

Source

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



Actress Kimberly Scott

EPHS Student Lanay Oliveira

EPHS Student Jennie Fernandez

Community Recognizes National Salute To Veteran Patients Week

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VA SORCC
8495 Crater Lake Hwy
White City, OR 97503
541-826-2111

Max E. McIntosh, PhD, MBA
VA SORCC Director

Sheila Meuse, PhD
Associate Director

Dr. David Donnelly
Chief of Staff

Karen Allen
Associate Director
of Patient Care Services

The VA SORCC welcomes submission of articles of interest to our readers. The editor reserves the right to use and edit all contributed articles. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Administrative Boards, Editorial Staff, or Department of Veterans Affairs.

Editor
Anna L. Diehl

Assistant Editor
Rhonda K. Haney

Editorial Board
Dan Kelly
Wolfgang Agotta
Russ Cooper
Katherine Dodd
Karen Allen

A Message From The

Director

Proud American men and women are serving and sacrificing for freedom around the world as America's military defends us against terrorism. They served proudly and courageously in America's defense. They helped create a nation that is freer and more prosperous than any known before. Today, many of them are separated from family and friends; suffer physical or emotional pain; and face an uncertain future.



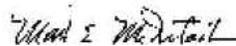
Dr. Max McIntosh

There are no words that can adequately express what their sacrifices have meant to the nation. But we can take time to directly express our personal thanks and appreciation.

At VA SORCC, we are privileged every day to care for those who ensured America's freedom and strength. Our patients hold a special place in our hearts. We are pledged to do all that we can to alleviate their pain; they are more than "patients" – they are "Veterans."

The VA SORCC would like to thank citizens young and old for joining us in honoring our Veterans during the National Salute to Veteran Patients week February 8-14 and reminding our Veterans that their sacrifices are not forgotten. Every citizen can make a positive difference in the life of a Veteran patient. Visits from community groups do much to lift the spirits of our patients.

Many of these Veterans are coming to the VA with special needs and challenges that require the hearts and hands of a new generation of VA volunteers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Max E. McIntosh". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Max McIntosh
Director, VA SORCC



Thank You Veterans

The annual VA National Salute program began in 1978 when VA took over sponsorship of a program started in 1974 by the humanitarian organization No Greater Love, Inc. VA Voluntary Service staff plan and execute local events and activities at VA medical centers. The National Salute is observed annually during the week of Valentine's Day, a day of caring and sharing which underscore the Salute's expression of honor and appreciation to inpatient and outpatient Veterans.

For the nineteenth consecutive year, the nationally syndicated column started by Ann Landers, now called Ask Annie, has devoted a column to the National Salute, asking readers to send Valentine cards and letters to hospitalized Veterans at VA medical centers. More than a million cards and letters are sent to VA patients each year during the National Salute.

This year's Annual National Salute to Veteran Patients week was February 8-14. Events included Entertainer and Impersonator Clint Ingbretson, who wowed the Veterans with his impersonations of Frank Sinatra, Willie Nelson and Elvis Presley; Eagle Point High School students handed out personalized Valentine's cards to all facility Veterans; Actress Kimberly Scott who appeared in The Abyss, Batman Forever and Drop Zone, shook hands and thanked our Veterans with special lapel pins representing the occasion; Phoenix High School Band (who placed 1st in Oregon District 8) performance drew many Veterans who appreciated the band for recognizing their sacrifices to our Nation.



Kimberly Scott and Mark Fuller



Veteran John Swift and Impersonator Clint Ingbretson



Phoenix High School Band



Clint Ingbretson Entertainer/Performer



EPHS Volunteer Students



VA Volunteers

Photo Gallery



Virginia Kula and Patricia Wright



Joe Fidura



Debbie Mazza and Carol Nofziger



Frank Kula

Thank You volunteers!!!

For All That you Do



Employee Spotlight

Karen Adams

by Katie M. Dodd



Karen Adams, RN, MHA, CWOCN has been with the SORCC since September 2008. She began her current assignment in January 2010 and works as both the Occupational Health Nurse and Wound Program Coordinator. Karen has been a Registered Nurse for over 20 years, specializes in wound, ostomy, and continence nursing, and recently obtained a Master's degree in Health Care Administration. She was raised in Ashland, OR and is a graduate of Ashland High School- GO GRIZZ!

Question: What would you like SORCC employees to know about Occupational Health?

