



THE BOISE FRONT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BOISE VA MEDICAL CENTER



Mandela Fellow Visits the Boise VA

Dr. Assane Diouf, a clinical pharmacist from Senegal, recently visited the Boise VA Medical Center to learn more about the Veterans Health Administration, Pharmacy training in the United States, and the training programs at the Boise VA.

Thank you for your visit Dr. Diouf!

BOISE is HIGHLY RELIABLE

High Reliability Organization (HRO)

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

THEME OF THE MONTH

Support a Culture of Safety

July 2024 | National Safety Poster

Escalating Process Change for Partial Doses

C

CONTEXT

While preparing to give an injectable medication to a patient, Traci DeMarco, Nurse Care Manager at Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center in Walla Walla, Washington, realized she was unable to change the charting documentation to indicate she was administering a partial dose of the vial. Without proper documentation, it would appear as an inappropriate dose or medication error.

A

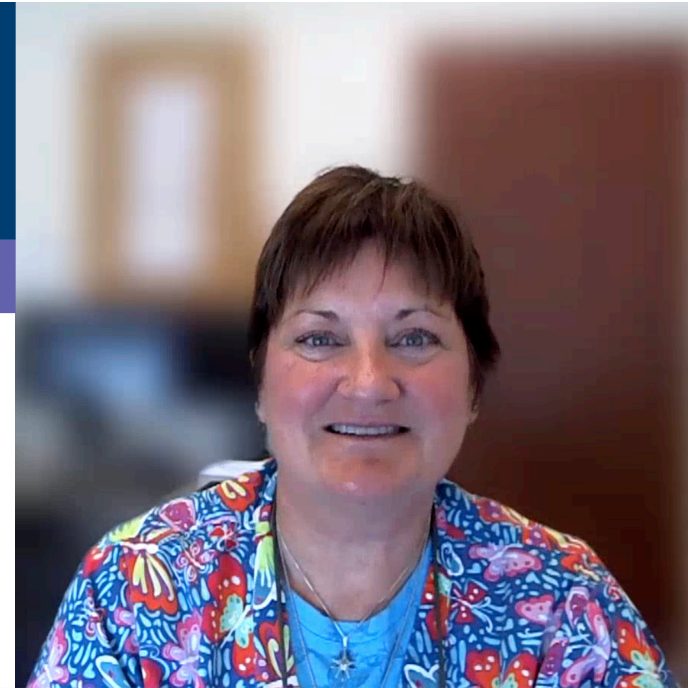
ACTION

Ms. DeMarco recognized the risk posed by having inaccurate records, and the supportive culture of her team empowered her to speak up for safety. She elevated her concerns to the facility pharmacist, who then further escalated the issue to the National Drug File Team.

R

RESULTS

As a result of this notification, the Drug File Team developed a new workflow in the medical records system, allowing inputs for partial doses of medications without generating errors. The facility's commitment to Support a Culture of Safety encouraged Ms. DeMarco to kickstart a new process that enabled more accurate record keeping and facilitated improved care for Veterans.



"I trusted my colleagues to help identify a solution when I reported this issue. Small moments like this build and reinforce a Culture of Safety."

Traci DeMarco, RN

*Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center
Walla Walla, Washington*

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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

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VHA'S JOURNEY TO
HIGH
RELIABILITY

Your Care is Our Mission.

