

**OUR CAST:**

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## From The Director

### SWVMHI Adolescent Services

At the time I write this article, plans continue for the closure of the 16-bed Adolescent Unit at this facility by March 1, and for the closure of the 48-bed Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents in Staunton, Virginia by June 30. I know that many staff remain hopeful, on behalf of the youth we serve, that this plan will soon change. Several legislators have introduced legislation with the intent to keep the programs open, and find budget savings in other areas. Your dedication and passionate focus are commendable, but unfortunately, we must continue to firm up plans for unit closure, including staff assignments, protocols for making the needed changes from twelve to eight hour shifts on several units, and, most importantly, planning for the continuity of care for the adolescents in our region who may be affected. The uncertainty and wavering hopefulness can be wearing. Many balls are in the air as we work out our plan to have no staff laid off during this time. The number of vacant positions and possibilities for openings changes almost daily, which in turn affects how specific we can be with planning. The internal transition team meets weekly, and we plan another series of meetings with Adolescent Unit and other staff who wish to know more about our plans. I know that these are difficult times. Within our power, we commit to using HPO principles to guide our planning processes and are working to be as transparent as possible about what we know and how we are

beginning to plan. Please be patient as we gather additional information and work together for the best possible solution.



**Cynthia McClaskey, PhD  
Facility Director**

As I stated on December 18, 2008, please call or email with your questions at any time. I am including my cell phone number (276-759-1169) so that you can call after hours or on weekends if you have a concern or question. I would rather you call me than have unanswered questions or for you to worry. Your EMC members also are available for questions and concerns.

Thank you for your patience, commitment and being a B.R.I.D.G.E. to a better organization.

### It's a Journey, Not a Destination

The SWVMHI Executive Committee has addressed the increasing use of cell phones and text messaging in the workplace by reminding

staff of the facility Mission, Vision and Values. While we believe it is not appropriate to use these items in the patient care areas or during work time, except during justifiable emergencies, we would rather not write a policy that states this. Can we rely on you, the High Performance Employee, to lead by example?

### Save the Date

**Employee Recognition will be held February 12, 2009, for all three shifts.**

Those earning Service, Making a Difference, Cash, Leave or Other, Team Awards will be recognized, as will our recent retirees. In addition, the next Employees of the Quarter will be announced and the award will be made for the Employee of the Year! See you on February 12!

~Cynthia McClaskey, PhD  
Facility Director

Virginia.gov

November 2008

Monthly Patient

Census

Admissions 74

Discharges 75

Passes 14

Average Daily

Census

150

## Governor Kaine and Attorney General

### McDonnell Announce Fraud Prevention Toolkits

**RICHMOND** – Governor Timothy M. Kaine and Attorney General Bob McDonnell announced their support for the distribution of 80,000 Medicare Protection booklets to older adults and caregivers throughout the Commonwealth. The toolkits are a joint effort of the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging Senior Medicare Patrol Program (SMP), the Virginia Department for the Aging and Virginia Bureau of Insurance with support by Virginia TRIAD, Senior Navigator and AARP Virginia.

"Volunteers and staff throughout Virginia that assist with SMP community education activities and Virginia Insurance Counseling Assistance Program activities provide a crucial role in educating older Virginians about Medicare and health insurance plans and the prevention of healthcare fraud." Virginia Attorney General Bob McDonnell expressed support for the toolkits.

"These toolkits will teach Virginia senior citizens how to detect and report suspicious activities related to

their health care, and empower them to protect themselves by preventing fraud," McDonnell said. The Office of the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and TRIAD Partnerships provide on-going support to seniors and caregivers. TRIAD is a crime-fighting partnership between law enforcement, seniors and service providers. TRIAD provides education about various types of frauds and scams and resources at all levels of government.

*Be Smart Virginians! Know Your Medicare Rights. Detect and Report Healthcare Fraud* contains:

- Questions for beneficiaries or family members to ask salespeople
- Facts on healthcare benefits options
- Things to look out for when considering a healthcare plan
- Four steps to safeguard their Medicare
- A contact list of helpful Virginia health and consumer agencies

The toolkits were made pos-



sible in part by a grant from the Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services. Toolkits were distributed beginning November 15, when the Medicare Part D Open Enrollment begins. Families and older adults who are interested in receiving a toolkit should contact their local Area Agency on Aging. A complete list of all local Area Agencies on Aging is available on the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging (VA) website at [www.vaaaa.org](http://www.vaaaa.org) or the Virginia Department for the Aging at [www.vda.virginia.gov](http://www.vda.virginia.gov). For additional information, call the VA at 1-800-938-8885 or the Virginia Department for the Aging at 1-800-552-3402.

