

The
BOISE



December 2022

FRONT

The official newsletter of the Boise VA Medical Center

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
OUR DIRECTOR, DAVID
WOOD FOR BEING
SELECTED FOR A 2022
PRESIDENTIAL RANK
AWARD!**

**CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL
STORY AND THE LIST OF ALL
THE 2022 RECIPIENTS.**



BOISE is HIGHLY RELIABLE

HRO PRINCIPLES & VALUES

THEME OF THE MONTH
Clear Communications

December 2022 | National Safety Poster

Clear Labeling to Avoid Preventable Harm

C

CONTEXT

Joey Boyer, a Registered Nurse at the VA Boston HCS, accessed medication from the Omnicell, an automated medication-dispensing system. He noticed that a paralytic medication in the Omnicell was neither clearly separated from other medications nor identified with clear warning labels.

A

ACTION

Recognizing the risk of improper medication labeling and storage, Mr. Boyer spoke up for safety. He worked with Pharmacy to implement risk-mitigation steps. Pharmacy distinguished the medication with an orange container, a tamper-free seal and a warning label. This action clearly indicated the drug's potential danger.

R

RESULTS

Mr. Boyer identified and reported a serious error risk, resulting in improved medication storage and labeling. Clear Communications requires using standard tools to communicate simply and clearly; it helps minimize the chances of preventable harm and supports quality and accuracy in everything we do.



“Clear Communications helps minimize the chances of preventable harm by ensuring information is clear to the entire team.”

*Joey Boyer, RN
Registered Nurse
VA Boston Healthcare System
Boston, Massachusetts*

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

For more information, visit: http://bit.ly/HighReliability_sp

VHA'S JOURNEY TO
**HIGH
RELIABILITY**

Your Care is Our Mission.

December, 2022

Patient Safety Managers Jodi Brewster and Karen Bermensolo

Patient Safety Minute

It's about the Veteran

Patient Safety Forum News

Thank you for the increased feedback at Dec 9th forum. Unfortunately, survey response was still pretty low with only 18 respondents. Our goal is at least 50 responses, so please complete survey after each forum— we need to hear from YOU!

Patient Safety topics— 4.61/5 stars

HRO topics— 4.67/5 stars

JPSR— knowing how to complete— 3.67/5 stars

Length of forum— 89% just right, 11% too short

Some Topic Ideas— JPSRs, documentation, non-clinical personnel topics, improving communication, continued interactive opportunities, continued guest speakers. Thank you for the great feedback!

Our next Patient Safety Forum is **JANUARY 20, 2023 10:00** during bimonthly Town Hall

HRO Tips and News, JPSR Tips (including how to complete one!), Great Catch, open discussion and more interaction!!

JPSR TIP- Complete your JPSRs using SBAR for clear communication.

SBAR is an acronym nurses utilize all the time— but really, it can be used by anyone wanting to “paint a clear picture” - use it to describe patient safety concerns when entering a report in JPSR—

S- Situation. A concise description of the situation using facts, not opinions.

B- Background. What brought the situation to this point? Is there a history or risk factors?

A- Assessment. What is your concern in the situation?

R- Response/recommendation— What actions or interventions were taken in the situation?

- When completing a JPSR, use titles and not names of individuals.
- Your name is not shared with reviewers. JPSRs are confidential.
- JPSRs can be entered by any employee with an active PIV card, if you see something, say something.

Patient Safety + HRO = Working together toward Zero Patient Harm



HRO Theme for December:

Clear Communication

Learn more at Share point





Compliance Corner

The Code of Integrity Q and A

By Steven Waltari, Acting Integrity and Compliance Officer

Q: What is the Code?

A: The Code of Integrity emphasizes VHA's common **culture of integrity** and its responsibility to operate with the **highest principles** and **ethical business standards** both in the provision of health care, as well as our everyday interactions with each other. The Code is centered around VA's I CARE values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence.

Q: Why do we need a Code?

