Summer 2015

Bay VISIONS

A Quarterly Publication of the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

Honoring Those Who Gave All

Bay Pines Memorial Day Ceremony attracts more than 3,500 attendees

Bay Pines Enrolls 10,000 In Million Veteran Program

VA pursuing development of world's largest genetic research database

From the Director

Welcome to Bay Visions – a publication of the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System. Communication is an important part of what we do in VA, and this publication gives us another way to do that. As such, if you have a story or experience to share you believe is suited for Bay Visions, please contact me or the Office of Public Affairs.

As you will soon read in this edition of Bay Visions, we continue to advance health care through research, innovation and technology, and remain focused on providing high quality, accessible health care to the Veterans we have the privilege to serve.

In the forefront of it all is our dedication to the men and women we serve and commitment to provide the very best personalized, proactive, patient-driven care grounded in VA's Core Values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence (I CARE).

Thank you for your service to America.

Sincerely,

SUZANNE M. KLINKER
Director, Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

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Bay Visions is a quarterly publication designed for Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) stakeholders. Its purpose is to inform and educate. Contents of Bay Visions are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Veterans Affairs, the Veterans Health Administration or the Bay Pines VAHCS.

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Contents

News

4 Thousands turn out at the Bay Pines Memorial Day Ceremony to honor the men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

6 U.S. Army Vietnam Veteran becomes 10,000th enrollee into Million Veteran Program (MVP) at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center as part of a national genetic research project.

To Your Health

8 Important things to know about VA-prescribed medications.

9 VetLink Kiosks speed up the appointment check-in process, allow Veterans to update personal information, view upcoming appointments, review insurance information and more.

10 Questions about the Veterans Choice Card? Review these quick facts to better understand how and when the card can be used.

Upcoming Events

11 Stay up-to-date on happenings across the Bay Pines VAHCS! Mark these special events on your calendar today or sign-up for our free E-News service at www.baypines.va.gov.

Do you have a story to share?
If so, send an email with your story idea to vhabaypublicaffairs@va.gov or call (727) 398-6661 extension 15031.

Thousands turn out to Annual Memorial Day Ceremony to honor service and sacrifice

Story by Jason W. Dangel, Public Affairs Officer
Photos by Timothy Westmorland, Medical Media Services

More than 3,500 Veterans, family member, friends, civic leaders and VA employees turned out for the annual Memorial Day Ceremony at the Bay Pines National Ceremony on Monday, May 25.

Prior to the event, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other volunteers from the community placed more than 35,000 flags on the graves of the brave men and women who served the nation. Cemetery officials reported that the flags were placed in about 45 minutes.

Guest speakers for the event included Bay Pines VA Healthcare System Director Suzanne M. Klinker; Saint Petersburg VA Regional Office Director Kerrie L. Witty; Memorial Service Network (MSN) 2 Chief of Operations Jeffrey L. Teas; U.S. Rep. David Jolly, 13th Congressional District of Florida; and U.S. Rep. Jeff Miller, 1st Congressional District of Florida and Chairman, House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

The keynote speaker was Sgt. Maj. of the Army (Ret.) Jack L. Tilley. Tilley served as the 12th Sgt. Maj. of the Army from June 2000 to January 2004. As Sergeant Major of the Army, Tilley served as the Army Chief of Staff's personal advisor on all enlisted-related matters. Throughout his 37-year career, Tilley held every key leadership position including: tank commander, section leader, drill sergeant, platoon sergeant, senior instructor, operations sergeant and first sergeant.

Tilley's keynote address stirred the emotions of the crowd as he spoke about personal experiences and the importance of remembering all of the men and women who sacrificed their lives in the name of freedom.

Attendance during this year's event was the largest recorded in recent years.

(Pictured Left) 12th Sgt. Maj. of the U.S. Army (Ret.) Jack L. Tilley and JROTC cadets from Gibbs High School proceed to the Bay Pines National Cemetery monument to place the Wreath of Remembrance during the annual Memorial Day Ceremony on May 25. Tilley was the keynote speaker for the event. More than 3,500 Veterans, family member, friends, civic leaders and VA employees came together during the ceremony to honor and remember the men and women who sacrificed their lives for the nation.

(Pictured below) A family member visits the grave of a loved one during the annual Bay Pines Memorial Day Ceremony on May 25. Prior to the event, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other volunteers from the community placed more than 35,000 flags on the graves of the brave men and women who served the nation. Cemetery officials reported that the flags were placed in about 45 minutes.

