

Summer 2018

Bay VISIONS



Quality | Access | Customer Experience | Employee Engagement | Operational Efficiency

It is never too late to quit:
**Veterans shake tobacco
habit with help from
Bay Pines program**

85 Years of Healing

Bay Pines celebrates 85th anniversary
in service to America's heroes

Hep C Screening Saves Lives

Veterans born between 1945-1965
encouraged to seek screening and treatment





From the Director

Thank you for taking the time to read Bay Visions, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System's quarterly news magazine. This issue is packed with feature articles intended to peak your interest and keep you informed.

The cover story focuses on how Veterans are taking advantage of our tobacco cessation program to improve their health and well-being. Another story featured includes the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System's 85th anniversary celebration and a short history of our organization. If you are a history buff like me, I know you will enjoy reading about our healthcare system's humble beginnings and robust expansion over the last 85 years.

There are also important articles about hepatitis C screening, low dose computed tomography screening for cancer, and VA's transformative whole health initiative.

Last, but not least, I would like to highlight an article on page 15 about hurricane preparedness. Last year, we experienced a very active hurricane season. It is never too early to be prepared. The article includes great information on how to prepare for a potential hurricane and important resources for information and assistance. Please enjoy the magazine.

Sincerely,
Suzanne M. Klinker
Director, Bay Pines VA Healthcare System



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Bay Visions is a quarterly publication produced for Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) stakeholders. Its purpose is to inform and educate. Contents of Bay Visions are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Veterans Affairs, the Veterans Health Administration or the Bay Pines VAHCS.

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Contents

Featured

- 4 Bay Pines celebrates 85th anniversary in service to America's Veterans
- 8 Knowing the enemy behind the lines: Veterans shake tobacco habit with help from Bay Pines

To Your Health

- 10 Hepatitis C screening saves lives
- 12 LDCT screening enhances cancer care at Bay Pines
- 14 A whole health approach to healthy living
- 15 Hurricane Season: Never underestimate the power of being prepared

Veteran Voices

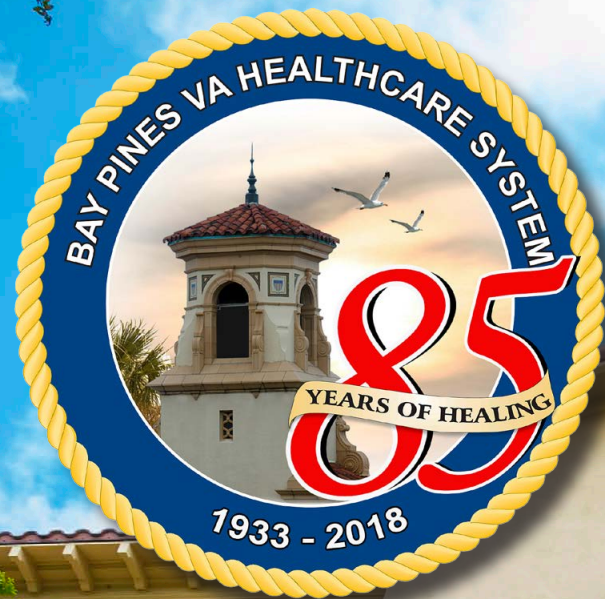
- 16 Read what Veterans and their loved ones are saying about Bay Pines

Employee Spotlight

- 18 A brief snapshot of employee accolades over the last several months



Have a story to share?
If so, send an email with your story idea to vhabaypublicaffairs@va.gov or call (727) 398-6661, extension 15031.



Bay Pines celebrates 85th Anniversary in Service to America's Veterans

The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) officially celebrated its 85th Anniversary on March 16. To mark the occasion, the organization held 85th Anniversary open house events at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center and Lee County Healthcare System on March 20. The events featured a plethora of information and resources to include, but not limited to VA health care benefits, VA benefits (non-medical), volunteer opportunities, VA employment information, women Veterans services, suicide prevention, and services specifically for Operation Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn Veterans. Vietnam Veterans who attended the open house activities received a special commemorative lapel pin, along with several other items, as part of the Nation's continued commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. Between the two events, approximately 400 Veterans attended.

The Beginning

In 1930, one-third of the 60,000 population in the St.

Petersburg area was out of work. The Great Depression had started in 1929. Real estate values were down by almost \$33 million. Urban income was rapidly declining. Florida had the highest per capita debt in the entire United States. In addition, Florida has just finished the 1926 land boom, survived killer hurricanes in 1926 and 1928, and the Mediterranean fruit fly infestation in 1929.

The entire community got behind its local leaders when word spread that Florida was getting a new National Soldiers Home. The community leaders knew they would have to compete with other Florida cities to have their site chosen.

Local businesses and civic organizations wanted the new hospital as a source of jobs plus a place to sell local agricultural products and other supplies. They also hoped it would increase tourism by creating a showplace. Although the newly formed Veterans Administration (VA) wanted to provide healthcare for Veterans, the fact that the local economy was in need of a public works project almost dwarfed that need.

