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VA Butler celebrated Customer Service Week, October 5-9. Congratulations to Josh Cooper and Lauren Heiger (left) for being named “Superman” and “Wonder Woman,” having received the most votes for providing exemplary customer service to Veterans and their peers.

Veterans, staff, and volunteers in Adult Day Health Care celebrated Halloween with costumes, treats and bingo!

The Veterans Day Ceremony sponsored by Butler County’s Veteran Services was held in the Community Living Center on November 11 to honor all Veterans. Thank you Veterans, every day.

Thirteen local Prisoners of War were honored at the Annual POW/MIA Recognition Ceremony held in September. The ceremony was also a time to remember those who remain unaccounted for.

VA Butler hosted the sixth annual Recovery Recognition Day in November to celebrate and honor 21 local Veterans who have overcome mental health problems.

Eighteen flu clinics were held this fall for Veterans at VA Butler and other community locations. It’s not too late! Veterans may still receive a free flu shot at VA Butler or at their local Walgreens.

Veterans in VA Butler Healthcare’s weekly Diabetes Support Group joined together for their annual (healthy!) Thanksgiving luncheon.

VA staff, volunteers and Veterans participated in the annual Pink Out for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October. Screenings save lives and VA provides mammograms to all Veterans.

Three Grand Opening Events were held for the newly relocated Community-Based Outpatient Clinics in Armstrong County, Clarion County, and Cranberry Township. A local Jr. ROTC group provided a demonstration at the Cranberry Township event.
Dear Veterans, fellow employees, volunteers and friends of VA Butler Healthcare,

My first week at VA Butler in November started off great – town hall meetings, a radio show, a very moving and inspiring celebration of 21 Veterans at the Recovery Recognition Day Ceremony, and having the facility recognized with a Gold NCPS Cornerstone Award for outstanding work with the RCA process and patient safety. It was an exceptional first week, and each week after has been just as great. I want to thank everyone – staff, Veterans, volunteers, and the community for welcoming me as the new director. I look forward to continuing to Make Lives Better at VA Butler as we move forward into 2016.

David Cord, Director
November 11 was a day of national remembrance — a special occasion to honor all the men and women who have served, our Veterans. The Pieceful Patchers Charity Quilters, part of the Pieceful Patchers Quilt Guild, is one of many organizations that gives back to those who served. The Charity Quilters have been donating handmade patriotic quilts to Veterans at VA Butler Healthcare on Veterans Day since 2009 with 100 quilts donated this year.

“It’s one way we can give back for all they’ve done for us,” said Donna Tasker, chairman of the Charity Quilters. “Our group receives as much (if not more) joy and satisfaction as the Veterans who receive our quilts.”

In addition to the quilts, the group also donated 111 holiday stockings this year. In fact, since 2009, the group has donated 519 quilts and 805 stockings to Veterans at VA Butler.
Tasker commented that the group, approximately 15 to 17 ladies, all feel good about this annual donation, especially because it’s to Veterans right here in the local community.

The group is hard at work finalizing the Women Veterans Quilt. Last spring, VA Butler began the project of collecting quilt squares to honor women Veterans. The final quilt will be made up of individually designed squares, each one devoted to a woman Veteran. One quilt square is designed and dedicated to each Veteran’s memory.

The Charity Quilters took this project on, and plan to donate the final quilt early in 2016. It will be displayed at the facility.

“IT’s groups like this that truly make a difference to our Veterans at VA Butler Healthcare,” said Paula McCarl, VA Butler’s Voluntary Services Coordinator.

November 11 may be our nation’s day to say thank you to our Veterans, but at VA we do that every day of the year. You can thank Veterans too—consider volunteering or donating. You can volunteer as an individual, in a group, or as a family. Your time, talent, and contribution as a VA volunteer lets our Veterans know that their service to America has not been forgotten. To learn more, contact VA Butler’s Voluntary Services Office at 800.362.8262 ext. 2575 or visit www.butler.va.gov/giving.

For his senior project at Franklin High School, student William Fitzgerald organized a fundraiser for VA Butler’s Homeless Veterans Program. He hosted a luncheon, which made over $1700 in proceeds for homeless Veterans. Thank you William for partnering with VA to help end Veteran homelessness.

