



## Family Patient Centered Care Training comes to CAVHCS

CAVHCS' implementation of the Patient Family Centered Care (PFCC) initiative took another step forward recently when specialized trainers provided PFCC training to leadership and more than 400 staff.

"Our goals are involvement, participation and inclusiveness," said Cezanne Garcia of the Institute for Family-Centered Care, Bethesda, Md. shortly after a training session that included more than 100 staff in the Montgomery Campus' Multipurpose Room. "For some people in this group it may mean taking small steps, while others take leaps and bounds. Of course it's also leadership letting them take those leaps and bounds."

"For me leadership support makes a huge difference," said Sue Montgomery, the Director of Patient and Family-Centered Care for Memorial Regional Hospital, Hollywood, Fla. who also lead training on both CAVHCS Medical Center campuses. "I don't have to fight my administration...they get it."

CAVHCS leadership gets it as well. VISN 7 is running the pilot PFCC program for the VA, and CAVHCS leadership attended a separate training session focused on implementation strategies. "CAVHCS has already



**Cezanne Garcia (in red), of the Institute for Family-Centered Care, Bethesda, Md. addresses CAVHCS staff during a recent Patient Family Centered Care (PFCC) training session. PFCC training for staff, leadership and Veteran Family Advisors was presented across five days and nine separate sessions.**

identified specific services to serve as Clinical Microsystems," said Montgomery. "These smaller services will serve as sort of a pilot of their own to reflect everything that's in the bigger organization"

CAVHCS will continue to implement a PFCC program, while developing opportunities for Veterans to become more empowered in their treatment. "It's (PFCC) about recognizing that we all have a blind side," said Garcia, "and that we can no longer afford to risk having that blind side being what's important to Veterans or family members.

"A great example was when we were buying new beds in Bethesda. We had Nurses looking at safety issues like cords and wire housings and Engineers ensuring they the beds all met the latest Federal Standards. But it wasn't until we sought a Veteran's point of view that someone actually got into the bed."

## Performance Improvement readies CAVHCS for Joint Commission

**Editor's note:** Performance Improvement has begun posting a monthly update on their intranet website: <http://vaww.visn7.med.va.gov/intranet/templates/inner.aspx?pid=57505>; called Quality Pipeline.

CAVHCS is due for a Joint Commission unannounced survey that can occur at any time. We will only have 15 to 30 minutes notice of their arrival to our facility. We must maintain continuous readiness by keeping our facilities in tip-top condition and by following processes that meet the highest standards of safety and quality for our patients and those we serve.

Every morning, Performance Improvement (PI) will access the Joint Commission extranet site that will notify us at 7:30am Central Standard Time (CST) of the surveyors' scheduled arrival to our organization that day. The site will contain pictures of the surveyors and a letter from the Joint Commission announcing the survey.

If a survey is scheduled for CAVHCS:

The Director's Conference Group and the Escorts/Scribes should report to the Multipurpose Room on the West Campus and the Staff Training Room on the East Campus at 8:45 am in preparation for the Opening Conference.

Command posts will be established in the Performance Improvement Offices at both Campuses. The West Campus ext. is 4562 and the East Campus at ext. 3496.

Operators at both campuses will make overhead announcements of the Joint Commission presence.

A few simplistic things we can all do to assure we get the positive outcome we deserve during the visit are:

Be prompt; be polite and courteous; look professional; know what to expect; listen carefully and then answer the surveyor's question; if you don't understand a question, ask for the question to be repeated; make sure your area is neat, clean, and orderly; remember, you are the best-qualified person to answer whatever question a surveyor may ask; know what processes are being improved in your service; know your patients, including history, plan of care, educational needs and plan, discharge planning, and patient safety. Know where to find evidence of assessment and care provided in the patients' records. Know and share with the surveyors all that we do every day to keep our veterans safe by implementing each of the National Patient Safety Goals. Speak with our veterans to discover how they feel about the care we provide.

# From the Director

Glen E. Struchtemeyer

I've been here for a little over a month now. During that time I've been receiving in-depth briefs from leadership and moved into my offices on both the Tuskegee and Montgomery campuses. I've also made trips to our Community Based Outpatient Clinics in Dothan and Columbus; visited our Mental Health Clinic in Dothan, the Wiregrass Clinic on Fort Rucker and toured almost all of Maxwell Air Force Base, including our Podiatry Clinic.

I've also attended a VISN 7 business meeting, which as you may know serves to provide us an opportunity to report on how we're doing, while also getting the latest direction from Dr. Biro – our VISN Director. So, I think I can share a few observations from my relatively short, but busy time here.

