

CAVHS COMPASS

Reaching Out To Veterans

The Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System Veterans Day Treatment Center, located at Second and Ringo Streets in downtown Little Rock since 1996, currently offers various services to include psychiatric assessment and treatment, vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services, addiction treatment, housing assistance, and justice outreach. Psychiatric services available include treatment for routine, stable conditions appropriate for management in this outpatient clinic. In addition, the Center has a designated Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA) employee to facilitate access to military and Veteran benefits.

CAVHS homeless program staff meets routinely with community groups, including the Arkansas Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Central Arkansas Team Care for the Homeless (CATCH). CAVHS officials met with community members, business owners and government officials to answer questions, address concerns, and explore opportunities for shared services such as transportation, security, and connecting Veterans to city resources to maintain community partnerships.

After a lengthy search, an appropriate site was identified and CAVHS is projected to relocate the Drop-In Day Treatment Center from its current location to 1000 Main Street in late 2012. This move will provide additional space to better meet the needs of Veterans who are enrolled with the VA and meet eligibility criteria, including engagement in case management or other treatment services.



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A Message from the Director

All of us at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) are dedicated to providing the highest quality health care and excellent customer service to every Veteran who walks through our doors. With that in mind, I would like to highlight our core values and what they mean to our staff of professionals.

Integrity is the guiding principle behind every decision made by our healthcare professional – always asking “**But What About The Patient.**”

Commitment drives every staff member to exceed our Veteran’s expectations and serve our mission.

Advocacy defines the essence of that mission – to be Veteran-centric and to advance the health and well-being of every Veteran.

Respect ensures our staff treats all those we serve with dignity and respect – to treat every Veteran like the hero you are in our eyes.

Excellence is the goal we strive for each and every day with every patient, at every appointment and with every procedure – **Serving One Veteran at a Time!**

Together they spell “**I CARE.**” That is not just a slogan; it represents the mission of our team, to care for our Veterans. We are grateful to all Veterans, their families, and the sacrifices you all have made for our country. It is an honor and a privilege to serve and provide you with the health care you deserve.



Mr. Michael R. Winn,
Medical Center Director



This billboard, located on Markham Street in downtown Little Rock, encourages Arkansas Veterans and their families to “Make the Connection” with VA services and benefits.

Make the Connection with VA

Earlier this year in February, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) was featured in a four-part story on KTHV, Channel 11 in Little Rock. The story related the difficulties that returning soldiers experience and the programs and services available for their return to the States after deployment.

You can find links to the broadcasts on our Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/VACentralArkansas>

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Recognized by DOD, Community

In January 2012, Mr. Guy “Al” Stratton, Under-Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, visited Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System’s (CAVHS) Vocational Rehabilitation program to recognize firsthand the partnership between Little Rock Air Force Base (LRAFB) and CAVHS.

The visit was prompted by Michael Minihan, 19th Airlift Wing Commander, LRAFB, who spoke positively of the LRAFB’s partnership with CAVHS.

The Vocational Rehabilitation program offers various services to Veterans, including an upholstery training program for retired and disabled Veterans. The program was created when Pamela Fogarty, M.S., CRC, CPRP, Vocational Counselor, cultivated a relationship with LRAFB and made an agreement to re-upholster various items located on base. This joint venture benefits retired and disabled Veterans by teaching them the craft of upholstery; it also benefits the base by providing inexpensive re-upholstery services and saving tax dollars that would have otherwise been spent on new furniture.

This program is an excellent example of one government entity assisting another, but – most importantly – serving Veterans.

Below: (left to right) Mr. James Staats, Golden Corral General Manager; Dr. Margie Scott, Chief of Staff, CAVHS; Dr. Craig Rookey, Chief Vocational Services, CAVHS; Mr. Nick Tarkington, Veteran; Mr. John Kusturin, Veteran; Dr. Tina McClain, Chief, Mental Health Services, CAVHS; Toby Mathew, Deputy Medical Center Director, CAVHS.



Below: Mr. Al Stratton, Under-Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs and Pamela Fogarty, Vocational Counselor



For information regarding CAVHS’ Upholstery Program, please contact Pamela Fogarty at (501) 920-8513 or pamela.fogarty@va.gov.

Feeling Stressed?

Stress is a normal part of life for most Americans, but its consequences can be both good and bad. Dr. Joseph Banken, a CAVHS psychologist, recently spoke with Dr. David Lipchitz on KARK 4 News about strategies to overcome the harmful effects of stress. If you’re feeling stressed, check out the video to learn more:



http://arkansasmatters.com/fulltext?nxd_id=521682

VA parking lot repaving

A parking lot repaving project starts July 16, 2012, for all parking lots around the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock, Ark. The entire project is scheduled to be completed by January 2013 (weather permitting), but expect traffic delays during much of the summer around the hospital. All patient and visitor parking spaces will remain open during construction, although specific lots will change as the project progresses. Please plan ahead and add extra time to ensure you can make scheduled appointments.

