

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

July 2012

Be a Detroit Excellence Contributor!

Detroit Excellence wants to feature the news YOU want to read! If you have a story to contribute, please email:

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

Detroit VAMC Employees and Volunteers Help Make the 2012 VA for Vets Hiring Fair and Open House a Success



It was the culmination of months of hard work for leadership and hundreds of staff members of the Detroit VA Medical Center.

On June 26th at 10:00 a.m., the doors of Cobo Center opened to thousands of Veterans who planned to attend the VA for Vets Hiring Fair and VA Open House.

“This was a first-ever project for most of us,” said Dr. Pamela Reeves, Medical Center Director. “We were tasked with planning this massive 3-day event that would provide everything from on-site medical exams to career counseling and coaching for area Veterans. It was a huge initiative for VA, nationally, and it certainly was an honor to host this here in Detroit.”

The results were impressive. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington DC, employers offered more than 1,300 jobs to Veterans and conducted more than 5,500 interviews. More than 8,000 Veterans attended the three-day Hiring Fair and Open House and more than 260 private sector companies, as well as governmental departments and agencies took part in the hiring efforts.

The 2012 National Veterans Small Business Conference & Expo ran concurrently with the hiring fair and open house.



Message from the Director



There's no better way to describe these last few months here at the Detroit VA Medical Center other than...BUSY!

What a quarter it has been for those of us who spend our time caring for the well being of our Veterans.

I hope all of you got the chance to experience some of the remarkable VA for Vets Hiring Fair and VA Open House, along with the National Veterans Small Business Conference & Expo, held the last week of June at Cobo

Center. I am very proud of the hundreds of Detroit VAMC staff-members and volunteers who participated and put in some very long days both leading up to the event and during the actual week of activities. Because of your great work, as of this date, thousands of Veterans were given job offers and hundreds were brought into the VA system for benefits and healthcare.

Here in our medical center, we were treated to some kind words from our namesake, Congressman John D. Dingell as he helped us re-dedicate a Veterans Memorial Wall, brought over from Cobo Center that now hangs in our Atrium. I hope you all have had a chance to look at it.

I was extremely proud to help cut the ribbon on our new VCRRC in early May. It's a beautiful facility and I know the other members of leadership share my sentiment. This is yet another program that will help us fulfill our mission to make sure all of our area homeless Veterans receive the care and the housing they need and deserve. Congratulations to the staff that worked so hard to open the center! You can read more about the new VCRRC on page 3 of the newsletter.

We received some wonderful recognition and some significant donations during the last couple of months, and I'm always thrilled when members of the community recognize and show appreciation for our Veterans.

I had the opportunity to join Ann Arbor's director and the great Justin Verlander as he made a donation to both of our medical centers. We will use those funds to put together a fitness center for our Veterans in the next year. Also, Ford Motor Company donated \$5,000 toward The Healing Garden, a roof-top patio designated for residents of our Community Living Center. Members of the Ford Motor Company Volunteer Corp set up patio furniture and assisted Veteran patients with planting vegetables and flowers. It was a terrific afternoon!

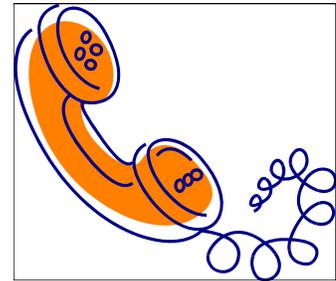
As we dive into mid-summer and look toward fall, I am grateful to our staff for their dedication and their commitment to our Vets. And, as I always say to our Veterans...thank you for your service!

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 VA Medical Center Expands Homeless Program with VCRRC



The John D. Dingell VA Medical Center in Detroit recently opened the doors of the Veterans Community Resource & Referral Center (VCRRC). The VCRRC is co-located inside of Piquette Square in Detroit.

“We are thrilled to be part of this new initiative,” said Beth Baker, Chief of the new VCRRC. “We are one of just 16 in the nation and the second in the United States to open its doors. The services we offer to Detroit-area Veterans are very specialized and quite unique.”

The VCRRC will be open 7 days a week, 12 hours a day, and will offer various services such as case management, substance abuse treatment, community referrals, housing placement, triage, transportation, showers, laundry facilities, a computer lab, clothing and ready-to-eat meals.

“This is a place where a homeless Veteran can walk through the door, seeking help, he or she can get a hot meal, a hot shower, speak to a therapist and begin the process of seeking permanent housing and medical care,” said Baker. “This is not a shelter. It’s a much more comprehensive approach to care, rehabilitation and rebuilding for some of our most vulnerable Veterans.”

