

Healthier VETERANS

A Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center Publication *Magazine*

WINTER 2012



New Device
Improves Outcomes in
Cardiac Surgery Patients

DCVAMC Launches
Hawk Eye Customer Service
Program and Hotline

A Day in My Shoes: DCVAMC
Change Academy Initiative

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Page



VA Opens Community Resource and Referral Center for Homeless and At-Risk Veterans

1



New CBOC Opens Near Joint Base Andrews

1



VA Combats Obesity Among Veterans

2

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Page



A Day in My Shoes: DCVAMC Change Academy Initiative



DCVAMC Launches Hawk Eye Customer Service Program and Hotline

6

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Page



New Device Improves Outcomes in Cardiac Surgery Patients

7

Healthier VETERANS Magazine

Washington DC VA Medical Center
50 Irving St. NW
Washington, DC 20422

Brian A. Hawkins, MHA
Medical Center Director

Michelle Spivak - Editor
Director, Community Relations and Public Affairs

Sarah H. Cox - Managing Editor
Public Affairs Specialist

Gloria Hairston - Contributing Editor
Internal Communications Officer

Gary Strange - Graphic Designer
Visual Information Specialist

Andrew J. White - Cover Photography
Chief, Medical Media

Telephone: 202-745-4037
Website: www.washingtondc.va.gov
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonDCVAMC>
Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/DCVAMC>

VA Opens Community Resource and Referral Center for Homeless and At-Risk Veterans

Ribbon cutting ceremony marking the grand opening of the Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC). The facility provides 24/7 help for homeless and at-risk veterans.



Homeless and at-risk Veterans now have round-the-clock access to services. The Washington DC VA Medical Center's (DCVAMC) new Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) reflects VA's proactive approach to ending homelessness.

A first for the DC metropolitan area, the CRRC is a community hub to combat homelessness among Veterans, centralizing services by offering a primary care clinic, social workers, mental health providers and benefits counselors. It's a collabora-

tive center that brings these diverse agencies and services together so that Veterans aren't faced with hunting down the services they need.

According to Dr. Fuad Issa, the Medical Director of the Community Resource and Referral Center, having comprehensive services in one location is especially beneficially to Veterans at-risk for homelessness.

"Homelessness is often a consequence of multiple factors and Veterans benefit by having a one-stop shop to address those issues."

The CRRC is not a shelter, but

it does offer showers and a laundry facility, a food pantry, a computer lab, a chapel, a secure play room for children, and a state-of-the-art professional kitchen which will soon be used as a facility to train Veterans interested in future employment in the restaurant industry.

The CRRC is located just 1.5 miles from the DC VA Medical Center at 1500 Franklin St. N.E. It is easy to access via public transportation. To learn more, visit www.washingtondc.va.gov or call the CRRC at 202-636-7660.

New CBOC Opens Near Joint Base Andrews

The Medical Center opened a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Camp Springs, Maryland on July 30. Present for the opening honors were (l to r): Brian A. Hawkins, Medical Center Director; Congresswoman Donna Edwards; Col. Janice D. Wallace, Vice Commander, 79th Medical Center of Joint Base Andrews; Senator Ben Cardin and Fernando O. Rivera, Network Director.



Combating Obesity Among Veterans with TeleMOVE!

By Cameron Barry, Public Affairs Intern

New technologies such as Telehealth are helping improve health care services, providing tools for remote care at community clinics, at home, and in the palm of your hand.

Veterans with a variety of chronic health issues may qualify for Home Telehealth or Veterans may choose to get Telehealth services at the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) nearer to their home. One outstanding Telehealth program is called TeleMOVE! Veterans struggling with obesity may find TeleMOVE! an excellent support in their efforts to lose weight.

VA estimates about 77% of Veterans enrolled for care have a body mass index (BMI) of 25, five points away from obesity. Medical professionals consider obesity a disease. It comes as no surprise that medical science has found a way to battle back in an attempt to stomp out obesity. Established in 2008, VA's TeleMOVE! program does just that.

The TeleMOVE! program invites Veterans who qualify to participate in a 90-day regimen that includes completing one workout per day for 82 days and modifying their diet with the help of a nutritionist.

Once a Veteran completes his/her 90-day cycle, the attending health care professional will either recommend discharge from the program, or another 90-day period of diet and exercise. The Washington DC



VA Medical Center (DCVAMC) was one of the first sites of care to offer MOVE! through Telehealth.

