THE PRICE OF FREEDOM IS VISIBLE HERE

Photo submitted by Angela Brothers
Tips From the Mail Room

Submitted by Scott Couch

When dropping mail into the box outside the mail room all letters, envelopes etc. should be secured with a rubber band separating the sealed and unsealed envelopes. We get a large amount and if not rubber banded together letters are known to fall out of the envelope.

The mail room is not set up to take double page appointment and patient letters. These envelopes contain a second page that will not be mailed out, but is also impossible to match up with its first page.

The correct size envelope should be used for the amount of paper you are mailing. The overstuffed envelopes won’t fit through the postage machine or may get shredded on the way through.

Internal mail must be separated so it does not get postage wasted on it, putting it in a holey joe and labeling it is a good option. Also be sure to also mark your outgoing letters with the mail code appropriate to your service.

Correctly fill out a holey joe. Just writing a person’s first name will not get it delivered. On the left is the wrong way and on the right is the correct way. The person’s full name and service or building number is required.
Hello's  ![Face with a smile]  Goodbye's  ![Face with a sad expression]

The Boise VAMC would like to welcome our new employees who came aboard:

Andre Barlow, FMS
Brandon Ward, Nursing
Breanne Merkley, Nursing
Brian Blake, FMS
Corey Albertson, Nursing
Deborah Jackson, West CPAC Las Vegas
Elaine Leisten, West CPAC, Las Vegas
Erika Sutton, SPS
Holli Traylor, Nursing
Jack Berry, P&SS
Jenisa Oberbeck, PM&H
Jennifer Vergara, SPS

John Shaffer, Nursing
Johnette D Shannon, HAS
Joseph Fuller, HUB
Kristi Lambrecht, Nursing
Marleen Gray, Nursing
Melissa Richards, Nursing
Sarah Hayden, HUB
Shawnee Montierth, MSO
Sydney Rader, Nursing
Travis Nelson, FMS
William Loome, MSO
YOU ARE INVITED TO A RETIREMENT PARTY IN HONOR OF

CHIEF GREG HARRIS

AS WE CELEBRATE THE CONCLUSION OF HIS CAREER IN PUBLIC SERVICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

WED | APRIL 24th | 1:30PM

BOISE VA MEDICAL CENTER LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER - BLDG 29
Join Us
As We Celebrate the Retirement of

Lessie Schoenfelder

April 26, 2019
1pm to 3pm
Bldg. 67, Room 243
The Boise VAMC would like to say goodbye to the employees who left us:

Alyssa Upton, PALMS
Benjamin A. Rogers, CRH/VISN20
Brian Hanson, FMS
Carter Edmiston, Nursing
Christopher Savitz, HR
Jacqueline Potts, Nursing
Jason King, Logistics
John M. Robinson, FMS
Kelley Gomez, MSO

Lori Leatherbury, Nursing
Michael Crawford, Pharmacy
Michael Pahang, Telehealth
Roxann Newcomb, Police
Sabrina Thueson, PALMS
Todd C. Rydalch, N&FS
Keri L. Jackson, EOSL
Gregory M. Harris, Police
Lessie Schoenfelder, Nursing
Ms. Spero provides the VA with outstanding clinical and administrative support in her role as a physician assistant. She was recently awarded ‘physician assistant of the year’ by the Idaho Academy of Physician Assistants. She coordinates nephrology care for Veterans and works very closely with multiple physicians in the Idaho Nephrology group. She is the co-chair of the VISN 20 Dialysis Committee. She also provides Veterans with outstanding clinical care in the cancer care navigation service. Heather is a vital nephrology resource to colleagues and is friendly and helpful in solving nephrology issues.

We had a patient on the Stepdown unit for approximately two weeks whom Ashley helped care for. The patient was in isolation, both droplet and contact. Ashley spent extra time, when workflow permitted, visiting with the patient, who was lonely, and even purchased him some snacks from the canteen store. The patient was literally moved to tears when discussing his appreciation for her and the care and attention she provided for him. This is just one example of the excellent, committed and very personal level of care Ashley provides every day she works.

Dennis has gone above and beyond to maintain the cyber security of our medical devices. He has pro-actively patched our systems to mitigate the risk of attack and works pro actively to ensure that clinical systems do not experience downtime during updates. He has recently been working on a project to upgrade our Cardiology PACS system. The new system, being constructed in a virtual environment, has suffered multiple hard drive failures requiring Dennis to rebuild the system after hours to keep the project on track. He has worked effortlessly to keep this project as close to on schedule as possible. He has also been a valuable asset in keeping our new Cardiac Cath Lab running smoothly. One of the computers experienced a network card failure, and Dennis was able and willing to work with the vendors outside business hours to get the system back up and running as quickly as possible to avoid cancellation of patient procedures. He is an invaluable asset to our team and shows excellence in his work every day to ensure continuity of care for our veterans.
Wednesday, May 15, 2019 (11:00am-1:00pm)
Where: Parade Grounds (Front of the Hospital)
Why: Collect toilet paper for Homeless Veterans
The new Sage Clinic opened on April 22nd and will be located at Bldg. T123 in the Mtn. Cove area of our campus. The clinic services will include Endo, DAV driver physicals, Hep C, Memory Disorder, Musculoskeletal, and Neurology. The providers associated with this clinic are: Ackerly, Christensen, Cusack, Han, Hansen, Herrera, Lawrence, Lowther, and Mohr.

