



THE

BOISE

FEBRUARY 2024

FRONT

The official newsletter of the Boise VA Medical Center

VA MEDICAL CENTER

HARASSMENT HAS NO PLACE AT VA

Within These Walls She Is Respected and Honored

For help or to report: 1.855.829.6636 (1.855.VA.WOMEN)

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

The following links are provided to support the Workplace Harassment Prevention Stand Down efforts.

[The Secretary of Veterans Affairs EEO; Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access; No FEAR; and Whistleblower Rights and Protection Policy Statement:](#)

[VA Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion Harassment Prevention Program: Harassment Prevention Program \(HPP\) - Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion \(ORMDI\) \(va.gov\)](#)

[VHA Assault and Harassment Prevention Office: Assault and Harassment Prevention Office Home \(va.gov\)](#)

Stand Up to Stop Harassment Now! Declaration

VHA is committed to a harassment-free health care environment for everyone and will not tolerate harassment of any kind. We promise to:

Create a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for everyone -



Empower everyone to recognize, intervene, and report harassment -



Advance a culture where harassment is never tolerated -



Provide a seamless, secure, and compassionate system for reporting harassment without fear of retaliation -



Assist Veterans, visitors, volunteers, and employees in reporting harassment -



Take prompt and appropriate action to respond to reports of harassment -



Be accountable by tracking harassment and the actions taken -



Partner with Veterans and Veteran Service Organizations to stop harassment -

We, the undersigned, dedicate ourselves to holding our leaders, our employees, and Veterans accountable to these principles.

David Wood



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center

Please do your part to stop harassment in the workplace by joining Director Wood in signing this pledge.

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY

**WELCOME HOME
CELEBRATION**

FRIDAY, MARCH 29TH

**EAST SIDE OF KLEINER PARK
1920 N. RECORDS WAY, MERIDIAN, ID**

1:00 - 3:30 PM

Celebration begins at 1:00 pm with music,
resource information & service based displays
where veterans can reconnect.

Hot Dogs and Drinks will be
served at no cost to our Vietnam
Veterans and their families!



Staff,

We continue to have issues with staff pinning and taping paper signs, posters, flyers, etc. to walls, doors, desks, windows, etc. Though displaying this information is well intended, displaying information like this not consistent with our facilities practice of creating a clean, clutter free, professional environment that our veterans expect and deserve. Removing these materials also causes damage to surfaces that then needs to be repaired/replaced. Paper products are also not able to be disinfected/cleaned, which is an infection control risk.

If there is information that staff believe is important to be communicated to veterans, please have them send that information to me and we will do our best to work with them on having that information displayed on the signage TV's, Facebook and/or the website for our facility. It should be noted we are actively working on installing more signage TV's in as many areas of the facility as we can. When applicable, we may also create a permanent sign to communicate the necessary message to the intended audience.

ACTION: Please do a walk-through of your area to ensure there are no paper materials taped or pinned to any surface in your work area where they are visible to a veteran patient. Paper materials found in an area where they are visible to patients may be removed without your consent or knowledge.

We appreciate everyone's cooperation to help make our facilities environment aesthetically consistent with the first-class care we provide. Having less information on the walls also helps lessen sign fatigue and makes it more likely that intended audiences see, read and comply with the signage we do have displayed.



THE HATCH ACT

Social Media Use Refresher

Social media is everywhere in today's world and accessible to most employees, even while at work. So it is important for federal employees to understand how their use of social media can run afoul of the Hatch Act.

In general, all federal employees may use social media and comply with the Hatch Act if they remember the following three prohibitions:

1. On Duty or in the Workplace Prohibition: Employees may not engage in political activity while on duty or at work. Political activity refers to activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party or partisan political group (collectively referred to as "partisan groups"), or candidate for partisan political office (candidate).
2. 24/7 Prohibition: Employees may not knowingly solicit, accept, or receive a political contribution for a partisan group or candidate.
3. 24/7 Prohibition: Employees may not use their official authority or influence to affect the outcome of an election.

Further restricted employees are subject to an additional restriction and may not engage in political activity that is on behalf of or in concert with a partisan group or candidate.

Examples of prohibited activity on a personal social media account

While on duty or at work, all employees may not:

- post or share a message about a candidate or a partisan group;
- tweet or retweet content supporting or opposing a candidate or partisan group; or
- invite others to a campaign rally or other partisan political event.

Even when off duty and away from work, all employees may not:

- tweet, like, or otherwise share a message that asks others to donate to a partisan group or candidate;
- share an invitation to a campaign or political party fundraiser; or
- use their official title or position to endorse a candidate.