Construction Begins

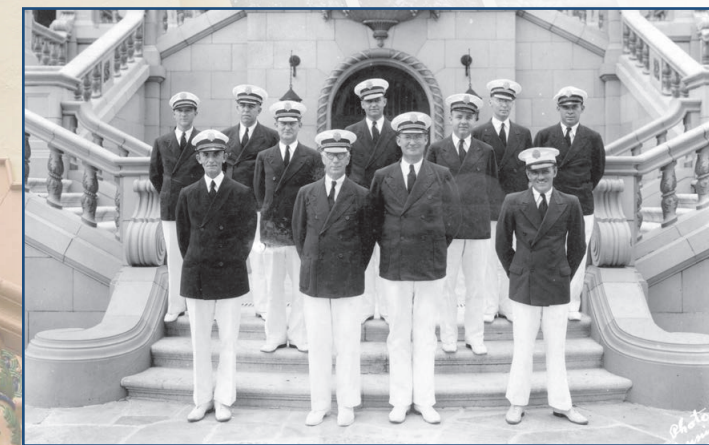
President Hoover approved the Saint Petersburg site of Seminole Point (now known as Bay Pines) as the site for the new Home. This beautiful but desolate site was selected from over 100 proposed locations. A selection committee headed by the first VA Administrator, Brigadier General Frank T. Hines, had personally toured all of the proposed sites. On Wednesday, May 27, 1931, the announcement that the Home would be located near Saint Petersburg occupied the entire front page of the St. Petersburg Times (now known as the Tampa Bay Times).

As construction began, jobs were limited to the local community. In fact, roadblocks at the Florida border stopped job hunters coming into the state. Approximately 1,424 men (428 of these were Veterans) preregistered to work in 36 job categories. On the first day of work, the road was jammed by local job seekers. VA set an hourly pay scale: bricklayers, plumbers, steam fitters, stonemasons, iron workers, tile workers, and electricians received one dollar per hour; unskilled laborers received 25 cents per hour. The project employed 800 workers, almost entirely from Pinellas County, and 75 government overseers.

Doors Open to Serve Veterans

On January 13, 1933, the first buildings were completed. They had a cost of slightly more than \$1 million and were located on 500 acres of land. The main hospital building (Building #1) had offices on the first floor as well as physiotherapy, basal metabolism, electrocardiography, medical records, an admitting office, and an x-ray department. The second, third, and fourth floors housed an operating room and wards for medical, surgical, and psychiatric patients.

Not surprisingly, the Home had a military atmosphere.



A photo of the original administrators standing in front of building 1 shortly after the hospital opened to serve Veterans in 1933.



A photo of building 1 under construction in late 1931. Building 1 was originally the main hospital building when Bay Pines opened to serve Veterans in March 1933.

The staff wore military-style uniforms. With the initial 90 staff members ready for work, the Home opened with 17 patients on March 16, 1933. Physician pay started at \$3,800 annually. Nurses, aides, and dietitians received \$1,800 per year. Firefighters, guards, elevator operators, orderlies, housekeepers, and other employees received salaries in the range of \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year. The first director (or manager) was Col. M. Bryson. The first Clinical Chief of Staff was Col. T.S. Troy. In addition to Col. Troy, the staff included 9 physicians, 13 nurses, dietitians, and a large staff of workers involved in dietary and maintenance. The professional life of nurses was hard. Nurses helped with housekeeping and lived in residences on site. They could also be furloughed at any time.

The Home was almost self-sustaining. Water was supplied from wells and street lighting from a power plant. There was also a post office, police station, and a fire department. By June of 1933, the Home had 40 patients in permanent residence in its domiciliary and 123 patients in the hospital. President Roosevelt approved plans for a \$105,000 recreation building (Building 20 which now houses the post office and auditorium). This recreation building had a theater, Post Exchange, restaurant, officers' room, and a reading room. The second floor had a billiards room, motion picture projection booth, showers, and dressing rooms for the stage. On June 15, 1934, the Soldiers Home became the Bay Pines Veterans Hospital. All of the buildings, the railroad timetables, and the post office carried the new name. VA Administrator, Brig. Gen. Frank T. Hines, stopped by on his way to Washington from a national American Legion convention in Miami and proclaimed Bay Pines the finest institution of its kind in the country.



▲ A photo of the Bay Pines rail station taken in the early 1960s. The station was commissioned in 1933 as a way to transport Veterans to and from the medical facility. The station was decommissioned in 1967. The building pictured (building 11), is now the primary VA Police Service building.

Continued Growth and Expansion

Construction continued, as plans were already in place for the Recreation Building (Building 20, completed in 1935), an expanded domiciliary and convalescent homes, when the main building opened.

Until World War II, construction was non-stop. A 52-bed domiciliary for female Veterans opened in 1937 (building 24), a new hospital wing increased bed capacity to 245, and a hydrotherapy treatment pavilion on Madeira Beach was constructed in 1934.

In September 1959, funds were approved for a much-needed 140 bed addition to be constructed in 1963 to accommodate the growing number of World War II Veterans. Additionally a domiciliary building was converted to add 160 hospital beds, opening October 8, 1961.

The next major construction project was the original Nursing Home Care Unit, opened in 1973. Then in 1976, following the efforts of Congressman C.W. Bill Young and a visit by President Ford, \$110 million in appropriations was announced for an addition to the Nursing Home Care Unit, a new domiciliary, the replacement hospital (Building 100) and renovations for Buildings 1 and 22. Prior to those projects, Building 23, the Clinical support Building, opened on June 13, 1977.

