

Detroit Excellence

A Monthly Newsletter for Employees, Volunteers and Patients of the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center



VA
HEALTH
CARE

Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

January 2012

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alyse.mengason@va.gov or lisa.olney@va.gov

VA Visits Detroit to Announce Summer Veterans Business Conference

VA Chief of Staff, John Gingrich, and others gathered at Cobo Center on an unusually warm January day to announce Detroit as host to a major summer conference.

The National Veterans Small Business Conference will take place, June 25—29, 2012, bringing nearly 6,000 people to the Motor City. This conference is the largest of its kind, focusing on helping Veteran-owned businesses maximize opportunities in the federal marketplace.

“VA is committed to bringing more Veteran-owned businesses into the public-private partnership,” said Chief of Staff Gingrich. “In addition to the National Veterans Small Business Conference, our Detroit Hiring Fair will provide Veterans with on-the-spot job opportunities and interviews, while also offering career search classes and one-on-one counseling.”

While in town, Mr. Gingrich also made a stop at the Detroit VA Medical Center to visit with patients and staff.



The National Veterans Small Business Conference will take place, June 25—29, 2012 at Cobo Center in Detroit. For additional information, please visit the website, www.NationalVeteransConference.com.



L to R: Detroit Mayor Dave Bing, VA Chief of Staff John Gingrich, COBO Center General Manager, Thom Connors.

Message from the Director



The New Year is certainly off to a busy start here in Detroit!

I had the chance to participate in the January 25th announcement at Cobo Center, as VA Chief of Staff John Gingrich joined Detroit leaders, including Mayor Dave Bing, in announcing Detroit as the host city of the 2012 National Veterans Small Business Conference and Expo. This is a great opportunity for Detroit and of course, for our medical center, which

will play a big role in many of the programs and feature of the conference. Anytime we provide our Veterans with opportunities to advance their skills and services, it's a good event in my eyes. This conference is part of Secretary Shinseki's ongoing efforts to help Veterans find employment in both the public and the private sectors. President Obama continues to emphasize it, Secretary Shinseki also says it, and I agree: Veterans are crucial to our economy and we need to find them jobs!

Also this past month, we were visited by some Washington VA staff. It's always a treat for myself and the other leaders of this medical center to show off our talented staff and to showcase some of the recent changes and developments we've made. In mid-January, Deputy Chief of Staff Hughes Turner was very pleased with his tour and spoke highly of the Veterans he met when he visited. On January 25th, as part of his visit to Detroit, Chief of Staff John Gingrich also stopped by the medical center for a tour. Mr. Gingrich was able to see our nearly complete 7th floor Mental Health Unit, which we hope to open sometime this Spring.

January is also the time we gear up for the Motor City Valentines for Veterans Concert, which staff-members have been working for months to plan. While I know I will see many of you at the Masonic Temple Theater on February 11th, enjoying the sounds of the Spinners, I hope you'll join me in keeping those Veterans who we've chosen to pay tribute to this year, top of mind: our Homeless Veteran population.

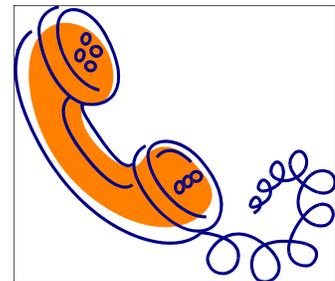
Enjoy February, and thank you for your service to our Nation's heroes!

Dr. Pamela Reeves, Medical Center Director

How do I call the Detroit VA?

The Telephone Call Center here at the Detroit VAMC can assist with appointment management, prescription refills and medical questions or concerns.

Members of our call center staff are available Monday—Friday, 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m., 313-576-1051 or 800-511-8056.



Follow the Detroit VA Medical Center on Facebook and Twitter!

We are reaching out to our Veterans, their families, our volunteers and our staff, providing them with good information on programs and services.

Have you visited our pages?
Make sure you tell friends and family!



Detroit’s “Urgent Care” Now Known as “Fast Track”

Constantly seeking ways to improve our level of care, the Detroit VA Medical Center’s Urgent Care Department is now referred to as , “Fast Track”.

“It’s important to note the difference between two very crucial units in our medical center,” said Dr. Scott Gruber, Chief of Staff of the Detroit VA Medical Center. “The Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and is here to serve our Veterans’ acute medical and surgical needs. Fast Track is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.”



Patients can be directed to either unit by the admitting staff in the entrance to the ED.

The triage process begins with a nurse evaluation, known as an Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS) nurse. The ACS nurse will determine the most appropriate level of care for the patient’s visit. The Veteran will then be registered and triaged to the most appropriate area, the Emergency Department or Fast Track.

“Clarity and consistency is key when it comes to our patients,” said Dr. Gruber. “We don’t want you to be confused, so by fielding all admissions at the entrance to the Emergency Department, we can direct our Veterans to the care center that can help them quickly and accurately.”

