



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veteran Connection

VA Portland Health Care System Newsletter

Keeping the Promise - Advancing Excellence



VA Portland Health Care System

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Portland, OR 97239
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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)

"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

Spring 2019

Volume 6, Issue 3

Message from the Director



Darwin G. Goodspeed

Director, VA Portland Health Care System

Spring is in full bloom and the VA Portland Health Care System is also celebrating the ever improving weather and our great staff. In May we have multiple opportunities to celebrate our staff and the great work they do everyday to support of Veterans. We kick off the month with [Public Service Recognition Week](#) (May 5 - 11). The idea of recognizing public service grew out of the January 20, 1961, inaugural address by President John F. Kennedy. In that speech, he urged Americans to participate in public service and to "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." More than two decades later, in 1985, the Public Employees Roundtable created Public Service Recognition Week as an opportunity for people across the nation to honor the men and women who work in government each and every day to assist Americans in need and advance our national interests.

During the week of May 6-12, we also celebrate National Nurses Week. This

celebration always begins on the birthday of Florence Nightingale and is an opportunity to celebrate, recognize and appreciate the significant contributions nurses make to improving the health of the nation. And then, during the week of May 13-17 we celebrate [National VA Research Week](#). VA Research Week gives us an opportunity to showcase the numerous achievements of VA researchers and the role they play in providing high quality care for Veterans and advancing medical science.

During the third week of April, I made my inaugural visit to our eastern Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). On April 22 I visited the CBOCs in Fairview and The Dalles for an employee town hall. That evening, VFW Post 4108 in Redmond hosted a Veteran Listening Session and on April 23 I visited the CBOC in Bend for an employee town hall as well. Elks Lodge 1814 in Prineville hosted another Veteran Listening Session on April 23. Thank you to the 100+ Veterans and family members who participated in the events and community partners who helped support them.

Darwin Goodspeed

-VAPORHCS-



Pictured is Darwin Goodspeed, Director of VA Portland Health care System, presenting a Vietnam era Veteran a 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War lapel pin during a Veteran Listening Session held at American Legion Post 424 in Newport on March 21. At every listening session VAPORHCS hosts, VA leadership hold a brief event to thank and honor Veterans of the Vietnam War for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to also thank and honor the families of these Veterans. On the front of the pin it states "Vietnam War Veteran", on the back of the pin it states "A Grateful Nation Thanks and Honors You. U.S.A. Vietnam War Commemoration."

If you would like to be added to the VAPORHCS Partner email list, please email us at VHAPOR-PublicAffairs@med.va.gov

MISSION Act info / update



Choose VA

What is the [MISSION Act?](#) - it is an acronym for the “**VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act.**” Signed into law June 6, 2018, it fundamentally transforms VA's health care system to help Veterans live a healthy and fulfilling life.

The **MISSION Act IS NOT** a step toward privatization. It's about significantly improving Veterans' experience and enhancing their access to care.

What's in it for me - What are the (enhanced) benefits of the MISSION Act as compared to CHOICE?

The [Veterans Choice Program](#) is one of several programs under the law that allow VA to refer Veterans to outside community providers for care, paid for by VA. In contrast, the **VA MISSION Act** replaces the Veterans Choice Program and other community care programs with a single community care program. In other words, the Veterans Choice Program is the name of a community care program, while the VA MISSION Act is the name of a law to be implemented and operational by June 2019.

The **new community care program** is designed to make receiving community care easier for Veterans by merging the sundry of VA's community care programs, including Choice, into one system that is easier to navigate for Veterans. The new program is expected to make eligibility, appointments, getting care, costs and billing processes easier and simpler so that Veterans receive timely, high-quality care.

MISSION Act (Con't) This is an excerpt from a more detailed article on [VA's Vantage Point Blog](#)



Choose VA

VA recently proposed new rules for Veteran community care that include six new eligibility criteria for Veterans under the VA MISSION Act.

