# Leadership Stories: “I truly love nursing at the VA.”



Olivia Giles, DNP MSN RN

ADPCS, Shreveport, LA

Dr. Olivia Giles is one of the newest Nurse Executives in the Veteran’s Health Administration, assuming her new role on August 16, 2020. Dr. Giles has served with the Veteran’s Affairs since 2010, after departing the private sector with experiences that varied from the Operating Room to Pediatric care. She transitioned to VHA after participating in a student trainee program that allowed her to shadow the ADPCS and a Chief Nurse in Shreveport, Louisiana. This experience served as the catalyst to convince Dr. Giles that she wanted to join the VHA Health Care team. She also has personal reasons for her dedication to Veterans, as she has the proud heritage of a grandfather and both parents who served in the US military. She identifies her role as Primary Care Nurse Manager as a career highlight because she had the opportunity to oversee the team providing care to her grandfather. Dr. Giles was primarily inspired to become a nurse by her mother, who would come home each day after working at a long-term care center and share stories about her experiences.

Dr. Giles’ most cherished accomplishments include advocating for the Veteran population through the implementation of Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) locally and being a champion for individual Veterans as leaders of the program. She cites the impact of her fellow nurse executives as mentors in helping her grow into her role. She is a proponent of mindfulness and relaxation, as she meditates at least three times a day.

Dr. Giles keeps her team motivated by celebrating and thanking staff individually for their work. She states, “It is really important to give praise recognition in the moment.” She often gifts staff with holiday specific treats year-round, and she utilizes on the spot recognition to praise her staff. Her staff receive Daisy award recognitions and she is planning to implement the “Lunch with the ADPCS” incentive when the pandemic subsides.

Dr. Giles shared the following: *“The VA is the only job that I have ever had when I got hired, I just knew that I am going to end up retiring from here. When I entered the VA, people were so nice, and there is a comradery, people that work here really love Veterans. If I didn’t come to the VA, I don’t think I would be able to reach my full potential. You can be anything you want to be in VA and there are so many different avenues. You can impact Veteran care in so many ways and so many different roles.”*