The September 2020

BOISE FRONT

The official newsletter of the Boise VA Medical Center

A big thanks to the EMS staff of the Boise VA who keep us clean and safe. **You are appreciated very much!**

Boise VA COVID-19 Response Highlight Environmental Management Services

By Jeanette McMillan, Employee Engagement Committee

The BVAMC housekeepers have been working diligently to help infection control. They have played a critical role to preventing employees or Veterans from getting COVID. Several things have changed since COVID-19 impacted BVAMC, including increased use of PPE, coordination to clear and immediately terminal clean (deep cleaning) the hallway following a COVID positive or person-under-investigation (PUI) from the ER to the inpatient unit or CT scan, and increased terminal cleans.

Staffing has increased to keep up with the demands, including frequent cleaning handrails, door handles, waiting areas, and frequently touched surfaces. The team has around-the-clock coverage and increased the amount of terminal cleans completed on the weekend. In addition, the team now has 4 robots that clean the area using UV light within 8-foot distance for 10 minutes. For all the Star Wars fans out there, the robots are all called R2D2, and each are named separately too – Cecilia, Trinity, Eva, and Seti.

Housekeeping has helped provide solutions for new issues found during the pandemic: For example, PUI or positive patients who transfer from the ER have a plastic sheathe covering them. This sheathe would have been directly on top of the patient's face, and housekeeping services brought up the idea for a transport table to be directly above patient's face to keep the plastic lifted off the patient's face. Another creative solution occurred on SDU: before the PPE caddies were hanging on the door. Housekeeping noted that when the door opened inward, it was a contamination risk for the clean PPE in the caddy. Housekeeping staff also help provide refreshers on PPE for staff who have questions about donning or removing their PPE.

With COVID restricting hospital visitors and all the PPE, a patient is often isolated and at the same time surrounded by employees that look like aliens with all their PPE. The housekeeper on SDU goes in with her PPE and spends time with the patient, talks with them about their day, and gives them support. What a great way to take time to help our Veterans going through a difficult time.

In my interview with EMS Supervisor, Fred May, he shared how proud he is of his team's performance, which is recognized in VISN-20 for our hospital-wide low-infection rates. Fred shared more on his perspective on the pandemic:

"For our team cleaning in a hospital setting nothing is different, but everything feels different.

Environmental services staff, the people who ensure hospitals are clean environments for healing, are right there in COVID units and in the rooms. They work alongside doctors and nurses in the messy, difficult, and volatile moments of combating disease and injury, and are a key component of health care. Our environmental services team must know all methods of sanitizing, control of infection, (and) are necessary to the elements of care that can save lives. If their job isn't on point, a surgery could be at risk of not taking place; from ensuring an operating room is ready, to assisting others with the immediate support in the service to each patient. We are there to sanitize and even use the UV robots during and after the transport of every possible or positive COVID patient. Our housekeeper's job affects the health of sick patients. That is why we ensure so much goes into their training and awareness of any new guidelines by the CDC.

We hold brief huddles and try and keep our board updated each day with critical information. This is sometimes difficult to do at times of social distancing and with such large group of employees keeping everyone well informed and on the same page can be a challenge.

At the end of each shift I look back and ask myself, "Did we do a good job? Did I make the right decisions? Were we thorough and attentive enough?"

Thank you to our Environmental Management Services team for all you are doing to break the chain of infection!

Hello's Goodbye's

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

Jennifer Hilton
Dusti Rogers
Deborah Sturgeon
Anjana Ganeshappa
Jessica Justesen
Geneva Ewart
Brittany Shuba
Ruben Gonzalez
Lauren Fitzgerald
Chelsy Koth
Megan Simenc

Wayne Steve Harding
Michael Vega
Frederic Sylvia
Lesa Heirigs
Alexander Evans
Maria Rodriguez
Melissa Williams
Erin Sue Carver
Rahul Kuver
Breanna Eastman,
Elizabeth Schackman

Hello's Goodbye's

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

NICHOLE DUNNAM
LEAH LAPRADE
RHIANNON GOETTLE
ETHAN BROWN
WILLIAM OLIN
CHAD NORTON
ANNA VAN DYKE
MITCHELL GULBIS
MICHELLE ELLIOTT
MARK LLOYD
MARK WARREN
DAVID TOMPKINS
RANDY HELLAND
MICHAEL KILFOYLE

