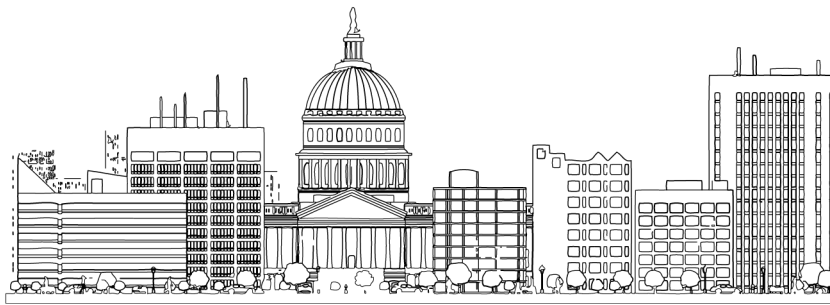


THE BOISE FRONT



JULY 2023

The official newsletter of the Boise VA Medical Center



Scott Smith (Professor, UW General Internal Medicine, retired VA medicine residency director) and Dr. Paula Carvalho held a special Saturday training session in the Boise VA Simulation Lab for a group of refugee physicians. Boise has a large refugee community and Dr. Smith has been helping them with the process of the Step tests and residency applications. These doctors were practicing physicians and surgeons in their own countries (Ukraine, Afghanistan, Africa, Middle East), and are now living in Boise. They spent the day in the SIM lab with us practicing procedures and discussing US medical education. The SIM lab experience was very successful and was very appreciated by this group of physicians. We also appreciated the assistance from Bryan Cruthirds, RN as well as the support from the Tetrad for facilitating this important community service.





HOMELESS VETERANS STAND DOWN

BOISE VA MEDICAL CENTER 500 W FORT STREET BOISE, ID 83702

21 OCTOBER 2023
0800 to 1500

PROOF OF VETERAN REQUIRED

MEDICAL SCREENINGS, HAIRCUTS, FOOD, SURPLUS GEAR & MORE

For more information call (208) 353-9769



Idaho State
UNIVERSITY



IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



Boise VA
Medical Center



Hello's



Goodbye's

**THE BOISE VAMC WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME OUR NEW
EMPLOYEES WHO CAME ABOARD IN JULY 2023:**

Jennifer Eames, Connected Care
Abigail Woodward, Pharmacy
Caroline Leeflang, Pharmacy
Jamie Green, Nutrition
Joshua Roff, Nursing
Kristen Dean, Education
Kristin Podjun, Nutrition
Mackenzie Klipstein, Pharmacy
Michael Burkett, Connected Care
Natalie Everett, Pharmacy
Olivia Roehling, Specialty Care
Sarah Peterson, Pharmacy
Stephanie Devine, Nursing
Tiffany Lam, Pharmacy
Ashley Jorgensen, Mental Health
Ashley Pettet, Nursing
Caleb Falck, Physical Medicine/Rehab
Chimaine McGarrity, Primary Care
Denise Dart, Primary Care
Gerardo Tzompa, Primary Care
Larry Rost, Nutrition

Marleen Gray, Nursing
Martha Fetzer, Mental Health
Naomi Bailey, Pharmacy
Ruzica Kovacevic, Nursing
Savannah Nessen, Nursing
Wendy Lawrence, Nursing
Sherri Howell, Connected Care
Caitlin Goodin, Mental Health
Christina Mathyssek, Mental Health
Christopher Ricken, Education
Emily Siebach, Mental Health
Emma Anderson-White, Mental Health
Mayson Schaff, Education
Judy Garner, Connected Care
LaSondra Attebery, Connected Care
Michael Gramlich, Connected Care
Selin Jacob, Connected Care
Daniel Winschel, Connected Care
Saman Heng, Connected Care
Laurin Johnson, Connected Care

Hello's



Goodbye's

THE BOISE VAMC WOULD LIKE TO SAY GOODBYE TO
THE EMPLOYEES WHO LEFT US IN JULY 2023:

Cari Sylvia, Mental Health

Jane Woychick, Pharmacy

Jensen Davis, Mental Health

Marc Heise, Mental Health

Michael Underriner, Mental Health

Emily Vogel, Mental Health

Kino Camarena, Supply

Rusty Robertson, Facilities

Robert Haun, Facilities

Tasha Gearhead, Facilities

Riley Binkowski, Pharmacy

Kyla Dickey, Pharmacy

Joshua Roff, Education

Haley Schlageter, Education

Zachary James, Sterile Processing

Jeanette Wood, Connected Care

BOISE is HIGHLY RELIABLE

HRO PRINCIPLES & VALUES

THEME OF THE MONTH
Commit to Zero Harm

August 2023 | National Safety Poster

Verifying Medication Orders to Reduce Harm

C

CONTEXT

Courtney Runningen, a clinical pharmacist at Fargo VA HCS, was reviewing a seemingly duplicative opioid order for a one-time dose of oxycodone alongside an additional take-home order of opioid painkillers. Concerned about possible opioid overuse, Ms. Runningen asked the provider for clarification.

A

ACTION

She discovered the oxycodone to be an inpatient order and, therefore, not duplicative. She also noticed the opioid, written as a nursing order, was pulled directly from the Omnicell® without proper pharmacy processing. The provider, pharmacist and pharmacy Automated Data Processing Application Coordinator (ADPAC) determined that a programming oversight was the root cause of the error.

R

RESULTS

The pharmacy ADPAC immediately adjusted the settings of all facility Omnicells to require a pharmacist-verified order before releasing medications. Ms. Runningen's thorough review of medication orders demonstrates her ongoing Commitment to Zero Harm for Veteran patients and helped to promptly uncover and immediately correct the larger issue with the facility's Omnicell settings.



“To me, committing to Zero Harm means committing to following up on the details that impact an individual Veteran.”

*Courtney Runningen
Clinical Pharmacist
Fargo VA Health Care System
Fargo, North Dakota*

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

For more information, visit: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhahrojourny>

Internal VA Use Only

VHA'S JOURNEY TO
HIGH
RELIABILITY

Your Care is Our Mission.



No photo on file

SDU

Unit of the
Quarter
Q3

As you know, monitoring fluid balance through accurate documentation of patients' intake and output flow sheets is vital during hospitalization especially for patients on the Stepdown unit. As a result, inaccurate fluid balance monitoring and poor documentation can result in poor clinical outcomes, including missed recognition of warning signs of dehydration, affected cardiac and renal function, fluid overload, over diuresing, prolonged hospitalization and increased mortality. It is prevalent that the current nursing practices of fluid intake and output monitoring for inpatients is inconsistent, incomplete and lacks accuracy for years.

The entire team on the Stepdown unit recognized this problem and took action by implementing a quality improvement project to improve Intake and Output recording, including selecting two I&O champions representative of both shifts, implementing a q shift water pitcher refill ritual, recording three meals food/fluid intakes, conducting monthly audit and monthly staff education based on the audit result, as well as offering I&O tips and reminders each month. Their efforts and engagement were truly remarkable, and within just four months, they were able to improve overall unit compliance from 26% to an impressive 66%. What's more, every category audited all well exceeded the target goal of 70%.

This achievement is a testament to the team's unwavering commitment to providing exceptional patient care. They worked tirelessly to improve processes, communicate effectively with one another, and support each other to achieve this incredible result. And the impact of their efforts is clear: patients are receiving better care, and their outcomes are improving.

I believe that the Stepdown unit deserves recognition for their outstanding work. They have demonstrated what is possible when a team comes together with a shared vision and a commitment to excellence. I wholeheartedly recommend them for the Unit of the Quarter award.

Congratulations BVAMC HRO HeROs!



Shannon Allen, RN Float

Shannon received a patient from another unit who was receiving an IV antibiotic. She looked up the patient's allergies and recognized that the medication the patient was receiving was listed as an allergy.

Shannon stopped the infusion, notified the medical team, and explained the situation to the patient.

Shannon's actions demonstrated *sensitivity to operations and preoccupation with failure*, by verifying the process and double checking the medications and allergies herself.

Shannon was *reluctant to simplify*, as she didn't blame staff for the error, rather identified system errors and made recommendations for process improvement. Her report prompted a review of medication administration practices and allergy verification in the facility.

Brian Baker, Housekeeping Aid, recent transfer to SPS

Big shout out to Brian for his *preoccupation with failure* by identifying and promptly writing a work order for a Geo-thermal wall heater that was hanging off the wall!

This would have potentially led to a flood. The heater wall bracket was promptly repaired by the after-hours Maintenance Technician.

