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As part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, VA Butler hosted the annual Clothesline Project to increase awareness of the impact of violence on women and men, to celebrate the strength of survivors, and to provide another avenue to “break the silence.”

Local high school student Brett Schoeffel raised more than $900 to be used for the mental health care of Veterans and said that he is “…proud of all of those who sacrificed and fought to protect this country” and could not think of another cause worthy of donation. The money was raised as part of his senior project.

Congressman Glenn Thompson visited VA Butler’s Clarion County CBOC in April. He met with staff and Veterans, and toured the new facility, which opened at its new location at 56 Clarion Plaza, Suite 115, Monroe Township in fall 2015.

VA Butler recognized Diabetes Alert Day to encourage Veterans to know their risk for diabetes, and to take action steps to decrease their risk. VA Butler offers a weekly support group, and a monthly self-management program for diabetes.

Deritch “Dee” Markus was one of many women Veterans at VA Butler Healthcare for the Women Veterans Quilt Dedication Event in March as part of National Women’s History Month. Markus contributed a quilt square to the quilt that honors 26 local women Veterans.

Local high school student Brett Schoeffel raised more than $900 to be used for the mental health care of Veterans and said that he is “…proud of all of those who sacrificed and fought to protect this country” and could not think of another cause worthy of donation. The money was raised as part of his senior project.

Dr. Adelman, Network Director VA – VISN 4, conducted a site visit at VA Butler Healthcare in March. As part of his visit, he participated in Environment of Care (EOC) rounds in Building 1, which included a tour of the facility education space.

During National Volunteer Week, VA Butler recognized six volunteers who were nominated for the Making Lives Better Volunteer of the Year Award for 2016. The nominees were Chuck Jennings, John Morgan, Danny Turner, Donna Croft, June Gregg and Linda Trimpey.

Over 130 people attended the third annual Butterfly Release Ceremony in May to honor 49 Veterans who passed away in VA Butler’s Community Living Center over this past year.

VA Butler hosted the sixth annual VA2K Walk and Roll in May exceeding attendance and donations from last year’s event! The annual event is dedicated to supporting homeless Veterans while also encouraging healthy activity.
Dear Veterans, fellow employees, volunteers and friends of VA Butler Healthcare,

We’ve had an eventful and successful spring at VA Butler Healthcare. We kicked off the new season with a much deserved recognition event for our Vietnam Veterans, and we will continue to thank and honor them as part of the ongoing national commemoration. We also placed the final steel beam of construction on the new Health Care Center, which is now about six months ahead of schedule! We are hosting more town hall meetings, offering more services, and working hard every day to continually provide our Veterans with the care they deserve. This summer, and all year long we will Make Lives Better for our Veterans, their families, and caregivers.

David Cord, Director

C O N T E N T S

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Topping Out
Construction is progressing! In early April, VA Butler held the official Topping Out Ceremony to celebrate the construction progress of the new Health Care Center. At the ceremony, the final steel beam for this new facility was placed.

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It Has Everything!
Navy Vietnam Veteran Paul Baros resides at VA Butler’s Community Living Center, but he makes frequent visits to the My HealtheVet program office—most recently, to learn all about My HealtheVet’s Veterans Health Library (VHL). Read more about the VHL and how it can benefit you too.

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Thank You Vietnam Veterans
As part of the national commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, VA Butler thanked Vietnam Veterans with a week of events in March, and an Appreciation Breakfast on March 30 sponsored by American Legion Post 778.

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

and more…

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Editor Amanda Kurtz
Photographers Chuck Jennings, Karen Dunn, Keri Dolan
In early April, VA Butler Healthcare held the official Topping Out Ceremony to celebrate the construction progress of the new Health Care Center (HCC). At the ceremony, the final steel beam for this new facility was placed. Additionally, remarks were provided by David Cord, VA Butler’s Director; Timothy Burke, M.D., VA VISN 4’s Chief Medical Officer; and T. Michael Scott, Cambridge’s President. Mike Kelly, U.S. Representative, 3rd District of Pennsylvania provided a keynote speech.

“The Topping Out of the new Health Care Center was an exciting milestone for Butler,” said Cord. “The HCC will enhance and improve the outpatient health care environment for our Veterans and their families and will provide new space for all outpatient services and support staff.”

Construction on the facility is approximately six months ahead of schedule, set to be completed by summer 2017 and officially opening for Veterans in fall 2017.

The completed HCC will be a silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), two-story building of 168,000 square feet located at 353 North Duffy Road, Butler, approximately 1.4 miles away from the main Butler campus. It will include primary care, specialty care, mental health, dental, diagnostic, laboratory, pathology, radiology, podiatry, optometry, pharmacy, physical rehabilitation, and women’s health services.

