



VA HEALTH CARE Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

Veteran Connection

VA Portland Health Care System Newsletter

Keeping the Promise - Advancing Excellence



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VA Portland Health Care System

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Produced by the VAPORHCS Public Affairs Office

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS ??

Please email us at...

VHAPOR-PublicAffairs@med.va.gov

or call 503-402-2975

Lincoln's Promise (VA Mission Statement)

"To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.

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For [VAPORHCS Events and Classes](#)—got to the VAPORHCS Web page...
www.portland.va.gov/calendar.asp

Message from the Director



Joanne M. Krumberger
Director, VA Portland Health Care System

This month, Portland VA Health Care System conducted our first Value Stream Analysis in Primary Care Services. This structured approach to improvement is part of our on-going Journey of Excellence. Leaders from around the health care system attended and are committed to developing a plan over the course of the next 15 to 22 months to enhance and improve primary care services to the Veterans we serve.

Our continued Journey of Excellence is a very deliberate approach that supports the overarching framework established by the [VA Blueprint for Excellence](#). This VA plan provides vision for the evolution of health services provided by VHA. Our Journey of Excellence is guided by six pillars which help us focus on what's important to the Veteran as well as the organization in our strategic and daily activities.

Our pillars are:

- **People** - Respect for the individual and empowerment of front-line staff to do the right thing, the first time, every time, without delay.
- **Service** - Deliver the best care and support all Veterans and the service we provide to each other.
- **Quality** - Ensure high quality and value as seen through the eyes of the Veteran.
- **Safety** - Ensure that patient safety continues to be our top priority in healthcare and ensure safety between our healthcare services.
- **Stewardship** - Serve as responsible stewards of national trust and resources.
- **Innovation** - Seek out and implement new methods to improve our services.

We will be providing regular updates on our Journey of Excellence and welcome your feedback.

On September 8 I was honored and proud to join Portland Mayor Charlie Hales and other local and federal officials in an event highlighting successes in ending Portland area Veteran homelessness and to publically recognize landlords and community partners who are supporting these efforts.

In January 2015, according to best estimates, there were nearly 700 homeless Veterans in the city of Portland and Multnomah County, and in just nine months, 430 of them were housed. That, according to the City of Portland, leaves about 260 who still need to find housing in the local area. The VA and many community partners are aggressively working to house all of these remaining Portland area Veterans within 100 days of this month's event. Many thanks to our dedicated community partners and our own VAPORHCS homeless team who serve this vulnerable population of Veterans.

September is Suicide Prevention Month. Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is leading the Department's efforts to raise awareness of VA's suicide prevention resources, such as the [Veteran Crisis Line](#) and the [Power of 1 Movement](#). This prevention outreach campaign emphasizes how just one act can encourage Veterans and Military Service members to reach out for support when they are in need. VA's goal is to spread the word about VA mental health and suicide prevention resources and encourage Veterans, Service members and their families to use them.

We are very proud of the real impact the VAPORHCS Suicide Prevention team is making right here in the Pacific Northwest. So far in 2015, our team has made 1,192 direct calls to Veterans in need from referrals and 169 active 'rescues' to Veterans as a direct result of Veteran calls to the national Veterans Crisis Line.

Please help us share information about this important resource.

Thank you for your service to our country and it is an honor for us to care for you.

In Service to Veterans,

Joanne M. Krumberger



VAPORHCS receives highest nursing credential Third-time Prestigious Magnet® Recognition

VAPORHCS has again attained Magnet® recognition as part of the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s (ANCC) Magnet Recognition Program®. This voluntary credentialing program for hospitals recognizes excellence in nursing. This credential is the highest honor an organization can receive for professional nursing practice.

Magnet recognition has become the gold standard for nursing excellence and is taken into consideration when the public judges healthcare organizations. In fact, U.S. News & World Report’s annual showcase of “America’s Best Hospitals” includes Magnet recognition in its ranking criteria for quality of inpatient care.

To achieve initial Magnet recognition, organizations must pass a rigorous and lengthy process that demands widespread participation from leadership and staff. The process begins with the submission of an electronic application, followed by written documentation demonstrating qualitative and quantitative evidence regarding patient care and outcomes. If scores from the written documentation fall within range of excellence, an on-site it will occur to thoroughly assess applicant. After this rigorous on-review process, the Commission Magnet will review the completed praisal report and vote to determine whether Magnet recognition will be granted.

What is Magnet ?

The Magnet Recognition Program®, administered by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), the largest and most prominent nurses credentialing organization in the world, recognizes healthcare organizations that provide the very best in nursing care and professionalism in nursing practice. The Magnet Recognition Program® serves as the gold standard for nursing excellence and provides consumers with the ultimate benchmark for measuring quality of care.

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An organization seeking to reapply for Magnet recognition must provide documented evidence of how Magnet concepts, performance, and quality were sustained and improved over the four-year period since the hospital received its [initial/most recent] recognition.

