



## MyVA311: One number to call to reach VA

By Gary Hicks  
Senior writer in the VA's  
Office of Public Affairs

When VA Secretary Bob McDonald first started evaluating business and customer service practices across VA to improve the Veteran experience, the need for a revamped phone system was clear. Instead of navigating dozens of automated phone trees with no guarantee of success, Veterans needed one place to call to get connected to the right place quickly

VA is introducing (844) MyVA311 (844-698-2311) as a go-to source for Veterans and their families who don't know what number to call. This new national toll-free number will help eliminate the feeling of frustration and confusion that Veterans and their families have expressed when navigating the 1,000-plus phone numbers that currently exist.

With (844) MyVA311, Veterans, families, and caregivers can access information about VA services like disability, pension, healthcare eligibility,



enrollment, and burial benefits, in addition to a self-service locator to find the nearest VA facility. And if they're looking for immediate assistance with housing or are having a mental health crisis, MyVA311 will route callers to the Homeless Veteran help line and the Veterans Crisis Line.

If you know what number you're calling – keep calling it. None of the existing VA numbers will go away. The future vision is that (844) MyVA311 will become a 24/7 one-stop information service platform for all VA services.

Veteran feedback has been instrumental helping us streamline the way

we get callers routed to the right place at VA. VA is also making improvements to the overall Veteran experience eliminating blocked calls and hiring more people to reduce wait times. We will continue to gather feedback from our Veterans to ensure VA is meeting their needs.

The new MyVA311 phone number is just one step in a larger effort to modernize VA contact centers so Veterans have a seamless, positive experience when reaching out VA.

In the coming months, we will be sharing more on additional steps as we continue to improve the Veterans experience.

## Free flu shots for Veterans enrolled in VA health care

The Dorn VA Medical Center is offering the seasonal flu vaccine at no cost to Veterans.

Also, all VA-enrolled Veterans with a VA ID and any other form of identification can receive their annual flu vaccination from any Walgreens. Simply, let the Walgreen pharmacy technician know that your flu shot is covered under a program through the VA and Walgreens and your vaccination information will be securely transmitted by

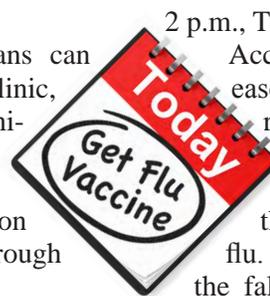
Walgreens to Dorn VAMC.

At Dorn VAMC, Veterans can visit their Primary Care Clinic, Medical Clinic, or Community-Based Outpatient Clinic to get their flu shot during scheduled appointments or on a walk-in basis, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Flu shots are also available at Dorn's Mental Health Clinics on a walk-in basis from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. to

2 p.m., Tuesdays through Thursdays.

According to the Center for Disease Control, flu is a respiratory illness that spreads easily from person to person and getting a flu vaccination is the best protection against the flu. Flu season usually begins in the fall and can continue through late spring. The flu causes more than 225,000 hospitalizations and about 36,000 deaths annually.



# Local and regional highlights

## HIV testing highlighted

Designated as World AIDS Day, Dec. 1 is an opportunity for communities worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV, and to encourage HIV testing for those that have never been tested.

To mark the event, VA encourages every Veteran to “say yes to the test” at least once in their lifetime. It is estimated that 62 percent of Veterans in VA care have never been tested for HIV.

HIV tests are quick, easy, and free for Veterans receiving care at VA. With advancements in the treatment of HIV, individuals with a positive diagnosis can now live long and healthy lives.

More than 27,000 Veterans with HIV are receiving care from VA, the Department is the largest provider of HIV care in the United States.

For additional HIV/AIDS resources—including tips, clinician guides, and hotlines—go to [www.hiv.va.gov](http://www.hiv.va.gov).

## New Patient Orientation

A Health Benefits Seminar designed to help Veterans new to Dorn VAMC is scheduled for the third Tuesday of every month and hosted in the Dorn VAMC auditorium (Building 5).