First and foremost, as I've said before, your professionalism and commitment to our nation's heroes is readily evident. Everywhere I've gone I've received insightful, in-depth tours and explanations of what you're doing. Just as importantly, I've received several glowing firsthand endorsements from Veterans.

Along with our Three Promises there are Core Values that will shape how we move forward. They are:

#### Forward Thinking

#### Results Driven

#### Continue Cultural Transformation on Units

#### Patient Centered Care

I can honestly say I've already seen many of you incorporating these values as you work to deliver on our Three Promises, so we're really talking about sharpening our focus. Some of the specific areas or immediate goals where you'll first see the adoption of these values include:

#### Forward Thinking -

- Ensure that we are able to move the Montgomery off-site lease forward;
- Ensure CBOC strategy is clear to all;
- A Supervisor training program;
- Decentralized travel and incentive award budgets to departments
- Grow Centers of Excellence at Tuskegee.

#### Results Driven -

- Address critical leadership vacancies;
- Evaluate staffing needs of facilities;
- Move from locum/fee basis to VA staff;
- Invest in VA/DOD sharing opportunities;
- Ensure performance plans & appraisals are done timely;
- Annual management briefings reviewing results and action plans for All Employee Survey results;
- VISN will hire a SPD Manager...IG and VISN will be doing unannounced surveys.

#### Continue Cultural Transformation on Units -

- Menu ordering plan implemented in Community Living Center;
- Clarify Mental Health support in Wiregrass Region;
- Hire Systems Redesign Coordinator.

#### Patient Centered Care -

- Training supervisors and staff;
- Develop a plan for uniformity in the nursing uniforms – RN specific LPN specific & NA specific – excludes mental health environment.

Of course this is not an all-inclusive list, and many of these goals were already initiated before my arrival. I am confident in your continued commitment to our success, and as I've mentioned in this venue before, accomplishments are dependant upon all of you being successful on a daily basis. Therefore, I plan to support your efforts – on a daily basis.

## CAVHCS All-Stars

I would like to take this opportunity to send a big thank you to your facility at Tuskegee, Alabama. You have an outstanding facility there. It is always very clean and well kept. The staff is the nicest and kindest people I have ever met at a VA facility, always smiling and friendly. I would especially like to send out a BIG "thank you" to Anthony at the Geriatric clinic for his help recently. A prescription was lost in the mail and he kept right with me in getting it traced and resolved. This kind of dedication is not easily found in today's busy world. I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate your staff and the doctors because their care is truly appreciated. The VA has been a big help to me in these difficult financial times. Thank you for all you do. -- *Sincerely, Ralph B. LaGrange, Ga.*

This was an outstanding and very informative class. Mr. Anderson, Charity and Chatman provided a plethora of information that was very beneficial to my better understanding and controlling my condition. They ensured that the participants were well informed and knowledgeable on their diagnosis. This has been the best class I have ever attended. -- *Larry P. Montgomery, Ala.*

### The CAVHCS Salute



Accredited by  
The Joint Commission

The CAVHCS Salute is produced by the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care (CAVHCS) Public Affairs Office. CAVHCS Salute is an unofficial, internal communications publication.

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## Employees of the Month

No  
Image  
Available

### Montgomery Campus Ms. Shelly Wiggins

Ms. Shelley Wiggins joined the CAVHCS Pharmacy in October 2008 as the VA Wiregrass Clinic, Ft. Rucker, Ala. Pharmacist. During this time in addition to her normal pharmacy duties, she has

provided support above and beyond the call of duty to support the CAVHCS E-pharmacy Claims Prescription initiative by reviewing and reconciling all e-pharmacy claims generated by all four pharmacy divisions. This requires frequent interaction with third party payers to resolve prescription claim rejections. Her effort to resolve these claims quickly and efficiently promotes a higher level of cost recovery for CAVHCS.

In addition Ms. Wiggins volunteered to split time between the VA Wiregrass Clinic and the Dothan Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), in order to provide interim coverage due to a recent unscheduled personnel shortfall.

This requires additional travel to and from the Dothan CBOC. This effort also required learning another pharmacy automation dispensing process, and has allowed CAVHCS to maintain on-site pharmacist coverage as well as continuity of on-site pharmacy care for Dothan clinic patients and providers.

### Tuskegee Campus Ms. Alice Calhoun

Alice Calhoun is a rare individual and was nominated by a patient. The patient says that she has assisted him in contacting his family regarding personal items he needed at a time when he was unable to get to a phone.

