

Crossing Generational Gaps

There's a new challenge at VA Puget Sound - a challenge derived not from budget cuts, downsizing, rightsizing, "change," new technology, pointy-haired bosses, bad breath, cubicle envy or greed. It's a problem created by a clash of generational values, ambitions, views, mindsets and demographics. Our workplace today is awash with the conflicting voices, views, and learning styles of the most age- and values-diverse workforce this country has known since our great-great-grandparents abandoned field and farm for factory and office. (Adapted and excerpted from *Generations at Work* (AMACOM, 2000))

The four generations - as we define them - cover 80 birth years - 1922 through 2004. They are the Veterans, 1922-43; the Baby Boomers, 1943-60; the Generation X-ers, 1960-80; and the Nexters, born after 1980.

Veterans of the Greatest Generation (1922-1943)

came of age before and during the Great Depression. World War II shaped their adult lives. They are the fabric of what made this country great. American industry developed, home life, family and getting an education were the goals for families reared by this generation. They are the classic believers in America and what it stands for; they are an irreplaceable repository of lore and wisdom, practical hard work and determination. They have learned to live without and appreciate what they have worked hard to earn. They take nothing for granted and scoff at the "gadgets" and materialism of the younger generation. Their core values: Dedication/sacrifice, hard work, conformity, law and order, respect for authority, patient, delayed reward, duty before pleasure, adherence to rules and honor.

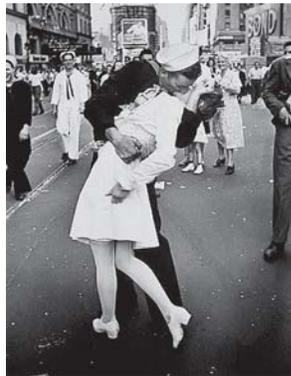


Photo by Alfred Eisenstaedt
VJ Day, New York



University of Kansas Archives

Baby Boomers (1943-1960), the post-war babies born to the Greatest Generation held promise; they were given opportunities so that they could get ahead and have a better life than their Depression/World War II-generation parents who had to do without. Now beginning to gray themselves, they protested and "sat in" to make a statement about government.

Farewell

Eight years: long enough to change an organization; short enough to seem like a passing moment.



Sandy Nielsen,
Deputy Director

As I make my final preparations to move to Kentucky as Director of VA Medical Center in Lexington, I can't help but reflect on the changes I have seen at VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

When I came in May 1997, we were just getting organized to roll out the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) across the facility. We were just beginning to be measured on national performance requirements for the chronic and preventive care we provide our patients. Integration of the Seattle and American Lake divisions was still fresh in everyone's mind, and reorganization efforts would soon concentrate 44 departments into 12 service lines. American Lake buildings were in desperate need of attention, with peeling paint, seismic problems, and maintenance projects too long deferred. Seattle programs were critically short of space.

In the past eight years we have refurbished and added space at both divisions, increased the number of patients seen by almost 30% with only 6% more employees, won funding for several Centers of Excellence and pilot programs, brought on 8 new service line leaders out of the original 12, as well as new Directors of Education, Research, and a new Chief of Staff. Our programs and our staff have won local and national awards for their excellence. And this list doesn't begin to get at the many improvements we have made over the years in the quality and efficiency of the care we provide.

I am deeply proud of what we have accomplished together and tremendously grateful for the opportunity to have been able to share the journey with such a caring, creative, hardworking group of employees. Thank you for the education you have provided me. I will work hard to be a credit to you.

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Breakthroughs in Medicine

Lifestyle Choices: How to Live a Long and Healthy Life

You can't live forever, but you can live longer and healthier. The key to healthy aging is to master life's delicate balancing act - maintaining the body, mind and spirit. Aging is an intricate, complex process that involves many areas of your body. Your best bet for a long and healthy life is to keep yourself healthy and prevent chronic diseases by:

- Eating a varied diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables and eat less saturated fat and cholesterol
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Exercising every day - try for 30 minutes a day - just get out and walk!
- Seeking prompt medical care when you're ill or injured
- Using sunscreen
- Quitting smoking and avoiding secondhand smoke
- Getting screened for diseases such as cancer and heart disease
- Monitor your blood pressure
- Maintaining close ties to your friends and family
- Wear your seat belt
- Work closely with your provider to make sure you're doing all you can to stay healthy. And if you have any questions about products that claim to slow or reverse aging, ask your provider for the lowdown. He or she can help you sort through the hype and get the facts.

