

The Augusta Pulse

For the employees and friends of the Augusta VA Medical Center

Fall 2005

This Issue

**New
Collaborative
Frontiers**

**Critical Care Unit
Opens**

**Remembering
September 11**

Katrina Efforts

Police On The Job

**Augusta's
Outstanding
Awards**

**New State of the Art Unit
Becomes a Reality**





1 Freedom Way
 Augusta, GA 30904-6285
 1-800-836-5561
 706-733-0188

James F. Trusley III
 Director

Ralph R. Angelo
 Associate Director

Thomas W. Kiernan, M.D.
 Chief of Staff

Joyce Coleman, RN, MSN
 Acting Associate Director for Patient/
 Nursing Services

The Augusta VA Pulse
 is published for the employees,
 volunteers, stakeholders, and friends
 of the Augusta VA Medical Center.
 To submit articles or story ideas for
 possible publication, contact Janice
 Kennedy , 706-823-1733 or via e-mail
 at Janice.Kennedy@med.va.gov.

Editorial Board:

Janice Kennedy, M.Ed.
 Community Relations Coordinator

Rosalie Bell
 Public Affairs Officer

Ellen Harbeson, CPHQ
 Quality Management

Jerry Pafford
 Nursing/Education

Sherry Elias
 Human Resources

Julie Dangar, MBA, MHA
 Primary Care

Anita Bell, MSLS
 Library

Aaron Love, MBA, MPH
 Administrative Fellow

Will Tullis & Karen McBride
 Staff Photographers

Brian Brockway, MS
 Medical Illustration/Design

ON THE COVER:

Rose Cowden Wright, Nurse Manager
 CCU; Donald Morant, Pamela Helms,
 Facilities Management

Director's Message



I am honored to have the opportunity to share with you the many outstanding accomplishments that have occurred in our medical center since the last issue of the Pulse Magazine. It has been a busy time with the opening of the new Critical Care Unit and the generosity and selfless acts by many staff to assist with the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

As you read through the articles, you will find that the Augusta VA Medical Center has been the proud recipient of two exceptional awards; the Georgia Progress Award, which is acknowledgement and recognition from an independent organization; and the 25th Olin E. Teague Award, a prestigious award from within the federal government, which was presented to our Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit. These awards only confirm to the rest of the country and validate what I have always known; the Augusta VA has an outstanding staff and provides care second to none.

We received many compliments on the first issue of the Pulse Magazine. A tradition and standard of excellence has been established. We want to hear from you. If you have ideas for articles or stories of interest, please let us know.

James F. Trusley III
 Director, Augusta VA Medical Center



Downtown Division



Uptown Division

New Collaborative Frontiers

The Augusta VA Medical Center and Eisenhower Army Medical Center (EAMC) have a long history of exploring new frontiers in the area of collaborative efforts. The two have now joined forces in a Coordinated Recruitment and Staffing Project aimed at recruiting, appointing and hiring professionals for difficult-to-fill direct patient care occupations that provide clinical and ancillary support services to a large veteran and Department of Defense (DoD) population. The project, developed by Linda Dailey, Supervisory Human Resources Specialist, is one of eight projects selected nationwide for demonstration as authorized by the 2003 National Defense Authorization Act and in support of the VA/DoD Strategic Plan and resource sharing legislative initiatives.

There are ten major medical facilities within Augusta's immediate geographical area. All are competing to attract well-qualified medical professionals. With the philosophy that two federal agencies working together in a competitive labor market would be better than one working solo; this collaborative effort was aimed at solving current and projected shortages of health care workers in critical specialties.

There are three focus areas – joint recruitment, training and staffing. Joint recruitment involves combining efforts at job fairs and recruitment events, and representing the needs of both facilities when publishing recruitment advertisements. Joint training enables staff at EAMC to take advantage of training opportunities at the Augusta VA and vice versa. The joint staffing efforts focus on hiring, credentialing and training a select group of medical staff to meet the needs of either facility if a critical staffing shortage should occur. It is expected that the positive outcomes resulting from this project will be identified as best practices, exportable to other VA and DoD facilities throughout the nation.

