

Keystone

CHRONICLE



respect | compassion | trust | commitment | excellence

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The Lebanon VA Medical Center's mission is to provide quality health care, with dignity, compassion, and respect, to our Veterans.

This edition is dedicated to all of our employees who, on a daily basis, continue to provide the "best care anywhere" to America's Veterans. Whether employed as nurses, clinicians, maintenance workers, executives, or administrative staff, every employee stands as a living testimony of our motto, "excellence in all."

Each time I go on a walkabout

to a different area of the medical center, Veterans tell me about the high level of responsiveness and care they receive at Lebanon. It is certainly an honor to lead an extraordinary team of individuals who devote their time and energy to caring for America's Veteran. I continue to be amazed as I watch the plans our staff have brought forth transform into reality. Working together we have greatly expanded behavioral health services adding over 30 positions within the past 2 years, expanded non-institutional care and services at our Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs); we continue to receive high satisfaction and performance ratings as demonstrated by seven external reviews and audits. We have established an upward mobility program for employees and developed construction projects that will transform how care is provided to our Veterans.

Positive attitudes, teamwork and genuine concern and compassion for Veterans are the reasons that the Lebanon VA continues to be ranked among the best health care organizations. This issue is devoted to a celebration of our employees who continue to put forth their best efforts every day. Every day your accomplishments show the dedication and motivation that our Veterans have earned. It's about the "Best Care Anywhere, By the Best Employees!" I see an even brighter future for Lebanon VAMC. I thank each of you for the superb professional, administrative and clinical services you provide to our Nation's Veterans. We are all stronger when we work together.

Robert W. Callahan, Jr.
Director



Lebanon VA Medical Center Continues to Lead with its 2009 Employee Survey Scores!

In 2009, the All Employee Survey was conducted with over 68% participating by providing your thoughts and impressions. Based upon your scores, Lebanon scored higher than the VISN and National averages in the majority of questions. The All Employee Survey scores reflect that our employees take great pride in their jobs and continue our motto, "The Best Care Anywhere, The Best Employees Anywhere." Based on these scores, Lebanon VA Medical Center continues to excel as an Employer of Choice.

The Lebanon VA Medical Center is leading the way for employee responses:

- All Lebanon VA Medical Center response averages were higher than those of VISN 4.
- Lebanon VA Medical Center ranked #1 or #2 in the VISN in 32 of the 37 categories. (See chart at right, 13 of the categories are shown.)

While there is always room for improvement, all employees should be commended for making our facility a top-rated medical center in customer satisfaction!



respect Webster's Dictionary defines respect as: a feeling of high regard, honor, or esteem. American Veterans risked their lives for the People of the United States so it seems obvious that Veterans deserve respect. There are several ways that I feel respect is conveyed. I try to listen to what my Veterans have to say; I am considerate of their likes and dislikes; I value their opinions; I appreciate their cultural backgrounds; and I also try to learn something from each of them. After all, we do not give Veterans' health care; they earned it!



Vicki Leib
Program Assistant, Acute Care

NURSING

Nursing is the backbone of all patient care. Increasing the knowledge of our nursing profession is a vital key to our success. The Education Department works to foster an environment of productive learning and career advancement. "Most recently I have received an increased interest by our employees about the types of educational funding programs available for career advancement," said Sandy Geib, Chief of the Lebanon VA Medical Center Education and Staff Development Department.

THERE ARE a number of options for nurses and other hands-on-provider support staff to further their education and the medical center has increased the amount of resources available for further education. One of the best options to help finance further education specifically in Nursing is the National Nursing Education Initiative (NNEI) Program.

The program was created by the Department of Veterans Affairs about 10 years ago to increase the number of nurses with higher-education degrees. NNEI is designed specifically for registered nurses who want to further their education to enhance their knowledge of patient care. The NNEI Program awards nurses with "scholarships for completion of bachelor's degrees in nursing or advanced degrees in nursing or related fields."

Another program available to staff is the Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP). EISP is geared toward employees who are not registered nurses (RN) and want to pursue a career in the field in nursing or a health care related field. EISP as well as NNEI are administered nationally by the Health Care Retention and Recruitment Office (HRRO) and locally by the scholarship coordinator in the Education Department, Anne Wertz. EISP is designed to help VA

recruit employees to positions that are difficult to fill.