As you age, most of us have some type of chronic disease. Addressing the disease process early is highly recommended and in many instances, we can maintain and perhaps even prevent further decline. Be good to yourself and take care of yourself. You want to be around to enjoy those other 'generations'!

<http://www.mayoclinic.com>

Prazosin Combats PTSD Nightmares

Prazosin, a drug that blocks excessive brain "adrenaline" effects, is very effective for trauma nightmares and sleep disruption in combat veterans. However, the usefulness and tolerability of prazosin for persons with PTSD caused by noncombat trauma has not been studied.

Murray Raskind, MD, executive director, Mental Health Service, has been awarded a 4-year, \$1,000,000 grant by the National Institute of Mental Health to study prazosin effects on PTSD nightmares, sleep disturbance and overall function in victims of such traumatic events as sexual assault, severe accidental injury and physical abuse. Both veterans and nonveterans are eligible for this study. For more information, please contact James O'Connell at 206 277-3740.

Kristina Utzschneider receives VA Career Development Award

Kristina Utzschneider, M.D., was recently awarded a VA Career Development Award to examine the link between how well insulin works in the tissues (called insulin sensitivity) and liver disease. Both diabetes and liver disease are very common in veterans.

Her current focus is the effects of too much iron on glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity, the effects of weight loss on

glucose metabolism, and the impact of obesity and aging on insulin secretion and insulin sensitivity.

Dr. Utzschneider received her M.D. training at Harvard Medical School and completed her residency training in Internal Medicine at the University of Washington. She is currently completing her fellowship training in Endocrinology and Metabolism at VA Puget Sound and the University of Washington.

Joel Kupersmith, MD

Named New Chief Research and Development Officer

Joel Kupersmith, M.D., joins VA's central leadership in Washington DC as the new Chief of Research and Development. Dr. Kupersmith is a graduate of New York Medical College.

Dr. Kupersmith is now a Scholar-in-Residence at both the Institute of Medicine and the Association of American Medical Colleges. In these roles he has completed projects and published papers on a number of health and research policy projects

including how to fund, oversee and promote effectiveness research, how Academic Medical Centers should be accountable, quality of care in teaching hospitals, regional IRBs, medical manpower and other issues.

Dr. Kupersmith was elected to the Governing Council, Medical School Section of the American Medical Association, is a member of the Association of American Medical Colleges Task Force on Fraud and

Abuse, and is a Site Visit Chair for the Liaison Committee on Medical Education.

With the recruitment of Dr. Kupersmith to this position, Dr. Stephan Finn, who was the Acting Chief Research and Development Officer, will step down. Dr. Finn, as you may know is the Director of VA Puget Sound's Health Services Research and Development program and an award recipient for VA Under Secretary Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research (2002).

Presidential Early Career Scientist Award

William Grady, M.D., a member of the Clinical Research Division, and an attending physician at the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, will be among 60 scientists to receive a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers from President Bush on June 13 in Washington, D.C. Grady, also a research associate at the Veteran's Administration Puget Sound Healthcare System, was nominated for the award by the Veterans Administration Office of Research and Development. In addition to the presidential citation, the VA will provide research funding of \$25,000 per year for five years.

"I am honored to receive this award as it a statement from my peers regarding the importance of the work that we are doing in my lab," Grady said.

This is the second such award made to a VA researcher. Dr. David Cummings was the first.



Presidential Early Career Scientist Award Recipients with President George W. Bush

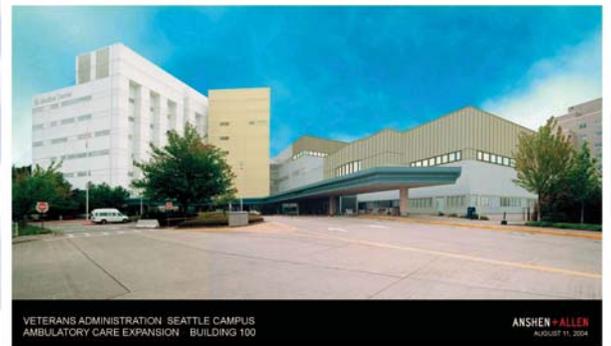
Making a Difference

Construction News - Facilities Management Services

Seattle Division

During the first week in June, the Seattle Women Veterans Clinic moved into 3,000+ square feet of newly remodeled clinic space. Included in the design, is a separate entrance on the southwest side of the main hospital entrance of Building 100 that opens into a reception/waiting area. The private and serene interior is achieved by using curved architectural elements, calming blue hues and light maple wood surfaces. Women veteran patients participated in the selection of photographic artwork; ocean scenes were a favorite theme. A new combination conference/presentation room will be shared with West Clinic.

