

# VETERANS' ADVANTAGE

THE WELLNESS MAGAZINE  
FOR NEW YORK / NEW JERSEY VETERANS

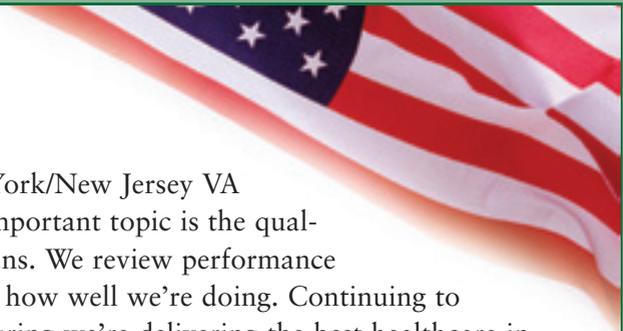
WINTER 2006



**6** 11 ways to prepare for an emergency

**7** Happy 75th Anniversary, VA!





Dear Veteran,

**I**n nearly every discussion with New York/New Jersey VA medical center managers, our most important topic is the quality of healthcare we provide to veterans. We review performance standards and clinical guidelines to judge how well we're doing. Continuing to judge our performance is our way of ensuring we're delivering the best healthcare in all our medical centers and community health clinics throughout the metropolitan New York/New Jersey area.

Our focus on quality healthcare is yielding results, and independent medical journals are starting to notice. Just a few months ago, *U.S. News & World Report* published "Military Might: Today's VA Hospitals Are Models of Top-Notch Care." The article summarizes VA achievements in healthcare delivery and our "culture of safety" that's contributed to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) recognition as a national healthcare leader.

The *Annals of Internal Medicine* published a study that shows VA had "substantially better quality of care" than other providers in many of the nearly 350 indicators of quality, such as screening and treating of depression, diabetes and hypertension.

The *New England Journal of Medicine* wrote that among 13 measures in which VA compares directly with the Medicare fee-for-service program, VA performed significantly better on all but one measure. These 12 measures include smoking cessation, flu vaccination, annual mammography and diabetes care. And, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences said, "Veterans Health Administration's integrated healthcare information system, including its framework for using performance measures to improve quality, is considered one of the best in the nation."

New York/New Jersey VA medical centers are proud that our achievements in delivering high-quality healthcare are recognized in national healthcare journals. But our greatest pride is knowing that the care we provide to each veteran is considered by many to be the best in the country. We will continue our commitment of service to you, our nation's veterans.

James J. Farsetta  
Network Director

<http://www.va.gov/visns/visn03>



### Get your prescriptions online

**Y**ou asked for it, and you got it! You can now use My HealthVet—VA's online service for veterans—to refill your prescriptions and view your prescription history online. To take advantage of this service, you must be a registered user of My HealthVet. As a registered user, you'll also have access to a Personal Health Journal, where you can record and track your health statistics online. To register for these important benefits, visit [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).

### We're just a phone call away

**Veterans, do you need information about medication dosages or prescription interactions, or do you have questions about your general health? Day or night, get answers to all your healthcare questions by calling the VA Nurses Helpline, 24 hours a day, at **1-800-877-6976**.**

# Make a difference— volunteer!



**L**ooking for a rewarding way to spend your free time? Volunteer! Men and women, from teenagers to those in their 90s, become volunteer partners on the VISN 3 healthcare team. Some bring special skills and knowledge, while others offer a desire to explore and learn. Many have a gift for working directly with patients. All our volunteers are

a dependable, valuable part of our staff.

VISN 3 Voluntary Service Officers match the volunteer to the assignment, provide orientation and training and offer an awards program. If you're interested in a life-enriching experience as a VA volunteer, call or e-mail the Voluntary Service Officer at the VISN 3 facility nearest you. (*See locations below.*) ■

## Volunteering starts here

### **Bronx VA Medical Center**

Marie Crooke  
(718) 741-4212  
marie.crooke@med.va.gov

### **Hudson Valley Health Care System**

**Castle Point Campus**  
Jerome Vaughan  
(845) 838-5180  
jerome.vaughan@med.va.gov

### **Montrose Campus**

Jerome Vaughan  
(914) 737-4400  
jerome.vaughan@med.va.gov

### **New Jersey Health Care System**

**East Orange Campus**  
Tyrone Steed  
(973) 395-7258  
tyrone.steed@med.va.gov

### **Lyons Campus**

Mary Beth Hynoski  
(908) 604-5814  
marybeth.hynoski@med.va.gov

### **New York Harbor Health Care System**

**Brooklyn Campus**  
Keith Butcher  
(718) 630-3704  
keith.butcher@med.va.gov

### **New York Campus**

Frank Civitillo  
(212) 686-7500, ext. 7920  
frank.civitillo@med.va.gov

### **St. Albans Campus**

Keith Butcher  
(718) 526-1000  
keith.butcher@med.va.gov

### **Northport VA Medical Center**

Mary O'Sullivan  
(631) 261-4400, ext. 7183  
mary.o'sullivan@med.va.gov

## Help

## for military sexual trauma

**V**A is here to help anyone who's experienced military sexual trauma (MST). Each VISN 3 medical center offers MST Coordinators for both male and female veterans. If you're suffering from MST, call your nearest MST Coordinator.

