

THE
BOISE



The official newsletter of the Boise VA Medical Center

RESEARCH WEEK

June 3rd-7th

WEEK OF
WONDER



Boise VA

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

WEEK OF WONDER

Celebrating the Spirit of Inquiry

WOW Poster Expo - June 5, 2024

LRC 9AM to 3PM

(Judging & Awards 11:30AM to 1PM)



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





Riding a bike can be very enjoyable experience while helping you achieve your health and fitness objectives. There is, however, risk involved. For instance, you can get in an accident, or you can get a flat tire. The steps that you take to avoid or mitigate those risks are called internal controls.

As America's largest health care organization, VA needs internal controls across our operations. We can all assist with simple activities already put in place by managers, like following a checklist or complying with standard operating procedures (SOP) and ensuring that multiple people confirm key details.

Why do we need Internal Controls?

"Effective controls allow us to maximize resources and protect the health and quality of care for every patient we serve," says Natalie Bulger, VHA's Director of Risk Management.

While having no controls isn't an answer, too many controls can create roadblocks or even increase risk in the process. When riding a bike, you don't wrap yourself in layers of bubble wrap to minimize all risk of injury because then you can't pedal correctly.

Who is responsible for internal controls and where are they documented?

Everyone is responsible for implementing internal controls in their own area of responsibility. It usually isn't difficult, but it does require intentional effort. Documentation is key even if it is a practice that is well known and already in place.

Documentation makes processes repeatable, communicates expectations and supports employee success in following procedures. It also provides necessary documentation for external reviews and audits.

Does your workspace have a risk that hasn't been addressed with internal controls? Talk to your supervisor about it first. Contact your [Integrity & Compliance Officer](#) if you feel the risk hasn't been addressed sufficiently.



COMPLIANCE CORNER



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center



BOISE is HIGHLY RELIABLE

High Reliability Organization (HRO)

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

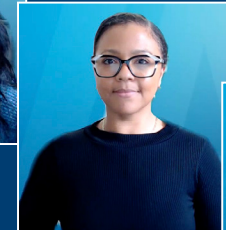
THEME OF THE MONTH

It's About the Veteran

June 2024 | National Safety Poster



*Bijal Jain, MD
Co-chair, Clinical
Algorithms Work Group*



*Samantha White, MSN
Member, Jesse Brown
for Black Lives Task
Force*



*Natasha Nichols, MD
Co-chair, Jesse Brown for
Black Lives Task Force and
Clinical Committee*

Advocating for Race-Neutral Health Calculators to Improve Veteran Care

C

CONTEXT

The Clinical Algorithms Work Group, a Jesse Brown for Black Lives Task Force subcommittee at the Jesse Brown VAMC, addresses racial and ethnic health disparities for Veterans through research, education, and advocacy. This work includes eliminating race in clinical calculations for organ function and disease management, which can lead to inaccurate and harmful impacts on disease identification and treatment.

A

ACTION

The work group authored a "white paper" and provided testimony to national regulatory agencies advocating for a new, race-neutral kidney function calculator to help patients receive timely and appropriate kidney care. The subcommittee has successfully advocated for and continues to support the implementation of race-neutral interpretations for lung function and high blood pressure.

R

RESULTS

Jesse Brown VAMC serves over 22,000 Black Veterans. The change to a race-neutral calculation improved kidney care for 47% of its patient population. The Clinical Algorithms Work Group demonstrates the HRO Value, It's About the Veteran, by advocating for an institutional change to provide Black Veterans with better access to accurate and timely care.

"Our team is supporting Veterans by working to address racial disparities in access to care, quality of care, and health outcomes."

*Jesse Brown for Black Lives Task Force, Clinical
Algorithms Work Group
Jesse Brown VA Medical Center
Chicago, Illinois*

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.



