



Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

Network Director's Update

November 2011



National News: (Click on titles to read full press release)

[VA Recognizes Outstanding Achievements in Homeless Programs](#)

- The best facilities, employees and civilian providers working to eliminate homelessness among Veterans were recently honored by the Department of Veterans Affairs. (11/23/11)

[A Thanksgiving Day Message from the Secretary](#) -

Thanksgiving is an American tradition that predates the U.S. Constitution by more than 100 years. It is an observance that binds us as Americans no matter our race, religion, or culture. It is a time when we reflect on our many blessings and give thanks for the bounty in our lives. (11/22/11)

[VA Announces "Badges for Vets" Contest](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced the Badges for Vets contest for creating digital "badge" systems to help Veterans translate their military skills into civilian jobs. (11/21/11)

[Osteoarthritis Finding Could Pave Way for Prevention](#) - Challenging long-held notions that osteoarthritis is a result mainly of wear and tear on the joints, researchers led by Dr. William H. Robinson of the Department of Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System and Stanford University have provided new insights into the immune-system changes that may trigger cartilage breakdown. Their report appears in the Nov. 6 online edition of Nature Medicine. (11/21/11)

[VA Celebrates National Family Caregiver Month](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs will join the National Family Caregivers Association to recognize and appreciate dedicated partners providing daily health care for Veterans during National Family Caregiver Month in November. (11/18/11)

[VA Support Program Expanding to More Veterans, Spouses](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs is implementing a telephone support program to help the spouses of returning Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans, after a pilot telephone support program showed significant reduction in stress for spouses. (11/18/11)

[VA Announces Contract for New Denver VA Medical Center](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs has awarded

a \$580.2 million construction contract to build the Denver VA Medical Center (VAMC) replacement facility on the same campus as the University of Colorado Hospital complex in Aurora, site of the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center. (11/17/11)

[VA Celebrates National Rural Health Day](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Rural Health (ORH) is joining the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) and other state and national rural stakeholders in celebrating the first-ever National Rural Health Day today. (11/17/11)

[VA Life Insurance Program Rated Highest in Customer Satisfaction](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs' Life Insurance Program has once again validated, through a renowned independent survey, that Veterans and their beneficiaries are very highly satisfied with the service they receive. (11/16/11)

[VA Publishes Final Regulation on Clothing Allowance Eligibility](#) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki today announced the publication of a final regulation in the Federal Register on clothing allowance that expands the eligibility criteria for Veterans with multiple prosthetic and orthopedic devices or who use prescription medications for service-connected skin conditions. (11/16/11)

[VA Plans Another 1,000 Units of Housing for Veterans at Locations Nationwide](#) - (11/16/11)

[Statement from Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki on Passage of the Returning Heroes and Wounded Warrior Tax Credits](#) - "Honoring our sacred trust with our Veterans means doing all we can to help them find work when they come home. On behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs, I would like to sincerely thank the members of the House and Senate for working together to support Veteran hiring and small businesses. The passage of the Returning Heroes and Wounded Warrior tax credits is just one more example of President Obama's leadership and unwavering support of Veterans, and an important step in the President's overall economic effort to create jobs. The Nation could not ask for a stronger advocate for Veterans and Servicemembers than President Obama." (11/16/11)

[VA Announces 89 Percent On-Time Delivery of IT Projects](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced its information technology (IT) systems development metrics for fiscal year (FY) 2011,

highlighting its successful delivery of 89 percent of all IT project milestones. (11/15/11)

VA Names Members of National Academic Affiliations Council - A newly formed Veterans Affairs (VA) advisory committee will provide a forum for joint planning and coordination between VA and the nation's health professions schools and universities. (11/14/11)

VA Introduces Make the Connection: Shared Experiences and Support for Veterans - Make the Connection, a new campaign launched by the Department of Veterans Affairs, is creating ways for Veterans and their family members to connect with the experiences of other Veterans—and ultimately to connect with information and resources to help them confront the challenges of transitioning from service, face health issues, or navigate the complexities of daily life as a civilian. (11/14/11)