Our Housekeeping Team is often the first to identify items in need of repair, thus avoiding potential big problems from seemingly smaller ones.

Social Media and Government Ethics

What do you need to know regarding the use of social media in both official and personal capacities? Here are answers to the most frequently asked questions...

Can I use social media while on duty? When employees are on duty, the Standards of Conduct require that they use official time in an honest effort to perform official duties, and that they use government property only to perform official duties. This limits the extent to which employees may use their social media accounts while on duty. You can however, logon to your social media accounts during breaks.

Can I use government owned computers to access social media? Yes, VHA Directive 6001 allows for 'limited personal use' of government owned property if doing so does not result in loss of employee productivity. Keep in mind that employees have no right to privacy while using work devices.

Can I refer to my title or position on social media? Yes, but employees may not use title or position for public gain or to suggest government sanction or support. Merely listing your title does not violate this. While you are free to describe your own interests, and ideas on unofficial time, do not use your personal social media accounts to act as a representative of the VA.

What types of posts should I avoid? The Standards of Ethical Conduct prohibit employees from disclosing non public information to further their private interests. Never post or share work related information to external groups, bulletin boards, or other public forums without approval from the Office of Public Affairs. Discussing and sharing work related information, patient information, or information about other staff members on social media is never appropriate.

Can I engage in fundraising through social media? Yes, employees may use social media to fundraise if they do not use their VA title or suggest that the VA sanctions the fundraising activity. Also, employees should not solicit funds from a subordinate.

What about posting to support a political candidate? The Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from sending messages through social media that advocate for a political party or candidate for partisan public office while on duty or in a federal building; engaging in such activity may subject them to disciplinary action. Employees maintaining a regular work schedule while teleworking are considered to have the same on duty status as if they were at their regular duty stations (Hatch Act, 5 U.S.C. §§ 7321-7326).

What else should I know? Be diligent when using social media. Foreign intelligence agents are known to specifically target federal employees for a variety of reasons.

This information is intended clarify some issues that federal employees might not be aware of or are confusing. This is not meant to replace a thorough review of the law, policy, or official guidance. For more information contact me at Steven.Waltari@va.gov or 208-422-1267.

COMPLIANCE CORNER



VA | Boise VA
Medical Center



The background is a white space filled with various farm-themed icons in a simple, colorful, line-art style. These include a green tractor, a yellow chicken, a yellow barn with a red roof, a sun rising over a green field, a basket of produce, a hand holding a red apple, a hand holding a fork, a green market cart, a cow, a windmill, and a sun with a house on a hill. The icons are scattered throughout the page, interspersed with small black plus, minus, and circle symbols.

BOISE VA MEDICAL CENTER

FARMERS MARKET

FRESH & LOCAL

EACH WEDNESDAY

1:30P - 2:30P

FLAG CIRCLE



No photo on file

Penney
Huffman-Cook

Employee of
the Month
JUNE

Ms. Huffman exudes in the ICARE value of Excellence. She has stepped into the charge nurse role and works in collaboration with staff to ensure our veterans are well taken care of. She has consistently advocated for both staff and veterans on 2MS and is not afraid to speak up when needed. She was one of three employees to speak up about documentation required when veterans are wearing Buprenorphine patches to prevent patients from losing them and being at risk for withdrawals. This medication was not covered in our policy related to opioid patches. Ms. Huffman does little things on the unit such as organizing breaks for staff and having “stocking parties” during downtime. She is always thinking of great ways to improve and maintain a well-run unit.

Ms. Huffman strives for the highest quality and continuous improvement by volunteering to chair one of our US Teams committees, which is focused on encouraging employee engagement and elevating patient experience on 2MS. She is leading her team in implementing a veteran grooming project to ensure our veterans are given the option to have their hair and beards neatly groomed so they look and feel better upon discharge.

This shows her respect and commitment to the care and well-being of the veterans we serve. She is also overseeing a project highlighting employee summer vacations, thereby building camaraderie and employee engagement on the unit. Ms. Huffman is continuously improving her knowledge of leading her committee and actively seeks ways to elevate her administrative skills to ensure her success. This helps her team feel they can count on her to drive continuous improvement and promote the best care possible for our veterans.

