



This Magic Moment

Valentines for Veterans Concert Series 'Big Hit'

The Department of Veterans Affairs' Valentines for Veterans (V4V) Concert Series came to Montgomery, Ala. February 11th to honor Veterans of all eras as well as the River Region's recently deployed service members and their families.

"Up on the Roof, Under the Boardwalk, Money Honey - they sang them all," said a concert go-er as she virtually floated out of Troy University's Davis Theater for the Performing Arts following the Tribute to The Drifters, starring Bobby Hendricks. "They were fantastic, and we had a great time."

"Due in large part to the support of the City of Montgomery and Troy University who donated the use of the theater, we're very happy that Montgomery was one of only 17 cities in the nation to be selected to host a Valentines for Veterans Concert," said CAVHCS Director, Glen E. Struchtemeyer during a brief ceremony prior to the concert that featured the Presentation of

Colors by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's Lima Company 323 and a rousing a capella version of the national anthem by Maxwell Air Force Base Men's Chorale Group. "We are very fortunate. We have outstanding support from the community whether we're

providing services to veterans or the city and the Governor getting together to host events like Montgomery's inaugural Veterans Day parade this year."

The Drifters, starring Bobby Hendricks who also sang There Goes My Baby, This Magic Moment and hits of the era like On Broadway, made the commitment to support the Veteran, active duty and family member communities with their gift of song by participating in the V4V Concert Series. That gift, as well as sponsorship by the national, non-profit organization Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV) www.HHV.org, translated to a no-cost event for 1,000 attendees.

One of the highlights of the evening came during the Drifter's



The Drifters starring Bobby Hendricks (white coat) performed at Troy University's Davis Theater Friday, February 11, as part of a national, 17-city Valentines for Veterans Concert Series. The no-cost series was sponsored by Help Hospital Veterans (HHV), www.HHV.org as well as sponsorships from throughout the local community. (Photo by Eric Johnson)

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VA & HUD Issue First-Ever Report on Homeless Veterans

For the first time, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development today published the most authoritative analysis of the extent and nature of homelessness among Veterans. According to HUD and VA's assessment, nearly 76,000 Veterans were homeless on a given night in 2009 while roughly 136,000 Veterans spent at least one night in a shelter during that year.

This unprecedented assessment is based on an annual report HUD provides to Congress and explores in greater depth the demographics of Veterans who are homeless, how the number of Veterans compare to others who are homeless, and how Veterans access and use the nation's homeless response system. HUD's report, Veteran Homelessness: A Supplement to the 2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, examines the data in the department's annual report to Congress in-depth.

"With our federal, state and community partners working together, more Veterans are moving into safe housing," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "But we're not done yet. Providing assistance in mental health, substance abuse treatment, education and

employment goes hand-in-hand with preventive steps and permanent supportive housing. We continue to work towards our goal of finding every Veteran safe housing and access to needed services."

Last June, President Obama announced the nation's first comprehensive strategy to prevent and end homelessness, including a focus on homeless Veterans. The report, Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, puts the country on a path to end Veterans and chronic homelessness by 2015; and to ending homelessness among children, family, and youth by 2020.

Key Findings

- More than 3,000 cities and counties reported 75,609 homeless Veterans on a single night in January of 2009; 57 percent were staying in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program while the remaining 43 percent were unsheltered. Veterans represent approximately 12 percent of

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CAVHCS All-Stars

My name is Freddie C. I have been to the Emergency room twice in 2010 and just wanted you to know that the staff, nurses and doctors were great! They took excellent care of me during my visits and treated me with care. I was very pleased with everything that was done for me.

-- Respectfully, Freddie C., Thorsby, Ala.

Kudos to the following individuals: Dr. Johnetta Stokes (Red Team), Dr. Eddie B. Warren (General Surgery), Mr. Pepper (Radiology & Imaging), Gabby (Radiology & Imaging), and Vergie (Radiology & Imaging). These individuals deserve the highest praise, for their professionalism, timeliness and compassion. Please do everything "within your power" to retain these individuals. -- Joni W. Opelika, Ala.

