VOICES OF VISN 6

Excellent Care - Earned by Veterans - Delivered Here.



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Edward Crocker, Chief of the New York Fire Department (FDNY) from 1888-1911, once said, "I have no ambition in this world but one, and that is to be a firefighter. The position may, in the eyes of some, appear to be a lowly one; but we who know the work which the firefighter has to do believe that his is a noble calling."

For John Kopp, an 86-year-old Marine Corps Veteran and retired FDNY fire-fighter of 32 years, no words ring truer. From 1960 until his retirement in 1991, Mr. Kopp saved the lives and property of many New Yorkers.

(PHOTO ABOVE) Firefighters from across the Raleigh-Durham area came out to visit retired FDNY firefighter and Marine Corps Veteran John Kopp, 86, at the Durham VA.

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 3

Message from the Network Director



Lately, I've had the opportunity to speak with Veterans about how well VA meets their needs. For most, everything is going well. They don't have problems making or keeping their appointments, their medications arrive on schedule, they have great relationships with their providers and they acknowledge high quality care. It wasn't the case for everyone, and that is troubling for a few reasons. For me, the bottom line is that every Veteran receives the best care and the best service available.

Today, throughout VHA the goal of our pursuit to become a high reliability organization is realizing what is true for one Veteran is true for all Veterans; that they receive the best care and live their best lives every day, and that they believe it is happening. Why do I say it that way? Because belief is an element of trust. Unfortunately, we are experiencing a time when Veterans' trust in

VA has waned. Even though Veteran health care through VA is second to none, many Veterans don't trust what we tell them.

We must regain that trust. It is imperative to improving our environment of care for them. In becoming a high reliability organization, we must first commit to becoming a learning organization — one that accepts that there might be better ways of doing things and that looks for them. We need to learn from past experiences, mistakes and best practices, and capitalize on the lessons contained in each to develop new approaches and apply them to solve the problems we face.

One of our greatest challenges is learning to reduce bureaucracy so we communicate efficiently, sharing ideas and exchanging what we learn quickly. I hope that you've already seen examples where we have applied our commitment to improvement. As the year progresses, expect to see tangible evidence that we are approaching a greater level of Veteran trust in VA health care.

We've opened our books, so to speak, so you can follow our improvement and compare it to private-sector performance on our VA Access to Care website. We are listening more closely to Veterans through our Medalia and Signals survey tools, which enable Veterans to offer very specific feedback, and contribute directly and immediately to changes in our facilities. Thank you for your dedication as an employee, a fellow Veteran or a stakeholder. As 2019 closes, my hope is that you see a VA that embraces not only the quality of care given, but the input received by you. Happy New Year!

 DeAnne M Seekins, Network Director



Secretary Wilkie: VA Not Affected in the Event of Partial Government Shutdown

WASHINGTON — In light of the possibility of a partial federal government shutdown, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert Wilkie released the following statement:

"Thanks to the leadership of President Trump and Congress, VA is fully funded for fiscal year 2019, and in the event of a partial government shutdown, all VA operations will continue unimpeded.

"We thank the president and Congress for their commitment to our nation's heroes in funding VA, and stand ready to provide all of the VA benefits and services our Veterans have earned."

Past and Present

Firefighters Honor One of Their Own

CONTINUED FROM COVER STORY | PAGE 1

"Being a firefighter was his life," says Rachel Kopp, John's wife of over 50 years. "He loved his job and he loved the department."

A native of Flushing, in the New York Queens borough, John served in the Marines from 1952-1954. Returning to New York after his service, John then took the firefighter's exam and worked various jobs while waiting for an opening in the department. When a position came open, John found himself assigned to a station in Brooklyn, Williamsburg 108.

"Back in those days the fire trucks were open," said Mrs. Kopp.
"During the late 1960s, some people used to throw bricks and all sorts of things from the tops of buildings. It was terrible, but he made it through without a scratch."

In 1977, John became a Fire Marshall, which put him out of harm's way. He remained in that position until his retirement, after which he and Rachel moved to North Carolina.

Now, at 86, John has dementia and spends his days at the Durham VA Health Care System's (DVAHCS) Community Living Center (CLC).

However, while some memories wash away like ash after a blaze, John's memories of his service with the FDNY still burn bright.