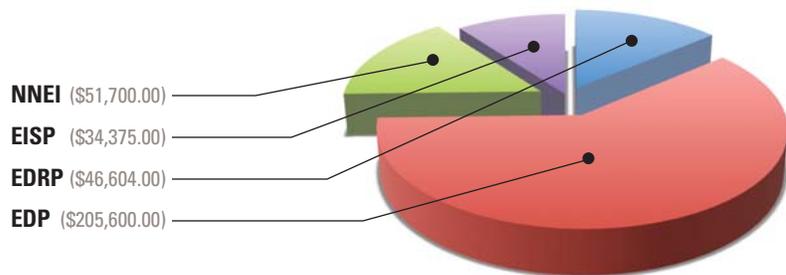
Jamie Fischer, Staff Development Specialist, has taken advantage of the educational opportunities available through VA. She completed her Bachelor's Degree in Biology and started working in the Food Service Department while she was in school to become a Registered Nurse. Since then, Fischer has received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), and in May 2009 received her Master of Science in Nursing Education degree.

To obtain her goals, Fischer utilized several programs to further her education. One of them was the Educational Debt Reduction Program (EDRP) which is administered locally by the Human Resources department. The program helps recently hired employees at the time of their hire with outstanding educational loans to reduce some of their debt in

exchange for continued Federal service. Through EDRP employees are able to receive a maximum award of \$44,000 in exchange for 5 years of service.

Another program is our VISN Employee Development Program (EDP) funding, which in Fischer's opinion is the "most flexible." This program is managed locally through the Education Department.

When it comes to the above mentioned educational options and programs, Fischer said, "the Lebanon VA makes it possible for all employees to reach their academic and career goals that would otherwise be unaffordable." In fiscal year 2009, 205 Lebanon VA Medical Center employees took advantage of the above-mentioned educational programs providing \$338,279 toward the cost of higher education.



trust



Brenda Ackerman
EMS Service

As a VA employee, the word trust means that you are true to the mission of the VA and faithful to your job which is to serve Veterans to the best of your ability. Trust is reflected through your character and attitude that you display to others everyday. Trust is earned not granted; usually through evidence of doing your best. Trust also means being reliable and dependable as a worker and understanding the needs of others. I am proud to work at the Lebanon VA Medical Center knowing that Veterans are fighting for our Country and we are here caring for them.

Administrative Officer Trainee Program

A Vision of Upward Mobility



ENSURING organizational mobility and improve upward mobility is a key factor in developing a professional workforce. As a joint management/labor initiative, Bob Callahan, Medical Center Director, and Justin Remsnyder, Union President, AFGE 1966, worked together to give upward mobility a “boost.” The administrative office trainee program not only enhances the professional careers of employees, but also assists in the retaining of quality staff members who have shown potential for advancement. This program benefits the medical center enhancing succession planning and the personal growth of its staff.

Employees who competed and were selected for the program are currently in GS 5 and 7 positions. The goal of this initiative is to enhance the employees’ knowledge skills and ability for more increasingly difficult assignments as their careers advance. After 2 years of intense

classroom, personal development and on the job rotational assignments, employees have the potential to advance to a GS 9 level. “This is just the beginning,” says Justin Remsnyder. “I think a very beneficial program has been created for employees. Not only do employees gain knowledge and skills that will help them move into more demanding positions, they also are able to experience different aspects of the VA outside of their current career field.”

Paddy Kindt, an Administrative Trainee working in the Behavioral Health Care Line says, “I am receiving on the job training that will lead to me being a more viable member of the medical center.” Another employee participating in the program, Deborah Mentzer, says, “I wanted to be in the program because I saw it as a wonderful opportunity to increase my knowledge base of the medical center’s functions and to be of better service to the facility. This

experience is enhancing my professional growth.”

As part of the upward mobility initiative, employees are exposed to various aspects of care line operations outside of their normal duties. As an Administrative Officer trainee, Karen Campbell says, “The variety of learning opportunities is unique to this position. We work with a broad spectrum of people in a large number of diverse activities ranging from projects for senior management, business planning, human resources, payroll processes and construction projects.” Karen conveys that she is using this as a “stepping stone” to help build the skills and experiences she needs to achieve her career goals.

There are currently six total positions with plans to expand the program in the future.

compassion



Theresa (Tess) Krall
LPN, Extended Care

As a Hospice Nurse, I embrace the meaning of compassion; a quality that is engraved in the make up of an individual. Compassion cannot be taught in a classroom or seminar. It is the individual that interprets it uniquely. Compassion can be as simple as a squeeze of the hand, a gentle touch, or a reassuring word. Compassion allows you to hold the inevitable in one hand, and the family’s heart in the other.

