

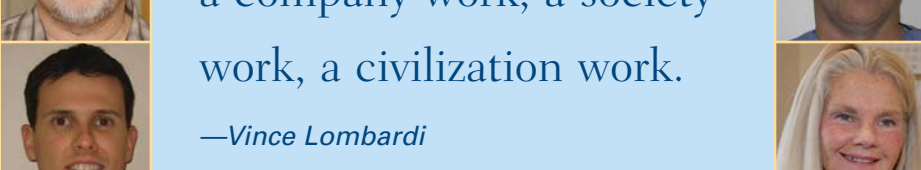
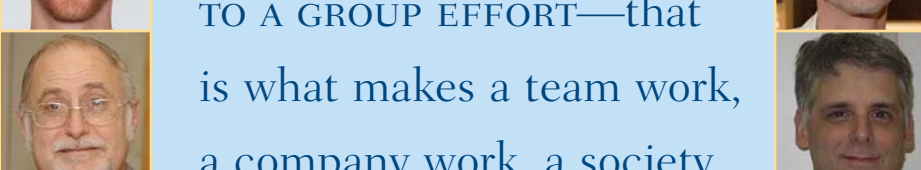
Vision FOR Excellence

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INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT
TO A GROUP EFFORT—that
is what makes a team work,
a company work, a society
work, a civilization work.
—Vince Lombardi

Director's Message

Vision
FOR
Excellence



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VISN 4's *Vision for Excellence* is published for the employees, volunteers, patients and friends of VA Healthcare - VISN 4. To submit articles, editorials, letters or story ideas for possible inclusion, please contact David Cowgill at 412-365-4052 or via email: david.cowgill@va.gov.

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Volume One | Issue Three

DEAR FELLOW EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, VETERANS AND FRIENDS OF VISN 4,

VISN 4 was Number One in participation for the All Employee Survey this year finishing with an 87% response rate, the best in the nation! The VHA average was 79%.

All VISN 4 employees were asked and encouraged to take the All Employee Survey, which could be completed by Internet, telephone or by filling out a paper copy. I would like to take a moment to sincerely thank each and every employee who took the time out of their busy schedule to let us know how they feel about their job and work environment.

This survey is of vital importance to the direction and strategic planning of VISN 4. It is well known that employees, who are satisfied with their jobs and work environment, will do great work. VISN 4 strongly believes that employee satisfaction leads to higher clinical results and better care for our veterans, which is why it is so important for us to hear from our employees.

The results of the All Employee Survey show that VISN 4 is a well-performing organization, but we will continue to make it better! We will analyze the results of the survey and determine what areas we can improve in and the improvements will be made.

Employees appreciate a better workplace and that makes for better outcomes for the patients. We want our employees to be satisfied. We want highly talented and dedicated individuals to choose VISN 4 as their employer and remain VISN 4 employees for the majority of their career. VISN 4 wants our employees to succeed and to be the best that they can possibly be, which is why I took this opportunity to showcase some of the programs that are offered to employees to help them advance their careers and themselves with VISN 4.

As you read through this publication you will learn about some fantastic programs offered through VISN 4 such as the Employee Development Fund, which can be used to help further one's education, or the Education Debt Reduction Program, which provides education loan repayments to recently appointed health care professionals in occupations for which retention and recruitment are difficult. In VISN 4 each medical center has established a leadership development curriculum for employees who are competitively selected as "high potential" employees called the Facility LEAD program and VISN 4 established a Leadership Development Institute (LDI) program for higher grade employees competitively selected as "high potential" employees.

Thank you for making VISN 4 an employer of choice!

