

# VETERANS' ADVANTAGE

FALL 2009

THE WELLNESS MAGAZINE  
FOR NEW YORK / NEW JERSEY VETERANS

**Helping Veterans  
find jobs**

**Special care for  
post-deployment  
issues**

**Flu vaccine facts**



**From the Network Director:**

# Thank you

Dear Veteran,

**O**n Veterans Day, our nation will pay tribute to you, the dedicated men and women who have served our country. The price paid by you is real, and many of you continue paying long after military service ends.

Our ongoing commitment to you continues. Our VA Medical Centers and Community Clinics provide services for acute medical and surgical care, and our Community Living Centers continue on the journey of cultural transformation for Veterans requiring extended care. Our mental health program staffing has increased and programs are evolving to a recovery-oriented consumer-centered health care delivery system. With the use of new Telehealth technologies, care is expanding into Veterans' homes. A new partnership with the New York City Department of Homeless Services and community partners has increased access to VA health care and services for homeless Veterans.

We continue to focus on the needs of our newest Veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, holding family readiness events, demobilization briefings and job fairs throughout the VA New York/New Jersey Healthcare System to encourage Veterans and their families to seek VA benefits.

On behalf of all VA employees and volunteers, thank you for your service to America. We strive to ensure that our VA health care speaks loudly of our commitment to serve you, who have served us. You have risked much and deserve nothing less.

Michael A. Sabo  
VA Network Director

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



## Get your prescriptions online

**Y**ou asked for it, and you got it! You can now use My Health@Vet—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 Health@Vet. 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 have questions about your health? During weekdays (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), staff at your VA Medical Center or VA Clinic are available to assist. After 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, weekends or holidays, call the VA Nurses Helpline at 1-800-877-6976 if you have a medical question. Remember to call 911 at any time if you're having a medical emergency.**



# Family meals keep everyone healthy



Sometimes simple changes can make a big difference. Eating together as a family can improve your health, your happiness and even your finances. No time to cook? No problem. Family dinners are easier than you think.

## Why eat together?

- Children learn skills, values and traditions.
- Children behave better.
- Children do better in school.
- Children and adults get the nutrients they need.

• Everyone treasures mealtime memories.

## Simplify your supper

- **Plan a weekly menu.** The key is to have a plan for shopping and cooking. Involve the whole family, so it's less stressful for any one person.
- **Cook once, eat twice.** Cook and freeze large batches of key ingredients, like ground beef for tacos and spaghetti sauce.
- **Stock up.** Pack your pantry and freezer with beans, tuna, fruit,



pasta, rice and frozen vegetables.

- **Use the sandwich advantage.** Make sandwiches for breakfast (on waffles), lunch (on whole-grain bread) or dinner (in a pita). ■

# Do you need the flu vaccine?

BY LOIS KATZ, M.D., AND MEREDITH KING-JENSEN M.S.N., R.N.



Each year, about 5 percent to 20 percent of Americans get the flu and about 36,000 people die from it. The best way to protect yourself is to get vaccinated each year. The flu shot for seasonal flu is available and is being given at all medical centers and clinics. The H1N1 vaccine will be given as soon as it's available.

## Who should get vaccinated?

- people ages 50 and older
- anyone with a chronic health condition such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease
- anyone at high risk for serious flu complications or people who live with or care for those at high risk
- health care workers
- children 6 months to 19 years
- pregnant women

## Who should not get vaccinated?

- people with a severe allergy to chicken eggs
- those who've had a severe reaction to the vaccine

## When and where to go

- Vaccination begins in the fall and continues until late spring.
- All VAs and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics have the flu vaccine.

## How can you prevent the flu?

- Cover your cough.
- Wash your hands often.
- Stay home if you're sick. ■

## Be flu-aware

For more information, visit [www.publichealth.va.gov](http://www.publichealth.va.gov) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

# A better view

James J. Peters provides state-of-the-art radiation therapy

BY JANELLE L. PARK, M.D., CHIEF, RADIATION THERAPY

In a continuing effort to provide Veterans with state-of-the-art treatment and care, the James J. Peters VA Medical Center (JJP VAMC) has invested in leading-edge technology for use in the fight against cancer. Having received a multimillion-dollar equipment upgrade, JJP VAMC installed a GE-Varian CT scanner for radiation therapy treatment planning (also known as simulation), as well as the first of two new Varian linear accelerator treatment machines (called linacs).

