

NEWS FROM NOVA

SPRING 2009

Volume 30

Number 2

Share NOVA with a Colleague-- Every Member Get a New Member This Year

By Nancy Claflin,
RN, PhD, CCRN, CPHQ, FNAHQ



Nancy Claflin, RN, PhD

“Though no one can go back in time and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.” (Anonymous). The veterans’ healthcare recruitment and retention bill from last year has an opportunity for a brand new ending. Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Chair of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, re-introduced this legislation to improve veterans’ health care on January 15, 2009. The

Veterans’ Health Care Authorization Act of 2009, S.252, is an updated version of the bill introduced last year to improve medical personnel incentives and other aspects of veterans’ health care. It includes:

- Recruitment and retention incentives for VA medical professionals, such as pay, benefits, scholarship programs, and work schedules, to attract top quality clinicians;
- Improvements in services and care for women veterans, who compose a significant and growing segment of the military and veteran population;
- Pilot programs to assist family caregivers, provide outreach and assistance to returning service members in their communities, and help prevent homelessness among veterans

Senator Akaka noted: “VA faces a looming shortage of health care personnel. Without concerted and timely action, this situation will only worsen in the years ahead. This is especially true as more Iraq and Afghanistan veterans return home injured and in need of new and specialized care. In order to avert this problem, VA must be able to offer competitive salaries, work schedules, and benefits. The provisions in the bill I am introducing will allow VA to recruit and retain nurses, home health aides, and specialty providers. This bill also contains measures that would improve the efficiency of health care delivery to veterans, including a number of pilot programs designed to help VA find new and innovative ways to deliver better, faster, and more

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Annual Roundtable

NOVA held its sixteenth Annual Legislative Roundtable on January 16, 2009 at the DAV National Headquarters in Washington, DC, providing an opportunity for key stakeholders in veterans’ issues to gather and share information. NOVA President Nancy Claflin welcomed everyone, and Past President and Legislative Chair Cecilia McVey invited participants to discuss concerns and issues. Topics covered included:

- Waiver of offset from pay for certain reemployed annuitants
- Senior Executive Schedule Position in VHA to ameliorate pay inequities for Nurse Executives and Medical Center Directors
- Increase the pay limitation contained for VA nurses from level five to level four of the Executive Schedule to address the pay disparity between the nurse five maximum rate and the GS-15 maximum rate in some geographic areas.
- Increase the pay cap under the nurse locality pay system. This change would also favorably affect the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA).
- Information and training on Locality Pay Surveys to assist in applying the law to ensure VA nurses receive appropriate pay raises.
- Reestablishment of the Health Professionals Scholarship Program (for non-VA employees.
- Inclusion of the revised definition of nurses who wish to work the 36/40 work week as utilized in the community.
- Direct hire authority for nursing.
- Concerns regarding the centralization of Information Technology resulting in a loss of local control and inability to access and use

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Join us for NOVA's 29th Annual Meeting
in New Orleans, LA - April 22-25, 2009

NOVA Foundation Update

By Deborah Beck



For eleven years, the goal of the NOVA Foundation has been to continually improve the quality of care that is so important to our veterans. We have strived to achieve this goal through research projects specifically targeted at the health care concerns of our veterans, through scholarships to ensure that the most qualified applicants receive the best education, and by keeping our nurses informed about

the most recent developments in nursing practice.

At the January Board meeting, the Board thanked Chairman Lula Cumberlander for her dedicated service during the past three years. The Board also welcomed Mary Seaman as Chairman, Cecilia McVey as Vice Chairman and Larry Lemos as Secretary/Treasurer. These 2009 Officers and Directors are dedicated to keeping expenses down and raising funds to ensure the maximum number of scholarships and research grants can be awarded to VA nurses.

The mission of the NOVA Foundation cannot be fulfilled without the donation support of the NOVA membership and their colleagues, family and friends. Even in difficult economic times I am confident the NOVA membership will continue to grow and continue to support the efforts of the NOVA Foundation to provide our nurses the education and training they need to become valuable servants to our nation's veterans.

This year, for the fourth time, the NOVA Foundation will participate as a charity partner in the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, DC on October 25, 2009. This is a tremendously exciting event, and even if you are not a runner or a marathoner, we encourage all NOVA members and VA nurses to participate with us in the 10k walk. I understand often times it can be expensive and time intensive to participate in such an endeavor, but I hope that if you are unable to join us, you will support the Foundation with a donation online or by mail so that this event can be a great creator of scholarships and research grants.

We will also be hosting our second annual Charity Bull Roast on September 19 at Martin's Greenbelt in Greenbelt, Maryland. Our inaugural event was a great success and we hope to increase attendance this year by sustaining the enthusiastic feedback we received. There will be great food, music and camaraderie, not to mention some great giveaways, a silent auction, raffles and enjoyable games and prizes. You won't want to miss this terrific evening, so please purchase your tickets today and once again, if you are unable to attend, I hope you will consider pledging a donation toward scholarships and research grants for VA nurses.

Finally, the NOVA Foundation is always striving to create additional fundraising events and capabilities, and we always appreciate input from our members. We hope to be participating in the Combined Federal Campaign this fall, and we hope you will remember the NOVA Foundation when making your selections. And of course don't miss the NOVA Annual Meeting, April 22-24 in the rejuvenating city of New Orleans.

Board Briefs

The NOVA Board of Directors met in Washington, D.C. on January 15 and January 16, 2009. The following activities and actions took place:

- Met with VA Office of Nursing Services staff.
- Approved minutes from November Board of Directors call
- Reviewed and revised NOVA strategic plan
- Approved proposal for VA Emeritus program to selling Soldier's Angels scarves at the annual meeting.
- Recommended a line item be added to budget for VA Emeritus program
- Approved the VA Emeritus logo
- Charged the awards committee with revising guidelines for awards process.
- Charged finance committee with developing an Investment Policy and Reserve Funds policy.
- Selected 2009 NOVA Award recipients.
- Approved 2009 nominations for slate of candidates
- Approved Annual Meeting to be held in Washington DC in conjunction with the Marine Corps Marathon, October 2010.
- Selected Thelma Roach-Serry as program chair for 2010 Annual Meeting.
- Approved plan to continue with regional meetings in addition to the Annual Meeting
- Requested former Board member Marian Ehrhart to attend VA Special Interest Group for the Ambulatory Care Nurses Association meeting to be held in Philadelphia, March 2009.



