

**VA National Center for Health  
Promotion and Disease  
Prevention  
(VA NCP)**

**FY 2007  
Annual Report**



*Linda S. Kinsinger, MD, MPH  
Director and  
Chief Consultant for Health Promotion  
and Disease Prevention  
Office of Patient Care Services*

## Message from the Director

As you'll see in this year's Annual Report, FY 2007 was another busy and productive year for the VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP), a field-based program office within the Office of Patient Care Services. The report includes highlights of activities in NCP's on-going clinical program areas: research and evaluation, prevention practice, *MOVE!* weight management, and employee wellness. This was the first full year for a new program area in NCP: the Veterans Health Education and Information Office. Led by Dr. Rose Mary Pries and ably assisted by Dr. Pam Hebert, the Office is well on its way to establishing itself as the lead for patient education information and support within VHA.



A continuing activity supported by several NCP program areas is the HealthierUS Veterans Initiative, a collaborative effort between the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services to encourage healthy eating and physical activity among all veterans and their family members to prevent the onset of obesity and diabetes and their complications. For more information about the HealthierUS Veterans Initiative and its activities in 2006-2007, please see a separate report at: [http://www.healthierusveterans.va.gov/docs/2006\\_2007\\_HUSV\\_Report.pdf](http://www.healthierusveterans.va.gov/docs/2006_2007_HUSV_Report.pdf).

We had a few staff changes this year, as you'll see noted below. It's always exciting to bring in new staff to our Center, just as it's sad to see other staff members leave. We wish Sejal, Karen, and Shirley all the best in their new endeavors.

We continue to strive for excellence in our support of health promotion and disease prevention services and activities in VHA. Next year's plate is full of exciting new projects and maintaining current ones. We look forward to working with others across VHA to provide the best in preventive health care for our country's veterans.

*Linda*

## Staff Changes During FY 2007

- Dr. Leila Kahwati became the Clinical Deputy Director at the beginning of FY 2007
- Dr. Pamela Hebert joined NCP as the VHEI Health Education Coordinator
- At the end of FY 2007, contracts ended for two *MOVE!* staff members: Sejal Dave, RD, and Karen Crotty, PhD and for our Program Support Assistant, Shirley Bullock

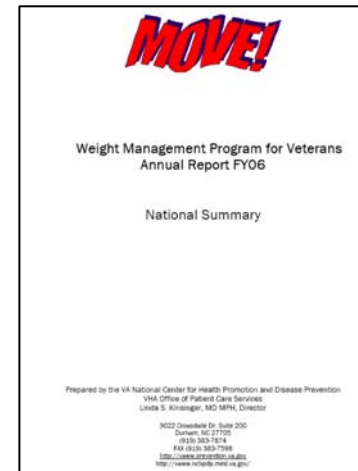
# Deputy Director, Clinical

## Leila C. Kahwati, MD, MPH

### Research and Evaluation

The Public Law that established the NCP in 1992 included prevention research as one of the NCP's functions. Since the NCP was established, research has always played a role in the center's activities and FY2007 was no exception. Over the last several years, NCP has become more engaged in program evaluation, an activity that nicely complements its research mission and which provides much needed information for informing future prevention program development and policy. The following summarizes highlights of NCP's research and evaluation activities for FY2007:

- **MOVE!** Weight Management Program for Veterans - Program Evaluation.
  - Conducted the FY2006 **MOVE!** Annual Report, an online survey of all VAMC on the status of facility **MOVE!** Programs and summarized findings from the **FY06 MOVE! Annual Report** to senior VHA leadership.
  - Refined the **MOVE!** Visits Utilization Data Cube hosted by the VHA Support Service Center.
  - Implemented two **MOVE!** Program pilot supporting indicators to assess screening and counseling for obesity and **MOVE!** Program participation.
- Developed and implemented a plan for evaluating the HealthierUS Veterans Initiative.
- Developed plan for evaluating patient and provider brochures designed to support the United States Preventive Services Task Force cardiovascular clinical preventive services recommendations.
- **Published a manuscript titled "The impact of the 2004-2005 influenza vaccine shortage in the Veterans Health Administration" in the August 2007 issue of the Journal of General Internal Medicine.**
- Obtained IRB and Research and Development Committee approvals to begin work on a 5-year **MOVE!**-related research study in collaboration with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to evaluate two enhancements to the **MOVE!** Program—tailored patient newsletters and veteran peer counseling.
- Continued on-going collaboration with the VHA research community including assisting with proposal review and development, serving as consultants and/or coinvestigators on funded studies, and serving on the Diabetes QUERI Executive Council.
- NCP continued to review evidence synthesis for the United States Preventive Services Task Force and participate on the obesity systematic review team for the Task Force on Community Preventive Services.



