



System Redesign Teams Earn Top Improvement Awards

By Paula L. Pedene APR

Have you heard of the training classes called Yellow Belt and Green Belt? Or how about the terms SIPOC, 5S or PDSA? If you have not, you soon will, as the Phoenix VA Health Care System leaders are challenging all of us to become Lean.

Lean Six Sigma is a synergized managerial concept of Lean and Six Sigma that strives to eliminate these seven kinds of organizational wastes:

- 1) defects
- 2) overproduction
- 3) transportation
- 4) waiting
- 5) inventory
- 6) motion
- 7) over-processing.

Embraced by the Veterans Health Administration, Systems Redesign such as Lean and Dr. Edward Deming's systems thinking approach to health care are the new cornerstones for providing more value to what we do in caring for our nation's Veterans. They are part of VHA's plan for organization-wide transformation. Trainings offered include Yellow and Green Belt and Black Belt at the higher level. The National Systems Redesign Program Office leads the effort. Lean Teams at our hospital use several methodologies including:

- **VA-TAMMCS: Visions/Analyzes - Team, Aims, Maps, Measures Changes and Sustains.**



Dr. James Robbins presents the award to Chief of Quality, Safety and Improvement Michelle Bagford, Medical Center Director Sharon Helman and Associate Director Patient Care Services Nancy Clafin.

- **SIPOC Tool: Suppliers, inputs, process, outputs, and customers-** a tool that helps define the issues, and leads to improvement processes.
- **5S** is the name of a workplace organization method that uses a list of five Japanese words:
 - 1) *seiri (sort)*
 - 2) *seiton (straighten)*
 - 3) *seiso (shine)*
 - 4) *seiketsu (standardize)*
 - 5) *shitsuke (sustain)*

They all start with the letter "S." The list describes how to organize a work space for efficiency and effectiveness by identifying and storing the items used, maintaining the area and items, and sustaining the new order. The decision-making process usually comes from

a dialogue about standardization, which builds understanding among employees of how they should do the work.

- **PDSA Model: Plan, Do, Study, Act**

With these tools in hand, our PVAHCS teams set out to enact change to our operations, enhancing the value in what we do. We are fortunate to have several winners from the Veterans Integrated Service Network (18) Quality Expo. Here are a few of them...

First Place Project-Enhancing Patient Outcomes and Experiences: Reducing Fee Basis Costs through Utilization Review

Team: Tiffany Potter, RN, MSN – Team Leader; Jennifer Binder, RN, MSN; Diana Stanley, RN, MSN;

continued on page 9

Construction Update

by DeMarques Potter

The Phoenix VA continues to push the pace and make progress on construction projects. Yes, the VA community has been through a lot in the past few months but more excitement is yet to come. Several large-scale construction projects are currently abuzz, which will greatly improve Veteran care while increasing needed floor space for the facility. These investments will help us meet increasing patient demands, accommodate new equipment and support numerous initiatives and directives from the Department of Veteran Affairs. Your support of the program is greatly appreciated as construction continues.

Projects currently under way:

- **Rehabilitation Building:** This new, two-story, 28,000 sq. ft. facility is to be located adjacent to D-wing of the main hospital. It will house rehabilitation services.

- **Expansion of Inpatient Pharmacy:** Expanding the current Inpatient Pharmacy footprint and reorganizing existing floor space is the objective of this project. Expansion was necessary to accompany additional equipment and support future growth.
- **Mental Health Building:** A new three-story, 41,000 sq. ft. facility is to be located adjacent to the main hospital. It will house the residential treatment program and other mental health functions.
- **Short Stay Intensive Unit (SSIU) Phase 2:** In this project, the old Medicine Intensive Care Unit is being renovated into the new SSIU. The project consists of reconfiguring space, infrastructure upgrades and new finishes.

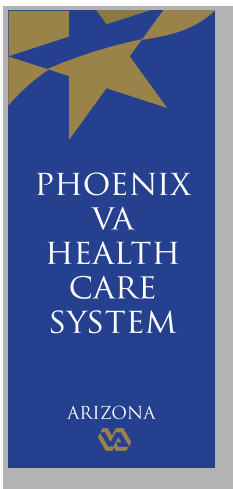
Projects planned:

- **Emergency Department Expansion:** This project will consist of two levels, ground floor

and basement. The first floor expansion will be approximately 14,000 sq. ft.. It will also consist of remodeling approximately 13,000 sq. ft. of existing building space. Some areas will require minor renovations, while other areas will be demolished and reconstructed. Project is planned for 2014.

- **Dental Building:** This new two-story, 24,000 sq. ft. facility is to be located on the north end of campus near Building 21. The project is currently in design and is planned for 2014.
- **Parking Structure:** This project to provide 300+ additional parking spaces with future considerations for vertical expansion will consist of a 60,000 sq. ft. parking garage. Construction is planned for 2014.

Again, we appreciate everyone's understanding and continued support throughout these necessary changes. We are proud to serve our nation's Veterans and their families. ■



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VCS Looks Forward to Upcoming Renovations and Improvements

by Crystal Coochise

Are you hungry for some butterscotch pudding, or do you feel like having a tasty taco salad for lunch? Then you are in luck, because the canteen features Taco Thursdays, when you can get a large delicious edible taco bowl of beef or chicken with all of the toppings to fill an empty stomach. Nevertheless, do not just come on Thursdays because you would miss a variety of good food choices for every day of the week, including lemon fish, chicken tetrazzini, lasagna and meatloaf.

Fabian Santos, chief and VCS retail store manager, hopes to improve operations at the canteen, retail store and vending machines. Santos, who recently earned “Canteen of the Year” and “Top Operating Income” from the Jackson, Miss, VA, takes pride in his work and starts with filling one small request at a time. Food Line Server Rasheed Fenty says, Santos is a good manager.

“If there are any needs, he is there to fix them. He is real attentive, good with customer service, and we work together really well. I am impressed by the way he forecasts, he is very good with the designs for the upcoming remodel which will make this place more workable, cleaner, and visible.”

The plans call for removing walls, and replacing the flooring and seating with more open, accessible and enhanced areas.

On any given day the canteen is filled with the chatter of excited Veterans, staff, friends and family enjoying their meals. Disabled Veterans have access to wheelchair areas to eat their meals, nurses converse with their friends, and service dogs sit patiently beneath the tables for their next command. The canteen is never short of laughter and big smiles when it comes to lunch, even though it is very crowded. Santos hopes to change the crowding within the limited space he is provided.

