if the patient is receiving the right care in the right setting at the right time for the right reason. UM applies evidenced-based practice (standards of care) using Interqual criteria to promote quality, increase efficiency, improve access, and encourage fiscal responsibility in regard to the resources.

Why should I care about UM?

VA resources are limited, but the needs of our Veterans are not. By evaluating each patient's needs, UM assures resources are used efficiently to allow VA to serve more Veterans. Nursing documentation plays an important role in UM's daily assessment of each patient's needs.

Assessments can confirm whether the patient is receiving the right care in the right setting at the right time for the right reason or if another level of care may be more appropriate. This promotes continuity of care and assists with patient flow throughout the system.

Employees invited to join the CTVHCS Kindness Movement

The Staff Enhancement Committee is challenging EVERY CTVHCS employee to join our Kindness Movement. Research has shown that demonstrating kindness to others has a positive impact on our own well-being and outlook on life. Being the recipient of an act of kindness can prompt similar action on our part, generating a beautiful, never ending "thread of kindness." What does kindness mean? According to the Encarta dictionary, kindness is the practice of being or the tendency to be sympathetic and compassionate, or an act that shows consideration and caring. Synonyms include thoughtfulness, consideration, helpfulness, and compassion.

December is Giving Month!

It's the time of year when we feel so much better when we give. Not everyone can afford a gift, but we can always give our time. Surprise a co-worker with a random act of kindness, it can be completely anonymous! There are many organizations that could use a helping hand during the holidays – give your time! Celebrate the meaning of the holiday season by giving something of yourself to others!

Thank you for participating!

CTX Staff Enhancement Committee
(Outlook comments or suggestions
to CTXStaffEnhancement@va.gov)

Participation abounds at this year's Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Thanks to the Suicide Prevention Team, who took the role of social worker and coordinator to this year's Suicide Prevention Awareness activities, participation rose to all-time new level of success. As evidenced by the three Suicide Prevention Stand Downs, 16 different entities participated making this a banner year for the event. Participants included organizations from VA and the greater Central Texas community that provided booths and informational materials about their services. Over 250 participants enjoyed the event.

This year's "It Matters" theme was selected to encourage staff to identify what matters to Veterans in helping them keep motivated and functioning.

In keeping with this theme, the team sought out booths with services that "matter" to Veterans.

- Does a job matter to you? We have a VRT booth to visit.
- Do finances matter to you? We have a regional office booth for that.
- Do problems with the criminal justice system matter to you? We have a Veterans Justice Outreach here for that.

- Does healthy eating and exercise matter to you? We have the MOVE program booth to visit to get information.
- Does relaxation matter to you? Come get a chair massage.
- Veterans could even enjoy interactive booths, such as watching a demonstration of the Veterans chatline on the

Service and the Women Veterans' Program for food and refreshments.

- They used creativity and innovation to seek out promotional items that would be well received by Veterans.

Acknowledgements

- Thank you to the coordinators of the Suicide Prevention Stand Down: Natalie Qualls, Linda Methvin, Anna Hauser, Kim Randolph, Jennifer Howland, and Rita Coker
- Kudos are extended to volunteers who assisted: included Tiffany Love, Daryl Dulany, Robert Bee, Robert Sebesta, Daniel Hart, Rekita Justice-Logan, Jana O'Leary, Vivian Mims, Corey Glasgow, Jeanette Skinner, and Debra Pate.
- CTVHCS leadership sends their compliments to the team for a job well done.

- Newspaper coverage of the event was very complimentary as well.

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of CTVHCS staff, the awareness event was a great success. The hope is that it will become an annual event.



computer or learning how to develop a safety plan to use when they are in crisis.

Team Planning

- The creativity that the Suicide Prevention team used to tie in the theme went above and beyond expectations.
- The team worked diligently to coordinate with Voluntary

Women Veterans honored at Garden Estates luncheon



Pictured are: Sheila Hemingway, Angelique Black, Rhonda Coward, Debra Ford, Judy Grayson (Family Advisor of Garden Estates of Temple), Mary Martin, Victoria Bryant (Executive Director of Garden Estates of Temple), Vivian Minns, Jana O'Leary and Maralee Tudor.

