

In The News

www.portland.va.gov

SPRING 2012



OEF/OIF Welcome Home Event

**Patient-Centered Care
Silver Star Volunteer**

Director's Letter



The Portland VA Medical Center is continuously improving healthcare for Veterans. In 2011 we made tremendous improvements in our process for evaluating and screening traumatic brain injury, the management of congestive heart failure, the care for homeless Veterans, and our comp and pension program. Our success, to a large extent, was due to your commitment to our mission and to cultivating a Culture of Ownership that helps to exceed customer expectations for access, service delivery, and quality of care.

In an effort to demonstrate our commitment to continuously improve the care we provide to our Veterans, the medical center has decided to embark on a Journey of Excellence in pursuit of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, which we have coined "Keeping the Promise: Advancing Excellence." The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award is recognized as the nation's top Presidential honor for quality and organizational performance excellence. Baldrige health care recipients are acknowledged as being at the forefront of innovative and evidence-based care, and for their relentless quest to make positive differences in healthcare quality, safety, access, and costs.

The concept of excellence, or continuous improvement is not new to our medical center. The Portland VA Medical Center has been recognized throughout the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) for its steadfast focus on innovation and clinical excellence. In addition to benchmarking and assessing our progress against other VA facilities and external organizations, we continue to promote the P.R.O.M.I.S.E. program as a public display of our commitment to caring for Veterans. The program demonstrates how individual employees put our mission into action and is visible by their earned lapel pins and the recognition posters in the elevator.

Examples of our commitment to live out this P.R.O.M.I.S.E. can be found throughout this publication and our facility. These P.R.O.M.I.S.E. examples of being patient-centered while providing excellent care to Veterans are some of the reasons why Portland VAMC is a great place to work and why we are pursuing the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Award.

As an organization we have earned many awards and honors in the past including The Beacon Award, the gold standard for critical care nursing; EPA's National Performance Track Award, noted as the gold standard for environmental performance; and designation as a Magnet facility which is known as the gold standard for all nursing areas. Baldrige designation is the logical next step for Portland VAMC and it is the gold standard for overall excellence in healthcare. Through our Baldrige Journey we intend to further demonstrate the commitment of the great people who work here, men and women of integrity, who understand and are dedicated to accomplish their duties in a spirit of excellence.

I am thankful for the opportunity to work with such a tremendous staff and for the ability to serve our nation's Veterans.

John E. Patrick
Medical Center Director

Keeping the **PROMISE**

Personal responsibility for my positive attitude & professional conduct;

Respect Veterans, co-workers, & the reputation of the organization;

Be **O**pen to different perspectives, cultures, ideas & change;

Live our **M**ission, Vision & Values;

Model **I**ntegrity: doing the right thing when no one is looking;

Seek & share opportunities for improvement professionally & organizationally;

Celebrate **E**xcellence as a journey



Director

John E. Patrick

Deputy Director

David Stockwell

Chief of Staff

Dr. Thomas A. Anderson

**Deputy Director for
Patient Care Services,
Chief Nurse Executive**

Kathy Chapman

**Assistant Director,
Veteran and Staff Services**

Mark E. Morgan

**Assistant Director,
Patient Centered Care**
Floss Mambourg

In The News is an organizational
newsletter for Veterans,
employees and volunteers at the
Portland VA Medical Center

Acting Public Affairs Officer

Kelli Roesch

kelli.roesch@va.gov

Copy Editor

Rachelle Hershinow

Layout and Design

Dianna Risley

Editorial Board

Kelli Roesch

Dianna Risley

Cover Photos

Dianna Risley

Content & Photos

Dianna Risley, Kelli Roesch

National Volunteer Recognition Week **April 15-21**

Portland VA Medical Center *Salutes and thanks our volunteers!*



Volunteer Barbara Weatherill

Cover Photo Information

All photos from the OEF/OIF Welcome Home Event at the Portland Rose Garden Arena, March 4, 2012.

Top Photo: Special Guest and Ceremonial Puck Drop Recipient, Army Veteran Leo Curtis with Portland Winterhawk, William Wren.

