



Proud of our Veterans,  
Proud of America!

# THE epicenter

Newsletter of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) • March/April 2003

## Registered Dietitians and Dietetic Technicians: Your *Best* Nutrition Resource



Registered dietitians and dietetic technicians are a key element of the VA Palo Alto Healthcare Team. They help provide patients with the best nutrition care and education possible and are your best source for any kind of nutrition information.

### What is a Registered Dietitian?

To become a registered dietitian (RD), an individual must obtain at least a bachelor's degree in nutrition or a related field. Course work includes classes in nutrition science, anatomy, physiology, chemistry, sociology, and economics. Many dietitians pursue advanced degrees as well. Completion of a supervised internship pro-

gram is required to earn the RD credential. RD licensure is granted once an individual passes a national examination. To retain RD licensure, dietitians must complete continuing education and training every year. Many registered dietitians also acquire certifications in specialized areas of practice, such as nutrition support, renal or pediatric nutrition, and diabetes education.

### What is a Dietetic Technician or DTR?

Dietetic technicians (DT) must obtain at least a two-year associate's degree in a nutrition related field. Many dietetic technicians possess a four-year degree. They may also choose to complete an internship and take a national registration exam. Dietetic technicians and registered dietetic technicians (DTR) are encouraged to complete continuing education and training as well.

### What do RD's and DT's do?

The mission of Nutrition and Food Service is to improve the health and well being of veteran patients by providing appropriate nutrition therapy and by serving high quality meals in a cost-effective manner. A dietetic technician or dietitian reviews all patients who are admitted to the VAPA Healthcare System. Any nutritional needs, whether for a special diet or nutrition education, are identified and addressed by the dietetic technician or dietitian.

Dietitians and diet technicians work with the food service workers to ensure that patients are provided with appropriate therapeutic meals for their medical condition. Dietitians and diet technicians work with

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# A Word From Our Director



**Elizabeth Joyce Freeman, Director  
VA Palo Alto Health Care System**

I am pleased to report we now have a budget for FY 2003! Our final operating budget for FY 2002 was \$318.3M. Our initial operating budget for FY 2003 will be \$342.2M, an increase of 7.5%. We will also have the opportunity to receive an additional \$3M from the VISN Director for meeting specified performance goals (to be determined in the near future). I am confident we will achieve these goals and receive a total increase of 8.5% for FY 2003. In addition,

we also hope to exceed our MCCF collections goal of \$12.9 M and to earn other external revenues totaling approximately \$6.5 M for a total operating budget of almost \$362M. This funding will allow us to support a slightly higher number of physicians than in previous years to support expanding needs in our outpatient and specialty clinics. We also plan to recruit some additional physicians and ancillary staff to support our research and academic missions. Finally, we will put additional resources in the recruitment and retention of critical staff. Although it was a long time coming, I am very pleased with the opportunities to improve our services to veterans this budget affords.

Unfortunately, the VA FY 2003 budget did not include funding for our major construction projects to seismically retrofit Buildings 2 and 4 at the Palo Alto Division. We will work closely with the affected staffs to explore alternatives if it appears future funding for these projects will be problematic.

Our first quarter performance review was conducted with our VISN Director, Dr. Wiebe and our VISN Quality Manager, Judy Daley, on February 27, 2003. Overall, they were very appreciative of our contributions to the VISN that quarter, especially given our budget uncertainty. Among our highest priority performance measures for this are the following:

- Achieve Clinical Intervention Targets (CPGs)
- Meet Clinic Wait Time Goals
- Meet MCCF Goal of \$12.9 M
- Meet Budget Goals
- Meet Outpatient Satisfaction Goals
- Achieve Special Capacity Goals
- Participate actively in CARES

Please accept my sincere thanks to all of you for your outstanding performance during the first quarter of this fiscal year. The VAPAHCS leads the VISN and the nation in achieving many of these goals.

Given the uncertainty of world events, we are intensifying our preparations in both the disaster preparedness and DoD back-up arenas. We will be participating in the Santa Clara County smallpox vaccination program tentatively scheduled to begin in late March. Dr. Mark Holodniy continues to represent us in exemplary fashion in our preparedness efforts. Similarly, Rae Denison, our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, continues to ensure that we are prepared to meet our obligations as a primary receiving center in the event VAPAHCS is asked to receive casualties in the event of war. Many others have made significant contributions to these efforts. I appreciate all the extra efforts you have made.

