



THE VISN VOICE



October 2008

I THOUGHT YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW

Mr. Garfunkel

Working for the VA

Do you ever stop to think how fortunate we all really are? As I watch the news almost every night, it is dominated by two issues. One is the financial crisis of our nation and, in fact, the world is going through. The other is the upcoming election.

As I listen to what is said, a couple of things become very clear to me. One is that having a job working for the federal government, is the best job in the world. All over the county, people are losing their jobs, as businesses are closing or greatly reducing the size of their employee workforce. Even where people are keeping their jobs, they are facing a year with either no pay raise, or even a reduction in salaries, as businesses struggle to meet payroll.

The second issue that becomes clear to me, is that no matter who gets elected this year, caring for our nation's veterans is held at such a high obligation and commitment for our country, that there is an agreement by all, to ensure that the VA remains adequately funded.

There are not many people these days, other than those of us working for the VA, that have both the security of working for the federal government, and the honor of caring for our nation's veterans. We all complain from time to time about work-related issues, but as we approach this holiday season, starting with Thanksgiving, I know that we all realize, especially this year, how much we have to be thankful for.

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](mailto:VISN5EmployeeNewsletter) 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

Suicide Prevention Rally guest speakers

Heather French Henry, Miss America 2000 and Dr. Victor Wahby



DC VAMC Suicide Prevention Rally guest speakers Heather French Henry, Miss America 2000 and Dr. Victor Wahby, Director, Office of Veterans Health Communications, stop for a photo after the rally September 10th at the Washington DC VAMC. The rally, sponsored by the Office of Veterans Health Communications, featured guest speaker Charles Mann, former Washington Redskins defensive end, and a performance by the Redskins cheerleaders. The medical center hosted a variety of activities in conjunction with National Suicide Prevention Week including guest lectures, information kiosks, and a suicide awareness walk around the fitness trail.

VISN 5 Employee Newsletter

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WASHINGTON DC VAMC NEWS

Welcome Aboard the Flagship!

New FMS Chief

Odeal Scott-Bedford has joined the medical center as Chief, Facilities Management Service (FMS). In this key role, Ms. Scott-Bedford will be responsible for providing direction and oversight of engineering operations to the DC VAMC. She comes to us from VA Medical Center in Fayetteville, N. C., where she provided direction and oversight of engineering operations there.



New EMS Chief

Environmental Management Service (EMS) has a new chief. Thomas E. Ross, Sr., comes to us from South Texas Veterans Health Care System, San Antonio, Texas. Mr. Ross, began his VA career as a Housekeeping aide and now brings a wealth of VA experience to DC VAMC, previously serving as Chief, EMS at VA Medical Centers: Northport, New York; Fort Howard, Maryland; and Hot Springs, South Dakota; and as Assistant Chief, EMS at Albany, New York.



New Patient Advocate Supervisor

Janet L. Bonner has joined the DC VAMC as Supervisor, Patient Advocate. Ms. Bonner recently retired from the U.S. Army with 20 years of active duty service as a Medical Service Corps Officer specializing in Human Resources and Development. Her last assignment was with Fort Steward, Georgia Medical Activity where she served as Director of Human Resources.



WASHINGTON DC VAMC NEWS

DCVAMC GETS TOP HONORS FOR OEF/OIF REHABILITATIVE CARE



Recipients of the prestigious Olin E. Teague Award with Secretary of Veterans Affairs, James Peake. From left to right: Dr. Stacy Pollock, Sevena Boughton, Secretary James Peake, Dr. Heather Malecki, Medical Center Director Fernando O. Rivera, Paula Gorman, Jill Cochran (Olin Teague's daughter), Katharine Bloeser, Jean Langbein, and Sheree Gordon.

Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, James B. Peake, awarded the 28th Annual Olin E. Teague Award to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Washington DC VA Medical Center (DC VAMC) in a ceremony at the National Guard Association "Hall of States" building in Washington DC, September 24.

The Secretary recognized the hospital's Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom

(OEF/OIF) Task Force for its work improving the quality of life for war-injured veterans. The team identified opportunities for improved case management of OEF/OIF veterans, and designed a health care structure that assigns one case manager to each veteran (over 7,400) currently enrolled at DC VAMC. This model is considered a "Best Practice" throughout the Veterans Health Administration.

The Olin E. Teague Award was

established by VA to honor the late Olin E. Teague, whose leadership in Congress as Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs provided vital support for the agency's mission of serving America's veterans. The award recognizes an employee or team within VA whose achievements have been extraordinarily beneficial to war-injured veterans' rehabilitation.

VA MARYLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (VAMHCS) NEWS

Welcome Home Maryland Veterans



Welcome Home Celebration Reaches Out to Latest Veterans

The VA Maryland Health Care System's (VAMHCS) 2nd Annual Welcome Home Celebration was another great success. This year's celebration was held on September 27th at the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis. Veterans browsed over 35 information tables and spoke to

representatives from various VAMHCS services, as well as representatives from various local community agencies.

Entertainment included a mechanical bull ride, moon bounce, inflatable slide, rock wall and a punt, pass and kick competition on the football field, in addition to performances by the ZOOperstars from *America's Got Talent*. To help people relax, massage therapists gave free-seated massages

to all attendees.

Besides the veterans, honorable guests included Miss Maryland and Miss Maryland Teen, who posed for photos, signed autographs, and danced with the crowd.

U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes joined VAMHCS leadership in welcoming veterans as they entered the Welcome Home Celebration.

