VOLUME 13 • ISSUE 2 • SPRING 2011

Salute Your Health

Affirming Our Commitment to America's Heroes

Tobacco Cessation

Quitting isn't easy. That's why Erie VA's Tobacco Cessation program offers Veterans multiple tools and resources to give patients the support they need to not only quit, but quit for life.

The Tobacco Cessation program offers Veterans a:

- One-time tobacco cessation group
- -Weekly tobacco cessation group
- -Telephone-based program, and the
- -*New!* MOVE/Tobacco cessation group that addresses tobacco cessation and weight gain

A Tobacco Cessation coordinator works with each Veteran to identify the right mix of tools to help patients succeed in quitting.

In addition to classes, support groups, and telephone support, patients can receive medications, including nicotine replacements (patches, gum, lozenges), Wellbutrin (bupropion), or Chantix. The best part — these medications are all free of charge.

If you or a Veteran you know is interested in learning more about the Tobacco Cessation program, contact your primary health care provider or call 814-860-2038.

Benefits of Stopping Smoking

20 minutes after quitting – your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

12 hours after quitting – the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

2 weeks to 3 months after quitting – your circulation improves and your lung function increases.

1 to 9 months after quitting – coughing and shortness of breath decrease.

1 year after quitting – the excess risk for coronary heart disease is half that of a continuing smoker's.

5 years after quitting – the risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half.

10 years after quitting – the risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a person who is still smoking.

15 years after quitting – the risk for coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker.

Resource: www.cancer.org

New Golf Carts Escort Patients

Tired of parking far away from the entrance? As a new customer service initiative, Erie VA is proud to introduce two new golf carts to offer patients a lift. Volunteer drivers will be circling all parking lots offering patients and their family members rides to the first floor and second floor entrances.

Erie VA purchased two six-passenger golf carts. These carts come equipped with an amber strobe light on the top of the golf cart along with side enclosures, tires to withstand salt and water, a windshield wiper, and can seat 6 people total.

There will not be a schedule for pickup or a phone number to call if you need a ride. Volunteer drivers will take turns circling the lots Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine, to help patients out.

My HealtheVet

"I order all my meds online and any questions I have I just use secure messaging. It simplifies things tremendously for me. I don't have to wait on hold or explain what I'm looking for to several people over the phone. Secure messaging takes all the work out of it and makes it simple to get my questions answered." – *Rick Sullivan, Veteran and MHV User*

My HealtheVet Features

- -Refill prescriptions online
- -Send a secure message to the health care team*
- -View appointments*
- -View wellness reminders*
- Access online medical libraries
- Self enter your health history

* *Must be In-Person Authenticated to use this feature.*

Here's How You Enroll

1. Go to **www.myhealth.va.gov.**
2. On the right side of the screen, click the **Register Today** button and complete the registration page. Review and accept the **Terms and Conditions** and the **Privacy Policy** at the bottom of the page. This takes about 10 minutes.
3. To use all the features, such as secure messaging, remember to upgrade your account.

To Upgrade Your Account

1. Log into **www.myhealth.va.gov** and watch the In-Person Authentication video online.
2. Complete the upgrade; you must sign the **In-Person Authentication** form at the Release of Information office located on the second floor of the medical center. This only takes a few minutes.

Forgot Your User ID or Password?

1. Go to **www.myhealth.va.gov.**
2. Click the **Go to My HealtheVet** button on the right side of the page.
3. In the Member Login box, click the **Forgot User ID** or **Forgot Password** buttons and follow the steps listed.

For questions about My HealtheVet, call the My HealtheVet Coordinator at **814-860-2097.**

My healthevet
www.myhealth.va.gov

New TeleMOVE! Program Helps Veterans Lose Weight from Home!

The new TeleMOVE! weight management program allows Veterans to participate in the MOVE! Program from the comfort of their own home. MOVE! provides nutrition information and professional support to Veterans interested in losing weight and improving overall health.

Benefits of TeleMOVE

Just a 10 percent weight loss decreases risk for many diseases, such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes, or promotes improvement for many existing medical conditions. The TeleMOVE! program accommodates Veterans who have busy work schedules, live far from the Medical Center, or prefer to work on weight loss individually.

What to Expect

Eligible Veterans will receive a Telehealth monitor, digital scale, pedometer, and MOVE! booklet, which contains nutrition, exercise, and behavior change handouts, all free of charge! Veterans will answer daily questions provided by the Telehealth monitor and track their weekly weight.

