PEOPLE • SERVICE • QUALITY • STEWARDSHIP

This & That

Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center, Indianapolis, Indiana

July 27, 2010

VETERANS SERVING VETERANS: DOING OUR PART

The Veteran Employment Program (VEP) allows Veterans the opportunity to utilize an alternative avenue in applying for federal employment. The VEP also assists human resources staff members with filling vacant positions at the medical center with Veterans or soon-to-be Veterans. Here at our facility we have two Veteran employment coordinators (VEC), Octavia Fitzgerald (U.S. Navy) and Thomas Black (U.S. Marine Corps). They assist Veterans in seeking employment at the medical center. Since the implementation of VEP, our facility has hosted a seminar on how to apply for federal employment. This seminar allows Veterans who are seeking employment at the medical center to ask questions and receive tips on how to improve their application process. Topics discussed at the seminar were:

- Understanding Your Status
- Resume Writing and Knowledge
- Skills, Abilities, and Other Characteristics (KSAO's) Tips
- How to Navigate USA Jobs.

The VEC will assist Veterans with understanding the application process and understanding how to navigate USA jobs. These are tasks that may be difficult for Veterans who do not know how to use a computer.

Here at our facility, Veteran employees represent 21% of the employment population. You will find our Veteran employees working in various career fields such as accountants, cooks, IT specialists, housekeeping aids, and many other career fields. If you are interested in hearing more about the VEP program, please contact Octavia Fitzgerald at 988-4311 or Thomas Black at 988-2328.

Johnny Bonner, Acting Co-Chief, Logistics Svc., enlisted in the United States Army in 1964 and served 26 years, including a stint in Vietnam. Master Sergeant Bonner received the Bronze Star.

Barrington Bloomfield, Addictions Therapist, enlisted in the United States Army in 1977 and served 24 years. First Sergeant Bloomfield received the Legion of Merit Award Medal and many others.

Natasha Allen, Vet Center Counselor, enlisted in the United States Army in 2002 and served with the 101st Airborne Division for 3 years in Iraq. Sergeant Allen received the Global War on Terrorism medal.

E-mail from the Executive Management Team

Using Communication Tools to Improve Service, Satisfaction, and Safety

Communication, Service, Satisfaction, and Safety are part of a package; improving in one area cannot help but influence the others. During our recent SOARS visit, the consultants posed a general question to executive management…"What keeps you up at night?" My answer? The fear of what I don't know…what might be happening in this large complex hospital that could compromise safety? Are there employees or Veterans who see or know something that could make this a safer place? Has Executive Management done everything we can to serve you by making it easy and comfortable for you to tell us your concerns?

We have seen events, both in VA and in the Private Sector, where safety concerns in an organization are uncovered only after sometimes tragic results… perhaps through an incident of violence or an untoward clinical outcome. Everyone asks, "Why couldn't something have been done to prevent this before it happened?" Post-incident reviews of the event almost inevitably yield recommendations for improving communication within the organization and offer suggestions to leadership on techniques that open up dialogue between leadership, employees, and stakeholders.

The Executive Management Team strives to SERVE YOU. Opportunities for you to voice your concerns include "Ask the EMT", Employee Town Hall meetings, Indy Excellence Celebrations, Quarterly half-day quorums, Environment of Care Rounds, and Executive Patient Safety Rounds. There can never be enough channels for communication up and down the organization and we want to encourage you all to stop us on the shuttle, in the halls, or in any of the forums mentioned above. We know that we cannot be everywhere and recognize that you, in your day-to-day service, have an invaluable perspective that helps us lead more effectively together as we strive to continuously improve service, satisfaction, and safety in Indy Excellence style.