## Precise, personalized treatment

With this new equipment, Veterans who have cancer will

## Visual therapy panels in the walls and ceilings create a warm and welcoming environment.

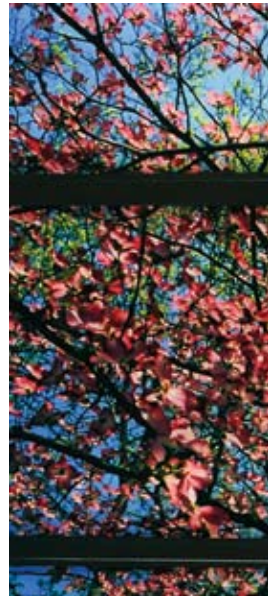
receive the best technology available. Treatments include intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) and image-guided radiation therapy (IGRT):

- IMRT is beneficial in decreasing the negative effects of radiation therapy for certain people with cancer. It does this by directing the dose of treatment to the target, thereby reducing the exposure of

surrounding healthy tissue.

- IGRT employs CT imaging before every treatment to identify the precise location of the target (within 2 millimeters). In addition, IGRT can provide for respiratory gating, a technology that takes into account the movement of a tumor as a patient breathes. The machine can incorporate this movement into the treatment plan and dose delivery.

A treatment called Varian RapidArc will be available on the second linac, which makes the treatment more precise, faster and less error-prone. The result is a win-win situation for patients and the clinic. Patients spend less time







The dedicated GE-Varian LightSpeed CT simulator will improve treatment planning and outcomes for patients at JJP VAMC.

on the table and receive a tightly targeted dose of treatment, and the clinic is able to deliver treatment more efficiently.

#### A welcoming environment

Even with these impressive advances in technology, the recent radiation therapy improvements at JJP VAMC aren't just technological. The rooms in which the new machines are located were redesigned with special attention and care to the appearance and feel, to create a patient-friendly atmosphere. Color selections for the rooms were made knowing



that certain colors can make people feel more relaxed and at ease during treatment. Visual therapy panels by Joey Fischer, a famous art therapist, were installed in the walls and ceilings of the treatment rooms to create a more welcoming and warm environment for patients. These improvements won't be limited to the treatment rooms—plans are under way for a redesign of the entire radiation therapy clinic.

JJP VAMC is dedicated to treating Veterans with the most advanced technology available in the field of radiation therapy today. We are committed to making each Veteran's radiation therapy course a positive experience, not only in terms of the technology and aesthetic appeal but also with our caring and dedicated staff. ■

#### Check us out!

If you'd like to learn more about the services offered at the James J. Peters Radiation Therapy Department, call us at (718) 741-4226.

◀ Visual therapy panels, shown here, help create a welcoming environment for patients.

## Are you enrolled in My Health<sub>e</sub>Vet?

My Health<sub>e</sub>Vet is a unique, interactive Internet portal that enables you, the Veteran, to take control of your health care. Created by the Department of Veterans Affairs and accessible via any Internet-ready computer, My Health<sub>e</sub>Vet allows you to read helpful health-related information, tailored to your specifications.

My Health<sub>e</sub>Vet, located at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov), will help you track prescription refills; learn about harmful drug interactions; enter your lab and exam results; and track progress on important health variables like blood sugar, cholesterol, weight, blood pressure and heart rate. You can do this and so much more to monitor your health and learn about healthy living.

In the coming months, My Health<sub>e</sub>Vet will be enhanced to give you direct access to your VA health record and lab results. By registering for My Health<sub>e</sub>Vet and completing the separate in-person authentication registration process, known as IPA, Veterans will be able to directly access a link to their own personal medical information.

Register today for My Health<sub>e</sub>Vet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov). ■



# Be in the game

BY WAVELL HODGE, M.D.