Veterans interested in TeleMOVE! may contact their provider or TeleMOVE! Coordinator Jennifer Beck, RD, LDN at **814-860-2780.**

Interested Veterans agree to participate using the Telehealth monitor on a daily basis. They cannot have plans to relocate while enrolled in the program or plan on going on vacation for more thanone week during each 90-day cycle. Veterans can participate in TeleMOVE for up to three 90-day cycles (nine months) with continued successful weight loss.

Move/Tobacco Cessation Group

Join this two-hour class, lead by a registered dietitian, and receive tools and much needed support for keeping focused and eating healthy while quitting tobacco use. Call Deb Kuntz at **814-860-2342** to join!

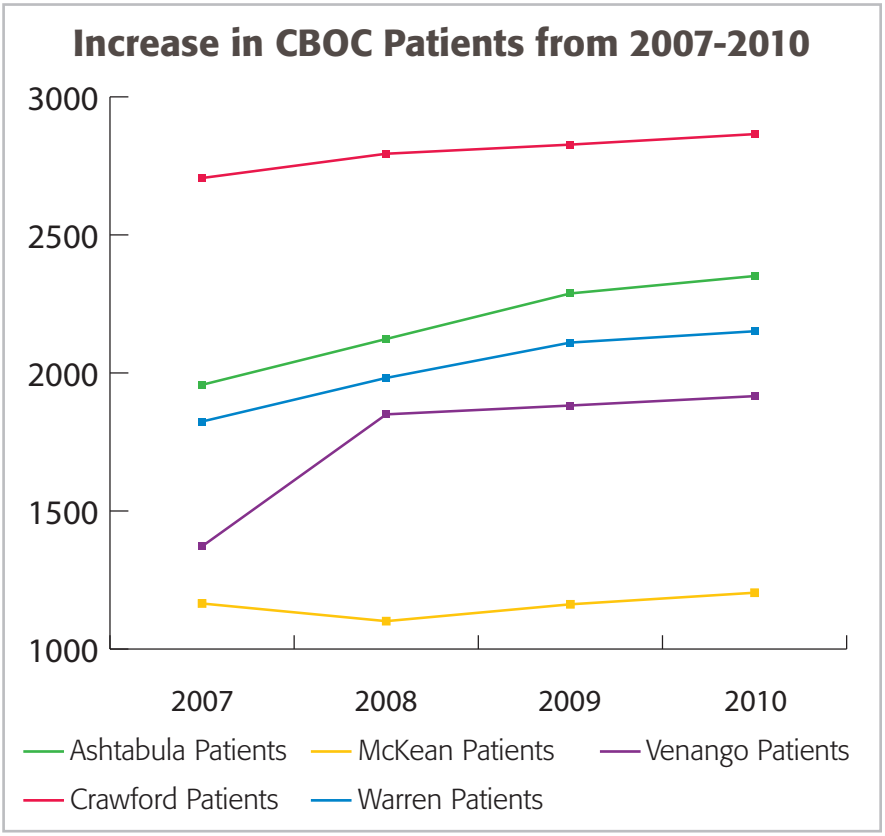
Making a PACT to Redesign Care

To better serve Veterans, Erie VA's Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) have been busy implementing Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT). The overall goal of PACT is to provide patient-centered care by focusing on improving:

- Partnerships
- Access to care
- Coordinated care
- Team-based care

Each CBOC has recently created PACT teamlets. A PACT teamlet includes a provider, a registered nurse, and health care technician and/or clerk. Teamlets work with patients to coordinate all care, including primary and specialty care for both VA and non-VA providers. Ask who's in your PACT teamlet at your next visit.

During any part of care, patients are always able to request to speak directly with their doctor. PACT simply gives patients more options on how, when, and where they'd like to receive care by providing each patient with a team of health care professionals.



What You Can Expect

To accomplish our goal of creating more patient-centered care, there are a few changes and process enhancements at the CBOCs. As staff at all levels take a more active role in your health care, here are a few things you can expect:

- -Increased focus on health promotion and disease prevention
- -Coordination of care by registered nurse care managers
- -Additional provider telephone clinics and group clinics
- -Increased communication options with your teamlet through the VA's My HealtheVet website
- -Same-day access to primary care
- -Enhanced patient education

Speak with your provider for more information about PACT.

Changed CBOC Clinic Hours

The Ashtabula, Crawford, Venango, and Warren Clinics including labs will open at 9 a.m. on the first and third Wednesday of each month. This does not apply to the McKean CBOC, which will continue with regular hours.

