

Instances of Excellence

Detroit VA Healthcare System



Winter 2014-2015

The "Instances of Excellence" program stems from a belief that employees must do the right thing, the first time, every time. Our program establishes a system of recognizing and celebrating those Instances of Excellence in the hope of fostering a culture that is dedicated to excellence in customer service and patient care.

Instances of Excellence Report from Veterans

- **Sophilea Revel-Louis - Physical Therapy** - Sophilea has greeted each client in person and on the phone with such great respect and dignity - during challenging times (as I observed) and with understanding. In my experience, Shopilea shared not just understanding and respectful courtesy, she shared an idea that has been remarkable! During the floods of August 2014 I observed tense clients in the waiting area. Sophilea was superbly understanding. Only later did I learn that she had been coping with flooding too! She is absolutely exceptional!
- **Sharon Brown RN - Stepdown** - Too often quality care is taken for granted and not fully acknowledged. Nurse Brown made me feel comfortable. She attended to my needs and monitored my vitals in such a professional and caring manner. Thank you Nurse Brown.
- **Linda Seidel - PACT Team D** - I would also like to recognize Linda Seidel who, in the past, has answered my questions promptly whenever I email her (if my provider herself did not answer). Her excellence in what she does shines a positive light on the VA. During these times, I feel that the VA can use all of the positive feedback it can get. Unfortunately, I have had a very bad experience with Neurology a few months ago so it's nice to have a pleasant experience at the VA to get that bad taste out of my mouth.
- **Judith Dolson - Call Center** - Nice to have a pleasant voice on the phone.
- **Suzanne Whalen - Physical Therapy** - Suzanne stepped right in when my therapist needed to take medical leave and did so with great caring, knowledge, respect and understanding. She has worked diligently (emphasis on gently) through and beyond some unbelievable pain and readying for the next steps. My gratitude, respect and appreciation are heartfelt. She is an incredible example of VA excellence. What a gem she is. We're so fortunate she has chosen to work at our VA!
- **Mrs. Emma Jones - Firm A** - I called earlier today about some health issues. Nurse Emma Jones at the Detroit VA medical center went above and beyond to find a way to get me treated. Many times you hear not such good things coming out of the VA system, but Emma Jones is definitely is not one of them. She seems to be a very kind and helpful lady and I want to let someone know how amazing and how lucky the VA is to have a person like her on staff. I hope this gets to the right person and she will be recognized for going above and beyond the call of duty.
- **Tanya Kenney - PACT Team D** - I have never written you but find it necessary to let you know how wonderful and caring Tanya Kenney in Firm D is. She always responds to my emails. I have been put on a new medication for my diabetic nerve pain in my leg. My provider was not in so before I picked up the medication, I had some questions. Ms. Kenney not only responded to my emails but invited me to stop by Firm D to have the medication and its instructions explained to me. I stopped in and she came out and answered my questions and instructed me how to take it, how often, and reassured me of the side effects and her experience with them (or lack of them). I picked up the medication am emailing her as to the progress. She defines excellence and should be recognized for her effort.



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- **Rustine Janiszewski - Housing Services** - I have witnessed Rustine on multiple occasions do what I consider exceptional service.
- **Dr. Matthews - Acute Care** - I just wanted to say that while I was admitted to the hospital for prolonged QT syndrome I was treated exceptionally well. I would like to thank Dr. Matthews and the rest of the team that took care of me. I would also like to thank the nurses and nurse assistants for being so nice and understanding during my stay.
- **Jessica DeJulian- IOP** - My experience is that Jessica is a total asset to VA/IOP. She gave everything professional about addiction therapy, and it is most useful to me. I'm glad she is part of the IOP staff.
- **Deidra Lett - Radiology** - I would like to take this opportunity, to recognize Deidra Lett (Radiology Department) at the VAMC. Her professionalism, knowledge, and attitude is beyond reproach. To me, she is an outstanding individual, who should be recognized for a job that was greatly appreciated. She put me at ease, and made me and my wife feel as though we were people and not a number. Again, I would like to thank her for a job well done.
- **Daniel C. - B2N** - A real trooper who maintains the highest level of professionalism despite the thinnest of resources and shortest amount of time.
- **Bridget Howard - B2N** - A great coordinator of services and cutting through red tape to get things done.
- **Angela Wincher - B2N** - Kind and loving and very experienced good doer that gets services for veterans that are needed. Talks reason into a veteran about accepting new and different things.
- **Vanessa Holt - B2N** - What a wonderful smile and great attitude.
- **Jenean Evans - Call Center** - The only person who I feel really cares enough to help me with my Vicodin. She has gone above and beyond her job. She kept me calm and resolved my issue better than the doctor, technicians and patient advocate. She was wonderful.
- **Charmaine Ricks - Switchboard Operator** - She is always happy and always right. She is a pleasant operator. She is wonderful. Listens and patient.
- **Charmaine - Call Center** - Was able to connect me to the proper person needed to get emergency service in a prompt manner. Very pleasing attitude, nice, kind voice and willing to help with patience.
- **Nancy Giaimo - Pain Clinic** - I'm writing this letter to bring to your attention the outstanding care that I have received by Nancy Giaimo, NP, over the past few months. In the past, I have seen several other medical experts at the hospital and by far, Nurse Giaimo is the first professional that is taking the necessary steps to alleviate my chronic back and leg pain. Most importantly, she takes time to really listen and clearly communicate the different types of options that I have to help me with managing my pain. Lastly, she always makes herself available when I need to be seen and when in her care she is always professional, friendly and caring. - The most help I've had.
- **Youli - A5S** - Everything was great about her.
- **Youli - A5S** - Youli is very kind and respectful of my needs. She is a wonderful nurse, very kind and compassionate.
- **Dr. Helene Shapero - PACT Team A** - Dear Dr. Shapero, I have been coming to the VA since it opened, and you are the best Dr. this writer ever had, counting the two I had before you. I'm basing this on your phone call to me. No Dr. has ever reached out to me like that. It puts you in a class by yourself. My mother died this year Dr. Shapero, and my life has started coming apart. We try sometimes to put things behind us, but they don't stay put. I guess you understand what I mean.
- **Katelyn Starr - PACT Team D** - I want to commend Katelyn Starr of Pharm D. She was very knowledgeable and answered all of my questions. She was up to date on various tests of the medication I was taking. She said she will be contacting my cardiologist to see if I should be taken off the aspirin that I have been taking. I said I was wondering when someone would say something on this. I felt very comfortable in her knowledge knowing I was in good hands.
- **Youliana Piscopo - A5S** - Excels with her patients by giving more into the person's needs, listening, answering your questions, coming back to your personal needs after working with her other patients. She doesn't forget about you. She doesn't treat you like an assembly line.



