



Voice Of The North Woods



Focused on Excellence—Putting Veterans First

A PUBLICATION OF THE
OSCAR G. JOHNSON VA MEDICAL CENTER
October-November 2012

Inside This Issue:

- Service Spotlight 2
- POW/MIA Ceremony 2
- Tribute to Gwen 3
- SCI Clinic 3
- Construction Update 3
- Butterfly Wishes 4
- Memorial Service 4
- Kudos 5
- Employee Spotlight 6
- Calendar of Events 6

Health Tip Of The Day!



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Early detection saves lives. Regular mammogram screenings are important. In addition, some healthy habits that lower the risk of breast cancer include: maintaining a healthy weight, regular physical activity, and limiting alcohol consumption.

For more information visit:
www.cancer.org and/or
www.womenshealth.va.gov

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

OGJVAMC Helps Veteran Caregivers

Jerri Dementer of Rapid River, Michigan, has been caring for her husband and high school sweetheart, Alan Dementer, since 2003 when he encountered a severe firefight in Iraq.

As a Marine Corp medic he saved many lives, and his heroic actions earned him a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. Unfortunately, he sustained serious injuries from a mortar attack that has made each day a struggle. Dealing with constant pain, physical disadvantages and emotional challenges has led to significant life adjustments. Fortunately, one night Jerri was browsing the internet and came across the VA Caregiver Support website.

Curious and hopeful, Jerri submitted her application. Soon after, she received a call from Kathleen Wahoviak, the Caregiver Support Coordinator at OGJVAMC.

Jerri is now one of eighteen Caregivers in the Upper Peninsula and Northern Wisconsin that receive both financial support through monthly stipends and emotional support through the VA health care network. Specialized training helps Jerri understand what she and her husband are going through, and free counseling is available if the need ever arises.

“The monthly stipend recognizes that the Caregiver often has to give up a job or at least go to part time to care for their Veteran,” said Wahoviak.

“Sometimes the hardest part is thinking that you are alone,” said Dementer. “I now know that is not true. Caregiver Support has made such a difference in my life;

I have a support system at the VA.”

Veterans eligible for the VA’s Caregiver Support Program are those who sustained a serious physical or psychological injury in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001. Other criteria that need to be met include the inability to perform one or more activities of daily living (e.g., dress-

ing, bathing, etc.), need for supervision or protection, and determination by the VA that the injury is connected to the Veteran’s military service. Caregivers of Veterans of other eras are also eligible for the same benefits except for

monthly stipends and health care for the Caregiver.

“I don’t know what I would be doing right now if it weren’t for the help my husband and I have been provided thanks to the VA,” said Jerri.

Veterans and their Caregivers interested in this program should call 1-800-215-8262, extension 32506, or visit www.caregiver.va.gov. ♦

“I don’t know what I would be doing right now if it weren’t for the help my husband and I have been provided thanks to the VA.”



Alan and Jerri Dementer

Service Spotlight: Sterile Processing Service (SPS)

The Sterile Processing Service (SPS) is charged with oversight and responsibility for the proper cleaning, disinfection and sterilization of the facility's patient care reusable medical equipment (RME).

SPS is integral to the overall spectrum of safe patient care delivery. SPS professionals work diligently – most times unnoticed - to assure optimal patient care

equipment and supply support provision is achieved every day. Process Excellence is the *standard* within SPS and SPS staff work diligently to maintain that standard as a baseline. SPS:

- Receives, inspects, cleans, disinfects and/or packages and sterilizes over 200 devices daily.
- Operates equipment ranging from ultrasonic cleaners to steam pressure and Ethylene Oxide sterilization systems.
- Monitors usability, outdate and storage requirements for 17 separate RME storage points.

