



Fayetteville VA Medical Center Community Update

Vol. 2 No. 6

Items of interest for our stakeholders

July 2011

Medical Foster Home: Where heroes meet angels

Tara Ingram, a Medical Foster Home caregiver, is waiting for a tenant. She has already prepared for the extra body, but her home remains empty.

“I just love to care [for] and help people,” she states with a smile.

She is one of several approved caregivers for the Medical Foster Home Program at the Fayetteville VA Medical Center. The program is a new option for Veterans who qualify to stay in a nursing home or assisted living community, but would prefer a more independent and family centered lifestyle.

The new program gives Veterans the opportunity to live with a caregiver who commits to providing for them and ensuring they receive all healthcare needs.

Veterans who may not feel comfortable with the prospect of living in a nursing home but require more care than that offered at assisted living facilities may find this a viable option.

Dr. Sandra Bragg, the Medical Foster Home coordinator, is looking to increase awareness of this alternative.

“The Veteran becomes a part of the family,” Bragg, said. “Sometimes in assisted living [communities] and nursing homes, people pretty much get lost or don’t necessarily get the individual attention that they would get in a medical foster home setting.”

Caregivers like Tara would not let that happen.

“I just love people. I’m a people person,” Ingram said.

It may also be a more financially feasible option for many Veterans. Foster homes can be more affordable than nursing

homes and assisted living communities because the price is privately negotiated and agreed upon with the caregiver, and it’s based on the Veteran’s ability to pay and his/her physical needs.

Dr. Bragg believes this benefits Veterans and the VA.



Tara Ingram, a Medical Foster Home Program caregiver, readies a bed that she hopes will soon be occupied by a Veteran needing living assistance.

Photo by Ed Drohan

“It’s a win-win situation ...the VA would otherwise pay for a Veteran to go into a nursing home or another facility. The Veteran pays his own way with a MFH. The VA is not financially responsible.”

The program has a partnership with Home Based Primary Care, which provides nurses, dietitians, and any other necessary providers for the Veteran. With the exception of specialty clinicians, all services are conveniently provided at the caregiver’s home.

The caregiver is considered

a part of the healthcare team, ensuring that the Veteran stays in compliance with the healthcare plan and assisting with daily living needs. According to Tara, most caregivers have prior experience.

“You’re actually being with that individual 24/7...[the caregiver] would have to have some type of experience of caring for someone in the privacy of their own home.”

A person must undergo a scrutinizing application process --

including a federal background check-- to qualify as a caregiver, and they must participate in medical and safety training. They are also supervised and inspected randomly each month to ensure that they are properly caring for the Veteran while successfully integrating them into the home.

**Fayetteville
VA Medical Center
Priorities**



Secure messaging comes to MyHealthVet

Secure messaging is the newest form of communication available on the award winning MyHealthVet website (www.myhealth.va.gov). It allows users to send messages about non-urgent, health-related matters to their Patient Allied Care Team (PACT) and receive a response within three business days.

Equilla Hightower, a medical support assistant and member of a Fayetteville PACT that currently uses secure messaging, had only rave reviews for the system.

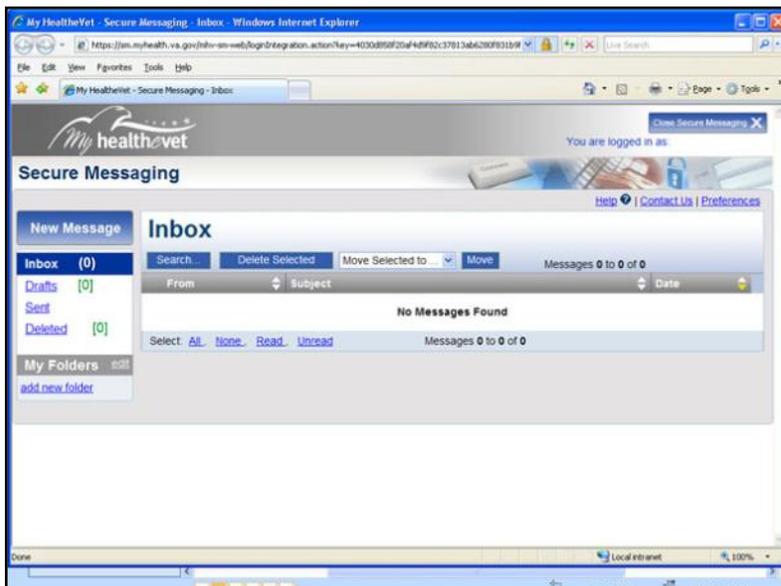
“Patients can request appointments and in addition to that, they may want renewal on their medication, which I can flag to the provider.” She stated. “It’s just like every day conversation, which makes the patient more relaxed.”