Sage Clinic Fax: (208) 422-1089
Sage Clinic Clerk: (208) 422-1000 ext. 7222
A campaign was held during the month of April to honor the victims of Military Sexual Trauma. The display (above) was up in Bldg. 85A and 114 during the month of April to recognize April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
The Surgical Service has received shipment of new Green Scrubs. A formal SOP will be forthcoming on appropriate use. This change is part of the Surgery Service’s Infection Control Initiatives.

In brief:

These olive green scrubs are intended only for use by the Surgical Service in the OR and perioperative areas. They should never be taken home, worn to or from the facility, and should be restricted to use within the main hospital facility and immediate vicinity by those directly involved in perioperative care. Vendors, residents, and others may use these scrubs only if they are assigned to the perioperative care areas.

Normal Blue Scrubs remain for routine use throughout the facility, including outpatient clinics.
May 1st through 31st

Are you ready to stop dealing with the commute, the ever-increasing congested roads or the aggressive driving? How does saving your hard-earned wages appeal to you? Why don’t you join the thousands of environmentally conscious citizens and reduce your stress and make the air we breathe healthier?

ACHD Commuteride, in partnership with Valley Regional Transit and Boise Green Bike request your participation in the 2019 May in Motion (MiM) Campaign.

What is MiM?
MiM is an annual campaign in which organizations come together to promote the use of smart commuting options – like vanpool, carpool, transit, bike, and walking during the month of May. Smart commuting options provide a financial, health, and environmental benefits to all participants.

For many of us, going to and from work is like a job itself. Fortunately, there are Solutions for your work Commute. During May we will be participating in a month-long event that encourages us to “commute outside the lines”. The advantages to driving less are many to include: saving money, decreasing stress and reducing the environmental impact by carpooling, vanpooling, taking the bus, walking, or biking.

Make a difference today! MiM participants must track their smart commuting trips through one of the following options:

Online at www.MyCommuterCrew.com
- Create and register your profile
- Enter and save your smart commuting information
- Log in daily or weekly to track your commute information (on desktop or the Share the Ride Idaho app on iPhone + android)

Register to record your alternate commute and enter drawings for prizes. Remember you can: Vanpool, take the Bus, Carpool, Bicycle, Scooter, Walk, etc.

Prizes include (pictured above):
Prize 1 – a MiM Backpack
Prize 2 – a MiM 12 oz. Stainless Steel Mug (Hot or Cold)
Prize 3 – a MiM Tote/Bag
Prize 4 – an ACHD Umbrella

Please have ALL logs electronically submitted by May 31st close of business. A prize drawing will be held on June 6th for those participating in the program. Pledge to “commute outside the lines” from May 1st through May 31st and you could win a fabulous prize!

For more information, please contact HR Benefits:
BOIBENEFITS@VA.GOV
Cindra Goldenstein, HR Assistant Ext. 7667
**APRIL** is **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MONTH**

Big Thanks to our Boise VAMC Occupational Therapists and OT Assistant: Connie Schroeder, Kristin Schultz, Lisa Denmark, Wendy Cary, Judy Reed, Karen Wallace, and Julie Orozco.

VA has more than 1,400 occupational therapy practitioners who help Veterans do the things they want and need to do through the therapeutic use of daily activities (occupations).

Kudos to our occupational therapists and the Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services program for all you do to enhance Veterans’ everyday life activities. For more information go to: Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services
WHEN PRIVACY & SECURITY WORK TOGETHER, THE PIECES FIT.

Collaboration between Privacy and Security facilitates continuous monitoring all year to better protect Veteran data.

Gina Thruston, Privacy Officer  Matt Biggs, ISSO
208-422-1031  208-422-1560

EMAIL: BOIPRIVACYOFFICERS@VA.GOV  HOTLINE: 202-273-5070
Boise VAMC celebrates a new Employee Engagement activity:

**Lunch with the Director!**

In an effort to expand the Employee Engagement Program, the Board of Champions is hosting Lunch with the Director, an opportunity for staff to visit with Mr. Wood. These luncheons will be scheduled at least quarterly and will involve 8-10 individuals who are selected by their service chief. The invite will rotate through services. Many thanks to Linette Hessenthaler for coordinating the event and to the Veterans Canteen Services for providing the food.