Well on its path to success, the project has already had many accomplishments. Recruitment events have been attended and advertisements published, targeting vacant positions at both facilities. Joint training initiatives have also occurred. A joint Registered Nurse Critical Care/Progressive Care Internship Program is ongoing with the first group graduating in September 2005. Registered nurses are also being credentialed and hired for both facilities to staff a Nursing Float Pool. This “pool” will provide staffing when there is a critical shortage, thus avoiding bed closures, overtime and negative impact on patient care. Other unexpected positive outcomes have occurred. The benefit of having clinical managers meet to discuss the project has opened dialogue concerning best practices in other areas. Routine meetings are creating enthusiasm in managers who welcome the project as a mechanism for discussion on a variety of issues.

In July 2005, Dan A. Ermann and John Bartrum with the Office of Management and Budget visited Augusta for a presentation on the project. Other distinguished guests during this visit included Dr. Stephen L. Jones, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs); Mr. Arthur S. Hamerschlag, Chief of Staff, Veterans Health Administration; Ken Cox, Director, DoD/VA Program Coordination Office, TRICARE Management Activity; and Veronica Singfield, Program Director, AMEDD VA/DoD Healthcare Resources Sharing Program, Office of the Surgeon General – Army. Representatives from Eisenhower Army Medical Center included Colonel Donald M. Bradshaw, Commander; Colonel John M. Wesley, Deputy Commander for Clinical Services; and other management officials.

While the overall outcome of this project will not be known for several years (the project is funded through Fiscal Year 2007), the progress that has been made thus far is evidence of how two federal agencies existing in the same competitive labor market can explore new frontiers and collaborate efforts to meet their missions in “Taking Care of Our Nation’s Heroes.....Past, Present & Future.”

***Pictured left to right:** Joyce Coleman, Associate Director for Patient/Nursing Services; Colonel John M. Wesley; Colonel Donald M. Bradshaw; Art S. Hamerschlag; Dr. Thomas Kiernan, Chief of Staff; Dan A. Ermann; and James F. Trusley III, Medical Center Director.*



New Critical Care Unit Opens

Active duty service members and military veterans now have one more reason to be proud of the Augusta VA Medical Center. On July 26th, 2005, a celebration was held to officially recognize the grand opening of the new Critical Care Unit (CCU). This state-of-the-art unit is visible evidence of the ongoing commitment to provide quality care to our nation's veterans, which has become the hallmark of the Augusta VA Medical Center. To mark the occasion, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the entrance to the unit which is located on the third floor of the Downtown Division. Staff and stakeholders, including Veterans Service Organizations and the Interim Mayor of Augusta, were on hand to participate in this historic event. Shortly thereafter, critical care staff moved patients into the new unit, which represented the first occupation of a new critical care unit since 1980. Encompassing over 15,000 square feet of patient care, administrative and storage space, the new unit is designed to satisfy and exceed the current recommendations from the Society for Critical Care Medicine for construction of new Intensive Care Units (ICU).

It all began in July 2002; an architectural firm was commissioned to conduct a study of the existing Intensive Care Unit and Coronary Care Unit. The goal was to develop a master plan for the renovation and consolidation of the two units. To support this goal, emphasis was placed on combining both areas into one functional unit allowing for more efficient utilization of staff and other support functions. One year later a construction contract to begin the renovation project was awarded and work began in November 2003. The new Critical Care Unit was completed in April 2005, for a total cost of \$4.5 million.

The beautiful area, which features the latest in architectural design, includes 18 private rooms, each covering over 200 square feet, outfitted with a bathroom, as well as ample administrative and storage space. In addition, two rooms are prepared for future expansion of authorized beds. A major feature of each room is a large window overlooking the surrounding area. This feature will assist in keeping the patients that are in this environment for long periods of time oriented to time and place. The configuration of the room also allows for patients to be positioned so they can see outside. Additional features include conference space, a large lounge for nursing staff, and a new arterial blood gas lab and work space for respiratory therapy staff.