### **Bronx VA Medical Center**

Ann Feder  
(718) 584-9000, ext. 5172

### **Hudson Valley Health Care System**

Francine Gitline, R.N.  
(914) 737-4400, ext. 3330

### **New Jersey Health Care System**

Risa M. Goldstein, Psy.D.  
(908) 647-0180, ext. 2671 or 4533

### **New York Harbor Health Care System**

*New York Campus:*  
Marion C. Eakin  
(212) 686-7500, ext. 7543

*Brooklyn/St. Albans Campus:*  
Amy Malkin-Ingoglin  
(718) 836-6600, ext. 6475

### **Northport VA Medical Center**

James Leathem, L.C.S.W.  
(631) 261-4400, ext. 7047

# Preparing for a crisis or disaster



The VA New York/New Jersey Veterans Healthcare Network serves veterans' healthcare needs. However, another important priority is to ensure that our staff and patients have a safe and comfortable environment in which to receive that care. Because of recent events in our area, this VA network has become a leader in emergency preparedness. Our team of emergency management experts across the network thought they would share these 11 tips with you on personal preparedness.

**1 Protect your family.** Establish a plan for leaving the house, and make sure everyone knows it. Have an emergency bag of food and water for your family. Include a three-day supply of wholesome snacks, such as dried fruits and granola bars.

**2 Remember your pets.** Keep pet carriers and leashes on hand to lead pets to safety. Take pet food with you, too.

**3 Protect your pictures.** Keep negatives or CDs of pictures in a lockbox or at a family member's home. Have picture albums ready to grab at a moment's notice.

**4 Store your papers.** Have all your important papers in a lockbox at a bank, and keep copies at home. If you must keep your original documents at home, put them in a folder you can easily grab if you have to move fast. Color-code it so you can find it!

**5 Remember your prescriptions.** Don't forget the ones that need to be refrigerated, such as insulin. Have a small ice chest and cold packs ready to pack and go. Include hand and foot warmers,

infant formula or medication, and medical instructions.

**6 Have your purse ready.** This is where you should keep your identification, credit cards and cash.

**7 Pack proper clothes and comfort items.** Choose clothes and outdoor gear that fit weather conditions. Pack your child's favorite blanket or toy and diapers if you need them. A game or deck of cards may keep your child occupied and calm, too.

**8 Include a planner or journal.** You'll need this for emergency contacts, phone numbers, insurance numbers and important dates.

**9 Take along personal hygiene items.** During an evacuation, these items may be hard to find: washcloths, disposable wipes, toothbrushes, tissues, hand sanitizer and feminine products.

**10 Keep communication lines open.** Have cell phones charged with a charger on hand. Keep a battery-powered radio tuned in to a local station, and pack extra batteries.

**11 Think of the extras.** These items may come in handy: a flashlight, matches, a pen and paper, a swiss knife, a can opener, a cigarette lighter and a small first-aid kit. Keep a stash of extra cash in case you can't get to an ATM machine. Also consider packing jewelry, an additional monetary source. And make sure your car has half a tank of gas. ■

# Happy anniversary, VA!

## Celebrating 75 years of excellence

**O**n July 21, 1930, President Herbert Hoover signed Executive Order 5398, which brought the U.S. Veterans Bureau, the Bureau of Pensions and the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers together into a single new agency—the Veterans Administration. In 75 years, the Veterans Administration has gone from an independent federal agency to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the second-largest federal department after the Department of Defense.

### How far we've come

Our budget today, \$69 billion, is much larger than the \$800 million budget we had in 1930. Our staff has increased from 31,000 to 237,000 members. And the 5 million veterans who received VA healthcare last year are a vast increase from the 640,000 patients treated 75 years ago.

Many people don't know that VA operates the largest integrated healthcare system in the country, with 157 hospitals and more than 860 clinics expected to treat more than 5.2 million veterans this year. In the New York/New

Jersey Network, we operate eight hospitals and more than 30 community-based outpatient clinics. More than half the physicians practicing in the United States receive some of their professional education at VA medical centers. Three winners of the Nobel Prize in Medicine have worked for VA.

