



Congratulations to Dr. Melissa Hagman!
Dr. Hagman was recognized by the VA Secretary with an ICARE award!

Secretary's Honor Award for ICARE - Dr. Melissa Hagman Nomination

INTEGRITY

Dr. Melissa Hagman serves as the Program Director of the University of Washington Boise Internal Medicine Residency Program. In this role, she oversees a VA-based training program and has demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment to the education and training of future healthcare professionals. Her expertise and guidance have significantly contributed to the development and success of the residency program, ensuring the delivery of high-quality care to veterans, and recruiting and retaining physicians to our rural state.

In addition to her remarkable leadership, Dr. Hagman exemplifies the core values of the VA through her exceptional patient care as a teaching hospitalist and palliative care physician.

COMMITMENT

I would like to share a specific patient care example that showcases her unwavering commitment and compassion. Recently, a patient with somatic anxiety disorder was admitted from the clinic to the Boise VA Medical Center. The patient presented with paresthesia, neck pain, and swelling, with inconclusive results from previous work ups. On the morning of a clinic visit, the patient experienced severe anxiety symptoms, including hyperventilation, crying, moaning, nausea, shaking, neck pain, and chest pain.

Dr. Hagman's prompt response to the patient's distress was truly remarkable. She immediately attended to the patient, demonstrating her ability to connect with individuals on a deeply compassionate level. With patience and attentiveness, she listened to the patient's concerns, ensuring they felt heard and understood. Dr. Hagman's professional and compassionate approach immediately put the patient at ease, creating a therapeutic environment for their care.

To ensure that the patient did not feel overwhelmed, Dr. Hagman personally wheeled the patient down in a wheelchair to their ENT appointment, offering constant reassurance and support throughout the process. Her presence provided a sense of comfort and security, enabling the patient to successfully complete the ENT examination. This act of going above and beyond normal expectations exemplifies Dr. Hagman's commitment to serving others and upholding VA's core values.

ADVOCACY

Dr. Hagman's leadership & advocacy skills and accomplishments are truly remarkable, setting her apart as an exceptional candidate for the Secretary's I CARE Honor Award. As the Program Director of the Boise Internal Medicine Residency Program and the Chair of the Idaho State Board of Education Graduate Medical Education Committee, Dr. Hagman exhibits a unique ability to lead and inspire others. Her role as the Program Director involves overseeing the training and development of resident physicians, ensuring the highest standards of education and patient care. In addition, in her position with the State Board of Education she demonstrates the ability to coordinate and collaborate with stakeholders state-wide to support resident physician education in Idaho.

Dr. Melissa Hagman's vigorous and profound commitment to the excellent care of veterans is exemplary. She consistently makes veterans feel heard, appreciated, and valued. Her expertise, knowledge, and leadership are not only inspiring to her colleagues but also have a lasting impact on the well-being and recovery of the veterans she serves.

RESPECT

It is also important to recognize Dr. Hagman's significant contributions to medical education and her dedication to advancing the field of internal medicine. Her exceptional teaching skills and mentorship have been acknowledged through numerous teaching awards, including the Richard M. Tucker WWAMI Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award and the Dr. Judd Lunn Memorial Teacher of the Year Award. These accolades reflect her outstanding respect & commitment to nurturing the next generation of healthcare professionals.

EXCELLENCE

Dr. Hagman's leadership extends beyond the realm of medical education, as she has also served as the Idaho American College of Physicians Governor, exemplifying her keen advocacy and networking skills. Her dedication to leadership and her numerous accomplishments in this area make her an exemplary candidate for recognition.

Thank you for considering Dr. Hagman's nomination. I am confident that she is a deserving candidate who will continue to make a significant difference in the lives of veterans and the field of healthcare. Should you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Compliance Corner

Social Media and Government Ethics

There are a variety of federal laws and regulations that govern the use of social media by federal employees in both official and personal capacities. So, what do you need to know? 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, with a caveat, 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 without authorization. When people know you work for the VA, they may assume you speak for the VA. To ensure readers understand that your posts are your personal views consider putting a disclaimer that states you are not posting in an official capacity.

