VA DEPSEC Visits MGVAMC for EHRM Update

VA Deputy Secretary James Byrne, (Col. USMC Ret.) received an enthusiastic welcome by fellow Veterans Dr. Robert J. Fischer, Medical Center Director and Mr. Mike Murphy, Network Director, VISN 20 during his first visit to Spokane in early August. The site visit also included the return of John Windom, Exec. Director of VA’s Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization among others.

“EHRM is the ‘D-Day’ moment for VA,” said Byrne, who showed great interest in learning more about the effort and why Spokane and Seattle are the VA’s first two sites creating and deploying the Cerner Corporation’s “Millennium” electronic health record. Following an in-brief which brought VA DEPSEC Byrne up to date on how MGVAMC staff are participating in local and national EHRM workshops, he also learned the realities of the EHRM effort coinciding with the rollout of the new VA MISSION Act—and the combined impacts on staff. Deputy Secretary Byrne and guests also received a facility tour which highlighted the space constraints of the facility - especially in our Primary Care clinic areas. While here, Mr. Byrne surprised several Veteran patients and staff by personally speaking with them, and in one case, met bedside with a Hospice patient bedside. VA DEPSEC Byrne was surprised himself, to learn and see the size of the Spokane VA campus, to include the Veterans Healing Garden in CLC.

Smoking Cessation Options Available in Advance of “Smoke Free” VA Oct 1st

Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center has begun to advertise local implementation of VA’s new smoke-free policy October 1st. More importantly, VA’s smoking and tobacco cessation program delivers state-of-the-art care, counseling, and medications to help Veterans and staff find ways to quit smoking and/or vaping.

VA’s policy ensures medications and counseling are available to any Veteran attempting to quit smoking - and, support does not require attendance or enrollment into a smoking cessation clinic or specialty program.

Put simply, VA will provide the resources, including nicotine replacements (gum, lollipops, toothpicks) and therapy (if desired), whether one-on-one, or in a group setting to help Veterans improve their health. At MGVAMC, a group of non-smoking Veterans are already established within the facility’s health and wellness and disease prevention programs. They will host table-top information booths in the VAMC hallways one day each week starting later in September. Read more here!
MGVAMC’s Behavioral Health Team Honors Intern entering US NAVY

Standing before family, friends, and admiring VA co-workers, Alyssa Smith completed her year-long Psychology Internship at Mann-Grandstaff VAMC last week, by accepting her Oath of becoming a Commissioned Officer in the U.S. Navy!

The event included her swearing in ceremony, led by former BHS Chief, Dr. Quinn Bastian (Navy Veteran) and included her first challenge coin, and her first salute from a Naval enlistee. Then, the group held a brief ceremony for fellow VA staff and other Active Duty and Guardsman in uniform at Spokane’s Naval Operations and Support Center next door.

Originally from Walla Walla, Lt. Smyth came back to the region, after Grad school and research at the Buffalo, NY VA. She says she was also inspired by another Navy mental health professional Heidi Craft who wrote “Rule #2” - after being embedded with US Marine Corps troops in war.

Smyth’s send-off was organized by VA mental health professional and Army Guardsman, LTC. Dawn Gray, joined by VA co-workers Capt. John Givens, USMC Sgt. Eric Stapleton, and recently retired Command Master Chief Val Moon, who works for VA’s Office of Community Care.

“We’re all just thrilled for her,” said VA Psychologist Dr. Ken Cogswell, Smyth’s VA supervisor during her internship. “She’s going to have to be compassionate, flexible, and balance that with being in charge.”

The event continued on with the Navy fight song and other traditions during lunch, where Capt. John Givens (CRNA at MGVAMC), also the Commanding Officer for Naval Reserve in Bremerton, WA, reminded Lt. Smyth to, “Always value your people, over the tasks, because you must take care of the troops under your command.” Showing she can be a good sport, Lt. Smyth received a “salt-water” spraying and other helpful advice, along with a little “good-natured ribbing and fun” to prepare her for the Navy. After some follow-up research and work at the Portsmouth VA, Lt. Smyth indicates her first duty assignment will be in Rhode Island. Thank you Lt. Alyssa Smyth - Good Luck!
9th Annual Kleckner Golf Classic a hit with Veterans

Despite a 30-degree temperature drop from the day before, followed by intermittent downpours, more than 400 Veterans and volunteers took part in the events surrounding KHQ News Anchor Dan Kleckner's 9th Annual Golf Classic at Downriver Golf Course Aug. 9-10th.

VA staff, including Gordon Graves and Chris Hartley provided outreach to Veterans and guests, including offering an air-powered “cannon” for Veterans to shoot their golf balls off the 10th tee-box!

Thanks to the generosity of an entire community and region, the Kleckner Golf Classic sponsored more than 200 Veterans to play golf, followed by parties both evenings, and a banquet that included a surprise presentation and announcement for Disabled American Veterans at MGVAMC!