Chair of the Commission for the Magnet Recognition Program identified several exemplars that the Commission believed stood out at VAPORHCS:

- Nursing engagement and nursing involvement in interdisciplinary quality improvement efforts.
- The PACT model and the role of the nurse within the model.
- Nurse-led interdisciplinary teams, especially evident in the Cancer Care Navigator Teams and the Transplant Teams.
- VAPORHCS’s work in preventing hospital acquired urinary catheter infections.

Being recognized as a Magnet facility for the third time is a great achievement for VAPORHCS as it continues to proudly belong to the Magnet community—a select group of 378 healthcare organizations out of nearly 6,000 U.S. healthcare organizations. VAPORHCS was initially designated a Magnet hospital in 2006. Hospitals must reapply for Magnet recognition every four years based on adherence to Magnet concepts and demonstrated improvements in patient care and quality.

-VAPORHCS-

Get your flu shot at the VA

A VA facility near you is offering shots for Veterans



It's time to get your flu shot!

The Annual Influenza (Flu) Immunization Drive began September 15, 2015, in the VA Portland Health Care System Atrium of the main hospital and at your local VA health clinic. The walk-in flu clinic in the main hospital is open from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, Monday to Thursday, except holidays. For local clinic hours, please call the telephone message line at 503-808-1923, and press the number for your clinic.

You also can get your flu shot at a local [Walgreens Pharmacy](#) (subject to availability; other restrictions may apply). If you have other health insurance, tell the pharmacist that you get your care at VA, and show your VA ID card.

You do not need an appointment to get a flu shot at a VAPORHCS walk-in flu clinic or a Walgreens Pharmacy. Veterans with scheduled medical appointments at any VA facility can ask for their flu shot at that time.

Why should you get a flu shot each year?

Influenza or “the flu” is caused by a virus and can be a serious infection. The flu can be prevented or at least made less severe by getting a flu shot. The best time to get a flu shot is as soon as the vaccine becomes available in September. However, getting a flu shot later still will protect you from the flu.

The flu spreads easily from person to person. The infection can be mild, but it also can cause severe illness or death. Certain people are at greater risk for severe illness if they get the flu. This includes older persons, young children and pregnant women; people with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, asthma or heart disease; and people who live in places like nursing homes.

All persons aged 6 months and older should get a flu shot, including persons with minor egg allergies. For most people with minor egg allergies, the benefits of getting a flu shot are greater than the risks of getting the flu. If you are allergic to eggs, please tell your health care provider so that special precautions can be made.

The flu shot is safe and it works. While it is not 100% effective in preventing the flu, if you get the shot and still get the flu, it is usually far less serious than if you did not get the shot. Sometimes there are side effects from the shot that may be mistaken for the flu, such as a sore arm, body aches or a slight fever.

Other things you can do to avoid getting or spreading the flu:

- Wash your hands often;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- If possible, stay home when you are sick; and
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

For more information about dates, times and locations of walk-in Flu Vaccination Clinics...

- ... please call the hotline at **(503) 808-1923**, and press the number for your clinic.
- If you get your flu shot outside the VA or Walgreens, please leave us a voice mail message to let us know at (503) 273-5225.

Protect yourself, the ones you love, and others around you by getting a flu shot this year.

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Board members selected for My VA Community Pacific NW



As part of its ongoing implementation of the [MyVA Transformational Plan](#), the VA Portland Health Care System announced Kimberly Douthit and Tom Mann as the co-chairs of its My VA Community Pacific NW (PNW) Advisory Board. This community Veterans engagement board will bring together local stakeholders, Veterans, families, and service providers to improve service delivery and outcomes for Veterans.

Chosen by the Directors of the VA Portland Health Care System, the Portland VA Regional Office, and the Oregon National Cemeteries, the two co-chairs bring experience and high energy to the volunteer positions.

“Both came highly recommended by their peers in the Veteran community,” according to Joanne Krumberger, Director of the VA Portland Health Care System. “We are excited that they both come to the Board with lots of ideas on how VA can better serve Veterans by partnering with both traditional and non-traditional organizations and groups,” she said.



- 1) Put the Veterans in control of how, when, and where they wish to be served.**
- 2) Measure success by the ultimate outcome for the Veterans.**
- 3) Integrate across programs and organizations to optimize**

Kim Douthit, a U.S. Coast Guard Veteran and Navy spouse, is the Veterans Resource Specialist at Portland Community College Sylvania Campus and lives in North Portland. Previously, she worked for Washington County Disability Aging and Veteran Services as a County Veterans Service Officer and the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs at its Portland claims office. Tom Mann, a service-connected disabled Army Veteran, formerly served as an administrator of Veterans’ services at the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, a Veterans Service Officer, and a civilian intelligence officer at the Defense Intelligence Agency. Mann is currently engaged in freelance consulting and writing at his home in Salem.

intelligence officer at the Defense Intelligence Agency. Mann is currently engaged in freelance consulting and writing at his home in Salem.

