



THE

MARCH 2024

BOISE FRONT

Letter of the Boise VA Medical Center

**Congratulations to our VA Police
Officers who were recently
promoted!**

Pictured L2R: Andrew Davey, Joseph Fesmire, Matthew Ybarra, TJ Rose

**Sergeant (Patrol Operations):
Andrew Davey**

Andrew is a former Boise PD Police Officer and has been a Boise VA Police Officer since 2019. From Day 1 at the VA, Andrew has worked diligently to provide the best service possible to the staff, veterans and the police service. Andrew volunteered to take on extra duties such as reconciling all Disruptive Behavior Reports submitted with associated police reports to ensure all reports are appropriately investigated. Andrew also is one of our two instructors for our new reporting system (the Axon RMS) as well as our new Body-Worn Cameras. Andrew successfully completed Intermediate SWAT training program and Hostage Negotiators training to enhance his abilities if an active threat incident occurred. Andrew will be completing his master's degree in Investigations this spring.

Sergeant (Physical Security Officer): Joseph Fesmire

Joe has been a VA Police Officer since 2020 and former police officer at Oakland PD, Sonoma County Sheriff's Office and Boise PD. Joe has voluntarily sought out opportunities to improve his knowledge of physical security, including the two-week course at the VA academy in Arkansas and is nearing completion of a degree in Cybersecurity and Information Assurance. Joe has also taken on many extra duties related to physical security such as testing alarms and doing building security surveys.

Sergeant (Veterans Benefits Office): Matthew Ybarra

Matt is a US Air Force veteran and former correctional officer for Idaho IDOC and has been a Boise VA police officer since 2006. Of his 18 years as a VA officer, Matt has spent ten of those years as one of the two officers we have assigned to the VBA's Regional Office co-located with our medical center, making him extremely well versed in the operations of that facility and much appreciated by the VBA staff.

**Lieutenant (Patrol Operations):
TJ Rose**

TJ has been an officer for the Boise VA Medical Center for two years, but has been with the VA since 2013, working as a Veteran Justice Outreach / Peer Support Specialist, Police Officer and (Supervisory) Police Lieutenant at the White City VA. A native of California, TJ worked as a reserve police officer for the city of Phoenix, OR. TJ also served in the United States Marine Corps for eight years, reaching the rank of Staff Sergeant. TJ's new position is a night shift supervisor, so those of you on days may not see much of him.



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THE BOISE VA MEDICAL CENTER IS HIRING MSA'S

MSA's handle customer service, appointment scheduling, and records management. You'll answer phones, greet veteran patients, schedule appointments and consults, help determine a clinic's daily needs, verify and update insurance information, and more.

If you are interested in being a Medical Support Assistant for the Boise VA Medical Center please apply by emailing your resume to :
mickie.palmer@va.gov



BOISE VA MEDICAL CENTER

VETERAN APPRECIATION

★ **FAIR** ★

Friday, June 28, 2024 ★ 11AM - 1PM

BOISE VA PARADE GROUNDS 500 W. FORT ST. BOISE, ID 873702

*Event is free to attend and family friendly. Event will include:
representatives of veterans organizations, dunk tank, live
music, lawn games, BBQ food, prizes, and MORE!*

For questions, to volunteer, or to have a booth contact Tammy at (208) 422-1175



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center



MARCH IS FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

What is Fraud, Waste, and Abuse?

Fraud is the intentional misrepresentation of facts to obtain something valuable, usually a financial benefit. Fraud requires intent and knowledge that the actions are wrong.

Waste is the thoughtless or careless expenditure or mismanagement of resources.

Abuse is the intentional and unacceptable use of resources or position.

What does it look like in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) programs?

Fraud can be carried out by internal parties (employees, contractors) and external parties (healthcare providers, vendors, Veterans, and family members themselves).