"The [CLC] staff have been amazing," says Mrs. Kopp. "It's hard taking care of someone with John's condition. They treat him with the dignity and respect he deserves."

When local firefighters and FDNY colleagues heard of his hospitalization they decided to treat John to something special. With a little help from the CLC staff, Raleigh and Durham firefighters arranged for a fire engine to swing by the DVAHCS and pay John a visit. However, the plan quickly took on a life of its own. As word that a friend and brother was feeling under the weather, retired FDNY firefighters came in from across the Raleigh-Durham area.

"As big as the fire department is, no one cares what's on the side of the truck," says Michael Greenham, Safety Officer of the Durham Highway Fire Department. "In the end, we're all firemen. It's a brother-hood and we're here for him."

Honor" by staff members at the Lynchburg VA Clinic.

Salem VA Medical Center's Lynchburg VA **Clinic Honors Local Hero** On Sunday, Nov. 25, 2018, the Lynchburg VA Clinic's staff members, Dana Hawkins, LCSW, Melissa Morgan, LPN, Joyce Stowers, RN, Stephanie Taylor, RN, and Theresa Whorley, LPN, attended a Day of Honor, Love, and Tribute for Mr. Maurice Millner. Mr. Millner is a Korean War Veteran and a pillar of the Lynchburg Virginia community. Mr. Millner has been a member of the Lynchburg American Legion Post 16 Color Guard for more than 40 years. He has rendered more than 4,000 Military Funeral Honors and has proudly served not only our Veterans and their families, but the Lynchburg community. Mr. Millner was also a part of the Color Guard who presented the colors at the Lynchburg VA Clinic's Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Sept. 29, 2008. It was indeed a pleasure for the Lynchburg VA Clinic's staff to attend the event. For his service and dedication, Mr. Millner was presented with the "Coin of Honor" by the staff members from the Lynchburg VA Clinic. **DAY OF HONOR:** Tribute to a local hero, Mr. Maurice Millner Maurice Millner was presented with the "Coin of



60-Year-Old Navy Veteran Wins Inaugural Veterans Chess Tournament

SALISBURY, N.C. — On Dec. 1, 14
Veterans from across the central Piedmont silently congregated across from each other to battle on the boards of one of the oldest strategy games in existence. The quiet shuffle of pawns, bishops, knights, rooks, queens and kings permeated the otherwise still silence in Salisbury VA's learning resource center. At the end of the chess tournament, one player remained undefeated: 60-year-old U.S. Navy Veteran William "Bill" Flores.

Flores, who served as an electronics technician for the Navy from 1980-1983 in Seattle, won 4 of 4 games in the Swiss-style tourna ment. Flores, who stated he had been playing chess since the age of 9, said "I was very surprised at how excellent all the players were. It was great." Along with bragging rights, Flores took home a travel chess board with pieces, a pocket planner, a pen, and two gift cards.

Three Veterans tied for 2nd with three wins and a single loss each: Ryan Schofield, a Veteran of both the Army and Navy, and Iraq War Veteran; Justin Herbert, Army Veteran and Iraq War Veteran; and Bart Major, Army Veteran and Afghanistan War Veteran.

Robert Belle, a Certified Peer Support Specialist for the Salisbury VA who organizes the Salisbury VA Chess Club, and served as tournament director, said he was ecstatic about the turnout for the inaugural tournament. "The chess club started in the summer of 2017 when several Veterans wanted to play,

A Veteran contemplates his position during the first round of the 2018 Veterans Chess Tournament on December 1.

or learn to play. I found that chess was an interest of Veterans from across the hospital," Belle said. "A tournament to encourage additional Veterans to come out and engage in a competitive but friendly game seemed like the logical next step."

The tournament was open to all Veterans, regardless of enrollment in VA health care, and Belle extended an invitation to any Veteran who wants to attend the chess club, which meets the second Thursday of every month from 6:00-8:00pm in Building 6 on the Salisbury Campus. "I encourage everyone to try it if they've ever had an interest. You never know until you try it," he said.

Belle, who also plays and helps teach newcomers to the game, says chess has benefits for Veterans and non-Veterans alike. (LEFT PHOTO) Army and Navy Veteran Ryan Schofield moves a rook during the final game of the tournament on Dec. 1. Schofield tied for second with Army Veteran Justin Herbert and Army Veteran Bart Major. (RIGHT PHOTO) Fourteen Veterans competed in the 2018 Veterans Chess Tournament at Salisbury VA on December 1.