Bay Pines enrolls 10,000 in Million Veteran Program

Story by Jason W. Dangel, Public Affairs Officer
Photos by Timothy Westmorland, Medical Media Services

Since 2011, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) has recruited Veteran volunteers for a national research program that aims to understand how genes affect health. Called the Million Veteran Program, the research project entails building the largest genetic databases in the country for future research on diseases like diabetes and cancer, and military-related illnesses.

U.S. Army Vietnam Veteran James Froman became the Bay Pines VAHCS's 10,000th enrollee on June 16 at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center – one of 52 national MVP enrollment sites across the country. Nearly 390,000 Veterans have participated nationally, representing more than one-third of VA's goal of 1 million enrollees.

Jeffery Hart (right), Lead Health Technician, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Service, Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, draws a blood sample from U.S. Army Vietnam Veteran James Froman at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center's outpatient laboratory on June 16. The sample was taken as part of Froman's enrollment into the Million Veteran Program (MVP) – a national research project that entails building one of the world's largest genetic databases for future research on diseases like diabetes and cancer, and military-related illnesses. Froman became the Bay Pines VAHCS's 10,000th enrollee.

"The enrollment process into MVP was virtually seamless," said Froman a native of Nokomis, Fla. "After I was educated about the program, I immediately agreed to participate. I support anything that can potentially benefit fellow Veterans," he said.

Froman completed his enrollment into MVP by completing simple paperwork and a quick blood draw during a routine lab appointment at the medical center's outpatient laboratory.

Like Froman, all MVP participants are asked to complete a brief, one-time study visit to provide a blood sample for genetic analysis. Participation also includes filling out simple health surveys, allowing on-going access to medical records, and agreeing to future contact. Veteran participation does not affect access to VA health care or benefits and stringent safeguards are in place to protect patient privacy and confidentiality.

"Hitting the 10,000 mark is a huge milestone for Bay Pines," said Dr. Rachel McArdle, MVP local site investigator (LSI) and Associate Director, Clinical Care, Rehabilitation, and Restoration Directorate, Hearing Center of Excellence. "All national enrollment sites have a goal of recruiting 20,000 participants, and we are half way there," she said.

McArdle said Bay Pines consistently ranks nationally as a top ten enrollment site for MVP. On average, 60-80 Veterans enroll into the program at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center each week.

"Our local research coordinators Gary Smith and Lori Sisler do a wonderful job recruiting Veterans for the program," McArdle said. She also credited Dr. Theodore Strickland, who serves as a Co-LSI and also the healthcare system's Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Chief, for allowing the integration of MVP operations into the outpatient laboratory at the medical center. This makes the enrollment process very easy for Veterans as it can be done during regularly scheduled lab appointments or on a walk-in basis.

VA expects to reach its goal of 1 million MVP participants nationally in the next three years. When the database is complete it will provide researchers with a rich resource of genetic, health, lifestyle, and military-exposure data collected from questionnaires, medical records, and genetic analyses. By combining this information into a single database, the program promises to advance knowledge about the complex links between genes and health.

To learn more about MVP, please visit www.research.va.gov/mvp, call Gary Smith at (727) 398-6661 extension 17222, or visit the outpatient laboratory at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center Monday through Friday anytime from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information about the Bay Pines VAHCS, please visit www.baypines.va.gov or connect with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/vabaypines.

(From left) Lori Sisler, Assistant Research Co-ordinator, Million Veteran Program (MVP) Bay Pines VAHCS; U.S. Army Vietnam Veteran James Froman; Dr. Rachel McArdle, local MVP site investigator and Associate Director, Clinical Care, Rehabilitation, and Restoration Directorate, Hearing Center of Excellence; and Gary Smith, Research Coordinator, MVP, Bay Pines VAHCS pose for a picture outside the outpatient laboratory at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center. Froman became the Bay Pines VAHCS's 10,000th enrollee into the MVP program at the medical center on June 16. Nationally, nearly 390,000 Veterans have participated in the research program.

You and Your Medicines

Your medicines are an important part of your health care. Here are some important things to know.

