New Orleans Veterans Medical Center Rolls Out Red Carpet for Women Veterans

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The Veterans Health Administration is undergoing one of the largest transformations in its history, and I’m proud to say that our efforts are pivotal to this transformation. Because we are focused on providing Veterans with timely access to care, especially Veterans with needs for care right away, same-day services are available in primary care and mental health care. We may address those health care needs by providing a face-to-face visit, returning a phone call, arranging a telehealth or video care visit, or scheduling a future appointment. Veterans are able to get access to same-day primary care assistance during regular business hours, and next-day services if they communicate with us after business hours. Additionally, if a Veteran is in crisis or has a need for urgent mental health care, he or she will receive immediate attention from a VA health care professional. Any Veteran new to Mental Health with a non-urgent need will receive an initial screening evaluation by the next calendar day. Veterans can also use systems like MyHealthVet to contact their providers if they need help or have a question about their health care needs. Telehealth programs also allow Veterans to work with specialists, oftentimes without the need to travel farther than their local clinic.

For many Veterans, deciding when, where and how to receive health care is often one of the most complex and challenging decisions about the entire health care process. Health care performance, access or quality of care data can be complicated. Therefore, VA launched a new website with an access and quality tool to help Veterans make more informed choices. This tool allows Veterans access to the most transparent and easy to understand wait time and quality of care measures across the health care industry. I encourage you to check it out at www.accestocare.va.gov.

At Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System, access to care for our Veterans remains a priority. In fiscal year 2016 we conducted over 18,600 more appointments than in 2015. So far this fiscal year, we’ve seen a 5.6 percent increase over this time last year. To improve access for patients, VA created a Veterans Appointment Request app that allows Veterans to make appointments from their mobile devices. Veterans can also continue to use My HealthVet, which allows Veterans to refill their VA prescriptions, create a personal health journal, view VA appointments and communicate electronically and securely with their VA providers for non-urgent health care questions. Visit www.myhealth.va.gov for more information.

We are nearing the next key milestones for clinical operations at the new Veterans medical center. Here’s what to look forward to.

- July, first inpatient mental health admission
- August, first medicine/surgery admission, emergency department visit and outpatient surgery
- September, first community living center admission.

We are excited about the future of VA and our health care system. Should you have any questions, please contact me directly by email at Fernando.Rivera@va.gov, on my office phone at (504) 507-7687 or my cell phone at (202) 834-7893. 
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SLVHCS selected for 2017 women Veterans art exhibit

By Jeff Nowakowski

The Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System was one of only 10 VA medical facilities in the country that featured an art exhibit created by women Veterans during Women’s History Month in March this year.

“It is a great time for female Veterans at SLVHCS!” said Interim Women Veteran Program Manager and Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program Manager Gweneh Vilo.

“We are working to provide whole health care in an environment that empowers and honors female Veterans. Our participation in the art exhibit serves as an affirmation to the culture of awareness for female Veterans that is so deserving for them.”

VA’s Center for Women Veterans partnered on this project with Veteran Artist Program, a nonprofit dedicated to fostering and promoting Veteran artists. The call for submissions resulted in nearly 400 pieces of art being sent in from more than 100 women Veterans around the country. The Veteran Artist Program selected 10 works to be featured on storyboards, each of which included an image of the work of art, photos of the women in and out of uniform, and a brief biography. An additional two local female Veteran artists were selected to also be a part of the exhibit. New Orleans artists Heather Englehart and Mickey Strain were part of the display.

Strain, who specializes in 3-dimensional black & white acrylic painting, said she got started after purchasing a painting in Venice, Italy, and thinking she can do that.

“This exhibit is a wonderful idea, and the diversity of artwork is
tremendous,” said Strain. “Now I do fleur de lis images or a lamppost with a saxophone or trumpet player. I only do fun art. If it’s not fun, you’re not living.”

