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Source

A Newsletter for the Residents, Volunteers & Staff of the VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics



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B. Don Burman New Director of the VA SORCC

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A Message About The

Director

Dear Fellow Employees, Volunteers, Veterans and Friends of VA SORCC:

The Department of Veterans Affairs is pleased to announce the appointment of Don Burman as the new director of the Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics (SORCC). Burman will oversee delivery of health care to more than 16,000 Veterans and an operating budget of \$89 million.



“We are excited to bring Mr. Burman on board as the new director of the SORCC,” said Larry Carroll, Network Director, VISN 20. “His sound leadership qualities and proven experience will be valuable assets for the VISN, the employees and volunteers, and most importantly, for the Veterans we are honored to serve. We anticipate he will arrive in White City within the next 45 to 60 days to begin his appointment.”

Mr. Burman is currently the Director of the Heartland Surgical Specialty Hospital, a private sector facility located in Overland Park, Kansas. He has held this position since May 2009. In this role, Mr. Burman is responsible for all business decisions within this very diverse organization including development, fiscal, strategic planning and regulatory issues that are required to ensure stability of the organization. During his tenure, he acquired one spine and orthopedic practice, one primary care practice and assumed the management of one Ambulatory Surgery Center. He also reduced operating expenses by 15%, saving the institution approximately \$2 million and negotiated the real estate purchase options for future acquisition of a land for buildings surrounding the hospital.

Under his leadership, Heartland was recognized by Press Ganey as a leader in patient satisfaction for 3 years, and recognized by Women Preferred as a facility of distinction and by the Becker group as one of the top 50 hospitals in the country. Mr. Burman also served as CEO for Pinnacle Healthcare LLC in Crown Point Indiana from 2006-2008 and the CEO for Orthopedic Hospital of Oklahoma from August 2000 – November 2005. He has an impressive resume of progressively responsible leadership positions in the field of Health Care Administration during a 24+ year career. He also served in the US Air Force, has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Trinity University in Texas, and a Master of Health Administration from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri.

A Message About The

Network Director

Lawrence H. Carroll was appointed Network Director, VISN 20, in October 2012. His effective date is December 3, 2012. Prior to that he served as Medical Center Director at the VA San Francisco, from the period February 2009 – November 2012.



Mr. Carroll began his VA career in April 1982 and served as VA District Planner, Medical District Office in Buffalo, NY through November 1987. From 1987 to 1996, Mr. Carroll served as the Director of Facilities Construction for the VA Western Regional Office in San Francisco. He then served as Special Assistant to the Director, NCHCS from July 1996 to September 2001 where he played a key role in executive management in setting policy, guiding organizational change and managing program development. He has also served as Deputy Network Director for the Sierra Pacific Network (VISN 21), Acting Director of the VA Northern California Health Care System (NCHCS) and Associate Director, NCHCS East Bay Division.

Before joining the VA, Mr. Carroll held several positions of increasing responsibility in health systems management including assignments as Director of Planning and Data Manager at the Health Systems Agency of Western New York, Buffalo, NY. He possesses a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University and an MBA with a specialty in Health Systems Analysis from the State University of New York. Mr. Carroll served two years in the United States Army and was honorably discharged.

The VA Northwest Health Network is one of 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). VISN 20 serves Veterans in 47 locations in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, California and Montana. The annual operating budget is more than \$2.1 billion and FTEE exceeds 10,500. The Network provides healthcare and other services to more than 220,000 veterans each year.

Calendar Of Events

March 27th Volunteer Award Ceremony-Red Lion

April 14th - 20th National Volunteer Week

May 6th VAVS Committee Meeting, 10 AM Activity Room

May 27th Memorial Day Ceremony, VA Cemetery-CRD Closed



Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.
~Sherry Anderson

Employee Spotlight

Dropping out of high school to care for a paraplegic uncle suffering with alcoholism started Danell Hiltz down a road that would lead her to a life of volunteer service and a career as an occupational therapist.

After returning to and completing high school she enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a personnelman where she was recognized for her active participation in the Navy Relief Program, Naval Color Guard and volunteer escort for retired Rear Admiral T.B. Neblett. Following her honorable discharge in 1983 she attended the University of Texas with the hope of a career in the marketing and delivery of healthcare.