1. How to Reorder VA Prescriptions

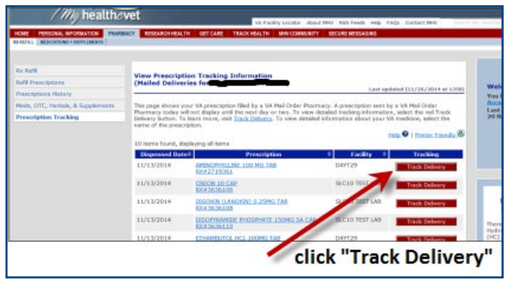
There are three primary ways to reorder prescription medications at the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS).

My HealtheVet (www.myhealth.va.gov) - Veterans can use My HealtheVet to reorder non-expired, VA-issued medications that are received in the mail. Use with the new *"Track Delivery"* option. Track Delivery lets you:

- View details about any prescriptions mailed from the VA Consolidated Mail Out Pharmacy within the last 45 days

- Know when the prescription package is scheduled to arrive and what is in the package

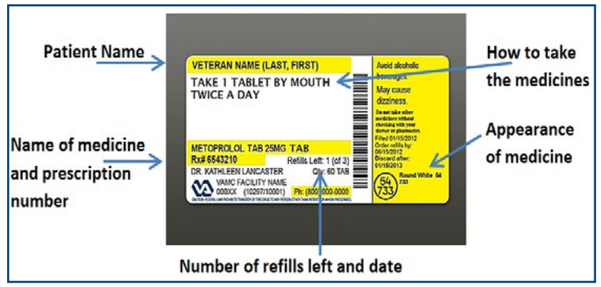
- View detailed tracking information about each prescription



Telephone Auto-Refill - Use the Bay Pines Pharmacy's Auto-Refill telephone system by calling (727) 398-6661 or toll free 1-888-820-0230 (press 1 and following the prompts).

By Mail or Drop Box - Use a refill request form and include the required information in your request - name, address, social security number (last four), medication name and prescription number.

2. Understanding the New VA Prescription Label



3. Make a Medication List and Keep it with You!

Veterans can use My HealtheVet to keep an up-to-date medication list to share with their providers.

4. Know Where to Find Information about Medications

Ask a VA Pharmacist
Pharmacists can be reached by telephone, in-person, or with My HealtheVet's secure messaging feature. Veterans can also call Bay Pines Pharmacy at (727) 398-6661 or toll free 1-888-820-0230 (press 1 and follow the prompts).

Ask the provider who ordered the medicine.

The Veterans Health Library is a great resource. Use it!

- www.veteranshealthlibraray.org

- Medications section has over 33,000 listings for prescriptions, over-the-counter products, and dietary supplements/fortified foods

- The Veterans Health Library can also be access from www.myhealth.va.gov

Information for this article was provided by the Bay Pines VAHCS's My HealtheVet team. For more information about My HealtheVet, please call (727) 398-6661 extension 15464.

Speeding up the check-in process and more with VET LINK SM

Have you noticed the new equipment in the hallways and clinics at our medical center and outpatient clinics and wondered what it is? Late last year, we installed patient check-in kiosks at the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center and our outpatient clinics located in Bradenton, Cape Coral, Palm Harbor, Port Charlotte, Sarasota and Sebring. Most recently, in June 2015, we added kiosks at our outpatient clinics in St. Petersburg and Naples.

These self-service, touch screen kiosks allow Veterans to update personal information, view upcoming appointments, review insurance information, check their account balances and request beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement (new feature) - all in addition to checking-in for each clinic appointment. The kiosks improve access to care and help to reduce the amount of time Veterans spend pre-registering prior to scheduled clinic appointments. Veterans who need to make changes to their demographic information that cannot be handled by the kiosk will be instructed where to go to get the information corrected.

To use the kiosk to check-in for an appointment, Veterans must login to the system using their Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC). If a Veteran does not have a VHIC and is enrolled for care, login can be accomplished by supplying a social security number. Once they have checked in, the kiosk will print out the Veterans' appointment time and location. VA staff can track the Veteran's check-in status in real time using a VetLink desktop application. The VetLink system is secure and designed to ensure patient privacy. Additionally, the new kiosks do not store patient information and they are equipped with a privacy screen and a proximity sensor to reset when a user walks away.

Please note that Veterans are not required to use the new kiosks and can still check-in for their clinic appointments at the appropriate desk. We do encourage all Veteran patients to give the new check-in kiosks a try during their next clinic appointment because we think they will find the kiosks are faster and more convenient.

