

VETERANS BENEFITS & BEYOND



Secretary Takes Action to Ensure Project ARCH Veterans Continue to Receive Care Closer to Home

As the Project ARCH pilot program comes to an end in August, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert A. McDonald recently announced that Veterans enrolled in the program will be able to continue receiving care closer to home. Taking advantage of options available under the Veterans Choice Program, such as the “unusual or excessive burden provision” and Provider Agreements, Veterans receiving care under Project ARCH will continue care without interruption when the pilot program ends August 7.

“My commitment to those Veterans under Project ARCH is that we will do everything within our control to make sure they maintain continuity of care in their communities with the providers they know.”

Robert A. McDonald
Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary

“There is nothing more important to us than serving the Veterans who served our country,” said Secretary McDonald. “My commitment to those Veterans under Project ARCH is that we will do everything within our control to make sure they maintain continuity of care in their communities with the providers they know.”

Project ARCH operates in Maine, Virginia, Kansas, Montana and Arizona. In anticipation of the program’s end, Project ARCH providers have been contacted and invited to continue to provide health care to Veterans under the Veterans Choice Program. “VA appreciates the Veterans and community providers who participated in the program,” said Dr. Baligh Yehia, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care. “VA is employing lessons learned and best practices from the program as we work to build one consolidated program for community care – a program that delivers the best of both VA and the community.”

Veterans transitioning to the Veterans Choice Program are being contacted regarding their individual care.

Source: www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2804

INSIDE

VA Announces New Partnerships and Collaboration

VA Announces Partnership With Non-Profit Organization, Leanin.org

OFFICE INBOX
Office News And Events

WHAT'S COOKING!
Cheesy Potatoes with Smoked Sausage

Jan Dils



Jan Dils brings her expertise to issues that affect you and millions of other Americans every day. While her knowledge spans the critical areas pertaining to Personal Injury, Veterans' benefits, Social Security disability benefits and related appeals and claims, her practice remains focused on people, making sure you get the right answers and, above all, results.



JAN'S Letter



It's hard to believe that summer is officially over! I'm so happy I had the opportunity to enjoy a great beach trip with family and friends before our oldest son, Hayden, headed off to his freshman year at Marshall. Our youngest son Spencer turned 13 over the summer too—I can't figure out where the time goes!

Speaking of time flying by, our first article deals with the end of the Project ARCH pilot program, which has helped Veterans who are enrolled in the program receive the care they need closer to home. While the end date for the program is August 7, VA announced that enrolled Veterans will continue to receive care without interruption when the pilot program ends. Be sure to check out the article for more details.

We've also included an article of special interest to women Veterans, and an overview of several new partnerships with VA. Plus, as always, we have news from our team, along with a few "extras" just for fun.

I hope you had time to spend with family and friends this summer, too, and that you are looking forward to cooler weather, football games, and all of the great things that come with the fall season as much as I am. And remember: if you have questions about applying for and receiving Veterans benefits, feel free to give us a call or send an email. We are always happy to hear from you!

Sincerely,
Jan Dils



STAY PLUGGED INTO THE PRACTICE

Want the scoop on what's new with our business and the team? You can find it right here, so stay plugged into the practice.

Congratulations to Accounting Specialist **Jenny Jones**, who married her Fiancé Rusty Fry on May 4th. We are saying goodbye to **Jackie Roberts** in August. As one of our team's very first employees, Jackie is retiring after 14 years of service. We're sad to see her go, but wish her all the best in her retirement! We are happy to announce that **Kris Fluharty** is our newest VA Non-Attorney rep, and we're proud to report three new additions to our staff: **Katie Harris** and **Samantha Wolfe** joined our Leads and Intake Pod, while **Melissa Nutter** joined Mail and Scanning.

COMMUNITY CORNER

In June of 2016 we attended the **1st annual Ellwood City Veterans Resource Fair** in Ellwood City, PA. The event was hosted by the Ellwood City Community Partnership. While in attendance we met a lot of Veterans from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and were able to provide a lot of educational books and information to this community.

Also, in May we attended a **Veterans Resource fair at American Legion Post 15** in Parkersburg, WV. The event was hosted by Workforce, WV and West Virginia University at Parkersburg. The event was attended by many local vets and businesses.



SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE

Heather Wilson

As a VA Medical Records Requesting Specialist, Heather Wilson is a crucial link in helping build the strongest possible cases for the Veterans we serve. A 2006 graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice and Sociology, Heather was in choir from 6th grade through her senior year of college, and had the opportunity to travel to different countries and sang with the WV Symphony several times. Now, when Heather isn't working to make sure our Veterans receive the proper records for their cases, Heather loves photography, and can often be found taking pictures of anything from weddings and families to senior pictures, scenery and more. She's also a diehard Red Sox fan who enjoys scrapbooking and painting, and she's even working on writing a romance novel! She and husband Chris have been together for 8 years and married for 2, and Heather has two step children, along with her grown kids Christopher and Nyla. Her black cat Binx rounds out the family.

Please join us in thanking Heather for her hard work and the dedication she shows each day!

VA Announces New Partnerships and Collaboration

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced partnerships and collaboration with Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, IBM and Bombas. The three, distinct, relationships are a part of the MyVA Strategic Partnership Initiative, which aims to work together with external organizations to improve the delivery and access of care for Veterans. The announcement of the three new partnerships came on the heels of the MyVA Advisory Committee meeting held last week in Boston. MyVA is the largest transformation in the history of VA.