I am enormously pleased to announce Ms. Lisa J. Rogers will be my new staff assistant. Lisa will begin working at VAPAHCS in April. She was formerly the Chief of Human Resources Management at the VA Central California Health Care System in Fresno. Lisa will be instrumental in helping Dr. Sheikh, Mr. Sisty and me to better organize our planning and communication efforts. She will also help me launch many new initiatives, including a new goal sharing effort. Please join me in welcoming her to VAPAHCS.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the contributions of Jim Morrison, who will be transferring to the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center in April. Jim has been the Chief of the Business Office since its creation in 1998. He has persevered through many difficult circumstances to build a strong and well-respected service. Jim, who is also a veteran, treats every veteran with the utmost respect. He has patiently worked with me through most of my tenure at VAPAHCS. I am personally in his debt for the countless hours he has spent transforming the Business Office operations. Jim and his wife Susan will be going "home" in a sense to be closer to family. My heartfelt thanks Jim and Susan for your stellar service to veterans.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth J. Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Joyce Freeman  
Director

# CARES Update . . .

## Why did VA rerun the enrollment forecasts for CARES?

In order for the CARES market plans to be the basis for credible funding requests to Congress, VA policy changes, including the recent enrollment decision and the administration's policies proposed in the FY 04 budget, must be incorporated into the CARES projections. Additionally, the VA only recently received the veteran-specific information from Census 2000 needed for CARES. Using Veteran Population numbers based on the 1990 Census has been an ongoing concern for veterans and stakeholders and rerunning the CARES data with Census 2000 information will improve the validity and credibility of the CARES projections.

In addition, the new enrollment policies, including enrollment fees, co-payment increases, and Priority 8 designation have been incorporated in new enrollment and utilization projections for CARES. The CARES office has also developed forecasting methods for Spinal Cord Injury and Blind Rehabilitation Programs and has identified several Planning Initiatives for each of these programs.

## Did rerunning the numbers have a lot of impact on the old Planning Initiatives?

No. Across the Nation, there were only a few changes to CARES Planning Initiatives and most of those have limited impact upon the

already selected Planning Initiatives. In all, there was a net decrease in the number of outpatient clinic stops by 1 million and a net increase in inpatient beds of 220 compared to previous projections across all market areas. In the final count, there were five fewer capacity planning initiatives and five changes to the small facility planning initiatives.

The small changes to the Planning Initiatives can be attributed to:

- CARES Planning Initiatives use a large (25%) threshold.
- Many gaps were so large that the increases or declines had no impact on the Planning Initiative threshold, for example some Planning Initiatives based on an 150 percent increase in projected demand. The new data run may have reduced that to 120 percent.
- Although there was a drop in the forecasted numbers of Priority 8s, the impact was not that great because Priority 8 veterans use VA health care at a lower rate, particularly for inpatient care.

VA will rerun the CARES demand projection model whenever there is a major change in policy to ensure applicability and accuracy of the projections. Veterans, employees, Congress, affiliates and other stakeholders have a right to expect CARES projections to be as accurate as possible and VA intends to meet those expectations.

## CARES Timeline

Roll out .....	June 2002
Markets established .....	July 2002
Demand data (Actuary & VSSC) .....	Oct 2002
Planning Initiatives identified .....	Nov 2002
Submit completed market plans .....	April 15, 2003
Initiate VHA/Under Secretary review .....	April 15, 2003
Publish Draft Nat'l CARES Plan .....	June 1, 2003
CARES Commission review .....	June 1, 2003
Recommendations to Secretary .....	Sept. 30, 2003
Secretary's Decision .....	Oct. 30, 2003

# Rev. Dr. Ed Bastille Receives the 2003 Julius W. Varwig Award



Chaplain Ed Bastille, Chief, Chaplain Service was the recipient of the 2003 Julius W. Varwig Health Care Chaplaincy Award. The award presented by the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries, an organization serving institutions and programs related to the United Church of Christ recognized Chaplain Bastilles' dedication to ministry and his leadership to further the profession of health care chaplaincy.