The Nursing Home Care Unit addition and replacement

Domiciliary were completed quickly - bids were accepted starting June 22, 1978 and both were dedicated October 21, 1980. The replacement hospital (building 100) was completed and dedicated on March 16, 1983. The restoration of Buildings 1 and 22 was completed in July 1987.



▲ U.S. Rep. C.W. Bill Young provides the keynote address during the dedication ceremony of building 100 on March 16, 1983. After his passing in 2013, the medical center was named in his honor.

Providing Care Closer to Where Veterans Live

Along with the growth of the primary facility at Bay Pines, the health care system expanded exponentially with the addition of outpatient clinics across southwest Florida. The first was Fort Myers in 1979 (now the Lee County Healthcare Center seen below); followed by St. Petersburg in 1991; Sarasota in 1997; Bradenton, Naples and Port Charlotte in 2000; Palm Harbor in 2001 and Sebring in 2002. Many of the outpatient locations have relocated and expanded since originally opening.

Recent and Ongoing Projects at the Medical Center

There are many other expansion projects that have either been completed or are underway on the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center campus. Of note, the health-care system constructed an opened a Fisher House in 2002, a radiation oncology clinic in 2011, a new eye care and ambulatory care center in 2012, and a parking garage in 2013. In 2016, the first of several inpatient wards inside the main medical center building (building 100) was completely renovated to a private and semi-private room environment with the latest in-room technology and medical equipment. A second ward would follow in May 2018. The most substantial and visible change on campus over the last year is the new 155,000 square foot Mental Health Center. The new facility features a wide array of inpatient, outpatient, and residential services for Veterans seeking mental health care. The facility opened to serve Veterans in September 2017.

On the north side of the campus, a new 17,375 square foot cancer infusion/chemotherapy center is starting to take shape. The new center will augment and be connected to the existing radiation oncology center. The new facility will feature 26 chemotherapy stations and an onsite compounding pharmacy. When the building is



▲ A photo of the original Sebring CBOC taken in 2007. The clinic expanded and relocated to a new building in November 2012.

activated, that part of the campus will effectively become a "one-stop shop" for cancer care where Veterans can receive a full range of state-of-the-art cancer treatment. On the west side of campus, construction of a new 12,440 square foot research addition is nearly complete that will allow for the expansion of the Bay Pines VAHCS's Research and Development programs. Construction of both the cancer infusion/chemotherapy and research building is expected to be complete this year with activations occurring in the months following.

Continuing a Traditional of Excellence

Since 1933, what started as a National Soldiers Home capable of serving 159 Veterans, has become a large, complex VA health care system that provides the full spectrum of health care services to more than 110,000 Veterans across a 10-county area in southwest Florida. More than 4,000 dedicated employees come to work every day to care for our nation's heroes at the medical center in Bay Pines and outpatient facilities located in Bradenton, Cape Coral, Naples, Palm Harbor, Port Charlotte, Sarasota, St. Petersburg, and Sebring. ■

A photo of the Lee County Healthcare Center in Cape Coral, Fla. The 220,000 square foot facility opened to served Veterans in December 2012. The facility is nearly five times the size of the facility it replaced in Fort Myers. The facility serves nearly 38,000 Veterans.



Knowing the Enemy Behind the Lines Veterans Shake Tobacco Habit with Help from Bay Pines

"We are soldiers and we all need to be aware of the enemy behind the lines," said U.S. Air Force Veteran Johnie Chattman. "For me, cigarettes were the enemy. I had to deal with it myself to win the battle I was fighting," he said.

Like Chattman, many Veterans are making the choice to become tobacco free. Choosing to quit can be a tough personal decision. The physical stress from withdrawal and alteration of daily habits can make it challenging.

The good news is that Veterans do not have to do it alone. The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System offers Veterans, family members and employees several resources that can help them along their journey.

"Research has demonstrated that people find the most success in quitting tobacco when they use a combination of tobacco cessation medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in addition to tobacco cessation counseling," said Dr. Candis Cornell, Clinical Psychologist and Health Behavior Coordinator, Bay Pines VAHCS.

Tobacco treatment coaches at Bay Pines offer the highest level of support, education, and behavioral strategies to aid Veterans in their journey to becoming tobacco free.

U.S. Air Force Veteran Eric Allen used the program to quit tobacco almost eight years ago, "I quit thanks to the program that was available to me. I had tortured myself for decades. When I came to Bay Pines I was scared. My doctor had just sent me for a CAT scan and explained that the pericardial effusion I was diagnosed with was due to my smoking habit," he said.

The Tobacco Free program meets once a week for one-hour sessions. The classes are designed to address different topics each week. Topics include overcoming triggers, altering habits, and managing stress. The class also provides the necessary tools and skills to help Veterans achieve success, monitor their tobacco use, and encourage setting a quit date within the first few weeks of attendance. Motivational interviewing strategies are used by tobacco treatment facilitators during group and individual counseling sessions. These strategies play an instrumental role in helping Veterans quit for good.

"For the most part, Veterans already have the answers they need to help them overcome their addiction to tobacco. Motivational interviewing strategies help them uncover those answers," said Cornell.

"I smoked for over 50 years. I've tried to quit smoking before, but this time I decided to quit, quitting," said Chattman. When I came to Bay Pines, I couldn't talk. This was a big deal to me. I used to sing in my church choir and couldn't participate anymore because of tobacco," he continued.

The American Cancer Society suggests that it takes an average of 8 – 10

quit attempts before tobacco cessation sticks.