In the previous issue of *Veterans' Advantage*, I encouraged you to “know your numbers” to make you a winning player in life’s game. This issue, we apply those numbers to a specific play—metabolic syndrome. This group of five risk factors—high blood pressure, high fasting blood sugar, high waist circumference, high triglycerides and low HDL, or good, cholesterol—increases your risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and stroke. If you have any three of these risk factors, you have metabolic syndrome.

Some 10 percent of American

adults in their 20s have metabolic syndrome by age 60. Recent studies show it’s getting worse, as a third of all current school-age children already show signs.

## The trouble with sugar

What’s the connection between these risk factors and disease? We eat to provide sugar as fuel and protein for the cells in our body. Carbohydrates broken down to sugar in the intestine must combine with insulin in the blood to get into cells. High amounts of fat covering the cells interfere with insulin’s ability to get sugar into the cells. The result is high sugar and insulin levels in the blood, which damage the lining of blood

vessels. This causes cholesterol to clog up blood vessels, resulting in heart attacks, strokes and kidney damage. High insulin levels also affect the body’s signaling mechanism regulating blood pressure, leading to higher blood pressure and damage to blood vessels. The mechanism makes the play obvious: Reducing your body fat by 5 percent to 10 percent will have an impact. To achieve this:

- **Exercise daily.** Try walking for a minimum of half an hour. This should be in addition to normal daily activity.

- **Eat smart.** Get half of your calories from complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, brown rice, multigrain pasta, high-fiber vegetables, beans and fruits. These foods are slower to break down and give a steady distribu-

tion of sugar in the blood. Avoid cake, candy and ice cream, which contain refined sugars. These foods lead to sugar surges in the blood. Also avoid foods with the words “fructose” or “sorbitol” on the label. These are simple sugars.

- **Choose good oils like olive, canola and flaxseed.** Another good source of oil is nuts.

No matter what your goal is, be in the game. Make an appointment to talk to your primary care physician about your numbers! ■

Studies show that a third of school-age kids show signs of metabolic syndrome.

**VA Hudson Valley Health Care System**

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

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

# A cultural transformation at Community Living Centers

BY DAVID GITELSON, D.S.W., LCSW

**V**A Hudson Valley Health Care System (HVHCS) continues to make significant enhancements to its extended care programs and nursing homes, including a change in name and focus.

VA nursing home units are now called Community Living Centers (CLC) to better convey the thinking that Veterans should live in a setting that is home, not homelike, where they spend their days building upon their community.

This approach to VA extended care service is commonly referred to as cultural transformation, and VA HVHCS has fully embraced it.

To ensure Veterans are truly part of the transformation, a cultural transformation committee—which includes Veteran residents from each of the five CLCs, as well as CLC managers and staff—has been created. Working with facility leadership, the committee has begun introducing innovative programs, new equipment and more meaningful educational, recreational and spiritual activities.

One of the first steps taken was to eliminate the number and letter unit identifiers. Working together, the Veterans renamed their CLCs Charlie Delta, Veterans' Village, Heroes Harbor, Alpha Row &

Bravo Broadway and Home of the Heroes.

Cultural transformation has also resulted in other notable, patient-centered initiatives, including restaurant-style dining; bread and cookie baking (with all those great smells); special meals and off-campus dining experiences; a new swim program; expanded music and art therapy; an Olympics program; greater computer access; gardening opportunities; and much more.

Communication in the CLCs has been enhanced with the publication of *The River View*, a cultural transformation newsletter, and through committee meetings and

CLC resident council meetings, where Veterans discuss ideas on how to improve the environment of care.

Perhaps the most important component of cultural transformation is the recognition that Veterans have greater control over their lives in the CLCs. This shift in thinking includes decisions on when to get up, when to go to sleep, what activities to participate in, how to spend time, food choices and more. To measure success, the staff uses a quality-of-life questionnaire to offer residents opportunities to comment on the changes and share what's important to them. ■



Cultural Transformation Committee members at the Montrose campus



# Finding balance

BY PATRICK M. MASONE, AU.D., CHIEF OF AUDIOLOGY AND SPEECH PATHOLOGY

**N**orthport VA Medical Center (VAMC) has established a Center of Balance—the first in the country—to diagnose and treat Veterans who have vertigo and balance disorders, the primary cause of falls in patients ages 65 and older. These conditions are prevalent in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans who have blast injuries and traumatic brain injuries.

