



The

Novem

BOISE

FRONT

The official newsletter of the Boise VA Medical Center

**BOISE VA STAFF
SAVE A VETERANS
LIFE ON THE WAY
HOME** Page 2

**RED CROSS BLOOD
DRIVE DEC 8** Page 13

**COVID19 VACCINE
INFORMATION** Page 3

Marleen Gray, RN at the location
where her and Dustin Isaac came to
the rescue.

A little after 4PM on Wednesday, November 4th a person (later discovered to be a veteran) was seen face down on the front VA lawn. Dustin Isaac was on his way home and stopped to assess the veteran. The veteran was unresponsive, but had a pulse and was breathing. Dustin called 911, and the Boise VA Police.

Marleen Gray, a nurse here at the VA, was also driving home and saw the person lying on the ground, and pulled over to help. At this point the veteran no longer had a pulse. Marleen quickly took charge and started CPR while Dustin opened the veterans airway. Knowing that she

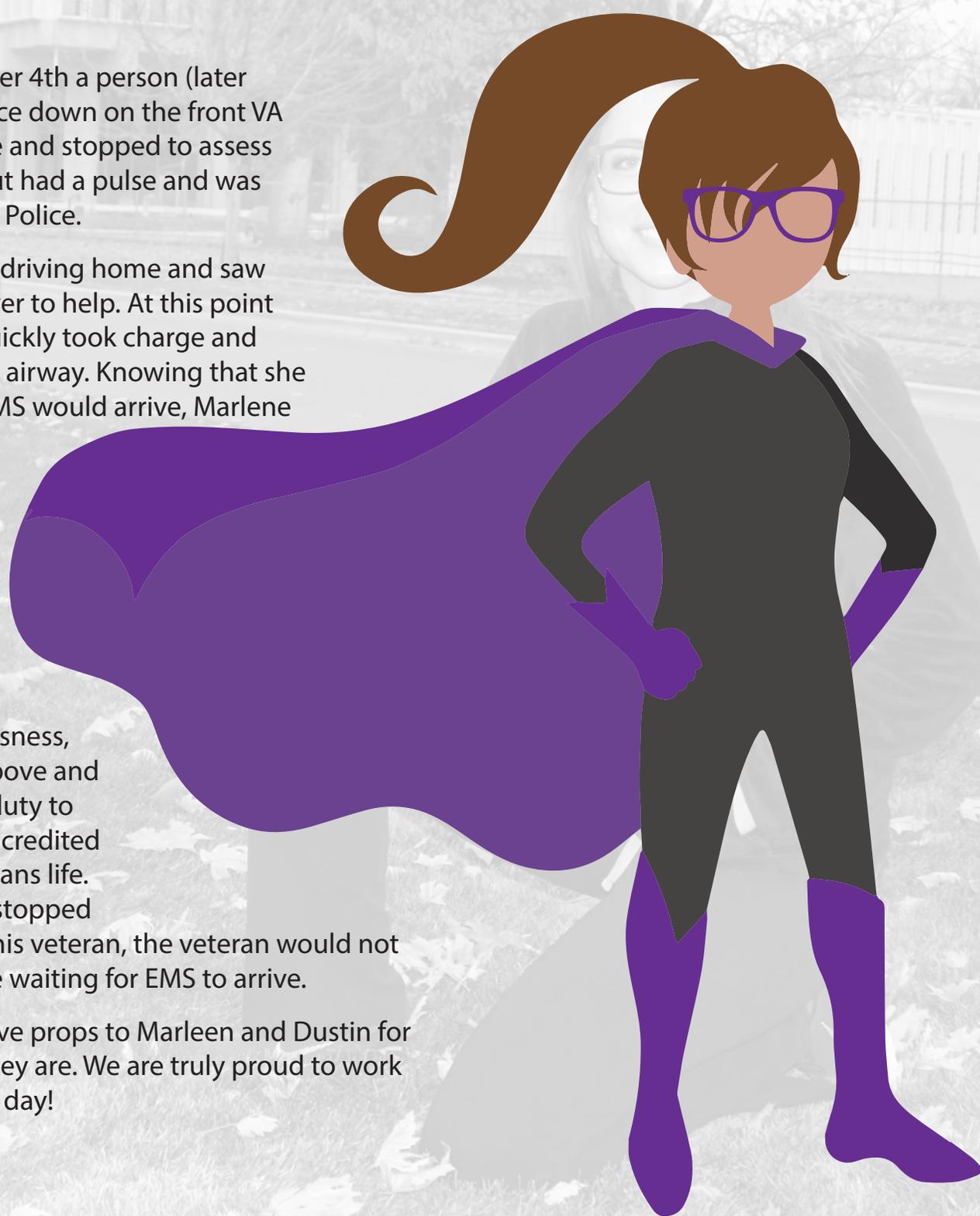
might tire before EMS would arrive, Marlene and Dustin took turns performing CPR until the paramedics arrived.

