

Working Together

Issue 18
Winter 2004



WARREN PARK PHOTO

CAMEOS
of
CARING

VAPHS Nurses Honored for Extraordinary Commitment to Quality Patient Care (Page 6)

Director's Winter Message	2
\$200 Million Major Construction Update	4
Cameos of Caring Awards Gala	6

A Message from the **Director**

University Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15240
1-866 4 VA PITT
(1-866-482-7488)

Check out our Web site at:
www.va.gov/pittsburgh

Michael E. Moreland
Director

Rajiv Jain, MD
Chief of Staff

Patricia Nealon
Acting Associate Director

Ira Richmond
Associate Director
for Patient Care Services

The VA Pittsburgh
Working Together

is published for the employees, volunteers, patients and friends of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. To submit articles, editorials, letters or story ideas for possible inclusion, please contact David Cowgill at 412-688-6224 or via e-mail: david.cowgill@med.va.gov

Editor
 David E. Cowgill
 Public & Community
 Relations Coordinator

Design & Layout
 Rodney E. Boyce
 Creative Director
 Square Peg Design

Photography
 Warren Park
 Glenn Hangard

On the Cover:
 Janice Rihely and Darlene
 Dietrich, 2004 VAPHS
 Cameos of Caring Winners.

Dear Fellow Employees, Volunteers, Veterans and Friends of the VA,

ON behalf of the Executive Leadership Team, I would like to wish each of you a Happy New Year! Many of us spent the Christmas and New Year's holidays with family and friends. I want to express my appreciation to those of you who spent much of your time caring for our veterans over the holidays. Our direct care providers, support staff, and dedicated volunteers are the ones who made this holiday season special for our patients who were hospitalized. I also want to recognize and commend our staff for coordinating special activities and parties for our veterans during the holiday season. It was a pleasure for me to attend many of these events, which brought such happiness to our veterans who must spend their holidays away from their loved ones.

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This last issue of *Working Together* for 2004 features an article on the status of our \$200 million major construction project, highlights of the 2004 Cameos of Caring Nursing Awards Program, a photo collage of our Employee Appreciation Picnics, and highlights of various projects and initiatives which will assist our Healthcare System in continuing to provide care that is second to none. It also spotlights the many outstanding achievements and milestones of our staff.

Mr. Moreland shown with Sharon Marciniak and Ellesha McCray, previous Cameos of Caring winners, and Darlene Dietrich one of this year's winners.

It was nice to see many of you at the Holiday Open Houses or as I made rounds over the holidays. I am very proud of our dedicated staff and volunteers and recognize your outstanding efforts in making our patients feel like family during this special time of the year.

I hope everyone has a happy and healthy New Year as we begin a new year of serving veterans.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Moreland
 Director, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

Vital Signs

VAPHS Nurses Provide Hurricane Disaster Relief

VA employees in VISN 4 traveled to Florida to aid in disaster relief. In the wake of Hurricane Francis, the team of four set off for Florida. As they traveled, Hurricane Ivan arrived in Florida to intensify the disaster. As they waited for Florida to become safe again, they stopped at the Atlanta VA to inventory and stock the mobile clinic they drove down from Wilkes-Barre.

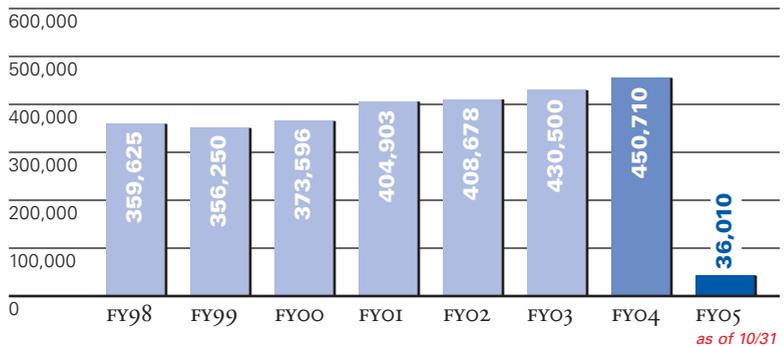
The group spent two days at the badly damaged Pensacola outpatient clinic (POPC) to help veterans who had lost their medications in the storm, suffered relatively minor injuries or just were not feeling right. From there, they traveled to a VFW Post in Niceville, Florida. Both major highways connecting the area to the POPC were badly damaged. The group provided a lifeline for many veterans who had no other access to medical care or medications.



