

# VISN 19 Network Director Update July 2010



Glen W. Grippen



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

[HUD and VA Launch \\$15 Million Demonstration Program to Prevent Veteran Homelessness](#) -

In an effort to prevent homelessness among veterans, primarily those returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. Department of Housing

and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that both agencies will invest a combined \$15 million in five selected communities near military installations. The HUD and VA grant funding is intended to provide housing assistance and supportive services to veterans who might otherwise be living in homeless shelters or on the streets. (7/22/10)

[VA Approves \\$2.8M for Gulf War Illness Research](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has approved \$2.8 million to fund three new research projects that focus on testing or developing new treatments for illnesses affecting Veterans who served in the Gulf War 1990-1991. The research incorporates recommendations of the department's Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Task Force. (7/21/10)

[VA Unveils Contract Strategy that Helps Veterans' Small Businesses](#) - To improve the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) execution of information technology (IT) projects and to further advance top-priority programs for Veterans, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced a new contracting strategy to be known as Transformation Twenty-One Total Technology (T4) which is focused on giving Veteran-owned small businesses more opportunities to support VA. (7/20/10)

[New Open Government Plan Emphasizes VA's Commitment to Transparency](#) - Supporting President Obama's pledge to make transparency and openness the pillars of good government, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has updated its "Open Government Plan," reaffirming VA's commitment to become a leader among federal agencies at applying these principles to achieve its mission of serving veterans. (7/19/10)

[VA Simplifies Access to Health Care and Benefits for Veterans with PTSD](#) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric

K. Shinseki announced a critical step forward in providing an easier process for Veterans seeking health care and disability compensation for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), with the publication of a final regulation in the Federal Register. (7/12/10)

[Hundreds of Veterans in Denver to Celebrate and Honor the Spirit of Independence Day through Competition](#) - More than 500 U.S. military Veterans who have sacrificed for our freedom are in Denver for the 30th National Veterans Wheelchair Games. The event, presented each year by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), began July 4 and runs through July 9. (7/8/10)

[Registration Opens for VA Forum on Women Veterans](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs opened registration on July 8 for a women Veterans forum that will address the quality of VA health care, the provision of benefits for women, and ways for VA to continue improving access to the care and benefits for women Veterans. (7/8/10)

[VA Launches Development of New Online Claims System](#) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today plans to develop a fully automated, online system for handling Veterans' disability compensation claims. More than a simple digitization of existing paper-based claims, the new system is part of VA's modernization of the end-to-end processing workflow. Automation will substantially reduce processing time and increase accuracy while simplifying the way that Veterans interact with the claims process. (7/2/10)

[VA Takes Action to Strengthen Measures to Protect Veterans](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) primary mission is to serve our nation's Veterans. President Obama has charged the Department with ensuring the VA medical network is a top-notch health care system. (7/1/10)

[Veterans' Medallion Available for Order](#) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki announced today that the Department of Veterans Affairs is offering bronze medallions to attach to existing, privately purchased headstones or markers, signifying a deceased's status as a Veteran. (6/29/10)

## **VISN 19:**

July has been a busy month in VISN 19. I was honored to attend Grand Openings for three separate VISN 19 Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinics (PCTOCs) this past month and Dr. Leigh Anderson, Chief medical Officer attended a fourth.



Congratulations to the Cheyenne VAMC for opening a PCTOC in Rawlins, WY and the VA Montana Health Care System opening their PCTOCs in Hamilton and Plentywood, Montana. We hosted several honored guests in our VISN this past month as well. More about that later...

## **New Director of Office of Rural Health Appointed**

I am pleased to share the appointment of Ms. Mary Beth Skupien, PhD, MS, RN, as the new Director, Office of Rural Health in Washington, D.C.

With almost three decades of experience as a clinician, both locally and nationally within Federal service, Dr. Skupien has a proven record of leading and implementing many initiatives in the public health arena, especially as they relate to Native American tribal issues. As a member and former Chief Executive Officer/Health Director of the Sault Saint Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, she has a keen insight into the health care needs of this unique population.

Dr. Skupien will be a driving force in further developing community partnerships, educating staff throughout Veterans Health Administration, and ultimately successfully serving Veterans who reside in rural and highly rural areas.