Have you signed up for VA's My HealthVet benefits?

My HealthVet is VA's award-winning e-health website, which offers Veterans, active duty soldiers, their dependents and caregivers anywhere, anytime Internet access to VA health care information and services. Launched nationwide in 2003, My HealthVet is a free, online Personal Health Record that empowers Veterans to become informed partners in their health care. With My HealthVet, America's Veterans can access trusted, secure, and current health and benefits information as well as record and store important health and military history information at their convenience. Registering and using My HealthVet is easy and it's free!

My Health, My Care: 24/7 Online Access to VA

- Refill your VA prescriptions online!
- Take charge of your health!
- Avoid duplicate tests and procedures!
- Move more easily from doctor to doctor!
- Improve the efficiency and safety of your health care!
- Access free health resources!
- Get personalized VA appointment and wellness reminders!

Visit www.myhealth.va.gov on the Internet and register today! It's free, fast, easy, convenient, and secure!



To Complete the In-Person Authentication (IPA):

Visit the patient education center or release of information office at the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock. At the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in North Little Rock, visit the library. Veterans in Mena, Conway, Russellville, Searcy and Pine Bluff can visit their local VA clinic for IPA. Contact MyHealthVet Coordinator Kathy Denison at 501-257-4504 for more information.

National Salute to Veteran Patients



Local ROTC members present valentines to a hospitalized Veteran.

Each year, during the week of February 14, Americans take an opportunity to say thank you to a special group of men and women – more than 98,000 Veterans of the U.S. armed services who are cared for in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, outpatient clinics, domiciliaries and long-term care facilities. Individuals, Veteran groups, military personnel, civic organizations, businesses, schools, local media, celebrities and others participate in a variety of activities at VA medical facilities across the country. The activities and events held at CAVHS included special ward visits, valentine distributions, photo opportunities, and Veteran recognition programs.

Driving Back to Independence

Helping Veterans regain independence is all in a day's work for CAVHS occupational therapist Heather Stracener, who currently spearheads the Driver Rehabilitation Program.

Through this rehabilitation program, Veterans may re-learn and regain skills needed to operate a vehicle in the community, thereby restoring self-sufficiency. Veterans in the program receive a pre-driving assessment to evaluate skills such as range-of-motion, strength, and coordination and then work through a personalized plan of rehabilitative treatments to restore driving capabilities. When necessary, Veterans can also be trained in the use of adaptive driving equipment, such as hand-controls. The program is available to any Veteran with a rehabilitative need. To get involved in the program, Veterans are referred through their health care providers.

CAVHS currently uses three driving simulators for the program. These machines allow Veterans to test their driving skills in a safe environment within the Occupational Therapy area.

As long as a driver shows continual progress toward regaining driving capabilities, CAVHS therapists are willing to work with them. Stracener's standard is to "do it as many times as it takes."



Alvin Caldwell gets a tour of the driving simulator from Occupational Therapist Heather Stracener.

Thanks to Our Volunteers

On April 13, CAVHS Leadership hosted a recognition banquet to honor CAVHS volunteers for their dedicated service.

Volunteers are an integral part of CAVHS, and two of them agreed to tell us why they volunteer.

Hank Hoyle (pictured below) spent 30 years in the Army and the Air National Guard before working as a civilian for the state of Arkansas. Now he spends his days making the lives of Veterans at CAVHS a little brighter. As of February 2012, Mr. Hoyle has been a volunteer for 3 years and he reports that his motivation for volunteering is a sense of helping others.

"When I'm out here, I feel like I'm doing a service to Veterans even though I don't always have direct contact with them," he says.



Robert Chapman (pictured below, on left) also feels a call to serve Veterans. Mr. Chapman has been working with the CAVHS volunteer team for over 12 years in addition to his full-time job in the community. Many of his family members were in the military, and he enjoys making Veterans smile. He recalls the first time he knew for sure that he had positively impacted a Veteran's day; that moment sealed Mr. Chapman's resolve to volunteer at CAVHS, and he hasn't turned back since. His philosophy for volunteering with Veterans is, "They gave a whole lot, so if I can't spend a couple of hours doing bingo, something's wrong!"



Both encourage anyone interested in making a difference in the lives of Veterans to become involved through the CAVHS Voluntary Service. For more information, call 501-257-3288.

Have You Updated Your Means Test?