VA MARYLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (VAMHCS) NEWS

Welcome Home Maryland Veterans



Congressman John Sarbanes, Maryland Third District, and Dennis Smith, VA Maryland Health Care System Director, greet a returning veteran as she enters the Welcome Home Celebration.



Racheal Jones, the coordinator of the VAMHCS My HealtheVet Program, talks to returning veterans about the benefits of registering for My HealtheVet.



A returning veteran and his baby pose with Poe, the Baltimore Ravens' Mascot, during the Welcome Home Celebration.



A returning veteran is greeted by Ana Maria Lawson, Miss Teen Maryland USA 2008 (left), and Casandra Tessler, Miss Maryland USA 2008 (right), during the VA Maryland Health Care System's Welcome Home Celebration.

VA MARYLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (VAMHCS) NEWS



VA Maryland Health Care System Named One of the 10 Best Places to Work in Baltimore

On Thursday, September 18, 2008, the VA Maryland Health Care System (VAMHCS) was officially named as one of the Baltimore Business Journal's 10 Best Places to Work in Baltimore for an organization with 500 or more employees. The health care system competed with over 90 other businesses, hospitals, universities, and financial institutions throughout the state for this prestigious honor.

The VAMHCS achieved a fourth place ranking in this year's competition, ahead of some very impressive businesses and organizations. Additionally, the health care system has the unique distinction of being the only Federal agency in Maryland to be named as one of the 10 Best Places to Work in Baltimore for 2008.

The 10 finalists for the Best Places

to Work competition, which covers Baltimore City and the five surrounding counties (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties), were selected based on employee responses to an online survey that was conducted by the Baltimore Business Journal for a three-week period. To be eligible to participate in the competition, the health care system needed a minimum of 195 employees to complete the online survey. Employees answered questions about job satisfaction, management style, trustworthiness, and their own job performance during the anonymous survey.

Here's what some employees have to say about why they feel the VAMHCS is one of the Best Places to Work in Baltimore:

"It really feels like working with a family, and everyone really cares about the work that they do for our veterans," said Dr. Christina Watlington, a psychologist with the VAMHCS Returning Veteran Outreach, Education, and Care Program.

"It's great to be a part of a high-energy organization like the VAMHCS where we are given the resources to effectively do our job of taking care of those who have served our country – our veterans," said Matt Camardese, a social worker for the VAMHCS.

"It's wonderful working for the VA and being able to give back to our veterans who have given so much for us," said Charlene Grant,

assistant chief of the Prosthetics Treatment Center for the VAMHCS.

The VAMHCS joins the ranks of AAI Corporation, Erickson Retirement Communities, Legg Mason Inc., LifeBridge Health, McCormick & Company Inc., MedStar Health, PHH Arval, Towson University, and Verizon Wireless as a part of the 10 Best Places to Work in Baltimore for the Large Company category.

This is the second such honor for the VA Maryland Health Care System, which achieved a seventh place ranking in the 2006 Best Places to Work in Baltimore competition.

MARTINSBURG VAMC NEWS

Welcome New Staff & Recognize Award Recipient



Ellyse Lamont, RN, MBA, became Coordinator of the Hagerstown CBOC in early August. Previously she had been Nurse Manager on Ward 5A.



Dan Reeser is the new Social Work Executive, transferring to Martinsburg from Brook Lane Health Services. He had been at Brook Lane for ten years and previously a social work intern at the Baltimore VAMC.



In mid-September, Jason P. Sawicki became Martinsburg's new Canteen Officer. He transferred from the VAMC in Richmond, Virginia. Jason is an Air Force veteran and he has eight years of federal employment.

Congratulations to Mary E. Marshall

Mary E. Marshall was recently presented the Secretary's Hands and Heart Award. This Award is presented annually to a facility employee who has demonstrated dedication and compassion in the delivery of patient care. Mary has 36 years of service at the medical center, and she has been a Dental Hygienist for the past 13 years. Joseph D. Hancock, DDS, nominated Mary and describes her as being an excellent clinical dental hygienist, an outstanding administrator for the dental hygiene student interns, and an employee who is always willing to take on an extra assignment for the betterment of the Service and the medical center.



MARTINSBURG VAMC NEWS

Submarine Veterans Memorial

On October 4, the Martinsburg VAMC hosted a dedication and unveiling of a beautiful Submarine Veterans Memorial to honor America's submariners. The Tri-State Base Chapter of the United States Submarines, Inc., an organization of U.S. Submarine veterans and active duty submariners, coordinated the event.



Martinsburg's National Golden Age participants, (front, l-r) Bob Such; Su Carroll; Jerry Beightol; Robert Sparkes; (back, l-r) Richard Purdie; Pierce Smith; Steve Ellis; Robert Hill; Charles Marshall; Joe Herbert; Darrell Anderson; Bill Randall; Jim Eells; John Harris; Norman Marriott; Ann R. Brown, Medical Center Director; and Rob Hugee.

Bringing Home the Gold

Sixteen Martinsburg VAMC veterans made the trip to Indianapolis, IN, in August to participate in the National Veterans Golden Age Games, along with more than 700 veterans from around the country. These 16 veteran participants, ranging from age 55-90, brought home nine Gold, six Silver, and four Bronze medals from 12 competitive events divided into six age categories.

Charles Marshall was also first place winner of the 2008 National Veterans Arts Festival (Special Recognition Category: Physical Disability).

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

(310) 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

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(540) 869-0600

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