Risk Factors for Posttraumatic Stress Symptomatology in Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans Similar to Those Observed in Vietnam Veterans - Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) researchers from Boston report in the November issue of the Journal of Abnormal Psychology that risk factors for posttraumatic stress symptomatology (PTSS, short of full-blown posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD) in Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans were found to be similar to those observed in Vietnam Veterans. This suggests that there may be generalized mechanisms and pathways, common to different Veteran populations, through which risk factors contribute to PTSS. (11/10/11)

VA Plans 3,000 Units of Housing for Veterans at 25 Locations Nationwide - The Department of Veterans Affairs plans to enter into agreements to provide more than 3,000 units of permanent and transitional housing for Veterans at 25 VA medical center campuses nationwide. Additionally, more agreements are planned for an additional 1,000 units, which we anticipate completing in the coming weeks. Proposed opportunities include housing for homeless Veterans, senior Veterans, disabled Veterans, other at-risk Veteran populations, and their families. (11/10/11)

Message from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on Veterans Day 2011 - Tomorrow, at the 11th hour, on the 11th day, of the 11th month of 2011, we will pause to honor America's Veterans and celebrate their contributions to our way of life. Few have given more to our Nation than the men and women who have served in our Armed Forces in peace and in war. (11/10/11)

Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance Maximum Coverage Increases - The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today that the maximum amount of Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) increased from \$90,000 to \$150,000, effective Oct. 1, under the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010. Maximum coverage will further increase from \$150,000 to \$200,000 after Jan. 1, 2012. (11/9/11)

VA Executive Honored with Spirit of Leadership Award - Craig Luigart, chief officer for the Department of Veterans

Affairs' Office of Health Information, has received the Janice K. Mendenhall Spirit of Leadership Award for outstanding leadership and dedication to enhancing VA performance through advances in technology. (11/8/11)

VA Announces Virtual On-Line Career Fair - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced a partnership with Milicruit.com to sponsor a nationwide, virtual online job fair on Nov. 10, from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. EST. (11/8/11)

VA Announces Industry Innovation Competition Winners - The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced 13 new awards in the agency's 2010 Industry Innovation Competition. The new projects will give VA an opportunity to evaluate new ways to enhance care and benefits for Veterans. (11/4/11)

Computer-Based Learning Program Improves Communications Between Oncologists and Patients - Showing doctor's recordings of their interactions with patients may boost their ability to show empathy and communicate effectively, according to a study by researchers with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and university partners. The findings appear in the Nov. 1 Annals of Internal Medicine. (11/3/11)

VA Receives 2011 Presidential Award for Environmentalism - The Department of Veterans Affairs received a top award from the White House for its programs to protect the environment and conserve energy. (11/2/11)

VA's Veteran Canteen Service Helping Homeless Veterans - The Department of Veterans Affairs is reaching out to homeless Veterans by providing free meals and spending money to eligible homeless Veterans. (11/1/11)

VA Dedicates Fifth Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center in San Antonio - The Department of Veterans Affairs has dedicated a new Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center (PRC) at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS) in San Antonio. The state-of-the-art, \$66 million inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation center will treat Veterans and active duty Servicemembers with multiple, traumatic injuries. This is VA's fifth polytrauma center nationwide. (10/31/11)

VISN 19:

Special Recognition in Achieving Secure Messaging FY 2012 Milestones

The My HealthVet Program recognized the outstanding accomplishments of VA Medical Centers that have achieved 100% Secure Messaging in Primary Care.

VISN 19 Facilities who met this milestone and received



recognition were Salt Lake, Grand Junction, Cheyenne. Congratulations!

