



# VAMC Anchor

Published by the Public Affairs Office



## Being civil shouldn't be ancient history

Anchor correspondent

Deb D'Allesandro gives a primer on C.R.E.W.



Once upon a time, men bowed and ladies curtsied when greeting each other. It was a sign of respect and reverence--part of the societal norm of the time. Times have changed dramatically, however. It's not just bowing and curtsying that have fallen by the wayside *but the sentiment behind those simple acts of civility*. Being civil should not be something we remember from days of old. Some might argue that it's needed more than ever, being vital to organizational health and excellence.

Providing good customer service is one example of how civility comes into play. Working in the health care industry, we know firsthand how important customer service is and the impact our behavior can have on the patient's healthcare experience. Do we greet people with a smile and say "hello, how are you?" Do we take time to listen and treat them with respect? What about our internal customers--the people who work beside us or in other departments within the VA? Are we civil towards them? Do we offer them help, support, positive feedback, or--when appropriate--constructive criticism? These are simple questions, but they are questions that we seldom take the time to ask ourselves.

To aid us in this quest, the VA has embraced an initiative called **Civility, Respect and Engagement in the Workplace** known as **CREW**. This program is available to all VA employees and provides us with the resources and tools to create a workplace that benefits the employee and the customer alike. CREW is designed to help work units improve team dynamics through better communication and appreciation of our shared values. CREW can show us ways to better understand and respect each other despite our differences and find that common goal to create the best team possible. CREW helps employees focus on making their work environment as positive and productive as possible.

The process is simple. Once a group decides that they want to have CREW come into their department, all they have to do is submit a request to one of our 2 CREW Coordinators (Anita Creamer or Minerva Thomas). They will then determine which of the CREW facilitators (we currently have six) will work with the group over a six-to-eight month period meeting on a regular basis weekly, monthly, (continued--page 2)



### January/February 2011

Anthony Reginato (Medicine)  
Paula Welch (Nursing)  
Rachel Slagle (MHBSS)  
Elizabeth Veasey (MHBSS)  
Jeanne Smith (MHBSS)  
Kelly Riel (Nursing)  
Robert Niebauer, Jr. (Nursing)  
Ellen Lynch (Nursing)  
Elizabeth Wessen (Nursing)  
Steven Quinn (Nutrition & Food Service)  
Shannon Gorski (Nutrition & Food Svc)  
Ramel Shaw (Nutrition & Food Svc)  
Elizabeth Preisinger (Pathology/Lab)  
Leslie Allen (Pathology/Lab)  
Dawn Dupuis (Pathology/Lab)  
Thomas Rotella (Pharmacy)  
Paige Parsons (Pharmacy)  
Alvin Kirkman (Police Service)  
Joseph Grassi, II (Police Service)  
Karen Oliver (Primary Care)  
Anton Skerl (Primary Care)  
Mary Dolan (Primary Care)  
Maryann Parent (Primary Care)  
Stefanie Hyde (Research)  
Erik Taylor (Research)  
Kathleen Langford (Social Work)  
Maureen Hebert (Social Work)  
Jean Bruch (Surgical Service)  
Joshua Pascale (Canteen Service)  
Paul Poulin (Facilities Management)  
Lucas Klein (Human Resources)  
Zachary Wicks (MHBSS)  
Steven Myers (MHBSS)  
Cheryl Amado (Patient Services)  
Aisling Caffrey (Research)  
Robin Pinto (Sensory & Rehab)  
Dola Conceicao (Sensory & Rehab)  
Melanie Travassos (Surgical Service)  
Jeffrey Martins (Canteen Service)



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## Director's Spotlight

### Construction Update

Over the past couple of years or so, we have all witnessed the completion of several significant upgrades to our Medical Center. We have a two new Audiology Clinics (Eagle Square and at the New Bedford CBOC), a new Eye Clinic (also Eagle Square), a new fixed MRI, a new Center for Restorative and Regenerative Medicine, a new Surgical Suite, and a newly-renovated Inpatient Psychiatric Unit. These projects have, of course, been significant and will undoubtedly contribute to better, safer quality care for our Veterans. But—believe it or not—we've only begun to scratch the surface of the surface. Very soon we'll start an \$18 million construction project to erect a new Mental Health and Specialty Clinics Addition on the east side of our main hospital building. Site work on that project is expected to begin sometime in mid-April. In addition, sometime after January 2012, another project will be awarded to construct a new Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit on the south side of the campus.

As I'm sure you're aware, parking will remain a concern and will be somewhat further strained. We have already lost an additional 30 spaces this past week (Armed Forces Boulevard), will lose about 30 or 40 more this summer (Air Force Drive), and about 75 more in conjunction with the new ED/ICU project. Some of the losses will be offset by a new parking lot (across from Lot 2) that will open this summer. We are looking at ways to help ease potential traffic congestion such as opening the Valley Street gate during normal duty hours.

As always, I'll continue do my best to keep you informed of our construction plans and ensure we communicate any impact these plans may have on your work environment. Facilities Management prepares a weekly construction activity update that's available on our Intranet, which I encourage you to view by clicking [here](#).

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue our march forward.

WILLIAM J. BURNEY  
Acting Medical Center Director

## "CREW" (Con't from page 1)

or bi-monthly). The ultimate goal is to establish a foundation so employees can work on continuous improvement within their group. On the flip side, for those who are interested in becoming a CREW facilitator please contact Anita or Minerva (see below) and they will help you on your way.

CREW has recently established CIA or "CREW in Action" which spotlights people who demonstrate the CREW philosophy using civility and respect in the workplace. Our CREW Champion, Alice Frezza, is the contact for CIA so please call her at extension 4263 or via email [Alice.Frezza@va.gov](mailto:Alice.Frezza@va.gov) whenever you see CREW in Action. That person will be recognized by receiving a CIA goody bag and have their picture taken to post on our CREW bulletin board!