Answer: Occupational Health is here to serve and protect the employee. We do this in several ways: (1) review employee vaccine histories and offer vaccines as appropriate, (2) provide the medical portion of DEMPS (disaster relief volunteers), (3) monitor all medical surveillance for potential occupational exposures (i.e. asbestos, radiation, pesticides, hearing conservation), (4) monitor return to work and light duty assignments for injured workers, (5) ensure specific disciplines are fit for duty, (6) running the TB program to ensure every employee has an annual TB test, (7) and many other duties. The Occupational Health team includes myself (ext. 3421) as primary contact, Yvonne Chilcoat (ext. 3419) as Occupational Health/ Infection Control Nurse, and Herbert House (ext. 3417) as the team's clerical support.

Question: What is your favorite thing about working at the SORCC?

Answer: The attitude of the employees- everyone seems to have a positive attitude!

Question: Can you tell us more about the Wound Program side of your position?

Answer: This Spring I will develop a Wound Care Program for all departments within the facility (including Klamath Falls and Grants Pass) empowering all providers and nurses to become proficient at wound care. There will be specific protocols, a product formulary, and in-services provided. Currently most wound care is being covered in outpatient wound care clinics at hospitals instead of here at the SORCC. The Wound Care Program will provide a valuable service to better manage the chronic wound care needs of our Veteran population.

Question: Do you have anything else you would like employees to know?

Answer: Yes, I'd like to share a tip- we are all required to have a yearly TB skin test, but sometimes it's difficult to remember when you are due. I put a recurring yearly announcement in Outlook so I get a personal reminder to get it done on time!

Recovery Is For Everyone

Charles A. Moore, Ph.D., Local Recovery Coordinator

THE RECOVERY REVOLUTION

Almost no one is completely satisfied with life and the way it is being lived. From time to time most can look back to when they did something better, felt better, thought better, had more or enjoyed life more. Most have some regrets about procrastination, lost opportunities, unfortunate choices, impulsive actions and a host of other life events that may have made life less rewarding than was hoped for. Sometimes it's as small as a case of being non-dangerously embarrassed in a social situation. Sometimes it is as huge as having a part (body, feeling, thinking, or spirit) blown off in a wartime firefight or explosion. Everyone responds somewhat differently to these setbacks and downfalls. It is harder to bounce back from some of the downfalls and it is just plain harder for some of us to bounce back at all. But if we are to get the best out of life, Bounce Back is what we must do.

RECOVERY IS BOUNCING BACK

Sometimes bouncing back is a matter of mere minutes. But other times full Recovery takes hours, days, or even years. To help Veterans and Guards with the Bounce Back of Recovery, the VA Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center & Clinics (VA-SORCC) is concentrating resources on expanding the Recovery Model of health care. The Model focuses on a genuine partnership between the VA helper and the Veteran or Guard Member and Families. Instead of "What is wrong with you?" the Recovery Model concentrates on "What is right with you? What is right with you and how can we work together to make it even better? How can we help you with the task of bouncing back, of recovering?"

Ten fundamental components have been identified which support our efforts to Recover or Bounce Back from whatever downfalls we have experienced:

HOPE – If I don't have hope, I don't seem to have any bounce left in me.

SELF-DIRECTION – I don't take well to being told what to do (unless it is what I wanted to do anyway).

INDIVIDUALIZED – "One size fits all" doesn't work for me! We all have somewhat different needs.

EMPOWERMENT- When I feel powerless, there is no bounce back. Life is flat and I feel weak.

HOLISTIC- Focusing on one problem and ignoring other life issues (mind, body, spirit, etc.) doesn't work

NON-LINEAR- Setbacks happen. Punishing me for them won't help. Encourage me to bounce back!

STRENGTHS-BASED – Focus on building my talents and skills, not on defeating my "weaknesses".

PEER SUPPORT- When I isolate from those who could support my recovery, I stay stuck down here.

RESPECT- If you don't respect me, we've got problems. If I don't respect/accept me, we've got problems.

RESPONSIBILITY- When I don't own my response-ability for my actions but blame others...I stay stuck!

REMEMBER: RECOVERY IS FOR EVERYONE

Attention Employees Is It Time For Your Yearly TB Test?

by Karen Adams

When you receive your yearly reminder to have a TB skin test, ask a VA SORCC nurse to administer the test, OR, call the Occupational Health Nurse at extension 3421 to schedule an appointment. It only takes a few minutes of your time.

The nurse will inject a small amount of PPD solution just under the skin on the inside of your lower arm. You **MUST** have a nurse check the injection site within 48-72 hours to complete the test. If you do not have the site checked within 48-72 hours, you will have to repeat the test.