NOVA Board January 2009

Retirement Announcement for AUDREY C. DRAKE, RN, MSN Deputy Chief Nursing Officer - VA Central Office



Throughout Audrey Drake's distinguished career as a health care leader she has exhibited an extraordinary level of dedication and personal commitment to meeting the health care needs of veterans.

Imagine the challenges, triumphs, and legacy created by a nurse leader whose career spans over forty-four years. This would be the professional career

of Ms. Audrey C. Drake, a 1970 graduate of North Carolina Central University Department of Nursing.

When one thinks of VA Nursing, the first connection is Audrey Drake. Patient advocacy has been at the cornerstone of her career. As an advocate for America's veterans and their families, Ms. Drake has created avenues for veterans to reach their full potential.

She has functioned in a variety of clinical, educational, and administrative positions at several Veteran Health Administration (VHA) Medical Centers including Acting Chief Nursing Officer as well as her distinguished Army career.

One would be remiss if the accomplishments and recognition by the District of Columbia Army National Guard was not highlighted. Ms. Drake, a retired Brigadier General, was the first nurse to command a Unit responsible for the leadership of clinical staff in medical readiness preparation. She was awarded the Distinguished 9A Proficiency Designator (the highest award for professional award accomplishment with the Army Medical Department) by the Surgeon General of the United States Army. Additionally, she was honored by the DC Army National Guard by having a Health Clinic, the BG Audrey Drake Health and Dental Clinic, dedicated and named in her honor May 2007. The honor was in tribute to her role in planning the design to renovate a 1940s clinic into a modern facility with space and technology that meets the health care needs of soldiers in the DC Army National Guard. Her commitment and service as a Chief Nurse for a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital that was deployed to the first Gulf War in Saudi Arabia requires acknowledgement and praise.

Mrs. Drake is a leader in developing and implementing programs to improve the quality of health care delivery to veterans. She fosters a patient focused environment and the application of models of care to improve outcomes for veterans. She has served in several interdisciplinary task forces resulting in program development and policy changes that improved significantly patient care outcomes.

Mrs. Drake has also served as a faculty member at numerous VHA Regional Medical Education Centers (RMEC) and in several national training programs that included ambulatory care, discharge planning, clinical indicators, geriatrics, and long-term care. Her consultation and participation in community organizations and other health care organizations is exemplary. She has presented in many workshops and nursing conferences to enhance the image of minorities as well as increase the knowledge of healthcare providers. She has served as President of the DC League of Nursing and as the Coordinator of the DC Long Term Care Council. Her interest and commitment to geriatrics and long term care have contributed to improving the quality of care and the quality of life of aging veterans as well as the aging population in general. Mrs. Drake is also actively involved in the outreach activities of her church and community including health care and service to the homeless.

Mrs. Drake is committed to professional development and career advancement in nursing and other careers. She is a role model and mentor for nurses seeking advanced leadership and executive roles. She is a mentor in the VA Federal Women's Program and the recently established VHA mentoring program. She has been a Preceptor for many nurses within the VA System and for graduate students at several schools of nursing. Known for her commitment to patient-center care, interpersonal skills and caring demeanor, she is highly respected by her colleagues and frequently consulted by Nurse Executives, Medical Center Directors, and program officials with Veterans Health Administration.

Mrs. Drake received her Nursing Diploma from the Kate Bitting Reynolds Memorial School of Nursing, a BSN from North Carolina Central University, and a MSN from the Catholic University of America. She has held adjunct assistant professor positions in nursing at the University of South Carolina, The Catholic University of America, George Mason University, and Marymount University. She is certified by the American Nurses' Association in Gerontological Nursing and Advanced Nursing Administration (CNAA).

She is a member of the American Nurses' Association, the National League for Nursing Association of Nurse Executives, Sigma Theta Tau, Inc., Chi Eta Phi, Inc., the Association of Military Surgeons, the American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing, and the National Black Nurses' Association.

Throughout the complex changes in veterans' health care, Mrs. Drake has remained a dedicated and committed advocate of the highest standards of care for veterans. As a leader and mentor she has been an inspiration for nurses at all levels. Her commitment to excellence has resulted in the advancement of nursing practice and the achievement of goals of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Palo Alto Chapter 129
By Mary Montufar, RN

NOVA Chapter 129 held its annual educational conference and business meeting on Saturday 1/31/09 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Milpitas, California. This year's program, "Advances in Wound Care" included content experts from the VA Palo Alto Health Care System as well as community health care providers. Over 90 nurses attended the all day conference. Peter Johannet MD, Chief of Plastic Surgery at VAPAHCS described the indications and options for surgical intervention in wound management. NOVA members Cheryl Bowers RN CNS/Extended Care Service emphasized the role of bio-burden in chronic wound care and described the promising outcomes using MIST therapy to resolve chronic stage 3 and 4 wounds. Phyllis McGrath MS RN, Vascular Service Clinical Nurse Specialist reviewed diagnostic techniques and treatment interventions for venous and arterial wounds. Rawnie Clements RN CWCN O'Connor Wound Care Clinic in San Jose NS Washington Hospital/Fremont, California, covered some of the constraints health care providers encounter with homeless patients and those with limited resources.

The day also provided an opportunity for NOVA members to welcome Gloria Martinez MS RN, who recently assumed her role as Chief Nurse Executive at VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Ms. Martinez has had an extensive career in VHA and comes to Palo Alto from San Francisco VA where she also was Chief Nurse Executive. The chapter expressed it's appreciation to Sandra Parkes MS RN for her leadership and many contributions as acting Chief Nurse during an 8 month transition and to Myrna Musni-Avila, who served as Acting Chief Nurse/Extended Care Service for the last 12 months. We were also delighted to congratulate Ann Narciso RN MS, immediate past president of the Chapter 129 and National NOVA Board Member, who is now Acting Chief Nurse/Extended Care Service. All 3 leaders are members of NOVA Chapter 129. VAPAHCS Director Elizabeth Joyce Freeman attended the morning session as she has each year to update members on new developments at VAPAHCS and VHA nationally. We appreciate very much the involvement of VAPAHCS senior leadership in NOVA's educational efforts.

