

NETWORK UPDATE

www.visn23.va.gov

April 2016

VA Midwest
Health Care Network
Honoring Service. Empowering Health.

British National Health Service and U.S. VA share lessons learned in tele-health initiatives

By André Kok, VISN 23 Public Affairs Officer

EAGAN, MN – A group of health care providers and administrators from the British National Health Service visited the Midwest Health Care Network from February 29 through March 4. The visit was part of an exchange program between the National Health Service and the Veterans Health Administration that began in 2013, continuing a partnership that dates back to 2001. The collaboration between VHA and NHS seeks to be mutually beneficial, with each organization learning from the other, sharing a common objective of improving the care they provide to patients.

“Working with representatives from NHS has been enlightening in understanding that our organizations face many similar challenges, and is beneficial to our Veterans in tangible ways,” said Mary Walker, Network Telehealth Program Manager. “For example, the U.K. has implemented a program of text messages that supports patients who have chronic illnesses. We have been able to learn from their experience and are deploying a similar program, based upon the unique needs of Veterans.”

The program has identified five main learning points, all of which are in areas where the VA is working to enhance Veteran care. The first point, transformation and the digital health journey, focuses on strategies for the use of technology to improve patient care and service effectiveness. Home telehealth is another learning point and looks at how patients in remote locations can use technology for both health monitoring in long term care management and improvement in self-care. The third area is telemedicine, which focuses on the use of real time video conferencing between patients and their medical service providers to replicate traditional face to face consultations. Fourth is the area of mobile health, which looks at using mobile devices to empower users with the information they need to improve health care delivery.



British visitors saw an e-Intensive Care Unit (eICU) demonstration at the Minneapolis Health Care System. (VA Photo by April Eilers)

Secure messaging and use of electronic health records is the fifth learning point and focuses on secure patient-provider messaging and health records that are accessible to those who need to review them.

Visitors to the network office in Eagan engaged in discussions in these areas, with presentations from both U.S. and British staff. During one session, the group used video conferencing technology to speak with a Veteran living in a rural area to hear directly about how the technology allows interaction directly with his VA providers from home.

“There’s a whole load that you’ve done that the British National Health Service is just starting on,” said Joanne Harding, Program Director for the National Health Service Partnership Exchange Program. “We’re really looking to see how you’ve implemented these strategies, what lessons can be learned from what you did and just how we can replicate some of that back in England, Scotland and Wales,” she said.

Vietnam War Commemorations held March 29

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs took time on Mar. 29 to recognize, honor and thank U.S. Vietnam Veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices as part of the national Vietnam War Commemoration.

Authorized by Congress, established under the Secretary of Defense, and launched by the President in May 2012, the Commemoration recognizes all men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975. Nine million Americans, approximately 7 million living today, served during that period, and the Commemoration makes no distinction between Veterans who served in-county, in-theater, or were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years. All answered the call of duty.

“This Commemoration has special significance for those of us at VA because of our honored mission to serve those who have “borne the battle,” said VA Secretary Robert McDonald. “It’s also an opportunity to remember our VA colleagues who served in this generation of Veterans, to extend our heartfelt appreciation to them and to their families who shared the burden of their loved one’s service.”

More than 300 VA medical centers, regional benefit offices and national cemeteries hosted events, many in partnership with local Veteran service organizations and volunteers.

To learn more about the Vietnam War Commemoration, go to: www.vietnamwar50th.com.

Upcoming Events

April 4 – Veterans Town Hall in Red Oak, IA

April 12 – Veterans Stand Down @Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff, NE

April 23 – Clinical Recruitment Event @ St. Cloud VA auditorium (Bldg. 8)

May 17 – Veterans Town Hall in Alexandria, MN

June 29 – Veterans Town Hall at the Central Iowa Health Care System

Follow your facility on Facebook for more!

This newsletter is compiled by the VISN 23 Public Affairs Officer, André Kok
andre.kok@va.gov



Jim Kellogg, American Legion Department of Minnesota Commander; Rick Miller, Mayor of Waite Park, Minn.; Mick Aguirre, Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Department of Minnesota Senior Vice Commander; Barry Bahl, St. Cloud VA Health Care System Director; and Ken Klein, Paralyzed Veterans of America Minnesota Chapter President, were recognized for their service in the Vietnam War by Secretary of Veteran Affairs Robert McDonald at a stakeholder meeting at the St. Cloud VA on March 25, 2016.
(VA Photo by April Eilers)