Chaplain Bastille was one of the first Northern California chaplains to be certified in the Old College of Chaplains. He has served as the Northern California College of Chaplains / Association for Professional Chaplains Chair for over 10 years. He has also been instrumental in significantly expanding and strengthening APC in Northern California.

## National Volunteer Week

The week of April 27th through May 3rd is National Volunteer Week. It has been established to recognize our nation's volunteers and thank them for their selfless dedication of uncompensated time, gifts and donations to those they serve.

Here at VAPAHCS, we celebrate one of the largest volunteer programs in VHA. Last year, a total of 1,543 regularly scheduled volunteers supported our patients and staff in a variety of ways. They are assigned to almost every service found in our health care system and augment staff in ambulatory care, hospice, nursing home care, patient escort and community outpatient clinics. We also have a very active youth volunteer program with over 230 youth volunteers assigned to various programs throughout the year. The United Students for Veterans Health (USVH) partnership between Stanford students and Menlo's two nursing home programs, affords over 30 students the opportunity to visit with the veterans on a weekly basis during the school year.

It is impossible to calculate in dollars the total value our volunteers provide our health care system. We do, however, see the outcome of their care and love in the improvement of our veterans' quality of life. Please take a moment out of your workday during National Volunteer Week to thank the volunteers assigned to your work unit for all they do to make a positive difference in the lives of our veterans.



*Front (l to r) Ginny DeGuzman, Glenn Endsley, Evelyn Young; back (l to r) Jammu Owens, Clarence Baptista, Vickie Baker, Frank Schleifer.*

# EMPLOYEE NEWS (MARCH)

## New Employees

Anesthesiology Svc.  
**Eric Lorenz**

Environmental Mgmt. Svc.  
**Andrew Freedman**  
**Al-Ricard Lewis**  
**James L. Murry**

Information Resources Mgmt Svc.  
**Joanne K. Joki**

Medical Svc.  
**Michael Lyon**  
**Tinh Tran**

Medical Information Svc.  
**V. Putnam**

Nursing Svc.  
**Danilo Apuada**  
**Louellen Barnes**  
**Margueri Donius**

Nursing Svc. (cont'd)  
**Maria Madrigal**  
**Irene Manzano**  
**Sonia Navarrete**  
**Sonia Olivar**  
**Mary Patterson**  
**Sud Ramamoorthi**  
**Josephi Serrano**  
**Patricia White**  
**Stanley Winokan**

Nutrition & Food Svc.  
**Gloria Gancinia**  
**Crai Scarbrough**  
**Jesus Wilson**

Pharmacy Svc.  
**Arnel Anoché**  
**John Conley**  
**Jeanie Dawson**

Physical Medicine & Rehab. Svc.  
**Deborah Rogers**

Police Service  
**Kang S. Ahn**

Radiology Svc.  
**Oliva O'Donnell**  
**Valeriano Sia**

Recreation Svc.  
**Jerry Duncan**

Research Svc.  
**Johanna Bronner**  
**Eric F. Crawford**  
**Kristyn L. Dixon**  
**Ryan K. Duffy**

Ward Administration Svc.  
**Ruby Johnson**

## Retirees

**Janet Agnew (35)**  
Acquisition & Materiel Mgmt.

**Susan Atkinson (27)**  
Director's Office

**Paul Boland (30)**  
Social Work Svc.

**Lorraine Coffaro (34)**  
Nursing Svc.

*(Years of service are indicated in parentheses.)*

## Employee Service Awards

### 10 Years

**Charles Adamson**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Dale Adkins**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Andrew Dadd**  
Blind Rehabilitation Center  
**Toni Lee**  
Nursing Svc.  
**William Logan**  
Nutrition & Food Svc.  
**Carmencita Manaois**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Andrea McCauley**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Mitchell Pippin**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Ronnie Sendaydiego**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Florence Wong**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Mary Wai-Ming Yen**  
Nursing Svc.

### 15 Years

**Pamela Cannon**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Kevin Clark**  
Social Work Svc.  
**Joni Dirks**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Evie Glasa**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Carma Heitzmann**  
Psychology Svc.  
**Esmeralda Javier**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Yuh-Der Lai**  
Nursing Svc.  
**Seu Pitzer**  
Nursing Svc.  
**David Rogers**  
Social Work Svc.  
**Nancy Searcy**  
Nursing Svc.