This is my second visit to the VA Hospital and I can truly say my visit to this location has been pleasant. Everyone I met was very helpful. The atmosphere is very welcoming. Thank you. Great job — Ms. Julie in C&P (Case Manager). Please thank her for me! -- Carol W., Columbus, Ga.

LPN Catherine Paschell-Johnson at Maxwell, AFB did an exceptional job with me on my visit recently. I am very pleased with her work. She took a great deal of care and her concern for my welfare during my visit was quite evident. -- Sincerely, CMSgt Bob J. Canada (USAF, Ret.), Selma, Ala.

I just wanted to take a few minutes to compliment Mr. White. Unfortunately when he comes to do work in my area I am not always available to provide him the opportunity to come in my office. I realized earlier today when he came that he has never become aggravated with me nor discouraged that he could not get to do what he needed to do.

He always go to one of the other areas we have placed a work order for and get the job done. He then comes back and makes sure he completes his work in my office. I know that it sounds minute and yes he is hired to get the work done but I have to say he has a great attitude. He has done a great deal for this service in the past two years.

I really should tell him that I'm appreciative and will get around to doing that. I just wanted to let you know that as far as I'm concerned he has been a great reflection on your leadership when he has completed tasks for my service. You both know that I don't believe in empty compliments and if I felt that he was doing mediocre work I would be the first to say so. Just wanted to let you know that he has responded to the work orders very timely and provides great customer service. In the future I will take the opportunity to compliment him on the spot. Thanks for listening.

-- Iva K. Davis, LMSW, ACSW
Chief, Social Work Service (122)

2011 Survey of Enrollee Announcement

Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary
for Health for Policy and Planning Announces its:



The VHA's Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health (ADUSH) for Policy and Planning is conducting the 2011 update of our national VHA telephone Survey of Enrollees. The purpose of the survey is to provide information that is incorporated into annual VHA projections of enrollment, utilization, and expenditures, as well as into a variety of high level VHA budget and policy related analyses.

The survey provides critical and essential information on Veteran utilization of health services, projecting the resources and services needed in VHA, and in developing our budget. The survey collects information on a random sample of 42,000 Veterans enrolled in the VA system, who participate in an approximately 15-30 minute telephone survey.

Each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) will have approximately 2,000 enrollees surveyed. The survey will be fully initiated the week of Feb 28, 2011. Interviewing will continue for 12 weeks.

Veteran enrollees selected for the survey will receive a letter that provides information about the survey and the contractor conducting the survey on behalf of VA.

Your support in this survey will help ensure that we provide the best care possible, where it is needed, when it is needed, and by whom it is needed.

Previous survey reports are available at:
www4.va.gov/healthpolicyplanning/reports1.asp
VHA's Office of the ADUSH for Policy and Planning internet Web site.

Thank you for your assistance in this project.

The CAVHCS Salute



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

Glen E. Struchtemeyer
Dennis Paquette
Yvette Hill, MS, RN
Cliff Robinson, MD
Al Bloom

'Valentines'

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version of Wilson Pickett's 1966 hit single Mustang Sally. Together with Veterans called up from the crowd Hendricks tore through chorus of "...ride Sally ride," while the veterans virtually stole the show dancing. The 81 year-old, recently renovated theater was nearly brought down to rubble when the crowd roared when one veteran busted into his version of the robot and then slid across the stage doing a moon walk.

The Valentines for Veterans Concert Series is part of the week-long VA National Salute to Veteran Patients celebrated during the week of Valentine's Day each year at VA medical facilities nationwide. The purpose of the week-long celebration is to pay tribute to veterans, increase awareness of the needs of hospitalized veterans, and provide an additional opportunity to express appreciation for the sacrifices of America's veterans. The concerts are also a great way for veterans and their families to share time together...especially on Valentine's Day.

