



THE VISN VOICE



November 2008

I THOUGHT YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW

Mr. Garfunkel

The election is over, and like many of you, I am anxious to see what changes may come to the VA in the next 4 years. As you may know, there is an official President Elect Obama web site “change.gov” that gives information on lots of issues. I thought I would share with you what this web shows about what we can expect. The following is taken directly from the “change.gov” web site, and therefore should represent the changes the new administration is planning for VA health care:

Reverse the 2003 ban on enrolling modest-income veterans, which has denied care to a million veterans.

Make the VA a leader of national health care reform so that veterans get the best care possible.

Improve care for polytrauma vision impairment, prosthetics, spinal cord injury, aging, and women's health.

Establish a national "zero tolerance" policy for veterans falling into homelessness by expanding proven programs and launching innovative services to prevent veterans from falling into homelessness.

Demand that the military and the VA coordinate to provide a seamless transition from active duty to civilian life.

Fully fund the VA so it has all the resources it needs to serve the veterans who need it, when they need it.

Establish a world-class VA Planning Division to avoid future budget shortfalls.

Recruit more health professionals, improve screening, offer more support to families and make PTSD benefits claims fairer.

Establish standards of care for Traumatic Brain Injury, the signature injury of the Iraq war.

Expand and strengthen Vet Centers to provide more counseling for vets and their families.

It sounds like we have a very exciting 4 years ahead of us.

Special points of interest:

*News From Around
the Network*

Washington DC VAMC

VAMHCS

Martinsburg VAMC

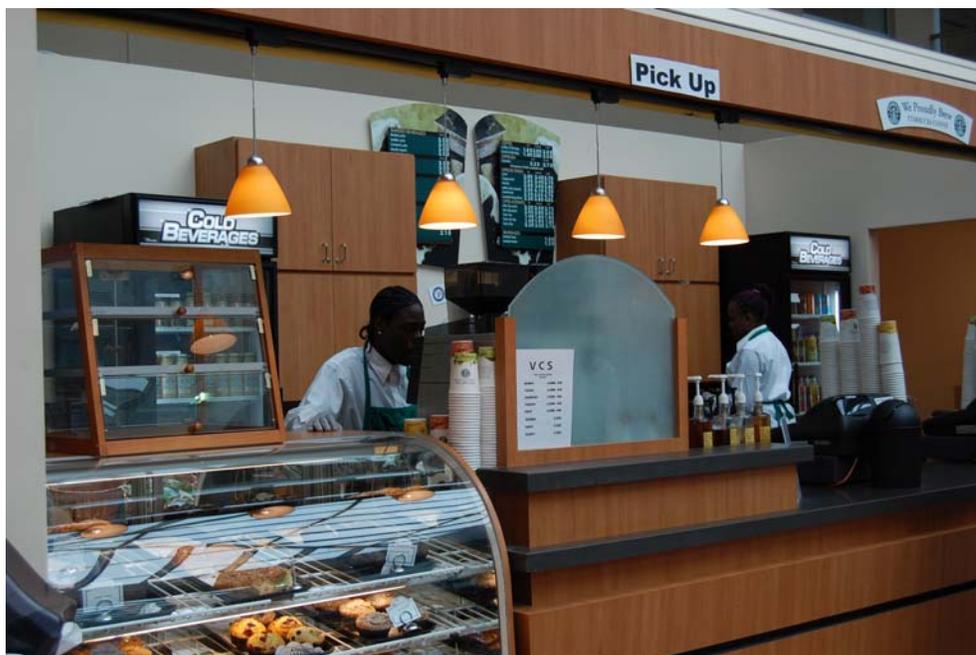
VISN 5 Service Area

Editors Note: How to contribute to THE VISN VOICE NEWSLETTER

The VISN Voice is a monthly Network publication, and a source of educational and informational articles for employees, volunteers, and veterans of the VA Capitol Health Care Network. Submit your information via outlook e-mail to [VISN5 Employee Newsletter](#) by the end of the month for the following month's publication. Please do not send PowerPoint or Published documents—use Word. Please include the following information: name, title, service, facility, and reason for submission. Submissions should not exceed 350 words. The editor reserves the right to make edits to any submission chosen for publication, and not all submissions will be chosen for publication. Ken Sliker—Editor

WASHINGTON DC VAMC NEWS

Veterans and Staff now have a new Starbucks Coffee Shop



Patients and employees of Washington DCVAMC now enjoy Starbucks coffee in the Atrium. The café also offers baked goods, specialty sandwiches, and salads. Soon the café will offer free internet access.