According to Rose Wright, Nurse Manager, one of the positive steps in the construction process was the inclusion of staff nurses, medical clerks, and physicians from the beginning to determine design, bed configuration, placement of items such as plumbing and medical gas outlets, as well as the color scheme. Ms. Wright adds that the involvement of the staff increased their pride and ownership of the



Julie Lober, RN, checking patient vital signs from new observation area.



Pam Helms, Engineering Technician and Donald Morant, Interior Design, take one last look over blue prints before CCU Ribbon Cutting.

area and helped create more effective patient care teams. The staff agrees that the unit has fostered a unique team environment with the two units now combined and being in one localized area.

Dr. John Brice, Service Line Executive for the CCU, also played a pivotal role in the construction design. Dr. Brice insisted that the patient rooms satisfy the current recommendations of the Society for Critical Care Medicine and also brought to the design table a physician's perspective ensuring that the environment of the unit was physician-friendly. A physician's viewpoint was taken into consideration in every aspect, even down to the actual lighting. As a result of streamlined operations, Dr. Brice also feels that efficiency in staff scheduling and equipment management has markedly improved.

The Critical Care Unit now has the capability of providing a myriad of critical care services including neurosurgery, general and vascular

surgery, thoracic surgery, interventional and medical cardiology and many treatments related to problems such as sepsis, respiratory failure, and diabetic complications, among others. The more conventional procedures CCU patients could experience are performed at the bedside, and include: upper and lower GI endoscopies, dialysis, insertion of temporary pacemakers, and insertion of arterial and central venous lines, balloon pumps, and feeding tubes.



Dr. Mudusar Raza and Mike Miller, RN, review patient record in new staff work area.

Another key concern for staff and family members during the hospitalization of patients in critical care is access of the family members to their loved ones. An integral part of the CCU design includes a large family waiting area, located directly adjacent to the unit so that family members are close by at all times. Moreover, this new waiting room gives family members access to an inviting location, allowing them to relax and comfort each other. There is also a smaller more private consultation room available for confidential discussions between family members and interdisciplinary team members.

It is an exciting time at the Augusta VA Medical Center as the new Critical Care Unit begins serving those veterans requiring its services. The unique features that the new unit has to offer will allow staff to serve and effectively care for our nation's heroes and to carry out our mission "to do everything we can for veterans."



New CCU Waiting Room Offers More Than Just Waiting

focus group is to create an open forum in which family members can share and express their concerns relating to their loved one's care. Participants in the focus group respond to questions concerning patient and family satisfaction in an effort to identify strengths in patient care and areas for improvement. The CCU family focus group meets monthly and is an extension of the long-standing weekly support groups for family members of critically ill patients. The support group provides emotional, social, and spiritual support to these families. Information gathered is often used to evaluate customer service and as a result the patient satisfaction scores within the medical center have dramatically increased over the past year. Ms. Fuqua is not alone in providing assistance and support to CCU families. Bessie May Chipley has volunteered in the CCU waiting area for over 10 years and brings an added sparkle to group sessions by not only being a strong shoulder for patient families; but also sharing light-hearted jokes at just the right time to make family members feel better. Ms. Chipley's volunteer assignment also includes acting as the "liaison" between the families and the hospital staff, answering the busy waiting room phone, and serving coffee and delicious homemade cookies which she regularly bakes at home and brings in for families and staff.



The new Critical Care Unit (CCU) waiting room is not just a place for family members to sit and wait; they also have the opportunity to participate in focus groups designed as informational sharing sessions to evaluate services provided. According to Anita Fuqua, Nursing Clinical Specialist and focus group leader, the goal of the

Remembering September 11, 2001: One Employee's Personal Journey

It is an often repeated truism that we never know what life holds in store for us. So it was when Sergeant Brian Rothwell, now an Audiovisual Production Specialist with the Augusta VA Medical Media Department, was asked to report for an interview at Ft. Gordon, Georgia. Sergeant Rothwell had no idea that this interview would lead to the White House and a front row seat to history. An offer for an assignment to the White House Communications Agency (WHCA) was made and a major decision which would forever leave the mark of unforgettable memories followed. Ironically, Sergeant Rothwell had been planning to leave the Army, but after discussing this once-in-a-life-time offer with his family, the decision was made to reenlist.

