

# Vinson Vine

## *In This Issue*

**Native American  
Veterans**

**The K9 Program**

**Home-Based  
Primary Care**

**Good Service**

## *Plus*

**From the Director**

**Employee Spotlight**

**Around the VA**

**Behind the Scenes**

***Happy Holidays  
To Everyone!!!***

# FROM THE DIRECTOR



**H**appy holidays, CVVAMC! I'm pleased to report that we enjoyed our Thanksgiving 2012 without any adverse occurrences and I ask all of our staff to be just as careful as we contemplate the coming December holiday observances. One of the freedoms that we enjoy as Americans is the right to socialize and enjoy fellowship with friends and family during this time of year, a freedom that our Veterans have fought, and in some cases, died for. To honor their sacrifice, we must take care of their needs and show them our heartfelt appreciation, and we can't do that if we are hurt, so please enjoy the holidays but be careful.

This issue of the Vinson Vine is loaded with items of interest about VA and our medical center. You'll read about our 2012 Veterans Day program, an outstanding event that gets bigger each year. You'll learn about the grand opening of our newest community-based outpatient clinic (CBOC) in Milledgeville, an event attended by the only Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Veterans Service, Mr. Pete Wheeler. Mr. Wheeler has served in his post since 1949 and no one has contributed more to building an outstanding state

agency for the needs of Veterans. His inspiring speech in front of over 100 attendees made us all proud to be Americans and serve with the US Department of Veterans Affairs. You'll get information about our Christmas morning tradition hosted by Volunteer Service, "Santa's Little Helpers," an event that brings holiday cheer to our in-patient Veterans by providing them with gifts, cards, and smiling, caring faces on what might otherwise be a lonely day for them. The event is open to all, takes less than an hour, and the appreciation of America's heroes makes it one of the most rewarding experiences a CVVAMC team member can experience. I encourage all available staff to come out and participate. Also, in this Vine you'll see that we are holding an 8A dedication now that that beautiful space is up and running and you'll find out details about this year's "Employee Appreciation Dinner" that will be in the auditorium immediately after the dedication. I want to see our folks smiling faces at both events so we can celebrate 2012 successes and energize ourselves for even better work in 2013!

Finally, all staff are reminded that the Vinson Vine is your publication, a vehicle for learning what you want to know about in VA and the CVVAMC, so if you have ideas about features, stories, or other items for the new format, please contact Editor-in-Chief Frank G. Jordan, Jr. at [Frank.Jordan.va.gov](mailto:Frank.Jordan.va.gov) or directly at 478-274-5440, or Copy Editor Greg Swars at [Gregory.Swars@va.gov](mailto:Gregory.Swars@va.gov) or 2442. Again, thank you all sincerely for your excellent work in 2012 and let's all have a safe, enjoyable holiday!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John S. Goldman".

John S. Goldman  
Director

# THIS ISSUE

## Feature Articles

- Native American Veterans** 4  
*A proud history of service*
- K9 Program** 8  
*Heroes Raising Heroes*
- Around the Medical Center** 12  
*A photo collage of October events*
- Home-Based Primary Care** 16  
*Bringing healthcare to our veterans*
- Good Service** 20  
*A matter of do's and don'ts*

## Magazine Staff

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## Departments

- Education/Training** 6
- IT Corner/On Patrol** 7
- Employee Spotlight/  
Behind the Scenes** 10
- Welcome to Our Family** 11
- Santa's Little Helpers** 14
- Ethics corner** 15
- A Word From QM** 18
- Toys for Tots** 19



Carl Vinson VA Medical Center

**Mission**

To improve the health status of Veterans...

**Vision**

To be the provider of choice for Veterans...

# NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS

DARLENE RICHARDSON, VA HISTORIAN



Prior to World War I, Native Americans who served in the U.S. Regular or volunteer military forces, state regiments, or militia since the country's founding did not receive veterans' benefits because they were not considered legal citizens according to English, and later, American law. They often served as guides or scouts for the Army and during the Civil War there were several Indian regiments on both sides. Some Native Americans successfully petitioned Congress and obtained small pensions or reimbursements for property losses, but they were did not have access to the same benefits given to white military veterans.

