



*A newsletter for employees of
the Portland VA Medical Center*

In the News

Fall 2005

Message from Veterans Affairs Secretary Nicholson on Hurricane Katrina Recovery

September 19, 2005 - The progress made over the past weeks recovering from the ravages of Hurricane Katrina is encouraging, and I want to express to all VA employees my admiration and sincere thanks for a job very well done.

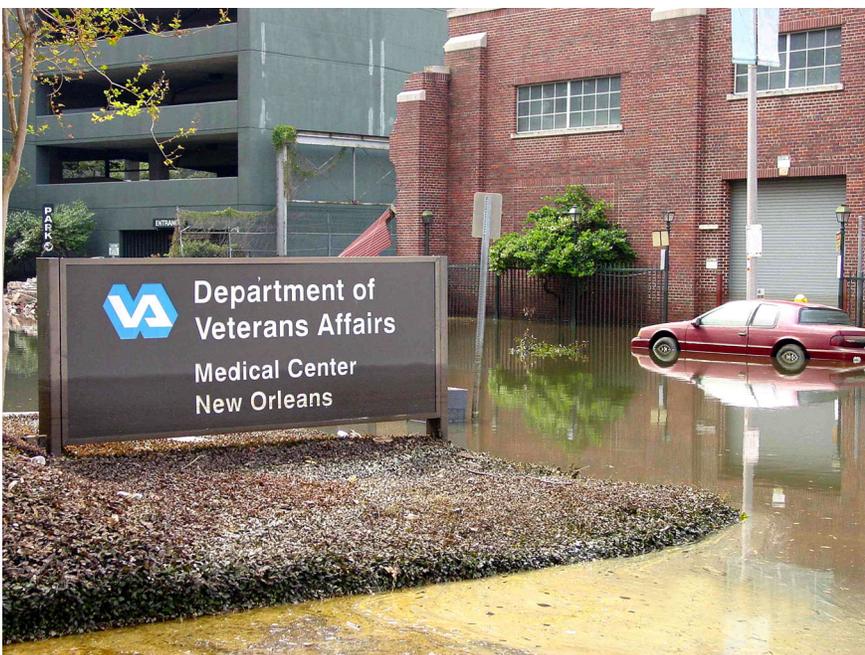
It is difficult to understand the destructive power of the storm that tore through Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. My tour of the hurricane-stricken region brought home that point in ways difficult to imagine. But throughout those scenes of devastation, there were hundreds of stories of courage and selflessness demonstrated by VA employees who went far above and beyond the call of duty.

As it stands, our Biloxi VA medical center is now fully operational and running on commercial power. The facility at Gulfport was destroyed.

We're continuing to assess the damage to our VA hospital in New Orleans. All community-based outpatient clinics in the area are fully operational; additionally, we have sent 12 mobile clinics into the area to help veterans and other citizens receive the care they need.

During Hurricane Katrina, thousands of VA employees have been heroic patriots in a tragedy of unprecedented proportions. What some of our colleagues have been through defies description. Even as they endured personal tragedy, their commitment to their patients and to the mission of VA has been unflagging. Their good works have been noticed beyond VA. Sen. Larry Craig, Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, called the evacuation an "incredible story about a mission accomplished extremely well," and said VA employees "were trained well enough to make decisions to proceed with evacuations, pull people out, instead of to hesitate or wait."

Rep. Steven Buyer, Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, who visited the area



New Orleans VAMC After Hurricane Katrina

continued on page 2

**Secretary Nicholson
Message cont.**

with me, expressed his admiration, saying, “I am proud of VA’s stellar performance in the face of this disaster. The men and women of VA conducted an effective and safe evacuation of their patients under challenging circumstances.”

In his mid-day newscast September 9, Paul Harvey summed up VA’s efforts before, during and after the hurricane in four words: “No excuses. None needed.”

But make no mistake: there is still much that lies ahead. We will need additional funding for continued cleanup, repairing facilities, providing temporary facilities and staffing. In the intermediate and longer term, there will be rebuilding needed - rebuilding to withstand forces never before encountered.

Great as the force of Hurricane Katrina was, it did not overpower the indomitable spirit of the professionals of VA. Thank you all.



Katrina destroyed the VA Medical Center in Gulfport, Mississippi.



VA medical employees cared for hurricane victims in Houston. A hangar at Ellington Field served as a triage area for patients.

Editor’s Note: All patients and staff were evacuated from the VA Gulf Coast Gulfport Division before Katrina struck, and the Biloxi Division was one of only two hospitals in Biloxi that were operational during and after the storm. The New Orleans VAMC sustained major damage and is still closed except for police and limited facilities and management staffing. The Michael E. DeBakey VAMC in Houston had only minor damage after Hurricane Rita and remained fully operational.

Local VA Volunteers Join Hurricane Recovery

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, well over 200 VA employees in VISN 20 have volunteered their time to help veterans and VA staff members affected by the devastation.

Physicians, nurses, pharmacists, housekeeping aides, mental health and social workers, police officers and many others have stepped forward to help.

In a September 16 message to all VISN 20 staff, Acting Northwest Network Director Dennis Lewis, FACHE, said, "I am tremendously proud of the dedication of our employees who have volunteered to leave their families and go to work in uncertain conditions, as well as the facility directors and managers who have made it possible to release valuable staff members from their regular duties. It is a proud feeling to be associated with people who are so dedicated to VA's Vision Statement, which reads as follows:

To be a patient centered integrated health care organization for veterans providing excellence in health care, research and education; an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner and a back-up for national emergencies.

Never before has it been so apparent that our employees take these words to heart, and it is evident, especially in times of crisis, that the VA really is one large extended family.

continued on page 4

Vancouver Celebration Honors WWII Veterans

On December 7, 1941, **John Bruening** was among survivors of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. On August 26, 2005, while a video camera rolled, the 86 year old WWII veteran talked about his experiences that day and on missions in the Pacific Theater that earned him the Purple Heart and Bronze Star more than 60 years ago.

In the hours after the Pearl Harbor attack, Bruening was among troops patrolling in and beyond Honolulu, expecting anything. "We thought they were going to invade," he recalls.

As a Corporal in the Army's 24th Infantry Division, Bruening served as a communications specialist in the Philippines and other parts of the Pacific Theater. "I loved my country and the people in it," he says, "and I'd do it over again today if I had to."

Bruening, who volunteers at PVAMC's Vancouver Division, is among hundreds of veterans who are recording their memories in the U.S.

Library of Congress Veterans History Project. He was interviewed at a celebration held August 26-28 in Vancouver to honor WWII veterans.

Drawing thousands of veterans and family members from the Northwest and beyond, the Vancouver celebration was the last and largest of a series of nationwide "America's Celebrate Freedom Salute" events marking the 60th anniversary of the war's end.

Vancouver's salute was headquartered at the Vancouver National Historic Reserve and included reunions, lectures, displays, tours, musical tributes, flyovers by vintage aircraft and F-15 fighter jets, a gala dinner, concert and dance, and numerous other events.

For more information on the Veterans History Project, which is ongoing, see www.loc.gov/folklife/vets or contact Gayle Cauthers in Voluntary Service at Ext. 55042.



Local Volunteers cont.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your dedication and compassion during this extremely challenging time in our nation's history."

For more information on hurricane relief efforts, see www.va.gov. Collection jars are available in the Canteen and Canteen Store for donations to help VA employees affected by the storms.

As of October 3, 2005, 265 VA employees from Portland, Walla Walla, Roseburg, Puget Sound, White City, Boise, Spokane and Alaska have volunteered to assist in the hurricane-stricken areas. So far 66 have been deployed for at least two-week intervals, including nine from Portland. Watch the next issue of In The News for reports from some of our returned Portland colleagues.

Let Us Hear From You

In The News is a newsletter for employees and volunteers at the Portland VA Medical Center. Please submit story ideas or comments to Public Affairs Officer Pat Forsyth by e-mail or call ext. 52975.

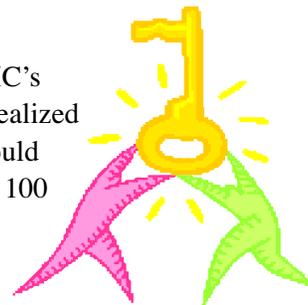


Service Recovery is Here

Pharmacy Kicks Off Pilot for National Program

by Kim Winn

Shortly after discharging a veteran from PVAMC's Nursing Skilled Care Unit in Vancouver, staff realized that he had left without pain medications he would need that evening. The patient lived more than 100 miles away. After discussing options, the team decided they could best serve their patient by transporting the meds to his home. While making arrangements, they called his house to be sure someone would be there. The family's reaction was "Wow!" recalls Vancouver Pharmacy supervisor **Burt Rosenblatt**. "They were impressed that we showed that much care and concern."



