



Director's Notes

Last month, my leadership team and I signed a MyVA Access declaration in front of the medical center staff in a show of support for the Undersecretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin's announcement about striving to improve Veteran access to our facility.



We did this, because we're committed to working toward same-day access by the end of this calendar year and I will now be asking each and every medical center employee to make the same commitment by signing a similar declaration.

The reason we are even here to serve you – those who have served our nation.

I know the Dorn VAMC has a shadowed past, but please believe me when I say, my team and I are diligently working to change that negative public perception.

This hospital needs to be a facility Veterans are proud to say to receive their treatment here, just as the employees are proud to say they serve the Veterans here.

As a 20+-year Navy Veteran myself, its my personal objective to make Dorn VAMC a better place – a place where I, too, would be proud to receive my health care. A place where I know the Veteran comes first.

– Timothy B. McMurry
Medical Center Director

VA promises to improve access

New Initiatives Chart Roadmap to Access-to-Care Improvements

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs' top health care official announced in April the progress and new steps VA is taking to improve Veterans access to health care. Dr. David J. Shulkin, under secretary for health, announced the measures during a briefing to a group of more than 100 journalists attending the Association of Health

Care Journalists' conference April 8 in Cleveland, Ohio.

"We are working to rebuild the trust of the American public and more importantly the trust of the Veterans whom we are proud to serve," Shulkin

said. "We are taking action and are seeing the results. We are serious about our work to improve access to health care for our nation's Veterans. We want them to know that this is a new VA."



During the briefing, Shulkin discussed a new initiative, MyVA Access. MyVA Access represents a major shift for VA by putting Veterans more in

control of how they receive their health care. It is a top priority for VA's Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

MyVA Access is a declaration from VHA employees to the Veterans they

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You may be infected and not know it

by Anne Bailey, PharmD
Dorn VAMC GI/ Hepatology
Clinical Pharmacy Specialist

Harvoni. Zepatier. Daklinza. Sovaldi. Viekira. Olysio. Sounds like the cast of another episode of *Game of Thrones* or perhaps the names of the dwarves who traveled with Frodo into Mordor in *The Lord of the Rings*. Actually, these are all medications used to treat – and cure – Hepatitis C.

Approximately 4 million people in the United States are infected with chronic Hepatitis C. Statistically, the percentage of Veterans who have Hepatitis C is greater than people in the general population.

In April 2000, Dr. Gary Roselle, pro-

gram director for Infectious Disease, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, presented a testimony to the U.S House of Representatives showing results from VA's Emerging Pathogens Initiative. These results showed that 62.7 percent of Veterans who tested positive for the Hepatitis C antibody served in Vietnam.

Additionally, 18.2 percent enlisted post-Vietnam, 4.8 percent were involved in the Korean conflict, 4.3 percent enlisted post-Korean conflict, 4.2 percent participated in WWII, and finally, 2.7 percent were from the Persian Gulf era.

Who should be tested for Hepatitis C? Anyone born between 1945 and

See Hep C, Page 3

What's happening here and around the state

Get the *Palmetto Post* at home

There are two ways to view the *Palmetto Post* at home. The Veteran's newsletter is available on the Internet at www.columbiasc.va.gov/Palmetto_Post/Palmetto_Post.asp.

Veterans can also sign up to receive the newsletter via email by simply sending an email to vhaomsdornpa@va.gov. Be sure to enter *Palmetto Post* in the email subject line.

There's a fine for that?

It's the responsibility of the VA police to keep Veterans and staff safe on the any property under the charge and control of the VA.

But did you know, you could be charge a fine or be forced to appear before a court for these offense:

- littering anywhere on the premises will cost you \$50;
- defacement, destruction, damage or removal of government property without authorization will land you in court;
- tampering with, removing, marring or destroying posted signs is a \$75 fine;
- unauthorized photography is \$25;
- unauthorized solicitation for contributions is a \$25 fine;
- distribution of unauthorized pamphlets, handbills and flyers will also cost you \$25.

For a complete listing, refer to 38 Code of Federal Regulation 1.218.

MyHealthVet has moved

The MyHealthVet office has moved into the main facility. The office is now located in Building 100A, Room 1D104, which is directly across the hall from elevators to eye clinic, and directly adjacent to the White and Blue team area.

For more information about MyHealthVet, call (803) 695-6783.

New Patient Orientation

A Health Benefits Seminar designed to help Veterans new to Dorn VAMC is schedule for the third Tuesday of every month and to 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 additional information, please contact Evetta Gregg, director of Stakeholder Relations, (803) 776-4000 (ext. 7696).