Bottom Left: Air Force Honor Guard

Bottom Right: On left Miss Oregon USA, Alaina Bergsma and on right Oregon Miss Teen USA Kiana Benion greet one of our many Veteran guests and his son.

6TH ANNUAL WELCOME HOME EVENT



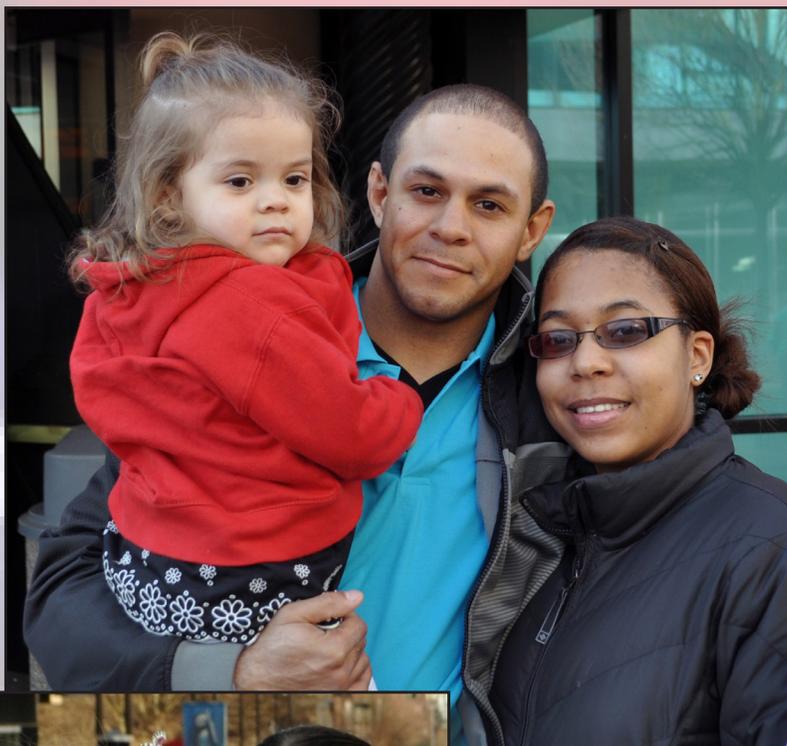
Special guest Army Veteran Leo Curtis and family



"The Welcome Home Event is a wonderful time to celebrate and honor the service of our Veterans, their families and friends," said Victoria Koehler, OEF/OIF Program Coordinator.



More than 1,900 Veterans and their family members attended the Portland VA Medical Center's 6th Annual Welcome Home Event on Sunday, March 4. The event, hosted at the Portland Rose Garden Arena, was an opportunity for our Veterans to enjoy a great hockey game between the division leading Portland Winterhawks and the visiting Tri-City Americans. The event also offered an opportunity for the Veterans to learn about their benefits available through the Department of Veterans Affairs and several community partners.



**VA Medical Center
Portland, Oregon**

**Operation Enduring Freedom
Operation Iraqi Freedom**

OEF/OIF Program

*Thank You for
Your Service
to This Country*



**VIEW ALL EVENT PHOTOS AT
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/VAPORTLAND
"LIKE" US AND STAY CONNECTED**



Our Nurses Really Shine!

Dianna Risley

Congratulations to our own Katherine Marie Sluder, Doctor of Nursing Practice on receiving the 2012 American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) State Award for Excellence! This award is given annually to a dedicated nurse practitioner in each state who demonstrates excellence in their area of practice.

Sluder's area of practice is in our Home Based Primary Care Program where she provides Primary Care to Veterans who are unable to get care at a medical facility or have difficulty getting to their appointments.

"It is a genuine privilege to be able to serve those who have so bravely served us," said Sluder. "We get to work together as a team to make shared decisions about what their goals are and how we can reach them."

Sluder is humbled at the receipt of this award and wishes she could share it with her coworkers. "I could not possibly do my job without the amazing group of professionals I am blessed to be able to work with everyday."