Once accepted into the program, Veterans are issued an electronic scale to consistently monitor their weight, a pedometer to calculate the number of steps taken and distance traveled during a workout, and a messaging device/modem that connects directly to a landline or cellular phone for communication with their dietician and personal trainer. Unlike traditional weight loss programs, which can cost hundreds



of dollars, VA offers TeleMOVE! to qualified Veterans absolutely free. Veterans must meet certain criteria to participate in the program. Your BMI must be determined to be overweight (25-29), or obese (30 or higher). Although the program accepts Veterans that are in the overweight category, the Veteran must also have a pre-existing condition, such as diabetes, to be considered for enrollment. Veterans must also have access to a landline or cellular phone in order to properly operate all needed equipment.

Exercise in the TeleMOVE! program is fairly simple and consists of walking, as well as light to medium weight lifting with dumbbells and resistance bands. Each workout session lasts 90 minutes, and requires Veterans to report back about their experience on the remote access modem connected to their landline or cellular device. The exercises are low impact and easy to do, so it's no wonder that the DCVAMC TeleMOVE! program averages 100 patients actively engaged in the program every day. Veterans who stick with their workout regimen lose weight at a safe, healthy pace, often reduce their medication intake, and feel better.

Veterans interested in TeleMOVE! are encouraged to contact VA Dietician Cheryl Wojnar at (202)745-8000, ext. 5401.



A Plan You Can LIVE With: Lifestyle Intervention for Veterans

By Cameron Barry, Public Affairs Intern

There's absolutely no question that the bacon cheeseburger combo meal you ate the other day tasted fantastic, and filled you up for an hour or so, but what affect will that food have on your body in the long term? Many Americans are finding out their diet and exercise habits are primary contributors to adult onset diabetes.

Dr. Peter Kokkinos of the Washington DC VA Medical Center (DCVAMC) has developed a program to help Veterans live a healthy lifestyle with a diabetes diagnosis. The program is called Lifestyle Intervention for Veterans, or LIVE, and it

was designed to combat the damage that diabetes can cause the body and potentially put the disease on hold for some patients.

“Most diabetics are physically 10 years older than their chronologic age, meaning that a diabetic at age 50 would have the physical ability of a 60 year old.”

DCVAMC established the LIVE program in July 2010. Dr. Helen Sheriff says “LIVE assists Veterans in better managing their diabetes, weight, and overall health.” Dr. Kokkinos and Dr. Sheriff agree that managing diabetes requires a holistic approach - treating the body, mind and spirit. They also believe that diabetes could be much better managed by adhering to a good diet and exercise regimen and stress reduction techniques - in addition to medication based treatments.



The LIVE program is comprised of a personalized diet and exercise plan that Veterans adopt for a 10 to 12 week period. Over that period of time, good habits will be formed and Veterans will experience the gratification of weight loss and

increased aerobic capacity and strength.

The first step is educating Veterans about their particular type of diabetes, and explaining

how diet and exercise can improve their quality of life. Veterans will then start a personalized exercise regime which usually includes; brisk walking, cycling, swimming, or other light exercises beginners can physically handle. The ideal regime will be a minimum of three exercise sessions a week. In addition to the personalized exercise plan, Veterans work with nutritionists to design a personalized diet, which they must adhere to throughout the program.

Nearly 800 Veterans have participated in the LIVE program and 400 patients are currently enrolled. The DC VA Medical Center is working to expand this program to CBOC locations in the DC metro area by offering a TeleLIVE option which would utilize Telehealth technology. With TeleLIVE Veterans can participate in every aspect of the program from locations close to their homes.

“Most Veterans are very happy with the results they see, and report that their individual results often exceed their expectations,” says Dr. Sheriff. Veterans who have completed the program report they are keeping up with their diet and exercise, resulting in a much greater level of control over their diabetes.

According to Dr. Kokkinos, “most diabetics are physically 10 years older than their chronologic age, meaning that a diabetic at age 50 would have the physical ability of a 60 year old.”

Through the LIVE program, it has been found that Veterans who enroll and exercise at least three times a week will be back to their rightful physical condition, regaining 10 years of physical performance, at the end of the 10 week treatment. Veterans who exercise five times a week or more will gain back 20 years of physical performance.

If you are a Veteran interested in the LIVE program, please contact your primary care provider, or Dr. Peter Kokkinos at (202)745-8430.



Exercise plays a key role in the lives of residents of the Medical Center's Community Living Center.

A DAY IN MY SHOES CHANGE ACADEMY INITIATIVE

VA Leaders spent a week stepping out on the front lines of VA Health Care, working different jobs to better understand employees' roles. The "A Day in My Shoes" program, included Medical Center Director, Brian A. Hawkins, at the wheel of an employee shuttle bus; Chief Nurse Executive, Kathy Barry serving as a medical clerk in a clinic; Deputy Chief Nurse, Alyshia Smith was a barista at the coffee café; and Director, Community Relations and Public Affairs, Michelle Spivak, served breakfast in the cafeteria.