~Cynthia McClaskey, PhD  
Facility Director

## Join Our Team!

Are you interested in becoming one of our newsletter volunteers? You are more than welcome to join our team and assist with reporting and the production of the SWVMHI newsletter.

Please contact Linda Bonham at [Linda.Bonham@swvmhi.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov](mailto:Linda.Bonham@swvmhi.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov)



# Payline Information

As we are all painfully aware our country is experiencing a period of economic difficulty. Virginia is feeling the effects of this national economic downturn. The Department of Accounts is continually seeking ways to cut costs statewide. One effort has been focused on Payroll and the implementation of Payline. Payline allows state employees a secure system through which they have access to detailed information about their individual earnings, deductions, and leave balances, including a locally printable electronic pay stub.

On January 16, 2009 SWVMHI implemented the "Global Opt Out," a mandated directive from

the Comptroller of Virginia. This means our facility will no longer receive preprinted earnings notices/pay stubs from the Department of Accounts. Before this date arrived, we requested that employees who have access to Payline, either through state issued computers or home-based computers, set up their accounts and begin participating in the program. With a few simple clicks of the mouse, you can elect to "opt out." By signing up, you are assured that you will receive your notice without delay. By supporting the statewide directives, we can play a part in cost savings that may save jobs and provide for security in the future. Not issuing earnings notices not

only saves the Commonwealth of Virginia money by not having to print earnings notices, but agencies can also realize savings:

- through reduced mailing costs (i.e. 41 cents per earnings notice times 24 pay periods)

- employee time sorting and distributing earning notices is eliminated

- security is increased, since there is no chance the earnings notices can be lost or stolen complies with Governor Kaine's E-Commerce Initiative

~Lonzo Lester  
Financial Director



## THANKS!

*"I want to thank everyone for the support, prayers, thoughtfulness, and to all who granted me time toward the Leave Share Program during my husband's illness. Your kindness and thoughtfulness mean more to me than you know. Thank you so much for everything. May God bless each of you."*

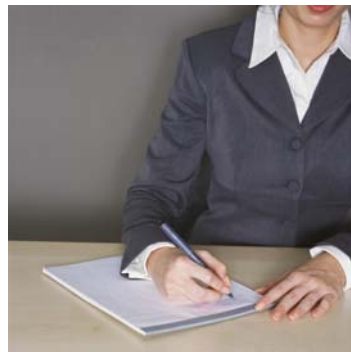
~Lenney Arnold,  
RN  
Infirmary Unit

# Letter from A Former Patient & An Employee Note

## Letter from A Former Patient

-“I wanted you all to know just how much you all touched my life these last five weeks. You have brought a smile to my face many times when I didn't have much of anything to smile about. Many times you listened, when I didn't think anyone wanted to hear me. Your jobs are very demanding and you do them very well. I will never forget all the kindness, compassion, and caring I have received from you all. All of you will be in my prayers! I truly believe God has a special place for all of the caregivers in Heaven, and I pray that all of yours is extra special. God Bless all of you, and Thank-You so much for everything you have done for me. I will never forget you all.”

~Former Patient



**Our mission, vision and values are clearly evident!**

## An Employee Note

-A SWVMHI employee informed us that she had been at the bank one day and a bank employee recognized her as being an employee of SWVMHI. The bank employee told her that her mother was once a patient here and was very complimentary of the staff and the care that her mother received while here. Our mission, vision and values are clearly evident!

# Recovery Haiku Contest Winners



Thanks to everyone who submitted Recovery Haikus. Many of them were accompanied by beautiful artwork! In order for judging to be anonymous, the panel of independent judges, Christina Quillen, Librarian; Teresa McNeil, Principal; and Doug Smith, Volunteer Services, received a typed copy of all the entries without identifying information. While the following haikus were judged to best represent the recovery experience in a haiku format, **all** entrants received a \$5 Meal Ticket for the Employee Cafeteria!