SPS is located in the main facility basement, B-291. ♦



From left to right: Ivy Wulf, Leonore Strong, Barry O'Brien, Joie Broullire and Rick Nagy



**SPS Week is
October 14-20. This
year's theme is
"Setting Patient Safety
Standards Through
Excellence in SPS"**

OGJVAMC Holds POW/MIA Ceremony

On Friday September 21, OGJVAMC hosted a POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony at its outdoor pavilion and paid tribute to very special American heroes who, unlike anyone else, fully understand the meaning of the words, "Freedom is Not Free" - the former POWs who live in OGJVAMC's catchment area and to those still missing in action. 37 former POWs live in the catchment area. VA staff and volunteers read poems and tributes, Michigan Governor Snyder and Congressman Benishek sent proclamations, and the Kingsford High School Concert Chorale provided music. Mrs. Jean Hiatt provided the keynote remarks, speaking of life as a POW family member. Her late husband, Ken Hiatt, was a WWII POW in Germany after being captured during the Battle of the Bulge. Ken Hiatt passed away in February. The Patriot Guard Riders were also present to honor the POWs and MIAs. ♦

For more photos, see 9/21 post at www.facebook.com/VAIronMountain



Former POWs John Moddie (l) and Leonard Hoefflerle (rt) pose with Jim Rice (Director) and Laura Branz (POW/MIA Advocate). Not pictured is FPOW, Robert Smith.



Mrs. Jean Hiatt, wife of the late Ken Hiatt, WWII POW, gave the keynote remarks.

Today, there are less than 32,500 surviving FPOWs, many now well into their 70's and 80's. Many still do not know that in 1981, Congress passed the "Former Prisoners of War Benefit Act." For more info on the FPOW Advocate Program, [click here](#) or call Laura Branz, FPOW Advocate, at 1-800-215-8262, x34710.



A Tribute To **Gwen**

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future” ~ Franklin Roosevelt

New OGJVAMC Volunteer Youth Award

Ms. Gwen Dawson passed away at the age of 88, but not before leaving a 59-year legacy of volunteering at the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center. Gwen began volunteering at the medical center in 1952 and continued to do so until her death in 2010. A wonderful woman and dedicated volunteer, she logged over **13,050** hours at the medical center — the equivalent of more than **6** years of full time work! Gwen’s tireless dedication and positive attitude greatly impacted the VA family and those we serve. To honor her contributions and promote youth voluntary service, the OGJVAMC is instituting the **“Gwen Dawson Memorial Volunteer Youth Award”**. Each year a student volunteer will be selected in honor of Gwen and have their name added to a plaque in the facility. With Gwen’s commitment our inspiration, this program will help build our youth for the future. ♦



SCI Primary Care Clinic at OGJVAMC

Since 2010, OGJVAMC has had a Spinal Cord Injury & Disorder (SCI&D) Primary Care Team to meet the everyday health care needs of the 53 Veterans with a spinal-cord injury or disorder who are currently enrolled at OGJVAMC or its CBOCs. The VA’s SCI&D care is set up in a “hub and spoke” system, with 24 SCI Centers (hubs) providing SCI&D expertise and SCI Primary Care Teams at the VAMCs (spokes) providing SCI&D Veterans with routine care. On August 22 OGJVAMC’s SCI&D team conducted their first telehealth SCI clinic visit for a Veteran. This allowed the Veteran to access more specialized treatment with a Milwaukee SCI Center provider alleviating the need for the Veteran to travel for this care. For info on the VA SCI&D Program see www.sci.va.gov ♦



Veteran Jim Manikowski being examined by OGJVAMC’s SCI&D team after his tele-SCI clinic, the first for OGJVAMC. (l to r): Dr. Raul Montante, M.D.; Kim Nelson, RN; Manikowski; and Amy VanKlombenberg, LPN. Other SCI&D team members include: Deb Pate, LMSW; Dr. Brenda Reed, PsyD; Lisa Bowser; and Jeff Owens, LPN.

Nutrition Tip Of The Day!