"There is a lot of evidence-based studies that show chess helps with cognition and mental health," *said Belle*, "and socialization is a great aspect of chess as well."

The chess tournament and chess club were supported by the Voluntary Services
Department, which donated chess sets for the club meetings and drinks and snacks for the tournament.

For further information about VA services visit www.explore.va.gov or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/VASalisbury.





MIRECC Director's

UPDATE DECEMBER 2018

For this month's newsletter, I wanted to provide an end-of-year update of our key accomplishments, best practices and deliverables from the past year. MIRECCs (Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Centers) and CoEs (Centers of Excellence) Mission were created to generate new knowledge about the causes and treatments of mental disorders, apply new findings to model clinical programs, and widely disseminate new findings through education to improve the quality of veterans' lives and their daily functioning in their recovering from mental illness. This is a summary of highlights from 2018:

KEY PROJECTS:

Developed a chronic pain education and treatment program (IMPETUS-V) for providers and patients.

- Developed a self-help sleep intervention and manual for providers and patients.
- Added two more Diffusion of Excellence awards focused on suicide prevention (using faithbased community partnerships) and moral injury (via Chaplain services) in addition to our 2016 award for the HOME program.
- Completed the Post-Deployment Mental Health (PDMH) Study (12 years, 3,876 enrolled OEF/OIF Veterans) and started the PDMH Longitudinal Follow-up study of this cohort.
- Developing complementary/alternative interventions to enhance pharmacological treatment for PTSD, TBI, suicide, alcohol and pain.
- Completing testing and development of two non-habit-forming, non-opiate safe pain interventions.
- Developing several mobile technologies to improve smoking cessation

outcomes that can be used "any time, anywhere" to reduce burden on Veterans for clinical appointments while increasing adherence.

- Developed several apps to reduce violence risk among Veterans with PTSD and TBI.
- Research on the mental health needs of those with Other Than Honorable (OTH) military discharges.
- Developing Comprehensive Rural Veterans Suicide Prevention program (Calveret County, NC)

BEST PRACTICES AND DELIVERABLES:

- 6-8 presentations per year to Southern Regional AHEC serving Fayetteville and surrounding rural area community providers.
- 5 trainings to improve group psychotherapy interventions
- Serve as expert consultants to VISN for TBI assessment and intervention (ongoing)
- 4. Expanded and developing best practices in telehealth for the HOME (Home-Based Mental Health Evaluation) and ATTEND (Allied Transitional Telehealth Encounters post-iNpatient Discharge) programs for veterans transitioning from inpatient to outpatient mental health care.
- We have developed a Web-based data portal to support program evaluation efforts by the Evidence-Based Psychotherapy Training rollouts.
- Completing the development of seven supplement booklets focused on applying safety planning to vulnerable subpopulations.
- 7. Served as consultants to develop safety planning template webinar in

TMS rolled out nationally.

8. Serving as consultants and presenters for VACO Academic Detailing

office for their national Suicide Prevention Campaign.

IN 2019, WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE FOLLOWING NEW PROJECTS:

- Developing several mobile technologies to improve alcohol use and cannabis use outcomes.
- Moving into the second year of the 10-year follow-up of the PDMH Study.
- 3. Beginning several new suicide prevention research projects focused on: understanding nonsuicidal self-injury in Veterans (which can lead to suicide), and collaborating with Department of Energy and the Million Veteran Program to conduct genetic, epigenetic, and whole genome sequencing using machine learning, to include study of suicide attempts and prediction.
- 4. Conducting several surveys of the healthcare needs of Veterans who have also served in the first Persian Gulf War.
- Improving our understanding of risk factors for violence based on medical chart data and outcomes.
- 6. Disseminating the safety planning supplement booklets.
- Supporting the VISN Office's Suicide Prevention initiative to streamline education, training, marketing and policy implementation of these efforts.
- 8. Working with our MIRECC facility site partners, as well as new partners in the VISN to continue expanding and implementing new research, educational and clinical programs that meet the needs of providers and patients.