- **Internal fraud** can be the acceptance of kickbacks or bribes by employees for access to contracts for services or goods, travel and purchase card use for personal items, and using Veterans Affairs (VA) records to commit theft.
- **External fraud** can be billing the VA for healthcare services not provided, falsifying medical records and claims for higher reimbursement, and using stolen identities to impersonate a Veteran or healthcare provider.

How can I prevent fraud?

Stay vigilant. Protect your personal and VA staff information, including identifiers, passwords, badges, and equipment. Don't share sensitive information; monitor and secure your equipment and passwords in the office and at home.

- **Look for fraud red flags**, including urgent, high-pressure requests via phone, email, or fax; unexplained or questionable changes in a person's behavior, such as increased inquiries or billings; and concerns raised by peers and staff.

Important Information for VA Clinicians: How to Identify and Report Fraud in Genetic Tests

As a VA clinician, it is your responsibility to **report any unsolicited faxes, emails or calls from labs asking for certification of genetic tests** that were not ordered by the Veteran's VA or community provider. Additionally, you should report any threats of legal action or pressure to sign lab orders, medical records, specialists notes or other documents you suspect to be fraudulent.

Genetic testing is a medical procedure to help predict disease risk and diagnose or guide treatment by identifying changes in genes, chromosomes, or proteins. It is becoming increasingly common in medicine. Different types of genetic tests include diagnostic, predictive, pre-symptomatic, carrier, prenatal, and newborn screening. Insurance coverage for genetic testing depends on the specific plan and the testing reason.

This new and concerning fraud scam is powered by identity theft – patients often don't receive the test or results from these crooked labs.



COMPLIANCE CORNER



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Report Fraud

VHA Integrity and Compliance Helpline

If you spot fraud or unusual attempts to gain personal information, contact your supervisor, local Integrity and Compliance Officer, or the Integrity and Compliance Helpline 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET:

- Integrity and Compliance Helpline: (866) 842-4357
- E-mail: VHAOICHelpline@va.gov
- Boise VAMC Integrity & Compliance Officer
 - E-mail: Steven.Waltari@va.gov



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

TODAY I AM
**FEELING
LIGHTER**

... because I learned how to be kind to myself.

Hear Chris' Story
A U.S. Marine Corps Veteran ↪



MakeTheConnection.net/MHM

JOIN US

May 1, 2024 from 0830 - 1600

Warhawk Air Museum

201 Municipal Drive, Nampa, ID 83687

The Boise VA will celebrate Mental Health Awareness month by holding our annual Mental Health Summit on May 1st.

For questions contact Susie.Klepacki@VA.GOV, or Luke.Coleman2@VA.GOV

We hope to see you there!

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!

Employees allowed only after 3PM. No walk-ups. Drive-thru only.

BOISE is HIGHLY RELIABLE

High Reliability Organization (HRO)

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

THEME OF THE MONTH

Commitment to Resilience

April 2024 | National Safety Poster

Implementing Tools to Bounce Back

C

CONTEXT

The Clinical Pharmacy Resource (CPR) Team within VHA Member Services reviews prescription charges for Veterans nationwide. Reviews are graded with a goal of 97% accuracy. As the team expanded, consistency became more challenging, and annual quality data showed a downward trend. Although the team was still hitting the goal, they wanted to develop processes to improve the consistency and quality of their reviews.

A

ACTION

Traci Eddy, CPR Program Manager, and her team developed a Casework Guide in Microsoft OneNote. The guide standardizes each type of prescription charge review and summarizes each review phase: research, documentation, and routing. The guide is easily accessible and frequently updated when team members identify opportunities for clarification or when new guidance emerges.

R

RESULTS

The guide, serving as Standard Work, enables the team to deliver consistent results and provide excellent service to Veteran and facility customers. It also contributes to increased quality scores that reached nearly 99% accuracy for two consecutive years. The CPR Team demonstrated a Commitment to Resilience by developing and implementing a system to improve review quality.

"We identified an opportunity to practice resilience, and in doing so, found ways to significantly improve the consistency and quality of our reviews."