Blair Jaynes




VA

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Medical Center

**VOLUNTEER
SPOTLIGHT**

After graduating from Idaho Falls High School in 1961, I enlisted as a Private in the Army and served as an artilleryman in Nuremberg, Germany. Later, in 1974, I served a short tour as an enlisted radio operator with the 19th Special Forces in Utah and became Airborne qualified at Ft. Bragg, NC. In 1976, upon completing Army ROTC at BYU, I was commissioned as an Army Engineer Officer and assigned to serve as a platoon leader in a unit of the 116th Combat Engineer Battalion of the Idaho Army National Guard located in Rigby. We responded to the Teton Dam disaster in July of that year. After completing Army Engineer Officer School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia later in 1976, I served an active-duty tour with the Walla Walla District of the Civil Works Division of the Army Corps of Engineers. Upon completing that tour in 1978, I was assigned to the 129th Combat Engineer Company of the Idaho Army National Guard in Payette. From 1979 to 1981 I served as a Platoon Leader with the Army Reserve's 321st Combat Engineer Battalion that drilled at the facility on Fort Street next to the VA Hospital. In 1981 I transferred to the 116th Combat Engineer Battalion of the Idaho Army National Guard at Gowen Field. Later that year I made an inter-service transfer to the Air Force and was appointed as a Judge Advocate with the Idaho Air National Guard at Gowen Field. In 1982 the Idaho Adjutant General asked me to accept an opportunity to serve as the first full-time active-duty Staff Judge Advocate in the Headquarters of the Idaho Army and Air National Guard. In 1999, after serving in that position for more than 17 years, I retired as a Lt. Col. with more than 23 years of active-duty service with the Army and Air Force.

I was born in Sacramento, California in 1943, just before my dad enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps, where he later served as a C-47 pilot in the European theatre during WWII. Among other missions, he flew one of those planes that dropped supplies to troops surrounded at Bastogne after the weather cleared up. He was awarded an Air Medal for his service.



After the war we lived in Sacramento, Berkeley, Oakland and Modesto. In 1960, after my dad obtained a position as a nuclear reactor operator with Aerojet at the INEL site, we moved to Idaho Falls. After graduating from Idaho Falls High in 1961 and serving my first 3-year tour of military service with the U.S. Army in Germany, I served as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Mission from 1965 to 1967.

I met my wife, Karren (Archibald) Jaynes, while attending BYU for a semester in 1967 and we were married later that year. After

working as a life insurance agent for a couple of years, I attended the University of Utah and graduated, Cum Laude, in 1973. We were then privileged to be accepted as part of the first class of the new J. Reuben Clark Law School at BYU where I graduated in 1976, after our fourth child was born. We are blessed to have four living children, 13 grandchildren and, so far, five great-grandchildren.

After law school, we spent a short time in Idaho Falls where I worked with the Law Firm of Cox & Bowen. We then moved to Walla Walla, Washington where I served that tour with the Corps of Engineers until 1978. Then we returned to Idaho and settled in Boise where I worked for a short time as Legal Counsel for Continental Life and Accident Company and three years as Assistant Corporate and General Counsel for the J.R. Simplot Company. It was then that I accepted the full-time active-duty position as Staff Judge Advocate for the Adjutant General of the Idaho National Guard starting in 1982.

After retiring from that position with the military in 1999, I started a new career as a Lead Deputy Attorney General with the Idaho Attorney General's Office. I served more than 22 years at the Idaho Industrial Commission as their legal

counsel and enforcing the Idaho Workers' Compensation Law against employers who failed to comply with the requirement that they provide insurance protection for their employees who may be injured or killed. I was also able to successfully handle several cases that were appealed to the Idaho Supreme Court. I retired from that position in December 2021.

Since retiring, I have enjoyed traveling, reading, driving sports cars, watching Formula One and being with family.

My long and varied career in the military led me to want to reach out and help those with similar backgrounds. I felt that my experiences might help me connect with those less fortunate who are trying to regain their health and find peace and happiness in their lives. I truly enjoy serving with the kind volunteers and medical providers to assist in any way I can to make veterans feel that they are valued and important to everyone.

I started volunteering in September 2022 and work as an escort, pushing wheelchairs mostly. I enjoy being able to help veterans and their families find their way through the maze that we call the Boise VA Hospital and see them get the quality medical care that they need at this great facility. Thanks.



Lorri
Vernon

Employee of
the Month
JUNE



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Lorri Vernon just recently started her position as the Star/Bro program coordinator in the CLC. Although she is very new to this position, she has really demonstrated the ICARE values of Commitment, Advocacy, and Excellence in her work with our most challenging dementia patients.