Sincerely,

MICHAEL E. MORELAND, FACHE
NETWORK DIRECTOR, VISN 4



Michael E. Moreland, FACHE



All Employee Survey Results

JOB SATISFACTION AVERAGES

Component	VISN 4 2006	VISN 4 2007	Difference
Work Type	4.07	4.06	-0.01
Work Amount	3.67	3.66	-0.01
Pay Satisfaction	3.22	3.18	-0.04
Coworker	4.01	3.98	-0.03
Supervision	3.65	3.69	0.04
Senior Management	3.04	3.08	0.04
Promotion Opportunity	2.68	2.72	0.04
Work Condition	3.47	3.48	0.01
Customer Satisfaction	4.00	3.93	-0.07
Praise	3.11	3.19	0.08
Work Quality	4.43	4.40	-0.03
Satisfaction	3.73	3.73	0.00
Satisfaction - 2 Years	3.01	3.07	0.06

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT AVERAGES

Component	VISN 4 2006	VISN 4 2007	Difference
Cooperation	3.55	3.60	0.05
Conflict Resolution	3.33	3.39	0.06
Diversity Acceptance	3.71	3.74	0.03
Coworker Support	3.63	3.66	0.03
Supervisory Support	3.66	3.65	-0.01
Customer Service	3.70	3.72	0.02
Innovation	3.41	3.45	0.04
Resources	3.81	3.83	0.02
Safety Climate	3.72	3.74	0.02
Leadership	3.47	3.51	0.04
Rewards	3.41	3.46	0.05
Employee Development	3.45	3.50	0.05
Work/Family Balance	3.77	3.79	0.02
Planning/Evaluation	3.64	3.68	0.04
Job Control	3.09	3.12	0.03
Demands	3.51	3.56	0.05
Retention	3.41	3.40	-0.01
Engagement	3.57	3.62	0.05
Psychological Safety	3.25	3.28	0.03

Color Key

Not Very Satisfied



No Change



Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied



Negative Change



Satisfied to Very Satisfied



Positive Change



Response Averages Comparison

THE PURPOSE OF THE 2007 ALL EMPLOYEE SURVEY was to gather information from our employees on their perceptions of the workplace. The survey process is completely anonymous and could be completed either electronically via the VA intranet, over the telephone or by hardcopy paper.

Employees were requested to answer specific questions based on the following scale:

- (1) Not at all satisfied
- (2) Not very satisfied
- (3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- (4) Somewhat satisfied
- (5) Very satisfied

VISN 4 had the highest participation rate in the nation with an 87% total participation. The final results were compared using last year's 2006 average results and this year's 2007 average results. These two tables compare Job Satisfaction and Organizational Assessment.

Job Satisfaction Averages—This comparison table measures individual employee satisfaction with key job features. Comparing the survey results from 2006 to 2007 demonstrates very similar numbers with the exception of "Promotion Opportunity". As you will note in this newsletter, Mr. Michael Moreland, VISN 4 Network Director, immediately addressed this issue by focusing attention on programs most likely to assist our employees in professional development and promotion opportunity. As a result our Employee Development Fund was increased more than twofold. Efforts to further assist employees have centered on educational opportunities such as the Facility LEAD program, the Leadership Development Institute and the Network Executive Health Care Leadership Institute. At all levels our focus is on personal employee development in support of our Network Succession Plan.

Organizational Assessment Averages—This comparison table measures employee perceptions of workgroup conditions. A comparison of 2006 and 2007 survey results demonstrates improvement over a majority of the components measured. A very slight decrease was noted in three components measured. Employee perceptions of their immediate workgroup remain positive. All facilities in VISN 4 have established action plans to improve in areas identified by each medical center director. These action plans are monitored and will be reported on quarterly during fiscal year 2008. ★

VISN 4 #1 for All Employee Survey

CONGRATULATIONS VISN 4! VISN 4 WAS NUMBER ONE in participation for the All Employee Survey this year finishing with an 87% response rate, the best in the nation! The VHA average was 79%.

