

VISN 19 Network Director Update August 2010



Glen W. Grippen



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

[VA Publishes Final Regulation to Aid Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange](#) - Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in Vietnam and other areas will have an easier path to access quality health care and qualify for disability compensation under a

final regulation that will be published on August 31, 2010 in the Federal Register by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The new rule expands the list of health problems VA will presume to be related to Agent Orange and other herbicide exposures to add two new conditions and expand one existing category of conditions. (8/30/10)

[VA/NIH Award \\$6 Million for Substance Abuse Research](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs is partnering with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to award \$6 million in grants for research examining the link between substance abuse and military deployments and combat-related trauma. (8/26/10)

[Veterans with Disabilities to Learn Life-Changing Skills at Summer Sports Clinic in San Diego](#) - The National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic is an event like no other, uniquely designed to teach recently-injured Veterans how to surf, kayak, sail, cycle and enjoy other sports. The 3rd National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic, sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), will be held September 19 - 25 in San Diego. (8/26/10)

[Veterans with Disabilities to TEE Off in Iowa](#) - Nearly 200 military Veterans are registered to tee-off in a unique golf tournament in Riverside, Iowa, September 6 - 9, 2010, proving that having a visual impairment or other disability does not mean they cannot lead a full and rewarding life. (8/25/10)

[Indianapolis VA Medical Center Launches Health Information Exchange](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced a new pilot in the Indianapolis region that will improve the delivery of Veterans health information. The Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis will partner with the Indiana Health Information Exchange (IHIE), the largest health information exchange organization in the United States, to securely exchange electronic health

record (EHR) information using the Nationwide Health Information Network. (8/24/10)

[VA Reaches Out to Homeowners Affected by Gulf Oil Crisis](#) - Veterans in the Gulf States impacted by the recent oil spill may qualify for delayed mortgage payments if their mortgages are already guaranteed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). (8/20/10)

[Shinseki Says VA's Home Loan Program Continues to Stay Strong](#) - Mortgage loans guaranteed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continue to have the lowest rate for serious delinquency and foreclosures in the industry. (8/19/10)

[VA Research Finds Possible Link Between Head Trauma and Chronic Traumatic Encephalomyopathy](#) - Researchers with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Center for the Study of Traumatic Encephalopathy (CSTE) at Boston University School of Medicine have provided the first pathological evidence of a link between repeated head injuries—such as those experienced by athletes in contact sports such as boxing, football, and hockey—and a disease (chronic traumatic Encephalomyopathy) that resembles amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. The results will appear in the September issue of the Journal of Neuropathology and Experimental Neurology. (8/19/10)

[VA Announces Test of Paperless Claims Processing System](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has selected its regional benefits office in Providence, R.I., to test a paperless system and new procedures to improve processing of Veterans' claims for disability compensation. (8/5/10)

[VA Obligates Last of its Recovery Act Funds to Help Veterans](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) committed the last of its \$1.8 billion in Recovery Act funds July 31, one of the first federal agencies to achieve that milestone. Projects at more than 1,200 sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico will increase access to health care and services to Veterans, while creating jobs and stimulating the economy. (8/5/10)

[More than 1,100 Schools Partner with VA on GI Bill](#) - Paving the way for recipients of the Post-9/11 GI Bill to attend higher-cost schools, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has entered into more than 3,200 agreements with over 1,100 schools for the upcoming academic year under the "Yellow Ribbon"

program. Schools can enter into multiple agreements with VA to accommodate different programs of study offered. (8/4/10)

[Murphy Named VA's New Compensation and Pension Service Director](#) - Tom Murphy was recently appointed Director of the Compensation and Pension Service for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). (8/2/10)

[VA Makes Applying for Health Care Benefits Faster for Veterans](#) - As part of Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki's effort to streamline access to benefits, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has removed the signature requirement for Veterans who electronically submit an online 10-10EZ "Application for Health Benefits." (8/2/10)

VISN 19:

Breaking the Back of the VBA Backlog

Secretary Shinseki continues to focus on the presidential mandate to transform VA into a 21st century organization. He has called for VA to change from being an agency perceived as adversarial to one known for advocacy.