What types of posts should I avoid? The Standards of Ethical Conduct prohibit employees from disclosing nonpublic 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



BOISE is HIGHLY RELIABLE

HRO PRINCIPLES & VALUES

THEME OF THE MONTH
Clear Communications

December 2023 | National Safety Poster

Self-Reporting Enables Clear Communications

C

CONTEXT

When Ricky Reyna, a nurse on the Medical-Surgical Unit at Amarillo VA HCS (Amarillo, TX), realized he had mistakenly given medication through injection rather than an oral syringe, he immediately self-reported the error and entered a Patient Safety Event into the Joint Patient Safety Reporting (JPSR) system. Because the Veteran was unharmed, this error would have remained undiscovered without Mr. Reyna's communication.

A

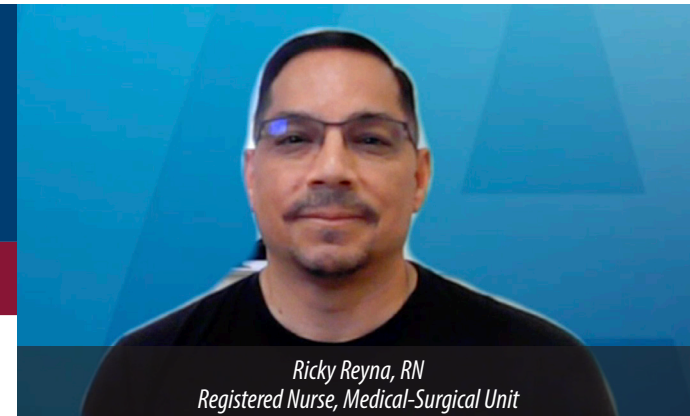
ACTION

The report resulted in a Root Cause Analysis (RCA) to determine how to prevent this error from reoccurring. The Nurse Manager, Terrah Jamandron, and the RCA team discovered that the facility lacked the appropriate syringes. Leadership immediately acquired the needed syringes and educated all nursing teams about the situation through training and updated orientation materials.

R

RESULTS

Michelle Isham, Chief of Inpatient Services, explains how Mr. Reyna's Close Call and Clear Communications positively impacted Amarillo VA HCS. Mr. Reyna notified leadership through proper channels, the team got to the root cause and Amarillo VA HCS addressed the reason for the error, closing the loop with clear, simple instructions. Mr. Reyna's reporting of the near miss was then celebrated to encourage the behavior at other facilities.



*Ricky Reyna, RN
Registered Nurse, Medical-Surgical Unit*



*Terrah Jamandron, BSN, RN
Nurse Manager, Medical-Surgical Unit*



*Michelle Isham, MSN, RN, SANE
Chief of Inpatient Nursing Services*

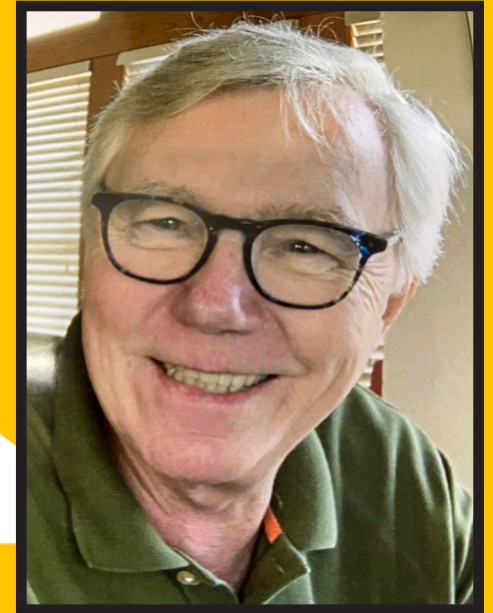
"By using the standard processes and channels, we clearly communicated and remedied the situation and can now use it to inform others."