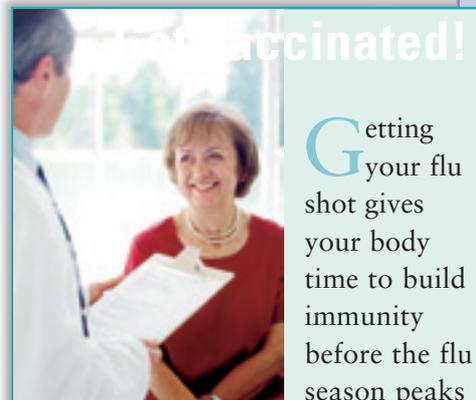
And we're still growing. VA has created hiring programs for newly returned combat veterans and placed VA staff within military facilities for early counseling about veterans benefits. In the New York/New Jersey Network, each medical center has a local coordinator who ensures that all Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom veterans receive prompt and efficient healthcare services.

### Local celebration

VA New Jersey Health Care System's Lyons Campus is proudly celebrating its 75th year of service to America's veterans this year. The Lyons facility that began in 1930 as a 400-bed neuropsychiatric hospital for the long-term care of the chronic mentally ill has evolved into a consolidated healthcare system with the East Orange Campus and 10 community-based outpatient clinics. ■



Secretary of Veterans Affairs R. James Nicholson (second from left) helped celebrate the Lyons 75th anniversary on November 22. Also pictured from left to right are three returning Operation Enduring Freedom veterans: Corporal Gilroy Parks; Sergeant 1st Class James Ortiz; and Major Amelia Weiland, an employee at the facility.



between December and March. The flu is contagious and can be deadly. People over 65 or who have chronic medical conditions are most at risk for the disease. If you haven't gotten your shot yet, it's not too late. Talk to your VA provider about whether the vaccination is right for you. ■





Maryann Musumeci  
Director, James J.  
Peters VA Medical  
Center, Bronx

# Messages from the

## Renaming of the Bronx VA Medical Center

**O**n September 26, the Bronx VA Medical Center was renamed in honor of the late James J. Peters—a veteran, friend and advocate for the disabled community. The renaming was pursuant to Public Law 108-422, sponsored by New York’s congressional delegation.

Peters was the Executive Director of the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (EPVA), now called the United Spinal Association. I will always remember him as a supporter of the Bronx VAMC and a personal friend. He was the quintessential champion of the spinal cord injured, predominantly responsi-

ble for establishing a national, stand-alone Spinal Cord Injury Service here.

Peters also worked tirelessly to have spinal cord medicine designated as an official subspecialty by the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Through his leadership and partnership with the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Peters built the PVA/EPVA Center for Neuroscience and Regeneration Research of Yale University at the West Haven VA Medical Center. I’m proud to be part of the renaming of the Bronx VAMC to the James J. Peters VA Medical Center, Bronx. ■

## Fight the flu this year

**O**nce again, the flu season is upon us. Each year, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized for flu-related complications, and some fatalities occur. Recently, much news has focused on the Avian, or bird, flu and the possibility of widespread infection. I want our Bronx VA community to know we will take all reliable measures to ensure our veterans and community are well prepared for any possible event. As always, there’s no need to panic.

We’ll make a full order of the flu vaccine available this year. The Bronx VA Medical Center (as well as others in our Network) will target our vaccination program generally to the following groups:

- enrolled veterans of any age who have chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, cancer or immunosuppression
- pregnant women
- nursing home patients
- spinal cord injury residents
- employees who have direct patient contact

I can’t overemphasize the importance of taking practical steps, whether or not you get a flu shot, to avoid or help prevent the flu’s spread:



**From left:** Rosemary Correll; Mary Ann Peters; The Honorable R. James Nicholson; James J. Farsetta, Network Director; Gerard M. Kelly; William A. Bauman, M.D.; and Maryann Musumeci, Director, celebrate the renaming of the James J. Peters VA Medical Center.

Alfred Hong, Director of Public Affairs

# Director

## A Bronx researcher receives a top honor

**W**illiam A. Bauman, M.D., Director of the RR&D Service Center of Excellence for the Medical Consequences of Spinal Cord Injuries (SCI) at the Bronx VA Medical Center, won the distinguished 2005 Paul B. Magnuson Award. It's the highest honor bestowed upon investigators of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Research and Development Service. Bauman won for his "... commitment and compassion in caring for veterans with disabilities, and for his outstanding research, vision and leadership in characterizing, preventing and treating the medical consequences of spinal cord injury."