In addition, further restricted employees may never:

- share or link to the account of a partisan group or campaign; or
- retweet a message from a partisan political group or candidate

Examples of prohibited activity on an official social media account or one that is being used for official purposes

Employees using such accounts may not:

- tweet or retweet a post about a partisan group or candidate; or
- follow or link to a candidate's campaign website or the account of any candidate or partisan group.

Reminders

- These restrictions apply regardless of whether an employee is using government equipment or a personal device or whether the employee's social media account is private, public, or uses an alias.
- Employees are "on duty" when in a pay status, other than paid leave or another excused or authorized absence. For advice about teleworking employees, please see this [advisory opinion](#).
- Agencies may have other rules or policies that govern an employee's use of personal or official social media accounts.
- More comprehensive social media guidance can be found on OSC's [website](#).

Contact OSC's
Hatch Act Unit
(202) 804-7002
hatchact@osc.gov

COMPLIANCE CORNER

**VA**Boise VA
Medical Center

FEEDING AMERICAN HEROES

WEDNESDAY

APRIL 10TH

1PM - 4PM

VA HOSPITAL

500 W FORT ST, BOISE, ID 83702

PROVIDING ESSENTIAL FOOD ITEMS AND SUPPLIES TO
HELP VETERANS STAY SAFE AND STILL BE ABLE TO
MEET BASIC NEEDS DURING ANY NATIONAL
EMERGENCY, CATASTROPHE, OR PANDEMIC.



VETERANS

& FAMILIES

HOT FOOD UNTIL

WE RUN OUT

RECEIVE VOUCHERS

FOOD FROM TACO EL RAY

SPONSORED BY



**The
Idaho
Foodbank**



**United
Rentals**

Registration link - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/feeding-american-heroes-boise-tickets-827619100007>

Volunteer link - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/827629601417?aff=oddtcreator>

Save the date for the next veterans food drive-thru event!

BOISE is HIGHLY RELIABLE

High Reliability Organization (HRO)

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

THEME OF THE MONTH

Preoccupation with Failure

February 2024 | National Safety Poster

Intervening for Safety

C

CONTEXT

Staff members at VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System maintain a Mental Health Environment of Care Checklist (MHEOCC) to identify and mitigate potential safety risks in the inpatient mental health unit. During regular rounds, members of the nursing team identified a patient in crisis who had devised a self-harm tool using a piece of laminate from a closet shelf.

A

ACTION

The nursing team immediately provided care in an effort to ensure the Veteran's safety and the safety of others nearby. Leadership quickly assessed the threat posed by other laminated products accessible in the unit. To prevent future incidents, the team proactively removed shelves in all other patient rooms, submitted a Joint Patient Safety Reporting entry, and added laminated products to the MHEOCC as a new item to check.

R

RESULTS

Through a Preoccupation with Failure, staff members recognized ways to eliminate this risk before it caused harm to other individuals in the unit. They maintained the safety of all patients and staff members in the facility through keen awareness of potential risks and leveraged this experience as a learning opportunity to incorporate as part of their standard safety processes.



"Thankfully we caught this situation before harm occurred, and we were able to reinforce the process to avoid future safety risks."

Joseph Peña
Licensed Practical Nurse
VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System
Reno, NV



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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

Internal VA Use Only

VHA'S JOURNEY TO
HIGH
RELIABILITY

Your Care is Our Mission.



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center



Kelly Helland
Records Officer
Kelly.Helland@va.gov
(208) 422-1000 ext. 7725



Tammy Plaisted
Alternate Records Officer
Tammy.Plaisted@va.gov
(208) 422-1000 ext. 7205

Get to know your **RECORDS OFFICERS**

**There are new staff changes in
the Records Department!**



STAY OFF THE TRAILS DURING WET WEATHER

Idaho Parks and Recreation reminds us to stay off hiking trails during wet/thawed out conditions like we are experiencing now. This includes bike riding, walking, and walking dogs. Using trail systems during wet weather causes damage and soil erosion on the trails that requires reconstruction in the summer.



**Michelle
Curtis**

**Employee of
the Month
JANUARY**



VA | Boise VA
Medical Center

Administrative Officer of the Day Michelle Curtis continuously displays her commitment to serving our Veterans on a daily basis.