The orientation was established to inform new patients how to access services within Dorn VAMC. You will be provided a booklet of crucial information to ensure your transition into VA is a smooth one.

Registration for this seminar is not required.

For more information, please contact Evetta Gregg, director of Stakeholder Relations, (803) 776-4000 (ext. 7696).

## Tobacco treatment expanded

The Dorn VAMC is now offering an additional day and time for the Tobacco Treatment Group. This group will now not only be offered every Wednesday from 2 to 3 p.m. (located in Bldg. 103; Room 2A100), but every FRIDAY from 9 to 10 a.m. as well. The group will be located in the Psychiatry Build-

ing (Bldg. 106) and meet in the lobby.

This group focuses on both the physical and psychological addition to tobacco use. Whether you’re thinking about quitting or ready to quit tobacco use, we work with you to find a plan that best meets your needs and goals. ALL Veterans and employees are welcome to attend this drop-in TTG.

No appointment or consult is necessary. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Shyla Rider at ext. 4306 or by email at [shyla.rider@va.gov](mailto:shyla.rider@va.gov).

## Signed up for the MVP, yet?

The VA’s Million Veteran Program is looking for nearly a half million more Veterans to participate in the largest genomic database in the world.

This is a national research program with a goal of better understanding how genes affect health and illness.

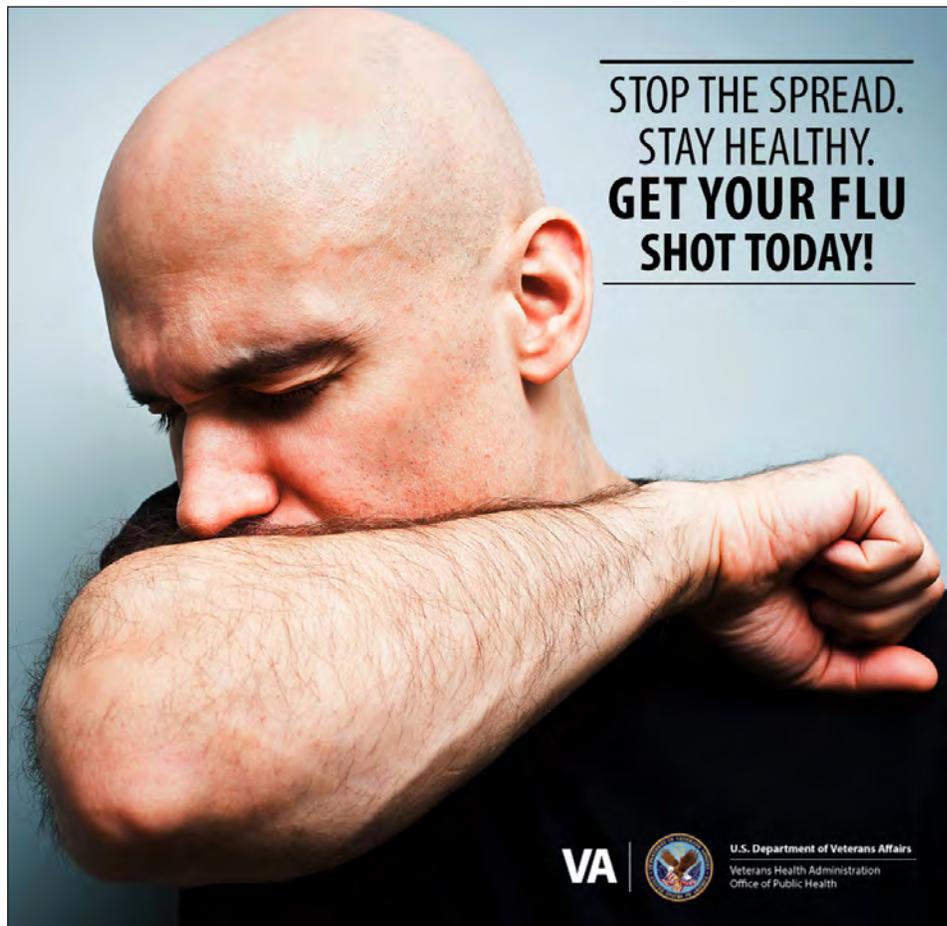
If you are a Veteran who is registered within the VA medical system,

please stop by the MVP office Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Bldg. 100, 3rd floor, RM 3A140.