That changed with World War I when thousands of Native Americans tried to enlist for the war

effort. They were required to register for the military draft of 1917, but could not be formally drafted into the military, or receive benefits later, because they were not legally citizens, despite having been born in the U.S. Instead, they volunteered and proved to be invaluable assets for the American forces. The first Native American "code talkers" were used during World War I to confound the Germans and proved so successful that their use was expanded in World War II.

## INDIAN HERO DIES FROM WAR WOUNDS

### *Joe Younghawk, Taken Prisoner, Killed Three Captors and Marched Two to Camp.*

MANDAN, N. D., June 16.—Joe Younghawk, son of Younghawk, one of the most famous of the old Indian scouts of General George Custer, lost a four-year battle for life after he had been wounded and gassed in France. He died at Bismarck, N. D., yesterday.

The wounds which contributed to Younghawk's death were suffered on the Soissons front, when he was surrounded by five Germans and captured while on patrol duty. Awaiting a favorable moment, Younghawk turned on his captors, slew three with his hands and captured the other two, and, although he himself was shot through both legs in the fight, marched them into camp.

Younghawk refused to discuss the fight with the Germans after his return other than to say that he broke their backs over his knee.

Tribal services will be held when Younghawk is buried on Monday at the Fort Berthold Indian reservation beside the graves of 106 other Indians who gave their lives in defense of the American flag.

*The New York Times*

Published: June 17, 1923

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Because of their loyalty, bravery, and exemplary service, Congress



#### Indian Girl Enlists in Waac

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oct. 3 (AP)—Miss Roberta Clark, 22, granddaughter of the Comanche Indian chief Quannah Parker, has enlisted in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. Chief Parker, who died in 1911, was the son of a Comanche chief and Cynthia Ann Parker, a white woman who, as a child, was kidnapped and reared by the Comanches. Miss Clark, whose Indian name is Weckeahi, will be sent to Fort Des Moines.

passed a law on November 6, 1919 that offered citizenship to all Native American veterans who served during World War I and were honorably discharged. Citizenship gave Native American veterans access to full Federal veterans benefits for the first time in history. Five years later, in 1924, Congress extended citizenship to all Native Americans. was historically significant to many Americans, and ten years later the observation of Veterans Day returned to its original date.

#### **The New York Times**

Published: October 4, 1942  
Copyright © The New York Times

*American Indians have participated with distinction in United States military actions for more than 200 years. Their courage, determination, and fighting spirit were recognized by American military leaders as early as the 18th century.*



## EDUCATION & TRAINING



### ***Upcoming Training Dates***

**Dec 13 - CPR - Police Training Room**

**Time: 1st Session 0800 - 1200, 2nd Session 1230 - 1630**

**Dec 14 - Mentor CORE Training - Career Development Center**

**Time: 0830 - 1630**

**Dec 19 - TMS for Supervisors - 11A Solarium Computer Lab**

**Time: 0900 - 1100**

**Dec 20 - ACLS - Auditorium**

**Time: 0830 - 1600**





## IT CORNER

Windows 7 is rolling out! Be prepared by taking these recommended TMS courses.

We recommend you take these three TMS courses to prepare for the Windows 7 rollout. These classes have been assigned to you in TMS and should show at the bottom of your “To Do” List under No Due Date.

Course 1: 1324002 - Getting Started with Windows 7

Course 2: 1324004 - Customizing Windows 7

Course 3: 1328257 - Office 2010 New Core Features



## ON PATROL

During this holiday season everyone PLEASE be extra vigilant and alert of your surroundings. It is unfortunate that there are those out there that use the holiday season as an opportunity to further their own gains by stealing from those that work hard for what they have. Here are some tips for your personal safety:

1. If possible try to shop with a friend or friends as there is safety in numbers.
2. Try to put your bought items in the trunk if you go to numerous places.
3. Don't try to do it all in one day.
4. Try to do it during daylight hours and if you know it's going to be dark, park under a light.
5. As you walk to your vehicle know who is around you.

