what's inside?

4  no one deserves to be treated this way

6  be there

8  new hope child care program

12  health tech, tips & tastes

14  vet chat
Construction continues to progress on VA Butler’s new Health Care Center (HCC)! The new HCC remains ahead of schedule, and is set to officially open for Veterans in fall 2017!

The first Veteran Stand Down for Butler County was held in September to serve homeless Veterans and the community. Free medical screenings, clothes, and haircuts were some of the resources available. Additional Stand Downs were held in Armstrong and Lawrence Counties this fall too.

Local Prisoners of War were honored at the annual POW/MIA Recognition Ceremony held in September. The Bantam Marine Corps League Detachment #743 presented the colors for the event.

VA employee Andy Pepe received the Gold Service Champion Award (voted by his peers) during Customer Service Week in October for providing exemplary customer service to his coworkers and Veterans, and for exhibiting VA’s ICARE Core Values.

VA Butler hosted its annual Healthy Living Recognition Event, recognizing 44 Veterans for their achievements. Courtney Johns, VA Butler’s dietitian for the MOVE! Program, presented Veteran Richard Henry with his award at the event.

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

U.S. Representative Mike Kelly visited the construction site for the new HCC and toured the progress made to date with VA staff and leadership. Once complete, the HCC will be a silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), two-story building with 168,000 square feet of space.

VA staff, volunteers, and Veterans participated in the annual Pink Out for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October. About 1 in 8 U.S. women will develop invasive breast cancer over the course of her lifetime. Get screened.

Local Prisoners of War were honored at the annual POW/MIA Recognition Ceremony held in September. The Bantam Marine Corps League Detachment #743 presented the colors for the event.

The Veterans Day Ceremony sponsored by Butler County’s Veteran Services was held in the auditorium on November 11 to honor all Veterans. Thank you Veterans, every day.
Dear Veterans, fellow employees, volunteers and friends of VA Butler Healthcare,

This fall marked the end of my first year at VA Butler Healthcare. I want to take a moment to thank all of you for making it a remarkable year. I come to work every day very proud and very humbled to work with the most dedicated group of people in health care, and serve our country’s very best, our Veterans. VA Butler Healthcare is not a campus, a building or a location. It is not a name or a logo on letterhead. Rather, VA Butler Healthcare is a team of professionals creating an environment of care and compassion for our Veterans. With the holiday season in mind, I want our employees, volunteers, community friends, and especially our Veterans to know how very thankful I am for all of you. I look forward to Making Lives Better in the New Year!

Dave

No One Deserves To Be Treated This Way
Intimate partner violence (IPV), which is often called domestic violence, can happen no matter your age, income, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability. No one deserves to be treated this way. Learn how VA can help.

Be There
We all can play a role in preventing suicide, but many people don’t know how to support a Veteran or Servicemember in their life who’s going through a difficult time. Preventing suicide starts with this simple act of support: Be There.

New Hope Child Care Program
This fall, VA Butler started the Hope Child Care Program (HCCP), the first of its kind in the country! HCCP is a babysitting service exclusively for women Veterans who attend the weekly Veteran “HOPE” program at VA Butler. Learn more.

Health Tech, Tips & Tastes
What’s new and interesting in VA’s health technology? Find out! Also enjoy a health tip and tasty fall recipe.

and more...

Fall Highlights
Hot Topics
Vet Chat
COPD Health Quiz
Who’s Who – Jackie Cannon

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No One Deserves To Be Treated This Way

Stop Intimate Partner Violence

**Intimate partner violence** (IPV), which is often called domestic violence, occurs when a current or former intimate partner (e.g., boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse) harms, threatens to harm, or stalks their partner. While domestic violence does include IPV, it refers to any violence that occurs in the home. Domestic violence includes child abuse, elder abuse, and other forms of interpersonal abuse. IPV refers specifically to violence between intimate partners.