Danell earned a BBA in marketing, graduating in the top ten percent of her class. Being interested not only in her own welfare but also that of her college and community she held offices in the college level chapters of professional associations, served as chairperson for the Arlington Homeless Shelter, assistant to the President of the Dallas International Cultural Center, volunteer educator for immigrants, Red Cross Disaster Team, and League of Women Voters to name just a few. Danell was recognized for these activities by being selected as one of only thirty seven students nationally to receive the "GM Spirit Award," which recognizes outstanding community/civic involvement by students while attending school, and inclusion in Who's Who Among Students in 1988.

After graduating from UT Arlington in 1989 Danell enrolled in Texas Woman's University's post graduate program of Occupational Therapy. During this time she served as a volunteer camp counselor for the Spina Bifida Association and a guest worker at the Hansen's Disease Research Center in Carville, Louisiana. Danell says she was quite impressed with the clinical excellence and commitment she observed at Carville and it was then she seriously considered returning to active duty. While working at Carville she met Captain Judith Bell-Krotoski and contributed to her research on sensory detection threshold studies which was published in the Journal of Hand Therapy in April 1995.

Before returning to active duty Danell completed an internship at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and a post graduate fellowship at the Center of Excellence in Substance Abuse Treatment and Education at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Seattle, Washington.

Upon attaining a commission in the U.S. Army Danell was asked her duty location preference, answering "My goal is to attain clinical excellence so I don't care where you send me as long as I'm challenged and among other professionals who have similar goals and are excited about their work." She was transferred to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. She got her wish, serving as Chief of three programs in the largest, most complex Army therapy clinics that received 8,000 visits per year. Her psychiatric occupational management program earned a Clinical Excellence Award. Danell volunteered, as a facilitator and public speaker about occupational health issues and instructor for the Army Family Team Building Program.

After Walter Reed Danell accepted a commission with the U.S. Public Health Service, where she volunteered with debriefing teams after the Anthrax attack and 9/11 then went on to develop the first occupational therapy clinic at Fort Defiance in Arizona.

Danell has been part of the SORCC family since 2005 and states, "There is not a day she has not looked forward coming to work." Largely because of her former supervisor, Ricky Martin, the respect she shares with providers and staff, and the opportunity to develop programs that benefit the Veteran patients we serve. She implemented the first occupational therapy internship program at SORCC as well as basic hand therapy and iontophoresis, the use of electric current to deliver medication through the skin. Her current volunteer work includes, providing guest education of her profession to senior citizen groups, the Women Veteran's Advisory Committee, Women Veteran's Tea, Major Medical Committee and Health Fairs just to name a few.

We are very proud to have someone of Ms. Hiltz's caliber, part of the SORCC family.



Veteran In Transition

Donald a former Marine can remember feeling different during his earliest childhood memories. “The male thing was not there all of my life but I pretended like so many of us do to fit in and not raise eye brows,” said Donald. Today Donald goes by Rachel a Veteran who is undergoing transformation through hormonal therapy and hopes to have reassignment surgery by 2014. On February 07, 2012, Rachel spoke at a VA regional conference. During her talk, Rachel said, “I am not an expert on transgendered issues nor speak for the community but I will offer some of my personal experiences from my prospective and perception.” Rachel felt by sharing her story with VA doctors and staff she could make a difference and help other transgendered Veterans like her. During her talk, Rachel also praised doctors and administrators of the Portland VA Hospital for treating her with the respect they show all fellow Veterans, which made it easier to open up to staff about her needs as a transgendered woman.

Although Rachel credits the VHA and Portland VA doctors for a lot of help and success during her transformation, they were not able to help with difficulties she faced with family members. When Rachel received the news her mother was diagnosed with cancer in 2011, made it very difficult for Rachel to write her mother to inform her she had transitioned to a woman and her name was now Rachel. Her mother replied, “I had two sons and a daughter, you were always my handsome boy, come to my funeral as my son or not at all.” In spite of her mother’s letter, Rachel did learn that her mother sought counsel from her priest and it gave Rachel peace knowing her mother had family members watching over her. After her mother’s death, Rachel spoke with the priest, he said, “Your mother did not approve of your “lifestyle choice” but please understand she did love you very much.” This allowed some closure for Rachel and empowered her to make the commitment to help other Veterans like herself so that perceptions are not misinterpreted which are based on zero communication with family or friends... this was a painful lesson for Rachel. Currently Rachel is continuing her estrogen treatment, and spends hours researching where to have her sexual reassignment surgery.