A: The Code demonstrates the commitment to I CARE values in the workplace and the ethical values that guide what should be done, beyond what must be done. The Code takes this commitment further by underscoring the unique role VHA staff play in Veteran's care. VHA's adoption of a Code of Integrity is critical not only to assuring high quality care, but also to maintaining public trust in VA.

Q: What is the purpose of the Code?

A: It helps streamline the rules and standards regarding integrity into one umbrella document for applicable standards. It provides consolidated points of contact to raise questions and concerns. Finally, it helps us as a facility create a culture that is conducive to the highest ethical standards in our work. While compliance with federal laws and regulations is mandatory, the Code demonstrates our commitment to integrity, and how we should treat each other every day.

Q: Where can I view the Code?

A: The Code can be viewed on VA.gov [VHA Code of Integrity](#)

The greatest asset we have to meet our promise serve Veterans with the utmost integrity are our VHA employees. All employees should be familiar with the Code and take the time to reflect on ways it applies to their everyday work.

If you have a question for the Integrity and Compliance Officer, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, Steven.Waltari@va.gov or phone 208-422-1267. I am here to help, and your communications with me will be treated with confidentiality. If you would like to make an anonymous report, you can do so by calling the Compliance Helpline at 1-866-842-4357. Additional reporting channels can be found in section 7 of the code of integrity (Points of Contact). Whistleblower Protections allow employees to disclose a violation of law, rule, or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety without fear of retaliation.

COMPLIANCE CORNER



VA | Boise VA Medical Center

HOW TO RECOGNIZE & RESPOND TO EMOTIONAL DISTRESS OR SUICIDAL BEHAVIORS DEMONSTRATED BY A VETERAN

Comments about emotional distress, crisis, or suicide should always be taken seriously. It's important to recognize the signs of suicidal thinking. Warning signs might include talking about suicide/death or dying, verbalizing feelings of hopelessness or feeling like there is no way out, experiencing anxiety, sleeplessness or agitation. Identifying warning signs provides an opportunity to intervene before suicidal behaviors occur. If you encounter a Veteran who is demonstrating signs of emotional distress or is making suicidal comments such as "There is no way out" or "There is no reason to live," remain calm and ASK the most important question of all: "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"

Other ways to ask the question include:

- "Are you thinking of suicide?"
- "Have you had thoughts about taking your own life?"

When asking the question remember:

- DO ask the question if you've identified warning signs or symptoms
- DO ask the question in such a way that is natural and flows with the conversation

- DO NOT ask the question as though you are looking for a "no" answer ("You're not thinking of killing yourself, are you?")
- DO NOT wait to ask the question until he or she is halfway out the door

As you listen to the Veteran, ask him or her to do the talking and use supportive, encouraging comments. Use the following steps to let the Veteran know that you are listening and acknowledge his or her experience:

- Talk openly about suicide – Be willing to listen and allow the Veteran to express his or her feelings
- Recognize the situation is serious
- Do not pass judgment
- Reassure them that help is available

If a Veteran is having suicidal thoughts, remain calm, reassure them that help is available, and implement the following:

- DO NOT keep the Veteran's suicidal behavior a secret
- DO NOT leave him or her alone
- Assess the environment for safety and remove any objects that pose a risk for self-harm, to include items brought in by

the Veteran.

- Help the Veteran access immediate support by contacting a Mental Health provider affiliated with your clinic/area (for example, PACT Teams should contact the Integrated Care Team at extension 7014), walking the Veteran to the Behavioral Health Acute Care (BHAC) Clinic in building 116 or escorting the Veteran to the Emergency Department. Be sure to stay with the Veteran until you are able to hand the Veteran off to the receiving staff member. When completing a hand off, be sure to inform receiving staff of the concern for suicide risk. If you are outside the main campus you can call 911. You can also call the confidential Veterans Crisis Line at 988 and Press 1.