IPV includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:
- Physical violence: hitting, pushing, grabbing, biting, choking/strangulating, shaking, slapping, kicking, hair-pulling, restraining
- Sexual violence: attempted or actual sexual contact when the partner does not want to or is unable to consent (for example, when affected by alcohol or illness)
- Threats of physical or sexual abuse: ways to cause fear through words, looks, actions or weapons
- Psychological or emotional abuse: name calling, humiliating, putting you down, keeping you from friends and family, bullying, controlling where you go or what you wear

Ask yourself these questions:

Has your partner:

- Emotionally mistreated you (e.g., called you names, tried to embarrass, or intimidate you)?
- Tried to control where you go, who you talk to, what you can wear, or what you can do?
- Told you that you are “crazy” or “worthless”?
- Stolen or tried to control your money?
- Looked at you or acted in ways that scare you?
- Threatened you, your possessions, your pets, or loved ones?
- Physically hurt you or tried to hurt you?
- Forced you to engage in sexual activities?
- Threatened to commit suicide or kill you if you left them?

If you answer yes to any of the questions or identify with any of the behaviors, VA Butler Healthcare can help.
### #StopIPV

Nearly 3 in 10 women and 1 in 10 men in the U.S. have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by a partner.

Intimate Partner Violence is preventable.

Ask your VA Provider for help.
Or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1.800.799.7233

- Stalking: following, harassing, or unwanted contact that makes you feel afraid
- According to the CDC (2015), IPV is a serious significant public health problem that affects millions of Americans. Awareness and identification of IPV among Veterans have been increasing over the past decade. Research in this area shows that Veterans are at greater risk for using and/or experiencing violence than their civilian counterparts, given the unique stressors posed by military life. In particular, those who served in the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan may be at even higher risk, given the higher rates of mental health concerns.
- IPV is prevalent among women Veterans, active duty women, and women living in the U.S. One third of women Veterans experience IPV in their lifetime compared to less than a quarter of civilian women. Women who experience IPV may have short and long-term health effects. Short-term health effects may include physical injuries like stab wounds or broken bones or sexually transmitted infections. They also may experience long-term health effects such as obesity; problems with their heart, stomach, or digestive systems; difficulties with pregnancies; chronic pain; and other stress-related difficulties such as headaches. They also may experience mental health issues such as depression, substance abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, and thoughts of hurting themselves.
- IPV can happen to anyone no matter your age, income, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability. IPV can be a single event or last for many years. No one deserves to be treated this way.

VA Butler Healthcare cares about Veterans affected by Domestic Violence (DV) and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). We recognize the impact IPV has on Veterans, family members and caregivers. The VA takes a trauma informed approach to helping Veterans and their families affected by IPV. To help Veterans and their families affected by IPV, VA Butler has a local DV-IPV Coordinator who can help you with services you may need related to IPV or other kinds of care, including help with safety planning, mental health counseling, safe housing or shelter. For more information, call the DV-IPV Coordinator directly at 800.362.8262, ext. 2293 or talk to your health care team.
We all can play a role in preventing suicide, but many people do not know how to support a Veteran or Service-member in their life who’s going through a difficult time. Preventing suicide starts with this simple act of support: Be There.

Helping someone feel included and supported can make a big difference during a challenging time. It does not require a grand gesture or complicated task. A simple act of kindness can help someone feel less alone.

Small actions of support — calling an old friend, checking in on a neighbor, cooking dinner for a relative, or inviting a colleague on a walk — are thoughtful ways to show you care. Similarly, encouraging Veterans and Servicemembers to take time for themselves and to focus on their own health and wellness can have a big impact.

Then, start the conversation. Being there for someone can be easy, but starting a conversation about your concerns for that person or broaching the subject of suicide can seem much more difficult. The most important thing is to show genuine, heartfelt support for someone going through a rough period. People may worry about what to say, fear that they will make matters worse, or think that special training is required to safely raise the subject (It’s not).