Thanks to the Garden Estates, several women Veterans who receive their care at the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System were honored at a "Veterans Day" luncheon Friday, November 15, 2013. The luncheon was held at the Garden Estates of Temple, located at 5320 Loop 205.

The luncheon to honor women Veterans was the idea of Victoria Bryant, the Executive Director of the Garden Estates, who is also a Veteran. Ms. Bryant said she wanted to give back to other women Veterans and tell them "thank you" for their service. Ms. Bryant comes from a family with imbedded roots of military service. Her mother and several other family members are Veterans, so her decision fell in line with her heritage.

Our women Veterans were provided lunch, great conversation, a moisturizer and a scarf to help keep them warm during this winter season.



Austin staff participates in NAMI walk

An Austin OPC Mental Health Team participates in the "NAMI Walk 2013: Veterans Marching Against Stigma" held September 28, 2013, in downtown Austin. Pictured Left to right are: Dr. Prati Shah (Staff Psychiatrist), Dr. Vina Patel-Mehta (Staff Psychiatrist), Dr. Steven Eilers (Chief, MH&BM, AOPC), Ms. Liz Wright (friend of VA staff member), and Dr. James Coleman (Staff Psychologist – MHICM Team Lead).

Clothesline Project spotlights awareness on domestic violence



To bring awareness of violence against women, the Clothesline Project was held at the CTVHCS Temple, Austin and Waco campuses in November. For women who have been affected by violence, the event allowed them a means of expressing their emotions by designing a t-shirt and hanging it on the clothesline. The intention of the "Clothesline Project" display is to honor survivors and act as a memorial for those who have been killed by violence. Various colors of t-shirts along with paint were available to participants to create their personal expressions. The different colors of t-shirt represent a specific category defined in "The Laundry List" below.

For more information on the Clothesline Project, please visit: <http://www.clotheslineproject.org/>

THE LAUNDRY LIST

The shirt colors in the Clothesline Project have different meanings.

- **White:** Victims who died as a result of domestic violence
- **Yellow or Beige:** Women and children who have been battered or assaulted
- **Red, Pink or Orange:** Women and children who have been sexually assaulted or raped
- **Blue or Green:** Women and children who have survived incest
- **Purple or Lavender:** Women and children attacked because of their sexual orientation

Source: The Clothesline Project handout



CTVHCS Pinkest Contest



Waco's Bella Beauty College treats women Veterans to make-overs

On October 23, 2013, Bella Beauty College of Waco partnered with the Women Veterans Health Program to conduct its first Ladies Day Outing. Four women Veterans took advantage of the free make-over.



The Ladies Day Outing is more than just a trip to the beauty shop. The make-over allows each woman to build their self-esteem and confidence by getting a chance to get pampered and feel important. The outing is also a chance for women Veterans to socialize with other women Veterans as well as get to know the Women Veterans Health Program staff.

This latest "pampering" project was orchestrated when Vivian Minns, Women Veterans' Clinic social worker contacted the Bella Beauty College owner, Linda Colwell. Ms. Colwell was excited about giving back to our Veterans and the community, so she agreed to provide some of our women Veterans with a shampoo, cut/style, and a manicure/pedicure at no charge. Arrangements were made by collaborating with Kimberly Kinerd, the Women Veterans Outreach Worker, and Mental Health psychologists from Mental Health Intensive Care Management, PRC (spell out) and the Seriously Mental Ill Life Enhancement Programs.

Veteran Georgia Smith was a photographer in the Air Force during the Vietnam era. Georgia says it's been 30 years since she's had a manicure and had her nails painted silver while at Bella Beauty College. She said sometimes people forget about the feminine side of being a Veteran.

