

# CAVHS COMPASS

WINTER 2012-13

VETERAN FOCUSED NEWS

## Veteran's Stand-down Reaches Homeless Vets

On a brisk November morning, more than 100 Veterans gathered just after dawn to take advantage of donated goods and services thanks to the dedicated work of many across the greater Little Rock community. The annual Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System's Veteran Stand-down provided and coordinated everything from health screenings and job counseling to housing assistance and haircuts for Veterans finding themselves down on their luck and with winter around the corner.

The annual stand-down is part of ongoing efforts across the VA to end homelessness among Veterans, according to Dr. Estella Morris, CAVHS Comprehensive Homeless Center of Excellence program manager.

"The VA's strategy to eliminate homelessness among Veterans is to implement a 'no wrong door' approach, meaning Veterans who seek assistance should find it in any number of VA's programs, from community partners or through contract services," said Dr. Morris.

The Veteran's Stand-down is one of many annual events to assist Veterans with needs from basic shelter and food to fighting recurring homelessness and improving health and well-being.

In alignment with Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki's action plan to end homelessness among Veterans, the VA continues to offer a full range of support necessary to end the cycle of homelessness by providing health care, counseling, education benefits, and assistance with gaining jobs and housing.

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Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) employees Don Martin (left) and Lori Graham handout cold weather clothing to Veterans attending the annual CAVHS Stand-down on the North Little Rock Campus Nov. 9, 2012. (Photo by Brian House, CAVHS medical photographer)

## A Message from the Director

One of the guiding principles for all Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) professionals is “*Serving One Veteran at a Time.*” What does that phrase mean to you? For the Veterans we serve, it is simple – our mission begins and ends with you. It takes our employees, our Veterans, their families and visitors working as a team to make every visit to our facilities successful. The most important part of that team is **YOU**, the Veteran, who should be involved in all your health care decisions.

Every doctor, nurse, and technician – all staff members at CAVHS are dedicated to ensuring your health care is tailored to improve your health and well-being. We customize your treatments, fitness plan, diet and medications to get you healthy and keep you fit. As the old saying goes, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

I know it is often hard to change or add new things to our busy lives. Your health care team would like to help you on your journey to improved health. One of the creative tools in place at CAVHS to help Veterans improve their health is the “SMART goal for self-management” tool. SMART is an acronym for healthy living goals you set using a four step approach.

To learn more about the SMART program visit the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention page of our website at [http://www.littlerock.va.gov/services/Health\\_Promotion\\_and\\_Disease\\_Prevention.asp](http://www.littlerock.va.gov/services/Health_Promotion_and_Disease_Prevention.asp) or talk to your Primary Care Provider during your next visit. There may not be an “I” in team, but when it comes to maintaining your health, there is a “U” - **YOU** are at the center of your health care team. Take control of your life and live it to its fullest. Thank you for your service to our country. It’s an honor to serve you.

*(For more about the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention team, see page 6)*



**Michael R. Winn**  
Medical Center Director



Carolyn Howard, a CAVHS registered nurse, administers a flu vaccination to a Little Rock Veteran at John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital. The annual flu shot is recommended for every person over the age of six months. The current vaccine will help protect people from contracting the flu for up to 12 months and is effective after just two weeks. (Photo by Jeff Bowen, CAVHS Medical Photographer)

## Flu Shots still available

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System facilities continue to provide free flu shots for all enrolled Veterans. Flu shot kiosks are set-up at John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital and Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center for walk-in vaccinations. The kiosks are open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays).

Veterans can also receive a flu shot from any of the Community Based Outpatient Clinics across Central Arkansas on a walk-in basis, Monday through Friday, during normal operating hours.



## A Partnership: Veterans and health care teams working together

A Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) has each Veteran working together with health care professionals to plan for whole-person care and create a life-long health and wellness plan.

The key to the PACT model is preventive care that will result in a coordinated, flexible, all-inclusive, and holistic approach to health and well-being. That all starts with the Veteran getting involved and staying involved with every aspect of his or her daily health decisions.