Dr. Bauman has devoted the past 16 years to understanding the medical problems that develop in veterans with SCI and to seeking treatments to lessen the impact of these

problems on health and quality of life. His current work is an outgrowth of the vision and support of James J. Peters—for whom the Bronx VAMC was renamed on September 26 (*see page 4*)—and the United Spinal Association (formerly the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association).

Dr. Bauman is also the chairman of a VA cooperative study directed at healing pressure ulcers in patients with SCI and a professor of medicine and rehabilitation medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, N.Y.

The highest award given by VA for rehabilitation research and development, the Magnuson Award is presented annually to a researcher who exemplifies entrepreneurship, humanitarianism and dedication to veterans. ■

from work or school so others won't catch your illness.

- Clean your hands frequently with alcohol-based hand rubs or soap and water.

If you do develop the flu, get plenty of rest, drink lots of liquids and avoid alcohol and tobacco. Always consult with your physician about taking antiviral medication such as Tamiflu to help relieve symptoms or prevent the flu. You can also call our 24-hour Nurse Helpline at (800) 877-6976.

If your flu symptoms are unusually severe or if you're at special risk for complications from the flu, consult your primary care provider here at the Bronx VAMC or at one of our easily accessible community-based outpatient clinics. ■





## VA Hudson Valley Health Care System helps you head off obesity



Obesity has overtaken tobacco use as the No. 1 health threat to Americans, particularly veterans. At VA Hudson Valley Health Care System, patient records show more than 70 percent of our veterans are overweight. We're responding to this problem with MOVE!—a new weight-management and physical-activity program.

### Understanding obesity

Obesity puts you at risk for many weight-related health problems. These include diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), heart disease, asthma, sleep apnea, arthritis and low energy.

The VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention created MOVE! (Managing Overweight/Obesity for Veterans Everywhere!) in 2004. Seventeen Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities piloted the program. MOVE! includes five levels, the first two of which we offer:

**Level 1:** computerized assessment, tailored self-help written materials and frequent phone follow-up

**Level 2:** Level 1 treatment plus ongoing multidisciplinary group clinics/classes and personal consultation when needed

**Level 3:** Levels 1 or 2 treatment plus weight-control medication

**Level 4:** brief residential weight-control program

**Level 5:** bariatric surgery at selected VA locations

### Joining MOVE!

MOVE! is typically offered to overweight and obese patients. During a visit to your primary care clinic, a healthcare provider will record your weight and height and check your vital signs. He or she will also determine your body mass index (BMI) through a formula based on the relationship between height and weight. If you need help managing your weight and don't have any medical contraindications, your healthcare provider will invite

you to join MOVE! If you agree, he or she will give you a questionnaire and help you make an appointment if you're joining a Level 2 group session.

The first round of group sessions, led by a multidisciplinary team, will take place over four weeks. The team consists of staff from Ambulatory Care, Nursing, Nutrition and Food Service, Kinesiotherapy, Mental Health, Pharmacy and Health Administration Service. If you complete the basic group sessions, you can continue with the support group that meets weekly, where you can keep reaching and maintaining your goals.

So far, we've completed five sessions at the Castle Point Campus. Combined, the members lost more than 230 pounds. We hope over time the number of MOVE! members will continue to rise as the number of pounds drops.

If you're interesting in joining MOVE!, contact your primary care team. ■

# The new food pyramid—

## More personal, more interactive!

BY CONNIE TIRADO, R.D., C.D.N.

After 12 years, the United States Department of Agriculture has revised its food pyramid. It reflects the new federal *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which stress the balance of food and physical activity.

### How has the pyramid changed?

The pyramid has been tipped over on its side, with all food groups running from the tip to the base. Each food group is designated by color:

- orange—grains
- green—vegetables
- red—fruits

- yellow—oils
- blue—milk
- purple—meat and beans

Steps added to the pyramid's left remind you to be active every day. Since one size doesn't fit all, you can choose from 12 pyramids based on your needed calories and activity level.

### Where can I find the pyramid?

Visit [www.myPyramid.gov](http://www.myPyramid.gov), where you can:

- take an animated tour of the pyramid
- download a miniposter of the pyramid

- learn more about the pyramid by clicking on “Inside the Pyramid”
- get tips and resources to help make the pyramid work for you