The VCRRC is a program that grew out of a 2009 pledge made by President Obama and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki to end homelessness among the nation’s Veterans within 5-years. According to a count on a January night in 2011, there were 67,495 homeless Veterans in the U.S. And, an estimated 144,842 Veterans spent at least one night in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program in a recent year. Here in Detroit, while hard to confirm accurate numbers, according to HAND, the Homeless Action Network of Detroit, 3,100 people will have no place to call home in Detroit, Highland Park and Hamtramck, tonight. Of those 3,100 people, more than 400 are Veterans. “Our ultimate goal is to get these Veterans off the streets and ease them back into a safe environment,” said Baker.

A ribbon cutting and grand opening for the VCRRC was held on May 3rd. For more information on the VA’s Homeless Veterans initiative, visit www.va.gov/homeless, or call the Detroit VA Medical Center at 313-576-1000.



Engines Roar at Welcome Home Event!

Veterans, staff and volunteers were treated to a great car show, games and giveaways, at a Welcome Home Event held June 1st at the medical center. The rain didn’t dampen anyone’s spirits, especially those who came out to see more than two dozen classic and muscle cars, displayed by Veterans and their families. A couple hundred Veterans visited and learned more about various services and benefits available to them at the



medical center. “It was a successful event, all around,” said Melva Coleman, OEF/OIF/OND Coordinator and one of the event organizers. “Anytime we can help spread the word to Veterans about what is here for them, and show them a great time, it’s a very good day!”



Photo Gallery July 2012



Photo guide: This page, clockwise, top left: Tigers pitcher Justin Verlander and a Veteran at the Meijer check donation; Dearborn Vet Center grand re-opening; VA Chief of Staff John Gingrich addresses employees at the start of the June 26-29 conference at Cobo; Veterans check -in on day one of the VA for Vets Hiring Fair at Cobo; VA staffers work tirelessly at the VA Open House. Opposite page, clockwise, top left: US Congressman John D. Dingell and a local WWII Veteran help re-dedicate the Veterans Memorial Wall at the medical center; employees staff the annual June Employee Carnival at the medical center; employees participate in the 2nd Annual VA2K Walk and Roll event outside of the medical center; employees staff an annual Welcome Home Event for OEF/OIF/OND Veterans; Paralympic athlete, Christopher Clemens visits the medical center; one of several cars on display for the 2012 Welcome Home Event; the VA2K; staff getting into the spirit of the 2012 Employee Carnival!

Photo Gallery July 2012



THANKS FORD!

On Friday, May 11, The Ford Motor Company's Model Care Teams brought a group of volunteers to the Detroit VA Medical Center's Healing Garden as part of the automaker's Accelerated Action Day. The volunteers put together patio furniture and planted a flowers for the patients of the Community Living Center.

The furniture and garden amenities were made possible by a \$5000 grant from Ford Motor Company.



Employees of the Month

April 2012: Antonio Sims is the Detroit VAMC Employee of the Month for April 2012. Antonio is a Travel Assistant and joined the VA in 2010. According to one of his coworkers, "Antonio has been outstanding in assisting when travel arrangements must be completed. His pleasant ways, knowledge of his job and consistency is outstanding. Antonio never hesitates to offer to help and always follows up on various issues." Congratulations Antonio!



May 2012: Benjamin Suthers is the Employee of the Month for May 2012. Ben joined the Detroit VAMC in September 2008 and is currently a Program Support Assistant. According to one of his coworkers, "Ben has worked diligently, using his personal time over the last several months to assist with the set-up of the Veterans Appreciation Celebration. This endeavor alone is much appreciated, however Ben went even further and made positive connections with the authors/ photographers of the book, Portraits of Service, Looking into the Faces of Veterans. With Ben's efforts, this beautiful book



June 2012: Sherrill Barrus is the Detroit VAMC Employee of the Month for June 2012. A Medical Technologist, Sherrill joined the Detroit VAMC in October 1974. Recently, during the morning blood draw rounds from the lab, Sherrill entered a patient's room and found the patient to be non-responsive, she promptly alerted the nurse and getting timely help improved the patient's recovery. The patient was moved to the ICU for more immediate care. Thank you, Sherrill, for your commitment to our Veterans!