When talking about a possible suicide risk or a life crisis, try to keep these best practices in mind:
- Remain calm.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Act with confidence.
- Don’t argue.
- Use open body language.
- Limit questions to casual information-gathering.
- Use supportive and encouraging comments.
- Be as honest and upfront as possible.

Before you start a conversation, do some research to find out what suicide prevention and mental health resources are available. Veterans and their families can contact VA Butler Healthcare to find counseling, treatment, and customized support for any life challenge.

Know when a crisis needs immediate action. Everyone should be aware of these signs of crisis, which require immediate attention from a medical or mental health professional:
- Thinking about hurting or killing oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior, such as drug abuse or the dangerous use of weapons

If you notice these signs in yourself or a Veteran loved one, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1.800.273.8255 and press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text to 838255 to get confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

VA Butler Healthcare has a suicide prevention coordinator to make sure Veterans receive needed counseling and services. (Calls to the Veterans Crisis Line are referred to local coordinators). You may contact VA Butler’s Suicide Prevention Coordinator directly at 800.362.8262, ext. 2737.

Whether you are expressing initial concern or responding to a suicidal crisis, let those experiencing hard times know that resources are available. Visit VeteransCrisisLine.net/BeThere to learn how you and your community can Be There to prevent suicide.
Your actions could save a life.

Showing you care can make a big difference to someone in crisis.

VeteransCrisisLine.net

1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Living Better Fall 2016
Hope Child Care Program
New Service for Women Veterans
This fall, VA Butler Healthcare started the Hope Child Care Program (HCCP), the first of its kind in the country! HCCP is a babysitting service exclusively for women Veterans who attend the weekly Veteran “HOPE” program at VA Butler.

In the Veteran “HOPE” program, women Veterans work with other women Veterans as a treatment team for a fictitious Veteran “HOPE” who has an abundance of 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, women Veterans navigate the many challenging obstacles on the path to empowerment in a supportive and collaborative environment with peers. In helping Veteran “HOPE,” women Veterans in the group help one another and ultimately themselves.

“HCCP provides a much needed service to allow our women Veterans to attend Veteran ‘HOPE’ and work on many challenging issues without the concern of child care,” shared Cary Adkins, Peer Support Specialist and one of the VA employees instrumental in getting this program started.

“Many Veterans are unfamiliar with navigating the VA system and therefore have trouble playing an active part in establishing the goals and objectives of treatment or knowing who to turn to for other issues,” added Nicole Thompson, Women Veterans Healthcare Program Manager. “This often results in staff-driven, rather than Veteran-centered treatment planning. Even when Veterans can articulate their goals, they may lack the self-confidence to believe they can develop a strategy to reach them. The hands-on process of Veteran ‘HOPE’ engages women Veterans to address their needs and builds their confidence.”

Two female volunteers staff the new child care program. It is available every Tuesday from 5:45pm until 8pm.

“From the vision, to the concept, and then the final preparation, this process took nearly a year to get started,” said Adkins. “There were so many people that provided assistance, guidance, and support to make this new service possible. Thank you, to all.”

Participation in Veteran “HOPE” is 100 percent voluntary and any VA clinician/provider may refer a woman Veteran, or a woman Veteran may just show up. Veteran “HOPE” groups are held weekly on Tuesday nights from 6-8pm in room 215WS (Building One). Veterans are invited to join at any time. For more information about the Veteran “HOPE” Program, women Veterans may talk to their VA Butler provider or call 724.285.2756.

www.butler.va.gov/services/women
New VISN 4 Centralized RN Triage Call Center at VA Butler

VA Butler Healthcare operates the new VISN 4 Centralized RN Triage Call Center that provides Veterans telephone medical advice from a Registered Nurse. While the Call Center is located at VA Butler, it provides service to more than 300,000 Veterans throughout the region.

The nurse call line offers a way to resolve primary, specialty, and mental health needs and, ultimately, to enhance timely and same day access.

Veterans can access the RN Triage Call Center by calling 888.266.9040.