Now that's customer service! Or more precisely, customer "service recovery."

We all have our own idea, or standard, of customer service and what it means. For example, a recent Harvard Business School newsletter columnist distilled it as "what the customer perceives and remembers." The Veterans Health Administration weighed in with its 2003 Directive 1003, which outlines the VHA Veteran Customer Service Program. This states, in part, that "VHA is committed to providing world-class service to veterans within a patient-focused culture." It directs leadership to demonstrate their commitment by supporting some key elements.

One of these elements is the Service Recovery Program now mandated at VHA facilities across the country. Service recovery simply means recognizing, preventing and correcting breakdowns in customer service. Its goal is to turn negative situations into potentially positive ones. This exciting program allows each VA employee to identify a service failure and effectively resolve it right at the source. Instead of the old method of directing anyone with a concern to the Patient Advocates, each department has its own "Advocates."

To implement this program in Portland, a Service Recovery Team was appointed in early 2005 - **Perry Robertson, Diane Yassenoff, Alice Avolio, Cyndi Harrison, Rich Maichle, Pat Forsyth, Jacalyn Hardy, and Kim Winn**. They have developed a handbook, training, scripts, promotional materials, patient brochures and surveys, and an implementation plan.

PVAMC's program is currently in its "pilot" phase. Our new Pharmacy Chief, **Subhash Tannan, M.S., R.Ph.**, offered our courageous Pharmacy Service for the initial pilot to help work out the training, reporting, and support issues involved before service recovery is rolled out station-wide. In a service that is, and has always been, a customer-service challenge, they have jumped in with both feet.

continued on page 5

Service Recovery cont.

Their first step was to recruit their Service-Level Advocates. Many staff members have the skills to serve in these positions, but the initial roster includes **Erica L’Esperance, Jennifer Adamson, Jenni Nakashima,** and **Ina McConnell** (Portland) and **Amie Lenzi** and **Peggie Collins** (Vancouver).

These employees went through a three-hour training session designed to enhance their listening, telephone, and interpersonal communication skills. They will not only be taking on patient issues as they arise, but following the issues to resolution and tracking them for the medical center. This tracking will allow managers to identify systemic problems and address them effectively. As an extra touch, when the advocates identify a service failure, they are authorized to offer affected patients a dollar certificate for food or drink in the Canteen or Canteen Store.

With some time and experience under their belt, the Service-Level Advocates are now reporting that the workload has not “exploded.” They all have stated that assisting veterans is something they do in the course of the day anyway, and having the tools learned in Service Recovery training has made that process easier. Having scripts developed for different issues also enhances communication and consistency of the information veterans receive.

.....assisting veterans is something they do in the course of the day anyway, and having the tools learned in Service Recovery training has made that process easier.

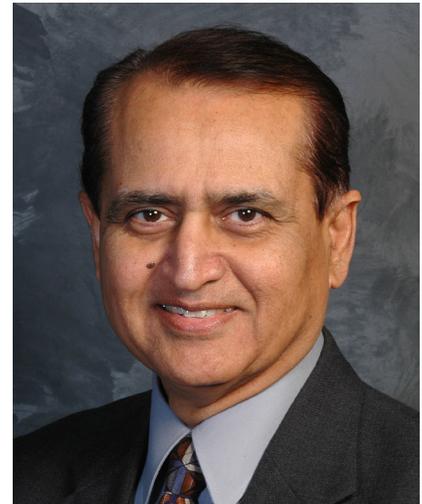
Pharmacy Chief Tannan had previously implemented a Service Recovery Program at the New Mexico VA Health Care System’s pharmacy, where he served as Chief before joining the Portland staff in April, 2005. He says that program ultimately helped save staff time in addition to improving patient satisfaction.

Now Tannan is seeing changes at Portland. “There’s nothing we’re doing that we didn’t do before, but there’s still a difference,” Tannan says. “Before, a lot of staff got involved in a problem and that interrupted the flow of work. Now the problem comes to the Service-Level Advocate, and the solution is more focused.” Further, he says, the culture has changed. “Everybody is making an effort to be aware that we are here to serve and to work as a team. Our ultimate goal is that everybody is a Service-Level Advocate.”

Tannan adds that the program’s documenting of customer service problems is another plus. “If we identify an issue,” he notes, “we can bring that to the staff and ask what we can do so we don’t repeat it.” That includes identifying system-wide problems, of course, potentially improving customer service throughout the medical center.

As the Pharmacy pilot concludes, the station-wide Service Recovery roll-out will begin. Watch for more information and training opportunities. Service Recovery is rolling your way!

“Our ultimate goal is that everybody is a Service-Level Advocate.”



Subhash Tannan, director of the PVAMC Pharmacy, is leading the medical center’s Service Recovery pilot program.

NEWS BRIEFS



Welcome to PVAMC'S New Chief of Police

PVAMC Deputy Director **Kathleen Chapman, MSN, RN, CNA, FACHE**, recently announced the arrival of our new Chief of Police, **Robert Beck**. Mr. Beck comes to us with over 30 years of experience in law enforcement. He spent 29 years with the Anne Arundel County (Maryland) Police Department, retiring as Chief of Police. When he became tired of retirement, Mr. Beck joined federal service, first as Deputy Chief of Police at the National Institutes of Health and then Chief of Police with the United States Mint at West Point. Our new Police Chief is a Vietnam veteran. Welcome, and a big "Thank You" to **Ron McLaughlin**, who has done an outstanding job as Acting Chief.

Prestigious VA Award goes to Portland Researcher

John C. Crabbe, PhD, a world leader in research on the complex interplay between heredity and alcoholism, has received the 2004 William S. Middleton Award, the highest honor given by the Department of Veterans Affairs for scientific achievement. Crabbe is director of the Portland Alcohol Research Center (PARC) at PVAMC, VA Senior Research Career Scientist and OHSU Professor of Behavioral Neuroscience. Under his leadership, VA and OHSU researchers at the PARC share the goal of identifying genes involved in alcoholism. They have made significant strides that may point the way to new approaches in prevention and treatment. Crabbe received his award June 29, 2005, at the annual meeting of the Research Society on Alcoholism.

Wendy Bumgardner Honored in Walker "Hall of Fame"

Wendy Bumgardner, Administrative Officer in the PVAMC Rehabilitation & Long Term Care Division, was recently inducted into the Hall of Fame of the nation's largest organization of walking clubs, American Volkssport Association. This honor, which has been awarded only five times in over 25 years, recognizes service to the AVA and promotion of walking, health and fitness.

Kelly Goudreau Elected President of NACNS Board

Kelly Goudreau, DSN, RN, CNS, Director of the PVAMC Education Service, is president elect of the governing board of the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS). She will become president in March 2006 at the organization's annual convention. The NACNS is made up entirely of clinical nurse specialists, in all specialty areas, and is the national voice for CNS issues.

Dr. Kaul New Chief of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Service

Matthew Kaul, MD, was recently appointed Chief of PVAMC's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service. He had been acting Chief for the past year and assumes the position vacated by **John (Jack) Dryden, MD**, who is now the medical center's Chief of Staff. Dr. Kaul has been a PVAMC staff member for the past 10 years. In addition to his duties as clinician and teacher, he is an active researcher with a primary interest in electro-diagnostic testing.

VFW Honors Post Led by PVAMC Employee

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 12011 in Battle Ground, Washington, has been named an All-American Post, receiving national VFW honors for being the top Post in VFW's division for membership. Led by Commander **Dennis Moore, LPN**, a staff member in PVAMC's NSCU/CRU in Vancouver, Post 12011 increased its membership by 400 percent over the past year. Moore has been honored as a VFW All-State and All-American Commander. He serves as Chief Petty Officer in the Naval Reserves and returned from a tour of duty in Iraq in October 2003.

TSP Open Season Eliminated

As of July 1, 2005, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Seasons have been eliminated. Employees covered by FERS or CSRS may now make contribution elections to start, change, stop, or resume Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) investments at any time. However, staff covered by FERS still must serve a waiting period before they can receive agency contributions to their TSP accounts.

New Method Predicts High-Risk Prostate Cancer

Although one in six men will develop prostate cancer during his lifetime, only one in 10 cases will be life-threatening. Since prostate-specific androgen (PSA) tests became widely available, however, more men than ever are receiving biopsies and treatment for the cancer - with accompanying side effects. Three out of four prostate biopsies are negative for cancer, and in men with a PSA less than 10, only 9 percent have cancer. Now PVAMC and OHSU researchers led by **Mark Garzotto, MD**, Director of Urologic Oncology at PVAMC and OHSU associate professor of surgery, have developed a new method to identify men most likely to benefit from a biopsy. Using age and results from clinical tests, the researchers developed a chart called a nomogram that they found could accurately predict which men may have the most aggressive type of prostate cancer. The team presented their study and nomogram in May at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

PVAMC Celebrates Cancer Survivors

The eighth annual PVAMC Cancer Survivors' Day was held June 9, 2005, in the Portland Auditorium. Guest speaker was **Mark Garzotto, MD**, Director of Urologic Oncology at PVAMC, who spoke on "Therapeutic Advances in Prostate Cancer." A survivor panel discussed the challenges they faced with cancer and answered questions from the audience. Once again, PVAMC employees showed their creativity with an array of inviting goody baskets that went to lucky door-prize winners. This year's basket competition winners were: "Apple a Day" from SSCU/GI Lab, Best Overall; "Oregon Rainbow" from Operative Care Division, Fanciest; "Hit the Road" from FMS, Most Masculine; "Taking Care of Me!" from Prosthetics/SAS Vancouver, Most Feminine; "Enjoy a Summer BBQ on Us" from Q&P, Most Creative; "Movie Time" from Human Resources, Funniest; "Family Game Night" from the Business Office, Most Practical; and "Complete Dinner" from PCSD-Critical Care-ICU, Tastiest.

PVAMC Team Receives Nursing Innovations Award

A PVAMC team led by **Victoria Church, RN, MSN, CNS**, has received one of the 2005 VA Office of Nursing Services Innovations Awards for their Best Practices Initiative to improve outcomes of telemetry - a cardiac monitoring system that alerts medical staff to life-threatening abnormalities in a patient's heart rhythm. Action plans developed by PVAMC's team have been shared throughout the VA system.

Established in 2003 to recognize nursing leadership in quality improvement, the Innovations Awards honor 10 teams led by VA nursing staff who have created programs and/or initiatives that provide innovative best practices. Portland submissions have won in each of the three years since this award was established.

In addition to Ms. Church, Portland's multi-disciplinary team included **Alice Avolio, RN**, engineer **Rob Hertert, Richard Harper, MD**, and **Greg Larsen, MD**. They will be recognized during the annual VA Nursing Leadership Conference in April, 2006, receiving a plaque and \$10,000 to be divided equally among team members. Congratulations to all!



NCRAR Hosts International Conference on Auditory Aging

by Carolyn Landsverk

Hearing problems faced by older people - a major and increasing problem in an aging population - were the focus of a recent conference hosted by the PVAMC-based VA RR&D National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR).

Held in downtown Portland September 22 and 23, the conference was attended by more than 200 guests from 32 states, Israel and Canada. **Margaret Giannini, MD**, Director of the Office on Disability, US Department of Health and Human Services, provided opening remarks. Sessions included case studies and roundtable discussions as well as presentations on recent advances in knowledge about the hearing problems of aging, such as difficulty understanding rapid speech and understanding speech in noisy situations.

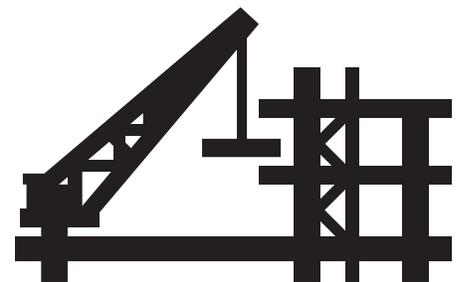
A pre-conference workshop titled "Ototoxicity: Early Identification and Monitoring" was held at PVAMC on September 21. NCRAR staff presented the protocol developed by center director **Stephen Fausti, PhD**, for monitoring harmful effects of certain medications on hearing function.

PVAMC Construction Update

by John Dodier

Several major PVAMC construction projects are nearing completion. In Vancouver, the VA portion of the new Clark County Center of Community Health will be finished in October, and VA move-in dates are scheduled late October and November. In addition to VISN 20 offices, the Fee Basis, Office of Resolution Management, and Emergency Preparedness offices will relocate to the new building. Next year, Rehab and Long Term Care Administration, Home Health Care and Contract Nursing Home offices are scheduled to move in as well. The Transplant Lodger Building in Vancouver will be complete in December 2005. It includes 30 two-bedrooms for transplant patients and their families, as well as space for the Compensated Work Therapy program.

In Portland, the final phase of the National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research, located on the P5 level of Bldg.103, will be complete in January 2006. The seismic upgrade of Building 6 will be complete in February 2006.





PVA Donates Commode Chairs for PVAMC Patients

Jerry Ryan, President of the Oregon Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America, presented two commode chairs to our Medical Center in an atrium ceremony October 4. These special wheelchairs, which enable paraplegic patients to more easily carry out self care, will be put to good use on the 5D Inpatient Unit and the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Unit in Vancouver. Many thanks to PVA for this generous contribution! Pictured (left to right) are Medical Center Deputy Director **Kathy Chapman, MSN, RN, CNAA, FACHE**, Associate Director for Operations **Floss Mambourg, MS, RN, Judi Dickerson, RN, Troy Canfield, Alice Avolio, RN, Jerry Ryan, Mary Murray, NA, Kim Kirpatrick, CRRN, Barb Riley (seated), Brian Roth, NA, and Amy Brown, RN.**

Florence Nightingale Hosts NSCU Talent Show

Florence Nightingale celebrated her 185th birthday May 12 at the Nursing Skilled Care Unit in Vancouver by hosting a talent show featuring almost 20 acts. All participants were winners, but the top three chosen by a panel of patients and employees were NSCU Work-Study student **Michael Gebhard** (diggeridoo), Pharmacist **Lynette Klaus** (vocal solo), and Nursing Assistant **Travis Helms** (vocal solo). Pictured with Florence (NSCU/CRU Nurse Manager **Waynette Ralls, RN**) are performers Q&P Program Analyst **Nancy Kraft** and NSCU/CRU Administrative Director **Lin VanWyngarden**. Florence herself just had to deliver a short lecture on hand washing, which she first advocated during the Crimean War.



Portland Honors its Volunteers

By Gayle Cauthers

Every April, as the nation celebrates volunteers, we recognize and thank all of the volunteers at PVAMC's Portland and Vancouver Divisions for their remarkable contributions. This year's annual awards banquet was held on April 12th at the Monarch Hotel in Clackamas. Volunteers were pleased to visit with invited VA executives and dignitaries and enjoyed an awards ceremony honoring volunteer contributions.

Our Medical Center could not provide the same quality of service and support for veterans without our volunteers. It is easy to overlook the importance of volunteers because they rarely sing their own praises, yet they change so many lives.

Guided by this year's theme "*Volunteers Light The Way*," our volunteers inspire the VA staff and the veterans we serve by performing a range of important duties, from playing bingo and visiting with hospitalized veterans, to doing clerical tasks or helping with specialized medical procedures. In FY 2004, 990 volunteers contributed nearly 116,000 hours of service to our medical center, including \$443,473 in gifts and donations. Monetary estimates aside, it is impossible to calculate the value of volunteerism. As we celebrate our volunteers, we say "Thank You" to the selfless men, women, and youth who embody the American spirit of caring for one another.

2005 Volunteer of the Year

by Gayle Cauthers

The PVAMC Volunteer of the Year Award is presented to a volunteer who exemplifies the mission and values of the VA Medical Center. This year's award went to someone heavily involved in the community and in serving our local veterans.

This volunteer, along with her spouse, grew up in the Dakotas and raised three children in California, moving to Oregon in 1969. She worked as an RN at OHSU and retired in 1993, wasting no time before contributing time and effort to local community projects, including serving on the city planning commission and volunteering with the county's elementary school reading program. Her love for the community got this volunteer and her spouse elected as Grand Marshals for Hubbard's annual Hop Festival and parade. They are the proud parents of three, grandparents of 10, and great grandparents of three.

In addition to community service, this volunteer donates immeasurable time and materials to local veterans. She started volunteering with PVAMC in January 1987 and has to date spent 4,061 hours in service to our veterans. She has served as the VAVS Hospital Representative for the American Legion Auxiliary and as a member of the Portland VAVS Executive Committee for

many years. Under this volunteer's leadership, these groups have managed to accomplish the following:

- Host the Annual Christmas Gift Shop for Hospitalized Veterans at the Portland VA Medical Center
- Organize the annual luncheon for the Rose Festival court
- Coordinate 40+ volunteers to run the daily Outpatient Coffee Program
- Purchase groceries every two weeks for the Liver/Kidney Lodging Unit veterans in Vancouver, as well as providing needed supplies and materials for this lodging unit.
- Provide materials and supplies for the Chemotherapy Lodging Unit in Portland.
- Purchase clothing and other supplies for 5C patients.
- Coordinate Portland inpatient ward visitations to provide comfort items to individual patients.
- Donate hundreds of quilts, afghans, neck pillows, back-scratchers and special gifts to veterans in the medical center.

We are proud to congratulate **Ann Barrie**, the 2005 PVAMC Volunteer of the Year.



Volunteer of the Year Ann Barrie at "Volunteers Light the Way" Awards Banquet



POW/MIA Day in Vancouver

PVAMC observed National POW/MIA Recognition Day September 16 with a ceremony at the Vancouver Division's Vietnam War Memorial Garden. The event was opened by the Korean War Veterans Association Oregon Trail Chapter Color Guard. Speakers included Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard. During the ceremony, the U.S Army 25th Infantry Division presented a commemorative wreath. A display of Harley-Davidson motorcycles with flags and empty gloves and boots also paid tribute to the missing. The event also celebrated installation of 52 new garden bricks honoring individual veterans, for a total of 629 since the garden was dedicated in November 2002 .

Flu Season On The Horizon What We Need To Know

What Is The Flu?

Influenza (flu) is a contagious illness caused by influenza viruses that attack the respiratory tract in humans. The flu usually comes on suddenly with symptoms including fever (usually high), headache, extreme fatigue, body aches, cough, and sometimes sore throat and stuffy nose. The common cold, on the other hand, seldom produces fever, headache, and severe aches or fatigue.

Why Get Vaccinated Against The Flu?

Influenza is a serious disease, and people of any age can get it. Serious complications such as pneumonia are common in people at high risk. In an average year, the flu causes 36,000 deaths (mostly among those aged 65 or older) and more than 200,000 hospitalizations in the United States. The “flu season” in this country usually spans November through April. During this time, flu viruses are circulating in the population, generally spread by respiratory droplets formed by coughing and sneezing.



Read the Story, Get TEMPO Credit!

Read the following Q&A story, take the quiz, and send your answers with your name and Social Security “last four” to Cyndi Harrison (mail stop P2-PCA) for 1 hour of TEMPO credit.

What Kinds Of Flu Vaccines Are Available?

Two types of vaccines are available. The “flu shot” contains killed flu virus and is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use among people over 6 months old, including healthy people and those with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. The other kind of vaccine is the “nasal-spray flu vaccine” approved in 2003. This vaccine contains weakened live flu viruses and is given by nasal sprayer. It is approved for use only among healthy people between the ages of 5 and 49.

How Do Flu Vaccines Work?

Both types of vaccine provoke the body’s immune system to produce antibodies that provide protection against influenza virus.

Who Is At High Risk For Complications From The Flu?

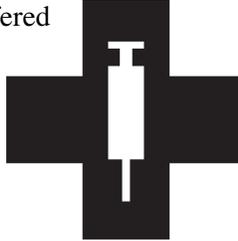
- People 65 and older.
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.
- Adults and children 6 months and older with chronic heart or lung conditions, including asthma.
- Adults and children 6 months and older who needed regular medical care or were hospitalized during the previous year because of a metabolic disease like diabetes, kidney disease or weakened immune system (including problems caused by medicines and by infection with the AIDS virus, HIV).
- Children 6 months to 18 years of age who are on long-term aspirin therapy (Children given aspirin while they have influenza are at risk of a severe complication called Reye’s syndrome.)
- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season.
- All children 6-23 months of age.
- People with any condition that can compromise respiratory function, that is, conditions that make it hard to breathe or swallow, such as brain injury or disease, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders and other nerve and muscle disorders.
- People 50-64 who have one or more medical conditions that place them at risk for serious flu complications (about one-third of this age group in the U.S.)

Should Anybody Who Isn't High-Risk Get A Shot?

