INTEGRITY

Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY VA CLINIC TOWN HALL

VA Northern Indiana Healthcare System (VANIHCS) hosted a townhall for Veterans at the St. Joe County VA Clinic in Mishawaka March 13.

The event was open to the public and attended by over 50 local veterans. VA Northern Indiana health topics addressed included opioid prescription reduction efforts, new whole health initiatives, construction updates and staffing at the St. Joe clinic and pharmacy questions.

Staff from the Veteran Benefits Administration office were also present to answer questions regarding compensation and disability pension payments to veterans and other matters related to those programs.

VANIHCS AT HOME & GARDEN SHOW

VANIHCS representatives from Enrollment, Suicide Prevention, and Transitional Care Management are sharing VA benefits and healthcare information with Veterans attending the Fort Wayne Home and Garden Show, March 1-4, held in the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.

With more than 650 exhibitors each year, the Fort Wayne Home & Garden Show is the place to see the latest in contemporary home and garden products and services. This event averages nearly 50,000 showgoers in 4 days from the 45 counties of the tri-state area, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. Over $100,000 invested in marketing to consumers.
Marion Campus, in partnership with Honor Flight Northeast Indiana, took 27 of our WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam Veterans on a “Flightless Honor Flight” to tour the War Memorials in Washington D.C. on Friday, February 16. This program was developed to allow Veterans who are unable to fly for a variety of reasons. It may be an ear problem, a circulation problem, some other medical issue that the Vet’s physician deems significant, or the Veteran may feel that the trip up to D.C. and back on a single day is just too much. It includes all aspects of a normal mission except for the actual flight to D.C. and back.

Michael Hershman, VANIHCS Director, welcomed the Veterans and took a roll call of military branches that the attending Veterans served in. Congresswoman Susan W. Brooks gave the opening remarks to thank the Veterans for their service. Dennis Covert, Honor Flight Northeast Indiana staff member, presented a slideshow of past Honor Flights with short narratives and biographies about the Veterans and caretakers participating in the actual trips to Washington D.C.

Those participating in the event also received a mail call with communications from congressional representatives, certificate of appreciation, and patriotic pillows. Veterans were escorted down the hall lined with VANIHCS staff cheering them on and treated to a reception in the Atrium following the presentation.

This specific event was put together by VA Northern Indiana employees and local Honor Flight coordinators for Veterans unable to make those trips due to health or other travel restrictions.

*To view photos from the event, click the arrows below slideshow to the right.*
KOKOMO ACUTE CARE TEAM

A team of VA Northern Indiana Healthcare System medical staff will be available two times a week to treat urgent care type issues in Kokomo, which began on Wednesday, February 27. This unique acute treatment team will be available if immediate primary care appointments are unavailable at the community based outpatient clinic in Peru or medical facility in Marion. Veterans seeking care at the Kokomo location must first call the Northern Indiana call center at 1-800-360-8387 and ask to make an appointment. The Kokomo site will not take in walk-ins and Veterans will be directed to call for an appointment.

The treatment team will operate Tuesday and Wednesdays, from 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at 620 North Bell Street. Currently, the team will operate in Kokomo through the year. Since this is a part time, acute-only treatment clinic, the impact on Northern Indiana staffing and resources will be minimal.

SJCVAC ENROLLMENT FAIR

VA NIHCS held an Enrollment Fair at the St. Joseph County VA Clinic on March 7. Veterans had the chance to come in and ask questions, enroll for healthcare, and take a tour. Representatives from services such as Enrollment, MyHealth Vet, South Bend Vet Center, Mobile Vet Center, Primary Care, Veterans Benefits, Voluntary Service, and many more had tables set up with information on programs and services. External representatives from Senator Donnelly’s Office, Northeast State District Service Officer Cameron Lochner, Northwest State District Service Officer Thomas D. White, Jr., and U.S. Department of Labor, Indiana Office, Veterans’ Program Assistant, Donald E. Mains, Jr. came out to support our Veterans as well.

Thank you to all of our staff for making this a great event and serving our nation’s heroes. A special thank you goes to Mike Gdula, Health Systems Specialist, for ensuring representatives had what they need to set up. Another special thank you goes to Teresa Calhoun, Assistant to the Director, for helping coordinate the event to make it a huge success.