"I've learned to tell myself certain truths and reward myself after winning a battle with a craving. One of those rewards is being able to enjoy the time I have with my grandkids," explained Chattman.

In addition to FDA approved tobacco cessation medication and counseling sessions, the VA has developed useful tools to engage Veterans who are trying to quit.

Quit VET is a great way to connect with a tobacco cessation counselor. The goal of the national hotline (1-855-QUIT-VET) is to provide Veterans with the resources to develop a quit plan and discuss strategies for staying on track.

Another innovative resource available to Veterans is SmokefreeVet. SmokefreeVet is a text messaging program available in both English and Spanish that provides daily tips and encouragement to support Veterans while they stop using tobacco. After texting VET to 47848, Veterans receive two to five encouraging messages each day. The messages help to provide sup-

"We are soldiers and we all need to be aware of the enemy behind the lines. For me, cigarettes were the enemy. I had to deal with it myself to win the battle I was fighting."

- U.S. Air Force Veteran Johnie Chattman

port two weeks before users' quit dates, and continues for six weeks following their quit date.

The Stay Quit Coach App resource has been specifically designed to address the needs of Veterans with PTSD. The app guides users in creating a tailored plan that accounts for their personal reasons for quitting, and has interactive tools to help Veterans cope with urges to smoke.

The most valuable resource available to Veterans, is their health care team. Talking with health care providers can help individuals customize a strategy that works best for them.

To learn more about the Bay Pines VAHCS Tobacco Free program, please visit: www.baypines.va.gov/services/Tobacco_Cessation.asp. The webpage includes valuable information and tobacco cessation resources as well as information about Bay Pines VAHCS's tobacco free policy. ■



▲ Clinical Psychologist and Health Behavior Coordinator, Dr. Candis Cornell discusses tobacco cessation strategies with U.S. Air Force Veteran Johnie Chattman in preparation for their next tobacco cessation session with Veterans participating in the Tobacco Free program at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center.

◀ U.S. Air Force Veteran Eric Allen listens to his comrades and provides valuable peer support during a tobacco cessation session.

Hepatitis C Screening Saves Lives

Veterans and their families can count on the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) to deliver high quality, comprehensive, coordinated and continuous care. The healthcare system's Strategic Plan outlines provisions currently at work, meeting the unique needs of America's heroes.

The Hepatitis C Screening Initiative is one of the ways Bay Pines VAHCS is strategically accomplishing these important objectives and fulfilling the overall mission.

Through this comprehensive initiative, proactive coordinated care helps to identify Veterans born between 1945 and 1965 who may be at risk of Hepatitis C. Once identified, dedicated staff reach out to the Veteran and offer Hepatitis C screening.

"Veterans born during this timeframe are five times more likely to have Hepatitis C and may not be aware of it since infected individuals can live many years without having any symptoms," explained Alexis Myers, RN.

Hepatitis C is a disease that affects the liver and is caused by a virus, called the Hepatitis C virus, or HCV. The virus is most often spread through contact with infected blood or blood products.

"On average, we are starting 7.5 Veterans on HCV treatment each week," said Dr. Amanda Atherton, Clinical Pharmacist.

To date, the Hepatitis C

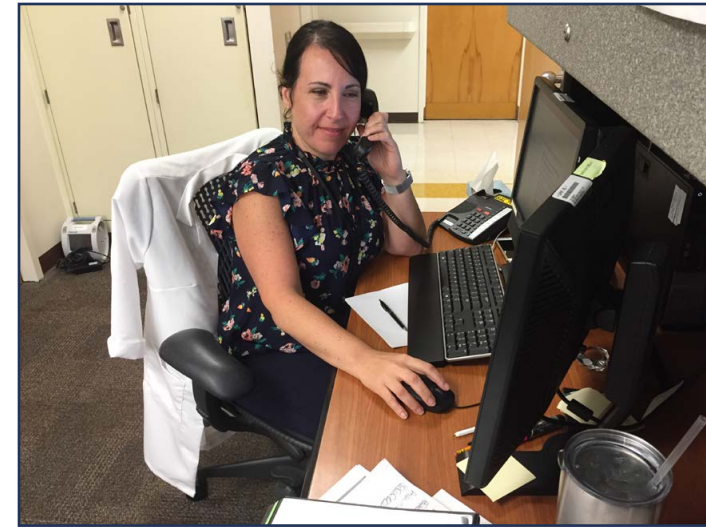
Screening Initiative has provided screening tests for more than 5,200 Veterans, and has helped treat a total of 1,850 patients affected with the virus.

"I started treatment in January and was finished with treatment in February. I couldn't believe that it was that fast and easy. The virus was completely gone."

- U.S. Navy Veteran Dennis Demille



Clinical Pharmacist Dr. Amanda Atherton discusses Hepatitis C treatment methods with Navy Veteran Dennis Demille.



▲ Alexis Myers, RN, contacts Veterans who may be at risk of Hepatitis C to offer Hepatitis C screenings. To date, the Hepatitis C Screening Initiative has provided screening tests for more than 5,200 Veterans, and has helped treat a total of 1,850 patients affected with the virus. Approximately 97 percent of Veterans treated have been cured.

Navy Veteran Dennis Demille is grateful to Bay Pines VAHCS staff for taking the necessary steps to help him overcome the virus.

