VA

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

GULF COAST VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM ANNUAL REPORT

FY2015

OUR MISSION

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise

...to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan...

by providing Veterans the world-class benefits and services they have earned — and to do so by adhering to the highest standards of compassion, commitment, excellence, professionalism, integrity, accountability and stewardship.

Table of Contents

IFC Our Mission

2 Director's Message

3 Executive Leadership System Map

4 Budget FY2015

5 GCVHCS Locations

6 Improving Access to Care for America's Veterans

8 Suicide Prevention

10 Putting a Face to Veteran Homelessness

11 The Invisible Man

12 Veteran Uses Past as a Tool to Bring About Change, Recovery and Resilience

14 Homeless Veterans Programs

15 Standing Up for Homeless Veterans at Stand Down Events

16 Providing Patient Centered Care

19 My VA

20 DM/EEO Annual Awards

22 Voluntary Services

25 Employee's Volunteerism, Love for Country Fuels His Dedication to Serving Others

26 Blind Rehabilitation Center

27 Artist at Blind Rehab See His Way Through

28 New Buildings Improve Service for Our Veterans

29 All Employee Survey

30 2015 Awards for Excellence in Nursing

31 Daisy Awards for Extraordinary Nurses

IBC I CARE Values

Director's Message

The year 2015 was a year of incredible challenges, incremental successes, and rebuilding for the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System, which served to make us even stronger as an organization. Through the National Access and Data review, the Joint Commission survey, and visits by a host of regulatory and compliance organizations, we continued to evolve, improve and grow. Putting a priority on listening to the voices of our Veteran patients, we began hosting quarterly town hall meetings to provide an additional forum for real-time feedback. We also held monthly Veteran Service Organization (VSO) and Congressional stakeholder meetings across the health care system. During all these data reviews, surveys, and meetings, we remained steadfast in our dedication to providing exceptional health care to our Nation's Veterans.

In this report, you will see that everything we accomplished in 2015 – from enhancing access to care, to collaborating with community partners to end homelessness among Veterans, to improving and expanding our facilities – was done to enhance Veteran-centered care.

This year has certainly been a year of transition for the VA, both nationally and on a local level. But for the opportunities to restore, refocus and reinvigorate bring much hope to the future of the VA and the care of our Nation's heroes. Work underway to transform our past way of doing business to one that puts Veterans in control of how, when, and where they wish to be served is called MyVA. It is a catalyst to make VA a world-class service provider. It will modernize our culture, processes, and capabilities to put the needs, expectations, and interests of Veterans and their families first. The MyVA vision provides a seamless, unified Veteran experience, in every VA, across the country. You will read more about MyVA in the pages of this annual report.

We have one of the noblest missions in our country, and that is to serve our Nation's Veterans. It's a mission that our staff, community partners, and Veterans have poured their hearts and souls into supporting. And for that, I thank you. I look forward to the years ahead as we continue to build upon the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care system long and proud legacy of caring for our Veterans.

ANTHONY L. DAWSON, MHA, FACHE
Director

Executive Leadership

ANTHONY L. DAWSON, MHA, FACHE
Director

KENNETH SIMON, MD, MBA, FACS
Chief of Staff

WM. GREGORY PUCKETT, MHA, FACHE
Associate Medical Center Director

M. CHRISTOPHER SASLO, DNS, ARNP-BC, FAANP
Associate Director for Patient Care Services

NANCY J. WEAVER, MBA, VHA-CM
Associate Director Outpatient Operations

FUNDS AVAILABILITY	FY2015 ACTUAL
Target Allowance (less CMOP withdrawal)	205,351,182
CMOP Withdrawal	29,583,336
CMOP Prior Year Balance	—
MCCF Collections	26,044,677
Prior Year X4 Adjustments	550,831
Discretionary Equipment	—
NRM	2,448,095
CBOC Reimbursement	—
Other Reimbursement/Funding Sources	34,991,647
CWT/STRAFF	466,001
Hep C	9,556,028
Major Activation Reimbursements (SP0Y)	2,564,868
Prosthetics	17,568,950
State Home	7,202,507
Other Special Funding Sources	22,117,669
VACAA NRM (0162XA)	—
VACAA (0152XA and 0162XA)	8,350,000
Care in the Community (CITC - 0160A3)	61,493,317
Choice (0172)	—
Rural Health (0152RH, 0160RH and 0162RH)	6,060
TOTAL AVAILABILITY	**428,295,168**
PROJECTED OBLIGATIONS	**FY2015 ACTUAL**
Personal Services	198,261,553
Personal Services - Major Activations (SP0Y)	953,121
Personal Services - Specific Purpose	12,283,482
Personal Services - VACAA	8,350,000
Personal Services - Rural Health	6,060
PERSONAL SERVICES SUBTOTAL	**219,854,216**

All Other (excl. X5 funding and items listed in rows 29-42)	65,525,190
CMOP	30,134,167
Equipment	75,029
NRM	2,448,095
CWT/STRAFF	466,001
Hep C	9,556,028
Major Activations	1,611,747
Prosthetics	17,568,950
State Home	7,202,507
All Other Specific Purpose Obligations	9,834,187
VACAA NRM (0162XA)	—
VACAA All Other	—
Care in the Community (CITC - 0160A3)	61,493,317
Choice (0172)	—
Rural Health (0152RH, 0160RH and 0162RH)	—
ALL OTHER OBLIGATIONS SUBTOTAL	**205,915,218**
NRM	—
CWT/STRAFF	—
Hep C	—
Major Activations (SP0Y)	—
Prosthetics	—
State Home	—
Other Specific Purpose	—
VACAA NRM (0162XA)	—
VACAA All Other	—
Care in the Community (CITC - 0160A3)	—
Choice	—
Rural Health (0152RH, 0160RH and 0162RH)	—
SPECIFIC PURPOSE OBLIGATION ADJUSTMENT TOTAL	—
TOTAL PROJECTED OBLIGATIONS	**425,769,434**

BUDGET FY2015

GULF COAST – 520

BILOXI VA MEDICAL CENTER
400 Veterans Ave., Biloxi, MS 39532
(228) 523-5000 | (800) 296-8872

MOBILE VA CLINIC
1504 Springhill Ave., Mobile, AL 36604
(251) 219-3900 | (888) 201-0110

JOINT AMBULATORY CARE CENTER
790 Veterans Way, Pensacola, FL 32542
(850) 912-2000 | (866) 927-1420

EGLIN VA CLINIC
100 Veterans Ave., Eglin Air Force Base, FL 32542
(850) 609-2600 | (866) 520-7359

PANAMA CITY VA CLINIC
Naval Support Activity/PC
101 Vernon Ave., Building 387, Panama City, FL 32407
(850) 636-7000 | (888) 231-5047

VA PANAMA CITY BEACH CLINIC WEST
140 Richard Jackson Blvd., Panama City Beach, FL 32407
(850) 636-7000 | (888) 231-5047

Improving Access to Care for America's Veterans

For the past year, improving access to care has been among the GCVHCS's top priorities. On a national scale, one year ago, 290,000 Veterans were waiting more than 30 days for care. In response to the unacceptable delays in Veterans receiving medical service, VA developed a strategy that focused on growing capacity in four critical areas: staffing, space, productivity, and VA Community Care.

Staffing

In FY2015, GCVHCS hired 437 staff, including 35 physicians, four physician assistants, 102 nurses, and 296 other select critical occupations.

