

CAVHS COMPASS

Winter 2014

VETERAN FOCUSED NEWS

Veteran's Stand Down Offers More Services

The change in temperatures that arrives with every November is nothing new to those without homes, and for hundreds of Veterans attending events during the week-long "Stand Down" event in North Little Rock, dealing with the colder weather might be a little easier.

The annual Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System's (CAVHS) Stand Down was expanded this year as part of on-going efforts to end homelessness among Veterans in Arkansas. According to Michael Winn, the CAVHS Medical Center Director, we must not forget that every Veteran deserves a second chance.

"As we continue to serve our Nation's Heroes, let's remind ourselves that Veterans Without Homes deserve our utmost respect and gratitude – as all Veterans do," said Winn. "When a Veteran stumbles or veers off course, we owe them a chance to get back on their feet. They may be temporarily without a home, but that does not change who they are... **A Veteran.**

"We will continue to explore new options and grow our partnerships with local and state organizations until even the term "Veterans Without Homes" becomes obsolete," added Winn.

The Stand Down offers Veterans the opportunity for one-stop shopping for everything from health screenings and winter clothes to housing assistance and haircuts.

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Linda Catalano, a CAVHS social worker, assists a Veteran with questions about the services available during the Veteran's "Stand Down" event held in North Little Rock Nov. 4-8, 2013.
(Photo by Jeff Bowen, CAVHS medical photographer)

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A Message from the Director

One thing that most of us can count on is change; change in family situations, change at work, change when you least expect it. Change is not necessarily bad. At Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS), change will touch aspects of your health care experience as we continue to look for new and better ways to improve the health and well-being of Veterans. To make those improvements, changes may impact the normal flow of your visits to our facilities.

You will see these changes, both big and small, during your visits. At no time will Veteran services or access to care suffer because of projects at CAVHS facilities. Some of our most recent improvements include the renovation of our 4D Step-down unit. The unit now has a more homelike feel for both Veterans and their visiting family members. The Imaging Service area in Little Rock has also seen a facelift with a redesigned waiting room and new pre-procedure area. We have also some Veteran-Centered Care (VCC) initiatives such as expanded telehealth capabilities for Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) and our VA/Clergy Partnership program which enable us to assist Veterans in their own community and reduce the need to travel to Little Rock. Other VCC programs recently added are the “Meal Mates” and “No Veteran Dies Alone” volunteer programs which offer companionship to Veterans with no local family or few visitors during their hospital stay.

Some changes are to procedures or policies that will improve our effectiveness when taking care of Veterans. No matter what change we make, we always ask one question first, “How is this going to improve Veteran care.” Our mission is to provide exceptional health care to Veterans. As we move forward and continue to strive for better and more sustainable healthy outcomes, we always put Veteran care first and foremost.

I hope the next time you see something changing at one of our facilities you will see not only the temporary impacts, but also the long-lasting benefits for Veterans in the future. And to all Veterans and their families – thank you for your service and sacrifices.



Michael R. Winn
Medical Center Director

VA Chaplains “All-in”

Although the smallest service at Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, the Chaplain Service has a very important impact upon Veterans, families and visitors. The CAVHS chaplains seek to offer spiritual comfort, guidance and care to our Veterans in a way that preserves the right of a Veteran’s free exercise of religion. In lay terms, that means that VA chaplains recognize the right of each and every Veteran to practice whatever faith or religion they wish, and yes, even none.

Anyone can be seen by a chaplain. Whether or not a person is religious, it doesn’t matter. All chaplain appointments are private and conducted in accordance with the Department of Veterans Affairs Chaplain Service *Code of Ethics*.

In addition to conducting regular worship services in the hospital chapel, some reasons for visiting with a chaplain are: loss of meaning and purpose, despair and/or hopelessness, sense of personal emptiness, abandonment, struggling with forgiveness, experiencing loss, facing an ethical dilemma, or needing the comfort of prayer. Chaplain Service also offers a six-hour relationship resilience program called “*Strengthening the Bonds*” for couples who wish to improve their communications skills, rekindle their relationship, even start the journey of healing their relationship or to make a good relationship better. If Chaplain Service can assist you, please call 257-2151.