Sluder will be recognized for this achievement during the Annual AANP National Conference this June.

"It is a genuine privilege to be able to serve those who have so bravely served us"



**Can you
guess what
new
machine
came to
our lab this
winter?**

Answer: A Modular Pre-Analytics (MPA)
The major benefits of the new MPA are shorter and predictable turnaround times and increased quality and efficiency in analyzing samples.

Social Work Matters

By F. Matthew Schobert, Jr., LCSW
Social Work Executive

March is National Professional Social Work Month, a time to recognize the invaluable service and leadership social workers provide to our nation, our communities, and our most vulnerable citizens. This important observance is an annual opportunity to reflect on the contributions of social workers, to celebrate the important work they do, and to anticipate a promising future for the profession and those whom they serve. These sentiments are captured in the theme of Social Work Month 2012 – *Social Work Matters*.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) inaugurated National Professional Social Work Month in 1963. After 20 years of professional and public recognition, the United States Congress passed a Joint Resolution in 1984 officially designating March as National Professional Social Work Month. The resolution was signed by President Reagan that same year. From 1984 until 1998 – the centennial year of the profession – (NASW) promoted a select social issue each year. Topics included health care, hate crimes, violence prevention, racial and ethnic harmony, HIV/AIDS, children in poverty, aging parents, value of work, homelessness, and more. Since 1998, Social Work Month themes promote the profession with general campaigns about who social workers are and their role and contributions in society.

Social workers are integral members of the Portland VA Medical Center's health care team. PVAMC employs approximately 120 social workers and provides graduate-level internships to 12-15 social work trainees each year. Social workers are assigned to five Services at PVAMC:



Matthew Schobert, Jr. LCSW

March is National Professional Social Worker Month

Thank You VA Social Workers! Veterans Bureau General Order dated June 16, 1926, established the social work program in the Veterans Bureau, outlining its organization and functions. The first year staffing consisted of fourteen social workers who were placed in psychiatric hospitals and twenty-two placed in regional offices throughout the country. Early social work involvement was centered exclusively on the psychiatric and tuberculosis patients.

- Mental Health & Neurosciences
- Rehabilitation & Long Term Care
- Chaplain & Social Work
- Primary Care
- Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn

Please join in celebrating our social work providers.

Patient-Centered Care

By Dianna Risley

When the lines between medical, social and emotional care become blurred, the results overwhelmingly suggest faster physical healing and support the decision by the Department of Veterans Affairs to focus on patient-centered care.

The concept of patient-centered care has been around since the 1950's but only in the past 8-10 years has it become common practice in today's medical facilities. Patient-centered care at its core is a model in which all of a patient's providers (including social workers, physical therapists, nurses, dietitians, as well as physicians) work together with the patient and family to identify and satisfy all of the patient's goals and needs. Meeting the patient's medical needs is only one piece of the puzzle. Understanding the patient's winning outcome and long term goals, as well as taking the time to understand the patient's life circumstances, allows the whole patient to heal.

Often the social, emotional and financial needs of a patient add additional stress which require energy and focus, detracting from the physical healing process. When those needs are being met, the energy and focus can be devoted to the physical aspect of healing thus speeding up the recovery time for the patient and saving our medical system money.

"Stepping into the patient's life and seeing their care from their perspective and lens is what patient-centered care is all about," said Megan Davis-Scott, the Patient-Centered Culture Program Manager. "Knowing the patient's end goal or motivation and getting the whole team on board is how we put that concept into action."

The Patient-Centered Care Team at the Portland VA

Medical Center (VAMC), headed by Floss Mambourg, Assistant Director, Patient-Centered Care, had an opportunity this winter to put this philosophy into action and stretch our traditional thoughts regarding the care our Veterans receive.

Army Veteran Robert Cordier experienced the Patient-Centered Care offered by the Portland VAMC first hand after he was unexpectedly admitted to the hospital in late December with an infected spider bite. The infection landed Robert in the intensive care unit for a week and was followed by an extended stay in the

hospital. A week prior to his stay in the hospital, Robert's father, also a Veteran, passed away. Due to the pending holiday season, Robert's family decided to hold the memorial service the first week in January.