VA MISSION Act

VA's new eligibility criteria for community care, providing more choices for Veterans.

The new eligibility criteria will be a major improvement over existing criteria in terms of making things simpler: currently, eligibility criteria vary between VA's community care programs. When the new criteria go into effect, Veterans can expect better access and greater choice in their health care, whether at VA or through a community provider.

The eligibility criteria are projected to go into effect in June 2019 after final regulations are published and effective, so the criteria are not yet final. In

addition, key aspects of community care eligibility include the following:

- Veterans must receive approval from VA prior to obtaining care from a community provider in most circumstances.
- Veterans must either be enrolled in VA health care or be eligible for VA care without needing to enroll to be eligible for community care.
- Eligibility for community care will continue to be dependent upon a Veteran's individual health care needs or circumstances.
- VA staff members generally make all eligibility determinations.
- Veterans will usually have the option to receive care at a VA medical facility regardless of their eligibility for community care.
- Meeting any one of six eligibility criteria listed below is sufficient to be referred to a community provider – a Veteran does not have to meet all of them to be eligible.

The VA MISSION Act includes:

- Streamlining and Improving Community Care,
- Establishing a new Urgent Care benefit,
- Expanding Caregivers Eligibility,
- Strengthening VA's Workforce,
- and Strengthening VA's Infrastructure.

Eligibility Criteria:

Veteran Needs a Service Not Available at a VA Medical Facility

In this situation, a Veteran needs a specific type of care or service that VA does not provide in-house at any of its medical facilities.

(Continued on next page)

MISSION Act (Con't)



Choose VA

Veteran Lives in a U.S. State or Territory Without a Full-Service VA Medical Facility

In this scenario, a Veteran lives in a U.S. State or territory that does not have a full-service VA medical facility. Specifically, this would apply to Veterans living in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Veteran Qualifies under the “Grandfather” Provision Related to Distance Eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program

For this element, there are a few different ways that a Veteran could be eligible for community care. Initially, the following two requirements must be met in every case:

Veteran was eligible under the 40-mile criterion under the Veterans Choice Program on the day before the VA MISSION Act was enacted into law (June 6, 2018), and Veteran continues to reside in a location that would qualify them under that criterion.

If both of these requirements have been met, a Veteran may be eligible if one of the following is also true:

Veteran lives in one of the five States with the lowest population density from the 2010 Census: North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Alaska, and Wyoming, or Veteran

- lives in another State,
- received care between June 6, 2017, and June 6, 2018, and
- requires care before June 6, 2020

VA Cannot Furnish Care within Certain Designated Access Standards

To be eligible under this criterion, VA would have to be unable to schedule a VA appointment for a Veteran at a facility within a specific average drive time to a VA medical facility and within a certain number of days (wait-time). If VA could not schedule an appointment that is within both the average driving time standards and the wait-time standard, then the Veteran would be eligible for community care.

The specific access standards are described below. (Important: Access standards are proposed and not yet final).

Average drive time to a specific VA medical facility

- 30-minute average drive time for primary care, mental health, and non-institutional extended care services (including adult day health care)
- 60-minute average drive time for specialty care

(Continued on next page)

MISSION Act (Con't)



Choose VA

Appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility

- 20 days for primary care, mental health care, and non-institutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with their VA health care provider
- 28 days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with their VA health care provider

It Is in the Veteran's Best Medical Interest

In this situation, a Veteran may be referred to a community provider when the Veteran and the referring clinician agree that it is in their best medical interest to see a community provider.

A VA Medical Service Line Does Not Meet Certain Quality Standards

In this scenario, if VA has identified a medical service line is not meeting VA's standards for quality based on specific conditions, Veterans can elect to receive care from a community provider with certain limitations.

Going Forward

What is described above should be taken as a preview of what the final eligibility criteria may be, because it is not yet final. The new criteria are expected to go into effect in June 2019, after final regulations are published and effective.

Links to resources about the MISSION Act...

