

# VOICES OF VISN 6

— Excellent Care – Earned by Veterans – Delivered Here —

## *VISN 6 Director Attends Durham Memorial Day Event*



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By Steve Wilkins | VISN 6 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Durham, N.C. - VISN 6 Director Paul Crews participated in a solemn morning Memorial Day ceremony May 30, held by the Durham County Department of Veterans Services at the Durham County War Memorial. According to organizers, roughly 75 people attended the ceremony, which is the the first live ceremony in two years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ceremony honored the sacrifices of our fallen warriors and individually named the 375 soldiers from the county who had lost their lives for our country since the formation of Durham County in 1881.

**LEFT PHOTO:** VISN 6 Director Paul Crews speaks to the Durham County Memorial Day ceremony audience, May 30.

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## MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Moving into summer this June, let's reflect on the concept of civility.

This month we observe occasions intended to raise our consciousness in caring for one another. Civility, as courteous or civilized conduct, can help people feel safe. It can calm tension during difficult conversations and enable us to overcome challenging times.

This month is Pride Month. VA recognizes Pride Month 2022 and promotes the general wellbeing and overall health of our LGBTQ+ Veteran community and employees. Civility dictates that even if we don't agree with a way of life, we don't get in the way. VA recognizes everyone's right to flourish and live their best lives.

"Pride Counts" at VA is meant to inspire, educate, and inform Veterans that VA provides a sensitive, respectful environment where they can feel comfortable talking openly with their VA providers. We want all our Veterans to know that we provide comprehensive care that includes LGBTQ+ Veterans.

When a person feels threatened, their mental, emotional, and intellectual wellbeing is compromised. That can affect their health and longevity. When we harass or cajole, belittle or insult people, we are causing harm that not only threatens, but impacts a person's ability to thrive. We must be intentional from moment to moment that we are not causing anyone harm. That sort of harm is avoidable

and comes from a conscious decision. For our Veterans' safety, we can't allow ourselves to make those decisions.

Juneteenth is June 19 this year, after being ratified a federal holiday by the Senate last year. In the wake of racially motivated violence and the gaslighting that continues to undermine progress toward racial harmony and equality, more than ever it is critical to mark this occasion. President Biden said, "All Americans can feel the power of this day and learn from our history." I agree. Each of us can listen to one another's story a bit more closely to help understand our common plight, and thereby live more harmoniously. Civility calls us to pause before responding to something we see or hear, and think compassionately about the origins and the consequences of negatively engaging other human beings.

Join me in promoting civility whenever we deal with difficult situations. Without it, we may cause trauma, having an effect not unlike some of the other traumas Veterans and other people may experience. Believe me, I am not suggesting that calling someone a name or not using the right pronoun is anything like a combat experience. I am suggesting that when we have the choice, be kind.

June is also Mental Health and PTSD Awareness Month. The Veterans Know campaign features Veterans of various backgrounds and identities who deliver the hopeful message that a healthier life is possible. The campaign uses shared military

experiences to help overcome the stigma some Veterans associate with common mental health challenges. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health problem. PTSD can only develop after you go through or see a life-threatening event.

It's normal to have upsetting memories, feel on edge, or have trouble sleeping after a traumatic event (also called "trauma"). As I mentioned earlier, the causes vary widely and could be combat-related or domestic, and as seemingly benign as harassment.

We can help by making the pledge to [raise PTSD awareness](#). Or, join us for the second annual [Step Up for PTSD Awareness Virtual Walk](#) by completing 30 minutes of exercise any time during the month of June. Take a photo or video and post it online, explaining why you're doing it, and tag the National Center for PTSD. For the first time this year, June 27 is designated as national [PTSD Screening Day](#). It's a day we mark to spread the word about self-screening.

Wishing you the best through the summer months, I will also caution you to continue washing, waiting and wearing as COVID is still with us, hydrate and cover to guard against sunlight and heat, and stay abreast of weather reports during what has been predicted to be a busy hurricane season. I look forward to seeing you out and about.

**PAUL S. CREWS**

*MPH, FACHE, VISA 6 Network Director*

## Room to Grow: New Morehead City CBOC Officially Opens

By Joshua Edson

DURHAM VAHCS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Community leaders, Veterans, and local political representatives joined Executive Leaders from the Durham VA Healthcare System (DVAHCS) and the VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network Tuesday, May 17, to celebrate the official opening of the new VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Morehead City, N.C. After a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony, attendees were treated to a guided tour of the new facility.

"This new space shows how far we've come," Marion Cumbo, Nurse Manager of the Morehead City CBOC, said. "We were a bit limited in what services we could offer Veterans at our old location. Now, we can offer our patients so much more."

Open to Veterans since late February, the ribbon cutting was a culmination of at least three years of effort to expand the Morehead City CBOC, which currently serves about 5,000 Veterans across Carteret County and the surrounding area. Morehead City lies only a few miles from Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. The area became a popular location for Veterans to settle after their service.

