



Network Director's Update

January 2012



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

[VA's Home Loan Program Continues to Lead Mortgage Industry](#) - Home loans guaranteed by the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to have the lowest serious delinquency and foreclosure rates in the mortgage industry. Veterans have also taken advantage of their home loan benefit in record numbers, as VA loan originations reached their highest total in eight years. (1/30/12)

[VA Publishes Regulation on Newborn Care](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs has published a regulation officially amending VA's medical benefits package to include up to seven days of medical care for newborns delivered by women Veterans who are receiving VA maternity care benefits. (1/27/12)

[VA Launches Acquisition Internship for Returning Veterans](#) - A special internship to prepare newly-returned Veterans to become federal contracting specialists was launched recently at the Acquisitions Academy of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Frederick, Md. (1/26/12)

[Veterans and Beneficiaries Receive 2012 Cost of Living Adjustment](#) - Veterans, their families, and survivors receiving benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs saw a 3.6 percent increase in their compensation and pension benefits beginning January 1. (1/24/12)

[VA Providing Credit Monitoring to Misidentified Veterans](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs is offering free credit monitoring to more than 2,200 Veterans whose personal information, including social security numbers, was posted on Ancestry.com following the mistaken release of data through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). (1/20/12)

[VA To Host Major Veteran Career Fair in Washington D.C.](#) - Answering the President's call to expand employment opportunities for America's Veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs will host a major Veteran-focused career fair and exposition with thousands of public and private-

sector on-the-spot hiring opportunities for Veterans on Wednesday, Jan. 18, in Washington. Senior VA officials are expected to attend the event, which will take place at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, 801 Mount Vernon Place, NW, from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (1/17/12)

[Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki On Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.](#) - On this day of national tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we honor the memory, the vision, and the service of one of the greatest Americans in my lifetime. (1/16/12)

[VA Announces Changes to Emergency Care Payment Policy](#) - The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today a change in regulations regarding payments for emergency care provided to eligible Veterans in non-VA facilities. (1/12/12)

[Largest Annual Wheelchair Sports Event in the World Returning to Richmond this June](#) - Registration is open for the 32nd National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. More than 500 Veterans from across the United States, Puerto Rico and Great Britain are expected to compete in the Games, taking place June 25-30, 2012, in Richmond, Va. - the site of the very first National Veterans Wheelchair Games held in 1981. (1/10/12)

[New Law Change Increases Insurance Coverage for Veterans](#) - Some Veterans covered under the Veterans Group Life Insurance program (VGLI) now have the opportunity to increase their coverage to the current maximum coverage under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program. (1/10/12)

[VA Deploying 20 New Mobile Vet Centers](#) - COLUMBUS, Ohio - The Department of Veterans Affairs today deployed 20 additional Mobile Vet Centers from the production facility of Farber Specialty Vehicles to increase access to readjustment counseling services for Veterans and their families in rural and underserved communities across the country. (1/4/12)

[Rules Liberalized for Veterans with Undiagnosed Illnesses](#) - Veterans of the Persian Gulf War with undiagnosed illnesses have an additional five years to qualify for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. (12/29/11)

VISN 19: VISN Leadership Changes

Ms. Lavonne K. Liversage was appointed as Acting Network Director of VISN 19 December 31, 2011 following the retirement of Mr. Glen Grippen after 40 years of government service.



As Acting Network Director, Ms. Liversage has assumed responsibility for the direction and management of all operations, finances, and clinical programs of three hospitals, three Health Care Systems and 62 community based outpatient medical clinics, TeleHealth, Outreach and Dental clinics in VISN 19. Ms. Liversage will manage an almost 1.5 billion dollar annual budget and lead over 6,000 employees.

Previous to this assignment, Ms. Liversage has served as the VISN 19 Deputy Network Director since May 2010. In this role, she is responsible for the supervision of VISN 19 administrative programs and their respective program managers, including Finance, Logistics, Capital Assets, Planning, the Green Environmental Management System program and Occupational Health and Safety, as well as administrative support staff.

New Acting Deputy Network Director Detailed

Also during this leadership transition, Ms. Liz Lowery has been appointed as Acting Deputy Network Director effective January 15, 2012.

Ms. Lowery is currently the Associate Director of the Cheyenne VAMC.



Elizabeth Lowery began her VA career as the Education Officer for the West Texas VA Health Care System in Big Spring, TX.

Prior to that position, she worked in Higher Education Administration. She served as the Education Officer and EEO Manager at the Grand Junction VA Medical Center where she also held the position of Special Assistant to the Director at the Grand Junction VA Medical Center. She was named as the Associate Director of the Cheyenne Medical Center in June 2009.