The PACT team coaches and guides Veterans on everything from nutrition and physical activity plans to pain management and emotional health issues. This is personalized care to meet individual health care goals. It is positive, focusing on health as opposed to disease. It is proactive, emphasizing wellness and health not treatment. Most importantly, it is interactive, placing the Veteran at the center of the team.



According to Dr. Mathew Jennings, CAVHS Associate Chief of Staff for Primary Care, the PACT approach to primary care works when Veterans participate in the process.

“We need the Veteran to be the center of this team approach. We want the Veteran to be an active participant in his or her health with input into management of their issues and healthy lifestyle choices. With guidance from the primary care provider, nursing staff and support staff, we can help Veterans meet their health care needs,” said Jennings.

The PACT model for care gets everyone involved to give Veterans the tools and services they need to lead a healthier life. In the end, that is the only thing that matters, according to Jennings. “The health and well-being of our Veterans is the number one reason we come to work everyday.”

## 27th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic

Snowmass Village, Colo.  
March 31 – April 5, 2013

The Winter Sports Clinic will celebrate its 27th year by bringing nearly 400 Veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological conditions and other disabilities to the mountain.

More than 200 certified ski instructors for the disabled, and several current and former members of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team, serve as ski instructors to meet the unique needs of the Veterans.

To learn more about the clinic, visit the VA website at [www.wintersportsclinic.va.gov](http://www.wintersportsclinic.va.gov) or send an e-mail to [Teresa.Parks@va.gov](mailto:Teresa.Parks@va.gov)



# Dad's Old Car Show Shines Bright for Vets



Above: Veterans and car enthusiasts alike enjoy the shiny line-up of classic cars and hot rods on display at the annual Dad's Old Car Show Nov. 4 on the North Little Rock campus. Sponsored by CAMS Car Club, more than 100 car buffs showed off their pride, patriotism, and their "cool ride" to Veterans, staff and the community during this free event.



Left: One patriotic white Corvette on display during the annual Dad's Old Car Show. This entry was a real crowd pleaser among many Veterans touring the classic cars, hot rods and custom rides on display.

Right: A classic 1957 Corvette convertible catches the eye of a passing admirer. Veterans from the hospital took advantage of free photos in front of their favorite cars. This was the 12th annual Old Dad's Car Show at the North Little Rock campus and the largest one to date.



## Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy, Vision Remembered

Nearly 50 years after hundreds of thousands of people crowded the Mall in Washington, D.C. to hear the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech, many will spend the day volunteering in his name in January for the annual Martin Luther King Day of Service.

Veterans, employees and guests congregated in the Chapel to celebrate King's legacy during the MLK Day celebration held Jan. 14, 2013 in North Little Rock. The event was emceed by Ms. Donna Terrell from Fox 16 News, and the guest speaker was former Arkansas State Senator, Tracee Steele. Mr. Cyril Ekeh, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) Associate Medical Center Director, provided opening remarks.

According to Ekeh, MLK Day of service is not just a "day off", it is a "day on." "It is an opportunity to keep the legacy of Dr. King alive by doing one thing to help someone. Dr. King's legacy included service. Here at CAVHS we have the opportunity to witness the services being provided by our CAVHS volunteers who unselfishly and willingly give of themselves and their time to assist us in caring for our veterans."

Working alongside people of all ages, races and backgrounds, Dr. King encouraged all Americans to work together to strengthen communities, reduce poverty, and acknowledge dignity and respect for all. Steele gave a moving speech that highlighted while Dr. King's important work tirelessly continues to this day, his dream remains beyond our reach. "Certainly, gains have been made, but far more needs to be accomplished." The former Senator framed reasons our country has not accomplished Dr. King's dream into three major issues: Race relations, Education, and Community Service through helping the needy. Fortunately, hundreds of thousands of Americans dedicate their lives day in and day out to address the barriers that remain standing.