"I was identified through this initiative, and tested positive for Hepatitis C. I was scared. I didn't know what to expect," he said. "The staff really took the time to explain everything to me in great detail, including how I would be treated," Demille continued.

The Hepatitis C Initiative has made it possible to cure 97% of Veterans treated for Hepatitis C at Bay Pines. Success rates are defined as (viral load not detected 12 weeks after finishing treatment) and vary depending on patient adherence, how severe the patient's liver damage is, and whether or not they have been treated previously.

"I started treatment in January and was finished with treatment in February. I couldn't believe that it was that fast and easy. The virus was completely gone," said Demille.

The screening initiative is especially important for those Veterans who may not have had the opportunity to meet with a VA provider to discuss their risk of Hepatitis C.

"Contacting Veterans to offer them a Hepatitis C screening gives me great satisfaction in knowing that we are doing everything we can to increase awareness about this disease and potentially saving their lives," explained Myers.

Veterans with questions on testing or evaluation of Hepatitis C are encouraged to contact their Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) or visit: www.hepatitis.va.gov/patient/hcv/index.asp. ■

Did you know?

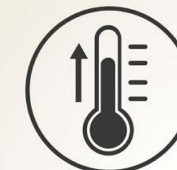
Hepatitis C is a disease that affects the liver. It is caused by a virus, called the Hepatitis C virus, or HCV for short. The virus is most often spread through contact with infected blood or blood products.

For some people, the disease is short-term. For the majority of people infected, up to 85 percent, the disease becomes a long-term infection that can result in serious health problems and even death. Veterans born between 1945 and 1965 are the highest at-risk population in the country.

In 2014, after decades of research and development, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved several new medication therapies. Many more have been developed since and have been effectively shown to cure 95 to 99 percent of patients with little or no side effects.

The typical treatment regimen requires patients to take one pill a day for 12 weeks. While treatment for a non-Veteran can cost up to \$80,000, Veterans enrolled for VA health care receive the medications at no cost or pay an \$8-9 co-pay for each 1-month supply.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF HEPATITIS



FEVER



FATIGUE



HEADACHE



LOSS OF
APPETITE



UNEXPLAINED
WEIGHT LOSS



DARK URINE



YELLOW
SKIN AND EYES



PALE-COLORED
STOOL



ABDOMINAL
PAIN

LDCT Screening Enhances Cancer Care at Bay Pines

The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) is actively pursuing ways to deliver the best in quality healthcare for America's heroes. Providing personalized, proactive, patient-driven care and empowering Veterans to make important health related decisions are at the forefront of the organization's strategic plan.

An important area of focus in the strategic plan identifies seamless oncology care as a tactic in moving the organization towards becoming a five-star healthcare system. Improving access to services, like lung cancer screening, is one of the ways in which the healthcare system is enhancing positive health outcomes for Veterans.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, lung cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in both men and women in the United States. Unfortunately, the prognosis after diagnosis is poor. About ninety percent of the cases identified will inevitably lead to death.

"Early identification of lung cancer leads to more effective treatments. Research has proved that lung cancer screening programs can help save lives," said Dr. Dominique Thuriere, Chief of Staff, Bay Pines VAHCS.

"Providing lung cancer screening with Low-Dose Computed Tomography (LDCT) is essential to our overall goal to drive health, prevent disease, and advance the cure for America's heroes," she said.

In a process of shared decision making between a Veteran and his or her provider, Veterans have the choice to be voluntarily screened for lung cancer at Bay Pines.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) recommends an annual screening for lung cancer with LDCT for adults aged 55 to 80 years-old, who have a history of smoking 30 or more packs of cigarettes per year, who currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years, and have a life expectancy of more than 5 years.

More information about LDCT lung cancer screening can be accessed here: <https://www.prevention.va.gov/docs/LungCancerScreeningHandout.pdf>

Cardiothoracic Radiologist Dr. Maria Harvey is responsible for spearheading the development of the lung cancer screening program at Bay Pines VAHCS.

"To date, we have performed over 2,000 LDCT lung cancer screening exams. Review of our data has shown our cancer detection rate at Bay Pines is about 1.135 percent, a number that is comparable to the results from a National Lung Cancer Screening Trial recently conducted. I am happy to report that LDCT for lung

cancer screening is already saving lives at Bay Pines," she said.

Dr. Harvey recently participated on a lung cancer screening interdisciplinary project team, providing support to develop guidelines for the newly implemented screening standards for facilities and health care systems across VHA.

"I am very proud to work at a facility that provides such exemplary care to our Veterans. Bay Pines is ahead of the curve on LDCT for lung cancer screening. We have a great team of people who made that possible," Dr. Harvey explained.

In addition to offering Veterans LDCT lung cancer screenings, Bay Pines VAHCS is working to improve access for Veterans receiving cancer treatment through the construction of a new 17,375-square-foot cancer infusion/chemotherapy center on the north side of the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center Campus. The new center will be connected to the existing radiation oncology center.

To learn more about Bay Pines VAHCS's modernization efforts, please visit:

www.baypines.va.gov/features/20171218.asp ■

Radiology staff pictured in photo from left to right: Dr. Bruce Kudryk, Dr. Julio Sandoval, Dr. Igor Sirotkin, Dr. Eric Lenz, Dr. Maria Harvey, Dr. Patrick Dougherty and Dr. Alex Hayes



U.S. Army Veteran Jim Altman receives lung cancer screening facilitated by CT Technologist, Miguel Santiago at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center.