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH **SEPTEMBER**

Megan Marquez

Megan is such a great addition to SDU. She is always willing to help staff, in addition to going the extra mile for our veterans. Her positive attitude and friendly demeanor helps our days go by smoother. She is so kind and compassionate with our veterans. We are extremely lucky to have her. She is always going out of her way to go above and beyond. She noticed that one of our high fall risk patients had his door closed. She entered the room to check on him and found that the bed alarm wasn't on either. She is such an amazing team member and always makes sure that her patients get the best care possible. She is such a hard worker. She deserves some recognition for increasing patient safety and potentially decreasing falls. Megan we all appreciate you and are so glad you are part of the SDU family. You are part of what makes the VA hospital such a great place. Thank you.

Victoria Weremecki

Vicky we are so lucky to have you on our team. You bring a ton of expertise, experience, stability, and kindness to our team and we so appreciate you. Vicky is a rock-solid, well-seasoned, well-rounded bedside nurse with superb clinical skills and a very able charge nurse. She seemingly never gets ruffled with the hectic pace of our unit. Even during times of chaos and stress, she handles her patients with care, compassion, professionalism, calm and level-headedness. This has been especially helpful during the ever changing COVID pandemic. We all trust her judgment and frequently seek her opinions on various issues on the unit. She brings tons of invaluable practical knowledge and experience to the unit. She is an awesome resource for difficult IVs/labs, nursing procedures, telemetry and ostomy care. She is a great communicator who truly listens to patient needs, acknowledges their concerns and helps them understand medical situations or procedures. She makes her patients feel respected and cared for. She is fun to work with. She is capable of turning even the dullest of moments into a great one. We are fortunate to have Vicky on our Step Down night shift! Thank you so much Vicky for exemplifying our core values of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect and excellence for our Veterans.

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH **SEPTEMBER**

Elise Talboy

I would like to nominate Elise. As the Covid pandemic began to unfold in March, she was willing to transfer from outpatient physical therapy to provide support to the inpatient team. Over the past few months, she demonstrated a willingness to be an active learner regarding all inpatient diagnoses, but particularly those related to pulmonary conditions. She has demonstrated exceptional patience with patients who are in a difficult situation and may be less patient than otherwise. She is willing to see the most ill of the patients in our hospital and do her best to help them recover their function so they can go home. She has taken these new responsibilities with a great attitude and has been an integral member of the physical therapy inpatient team.

VISN20 EMS Technician of the Year

Art Keen

Congratulations to Art Keen for being selected as the V20 EMS Techinician of the Year for 2020. The nomination for Art's award is below:

I am writing this letter to nominate Arthur Keen for the VISN20 EMS Technician of the Year. He is an outstanding employee, a huge asset to our department, and is so deserving of this award and recognition. As Abraham Lincoln once said back in March 4, 1865, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." Its meaning and importance lost to the ages, yet still hangs as a beacon of hope to those veterans entering any VA. Arthur Keen embodies this phrase uttered so long ago. Arthurs commitment to his fellow man and veteran, empowers all those around him to do better and to think of others before one's self. Let me tell you about Arthur Keen.

Arthurs skills and knowledge are beyond approach. Having only been with the VA for a little over five years, Arthur has demonstrated great retainability of all EMS policies and procedures that are associated with EMS. His understanding of external polices related to medical services, GEMS, safety, and infection control make Arthur a wealth of knowledge and a resource for others in different departments throughout his VA. Arthur is routinely called upon to answer questions and concerns from his peers, his answers and suggestions are always clear and in accordance with polices and procedures. Arthurs skill set is the highest amongst his peers, at any given time and or opportunity he is teaching and instructing others with his extensive knowledge and skills.