The 2009-2010 NOVA Board members were also presented at the conference. They include: Joanne Weith,

Chapter News



Secretary, and directors Jill Gandofi, Karen Boatright and Rosalie Shinsato. With other board members, they were deeply involved in making the conference such a big success.



NOVA Chapter 129 Board of Directors

Eastern Kansas Chapter 202
By Mary Haubold, RN

On Friday Dec. 5th, NOVA Chapter 202 Eastern Kansas held their annual Christmas Tea in Hawley Auditorium at the Topeka Campus. We had hot spiced punch and many goodies to eat. We also had a silent auction that netted \$200 which is being donated to our Homeless Vets program. Everyone enjoyed the goodies and fellowship. Plans are for a similar event to be held next year. A NOVA membership promotion display and brochures were available at the event.



Rose Mary Malm., Cheryl Holz, Chris Smith, Debbie O'Quinn, & Kristi Crowder.

Boston Chapter 226
By Donna L. DeMartino, RN

This quarter the Boston NOVA chapter has been gearing efforts to increase our membership as well as increase our funds as we strive to share with all our nursing staff, and especially our new nurses, how important NOVA is to our veterans as well as our profession. Dovetailing with the "Member-get-a-Member" campaigns for 2008 and the current Spring campaign, we have increased our membership by approximately 50 members to date. Maureen Levesque recruited the most members for 2008

and received her free NOVA national membership. She is continuing that effort for 2009 but she has some friendly competition during the current campaign as Donna Simono, a fairly new member herself, is motivated to get enough members to earn free membership or even free registration to our annual meeting in New Orleans.

In November we had a bake sale a few days before Thanksgiving which was very popular. We sold some Christmas wreaths as well as raffled some off that were made by Carmen Concepcion and it was very successful. We have another bake sale scheduled for Valentine's Day which promises to be even more successful. Our other fundraising effort that we have had for several years and is our biggest success is the "March Madness" calendar event. Diane McCrackin puts this pivotal event together every year and it takes a lot of hours and planning. Its success each year is because of her organization, the prizes donated and our member's participation. Thank you Diane for a great job and your continued efforts for our chapter.

Our fundraising efforts go towards partial reimbursement for member's registration fees for the NOVA Annual Meeting as we hope to foster attendance at this important professional meeting. In 2008 the meeting was in Boston so we had a good showing and we hope to do the same in New Orleans this year and going forward.



Boston Chapter Members Sue Pye, Kelly Skinner, & Carmen Concepcion

Michael E. DeBakey Chapter 388
By Constance Ward, RN

In the spirit of giving and Christmas the members of NOVA Chapter 388 agreed to adopt a family that was affected by the devastation of Hurricane Ike in November 2008. The members formed a workgroup, set criteria for the adoption of which the family to be adopted had to also be our own VA employee. The generosity of Chapter 388 adopted 3 families that are pictured below that suffered loss from the storm. Thank you NOVA Chapter 388 for your thoughtfulness and generosity to our VA community.



Lekeicia Anderson-Spight, Mieka Anderson, and Carolyn Parkman

Change is in the Air!

By Mary Seaman, MS, RN, NEA-BC
NOVA Foundation Chair



It's hard to believe that Groundhog Day has come and gone and that spring is just around the corner. As the seasons change so must NOVA as we move forward with a new administration, new ideas and new challenges in our personal and professional lives. However, since change is inevitable, what we must do is look for new

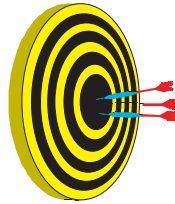
opportunities to drive excellence, nurture our young nurses and provide opportunities for growth and professional development within the VA healthcare system.

As the new Chair of the NOVA Foundation, let me share with you that one of my goals over the next two years is to change the image of the VA within and throughout our communities. We are the nation's best kept secret in terms of innovations, quality of care and state of the art medicine. Our national, "Let's Get Certified Campaign" for example is the first of its kind initiated within a large healthcare system. Change is indeed in the air!

The campaign has the ability to globally impact the health of not only veterans but also the delivery of care within our communities as we raise the bar of excellence within healthcare delivery systems in and beyond the VA. The VA has once again paved the way as a model healthcare system in the promotion of national certification of its nurses – what a legacy to be part of and to be proud to promote in today's competitive marketplace and compete we must!

However, in today's economy the ability of many to pursue further education or initiate large research projects can be quickly thwarted without adequate financial support and funding of special projects. The NOVA Foundation will assist in providing research grants and supporting those scholarly endeavors – we are here to help! Our purpose then, is not just to raise funds as a foundation but rather to support the advancement of nursing through many venues that improve the quality of life both for nurses and for the patients they serve.

In closing then, I hope you realize that fund raising activities we invite you to participate in over the next few years, result in supporting each other and a net gain for our veterans. Please keep your "change" for our worthwhile cause and "change" with us to make nursing within the VA the icon it was meant to be and a pillar of strength for those who have borne the battle. I hope to see you all at our next funding raising endeavor knowing full well that your vital contribution has a lasting and far more reaching effect than you could initially imagine.



The Evidence-Based Practice Toolkit: Dissemination to VA Nurses Nation-Wide

By April A. Gerlock PhD

Despite the rapidly changing landscape of health research and practices, nurses continue to rely heavily on their peers for information. Few use the on-line resources or library available to them. As part of the VA's Office of Nursing Services (ONS) goal to develop an infrastructure for EBP for VA nurses, the EBP toolkit was developed and disseminated to educate VA nurses about EBP at all settings. An EBP goal group of advanced practice nurses, nurse educators, nurse researchers, and nurse executives worked to develop a toolkit that will be readily available to all nurses, easy to navigate, and designed to address a wide-range of EBP questions from just getting started, to implementing EBP at all settings.