6. Try to use a shopping cart so your hands are free and not tangled up in plastic bags if you have to fight.

7. Have 911 in your speed dial on your cell-phone.

8. If something does happen, FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE!!! Hit, kick scratch, maim, use anything for a weapon, keys, that heavy purse, that tire iron in the trunk. Do every thing possible to inflict as much damage as you can. Try to mark that persons face so you give an accurate description when the police finally show up because they will not be there and your assailant knows this or he/she would not have attacked. Also look for something that stands out, scar on the face, tattoo that can be easily identified.

Finally, please be safe and I hope none of you have an incident like this.



# DETECTION K9 DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

GREG SWARS



**T**he CVVAMC Detection K9 Development Program is in its third year. The program to date has trained 9 rotations of dogs, 35 in total. Most importantly, 50 of our veterans in the domiciliary program have been through this program with a 97% success rate. The veterans who have been involved with the program have enjoyed the company of these fine animals. One veteran said “All my life I have only cared for creatures on two legs. Learning to love these puppies has given me a new perspective on life. The unconditional love from these animals, without judgment

of my shortcomings and past mistakes, has given me great joy. I never would have dreamed that an animal would help me succeed and give me a reason to look forward to another day.” All of these veterans are proud to continue to serve their country by training the dogs to protect soldiers around the world and law enforcement agencies around the country. Our dogs have moved on to various locations around the world, Afghanistan, Iraq, embassies, law enforcement agencies and we even have one in the White House, Brett, one of the Black labs that came through.

The mission of the program is to *“make a positive difference in the lives of homeless Veterans, primarily through a professionally-supported, one-to-one relationship with a dog, and to assist them in achieving their highest potential as they grow to become confident, competent, responsible, and caring citizens, by providing committed leadership, standards of excellence, and an honorable goal of continuing to*



*provide service to their country. The Detector Canine Program promotes community interaction, service to others, and relationship development.”* Program Coordinator Les Black has led this program since its start and is very pleased with the success.

The program also gets involved with the community by showcasing the dogs at schools throughout our area. This helps our veteran’s social interaction skills as they speak to children of all ages about the program. The dogs are usually around 16 weeks old when we get them from Auburn Univer-

sity and our veterans train them on basic obedience commands for approximately 6 months. They are then shipped off to their next phase of training.

The new batch is in. A set of four beautiful Black Labs. They are 16 weeks old. Waylon, Webster, Wren and Willow are their names. As you would expect puppies to be, they are very energetic and vibrant. The handlers and trainers are veterans; Fred Carter, Amy Bailey, Eric Hilliard, Eddie Watts and Jess Dinkins.



Greg Swars

**EMPLOYEE  
SPOTLIGHT**  
BY GREG SWARS



## ***Geraldine Walker***

Geraldine has been with the CVVAMC for 13 years. She has been with Logistics in the Process Store for the last 10 years. She is also part of one of our Husband and Wife Teams that work here. She is married to Preston Walker from our AWESOME Paint Shop. They just recently celebrated their 10th Anniversary. When asked what brings her to work everyday she said “I love dealing with people and I love my job”

**BEHIND THE  
SCENES**  
BY GREG SWARS



## ***Crystal Williams***

Crystal has been with the CVVAMC for 5 years. She spent her first 3 years in VCS. She has spent the last 2 years as the Program Support Assistant for our outstanding EMS Service. Lee Baggett (EMS Supervisor) said that Crystal has been a valuable asset to the department. When asked what she likes most about working here she replied “I enjoy working with such a diverse group of people.”

# WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

BY GREG SWARS



Front row left to right: **John W. Davis**, Registered Respiratory Therapist, Nursing Service; **Colandra L. Stafford**, Pharmacist, Pharmacy Service; **Michelle S. Patterson**, Physician, Albany CBOC; **Pete-Gaye Nation**, Physician, G&EC (Physical & Rehab Med); **Gelester N. Jenkins**, Recreation Therapy Assistant



Back row Left to right: **Walter David**, Housekeeping Aid, EMS; **Angela L. Lofy**, RN-Off-Tour Supervisor, Nursing Service; **Megan L. Dudek**, Social Worker, Social Work Service; **Michael Catoe**, Readjustment Counseling Therapist; Macon Vet Center; Front row: **Nkechi T. Ekwueme**, RN-Critical Care Coordinator, HAS; **April Howard**, Dietitian (Contract) Macon CBOC; **Kristina Woods**, Pharmacist, Pharmacy/S&A Service

# AROUND THE MEDICAL CENTER

GREG SWARS





## SANTA'S LITTLE HELPERS



**W**ant to lend Santa Claus a hand? Then join us December 25th, 2012, for our annual Santa's Little VA Helpers, a program that honors our Veterans while making them feel cared for on one of the most special days of the year. We need the assistance of as many of our CVVAMC folks and their families, volunteers, and anyone else who wants to experience some real holiday cheer, so we can make sure that our in-patient Veterans' Christmas morning is as happy as it can be. If you can make it, join us Christmas morning from 9:00-10:00 am. We'll meet on 6A at 9:30 am for coffee, hot chocolate, and cookies, then we'll divvy up Santa's gifts and cards and distribute them to our Veterans. Wear your most festive holiday attire and join us for what is always an inspiring event! For questions, please contact Ms. Susan Hayward of Volunteer Service at 2439. Thank you in advance for your Christmas spirit and helping to ensure that our Veterans have a merry holiday!





## ETHICS CORNER

### Ethics Reminders for Holiday Parties

Employees are reminded to keep the following ethics rules in mind during the holiday season. Please note, however, that these rules also apply throughout the year. The Office of General Counsel (023) and the OGC Ethics Specialty Team can provide additional guidance on these issues and other ethics matters please contact us at [GovernmentEthics@va.gov](mailto:GovernmentEthics@va.gov) with any questions.

### Office Parties

Managers who are considering holding or permitting office holiday parties within their units should keep the following guidelines in mind. Participation must be voluntary. Employees should not feel coerced to participate in office holiday parties. This includes decorating the office as well as party preparation, financing, and cleanup. Supervisors should not solicit contributions. Ethics regulations permit employees to pool funds for the purchase of office party supplies and refreshments. However, employees may not be coerced to contribute. In order to prevent the appearance of coercion, it is recommended that supervisors permit a lower-ranking employee to solicit funds, rather than personally soliciting. In addition, although a suggested contribution amount may be set, mandatory contributions by pay grade (e.g., \$5 for GS-12 and under but \$10 for GS-13 and up) are not permissible. Employee gift exchanges should involve gifts of \$10 or less. The Standards of Ethical Conduct generally prohibit an employee from giving a gift to a supervisor. They generally prohibit supervisors from accepting gifts from subordinates. There is an exception to these rules for gifts of \$10 or less, given on an occasion when gifts are traditionally given, such as a holiday party.

### Other Holiday Parties

Generally, employees may host holiday parties and attend parties of their choosing. However, employees should keep in mind that, in general, they may not accept a gift from a prohibited source or a gift given because of their

official position. A prohibited source is any person or organization that (1) seeks official action from VA (e.g., Veterans), (2) does or seeks to do business with VA (e.g., contractors and bidders), (3) conducts activities regulated by VA (e.g., financial institutions offering VA home loans), or (4) has interests that may be affected by the employee's VA duties. A prohibited source also includes any membership organization if a majority of its members are prohibited sources (e.g., Veterans Service Organizations).

If an employee is invited to a holiday party by a prohibited source or because of his or her official position, a number of exceptions to this prohibition may apply.

