



Voice Of The Northwoods



Focused on Excellence—Putting Veterans First

A PUBLICATION OF THE
OSCAR G. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER
May-June 2014

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Healthy Living Message



It's summer and time to hit the road, but DON'T TEXT AND DRIVE.

Distracted driving is a dangerous epidemic on America's roadways. **In 2012 alone, 3,328 were killed in distracted driving crashes.**

<http://www.distraction.gov/>

PACKERS VISIT OGJVAMC VETERANS

The Green Bay Packers made OGJVAMC one of their stops on the Packer Tailgating Tour on April 16.

Three current and three former Packers players as well as team president Mike Murphy spent time with residents of OGJVAMC's Community Living Center.

Players included kicker Mason Crosby, cornerback Jarrett Bush, linebacker Brad Jones, quarterback Lynn Dickey, and Hall of Famers James Lofton and Paul Coffman.

"When we visited the Veterans today, it kind of makes you feel small, in that they look at us and our football careers and are so enamored with it. But then playing a game and then trying to do what some of those guys did serving in wars, there is no comparison," said Dickey. "Yes, we played a game that is violent, but no one is looking at getting shot at and killed. It felt good to visit and talk with people who have served."

"...playing a game and then trying to do what some of those guys did serving in wars, there is no comparison."

*Lynn Dickey,
Former Packer QB*



Linebacker Brad Jones chatting with Pearl Harbor survivor, Neil Pelletier.

"It was a joy to see the Veterans' reactions to the players yesterday as well as the respectful manner that our Veterans were treated by the Packers," said Selena Okler, RN.

"Events like this add so much quality to our Veterans lives, reinforcing

our philosophy that the Community Living Center is not a place where our Veterans go to die, but rather a beautiful place where Veterans go to live and enjoy life!" ♦



Check out the following links for more articles, photos and video:

[Packers article, photos, video](#)

[OGJVAMC's Facebook Photos](#)

[ABC 10 web article and photos](#)

Left: Lynn Dickey, James Lofton and Brad Jones chatting with Veterans residing in the CLC.

Who We Serve

Our Veterans and their stories

Nancy Close, U.S. Army

Nancy Close grew up just outside of Detroit and joined the Army during the Vietnam War in 1974. She spent all six years in the army as a “cop” with the military police (MP).

“I was one of the first females to join the MPs, so I faced a lot of harassment,” said Nancy. “It was rough because it was very male dominated, and the women in the unit were labeled ‘prostitutes’ or ‘lesbians’.”

“Females were questioned a lot if they could do it, although I was a sharpshooter and outdid many of my male counterparts,” she added.

Nancy served as an MP at Fort Knox, Kentucky, Hanau, Germany, and Fort Ord, California.

Nancy left the Army in 1980 and worked on base in the recreation department. She lived in Germany a total of four and a half years.

“It is a real adjustment when you leave the Army,” said Nancy. “There is a loss of community and you can feel isolated. It is better if you stay involved with veteran service organizations.”

Nancy moved to Crystal Falls to take a job at Teaching Family Homes and then to Iron Mountain in 1992. She has worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant for Marquette General Hospital’s



Nancy Close (center) with her Oncologist, Dr. Harninder Singh, and Marchell Merkel, RN.

home health hospice program.

Nancy enrolled in VA health care in 1997. It was in OGJVAMC’s Women’s Wellness Clinic that her breast cancer was discovered in late 1999. After a double mastectomy, radiation and chemotherapy, Nancy thought she was in the clear.

The pains came back four and half years later, and it was discovered that her liver was full of cancer and there were three spots on her lungs.

“They gave me six to eight months to live,” said Nancy. “The doctor advised me to get my affairs in order while I still could. I never regretted that advice because no one knows how much time they have left.”

Nancy has been taking chemotherapy weekly since May 19, 2009.

“Fortunately, the chemo has gotten my cancer under control, and I have learned to live with constant fatigue, mild nausea, various pains and the thought that the cancer could come back any time,” said Nancy.