Sixty-seven-year-old Army Veteran Mrs. Juanita Woody was excited about her new haircut and was ready to show it off.

Veteran Bobbie Hyder-Cooper said she was very pleased with her wash and style.

Veteran Naomi Begnaud received a manicure and wash/style.

They all expressed their gratitude after being pampered and look forward to their next outing.

Reporter Jordan Bontke covered the outing, and his story is available on the KCEN-TV website at: <http://www.kcentv.com/story/23772367/pampering-our-veterans>

Featuring Your **Pets**



Giddy up little horsey. My name is "Baby Dog" and my master Carolyn Claggett. I love to ride with her, so she's taking me on a ride for the holidays.



My name is Portia, and I'm spoiled rotten so says my master Bobby Smith. I'm an European Doberman, and I rule the house!



My name is Jammer, and I'm Portia's Boss'. She may be spoiled rotten and thinks she rules the house, but I have news for her! Toy poodles may be small, but you know they say dynamite comes in small packages!

All I want for Christmas is to go see "Beverly Hills Chihuahua." Can anyone drop the hint to my master Kim Faraoni?



My name is Epajean, and my mom is Rebeca McCracken-Pruske. What does a baby have to do to get a little sleep around here? Don't you know I have to get my beauty sleep!

IRB recognizes Fremont Hodson

The CTVHCS Institutional Review Board (IRB) recently recognized Fremont Byron Hodson, III, for his faithful service. Mr. Hodson has more than 5 years on the IRB as a IRB Community member.

Mr. Hodson is the son of a U.S. Army Infantry Officer. He moved to the Temple/Killeen area in 1970 and graduated from Killeen High School in 1971. He served in the U.S. Army for over three years as a Military Policeman. In 1974, he was honorably discharged from the armed forces and joined the Killeen Police Department.

Hodson graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from the University of Central Texas. He served with the Killeen Police Department for 15 years specializing in organized criminal conspiracies. A graduate of the FBI National Academy and trained by

the Internal Revenue Service in asset investigation and analysis, he participated in the seizure of drug-related assets worth millions of dollars. Hodson attained the rank of Captain of Police and commanded the Staff Services, Criminal Investigation, and Organized Crime Divisions.

In 1989, Mr. Hodson became a financial advisor. He is a Registered Principal Investment Advisor with over 23 years of experience offering securities and investment advisory services through a private investment firm in Temple..

In March of 2008, he was speaking with the Rector of Christ Church about his desire to volunteer in some area so he could be of service to returning Veterans receiving care at VA. Shortly after that conversation, Hodson, out of the blue, received an invitation



to become a member of the IRB at Central Texas Veterans Health Care System as a Non-Scientist/Community Member. Even since, he has faithfully served in this capacity, and CTVHCS extends its appreciation to him for his service.

Cardiac Catherization Lab/Hybrid Operating Room Opens at CTVHCS



Congratulations on the opening of a new Cardiac Catherization Lab/Hybrid Operating Room at CTVHCS. A ribbon cutting and open house was held November 7, 2013, to celebrate the new service at CTVHCS and allow staff and visitors a chance to tour the new area and see the state-of-the-art technology being utilized for cardiac catherizations.

Baby Boomers and Hepatitis C

By Dawn Scott, Physician Assistant
Lead Viral Hepatitis Clinician
Central Texas Veterans Health Care System

What is Hepatitis C? Hepatitis C is a virus that affects your liver. Many people with Hepatitis C have no symptoms and can live for years with the infection without feeling sick. When someone is exposed to the Hepatitis C virus, about 80 to 85% do not get rid of the virus and it becomes a chronic infection. Over years, the infection can cause serious problems including cirrhosis or liver cancer. Hepatitis C is the leading cause for liver transplantation in the United States.

How to get tested? A simple blood test is needed to check for prior exposure to Hepatitis C. If that test is positive, then a second test for the actual virus is done to see if there is a chronic infection.