Gifts of \$20 or less – Employees may accept holiday gifts from any source that is not solicited/requested, if the value of the gift is \$20 or less and the total value of gifts accepted from that source during the calendar year is under \$50. Note, however, that accepting an invitation to a \$40 dinner and eating only half the meal will not satisfy the requirements for this exception. The value of the gift offered must be under \$20. Gifts based on spouse's employment – Employees may accept free attendance, meals, or entertainment at a spouse's office holiday party, even if the spouse's employer is a prohibited source. Gifts based on a personal relationship – Employees may accept holiday gifts based on a personal relationship (and, therefore, not based on their official position) even if the giver of the gift is a prohibited source. Note that the personal relationship should be one that exists independent of the employee's official position. Widely-Attended Gatherings – Where an Agency Designee determines that it is in VA's interest for an employee to attend an event, the employee may attend even if he or she has been invited based on his or her official position or the cost of attendance will be paid by a prohibited source. Even though most PAS officials are Agency Designees, it is important to note that Agency Designees are prohibited from approving their own attendance at an event. The Chief of Staff generally serves as the Agency Designee for most PAS officials.

# HOME-BASED PRIMARY CARE

GREG SWARS



Since the program's beginning in 2006, Wanda Wilcher, RN-BSN, HBPC Program Coordinator/Nurse manager has had her hands full.

The Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC) Program for the CVVAMC has been a success story. To date the program has screened 646 clients with 359 of those being served by the HBPC Program.

## The Mission

Is to provide comprehensive, interdisciplinary, primary care in the HOMES of the Veterans with complex medical, social and behavioral conditions for whom routine clinic based care is not effective. Continuous provision of services involves ongoing monitoring, routine comprehensive assessment, coordination of care, prevention or early detection of worsening conditions and timely

interventions delivered throughout the protracted course of chronic disease. This is in contrast to episodic care that is provided only at intervals of disease presentation or exacerbation.

## Background

Care of the elderly in their home setting is not a new concept. In the United States, home health service had its beginnings in the early 1790s, when visiting nurse associations and other charitable organizations began providing nursing care to the sick poor, primarily for the care of mothers and children, out of the Boston Dispensary. The VA modeled the HBPC program after the prototype for a hospitalbased home care program developed by Dr. E. M. Bluestone at the Montefiore Hospital in New York City in 1947, although without homemaker services. The HBPC program, originally titled Hospital-Based Home Care, was established in 1970 as a demonstration project at 6 teaching VA hospitals under the VA regulation, which authorized outpatient follow-up services. In fiscal year 1972 (October 1 to September 30), funding was secured for the 6 demonstration hospitals. Since that time, HBPC has grown to a total of 116 programs nationwide caring daily for an average of more than 2,500 veterans per year.

The major influence upon the provision of home health services in the community was the enactment of the Health Insurance for the Aged and Disabled Act, Medicare, for most Americans older than 65 years or disabled. To be eligible for home health coverage under Medicare, the patient must essentially be confined to his or her residence, be under a physician's care, and need intermittent skilled



nursing care and physical, occupational, or speech therapy. The care must be prescribed by a physician, and the services provided must be in accordance with the physician's treatment plan.

The HBPC program was conceptualized as having the ability to care for a specific target population that can be cared for in the home. The program philosophy was planned and developed to provide in-home long-term care services for the chronically ill patient that are not available under federal or state programs such as Medicare or Medicaid. The HBPC program was specifically planned to be a geriatric program in which the skills and knowledge of a geriatrician would set the tenor for the medical care delivered. The program was not designed to be an alternative to institutional care, but rather to provide quality geriatric care to patients unable to return to the outpatient clinic. The program was not designed for all patients, but only for those with selected disease processes that can be comfortably provided care at home (i.e., cardiac patients, diabetics, arthritics, terminal patients, and those with chronic pulmonary diseases).

