



CAVHCS' Enhanced Use Lease Opportunity

CAVHCS and VA leadership held a Public Meeting in the Tuskegee Campus' Building 90 Theater the evening of March 5, to discuss the proposed opportunity to utilize Tuskegee's Building 62 in an Enhanced Use Lease (EUL).

The public hearing not only provided the VA an opportunity to publicly present the proposal as well as receiving input from the public, but also afforded an opportunity to answer questions from both the public and prospective developers interested in the EUL proposal.

Details of the EUL proposal identified a long-term lease (up to 75 years) of Building 62's approximate 79,000 square feet, for a lessee's development and operation of a transitional housing facility. The lessee will be required to finance, design, develop, renovate, construct, equip,

furnish, operate, and maintain the unit in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws, codes, and requirements. In return for the EUL, the lessee will be required to provide VA with "fair consideration" as determined by the Secretary, which is to be in the form of negotiated cash and/or "in-kind"



consideration. At the end of the lease term, the leased property and the underlying improvements will revert to VA.

In the month leading up to the Public meeting CAVHCS advertised the event and details of the proposal in the Opelika/Auburn News; The Tuskegee news; The Dothan Eagle; The Columbus Ledger Enquirer and The Montgomery Advertiser newspapers. Additionally, letters were mailed directly to more than 150 VA Stakeholders and Veteran Service Organizations.

CAVHCS and VA leadership recently held a Public Meeting to discuss the details of a proposed Enhanced Use Lease of Building 62 on the Tuskegee Campus.

Women's History Month

CAVHCS Celebrates Service, Progress, Opportunity

By Rose H. McCall,
Program Assistant, PAO

In keeping with the VA's national theme, "She served so that we could live free," CAVHCS celebrated Women's History Month on both campuses in March.

"The Women's History Month program was very interesting and informative," said Ms. Mary H. Smith, Program Chairman and Mistress of Ceremonies. "Little known historic and culturally relevant facts were presented to the audience by the two speakers, who were very knowledgeable on their respective subjects.

"Ms. Ladonna Golden (a retired Army Lt. Colonel) delivered a presentation on 'Women in the Military,' and Ms. Rose McCall delivered a presentation on 'Nine Women who changed the World,' which also included a very nice display of the women she talked about," added Smith. "The program was the brain child of Mrs. Faye Rayford-Outsey, a

member of the Diversity Advisory Committee and Ms. Loretta McCloud, the EEO advisor. This was a well organized and enjoyable program."

By honoring a proud tradition of military service CAVHCS saluted those women who stepped forward to fight for not only their freedom, but that of all Americans. As a direct result of that service as well as the Women's Suffrage Movement and increased access to education, women have opportunity to be generals and admirals, inventors, educators, ministers, pilots, athletes, lawyers and governors.

"I enjoyed the program and all the information we received," said Mrs. Samantha Davis, a member of the Alabama National Guard and CAVHCS Administrative Assistant in Tuskegee. "The history of the women who fought in the past wars and what they had to endure and the accomplishments of the women from today were timely and interesting. We have come a long way."

From the Director

Shirley Bealer, MS, RN, CNA, BC, CPHQ

March has been another eventful month here in CAVHCS. From Women's History Month programs and opening a new Wellness Center on the Montgomery Campus to celebrating the VA's 20th Anniversary as a cabinet-level department and a two-day OEF/OIF workshop as part of Social Work Services Month, your efforts continue to put us in position to succeed as we strive to deliver on our three promises to every Veteran; provide care second to none, maintain while expanding services and to ensure every veteran is satisfied – based on outcome.

As we look back, we also had a successful VISN-driven Survey Team visit that served to evaluate our ongoing efforts as we look forward to our upcoming Office of the Inspector General's Combined Assessment Program (OIG CAP) visit, which is scheduled to begin May 4, 2009.

Similar to a Systematic Ongoing Assessment and Review Strategy (SOARS) survey team, the upcoming OIG CAP team will review and evaluate our systems and programs ranging from Quality Management, Environment of Care and Medication Management to Coordination of Care, Staffing and even the new Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP).

Overall - these surveys, inspections and assessments are conducted to ensure CAVHCS is ready, willing and able to deliver on our three promises. More specifically they also prepare us for The Joint Commission surveys. We've been featuring information about The Joint Commission surveys in the CAVHCS Plan of the Week for a few months now. We've provided facts, figures definitions and specific expectations involved with a Joint Commission survey. One fact provided was Joint Commission surveys are unannounced, with a few exceptions, such as with the Bureau of Prisons or Department of Defense facilities. An organization can have an unannounced survey between 18 and 39 months after its previous full survey. CAVHCS' current certification was awarded in February 2007, so we can expect a Joint Commission survey at any time.