The first lunch was held with staff members who submitted ideas for the new Employee Engagement logo. This shows the group prior to food service.

Erik Astheimer
Stephanie Dalton
Don Lake
Ron Lee
Bryan Lightfield
Erin Martin
Tony Martinelli
John Maury
Chris Reeder
Karen Smith
Celebration Patrols!
Thanks to all our staff for their ideas
Spring showers brought out the Fall-planted flowers!
The VA MISSION Act of 2018 empowers employees. It also strengthens VA’s care nationwide.

The MISSION Act:
• Improves ways to hire staff and keep staff onboard;
• Creates “Anywhere to Anywhere” telehealth linking Veterans with their care teams across state lines;
• Allows VA to lead with cutting-edge technology;
• Enhances VA as a leader for U.S. health care.

We are proud to serve our Veterans!
What is the MISSION Act?
The MISSION Act puts Veterans at the center of care to coordinate their care whether it’s at a VA facility or in partnership through a community provider.

The VA MISSION Act:
1. Improves community care
2. Expands eligibility for Caregiver Support
3. Enhances VA’s ability to recruit and retain top notch employees
4. Strengthens VA’s building infrastructure

VA’s High Quality of Care:
- A 2018 RAND study found VA health care performed similarly or better than the private sector. The study was issued by an American nonprofit organization that analyzes national inpatient and outpatient quality of care measures.
- A 2019 Dartmouth College study found the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) may provide better care than the private sector in every local area. It also found VA health care was significantly better than non-VA care in 14 out of 15 quality and patient safety indicators.

Key Elements

Access to Care – VA offers same day services for Mental Health and Primary Care at all sites across the country.

Improves Community Care – The MISSION Act streamlines VA community care programs making it easier to navigate, for Veterans, their families, community providers, and VA employees.

Expand Eligibility for Caregiver Support - The MISSION Act expands eligibility for VA's Caregiver program. It will now include eligible Veterans from all eras of service. The expansion will occur in two phases. The first starts with those who were injured on or before May 7, 1975. Further expansion will occur two years later. The expansion timeline is still under development.

Strengthen VA’s Infrastructure - The Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) process in the MISSION Act will provide VA the necessary flexibility to improve older buildings, bringing them in line with modern standards to help us support news and high tech equipment.

Strengthen VA’s Ability to Recruit and Retain - VA is focused on recruiting top notch health care experts to ensure Veterans are receiving the care they have earned. This Act will allow for a new scholarship program, greater access to VA’s education debt-reduction program and improved flexibility for providing bonuses for recruitment, relocation and retention.
Overarching Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Q1. What is the VA MISSION Act?
A1. The VA MISSION Act is legislation passed by Congress and signed into law on June 6, 2018. Through this VA will need to make changes in several key areas including:
   - Streamlining and Improving Community Care,
   - Establishing a new Urgent Care benefit,
   - Expanding Caregivers Eligibility,
   - Strengthening VA’s Workforce,
   - and Strengthening VA’s Infrastructure.

Through the MISSION Act, VA has additional opportunities to enhance our high-quality health care to our nation’s Veterans.

Q2: What does the MISSION acronym stand for?
A2: M
I
S
S
Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION).

Q3. Is the MISSION Act about privatizing Veterans’ health care?
A3. No, it’s not about privatizing VA. The MISSION Act is designed to strengthen and improve VA’s high-quality health care system.

Q4. What does the MISSION Act encompass?
A4. The MISSION Act legislation contains more than 50 sections intended to strengthen and improve VA’s ability to deliver world-class health care. As this is complex and will take place for several years, we have a visual graphic depicting how it will work. You can find the handout at this link: https://www.va.gov/oei/docs/MISSION_Act_Placemat.pdf.

If you’re interested in learning more you can read through the handout entitled MISSION ACT 101: How the law will improve VA’s ability to deliver health care to veterans on VA’s VAntage Point blog located at: https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/56414/mission-act-101-how-the-law-will-improve-vas-ability-to-deliver-health-care-to-veterans/.

Q5: How will the VA MISSION Act Improve Community Care?
A5: VA community care programs have grown in number and complexity through the years, making them complicated. The MISSION Act streamlines and improves VA’s community care programs, providing Veterans better customer service when receiving community care.

Q6: How will the VA MISSION Act expand Caregivers Eligibility?
A6: The VA MISSION Act expands eligibility for Veterans who have family members serve as their caregivers. Right now, the Caregiver program is only available to eligible Veterans who were injured on or after September 11, 2001. But, the expansion under the MISSION Act will open the program to eligible Veterans and their caregivers from all eras.

