



Horizons

A NEWSLETTER OF WILKES-BARRE VA MEDICAL CENTER // SEPTEMBER 2019



CONQUERING PAIN FOR IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE

Dr. Amanda Schramp is no stranger to Veterans, or their struggles with pain. Prior to joining the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center as a Physical Therapist, she was commissioned with the United States Army Reserve as a Physical Therapist and member of the Medical Specialty Corps. She joined the 865th Combat Support Hospital in Niagara Falls, New York, in July 2016, and has experience working in critical care, skilled nursing and rehabilitation, home care, and outpatient orthopedics.

As a member of the Interdisciplinary Pain Management Team, she works daily to minimize the impacts of a Veteran's pain on their quality of life.

By educating Veterans on the impacts and effects of chronic pain, she is helping Veterans understand the connection and relationship between their pain experiences and their brain. She develops individualized treatment plans, based on each Veteran's examination and evaluation, to select the best interventions to address their pain. Pain intervention techniques such as exercise, stretching, manual therapy, and physical agent modalities (heat, cold, sound wave, electricity, mechanical forces) are just a few of the medication-free options offered.

Our team of dedicated professionals is committed to working with you to determine the best possible solution for managing your pain. If you're experiencing chronic pain, pain that lasts for more than three months, speak with your Primary Care Provider about a referral to Interdisciplinary Pain Management Team. What can it hurt?

The overarching goal of the Interdisciplinary Pain Management Team is to restore the quality of life for our Veterans by enhancing their ability to perform the functions of daily living and leisure activities through appropriate pain management.

A Message from the Director



When it was recently announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs would implement a 'smoke free' policy at all sites of care, I knew it would be a challenge. A challenge not only for myself as an administrator, but more significantly a challenge for many of the Veterans we serve.

Smoking has long been a part of the military culture. Cigarettes were provided in rations in WWI and WWII, as well as during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. The practice of providing cigarettes to the US Armed Forces continued into the 1970s, as the harmful effects of smoking were being fully realized.

While the practice of medicine may be an ever-evolving field based on scientific advancements and clinical research, there is no arguing the harmful effects of smoking. Smoking is a man-made epidemic which has become the leading cause of avoidable death in the United States.

As Director, it is not only my obligation to support the organization and its efforts, but to assure that our Veterans are being afforded safe reliable healthcare. For our Veterans, staff, and visitors, the October 1, 2019 Smoke Free Initiative is the right thing to do.

It is not my intent to preach, but to encourage and assist you in becoming a non-smoker. Talk to your Primary Care Provider about individual counselling sessions, support groups, nicotine replacement options, or visit one of the many VA sponsored websites or apps for help quitting for life!

<https://veterans.smokefree.gov/>
<https://mobile.va.gov/app/stay-quit-coach>

Russell E Lloyd, Director



Assisting Veterans with Access to Healthcare

If you've visited the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Wilkes-Barre, or any of our Community Based Outpatient Clinics you've likely seen a vehicle with a Disabled American Veterans (DAV) logo. The DAV is a non-profit organization founded by Congress to assist ill and injured Veterans enhance their quality of life.

Veteran transportation is one the many services provided by the DAV in collaboration with Wilkes-Barre's Voluntary Service Office. Each week, volunteer drivers provide transportation for medical appointments to Veterans across Wilkes-Barre's catchment, supporting in excess of 30 travel routes a week.

Space on the van is limited, but there are slots available. If you're interested in transportation assistance to/from your next appointment, speak with any member of your healthcare team about the availability of DAV transportation services in your area.

If you're interested in becoming a DAV Volunteer Driver, please contact Voluntary Service (570) 824-3521 Ext 27448.



"Code Black" Disaster Exercise Conducted at the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center

The Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center recently partnered with community first responders to conduct a live "Code Black" exercise on our grounds.

A "Code Black" event, which indicates the occurrence of a disaster, provides the opportunity for Medical Center staff to test Emergency Operations Plans, including communication and coordination efforts with our community partners.

Federal, State and local agencies participated in the three-hour drill, all working together to maintain operational readiness and responsiveness. Although the drill was held on the grounds of the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center, the skills and relationships fostered by the training event extend well beyond the VA Campus.

By working and training together, we're preparing for the efficient and systematic coordination of mitigation actions to assure not only your safety, but the safety of our families, friends and our communities.

"Effective exercises are an essential element of preparation. These exercises provide us the opportunity to test our skills and our processes in real-time to identify our strengths and opportunities for improvements."

—JUSTIN FARLEY, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST





Patient Advocate Office Expanding at the WBVAMC

Wilkes-Barre is proud to announce the addition of Ashton Mettin as a member of the Patient Advocate Team at the Medical Center. Ashton joins Nicole Gillen in supporting the Patient Advocate Program at the Medical Center and all Wilkes-Barre's Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs).