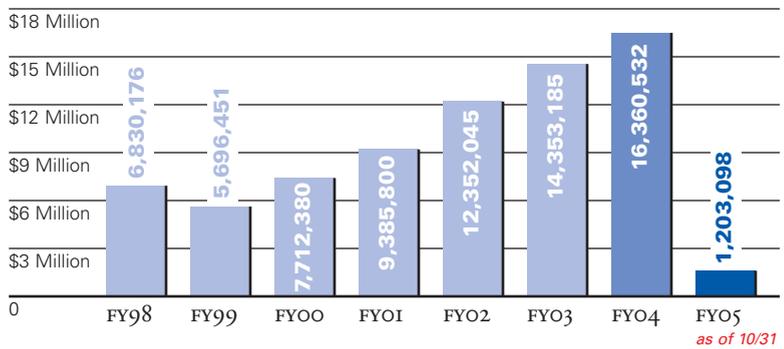
UNIQUE PATIENTS



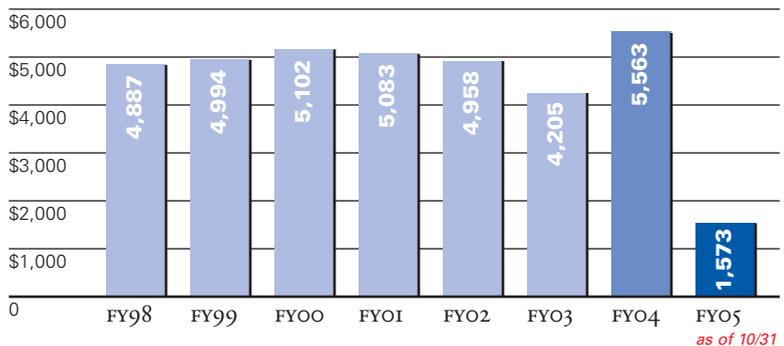
OUTPATIENT VISITS



MEDICAL CARE COST RECOVERY



OBLIGATIONS/UNIQUE PATIENT



Pictured left to right: Dr. Jonathan Sirkin, Philadelphia VA; Robert Nat, Wilkes-Barre VA; Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi; Gene Martin, RN, VAPHS; Charleen Welch, RN, VAPHS.

WITH THIS ISSUE OF WORKING TOGETHER WE BEGIN A SERIES OF

ARTICLES DESIGNED TO KEEP YOU INFORMED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT. THIS PROJECT IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS ACROSS OUR NATION, THAT WILL HONOR VA'S COMMITMENT TO HELPING OUR VETERANS, BY PROVIDING STATE-OF-THE-ART CARE FOR THOSE WHO DONNED A MILITARY UNIFORM. AS PART OF INTRODUCING YOU TO THIS PROJECT, WHICH WILL CHANGE THE FACE OF THE VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM FROM A THREE-DIVISION TO A TWO-DIVISION SYSTEM, YOU SHOULD BECOME FAMILIAR WITH SOME OF THE FACES OF THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN PLANNING AND COMPLETING THIS PROJECT.

Right:
VAPHS Acting Associate Director For Site Operations, Robert Callahan and his staff are ensuring a smooth transition for both patients and employees with the launch of the major construction project in May 2004. Left to Right: Jessica Morris, Steve Young, Robert Callahan, Todd Houck, and Steve Krumholz.

Below:
The University Drive Parking Garage Site Plan includes 1,500 new spaces for patients and employees over existing Lots 3 and 5.