Protein foods include both animal meat and plant sources. We all need protein— but most of us eat enough, and some eat more than they need. How much is enough? Most people, ages 9 and older, should eat 5 to 7 ounces of protein per day. For 10 tips on how to choose good protein sources visit:

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet6ProteinFoods.pdf>

OGJVAMC Construction Update

Currently parts of the 3rd floor and all of the 6th floor are under construction. The 6th floor will house the Pathology and Lab Service (eastern wing) with Home Based Primary Care, Voluntary Service, Credit Union, Library, Nurse Education, and a shared conference room occupying the remaining spaces.



6th floor: Tearing down the old offices (left) and building new spaces (right).

OGVAMC Fulfills Butterfly Wishes

Thanks to the generosity of employees, volunteers and others outside of the VA, OGVAMC was able to fulfill Butterfly Wishes for three hospice/palliative care Veterans, who selflessly served our country. Fulfilling their wishes had a tremendous impact on the Veterans and their families.



Steve Steeno receives his recumbent bike from OGVAMC employees (left to right) Mary Bertucci (Home Based Primary Care Social Worker), Susan Scullon (Home Based Primary Care RN), and Bryan Carter (Boiler Plant/Engineering). An Army Veteran who served in Viet Nam and 24 years at the Iron Mountain VAMC, Steve was physically active until his diagnosis of cancer. His favorite activity was biking, so his wish was to get a bike he could ride.

Richard Waldron, a Korean War Army Veteran, boarding a plane to fulfill his Butterfly wish to visit his family, especially his three great grandchildren, in Lansing, Michigan. While there, he celebrated his 82nd birthday. Richard Waldron served with the Army in Korea from 1951 to 1953. Richard passed away on September 28, 2012.



Elmer Wesman, an Korean War Air Force Veteran, fulfilling his Butterfly Wish to visit the grave of his wife, Henriette, who died in 2008. Elmer Wesman. He layed a wreath and had a nice picnic. Elmer passed away on August 22.

For the complete article visit: [www.ironmountain.va.gov/features/OGJVAMC Fulfills Butterfly Wishes for Veterans.asp](http://www.ironmountain.va.gov/features/OGJVAMC_Fulfills_Butterfly_Wishes_for_Veterans.asp)

For more photos see 10/8/12 post at: www.facebook.com/VAIronMountain

Special thanks to the following for making these wishes a reality: Mary Bertucci (HBPC), Susan Scullon (HBPC), Bryan Carter (Boiler Plant), Selena Okler (Palliative Care RN), Adam Hayes (Ass't Rec Therapist), Greg Weiss (Voluntary Services), Nikki Janczy and Tia Romagnoli (CNAs in CLC), Christopher Teuteberg and Arms of Angels for providing transportation for Mr. Wesman, and the Veteran's Dream Foundation for managing the funds raised for Mr. Steeno and Mr. Walden. A very special thanks to all those who contributed.

Annual Veteran Memorial Service

On September 26, OGVAMC held its annual Veteran Memorial Service honoring the lives of those 95 Veterans who died at the VA Medical Center and 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. Music was provided by the Kingsford High School Band.

(l to r): Family, friends & staff attending the service; Selena Okler, RN, closing the service with a poem. OGVAMC staff participating: Bob Green, Bill Caron, Chaplain Mueller, Adam Hayes, Karen Burkman, Katie Uren, Mary Bertucci, and Selena Okler.

Vantage Point & VA You Tube

Have you heard about **Vantage Point**, the VA's blog site?

It is a great blog site with articles, view-points and latest tips for benefits.

VA also has a dedicated **You Tube site**.

We recommend they be bookmarked as one of your Favorites.

From time to time, we also post links to some of the blog articles & you tube videos on our facebook site.

Check out the blog site at

www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/ and VA You Tube at www.youtube.com/user/DeptVetAffairs

Kudos!

