



# Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs *Good News*



Volume 1 Issue 8

**Welcome to Good News. This Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) newsletter highlights the accomplishments and sharing activities at both the local and national levels.**

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### **Joint Sharing Success: Pensacola Joint Ambulatory Care Clinic**

The Joint Ambulatory Care Clinic (JACC), adjacent to Pensacola Naval Hospital, celebrated the opening of its doors to veterans and active military personnel on September 15, 2008. The grand opening included a ribbon-cutting ceremony and tours of the 200,000-square-foot facility for the military community, national officials and local residents. Speakers at the event included the Honorable James B. Peake, Secretary of the Department of Veteran Affairs; the Honorable Jeff Miller, U.S. Congress; Dr. Stephen Jones, Principal Deputy for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs; Mr. Buzz Gray, Director of the South Central Veteran Affairs (VA) Health Care Network; Mr. Charles Sepich, Director of the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System; Rear Admiral Thomas Cullison, Deputy Surgeon General, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

The \$55 million project, located on 25 acres of land provided by the Navy, replaces the current Pensacola VA outpatient and mental-health clinics, as well as an outdated Navy student clinic. The new Pensacola clinic will significantly enhance primary, dental, vision and mental-health care in addition to rehabilitation services, a women's clinic and various other specialty clinics. The center is a joint operation of VA and DoD and employs more than 300 people. This new clinic greatly benefits veterans who reside in southern Alabama and the Florida Panhandle, as well as Navy Corry Station students. The consolidation of separated clinical and administrative services into one modern, state-of-the-art ambulatory care facility with close proximity to Naval Hospital Pensacola facilities demonstrates the benefits of joint health care collaboration to our veterans and Service members.

### **Improving the Federal Health Care Supply Chain through Better Product Data**

Through a Joint Incentive Fund (JIF) initiative, DoD and VA are collaborating to reduce health care supply costs and improve operations in the federal health care supply chain. The organizations are linking and expanding efforts to both standardize and synchronize product information between their hospitals and supplier partners. As of October 1, 2008, these data synchronization efforts have resulted in nearly \$32 million

in total product price reductions for the federal health care community. Participating VA hospitals, which are newest to the effort, have realized nearly \$1 million in reductions in the past year alone.

Through the use of new software, participating organizations are documenting more savings opportunities as each month passes. This new software pulls product, purchasing and contracting data from a robust, authoritative and synchronized data source known as the Product Data Bank. The software tool allows users to quickly identify and research opportunities to reduce costs, particularly in areas where hospitals are able to use existing supply contracts that offer better pricing than what they may have been paying previously. Eighty VA and DoD hospitals are programmed to participate in the program, with 41 hospitals already using the software tool. In addition, more than 20 mutual supplier partners and two major distributors are involved with the JIF program. DoD and VA recognize those suppliers that contribute the highest quality product data with an annual award, slated to be presented this year in October.

"Our ongoing effort to reduce costs by leveraging standardized and synchronized data holds promise for the entire industry. While we are seeing exciting results, our work really serves as an interim step that will help us drive efficiencies and improve patient safety internally until a larger, industry-wide solution for synchronized, consistent and accurate product data becomes available," says Kathleen Garvin, program manager for DoD/VA Data Synchronization. "Such an industry product data utility will help drive efficiencies and savings to the health care supply chain as it has done for other multi-billion dollar industries."

"The VA and DoD Data Synchronization program is important because it takes aim at a significant problem in health care -- inconsistent and inaccurate product information available to the facilities," says Michelle Whitehead, Chief Logistics Officer, Capitol Healthcare Network, Veterans Health Administration. "Bad data contributes to the inefficient exchange of information in the supply chain, adding costs and potentially impacting patient safety. We are encouraged by the successes we've seen in the Data Synch project to date, and look forward to realizing increasing benefits as more VA hospitals join the effort. Being able to leverage a joint DoD/VA catalog is vital to fueling efficiencies in the federal health care supply chain going forward."

The VA and DoD data synchronization partnership shows that collaboration can yield powerful results in the federal health care community, and provides an excellent example of leadership for all parties interested in reducing costs, increasing efficiencies and improving patient safety.

**For questions please contact the appropriate point of contact below.**

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If you have any good news stories and or accomplishments from your local teams, please send them to Maura Brady at [maura.brady.ctr@tma.osd.mil](mailto:maura.brady.ctr@tma.osd.mil) and your stories may be included in a future issue of the newsletter.

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