Message from the Director

Michael W. Fisher
Director, VA Portland Health Care System

Happy New Year! With the change of the year also comes a change in the way we at VAPORHCS will provide care.

I am very pleased to announce that VAPORHCS is one of 18 VA facilities selected to be a “Whole Health Flagship Site.” Whole Health, also known as “Personalized, Proactive, Patient-driven Care,” is an approach to health care that empowers and equips people to take charge of their health and well-being and to live their life to the fullest. The Whole Health System includes conventional treatment, but also focuses on self-empowerment, self-healing, and self-care. This model emphasizes self-care in the larger context of well-being, where the partnership between Veterans and VA staff is a core part of this model. The Whole Health System moves VA forward from focusing on episodic care to a more continuous engagement with the Veteran throughout his or her life. The Whole Health System model is the current vision for complementary and integrative health (CIH) integration across the VA.

Our journey, as part of this Whole Health Flagship process, is just starting and runs until September 2021. To kick this off, just this month, about 80 VAPORHCS leaders participated in two days of Whole Health training; organizational understanding of the components of Whole Health and support implementation is key to its success. We are also in the process of hiring several staff who will serve in Education Champion roles for both staff and Veterans alike in inpatient and outpatient areas in facilities across our health care system.

As we move through this process I will be sure to keep you apprised of our progress through communication in future newsletters, social media, and the VAPORHCS web site.

A very important aspect of my job is to hear and discuss ideas, issues and concerns with our Veterans so we can take a critical look at the way we do business. With this feedback we do make changes where we can and appropriate to ensure we are providing the best care and Veteran experience possible.

We at VAPORHCS gain feedback through a variety of ways including: communication through our Office of Veteran Experience/ Patient Advocates and service-level advocates; letters; email; congressional correspondence; White House VA Hotline; VA National Inquiry Routing & Information System (IRIS); VA Portland Town Halls/ community meetings; and our very active VAPORHCS Veterans Service Organization/Officer Committee and Veterans & Family Advisory Board. For more information on any one of these opportunities, please reach out to my Public Affairs Office. The next Veteran community meeting/Town Hall I have scheduled is for Feb. 22 in Astoria. More details are in this newsletter. I plan on hosting other such events in Newport, Salem and Bend in the next few months. Watch our web site and Facebook page for the details. I hope to see you there.

Thank you for your service and for letting us serve you.

Michael Fisher
Starting February 13, 2018 -

Full room service for inpatient Veterans in Portland...

“Veterans Cuisine, Choice Offerings”

VAPORHCS Nutrition & Food Services (NFS) is proud to announce they have begun the last few steps toward a full room service program for inpatient Veterans in the Portland VA Medical Center.

Transitioning from a prepare-in-advance “cook-chill” system, starting Feb. 13, PVAMC will offer a new “Veterans Cuisine, Choice Offerings” cook-to-order menu service to inpatients between 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. every day. All meals will be prepared fresh by the VAPORHCS Culinary Team using new menu items delivered directly to the Veterans.

Enhanced dining options were launched at the 132-bed Vancouver VA Campus in August 2017, and met with very positive reviews by patients. In addition, staff report improved job satisfaction being able to provide improved service and high quality food to the Veterans they serve as well as enabling them to reduce waste and food costs.

The change was a several-year process requiring budget approvals, remodeling, new equipment purchases, hiring staff, training, menu development, and logistical planning. This was done while still providing uninterrupted food service for Veterans at the Vancouver and Portland facilities.

Benefits of the new VAPORHCS Veterans Cuisine...

- Food service for in-patients
- More than 20 food entrée choices;
  - Five grilled entrées
  - Five salad entrées
  - Eight ‘House Specials’
  - Multiple sandwiches & wraps
  - New side dishes & desserts
  - … & more.
- Reduced sodium and fat content
- Fewer ingredients = fewer allergens
- Improved nutritional value
- Reduced waste = reduced cost

Nutrition & Food Services Chef John Presto (Army Veteran) cooking in the PVAMC kitchen.

BBQ Chicken Salad
Spaghetti and House-Made Meatballs
Puréed BBQ Chicken
**Notice of Request for Information on VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)**

**Respond by February 5, 2018**

Through PCAFC, VA provides certain medical, travel, training, and stipend benefits to designated family caregivers of eligible veterans and service members who were seriously injured in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001. This notice requests information and comments from interested parties to help inform PCAFC of any changes needed to increase consistency across the program, as well as ensure it supports those family caregivers of veterans service members most in need. We want to hear from caregivers, Veterans, Veteran Service Organizations, Military Service Organizations, community partners, and others who are committed to supporting the nation-wide network of caregivers. Share your ideas and thoughts about the PCAFC by commenting on the notice published in the Federal Register and provide your comments on the specific questions posted in the notice. Your input will be used to help inform program improvements, increase consistency across the program, and ensure support for the caregivers of eligible Veterans who are most in need.

-VAPORHCS-

**Pharmacy hours change at PVAMC starting February 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon. — Wed. — Thurs. — Fri.</th>
<th>7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tues.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Weekends</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Holidays</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PVAMC Pharmacy helpful facts**

- PVAMC Outpatient Pharmacy is open 365 days a year.
- PVAMC fills 1,100 Rx/day; an additional 3,000 Rx/day are processed and sent to the VA Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP)
- Serves ~300 Veterans/day at the Pharmacy window.
- Busiest time of the day is 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Statistically, no single day of the week is busier than any other day. Sometimes the day after an Federal Holiday can be pretty busy and wait times may be longer than average due to the volume.
Opioid overdose can happen. Even when you take your medications as prescribed

Know your risk.