McGuire Bids Farewell to Lombardo

Richmond's Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center would like to take this opportunity to recognize and wish a fond farewell to interim director Alan Lombardo.

He served as associate director prior to his appointment as interim director in Oct. 2018, replacing John Brandecker, who was promoted to a VA Network Director position in northern California.

Throughout Lombardo's 13-year career at McGuire, he held several positions, including physical therapist, health administration resident, executive assistant to the director, associate director and interim medical center director. He has guided the organization through many positive changes and a wide variety of initiatives. Under his leadership, McGuire has grown and further developed its mission to provide excellence in health care, compassion and customer service.

"It has been a wonderful journey over the past 13 years — enjoyable, challenging, hugely satisfying, and a privilege to have led this great facility," Lombardo stated. "Thank you for your support and your amazing dedication to our Nation's Heroes, and their families, alongside whom we journey."

"We wish Alan all the best for the future," responded DeAnne Seekins, Director, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN 6). "He has been a strong leader for our VA family, and he has certainly initiated programs which have been instrumental in the continuing progress for McGuire's leadership in the health care community."

Lombardo will depart Jan. 31, 2018. An interim director will be appointed until a new director is selected.

McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Va., is proud to serve Veterans across multiple states and is utilized as a referral center for acute needs such as spinal cord injury, brain injury and heart transplants. The facility serves more than 60,000 Veterans annually and includes the Richmond campus and four community-based outpatient clinics.

RICHMOND FISHER HOUSE, **Holiday Helper Association Brings** Holiday Cheer to Children

By Brandon Davis

Since 2012, Richmond Fisher House has maintained a working relationship with Fort Lee's Holiday Helper Association to provide gifts for children staying at the house.

Richmond Fisher House serves as a home away from home for families of inpatient Veterans receiving treatment at McGuire VA Medical Center. Every Christmas season, Holiday Helper invites Richmond Fisher House to come and choose from a wide variety of gifts for children of

Holiday Helper Association is a non-profit organization that strives to ensure a loving and memorable Christmas season for wounded warriors and military families who may be facing challenging times. Military families and organizations such as the Fisher House Foundation can shop at the Fort Lee Holiday Helper store free of charge for stocking stuffers, toys, books and more.

Wayne Walker, manager of the Richmond Fisher House, spoke cheerfully about the organization.

"It is our goal to make sure that all the kids staying at Richmond Fisher House feel the holiday spirit on Christmas morning," he said. "This year, we're providing 10 to 15 toys per child. The parents give us a list of what the children want, and we go out to Holiday Helper and they do a good job of helping us find what the children enjoy playing with. Normally what we do is we get the toys, gather them all together and

we put them under the tree for the families. The children are happy and the families are happy, so it's a great atmosphere and a great holiday spirit at Fisher House."

Susan Garling, a board member with Holiday Helper Association, elaborated on the group's mission.

"We serve over 550 families, and we provide toys to over 1,250 children every year," she said. "This endeavor takes hundreds of volunteers every year to make this happen. Everything here at our toy store is donated and every person you see in here is a volunteer, including the board members. Monetary donations come in from across the United States and this year we had toys come in from as far away as Pennsylvania."

With the help of many donations, fundraisers, grants, and sponsors across the country, Richmond Fisher House and the Holiday Helper Association put smiles on children's faces Christmas morning and eased the burden of provision for military families dealing with hardship during the holiday season. Richmond Fisher House hopes to maintain this partnership with Holiday Helper Association to benefit families of Veterans at McGuire.

(BOTTOM PHOTO) Holiday Helper Association tov store manager Idian Hall. left, assists Richmond Fisher House manager Wayne Walker with selecting toys for children staying at the Fisher House. (Photo: Brandon Davis)



Fayetteville Voluntary Service Promotes Holiday Spirit With Annual Event

By Fayetteville

VAMC VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Volunteers gathered outside Fayetteville VAMC Voluntary Service Dec. 21 for the annual holiday gift distribution.

A tradition dating back more than 30 years, the holiday event involves a process in which gift bags are assembled at the hospital and delivered to hospitalized Veterans and residents of the Community Living Center (long-term care).