If you have questions about VetLink or want more information about the Veterans Point of Service Program, send an e-mail to vps@va.gov or contact the Bay Pines VetLink site lead, Kyle Oakman, at (727) 398-6661 extension 10781.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT YOUR VETERANS *CHOICE CARD*

VISIT WWW.VA.GOV/OPA/CHOICEACT/ FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Before your Veterans *Choice Card* can be used, you must first meet the following test of eligibility for *Choice Card* benefits. If, after following Step 1 of the test you are not eligible for benefits, just hold on to your Card - you do not need to call us.

TO FIND OUT IF YOU'RE ELIGIBLE:

STEP 1

PERSONALLY ASSESS YOUR ELIGIBILITY FOR *CHOICE CARD* BENEFITS.

Before you call us, ask yourself these four simple questions:

1) Have you been told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days from your preferred date or the date medically determined by your physician? ***OR***

2) Is your current residence more than 40 miles drive distance from the closest VA health care facility? ***OR***

3) Do you need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home? ***OR***

4) Do you reside in a location that is 40 miles drive distance or less from a VA medical facility and face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to such a facility?

STEP 2

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be eligible to use your *Choice Card*. **VERIFY YOUR ELIGIBILITY by calling 866-606-8198.**

When you call us, please be prepared to provide us with any other health insurance coverage you have, such as employer or union-provided health plans, so we can assess coverage responsibilities.

IMPORTANT: If you do not receive approval prior to obtaining care, you may be responsible for some or all of the costs of the non-VA treatment you receive.

NOT ELIGIBLE RIGHT NOW? NO NEED TO DO ANYTHING! JUST KEEP YOUR CARD!

If you are not eligible to use the *Choice Card* right now, **keep your card in a safe and convenient location**. There is no need to call us.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

For questions about the Veterans Choice Program, please call (727) 398-6661 extension 15024 or 14024.

Mark your calendars...

for these upcoming events

Event: VA Summer of Service
Date/Time: All summer long!
Location: All Bay Pines VAHCS-operated facilities
Description: As part of VA's "Summer of Service" initiative, the Bay Pines VAHCS is seeking the help of individuals, organization and communities to grow the number of people serving Veterans across southwest Florida through volunteerism, employment and building new partnerships. To learn how you can help, please call (727) 398-6661 extension 15505.

Event: Veterans Town Hall Meeting
Date/Time: Tuesday, August 4, 2015 | 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Location: St. Petersburg VA Regional Office, St. Petersburg, Fla.
Description: VA officials will provide updates on VA operations and improvement initiatives regarding VA health care and benefits. Veterans and their families will have an opportunity to comment publicly about VA programs and services. This event is open to the public. For more information, please call (727) 398-6661 ext. 15031 or visit www.baypines.va.gov.

Event: Annual Veterans Day Ceremony
Date/Time: Wednesday, November 11, 2015 | 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Location: C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center, Bay Pines, Fla.
Description: The Bay Pines VAHCS will conduct its annual Veterans Day ceremony on November 11. The event will take place in the medical center courtyard located between buildings 2 and 37. Additional information will be communicated when available. For questions, please call (727) 398-6661 ext. 15031.

Note: All events listed on this page are subject change. For the most up-to-date information, please visit www.baypines.va.gov. While your there, sign-up for our free E-News service!

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Palm Harbor VA Community Clinic
35209 U.S. Highway 19 North
Palm Harbor, Florida 34684
(727) 734-5276