"We have so many Veterans entering the VA Healthcare System," says Sarah Fredrickson, Interim Assistant Director of the Greenville VA Healthcare Clinic. "Especially here in Carteret County. We needed a location that could give us the space to accommodate the surging Veteran population and their unique health care needs."

Some of the health care options



Veterans and local community leaders, along with DVAHCS and VISA-6 Executive Leadership, cut the ribbon at the official grand opening of the new Morehead City CBOC. With more room to grow, the new CBOC location offers expanded health care options to Carteret County's growing Veteran population.

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# Salisbury VA Health Care System Doctor Takes Prestigious Honor

By Todd Godman | SALISBURY VA MEDICAL CENTER, PAO

SALISBURY, N.C. — Dr. Charles de Comarmond, Salisbury VA Health Care System Chief of Medicine and lead consultant for infectious diseases and infection prevention, recently was selected as the 2021 Mark Wolcott Awardee for Excellence in Clinical Care Leadership. Established in 1996, this award recognizes outstanding Veterans Health Administration practitioners who deserve special acknowledgment for their contributions in enhancing clinical care.

This award is given once per year to the top clinician and top leader in clinical care for the entire VA and recognizes a lifetime of service, not just one year. After being selected, de Comarmond felt humbled.

“My first reaction was disbelief, given that this is one of the VHA’s most prestigious clinical awards,” he said. “As a physician, every day is a lesson in humility — especially when you think of how much our Veterans have sacrificed.”

According to de Comarmond, this award reflects Salisbury VA HCS’s journey.

“Salisbury has attracted a talented workforce where one is surrounded by highly skilled colleagues who make award-worthy changes happen,” said de Comarmond. “I am grateful that Salisbury VA leadership shared what we have done over the past 15 years, and I thank the Wolcott Award review committee for recognizing and believing in the hard work and dedication of our team.”

Some of the highlights of de Comarmond’s time with Salisbury VA include creating a hematology/oncology service from the ground up; expanding Gastroenterology and Endoscopy; starting a chronic dialysis program; developing the only freestanding cardiac catheterization program in VHA; and significantly improving the Infectious Disease service and network-wide Infection Control Program. Under his leadership,



Dr. Charles de Comarmond, Salisbury VA Health Care System Chief of Medicine and lead consultant for infectious diseases and infection prevention, has been honored with the 2021 Mark Wolcott Award for Excellence in Clinical Care Leadership.

Salisbury VA’s cancer care program became the first in VHA to be certified by the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

“The list of Dr. de Comarmond’s accomplishments and contributions to this health care system cannot be overstated,” said Interim Salisbury VA Executive Director Ronald Johnson. “Going above and beyond the scope of his duties ... that’s just what he does. It’s who he is.”

His work is done with a certain sense of joy. He approaches each day with the goal of improving the lives of Veterans. Any recognition he receives is a bonus.

“Since my arrival here, patient care has been my number priority,” said de Comarmond. “Improving Veteran lives is always in my thoughts. They have given us so much.”

For more information, please contact Salisbury VA Public Affairs Officer Todd Goodman at [Christopher.goodman2@va.gov](mailto:Christopher.goodman2@va.gov) or (704) 775-1109.

# Salem RN Receives VISN 6 Award for Excellence in Nursing

By Rosaire Bushey

SALEM VAMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Several nurses of the Salem VA Health Care System were recognized in May as annual award winners during Nurses Week celebrations, including one nurse who will proceed to a national competition.

On May 9, the 2022 Nursing Excellence Awards were presented to:

- Ray Weir, Nursing Assistant
- Sarah Bryant, LPN
- Sharon Stanley, RN
- Mike Raczynski, RN in an Expanded Role.

After the awards were presented, Lisa Shear, Chief Nursing Officer for VISN-6 Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network, called Nurse Raczynski back to the stage and presented him with the Secretary’s Award for Excellence in Nursing as an RN in an Expand-



Lisa Shear, Chief Nursing Officer, VISN-6, Sharon Stanley, RN, Sarah Bryant, LPN, Mike Raczynski, RN, Pamela McAnally, Associate Director of Patient/Nursing Service, and Rebecca Stackhouse, Executive Director, Salem VA HCS. (Not pictured: Ray Weir, Nursing Assistant.)

ed Role for the entirety of VISN-6. Raczynski will now compete with other VISN recipients for VA-wide honors.

“I was definitely surprised by the awards,” Raczynski said. “I’m happy to receive the award on behalf of all the staff, providers, and volunteers at Salem HCS. Infection Prevention

really is a team effort that involves everyone, and everyone has a role to play in protecting our Veterans. I have been blessed to have many experienced staff at Salem, the VISN, and at VACO that work together every day to provide care and promote evidence-based practices. As a Veteran, I speak first-hand to the amazing care I have received at Salem. This award is really a recognition of all they do every day to care for our Veterans. I am proud to work with such a great team.”