Inspiration leads to Dedication

Dr. Mary Averill

DR. MARY AVERILL, Associate Chief of Staff/Primary Care, came to Lebanon VAMC in October of 2008. As an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania she worked with Veterans from the Philadelphia VAMC doing taste-testing research. After completing medical school at Harvard, she completed an internal medical residency at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. After a year of geriatric fellowship at the Palo Alto VA Medical Center and a year at an HMO in the Dallas, Texas area, she joined the Dallas VA Medical Center. Over the next decade she “answered the call” and established herself in leadership roles in Ambulatory Care, Home Care and Extended Care.

“I was always inspired by my father, who served as a Navy Medical Officer from 1947 to 1949 and then went on to become a private cardiologist and family physician,” says Dr. Averill, showing a picture of him as a young man in uniform, which she proudly displays in her office next to her diplomas.

In 1995, Dr. Averill transferred to the East Orange VA Medical Center in New Jersey. After 2 years in primary care, she was promoted to Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) for Ambulatory Care. A major accomplishment during her time there was the integration of the outpatient clinics and Urgent Care/ Emergency Departments of the Lyons and East Orange Campuses, which merged to become the VA New Jersey Healthcare System.

During her tenure there, she also opened six new Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) to make a total of eight by 2002.

Dr. Averill was then recruited for the ACOS/Primary Care at the W.G. “Bill” Hefner VA Medical Center in Salisbury, NC, in 2003, where over the next 5 years she managed rapid growth, and the doubling of the primary care population served from 30,000 patients to 60,000. “It was an exciting time with recruiting new physicians from all over the country to care for Veterans,” comments Dr. Averill. In addition, she modernized and expanded the Emergency Department facilities at Salisbury to meet the growing acute medical needs of the Veterans from the Piedmont area of North Carolina.

Now that Dr. Averill is firmly established at Lebanon VAMC, she has not delayed in identifying her goals. Working closely with Ms. Elizabeth Miller in the Women’s Veteran Health Program, she is working to create a comprehensive women’s health clinic with a major renovation in progress, and a plan to continue expansion of women’s health care throughout the CBOCs. In addition, Dr. Averill is working closely with the Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) program to establish a similar model of designated providers who can offer “one-stop shopping” care to Veterans at every health care site.

Dr. Averill is well on her way to making her legacy at Lebanon. The ambitious goals she has set and her motivation to see them through will help Lebanon VAMC maintain its reputation for excellence in health care. “Improving health care is a very exciting mission to me. Through enthusiastic teamwork, we can all make a real difference in our Veterans care.”



On a Mission

Elizabeth Miller

THE LEBANON VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER offers a Women’s Veterans Health Program for women Veterans to receive a full range of medical and mental health care services. Unfortunately many women who have honorably served our country are unaware of the VA benefits and health care services they can receive by enrolling in VA health care.



The Veteran’s Health Care Act of 1992 enabled VA medical centers nationwide to drastically improve their services for women Veterans. Those services consist of: Primary Care, Gynecological Care, Reproductive and Maternity Care, Patient Education, preventive screenings including breast cancer, cervical cancer, and osteoporosis. In addition, counseling and treatment for sexual trauma, substance abuse, depression, and post-traumatic

stress disorder (PTSD), is also available.

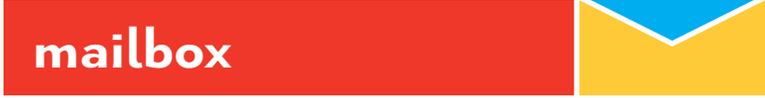
At every VA medical center there is a Women’s Veterans Program Manager (WVPM) dedicated to serving as an advocate for women Veterans. Elizabeth Miller, Physician Assistant Certified (PA-C), is the WVPM who helps women coordinate their health care within Lebanon VAMC. Ms. Miller’s father was a WWII Army Veteran who stayed for a short time as an inpatient. “I really never dreamed that I would work here, but 21 years later it turned out to be one of the best decisions I made in my life,” says Ms. Miller. “This is my way of giving back because we should never take more than we give.”

This is my way of giving back because we should never take more than we give.