[VA Office of Enterprise Integration \(OEI\) MISSION Act web page](#)

[Fact Sheet – Veteran Community Care – Eligibility \(VA MISSION Act of 2018\)](#)

[Fact Sheet – Veteran Community Care – General Information \(VA MISSION Act of 2018\)](#)

[VA MISSION Act 2-page overview of key elements](#)

- Community Care, Caregivers Program, Asset and Infrastructure, Recruit and Retain, Information Sharing

[Mission Act Frequently Asked Questions \(2 pages\)](#)

Got CPAP?

There's a VA app for that! (And VA Portland has it!!)



The [Remote Veterans Apnea Management Platform \(REVAMP\) App](#) pairs with your Positive Airway Pressure (PAP) machine and enables you and your VA sleep care team to track your sleep data. You can use the app to obtain educational information and troubleshooting support about sleep apnea as well as complete questionnaires regarding your sleep health. Additionally, a built-in message system allows you and your VA sleep care team to exchange secure messages.

REVAMP App for Veterans Features:

- Home sleep testing
- Built-in alerts for sleep tests
- Sleep health questionnaires
- Submit requests for PAP supplies
- Sleep tracking graphs
- Send and receive secure messages with your sleep care team

Learn more...

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/revamp-veterans>

Call the VA Portland Sleep Lab at
(503) 220-8262, ext. 51640

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VA Portland Health Care System

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- **Customize to get ANYTHING VA**

Go to the [VAPORHCS main web page](#)

And click

**“CONNECT WITH VA PORTLAND
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM”**

-VAPORHCS-

We love our Volunteers at VA Portland!

Thank you Claude Poole for volunteering at Vancouver VA to support your fellow Veterans!

We appreciate you arriving early to make and deliver coffee to several parts of our Vancouver campus. It's a key hospitality effort so that when Veterans arrive for their appointments, they have a free hot cup of coffee and a newspaper to read.

Mr. Poole was a cook in the Army from 1967-69 and he has been volunteering at the VA for about eight years. We thank him and all of our Volunteers for sharing their time and talents to Veterans.

[Share this on Facebook!](#)



Three volunteers working April 11 at Portland VA Medical Center visiting Veterans and distributing comfort items: left to right is Kathy Clampitt (a daughter and granddaughter of a Veteran) with DAV Auxiliary Unit 5 out of McMinnville; Vickie Partridge (also a daughter and granddaughter of a Veteran) with DAV Auxiliary Unit 1 out of Portland; and Dona Burns (a spouse of a Veteran) of DAV Auxiliary Unit 25 out of Beaverton.

Thank your for your service to our Veterans ladies!

[Share this on Facebook!](#)



Research Day Honors VA Portland Scientists



Left to right: Curtis Billings, PhD; Samuel Edwards, MD; Marina Guizzetti, PhD; Sonemany Salinthone, PhD; Michael Heinrich, MD; Michael Davey, MD, PhD.

V A Portland Health Care System (VAPORHCS) held its annual Research Day in the Portland VA Medical Center auditorium on April 9, 2019. The event honors and recognizes VA staff who work in research to improve the lives of Veterans through health care discovery and innovation.

“This is a great opportunity for all of us to pause and really think about the research mission at the VA and to celebrate the accomplishments of some of our fabulous scientists” said Darwin Goodspeed, Director of VAPORHCS.

VAPORHCS ranks in the top 10 among all VAs nationwide in total research funding. Additionally,

VAPORHCS is home to nine Centers of Excellence including the Portland Alcohol Research Center, National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR), Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center, Parkinson’s Disease Research Education and Clinical Center, Multiple Sclerosis Center of Excellence, Hepatitis C Virus Resource Center, Methamphetamine Abuse Research Center, VA Health Services Research and Development Center of Innovation, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Evidence Based Practice Center.