Dr. Skupien is located at VACO, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC in Room 842B and may be reached at (202)416-7083.

## **VHA Emergency Response in Rocky Boy Reservation Flooding**

Recent heavy rains in north central Montana caused major flooding on the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation which resulted in crucial need of emergency assistance as several main roads and thoroughfares were impassable. Homes and Tribal buildings were compromised and families were evacuated. A major healthcare risk was the loss of their Tribal Health Facility as the reservation's outpatient healthcare clinic sustained structural damage, and the nearest trauma care facility is 25 miles away.

On June 24, Indian Health Service and FEMA made inquiries to Fort Harrison VAMC to support an immediate need for two mobile medical facilities at Rocky Boy.



VISN 19 identified two mobile Vet Center vans in Missoula and Billings which could be deployed to the reservation to address this need in accordance with State and local resource sharing agreements. Supporting resources (e.g., generators, staffing) were also placed on stand-by for immediate use.

In rapid response, Vet Center leadership agreed to the deployment of two vans based on approval from VACO Emergency Response Team. Ms Robin Korogi, Medical Center Director, Ft Harrison offered willingness to staff the clinic with VA nurses from the VAMC or local CBOC. The vans remained deployed as a temporary site for the healthcare clinic until the emergency was resolved.



## 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:** GRAND OPENING HELD JULY 30, 2010.
  - b) **Plentywood, MT:** GRAND OPENING HELD JULY 30, 2010.
  - c) **Rawlins, WY:** GRAND OPENING HELD JULY 16, 2010.
  - d) **Moab, UT:** Grand opening to be held in August.
  - e) **Glenwood Springs, CO:** Grand Opening to be held in October.
  - f) **Salida, CO:** OPERATIONAL in December 2009
  - g) **Idaho Falls, ID:** Grand Opening to be held in August.
  - h) **Price, UT:** Grand Opening to be held in September.
  - i) **Worland, WY:** Anticipate Grand Opening to be held in September.
  - j) **Evanston, WY:** Anticipate 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.

### **2) General Telehealth: Tele-Specialty**

**Consultations:** this project allows for specialists from the larger facilities to consult with our smaller facilities in the areas of Endocrinology, Tele-TBI; Cognitive Impairment, Tele-Pain, Tele-Dementia Services, Tele-mental Health; PTSD, Tele-Derm, Tele-Wound Care, Tele-Surgery, Tele-Cardiology, and a Tele-Tumor Board. The operational target for all Specialty Projects is July 2010.

**3) Extended Education and Wellness** – Using telehealth modalities, this project provides innovative education and wellness strategies to veterans in rural areas and delivers intensive case management and education to veterans who have high-risk conditions. VISN-wide Web Based Patient Education materials are available via computer for all providers in exam rooms while they are with patients. Patient education classes are also now available online at <http://visn19.kramesonline.com>.

### **4) vICU Project (virtual ICU)**

The virtual ICU maintains access to critical care services in the four smaller facilities in VISN 19 (Fort Harrison, MT; Grand Junction, CO; Cheyenne, WY; and

Sheridan, WY) by combining existing technology with expanded critical care nursing services and medical specialists located in Denver.

The Virtual ICU has been operational and is considered a great success. For example, previously if a patient from the Cheyenne VA system needed a more complex surgery than the Cheyenne VA Medical Center could perform, they would have to transfer care to Denver.

Now, they have the option of getting their surgery quicker and by their same care team that they see in Cheyenne. How? Through the Telemedicine Consultative Services offered through the vICU.



Photo courtesy: Shawn Fury, ECHCS

When VISN 19 initiated the Virtual ICU program, the idea was simple: Give outlying clinics and lower complexity facilities immediate access to consultation with ICU providers at the Denver VAMC through telemedicine. Through this program, a patient at a rural clinic could be seen by the ICU staff at the Denver VA for immediate evaluation of a potentially serious medical issue.

Surgeons in Cheyenne and support staff in Denver have taken this program one step farther. That same patient from Wyoming can now do the majority of his pre-operative checks in Cheyenne. For surgery, the patient and the surgeon travel to the Denver VAMC and use its operative facilities and support staff. Once the surgery is complete, the surgeon travels back to Cheyenne, and the patient begins recovery at the Denver VAMC. Here's where the telemedicine begins.