VA Maryland Health Care System Director Honored by President Among the “Best of the Best,” VA Secretary Says

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In addition, Smith’s outstanding leadership led the VAMHCS to be named one of the 10 Best Places to Work in Baltimore and the five surrounding counties for 2008. “Dennis Smith is an outstanding public servant who is truly deserving of the Presidential Rank Award,” said Congressman Elijah Cummings, who represents Maryland’s 7th District where three of the VAMHCS facilities are located. “I am immensely proud of his achievement and his unwavering commitment to our veterans and to our country.”

A native of Baltimore, Smith received his Bachelor of Science degree in

Business Administration from the University of Maryland, College Park; Master of Business Administration from Loyola College, Baltimore, Md.; and Master of Hospital Administration from George Washington University, Washington, D.C. He currently resides in Glenwood, Md.

Smith is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and served on the Board of Directors for the United Way of Central Maryland and the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training. He is also a delegate on the American Hospital Association’s Regional Policy Board.

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WASHINGTON DC VAMC NEWS

Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Award to Washington DC VAMC



The Secretary of Veterans Affairs presents the Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Award to Medical Center Director Fernando O. Rivera and staff during a ceremony in downtown Washington, DC on Oct. 31. The medical center received this coveted award for management processes that create outstanding patient outcomes. The award is based on the national Baldrige award criteria, used by thousands of organizations around the world to continuously improve efficiency and performance to become among the best in their fields.

DC VAMC Family Reaches out on Veterans Day



DC VAMC sponsored a one-hour news program on WUSA Channel 9 News, the CBS affiliate, on Veterans Day. The show included; on-air interviews with DC VAMC representatives Jean Langbein, OEF/OIF Program Manager and Dr. Stacey Pollack, Director, Trauma Services Program. Dr. Jonathan C. Ogbonna represented the VA Washington Regional Office and Mr. Fred Harvey of North America Blind Veterans (NABVETS) also participated. The phone bank received 82 telephone calls with questions relating to benefits, claims, clinical appointments, employment and interest in Medical Center Programs. Marketing of the news program began November 1 with more than 25 promotional messages airing on channel 9 news as well as the WUSA9 web site.

VA MARYLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (VAMHCS) NEWS

VA Maryland Health Care System Director Honored by President Among the “Best of the Best,” VA Secretary Says

VA Maryland Health Care System (VAMHCS) Director Honored by President Among the “Best of the Best,” VA Secretary Says.

Dennis H. Smith, Director of the VAMHCS, was among 21 employees of the VA recently honored by President Bush as one of the top civil servants in the federal government.

“Smith joins other recipients of this year’s Presidential Rank Awards as the best of the best,” said Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. “He has excelled in one of the noblest of callings, that of public servant.”

The prestigious awards are presented annually to senior members of the federal civil service for “exceptional long-term accomplishments.” Winners are chosen through a rigorous selection process. They are nominated by their agency heads, evaluated by boards of private citizens and approved by the president. The criteria focus on leadership and results.

“I am honored to be recognized for my contributions to the VA,” Smith said in response to receiving the award. “This award also reflects the superb performance and contributions of the more than 2,600 employees who work throughout the VAMHCS. As always, it’s a team effort.”

This honor is the newest milestone in Smith’s 35-year career with VA. He joined the VA in 1973 at the Washington, DC VA Medical Center (VAMC) as an administrative resident. Since that time, he has served at various levels within the Veterans Health Administration in senior administrative positions. Prior to being appointed as the director of the VAMHCS, Smith was

the chief of staff to the Under Secretary for Health in VA Central Office.

As Director for the VAMHCS, Smith directs one of the largest health care delivery systems in the state. He oversees the management and operation of the Baltimore and Perry Point VA medical centers, the Baltimore VA Rehabilitation & Extended Care Center (BRECC), and Cambridge, Glen Burnie, Fort Howard, Loch Raven and Pocomoke City VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC). Through this integrated health care system, he is responsible for the provision of care to more than 52,000 veterans throughout Maryland, with over 9,000 inpatient admissions, 727 inpatient beds and more than 600,000 outpatient visits made annually.

With his commitment to excellence, Smith has positioned the VAMHCS to be a leader in veterans’ health care, research and education. Through a staff of over 2,600 professional, technical and support personnel, the health care system is able to provide comprehensive services to veterans across the state, including medical, surgical, rehabilitative, neurological, primary and mental health care on both an inpatient and outpatient basis.