Michelle recently coordinated the after-hours ground and air transport of a patient from the Boise VA to OHSU hospital in Portland, a process that involved several flight cancellations due to bad weather. Michelle persisted with her quest to find a flight team and ground crew to help get the patient transported to a higher level of care that he desperately needed. In the meantime, she continued to answer phone calls, check patients into the emergency department, complete her other responsibilities, and communicate closely with the ICU attending regarding the ill patient upstairs. Michelle's hard work finally paid off when a medical flight from Montana agreed to fly our patient to Portland that same night. As the AOD, Michelle is the face of our VA - the way she treats patients, visitors, and non-VA hospital staff shapes how our organization is viewed. Without a doubt, the people she interacts with feel respected, cared for, and deserving. For this, I'm thankful for Michelle and her commitment to 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 [Catie Navejar](#) for earning her **Lean Yellow Belt certification!**

Problem Statement: There have been frequent scheduling errors (an average of 2.5 errors/week) made for the audiology clinics at the Caldwell CBOC. In the 4 weeks of observation 35.7% of the appointments were scheduled incorrectly. This leads to patients showing up and not having a provider to see them, which is causing frustration not only for the patients, but for the providers and MSAs as well.

Catie and her project team created an improved process for scheduling Audiology appointments at the Caldwell, ID Community-based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). This improved efficiencies and satisfaction for MSAs, Audiologists, and our Veteran patients. The new process led to a sustained ZERO scheduling error rate!

Catie's LEAN project, "Reducing Audiology Scheduling Errors at the Caldwell Idaho CBOC" provided an outstanding example of LEAN education and the LEAN process in eliminating waste and increasing positive outcomes. This process improvement initiative created a pathway for staff to become involved in providing solutions and input.

Congratulations, Catie, on earning your Lean Yellow Belt certification. Well done!

[Reducing Audiology Scheduling Errors-CNavejar](#) (click link)

If you would like to see more information on this project, please click on the presentation link above. We are proud to showcase the hard work and accomplishments of our staff. 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

Lean
Yellow
Belt
Project
Spotlight:
Catie
Navejar



Denise
Dart

Employee of
the Month
JANUARY



VA | Boise VA
Medical Center

I have the honor to nominate Denise Dart for the Employee of the Month. Denise is an invaluable member of our Women's Clinic team, and her work ethic have truly set her apart.

Denise, embodies the ICARE values, specifically Commitment as she consistently ensures our Women's Clinic runs continuously, earning her the well-deserved title of our head nurse. Her dedication is unwavering, and she gets the job done exceptionally well.

Denise's value extends beyond her hard work. As an RN, she is exceptionally knowledgeable, a walking encyclopedia of nursing knowledge and expertise. What sets her apart is not just her knowledge but her willingness to share it with both patients and peers. Denise has a gift for explaining complex medical concepts in a simple manner, that is effective with patients, and among peers, fostering a culture of understanding and learning.

Denise's eagerness to help is another quality that sets her apart. Whenever a hand is needed, she's there without hesitation. Denise creates a positive and supportive atmosphere, making our workplace not just functional but enjoyable.

In summary, Denise Dart is a superb addition to our team. Her hard work, reliability, and wealth of knowledge makes her an outstanding colleague, and she contributes significantly to the sense of teamwork within our clinic.

Thank you for considering Denise Dart for this well-deserved recognition.

A graphic of a spotlight shining down from the top left corner of the page. The spotlight is yellow and has a black base. The background of the slide is orange with a pattern of overlapping circles.

Lean Yellow Belt Project Spotlight: Tom Jodlowski

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 **Tomasz Jodlowski** for earning his **Lean Yellow Belt certification!**

Problem Statement: Vancomycin dosing using the traditional "trough only" method has been associated with increased risk of toxicity. AUC based dosing targeting AUC of 400-600 has been shown to be safer and equally effective in treatment of severe MRSA infections and is the current standard of practice.

Using extensive scientific research, Tom's LEAN project, "Vancomycin AUC-based Dosing" compared Trough-based dosing versus AUC-based dosing, showing Vancomycin (a strong antibiotic) a reduced vancomycin exposure, reduced risk of nephrotoxicity, and led to a 100% compliance rate by pharmacists using the new AUC protocol. The new protocol also led to a Return on Investment of over \$17k each year!

Tom's Lean project provided an outstanding example of LEAN education and the LEAN process in eliminating waste and increasing positive outcomes. This process improvement created a safer use of a volatile antibiotic which led to safer outcomes, better care for our Veterans, and reduced costs. **Congratulations, Tom, on earning your Lean Yellow Belt certification. Well done!**

[Vancomycin AUC-based Dosing-TJodlowski](#) (click link)

If you would like to see more information on this project, please click on the presentation link above. We are proud to showcase the hard work and accomplishments of our staff. 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!