Special Assistant to the Secretary Mr. Jay Halpern and Ms. Bealer (l,r) recently led a Public Meeting to discuss the details of a proposed Enhanced Use Lease of Building 62 on the Tuskegee Campus.

CAVHCS All-Stars

Recently I had an appointment with the VA Hospital in Tuskegee, AL. As I entered Team A headquarters they made me feel like Veterans come first with them. They were very professional and business like in their work. They made sure I had a meal ticket after coming in fasting for my blood work. The nurses were very courteous and polite. Dr. Boraza has been treating me for several years and has saved my life a couple of times after I went into a Diabetic coma. I wished every VA Hospital in the US could send a representative to Tuskegee VA Hospital and let them observe how well Team A treats their patients. I have been in several VA Hospitals, but Tuskegee is the best I have ever been in. I would like to thank Dr. Boraza and Team A for their good treatment during the past several years. -- Respectfully submitted, Claude M., Prattville, Ala.

Dr. Taylor, Ms. Eddie Mae Scott and Mrs. Annie Moore were very great with my husband, Kenneth M. We came to the ER Friday the 13th and had to be sent to Baptist Surgery for Gall Bladder Surgery. Dr. Taylor really cares about her patients. I have never seen a doctor or her nurses so helpful. They are the best! -- Thank you very much, Gina and Kenneth M.

My name is Freddie P. I am a 100% disabled vet. I'm an amputee. I want to tell you about staff on 2A. They are very, very professional people. I had a minor surgery on 2-12-09 by Dr. Bhuta. He is also a great person. -- Sincerely, F.L.P., Selma, Ala.

I would like to take this time to thank and congratulate this staff for their kindness and professional courtesy. They were GREAT! I don't want to be in this situation again, but if I am, I pray I'm lucky enough to have providers of this standard. They were excellent! -- Thanks again, David A., 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.

Interim Director
Acting Associate Director
Acting Associate Director, Patient Care Services
Chief of Staff
Public Affairs Officer

Shirley Bealer, MS, RN, CNA, BC, CPHQ
Anita F. Willard, MPH
Storm L. Morgan
Clifford Robinson, MD
Al Bloom

Employees of the Month



Tuskegee Campus Mr. Wallace Tinsley

Mr. Tinsley works tirelessly to keep the Columbus CBOC (an old building) clean. He provides excellent customer service to the Veterans at the Columbus CBOC by assisting them with directions, answering questions and directing them to the appropriate personnel when additional assistance is needed. Mr. Tinsley serves as a leader/supervisor to the CWT/IT staff that works at the CBOC. He instructs and supervises them in their daily duties and ensures that all tasks are completed correctly the first time and in a timely manner.

Mr. Tinsley accomplishes his work with a pleasant and helpful attitude. I have found that he goes out of his way to resolve our issues and concerns in a courteous and professional way. Please extend our heartfelt appreciation and thanks to him for all he does. Mr. Tinsley makes a tremendous difference at the Columbus CBOC and it would be wonderful if Mr. Tinsley was promoted and provided with full-time employment or selected as the Employee of the Month.

-- Submitted by Phaedra Pitre, Columbus CBOC

New Wellness Center Opens

The Grand Opening of the Montgomery Wellness Center, located in between Bldg. T-25/Smoking Hut and Bldg. 40 Prosthetics, was held March 10. The new Wellness Center has approximately 1600 square feet of space filled with equipment from ProMaxima, Cybex, Sci-Fit, and Noramco. It is also stocked with more than 4000 lbs. of Ivanko free weights and dumbbells.

For staff interested in utilizing the new Wellness Center there will be a one-time \$10 fee to join and a \$60 annual fee. All payments are required to be up front, and new members will be required to have equipment familiarization and be briefed on CAVHCS policy and rules for the area. Hours of operation will initially be 5:00 am – 9:00 pm. Showers are available in Bldg. 4, adjacent to the Wellness Center, but employees must furnish their own towels.

The Wellness Center is for employee use only. No family members, friends, or pets. Employees are required to sign in daily prior to utilizing the facility. Rules for the area will be strictly enforced, and violators could have their membership revoked. Once a member, employees can only get out on their anniversary date, e.g. one year from the month they join. A waiver of liability must be processed prior to receiving a Wellness Center card. You must have your card with you when using the facility.

Montgomery Campus Mr. Fredrick Harris, NA



Mr. Frederick Harris has worked at the VA since 1988 and in the Nursing Facility for ten years, moving to the Outpatient Clinic during his service here. Prior to coming to the VA he worked at Baptist Hospital in Oncology, Orthopedics and as a scrub technician in OR.