VA enrollments are renewed annually and many Veterans will stay enrolled each year without any action on their part. However, most Veterans who do not receive monthly compensation or pension checks from VA must complete an annual financial statement known as a Means Test. Completing a Means Test allows the VA to place Veterans in the correct Priority Group for determination of copayments. It also ensures that local VAs receive accurate reimbursement from VA for the health care they provide. If you haven't completed a means test recently, you can apply for enrollment or renewal of your benefits by internet, phone, mail or in person.

By Internet

Online instructions and forms are available at <https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/>

By Phone

You can apply for enrollment or renewal of your benefits by phone by calling **1-877-222-VETS (8387)**, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time). A VA representative will have your completed form sent to you for verification and signature.

By Mail

Complete and sign the Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ) or Health Benefits Renewal Form (VA Form 10-10EZR), then mail it to the following address: Eligibility (136A1), Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, 4300 W. 7th St., Little Rock, AR 72205.

In Person

Visit the Eligibility Center located in the Orange Atrium at the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital campus in Little Rock, or in Building 170 of the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in North Little Rock to apply for enrollment or renewal of your benefits in person.

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Other beneficial aspects of the projected move include ease of accessibility to state and local services such as Social Security Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, public library, banking, public housing administration, multiple bus routes, and availability to current CAVHS inter-facility van routes.

“This relocation affords us an opportunity to provide enhanced and additional services to one of our most vulnerable Veteran populations,” said Tina McClain, M.D., Chief, Mental Health Service. Estella Morris, PhD, LCSW, Program Manager, Comprehensive Homeless Center further added that “Veterans will have improved access to the full range of services currently provided at our Drop-In Center in addition to a primary care team available to Veterans enrolled at the Center.”

*Note – The VA encourages family, friends, and citizens in the community to “Make the Call” and help prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. Since March 2010, VA has offered a toll-free telephone number, staffed around the clock by trained professionals, to help homeless Veterans and their families.

The toll-free number is 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).

Increase Alcohol Awareness

By Michael Ballard, LCSW — Coordinator of Outpatient SUD Programs

In our society, alcohol consumption is considered to be socially acceptable, and many adults are able to drink alcohol responsibly. For others, however, alcohol can become a problem. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 23.5 million persons aged 12 or older required treatment for alcohol or other drug abuse problems in 2009. The largest percentage of these treatment admissions (41.4 %) involved alcohol abuse.

Without being aware of it, many people use alcohol to deal with a bad home situation or to avoid difficult emotions such as anger, worry or sadness. Others use alcohol as a way to cope with bad memories or traumatic experiences related to combat or some other traumatic event. While it may seem like drinking alcohol helps you to cope in the short run, it actually can make your problems worse.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does drinking alcohol sometimes interfere with my life at home or at work? Am I missing work?
- Do I need alcohol to feel comfortable or confident in social situations?
- Is it difficult to stop drinking once I start?
- Do I find myself drinking more than I intended?
- Do I sometimes use alcohol to fall asleep or to sleep better?
- Have I been arrested for driving under the influence or for disorderly conduct?



Eat Wisely!

Eat wisely to maximize your health. For best health results, eat a variety of foods including vegetables, fruits and whole grains. It is also important to include fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products in your diet, and limit salt, fat, sugar, and alcohol. For more information about healthy living, visit our website at http://www.littlerock.va.gov/services/Health_Promotion_and_Disease_Prevention.asp

- Do I sometimes use alcohol to feel less angry, worried or sad?
- Am I craving alcohol at a certain time of the day or throughout the day?
- Have my friends or family expressed concern about my drinking?
- Have I ever "blacked out" and been unable to remember what happened the night before?

Answering yes to even one of these questions might indicate a problem. Addressing an alcohol problem can seem overwhelming, but with a little help, it could be a first step toward a happier, healthier, more fulfilling life. Many people find help from local support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), while others feel more comfortable discussing an alcohol problem with a spiritual or religious advisor.

Your Primary Care Physician should be able to answer some basic questions about alcohol-related problems and the various treatment options and resources that are available, or may be able to make a referral. If you are a Veteran, you may be eligible for one of the many treatment programs offered including residential treatment, intensive outpatient treatment and outpatient aftercare. Talk with your doctor or counselor about different treatment options to find the best fit for you.



Events to Keep You in the Know

July

July is UV Safety Month and National Cleft & Craniofacial Awareness/Prevention Month

July 28 is World Hepatitis Day

August

August is National Immunization Awareness Month and Children’s Eye Health & Safety Month

September

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month

Sept. 13 is National Celiac Disease Awareness Day

Sept. 16-22 is National Rehabilitation Awareness Celebration Week

Sept. 21 is World Alzheimer’s Day



CAVHS Events

July 16: A repaving project starts at John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital (See page 3).

August 1: The New Hot Springs Community Based Out-patient Clinic opens.

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 _____	501-881-4112
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