Marlene and Dustin both demonstrated phenomenal selflessness, insight and went above and beyond the call of duty to help. They are both credited for saving this veterans life. Had they both not stopped to provide CPR to this veteran, the veteran would not have survived while waiting for EMS to arrive.

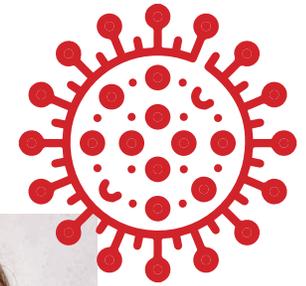
Please be sure to give props to Marleen and Dustin for being the heroes they are. We are truly proud to work alongside you each day!



Dustin Isaac, Medical Service Secretary



COVID19 **Vaccines!**



Hope is on the Horizon

By Jeanette McMillan Berry, Veterans Health Education Coordinator

We've learned a lot about COVID-19 since the virus has impacted our community. Treatments that show benefit include Remdesivir and corticosteroids, and other treatments have not been found to be helpful. We know general precautions help too. Wear a mask, physically distance from others, and wash your hands.



Even with the improved treatments, there is still a heavy toll from the virus with over 12.5 million cases diagnosed in the USA. Hospital systems are overwhelmed, and over 258,000 American lives lost to COVID-19 which is more lives lost than Americans killed in World War I and the Vietnam wars combined. Even some individuals who are infected and have recovered continue to have lingering symptoms. These are sobering statistics.

However, hope is now on the horizon, as vaccines are on their way.

The FDA is preparing to review the first COVID-19 vaccines. Pfizer is the first vaccine to apply for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). The Pfizer study enrolled 44,000 participants and involved 41% of individuals from diverse backgrounds. The vaccine was found to be 95% effective with 162 cases of COVID-19 observed in the placebo group compared to 8 cases of COVID-19 in the vaccine group. There were 10 cases of severe COVID-19 observed in the trial with 9 cases in the placebo group and 1 case in the vaccine group.

The side effects of the Pfizer vaccine included headache (2%) and fatigue (3.8%). This vaccine is given as two doses, at least 21 days apart.

A second vaccine from Moderna is not far behind and is also applying for a EUA from the FDA. The Moderna "COVE" vaccine study had over 30,000 participants, with a diverse pool including 37% of



racial and ethnic minorities. This study has shown 94.5% efficacy, with 0 severe COVID-19 cases in the vaccine group compared with 11 in placebo group.

The side effects for the Moderna vaccine include injection-site pain (2.7%), fatigue (9.7%), muscle pain (8.9%), joint pain (5.2%), headache (4.5%), pain (4.1%), and redness and swelling at injection site (2%), all of which were self-limiting. This vaccine is also given as two doses, at least 28 days apart.

Other vaccines are progressing closer to applying for EUA, including AstraZeneca.

The FDA is responsible to review these vaccines for safety and efficacy. Their goal is to get a safe and effective vaccine to the American people to combat the out of control COVID-19 pandemic.

Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) means that there are no current licensed vaccines available, and since COVID-19 is a worldwide emergency the FDA conducts the review with an abbreviated timeline. We anticipate FDA Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) to review and debate the vaccine study results the second week of December.

