

JULY/AUGUST 2016



VETERANS BENEFITS & BEYOND

VA Announces Telemental Health Clinical Resource Centers During Telemedicine Association Gathering

As the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) works to improve Veterans' access to health care, its telehealth services play an integral role in that process, said Dr. David J. Shulkin, VA's Under Secretary for Health. Dr. Shulkin spoke recently to members of the American Telemedicine Association attending the group's 2016 conference in Minneapolis, where he also announced the establishment of five VA Mental Health Telehealth Clinical Resource Centers to provide enhanced mental health access and services to Veterans in remote locations.

VA is recognized as a world leader in the development of telehealth services that are now mission critical to the future direction of VA care to Veterans. VA uses health informatics, disease management, care and case management and telehealth technologies to facilitate access to care and improve the health of Veterans. VA currently services more than 677,000 Veterans through telehealth; that amounts to approximately 12 percent of the 5.6 Million Veterans who receive healthcare from the VA.

VA's Mental Health Telemedicine Clinical Resource Centers will provide Veterans, particularly those living in rural areas, with rapid access to mental health services where local barriers exist. This expanded effort will help close the gap in access to mental health care, in particular, in those traditionally underserved communities.

Source: www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2789

"We are in the midst of the largest transformation in the history of VA with MyVA, which means we are reorienting what we do around the needs of our Veterans and providing care when, how and where they want to receive that care," said Dr. Shulkin. "These mental health telehealth resource centers will provide our Veterans in underserved areas the expert mental health providers they may not otherwise be able to obtain locally. We know that we are doing

more in telehealth than any other healthcare system and connecting mental health providers to areas hard to recruit and retain."

The Mental Health Telehealth Clinical Resource Centers will be located in Charleston, SC.; Salt Lake City, Utah; Pittsburgh, PA; and a consortium of facilities in Boise, ID; Seattle, WA; and Portland, OR. The fifth facility, already operational in West Haven, Conn., is a specialty hub focused on the most severe and complex mental health issues, such as chronic depression and bipolar disorder. The others are expected to be available in the summer, with the priority given to VA medical facilities in urgent need of additional mental health providers.

VA Telehealth Services are available for more than 45 specialty areas of care. Top areas for VA telehealth services are mental health, rehabilitation including audiology

and speech pathology, retinal imaging, primary care, weight management, cardiology, and dermatology.

"These mental health telehealth resource centers will provide our Veterans in underserved areas the expert mental health providers they may not otherwise be able to obtain locally"

Dr. David J. Shulkin
VA's Under Secretary for Health

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JAN'S LETTER

To kick off our latest newsletter focusing on our Veterans and Veterans benefits, I'm happy to report that the Jan Dils team has been busy finding informative and interesting articles to include in this newest edition. And there's lots of good news to share—for instance, VA's Mental Health Telemedicine Clinical Resource Centers will provide Veterans, especially those living in rural areas, with faster access to mental health services where local barriers exist. This expanded effort focuses on closing the gap in access to mental health care, particularly in traditionally underserved communities.

Also, be sure to check out the articles we have included on MyVA, which represents the largest VA transformation ever to

provide a better experience for Veterans, and the well-rated VA Life Insurance Program.

We've also compiled the latest news from our team members, a fantastic new recipe, and a couple of items that are “just for fun”. Speaking of fun, with summertime in full swing, I hope you all have the opportunity to spend some time enjoying the warm weather with family and friends. Please remember that, if you have any questions about applying for and receiving the Veterans benefits you deserve, feel free to give us a call or send an email. We are always happy to hear from you!

Sincerely,
Jan Dils



JAN DILS brings her expertise to issues that affect you and millions of other Americans every day. While her knowledge spans the critical areas pertaining to Veterans' benefits, Social Security, disability benefits and related appeals and claims, her practice remains focused on people, making sure you get the right answers and, above all, results.

Improving the Veteran's Experience through MyVA Communities

As part of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) MyVA initiative, the largest transformation in the history of VA, VA is reporting the progress and growth of the locally led, community-driven initiative, MyVA Communities.

Modeled after San Diego's successful One VA Community Advocacy Board, more than 50 communities have joined the MyVA Communities movement. What these communities have in common is that they have local Veteran engagement boards that are led by the community, provide a feedback and input mechanism for local Veterans, are accessible, and are designed to bring together all available local resources and capabilities to better support our Veterans. They are also flexible enough to meet the unique needs of each community and facilitate the development of local solutions.