“I would like to add new concepts, increase variety on menu options, and update the look of the cafeteria, because it is very outdated. We hope to add seating that is more versatile so that people can have more options along with improving wheelchair accessibility. I would like to get rid of some of the walls so that the area is more visible, and change the entrances and exits to improve the traffic flow.”

Thanks to Santos and his staff they offer take-out platters for anyone who does not want to stay to eat, several lines for various food items to improve the flow of traffic, and three lines for check-out to make the lunch lines shorter and more efficient. This busy, highly sought-after lunch spot will soon be renovated, but the details are still in the works. Meanwhile the staff is very friendly and dedicated to making a visit to the canteen a positive experience. They work with the vendors who set up and sell shirts and trinkets to promote a positive environment for their customers. “We have a great staff in terms of customer service; they go above and beyond to make sure that patients and family are helped and seated properly, and resolve problems to improve the conditions every day,” he said.

With the Retail Store, Santos is optimizing it to be less cluttered, more shoppable, and have new and exciting items such as TVs and electronics, snacks, household items, mugs, military gear, hats, candles, beautifully-lighted display cases, and clothing. Items that were once too high to reach he has placed on a lower level.

“I’m a short guy, and a lot of our items are up high. It made me think, what about our Veterans in wheel chairs, what could they reach?”



Rasheed Fenty and Jennifer Punchios work the VCS Food Line

How does Santos fill the needs of the VA shoppers? He has stationed a comment box for suggestions from patrons on the entrance wall of the VCS Retail.

Santos loves the Southwest and Phoenix, and while he has been at the Phoenix VA Health Care System for only four months, he has already made an impact on the lives of those who utilize these services. When you walk in to the VCS Store for the first time you notice the large TV screens, wide variety of electronics, cookware, and household options. When you start to find several objects that you need, you start to look for more. I have seen fishing gear, carpet cleaners and deodorizers along with books, shoes and trinkets with refrigerators for drinks and snacks.

Patriot Café hours are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 3:30. VCS Retail Store hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30., and Saturday 8 a.m. to 3:30.

What’s more, you will be surprised to learn that a portion of each sale from the store or café comes back to the VA Medical Center, allowing us to purchase food or promotional items for all employee functions. Thus, part of every dollar spent at the VCS Retail Store comes back to the Phoenix VA Health Care System. That is win-win for all of us. ■

In These Hot Summer Months Avoid Dehydration

By Bridget Hennessey

Did you know that if you are thirsty, you are already partially dehydrated?

Dehydration makes a person tired, cranky and stiff-jointed. It can cause headaches and muscle aches. Severe dehydration leads to seizures, coma, and even death.

Most people do not get enough water to drink daily. An average person in a moderate climate such as in England can lose 2.5 liters of water a day. Your body is 60-75% water, but simply drinking water will not keep you hydrated. You need electrolytes in the water, and adding them is as easy as adding lemon or lime.

Electrolytes are salts and minerals that conduct electrical impulses in the body. Common electrolytes are sodium, potassium, chloride and bicarbonate. Sodium (Na+) appears outside of cells in the blood. Excessive amounts (from our diets) are excreted in urine. It regulates the amount of body water. It transmits electrical signals in and out of cells. Many body processes require these signals for communication, especially the brain, nervous system and muscles. Excesses cause cells to malfunction and can be fatal.

Potassium (K+) appears inside cells in the blood. A serious increase or decrease affects the nervous system and increases chances of an irregular heartbeat, which can be fatal.

Chloride exists outside of cells in the blood. Seawater has almost the same concentration of chloride ions as do body fluids. It helps our bodies maintain normal fluid balances. Significant increases or decreases can be fatal.

Bicarbonate (HCO₃⁻) maintains normal pH levels in our bodies' fluids. The bicarbonate test is performed along with tests for other electrolytes.

Dehydration can be a sign of *adrenal fatigue*. The adrenals are two small glands that sit on your kidneys, create

energy and secrete aldosterone, which regulates water and sodium levels in your body, helping you stay hydrated.

The adrenals also regulate stress responses. When you're stressed, more aldosterone and sodium circulates in your system. When stress drops, aldosterone levels drop and sodium is excreted (with water) by kidneys in urine.

Dr. Leonard Smith, renowned gastrointestinal, vascular and general surgeon, suggests these guidelines for good hydration:

1) Drink half your body weight in ounces of water daily.

2) Sip water slowly. Drinking too fast risks diluting your blood, which causes faster excretion of water by the kidneys.

3) After you exercise, replace lost fluids.

4) Avoid coffee, soda and alcohol.

5) Use a good water filter. Distilled or reverse osmosis water removes most of the minerals.

6) In a dry climate, drink *before* you get thirsty.

7) Control blood sugar level. Sour foods and beverages take away sugar cravings. You will be satisfied with natural sugars in foods like carrots and fruit.

8) Maintain your blood alkaline level. A diet high in sugar, processed foods and animal proteins can make blood more acidic. This leaches minerals and weakens adrenals.

9) Reduce stress and get proper sleep. Sleep nourishes your adrenals and allows your body to repair itself.

Benefits of Being Well-Hydrated:

- Boosts physical and mental endurance.
- Helps you maintain a pleasant demeanor.
- Helps prevent muscle cramps in your legs, hands, and feet -- and achy stiff joints.

- Can decrease risks of kidney stones, and lowers risk of some cancers by flushing out toxins.
- Softens the stools, making them easier to pass.
- Helps prevent urinary tract infections by flushing away bacteria.
- Helps pregnant women from being constipated -- and flushes away excess fluid that leads to bloating and swelling.
- Helps nursing women produce milk. Helps keep eyes and skin moist.
- Helps asthmatics breathe more efficiently. Apparently, dehydration interferes with how well the lungs function.

Signs of Dehydration

The easiest way is to check that urine is clear or pale yellow. When it darkens, increase fluid intake.

- **Mild Dehydration:** Thirst, dry lips, dry mouth, flushed skin, fatigue, irritability, headache, urine is dark or decreases.
- **Moderate Dehydration:** All of the signs of mild dehydration, plus: skin doesn't bounce back quickly when pressed, very dry mouth, sunken eyes, limited urine that is dark yellow, cramps, stiff and/or painful joints, severe irritability, fatigue, severe headache.
- **Severe Dehydration:** All of the signs of mild and moderate dehydration, plus: blue lips, blotchy skin, confusion, lethargy, cold hands and feet, rapid breathing, rapid and weak pulse, low blood pressure, dizziness, fainting, high fever, inability to urinate or cry tears, disinterest in drinking fluids.