It’s simple and only takes about 10 minutes to enroll. Help us move health care forward for yourself and future generations of Veterans.

## December Observances

- National Impaired Driving Prevention Month
- National Hand Washing Awareness Week (first full week)
- National Influenza Vaccination Week (first full week)
- First patient admitted to the Columbia Veterans Affairs Hospital (1).
- National Volunteers Day (5)
- Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day - 75 years (7)
- Bill of Rights day (15)
- First night of Hanukkah (24)
- Christmas (25) (26 observed)
- New Year’s Eve (31)



**STOP THE SPREAD.  
STAY HEALTHY.  
GET YOUR FLU  
SHOT TODAY!**

**VA**  U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Office of Public Health

## Pride in family, work for Dorn employee

Story and photos by  
Jennifer Scales  
Dorn VAMC Public Affairs

You may have passed him in the hallways of the William Jennings Bryan Dorn Veterans Administration Medical Center...or he may have come into your office at some point during the day to empty your 'file 13s.'

In any case, Benjamin Clinton Crawley, who most know as 'Ben,' has been pushing, pulling, mopping, sweeping, or performing some other type of Environmental Management Service task from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each day for nearly three years here at Dorn VAMC.

The 65-year-old Henderson, N.C. native is an Army Veteran, who began his military obligation in 1973; which carried him to Korea; Okinawa, Japan; Fort Gordon, Ga.; Fort Bragg, N.C.; and Fort Jackson.

During his stint in the Army, Crawley says he was awarded for saving the lives of about eight persons while stationed in Korea. "Driving down a

snowy, treacherous stretch of a winding road in the mountains, the brake line snapped due to the cold weather," Crawley reflects. "Though the vehicle I was driving was moving uncontrollably down the mountain road, I was able to maneuver it down a 200-foot ravine. My passengers were really shaken up, but relieved and grateful to me that no lives were lost."

He and his wife of 40 years, the former Fay Anthony of Swansea, S.C., have three sons (Tony, Terry, and Shelton). The family numbers grow substantially when it comes to the offspring of their sons: eight grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren (which include two sets of twins). Crawley attributes that to the 25 sets of twins from his wife's family.

"I'm very proud of my family," Crawley says. "They (my sons) are very talented and work hard. Fay and I



have tried to raise them well. They see what I have done and they in turn take care of their own families."

Even though his daily work at Dorn VAMC has him doing such tasks as cleaning the hallways/windows/offices/bathrooms and setting up conference rooms, Crawley states he gets his most enjoyment from helping Veterans.

"I may see Veterans who just look like they need a friend or conversation, and I just go up and begin a conversation with them," Crawley said. "Or if they need an escort to a certain place, I will walk with them."

But Crawley has hobbies too.

Reading medical books is one of his favorite. When asked why, Crawley stated that his interest was piqued in the terms he was researching while enrolled in a medical billing and coding course. "I like to look up the various illnesses and diseases, especially those related to arthritis and high blood pressure; and then follow through by looking up natural and homeopathic cures for those ailments without having to take pills."

"I like reading historical and adventure novels, world history such as the Civil War and World War II," Crawley added.

Maybe that is why the history in the Crawley family has always taken a front seat for him. His grandfather, Frank Taylor of Oxford, N.C., was born into slavery in 1852. "I have a genealogy line that has my family related in direct linkage to Zachary Taylor, James Monroe, James Madison, Jefferson Davis, and Robert E. Lee," Crawley said.