The Women's Clinic has seven exam rooms, a procedure room, triage room, lab, nurse manager and social worker offices. All are designed to meet current medical standards to provide veterans the best possible care.



VETERANS ADMINISTRATION SEATTLE CAMPUS
AMBULATORY CARE EXPANSION BUILDING 100
ANSHEN+ALLEN
AUGUST 11, 2004
*General Internal Medicine Clinic (GIMC)
Diagnostic and Treatment Expansion (Building 100, Second Floor)*



*Sandy Nielsen, Deputy Director and Dr. Kay Johnson, Director
Womens Clinic Programs open the new Seattle Women Veterans Clinic*

Construction continues on the new 20,000 sq/ft GIMC targeted to open in late spring 2006. Connection points between buildings 1 and 100 are being seismically prepared to accept steel beams for exterior framework. These beams must be placed by crane. This means that the main entrance loop will be closed for as long as a year while the project is completed. Traffic will be re-routed to keep patients, visitors and staff safely out of the construction zone. We appreciate your patience during this phase of construction. The end result will be a modern, well-designed medical clinic.

Miscellaneous Projects

Seismic upgrades to building 100 are set to begin in the fall of 2005. Because of budget constraints, the upgrade of the cardiac catheterization lab on the fourth floor of building 100 is on hold.

American Lake Division

Renovation and seismic upgrading of building 6 has been completed. Facilities Management Service (FMS) was the first to move in. VASH (VA Supported Housing), VA Police, Quality Management, Industrial Hygiene and Safety will soon be joining FMS.

Phase II of the building 85 renovation/seismic upgrade project has also recently been completed. Health Plan Management (HPM) has been newly relocated to the second floor allowing HPM to consolidate all its departments in one location for the first time. Staff can now interact more efficiently with each other and in their dealings with veterans.

Phase III work is already well under way to renovate the third floor and replace the roof of building 85. Upon its completion,

Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC) will be moving to the third floor some time in November 2005.

Currently in the works are designs for the renovation of building 17 to house Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) offices. Also on tap are plans for replacing building 18 and approval of the new Nursing Home Care Unit.



Building 85 renovation, American Lake

First Annual Operation Iraqi and Enduring Freedom Conference

VA and DoD healthcare providers attended the First Annual Operation Iraqi and Enduring Freedom Conference held at the VAPSHCS' American Lake campus. Although the conference was planned by the Social Work Department, the presentations demonstrated the evolving partnerships between the VA, the Department of Defense, Washington State and community providers. Attendance exceeded all estimates. The response clearly represented not only the concern but the shared commitment by those in attendance to meeting the needs of our returning combat soldiers. Topics reflected the theme of collaboration as the key to facilitating a successful transition. Issues presented included:

- Health care delivery and resources including recent research on the use of Prazosin and its impact on OIF/ORF veterans
- VHA eligibility
- VBA benefits
- US Army's 90-Day Post Deployment Health Risk Assessment Appraisal
- Post Deployment Adjustment including reunion stress

The Social Work Department is interested in feedback, including issues of concern, future topics and/or speaker recommendations. All suggestions should be sent to Taylene Watson, LICSW, and Director of Social Work 206-762-2646.

COLLABORATION the Key to Successful Transition

The First Annual Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Conference

Meeting the Needs of the Returning Combat Soldiers

Department of Veterans Affairs
Puget Sound Health Care System
American Lake & Seattle

VA IN THE NEWS

VISN 20 Welcomes Acting Network Director, Dennis (Max) Lewis.



On May 16, 2005, Max Lewis assumed the position of Acting Network Director for VA NW Health Network. Mr. Lewis is being detailed from VA Central Office, where he serves as the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health/Operations and Management for VHA, a position he has held since July 2002.



including assignments as Associate Hospital Director at four VA Hospitals.

Mr. Lewis has published numerous articles and has been recognized for his expertise in information systems management, for which he has received regional and national awards, including the Department's National Information Resource Management of IRM Resources. Mr. Lewis holds membership in a variety of organizations. He is a life member and former president of the Leadership VA Alumni Association and is an alumnus and life

As Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health/Operations and Management, Mr. Lewis is the Assistant Chief Operating Officer, responsible for VHA's 21 VISNs, as well as oversight for the Directors of Network Support, National Leadership Board Staff, VSSC, Director Strategic Initiatives and Veterans Canteen Service. Mr. Lewis' responsibilities also include Healthcare Engineering, Safety and Technical Services, and he is the Department Historic Preservation Officer.

member of the Federal Health Care Executives Institute. As a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), Mr. Lewis is board certified in health care administration. For his contributions, Mr. Lewis recently received a Presidential Rank Award.