All of the facilities within VISN 4 did a great job of encouraging employees to participate in the All Employee Survey. The Ice Cream socials were a great idea and a hit! Erie was creative with their “walking” billboards, which increased awareness of the survey and helped them achieve a 100 percent response rate. ★

Location	Employees	Respondents	Response Rate
VISN 4 Total	10,550	9,178	87.00%
VISN 4 Office	49	41	83.67%
Altoona	500	451	90.20%
Butler	494	419	84.82%
Clarksburg	663	504	76.02%
Coatesville	1,173	924	78.77%
Erie	526	534	100%
Lebanon	1,068	919	86.05%
Philadelphia	1,790	1,580	88.27%
Pittsburgh	2,505	2,356	94.05%
Wilkes-Barre	1,015	757	74.58%
Wilmington	767	693	90.35%



A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.

—John C. Maxwell



Employee Development Fund (EDF)

THE PURPOSE of the Employee Development Fund is to provide support to employees at all levels as they strive to develop in areas related to the competencies of the VHA High Performance Development Model (HPDM), which provides a framework for the VHA to develop a highly skilled, customer-centered workforce for the 21st century. To learn more about HPDM please visit <http://vaww.va.gov/hpdm/>.

Mr. Michael Moreland, VA Healthcare – VISN 4 Director, substantially increased the funding for EDF to further support staff education, training and development. Initially Mr. Moreland increased the EDF from \$700,000 to \$1.5 million during fiscal year 2007. This fund remained at \$1.5 million for fiscal year 2008, but Mr. Moreland requested the amount of money available for each employee be increased from \$2000 to \$4000 per individual per fiscal year.

The EDF may be used for continuing education offering registration fees, tuition (academic and non-academic) and formalized self study courses to include associated travel expenses. Funds may also be requested by individuals for study manuals, tutorial materials (CD-ROMs, etc.) and textbooks that are deemed required and necessary to successful course completion. The EDF cannot be used to directly support licensure or certification preparation. ★

“Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don’t turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.”

—Michael Jordan

I’ve been the recipient of EDF funds over the past couple of years. I’ve taken two correspondence courses and two off-station classroom courses through USDA’s Graduate School. All of these courses have been helpful in my career advancement. Most recently, I received nearly \$2000 from EDF to attend Basic Position Classification training. This was an intensive, 10-day classroom course, which I highly recommend to other Human Resources staff members. While all of my classes have been directly job related, EDF funds don’t have to be job specific. All employees should look into the EDF program for their educational needs and desires.



Falina Henline, HR Specialist
Clarksburg VAMC

In October 2001, I began working at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. When I began my career here I did not have a college degree. The *Education Development Fund Program* motivated me to finish my education while working full time. With the assistance provided, I earned an associate degree in Liberal Arts & Sciences in 2004 from the Community College of Allegheny County, my bachelor’s degree in Human Resources Management in 2006 from Geneva College and I am now in my second year of obtaining a master’s degree in Organizational Leadership at Geneva College.



Juanita Chapman
VBA

I am very thankful to the leadership and education staff for making this program available to all employees. I can truly say that I have taken full advantage of the program and as a result, my academic accomplishments have exceeded everything I ever thought I would accomplish in pursuing my educational goals. My dreams of obtaining a college degree have been fulfilled through the help of this organization.

I have recently accepted a position with the Veterans Benefits Administration’s Pittsburgh Regional Office as an Employment Specialist. I am utilizing my academics and VA work experience to further enhance the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Thank you!

The Employee Development Fund allowed me to begin attending college for a Bachelor’s degree in nursing. This let me start with the group of students that began this fall instead of being in a class that was ahead of me. The interaction with students of the same type has been very helpful to my early success in the class (I got an A). I wanted to go back to school for myself and to help improve patient care in any areas that I work. Continuing my education was also an expectation of my employment which I was able to fulfill within one year of starting my career at the VA. I would not have been able to do that without the help of the Employee Development Fund. Thank you.