A Whole Health Approach to Healthy Living

By Candis Cornell, Psy.D, Health Behavior Coordinator, and Kathy Green, MS, RN-BC, Health Promotion Disease Prevention Coordinator

Focusing on personal well-being (physical, emotional, spiritual, etc.) is a major shift in health care. The Office of Patient Centered Care and the National Center for Prevention recognize three behaviors that contribute to four chronic diseases, which result in 50% percent of deaths worldwide.

These lifestyle choices, including tobacco use, unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity, are proven to be detrimental to overall health and well-being. In fact, 80% of chronic conditions are preventable by choosing to live a healthy lifestyle and focusing on self-care.

To maintain good health, it is important to stay mindful of the lifestyle choices we make every day. One tool that may help raise awareness to our personal goals is the Personal Health Inventory (PHI). This tool allows an individual to identify areas of growth. Whether it is focusing on the power of the mind, nutrition, or feeding the spirit, it is a positive way to enhance personal development. The PHI creates an opportunity to develop



health goals that impact life-style habits through self-determined strategies and choices.

Take a step back and ask yourself a few simple questions about your well-being. How do I feel physically and emotionally? Am I satisfied with my personal and social life? Am I nourishing my body? Do I routinely obtain enough rest? Is the environment around me pleasant? When thinking about relationships, do I find them fulfilling? Am I feeding my spirit and soul? To

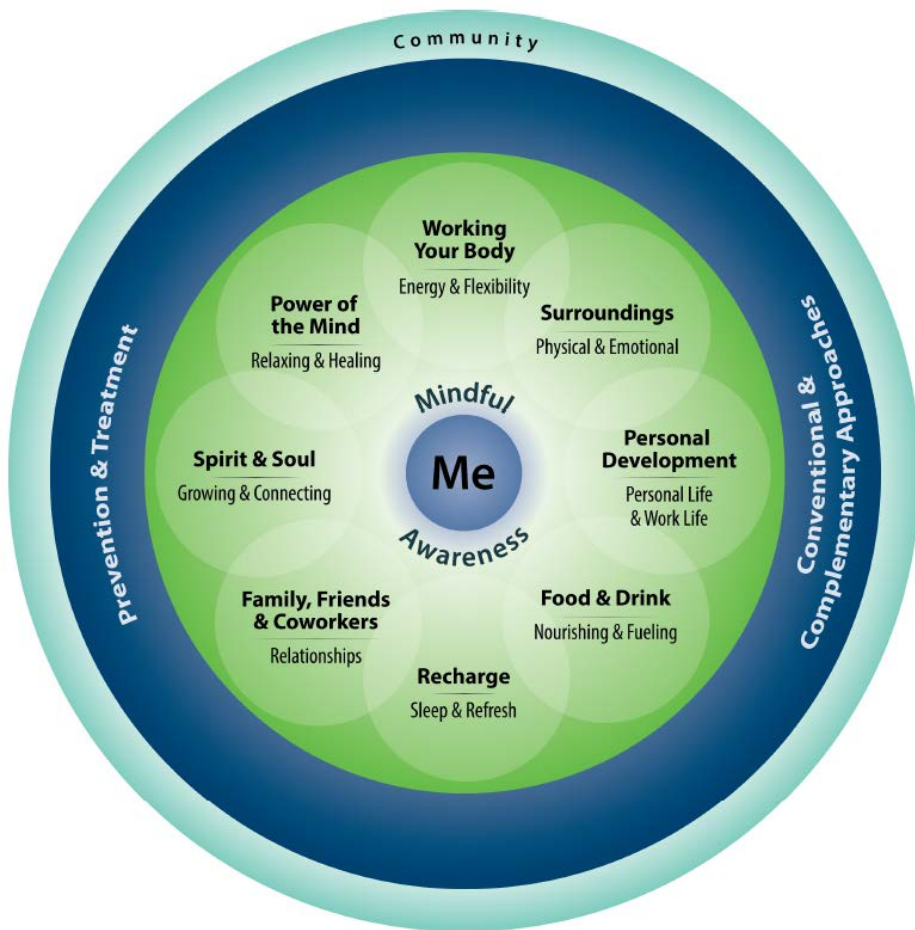
maintain an optimal state of wellness it is important to bring attention to each of these areas.

Bay Pines VAHCS is in the process of transforming the delivery of care through the implementation of patient-centered care via the Whole Health model.

The Whole Health model of care focuses on empowering and equipping people with the skills they need to live life to the fullest despite chronic illness. It is truly a self-management approach to evaluate what matters most to everyone based on their own personal values.

To get started on thinking about your whole health, review the circle to the left and then complete the "Personal Health Inventory" available at the link below and discuss the information with your primary care provider during your next scheduled appointment. <http://projects.hsl.wisc.edu/SERVICE/key-resources/Brief-PHI-WH-FL-508.pdf>.

For more information, please call 727-398-6661, extension 15987. ■



Hurricane Season: Never Underestimate the Power of Being Prepared

Never underestimate the value of being prepared for a natural disaster. The VA is here to help you, but the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center and Community Based Outpatient Clinics are not emergency shelters. In the event of a major impact, clinics may be closed for extended periods of time. Take the time to prepare yourself, your family, and your pets. Veterans are advised to follow evacuation orders.