Raczynski served as a member of the U.S. Army from 1987-1992, and has been an RN for 26 years, working in specialties including med-surg, ICU, ED, Nursing Supervisor and manager. He has served on a number of VISN and national boards, committees and workgroups, and is the Chair of the VHA National Infection Preventionists, and Vice-Chair of the VHA National Infectious Disease Service Infection Prevention and Control Field Advisory Board.

## Room to Grow: New Morehead City CBOC Officially Opens

that have benefitted from the additional space are physical therapy, laboratory services, women’s health, and mental health. Additionally, a brand-new kitchen at the location allows nutrition staff a chance to teach Veterans and their caregivers how to prepare healthier meals. Telehealth services have also expanded, a critical component in a state where many Veterans live in rural locations with limited health care options.

“Now, our Veterans have a greater option of choice,” said Cumbo. “They don’t just have care in the community. They can stay local, without having to travel hours to get their care in Greenville or Durham.”

With more breathing room, Morehead City CBOC plans to hire more staff. Expanding services often bring additional people on board, something difficult to do when a facility is hamstrung by space. More mental health and physical therapy provider positions are being created, strengthening the DVAHCS’ ability to offer cutting edge care to a population of rural Veterans that have been traditionally underserved when it comes to health care.

“I was one of the first patients at the Morehead VA when it opened back in 2003,” says Vietnam Veteran and retired Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Norman Kidd, who was also an honored guest at the ribbon-cutting event. “This is the first time I’ve seen the new place up close. I’m really impressed. This is a great day for Carteret County Veterans, and I encourage them to come in and enroll. This place has so much to offer.”

Qualified Veterans in Carteret County and the surrounding area are encouraged to visit the new Morehead City CBOC. Please visit <https://www.va.gov/durham-health-care/locations/morehead-city-va-clinic> for hours and location.



Veterans and local community leaders with DVAHCS and VISN-6 Executive Leadership listen to Dr. Kathryn Masincupp, a Clinical Pharmacist at the Morehead City CBOC, as she explains the expanded pharmacy services offered at the new CBOC location. The Morehead City CBOC recently moved to a larger location to offer greater health care options to meet the needs of Carteret County’s growing Veteran population.



Staff from Salisbury VA take a break from setting up for the Cheerwine Festival in downtown Salisbury. Employees were on hand to answer questions from the thousands of people who visited the festival.

## Hefner VA Staff Participates in Cheerwine Festival

STORY AND PHOTO BY TODD GOODMAN

Thousands of people flocked to downtown Salisbury for the annual Cheerwine Festival on Saturday, May 21. The all-day event was full of food trucks, live music, and Salisbury VA staff.

“It was a blast to be a part of the event,” said Human Resources Specialist James Grimm, a retired Navy Veteran of 25 years. “The festival began officially at 12:00pm, but we were helping people at our booth at least an hour prior to that.”

HR staff were there to recruit potential employees and to help folks navigate the federal hiring process.

“One of the misconceptions when applying to a government job over a private sector job is the resume,” said Grimm. “Government resumes must be very detailed about each of the positions you have held, while private sector resumes are briefer, with fewer details. In many cases, Veterans leave out important information about their military service.”

Other programs showcased at the festival included Eligibility, Suicide Prevention, Whole Health, Caregiver Support and M2VA.

Whole Health Director Dr. Christina Vair spent two hours in the heat and humidity touting the benefits of a holistic approach to care, which includes acupuncture, clinical hypnosis, tai chi, yoga, and more.

“It was a great experience and offered an opportunity to connect with members of our community, including Veterans who access VA care as well as those who don’t,” said Vair. “Being out there allowed us to encourage Veterans to consider applying for VA care and gave us the opportunity to answer questions and dispel misinformation as well.”

Outreach events like this are a great way to remind the public that VA is here and ready to serve, not just with patient care, but job opportunities as well.

“Large events such as these provide an opportunity to share the benefits, contributions, and successes of our health care system,” said Interim Salisbury Executive Director Ron Johnson. “It’s important to do this, whether it’s with a small Veteran gathering or with thousands like we had at the festival. Outreach is an important tool to ensure we are reaching as many Veterans and family members as possible. If we can positively change the course of one life, then all of our efforts are worth it.”