His father, George Truly Crawley, is also linked to a historical figure. Nat



Benjamin Crawley has worked for the Dorn VAMC for more than three years; two years with the Compensated Work Therapy and then a full-time employee.

See Crawley, Page 7

# Honoring Dorn's Veterans



Photo by Ken Holt, Dorn VAMC Medical Media photographer

Students from Meadowfield Elementary School visited the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center on Nov. 10, 2016, to sing a few patriotic songs for the Veterans and staff.



Photo by Ken Holt, Dorn VAMC Medical Media photographer

David Omura, the interim medical center director, speaks with Veteran and Dorn VAMC Community Living Center resident Albertha Sumpter.



Photo by Bob Hall, Dorn VAMC public affairs

The Veterans Canteen Service at the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center hosted a Veteran's Day celebration on Nov. 10 in which six local Veterans were recognized and presented with Certificates of Appreciation. The Veterans, (left to right) were Jack Simpson, USMC/USN; Jesse Blue, USA; Rovina Jenkins, USA; Harry Phillips, USN; Jan Barkan, USCG; and Richard Jones, USAF. All were presented certificate by Dorn's Interim Director David Omura and the VCS Chief Rick Roberts.



Photo by Bob Hall, Dorn VAMC public affairs

The Dorn VAMC leadership and other Dorn employees wave to Veterans and other parade goers as the Dorn VAMC parade float passes by the Columbia Veteran's Day Parade reviewing stand.



Photo by Bob Hall, Dorn VAMC public affairs

Veterans and Dorn VAMC Police Officers Tony Gutierrez and Brian Jones aboard T-3 scooters ride along behind the Dorn VAMC floats in the Columbia Veteran's Day Parade.



Photo by Bob Hall, Dorn VAMC public affairs

Veteran and Dorn VAMC Police Officer Cpl. Victor Gomez waves to Veterans and other bystanders at the Columbia Veteran's Day Parade on Nov. 11.

# Healthy holiday home cooking habits

## Food substitutes lower carolic intake

By Jessica Mooney, MS, RD

It's the holidays and those smells coming from the kitchen are just, well... almost irresistible.

However, all year you've been sticking to a plan that puts you on track to better health, so how do you get through the holidays – avoid all of the foods or just indulge a bit?

If your family is known for its pumpkin pie and it is only made once a year, resisting eating the piece is going to be hard. Know your willpower and know what brings joy to your life.

Having one piece of pie is not going to ruin your goals but if you know one piece turns into a whole pie

or you splurge too often, find a substitution that will make you feel satisfied.

When you feel as though indulging has gone too far try some of these recipe substitutions to enjoy a modified traditional food:

- Use olive oil while sautéing instead of butter
- Use applesauce, pureed bananas, or avocado for baking instead of butter (swap up to 1 cup of fruit puree for 1 cup of butter)
- Try adding mashed cauliflower into your mashed potatoes or instead of mashed potatoes
- Make warm cinnamon apples or baked apples instead of apple pie
- Cocoa powder for baking chocolate (3 tablespoons of cocoa powder for 1 ounce



baking chocolate)

- Choose low-fat dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt the extra fat is added calories)

No one ruined a nutrition goal with a piece of pie, but some ruined their lifestyle changes with a season of guilt and poor lifestyle choices.

Save your splurges for

those amazing out of this world holiday foods and watch the portion size.

Think of how amazing your favorite, perfectly portioned, holiday item is going to taste without the guilt.

**Editor's Note:** Jessica Mooney is a registered dietitian with the Portland VA Health Care System and co-chair of the Healthy Teaching Kitchen NFAC team. She is also a member of the VHA Employee Health & Well-Being Program team.

## You can make healthier food choices by ensuring you make a healthier plate

Why?

**REDUCES HEALTH RISKS** – Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate or in your cup, glass, or bowl. Vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, fruits, and lean protein foods are all great choices. Eating these foods can reduce risks of developing diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and some types of cancer.