Do you know how to be a CREW-Member?

CREW (Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace) is here and it’s changing the way employees interact with each other.

This ongoing program developed by VHA Leadership and the National Center for Organizational Development strives to re-educate and remind us how to work and communicate in a civil and respectful manner with our colleagues.

Respectful communication alone has the power to change attitudes, accomplish goals, and create a pleasant, creative environment where employees feel engaged, empowered and appreciated for the work they do.

You can start practicing CREW now: Tell your co-worker you appreciate his/her help, greet your colleagues when you arrive in the morning, when an issue arises discuss resolutions in an adult, respectful way – don’t criticize, judge, blame, belittle – **REMEMBER, WHAT WE SAY AND DO EVERY DAY DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**



Photo Album, Fall 2011



Photo Album, January 2012

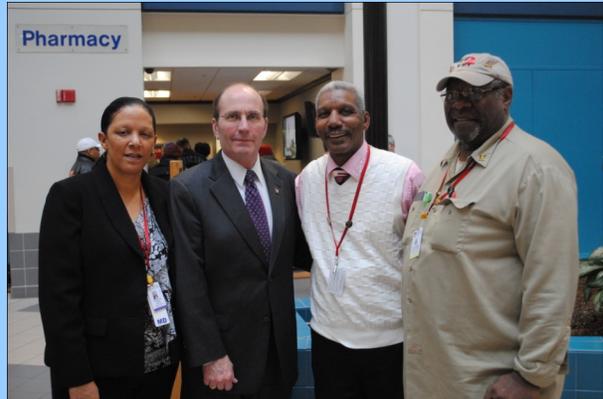


Photo Guide: **Page 4**, Clockwise beginning top left: A holiday visit on December 7, 2011 by a Salvation Army Band; Employees enjoy the holiday luncheon on December 20, 2011; an employee takes part in the luncheon; a member of the Detroit VAMC clinical staff provides medical care at the annual Stand Down, October 12, 2011; Breast Cancer Awareness Walk in October 2011; Employees volunteer at the Stand Down, October 12, 2011; VA Assistant Secretary of Information & Technology, Roger Baker, speaks at the October 12th Homeless Outreach Program. **Page 5**, Clockwise beginning top left: Employees visit the MLK Day celebration, January 2012; Deputy VA Chief of Staff, Hughes Turner, speaks to staff during his visit on January 13, 2012; VA Chief of Staff John Gingrich visits the medical center on January 25; Financial Open House was held on January 17; VA's Deputy Chief of Staff chats with Detroit VAMC employee Ulysses Spencer.



Detroit Area Business Determined to Help Military and Veteran Brides

Everyone knows that Summer-time is high season for weddings, both in Michigan and around the country. A Detroit-area jewelry designer has just announced her *Michigan Military Brides Program*. Denise Ilitch Designs wants to support the armed forces and Veterans by providing jewelry from its wedding line to women who are serving in the military, have served or are marrying someone currently serving.

“Supporting and honoring our troops and their families is very dear to me,” explains owner/designer Denise Ilitch. The program will take place during February and March. In order to qualify for the program, the couple must have a residence in Michigan and either the bride or groom must be enlisted in the military or a Veteran. The couple must submit an application for acceptance into the program. For more information, please visit www.deniseilitchdesigns.com or call 248-203-6789.



Detroit VA Medical Center Focuses on Strategic Plan

With an eye on the future and the well-being of our Veteran patients always top of mind, leaders at the Detroit VA Medical Center have spent many months developing what’s called our “Strategic Plan”. What is a Strategic Plan, and why do we need one?

“The strategic plan gives an organization direction as to where and what it is moving towards,” said Dr. Pamela Reeves, Medical Center Director.

There are three components: Directional strategies (mission, vision, values), and these don’t change over time, but they do set the general direction of where the organization is going; strategies which give more specifics of how to achieve the direction we are moving in; and finally—the strategic momentum which is how you implement, monitor and revise how you are achieving your strategies.

This basis for developing our medical center’s strategic plan comes from the Department of Veterans Affairs strategic plan and the direction they provide to us.

Here at the Detroit VA Medical Center, our plan is divided into 4 pillars, People, Quality, Service and

Economic Stability/Innovation. Over the course of the next few months, we want to make all employees and our Veterans we serve, familiar with this plan and what it means for our future.



Do you know our Mission Statement?

The Detroit VA Medical Center’s Mission is to fulfill President Lincoln’s promise, “‘To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan’ by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s Veterans.”

Detroit VA Medical Center Employees of the Month

An employee since January 2001, Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist **Darryl Tinsley** is the Detroit VAMC's Employee of the Month for **January 2012**.

According to one of his coworkers, "Darryl Tinsley has been a mainstay in the radiology department for over a decade. He performs at an outstanding level and I am confident that he will continue with this level of service to the veterans of the Detroit VA Medical Center."