*Ricky Reyna, RN
Registered Nurse, Medical-Surgical Unit
Amarillo VA HCS
Amarillo, TX*

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Tom Aden



I am a combat Veteran. I served with the 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Marines in Vietnam from July 1968-August of 1969. I was the forward observer for mortar support. Combat does create a special camaraderie with the members of your unit. After 55 years I remain close with our platoon corpsmen.

I was born and raised in

Nebraska, and a proud graduate of the University. Most of my career was in the commercial insurance business. At the end of my career, I was involved in office leasing.

Mitzi and I have been married for 53 years. We moved to Boise in 1989. Our two daughters, their husbands and seven grandchildren live in the Washington DC area.

We are fortunate to be able to visit them a few times a year. My hobbies include fly fishing and golf. Also, Mitzi and I enjoy bridge, travel, and dinners with our friends.

I started volunteering with the VA in 2019. I think it is important to give back and I am happy to assist my fellow Veterans. I have volunteered with other organizations over the years, but none have

given me more satisfaction than the VA. Those I volunteer with are a wonderful group of people, and I am pleased to serve with them.



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HOLIDAY SPONSOR PROGRAM

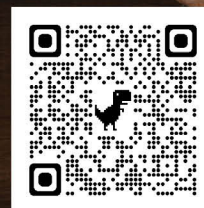
The Veteran Holiday Sponsorship Program is open for sponsors and veteran nominations now through December 8.

The program is limited to 250 people. Gifts will be available for pickup or delivery the week of Christmas. If you would like to sponsor a veteran or nominate yourself or another veteran please contact Tammy at (208) 422-1175

Completed forms can be dropped off at Voluntary Service or emailed to boivoluntaryservice@va.gov

Application forms can be found at the Boise VA Information Desk and online at:

www.va.gov/boise-health-care/work-with-us-/volunteer-or-donate/





**Jennifer
Ackerly-Woods**

Employee of
the Month
OCTOBER



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Ms. Jennifer Ackerly-Woods has displayed several of the I-CARE values in support of the Boise VAMC's mission. She increased her workload in oncology when we were down multiple providers due to resignations and illnesses (Commitment). This kept the oncology service running while we recruited and on-boarded a new physician. She has also worked to integrate tele-endocrinology into the Boise VAMC's endocrine service, and this has improved the timeliness of endocrinology care at our facility (Excellence). She now serves as the facility POC for colon cancer screening and surveillance. She has done an excellent job in this role, coordinating with multiple stakeholders to ensure that Veterans get timely, appropriate colorectal cancer screening and surveillance. Jennifer also serves as a member of the Physician Assistant Professional Standards Board and as the Physician Assistant member of the Protected Peer Review Committee. Jennifer has done all of this while still providing exemplary clinical care to Veterans and educating her colleagues on endocrinology and rheumatology issues (Excellence). She consistently displays a positive, can-do attitude. She has frequently helped patients navigate complex issues with compassion and patience (Respect, Advocacy).

*NO PHOTO
ON FILE*

Andrea
Ghighina

Employee of
the Month
OCTOBER



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Andrea Ghighina works as a night shift nurse on 2MS. She consistently goes above and beyond to fulfill the VA mission by demonstrating the ICARE values of Commitment and Excellence.

During our US Teams pilot on 2MS, Andrea stepped up to become the co-chair of the Education/Performance Improvement committee. As this committee and role is strictly voluntary, Andrea has dedicated her personal time to attending every meeting and ensured projects identified make it to completion. Andrea reaches out to members of the team outside of meetings to track projects and promote engagement within the team. She also steps in to lead meetings when the co-chair is unable to lead. It is because of her commitment to the success of US Teams that this pilot has thrived. Her leadership within the team helps keep other team members engaged as she demonstrates her commitment. Andrea also demonstrates excellence by consistently looking for new ways to improve the quality and care provided to our veterans through US Teams.

