

Veterans Healthy Times

Spring Edition

Latest Generation Committee

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Homes For Our Troops

Homes for Our Troops is a non-profit organization founded in 2004 which is strongly committed to helping the servicemen and women who have selflessly given to their country and have returned home with serious disabilities and injuries. It works to secure donations of money, building materials, and professional labor, and then coordinates the process of building a new home or adapting an existing home for handicapped accessibility.

One of VA Boston's Veterans, Sergeant Brian Fountaine has been a recent recipient of this organization's goodwill. While serving in the First Brigade Combat Team of the Fourth Infantry Division, Sergeant Fountaine came under attack, which resulted in the loss of both his lower legs. This was his second tour of duty, one for which he volunteered.

This past Veterans Day, hundreds volunteered for the Build Brigade in Plymouth, Massachusetts for the groundbreaking for Brian's new home. Boston and Plymouth Firefighters, local church groups, friends and neighbors all lent a helping hand and large corporations donated materials; their efforts have undoubtedly made a tremendous positive impact on Brian and his future.



Hundreds volunteered for the ground breaking on Veterans Day (above). Sgt. Brian Fountaine thanks a volunteer for donating his time (below).



Giving back is what it is all about!

Home For Our Troops plans to take on an additional 20-30 home building projects in 2008.

To learn more go to www.homesforoutroops.org or call 866-7-TROOPS.



Don't forget your sunscreen everyday!

Let's Talk About Skin Cancer

A person's risk for skin cancers doubles if he or she has had five or more sunburns.

Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed type of cancer among men and women. People who have fair skin, light hair, and blue, green, or gray eyes are at higher risk. Hispanics, Asians and dark-skinned individuals of African

descent are far less likely than Caucasian to develop skin cancer.

Most people have moles, and almost all moles are harmless. But it is important to recognize changes in a mole- such as its size, shape, or color- that suggests a melanoma may be developing.

Be sure to show your doctor any area that concerns you. A

qualified doctor should be able to identify any suspicious areas you may have. If your dermatologist suspects you may have a skin cancer, he or she will perform a biopsy to confirm it and discuss with you the best available treatment option for your type of skin cancer.

Did you know you could be eligible for as much as \$1000 for serving in active duty?



'Welcome Home' Bonus

The "Welcome Home" Bonus is a one-time tax-free cash payment available to eligible United States service members activated since September 11, 2001. The "Welcome Home" Bonus program is administered by Treasurer Cahill's office. To date, close to 14,000 applications have been approved; another 13,000-plus service members are eligible but have not yet applied for the bonus. Any service member is eligible if they meet the following criteria: six months domicile in Massachusetts immedi-

ately prior to entry into the armed forces service, beginning September 11, 2001, and discharge under honorable conditions. Service members who served active duty in Iraq or Afghanistan receive \$1000. Service members with six months or more active service, stateside or outside the continental limits of the United States, receive \$500. "Our goal is to make all eligible service members aware of this program," said Treasurer Cahill. "We owe these men and women a debt of gratitude, and one way

to show it is through the "Welcome Home" Bonus." To apply for the "Welcome Home" Bonus, service members or their families must submit an application, which is available from Treasurer Cahill's office; a Residence Certificate; a copy of Discharge Papers (DD214); and a W9 form. For more information about the "Welcome Home" Bonus program, or for an application, please contact Treasurer Cahill's office at www.mass.gov/treasury or 617-367-9333 x350 or x505.

My HealtheVet Update

This fall has seen some new changes in the My HealtheVet website. Check it out!

- On the pharmacy tab, there is a new “blended” medication view. Your VA meds will be entered from the pharmacy package and you can add all your other medications, vitamins and herbal preparations. It is recommended that you print this list and share it with your Primary Care Provider as the VA’s computer system has the ability to check any compatibility

issues that may arise.

- There is a new Health Calendar which allows you to track your appointments, med refills, health reminders, personal events, and VA events. Print a “To Do List”. This is particularly useful for the busy person or the caretaker of an aging parent. There is an easier and faster way to recover lost passwords. You can check this out directly under the login on the first page.

Create an account at www.myhealth.va.gov,

then complete the In Person Authentication Security Process to be able to take advantage of all the features My HealtheVet has to offer!

To receive an E-newsletter or request assistance with any of the features of My-HealtheVet, send an email to VABostonMy-HealtheVet@va.gov. Be aware that this is not an encrypted email and you should not give out your personal identifiers such as social security numbers.



*Get organized
in 2008 with the
help of
MyHealtheVet’s
new Health
Calendar and
Home
TeleHealth*

Home TeleHealth

TeleHealth Technologies is a home monitoring and case management program developed to ensure that veterans receive the “right care, at the right place, and at the right time”. This program helps to keep our non-institutionalized veterans healthy at home and prevent emergency room visits and hospitalizations. Teams here at the Boston VA Medical Center have recently been awarded for extending their work

schedules to be available to patients and families, attending training to improve their knowledge base, and training VA staff on the benefits of TeleHealth for their patients. Comprehensive, diligent case management coupled with home TeleHealth technologies provides for continuity of care for the veteran that extends VA medical services beyond the hospital and clinic environment to patients in their homes. The greatest impact for

the patients is improved health care, daily monitoring of their health status, and individualized nursing case management.

This program also impacts the medical center through lower health care utilization of the patient. This provides improvement in multiple performance measures and such Advanced Clinic Access issues as clinical wait times and clinic appointment compliance.



*Right care, right place,
at the right time.*



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1400 VFW Parkway
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We're on the Web
[http://
www.boston.va.gov](http://www.boston.va.gov)



What's New at the VA

What's the buzz on Customer Service at VA BHS?

The Customer Service Committee at VA Boston Healthcare System is doing wonderful things for its patients and employees:

- Providing Visitor Guides in the waiting areas for family and friends to easily locate restaurants, hotels, transportation while visiting patients
- Offering healthier choices such as veggie burgers, Campbell's soup and a salad bar in the Canteen Cafeteria
- Examining the use of recliner chairs in patient rooms so visiting relatives and friends can comfortably spend time with their loved ones

Look for more initiatives from the Customer Service Committee to come...

The Department of Veterans Affairs has established a [national veterans suicide prevention hotline](#) that is staffed by VA mental health professionals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

VA National Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Did you know the VA Boston Healthcare System has a [new web address](#)?

This website was developed for our veterans to provide them with the latest information pertaining to the VA Boston Healthcare System and its programs.

Clicking on the **Returning Service Members** [picture link](#) from the homepage provides contact information about our special coordinator for Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF). The Returning Service Member page has links to information about benefits, eligibility, and enrollment.

If you would like to learn more about career opportunities at the VA Boston, you will find a list of current positions available or you may contact Human Resource Management Services at 774-826-1253.

The website link for the homepage is <http://www.boston.va.gov>, for returning service members, <http://www.boston.va.gov/freedom.asp> and for VA careers <http://www.boston.va.gov/careers>. Check out the websites!