This year, Santa Paws (AKA Ghost) made her debut. Ghost is a Great Pyrenees (breed) registered therapy dog owned by Wayne and Sharon Thompson of Raleigh, NC. Ghost was dressed in her holiday best. She went along with Santa and Mrs. Claus, a six-foot elf (Harold Nelson) and a host of other volunteers traveling room to room, delivering holiday cheer.

The gift bags were filled to overflowing through the generosity of local service organizations, community partners and private citizens. The volunteers had a blast making their rounds and the Veterans and staff enjoyed the early Christmas visit. Norma Fraser, Chief, Voluntary Service stated, "This is a fantastic day we look forward to each year. It's a wonderful way to honor our Veterans, and end the year on a high note."

This year 515 gift bags were also prepared and offered to Veterans in Fayetteville VA's Home-Based Primary Care and Mental Health Intensive Case Management Programs, Community Nursing Home placements and our VA Dialysis Center.

The facility also sponsored events during the holiday season, including a gospel concert, room-to-room caroling by students and a church choir, a Christmas luncheon and bingo were just a few of the events held throughout December. Sponsored events by local schools, military personnel, and volunteers made the holiday season merry and bright for our Veterans.



ABOVE PHOTO) Santa Paws (AKA Ghost) and troupe at the Fayetteville VAMC



VA Partners With The Independence Fund to Help Prevent Veteran Suicide

Operation Resiliency will connect Veterans, caregivers with Education and support systems

WASHINGTON — In December, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) <u>announced its partnership</u> with <u>The Independence Fund</u> to provide wellness and mental health education to Veterans, caregivers and families.

VA and The Independence Fund will collaborate on suicide prevention initiatives to connect Veterans with care and support before they reach a crisis point.

"Every Veteran suicide is a tragedy, and our goal is to prevent suicide among all Veterans nationwide — even those who do not seek care within our health system," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "The Independence Fund is an important ally to reach Veterans on this top clinical priority for VA, as well as caregivers and their families."

The two organizations will work together on Operation Resiliency to encourage Veterans to take part in suicide prevention initiatives. This includes a 2019 retreat that will bring together atrisk Veterans who served in the same unit during deployments.

Founded in 2007, The Independence Fund empowers the nation's severely wounded, injured or ill Veterans to overcome physical, mental and emotional wounds incurred in the line of duty. It has a goal of improving the lives of both Veterans and their families through the organization's mobility, caregiver, adaptive sports and advocacy programs, while also bridging the gap of unmet needs of Veterans' caregivers. The Fund works to give Veterans the best mobility device options available, as well as to promote their mental and physical health.

Suicide is a national public health issue that affects communities everywhere. VA is engaging communities nationwide to deliver care and support to Veterans where they live, work and thrive. Partnerships such as this with The Independence Fund are an important part of VA's National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide.

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a Veteran in crisis, can call the Veteran & Military Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call I-800-273-8255 and press I, send a text message to 838255 or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat.

Reporters covering Veteran mental health issues can visit ReportingOnSuicide.org for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.

VA Awards Community

Care Network Contracts to Increase Health Care Access

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) awarded contracts Dec. 28 to manage provider networks for Regions 1, 2 and 3 of VA's new Community Care Network (CCN), the department's direct link with community providers that will ensure that VA provides the right care at the right time to Veterans.

"These contract awards reflect our ongoing commitment to increasing Veterans' access to care," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "As part of VA's modernization efforts, we designed the new network based on feedback from Veterans and other stakeholders, along with lessons learned from the <u>Veterans</u> <u>Choice Program</u>. We are confident that this new network will greatly improve customer service for Veterans and timeliness of payments to community providers."

The network will be the standard contract vehicle allowing VA to purchase care for Veterans from community health care providers using industry-standard approaches and guidelines in support of the <u>VA MISSION Act of 2018</u> to administer services and manage the network to its full potential. VA will provide care coordination under this new contract. TriWest Healthcare Alliance has expanded its network to support Veteran and provider care coordination across the nation until CCN is fully implemented.

Contracts were awarded to the following firm:

- Region I Optum Public Sector Solutions, Inc.
- Region 2 Optum Public Sector Solutions, Inc.
- Region 3 Optum Public Sector Solutions, Inc.

The contract award for Region 4 is expected by early April 2019. Contract award for Regions 5 and 6 are expected by end of calendar year 2019.

Region I includes VA medical centers in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia.