All five CBOCs will have no scheduled primary care provider or nurse clinic appointments offered after 12 p.m noon every Wednesday.

Substance Abuse Services

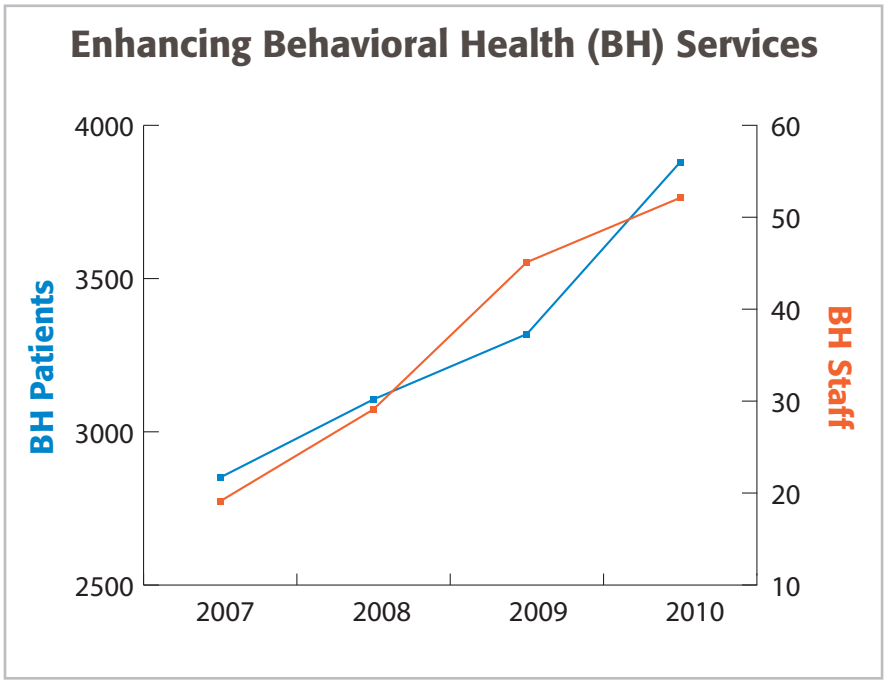
Whether patients are thinking about decreasing their substance use, trying to quit, or need support maintaining their recovery efforts, the Behavioral Health Clinic (BHC) has services to meet Veterans' needs.

Erie VA's BHC offers medication management to assist with cravings and withdrawal symptoms, individual counseling, two weekly addictions groups, and a 12-week Intensive Outpatient Program.

The newest addition to substance abuse services is a therapy group devoted to patients thinking about quitting or decreasing their substance use. This program just started in April.

The substance abuse team consists of a social worker, chaplain, psychologists, psychiatrists, and certified drug and alcohol counselors. Staff members provide education about the effects of using substances, help patients identify reasons for their use, and teach skills to prevent further substance use. These staff members can also connect patients to community resources, assist patients in entering detoxification, and refer to more intensive levels of treatment, such as residential substance abuse programs.

Substance Abuse Team, from left to right: Angela Lindemuth, Terrence Yeager, Debbie Semanscin-Doerr, Stephanie Dorich, David Fugate, and Charles Woodard



For more information on substance abuse treatment, contact Debbie Semanscin-Doerr, Ph.D., at **814-860-2038.**

Become a Healthier U.S. Veteran

www.prevention.va.gov

Spring 2011

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Sleep Management

This one-session class is designed to help improve your sleep.

CONTACT: *Edward Dabkowski, Ph.D., at **814-860-2038** to register or for more information, or ask your primary care provider for a referral.*

Pain Management

Find better ways to manage pain and live more effectively.

CONTACT: *Edward Dabkowski, Ph.D., at **814-860-2038** for more information or ask your primary care provider.*

TOBACCO CESSATION

Quit the habit. Live longer. You may receive a prescription for one of several medications to aid in your attempt to quit.

CONTACT: *Stephanie Dorich, LSW, at **814-860-2038** or ask your primary care provider for a referral to any of the following tobacco-cessation group programs:*

Support Group

Support therapy for any Veteran interested in quitting tobacco of any kind

WHEN: *Every Friday at 9 a.m.*
WHERE: *Behavioral Health Clinic*

Educational Group

One-time tobacco-cessation educational group

WHEN: *Dates vary*
WHERE: *The Erie VA and several of the community-based outpatient clinics*

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Studies of those who have lost weight found that having support increases your chance for success. Join one of these *MOVE!* programs to get started on a healthier you.