Recently, 2MS had an extremely challenging patient who often times became both verbally and physically assaultive to employees. While the psychiatric team worked to get him medically stable, Lorri was a visible presence on the units to support the inpatient nursing teams every step of the way. She literally took this role to another dimension as it used to be just a “drive-by check-in” on the units. Lorri would quite frequently change her schedule to be on the units with this difficult patient. She worked diligently with the managers to come up with a plan for this veteran to ensure the safety of staff on the unit. She would also step in to sit with this patient so our staff could get a break from responding to his behaviors. By sitting with this patient, Lorri got to know this veterans behaviors and had a better picture of how to manage them appropriately, rather than just throwing ideas out there for staff to try. This hands-on experience and approach was invaluable for our staff. Lorri has gone above and beyond in her new role to show she is committed to the care of these veterans as well as the safety of our employees. During the most difficult days, she advocated for this patient with the interdisciplinary team to ensure he was treated with dignity throughout his stay. She also thought “outside of the box” to propose new interventions to his care while collaborating with management. Our staff have really felt supported by Lorri on the unit and we cannot thank her enough for helping us navigate this difficult patient. Lorri has proven herself to be an amazing fit for her new role and deserves to be recognized for the unwavering support she has provided to the inpatient units. She exemplifies the ICARE values and the mission of the VA.



**Natasha
Yekel**

**Employee of
the Month
JUNE**



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HAS would like to nominate Natasha Yekel for Employee of the Month. Natasha is currently a Lead MSA who has made outstanding contributions to the facility by providing support to both veterans and employees. Her supervisor would especially like to recognize Natasha for providing support to her that as a new supervisor has been a critical part of her succeeding in her role. The area Natasha works includes 5 clinics with 15 employees--there are often gaps in coverage and each time Natasha rises to the occasion and is willing to step up and help with clinic coverage. She is well versed in the procedures of the clinics she covers and is instrumental in communicating with staff. Integrity is at the heart of Natasha's daily practice. She has consistently demonstrated honesty and transparency in her daily interactions with patients and colleagues that is critical to the smooth operations of the clinics she supports. Our team looks to her for guidance and we are so very appreciative of her open dialog, work ethic and ability to provide outstanding customer service. Her leadership has not only elevated our clinic operations but also has enriched the lives of patients and staff alike. She embodies the values that define our organization and sets a example for all of us to follow.



Rebecca
Bishop

Employee of
the Month
JUNE



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I am compelled to acknowledge the outstanding performance of Rebecca Bishop. Recently, within the Oncology department, there was a situation involving a Veteran who experienced an infusion reaction leading to respiratory distress and cardiac arrest. Thanks to the prompt and decisive actions of Becca and Angela, the Veteran's life was saved. Becca promptly initiated CPR and even resorted to mouth-to-mouth ventilation when the necessary equipment was not readily available. It was her swift response and proficient CPR technique that ultimately resulted in a positive outcome.

After a single cycle of CPR, the Veteran's pulse was restored, and normal breathing resumed. He was subsequently transferred to the Emergency Room, admitted to the Hospital, and later discharged after a brief recuperation period. Through her selfless actions and quick thinking, Becca effectively preserved the life of this Veteran.

It is essential to recognize exceptional dedication and initiative demonstrated by our staff, and Becca undoubtedly exemplifies these qualities by consistently prioritizing the well-being of our Veterans and displaying a genuine commitment to their care.



**Jeffrey
Stevenson**

**Supervisor of
the Quarter
QTR 3**



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Jeff has been a crucial part of HAS since he took over as supervisor. It's a tough roll, and he conquers it every day. He is always available to talk to. He is an instrumental part of our world of operators. He always has the answer, or knows where to find the answer. Jeff has been super understanding when I completely lost my voice for 2 1/2 weeks and could not do my job as an operator. He is an asset to our team and I hope he does get Employee of the Month. He completely deserves it, and so much more.

Nomination2: Jeff Stevenson stepped in and became supervisor 2 months after I was hired. I immediately noticed a difference in leadership. He took control and reassured us the staff that he was their to help lead and guide us which we so desperately needed. He shared his goals and was transparent with us every step. Whenever we have had a question he replies and even though he might not have the answer he makes sure to find one and then reports back to us with his findings. He has had a great attitude through some stressful situations and has had a sense of humor to go along with it. Their have been a few times that we have had a disgruntled veteran that has been aggressive and verbally abusive to the operator's. He has professionally talked to these veterans and has heard both sides of the story. He will not stand for that kind of behavior and has let the veteran know that also. He has always had our backs! He knows he doesn't know everything and is the first to admit that, his kindness and loyalty to us all really stands out! We are thankful to have Jeff Stevenson as our supervisor and hope he will be nominated for Supervisor of the month. Thank You!



