



# Voice Of The Northwoods



*Focused on Excellence—Putting Veterans First*

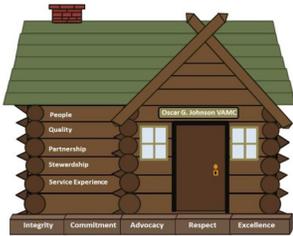
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*Focused on Excellence - Putting Veterans First*



## BE INVOLVED IN YOUR HEALTH CARE

You can play an active role when you have a visit with your health care team. To get the most out of your visit, plan the questions you want to ask and the things you want to discuss. Be sure to leave the visit with information about your care. For more information click [here](#).

**VA HEALTH CARE** Defining **EXCELLENCE** in the 21st Century

## ONE ON ONE WITH THE CHIEF OF STAFF

The VA Voice of the Northwoods recently caught up with the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center's new Chief of Staff, Dr. Gail McNutt.

Dr. McNutt reported for duty June 28 after serving previously as the Associate Chief of Staff of Ambulatory Care for the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin.

**Voice:** Tell us a little about yourself.

**Dr. McNutt:** I'm originally from southern Wisconsin—a small town called Delavan. I spent most of my school years in Milwaukee, and I am a graduate of Marquette University and Medical College of Wisconsin. Three generations of women in my family are Marquette University graduates.

**Voice:** What do you like to do outside of work to unwind?

**Dr. McNutt:** I'm always happy to take a walk—even in winter. The Upper Peninsula has some beautiful scenery!

**Voice:** What is one hobby you enjoy?

**Dr. McNutt:** I love to read, and I especially enjoy fiction and biographies. I rarely watch movies, although I have a long list my

friends think I should see!

**Voice:** What drew you to the medical profession?

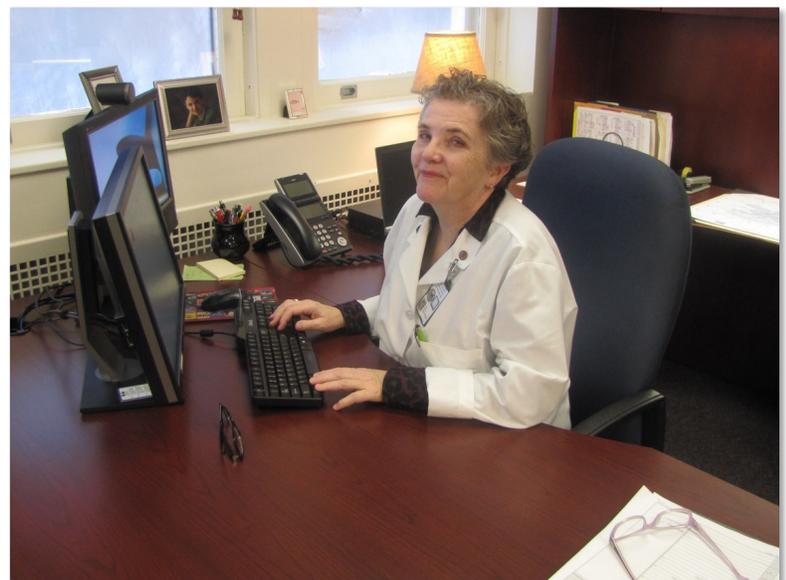
**Dr. McNutt:** Medicine is always intellectually challenging and an opportunity to share in people's lives. I consider myself very fortunate to have found a career in medicine.

**Voice:** Why did you choose to work for the VA and when did you start?

**Dr. McNutt:** I spent many years training in the Milwaukee VA—both in Residency and Internal Medicine—and my Fellowship in Allergy and Immunology. I returned to the VA in 2001 and have been here since. The VA has an outstanding system for delivering primary care, and I have a passion for and appreciate the opportunity to work within it.

*"The VA has an outstanding system for delivering primary care, and I have a passion for and appreciate the opportunity to work within it"*

*(Continued on page 4)*



# Who We Serve

## *Our Veterans and their stories*

*Lawrence Rubick (US Army)*

U.S. Army Veteran Lawrence Rubick is a native of Manistique, Michigan, and was the youngest of 11 brothers and sisters. He turned 17 in October 1945 and dropped out of high school to serve his country. Unfortunately, he was rejected because of his eyesight. The nation was at peace again and requirements to enter the military had been raised. Rejection was a big disappointment because he wanted to follow his brothers, two of whom served in the Army in North Africa, Normandy on D-Day, and in the Battle of the Bulge. The third brother was in the Navy and served on the light cruiser U.S.S. Boise, credited with sinking six ships in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

From 1946 to 1950 Lawrence worked as a miner in McQueen, Montana, and as a sailor on Great Lakes freighters.