“VA is undergoing its largest ever transformation, MyVA, based around the central premise that we must look at all of the decisions we make through the lens of the Veteran, that is how we provide a better experience,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “A vital part of that transformation is better working with strategic partners and that's exactly what MyVA Communities help us do, bring together local community leaders that want to help VA improve and provide services to Veterans.”

Connecticut established the first Veterans community board in the country using the new MyVA Communities model and was followed by

several other start-ups including MyVA Pikes Peak in Colorado Springs, Colorado. In other areas, VA was able to join well-established existing engagements including the Alaska Forget Me Not Coalition and the Region 9 Veterans Community Action Team in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The community Veterans engagement boards, which go by different names in each community, are co-chaired and driven by local community leaders and include representatives from all three VA Administrations

on the board membership (Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration and the National Cemetery Administration). To support further integration of VA service offerings in communities, VA is incorporating the Veterans Economic Communities Initiative (VECI) into the MyVA Veterans Experience

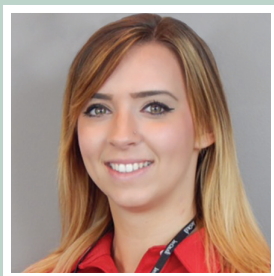
portfolio of service offerings. VECI, which was announced by the Secretary in 2015, has improved education and employment opportunities for Veterans in over 25 communities around the country. This is one example of a resource VA can offer to current and future MyVA Communities across the country.

VA expects to see 100 MyVA Communities throughout the country by the end of this year as a result of ongoing engagements with community leaders and existing groups with similar missions. The goal is

to seek integration with existing community collaborative groups, and encourage local community leaders to adopt the MyVA Communities model where gaps may exist.



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SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE

Darian Farley

Assisting Veterans in receiving the benefits they deserve hits close to home for Management Support Specialist Darian Farley, who has multiple family members in the military. Her boyfriend Anthony is in the National Guard as well, and has recently been promoted to an E-5 (Sargent).

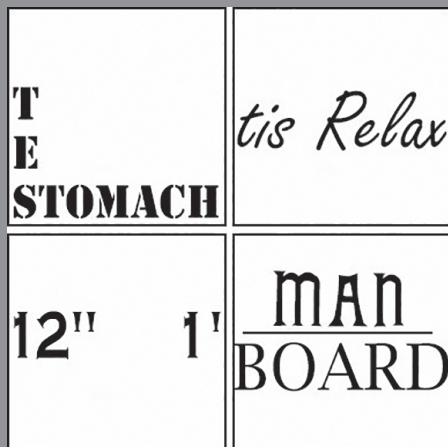
"Since I have been at Jan Dils, I have developed close bonds with the Veterans I have helped. I really enjoy hearing their experiences and life stories. Being able to help them is the most rewarding job," said Darian, who grew up in the small town of Waterford, Ohio. After graduating high school, she began her college career at Washington State Community College.

When she's not busy helping Veterans, Darian is busy house hunting with her boyfriend, Anthony, as they plan on getting engaged in the near future. They also enjoy spending time with their husky/hound mix, Halo, who they adopted from the Humane Society almost two years ago.

Please join us in thanking Darian for all of her hard work on behalf of the Veterans we serve!

BRAIN GAME

A wuzzle is a saying/phrase that is made up of a display of words, in an interesting way. The object is to try to figure out the well-known saying, person, place, or thing that each wuzzle is meant to represent.



ANSWERS: 1. 1. Upset Stomach 2. Sit Back and Relax 3. Two Feet 4. Man Overboard

OFFICE INBOX

STAY PLUGGED INTO THE PRACTICE

Want the scoop on what's new with our business and the team? You can find it right here, so stay plugged into the practice.

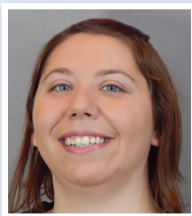
Congratulations to **Jenny Jones** in our Accounting Department, who married Rusty Frye on May 4th, and to Shawna Drake who welcomed her first child, Katara, who weighed in at 7 pounds and 3 ounces!