All of the patient's post-operative checks are done via the telemedicine equipment while the patient is in Denver and the surgeon is in Cheyenne. Surgical resident and nursing staffs, via telemedicine equipment, see the patient in Denver while the surgeon leads the check-up from the other end of the equipment in Cheyenne. The surgeon essentially does virtual rounds, facilitated by the residents, nurses and

technology. Once the patient is discharged, he/she goes back to Wyoming to continue his/her care with the same care team he/she has seen throughout the entire process.

The benefits to the patient are numerous. First, the treatments are timely. Instead of waiting in the cue for Denver surgeons, the patient is seen by Cheyenne surgeons in operating room times specifically blocked for the Cheyenne VAMC. Second, the treatments are convenient. The patient doesn't have to make numerous trips to the Denver VA for pre and post operative evaluations; he/she does the majority of his/her checkups with his/her providers at the Cheyenne facility. Third, the treatments are provided by the same care team. The telemedicine equipment gives a new option for continuity of care by one VA team of providers.



Photo courtesy: Shawn Fury, ECHCS

The new application of the V-ICU program allows connectivity like never before. Essentially, a patient from Sheridan, Wyoming, can receive care from a provider at the Cheyenne VA Medical Center team for surgery in Denver, Colorado, all facilitated by telemedicine technology.

Some telemedicine programs around the nation provide connections from one office to another or one hospital in a city to another hospital in the same city. VISN 19's telemedicine program expands care over hundreds of miles. It is changing the face of rural health care, and providing access to quality medical care to all Veterans in VISN 19.

## 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.

Temporary signs have been placed on the future site noting the Future Home of the VA Medical Center.



User Group Meetings are currently underway. These meetings allow for various services or sections to discuss space layout, flow of patients, equipment requirements and any special considerations needed to provide safe care to our Veterans. These discussions include size of rooms, where each room should be located, and the furnishings, equipment and fixtures for those rooms.



A new wave of enthusiasm was exhibited as users started identifying what equipment and furnishings would be in each room. Each service was asked to identify the equipment and furnishings for each room in the service – offices, exam rooms, x-ray rooms, surgery rooms, etc.

Members of the task forces represent a variety of services and stakeholders. A few examples include security, parking, landscaping, room standardization, signage, art, lounges, training rooms, and many more. June User Group Meetings have just concluded.

If you would like to be on a task force please contact Marcie Chase at (303) 370-7508.

The Joint Venture Team has hired CPI, Inc to assist in the development of a master list of all of these items that will be the basis for the Denver Replacement Hospital Project Team to use for activation of the building. Part of activation is the actual furnishing and equipping of the building to get it ready to open. This list will also be used by the architects to create drawings of the floors and walls for the next round of meetings.

The next round of User Group Meetings began July 19<sup>th</sup> and will continue until August 6<sup>th</sup>. This round of meetings will include a review of room layouts and interior elevations (wall cabinets and wall equipment locations).

The building layout north of 17<sup>th</sup> Place is still being developed. The Community Living Center (formerly called Nursing Home Unit) is being redesigned to meet new VA criteria. This will affect the footprint of the building, which forces other structures in that area to be rearranged.

The parking garage for employees has been redesigned to make it more efficient as well. Other

potential buildings on the north side of 17<sup>th</sup> Place include a new Fisher House and a PTSD residential house (awaiting congressional approval for FY 11).

### **ECHCS to Begin Ambulatory Surgery Services at Air Force Academy**

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 will host an Open House on August 16 at 10:30 a.m. 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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

The Joint Incentive Fund used to pay for the collaborative provides special funding for both DoD and VA that wouldn't otherwise be available.

- First Year Funding:
  - VA: \$2,473,000,
  - DoD \$2,877,000
- Second Year Funding
  - VA: \$2,823,000,
  - DoD: \$1,598,000

## Therapeutic Recreation at its finest!



What were you doing on the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend?

Veterans at the VA ECHCS Community Living Center (CLC) were riding in side cars to City Park for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Harley's Heroes Motorcycle ride. The program launched in 2007 when Therapeutic Recreation volunteer Marty Hahn connected with two CLC residents who longed to ride

motorcycles again. Marty pitched the idea to Donna Lonergan, CTRS CLC Recreation Therapist and off it went.