If they authorize the vaccine, this means we could have a vaccine by mid-December. The VRBPAC will only approve a vaccine if it is safe and effective and the benefits outweigh the risk. With the EUA, although there is a condensed timeline there is not a difference with normal phases of vaccines trials or how the results are reviewed by FDA. FDA will only consider vaccines that have a full 2-month safety follow-up post study. Even if a vaccine receives a EUA, the company still needs to apply for full





licensing from the FDA which requires continued safety monitoring.

VA has two goals: First, to obtain a safe and effective vaccine, and second, to vaccinate any Veteran or employee who wants the vaccine. Since initially there will be limited doses of the vaccine available, VHA has been building prioritization lists with the goal to bring the most benefit to Veterans.

If you are interested in learning more about the vaccine options, please visit the VHA COVID-19 Vaccine SharePoint, which has several CDC, FDA, and VHA resources (note: this is an internal-only link). Tune in December 4th at 10AM for the Townhall for more information.

Hope is on the way. We'll still need to continue with COVID-19 precautions, but the risk of COVID-19 causing a serious reaction will be improved thanks to these vaccine options.

Hello's



Goodbye's

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

Darren Irwin
Stephanie Benjamin
Rylee Farnham
Aleah Bennett
Amber Compher
Cassie Matsen
Naila Dulic
Steven Garcia
Jose Guzman
Flyer Seabrook
Hannah Sackett
Danielle Torres
Cameron Rail
Alysia Thompson

Emily Bartlett
Cheri Lamb McFarlane
Kelly Hanna
Chloe Sabala
Larry Wilkerson
Aaron Duncan
TiAsia Campbell
Haylea Thompson
Kenneth Pittman
Joseph Fesmire
Marissa Boxall
Florina Ross
Madison Thomas
Madison Keller

Hello's



Goodbye's

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

Kian Brinkerhoff
Melanie Drake
Kristin Kaschmitter
Jena Harris
Vienna Rowell
Sara Houtz
Clayton Pleasant
Collen Burck
Rodney McVey



Boise VA Police Officer Scott Pfister was awarded his 20 year service pin by Associate Director, Nate Stewart (left) and Director, David Wood (right).

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH NOVEMBER



**Lydia Campbell-
White**

Lydia embodies all of the VA's ICARE values on a regular basis. We have all been working diligently as a team on PC/Silver to get through these difficult times. It has required commitment to each other and to our mission to make sure our Veterans are getting the care that they need. Lydia has been unwavering in her ability to provide positive, diligent work through every change that our team has had to transition through and she does so with a smile and attitude that is contagious and reassuring. This month we were made aware of a COVID crisis at the Idaho State Veterans Home. The ISVH reached out to us for help to provide staff that would care for the Veterans there, as staff were out sick, as well as a large number of COVID + patients that required extra care. Lydia, and not unexpectedly, was the first to volunteer to serve the needs of our Veterans in the community. I have already had feedback from administrative staff speaking to how wonderful she is. I would like to nominate Lydia for employee of the month for October, so that her efforts and commitment to our Veterans, whether her patients or not, does not go unnoticed. Thank you Lydia for all you do and for with the attitude in which you serve.

Faye Lewis is a LPN who does check in for Veterans. Last week, she was checking in a patient who was being seen for a routine appointment. She went the extra mile and showed advocacy and excellence in finding a problem with his feet hygiene. She noticed that he needed to have his toenails trimmed as he had been living alone for years and wasn't able to provide this service for himself. He is not diabetic so it was NOT required for her to check his feet, but she did it anyway. She then advocated for the veteran and was able to get a same day appointment with the foot care clinic, which is exceptional since foot care was not offered during that day or time of day. She also was the one that performed the foot care! Thank you Faye for the outstanding and exceptional care to our Veterans.