Please reach out to the local Suicide Prevention Team with questions or concerns at x7504. For additional guidance, refer to local SOP: [SOP 11-21-91 Suicide Assessment Management and Documentation.pdf](#) ([sharepoint.com](#))



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH **NOVEMBER**



**Stephanie
Scodellaro**

RN Stephanie Scodellaro is an irreplaceable RN Care Coordinator with the Remote Patient Monitoring Telehealth program (RPM.) She brings a diverse background of nursing experience, exhibits integrity, demonstrates commitment delivering exceptional care, advocates for our veterans, and goes above and beyond as a vanguard of excellence. For the past three years RN Scodellaro has been a key player in the development and implementation of the RPM intensive diabetes program called Advanced Comprehensive Diabetic Care (ACDC.) This program was named Office of Rural Health Promising Practice in 2020 and was selected as a winner of the 2018 Diffusion of Excellence Shark Tank competition. Through her efforts as well as those of the BVAMC ACDC team, our facility has not only seen astonishingly positive outcomes for our high-risk diabetic patients with HbA1c >9, but also provided essential data needed to co-author a research article written by Duke University School of Medicine and the Veteran's Affairs health Care System. RN Scodellaro cared for a panel of patients enrolled on the ACDC program, developed data processing forms and EHR templates, fine-tuned the RPM ACDC disease management protocol, held local development/ planning/ promotional meetings as well as participated in monthly National ACDC calls with other participating VAs. RN Scodellaro is an excellent example of a caregiver who exemplifies the ICARE values. The Telehealth Team would like to recognize RN Scodellaro for her contributions to our veterans and the BVAMC as she consistently goes above and beyond in her Nursing role.

Coding Connection

New SharePoint Site!

There is a new SharePoint site for Auditing and Clinical Documentation Improvement/Integrity. This page will house links to all the educational materials we've made to help providers understand how to code and document better.

[Clinical Documentation Integrity \(Inpatient\) & Outpatient Coding Auditing \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

The site is very easy to manage but please don't hesitate to reach out to Brooke Horlocher or Shasta Balke if you can't find what you're looking for.

This site will also house all the "2023 CPT Updates" educational materials. There were some major changes to guidelines and code descriptions for these services:

- Consultations – In-person (Inpt & Outpt)
- Emergency Department
- Home & Residence Care
- Inpatient (Initial, Subsequent, & 24 admit and discharge)
- Nursing Facility

These guideline changes start January 1st, 2023

I would highly suggest having any providers in the above departments/services watch the recorded presentations in the department specific 2023 CPT updates folder.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about this coding topic!

Brooke Horlocher, CPC
MRT-Coding Auditor (Outpatient)
brooke.horlocher@va.gov
208-422-1000 X4435

Shasta Balke, LPN/RHIT/CCA
MRT-CDIS (Inpatient)
shasta.balke@va.gov
mobile 660-473-0152





FREE TO ATTEND!

2023 VETERANS LEGAL CLINICS

**17 January
21 February
21 March
18 April
16 May**

Legal clinics are free & open to veterans and spouses.

Clinics are held from 2PM to 4PM at the Boise VA Medical Center, Bldg. 54. Located at 500 W. Fort Street, Boise, Idaho 83702.

Additional phone appointments with attorneys are available on a case-by-case basis.

Please contact Amanda Pentland, LCSW at (208) 422-1000 ext. 7099 for additional information.

**VA**

Boise VA
Medical Center

2023 IDAHO DISABLED VETERANS ELK HUNT

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED JANUARY 2 - JANUARY 31 2023



The Idaho Division of Veteran Services will coordinate an elk hunt for two disabled Veterans with 40% Service Connected Disability Ratings or Higher.

A selection committee will review applications and choose two Idaho Veterans.

Applications are available at <https://veterans.idaho.gov/> or you can scan the QR Code

If you have any questions about this opportunity call (208) 780 – 1300.



THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME!

REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERFACILITY TRANSFER DOCUMENTATION



When transferring a patient from the Boise VA emergency department or an acute care inpatient unit to another VA or Non-VA medical facility, **the transferring provider is required to document an Interfacility Transfer**. The following steps are to be completed when transferring a patient to a VA or Non-VA medical facility. Note: The following are documentation requirements only. For a comprehensive procedural guide for inter-facility transfers refer to attachment C of local policy 11-20-60 Admissions, Discharges, and Interfacility Transfers.

Step 1. In the patient's electronic health record (EHR) place the appropriate consult depending on the type of transfer (i.e., Non-VA Care).

Step 2. Complete the Interfacility Transfer Note using the EHR Template or VA Form 10-2649A.

Step 3. Complete Patient Consent for Transfer using VA Form 10-2649B or iMed Consent. The pathway for entering an iMed Consent is Shared->Administrative->Provider->Certification and Patient Consent for Transfer.

Step 4. Place a Beneficiary Travel Consult.

Step 5. (Inpatient Providers Only). If the patient is in acute care and transferring to another VA or Non-VA facility complete the following, in addition to the above,

- Inter-Agency Transfer Discharge Mediation Reconciliation Note.
- Discharge Summary
- Patient Discharge Instructions.

A screenshot of the "Progress Note Properties" dialog box in an EHR system. The "Progress Note Title" field is set to "INTERFACILITY <INTERFACILITY TRANSFER NOTE>". A list of other note types is visible, including "INTERFACILITY <NUTRITION INTERFACILITY CONSULT>", "INTERFACILITY TRANSFER NOTE", "INTERIM <CAREGIVER PROGRAM INTERIM IN HOME ASSESSMENT>", "INTERIM <CAREGIVER PROGRAM INTERIM IN-HOME ASSESSMENT>", "INTERIM <CAREGIVER PROGRAM INTERIM IN-HOME MONITORING>", and "INTERIM <INTERIM SUMMARY>". The "Date/Time of Note" is "Jan 4, 2018@11:08" and the "Author" is "Mckie, Robert A - Chief, Inpt Med & Specialty".A screenshot of the "Template: INTERFACILITY TRANSFER NOTE" form. The form is titled "Department of Veterans Affairs Inter-facility Transfer Form". It includes instructions: "This form must be completed for all transfers out of VA facilities. VA form 10-2649B Physician Certification and Patient Consent for Transfer must also be completed for all transfers. You may complete the VA form 10-2649B via iMed consent library." The form is divided into two sections: "SECTION I - DEMOGRAPHIC AND ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION" and "SECTION II - REASON FOR TRANSFER". Under Section I, there is a "PATIENT IDENTIFICATION:" section with fields for Patient Name (ZZDOODLE, YANKEE), SSN (000-00-4444), and Address (123 FREEDOM RD., NEW YORK, NEW YORK, 10034). There is also a question "Does patient have Advanced Directive?" with "Yes" and "No" radio buttons. Under Section II, there is a "NATURE OF SERVICES NEEDED BY PATIENT REQUIRING TRANSFER (Identify)" section with checkboxes for "Service Not Provided at Referring Facility" and "No Bed at Referring Facility". The form has a footer with a note "* Indicates a Required Field" and buttons for "Preview", "OK", and "Cancel".



The 2022 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) has kicked off. The CFC is our annual opportunity to give to charities through the workplace. Please open the attached “How to Give” flyer for more information on ways to give.

[Why does the CFC matter?](#)

Through the CFC, you can give to vetted charities via payroll deduction. Giving a little each pay period turns into a significant gift at the end of the year, and the collective impact of all of our gifts over the past 60 years is huge: more than \$8.6 billion. Just last year, the CFC raised \$78 million to help people and communities in need. Each year, you make that happen!

Ready to give? Then, [complete or renew your pledge today](#) and get us off to a strong start.

New to the CFC? There’s a first time for everything! Please consider joining us this year. I am available to answer any questions you might have.