The toolkit is available to all VHA nurses on COL-LAGE at the ONS community of practice site. It consists of eight content areas to include: Basic Elements of EBP (a good place to start for those unfamiliar with EBP); Organizational Infrastructure and Support (practical strategies to embed evidence into your culture); Changing Practice, Guiding Principals of Implementing EBP (changing practice through EBP projects: a power point presentation); National VHA Initiatives, IHI, Clinical Practice Guidelines (a power point presentation); Teaching EBP (considerations for teaching EBP at the baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral level); Search engines, Web Sources, and Professional Organizations (web-links to national and international sites); EBP Requirements for Magnet Status (a power point presentation); and Pick a Path (exemplars of evidence based activity at a wide range of nursing settings from staff nurse to nurse executive).

The toolkit was introduced to VA Nurse Executives and leaders in April 2008, and a formal "roll-out" was conducted via a webinar for nursing leaders in August 2008. Smaller EBP educational offerings have accessed the toolkit as a learning tool and resource. Anyone accessing the toolkit has the opportunity to complete the one-page survey that asks background information about the user as well as the usefulness of the toolkit: Nurses from all settings within the VA have been accessing the site. Recent feedback from a staff nurse stated: "I'm very excited about the existence of the site. As an old dog trying to learn new tricks, it's been very hard for me to learn about EBP, what it is, & what it can do. Thank you!" To date there have been more than 4,000 visits to the site. By designing an easy to access EBP toolkit and disseminating it throughout the national VA nursing network, we are building a foundation of EBP for VA nurses.

Visit the site at: http://vaww.collage.research.va.gov/collage/n_ebp/

NOVA FOUNDATION DONORS

NOVA Foundation donations received between
12/01/2008 - 02/01/2009

\$250-\$499

Nancy Claflin

\$100 - \$249

Audrey Drake
Ronald Hopper
Donna Humes

\$50 - 99

Sandra Brandt
Ruth S. Ishizaki

\$1-49

Sharon Bouchard

Ramona Charles
Jessica Gonzalez
Genevieve Huerstel
Susan McKeenan
Angela Paden
Bernard Prouty
Al Pucci
E. Elaine Raisler
Nancy E. Reagan
J. Seaman
Annis Turney
Phyllis A. West
Ryan Law LLC

Shinseki Sworn In, Vows 21st Century Service to Veterans

WASHINGTON (Jan. 21, 2009) - Retired Army Gen. Eric K. Shinseki took the oath of office today as the Nation's seventh Secretary of Veterans Affairs, assuming the leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs following Tuesday's confirmation by the Senate.

"The overriding challenge I am addressing from my first day in office is to make the Department of Veterans Affairs a 21st century organization focused on the Nation's Veterans as its clients," Shinseki said.

Shinseki plans to develop a 2010 budget within his first 90 days that realizes the vision of President Obama to transform VA into an organization that is people-centric, results-driven and forward-looking.

Key issues on his agenda include smooth activation of an enhanced GI Bill education benefit that eligible Veterans can begin using next fall, streamlining the disability claims system, leveraging information technology to accelerate and modernize services, and opening VA's health care system to Veterans previously unable to enroll in it, while facilitating access for returning Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans.

Shinseki, a former Army Chief of Staff, takes the reins of a 284,000-employee organization delivering health care and financial benefits to millions of Veterans and survivors under a \$98 billion budget authorized this year through networks of regional benefits offices and health care facilities from coast to coast.

Born in 1942 on the island of Kauai, Hawaii, Shinseki graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in 1965. He served two combat tours and was wounded in action in Vietnam. He served with distinction in Europe, the Pacific and stateside, eventually becoming the Army's senior leader from June 1999 to June 2003.

Retired from military service in August 2003, Shinseki's military decorations include three Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts.

Shinseki succeeds Dr. James B. Peake as Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

NOVA 2009 Award Winners

Barbara Chambers Award – Dianne Nelson

Professional Nurse Award for Clinical Excellence
– Hazel Jackson

Professional Nurse Award for Leadership
– Donna Soroczak

Silver Star Chapter Award – Chapter 346,
Lebanon, PA

Veterans Award – American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Texas, Post 658

Top Five Recruiters from the Every Member Get A Member Campaign

(August 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008)

1. Alisa Marquez – 17 new members, Overton Brooks VAMC
2. Nancy Claflin – 15 new members, Phoenix HCS
3. Matilde Cangco – 8 new members, Phoenix HCS
4. Rowena Jumamoy – 7 new members, Hunter Holmes McGuire VAMC
5. Donna Simono – 7 new members, Boston HCS

Any NOVA member who recruited a member was entered into a contest for the grand prize. The grand prize winner is Ethel Davenport RN, member of Chapter 446, Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee, WI. Ethel received a check for \$250 and a \$100 donation was made to the NOVA Foundation in her honor.



Why I Joined NOVA

By By Ethel Davenport, RN

Chapter 446 - Clement J. Zablocki VAMC



I was looking for a professional nursing organization when I noticed the NOVA website link on the VHA internet. After initially reading the mission statement, I became eager to know more about the NOVA. I learned of NOVA's involvement with legislative issues, providing testimony on Capitol Hill, and the role

NOVA plays with recruitment and retention. Although my facility did not have a chapter, I chose to make NOVA my professional nursing organization. As an RN for the VA, NOVA exists to advance my professional practice. Realizing after talking to a few of my colleagues that they did not know about NOVA and perhaps other nurses within my facility might not be knowledgeable of NOVA, I decided to have a membership drive to recruit more nurses from my facility. My intention is to continue to spread the word about NOVA within my facility.

Make the Most of Your NOVA Membership!

Visit the NOVA Website!

Learn more about YOUR association - the only professional organization for VA registered nurses.

Go to

www.vanurse.org

And Discover ...

- How to get affordable Long Term Disability Insurance coverage.
- How to participate in Membership Promotion Campaigns and win exciting prizes.
- New ideas and information from colleagues across the U.S. by using NOVA's Message Board. NOVA now has new regional chat rooms for VISNs available at <http://www.vanurse.org/messageboard.html>.
- NOVA's educational offerings – Annual and Regional Meetings – valuable learning experiences with great networking opportunities.
- Details regarding NOVA's legislative achievements that benefit YOU and VA nursing.