What is the deal with baby boomers? The Centers for Disease Control, as well as the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force, currently recommend that all baby boomers have a one-time test for chronic Hepatitis C. More than 75% of the Hepatitis C in the United States is in people born from 1945 through 1965, the baby boomers. It is estimated that over half of the Hepatitis C cases in the United States go undiagnosed, because people have not been tested.

What about Veterans? Veterans in this age group are even at greater risk. More than one in seven Veterans in this age group will test positive for prior exposure to Hepatitis C. More than one in ten will have an active Hepatitis C infection. The numbers are even worse for our black Veterans where more than one in five will test positive for prior exposure and almost one in six will have an active infection.

Is there treatment for Hepatitis C? Yes. There are medication regimens to treat the virus, and in some cases, cure Hepatitis C. There are newer treatments in clinical trials that will have less side effects and be more effective than current treatments. A couple of these new medications are likely to be licensed within the next six months.

Where can I get more information?

www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis

www.Hepatitis.va.gov

<http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/pdf/hepatitisC-booklet.pdf>

What should I do? If you were born between 1945 and 1965 and have not been tested, contact your primary care medical provider and ask to be tested. Encourage your family members and friends in this age group to be tested. Encourage the Veterans you serve to be tested. Help us to spread the word about Hepatitis C screening recommendations.

Austin OPC Halloween photos

Mike Makar
– Penguin



Brian Turner –
Pumpkin Head



Pedro Diaz
– Cheech



Antoinette
Gibson-Taylor –
Cleopatra

What is SAW?

SAW stands for School at Work®. SAW is the premier career development system for entry-level workers in the healthcare industry. SAW is a proven tool to grow our own workforce, providing education and encouraging career advancement. SAW is a bridge program that prepares employees for better-paying jobs and for entrance to local community colleges. It blends learning instructional model (Coach, Career Counselor, DVDs, Internet, workbooks) and delivers education on-site at the employer location.

The SAW vision is to dramatically expand access to education for adults employed in support-level jobs. This vision is being achieved by working closely with employers to help them realize a return-on-investment and by using technology to deliver education.

SAW is not a degree granting program; it prepares employees for career advancement and/or future education.

Participants spend two hours per week in class (on duty time) and approximately two hours per week self-study (on student's own time) and is conducted over a six-month period.

For more information or questions about the SAW Program, contact Rosalind Gambles at ext. 42938.

SAW graduates —where are they now?

2008 Class

Donnalee Jones, Mental Health & Behavioral Medicine (MH&BM), continuing education in culinary arts (Austin)

Alvin Molden, *Environmental Management Service (EMS)*, now working in Medical Administration Service (MAS), (Veteran)

2009 Class

Stephanie Coggins, *EMS*, now working in MAS as a Medical Support Assistant (Veteran)

Colette Pagan, *EMS*, now working in MAS as a Medical Support Assistant (Veteran)
2010 Class

Lakisha Little, *MH&BM*, received tuition reimbursement, now LVN pursuing a BSN (Veteran)

Nikia Matthews, *N&FS*, received certification in Billing and Coding

Jessica Moore, *N&FS*, now working as receptionist in the Domiciliary

2011 Class

Lyle Byrd, *EMS*, promoted to EMS Supervisor, and now working in MAS and continuing education in Health Information Management (Austin, Veteran)

Kayla Love, *Veterans Canteen Service*, promoted and now working in Pathology and Lab Service

2012 Class

Louis Russell, *N&FS*, now working in Medical Administration Service in the call room (Waco, Veteran)

Reannetta Cox, *EMS*, promoted to Secretary in Environmental Health and Safety (Veteran)

2013 Class

Emma Cotton, *N&FS*, promoted within service, now Lead Supervisor (Waco)

Jill Johnson, *MAS*, promoted to Advance Medical Support in Medical Service (Veteran)



MyHealthVet celebrates 10 years of service

Keeping America's Promise: Online Access to Support Veterans Health

The Department of Veterans Affairs Personal Health Record, My HealthVet (www.myhealth.va.gov) celebrated 10 years of online access on Veterans Day, November 11, 2013. Many of you may recall that time 10 years ago when VA first launched its online patient portal – look how far this online service has come!