Mr. Lewis has also served as Hospital Director at VA Hines, IL. He began his VA career in 1970 as a Payroll Clerk in VA Central Office, and advanced through progressively responsible positions

Mr. Lewis is also an accomplished photographer and an avid outdoorsman. He has been a volunteer for the last 26 years in repairing high altitude trails across the country. We welcome him to the Northwest, and look forward to working with him.

Eyewitness to History

Fourth grade student, Hannah Roberts, daughter of VA Puget Sound's periodontist, Dr. Frank Roberts, and his wife Laurie, was the only 4th grader to win a Weekly Reader nationwide essay contest called "Eyewitness to History."

Hannah's essay described the important contribution made by WASP's (Women Airforce Service Pilots) during World War II. Hannah's eyewitness to history was former WASP, Martha McKenzie Carpenter, who flew three types of planes during World War II: a B-26, a P-40 and a P-63. Although women were not allowed to fly combat missions, they were critical to the delivery of planes from the manufacturer to the air bases.

The Weekly Reader is a newspaper for children in the elementary grades. It was founded in 1928 and by 1959 was producing papers for kindergarten through grade 6. It serves more than 7 million elementary students in more than 50,000 schools.



WASP's (Women Airforce Service Pilots), U.S. Air Force Photo

Excellence in Nursing - Local VA Leaders Lauded for Excellence



At VA Puget Sound's annual Nursing Excellence banquet in May, thirty-five advanced practice registered nurses, RN's, LPN's and NA's were nominated by their peers for consideration for local excellence awards. Nursing Excellence honorees for 2005 are: April Gerlock, advanced practice RN; Chelsea O'Brien, RN; Ferris Jones, LPN (he also won at the national level); and Pat Sanislo, NA.

Three staff members from VA Puget Sound were recently honored at a ceremony in Washington D.C. for their extraordinary contributions and personification of excellence in nursing. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, James Nicholson, made the announcement saying, "Our health-care system - the largest in the country, and in the opinion of many industry experts, world-class in quality - would be nothing without our strong foundation of nurses." He added that their professionalism, skill and compassion "drive the engine of VA health care for the more than 5 million veterans who visit our facilities every year."

Ferris Jones, a licensed practical nurse (LPN), began working at VA Puget Sound's American Lake Division after retiring from the U.S. Army in 1996. He works in the Homeless Domiciliary Care Program, a residential program for up to 60 veterans with post

traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse or homelessness and unemployment. He is the "go to guy" according to his co-workers. His strong medical background coupled with his experience in mental health and excellent nursing skills set the standard for himself and others with regard to professionalism and work ethic. He is an invaluable and trusted member of the interdisciplinary team.



*Frankie Manning, R.N.,
Nurse Executive*

Frankie Manning, R.N., is VA Puget Sound's nurse executive and a retired lieutenant colonel in the U. S. Army. Her dedication and high commitment to patient care is well documented with dozens of awards and honors to include: the Congressional Black Caucus Brains Trust award; The American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) Community Partnership Award; appointed by then Governor Gary Locke to serve on the Washington State Board of Health; adjunct faculty positions with four universities in undergraduate and graduate nursing education. She was recognized for accepting a detail as Acting Chief Nurse to the Dallas North Texas VA Health Care System, a position she has held since February.



*Timothy B. Williams,
Director*

Timothy B. Williams, director of VA Puget Sound, was honored for his commitment and implementation of innovative strategies for optimizing patient care. Because of his tireless efforts, VA Puget Sound was successful in securing one of the first post-doctoral nursing fellowships co-sponsored by the Robert Wood Fellows and the University of Washington School of Nursing. He has provided scholarship funding for as many as ten VALOR (VA Learning Opportunity Residencies) students. He is a VA leader who consistently seeks to support programs for nurses in the medical center, the local community and nationally. He said, "Not only do VA Puget Sound nurses make contributions to nursing as a profession, they are also in the forefront of research and teaching in areas like diabetes, chronic pulmonary disease, telemedicine, and geriatrics and extended care."

VA has one of the largest nursing staffs of any health care system in the world numbering more than 59,000. At VA Puget Sound that translates into 71 nurse practitioners, 12 clinical nurse specialists, 604 registered nurses, 143 licensed practical nurses and 117 nursing assistants. Among these, the best are selected by their peers for a nationwide award. VA nurses are the backbone of VA health care. We cannot thank them enough for answering the call to serve our nation's defenders who come to us for world-class care..