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2P

Unit of the
Quarter
QTR 3

I would like to nominate unit 2P as unit of the quarter. Over the past two years the nurses on 2P have worked hard to change the 2P culture and to focus on process improvement on the unit. To improve patient outcomes and communication on the unit, in 2023, the nursing model changed to a primary nursing model. Nurses embraced this change and provided valuable feedback on how to successfully implement the model, identifying and mitigating barriers. In January 2024, 2P implemented the US Teams/Shared governance committee, as a result the team is currently collaborating on their first PI project. 6 RN's have received their Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Certifications. The ANM is currently in LEAD, One RN has been accepted in the Supervisor Ready program starting August 2024, one was selected for Employee of the month for December 2023, and we had another nominee April 2024. Aside from all these accomplishments, what truly matters is the opinion of our Veterans, the recipients of our care. In the past year, the 2P nursing staff has received 4 Daisy nominations (as a team). Although these nominations are not eligible for a Daisy award, I would like to acknowledge the team because they all deserve a Daisy!! Among the nominations Veterans stated:

- "Best VA I have been in."
- "All I can say is best experience I have had with medical issues and mental health help. Anyway, what a great team of folks. I can't thank one; they all have contributed to my life in their own way."
- "Sometimes people need reassurance, comfort, and love. You have provided that to me ten-fold, without knowing if I deserved it. I didn't think I did. I wanted to say thank you from the bottom of my healing heart."



Compliance Corner

The Code of Integrity Q and A

By Steven Waltari, Acting Integrity and Compliance Officer

Q: What is the Code?

A: The Code of Integrity emphasizes VHA's common **culture of integrity** and its responsibility to operate with the **highest principles** and **ethical business standards** both in the provision of health care, as well as our everyday interactions with each other. The Code is centered around VA's I CARE values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence.

Q: Why do we need a Code?

A: The Code demonstrates the commitment to I CARE values in the workplace and the ethical values that guide what should be done, beyond what must be done. The Code takes this commitment further by underscoring the unique role VHA staff play in Veteran's care. VHA's adoption of a Code of Integrity is critical not only to assuring high quality care, but also to maintaining public trust in VA.

Q: What is the purpose of the Code?

A: It helps streamline the rules and standards regarding integrity into one umbrella document for applicable standards. It provides consolidated points of contact to raise questions and concerns. Finally, it helps us as a facility create a culture that is conducive to the highest ethical standards in our work. While compliance with federal laws and regulations is mandatory, the Code demonstrates our commitment to integrity, and how we should treat each other every day.

Q: Where can I view the Code?

A: The Code can be viewed on VA.gov [VHA Code of Integrity](#)

The greatest asset we have to meet our promise serve Veterans with the utmost integrity are our VHA employees. All employees should be familiar with the Code and take the time to reflect on ways it applies to their everyday work.

If you have a question for the Integrity and Compliance Officer, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, Steven.Waltari@va.gov or phone 208-422-1267. I am here to help, and your communications with me will be treated with confidentiality. If you would like to make an anonymous report, you can do so by calling the Compliance Helpline at 1-866-842-4357. Additional reporting channels can be found in section 7 of the code of integrity (Points of Contact). Whistleblower Protections allow employees to disclose a violation of law, rule, or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety without fear of retaliation.

COMPLIANCE CORNER



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HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



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

Brian Knapek, Canteen
George Brady, Mental Health
Sydney Miller, Nursing
Anahlyse Ruddock, Health Administration
Bode Swendsen, Nursing
Lakin Grout, Nursing
Michael Southern, Primary Care
Mischa Brady, Primary Care
Niki Colton, Health Administration
Riley Fuller, Physical Medicine and Rehab
Victoria Linderman, Nursing
Cassidy Backowski, Pharmacy
Courtney Pos, Pharmacy
Gabrielle Hiner, Pharmacy
Isabella Sturgeon, Pharmacy
Madison Carter, Pharmacy
Maria Morales, Mental Health
Sarah Stevenson, Mental Health
Shannon Park, Mental Health
Tucker Short, Mental Health
Wendolyn McConnell, Pharmacy
Jarid Henman, Police
Erin Jacobson, Laboratory
Jean Kim, Clinical Resource Hub