**IMPROVES PORTION CONTROL AND FOOD CHOICES** – Food portions and food choices are very important for reaching and keeping a healthy weight.

one half plate • non-starchy vegetables & fruits

one quarter plate • grain & starchy vegetables

one quarter plate • lean meat / protein

9" plate

Fill ½ of your plate with non-starchy vegetables and fruit

Fill ¼ of your plate with whole grains and/or starchy vegetables

Fill ¼ of your plate with lean protein (a 2–3 oz. cooked portion)

Drink more water

## VA introduces new weekly podcast: *This Week at VA*

WASHINGTON – As part of its ongoing effort to engage and reach out to Veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs has launched a podcast titled “*This Week at VA*.” The podcast will be produced weekly. Each episode will include information on benefits or products, interviews with Veterans, a highlighted Veteran of the Day and other helpful content.

“*This Week at VA* highlights the department’s commitment to delivering valuable information to the Veteran community through real stories of the Veteran experience,” said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald.

The “*This Week at VA*” podcast will act as another platform to communicate with Veterans, their families and stakeholders.

The podcast is available on VA’s Vantage Point blog under the *This Week at VA* Podcast category and on iTunes. Be sure to subscribe in iTunes for updates each week when new episodes are released.

The podcast adds to the number of innovative ways VA communicates directly with Veterans and their families. VA has a robust presence on social media, with more than 150



Facebook pages, most of which belong to individual VA medical centers.

VA’s digital presence also includes the Vantage Point blog, nearly 100 Twitter feeds, Instagram, a Flickr page containing more than 32,000 photos, and a YouTube channel with nearly 1000 videos, which has amassed over 5.6 million views.

To access and connect to VA’s social media sites, visit VA’s social media directory at [www.va.gov/opa/socialmedia.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/socialmedia.asp).

## Crawley

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Turner, a slave who led a rebellion to free slaves in 1831, was his father’s great uncle.

Another hobby he doesn’t get as much time to vote to these days is that of painting.

No, not houses. People and figures. This hobby, according to Crawley, was developed when he was about 14 years old, and he expanded it vastly when he was in the military, especially during the down time he had when he was in Korea. Though he only has a few left, Crawley stated he has done more than 200 portrait paintings.

In his profession, especially here at Dorn, Crawley has come across many people that have made an impact on him.

His comments include, “Ruth Mustard has a classy, professional style about her. I admire the way she carries herself”; “David Brown, my supervisor, is good as gold. He is fair, low-key, and quiet. I have never seen him angry”; “I miss Mr. Bob Evans. He is personable and down-to-earth. He is a man that seems to be genuinely in touch with his creator.”

On the other hand, there are some who have characterized Crawley. “Though I have only known Ben about six months, he is a morally good person. His good reputation precedes him,” said EMS co-worker, William Dukes.

There are no plans for retirement on the horizon for Crawley. “I love the VA. The services everyone provides here is great; plus I have seen the changes that have come about here,” Crawley said.

Ben added he just wants to concentrate on doing his job. “This reminds me of the pride instilled in me when I was in the Army. I take pride in helping Veterans because that is our number one job.”



Crawley speaks with fellow EMS worker Williams Dukes. Crawley and Dukes are both Army Veterans.