Faye Lewis



Kelley Wright

Kelley is an amazing asset to the VA, and exemplifies the ICARE values every day through her actions. She always goes above and beyond and is so pleasant even during the most stressful situations. She heard about a patient that needed a little pick me up while staying inpatient and she went out of her way to make this veteran a care package with personal care items, nail polish, and lotion. This made the Veterans day and this veteran continues to enjoy the care package days later and it still brings a smile to their face. We are so lucky to have Kelley a part of our team.

CODING CORNER: 2021 E/M Coding Changes

Beginning January 1st, 2021 coding guidelines for new and established office visits will updated. These changes were made to allow staff treating patients to focus on documenting what is essential to the visit.

TMS Training will be coming for the new coding guidelines.

Major Changes:

- History and Physical Exam will no longer be used to determine E/M level.
- Time includes all prep, exam, follow on the same date as the visit.
- Medical Decision Making (MDM) or Time can be used, whichever is you chose!

Time should **ALWAYS** be documented for all patients, regardless of which method is used to determine MDM

Established Patients		
	2020	2021
99211	5 Minutes	Not Specified
99212	10 Minutes	10 - 19 Minutes
99213	15 Minutes	20 - 29 Minutes
99214	25 Minutes	30 - 39 Minutes
99215	40 Minutes	40 - 54 Minutes

New Patients		
	2020	2021
99201	10 Minutes	Deleted
99202	20 Minutes	15 - 29 Minutes
99203	30 Minutes	30 - 44 Minutes
99204	45 Minutes	45 - 59 Minutes
99205	60 Minutes	60 - 74 Minutes

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST CODING MEMBERS

Michelle has been working in coding for 6 years and has been auditing for 5 years. She is here to provide coding accuracy audits of code selections and coding education.

Michelle Gauron – Medical Record Technician-Auditor
Michelle.Gauron@va.gov or 208-422-1000 x4484

Aleah has been working in coding for 3 years. She is here to provide documentation reviews and provide education on any documentation loopholes in the medical record.

Aleah Bennet – CDIS Specialist
Aleah.Bennett@va.gov or 208-422-1000 x7003

Please contact Michelle and/or Aleah to request any coding accuracy audits, documentation reviews, and/or coding education, they are more than happy to help!

CODING

CORNER

BOISE is HIGHLY RELIABLE

HRO PRINCIPLES & VALUES

November | National Safety Poster

Multidisciplinary Team Stops Look-Alike, Sound-Alike Medication Error

Context: A new anti-inflammatory medication had recently been stocked in the surgery department's Omnicell at Hershel "Woody" Williams VAMC. The new medication was displayed below a sedative with a similar name, vial size and color top. Given the similarities, the incorrect drug was mistakenly placed in the Operating Room's (OR) anesthesia cart from the Omnicell. Lora Brown, CRNA, noticed that the cart included the sedative instead of anti-inflammatory medication.

Action: Using the Five Rights of Medication Administration (the right patient, the right drug, the right dose, the right route and the right time), Lora was able to confirm the medication was not normally ordered for the scheduled procedure and reported the findings to her supervisor. Robin Bailey, CNOR, investigated the incident and reported it to OR Charge Nurse Adria Lucas, CNOR. Nurse Lucas worked with Pharmacist Joey Nash to correct the issue.

Result: Within three hours of the incident, Mr. Nash added a look-alike, sound-alike medication alert to prevent future errors. He also added an alert identifying each drug by the brand name. This interdisciplinary group demonstrated *Respect for People* through their effective teamwork to correct the issue rather than placing blame.

Theme of the Month: **Respect for People**

Respect for People Through
Teamwork Corrected the Issue
Rather Than Placing Blame



“ We are committed to maintaining a Culture of Safety and an environment of Zero Harm for our patients. ”

Hershel "Woody" Williams VAMC Team

*Lora Brown, CRNA
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist*

*Robin Bailey, RN, CNOR
Operating Room Registered Nurse*

*Adria Lucas, RN, CNOR
Operating Room Registered Nurse*

*William "Joey" Nash, PharmD
Inpatient Pharmacy Supervisor*

VHA'S JOURNEY TO
**HIGH
RELIABILITY**

Your Care is Our Mission.