**Janis Squire**  
Nursing Svc.

**Marcia Trainito**  
Nursing Svc.

**Donna Wing**  
Nursing Svc.

### 20 Years

**Jun Sheila**  
Nursing Svc.

**Kevin McGill**  
Research Svc.

**Sheryl Whistance**  
Nursing Svc.

### 25 Years

**Robert Fink**  
Nursing Svc.

**James Grehan**  
Environmental Mgmt. Svc.

**Gerald King**  
Acquisition & Materiel Mgmt.

**Sandra Lynch**  
Medical Information Svc.

**Bobette Nicholl**  
Nursing Svc.

**Steven Pell**  
Anesthesiology Svc.

**Robert Ross**  
Veterans Canteen

### 30 Years

**Arthur Reichstadt**  
Social Work Svc.  
**Patricia Wagstaff**  
Blind Rehabilitation Center

### 35 Years

**Anita Straley**  
Nursing Svc.

# EMPLOYEE NEWS (APRIL)

## New Employees

Aids Svc. <b>Timothy Loomis</b>	Nursing Svc. <b>Gracie Barragan</b> <b>Rosa Beas</b>	Physical Medicine & Rehab <b>Alan J. Lombardo</b>
Domiciliary Svc. <b>Leroy Edwards</b>	<b>Rosanna Deregla</b> <b>Marcia Floyd</b> <b>Shobna Kishan</b>	Physicians <b>Hoss Sarajedini</b>
Engineering Svc. <b>Carl Koprek</b>	<b>Andrea Lord</b> <b>Wilma Palaganas</b> <b>Lorraine Rother</b>	Police Svc. <b>Jimmy Trinetra</b>
Environmental Mgmt. Svc. <b>Earl Batterton</b> <b>Serria L. Scott</b>	<b>Wanda Tacey</b> <b>Joyce Tanaka</b> <b>Richard Trimble</b>	Research Svc. <b>Vaisha Krishnan</b> <b>Leah McKechnie</b> <b>Thaneemit-Chen</b> <b>Lauren S. Uyeda</b> <b>Yajie Wang</b>
Nuclear Medicine Svc. <b>Kent Hutchings</b>	Nutrition & Food Svc. <b>Sarah Preston</b>	Social Work Svc. <b>Patricia Ash</b>

## Retirees

Nursing Svc. <b>Patricia Togashi (16)</b>
Nuclear Medicine <b>Van Truong (12)</b>

*(Years of service are indicated in parentheses.)*

## Employee Service Awards

10 Years	15 Years	20 Years	
<b>Stephanie Alvarez</b> Nursing Svc.	<b>Suvarna Akki</b> Medical Svc.	<b>Betye Carey</b> Social Work Svc.	<b>James Canfield</b> Medical Svc.
<b>Trellis Anderson</b> Nursing Svc.	<b>Carol Crannell</b> Medical Svc.	<b>Amado Cayabyab</b> Engineering Svc.	<b>Hilarion Cantor</b> Fiscal Svc.
<b>Susan Cole</b> Anesthesiology Svc.	<b>David Dickerson</b> Nutrition & Food Svc.	<b>Dagmar Gallagher</b> Radiology Svc.	<b>Teresa Yoon</b> Recreation Svc.
<b>Arthur Halliday</b> Medical Svc.	<b>Magdalena Kaczynska</b> Medical Svc.	<b>Nancy McDonald</b> Nursing Svc.	<b>30 Years</b>
<b>Kristopher Morrow</b> Information Resources Mgmt.	<b>Shee Jung Lee</b> Nutrition & Food Svc.	<b>Bernard Morris</b> Engineering Svc.	<b>Lloyd Abella</b> Environmental Mgmt. Svc.
<b>Emiko Obuchi</b> Police Svc.	<b>Dannie Ogletree</b> Nutrition & Food Svc.	<b>Evangeline Oribio</b> Nursing Svc.	<b>Carolyn Bowker</b> Nursing Svc.
<b>Rosario Pasion</b> Nursing Svc.	<b>Peter Portolos</b> Engineering Svc.	<b>Amelia Reyes</b> Nursing Svc.	<b>Robert Coleman</b> GRECC
<b>Douglas South</b> Nursing Svc.	<b>Ellen Shibata</b> Chief of Staff	<b>Conrad Rougeux</b> Chaplain Svc.	<b>Thomas Williams</b> Engineering Svc.
<b>Sandra Ann Walker</b> Nursing Svc.	<b>Stephanie White</b> Information Resources Mgmt.	<b>Carole Stepp</b> Nursing Svc.	<b>35 Years</b>
<b>Sonia Wright</b> Dental Svc.	<b>Evelyn Young</b> Chaplain Svc.	<b>Alvin Walton</b> Radiology Svc.	<b>Jimmie Penny</b> Acquisition & Materiel Mgmt.
		<b>25 Years</b>	<b>40 Years</b>
		<b>David Butler</b> Acquisition & Materiel Mgmt.	<b>Anthony Carlson</b> Pathology & Laboratory Svc.

