

VA New England Healthcare System

FALL 2017

VETERANS'

healthy living

Marking a
Milestone

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



A Message from the Network Director

Michael Mayo-Smith, MD, MPH
Network Director

Dear Veterans,

We want all of our Veterans to live happy, healthy and productive lives. But, some Veterans may struggle with painful past trauma that may make it hard to face tomorrow. Although the VA is making strides in reducing Veteran suicide, we need your help to tackle this serious issue. Read on pages 4 and 5 about what the VA is doing to reduce Veteran suicide and how you can help.

The VA is witnessing remarkable breakthroughs regarding mental health care thanks to the tireless efforts of providers like Dr. John Bradley. John is not just a doctor, but he's also a Veteran. And that makes a big difference in how he treats Veterans. Read more on page 6.

We love to celebrate our Veterans and each milestone they reach in life. We're pleased to say Veteran Lillian Aronson celebrated her 100th birthday on July 1. Read more about her extraordinary life on page 3.

The crisp air and beautiful colors all around us means fall has arrived! This is a great time of the year to get outside and experience the beautiful sights and sounds of New England. While you're out and about, plan to attend one of the fun VA-related events coming to your area. Check out page 7 for more information.

Thank you for your service. Now let us serve you!

Michael Mayo-Smith, MD, MPH
Network Director



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ON THE COVER:

Army Veteran Lillian Aronson celebrated her 100th birthday on July 1. Read more about her life well lived in the article on the next page.



Veteran celebrates 100th birthday



Associate Director Ed Koetting congratulates Veteran Lillian Aronson on reaching her 100th birthday during her June 29 party at a Community Living Center at Bedford VA.

Army Veteran Lillian Aronson has always seized the day, going wherever life takes her. When the U.S. entered the Second World War, Lillian heeded the call and enlisted. From that point on, life was anything but ordinary for her. Now, as she marks her 100th birthday, Lillian reflects on her extraordinary life of service.

Lillian enlisted in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corp (WAAC) in 1943, shortly after the Corps was created thanks to the tireless efforts of U.S. Representative Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts. Like many of her fellow WAAC women, Lillian worked stateside initially. She handled a variety of administrative duties from war bonds to troop movement.

"I enjoyed everything I did," says Lillian. "It was a challenge."

She lived most of her early life on the east coast – growing up in Salem, Massachusetts and receiving basic training at Camp Patrick Henry in Virginia. But, Lillian wanted to expand her horizons. So, when it came time to transfer, she left the east coast for the west coast – settling in California at the Oakland Army Base near San Francisco, and later at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. Still, her restless heart wanted to see more of the world.

During her military career, she served in Panama and Germany. Later, she returned to Europe for four weeks to visit Spain, Italy and see friends in Germany just after retiring from the Army in 1964. As she says, to live a truly fulfilling life you must "keep moving."

She earned her degree in social science from San Francisco State University, and after the Army she resumed working for the State of Massachusetts. She retired in 1978.

She celebrated her 100th birthday on July 1, 2017. A party was held in her honor on June 29 at the Community Living Center at Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital (Bedford VA) where she lives. Her friends and family joined the celebration. Her family includes 15 nieces and nephews, 12 great nieces and nephews, 12 great-great nieces and nephews.

Her motto today is "move it or lose it," and she spends her time playing trivia games and exercising. And, she continues to serve – sending birthday cards to every resident on her floor in her Community Living Center.

Fighting for Life

VA works to prevent Veteran suicide



Connect
with support.

No matter what you are going through,
resources will be there to help.

VeteransCrisisLine.net



Preventing Veteran suicide has become the top clinical priority within Veteran Affairs. And, for good reason. About 20 Veterans die by suicide each day. Although that's an improvement over the 22 per day in 2012, it's still one too many. In addition, Veterans 50 and older are now at higher risk for suicide, despite the common belief that suicide is more common among younger Veterans. It's time to "be there" for the Veterans who are hurting in our midst.

"When adults get older, they are more socially isolated," says Christina Allen, Suicide prevention coordinator at VA Connecticut who works with non-VA agencies to identify at-risk Veterans. "Older adults are less likely to reach out for treatment and services." She says that's why it's important to spread the word to all Veterans that there's support and treatment available for those struggling.

As a way to better support Veterans, the VA recently launched Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health — Veterans Enhanced Treatment (REACH VET). The program analyzes data from Veterans' health records. It seeks to identify those at a high risk for suicide or other mental health issues.