~Cynthia McClaskey, PhD  
Facility Director

Recovery—  
The  
regaining of  
or possibility  
of regaining  
something  
lost or taken  
away.

## Grand Prize Winner- **\$50**

Life interrupted  
Trudging through gray days  
and gloom—  
Tap strengths, recover.  
~Sharon Neitch, OTR/L  
Occupational Therapy  
Supervisor

## First Place - \$25

Believe in yourself!  
Light will push away the  
dark—  
Spring will come again!  
~Denise Deel  
Radiology Supervisor

## Second Place - **\$20**

I can recover  
And start again with courage  
Wounds take time to heal.  
~Virginia S., Ward H

## Third Place - **\$15**

A boat out to sea—  
Sailing its way safely to,  
A recovery.  
~Christy Barbow, PA, Ward K

## Honorable Mention - **\$10**

Rain falling down  
Hope at the end of the path  
Rinsing the dust  
~Cindy Blevins, Ward Clerk, A/B

Forming a circle  
Helping me reach recovery  
Wreaths of hope I see  
~James K., Ward J

## Other Haiku Entered

Caring indicate healing  
Recovery indicate a new beginning  
Darkness indicate going into lightness  
~Louetta Carnell, LPN, Ward I

A cloud in the sky  
Gleaming ray of hope  
Trust for weakened heart  
~Cindy Blevins, Ward Clerk, A/B

Breeze blowing by  
Filtering life's responsibilities  
Strength overcome all  
~Cindy Blevins, Ward Clerk, A/B

Colors all around  
Self-esteem rising above  
Respect found its way  
~Cindy Blevins, Ward Clerk, A/B

White all around  
Shining down the path  
Faith awaits  
~Cindy Blevins, Ward Clerk, A/B

Life is perfect in spring  
There's ebb in the flow of summer  
Autumn starts to come slow  
~Richard J., Ward I

Ride on a reindeer  
To the North Pole to get well  
Come home for Christmas  
~Leroy R., Ward J

The Christmas season  
A time of new beginnings  
Gives me hope and peace  
~William H., Ward I

Holiday Christmas  
Snow for holiday season  
List'ning to the staff  
~Gary P., Ward G

Reaching for the stars  
Racing for recovery  
Is the best for me  
~Monique K., Ward I

When Christ was born at  
Christmas is a wonderful  
Time of the season  
~Johnny S., Ward J



# Letter from A Family Member



**I applaud and thank you all.**

“Leiann, Dr. Crisp, and all the wonderful staff who work on the

Geriatric Unit:

I hope you all have happy holidays and a year filled with fun, laughter, joy and love. Thank you for all you do for my loved one, the good care you give her and all the patients. You are all so good at your work and with the patients. It is admirable. I received a long letter the other day. In it, my friend told of how the hospital helped her and how all of ya’ll were never mean to the patients. You hear so many horror stories

of how older, mental or demented people get treated sometimes. But not by ya’ll. I’ve always felt my loved one was in the best care she could get, which helped my aching heart a number of times. I APPLAUD and THANK YOU ALL. May your holidays have one special, wonderful bright spot.”

Regards,  
~Sister of Patient

**VALUES**

“We are generous with our benefits of doubt: we do not rush to condemn.”

## HPO: Value of the Month

### TRUST

- Deeply intertwined with the other values.
- The key to driving out fear in the organization.
- Is slow to build and quick to destroy.
- Link your words to your actions always, always, always.

- We do not promise more than we can deliver.
- We sincerely apologize for mistakes.
- We accept responsibility for outcomes, positive and negative.
- What we say to a person is the same as what we say about that person.
- We do not separate Caring from Candor.

**And most importantly,**

- **We are generous with our benefits of doubt: we do not rush to condemn.**

~Mary Beth Counts  
HPO Resource Team



## CVC Campaign Thanks SWVMHI

Thanks to all who helped to make the CVC Campaign here at Southwestern Virginia Mental



Health Institute a success again this year! We raised a total of \$4452.00 which is \$334.00 more than last year!!

