



## VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network

Keeping Veterans at the HEART of it all

June 2010

### News briefs

#### Comp & Pen Payments on Debit Cards

The Direct Express® Debit MasterCard® card is now available for your VA Compensation or Pension payments. It's easy to sign up: By phone – call (888) 544-6347, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., or, reply to your letter this month. More info online at: [www.USDirectExpress.com](http://www.USDirectExpress.com)

#### Help Available By Phone, Online

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org) or 1-800-273-8255 (TALK).

Veterans or their family members can remain anonymous once they enter the one-on-one chat Web site. There, they are joined by a counselor who is trained to provide information and respond to the requests and concerns of the caller.

#### Radio PSAs Available Online

Radio public service announcements inviting Veterans to enroll for VHA health care are now available from VISN 17. To preview the PSAs in Spanish or English, visit [www.heartoftexas.va.gov/opa/](http://www.heartoftexas.va.gov/opa/). To get a high-quality MP3 file, e-mail Diana Struski or Aaron Reed

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

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# Network news

## New Issue of 'Ionizing Radiation Review' Available

A new issue of the *Ionizing Radiation Review* newsletter has been published by the Radiation and Physical Exposures Service of the Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Highlights of the issue include:

- A message from Secretary Eric Shinseki
- An update from Veterans' Advisory Board on Dose Reconstruction, which oversees compensation for radiation-related illnesses in Veterans
- Appointment of a new director of the Radiation and Physical Exposures Service
- Establishment of ALS as a presumptive compensable illness for all Veterans with 90 days or more of continuous active service in the military
- Information on the Ionizing Radiation Registry (IRR)
- A list of health conditions recognized for presumptive service-connection to radiation exposure

- Where to get help and information
- Other updates on VA benefits and programs

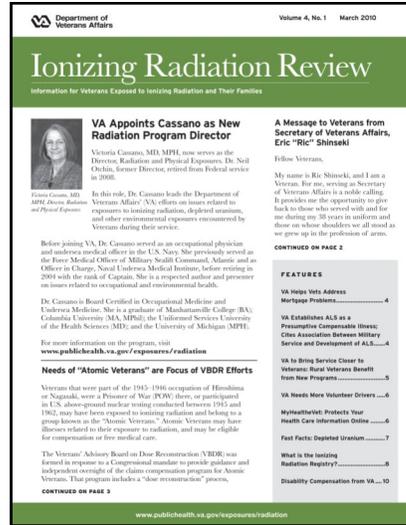
The *Ionizing Radiation Review* is published to provide information to Veterans who may have been exposed to ionizing radiation during their military service in a variety of settings in World War II or in specific conflicts and situations since then.

The Review describes the possible long-term health consequences of such exposure and VA's programs to respond

to this health risk.

Copies of the issue were mailed in late May to Veterans participating in VA's Ionizing Radiation Registry and to VA Medical Centers, Regional Offices, Vet Centers, and Veteran Service Organizations.

The issue, as well as more information on radiation, is now available on the Web at [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/radiation](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/radiation).



## VA to kick-off HIV testing push for Veterans June 27

Nine out of 10 Veterans have **never** been tested for HIV. It's time to put HIV testing on VA's radar screen.

Every year, the U.S. marks June 27 as National HIV Testing Day. This year, VA is going one better. We're having **VA HIV Testing Week, June 27–July 3**.

The week will kick off a sustained effort to increase HIV testing throughout VHA, with a goal of diagnosing those Veterans with HIV and

providing them with the care they need.

We all know that HIV testing saves lives. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends making HIV testing part of routine medical care.

So does the American College of Physicians. And so does VA—routine voluntary HIV testing is now official VA policy.



# Health Care Reform: What does it mean for Veterans and their health care?

Many Veterans have questions about the new health care reform law. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) offers the following information about the law and its impact on Veterans.

VHA will provide additional information about the new law as it is developed.

Nothing in the new law changes anything about VA health care. The law contains many complex provisions, including many

reforms to the practices of the health insurance industry. Nothing in the new law changes anything about the Veterans' health care program.

Enrolled Veterans may still rely on VHA for their health care in the same manner as before the law.

Beginning in 2014, everyone will be required to have health care cover-

age.

The law requires that every individual must have some form of health care

coverage. The coverage must meet a minimum standard so that everyone will be able to have a minimum level of care.

Congress wrote into the law a provision that says the Veterans' health care program, administered by VHA, meets the standard for health care coverage.

Enrolled Veterans do not have to purchase additional coverage. Because the Veterans' health care program meets the standard under the law, Veterans enrolled in the VA health care program do not need to obtain additional health care coverage.

Veterans may continue to purchase additional coverage if they wish, but the law does not require them to do so.



## North Texas Chief of Medical Service, Professor, Receives 'Master' Honor

Dr. Daniel M. Goodenberger, Chief of the Medical Service at the Dallas VAMC, and Professor and Vice-Chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School recently was named a Master of the American College of Physicians.

Masters comprise a small group of highly accomplished physicians who have been selected because of personal character, positions of honor, contributions toward furthering the purposes of the ACP, eminence in practice or medi-

cal research or other attainments in science or in the art of medicine.

Before coming to the Dallas VAMC, Goodenberger was the Chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of Nevada School of Medicine for two years.

He served for 14 years as the Residency Program Director at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, and for eight years as the Chief of the Division of Medical



Education at Washington University School of Medicine, where he was Professor of Medicine.

He was series advisor for *The Washington Manual* series, comprising 18 books in addition to the original, and is author of numerous articles, book chapters, and lectureships.

Goodenberger has held leadership roles in national, local and specialty organizations.

## June 2010 Priority 8 Outreach Events

**5:** 9 a.m. – 11 a.m., VFW 9191 Seminar, 3307 Zephyr Rd, Killeen, Texas 76549, Dianne Thompson, 254-743-2225

**12:** 7:30 a.m., Joint IRR Muster, Navy/Air Force Reserve, 1803 Doolittle Ave., Fort Worth, Texas 76114

**13-14:** 7 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., 1st Annual Wounded Warrior Half, VHA Place Parking Garage, 220 East Las Colinas Blvd, Las Colinas, Texas

**16:** 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Veterans Informational Table, Career Point College, 485 Spencer Ln, San Antonio, Texas 78201, Genevieve Joson, 210-617-5300 ext. 15735

**22-25:** 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Military Health Care Convention and Conference, Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, 200 E. Market St., San Antonio, Texas 78205, Genevieve Joson, 210-617-5300 ext. 15735

**30:** 6 p.m. – 8 p.m., Wounded Warrior's Dinner, 1900 Blanco Rd., San Antonio, Texas 78212, John Sanchez, 210-617-5300 ext. 14130

## Meet the Chief of Staff at VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend HCS

Raul Aguilar, M.D., was named Chief of Staff for the new VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System in May 2010.

Prior to his appointment, Aguilar was selected as the Associate Chief of Staff for Ambulatory Care in September 2009 and for the last 25 years served as the Chief Medical Officer for the McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic. Aguilar is board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine and holds a certificate of Added Qualifications in Geriatric Medicine.

Aguilar is a 22-year Veteran of the U.S. Air Force Reserve, currently serving as a flight surgeon.