Space

In FY2015, GCVHCS began the design/build renovation of a new acute inpatient ward on the Biloxi, Miss., campus that will increase the number of acute inpatient beds from 20 to 26. We also began the design of an 18,000 square foot addition and 4,000 square foot renovation to the Eglin VA Clinic in Fort Walton, Fla. The project adds four additional Primary Care teams (PACT) and space for five additional mental health providers.

In Panama City, Fla., construction is underway for a new clinic which is set to open in FY2016. The Primary Care clinic will expand from approximately 11,000 square feet to 30,000 square feet. The expansion will add space for one new PACT, radiology, laboratory, and pharmacy services. The Mental Health Clinic in Panama City, which is at a separate location, will expand from 6,500 square feet to 10,000 square feet. The expansion will add five new mental health providers, group rooms, and expanded Home Based Primary Care. Activation of the new mental health building is set for FY2016.

In Mobile, Ala., a major lease is being sought that will increase the VA clinic from 56,000 square feet to 82,000 square feet. The expansion will add four new PACTs, expanded laboratory, radiology, and pharmacy services, and an eye clinic. Activation is estimated for FY2018.

Improved Access Results

Hard work focused on critical activities is not enough. Veterans and taxpayers expect to see actual improvements in access to care outcomes. GCVHCS FY2015 highlights include:

54,281
more patient encounters
at GCVHCS clinics in FY2015
from FY2014, a
5.1%
increase over a 12-month period

97%
of patients seen within
30 days or less
(GCVHCS completion
percentages
on November 30, 2015)

GCVHCS average wait times for completed visits at the end of FY2015

Primary Care	Specialty Care	Mental Health
6.06 days	6.76 days	4.46 days

VA Community Care

GCVHCS expanded community care with the use of VA's Accelerating Access to Care initiative (ACI), using $13,720 in ACI funding in these areas:

- special radiology services
- pain management
- orthopedic
- dental
- endocrinology
- neurosurgery
- ophthalmology

Suicide Prevention

Every Veteran suicide is a tragic outcome and, regardless of the numbers or rates, even one Veteran suicide is too many. We continue to spread the word throughout VA that "Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business." Although we understand why some Veterans may be at increased risk, we continue to investigate and take proactive steps. Our ultimate goal is eliminating suicide among Veterans.

Current Initiatives

VA's basic strategy for suicide prevention requires ready access to high quality mental health (and other health care) services, supplemented by programs designed to help individuals and families engage in care and to address suicide prevention in high-risk patients. Some of the initiatives proven to be very effective include:

- **A 24/7 Veterans Crisis Line (VCL)**: Veterans call the national suicide prevention hotline number, 1-800-273-TALK, and then "Press 1" to reach highly skilled responders trained in suicide prevention and crisis intervention.

Starting in 2007 through June 2015, more than1.86 million calls from Veterans, family members, friends, and other people concerned about a Veteran have been received. The VCL initiated dispatch of emergency services to callers in imminent suicidal crisis over 50,000 times. Since launching chat in July 2009 and text services in November 2011, the VCL answered over 240,000 requests for chat and 39,000 requests for text services. The VCL also provided over 300,000 referrals to a VA Suicide Prevention Coordinator (SPC), thus ensuring Veterans are connected to local care.

- Each VA medical center has a **Suicide Prevention Coordinator** or team. The coordinators and their teams ensure the Veteran receives the appropriate services. Calls from the VCL are referred to the coordinators as appropriate; they follow up with Veterans and coordinate care.
- **Screening and assessment processes** have been set up throughout the system to assist in the identification of patients at risk for suicide. A chart "flagging" system has been developed to ensure continuity of care and provide awareness among caregivers.

- *Patients identified as being high risk receive an enhanced level of care, including missed appointment follow-ups, safety planning, follow-up visits, and care plans that directly address their suicidality.*
- *All patients, including those who call the VCL, identified as being at possible suicide risk and determined to be safe at the present time are seen within 24 hours by a mental health professional. Patients identified as not safe at the present time are immediately admitted or escorted to a safe facility.*

- **Reporting and tracking systems** have been established to learn more about Veterans who may be at risk and to help determine areas for intervention. Continual analysis of reports and VA data has led to three information letters to the field:
  - *Each of the mental health conditions increases the risk of suicide. However, the effect of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder may be related separately from its co-occurrence with other conditions.*
  - *Chart diagnoses associated with Traumatic Brain Injury are associated with increased risks of suicide, even after controlling for comorbid mental health conditions.*
  - *Some, but not all, chart diagnoses associated with chronic pain are associated with increased risks of suicide, even after controlling for comorbid mental health conditions.*

- **Employee education programs** have been implemented such as Operation S.A.V.E. (Signs of Suicidal thinking, Ask the questions, Verify the experience with the Veteran, and Expedite or Escort to help), and a Web-based clinical training module is mandatory for all VHA employees. There are two centers devoted to research, education and clinical practice in the area of suicide prevention. VA's Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 2 Center of Excellence in Canandaigua, New York, develops and tests clinical and public health intervention strategies for suicide prevention. VA's VISN 19 Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center in Denver, Colo., focuses on clinical conditions and neurobiological underpinnings that can lead to increased suicide risk; the implementation of interventions aimed at decreasing negative outcomes; and training future leaders in the area of VA suicide prevention.
- Each Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (MH RRTP) conducts an annual **Stand Down** focused on safety and security as part of the Culture of Safety initiative. During a Stand Down, each program suspends program operations and holds meetings and events, inviting input from program staff, Veterans, and other key stakeholders, for a focused review of current challenges related to the safety and security needs of Veterans served. A Stand Down provides dedicated time for staff to address safety and security concerns identified through review of policies, procedures, and practices throughout their continuum. In addition, the Culture of Safety initiative outlines requirements for S.A.V.E. training for all Veterans admitted to the MH RRTPs. The Culture of Safety initiative places particular emphasis on some of our most vulnerable populations, including women Veterans, Veterans at risk for suicide, and Veterans diagnosed with opioid dependence.

GCVHCS suicide prevention staff fielded 1,052 VCL calls during FY2015 and attended 94 outreach events at various community agencies, businesses, conferences/workshops, and for VA staff/events. Two new Suicide Prevention Coordinators were hired in FY2015 (Pensacola, October 2014; Biloxi, January 2015).