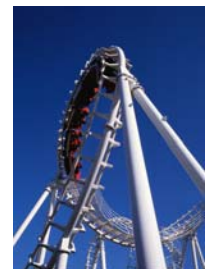
**Winners of the prizes are:**

- Dollywood Tickets were won by **Sherri Wheeler.**
- Tickets to the Spring Sharpie

Mini 300 Race were won by **Jennifer Cregar.**

- P. Buckley Moss print was won by **Rebecca Barker.**
- Barter Theater/Martha Washington Inn Package was won by **Amanda Currin.**

~Denise Deel  
CVC Coordinator



**Congratulations to our winners!**



December 2008

Monthly Patient

Census

Admissions 88

Discharges 84

Passes 14

Average Daily

Census

149

## Revisions to Family and Medical Leave Act

The Human Resource Office would like you to know that changes have been made to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FML) effective on January 16, 2009.

-Military caregiver leave is up to 26 weeks for a single 12 month period, per service member, per injury/illness starting with the first date of leave forward 12 months, regardless of what 12 month period the employer uses. For example, the Commonwealth currently uses a calendar year for FML- if a caregiver starts this type of leave in June, it would start counting forward 12 months from June, not January. A qualified service member must be a current member of the regular Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves or those on temporary disability retired list.

-Military leave "qualifying exigency" is a non-medical activity directly related to the covered military member's active duty or call to active duty status and must fall within one of seven categories of activities: a) short-notice deployment of seven or less days notice of call to active duty; b) military events and related activities; c) certain temporary childcare arrangements and school activities (but not ongoing childcare); d) financial and legal arrangements; e) counseling by a non-medical counselor such as clergy; f) leave up to five days when the

military member is on leave; and g) post deployment military activities

Under qualifying exigency leave, a qualifying service-member is someone on active or called to active duty by order of the President (not a state) and under US Code, such calls are only made to the members of the National Guard or Reserves, and therefore, an employee may not take exigency leave if the service member is a member of the regular armed forces. We can require a copy of the Active Duty Notice OR a written statement from the employee including supporting documentation, about the nature and details of the specifics.

-Serious health condition now requires **two** visits per year to the doctor (currently it is just one – so beginning January 16, we are only be able to approve FML for six months at a time rather than the full year, and the employee will need to be recertified after six months.

-If an employee accepts a light duty assignment while still eligible for FML leave, he/she has reinstatement rights to his/her original or equivalent job, but only until the end of the 12 month period the employer uses to calculate FML leave (in our case, 12/31)

-To determine eligibility when a break in service has

occurred, we need only look back **seven years** to determine if the employee has at least 12 months of service with the Commonwealth. Currently, we look back to any service with the Commonwealth.

Family Medical Leave (FML) still runs with the Calendar Year for Commonwealth of Virginia employees (except under military caregiver provisions) and therefore expires December 31 if it has not already been exhausted during the year. Therefore, if you were approved during 2008, regardless of when the approval was made, you will need to reapply and give supporting documentation to the Human Resource Office for 2009.

If you have any questions about these or any other provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act, please contact someone in the Human Resource Office.

~Cheryl Veselik  
Human Resources Assistant



# HPO: Getting to Know You



At least once a week, arrange to meet someone face to face that you normally only have email or phone contact with. It could also be someone that you only see or hear their name but don't know who they are in person. Plan a brief meeting in the hall, walk to their work area instead of calling

**Plan to meet someone new!** or emailing them, or meet in the café for lunch. Try it! For more than a year, I spoke with Betty Gilley on the phone almost EVERY single weekday (most days many times!) before I finally met her in person. The amazing and really sad part is that I had passed her time and time again in the hall with just a nod without even realizing who she was. Take a moment to meet the people that are a part of the same team that you are, those that you work hand in hand with every day without knowing who

they really are.

If you can't think of anyone to meet, then come and see me, or call me and I will come to see you. Better yet, we could meet and go see Betty! Hello Betty!

If you want to share your experiences with this activity, please email or call me at [Mary.Counts@swvmhi.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov](mailto:Mary.Counts@swvmhi.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov) or at Ext. 822. I'd love to hear your stories!

~Mary Beth Counts  
HPO Resource Team

**MEETING**  
**REMINDER**  
HPO Resource  
Team Meeting  
February 10  
1:30PM –  
3:00PM  
C Building  
Conference  
Room

## Well Wishes From Our Departing Human Resources Manager



“As I depart today, I want to thank each of you for the opportunity to have served as your Human Resources Manager. It has been a very rewarding experience for me and I only hope that I have in some small way made this a better place. I look forward to hearing about the wonderful things that are happening

at the facility as you continue on your journey as employees, and assist those whom we serve on their journey of recovery as well.”