Two artists featured as part of the national program travelled to SLVHCS to assist with the kick-off event. “This is a very special exhibit for women artists because it recognizes that our work is special and important,” said national artist Debra Russell, who specializes in photography and currently resides in Pensacola, Fla. “Because, even though we served, women Veterans are often neglected.”

The Women Veteran Artist Program’s exhibit, which started a few years ago with a display in the Pentagon, was located on the first floor concourse next to the staff parking garage. “Selecting these 10 initial artists was a difficult task for the reviewing committee, so much so, that we had to create a list of 10 honorable mentions,” said Veteran Artist Program Acting Executive Director Jeremy Paris. “Our criteria was to look for diversity in the works, the service branch, the art medium, and the stories of each female Veteran.”

Many SLVHCS employees said this art initiative will help women feel more welcome by seeing their experiences as Veterans visibly reflected in images by and of other women when they enter a VA facility. “You can see there is a lot of hidden talent in our female Veterans,” said Nurse Tonya Eaglin. There are a lot of different, deep messages in this art work. This speaks to us.”
Putting your best fork forward

March is national nutrition month

By Jeff Nowakowski

It’s national nutrition month and this year’s theme is “putting your best fork forward.”

The theme of using your best fork is meant to show that you have all the tools you need to be healthy, but the biggest factor is choosing to eat healthy.

Think of the three prongs of a fork as nutrition pathways – one bad, one better, and one best.

While sometimes we would love to strive for the best, choosing the better choice can have great health impacts as well.

For example: Susan is a mother of three children and works a full-time job. By the time she gets home she is wiped out, so she opts to order a pizza for the family. What would be the better and best choice over her current one?

**Better Choice:** Instead of a regular pepperoni pizza, Susan could choose a smaller vegetable pizza (could even add lean chicken) and order a salad for the family.

**Best Choice:** Susan could carve out some weekend time where the family could get together and cook some meals from scratch that they can then freeze for weeks when meal preparation does not happen.

SLVHCS Clinical Dietician Chantel Chatham says meal prep at home for the entire week is a great idea. Due to busy lifestyles, it is often hard to have time to prepare and cook healthy meals every day throughout the week. Many of us settle for fast convenience food since we are often on the go.

“Meal prepping is a great
Meal prepping is a great alternative and idea to help prepare healthy meals for the whole week in just one day,” said Chatham. “It is a great way to try new healthy recipes and get the whole family involved to make a tedious task a fun and enjoyable activity for the whole family.”

But how do you make a good, better or best choice while at work?

One option could be eating healthy in the cafeteria. Eating healthy can be difficult, especially when you are depending on foods that are not cooked at home.

Typically when eating out you can assume:

- Portions are larger
- Foods may be higher in sodium
- Foods may have added sugar

If you were cooking at home you’d be able to control each of these. However, when you are eating in a cafeteria you lose control over some elements of your diet and nutrition.

To put your best fork forward and eat healthy when eating in the cafeteria at work or enjoying a meal at a restaurant, try these tips and tricks:

- Choose proper portion sizes
- Aim to fill half your plate with vegetables
- Go for a side salad over fries
- Avoid fried foods
- Request dressings and sauces on the side
- Choose water instead of a sweetened beverage
- Skip dessert or have fruit

Taking on this whole list during your next outing might be too overwhelming. Try one tip at a time that you feel you could be really successful at and that would make the greatest impact on your diet.

What can you do to reach your nutrition goal or your “best choice?”
By Debra Ceasar-Winbush

The Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System’s Women’s Clinic is celebrating the gift of an original Heather Englehart painting that will contribute to the Veterans art displays featured throughout the new Veterans medical center.

The original painting was unveiled during a special donation ceremony inside the new Women’s Health clinic on the seventh floor of the new medical center.

Veterans Bryon and Cindy Newton of Ponchatoula, La., along with their daughter Katherine Newton-Mott, donated the painting.