Congratulations are also in order for a number of professional accomplishments this month. **Peggy Pippin** is transitioning from Case Development to our Leads department; transitioning from her former position as a medical records review specialist, **Morgan Hellein** is our new VA Support Specialist; **Andrea Parsons** has transitioned from VA C-file reviews to VA Hearing Clerk/Appeals specialist; **Jess Hacker** is transitioning from VA Case Manager to VA C-file review specialist, and will retain her title as VA Team Leader; **Savannah Gay** has transitioned into VA case management, covering Veterans whose last name falls between D and J; and **Beth Pack** and **Heather Wilson** are two new additions to our team: Beth is a VA leads specialist and Heather is joining our VA department. Please join us in congratulating our team members!

Jan Dils team member Cheryl Wingrove had the honor of presenting **April's Golden Apple Award** to **Ronda Lemon**, a special education teacher at Hamilton Middle School. Parents say she has a heart of gold and is always willing to go the extra mile for her students, even finding mentors for her students who need them.

She refuses to give up on her students and refuses to let them give up on themselves. Lemon says she was surprised to be nominated by one of her students. "I never thought that anybody ever noticed anything that I do. I just try to do what each kid needs and it's nice to be recognized. Get involved with these kids, roll up your sleeves... you don't know how much impact you're going to have on their lives. I didn't realize I had a lot of impact," Lemon said. Patrick, the student who nominated her said, "She's an awesome teacher!"

Please join us in thanking Ronda Lemon and all of the incredible educators we have been honored this year for their dedication and hard work, and remember, if you have a teacher you feel is deserving of the Jan Dils Golden Apple Award, be sure to send in your nomination letter at www.thenewscenter.tv!



Get any morning off to a great start with this month's recipe for Breakfast Casserole, from the kitchen of VA Hearing Clerk Jolene Reeder!



INGREDIENTS

3 to 6 Eggs (depending on how many people you want your casserole to serve)
Your favorite type of biscuits

Sausage
Sausage gravy (mix or canned)
Shredded cheese (any type)

Directions: Bake biscuits and prepare sausage gravy. Scramble eggs. Cook sausage until crumbly. Layer biscuits with sausage gravy, then add scrambled eggs and cooked sausage. Top with shredded cheese, then bake at 350 degrees until cheese is melted and gooey (about 5 minutes). Dig in and enjoy!

IT'S TIME TO...

- ... Thank your mail carrier. **July 1st is Praise a Postal Worker Day.**
- ... Have your fireworks ready and fly Old Glory. **July 4th is Independence Day.**
- ... Sample all 31 flavors. **July 13th is Ice Cream Day.**
- ... Enjoy a second cup of "Joe". **July 24th is Coffee Day.**
- ... Thank a sailor. **August 4th is US Coast Guard Day.**
- ... Take it easy. **August 15th is Relaxation Day.**
- ... Practice the hula. **August 21st is Hawaii Day.**
- ... Forgive and forget. **August 25th is Kiss and Make Up Day.**

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VA Life Insurance Program Scores High in Veteran Satisfaction

VA's Life Insurance Program received a strong customer satisfaction score of 81 on a scale of 100 from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), an independent survey that scores customer satisfaction for more than 300 private companies and federal and local government agencies.

"VA is proud of the excellent service provided by its dedicated Insurance Program employees and the recent ACSI results they achieved," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "As part of our MyVA transformation effort, we will use the feedback from the survey to continue to build upon our strong customer service performance and further enhance the experience of the Veterans we work hard to serve every day."

The objective of the survey is to measure customer satisfaction and identify the critical factors related to improved customer satisfaction. The customer service index score of 81 is well above the government average of 64, and higher than the private life insurance industry average score of 77. The final score is based on favorable responses to questions of customer satisfaction compared to customer expectations.

In total, nine distinct services were surveyed, including Telephone Service, Requests for Policy Loans and Cash Surrenders, Correspondence, Waiver-of-

Premium Decisions, Beneficiary Claims and Designations, and new Life Insurance Applications. As part of its mission to serve Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families, VA's Life Insurance Program provides individuals with the peace of mind that comes with knowing their family's financial security is protected, given the extraordinary risks involved in military service. VA provides more

than \$1.3 trillion in coverage and insured 6.4 million Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families in fiscal year 2015.

"VA is proud of the excellent service provided by its dedicated Insurance Program employees and the recent ACSI results they achieved"