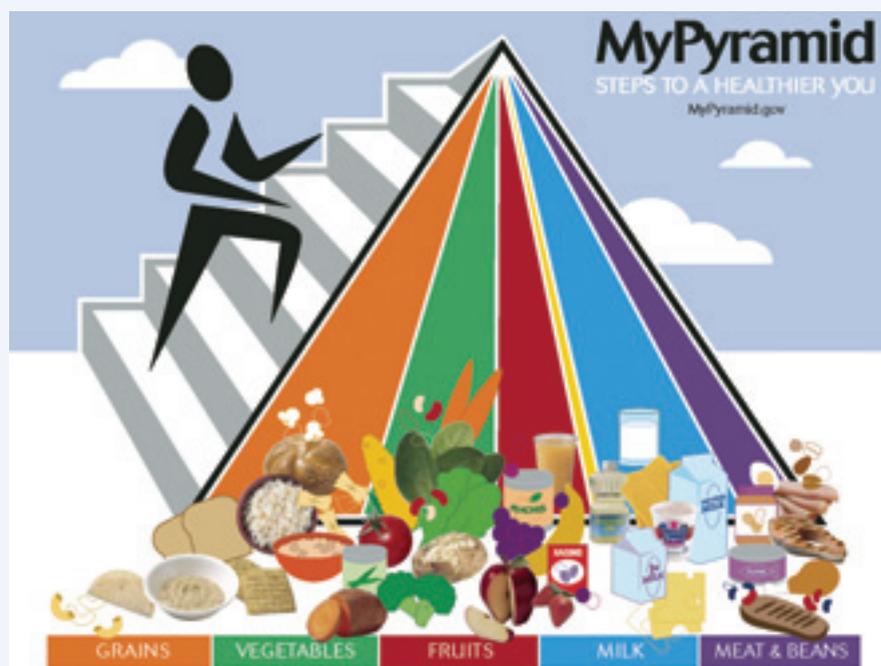
You can also personalize the pyramid by entering your age, sex and activity level, and download worksheets to track your food and activity choices.

One of the most exciting features of this Web site is “MyPyramid Tracker,” which helps consumers and nutrition professionals determine diet and activity levels. The program creates a password-protected profile for you from personal information you provide. It analyzes your diet based on foods you've eaten on one day. MyPyramid Tracker checks your diet against three nutritional standards: the Recommended Dietary Allowances for your age and gender, the new *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and MyPyramid's food-group recommendations for your age and gender. The program gives you tips for improvement, too.

MyPyramid Tracker remembers your previous entries, so you can add to them each time you log on. It even provides graphs that chart your nutritional history over several days. And, the program tracks your physical activity and evaluates it on a scale from 1 to 100.

The MyPyramid Web site also contains a “Diet and Health Information” feature with links to various government and health-association Web sites.

For more nutritional counseling, ask your primary healthcare provider to refer you to a nutrition clinic at your local VA medical center or community-based outpatient clinic. Here, we can help you get and stay in good health. ■



The new MyPyramid at [www.myPyramid.gov](http://www.myPyramid.gov) provides you with a personal nutrition and fitness plan based on your age, gender and activity level.



in East Orange, N.J. Our cancer specialists offer comprehensive cancer screening exams, education and counseling, and medical care.

The best way to cure cancer is to detect it early. Annual cancer screening exams are one way to find cancers fast, modify risks of developing cancer and maintain healthy lifestyles.

During a cancer screening, our nurse practitioner will review your health, family history and lifestyle.

We offer comprehensive and specific screenings that follow the American Cancer Society Guidelines for Cancer Screening.

To make an appointment for a cancer screening at our East Orange Campus, call the registration office at (973) 676-1000, ext. 1843 or 1968. You can also call toll-free at (800) 475-2336 or e-mail Patricia Goyer at [patricia.goyer@med.va.gov](mailto:patricia.goyer@med.va.gov). ■

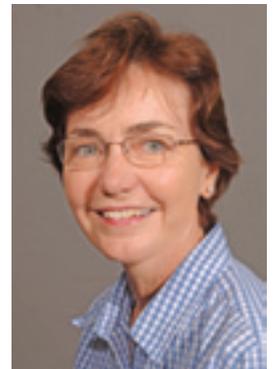
## Get screened! It's key to beating cancer



The VA New Jersey Health Care System has a Comprehensive Cancer Prevention and Screening Program at our East Orange Campus on 385 Tremont Avenue

## VANJHCS earns praise for colorectal cancer screening

The VA New Jersey Health Care System was cited as “the best practice model for colorectal cancer screening” at the New Jersey Colorectal Cancer Screening Conference in Woodbridge, N.J. Patricia Goyer, R.N., M.S.N., A.P.N.-C., Surgical-Oncology Nurse Practitioner, presented VANJHCS’s colorectal cancer screening process at the event, sponsored by the Office of Cancer Control and Prevention and the American Cancer Society. Primary care/specialty care providers, health care and health plan leaders, and New Jersey Cancer Education Early Detection Program leaders attended. ■



Patricia Goyer, R.N., M.S.N., A.P.N.-C., Surgical-Oncology Nurse Practitioner, helps patients win the battle against colorectal cancer.