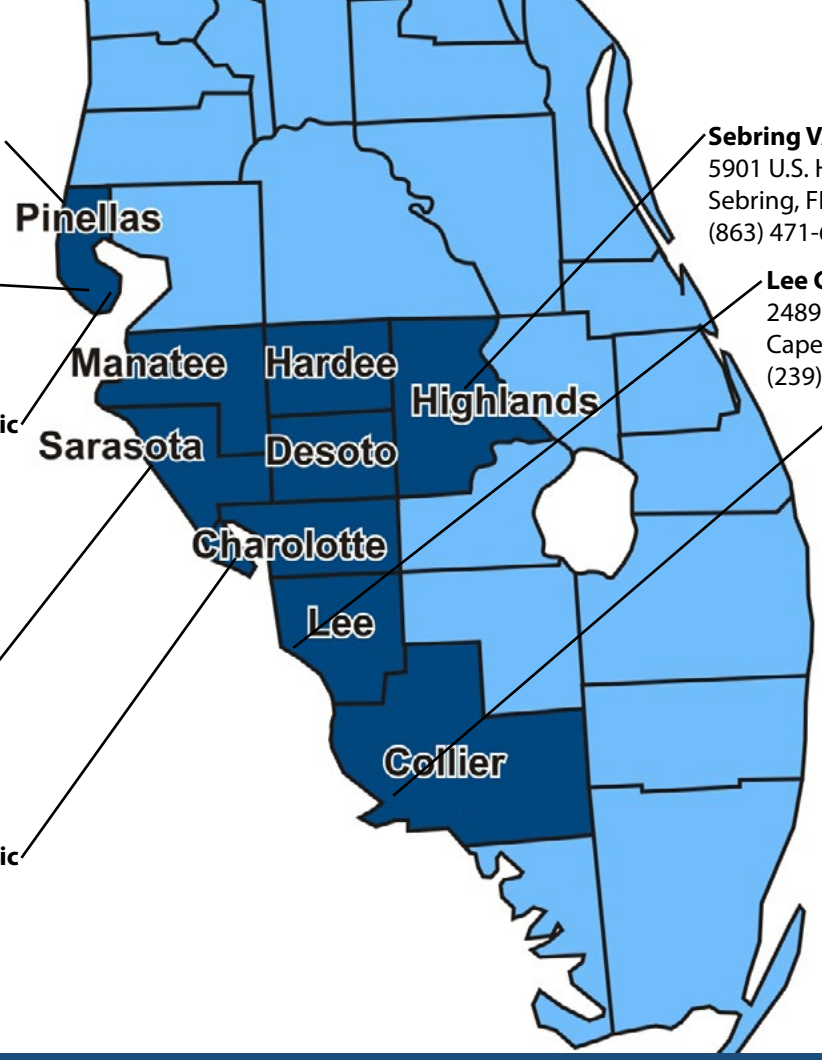
C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center
10000 Bay Pines Blvd.
Bay Pines, FL 33744
(727) 398-6661 or 1-888-820-0230

St. Petersburg VA Community Clinic
840 Dr. MLK Jr. St. N.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33705
(727) 502-1700

Bradenton VA Community Clinic
5520 State Road 64, Suite 101
Bradenton, Florida 34208
(941) 721-0649

Sarasota VA Community Clinic
5682 Bee Ridge Rd., Suite 100
Sarasota, Florida 34233
(941) 371-3349

Port Charlotte VA Community Clinic
4161 Tamiami Trail, Suite 401
Port Charlotte, Florida 33952
(941) 235-2710



Sebring VA Community Clinic
5901 U.S. Highway 27 S.
Sebring, FL 33870
(863) 471-6227

Lee County VA Healthcare Center
2489 Diplomat Parkway E.
Cape Coral, FL 33909
(239) 652-1800 or 1-888-513-0045

Naples VA Community Clinic
2685 Horseshoe Drive S.
Naples, Florida 34104
(239) 659-9188

VA HEALTH CARE Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

Visit us online at:
www.baypines.va.gov or scan the QR Code with a smart phone app.

Important VA Phone Numbers

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
(727) 398-6661 or toll-free 1-888-820-0230

Lee County Healthcare Center
(239) 652-1800 or toll-free (888) 513-0045

Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 press 1
The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline.

Scheduling an Appointment
(727) 398-6661 or toll-free 1-888-820-0230, press 2
Veterans who need to schedule, cancel or reschedule appointments can call Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Prescriptions
(727) 398-6661 or toll-free 1-888-820-0230, press 1
Veterans who need to request a prescription refill or check the status of refills can call Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Billing Questions
1-866-793-4591
Veterans who have questions about a bill received from the Bay Pines VAHCS can call the VA Revenue Center.

Patient Advocate
(727) 398-6661 or toll-free 1-888-820-0230 ext. 15024
Patient Advocates serve as liaisons between patients and the medical center, act on the patient's behalf, and help patients understand their rights and responsibilities.

My HealtheVet
www.myhealth.va.gov
Veterans can manage their health by logging onto My HealtheVet, which offers access to Veteran health benefits and services

VA Benefits (other than health care)
1-800-827-1000
Veterans who need information on VA benefits including VA compensation and pension, home loans, and education can call the VA Regional Office.