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HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



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

John Groat, Nursing
Caitlin Goodin, Mental Health
Christina Mathyssek, Mental Health
Brandi Reyes, Facilities Management
Valerie Vega, Pharmacy
Mindi Gibbens, Primary Care
Stephanie Johnston, Specialty Care
Heather Coronado, Nursing
Janee Rodriguez, Clinical Resource Hub



BOISE VA MEDICAL CENTER

HOMELESS VETERANS STAND DOWN

28 SEPTEMBER 2024

8:00AM  3:00PM

500 W. FORT ST. BOISE, ID 83702

PROOF OF VETERAN REQUIRED
MEDICAL SCREENINGS, HAIRCUTS,
FOOD, SURPLUS GEAR & MORE

For more information call (208) 353-9769

LUNCH HAS BEEN GENEROUSLY DONATED BY CS BEEF PACKERS

VISN 20 Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program

Presents:

3rd Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) 2024

Virtual Education Summit

Special Topics in IPV

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, 10/09/2024

9AM—3PM (PST)

Presentations Include:

Intimate Partner Violence and Families

Tara Lzicar, M.Ed., LCPC

Technology Safety

Tyesha Riley

Maternity and Intimate Partner Violence

Laura Miller, M.D.

*Registration link will be sent in a subsequent email.

4.5 Continuing Education Credits available for:

ACCME, ACCME-NP, ACPE, ANCC,

APA, ASWB



VA



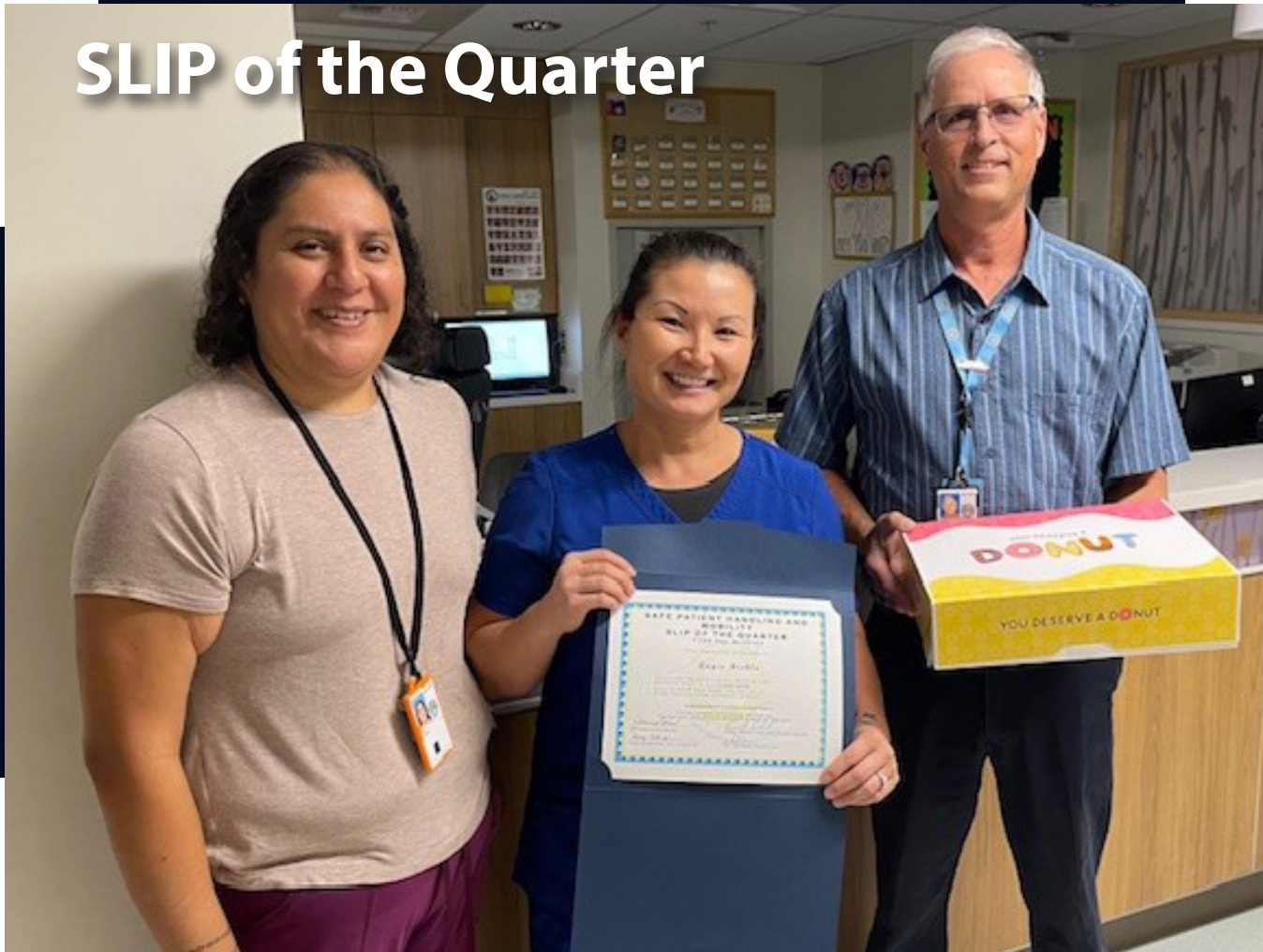
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