Though the services particular to women have been available for quite some time, outreach efforts are being implemented to make female Veterans aware of what services are offered here at the LVAMC. Currently women make up 14% of the active military in the United States and approximately 20% of all new recruits are women. In addition, 11% of Veterans from OEF/OIF are women, which equates to 70,000

women nationwide. When asked how Ms. Miller would like to see the program expand, Ms. Miller responded: “My biggest wish is that we will be able to provide comprehensive primary care for all female Veterans and we are doing just that with the new Women’s Health Clinic that is under construction.” The Women’s Clinic, once completed, will be located on the 5th floor of Building 17 at the medical center campus.

Many of today’s female Veterans who work outside the home have child care needs, and time constraints. They need care in a timely fashion; therefore, expanding comprehensive women’s primary care to our Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) has been an answer to their needs. We have added women’s care in all of our CBOCs this year.


mailbox

Dear Mr. Callahan,

I recently completed the MOVE Program at Lebanon VA Hospital. I would like to let you and other Veterans know what an excellent program this is. The staff/instructors are the Best of the Best; it is not a diet, but a lifestyle.

For overweight Veterans who really want to lose some pounds, tell them to ask their primary care doctor about MOVE. They won't regret it.

I don't know about other VA hospitals, but I think Lebanon VA is the top of the heap.

Thank you, **J.M.**, Vietnam Veteran

Mr. Griffiths,

This letter is written to express appreciation for the care, concern and professional treatment I received at the Lebanon Veterans Hospital. While I find this to be a general and ongoing fact, let me address my statements to the specific surgery performed by the Department of Orthopedics.

On August 19, 2008, Dr. Jones and Mike Sanders performed a total knee replacement involving my left knee. During the pre-op period, the actual surgery and post-operative follow up, the above named plus the entire staff, which included therapy, nursing personnel and office took time and care to not only keep me fully informed, but dedicated their efforts to my comfort and healing.

While my recovery now is well underway, my good fortune most certainly is indicative of the dedicated efforts of all concerned. It most definitely reflects the attention to detail of the Orthopedic Department.

Thank you to many, many "servants" of all Veterans' health and welfare.

Sincerely, **E.J.B.**

Dear Sir,

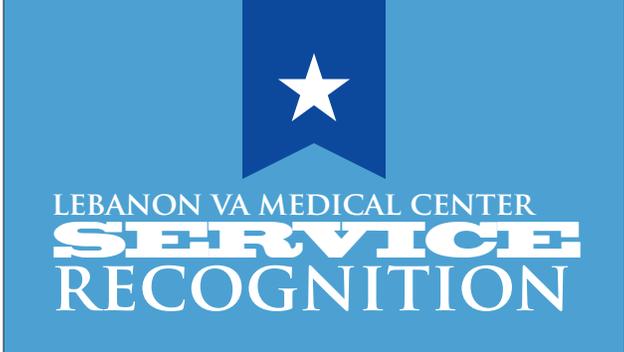
I was a patient at your facility for a couple of weeks during August/September 2008. When I was initially told that I was going to a VA Hospital I was not very happy. Having seen all of the bad reports about the VA in the news, I thought that I was not going to get the medical/metal care that I needed.

Once I arrived at your hospital, my mind began to change from the first moments. I was treated with respect and received the best care that I have ever seen given from a hospital staff. I was housed in the Behavioral Health Unit, and I can truly say that they are top notch professionals. I was amazed at the way the staff constantly checked on all of the patients, and made sure that we received our medications and meals, etc. They were not judgmental about the patients' conditions, and treated our mental health issues, like any other medical condition.

I especially want to mention the OT staff, Trish and Andy. They went above and beyond their jobs, and made sure that I (along with others) attended my sessions. They also talked to everyone during these sessions, and I got more counseling during these meetings, than I received from anyone else. More than anything their calm demeanor while talking about what we could change in our lives when we got out, in order to make our lives better, had a dramatic effect on me.

Since I have been released I give nothing but praises to the Lebanon VA Hospital, whenever I am asked how things were there. Even after I was out, your staff followed up, and tried to make sure I was headed in the right direction. Thank you for your leadership, and I hope that all Veterans receive the great care that I did.