Seasonal Flu

Be ready for the flu season by getting your flu shot. All VISN 19 facilities and our clinics are offering FREE flu shots for eligible Veterans. Influenza, or "flu," season begins in October and runs through March. As your health-care provider, we care about you and your health. Veterans will be able to receive a flu shot at:

- any scheduled appointment
- at one of our walk-in flu shot stations
- if you are admitted to our facility



November 2011 – Mr. Glen Grippen, VISN 19 Director and Mr. Terry Atienza, GJVAMC Director receive their Flu Shots at the Grand Junction VAMC.

Fall Into Fitness

A Healthy Holiday Lifestyle All Year Long!

With the holidays among us, sometimes it can be difficult to manage stress and to stick to your normal routine. Without a healthy approach to the holiday grind, many of us become stressed out and sleep deprived; all while indulging on calorie-dense holiday meals, treats, and alcohol. Try these tips for making your holidays less stressful and more healthful:

- **Make a plan:** Adopt a few specific small changes such as adding a piece of fruit to your diet each day. When you make a realistic plan, the changes won't seem so overwhelming.
- **Choose lower-calorie party foods.** Go easy on fried appetizers and cheese cubes. Instead, have some raw vegetables with a small amount of dip—just enough to coat the end of the vegetable— or try boiled shrimp or scallops with cocktail sauce or lemon.
- **If you are at a sit-down dinner party, cut your first helping in half.** That way, you can

enjoy seconds and the total amount of food you eat will be about the same as a normal-size portion.

- **When it comes to drinking alcohol, start with a calorie-free, non-alcoholic beverage.** Satisfy your thirst before having an alcoholic drink. Also limit cocktails made with juice, soda or syrup.
- **Enjoy physical activity after a holiday feast.** Find activities the whole family can do such as walking, biking, or dancing.
- **Keep a journal.** Eating as a result of stress is common for many people, and the rush of holidays doesn't help. If you find yourself eating to cope with stress, pause and figure out why. Keeping a journal can be an effective way to track how you feel along with what and why you are eating. Over time, you may begin to recognize behavior patterns and be able to deal with stress without food.
- **Be realistic.** Don't try to lose weight during the holidays—this may be a self-defeating goal. Instead, strive to maintain your weight by balancing party eating with other meals.

Learn More!

[Click here](#) to find out more on how you can stay healthy and avoid gaining weight over the holidays while still enjoying all the social aspects of this special time of year. Happy Holidays!

[Click here](#) to view and print healthy holiday recipes!

Eastern Colorado Health Care System



Denver, CO – Replacement Medical Center Facility

The Denver VAMC (parent Eastern Colorado Health Care System) provides monthly updates on the status of the Denver Replacement Hospital. Updates are distributed via e-mail monthly and can be found on www.denver.va.gov or on Facebook WWW.facebook.com/denverva . Also check out our new brochure [here](#) or at www.denver.va.gov/projecteagle.

PROJECT EAGLE UPDATE



FUTURE - DENVER VA MEDICAL CENTER - AURORA, COLORADO

VA Announces Contract for New Denver VA Medical Center

Spinal Cord Injury Center to Be Part of the Complex

On November 17, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced it had awarded a \$580.2 million construction contract to build the Denver VA Medical Center (VAMC) replacement facility on the same campus as the University of Colorado Hospital complex in Aurora, site of the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center.

"This new medical center will not only help provide Veterans with the care they have earned, it will create good-paying jobs that benefit the local economy," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

The new 182-bed medical center will include inpatient tertiary care and ambulatory care, a 30-bed Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder Center, a 30-bed nursing home community living center, a research building, and parking structures. The medical center will employ approximately 2,000 people and serve approximately 82,700 veterans.

The construction component of the contract totaling \$580.2 million was awarded to Kiewit-Turner Joint Venture from Englewood, Colo., on Nov. 17. The facility will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver certified, making the most of renewable energy initiatives. More than 6,300 jobs will be created during the construction of the medical center.

The completion date of the hospital is scheduled for early 2015. A celebration ceremony was held on November 21 on site.