We are fortunate enough to have our main program here at the hospi-

tal where we reach out to veterans in need in a 50 mile radius. With funding from the Office of Rural Health, we were able to open a satellite site in the Milledgeville CBOC thus enabling us to reach out to more veterans within a 50 mile radius of Milledgeville.

Ms. Wilcher is very proud of the team she has put together.





## A WORD FROM QM

### **Pain**

▣ Inpatients: screening should occur upon admission and at least in every shift. A follow up evaluation of medication administration or other interventions should be made 30 minutes after IV medications are administered, and about 60 minutes after medications by any other route are administered. Effectiveness of PRN medications will be documented within 4 hours of administration.

▣ Outpatient: screening should occur at each visit regardless of the original reason for the visit or as clinically indicated for the setting and the individual patient. In outpatient mental health settings, less frequent (at the initiation of treatment or program), but regular screenings should be performed.

### **History and Physical**

▣ Acute Care: completed within 24 hours of admission (authenticated by the attending physician when written by medical students, PAs, NPs, and 1st and 2nd year residents) and within 30 days prior to surgery or procedure. If H&P has been performed within 30 days prior to admission, an update to include any changes in patient's condition is required.

▣ CLC: completed within 72 hours of admission

### **H&P shall include:**

- 
- ▣ Identification data
- ▣ Chief complaints
- ▣ Personal and family history
- ▣ History of present illness
- ▣ Past history (including medications and allergies)
- ▣ Physical examination
- ▣ Psychological history
- ▣ Military history
- ▣ Diagnostic tests
- ▣ Special reports such as consultations
- ▣ Clinical laboratory
- ▣ X-ray and other provisional diagnosis
- ▣ Medical and/or surgical treatment
- ▣ Operative report
- ▣ Pathological findings
- 

### **Do Not Use Abbreviations**

"U", "IU", "Q.D", "Q.O.D", "MS", "MSO4", "MgSO4", "SS", DPT", "Ug"

### **Medication Reconciliation**

#### **Admission:**

(1) Interview the patient and confirm the medication regimen the patient is following. (Nurse or other qualified staff member may complete this step)

(2) Update patient's new drug allergies/adverse drug reactions and non-VA meds in CPRS

(3) Order inpatient medications based on patient's current needs.

(4) Document in the progress note that medication reconciliation was performed.

Transfer: Review list of home medications prior to writing medication orders to ensure reconciliation of all medications; reconciled list must be communicated to the next provider of service whenever patients move from one setting, service, provider, or level of care within or outside the Carl Vinson VAMC.

#### **Discharge:**

(1) Instruct/remind the patient of his/her responsibility to wait for discharge medications, pharmacist counseling and discharge instructions prior to leaving the facility

(2) Review all inpatient medications and supplies

(3) Discontinue the obsolete medication(s) from the Outpatient Medication Profile

(4) Document the treatment plan in the discharge progress note in CPRS including documentation of the current medication list including all medication including the previous outpatient, VA and non-VA medications that will continue after discharge

(5) Order discharge medication

(6) Communicate the new medication regimen to the patient. A discharge instruction sheet will be provided to the patient

Outpatient Visit: provider will review current medication list with patient. Ask if patient taking any medications which are not on the list; add any medications to the list. Provide patient the updated list and document changes in CPRS



## TOYS FOR TOTS

### Toys for Tots—Giving the Gift of Love

Children look forward to Christmas like no other holiday, imagining all the wonderful toys that they will receive and time spent with their friends and family. Memories generated from each Christmas will live in their memories for life, so, what if those memories are not pleasant? In the U.S., 15% of children live in poverty, meaning that their Christmases are often disappointing experiences when they could be a brief respite from the want to which they are accustomed. Few things are sadder than a child who can expect little during the holidays. So how can you help? Follow VA staffer Jan Reynolds' example.