Prior to the concert The Drifters made a visit to the Montgomery VA Medical Center where they met with staff and veterans alike. "We're happy to be here to visit our nation's heroes," said Bobby Hendricks. "Tonight we'll sing one of Ben E. King's (King was a member of the Drifters briefly from 1959-1960) hits - Stand By Me. For me that's what it's all about. I want us to always support and 'Stand By' our veterans."

"It's wonderful to have the Drifter's concert scheduled to coincide with our annual National Salute to Veteran Patients," said CAVHCS Chief of Voluntary Service,

William Petty. "We're very fortunate, because we always have an outstanding community response, but this year the concert really got folks excited. This year we received several hundred Valentine's Cards, as well as hundreds of visitors from local schools, Veterans Service Groups, ROTC programs and active duty military. It's amazing to see the interaction.

The veterans light up. You can literally see their body language soar."

CAVHCS' Valentines for Veterans Concert also served as a Welcome Home for the River Region's recently deployed service

members and their families. CAVHCS works directly with the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Programs, which are designed to provide information, services, referral, and proactive outreach

programs to Soldiers and Airmen as well as their families through all phases of the deployment cycle.

The Valentines for Veterans Concert Series coincided with a Post-Deployment Yellow Ribbon Training Event, which was also held in Montgomery over the same weekend. The training event provided information on available Department of Veterans Affairs educational, health care, counseling, dental and even employment assistance benefits.

Such a Night! The Valentines for Veterans Concert Series recently played The Davis Theater for the Performing Arts (1) featuring The Drifters starring Bobby Hendricks (2, 9). The Drifters visited with Veterans and staff the day of the concert (3, 5), before entertaining an estimated 1,000 Veterans, active duty and family members (6, 11). During the program just prior to the concert, CAVHCS acknowledged supporters like Laura Balin, VA Director of Voluntary Service (4) and Ken Selvaggi, General Manager, WSFA-12 News(12). After that the party was on including show-stopping audience participation (7, 10)!

(Photos by Eric Johnson)



WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

*You served, you deserve
★ the best care anywhere.*



Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System (CAVHCS) will host two Women Veterans Health Program recently conducted a series of Meet and Greets in the Wiregrass Region and Columbus, Ga. to increase women Veteran awareness of the specialized services available for them.

“The Women’s Veteran Program (WVP) Meet & Greet activities are conducted for several reasons,” said Ms. Peggy Hall, CAVHCS’ Women Veterans Health Program Coordinator. “The activities provide an opportunity to introduce the women’s health staff; allow distribution of women’s health educational information; increase collaboration within the VA (Department of Veterans Affairs); and provide an opportunity to conduct small focus groups to obtain needed feedback related to planning and implementing the Women’s Health Program.”

Women Veterans are a growing segment of the Veteran demographic. The current approximate percentage of women Veterans is as high as 8 percent, which is up from 4.4 percent in 1988. And, women make up 11.3 percent of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans.

As part of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ efforts to ensure readiness for the influx of new women Veterans, CAVHCS is actively addressing resource needs so that the proper training, as well as equipment and supplies are in place in facilities. In the case of the recent meet and greets, CAVHCS teamed up with the Montgomery’s Vet Center Program who arranged for a Mobile Vet Center (MVC) to drive up from Florida.

“Many of the veterans were interested in seeing the Mobile Vet Center,” said Hall. “Most of them were unaware that the VA had mobile units and wanted to see what they looked like. So, the Mobile Vet Unit was a great conversation starter.”

CAVHCS Women’s Health Program is planning on conducting several additional outreach events. In fact, the focus on Women veterans can be seen throughout CAVHCS. For example, March is Social Worker Service Month and the theme of the Annual Workshop this year will focus on Women Veterans. Other planned outreach activities include; Operation Baby Shower, Spring Flair Health Fair, Breast Cancer Awareness Walk and Tea and Talk Focus Groups. For more details contact Ms. Peggy Hall at (334) 272-4670 x2703 or peggy.hall2@va.gov.