“Research is part of our ethos. It makes us inquisitive. It spills over into everything we do at the medical center. We will get problems. We ask questions, we look for innovative solutions, and we collect data – this all part of being a learning health care organization. The VA will continue to change. We will always have challenges. Research will always be part of our mission and we are better for it,” said Michael Davey, MD, PhD, Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development, VAPORHCS.

During the event, five research scientists presented their findings from their programs including:

Samuel Edwards, M.D., Staff Physician, VAPORHCS and Assistant Professor of Medicine, Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)

“Burnout among health care providers and staff in primary care practices”

Sonemany Salinthone, Ph.D., Research Scientist, VAPORHCS and Assistant Professor of Neurology, OHSU

“Therapeutic potential of lipoic acid in multiple sclerosis: How does it work?”

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Research Day Honors VA Portland Scientists (Con't)

Michael Heinrich, M.D., Staff Physician,
VAPORHCS and Professor of Medicine,
Knight Cancer Institute, OHSU

"Precision therapy to treat cancer"

Marina Guizzetti, Ph.D., Research Scientist,
VAPORHCS and Professor of Behavioral
Neuroscience, OHSU

*"Epigenetic changes associated with alcohol
exposure"*

Curtis Billings, Ph.D., Research Audiologist,
NCRAR, VAPORHCS, and Associate
Professor of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck
Surgery, OHSU

*"Diagnosing/treating hearing difficulties when
the audiogram is normal"*

Also, during the event, Dr. John Crabbe, a
Senior Research Scientist at VA Portland
Health Care System was lauded for his efforts.
Crabbe established the Portland Alcohol
Research Center and is retiring this year after
40 years of dedicated service. He is the
recipient of the VA's highest honor in
biomedical research, the Middleton Award,
and was recently named an American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow.

"John is responsible for the recruitment of at least eight additional independent scientists to the Portland VA and has made substantial contributions to the growth of the Department of Behavioral Neuroscience at Oregon Health and Science University, which today is recognized as one of the most successful departments in the university. A recent assessment of our research portfolio found that 40 percent of the grants at the Portland VA were from faculty with appointments in behavioral neuroscience, roots that no doubt trace back to John. He's had a lasting impact on the Portland VA," said Davey.

For more information about VA research please visit the following sites:

<https://www.portland.va.gov/Research/about/index.asp>

<https://www.research.va.gov/about/default.cfm>



During the event, Dr. John Crabbe, a Senior Research Scientist at VA Portland Health Care System was lauded for his efforts. Crabbe established the Portland Alcohol Research Center and is retiring this year after 40 years of dedicated service.



Veterans Health Administration
Research & Development

Improving Veterans' Lives  www.research.va.gov

Portland VA Celebrates 1 Year of Room Service

After years of research, planning, construction, training and a lot of determination, Nutrition and Food Services (NFS) launched the Room Service program one year ago in February 2018.

Room Service is a patient-focused meal service program that allows the patient to choose when they receive their meal and what they will eat. Immediately after going live with Room Service, our Veterans became more engaged in their nutrition therapy by participating in nutrient counting and asking questions about their diet in real-time. Food waste was reduced dramatically through preparing only what is ordered/when it is ordered, and by our patients eating much more of the meals served.



Nutrition and Food Services Ambassador Valory Simpson (Army '84-'87) and Food Transporter Len Ackerman (Air Force '84-'88) stop for a quick photo while delivering meals to inpatient Veterans at Portland VA Medical Center.

In its first year, Room Service proved itself by improving patient engagement, satisfaction and nutritional care. The program also provides value through reduced food waste and cost savings, as well as an improved NFS employee



work experience. Nutrition and Food Services supports the VHA mission by providing exceptional nutrition care to the Veterans we serve.

Nutrition and Food Services Tray Line staff member Patricia Hampton and Ambassador Tom Bordon (Army '74-'79) prepare meals at Portland VA Medical Center and VAPORHCS Executive Chef Jesse "J.J." Halliday (Army National Guard '03-'07) finishes up cooking a made-to-order chicken inpatient meal right before it is delivered.