Kimberly Radant, Acting Associate Medical Center Director

My healthevet

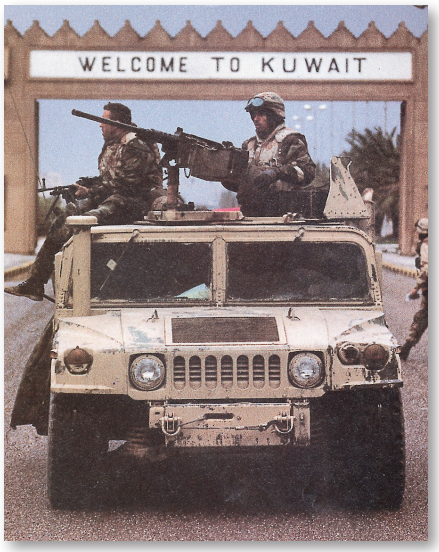
Fair

August 19

1 - 4 p.m. in C-1202

Secretary Shinseki Marks 20th Anniversary of Gulf War with Renewed Pledge to Improve Care and Services to Gulf War Veterans

August 2010 marks the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the Gulf War, launched with Operation Desert Shield and followed by Operation Desert Storm. VA honors this milestone with a renewed commitment to improving our responsiveness to the challenges facing Gulf War Veterans.



Today, more than 250,000 Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield Veterans receive disability benefits from VA. Nearly 150,000 Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield Veterans have been treated by VA for illnesses associated with their military service. We vow to reach more of these Veterans and have taken aggressive steps to do so. Earlier this year, VA proposed a new rule to make it easier for our Gulf War-era Veterans to obtain disability compensation and related health care. This rule, once it takes effect, will grant presumptive service connection for nine infectious diseases associated with military service in Southwest Asia and Afghanistan.

VA is taking bold steps forward in how we consider and address the challenges facing our Gulf War Veterans as well as the challenges facing all Veterans. Our commitment to the Nation's Veterans is unwavering.

Celebrating the Groundbreaking of the New Veterans House

On July 21, the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Veterans House featuring guest speaker Mayor Gregory A. Ballard. The Veterans House is funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. and is being dedicated to Dr. Otis R. Bowen, WWII surgeon and former Governor of the State of Indiana. The Veterans House will include twenty-eight (28) fully furnished private guest rooms, with handicap accessible bathrooms. Common areas include a kitchen, laundry, dining room, living room, fitness room and a library. The Veterans House is set to open in about twelve months from now.

Customers Waiting?

The best prepared health care clinics experience unexpected waits and delays. Circumstances beyond our control resulting in increased wait times can cause customer frustration and lead to customer complaints. A complaint is evidence of a service failure usually because the customer has lost faith in our process. What can be done to recover that trust? The Radiology and Sleep Lab staff is proactive in their approach to expected and unexpected waits in their service areas. I've named them Customer Waiting Champions because they consistently:

- Advise customers of the delay
- Explain the nature of the delay (expected/unexpected)
- Apologize for the inconvenience
- Offer a service recovery item
- Offer alternative scheduling
- Notify Patient Advocates Office of delay
- Requests service recovery items
- Pick up and deliver service recovery items to our waiting customers

The outcome of their proactive approach is fewer customer complaints.

Another proactive approach was exhibited by Derek Payne, Business Manager, Surgery Service and Mary Ann Waterman, AA, COS. An unusually long and unexpected wait occurred in one of the specialty clinics. Customer complaints prompted information sharing between our offices that allowed us to identify the problem. Mr. Payne went to the clinic and personally addressed the waiting customers; the outcome was no additional complaints filed about this unexpected delay.

Our co-workers prove that a proactive approach to customer waiting challenges improve customer satisfaction. Is there a customer waiting champion in you?

Pauletta Morris, PSA
Patient Advocates Office
Chair, Customer Waiting Subcommittee

Customer Waiting Sub-committee, L-R: Gudrun Carlson, Pauletta Morris, (Chair), Marcus Townsend, Lynn Medley, Maisha Garrard, and Deborah Doan. Not in photo: Jackie Ruiz, Karol Alfimow and Debra Lewis.