Messages are encrypted to ensure privacy and security for both patients and healthcare staff. Only authenticated users, Veterans who have upgraded their account through the VA, can use the system.

“It’s professional answers for health-related questions.” Terri Admire, the Veteran Health Education coordinator and Interim My HealthVet coordinator, said.

With secure messaging, every member of a PACT has access to their patients’ messages, and team members reply based on the patient’s need.

“We’re very diligent in making sure that we check for those messages.” PACT registered nurse Sharon Foutz said. “The first one to it usually opens it up and tries



to address the needs...if it is something the nurse needed to do, she’d reassign it to me and the same thing (would happen) if I needed to assign it to the doctor.”

Foutz, like Hightower, is a member of one of the four Fayetteville VAMC teams – all of which work out of Village Green – who are able to use the secure messaging system. More Fayetteville VAMC teams will be added to the system throughout the year.

Her team began using secure messaging March 30. They haven’t slowed down since.

“We got our first message March 31,” she stated.

There are currently more than 1,800 authenticated Veterans in the Fayetteville area who are on MyHealthVet, and the number continues to

rise each month. However, the new messaging system in no way replaces physical interaction with providers.

“They still have their face to face appointments; they still have the telephone they can use,” Foutz said. “(Secure messaging) is just another venue to make things a little easier for the Veteran.”

Admire believes in the benefits of the new messaging system and the My HealthVet website in gen-

eral. “I believe in MyHealthVet. It’s a way to help empower (Veterans) to become more involved in their healthcare.”

— Adara Ingram

FOSTER, continued from Page 1

Coordinators try to match the Veteran and caregiver based on temperament, lifestyle and interests, but the final selection of caregiver rests in the hands of the Veteran and their loved ones.

“They have a right to decide,” Bragg stated. “We want people to feel comfortable. It’s a long term commitment.”

They can visit the homes of the caregivers several times before making a decision. In the majority of cases, once the Veteran is placed in a home, they mesh well with the caregiver and their family.

Bragg noted, “Once a veteran is placed, usually it’s a good place.”

She is focused on spreading the word for the program, and is currently speaking with several Veterans to see if they are interested.

Meanwhile, Tara is patiently waiting for a new tenant.

“Just being able to help someone, you know, I just think that’s a calling from God. It’s a gift.”

For more information on the Medical Foster Home Program or to learn how to become a caregiver, please contact Dr. Bragg at (910) 488-2120, extension 7325.

— Adara Ingram

Community Update is published monthly. The contents provide readers with information on programs and happenings at the Fayetteville VA Medical Center.

If you have questions or comments about the newsletter, email edward.drohan@va.gov or call (910) 488-2120, ext. 5991.

- Elizabeth Goolsby..... Director
- James Galkowski..... Associate Director
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- Dr. Anna Teague..... Interim Chief of Staff
- Ed Drohan..... Public Affairs Officer/Editor

Director's Forum By Betty Goolsby

Providing Access to High Quality Safe Patient Care And Services

I am frequently reminded by our patients and their families of the high quality patient care and services we provide at the Medical Center and all of our outreach areas. The stories are heartwarming and reaffirm the commitment and dedication each of you brings every day to our veterans. Today, I would like to share one of those stories with you.

A veteran couple writes they were struggling with homelessness or near homelessness for three years. They held part-time jobs but the economy and health problems saw them falling behind in bills and rent payments.

The staff at the Medical Center connected them with VA and community resources. They were made aware of VA benefits they were unaware of and entitled to. They were able to get into a



stable home environment and are no longer homeless. Throughout the interactions, they report they were never made to feel they were undeserving and always experienced a kind, helpful attitude from our staff.

This couple is helping other homeless or near homeless in the community. They closed the letter by saying "We are proud of our VA and proud to be no longer homeless and able to contribute to the community."

This is one of many wonderful stories I have heard since coming to Fayetteville. I bet each of you has heard similar ones.

Thank you for continuing to care for America's heroes – our veterans.

Fayetteville VAMC parking areas change

As of June 27, changes were made to help utilize the Fayetteville VAMC's limited parking areas more effectively.

All employees must now park on the north end of the medical center campus, leaving the parking areas nearest the emergency room and outpatient check in area available for patients and visitors.

The parking restrictions are in place from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Patient parking is now in Lot 1, and in front of Buildings 45, 46 and 48 for those using the outlying clinic buildings. Pa-

tients with handicap placards or license plates can park in Lot 2 and the first row of Lot 3A.

