

The BEACON

FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF THE SAN FRANCISCO VA MEDICAL CENTER • JULY 2010

SFVAMC's Own Astronaut Sends Experiment to Space

When the space shuttle Discovery lifted off on April 5, 2010, Veterans had a vested interest in an experiment onboard. Dr. Millie Hughes-Fulford, also a former astronaut, sent an important experiment to the International Space Station that may save the lives of elderly Veterans in the future.

Dr. Hughes-Fulford, VA's first astronaut who flew aboard the space shuttle in 1991, is trying to find out why some white blood cells stop working the way they should in some elderly people. White blood cells help fight off infections, and if they don't do their job, it can be fatal.



Personnel aboard the International Space Station carried out her experiment to investigate why some white blood cells stop working in the absence of gravity. The experiment has implications for disease on earth as well. On earth, some white blood cells that are so important to the body's immune system cease to function in people with untreated HIV/AIDS, as well as in some elderly people, leading to the development of potentially fatal infections.

Simplified, the immune system protects us against disease by identifying and destroying germs and tumor cells. "From the beginning of the US Apollo

moon program, we've known that about half of our astronauts develop suppressed immune systems

either during flight or shortly afterwards, and we have since learned that non-functioning white blood cells known as 'T cells' are at least partly responsible," says Dr. Hughes-Fulford. "The 'T cell' is the quarterback of the white blood cells and it activates the rest of the team. I always use that analogy to explain it to my husband."

"If we can get to the root cause, we can potentially help older people, HIV/AIDS patients, and anyone else who is having problems with their immune system," Dr. Hughes-Fulford adds.

In Dr. Hughes-Fulford's experiments, 16 mice aboard the Shuttle flight STS-131 did nothing but live comfortably in what NASA calls "Animal Enclosure Modules" and were monitored by the station's astronaut crew. At the same time, another 16 mice stayed back in her VA lab. When the astromice returned, the immune systems of both groups were challenged with a protein found in egg whites to see how they react to this simulated infection.

She cautions that such therapy is "many, many years away. We're just laying the groundwork." When asked by a reporter if she'd like to fly in space once again, she said, "I'd kind of like to, but I'd rather do science!"

All Employee Survey '10

The All Employee Survey (AES) resulted in an incredible participation by San Francisco VA employees with more than 72% of our staff completing the survey. The survey scored results between the ranges of 2.0 – 5.0. Our facility scored 3.4 in Organizational Culture, and 3.8 in both Organizational Assessment Inventory and Job Satisfaction. These results remain consistent with neighboring VISNs and our results over the past couple of years.

Main areas identified as needing improvement included: communication, training, and upward mobility. HR has already begun developing employee workshops and training to assist in closing the gap within these areas.

If you'd like to review the full report, please go to our HR intranet site at: http://vaww.sf.med.va.gov/HRMS/hrms_index.htm. Also, plans call for service-specific results to be distributed to supervisors. For more information about the All Employee Survey results, contact Monica Allison at x3793.

Thank you for expressing your opinions and perceptions about your workplace, and congratulations to the AES Prize winners: Erica Wang, Lourdes Aguas, Violeta Armas, Wilfredo Fragata, Margie Velasco, Jacqueline Kempis, and Denise Guisti-Bradford.

VA-NAMI Family Group

Do you have a family member with a mental illness? Do you know a Veteran with mental illness who would benefit from better family support? The VA-NAMI Family to Family education class is being offered at the San Francisco VAMC from July 27 through October 12, 2010. The class will be held Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. in Bldg. 203, Room GA-27. This 12-week class helps family members, friends and caregivers understand and support individuals with severe mental illness while maintaining their own wellbeing. Please call for more information.

For more information contact:

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Barbara Redfield, (415) 931-3480

CBI Bullets...

Does the saying, “You learn something new every day” hold true for you? Well, Compliance and Business Integrity (CBI) is making an effort to help SFVAMC staff learn about the importance of business process oversight. On May 6, 2010, CBI and IntegratedEthics staff hosted an event in celebration of National Compliance and Ethics Week. The guest speaker, Marianne Jennings, Professor of Business Ethics, inspired staff to keep ethical business practices at the forefront of our work in “providing exceptional health care that improves Veterans’ health and well-being.” Clinical and administrative staff must form a partnership to ensure that we do all that is necessary to bill our Veterans fairly and accurately for the care they receive. That partnership includes: providers, member services, health information management section, Medical Care Cost Recovery, accounting, decision support systems, and last but not least, CBI.

SFVAMC’s CBI program is modeled after the Office of Inspector General’s guidance for an effective compliance program. They name seven elements of an effective compliance program, and one of those elements is “education and training.” Compliance education and training can take several forms:

- Awareness training provided to all new hires during orientation.
- Annual refresher training, which can be accessed via SFVAMC’s Intranet site.
- Job-specific training.