My best wishes for each of you,

~Ruby Wells

## Treasure Seekers

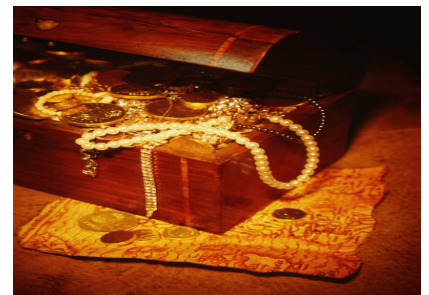
Many of you have expressed interest in donating to the Treasure Seekers Store located in the Rehab. Building, and we are now ready to accept donations. Treasure Seekers is a patient-operated activity that works like a Thrift Store. We will accept donations of yard sale/thrift store items for the store immediately

**(no clothing please).** Clothing for Bonanza will still be accepted in the C Building as usual. To make a donation, please contact me at Ext. 855 to set a time and date to drop items off at the Rehab. Building.

**Watch for the Grand Opening in early February!**

The exact date and time will be announced.

~Doug Smith  
Volunteer Services  
Director



**Treasure Seekers is a patient-operated activity that operates like a thrift store.**

## Personnel Changes: New Employees



Tabatha L. Griffey Psychiatric Aide	12/10/2008
Brandie N. Oakes Food Service Technician I (P14 Hourly)	12/10/2008
Amy A. Meadows OSA/Patient Registrar (P14 Hourly)	12/10/2008
Joseph D. Simms Rehabilitation Resource Coordinator	12/16/2008
Jerry Scott Wilson Psychiatrist/MOD (P14 Hourly)	12/22/2008
Alec Brennan Djukovich Food Services Technician I (P14 Hourly)	12/29/2009
Christine G. Marion-Lopez Rehabilitation Resource Coordinator	01/09/2009

## Personnel Changes: Separations

Larissa Powers Recovery Education Coordinator	12/09/2008
Jessica Kincaid Psychiatric Aide	12/29/2008
Kevin Beyerbach Psychiatric Aide	12/30/2008
Ruby Wells Human Resource Manager	12/31/2008



## Personnel Changes: Promotions/Role Changes

Stacy D. Horne Registered Nurse to Registered Nurse Clinician A	12/10/2008
Patricia Evans Secretary Senior to Executive Secretary	12/25/2008
Rhonda Ford Clinical Social Worker to Clinical Social Work Supervisor	01/10/2009



# CommonHealth: Calm Your Nerves!

## The First Quarter program will be Calm Your Nerves.

This will help you find healthy ways to release the build-up of stress before it takes a toll on your health. The key is to balance your time, budget, and social ties. Participants will have a chance to see and practice simple stress relieving ideas and techniques that can take as little as 30 seconds. Watch for more information on dates and times at SWVMHI.

## Other Health and Wellness Programs available:

- **Future Moms**
- **Quit For Life (Smoking Cessation)**
- **Weight Watchers**



Visit the CommonHealth Website for more information on these programs:  
[www.commonhealth.virginia.gov/](http://www.commonhealth.virginia.gov/)

~Cindy Jones, RN, CIC  
 Nurse Coordinator for Infection Control and Employee Health

## THANKS!

*"I want to thank everyone for your prayers, gifts, cards, flowers, and words of encouragement I received over the last four months. It is difficult to find words to express my feelings. Our lives can change in a second, but with faith in God and good friends, I have discovered that I am a stronger person. I truly believe that friends are treasures from God."*

~Juanita Rutherford  
 Administrative Assistant

# Name The SWVMHI Newsletter Contest

We invite you to participate in naming the SWVMHI Newsletter! Get those creative juices flowing and come up with a catchy title for our newsletter. You will win the honor of naming the paper as well as recognition for doing so in the next newsletter. You can even come up with decorative art that compliments your suggested name.