To transform VA, we are guided by three principles: we must be people-centric—focused on the best for our Veterans and for our VA employees. We must be results-oriented—Veterans have served their country and are looking for outcomes and solutions to their problems. They deserve results and answers in a timely fashion. And finally, we must be forward-looking—attuned to Veterans' evolving needs and prepared to meet them with available resources.



VBA is making great strides towards transformation. Here are some examples:

- Last year, the first checks for Veterans were sent as part of the Post 9-11 G.I. Bill. Since that time, over \$4 billion in tuition, housing, and stipends for over 300,000 student Veterans and eligible family members have been issued.
- There has been an increase in hiring, pilot programs and an investment of \$138 million in a paperless benefits management system.
- To respond to the growing needs of women Veterans, there are women Veterans coordinators at all regional offices to provide benefits assistance.

- VBA is working to ease service members' transition from DoD to VA by lowering the processing time for Disability Evaluation Service (DES) evaluation and the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program.

At the same time all these changes are happening, VA home loans maintain a significantly lower foreclosure rate than any other type of home loan in the industry. As the eighth largest insurance provider in the country, VBA insures over seven million Americans with total coverage of over \$1.3 trillion.

Pilot programs in Milwaukee and Wichita to provide on-the-spot claims review have the potential to transform how quickly VA can process claims for Veterans. VBA employees have developed disability benefits questionnaires to help lead to completeness in medical exams and faster compensation decisions. A Quick Pay pilot in St. Petersburg has already resulted in \$1 million being paid to Veterans.

Change also requires resources and in an era of fiscal constraint, VBA has received significant budget increases. There is a lot of work ahead, but VBA is working to make itself a different organization in the future from the one that exists today.

Murphy Named VA's New Compensation and Pension Service Director

Tom Murphy was recently appointed Director of the Compensation and Pension Service for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

In his new post, Murphy will manage the disability and survivor benefit programs that provide more than \$45 billion annually in benefit payments to four million Veterans and their families. Murphy had been the Director of VA's San Juan Regional Office since August 2009, overseeing benefits for 151,000 veterans living in Puerto Rico, Vieques, Culebra and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Murphy retired from the military as a Major after serving 15 years in the Colorado National Guard and six years in the Marine Corps Reserve.

He joined VA from The Home Depot, where he was a Director of Merchandise Planning and oversaw more than 1,950 stores, with more than \$8.5 billion in annual sales.

Murphy previously was a Senior Tactical Planning Manager for Qwest Communications and worked for 10 years at the Department of Defense in a variety of positions.

Murphy replaces Bradley G. Mayes, who has been named Director of VA's Boston Regional Office. Mayes

leaves VA headquarters to return to VA's field organization and work more directly with Veterans, after bringing significant improvements to VA. These include the groundbreaking new disability evaluation criteria for Traumatic Brain Injury and simplified claims procedures for Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

VA provides compensation, pension, education, loan guaranty, vocational rehabilitation, employment and insurance benefits to Veterans and their families through 57 VA regional offices.

Updates on VISN 19's Four Rural Health Projects

- 1) **Establishing Ten Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinics (PCTOCs)** to serve an estimated 7,023 veterans in rural and highly rural counties in Colorado, Montana, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming through the use of telehealth modalities.
 - a) **Hamilton, MT:** OPERATIONAL
 - b) **Plentywood, MT:** OPERATIONAL
 - c) **Rawlins, WY:** OPERATIONAL
 - d) **Moab, UT:** OPERATIONAL
 - e) **Glenwood Springs, CO:** Grand Opening to be held in October.
 - f) **Salida, CO:** OPERATIONAL
 - g) **Idaho Falls, ID:** Grand Opening to be scheduled.
 - h) **Price, UT:** Grand Opening to be held in September.
 - i) **Worland, WY:** Grand Opening to be held in September.
 - j) **Evanston, WY:** Grand Opening to be held in September.