Yes - any person in close contact with someone in a high-risk group, such as health care workers, caretakers of children between six and 23 months old, and close contacts of people 65 and older.

When Should I Get A Flu Shot?

Beginning each September, the flu shot should be offered to people at high risk when they are seen by health-care providers. The best time to get vaccinated is from October through November. Flu in the United States usually peaks between late December and early March. A late vaccination is better than none - even if flu is already present in your community.



Who Should Not Be Vaccinated?

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs (eggs are used in vaccine production).
- People who have had a severe reaction to a flu shot in the past.
- People who developed the neurological condition Guillain-Barre syndrome after a previous flu shot.
- Children less than 6 months old.
- People who currently have a moderate or severe illness with a fever. These people should wait until recovered to get a flu shot.
- If you have any questions about whether you should have a flu shot, talk to your health-care provider.

Does Flu Vaccine Work Right Away?

NO, it takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop and provide protection against influenza viruses. That is why it's a good idea to get vaccinated early in the fall before the flu season really gets under way.

Can I Get The Flu Even Though I Got A Flu Shot This Year?

Yes. We've all heard of cases of "I got the shot and still got the flu!" That's because the shot's ability to protect you depends on two things:

- 1 The age and health status of the person getting the vaccine.
- 2 The similarity or "match" between the virus strains in the vaccine and those currently circulating in the community.

Nonetheless, your chances of getting the flu are much lower if you've had the vaccine.

Why Do I Need To Get Vaccinated Against The Flu Every Year?

Flu viruses change from year to year. That means you can get the flu more than once during your life. Immunity built up by infection by one virus may not protect you against a new virus strain. Also, a vaccine made against flu viruses known to be circulating last year may not

protect against strains circulating this year. Further, even if similar strains are circulating, immunity provoked by last year's shot will have declined during the year after you were vaccinated.

What Is The "Bird Flu" I've Heard About In The News?

Bird flu is caused by viruses found in birds worldwide. Although they usually don't make birds sick, these viruses are very contagious among them and can cause severe illness and death in some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks and turkeys. In recent Asian outbreaks, millions of birds either died or were destroyed to stop spread of the disease. Bird flu viruses don't usually infect humans, but some human cases and deaths were reported during these outbreaks. Unlike human influenza, bird flu apparently does not pass easily from person to person. Because viruses are always changing, however, public health officials are planning for the possibility that bird flu could pose a serious threat to human populations.

Sources: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

**Occupational Health
will be providing
Flu Vaccinations
for this year.
Watch for Flyers and
Bulletins on times/
locations.**

Flu Quiz for 1 Hour of TEMPO Credit

Send your answers with your name and Social Security “last four” to Cyndi Harrison (mail stop P2-PCA), or bring to Bldg. 101, Rm. 120, for 1 hour of TEMPO credit.

Your Name _____ Social Security Last four _____

Please circle the correct answer for the five questions.

1. Which of the following is true?
 - a. Influenza is a severe form of the common cold.
 - b. Diarrhea and vomiting are the most common influenza symptoms.
 - c. Influenza causes about 36,000 deaths each year in the United States.
 - d. Influenza seldom produces symptoms of fever, headache, or extreme fatigue.

2. Who in the following list should get a flu shot?
 - a. People 65 and older.
 - b. Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season.
 - c. People who currently are ill with a fever and think they may have the flu.
 - d. All of the above.
 - e. Both “a” and “b.”

3. Who in the following list should **not** get a flu shot?
 - a. People who have a severe allergy to eggs.
 - b. Children 6-23 months old.
 - c. Adults with chronic heart or lung conditions such as asthma.
 - d. Both “a” and “c.”

4. Which of the following is true?
 - a. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the flu shot to provide protection.
 - b. You only need to get a flu shot every five years, when antibody levels decline.
 - c. You can only get the flu once during your lifetime.
 - d. All of the above.

5. Which of the following is true?
 - a. There were no human cases during recent bird flu outbreaks in Asia in which millions of birds died or were destroyed to stop spread of the disease.
 - b. Bird flu viruses pass easily from one person to another.
 - c. Bird flu viruses pass easily from one chicken to another.
 - d. Viruses are always changing, so bird flu has the potential to become a more serious threat to public health.
 - e. All of the above.
 - f. Both “c” and “d” are true.