Supervisors are responsible for the education and training of all new hires, but when there are to many problems and issues around the VA, the new hires are given to Arthur Keen. Arthur has the confidence, trust, and admiration of those appointed above him to fully and completely train any new hire in accordance with

VISN20 EMS Technician of the Year

all VA polices and procedures. There will not be an area missed when Arthur is training and instructing a new hire. Not only will Arthur train "by the book" but he will teach each new hire to think outside the box, to problem solve and work the problem using the skills and knowledge Arthur has given them. A supervisor will give Arthur a task and purpose with what they would like the new hire trained in. Not only will Arthur train the new hire up to and beyond that standard, he will expand his instructions when he feels that the new hire has completely grasped the training criteria and move on to another area of training, all the while making sure that the new hire is taking all the proper notes, getting hands on experience, and quizzing the new hire to make sure they are understanding and retaining the information, skills, and knowledge Arthur is passing onto them.

The daily duties of the EMS technician have forever changed with the onset of COVID. With that, duties and responsibilities have ever expanded to include areas of expertise that otherwise would never have been expected for EMS Techs to learn or incorporate into their daily duties. One such piece of equipment is our Xenex Light Strike machine. The Light Strike limited as it is in its functions, has an added impact on moral and the feeling safe and protect by other staff and veterans. Arthur Keen is one of a handful of EMS techs that transports, sets up, and operates the Light Strike. Arthur also trains not only other EMS techs on its operational procedures but various other staff around the VA. Arthur can be seen in many different areas of his VA helping his peers with their daily tasks and duties. Arthur not only completes his duties in a timely manner he finds additional projects to do to raise the appearance and cleanliness of his VA. Arthur will ask his supervisors if there are other tasks that need attention, and will then go and complete those tasks with little or no supervision.

An EMS technician is in a unique situation within any given VA. Not only do EMS techs have the pleasure of interacting with veterans, but they also deal with many other VA employees throughout the VA. Arthur Keens customer service, when it comes to other veterans admitted to the VA is one of amazement and wonder, not only does Arthur make sure that he performs his job duties within every single veterans room, he will always make the time to lend an ear and listen to the veterans troubles, their pain, their concerns. I have never seen Arthur dismiss a veteran for any reason regardless of his personal work schedule or time constraint. Arthur will sit with and engage each and every veteran that requires someone to listen to them, let it be a praise on other staff or himself, or a complete verbal breakdown of any and all issues that have enraged the veteran, Arthur has and will continue to encourage each and every veteran that their situation will get better and then see what he can do for their problems that are within his scope of responsibilities. If Arthur is unable to help, he will seek out those that can make a change or solve the problem, and only returning to his duties once he knows that the problem will be resolved.

VISN20 EMS Technician of the Year

Arthurs continued selfless service to his peers and veterans not only has earned him praise from all corners of his VA, but also has allowed him to be nominated for employee of the month three times and being awarded employee of the month once. Employee of the month is no easy task, there are no independent department employee of the months, there is only one given to one worthy employee out of over 1400 employees each month. Arthurs continued commitment to his job, peers, and veterans will make him an enduring asset for as long as he chooses to work at the VA.

Arthur Keen is a retired Lt. Colonel, with over 20 plus years of service, his passion and dedication has allowed him to work at his VA not for a paycheck, but for the satisfaction of helping veterans; like him, receive the best possible care and comfort each veteran had fought for. Arthur is not only an employee at the VA but also one of the many veterans that receive care here. By also being one of the veterans that receive care Arthur makes sure that all new hires he trains he makes sure that they all know that they better treat everyone they come in contact with respect.

Arthur creates an environment in which his peers and new hires can find new ways of motivating themselves considering our organization's changing needs. Arthur is highly self-aware and holds others accountable for their own misperception of "housekeeping". If and when it happens, Arthur learns from mistakes while making it safe for others to volunteer innovative recommendations to the many challenging problems that arise. Arthur focuses on aligning his peers by setting a common working standard that creates a common mindset of learning, growing, and acquiring new skills.

Not once since I have been Arthurs supervisor have, I heard one negative comment about him from his peers or other VA employees. There is no mind-numbing task, or job that Arthur will do without complaint, he will take his instructions and proceed to accomplish the tasking at hand with a smile and determination. Arthur Keen not only embodies the core principles of his former military command, but also those beliefs and desires of Abraham Lincoln. It is with great pleasure that I respectfully submit this nomination for Arthur Keen to be recognized as the EMS Technician of the Year.

