



# NEWSLETTER

May 26, 2005

Volume V Issue I

## Care Coordination on Capitol Hill

**S**taff Director of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, Susan Edgerton (Fourth from Left) poses with VHA Care Coordination participants (Left to Right) Dr. Charles Levy, Dr. Linda Godleski, Dr. Ross Fletcher, Dr. Adam Darkins, Pat Ryan, Dr. Chris Frueh, Dan Maloney, and Sydney Wertenberger following the May 18th panel testimony on VHA's use of telemedicine. The VA testimony was well received by the subcommittee members. An audio record of the session is available through the OCC Website. More photos inside.



### Nat'l Conference Sets OCC Course



**S**alt Lake City was the backdrop for this year's national VHA Care Coordination and Telehealth Leadership Forum. Please see related articles and additional conference photos (page 11) inside this newsletter. Some Conference details (including some presentations) remain available to VA staff through the OCC's Conference Web page at <http://vaww.va.gov/occ/CareCoord/Conferences.asp>

### VHA's OCC & Telehealth Web sites Merge

As has our office, as has this newsletter, VHA's OCC and Telehealth Websites have recently merged into [www.va.gov/occ](http://www.va.gov/occ) Visitors to the old VHA Telehealth Web site will be redirected.

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# Office of Care Coordination

## Making a Difference

By Adam W. Darkins, MD

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005, the House Veterans Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Health held an oversight hearing on telemedicine in VHA. The hearing considered the use and future devel-

opment of telemedicine in VHA and details of the hearing, names of witnesses and the testimony given are all available on the Internet at: <http://veterans.house.gov/hearings/index.html> as both text and audio downloads. The hearing was generally well received with the range of services in VHA that involve both Care Coordination Home Telehealth (CCHT) and Care Coordination General Telehealth (CCGT) highlighted.

Many of the witnesses testifying at the hearing had recently presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Care Coordination & Tele-

health leadership meeting that was held in Salt Lake City in April 2005. This meeting, as meetings in previous years had been, was a landmark event in the ongoing development of Care Coordination and Telehealth



Adam Darkins, MD

is the Chief Consultant for VHA's Office of Care Coordination & VHA's Telehealth Strategic Health Care

in VHA. The Salt Lake Meeting was also memorable because of the care and concern taken by the Employee Education System (EES) to ensure that everything went smoothly. The convivial surroundings created pro-

vided an ideal opportunity to network with colleagues and join the growing community of interest within VHA that is taking Care Coordination forwards. A community of interest that is centered at the VISN level and responsible for the success that was shared with the oversight hearing. Over 50 papers and posters were submitted for presentation at the meeting. From these submissions a thought-provoking and stimulating concurrent session was developed that focused the attention of the attendees on the challenges of service delivery in telemental health, tele-rehabilitation, CCHT and diabetes care. Eighteen colleagues from the Indian Health Service (IHS) came to the meeting to share their expertise and explore the potential for developing inter-agency telehealth programs between VHA and IHS. A 2002 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between VHA and IHS forms the basis upon which any new telehealth services can be developed as part of the VISN strategic priorities.

Time was set aside on the last afternoon of the conference for VISN and facility-based Care Coordination and Telehealth staff to identify areas of particular strategic importance for VISN's to consider in the ongoing development of Telehealth. Mental

health, rehabilitation, CCHT, information technology and diabetes care. Many of the front-line staff that the Office of Care Coordination (OCC) would most like to involve in these educational activities are unable to

find free-time or the money to attend meetings such as that in Salt Lake City.

VHA therefore held a concurrent virtual telehealth meeting that was broadcast by satellite on the VA Knowledge Network (VAKN) at the same time as the face-to-face meeting in Salt Lake City. EES in Salt Lake City kindly made it possible to broadcast this virtual meeting nationwide. The meeting was available in the satellite viewing rooms in VA Medical Centers and on the desktop as streaming video. There were 700 hits on the VAKN broadcast website for the Telehealth program.