Region 2 covers Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Region 3 will serve Veterans in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

VA is committed to delivering efficient, safe, timely and quality health care to all Veterans across the nation.

VA Announces Moratorium on Discharges and DecreasesFrom Comprehensive Caregiver Program

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced Dec. 21 that it will temporarily suspend discharges and decreases in level of support from its Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers because of continued concerns expressed by Veterans, caregivers and advocates about inconsistent application of eligibility requirements by VA medical centers.

"It is essential that we get this right," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This affects one of our most vulnerable Veteran populations and we need to make sure we have consistency on how we process and evaluate benefit applications across VA."

The suspension does not impact the current application process. VA medical

centers are continuing to accept and approve applications to the family caregivers program based on current eligibility criteria along with processing appeals and monitoring eligible Veterans' well-being at least every 90 days, unless otherwise clinically indicated.

Termination of benefits exempted from the suspension include those made at the request of the Veteran or caregiver, by the local Caregiver Support Program for cause or noncompliance or due to death, permanent institutionalization or long-term hospitalization of a Veteran or caregiver.

In addition to initiating an internal interview, VA will continue to solicit feedback from external stakeholders. VA is reviewing policy changes as well

as pursuing long-term legislative and regulatory changes.

The VA Caregiver Support Program has aided more than 38,000 family caregivers since 2011. Participating families receive an average monthly stipend ranging from \$660 to \$2,600, based on the level of assistance required by the Veteran and the geographic location of the Veteran and caregiver.

Participating caregivers also receive access to health care if the caregiver does not have insurance, assistance with travel related to the care of the Veterans, mental health care and additional service and support.

For more information about the VA caregiver program, visit www.caregiver.va.gov.

Registration Opens for 2019 National Veterans Wheelchair Games

Event to be held July 11-16 in Louisville, Ken.

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced that Veterans interested in registering for the 2019 National Veterans Wheelchair Games can do so online Jan. 7 through April 15.

Presented by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), the world's largest sports event for Veterans who use wheelchairs, will be held July II-16 at Robley Rex VA Medical Center in Louisville, Ken.

The event is a sports and rehabilitation competition to engage Veterans who use wheelchairs due to spinal cord injuries, amputations or other neurological conditions.

"I encourage every Veteran interested in competing at the National Wheelchair Games to register for this important event,"

— said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

"The games exemplify VA's commitment to supporting Veterans as they navigate through recovery and rehabilitation to active, independent lives. Sports and recreation play an important role in this journey, enhancing Veterans' positive mental health and physical well-being."

Each year, Veterans challenge themselves and cheer on their fellow Veterans in the excitement-packed games. This year, David Zurfluh, national president of PVA and a service-disabled Air Force Veteran, plans to compete alongside hundreds of other Veterans at the games.

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games offer 19 different competitive events, including air guns, archery, basketball, bowling, field events, hand cycling, nine-ball, power soccer, quad rugby, slalom, softball, swimming, table tennis, track, trapshooting and weightlifting. Athletes compete against others with similar athletic ability, competitive experience or age.

For more information about the games, visit <u>www.wheelchairgames.org</u>. Follow <u>VA Adaptive Sports</u> on <u>Facebook</u>, <u>Twitter</u> and <u>Instagram</u> at @Sports4Vets.

Two Charles George VA Nurses Named Among 2 0 18 'S GREAT 10 0 Nurses in North Carolina

By Armenthis Lester

In late fall, at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, David Przestrzelski, Associate Director of Patient Care Services and Wanda Dunn, RN, were named among North Carolina's Top 100 Nurses for 2018. This prestigious award is given each year by The North Carolina Great 100, Inc. and recipients are nominated by their peers.

Recipients are recognized for their outstanding professional ability and for the contributions they have made to improving the healthcare services in their community. When asked to describe Wanda Dunn in one sentence, her nomination package stated,



wanda Dunn and David Przestrzeiski were recognized as being among North Carolina's Top 100 Nurses for 2018.

"This nominee is a true patient advocate, and readily and willingly shares her expertise with staff to provide evidence-based quality care for the best possible outcomes."

When the same question was asked about Dave Przestrzelski, his nominated package stated, "This nominee is a transformational nurse leader experienced in engaging and inspiring employees, and fostering a professional practice environment of continuous learning, responsible

risk-taking, and personal accountability to optimize patient-centered care and clinical outcomes."