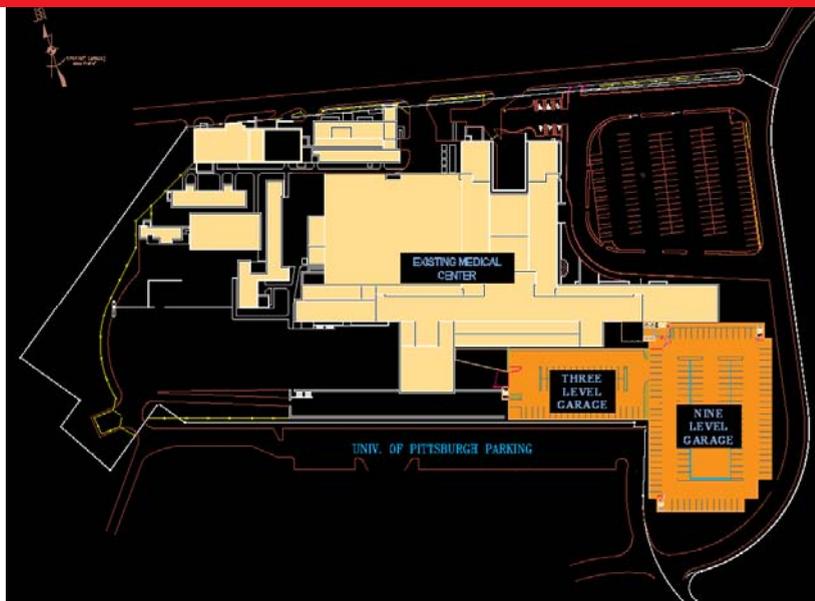
Office of Major Construction Formed to Lead VAPHS in Construction Transformation

Michael Moreland, as Director of VAPHS, has overall control of this large and complex project, which will bring \$200 million in construction dollars to Pittsburgh, and the O'Hara Township area of Allegheny County. An Office of Major Construction (OMC) was established under the Director's Office. The Office of Major Construction staff consists of the following and their current roles:

Robert Callahan, Acting Associate Director for Site Operations at Highland Drive, has prior experience at VAPHS as Vice President for Facilities Management. Bob has the day-to-day responsibility for this project and serving as a bridge between the Director's Office and employees, veterans groups, architects, contractors, the University of Pittsburgh and local government officials.

Todd Houck is the Project Engineer for the major construction project. Todd has previous experience with the VA as a Facility Engineer at the VAMC in Baltimore, MD, and as a Resident Engineer during construction of the bed tower project at University Drive. Todd has most recently worked in the private sector, managing construction projects in Western Pennsylvania for Turner Construction. Todd's responsibilities encompass day-to-day planning and design with the architects and engineers as well as VA Central Office construction staff to coordinate VAPHS's major construction program.

As the Administrative Assistant, Jessica Morris provides planning and data support. Since August 2003 she has served as a Presidential Management Fellow. When she started with the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Jessica wrote the approved application for the major construction project.



Steve Krumholz is a Health Systems Specialist. Steve has previous experience in Information Resource Management Service Line and with Media/Library Services at Highland Drive. He has also been the Combined Federal Campaign Loaned Representative for the past three years. His responsibilities during the project include working with the Public Affairs Office at VAPHS, website changes, and staff support.

Steve Young is the Parking Planner. Steve has previous experience as the Compliance Officer for VAPHS and in Quality Improvement. Steve is responsible for coordinating and planning all facets of parking-related issues during the project.

Once construction was approved in May 2004, the OMC started obtaining input from stakeholders. Preliminary planning for a construction project of this size requires vast amounts of data from many different groups and individuals.