CAVHS Remembers Dr. King

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is not just another federal holiday or a day-off from work; it is a call to service.

Taking place each year on the third Monday in January, MLK Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service – “A Day On, Not a Day Off.”



Cyril Ekeh, the CAVHS Associate Medical Center Director, addresses Veterans, employees and visitors attending the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration Jan. 14, 2014, in North Little Rock. (Photo by Jeff Bowen, CAVHS medical photographer)

During opening remarks to those attending the annual Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System’s (CAVHS) MLK Day celebration, Cyril Ekeh, the CAVHS Associate Medical Center Director, encouraged everyone to get involved.

“The King Holiday is a time to remember, to celebrate and to act,” said Ekeh. “Keep the legacy of Dr. King alive by doing one thing to help others over the next few days. We all have the potential for greatness and I encourage each of you to set your goals higher.”

The events keynote speaker, Dr. Dexter Suggs, Sr., the Little Rock School District Superintendent, reminded everyone that to maintain our freedom, we must “be willing to sacrifice...to fight the good fight.”

Dr. Suggs ended his remarks by challenging people to take responsibility and to make a difference.

“Dr. King understood the meaning of responsibility. We all have a responsibility and I challenge you to find your duty, your fight.”

Kiosks at your Service

Veterans have a new tool to speed-up the check-in process and more. Veterans Point of Service (VPS) kiosks (also known as VETLink) have been installed in all Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System clinics allowing for easy Veteran check-in. The VPS kiosks can also be used to enter or update next of kin/emergency contact information and demographic information. Veterans can view future appointments and take a quick survey to help VA improve the kiosk experience.

Additional capabilities will be added in the near future so Veterans can scan insurance cards, pay account balances, complete beneficiary travel requests, review medication and allergy information, and receive directions to appointments or clinics.



(Photo by Jeff Bowen, CAVHS medical photographer)

American Indian Heritage Month Celebration

The men and women of Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System took time in November to honor the vibrant cultures and rich history of the American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

The theme for this year’s celebration was “Guiding our Destiny with Heritage and Traditions.” The program featured two great speakers, Dr. Daniel Littlefield, Director of UALR’s Sequoyah National Research and Starr Mitchell, Education Director of the Historic Arkansas Museum.

About 12,000 Native Americans volunteered to serve in the United States military during World War I and more than 42,000 Native American served in the military in the Vietnam Era. There are currently more than 154,000 Native American Veterans.



(Photos by Jeff Bowen, CAVHS medical photographer)



Above: CAVHS employees and visitors alike peruse the exhibits during the annual American Indian and Alaska Native heritage celebration at John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock, November 8, 2013.

Left: Barbie Mellinger shows-off some Native American artwork during the heritage celebration. In addition to the displays and guest speakers, all attending we treated to authentic Native American cuisine.

Dad's Ole Car Catching Veteran's Eyes



Above: A member of Classic American Muscle and Streetrods (CAMS) Car Club prepares for the annual "Dad's Ole Car" car show at the North Little Rock VA campus Nov. 10, 2013. More than 100 entries made the 2013 event the biggest to date.

Left: Veterans and car enthusiasts from across the Central Arkansas area flocked to view some of Arkansas' best street machines.

Below: This year's annual "Dad's Ole Car" car show featured everything from an exotic, a tricked-out pickup, to American classics. This was the 13th annual car show at the North Little Rock VA campus.



(Photos by Jeff Bowen, CAVHS Medical Photographer)

Good Fishing, Great Day

Veterans enrolled in the Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) program and Veterans from the Low Vision clinic gathered for the fifth annual September fishing derby at the North Little Rock VA campus.

More than 40 Veterans and their families enjoyed a day at the lake and lunch provided by VFW Post 11474.