2-Step PPD Test

Employees who have not had a TB skin test within the past 12 months, will have to have the 2-Step TB test. A 2-Step test detects individuals with past TB infection who now have less reaction to the skin test. In this procedure a person is given a baseline TB test. If the test is negative, a second “booster” test is administered two to three weeks later. If the second test is negative, the person is considered uninfected. If the second test is positive, then the person is considered to have a “boosted” reaction that shows they had an infection a long time ago. Our facility uses the 2-Step procedure to avoid misinterpretation between a boosted response and a new infection, should they have a positive test in the future. For more information, please contact Karen Adams, RN, MHA, CWOCN Occupational Health Nurse at extension 3421.

Nutrition & Food Services Awards



Tuesday, January 28, Dr. McIntosh and Dr. Meuse attended Nutrition and Food Services Annual Awards Presentations.



VA SORCC Blood Drive Dates
10:00AM to 4:00PM

March 18th
May 20th
July 22nd
September 23rd
November 18th

In The Theatre

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

by Rose Crews

WELLNESS AT WORK

Assistance is available at the SORCC for any employee and/or family member having problems. Problems need not be job related to obtain assistance, you are eligible to receive assistance with any of the following, or others not listed below:

Substance abuse, depression, grief/loss, sexual abuse, child abuse, rape, emotional problems, marital/family problems, separation/divorce, stress, suicide prevention, AIDS, compulsive gambling.

All contacts are strictly confidential and no information is released without your written consent. You may receive, if needed, up to four one-on-one counseling sessions for crisis intervention, assessment and if necessary, referral to community resources. The four initial sessions are at no cost to you and may take place during work hours. If you feel you are in need of assistance, contact the counselor of your choice directly to set up an appointment.

Counselors

Coordinator:

Dahna Dow Osmus, LCSW, RN

Case Management Service

826-2111 Ext. 3820

Mike Miller, LCSW

Case Management Service

826-2111 Ext. 3478

Tamara Burrill, LCSW

Case Management Service

826-2111 Ext. 3161

Mike Hines, MSW

Psychology

826-2111 Ext. 3186

Paul Guyton, LCSW

Case Management Service

826-2111 Ext. 3820

VA SORCC Employer of Choice

The SORCC continues to shine as an Employer of Choice and a great facility!! The Fiscal Year 2009 All Employee Survey results for Diversity Acceptance are above the VISN and National Averages!

