



## VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network

Keeping Veterans at the HEART of it all

April 2010

### News briefs

#### Blind Rehab Groundbreaking

Central Texas Veterans HCS will host the Blind Rehabilitation Unit groundbreaking ceremony April 5 at 10 a.m. U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards will speak at the event.

The newly renovated, historic building adds five beds, bringing the unit to a total of 20 beds, and provides amenities such as a fitness area, movie theater, game room and computer lab, which promote both patient and staff interaction.

The Blind Rehabilitation Unit offers training in Vision Rehabilitation, Orientation/Mobility, Living Skills, Manual Skills and Computer Access training.

#### Ex-POW Recognition Day

April 9 is National Ex-POW Recognition Day, and commemorates Maj. Gen. Edward King's surrender to the Japanese 14th Army in the Philippines in 1942. There are fewer than 30,000 former Prisoners of War living today.

**Network News** is a publication of VISN 17, the VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network. Contact:

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# Network news

## VA Commits \$39 Million to End Homelessness

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric K. Shinseki has committed the VA to ending homelessness among Veterans within five years. In 2009 approximately 107,000 Veterans were homeless on a typical night.

With the VA's second year to eliminate homelessness the number of homeless Veterans has decreased by 18 percent through enhanced collaboration with other federal, state, faith-based, Veterans service organizations, and community partners.

As Shinseki noted, it will take the dedication, creativity and hard work of many parts of American society to end homelessness among Veterans.

The VA is the largest federal provider of direct assistance to the homeless, with 14,000 transitional beds currently in operation or development. The VA has been allocated \$39 million to fund 2,200 new transitional housing beds through grants to local providers.

Grants, in the amount of \$24 million, will be available to renovate or rehabilitate space to create about 1,000 new transitional housing beds. The grants put a priority upon housing for homeless women and housing on tribal lands.

Approximately \$15 million is expected to fund about 1,200 beds through homeless providers who al-



ready have suitable transitional housing. The grants will provide per diems based upon the number of homeless Veterans served in transitional housing.

"We will use every tool at our disposal -- health care, education, jobs and safe housing -- to ensure our Veterans are restored to lives with dignity, purpose and safety," Shinseki said.

For additional information on the VA's commitment to ending homelessness, please visit the VA's Web page [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless). Veterans may also contact the VA's National Homeless Call Center toll-free at 877-424-3838.

#### VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network Homeless Coordinators

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## Journey toward Veteran-Centered Care Continues

As the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues its journey to a Veteran-centered care culture, Veterans and all stakeholders will experience a variety of new initiatives.

One initiative is the implementation of Planetree®. Planetree's clinical and

operational benefits include improved quality outcomes and accessibility to health care, increased Veteran satisfaction with health-related benefits, decreased stay length, fewer emergency

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## VA Research Celebrates 'Research Week' April 26-30

For more than 85 years, the VA Research and Development program has been improving the lives of Veterans and all Americans through health care discovery and innovation.

The groundbreaking achievements of VA investigators—70 percent of whom also provide direct patient care—have resulted in three Nobel prizes, six Lasker awards, and numerous other

distinctions.

While realizing the advantages of an intramural program and embracing its close ties to academic affiliates, the VA Research and Development program fosters dynamic collaborations with other federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private industry—thus extending the program's impact on the health of Veterans and the nation.

### **Veteran-Centered, from p. 1**

room visits, fewer medication errors, increased staff retention, and enhanced staff recruitment.

A second initiative is the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH). In this model, a team of health professionals, led by the Veteran's provider, work collaboratively to improve communication and provide continuous, coordinated and comprehensive health care to Veterans.

The Medical Home encourages patients to take a more active role in their health care management. By redesigning our VA Primary Care practices to become patient-centric, we will involve Veterans by listening to their values and preferences in their care planning.

To optimize access to meet Veteran expectations, we will implement Telehealth that includes VA Point of Service Kiosks and MyHealthVet secure messaging.

- **Telehealth** - uses electronic com-



**PLANETREE**

munications and information technology to connect clinicians and patients at home.

- **VA Point of Service Kiosks** – allow Veterans to check-in for ap-

pointments, view and schedule appointments, and view and pay balances.

- **MyHealthVet** secure messaging – empowers Veterans with the ability to communicate with their VA health care providers and staff for non-urgent and administrative needs.

While this cultural change will focus heavily on transforming primary care in Fiscal Year 2010, the foundation will be laid to change all of our Network's clinical and business processes. This effort will require a continuous investment during the next few years to be successful.

The VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network is committed to providing the health care and services that exceed our Veteran's expectations.

## South Texas Veterans HCS Earns State Quality Award

The South Texas Veterans HCS (STVHCS) was one of three organizations receiving the Quality Texas Foundation's second-highest award.

The STVHCS was recognized for Achievement in Organizational Excellence with effective, systematic approaches to organizational management with good performance levels and trends evaluated against industry standards.

South Texas Veterans HCS, along with the other award recipients, will be recognized at a ceremony June 7, at the Hilton Bella Harbor on Lake Ray Hubbard in Rockwall.

In October, 2009, the health care system was recognized with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' Robert W. Carey Organizational Performance Excellence Award.

The Quality Texas Foundation, is a non-profit Texas corporation.

### **Meet the Associate Director**

Russell Lloyd was appointed the associate director for resources at the Central Texas Veterans HCS (CTVHCS) effective March 28, 2010.

As associate director for resources, Lloyd is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the multi-site VA health care system with an annual budget of approximately \$523 million and more than 3,200 employees.

Prior to assuming his current position, Lloyd served as the associate director for operations at the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VAMC in Walla Walla, Wash.

Lloyd received a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Texas at Austin and a Masters of Science in Health Care Administration from Trinity University in San Antonio.

He began his VA career as an administrative resident at the Dallas VAMC. Lloyd is a Certified Federal Financial Manager and a graduate of the VA's Executive Career Field Candidate Development Program Class of 2008.

## April 2010 Priority 8 Outreach Events

- **3:** Daughters of American Veterans Harker Heights, 607-B East Veterans Memorial Blvd., Harker Heights, TX, Mr. Bailey, 512-0525-1087
- **7:** Veterans Advisory Council, VA Regional Office, One Veterans Plaza, 701 Clay Ave., Waco, TX, Sharon White, 254-743-2003
- **10:** Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, 72<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, South Padre Island, TX, Tiffany Charvet, 210-617-5300, ext. 19240
- **16:** Air Force Sergeants Association Convention, Holiday Inn Riverwalk, 217 N. St. Mary's St., San Antonio, TX, Genevieve Josen, 210-617-5300, ext. 15735