Plus a lot more!

www.vanurse.org

NOVA Congratulates

NOVA congratulates Maureen Farrell RN who received a certificate for the most creative poster at the VISN 16 2008 Quality Island Poster Contest. The theme of Maureen's poster was "Follow the Yellow Brick Road through the Discharge Process."

Welcome Aboard

12/01/08 - 2/01/09

Phoenix HCS

James Brezinski
India Caldwell-Cox
Dedrea Dunham
Paula Gionet
Justin Martindale
Jean Sandman

Southern Arizona HCS

Jessica Gonzalez

Central Arkansas HCS

Linda O'Dell

Long Beach HCS

Blaire Duhaime
Dianne Rose-DeYoung

Northern California HCS

Barbara Militano

Palo Alto HCS

Herlita Ayap
Dario Carino
Sandra Scaling

N. Florida/S. Georgia HCS

Jennie-Lynn Collins

Miami HCS

Neil Baron
Joanne Silva

James A. Haley Veterans Hospital

Deanna Goff
Lorraine Kaack
Jerrell Showers

Atlanta VAMC

Erma Boykin

VA Eastern Kansas HCS

Kassandra Snow

Southeast Louisiana HCS

Carla Jackson-Tillery

Overton Brooks VAMC

Blanche Akana
Kimberly Banks
Rosalyn Bowman
Patti Carstensen

Ronda Faciane

Nancy Faulk
Helen Ferrell
Wanda Gilmore
Carolyn Green
Deborah Harkins
Carmen Kent
Sharyne Maloney

Stacey Oswalt

Robin Pitchford
Gail Reed

Imogene Thompson

Lisa Tramel

218 Maryland HCS

Christine Engstrom
Miriam Rogers

224 Edith Nourse Rogers VAMC

Julia Gamble
Ann Goulet
Christine Jones

Martine Pierre-Parker

226 Boston HCS

Stacy Burns
Caitlin Chadwick
Deanna Crowley
Kerianne DeGloria
Diana Durgin
Kristen Ferris
Kerry Maloney
Cynthia Moore
Danielle Newman
Jacquelyn Rose
Meaghan Sheils

246 Minneapolis VAMC

Julie Katseres

273 Southern Nevada HCS

Cecilia Krauss

274 Manchester VAMC

Linda Bauer
Helene Baum
Teresa Heggelund
Judith Keefe

308 Asheville VAMC

Susan McKeehan

326 Dayton VAMC

Catherine Hardman

342 Coatesville VAMC

Angela Chambers
Nadiyah Gary
Gigi Ann Hayes

346 Lebanon VAMC

Carla Collins
Suzanne Fritz

348 Philadelphia VAMC

Melvin Brewer

358 Providence VAMC

Wendy Cain
Daniel Nason

388 Michel E. Debakey VAMC

Glennys Asselin
Rizalina Bonuel
Barbara Cole
Leticia Craw

420 Hunter Holmes McGuire VAMC

Jacquelin Bartolome
Priscilla Bradby
Dianna Sue Cash
Gladys Crumpler
Teresa Dickerson
Carol Shannon Foote
Alicia Jakes
Cheryl Johnson
Angelene M Jones
Linda Lewis
Vonda Mayfield
Margarita Mohta
Sandra Nowell
Judith Thomas
Welton Tyler

424 American Lake VAMC

Vickie O'Neal
Sandra Solomon

446 Clement J. Zablocki VAMC

Margaret Amato
Enssaf Bassiouni
Debra Levine
Joel Ottoson
Bernard Prouty
Lorraine Utech
Arnold Valerius

The New Magnet Model: Structural Empowerment

By Sandra K. Janzen, MS, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN



This column extends knowledge about the magnet model and its application in nursing practice. A premise for today's column is that a transformed nursing leadership supports nurses by providing resources, involving nurses in decision-making, facilitating access to organizational information, collaboratively setting markers of excellence, expecting implement

of evidence into practice and by empowering nurses. Various interpretations of empowerment result in misunderstandings and misuse of the term. The construct of 'structural empowerment' is seen as jargon, but I propose that the concept of structural empowerment is useful for any nursing service that is on the magnet journey.

Structural empowerment literature states that opportunity and power in organizations must be available to all employees if the organization is to be fully effective. The theory of structural empowerment was developed by R. M. Kanter (1979) who viewed the workplace as the major determinant of worker behavior. Within the context of a workplace, the organization can be a major force in the development of empowerment among staff.

I think of structural empowerment synonymously with shared governance: a method of getting the work of nursing service accomplished. Many VA Medical Centers are creating, modifying and refining Shared Governance. For shared governance to achieve its potential, attention must be paid to the place where staff nurses' derive their professional identity and their concept of self as nurse.

I propose that nurses see the microsystem as their preferred professional 'home', the place where their professional identities are shaped. Microsystems are "the places where patients and families and care teams meet." Within hospitals, microsystems are patient care units where nurses and other interacting disciplines work with patients and families. At the recent Clinical Nurse Leader Summit conference, the microsystem was the matrix within which workforce satisfiers exist, policies are put into place, and clinical care is actually delivered.

As an original site for Transforming Care at the Bedside (TCAB), our organization came to understand the power of direct care nursing staff and the team in making a difference for the patient at the bedside. An empowered nursing staff willingly and knowingly redesigns their respective jobs every day. An empowered staff expects to take risks in order to perform tests of change that have promise to make a difference in care. An empowered staff works

together to figure out just what safe and reliable care is, become truly patient-centered, achieve the goal of achieving lean and efficient units, and improves the vitality (the joy of work) of the team on the patient care unit.

Measures of empowerment in hospital microsystems are many, but one "master measure" is direct patient care. Hendrich and Chow found that nurses on many different microsystems spent only 30% of their time in direct patient care. The goal with TCAB facilities is 70% direct patient care time. To the extent that the goal is achieved, patients feel more secure, less apprehensive and more informed, with increased presence of the nursing staff. Nurses are more satisfied and re-learn how to connect with patients when there isn't a specific task to do or medication to administer. Team vitality is strengthened when the team communicates well and patient care outcomes are clear to all providers and are achieved. TCAB teams are interdisciplinary and meet together to generate ideas to improve patient care, act on suggestions by their patient partners and address problems and correct them. This is making a difference at the microsystem level. This is structural empowerment at the patient care level.