She has given him guidance in the pass policy so that he can go home for visits to see his family and says that she has a pleasant attitude in dealing with the Veterans.

The Veteran who nominated Ms. Calhoun says that she is the most considerate and kind social worker that he has ever seen and that he prays that she succeeds in her career at CAVHCS. A rare individual indeed who support us Veterans 100%!



### Disaster Assistance now Available

If you sustained losses or damage in Autauga, Elmore or Montgomery Counties during the severe storms of May 6-8, 2009 you may be eligible for federal and state disaster aid.

800-621-FEMA (3362)

[www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov)



## Pandemic Declared by World Health Organization

### From Centers of Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu)

On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) raised the worldwide pandemic alert level to Phase 6 in response to the ongoing global spread of the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus. A Phase 6 designation indicates that a global pandemic is underway.

More than 70 countries are now reporting cases of human infection with novel H1N1. This number has been increasing over the past few weeks, but many of the cases reportedly had links to travel or were localized outbreaks without community spread. The WHO designation of a pandemic alert Phase 6 reflects the fact that there are now ongoing community level outbreaks in multiple parts of world.

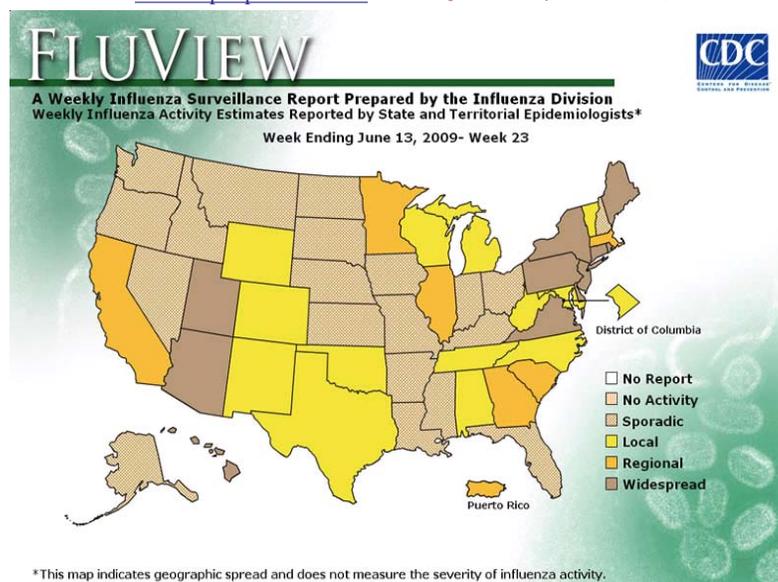
WHO's decision to raise the pandemic alert level to Phase 6 is a reflection of the spread of the virus, not the severity of illness caused by the virus.

The VA is monitoring the situation very closely and is prepared to respond. We will be working closely with the CDC, HHS, Homeland Security and the White House.

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CAVHCS employees are encouraged to reacquaint themselves with the CAVHCS Pandemic Flu Plan - **Memorandum No. 001S-09-03** January 30, 2009, 25-1 SOP-25 PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLAN

<http://vaww.visn7.med.va.gov/intranet/templates/inner.aspx?pid=151256>. (Cut & paste into your browser)



## No Change to Beneficiary Travel Claim Criteria

In a press release late last year the VA announced an increase in the mileage reimbursement Veterans receive for travel to VA facilities for treatment and medical care. This increase saw the rate of reimbursement from 28.5 cents per mile to 41.5 cents per mile for all eligible Veterans. However, while the rate of reimbursement has changed – the criteria to receive beneficial travel reimbursement has not.

“The Business Office administers our Beneficiary Travel,” explained CAVHCS Business Office Chief Helen Booker. “CAVHCS staff should be referring all questions concerning mileage reimbursement to Business Office, so we can ensure Veterans get all the right information as well as their appeal rights if appropriate.”

To be eligible for mileage reimbursement a veteran must: Have a service-connected rating of 30 percent or more; Travel for treatment of a service connected condition, or Receive a VA pension, or Income not exceeding the maximum annual VA pension rate, or Travel for a scheduled Compensation or Pension examination.

According to VA Regulations a Veteran must be

seen by a clinician - a Physician, Physician Assistant (PA), Nurse Practitioner (NP) Psychologist, or other independent licensed practitioner - in order to be eligible to make a beneficial travel claim. “Registered Nurses (RNs) do not meet the definition of clinician for this program,” said Booker. “This means that Veterans will not be eligible to receive mileage reimbursement for nurse appointments such as blood pressure checks, education, injections etc.”