Ms. Lowery obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree, Education, from Lubbock Christian University and a Master's Degree, Communications, from University of Texas.

New Winter Sports Clinic Director Named

In conjunction with the National Veterans Sports Program and Grand Junction VAMC, we are pleased to announce that Ms. Teresa Parks has been selected as the Director/Program Manager of the Winter Sports Clinic (WSC) held annually in Snowmass, Colorado. Ms. Parks has worked with the WSC for over ten years so her transition into this important leadership position will undoubtedly be seamless for the many Veterans and volunteers she serves.

The Winter Sports Clinic will be held March 25-30, 2012 in Snowmass Village, Colorado and will be celebrating its 26th year. The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic has been a leader in helping Veterans with disabilities rehabilitate by introducing them to adaptive winter sports on the majestic Colorado Rockies in Snowmass, Colorado.

The Clinic is co-sponsored by The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and made possible by a number of sponsors who make monetary and in-kind donations.

Congratulations, Teresa!

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 their new brochure [here](#) or at www.denver.va.gov/projecteagle.

Another resource for keeping up-to-date on the status of Project Eagle is to check out the Kiewit-Turner "Progress" webpage. This page will have images of the project as it moves forward. Be sure to check back often as they continue to update the page with the latest information. <http://www.denvervahospital.com/progress/>

Progress is being made and ground has been broken!

See excavation pictures below.



Newly installed temporary dewatering system on the north side of Clinic Building South for the Parking Visitor South.



Construction of elevator core and stair tower for the Clinic Building South addition.



Grubbing and clearing occurring on the previous Clinic Building South parking lot. This prepares the land for forthcoming excavation at this location.



Beginning of mass exaction and support of excavation at the Diagnostic and Treatment Center.

VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System Opens New Homeless Veterans Resource Center

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will open a Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) at 3030 Downing St., Denver; on Feb. 19 at 1 p.m. Mayor Michael B. Hancock and VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System Director Lynette A. Roff will speak.

The CRRC will offer a wide range of services to homeless Veterans and their families, including permanent and transitional housing, VA and non-VA benefits, medical and mental health care, employment, substance abuse treatment, showers, laundry and case management.

A number of community collaborators are committed to providing services to Veterans at the CRRC.

Grand Junction VAMC



The Grand Junction VA Medical Center's staff has spent the last month polishing their outreach programs and pulling together to find new ways to establish contact with Veterans across the Western Slope.

One of the most unique developments actually came from a VA employee's child who suggested the Medical Center develop a QR code to promote the facility's webpage with the increasing number of Veterans with Smart Phones.

It took a little research and the combined efforts of every staff member who had a Smart Phone running tests, but the Medical Center was able to develop a QR Code that was nearly universal.

QR Codes can best be described as square shaped "super" barcodes that direct mobile devices directly to specific web pages. They require a special "app" be loaded on the mobile device but are a great time saver and don't

require the user to type the webpage address directly into the Internet browser.

The Medical Center's partnerships with regional communities also paid off with invitations from the City of Collbran and the Telluride Elks to hold Veteran's Forums in both locations.

For the past quarter the Medical Center's staff has been exploring new ways to reach Veterans who either left the VA years ago or who believe they need to leave room for Veterans "who really need the VA."

One of the most successful examples of a positive outcome from an outreach effort was seen at an information table at the Grand Junction Sportman's Warehouse. Staff convinced several Vietnam Veterans to return to the VA and found three Veterans with legitimate service connected disabilities who had never filed. All three of these Veterans filed claims the next business day through the local Disabled Veterans Service Officer.



The Grand Junction VAMC was pleased to receive two donated photos of the Grand Junction VAMC from Flying Tiger Photo to use in their outreach efforts.

January has also gone well in several other areas. The local Carl's Jr. contributed \$2,000 to the Recreations Therapy Program Through their Stars for Troops fundraiser and the New Emerson Elementary third graders collected 1,500 pennies for the Medical Center's Patient fund.



The Carl's Jr. donation will be used to support such activities as Fly Fishing Clinics, complete with fly tying and trips to the Grand Mesa lakes, Adaptive Ski trips to Powderhorn and several other programs that help Veterans learn they can still enjoy the outdoors even if they have a serious service connected disability such as the amputation of limb.

VA Montana Health Care System:



VA Signs 38 Enhanced-Use Leases at Locations Nationwide

Continues Ongoing Efforts to Provide Housing to Veterans

VA executed 38 leases in December 2011, which are expected to provide over 4,000 units of permanent and transitional housing at various VA medical center campuses nationwide; and mixed-use facilities at four of the sites. VA and the lessees will engage in further negotiations regarding each of these lease projects and perform additional due diligence, including compliance with all Federal environmental and historic preservation laws.