The local Project Eagle Team focused on developing wayfinding and signage solutions for the campus and facility. The wayfinding effort actually starts on the interstates and surrounding roadways. A campus-wide group involving all of the stakeholders is working to make it easy for patients and visitors to get to the correct facility. This combined effort between VA, the University of Colorado Hospital and Children's Hospital is an ongoing project as the facilities emerge.

With over 5,500 rooms in 10 buildings and 3 parking garages, effective signage is crucial in order to get

Veterans, families and visitors to the correct locations. The buildings will be identified by letters starting south to north: A, B, C and so forth. The elevators will have transparent vertical passages, and each elevator cab will have a large, easily-visible number. The main entrances will be differentiated by visual cues as well. The South Entrance will have the 6 seals of the military branches while the North Entrance will have the 6 flags of the military branches. This helps a person remember whether you came in by flags or seals.

In keeping with a Colorado theme, each check-in desk will be named after one of the 14,000 ft peaks in Colorado. So, one check-in desk might be "Pike's Peak" while another is "Mount Bierstadt". Conference rooms will be named after Colorado native trees, and patient education rooms will be named after native flowers.

The intent in signage and wayfinding is to keep signs to a minimum while providing maximum ease of use.

Grand Junction VAMC



November has become the traditional transition month at the Grand Junction VA Medical Center as the Grand Valley finally moves from late fall into winter weather. With temperatures early in the month rarely falling below 65 degrees, the staff plan as many outdoor activities as possible before freezing weather hits around mid-month.

The month started with Grand Junction's annual parade in honor of the Western Slope Veterans held on the first Saturday of the month. Despite pouring rain, several staff members showed up to participate and the route was lined with spectators.

As the week progressed toward Veterans Day, schools sent students to visit inpatients. The visits included a performance by the local Job Corps choir.



On November 9, 2011, Choir members from Collbran Job Corps sang for Veterans and Families at a Veteran's Day Remembrance Ceremony in the Community Living Center at the GJVAMC.

On Veteran's Day, staff and Veterans gathered at the local Vietnam Memorial in Fruita, Colo. to remember all American Veterans who gave their life in defense of their county and celebrate their dedication to freedom. In addition, the Medical Center, with help from a local boy scouts, set up the facility's Avenue of Flags.

As the month grew colder, the recreation therapy staff packed away the program's camping and fishing gear and dug out the adaptive ski programs equipment in preparation for the upcoming ski season.

Staff members' hearts also warmed up as temperatures dropped as was proven by donations to the local Care and Share program that ensures Veterans in need have a full Thanksgiving meal on their table.

And finally, the Medical Center brought new resource for Veterans online with a button called "Do I Qualify for VA Care" on the Medical Center's homepage that helps Veterans understand basic eligibility for VA Health Care and how to apply for VA provided care.

VA Montana Health Care System:



Montana Adjutant General recognizes VA employees

By Mike Molina

Three employees from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Montana Health Care System were recognized by the Montana Adjutant General for their work supporting Montana's Airmen, Soldiers and their families.

Marcy Steffy, Doug Wright and Phay Lloyd from VA Montana's Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF), Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and New Dawn (OND) program office received the Montana Adjutant General's Distinguished Patriot Medal at a ceremony on Nov. 1.

Their "selfless dedication and commitment to all Veterans" have made them invaluable assets to this state and our nation, wrote Brig. Gen. John Walsh, Montana Adjutant General, in the citations accompanying the award.

The three assist Veterans who have served in OEF/OIF/OND, and also serve Veterans who have sustained polytrauma or traumatic brain injury. Ms. Lloyd is the program manager and has been a nurse for more than 27 years. Mr. Wright is the transition patient advocate and is retired from the Air Force. Ms. Steffy is a registered nurse case manager and has been a nurse for 16 years.

"This was truly a team effort," Ms. Lloyd said. "I want to thank all of the many individuals in the different departments that assist our office every day to provide this outstanding care to our Veterans."