Remember, your body is 60-75% water, so keeping hydrated, especially in these hot summer months in Arizona is key. ■

New AV system improves conference room capabilities

By Paul Coupaud

The audiovisual upgrade project for the conference rooms in the basement of the Ambulatory Care Clinic is complete. In addition to modernizing the backbone of the system, the AV upgrade includes high definition projectors, Blu-ray video capabilities, improved and extended wireless microphone capabilities, digital audio and video inputs from each room, and improved system controls. With the primary installation and programming completed July 13, Medical Media staff are training on the new equipment and working to identify and resolve any bugs.

The previous AV system, which controlled the ceiling-mounted projectors, computer inputs, and audio system, broke down nearly a year ago. Many individual parts still work, but the control system that routs signals between components is inoperable. For instance, the speakers in the conference room still work, but there is no way to



configure the microphones to output to the speakers. This situation forced the Medical Media staff to rely on portable AV equipment to meet customer needs. This was often a challenge to room users, as they had to work around a projector cart or other portable equipment during their events.

Staff members frequently had to move equipment from locations across campus for use in the ACC conference rooms and often sought on-the-fly solutions to the AV challenges that inevitably arose. The staff is still learning the new system, but working with the new equipment for even a short time has already proven to save time and effort.

When hospital staff members

schedule events in the ACC basement conference rooms, they should contact Medical Media about their AV needs. The best way to do this is through Medical Media's email group "VHAPHO Medical Media," as requests sent to that email group are delivered to all Medical Media staff members. Some options customers have for AV support in the conference rooms include projecting computer displays to the screen, playing DVD or Blu-ray discs, using wireless microphones and participating in video teleconferencing. Room users that have difficulties with the AV equipment should call the Medical Media staff, ext. 6413. ■

Thinking Outside the Bowl

By Robin K. Ferguson and Daniel Blackman

Do you have an idea or suggestion that will improve our medical center? If so, now is the time to share it. We have launched the FISH Program. The FISH (Fresh Ideas Start Here) Program allows everyone (Veterans, staff, family members) the opportunity to improve not only what we do, but also how we do it.

The elevators on all floors have placed boxes with FISH forms in the facility and at the Southeast, Northwest, and Thunderbird Clinics for anyone who wishes to send the new FISH committee a suggestion. There will also be a form developed for on-line input, and employees can email their suggestions to the VHAPHOEmployerOfChoice email address.

Suggestions will be collected throughout each month, and the FISH workgroup will enter them into a program designed to track the implementation of suggestions that are received. Each service line will have a representative in the group to receive and track the suggestions associated with his/her service. Medical Center Director Sharon Helman will also read each suggestion as part of her interest in capturing and denoting improvement.

As each suggestion becomes implemented the committee and the director will recognize the person responsible for the idea for that contribution. ■



Volunteer Restores Beauty to 1951 Bronze VA Seal

By Crystal Coochise

Often sitting indoors on a hot day in Arizona at the VA Hospital, one gets a little chilly. Stepping outside into the heat seems to alleviate this problem. Recently, Tom Stelling of Daytona Beach, Florida, dared to do just that, step out into the heat while visiting his uncle in the Community Living Center (CLC). When he walked out the VA Gallery door, he noticed the tarnished condition of the Carl T. Hayden VA plaque posted at the original entrance.

Having worked for the past five years restoring bronze and marble plaques, he decided that he wanted to give back to the Phoenix VA Health Care System by restoring this plaque in honor of his uncle who had great care in the CLC.

"I was amazed at the people there in the CLC, they paid more attention to him, and when he did have to move to hospice care the atmosphere was great."

Although Stelling lives in Daytona Beach, he was determined to return to Phoenix to do the restoration. Flying back from Florida to Arizona, Stelling picked up his uncle's truck and packed his supplies and headed to the VA Hospital to begin his work from 5 to 8 a.m. in 88-degree weather on July 1, 2012. It took two coats of paint and a lot of hard work that would have normally cost more than \$1,000 to restore. It was a labor of love in honor of his uncle.

"It's like a car. It has a quick dry in the paint to prep the plaque, then a clear coat to protect the paint with a shiny luster and sanding to bring out the emphasis. After touch ups are finished, another clear coat is applied. It can last up to twenty years if maintained correctly, but sometimes the clear coat comes off and has to be re-applied," he said.

Stelling started working on plaques when his mother asked him to find someone who could restore his father's bronze plaque on his tombstone. Oddly enough, he could not find anyone that knew how to restore bronze, only marble or granite. After seven tries with various materials, he became successful at restoring his father's plaque. One of the hardest plaques he restored to date was a bronze tombstone, which took three to four times as long, because

up the street and throughout the state, and currently for the city of Daytona Beach, Volusia County and The Daytona News Journal newspaper.

"I have restored 150-200 plaques, and have requests from other states as well. I am most excited about the Blue Star Memorial Plaque markers in California and have had so many jobs now I have been finding it difficult to find enough space on my Website

to put all of the pictures. The Phoenix VA Health Care System plaque in particular could use a small eight-inch roof over it so that the rain runoff and pigeon waste does not ruin it again," he says.

The Blue Star Memorial plaque markers are green, blue and gold, and originally had a red circle in the middle, but the national organization did away with that. The Blue Star memorial markers take about eight hours to complete because the letters are in gold flake and the star and letters are hand painted. The Blue Star Memorials are a tribute to service members who have served in the armed forces.

"My uncle Robert Stelling is a former Air Force Veteran of the Vietnam War who was born in Raleigh, North Carolina; moved to several places before he sold his place in New Mexico and moved to Arizona where he lived for 15 years. He served as chair of the Democratic Veteran's Caucus. Bob Stelling passed away May 15, 2012 at the age of 72 in the CLC."

Tom Stelling, who is a Navy Veteran, also restores marble and granite. If you would like to see more of his work, you can visit his Website at www.thetombstonecleaner.com. ■



Tom Stelling polishes and restores our VA seal off the 7th Street VA Gallery



it was a stone carved with roses for someone's mother.

With his new trade in hand, Stelling began working for friends and people

Director's Column

By Sharon Helman, MBA

Sometimes we need to stop and look in the review mirror. What do I mean by that? We have accomplished a lot in a short time frame, and it is way too easy to think of everything facing us and ask, "Am I getting anything accomplished or are we there yet?" So, let's pull over and sit back for a few minutes while we stop and turn around to face the good things all of you at our Phoenix VA Health Care System family have accomplished so far. Smile, feel the joy in team work, and allow yourself to accept that you, **yes you**, were instrumental in the accomplishments of all of these (and more)....here we go....