**Natalie
Browning**

**Employee of
the Month
APRIL**



VA | Boise VA
Medical Center

HAS nominates Natalie Browning for Employee of the Month. Natalie has consistently demonstrated exceptional performance in her job as a File Clerk. She plays a pivotal role in ensuring providers have access to the information they need to provide quality care. Her commitment exemplify the core values of the Boise VAMC. Her efforts ensure that the facility has consistently exceeded scanning goals and Boise maintained a zero backlog for the last 2 years. She is a highly productive employee who averages 96 scans per day/16.34 per hour. The scans per hour rate exceeds the outstanding performance requirement. Her hard work, dedication, and positive attitude has made a significant impact to the file room team especially when employees out of the office, she is more then willing to help her team no matter the circumstances. She has shown strong ICARE values by upholding the highest standards in her work, maintaining accuracy and patient confidentiality at all times. Natalie is committed to her role and consistently exceeds expectations in both amount of work produced and accuracy. Besides her performance Natalie is also supportive and helpful to her team. Natalie's contributions to our team are invaluable and she is truly deserving of Employee of the month recognition.



**Nicholas
Gorden**

Employee of
the Month
APRIL



VA | Boise VA
Medical Center

Respect, excellence- Dr. Gorden respects EVERYONE. With regards to his fellow staff members, he is open to feedback from anyone in any position, and he never falls short of showing his gratitude to those deserving. He is accessible to answer questions and to help with urgent matters. He never comes across as frustrated or inconvenienced. He teaches without denigrating, but also listens openly to those with more experience in the VA system, those who have been following longstanding patients, or those with new and valid ideas.

Commitment, advocacy and respect- Dr Gorden has been fantastic to work with. His notes are easy to read and succinct as to the therapy that he has planned for his patients. He remains professional even while joking around with his coworkers. He is easy to approach and talk with. He treats everyone with respect. He demonstrates concern for his patients. For example, he was concerned about one of his patients whom he could not reach by phone. He called multiple times on multiple days and tried reaching out to NOK rather than pushing that onto someone else to try and contact patient.

Integrity – demonstrates integrity in his practice.

Commitment – committed to the well being of his patients and to that of his colleagues. He takes time to f/u w/ me on things I've missed or didn't know in order to build my skills.

Advocacy – advocates in best interest of patients.

Respect – respects all members of the team, collaborates well with APPs, myself included.

Excellence – excellent teacher and collaborator.



**Michelle
Schweizer**

**Employee of
the Month
APRIL**



VA | Boise VA
Medical Center

Michelle Schweizer has played an integral part in promoting an excellent culture on 2MS. She seamlessly displays and embodies the VA ICARE values and sets a great example for others around her.

Michelle has been extremely committed in her position as a CNA, going above and beyond frequently without reservation. She selflessly dedicates her free time to volunteer as the President of the VAEA (2 years in a row) where she is continually looking for ways to elevate the care of our veterans and the engagement of employees across the VA.

In addition, Michelle has become a prominent member of our US Teams Employee Engagement/Patient Experience group, where she has offered her creativity and thoughtfulness to enhance 2MS to ensure everyone walking on the unit feels appreciated and welcomed. Most recently, she has helped to improve our veteran communication by helping to develop and implement consistency of patient room white board communication. She also created the US Teams board which promoted positive quotes in a visually appealing way.

Michelle is a recent graduate of the EDGE program where she continually seeks to grow and was just accepted into NNU's nursing program. We are so grateful to have Michelle on our 2MS team. She is truly a leader on our unit and we feel she would be an amazing nominee and should be considered for Employee of the Month.



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center

HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



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

Mahendra Upadhyaya, Connected Care
Chalmer Morris, Emergency Care
Joanna Pawliczuk, Nursing

Kimberly Tran, Diagnostic Imaging
Pariva Tayefeh Hashemi, Canteen Service
Aliyah Horne-Robinson, Nursing