Putting a Face to Veteran Homelessness

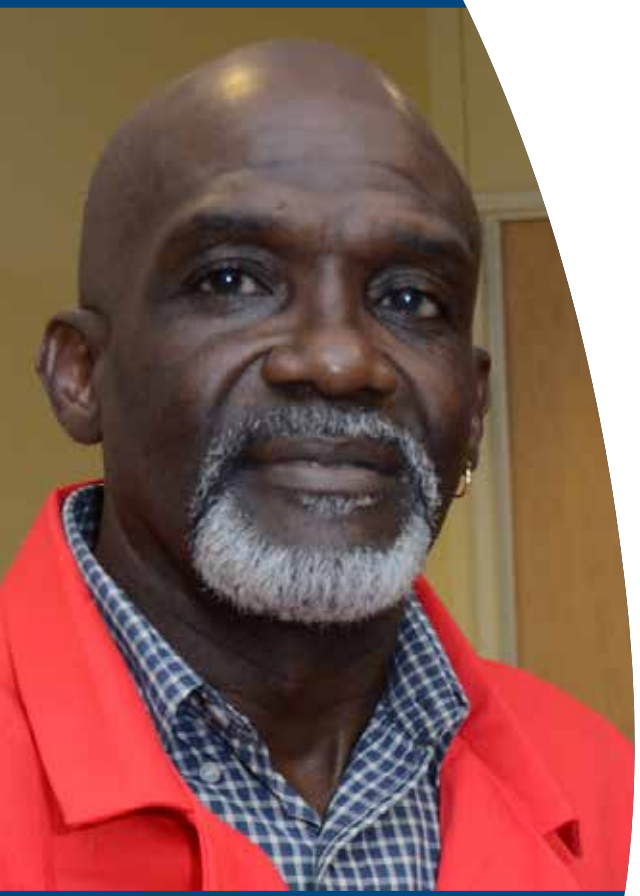
On December 31, 2015, U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro called the mayors of Biloxi and Gulfport, two of the largest cities along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Included on the call was the Homeless Veterans Program staff from the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care Center, located in Biloxi, and the U.S. Interagency on Homelessness. He congratulated them for their collaborative efforts to help effectively end homelessness among Veterans in these two cities. Nearly 250 Veterans have been housed across the Coast, and this designation of effectively ending homelessness among Veterans means that programs are in place, and the community has the capacity and resources to assist Veterans in obtaining and maintaining housing stability.

Across the nation, cities small and large are working to achieve this designation. Breaking it down even further, from the generic term 'Veteran' to an actual person's name, highlights the importance of the work communities are doing to end homelessness among Veterans.

Here are two stories that illustrate the impact of these programs.

MARY KAY GOMINGER | Public Affairs Officer | Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System

The Invisible Man



Army Veteran
Rodney Frelix

Army Veteran Rodney Frelix doesn't mind being a housekeeper. In fact, Frelix goes as far to say that he enjoys emptying trash cans, mopping floors, and even scrubbing toilets. "Who wants to come into a hospital and it be a mess?" he asks. "I don't mind cleaning at this VA hospital. I take pride in knowing that I am a part of something that is good. I'm at peace today, and I thank God every day that He brought me to Biloxi."

Frelix, 58, surprises even himself that he is where he is today. His life since leaving the Army in 1980 has been anything but peaceful. And it was a comment made by a child while he was living on the streets of Atlanta that cut him deep to his core; that made him want to pick up the pieces of what was left of his life and do better.

"This little girl, she said, 'hey, mister, you are a crackhead,'" Frelix said. "I heard her, and I looked away, but let me tell you, this child's words hurt me more than anything else that had happened to me in my life. Out of the mouth of babes, right? Somewhere deep inside of me I knew I was an addict, but I had never admitted it to myself or even let myself think about what that meant. I made a vow right then, that I was going to get help."

After he got out of the Army, Frelix had a variety of jobs, but none of them ever lasted more than five or six months. He was heavily involved in alcohol and drugs and eventually he lost his home, his family, and basically everything he had. He became, as he explained, the invisible man, living for more than 15 years on the streets of Atlanta, then New Orleans.

"I was invisible to the world," Frelix said. "People would see me and not see me, you know? I mean here you are, hungry, tired, strung out, dirty, and the only thing you care about is the next fix. I didn't get that I was sick, but more important, I didn't care."

Something had to change

It was a death in the family that caused Frelix to spiral out of control with his drinking and he ended up in the hospital. From New Orleans, he got referred to the Behavioral Health Unit at the Biloxi VA Medical Center, part of the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System, and he spent the next 45 days as an inpatient.

"I had cleaned up my act before," Frelix said. "One time, I stayed straight for two years, but what happens is that the people and places and things that were most comfortable to you, that's what you go back to. And everyone I associated with drank. So, inevitably, I ended right back to where I started.

"At Biloxi, they gave me time to get my health back, my physical strength, and a support system that included a psychiatrist, peer support, group therapy, and I lived with other Veterans experiencing the same things I had. Once I was ready, they got me a job here in housekeeping, as part of the Compensated Work Therapy Program. I worked with a case manager in the Homeless Veterans Program, and I now have my own apartment with the help of a HUD-VASH voucher. For the first time in my life, I am a productive member of society.

"It feels good," Frelix said.

Though his rehabilitation period is coming to an end, Frelix is confident that he now has the tools and resources he needs to continue on his journey of wellness. He looks forward to the future, for the first time ever, and it is important for him to share his story so other Veterans in similar situations as his know that help is as close as the nearest VA.

Your service is a bond

"Once you have been in the service, you are always part of the service. What I would like to tell my fellow service members is that VA is here. They are more sympathetic and compassionate about our needs than anyone I've experienced in the public sector. I've been to both. VA has specialized help for people just like me. But you have to reach out and ask for help," he said. "It's hard work, but if I can do it, anyone can."

Veteran uses past as tool to bring about change, recovery and resilience

Marine Corps Veteran
Alex Stallworth

Alex Stallworth works in the laundry facility at the Biloxi VA Medical Center. He also volunteers as an Ambassador, assisting Veterans in finding their way as they come into the hospital. Stallworth is energetic, friendly, and he has a smile that lights up a room. On first look, one concludes he is a man with a mission – a man that knows what he wants in life and is going after it.

What one would not know, would never guess, when meeting Stallworth, are the struggles he endured over the last 15 years and how many near death experiences he has lived through, and come out on the other side. It's a story that bears repeating and for him, telling it and hearing it told serves to strengthen his recovery. And if there is even a slight chance that another Veteran will read this and walk away with a tiny bit of hope…or resolve…or desire to make a change, then Stallworth is more than willing to share parts of his life that until now have shamed him and caused him much pain.

Here's his story.

Stallworth was born and raised in Virginia, the son of a career Army man. He lived in a nice home, had loving parents, and he figures he had a typical middle class upbringing…never really wanting for anything, but not having excess either. After high school, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. He was in the Infantry and was on the Marine Corps boxing team. After a four year tour, he decided it was time to move on to the next thing in his life. He wasn't sure what it was, but he envisioned a life full of fast cars, night lights, and plenty of cash.

"The life I thought I wanted," Stallworth said, "was so unrealistic. I know now that the only way you can achieve good things in life is with hard work." But this was a lesson he had to learn the hard way.

"For several years, I thought I had made it big. I was hired to drive a car up to New York, pick up drugs, then turn around and drive home. It paid great. My 'employer' provided me with a house, a car, cash, drugs…in my mind, this was the life I was meant to live," he said.

Until it wasn't.

"Here's what happens when you get mixed up in that kind of life," Stallworth warns. "You start skimming. The box you deliver is a little lighter, you start taking more drugs to keep that high going all day and into the night. You get greedy. Then it all falls apart."

Move on and start over

So now Stallworth is a full-fledged drug addict, is wanted by his employer for stealing from him; he has no place to live, no money, no car, no job. He's living on the streets, his every breath zeroed in on finding the next high.

With few options, Stallworth calls a buddy of his he met while in the Marines. His friend had a successful business in Fort Walton Beach, Fla. He offered Stallworth a safe place to stay and a job. He wanted to help him get his life back.

That was working fine….until it wasn't.

"Even though I quit using, addicts can pick each other out of a crowd. And that's how it was for me. I was working hard, trying to stay straight, but the pull was too hard. Next thing you know, I'm back to moving drugs," Stallworth said. "It's a vicious cycle. You get trapped in it, and you see no way out."