“Veterans will be easily able to navigate the new facility as all clinical services will be provided on the ground floor,” added Cord. “The HCC also will allow for the expansion of clinics as our Veteran utilization increases.”

Cherie Hawryliak, VA Butler’s HCC Program Manager, was excited to see the Topping Out occur, but is even more excited for the continued construction progress since the April event. Construction continues to excel at the site as concrete pours continue at all levels of the building, roofing materials are placed, retention ponds are finalized, and block and brick work continues. In addition, Duffy Road improvements will occur in May and June.

“We are very blessed to get a new building like this in Butler County—for everyone in Butler, but especially for our VA staff and our deserving Veterans,” commented Hawryliak. “This new facility will provide our Veterans with the health care they need and deserve, and knowing that and being a part of that is an amazing feeling.”

Veterans and the community can keep up-to-date on HCC construction progress by visiting www.butler.va.gov/news/building.asp. The site features a live-camera update direct from the construction site. Quarterly town hall meetings are scheduled for Veterans and the community to discuss the new Health Care Center and address any questions. The next one is set to occur this summer.

www.butler.va.gov/news/building.asp
U.S. Navy Vietnam Veteran Paul Baros was an anti-submarine air crewman tasked with detecting and classifying enemy nuclear submarines. He served from 1969-1973, spending some of that time on the U.S. Ticonderoga. Paul now resides at VA Butler’s Community Living Center (CLC), but he makes frequent visits to the My HealtheVet program office—most recently, to learn all about My HealtheVet’s Veterans Health Library (VHL).

The VHL offers Veterans, family members, and caregivers 24/7 access to comprehensive, Veteran-focused health information. The library includes more than 1,500 health sheets, more than 150 videos, Go-to-Guides, and flipbooks that have been approved by VA experts and cover topics specific to Veterans, for example, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat-related traumatic brain injury, Agent Orange, and cold injuries. All health information is available to Veterans, their families and the public, no matter where the Veteran receives care.

Baros is a long-time My HealtheVet user. In the beginning, he used it primarily to refill his VA prescriptions. Once he moved into the CLC, he purchased a laptop and a tablet, and saved the My HealtheVet website as a favorite on his electronic devices to enjoy its many features. Baros uses My HealtheVet frequently on his own, but also regularly visits VA Butler’s My HealtheVet Coordinator, Lauren Heiger, to learn more about its many features.

The VHL Quick Link, located on the My HealtheVet webpage, makes the library easy to access, and Baros was amazed at all VHL has to offer – especially the Health Encyclopedia, with A-to-Z health subjects and one-touch accessibility. The one-touch accessibility is especially helpful for Baros, who has lived with chronic, debilitating tremors for years as a result of prolonged use of psychiatric medications. He has participated in medical trials and medication adjustments to ease the effects of his
Pseudo Parkinson’s disease or Parkinsonism. His current medication has successfully reduced his hand and arm tremors, and prescription adjustments in the past have reduced severe tremors in his jaw and arms.

With the touch of his stylus to his touch screen, Baros was able to choose a single letter of the alphabet to explore the Veterans Health Library’s Health Encyclopedia rather than typing in a search word with his stylus or finger. The one-letter touch produced an alphabetic list of health topics for him to easily choose from and click. “It has everything! Knowing this is here,” Baros said, “I can search various topics and consult with my doctor.”

The Health Encyclopedia search provided Baros with medication side effects, treatment options and a “Learn More” section to the right of the screen that features the links: “Health Education” and “Medication Reference” to refine the results of his search. Once Baros touched the “Medication Reference” link, it drilled the data down further. The “Drug Search” link lists the letters of the alphabet – and with a pull down menu, every medication becomes available in alphabetical order – all at the touch of the alphabet button!

As Baros explained, the facets of his condition to Heiger aloud; he also would touch the screen on the topic and confirm his knowledge base – with diagrams, definitions, additional links, and resources.

“Knowing that the Veterans Health Library is on the My Health eVet home page, I am able to search various topics and learn new things. And, the VHL’s A-to-Z Health Encyclopedia saves me from having to use my stylus to type each letter of a search word! Now, I can touch a single letter and select from the list of health topics that appear in alphabetical order at the touch of an alphabetical letter on the screen. This is such a help for me with my hand tremors, to be able to select the letter of the search word – rather than spelling it out.”