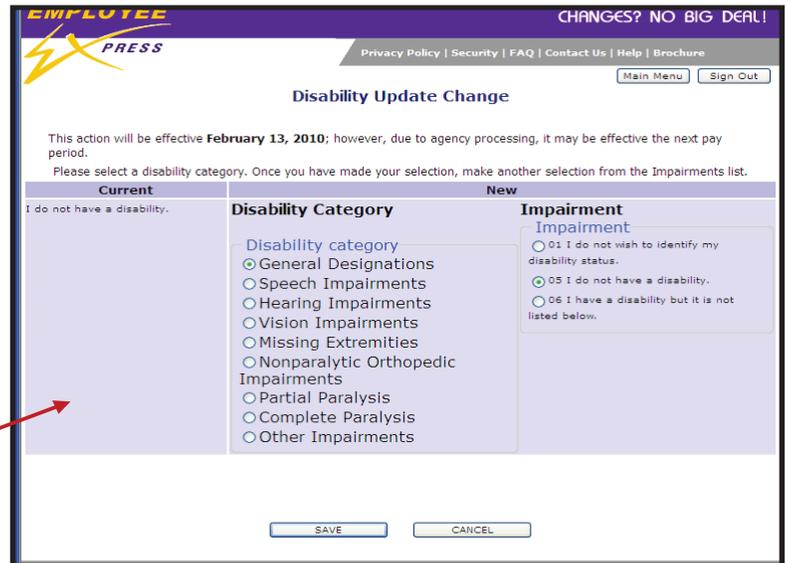
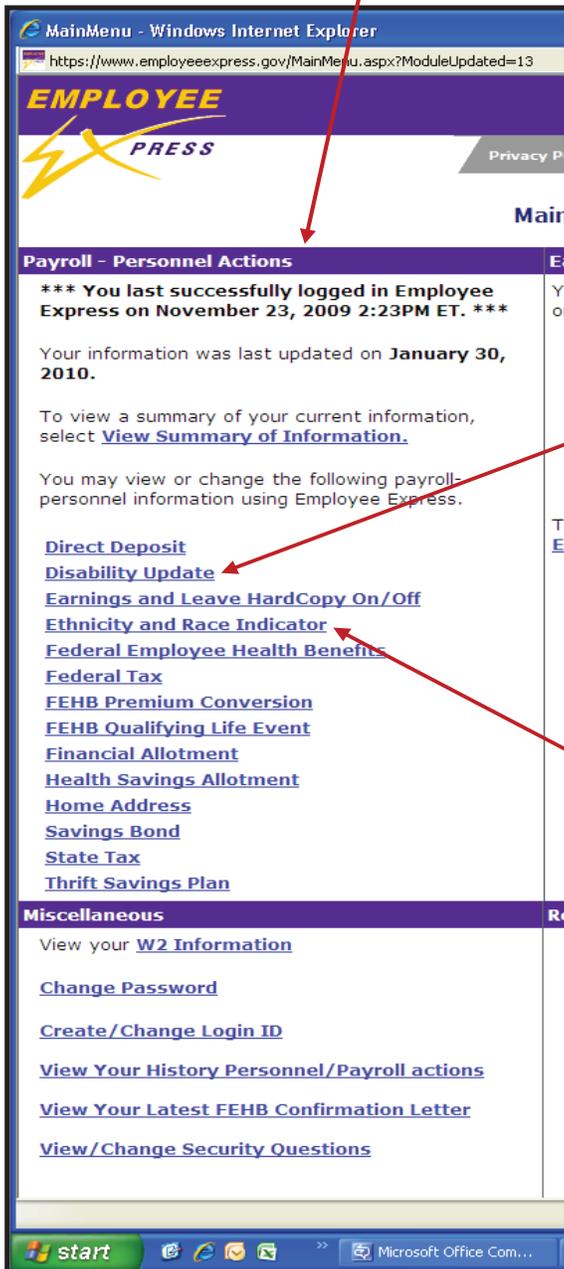
We want to continue this culture of acceptance at the SORCC. It will be measured again in the new Voice of the VA Survey. Last year there were updates to the way VA Central Office categorized diversity and some employees may not be represented in the race or national origin they identify, or shown to have a disability. In order to continue to get a more accurate picture of the diverse workforce at the SORCC, please take a moment and go into Employee Express and update your self-identification of Race, National Origin (RNO) and disability status. These data are used for statistical purposes only and help the facility compare to the local civilian labor force to see if the SORCC matches the community.

The following page will show you how to update your status in Employee Express.

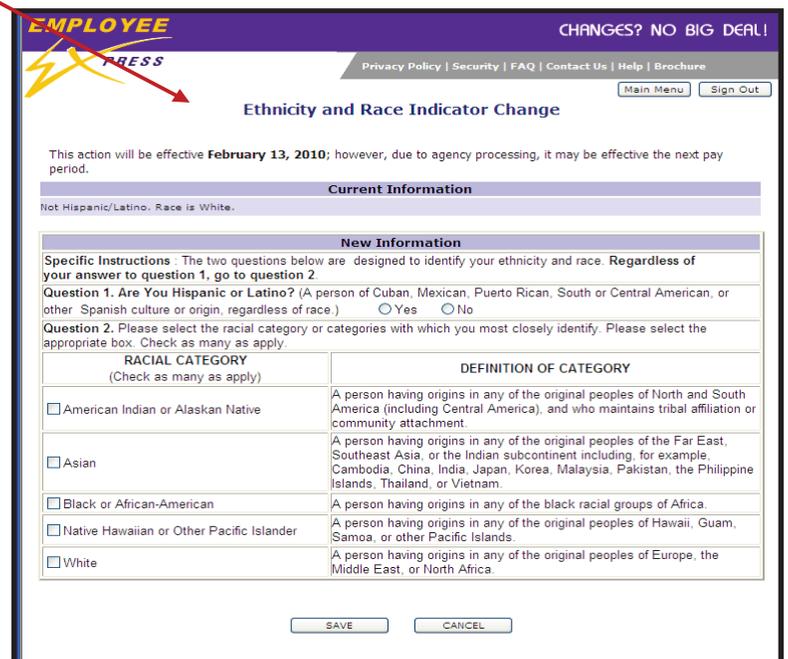
HOW TO SELF IDENTIFY YOUR RACE AND DISABILITY IN EMPLOYEE EXPRESS

Click on [Employee Express](#) to log in and begin editing your information.