- Development of a Morning Dashboard, highlighting our productivity in appointments and collections.
- Budget projection and forecasting tools that are awesome.
- Nutrition and Food Menu options for patients expanded Cleaner facility, cleaner grounds.
- Retail store with great items, and an improved catering menu, new supervisor.
- Employee satisfaction committee launched.
- New facility-wide committee structure.
- System Redesign 5 S projects that are super cool and have made more efficiencies on the front lines.
- System Redesign projects that rock!
- System Redesign Team Winners at the VISN Quality Expo.
- More Yellow, Green and Black belts trained--means more lean projects--means more efficiencies.
- Luke Air Force Base collaboration initiatives--saving us staff time by utilizing their staff with health care certifications and allowing their crew to maintain their competencies
- Show Low VA Health Care Clinic Ribbon Cutting--Veterans and staff are happy!
- New Mental Health Building Ground Breaking.
- Health care leaders in the community visit VA for an open house/building our collaborative efforts.
- Meetings with our new Mayor Greg Stanton and with Maricopa Integrated Health Care System Director Betsey Bayless and team.
- Homeless Veterans community outreach and visits to our sites and collaboratives
- High caliber of VA Police Officers hired and successful Headquarters Inspection
- Emergency Department process and staffing improved, plus final designs for an expanded ED moving ahead.
- Fee processes improved, money saved, Veterans streamlined back to us.
- South East VA Health Care Clinic expansion designed for Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) moving ahead.
- PACT training--everyone moving forward in the same direction.
- PACT Steering Committee improved and re-launched.
- Increase in telephone appointments with Veterans.
- Improved Performance Measures.
- Redesigned Quality, Safety, and Improvement Department.
- More equipment purchased from VISN funding, including new tray system.
- Second MRI funded.
- Buildings torn down....new buildings going up.
- Operating Rooms renovated and staff and operations moved back in.
- New Women's clinic, and OEF/OIF/OND renovated, and everyone moved in.
- First ever Federal Years of Service Ceremony, to be held annually.
- Successful Network Director Site Visit.
- Commission of Accreditation for Rehabilitation Facilities Services visit successful.
- Nuclear Medicine, Compensation and Therapy, Psychology and Recreation Therapy area renovated.
- Parking Committee launched.
- National VHA Public Affairs Awards for the VA Veterans Day Parade and Media Relations.
- Food and Drug Administration Site visit successful.
- Improved processes.
- More hiring's, more recruitments, more employee and labor relations training.
- New incentive awards policy/program.
- Solar Champion award from the City of Phoenix.
- Fifty percent decrease in Validation Errors in Incomplete Status.
- Partnership improved with the Phoenix VA Regional Office under the Veterans Benefits Administration.
- Facilities Management Site Visit from VACO staff: They couldn't believe the improvements made so quickly.
- 2K run for Homeless Veterans.
- Expanded MyHealthVet enrollees.
- Telehealth Expansion, including telederm Veteran testimonies "Phoenix VA saved my life."



And the list goes on

These *one-line highlighted successes* show the hours and hours of employees and supervisors dedicating leadership and passion to make our Phoenix VA Health Care System the best health care entity for Veterans.

It is my honor to work alongside such an amazing group of human beings who choose to be in a health care support role, embracing the challenges (and stress) that come with these accomplishments, and the desire to leave this place better than we all found it.

Stay strong; stay healthy; stay refreshed; stay passionate; stay focused; stay humorous; stay loyal to the mission; and stay together. It is our teamwork and relying on one another that will only get us through the challenges and rough patches that lie ahead.

I know that our Veterans are proud of you and thank you for what you have done already and what you are going to do tomorrow. ■

New Pharmacy Residents Join VA

Our Pharmacy Department would like to introduce you to its residency class of 2012 – 2013. As you can see, we are fortunate again this year to have new team members from all across the country. The Phoenix VA Health Care System had another successful year in matching with what we consider an extremely talented residency group. Please take a moment to say hello as you see our new team members in the hallways.

PGY2 Internal Specialty Pharmacy Residency

- Shannon Davis, Pharm.D., (Shenandoah University)

PGY1 Acute Care Focus Pharmacy Residency

- Anthony Thai, Pharm.D. (University of Hawaii)
- Sal Rivas, Pharm.D. (Roseman University)
- Pam Slaughter, Pharm.D. (Roseman University)

PGY1 Ambulatory Care Focus Pharmacy Residency

- Minh Le, Pharm.D. (Pacific University)
- Amanda Klein, Pharm.D. (University of Arizona)
- Kimberly Stewart, Pharm.D. (University of New Mexico) ■



*Front Row (Left to Right): Shannon Davis, Pam Slaughter, Amanda Klein, Kimberly Stewart.
Back Row (Left to Right): Anthony Thai, Sal Rivas, Minh Le.*

PR PROVIDERS

Public Affairs Officer Paula L. Pedene APR often has to garner information and assistance from staff on a short turnaround for media queries. When staff assists our VA with media and other PR requests, Pedene recognizes them as PR Providers. PR Providers earn recognition in this column, and they receive a special token of appreciation for their PR efforts.

- Our thanks to Andra Batie for his support with a media request from Channel 12.
- Our thanks to Dr. Leslie Telfer, Dr. Clint Anthony, Doug Mitchell, Cheryl Roberts, Kathleen Gale and Troy Briggs for assistance with information about the new Mental Health Hiring Initiative.
- Our thanks to Dr. Kris Nordberg, Karen Walenga and Julie Efron for their assistance with a CLC media query.
- Our thanks to Brad Curry and Dr. Robbi Venditti for their assistance with a media request on Fee Basis.
- Our thanks to James Larson for his support of the Solar Champion award and ensuing media requests.



*Paula L. Pedene, APR,
with a Silver Anvil Award
presented by the Public
Relations Society of
America*

We thank you all for being PR providers!

Romanie Brooks-Dillon, RN, MSN; Melissa Pacheco, RN, BSN; Nadine Beauvais, RN, MSN; Gwendolyn Johnson, RN, BSN; Julie Patterson, RN, BSN; Nydia Stuart, RN, BSN; David Anderson; Robbi Venditti, D.O.

