

NETWORK UPDATE

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VA Midwest
Health Care Network
Honoring Service. Empowering Health.

Integrated Ethics Conference examines Community Care Services

By André Kok, VISN 23 Public Affairs Officer

Integrated Ethics (IE) professionals from across the Midwest Health Care network gathered here for a two day conference January 20 and 21. The 42 leaders, program officers, ethics consultation coordinators and preventative ethics coordinators met at the network office to hear presentations on current issues, discuss opportunities in breakout sessions and review program plans for the new year.

The opening plenary session of the conference featured a case study exercise on ethical considerations in community care services, led by Dr. Lisa Lehmann, Executive Director, National Center for Ethics in Health Care (NCEHC), Veterans Health Administration. The NCEHC defines ethics as the discipline that considers what is right or what should be done in the face of uncertainty or conflict about values, and this conference aimed to further that discipline among the network staff.

Dr. Lehmann's presentation focused on ethical challenges raised by staff members related to expanding veteran's care to outside community providers through the Veteran's Choice Program. Specific areas of interest addressed included communication among involved parties; timeliness of service; quality of care standards, and consult management concerns.

"I really appreciated Dr. Lehmann's engagement

with our group and her efforts to understand our ethical concerns about the Choice Act," said Connie Seldon, ethics consultation co-coordinator for the Saint Cloud VA Health Care System. She also noted that the conference "provides a wonderful forum to share ideas for possible improvements."

Additional presentations focused on current professional literature in the field, looking back and learning from historical ethics cases, and developing action plans for future work. Participants also had an opportunity to break out into smaller groups during the conference to discuss challenges unique to their different specialties.

"It's really helpful to run through these consultation exercises and take the knowledge back to our site," said Jenny Tyner, staff nurse at the Iowa City VA Health

Care System.

According to the NCEHC, the Integrated Ethics model used by VA was developed through a rigorous consensus building process involving stakeholders from numerous organizations. Structures, methods, and tools were systematically evaluated through validity testing, field testing, and a 12-month demonstration project in 25 separate health care facilities. Since 2008, IE has been implemented in all of VA's 152 medical centers and 21 regional networks. The model is continuously improved as new resource materials are added.



Dr. Lisa Lehmann, Executive Director, National Center for Ethics in Health Care, Veterans Health Administration, facilitates a discussion on ethical issues.

(VA Photo by April Eilers)

Final Wish: Veteran Walks Daughter Down Aisle

By Ross Twetten, Fargo VAHCS Public Affairs Officer

FARGO, ND – Eldon Frye was a Veteran receiving lung cancer treatment at the Fargo VA Medical Center who had a dream of attending his daughter's wedding on Feb. 6, 2016.

But there was concern that Mr. Frye's medical condition was such that he may not survive long enough to witness his daughter's milestone.

So on Jan. 4 a small cadre of Fargo VA professionals, as well as family and friends of Mr. Frye and his daughter Teah, rallied together to hold a small wedding ceremony in the Fargo VA chapel to make Mr. Frye's dream of walking his daughter down the aisle a reality.

After a round of radiation in the morning, Mr. Frye gathered his strength to walk his daughter down the aisle and participate in the ceremony with family and friends attending from as far away as Watford City, N.D., and Pierre, S.D.

While Teah will still have her formal wedding on Feb. 6, the wedding ceremony in the Fargo VA chapel came at a precious time for Mr. Frye and his family as Mr. Frye passed away on Jan. 8. It was an honor for the Fargo VA to host the ceremony for Teah and her new husband, and we thank Mr. Frye for his service to the country.

The event was coordinated in conjunction with the Fargo VA's Wishes on Wings program. The focus of the Wishes on Wings program is to help Veterans fulfill a last wish with the limited time they have left.

The Fargo VA is always striving to provide the very best patient centered care possible, and the Wishes on Wings program was created with this in mind.

The program serves Veterans by meeting the unique desire or wish of a Veteran at the end of their life. Wishes can be as small as a lunch with family members to as extravagant as a ride in a helicopter. Whatever the wish, big or small, a committee comprised of Fargo VA employees will do their best to help the Veteran experience it.

Wishes are made possible solely through the generosity of caring donors. To become a Wishes on Wings donor, contact Fargo VA Voluntary Services at (701) 239-3700 ext. 9-3395.

If you are a Veteran or know of a Veteran who may qualify and benefit from the Wishes on Wings program at the Fargo VA Health Care System, contact Trisha Chadduck at (701) 239-3700 ext. 9-2726.



(Courtesy Photo)

Upcoming Events

- February 5-7 – Outreach @ the Sportsman Show in St. Cloud, MN
- February 9 – Veterans Benefit Fair @ American Legion in Middle River, MN
- February 19 – Coffeehaus Outreach @ the VA Auditorium in Lincoln, NE
- February 23-25 – Outreach @ the Farm Show in St. Cloud, MN
- March 1 – Stand Down for Homeless Veterans in Kyle, SD
- March 2 – Stand Down for Homeless Veterans in Mission, SD
- March 10 – Town Hall meeting in Galesburg, IL

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