"Everyone is great because everyone can serve" is the message that Dr. King communicated. "At CAVHS we also share in Dr. King's vision of greatness," said Ekeh. "We owe a great debt of gratitude to the men and women serving in our armed forces. We owe our veterans the best we have to give. Although Dr. King's time with us was too brief, his vision of what we were capable of achieving as a nation left us a blueprint for success and a legacy to inspire us to improve the world around us.



Photos by Jeff Bowen, CAVHS medical photographer.



It is up to each of us to make Dr. King's dream a reality here at CAVHS and in the lives of others," said Ekeh.

The event was a stirring tribute and well attended by Veterans and employees alike. Mr. Milton Crenshaw, Primary Flight Instructor from the famed Tuskegee Airmen, was also in attendance. The theme for this year's event was "Sharing the Dream of Freedom and Equality for all." Many who witnessed the celebration walked away inspired and filled with hope for a better future.

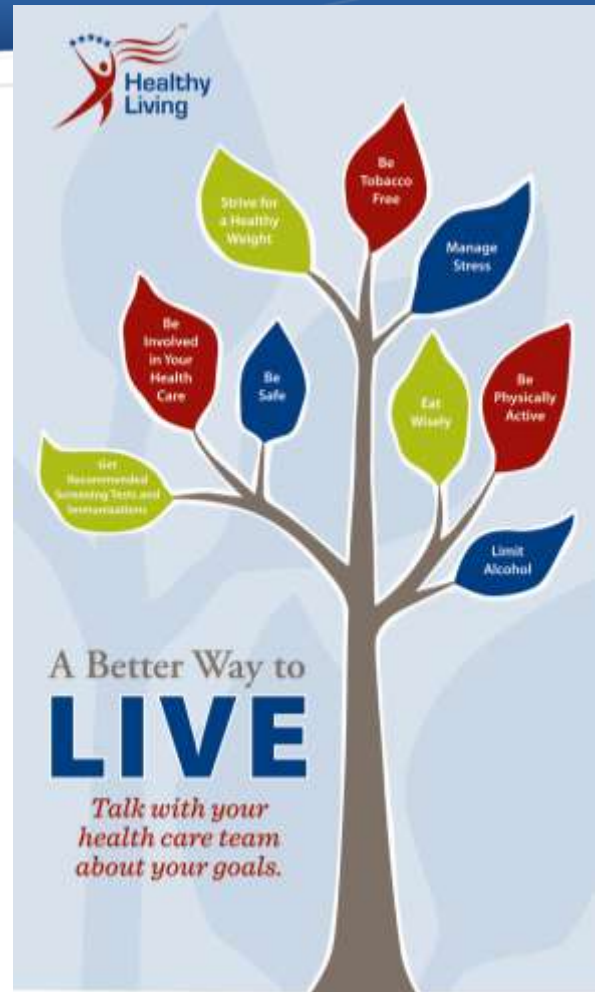


# The Choice is Yours

Daily life involves many choices – what to eat, how much sleep to get, whether or not to smoke or drink alcohol. Many of these daily choices can have impacts on your overall health and well-being.

The Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (HPDP) team and your primary care clinic want to help you in setting health goals for now and a lifetime. The HPDP staff promotes health coaching and mentoring to Veterans with programs for tobacco cessation, weight management, stress management, lactation classes for women, as well as healthy cooking classes offered after hours.

Your primary care team is focused on helping Veterans set SMART goals. Setting specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and timely (SMART) goals is the key to successful lifestyle changes. You can also participate and improve your health through group medical visits, communicating with your provider through secure messaging, or by phone, by attending specific healthy living classes, and by using available tools that allow you to be an active partner in your health care.



## Stand-down (continued from page 1)

The VA will increase the number and variety of housing options available to homeless Veterans and those at risk, including permanent, transitional, contracted, community-operated and VA-operated housing. Most importantly, VA will target at-risk Veteran populations with aggressive support and intervention to prevent homelessness before it starts.

Bringing VA and community service organizations together at one event improves opportunities for greater reach into the homeless Veteran population. Some Veterans attending this year's Stand-down received dental exams with follow-up appointments donated by local dentists. All enjoyed a warm meal and walked away with cold weather clothing for the coming winter.