Celebrating the new hospice unit are (from left) Kenneth H. Mizrach, Director, the VA New Jersey Health Care System; Judith Grey, Compassionate Care Hospice Chief Operating Officer; Milton Heching, Compassionate Care Hospice Chief Executive Officer; James J. Faretta, FACHE, Network Director, VA New York/New Jersey Network; and Michelle Stefanelli, Women Veterans Program Manager/Iraqi Freedom Coordinator.

# New hospice care unit opens

Compassionate Care Hospice's newest unit opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the VA New Jersey Health Care System's East Orange Campus on Monday, July 11. More than 100 veterans, employees, volunteers and community members attended the ceremony and toured the facility. Hospice offers care and comfort to terminally ill patients, many who remain at home.

The new 12-bed inpatient unit offers patients symptom management that may be too complicated

to handle at home. Ten private rooms and one semiprivate room with warm and cozy accommodations provide a homelike atmosphere. Families can stay at their loved one's bedside with no visiting-hour restrictions and receive overnight accommodations. Kitchen facilities, including a microwave, let families prepare home-cooked meals.

The unit also offers a quiet room for relaxation, prayer and meditation. A full-time social worker, chaplain and bereavement counselor provide support to patients and their families. ■

## Honoring our Employees of the Year

Executive Board  
 Stan Northern  
 three VA New  
 staff  
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 the  
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 outsta-  
 well done

**Outstanding Employee**  
 Ginger Horling  
 Pharmacy Service,  
 Patient/Nursing  
 Care Services



**Secretary of the Year** ▶  
 Marsha Scovil,  
 Laboratory Service



**Initiative** ▶  
 Holly Crisonino,  
 Ambulatory Care  
 Service

## Public notice

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) will conduct an unannounced triennial accreditation survey of the Department of Veterans Affairs New Jersey Health Care System's Hospital, Behavioral Health, Long Term Care, Home Care, and Opioid Treatment Programs during 2006.

The purpose of the survey will be to evaluate the organization's

compliance with nationally established Joint Commission standards. The survey results will be used to determine whether—and the conditions under which—accreditation should be awarded to the organization.

Joint Commission standards deal with organizational quality of care issues and the safety of the environment in which care is provided. Anyone believing that he or she has pertinent and valid information about such

matters may contact the Joint Commission's representatives. Information will be carefully evaluated for relevance to the accreditation process.

Such requests should be mailed to **Division of Accreditation Operations, Office of Quality Monitoring Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, One Renaissance Boulevard, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181; faxed to (630) 792-5636; or e-mailed to [complaint@jcaho.org](mailto:complaint@jcaho.org).** ■



# Putting a stop to shingles

and dramatically reduced the disease's severity and complications in those affected by shingles.

## About shingles

Shingles results from reactivation of the virus that causes chicken pox, a childhood infection. After chicken pox, the virus stays dormant within nerve cells and sometimes reappears as shingles in adulthood. A symptom of shingles is pain in an area of skin on one side of the body or face. Another is a blistering rash in the same area.

Shingles can affect anyone who has had chicken pox—which includes most adults in the country.

Half the people who live to age 85 will get shingles, and about 1 million new cases occur in the country every year. “For some people, shingles can result in months or even years of misery,” says Shing Shing Yeh, M.D., Northport VAMC

Extended Care Attending Physician and the study's lead investigator at Northport VAMC.

## The study

The Shingles Prevention Study involved more than 38,500 men and women, ages 60 and older, at 22 study sites across the United States. Sixteen VAMCs and six clinical sites coordinated by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases participated.

In the study, half the subjects received a placebo and the other half received one vaccine injection. This new vaccine contains a live, weakened form of the virus responsible for chicken pox and shingles. Produced by Merck & Co., Inc., the vaccine is a stronger version of the vaccine that's been used to prevent chicken pox in children since 1995.

The researchers stressed that

they tested the vaccine as preventive therapy only. Not available to the public yet, the vaccine isn't meant to treat those who already have shingles or post-herpetic neuralgia, a condition whereby pain from shingles persists long after the rash has healed. ■



Shing Shing Yeh, M.D., Northport VAMC Extended Care Attending Physician and a local lead investigator in the Shingles Prevention Study, helps protect veterans from shingles.

**N**orthport VA Medical Center has taken new strides to protect veterans from shingles, a painful nerve and skin infection. In one of the largest adult vaccine trials ever—the Shingles Prevention Study—researchers from Northport VAMC and New York Harbor Healthcare System and colleagues across the country proved an experimental vaccine against shingles prevented incidence of the disease by about 51 percent



## Northport VAMC reaches out to

# America's newest veterans

**A**t Northport VA Medical Center, we continue to welcome home the men and women who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). We're here to teach them about VA benefits, help them transition from active duty to civilian life and ensure they get proper medical care.