There are currently about eight Veterans at the VA SORCC who are enrolled in care as outpatient, who are transitioning at this time. Transgender population may not want VA providers or military to know that they have Gender Identity Disorder (GID). When the “don’t ask don’t tell” was repealed during President Obama’s first term, it changed the dynamics of views.” Currently, the SORCC does not have an endocrinologist on staff to prescribe hormone treatment, therefore, transgender Veterans are sent to Roseburg VAMC to start and regulate the hormones.

VA SORCC, Toni Vondra, LCSW, Chair of the Case Consultative Ethics Team, reviewed the process of Transgender Care to meet the challenges in residential program that has a series of actions to estab-

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lish clear boundaries, which protects LGBT Veteran population as defined by the VHA Directive 2011-024, Retaliation Memo, and EEO Protected Populations.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) defines Transgender as “a term used to describe people whose gender identity (sense of themselves as male or female) or gender expression differs from that usually associated with their sex assigned at birth.” It is VHA policy that medically necessary care is provided to enrolled or otherwise eligible intersex and transgender Veterans, including hormonal therapy, mental healthcare, preoperative evaluation and medically necessary post-operative and long-term care following sex reassignment surgery. Sex reassignment surgery cannot be performed or funded by VHA or VA. The Transgender American Veterans Association, estimates there could be as many as 300,000 transgender people among the nation's 26 million Veterans.

Wounded Warrior's

By Kenneth Price, Vietnam Veteran

They are young...so very strong
Off to war
For which some long
They didn't know
What they would see
They'd be fighting memories
Wanting only to be Free
So often alone... on cold...dark nights,
Reliving the horror
Reliving the fight
While those at home
Who wait for their men
Not really knowing
Those whom they loved
Could never be as before, again
They finally return
Only wanting to hide
From terror they've known
From wound's deep inside
In trying to cope, some turn to dope
Many more lose, turning to booze
In reaching a bottom
Some look to above
By turning to others
Sharing real love
Healing may come
As they work through their pain
By lancing their wound's
A new life they gain
America...be caring with
All those you sent, show them compassion, for
you, they went



VA SORCC Team for another successful year in providing the Best Care Anywhere for our Nation's Heroes!

Education: In coordination with HR and Workforce Development Committee, the PATHWAYS program was implemented with 10 graduates successfully completing the 16 week course and developing improvement projects.

Feds Feed Families: Through the combined efforts of HR and the VA SORCC staff, we collected nearly 1000 lbs of food to be donated to our local community food bank.

SORCC Addition Treatment Program (SATP): Congratulations to the SORCC Addiction Treatment Program for ranking 1st in VISN20 and 4th in the nation for SATP successful completion rate!

Optometry: Successful implementation and accreditation of Optometry residency program at the VA SORCC.

Residential Care: Through collaborative efforts with the Infirmary, Panel Nurses, Travel Staff, and Pharmacy, the Residential Care Program developed a new "Medical Appointment Pass slip" process to assure accurate, timely, and safe travel to and from medical appointments off-station.

Quality Management: VA SORCC Quality Management team of 5 staff members lead the facility through its most successful OIG-CAP review that occurred in FY2012. It was the best VA SORCC has done in its history and with only 5 recommendations, is a new record for VISN 20 facilities. VA SORCC has established a new benchmark for others.

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC): The HBPC team improved home oxygen patient safety program.

Voluntary Services: Volunteer Statistics Regularly scheduled volunteers = 524, Total Volunteer Hours = 74,136, FTE Equivalent = 36, Monetary Value of Hours = \$1.6 million

Volunteer drivers for DAV Transportation Network: Rural Outreach Vans, Chaplain Service, Recreation Therapy, SATP, Social Work Service and Vocational Rehabilitation. **DAV Transportation Statistics:** 172,899 miles driven, 45 drivers, 13,535 volunteer Hours, 4,496 Veterans transported.

Chaplain Service: 100% Completion of VHA Handbook 1111.02 on spiritual assessments. Increased attendance on weekend services, with more volunteers during the service. Continued Chaplain Services (spiritual/pastoral/religious) and classes.