#### The Impact of the 2004-2005 Influenza Vaccine Shortage in the Veterans Health Administration

Leila C. Kahwati, MD, MPH<sup>1</sup>, John R. Elter, DMD, PhD<sup>2</sup>, Kristy A. Stralts-Tröster, PhD<sup>3</sup>, Linda S. Kinsinger, MD, MPH<sup>1</sup>, and Victoria J. Davey, RN, MPH<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Office of Patient Care Services, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 3022 Crossdale Dr, Suite 200, Durham, North Carolina 27705, USA; <sup>2</sup>Office of Quality and Performance, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, Durham, North Carolina 27705, USA; <sup>3</sup>Mid-Atlantic Network Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, Durham, North Carolina 27705, USA; <sup>4</sup>Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC, USA.

# Prevention Practice

## Pamela Del Monte, MS, RN, C

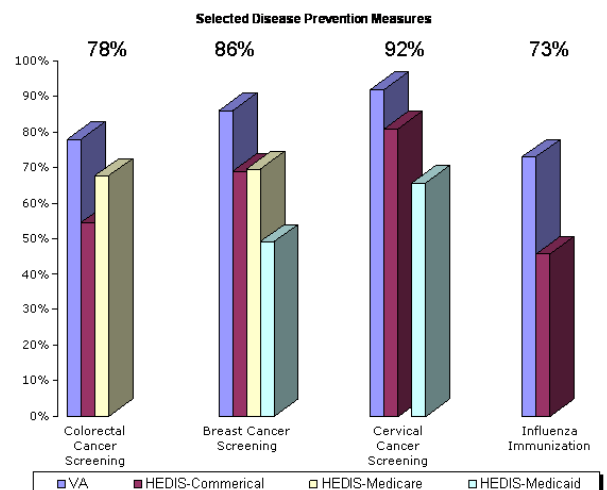
Prevention Practice serves to provide resources, guidance and support interactions between the NCP, VISN Preventive Medicine Leaders, facility Prevention Coordinators and others on prevention-related issues including, but not limited to screening, immunizations, counseling and chemoprevention.

Strengthening collaborations with others to promote the prevention of disease, the NCP took either the lead or an active role in numerous activities in 2007. In January, Prevention Practice took the lead in coordinating and promoting the VA's participation and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in the 2007 HealthierFeds Campaign. Other activities included Wear Red to Work Day focused on the awareness and prevention of heart disease in women, the Great American Smokeout and World AIDS Day. Throughout the year Prevention Practice played an active role in revision of the 2007-2008 Influenza Toolkit and development of Pandemic Flu resources in collaboration with the Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards.

This section provided clinical prevention information to clinicians and veterans including 3 Information Letters on Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening, Vaccination to Prevent Cervical Cancer Caused by Certain Types of Genital Human Papillomavirus and Vaccination to Prevent Herpes Zoster. Ongoing monthly prevention conference calls presented timely and topical information to clinicians. A variety of prevention-related topics are presented on the calls. FY 2007 topics included suicide prevention, immunizations, HIV/AIDS, hypertension, an update on seasonal and pandemic influenza and success stories from the field. Eight-two Monthly Prevention Topic handouts were developed and numerous web resources posted for use with veterans. Work has begun on the development of a comprehensive clinical prevention policy for VA. As this project moves forward, a new section to the prevention website will include directives, handbooks, policies, information letters, resources, successful strategies and patient education materials, including veteran-centric and provider brochures being developed for the US Preventive Services Task Force Cardiovascular recommendations.

Prevention Practice actively reaches out to clinicians, veterans and the public. This was most notable in the redesign of the [www.prevention.va.gov](http://www.prevention.va.gov) website. Visits to the website averaged 115 per day for an annual total of 42,000. The website is divided into distinct sections. In Resources for Clinicians, users will find health resources targeted at clinicians, health resources targeted at patients, continuing education resources and timely updates. In Health Information for Veterans and the Public, visitors will find information and links to health information, health resources on a variety of topics and information sheets available for download. Each month a different health topic is highlighted.