Throughout this period, Stallworth was in and out of jail. He said he didn't call it being arrested, he called it a rescue. For years he was homeless, sleeping only hours at a time, so high he really didn't care. And that, to him, was the worst part.

"My life at this point was such a waste, it felt insurmountable," he said. "I didn't know who to ask for help. I had abandoned and neglected everyone in my life and I was at the point where I didn't think I could be fixed."

In 2014, a fellow Veteran told Stallworth about the inpatient substance abuse program at the Biloxi VA Medical Center. He said he didn't really feel like he had much of a chance at recovery, but it would give him an escape from bad people trying to find him, and it was a place he could crash for a few weeks. He inquired and landed a spot.

Changes came slowly

The first two weeks Stallworth just went through the motions. He would go to the required meetings, but in his head he was already thinking ahead about what he would do when he got out.

But the third week, things started to change, Stallworth recalls. "Some of the things the counselors said started to make sense," he said. "I thought, wow, they really get me."

Stallworth ended up extending in the program and he absorbed everything he could. Without the drugs, his mind started to clear and for the first time in 15 years, he felt a glimmer of hope.

"The substance abuse programs gave me the tools I so desperately needed," Stallworth said. "They taught me coping skills and how to recognize what events trigger the downward spiral for me, so I can learn to get through them, in a positive way."

Eventually as Stallworth's recovery evolved, he was selected to take part in the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program. For the first time in a very long time, Stallworth said, he was clean, making good choices, was employed and was feeling optimistic about his future. The Homeless Veterans staff assisted him with housing, the one thing that had eluded him for so many years. He eventually applied for and was selected for a permanent position in the laundry facility.

The silver lining

"What I do know," Stallworth said when recalling his rocky past "is that all my life I have had genuine people that went out of their way to help me. I don't know why I have been so blessed, but I have, and I am very thankful."

As a final note, Stallworth recently applied and was accepted to take the courses to be certified as a peer support specialist. He looks forward to sitting on the other side of the table and helping Veterans overcome their addictions.

"Look at me," Stallworth said. "I am living proof that change is possible. You've got to seek help and put in the work. But let me tell you as someone that has been at the bottom of the bottom – the life I was living is no life at all. The good people at the VA have given me a chance to live. And for that I am forever grateful."

"I am living proof that change is possible...
The good people at the VA have given me a chance to live."

Homeless Veterans Programs

2000
Veterans assessed for services and connected to VA health care through HCHV program since 2008

596
HUD-VASH vouchers allocated to GCVHCS

561
HUD-VASH vouchers currently in use in housing or Veteran is in process of searching for housing

2
GPD programs Mobile, Ala. Pensacola, Fla.

68
Veterans housed through GPD programs

600+
At risk or homeless Veterans reached at Stand Down events in FY2015

800+
Calls responded to by homeless program staff in FY2015

Nationwide, significant strides are being made to end Veteran homelessness community by community. The goal of the Homeless Program is to end homelessness in all locations. Several key components make it a successful and essential service to Veterans at GCVHCS:

- Healthcare for the Homeless Veteran (HCHV)
- Housing and Urban Development - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH)
- Grant Per Diem (GPD)
- Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO)
- Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF)
- National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (NCCHV)

The HCHV outreach program started in 2008. At GCVHCS, the HCHV program spans our health care system's 300-mile primary service area. An HCHV outreach Social Worker is often the first point of contact many Veterans have with VA in the community and this person ensures a warm hand-off within the homeless program or to other services within VA.

Current HUD-VASH vouchers for GCVHCS include 90 additional vouchers allocated in FY2015. Most of the vouchers are being used in housing or the Veteran is in the process of searching for housing. The most vulnerable and chronic homeless Veterans continue to be our priority. Our collaboration with HUD to offer housing vouchers to eligible Veterans has been an integral aspect of our success in providing permanent housing and case management to Veterans.

GPD programs provide transitional housing for up to two years for homeless Veterans as they return to school and seek employment. GPD programs also give them a helping hand as they seek permanent housing and re-engage into the community.

Located in Biloxi, Mobile and Pensacola, our four VJO Specialists provide services within the legal system to connect Veterans to mental health and substance abuse programs in VA. We also have Veterans Courts from Biloxi to Panama City. These services help individuals often struggling with PTSD, addiction, TBI and other medical and mental health issues that can be treated within the VA system, often preventing extended stays in prison or jails and another night of homelessness.

Homeless Stand Downs for FY2015 were held in September and October in Pensacola, Eglin and Panama City, Fla. Our Biloxi Homeless Program took part in Project Homeless Connect in the community.

The SSVF program is an integral element of the continuum of services for Veterans at risk or currently homeless. This program provides rental and security deposits and other financial assistance to ensure Veterans maintain permanent housing as well as provides homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing to Veteran households. These grants have been awarded to community providers covering the entire catchment area of our health care system.

The National Homeless Hotline Call Center provides an efficient and effective link for Veterans to receive information and referrals to VA and community resources.

Standing Up for Homeless Veterans at Stand Down events

Providing Patient Centered Care

The Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System (GCVHCS) Office of Patient Centered Care & Cultural Transformation (OPCC&CT) continues to focus on each Veteran's experience in his or her journey to achieving healing relationships and healing environments.

Three major landmarks on our journey have been the Ambassador Program, Patient Centered Care (PCC) Retreats and the Inspire! Newsletter. All three are essential to advancing effective communication, cultural competence and Veteran and Family-Centered Care. In fact, the Ambassador Program and the PCC Retreats share common goals and facilitators. Ambassador Program and PCC Retreat facilitators are known as PCC Champions. The OPCC&CT will continue to work with key partners over the next fiscal year for the purpose of enhancing our journey in Patient Centered Care.

Ambassador Program and Patient Centered Care Retreat Goals

- To develop a basic understanding in all employees of the gold standard in customer service and philosophy and how it can change the culture of the organization
- To empower each staff member and volunteer to commit to and actively participate in the Ambassador Program and PCC Retreats
- To empower each staff member to commit to and actively participate in PCC initiatives
- To recognize everyone as a caregiver
- To stress the importance of human interactions and the power of the simplest acts of kindness
- To enhance caregivers' sensitivity to the patient's or resident's perspective of wellness, illness, hospitalization or long-term care
- To provide participants an experiential forum to explore the role of the caregiver in providing personalized care in every setting along the continuum of care
- To explore the importance and impact of communication and continuity of care from the patient's and resident's perspective
- To identify factors that help create a healing environment for Veterans and their families
- To explore the importance and impact of service recovery on the patient satisfaction scores

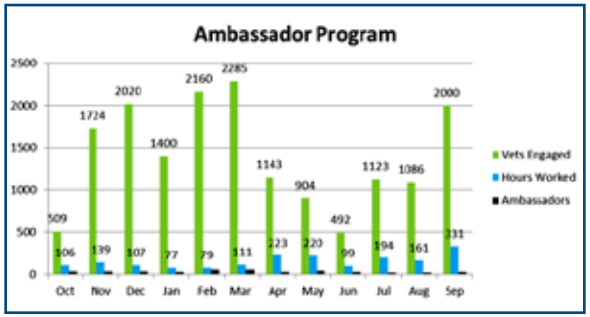
PCC Councils, Committees and Work Groups