# POISON PREVENTION TIPS

## What is the most important thing parents can do to protect their kids?

Store anything potentially poisonous in a locked place or up high, out of children's reach. This includes items like nail polish remover, silver cleaner, furniture polish, insect bombs, toilet bowl cleaner, and chlorine for swimming pools. Pay special attention to the bathroom — it's full of things like rubbing alcohol and mothballs, which are small and round and probably look good to a child. And get rid of all your medicines that have expired.

You also need to be familiar with first aid and to have some syrup of ipecac at hand. It's a one-ounce bottle of a liquid that causes a child to throw up automatically, and it only costs about two dollars. But always talk to your doctor or a poison control center before giving it to your kid, because there are some poisons that should not be removed by vomiting.

## What else should parents do?

Make sure you know the number of your local poison control center, and keep an instruction sheet in a place where everyone can see it that tells what to do in the event of poisoning. Give your babysitter, the grandparents, and other caregivers these instructions and the number of the poison control center.

## Could you tell us more about your campaign to increase the print size for drug warning labels?

One of the main reasons we wanted larger warnings was that seniors were misusing ibuprofen, a common over-the-counter painkiller. Thousands of people get gastrointestinal bleeding from it each year, and a number of them die. They wake up at night with arthritis pains and they take the drug on an empty stomach because they can't read the label telling them to take it with food. We got a law passed in California that calls on the FDA to increase print size of warning labels.

## You've recently turned your attention to warning labels for herbal supplements. How does this work relate to your poison control campaign?

Alternative medicine is an area of great concern for us, because people are dying, literally, for lack of good information. People think that if something is advertised as "natural," then it's healthy, and that's not

always true. The FDA has logged more than 180 reports of deaths linked to dietary supplements. One of the most dangerous is ephedra, or ma huang, whose active ingredient is ephedrine, a stimulant. Kids use it as a stimulant, and what happens? Sometimes their blood pressure goes up so high they pop a blood vessel and die.

The problem is that there are no regulations requiring the manufacturers to spell out all the possible side effects of these supplements. I mean, if you use an over-the-counter medicine that can raise your blood pressure or interfere with pregnancy, the label has to tell you that. But if you buy an herbal supplement, the label doesn't have to tell you anything. No one is watching out for the consumer. So we want to change the law to require the same kind of warning labels for herbal supplements that you find on regular medicines.

## As a pharmacist, are you concerned about the possibility that some herbs can interact in a dangerous way with over-the-counter or prescription drugs?

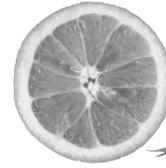
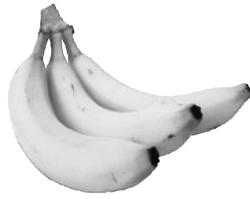
Absolutely. That's the biggest issue. Although some supplements are beneficial, some interact with over-the-counter or prescription drugs in a way that can harm or even kill you. Popular products such as ginkgo, which is available in health food stores, may be lethal in some cases if taken with the anticoagulant drug warfarin. Countless Americans take warfarin, but if you combine that drug with ginkgo, which also has anticoagulant properties, it can cause fatal bleeding. And not everyone realizes that.

Because products found at health food stores are unregulated, it's not even clear what you're getting. There are no standards, so you often don't know if the product is coming from the root, the leaves, or the stem. There is no good labeling, no warnings. It's strictly "buyer beware."