Employees will now park in Lots 3, 4 and the back row of Lot 5. Employee

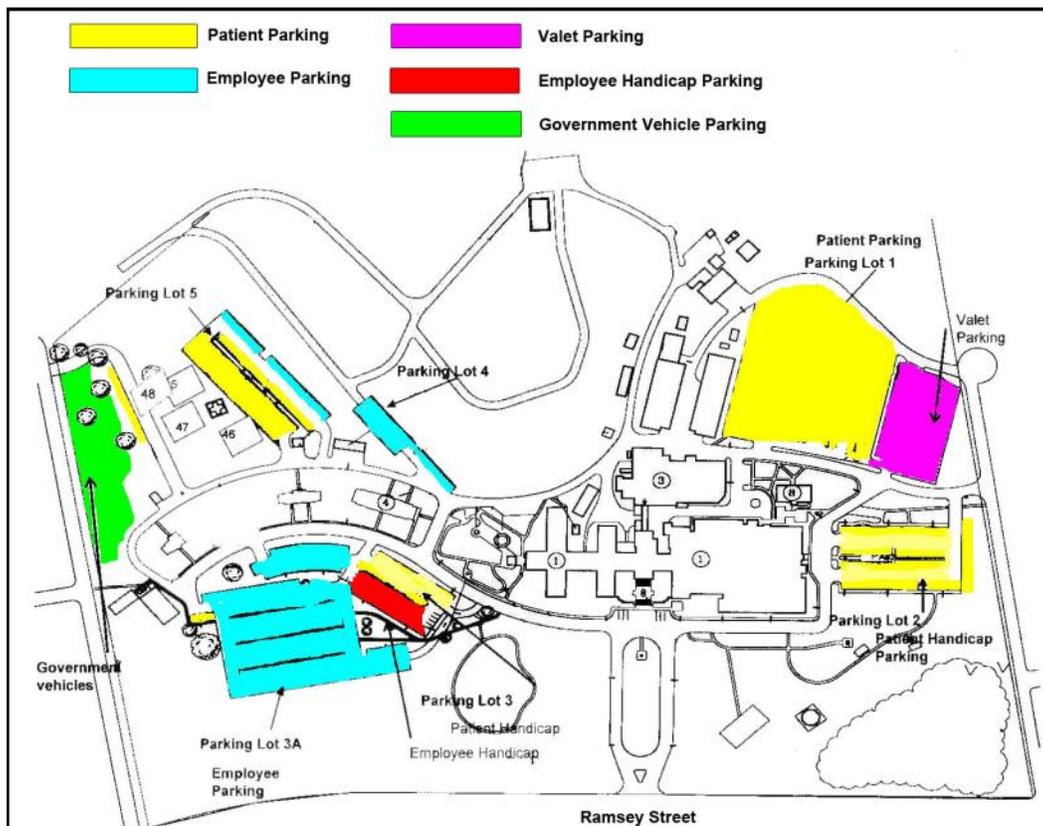
where except the valet and handicap parking areas on weekends, holidays and evening shifts since entryways to the hospital are sometimes restricted during these times.

handicap parking is in the second row of Lot 3. Overflow parking for employees when other lots are full will be at the back end of Lot 1.

Government vehicles will now be parked on the grass between Building T41 and the Cochran Gate.

Valet Parking will still be available at the outpatient entrance.

Employees can park any-



where except the valet and handicap parking areas on weekends, holidays and evening shifts since entryways to the hospital are sometimes restricted during these times.

FVAMC growing to improve Veterans' access

One of the main priorities for the Fayetteville VA medical Center is increasing Veterans access to safe, high quality healthcare services. With a coverage area that includes 21 counties in North and South Carolina, that can be quite a challenge, especially when you're also trying to be a good steward of resources at the same time.

Fortunately, there are already several projects either underway or in the planning stages that will make it easier for Veterans to access the care they've earned through their service to the country.

Brunswick County Outreach Clinic: Located at 20 Medical Campus Drive in Supply, N.C., the new outreach clinic will include one Patient Aligned Care Team (provider, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse and medical administration specialist) that will provide primary care services four days each week. Other services and educational activities will be available on the fifth day on a rotating



The new Brunswick County Outreach Clinic will be housed in the Brunswick Medical Building near Highway 17 in Supply, N.C.

Photo by Ed Drohan

basis. The clinic is scheduled to see its first patients at the beginning of August.