Human Resources: HR completed a tremendous task of converting all Vet Pro files to electronic files, and met the requirement in record time. HR worked with Education Service this year to streamline our New Employee Orientation process. During FY 12, the Human Resources Office was visited by the VA Central Office as a part of a Human Capital Management Assessment Site Review. The results of the review were very positive due to the hard work and preparation by all members of the HR Team.

Vocational Rehabilitation: During FY 2012 98 Veterans have been placed into direct employment 1st and



2nd quarters which is a 44% increase over FY 2011. The number of Veterans placed the 1st and 2nd FY2012 under the Transitional Work Program is 119; a 50% increase from the same period last year.

Business Office: Successfully merged Medical Care Cost Fund at VA-SORCC with the West Consolidated Patient Account Center in Las Vegas. Progress towards full implementation of the new Non

VA Care Coordination program which is a national initiative. Reduced time needed to transfer Veterans from local hospitals to VA facilities.

Patient Safety: The Patient Safety Program of the VA SORCC has successfully completed 8 Root Cause Analysis with small teams of dedicated employees whose efforts have significantly improved the safety of care to Veterans to ensure freedom from accidental or inadvertent injury through solidly investigated root causes, well developed actions plans and detailed outcome measures.

Infirmary: Restructured panel teams, restructured sick call, and enhanced Safe Medication Management process to improve quality, safety, and efficiency.

OEF/OIF Program: In FY12 Office of Rural Health funded 16 (out of a possible 24) OEF/OIF/OND Veterans to participate in an 8-week Equine Assisted Therapy Program in Yreka, CA called Horses Helping Heroes in 3 separate seasonal riding sessions. The Program, facilitated by a licensed Occupational Therapist, assists Veterans in addressing their musculoskeletal problems and other challenges including flexibility, strength and cognitive attention. Additionally, the Veterans work on building trust, coping with anxiety and improving their ability to concentrate. All the Veterans who participated expressed their appreciation in being able to engage in a satisfying method of physical and emotional therapy that was enjoyable and supported by the VA.

Customer Comments: “(GP CBOC) For maintaining a high level of professionalism...and for great service to our Veterans” “(Dental) Best dental staff in the valley.” “(Pharmacy) It is always a pleasure and pleasant.”

Social Work/Homeless Programs: In the past year a redesign of the Grant Per Diem (GPD) program was completed. This was done by the organizational restructuring of the Interfaith Care Community (ICC), to align their program with VA initiatives and their GPD contract. All program standards and policies were revised to align with the recovery model and make the program Veteran centered. A Veteran Council was developed and several trainings were provided in the past year for all GPD agency staff on the recovery model, recovery planning, motivational interviewing, and communication. A significant amount of positive feedback has been received from Veterans, ICC staff, VA staff and community partners in relation to the changes.

Compensation and Pension: Compensation and Pension ranked 1st in VISN 20 for 3rd quarter claims processing times!

Case Management: The Community Integration Program garden has produced over 20,800 pounds of vegetables for the Jackson County Food Bank, nearly doubling the amount produced in FY 2011.

Systems Redesign: During 3rd and 4th Quarters of FY12, 13 improvement teams were chartered. With the engagement of SORCC employees, a number of services, processes, and programs were implemented or improved.

Healthy VA A Healthier You

The VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics (SORCC) is committed to partnering with our Veterans to promote a culture of health and wellness. The purpose of the Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP) Program is to provide those services to assist the Veteran in managing his/her health focusing on the individual's needs and preferences. Patients who are actively involved in their healthcare are more likely to experience improved health outcomes and higher satisfaction with their healthcare. The program is built around the nine healthy living messages.



- Be Involved in Your Health Care
- Limit Alcohol
- Get Recommended Screening Tests and Immunizations
- Be Tobacco Free
- Eat Wisely
- Manage Stress
- Be Physically Active
- Be Safe
- Strive for a Healthy Weight

The facility has a variety of offerings to assist our Veterans in promoting, improving and maintaining their health. These include some of the following: MOVE! Weight Management Program, Tobacco Cessation Program, Myhealthvet, and the Chronic Disease Self Management (CDSM) Program.

