



## Wiregrass Stand Down provides support for Homeless Vets

In military life a Stand Down is a time to stop operations, rest and focus on specific areas of concern. And, for homeless veterans in the Wiregrass Region, the recent Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System (CAVHCS) Homeless Stand Down in the Army National Guard Building on Dothan's Third Avenue provided a similar respite as well as an opportunity to regroup and focus on areas of concern in their life after the military.

"Stand Downs are conducted to assist homeless veterans in crisis," explained CAVHCS Social Worker Marguerita D. High. "This is the second year we've conducted a stand down in the Guard's building. Along with all the other support organizations we're able to provide a single meeting point where homeless

veterans can access several services at once to hopefully assist them in their efforts to improve their quality of life."

Homeless Veterans attending the stand down were greeted by volunteers, as well as members of more

than 20 support activities based in the Wiregrass Region. "We had folks from Department of Human Resources, Social Security and the Alabama State Employment Service," said High. "Veterans also received clothes and even flu shots."



Several CAVHCS services provided support to homeless Veterans in the Wiregrass Region during a recent Stand Down in Dothan's Army National Guard Building.

Nationwide, the number of homeless veterans is estimated to be 200,000 on any given night, though accurate numbers are impossible to pin down, according to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans in Washington. Locally, while numbers are equally difficult to determine, the Wiregrass Region's homeless Veterans are being actively supported.

### Message from the Chief

## Goals, Strategies, and Operational Plans

By: **John Gingrich**

Chief of Staff, Department of Veterans Affairs

The Secretary's ambitious vision of a transformed, 21<sup>st</sup> Century VA, is taking shape. Thanks to the efforts of a VA Transformation Task Force created earlier this year, and with broad cooperation and support throughout the Administrations and Staff Offices, we have created a new strategic plan – a roadmap that will help guide our transformation journey. Our strategic plan is now under review at the Office of Management and Budget.

Our strategic plan has four Department-wide goals:

- (1) Improve the quality and accessibility of health care, benefits, and memorial services while optimizing value;
- (2) Increase Veteran client satisfaction with health, education, training, counseling, financial, and burial benefits and services;
- (3) Raise readiness to provide services and protect people and assets continuously and in time of crisis; and
- (4) Improve internal customer satisfaction with management systems and support services and make VA an employer of choice by investing in human capital. These are bold goals

that reflect our desire to honor the service of our nation's Veterans.

The strategic plan establishes three Integrated Objectives for the Department, with a series of integrated strategies to achieve each objective. It is our collective responsibility to execute this plan – ensuring continuous alignment, collaboration, and communication. We need to make sure that our resources are properly allocated, that our actions are transparent and accountable, that our results are meaningful and clearly reported. We need to learn from our mistakes, improve our processes, and hold ourselves to the highest standards of clarity and focus. Every VA leader and employee must be an active participant in our efforts to transform VA and implement this strategic plan.

The final component of our planning cycle is the development of Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Operating Plans for each Administration and Staff Office. These operating plans

Please see 'Chief'

# Flu Season: Staying Informed is Vital

In September 2009, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) determined target populations to first receive novel H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. Based on the projected initial supply of vaccine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) agreed on an initial novel H1N1 vaccine allocation for VA staff who are at occupational risk because they deliver healthcare to VHA patients.

In addition, certain patients who receive health care in VA or VA staff who are at personal risk or pose a risk to others from novel H1N1 illness are also among targeted groups to receive vaccine from this initial allocation. By an agreement with other Federal agencies, non-VA Federal workers who are at occupational risk may also be vaccinated by VA staff at VA sites around the U.S.

Targeted groups from the VA community who are to receive vaccine from the initial allocation are (\*note that this list is not in order of risk or priority for vaccination):

- \* Health care workers and emergency medical service personnel who are expected to have direct contact with patients or infectious materials.

- \* Pregnant women.

- \* Caregivers and contacts of infants less than 6 months old.

- \* Adolescents (generally 18 year-olds) with medical conditions making them at higher risk for Influenza-related complications.

- \* Vaccination targeting was designed to protect persons believed to be most at risk for infection with H1N1 influenza.

- \* VA has agreed to follow the National guidelines developed by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices as endorsed by HHS/CDC.