The following organized groups serve as steering bodies for the PCC model and philosophy:

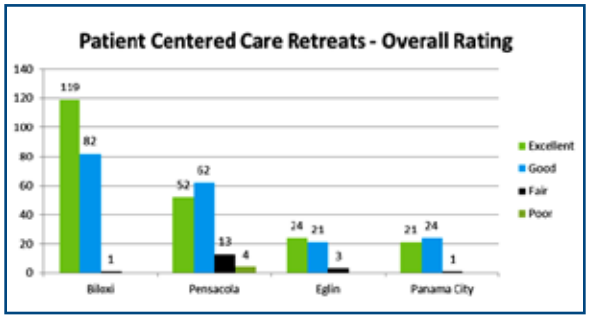
- **Patient Satisfaction Committee:** Meets monthly and is comprised of service chiefs and program managers responsible for providing personalized, proactive and patient-driven health care and initiatives. The role of this committee is to monitor, analyze, and communicate results of patient satisfaction performance improvement measures for the GCVHCS. There are also three Veteran Advisors on this committee.
- **Veteran and Family Advisory Council (VFAC):** Meets quarterly and is comprised mostly of Congressional and community stakeholders. The function of the VFAC is to work with the GCVHCS leadership to identify areas of improvement to better meet the needs of Veterans and their families.
- **Courtesy, Professionalism and Respect/ I CARE Work Group:** Meets bimonthly and is comprised of service chiefs and program managers. The purpose of this work group is to provide "real time" initiatives for improvement based on the Veteran experience and employee satisfaction within GCVHCS.
- **VISN 16 Voice of the Veteran Subcommittee:** Meets monthly and is comprised of Patient Centered Care Coordinators, Health Systems Specialists, and Customer Service Directors. This subcommittee analyzes data from a variety of sources such as SHEP, SAIL, PATS, and Voice of the Veteran real time feedback system. Data is presented via a dashboard, with suggested targets, and reviewed by the subcommittee. The Voice of the Veteran Subcommittee will focus on access measures and questions with the most potential from the Attributable Effects Report.
- **VISN 16 PCC Coordinators:** Meets monthly and is comprised of PCC Coordinators in VISN 16 to share feedback about PCC initiatives and best practices.

Ambassador Program and PCC Retreat Statistics

- A total of 12 Ambassador Program training opportunities were held in FY2015. There were 33 volunteers and 52 employees trained.
- A total of 38 PCC Retreats were held, giving 795 employees an opportunity to improve practices and experiences for our Veterans.



This graph represents the monthly performance of the Ambassador Program for FY2015. A total of 16,846 Veterans were served with an average of 33 Ambassadors serving each month.



This graph represents the overall rating of the Patient Centered Care Retreats in FY2015 for Biloxi, Pensacola, Eglin and Panama City. Pensacola, Eglin and Panama City are half-day retreats.

Inspire! Newsletter and PCC SharePoint

- Making patient centered care come alive is the main goal of the **Inspire!** newsletter. Inspire! is the GCVHCS's newsletter highlighting best practices in patient centered care and patient stories of inspiration. Written by staff and Veterans across the Gulf Coast, Inspire! is dedicated to telling the stories of Veterans in their own words as well as highlighting programs of note as they put the Veterans first in their everyday work. The newsletter was published nine times this year and evolved from four pages to eight pages. As of 9/30/2015, there were 3,859 email subscribers.
- The **PCC SharePoint** continues to actively engage employees with the Inspire! newsletter, maintaining the first place in top page views. The SharePoint is also the home of the Ambassador Program's shared documents and monthly workload calendars.

- All of the presenters were wonderful, but I found Noel to be an especially powerful, effective, charismatic presenter.
- Staff opened up and voiced opinions to someone who may be able to help.
- Free exchange of ideas that was refreshing.
- Brutal honesty, showing more compassion and accountability are the ingredients needed to being of greater service to my fellow Veterans.
- The importance of working as a team to better serve the Veteran to promote 'whole health.'
- Enjoyed the opening exercise and hearing all of the stories of the participants in Retreat #27. We were all very personable and shared some very sensitive information.
- So refreshing to see so many positive people in our facility.
- Reignited highest respect for our Veterans.
- I will start to listen to my Veteran's eyes as well as what they are saying.
- This retreat was very resourceful, and I learned a lot. I will try to be creative in my dealings with my Veterans. Excellent class!
- Excellent retreat! I enjoyed the interactive sessions.
- It was very enlightening to hear everyone's stories.
- Very interactive and entertaining, not what I expected in a VA retreat.
- This retreat has really challenged me to be better at serving others, to be more relational, and to find solutions to problems.
- Great presentation and enthusiastic dialogue!

myVA

Last year, VA launched an initiative that reorganizes VA around Veteran needs and empowers employees to deliver excellent customer service to improve the Veteran experience. MyVA is the largest department-wide transformation in VA's history and is a product of ideas and insights shared by Veterans, employees, members of Congress, Veteran Service Organizations, and other stakeholders. MyVA is focused on five areas of improvement:

- Improving the Veteran experience
- Improving the employee experience so they can better serve Veterans
- Improving internal support services
- Establishing a culture of continuous improvement
- Enhancing strategic partnerships

At GCVHCS, the MyVA initiative has resulted in the development of "Voice of the Veteran/Courtesy, Professionalism, Respect Workgroup," under the Excellence Council. The workgroup hit the ground running in 2015 and as a team created "Your Voice: You Speak, We Listen, Taking Action, Building Trust," a program that encompasses the following areas of improvement:

- The implementation of Service Level Representatives across the health care system to assist Veterans experiencing difficulties navigating the system
- Empowering employees and Veterans to voice their concerns with the knowledge that they will be addressed and process improvement will be implemented
- Utilizing the All Employee Survey to identify areas for improvement
- Partnering with Veterans and Veteran Organizations to build trust and positive public opinion in the community

GCVHCS Director Anthony Dawson speaks at the Mobile Town Hall

DIVERSITY
MANAGEMENT
EQUAL
EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITY

ANNUAL AWARDS

RAYMOND GROAT
Chief, Police Service
GOLD AWARD
Service Chief/Program Manager of the Year

GABRIELE McADORY
Chief, Environmental Management Service
SILVER AWARD
Service Chief/Program Manager of the Year

NANCY GRABEN
Clinical Applications Manager
BRONZE AWARD
Service Chief/Program Manager of the Year

DR. IRVIN SHERMAN
Medical Service
EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

EEO STAR AWARDS

CHERYL WILLIAMS, LPN
Nursing, Behavioral Health
EEO GOLD AWARD

LAURA HYMEL, RN
Nursing, Nurse Manager, Home Telehealth
EEO SILVER AWARD

MARTHA COURIER
Kinesiotherapist
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service

CANDIDA TORRES, LPN
Nursing, Extended Care

CANDACE TAYLOR
Medical Support Assistant
Medical Administration Service

BOBBY REED
Nursing Assistant
Nursing, Acute Care

DIANNE WRIGHT
Housekeeping Aid
Environmental Management Service

Voluntary Services

National Salute to Veterans, Feb. 2015

Voluntary Services provides quality assistance and service to Veterans and GCVHCS employees. Recreation Therapy supports all Voluntary Service sponsored events. We work together, as a team, to help meet the needs of our Veterans.

57,052

TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS

(equates to 30 FTEE)

24,155

Combined volunteer hours
Biloxi, Miss., and Mobile, Ala.