IN THE NEWS

A Glance Back in Time

Janet Ribbeck

Janet Ribbeck was a single, 22-year old newly graduated nurse on December 7, 1941. She and her mother were at home in Chicago when the radio blared the horrific news that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. Her immediate response was, "I must enlist." Although she knew nothing about the military, she had no hesitation about enlisting, nor did her family voice any objections. It was there at the nearest recruiting office in Oak Park that she joined the Army Air Corps. She was issued two uniforms and sent to Scott Air Force Base near St Louis. She had no formal basic training, instead learning everything she needed while on duty. When she enlisted, she, like many young enlistees, gave no thought to the future other than helping her country in any way possible. The possibility of actually working overseas on the front lines of the war never occurred to her.



She had virtually no money concerns while at Scott Air Force Base (AFB). The military supplied everything for enlistees: living quarters, uniforms, toiletries and recreation. Recreation was usually limited to drives around the area, ping-pong in the Officers Club, or card games like bridge in their rooms. She was proud to be in the military, caring for the sick and injured soldiers, marching in parades, participating in and watching flag ceremonies. While she was destined to stay stateside and care for soldiers on the home turf, her enthusiasm for serving her country never waned.

What ever happened to Janet Ribbeck? She fell in love with a young officer at Scott AFB, left the service after a brief tour of duty and eventually had four children. Her husband remained in the military for thirty years, so Janet Ribbeck continued serving her country as a military spouse. Today Janet receives her health care through VA and still loves to be around "anything military." Thank you, Janet.

Women Veteran's Health Fair "Taking Care of Mind and Body"

In honor of National Women's Health Week, VA Puget Sound recently hosted a women's health fair to raise women veteran's health and mental health awareness at American Lake. Topics included a presentation by Dr. Kay Johnson, director of the women's program. Other topics included:

- Women's Health Clinic
- PTSD Clinic
- Holistic Clinic
- Chaplain Services
- Nutrition
- Homeless Women Veteran's Program
- Tacoma Vet Center
- VA Regional Office
- Addictions Treatment Clinic
- Deployment Health Clinic
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society-Washington Chapter
- Pierce County Senior Information and Assistance
- American Cancer Society
- American Diabetes Association
- Blood pressure screenings, glucose testing, and education on breast self exams

Women Veteran's Health Fair
"Taking care of our Mind and Body"

In honor of National Women's Health Week (May 8-14th) we will be having a women's health fair to raise women veteran's health and mental health awareness.

Where: VA Puget Sound American Lake Division, Building 9- Auditorium

When: Wednesday, May 4th Time: 1:00p.m. - 2:30p.m. (Fair)

Speaker: 2:30-3:30p.m. (Dr. Kay Johnson- "Heart Disease Prevention for Women")

The fair will include informational/educational booths from VA Staff and Community Agencies:

- ALVA Women's Health Clinic
- PTSD Clinic
- Holistic Clinic
- Chaplain Services
- Nutrition
- Homeless Women Veteran's Program
- Tacoma Vet Center
- VA Regional Office
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society- Washington Chapter
- Pierce County Senior Info & Assistance
- Blood pressure screenings, glucose testing, and education on breast self exams

In addition there will be other community agencies involved in the women's health fair that are not listed.

Healthy snacks and beverages will be available. This fair is open to women veterans and is free. VA staff are more than welcome to attend.

We hope you can join us!

VA Puget Sound Health Care System

Michael Beebe Receives National Recognition



Michael Beebe, BSN, MSN

Michael Beebe, BSN, MSN is a self-proclaimed life-long learner having accrued various degrees, certificates and awards in nursing and health information management over the past 30-some years. He recently received the Missouri University Sinclair School of Nursing Citation of Merit at the school's annual banquet. This award is the MU Nursing Alumni Organization's highest honor.

Rose Porter, dean of the School of Nursing,

said, "Michael is an example of someone who has gone above and beyond in creating an infrastructure that supports the whole of nursing. His passion for helping nurses has touched many lives in a positive way."

Beebe became interested in nursing while working as a surgical technician in the mid-60's and completed his bachelor's degree in nursing at Missouri University after a hitch in the Army. He then went on to earn a master's in community health nursing at Boston University and a doctorate in nursing at Indiana University.