Nancy participates in a metastatic breast cancer support group. “These women are going through treatment at some big name hospitals. They have to wait several days or weeks to get test results, beg to talk to their doctors, and their doctors are not working together to treat the various issues. It really makes me glad that I’m being treated at this hospital. I don’t see any of these problems and most of the staff are very friendly.”

Married to her husband, Dale, Nancy stays involved with her church and adult classes. ♦



Nancy Close, Military Police, US Army 1974-1980

Service Spotlight: Pathology & Laboratory Medicine Service



P&LM Service (l-r): Jessica Howard (NWTC Phlebotomy Student), Holly Learned, Dan Recla, Erica DeTemple, Stephen Rich-ey, Jan Buckman, Bridget Jacko, Stephanie Wilson, Sarah Beauchamp, and Brad Tomassucci. Not pictured: Audrey Hewitt, Sharon Malburg, Daniel Arnold, and Albert Fisher.

The Pathology & Laboratory Medicine Service (P&LMS) provides exceptional diagnostic clinical testing to our providers to assist them in the treatment and care of our veterans in the areas of hematology, coagulation, chemistry, urinalysis, transfusion medicine, bacteriology, point-of-care and anatomic pathology. Using state-of-the-art technology and instrumentation, laboratory medical technologists at the OGJVAMC perform and supervise tests that lead to the uncovering of potential health problems; the sooner a disease is detected, the likelihood increases for a positive outcome.

Medical technologists at OGJVAMC are highly trained professionals who work closely with all members of the health care team to deliver outstanding medical care to the veterans that we serve.

OGJVAMC's P&LMS is accredited by the College of American Pathologists and performs more than 500,000 tests per year on both inpatients

and outpatients, including those veterans who receive their healthcare at our VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). Based on workload and expense data from the CAP/VHA Laboratory Management Index Profile, the OGJVAMC P&LMS consistently remains the most cost efficient and productive laboratories in VISN12. This is possible only because of the dedication and commitment of the entire laboratory staff. ♦

Nutrition Tip Of The Month!

"Spring Cleaning" our eating habits!

Spring often brings to our minds "Spring cleaning," but have you ever thought about applying this to cleaning up your eating habits, and perhaps your pantry? There are some steps we can take that will help us to do both...

- ♦ **Discard anything that is outdated** from the refrigerator and pantry. You may find items such as high fat snacks that need to go!
- ♦ **Get rid of food that you are just not going to eat.** If the date is still good, donate to a pantry.
- ♦ **Check the refrigerator for moldy cheese or other forgotten leftovers.**
- ♦ **Don't forget the freezer** – be sure to remove anything that is freezer burned or has been thawed and refrozen.
- ♦ **Take some time to organize foods by categories.** Cleaning out the old can allow time to reorganize and gain a fresh start.
- ♦ **Keep healthy snacks accessible** – fresh fruits, portion controlled low fat snacks, nuts (in moderation) and even whole grain cereal.



Annual VA2K Walk

To Benefit Homeless Vets

The Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center will be hosting a 2K walk on Wednesday, May 21, 2014, to promote healthy living and benefit homeless Veterans. The event is open to employees, Veterans, families, friends and the public of all ages.



People participating in the 2K walk at OGJVAMC may do so at their convenience during the following times: 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Registration for the 2K walk will be held at the main entrance of the medical center.

For those wishing to help homeless Veterans or those at risk of becoming homeless, gift cards are welcome, particularly gas and Walmart cards.

Any questions may be directed to Sally Steidl, NP, at 1-800-215-8262,

OGJVAMC Volunteers Recognized at Luncheon

April 6-12 National Volunteer Week

The 400 plus volunteers at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center are a force multiplier, providing **over 44,700 hours of service in 2013**, which is the equivalent of **22 full-time employees**. VA volunteers provide invaluable support to many departments and programs: recreation therapy, Veteran transportation, outpatient clinics, library and education services, chaplain programs, pet therapy, patient escorts, and the long-term care Community Living Center. They also assisted at 26 special events, ceremonies, and nursing home outings that occurred throughout the last year at the facility.