Some examples include:

The SWVMHI Star 

The Recovery Report

The SWVMHI Sun 

Healing Hands Hearsay

**Send ideas to Linda Bonham at [Linda.Bonham@swvmhi.dmh.mrsas.virginia.gov](mailto:Linda.Bonham@swvmhi.dmh.mrsas.virginia.gov) by February 16, 2009.**

# Operation Santa Claus Was A Great Success!

Thank you to all for making Operation Santa Claus a success. With the economy on our minds and needs in the surrounding communities greater than ever, people went above and beyond to make this year's events happen.

This year, you contributed by giving items, donating financially, and by assisting with the hands-on tasks to make sure the events came off as

planned. Patients again enjoyed shopping for Christmas presents in the gym, and on Christmas Day each patient received a stocking stuffed with goodies.

I would like to extend a very special "thank you" to the Centralized Rehab. Services Staff, without whom many of the special events would not take place here at SWVMHI. Thanks also to Volunteers Sandy

Hopkins and Betsy Daniels for the many hours shopping and all their help with the event. And, finally, thanks to all the staff and friends of the hospital who helped with Operation Santa Claus, especially those of you who gave of yourselves, your time, talents and resources, to help provide a happy holiday for the patients we serve.

~Doug Smith  
 Volunteer Services Director



**Thank You!**

## THANKS!

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your thoughts, prayers, and phone calls during the tragic death of my brother, Johnny Olinger. Especially a special thanks to the Geriatric Unit for the trays of food, money, cards, and visits. I feel very fortunate to work with such caring people. As we enter into the new year, may God richly bless everyone."

Thanks again,

~Martha Delp, LPN

Geriatrics Unit

# Driving in Snow and Ice

The best advice for driving in bad winter weather is not to drive at all, but if you must go out allow yourself extra time to reach your destination. If you must drive in snowy conditions, make sure your car is prepared and that you know how to handle road conditions. It's helpful to practice winter driving techniques in a snowy, open parking lot, so you're familiar with how your car handles. Consult your owner's manual for tips specific to your vehicle.

### Driving safely on icy roads

1. Decrease your speed, and leave yourself plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you.
2. Brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock, ease off the brake.
3. Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.

### If your rear wheels skid

1. Take your foot off the accelerator.
2. Steer in the direction you want the front wheels to go. If your rear wheels are sliding left, steer left. If they're sliding right, steer right.
3. If your rear wheels start sliding the other way as you recover, ease the steering wheel toward that side. You might have to steer left and right a few times to get your vehicle completely under control.

### If your front wheels skid

1. Take your foot off the gas and shift to neutral, but don't try to steer immediately.
2. As the wheels skid sideways, they will slow the vehicle, and traction will return. As it does, steer in the direction you



want to go. Then put the transmission in "drive" or release the clutch, and accelerate gently.

### If you get stuck

1. Do not spin your wheels. This will only dig you in deeper.
2. Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way.
3. Use a light touch on the gas, to ease your car out.

Sources: National Safety Council, New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, Washington State Government Information & Services

~The Safety Committee

# Two Employees Earn CPS Certification

**Lisa Berry, Administrative Assistant and Patricia Evans, Executive Secretary just received the results and passed the CPS exam with extra high scores! We commend them!**

The Certified Professional Secretary® (CPS®) rating through the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) is a MARK OF EXCELLENCE!

Certification provides opportunities to enhance your career success through:

**Professional Skills**— You will learn more about office operations and build skills by studying for and taking the CPS exam.

**Salary** – A recent IAAP membership profile study shows that CPS holders earn an average of \$2,228 more per year than those who do not have certification.

**Esteem** – Attaining certification demonstrates to your employer that you are committed as a professional.

**College Credit** – Many colleges and universities offer course credit for studying for and passing the CPS exam.

### Certification Conference and Professional Development Seminars

- You receive the benefit of annual state-of-the-art continuing education and networking with other professionals in the administrative field.

~Mary Ann Stamper  
Admissions Unit Secretary



# The Wellness Project



**Get Fit Today!**

A proposal for the Wellness Project was drafted in September, 2008.

With the basic goal of the project being to emphasize health and wellness, the importance of the effort was stated as broadening and improving existing choices within the Centralized Rehab. Services program.

Those with whom we work indicated they are interested in pursuing a variety of activities we haven't explored too much lately; for example, "I'd like to ride bikes in the park," or "Dancing would be fun."

There has also been lots of interest expressed by staff in developing and participating in many levels of physical exercise. This is important, most of all in that the more fit we are, the more we enjoy our daily, work, and the less likely injuries will occur.