### Are you eligible for benefits?

Active-duty personnel and Reservist or National Guard members who served in a theater of combat operations are eligible for VA services for injuries or illnesses they believe resulted from combat service for up to two years beginning on the date of their

discharge. This eligibility is available without medical proof that the conditions are combat related. Afterward, these veterans can continue to receive free healthcare for injuries and illnesses officially connected to military service.

Northport's Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom Team, led by Vanessa J. Brown, R.N., helps OIF/OEF veterans with VA enrollment, benefits and claims, and medical services, including medications and therapy. Some VA services are time-limited.

If you know an OIF/OEF veteran who hasn't enrolled with Northport VAMC, ask him or her to contact Brown right away at (631) 774-1707 or (631) 261-4400, ext. 2173 or 2385. ■

## Were you exposed to Agent Orange?

**I**n 1978, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) established an Agent Orange Registry Examination Program to evaluate Vietnam veterans concerned about Agent Orange exposure. VA maintains a computerized registry of data from these exams. Registrants receive regular updates on Agent Orange studies and VA policy.

Like other veterans, Vietnam veterans with disabilities incurred or aggravated by military service may receive monthly VA compensation.

Thanks to Agent Orange studies, these diseases not recognized during service are known today to be service connected: chloracne, Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, porphyria cutanea tarda, respiratory cancers, soft-tissue sarcoma, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy, prostate disease and adult-onset diabetes.

To schedule an Agent Orange Registry exam at Northport VAMC, call (631) 261-4400, ext. 2660, and ask for the Agent Orange Coordinator. ■

## Northport VAMC celebrates VA's 75th birthday!



**N**orthport VA Medical Center's senior managers celebrated the Department of Veterans Affairs' 75th "birthday" with patients and staff. Blowing out the candles are (left to right) Chief of Staff Edward Mack, M.D.; Director Robert Schuster, M.H.C.A.; newly appointed Associate Director Maria Favale, Pharm.D.; and Associate Director for Patient/Nursing Services Rosie Chatman, R.N., M.A. ■



# Healthcare Happenings

Information for Veteran Patients of the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System



## Bringing better health to you

VANYHHS offers Home Based Primary Care

At VA New York Harbor Health Care System, we provide Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) to veterans who are homebound and unable to travel to our medical campuses or

community clinics for primary care. Our HBPC medical team consists of nurses, social workers, rehabilitation therapists and a dietitian. A physician, who also makes home visits, oversees the services.

### Learn more

To find out more about Home Based Primary Care, call an office nearest you:

- **Brooklyn Campus:** (718) 630-3730
- **New York Campus:** (212) 951-3208
- **St. Albans VA Primary and Extended Care Center:** (718) 298-8510

HBPC services include a complete medical history and physical, laboratory medical tests, an EKG, home oxygen monitoring, palliative care, and patient health education about diet, exercise and medications. Patients receive VA medications through the mail. They may also receive home equipment and adaptive devices to help them live independently.

### Are you eligible for HBPC?

To receive HBPC services, you must:

- live in Brooklyn, Staten Island, Manhattan, Queens and parts of the Bronx and Nassau counties
- be homebound or bed-bound and unable to access medical care
- have a caregiver willing and able to care for you at home
- be willing to accept your primary medical care through HBPC

HBPC doesn't offer highly technical care, intravenous therapy, physical therapy, daily visits and home health aides. For more information about HBPC, contact your VA social worker, speak with your primary VA provider or call our HBPC offices (*see box above*). ■

# See your doctor faster at VANYHHS

Call to cancel your appointment!

Letting us know you can't make your appointment helps us provide better care.

Did you know that veterans missed about 115,000 scheduled appointments last year? And that this affects you and your healthcare?

It's true! Because of the overwhelming number of no-shows (missed appointments), many veterans like you may not receive your healthcare appointment when you want it. You're forced to wait longer to see a provider. In return, when you don't call to cancel an appointment, your

unused slot can't help another veteran who needs care.

We need your help to solve this problem. Please take a moment to call us as soon as you know you can't make your appointment. By calling to cancel, you'll help other veterans get the medical care they need faster.

Remember: One simple phone call is all it takes to be a buddy to your fellow veterans and help us serve you better. ■

## Call us

Use this quick-and-easy guide next time you need to call to cancel your healthcare appointment.