The White House Communications Agency, staffed by members from all branches of the military, provides communications support for the President, Vice-President, secret service and others as directed. "Wherever the President goes the Director of WHCA and a team goes aboard Air Force One with him," says Brian. Videos, photographs and audio recordings are maintained for the archives and eventually transferred to the presidential libraries.

During the four-year tour with the WHCA, Brian served both Presidents Clinton and Bush, recording official events on five continents and in all fifty states. Among the highlights were trips to Egypt, where he toured the interior of the Great Pyramids and to the Kremlin in Russia. However, September 11, 2001, will forever stand out as the most significant date of Brian's service.

What started out as a uneventful day recording President Bush in an elementary school classroom in Florida, soon put Brian Rothwell right in the middle of witnessing first hand the news of the most horrific attack on our own shores that our nation has ever experienced. With video camera focused on President Bush, Brian recorded the staff as they leaned over the president's

shoulder to tell him that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. Shocked and in disbelief, Sergeant Rothwell, with a level of responsibility that few of us will ever face, spent the next harrowing hours and days recording for history the President's visits to both Ground Zero and the Pentagon. We all have vivid memories of where we were on September 11, 2001, but probably none as dramatic as our co-worker Brian Rothwell.



Official White House Photo

Augusta VAMC Supports Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts

The Augusta VA was actively involved in the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. Kathleen Scott, Homeless Veterans Program Manager, set up an information table at May Park, the Community Centralized Disaster Relief Center, to offer assistance and respond to questions from veterans, their families and VA employees. Local phone numbers and contacts were established for veterans coming to our community and walking into our medical center seeking medical care,



pharmacy refills, or other services. VA employees from the affected gulf areas were also provided with resources and contacts to assist with employment issues. As a direct result, two

displaced employees were hired as permanent employees. Public Service Announcements alerting veterans and employees of contact numbers were also released to local media. The Employees Association was quick to respond by opening an account to handle donated funds to assist with employees coming to our area, and Voluntary Services coordinated donations for displaced veterans and their families. The Veterans Canteen Service placed "collection boxes" in the retail stores and food courts to accept donations for VA employees on the national level.

Two police officers, Robert Richardson and Linda Banks, volunteered to go to the New Orleans VA on a two week assignment to assist with securing that facility. In addition, 13 staff deployed to Atlanta to assist in receiving hurricane survivors at Dobbins Air Force Base and other relief efforts. Those staff included: Shedericka Edwards, RN; Dorothy Grady, RN; Betty Grant, RN; Theresa Hall, RN; Druscilla (Robin) Jones, RN; Sandra Judge, RN; Carolyn Lee, RN; Estrellita Mitchell, RN; Dr. Pamela Fall; Elaine Miles, Social Worker; Michelle Mitchell, Social Worker; Remell Wilson, Human Resources; and Bettye McKinney, Patient Services Assistant.

Hope for New Augusta VA Employee

On September 1, the Human Resources Department had what appeared to be an ordinary customer seeking information on job opportunities. That ordinary customer turned out to be an employee from the New Orleans VA

desperately seeking information about available vacancies. The employee had experienced the deadly force of Hurricane Katrina, and the floodwaters that followed had destroyed her house and all of her belongings. The biggest concern was to find a job. Not only was she running out of money and unable to access her local bank, which had also been destroyed; but there was no job to return to at the New Orleans VA. This employee had left her home, accompanied by a friend, with only a few personal items, a pet dog and her car. With no destination in sight, the two drove continuously until arriving at the Augusta VA where the friend, a veteran, could seek treatment and the employee hoped to find a job. Neither of the two travelers had showered or slept for two days, but in spite of the fatigue and mental exhaustion, the employee decided to visit Human Resources and inquire about a job.