Sincerely, **R.W.H.**


**LEBANON VA MEDICAL CENTER
SERVICE
RECOGNITION**
**10
YEAR AWARDS**

Rodney Hitz
Linda Moyer
Billy Reigert
Marlisa Smith
Vickie Torres
Bradley Davidson
Lisa Daly
David Lynch
Karen Campbell
Tammy Wessner
David Sauerwein
Justin Remsnyder
Mary Adams
Katherine Mulligan
Elisa Breeze
Jeremy Connatser
Brian Fosnocht
George Wilkins
Dale Getz
William Weaver
Frederick Coopey
Ernest Allen
Judith Bashore
Melissa Boustany
Robin Perry
Teresa Wallace
Clagett Wolfe
Lisa Getz
Peter Paulk
Suhail Ali
James Stauffer
William Griffiths
Janet Fortna
Lisa McKee

**15
YEAR AWARDS**

Theodore Gudelski
Timothy Ditzler
Susan Levack
Colleen Skylakon
Rebecca Kerstetter
Rosemary Koch
Melissa Mabry
Ivy Matthews
Gregory Santiago
Ruth Hitz
Virginia Galebach
Penny Whary
Lynn Rutt
Peggy Boyer
Gary Fox
Beverly Bronson
Noreen Perry
Misty Anfinson
Verna Geesaman
Karen Reager
Heather Knorr
Linda Sylvester
Wendy Meginley
Lori Wise
Nancy Cavanaugh
Rodney Flanary
Donna Youndt

**15
YEAR AWARDS**

James Sumlin
Jonathan Benach
Scott Schreve
Ashok Khattri
Timothy Smith
Arthur Lyon
Elaine Dernovsek
Michael McAllister
Lawrence Thompson

**20
YEAR AWARDS**

Gary Deck
Dorothy Rebusck
Rebecca Sterner
Jose Torres
William Reeves
Sandra Geib
Colleen Zimmerman
Kathleen Leisey
Candace Rumpf
Beverly Cantrell
Michelle Torres
Edward Schlessner
Paula Dimond
Judith Reed
Mary Horsfield
Linda Cook
Rita Koons
David Kreiser
Kim Hoffsmith
Lorna McAlevy
Robert Dayhoff
Curtis Mead
Ernest Deaton
Brenda Wolfe
Robert Thompson
Carolyn Bolian
Charles Burkholz
Carolyn Leonard
Deborah Jackson
Mary Tonini
Elinor Gerock
Lesley Thome
Elaine Sadler
Wanda Klingner
William Jenkins
Kelly Bradshaw
Kathleen Shaver

**25
YEAR AWARDS**

Roger Houtz
Juanita Martin
Diane Brown
Cynthia Sobiesiak
Penelope Leibold
Raimundo Mercado
Duc Kim Hoang
Frances Kunath
Ronald Albaugh
Carol Bretz
Mary Averill

**25
YEAR AWARDS**

Daisy Long
Bryan Albricht
Richard Progin
John Karnbach
Kenneth Michael
William McCracken
Heather Reilly
Timothy Boyer
Lisa Milano
Charles Tyler
Chris Likes
Edward Breen

**30
YEAR AWARDS**

Mary Murray
Mary Swirsky
Joanne Arnold
Peter Lorenzetti
Anthony Mendez
Patricia Sincavage
Dennis Wolfe
Dawn Fenstermacher
Dawn Wunderlich
Barry Southam
Gina Lux
Grover Royal
Rodney Hackman
Pamela Keim
Margaret Wilson
David Helms
Larry Reider
Gregory Lang
Thomas Minerick
Kay Brandt
Michael Ditzler
Pamela Shaffer
Otis Nash
Jeffrey Adams
Edgar Aikins
Margie Smeltz
Diana Hromco
Tamah Piel
Ruth Barley
Beverly Mitchell
Susan Habecker
Scott Harman

**35
YEAR AWARDS**

Joellen Noll
Ann Jones
Robert Wood
Jose Rodriguez
Mary Manz
Andrea Karoscik
Eileen Hackman
Bonita Starnowsky
Beverly Rittle



commitment

Once you accept a position or assignment, you see it through to the end. You do not quit and walk away just because it is difficult; this is commitment. Our Veterans proved their understanding of this concept through their service to our country; we are free because of their commitment to the military mission. As Veterans Health Administration employees, we must show the same commitment in the medical care and services we provide. We have accepted the mission and we will serve for the duration; this is our commitment.



Margaret (Peggy) Wilson
ACNS, Acute Care



excellence

The Lebanon VA Medical Center is continually striving for excellence. Clinics are expanding hours, buildings are being renovated, and outpatient services are being expanded. All of this is in the pursuit of excellence for our Veterans. In the medical field the standard of excellence in care is constantly changing and VA is continually enhancing care and services to meet this standard and surpass it. VA is also a pioneer in defining this standard with tools such as the electronic patient record.



Julie Bergstresser
Social Worker, TBI Clinic