What does the Call Center mean for Veterans? Veterans have access to a nurse call line for symptom management and advice. Veterans may call the Centralized RN Triage Call Center to:
- Ask a medical or mental health question
- Report any symptoms they may be experiencing
- Seek medical advice about a medical or mental health condition

The Call Center hours are Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm. After hours and on weekends and holidays, Veterans who call the main line will automatically be re-directed to the Bronx Call Center, as normal.

It’s Not Too Late—Get Your Flu Shot

Did you miss VA Butler’s fall flu clinics? It’s not too late! Even though flu season starts in the fall, it’s never too late to get a flu shot, as flu season can continue into spring. So, make today the day you protect yourself, and those around you, against flu.

Everyone six months and older is recommended to get a flu shot each year by VA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Getting a flu shot is the best way to slow the spread of flu. No live virus is used to make the flu shot vaccine, so you cannot get flu from a flu shot.

Veterans enrolled in VA health care can get a free flu shot by visiting VA Butler Healthcare. Make sure you are protected during flu season!
One Number to Call to Reach VA—1.844.MyVA311

VA recently introduced MyVA311 as a go-to source for Veterans and their families who don't know what number to call when trying to find VA-provided services and locations. This new national toll-free number – 1.844.MyVA311 (1.844.698.2311) – will help Veterans and their families navigate VA.

With 1.844.MyVA311, Veterans, families, and caregivers can access information about VA services, such as disability, pension, healthcare eligibility, enrollment, and burial benefits, in addition to a self-service locator to find the nearest VA facility. If they are looking for immediate assistance with housing or are having a mental health crisis, MyVA311 will route callers to the Homeless Veteran help line and the Veterans Crisis Line.

None of the existing VA numbers will go away. The future vision is that 1.844.MyVA311 will become a 24/7 one-stop information service platform for all VA services.

Nationwide Study on the Health of Vietnam Era Veterans

VA researchers are embarking on a new nationwide study to comprehensively evaluate the current health and overall well-being of Vietnam era Veterans as they age. In November, VA began recruiting participants for the Vietnam Era Health Retrospective Observational Study (VE-HEROes).

“Through VE-HEROes, VA will be able to answer questions about the long-term health consequences of Vietnam War service, provide VA clinicians with evidence to explain health conditions, and anticipate future needs for VA health care and services,” said Dr. Victoria Davey, VA Office of Research and Development staff member, senior researcher for Post Deployment Health Services, and principal investigator on this study.

VE-HEROes researchers will invite approximately 43,000 Vietnam-era Veterans, including Veterans who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War and Veterans who served elsewhere during the war, to participate in this study by completing a questionnaire. Researchers also will invite a comparison group of approximately 11,000 members of the general population to participate and complete a similar questionnaire. Researchers will look closely at neurologic conditions and hepatitis C infection as a part of this study. Researchers also will describe the health of a population of Vietnam Veterans who served only in the Blue Water Navy and will ask Veterans about health conditions among their descendants that may have been inherited.

Caregiver Support

November is National Family Caregivers Month. VA Butler recognizes family caregivers for the care and tireless support they provide to Veterans. In honor of Family Caregivers Month, VA Butler hosted a fall caregiver self-care program focusing on two topics: “Health and Wellness and Sleep Hygiene,” and “Pain Management.” During the afternoon session, an artist from the local studio Brushes and Barstools, taught a painting class for attendees.

VA Butler offers a wide range of services to family caregivers through its Caregiver Support Program. To learn more about the number of caregiver services available through VA, please contact VA Butler’s Caregiver Support Coordinator at 800.362.8262, ext. 2492 or visit www.butler.va.gov/services/caregiver. VA’s Caregiver Support Line – 1.855.260.3274 –also is just a quick phone call away.

As a caregiver, the very best thing you can do for those who depend on you is to take care of yourself. Let VA help.
**Be Physically Active**

**Forty-four local Veterans** were recognized at VA Butler Healthcare’s annual Healthy Living Recognition Event in October for successes made toward making healthy living choices resulting in positive outcomes (i.e. improved cholesterol, blood sugar control, weight loss, tobacco cessation, etc.). Congrats Veterans!