Sincerely,

Harvey L. Stewart
EMS Supervisor

Congrats Art!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Terry Schuebert

I am not a veteran, but I come from a long line of veterans. My father was in the National Guard for over 20 years, serving the Guard full time from 1952 to 1965. My grandfather fought in WWII and would tell my brother and me many stories. My brother was in the Army. My husband spent 6 years in the nuclear Navy. The list goes on and on with many more family and friends that were in the military.

I was born in Ontario, Oregon on Nov. 22 1955 to Bob and Mary Danilson. Since dad was in the National Guard he was transferred to LaGrande, Oregon for 2 years and Pendelton, Oregon for 2 years before moving back to Ontario where I finished school. After graduation I started to work for Skaggs Drug Store in the fishing and hunting department. The store went through many changes being bought out by Osco Drug and later Payless Drug. I became a member of management with Payless Drug and was soon transferred to Blackfoot, Idaho and after a year to Idaho Falls, Idaho. I enjoyed Idaho Falls and wanted to stay in the area. My son was in grade school and didn't want to change schools again. My neighbor was a department manager at the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and was looking for an administrator for his department. I was lucky enough to get the job and spent 24 years working for the INL working mainly for Facilities and Maintenance as a Preventative Maintenance Coordinator and as a scheduler and planner. When the government offered an early retirement I took the offer at age 58. I wasn't ready to stop working yet and was lucky enough to be hired by Holland American Princess Cruise Lines as a bus driver/tour guide. For 7 summers my husband and I have been working in Alaska driving tour bus. We also train people to drive bus in Rexburg, Idaho and Logan, Utah for 3 months to get them ready to go to Alaska.

When we are not working we enjoy just about anything outside. We hook up our 5th wheel and head to the mountains where we hike, fish and hunt. In the winter we cross country ski, snowshoe and snowboard. Last November my mom had a closet full of clothes and shoes that belonged to my father who had passed from Alzheimer's. We took everything to the Veterans Advocates in Ontario, Oregon, and while there I asked if they needed any drivers. I was told they did, as they hadn't had a driver for the brand new DAV van in Payette for quite a while. I started the process to become a volunteer, but when Covid hit it really slowed the process. Finally in May I was approved to become a volunteer. Driving has been a bit slow because of Covid, but I have taken a few people to the hospital for appointments.

I also volunteer Mondays as a Covid pre-screener in the parking lot. My favorite part is the feeling of helping where needed and all the wonderful people I have met.

BOISE is HIGHLY RELIABLE

HRO
PRINCIPLES & VALUES

September | National Safety Poster

Theme of the Month: Learn, Inquire and Improve

Committed to learning from mistakes, a multidisciplinary team reviews current processes to identify issues and develop new protocols for improved patient care.

Multidisciplinary Team Develops New Protocols to Address Infection Rates

Context: Infection preventionists, Aaron Woodall and Xiomara Santana-Jones, at James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital noticed a sharp increase in Catheter-associated Urinary Tract Infections/Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI/UTI) in Long-Term Care Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) units.

Action: Aaron and Xiomara conducted an extensive records review. The review identified that several process issues were causing the increase. The SCI units formed a multidisciplinary team including SCI and Infectious Disease physicians, Nursing, Environmental Services, Wound Care, Pharmacy, Logistics, Biomedicine, Laboratory and Inter-facility Transport staff members. Challenges to eliminating CAUTI/UTI included culture, product design, peri-care practices, routine irrigation/flushing, specimen collection, and transport and catheter change practices.

Results: The Infection Control team developed new processes founded on evidence-based practices, risk assessments and deference to expertise. Thanks to the team's ability to *Learn, Inquire and Improve*, the SCI units were CAUTI/UTI free for 11 months at the time this story was shared.

> "As a team, we reflect daily and continue to apply the *Learn, Inquire and Improve* value to reach our goal of Zero Harm."

Aaron Woodall, MPH,
Chief, Infection Control
James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital

Xiomara Santana-Jones, MPH,
Asst. Chief, Infection Control
James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital

VHA'S JOURNEY TO HIGH RELIABILITY
Your Care is Our Mission.