*Traci Eddy, R.Ph.
Program Manager
VHA Member Services*

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.



★ ★ ★

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

IDAHO STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

Monday, May 27th 2024, 10:00 am
10100 N. Horseshoe Bend Rd Boise, ID 83714

Public Parking & Bus Services will be at
Optimist Park 8:30am-11:45am



Visit www.veterans.idaho.gov/cemeteries for more information





**Lorenzo
Garcia**

**Employee of
the Month
FEBRUARY**



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I am very happy to nominate Lorenzo Garcia for employee of the month. Lorenzo exemplifies the iCARE values in his daily work. He has grown along with our Lab and has served in different capacities since 2017, from a Phlebotomist, a Send Out Processor, a Specimen Processor, Urine Drug Screen Collector, PALMS Secretary and Timekeeper. Soon he will be transferring to work with our friends at the Caldwell CBOC. The staff here in Boise will miss Lorenzo dearly but are excited for his new opportunity.

Lorenzo's customer service is to be modeled. He actively triages calls from Providers, Nurses, Reference Labs, other VA's and Veterans with courtesy, professionalism and friendliness. Lorenzo goes out of his way to ensure that each call he receives is directed to correct department or person. When he encounter Veterans who cannot find where they need to go, he walks them to their destination. By the end of each day, Lorenzo treats everyone he encounters with kindness and respect.

We are also very grateful for Lorenzo's attention to detail. Lorenzo works diligently and accurately by entering Pathology Report comments. These reports can be complicated and cumbersome, but he approaches each case with careful consideration and efficiency. We are also thankful for his persistence when it comes to timekeeping. Timekeeping is a challenging, complex job and sometimes thankless job. But Lorenzo approaches it with grace, responding the constant schedule changes and updates with the utmost meticulousness. More often than not, he gets it done right, the first time.

I am proud to work with him and grateful that he works at our VA and at the PALMS service. Please accept my nomination for Lorenzo Garcia as employee of the month.



Lean Yellow Belt Project Spotlight: *Catie Navejar*

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 you!



**Maria
Chavez**

**Employee of
the Month
FEBRUARY**



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Maria consistently goes above and beyond what is expected of her on 2MS. In addition to performing the required nursing duties, she has volunteered to champion one of our units Quality Performance indicators. While performing in this role, she provides fellow staff members just in time education to ensure any concerns are dealt with in real-time and patient safety standards are continuously followed.

In addition to supporting the safety of our patients, Maria helps to balance our unit schedules to ensure core staffing for the care of our patients. She reaches out to staff members via text to see if they can move a preference shift to a day where there has been minimal sign-ups. By doing this, she helps the unit manager to not only balance the schedule, but also decrease the time it takes to get certified schedules out.

Lastly, Maria is a fierce advocate for both patients and staff. If she notices other staff members are drowning with work on the unit, she is not afraid to reach out to her managers for help. This helps the team feel supported by everyone and ensures our veterans are well taken care of during their stay.

Maria demonstrates the iCare value of integrity by acting with high morale principle while advocating for staff and patients. She demonstrates excellence by being committed to improvement, as well as always promoting the VA mission we hold in such high regard.

Congratulations on your Lean Yellow Belt Certification!



- ➡ Robert Fisher
- ➡ Kacee Davies
- ➡ Josu Zubizarreta

This dynamic team completed a project for the Office of Community Care in removing the paper process of records to a digital process, saving time, \$\$, and extra work for the file room!

[Project Teams 9Box A3](#)

(Click above to read more)

“As of January 2023, the Boise VA file room is back logged with paper records. Currently the file room averages 5046 “bundles” per month. Of these bundles, 35% are paper and require more time for the file room to process compared to the 65% digital records. The time it takes to get files to the file room (transportation) adds to the process delay. For example, a record received on the Gold/Orange Team takes on average “10 days” to get to the file room before it can be processed. The 10 days is from: 6.2 days the record sits on the team, and additional 3.8 days for transportation. This delay also affects Office of Community Care (OCC). OCC is also backlogged by open community care consults that can’t be closed because the patient records are sent to primary care teams (for example, Gold/Orange team) instead of the File Room per REF doc instructions. This lack of standardized process has resulted in increased inefficiencies and increased employee workload.”