OGJVAMC volunteers were honored by VA leadership at a special luncheon Friday, April 11, at Pine Grove Country Club. *For a complete article on the Volunteer Luncheon, click [here](#).* ♦

For more photos and names of honorees check out the OGJVAMC's Facebook photo album [here](#).



500 Lifetime Hours: Trudy Sparks, Tracy Blagec, Lee Hauswirth, Cheryl McNeil, Bert Peterson.



750 Hours: Bonnie Fortier, Linda Tripp, John LaCourte, Barb Larson, Bob Manning, and Ken Davis.



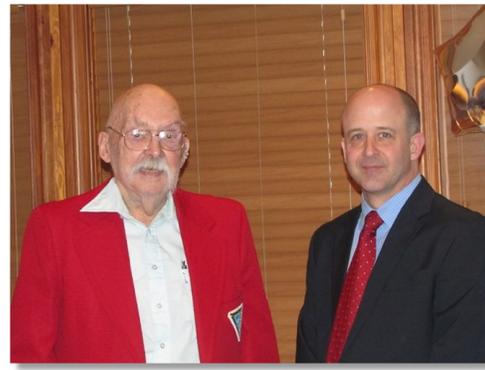
Gwen Dawson Youth Award: Valerie Forstrom.



1,000 Hours: Dave Karban.



1,750 Hours: Dale LaPalme.



3,750 Hours: Robert Morrell

Helping Veterans Who Experience MST

By Julie Gendron, LMSW, Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator

Each year the month of April is designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). The theme for this year's SAAM within the VA was "You're Not Alone: VA Supports Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma."

The VA uses the term Military Sexual Trauma (MST) to refer to experiences of sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment experienced while on federal active duty or active duty for training and these experiences are more common than one may think. One in five women and one in 100 men tell their VA provider they have experienced MST, and Veterans from all eras of service have reported MST. Veterans who are survivors of MST are truly not alone.

Although MST is an experience, and not a diagnosis, there are common mental health diagnoses associated with MST, including but not limited to PTSD, depression, and substance abuse. There are also physical health consequences associated with MST such as chronic pain, gastrointestinal problems and cardiovascular problems, just to name a few. Many Veterans who are survivors of MST experience more than one of these mental health or physical health consequences of MST.

The VA has a range of outpatient, inpatient, and residential services available to assist Veterans in their recovery from MST. In addition, all treatment for conditions related to MST is provided to Veterans free of charge. Veterans do not need to be service connected (e.g., have a VA disability rating) to receive this free care, and eligibility for MST-related healthcare is independent of receiving other VA benefits. However, Veterans can file a claim to receive compensation for MST-related injuries or disabilities by contacting their local county Veterans Service Officer.

Every VA healthcare facility has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues. This person can help Veterans find and access VA services and programs. The MST coordinator at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center is Julie Gendron, LMSW and she can be contacted by calling 1-800-215-8262 extension 32531. Additional information on the topic of MST is also available at

www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp

Nurses Week 2014

May 6 to 12 is National Nurses Week and a time to honor the dedicated men and women who we, in the VA, consider the compassionate backbone of the Veterans' health care system – nurses.

Our 164 nurses at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center and our community outpatient clinics across the Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin truly embody the theme of this year's National Nurses Week - *Nurses Leading the Way*. Our talented VA Nurses are on the forefront of the VA's cultural transformation to patient-centered, patient-driven health care. They also lead the way in health care education and training, clinical responsibility, and research, but their passion comes from VA's mission – caring for Veterans.

VA nurses are integral and equal members of our health care team of professionals. No health care professional is closer to the Veterans we care for than a VA nurse. They make a positive difference each day in the lives of Veterans and their families, meeting their needs with compassion and skill.

I am deeply proud to be associated with the nurses who care for our nation's Veterans.

Sincerely,
James W. Rice
VA Medical Center Director



Night shift ICU and 4E (l-r): Rich Ledgend, RN, Brittany Lucas, RN, Samantha Micheau, LPN, Hannah Antilla, RN, and Patty Bruders, RN.

