HELLO AGAIN AND WELCOME to the third edition of "What's new at the WRIISC?."
The War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) is proud to present this newsletter to you quarterly to update you with current information on our program and topics related to veterans' health. We hope that you enjoyed reading the first and second editions of this newsletter. We were very happy to have you participate in our program and want to extend a heartfelt thank you for your involvement. You have our continuous support. If you would like additional information about anything mentioned in our newsletter, or have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us. If you'd like to make suggestions about topics to cover in this news letter in future editions or you would like to be taken off of our mailing list, please let us know. We are on the 11th floor of the East Orange VA Medical Center and our number is 1-800-248-8005. Our website is www.wri.med.va.gov.

EXPOSURE CLINIC

At the time you visited our center, an exposure assessment was part of your comprehensive clinical evaluation. The WRIISC is now offering this assessment to veterans separate from the full comprehensive clinical evaluation. Through this effort the WRIISC will both address the individual exposure concerns of more veterans and serve as a leader of expertise in this area of deployment health.

Veterans who are interested in having an exposure consultation at our center can contact our center for an appointment.

IMPORTANCE OF YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

A primary care provider is more than just your regular doctor. A primary care doctor can help put together all of your health information, make recommendations that are in your best interest and guide you in making decisions about your own healthcare. Having a primary care doctor that you trust and feel comfortable with is essential to overall health.

Taking an active role

It is important that individuals take an active role in their healthcare and assist their primary care provider in providing the best care that leads to the best possible health outcomes. Working as a team is important, so that both you and your doctor are on the same page. There are things that individuals can do to take charge of their healthcare. These things include:

- Practicing strategies to improve patient physician communication (Go to our website to see the WRIISC fact sheet on "Talking to your doctor").
- Keeping a personal copy of medical records that includes visits with specialists.
- Keeping an up to date list of medications, including over the counter medications.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Because of her incredible accomplishments in both military and civilian life, our last newsletter featured an introduction to Major General (MG) Marianne Mathewson-Chapman. We will begin sharing her life experiences in the next edition of this newsletter in the "Making a Difference" feature.

MEFLOQUINE (LARIAM) FACT SHEET

The WRIISC has recently developed a fact sheet on the drug mefloquine (Lariam). Service members have expressed concern about both the side effects and long term health impact of taking the drug. Mefloquine is the best drug for some deployed service men and women to take for protection from the disease malaria. Despite common concern about use of the drug, the benefits of taking mefloquine, most importantly prevention of death from malaria, outweigh the possibility of having both common and rare side effects from the drug. There are no scientific studies that show long term health effects from the drug.

NEW EDUCATION INITIATIVE

We are working on developing a series of veteran workshops. Veterans living with a chronic condition who are interested in improving their quality of life will be invited to attend. Keep an eye out for future announcements!

Participating in research helps other veterans. We appreciate your continuing support of our mission to improve the health of veterans through research.

We wish you a happy & healthy holiday season!