**Michelle
Swensen**

**Employee of
the Month
JANUARY**



VA | Boise VA
Medical Center

There was recently a quadriplegic patient admitted to 2MS, he was placed on an ICU bed to help with his skin integrity but was continuously waking up terrified, yelling for help and inconsolable. Nursing had exhausted all mediation options for this veteran but he continued to have the sensation of falling out of bed. Michelle suggested changing from an ICU bed to a bed that goes much lower to the floor to see if that helped his perception of falling. Michelle took the lead on making the bed change happen and the patient and staff noticed an immediate and positive difference in his behavior. Being a former housekeeping she has a working knowledge on how to make these changes with the least amount of cleaning left behind for housekeeping. Michelle showed multiple ICARE values in this scenario: commitment to serving the veterans and thinking outside the box and advocacy and respect in going the extra mile to make the veteran feel safe and well cared for were all exemplified by Michelle.



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center

HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



**The Boise VAMC would
like to welcome our new
employees who joined
the team in
February 2024:**

Emily Price, Research
Chelsea Owens, Specialty Care
Kelly Allen, Primary Care
Majka Workland, Dental
Matthew Gilchrist, Primary Care
Miguel Reynoso, Clinical Engineering
Ruth Adepetun, Mental Health
Ryan Martinez, Health Administration
Abe Copeland, Primary Care
Andrea Dutton, Nutrition
Ashley Wright, Nursing
Christopher Clingan, Sterile Processing
Elizabeth Jaeger, Diagnostic Imaging
Hannah Nogle, Diagnostic Imaging
Heather Coronado, Nursing
Julie Labernik-Fabela, Mental Health
Kathleen Kocur, Nursing
Korey Godek, Primary Care
Kori Keyes, Nursing
Molly Putnam, Specialty Care
Oksana Wandell, Specialty Care
Victoria Beaulieu, Connected Care
James Rairigh, Supply
John Arnold, Supply
Keyla Liposchak, Health Administration
Matteo Monetti, Health Administration
David Mastache, Facilities Management
Tracy Tillotson, Primary Care
Gladys Githinji, Connected Care
Delania Eiland, Connected Care



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center

HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



Margaret Dahl, Physical Medicine/Rehab
Katherine Andrews, Specialty Care
Christine Drouillard, Mental Health
Kittrick Dubois, Anesthesiology
Andrea Dughoff, Connected Care

**The Boise VAMC would
like to say farewell to the
employees who left the
team in February 2024:**



VA | Boise VA
Medical Center



2024 VETERANS LEGAL CLINICS



FREE TO ATTEND
FOR VETS & SPOUSES



Legal
Clinics are
held from 2PM
to 4PM in Bldg. 54 at the
Boise VA Medical Center 500 W.
Fort St. Boise, ID 83702.

Assistance with Estate Planning & Wills are not
included at these Legal Clinics.

Please contact Amanda Pentland, LCSW at
(208) 422-1064 for additional information.

January 18, 2024
February 15, 2024
March 21, 2024
April 18, 2024
May 16, 2024
June 20, 2024



**PLEASE HELP US SHARE THIS
OPPORTUNITY WITH VETS**



You have the power to save a life.

Please RSVP before
April 30th by emailing
kelly.corley@va.gov
Space is limited.

VA S.A.V.E. Training

How to talk to someone in crisis.

May 6, 2024

9:30AM - 12:00PM

Boise VA Medical Center

500 W. Fort Street Boise, ID 83702, Bldg. T-111

Caregivers are invited to participate in VA presentation to discuss how we can all be a part in suicide prevention. This will be an in-person, interactive presentation where Caregivers are given tools and resources on how to help your loved ones through any crisis.

S.A.V.E. Training will help you act with care and compassion if you encounter someone who is in crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts. The acronym S.A.V.E. helps you remember the important steps involved in suicide prevention.

- S** Signs of suicidal thinking are recognized
- A** Ask the important question - *are you thinking about suicide*
- V** Validate the persons experience
- E** Encourage and expedite getting help



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center





YOU ARE INVITED

March 13th at 2PM

**Please join us for a
virtual town hall event
on the PACT Act.**

This is a unique opportunity to learn more about the PACT Act, what it can do for you, and talk with experts at the DAV, Office of Veterans Advocacy, Boise VA Medical Center & Boise VA Regional Office.

**To join the town hall on
March 13th at 2PM MST, please
call (872) 701-0185 and enter
code 924925629#**

SPECIAL EVENT