Mr. Harris is utilized in all of the outpatient clinics and gets pulled wherever there is a need. He also worked in the Diabetic Management Clinic alone for almost a year after the sudden death of an employee. This was a large responsibility for a nursing Assistant, but he rose to the occasion to care for our many diabetic Veterans.

He is pleasant and assists all the nurses on the Red and Yellow teams, and is utilized by the Green team when necessary. He continues to cover the Diabetic clinic when the LPN is not available. He takes the initiative to triage patients that are checked in when needed or overbooked. He assists with procedures or covers clinics when staff/team members are busy with other patients or emergencies. He also escorts Veterans who are confused, or physically challenged. He is polite and professional and treats the Veterans and coworkers with respect.

Please be advised, that although the Wellness Center is being run by the Central Alabama Employee Association (CAEA), the facility and equipment is government property. Failure to properly care for and maintain the equipment could result in losing it. Damage, theft, or unauthorized use of the facility or equipment is subject to applicable laws.



Ms. Bealer and Cliff Wrencher (Left, l-r) cut the ceremonial ribbon during the grand opening of the new CAVHCS Wellness Center on the Montgomery Campus, which features more than 4,000 lbs. of free weights and dumbbells. The 1600 sq. ft. space also has ProMaxima, Cybex, Sci-Fit, and Noramco fitness equipment.



CAVHCS to Celebrate Volunteer Week

Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System (CAVHCS) volunteers, who tirelessly work to improve services to Veterans, will be honored during National Volunteer Week, April 19-25, 2009. CAVHCS Voluntary Services will host two National Volunteer Week ceremonies. The first ceremony will target Montgomery Campus volunteers on Saturday April 25, at noon in Starlight Caterer, 3457 McGehee Road, Montgomery, while the second ceremony will target Tuskegee Campus volunteers Sunday April 26 in Building 90's Room A-107 at 2 pm.

"Volunteers perform countless acts of service and are one of America's most valuable assets," said Mr. William Petty, CAVHCS' Chief, Voluntary Services. "During the past year, volunteers at all CAVHCS facilities have continued to reach out to their neighbors, Veterans, and their families. National Volunteer Week is the ideal time to honor volunteers who continually meet our community's needs and calling the public's attention to their tremendous contributions."

In 2008, CAVHVS was supported by more than 800 volunteers who donated more than 57,000 hours, and CAVHCS has a way to calculate that generosity into a tangible figure. "The State of Alabama Independent Sector valued volunteer hours in 2006 at \$16.33 an hour," said Petty. "Based on that 2006 value, our 57,000 volunteer

hours translates to \$930,810.00, which of course represents a huge savings for CAVHCS. On top of that - CAVHCS Veteran Organizations and groups made \$392,138.50 worth of donations."

National Volunteer Week began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order establishing an annual celebration of volunteering. Every

president since has signed a proclamation promoting the week. During National Volunteer Week, VA volunteers nationwide will receive presidential recognition for their service to veterans. These awards are presented throughout the nation to honor the service of our country's most committed volunteers and sharing their

achievements to encourage more Americans to volunteer.

"CVAHCS' National Volunteer Week theme, 'Hands that Serve Hearts that Care,'" truly exemplifies the energy, compassion and commitment of VA's volunteers," said Petty. "We will be presenting CAVHCS awards at our annual banquets. And while we have so many wonderful, dedicated volunteers that it makes it a challenge determining who to provide special recognition, ultimately - we do our best to make sure all of our volunteers know how much we appreciate them."



Veterans receiving support in the In-patient Pain Program recently benefitted from the renovation of CAVHCS Hoptel rooms on the Tuskegee Campus. The Department of Alabama Veterans of Foreign War Auxiliary, Post 5404, Auburn, Ala. and Post 5808 Auxiliary Eufaula, Ala. each donated a total of \$9600 to fund the renovation.

Understanding Why We Honor Former Prisoners, Families

April 9, 2008 the nation will recognize our former Prisoners of War. It is a day to honor the extraordinary sacrifices made by these courageous veterans. But why April 9?

The date is significant. Former POW Recognition Day is held each year on April 9, because it was the day that a starving and exhausted U.S. military force at Bataan in the Philippines surrendered to the invading Japanese during World War II.

Ten thousand American soldiers, along with thousands of Filipinos, were marched some 70 miles to a POW camp. An estimated 600 to 650 American soldiers died from maltreatment and murder along the way. The rest faced years of brutal and deadly captivity in the Philippines and Japan. Former POW Recognition Day began to honor and remember those veterans and through the years has come to honor all of America's veterans who survived wartime captivity.