## What about poisoning from prescription and over-the-counter drugs?

That's a huge issue. More than 100,000 people in hospitals die each year from adverse drug reactions. That makes them the fourth leading cause of death, behind heart disease, cancer, and stroke. Isn't this incredible? Why aren't people screaming and hollering? And we have other consumers getting their drugs mixed up at home. Pharmacists are underutilized; they're in the back of the shop typing and pouring. Consumers need them to be up front counseling and answering questions. We're not talking about rocket science here; we're talking about simple solutions.

# NUTRITION QUIZ



1. According to the US food guide pyramid, how many servings of fruit should an adult consume daily?
  - a. 1-2
  - b. 3-5
  - c. 2-4
2. True or False. High protein foods will make my muscles larger or stronger.
3. One gram of carbohydrate has how many calories?
  - a. 4
  - b. 9
  - c. 12
4. What nutrient is usually consumed in the greatest quantity from the diet?
  - a. Fat
  - b. Protein
  - c. Water
5. We all know that too much cholesterol is bad for the heart. But it is also a necessary substance for our bodies. What does cholesterol do?
  - a. Helps the immune system
  - b. Produces certain hormones
  - c. Prevents cancer
  - d. Improves eyesight
6. The body needs vitamins to:
  - a. Regulate metabolism
  - b. Help change carbohydrates to energy
  - c. Assist in forming bone and tissue
  - d. All the above
7. What nutrient in tomatoes makes the color red and has been tested extensively for its possible correlation to decrease cancer risk?
  - a. Niacin
  - b. Aspartame
  - c. Lycopene
8. Which fast food burger has the most fat?
  - a. McDonald's hamburger
  - b. Burger King hamburger
  - c. Wendy's single hamburger
9. Between McDonald's, Burger King, or Wendy's, whose small serving of French fries has the most calories?
  - a. Wendy's
  - b. McDonald's
  - c. Burger King
10. One gram of fat has how many calories?
  - a. 4
  - b. 9
  - c. 12

## Answers:

1. C. 2 - 4
2. False. There is no evidence that extra protein in food or supplements will lead to larger, stronger muscle. Only exercise makes muscles grow bigger.
3. A. 4
4. C. Water
5. B. Cholesterol is essential to your body's cell membranes and insulates your nerves. It's also used by your liver to make bile acids which help digest your food.
6. D.
7. C.
8. C. Wendy's burger has 16 grams of fat; Burger King's burger has 15 grams of fat; McDonald's burger has 9 grams of fat
9. A. Wendy's (3.2 ounces) has 270 calories  
McDonald's (2.4 ounces) has 210 calories  
Burger King (2.6 ounces) has 250 calories
10. B. 9

# You Make a Difference!

*Submitted by our veterans and their families. We welcome more contributions from LVD, Stockton, Modesto, San Jose, and Monterey.*

My days on the **4A Floor**, Livermore Division, were very pleasant. The nurses and doctors kept my mind at ease. I got the best care possible. They smiled at me every day.

This letter is in regard to the **National Center – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder** (Menlo Park). I want to bring to your attention the good work done with the veterans they serve. They helped restore my hope and faith. I now see a future with many possibilities. I feel so lucky to have experienced the healing here. There are a few staff I would like to mention: **Chris Wenk, Jeanne Schillaci, David Rogers, Sherry Riney, and Anne Charnley**. I could sing all the staff members praise. Thank you for my life saving treatment. Please keep up the good work in helping our nation's veterans.

I just recently had my first surgical procedure performed. And I have to admit that I was extremely intimidated at the thought of the surgery I was about to undergo. I wish to take this opportunity to extend my sincerest thanks to the entire **Surgical Team** for making me feel so comfortable and making the experience a lot less traumatic than I thought. The entire Surgical staff should have a great deal of pride for their high level of professionalism and in how they perform their duties.

I am a disabled veteran of WWII and I am writing this letter because I felt the need to let you know that one of your RN's, **Bonnie Anderson, Home Based Primary Care** (Palo Alto), has been extremely

helpful to me and that she is very talented and conscientious in her work. It is rare these days when someone displays the kind of humanity she has within her. I thank her and applaud your choice in nurses. She is a treasure.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to **Nancy Granzella** (San Jose), Pharmacy Service, and the **Pharmacy staff**. During the past several years I have had the opportunity to consult with Nancy and her staff on prescription questions. They are professional, caring, and courteous to all the veterans who use the Pharmacy. Nancy's leadership and dedication to the VA Mission has been outstanding. When you get a prescription at the San Jose Clinic, it is the correct one. My heartfelt thanks to Nancy and the Pharmacy staff for an outstanding job, which the Veterans Administration can be proud of.