Writing Helps Heal Portland Veterans

Oregon's Poet Laureate partners with VA Portland to host writing retreat

On Saturday, January 26, 2019, more than 40 veterans, family members, VA caregivers, and members of the community attended a writing retreat facilitated by Kim Stafford, Oregon's Poet Laureate.

The afternoon gave participants an opportunity to write, share ideas about how writing can promote health and happiness, and offered resources for beginning and sustaining a writing practice.

The event was initiated by Craig Ling, dentist and Chief of Dental Service, at Portland VA Medical Center. Outside of the hospital, Ling enjoys reading and loves to write poetry.

"Many of my patients write stories and poetry," said Ling. "One of my patients once told me that it wasn't until he started writing that he started to heal after Vietnam because it allowed him to say what was on his mind and in his heart."

Ling began researching if such writing events for Veterans had been hosted by VA and had little success finding any specific to the local VA community.

Ling brought the idea of creating a writing event for Veterans to a few his fellow coworkers including Judy Ulibarri, VA RN, Helen Lee, VA Nurse Residency Program Director, Nathan Davis, Administrative Support Assistant for VA Dental Service, as well as Stafford, and they all fully supported it. Together Ling and Stafford worked out all the details to make a writing workshop happen - and it ended up being a huge success! The theme of the event was related to healing. During the writing workshop Stafford asked participants, "Is the question, What's the matter with you? or What matters to you?"

The event was held at full capacity and individuals from a wide-range of backgrounds were in attendance. Throughout the day, participants were engaged in conversation with Stafford and other writers, and everyone walked away with a notebook full of poems, ideas and scribbles.

"When you write, no one will tell you what you write is wrong," said Stafford. "When you write about something good you've lost you can recover it."

Many of the veterans and participants shared that they have a need for writing and that writing helps them heal. The 2.5 hour workshop gave everyone the opportunity to connect with one another, learn new skills, and write about healing topics. The group included writers of all levels from individuals learning about writing to experienced authors.

There were many different programs and organizations in attendance to show their support including Write Around Portland, Northwest Narrative Medicine Collaborative, StoryCorps, Art Therapy from Lewis and Clark, and Portland VA's "My Life, My Story" program.

"We want to continue working with the arts," said Ling. "This event was one of many ways we can touch people and continue to care for them."



The group included writers of all levels from individuals learning about writing to experienced authors. Craig Ling, Dentist at VA Portland Health Care System, is in the front row, 5th from left. Kim Stafford, Oregon's Poet Laureate, is in the front row, 3rd from right.

VA Portland Health Care System

invites you to help celebrate the 22nd annual...



Survivor *noun* An individual is considered a cancer survivor from the time of diagnosis through the balance of his or her life.

Thursday, June 20, 2019

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m.

VA Portland Health Care System Auditorium

- Speakers
- Educational materials
- Refreshments

This celebration honors the courage and determination of cancer survivors and those who support them.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

For more information:

Carol Rentz

Carol.rentz@va.gov

(503) 220-8262 Ext. 56776

648FAO #0109 June2019



Managing Chronic Pain and Suffering: A Whole Health Resource Workshop



VA Center for Integrative Pain Care (CIPC)

Do you live with chronic pain? Join us to hear about the many resources available at Portland VA to help you manage chronic pain and improve your quality of life.

Presenters will include experts in:

Pain Medicine	Medications	Acupuncture
CBT for Chronic Pain	Nutrition	Movement Therapies
Chiropractic Care	Yoga/Tai Chi	Stress Management

Learn about multiple evidence-based approaches to reduce your pain-related distress and leave with a plan of action to improve your daily life.



**Tuesday, May 21, 2019
8.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.**

Vancouver campus, Columbia Room, Bldg 11

For more information please call Dr. Timothy Wright, PsyD.

503-220-8262 ext. 55612

To be scheduled, please call and leave a message with your name and last four and we will send a confirmation letter.