Under Smith’s direction, the VAMHCS has established one of the largest funded research and development programs in VA nationwide, including a Geriatric Research, Education and Clinic Center, a Multiple Sclerosis Center of Excellence and a Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical



Dennis H. Smith, the Director of the VA Maryland Health Care System, received the Presidential Rank Award.

Center. As a leader who is dedicated to cultivating future health care professionals, he also has cultivated an active affiliation with the University of Maryland School of Medicine and other local colleges and universities. Thanks to this commitment, over 1,100 residents, interns and students from various disciplines are trained throughout the VAMHCS each year.

As a creative and dynamic leader, Smith has a synergistic effect on the health care system by allowing his managers to develop innovative solutions and programs to serve the needs of Maryland’s veterans. Through this management style, the VAMHCS has the prestigious honor of being home to the world’s first filmless radiology department, which allows health care professionals to have nearly instant access to patient radiology images from anywhere in the system. Baltimore and the five surrounding counties for 2008. (Continued on page 2 under ‘VA Maryland Health Care System Director Honored’)

VA MARYLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (VAMHCS) NEWS

Loch Raven Clinic Expansion Improves Services



Drive up entrance of the Loch Raven VA Outpatient Clinic.

After two years of construction, the expansion of the Loch Raven VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) is complete and numerous enhancements have been added to the facility. As a result of the expansion, the clinic's physical footprint has increased by 18,700 square feet of space.

Inside, many improvements have been made to the existing clinical space and additional services and programs have been introduced to better serve Maryland's veterans. The first thing veterans will see when they walk in the main entrance is a new registration desk with privacy booths for patient check-in. Additionally, six exam rooms have been added for optometry services and four exam rooms were added to the podiatry clinic. There is also newly expanded clinic space that houses a larger blood drawing lab.

One of the additions to the clinic is the driver rehabilitation program, which

relocated from the first floor of the Baltimore VA Rehabilitation and Extended Care Center (BRECC). The program helps veterans with a variety of disabilities and age-related health conditions learn to drive again. Additionally, veterans with prosthetic arms or legs

and those who suffered brain injuries or stroke can also regain their independence through this unique program, which has already served a number of injured veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan.

To help improve access to care, additional physicians, nurses, and other support staff have been added and more will be added as additional clinics become available. "By increasing our number of providers, we are able to achieve shorter wait," said Andrea McKoy, site manager for the Loch Raven VA CBOC.



Entrance to the newly expanded Loch Raven VA Outpatient Clinic.

VA MARYLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (VAMHCS) NEWS

Outpatient Specialty Care Project Begins



The Baltimore VA Medical Center breezeway is closed to traffic. A pedestrian tunnel has been built in front of the revolving doors.

Outpatient Specialty Care Project: The Results

There are a number of renovation projects underway throughout the Baltimore VA Medical Center to improve patient access and expand clinical programs. The Outpatient Specialty Care Expansion Project is expected to take approximately two years to be finalized. Once completed, there will be a new outpatient clinic on the 2nd floor, expanded space for Research Service on the 3rd floor, and new space for the Prosthetics Treatment Center and Consumer Relations Service on the 4th floor.

New Construction will improve patient access

The Baltimore VA Medical Center's 2A Outpatient Specialty Care Improvement project, a major renovation project, includes the construction of a new clinic and office space on the 2nd floor of the medical center. The project entails building out over the drive-thru in front of the medical center's revolving door and main lobby area. The project will also involve building up three floors above the 2nd floor balcony, which is located adjacent to the library in the front atrium of the building.

The first phase of this project began on August 1, 2008, with the building of temporary construction barrier walls from the 2nd up to the 5th

floors.

Phase II of the project began in mid-August with construction of barrier walls outside of the revolving door to allow the contractor to bring construction materials inside the hospital without disrupting normal day-to-day operations. A temporary pedestrian tunnel was built within the construction barrier walls outside from the revolving door entrance to the sidewalk on Greene Street, to allow safe means of entry and exit. The breezeway directly in front of the hospital is now closed to traffic.

During the renovation project, we urge everyone to pay attention to posted signage that will provide information about new traffic patterns, detours throughout the medical center, and new entry and exit points at various locations.

MARTINSBURG VAMC NEWS

Flag Flown in Iraq presented to Martinsburg VAMC

On November 3, Gretchen Burks, a retired VAMC nurse and member of the 167th Air Guard, presented a U.S. flag to the medical center. The flag had been flown over Ms. Burks' deployment location in Iraq.