WARREN PARK PHOTO

Ten employee focus groups involving 72 employees met during September/October of 2004. Approximately twenty-five hours of data was gathered and shared from and with these employee focus groups so they understood the complexity of the project, and so that OMC staff understood the processes involved in the operation of their work areas. Over 700 letters of invitation were sent and 1,500 flyers distributed to: current veterans utilizing service at the VAPHS; veterans recently returned from Afghanistan and Iraq; and active duty military. The VAPHS leadership held focus groups with veterans in December 2004.

Communications during a project of this size are essential and this project has implemented a number of different methods for sharing information. A website has been established which can be accessed from the VAPHS homepage at www.va.gov/pittsburgh. This website is the best way to obtain the most up-to-date information. There will be updates regularly in *Working Together*. There will be periodical flyers distributed to clinical and administrative areas. At some point, as construction begins, we hope to install an interactive web camera on the top of Building #1 at University Drive to allow visitors to the website to view the progress of construction.

BRIEFLY, SOME OF THE WORK COMPLETED TO DATE AND PLANNED IN THE NEAR FUTURE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- RTKL, an international architectural, design and planning firm has been hired as consultants to perform pre-design services. To date, studies involving traffic flow, soil and borings samples, environmental analysis, utility placement and design of the garage have been completed.
- The parking garage at University Drive (UD) will hold approximately 1,500 cars and will be built in the current parking areas known as Lots 3 and 5. Construction of the garage is expected to begin in Spring 2005. This construction will necessitate the relocation of approximately 700 employee parking spaces. A parking committee composed of both management and union representatives submitted a consensus recommendation to the Director for the displacement of 700 cars during the expected two-year construction of the garage. Several options are being considered for the relocation of employee parking during the garage construction. Some of these changes may include: move existing eligible services from UD to either HD or Heinz; utilize excess parking capacity at UPMC/University of Pittsburgh; shuttle employees from an off-site lot in close proximity to UD; or shuttle staff back and forth from HD. Please check the construction website to obtain the most recent information.
- Demolition of the vacant buildings is expected to begin at Heinz in the Winter/Spring of 2005. Removal of these buildings creates room to begin construction at Heinz.
- The location of buildings and parking lots at Heinz is nearing completion and will be shared via our website as soon as approved.
- Meetings are being held with the University of Pittsburgh regarding the construction at UD and the potential impact near their properties.
- Meetings have been held with the Deputy Mayor's office in Pittsburgh to discuss the impact of the UD construction on the City.
- Meetings have been held with the City of Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire to make accommodations for life safety issues and fire truck access during construction.
- Meetings will be held with Port Authority Transit to negotiate changes to bus routes during construction and possible use of the East Busway by shuttles.

As with any large, complex construction project, there will be changes along the way. Our pledge to employees and patients is to share as much information as quickly as possible in as many different media formats as resources allow.

Mailbox

Dear Mr. Moreland:

I am writing this letter to let you know about the excellent treatment and care that I have received at the Pittsburgh VA Facility over the past two years. Specifically for Hepatitis C and other complications.

I received the excellent care and treatment from Dr. Butt and nurse practitioner, Kathy Risa from the Rainbow Team, Infectious Disease Department. Their knowledge of treatment, care and availability helped me survive a one-year treatment program of Pcg Interferon Alpha 2B that was very challenging to all of us.

I survived and am doing well: I am a living example of the good they can do.

Mr. Moreland, I urge you to continue to support and fund this group at the Pittsburgh VA Facility.

I have been and continue to be part of their study groups, which I hope will be of some value in the future treatment of this and other diseases for all the veterans who are in need of such treatment.

I served in the U.S. Navy for seven years and was honored to do so; now I am very happy to be able to have received the treatment that I needed.

By copy of this letter to my local Federal Government Representatives, I am requesting them to continue their support and endeavors to secure the necessary funding to keep this project going for our future veterans at all of the VA facilities.

Very truly yours,

—W.J.W.