A couple of seasoned fishing Veterans enjoy some quality time in the shade. (Photo by Jeff Bowen, CAVHS Medical Photographer)

Stand Down (continued from page 1)

When Veterans find themselves down on their luck, CAVHS staff members are there to help them up and get them back on the track to a healthier, more balanced future.

The annual Stand Down is just one of many VA programs across the nation to end homelessness among Veterans, according to Dr. Estella Morris, CAVHS Comprehensive Homeless Center of Excellence program manager.



“The CAVHS strategy to eliminate homelessness among Veterans is to implement a ‘no wrong door’ approach, meaning Veterans who seek assistance should find it through any number of VA’s programs, from community partners or through contract services,” said Dr. Estella Morris, CAVHS Comprehensive Homeless Center of Excellence program manager.

The Stand Down brings many of those community partners together for the week to help as many Veterans as possible. By all measures, this year’s event exceeded all expectations and Veterans walked away better prepared for the future.

Members from the Red Cross help Veterans prepare for natural disasters during the annual CAVHS Stand Down. (Photo by Jeff Bowen, CAVHS Medical Photographer)

Veteran's Day 2013



Top: Some of our Nation's "Greatest Generation" salute during the National Anthem.

Above: CAVHS Chaplain James Ryan shows respect during the posting of the colors.

Right: The CAVHS Chorale performs during the annual Arkansas Veterans Day ceremony in Little Rock Nov. 11, 2013.



(Photos by Jeff Bowen, CAVHS Medical Photographer)

Events to Keep You in the Know

February

February is Age-related Muscular Degeneration (AMD)/Low Vision Awareness Month

Feb. 14 is National Donor Day

Feb. 17 is Presidents Day (Federal Holiday)

March

March is National Colorectal Cancer and Endometriosis Awareness Month

March 9 is the start of Daylight Saving Time

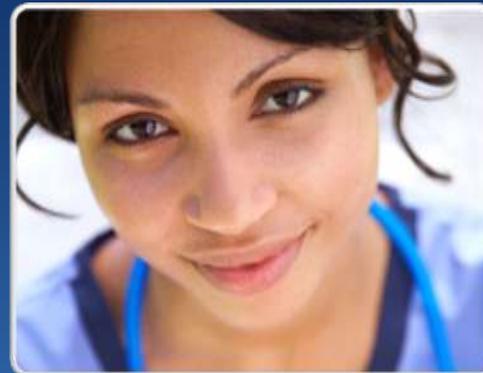
March 24 is World Tuberculosis Day

April

April is Alcohol Awareness and Sexual Assault and Prevention Month

April 7 is World Health Day

April 20 is Easter



CAVHS Events

Feb. 10: National Salute to Veteran Patient Reception (NLR)

Feb. 13: National Salute to Veteran Patient Meet and Greet (LR)

Feb. 14: Salute to Veteran Patient Sweetheart lunch (NLR)

CAVHS Contact Information

CAVHS and VA Contact Numbers

John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital, Little Rock	501-257-1000
Eugene J. Towbin VA Medical Center, North Little Rock	501-257-1000
Conway Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	501-548-0500
El Dorado Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	870-881-4488
Hot Springs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	501-520-6250
Mena Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	479-394-4800
Mountain Home Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	870-424-4109
Pine Bluff Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	870-541-9300
Russellville Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	479-880-5100
Searcy Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	501-207-4700
Pharmacy Refills/Helpline	1-888-492-7845
VA Eligibility & Enrollment	1-800-224-8387
Assistance for Returning Troops from Iraq/Afghanistan	501-257-6706
For an Appointment in the OEF/OIF Post-Deployment Clinic	501-257-3984
Little Rock VA Regional Office	1-800-827-1000
Little Rock VA National Cemetery	501-324-6401
Veterans Day Treatment Center, Downtown Little Rock	501-244-1900

National Hotline Numbers

Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255
Caregiver Support Hotline	1-855-260-3274
Hotline for Homeless Veterans	1-877-4AID-VET