"Getting to zero suicides requires working together and putting our collective arms around anyone we believe is in crisis," says Poonam Alaigh, acting under secretary for health at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. "Preventing Veteran suicide is both a shared goal and a shared responsibility."

If you know someone who is hurting, the best place to start is the Veterans Crisis Line. Since 2007, the Veterans Crisis Line has answered more than 2.9 million calls, dispatched priority services more than

77,000 times, responded to over 70,000 Veterans in need via text and chat, and referred 470,000 Veterans to trained local VA suicide prevention coordinators. Calls to the crisis line are now being answered within 8 seconds.

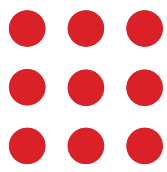
To learn more about how you can help a Veteran in need, visit www.veteranscrisisline.net/BeThere.aspx.

Operation SAVE

If you encounter a Veteran who is in suicidal crisis, the acronym SAVE can help you remember what to do so you can act with compassion:

1. **SIGNS** of suicidal thinking should be recognized.
2. **ASK** the most important question of all: Are you thinking of killing yourself?
3. **VALIDATE** the Veteran's experience.
4. **ENCOURAGE** treatment and **EXPEDITE** getting help.

Expanding Mental Health Care Services



**Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

Researchers have found a strong link between mental health and suicide. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reports that about 90 percent of those who die by suicide have a diagnosable mental disorder. As of July 5, VA now covers emergency stabilization care for former service members with an Other Than Honorable Administrative Discharge who have a service-connected, emergent mental health need.

"We know the rate of death by suicide among Veterans who do not use VA care is increasing at a greater rate than Veterans who use VA care," says Secretary David J. Shulkin.



"When we say even one Veteran suicide is one too many, we mean it." Of the 20 veterans who die each day by suicide, 14 are not connected to the VA.



There are more than 500,000 former service members with OTH discharges. Now, they know where to turn if they face a mental health emergency — whether it means receiving urgent care at a VA emergency department, a Vet Center or through the Veterans Crisis Line. Veterans with an OTH Administrative Discharge may receive care for their mental health emergency for up to 90 days, which can include inpatient, residential or outpatient care.

If you or a Veteran you know is in crisis, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 (press 1), or text 838255.

Here to help

The Choice Champions at VA medical centers throughout VISN 1 are here to help you get the care you need.

Bedford:

Sandy D'Amico, 781-687-2996

Boston:

Marlyne Ebanks, 857-364-6003

Donna Schnaible, 857-364-3224

Connecticut:

Melissa Kowaleski

860-666-6951, ext. 6696

Quiana Carmon

203-932-5711, ext. 3374

Central Western

Massachusetts:

Brian Hurst, 413-584-4040, ext. 2015

Maine:

Charity Heroux

207-623-8411, ext. 6164

Mary Katie Caswell

207-623 8411, ext. 4133

Manchester:

Office of Community Care

800-982-8384 x 2820

Providence:

Jeff Brown, 401-273-7100, ext. 6155

Linda Kelley, 401-273-7100, ext. 3149

Kim McRae, 401-273-7100, ext. 3177

White River Junction:

Deborah Findley, Michelle Wells and

Dawnese Downs

802-295-9363, ext. 6060

DOCTORS WHO SERVED

Featured: Dr. John Bradley

Veteran John Bradley, MD, Chief of Psychiatry and Deputy Director for Mental Health for the VA Boston Healthcare System, understands the trauma many soldiers and Veterans experience. He understands the heartbreak that comes with leaving family for months or years at a time. He knows because he lived it. And, what he learned on deployment has taught him how to help Veterans work through service-connected mental health issues.

"Everything matters when you're deployed. Every decision you make, matters," says John, who served on tours to Bosnia (1997), Egypt (2000) and Iraq (2005-2006). He says these pressures can majorly impact a soldier's life, affecting every other decision he or she makes in life.

John had an interest in studying medicine from a young age. But, coming from a military family, he didn't always want to follow in those footsteps. But, when he was getting his undergraduate degree from the University of Rhode Island, he joined ROTC. He got his M.D. from Uniformed Services University, and then joined the military.

"I wasn't necessarily thinking I'd serve a 30-year career," says John. "The longer I served, the more I loved it. The military tends to be a family business."



Veteran John Bradley, MD, has received numerous awards, including the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star and the Order of Military Medical Merit. The National Capital Consortium Teacher of the Year Award was renamed the "John Bradley Award" in 2011 in his honor.