Dr. Parr and Dr. Valerie Harvey with the EVMS students, Dr. Tamika Champagne and RN Gloria Essandoh. (Photo by Dr. Robert Hersh)

# Hampton VAMC Holds Skin Cancer Awareness Event

With more than 5 million cases diagnosed in the United States each year, skin cancer is the most common cancer in America. Fortunately, it is also one of the most preventable cancers. To observe Skin Cancer Awareness Month, Hampton VAMC Cutaneous Oncology Center staff held an awareness event on Friday, May 13, to educate our community about the signs of skin cancer and the dangers of unprotected sun exposure. Staff also presented highlights of a unique skin cancer management program in our facility, combining the expertise of dermatology with the technical capabilities of plastic and Mohs micrographic surgery. There are very few programs like ours in the

United States, with the Cleveland Clinic boasting a similar model. After the encouragement we received from former VA Secretary Robert Wilke during his visit, the Cutaneous Oncology Center has expanded to hire another board-certified dermatologist, Dr. Emily Osier, who is also Hampton's new Teledermatology Program Director. Teledermatology has improved our access to care and our timely diagnosis of skin cancer, and had a great reception among patients and referring providers. We look forward to expanding our services to all the community-based outpatient clinics, and to serving even more Veterans. Hampton VA staff partnered with Dr. Valerie Harvey, Director of the Hampton

University Skin of Color Research Institute, and EVMS medical students from the Dermatology Interest Group for the event. With their help and insight, they educated the community on different presentations of skin cancer in patients with skin of color, and the importance of sun protection and routine skin exams. Department leadership said they are grateful to all who made this event possible.

Dr. Karina Parr, Director of the Cutaneous Oncology Center, addresses the audience assembled at the opening of the Skin Cancer Awareness Forum. (Photo by Dr. Robert Hersh)



The forum was attended by the Assistant Chief of Surgery, Dr. Sridevi Maddineni. (Dr. Robert Hersh)



Dr. Robert Hersh, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and Co-Director of the Cutaneous Oncology Center, Dr. Tamika Champagne and Caroline Miller, Lead Health Technician, Telehealth Hampton VAMC. (Dr. Robert Hersh)

# A Donation, Military Service, Kindness in Health Care

A group of neighborhood girls organized a rummage sale to gather funds for the local VA hospital totalling \$221 in 1945. The Central Virginia VA Health Care System operates a main hospital in Richmond and five community clinics in Fredericksburg, Charlottesville, Emporia and Henrico.

By Megan Kon  
CENTRAL VIRGINIA VAHCS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Annie Thomas reached into a photo album and produced an old, yellowed news article to show her daughter. The bold headline read, "Small Girls with Big Ideas Plan Sale to Aid Soldiers." The Richmond News Leader published the story in 1944 about Thomas and her friends doing a good deed for Veterans.

Thomas, whose maiden name is Hardiman, was just 11 years old when she volunteered with a group of children from the Barton Heights neighborhood. They called themselves the Junior War Workers, following a popular sentiment to support the U.S. war effort. At a school assembly, the Red Cross inspired the group to take action and help the local VA hospital that was soon to open.

The Junior War Workers got organized. They planned a rummage sale to help raise funds for Veterans returning from war in Europe. The group raised and donated \$221 to go toward personal items for Veterans receiving medical care.

Sharon Thomas O'Donnell, Thomas's daughter, remembered the old newspaper clipping and how her mother was the treasurer of the group, while neighbor Audrey Bertram was president. Her mother, now 88 years old, is still friends with Bertram today.

A few years after the war, Thomas married the love of her life on Valentine's Day in 1952.

In 1954, that man, James Earle Thomas, was drafted to serve in the Korean War.

"Dad retired as a lieutenant colonel in the Army and would visit the VA hospital for his health care needs," O'Donnell said. "He was always treated with great dignity and kindness."

Today, the Central Virginia VA Health Care System treats more than 70,000 Veterans from 52 counties and cities in the central part of the state.

"She dedicated her life to supporting us," O'Donnell said. "It's wonderful knowing the VA hospital that she donated to in 1945, would one day give back and care for the needs of her soldier."



## Small Girls With Big Ideas Plan Sale to Aid Soldiers

The rummage sale scheduled to begin at 8 A. M. Saturday in the storeroom at 2423 East Main St. is sponsored by the Junior War Workers' Club. Proceeds will go for the "little personal things" needed by wounded soldiers at McGuire General Hospital, to be opened June 15.

Members of the club number 10. All are students of the 5-L class at the J. E. B. Stuart School. That is, all but two. They are Martha King, 5, and Sandra Wright, 6-year-old daughter of Mrs. Gordon Wright, and sister of the club's vice-president, Joan Wright.

The club was organized in February and meetings are held around the dining-room table at 2910 Fendall Ave., home of Audrey Bertram, 10, president. Audrey's mother works every day, but her grandmother, Mrs. Grace Higgason, says she always tries to be busy in the kitchen while the little girls are meeting because she enjoys hearing them.

### GIRLS WITH BIG IDEAS

The girls are small in size, but they have big ideas. They expect to take the proceeds from rummage sale and the \$17 now in the possession of Annie Hardiman, their treasurer, and buy tooth paste, razor blades, combs, small games, ash trays and playing cards for the wounded soldiers at McGuire General Hospital.