When you complete your pledge, download your [“I Gave” badge](#) to use in your email signature or on social media.

Thank you for your generosity and willingness to change the world through the CFC.

For more information on the local CFC efforts, contact Briana Budell or Heather Gula.

HOW TO GIVE



OUR
FAVORITE
WAY TO
GIVE!

ONLINE

- 1) Visit GiveCFC.org and click DONATE.
- 2) Create an account or log in to your existing account.

- 3) Complete or update your profile:
 - a. Enter the ZIP code of your office



to access the correct list of units/offices.

Our office ZIP code is: 83702

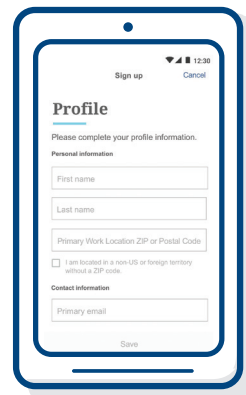
- b. Enter your CFC unit code to automatically populate the Department/Agency/Office selections.

Our CFC unit code is: H61MNF

- 4) Search for the charities you want to support.
- 5) Make your pledge by selecting your designated charities and allocating funds or volunteer hours.



CFC GIVING MOBILE APP



Download the App

The CFC Giving Mobile App is available for iPhone and Android devices by searching "CFC Giving" in the app store.



Sign in or create an account

Returning donors: Use the same login as your CFC online pledge portal account.

New donors: Create an account, verify it, and set up your profile.



Search for charities

If you are attending a campaign event, you can see the list of charities participating in your event. Or you can generate your own list of CFC charities and their descriptions by entering search criteria: charity name, CFC Code, EIN, or keyword.



Give

Tap each charity you would like to support and enter your pledge amounts and volunteer hours.



Complete your donation

Update or add a funding source (payroll deduction, bank account, or credit/debit card).

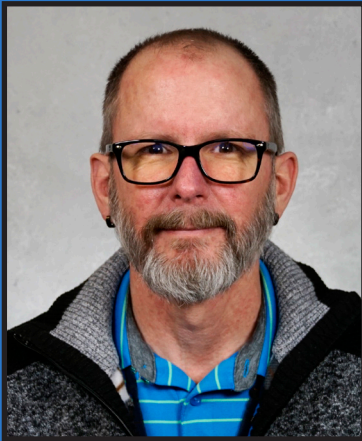
PAPER PLEDGE FORM



Prefer using a good old pen and paper?

You can still complete a paper pledge form. Download the paper form from GiveCFC.org and fill it out using the instructions on the second page. Submit it to your Keyworker.

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH **NOVEMBER**



David Woodward

David shows his commitment to the Boise VA by working diligently to serve Veterans every day. Recently when one of our departments was critically staffed and lacked the coverage to take care of the needs of our patients David volunteered to help. In fact, he often offers to work in other departments when needed. He always makes himself available to anyone who needs information. He is one of a handful of employees who have cross trained in all of our departments and frequently he checks in on other teams and offers to help – consideration for others is his first priority.

David shows respect for those he serves and works with. He displayed this recently when he was asked to provide training to different departments. He went out of his way to make his coworkers comfortable and encouraged employees as they gained new knowledge. He is skilled at making employees feel empowered as they work to reach new goals. He is proactive and works hard to ensure veterans who need his help have their identified needs met but he also makes sure we do not miss any part of taking care of a veterans needs by using his vast knowledge of VA care to help identify other issues.

David consistently strives for excellence and sets the example for others. David works to identify areas for improvement in himself and work processes. He makes everyone he works with feel like he is there for them to answer questions and provide support in difficult situations—even when David is short of time and resources, he makes time to support others.

David is an excellent employee who acts with the highest moral principles, always maintaining the trust and confidence of all those around him.

**VA**Boise VA
Medical Center

DO YOU?