GOOD CATCH AWARD

While working at the Boise VAMC Community Living Center (CLC), William Olin, Housekeeping, noticed a paper cup 2/3 full of a concentrated cleaning solution meant to clean the spa/bathtub room in a patient's room. William reported the concern to Cheryl Fabello, CLC Registered Nurse. To prevent future errors, Cheryl communicated the need for staff education about appropriate storage of chemicals to CLC leadership and supported a culture of safety by reporting in Joint Patient Safety Reporting (JPSR).

There are several safety concerns associated with storing chemicals in a patient's room.

- The cleaning solution must be used at a specific concentration to adequately disinfect the bathtub between residents.
- A resident could mistake the paper cup for a beverage with the potential to accidentally drink it.

William and Cheryl's actions demonstrated how to Support a Safety Culture by focusing on learning from mistakes and empowering staff to improve the process for safely storing chemicals.

Boise VA Medical Center

WHITE RIBBON

What is White Ribbon VA?
A national call to action under the Stand Up to Stop Harassment campaign - to address sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence. The aim is to eliminate sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence in VA Healthcare settings and in my community to promote a positive change in the culture that would allow actions from the pledge to become the norm.

When is White Ribbon VA?
The movement will kick off in October 2020 Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Background:
White Ribbon is the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end violence against women and girls, promote gender equity, healthy relationships and a new vision of masculinity. Since its inception in Toronto in 1991, the White Ribbon Campaign has spread to over 60 countries around the world, including college campuses, military bases and stations, and states (bright spots: Massachusetts and Ohio).

- White Ribbon VA is part of the continued implementation of the Stand Up to Stop Harassment Now! Campaign
- Genderless awareness; Employees and Veterans – All
- The campaign asks people to wear white ribbons as a sign of their pledge to never to commit, excuse, or stay silent about sexual harassment, sexual assault, or domestic violence against others.
- VA will hold local and national White Ribbon-VA programming throughout the month of October 2020.
- Programs will consist of various speakers including Veterans and Employees promoting a workplace and healthcare system free of harassment and assault
- National VA partnership announcement with National Association of Social Workers and White Ribbon-USA news release and other nationwide messaging

White Ribbon VA Pledge:

I, (Your Name), pledge from this day forward, to never commit, excuse or stay silent about sexual harassment, sexual assault, or domestic violence against others. Therefore, I promise to:

1. Honor VA health care settings as safe and welcoming environments
2. Recognize that touching, or comments about appearance, or referring to people as "baby," "honey," "sweetie," "hottie," "sexy," may make others feel uncomfortable
3. Talk to others in my life about the repercussions of unwanted hugging, touching, or flirting
4. Give everyone extra personal space
5. Understand that some Veterans and others may have invisible wounds and experiences that I may not fully understand
6. Lead by example through my thoughts, words and actions
7. Treat all those we serve and with whom we work with dignity and respect. Remember Every Single Person Expects Courteous Treatment (RESPECT)

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WHITE RIBBON

TAKE THE PLEDGE!

WE ARE COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

The VA's Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program (IPVAP) is committed to helping Veterans, their partners, and VA staff who are impacted by IPV. If you, or someone you know could be experiencing and/or using IPV - help is available.

Keri Barbero, LCSW, Intimate Partner Violence Program Coordinator (208) 422-1108

ICARE

The following is a snapshot from the all staff virtual Town Hall meeting on September 4, 2020 where staff members were invited to provide feedback on how we are Living Our ICARE Values during the Pandemic with a focus on ADVOCACY.

The below word cloud is a summary of staff responses to "What helps you embody ADVOCACY during the COVID Pandemic?"

Note: the larger font indicates greater frequency of responses.

VA | Boise VA Medical Center

Drive-Up Pharmacy

Because of COVID-19 the Boise VA pharmacy is only filling urgent prescriptions at this time. All other prescriptions must be mailed.

To refill an urgent prescription in person, go to one of the four parking stalls designated for *'parking pick-up'* in parking lot 21, across from the main entrance at Bldg. 85A between 9AM to 4PM.