Every time we approach our Ward Clerk **Sharon Strong** (MPD) Nursing Home, we are always greeted by her warm and pleasant personality. Whenever you see her-as her work permits-which is very demanding itself-we find her: "Assisting in feeding residents, escorting residents to various venues, assisting in handling difficult residents, interfacing with families, especially when they are under stress, transporting specimens to the lab and assuring that the linen cares are full." Many are beyond the scope of her responsibilities. The residents of **Building 331 D Wing** appreciate her love and care for us.

## A Touch of the Ritz!



*Larry Moore, Head of Ambassador Program*

When you think of vacationing you may have to consider a hotel to stay in. You need to consider the cost, the amenities, and the reputation. At the top of the list is usually a Ritz Carlton. Their associates always seem to go out of their way to make your stay enjoyable and relaxing.

Environmental Management Service (EMS) is implementing its EMS Ambassador Program to provide each inpatient a "Touch of the Ritz!" "EMS wants its finger tips on the pulse of the hospital. We want to know what our patients think of our service and we want them to feel good and safe in their environment," said Tony Fitzgerald, Chief, EMS. Heading the Ambassador Program is Larry Moore, recent retiree of VAPAHCS and former EMS employee. Larry, a disabled veteran, will visit each division and talk with inpatients. He will solicit their opinion on the cleanliness of the environment and how EMS could make their stay more comfortable. Each Housekeeping Aide will play a major role in the Ambassador Program.

EMS is excited to offer this new, innovative service to the veterans we serve.

# VHA Privacy Policy Mandatory Training

All employees, student trainees, medical residents, volunteers and some contractors are required to complete the VHA Privacy Policy Mandatory Training by April 14, 2003. This is a requirement of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule.

Training can be accessed through:

- a. <http://vhaprivacytraining.med.va.gov>
- b. <http://vapaweb/> under Employee Education, VHA Privacy Policy Training

A print version of the course is available through the privacy officer for those who do not have computer access. For any questions or additional information, please contact Ana Marie Vitente (Privacy Officer) at extension 64616 or Pat McCarthy (Nursing Educator) at extension 65369.

## Best Nutrition Resource (cont'd from page 1)

each patient to provide individualized nutritional advice for improving their diet. RD's and DT's will offer valuable suggestions that are tailored to individual needs, depending on whether a patient needs to gain weight, lose weight, or manage a chronic condition such as diabetes or heart disease. Dietitians also play a significant role in the outpatient setting, where patients come from home to seek on-going nutritional counseling. Outpatient dietitians help these patients maintain healthy diets by making appropriate food choices.

### Why do we need RD's and DT's?

A nutritious, well-balanced diet is the key to good health. The right food choices can help manage chronic disease conditions, such as heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. Every day, there are more and more news stories with different, and often conflicting information about nutrition. Dietitians and dietetic technicians can help debunk myths, and identify truly important or relevant information.



is published monthly  
by and for employees of the  
VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

Submissions should be received by  
the 1st working day of the month to  
be included in upcoming issues.  
Due to space limitations, it is not  
possible to publish all submissions.

We welcome any comments,  
suggestions or story ideas  
you may have; please contact the  
Communications Officer (00A) at  
ext. 64888 or directly at  
650-858-3925.

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An illustration of a woman with long, wavy hair, wearing a grey top, sitting at a desk. She is holding a telephone receiver to her ear with her right hand and has a pen in her left hand, which is resting on an open calendar. A large speech bubble originates from her, containing text. The background is a solid blue color.

Yes, we'd love  
to have you  
come over to visit ...  
Let me see ... no,  
we've got girl scouts,  
boy scouts, baseball,  
softball, women's club,  
men's club ...  
Here's an opening,  
next month, the 15th,  
from 8-9:15 PM.

**Jan often  
wondered  
why so few of  
her friends  
would ever  
come over  
to visit.**