It was during his stint as a nurse practitioner in Boston in 1973 that he was bitten by the computer bug. The electronic clinical

record was barely off the drawing board when Beebe became one of the first nurses in the country to use it. Since then, he has been at the forefront of computerization of health information.

Before earning his bachelor's degree in nursing at Missouri University, he served a hitch in the Army during the Vietnam War. His latest military stretch came during Operation Desert Storm where he served as a nurse and information systems officer for a 3,000-bed hospital in Saudi Arabia. His work kept track of all injured soldiers moving out of the theater of war.

Beebe has made numerous presentations at local, national and international nursing and information management conferences; published articles; wrote a book chapter on men in nursing; developed software and media projects; and taught courses on informatics and computer systems. Although he has held a variety of clinical and academic positions since leaving MU, he says that his greatest contribution to the nursing profession has been in the area of clinical information management. For the past nine years, VA Puget Sound has been the beneficiary of Beebe's commitment to nursing and information management. He is currently pursuing another degree in web design and management.

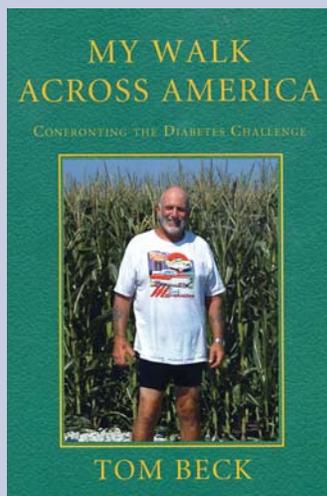
Away from work, Beebe and his wife, Della, are involved in a variety of activities in their community and church.

My Walk Across America

Thomas A. Beck was born in Monterey Park, California, and served in the U.S. Navy from 1962-64. He moved to Seattle in 1969 and worked as a dispatcher in the freight industry.

When he was 39-years old, he was diagnosed with diabetes. He weighed over 300 pounds and smoked three packs of cigarettes a day. Both his mother and maternal grandfather had suffered the effects of diabetes: amputated limbs, blindness, kidney failure and heart failure. He was at a crossroads. In one direction was an early grave; in another, a good chance at a long and happy life.

When he retired in 2001 at age 57, he decided to celebrate his retirement by walking across America. Why? Because he wanted to prove that diabetes does not have to be a death sentence, that diabetes is controllable with diet, exercise and medication, and that if he could do it, anybody could.



Tom started jogging. Within a year, he lost 50 pounds and celebrated his 40th birthday by running a 10K. He continued jogging for the next 14 years until advised to save his joints and start walking. That's when the idea of walking across American started floating around in his head.

He trained for a year building up to 35 miles per day. He started out on April 28, 2002 at Ilwaco, Washington. Four and a half months later, after going through 10 pairs of shoes, hours of loneliness and fatigue, and every possible weather event, he walked into Washington, DC.

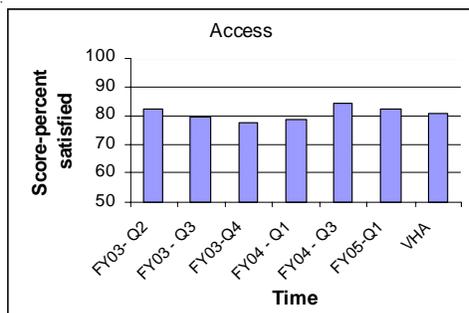
He has been insulin-dependent for 22 years without the nerve damage that can occur with diabetes. His walk has brought many positive changes to his life, not the least of which is his appreciation for others, redefinition of his values, and the realization that he is limited only by his expectations.

How Are We Doing from the Patient's Perspective?

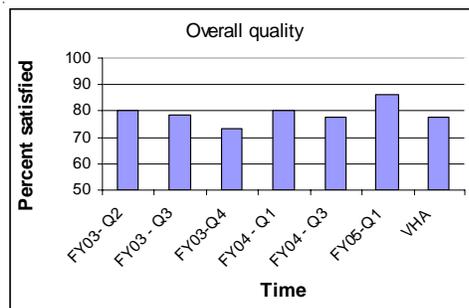
VA Puget Sound continues to grow at a rapid pace. As we grow, we are faced with ongoing changes and challenges to meet patients' needs. One way to measure our success in meeting patients' needs is to ask for feedback. Nationwide, VA conducts quarterly surveys to ask patients' how we measure up.

The scores from last quarter of 2004 (Oct - Dec 2004) have been tabulated and shown below. All scores will be posted at both divisions. A copy of this information will be available through the patient advocate office at American Lake, Bldg 8/214, or in Seattle, Bldg 100/1D/142.