In recognition of these pioneering 10 years of online access via VA's My HealthVet, please personally invite all Veterans, Servicemembers and employees to join the millions already accessing VA health care information and services such as VA Prescription Refill, VA Notes, VA Blue Button and Secure Messaging with their VA health care providers. With this milestone, VA's goal is to make sure all take full advantage of My HealthVet's features.

Throughout the month of November and upcoming year, our CTVHCS My HealthVet Coordinator, Larry McDonald, continues to partner with the Outreach, Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP) Committee and the Public Affairs Officer to organize community events, host enrollment

and education at health fairs, lead training sessions, and work with VA Voluntary Service to showcase how My HealthVet contributes to more informed and more engaged Veteran patients. VA continues to build its My HealthVet online personal health record (PHR) by adding new online tools and features.

CTVHCS would like to take this opportunity to thank our current and past My HealthVet Coordinators as well as our many partners who have helped us reach this milestone. Here at Central Texas, we can be proud of our numbers. As of November, we have 72,044 My HealthVet registered users, and 47,107 have an upgraded Premium account which allows them greater access to key VA health care services. As you can see, we have come a long way since 2003. We still have room to grow, but it takes all of us working together as a team. So thank you all, especially to our primary care teams and medical support assistants for their tremendous efforts.

For anyone who isn't yet familiar with the PHR, My HealthVet (www.myhealth.va.gov) is VA's award-winning website that offers

Veterans secure access to portions of information in their VA health care records anywhere and anytime. Its web-based tools give users greater control over their care and wellness, helping them become active partners in their health care. In addition to allowing Veterans access to their records, My HealthVet lets them save, print and share their health information using the VA Blue Button, refill VA prescription(s) online, and track their health activities, among other functions. Veterans who upgrade their accounts, free of charge, can opt in to Secure Messaging to communicate electronically with their VA health care teams between visits, and they can also view VA appointments, get VA Wellness Reminders, access VA lab results, and much more.

VA is dedicated to providing Veterans with the best experience possible via the My HealthVet online portal. We are proud to celebrate a decade of online access to Veterans and look forward to a future of even more access to meet the growing needs of our Veterans.

Please encourage all our Veterans, Servicemembers and employees to enroll or upgrade today at www.myhealth.va.gov.

For more information, contact, Larry McDonald at 254.743.0100.



Congratulations to the new GI Clinic that opened at the Austin Outpatient Clinic in October 2013. The team members of this new team are: Lamarcus Martin (MAS); Joel Thomas RN, BSN, Vicki Matamoros (Health Tech); Anjana Lyons, RN, BSN; Christina Kramer RN, BSN (Nursing Supervisor); Dr. Enrique Spindel; John Badger, LVN; Patricia Eary, RN, BSN; Greg Ward (Health Tech); Fatima Evans, RN, BSN; Maribel Lee (Health Tech)-(sitting); Joseph Cavitt, RN, BSN; and Obinna Uzochukwu (MAS). Dr. Spindel is already busy seeing patients, and endoscopy procedures are set to start the first of the year.



HEY, Good Catch! A message from Patient Safety

*There once were RCAs, actions, and outcomes
That teased us along like bread crumbs,
But we worked shoulder to shoulder*

*Making actions stronger and bolder,
Now we can stand up and cheer,
We made **GOLD** Cornerstone* this year!*

Thank you to all CTVHCS staff for your participation on teams and workgroups to improve patient safety!

Thought for the day:

Patient Safety is a core value, not a commodity that can be counted.

HEY! Good Catch!

What's the *Gold Cornerstone Award?

Do you know of a situation where a patient or visitor could have been injured, but timely intervention prevented an error or injury?

Let us know. We would like to recognize these "Good Catches"!