When PCTOCs are completed, 94% of the veteran patients will be within 60 minutes of Primary Care Services in VISN 19.

Geriatric Scholars Program

Three clinicians from VISN 19 were recently accepted into the Geriatric Scholars Program. Congratulations to Paul Hampton, PharmD; Mishcha McCabe, NP; and Marta Krissovich, GCNS, ANPBC.

The Geriatric Scholars program is an intensive 4 day course in geriatric medicine that emphasizes a functional assessment approach to comprehensive care of older adults. This training is VACO sponsored and is intended to train providers in rural communities.

This training opportunity is designed to ensure our providers are up to date and well qualified to conduct a thorough geriatric evaluation.

Eastern Colorado Health Care System



Denver, CO – Replacement Medical Center Facility

The Denver VAMC (parent Eastern Colorado Health Care System) is providing monthly updates on the status of the Denver Replacement Hospital. Updates are distributed via e-mail monthly and can be found on <http://www.denver.va.gov/projecteagle/index.asp>. We have also heard you want more specific information on progress being made at the sites.

"Future home of the VA Medical Center" signs were placed at four locations on the site. Veterans and the community can now see where the facility will be and know that the project is moving forward.



The User Group Meetings focused on "Elevations" which included the placement of items such as: paper towel dispensers, blood pressure machines, shelving, white boards, and mirrors. For many areas, the architects have created three dimensional renditions of spaces to assist users in envisioning what the rooms will look like and where the elevations will be located.

The 3D modeling also assists user groups to better see patient and employee flow and interactions. Several areas have “tweaked” their design based on these new views and better understanding of how the actual space will look.

The next round of User Group Meetings is being held August 30th to September 17th. This round of meetings will include a review of mechanical, electrical, plumbing and Information Technology needs.

Partners in Musters

By Janie Hirth RN BSN CCM OEF/OIF Case Manager ECHCS

As part of the OEF/OIF Outreach Team at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS), there are many opportunities to participate in outreach events.

On August 7th, 2010, ECHCS hosted the 88th RSC IRR Muster at the VAMC for 134 Veterans and received 50 new enrollments for VA healthcare. Some of the activities included receiving enrollments, completing Post Deployment Health Re-Assessments (PDHRA), dental and mental health exams, OEF/OIF Focus Groups, and an Awards Ceremony. It was a full day!



ECHCS was honored by the presence of three Generals!

Pictured is Brigadier General William D. R. Waff with Janie Hirth, ECHCS OEF/OIF Case Manager.

General Waff is currently the Deputy Commanding General of the US Army Human Resources Command. Prior to this assignment, he was the Deputy Commanding General of the 99th Regional Readiness Command in Corapolis, Pennsylvania.

One of his long-term goals is to have all partners present at all IRR Musters to include Representatives from each State, as every State has their own rules and benefits. He wants each and every soldier to be educated on all their benefits and entitlements.

In civilian life, BG Waff is the Director of Pastoral Care, Ethics and Interpreter Services for Vista Health in Waukegan, Illinois. It is apparent he commands a genuine respect from those he encounters. ECHCS was honored to be a part of this IRR Muster.

AFA VASS Opening

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS) is now offering ambulatory surgery services at the US Air Force Academy 10th Medical Group (MDG) facility.

Both organizations hosted a joint Open House on August 16 at the 10 MDG; 4102 Pinion Drive, Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs.



The new VA operation provides Southern Colorado Veterans with surgical services that would have previously required them to drive to the Denver VA Medical Center.

The center is projected to perform surgery on approximately 1,000 Veterans in the first year. Initially, services will include general surgery, with plans to expand into Orthopedics, Urology, and Ophthalmology.