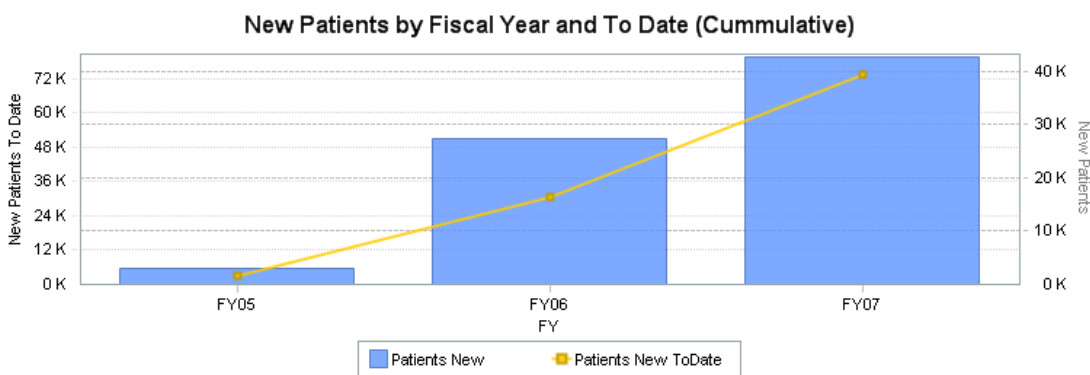
The work of Prevention Practice augments the work of others and translates into positive results for clinical prevention services. Selected results are in the accompanying chart. These are FY 2007 VA results of cancer screening and influenza immunization rates as compared to HEDIS-Medicare, HEDIS-Medicaid and HEDIS-Commercial rates.



# MOVE! Program

## Kenneth Jones, PhD

FY 2007 was a year of significant expansion of patient care for the *MOVE!* Weight Management Program for Veterans. The figure below displays a blended representation of the cumulative number of veterans who received workload credit for at least one follow-up appointment for *MOVE!* as well as the number of new patients seen each fiscal year. In FY 2006, 27,513 new patients received *MOVE!*-related care. In FY 2007, 42,801 patients received *MOVE!*-related care representing a 56% increase in the number of patients served over the prior year. Patient contacts (individual, telephone, group) also rose from 107,600 in FY 2006 to 212,980 visits in FY 2007, a remarkable increase in *MOVE!*-related patient interactions of 97%.



During FY 2007, the *MOVE!* team at NCP made significant enhancements to group session materials and other resources. Previously, group session materials primarily consisted of packets of information that staff had to integrate with other materials to conduct group sessions. After surveying the field on typical practices and needs, the team revamped the group materials into a succinct package. The sessions now contain a streamlined format with interactive exercises and a weekly physical activity. New orientation and anniversary group sessions are now available. As many *MOVE!* staff may be new to leading groups, general guidance for group leadership is now provided.

A primary treatment information tool for *MOVE!* is the package of handouts (hardcopy and web) that address individual issues. In FY 2007, the content of the handouts was reviewed and revised. The handouts were reformatted for the visually impaired. Eight additional handouts were developed based upon needs identified by the field and in support of the VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for the Identification and Management of Overweight and Obesity. The organization and look of our patient and staff websites were revised so that users could rapidly find needed information.

The 2006 *MOVE!* Annual Report revealed that facilities are having difficulties providing ongoing support to patients enrolled in *MOVE!*. In FY 2007, the *MOVE!* team worked with the Office of Care Coordination to develop a new Disease Management Protocol (DMP) for *MOVE!* to provide self-management support with home messaging technologies. The DMP is designed for daily patient communications with patients. Following development work by NCP and OCC, the DMPs were reviewed and revised by a national multidisciplinary panel of VA weight management experts. The *MOVE!* DMP will target obese patients with either metabolic syndrome or a new onset of diabetes, and is targeted for release in FY 2008. Over the next two years the team will be developing and testing regional call centers and web-based treatment for *MOVE!* to provide further resources to support weight self-management.



## Health Promotion

### Richard Harvey, PhD

NCP has been promoting employee wellness in VHA for approximately five years. An active e-mail network of wellness coordinators and other interested persons was formed, as was a field-based Wellness Advisory Council. Bimonthly national wellness conference calls were established to encourage interaction and sharing of knowledge, resources, and best practices.

Significant advancements in employee wellness have been made during FY 2007. A substantial amount of time has been devoted to strengthening the employee wellness network and developing resources. Participation in the bimonthly calls has increased from approximately 30-35 to over 90 callers. The employee wellness section of the NCP website now features an abundance of resources, and has been enthusiastically received by wellness leaders in the field. There are at least 49 wellness programs in operation in the VHA, and the energy, enthusiasm, and creativity demonstrated by those who operate those programs is truly remarkable. Programs are being encouraged to adopt evidence-based best practices where possible.