In addition to US Teams, Andrea volunteered her time to become a PMDB trainer. As a night shift nurse, she has happily changed her tour multiple times to accommodate training day shift staff to ensure nursing service compliance. It's not easy switching back and forth between night shift and day shift. Andrea's flexibility has helped to ensure staff have the much needed training to promote their safety on the inpatient units.

We are lucky to have such an engaged employee on 2MS and feel she deserves to be recognized for employee of the month for her additional efforts displayed within our 2MS team.



**Tiffany
Spaulding**

**Employee of
the Month
OCTOBER**



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Tiffany Spaulding, our new interior designer, came on-board during the middle of the Caldwell CBOC transition planning. She quickly asserted herself and started coordinating the planned move from the old CBOC to the new. She went around to the key services and determined which department was moving what items. She labeled every piece of equipment and furniture in the old CBOC location with the Category, Team Responsible for Movement, the old CBOC location, and the new CBOC location. Each tag was also color coordinated that corresponded with a detailed map showing the best route to deliver each piece of furniture/equipment based on the final location at the new CBOC and the size of the item regarding the height and width of the doors. During the actual move, she was on location and assisted anyone who needed help, or a question answered. She also, at her own expense, provided drinks and snacks for all throughout the duration of the move. After the move was complete, she brought in homemade cobbler and ice cream as a "Thank you" for everyone who assisted. In all aspects of her efforts for the Caldwell CBOC transition, she went above and beyond expectations. In my time here at the Boise VA Medical Center, I haven't seen anyone make such an impact and establish a reputation for excellence in such a short time as Tiffany has done.

HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



**The Boise VAMC would
like to welcome our new
employees who joined
the team in November
2023:**

Ammon Blaser, Facilities Management
Catherine Pellizzari, Mental Health
Derrek Bull, Canteen Service
Enesa Miljkovic, Nursing
Ernest La Mertha, Chaplain
McKennah Baird, Canteen Service
Rana Fease, Nursing
Stephanie Johnston, Specialty Care
Stephen Collins, Nutrition and Food
Amanda Wade, Health Administration
Andrea Sheley, Primary Care
Angellina Bolt, Primary Care
Anthony Rotondo, Nursing
Brandy Watts, Nursing
Halie Ellerd, Connected Care
Joshua Montgomery, Health Administration
Kaylea Larrea, Health Administration
Lisa Anshutz, Pharmacy
Meghan McGuire, Nursing
Michele Hope, Pharmacy
Patrick Nichols, Nursing
Sarah Weekes, Pharmacy
Silvia Peregrina, Health Administration
Stephanie Young, Health Administration
Tyler Graves, Primary Care
Amber Dougan, Facilities Management
Gary Spencer, Facilities Management
Ashley Hilliker, Primary Care
Rebecca Plummer, Connected Care
Laura Carlton, Connected Care

HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



**The Boise VAMC would
like to say goodbye to the
employees who left the
team in November 2023:**

Savannah Nessen, Nursing
Lisa Denmark, Physical Med & Rehab
Steven Armendariz, Health Administration
Emily Antimie, Nursing
Jennifer Skinner, Nursing
David Baumgart, Mental Health
Mary Field, Mental Health
Samantha Legault, Nursing
Pamela Fleckenstein, Nutrition and Food
Jennifer Hernandez, Connected Care
Madison Woodworth, Primary Care
Mark Ellestad, Connected Care

Wipes **CLOG** pipes



**Wipes clog pipes!
Never flush them.**



Trash them!

While some products may be advertised as "safe for septic systems and sewer" or "flushable", **they do not break down** like toilet paper causing sewage backups, costly repairs, and unsanitary conditions.