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)



SLIP of the Quarter



Angie Birkle, CNA on the 2MS team, has been chosen for the 3rd Quarter, FY24 Safe Patient Handling and Mobility SLIP of the Quarter. During the past 3 months, Angie stepped up in a big way when conducting Annual SPHM training. Angie signed-up and committed to four, 4-hour inpatient training sessions during the month of May. She trained a total of 24 staff members during these training sessions, and all were done between 0100 – 0500 in the morning. When another SLIP, who was scheduled to

train from 2000 – 2400 got injured a couple days prior, Angie volunteered on short notice to train 10 more staff members. Angie's commitment to assist fellow staff members does not go unnoticed. She is committed to keeping our staff and patients safe.

Great job and congratulations on being the 3rd quarter, FY24, Safe Patient Handling and Mobility SLIP of the Quarter!

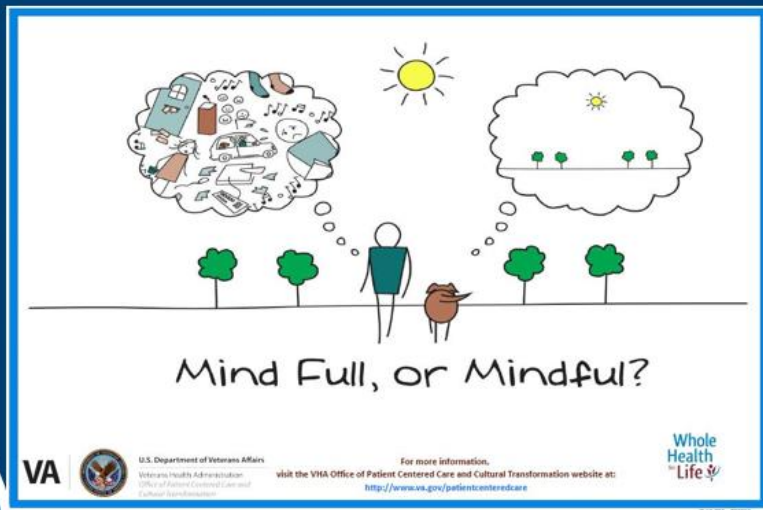


Upcoming Employee Whole Health Classes

Want an outlook invite?

Contact 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.



2024 Employee Whole Health Healthy Teaching Kitchen

Virtual Class on [Teams](#)

12:00 – 12:30 PM Mountain Time

4th Wednesday each month

Hosted by Boise VA with Madison Keller, RD

August 28: [Sauteed Swiss Chard](#)

September 25: [Banana Oat Chia Pudding](#)

October 23: [Chocolate Chip Chickpea
Cookie Dough](#)

November 27: [Simple Pumpkin Pudding](#)

December: *No session – happy holidays!*

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:

