



Voice Of The Northwoods



Focused on Excellence—Putting Veterans First

A PUBLICATION OF THE
OSCAR G. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER

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Health Tip Of The Day!



New to the VA in 2013, the **Veterans Health Library** offers Veterans, family members, and caregivers 24/7 access to comprehensive, Veteran-focused health information. All health information has been approved by VA experts. There are over 1,500 health sheets, 150 videos, go-to-guides and flipbooks. See for yourself at

www.veteranshealthlibrary.org

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

OGJVAMC HOSTS ANG'S 1432ND ENG. CO.

OGJVAMC hosted the Michigan Army National Guard's 1432nd Engineering Company during their drill weekend of September 7-8, providing medical appointments to establish care for the soldiers within the VA health care system. The Kingsford-based unit returned last March from a combat tour in Afghanistan.

Soldiers also attended presentations by VA staff on how being in a combat theater impacts soldiers as well as the full range of services provided by the medical center.

"The benefit of hosting these units on the weekend is that it alleviates the need for soldiers to take time off from work or school to make it to a VA medical appointment," said Kathy Truax, OEF/OIF/OND Program Coordinator.

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OGJVAMC Audiologist, Dr. Krista Frick, explains the hearing screening to Ben Fleming of the 1432nd Eng. Co.

"Welcome Home" VA health and benefit fair, which was open to all Veterans, their families and the general public on both days .

This was the second time OGJVAMC opened its doors on a weekend (using volunteer staff) to accommodate a National Guard unit returning from combat. The 1430th Eng. Co. was hosted in March

2012. ♦

Held in conjunction with the visit by the 1432nd was OGJVAMC's annual

For more photos [click here](#).



Dr. Brenda Reed provides an overview of VHA services and benefits to 1432nd soldiers.

Service Spotlight: Home and Community Based Care

The staff in Home and Community Based Care (H&CBC) at OGJVAMC and its satellite clinic in Watersmeet, MI, strive to support Veterans in their home and communities through an array of home and community-based options, including:

- Homemaker/Home Health Aide,
- Veterans Directed Home Care,
- Home Respite,
- Home Hospice,
- Home Based Primary Care,
- Home Telehealth,
- Purchased Skilled Home Health,
- Home Infusion Therapy,
- Contract Nursing Home and Adult Day Care.

[Click here](#) for more information of any of these H&CBC services. ♦



Home Based Primary Care Staff recently celebrated the 5th anniversary of H&CBC at OGJVAMC. Front row (l to r): Sarah Buckley and Laura Skrumbellos. 2nd row: Geralyn Patterson, Cheryl Eliason, Rebecca Sadler, Alyss Maki, Charlotte Briggs, Andrea Millan. Back row: Susan Scullon, Joan Arms, Linda Hayes, Stacy Casanova, Mary Bertucci, Karen Olson, Lisa Patterson, Terry Kenmore. Inset: Watersmeet staff Linda Frisby (l) and Heather Tirpe (rt). Not pictured: Debra Rhodes, Cynthia Gannon.

Nutrition Tip Of The Day!

Enjoy the harvest all

year long! Many of us will be preserving those wonder-

ful fruits and vegetables and maybe meat, poultry and fish, too. Preserving food can be as simple as blanching veggies and freezing them to more involved methods of canning meat and smoking fish.

If you don't have a lot of experience and are looking for the best method, you need to consider (1) how much experience you have in canning meat & low acid foods, (2) what you need to get started (jars, lids, rings, pressure canners, etc.) for the type of foods you are preserving, (3) type of storage you have (freezer vs. dry) and (4) what resources you have if you have questions. Good resources available are:

- Nat'l Center for Home Food Preservation: <http://nchfp.uga.edu/>
- MSU Extension: <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/>
- Several other publications that include recipes and helpful tips for a great and safe food preservation experience: http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html



VA Transplant Vets in the News



"I felt an immediate difference...like I could dance on the floor." ~ Heart transplant recipient Larry Brown

"I woke up in post op, took three breaths and knew something was different." ~ lung transplant recipient Dave Coleman.

Did you know that the VA has a transplant program? Air Force Veteran Dave Coleman (left) and Navy Veteran Larry Brown (right) told their stories to the Iron Mountain Daily News recently. Read it [here](#). ♦ 2

OGJVAMC Opens New PT Clinic

State-of-the-art equipment in the CLC

Veterans from around the Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin staying at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain, Michigan, for short term rehabilitation or long term care will now have additional physical therapy options that are both convenient and state of the art.

The VA medical center recently opened a physical therapy (PT) satellite clinic in its Community Living Center, the medical center’s long term care and short term rehabilitation unit.

The new PT satellite clinic will offer inpatient residents additional rehabilitation opportunities with the newest, state-of-the art rehabilitation equipment on the Community Living Center’s main floor. This equipment includes the latest models of recumbent steppers,

upper and lower extremity conditioning bikes, and full power adjustable parallel bars.

“This equipment will provide the Veteran with the most up to date rehabilitation techniques for recovery from brain and spinal cord injuries,” said Josh Early,

ly, a Physical Therapist at the VA Medical Center. Early was working with retired Navy Veteran Roy Chellew, the first patient in the satellite PT clinic.

Not only will these inpatient Veterans receive the most up-to-date physical therapy treatments, they will also be more timely and convenient. Prior to opening the satellite clinic, residents needed to be transported

to the medical center’s main PT clinic on the fifth floor.

“Our primary goal is to provide the highest quality physical medicine and rehab care in as close to a home-like environment as possible,” said Jim Zeigler, Chief of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, “and this satellite clinic in the Community Living Center does just that.” ♦

“Our primary goal is to provide the highest quality physical medicine and rehab care in as close to a home-like environment as possible”



Mr. Roy Chellew, a 21-year retired Navy Veteran, is walking with the help of a Lite Gait that helps a patient to balance and walk. He is being assisted by VA physical therapist Josh Early, PT, (right) and equipment company representative Monika Patel, PT, DPT (left). Chellew was the first patient to use the VA Medical Center’s new Physical Therapy Satellite Clinic.

Shoo the Flu 

Flu Shot Walk-in Clinics:

At OGJVAMC:

Sep 18-20, Oct 7-18 (8:00-3:30)

At VA Clinics in Ironwood, Marquette, Menominee, Sault Ste. Marie & Rhineland:

Sep 18-20 (9:00-3:00)

At VA Clinics in Hancock & Manistique:

Sep 18-19 (9:00-3:00)

For more details, click [here](#).

For Employee flu shots, see page 9.

Two-Way Communication at OGJVAMC

Leadership seeks employee feedback

One consistent feedback from OGJVAMC employees has been lack of communication. As a result of the 2012 All Employee Survey, which solicits feedback on the work environment, the Medical Center Director, Mr. Jim Rice, initiated and continues to hold monthly employee focus groups and personally conducts follow up sessions with each new employee on his or her 30-day and one year anniversary at OGJVAMC. The purpose of both these initiatives is to get employee feedback on the work environment, clarify any misleading information or rumors, and seek their input on how to do business better. The focus groups and employee interviews are in addition to the already established quarterly employee Town Halls and monthly Director Staff meetings. ♦



Monthly employee focus group with the Director.



Left: Recent Employee Town Hall with the Medical Center's Director, Jim Rice and Associate Director, Bill Caron. Right: Mr. Rice conducts a one-on-one session with James Stewart of the Nutrition and Environmental Support Staff (NESS) on his one year anniversary being employed at OGJVAMC.



Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255

Support Matters.

 **Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

Confidential help for
Veterans and their families

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

September is Suicide Prevention Month ...

... and the theme this year is, ***It Matters.***

**Connect. It Matters.
Because one small act
can make the difference.**

OGJVAMC's Suicide Prevention Coordinator is Sharon Anastas, x32769

Caught on Camera



Summer VA interns **Kaylin Olson** (left) and **Kelly Derwinski** (right) dancing to the music with two CLC Veterans at the annual **VA Patient Carnival** in July.



Sharon Anastas, OJGVAMC's Suicide Prevention Coordinator was the August guest on WJNR's Veteran Information Hour.



VA employee **Kevin Fraker** (Biomed) singing at the annual **Patient Memorial Service** held August 1. See story on page 6.



Psychology Intern **Erika Guzman** gives a presentation on **Diversity Amongst Hispanics and Latinos** at the recent employee **Town Hall**.



To see more photos click [here](#) or go to OJGVAMC's Facebook Photo Albums



Some of the **Marquette CBOC** employees (from left to right): **Wendy Schuster**, LPN, **Jennifer Nylander**, clerk, **Larry Talus** (LPN), **Sandy Sarasin** (RN), and **Sheri Saberniak**, Telehealth Tech.



Dave Lukowski (Patient Admin Supervisor) and **Leah Morgan** (Chief, Pharmacy) on left serve (from left to right) **Bob Pasowicz** (VA Police), **MaryKay Campbell** (VISN12 ORH), and **Tania Fuller-Hautamaki** (Nursing Education) at the **Annual Employee Appreciation Picnic**.



VA Peer Support Specialists **John Jamison** (left) and **Fernando Chavarria** (right) talking with a Veteran at the first annual **Veteran Recovery Festival** held August 24 at Pine Mountain Ski Resort.

2013 Annual Patient Memorial Service

On August 1st, OGJVAMC held its annual Patient Memorial Service honoring the lives of 85 Veterans who died at the VA Medical Center or at VA contracted nursing homes during the past year. Family and friends of these heroes were invited to attend the service and have refreshments afterwards. Keynote message was provided by Rev. Tracy Blagec, who is also a OGJVAMC volunteer. Music was provided by soloist Kevin Fraker. ♦



2013 Adopt-a-Garden Contest Results

This summer OGJVAMC had nine entries in its 2nd annual Adopt-a-Garden Contest, and once again, they all looked great and greatly enhanced the beauty of the medical center's grounds. Judging this year was done by two Master Gardener Volunteers from the community, Pat Nicometo and Sandy White, who were really impressed by the program and the entries. They awarded the following places:

- 1st - Behavioral Health Service
- 2nd - Home Based Primary Care
- 3rd - Nursing Educ. & OEF/OIF



To see all the entries click [here](#) or go to OGJVAMC's Facebook photo albums.

Explore VA

You or a loved one has served the nation with honor. Now let the VA serve you.

VA has made it easier for you to explore your benefits. Whether you're a Veteran or a family member of a Veteran, chances are you've earned at least one benefit. VA assistance can help get you the benefits you deserve to assist you at home, at work, and in life. So, take a few minutes to explore your benefits—and know that we're working every day for you. Explore VA today at:

www.VA.gov/Explore

Check out the new TV ad at this [link](#).

Kudos!

Employees of the Month

July



Peg Baciak, Behavioral Health Service. Peg has been serving staff and Veterans in the BHS for the majority of her 28 years at the VA. Her extensive knowledge, expertise, and kind demeanor has been the "glue" that has held BHS together through times of significant change, including an eight-fold growth in the department. Peg has been employed at OGJVAMC since 1985.

August



Dawn Wahlstrom, Housekeeping Department in the Nutrition & Environmental Support Service. Dawn is lauded for her phenomenal support to the staff of the Community Living Center and particularly to the Hospice Program and the Veterans it serves. Recently, Dawn was instrumental in setting up and preparing the atrium for fulfilling Butterfly Wish for a hospice Veteran. Dawn has been employed at OGJVAMC since 1998.

2012 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 2012 recipient of the Annual Hands and Heart Award is **Jay Harry, RN**, Nursing & Patient Care Service. Jay works day shift in the Emergency Department. Congratulations Jay!

Please notify OGJVAMC Public Affairs of any employees receiving professional certificates, awards or recognition.

Service Pins



Jim Rice (Medical Center Director, left) presented service pins to (left to right): **Bob Peterson, NP** (Geriatrics & Extended Care Service, 20 years), **Todd Pierce** (Logistics Service, 10 years), and **Dr. Barbara Nelson-Thomas** (Behavioral Health Service, 20 years). Not pictured: **Dr. Edward Perez-Conde** (Emergency Department, 15 years), **Barbara Nurenberg** (Behavioral Health Service, 10 years), and **Julie Gendron** (Behavioral Health Service, 10 years).



Todd Hagen (Nutrition & Environmental Support Service) receives his 25 year service. Not pictured: Sandra Kregalka (Imaging Service, 30 years) and Dr. Kirk Susott (Surgery

Environmental Excellence Award



OGJVAMC was selected as a winner of the 2012 Practice Greenhealth Environmental Excellence Award . Kudos to the GEMS committee and the following services: Pharmacy, Lab, NESS, Engineering, SPS, and Logistics. Accepting the award is **Greg Haslow**, OGJVAMC Industrial Hygienist.

Federal Women's Program Outstanding Achievement Awards

The FWP awards program recognizes employees who have gone above and beyond to further the status of women both at the VA and in the community. This year's winners are **Katie Uren** (left) and **Jan Irish** (right). Both women work in the Nursing & Patient Care Service.



Welcome To OGVAMC!

Behavioral Health

Erika Guzman (Psychology Intern)

Carmella Tress (Psychology Intern)

James Reynolds

Jayne Fredrick

Chief of Staff Office

Erin Stott

Engineering

Glen Schoen

NESS

Joshua Wetzal

Mark Bergeron

Patrick Hendricks

Travis Thom

Nursing & Patient Care

Lindsay Bricco

Mark Hill

Samatha Abraham

Sheila Henrichs

Patient Admin Service

Melissa Arkens

Pathology & Laboratory

Kathryn Zeier

Daniel Arnold

Pharmacy

Alex Barker

Catherine Rosenbury

Primary Care

Dr. Elwood Robins

Surgery

Karen Nandory

Michael Pizzolatto

VA Police

Gabriel Maps*

Joseph Wickman

Farewell Wishes! (*retired)

Behavioral Health

Dr. Cliff Smith

Barbara Nurenburg* (10 years)

Patrick Flynn

Lynda Wargolet (Psych. Intern)

Joseph Conerty (Psych. Intern)

Canteen Service

Karen Pohlson

Dental Service

Greg Bradley* (32 years)

Engineering

Ron Johnson* (34 years)

Imaging Service

Rebecca Fochtman

Medicine Service

Dr. Lawrence Friedman

Nursing & Patient Care

Lois Groop* (29years)

Ernest Luri* (30 years)

Wanda Faull* (5 years)

Christy Hendrickson

Sheila Cappaert

NESS

John Schumacher* (12 years)

OIT

Karrin Orler

Patient Admin Service

Mary Casey

Michael Johnson* (30 years)

VA Police

Richard Wright

Shoo the Flu



Employee Flu Shots:

October 9 & 16 6:30-9:00 a.m., basement by the elevators

October 10 2:00-4:30 p.m., Employee Health will walk around

October 11 2:00-4:30 p.m., Employee Health will go to outer buildings.

Upcoming Events & Observances

September:

* Suicide Prevention Month

* National Preparedness Month

* Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month

* National Hispanic Heritage Month

1 WWII Begins (1939)

2 V-J Day (1945)

2 Labor Day

7-8 Welcome Home Event for 1432nd at OGJVAMC

8-14 National Suicide Prevention Week

10 World Suicide Prevention Day

11 Patriot Day

12 Annual Employee Appreciation Picnic (11 a.m.-1 p.m.)

16 American Legion Chartered by Congress (1919)

17 Constitution Day

17 VFW Ladies Auxiliary Established (1914)

18 US Air Force Established (1947)

18-20 Flu Shot Clinics for enrolled Veterans

20 POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony (11 a.m.)

22 Autumn begins

25 Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Established (1920)

29 Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Established (1899)

October:

* National Dental Hygiene Month

* Breast Cancer Awareness Month

* National Chiropractic Month

* National Physical Therapy Month

6-12 National Physician Assistants Week

Nuclear Medicine Week

Mental Illness Awareness Week

Emergency Nurses Week

7-18 Flu Shot Clinics for enrolled Veterans

9 Employee Flu Shots

13 US Navy Established (1775)

14 Columbus Day

16 National Boss Day

Employee Flu Shots

18 National Mammography Day

20-26 National Healthcare Quality Week

National Respiratory Care Week



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

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