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

For more information, visit: http://bit.ly/HighReliability_sp

Boise Veterans Administration Medical Center and the American Red Cross are hosting an upcoming blood drive.

Please join our lifesaving mission and schedule an appointment today!

Drive Details:

Site: VA Gym in Building 119

Address: 911 Mountain Cove Rd.,
Boise, ID, 83702

Room Name: gym

Date: Tue Dec 8, 2020

Time: 09:00 AM - 02:15 PM

[Click here to make an appointment](#)

The need for blood is constant and only volunteer donors can fulfill that need for patients in our community. Nationwide, someone needs a unit of blood every 2 to 3 seconds and most of us will need blood in our lifetime.

Thank you for supporting the American Red Cross blood program! Download the Red Cross Blood Donor App on the App Store, Google Play or text BLOODAPP to 90999.

Schedule appointments, view your blood type and results of your mini-physical, and track your donations.



American Red Cross

Lately, there has been encouraging news about progress towards safe and effective COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 vaccines. As a research enterprise, we should be proud of the role that we have played and continue to play in these historic efforts. Some have called the COVID-19 response a marathon rather than a sprint; given the pace, it has seemed to me more like a series of sprints. This does not leave much time to rest on our laurels. After all, the reason that we have vaccines with promising results less than one year into this pandemic is because of the rapid pace of research. Six vaccine trials currently are underway at dozens of VA sites, and we must work together to ensure that those trials open to enrollment on schedule and meet recruitment goals.

Everyone reading this message can help by spreading the word about our COVID-19 research volunteer list (www.va.gov/coronavirus-research). Veterans and others can go here to learn more about volunteering in trials and can register their interest in being contacted to learn more. Trial sites are then given a list of the potential volunteers in their respective geographic areas, which can help to meet recruitment goals. So far, nearly 6,000 people have signed up for the volunteer list!

VAMC public affairs offices have been made aware of a [new 30-second public service announcement, available on YouTube](#), that promotes the volunteer list. Please reach out to your local offices to ensure that they share it widely on social media. We are grateful to Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at NIH, and Vice Admiral Dr. Jerome Adams, the U.S. surgeon general, for taking part in this PSA. We believe their messages and those of the Veterans who appear in the video will resonate with many Americans.



Participants in COVID-19 trials must reflect our nation's demographics. We are encouraged by the fact that 20% of the people who signed up for the volunteer list are non-white, and the PSA looks to build upon that success by inviting Black, Hispanic and Native Americans to learn about VA's COVID-19 research and consider volunteering. Among the Veterans featured in the PSA is Michele Jones, the first woman to serve as command sergeant major of the Army Reserve; and Dr. Adam Robinson, VAMC director in Honolulu and former Surgeon General of the Navy.

Finally, we all owe the local VAMC R&D Committees a huge thank you for their service. Many of these committees have been putting in extra hours and going above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that clinical trials and other important COVID-19 studies get the timely review and approvals they need to proceed. The nation will continue to need your service as new COVID-19 therapeutics and vaccine trials get up

and running.

We are living in extraordinary times, and I am so grateful for the extraordinary effort and creativity that our research community has put forth. With appreciation,

Rachel Ramoni, DMD, ScD
Chief Research and Development Officer (14RD)
Department of Veterans Affairs

VA RESEARCH INFO



LEAVE NO VETERAN BEHIND THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

**PLEASE SUGGEST/REFER
VETERANS TO THIS PROGRAM!**

The Veteran
Holiday Sponsorship Program is
open for sponsors and for veteran
nominations now through December 8.

The program is limited to 250 people.

Gifts will be available for pickup or
delivery the week of Christmas. If you
would like to sponsor a veteran or
nominate yourself or another veteran
please contact Tammy at (208) 422-
1175 or Jake at (208) 422-1176.

*Nomination forms can be found online at [https://
www.boise.va.gov/docs/OGHApplication.pdf](https://www.boise.va.gov/docs/OGHApplication.pdf)*

Completed forms can be dropped
off at Voluntary Service or emailed to
boivoluntaryservice@va.gov