One of the best ways to start making healthier choices is by adding physical activity into your daily routine. Physical activity is not only an effective way to lose weight; it also is a great way to increase your energy levels. Having energy to enjoy life is probably the best reason to exercise!

VA Butler offers many resources and programs to help Veterans get started with physical activity. The free wellness center and weekly fitness classes are just two of the programs available.

“I have been going to the free Wellness Center at VA Butler Healthcare every week for many years and so should you because age is just a number! You have to keep moving, so just get up and go!” said John Mahler, a 98-years young Air Force Veteran.

VA Butler’s free Wellness Center is available Monday-Friday from 7am-4pm. Veteran fitness classes are offered Monday-Friday from 4:30-5:30pm in VA Butler’s auditorium (Building 1). The classes are provided free of charge, but Veterans must pre-register before attending.

For more information about the Wellness Center, fitness classes, and other ways VA can help you be physically active, please call 724.285.2292 or visit www.butler.va.gov/services/Health_and_Wellness.asp.

**Veterans Serving Veterans**

VA operates one of the largest health care systems in the U.S. VA employs highly trained professionals who are dedicated to providing quality health care to Veterans, and many are Veterans themselves! Currently, more than 30 percent of VA Butler Healthcare’s employees are Veterans.

“All of the great care I received at VA Butler Healthcare has led me to a rewarding career with the VA, and gives me the opportunity to continue helping my fellow Veterans get the health care they deserve.”

Outreach Coordinator and Marine Corps Veteran Dwight Boddorf

Hey Veterans! Share your stories with us in Vet Chat. Email Amanda.Kurtz2@va.gov. We’d love to hear from you!
Health Quiz: COPD

COPD, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, is the third leading cause of death in the United States. More than 12 million people are currently diagnosed with COPD. Test your knowledge about the causes and symptoms of COPD, and learn how you can prevent its complications.

1. COPD is a lung disease that:
   a. usually starts during childhood and develops quickly
   b. makes it hard to breathe and gets worse over time
   c. is passed from person to person

2. In the United States, the term “COPD” describes two main conditions in the lungs:
   a. emphysema and pulmonary hypertension
   b. cystic fibrosis and chronic bronchitis
   c. emphysema and chronic bronchitis

3. The most common lung irritant that causes COPD is:
   a. allergies
   b. cigarette smoke
   c. air pollution

4. Common signs and symptoms of COPD include:
   a. fever
   b. an ongoing cough, or a cough that produces large amounts of mucus, and shortness of breath
   c. a racing heartbeat

5. If you have COPD, which steps can you take to prevent complications and slow the progress of the disease?
   a. quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke
   b. avoid other lung irritants, such as air pollution, chemical fumes, and dust
   c. follow your treatment plan for COPD exactly as your doctor prescribes
   c. all of the above

Quiz Results
1) B 2) C 3) B 4) B 5) D

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Research shows that Veterans and active duty service members are at significantly higher risk than their civilian counterparts for using and/or experiencing violence due to the unique stressors posed by military life.

VA has a number of resources available for both women and men who have experienced Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence (DV/IPV). Veterans can talk to any VA provider about DV/IPV. VA offers effective therapies for mental health problems that commonly occur with DV/IPV, such as PTSD, depression, anxiety and alcohol or drug use problems. VA can provide community referrals for shelters, legal advice, advocates and support groups.

Jackie Cannon is a social worker and the DV/IPV Coordinator for Veterans at VA Butler Healthcare. To learn more about DV/IPV, and treatment and tools available, contact her at 724.285.2293.

Living Better Fall 2016
HEALTH TECH – NATION’S FIRST HADRONDON CENTER

In October, VA and Stanford Medicine announced they would be collaborating to establish the nation’s first Hadron Center in Palo Alto, California, for the benefit of Veteran and non-Veteran cancer patients who could benefit from Hadron therapy.