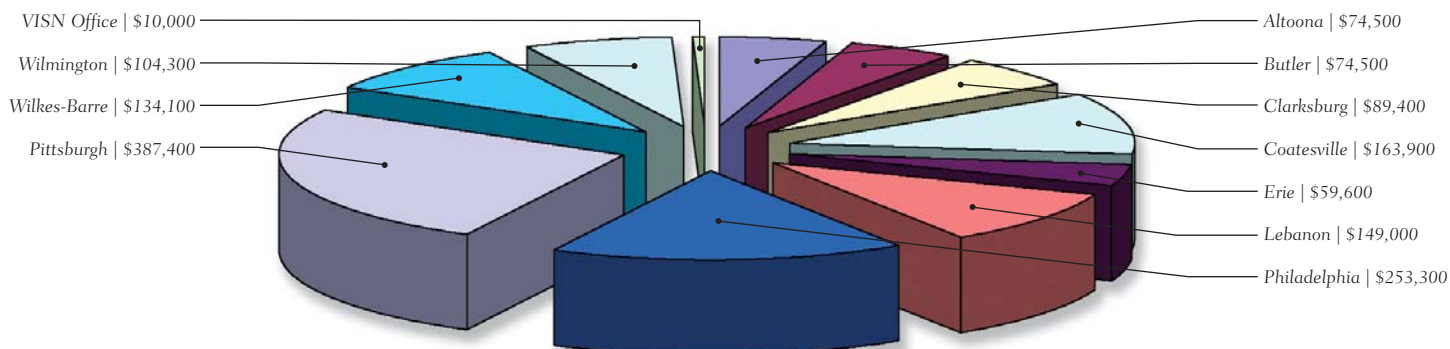
Timothy D. Johnson, RN, Supervisor, Surgical Services
Erie VAMC

With the help of the Employee Development Fund I was able to obtain an Associate’s Degree in Health Information Management. This allowed me to take the examination to become a Registered Health Information Technician and I earned that credential in 2006. The knowledge I gained through the degree program has been vital to my present position.



Lori B. Wise, Medical Records Specialist
Lebanon VAMC

VISN 4 | Development Fund | FY 08



Education Debt Reduction Program (EDRP)

THE EDUCATION DEBT REDUCTION PROGRAM is a centrally funded program managed by the VHA Healthcare Retention and Recruitment Office. EDRP enhances the retention and recruitment of health professionals that are required to meet the staffing needs of the Veterans Health Administration. It provides education loan repayments to recently appointed health care professionals in occupations for which retention and recruitment are difficult. Educational assistance, such as that afforded under EDRP, is an excellent tool that can help VISN 4 achieve its staffing goals and enhance the value of health care that it provides to the nation's veterans.

Each medical center's human resources office must identify and prioritize a written list of local, difficult to recruit and retain occupations, or specialties within occupations, which will be eligible for consideration of EDRP awards.

The following occupations are currently included on all facility lists for consideration of EDRP awards: Physician, Dentist, Podiatrist, Pharmacist, Licensed Practical and/or Vocational Nurse, Expanded-function Dental Auxiliary, Registered Nurse, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, Physician Assistant, Optometrist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Certified Respiratory Therapy Technician, Registered Respiratory Therapist, Nuclear Medicine Technologist, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapy Assistant, Medical Technologist, Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist, Therapeutic Radiologic Technologist, Medical Instrument Technician, Pharmacy Technician, Orthotist or Prosthetist, Medical Records Administrator and Specialist, Prosthetic Representative, Medical Records Technician, Biomedical Engineer, Chiropractor, Audiologist/Speech Pathologist, Dietician, Psychologist and Social Worker. ★

I could go on and on about EDRP, but in a nutshell; the benefits here at the VA are some of the best. I graduated from a practical nursing program in December of 2005, came to work at the VA in January of 2006. I owed nearly \$13,000 at that time. In about 3 years from my start date, I will have paid off all but \$4-5,000. I would have received \$13,000, but I decided to go back to school for my RN which the VA is paying for also. No one wants to have that kind of debt (school loans) hanging over their head for long. With EDRP, you don't have to. All you have to do is set up a payment plan and stick to it, then the VA will reimburse you for whatever you have paid according to the plan you set up. It's a great deal and I recommend it to anyone.