**Kseniya
Bowcutt**

**Employee of
the Month
FEBRUARY**



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Kseniya Bowcutt is exceptional team member and essential employee of Supply Chain Management! Her work ethic and great attitude are major assets to the Supply Chain Management team and throughout our facility. Her customer service is seen daily by resolving any requests and quickly responding to facility staff ensuring they receive correct items, in a timely manner and in the proper quantities. Kseniya has also assumed accountability for overstock and expired merchandise. Her expertise and attention to precision has made sure that the necessary medical items are accurately gathered for removal, packaging, and shipping. She worked with GSA to arrange for the removal of 72 items, and her actions helped save \$50,000 by removing unnecessary outdated products from the supply chain. This made it possible for our service to open critical areas for new supplies to our facilities. I would like to nominate Kseniya Bowcutt for employee of the month.



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HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



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

Alanna Rose, Primary Care
Bridgette Jansson, Mental Health
Emily Thurlow, Physical Rehab
Julia Rogers, Nursing
Rosalba Loera, Pharmacy
Shawna Beechinor, Specialty Care
Amanda Dawson, Nursing
Amy Vo, Primary Care
Chandra Blood, Nursing
Dulce Nochebuena, Laboratory
James Berrey, Nursing
James Piktel, Mental Health
Jared Young, Nursing
Jayda Banda, Health Administration
Jeffrey Weese, Specialty Care
Joel Swanson, Primary Care
Jonathon Ramos, Primary Care
Kenzi Pfeiffer, Mental Health
Peggie Bensch, Specialty Care
Ruad Mehanovic, Primary Care
Robert Solorio, Nursing
Sara Scott, Nursing
Torey Graber, Nursing
Barbara Burton, Education
Judith Paul, Connected Care
Barbara Wasie, Connected Care
Patsy Cooper, Connected Care
Karina Beas, Connected Care
Danielle Goodger, Connected Care

POST 9/11 VETERANS

The Post 9/11 Military2VA (M2VA) team now offers a support group for veterans who served after September 11, 2001. The group will meet each week over VVC on Wednesdays from 4:30PM to 5:30PM.

The goal of this group is to provide community, connection, and counseling during transition from military service. This group is a hybrid of topic focused and open forum. Topics can be rotated based upon interests from the group in relation to common challenges during readjustment to civilian life. If you would like to join the group, please contact a Post 9/11 M2VA case manager:

Amy Rigenhagen (208) 422-1000 ext. 4067
Mon. to Thurs. 7:00AM - 5:30PM

Colleen Fletcher (208) 422-1000 ext. 4359
Tues. - Fri. 7:30AM - 6:00PM



★ *The price of freedom is visible here.* ★



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HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



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

**Angela Biggs, Mental Health
Jocelyn Doglietto, Primary Care
Maddyson Page, Primary Care
Baltazar Morfin, Clinical Engineering
Michael McCary, Nursing
Mayra Blankenship, Finance
Kathleen Gately, Nursing
Michelle Groves, Pharmacy
Maisha Tagoilelagi, Connected Care
Ines Campoverde, Connected Care**



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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 the Veterans Justice Outreach
team at (208) 422-1064 to register.