It is gratifying that the success of



Salt Lake City conference presenters Dr. Chris Frueh, Dr. Linda Godleski, Sydney Wertenberger, Dr. Charles Levy, and Pat Ryan reconvened 6 weeks later to testify before HVAC on Capitol Hill.

care coordination and telehealth in VHA at the VISN level was amplified at the meeting in Salt Lake and was then heard in the Committee Rooms of Congress. Thanks are due to everyone for the difference they are making to the delivery of care to veterans.

**It is gratifying that the success of care coordination and telehealth in VHA at the VISN level was amplified at the meeting in Salt Lake and was then heard in the Committee Rooms of Congress.**

## Instructional Videotapes available to VHA Staff: Telemedicine Steps for Success

We want VHA Staff to be aware that the popular EES Produced informational training videotape entitled 'Telemedicine *Steps for Success*' is available from your local VHA facility library (Classification Call Number: W 83.1 T268 2002). If your library is currently without a copy of the tape and you want a replacement copy, a limited number of additional copies are available (for a limited time) through your VHA facility Education Contact, whose contact details are available through the EES intranet site at <http://vaww.ees.lrn.va.gov/Site/Templates/Wide.aspx?pid=996>

## Thanks *EES* for Another Great Conference



*EES in Action—VHA Care Coordination & Telehealth Leadership Forum— Salt Lake City, UT —April, 2005*

1. *EES's Bob Lane and Kristine Palazzolo keep audio-video (and everything else) running smoothly behind the scenes;* 2. *Meanwhile, out on the front line, EES's Nichole Lucero expertly fields questions at the registration table;* 3. *Leadership Forum participant being interviewed for use on the VAKN Virtual Meeting Broadcasts;* 4. *Nichole Lucero and Shirley Leal checking their list one more time.*

# VHA TELEREHABILITATION:

## Quarterly Update: Spring 2005

By **Cathy Cruise, MD**

**M**embers of the Telerehabilitation Field Work Group (FWG) met in Salt Lake City, Utah, at the Care Coordination and Telehealth Leadership Forum from April 5-7, 2005.



Dr. Charles Levy, Chief, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) Service and Director of the Low Assisted Daily Living (ADL) Monitoring Program (LAMP) at the Gainesville VAMC identified strategic priorities for telerehabilitative care in the plenary session.

Dr. Jodie Haselkorn, Director of the West Coast Multiple Sclerosis Center of Excellence (MSCoE) then spoke about how the Office of Care Coordination (OCC), particularly the Telerehabilitation FWG could step up to the plate to help VHA meet these strategic priorities.

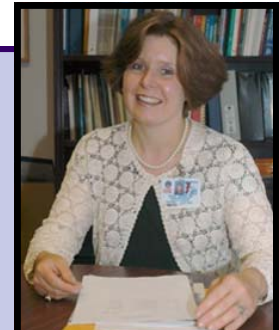
Concurrent sessions featured a number of excellent presentations, as listed below:

- Dr. Chester Ho—Use of Telerehab with SCI/D
- Susan Gill—Use of Telemonitoring for SCI/D
- Dr. Robert Kane—Internet-based Neurocognitive Assessment in MS
- Dr. Jodie Haselkorn—Overview of Telehealth in the MS Centers of Excellence (MSCoE)
- Dr. Charles Levy—The Low ADL Monitoring Program (LAMP)
- Dr. Marilyn Selinger—Successes and Limitations of Clinical Telerehabilitation
- Dr. Jon Sanford—Virtual Therapy: Efficiency of Video Teleconferencing for Rehab Interventions at Home
- Dr. Dale Strasser—Team Functioning and Telehealth: Implications from a VA Rehab Teams Project

The members of the Telerehabilitation FWG present at the conference then developed a SWOT Analysis for Telerehabilitation, focusing on Telerehabilitation Strategic Planning. This analysis and plan is currently being reviewed by the FWG and will be presented to Dr. Darkins and the OCC staff with specific action items and timeframes in the near future.