More than half a million Americans have been captured and interned as Prisoners of War since the

American Revolution. The largest number of American POWs came during the Civil War when an estimated 220,000 Confederate soldiers were interned by the North and nearly 127,000 Union soldiers were taken prisoner by the South. Since World War I, more than 142,000 Americans - including nearly 100 women - have been held as POWs. Today, more than 90 percent of America's living POWs are World War II veterans.

America's former Prisoners of War fought fiercely and served with honor and distinction under the worst conditions. They demonstrated personal courage, selflessness, and unflinching loyalty to their country. Theirs is a quiet courage based on hope and trust that saw them through the most brutal and depressing of all military experiences. And whether their imprisonment lasted a few weeks or many years, during that trying time there was no end in sight, only their personal will to go on.

In a speech presented July 21, 1920, President Calvin Coolidge said, "The nation which forgets its defenders will itself be forgotten."

Celebrating 20 Years

A 21st Century Department of Veterans Affairs

White House Blog (Monday, March 16th, 2009) - Today President Obama helped mark the 20th anniversary of the Department of Veterans Affairs as a Cabinet-level agency with remarks in Washington, DC.

The President paid tribute to this department, which was formed in its first incarnation over 70 years ago under President Herbert Hoover, and today stands as the second-largest of the 15 Cabinet departments, by pointing to the original vision of Abraham Lincoln “to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan.”

In recalling his grandfather’s service in Patton’s army, President Obama expressed his profound gratitude to our nation’s service members on behalf of the entire nation: And I think about my grandfather whenever I have the privilege of meeting the young men and women who serve in our military today. They are our best and brightest, and they’re our bravest - enlisting in a time of war; enduring tour after tour of duty; serving with honor under the most difficult circumstances; and making sacrifices that many of us cannot begin to imagine. The same can be said of their families. As my wife, Michelle, has seen firsthand during visits to military bases across this country, we don’t just deploy our troops in a time of war — we deploy their families, too.

The President also expressed full support of Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric Shinseki, who is one of our nation’s finest veterans — having served a long and distinguished career in the U.S. Army. Under the leadership of Secretary Shinseki the Department of Veterans Affairs will be transformed for the 21st century.



CAVHCS employees celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the VA becoming part of the Presidential Cabinet after watching President Obama’s address to VA employees in Washington, D.C. via TargetVision.

Over the next five years, the budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs will increase by over \$25 billion. These funds will be used to expand the VA health care program so that it can serve an additional 500,000 veterans by 2013; to implement a GI Bill for the 21st century; to provide better health care; and to dramatically improve services related to mental health and injuries like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury. The funds will also be used for technology that will ease the transition from active duty to home for our nation’s service members.

For the entire Administration, the 20th anniversary of the Department of Veterans Affairs is a reminder of our debt of honor to the men and women who have fought to defend our freedom and for all involved it is an honor to undergo the work of transforming the Department for the 21st century.

Social Work Services Month: Purpose and Possibility

In support of Social Work Services Month, CAVHCS hosted programs ranging from Social Work Service Day, Open Houses on both campuses and a special, two-day OEF/OIF Workshop that included members of CAVHCS staff, Department of Defense from Alabama and Georgia and Department of Veterans Affairs’ Central Office.





Members of CAVHCS Pharmacy gather to share the CAVHCS Plan of the Week. The Plan of the Week is published and sent to CAVHCS supervisors - Fridays.

The Plan of the Week and CAVHCS Salute are also available to staff by visiting the Public Affairs intrAnet website.

(Photo by Robin Johnson)

April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Alcohol Awareness Month - www.ncadd.org Cancer Control Month - www.cancer.org National Occupational Therapy Month - www.promoteot.org ; www.aota.org Counseling Awareness Month - www.counseling.org			1	2	3	4	
			Testicular Cancer Awareness Week - www.tcaw.org Medication Safety Week - www.womensheart.org				
 Palm Sunday National Public Health Week - www.apha.org	5	6	7	National Radiology Nurses Day www.arna.net	National Former POW Recognition Day	 Good Friday	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
			Income Tax Due 				
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
National Volunteer Week - www.pointsoflight.org			Administrative Professionals Day 				
			Medical Laboratory Professionals Week - www.labweek.org				
26	27	28	29	30	National Donate Life Month www.kidney.org ; www.organdonor.gov National Parkinsons Awareness Month www.parkinson.org		

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. Submissions are not guaranteed to be published. Editorial considerations will be made for propriety, promptness and print space.