VA maintains a strong academic and research affiliation with Stanford Medicine. This long-standing partnership has enabled the VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) to offer an exceptional breadth of medical services to Veterans. Now, VA and Stanford University are looking to expand and enhance this affiliation through new collaborative efforts around the Hadron Center and particle beam therapy for Veteran and non-Veteran patients with cancer.

“We are excited to further expand our current partnership with Stanford Medicine, and explore ways to continue leading Veterans health care into the 21st century. The state-of-the-art Hadron Center would not only improve the lives of those affected by cancer, but further demonstrate VA’s ability to partner toward pioneering innovation and exceptional health care,” said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald.

The Hadron Center is anticipated to be a clinical facility, designed to deliver particle radiation beam therapy for the treatment of cancer patients. Presently, the most common radiation beams used for cancer treatment are photons and electrons, which are easy to target to a tumor but can result in damage to normal tissue. Particle beam radiotherapy, on the other hand, uses beams of charged particles such as proton, helium, carbon or other ions to allow more precise targeting anywhere inside the patient’s body, resulting in less damage to normal tissue. Particle beam therapy can be more effective at killing radiation-resistant tumors that are difficult to treat using conventional radiation therapy. Judicious and innovative application of particle therapy can result in improved cure rates for cancer.

“Through our Precision Health vision, Stanford Medicine is committed to providing more personalized health care that is tailored to each individual,” said Lloyd Minor, MD, dean of the Stanford University School of Medicine. “Planning for the Hadron Center embodies this commitment, as we seek to identify optimal ways to offer targeted treatment that both reduces harm and promotes healing.”

This project would be the first of its kind in the nation and serves as an excellent example of public-private collaboration to further research and clinical care, using cutting-edge cancer therapy.

The Hadron Center would significantly complement VAPAHCS’s mission to provide the most advanced care for Veterans, by offering those with cancer access to Hadron therapy treatments and participation in clinical trials.

Source: www.va.gov
Health Tastes –
Chicken Chile Stew

Ingredients
Nonstick cooking spray
3 lb boneless, skinless chicken (breast or leg), cubed
3 stalks celery, chopped
1 medium tomato, diced
7 green chilies, roasted, peeled, seeded, and chopped
4 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
Ground black pepper to taste

Serving size = ½ Cup, makes 10 servings

Directions
Spray a heavy iron skillet with cooking spray, and preheat over medium. Brown chicken cubes in batches. Place meat in a 3- or 4-quart casserole (with cover), and add remaining ingredients. Deglaze the skillet: On high heat, add cold water and scrape hardened juices with a spatula to dissolve them into the water. Add the sauce to the casserole. Add water to barely cover the ingredients. Cover the casserole, and simmer until the stew is thick and the meat is tender (1½ hours). Add black pepper to taste.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Crossword

Physical AND Mental Activity
Read, write, do crosswords, and more! Physical and mental activities are important for your overall health!

ACROSS
1. Nil (4)
3. Cask (6)
8. Security device (7)
9. Water barrier (3)
10. Terse (4)
11. Rudderless (6)
13. Technical terminology (6)
15. Zealous (4)
18. Written record of events (3)
19. Countries (7)
21. Currency unit (6)
22. Labyrinth (4)

DOWN
1. Fastner (3)
2. Detection instrument (5)
4. Japanese martial art (6)
5. Armbones (5)
6. Restricted (7)
7. Adult male swan (3)
10. Coaxed (7)
12. Part of the eye (6)
14. Majestic (5)
16. Stringed instrument (5)
17. Consumed (3)
20. Litigate (3)

HEALTH TIP—BUILD YOUR QUIT PLAN
Are you still trying to quit smoking? Then you have not failed. Create your quit plan today. You can do this by visiting the “Build Your Quit Plan” portion of the website SmokefreeVET, a collaborative effort between VA and the National Cancer Institute.

https://smokefree.gov/veterans/how-to-quit/build-your-quit-plan

Living Better Fall 2016
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.