A manual for implementing *MOVEmployee!*, an employee version of the *MOVE!* weight management program for veterans, has been developed and posted on the website. *MOVEmployee!* programs have grown from 12 in May 2006 to 43 in November 2007, and others are in the planning stages. A guide for hosting a healthy meeting was also prepared and posted on the website. A number of VHA conferences have since utilized the suggestions to improve the health-promoting character of those meetings.

For the future, continued development is anticipated. An Under Secretary's Information Letter on employee wellness is being prepared, and an official VHA "Handbook" may follow. A formal network of wellness coordinators in every medical center is being proposed. NCP is working with representatives from the Occupational Safety and Health Program in the VA Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards, Veterans Benefits Administration, the National Cemetery Administration, and the Office of Personnel Management on wellness initiatives. Employee wellness indeed has a bright future in the VHA!





# Veterans Health Education and Information

Rose Mary Pries, DrPH, CHES

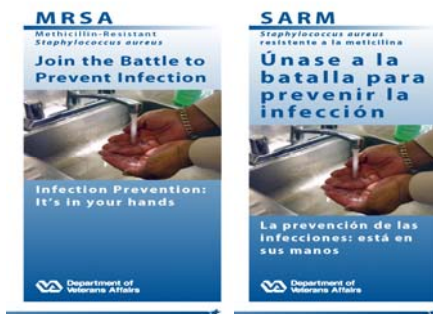
In FY07, its first year, the Office of Veterans Health Education and Information promoted health education across VHA's healthcare continuum. VHEI developed its strategic plan and formed the VHEI Coordinating Committee. This Committee includes representatives from VACO program offices and VISN and VAMC clinical leadership. VHEI coordinates and offers the field-based Patient Education Network hotlines, conference calls and newsletters on important health education topics. Clinician training on patient education, *Patient Education: TEACH for Success*, is offered in partnership with the Employee Education System.

VHEI has also developed resources for veterans in collaboration with clinical and patient education content experts in VACO and the field. These resources include My Health<sub>Vet</sub> Healthy Living and Condition Centers on Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, Diabetes, Heart Failure, Hypertension, Coronary Heart Disease, and Smoking and Tobacco Use Cessation.

Five brochures in color and black and white in both English and Spanish were developed in support of VHA's Prevention of Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus Initiative. VHEI collaborated on fourteen resources for veterans and four for clinicians on Chronic Disease Self-Management to help veterans take a more active role in their health. These resources stress the therapeutic alliance between providers & patients through effective communication, shared decision-making & personalized patient health education & information. To help veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) receive the best possible rehabilitation services and achieve optimal levels of function, VHEI initiated a partnership for care agreement for VA Polytrauma Centers. In addition VHEI assisted with the creation of additional education resources for TBI patients. Informational letters for veterans on suicide prevention and Shelhigh devices were also developed.

VHEI consults with VACO, VISNs and VAMCs on critical issues to promote patient-centered care and improve delivery of patient education services to veterans and their caregivers. Consultation has included process improvement, organizational structure and function of patient education coordinator positions and committees at the VAMC and VISN levels.

In FY08, VHEI will focus on three important areas. One of the areas of focus is collaboration with the Harvard University School of Public Health to promote health literacy in VHA healthcare facilities. The aim of this effort is to develop strategies to promote literacy appropriate messages for veterans and their caregivers with regards to health and wellness. This first area of focus is an important component of the second, to assist the field to meet the Joint Commission's patient education standards. The third is to revise and update the previous VHA policy manual on patient education.



**VA National Center for Health Promotion  
and Disease Prevention  
Office of Patient Care Services**

**FY 2007 Staff**

**Director** – Linda Kinsinger, MD, MPH  
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**Program Analyst** – Connie Lewis  
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**MOVE! Project Coordinator, Contractor-**  
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**Program Analyst** – Tony Rogers  
**Program Manager for Health Promotion** –  
Richard Harvey, PhD

**Program Manager for Veterans Health Education and Information** –  
Rose Mary Pries, DrPH  
**Health Education Coordinator** –  
Pamela Hebert, DrPH, CHES



**For additional information on VA prevention activities, please contact:**

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[www.prevention.va.gov](http://www.prevention.va.gov)

**Our Mission**

The VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP), a field-based office of the Office of Patient Care Services, provides input to VHA leadership on evidenced-based health promotion and disease prevention policy. NCP provides programs, education, and coordination for the field consistent with prevention policy to enhance the health, well-being, and quality of life for veterans.

**Our Vision**

To improve and maintain veterans' health status and quality of life by providing high quality preventive health care.