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- **Dr. Kanetti - Women's Clinic** - I want to recommend the staff in the women's clinic to be awarded for their efforts in continuing excellent care to their patients. They use the myHealthVet system which saves times and addresses our immediate needs. They are always friendly and polite. They keep to their schedules very well and if running behind they let you know. The doctors are also great especially Dr. Kannetti. She always reviews your records before you come in, she takes her time and you feel very comfortable with talking to her. I make lots of complaints but this clinic now none. They are understanding and very respectful to all the vets and dependents. GREAT CARE.
- **Dr. Baldwin, Dr. Kitchen and Dr. Brown - Dental** - Thanks for the fantastic dental care I just received AGAIN from Dental Hygiene on Dec. 10th and 11th, 2014.
- **Youli - A5S** - This nurse would always be concerned with my problems I had mental and physical. Made sure I always felt alright, had clean clothes, towels, etc. Would always ask about my meals, seems to care about all patients. - All nurses and employees could learn a great deal in learning how to treat people from Ms. Youli.
- **Dr. Kurtis Smith - PACT Team D** - I am reporting that since March of 2000, when he became my Primary Dr., I have always been more than satisfied when him. 5 STAR RATING FOR HIM.
- **Melissa Callan - Mental Health** - I would like you to commend Melissa Callan, my social worker, case manager, at the mental Health clinic, team 4. She has consistently supported me for over one year now through personal telephone contacts as well as personal visits every two weeks and more if I need them. I cannot tell you how much she has helped me. She is a very dedicated and wonderful employee at the Detroit V. A. Medical center. Please, if you can, give her special recognition, in writing, for her dedication to her patients especially me. P.S. I tell her often how much I appreciate her. Now I would like you to tell her too.
- **Mrs. Cruse - Women's Clinic** - I would like to commend Ms. Cruse at the Detroit Women's' clinic, Team 4, for her constant reminders and answers about my medication, my general inquires, what I need for my appointments, keeping my doctor up to date on my medications and medical issues, and so much more. She is definitely a wonderful and very dedicated employee at this clinic. Without her assistance, I would be at a complete loss as to what I need to do and who needs to be contacted at the Detroit V.A. medical Center. In addition, she is always prompt at providing me with what I need, and her response time is within 24 hours or less. Please recognize her publicly and in writing for her assistance. I tell her all the time how great she is to me.



- **James Shaw - Emergency Department** - When I came in for my medical emergency I was dreading having to give my last name and SS# to the ER admin worker. This was because for the last 3 years no one here has been able to change my maiden last name to my married last name and update the system with my new info. This has affected my VA claims and my VA bills! Mr. James Shaw has literally made my life easier now! Thank you! Mr. James Shaw helped me when no one else could. He changed my name in the system and updated all my info without a problem! This was amazing to me because I have been coming here for 3 years trying to get my information updated and all I have been getting is the run around! He was patient and took time with me and my situation. He was very understanding as well. He is awesome!