Passing the "Toys for Tots" barrel in front of the CVVAMC Retail Store, Jan noticed that it was empty. As she returned to her office, she couldn't get the idea of that empty barrel and what it meant out of her mind. Jan imagined all the children who would not get to enjoy their Christmas, and she just couldn't shake it, so, on her lunch break, she did what she had to do to feel that she had done the right thing—she went shopping. Filling up a buggy full of toys, Jan brought them back to the CVVAMC and loaded that barrel up! Now, Jan can enjoy her own holidays this year certain of one thing—there will be a lot fewer children this year who wake up to a sad Christmas because of her generosity and concern for those less fortunate than herself. After all, what is the worth of having a good job if you don't take the time to help others?

Would you like to experience the good feeling that Jan now enjoys? It's easy to do! Just buy a new toy and drop it in the "Toys for Tots" barrel located in front of the CVVAMC VCS Retail Store in the main hallway of the medical center. The program is sponsored by the CVVAMC EEO & Diversity Committee to ensure that local children have a Merry Christmas despite their poverty, and to demonstrate that the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center is staffed by caring people who are invested in their community and are always ready to show the generosity that proves it. Christmas comes once a year only, so take a few minutes and a few dollars to make a local child's Christmas one that will live in memory for a lifetime, and thank you Jan for setting the tone for our entire team.



## EDITOR'S NOTE

*From the News Staff, have a wonderful and safe Holiday Season!!!! If you would you like to see a particular feature or topic covered in The Vinson Vine? Just submit requests for content to the editor at [Frank.Jordan@va.gov](mailto:Frank.Jordan@va.gov) or [Gregory.Swars@va.gov](mailto:Gregory.Swars@va.gov).*

# GOOD SERVICE: A MATTER OF DO'S AND DON'TS

FRANK G. JORDAN, JR.



**P**roviding good service requires a number of mechanics in order to be effective. This is not “rocket science,” rather a set of guidelines and principles of how most consumers wish to be treated. Although most are simple commonsense suggestions, we have discovered a number of employees either do not adhere to these service values or were never taught them. Your number one responsibility is to create long term loyalty - and you do that by consistently satisfying the customer each and every time. People like to do business where they feel respected, appreciated and feel they are getting value for their money. Here is a suggested list of ten “Service Do’s” and “Service Don’ts.” We hope these will make a significant contribution to your employees/staff as well as your customers.

## **SERVICE DO’S**

Do make an excellent first impression. It sets the tone for how others see you and the company. Essential elements include greeting every person when they first come in, a sincere smile, eye contact, asking to assist them, making them feel as a welcome and valued person, not a “number.”

Do be friendly and personable. If you could have one quality that you demonstrate more than any other, I would suggest being friendly. Being a friendly person

typically presupposes you are competent, caring, confident, interested in others and possess an interesting personality and integrity. The rule of thumb is: greet anyone you come in contact with within ten feet of you.

Do take pride in what you wear and dress professionally for what you do. People will typically judge you in two areas - appearance and how you make them feel.

Wear clean, pressed clothes, appropriate make up and hygiene. How they “feel” is critical - use their name, acknowledge them immediately, keep your word, listen to them and do your best to make them feel important and appreciated.

Do exceed their expectations. Often you have a good idea of what customers need before they ever ask. In life as well as in service, do more than is expected of you and anticipate needs to best serve them. Most people in life do only what is expected of them and very little else . . . don’t let that be you.

Do put others first. One of the greatest attributes of a successful person is their ability to make others feel significant. You will go far when you learn to place others before your own self interests and make them feel they are the most important person.

Do choose your attitude. More important than your education, your seniority, your title or the money you make is your attitude as it shapes and determines the outcome of others. Attitude is the #1 determinant of how effective and successful you will be.

Do the little things and go the “extra mile” when possible. People remember the personal touch you give and little things you do more than the big things. Practice random acts of kindness and you will make an indelible impression on others.

Do have a “YES” mentality. Begin your thinking with ways to make things work instead of why things can’t work. Customers hate “No,” “You can’t,” “I don’t know” or “We don’t . . .”. Focus on becoming solution-oriented, not challenge-oriented.