The "Day in My Shoes" program is one of several Change Academy Team Initiatives being implemented throughout the Medical Center. Other initiatives are: Mission Statement, LEAD Graduate growth, Walking Path, and Quarterly Activities. These initiatives grew out of the Medical Center's Planetree and Patient-Centered Care Model. The initiatives are helping staff members put "Capitol Excellence" in practice by engaging them in efforts to achieve cultural transformation and operational excellence.



Chief Nurse Executive, Kathy Barry, RN, serves as a clerk June 25 as part of "A Day in My Shoes" initiative.



Medical Center Director Brian A. Hawkins spent the day in the shoes of a Medical Center shuttle bus driver.



Michelle Spivak, Director, Community Relations and Public Affairs helped serve meals in the Cafeteria with Pat Smith, Food Service Leader.

There is nothing more constant and reliable as change. Here at Washington DC VA Medical Center (DCVAMC) we are embracing change as something positive and inevitable and are even enjoying it.

We've implemented The Change Academy which is helping us operationalize our "Capitol Excellence" theme. The Change Academy builds upon what DCVAMC started when it implemented Planetree and the Patient-Centered Care Model and takes us to the next level.

Currently, eight different Change Academy initiatives are underway to engage employees, achieve operational excellence, and transform our culture so that we can be the best Medical Center in the world.

Every employee has been empowered to create positive change in the Medical Center. So far, the teams have rewritten our Mission Statement, created the Hawk Eye Program, coordinated lunchtime concerts, implemented the Workplace Conduct program "Behaviors of Consistency" and started the "Day in My Shoes" Program.

We hope you have noticed and approve of the many changes we are making to help improve your DCVAMC experience.



BRIAN A. HAWKINS, MHA
Medical Center Director



DCVAMC Launches Hawk Eye Customer Service Program and Hotline

Embracing our mission of "Capitol Excellence," the Washington DC VA Medical Center (DCVAMC) has established the Hawk Eye program to be certain that all staff members provide Veteran-centered care and to ensure a safe, respectful and caring environment for visitors to the hospital.

Hawk Eyes visit units throughout the Medical Center and in the community clinics identifying opportunities for improvement and giving guidance to staff members. Medical Center Director, Brian A. Hawkins, explained. Excellence transcends the management team. It is a culture that encourages every single employee to make positive changes in operations. It's empowering!

Hawk Eye phone and email hotlines have been established for Veterans, visitors, volunteers and staff members to call to report



customer service issues of concern:

1. From any Medical Center Phone: Dial extension 7474 to leave a message on the Hawk Eye Customer Service Hotline.
2. Hawk Eye Customer Service Hotline phones: These bright orange phones located in the main atrium and the cafeteria give Veterans and visitors direct access to the hotline.
3. From an outside phone line: Dial 202-745-8000, ext. 7474.

Veteran's Wish Fulfilled...

A Warm Hug Between Old Friends

Navy Veteran Douglas Schiliro of Ft. Washington, MD enjoyed horseback riding, and the great outdoors. Mr. Schiliro, who resided in the DC VA Medical Center's Community Living Center, told the staff of the Palliative and Hospice team that he wanted to see his horse one more time. The staff connected with Schiliro's fiancé, and his friends, to fulfill his wish. On July 20, Mr. Schiliro and DCVAMC employees had a wonderful surprise when a large horse trailer arrived with the Veteran's beloved horse, "James Brown". Schiliro couldn't wait to stroke and hug his old friend. It lifted the Veteran's spirits to know his VA caregivers had made his wish come true. Mr. Schiliro passed away on Oct. 12, 2012.

Hawk Eye team member assists Veteran with a concern.





New Device Improves Outcomes in Cardiac Surgery Patients

Cardiac surgeries performed at Washington DC VA Medical Center (DCVAMC) are now safer and more accurate thanks to the latest intra-operative tool, the Medistim VeriQC.

One of only twelve VA medical centers employing this technological advance, DCVAMC's Chief of Cardiac Surgery, Dr. Gregory Trachiotis, calls the VeriQC system a quality control tool.

The system, used before and during coronary artery bypass procedures, combines ultrasound and Doppler velocity measurements. It uses two probes, one for imaging of the outside of the cardiac muscle and the other to measure blood flow transit time.

"This helps us ensure a more precise and complete revascularization."* says Trachiotis.

The device also allows the surgeon to view vessels resulting in quicker surgery and reducing the patient's time under anesthetic.

The probe that measures the volume of blood flow and the resistance to flow in real time gives the surgeon the opportunity to evaluate the success of the revascularization while the patient is still on the operating table.