Veterans meet for coffee

On May 10 from 9 to 10:30 a.m., all Veterans in and around Elgin, S.C., are welcomed to come out for free coffee and doughnuts. This is also a opportunity to meet with, talk with, and share stories with other Veterans in the area. The event is hosted at Blaney's Backyard Grill at 1244 Pine St.

This event is a monthly gathering and all Veterans, from all services, are welcomed.

For more information, please call Julie Trott at (803) 432-1195.



VA research celebrated

Dorn VAMC will host a Research Day event at 10 a.m. on May 18 as part of the National VA Research Week observance. The program theme is "VA Research – The Path of Progress" and will include poster presentations, a keynote speaker along with three other Principal Investigators.

"VA research is a national asset that benefits Veteran patients and the entire nation by moving medical science forward," said Dr. Sue Haddock, the medical center's associate chief of staff for research. "VA investigators play key roles in developing devices and techniques that revolutionized health care

– including the cardiac pacemaker, the CAT scan, Shingles vaccine, liver and kidney transplants, and much more. Today, VA is a leader in many areas of research, such as AIDS, mental health, genomics, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, infectious diseases, and spinal cord injury."

VA conducts biomedical, rehabilitation, clinical, and health services research – as well as large, multi-center clinical trials – at more than 100 medical centers across the country including Dorn VAMC.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs celebrates 91 years of research excellence during National VA Research Week, May 16 through 20.

Veterans can learn how to participate in Dorn research studies May 19 in the main facility lobby.

Female Veterans event at Dorn

Dorn VAMC will host a Ladies Night Out May 25 from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Auditorium. All female Veterans are welcome.

The event will include line dancing, food, art therapy, door prizes and more. For more information, call (803) 766-4000 ext. 5372.

Hiring Fair at Fort Jackson

Fort Jackson will host a Hiring Fair June 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Solomon Center on Fort Jackson. The event is open to all service members, Veterans, and military spouses.

For more information, go to <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/event/columbia-hiring-fair>.

Veteran Town Hall meetings

A Veteran's Town Hall meeting is being planned in **June** for Veterans living in the Rock Hill area.

The date, time and location for the Rock Hill Veteran's Town Hall in June is still to be determined. Updated information will be posted to the Dorn VAMC official Website at www.columbiasc.va.gov/pressreleases or www.facebook.com/VAColumbiaSC.

More parking opening up behind the School of Medicine



A solar-panel farm being constructed near parking lots #9 and #10 will provide nearly 125 additional parking places when the project is complete. (Photo by Bob Hall, Dorn VAMC public affairs specialist)

by Bob Hall

Dorn VAMC public affairs specialist

The Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center is adding approximately 125 parking spaces. They will be partially covered parking spaces under a new solar-panel farm adjacent to parking lot #12, which is west side of building 106 and directly behind the University of South Carolina School of Medicine.

These new parking spaces are ex-

pected to be available by mid-May.

However, two another parking lot will be affected before the entire project is completed, which is tentatively scheduled to be completed in August. Parking lot #3 (behind the Community Living Center and the emergency department) is also part of the overall solar-panel farm project at Dorn VAMC and will be closed in-part or fully as the project progresses.

The overall intent of this project is to fall more in line with the Environmen-

tal Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas and Energy Program or renewable energy sources.

This solar-panel farm is expected to generate an estimated 1,554 megawatt hours of power each year. This could total in an overall saving of nearly \$150,000 a year.

Power generated from this solar-farm will be used to power Building 100, the main hospital building at Dorn VAMC.

Hep C

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1965 is at risk for having Hepatitis C, because, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, this population has an unusually high prevalence of Hepatitis C infection and related disease.

Others at high risk for Hepatitis C are: those who received blood transfusions or organ transplants prior to 1992; those who share or have shared needles, syringes, or anything used to inject illicit drugs; and those who have received tattoos or body piercings from non-licensed facilities, in informal settings, or with non-sterile equipment.

Also, sexual transmission of "Hep C" though very rare is possible. Some people who have Hepatitis C do not know how they got it.

Previous medications used to treat Hepatitis C had very poor cure rates and caused a variety of very difficult side effects. Most people with Hepatitis C have chosen, over time, not to be treated, because they did not want to get sicker from the medications.

Fortunately, new medications have become available in the last several years that have very high cure rates (greater than 90 percent of people on these medications are cured) and very few complain of side effects (headache or mild fatigue are most common). Also, patients were previously treated for very long periods of time; most treatment courses today are only 12 weeks (3 months).

In March 2016, the VA announced "that it is now able to fund care for all Veterans with hepatitis C" through September 30, 2016, "regardless of the stage of the patient's liver disease (<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2762>)."

At Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center, we are working very diligently to get as many patients with chronic Hepatitis C treated as possible in order to see Hepatitis C cured in our population.

