



# Truman VA BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 8, 2008

## WELCOME

- Caitlin Arner**, Student Nurse Technician (PS)
- Joshua Arner**, Medical Laboratory Aid (CS)
- Shane Clayton**, Food Service Worker (BUS)
- Eric Curnutte**, Occupational Therapy Student (CS)
- George Saab, MD**, Staff Physician (SC)
- Erica Sachs, LPN** (PS)
- Victoria Sommerer**, Physical Therapy Assistant (CS)
- Emily Spalding, RN** (PS)
- David VanMeter**, Staff Assistant to Director (DIR)



## FAREWELL

- Emily Andsager, LPN** (PS)
- Donald Atchley**, Respiratory Therapist (SC)
- Taneeka Clark**, Medical Support Assistant (PS)
- Lynn Cooper, RN**, Associate Director for Patient Services (PS)
- Gail Miller**, Patient Services Assistant (SC)
- Adam Prasanphanich**, Biological Science Aid (Research)
- Ronald Sapp**, Program Support Clerk (Police)



## VOLUNTARY LEAVE TRANSFER

**Karen Watson** (Research) has been approved for the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program. Contact **Lena Warren** (HR) at extension 56397 for information.

## TRUMAN VA - MRSA BETA TEST SITE

Truman VA's application to be a beta test site for Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) Nursing Home Care Unit guidelines has been accepted. As a beta site, we will test the usability and feasibility of the proposed national guidelines. During the field test, we will participate in regular conferences with other beta test sites to address issues and concerns experienced as MRSA testing is expanded and conducted on ward 3-east. Recommendations will be considered when preparing the final guidelines for all VHA facilities.

The MRSA Initiative rolled out nationwide in 2007 to help decrease the risk of MRSA infections in VA patients. The initiative is organized into processes that include (1) active surveillance/screening (nose swabs and laboratory testing); (2) contact precautions; (3) hand hygiene; and (4) culture change. The intent of the national initiative is to interrupt the chain of transmission of MRSA and decrease the number of patients at risk for

MRSA infection. **Kathy Kormann, RN**, is Truman VA's MRSA Initiative Coordinator.

## FEBRUARY SERVICE PIN RECIPIENTS

- 35-Years -----
  - Alan W. Helland**, Chaplain (CS)
  - John B. Schafer**, Supervisory Medical Instrument Tech (PS)
  - Nancy S. Whitley**, Linen Clerk (FM)

- 30-Years -----
  - Margaret Barnes**, Secretary (DIR)

- 20-Years -----
  - Donald R. Herron**, Housekeeping Aid (FM)

- 10-Years -----
  - Shone Gill**, Pharmacy Technician (Pharmacy)
  - Phillip J. Wilkinson**, Housekeeping Aid (FM)

- 5-Years -----
  - Cathy L. Beamer, RN**, Staff Nurse (PS)
  - Lawrence D. Brady**, Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist (BH)
  - Teana J. Cook**, Patient Services Assistant (BUS)
  - Sue M. Doerhoff**, Readjustment Counseling Therapist (BH)
  - Billie K. Horak, RN**, Staff Nurse (PS)
  - Sharon E. Weisser**, Secretary (CS)

## ENHANCED ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

On Jan. 28, "Public Law 110-181" titled the "National Defense Authorization Act of 2008" was signed into law. One important change to existing law extended the period of eligibility for health care for veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after Nov. 11, 1998 (commonly referred to as combat veterans or OEF/OIF veterans) from two years to five years. Currently enrolled veterans and new enrollees who were discharged from active duty on or after Jan. 28, 2003 are eligible for the enhanced benefits for five years post discharge. Veterans discharged from active duty before Jan. 28, 2003, who apply for enrollment on or after Jan. 28, 2008 are eligible for the enhanced benefit until Jan. 27, 2011. As with all topics related to eligibility, there are many details associated with the change. Additional information is available on the following Web site: [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility).

This same public law increased the period of time that recently discharged veterans can apply for VA dental care from 90 days of separation to 180 days of

separation. More detailed information is available at the above referenced Web site.

### 2007 EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION RESULTS

2007 All Employee Satisfaction (AES) Survey results are available on the hospital's home page under the Hospital News section. AES Survey questions are available to assist you in correlating which questions relate to each scoring area. For more information, contact either **Lea Foster** at extension 54071 or **Sara Hake** at extension 56280.

### V.C.S. – DID YOU KNOW?

The Veterans Canteen Service (VCS), which operates the Food Court and the Retail Store, is not supported by appropriated government funds. This quasi-governmental organization generates its entire operating budget from its retail and food sales. Any "profit" gained is reinvested at each VA medical center via the "Canteen Fund," which provides resources for employee recognition activities and events. Nationally, VCS supports VA recreation events including the annual National Veterans Wheelchair Games and the annual Winter Sports Carnival for disabled veterans. Recent increases in food prices have been made as a last resort and are due to the rising costs of dairy products, grain products and overall transportation expenses. Unlike cafeteria operations at most private sector hospitals, the Canteen food operation is not subsidized by the hospital. For more information, contact **Renee Claypool** at extension 56325.

### SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS, FEB. 10-16

This year's National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans is scheduled Feb. 10-16. The annual program, which began in 1974, has three major objectives: (1) honor hospitalized veterans; (2) increase community awareness of VA's role in providing comprehensive medical care to the nation's veterans; and (3) encourage Americans to visit hospitalized veterans and work as VA volunteers. For more information about local activities and/or to volunteer during the week, contact **Nathan Witt**, Chief, Voluntary Service, at extension 56405.

### AFGE 3399 VALENTINE'S DAY BAKE SALE

AFGE 3399 will hold its annual Valentine's Day bake sale in room E-111 from 7:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 14. All patients, visitors and employees are invited to stop by to support the union and enjoy a variety of foods and holiday treats. Available items include breakfast items, hot dogs, chili, hot wings, nachos, balloons, valentine cards and candy, stuffed animals, candy bouquets and chocolate covered strawberries.

### VISN 15 DIVERSITY: 2007 SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Accepting diversity is recognizing and valuing the similarities and the unique qualities and characteristics within each of us. In VISN 15 (VA Heartland Network), we celebrate and respect the diverse backgrounds, education levels, cultures and occupations around us. Without this celebration of diversity, we risk becoming polarized in our outlook toward others.

The VHA All Employee Survey measures "diversity acceptance" by averaging the individual scores from these three statements:

- This organization does not tolerate discrimination.
- Differences among individuals are respected and valued in my work group.
- Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds in my work group.

In the 2007 survey, VISN 15 scored 3.68 for "diversity acceptance," an improvement of .05 over the 2006 score. As we begin a new year, all employees are encouraged to embrace diversity. Diversity acceptance elevates employee morale and employee satisfaction by valuing and respecting members of the workforce. Each employee is a valued member of the VISN 15 team. Celebrating our diversity is contagious! Pass it on!

### THANK YOU

Thank you all for the fantastic send-off into retirement. The festivities were such fun and the gifts were wonderful. I will not miss the work stressors, but the VA family can never be replaced!!

*Lynn Cooper*



**ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM? THANK A VETERAN!**