The painting is an original work by Army National Guard Maj. Heather Englehart. Englehart is a New Orleans artist and architect who grew up in South Dakota. She is also the director of the Louisiana National Guard Museums division based at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans. Englehart is a decorated combat artist who deployed to Iraq with the Louisiana National Guard in 2002-2003. Some of her works are hosted as a permanent part of the U.S. Army Center for Military History’s collection in Washington, D.C.

The painting, depicting five service women, was created as a reminder to all of the pride, beauty, sacrifice and commitment that

An original Heather Englehart painting is the first to be displayed inside the new Women’s Health clinic. Englehart was recently featured in the Women Veterans’ Art Exhibit, which was displayed during the month of March. (Photo by Chris Cox)
Veterans Cindy and Bryon Newton donated an original Heather Englehart painting to be displayed inside the new Women’s Health clinic on the seventh floor of the new Veterans medical center. SLVHCS Medical Center director Fernando O. Rivera accepted the painting, along with Health Promotion and Disease Prevention manager Gweneh Vilo. (Photo by Anne Marino)

Women continue to make in service to the nation.

Englehart was recently featured in the Women Veterans’ Art Exhibit, which was displayed during the month of March on the first floor concourse. SLVHCS was one of only 10 VA medical facilities in the country that featured an art exhibit created by women Veterans during Women’s History Month.

The Newtons and their daughter are Veterans themselves and play a strong role in the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. Since 2007, they have been serving as volunteers at SLVHCS and this painting donation is just one more example of their commitment to Veterans and the mission here.

“My daughter and I served in the U.S. Navy and are very proud to be Veterans,” said Cindy Newton. “We work in our community and throughout the state to help all Veterans.”

SLVHCS Medical Center Director Fernando O. Rivera received the Newton’s donation of the painting.

“It’s exciting to get a donation like this where there is a rich focus,” he said. “It is a welcoming treasure that reflects the diversity of our patients.”

The painting will be displayed in the Women’s clinic to enhance the clinic environment and show support to the servicewomen who supported our country.

“Lady Veterans have a special heart,” said Newton. “Servicewomen have to stick together and support each other because we are Veterans just like the men who served.”

Donations from Veterans service organizations and individuals in the past have been used to support recreation therapy programs, the coffee program for Veterans waiting for appointments, various programs for homeless Veterans throughout southeast Louisiana and much more.
Baton Rouge social worker Jennifer Hannon is state social worker of the year

Nomination based on Hannon’s work at the shelters following August 2016 Baton Rouge flood

By Jeff Nowakowski

SLVHCS’ Baton Rouge Anselmo Clinic Social Worker Jennifer Hannon has been named the 2017 Louisiana Social Worker of the Year.

The Louisiana chapter of the National Association of Social Workers gave Hannon the award for her “commendable social work practice” and involvement with different organizations during the organization’s annual state convention in March 2017. Social worker of the year was one of six award categories recognized during the annual meeting.

Locally, as the Baton Rouge CBOC’s grant & per diem social worker, Hannon helps homeless Veterans in the Baton Rouge area make the transition to permanent housing, including income attainment goals. She also links Veterans with employment, medical, mental health, and substance abuse resources.

“Jennifer has role modeled the highest principles of social work that many of us strive to live up to and values that we hope to see in new social workers emerging into our field,” said Louisiana Department of Health Office of Aging and Adult Services Program Manager Gina Rossi.

It was for Hannon’s efforts following the devastating August 2016 floods in the Baton Rouge area that the nomination review committee recognized her with this year’s award.

“When Jennifer learned about the massive flooding in Baton Rouge, she left her home and family to help those in need,” said Margaret Dumas Mental Health Center Manager Adrianne Rivera. “She began helping to unload those who had been rescued, organized medical triage, organized arriving medical supplies, and coordinated emergency medical transport to local hospitals,” she said.