To view photos from the event, click the arrows below the slideshow to the right.
no-show rate by one appointment a month. The baseline no-show rate was 26.6 for Fort Wayne, 17.2 for Marion, 12.2 for the Muncie CBOC and 13.3 for the Peru CBOC. Current data as of 3/1/18 is 2 for all 4 sites. An improvement workgroup will also convene beginning on 3/28/18 to improve the process for Stress Lab Consults. The goal is to decrease the number of inappropriate stress tests with MYOVIEWTM imaging orders by 30 percent by 7/31/18 and 60 percent by 9/28/18.

Systems Redesign staff continue to provide Lean Six Sigma training classes. As word continues to spread throughout the healthcare systems that Lean improvements do make a difference and that front-line staff are empowered to improve their work, interest in Lean Six Sigma classes have increased.

Systems Redesign staff continue to assist departments in starting huddles, coaching staff/areas to improve existing huddles and introduce daily improvement boards in huddles.

**SYSTEMS REDESIGN ENHANCES CARE**

The Systems Redesign program continues to ensure front-line staff participation on all process improvement teams. Within recent months, Systems Redesign completed two Rapid Process Improvement Events (RPIE’s): 1) Reorganizing Recreation Therapy services, resources and processes to create a better patient experience for our Veterans.

The primary goal is to reduce by 40 percent administrative duties currently performed by Recreation Therapists. This will free up extra hours each week for Recreation Therapists to have more time to focus on Veteran-centered activities. 2) Direct Scheduling for Nutrition focused on reducing delays by 50 percent in care caused by unnecessary appointments to Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) and reduce the burden on PACT. Patients can now direct schedule routine appointments with Nutrition without going through Primary Care. One of the goals was to

**FLAG BLANKET DONATION**

VA NIHCS would like to thank the Marine Corps League and VFW Post 60 for donating $1,000 to purchase flag blankets for our Veterans on the Palliative Care Unit. The flag blankets are used to drape over the Veterans that are nearing the end of their life. Once the Veteran has passed, these blankets are then gifted to the family as a keepsake.

For more information on this, please contact the Voluntary Service Office at 73114/71435.
A Veteran recently received care from acute psychiatry in Marion. He was new to the VA system and has sought both mental health and medical care via non-VA providers. During admission, the electrical activity of his heart was checked and one of the heart intervals returned significantly out of range, which can potentially lead to sudden cardiac death. Several mental health and cardiac medication changes were made soon after Veteran’s heart interval normalized.

Upon hearing the information, the Veteran broke into tears of joy and remarked, “Thank you for saving my life. I could have been dead. I’m not ready to die yet.”

In addition, the Veteran was maintained on a blood thinner through non-VA Cardiology. Upon further investigation and chart review, it was determined that he longer needed the medication. When the Veteran was informed of the decision, he became very glad that the team was able to recognize that he did not need the particular medication any longer. Veteran states, “It seems like some medications can do more harm than good if you don’t need them”. When more information was obtained, it appears that the blood thinner has initially been started by another non-VA cardiologist and subsequently continued by the current one later on.

Impressed by the exceptional care he has been receiving, Veteran went on to remark that it seems like the team really care for him and that he would like to transfer all of his care to the VA. Veteran states, “I would like to give the VA a chance”.

He was reminded of the fact that all of his care will be transferred to the VA and there would be continuity of care. He understood that it was the lack of communication and collaboration between the specialists in the community that led to the inability to detect some of the medical problems he has experienced. He said after experiencing this exceptional care at the VA, he feels very proud to share his story and he hopes other Veterans can place more trust in the VA.
**Our Mission Statement:**
The mission of VANIHCS is to honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

**Our Vision:**
VANIHCS will continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in health care by providing exemplary services that are both patient centered and evidence based.

This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery and continuous improvement.

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**THE DEPARTMENT’S 5 PRIORITIES**

1. **Greater Choice for Veterans**
   - Redesign the 40/30 Rule
   - Build a High Performing Integrated Network of Care
   - Empower Veterans through Transparency of Information

2. **Modernize Our System**
   - Infrastructure Improvements & Streamlining
   - EMR Interoperability and IT Modernization

3. **Focus Resources More Efficiently**
   - Strengthening of Foundational Services in VA
   - VA/DoD/Community Coordination
   - Deliver on Accountability & Effective Management Practices

4. **Improve Timeliness of Service**
   - Access to Care & Wait Times
   - Decision on Appeals
   - Performance on Disability Claims

5. **Suicide Prevention**
   - Getting to Zero

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Click the “Extras” icon to open the menu panel

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