After the targeted individuals are vaccinated (**we hope this will take no more than 3-5 weeks**), vaccination of all remaining VHA patients and VA staff should begin without delay using any vaccine and supplies available.

- \* At this time, we recommend H1N1 influenza vaccine for everyone, except persons who have a severe allergy to eggs which is rare.

- \* We especially recommend vaccine for the following patients and staff who may have a higher risk of becoming ill with novel H1N1 influenza than others

- \* All 19-24 year olds

- \* All 25 to 64 year olds with medical conditions that put them at risk of influenza complications.



Leading by example - CAVHCS Director Glen Struchtemeyer receives his annual Seasonal Flu vaccination from Laundrena LaPradd-Bradley. (Photo by Eric Johnson)

## CAVHCS All-Stars

Dear Caregivers:

Mr. Jerry B. C. recently brought to my attention the excellent care that you are providing at the VA Medical Center in Tuskegee, and I would like to express my immense appreciation for everything that you do for our nation's veterans.

The American dream would not be possible if not for the courageous and valorous efforts of our servicemembers, and we are all extremely fortunate to have selfless caregivers, such as yourselves, in our great state to provide the support that they have rightfully earned in their service to our nation.

Again, thank you for all that you do for our veterans, our state, and our nation. I pray for the utmost success in all of your future endeavors, and I look forward to hearing more great things about the Tuskegee VA Medical Center.

-- Sincerely, Richard Shelby, United States Senate

If your office handles "complaints" then I hope that you will accept a simple "thank you". I am only one service-connected Veteran. However, it seems like every time I go into my local CBOC for treatment, that not only me alone, but all the Veterans are treated in the utmost fashion. Your staff are caring, efficient and very professional. Please convey my gratitude to all of them particularly: Dr. Lokesh, Bruce Clyne and Dr. Welch, Maria Acobe, Evelyn Sonn and Mo Funderbirk. -- Sincerely, David H.

## The CAVHCS Salute



Accredited by  
The Joint Commission

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# Tuskegee Mission Homeless Program Progressing

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System (CAVHCS) held an organizational meeting with local Tuskegee and Macon County on the Tuskegee VA Medical Center campus recently completing the next step in the process for entering into a long-term, Enhanced-Use Lease (EUL) for the development and operation of a transitional housing facility.

As part of its Capital Asset Management Service (CAMS) Program, VA is seeking to more effectively assess and manage its real property assets. Referred to as the Tuskegee Mission Homeless Project, the VA first conducted a Public Meeting on the Tuskegee campus March 5, 2009, to provide an open forum to discuss the proposed long-term (up to 75 years) Enhanced-Use Lease (EUL) of Building 62 on the Tuskegee Campus. The recent meeting comes before the release of the official Request for Proposals (RFP), which is expected to be available to developers and the public in October at [www.va.gov/ASSETMANAGEMENT/MissionHomeless/Tuskegee/index.asp](http://www.va.gov/ASSETMANAGEMENT/MissionHomeless/Tuskegee/index.asp).

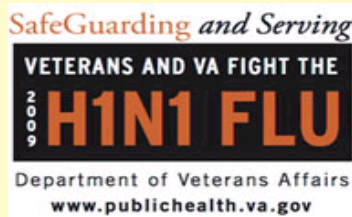
Proposals will be accepted for the development and operation of the 79,000 square foot building as a transitional

housing facility, which will be expected to serve eligible homeless Veterans on a priority basis. Under the terms of the proposed EUL, 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 VA 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.



Tuskegee Mayor Omar Neal (center) and CAVHCS Director Glen Struchtemeyer listen closely to a recent presentation on the proposed Enhanced use Lease of the Tuskegee Campus' Building 62. (Photo by Eric Johnson)



This year, VA hopes to give more than 3 million Veterans and VA staff seasonal flu vaccine and is preparing to give H1N1 flu vaccine to a similar number of Veterans and VA staff, if it is approved for use. At the request of the White House, VA is also preparing to help vaccinate some other Federal employees as well.

Influenza (flu) causes an average of 36,000 deaths and 226,000 hospitalizations per year in the U. S. To stay healthy and strong, VA encourages all veterans who are eligible to get vaccinated for flu at their local VA health care facility each year. Outbreaks of seasonal flu occur each year, mostly in winter.

\* The viruses that cause seasonal flu are like the ones from the past few years. That's why many people can fight off the illness.