Marcy Steffy, a registered nurse and nurse case manager for VA Montana's OEF/OIF/OND/Polytrauma TBI program office, is awarded the Adjutant General's Distinguished Patriot Medal from Brig. Gen. Joel Cusker at a ceremony on Nov. 1. Ms. Steffy, Phay Lloyd and Doug Wright received the Patriot Medal for their work supporting Montana's Airmen, Soldiers and their families.

Airmen visit Veterans at Fort Harrison VA

By Mike Molina

Veterans at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center at Fort Harrison received a special visit from active duty Airmen this Veterans Day.

Eighteen Airmen from the 341st Security Forces Squadron at Malmstrom Air Force Base visited inpatients at the Fort Harrison VA Medical Center on Nov. 11. The Airmen provided each Veteran with a card thanking them for their military service and a flag from the Veteran's respective branch of service.

"Today we have a general 'thank you' for all Veterans that have served before us and provide some solace and comfort for them," said Staff Sgt. Bradford Houser.

The Airmen spoke with the Veterans and shared stories of their service.

"It means a lot to me that we are appreciated and I thank everybody who came today," said Keith Flatet, a patient at Fort Harrison and a Veteran of Operation Desert Storm.

The Airmen plan to make the Veterans Day visit to Fort Harrison an annual event.



Staff Sgt. Bradford Houser (left) of the 341st Security Forces Squadron at Malmstrom Air Force Base, is thanked by Sgt. Maj. select Ken Fenstermacher, at Fort Harrison VA Medical Center on Nov. 11. Staff Sgt. Houser was one of 18 Airmen who visited Veterans at the medical center on Veterans Day.

VASH vouchers help two Blackfeet veterans' families find homes

"We have between 800 and a thousand Veterans living on the Reservation," said Roger "Sassy" Running Crane of the Blackfeet Veterans Alliance on Thursday, Nov. 10, "and I'd say the majority of them don't have homes. We've pursued this because in December 2011, we will have a withdrawal from Iraq, and we now have 100 to

120 active men and women there. There are no homes here for them, so I'm really glad to see you come up here."

Running Crane was joined by George Kipp IV of Blackfeet Manpower in welcoming Mark Annas of the VA Montana Healthcare Systems Homeless Vet Program to Browning and the Manpower office. The immediate focus of Annas' visit was two Blackfeet Veterans who together with their families are homeless and who will be assisted through the Veterans Administration Supportive Housing's voucher program.

Annas explained that the U.S. Department of Commerce awards vouchers every year to various housing authorities and other Veterans assistance groups, through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Veterans Administration provides case management while HUD supplies the funding.

Annas said he realized he had two vouchers left over from his group in Helena and contacted Running Crane to see if they could be of use, and he said another group in Kalispell might also be able to provide leftover vouchers to the reservation area. Annas stressed the importance of identifying homeless Veterans and getting them in line for vouchers as they become available. Not only will this benefit homeless Vets, it also serves to demonstrate the need to funding agencies. Ultimately, he said, it would be best if Blackfeet Housing would apply to HUD for vouchers since they would be doled out, not one or two at a time, but 25 at once.



Mark Annas of the VA Montana Healthcare System's Homeless Vet Program came to Browning last week to announce that vouchers would be awarded to Matthew Tosh Wolf Robe Bear Medicine and Chiinapi Pahdocony and their families. Photo by John McGill

Money to pay for housing is only one-half the equation, said Annas. The other half is having housing available for Veterans at all. To that end, Running Crane said he was working toward setting up meetings between Housing and HUD to arrange for construction projects aimed at

housing homeless Veterans. Finally, the pair of Veterans was introduced, understanding that they and their families will be in homes of their own by Thanksgiving.

Chiinapi Pahdocony is a 1997 Browning High School graduate who joined the Air Force upon graduation. He said he'd served in Iraq a few times but was mostly stationed in Florida. "I've spent lots of Christmases overseas," he said.