Northport's balance center is a

joint venture between the VAMC's physical medicine and rehabilitation, audiology and speech pathology and optometry services. VA patients are referred to the center by their VA primary care or specialty care providers. The protocol for the Center of Balance full-day diagnostic workup includes:

- 1 Documenting the patient's perception of the problem by administering the Dizziness Handicap Index (DHI) and the Activity Balance Confidence Scale.

**The Northport VA Center of Balance—the country's first—treats Veterans who have vertigo and balance problems.**

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**2** A general assessment of the patient's musculoskeletal system.

**3** Administering the Sensory Organizational Test (SOT), which determines what type of sensory conditions a patient experiences during episodes of unsteadiness and vertigo.

**4** Optometric evaluation to assess the vestibular-ocular reflex (VOR), which determines how well a patient maintains a stable visual field while the head is in motion.

**5** Videonystagmography or electronystagmography to determine if the dizziness and unsteadiness are caused by the organ of balance.

After the diagnostic workup, the Center of Balance team meets with the patient to determine the diagnosis and establish a treatment plan. Upon completion of treatment, the DHI, SOT and visual assessments are repeated to determine the treatment's success. The results have been very encouraging. ■



Pictured proudly with the posturalography equipment in Northport VA Medical Center's Center of Balance are (l-r) team members Bradley Meltzer, O.D.; Justine Cannavo, Au.D.; and Andrew Ekelund, P.T.





Dedicated VA volunteer and U.S. Air Force Veteran John Ferrone is a volunteer driver with the Disabled American Veterans Transportation Program.

# Become a Northport VAMC volunteer!

**A**re you looking for something meaningful to do? Whether you're in your teens or your 90s, you can make a difference in the lives of Northport VA Medical Center (VAMC) Veteran patients.

All of us have special skills and knowledge, so bring yours to Northport VAMC and explore new ways of helping others.

Many of Northport VAMC's 1,300 dedicated volunteers have a gift for working directly with Veteran patients, while others bring dependability to assignments behind the scenes. Concerned about what you might be able to contribute? Northport's voluntary service staff carefully matches the volunteer

to the assignment, provides orientation and training and recognizes your thoughtful contribution to Veterans.

## **Volunteer activities**

Over the past 82 years, Northport VAMC volunteers have donated more than a million hours of service to America's finest citizens—our Veterans. Northport VAMC volunteers perform a variety of duties at the medical center, on the road as volunteer drivers and at Long Island's national cemeteries.

At the medical center, volunteers' roles range from escorting patients and handling light administrative duties to creative activities like teaching arts and crafts to serving as friendly companions to Veterans looking for that helping hand and a friendly face only a

## **Yearning for the open road?**

**B**ecome a volunteer driver with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation Program at Northport VAMC. Volunteers use DAV vans to transport patients with travel hardships to and from their VA appointments. If you'd like to help out as a driver or in any way, please join Northport's winning team of volunteers by calling **(631) 261-4400, ext. 7183**.

volunteer can offer.

Volunteers have been particularly active in supporting our programs aimed at reaching and serving newly returned combat Veterans and homeless Veterans, and carrying on the long tradition of hosting unit- and facility-wide recognition parties and activities.

Corporate volunteers are playing a stronger role in VA voluntary service, setting the pace for the future. A strong and growing youth volunteer program is introducing teenagers and college students to rewarding health care careers and to community service. ■

**Northport VAMC**

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



# Flower power

Business staff's gifts move Veterans to tears

**D**ozens of long-stemmed roses, carnations, irises and lilies were set out on tables at both the Brooklyn and New York campuses along with piles of baby's breath, colored sheets of tissue paper, rolls of ribbon and vases of different sizes and shapes. On either side of the table, business-office staff sat somewhat tensely waiting for the "Spring Fling" contest to begin.

When Jodie Jackson, Chief Business Officer, who coordinated the event, said "Go!" the beat of "Playing for Change: Songs Around the World" filled the room. And staff members—some alone, others in teams—rushed to choose flowers.