Recognizing a critical need to help, Julie Choate, Chief, Human Resources, and Linda Dailey, Supervisory Human Resources Specialist, took quick action. After obtaining personal information from the individual the two were able to arrange for the employee's next paycheck to be sent to Augusta. Since the employee was seeking permanent employment, they also worked to find an appropriate vacant position and arranged for the employee to be transferred from the New Orleans VA to the Augusta VA on a permanent basis.

As the employee shared her story it became evident that she would need additional assistance. She had no cash on hand, and explained that no bank along the way would cash her money order or



checks because they were from a New Orleans bank; gas stations would accept only cash. Working with the credit union, Ms. Choate and Ms. Dailey arranged for the money order to be cashed and for a new checking account to be opened. The Employee Association and AFGE Local 217 also stepped in and provided needed cash to purchase items to begin setting up a new home.

Once basic details had been arranged and the employee realized she had a new job, the overwhelming reality of loss and true heartbreak began to show; tears flowed down her face. She will forever be grateful for the quick actions and overwhelming support from the Human Resources staff, the Augusta VAH Credit Union, AFGE, and Employees Association.

Affirming the Commitment

“The meaning of America is not to be found in a life without toil. Freedom is not only bought with a great price; it is maintained by an unremitting effort.”

-Calvin Coolidge

We see the faces of our veterans daily as we walk through the halls of our Medical Center. Despite their differences, they share the common bond of once serving their country through military service. As employees of the Augusta VA, we know we are here to serve the veteran, but in the daily routine to complete our assigned duties; do we take the time to think about the sacrifices these individuals have made?

Affirming the Commitment is a national initiative designed to help employees better understand and appreciate veterans and their military service, to create a culture based on

commitment and pride in serving veterans by reinforcing the importance of our service, and to make VHA a more gratifying place to work. In the weeks and months ahead, you will be hearing and reading more information on this new program.

CREW Is Coming!

VISN 7 has been selected as one of eight VA sites to pilot the National CREW Program; the Augusta VAMC along with the VISN 7 office will take the lead in this initiative. CREW, which stands for Civility, Respect, and Engagement of the Workforce was developed from feedback from the VHA All Employee Survey and through focus groups which placed a high priority on civil and respectful behavior in the workplace. The main objective is to increase employee satisfaction and awareness of the importance of civility and respect among staff and our patients.

Patience of Police Officers Pays Off

During a routine patrol of the outpatient parking lot at the Downtown Division, night shift police personnel located a vehicle with a stolen South Carolina license plate. Further investigation revealed that the stolen license plate had been attached to a vehicle that had also been stolen from Columbia, South Carolina. The proper South Carolina authorities were contacted and the vehicle was placed under surveillance.

Police Officer Myles Arnold was maintaining surveillance when two males driving a late model Sports Utility Vehicle stopped by the stolen vehicle and proceeded to remove items from it. Officer Arnold called for backup. When Officer Thomas Mitchell arrived on the scene, both officers approached the individuals asking for their identifications. Neither individual had a valid driver’s license; the vehicle they were driving was stolen; and, there were out-of-

state warrants for both individuals. The two were taken into custody and transferred to the Augusta-Richmond County Jail.

Officers Mitchell and Arnold’s attention to detail and quick actions led to the apprehension and incarceration of two wanted criminals plus the recovery of two stolen vehicles and a stolen license plate.



Pictured left to right: James F. Trusley III, Medical Center Director; Officer Thomas Mitchell; Linda F. Watson, Director, VA Southeast Network; Tom Howe, Chief, Police Department; during recognition at August Town Hall meeting. (not pictured Myles Arnold)

Augusta VAMC Receives Two Outstanding Awards

25th Olin E. Teague Award

The Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit located at the Uptown Division has been named the recipient of the prestigious Olin E. Teague Award. This unit is a combined effort between the U.S. Army Southeast Regional Medical Command (SERMC) and VA Southeast Network 7. The nomination, approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, was presented during a special ceremony held in Washington D.C. on October 12. The ceremony was attended by senior VA and VHA officials, members of veterans' service organizations, and Congressional