While you are in the parking pick-up spot call the phone number (208) 422-1180 to speak with pharmacy staff, who will provide you with information & instructions

Once your order is complete, a technician will bring your prescription to your car. Please have your ID ready to show pharmacy staff.

If all the pharmacy parking stalls are taken please come into the pharmacy to talk with pharmacy personnel as usual.

Please do not wait until stalls are empty as this will cause congestion and increased wait time.

2020 Boise VA Medical Center Drive-Thru Flu Clinics

Boise VA Medical Center

NEW CHANGES THIS YEAR DUE TO COVID-19!

Boise VA Medical Center	Salmon CBOC
Sep. 21 to Oct. 16 (Mon - Fri)	October 13, 16, 20
9:00am - 3:00pm	1:00pm - 3:30pm
Twin Falls CBOC	Caldwell CBOC
October 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28	October 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, 27, 30
9:00am - 3:00pm	9:00am - 3:30pm
Mtn. Home CBOC	Eastern Oregon CBOC
October 14, 15, 16	October 5, 9, 16
9:00am - 3:00pm	9:00am - 3:30pm

GET YOUR FLU SHOT!

NEW THIS YEAR: There will be no 'walk-in flu clinics' this year due to COVID.

Get a flu vaccine during your scheduled VA appointment, or attend one of the drive-thru flu clinics being offered above.

Please remember your VA ID card and clothes that help make your shoulder accessible.