One of the purposes of CBI oversight is to help ensure transparency so that our business practices do not result in a loss of trust. CBI staff is happy to assist any service in need of training and education on any compliance concern or issue. If you have any specific training needs please contact: Yvonne Brooks, Compliance Officer, at (415) 221-4810, x 4398, or yvonne.brooks@va.gov.

National Compliance and Ethics Week Prize Winners!

Door prizes: Joanne Peters, Teresa Corpuz

Word Games: Isabelle Lynch, Lisa Tong, Gary Tarasovsky, Stephen Morange, Christine Parker

Submitted by Joumana Dakour, CBI Intern

Take Me Out to the Ball Game!

On Saturday, July 24, the San Francisco VAMC, VA Palo Alto Health Care System, and the Northern California Health Care System partnered with the Oakland A's to welcome home nearly 1,000 Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans and their families, as part of "Welcome Home 2010."

Christian Valle, who served two tours of combat in Iraq in 2003 and 2005, threw out the first pitch. Singing the National Anthem was Army Staff Sergeant Tangerine Gyi from San Francisco. Twenty-five Veterans, including five SFVAMC patients, who served in the conflicts, lined the bases during the pre-game show. Prior to the game, Veterans and their families visited with VA staff and vendors who manned informational tables, as well as met and posed for pictures with several Oakland A's players and their mascot.

This was the first year that all three Medical Centers joined forces to host the Welcome Home, and the first time an event was held at a baseball game. It was an outstanding day and very much appreciated by those in attendance. Thank you to the following SFVAMC staff who planned, coordinated and attended this special event: Carrie Bancroft, Spence Casey, Judi Cheary, Ed Caballero, Bob Lee, Jim McDermott, Brian Rin and Richard Burton.

On Memorial Day, volunteers from NCIRE were on hand in the San Francisco Giants Community Clubhouse at AT&T Park to raise awareness and educate fans about important health issues facing Veterans and active military personnel.

NCIRE volunteers distributed informational materials and were joined in the ballpark by volunteers from Strikeouts for Troops, the nonprofit organization founded by Giants pitcher Barry Zito.

Before the day's game, the Giants honored Veterans of current and past wars, as well as representatives of NCIRE's Board of Directors in an on-field ceremony. Among the Veterans recognized was Medical Center Director Larry Carroll. Also joining him on-field were Bob Obana, NCIRE Executive Director, and Dr. Paul Volberding, Chief of Medicine.



Photo by: Edgardo Caballero

The Welcome Home 2010 logo appeared on the Jumbotron at the Oakland A's game.



Photo by: Edgardo Caballero

Twenty-five Veterans who served in the current conflicts were on the field taking part in the pre-game show.



Photo by: Roy Kaltschmitt

Veterans were honored at the Giants game in an on-field ceremony. Among them included Medical Center Director Larry Carroll (second from left) who was also shown on the Jumbotron.

Highlights Around the Medical Center



Veterans enrolled in Mental Health Outpatient Programs are creating a Therapeutic Garden near the CLC for use by SFOVAMC patients and residents of the CLC. The Therapeutic Garden is a patient-driven initiative that will help Veterans learn a skill that will help them in their communities. It will also be a quiet relaxing place where CLC residents will be able to sit and enjoy the garden.



Shira Maguen, Ph.D. has been named the 2010 American Psychological Association Division 19 (Psychology in Public Interest) VA Section Outstanding Researcher. She is an active clinician, supervisor in the SFOVAMC Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team, and core investigator in the HSR&D Research Enhancement Award Program.



Julius A. Sales, son of Adelaida Arato, Purchasing Agent, just graduated from Air Force training in Lackland AFB in San Antonio, TX. He graduated in the top 10% of his class!



Congratulations to Dr. Elizabeth Sutherland (Geropsychologist, CLC) on her poster entitled, "To Our Vets, We Hear You," that won 2nd place at the National Cultural Transformation Summit. Congratulations to Ed Caballero, Medical Media, who designed the poster.

Congratulations to Dr. Paul Volberding, Chief, Medical Service, on being selected to chair a committee of the Institute of Medicine, commissioned by Social Security Administration, to revise the determination of disability for HIV infection.



Heather McCormick, RN, Susan Phillips, RN, and Julie Madsen, RN, passed their certification exams to become ANCC Board Certified Nurses in Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing.



Congratulations to Stephanie Wu, student/volunteer, who is the recipient of the 2010 Jessie Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship.



Dr. Daniel Lim, has been selected to be a U.S. National Academy of Sciences Kavli Fellow and speaker at the 22nd annual Frontiers of Science symposium.



Lori Morgan, Medical Technologist, Santa Rosa CBOC, is running in the Marine Corps Marathon, October 31, 2010 in Arlington, VA. She is running with a team called "Team Home for Our Troops." This non-profit organization builds homes for seriously injured service members that cannot function in their current home. To learn more about this organization go to: www.homesforourtroops.org, or contact Lori at www.homesforourtroops.org/goto/morgan.