Process-Aim: To decrease Fee Base expenditures by decreasing bed days of care in Non-VA hospitals by 5% before March 31, 2012. The SR team began 3 PDSA change cycles in attempt to accomplish the Aim. The tools used to decrease the bed days of care include:

- 1) Fee Basis Claims Software to monitor and measure the number of Veterans in community hospitals.
- 2) The InterQual System for daily reviews by Utilization Review nurses to coordinate quicker discharges and transfers from community hospitals back to the PVAHCS.
- 3) Bed Management System software to determine bed availability in the PVAHCS, and increase communication on Veteran placement needs.

Lessons Learned: We realized during the process of utilizing BMS that the availability of beds that was being communicated to the nurses was less than what was actually available. BMS is now being utilized to provide an accurate reflection of bed status for the nurses to transfer patients to the Phoenix VA. The implementation

of utilizing the new claims software for nurse clinical reviews assisted the team in identifying that they were not previously capturing all of the Veterans admitted to the community. This proved to be a critical discovery that led to the identification of additional cost savings after implementing the new process.

Outcome: The InterQual review process was successfully implemented for Non-VA hospital clinical reviews. The result from the project demonstrated a decrease in bed days of care by 9%, saving an estimated \$148,512 in overall Fee expenditures for the increasing population during the six-month project period. It also improved communication of the Veterans' care between PVAHCS and the community hospitals.

Second Place Project-Improving Transition and Flow: Building Bridges with Our Community Providers

Team: Nadine A. Beauvais RN, MSN –Team Leader, Jennifer Binder RN; MSN; Tiffany Potter, RN, MSN; Cara Garcia, Social Worker; Lucy Lederfeind, Fee Clerk; Gail Smith, RN, MSN.

Process: To improve transition and flow of notifications from the community hospitals to PVAHCS. In order to accomplish this:

- Community providers needed to be directed and given fax numbers to send notifications.
- Veterans needed to be identified sooner.
- An education method to inform providers as to the process of appropriate hospital notification.
- Once the Veteran is stable and service has been established then the Veteran could be transferred, to cut down on claims and costs.

Lessons Learned: The team identified that confusion existed within the community hospitals regarding the notification process. If VAs get notified quicker, our Veterans Non-VA care would be coordinated sooner to help decrease authorized claims and costs.

Outcome: After the team's new process was developed, community

education and quick reference guides developed, and notifications increased from 54% to 90%. This allowed our VA to be above 80% of our target goal.

Second Place Project-Improvement Tools and Lean Leadership: Providing Guest Wireless Internet Access for Our Veterans

Team Members: Robbi Venditti, D.O. Team Leader; Douglas Wagman; Felix Cabrera Rodriguez.

Process: The team discovered we could bridge a gap with the installation of Wi Fi modules already deployed to the station. The locations for the Wi Fi modules were selected based on areas of highest guest usage: cafeteria, ED waiting area, Intensive Care Unit/ Surgery waiting area, library, basement conference rooms and Optical Shop waiting area.

Lessons Learned: We were able to show that our guests would use the wireless Internet access if provided. However, the module offered only allows for five users per unit. We are now involved with PDSA cycle #2 by partnering with a communications company which allows for up to 200 users and provides more coverage areas.

Outcome: Phoenix Veteran Centered Care Committee was able to

bridge the gap between the Request for Proposals and implementation by utilizing modules already deployed to the station. VISN 18 has committed financial support to assure this service is continued for two years. Our data demonstrated Veteran guests will use wireless Internet if provided. ■

“When we refine our processes through Lean we improve care for our Veterans.”

HIGHLIGHTS

Around the Medical Center

By Paula L. Pedene, APR, Public Affairs Officer

- Congratulations **Michael Lamb, OD**, selected as “Optometrist of the Year 2012” from the Arizona Optometric Association. Nominations for this award come from a general membership, which consist of approximately 1000 licensed Optometrists in the State of Arizona. Nominees are evaluated on the following criteria: public service contributions to the state, community; religious service organization or charitable cause; service to the vision welfare of the public with, sight-saving groups, legislative activities, participation in health care programs, public service programs; service to the profession of Optometry and service to the American Optometric Association and AZOA.



Michael Lamb

- The **Phoenix Integrated Surgical Residency** held its annual black tie graduation at the Arizona Biltmore. The 2012 PISR Faculty Teaching Award selected by the chief residents went to **Dr. Mark Runfola (General Surgery)**.
- Veterans Impairment Services Team (VIST) Coordinator and blinded Veteran **Tom Hicks** will be accepting the Blinded Veterans of America’s Major General Melvin J. Maas award in August. The award is presented annually to the service-connected blinded Veteran who demonstrates outstanding efforts in their field of employment, in community service and in the adjustment to daily living. The late Baynard H. Kendrick, the mystery writer and author of Lights Out, initiated the award named for Marine General Maas who was an early president of the Blinded Veterans Association and at the time of his death was the Chairman of the President’s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. From the beginning, the presentation of this award has contributed to the enhancement of a positive image of blind persons and to the elimination of the concept of helplessness. Hicks leads by example having climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and scaling the Grand Canyon with sighted guides and team members. He will travel to Galveston, Texas August 23 to accept the award at the Blinded Veterans of America national convention.
- **LAB superstars:** Our Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Service led by **Dr. Anna Felty-Duckworth** was ranked #1 out of 18 other VA labs in second quarter’s Laboratory Management Index Program report. LMIP is

a national program offered through the College of American Pathologists and is a structured, comprehensive assessment of operating performance (efficiency), labor productivity and test utilization. All VA labs are required to report their data for analysis each quarter. Each lab is compared to a similar grouping of labs for their overall efficiency and productivity. Phoenix is in the 1-Core grouping because of the amount of reference testing they do.

- **Johnny Stewart**, Commander of the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Arizona, sent his sincere thanks to Medical Center Director **Sharon Helman**, who recently addressed the Disabled American Veterans at their State Convention. Stewart said, “It was a great pleasure to meet you and the information you provided was very helpful.”

- **Phoenix VA Health Care System earns Most Overall Registrations in the Hospital Donor Registry Challenge!** During April, National Donate

Life Month, 54 hospitals and health care facilities competed against each other in the second annual Hospital Donor Registry Challenge. In all, we registered 3,729 people as organ and tissue donors earning us recognition with Olympic-style awards of gold, silver and bronze in theme with this summer’s games.



Tim Brown, DNA’s CEO; Sharon Helman, facility director; Tania Kemp, DNA’s donor program coordinator; Allen Estep, clinical informatics coordinator and Lindsey Baker, DNA’s donor program coordinator.

More than 114,000 people are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant in the U.S., with more than 2,300 people waiting in Arizona.