Wilmington Medical Specialty Outpatient Clinic: Located near the Wilmington Airport, the new MSOC will be more than eight times the size of the current Wilmington Community Based Outpatient Clinic and will increase services available to coastal Veterans as well. The groundbreaking is scheduled for the September time frame, with construction expected to last approximately 18 months.

Goldsboro Community Based Outpatient Clinic: Contracting is in the final site selection process for the Fayetteville VAMC's fifth CBOC which will provide

primary and mental health care for Veterans in and around Wayne County. The expected opening will be in early 2012.

Fayetteville Health Care Center: Site selection is also underway for the 230,000+ square foot HCC, which will house the majority of the outpatient services now being provided at the main campus. Plans are to renovate the current facility to expand inpatient services. Expected opening is in 2013.

Joint VA-DOD Clinic: Plans are being drawn up for a proposed joint venture between the Fayetteville VAMC and Fort Bragg. If approved, a joint clinic would be built between Spring Lake and Sanford that would provide health care services for Veterans through VA providers, and active duty military members and their families through DOD providers with both sharing resources.

Updates on these projects will be provided as they become available.

PACT FAIR

*Patient
Aligned
Care
Team*

Call (910)
482-5739
for more
information.



Wednesday July 20, 2011

1:00-4:00PM

Fayetteville VAMC Geriatric Park
(By the White Gazebo)

Staff and Veterans are invited to see displays and gain valuable information about the new Patient Aligned Care Team principle.

NC Veterans Park Dedication

Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary for Operations, Security and Preparedness Jose D. Riojas (right) was a guest speaker during the dedication of the North Carolina Veterans Park in Fayetteville July 4.

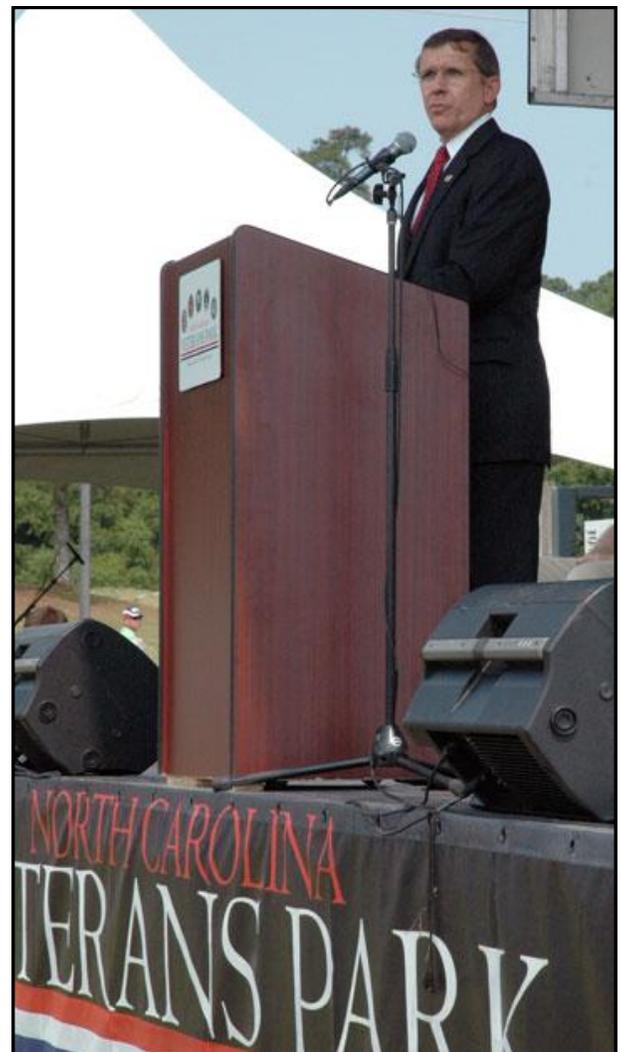
The park, located on five acres next to Fayetteville's Airborne and Special operations Museum, includes a visitors center with a chandelier made of more than 30,000 dog tags, as well as water features and an amphitheater where the Fort Bragg's 82nd Airborne Chorus performed for some of the more than 3,000 people who braved 90+ degree heat to attend the ceremony (below).

According to Riojas, the state has set the bar high for others looking to honor Veterans.

"I won't be shy about putting (the Veterans park) out as an example for the world to follow."