\* It takes about two days to get sick after contact with seasonal flu viruses. A person can start to spread flu to others about one day before they feel sick, and up to five days after becoming sick.

\* Not all people who get sick will need to go to the hospital, so there is space for those who are really sick.

\* Healthy adults usually don't get very sick. The very young, the elderly, and people with chronic health problems could get extremely ill.

\* A flu vaccine (flu shot or nasal spray) is made each year that works well to stop the spread of seasonal flu.

\* Getting a flu shot (or nasal spray) each year is the best way to protect yourself from seasonal flu.

## Symptoms of Flu

Fever (usually high)  
Headache  
Tiredness (can be extreme)  
Cough  
Sore throat  
Runny or stuffy nose  
Body aches  
Nausea, vomiting and Diarrhea  
(more so in children than adults)

## Web Resources

[www.centralalabama.va.gov](http://www.centralalabama.va.gov)  
[www.publichealth.va.gov](http://www.publichealth.va.gov)  
[www.pandemicflu.va.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.va.gov)

## 'Chief'

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reflect our intended commitment of resources (people and funds) to meet those objectives that support our goals. The operating plans include organization-specific initiatives and measurable outcomes. In short, the plans guide budget execution and performance monitoring for the quickly approaching fiscal year.



Our FY 2010 Operating Plans are currently being finalized, but this work is far from over. As we begin to execute our strategy, we will certainly discover mistakes and opportunities to improve – even the best plans must be adjusted after implementation begins. But, together, with your creativity, passion, and commitment, VA is prepared to pursue the goals and objectives of our new strategic plan.