### VHA Telerehabilitation Programming Note:

**VA Staff are reminded that, on Thursday July 21st, there will be a 'Multiple Sclerosis Centers of Excellence and Telehealth' broadcast beginning at 1PM on the VA Knowledge Network (VAKN) Channel 1. Please tune in—and Call in your questions for the panel.**



**Dr. Cathy Cruise** is the Lead for VHA Telerehabilitation as well as Director of VISN 3 Care Coordination Program



## Care Coordination Home Telehealth CCHT National Training Center Sunshine Training Center Roundup



By  
**Rita Kobb MN, GNP-BC**  
Training Center Director

Here is an update on activities this quarter from the Sunshine Training Center. The first update is on the successful pre-conference workshop: **CCHT the Basics Course** coordinated and taught by Training Center and OCC staff at the national Leadership Forum in Salt Lake

City, Utah. There were **over 100 attendees** and evaluations were very positive. The Training Center would like to thank Pat Ryan, Sarita Figueroa and Linda Foster for their contributions in teaching this course.



OCC's Pat Ryan presents *CCHT The Basics* with Rita Kobb, Robert Lodge, and Sarita Figueroa April 4, 2005

tions for the OCC to help guide VISN teams in their use of the care coordinator role in CCHT programs. Task force members include:

**Rita Kobb MN, GNP-BC**  
Education Program Specialist/Training Center Director  
Office of Care Coordination

**Robert Lodge LCSW**  
Training Specialist  
Sunshine Training Center

**Corinne D. Smith RN, MS, NHA**  
VISN 1 Director, Geriatrics & Extended Care

**Paula Hemmings RN, MSN**  
Network 2 Geriatrics & Extended Care Line Director

**Cathy M. Cruise MD**  
Lead, VISN 3 Telehealth /Lead VHA Telerehabilitation

**Wendy Hepker MSW, LICSW**  
VISN 7 Health System Specialist

**Carla Anderson MSN, RN**  
Manager/Community Based Extended Care  
VISN 11 Telehealth Lead

**Kimberly Chudy BS, HSS**  
VISN 16 Telehealth Coordinator

**Laural Traylor (Opalinski) MSW**  
VISN 22 Office of Care Coordination Home Telehealth

**Linda Foster RN, MSN**  
VISN 11 Care Management Coordinator  
Acting Quality Manager-Office of Care Coordination

**Deborah Antai-Otong MS, APRN-BC, FAAN**  
VISN 17 Care Coordination/Home Telehealth Program  
Acting Quality Manager-Office of Care Coordination



OCC's Linda Foster presents during the pre-conference training program *CCHT The Basics* in Salt Lake City, UT

Training Center staff have been working closely with the University of Florida's Center for Telehealth staff on its upcoming **International Conference on Aging, Disability and Independence, February 1-4, 2006** in St. Pete, Florida. Training center staff will peer-review abstracts and serve as track chair for the Telehealth section of the conference. Here is the link for the call for abstracts [www.icadi.phhp.ufl.edu](http://www.icadi.phhp.ufl.edu) the **deadline is September 1, 2005**. We encourage staff to submit abstracts on the many excellent programs that VA has related to both hospital-based and home telehealth activities.

Training center staff are facilitating the national **Generic versus Specialized Care Coordinator Role** Task Group. Members have been working since March to develop a set of recommenda-

Finally, the Training Center has **revised the coding lesson** within the Building Blocks on-line Course to reflect all of the recent changes to coding and workload capture.

# Care Coordination at U.S. House Hearing



Scenes from the Hill—May 18th, 2005 1. VA Office of Congressional Affairs' Mary Kay Stack (Left) leads VHA panelists to Hearing Room; 2. Dr. Ross Fletcher (Washington, DC) demonstrates VHA's multimedia electronic health record; 3. Subcommittee Chair Henry Brown (SC) addresses panel; 4. VISN 15's Sydney Wertenberger (Poplar Bluff, MO) testifies on rural telehealth; 5. OCC's Pat Ryan makes a point with Congressman Brown; 6. OCC's Dr. Linda Godleski presents on Telemental Health; 7. VHA Office of Information's Dan Maloney, Dr. Ross Fletcher, and OCC's Dr. Darkins confer; 8. American Telemedicine Association's Jon Linkous (Left), Dr. Fletcher, Dr. Darkins, Dan Maloney, and Mary Kay Stack listen to panel; 9. Congressmen Michael Michaud (ME) and Henry Brown listen to VHA panelist Dr. Chris Frueh (Charleston, SC).