“Many folks with all kinds of needs were certainly blessed to have Mrs. Hannon devise, implement and evaluate/correct processes that enabled them to be on the road to recovery,” said social worker Keith Horcasitas.
Hannon also coordinates transitional housing, counseling services, assessments and treatments, and a variety of different topics Veterans will need, such as budgeting, banking, interpersonal skills, and employment.

“I feel Ms. Hannon has spent her career representing what the field of social work is all about, including serving, advocating, leading, innovating, and learning,” said SLVHCS Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist Kimberly Catalon. “I believe these characteristics represent all that is good in our field.”

Hannon has prior experience in hospital psychiatry, community mental health, chronic mental illness, and grief and loss but began her career as a social worker in the Baton Rouge community in 1995. She worked in a private medical center providing psychotherapy for more than 20 years before joining the SLVHCS Baton Rouge CBOC two years ago.

“I was so flattered and humbled to be recognized in that way,” said Hannon. “For me, it means that I am living up to my own expectations and establishing a strong reputation in the community for professional social workers. My message is ‘make yourself proud through the quality of your work and represent the profession well.’”

Hannon’s prior awards include SLVHCS’ Patriot of the Month in August 2016.

“Many folks with all kinds of needs were certainly blessed to have Mrs. Hannon devise, implement and evaluate/correct processes that enabled them to be on the road to recovery.”

- Keith Horcasitas
Occupational therapy helps individuals live life to the fullest

By Jeff Nowakowski

Every Tuesday and Thursday, Veteran Will Spears arrives early for his occupational therapy appointment in the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service. He used to travel to Houston to receive care, but after seeing the new PM&R therapy rooms he now stays in the New Orleans area to receive the therapy he prefers.

“I feel a whole lot better, and I think I’m progressing in getting stronger by completing my occupational therapy here,” said Spears. “This therapy is working for me in getting back some balance, and I can tell a difference when I transfer from my wheelchair to the car, couch or bed. But I can still improve.”

Spears is working on his treatment regime to focus on gaining upper body strength and core control and balance. His progress is reviewed by his physician and therapist every four weeks to make sure he’s meeting short- and long-term treatment goals.

“Will is independent with his self-care so now we’re working on improving strength and general fitness,” said Occupational Therapist Sarah Olivier, who’s been working with Spears for the past two months. “We are always working on functional living and improving his endurance.”

Occupational therapy enables people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health, prevent—or live better with—injury, illness, or disability.

Occupational therapists and OT assistants focus on doing whatever occupations or activities are meaningful to the individual. These solutions may be adaptations for how to do a task, changes to the surroundings, or helping individuals to alter their own behaviors.

“It’s an exciting time to be in occupational therapy because we are ahead of the curve of what’s currently being offered in terms of space, equipment, and staff expertise.”

- Dale Chatham

PM&R sees more than 130 Veteran patients each day with a staff of 19 OT/PT therapists in the new Veterans medical center and an additional 14 OT/PT therapists in the Baton Rouge, Hammond, and Slidell CBOCs.
Army Veteran Will Spears works on improving his upper body strength using resistance bands under the direction of his Occupational Therapist Sarah Olivier. (Photo by Jeff Nowakowski)

PM&R has a PT gym, OT gym, cardiac rehabilitation, aquatherapy pool, a soon-to-be-completed recreation center and state-of-the-art equipment supporting many other specialty programs.

“That’s the beauty of designing from scratch with input from all of the specialties on how to deliver high-quality therapy where Veterans see us as their number one choice,” added Chatham.

Later this summer, PM&R is scheduled to activate its two activity of daily living homes, which will provide ADL training with adaptive equipment for a residential and commercial setting. PM&R is also scheduled to expand its adaptive sports program for basketball and some track and field sports once the recreation center is activated. PM&R will also be offering inpatient services as those inpatient buildings activate.