Michael Moreland,

In June 1984 C. Bernie Good, MD, called out my name for my appointed exam. I was blessed. Dr. Good has been my primary care physician for twenty years (1984-2004). He knows all my health problems. He schedules all my needed appointments, namely eyes, skin cancer, x-ray, ultra sound, blood work, aneurysm, neurology, medication, etc. I never, ever had any worries. Dr. Good has taken GOOD care of me and all my problems: I always walk out of his office feeling like a new man.

Lately, neuropathy has been my problem causing me to walk slowly and teeter-totter. Dr. Good is aware of my condition. Neurontin medication is helping much. He is also aware of my aneurysm and watches it very, very closely. He is a doctor who abounds in charisma and ranks second to none.

To make me more comfortable, Dr. Good ordered a chair lift and also a stair lift for me. Thank you, Director Moreland and Dr. Good. A personal thank you is forthcoming.

In short, Michael Moreland, Hospital Director VAPHS, you are to be commended for running a tight ship.

C. Bernie Good, MD Gold Team, is also to be commended for his services and medical knowledge.

Sincerely yours,

—E.P.M.

Dear Sir:

Recently I was a patient at the Pittsburgh Veterans Hospital. The reason I'm writing is to thank all of you from the doctors to the nurses for the care you gave me. This is the second time I've been at your hospital and felt welcome. The nurses were very polite and caring to my needs, with great compassion. The surgeons were very good at their jobs, as well as caring to make sure I was given the best care possible. They explained what they would do and as a result, helped me be calm and assured of their skills. My wife and myself are extremely grateful for all your efforts. Thanks!

—Anonymous



Six VAPHS nurses were honored at the sixth annual Cameos of Caring Awards, a program started by the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing to recognize exceptional work in nursing. In all, 43 nurses from 37 hospitals in the region were heralded at a gala in October at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center.

Sandra Petruzzi and Jennifer Sanders – shown here with Mr. Moreland and Ira Richmond, Associate Director of Patient Care Services – were nominated by the VAPHS for Cameos awards in special categories.

WARREN PARK PHOTO



VAPHS nurses honored included the following:

Donald Fox
Heinz Division

Darlene Dietrich
University Drive Division

Janice Rihely
Highland Drive Division

Jennifer Sanders
Advanced Practice Nominee

Sandra Petruzzi
Donate Life Nominee

Nicole Hicks
Cameos of Caring Endowment
Scholarship Winner

SPOTLIGHT ON

Debra S.
Mayher
RN, MS, CCTC

DEBRA S. MAYHER RN, MS, CCTC, IS ONE OF FOUR CLINICAL TRANSPLANT COORDINATORS AT THE VA PITTSBURGH HEALTHCARE SYSTEM.

As transplant coordinators, they act as patient advocates, educators and facilitators. They are responsible for the management of veterans through the transplant process, which includes referral, evaluation, activation on the waiting list, the transplant itself and the post transplant recovery period.

GLENN HANGARD PHOTO



Ms. Mayher began working as a liver transplant coordinator at the VAPHS in March of 2004. Prior to that time, she was a liver transplant coordinator at UPMC for approximately 14 years. She has also held positions in case management and transplant research.

Ms. Mayher states that she has always wanted to work at the VA, not only for the excellent working environment, but also for the opportunity to care for the veteran population.

Debra graduated from CCAC in 1986, obtained a bachelor's degree in nursing in 1997 from Carlow College, and obtained a master's degree in professional leadership and health education from Carlow College in 2001.

She is certified as a clinical transplant coordinator through the American Board of Transplant Certification. She is an active member of the International Transplant Nurse's Society.

Ms. Mayher has been married for several years to her husband, Jim and they enjoy spending time with family, friends and their dog, Tori.

EMPLOYEES WITH

20 years

OR more OF SERVICE!

The employees listed have reached a benchmark in their years of government service during the period October 1 to December 1, 2004.