CONTACT: ***814-860-2554** for more information or to schedule an appointment for any of the weight-management programs listed below:*

MOVE! Support Groups

Support therapy for overweight or obese Veterans who want to lose weight, keep it off, and improve their health.

WHEN: *Two times a month*

MOVE! Phone Clinic

This call-in telephone clinic can answer your questions about losing weight and provide support when needed.

MOVE! Education Series

This is a four-week educational series taught by a registered dietitian, a physical therapist, and a behavioral health clinician.

EDUCATION

Medical Words: A Tutorial from the National Library of Medicine

This tutorial teaches you about medical words and how to put them together. You'll also find quizzes to see what you've learned.

VISIT: *www.nihseniorhealth.gov. See Training Tools at the bottom of your screen.*

CANCER SURVIVORS SUPPORT GROUP

The Man to Man support group is led by Dr. Sharma, urological surgeon at Erie VA. Life after cancer...share, support, learn.

WHEN: *May 19, June 16, July 21 from 1 to 2 p.m. Look for more dates in the next issue.*
WHERE: *Conference room 1 on the second floor of the Erie VA Medical Center*

View upcoming events and classes online at www.erie.va.gov.

CLIP AND SAVE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

More Construction Is on the Way!

In 2011, Erie VA Medical Center will break ground for a new Behavioral Health building to better meet the needs of this growing patient population. Construction on the 20,000-square-foot Behavioral Health Clinic is expected to begin this summer.

Also in the works is the Ambulatory Surgery Clinic renovation project. This project will relocate to a ground-level space so patients have easier access to care. This renovation will add approximately 17,000 square feet of new and remodeled space. This project is expected to start this year.

Stay tuned to **www.erie.va.gov** for more construction updates.

Parking Note: The new parking lots in the front of the building are now open to patients!

Are you on Facebook and Twitter? So are we!

Find us at **www.facebook.com/VAMCErie** and **http://twitter.com/ErieVAMC.** View Erie VA health stories, photos, and updates!

Welcome Home Event

Mark your calendars for the Welcome Home Veterans Appreciation Day, scheduled for Saturday, July 23. Enjoy a free buffet dinner and an Erie SeaWolves game with fireworks to follow. Starting June 13, tickets to this event will be available in the Voluntary Service Office and the OEF/OIF Office. Tickets will NOT be available the day of the game. Look for more information online at **www.erie.va.gov.**

Erie Veterans Affairs Medical Center
135 East 38th Street
Erie, PA 16504

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INSIDE:

- **Lose Weight from Home!**
- **Substance Abuse Services**
- **New Hours for CBOCs**

Attention Postmaster: Time Dated Material Enclosed

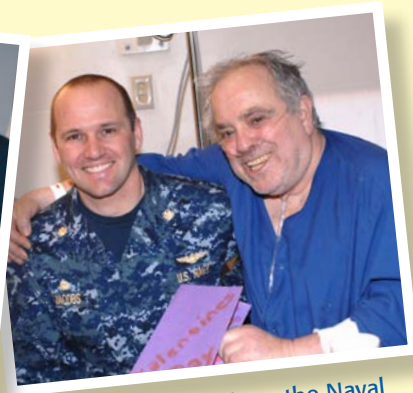
Salute Your Health is published quarterly as a patient education service by the Erie VA Medical Center. The publication is intended to provide information to help you stay well, manage your health care, and learn more about the many services available through the VA. This publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, which should be obtained from your provider. All articles may be reproduced for educational purposes. Our mission is to maintain and improve the health and well-being of Veterans by providing state-of-the-art comprehensive health care in a professional and pleasant environment. All models used for illustrative purposes only. (SP11 6210M)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US AT:
Erie VA Medical Center
135 East 38th St., Erie, PA 16504
814-868-8661 or 800-274-8387
Check out our Web site for hours, telephone numbers, and maps at www.erie.va.gov.

National Salute to Veterans Week

Members of the 99th Division Re-enactors of WWII don authentic WWII uniforms to hand out Valentine's Day cards.

Members of the Erie Police Department visit patients, including a former lieutenant in the department.



LCDR Roger Jacobs from the Naval Reserve Center went from room to room thanking Veterans on behalf of active duty personnel.

Mayor Joe Sinnott and Fred Rush visit patients during recreational therapy activities.

Community members of all ages came to bring Valentine's Day cheer to Veterans.

County Executive Barry Grossman visits Veterans.