We feel Ms. Huffman demonstrates our ICARE values on a daily basis and feel she deserves special recognition for her commitment to our veterans and employees.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Doug Cole



1. I served in the US Air Force from March 1971 thru August 1974, doing two tours in SE Asia, mostly in Thailand. During my first tour, I was a radio operator, and during my second was assigned to the 56th Special Operations Wing at NKP Thailand, doing intelligence work. In between, I was sent to 15th AF HQ, where they had me be a personal assistant to a Colonel in the Directorate of Operations (sort of like Radar O'Reilly), which was very interesting in its own way.

2. I was born in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, and moved to Idaho when I was five. After being discharged, I attended college under the GI Bill and became a planner, and then an environmental scientist for the Environmental Protection Agency. I've been a platelet donor for over 35 years and done something over 450 donations. After retiring from EPA, I volunteered for the Red Cross for a few years, and then at the VA hospital. I enjoy spending time with family and friends, tying flies, fly fishing, and

spending time in the woods hunting and camping.

3. Volunteering for the Red Cross was extremely rewarding, but something compelled me to ask to be allowed to volunteer at the VA hospital, and Tami was gracious enough to say yes. I'm an escort, and have only been doing it for a little over a year. Helping the veterans who come into the hospital is an honor, and I've had the good fortune to meet some incredible people. It's very difficult to describe the feelings, but I suspect the other volunteers and VA medical staff, know the feeling as well. An added bonus has been meeting and working with the other volunteers, who inspire me daily. I want to be more like them when I grow up.



No photo on file

**Gail
Leininger**

**Employee of
the Month
JUNE**

Gail is an essential member of the Supply Chain Management warehouse team. His positive attitude sets the tone as he goes the extra mile to make sure the mission is completed. He is the epitome of the team player working closely with our inventory managers and supply technicians to ensure critical items are processed and delivered to the facility. Recently, Gail was quick to respond when a mission critical part was needed to repair a laboratory blood tube system. He processed the shipment and rushed it to the repair technician, enabling the system to get back online within minutes of delivery. He has been exceptional when training our new CWT workers, showing patience, and understanding. He is quick to lend a helping hand wherever needed. He is the first to volunteer to perform the daily narcotic counts in the pharmacy and works closely with the records management officer during patient record shipments. He has been a vital link to the supply chain by volunteering to assist the supply technicians during the current manning shortage to ensure critical supplies are delivered to the facility to allow our frontline staff to continue to care for our veterans.

Boise VAMC Office of Systems Redesign & Improvement

Congratulations!

In an effort to shed more light onto the HRO pillar of Continuous Process Improvement, the Systems Redesign and Improvement program will be showcasing projects and work from around our Boise VAMC.

We would like to congratulate Jeanette Berry, RN for earning her Lean Yellow Belt certification! Jeanette's project was on increasing available space for lactating women.

Problem Statement: *Lactating persons have few options for lactation space when needed on BVAMC campus to meet the requirements from H.R.5738 Lactation Spaces for Veteran Moms Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and National Institute of Health recommendations. Boise VA has 3 options currently: Basement B67 G05 (employee only), Orange/gold team (employee only), and Women's Wellness Center (Veterans, Visitors, and Employees, though 10 min from main building). Awareness of current lactation spaces is limited by staff and Veterans. The limited options of space lead to increased time to find space for lactation, stress and emotional burden for lactating person, and safety concerns of using bathroom and contaminating milk if bathroom seems to be only feasible option.*

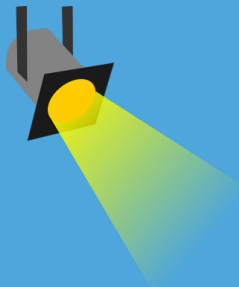
Jeanette not only doubled the number of available areas for lactating women to breastfeed, but she also worked with various departments to ensure safety, security and worked with our space committee to identify areas to implement her strategy in increasing available spaces for breastfeeding women. This included cleaning out current spaces and making them aesthetically pleasing.

Jeanette's LEAN project, "Lactation Space Process Improvement," created a safe place for a particular need that was not well addressed prior. Her take charge attitude of Whole Health is what makes her a shining light in the Veteran's Experience Office and the VA. Congratulations, Jeanette, on another job well done!

If you would like to see more information on this project, please click on the presentation link below. We are proud to showcase Jeanette's work. If you are interested in Lean training or would like more information about how you can participate in process improvement, please email BOISystemsRedesign@va.gov. We'd love to hear from you!