The group's initial work was

completed at the end of December. We found there are several issues we'd like to pursue, so the sub-groups will be getting back together over the next weeks to "re-cast our nets into the waters."

The program will be implemented in phases as resources are identified and tapped. We already have access to some very fine equipment, loads of ideas, and a goldmine of expertise among the staff. The most important resource at this point is enthusiasm--so let's get going!!

~Sharon Neitch, OTR/L  
Occupational Therapy Supervisor

## THANKS!

*"Thanks to all who visited, sent cards, and kept me in their thoughts and prayers during the recent illness and death of my mother, Lillian Fowler."*

~Dianne Fannin  
Laboratory Technician

# January Nurse Forums

Day shift Nurse Forums were held at two sessions on January 15. Almost 30 nursing staff members attended, which is a great turnout! A detailed handout was distributed with a number of issues discussed, and this handout is available on the units for all three shifts to review. Staffing issues, work schedules, budgetary concerns, effective communication, job duties, and co-workers doing a fair share of the work were covered.

Several employee generated projects or initiatives have come out of the recent forums. The patient belonging list is being revised by a staff workgroup. Bath mats are being piloted on Admissions CD, and DSM-IVR reference manuals have been purchased. At the recent forum, it was noted that the Daily Patient Care Summaries need to be updated to include facility changes, such as patient privilege levels. Each Unit Nurse Coordinator will work with staff

to improve these forms.

All things may not be relevant or appropriate to discuss in a large group, but each issue is given consideration. I appreciate the feedback nursing employees provide in preparation for the Nurse Forums and during the discussions.

~Alicia Alvarado, RN, MS  
Chief Nurse Executive

# HPO: Communication Tips

The following information regarding phone communication is from your HPO Communications Work Team.

- When leaving messages, leave concise, short, and clear messages with the date and the time that you have called.
- Also when leaving messages, clearly identify yourself, and state the reason you are calling.
- Last, when answering calls, answer with a smile and speak clearly, slowly and in a pleasant tone.

**By brushing up on our communication skills, we can all make SWMH I a great place to work!**

~Rick Delp  
HPO Communications Team



**Phone Etiquette is Easy to Learn!**



## Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute

**Address:** 340 Bagley Circle  
Marion, Virginia 24354  
**Phone:** 276-783-1200  
**Fax:** 276-783-1465



### February 2009 Dates to Celebrate!

- February 2 Groundhog Day
- February 3 Elmo's Birthday
- February 4 Super Bowl XLI
- February 6 Pay A Compliment Day
- February 11 Clean out Your Computer Day
- February 17 Random Act of Kindness Day
- February 20 Love Your Pet Day
- February 24 National Tortilla Chip Day
- February 26 Tell a Fairy Tale Day

### Comments, Suggestions or Ideas?

#### SHARE THEM!

Please place any comments, suggestions or ideas you have regarding the newsletter in the Suggestion Box located outside of the copier room on the Clinical/Medical/Nursing Administrative Offices hallway.

# HPO: Recovery TV Project

The Consumer Education and Recovery Awareness workgroup is currently focused on utilizing the television service at SWVMHI to provide therapeutic programming. During most of the working day, patients will have the opportunity to watch a variety of programs that are geared at education about mental illness, substance abuse, personality issues, medical issues, community services, peer support, recovery, and many more ideas. This is an innovative way to focus on recovery-oriented material during leisure time or when not attending groups at the facility.

The committee consists of Tom Miller, Clinical Social Worker; Karen Chavers, Training Director; Doug Smith, Volunteer

Services Director; Steve O'Brien, Rehab. Program Supervisor; Jim Lundy, Admissions (Ward A/B) Unit Nurse Coordinator; Cindy Jones, Nurse Coordinator for Infection Control and Employee Health; Alicia Alvarado, Chief Nurse Executive; and Don Chisler, Physical Plant Services Director. With the help of these co-workers and many other resources, we hope to provide a scope of educational materials throughout the day.

For additional information contact Tom Miller at Ext. 837 or email Tom.Miller@swvmhi.dmhmsas.virginia.gov.

~Tom Miller, MSW  
Clinical Social Worker



**“This is an innovative way for patients to focus on recovery-oriented material.”**