For the past week the little girls have been rounding up old clothes of every description from homes in their neighborhood, and even spent \$6 at a local cleaning shop. Here they bought three large boxes of unclaimed dresses and suits for the sale.

"Lots of the things are hanging

in our pantry, our bedrooms and in the garage," Mrs. Higgason said yesterday as she proudly told of how the collection of clothes for the sale was increasing.

The idea for the boxes for the wounded soldiers came to the club members in a school assembly back in March. A Red Cross speaker was talking about the opening of the hospital, and asked all the Stuart school pupils to bring in coat hangers and to save pennies so ash trays could be bought for the soldiers.

### TIME AGAIN TO HELP

The Junior War Workers, all Barton Heights neighborhood children, had conducted two paper salvage drives, a tin can salvage campaign and sold carnations for the Virginia chapter of the American War Mothers. And they felt it was again time for them to help on the home front.

The other members of the patriotic group are: Ann Marie Watson, Gloria Andrews, Ann Porter, Joyce Ross, the secretary, and her little sister, "Tookie" Ross. Soon they will have armbands bearing the words "Junior War Worker," made for them by Mrs. Wright.

Only Joan and Audrey will be on hand Saturday to help with the rummage sale, because there "would be too much confusion with all 10 of them," Mrs. Wright said. Sometimes they get a little noisy at their meetings.



Durham County VSO Linzie B. Atkins III holds a photo of PFC Diego Rincon during Director Crews' homage to the fallen soldier.

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## VISN 6 Director Attends Durham Memorial Day Event

Crews addressed several local dignitaries in the audience, including County Manager, Dr. Kimberly Sowell and North Carolina Veteran's Council President Larry Coleman. In his address Crews recounted the sacrifice of Army PFC Diego Rincon, who had plans to take his oath of citizenship with his father upon his return from fighting in Afghanistan, but who instead was killed by a suicide bomber. Crews said he related that story to help us remember that our "Freedom is not free."

While Crews spoke about Private Rincon, Veterans Service Officer Linzie Atkins held up a

photo of him for the audience to see.

Crews went on to discuss the nation's responsibility to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and others who gave their lives so that Americans could thrive. He continued, adding that VA helps to fulfill the nation's commitment to its military and Veterans every day, to ensure they receive the best care, live their best lives, and are honored upon demise. Crews ended his remarks by emphasizing VA's devotion to caring for Veterans no matter what it takes.



PFC Diego Rincon



VISN 6 Director Paul Crews greets Durham County Director of Veterans Services Lois Harvin-Ravin after the Durham Veterans Service Memorial Day ceremony May 30.



VSO Jonathan Crooms guides Col. Larry Coleman (U.S.A., Ret.) to the next name being read of those Durham residents who lost their lives during U.S. Wars.

# VA Implements COVID-19 Health Protection Levels Enhancing Veteran, Visitor and Employee Safety at Medical Facilities

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs Health Administration launched three operational levels called VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Levels to provide a consistent, nationwide approach at its medical centers.

VA applied the three-tier safety protocol standard effective May 23, enhancing safety for Veterans, visitors and employees during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The levels align with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Community Transmission Levels](#) designed for use by health care facilities.

“The VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Levels provide transparent and flexible guidelines for local facilities to help Veterans and staff know what to expect when entering a facility, despite the unpredictability of COVID-19,” said Deputy Under Secretary of Health, performing the delegable duties of the Under Secretary for Health Steven L. Lieberman, M.D. “This allows VHA facili-

ties to provide maximum reliable access to safe, timely and quality care by adjusting safety protocols based on the fluctuation of COVID-19 levels in the community.”

Each VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Level includes guidance on personal protective equipment, screening, testing, visitation, waiting rooms, group care/therapy and staffing.

The levels are on a low, medium to high scale as described below:

- Low (when community transmission level is low): Visitors are welcome, self-screening allowed and physical distancing not required.
- Medium (when community transmission level is medium or substantial): Care partners are welcome, self-screening allowed and physical distancing not required.
- High (when community transmission level is high): Visitors are limited to the discretion of the care team on a case-by-case

basis, facilities may choose to screen at the door and physical distancing required.

Masking and employee screening testing, as applicable, will remain in effect at all VHA medical facilities, regardless of health protection levels and consistent with CDC guidance for health care facilities. The VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Levels do not impact current requirements regarding testing and masking for employees.

Levels will be monitored weekly at each facility and updated to reflect any changes on Mondays. VHA will notify Veterans and staff by displaying signage at all facility entrances, updating levels on their local facility websites and social media. All medical center voice-mails will include VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Levels as well.

Use the [VA medical center locator](#) to find its current level and learn more about [VHA Health Protection Levels](#).