There are many ways to help homeless Veterans. Make sure the Veterans you know are aware of essential VA resources— www.va.gov/homeless.
Meet Dave

VA Butler Healthcare’s New Director

David Cord started as VA Butler Healthcare’s new director on November 16, and he’d like for everyone to call him “Dave.”

Dave joined the VA more than 14 years ago, but most recently served as the Director of the Erie VA Medical Center. He also served in the U.S. Air Force for more than five years as a Judge Advocate Generals Officer. He was responsible for prosecuting court-martials. His experience in the military is what solidified his commitment to pursuing a career of serving fellow Veterans in VA.

On day one at VA Butler, Dave held a town hall meeting for Veterans and the community to introduce himself and answer questions. Moving forward, he plans to host frequent town hall meetings to provide VA information and news, as well as continually seek input from Veterans.

“This facility does not belong to me, or the wonderful staff here – it belongs to our Veterans. The best way for me to ensure our Veterans are continually receiving the best care is to meet and speak with them regularly, listen to them.”

In addition to regular town hall meetings, Dave also will hold open office hours every Friday afternoon from noon to 1:30pm for Veterans, VA staff, and the public. During this time, anyone may stop by to meet with him, ask questions, or address concerns.

“I value open and honest communication, and every decision I make will be in the best interest of our Veterans,” he noted. “I also don’t like formal presentations or PowerPoints. I like being able just to talk to our Veterans and stakeholders.”

Dave joins VA Butler at an exciting time – with three new CBOCs, a new Health Care Center (HCC) underway, and over 19,000 Veterans being served at the main facility and its surrounding clinics.

“It is a sincere honor that I have the opportunity to lead VA Butler Healthcare,” he said. “I look forward to working with VA Butler leadership and their dedicated staff, Veterans’ representatives, congressional offices, the community, and most importantly, our Veterans, to continue to provide the high quality care for which Butler is known.”

Dave is from the Pittsburgh area, and is happy to be back home. In fact, he plans to be at VA Butler as the director for many years to come. This is his second position at VA Butler. He previously served as human resources director from 2006-2008. He also held leadership positions at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, VA Maryland Healthcare System, and the Wilmington VA Medical Center in Delaware.

Dave earned bachelor’s degrees in English literature and psychology from the University of Pittsburgh and a Juris Doctorate from Duquesne University. He is a graduate of the Executive Career Field program and Leadership VA.

“As a Veteran myself, my ultimate goal as VA Butler’s new director is to provide the best care possible for our Veterans. I also want our Veterans to always feel welcome to come to me with questions, comments, concerns, thoughts, and ideas. They have earned this through their service. We are here to serve them.”

www.butler.va.gov/about/leadership.asp
Health Care Closer to Home
Three Newly Relocated Community-Based Outpatient Clinics Open

This fall VA Butler Healthcare relocated and enhanced its three contracted Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) in Armstrong County, Clarion County, and Cranberry Township through a partnership with Valor Healthcare. Valor Healthcare is a Veteran-led organization that staffs and operates more than 30 CBOCs across the country, and has been a partner with VA Butler for over five years.

The Armstrong County CBOC opened in mid-September at its new location: 11 Hilltop Plaza, Kittanning, PA 16201. The Clarion County CBOC opened in late September at its new location: 56 Clarion Plaza, Suite 115, Monroe Township, PA 16214; and the Cranberry Township CBOC opened in early November at its new location: 900 Commonwealth Drive, Cranberry Township, PA 16066.

“We’ve enjoyed an outstanding relationship with the Veterans, Veteran organizations, and volunteers from each of the counties and townships involved with these new clinic openings,” said Tim Florian, VA Butler’s CBOC Manager. “Both current and new CBOC staff members really banded together to ease the transition, and the beautiful new facilities have provided additional access to our Veterans.”

At the new, larger clinics, Veterans may receive primary care (with support services such as laboratory), behavioral health, social work, pharmacist consultation, podiatry, and a variety of specialty care services using telehealth.