**Dr. Robert Gardner, a Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) Dentist, performs a dental exam on a local Veteran during the annual CAVHS Veteran Stand-down on the North Little Rock campus Nov.9, 2012. More than 100 local Veterans were treated to breakfast and lunch while taking advantage of all the services provided. (Photo by Brian House, CAVHS medical photographer)**





# Fishing derby brings Veterans out for the day

A day at the lake may be just what the doctor ordered for some of our Veterans enrolled in the Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) program. Veterans enrolled in the program along with Veterans from the Low Vision Clinic gathered for the fourth annual September fishing derby at the lake on the North Little Rock campus.

Kim Evans, an HBPC skilled care nurse, was the organizer of this year's event. "We are excited to provide our Veterans with a unique opportunity to have fun in a beautiful setting. This may be the most fun that they have all year."

The HBPC staff teamed-up with members of the Hubble/Delk Levy Memorial VFW Post 11474 to provide a cookout for lunch and each Veteran went home with prizes provided by the Arkansas Game and Fish Department and the HBPC staff.



Above: Sherlee Reeves, an Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) registered nurse, helps Veteran John Simpson remove a hook from his catch of the day.

Right: Veteran Billy Galloway (left), shows-off a catfish to Matt Bishop, an HBPC registered nurse. More than 40 Veterans enjoyed a day at the lake and lunch during the event.

(Photos by Brian House, CAVHS medical photographer)



## Holiday Gift Bags

During the season of giving the Home Health Care Service (HHCS) staff donated food and gift items for some home care Veterans who have little or no family, and would otherwise do without during the Holidays. This year, staff delivered 21 gift bags to home-bound Veterans. According to Debbie Elder, an HHCS program support assistant, the project helps both the Veteran and the care givers.

"There is nothing more rewarding than seeing a home-bound Veteran's face light up when the gift bags are delivered. The patients and caregivers are very appreciative of the gifts and the visit by staff when the bags are delivered."

(Photo by Brian House, CAVHS medical photographer)



Home Based Primary Care provides primary health care services for disabled Veteran patients in Central Arkansas when their health status makes travel to VA outpatient clinics difficult or impossible. To learn more about the program, call the HBPC coordinator at 501-257-5080.

# Events to Keep You in the Know

## January

January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month and Thyroid Awareness Month

Jan. 21 is Martin Luther King Jr. Day

## February

February is AMD (Age-Related Macular Degeneration)/Low Vision Awareness Month

Feb. 14 is Valentine's Day

Feb. 18 is Presidents Day

## March

March is National Colorectal Cancer and Endometriosis Awareness Month

March 10 starts Daylight Savings Time

March 17 is Saint Patrick's Day

March 31 is Easter



## CAVHS Events

Feb. 12: Salute to Veteran Patient Sweetheart lunch (NLR)

Feb. 14: National Salute to Veteran Patient Reception (LR)

Feb. 15: National Salute to Veteran Patient Meet and Greet (NLR)

# CAVHS Contact Information

### Local Contact Numbers

John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital, Little Rock	501-257-1000
Eugene J. Towbin VA Medical Center, North Little Rock	501-257-1000
Conway Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	501-548-0500
El Dorado Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	870-881-4488
Hot Springs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	501-520-6250
Mena Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	479-394-4800
Mountain Home Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	870-424-4109
Pine Bluff Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	870-541-9300
Russellville Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	479-880-5100
Searcy Community-Based Outpatient Clinic	501-207-4700
Pharmacy Refills/Helpline	1-888-492-7845
VA Eligibility & Enrollment	1-800-224-8387
Assistance for Returning Troops from Iraq/Afghanistan	501-257-6706
For an Appointment in the OEF/OIF Post-Deployment Clinic	501-257-3984
Little Rock VA Regional Office	1-800-827-1000
Little Rock VA National Cemetery	501-324-6401

### National Hotline Numbers

Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255
Caregiver Support Hotline	1-855-260-3274
Hotline for Homeless Veterans	1-877-4AID-VET