Check out more photos of Nurses Week [here](#)

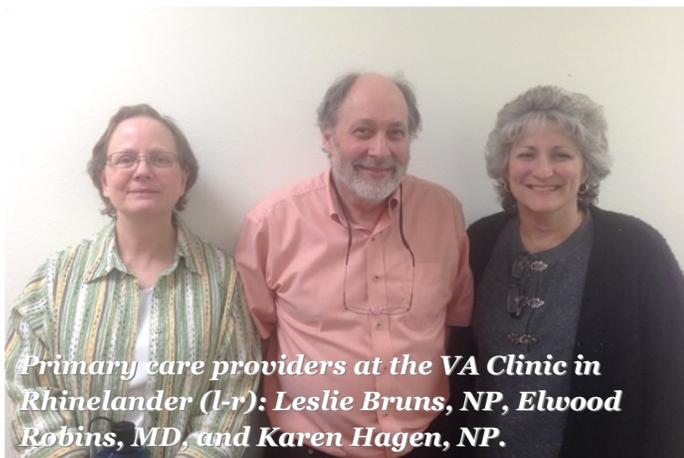
Caught on Camera



OGJVAMC employees wore teal to show their support for survivors of military sexual trauma (MST) and to let them know they are not alone. **Check out the MST article on the preceding page (page 5).**



Some of our providers (l-r): Ann Johnston, MD (ED), Debra Rhoades, GNP (Home Based Primary Care), Toby Gendron, MD (Hospitalist), David Curland, DO (Primary Care), and Art Naddell (Primary Care). Standing (l-r): Bob Peterson, GNP (Geriatric & Extended Care), Kimberly Wallman, MD (Behavioral Health), Mary Fornetti, PA (Primary Care), Carlos Medina-Padilla, MD (Primary Care) and Harninder Singh, MD (Oncology).



Primary care providers at the VA Clinic in Rhinelander (l-r): Leslie Bruns, NP, Elwood Robins, MD, and Karen Hagen, NP.



Members of the Quality Management Team who hosted the Performance Improvement Fair (l-r): Tara Dowrick, Linda Haleen, Mary Kelly, Mary Beth Bezotte, and Kathy Spade. Not pictured: Carrie Gunville, Jan Iris, Paula Ebli, and Mary Gagala. For more photos of the PI Fair, click [here](#).



Gary Hess, RN (left) and Dr. Nick Cannella (right) giving a tour of the Menominee VA Outpatient Clinic to Rep. Dan Benishek (center).



Hosting a taste testing day are 3 of OGJVAMC's dieticians (l-r): Andrea Millan, Bridget Galas, and Nancy Whitens.

Kudos!

Oscars of the Month*

February



Rich Ledgend, RN, Nursing & Patient Care Service (ICU, night shift). Rich is recognized for always being compassionate, patient and caring with Veterans, their families and other staff. He is also lauded for his initiative and willingness to help both at “4E” (Med/Surgical unit) and the Community Living Center. This past winter Rich was quick to help other employees clean the snow off their cars. Rich has been employed at OGJVAMC since 2001.

March



Laura Adler, LPN, Nursing & Patient Service (Community Living Center). Laura is recognized for her patient-centered care. On her own time, and with her own resources she initiated and coordinated March Madness college basketball posters and activities for the CLC residents. She goes above and beyond in her care for the Veterans. One resident describes her as “impeccable in everything she does, a rare find, a wonderful lady who always has a smile on her face.” Residents requested she be nominated. Laura has been employed at OGJVAMC since 2011.

* Employee of the Month has been renamed the Oscar of the Month

Service Pins



Employees presented with Service pins for March and April are (l-r): **Janet Bauer-Green** (Nursing & Patient Care, 40 years), **Anna Vincent** (Logistics Service, 30 years), **Mike Sommerfeld** (Engineering, 10 years), **Paula Ebli** (Quality Management, 10 years), **Kevin Smith** (Respiratory Therapy, 20 years), **Carol Perdue** (Nutrition & Environmental Support, 10 years), **Marilyn Patzer** (Respiratory Therapy, 35 years), **Jeff Owens** (Nursing & Patient Care, 10 years), and **Joe Wickman** (VA Police Service, 30 years). Not pictured: **Bob VanSickle** (OIT, 30 years).