32,897

Combined volunteer hours
Pensacola, Eglin and Panama City, Fla.

$1,540,283.60

TOTAL IMPACT: HOURS/DONATIONS

$1,286,522.60

Volunteers Hourly Value
(57,052 X $22.55)

$290,306.56

Total Donations
Monetary: $41,670
Nonmonetary: $248,636.56

629

VOLUNTEERS

on rolls at end of FY2015

316

Biloxi/Mobile

313

Pensacola/Eglin/Panama City

18

NEW VOLUNTEERS

(Orientation)

7

Biloxi

11

Pensacola

8

QUARTERLY VAVS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

4

Biloxi

4

Pensacola

The **Disabled American Veterans** (DAV) Transportation Network (VTN) continues to provide outstanding service to Veterans. Veterans are transported to the Biloxi VAMC from Pensacola, Foley, and Mobile. DAV VTN operates two DAV vans which pick up patients in Harrison, Hancock, Jackson, Greene, Pearl River, Stone and George counties in Mississippi. Veterans are also transported to Pensacola from Panama City.

Patients Transported	Hours Logged	Miles Logged
1,983 Biloxi	2,719 Biloxi	39,299 Biloxi
1,597 Pensacola	3,946 Pensacola	110,920 Pensacola

Successful Projects and Activities

Voluntary Services plays a significant role in the Patient Centered Care initiative by recruiting Volunteers to serve as Ambassadors. This program, in its third year, has measurably improved patient satisfaction. It has been fully activated throughout our health care system and it continues to grow.

Volunteer participation in special events, holidays, and regular scheduled activities has been outstanding. Volunteers and Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) provided tremendous support for events such as our Fall Carnival, Cruisin' the Coast®, Veterans Day Program, Christmas Gift Shop, National Salute to Veteran Patients, and our annual Honoring Our Veterans Car Show, to name a few.

This year our annual Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Awards program and luncheon was nothing short of outstanding. Each year staff members treat the volunteers to a musical performance. This year's theme was "Spring Fling." Our newly formed VA Choir, along with individual performers, entertained the volunteers. Service Chiefs and others in leadership positions served the meal and assisted people who needed help going through the buffet line. We also held VAVS Awards programs for volunteers at the outpatient clinics in Pensacola, Eglin and Panama City, Fla. More than 350 volunteers and their guests attended the ceremonies.

Community Relations and Activities

Keesler Air Force Base and the Naval Construction Battalion Center continue to provide outstanding support. They provided over 250 active duty personnel to assist with special events during FY2015. Camp Shelby's Youth Challenge Program provided 30 personnel to support special events.

Local high school JROTC Units participated in several events during the fiscal year, including our annual Veterans Day Ceremony and POW Luncheon.

Performer at Volunteer Awards Banquet, April 2015

VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATION

American Legion
American Legion Auxiliary
Disabled American Veterans
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Military Order of the Cooties
Forty & Eight
Order of the Purple Heart
Order of the Trench Rats
Wounded Warriors
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Blind Veterans of America
American Veterans (AMVETS)
Marine Corps League
Sons of AMVETS
Sons of American Legion

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATION

BPO Elks
American Red Cross
Salvation Army
Pizzas 4 Patriots
DVD 4 Vets
Mississippi Beach Cruisers

Soldiers Angels
Project Healing Waters
Run n Tri
Bradford O'Keefe Funeral Home
Cruising the Coast
Waste Pro
Moose Lodge
Daughters of American Revolution
Masonic Lodge
Knights of Columbus
U. S. Marine Inc.
Beau Rivage Casino and Resort
Hard Rock Casino and Resort
IP Casino and Resort
Holy Joe's Cafe
AT&T Call Center
AT&T Pioneers
Coastal Development Group
Mississippi Mud Pirates

Vintage and classic vehicles offer memories and dreams on wheels to Veterans, volunteers and staff

Employee's volunteerism, love for country fuels his dedication to serving others

By JERRON BARNETT
GCVHCS Public Affairs

For James A. Kite Jr., a health technician in the podiatry section at the Joint Ambulatory Care Center in Pensacola, Fla., giving back to his community and country has always been a way of life.

After a distinguished, 30-year U.S. Naval career where he traveled the world's seas serving onboard Navy ships such as USS Nimitz, USS Thorn, and USS Seattle, Kite now finds himself in a new but familiar territory working for VA – giving back.

"I feel it's my honor and responsibility to treat Veterans as I would want to be treated," Kite said. "To treat those having the scars of battle and those who had the responsibility of defending our country is what it is all about."

It certainly seems as if giving back and serving is what it is all about for the Kites, as wife and fellow sailor Maureen, and son and Army Veteran Brad, also work at the JACC. Maureen currently is a medical support assistant after previously serving as a VA volunteer, and Brad works in Environmental Management Service.

"I could think of no better place to work where I can enjoy the excitement of not only interacting with the Veterans and their families, but having my wife and son also working at the same facility," Kite said.

Kite described his family's military history as "extensive," as his late father was a World War II Veteran, his grandfather was a WWI Veteran, and many others in his extended family have also served.

After military retirement and teaching at Pensacola State College, Kite was still trying to find a way to give back. He volunteered at VA for a year, then was employed by VA. Yet after five years as a VA employee so far, Kite yearned for more, as he felt "something was missing."

That's when in 2014, Kite came across an organization called the Joe Foss Institute, which is named after the famous U.S. Marine Corps fighter pilot, World War II hero, and Medal of Honor recipient. JFI is a nonprofit organization whose stated mission is to "close the civics education gap and prepare young Americans for civic engagement as voters and informed members of their community."

Over the last year, Kite has volunteered many hours of his time a few times a month at local middle and high schools through JFI. Kite teaches the students about the American flag's history, appreciation of America's freedoms, and the meaning and origin of our Bill of Rights. Kite said his motivation comes from Joe Foss and his organization.

"I found if he (Foss) could do that, then this is the least I can do," Kite said. "It's warming to see the pride many of our youth have for our military in this area."

Kite is also very passionate about the protection of each person's individual rights, a subject that is very important to him. Kite, who has a mostly stoic demeanor, lights up when the subject of rights is part of the discussion. You can almost see the energy and passion surge through his body as he shares his thoughts about individual rights. He doesn't want America's youth to lose sight of how vital the preservation of rights is to this country for generations to come.

"The kids are our future," Kite said, with the seriousness a father would add to a discussion with his son about something he should never forget.

Kite hasn't given much thought to life after two federal careers, but he plans to work for the GCVHCS for "awhile." After that, Kite looks forward to fishing and maybe taking Maureen on a cruise, but he'll never stray too far away from giving back. After all, he's lived a life's worth of giving back and serving others. Why would he stop now?

> *"I'll always find a way to do that," Kite said about volunteering and giving back.*
>
> *"I love to do it."*

Blind Rehabilitation Center

The Gulf Coast Blind Rehabilitation Center (GCBRC) had a banner year in FY2015. In August, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and The Joint Commission (TJC) paid separate visits to the GCBRC to review the program. The GCBRC received their first three-year accreditation from CARF, as well as high praise and no recommendations for improvements from TJC.

Veterans who attended the GCBRC training program in FY2015 and filled out an anonymous survey upon completion had an overall 99+ percent satisfaction rating.