Personal Preparedness Checklist

Your personal preparedness should include enough supplies for about two weeks:

- **Water** – 18 ½ gallons of water per person (1/2 gallon for drinking, two gallons for bathing)
- **Food** – Ready to eat canned foods, shelf stable snacks, and beverages
- **Medicine** – Your prescription medication, first aid kit that contains aspirin, non-aspirin pain reliever, antacid, antiseptic, scissors, and insect repellent
- **Personal Hygiene/Care Items** - toilet paper, towels, soap, shampoo, denture needs, eyeglasses, and sun protection
- **Other supplies** – battery operated radio, flashlight and batteries, non-electric can opener, portable cooler and ice, plastic trash bags, tarp or sheet plastic, cleaning supplies such as bleach, paper napkins, plates and cups, pillows and blankets, and duct tape

Prescription Medications

- Keep a list of all medications in your personal preparedness kit.

- Keep a 15 day supply of medication and supplies on hand. Do not allow your supply to go below 15 days.
- For medications that require refrigeration, make sure you have a small portable cooler or ice chest ready for easy transport if needed.
- If you evacuate, bring prescription bottles, whether full or empty, of all medications that you are currently taking with you.

Follow Up Care and Scheduled Appointments

- If your VA appointments were cancelled, contact Bay Pines VAHCS to be rescheduled.
- For urgent care needs that require continuing care while you are evacuated, contact any VA facility by calling 1-800-507-4571. Let them know that you were evacuated and that you usually receive care from the Bay Pines VAHCS. ■

Additional Resources

- Bay Pines VAHCS Telephone - 1.888.820.0230
- Emergency Information Line - 727.398.9500
- Family Information Line - 727.320.1990
- Employee Accountability Line - 727.320.1991
- VISN 8 Information Hotline - 1.877.741.3400
- VA Veteran Helpline - 1.800.507.4571
- Bay Pines Internet Homepage - www.baypines.va.gov
- Text/Email Updates - www.baypines.va.gov/news/enews_subscribe.asp
- Facebook - www.facebook.com/vabaypines
- Twitter - www.twitter.com/vabaypines
- FL511 (Road and Bridge Closures) - <https://fl511.com/>
- National Hurricane Center - www.nhc.noaa.gov
- FL Disaster Emergency Info - www.floridadisaster.org/info/
- FEMA - www.fema.gov/plan-prepare-mitigate

Veteran Voices

A small sample of feedback received from Veterans and their loved ones about care provided by the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

Dear Director Klinker,

Dr. Boulay was assigned to me as my GI Doctor. I am very grateful to have him on my team. Dr. Boulay is not only a true professional, he is very compassionate. He explained every single thing I needed to know not only to me, but to my wife as well. Dr. Boulay, even with a heavy schedule, returned every one of my calls and he helped me get through those difficult times. He was my rock during my hospital stay, giving me hope and confidence as he has been guiding me back to health. Dr. Boulay is a wonderful part of the best Medical Facility on earth, Bay Pines.

OVER THE PAST YEAR, MY HUSBAND JAMES HAS WORKED WITH PHYSICAL THERAPY TO OVERCOME A NUMBER OF HEALTH ISSUES INCLUDING A SHOULDER INJURY, RECOVERY FROM SURGERY, AND BALANCE. THANK YOU, THE BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL THERAPY HAVE NOTICEABLY IMPROVED JAMES' QUALITY OF LIFE.

reviewed Bay Pines VA Healthcare System — 4★

Bay Pines has to be one of the best rated VA facilities in the USA, if not the very best! Like most things, everything is not perfect, however, when I have made the aware I was able to obtain what I expected. Personnel are great, friendly, and respectful!



Comment

Share



Been serving my needs for 27 years. God Bless the Bay pines VA.



Comment

Share



I have always been afraid of Dentist to The point I would not go tell I hurt so bad, That was when I went. I now have found people who do so good I know longer fear The Dentist. Been here 5 Times, over The last 4 months with no fear of coming. My Doctor Dr. Pantazes + Tec Becky Jamin Need to be credited with my fear being no more The V.A. dose the best Job. Thank you for all you do.

reviewed Bay Pines VA Healthcare System — 4★

I went to the Lee County VA Ambulatory Care Unit since I was dealing with Severe back pain and Neuropathy in both legs. They signed me in immediately. The doctors at the unit took their time and explained to me the precise nature of my problem and what would be the appropriate course of action Post visit with Neuro Surgeon. Then, they were concern due to family history if I had recent Detection test for Colon and Prostate. When I told them no they immediately ran the necessary lab test. Then they had me get some RX's that were being prescribed for my back. Each individual who saw me this day was very kind and empathetic to my health concerns. It was a very pleasing few hours at a time when I was feeling a great deal of pain and emotional stress. Overall, it was one of the best experiences I have had in the VA system in 20 years. Sincere GRATITUDE and APPRECIATION to all those employees involved.

Like

Comment

Share

Bay Pines Compliment Count

Compliments received by the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System by Veterans, family members, friends and others by fiscal year (October 1 - September 30):

2012 - 104

2013 - 468

2014 - 1331

2015 - 1518

2016 - 1838

2017 - 1995

2018 - 1436 (As of June 29, 2018)

EMPLOYEE *Spotlight*

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System employees are committed to VA's Core Value of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy Respect, and Excellence. Everyday, more than 4,300 dedicated Bay Pines employees go above and beyond the call of duty to provide Veterans with the best health care services the Nation has to offer. This section of the Bay Visions is dedicated to them, and provides a brief snapshot of employee accolades over the last several months.