Army Veteran Will Spears works on improving his upper body strength using resistance bands under the direction of his Occupational Therapist Sarah Olivier. (Photo by Jeff Nowakowski)
SLVHCS holds nurse recruiting fair

Nearly 500 nurses attended a job fair on April 8 to recruit all categories of nurses to the new Veterans medical center. (Photos by Amanda Jones)
Medication Safety Week is April 1-7

By Jeff Nowakowski

As the new Veterans medical center activates more medically-complex services and programs, medication safety takes on greater importance.

To raise awareness about medication safety among our Veteran patients, SLVHCS employees, health care professionals, and the public, April 1-7 was designated Medication Safety Week. Over the course of that week, Pharmacy conducted multiple activities in the new Veterans medical center and at all seven CBOCs to draw more attention to this health problem as the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S.

“Patient safety is a critical component of quality care, and is one of the most challenging issues in health care today,” said Pharmacy Service Chief Dr. Phalba Adams, RPh. “That’s why Pharmacy Service is actively working with all of our health care services to build a higher level of safety into the new medical center.”

Pharmacy collaborated with several other programs, MyHealthVet and Patient Safety, to participate throughout the week at an educational display on the first floor concourse in the Veterans medical center.

Pharmacy recommends maintaining an up-to-date medication record that includes both the generic and trade names listed. This can help clear up some of the confusion with medicines and reduce the risk of a medication-related illness.

Adverse drug events are preventable. Patients can suffer from an adverse reaction to a drug, an improper dose, or a lack of drug treatment.

Medication safety week at SLVHCS began with medication safety at home that included information on how to store, secure, manage and organize pills, understanding difficulties that may arise in identifying new pills, whether they are generics or brand names, pills that look alike but are different, and pills that are similar in color.

One major program message, opioid safety, was presented on two different days of the week.

Most importantly, Veteran patients need to recognize they have a responsibility for good, ongoing communication with their doctors and pharmacists about what drugs and supplements they are currently taking, including over-the-counter medicines, supplements, herbals, and birth control pills.

Adams reminded all Veterans and employees of the importance of reporting side-effects promptly, obtaining/requesting drug information sheets from the pharmacist, paying attention to precautionary stickers, and carefully reading labels on medicine bottles.
The donation of a baby grand piano was music to everybody’s ears when it was unveiled for the first time in the main concourse of the new Veterans medical center April 4.

The Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System received a donation of a baby grand piano for the new Veterans medical center from the Louisiana District 4th Degree Knights of Columbus during a brief lunch-time ceremony.

“Veterans service organizations are forever our partners in this journey with a shared mission of caring for our nation’s heroes,” said SLVHCS Medical Center Director Fernando O. Rivera. “Together, we strive to make every Veteran’s visit special, and we know how powerful music can be in creating a calming environment.”

The Boston baby grand piano, which is a division of the Steinway Piano Company, is a self-playing piano that features special wood

Flutist Michael Scorsone and pianist Marianne Eyles presented several musical selections during the unveiling of the new baby grand piano. (Photo by Anne Marino)
Louisiana District 4th Degree Knights of Columbus members unveiled their donation of a baby grand piano to the new Veterans medical center April 4. (Photo by Anne Marino)

The piano is stationed just inside the main entrance of the new VA medical center, so Veterans across the facility can hear relaxing music as they come in for their appointments. The piano is also close enough to the cafeteria and its main seating area, so Veterans and staff can eat lunch while enjoying the musical selections.

It was at a 50th wedding anniversary celebration last fall for a Veteran volunteer that Rivera had a conversation with Louisiana Knights of Columbus Former District Master David J. Lemaire Sr. about his vision for the facility. He told Lemaire that one-day he would love to see a pianist sitting in the lobby tickling the ivories of a piano to welcome and entertain Veterans who come in and out of their Veterans hospital. Lemaire looked over at Rivera, and without any hesitation said, “Done!”