As a team, Nicole and Ashton are able to more efficiently assist Veterans with questions and concerns, while working to continuously improve and expand the services provided by the office for the overall improvement of the Veteran's health care experience.



Expanding services at Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Allentown for the convenience of our Veterans.

Allentown Outpatient Clinic Offering Service Closer to Home

Historically, Department of Veterans Affairs Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) were established to enhance a Medical Center's ability to provide Primary Care and Mental Health Services across the catchment. However, Specialty Care, those services not delivered by a primary care provider, were typically only provided at the local Medical Center.

In an effort to increase the convenient access to care and ease the travel burden of our Veterans, Wilkes-Barre began offering select Specialty Care Services at the Allentown Clinic in August. The clinic currently offers Neurology, Endoscopy, and Pulmonary services on a regular rotating schedule.

Wilkes-Barre is pleased to announce what we believe will be an efficient expansion of services for our Veterans. We're continuing to review utilization and work load in an effort to enhance the services we are able to offer to those who served.

Veterans in Wilkes-Barre are Getting Creative

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities nationwide use the creative arts as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities. Each year, Veterans treated at VA medical centers can compete in the National Veterans Creative Arts competition. The competition recognizes the progress and recovery made through arts therapy and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our nation's Veterans. The competition includes over 150 categories pertaining to all aspects of art, music, dance, drama and creative writing.

First Row: Fred Searles, Harry Houser, Sal Conigliaro, Ronald Strauss, Charlie Anistranski, and Jake Mashunas; Second Row: John Wrazien, Harold Fetzier, William Huber, William Harrison, Derbert Dilworth, and Perry Shull; Standing: William Kuklewicz, Sam Booker, Robert Rushak, William Ellsworth, William Roberts, Dominick Riccardo, Bernie Hrabowski, Felix Toro Jr, Ronald Jones, Travis Harman, James Dombroski, James Stokes, Virginia Bealer, and Jack Kasar



American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer Program Accreditation

Wilkes-Barre is proud to announce that we have received continued accreditation of our Cancer Program by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer.

By taking a multidisciplinary approach to treating our Veterans with a cancer diagnosis, our health care professionals, including surgeons, oncologists, radiologists, pathologists, and other cancer specialists are fighting on a united front for the best possible clinic outcomes and an increased quality of life.

"It's a lot of work. The program monitors and tracks quality care standards which must be met to achieve certification, but it's also a testament of the care that we're able to provide our Veterans. The team is very proud of the work we're doing and the services we provide."

—ASHLEY GILMORE, CANCER PROGRAM COORDINATOR

EIGHT CONVENIENT LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center
1111 East End Blvd, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711
507-824-3521 / 877-928-2621

Allentown Community Based Outpatient Clinic
3110 Hamilton Blvd, Allentown, PA 18103
610-599-0127

Columbia County Community Based Outpatient Clinic
301 West Third Street, Berwick, PA 18603
570-759-0351

Northampton County Community Based Outpatient Clinic
701 Slate Belt Blvd., Bangor, PA 18013-9341
610-599-0127

Sayre Community Based Outpatient Clinic
1537 Elmira Street, Sayre, PA 18840
570-888-6803

Tobyhanna Community Based Outpatient Clinic
Tobyhanna Army Depot, Bldg. 220
Tobyhanna, PA 18466
570-615-8341

Wayne County Community Based Outpatient Clinic
600 Maple Avenue, Honesdale, PA 18431
570-251-6543

Williamsport Community Based Outpatient Clinic
1705 Warren Avenue, 3rd Fl, Ste. 304
Williamsport, PA 17701
570-322-4791



Call Center

1-877-928-2621

CONNECT
WITH US



ONLINE

<http://www.wilkes-barre.va.gov>



FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/VAWilkesBarre>

Please Remember to Leave Your Weapons at Home!

For the safety of our Veterans, visitors, and staff please remember that weapons are prohibited on the grounds of the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center and all Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

Per 38 CFR 1.218- Security and Law Enforcement at VA Facilities.

- It is unlawful to possess a firearm, carried either openly or concealed, whether loaded or unloaded except by Federal or State Law Enforcement Officers on official business.
- It is unlawful to introduce or possess explosives, or explosive devices which fire a projectile, ammunition, or combustibles.
- It is unlawful to possess knives which exceed a blade length of 3 inches; switchblade knives; any of the variety of hatchets, clubs and hand-held weapons; or brass knuckles.



For additional security information please contact the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center Police Department at 570-824-3521 Ext. 27365.