Stem by stem, they created wonderful bouquets. Nothing about this task was casual. Staff members frowned in concentration, snipping, pinching and fluffing as they orchestrated more than 30 arrangements at each site. When time was up, Associate Director Martina Parauda awarded first, second and third prizes.

## A beautiful thank you

Jackson and others on her staff had contacted department nurses in advance and identified appropriate patient recipients. Each bouquet was presented to a patient as the business staff member read them a poem as an expression of thanks for their service to our country.

It took the efforts of a committed team to make the event a success. "Titilola Fayanmira, a technical career field intern, was instrumental in making this event happen," says Jackson. "She supported every aspect of the program and helped in every area. Her positive, upbeat attitude kept the group engaged."

Julisa Cruz found the poem, designed the cards on which it was written and designed the agenda. Eddie Yee helped with coordination. Wanda Addison

## Bouquets were presented to Veterans as an expression of thanks for their service.

drove to the flower district at the break of dawn and negotiated prices to get the most flowers from money donated by staff. She was assisted in these efforts by Brenda Jackson. In addition, Andrea Lightfoot, Carmen Rodriguez and Erica Martins marketed the program throughout the department and encouraged everyone to participate.

"Many Veterans could scarcely believe the flowers were for them," said Fayanmira, after presenting a patient with a bouquet. "It was very moving." ■



Bouquets for Our Veterans: Michele Basile, Andrea Foster, Dorian Baldwin, Davina Byrd, Nancy Pyram and Sabrina Chandler make beautiful arrangements for Veterans.

## VA NY Harbor Health Care System

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

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

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



# Remembering our fallen Veterans

More than 200 people attended the interfaith St. Albans Community Living Center Memorial Service on Sunday, May 31. The service was held for 36 Veterans who passed away during the last six months, honoring Veterans who were residents of St. Albans Community Living Center, enrollees in the Adult Day Health Care Program and Veterans who received home health care through their affiliation with VA's extended care program.

## Celebrating life

The group that gathered for the memorial ranged from infants to the very elderly and included Veterans, staff, family members and friends. Seated in the Chapel with the early afternoon sun filtering through colorful stained glass windows, they listened to comments by members of the St. Albans staff and leadership, including Health Care Facilities Officer Denise Hinton; St. Albans Associate Chief of Staff Roger Boykin, M.D.; VISN 3 Geriatric and Extended Care Coordinator Doris Quijano; and Palliative Care Social Worker Winsome Dyer. They were joined in delivering meditations by pastoral staff members.

The general message presented by Protestant Chaplains



Esther Findlay, widow of an ADHC patient, lit a candle and received comfort from Health Care Facilities Officer Denise Hinton.

Sotar Alphonso-Lloyd and Alvin Mills, Jewish Chaplain Murray Stadmauer and Catholic Chaplain Ramon Saavedra encouraged the celebration of life and spirituality while remembering those who are no longer with us.

## "A special tradition"

A particularly moving part of the memorial was a candle-lighting ceremony during which the name of a Veteran who had died was read by Palliative Care Coordinator Arlene Blaketta. A bell was rung, and a family member, friend or staff member came up to light a candle from a community candle. The lit candles were later used to light those held by family and friends who had

remained seated. Coordinated by the St. Albans Palliative Care Team, the service included a cappella songs, organ music and an outstanding performance by the Mount Vernon Pathfinder & Drum Corps. After the ceremony, a generous luncheon was served by staff, members of a local Girl Scout troop and other volunteers.

"The memorial is a special tradition at St. Albans twice a year to honor our Veterans and their service to our country. It's very meaningful that members of our local community participate in our activities," says Dyer. She noted in particular singer Charlene Blair (who agreed to be a last-moment replacement), the Girl Scouts and organist David Wattlely. ■

# Helping mentally ill Veterans

BY MARILYNN MASTRELLA, LCSW

**T**he President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health made several recommendations to address issues with the delivery of mental health services. It asserted that "consumers and families should be involved in orienting the mental health system toward recovery."