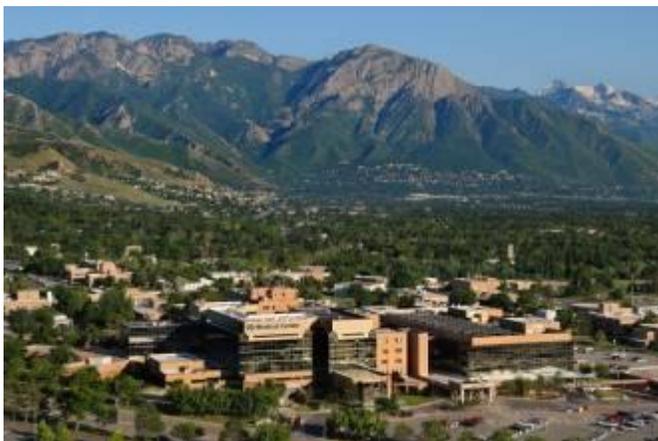
Asked about finding employment and housing, Pahdocony said only that "it's been hard around here." He was excited to hear of job opportunities coming up at Manpower, and looks forward to having a home for his wife, Kerry Lynn Stump, and his two daughters, Iriela Alicia Padocony, 7, and Kerensa Cocheta, 3.

Matthew Tosh Wolf Robe Bear Medicine is a 2002 Browning High School graduate who joined the Marine Corps upon graduation. He was stationed in Korea and in Japan, but since coming home found no work nor housing in Cheyenne, Wyoming, so he and his family came north. Since then, they've stayed with Matthew's mother, but have had no luck finding a home of their own.

Matthew and his wife, Kathryn, and their two boys, Matthew Jr., 2, and Xhaiden, 1 year old next month, are looking forward to having their own place in time for the holidays.

While Running Crane and Kipp were clearly enthused about the vouchers and the promise offered by Mark Annas, they both realize it's just the beginning in dealing with issues of homelessness and unemployment among returning Veterans. Simply getting a handle on the size and nature of the situation is the first step toward supporting these fathers, mothers, sons and daughters as they look for help in rebuilding their lives.

VASLCHCS



VASLCHCS Legal Standdown

The VA SLC Health Care System hosted its first Legal Stand Down on Friday, November 4, 2011. The Honorable Judge Paul M. Warner held a session of the United States District Court of Utah Veterans Court during our annual Homeless Stand Down. Fifteen Veterans stood before Judge Warner that day.



The event was designed to give special consideration to Veterans who are having legal troubles as a result of issues related to their service. The VA and the United States District Court believes these Veterans could be better served through treatment rather than caught up in the criminal justice system. The court allows Veterans to atone for what they've done, yet receive the services they need to succeed in the future.

An additional 31 Veterans received legal assistance from 25 volunteer attorneys and University of Utah law students.



The Legal Stand Down was hugely successful and the Veterans who received consideration seemed genuinely

appreciative of the VA's efforts. Also, many of the volunteer attorneys said that they had a wonderful day providing service to our nation's heroes and can't wait to assist at next year's event.



VASLCHCS Unite for Veterans Infothon

On 11-11-11, the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System hosted its third annual Unite For Veterans Campaign with KUTV Channel 2. More than 400 phone calls for requests for information were fielded and more than 200 information packets were mailed out. Most of the packets contained enrollment and/or claims forms.



The info-thon is broadcast live during newscasts and consists of experts from ONE VA manning phones for a 12 hour time period. The event raises education and awareness to Veterans and the community, while branding VA and its mission of dedication.

This year the VASLCHCS focused on Fisher House, the Veterans Court, PTSD, Homeless Veterans, the Women Veterans Program and Presumptive illnesses. The event

was a huge success and it is a tremendous opportunity to put a face to the bureaucracy of VA.



Sheridan VAMC:



Clinical Psychology Internship Training Program At Sheridan VAMC

The Sheridan VAMC was recently given the opportunity to provide internships in clinical psychology. The predoctoral internship at the Sheridan VA Medical Center is a full-time rurally-focused training program in clinical psychology.

