On Friday, December 1st the Boise VA Medical Center said congratulations and goodbye to Denise Plowman, who retired from federal service after working at the Boise VAMC for over 36 years.
Hello’s

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

Teri Barker, Director’s Office
  Mikel Johnson, EMS
  Abraham Staggs, EMS
  Timothy Stout, EMS
  Christopher Smith, HAS
  Gloria Lopez, HAS
  Lisa Schlosser, MSO
  Camille Buchmiller, MSO
  Amy Beutler, Nutrition and Food

Bo’C Welker, Police
  James Coleman, EMS
  Michael Hotrum, MIS
  Brian Cothern, MSO
  Robert Fillion, Nursing
  Callie Powell, Nursing
  Robin Torrey, Nursing
  Robert Dornath, Nutrition and Food
  Joseph Ineck, Pharmacy

Goodbye’s
The Boise VAMC would like to say goodbye to the employees who left us:

Efrain Scott, HAS
Luis Godinez, PALMS
Anthony Duchai, EMS
Michael Digiacomo, HAS
Denise Plowman, HAS
Leonard Nolt, MSO
2017 Holiday Party
Twin Falls CBOC
2017 Holiday Party
A team of high school students from the Boise-based One Stone Charter School recently participated in a student-led and -directed project with the Boise VA Medical Center. One Stone is a nonprofit that makes strives to empower high school students to learn and practice 21st century skills through experiential service, innovative initiatives, social entrepreneurship, and the radical reinvention of learning.

One Stone students project was to create and spread awareness about a user-friendly patient safety reporting program known as Joint Patient Safety Reporting (JPSR). They focused on a common interest: reducing medical adverse events by increasing incident reporting in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

When they began this project, the students met with their community partner, Dr. Michael Krug, to discuss the importance and impact of medical adverse events and how incident reporting is an evidence-based means to prevent future adverse events. Dr. Krug tasked the group with increasing knowledge of the JPSR system within the BVAMC in order to increase reporting. The students began researching the system and gained empathy by interviewing VA employees with different roles and from different departments. Eventually, the decision was made to focus on the ICU staff. Since the sickest patients are often cared for in the ICU, it was thought that staff in this area would frequently be the first and last line of defense when it comes to preventing adverse events. The students interviewed ICU nurses and went through three different “How Might We” statements to help focus their project. Ultimately, the students settled on “How might we create and spread awareness about adverse event reporting through JPSR for nurses in the ICU at the Boise VA?”

The VA group considered a number of different design options, before ultimately deciding to go with an art installation/poster. The students used a regular mirror and added the phrase, “Who can improve patient safety?” to prompt internal reflection by those who looked in the mirror in order to empower the viewer to report adverse events. The students received overwhelmingly positive feedback from VA representatives. The mirror currently hangs in the ICU break area as a positive reminder to ICU nurses of the power they have to report and reduce medical adverse events in order to improve patient safety.
Ask LGBT Health – Coming Soon

The LGBT Health Program announces Ask LGBT Health, a new weekly drop-in question and answer session for all VHA staff. Starting January 5, join Dr. Lexi Matza & Dr. Carrie Klemt for personalized responses to your training, policy, or education queries.

Phone: 1-800-767-1750 Code 38929#

Online: http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/asklgbthealth/

For more info: VALGBTProgram@va.gov

Every Friday 2 to 3 p.m. EST starting January 5, 2017
I want to nominate BH Specialist, Shelly Fletcher, for employee of the month. We had a veteran transfer to our ER from St. Luke’s ER overnight for psychiatric admission. When he arrived to our ER, it was found that he was not “eligible for care” because he had not filled out a specific form. The ER planned to send the veteran into the community for care. He waited at our facility overnight, and this morning Ms. Fletcher took the extra time to investigate further. She met with the veteran and his wife in the ER and found out that the family did not fill out the forms for eligibility because they made just $700 over the cutoff amount. Ms. Fletcher also learned the wife had been fighting cancer for the past year, which cost the couple over $13,000 in medical expenses. Ms. Fletcher worked with the family to fill out the required paperwork, and the veteran was granted eligibility given the financial circumstances. This veteran, with a purple heart for his service, was then able to be admitted to our hospital. Because of Ms. Fletcher’s efforts, this veteran was able to be admitted to our hospital and receive the care he needs. This is just one example of how Ms. Fletcher goes above and beyond for our veterans. I work with her frequently in triage, and I have seen her make extra efforts for veterans on countless occasions.
SERVICE PIN AWARD CEREMONY