Nursing Excellence Awards



Receiving the 2014 Administrators Award for Excellence in Nursing are (from left to right): **Tracy Tregillis, LPN, 4E**, received the Licensed Practical Nurse Award. **Ann Frey, RN, Nurse on Duty (NOD)** for midnight shift, received the Registered Nurse Award. **Kim Fairhall, CNA**, Community Living Center, received the Nursing Assistant Award. **Kim Mitchell, RN, 4E** nurse manager, received the Administrative Registered Nurse Award. [Click here for more photos.](#)

FEMA Graduates

Employees recently completing the Emergency First Responder training are (from left to right): **Adam Steinbrecher** (Engineering Service), **Steve Beauchamp** (Facility Emergency Manager), Rex Sweet (Chief, VA Police), **Paul Seim, RN** (Ass't Chief, Nursing & Patient Care Service) and, inset, **Jim Foote, RN**, E-RANGE team, Manistique VA Rural Outreach Clinic).



Mentor Certification

Brenda Reed, PsyD, was recognized for achieving VHA mentor certification at the Resident level. She completed VHA Core Mentor Training and actively participated in 25 hours of mentoring, coaching or precepting. Certified Resident Mentors, Coaches and/or Preceptors play a key role in VHA's succession planning efforts.

Welcome To OGVAMC!

Behavioral Health

Jason Dougherty

Rebecca Panasiewicz

Information Security Officer

Joseph Jarvis

Nursing & Patient Care

Kelly Fishell

Dominga Lynch

Richard Paulson

Tammy Povolo

Aimee Thom

Carol Uren

Nutrition & Environmental Support

James Eaglebarger

Primary Care

Bonnie Koski

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Debra Johnson

Respiratory Therapy

Donald Squier

Escanaba Vet Center

Charles Wolden

Farewell Wishes! (*retired)

Behavioral Health

Jayne Fedrick

Jesse Gendron

Director's Office

Aaron Sussman (Intern)

Chief of Staff Office

Grace Stringfellow

Bruce Gray* (33 years)

Nursing & Patient Care

Samantha Ackley

Charlotte Briggs

Jennifer DeFalco

Jeanne Durocher*
(29 years)

Jessica Hagen (Intern)

Ellen Jennings

Jane Skoglund

Nutrition & Environmental Support

Carol Perdue

Dawn Wahlstrom*
(15 years)

Patient Admin Service

Geraldine Anderson

Nichelle Major

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Christian Johnson*
(35 years)

Danica Noskey (Intern)

Primary Care

Carol Norman

Upcoming Events & Observances

May:

- 28-May 2 National Compliance and Ethics Week**
- 2 National Day of Prayer**
- 4-10 Public Service Recognition Week**
- 6-12 National Nurses Week**
- 7 Vietnam War officially ends (1975)**
- 8 V-E Day (1945)**
- 11 Mother's Day**
- 11-17 National Hospital Week**
- National Women's Health Week**
- 14 Women's Army Auxiliary Corp Established (1942)**
- 15 National Employee Health & Fitness Day**
- 17 Armed Forces Day**
- 21 VA2K Walk (7:30-8:30 a.m., 10 a.m.-2 p.m., 3:30-4:30 p.m.)**
- 26 Memorial Day**

June:

- 1 National Cancer Survivors Day**
- 6 D-Day Anniversary (1945)**
- 10 Alcoholics Anonymous Founded (1935)**
- 14 U. S. Army Established**
- Flag Day**
- 15 Father's Day**
- 21 Summer Begins**
- 22 GI Bill signed into law (1944) (70th Anniversary)**
- 25 Korean War Begins (1950)**
- 26 United Nations Charter Signed (1945)**
- 27 National HIV Testing Day**
- 30 National Veterans Golden Age Games (Fayetteville, AK)**

Visit us online at www.ironmountain.va.gov and follow us on



Facebook & Twitter

Comments? [Email bradley.nelson@va.gov](mailto:bradley.nelson@va.gov)

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