James F. Trusley III, Director, Augusta VA Medical Center, receiving Olin E. Teague Award from R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, during a ceremony in Washington D.C.

representatives. Attending the ceremony and accepting the award on behalf of the Augusta VA Medical Center were: James F. Trusley III, Medical Center Director; Dr. Thomas Kiernan, Chief of Staff; Dr. Rose Trincer, Service Line Executive, Spinal Cord Injury Unit; Dr. Dennis Hollins, Medical Director, Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit; Dr. Celso Bolet, Psychiatrist, Active Duty Rehabilitation; Doug Mitchell, Supervisory Therapist, Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit; and Cheryl Readett, Business Manager, Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit.



The Olin E. Teague Award is named for the late Congressman from Texas, who chaired the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for over 18 years. This acknowledgement pays tribute and gives high recognition to the employees who worked as a team to conceive, develop, and operate this unique unit. The award recognizes that the achievements of the Active Duty Rehabilitation Unit have been extraordinarily beneficial to the rehabilitation of war-injured service members and veterans.

Georgia Progress Award

The Augusta VA Medical Center joined a select group of organizations to receive state-wide recognition at the Georgia Oglethorpe Annual Conference and Awards Banquet held in Atlanta on September 27, 2005. The Augusta VA was named the Georgia Progress Award recipient by the Board of Examiners for the Georgia Oglethorpe Award Process, Inc. The Georgia Progress Award is the second step toward seeking the state's highest recognition for organizational performance excellence – the Georgia Oglethorpe Award. Named after Georgia's founder and first Governor, James Edward Oglethorpe, the application criteria and assessment are based on the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria for Performance Excellence.



Janice Kennedy, Community Relations Coordinator; Dr. Michael Spencer, Primary Care Service Line Executive; Linda F. Watson, Director, VA Southeast Network; and Victoria Taylor, Executive Director, Georgia Oglethorpe, Inc. during recognition ceremony in Atlanta, Georgia.

“This acknowledgement and recognition by an outside organization reaffirms to me that the Augusta VA Medical Center not only provides outstanding services on a daily basis to our veterans; but we also continually strive for performance improvement and excellence in everything we do,” said James F. Trusley III, Director, Augusta VA Medical Center.

Dr. Michael Spencer, Service Line Executive for Primary Care, and Janice Kennedy, Community Relations Coordinator, attended the ceremony and received the award on behalf of the Augusta VA Medical Center.

Service Awards & Outstanding Staff

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Charlene Jackson – Aug.
Remedios Virata - Sept.
Jimmie Wood - Oct.

STAR TRECC CUSTOMER SERVICE RECIPIENT

Walter Johnson – Aug.
April Snipes – Sept.
Kenneth Johnson - Oct.

The following employees have reached a special benchmark in their years of government service during the months of August, September and October.

40 YEAR SERVICE AWARD:

Herbert E. Kalbskopf

35 YEAR SERVICE AWARD:

Ralph R. Angelo
Dora M. Chaplin
Alpheus H. Glasco
Lonnie Moore

30 YEAR SERVICE AWARD:

Deborah K. Arrington
Anita J. Bell
Mary L. Brown
Anthony J. Evangelista
Robert G. Foss
Valarie B. McLeroy
Nathan E. Reid
Andrea Murray Walker
Thelma L. Walker
Cornelia F. Wells
Sandra J. Williford
Ella T. Wright

25 YEAR SERVICE AWARD:

David L. Agee
Linda B. Bailey
Linwood Boatwright
Sudershan Rao Bongu
Warren A. Brown
Elaine M. Chisholm

Mildred P. Durrence
Pearlie P. Evans
Winston Gardner, Sr.
Joyce R. Grimaud
Alice Hawes
Jody K. Hutto
Mary S. Mihm
Shirley J. Padgett
Cecil N. Rachels
Julie E. Smith
Patricia L. Story
Andre Taylor
Annie P. Thomas
Calvin W. Timmons
Dianne H. Walker
Lisa T. Waller
William T. Yates