Allen Wong, Primary Care
Anna-Marie Cisneros, Health Administration

Grisel Plascencia, Primary Care

Kelly Andrews, Mental Health

Kevin Myers, Sterile Processing

Robert Gutierrez, Pharmacy

Shawna Martinez, Primary Care

Tawn Coleman, Nursing

Keri Pruitt, Clinical Resource Hub

Bradley Blackstock, Health Administration

Erik Burger, Supply

Erin O'Connor, Finance

Jalen Price, Supply

Robert Carrico, Facilities Management

Nikolas Morrison-Welch, Facilities Management

Janet Williams, Clinical Resource Hub

Elisabeth Shell, Clinical Resource Hub

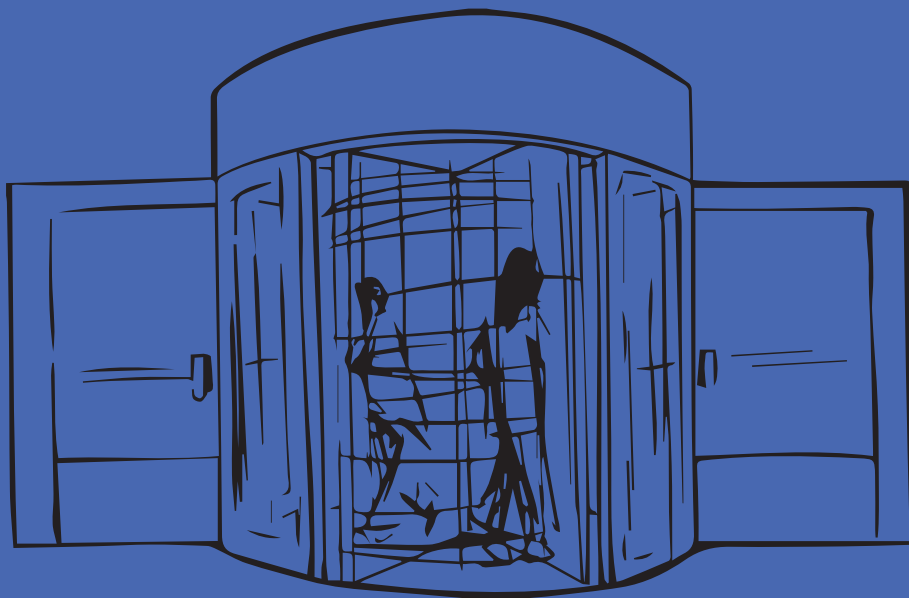
Brandi Harlow, Clinical Resource Hub



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center

HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



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

Brianna Freeman, Nursing
Veronica Williams, Health Administration
Jonathon Ramos, Primary Care
Abe Copeland, Primary Care
Brian Dealy, Specialty Care
Tiffany Gold, Nursing
Dana O'Connor, Clinical Resource Hub
Corey Bryant, Facilities Management
Seth Woodbury, Facilities Management
Pennie Rojahn, Nursing
Deborah Ray, Mental Health
Christina Freer, Mental Health
Kamille Peck, Mental Health
Melissa Thomas, Mental Health
Rebecca Widney, Mental Health
Malliga Ganapathy, Clinical Resource Hub

IDAHO Women Veterans

CONFERENCE



COMMUNITY, CAMARADERIE AND CONNECTION

Join us for a day of connection and inspiration.
Registration is free and Lunch is included!



June 8th, 2024



9:00AM - 3:30PM



Warhawk Air Museum
Nampa Idaho

with Keynote Speaker:

Chief of Staff-
ID Army National Guard

Col. Nicole Washington



To Register,
scan the QR code

or visit

www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-idaho-women-veterans-conference-tickets-851907547407

Questions, Contact:



Marisa.McCarter@
veterans.idaho.gov



Congratulations BVAMC HRO HeROs!



Kimberly Barker, RN & Warren Rose Home Health Orders Process Improvement

Kimberly led the implementation of an extensive process improvement to streamline signing orders for home health services.

The previous high-volume process required printing, scanning, and manual processing of 60-80 orders per/day or 100-240 pages. This often resulted in delays in care, duplicate or redundant work, increased workload, and in cases lack of home health services in rural areas.

With the assistance of Warren Rose, a new digital process was developed which allows for daily processing. The new process focused on Sensitivity to Operations and resulted in waste reduction, reduced workload, and improved Veteran Primary Care service, Nursing service, and the Scanning Department, as well as, enhancing information security.