Rene Slake's Passing

It is with heavy hearts that we announce that René M. Slake, 22, passed away unexpectedly on July 17. Renee was employed as a Nursing Assistant in Escort Service here at the medical center. René was the daughter of Julie Herbertz, a long-time employee in Research and Development.

Top myPay Questions from VA Employees:
Question #5 (of 12)

#5. After migration to myPay, how soon after a new employee enters on board will they receive their myPay temporary password?

If the employee has a valid email address in PAID, the temporary password will be emailed the pay period after the employee's information has been entered into the Defense Finance and Accounting System (DFAS), Defense Civilian Pay System, (DCPS), VA's payroll provider. If the employee does not have a valid email address in PAID, the employee may request a temporary password from the myPay Home Page. —Stay tuned for questions #s 6-12 in coming issues of This & That. *Rita Hill*

Vet Center has new address:

8330 Naab Road, Ste 103
Indianapolis, IN 46260
(317) 988-1600

Picture This Players
"Diversity Theatre"
August 10
A-8095
1-2 p.m. or 3-4 p.m.
To register, please e-mail or call Elizabeth Jobe ext. 83033.

Planetree

What is Planetree? Simply stated Planetree is an organization devoted to promoting the development and implementation of innovative models of healthcare that focus on healing and nurturing body, mind, and spirit. The organization was founded in the late 70's after its founder; Angelica Thieriot experienced a lack of personalized care after several traumatic hospital stays. She named the organization after the sycamore (or plane tree) under which Hippocrates sat as he taught holistic medicine to students in ancient Greece. Today, Planetree is an internationally recognized leader in patient-centered care. Roudebush VA Medical Center has contracted with Planetree in order to help us improve our focus on our Veterans and provide them with the best Veteran centered care possible.

Sycamore tree

Planetree will be holding information sessions August 23 and 24 at the medical center; all staff and volunteers are invited to hear about Planetree and how they will be assisting us!

Kudos

First and foremost, this letter is in praise of Richard L. Roudebush VA Hospital, but this is my story, as it may save a life! On June 14 at about 10am, I started feeling a dull pain in my left chest and left arm. Because I had had it before, I ignored it after taking some aspirin and it subsiding in about a half hour or so. I mean, after all, I had an appointment scheduled for this Thursday; surely, it could wait until then, right?

Then, on Tuesday, at almost the same time, here was that pain again. Same cure, aspirin, and same wrong reasoning-it can wait. Wednesday, well, you probably guessed, one more. Now, I decide to call the VA to ask them to check for a heart attack in the lab when drawing my blood before my appointment, as I had been told to do by calling Visiting Nurses.

Sure enough, after the same thing happening again Thursday morning, my healthcare provider, Deborah Seifert, RN, immediately got me a bed and admitted me. I had had several heart attacks!

On June 21, I had a heart catheter and two stints put in the left side of my heart. I was truly blessed by God that my inaction caused no more damage than it did, or I would be looking at bypass surgery, or worse… death.

But back to the first thing. The care I received at Roudebush was unsurpassed, in my opinion! Please remember you may hear of bad stories about the care Veterans get, but everyone I met there was a blessing to me, and I will be eternally thankful to all there, from the doctors, nurses, kitchen staff, to the people who keep the medical center clean!

God bless them all!!!

John C. Skaggs, Indianapolis

Years of Service Awards

25 Years

Tamara Cooper
Alvin Esper
Raymond Harris
Ira King
Theresa Randall
Tammie D. Rennick
Linda Rustad
Ima J. Tigner
Karen S. Troy

30 Years

H. Scott Boswell
Rufus Coleman
Clarice J. Douglass
Kenneth Klotz
Lou Ann Kremer
Claire J. Orwig

35 Years

Dovey Hatchett

This & That newsletter is published every other Tuesday on payday. Send announcements and information via e-mail to IND PR. Deadline is Tuesday before payday. *This & That* is posted at http://go.usa.gov/O9j. Roudebush VA Medical Center is not responsible for the content or accuracy of third party posting, nor assumes any legal obligation or liability associated with such posting.