Special Recognition Awards - Top to Bottom:
Josiah Christensen
Linda Truman
Luke Strozewski
Robert Moodie
Sims Lab Award
A Safe Start to 2018: New Year’s Resolutions You Can Actually Keep

In the year ahead, don’t keep your New Year’s resolutions to safeguard Veterans’ — and your own — Personally Identifiable Information (PII) private. Adopt and share these five resolutions, and make a safe start to 2018:

• **Rethink your passwords.** Update your passwords to employ combinations of numbers, upper and lowercase letters, and symbols. Never use the last four digits of your Social Security number in your password!

• **Destroy sensitive documents.** Shred any old records or files using your department’s shredder before trashing them — but be sure to consult with your Records Officer before destroying records!

• **Lock your computer.** Going for a quick coffee break? Lock your computer by pressing “Ctrl-Alt-Delete,” selecting “Lock Computer” and removing your PIV card before you go.

• **Send safer emails.** Encryption is the only way to securely send sensitive information via email. Do you lack encryption software? If so, don’t send email if it contains PII. Ask your Information Security Officer how to obtain and use encryption software.
It is not uncommon for each of us to identify problems in our work flow that need improvement. And, it is human nature to want to fix the problem as quickly as possible. However, a quick fix is not always a good one. So, what can you do to ensure your attempt to fix a problem is worth your effort? There are a few key steps that will help:

1. Make sure you truly have identified the problem. Have you determined the root cause of the problem, or will the solution only be a “Band-Aid” to a symptom of the real cause? In general, “Band-Aid” solutions will not work over time. There are several tools that can assist with determining the root cause. Two of these tools are the 5
Whys and the Fishbone Diagram. Both tools are very simple to use.

2. See input from others/other work units who have a stake in the process. Individuals and work units involved in a process will have different perspectives on a process. It is important to seek input about all aspects. Managers that do not seek input from frontline staff often miss key points that will ensure success or failure of a solution. Work units that reach out to other work units/services involved in a process can benefit from learning their needs and perspectives on the issue.

3. Reach out to others to learn how they have solved the same or a similar problem. Why reinvent the wheel? Although work units, facilities, and even VISNs are different, we are the same in many respects. We often share the same concerns. Seeking input from other work units, facilities, or community partners can save time and frustration when seeking solutions. Can we use their same solution approach, or use the concept and modify it to meet our needs? Where can we find these solutions?

   a. VA Pulse. VA Pulse log-on There are many opportunities to seek input through VA Pulse. The first is the “Ask It” box on the page that opens after you log on. VA Pulse also has groups or “communities of practice” (COP). These groups share common interests. Examples of COPs might include specific interests such as Telehealth, Employee Engagement, Suicide Prevention, or be work-group specific such as Nutrition and Food Services, Systems Redesign or Primary Care RN Care Managers. COPs can be found using the search function.

   b. The VA Diffusion of Excellence Hub. VA Diffusion of Excellence Hub This site is a repository for promising practices, including improving access to care, quality and safety, the Veteran experience and others.

   c. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement. IHI This non-VA site has is focused on improving health and healthcare worldwide. It has many cutting-edge resources that can be considered and applied to VA.

4. Share the solutions that are working for you! Have you considered how your solution can benefit others? Any solutions to problems ultimately directly or indirectly improve care for the Veterans we serve. You can share your solutions at team huddles or unit meetings; service-level meetings; with other teams or services; with your supervisor, service chief, and Tetrarad member; on VA Pulse; and, the VA Diffusion of Excellence Hub. Contact Renee Johnson at Renee.Johnson2@va.gov if you would like to share a promising practice on the Hub and she can guide you through the process.
Boise VA Medical Center researchers, Dr. Dennis Stevens and Dr. Amy Bryant were published in the New England Journal of Medicine recently in an article titled: Necrotizing Soft-Tissue Infections. You can read the article by cutting/pasting the link below into your web browser.