OPM announces new 'safe leave' for domestic violence victims.

Federal workers may now take paid leave to address issues related to their or a family member's safety or to recover from domestic violence, abuse or harassment, under new guidance from the government's dedicated HR agency.

[OPM announces new 'safe leave' for domestic violence victims - Government Executive \(govexec.com\)](#)



Congratulations BVAMC HRO HeROs!



Boise VA Sterile Processing (SPS) Team

Stopped the line when something wasn't as expected!

An employee noticed that the washer cycle for the cataract instruments was only half the time it should be. She quickly alerted SPS management, as she knew the parameters for cataract instruments were very stringent. It was found that this issue went unnoticed and affected 14 patients.

The team immediately pulled a month's worth of logs for the washer in question. After finding they were incorrect, the team immediately escalated the situation to leadership and recalled all cataract sets. After identifying the issues with the washer, the parameters were fixed so they could reprocess all the affected cataract sets. Through all three shifts, the team worked on getting the over 200 instruments properly reprocessed and ready for the cases the next day.

Syuzana Moon, RN

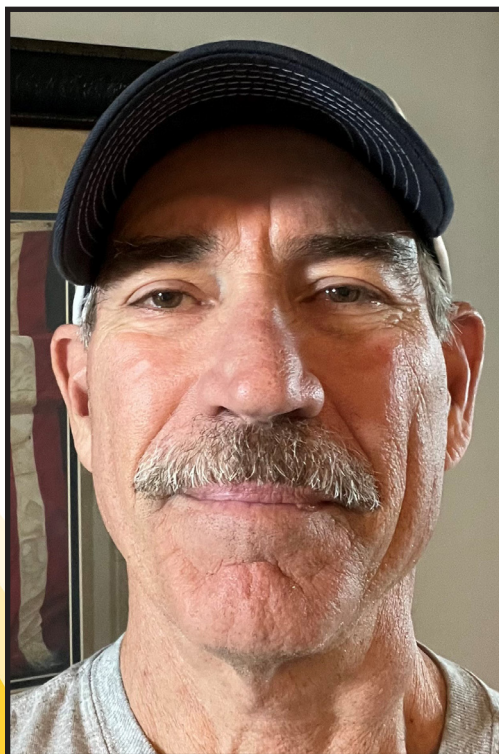
Syuzana was caring for a patient when she noticed changes in the Veteran's breathing which seemed different from the previous night.

She brought her concern to the physician, who ordered some lab work. Syuzana was still concerned about her observed changes in the patient and called respiratory therapy to help evaluate. RT immediately called the physician and the rapid response ICU nurse to the bedside.

Syuzana acted and engaged the team, which allowed Deference to Expertise via further evaluation and imaging. This Veteran had an emergency procedure in the morning. Had Syuzana not spoken up about her concerns this emergent situation may not have been caught in time to provide appropriate intervention.



Chris O'Rourke



I was born in San Rafael, CA in the mid 50's and was raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1973 I graduated from Berkeley High School. Although I would have considered joining the military or the California Highway Patrol my real passion was being a firefighter which I pursued right out of high school. I worked for Cal Fire (wildland fire fighting) as a seasonal firefighter for a few fire seasons until I could get a permanent job as a firefighter which I did for a fire district in Contra Costa County. My real desire, however, was to work for a larger city fire department so I could get greater experiences. In 1982 I became a firefighter for the City Oakland Fire Department. I loved my job even though it can be very physical and stressful. I was able to experience many things a city like Oakland is known for. I've had unique opportunities to be a part of local history like the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, the Oakland Hills fire in 1991, the Rodney King Riots in 1992 and many other events. Overall I worked over 30 yrs in the fire service until I sustained enough injuries to be retired with a disability at the rank of a Captain. I've been married for 45 yrs to my wonderful wife Karen and we have a son, a daughter and a daughter in-law, all who are very dear to us. But alas grandchildren don't seem to be in the



VA | Boise VA
Medical Center

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



future.