The first step for co-chairs will be to choose approximately 15 board members who will represent diverse Veteran groups and services including women Veterans, mental health services, and transportation services. The selected members will be representative of the various geographic locations within the VA Portland Health Care System catchment area.

“There are a ton of qualified people for the board, so it’s going to be hard to choose just 15,” Mann said. “But I’m confident we can choose 15 passionate people and then lean on all those other subject matter experts to help us with the work of creating a holistic and seamless system between communities and the VA,” he said.

“We are just starting out but are always looking for ideas,” Douthit said. “Anyone interested in sharing their thoughts or being considered for the board should send us an email at myvapnw@gmail.com. We are eager to hear what’s working in the community, where there are gaps, and especially community services that we don’t yet know about,” she said.

For more information about My VA Community model, please visit www.va.gov/icbc/myVA.asp

year.

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Veterans are connecting electronically with VAPORHCS

By M. Alex Harkins, My HealtheVet Volunteer & Veteran
Brian K. Miller, Secure Messaging Administrator



My Health, My Care: 24/7 ^{Online} Access to VA

As Many patients of VAPORHCS are already taking advantage of the online access to healthcare services provided by the free My HealtheVet web portal. Approximately 67,500 of Portland's 90,000 patients have full access to My HealtheVet. They use it primarily to order prescription refills, view doctors' progress notes and send encrypted messages to their primary and specialty healthcare teams.

Whether you are an existing user or are just hearing about it now, please feel free to reach out to local or national My HealtheVet staff for any assistance you may need. Existing users may reach us by secure message at "*MyHealtheVet/Secure Messaging Portland". New users can register at home at www.myhealth.va.gov and then stop by one of our My HealtheVet offices to gain full access.

Our My HealtheVet office in Portland is located in the main building, just inside the outpatient pharmacy in room 140D. On the Vancouver campus, our office is on the 2nd floor of building #11, Room 230C. The phone extensions for the two offices are x57854 for Portland and x33307 for Vancouver. Patients may also dial the national My HealtheVet hotline at 1-877-327-0022 between 5am and 5pm, Monday through Friday.

After a short learning curve, using My HealtheVet can not only furnish you with valuable information but also save time for you and your healthcare team, time your healthcare team can then spend on caring for more veterans, time you can spend doing anything else. So if you have access to an Internet-enabled device and are not yet registered, go to the web site "www.myhealth.va.gov" and select the green "Register Today" box on the right side of the window. For detailed registration instructions, please click on or enter in to your browser the following URL: <http://1drv.ms/1phkDAO>.

After you register, there's just one more step to full access: fill out, sign and turn in VA Form 10-5345a-MHV, which authorizes the VA to release access to your records to you through My HealtheVet. If you have an eBenefits account and premium DS Logon, you may complete this authentication process online at www.ebenefits.va.gov (eBenefits help is 1-800-983-0937). If not, you may come to any VA facility to obtain, sign and submit the form.

If you come in person you will need to show your government photo ID to confirm you are who you say you are. If you are coming to the Portland or Vancouver campus, stop by one of our My HealtheVet offices. If you are coming to one of our outpatient clinics, the front desk staff will be able to assist.

Note: Family members of VA patients who have Power of Attorney for the patient's healthcare may register for and utilize My HealtheVet on the patient's behalf.

year.

VAPORHCS



Some of the many benefits of being a My HealtheVet user:

- Anytime, anywhere access
- Communicate with your providers (without waiting on hold)
- Refill prescriptions
- Renew prescriptions by messaging your provider
- See your appointments in list or calendar format
- See the bulk of your VA health care record



September is Suicide Prevention Month

[#ThePowerOf 1 starts with you](#)



Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255

VAPORHCS Suicide Prevention team is comprised of two full-time Suicide Prevention Coordinators and a half-time Suicide Prevention case manager. The team covers the entire VHAPORHCS 26 county catchment area and does the following:

- Follow-up on calls to the Veterans Crisis Line within 24 business hours;
 - ⇒ In 2015 so far...Veterans Crisis Line referrals: 1,192 and...
 - ⇒ Veterans Crisis Line rescues*: 169

(*Crisis line responders requested rescues by emergency personnel in VAPORHCS catchment area for Veterans who were calling with life-threatening crises)

- Training and consultation to VA staff and in the communities;
- Conducts an average of 10 outreach events in the community every month;
- Runs two drop-in support groups (Vancouver & Portland campuses) for Veterans with suicide prevention safety plans called Wise Warriors.
- Fields an average of 10 calls per day to our team line from concerned loved ones of Veterans about the resources available through the VA and how to connect them to care.

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**VAPORHCS Suicide Prevention (SP)
Team Contact:**

SP Team Line (503) 402-2857

1 call can save a life

-

1 small act makes a difference

-

1 question can open the door to support