- Have a desire to 'give back' to Veterans?
- Have caregiving experience (formal or informal)?
- Feel satisfaction caring for others?
- Have an extra room in your home?

**IF YOU ANSWERED YES,
YOU MAY WANT TO
CONSIDER A MEDICAL
FOSTER HOME
PROGRAM CAREGIVER!**

What is a Medical Foster Home?

A Medical Foster Home provides a safe, supportive, long-term care option for Veterans in a comfortable home environment. MFH's are an alternative to nursing home care and may be an option for Veterans who are unable to live alone, or don't have a caregiver.

Are Caregivers Paid?

Yes. The amount varies depending on the care the Veteran requires.
On average the monthly amount is \$2500-\$3500, per Veteran.

How Do I Become A Caregiver?

Contact the Boise VA MFH Coordinator to discuss the program. To ensure safety and quality of care, there is an application process.

What Do Caregivers Provide?

Personalized, comfortable room
Home cooked, nutritious meals
Laundry
Transportation
Medication management
24-hour care and support
Personal care



**For more
information call the
Boise VA Medical
Foster Home
Coordinator:**

Amie Panicacci
(208) 780-6253



THE RETIREMENT OF OUR FLAG

By Dennis Bankhead

I work at the Boise VA in the Laboratory as a Laboratory Information Manager. This means that I am responsible for creating and maintaining computer interfaces which allow for the transfer and interpretation of test results between instrumentation and VistA/CPRS. I have served in this role for the last 9 years and have worked here for a total of 16.

Outside of work, I act as the Cub Master for Meridian Pack 165. In this position, I lead monthly meetings and outings for Cub Scouts who belong to our Pack. The Pack is composed of 28 boys and girls, divided into Dens, which are organized by grade level. Kids who are in Kindergarten are called Lions, First graders are Tigers, Second graders are Wolves, Third graders are Bears, Fourth graders are Webelos (which means "WE BE LOyal Scouts") and lastly, Fifth graders who are AOLs (meaning "Arrow Of Light," comparable to the Eagle Scout rank, but for Cub Scouts). I am proud to say that I have been apart of this Pack for the last seven years, acting as a Den Leader for my oldest son through all six Cub ranks, and are currently supporting my youngest Son through his Scouting journey.

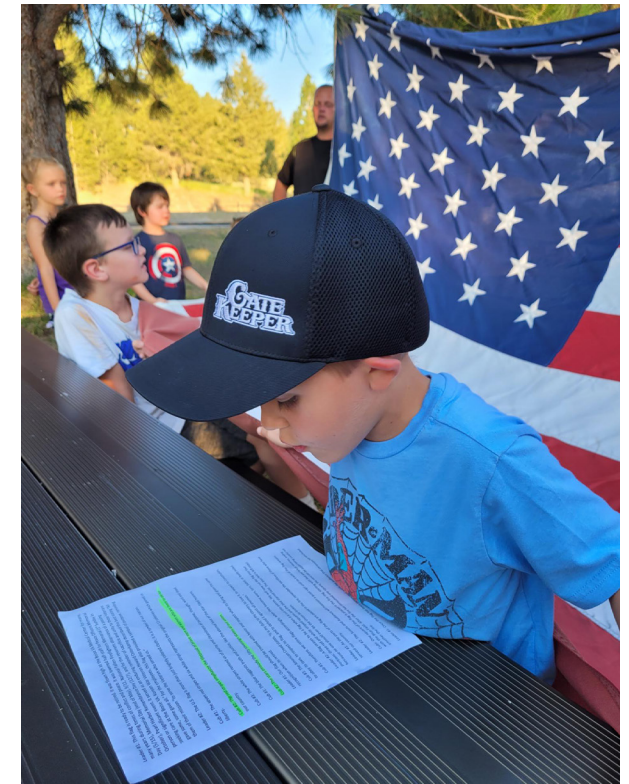
Every year our Pack holds a summer family overnight campout in various rotating locations throughout southern Idaho. During



the campout, we teach all Cub Scout ranks a variety of skills like knot tying, cooking, fire building, knife safety, orienteering and leather work, to name a few. The cooking station is perhaps the most entertaining to adults. Observing a Kindergartner or child who has never cooked, then attempt to mix, pour, and grill a pancake without burning it OR themselves, is both scary and fantastic!