SLVHCS continues to focus on improving the overall Veteran experience at the new medical center.

Donations from Veterans service organizations and individual donors in the past have been used to support recreation therapy programs, the coffee program for Veterans waiting for appointments, various programs for homeless Veterans throughout southeast Louisiana and so much more.

Numerous medical and patient studies suggest music has rehabilitative qualities; it can heal cognitive functions, improve communication skills, and reduce anxiety and sensory overload. In clinics and hospital settings, music can calm patients, caregivers and staff, and ease the experience of waiting.

This generous donation provides an opportunity for Veterans, patients, and the community to collaborate with SLVHCS’ efforts to improve the Veteran experience.

Pianists interested in donating their talent should contact Voluntary Service via email at VHANOLVoluntaryService@VA.gov.

Lemaire, along with current District Master of the Louisiana Knights of Columbus Warren Deemer, presented the piano to SLVHCS.

“It feels great to put a smile on their face and a song in their heart,” said Lemaire.
Two major services were activated in the month of May and were immediately ready to provide health care to Veterans, and reassurance to their family members.

All of the 16 examination rooms comprising Urgent Care were in use by lunchtime May 15. Patients came into the unit seeking care for everything from medication refills to one patient suffering a stroke.

“Our first day was pretty typical with a lot of sick patients, but patient care went very well,” said Emergency Department Chief Dr. Julie Slick. “This has been a long time coming, and we’ve done a lot of preparation. It is apparent that all of our staff is engaged and eager to get to work here. We will debrief every day in an effort to continuously improve our processes until we all feel comfortable.”

Currently, Urgent Care is open five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. But as more support services become activated, Urgent Care will make well-orchestrated changes to expand hours of operation and complexity of services.

“We’re still in an information-gathering phase, but the nursing staff really enjoys this new work space and flow,” said Urgent

Physicians and nurses were very busy on the first day of activation of Urgent Care service.
(Photo by Anne Marino)
Emergency Department Chief Dr. Julie Slick reviews messages during the first few days of the Urgent Care service opening May 15. (Photo by Anne Marino)

Care Center Manager Nurse Christine Soulet. “There are some processes we need to refine and make smoother, but overall, it feels like Christmas here.”

Just down the concourse from Urgent Care, Radiology was activated. All 21 rooms in the diagnostic imaging center were functional. The diagnostic imagining center contains CT scanners, magnetic resonance imagers, ultrasounds, intervention radiology, fluoroscopes, and a bone density analyzer. Later this fall, the diagnostic imaging center will activate its nuclear medicine scanners.

“This is a dramatic change, but the space layout is better with most of the everyday use diagnostic equipment on one level,” said Radiology Service Chief Dr. Rommel Dhadha. “I can see us growing into this space very quickly and efficiently for our patients.”

Radiology has set its initial operating hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, the service is also staying open an extra two hours during the week to help patients who need an image study completed after work hours.

“The staff really likes this new space, with more and new imaging units and that gives us the opportunity to provide more care for our patients,” said Diagnostic Imaging Administrative Officer Linda Bailey. “This week went well as the equipment functioned as programmed and our staff did a great job of trying to see patients in the most timely manner. We had some lessons learned, but they were all very easy issues to resolve.”

Currently, Urgent Care is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. But as more support services become activated, Urgent Care will make well-orchestrated changes to expand hours of operation and its complexity of services.
“Show me your sass!”

New Orleans Veterans medical center rolls out the red carpet for women Veterans

By Jamie Dannen and Amanda Jones

As the female Veterans entered Ladies Night, an event organized to help them learn about VA services offered to them, they were met with a red carpet and a photographer who used her boisterous personality to get them to smile.

“We wanted our Veterans to feel empowered tonight,” said event organizer Gweneh Vilo. “A celebrity-style entrance is a great way to set the tone for the event.”

