

MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR

Whole Health

It is often said good health is one of the most important things we can have in life. But what is good health? Is it being free of illness or disease? Is it having no pain? Is it being at a healthy weight and physically fit? Here at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, we believe it is all of these things and more. Good health, or Whole Health as it is known in VA, is being physically and mentally able to live the life you want to live and do the things that fulfill you. That approach to health and health care involves knowing our Veteran patients on a deeper level and learning about what is important to them – like being able to participate in the Bridge Run even though you have a prosthetic leg, or having the stamina to keep up with your toddler-age children, or dancing with your granddaughter at her wedding. Each of these goals can and should drive medical care and lifestyle decisions that improve overall health. Whole Health involves partnering with Veterans to provide personalized, proactive, patient-driven care, that incorporates a full range of conventional, complementary and integrative health and lifestyle options.

The key is communication. That is why we recently implemented Relationship Centered Communication training by the Academy of Communication in Healthcare for our clinical teams at our VA. Health care is full of practices that require highly-trained specialized skills, and communication is one of those. The enhanced communication skills we are learning through this training have been proven to improve patient-provider relationships, bring out clearer information

for diagnostic purposes, and improve patient engagement and compliance with treatment plans that in turn improves health outcomes for patients. By March 5 we will have six trainers from our VA team certified by the Academy and more than 70 providers trained, with a total of more than 150 clinical team members trained in Relationship Centered Communication by this fall.

For years we have been passionately pursuing ways to improve Veterans' health at our VA. We are fully committed to communicating more effectively with our patients, understanding our Veterans more fully and working with them as an integral part of the health care team to develop a personalized health plan that meets their clinical needs and life goals. This personalized, proactive, patient-driven care system incorporates a full range of conventional, complementary and integrative health and lifestyle options.

There are three central components in the Whole Health System to support Veterans as they strive to achieve their greatest level of health and well-being:

- The Pathway (Empowering) – Our VA team partners with Veterans and their loved ones to discover their mission/purpose/aspirations and create an overarching personal health plan that integrates care in the VA and beyond.
- Well-being Programs (Equipping)– Our VA supports Veterans by integrating personal wellbeing into clinical care and enabling self-care.

These programs provide proactive, integrative health approaches, such as stress reduction, yoga, tai chi, mindfulness, nutrition, acupuncture, health coaching, and more based on the Veteran's needs.

- Whole Health Clinical Care (Treating) – Clinical care is provided in outpatient and inpatient settings that are attentive to healing environments and healing relationships. Our VA's interdisciplinary teams work together with the Veteran patient to formulate the best treatment plan for his or her specific condition and goals.

Our VA is committed to helping you live your best life. I encourage you to learn more by watching VA's [Whole Health video](#). Then, work with your VA team to create your personal health plan and take advantage of the many supportive services – from Tobacco Cessation classes to help you quit smoking to Tai Chi to manage stress to our greatly successful MOVE program to help you get that excess weight off and keep it off. No matter where you are in life or in your health journey, we're here to help. And we look forward to partnering with you to make this the best time of your life.

Sincerely,



Ronnie Smith, MSHA, MBA,

Acting Director & CEO



VA | Ralph H. Johnson
VA Medical Center



Ronnie Smith, MSHA, MBA
Acting Medical Center Director

CHECK IT OUT-
CHARLESTON VAMC
VIRTUAL TOUR

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 27, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., College of Charleston School of Professional Studies (3800 Paramount Dr., North Charleston) – [Military, Veteran and Spouse Career & Resource Fair](#)

Feb. 29, 8 a.m. check-in; 9 a.m. start, 2020 [Lowcountry Heart Walk](#) – Join Team Ralph by registering online; then click Join a Team and enter Team Ralph

March 11, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Veteran Job Fair, Savannah VA Outpatient Clinic

March 19, 11 a.m. – Women's History Celebration, Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center Main Auditorium

SUICIDE PREVENTION TAKES EVERYONE!

#BeThere

Veterans Crisis Line:
1-800-273-8255 and Press 1

Online chat at:
www.veteranscrisisline.net

Text: 838255



Choose VA



**1,772 FAMILIES
SERVED**