Out of the Top 100 awardees, Dunn and Przestrzelski were the only VA nurses. Congratulations, Wanda Dunn and David Przestrzelski.



Harper Joins Fayetteville VA as New Assistant Director

Michael W. Harper was appointed Assistant Medical Center Director Jan. 6, 2019. A native Memphian, he joined Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2008 at Memphis VA Medical Center, where he served in various roles including Chief of Business Office, Executive Assistant to the Medical Center Director, Administrative Officer for Ambulatory Care, Group Practice Manager, and Chief of Customer Service. Prior to joining the VA, he served as chairman of the Allied Health Programs at Remington College in Memphis.

He served in the United States Navy from May 1987 to August 2007 as a Hospital Corpsman. Over the course of his military career, he served as a Medical Section Department Head, Patient Administration Officer, Public Affairs Officer, Career Counselor, Senior Enlisted Advisor and Radiologic Technologist.

Mr. Harper holds an Associate Degree in Radiologic Technology from the University of Phoenix, a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Management from Crichton College, a Master's Degree in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma, and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Christian Brothers University.



Charles George VAMC Hosts Job Fair

By Armenthis Lester

On Jan. II, 2019, the Charles George VAMC hosted a job fair in Asheville, N.C. The fair lasted from 10:00am-7:00pm to afford potential applicants increased flexibility for attendance with the goal of capturing a variety of applicants including: currently employed, unemployed, working parents, etc. In addition, the event was offered offsite at a local American Legion Post to remove the burden of parking and navigating on the medical center's vast campus.

The endeavor was led by Human Resources, but was a collaborative effort between various VA programs and services. Both clinical and admirative leads were present during the event to discuss job opportunities. For some positions, onsite interviews were conducted.

A total of 184 applicants attended the event. When asked, "Why did you come?" a radiology technician applicant named Kyna Baxter stated, "I think it would be an awesome opportunity, especially for someone my age, to give back to Veterans using my line of work."

Throughout the day, real-time updates were populated via Charles George VA Medical Center's social media platforms to help promote and market the event. In addition, a local TV station conducted a Facebook Live recording and interviewed VA staff and applicants. The feed ran on the station's Facebook page, and ran a news story during the evening broadcast.

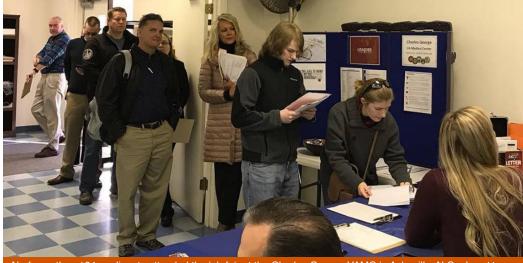
To maximize the usefulness of the event, medical center leadership wanted to ensure that Veterans looking for employment also had the opportunity to learn and obtain access to VA programs and services. Therefore, the job fair was also an outreach event.

Outreaching to Veterans is a priority for Charles George VA Medical Center leadership. The medical center director, Stephanie Young, has established an Outreach Committee at Charles George. "We must take advantage of every opportunity to reach out to our Veterans and their families. I want Veterans living in Western North Carolina to know about the many specialized programs offered

by VA," said Young.

Veteran Health Education, Enrollment and Eligibility, Voluntary Services, VBA, Suicide Prevention and Geriatrics were some of the programs present to educate Veterans and the public about programs and services. Each group provided interested parties with pamphlets and points of contact.

Following the event, service chiefs and human resources personnel will review applications, schedule additional interviews, and make selections. Some applications will remain on file as a resource for future opportunities. The organizers are hopeful the event yielded qualified hires.



No fewer than 184 applicants attended the job fair at the Charles George VAMC in Asheville, N.C., Jan. 11

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.fayettevillenc.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

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 NG 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 27909 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

4006 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

5420 U.S. 70 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

374 Charlotte Road Rutherfordton, NC 28139 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 Favetteville

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 Elistree Lane Raleigh, NC 27617 919-856-4616

Roanoke Vet Center

350 Albemarle Ave. SW Roanoke, VA 24016 540-342-9726

Virginia Beach Vet Center

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

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