“This is a great way to eliminate the travel inconvenience for Veterans who previously had to travel to Denver for these services, while also reducing VA fee-basis costs, and strengthening VA and DoD collaborative efforts” said Rebecca Keough, ECHCS Assistant Director.

Aside from reducing the travel time for Veterans by providing services closer to home, the new clinic also provides ECHCS with surgical capability where it is needed most while utilizing existing federal facilities to enable a “right sizing” of upcoming ECHCS construction and lease projects.

Combining surgical support staff of the 10th Medical Group and the VA ECHCS in Colorado Springs will provide economies of scale that will make the federal ambulatory surgical capability significantly more effective.

VA Montana Health Care System:



Ft. Harrison Office Uses Federal Recovery Act Funds to boost Local Economy

FT. HARRISON, Mont. – The regional benefits office of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was able to put local residents to work with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Ft. Harrison office was authorized to hire six new employees to help process Veterans' claims for benefits, especially disability compensation.

The new employees are involved in administrative work that supports the professional staff who handle Veterans' claims for disability pay, pensions, educational benefits and other VA programs. VA officials say the additional workers freed highly-trained professionals of routine administration work, allowing the speedy processing of applications.

The Recovery Act provided \$150 million for VA to hire, train and equip the new employees. Under the act, VA hired about 2,700 temporary and permanent employees to assist with Veterans' claims for benefits. Under the Recovery Act, VA received about \$1.8 billion to spend on behalf of Veterans.

Information about VA programs funded by the Recovery Act is available on the Internet at www.va.gov/recovery.

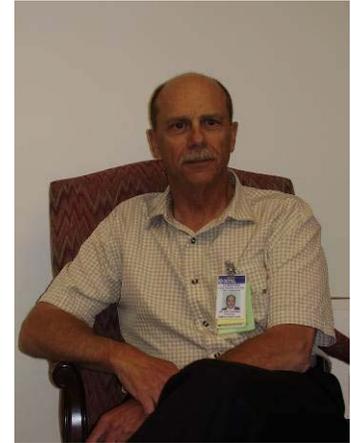
New VAMTHCS Chief of Staff Appointed

Kurt E. Werner, M.D. has accepted the position of Chief of Staff of the VA Montana Healthcare System August 13, 2010.

Prior to this appointment, he served in the Medical Corps U.S. Navy (June 1974), as a physician at the Helena Hawkins Lindstrom Clinic (October 1980), as an Active Medical Staff Member at St. Peters Hospital in Helena (October 1980), and as an Active Medical

Staff Member at VA Montana Healthcare System (September 1999).

Dr. Werner received his B.S. Magna Cum Laude from the University of Detroit May 1970. He received his Doctor of Medicine from Wayne State University School of Medicine in May 1974. In June 1977, Dr. Werner completed his Family Practice Residency at Naval Aerospace and Regional Medical Center, Pensacola FL.



Dr. Werner has an extensive military career which started with Ensign 1915 Medical Student Program, Wayne State University School of Medicine (June 1973 - May 1974). His military career continued with, Medical Corps U.S. Navy (May 1974 – October 1980); U.S. Army Medical Corps Montana Army National Guard (MTARNG) (March 2001 to present); Assistant to the Montana State Surgeon, MTARNG; Active Duty, Operation Iraqi Freedom (May to August 2004 and February to May 2008); Operation Enduring Freedom (November 2005 – January 2006); State Surgeon MTARNG 2006 to present)

Dr. Werner is board certified with the American Board of Family Practice and is ACLS certified. He belongs to the American Academy of Family Practice and Association of Military Surgeons United States.

Dr. Werner has donated his time to several community service programs; has served as a coach for YMCA soccer and Helena Arsenal program; as a Soccer Referee for the Montana High School Association; is a Member of the Board of St. Peters Hospital; and a School Board Member and Chairman, Kessler School District, Helena, Montana.

