

VETERANS BENEFITS & BEYOND

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JAN DILS ²⁵
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, L C



The VA Has Cured 100,000 Veterans of Hepatitis C.

Inside

**The VA, DeepMind Develop
Machine Learning System
to Predict Life-Threatening
Disease Before it Appears**

Office Inbox

Office News and Events

What's Cooking!

Skinny Spaghetti



March 2, 2019, marked the nationwide World Hepatitis Day. New drugs and an outreach campaign to help the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to rapidly deploy and treat Veterans has reached a significant milestone, having cured more than 100,000 Veterans of chronic hepatitis C virus infection (HCV).

Until recently, hepatitis C treatment required weekly injections and oral medications that many HCV-infected people couldn't take because of other health problems or unacceptable side effects.

That's changing. Today, chronic HCV is usually curable with oral medications taken every day for two to six months.

Still, about half of people with HCV don't know they're infected, mainly because they have no symptoms, which can take decades to appear. For that reason, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends

a one-time screening blood test for everyone at increased risk of the infection. The largest group at risk includes everyone born between 1945 and 1965 – a population five times more likely to be infected than those born in other years.

HCV infection can lead to advanced liver disease (ALD), liver cancer and early death. Curing HCV can prevent the development or progression of ALD, cutting death rates by up to 50%. Until recently, HCV treatment required medications to be taken daily by mouth and weekly by injection for up to a year, with cure rates as low as 35%. Additionally, this treatment had disabling medical and psychiatric side effects, which caused over half of patients to stop treatment prematurely.

“These efforts have been nothing short of lifesaving for tens of thousands of Veterans, and that's precisely why VA has made diagnosing, treating and curing hepatitis C virus

Continues on back page >>



Jan's Letter

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in one year alone approximately 399,000 people died from Hepatitis C, mostly from cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma (primary liver cancer). The virus is spread by contact with contaminated blood. Most people have no symptoms. Those who do develop symptoms may have fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite, and yellowing of the eyes and skin. The good news is Hepatitis C is treatable with a diagnosis. In fact, antiviral medicines can cure more than 95% of persons with hepatitis C infection. Fortunately, this is something the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking seriously. We hope you will read more about treatments for our Vets.

Also, on the proactive front, the VA has partnered with DeepMind Health on the development of an artificial intelligence (AI) system that can forecast Acute Kidney Injury (AKI). It is important that we work diligently to address the medical issues of those who have risked their lives. At Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we continue to fight for treatment and compensation of our Veterans. We understand the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made. If you are a disabled Veteran not being heard by our government, please contact us at 877.526.3457 or visit Fight4Vets.com.

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 Personal Injury, 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.

Spotlight Employee DEVON BURNFIELD

Devon Burnfield has spent most of his life here in the Mid-Ohio Valley. He joined the Jan Dils team in January 2017. He is a VA Disability Case Manager, working very closely with his clients. "It's so rewarding being able to be a part of something greater. It's my honor and privilege to help disabled Veterans navigate what can be a complicated process." When Devon is not hard at work, he enjoys listening to podcasts, traveling, and spending time with family. And so we chose Devon to be our fall Spotlight because of his kindness and professionalism, but to seal the deal, we also found out his favorite food is Italian. So you know he will be trying Elizabeth Dues' spaghetti and enjoying the annual dinner as well! Congratulations, Devon. We so enjoy having you as a member of our firm!



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.

Hannah Hoggard, **Hayley Todd** and **Elizabeth (Beth) Parsons** have joined the VA POD as Case Managers. **Jaime Caverly**, previously a Support Specialist, was also recently promoted to a Case Manager. We are excited to celebrate her growth with our firm. We've also added to our team a Medical Record Requestor, **Logan Heermans**, and a Hearing Clerk Support, **Natasha McFarland**. **Seth Kerby**, a summer intern is now a full-time Support Specialist as fall. **Chad Lockhart** is joining our VA Leads team in August. **Sarah Cooke** is our new Social Media Specialist. **Jasmine Bell** was recently added to our Mail and Scanning team.

Congratulations also go out to **Kasey Myers**, our Scheduling Coordinator, and **Morgan Hellein** in C-file are both expecting. **Nikki Coy** and **Amy Strong** from our C-File department both had babies in August.

Community Spotlight

In August, we held our annual fundraiser for **Operation Transportation**. The check will be presented at our fall Veterans Appreciation Dinner on November 7, 2019.

The annual spaghetti dinner takes place at the local Knights of Columbus in Downtown Parkersburg. The money goes to provide free bus passes to

Veterans in the Mid-Ohio Valley. And, of course, as a company and a country we will be celebrating Veterans Day on Monday, November 11, 2019.



The VA, DeepMind Develop Machine Learning System to Predict Life-Threatening Disease Before it Appears.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in partnership with DeepMind Health, published results in the July 31 edition of Nature (a publication of the International Journal of Science), on the development of an artificial intelligence (AI) system that can forecast a deadly kidney disease in advance.