Dr. Rob Daroff received the 2010 Chancellor's Award for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and/or Transgender (GLBT) Leadership. This award recognizes contributions to the advancement of GLBT communities at UCSF. For years Dr. Daroff has headed the SFVA's HIV Psychiatry Clinic and has helped bring cultural competence training on GLBT issues to staff and trainees.



Andre Mills, Patient Services Assistant, Santa Rosa VA CBOC, received his BA in Health Administration from the University of Phoenix on June 27, 2010. Andre has been accepted to graduate school and will be attending Holy Names University.

Dr. Mike Weiner, Director, Center for Imaging of Neurodegenerative Diseases (CIND), recently spoke to the VA Gulf War Advisory Committee on the “Effects of Military Service and Combat on the Brain.” He gave an overview of the neuroimaging work being done at the San Francisco VAMC concerning Gulf War Illness and PTSD.

Dr. Barry Massie, Chief, Cardiology, was elected to a two-year term as President of the Heart Failure Society of America. Also, Dr. Massie was the Chairman of the VA Cooperative Study, WATCH: Warfarin and Antiplatelet Therapy for Chronic Heart Failure, which was published last year in *Circulation*. It was recently announced that his paper was selected as the most important clinical paper published in *Circulation* in 2009.

Susan Heath, Movement Disorders Clinical Nurse Specialist, was one of only three nurses invited to present a lecture at the Movement Disorders Society International Meeting in Buenos Aires. Her topic was “Nursing Opportunities in Dealing with End of Life Issues in Parkinson’s Disease.”

Congratulations to the following OR nurses who achieved CNOR certification this year: Evelyn Jue, RN; Rennie Paw, RN; Manolo Stephens, RN, and Anne Langford, RN.

Dr. Carl Grunfeld, M.D., Ph.D., Chief, Division of Metabolism and Endocrinology, received the 2010 Endocrine Society and Pfizer Inc. “International Award for Excellence in Published Clinical Research in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism for 2009.”

The National Institutes of Aging recently announced that Dr. Mike Weiner’s SFVAMC grant entitled “Alzheimer’s Disease Neuroimaging Initiative” will be refunded for \$69 million for the next 5 years. Overall, this project has been funded for over \$140 million during a 10 year period, making this the largest grant ever funded to study Alzheimer’s Disease.

Dr. Mandeep S. Nagra, Santa Rosa CBOC, and his Sikh Temple sponsored an event in observance of the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the fifth Sikh guru. This year they specifically reached out to Veterans and provided free water bottles, sodas and juices.

Dr. Sophia Vinogradov has been selected to serve as a member of the Adult Psychopathology and Disorder of Aging Study Section, Center for Scientific Review.

Judi Cheary, PAO, received 1st place in the 2010 VHA Communications Awards in the History Category. She was honored for her work in writing and designing a book about the history of the San Francisco VAMC as part of the celebration of the Medical Center’s 75th Anniversary.

Every Friday in July, the CLC residents participated in an event called “Dance Anywhere.” Michelle Tapia, LCSW, (CLC Social Worker and Wellness leader) and Faith Luss, RN, (CLC Nurse Manager) led a joyful/musical dancefest with enthusiastic CLC staff and residents. The upbeat nostalgic music brought smiles to everyone’s faces!

Veterans on the inpatient units had a very special visit from Gina Elise (pictured below), founder of “Pin-Ups for Vets,” a non-profit organization that produces a WW-II-style pinup calendar. During her visit, Gina distributed calendars, signed autographs and posed for pictures with Veterans and staff.



New Patient Parking Garage Coming to SFVAMC

Beginning this fall, the San Francisco VA Medical Center will begin construction on a new Patient Parking Garage. The new garage will be built in Parking Lot A. When completed in the Spring 2011, the garage will have approximately 160 patient parking spaces.

To accommodate the loss of parking during the construction, the ground level of the Parking Garage will be designated as patient and visitors parking only.

Overflow parking will be allowed at Memorial Parking Lot on El Camino Del Mar and Merrie Way off of Point Lobos Ave. A continuous shuttle will run between the SFVAMC and these lots.

We will provide additional notifications and information to employees, patients and the community when an official project start date is identified.



An artist's rendering of the new Patient Parking Garage.

OVERFLOW PARKING: Memorial Parking/Merrie Way



Overflow parking will be available at the Memorial Parking Lot on El Camino Del Mar and Merrie Way off of Point Lobos Ave. A continuous shuttle will run between the SFVAMC and these lots.

SHUTTLE SCHEDULE:*

Every **15 minutes** from **5:30 a.m.** to **9 a.m.** and **2 p.m.** to **6:30 p.m.** (peak time), Monday - Friday.