The country began drafting recruits again in 1950. Lawrence was called up but was sure he would again be rejected because of his eyesight, but the entry requirements were lowered due to the Korean war. He was accepted for service and sent to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, for basic training.

Lawrence was soon on a troop ship to Japan and stationed in Kyushu. He was assigned to the Quartermaster Corps, promoted to corporal, and put in charge of warehouses.



*Lawrence Rubick today.*



*Army Corporal Lawrence Rubick, Korean War Veteran*

When U.S. troops were isolated by the enemy and supply cut off, getting supplies to them became critical. In these instances, the quartermaster would receive a “Red Ball” order, meaning the quartermaster had to immediately prep supplies for an airlift to the troops. Quartermasters assembled packages, moved them into the transport plane, attached parachutes, and then flew with the supplies to the drop site. Kyushu was so close to Korea the quartermasters would joke that the troops did not miss one meal.

After returning from one Red Ball flight, they noticed bullet holes in the plane. The supplies were dropped from such a low altitude that the enemy infantry would shoot at the plane with small arms. After that flight, the crew changed the Japanese expression for “Do Not Worry” that was painted on the nose of the plane, to “Worry a Little”.

After military service Lawrence worked as a forester for the DNR. In 2013 Lawrence noticed a news article about Michigan extending WWII educational benefits to cover Korean War Veterans, meaning he was eligible to graduate from high school. This last May he was the oldest graduate of the Manistique High School Class of 2014 to receive his diploma. He declined the cap and gown, but agreed to make a few comments. After his talk he was left speechless by the applause, cheers and standing ovation.

Lawrence and his wife Celeste have three daughters and three sons, 18 grandchildren and currently eight great-grandchildren. One son is Rob Rubick who was a tight end for the Detroit Lions from 1982-1988. ♦

# Service Spotlight: Chaplain Service

The chaplains at OGJVAMC are available to provide spiritual care and support to Veterans, their family members, and staff. They are responsible for upholding the right to free exercise of religion by all OGJVAMC patients, including facilitating appropriate worship opportunities. They also assess a patient's desire or lack of desire for spiritual and pastoral care as part of the total evaluation of their health care needs. Our trained staff chaplains are available 24/7 to provide the following:

- Spiritual support
- Compassionate listening
- Care without judgment or advice
- Help in preparing for death
- Worship and memorial services
- Grief counseling
- Funerals, baptisms, anointing, Holy Communion
- Facility event invocations
- Bedside visitation ♦



OGJVAMC Chaplains (l-r) Reverend Herb Becker and Monsignor James Kaczmarek

## Nutrition Tip Of The Month!



### *Drinking calories...*

Many choose a drink completely unaware of the calories it contains. For example, did you know that a medium **Pepsi** (20 oz.) contains **250 calories**? In fact, **pink lemonade** (20 oz.) contains **300 calories** and a medium **A&W Root Beer Float** (20 oz.) has **350 calories**. That's like eating 5 slices of bread! You will probably be surprised to know that a medium **McCafé Strawberry Shake** (16 oz.) totals **690 calories** and we haven't even considered the 100 grams of sugar it contains (that's 25 teaspoons of sugar!).

So the next time you're craving a refreshing drink, don't forget to make an informed decision by paying attention to the number of calories it contains. And remember, water not only contains **0 calories** but also helps cleanse your body without added sugars. To add variety, try infusing fresh lemon slices, cucumber slices, fresh raspberries and/or mint leaves to your next glass of water. ♦

## Staff Completes Yellow Belt Training

Thirty OGJ VAMC staff, representing 14 different services and product lines, attended a three day *Yellow Belt* training session in September at Pine Mountain Lodge. Participants learned how to lead continuous improvement within microsystems and apply the VA-TAMMCS Lean Improvement framework (**V**ision, **A**nalysis, **T**eam, **A**im, **M**ap, **M**easure, **C**hange, **S**ustain and **S**pread) to any project. System redesign focuses on improving the way systems work individually and together, which in turn improves the quality of care. Upon completion of a *Yellow Belt* improvement project and online exam, these participants will receive Yellow Belt Certification.