SUSAN WINTER, LPN, SOON TO BE RN!
Coatesville VAMC

I became employed by the Butler VA Medical Center as a Physical Therapist in 2001. I qualified for the EDRP and was eligible for the maximum of \$44,000 for student loan reimbursement. After 5 years of service I am free of my student loan debt and am now able to better save for my children's college education! I am thankful and grateful to the VA for the assistance and the privilege to serve our nation's heroes. Thank you.



LAURIE CONTI, MPT
Butler VAMC

The EDRP program was a tremendous perk to my employment as a Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Philadelphia VAMC. I was hired at the Philadelphia Parkinson's Disease Research, Education and Clinical Center only one year after completing my master's degree at the University of Pennsylvania. I was hopeful that the personal rewards of my new career would outweigh the financial drain of my student loans. I was absolutely thrilled when I was accepted into the EDRP and am proud to say that this summer I became debt free. I truly love working at the VA and the EDRP told me that I was loved right back!



REBECCA MARTINE, APRN, CS, BC
Philadelphia VAMC

If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself. —Henry Ford

Facility LEAD Program



*Front row, seated L-R:
Lolly Jeane Rosenbaum, Jaime Dumire,
Kuiana Williams, Vera Gehringer*

*2nd row, standing L-R:
Monica Phillips, Wadea Hines,
Miriam Rockemore, Valerie Durosomo,
Ruthe Ann Lombardo, Sandy Geib*

*3rd row, standing, L-R:
Michael Neusch, Mary Louise Kurtz,
David Logue, Timothy Tyson,
Ruth Ambrose, Loretta Boyer,
Shannon Hancuff, Diane Smith*

IN VISN 4 each medical center has established a leadership development curriculum for employees who are competitively selected as “high potential” employees. “High potential” consists of three indicators: the desire to learn, work hard and move into a leadership role; high performance in the current position; and evidence of the eight core competencies as defined by the High Performance Development Model (HPDM). LEAD programs include a coaching or mentoring component, a curriculum based on the HPDM, a personal development plan, and multiple opportunities and modalities for learning. Participants work on projects or task forces that are

facility-wide to provide them with a broader perspective of our healthcare mission. To date two classes have graduated with a total of 50 staff participating at the GS-5 through GS-10 levels. 11 of these graduates have thus far been promoted. The selection process for the Facility LEAD program is competitive. Applicants self-nominate providing evidence of the HPDM Core Competencies. The applications are reviewed by the facility director who endorses and prioritizes the applications and the applications are then forwarded to the VISN Office for final approval and action. ★

VISN LDI Program

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.—Margaret Meade



*Front row, L-R:
Marie Polardino, Song Yi, Lisa Harris,
Roberta Calhoun, Bob Malec,
Denice Duman, Megan Walton,
Linda Westbrook, Christine Peterson,
Sharon Kwasny, Dawn Martz-Porter*

*Back row, L-R:
Craig Wingate, Thaddeus Kocuba,
Christine Meyer, Charles Mattina,
Michele Krajewski, Susan Kane,
Paul Hill, Michael Neusch,
Colleen Kaskel, Brian Tallmadge*

VISN 4 established a Leadership Development Institute (LDI) program for higher grade employees competitively selected as “high potential” employees. “High potential” consists of three indicators: the desire to learn, work hard and move into a leadership role; high performance in the current position; and evidence of the eight core competencies as defined by the High Performance Development Model (HPDM). The VISN LDI program includes a coaching or mentoring component, a curriculum based on the HPDM, a personal development plan, and multiple opportunities and

modalities for learning. Participants work on projects or task forces that are VISN-wide to provide them with a broader perspective on VISN 4’s healthcare mission and issues. The first VISN LDI class consisting of 16 staff graduated in October 2007 and they worked on 4 separate projects this year: Pandemic Flu; Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation; Advanced Clinic Access (ACA); and Data Warehouse. This program is an integral part of our VISN 4 Succession Plan. ★



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