Dr. Trachiotis believes the new device will improve both early and long-term results and potentially could help avoid more surgery. He says, "It's an amazing device and we're really excited to be able to offer this level of surgical excellence to Veterans."

*Revascularization is a surgical procedure that provides a new, additional, or augmented blood supply to a body part or organ.

Chief, Infectious Disease Honored by CDC

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) honored Washington DC VA Medical Center's Chief of Infectious Disease, Fred M. Gordin, MD, with the Charles C. Shepard Science Award for achievement in the advancement of prevention and control of tuberculosis. Dr. Gordin co-authored "Three Months of Rifapentine and Isoniazid for Latent Tuberculosis Infection" which was published in the New England Journal of Medicine, and was one of only four papers nominated for the award out of 69 submissions.

Dr. Gordin's research has led to a major breakthrough, resulting in shorter treatment time. This could accelerate the process of totally eradicating tuberculosis.

The Shepard Science Awards were established in 1986 in honor of Charles S. Shepard, MD, and are presented to medical/science professionals for original publications and lifetime achievement.



DC VA Medical Center's Chief of Infectious Disease, Dr. Fred M. Gordin recognized with the CDC's Shepard Science Award.

Groundbreaking Research published in The Journal of Biological Chemistry

Dr. Bidhan C. Bandyopadhyay and his team are studying the process of regulating calcium concentrations in saliva. DCVAMC's Calcium Signaling Laboratory studies Salivary Stone Disease (Sialolithiasis) and infections in the

salivary gland (Sialadenitis). The study, published in The Journal of Biological Chemistry may also help scientists examine similar processes for preventing calcium stones in kidneys, the pancreas, and the vascular system.



The Calcium Signaling Laboratory Team

DCVAMC Director Named "Communications Visionary of the Year"

Washington DC VA Medical Center is the proud recipient of two Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Communications Awards for 2012. Brian A. Hawkins, Medical Center Director, was named VHA "Communications Visionary

of the Year". This award recognizes a leader's innovative techniques and achievements in support of VHA's public affairs mission. And, the DCVAMC Office of Public Affairs received the 3rd place award in the Communications Campaign category for its "Capitol Excellence"

Suicide Prevention Coordinator Honored by VA

DCVAMC's Suicide Prevention Coordinator is the winner of the Secretary's Award for Nursing Excellence, the highest honor bestowed upon a VA Nurse.

Ms. Toles, who has been serving DCVAMC Veterans since October 2007, is responsible for ensuring high-risk Veterans meet with the Suicide Prevention team. Her innovative treatment strategies help Veterans better cope with their challenges. Ms. Toles loves her job because "I know we're saving Veterans' lives".



Patricia Toles-Lucas, RN, Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Washington DC VA Medical Center Director, Brian A. Hawkins

Campaign. VHA sponsors these annual awards to recognize and encourage improvements to the quality and impact of communications and public relations programs.





WASHINGTON DC

VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER
CAPITOL ★ EXCELLENCE

Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
50 Irving Street, NW
Washington, DC 20422
202-745-8000
www.washingtondc.va.gov

WINTER 2012

Bringing Health Care Closer to Home: Community Based Outpatient Clinics

Washington DC VA Medical Center operates five Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) and a Community Resource and Referral Center in DC and the surrounding areas. The CBOCs offer Veterans the opportunity to receive quality health care closer to where they live. If you have any questions, you may call the clinic nearest to you directly or to make an appointment you may call the Patient Service Center, 202-745-8577 or 877-DCVAMC1(1-877-328-2621).

Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) 202-636-7660
1500 Franklin Street, NE
Washington, DC 20018

Ft. Belvoir Community Clinic 571-231-2408
9300 DeWitt Loop
Fort Belvoir, MD 22060

Southern MD VA Outpatient Clinic 301- 884-7102
29431 Charlotte Hall Road.
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622

Greenbelt Community Clinic 301-345-2463
7525 Greenway Center Drive
Greenway East Professional Center, Suite T-4
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

Southeast Community Clinic 202- 745-8685
820 Chesapeake Street, S.E.
Washington, DC 20032

Southern Prince George's County Community Clinic 301-423-3700
5801 Allentown Road
Camp Springs, MD 20746



My HealthVet is a web-based application designed specifically for Veterans and their families. It provides Veterans access to personal, secure, convenient, and trusted health information that improves their health and empowers them as health care consumers.

To register, stop by the MyHealthVet Office during your next visit to the DCVAMC or if you prefer, you may schedule an appointment by calling: (202) 745-8000, ext. 8715.

Services available on My HealthVet:

- Managing Appointments
- Ordering prescription refills online
- Establishing a personal health journal
- Wellness reminders

Visit www.myhealth.va.gov for more information.



VA HEALTH CARE | Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century