What is exciting about the concept of the microsystem, is that it is NOW being understood and valued! It is about putting structures in place to deliver safe and reliable care. An example of a structure at the system level is the discharge planning process. At the microsystem level, it is the unique, standard process on a surgical unit for discharging the patient going home with a new tracheostomy. The responsibilities of each team member are defined. Checklists are developed. The discharge process for the tracheostomy patient is streamlined by the involved staff so that everything from physician orders to needed supplies is completed on time. The patient leaves the hospital well-educated, understands his care and is comfortable with the transition to home. In reality, our patient care settings and these processes are very complicated and discharges are often rushed and uncoordinated, leaving staff and patients frustrated and unsatisfied.

Structural empowerment takes on new meaning when we think of the patient care unit as a microsystem. It is where nurses make a difference for the patient.

NOVA Congratulates VA Nurses

News from NOVA seeks to recognize VA nurses for achievements. If you know a VA nurse who has received an award or other type of recognition for an achievement, please send the information to Larry Lemos at larrylemos@yahoo.com

PRESIDENT cont. from page 1

comprehensive treatment.

Women make up an ever growing percentage of the Armed Forces. As such, they are also making up an ever growing percentage of the veteran population. While there have been efforts over the years to address the unique needs of women veterans, there is much more that VA might do. To that end, there are provisions in this bill to address current shortcomings and help VA better respond to the increased demand for care from women veterans. One of the most troubling and difficult challenges of warfare, which can be seen particularly in the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, is diagnosing and treating those who suffer from the invisible wounds of war. The lack of understanding of these injuries, the stigma associated with them, and many other factors make effective treatment difficult. Last Congress, legislation I authored, the Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act, was enacted as Public Law 110-387. During this Congress, I seek to improve upon those advances, and to continue to provide accessible, cutting-edge care for those afflicted with invisible wounds. This bill would expand eligibility and authority for the Vet Centers to provide needed services, and would commission a comprehensive study on suicides among veterans so that we can improve efforts to prevent such tragedies. This bill will also provide support for homeless veterans through a proposed series of innovative pilot programs. These programs are designed to significantly improve VA outreach to these veterans, in order to help them access the benefits and services provided by VA."

NOVA Past President Cecilia McVey provided testimony on this bill in May 2008, describing NOVA members' input and feedback for this important legislation. NOVA will closely monitor this legislation and keep members updated on its progress.

NOVA has something for everyone with new and exciting activities and programs. NOVA retired members Mary Raymer and Dianne Nelson have initiated an exciting new program, the VA Nurse Emeritus. This is an established group within NOVA for NOVA members who are retired or planning to retire with the next calendar year. The group functions through an Emeritus Council with a Chair, Vice Chair, and six members, including the NOVA President. The VA Nurse Emeritus group exists to support the mission and vision of NOVA through engagement of nurses who have retired or have immediate plans to retire from active employment in VA. This group is looking to recognize and value the expertise of retired VA nurses through substantive projects that support the working VA nurse and the veterans we serve. The VA Nurse Emeritus group will be at the annual meeting in New Orleans April 22-24, 2009 with their first project through the Soldiers' Angels foundation; cool scarves for soldiers.

If you haven't renewed your NOVA dues, you

may have received a call from a NOVA board member in January. NOVA board members participated in a program to call non renewing members before the NOVA board meeting in January. This innovative program served to not only get the word out that memberships were due to be renewed, but also provided an opportunity for NOVA board members to talk directly to NOVA members across the country to gain valuable information about issues and concerns important to members. This is a great activity for chapters to consider. Every member is valuable; we need all of you to continue your membership to help keep NOVA strong.

NOVA Membership Secretary Cheryl Knowles had an idea to develop a VA Nurse Certification program, and contacted the American Nurses' Credentialing Center for information to get started. Kathy Lehmann from Bedford volunteered to lead a group of NOVA members working on completing the application. You can find more information on this topic on the NOVA bulletin boards on the NOVA web page. These discussion boards provide an opportunity for NOVA members to share ideas and ask for feedback. Go to the NOVA web page, <http://www.vanurse.org>; click on NOVA Home Page, then click on Members Network Messaging Board on the home page in the blue column on the left; scroll down just a little way, right after the Member Get a Member Membership Campaign. The message boards were created by the NOVA Membership Committee to provide another opportunity for networking and communicating with other NOVA members. You can use these message boards to post information or ask questions. It's just like posting something to a bulletin board, and other NOVA members will then post replies. It's a great way to share ideas, get feedback, and connect with other NOVA members. This functions like a bulletin board; messages are posted, reviewed, and released so they can be seen within 24-48 hours.

Don't forget the 2009 Annual Meeting; we hope to see you there! The NOVA Annual Meeting will be held in New Orleans, April 22-24, 2009, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, 300 Bourbon Street, New Orleans, LA 70130, (800)766-3782. Would you be interested in working on a Habitat for Humanity project in New Orleans after the conference? You'll have the opportunity to participate in this optional activity the day after the conference.

It's not too early to start thinking about the 2009 Marine Corps Marathon on October 25, 2009. This is a great activity for all chapters to raise funds for the NOVA Foundation for VA Nursing Scholarships and VA Nursing Research. I'll be walking in the 10K again, and I invite you to join me in the 10K, or run the marathon, or volunteer in the NOVA tent or at a medical or water station on the route. Looking to the future, the NOVA Board of Directors has approved moving the Annual Meeting in 2010 to be held in October in conjunction with the Marine Corps Marathon. That will be a great time to come

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to Washington, DC to participate in the annual meeting and support the marathon as a runner, walker, or volunteer. If you haven't been to the capital recently, plan to attend this terrific series of events.