Dr. Werner resides in Helena, Montana with his wife and enjoys spending time with his four children and three grand children.

Cut Bank VA Clinic to Move

VA Montana Health Care System is moving the Cut Bank Community Based Outpatient Clinic to a VA staffed site prior to October 31, 2010. The contract for the leased space will be complete by September 3, 2010. Renovations will take place soon after that date.

Warrior/Veterans Wall of Remembrance at Eagle Circle, Pablo MT

On July 14, 2010, the Warrior/Veterans Wall of Remembrance at Eagle Circle was dedicated in Pablo, MT.



The vision of the coyotes came to artist Corky Clairmont 20 years ago. He just didn't know what it was for at the time.

On a warm Wednesday, hundreds of people saw part of Clairmont's vision etched in granite as the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes dedicated the Clairmont-designed Warrior/Veterans Wall of Remembrance at Eagle Circle in front of tribal headquarters.



Tepee poles 65 feet tall rise over the memorial, and serve to welcome Indian veterans both alive and dead

back home at their reservation. Inside the monument, the head of an eagle occupies the tallest piece of granite, and other pieces form the wings that circle around to protect those inside.

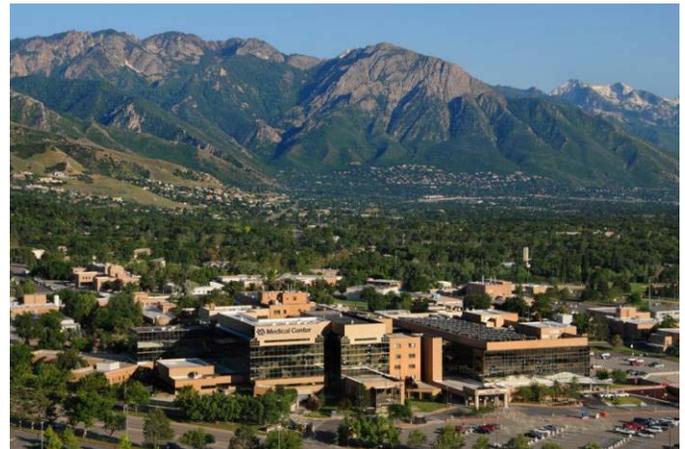
On those inside walls, the names of more than 1,200 Indians from the Flathead Reservation who have served their nation are carved into the stone. At Eagle Circle, families now have a place they can go to remember, to mourn, and to honor.

Robin Korogi, Director, VA Montana Health Care System and Buck Richardson, Minority Veteran Coordinator for VISN 19 participated in the Veterans Honor Dance.



Buck Richardson and Robin Korogi in the Veterans Honor Dance

VASLCHCS



SLC Veteran Cleans Up at National Veterans Wheelchair Games

He's like lightning on the track! David Tims, a disabled Army Veteran from Murray, Utah competed in the 30th National Veterans Wheelchair Games, held last month in Denver, Colorado.

Tims took home two golds and three silvers, but of course he claims they should have been all golds!



Attracting nearly 600 athletes each year, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games are the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world.

It is a multi-event sports and rehabilitation program for military service veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, amputations, or certain neurological problems.

Tims is a 54 year old combat-wounded Veteran of Vietnam. He has a spinal cord injury and currently receives care at the George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center. Way to go David!

The Games are presented by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), and were hosted this year by the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care system (VA ECHS), and the Paralyzed Veterans of America Mountain States Chapter. Funded with help from a host of corporations and service organizations, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games are a showcase for the benefit of sports rehabilitative programs, and the remarkable athletic abilities and personal achievements of our nation's disabled veterans.

Please encourage any of our disabled Veterans who may be interested to get involved. Tims says "it is a wonderful experience."

18 Interfaith Chaplains Graduate: SLC CPE Program Gaining Momentum

They represent a variety of faith traditions from all over the community including Anglican, Latter-day Saint, Lutheran, Non-denominational, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian. However, they all have one thing in common: the use of spirituality in healing.