However, the most valuable experience that our Cubs and their families take part in, or witness, is the Flag Retirement Ceremony. We incinerate flags in a respectful manner that should no longer be flown. The United States Flag Code defines when this should occur: The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem of display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning. Our ceremony begins at dusk after a fire is built and burning strong.

This last summer our Pack had the honor and privilege of retiring a Boise VA flag. This



large was flown in front of the CLC for many years. Before the flag was incinerated, it was displayed in full one last time, for everyone at the ceremony to see. Once it was unfolded and presented, the following was said:

Just a simple piece of colored cloth; sewn together in a red, white, and blue design.

A piece of cloth that of itself does nothing more than hang or blow in the wind.

To many millions of people throughout our nation's glorious history, it has stood tall,

THE RETIREMENT OF OUR FLAG

continued....

standing as a monument of Freedom, for all Americans.

Men and women have given their lives for it, fought for it, cried for it, and revered it as a symbol of the greatest country on earth.

At every Den and Pack meeting we pledge our allegiance to it.

Whenever it is raised or passes by, we all place our hands over our hearts or salute it.

It stands for the freedom we all share and the pride and patriotism we feel for our country.

Given the enormity in size of the flag, we were not able to place its entirety into the fire ring like we normally would. Instead, we carefully cut the flag into quarters to incinerate each piece individually. The flag was cut vertically in half, avoiding the Blue Star field. The remaining pieces were then folded in half and cut once again. In the end, one section composed the Blue Star field and other three contained Red and White stripes.

Before we placed the first section into the fire, the audience was asked to stand in silence and observe the flag until each section was incinerated and nothing remained. During this solemn time, it is not uncommon for Cubs or their parents to tear up, especially if the first retirement ceremony they have attended. The following day,

after the fire is completely out, the islets are retrieved and given to the Cubs who best exemplified the Scout Oath and Law for that weekend.

If you have a son or daughter, or, grandson or granddaughter, who may be interested in becoming a Cub Scout, please let me know.

Yours in Scouting,
Dennis L. Bankhead





Employee Whole Health Healthy Teaching Kitchen Winter Series

Virtually on [Teams](#)

12:00 – 12:30 PM Mountain Time

Last Wednesday each month

Hosted by Madison Keller, RD

January 25: [Zucchini Fritters](#)

February 22: [Microwave Chocolate
Mug Cake](#)

March 29: [Tuscan Tuna Salad Wrap](#)

Recorded sessions and recipes are on the Boise VA
[Employee Whole Health SharePoint Site](#).

Want an Outlook invite? Contact [Jeanette Berry](#)

Open to all VISN 20 staff!



EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH **NOVEMBER**



Jenna Elsholz

I want to nominate Jenna Elsholz for employee of the month. She has been a huge asset to the vascular department and is so deserving of this award and recognition. Jenna is the sole vascular technician coordinating with vascular surgery. She is well respected by Dr Masser and all of the vascular surgery team. Her reports are always thorough and above the standard that we often obtain from the community. She also is a well appreciated part of the vascular team. She not only is accurate and thorough, but she also contributes her talents when needed in a pinch, urgent setting and does this with the commitment of the VA mission to service our veterans. The vascular surgery team has often elicited her assistance in the OR, cath lab and at bedside in the ICU without more than 12-24hour notice. I have also had the pleasure of hearing the great things veterans tell me about the care they receive in her care, as one veteran put it "she knows what she is doing all right, she is a keeper!". As a new member of the vascular surgery team, I have been so happy with the care she gives and her exemplary standard. I want to thank her for being such a great team member to the service!