The image features a promotional banner for PTSD Screening Day on June 27. The banner has a dark blue background with the text "PTSD SCREENING DAY" in large white letters and "JUNE 27" in large orange letters below it. In the bottom left corner of the banner is the logo for the National Center for PTSD, which includes the text "National Center for PTSD" and "POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER" around a circular emblem. To the right of the banner is a screenshot of a laptop displaying the VA's PTSD Self-Screen website. The website header includes the VA logo and navigation links. The main content area is titled "PTSD: National Center for PTSD" and features a "PTSD Self-Screen" section with a "START SCREEN" button. A disclaimer states: "This self-screen can help you find out if your feelings and behaviors may be related to PTSD. Only a trained provider can diagnose PTSD. Your responses here are private and secure—they are not collected or shared. You may take a screenshot or print the screen to share with a provider. Do not take the self-screen for someone else. If you are concerned that someone you care about might have PTSD, please share the screen with them instead."

## VA Issues Correction to Notice of Funding Opportunity for Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs issued a correction to [the Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program.

The correction clarifies requirements regarding the provision or coordination of a baseline mental health screening to partici-

pants.

Under section 201 of the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act (Public Law 116-171) and regulations VA published at [38 CFR part 78](#), VA will award grants to eligible entities that apply for such assistance to provide or coordinate suicide prevention services for

Veterans and other eligible individuals at risk of suicide and their families.

The [NOFO](#) provides information about how to apply for financial assistance under the [Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program](#). Applications must be submitted by 11:59pm ET, June 10, 2022.



# VA Publishes Interim Final Rule for Legal Services for Veterans Grant Program

WASHINGTON — As part of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ national homeless prevention efforts, VA published an [Interim Final Rule](#) which allows VA to enhance the provision of legal services for Veterans experiencing or at risk for homelessness.

Under section 4202 of the [Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D., Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020](#), VA will, through the Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness Grant Program, offer up to 75 grants each year to eligible entities, with at least 10% of funding being utilized for women Veterans.


These grants will also satisfy section 5105 of the Act, which requires VA to partner with outside organizations to provide legal services to women Veterans.

“Providing full access to justice and legal services for Veterans takes unified, interagency partnerships, from the federal level down to states, cities and communities at the grassroots-level, where Veterans work and live,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “This first-of-its-kind grant will ensure that legal services are available nationwide to Veterans in need.”

LSV-Homeless builds on existing legal services offered to Veterans through partnerships between VA and [legal service](#) providers in communities across the U.S. Services provided by the new grants will support Veterans’ legal needs related to such housing, family law issues, income support, criminal defense, and requests to upgrade the characterization of a discharge.

A Notice of Funding Opportunity with instructions on how to apply for a grant is expected to be published in September 2022, once the Final Rule for the grant program is complete.

Get information on [LSV-Homeless](#). The [Interim Final Rule for the Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness Grant Program](#).



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<https://nobarriers.tfaforms.net/f/22-Warriors-Application>

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Backcountry Expedition in Pisgah National Forest are our most challenging Warriors offering. These wilderness adventures have changed thousands of lives for the better. Each expedition uses the No Barriers Life Philosophy to craft experiences that challenge Veterans to critically think about where they are in life, where they want to be, and how to get there. 97% of participants would recommend this program to other Veterans.

*This program has enabled me to focus on who I want to be in the future. It has helped me to visualize goals as I move forward. I now have a better sense of who I am and what I am capable of. I now have a more positive outlook on my future self.*

**– WARRIORS PROGRAM ALUMNI**

For more information about how you can apply for an Expedition, contact Major Marlene Champagne, Warriors Tri-State Development Manager, at [marlene@nobarriersusa.org](mailto:marlene@nobarriersusa.org) or 828-782-8322.

No Barriers Warriors | 10 Deep Creek Trail, Arden NC 28704 | 828-782-8322 | [NoBarriersWarriors.org](http://NoBarriersWarriors.org)



**JUNE TEENTH FREEDOM DAY**

JUNE 19

*Celebrate Freedom*

PRODUCED BY THE DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY

# VA Secretary Denis McDonough Statement on PACT Act

WASHINGTON — President Biden has stated that we have a sacred obligation to support Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. As part of his first State of the Union address, he identified supporting Veterans as a key pillar of his [Unity Agenda](#), and an issue that can unite the country. The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act makes good on that promise.

In my [recent press conference](#), I spoke in detail about the Department of Veterans Affairs' strong support of the PACT Act because the bipartisan bill will help us advance one of the department's top priorities: getting more Veterans into VA care. President Biden has also been clear about his commitment to getting more VA health care to Veterans impacted by

toxic exposures, which is why we need Congress to send the PACT Act to his desk.

Study after study demonstrates that Veterans in VA care do better — and this legislation could bring up to 3.5 million more Veterans into our care. The PACT Act would be one of the largest substantive health and benefit expansions in VA's history, comparable in scale and impact to the Agent Orange Act. It would codify many of the ongoing efforts by the department to improve its process for establishment of presumptions of service connection due to toxic exposure, reducing the burden for Veterans and increasing transparency.