"Your future depends on many things, but mostly on you." (Frank Tyger) NOVA's future depends on all of us; we can each work to recruit one new NOVA member this year. NOVA dues are \$100 per year, \$4.10 per pay period, or 41 cents each work day, a rare bargain in a professional nursing organization. NOVA has a history of working for you. Mary Raymer researched past legislation that NOVA has been involved with, and identified that NOVA was pivotal in the development and ratification of eighteen public laws that have directly benefited VA nurses! Registered nurses (RNs) in FERS are able to retain their sick leave benefits for their annuity; no other VA employee in FERS has this benefit; only RNs, and only due to NOVA! Other laws enacted with NOVA's support include:

- RN Saturday premium pay
- Saturday premium pay extended to licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and nursing assistants (NAs)

- Elevation of the Chief Nursing Office to report directly to the Undersecretary for Health
 - Locality pay systems revisions
 - Alternate work schedules including the Baylor Plan (first introduced by NOVA in 1982)
 - Veterans' clinical services including those for women veterans, sexual trauma counseling programs, mental health services, homeless, and long term care
 - Education benefits for RNs including extensive support for the National Nursing Education Initiative and the Education Debt Reduction Program
 - Eliminating the cap on overtime pay—initially proposed by NOVA in 1986 and enacted in 1989
 - Removal of restriction on outside employment for RNs—introduced by NOVA in 1989 and enacted in 1996
 - Recruitment and retention bonus programs
- Strengthen NOVA's membership and help NOVA continue to work for you. Thank you for all you do for NOVA.

ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE *cont. from page 1*

- needed equipment and software, specifically Class III software.
- Concerns regarding the LMS (learning management system) not functioning appropriately and not meeting pre-established timelines.
 - Support for the VA Nursing Academy so all VA facilities will benefit.
 - Support for the principles of Magnet.
 - Succession planning, particularly for nurse executives.
 - Incentives, special pay, and recognition for advance practice nurses.
 - Oversight of medical centers, both internally and externally.
 - Increased retirements.
 - Incentives for facilities to use Travel Nurse Corps pilot program, and expansion to a VA Travel Corps.
 - Decreasing non nursing tasks assigned to nursing.
 - Stand Up for Veterans—awareness and advocacy initiative.
 - Support for strengthening federal policies/programs for health care services to disabled veterans.
 - Ensure that VA has resources, programs, services for health care for wounded and disabled veterans in recovery and rehabilitation.
 - Properly screen and treat psychological wounds, including PTSD, utilizing most effective evidence based tools and therapies.
 - Properly screen and treat veterans with TBI, including moderate and mild TBI, using validated assessment tools and proven, effective treatments.
 - Provide comprehensive support to family caregivers of severely wounded and disabled veterans, including access to VA mental health care services and financial support programs.
 - Reform federal budget process to provide sufficient, timely, and predictable funding necessary to sustain the VA health care system and the "best care anywhere;" budget reform from mandatory funding to advance funding method.
 - Ensure that VA programs responsive to gender specific needs of women veterans, and encourage research activities.
 - Ensure outreach to improve women veterans' awareness of services, benefits, and eligibility criteria.
 - Construction issues.
 - National VA healthcare leasing project, direct privatization of care, in joint ventures.
 - Contracting of care.
 - Rural health care, lack of capacity and providers; concerns with Project Hero.
 - Need more points of contact between VA and community based organizations.
 - Homeless veterans; women are fastest growing homeless veteran population; 3% homeless, increased 15% last year; VA programs reach only 25% of homeless veterans.
 - Accountability, whether VA using money wisely.
 - Growing backlog of claims.
 - Outreach; approximately 70% to 75% of veterans don't use the VA.
 - 1.8 million veterans with no insurance; many don't know about available benefits.
 - Issues for OEF/OIF veterans include musculoskeletal disorders and amputations.

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- VA needs to provide all services, orthopedic physicians, physical therapists, nurse specialists to expand these services.
- Access for priority 8 veterans; Congress has given VA \$250 million to open access.
- Questions about Project Hero.
- Minority veterans are a concern, specifically health care and access.
- CARES initiative will be revisited in second session of Congress.
- Delays in healthcare.
- What the VA will look like in 10 to 20 years; keeping up infrastructure.
- Implementation of GI bill due in August, 2009.
- Nurse and nurse faculty shortages.
- Crisis for VA regarding CRNAs; one third of current CRNAs can retire within the next five years; increasing need for CRNAs outside OR.
- VA research funds provided to any clinician at least 5/8 FTEE; supports TBI, PTSD, and homeless veterans; requested \$575 million; separate request for \$142 million to improve VA lab space.
- Shortage of staff on the benefits side, with experienced staff retiring; fully funding VA's disability compensation program and preserving current form.
- Enforcement of employment and re-employment acts; guard and reserve education for employers on hiring returning troops.
- Seamless transition between VA and DOD.
- Independent budget with 7 critical issues; sufficient, timely, and predictable funding for VA health care; challenge of caring for our newest war veterans; maintain VA's critical medical

facilities infrastructure; improvements needed in the claims process; seamless transition from DOD to VA; human resources challenges facing the Department of Veterans Affairs and national cemetery administration.

Participants included: NOVA Board of Directors, President Nancy Claflin, Past President Cecilia McVey, Vice President Larry Lemos, Treasurer Mary Seaman, Membership Secretary Cheryl Knowles, Secretary Joan Clifford, Directors Sharon Johnson, Ann Narciso, and Thelma Roach-Serry; Past Board Members Dianne Nelson and Mary Raymer; Executive Director Deborah Beck, Deputy Director Susan Dove, and Luke Zorich. Other participants included Cathy Rick, Chief Nursing Officer, Office of Nursing Services; Reji John, Administrative Assistant, Office of Nursing Services; Betty Moseley Brown, Center for Women Veterans; Angela Prudhomme, Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs; Cathy Wiblemo, House Committee on Veterans Affairs; Andrea Buck, Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs; Joy Ilem, Disabled American Veterans; Carl Blake and Alethea Predeoux, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Teresa Morris, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Bernie Edelman, Vietnam Veterans of America; Annie Minguez, American Association of Colleges of Nursing; Kathryn White, Association of VA Nurse Anesthetists; Gary Ewart, Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research; Cheryl Beversdorf; National Coalition for Homeless Veterans; and John Bradley, Consultant in Veterans Affairs.

Quality of Care Indicators VA-HEDIS Comparisons

VA routinely measures performance through a series of performance measures, and VA's performance on these quality indicators exceeds the performance of the private sector. VA's performance indicators can be compared to other indicators. The Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) is a tool used by more than 90 percent of America's health plans to measure performance on important dimensions of care and service. HEDIS indicators were developed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), an accrediting body for managed care organizations. VA performance measures can also be compared to similar performance measures for Medicare and Medicaid patients.