Do connect with the customer. This creates trust by demonstrating respect for others. We call it “relational service.” You must establish some level of rapport with them through small talk, eye contact, smiling, genuinely listening to them, keeping your word, responding to their needs and finding ways to affirm them.

Do understand that your co-workers are customers too. How we treat each other is how we empower each other to treat the customer. According to the Gallup organization, there is a direct correlation between employee and customer satisfaction. Find ways to encourage, support and respect your coworkers and they’ll return the favor.

# Freedom Because of Veterans

# SERVICE



# Because We Care

On the other side of the coin, there are some things that are definite "turn-offs" for the customer. Not that employees are overtly doing these things, but they may not be aware of the significance little negatives have in the overall impression customers may have of the company and you.

## SERVICE DON'TS

Don't ever ignore a customer. It is the biggest insult you can give! When someone calls you a name or insults your intelligence, you have put them down as a person, yet, ignore that person and you've treated them as non-person. Here are three simple solutions: #1 Give direct eye contact and verbally acknowledge them, #2 Smile, as it helps break down barriers and #3 Speak directly to them - it demonstrates interest and establishes rapport.

Don't argue with the customer. Even if you are 100% correct, you lose. You have just insulted and embarrassed them. Not only will you lose them, you will most certainly lose 30 of their friends and family, and a number of their friend's friends. Zig Ziglar says it this way, "Would you rather feed your ego or feed your family?"

Don't chew gum in the presence of a customer. It gives the appearance you are disinterested and unprofessional. Instead, stick a breath mint in your mouth. Never smoke around a customer - even when you are on break - as it is a big turn-off.

Don't make excuses or use negative phrases such as "I don't know," "It's not my job," "I can't help you," or "You have to wait." Find out what they need and quickly get right back to them with an answer or solution. Never tell other people about your challenges. . . 90% of them don't care and the other 10% are actually glad you have them.

Don't misuse the telephone or it will be your adversary. Attitude and mood are reflected via your tone of voice. "Put a 'smile' in your voice" really works. Using a "live" person creates a better image than a recorded message or voice mail. If your goal is integrity, answer every call within 24 hours or stop using the phrase, "I'll get right back with you." Lastly, create a positive, friendly greeting!

Don't be condescending or arrogant. Treat people on the same level

or as your equal. Sarcasm, another form of condescension, is not so much in the words, but rather in your tone of voice. A little tactfulness will do wonders for any relationship you desire to build. Being curt and rude only serves to diminish other people's perception of you.

Don't criticize, condemn or complain. Anyone can find fault with your company or other people you work with. It takes a person who is far better, who sincerely desires to make a difference and is willing to look past the faults to the potential that lies within every person to discover the good in the company and their coworkers. Turn all complaints into specific requests.

Don't keep people waiting. It demonstrates a complete lack of respect on your part for other's time. It's amazing that it is fine for you to wait in certain offices until 10:30 for your 9:00 am appointment, while others reschedule if you are 10 minutes late. When placing someone on hold, you must respect their time and keep them updated frequently. The key principle is respect for them, their time and long-term loyalty.

Don't be plastic or robotic by quoting company policies or rules. Many policies can and have been modified for various situations. The key word is be "flexible" when possible yet, if you're unable, explain why the policy is in place. Our purpose is to help them feel like a valued part of the team and not as an outsider.

Don't be average. Average never inspired anyone. The common belief is that people are above average, yet most aren't. Ask yourself the following question: What do I do that separates and differentiates me from average? If you can't give several specifics, the answer is . . . you're probably average. My proposal to you is this: start doing the little things and give the personal touch that will separate you from those who are average.

Providing good service is not difficult, but it requires definite buy-in and a change in the mindset of each employee. Our hope is that employees will make these simple "Do's and Don'ts" a part of their service to their customers and especially apply these to their relationships with family and friends. Understand that service is giving. The better we are at giving to others, the better we are at serving each other.



*“Taking care of our veterans is my priority.”*

**Cheryl King**  
***Patient Services Assistant***