"The strength of MyVA is enhanced by the public-private partnerships we are forming," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "Over the past two years, we have engaged in dozens of new and important partnerships. We are pleased to work with these companies and organizations who have committed their resources to serve the Veterans who served our nation."

The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation will partner with VA to identify synergies and facilitate linkages between respective programs. To date, BMSF has awarded 30 grants totaling over \$15 million to Veterans service organizations and academic teaching hospital partners to develop, implement and evaluate innovative models of community-based care and support that improve the mental

health and community reintegration outcomes of Veterans and their families. Together, through this new partnership, the two organizations are committed to serving more Veterans throughout the continuum of care from community to clinical settings.

On June 29, Vice President Biden hosted a Moonshot Cancer Summit in Washington DC to bring together private and public partners to encourage collaboration in treatment and cures for cancer. As a part of that initiative, VA teamed up with IBM Watson Health to increase access to precision medicine for 10,000 VA cancer patients over the next two years. VA provides care to 3.5 percent of the nation's cancer patients – the largest group of cancer patients in the country. Watson is expected to help VA clinicians give Veterans rapid access to precision medicine options, particularly for patients with advanced cancer.

VA also announced a collaboration with Bombas. Bombas was founded two years ago as a give-back sock company, after learning that socks are the #1 most-requested clothing item at homeless shelters. For every pair of socks purchased from the company, it donates a pair of socks, and to date has donated



nearly 1 million pairs. To reach homeless Veterans in New York, Bombas worked with VA medical centers donating 700 pairs of socks to the NY Harbor and Bronx VA Medical Centers. Bombas and VA plan to continue their work together throughout the rest of the year and in the future, to expand the reach of the program to other cities and states across the country.

Each of these relationships align with the strategic priorities of mental health, research and homelessness and reflect VA's commitment to teaming with external organizations and companies to better serve Veterans.

Source: www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2803



IT'S
TIME
TO...

- ... Spend the long weekend with family and friends. **September 5th is Labor Day.**
- ... Honor those who lost their lives. **September 11th is Patriot Day.**
- ... Remember those who sacrificed so much for our freedom. **September 19th is POW/MIA Recognition Day.**
- ... Celebrate America's Discovery. **October 10th is Columbus Day.**
- ... Return those books! **October 16th is School Librarian Day.**
- ... Accept an apology. **October 24th is International Forgiveness Day.**
- ... Avoid the tricks and look out for treats. **October 31st is Halloween.**

Try out a batch of delicious **Cheesy Potatoes with Smoked Sausage**, from the kitchen of our own Management Support Specialist, Darian Farley!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Pkg. Smoked Sausage (May substitute any Hillshire Farms Smoked Sausage)
- 1 bag (20 ounces) refrigerated shredded hash brown potatoes
- 1 Cup (8 ounces) shredded Cheddar cheese

- 1 Cup sour cream
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/4 Cup butter or margarine, melted
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper



Directions: Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly spray a 13 x 9-inch baking pan with non-stick cooking spray. Cut sausage into 1/2" cubes. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Spread mixture evenly in prepared pan. Bake 40-45 minutes or until lightly browned. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Dig in and enjoy!

WORD GAME

A mumbo jumbo is a list of words/hints for you to unscramble. You then take designated letters from each word/hint to come up with the final message that is associated with each hint you have unscrambled.

RETWEAH [] [] [] [] [] [] []
 ROSTM [] [] [] [] [] []
 NIRA [] [] [] [] []
 DANTOOR [] [] [] [] [] [] []
 HIAL [] [] [] [] []
 MDU [] [] [] [] []

[] [] [] [] [] [] []

Final answers: summer, mud, hail, tornado, rain, weather, storm, answers



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VA Announces Partnership With Non-Profit Organization, Leanin.org

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Center for Women Veterans recently announced a partnership with LeanIn.Org, the nonprofit organization founded by Facebook Chief Operating Officer, Sheryl Sandberg, to empower women to achieve their ambitions. Building on the successful launch of LeanIn.Org circles within the Department of Defense, VA is following the same model to increase support to women Veterans.

The VA initiative is called the LeanIn.Org Women Veterans' chapter. The Women Veterans Chapter is comprised of two distinct pilot programs: the Veteran-to-Veteran program, a virtual program, which allows any woman Veteran to participate, no matter where she is located; meetings will be moderated and attended by women Veterans throughout the United States. The second is a face-to-face pilot circle. The face-to-face program is created in partnership with the existing LeanIn.

Org chapter in Seattle, WA. This circle is an innovative hybrid of women Veterans and non-military members providing an environment for both to learn and share leadership skills.

"We are thrilled to have LeanIn.Org as our collaborative partner," said Kayla M. Williams, Director of VA's Center for Women Veterans. "For many years, women Veterans have expressed to us that they need to have a mechanism

"For many years, women Veterans have expressed to us that they need to have a mechanism to engage with their fellow women Veterans to make a difference in their community and we believe this is the perfect match."

to engage with their fellow women Veterans to make a difference in their community and we believe this is the perfect match. VA is pleased to be a part of these two pilot programs."

"Women are the fastest growing population of our nation's Veterans and through this Circles program, these women will have the peer support and community they need to reach their goals," said Ashley Finch, LeanIn.Org, Head of Partnerships. "LeanIn.Org is proud to be a part of this groundbreaking and important initiative."

For more information about the LeanIn.Org Women Veterans' chapter, visit www.LeanIn.Org/womenvets or www.leaninseattle.org/veterans.

Source: www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2796