## Frequently Called Numbers

Admissions .....	(803) 776-4000 x4983/7190
Appointment Line.....	(803) 647-5829
.....	(800) 293-8262
<b>Billing and Insurance</b>	
Collections – pay a bill .....	(888) 827-4817
General questions.....	(866) 258-2772
Medical claims .....	(803) 776-4000 x6763
<b>Chaplain Services</b>	
8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ....	(803) 776-4000 x6332
After hours .....	(803) 776-4000
<b>Compensation and Pension.....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x6183
<b>Enrollment Eligibility .....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x7010
<b>Information Desk (Dorn VAMC).....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x4179/8055
<b>Medical Records .....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x6283
<b>Mental Health .....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x
<b>MyHealthVet.....</b>	(803) 695-6783
<b>Patient Advocate .....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x7998/6937
<b>Prosthetics.....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x6323
<b>Release of Information .....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x6290
<b>Shuttle Service.....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x6780
<b>Telephone Advice Line</b>	
Outside Columbia .....	(888) 651-2683
In Columbia .....	(803) 647-5829
<b>Travel Office.....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x4483/4525/4484
<b>Veteran’s Transportation Service .....</b>	(803) 776-4000 6398
<b>Veteran Service Organizations</b>	
American Legion .....	(803) 776-4000 x7539
AmVets.....	(803) 776-4000 x2421
Disabled American Veterans .....	(803) 776-4000 x2422
Military Order of the Purple Heart.....	(803) 776-4000 x2430
Paralyzed Veterans Association .....	(803) 776-4000 x2432
Veteran’s of Foreign Wars.....	(803) 776-4000 x2443
<b>Voluntary Services.....</b>	(803) 776-4000 x6780/7081

## Community-Base Outpatient Clinics

Anderson CBOC  
3030 N. Hwy 81  
Anderson, SC 29621  
Tele (864) 224-5450

Sumter CBOC  
407 N. Salem Ave  
Sumter, SC 29150  
Tele (803) 938-9901

Greenville OPC  
41 Park Creek Drive  
Greenville, SC 29605  
Tele (864) 299-1600

Orangeburg CBOC  
1767 Village Park Drive  
Orangeburg, SC 29118  
(803) 533-1335

Spartanburg CBOC  
279 North Grove Medical Plaza  
Spartanburg, SC 29303  
Tele (864) 582-7025

Rock Hill CBOC  
2670 Mills Park Drive  
Rock Hill, SC 29732  
Tele (803) 366-4848

Florence CBOC  
1822 Sally Hill Farms Blvd  
Florence, SC 29501  
Tele (843) 292-8383



The *Palmetto Post* is a monthly newsletter for the Veterans at and around the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center, or one of its seven community-based outpatient clinics in Anderson, Florence, Greenville, Orangeburg, Rock Hill, Spartanburg or Sumter.

This newsletter is a product of the Dorn VAMC Public Affairs Office. Any questions, concerns, comments or suggestions should be directed to Bob Hall at (803) 776-4000 x 6519 or by email to [vhacmsdornpa@va.gov](mailto:vhacmsdornpa@va.gov).

### Dorn VAMC Staff

**Interim Director .....** David Omura  
**Acting Associate Director .....** Jeff Soots  
**Associate Director of Nursing/Patient Services .....** Ruth Mustard  
**Chief of Staff.....** Bernard DeKoning  
**Assistant Director.....** Kenneth Thibodeaux

**Public Affairs Specialists .....** Bob Hall  
**.....** Jennifer Scales

## Comments / Suggestions for the *Palmetto Post*

The *Palmetto Post* is designed to help keep South Carolina’s Veterans informed about the health care and services provided by the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center and its seven community-based outpatient clinics.

This is your newsletter. So suggestions on the information you’d like to see in this newsletter are most welcome. Keep in mind, space is limited as this is only a monthly newsletter, so not all suggestions will be granted.

Submit your comments or suggestions to [vhacmsdornpa@va.gov](mailto:vhacmsdornpa@va.gov).

## Stay connected to with Dorn VAMC

**Dorn VAMC official Web site:**  
[www.columbiasc.va.gov/](http://www.columbiasc.va.gov/)

**Dorn Facebook page:**  
[www.facebook.com/VAColumbiaSC](http://www.facebook.com/VAColumbiaSC)

**Dorn Twitter handle:**  
[@VAMCColumbiaSC](https://twitter.com/VAMCColumbiaSC)

**Dorn Flickr account:**  
[www.flickr.com/photos/dornvamc](http://www.flickr.com/photos/dornvamc)