In keeping with the VA's efforts to help improve the lives of Veterans through research and innovation, the breakthrough finding shows the model developed by the researchers can predict the presence of Acute Kidney Injury (AKI) in patients up to 48 hours in advance, which could help doctors determine treatment options to prevent further deterioration of the kidney.

AKI is notoriously difficult for doctors and nurses to detect; when it occurs, patients often deteriorate very quickly. The AI model permitted identification of over 90% of the most severe Acute Kidney Injury (AKI) cases 48 hours sooner than with usual care. That early detection permits improved medical care that can reduce progression to serious consequences such as need for dialysis.

"These are exciting times for research and innovation at VA," said VA Secretary

Robert Wilkie. "Studies like this can have a significant effect in not only the Veteran community but people throughout the nation."

Moving forward, the VA Palo Alto Health Care in California will be exploring ways to bring these advances into clinical use. The work leading up to this clinical trial involves complex interdisciplinary coordination to build and integrate a user-friendly platform to assist clinicians with treatment decisions. Leveraging the latest developments in AI technology is another innovation in health care that VA leadership is using to empower clinicians with timely, actionable data that improves the lives of Veterans.

At Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we are pleased with the investment toward innovation the VA is making. Many of our

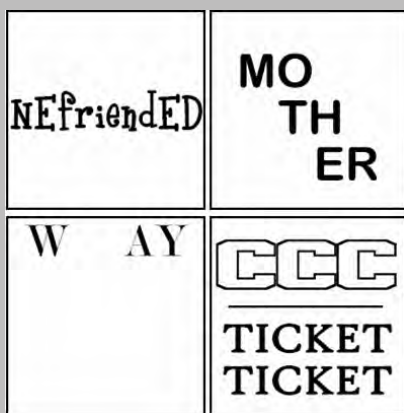


disabled Veterans suffer severe chronic issues. As VA technology gets better, we also urge that the government take care of our Veterans in the most basic way – fair compensation for disabilities received in the line of duty. If you or a family member is struggling to get the help you need, please don't hesitate to contact us at 877.526.3457 or jandils.com.

Source: www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5287

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: A friend in need, Stepmother, Divided highway, Season Tickets

SKINNY SPAGHETTI! Did our Community Spotlight get you thinking about spaghetti? Try this savory recipe from our Outer Offices Manager, **Elizabeth Dues**. All the flavor with fewer calories.



Ingredients:

- 1-1/3 lbs. lean ground turkey
- 2 cups minced bell peppers (about 15 mini peppers)
- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 3/4 cup Italian seasoned whole wheat breadcrumbs
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, plus extra salt and pepper
- 35 ounces super smooth spaghetti sauce (my preference)
- 16 ounces uncooked spaghetti
- fresh minced parsley and additional cheese for topping

DIRECTIONS: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Prep the peppers. Beat the eggs in a large bowl. Add the Parmesan cheese and breadcrumbs and stir until thick and sticky. Add the bell peppers, turkey and salt. Mix with your hands to really get the mixture incorporated. Roll the mixture into meatballs (I did smaller-sized meatballs and I was able to make about 50) and place on a greased baking sheet. They WILL stick and brown on the bottom as they bake. Sprinkle the meatballs generously with salt and pepper. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove from the baking sheet and set aside. Cook spaghetti according to package directions. Heat the spaghetti sauce in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the meatballs and some fresh parsley; stir gently and cover. Let the mixture simmer until the noodles are done cooking and the sauce is warmed through. Combine the sauce and noodles directly in the pan, or just scoop the sauce on top. Sprinkle with a little cheese for good luck.

Important Veterans Benefits News For Everyone

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Continued from cover story

infection such a priority," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

In early 2014, highly effective, less toxic, all-oral, direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) became available for HCV

"These efforts have been nothing short of lifesaving for tens of thousands of Veterans"

Robert Wilkie, VA Secretary

treatment. These new drugs have fewer and less severe side effects and can be given as one pill a day. The VA adopted use of these new medications within days of FDA approval.

Through Veteran advocacy, the VA

leadership and the support of Congress, VA implemented an aggressive program to treat Veterans with HCV who were both willing and able to be treated.

This included extensive outreach to all Veterans in the VA known to have HCV infection, and increased testing of those at highest risk for HCV. At the end of 2018, almost 85% of Veterans at increased risk for HCV had been tested, compared to 50% for the general U.S. population.

At the peak of this effort to rapidly deploy DAAs, VA was starting a Veteran on HCV treatment every 72 seconds on a typical work day – a rate of almost 2,000

new treatments each week. Currently, fewer than 25,000 Veterans in VA care remain to be treated. Because of this historic effort, Veterans cured of HCV are estimated to be 72% less likely to develop liver cancer.