Row 1 (l-r): Matt Mainville, Jason Neeley, Karen Burkmans, Holly Fayas. Row 2: Daniela DenBoer, Ellen Thom, Laura Branz, Kim Mitchell, Tara Dowrick, Carrie Gunville, Sarah Zollner (instructor), Lisa Basanese, Kit Demuri, Sara Buckley, Sharon Anastas, Jackie Vedin, Marian Johnson. Row 3: Terry Kennemore, Deb Uren, Matt Pipp, Andrea Millan, Lori Brown, Bridget Galas, Steve Richey, Marcia Crosson, Jan Irish, Sally Klingelhutz, Sabrina Chavez. Not pictured: Jodi Casanova, Karen Olson, Bruce Romick. ♦

## One on One (continued from page 1)

**Voice:** Tell us about the career path you took in the VA.

**Dr. McNutt:** I have had progressive responsibility in management, as well as taking care of patients over the years. My history with VA goes back quite some time; the very first people to call me with congratulations when my daughter was born were the Milwaukee VA switchboard operators. That daughter is now 26 years old.

**Voice:** Did you ever practice outside the VA?

**Dr. McNutt:** My first position after completing my fellowship was with the Marshfield Clinic in Minocqua, Wisconsin.

**Voice:** What was your most rewarding position or assignment in the VA and why?

**Dr. McNutt:** I have found most all my work with the VA to be engaging and interesting, especially talking to Veterans. On my desk is a jelly jar of Iwo Jima sand that one of my patients—a WWII Veteran—brought me.

**Voice:** What was appealing about OGJVAMC that brought you here?

**Dr. McNutt:** The facility is located in a small community which has been very supportive of the VA mission. There is a true sense of community both within the medical center and within the town.

**Voice:** What are your priorities as Chief of Staff?

**Dr. McNutt:** Excellent patient centered care delivered in a timely manner. ♦

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## 2014 Adopt-a-Garden Results



*Want to remember some warmer (and greener) days as we start our Winter? Did you miss the results of our 3rd Annual Adopt-a-Garden results last Fall? Well click [here](#) for photos of our beautiful gardens planted and tended by our employees this last summer.*

## Veterans Choice Cards

The Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act (VACAA) was signed by President Obama on August 8, 2014, providing more choices for Veterans enrolled in VA health care. As part of VACAA all nine million plus Veterans enrolled in VA health care are receiving Veterans Choice Cards. The Veterans Choice Card Program is a temporary program to bridge the gap while VA expands capacity and access for Veterans. It will be managed by a third party administrator, which is HealthNet for OGJVAMC Veterans.

The criteria for Veterans to be eligible to use the Choice Card are:

- ♦ The Veteran was enrolled in VA health care by August 1, 2014, or enrolled after returning from combat, and
- ♦ The Veteran resides more than 40 miles (straight line, “as the crow flies”) from any VA medical care facility regardless if it provides the needed service or not (this includes VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics), and/or
- ♦ The Veteran has a VA appointment that is more than 30 days from the provider’s or patient’s preferred date.

While all nine million plus enrolled Veterans will receive a Veterans Choice Card, not all will be eligible to use it unless they meet the criteria above.

**Veterans should always call HealthNet at 1-866-606-8198 before seeking care using the Veterans Choice Card to ensure they are eligible and the needed medical care is authorized.**

The Veterans Choice Card is **not** an insurance card and does **not** replace the VA ID card.

For more information on VACAA and the Veterans Choice Card Program, check out the link below:

[www.va.gov/opa/choiceact](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact) or call 1-866-606-8198.

# Continuing the Journey Toward Patient-Centered Care

## *Engaging OGJVAMC Employees*

In December 2013 OGJVAMC started the journey to provide *personalized, proactive, patient-centered care*, which is critically important as OGJVAMC strives to be a leader in rural health care and provider of choice for Veterans in the Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin.

OGJVAMC has partnered with the national VA Office of Patient-Centered Care and Cultural Transformation (OPCC&CT) to train leadership and employees in the PCC&CT model. To date, teams from the national office have provided supervisory leadership sessions, conducted listening sessions with Veterans and VA employees, and provided extensive training for fourteen OGJVAMC employees who now serve as PCC&CT champions.

These fourteen staff members currently facilitate day-long PCC&CT engagement sessions, scheduled once each month, to ensure that employees are well-versed in the patient-centered care model. The goal over the next year is for all employees to attend these sessions and be champions of PCC&CT.