****Clinic times are subject to change. Visit www.boise.va.gov for updated information.***

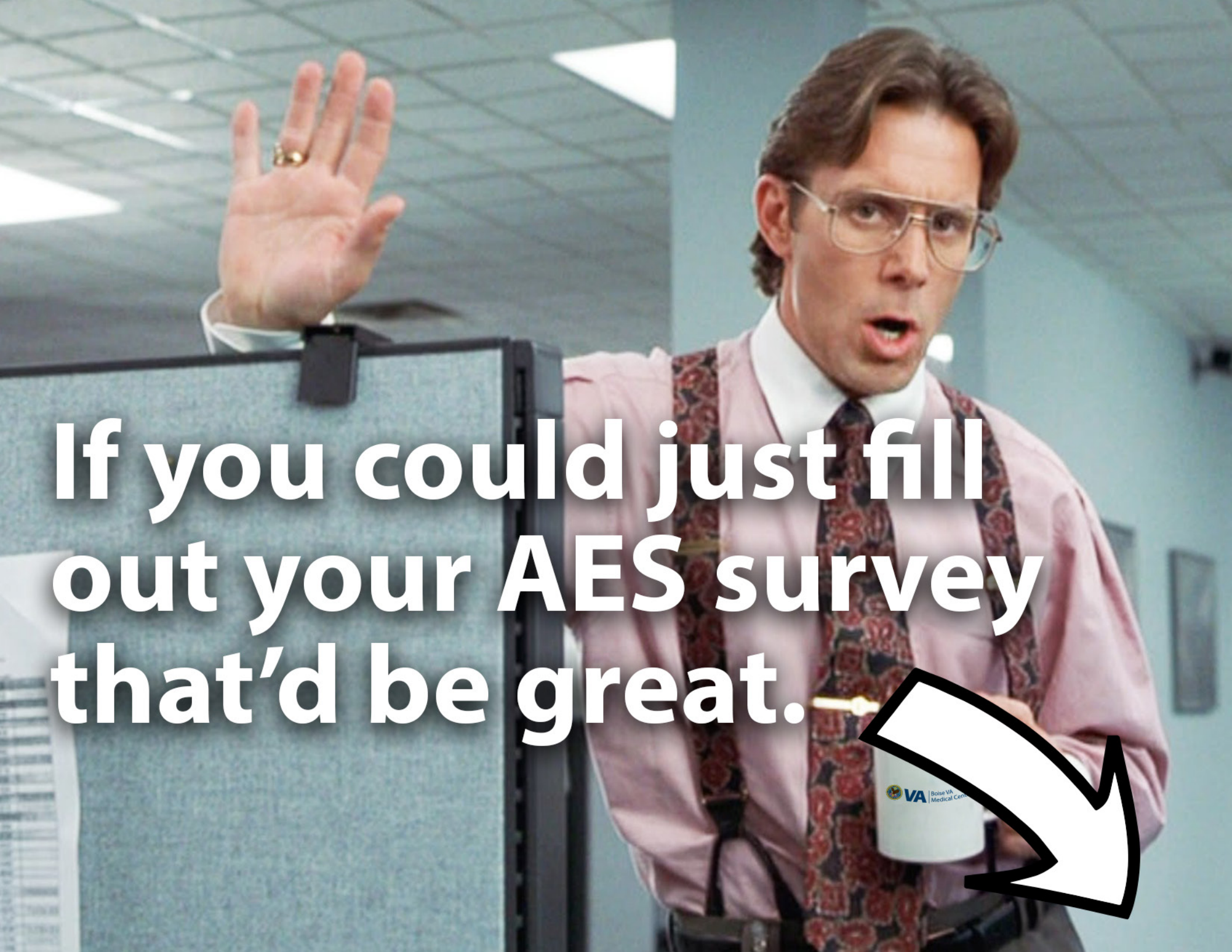
CHECK-IN BY TEXT

VA | Boise VA Medical Center

You are now able to check-in for your VA appointment by texting the VA that you have arrived with your smart phone.

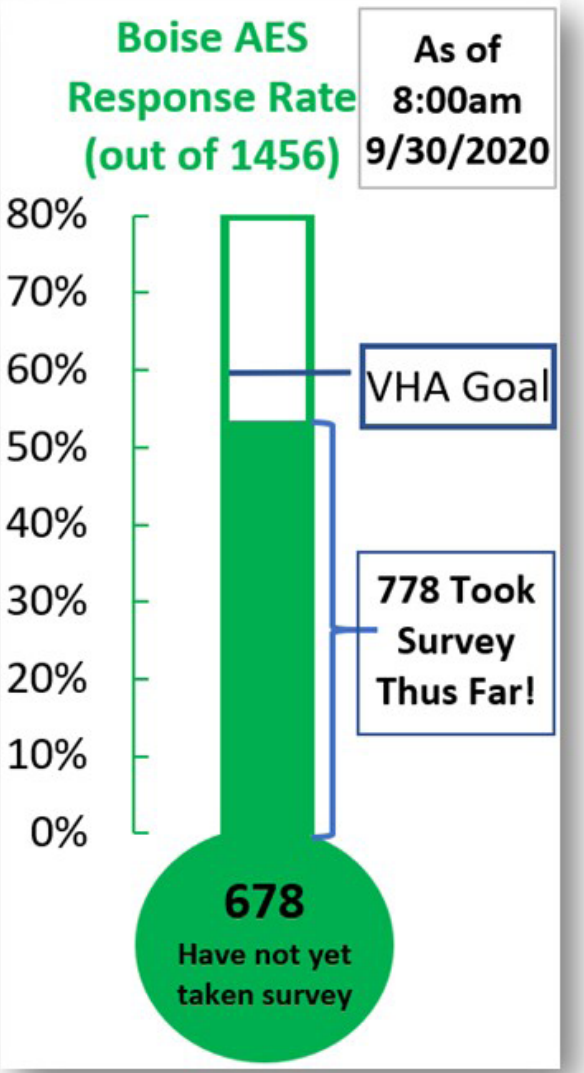
To check-in for your VA appointment please text the word 'HERE' to 53079 and wait for a reply before entering.

If you don't receive a text reply or if you have been waiting more than 5 minutes past your appointment time please call (208) 422-1499.


If you could just fill out your AES survey that'd be great.
VA

AES

Only 5 days left...

- Thank you to the 778 Boise VA Health Care System employees who have taken the All Employee Survey as of 9/30/2020 at 8am.
- We are nearly at the VHA 60% response rate goal.
- 80 Workgroups now have enough responses (5 or more) to receive a workgroup summary report.
- 43 Workgroups do not yet have enough responses for a report.
- It's not too late to take the survey. The survey ends 10/5/2020.
- Please share your voice!
- If you have not yet received information about your workgroup code to use when taking the survey, please reach out to either your supervisor or one of the AES Coordinators:

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