Tonora Shannon is the **December 2011** Employee of the Month.

A Program Support Assistant since April 2008, Tonora is recognized by her fellow employees for her dedication and commitment to our Veterans.

According to one of her coworkers, "I have known Tonora for a few years and she continues to amaze me by her respect, her outstanding abilities, and her rapid response to our needs and problems."



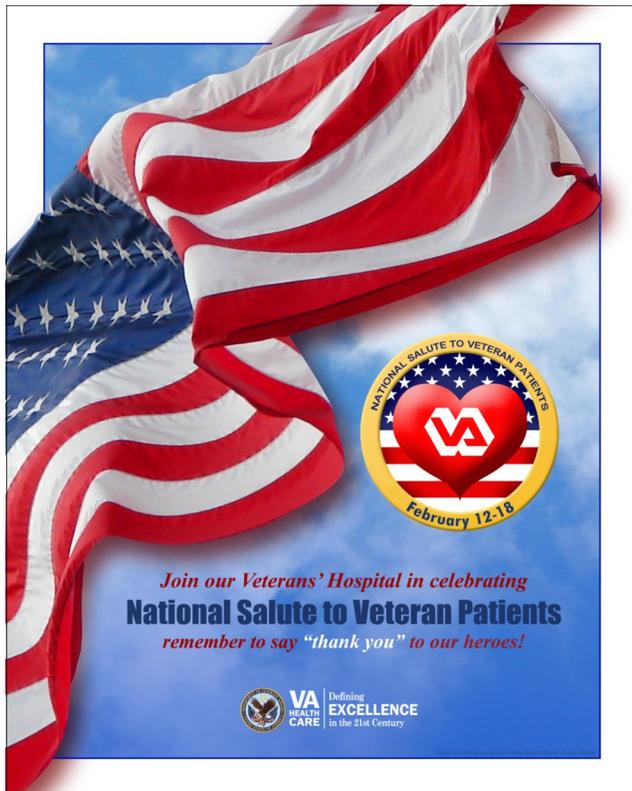
Timothy Smith is the **November 2011** employee of the month for the Detroit VAMC. An addiction therapist since November 2005, Tim is known for his commitment to our Veterans.

"Tim is an exceptional employee and is well respected by staff and patients. He is always helpful and volunteers anywhere he can help," said one of his coworkers. "Tim has been the point of contact since implementation of treatment planner software in 2009. He receives many calls from all services in Mental Health requesting help with training, fixing, and deletion of treatment plans. This takes many hours to complete and he has been doing this all on his own time in addition to his usual responsibilities."



Calendar of Events

- **February 11, 2012:** Motor City Valentines for Veterans Concert, Masonic Temple Theater
- **February 12, 2012:** Lincoln's Birthday (1809)
- **February 13, 2012:** 1st Medal of Honor Awarded, 1861; Marine Corps Women's Reserve Created (1943)
- **February 13—19, 2012:** National Salute to Veteran Patients Week
- **February 14, 2012:** Valentine's Day
- **February 15, 2012:** Susan B. Anthony Day
- **February 20—26, 2012:** National Eating Disorders Awareness Week
- **February 20, 2012:** President's Day, Washington's Birthday
- **February 23, 2012:** Desert Storm Ground War Began (1991)
- **February 26, 2012:** Kuwait Liberation Day (1991)
- **February 29, 2012:** Leap Day



Recognizing our Employees for their Outstanding Work!

- Congratulations to the Gastroenterology and Pathology Services in achieving Wayne State University CME Accreditation approval for their monthly "Gastroenterology Pathology Lecture Series". This team presents GI/Path cases every 4th Monday each month. All the best to Dr. Lawrence Miller and his team.
- Congratulations to Diana Kinsey-Steele, DNP, ANP-BC for her research, which was published in the January 2012 edition of Federal Practitioner, "Effects of Psychosocial Issues on Medication Adherence Among HIV/AIDS Patients".
- Congratulations to Abdul Ghani Sankri-Tarbichi, MD, Ph.D, on his certification by the American Board of Internal Medicine as a Diplomate in Sleep Medicine.
- The Detroit VA Medical Center's surgical oncology abstract on ovarian cancer work was accepted for oral presentation at the upcoming Association of VA Surgeons Meeting. It will be presented by Scott A. Gruber, M.D., Ph.D., MBA, FACS, FCP, FACHE, Chief of Staff of the Detroit VA Medical Center, and Dr. Ramesh Batchu from the Detroit VA Medical Center and the Department of Surgery, WSU School of Medicine .



Are you a Detroit VAMC Employee ready to get involved in some great activities? Consider joining the Veterans Administration Employee Association (VAEA)! It's easy and it's fun. Only \$5 to join, this group will be responsible for the annual Employee Carnival, an Employee Children's Holiday Party and many more fun activities! Interested? Call Jackie Weisman, ext. 63327 or Jackie Pugh, ext. 63816.