### Brooklyn Campus

**POD A:** (718) 630-3701

**POD C:** (718) 630-3681

**POD D:** (718) 439-4149

**POD E:** (718) 439-4148

**POD F:** (718) 630-3774

**Women's Health:** (718) 836-6600, ext.1269

**Hematology/Oncology:** (718) 836-6600, ext. 6221

### New York Campus

**Primary Care:** (212) 686-7500, ext. 7135, 6802 or 4091

**Pharmacy questions:** (212) 686-7500, ext. 6860

**Central Scheduling (all other outpatient clinics):** (212) 686-7500, ext. 4229 or 5967

### St. Albans Campus

**Outpatient Clinic:** (718) 298-8400

**Pharmacy Help Desk:** (888) 216-9094

# Where YOU CAN FIND US—ANYTIME

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**Bronx**

*Medical Center:*

130 West Kingsbridge Road  
Bronx, NY 10468  
(718) 584-9000

*Community Clinics:*

23 South Broadway  
White Plains, NY 10601  
(914) 421-1951

124 New Main Street  
Yonkers, NY 10701  
(914) 375-8055

41-03 Queens Boulevard  
Sunnyside, NY 11104  
(718) 741-4800

953 Southern Boulevard  
Bronx, NY 10459  
(718) 741-4900

.....  
**VA New York Harbor  
Health Care System**

*Medical Centers:*

Brooklyn Campus  
800 Poly Place  
Brooklyn, NY 11209  
(718) 836-6600

New York Campus  
423 East 23rd Street  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 686-7500

VA Primary and Extended  
Care Center

179th Street & Linden Boulevard  
St. Albans, NY 11425  
(718) 526-1000

*Community Clinics:*

40 Flatbush Extension—8th Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
(718) 439-4300

1150 South Avenue  
3rd Floor—Suite 301  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
(718) 761-2973

55 West 125th Street—11th Floor  
New York, NY 10027  
(212) 828-5265

245 West Houston Street  
New York, NY 10014  
(212) 337-2569

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**VA New Jersey  
Health Care System**

*Medical Centers:*

East Orange Campus  
385 Tremont Avenue  
East Orange, NJ 07018-1095  
(973) 676-1000

Lyons Campus  
151 Knollcroft Road  
Lyons, NJ 07939  
(908) 647-0180

*Community Clinics:*

970 Route 70  
Brick, NJ 08724  
(732) 206-8900

654 East Jersey Street—Suite 2A  
Elizabeth, NJ 07206  
(908) 994-0120

171 Jersey Street—Building 36  
Trenton, NJ 08611-2425  
(609) 989-2355

385 Prospect Avenue  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
(201) 487-1390

115 Christopher Columbus Drive  
Jersey City, NJ 07302  
(201) 435-3055

317 George Street  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
(732) 729-0646

340 West Hanover Avenue  
Morristown, NJ 07960  
(973) 539-9791  
(973) 539-9794

20 Washington Place  
Newark, NJ 07102  
(973) 645-1441

Patterson Army Health Clinic  
Stephenson Avenue—Building 1075  
Fort Monmouth, NJ 07703  
(732) 532-4500

275 Getty Avenue  
Paterson, NJ 07503  
(973) 247-1666

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**VA Hudson Valley  
Health Care System**

*Medical Centers:*

Montrose Campus  
Route 9A/P.O. Box 100  
Montrose, NY 10548-0100  
(914) 737-4400

Castle Point Campus  
Castle Point, NY 12511  
(845) 831-2000

*Community Clinics:*

461 Broadway  
Monticello, NY 12701  
(845) 791-4936

150 Pike Street  
Port Jervis, NY 12771  
(845) 856-5396

20 Squadron Boulevard—  
Suite 400  
New City, NY 10956  
(845) 634-8942

30 Hatfield Lane—  
Suite 204  
Goshen, NY 10924  
(845) 294-6927

488 Freedom Plains Road  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603  
(845) 452-5151

1875 Route 6  
Warwick Savings Bank—  
2nd Floor  
Carmel, NY 10512  
(845) 228-5291

2881 Church Street  
Route 199  
Pine Plains, NY 12567  
(518) 398-9240

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**Northport (Long Island)**

*Medical Center:*

79 Middleville Road  
Northport, NY 11768  
(631) 261-4400

*Community Clinics:*

4 Phyllis Drive  
Patchogue, NY 11772  
(631) 758-4419

1425 Old Country Road  
Plainview, NY 11803  
(516) 694-6008

Westhampton Air Base  
(by appointment only)  
150 Old Riverhead Road  
Westhampton, NY 11978  
(631) 898-0599

NY/NJ Veterans Integrated Service  
Network 3  
130 W. Kingsbridge Road  
VISN Office  
Bronx, NY 10468

<http://www.va.gov/visns/visn03>

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