Detroit Tigers Pitcher Donates 100% of Proceeds from Cereal Sales to Detroit and Ann Arbor VAMCs

A seemingly ordinary day of shopping in an Allen Park Meijer store turned into quite an event as Justin Verlander, star pitcher for the Detroit Tigers, stopped by to present the Detroit and Ann Arbor VA medical centers with a check for \$45,000 on May 16th. The funds came from the to-date sale of more than 110,000 boxes of 'Fastball Flakes,' the cereal he's been 'pitching' since February. When the cereal was introduced, Verlander told the medical centers that 100% of the proceeds would be divided between the two hospitals.

The 14-ounce box of cereal, which is a take-off on Kellogg's Frosted Flakes, retails for \$3.49 and features a likeness of Verlander pitching a baseball. The cereal company signed Verlander after he won the American League's Cy Young and Most Valuable Player awards last season.

Verlander's first cousin, Christopher, is on his second tour of duty, currently serving in Afghanistan.



Now is the Time to Try My HealthVet

What's new on [My HealthVet](#)?

VA patients can now see their VA Appointments on [My HealthVet](#).



If you are a Veteran enrolled at a VA health care facility, are registered on [My HealthVet](#) and have an upgraded account, you have the option to see your VA Appointments. It's quick, easy and it's free!

Congratulations to the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center on being named to the 2012 Hospital & Health Networks "Most Wired" Hospitals List.

The survey/study which was developed in cooperation with Hospital and Health Networks (H&HN), the American Hospital Association (AHA), McKesson, AT&T, Caretech Solutions, and the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME), surveys hospitals and health systems to identify the best information technology (IT) practices in the industry.



You can click [here](#) for details and to read the entire article.

DIVERSITY CORNER

(a new feature in Detroit Excellence!)

Learn to Foster Dignity and Respect With Simple Gestures. In November 2008, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's Center for Inclusion introduced a campaign in an effort to promote a broader sense of accountability—to unify a shared belief that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

Your Side of the Street. It's all about your perspective. It doesn't matter what situation you find yourself in, what problem you're trying to solve, what solution you've come up with: If you look at it another way you can find something new—good, bad or ugly. Of course, that statement isn't rocket science, but it has significant merit in a diversity context.

Upcoming event: **Blacks In Government (BIG) 34th Annual National Training Conference**, Cobo Center, August 13—16, 2012.

For information, contact Tanisha Homes-Garris, ext. 61324 or tanisha.holmes-garris@va.gov

Calendar of Events

- *July 1: Medicare Anniversary (1968)
- *July 4: Independence Day
- *July 6: Air Force Cross Created (1960)
- *July 6—12: Alzheimer's Awareness Week
- *July 8—14: National Therapeutic Recreation Week
- *July 20: Ramadan Begins
- *July 21: Veterans Administration Created
- *July 26: Armed Forces Unified (Department of Defense Created)
- *July 27: Korean War Armistice (1953)
- *July 28: World War I Begins (1914)

- **UV Safety Month
- **Bioterrorism/Disaster Education and Awareness Month

Recognizing our Employees for their Outstanding Work!

- Anjan Kowluru, Ph.D., professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences and associate dean for external scientific affairs in the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and professor of Internal Medicine for the School of Medicine, and a staff member of the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center, was recently recognized for his research in the area of Type 1 Diabetes. You can click [here](#) for more information.



Detroit VAMC Unveils Relocated Veteran Memorial Wall



Staff and leadership of the Detroit VA Medical Center were joined by U.S. Congressman John D. Dingell, and members of Detroit's Cobo Center management to officially cut the ribbon on the recently relocated Veteran Memorial Wall, which was hung after being refurbished.

The memorial is a floor-to-ceiling bronze installation, listing the names of more than 8,700 Detroit residents who sacrificed their lives in every war from the Spanish American War in 1898 to Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990-1991.

While its ownership is unknown, the wall was originally located at the Veterans Memorial Building, now known as the Ford UAW Building in Detroit. It was later moved to Cobo Hall during renovations. In late 2011, the medical center was contacted and it was decided that the wall would be relocated to inside of the facility.

A rededication was held on June 14th at the medical center.

"This has been such a moving project for our staff," said Dr. Pamela Reeves, Director of the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center. "When I was approached about accepting the wall and hanging it here in the medical center, there was absolutely no question that we would take it. Even though its origin is a bit of a mystery, the fact that we can pay tribute to all of these residents of this great city who sacrificed so much, fighting for our country, is wonderful."

The re-hanging of the wall took more than a week and is attracting quite a bit of attention as Veterans and their families visit the medical center. In 1991, the 'final' name was added to the wall, allowing the Veteran memorial to span nearly 100 years.