For more photos, go to http://www.fayettevillenc.va.gov/eventphotos/NCVP_Photos.asp

Photos by Ed Drohan



Summer Youth Volunteer Program

Lynda Gray trains volunteer Amanda Saunders how to check patients in at the Diabetes Clinic (below) while Sandra Soliman and Hannah Farmer help decorate shirts for Community Living Center residents. They are among the 50 youths who are spending two days a week for six weeks volunteering at the Fayetteville VAMC this year as part of the Summer

Youth Volunteer Program. Students ages 13 to 18 are eligible to volunteer and, after training, work in areas throughout the hospital.



Photos by Adara Ingram

Local VA employee invited to White House

After a hectic drive from Fayetteville and a quick change into formal attire in his car, Regional Veteran's Employment Coordinator Thomas Green III was excited to catch a cab in Washington D.C. It had been a long morning, but he was determined to get to the White House.

After all, he was invited, and no one turns down an invitation to the White House.

"What do you say, besides wow?" Green said.

Green was one of 15 honorees for Champions for Change, an initiative by President Obama to bring awareness to ordinary citizens who positively affect their community. Every week, individuals are selected and invited to the White House to discuss their ideas on how to improve the lives of those around them. For Father's Day, 14 men and one woman were selected because of the paternal role they play in their communities.

"It's great being a part of his initiative," Green stated.

Each father or father figure had a unique story to tell, including Green. At 21, he was an active duty soldier recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center from an EOD explosion that occurred during a deployment to Iraq. During this time, his grandfather, Thomas Green Sr., passed and his first wife left him. He became a Purple Heart recipient and a young, severely injured Veteran.

Fast forward to now, and the pain of that time is nowhere to be found. Green is happily married to Shahidah Green and has three kids - Devin Green who is seven, A'Jaylah Green who is 6, and 3-month-old Thomas Green IV.

"They are beginning to tell the story," Green said about his kids. "They share my testimony with everybody they can."

He is a certified peer mentor for the Veterans, a motivational speaker and a minister. All three roles combine in his job as the Employment Coordinator. His mission is to not only employ Vet-

erans, but motivate and encourage them as they seek employment.

His road to recovery and VA success is documented in his book, *Sometimes We Fall as Boys but Rise as Men*. Somehow the story made its way to the White House staff, who called Green notifying him that he was a 2011 Champion for Change honoree of Fatherhood and was invited to the White House.

Green accepted the invitation and, for Father's Day, he walked

through the doors of the White House as an honored guest. "I'm still amazed at that," Green said.

The honorees discussed the meaning and challenges of fatherhood and wrote blogs explaining how they became role models as well as the emotions associated with their journeys.

Green hopes the impact the honorees have on their communities continues.

"We're hoping that we can fulfill the President's promise to be able to continue to uplift, motivate, encourage, and inspire Fathers throughout the nation," he stated.

Now back home and back at work, Green has no intentions of slowing down. He still gives speeches across the nation, ministers and has two more books in the works. He's also still a full time employee of the VA.

"It's very rewarding, being able to get that phone call that says, Mr. Green, I got a job." Green stated. "Being able to hire one veteran is a win for the community, not just for the Veteran."

According to Green, there are several VA employees who have an amazing story and inspire the community.

"It's a lot of workers here that you don't hear about," he stated. "It's up to us to highlight each other and report that good news."

From Fayetteville to the White House and beyond, Green demonstrates the efforts of all VA employees set on making a difference in the lives of Veterans, their families, and the community.

— Adara Ingram



Shahidah and Thomas Green stand in front of the Executive Office of the President flag during their recent visit to the White House at the invitation of President Barack Obama.

Courtesy Photo



The Department of Veterans Affairs Presents

NATIONAL VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS Conference and Expo

Building Partnerships - Veterans, Businesses, and Government

SAVE THE DATE

August 15 - 18, 2011

**Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, Louisiana**

The largest nationwide conference of its kind, with 4,000 attendees expected this year, the National Veteran Small Business Conference provides Veteran-Owned and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs and SDVOSBs) an opportunity to learn, network and market their businesses.

This year's event is composed of three venues:

- **Small Business Conference** – Attendees will participate in training sessions on a variety of topics including managing small business finances, compliance, business development, marketing and selling to the Federal Government, navigating the Federal acquisition process, developing successful business strategies, contract management, human resources, technology, and program management.
- **Exhibit Hall** – Leaders from Federal agencies, VOSBs, SDVOSBs, and large businesses will network with each other in a 500+ booth exhibit hall and through one-on-one matchmaking sessions.
- **VA Open House** – Veterans from both the conference and local community will join us to learn and experience the wide range of resources available to the Veteran community.

To register and for more information, please visit
www.nationalveteransconference.com

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Public Affairs Officer, at
edward.drohan@va.gov**

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Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

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