Clinical Indicator	VA FY08	HEDIS 2007	Medicare 2007	Medicaid 2007
Breast cancer screening	87%	69%	67%	50%
Cervical cancer screening	92%	82%	N/A	65%
Colorectal cancer screening	79%	56%	50	N/A
LDL screening after AMI	94%	88%	88%	76%
LDL Cholesterol <100	66%	59%	56%	38%
HgbA1c done past year	97%	88%	88%	77%
DM control HgbA1c <9	84%	71%	71%	52%
Cholesterol Screen Diabetic	95%	84%	86%	71%
Cholesterol <100 Diabetic	68%	44%	47%	31%
Diabetic Eye Exam	86%	55%	63%	50%
Diabetic Renal Exam	93%	81%	86%	74%
B/P <= 140/90	78%	64%	59%	56%
Hypertension B/P <140/90	75%	62%	58%	53%
Smoking Cessation	89%	76%	N/A	70%
Immunizations (flu) 50-64	69%	49%	N/A	N/A
Immunizations (flu) >65	84%	N/A	72%	N/A
Immunizations (pneumo)	94%	N/A	67%	N/A

How to Use Our Online Bulletin Board

By Kathleen Lehmann, RN

Using an online bulletin board is something of a cross between requesting information via telephone and requesting it in writing through the mail. NOVA uses its Members Networking Message boards to allow an exchange of information and sharing of ideas and opinions, related to individual subgroups or based on specific topics. It is our desire to expand the theme of "one VA" and to have nurses use current technology. The online bulletin board allows each individual member of NOVA to speak his or her mind, ask questions, get feedback, and network with each other.

Bulletin board topic areas are organized by VISN, as well as specific concerns and questions such as: APN issues, Legislative Issues, the NOVA Foundation, the NOVA Newsletter, Memberships and Chapters. Our newest message board is focused on our newest exciting project; the VA Nurse Certification Project.

Once a submission is posted on the bulletin board, it remains online and becomes part of what is known as a "thread". For those new to this technology, it is similar to an e-mail message, where the first message in a chain is at the bottom of the thread. As people add their comments and questions, they are added to the top of the thread and will appear as the most recent item to be read. Once you understand what comprises a thread, it becomes easy to follow the order of the messages.

For those members who do not have local physical access to an active NOVA chapter, we encourage full and regular participation in our online activities. One can belong to an online community and truly be an active member of a virtual NOVA chapter.

Your next step should be to go to your computer and log onto our website (www.vanurse.org). Click onto the home page, and follow the links to the bulletin board. Be curious and investigate each topic. You'll be surprised what you may learn or who you may encounter out there in nursing cyberspace. Post a message and you will no longer be a cyberspace rookie.



Check out our Website:

www.vanurse.org

VA Nurse Emeritus Report

By Mary Raymer, PhD, RN and Dianne Nelson, BSN, RN

Charter members of VA Nurse Emeritus have gotten off to a active start in 2009. The members selected the Cool Scarf project for the Soldiers via the Soldiers Angels nonprofit organization as our service project for this year. The Scarves will be available at Annual Meeting for attendees to sponsor via a donation. The scarves will be sent to Soldiers Angels for distribution to the troops. Each Scarf will have the following enclosure



VA Nurse Emeritus will also have a poster and membership information available at Annual Meeting. NOVA members who have retired or plan to retire within the next year are invited to a meeting of VA Nurse Emeritus which will be held Wednesday April 22nd from 4:30-6pm. Room location in the Hotel will be posted at the Annual Meeting registration table.

- Have a little extra time to sew some scarves? (not complex – just need to sew straight seams). VA Nurse Emeritus is seeking volunteers to participate in this project for our active duty men and women.
- Interested in joining VA Nurse Emeritus?? Join us on our monthly conference call – 4th Monday of the Month.
- Contact Mary Raymer via raymerm@bellsouth.net to obtain information regarding VA Nurse Emeritus membership and/or the Cool Scarf Project

VA Nurse Emeritus Mission Statement

- *VA Nurse Emeritus* exists to support the mission and vision of NOVA through continuing engagement of nurses who have retired or have immediate plans to retire from active employment in the VA.
- *VA Nurse Emeritus* seeks to recognize and value the expertise of retired VA nurses through substantive projects that support the working VA nurse and the veterans we serve.
- *VA Nurse Emeritus* strives to recognize and celebrate the contribution of retired VA nurses through positive affirmation programs and projects.

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Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs • 1726 M Street NW, Suite 1101 • Washington, DC 20036
(202) 296-0888 • FAX (202) 833-1577 • e-mail address: nova@vanurse.org • Website: www.vanurse.org

Our Mission Statement

“NOVA: Shaping and Influencing Health Care Within The Department of Veterans Affairs.”

Our Vision Statement

VA nurses will provide high quality nursing care. VA nurses will have an optimal work environment. VA nurses will be well informed on relevant issues that impact VA healthcare and nursing practice. VA nurses will have a strong voice in the legislative arena. VA nurses will have a strong presence at the VHA corporate leadership level. VA nurses will be NOVA members.

important INFORMATION

NEWS FROM NOVA, edited by Larry Lemos. This newsletter is yours, please feel free to quote, photocopy, or share, but always reference **NEWS FROM NOVA**.

NEWS FROM NOVA is the official publication of the **Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs**. It is published four times per year. Subscription price is included in annual dues for members. Postmaster: send change of address and correspondence to NOVA, 1726 M Street NW, Suite 1101, Washington, DC 20036.

It is extremely important that you notify the National Office as soon as possible whenever you have a **change of address** or VA facility. Crucial legislative and other correspondence will then reach you in a more timely manner. If you have not received your election ballot, **NEWS FROM NOVA**, Annual Meeting brochure, or dues notice, please contact National Office so we can correct the problem.

REMINDER:

Put your questions or requests in writing when communicating with NOVA National Office.

Use our website for faster service: www.vanurse.org or fax your comments to: 202-833-1577

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Suite 1101
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(202) 296-0888

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