35 years

William J. Francis
Facilities Management

Carolyn R. Ressler
Medical Specialty

30 years

Ronna Goldberg
Clinical Support

Stephen R. Nicoletti
Patient Care Service

Robert L. Ferrell
Facilities Management

Samuel G. Scanlon
Critical Care Service

Shirley A. Logan
Patient Care Service

Ida M. Smith
Patient Care Service

Patricia L. Moore
Business Service

25 years

Willie E. Bennett
Surgical Specialty

Nancy J. Maines
Facilities Management

Calvin C. Jones
Nutrition & Food

20 years

George R. Brandle
Surgical Specialty

Peter F. Lazzarotti
Behavioral Health

Robert Broadnax
Nutrition & Food

Thomas R. Lewandoski
Facilities Management

Joseph F. Crowley
Clinical Support

Richard McCoy
Patient Care Service

Janice L. Galanter
Community Based Care

Mary L. Niebauer
Patient Care Service

Ernest J. Gribshaw
Clinical Support

Janet S. Nock
Clinical Support

Diane Hartshorn
Business Service

Tami L. Pervuznik
Critical Care Service

John W. Hunger
Patient Care Service

Rita A. Zulka
Business Service



CONGRATULATIONS!



WARREN PARK PHOTO



◀ VAPHS United Way Combined Federal Campaign

The VAPHS United Way Combined Federal Campaign kicked off on October 25th. Employees were greeted with doughnuts and coffee or a wiener roast and encouraged to pledge to help the campaign. Incentives included chances in a raffle for the following: DVD/VCR player, an eagle print, a DVD/VCR/TV combo, tickets to a PITT/WVU college football game and a gift certificate for the Renaissance Hotel. The VAPHS' goal this year is to raise \$100,000. Last year \$90,783 was raised. Ira Richmond, Associate Director for Patient Care Services, is serving as the Campaign Chairperson for this year's campaign. She is shown here helping an employee register at the University Drive Division.

Stars & Stripes Cafe Grand Opening ▶

Gourmet Coffee arrived at the Heinz Division on November 1st with the Grand Opening of the Stars & Stripes Cafe, a veteran-run enterprise co-sponsored by the Community Support Program and Compensated Work Therapy. Participants in the ribbon cutting included (left to right) Carolyn Bechtold, Heinz Site Manager; Tim Smith, Veteran; Patricia Nealon, Acting Associate Director; Herve Keptner, Veteran; Tim Morrison, CSP Case Manager; and Janice Galanter, CSP Director.



GLENN HANGARD PHOTO

ERIN KLUGH PHOTOS



HIGHLAND DRIVE DIVISION

WARREN PARK PHOTOS



UNIVERSITY DRIVE DIVISION

GLENN HANGARD PHOTOS



HEINZ DIVISION

◀ Employee Appreciation Picnics

Employee Appreciation Picnics were held at the VAPHS on Wednesday, September 29; Thursday, September 30; and Friday, October 1. Employees were also given the chance to enter an Appreciation Prize Giveaway at the picnic or via email. Over 1,247 VAPHS employees entered for a chance to win!

Congratulations to these lucky winners!

POLAROID PORTABLE DVD w/ 8" ROTATING LCD SCREEN:

Wayne Anderson, EMS – *Highland Drive Division*
Tina Bacon, Pharmacy – *University Drive*
Beth Mcgihon, PCS – *Heinz Division*

CANON 35MM SURE SHOOT CAMERA:

Frank Truesdale, FMS – *Highland Drive Division*
Larry Daniels, EMS – *University Drive*
Tom Ansell, PCS – *Heinz Division*

12 POLO SHIRTS WITH VAPHS LOGO:

Highland Drive Division **Charlotte Baloh**, Business
Dan Hallam, IRM
Agnes Nossek, PCS
Beverly Vanderhorst, Community Based Care

University Drive Division **Tom Hough**, FMS
Evelyn Segina, Critical Care
Katherine Mastrocola, Primary Care
Renee Very, Surgical Specialty

Heinz Division **Heather Korpa**, Geriatrics
Zenora Henderson, Nutrition & Food
Tamesa Gray, PCS
Herman Smith, Nutrition & Food

