



VA Heartland Network

Truman VA BULLETIN

MAY 18, 2007

WELCOME

- Konstantin Chartkov**, Student Nurse Tech (PS)
- Billy Davenport**, A/C Equipment Operator (FM)
- Leah Drennan**, VALOR Student Nurse Tech (PS)
- Brittany Kammerich**, Medical Support Assistant (PS)
- Laura McKee**, Medical Support Tech (PS)
- Alexandria Neier**, VALOR Student Nurse Tech (PS)
- Elizabeth Wilburn**, Retail Clerk (Canteen)

FAREWELL

- Melissa Beiswanger, RN** (PS)
- Emily Bergfeld**, Pharmacy Technician (Pharmacy)
- Aundra Berry**, Social Work Intern (BH)
- Gary Lembke**, Social Work Intern (BH)
- Ayanna Prince**, Medical Support Assistant (PC)
- Sandra Sterling**, Nurse Practitioner (PC)

VOLUNTARY LEAVE TRANSFER PROGRAM

Ruth Douglass (BH), **Steven Hudson** (Police), **Helen Kennedy** (PS) and **Aileen Susan Riley** (PC) have been approved for the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program. Contact **Lena Warren** (HR) at extension 56397 for information.

NETWORK TOWN HALL REMINDER – WEDS., MAY 30

On Wednesday, May 30, **Dr. Peter Almenoff**, Director of the VA Heartland Network (VISN 15), will conduct an all-employee Town Hall meeting at 9:00 a.m. in the hospital auditorium. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a VISN 15 status report as well as provide employees an opportunity to ask questions about the Network and veterans health care issues.

RECENT EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARDS

Winifred L. Chirnside (Primary Care)	Employee of the Month (May)
Betty P. Turner, RN (Primary Care)	Star of the Month (March) ★
Erica S. Keeler, PharmD (Pharmacy)	Good Catch Patient Safety Award (March)
Cynthia A. Gillispie, RN (Patient Services)	Good Catch Patient Safety Award (April)

VA SECRETARY'S EXCELLENCE IN NURSING AWARDS

Each year, VA medical centers and Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) identify nurses in three different categories for the VA Secretary's Excellence in Nursing Awards. The 2007 award recipients at Truman VA include **Ed Allen, LPN**, **Ann Beasley, RN** (staff nurse role) and **Neva Berkey, RN** (non-staff nurse role). Congratulations to all three Truman VA nurses. Additionally, Ann and Neva were also award recipients for the VA Heartland Network (VISN 15).

ANNUAL NOTICE OF REPRESENTATIONAL RIGHTS

The Civil Service Reform Act requires annual notification to all employees who are in units of exclusive recognition of their representational rights in certain investigatory examinations. As an employee, you have the right, freely and without fear of penalty or reprisal, to form, join, and assist a labor organization or to refrain from doing so, and you will be protected in exercising this right. However, your right to hold an office in a labor organization, to act as a representative of the organization, or to participate in its management may be affected by the particular position you hold.

The Master Agreement with AFGE sets out some basic rights and responsibilities. Among them, the Union is guaranteed the right to be represented at the following kinds of meetings:

- a. Any formal discussion between one or more representatives of the VA and one or more employees in the unit concerning any grievance or any personnel policy or practice or other general condition of employment; or
- b. Any examination of an employee in the unit by a representative of the VA in connection with an investigation, if (1) the employee reasonably believes that the examination may result in disciplinary action against the employee, and (2) the employee requests representation.

CANTEEN SERVICE FOOD COURT MENU

A weekly menu for the Veterans Canteen Service Food Court is available on the hospital home page. The links are Veterans Canteen Service and then Food Court.