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 620 U.S. hospitals - representing the top 18 percent of Joint Commission-accredited hospitals - earning the distinction of Top Performers on Key Quality Measures™. It is also one of only 244 hospitals receiving this recognition for a second year in a row. **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 Iron Mountain Daily News article at <http://www.ironmountaindailynews.com/page/content.detail/id/536816/VA-earns-top-performer-honors.html?nav=5002>

Employees of the Month



July: **Annette Meldrum-Sabotta, LPN**, Surgical Service (2nd from left), and **Lisa Sutherland, CPhT**, Pharmacy (2nd from right), for their collaboration between their two departments in ensuring patient-centered care.



August: **Bob Peterson, NP**, Geriatrics & Extended Care Service, for filling in as lead physician at many of the VA Community Outpatient Clinics due to physician vacancies.

VHA Mentor Certification

Congratulations to Paula Ebli, RN, Patient Safety Officer, and Bill Caron, FACHE, Associate Medical Center Director, for achieving VHA Mentor Certification at the Fellow Level. They have demonstrated their commitment to teaching, growing and developing the next generation of VHA leaders by completing the coursework and at least 50 hours of mentoring required for certification.

Accreditation from College of American Pathologists

OGJVAMC's Pathology and Laboratory Service received accreditation from the College of American Pathologists (CAP), and is now one of more than 7,000 CAP-accredited facilities worldwide. The U.S. federal government recognizes the CAP Laboratory Accreditation Program as being equal to or more stringent than the government's own inspection program. **Congratulations to the employees of the Pathology and Laboratory Service!**

Employee Spotlight!

Welcome To OGVAMC!

Canteen

Karen Pohlson

Chief of Staff

Grace Stringfellow

Behavioral Health

David Baker

Patrick Flynn

Steve Miljour

Lisa Warden

Nutrition & Environmental

Support

Mitzi Metzler-Baker

Nursing & Pt Care

Jeffery Balek

Kathleen Dupont

Rebecca Frochtman

Alyssa Maki

Rick Nagy

Pharmacy

Amber Gunville

Primary Care

Carol Norman

Rehabilitation Med.

Shannon Powell

Farewell Wishes! (*retired)

Behavioral Health

George Wiedenhoef* (8 years)

Nutrition & Environmental

Support

Keith Mitchem

Nursing & Patient Care

Rhonda Brunswick* (30 years)

Pharmacy

Sheri Sprygada-Moon

Rehabilitation Med.

Cynthia McManus

Service Pins (Sep-Oct)

10 Year

Laura Baumler - Patient Administrative Service

Gene Leslie - Nutrition & Environmental Support Service

15 Year

John Pierucki - Nutrition & Environmental Support Service

20 Year

Tania Fuller-Hautamaki - Nursing, Staff Education

Thomas Lister - Pharmacy Service

Dawn Rompalski - Patient Administrative Service

25 Year

Robert Green - Medical Admin, Surgical Service

30 Year

Rhonda Brunswick - Nursing, Primary Care

35 Year

Brain Despin - Medical Admin, Primary Care

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



Comments? Email bradley.nelson@va.gov

Upcoming Events & Observances

October:

Breast Cancer Awareness

National Physical Therapy Month

National Chiropractic Month

National Cyber Security Month



1-7 Healthcare Foodservice Workers Week

7-13 Mental Illness Awareness Week

8 Columbus Day (Clinics Closed)

7-13 Mental Illness Awareness Week

10 World Mental Health Day

12 Emergency Nurses Day

13 U.S. Navy established (1775)

14-20 Sterile Processing Service Week.
Infection Control Week.

16 National Boss Day

21-27 National Pharmacy Week

National Respiratory Care Week

Healthcare Engineering

Week



November:

National Family Caregivers Month

National Hospice Month

National Long-Term Care Awareness

National Aids Awareness

American Diabetes Month

Palliative Care Month

4-10 National Radiologic Week

4 Daylight Savings Ends; Change Clocks

10 U.S. Marine Corps Established (1775)

11 Veterans Day

12 Veterans Day Holiday (Clinics Closed)

16 National Rural Health Day

17 Great American Smokeout

22 Thanksgiving (Clinics Closed)