Q7. What are the key benefits for recruiting and retaining high quality staff under the MISSION Act?
A7. Key benefits for employees under the MISSION Act include:
   - Providing several options to help recruit and retain employees through an expanded education debt reduction program,
   - Improving flexibility for recruitment bonuses,
   - Allowing for relocation and retention pay so we can keep high-quality medical professionals,
   - Piloting a scholarship program for eligible Veterans to receive medical training in return for serving in a VA hospital or clinic for four years.

Q8: How will the VA MISSION Act strengthen VA’s Infrastructure?
A8: Many VA buildings are nearly 60 years old and half of them were built before 1920. We need ways to ensure we can keep up with the changes to technology and building improvements as we modernize our systems. That’s why the MISSION Act offers reviews and plans to help VA better manage its infrastructure.

Q9. When will the MISSION Act be implemented?
A9: VA is already developing processes for a multi-year effort, including plans to keep all of us informed each step of the way. We are excited to improve access to VA’s high-quality care and reaffirm our commitment to America’s Veterans.

Q10. How will the MISSION Act benefit Veterans?
A10. The MISSION Act empowers Veterans and enhances care options. VA will:
   - Continue to be a trusted, caring partner
   - Meet Veterans where they are, with the right care at the right place and the right time
   - Provide telehealth in their home, in a VA facility, or in the community
   - Focus on providing an excellent experience for Veterans and their families.

Q11. How will the MISSION Act benefit VA staff members?
A11. The MISSION Act empowers employees and strengthens VA care nationwide. The MISSION Act:
   - Improves ways to hire staff and keep staff onboard
   - Creates “Anywhere to Anywhere” telehealth linking Veterans with their care teams across state lines
   - Allows VA to lead with cutting-edge technology
   - Strengthens VA as a leader for U.S. health care

Q12. Where can I find the full text of the MISSION Act?
A12. You can read the MISSION Act online at this link: https://www.va.gov/oei/missionAct/index.asp.

Q13. How can I find out more about the MISSION Act?
The Annual Voluntary Service Banquet was held Friday April 19 at the Riverside Hotel. We were able to honor more than 80 of our volunteers at the luncheon in front of their friends, family, and Boise VAMC leadership. The event kicked off with one of our Boise VAMC volunteers, Diana Titus, singing The Star Spangled Banner. The volunteers and their guests were then treated to a buffet style lunch. Mr. Wood then thanked the volunteers on behalf of Boise VAMC leadership and staff, for everything they do for our facility and our Veterans. Brigadier General (Retired) William Bankhead then took the stage as the guest speaker, and he gave a great speech on generational differences among our Veterans. The event concluded with the presentation of awards. Several volunteers were recognized for their dedication to our Veterans, one in particular, David Sheppard, was recognized for 25,000 volunteer hours at the Boise VAMC. In 2018, our volunteers donated 43,229.75 hours of their time to our medical center.

We have an incredible group of dedicated volunteers, and we could not provide our outstanding level of care without their help!
Boise Parks and Recreation and the Boise City Department of Arts and History are hosting an open house at the O’Farrell Cabin on Saturday, May 11, from 9 a.m. to noon. There is no charge. Take a bare walls look at Boise’s first family home and learn what it was like to live in Boise during the 1800s. City staff will be on hand to provide information and answer questions. Enjoy this rare opportunity to explore inside the O’Farrell Family Cabin.
SAVE THE DATE
15 MAY AT 8:30AM
Caldwell Veterans Memorial Hall
Caldwell, Idaho

Boise VA Medical Center
Mental Health Summit

For additional questions contact Maggie Blandford at (208) 422-1110
Celebrate Women’s Health Week May 12th-16th with an Open House of the Women’s Wellness Clinic on May 14th from 1200-1300 where several comprehensive Women Health providers will be available to meet with and discuss the various services available to female Veterans. Thank you to our female Veterans for your service and your support!
The month of May is designated as Hepatitis Awareness Month in the United States, and May 19th is Hepatitis Testing Day. During May, CDC and its public health partners work to shed light on this hidden epidemic by raising awareness of viral hepatitis and encouraging priority populations to get tested.
Mental Health Month is coming to a close, but the conversation around mental health doesn’t have to. Follow @veteransmtc year-round to hear about the moments that mean the most to Veterans: https://maketheconnection.net/mhm/
Mr. Alex Huntington  
Physical Therapist  
Boise VA Medical Center  
500 West Fort Street  
Boise, ID 83702  

Dear Mr. Huntington:

It is always a pleasure to learn about the services provided by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees. It was particularly satisfying to receive the enclosed letter from Mr. and Mrs. [redacted] expressing their gratitude for the exceptional care you provide.

VA’s mission of providing quality care and assistance could not be attained without the professionalism and dedication of its employees. Although we expect our employees to go the extra mile, it is always gratifying to know when our I-CARE values have been met.

Thank you for your commitment and representing VA so well.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert L. Wilkie

Enclosure