If you are interested in being screened for Hepatitis C or if you know you have Hepatitis C and want to be evaluated for treatment, please contact Anne Bailey, PharmD at (803) 530-7762.

Access

from Page 1

care for; it is a call to action and the reaffirmation of the core mission to provide quality care to Veterans, and to offer that care as soon as possible to Veterans how and where they desire to receive that care. The initiative ensures that the entire VA health care system is engaged in the transformation of VA into a Veteran-centered service organization, incorporating aspirational goals such as same day access to mental health and primary care services when it is medically necessary.

At present, 34 VA facilities offer same-day appointments, and as a practicing physician, Shulkin currently sees Veterans needing same-day appointments at the VA Medical Center in Manhattan.

VA is hoping to be able to offer same day appointments when it is medically necessary at all of its medical centers by the end of 2016.

In addition, Shulkin introduced a new smart phone app called the Veteran Appointment Request App. This app allows Veterans to view, schedule and cancel primary care and mental health appointments as well as track the status of the appointment request and review upcoming appointments.

It is currently available in 10 locations and has received positive feedback from the vast majority of Veterans. VA expects to make the app available to all Veterans by early 2017.

Other efforts underway include a website enhancement to allow Veterans to check wait times in real time where ever they live – this includes new and existing patients and a new, easy-to-use scheduling software program.

The new program is being piloted in 10 sites and is expected to reduce scheduling errors and enhance VA's ability to measure and track supply, demand and usage.

MyVA Access is part of MyVA, introduced in 2014 by VA Secretary Robert McDonald following one of the most challenging times in the history of VA. MyVA is centered around the needs of Veterans by putting them first in everything VA does.

Since that time, VA has made significant progress in addition to the new initiatives announced by Shulkin.

Among health care progress made:

Nationally, VA completed more than 57.36 million appointments from March 1, 2015, through Feb. 29, 2016. This represents an increase of 1.6 million more appointments than were completed during the same time period in 2014/2015.

VHA and Choice contractors created over 3 million authorizations for Veterans to receive care in the private sector from Feb. 1, 2015, through Jan. 31, 2016. This represents a 12 percent increase in authorizations when compared to the same period in 2014/2015.

From FY 2014 to FY 2015, Community Care appointments increased approximately 20 percent from 17.7 million in FY 2014 to 21.3 million in FY 2015.

VA completed 96.46 percent of appointments in February 2016 within 30 days of clinically indicated or Veteran's preferred date.

In FY 2015, VA activated 2.2 million square feet of space for clinical, mental health, long-term care, and associated support facilities to care for Veterans.

VA hosted two Access Stand Downs, focusing on patients with the most urgent health care needs first. During a nationwide Access Stand Down on Feb. 27, the one-day event resulted in VA reviewing the records of more than 80,000 Veterans to get those waiting for urgent care off wait lists; 93 percent of Veterans waiting for urgent care were contacted, with many receiving earlier appointments.

VA increased its total clinical work (direct patient care) by 10 percent over the last two years as measured by private sector standards (relative value units). This increase translates to roughly 20 million additional provid-

er hours of care for our Veterans.

VA is also working to increase clinical staff, add space and locations in areas where demand is increasing and extending clinic hours into nights and weekends, all of which have helped increase access to care even as demand for services increases.

VA is addressing critical components necessary for the delivery of a seamless community care experience by consolidating all purchased care programs into one Veterans Choice Program (New VCP). The New VCP will clarify eligibility requirements, strengthen VA's high-performing network, streamline clinical and administrative processes, and implement a care coordination model across the continuum of care.

VHA offers an extensive community provider network of over 257,000 providers through the PC3/Choice Programs and more are joining each month.

VA Telehealth services are critical to expanding access to VA care in more than 45 clinical areas.

In FY2015, 12 percent of all Veterans enrolled for VA care received Telehealth based care. This includes 2.14 million telehealth visits, touching 677,000 Veterans.



Timothy McMurry, Dorn VAMC director, signs the MyVA Access declaration at an All Employee Forum April 22. (photo by Ken Holt, Dorn VAMC medical media photographer)

Dorn honors its volunteers with banquet, awards



Left: Tammy Finney, Dorn VAMC's voluntary services director, talks with and laughs with volunteers at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet April 14. More than 100 of the volunteers came to the banquet at the Garners Ferry Station Complex. Dorn VAMC's Voluntary Services hosted the event to thank volunteers for the more than 66,400 hours of voluntary service to South Carolina Veterans during the fiscal year 2015. Additionally, donations to Voluntary Services totaled more than \$270,000 during the fiscal year as well. A comparison between voluntary service hours and donations, Voluntary Services estimate the total resource impact to be more than \$1.74 million.