Marty, a member of the Harley Owners Group # 422 from Firestone, organized the registration of 40 Harley Davidson Riders. The Harley Davidson riders paid an entrance fee to travel from Fredrick, CO to the Denver VAMC CLC to take veterans for a ride in side cars.



The veterans were transferred from their wheelchairs to a side car using a Linko Lift. John Braun, CNA coordinated the transfers.

The ride featured 2 sidecars and a motorcycle or Humvee escort front and back. The route included a drive to the entrance of City Park, onto the promenade around Ferril Lake and the boathouse and through the park. The veterans enjoyed the scenic panoramic views.



Special guests included Scott McMorris, President High Country Harley Davidson, Brandon Schaffer, President of the Colorado Senate and Judy Burke, Director, Patient Care Services.



A special salute to the Harley Heroes Motorcycle organizing committee: Marian Bildner, Judy Burke, Allison Bowers, John Braun, Sharon Devine, Barbara Lilly, Donna Lonergan, Ron Wilkins, Sean Midgley, Jordan Schupbach, and Jack Vining, Marty Hahn, and Phil Ricketts, Harley Owners Group and VA volunteers.

The support of the CLC Nursing Staff and Therapeutic Recreation Specialists Adeline Velasquez and Vanessa Smith made the event safe and organized. Other partners were Denver Parks and Recreation, The Colorado National Guard, and High Country Harley Davidson.



To experience Therapeutic Recreation at its finest, join the 2011 ride by contacting Donna Lonergan, ext 2851.

**VA Montana Health Care System:**



**Plentywood and Hamilton Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinics Grand Openings**

VAMTHCS proudly hosted two grand openings for their two Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinics on July 30, 2010.

ceremony for the Plentywood Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinic (PCTOC)



Pictured Left to Right: Robin Korogi, Director, VA Montana Health Care System; Leigh Anderson, MD, Chief Medical Officer VA Rocky Mountain Network; Bruce Henderson, Field Representative, US Senator Jon Tester's Office; Lyndsay Bell, Field Representative, US Senator Max Baucus' Office; Erin Gabrian, Field Representative, US Congressman Denny Rehberg's Office.



Donna Williams, Telehealth Director for Sheridan Memorial Hospital talks about the benefits of using telehealth equipment to the audience at the PCTOC dedication in Plentywood. Sheridan Memorial Hospital is the contract site for VA's PCTOC in Plentywood.



Roger Trumper, VA Montana Health Care System Enrollment Coordinator listens during the dedication

On July 14, 2010, the VAMTHCS participated in the **Veterans Dedication** at the Flathead Tribal Complex in Pablo, Montana. Pictured in the middle of the Veterans Honor Dance in front of Eagle Circle is VAMTHCS Director, Robin Korogi and VISN 19 Minority Veteran Coordinator, Buck Richardson.



**Fort Harrison's Group House**, home for the Vet to Vet peer support groups and Military Women to Women peer support groups new location opened in July 2010.



**Construction on the Fort Harrison 24 bed Mental Health inpatient facility** takes shape. The bricks and mortar are here to stay.



**Sheridan VAMC:**



**Construction for the new warehouse** has also started. The current warehouse will be vacated for new Mental Health space.



Sheridan VAMC will open two new Patient TeleHealth Outreach Clinics in September. The clinics will be located in Evanston and Worland.

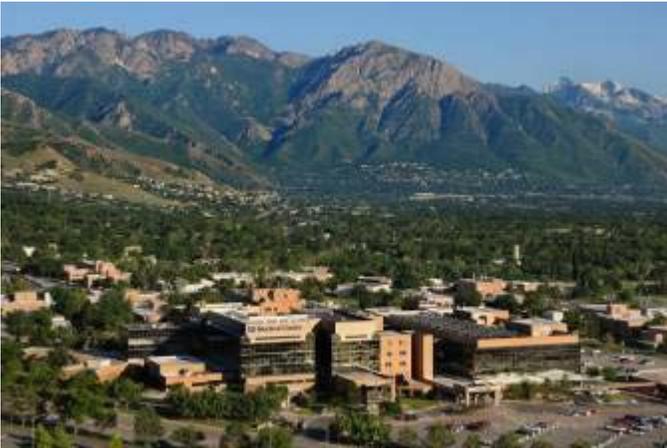
Each clinic will utilize state of the art equipment to connect patients with the provider. Already, all of Sheridan VAMC's clinics are using the telehealth global media carts with great success.