Every **30 minutes** from **9:30 a.m.** to **1:30 p.m.** (off-peak time), Monday - Friday.

Shuttles will stop in front of Bldg. 200 and at the Memorial Parking Lot and the Merrie Way Lot near the "SFVAMC Shuttle" sign.

*Schedule is subject to change.

Events and Happenings



Photo by: Edgardo Caballero

VA's Under Secretary for Health Robert A. Petzel, M.D., (pictured with ICU Chief Leslie Zimmerman, MD, and Nurse Manager Wendy Quek, RN) visited the San Francisco VA Medical Center. During his visit he toured the Intensive Care Unit, OEF/OIF Integrated Care Clinic, Advanced 3-D Imaging Lab and the Community Living Center. He was very complimentary of the staff and appreciated the variety in our tour. He said he was left with a very good feeling about San Francisco VAMC and "now knows why we are one of VA's premier facilities." He also told Medical Center Director Larry Carroll that he would like to clone our staff!



Photo by: Robin Flanagan

After over five years of planning and construction, the San Francisco VA Medical Center held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new Emergency Department (ED). The new ED has 12 individual self enclosed, privacy protected exam rooms, all with negative pressure. In addition to benefiting emergency and urgent walk-in Veterans, there is increased space to accommodate psychiatric emergencies 24-hours a day. The project also adds two new floors to accommodate administration space, as well as expanded space for Dental, Radiology and Medical Practice.



Photo by: Judi Cheary

A ground-breaking ceremony was held at the construction site for the new Clearlake VA Outpatient Clinic. Congressman Mike Thompson (pictured center with red tie), members of the Lake County Board of Supervisors, city leaders and local veterans group representatives joined SFVAMC staff for the ceremony and tour of the site. There was no dirt to turn; however, with the building being remodeled, there was a chance to get in on the demolition. Cong. Thompson took one of the sledgehammers and went over to a wall, and eagerly knocked a few holes in the sheetrock! The new clinic is planning for an October 2010 opening.

Service Awards

The following employees have been honored for their years of service between April 2010 - July 2010.

[SOURCE: SFVAMC Human Resources Service.]

• 10 Years •

Gary Abrams	Herminigilda Malalis
Susana Bartolome	Manuel Malunay
Lelani Basuel	Romulo Mangoba
Stephen Bent	Daniel Mathalon
Diana Blair	David Mazur
Bridget Blake	Wilson Medina
Linda Chetaitis	Lolita Nicolas
Jon Colias	Dennis Oh
Lisa Dipko	In Oh
Annabel Dizon	Artemio Ong
Janice Fong	Roy Pacleb
Emelita Gangano	Samuel Panter
Jordan Hubbard	Michael Shlipak
Michael Hutchison	Elizabeth St. Lezin
Emily Keram	Jutarat Ward
Jason Lee	

• 15 Years •

Ferdinand Alonso
Susan Bringel
Patricia Cavanagh
Steven Cheung
John Ben Davoren
Edie Emelife
Daniel Evenhouse
Charles Hardy, Jr
Catherine Johnston
Ping Kang
Anthony Peneyra
Johannes Rothland
Rajiv Sawhney
Betty Wong
Kristine Yaffe

• 20 Years •

Cecilia Bartolo
Gerald Carlin
David Doll
Francisco Donida
John Ford, Jr.
Eden Hernandez
Charles Krimmel
Salina Kwang
Jennifer McLain
John Rietcheck
Joel Simon
Lygia Stewart
Gina Surber
Sophia Vinogradov
Vonita White-Lee
Leslie Zimmerman

• 25 Years •

Keith Armstrong
Leslie Asis
Tasnee Bunchien
Sharon Cassidy
Gilbert Deocampo
C. J. Graettinger
Dewitt Hawkins
Robert Hogg
Junetta Jett
Elsy Mancia-Acevedo
David Miller
Kathryn Moss
Ian Ndulu
Emerita Reyes
Sheila Shives
Jacinta Trott-Ramos
Teresa Wright
Ellen Zufall

• 30 Years •

Lawrence Carroll
Patricia Cornett
Bernard Dolan
Dennis Frank
Bernard Halloran
Julia Jung-Ames
Patricia LaSala
Howard Leong
Cynthia Mann
Eric Merritt
Thelma Vetvitoon

• 35 Years •

Brenda Augusta
Mary Citizen
Allan Flach
Paul Galat
John Hiatt
Richard Kennedy
James Trujillo

• 40 Years •

Edna McAnally
Donna Daniels
Pamela Gatson-Smith
Patricia Thomas-Higgins
Michael Weiner

• 45 Years •

Ejermina Dela Cruz

IN MEMORIAM

Brenda Bowen, AO, Engineering Service
John B. Corsiglia, Longtime Volunteer

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