"This is fantastic. We will be even better positioned to recruit the best of the best from colleges and universities to come care for Veterans at our Mental Health Program." said Dr. Mark Mann Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health at the Sheridan VAMC. The announcement came late this fall and the facility plans to select the first class of interns in February 2012.

The mission of the Sheridan VA internship training program is to provide 2 interns each year with a rigorous yet positive and supportive training environment designed to help them develop the knowledge, skills and abilities

necessary to enter the professional practice of psychology. We are particularly interested in developing psychologists who have an interest in working with veterans in underserved rural areas since men and women from these areas tend to be over-represented in the armed forces. Psychologists working in rural areas need to be generalists to a large degree so a major goal of our program will be to produce psychologists who are outstanding generalists.

The internship training program is located within the Sheridan VAMC's mental health service. Psychology plays an integral role at the Sheridan VAMC, providing assessment, consultation, and a wide range of psychological interventions and treatment modalities throughout the hospital. While the internship program is new, the Sheridan VAMC has offered practicum training to students in the University of Wyoming's Ph.D. program in clinical psychology for over 40 years. The new program will be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association.

Cheyenne VAMC:



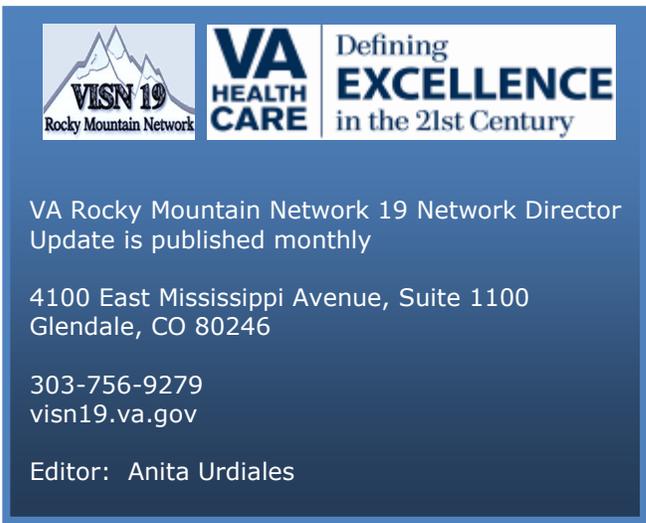
Cheyenne VA continues to work towards eliminating homelessness

Each year, the Cheyenne VAMC participates in two Homeless Veterans Stand-Down; one held in Wyoming and one held in northern Colorado. During this past month, the Northern Colorado Stand Down was held at The Mission in Fort Collins, Colorado. This year, over 100 Veterans attended the "Northern Colorado Homeless Stand Down" and received information assistance with a number of VA and community programs and resources that serve both the immediate and long term needs of the homeless. VA staff assisted attendees with VA registration, enrollment to the VA's Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program, provided dental screenings and other mental wellness counseling. Immediate needs that included food, clothing, blankets, barbering and bike repairs were also provided.

Free transportation from surrounding communities including Longmont and Greeley was provided to increase

the number of Veterans who could benefit from the Stand Down. Each year, VA participates in more than 100 stand downs coordinated by local entities. Stand Downs are collaborative events, coordinated between local VAs, other government agencies, and community agencies who serve the homeless. The first Stand Down was organized in 1988 by a group of Vietnam Veterans in San Diego. Since then, Stand Downs have been used as an effective tool in reaching out to homeless Veterans, reaching more than 200,000 Veterans and their family members between 1994-2000.

Partners for this event include the Department of Veterans Affairs, both Veterans Health Administration and Veterans Benefits Administration, Colorado Department of Labor, Colorado Workforce Center, Larimer County Veterans Services, Catholic Charities-The Mission and other community partners.



VA Rocky Mountain Network 19 Network Director Update is published monthly

4100 East Mississippi Avenue, Suite 1100
Glendale, CO 80246

303-756-9279
visn19.va.gov

Editor: Anita Urdiales