The VHL provides the ultimate in accessibility with a full spectrum of reliable health information that has been reviewed by VA clinical experts. The VHL ensures accessibility in many ways and is easy to use for Veterans with mental or physical disabilities.

Check out the Veterans Health Library today at www.veteranshealthylibrary.org. To learn more about My Health eVet and to sign up, visit www.myhealth.va.gov or call VA Butler’s My Health eVet Coordinator at 800.362.8262, ext. 2595.
In 2008, the Secretary of Defense was authorized by law to conduct a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. The inaugural event occurred at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, commonly known as “The Wall,” in Washington, D.C. on Memorial Day, 2012. The President was the keynote speaker, and he stated:

“And one of the most painful chapters in our history was Vietnam – most particularly, how we treated our troops who served there. You were often blamed for a war you didn’t start, when you should have been commended for serving your country with valor. You were sometimes blamed for misdeeds of a few, when the honorable service of the many should have been praised. You came home and sometimes were denigrated, when you should have been celebrated. It was a national shame, a disgrace that should have never happened. And that’s why here, today, we resolve that it will not happen again.”

The significance of the Vietnam 50th Anniversary Commemoration is that our Vietnam Veterans were never welcomed home and honored like they had been after previous wars. Vietnam was a long war, and accordingly a long commemoration period is planned. By presidential proclamation, the Commemoration extends from Memorial Day 2012 through Veterans Day 2025.

The Commemoration recognizes all men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975. Nine million Americans, approximately 7 million living today, served during that period, and the commemoration makes no distinction between Veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years. All answered the call of duty.

VA conducted hundreds of events nationwide this past March to recognize, honor and thank U.S. Vietnam Veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices as part of the national commemoration.

VA Butler Healthcare recognized and thanked Vietnam Veterans throughout the week of March 28, 2016, with the main commemoration event being an appreciation breakfast on March 30 sponsored by American Legion Post 778. More than 300 people attended the appreciation breakfast, and all Vietnam Veterans who were there received a certificate of appreciation signed by VA Butler’s Director along with the Vietnam Veteran lapel pin.

VA Butler Healthcare, along with more than 9,000 organizations across the country, has joined with the Department of Defense as commemorative partner. We will continue to host events for the next few years to thank and honor our Vietnam Veterans and their families.

To learn more about the Vietnam War Commemoration, go to: www.vietnamwar50th.com.
Volunteers of the Year –
Congratulations Chuck and Linda!

April 10-16 was National Volunteer Week and the VA used the opportunity to thank more than 74,000 citizen volunteers nationwide who give back to Veterans every day. Locally, VA Butler Healthcare held its third annual Making Lives Better Volunteer of the Year Program on April 15 to commemorate the week.

Six volunteers (three men and three women) were nominated for the award this year: Chuck Jennings (Butler), John Morgan (Cranberry Twp.), Danny Turner (Butler), Donna Croft (Butler), June Gregg (Butler), and Linda Trimpey (Renfrew). Together, these volunteers have contributed more than 12,492 hours over 29 years.

Congratulations to the 2016 Male Volunteer of the Year, Chuck Jennings, and the 2016 Female Volunteer of the Year, Linda Trimpey! Thank you for everything you do every day for our Veterans.

Last year, 346 volunteers at VA Butler contributed 38,808 hours of service. VA volunteers, Veteran Service Organizations and the community contributed more than $156,000 in donations to support Veteran programs at VA Butler. Volunteers and contributions totaled $1,074,473 in supportive services that positively impacted the lives of Veterans.

VA Butler Healthcare currently has volunteer assignments open and is in need of volunteer drivers, clerical support, greeters at the main facility and CBOCs, and helpers for the My HealtheVet Program, an online health maintenance resource. Individuals also may support the Voluntary Services program through donations of personal care items. These items are used for inpatients, some outpatient programs, and the Homeless Veterans Program. A wish-list of requested items is maintained in Voluntary Services and can be provided upon request.

For more information about volunteering at VA Butler Healthcare, contact VA Butler’s Voluntary Services Office at 800.362.8262, ext. 2575, or visit www.butler.va.gov/giving.

Mindfulness means paying attention, on purpose, to whatever is going on in the present moment without passing judgment on it. Mindfulness has been shown to be effective for reducing stress, improving emotional balance, increasing self-awareness, helping with anxiety and depression, and coping more effectively with chronic pain.

Starting in May, VA Butler Healthcare began offering a new, introductory group about Mindfulness. The group is held the second Wednesday of each month and any Veteran enrolled at VA Butler is encouraged to attend. If interested, Veterans should talk to their VA health care team.

VA also has a Mindfulness Coach Mobile Application (App) designed to help Veterans, Servicemembers and others learn how to practice mindfulness. Learn more here by visiting https://mobile.va.gov/app/mindfulness-coach.
**Health Care Center Construction Progress**

**VA Butler’s auditorium** officially reopened in May – and VA Butler’s free weekly fitness classes have resumed in that location Monday-Friday from 4:30-5:30pm. Classes include:

- Mondays and Wednesdays: PE Plus (Cardio)
- Tuesdays: Kickboxing
- Thursdays: Cardio Kickboxing
- Fridays: Yoga

Get in shape for summer now – *for free*!

Veterans must pre-register before attending classes. To do so, contact VA Butler’s Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Program Manager at 800.362.8262, ext. 2292.

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**New Telehealth Option for VA’s Bariatric Surgery Program**

**VA’s Bariatric Surgery** Program is offered to Veterans who are in need of significant weight loss to regain health and function. There is a series of appointments for which participation is necessary to be eligible for and then ready for bariatric surgery. The majority of these appointments previously required VA Butler Veterans to make multiple trips to the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS). Thanks to telehealth, many of these trips are now eliminated!

Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) allows Veterans to avoid the expense, time, and stress of traveling to VAPHS. CVT connects Veterans in Butler with Bariatric Team providers in Pittsburgh using real-time video conferencing. By connecting with the Bariatric Surgery Team using CVT, the group education overview class, the pre-operative psychology evaluation, weekly Optifast group program (specialty liquid diet program to reduce medications and prepare for surgery), and the ongoing series of post-operative visits (occurring at various monthly intervals post-surgery, and then annually for years to come) can all be done right in Butler.

Talk to your health care team at VA Butler today, if you want to learn more about weight management and the best care options for you. To learn more about telehealth, visit [www.butler.va.gov/services/Telehealth.asp](http://www.butler.va.gov/services/Telehealth.asp).
Quilt for Women Veterans Unveiled

**VA Butler Healthcare** collected quilt squares from women Veterans last year in recognition of National Women’s History Month, celebrated annually in March since 1987. To celebrate Women’s History Month this year, the final quilt was presented.

The final quilt was made up of 26 individually designed squares, each one devoted to a woman Veteran. Each quilt square is designed and dedicated to a woman Veteran’s memory and may mention the dates served, rank, branch of service, and the name of the woman.

Two of VA Butler’s employees and women Veterans themselves, Paula McCarl and Anne McKee, came up with this creative idea as a way to honor fellow women Veterans. “The goal behind this project was to help showcase the many accomplishments of women in the military—to really show what women can do,” said McCarl.

The Pieceful Patchers Charity Quilters, part of the Pieceful Patchers Quilt Guild, donated their time and supplies to put together all the quilt squares into the final quilt. The final quilt will be on display soon at the main facility, and then once the new Health Care Center is open next year, the quilt will be on display there for all to enjoy.

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.

“I came to work here because VA Butler played an integral role in reshaping my own life. It’s a pleasure to serve fellow Veterans. I have brothers out there losing their battle with PTSD, addiction, and other mental health issues. I want to be part of a VA that helps them turn the tide.”

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

Hepatitis C Basics?

Did you know that Veterans are at increased risk for hepatitis C? Learn more about the hepatitis C virus with the quiz below or online at www.hepatitis.va.gov.

1. Hepatitis C virus (HCV) causes severe liver disease in everyone who has it.
   a. True  b. False

2. You can only get hepatitis C if you inject drugs.
   a. True  b. False

3. You can have hepatitis C and not even feel sick.
   a. True  b. False

4. Hepatitis C is spread through dirty food and water.
   a. True  b. False

5. I can protect myself from getting hepatitis C.
   a. True  b. False

6. There is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C infection.
   a. True  b. False

7. As a Veteran, I can be tested for hepatitis C at VA Butler Healthcare.
   a. True  b. False

8. VA Butler Healthcare can provide me with more information and support.
   a. True  b. False

Quiz Results
1) False  2) False  3) True  4) False  5) True  6) True  7) True  8) True

Get Screened for Hepatitis C

About 4 million Americans have hepatitis C—are you at risk? Here are three facts you should know about hepatitis C:

1) Baby boomers are five times more likely to have hepatitis C.
2) Hepatitis C is a leading cause of liver cancer.
3) Treatments are available that can cure this disease.

VA recommends testing if you were born between 1945-65 or have other hepatitis C risk factors. A blood test is the only way to know if you have it. Symptoms can go unnoticed for years, even decades. Talk to your VA healthcare team about testing and treatment. Early detection can save lives!

