For the past 28 years, I’ve had the good fortune of serving our nation’s veterans through my employment with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Although I’ve held several positions across the organization, the mission to provide the veterans we serve with safe, reliable, high-quality healthcare has always been a constant.

After my first year in Pennsylvania, I can tell you that it’s not quite as hot in Wilkes-Barre as it is in Central Texas, but the veterans are just as deserving and the staff are just as dedicated. I’ve been impressed by the staff here, and it’s great to hear the veterans compliment their care.

Over the last year, Wilkes-Barre and its community-based outpatient clinics participated in over 24 internal/external inspections, including significant hospital level program reviews by the Joint Commission, Office of the Inspector General, and Long Term Care Institute. Of all the reviews, surveys, and inspections, I’m pleased to announce that there were no significant findings at Wilkes-Barre or any of our outpatient clinics.

As the Medical Center Director, I raise these successes not to boast, but to acknowledge the daily dedication and hard work of the staff. We’re not celebrating survey successes; we’re celebrating the delivery of safe, reliable, high-quality healthcare to our veterans!

The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Wilkes-Barre, PA is proud to announce the establishment of a Bariatric Surgery Program. The program, which is an expansion of Wilkes-Barre’s existing weight management services, is the first of its kind to be established at a Complexity Level 2 Medical Center.

The multidisciplinary team, led by Dr. Ghazali Chaudry, Chief Surgical Service, utilizes well-studied, minimally invasive techniques for the performance of procedures including gastric bypass and sleeve gastrectomy.

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Wilkes-Barre’s Talented Veterans

Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities nationwide use the creative arts as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help Veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities. Each year, Veterans treated at VA medical centers can compete in the National Veterans Creative Arts competition, which recognizes the progress and recovery made through art therapy and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our nation’s Veterans.

This year 5,632 entries were submitted into the national competition with 138 VA facilities represented. The Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center is proud to announce that 15 Veterans who participated, have placed at the national level.

The VAMC Wilkes-Barre is recruiting qualified health care professionals

Please contact Human Resources at (570) 824-3521 Ext 7209 for more information on working with our nation’s Veterans.

Influenza Season (Flu) 2017-2018

Although the influenza virus (flu) can be detected across the United States throughout the year, it is most common during the fall and winter months, with peak flu activity usually occurring between Dec. and Feb.

The flu is a contagious illness which is most commonly spread through the ingestion of aerosolized virus particles frequently resulting from the coughing and sneezing of an infected individual. However, the virus can also be readily transmitted by direct touch and transfer from contaminated surfaces, so it is important to maintain good hand hygiene during the winter months.

The Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center, including the Community Based Outpatient Clinics, received delivery of this year’s flu vaccine at the end of September. At your next scheduled appointment, you will be offered a flu shot. Walk-in clinics are available for those with no upcoming clinics. For those who do not have a scheduled appointment during flu season and you would like a flu shot, please call 1-877-928-2621 between 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM and choose Option “2” to schedule an appointment.

Walk-in and Evening Clinics are scheduled for October at the VA Medical Center in Wilkes-Barre and the Community Based Outpatient Clinics in Allentown, Sayre and Williamsport. Clinics and times and dates vary by site, so please call 1-877-928-2621 for information by location.

Remember, the flu vaccine contains only inactive particles from the flu virus. You cannot catch the flu from the vaccine!
Absent From Picture: Benjamin Miller And Jozsef Stadler.

Joseph Anistranski, William Kuklewicz, Robert Rushalk, Russell Lloyd- Medical Center Director.

John Fincher, Mary Collins (Accepting The Award For Her Father John Struck), John Malarkey, STANDING: (L – R) SEATED: Edward Ornoski, Henry Castner, Michael Smallen, Mack Mcquilla, Herbert Beier

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HORIZON NEWSLETTER

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CLC Spirit Committee goes RETRO for Throwback Thursday

Commonly, the thought of healthcare conjures up images of doctors and nurses, pills, needles, and those drafty gowns, but for the Residents of Wilkes-Barre’s Community Living Center (CLC), their stay is much more than clinical. The CLC Spirit Committee goes above and beyond to engage and promote the social interaction of the Residents, many of which call the CLC their home. For a recent Throwback Thursday Event, staff and Residents were encouraged to showcase their era. In addition to the laughs, the event brought back many memories and stories of yesterdays.

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Access & Quality

The Department of Veterans Affairs launched a Quality and Access Website to provide Veterans with the latest information on wait times and satisfaction at VA facilities across the country.

The VAMC

is recruiting

human resources

for site specific data, visit

www.accesstopwt.va.gov

A Whole-Health Approach to Wellness

An innovative way for a Veteran-centered approach to health and wellness is underway at the VA Wilkes Barre Medical Center. Prevention Proud is a 6-week interactive group course, aimed at providing Veterans a “whole-health” approach to living.

The course includes topics on nutrition, physical activity, mindful awareness, spiritual and personal development. Registered Dietitians, Exercise Therapists, the Health Promotion Disease Prevention Coordinator and a Yoga instructor lead the group.

Veterans are encouraged to share their personal experiences and support one another in their efforts to attain completion of their individual health and wellness goals.

With the assistance of clinical personnel, Veterans monitor their physical measurements and physiological data throughout the course of the program to monitor progress.

Veterans who have completed the Prevention Proud Course will be recognized for their dedication and hard work on the Wellness Wall of Fame.

For more information on joining Prevention Proud Course, please contact Ms. Debra Waite, Registered Dietitian, at (570) 824-3521 Extension 7694.

Prevention Proud: Taking steps to a healthier you. After completing the six-week Prevention Proud group class, Veterans meet to review their achievements and discuss strategies to continue improving their whole-health.

From Left to Right: Ronald Petro, Keely Mackenzie Emily Richters; Outpatient Registered Dietitian, Debra Waite; Outpatient Registered Dietitian, Teresa Hapton (sitting), Rainier E Byrd, and James T Tyjie
THE DEPARTMENT’S 5 PRIORITIES

1. Greater Choice for Veterans
   - Redesign the 40/30 Rule
   - Build a High Performing Integrated Network of Care
   - Empower Veterans through Transparency of Information

2. Modernize Our System
   - Infrastructure Improvements and Streamlining
   - EMR Interoperability and IT Modernization

3. Focus Resources More Efficiently
   - Strengthening of Foundational Services in VA
   - VA/DoD/Community Coordination
   - Deliver on Accountability and Effective Management Practices

4. Improve Timeliness of Service
   - Access to Care and Wait Times
   - Decisions on Appeals
   - Performance on Disability Claims

5. Suicide Prevention
   - Getting to Zero

Find us on the web, or Facebook at:

wilkes-barre.va.gov
facebook.com/VAWilkesBarre

Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center
Call Center
1-877-928-2621