“With expanded telehealth services, along with primary care providers, specialists, and support staff on-site, the goal at these new clinics is to provide for the majority of our Veterans’ primary health care needs without them having to travel to the main facility in Butler or the VA in Pittsburgh,” added Florian. “We want to provide our Veterans health care closer to their home.”

Upon completion of the three new facilities, grand opening events were held this fall at all locations to commemorate the new facilities for Veterans, as well as invite Veterans to check out their new clinic, meet new staff, and ask questions.

“All in all, the clinic openings have been enthusiastically received and we look forward to growing these clinics together,” said Florian.
Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

Armstrong County
11 Hilltop Plaza
Kittanning, PA 16201

Clarion County
56 Clarion Plaza, Suite 115
Monroe Township, PA 16214

Cranberry Township
900 Commonwealth Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
“Veteran X” Celebrates One Year at VA Butler Healthcare

This November marked the one year anniversary of VA Butler’s “Veteran X” recovery program. The program also had its first Fidelity Assessment, and not only were there no recommendations and no findings, but it was rated as one of the best groups in the nation.

In the weekly “Veteran X” recovery group, Veterans work with other Veterans as a treatment team for a fictitious Veteran “X” who has challenges similar to their own. These challenges are presented in the form of a scenario and may include things like mental illness, addiction, homelessness, economic hardship, family issues, etc. As a group, Veterans navigate the many challenging obstacles on the path to recovery. In helping Veteran “X”, Veterans in the group help one another and ultimately themselves.

Veterans are welcome to join the “Veteran X” group at any time. For more information about the “Veteran X” program, Veterans may talk to their VA provider or call Cary Adkins at 724.996.8892 or Jackie Cannon at 724.285.2293.

New Women Veterans Healthcare Program Manager

Nicole Thompson, RN, started as VA Butler Healthcare’s new Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM) in October. Thompson started at the VA as a nurse manager at the Clarion County Community-Based Outpatient Clinic. After, she worked as Butler’s Revenue Utilization Review Nurse through the North East Consolidated Patient Account Center (NECPAC).

“I am eager and honored to work with and advocate for our women Veterans. I look forward to growing the program, and making VA Butler Healthcare the provider of choice for our women Veterans.”

Learn more about women Veterans health care at VA Butler here: www.butler.va.gov/services/women/index.asp

www.butler.va.gov/services/Behavioral_Health.asp
FREE Flu Shots Available

This flu season protecting your health with a flu shot is as close as your local neighborhood Walgreens! VA and Walgreens care about your health and are partnering to offer enrolled Veteran patients easy access to flu shots. No appointment is required. Veterans should inform the pharmacist they receive care at a VA facility and show their Veteran Identification Card or other photo identification. The Veteran’s health record will be updated electronically to include the immunization.

Flu shots are still available for free at VA Butler Healthcare, but with our Walgreens partners you now have more time and location options, all without having to complete any other VA forms or carry around paper records.

Fast Facts About the Flu and Flu Shot
- The flu is very contagious; you are most likely to give it to others before realizing that you are sick.
- Today’s flu vaccine is safe; millions of people receive flu shots each year. You may experience a sore arm or mild fever for a day or two after receiving the shot, but this is not the flu. It is impossible to get the flu from a flu shot.
- The flu shot will not make your medications less effective or your current illnesses worse.
- If you are age 50 or older or if you have chronic medical conditions (such as heart disease, lung disease or diabetes), we strongly recommend that you get a flu shot each fall.

New Fitness Classes

VA Butler offers free, weekly fitness classes from 4:30 to 5:30pm in room 403C for Veterans. Starting this October, there’s a new line-up of classes, including Boxercise!

Monday/Wednesday: P.E. Plus
Join us for a one mile warm up walk on the grounds of the VA Butler Healthcare campus (weather permitting), followed by cardiovascular drills and resistance band/body weight strength exercises.

Tuesday/Thursday: Boxercise
Put on some boxing gloves for a full body workout. Learn basic boxing skills and other exercises that will work the entire body.

Friday: Yoga
This is an easy and gentle yoga class! Chair support is offered to safely perform a variety of seated and standing postures designed to increase flexibility, balance and range of movement. Restorative breathing exercises and final relaxation will promote stress reduction and mental clarity.