Robert was looking forward to saying goodbye, honoring his father, and accepting the flag and shells at the end of the service. The thought of missing out due to his infection was taking a toll on his

emotional state.

Robert and his father had always been close, but became even closer during the last 5 ½ years of his life after Robert sold his home in Kalama and made the

decision to become his father's full time caregiver. Robert's father inspired him to join the military as well as his

love for sports and music. For Robert, saying goodbye and attending the memorial was extremely important to bring closure and to be able to share memories and grieve with his family.

As the time grew closer to the memorial service, it became obvious Robert was not going to be physically able to attend the funeral. Upon learning



“Stepping into the patient’s life and seeing their care from their perspective and lens is what patient-centered care is all about,”

Up Close and Personal

of the dilemma, social worker Kimberly Donovan partnered with Robert's brother to brainstorm and find a solution.

When the suggestion of attending the funeral virtually on the internet was floated, Donovan invited the Portland VAMC Information Technology staff to join Robert's care team.

Under a time crunch, Robert's care team worked together to make it happen. His nursing staff stabilized him enough to move him out of the ICU. The Information Technology staff allowed access to the hospital's internet server via Robert's brother's laptop computer and took care of the technical details. Donovan pulled all the teams together and keep the communication open between the providers, the family and Robert. And, as the time for the memorial service neared, the nursing staff helped Robert groom himself so he was feeling comfortable in front of the camera.

With all the puzzle pieces in place, Robert, with his wife at his side, attended his father's funeral in real time, virtually, through the magic of the internet. When asked how this experience impacted his stay at the Portland VAMC, Robert said, "It put me in better spirits knowing these people were working for me and working for our family. It has made me look at people in a different way. I will never say anything bad about the VA. The people here are great."

With his emotional and social needs met, Robert then shifted his focus on healing and getting out of the hospital. Robert was able to leave the hospital shortly after the funeral and continued to recover at home.



"Caring for the whole person, emotional, familial, inner personal, as well as medically is what patient-centered care is all about," said Matthew Schobert, Director, Chaplain and Social Work Service. "We know there is a huge connection between mind and body healing and, when the patient is able to focus their emotional energy on physical healing instead of mental anguish while in the hospital, the patient's medical recovery is much faster."

Robert's Portland VAMC care team, headed by Donovan, provided a perfect opportunity to put the principals of patient-centered care into action and the emotional and physical rewards for this Veteran will be remembered for a life time.



VHA 12 core Principles of Patient-Centered Care

- ★ Honor the Veteran's expectations of safe, high quality, accessible care
- ★ Enhance the quality of human interactions and therapeutic alliances
- ★ Solicit and respect the Veteran's values, preferences and needs
- ★ Systemize the coordination, continuity and integration of care
- ★ Empower Veterans through information and education
- ★ Incorporate the nutritional, cultural and nurturing aspects of food
- ★ Provide for physical comfort and pain management
- ★ Ensure emotional and spiritual support
- ★ Encourage involvement of family and friends
- ★ Ensure that architectural layout and design are conducive to health and healing
- ★ Introduce creative arts into the healing process
- ★ Support and sustain an engaged workforce as key to providing Patient-Centered Care

Volunteers

By Dianna Risley

Stars In Our Midst



Purple Heart recipient Al Herrera recently received the Silver Star Medal. Forty-two years in the making, Herrera was honored in Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber's office on November 28, 2011 for his heroic actions which took place during the Vietnam War in August of 1969.

Herrera was formally honored in a ceremony on March 9 at Fort Riley, Kansas. Major General William Mayville Jr., Commanding General of the 1st Infantry Division hosted Herrera, along with his wife Betty, and formally presented him the Silver Star.

Herrera and Betty are invaluable members of our Portland VA Medical Center Volunteer Staff. Together, they serve our Veterans each Friday with the Coffee Cart Program.

"It is so nice to be able to give a program to a couple and not worry about it because they are so dedicated," said Shaun Benson, Chief of Voluntary Services.