From July 30, 2008 through January 8, 2009 deductible amounts applied to certain mileage reimbursements were frozen at \$7.77 for a one way trip, \$15.54 for a round trip, and capped monthly at a maximum of \$46.62. However, on January 9, 2009, these deductibles decreased to \$3 for a one way trip, \$6 for a round trip, with a maximum of \$18 per calendar month. However, deductibles can be waived if specific criteria are met.

“Staff should be referring all questions concerning Beneficial Travel, mileage and reimbursement claims to us in the Business Office,” said Booker. “That way we can ensure our Veterans get all the right information.”

## Priority Group 8 Enrollment Restriction Rolled Back 10 Percent

In order to ensure the availability of quality and timely health care to veterans with service connected conditions, special authority based on military service, low income, and those with special health care needs, in January 2003 VA made the difficult decision to stop enrolling new Priority Group 8 (high income) veterans whose income exceeded VA income thresholds.

The new regulations went into effect on June 15, 2009 and enable the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to relax income restrictions on enrollment for health benefits. While this new provision does not remove consideration of income, it does increase income thresholds.

### Denied Enrollment on or After January 1, 2009

If you have applied for enrollment on or after January 1, 2009 and you were denied enrollment because your income exceeded the VA income thresholds, you will be reconsidered and contacted by mail if you now qualify. You will receive a letter from the VA Health Eligibility Center notifying you of your eligibility for enrollment and welcoming you to the VA health care system. Included with the letter will be instructions for getting care and how to obtain a Veterans Identification Card.

### Denied Enrollment Before January 1, 2009

If you applied for enrollment before January 1, 2009, and were denied enrollment because your income was too high, VA encourages you to take advantage of our enrollment calculator to assist you in determining if you are now eligible for enrollment under this new regulation based on your 2008 income. Whatever your enrollment determination, VA encourages all Veterans to apply for enrollment as this will

help us in our future planning and budget efforts as well as allow us to be in a better position to identify necessary funding levels to Congress.

### Determine if You are Eligible

To determine if you may be eligible under this new regulation, we have developed an enrollment calculator [www.va.gov/healtheligibility/apps/enrollmentcalculator](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/apps/enrollmentcalculator) which will help you in determining if your income falls within the new 10% income thresholds guidelines. Once you have entered all required information below, this calculator will determine if you may be eligible for enrollment under the new rule.

The new regulations (defined in Public Law 110-329) provide VA additional funding to allow expanded enrollment opportunity for certain Priority 8 veterans who may have been previously denied enrollment in VA's health care system because their income exceeded VA's means tests thresholds.

Effective June 15, 2009, a veteran who applies for enrollment, who does not qualify for a higher Priority Group and whose income exceeds VA's means test thresholds by 10% or less will be placed in a Priority Group that allows the veteran to be enrolled in VA's health care system.

Check the CAVHCS internet website to see if you qualify for enrollment under new rules for VA health care. Look for this icon: [www.centralalabama.va.gov](http://www.centralalabama.va.gov).



# 2009 All Employee Survey, Most Responses Ever

**Editor's Note:** VHA Organizational Assessment Sub-Committee recently released its inaugural issue of the Organizational Health Bulletin, which reported on the initial results of the 2009 All Employee Survey.

**CAVHCS results will be made available soon.**

The 2009 All Employee Survey response rate of 169,242 is the highest recorded response rate ever! As more and more employees are making their voices heard, the All Employee Survey (AES) has emerged as one of the best tools to evaluate organizational health.

In 2009, all VHA employees participated in the 2009 All Employee Survey as well as some VACO Offices and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). While we were unable to reach the national response rate goal of 72%, the final response rate was a very impressive 66.9%. This means that over two-thirds of potential respondents made their voices heard in an effort to improve the organizational health of VA.

## VHA Organizational Assessment Sub-Committee

Two national briefings were provided to the VHACO Chief Officers on June 15 and to the VHA Network Directors on June 18. Highlights of the national overview included: continued improvements in nearly all job satisfaction items (e.g. type of work you do) as measured by the Job Satisfaction Index (JSI); continued improvements (e.g. civility) in your work group relationships as measured by every measure in the Organizational Assessment Inventory (OAI); and improvements in the organization as measured by the Culture domains of Group (motto: "our people are our most important assets") and Entrepreneurial (motto: "Let's find a way to do it better!").