*Space is limited.
You must register
to attend!*

**April 18, 2024
May 16, 2024
June 20, 2024**



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

**VA**

Boise VA
Medical Center

YOU ARE INVITED
**COMPACT ACT
TOWN HALL
EVENT**

WEDNESDAY

**VIRTUAL OR
IN-PERSON**

April 17, 2024 from 1:00PM to 2:30PM

*To attend in-person come to the
Boise VA Medical Center, Bldg. 29 (LRC).*

*To attend virtually call (205) 235-3524 and enter code
853052710# or click [HERE](#) to attend on Microsoft Teams.*

*This is a unique opportunity to learn more about the
COMPACT Act and how veterans can take advantage of
these important benefits!*



For more information
contact Tacy McCoy
or Travis Schmidt



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



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VA2K - May 15th

Times pending

VA2K is an annual event to promote VA employees to get out and walk or roll and support our homeless Veterans with donations. Did you know a 2K is 1.24 miles?

Donations for the event are optional and directly benefit homeless Veterans. We'll share more information on upcoming townhalls and staff emails.

Each year we award the biggest team that donates. Last year was the first time in nearly a decade we had a new champion!

Will your team be the grand champ this year?!

2023 Top Donors:

#1 - 2M Inpatient/RNOD Nursing - 740 Rolls

#2 - Education- 653 Rolls

#3 - Woman's Wellness Center – 410 Rolls

Biggest walking group - VBA

Last year we had **2,146 rolls of toilet paper** and several other toiletries donated, including from Ride for 22!

Save the Date: May 15, 2024

14TH ANNUAL NATIONAL VA 2K WALK AND ROLL
ENCOURAGING HEALTHY LIVING & SUPPORTING HOMELESS VETERANS

More info:



va.gov/wholehealth/va2k



DISCOVER
WHAT MATTERS
Live Whole Health.

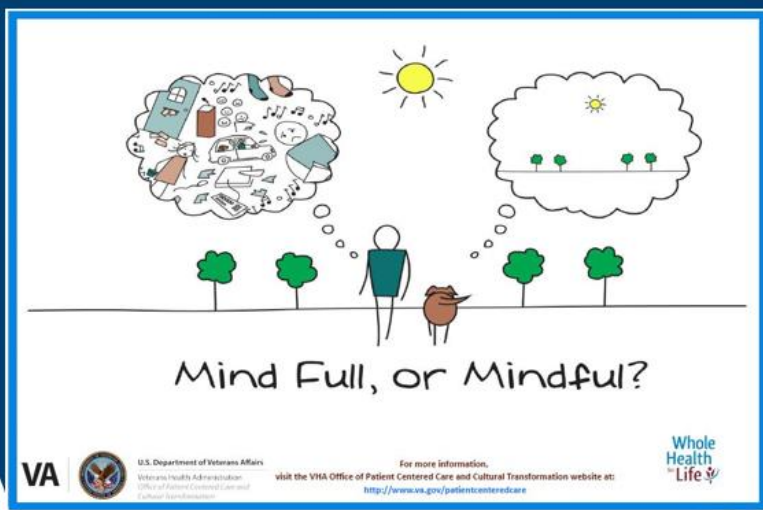
Join Us for an upcoming Employee Whole Health Class!

Want an outlook invite?

Reach out to Jeanette Berry, Employee Whole Health Coordinator

Be Here Now Class

Your Path to Mindfulness



First Thursday Monthly from 12 – 12:30 PM MT

Teams Meeting Online - For VA employees.

**Led by Drs. Tanya Watford and Adam Brotman
from Boise VA Medical Center**



**Join us for a short mindfulness practice and learn more about
mindfulness through experience and
conversation.**



DISCOVER
WHAT MATTERS
Live Whole Health.



Employee Whole Health Healthy Teaching Kitchen Summer Series

Virtual Class on Teams

12:00 – 12:30 PM Mountain Time

4th Wednesday each month

**Hosted by Boise VA with
Madison Keller, RD**

HTK will resume in June!

June 26: Kale and Shaved Fennel Salad

July 24: Tropical Fruit Salad

**Recorded sessions and recipes are on Boise VA's
Employee Whole Health SharePoint Site
Want an Outlook invite? Contact Jeanette Berry**

Open to all VA staff!



QR code to join the call!