We support the expansion of access to VA health care in the PACT Act and will work to ensure that the expansion of eligibility for health care does not result in the delay or

disruption of care for those Veterans already receiving health care from VA.

I want to personally thank Senators Jon Tester (D-MT) and Jerry Moran (R-KS) for beginning to address the operational impact on VA by investing heavily in VA claims processing, VA's workforce and VA health care facilities. These investments and more are necessary for us to deliver the timely, quality services, benefits and care our Veterans deserve.

As always, we encourage Veterans to continue to file their claims for disability compensation and other benefits as we anticipate this legislation so VA can provide the benefits and care they have earned and deserve.

[View the full press conference.](#)



## Pride Counts at VA

Adding your gender identity and preferred name to your VA health record helps providers personalize your care.



**VA** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

## VA Launches \$20 Million Innovation Challenge to Reduce Veteran Suicide

WASHINGTON — As part of the Department of Veterans Affairs' [10-year strategy](#) to reduce Veteran suicide, VA invites innovators across the country to participate in Mission Daybreak — a \$20 million challenge designed to help VA develop new suicide prevention strategies for Veterans.

Those interested are encouraged to submit their detailed concept papers via [missiondaybreak.net](#) to VA no later than July 8, 2022.

The effort supports the goals of [President Biden's Unity Agenda](#) and aligns with the priority goals and implementation principles of the White House strategy on [reducing military and Veteran suicide](#).

"To end Veteran suicide, we need to use every tool available," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "In the most recent [National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#) more than 45,000 American adults died by suicide — including 6,261 Veterans. That's why Mission Daybreak is fostering solutions across a broad spectrum of focus areas to combat this preventable problem."

Proposed solutions for Mission Daybreak should seek to address one or more of the designated [challenge focus areas](#)

outlined in the Mission Daybreak webpage.

During Phase I all challenge participants will have access to a collection of open data, surveys and reports on Veteran suicide prevention as they prepare their concept papers. Innovators and collaborators are also invited to join the Mission Daybreak solver community, which helps solvers to expand and augment their teams with interdisciplinary expertise.

To learn more and hear from experts, solvers are encouraged to [register for the upcoming virtual information session and topical webinars](#).

Forty teams will receive awards ranging from \$100,000 to \$3 million which will be distributed across two phases.

Visit [missiondaybreak.net](#) for more information on the challenge.

Reporters covering this issue can download [VA's Safe Messaging Best Practices](#) fact sheet or visit [ReportingOnSuicide.org](#) for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.

If you're a Veteran having thoughts of suicide or you know one who is, contact the Veterans Crisis Line 24/7/365 days a year. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online at [veteranscrisisline.net/Chat](#) or text to 838255.