The GCBRC admitted 174 Veterans in FY2015. The average length of stay for Veterans was 34 days. The average wait time for admission from the time an application was submitted to the GCBRC to the date of admission was 37.2 days. Length of stay and wait time for admission varied depending on the program the Veteran was being admitted to for training.

The CATs and Dogs program kicked off in FY2015. This program is a joint venture with the Guide Dog Foundation, America's VetDogs. The GCBRC identifies Veterans who are already advanced cane travelers and who would benefit from having a guide dog to further enhance their travel abilities and helps them complete the application process. The Guide Dog Foundation sends an instructor and guide dogs to the GCBRC a couple of times a year for training classes. Three classes of Veteran and guide dog pairs have graduated from GCBRC.

The CATs part of the program indicates the Veteran is generally receiving advanced Computer Access Training or CAT classes when not in guide dog training.

Veteran Comments:

- "With my 5-week enrollment in the program at the Blind Rehabilitation Center winding up, I am contacting you to congratulate you on the most effective and highly professional staff of the Biloxi Center. Each of them is a credit to the Center, and to the VA."
- "I was there for training and learning many skills and equipment usages due to my blindness. The people are extremely qualified and go beyond — far beyond normal teaching and what is normally required. My admiration of them far exceeds any teachers or instructors I've had in the past...and all those wonderful nurses who strived to be helpful and friendly."
- "I felt the scope of your efforts toward rehabilitation of blind and diminished vision Veterans was so significant for this Veteran that a simple "thank you" or "I am grateful" was insufficient. Organizing and directing a collective effort, each element of the program complementing the others on a scale of this magnitude of the operation, is truly impressive and no small task.
- "You should change the sign as you come in the front to door from Welcome Blind Rehabilitation Center to: Welcome Blind Rehabilitation Center — Where Hope Becomes Reality."

Artist at Blind Rehab sees his way through

By MARY KAY GOMINGER
GCVHCS Public Affairs Officer

Imagine, if you will, what the life of an artist must be like. Have you ever wondered how they are inspired? Do they wake up with visions in their head that they must draw? If art is your livelihood, does that kind of pressure affect your creativity? And what happens when you can no longer create?

For lifetime artist Charlie Swan, he knew at the young age of eight that his passion was drawing, painting, sketching . . . anything that involved expression through his hands, his mind, and most importantly, his eyes. It was his passion for art that landed him the job of Illustrator when he joined the Air Force in 1952. On his way to his overseas assignment, he was aboard the USS Mann. He sketched a cartoon for the Navy's newsletter that resulted in him being called to the Skipper's office and the rest, as they say, is history.

"I had no idea why the Captain wanted to talk to me," Swan said. "I figured I had done something bad . . . really bad. But you don't say no to a request like that, so in I went."

That meeting turned out to be a focal point in the next 50 years of Charlie Swan's life as the Captain told him he had seen his cartoon in the newsletter and he wanted to tell him how impressed he was.

"He told me I was a good artist and that I should be sending my cartoons to Stars and Stripes which was a big deal," Swan said. "So, I did." Swan's cartoons were published in Star and Stripes regularly after that.

Swan left the Air Force when his tour was up and, with the confidence that was made stronger through his experiences (Captains are never wrong), he was hired as an illustrator for a contractor at NASA in Bay St. Louis, Miss. (now known as Stennis Space Center). For the next 34 years, working with one NASA contractor or another, Swan continued to delight and amaze his co-workers, friends, and family with the work he created. His larger-than-life murals still decorate the halls and walls at the Stennis Space Center, and his legendary caricatures brought joy and countless smiles to so many.

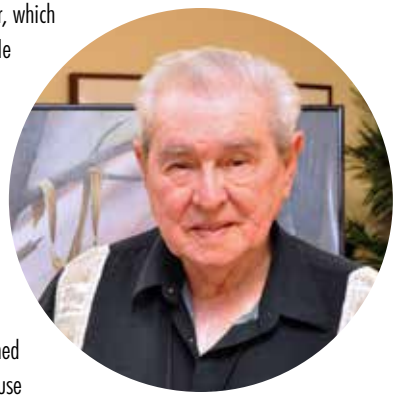
"Through the years, and this sort of evolved, I got quite famous for my caricatures." Swan said. When an employee was retiring, I had his or her co-workers send me all sorts of things about that employee, and then I would sit down and sketch out the caricature. I would capture the person's whole career with all the things co-workers shared with me."

Swan also created Stennis' mascot, a friendly-looking alligator, and that image is still being used today.

Swan retired in 1997 but continued his involvement with art, continuing to produce award-winning pastel, watercolor, oil, acrylic and mixed-media paintings. More than 1,500 Charles Swan portraits, landscapes, still lifes, contemporary paintings, and character paintings hang in private and public collections worldwide. He has served the art community as two-time past president of Mobile Art Association and for years he judged, taught, and spoke publicly. Through all this though, something was changing in Swan. He began to lose sight in his right eye.

"I've never had good sight in my left eye," Swan said. "But my right eye compensated, and it never was more than just a hindrance. But in the last couple of years, my vision started getting worse and worse, and I started using a magnifying glass to do things. Then the headaches started. Next thing I know the doc tells me I couldn't drive, that's how bad my eyesight had gotten. I knew I was in trouble."

Swan's life was pretty much in a downward spiral at this point. He couldn't paint or sketch, and he hadn't read a newspaper or book in almost a year. That all changed when his VA doctor at the Mobile Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Mobile, Ala., told him about the Blind Rehabilitation Center, which is located at the Biloxi VAMC in Biloxi, Miss. He suggested he give it a try.



"He is not the same person he was when he came in here a month ago," said Swan's sister, Wanda Lott. "I haven't seen this Charlie Swan in about 10 years. This is the brother that I remember."

Wanda was at the Blind Rehabilitation Center visiting her brother on April 30, which happened to be the same day the BRC held an Open House exhibiting all of his art work.

"This place is just magnificent," Swan said. "The staff has introduced me to new tools that help me do all the things I used to do. I can read and draw and, even more than that, I've learned how to cook," he said with a laugh. "I've never had to cook for myself, but now I can cook for me and my wife."

Swan is very grateful that VA has a facility such as the Blind Rehabilitation Center. Without it, he's not sure what would have happened to him.

"I've still got a ways to go, learning new things here, but I have to say, this is one of the best kept secrets of the VA. And it's more than the beautiful building, great staff and new technology. It's about the fellowship I've enjoyed with my other Veterans. That means a lot to me. I would, without reservation, recommend this facility to any Veteran out there that is visually impaired. It's been a life changer for me," he said.

Building 29: Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service | Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service | Employee Workout Center

Improving service for our Veterans

Building 31: Nutrition and Food Service | Laundry

All Employee Survey

The 2015 VA All Employee Survey (AES) is administered annually to all VA employees with results available within a month of survey closure. This year, 57.6% of GCVHCS employees participated in the survey.