Please DO NOT Flush:

- Cleaning wipes of ANY kind (baby wipes, disinfectant wipes, moist wipes, etc.)
- Sanitary napkins, tampons, condoms
- Paper towels or napkins (paper or cloth)
- Wash cloths, towels, rags
- Diapers (cloth, disposable, "flushable")
- Facial tissues, cotton balls, swabs & pads
- Toilet bowl scrub pads
- Food or Coffee Grounds
- Dental Floss
- Hair
- Kitty Litter



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center

FOCUS GROUP

7 DEC 2023 / 5PM - 6PM

4 times a year we invite a small group of 3 to 9 women veterans to tell us about your healthcare!

The topic for this Focus Group is:
'Whole Health What Matters to You'

Join us for the upcoming discussion, or RSVP for future focus groups by calling:

Sharon Cardona, MSN, RN
Women Veteran Program Manager
(208) 422-1000 x 7442

Tell us about your VA experiences!



THIS HOLIDAY SEASON,
THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GIVES
BACK!

Comfort and Joy

A VETERANS WINTER CLOTHES DRIVE



Help us bring joy, cheer, and warmth to our
veterans by donating hats, socks, gloves, scarves,
and new or gently used coats!

Donations can be dropped off to
Building 54 (Education) between
December 1 - 31, 2023. If you
have questions you can email
kelly.goodman@va.gov

Please drop off all donations to
the Education Dept with either
Kelly Goodman (Rm 116) or
Paige Calhoun (Rm 115)





**Thank you to everyone
who was able to donate
to the VA Food Pantry! We
collected a total of 775
lbs. of food!**

Now for epic bragging rights and
pizza: RNODs/Float Pool gathered
a total of 260.8 lbs.

ED: 138.6

ICU: 58.1

SDU: 78.3

2P/TRC: 43.1

2MS: 99.1

CLC: 96.7

**Volunteer services gives
out roughly 95 bags a
month of food that weigh
around 15lbs. This food
drive will keep them well
supplied throughout the
holidays!**



GIVE HAPPY



This holiday season consider joining thousands of other Federal employees and give a donation to a charity of your choice through the Combined Federal Campaign.

WHY GIVE THROUGH THE CFC?

We know there are a lot of giving options out there. Here are four great reasons to give through the CFC:

1. **Give through payroll deduction** for a greater impact over time.
2. **Give to multiple charities** and pledge volunteer hours in one place.
3. **Give for greater impact** – the world is a better place when we give together.
4. **GIVE HAPPY!** Studies show that when you give happiness, you get happy too.

Watch the [CFC promotional videos](#) to learn more about the campaign.

Check out the [Boise VAMC CFC SharePoint site](#) for all CFC resources and to watch our donations barometer grow.

Help us meet our goal of \$15,000 by January 15, 2024!

Your dollar goes a long way!

If each employee donated **\$1** per paycheck, the BVAMC would raise approximately **\$44,200**.

If each employee donated **\$5** per paycheck, the BVAMC would raise approximately **\$221,000**.

You can make a difference!

BVAMC Office Codes

StnID: 531

CFC: H61MNF

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Your Local CFC Team ~ Erik Astheimer – Brianna Budell – Heather Gula – Kayla Stafford



DISABLED VETERANS SNOWMOBILE RIDE



DISABLED VETERANS WE WANT YOU!

DISABLED VETERANS WHO ARE RATED 30% DISABLED OR MORE BY THE VA ARE INVITED ON AN ALL-EXPENSE PAID SNOWMOBILE RIDE IN MCCAIG, IDAHO.

ON THE RIDE VETS WILL BE PAIRED WITH A PERSONAL RIDING COACH AND PROVIDED LUNCH, SNOWMOBILE & SWAG!

VETS WILL BE CHOSEN ON FIRST-COME BASIS.

DISABILITY DOES NOT NEED TO BE COMBAT RELATED.

TO SIGN UP CALL JOSH AT THE BOISE VA BEFORE MARCH 1, 2024 AT (208) 422-1054.