Proceeds from the tournament, along with a surprise (anonymous) donation, also allowed Kleckner and NW Golfers for Warriors to present Disabled American Veterans with $15,000 towards a new DAV van to transport Veterans to/from MGVAMC! The donation and its impact were highlighted in this [KHQ News story at this link](https://www.facebook.com/VASpokane) which aired at the annual awards and dinner banquet!
**EHRM Update**

For MGVAMC staff who attended Local Workshop 6 sessions the last week of July may have seen separate sessions going on in parallel. This was part of Mann-Grandstaff’s Local Design Review where select local executive leadership, Service Chiefs, and managers from our facility had discussions with the Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization (OEHRM) and Cerner around Mann-Grandstaff’s Go-Live readiness. I’ve included some overview information below that will hopefully help you understand more about this Local Design Review and what the next steps will be.

**What was the Local Design Review?**

The Local Design Review was an important opportunity for our team to discuss key details of Mann-Grandstaff’s electronic health record (EHR) system and to ensure its readiness to proceed to its next phase. These discussions allowed project leadership to weigh options for the EHR’s capabilities in its Initial Operating Capability (IOC) phase; the new EHR’s functionality at Go-Live; and the specific timing planned for Go-Live. VISN and VHA leadership asked for positive VAMC approval and are wanting to ensure the respective VAMCs agree on the intended design strategy before moving on to more detailed designs.

**What are some key takeaways from the Local Design Review?**

- We continue to be hopeful for a Go-Live date of early 2020, but recognize that this requires a series of important and complex decisions to ensure continuity of care is provided at Go-Live.
- We are continuously conducting comprehensive reviews of capabilities and taking into account data migration and the appropriate interfaces needed for a proper build of the system.
- Our ultimate goal is to maintain safety for Veterans and efficiency for staff who need to utilize the Cerner solution in our work.
- At Go-Live, we fully intend for IOC sites to have more capabilities than most commercial clients.
- Continuous advancement of functionality will occur over the course of the program through upgrades, new functionality, and evolution of content.

**What are the next steps?**

OEHRM, our local Mann-Grandstaff leadership, and Cerner continue to work actively to finalize our plans for the EHR’s capabilities and functionality. In the EHRM’s project’s next phase, more detailed design decisions will occur. If these decisions require your input, your leadership will let you know. You can also expect regular updates on the status of the EHRM project over the next several months.

**How can I ask questions or provide feedback?**

If you would like more information on this effort, please reach out to your local change management consultants or direct your questions to SPO EHRM. We will make sure to communicate any Local Design Review-related information as soon as we receive it.

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**VA DEPSEC’s EHRM Visit**

**Included Recognizing Our High Performers**

Before he embarked on a tour of the main hospital building at Mann-Grandstaff VAMC, VA Deputy Secretary James Byrne formally recognized several employees who continue to embody VA’s ICARE core values and quality standards.

Receiving a personal coin from VA DEPSEC are: John Givens, CRNA; Jan Pennock, Chief, OCC; Scott Mayo, Chief, SPS; Kevin Arbanas, HR; Dr. Hugh Conway, Chief, Dental Service (& recent Acting Deputy COS); along with Eddie Steetle, Change Mgr. of EHRM here at MGVAMC.

VA DEPSEC Byrne challenged MGVAMC staff to “keep up the great work out here that we’re all hearing about back in D.C.”
Native American Veterans to Gather for 10th Annual AIVAC Veterans Memorial & Honoring

All Veterans and their families are welcome to join the American Indian Veterans Advisory Council (AIVAC) and it’s 10th Annual Veterans Memorial and Honoring Ceremony at Mann-Grandstaff VAMC on Saturday, Sept. 14th from 10:00am-2:00pm.

Families Welcome! Cultural & Military Event!

- Warrior Drums
- Song, Dance, and Prayer
- Salmon & BBQ meal

Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center is Proud to Host the 10th Annual American Indian Veterans Advisory Council’s (AIVAC) Memorial & Honoring Ceremony

Saturday, September 14, 2019 (10:00a.m. - 2:00p.m.)

This annual event honors U.S. Military Veteran Warriors from several Pacific Northwest American Indian Tribes. The ceremony includes traditional Native American Costumes and Honors all Veterans in attendance.

Mann-Grandstaff VAMC - 4815 N. Assembly St., Spokane, WA 99205 - 509-426-3378

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FAIR

September 19th, 2019 - 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center
(Outside the MRI Entrance)
4815 N. Assembly St, Spokane, WA 99205

ARE YOU PREPARED?
- Learn how to prepare your family for disaster
- Learn how to prepare your pets for disaster
- Learn how your VA prepares for disaster
- Check out the resources to respond to disaster
- Meet the VA family and learn how to make a plan

HAVE A PET PLAN?

2019 Veterans Stand Downs Schedule

All Stand Downs begin at 8:00 a.m.

May 11th: Coeur d’Alene, Idaho
North Idaho College

June 8th: Kalispell, MT
Flathead Co. Fairgrounds

July 27th: Newport, WA
Newport High School

Sept. 14th: Wenatchee, WA
National Guard Armory

Sept. 21st: Coeur d’Alene, WA
Stevens County Fairgrounds

Sept. 28th: Moses Lake, WA
Grant County Fairgrounds

Oct. 5th: Libby, MT
Asa Woods Elementary

Oct. 19th: Wallace, ID
Wallace Elks Lodge

MGVAMC Contact: Kevin Copelin, Outreach / Stand Downs Coordinator
(509) 462-2500 ext. 4017

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