If VA and the lessees reach agreement on all final transaction terms and the required due diligence is satisfactorily completed, the leases will be amended accordingly. If adequate progress is not being made toward negotiations and/or required due diligence, each of the 38 leases includes a no-cost options to terminate the lease.

Enacted in 1991 and codified in sections 8161-8169 of title 38, United States Code, VA's Enhanced-Use Lease (EUL) authority allowed the Secretary to enter into these 38 agreements, to lease land and buildings to public, private and/or non-profit partners for terms of up to 75 years, provided the use of the property is consistent with VA's mission.

VA's authority to execute these mission-driven leases expired on December 31, 2011, and reauthorization has not occurred to date. VA is committed to furthering the goals of the EUL program, subject to Congressional

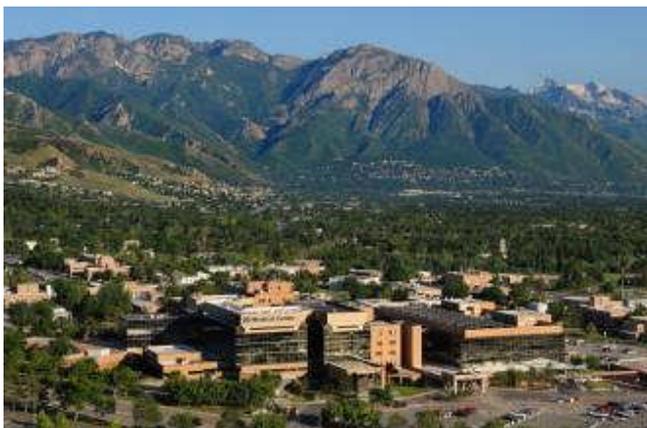
authorization, and will inform developers and pertinent stakeholders in the event reauthorization is obtained.

VAMTHCS is pleased to announce that VAMTHCS Fort Harrison was selected as a site for one of the 38 leases. VAMTHCS has executed a lease with Communities for Veterans, LLC at the Fort Harrison VAMC, Fort Harrison, MT. with an effective date of December 27, 2011 using a modified process to allow sufficient time for the parties to complete the required due diligence (including the environmental and historic compliance), complete a comprehensive development plan (as discussed more fully below), and to allow Communities for Veterans, LLC to obtain and close financing and complete all prerequisite project milestones. Execution of an amendment to the lease, to formalize the full transaction terms for each project, is conditioned upon the successful completion of these activities.

Communities for Veterans, LLC is responsible for preparing a comprehensive development plan that clearly outlines all terms of the proposed projects. VA will review and if necessary, provide comments on the development plan, and work closely with the Communities for Veterans, LLC and local authorities, to reach an acceptable document.

If a final development plan is reached, it will be made an exhibit to the amended lease. This development plan review process is just one of the ways in which VA will work collaboratively to address any concerns or special needs that may arise throughout the development process.

VASLCHCS



“VA Salt Lake City HCS: We’ve come a long way Baby!”

The VA Salt Lake City HCS would like to welcome **Alicia Marie New** to the world. Alicia is the **FIRST** baby born through VASLCHCS Women’s Health program and delivered by a VA Physician. She was born Thursday,

January 12, 2012 weighing in at 7 pounds 9 oz. and measuring 21 1/2 inches.

Alicia’s mother Tammy New received ALL of her maternity care from VASLCHCS and was delivered by VA OB/GYN Doctor Susan Rose at the University of Utah Hospital. We are only one of two medical centers in the country to have an OB/GYN on staff. The VA SLC HCS would like to congratulate the New family on their new addition to their family.



VA Fisher House Open House and Grand Opening Extravaganza!!

On December 21, 2011 over 300 people toured our gorgeous new Fisher House and enjoyed some holiday cheer. On January 9, 2012 we opened the doors to our very first family; in total six families checked into their new “home away from home”. Our local newspaper did a heart-felt story on the new bonds formed instantly between families brought together under such difficult circumstances. The Fisher House will be dedicated officially on February 29, 2012 at 10 am.





Welcome Dr. Karen Gribbin, New Chief of Staff, VA Salt Lake City Health Care System

We are pleased to announce Karen Gribbin, MD as new Chief of Staff for the George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center and the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System.



Dr. Gribbin comes to us from the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center in Muskogee, Oklahoma where she has been the Chief of Staff for the past four years.

Prior to that, she was the Chief of Medicine Service for ten years and held other clinical positions. She received her undergraduate degree in medical microbiology from Stanford University. She attended medical school at the University of Oklahoma and the Medical College of Ohio. She completed her internal medicine residency at the University of Oklahoma in 1989. Her first day on the job was Monday, January 23, 2012. Welcome Karen!