OGJVAMC has already initiated programs to improve the experience of Veterans, and provide care for their whole health. Some recent initiatives include:

- Hiring a full-time Chaplain for spiritual support,
- Offering acupuncture services,
- Partnering with local and regional food banks to



*OGJVAMC employees who volunteered to be Patient Centered Care Champions participating in a small group exercise during facilitator training. From left to right: Steve Eakley, Jim Zeigler, Herb Becker, Andrea Millan, and Ellen Thom.*

- distribute free food to Veterans,
- Offering Tai Chi classes,
- Installing kiosks for easy check-in,
- Providing personalized patient education and entertainment video options for inpatients, and
- Offering a selective menu for inpatients, including regional favorites like pasties.

In 2015, OGJVAMC will continue to implement the patient-centered care model with local initiatives that are focused on enhancing *clinical practice* and the overall *experience* of Veterans. ♦



*OGJVAMC employees who participated in PCC/CT Champion training: Herb Becker, Bruce Romick, Megan Easterling, Deborah Uren, Paul Lyman, John Jamison, Ellen Thom, Christy Girard, Andrea Millan, Jessica Judy, Mary Ellen Kent, Mari- anne Brady, Jim Zeigler, Selena Okler, Steve Treiber, and Steve Eakley.*

# Caught on Camera



October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and OGJVAMC Employees wore pink to honor those who have died from breast cancer and celebrate those who have survived it. Below: Veteran Rebecca Lewane, 73, is a OGJVAMC patient and breast cancer survivor. With her is Carrie Champion, LPN, from the Women's Wellness Clinic. For more Wear Pink Day photos of staff at OGJVAMC and its CBOCs [click here.](#)



Six former POWs and their families were honored during the annual POW/MIA ceremony and luncheon on September 19 hosted by OGJVAMC at the Pine Grove Country Club . From l to r: Laura Branz (OGJVAMC POW/MIA Coordinator), John Kusmitch, John Moddie, Rodney Roehm, John Torreano, Glenn Johnson, Jack Sours, and Nicole Kleist (Acting Associate Medical Center Director). For more photos of the ceremony [click here.](#)



OGJVAMC held its second annual Halloween costume contest. Shown here are the timekeepers for Nursing & Patient Care Service (l-r): Lori Brown, Jeana Klingelhutz, and Helga Anderson. Check out the rest of the creative costumes and themes [here.](#)

Volunteers from the American Legion Auxiliary held their annual Holiday Gift Shop where residents of the CLC came and picked out gifts for their families free of charge. Helping wrap gifts are (l-r): Sue Verville, Susan Kliekamp, Carole Baldinelli, and Pam Kirschner. For more photos of the Holiday Gift Shop [click here.](#)

## 2013 Hands & Heart Award



Each year the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) honors an employee at each facility who has demonstrated particular sincere dedication and compassion in the delivery of patient care. OGJVAMC's 2013 recipient of the Annual Hands and Heart Award is **Selena Okler, RN**, Nursing & Patient Care Service. Selena is OGJVAMC's inpatient Hospice/Palliative Care RN.

Congratulations Selena!

## The Joint Commission Top Performer

OGJVAMC was named one of the nation's top performers on key quality measures by The Joint Commission, the leading accreditor of health care organizations in America. OGJVAMC is one of 1,224 U.S. hospitals earning the distinction of 2013 Top Performers on Key Quality Measures™. OGJVAMC is recognized for achieving greater than 95% in accountability measures for evidence-based processes for pneumonia and is receiving this recognition for the third time in four years. **This honor is a testament to OGJVAMC employees and their commitment to Veterans and fulfilling our motto, "Focused on Excellence - Putting Veterans First."** Check out the WLUC TV 6 web article at <http://www.uppermichiganssource.com/news/story.aspx?id=1123100>

## 2014 Adopt-a-Family Drive



OGJVAMC employees and volunteers donated over **140 gifts** for **seven area families** in need this Christmas season. Members of the VA's Adopt-a-Family committee included (from l-r): Christine Watt, Megan Wedin, Michele Perino, Karen Burkman, Raegan Walter, Cheryl Johnson, and Carla Steinbrecher. Not pictured: Ellen Thom, Angela Finley, Melanie Roell, Angela Hart, and Marybeth Langin. Also a big thank you to others who helped with distributing the gifts: Patrick Skorupski, Steve Beauchamp, Sharon Lies, Sharon Anastas, Jodi Casanova, John Casanova, Bruno Perino, Mike Seda, Therese Olsen, Matt Mainville, and Heather Steinbrecher.