[03212022_Lactation Space Process-JBerry.pptx](#)

Lean Yellow Belt Project Spotlight



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center

VISN 20 Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program Presents

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) Virtual Education Summit 2023

SAVE THE DATE

10/11/2023, 9 am—3 pm (PST)

The Intersection of Intimate Partner Violence and Cognitive Functioning

Presentations Include:

◆ **TBI/Cognitive Impairment and the Use of IPV**

Dr. Lewis Krain, Geriatric Psychiatrist, Chief of Inpatient Mental Health,
Central Arkansas VA Healthcare System

◆ **Caring for Loved Ones with Neurocognitive Disorders**

Dr. Valerie Johnson, Doctor of Occupational Therapy, Major of Public Administration,
Alaska VA Healthcare System, Caregiver Support Team

◆ **Impacts of Strangulation and Identification**

Rachel Ramirez, LISW-S, Ohio Domestic Violence Network, Director of Health and
Disability Programs, Founder of The Center on Partner-Inflicted Brain Injury

◆ **Firearm Life Planning**

Marian Betz, MD, MPH, Professor of Emergency Medicine,
University of Colorado School of Medicine

4.5 Continuing Education Credits pending approval for:
ACCME, ACCME-NP, ACPE, ANCC, AOTA, APA, ASWB



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

Contact Your VA Coordinator
Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program
www.socialwork.va.gov/IPV/Coordinators.asp

The National Domestic Violence
HOTLINE
1.800.799.SAFE (7233) • 1.800.787.3224 (TTY)



Boise VAMC Office of Systems Redesign & Improvement

Congratulations!

In an effort to shed light onto the HRO pillar of Continuous Process Improvement, the Systems Redesign and Improvement program will be showcasing projects and work from around our Boise VAMC.

We would like to congratulate Linda Petersen, RN for earning her Lean Yellow Belt certification! Linda's project was on improving the pre-work process for lean courses.

Problem Statement: *The amount of time it takes for the Systems Redesign and Improvement Coordinator (SRIC) to search for students who have taken Lean courses, exams, and completed projects in TMS, emails, and occasional excel spreadsheets is >16 hours. Additionally, after further research in TMS, it was discovered that the percentage of students given credit in TMS for Lean completions was <40%. The exorbitant time wasted in these searches and lack of a defined tracking system created frustration and backlog for current SRICs. It was further complicated in recognizing there is no standardized process at the Boise VAMC for students to sign up for, enter, complete, and obtain credit for completing a Lean Belt course.*

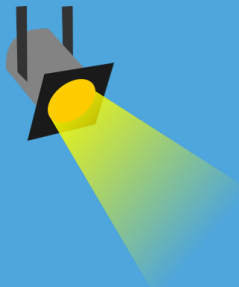
Linda was very new to the SRI office but recognized that there was a need to improve the work that goes into a Lean class. It took an average of 16 hours to do all of pre-work and some participants were not getting credit for taking the course. Linda's project decreased the amount of time to under 1 hour and ensured that 100% of participants were getting credit in a timely manner.

Linda's project improved the process not only for the System Redesign office making it faster and more efficient but also for the facility by ensuring participants are getting the credit they deserve. Linda's ability to spot problems and take action are what makes her a valuable member in the Veteran's Experience Office and the VA. Congratulations, Linda, on another job well done!

If you would like to see more information on this project, please click on the presentation link below. We are proud to showcase Linda's work. If you are interested in Lean training or would like more information about how you can participate in process improvement, please email BOISystemsRedesign@va.gov. We'd love to hear from you!

[Improving the Pre-Work for Lean Courses](#)

Lean Yellow Belt Project Spotlight



VA | Boise VA
Medical Center

KOREAN AMBASSADOR FOR PEACE MEDAL



The Embassy of the Republic of Korea would like to present all Korean War Veterans who served between

June 25, 1950 – Dec. 31, 1955
with the
The Korean Ambassador of Peace Medal

This medal is an expression of appreciation from the Korean Government to US servicemen and women who served in the Korean conflict past and present.

Please contact us to determine eligibility and apply mitzi.cheldelin@veterans.idaho.gov

To receive the medal by Veterans Day 2023, apply by:

OCTOBER 1ST, 2023