To register as an organ and tissue donor in Arizona, people can sign up online at DonateLifeAZ.org, call 1-800-94-DONOR or check the box on their drivers license or ID application at the Motor Vehicle Division.

■ After completing her Management of Clinical Information Technology degree in May 2012, **Chris Stang**, Clinical Applications Coordinator, successfully passed the Certification Exam in June 2012. Stang is now a Nationally-Certified Health Information Technology Professional.



Chris Stang (with cap and gown)

■ Our **Homeless Veterans Program** deserves kudos says **Martin Mendoza**. This department services our 5000 homeless veterans in the state of Arizona. Our six homeless outreach social workers provide shelter service, lunches, and clothing locker for our homeless Veterans. Our six employment social workers provides employment services through our compensated work therapy program or our transitional work experience program. We also have approx. Twenty social workers assisting our homeless Veterans in getting Housing and Urban Development-VA Supported Housing, which is Section 8 housing. They are all great people helping our Homeless Veteran's get back on their feet. Their main contact person is Michael Leon, (health care for homeless veterans coordinator) extension 7656.

■ The celebration of Hawaiian Day kicked off in the **Community Living Center** June 12. All staff and resident Veterans were encouraged to wear Hawaiian or beachwear for the party in the afternoon. Resident Barry Becker went all out with his Hawaiian skirt, straw hat and leis. Even Tana, Becker's greyhound, got into the act wearing a Hawaiian skirt, leis and a pretty flower by her ear. A photograph of Becker and Tana helped to create his campaign poster for Resident of the Year. Next, Becker will be the Grand Marshal in the Olympic Parade through the facility July 26 as resident Veterans pass the torch through the hallways.



Barry Becker in Hawaiian attire

■ Lung Cancer Alliance (LCA) proudly announced the expansion of its Medical and Professional Advisory Board, a highly respected multi-disciplinary group of medical and professional leaders whose area of expertise involves lung cancer.

Laurie Fenton Ambrose, LCA President & CEO praised the

members of the Advisory Board for their steadfast dedication to the lung cancer community and for their commitment to help advance the work of Lung Cancer Alliance.

Samuel M. Aguayo, MD, Associate Chief of Staff for Research is now on the board. "Individually and collectively," said Fenton Ambrose, "they are an extraordinary group of caring leaders of great stature in the broad range of fields that are needed to address lung cancer." She continued, "We are grateful for their willingness to join together on this board and to help us increase lung cancer research, improve patient care, change public health policy, and build greater awareness."

■ **Fabian Santos** earned top honors as Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) Chief from his former duty station at Jackson, MS. Congratulations Santos and we're looking forward to your award winning expertise taking hold at our VA!



Fabian Santos

■ Welcome to **Janene Anderson** who is in a new position at our VA as a Program Specialist, Contract Liaison. Anderson is an Army Veteran who comes to us from Warner Robins Air Force Base in Georgia where she worked as a contract specialist. She started her contracting career with Raytheon Missile Systems as a Stinger Missile Program Management Liaison assisting with Foreign Military Sales programs. She later joined the federal workforce as a contract specialist working for the Army Contracting Command C2ISR southwest division at Fort Huachuca. In her new position, Anderson will serve as the Phoenix facility point of contact for all contracting actions reporting directly to the Associate Director, Lance E. Robinson. Acting as the Contracting Coordinator, her new position will include the following:



Janene Anderson

- Chair the contracting oversight team.
- Provide oversight on all contracting processes.
- Establish and facilitate communication between . the Phoenix facility and contracting.
- Serve as the Phoenix facility Contracting Officer . Representative Point of Contact to include COR training, certification and file audits.
- Assist the service chiefs, administrative officers and contracting officer representatives with procurement.

Make Skin Protection Part of Your Everyday Routine

By Public Affairs Staff

A few simple steps each day can help you avoid skin cancer. “Always wear a broad spectrum sunscreen, even though it’s hot be sure to cover your body with proper clothing including long sleeves and stay indoors between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.,” says Dermatology Physician Assistant Catherine Yanni at the Phoenix VA Health Care System.

“A good rule of thumb for gauging to see if UV rays are their strongest is checking to see if your shadow is shorter than you are. Also, although long sleeves might appear to be hotter than a tank top, the opposite is actually true,” she said.

The reason, PA Yanni says, you’re hotter in a tank top because your skin is getting burned. Here’s another good pointer.

“It’s important to protect your skin even while driving as car windows offer little protection from UV rays,” she said, noting that she wears a sleeve on her arm and gloves on her hands while driving to and from work to protect her skin.

“The more sunburns you have during your lifetime it increases the risk you have of getting skin cancer,” she said.

Dermatologists know that the skin is a sensitive organ. Sun exposure has a cumulative effect on the skin. Thus, it’s important to use a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher at least 15 minutes before heading outside. Typically, you should use one ounce or the equivalent of a shot glass to cover your arms and legs. Then as a general rule of thumb it’s important to reapply it every two hours to continue the protection. Additionally, sunscreen and a lip balm with an SPF of 30 or higher should be used on your face and lips as both are constantly exposed to the sun, she added.

Other great skin protectors include:

- Sun glasses and wide-brimmed hats that cover not just a person’s face but their ears and the back of their neck.
- Wear sunscreen even when the sun isn’t out. On a cloudy day, up to 80 percent of the sun’s UV rays can pass through the clouds.
- Creams are best for dry skin and the face.
- Gels are good for hairy areas, such as the scalp or male chest.
- Sticks are good to use around the eyes.
- Sprays are sometimes preferred by parents since they are easy to apply to children. Make sure to use enough of these products to cover the entire surface area thoroughly, and do not inhale these products.

Even if you’ve made every effort to protect your skin, skin cancer can still occur, which is why it’s important to be aware of changes in your skin, she said.



“The American Academy of Dermatology has the saying, ‘Check your birthday suit on your birthday,’” says Yanni.

Having a professional check your skin each year is an important step. Early detection of the two most common forms of skin cancer such as basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma are often easily treated if caught early.

“Even the worst of skin cancers, melanoma, when treated before it reaches the lymph nodes, has an almost 100 percent survival rate,” she said.

For more information about protecting your skin and preventing skin cancer, Yanni recommends the American Academy of Dermatology’s Website, www.aad.org. ■

Organization Update - Suicide Prevention

What do you do if you get a call about a Veteran who is threatening to take their life? Or what do you do if you hear of a Veteran who is telling his friends and family it isn’t worth living anymore? These are serious suicidal warning signs and all of us need to immediately report any suicidal ideation, attempts and/or actual suicides from our Veterans and/or staff members to the Phoenix Health Care System Suicide Prevention Team.