## 1. COMING THURSDAY MAY 26

### CARE COORDINATION/TELEHEALTH

# VHA—IHS Collaborations

Partnering with Indian Health Service for Telehealth

Thursday **May 26** (1PM Eastern) CH 1

#### Taped Rebroadcasts

Tuesday—May 31—3PM Eastern

Wednesday—June 8—10 AM Eastern

Monday—June 20—1 PM Eastern

## 2. COMING THURSDAY JULY 21

### CARE COORDINATION/TELEHEALTH

# MS Centers of Excellence & Telehealth

Thursday **July 21** (1PM Eastern) CH 1

#### Taped Rebroadcasts

Tuesday—July 26—3 PM Eastern

Wednesday—August 3—10 AM Eastern

Monday—August 22 —1PM Eastern



*VA Employees may see complete program details in the*



*Employee Education System Learning Catalog* [vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/](http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/)

## CARE COORDINATION TRAILBLAZERS

# PATTY BENSON



Bids  
Farewell  
to  
VA's  
National  
Acquisition  
Center

Although it is often emphasized that Care Coordination Home Telehealth is **not about 'the technology'**, most CCHT leaders would agree that the technology allows the VA to do some amazing things in terms of delivering care to patients at home. As part of the CCHT team, the NAC's **Patty Benson** has been doing some amazing (trailblazing) things herself, over the last two years, in terms of getting the technology from a nascent home telehealth industry, through a federal procurement process (and its attendant technical requirements), to grateful CCHT staff, and finally, into the hands of their enrolled veterans and caregivers. In our quick 'exit interview' that begins on the next page, you will get a little glimpse of **our great appreciation** for the **vast talent** VA had in this **former English teacher...**

*(Continued on page 9)*



## VA CARE COORDINATION TRAILBLAZER

**John Peters:** *I think I remember meeting you at our national telehealth conference at the Orlando Convention Center at the end of April 2003, is that your earliest connection with our office?*

**Patty Benson:** I don't recall when I met Pat (Ryan) and Adam (Darkins), but I became involved when they came to the National Acquisition Center (NAC) to talk to me about national contracts around February of 2003.

**JP:** *How many years had you been with the VA/NAC, and was there anything unique about the Care Coordination Home Telehealth (CCHT) acquisition, or was it just another in-home device acquisition?*

**PB:** I started working for VA in June 1992. I had been teaching English at Northern Illinois University for three years when I decided to try out a career change. In May 2001, I was promoted to Program Manager for Prosthetics' Standardization. Each procurement has been a challenge since prosthetic items had been exempt from standardization up until this time. The CCHT procurement has been the most challenging, interesting, and rewarding of my career. We were faced with finding a way to require vendors to locate their servers behind VA's firewall and meet all of VA security and other IT requirements. Additionally, we were dealing with a new industry that was still developing the devices we were procuring. Most of the vendors were new to Federal Procurement and the home telehealth industry is an emerging one that is highly competitive. Contracting on the scale we were doing had not been done before. The learning curve included multiple protests from vendors. None of the protests were upheld by the General Accounting Office (GAO). The best part of this procurement, for me, has been working with the VHA people who are involved with this program. I have never worked with a workgroup that was so respectful and caring of each other and my team at the NAC. I felt as if I were a part of the Care Coordination family. I am proud to have been a part of your program and hope that the eight contracts/Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA's) help you all to serve your patients.