The graduation ceremony itself was quite touching from the humble words of our graduates to the blessing of the hands.

Each graduate has different reasons for embarking on this experience but it seems at the core it is the desire to impact and change lives with something as simple as a touch.



The CPE Program is a full year commitment for student chaplains. Many of the chaplains feel the opportunity to serve America's Veterans is an added bonus of the training experience. Among the eighteen graduates, some are licensed clinical social workers, university professors, journalists, graduate students, businesspersons, homemakers, hospice volunteers and retired individuals.

Going High-Tech to Better Serve Our Veterans

Getting your blood pressure, blood sugar, heart rate, weight, and mental health evaluated via phone line or internet line seems a little futuristic. Well... the future is here!

Veterans and VA Employees who attended the Telehealth Expo were pleasantly surprised to learn just how high-tech the VA is.



Patients at our Community Based Outpatient Clinics can be evaluated by a doctor at the George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center through Telehealth technologies

which can even allow the doctor to hear the Veterans heartbeat and respiration.

If a patient can't make it to a meeting in our Veterans' Learning & Telehealth Education Center (VLTEC), he or she can attend and participate via Telehealth technologies. Some Veterans don't have to leave home for their check up.

The over 400 Veterans using the Health Buddy System in the VASLCHCS get their blood pressure, heart rate, blood sugar, and weight monitored daily via phone or internet line in the comfort of their own home. What about mental health? The Health Buddy checks that by asking a series of questions.

Technology is helping us better serve the Veterans who have served us.

Grand Junction VAMC:



The Grand Junction Medical Center continues to make progress in several projects and programs.

Moab TeleHealth Clinic

A grand opening for the Moab TeleHealth Clinic was held Aug. 12, 2010. The event drew a large crowd with some Veterans travelling nearly 100 miles to attend and learn about the services available through the clinic.

"We have been really looking forward to this clinic opening," said Tom McClelland, a county VSO from Dove Creek, Colorado. "I average six to eight trips a month to the Grand Junction VA every month with Veterans. That's 430 miles round trip. This is only 83 miles one way."

In the first week after opening, the clinic had 75 assigned patients. Since then, it has averaged four to five Veterans dropping in weekly to learn about the services available at the clinic.



(Right to Left) Terry Atienza, GRJVAMC director, Glenn Grippen, VISN 19 director, Moab Police Chief Michael Navarre, Ed Munson, Moab American Legion and Terry Schow, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the Moab TeleHealth Clinic.

Many of these are Veteran who said they had not enrolled in the VHA because of the long distance, 120 miles, from Moab to Grand Junction.

Surgical Suite Expansion

The contractor for the 31,000 square foot project hosted a "beam signing" Aug. 11 at which local VIPs, VHA leadership – to include Glen Grippen, VISN 19 director, congressional staffers, facility staff, patients and volunteers were invited to sign one of the major support beams to kick off the project.



Richard Baca, representing Congressman John Salazar (3rd Dist – D), Terry Atienza, GRJVAMC director, and Glen Grippen, VISN 19 Director, signed a main support beam that will be used in a project to create a consolidate surgery and support suite beside the inpatient ward. The 31,000 square foot expansion will greatly increase communication and aid in decreasing risk of infection.

Despite a few technical difficulties with the paint pens used in the ceremony, more than 75 people signed the beam. The project will consolidate surgery suites, recovery, SPD, ICU, wards and several other related activities into one location greatly increasing both safety and communication.

Suicide Prevention

In preparation for National Suicide Prevention Awareness Week, the facility's program coordinator convinced Central Office to use Grand Junction as a pilot location to expand the program placing the suicide helpline number on bus stops and inside buses. This placed 25 ads at bus stops throughout the grand valley and several more inside the buses

The suicide prevention coordinator also combined resources with the homeless veteran coordinator to develop a product aimed at the highest risk populations, recently homeless Veterans and those in danger of becoming veterans.