CAVHCS Women’s Veterans Program Coordinator Peggy Hall (R) discusses available services with Veterans in the Columbus, Ga. Community Based Outpatient Clinic during the recent Meet and Greet. (Photo by Eric Johnson)

‘Homeless’

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all homeless persons counted nationwide during the 2009 ‘point-in-time snapshot.’

- During a 12-month period in 2009, an estimated 136,000 Veterans—or about 1 in every 168 Veterans - spent at least one night in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. The vast majority of sheltered homeless Veterans (96 percent) experienced homelessness alone while a much smaller share (four percent) was part of a family. Sheltered homeless Veterans are most often individual white men between the ages of 31 and 50 and living with a disability.
- Low-income Veterans are twice as likely to become homeless compared to all low-income adults. HUD and VA also examined the likelihood of becoming homeless among American Veterans with particular demographic characteristics.

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In 2009, twice as many poor Hispanic Veterans used a shelter at some point during the year compared with poor non-Hispanic Veterans. African American Veterans in poverty had similar rates of homelessness.

- Most Veterans who used emergency shelter stayed for only brief periods. One-third stayed in shelter for less than one week; 61 percent used a shelter for less than one month; and 84% stayed for less than three months. The report also concluded that Veterans remained in shelters longer than did non-Veterans. In 2009, the median length of stay for Veterans who were alone was 21 days in an emergency shelter and 117 days in transitional housing. By contrast, non-veteran individuals stayed in an emergency shelter for 17 days and 106 days in transitional housing.
- Nearly half of homeless Veterans were located in California, Texas, New York and Florida while only 28 percent of all Veterans were located in those same four States.

- The report studied the path homeless Veterans take into the shelter system and found most Veterans come from another homeless location and few entered the shelter system from their own housing or from housing provided by family or friends.
- Sheltered homeless Veterans are far more likely to be alone rather than part of a family household; 96 percent of Veterans are individuals compared to 63 percent in the overall homeless population.
- For more information on VA’s efforts to end homelessness among Veterans, visit VA’s Web page at www.va.gov/homelessness.



Call for Award Submissions

VA is now accepting nominations for the Secretary's Annual Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards Program. These awards, coordinated by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), are the highest recognition given to any VA employee or team who has excelled in and produced measureable accomplishments toward the three goals listed in VA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, each of which contribute to the underlying mission to foster a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity.

Awards will be given in three categories: manager/supervisor, nonsupervisory employee, and team. Please note that all nomination materials must be cleared through proper channels in your organization and received by ODI no later than Friday, April 29, 2011.

For more information - including nomination eligibility, criteria, documentation and processing - visit www.diversity.hr.va.gov/ca/awards/index.htm or contact Yvonne Rannels, Training and Communications, ODI at (202) 461-4007 or Yvonne.Rannels@va.gov.

Vets ready to 'Play Ball'

Spring training for the first ever all-amputee standing slow pitch softball team is set to start in Tucson, Arizona. Comprised entirely of 20 military Veterans and active-duty service members who lost limbs while in military service, the team will showcase their abilities March 11 at 8:00 p.m., at the University of Arizona's Hillenbrand Stadium.

Sponsored by a grant from the University of Arizona, the team was assembled by David Van Sleet, VISN 18 Prosthetic Manager, based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Van Sleet expects the game to highlight both the athleticism of the players as well as the high-quality of prosthetic devices offered by VA. "These guys are in incredible shape and they are super competitive," said Van Sleet. During their game in Tucson, 10 amputee softball players will compete against 10 of the other amputee softball players. Van Sleet noted that for their next game, members of the team will travel to Washington, D.C., in May to take on a team of able-bodied players from the staff of Walter Reed Army Medical Center.



Eat Right with Color

March is National Nutrition Month, a nutrition education and information campaign created by the American Dietetic Association (ADA). The 2011 theme is "Eat Right with Color."