The first category is access in which we look at scheduling appointments, wait times, and time a patient spends with a VA provider, where the scores continue to rise.



The next category is overall quality, where we ask patients to indicate how VA Puget Sound is doing overall. Results indicate that we have improved over previous quarters and that VA Puget Sound rates higher than all VA health care facilities combined.



If you should have any questions on the survey process or results, please call the patient advocate at either American Lake, extension 76785, or Seattle, extension 62160.

Patient Safety Is Everyone's Business!

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) annually publishes a list of National Patient Safety Goals to promote specific improvements in patient safety. The Goals highlight difficult areas in health care and offer solutions to these problems. Health care organizations will be surveyed for compliance with these goals using a "three-strike" rule. Three or more strikes and the result is non-compliance! The new 2005 goals are highlighted in bold type below:

- Use at least two patient identifiers (neither can be the patient's room number) whenever administering medications or blood products; taking blood samples and other specimens for clinical testing, or providing any other treatments or procedures.
- Measure, assess and, if appropriate, take action to improve the timeliness of reporting, and the timeliness of receipt by the responsible licensed caregiver, of critical test results and values.
- Identify and, at a minimum, annually review a list of look-alike/sound-alike drugs used in the organization, and take action to prevent errors involving the interchange of these drugs.
- Accurately and completely reconcile medications across the continuum of care. During 2005, for full implementation by January 2006, develop a process for obtaining and documenting a complete list of the patient's current medications upon the patient's admission to the organization and with the involvement of the patient. This process includes a comparison of the medications the organization provides to those on the list.
- A complete list of the patient's medications is communicated to the next provider of service when it refers or transfers a patient to another setting, service, practitioner or level of care within or outside the organization.
- Reduce the risk of patient harm resulting from falls. Assess and periodically reassess each patient's risk for falling, including the potential risk associated with the patient's medication regimen, and take action to address any identified risks.
- For Long Term Care: Implement a fall reduction program, including a transfer protocol, and evaluate the effectiveness of the program.
- For Long Term Care and other high risk patients: Reduce the risk of influenza and Pneumococcal disease in institutionalized older adults: Develop and implement a protocol for administration and documentation of the flu vaccine and Pneumococcus vaccine. Develop and implement a protocol to identify new cases of influenza and to manage an outbreak.

For further information, call Helen Harte, patient safety manager at extension 62287, or your service line quality manager.

They would really rather be young and care-free than be middle-aged adults watching their cholesterol levels; yet when given responsibility they run with it. They are problem solvers, doers and joiners. They invented the 60-hour workweek and scoff at anyone who is not serious and committed to work, community issues and making the world a better place. They have increased the revenues of wine distributors and designer items to create an image of affluence and success that never dawned on their parents. This is the latest health craze generation, who in their youth swore off material goods, grew their hair long and ate granola! Still, boomers are passionately concerned about participation and spirit in the workplace, about bringing heart and humanity to the office and about creating a fair and level playing field for all. They fight passionately for the environment, women's rights, equality, and whatever cause they believe in. Baby Boomer core values: Optimism, team orientation, personal gratification, health and wellness, personal growth, youth, work, involvement.

The X-ers (1960-1980) grew up in the post-'60s era of Watergate, latchkey kids, and energy crises. Their need for feedback and flexibility, coupled with their hatred of close supervision, is but one of the many conundrums they present employers. They want what they want and they are determined to be their own



person. They are much more inclined to keep their own counsel than are their Boomer predecessors. X-ers are very clear about what they want and how to get it; they understand boundaries and the meaning of the word "balance" in their lives: Work is work and it represents money to do other things. And they work to live, not live to work. If work is not fun, they are not interested. Team is not their concept of work.

The Nexters (born after 1980) may be the smartest, cleverest, most-wanted small humans to have walked the face of the planet. Their moms and dads see themselves as devoted parents sacrificing to bring this new generation to adulthood. Think soccer moms and little-league dads. The ones now in the workforce think fast food, MP3 Players, Wi-Fi access, cell phone photo images downloaded to another gadget are the norm. They are smart, sharp, analytical and quick thinkers. Nexter core values: Optimism, civic duty, confidence, achievement, sociability, morality, street smarts, diversity.



Looking at the wide diversity of generations we have represented at VA Puget Sound, 274 employees are older than 60; 1,162 employees older than 50; 882 employees older than 40 and 698 employees between the ages of 20 and 40.