After their red carpet photo, Veterans were able to walk through a variety of booths to learn about job opportunities, benefits and health care services. They had the opportunity to meet the women’s clinic staff, suicide prevention coordinator, and military sexual trauma coordinator, all while enjoying the soothing tunes of the Gallatin Street Band.

“My daughter is finishing her degree, and I would love for her to intern here with VA,” said a female Veteran who was excited about the evening’s event.
and impressed that there was a table of staff who could provide her with additional information.

Beyond the booths, donated refreshments were served, and Veterans were treated to manicures and chair massages.

“This is an amazing event,” said a Veteran as she peeked through her swag bag filled with donated cosmetics and a wealth of health care information.

By the end of the night, well over 200 female Veterans had walked through the doors, each eager to learn about their VA services and spend a relaxing night with their peers.

“It was a successful event,” said SLVHCS Medical Center Director Fernando O. Rivera. “We achieved what we sent out to accomplish, which was to provide an opportunity for female Veterans to get acquainted with their new medical center and the services they’ve earned.”

Whether it’s face to face, virtual or purchased care, Ladies Night offered female Veterans another opportunity to take comfort in the coordination of their care.
Ladies Night, continued

Photos by Hillary Rustine, Amanda Jones, And Anne Marino
SLVHCS selected as local site for Million Veteran Program

Veterans volunteer to support ambitious VA research program

By Jeff Nowakowski

The Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System is one of only a handful of VA medical centers in the country that will participate in an ambitious genetic research study that seeks to enroll more than one million Veterans and create one of the largest databases of health information that may one day lead to new ways of preventing and treating illnesses in Veterans.

The genetic research study, known as the Million Veteran Program, was launched at SLVHCS in June. The program seeks to learn more about how genes affect health and to improve health care for Veterans.

SLVHCS is joining a national team that has collectively enrolled more than 550,000 Veteran participants since MVP’s launch in January 2011. Dr. Amy Gutierrez has been selected to serve as SLVHCS’ local site investigator.

“The diversity of the Louisiana population is key to the success of this project,” said Gutierrez. “This project is on the cutting edge of what people mean when they talk about precision medicine. The future results will let medical therapies be tailored to the specific person instead of the current practice of one size fits all.”

To learn about the role of genes, health researchers compare genetic and health information from many thousands of people. That’s why researchers turned to VA.

VA is uniquely situated to carry out this kind of project, in part because Veterans tend to have medical records in the system that stretch back decades.

Yet another advantage was the Veterans themselves, who have a long tradition of volunteering in high numbers for research studies. In 2009, Johns Hopkins University researchers surveyed Veterans to see what they thought about the idea of participating in this type of genetic research project and found that 71 percent said they would definitely or probably participate.

Genes determine a person’s eye and hair color, height, and other personal traits. Through interactions with the environment and various lifestyle factors, genes may also contribute to the risk for disease. Through MVP, researchers hope to learn more about the effects of genes on health. This knowledge may eventually lead to better treatments and preventive measures for many diseases, including common illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.
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Paul Rizzo @PaulRizzo504
@VANewOrleans Thanks my wife has been bugging the MP2 people to see what is going on also. Thanks again!

Paul Rizzo @PaulRizzo504
@VANewOrleans @VANewOrleans Sheila Fletcher one of our great patient advocates was able to get my appt moved up. Thanks for the help!

James Scott Daria and Steven, this veteran thanks all for giving him great healthcare in the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System the doctors, nurses and volunteers do their best for all veterans every single day!

Jane Dumestre Based on my own experiences, the New Orleans VA Medical Center is the best there is in all aspects.

Stephanie Welton Nice

Veterans Choice Program-Vetran to Veteran Well, they sure came to the right place!

SteelMagnolia

I have been a satisfied patient @VANewOrleans for over 40 years. They are what other VAMC's should aspire to be!

New Orleans VA Medical Center Thank you James! We appreciate your feedback and are so glad you are happy with your care! -Jamie