# VISN 6 Sites Of Care & VA Vet Centers

## MEDICAL CENTERS

### Asheville VAMC

1100 Tunnel Road  
Asheville, NC 28805  
828-298-7911 | 800-932-6408  
www.asheville.va.gov

### Durham VAMC

508 Fulton Street  
Durham, NC 27705  
919-286-0411 | 888-878-6890  
www.durham.va.gov

### Fayetteville VAMC

2300 Ramsey Street  
Fayetteville, NC 28301  
910-488-2120 | 800-771-6106  
www.fayettevilleenc.va.gov

### Hampton VAMC

100 Emancipation Dr.  
Hampton, VA 23667  
757-722-9961 | 866-544-9961  
www.hampton.va.gov

### Richmond VAMC

1201 Broad Rock Blvd.  
Richmond, VA 23249  
804-675-5000 | 800-784-8381  
www.richmond.va.gov

### Salem VAMC

1970 Roanoke Blvd.  
Salem, VA 24153  
540-982-2463 | 888-982-2463  
www.salem.va.gov

### Salisbury VAMC

1601 Brenner Ave.  
Salisbury, NC 28144  
704-638-9000 | 800-469-8262  
www.salisbury.va.gov

## OUTPATIENT CLINICS

### Albemarle CBOC

1845 W City Drive  
Elizabeth City, NC 27909  
252-331-2191

### Brunswick County CBOC

18 Doctors Cl., Units 2 & 3  
Supply, NC 28462 | 910-754-6141

### Charlotte CBOC

8601 University East Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28213  
704-597-3500

### Charlotte HCC

3506 W. Tyvola Rd.  
Charlotte, NC 28208  
704-329-1300

### Charlottesville CBOC

590 Peter Jefferson Pkwy  
Charlottesville, VA 22911  
434-293-3890

### Chesapeake CBOC

1987 S. Military Highway  
Chesapeake, VA 23320  
757-722-9961

### Clayton CBOC

11618 US Hwy 70 Business Highway West,  
Suites 100 & 200  
Clayton, NC 27520

### Danville CBOC

705 Piney Forest Rd.  
Danville, VA 24540  
434-710-4210

### Emporia CBOC

1746 East Atlantic Street  
Emporia, VA 23847  
434-348-1500

### Fayetteville HCC

7300 So. Raeford Rd  
Fayetteville NC 28304  
910-488-2120 | 800-771-6106

### Fayetteville Rehabilitation Clinic

4101 Raeford Rd. Ste 100-B  
Fayetteville NC 28304  
910-908-2222

### Franklin CBOC

647 Wayah Street  
Franklin, NC 28734-3390  
828-369-1781

### Fredericksburg CBOC

130 Executive Center Pkwy  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401  
540-370-4468

### Fredericksburg at Southpoint CBOC

10401 Spotsylvania Ave, Ste 300  
Fredericksburg, VA 22408  
540-370-4468

### Goldsboro CBOC

2610 Hospital Road  
Goldsboro, NC 27809  
919-731-4809

### Greenville HCC

401 Moye Blvd.  
Greenville, NC 27834  
252-830-2149

### Hamlet CBOC

100 Jefferson Street  
Hamlet, NC 28345  
910-582-3536

### Hickory CBOC

2440 Century Place,  
SE Hickory, NC 28602  
828-431-5600

### Hillandale Rd. Annex

1824 Hillandale Road Durham  
North Carolina 27705  
919-383-6107

### Jacksonville CBOC

2580 Henderson Drive  
Jacksonville, NC 28546  
910-353-6406

### Jacksonville 2 VA Clinic

306 Brynn Marr Road  
Jacksonville, NC 28546  
910-353-6406

### Jacksonville 3 VA Clinic

4 Josh Court  
Jacksonville, NC 28546  
910-353-6406

### Kernersville HCC

1695 Kernersville Medical Pkwy  
Kernersville, NC 27284  
336-515-5000

### Lynchburg CBOC

1600 Lakeside Drive  
Lynchburg, VA 24501  
434-316-5000

### Morehead City CBOC

2900 Arendell St, Suite 19b.  
Morehead City, NC 28557  
252-240-2349

### Raleigh CBOC

3305 Sungate Blvd.  
Raleigh, NC 27610  
919-212-0129

### Raleigh II Annex

3040 Hammond Business Place  
Raleigh, NC 27603  
919-899-6259

### Raleigh III CBOC

2600 Atlantic Ave, Ste 200  
Raleigh, NC 27604  
919-755-2620

### Robeson County CBOC

139 Three Hunts Drive  
Pembroke, NC 28372  
910-272-3220

### Rutherford County CBOC

2270 College Avenue, Suite 145  
Forest City, NC 28043-2459  
828-288-2780

### Sanford CBOC

3112 Tramway  
Road Sanford, NC 27332  
919-775-6160

### Staunton CBOC

102 Lacy B. King Way  
Staunton, VA 24401  
540-886-5777

### Tazewell CBOC

141 Ben Bolt Ave.  
Tazewell, VA 24651  
276-988-8860

### Virginia Beach CBOC

244 Clearfield Avenue  
Virginia Beach, VA  
757-722-9961

### Wilmington HCC

1705 Gardner Rd.  
Wilmington, NC 28405  
910-343-5300

### Wytheville CBOC

165 Peppers Ferry Rd.  
Wytheville, VA 24382-2363  
276-223-5400

## DIALYSIS CENTERS

### VA Dialysis and Blind Rehabilitation Clinics at Brier Creek

8081 Arco Corporate Drive  
Raleigh, NC 27617  
919-286-5220

### VA Dialysis Clinic Fayetteville

2301 Robeson Street, Ste. 101  
Fayetteville, NC 28305, 910-483-9727

## VET CENTERS

### Charlotte Vet Center

2114 Ben Craig Dr.  
Charlotte, NC 28262  
704-549-8025

### Fayetteville Vet Center

2301 Robeson Street  
Fayetteville, NC 28305  
910-488-6252

### Greensboro Vet Center

3515 W Market Street, Suite 120  
Greensboro, NC 27403  
336-333-5366

### Greenville Vet Center

1021 W.H. Smith Blvd.  
Greenville, NC 27834  
252-355-7920

### Jacksonville, N.C. Vet Center

110-A Branchwood Drive  
Jacksonville, NC 28546  
910-577-1100

### Norfolk Vet Center

1711 Church Street  
Norfolk, VA 23504  
757-623-7584

### Raleigh Vet Center

8851 Ellstree Lane  
Raleigh, NC 27617  
(919) 361-6419

### Roanoke Vet Center

1401 Franklin Rd SW  
Roanoke, VA 24016  
540-342-9726

### Virginia Beach Vet Center

324 Southport Circle, Suite 102  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452  
757-248-3665

## VISN 6 Newsletter

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Questions or comments about the newsletter, email [stephen.wilkins2@va.gov](mailto:stephen.wilkins2@va.gov) or call 919-956-5541

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