The Portland VA Medical Center would like to congratulate First Sergeant Al Herrera on his Silver Star Medal and thank him and Betty for their service and dedication to our country and Veterans!

More information regarding this story can be found on Oregonlive.com.

VALENTINES FOR VETERANS



Volunteers Betty Weber and Joanne Ostlund provide bright smiles and Valentine's Cards to Veterans during National Salute to Veteran's Week.

In the News

Let's Go Fishing!

Whether you are a novice or an experienced fly fisherman, all Veterans are invited to sign up for the Healing Waters Fly Fishing Workshops. Workshops are held on the third Thursday of each month at the Portland VA Medical Center and on the second Wednesday of each month at the Vancouver Campus. Call the Vountary Services Hotline at 503-402-2896 for more information.



Eddie Owens works on one of his artificial flies



Geocaching Finds Its Way To The VA

Geocaching is a worldwide treasure hunting game using the Global Positioning System (GPS) in tandem with either a GPS enabled cell phone or a standalone GPS Receiver to find treasures.

These treasures called "caches" (pronounced like "cash") vary in size from a finger nail to a telephone booth. The cache will contain items such as a small log book to verify you visited the "cache site" or trinkets and goods which can be traded. Ultimately, the prize is finding these little treasures hidden in some of the



Geocache treasure located on the Vancouver Campus, Jason Braaten, inset

most interesting places in the world.

Avid Geocacher, Jason Braaten, both a Navy Veteran and employee, was thrilled to have an opportunity to work with Portland VA Medical Center staff to place a Geocache at the Vietnam War Memorial Garden on the Vancouver campus. Discretely placed, it is designed to celebrate and remember those who serve our country.

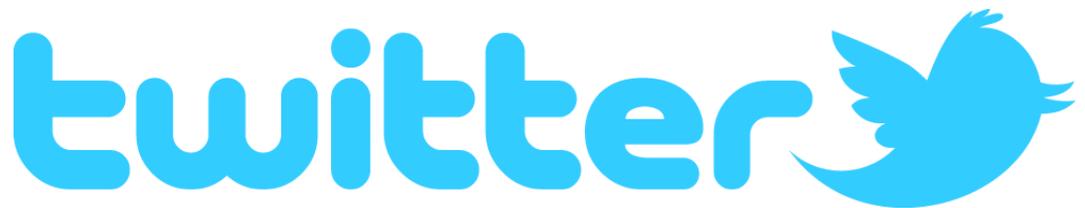
"If geocaching is about finding those interesting places that take your breath away, I could not think of a location better than the Garden," said Braaten.

come tweet with us!

Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/VAPortland or follow us on twitter at twitter.com/vaportland to get the latest information about about our services, breaking news, events, travel or road challenges, and weather related closures.



Photos from many of our events are also posted on Facebook for your viewing pleasure.



IMPORTANT VA PHONE NUMBERS

Portland VA Medical Center
503-220-8262 or 1-800-949-1004

Press:

- 1** If you know the extension you need
- 2** Seasonal Flu Shot Clinics and Availability
- 3** Business Office: Patient Accounts, Enrollment, Eligibility, Patient Travel
- 4** Auto Prescription Renewal/Refill Line, Appointment Reminder
- 5** Make or change a Primary Care Appointment
- 6** Primary Care Team
- 7** Pharmacy Customer Service Representative
- 8** Specialty Clinics, including Eye Clinic

All other information, stay on the line to reach an operator.

Billing Questions

1-866-290-4618

Monday- Friday 5 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Pacific)

VA Health Resource Center staff can assist with your VA Billing Statement/Insurance questions.

Veterans Crisis Line

Confidential Help for Veterans and their families

1-800-273-TALK (8255) Press 1 for Veterans

Talk to a trained professional 24/7

visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

My HealtheVet

www.myhealth.va.gov

Renew prescriptions online, communicate with your PCP online using secure encrypted messages, view appointments online

503-721-7854 or **800-949-1004, ext. 57854**

VA Benefits Information & Assistance

1-800-827-1000