Below: James Hamilton, a Dorn VAMC voluntary service specialist, chats with volunteers during the dinner portion of the banquet. This year marks 70 years since the VA established Voluntary Services. (photos by Ken Holt, medical media photographer)



Timothy McMurry, Dorn VAMC director, provided opening comments thanking all of the volunteers for countless hours they contribute to serving Veterans. (photo by Ken Holt, medical media photographer)



A poem is read every table.

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Top left: Dorn VAMC Chaplain Robert Bellin gives in the invocation at the start of the banquet.

Top right: Dorn VAMC leadership, Ruth Mustard, the associate director of nursing and patient service; Lincoln Bonds, acting assistant director; and Jeff Soots, the acting associate director, came to the banquet to personally thank the volunteer.



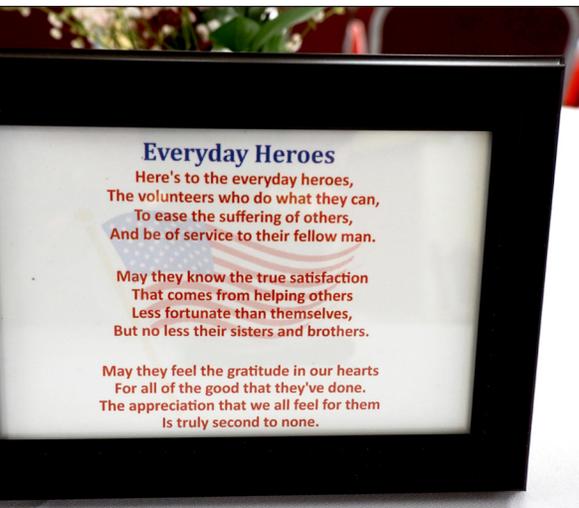
Left: More than a dozen of Dorn VAMC staff volunteered to serve the volunteers at the banquet.

Below: James Flowers, a local law enforcement consultant, was the guest speaker for the event.



chief, volunteer 800+ Sports event volunteer year totaled all total untary

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about volunteers being "Everyday Heroes" was placed on ble.



Medal of Honor recipient honors Dorn Veterans



Medal of Honor recipient, retired Sgt. 1st Class Melvin Morris meets with Thomas Duncan, a Korean War Veteran and Veteran patient at the Dorn VA Medical Center's CLC.



Medal of Honor recipient and former U.S. Army Green Beret, retired Sgt. 1st Class Melvin Morris meets with former fellow Soldier Sylvester Byrd a Veteran patient at the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center's Community Living Center. Morris visited with several Veteran patients in the Dorn VAMC CLC during his visit to Columbia, S.C. on April 25. In 2014, Morris was recognized for his actions in Chi Lang, Vietnam, on Sept. 17, 1969. Morris led an advance across enemy lines to retrieve a fallen comrade and single-handedly destroyed an enemy force that had pinned his battalion from a series of bunkers. According to his biography on the U.S. Army's website, Morris was shot three times as he ran back to friendly ground. (photos by Bob Hall, WJB Dorn VAMC public affairs specialist)



Medal of Honor recipient, retired Sgt. 1st Class Melvin Morris meets with John Smith, a Korean War Veteran and Veteran patient at the Dorn VA Medical Center's CLC.

Meet the Team: Profiles of Dorn staff

“Meet the Team” is a monthly profile featuring two or three members of the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center family.

This month, you will be introduced to two of our patient advocates. Patient advocates are here to help Veterans resolve their health care issues.

Meet Maggie Lockett.

Lockett is originally from Sycamore, Ohio. She has been working for the VA and Dorn VAMC for the last six and half years as a Patient Advocate. She's an Air Force Veteran; having served more than 23 years.



Lockett says she enjoys helping her fellow Veterans to resolve their concerns with obtaining the

health care they desire and deserve. She also enjoys interacting with the staff throughout the facility.

When Lockett is not helping Veterans at Dorn VAMC, she enjoys reading and yard work.

Meet Michelle Hayes.

Hayes is originally from West Monroe, La. She has been working for the VA and Dorn VAMC for 15 years, and is presently a Patient Advocate. She's the wife a 20-year Army Veteran.

Lockett says she enjoys assisting Veterans obtain the care they're entitled to. She also enjoys listening to Veterans and ensuring their medical and emotional needs are met to best of



our ability.

When Hayes is not helping Veterans at Dorn VAMC, likes working with family shelters, the Women's Correctional Facility, and homeless shelter. And, of course, she also enjoys time with her family.



Frequently Called Numbers

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

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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-base 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 at this time, so not all suggestions will be granted.

Submit you comments or suggestions to vhacmsdornpa@va.gov.

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