Our amazing team consists of three licensed social work practitioners, who

work in collaboration with all of our professional mental health staff.

- Mr. David Klein, LCSW, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, ext. 6731
- Mr. Rafal Wojcik, LCSW, Suicide Case Manager, ext. 5582
- Ms. Michell Hovis, MSW, Suicide Case Manager, ext. 7478

In addition, there is always a suicide case manager who is on-call for Veterans who have been flagged and are being followed by the Suicide Prevention Team.

The number to call for suicidal

Veterans is at the Crisis Line, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), Press “1” for Veterans.

Professionals are immediately available at this number 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Veteran’s in crisis need to be a “Warm Transfer,” to the Crisis Line. This means you must remain on the phone during the transfer to give any information to the operator. This includes the Veterans name, phone number and last four of his or her SSN if available.

You can also text support assistance to 838255. ■

VA Provides Help to Homeless Veterans



by Phillip Guerrero

Complexities abound for homeless Veterans. Many of them have issues with substance abuse, lack of support and coordination, which leads them to a life on the streets. Weaving an easy path back to a better home is the goal of the Phoenix VA Health Care System, and it ties into Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki's initiative to end homelessness amongst Veterans within the next five years.

"There was a female Veteran in her mid-40s, and she had few or no teeth when I assessed her," said Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program Manager Michael Leon LCSW. "She wanted to go back East but she wanted to get clean and sober first."

The Veteran was referred to the Substance Abuse Clinic and to the Housing Urban Development- VA Supportive Housing program for help with her substance abuse problems and to find housing. She was eligible for VA health care and, thanks to a partnership with the Central Arizona Shelter Services dental program, was able to get her teeth fixed.

"Every time I see her smile, I think, 'That's success,'" he said.

When it comes to providing services to homeless Veterans, Leon said the HCHV's priority is to provide health care while at the same time working with community partners to find

housing options for our Veterans in need.

"When they come in, they get a mental health screening and a physical exam to determine their health care needs. Along with that comes the screening to see which transitional homeless programs they may be eligible for including HUD-VASH, which can take up to 90 days before an opening is available," he said.

"We see a lot of homeless Veterans at our VA but they don't seek medical care because their priority is housing and employment," he said.

While the medical center does not provide housing, it does have community outreach programs with several community partners to help meet that need, he explained.

During the past five years, our VA has averaged 50 percent or more of the total HCHV Veterans seeking care within our region," he said. That number equates to about 1,300 Veterans per year.

"I couldn't do it without my staff," he said. "They are a blessing."

PVAHCS is one of 27 VAs connected to the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, also known as Operation Home Front, Leon said, adding that the telephone number for the program is 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838). ■

Valuable VAEA Memberships Now Available

By Michelle Roberts

Membership in the VA Employees' Association is open to all VA employees of this facility, Veterans, Canteen Service employees, volunteers, and other associates. Our aim is to cultivate friendly relationships among, and promote the welfare of, our members by aiding and encouraging general participation in social and related activities and group economic opportunities.

Cost of VAEA membership is only \$5 per calendar year, and once you join you will be given a mini-packet of discount opportunities and events. Many discounts and special offers are available to the VAEA through its membership in ESM, Employee Network and the Perks Card. You will also be added to an Outlook e-mail group that will notify you of any new discounts. Call (602) 222-6442 with questions. ■



Hayden Town Hall Update

Couldn't make it to the Hayden Town Halls June 7? We're sorry to have missed you. But to keep you in the loop here are the highlights:

- Associate Director Lance Robinson read a complimentary letter from Mrs. Bowers to our staff.
- **Medical:** Dr Darren Deering helped us to understand the concerns about medical marijuana from the perspective. Since we live in a state where medical marijuana is sanctioned, we will have patients coming to us who are using this as part of their health care plan. It is important to note that we can't prescribe it; patients have to obtain medical marijuana from an outside provider; they can't bring it on the property; it is a federal offense; we still provide patients their regular health treatment and providers can alter health treatments accordingly. It is important to remember that no patient can be refused care because they opt to use medical marijuana.
- **Fee Basis** changes: Have you heard that the claim processing for patients is moving away from our to VISN 19? This is a "behind the scenes" effort to streamline the process and ensure our patients are provided for through a centralized effort.
- **Patient Aligned Care Teams or PACT:** Carol Dunaway NP, has been selected as the new PACT coordinator, some quick PACT Stats:
 - All of our patients receive their appointments on the dates requested.
 - Our numbers of secure messaging request and phone appointments is on the rise; including telehealth and the use of the MOVI camera.
 - We make follow up calls two days after discharge.
 - Our new Southeast Health Care

Clinic will be a SUPER Clinic and PACT will help the patients there align services better.

- **MyHealthVet** Coordinator Victoria Reyes just had a registration drive and was able to enroll 250 new MHV patients! The most attractive part of this program is secure messaging where patients can email their providers directly.
- **Construction** is always on the agenda as of late. We talked about our several projects including:
 - OEF/OIF/OND and Women's Clinic is now open for business. Ribbon cutting will be scheduled soon.
 - New Southeast Health Care Clinic is in the design process.
 - Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation building has placed the last beam of steel and is working on enclosing the building.
 - Mental Health Building excavation and foundation work continues.
 - Dental Building in design concept.
 - Emergency Department Expansion in design concepts.
 - Parking Garage in design concept.
- We talked **CRISP** – Continuous, Readiness in Information Security Program.
- **HPDP:** This stands for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. Our VA is incorporating nine healthy living messages in all we do for our Veterans
 - 1) Get recommended screening tests and immunizations.
 - 2) Be involved in your health care.
 - 3) Be safe.
 - 4) Strive for a healthy weight.
 - 5) Be tobacco free.
 - 6) Manage stress.
 - 7) Eat wisely.
 - 8) Be physically active.

9) Limit alcohol.

Want to learn more about HPDP? Contact Karen White at Karen.white4@va.gov and Abby Harris at abby.harris@va.gov.