## Oscars of the Month

October



**Debra LaCourt**, Veteran Canteen Service. Debra is recognized for her outstanding customer service in the Canteen. On very short notice she graciously coordinated and put together sub sandwiches for Surgery Service, which greatly accommodated the needs of that service. Debra has been employed at OGJVAMC since 1994.

November



**Alyssa Pontti**, CNA, Nursing & Patient Care Service (CLC). Alyssa is recognized for her willingness to go above and beyond in helping anyone who needs help, be they a patient, visitor or co-worker. She comes to work with a positive attitude and is always kind and friendly. Alyssa has been employed at OGJVAMC since 2012.

## Service Pins



Employees presented with Service pins for **October** are (left, l-r): **Todd Willman** (VA Police Service, 30 years), **Kevin Reisz** (Patient Administrative Service, 20 years), **Kelly Babbit** (Behavioral Health Service, 15 years), **Jeffrey Bilski** (Nutrition & Environmental Support Service, 10 years), and **David Adamini** (VA Police Service, 10 years). Not Pictured: **Deb Becker** (Medicine Service, 10 Years) and **Sandy Bergman** (Rhinelander CBOC, 10 years).

Employees presented with Service pins for **November** are (right, l-r): **Andria Nichols** (Nursing & Patient Care Service, 10 years), **Ricky Jones** (Engineering Service, 10 years), **Dean Dove** (Nutrition & Environmental Support Service, 25 years), and **Anna Fox** (Veteran Canteen Service, 25 years). Not Pictured: **Marcia Perkins** (Sault Ste. Marie CBOC, 15 years), **Dr. John Sand** (Primary Care Service, 10 years), and **Dr. Gina Louis-Mercier** (Hancock CBOC, 10 years)



## Welcome To OGVAMC!

### **Behavioral Health**

Majorie Middel  
(Manistique CBOC)  
Elizabeth Stanczak

### **Associate Director**

Clifford Smith

### **Engineering**

Mark Girard

### **Human Resources**

Roger Stein

### **Nursing & Patient Care**

Michael Stuer  
Mary Beth VanPembrook

### **Nutrition & Environ- mental Support**

Lucas Lohr

### **Primary Care**

Steve Coenen  
Kay Tansey  
(Sault Ste Marie CBOC)

### **Surgery**

Michael Cline

## Farewell Wishes! (\*retired)

### **Behavioral Health**

Greg Asgaard  
David Baker  
Sean Coopersmith  
Kurt King  
Trisha McEvers  
(Manistique CBOC)

### **Human Resources**

Barbara Kocha\*

### **Non-VA Care**

Christine Schletter\*

### **Nursing & Patient Care**

Roxanne Applewhite-  
Eakley

### **NESS**

Debra Jump\*

### **OIT**

Dwayne Ingebrigsten

### **Optometry**

Jessica Hartwig

### **VA Police**

Patrick Palmquist

## Upcoming Events & Observances

### **January:**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

- \* Glaucoma Awareness Month
- \* Cervical Cancer Awareness Month
- \* Thyroid Awareness Month
- 1 New Year's Day (Clinics Closed)**  
Emancipation Proclamation (1863)
- 15 Pentagon Completed (1943)**
- 16 Gulf War Begins (1991)**
- 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Clinics Closed)**
- 25-31 National Certified Nurse Anesthetists Week**
- 27 Liberation of Auschwitz (1945)**  
Vietnam Peace Agreement Signed (1973)
- 30 Tet Offensive Began (1968)**
- 31 Chinese New Year**

### **February:**

- \* African-American History Month
- \* American Heart Month
- \* Cancer Prevention Month
- 1 National Freedom Day (1865)**
- 1-7 Women's Heart Week**
- 6 National Wear Red Day**
- 8-14 National Salute to Veteran Patients Week**
- 12 President Lincoln's Birthday (1809)**
- 13 First Medal of Honor Awarded (1861)**  
Marine Corps Women's Reserve Est(1943)
- 14 Valentine's Day**
- 16 Presidents Day (Clinics Closed)**
- 22-28 National Engineers Week**
- 22 President Washington's Birthday (1732)**
- 23 Iwo Jima Day Anniversary (1945)**  
Desert Storm Ground War Began (1991)
- 26 Kuwait Liberation Day (1991)**

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