Joshua Snodgrass is the Hepatitis C Clinical Pharmacist at VA Butler. To learn more about Hepatitis screening and treatment, call 1.800.362.8262, ext. 4609, or visit: www.hepatitis.va.gov.
HEALTH TECH – HEADBAND DEVICE PREVENTS MIGRAINES

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), 12 percent of Americans (about 37 million people) have migraines. These unbearable headaches affect children and adults, and women are three times more likely to have migraines than men (about 18 percent of women have migraines). A new headband device may help!

“One of my patients told me about this new device that was approved by the FDA in 2014,” said Dr. Alton Bryant, a neurologist at the Salisbury VA in North Carolina. “I’ve been prescribing it for about six months now. I think it is a solid treatment, certainly as good as our standard migraine medicines.”

The device is called Cefaly, and it is a transcutaneous (passing through the skin) electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) device for use before the onset of a migraine. Patients can use Cefaly daily, and the treatment has been shown to reduce the number of days during which they experience migraines. TENS technology has been around a long time as a treatment for general pain, but this is the first time it has been authorized as a preventive measure for migraines.

The portable, battery-powered Cefaly device resembles a plastic headband worn across the forehead. The user applies an electrode (a patch) to the forehead, connects the plastic headband to the electrode, and the device then emits an electrical current to stimulate one of the large nerves in the head (the trigeminal nerve), which has been associated with migraines.

“I was kind of skeptical, but I gave it a try,” said Marine Corps Veteran Rodney Harrington. “I went from having two to four migraines a week to having maybe two per month. It really works. I usually wear it in the afternoon or evening. It’s very calming. It’s kind of a good way to end the day.”

Although there are effective drug treatments for migraines, they can have side effects. Medical devices aim to provide an alternative treatment with fewer and more tolerable side effects.

“The meds I was taking would make me feel like a zombie,” Harrington said. “I call them knock-out pills. But this thing just relaxes me. It’s small and lightweight, so whenever I go out of town I just throw it in my bag and take it with me.

“I haven’t taken my meds in quite some time now,” he added, “so this has definitely been a benefit. I’ve had migraine problems for 20 years and this is the first thing that’s really made a difference for me.”

“It’s a preventative,” observed Dr. Bryant. “Like any migraine preventative, it will work extremely well for some people, moderately well for others, and not well at all for some. I can say it has been beneficial for most of my patients. Well over half of my patients have a moderate to very good response.”

Migraines are often under-diagnosed and undertreated. If you have migraines and don’t get adequate relief, talk to your VA health care team today.
Health Tastes
Yogurt Salad Dressing

Ingredients
8 oz nonfat plain yogurt
1/4 C reduced-fat mayonnaise
2 Tbsp dried chives
2 Tbsp dried dill
2 Tbsp lemon juice

Directions
Mix all ingredients thoroughly in a glass or stainless steel bowl. Refrigerate.

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

Calories: 39g ★ Total Fat: 2g ★ Carbohydrates: 4g ★ Protein: 2g

Crossword

Exercise for your Brain

Different parts of the brain will be exercised depending on what kinds of puzzles you choose to do. Crossword puzzles challenge the language and memory areas while jigsaw puzzles provide exercise for the parietal lobes. Exercise your brain with the crossword below.

ACROSS
1. Obscure (5)
4. Nimble (5)
7. Monumental (7)
8. Fencing sword (4)
10. Test (5)
13. Woodwind instrument (5)
14. Celestial body (4)
17. Innovator (7)
19. Carapace (5)
20. Raucous (5)

DOWN
1. Smooth fabric (6)
2. Precious stone (3)
3. Simple (4)
4. Bee house (6)
5. Imprecise (7)
6. Reverberation (4)
9. Oval (7)
11. Saunter (6)
12. Blood vessel (6)
15. Optical device (4)
16. Ursine mammal (4)
18. Uncooked (3)

HEALTH TIP—WEAR A PEDOMETER

This handy tool counts your steps and can motivate you to be active. Aim for at least 10,000 steps daily (start slowly and increase gradually) this activity level is recommended for good health.
ARMSTRONG COUNTY VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
11 Hilltop Plaza
Kittanning, PA 16201
724.545.8420

CLARION COUNTY VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
56 Clarion Plaza, Suite 115
Monroe Township, PA 16214
814.226.3900

CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
900 Commonwealth Drive,
Suite 100
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
724.742.3500 or 724.741.3131

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 Kerrwood 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.

Learn about ways to help you manage and reduce your stress.

A Better Way to LIVE
Talk with your health care team about your goals.
Learn more at www.prevention.va.gov