- **Employee Satisfaction:** GCVHCS showed more favorable results in Direct Supervision, Senior Management, Promotion Opportunity, Praise, and Workgroup Station.
- **Organizational Climate:** GCVHCS showed much more favorable scores in Performance Ratings and Job Control and slightly more favorable scores in Engagement-Organization, Workload, Organizational Commitment, Information Sharing, and Performance Recognition.
- **High-Performing Workplaces:** GCVHCS showed much more favorable scores in Innovation, Leadership (Performance Goals), Planning/Evaluation and slightly more favorable scores in Employee Development, Workplace Performance, Conflict Resolution, Psychological Safety (Bring Up Problems), Psychological Safety (Try New Things), Workgroup Communication, and Workgroup Psychological Safety.
- **General Workgroup Perceptions:** GCVHCS showed much more favorable scores in Workgroup Involvement and slightly more favorable scores in Customer Services, Collaboration Across Workgroups, Accountability, Ethic, and Workgroup Change.
- **Supervisory Behaviors:** GCVHCS showed much more favorable scores in Supervisor Communications and slightly more favorable scores in Fairness, Relationship, Advocate, Favoritism, Supervisory Support, Psychological Safety (Disagreement), and Supervisory Psychological Safety.
- **Managing Risks:** GCVHCS showed slightly more favorable scores in Applied Learning.
- **Burnout and Turnover:** GCVHCS showed slightly more favorable scores in Reduced Personal Achievement.

2015 Awards for Excellence in Nursing

ANGELA GOOLSBY
Nursing, CLC
Nursing Assistant of the Year

DEBRA PHILLIPS, LPN
Nursing, CLC
Licensed Practical Nurse of the Year

HARRY GIRTEN, RN
Nursing, CLC
Registered Nurse of the Year

DEATOSHA HAYNES
Nursing, ANE, Acute Care
Mentor of the Year

ANGELA BLAKLEY-SMITH, RN
Nursing, Clinical Nurse Leader, CLC
Expanded Role Registered Nurse of the Year

BETH SADLER, BSN, RN, CHEP
Emergency Department Nurse Manager
Nurse Manager of the Year

KELLY WOODS, PhD
Chief, Quality and Performance Management
Honorary Nurse of the Year

Daisy Awards for Extraordinary Nurses

The Daisy Award for Extraordinary Nurses in Memory of J. Patrick Barnes is a registered trademark of The Daisy Foundation. The Daisy Award was created to provide a recognition program to honor the skillful and compassionate care provided by nurses every day to patients and their families. Nominations for The Daisy Award are submitted by patients, their families or co-workers of the nurse.

DAN DANJANIC, RN
Behavioral Health, Biloxi VAMC
April 2015

KAREN HUDSON, RN
Mobile VA Clinic
May 2015

PERRY "BODIE" JENKINS, RN, BSN
Nurse Manager, ASOU, Biloxi VAMC
June 2015

STACY SLAGLE, RN
Outpatient Primary Care, Biloxi VAMC
July 2015

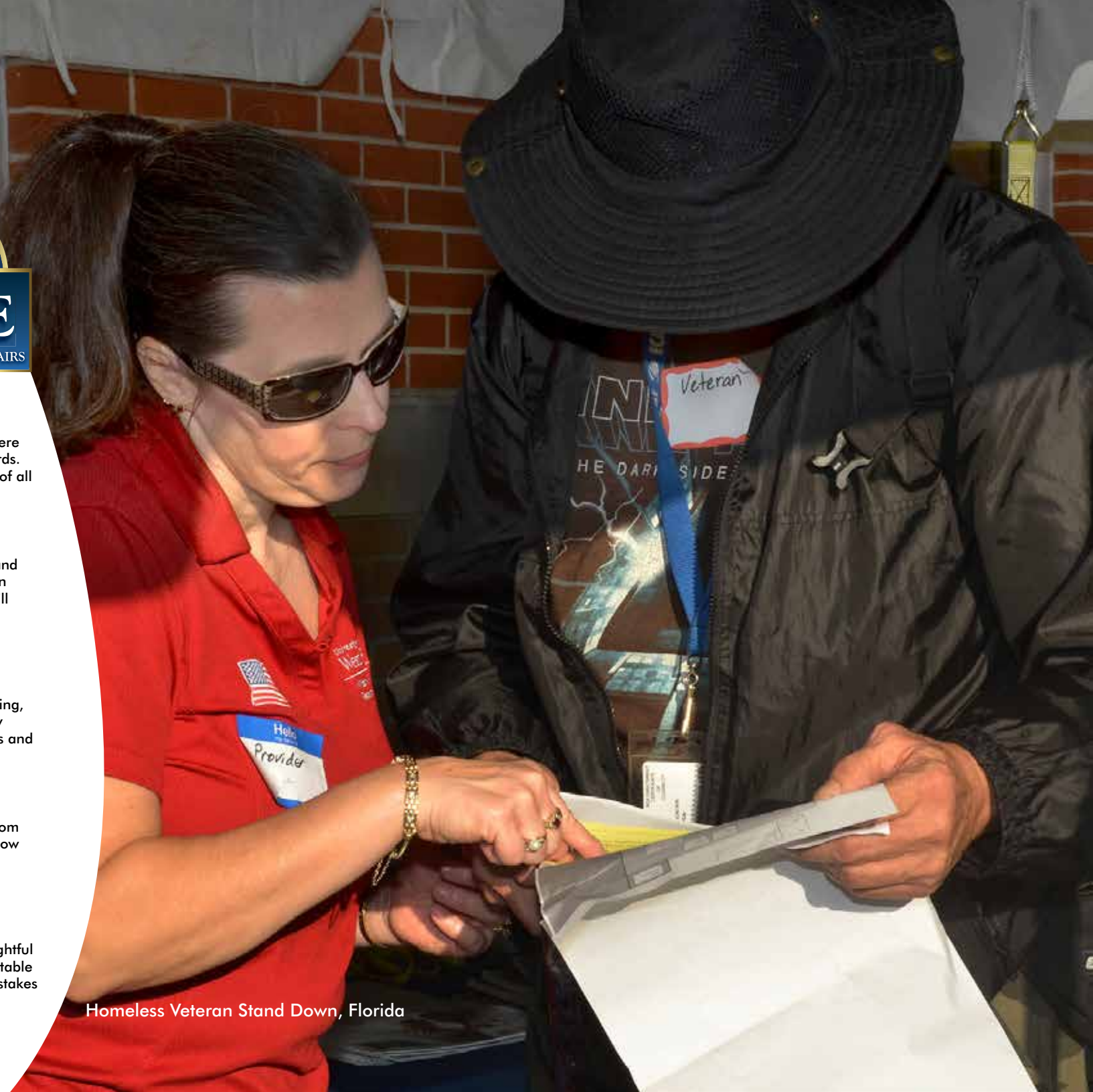
NAOMI LANG, LPN
PRRTP, Unit 19-3, Biloxi VAMC
August 2015

LINDA BURSON, RN
Panama City VA Clinic
September 2015

Joint Ambulatory Care Center, Pensacola, Fla.

Garden Masters
May 2015

Summer of Service, Biloxi VAMC



Homeless Veteran Stand Down, Florida

I CARE

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Integrity

Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

Commitment

Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

Advocacy

Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Respect

Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

Excellence

Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes and rigorous in correcting them.

Facebook
http://www.facebook.com/VAbiloxi

Twitter
http://twitter.com/vabiloxi

Website
www.biloxi.va.gov

GULF COAST VETERANS
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
400 Veterans Ave.
Biloxi, MS 39531

Community and Public Affairs Service
Mary Kay Gominger, Chief

PHOTO CREDITS:

Medical Media Service
Wayne Alley
Gary Modick
Tom Coffelt
Horace Pratt

VA official staff photos

Stock images: Thinkstock/Getty Images

MMS, 16-106B, 2/2016V