Patients in Gillette are able to see a physician in Sheridan or Denver without leaving town. The systems have also enabled the VA to limit cancelations when a provider is ill, as a provider in another location can see the patient. This has been a win-win for both patients and the facility.

Day One, August 3, 2010: **Geothermal test well** being dug at Fort Harrison Campus.



## VASLCHCS



### Secretary Visits Salt Lake City

Secretary Eric Shinseki capped off VASLCHCS' Independence Day Celebration by meeting with Salt Lake City Veterans who are responsible for those freedoms.

The Secretary arrived on Tuesday July 6<sup>th</sup> late afternoon and proceeded on a whirlwind tour of the campus. There was so much to show and so little time! After brief introductions the Secretary toured the OEF/OIF Clinic and Women's Clinic where he chatted with Veterans.



The Secretary also went inside VASLCHCS' Sweat Lodge, which is fairly unique to VA, and was briefed on the therapeutic benefits the ceremony has for Veterans. This tour was led by Buck Richardson, VISN 19 Minority Veteran Coordinator, Mr. Glen Grippen and Dr. Ron Gebhart, Chief of Staff, VASLCHCS.



Secretary Shinseki also had the opportunity to meet with the late George Wahlen's widow, Melba and her two daughters. What a moment as the namesake of the VA SLC hospital's family met the Secretary of the VA for the first time.



His visit was capped off by phenomenal presentation prepared by VASLCHCS' homeless program coordinator which included programs and innovations we are very proud of. Our employees, particularly those involved

with the visit, called the Secretary's visit the highlight of their careers.



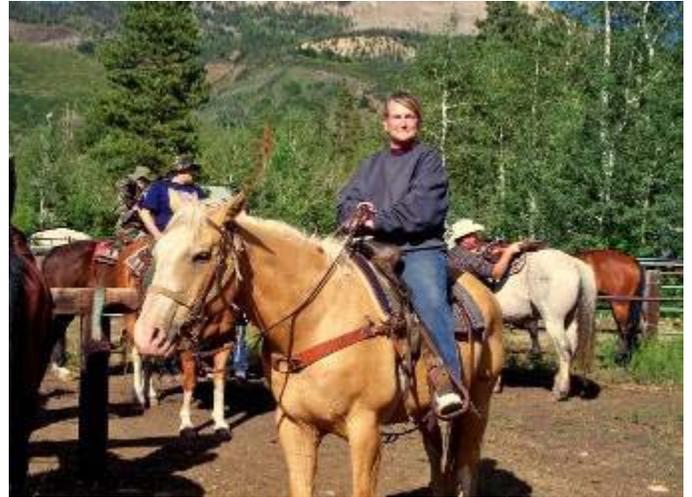
### **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Goddess Camp "Veterans Get Back on the Horse"**

High in the Utah Uinta mountains women Veterans are breaking new ground and regaining some old. And it goes without saying that VA Salt Lake City Health Care System's Recreation Therapy Program is always doing something groundbreaking.



Many of these female Veterans suffer from PTSD, MST or both. They struggle with anxiety and isolation. Some haven't been camping or horseback riding in two decades.

Goddess Camp allows women to be women. The ladies can let their hair down and break down barriers that have been in place for years. "I can do anything now" mentioned one Veteran after a long ride through the stunningly beautiful mountains. The women bond and they lean on each other for support.



Recreation Therapist Emily Potter hopes this experience will resonate into other parts of the Veterans lives long after this brief retreat is over. A picture is worth a thousand words.



### **2010 VHA Communications Award Ace Achievement**

VASLCHCS Public Affair is in proud receipt of two recent national level awards. Staff received the Pinnacle Award in the Broadcast Media category for their "VA Rap: Healing Through Music" as well as the Ace Achievement Award for social media. VASLCHCS's Facebook page received rave reviews. This was an amazing team effort, but it's easy when dedicated people love what they do!