For many years I've enjoyed spending time with family, motorcycle touring, carpentry/wood working, traveling in our RV, firearms, hiking, lap swimming and other fitness activities along with serving in our church. But now, as I slow down, though we still hike and lap swim, I am pursuing fishing more and more and less of the other stuff. Still spending time with family, serving in my church, bible studies and other related work is important.

I've always had a heart and great respect for those who have served our country in the military and so I wanted to do something to express that respect. Shortly after retiring I began volunteering at the Martinez VA clinic in 2011.

An interesting note. I knew very little about

my biological father until I was about 65 yrs old (a long story if you ask). Though he has passed away and I've never met him, I discovered he was in the Navy for 9 yrs during and after WWII, then immediately upon leaving the Navy, he joined the Air Force for another 20 yrs as a medical doctor, ultimately reaching the rank of a full Colonel. He then went on serving in his community in various ways with his medical experience. So, I guess you can say, the military and serving, in a round about way, is in my blood.

After moving from CA, and eventually ending up in Idaho, I wanted to get reconnected with the VA as a volunteer. At the VA in Martinez I drove the parking lot shuttle so driving was the natural direction to go as a volunteer when we landed in the Treasure Valley. Since the VA Boise is the only clinic available in the area - here I am.

My duties as a volunteer, here in Boise, is chauffeuring veterans, who are unable to drive, from their homes to the clinic for their appointments. I've been a volunteer here in Boise for about two years now with a total of about ten in the VA system overall.

There are many perks being a VA volunteer but the best one is getting to know the

veterans and hearing the stories and sacrifices many of our brothers and sisters experienced while serving our country. All have something interesting to share and all are worth listening to. And, getting up to a half hour of driving time with them is the perfect way to make that connection. As we all know there are many "unique" veterans out there and most have something to say - I don't mind listening.

I've gotten great satisfaction in serving the community through the fire service and in many ways the fire service is similar to military service so in a round about way that satisfaction continues.

I feel blessed that I can help out those who have served in our military as it is an important reminder of the military's role in history in securing the freedoms of our nation and the world.

Thank you Veterans for serving and God bless!



YOU CAN HELP VETERANS

"I don't know where I'd be without my Medical Foster Home caregiver. They gave me a home. They gave me a family."



VA

Boise VA
Medical Center

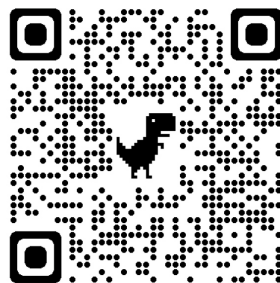
Become a Medical Foster Home caregiver.

Apply Today!

Talk to a VA Medical Foster Home Program Coordinator today to learn how you can become a Medical Foster Home Caregiver and give back to those who served.

Call (208) 780-6253 to learn more.

*You can also scan the QR code to learn more
VA's Medical Foster Home Program.*



The MFH Program is looking for caregivers to care for aging veterans in the caregivers home.

If you or someone you know may be interested please have them call (208) 780-6253 to find out how they can help!

On April 20, 2024, an Ada County Sheriff's Deputy was shot in the line of duty and succumbed to his injuries on April 21, 2024. The Deputy's name is Tobin Bolter. This is the first ever line of duty death in Ada County Sheriff's Office history. As all Line of duty deaths are significant this one was a little more significant for Ada County. Deputy Bolter was only 27 years old and had seven years of law enforcement experience and had been with the Ada County Sheriff's Office since January 2024. Prior to the ACSO, Deputy Bolter worked with Meridian Police Department and Pleasant Hill Police Department in California.

Chief Caffey asked for Volunteers to attend the Funeral Procession and Funeral services on April 30, 2024. I (Lt. TJ Rose), Sgt. Patrick Sweeney, and Officer Edward Richards volunteered to attend the services, representing the VA, and showing our respect to our fallen brother in blue and his family. In all there were approximately 1500 police cars and other Emergency vehicles in attendance for the procession and approximately 3500 officers, friends, family, and volunteers in attendance at the funeral service that took place at the Ford Idaho Center in Nampa.

Patrol Lieutenant

T. Rose