John has had an impressive career, and has published extensively on the treatment of combat trauma and PTSD, suicide, and on the American Revolution. Still, it's the work he's done with Veterans and active duty soldiers that makes him most proud.

"We're able to return 97% of soldiers to combat after treatment," says John. "Most soldiers want to succeed and do their job. They don't want to be encumbered by any symptoms they may have."

He retired from active duty in 2011 and has since worked with the VA to find ways to better help Veterans manage their mental health. That starts with helping them get the right medication the first time around.

"For so many people, it's trial and error," says John. "If we can use biological markers to get someone on the right medicine right away, you can only imagine how much better people can do."

YourVA: A New Look at Veterans Services and Benefits



Want to keep your finger on the pulse of what's happening in the VA? Then check out the YourVA cable show on the Boston Neighborhood Network (BNN) Television on RCN TV.

VA Boston Healthcare System has partnered with the Veterans Benefits Administration and National Cemetery Administration to present YourVA, which debuted in January 2017. Hosted by Chuck Ritter, Assistant Director, Jamaica Plain Campus, this 30-minute show serves Veterans in more than 600,000 homes, informing viewers about the benefits and programs offered in the New England area.

"YourVA started with the idea of providing our Veterans with an inside look into the VA, to give them an idea of how much goes on at our facilities. It provides a call to action to those who do not use the VA for care yet," said Ritter.

The show features VA providers, Veterans and volunteers, and shows how their contributions help Veterans throughout New England. A recent episode highlighted how VA Boston led an innovative approach to combating the opioid crisis. Other episodes feature the broad-reaching research programs and the critical services provided by the prosthetics department.

YourVA airs the second and fourth Wednesday of each month on BNN or on-demand at <https://bnntv.org/vod/your-va>.

Fall Events around VISN 1



The WaterFire event in downtown Providence salutes and honors our Veterans and all military personnel of the United States and their families.

WaterFire: Nov. 4, Providence, RI, waterfiresalutetoveterans.org

The Big E: Sept. 15-Oct. 1, West Springfield, Mass., thebig.com

The Great American Smokeout: Nov. 17

UPCOMING STAND DOWNS:

Sept. 15-16 – VA Providence Stand Down Weekend

Sept. 22 – VA Connecticut, State Veterans Home, Rocky Hill

Sept. 29 – VA Western Mass Veteran, Greek Cultural Center, Springfield

Oct. 21 – Togus VAMC, Homeless Stand Down

ARM YOURSELF: GET YOUR FREE FLU SHOT TODAY

www.publichealth.va.gov/flu



The Big E event

VETERANS'

healthy living

VISN 1 Communications
Department of Veterans Affairs
200 Springs Road
Bedford, MA 01730

VA MEDICAL CENTERS

CONNECTICUT

VA Connecticut Healthcare System

Newington Campus
555 Willard Avenue
Newington, CT 06111
(860) 666-6951

West Haven Campus
950 Campbell Avenue
West Haven, CT 06516
(203) 932-5711

MAINE

VA Maine Healthcare System

1 VA Center
Augusta, ME 04330
(207) 623-8411
(877) 421-8263

MASSACHUSETTS

Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hosp.
200 Springs Road
Bedford, MA 01730
(781) 687-2000

VA Boston Healthcare System

Brockton Campus
940 Belmont Street
Brockton, MA 02301
(508) 583-4500

Jamaica Plain Campus
150 S. Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02130
(617) 232-9500

West Roxbury Campus
1400 VFW Parkway
West Roxbury, MA 02132
(617) 323-7700

VA Central Western MA Healthcare System

421 North Main Street
Leeds, MA 01053
(413) 584-4040

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Manchester VAMC
718 Smyth Road
Manchester, NH 03104
(603) 624-4366
(800) 892-8384

RHODE ISLAND

Providence VAMC
830 Chalkstone Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
(401) 273-7100
(866) 590-2976

VERMONT

White River Junction VAMC
215 North Main Street
White River Junction,
VT 05009
(802) 295-9363

COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS

CONNECTICUT

Danbury CBOC
7 Germantown Road
Danbury, CT 06810
(203) 798-8422

New London CBOC
4 Shaw's Cove, Suite 101
New London, CT 06320
(860) 437-3611

Stamford CBOC
Stamford Health System
1275 Summer Street
Stamford, CT 06905
(203) 325-0649