On the left side of the **Main Menu** select the option you want to edit.



Select the choice that best describes you



Bats, Cats, Rabies and Critter

Cautions

by Yvonne Chilcoat



Those little night-flyers with the horror show reputation, commonly known as bats, are the chief carrier of Rabies in the Pacific Northwest. There are several strains or “source types” of rabies in the United States such as skunk, fox and bat strains. This is important because bat strain rabies occurs nationally, but the other strains of rabies, including those occurring in terrestrial or land based mammals, do not occur in Oregon. Not all bats carry rabies and in fact, only a small percentage are infected in Oregon and nationally. Of the sick and dead bats tested in Oregon during the last 10 years, about 9.5 percent have had rabies.

There has been a recent rabies alert in Southern Oregon. Oregon Public Health officials are warning people to protect themselves and their pets from rabies after finding a rabid goat and two fox in Cave Junction in Josephine County. Oregon State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory confirmed the diagnosis of rabies in all animals. The three rabid animals were located on the same property in Cave Junction. The goat and one fox died of exposure to a bat strain of rabies. The second fox is currently being tested to confirm the strain source.

At the SORCC, being surrounded by a rural setting, it’s not uncommon to see such mammals as coyote, raccoons or bats. Please be cautious when approaching wildlife. Animals with rabies often show changes in behavior. Wild animals may act friendly, domestic animals may become aggressive, and animals that are active only at night may appear during the day. Rabid animals may stagger, drool, or become paralyzed.

Any mammal in Oregon can be infected with rabies from bats. Exposure is usually through a bite but can also occur through infected saliva contacting open scratch wounds. “Vaccinating pets against rabies protects them and provides a buffer zone between humans and wild animals that may have rabies,” states Belle Shepherd, Josephine County Public Health Director. “People can take two precautions to protect themselves and their pets from bats and rabies. Never handle bats; and make sure your cats, dogs and other domestic animals are up to date on their rabies vaccines,” said Dr. Emilio DeBess, public health veterinarian at the Oregon Public Health Division. Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system and is almost always caused by exposure to a rabid animal.

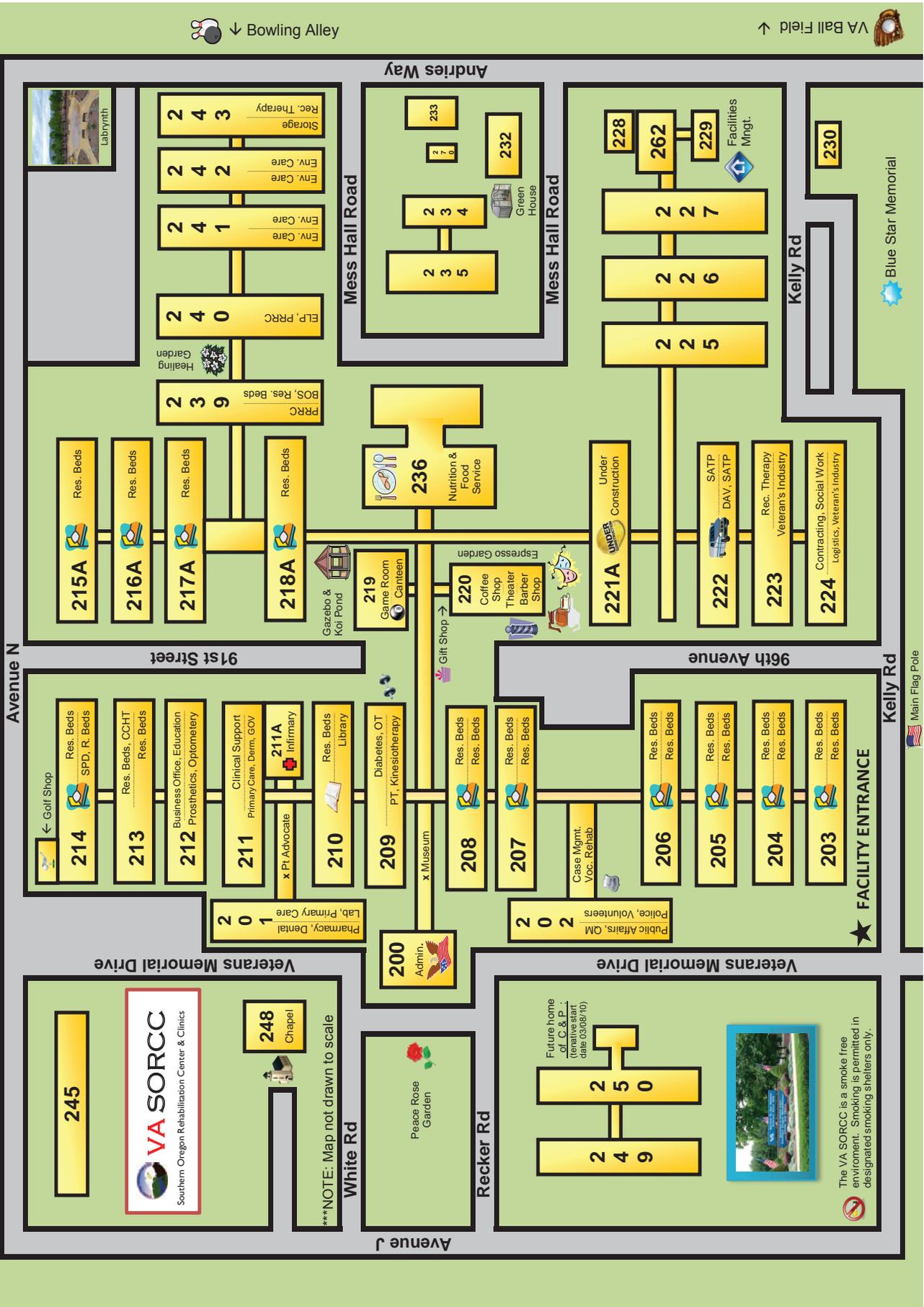
To prevent your exposure to rabies:

- Have your dogs, cats, ferrets, horses, sheep, and cattle vaccinated against rabies.
- Keep your pet under your control at all times, especially when traveling.
- Enjoy wildlife from a distance and do not feed wildlife.
- Avoid sick bats or other animals and any that are acting in an unusual manner.
- Cover garbage cans securely and do not leave pet food outside.
- Do not relocate wildlife.

If you or your pet has been exposed to a rabid bat or suspected rabid domestic animal, get the owner’s name, address and telephone number. Contact your local health department or animal control agency as soon as possible and seek medical attention.

We don’t want to leave you with a bad impression of our little bat friends though, because bats are one of our greatest animal assets and we should be grateful for the benefits they provide us. It’s true, they are carriers of rabies, but they are actually quite harmless and are important indicators of a healthy environment. Because

Continue on back cover



Employee News

Submitted by: Human Resources

WELCOME ABOARD:

Clinical Support Service: Mary Edwards, RN Infirmery
Facilities Management Service: Glen Loftin, Housekeeping Aid
Mental Health: Gary Peterson, Addiction Therapist SATP; Jacqui Davis, Addiction Therapist SATP
Nutrition & Food Service: Christopher Doran, Food Service Worker; Danny Gutfeld, Cook
Primary Care Patient Service: Michelle Roberts, Medical Technician (Lab)
Residential Care: Lawrence Baker, Social Service Assistant; Lynn Jones, Social Service Assistant

MOVING AROUND:

Public Safety: Misty Downing, Security Assistant

RETIREES:

Facilities Management Service: Rick Fish, Safety & Occupational Health Specialist

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bats are sensitive to high pollution and pesticide levels, they are useful as a warning sign to potential environmental problems. Bats can also be important weapons in combating insects that are actually dangerous to humans. One of the primary examples of this is the role bats play in controlling West Nile Virus.

As most of us are aware, the West Nile Virus is primarily spread through mosquitoes. Mosquitoes make up a significant portion of a bat's diet and a small bat can capture more than 1,200 mosquitoes in a single hour! Besides mosquitoes, bats can help control the populations of beetles, moths, and leafhoppers. Many insects can hear bats up to 100 feet away and will avoid areas they occupy. The effectiveness of bats in some areas diminishes the need for pesticides that can harm both the pests and their natural predators.

So don't get up close and personal with a bat, especially if not acting normally, but be thankful for all the contributions they make to our health and our environment! For more information on this subject go to <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/diseases/rabies/rabies.shtml>

Wolfgang Agotta, Patient Advocate Gail German-Rightnour, Patient Representative

Can help you with: Compliments, complaints or unmet needs. If you have SORCC policies and procedures questions not answered elsewhere, come see us we have an open door policy. Our hours are:

7:00a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Monday—Thursday
Building 201, Room 272 and 274
Ext. 3657 (Wolfgang)
Ext. 7504 (Gail)