The final product is a steel water bottle with three phone numbers: the Grand Junction VA Medical Center's main number, the national suicide help line and the national VA homeless hotline. These bottles will be given out at the upcoming Stand Down and to selected Veterans in rural communities identified by area law enforcement and county social services.

Cheyenne VAMC:



New Cheyenne VAMC Medical Center Director

Ms. Cynthia McCormack, RN, PhD. reported for duty at the Cheyenne VA Medical Center on August 16th, thus beginning her tenure here as the new Medical Center Director.

Ms. McCormack has over 25 years of experience in the Veterans Health Administration as both a staff member and leader. She joins the leadership team at the Cheyenne VAMC as numerous developments and progress at the facility are occurring.

The Cheyenne VAMC and VISN 19 welcome Ms. McCormack as she starts her new adventure. Enough of the talking, let's start digging!

In fact, just days before Ms. McCormack's arrival, officials from the VA and the Army Corp of Engineers broke ground at the main campus on August 10th. This activity formally and symbolically begins the construction of a new outpatient clinical addition.

The new clinic will feature 48 exam rooms where outpatient primary care, mental health care and cardio pulmonary services will be provided. This new area will also feature a centralized check-in area, providing a "one stop check-in" for outpatients visiting the VA Medical Center.

At almost 23,000 square feet, this is one of the larger additions to the Cheyenne VA. Cost for the new addition is budgeted at \$6.9 million with construction expected to last approximately 12 months.



(From left to right): Andrew Ruben, Cheyenne VAMC Public Affairs Officer oversees the ground breaking for the 2010 clinical addition project. US Army Corps of Engineers, Robert Michaels (Chief, Construction Division), WY Vets Commission Representative, Mr. Bob Craft; Acting Medical Center Director, Debra Hirschman; VISN 19 Deputy Director, Ms. Laverne Liversage; Medical Center Associate Director, Ms. Liz Lowery; US Army Corps of Engineers, Col. Robert J. Ruch (USACE District Commander) and Medical Center Project Engineer, Dan Schell remove the first shovels of dirt.

Rawlins PCTOC

In the first month of full scale operations, the Rawlins PCTOC has been very successful. Interest in the clinic is high from both Veterans living in Carbon County, Wyoming as well as from the US Congressional delegation representing Wyoming.

Senator Enzi and Representative Lummis both toured the facility this month and expressed compliments about the VA's Telehealth Program. They specifically outlined how well the VA provides healthcare to Veterans in rural areas while maintaining high quality clinical outcomes.

My Healthe Vet Program

Momentum is gaining at the Cheyenne VA in regards to the My Healthe Vet Program. My HealtheVet is VA's award-winning e-health Website, offering Veterans anywhere, anytime Internet access to VA health care information and services. With My HealtheVet, Veterans will be able to access trusted, secure and current health and benefits information and much more. Registered users can also refill their VA prescriptions online. Using My HealtheVet is free and easy. The website is located at: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>.

Sheridan VAMC:



After a long summer of demolition and contractors the Sheridan VAMC's Nutrition and Food service has a new dining room to serve patients.

This was no minor flooring change and new tables, "we were able to have a wall removed that opened up the room to the serving line and gave the patients more room." said Janet Nowak, Nutrition and Food Supervisor.

Though the planning took nearly a year, contractors were able to complete the work in 8 weeks, including the custom build for the drink station.

"The patients had been asking for a salad bar and easier drink station. This new configuration allows us to provide them with more variety. Everyone loves it."



Part of the change was to add a variety of seating.



"One of the things patients really like is the higher tables and chairs." Said Lisa Alsaker, Administrative Nutritionist. "The new seating is easier for some of our patients to get in and out of. All in all it is beautiful."



The over two hundred and fifty thousand dollar remodel is just one project at the facility. Work continues on the Medical Unit remodel and is expected to be completed in the next twelve to eighteen months.