- **Moves** – Did you know the PIV card group has moved into the hospital? They are across from the vending room in between the cafeteria and retail store. No more walking across the street for your badges!
- Have you heard of **FISH**? Not the ones you eat but the ones that make you think! It stands for Fresh Ideas Start Here and we're setting up the boxes near the elevators and online email at vhaphoemployerofchoice@va.gov. Both staff and patients are welcome to share their thoughts on how to improve our working environment. You'll need to think of the improvement from start to stop, so if you think we should have a flower vending machine in the Gallery, we need to know who will stock it, how will we get the water and electricity to the flowers (plumber and electric shop queries); promotion to patients, etc. We're looking forward to your ideas!
- **Employee Engagement Committee:** Want to help us build morale? Maybe we have a softball team, maybe we have a walking club, we're looking for your feedback. Contact Andra Batie at andra.batie@va.gov or Jennifer Russoniello at [Jennifer.Russoniello@va.gov](mailto:jennifer.russoniello@va.gov).
That's it for this quarter's wrap up! We hope you'll join us for the next one on **Sept. 12 at 7 a.m.; 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.** We hope to see you there! ■

Medical Center Earns Award for Green Energy

By Phillip Guerrero

Our energy conservation efforts are paying off, not only in savings but recognition too. Recently, the Carl T. Hayden Veterans Affairs Medical Center earned the award of Solar Champion from the City of Phoenix for our use of solar energy. In honor of International Solar Day, Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton recognized CTHVAMC for our commitment to sustainability.

Currently the medical center has installed carport solar panels on 1600 parking spaces throughout the facility. The solar panels save the taxpayers about \$300,000 in energy costs annually. The money can then be used toward patient care at the Veteran's hospital.

James Larsen, VA medical center energy manager, and Director Sharon Helman, accepted the award on behalf of the VA. The medical center currently has 18,000 solar panels spread across 36 acres of parking lots surrounding the facility. The solar panel project began in 2009 and is ongoing.

"This is just one of the energy projects we are working on here at the VA," Larson explained.

Currently air conditioning at the hospital uses a 1.5 million-gallon chilled water storage system. The system chills water to 55 degrees then the water is piped into the facility to provide cooling. Now the hospital is running the chilled water system at night to use less electrical energy. Since air conditioning use accounts for nearly 33 percent of the total electrical use at the VA facility, the overall savings can be substantial.

The federal government has mandated the reduction of overall energy consumption by 30 percent by the year 2015. The VA campus has reduced energy use by about 12 percent



Mayor Greg Stanton, Medical Center Director Sharon Helman, Energy Manager Jim Larson, Councilman Bill Gates and back row Councilman Jim Waring.

since 2003 and is well on its way to meeting the federal mandate, Larson explained.

VA engineers are also replacing air handling units with new duct work to reduce energy consumption at the hospital. Currently air for the building comes from the outside and then must be cooled to 55 degrees. Once all 40 air handling units are replaced, nearly 90 percent of the air in the facility will be recycled for reuse like the average home.

The VA medical center spends about \$2 million annually for electricity. Energy savings alone from solar power equal a 15 percent reduction in that power bill. "Even though the average temperature in Phoenix keeps going up over time, we are actually using less energy," Larson explained. "Plus these solar panels give covered shaded parking for our Veterans and our employees. That reduced temperature is a relief in these hot summer months in Phoenix."

Larson advises all energy consumers to save electricity use at home by switching to energy-reducing light

bulbs, turning off electrical equipment not in use, and going to the gym or shopping after work. "Learn to use someone else's air conditioning in the hottest part of the day," he said. "Wait and save your energy for later at night when peak energy rates go down. This will save you money and wear and tear on your home air conditioning unit."

Other energy saving tips include having more attic insulation blown-in, install energy efficient dual-paned windows and sliding doors, use a programmable air conditioning thermostat, install an evaporative cooler or ENERGY STAR rated appliances, and install a new high efficiency air conditioning unit. To reduce overall energy use, join a carpool or use mass transit, turn household thermostats up in the summer and down in the winter.

These energy saving tips will not only save money, but also reduce the need for costly new power plants, increase American energy reliability, cut overall pollution, and lower dependence on foreign energy. ■

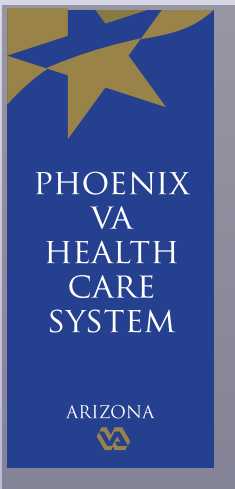
Research Study

Veterans who smoke, are age 50 and older, and who may want to quit can now enroll in the Phoenix VA Early Lung Cancer Action Program Legacy study. Veterans will be encouraged to stop smoking with support from Dr. Aguayo and members of the Legacy study team. The study involves three study visits and includes a Cat Scan of the chest. All study visits and procedures are of no cost to the participants. If you would like to learn more about this study, call Christopher Kuramoto, at 602-277-5551 X1-3295. ■

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

By Victor L. Nickson, PSA Turquoise Clinic

June



Micki Martin, PharmD, a 20-year VA employee, currently in the Community Living Center clinical pharmacy team, is congratulated on being selected as the June 2012 Employee of the Month.

She has been described committed, compassionate, caring, and an amazing pharmacist.

These descriptions pale in comparison to her humanness, her humaneness. The following story is what we should all aspire to be, the stuff of heroes, a legend born.

Martin went way beyond the call of

duty in befriending a homeless Veteran who was under a freeway underpass. His health was in serious decline and she helped him be admitted here to at the VA Hospital for much-needed health services.

That is not all. His VA pension had been discontinued because of some miscommunications, and, as expected, Martin is not resting on her laurels. She is heroically assisting him in getting this straightened out.

All cheers to Micki Martin, the living embodiment of all that is good about the VA. ■

July



Roberta Mcaffé

Roberta Mcaffé, from Ward 4C, is congratulated on being selected July 2012 Employee of the Month.

Mcaffé has been described as a hard worker with great ethics; as having a luminous smile, which brightens the day; as exhibiting never-ending kindness towards our Veterans, who very much appreciate that kindness; and as presenting a clean, safe room environment for patients and staff.

Her dedication is without peer. Mcaffé will not leave her station until all of her work is done, and even when at lunch or during staffing crunch times, she has never failed to respond to emergency calls or to return to her

station if needed.

The staff, through historical perspective with respect to her job preparedness, has every faith, trust and confidence that Mcaffé will be there when they need assistance; her patients know that too. They greatly respect her excellence of performance.

Her vitals are always completed; she bathes and shaves her patients as needed, and can be counted on to extend a helping hand lifting Veterans out of bed.

Mcaffé is committed to ensuring that Ward 4C continues to be a top quality unit for Veterans. ■