Virtual Lifetime Electronic Records (VLER)

VASLCHCS' VLER staff has been working with the Utah Health Information Exchange Network to promote electronic record sharing. Through a grant our local VLER Community Coordinator, VHA Office of Health Information, was able to purchase advertising.

Please check out the link to view the ads promoting VLER. <http://www.lonepeakproductions.com/clients/UHIN/VA-ALLspots.html>

Sheridan VAMC:



Sheridan VAMC opened the newly renovated medical unit on January 25, 2012. The re-grand opening was attended by over 100 patients and dignitaries, including county commissioners and state legislators.



The \$4 million dollar remodel began eighteen months ago with a complete demolition. This allowed for new wiring and plumbing. One of the unique aspects for the new unit is that each bed has a patient lift system. The lifts will allow nursing staff to safely transport patients from their beds safely and without potential injury to the nursing staff.

"We are so excited to see this project completed and can't wait to care for patients on the new unit." said Sherry Kolb, Nurse Manager of the Medical Unit. Staff will be transporting patients from their temporary location on the Mountain View Living Center to the new unit on January 30.

Cheyenne VAMC:



Cheyenne VA: Ready for Returning Troops

In a news story recently broadcast on local TV, the Cheyenne VA Medical Center reinforced that its staff remain ready to serve all Veterans, whether it is those who have recently returned from service in southwest Asia, those who are already enrolled in VA healthcare or those who have not yet enrolled in the VA system for care, regardless of period of service.

There are several key drivers which lay the foundation of the Cheyenne VA's readiness to serve Veterans with high quality healthcare. One is the mission and infrastructure of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The VA mission nobly defines the task at hand for all VA Medical Centers, of which in and around Cheyenne, Wyoming, has been tactically addressed every day for more than 75 years.

The Cheyenne VA has dedicated staff, sound information technology infrastructure, high quality outcomes with VA performance measures and integrated clinical programs. These elements foster high quality outcomes, high levels of customer satisfaction and a level of readiness to serve more troops coming home.

On that note, the Cheyenne VA's OIF/OIF/OND program works "hand in glove" with Department of Defense and National Guard managers to insure troops who are discharged from military service receive timely program information and enrollment assistance. This exchange of information and coordination for care enhances the ability of Cheyenne VA staff to conduct outreach and provide the necessary support and assistance for Veterans to access Cheyenne VA's primary, specialty, surgical, social and mental health services.

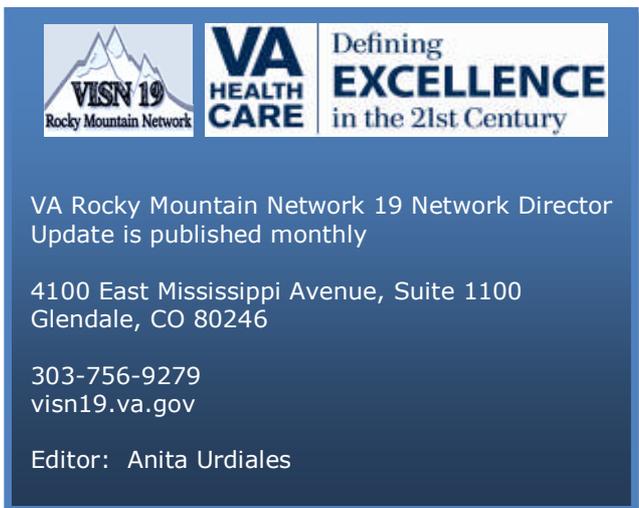
And for those visiting the main campus in Cheyenne, there will be improvements to these services by late fall of 2012. The current construction of a new outpatient addition will feature approximately 40 new outpatient

exam rooms. These expansions are not limited to the Cheyenne campus. Outpatient services throughout the region have also increased over the past few years.

The relocation to larger, modern facilities in Greeley and Fort Collins occurred recently, the new Telehealth Outreach Clinic celebrated its one year anniversary this past summer and the Mobile Telehealth Clinic has seen steady growth and utilization in the four communities it serves each week.

In respect to growing into the information age, Cheyenne VA has developed programs to support VA's expansion into this electronic environment as well. Examples of forward thinking programs that help serve Veterans who prefer technological access include Secure Messaging with PACT teams, Smartphone "apps" that help Veterans manage PTSD, Home Telehealth modules that assist the management of health conditions such as diabetes, COPD, depression and PTSD.

If you or someone you know lives in the tri-state service region of Cheyenne VA, call or click to find out more about VA enrollment, 888-483-9127 or <http://www.cheyenne.va.gov/>.



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