**JP:** *Do you have any direct connections with veterans - and has your time at the NAC been meaningful in terms of creating contracts for goods and services that allow VA to care for veterans?*

**PB:** Before my current position, my contact with veterans was limited to my father, my uncle, and my brother-in-law, all of whom are service disabled veterans (World War II and

**When the CCHT procurement was assigned to me, and you all talked about the veterans you served, I visualized my father and my uncle.**

Vietnam). I grew up with a father who was missing most of his knee but still able to walk. As he has aged, the injuries he received while serving have become significantly worse due to arthritis. When I started working for the Prosthetics & Sensory Aids Service (PSAS) program, I met many veterans who are VISN (VHA's Regional) Prosthetic Representatives. When the CCHT procurement was assigned to me, and you all talked about the veterans you served, I visualized my father and my uncle. When you talked of veterans being cared for in their homes, I thought about how walking has become so difficult for my father and how difficult going to the VA would be for him if he needed to come in weekly. I go with him to visit his gerontologist every three months or so and know how difficult going to the VA is for him. I can just imagine how much more difficult visiting VA would be if we lived in a remote area of North Dakota and he needed to see a cardiologist regularly. Your program has been the most meaningful for me, with my procurements for scooters and power wheelchairs

## VA CARE COORDINATION TRAILBLAZER

(Continued from page 9)

coming in next.

**JP:** *Who at the NAC will inherit Care Coordination acquisitions?*

**PB:** Ms. Willie Anthony is going to carry on for you. She is going to keep in touch with me so that I know how well the program is working out.

**JP:** *What's next for you professionally?*

**PB:** I am going to the Department of Energy where I will be working on an entirely new area of contracting with completely new challenges-- I love change and learning, so I am looking forward to this new position, although I am sad about leaving CCHT.

**JP:** *Any final thoughts about your time with the VA?*

**PB:** When I left teaching and was hired by VA, I believed I was leaving my altruism behind and that the rest of my working life was going to be meaningless (I changed jobs for financial reasons only). Working for prosthetics, and particularly working on your procurements, gave meaning and purpose to my career. Thank you for accepting me into your family for the brief time we all traveled the same path.

**JP:** *It was our pleasure. All the best Patty.*

## Another VA Pioneer: Jill Manske Receives National Social Work Award



**Jill Manske MSW, ACSW, LISW**  
Director VHA Social Work Service

On Thursday April 14th, in Houston, TX, the [Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care](#) presented the OCC's Jill Manske with the **2005 Ida M Cannon Award** for her pioneering work as VHA's Director of Social Work Service. This award is a most prestigious Social Work Leadership award, and is extra special this year because it coincides with the 100 year anniversary of Ida Cannon's establishment of a social work department in an acute care medical setting (at Massachusetts General in 1905).

In his letter of recommendation for the award, VHA's Dr. Jonathan Perlin wrote '...Ms. Manske has improved the service we provide to our Nation's veterans, especially those who return ill or injured from Iraq and Afghanistan. She has been instrumental in the development of a closer working relationship between the Department of Defense and VA through her work in our VA Seamless Transition Program and our VA Fisher House Program, Ms. Manske has worked diligently to provide immediate service to both active duty service members, veterans and their family members. One quickly sees that the care of the patient is what is most

important to Ms. Manske...' Congratulations Jill!

# Nat'l Conference: Training & Networking

## Scenes from Salt Lake—April, 2005

1. National Training Center for CCHT Director Rita Kobb presents during Monday afternoon pre-conference short course; 2. OCC's Linda Foster presents on CCHT program Quality & Performance; 3. A group of VISN 8 participants gather for a group photo; 4. Congratulations to this year's poster winners (Left-to-Right) Michelle Ruby, Vladimir Ortiz, Eric Marshall, Sheri Kline, and Mary Anderson (not pictured: Robin Robillard-Smallwood); 5. Good friends Rita Kobb (Gainesville, FL) and Sydney Wertenberger (Poplar Bluff, MO) catch up in Salt Lake.





# NEWSLETTER

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## MISSION

Serve as a conduit for information sharing,  
strengthen resources, and  
promote community for care coordination and telehealth within the VHA,  
with the ultimate goal being: to provide the right care, at the right time, in the right  
place.

## STAFF

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## FEEDBACK

Please drop us a line and tell us what you think, or make a suggestion about content  
for future issues. We would love to hear from you. Please contact: John Peters on  
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## NEXT ISSUE

Coming late August 2005

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