Veterans are two times more likely to die from an opioid overdose.

Half of those who overdose on opioids are also taking benzodiazepines.
For example: diazepam, lorazepam, alprazolam

Mixing opioids with alcohol increases your risk.

Protect yourself.
Ask your provider how to reduce your risk.

For more information visit:
www.visn20.med.va.gov/VISN20/services/pain/
Managing Chronic Pain and Suffering: A Resource Workshop

When: February 13, 2018 – 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Where: PVAMC, Building 101, Room 201

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 increase your quality of life.

Presenters will include experts in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pain Medicine</th>
<th>Medications</th>
<th>Complementary Medicine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBT for Chronic</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Movement Therapies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Yoga/Tai Chi</td>
<td>Stress Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

For more information or to sign up, call Dr. Timothy Wright
At 503-220-8262 Ext. 55612

Program offered by NW Pain Clinic & Primary Care - Mental Health Integration (PCMHI)
The ‘CART’ Research Study

Participate in a study exploring how technology supports the aging process.

The Collaborative Aging (in Place) Research using Technology (CART) project uses technology to assess activity in a home, with the hope of helping people remain independent as they age. By participating in this three-year long study, you’ll be contributing to the development of future devices that aim to increase the quality of life of older adults who may live far from medical clinics and hospitals.

You may be eligible if you:

- Live independently or with a partner
- Are at least 62 years old
- Are a veteran

What is Involved:

- Continuous measurement of activity patterns, by using motion sensors placed in your home and devices like a digital watch, scale and pillbox.
- In-home physical and cognitive assessments
- Compensation is provided at $100 per month

How the technology Works: After undergoing a screening process, researchers will install motion sensors in each room of the subject’s home, as well as devices like a digital watch, scale and pillbox. These sensors and devices are sensitive to a person’s presence and can continuously measure home-based activity in real-time.

Using an internet connection, data from these devices is sent securely to the research team’s servers. Innovative algorithms can translate the raw data into meaningful information.

The sensors are discreet and the devices do not interfere with daily life, meaning that the participant does not need to change their daily routines.

For more information: Contact study coordinator...
Rachel Wall — Email: Rachel.Wall@va.gov, Phone: 503-468-7178
Women Veterans - VAPORHCS wants to hear from you!

Attention Women Veterans: We want to hear from you about your experiences at VA Portland Health Care System to help improve our services.

A focus group is scheduled to hear your feedback:

Saturday, February 3rd, 1:30 - 4 p.m.       Topic: Outpatient Care

To register, please contact Ms. Jimmie Samuels at (503) 220-8262 ext. 58630.
Other details will be provided when you register.

If you are interested in providing feedback but unable to make it at these times, please leave your name so we can contact you for future focus groups.

Please help us by sharing this opportunity via Facebook

-VAPORHCS-
Self Referral now offered for Podiatry, Nutrition Services, and Amputee/Wheelchair Clinics

Podiatry, Nutrition Services, and Amputee/Wheelchair clinics can all now see patients by Self-Referral, meaning they do not need a consult placed to be able to see a provider in one of these areas. In the community, depending on a person’s insurance they may or may not need a referral to see a specialist. This option reduces the number of times a Veteran has to physically travel to a clinic since they do not need to see their PCP first and it gives them the ability to seek the care they need at the time they need it, with the goal of improving Veteran satisfaction and their health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the changes</th>
<th>How to contact or direct dial number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Podiatry</strong> – does the Veteran have new foot pain or open wounds on feet? They can call the Specialty Call Center and be referred directly to the Podiatry service for scheduling. The Veteran no longer needs to go through their PCP to have a consult entered.</td>
<td><strong>Podiatry</strong> – through the Specialty Call Center, (503) 220-8262 ext. 50820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition Services</strong> – If a Veteran would like to see a dietitian, they can call the NFS direct dial number to be scheduled. The Veteran no longer needs to go through their PCP or Specialist to have a consult entered.</td>
<td><strong>Nutrition Services</strong> – (503) 273-5112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amputee clinic</strong> – for our Veterans who are missing a body part, they can call or come by the clinic to be scheduled. No consult needed.</td>
<td><strong>Amputee &amp; Wheelchair clinics</strong> – (503) 273-5018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wheelchair clinic</strong> – for Veterans in need of a wheelchair, power wheelchair/scooter they can call or come by the clinic to be scheduled. No consult needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-VAPORHCS-
VA Veteran Listening Sessions/Community Meetings in

**Astoria** and **Newport**

**WHAT?**  VAPORHCS and VBA Portland Regional Office Directors are hosting a Veteran listening session/community meeting to hear from Veterans about issues, concerns and ideas so we can work on improving the care and services we provide to the Veterans in the community.

**FOR WHO?**  Veterans, family members and media representatives are invited.

---

**Astoria**

**WHEN?**  **Feb. 22, 2018:**  10:00 - 11:30 a.m.  (Please share via the web or Facebook)

**WHERE?**  **American Legion Post 12,**  basement/dining hall, 1132 Exchange St., Astoria, OR 97103

---

**Newport**

**WHEN?**  **March 13, 2018:**  12:00 - 1:30 p.m.  (Please share via the web or Facebook)

**WHERE?**  **American Legion Post 116,**  424 W Olive St, Newport, OR 97365