Veterans must pre-register before attending classes. To pre-register, contact VA Butler’s HPDP Program manager at 800.362.8262, ext. 2292.

Recovery Recognition Day

VA Butler Healthcare hosted its sixth annual Recovery Recognition Day in November to celebrate and honor 21 local Veterans who have overcome mental health problems (i.e., PTSD, TBI, depression, substance abuse, etc.). Mental Health Recovery differs from other types of recovery (i.e., physical recovery, trauma recovery, etc.). Definitions of Mental Health Recovery vary, but all involve some component of acceptance of the illness, having a sense of hope about the future, and finding a renewed sense of self. Every VA across the country has a local recovery coordinator who assists Veterans and their families with their recovery efforts. For more information, visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mentalhealthrecovery.asp.
This fall, the Armstrong County Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) was the first of three CBOCs to relocate to new, larger buildings with expanded services and additional staff. The Armstrong CBOC relocated from 313 Ford Street in Ford City to 11 Hilltop Plaza in Kittanning.

Army Veteran Edward (Ed) Kijowski has been going to the Armstrong CBOC for his health care ever since it opened. It is closer to his home than the main facility in Butler.

“My experience with Armstrong has been great—the people are fantastic. They help me in every way they can. Connie especially, has been very helpful to me. If I ever have a problem, I can rely on her to help me. It’s great to have people like that on your side,” said Kijowski.

He is at the Armstrong CBOC once a month for needed blood tests, and has already been to the new clinic twice.

“Now where they’re at—there’s ample parking; it’s level; and you can get to it easily.”

The new clinic added square feet to the waiting, group, and specialty care rooms. There’s also more parking, and the CBOC is located near shopping and dining within a safe walking distance.

Kijowski also enjoys the punctuality of his appointments at Armstrong.

“I had an appointment for 8:30am. I was taken in at 8:30am and taken care of,” he commented.

All Veterans eligible for VA health care may enroll to receive their care at the Armstrong County CBOC. VA Butler Healthcare’s Pre-Registration Office provides assistance with VA eligibility and enrollment. Veterans may contact the Pre-Registration Office by calling 800.362.8262 ext. 5011.
Health Quiz: Secondhand Smoke

During the annual Great American Smokeout in November, VA encouraged all smokers to make a plan to quit! You can quit today. VA can help. Do you know the risks of secondhand smoke? Find out in the quiz below.

1. Secondhand smoke is...
   a. Smoke that is breathed out by the smoker
   b. Pollution from smoke stacks and car exhaust
   c. Smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette
   d. a and c

2. Secondhand smoke is annoying, but it is not really a health concern.
   a. True
   b. False

3. Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, including some that cause cancer in humans.
   a. True
   b. False

4. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to have which of the following illnesses?
   a. Ear infections
   b. Severe and frequent asthma attacks
   c. Bronchitis and pneumonia
   d. All of the above

5. Which of the following chemicals does secondhand smoke contain?
   a. Ammonia
   b. Arsenic
   c. Cyanide
   d. Formaldehyde
   e. All of the above
   f. None of the above

6. Ventilation and separate non-smoking sections can eliminate secondhand smoke exposure.
   a. True
   b. False

7. A healthy non-smoker must be exposed to secondhand smoke for what amount of time before experiencing negative health effects?
   a. 5 minutes
   b. 30 minutes
   c. 3 hours
   d. 8 hours

8. Research has shown that after laws were passed banning smoking in bars and restaurants there was a large decline within a couple of months in which of the following?
   a. Lung cancer rates
   b. Pneumonia requiring hospital admission
   c. Heart attacks
   d. Colds and flu in restaurant workers

Quiz Results
1) D  2) B  3) A  4) D  5) E  6) B  7) A  8) C

Source: SmokeFree.gov

Who's Who?

TIM FLORIAN

CBOCs

Tim Florian is the Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) Manager for VA Butler Healthcare, as well as a Marine Corps Veteran. As the CBOC manager for VA Butler, Florian coordinates services and oversees operations at VA Butler’s five CBOCs. This includes three contracted CBOCs, and two leased and VA-staffed CBOCs. He works to ensure that Veterans receive the health care they deserve in the best environment close to home.