Waterbury CBOC
95 Scovill Street
Waterbury, CT 06706
(203) 465-5292

Willimantic CBOC
1320 Main Street
Tyler Square (next to
Social Security Office)
Willimantic, CT 06226
(860) 450-7583

Winsted CBOC
115 Spencer Street
Winsted, CT 06098
(860) 738-6985

MAINE

Bangor CBOC
35 State Hospital Street
Bangor, ME 04401
(207) 561-3600

Lincoln CBOC
99 River Road
Lincoln, ME 04457
(207) 403-2000

Calais CBOC
50 Union Street
Calais, ME 04619
(207) 904-3700

Caribou CBOC
163 Van Buren Road, Ste. 6
Caribou, ME 04736
(207) 493-3800

Fort Kent CBOC
Medical Office Building
197 East Main St.
Fort Kent, ME 04743
(207) 834-1572

Houlton CBOC

Houlton Regional Hospital
20 Hartford Street
Houlton, ME 04730
(877) 421-8263, ext. 2000

Lewiston/Auburn CBOC

15 Challenger Drive
Lewiston, ME 04240
(207) 623-8411 Ext. 4601
(877) 421-8263 Ext. 4601

Mobile Medical Unit
Main Street
Bingham, ME 04920
(866) 961-9263

Portland CBOC
144 Fore Street
Portland, ME 04101
(207) 771-3500

Rumford CBOC
431 Franklin Street
Rumford, ME 04276
(207) 369-3200

Saco CBOC
655 Main Street
Saco, ME 04072
(207) 294-3100

MASSACHUSETTS

Causeway Street CBOC
251 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 248-1000

Fitchburg CBOC
Phillip J. Philbin Federal Bldg.
881 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420
(978) 342-9781

Framingham CBOC
61 Lincoln Street, Suite 112
Framingham, MA 01702
(508) 628-0205

Gloucester CBOC
199 Main Street
Gloucester, MA 01930
(978) 282-0676

Greenfield CBOC
143 Munson Street
Greenfield, MA 01301
(413) 773-8428

Haverhill CBOC
108 Merrimack Street
Haverhill, MA 01830
(978) 372-5207

Hyannis CBOC
233 Stevens Street
Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 771-3190

Lowell CBOC
130 Marshall Road
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 671-9000

Lynn CBOC
225 Boston Street, Ste. 107
Lynn, MA 01904
(781) 595-9818

Martha's Vineyard Hosp.

One Hospital Road
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557
(508) 771-3190

New Bedford CBOC

175 Elm Street
New Bedford, MA 02740
(508) 994-0217

Pittsfield CBOC

73 Eagle Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 499-2672

Plymouth CBOC
116 Long Pond Road
Plymouth, MA 02360
(800) 865-3384

Quincy CBOC
110 West Squantum St.
Quincy, MA 02171
(774)-826-3070

Springfield CBOC
25 Bond Street
Springfield, MA 01104
(413) 731-6000

Worcester CBOC
605 Lincoln Street
Worcester, MA 01605
(508) 856-0104

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Conway CBOC
71 Hobbs Street
Conway, NH 03818
(603) 624-4366, ext. 3199
(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

Keene CBOC
640 Marlboro Street
Keene, NH 03431
(603) 358-4900

Littleton CBOC
264 Cottage Street
Littleton, NH 03561
(603) 575-6700

Portsmouth CBOC
302 Newmarket Street
Portsmouth, NH 03803
(603) 624-4366, ext. 3199
(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

Somersworth CBOC

200 Route 108
Somersworth, NH 03878
(603) 624-4366, ext. 3199
(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

Tilton CBOC

630 Main Street, Ste. 400
Tilton, NH 03276
(603) 624-4366, ext. 3199
(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

RHODE ISLAND

Middletown CBOC

One Corporate Place
Middletown, RI 02842
(401) 847-6239

VERMONT

Bennington CBOC

186 North Street
Bennington, VT 05201
(802) 440-3300

Brattleboro CBOC

71 GSP Drive
Brattleboro, VT 05301
(802) 251-2200

Burlington Lakeside CBOC

128 Lakeside Ave., Ste. 260
Burlington, VT 05041
(802) 657-7000

Newport CBOC

1734 Crawford Farm Rd.
Newport, VT 05855
(802) 624-2400

Rutland CBOC

232 West St.
Rutland, VT 05701-2850
(802) 772-2300