It's national recognition of organizations that have met the following criteria:

- Patient Safety Analyses: Complete 9 RCAs each within 45 days.
- Alerts and Advisories: Final actions for all Patient Safety Alerts and Advisories are completed by the due date.
- RCA Actions: 85 percent of all RCAs and ARs have at least one intermediate or stronger action with management concurrence.
- Outcome Measures: 95 percent of all RCAs and ARs have at least one quantifiable outcome measure.
- Ratings: 95 percent of all outcome measures due during the fiscal year are rated for effectiveness.
- PSAT: Using WebPSAT, complete Element 1, "Leadership" and Element 2, "Patient Safety Program Management" during the fiscal year.
- Culture Survey: For the FY14 NCPS Patient Safety Culture Survey, at least two actions the facility intends to take to promote participation in the patient safety culture survey are entered on the NCPS website by the end of the FY.
- Promoting a Culture of Patient Safety: At least two actions, strategies or programs implemented for six months or more that support patient safety and/or a patient safety culture are entered on the NCPS website, e.g. CTT, The Daily Plan®, NPSGs, prevention of hospital acquired conditions, etc.

STOP THE LINE! for patient safety. Communicate your concern.

3 "W"s ©

1. What I see
2. What I'm concerned about
3. What I want

4 Step Assertive Tool

1. Get Attention - Use title or first name
2. State Concern - "I'm uncomfortable with"...
3. Offer Alternative - "I want you to..."
4. Pose question - to get resolution

Michele Vavich

named Social Worker of the Year

Submitted by: James Coleman, Ph.D. Austin MHICM Team Lead, Mental Health.



Consistently demonstrating exemplary performance, teamwork, and dedication as a member of the Austin MHICM team, Michelle Vavich was selected as social worker of the month in August of 2012 and then the Central Texas Nominee for the Under Secretary's for Health's Hands and Heart Award the same year.

Vavich provides a good role model for her peers and demonstrates her keen sense of determination while seeking a quality treatment plan for all Veterans, regardless of the situation. A member of her team sent an email expressing, "Perhaps her greatest strength is her ability to view challenging clinical situations as opportunities for growth. This was best exemplified in her work this

year with a pregnant Veteran who had yet to engage in treatment and was initially very psychotic and overtly hostile. This Veteran, who is now very engaged in her own recovery, recently stated that, "without Michelle, I would be dead or locked up. She is super-awesome at what she does." Her encouragement of staff and other Veterans has led to many cases resulting in positive outcomes such as this.

This past year, Vavich led numerous outings and created numerous groups, including a Gingerbread House outing, pancake group social outing, recurring farmer's market outings, yoga outings in the spring, and recurring swimming outings in the summer to name a few. She initiated a haircut group that provides haircuts free of charge to Veterans

plus a drop-in breakfast group at a local Denny's restaurant that is open to any Veteran. Another recent and exciting success was a cooking class series that she organized with lessons and education by the Sustainable Food Center, a local agency that promotes healthy eating. Vavich additionally noticed gaps in knowledge of community resources among providers after which she organized a Community Resource Brown Bag Series that meets monthly.

Ms. Vavich introduced innovative ideas for organizing activities for the MHICM Program, including calendars of events for Veterans and duty rosters for staff on the team. She works cooperatively and compassionately with Veterans in the program to assist them in developing their independence and achieving their recovery goals. The MHICM Program staff and Veterans have benefited from her superior knowledge of VA and community resources. Ms. Vavich saw a need to develop a roster for travel and staffing for each Veteran to ensure visits were being met for the month, and the team implemented her proposal. She created the MHICM Team Merit Badge for her co-workers in the wake of two challenging cases and encouraged her peers to join her as the captain of the MHICM team during the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) walk this past year.

Congratulations Michele Vavich for being selected as Social Worker of the Year and providing exceptional patient-centered care and supporting VA commitment to provide the high, quality care to our Veterans.