HEPATITIS AWARENESS MONTH – MAY

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month and is a great opportunity to raise patient awareness about liver health issues related to viral hepatitis. This year's focus is on the issue of confirmatory testing for Hepatitis C (HCV). Although the VA health care system has performed HCV antibody testing for roughly half of the enrolled veterans, far too many patients that test antibody positive fail to receive necessary confirmatory testing to detect HCV viremia. VA Central Office estimates indicate the proportion of HCV antibody positive veterans that lack HCV confirmatory testing may be higher than 25 percent at some VA facilities. Sites that have systematized reflexive HCV RNA testing for patients that test HCV antibody positive tend to have fewer patients with incomplete testing. However, no system is 100 percent reliable. Good patient care requires vigilance by providers regarding patients' HCV risk factors and testing status. Informed and knowledgeable patients can also help ensure that their HCV testing is complete.

NEWS FROM AFGE 903 & BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT

On Thursday, May 24, AFGE 903 and Blacks in Government (BIG) will sponsor a "Lunch 'N Learn" presentation entitled, "Getting Ready for Retirement," from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. in the auditorium. **Ken Cluck** of Benefits Advisors Group will provide four 30-minute presentations beginning at 11:00 a.m. To register for one of the presentations, please e-mail or telephone either **Jessica Hickem** (extension 56370) or **Dixie Wyatt** (extension 56605). Mr. Cluck is knowledgeable about VA benefits including the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and federal retirement. Pizza and soft drinks will be served.

SECURITY ALERT

Truman VA Police remind employees to be continuously observant and vigilant about safeguarding their personal belongings and their worksites. The MU Police Department reported a recent series of wallet thefts from nearby MU offices and one of the suspects was recently caught in our hospital. Wallets have been taken from various unlocked and unoccupied offices in several different MU buildings. Typically, a single individual is responsible for a series of thefts. This person typically has a "cover story" for when they might be approached by an employee. The good news is that these activities are often crimes of opportunity and, when the person is caught, the crimes stop. Sadly, cash is typically the item the person wants and is seldom recovered. VA employees are reminded to (1) lock office doors even if they are leaving for a short period of time and (2) be aware of any suspicious actions near your worksite and report them to the VA Police immediately.



ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM? THANK A VETERAN!

VA NURSING FACTS

The Veterans Health Administration has approximately 61,000 nursing personnel (including nurse anesthetists) nationwide as of April 2007. The breakdown is as follows:

Registered Nurses	(RN)	37,212
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists	(CRNA)	527
Nurse Practitioners	(NP)	3,174
Clinical Nurse Specialists	(CNS)	672
Licensed Practical / Vocational Nurses	(LPN/LVN)	10,028
Nursing Assistants	(NA)	9,145

VA nurses provide comprehensive, complex and compassionate care to the nation's veterans. VA Nursing also provides the largest system of clinical training and cooperative education opportunities in association with undergraduate and graduate programs at numerous colleges and universities.

THE ORIGINS OF MEMORIAL DAY

Three years after the Civil War ended, on May 5, 1868, the head of an organization of Union veterans — the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) — established Decoration Day as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead with flowers. Maj. Gen. John A. Logan declared it should be May 30. It is believed the date was chosen because flowers would be in bloom all over the country.

The first large observance was held that year at Arlington National Cemetery, across the Potomac River from Washington, DC. The ceremonies centered around the mourning-draped veranda of the Arlington mansion, once the home of Gen. Robert E. Lee. Various Washington officials, including Gen. and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, presided over the ceremonies. After speeches, children from the Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphan Home and members of the GAR made their way through the cemetery, strewing flowers on both Union and Confederate graves, reciting prayers and singing hymns.

By the end of the 19th century, Memorial Day ceremonies were being held on May 30 throughout the nation. State legislatures passed proclamations designating the day, and the Army and Navy adopted regulations for proper observance at their facilities. The day was not expanded to honor those who have died in all American wars until after World War I. In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress, though it is still often called Decoration Day. It was then also placed on the last Monday in May, as were some other federal holidays.

THANK YOU

Thank you all for your kind words and wonderful retirement party. I will never forget this hospital and the fine staff. You have many reasons to be proud. Keep up the great job you do serving "our nation's finest." Thank you very much.

Tom Amerson