Instances of Excellence Report from Family Members and Visitors

- **Youli - A5S** - My Dad, who is in hospice, is happy when Youli is his nurse, and he tells me this! Also, finds her to be open, works hard and she is very nice! This lady is the best nurse on the floor. Does her job right...
- **Mr. Chris Hermann, NP** - I just saw this choice after all this time! There are so many outstanding people at the John Dingell V.A. Hospital in Detroit, but I have to single out Chris Hermann, N.P. He is sensational! Not only is he an excellent N.P., but it would be hard to find a more caring and efficient person. He has done so much to make my father feel better physically and feel good about his service, and has been totally responsive to all the questions and problems I've thrown at him. His team, Trudy and Karen, are also top-notch people who always go out of their way to be helpful. I am GRATEFUL for the fantastic care my father has received at John Dingell Medical Center, and especially the care he has received at the hands of Chris Hermann. Thank you so much!



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- **William Banks - A3N** - Would like to thank William Banks for the best of care for my husband.
- **Latrice Anderson - A3N** - Would like to thank Latrice Anderson for the best of care for my husband.
- **Dr. Matthews** - I just wanted to say that while I was admitted at the hospital for prolonged QT syndrome I was treated exceptionally well. I would like to thank Dr. Matthews and the rest of the team that took care of me while I was admitted for prolonged qt. I would also like to thank the nurses and nurse assistants for being so nice and understanding during my stay.
- **Shiela Wolfa - PACT Team G** - Every month when I come in for my meds she treats me with the utmost care. She gets me in and taken care of as quickly as possible and always with a smile.

Instances of Excellence Report from Employees

- **Christine Peterson - Call Center** - I am writing to applaud Nurse Peterson. Yesterday she handled a delicate suicide call and in my opinion went above and beyond to assist in the situation and assure the veteran was assisted. We did not connect yesterday and regardless due to my lack of availability as I was in meetings all day, she handled the situation appropriately, continued to try to contact me to keep me in the loop and confidently proceeded in what was her best clinical opinion. She is truly an asset to your team, and this is just a letter to say thank you and kudos to Nurse Peterson.
- **Dave Smith and Donald Johnson - Kitchen** - The purpose of this letter is to recognize Dave Smith and Donald Johnson from kitchen service. The weekend of October 19 was particularly busy as I cover the blue medicine tower as the only weekend social worker. I was paged to the Emergency Department to assist a homeless veteran with transport to a local homeless shelter. The veteran was planning for discharge from the ED within the hour. I went to the kitchen requesting a bag lunch for my patient fully expecting resistance from the kitchen staff. I was very impressed that Mr. Dave Smith directed me to Mr. Donald Johnson who provided a well-balanced lunch for my patient. The only question I received was regarding diet preferences for the patient. Wow, was I impressed! The staff was also very helpful and they are willing to assist with food needs for a veteran. This was not my first weekend interaction with the kitchen staff. I would like to recognize the outstanding service of a very good group of Detroit Veteran's Hospital employees.
- **Portia Taalib - Information Technology (OIT)** - Portia Taalib is the finest OI&T and we are so fortunate that she has decided to work at our Detroit VA Medical Center! She's supportive! Makes sense out of technology! Reliable! Intelligent! Courteous! Professional! And kind even when faced with challenging circumstances! Again, recently Portia expressed understanding while never undermining. She then had been assigned to install equipment and did so without interrupting things, interfering with services and quietly, professionally and then humorously responded to a very humorous moment. We are fortunate for Portia's professionalism and camaraderie. Thank you Portia!
- **Kenya Charlton - Human Resources** - I called to inquire info on insurance. She was the one who answered all of my questions remarkably and guided me to complete the paperwork. Not only did she come in early to help me, she asked if I had a few minutes so she could complete the forms "right now." I was amazed how she completed everything for me with such integrity and compassion. I have never had an experience like that here and I appreciated every minute of it. Thank you Kenya! I was just amazed at the above and beyond response Kenya gave to me. Thanks again.
- **Greta Gray - Logistics** - Always pleasant and responsive to everyone's needs. She goes out of her way to help everyone. She takes pride in her job and works extremely hard. She makes sure we never run short of much needed material. This has made the dental lab run smoothly. Thank you. - She is a wonderful individual to work with. She always responded promptly to all our needs in the cath lab. Great job Greta. Greta has done an outstanding job making sure our department always has the products we need to do our procedures. Greta is one of the key individuals here at the Detroit VA. Greta is awesome! She is always helpful and kind. She goes out of her way to do anything needed to make sure our department runs smoothly. Greta displays punctuality in the performance of her duties with regard to dental acquisitions. She is prompt with getting information back to our department. "3G" we're glad to have you on our team. Greta is always available and ready to help deliver supplies to Endoscopy. I can always count on Greta for a reply to my emails and fast efficient solutions. Good addition to the logistics department.
- **Samantha Ramnauth - Logistics** - Very punctual and though provoked in the administration of her duties, she pays tremendous attention to detail. Glad to have her on our team. Sam directs herself and her team with diligence and has a sense of self-direction.
- **Greta Gray - Logistics - Great Gray - Logistics Greta Gray - Logistics - Sam Ramnauth - Logistics** - Prompt and makes sure our orders are correct and that we have enough in stock. Very efficient.