40 years of Government Service



Norman B. Willover, OI&T



Earlene O. Little, Nursing Service



Cynthia A. Porter, Dental Service

35 years of Government Service



Larry Albert Jr., Nursing Service



Nellie P. Lumpkin, Education Service



Frederick H. Kurtz, Medicine Service



Robert T. Ownbey, Environmental Management



Angelia M. Grady, Nursing Service



Phillip R. Hardesty, OI&T

30 years of Government Service *(Continued on next page)*



Zdzislaw B. Czechowski, RN, Nursing Service



Toni G. Martin, Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service



Ricky L. Walega, Engineering Service



Fred W. Liggett, Social Work Service



Carolyn J. Judah, OI&T Service



Derek R. Reese – Engineering Service

Employee(s) of the Year/Month, VISN 8 Supervisor of the Quarter



Year (2017) - Suzzette A. Seril, RN, Nursing Service



Year (2017) - James K. Reynolds, Police Service



February - Obed A. Muniz, EEO



January - Anna Paszczuk, M.D. – Medicine Service



January - Scott H. Rogowski, Engineering Service



March - Janice E. Middleton, Health Administration



April - Melissa Quinn, RN, Nursing Service



Supervisor of the Quarter - Gary Wilson, Pharmacy

Not pictured:
- Samara W. Walker, RN (February employee of the month)
- Christopher P. Storey, Peer Support Specialist, MH&BSS (30 years of government service)
Note: Scott H. Rogowski was also a recipient of a 35-year service award.

Bay Pines Nationally Recognized for Green Environmental Practices

The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) was recognized nationwide by receiving an “Emerald Award” by Practice Greenhealth, the nation's leading organization dedicated to environmental sustainability in health care. The award is one of the Environmental Excellence Awards given each year to honor environmental achievements in the health care industry. The Emerald Award recognizes the top 20 percent of health care facilities nationwide that are setting the standard in eliminating mercury, reducing and recycling waste, sustainable sourcing, and have developed successful sustainability initiatives in other program areas. Bay Pines was also one of ten medical facilities nation-

wide that received a “Circle of Excellence Award in Energy” for outstanding performance in energy efficiency and strategic use. The Circle of Excellence Award in Energy recognizes facilities that are pushing the envelope and driving innovation in energy sustainability. Leading healthcare systems, like Bay Pines VAHCS, have programs to reduce energy use over time, track energy intensity and Energy Star performance metrics, and share details on comprehensive energy project implementation.



Palm Harbor VA Community Clinic
35209 U.S. Highway 19 North
Palm Harbor, Florida 34684
(727) 734-5276

C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center
10000 Bay Pines Blvd.
Bay Pines, FL 33744
(727) 398-6661 or 1-888-820-0230

St. Petersburg VA Community Clinic
840 Dr. MLK Jr. St. N.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33705
(727) 502-1700

Bradenton VA Community Clinic
5520 State Road 64, Suite 101
Bradenton, Florida 34208
(941) 721-0649

Sarasota VA Community Clinic
5682 Bee Ridge Rd., Suite 100
Sarasota, Florida 34233
(941) 371-3349

Port Charlotte VA Community Clinic
4161 Tamiami Trail, Suite 401
Port Charlotte, Florida 33952
(941) 235-2710

Sebring VA Community Clinic
5901 U.S. Highway 27 S.
Sebring, FL 33870
(863) 471-6227

Lee County VA Healthcare Center
2489 Diplomat Parkway E.
Cape Coral, FL 33909
(239) 652-1800 or 1-888-513-0045

Naples VA Community Clinic
2685 Horseshoe Drive S.
Naples, Florida 34104
(239) 659-9188

Note: The Naples VA Community Clinic will move to the following address in Spring 2018:
**800 Goodlette Road North
Naples, FL 34102**



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Visit us online at:
www.baypines.va.gov or scan the
QR Code with a smart phone app.



Important VA Phone Numbers and Resources

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

(727) 398-6661 or toll-free 1-888-820-0230

Lee County Healthcare Center

(239) 652-1800 or toll-free (888) 513-0045

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255 press 1

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline.

Scheduling an Appointment

(727) 398-6661 or toll-free 1-888-820-0230, press 2
Veterans who need to schedule, cancel or reschedule appointments can call Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Prescriptions

(727) 398-6661 or toll-free 1-888-820-0230, press 1
Veterans who need to request a prescription refill or check the status of refills can call Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Billing Questions

1-866-793-4591

Veterans who have questions about a bill received from the Bay Pines VAHCS can call the VA Revenue Center.

Patient Advocate

(727) 398-6661 or toll-free 1-888-820-0230 ext. 15024
Patient Advocates serve as liaisons between patients and the healthcare system, act on the patient's behalf, and help patients understand their rights and responsibilities.

My HealtheVet

www.myhealth.va.gov

Veterans can manage their health by logging onto My HealtheVet, which offers access to Veteran health benefits and services

VA Benefits (other than health care)

1-800-827-1000

Veterans who need information on VA benefits including VA compensation and pension, home loans, and education can call the VA Regional Office.