## CFC Key Workers

Note: Not a complete list

### DIRECTOR

**Melanie L. Johnson (M) 4636**  
**Greg Ingram (T) 2564**

### BUSINESS OFFICE

**Beverly Rucker (M) 2144**  
**James Hawthorne (T) 3319**

### ENGINEERING SERVICE

**William Thomas (T) 5229**  
**Zhivorka Yelder (M) 4858**  
**Robert Carlson (M) 4755**  
**Barbara Green (T) 3657**

### EMS

**Robert Carlson (M) 4755**

### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

**Barbara Green (T) 3657**  
**Lovelly Evans (T) 3622**  
**HUMAN RESOURCES**  
**Sharon Pearson (T) 3009**

### OI&T

**Rhonda Tyson (T) 3784**  
**Cecelia Pitts (T) 5212**  
**Shelia Talley (M) 6208**

### LOGISTICS

**Pamela Rudolph (M) 4460**  
**Marlon Colquitt (T) 3770**

### NUTRITION AND FOOD

**Carolyn Moss (T) 3349**  
**Tracey Kinard (M) 4796**

### POLICE

**Naquinta Simpson (T) 5173**

### SAFETY

**Deborah Morrison (T) 3153**

### NURSING HOME 129-1B

**Felicia Anderson (T) 3628**  
**Patricia Garrett (T) 3628**  
**Katina Battle (T) 3628**

### VOLUNTARY SERVICE

**Marie Motley (M) 4748**

### NURSING

**Valerie Dubose (M) 4343**  
**Cassandra Williams (M) 5530**

### CHAPLIN SERVICES

**Deborah Cannon (T) 3372**

### PATIENT HEALTH

**EDUCATION**  
**Christa Sanders (M) 4361**

### SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

**Cynthia Davis (M) 4824**  
**Mary Ducksworth (T) 3345**  
**Brenda Cobb (T) 3313**

### CHIEF OF STAFF

**Monsherri Golston (M) 4096**

### DENTAL SERVICE

**Eric Patterson (M) 4451**  
**Alvin Smelley (T) 5321**

### IMAGING SERVICE

**Roberta Lewis (T) 3216**  
**Shelia Thompson (M)**  
**P&LMS**  
**Kathy Bond (M) 4716**

### PHARMACY

**Joseph Clark (M) 4227**  
**PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Avis Tidwell (T) 2957**

### REHABILITATION

**Howard Robinson (T) 5358**  
**Sue G. Garnett (M) 2307**

### G&ECR

**Debra Hill (T)**

### HIMS

**Sue Chan (T) 3363**

### AMBULATORY CARE

**Margaret Ewell (T) 6305**  
**Eddie Mae Scott (M) 4591**

### Bed Management

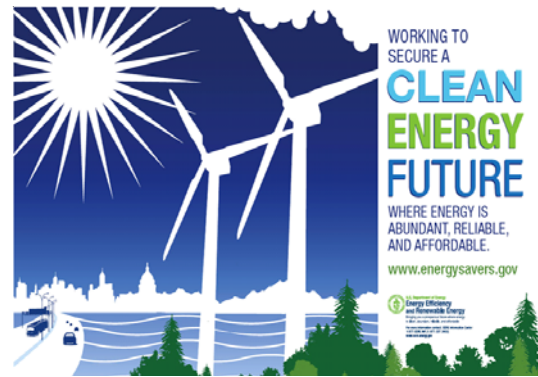
**Elsie Dixon (T) 6878**

### ICU

**Veronica Wingard (M) 4391**

### CBOC COLOUMBUS

**Phaedra Pitre (CBOC) 7243**



## Energy Awareness Month

October is Energy Awareness Month, and VA has a plan and a program to help you and the Department get to know your carbon footprint. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Shinseki has directed the Office of Asset Enterprise Management to launch a new VA Web site – the Green Routine. VA Chief of Staff John Gingrich has been introducing the new Web page in a video to be broadcast over the VA Knowledge Network as well as on demand from the Content Delivery Network. On the broadcast, he lays out the program’s purpose — to educate employees on how to “green” their workplace with simple tips and actions that can be done daily. It’s VA’s “green routine.” To get started, visit the new Green Routine Web site for resources, tips, articles and more at [www.va.gov/greenroutine](http://www.va.gov/greenroutine).

## VA Warns Vets of Phone Scam

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is warning Veterans not to give credit card numbers over the phone to callers claiming to update VA prescription information.

“America’s Veterans have become targets in an inexcusable scam that dishonors their service and misrepresents the Department built for them,” said Dr. Gerald Cross, VA’s Under Secretary for Health. “VA simply does not call Veterans and ask them to disclose personal financial information over the phone.”

Veteran Service Organizations have brought to VA’s attention that callers are misrepresenting the VA to gain personal information over the phone. They say VA recently changed procedures for dispensing prescriptions and ask for the Veteran’s credit card number.

“VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines,” Cross said. “Nor has VA changed its long-standing commitment to protect the personal information of this nation’s Veterans.”

Veterans with questions about VA services should contact the nearest VA medical center or call, toll-free, **1-877-222-8387**.

## MyHealtheVet: My Health, My Care

My HealtheVet, [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov), is VA's award-winning e-health website, which offers Veterans, active duty soldiers and their dependents and caregivers anywhere, anytime Internet access to VA health care information and services.

Launched nationwide in 2003, My HealtheVet is a free, online Personal Health Record that empowers Veterans to become more informed partners in their health care. With My HealtheVet, America's Veterans can access trusted, secure, and informed health and benefits information and record and store important health and military history information at their convenience.

Veterans may log on to My HealtheVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) and begin to better manage their health care and make informed decisions in collaboration with their health care providers. To register, Veterans simply need to go to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).

With My HealtheVet, registrants can access:

- \* VA Prescription Refill Services
- \* Healthy Living Centers
- \* Trusted Health Information
- \* Vitals Tracking & Graphing
- \* Military Health History
- \* Disease & Condition Centers
- \* Activity/Food Journals
- \* VA Benefits & Services
- \* VA News & Feature Stories
- \* Personal Health Journals

Veterans who receive care at a VA facility should ask about In Person Authentication, or "IPA", to obtain an

upgraded account which offers additional access to key portions of their VA electronic medical record. You will also need to sign a VA Form, 10-5345a. Bring the signed form to **CAVHCS' Release of Information Office** on the first floor of the Montgomery Campus, Room 1A-108. This form is also available at Release of Information Offices if you are unable to print. When this one-time process is complete, you will have access to your online Personal Health Record by logging on to My HealtheVet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).