(L-R) Ann R. Brown, Medical Center Director; Gretchen Burks, RN, retired VAMC employee; and Susan George, RN, AMCD for Nursing/Education



ANNUAL HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST



October 31 was a "spooktacular Friday at the MVAMC." It was difficult judging the funniest, most originally, prettiest, scariest, and ugliest.

MARTINSBURG VAMC NEWS

2008-2009 LEAD Program Participants



(1st row L-R) Erin Shaw, Nursing Service; Barbara McGruder, Nursing; Julie Gray, Nursing; Regina Jordan, Nursing; Rosemary Buan, Pharmacy; and Shelby Nelson, Primary Care.

(2nd row L-R) Michael Porter, Police Service; Earl Burkhart, Police Service; Erika Blaylock, Nursing; Matt Mitchell, Facility Management Service; and Neville Leonard, Nursing/Education.

Martinsburg's LEAD participants are beginning extensive learning opportunities for the next year. The LEAD Program is a one-year developmental program for employees, GS-10 (WG or Title 38 equivalent) or lower, who are competitively selected as "high potential" employees. A variety of learning methods and experiences are included in the Program...classroom instruction, educational seminars, a Personal Development Plan (PDP), meetings with facility level staff members, mentoring/coaching, and project development.

New Information Security Officer



Christopher Campbell is Martinsburg's new Information Security Officer. He is a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISP). Chris previously worked in support of the Department of Defense as the Information Assurance Security Officer at the US Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC) at Fort Detrick, MD.

MARTINSBURG VAMC NEWS



Working 4 Wellness is an Employee Wellness Program at the MVAMC that actively encourages participation of all employees and volunteers. The Program works to inspire, educate, and empower participants with the most reliable health information so they can maximize their health, educate others, and serve as better role models for veterans.

Working 4 Wellness planning team members are comprised of interdisciplinary health professionals who are fellow employees. They work to provide opportunities and experiences that help others to be more healthful.

Julia Hudson, Wellness Coordinator, works with planning team members and Recreation staff to provide a variety of activities to help employees maintain a healthy program and stay motivated.

The activities currently being publicized include the following:

“Maintain, Don’t Gain”

Participants will weigh in and work to achieve
no more than a 3-pound weight gain throughout the Holidays.
Certificates of Success will be awarded at the end of the Challenge.

“Have Your Cake and Eat It Too!”

Lo-cal Holiday cooking demonstration and lecture presentation
Intern Dietitians, Danielle Belinski and Jena Ashworth,
present Holiday Dessert Recipes and cooking demonstrations.

“Climb the Stairs” Service Challenge!

Services are invited to “Create A Team” and register
Participants climb the stairs for fitness
and opportunities to win a free luncheon for their team.

The Great American Smoke-Out

Educational presentations -Handouts – free give-a-ways
Free smoking cessation classes, personal coaching and mentoring,
Free exercise and nutrition consultations.

Pilates Classes

Hoop Class Schedules

Offered at various times for different levels

Weight Watchers @ Work

Weekly weigh in’s and lectures

Try a meeting for FREE!

VISN 5 Service Area



Facility Numbers

VA Maryland HCS

1-800-865-2441

Baltimore VAMC Medical Care Line

1-800-463-6295

Perry Point VAMC Medical Care Line

1-800-949-1003

Baltimore Rehab & Extended Care Center

1-800-463-6295

Prescription Refill

1-800-463-6295, ext 7395

Martinsburg VAMC

(304) 263-0811

Medical Advice Line

1-800-817-3807 or (304) 262-4855

VETS Information

(304) 263-0811, ext 3758/3757

Monday—Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Or ext. 3050 after 4:30 p.m.

Prescription Refill

1-800-817-3807, prompt # 2

Washington DC VAMC

(202) 745-8000

Medical Advice Line

(202) 745-8247

VETS Information

(202) 745-4046

PTSD Clinic Number

(202) 745-8591

Prescription Refill

1-888-553-0242

Cambridge, MD

(410) 228-6243

Fort Howard, MD

(410) 477-1800

Hagerstown, MD

(301) 665-1462

Alexandria, VA

(703) 313-0694

Franklin, WV

(304) 358-2355

Charlotte Hall, MD

(301) 884-7102

Glen Burnie, MD

(410) 590-4140

Loch Raven, MD

(410) 605-7650

Harrisonburg, VA

(540) 442-1773

Petersburg, WV

(304) 257-5817

Cumberland, MD

(301) 724-0061

Greenbelt, MD

(301) 345-2463

Pocomoke City, MD

(410) 957-6718

Stephens City, VA

(540) 869-0600

Washington, DC

(202) 745-8685

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