CREW is a great program to take your work unit, your department, or your Service to the next level. For more information about CREW, please contact Anita Creamer at ext. 3171 or Minerva Thomas at ext. 3292.

Employees wishing to review some frequently asked questions about CREW, can click [here](#).

## PVAMC - Navy Partnership A "Win-Win" Situation

by Commander Paul Barfknecht

Upon the conclusion of my active duty service and departure as the program facilitator for Navy personnel participating in a new collaboration between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Navy, I present my appreciation.

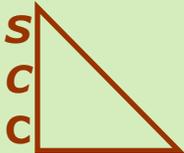
Expert clinicians can significantly affect each patient they care for, but

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## Traumatic Brain Injury

by Marie L. Sullivan, LICSW, BCD, CCM

### Specialty Clinic Corner

The Providence VAMC has a well-developed system for identifying and treating Veterans with Polytrauma/TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury). All service members returning from deployment are now screened to determine if they have sustained a deployment-related traumatic brain injury or concussion.

The initial screen is called the TBI Clinical Reminder. This reminder is composed of a set of "yes/no" questions which, when properly administered, will identify exposures to events with risk for TBI. Veterans who screen positive are referred for a Comprehensive Second Level Evaluation. This more in-depth evaluation is conducted by Dr. Stephen Mernoff (Chief Neurologist), Dr. Stephen Correia and Dr. Megan Spencer (Neuropsychologists), and Marie Sullivan LICSW (who completes the initial psychosocial assessment). The intent of this Evaluation is to assess the likelihood a Veteran sustained a TBI and to estimate the severity of the injury. The process is limited by reliance on Veterans' self-report of their injury since documentation at the time of injury is rarely available. Here at PVAMC, Drs. Mernoff, Correia, and Spencer have "adopted a fairly simplified clinical guideline for determining the presence or absence of TBI; a patient who can relate a continuous narrative before/during and after an event seems unlikely to have suffered a physiologic disruption of brain function. We have found this guideline to be quite helpful in deciding ambiguous cases."\*

*Our Polytrauma/TBI program is now identified nationwide as a Polytrauma Support Clinic Team (PSCT). This designation is due to the volume, intensity of care, and resources PVAMC has invested in providing outstanding assessment and treatment to our Veterans. Our team is led by Dr. Mernoff and includes many additional committed disciplines such as Psychology (Neuropsychology and Psychologists specializing in PTSD), Primary Care; Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy, and Social Work/Case Management. The goal of our program is to identify the issues that are treatable for our Veterans (such as PTSD, depression, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, sleep deprivation, chronic pain, employment, marital distress, returning to school, and adjustment to civilian life) and to help Veterans lessen symptoms and improve their overall quality of life.*

*(Note: to review the complete article, please click [here](#))*

\*Excerpted from the article: Military Blast Injury in Iraq and Afghanistan: The Veterans Health Administration's Polytrauma System of Care; by: Stephen T. Mernoff, MD,FAAN, and Stephen Correia, PhD. Published in Medicine & Health Rhode Island, Vol 93, No1, Jan.2010.

### Navy Partnership – con't:

they choose to pass along their expertise by becoming teachers and exponentially impact multitudes. I personally thank everyone from the Providence VA Medical Center for helping to sustain and improve the skills of our Registered Nurses and Corpsmen shipmates from Naval Health Clinic New England. We have developed a program which will contribute to quality care delivered to our service members deployed worldwide in "Harm's Way." Your continued input by virtue of your expertise is welcomed and warranted for the success of this program.

The administrators who worked through our "red tape" differences while maintaining systems integrity and patient safety protocol in record time are nothing short of miraculous.

As with any new integration between governmental agencies, many departments and many individuals are involved...I am honored to have served alongside you aboard the Providence VA Medical Center. You are GREAT Americans.

Very Respectfully,  
Paul Barfknecht  
Commander, Nurse Corps, U.S. Navy

*CDR Barfknecht was instrumental in helping set up the unique collaboration between Naval Health Clinic New England Newport, Naval Branch Health Clinic, Groton, and the Providence VAMC. NHCNE Military Nurses and Corpsmen are each doing a work rotation in PVAMC's Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit, helping them maintain clinical knowledge and skill competencies in triage, assessment, and in procedures they'll use during deployment.*



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## Staff in the News



### Service Awards

At left, clockwise from top left: **Joanne Gibbons (30 years)**; **Marilyn Vincent (30 years)**; **Paula Bissell (25 years)**; and **Leslie Gagnon (25 years)**. At right, clockwise from top left: **Maureen Benz (25 years)**; **Ernie Daniels (30 years)**; **Joanne Cardoza (25 years)**; and **Betty Baptista (30 years)**; not pictured is **Nolie Bryan (10 years)**



### ...Around the PVAMC...

From bottom left: **Maribel Arguinizoni** demonstrates the Sara-Lift with **Aygul Cetinel**, **Margaret Milner**, and **Suzanne Richmond** during the Nursing Skills Fair; **MyHealthVe Coordinator Eileen Kirshenbaum** briefs family member **Denise James**; **Veteran Darrell Smith and Lynn Gibbs** pose with **Women Veterans Program Manager Betty Grady**; Guest Speaker **Rachel Rotkovitch** receives a certificate of appreciation during Women's History Month celebration; lastly (not pictured), congratulations to Dawn Pedchenko on her selection as Chief Information Officer.



### Got Story Ideas?

Please submit your ideas to  
[Thomas.Antonaccio@va.gov](mailto:Thomas.Antonaccio@va.gov).

### PVAMC Website



### Need Enrollment Info?

Please call (401) 273-7100, ext. 3300