20 YEAR SERVICE AWARD:

Laurie J. Bennett
Kim R. Foss
Gregory A. Hankins
Laurie A. Hogan
Janice J. Jones
Thomas J. Lusk
Maria A. McLeod
Eunice F. Miller
Sytheria T. Mitchell
Vickie N. Richardson

Roosevelt Woods
Diana D. Withrow

15 YEAR SERVICE AWARD:

James L. Bartlett
Jimmie D. Bowden
John W. Brannon
Rebecca A. Carter
Donald J. Clay
Leonard S. Dixon
Mae R. Duncan
Timothy Horn
Betty M. Kennedy
Orlang Miller

10 YEAR SERVICE AWARD:

Curtis M. Brinson
Glen E. Garrison
Wendy E. Gogolski
Marie C. Hair
John B. Hofmeister
Mary W. Johnson
Sandra M. Maule
Janette R. McDaniel
Joseph I. Padilla
Donna T. Peninger
Alexander Puha
Melanie L. Walsh
Ronald J. Worley

Congratulations to the following outstanding staff for their significant contributions, acknowledgements and recognitions.

Andrea Bussey, Clinical Pharmacy Specialist-Geriatrics, completed a Postgraduate Traineeship in Alzheimer's/Dementia offered by the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) Research and Education Foundation.

Lee Stoughton and **Vicki Stoughton**, Blind Rehabilitation Center, passed the test to become Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists from the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP).

Paul Whitten received the Georgia Chapter Association for Education and Rehabilitation (AER), Professional Achievement Award for 2005.

Jane Ballenger, JoAnn Capozzoli, Melissa Carter, Lori Hall, Mary Kinzler,

Jennifer Mitchell, Darlene Reliford-Johnson, and Angie Rollins completed the "HPDM and Your Career" educational program. This was an eight week interactive web-based course sponsored by the VA Southeast Network Employee Education Sub-council.

Secretary's Socioeconomic Achievement Award for Fiscal Year 2004 was presented to Linda F. Watson, VA Southeast Network Director, and Roger Welch, VA Southeast Network Deputy Director, by Wayne

Simpson, Deputy Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Department of Veterans Affairs, on September 29 during a ceremony at the Augusta VA. This first place award recognized Logistics for meeting and/or exceeding goals established by the VA Secretary in the category of Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business and the Small Disadvantaged Business Categories. A Third Place Award was also presented in the Small Business Category. The Augusta VAMC is the main site of the VISN 7 centralized contracting program.



Mail Call!

Dear Mr. Trusley,

I want to compliment the medical center for such fine service. This is my first trip to the VA for a C & P exam. I am recently retired from service and was skeptical about care at the VA, especially since I had heard so many negative stories through the years. My experience was completely opposite to what I expected. I was lodged overnight for my appointment and the accommodations were excellent. I was also impressed with the C & P staff both medical and administrative. I was especially impressed by Ms. Ede Lamar who was fantastic and very professional. The service at the Augusta VA has been better than anyone can ask for.

Keep up the good work!
MS

Dear Director,

Just a note to let you know how well my three visits went at your facility.

My first visit I was told what I needed to fill out and take to my next interviewer, Mr. Wilson, who was very informative, pleasant, and made me feel good about my visit.

My second visit, the information seminar was very good. I was given a lot of information in a relaxed atmosphere.

My third visit with my primary care Dr. McKnight also was a good experience. Dr. McKnight was very personal and pleasant. I felt very confident in what he was telling me. The nurses were very pleasant, answered my questions, and showed me where to go next.

The pharmacy visit was done orderly and made me feel like they knew what they were doing. They had a good system and followed it.

All in all, your staff treated this veteran with respect, answered questions, and made my three visits a good experience. I was asked for my last four of my social security numbers a lot, but never felt like I was just a number; but rather they were attentive to detail and wanted to be accurate in who they were dealing with. It did not make me feel that I was just a number. Please let your staff know they are doing a great job and you have a great staff working for you.

Thanks again, keep up the good work!

I salute you and your staff,
GRM

Special Events Fall 2005