For Veterans who are overweight or obese the MOVE! Program has been tailored to meet the individual needs of each Veteran. MOVE! provides our Veterans guidance on nutrition and physical activity and allows you to set the pace through goal setting and a stepped level approach. The MOVE! Healthcare team at the SORCC will provide you with lots of support and follow-up. The SORCC offers Tobacco Cessation classes to provide encouragement and support for our Veterans who want to stop smoking. Individual appointments and telephone counseling are available as well. Ask your PCP or RN Care Manager for referral to an upcoming class. Smoking cessation medications are available for Veterans seeking to quit tobacco. MyHealthvet is VA's award winning online personal health record providing 24/7 online access to VA healthcare. Some of the services the site features include the ability to refill prescriptions, receive wellness reminders, create personal health journals, track vitals & graphing, maintain activity/food journals and communicate with their care team via secured messaging. Additionally, it provides our Veterans with two extensive online medical libraries: Veterans Health Library and MedlinePlus to enhance their knowledge of medical conditions and proactive education materials designed to promote health and wellness.

The Chronic Disease Self Management Program workshops are a series of weekly 2 ½ hour classes given over a 6 week period that is intended to help Veterans learn how to manage their chronic illnesses and achieve control of their lives. Diseases such as arthritis, diabetes, pain, obesity, depression, asthma, emphysema, heart conditions, high blood pressure, MS, etc. The Veterans learn real life skills for living a full, healthy life with a chronic condition. The workshops offer Veterans the support of others living with chronic illnesses and provide tools to manage their health and improve quality of life. For further information or assistance regarding these and other programs please contact Melanie Olivas, HPDP Program Manager at 541-826-2111 Ext 3554.

Construction Equals Jobs At The VA SORCC

By Patrick Taylor

Laid off, out of business, and searching for work are 1circumstances many Southern Oregonians have faced more than usual since 2008. In September 2012, the national unemployment rate dropped to 7.8% and the state of Oregon's rate dipped to 8.7%. Here in the Medford area the rate has dropped to 10.6% but still significantly higher than the state or national average although, it is lower than the average of 13.1% of October 2010. Fortunately, the VA in White City has been able to make construction projects available to the Southern Oregon area allowing contractors to bid on jobs that require Electricians, Plumbers, Carpenters, Masons, Landscapers, and many other skilled workers.

Stacey Wharton-Webster, Chief, Facility Management, at the SORCC explains, "Since 2008, the VA SORCC has had 90 million dollars worth of projects funded through normal construction streams and funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Renovations are underway to enhance corridors, install security upgrades, remodel dental clinic, retrofit storm waters, replace kitchen, and expand ambulatory care building. So far, six residential care buildings have been replaced with seismically efficient buildings that offer enhanced corridors, security, and environment of care. In addition, parking has been expanded and roadways improved".

Furthermore, Stacey adds, "Each project has a General Contractor (GC) of which may have one to fifteen plus Sub Contractors (SC). The GC in charge of replacing seismically deficient buildings 'SB James' is local to Southern Oregon as is the GC expanding the Ambulatory Care Building 'Ausland Group' of Grants Pass. Also, the VA prefer hiring Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business GC's and SC's of which most are from the West Coast and local area, additionally, the SORCC projects are prevailing wage construction jobs within Southern Oregon".

"The SORCC is very happy with the improvements made so far, since they enhance care to Veterans and increase the construction industry in the area", said Stacy and currently there are several large projects being worked on and several being negotiated for 2013. Since funding has been good over the past few years it is hoped that it will continue, thus, boosting the local construction industry, VA care, and working conditions for VA staff".



Below: New Expansion of B201 Ambulatory Care and Clinics



Customer Service/Veteran Advocacy



Sharon Winningham Ext. 7504
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Improvement Of Veterans Healthcare Is Our Business!

Hours of operation are:
8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday
Building 209, Room 209

VA Mission Statement

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

Vision Statement

VA will continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in health care and benefits by providing exemplary services that are both patient centered and evidence based.

This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery and continuous improvement.

It will emphasize prevention and population health and contribute to the nation's well-being through education, research and service in National emergencies.



Register with My HealthVet (MHV) as a VA Patient to access the VA Online Rx Refill for veterans.

VA Rx Refill is the number one electronic service that veterans request. This My HealthVet service is available from anywhere using the Internet, and offers a very easy way to refill your VA prescriptions. Type www.myhealth.va.gov into your browser to display the VA Home page.