So, what is a CBOC? A primary care clinic that provides services to Veterans close to where they live, saving them drive time to the main Butler facility or another VA Medical Center. VA Butler has five CBOCs—they are located in Armstrong, Southern Butler (Cranberry Township), Clarion, Lawrence, and Mercer counties.

In addition to primary care services, VA Butler’s CBOCs provide behavioral health, social work, and a variety of specialty care services.

To learn more about VA Butler’s five Community-Based Outpatient Clinics, contact Tim Florian at 800.362.8262 ext. 4565, or visit www.butler.va.gov/locations.
HEALTH TECH – BRAINGATE ADVANCES

In the latest report on BrainGate, an investigational device that allows people with paralysis to control computer cursors just by thinking about the movement of their own hand, researchers describe the best performance yet by studying volunteers using the system.

BrainGate uses a tiny electrode array, the size of a baby aspirin, implanted in a part of the brain that controls movement. The electrode array picks up brain signals that then get decoded by an external computer and translated into commands for computers, robotic arms, or other devices. The researchers plan to eventually make the system wireless.

This newest study involved two volunteers diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. The disease destroys cells in the spinal cord and brain and causes gradual muscle wasting and loss of movement. Only one in five people with the condition survives beyond five years.

While scientists seek therapies to slow or cure ALS, BrainGate and similar technologies in the works focus on restoring communication, mobility, and independence for patients. The work also has applications for those with spinal cord injury, stroke, or limb loss.

To help test recent enhancements to the technology, the two participants performed a variety of computer tasks, using only the intention to move their hand. In one part of the study, they were able to move a cursor to catch up to a large green dot that moved around the screen, changing position every few seconds.

In another task, a circular pattern of eight circular targets appeared, with another target in the middle. The participants had to maneuver the cursor back and forth between the center target and randomly selected outer targets.

In another experiment, one of the participants typed a few sentences by moving the cursor to select letters from an on-screen display. She was able to type about six words per minute.

Overall, the volunteers were able to do the tasks more than twice as fast as participants doing similar tasks in BrainGate studies up till now.

The team expects to continue refining the hardware and software through additional clinical trials and feedback from users.

Source: VA Research Currents
Health Tastes – Parmesan Green Beans

Directions
Combine olive oil and garlic in a large saucepan. Cook until garlic is soft, but not browned (about 30 seconds). Add onion, and continue to cook for about five minutes over medium heat until soft. Add green beans and chicken broth. Bring to a boil and simmer for two minutes, until the beans are heated through. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and pepper, and serve.

Serving size = 1 Cup green bean mix. Makes 4 servings.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Cookbook

Crossword
Exercising the Mind
Research shows people who keep their minds active are less likely to have their thinking skills decline. So, games, puzzles, and other types of brain activities may help slow memory loss and other mental problems. It’s worth a shot!

ACROSS
1. Hanker (5)
3. Lariat (5)
6. Decimal base (3)
8. Conundrums (7)
9. Garret (5)
10. Dull pain (4)
13. Long narrative poem (4)
14. Commence (5)
17. Vegetable (7)
18. Novel (3)
19. Nursemaid (5)
20. Synthetic fabric (5)

DOWN
1. Abominable snowman (4)
2. Serviette (6)
3. Indolent (4)
4. Choice (9)
5. Marine mollusk (6)
7. Sustenance (9)
11. Time of year (6)
12. Gentle breeze (6)
15. Untrusting (4)
16. Aquatic bird (4)
LAWRENCE COUNTY VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
Ridgewood Professional Centre
1750 New Butler Road
New Castle, PA 16101
724.598.6080

MICHAEL A. MARZANO VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
295 North Kernwood Drive, Suite 110
Hermitage, PA 16148
724.346.1569

VA Butler Healthcare, located in Butler County, Pennsylvania has been attending to Veteran's total care since 1947. We are the health care choice for over 18,000 Veterans throughout Western Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio and are a member of VA Healthcare VISN 4 under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. VA Butler provides comprehensive Veteran care including primary, specialty and mental health care – as well as management of chronic conditions and social support services for our nation's finest, America's Veterans.