**2020 YEAR OF THE NURSE: A FOCUS ON HOLISTIC NURSING**

# CIH Highlight—Battlefield Acupuncture (BFA)

**Nurse Highlight:**

**Cynthia Kinser, NP-BC**

Geriatrics & Extended Care

Battlefield Acupuncture Certified Practitioner

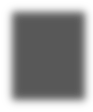
## Q: Why did you become a nurse?

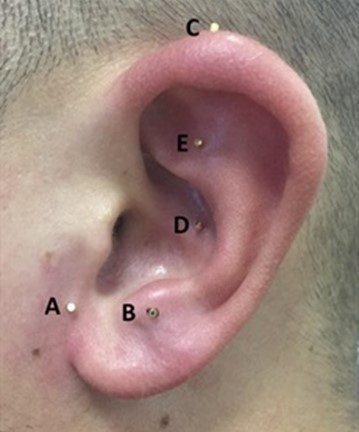
A: Short story - My daughter told me I should and could do it. I was looking at a career change, she was telling me how much she enjoyed her role as a nurse and encouraged me to consider nursing. She reminded me of how much I enjoyed the medical aspect while

a ski patroller at Cataloochee. I was also assisting in the care of my parents at the time. As I started the program, I enjoyed the holistic approach of education, advocacy, relationship building and hands on care of the patient.

## Q: How is holistic nursing relevant now more than ever?

A: The foundation of nursing is holistic, in general. Providing supportive therapies such as those offered by the integrative team are an important complement to what many consider traditional medicine. Most patients have complex medical and psychosocial needs that cannot be fully addressed by a single therapy. Options such as healing touch, virtual reality and, more specifically to me, Battlefield Acupuncture (BFA) provide patients other ways to address anxiety and pain. The additional personalized care while inpatient is helpful to reduce stress associated with hospitalization. It is very exciting to provide BFA at the bedside and hear reports of reduced pain or anxiety. I am honored to help the CGVAMC team in educating about BFA and providing access to this tool that can address pain to veteran’s while inpatient.

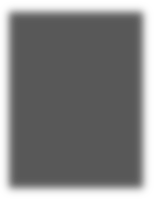
**Battlefield Acupuncture (BFA)** is an abbreviated auricular acupuncture technique, modified from the ancient art of acupuncture. This was developed by an Air Force radiation oncologist and medical acupuncturist, Dr. Richard Niemtzow, in 2001 for the purpose of rapid pain relief. Acupuncture is used to restore or maintain health and although is typically used to treat acute or chronic pain, it is also useful for other conditions such as anxiety, depression or sleeplessness. Small needles are placed strategically in up to five points of one or both ears. The entire body is represented in the ear and placing small

needles in these locations can affect the whole body.

BFA has been provided for established Veterans at the Charles George VA Medical Center (CGVAMC) by doctors and midlevel practitioners since 2018, yet the availability to provide has been limited. There have been a select few providers and pharmacists that provide BFA, yet Cynthia Kinser, a Nurse Practitioner in the Community Living Center (CLC), has committed her time and energy to providing this Integrative therapy to Veterans throughout the facility. Given the relief that this simple and timely procedure can provide, the demand has been on the rise, therefore, so has the need to increase availability to Veterans.

***Captured is the view of locations where the BFA pellets are placed, in order: (A) cingulate gyrus, (B) thalamus, (C) omega 2, (D) point zero, (E) Shen Men.***

BFA was originally prohibited by Registered Nurses (RN) to practice in the state of North Carolina as legislation to practice is state led. Yet, the NCBON changed its legislation in January 2020, allowing federal facilities to set their own parameters for providing it. Cynthia Kinser, NP, in conjunction with Dr. D’Angio, MD and acupuncturist, the Complementary Integrative Health (CIH) team, and the Whole Health program, are paving the way for RN BFA providers to practice BFA at the CGVAMC for the first time in NC.



**Veteran response to BFA:**

***Not all Veterans have the same experience; some reporting no change, others only moderate, while some having total resolution of***

***pain. Several Veterans report change in mood – calmness, relaxed.***

***In particular, one Veteran reported remarkable results following application of BFA. He was using PRN morphine for breakthrough chronic***

***pain. After first application, he did not use any PRN***

***morphine for 10 days – 45 mg daily total! Veteran was very pleased to report the***

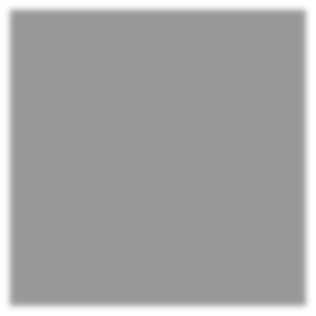
***pain improvement and the reduction in use of***

***morphine. He now receives regular BFA treatments and has consistently used less PRN morphine.***

# Nurse Executive Highlight:

**Deb Whisenant, MSN, RN—Chief Nurse, Ambulatory & Procedural Care**

### Q: Why did you become a nurse?



A: “I’m a problem solver by nature and I wanted to use that skill to help those around me who could not manage wellness on their own. I value education and have found over my career patients often don’t understand their disease processes and how the daily decisions they make impact them. Given the opportunity to ask questions and participate in care, patients are empowered to live the life they chose.”

### Q: How is holistic nursing relevant now more than ever?

A: “During the pandemic, many have found themselves isolated from their traditional support system. The ability to focus on being well both mentally and physically offers an escape from the isolation. The time is very

appropriate to focus on the sum and not just the parts.”