In response to the recommendations made by the Commission, VA New Jersey Health Care System (VANJHCS) developed the Family Psychoeducation Program to provide services to Veterans dealing with mental illness and their families. The definition of "family" in this program includes

anyone who has a significant relationship with the Veteran. Within VANJHCS, the program operates on the campuses of Lyons, East Orange and the Newark Day Treatment Center.

## A family affair

Services include family therapy and family psychoeducation, which involves providing the Veteran and his or her family members with information about mental illness, medication and treatment options. In addition, interpersonal, emotional and environmental needs are assessed and a plan is developed to best aid the Veteran

**Our goal is to help Veterans and their loved ones cope with and manage stress.**

and his or her family in achieving mental health recovery.

Soon to be added to the program is multi-family group therapy, which will offer Veterans and their loved ones the opportunity to meet with other families of Veterans who have a mental illness. This type of support system has shown to be an effective strategy for helping individuals and families cope and manage stress. ■

## Get on the road to recovery

**C**ristina Juguilon, LCSW, ACSW, B.C.D., who completed postgraduate clinical training at the Ackerman Institute for the Family and the Externship in Emotion-Focused Couples Therapy, and Marilynn Mastrella, LCSW, former Coordinator of Intensive Family Support Services at Family Guidance Center of Warren County, provide mental health services at VANJHCS. To reach Juguilon, call (973) 645-3042, ext. 226. To reach Mastrella, call (908) 647-0180, ext. 4529.



## VA NJ Health Care System

[www.eastorange.va.gov](http://www.eastorange.va.gov)  
[www.lyons.va.gov](http://www.lyons.va.gov)





# Special services for women

BY KATHLEEN YEMM, LCSW

Since 1992, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been authorized to provide counseling and treatment for military sexual trauma (MST). Inquiring about any history of this form of trauma has become a routine part of screening for all Veterans.

VA is concerned about trauma and recognizes that any type of distress can have lasting effects on a person's physical and mental health. VA also recognizes that people can recover from trauma and that, with counseling, Veterans can learn to cope with their past experiences, regain their confidence and self-esteem and improve their quality of life.

## Help is available

MST counseling is available even if a Veteran didn't report the incident when it occurred or hasn't filed a claim for benefits. The recently opened Women's Treatment Unit (WTU) at the Lyons campus is a residential program offering treatment to Veterans who have experienced MST. The average stay is seven weeks, but each individual has specific needs and treatment goals that may make stays of longer or shorter duration appropriate.

## A team approach to treatment

The unit offers a team approach to treatment. The team includes a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, substance abuse counselor, vocational rehabilitation

## What is MST?

Sexual trauma can include harassment or sexual assault. Sexual harassment is any repeated unwelcome sexual behavior that occurs in the workplace. It includes offensive remarks, unwanted advances or pressure for sexual favors. Sexual assault is any kind of sexual activity in which one person is involved against his or her will.

counselor, recreation therapist and psychiatric nurses.

Individual and group treatment and classes that teach Veterans about post-traumatic stress disorder are also offered, and the program also provides various recreational and leisure-time outlets. ■

## Need help? Call us!

For more information about this program, please contact Kathleen Yemm, LCSW, Admissions Coordinator, at (908) 647-0180, ext. 5897, or Suzanne Loftus, Psy.D., Clinical Director, at (908) 647-0180, ext. 5896.



# Help for post-deployment health issues

The War-Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC, pronounced “risk”) is a national Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) program established to provide Veterans and their health care providers with expertise in post-deployment health. Recognizing that deployed

Veterans have unique health care problems, WRIISC staff members strive to improve the health of Veterans with war-related illnesses and injuries.

Through the WRIISC program, Veterans can be evaluated by a multidisciplinary team of health professionals in one visit to help the Veteran and his or her providers better address post-deployment health issues.

Since the program’s inception, WRIISCs have focused on evaluating and assisting Veterans who have chronic, hard-to-diagnose medical symptoms. WRIISC staff members focus most on giving Veterans the tools they need to improve their quality of life.

Most important, WRIISC staff

## Were you denied enrollment?

In 1996, Congress established a priority-based enrollment system for access to VA health care. In 2003, due to increased pressure on resources, enrollment was suspended for certain Veterans with incomes above the “geographic means test” threshold.