You will be able to:

- \* Refill VA Prescriptions by name
- \* Get VA Wellness Reminders
- \* Communicate electronically with participating health care providers through Secure Messaging (coming to local facilities throughout 2009 and 2010)
- \* Get VA Appointment Reminders and view VA Appointments (coming in 2009/2010)
- \* View VA lab results (coming 2010)

Veterans, active duty service members and others are urged to join hundreds of thousands of enrollees already taking charge of their day to day health care by logging on to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov). My HealtheVet is about My Health, My Care: 24/7 Online Access to VA Health Care and Services. For more information please contact one of the following CAVHCS staff: **Lena Anderson in Tuskegee at 334-727-0550 Ext. 5379, Rosetta Latimore in Montgomery at 334-272-4670 Ext. 4794, or Faye Rayford-Outsey, CAVHCS MyHealtheVet Point of Contact, 334-272-4670 ex 4307.**

## OIG Results: Endoscopic Equipment Inspection Completed

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General inspected every VA medical site with endoscopic equipment, independently verifying the success of a national program VA instituted to ensure safe and sterile procedures for reprocessing endoscopic equipment across the country.

"VA's top priority is to provide the highest quality care to the Veterans of this Nation," said Acting Under Secretary for Health Dr. Gerald M. Cross. "This report shows VA's unparalleled quality assurance programs identified a risk and successfully corrected that risk on a national scale."

The VA Office of Inspector General report, dated September 17, 2009, shares findings from 129 medical sites inspected across the country. Only one discrepancy was found, a typographical error in certification paperwork.

In late 2008 and early 2009, VA found that inconsistencies in the sterilization of endoscopes at three medical centers led to possible infection risks among 10,000 patients. VA facilities rapidly notified patients of the risk

and offered testing. Since that time, VA has been able to contact over 99 percent of these patients. Although fifty-six patients potentially screened positive for infections, though it is uncertain whether the endoscopes are the source. The national information line at 1-877-345-8555 is available for patients and their families.

VA instituted a national review of facilities in February, 2009, to ensure all VA medical sites are trained on proper endoscope use and cleaning procedures. VA then established a new policy for the reprocessing of reusable medical equipment, including certification of staff, to prevent future incidents. VA has also currently taken over forty disciplinary actions related to this event.

Following the completion of this national effort, the Office of the Inspector General inspected every VA medical site with endoscopic equipment for compliance with manufacturers' instructions and VA's national policy on endoscopic equipment and procedures. This report is found at: <http://www.va.gov/oig/54/reports/VAOIG-09-02848-218.pdf>.



“On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we honor the sacrifices and determination of those captured as prisoners of war as well as those who remain unaccounted for and we wish their families some small comfort in knowing that America has not forgotten them,” said CAVHCS Director Glen Struchtemeyer during this year’s observance in Maxwell AFB’s Officers Club, which featured the base’s Honor Guard. (Photo by Robin Johnson)

# October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
National Breast Cancer Awareness Month - <a href="http://www.nbcam.org">www.nbcam.org</a> National Dental Hygiene Month - <a href="http://www.adha.org/ndhm/index.html">www.adha.org/ndhm/index.html</a> National Disability Employment Awareness Month - <a href="http://www.abilityone.gov">www.abilityone.gov</a> National Medical Librarians Month - <a href="http://www.mlanet.org">www.mlanet.org</a> National Physical Therapy Month - <a href="http://www.apta.org/nptm">www.apta.org/nptm</a> National Spina Bifida Awareness Month - <a href="http://www.sbaa.org">www.sbaa.org</a>						3
4	5	6			9	10
	National Fire Prevention Week— <a href="http://www.nfpa.org">www.nfpa.org</a> Mental Illness Awareness Week— <a href="http://www.nami.org">www.nami.org</a> National Physician Assistants Week— <a href="http://www.aapa.org">www.aapa.org</a>					<b>World Mental Health Day</b> <a href="http://www.wmhday.net">www.wmhday.net</a>
11		13	14		16	17
	19	20	21		23	24
	National Health Care Quality Week - <a href="http://www.nahq.org">www.nahq.org</a> Hearing Aid Awareness Week- <a href="http://www.ihsinfo.org">www.ihsinfo.org</a>					<b>Breast Cancer Awareness Walkathon</b> 11:30 - 1 pm Tuskegee Bldg. 2
25			28	29	30	
		<b>National Healthcare Facilities and Engineering Week</b> <a href="http://www.ashe.org">www.ashe.org</a>			<b>Breast Cancer Awareness Walkathon</b> 11:30 - 1 pm Montgomery Pavilion	<b>Halloween</b>

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.