In the first quarter of FY'05 (Oct-Dec) the patients we treated were the following ages:

Age range	Number of patients	Generation
20-29	1451	Nexters
30-39	3325	X-ers
40-49	6970	Both X-ers and Baby Boomers
50-59	14876	Baby Boomers
60-69	10241	Baby Boomers and Greatest Generation
70-79	8835	Greatest Generation
80-89	11233	Greatest Generation
90+	191	

So, what does this mean for you? Four generations in the workplace...each with a slightly different view of the world; and each generation bringing its own set of values, beliefs, life experiences, and attitudes to the profession/workplace. Four generations of patients seeking care in an environment that tries to understand each of them. If you say you value respect, to the Greatest Generation veteran that may mean being called Sir or Ma'am, but to an X-er, it may mean "respecting my life experience or competence."

Each generation has been shaped by sociological, political and economic conditions of the times. Examining them can lead, if not to harmony, then at least to understanding. VA Puget Sound strives for a workplace where both patients and staff can fit in unconditionally, and where each person's unique qualities are viewed as valid and acceptable.

Continued on next page

How Do You See the World?

	Greatest Generation	Boomers	X-ers	Nexters
Outlook	Practical	Optimistic	Skeptical	Hopeful
Work Ethic	Dedicated	Driven	Balanced	Determined
View of authority	Respectful	Love/hate	Unimpressed	Polite
Leadership by	Hierarchy	Consensus	Competence	Pulling together
Relationships	Personal Sacrifice	Personal Gratification	Reluctant to Commit	Inclusive
Turnoffs	Vulgarity	Political Incorrectness	Cliché, hype	Promiscuity

United States Army recruitment ads reflect this shift in core values across the generations:

- **Greatest Generation:** “Uncle Same Wants You!”
- **Baby Boomers:** “Join the People Who've Joined the Army”
- **Generation X-ers:** “Be All That You Can Be”
- **Nexters:** “An Army of One”

In a Snapshot

Generation	Changing Jobs	Around Feedback	Around Training
Greatest Generation/Traditionalists	Carries a stigma	“No news is good news.”	“I learned it the hard way; you can too.”
Baby Boomers	Puts you behind	“Feedback once a year, with lots of documentation”	“Train them too much and they will leave”
X-ers	Is necessary	“Sorry to interrupt but how am I doing?”	“The more they learn, the more they stay.”
Nexters	Is part of my daily routine	“Feedback whenever I want it at the push of a button”	“Continuous learning is a way of life.”

Sources:

- The Seattle Times Magazine, Pacific Northwest, 3/13/2005
- Generation Gaps in the Company Classroom* by Ron Zemke, Claire Raines, and Bob Filipczak
- Dynamics of the Multigenerational Workplace*
- When Generations Collide in the Workplace*, Catherine Futch, MN, RN, CNA, CHE, CHC

VA Committed to Maintaining Reputation for Quality Care

As we continue to deal with budget challenges, increasing workload and the need to reduce staffing, it may be helpful to borrow a reminder from the auto industry:

"Quality Is Job #1!"

It is important for all employees to know that we will not compromise on the quality of care we provide to patients.

How do we maintain this if we are unable to fill behind key people who leave our organization? We work within service lines and across the organization to prioritize what we do. Lower priority programs need to be discontinued and those resources reallocated to higher priorities.

Why are we continuing to remodel areas and build new space when we need those resources to take care of patients? Projects like the primary care build-out over the 1st

floor of the Diagnostic and Treatment building at Seattle, and the remodeling of Buildings 85 and 6 at American Lake are funded through a separate VISN and national process. That funding cannot be used for patient care.

Is the facility working to cut costs in other areas besides staffing? We were working to cut costs in many areas even before the fiscal year started. Many goal-sharing teams last year worked on projects to make us more efficient. Here are a few examples of efforts going on behind the scenes this year: overtime has been cut; agency nurses have been replaced with less costly VA staff; drug costs have been reduced through the use of less costly alternatives; contracts for laboratory tests have been renegotiated; the transcription contract has been rewritten; and there are other initiatives in several services that may well lead to more efficient, less costly operations. We have asked service line leaders to solicit cost

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saving ideas, big or small, from staff at all levels. We have received more than 500 ideas to date that we are working through and implementing when possible.

Will next year be any better? We can probably count on a continuing need to look for more efficient ways of operating, but we should not lose heart over this. The taxpayers of this country deserve to know that we are ever-mindful of operating as efficiently as possible. The veterans deserve to know that we will not compromise on the quality of care we provide them. Staff deserve to know that we are committed to maintaining VA Puget Sound's reputation for quality care provided by quality people.