Last year, Congress passed legislation raising this income threshold by 10 percent. Starting this summer, VA began the process of contacting thousands of Veterans who had previously been denied enrollment.

If you were denied enrollment on the basis of your income, please contact your nearest VA Medical Center eligibility office to determine if you are eligible under the new guidelines.

members recognize that our newest Veterans need special attention and care during the transition to civilian life.

A top priority of WRIISCs is to educate the primary care community on Veterans’ post-deployment health concerns, including environmental exposures. WRIISC experts are also dedicated to preventing and treating war-related health problems. They envision that their work will help improve the health of Veterans around the country. ■

## Want to learn more?

If you’re a Veteran or provider interested in finding out more about WRIISC, call **1-800-248-8005** to speak with a representative at the New Jersey WRIISC. Or visit [www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/](http://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/) for more information about specific services and programs.



# Tune in to our new radio show

**L**ow vision, physical rehab and diet are just some of the topics discussed on “VA Healthcare Advantage Radio” (89.1 FM). The new talk show, which airs every Sunday at 8:30 a.m., is produced at Fairleigh Dickinson University and reaches up to 707,000 Veterans. “The show is about educating Veterans, their families and the public about illness, treatment and the important part Veterans play in maintaining health,” says program host John Mazzulla, VISN 3



Communications Officer. “VA physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists and clinicians discuss information and health care services available to Veterans.” Recent programs featured VA physicians who discussed substance use and the War-Related Illness and Injury Study Center at VA New Jersey Health Care System.

“We’re committed to providing the best care for our Veterans,” says Michael A. Sabo, Network Director, VISN 3. “Our

## Log on to listen!

**VA** Healthcare Advantage Radio” interviews are posted on the VA New York/New Jersey Healthcare Network Web site at [www.nynj.va.gov/broadcasts.asp](http://www.nynj.va.gov/broadcasts.asp) and on the Fairleigh Dickinson University studio Web site at [alpha.fdu.edu/wfdu/wfdufm/home.html](http://alpha.fdu.edu/wfdu/wfdufm/home.html).

show offers a chance to provide education about prevention and treatment of medical conditions while encouraging even greater participation among Veterans.” ■

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Network 3 Public Affairs Officer and show host John Mazzulla (left) with Dr. Ken Reinhard, Clinical Psychologist, Director of the Anxiety Disorders Clinic, VA Hudson Valley Health Care System Montrose Campus

## Employment assistance for Veterans

**I**raq War Veteran Jordan Chase is finding that although he has significant military experience in training personnel, scheduling maintenance and using new technologies, he has been unable to find a civilian job. At a recent VISN 3-sponsored vocational symposium at the New York Campus of VA New York Harbor Health Care System, he told an audience of vocational and educational experts from the public and private sectors and a half dozen Operation Enduring

Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans that he has considerable managerial expertise. But when potential employers see U.S. Army Artillery on his resume, the words don’t translate into skills that are transferable to civilian life.

Specialists at the Veteran-centered vocational symposium identified priority areas including assistance navigating through multiple benefits and services; improving outreach, vocational counseling services and coordination of resources; and addressing mental-health issues.

The key to improving communication between specialized professionals among VA and its partners was presented by Fritz von Bulow, an IBM consultant who emphasized the power of connectivity

offered through the Internet.

“I’m convinced that we have to explore ways of using the Internet to connect all of us who are committed to helping our Veterans get good jobs using their military skills and to assist those who want to pursue further training and education,” says VISN 3 Network Director Michael A. Sabo. ■



Representatives from community organizations met to define priorities for serving the needs of our newest Veterans.



www.nynj.va.gov

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# Where YOU CAN FIND US—ANYTIME

## **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  
(646) 273-8125

## **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

## **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:*

Jefferson Professional Plaza  
60 Jefferson Street  
Unit 3  
Monticello, NY 12701  
(845) 791-4936

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

345 North Main Street  
Upper level  
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  
Provident Savings Bank—  
2nd Floor  
Carmel, NY 10512  
(845) 228-5291

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

## **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