The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity. Different foods supply different nutrients, to maximize the nutritional value of your meal, include a variety of healthful choices in your diet.

VA's specific focus during National Nutrition Month is having a healthy workforce. ADVANCE your personal and professional growth, and ADVANCE service to Veterans and their families by visiting <http://vaww.va.gov/ADVANCE> to take control of your health.



Joint Commission Health Care High 5

IN THE NEWS

1 Fed Outlines Chronic Illness Strategies
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently issued a new *Strategic Framework on Multiple Chronic Conditions* to help the nation's health care providers adapt to the rising number of patients who suffer from more than one chronic illness. Visit www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/mcc/mcc_framework.pdf for more information.

2 AHRQ Jumpstarts Fight Against HAIs
The U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) recently awarded \$34 million in grants for projects focused on preventing health care-associated infections (HAIs).

3 Long Work Hours Causing Possible Depression Among Surgeons
The more hours surgeons work each week, the more depressed and burned out they become, according to a recent study in the November 2010 *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*. The study, based on a 2008 survey of 7,905 U.S. surgeons, identified statistically significant trends linking an 80-hour work week to increased burnout rates and decreased quality of life.

4 Safety Group Creates Patient Safety Certification Program
The National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF), a nonprofit organization specializing in advancing safe patient care, has launched a new certification program.

5 CMS Opens Registration for eHR Incentives
Registration for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) electronic Health Records (eHR) Incentive Program opened on January 3. The program allows eligible professionals, hospitals, and critical access hospitals to receive incentive payments from CMS when they adopt certified health technology and successfully demonstrate "meaningful use" of the technology in ways that improve quality, safety, and effectiveness of patient-centered care.



CAVHCS' Diversity Advisory Committee recently presented observances in support of National African American/Black History Month on the Tuskegee and Montgomery Campuses. Each observance featured live music, a look at the historical contributions of the Tuskegee VA Medical Center and a presentation by Jeff Flowers (pictured) of a speech that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. first delivered in Montgomery on March 25, 1965 following the Selma to Montgomery known as the 'Our God is Marching On!' or 'How Long, Not Long,' speech. (photo by Eric Johnson)

2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS VA OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS FEDERAL HOLIDAY						
		<h1>March 2011</h1>				
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<input type="checkbox"/> Women's History Month <input type="checkbox"/> Save Your Vision Month <input type="checkbox"/> National Nutrition Month <input type="checkbox"/> American Red Cross Month <input type="checkbox"/> National Kidney Month <input type="checkbox"/> Hemophilia Month		1 *Peace Corps Founded (1961)	2	3 *National Anthem Day (1931)	4	5
Patient Safety Awareness Week (March 6-12)						
6	7 *Army Distinguished Service Medal Authorized (1918)	8 *International Working Women's Day	9 *Registered Dietitian Day *Tokyo Blanket Bombing (1945)	10 *World Kidney Day	11	12
National Pulmonary Rehabilitation Week (March 13-19); International Brain Awareness Week (March 14-19)						
13 *Daylight Saving Time Begins	14	15 *VA Cabinet Status (1989)	16 *Freedom of Information Day	17 *St. Patrick's Day	18	19 *Operation Iraqi Freedom Begins (2003)
National Poison Prevention Week (March 20-26)						
20 *Spring Begins	21	22 *Diabetes Alert Day *Tuskegee Airmen Activated (1941) *World Water Day	23	24 *World Tuberculosis Day	25	26
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic (March 27-April 1)					<input type="checkbox"/> National Eye Donor Month <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics Awareness Month <input type="checkbox"/> National Colorectal Awareness Month <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic Fatigue Awareness Month <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Sclerosis Education Month <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf History Month (Mar. 13-Apr. 15) <input type="checkbox"/> National Social Work Month <input type="checkbox"/> Brain Injury Awareness Month <input type="checkbox"/> Irish-American Heritage Month	
27	28	29	30 *Doctors' Day	31		

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.