Congratulations to Jill Atwood, Scott Jackson, Diego Coronel, Milo Quiroz, Maria Fruin, and Keith MacNaughtan!

**Grand Junction VAMC:**



The Grand Junction VA Medical Center has made large strides forward during the last month in several new and existing programs.

One of the newest, Patient Centered Medical Home, progressed as the facility filled its nursing positions and the orientation process for involved staff. Training for the pilot team is ongoing and the pilot program itself should kick off in August.

The Women Veteran's Program has also had excellent growth; the facility now has about 600 female veterans enrolled for care with 315 of them in Women's Clinic.

The Women's Clinic staff has also begun developing a special outreach effort for women veterans who have a service connected disability but are not enrolled with the VHA after encountering several of these special Veterans recently who were not enrolled for VA health care. Most of these women, to include a few younger Veterans, didn't know that their Service Connected Disability was connected to their VHA eligibility.

The Medical Center has also begun planning for the next flu season. Staff is looking at the possibility of again holding special Veteran's flu shot clinics in rural areas with high numbers of Veterans', creating special signage to direct patients to these clinics and developing targeted public service announcements to reach these Veterans.

The Western Slope as a whole has continued to support the Medical Center's outreach efforts. Community organizations such as the Elks, VFW and American Legion have offered to host Grand Opening Celebrations at the new TeleHealth Clinics soon to open in Moab and Glenwood Springs, and the new location of the Craig TeleHealth Clinic.

The community of Redstone, Colorado hosted a VA information table at the town's Veterans Motorcycle Rally which attracts an average attendance of 4, 000 people. The VA Medical Center used this event to host an annual Welcome Home Event.

**Cheyenne VAMC:**



**Rawlins PCTOC Grand Opening**

Veterans living in Carbon County, Wyoming joined leadership from VISN 19 and the Cheyenne VAMC in celebrating a grand opening of the new Rawlins Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinic on July 16<sup>th</sup>.

State and local officials, as well as veterans, attended the grand opening of the new Department of Veterans Affairs Primary Telehealth Outreach Center in Rawlins.

The new center, located at 1809 E. Daley St., is open Monday through Friday.



**(Rawlins Daily Times, photos by Kathy Johnson)**

State Veterans Service Officer Barry D. Gasdek, left, Veterans Commission Commissioner Linda Allgeier, Rawlins City Manager Steve Golnar, VA Network Director Glen Grippen and Medical Center Director Deb Hirschman cut the ribbon to officially open Rawlins' new Telehealth Outreach Clinic.

Primary care services provided at the Rawlins VA PCTOC are currently provided through real-time clinical videoconferencing; tele-retinal services will utilize

store and forward methods. The transmission of all patient / provider interactions is completed through the secure VA data network. Clinical peripheral devices, such as high resolution cameras and "smart" stethoscopes, are available for providers to gain a complete health assessment of each patient.

Whether it's a fixed site as the case in Rawlins, WY or the four sites of care the Cheyenne VA's mobile Telehealth clinic provides the high-tech approach VA takes with the implementation of Telehealth insures the VA's standard of high quality clinical care is provided in rural parts of VISN 19 / Rocky Mountain Network.

VISN 19 Network Director Glen Grippen says, "The technology allows primary care doctors, mental health doctors, substance abuse counselors, anger management counselors and specialists to provide direct care to our rural sites. This technology brings big city healthcare to rural America. "



While nurses are available at the Rawlins PCTOC to answer questions and complete lab procedures between 8 a.m.-4 p.m., the Rawlins PCTOC is an "appointment-only facility." Veterans who need an appointment with their primary care provider can call 307-324-5578 or 1-888-483-9127 x3816.

On other topics, various construction projects at the main Cheyenne VA campus are currently in progress. Work on the exterior of the new surgical addition is complete and interior finishing is underway. A "green energy" project has resulted in the installation of new solar panels which have the potential to generate 45 kW of power; a second solar array project, estimated to generate 130 kW of power, is scheduled to begin in August.

And finally, to the benefit of patients, visitors and employees, construction and paving operations in the new parking areas are nearing completion. This will result in ample parking for everyone in the very near future.