## Annual Clean-up

# Logistics Available to Assist Processing

Maintaining clean, orderly spaces is a constant effort, but every year CAVHCS conducts a sort of Spring Cleaning – just in case there's some catching up to do. This year July 13 - 17, is designated as the time for our annual house-cleaning campaign at all CAVHCS facilities, and there's even a system in place to dispose of equipment no longer used or required.

"If people have any Non-Expendable equipment to be turned in all they have to do is prepare a VA Form 90-2237 with the Equipment Entry Number and serial number," said CAVHCS Logistics Officer Johnny Davis. "Logistics Warehouse personnel will pick up the items that have been turned in from the Service Line. However, CAVHCS Salute - June 2009 Edition

warehouse personnel are not allowed to pick up equipment that could be a hazard to others, so please see that all items requiring decontamination are tagged with the correct form for the safety of everyone."

Filling out the '2237' completely is vital. "The condition of these items, such as 'no longer in use,' or 'unserviceable,' should be included in the justification section," said Davis. "But everyone has to prepare separate turn-ins for expendable and non-expendable items."

The final step to remember when turning in equipment no longer in use or equipment considered unserviceable is to ensure an EIL official's or coordinator's signature are

**Employee satisfaction means patient satisfaction. It's a win for everybody!**

If you would like additional information concerning the All Employee Survey please feel free to visit the AES portal: URI: <http://vssc.med.va.gov>. The AES portal contains valuable AES related information such as the National, VISN, and Program Office presentations.

Healthy organizations, like healthy individuals and healthy work groups, don't just happen. We have to work at it. We hope you use the VA All Employee Survey as a tool to improve the organizational health of not only your work group, but VA as a whole. Remember, healthy organizations are places where employees want to work and patients want to receive care.

## Review and Discuss the All Employee Survey Results!

Each employee should have a chance to view and discuss the AES results of not only their organization, but their individual work group as well. **The results of the 2009 AES are expected to be distributed to all employees - down to the work group - SOON!** As long as your work group had at least 10 responses your work group results will be published. Your local leadership will ensure you see your data.

Take the time within your work group to review and discuss the results of the All Employee Survey. What are you doing well? What can you do within your work group to improve employee satisfaction and improve the organizational health of our VA?

We hope you look forward to discussing your work group results with your supervisors and co-workers.





U.S. Navy Sailors from Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan hold a vintage American flag with 48 stars, in Kabul, Afghanistan to commemorate Fourth of July celebrations - July 4, 2008. The 48 star flag was flown in the U.S. from July 4, 1912 through July 3, 1959.

Retired Navy Cmdr. Joseph Agra III acquired the flag in 2000 after a fisherman retrieved it from the water off the coast of the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines.

Agra has carried the flag to several locations, and flown it over camps in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Beth Del Vecchio)

# July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p><b>Disaster Assistance Now Available</b> If you sustained losses or damage in Autauga, Elmore or Montgomery Counties during the severe storms of May 6-8, 2009 you may be eligible for federal and state disaster aid. 800-621-FEMA (3362) <a href="http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov">www.DisasterAssistance.gov</a></p>			1	2 Civil Rights Act of 1964	3	
5	6	7	8	9	10 Dental Awareness Day 	11
12 National Therapeutic Recreation Week <a href="http://www.nrpa.org">www.nrpa.org</a>	13	14 Annual CAVHCS Clean-up Campaign July 13 - 17				
19	20	21  <b>VA Created (1930)</b>	22	23	24	25
26 Department of Defense (1947)	27 Fireworks Safety Months (June 1-July 31) - <a href="http://www.preventblindness.org">www.preventblindness.org</a>	28 Hemochromatosis Screening Awareness Month - <a href="http://www.irondisorders.org">www.irondisorders.org</a>	29 International/National Group B Strep Awareness Month - <a href="http://www.groupbstrepinternational.org">www.groupbstrepinternational.org</a>	30	National Hospitality House Week- <a href="http://www.nahhh.org">www.nahhh.org</a>	
					31	

\*\* OI&T will provide Microsoft Office 2007 overview & interaction courses in Tuskegee & Montgomery IT Training Rooms. All other classes will be held via V-tel. If you have any questions, please call Shai Holden at Ext. 4508.

The CAVHCS Community Calendar is not intended to be an all-inclusive, official calendar. It is intended rather to provide a medium for CAVHCS Salute to share upcoming events.

If you would like to add a CAVHCS event please email details directly to [alan.bloom@va.gov](mailto:alan.bloom@va.gov). Submissions are not guaranteed to be published. Editorial considerations will be made for propriety, promptness and print space.