



VA Boston Healthcare System OEF/OIF Bulletin

"Your interest and participation is the strength of this bulletin."

October 2009



*****Welcome Home and Thank You for Your Service*****

I had the pleasure of meeting **Dr. Megan Gerber** and **Carolyn Mason-Wholley, LICSW** - when my wife (an Iraq Veteran) and I attended the **Women Veterans' Expo** last month. Dr. Gerber (**Medical Director, Women's Health**) wanted to share with readers: "Our main goal is offering high quality, accessible and convenient care to women Veterans throughout the Boston area. We work with **CBOC's (Community-Based Outpatient Clinics)** to make care for women Veterans available where they live. We have two comprehensive Women's Health centers in Brockton and Jamaica Plain. At these locations, we provide multidisciplinary care along with primary care. We hope that women Veterans will think of the VA as a place to come for preventative care to help them remain healthy as well as a place to come when they are not feeling well."



Dr. Megan Gerber and Carolyn Mason-Wholley at last month's VA BHS Women Veterans' Expo, Brockton, MA.

Carolyn Mason-Wholley, LICSW, is the **Women Veterans Program Manager**. I asked Carolyn what her duties entail: "As the Women's Veterans Program Manager, I work with Dr. Gerber to oversee the services provided to women at the VA. My role at the VA BHS includes: assessing the needs of women Veterans, coordination of women Veterans policies and programs, planning for future needs, coordination of quality care, and evaluating the delivery of care to women. I ensure that women who served in the military know if they are eligible for VA services, that when a woman Vet comes to the VA she is treated with respect and dignity, and that she has access to care that meets her needs. I work to make sure her care is provided in a sensitive and safe environment. I spread the word about the VA to women who served in the military at demobs (demobilizations), social events, health fairs, and more. I am a point of contact for women with questions about VA care and benefits, connecting the Veteran to the appropriate services, programs, or people."

Everyone knows a Servicemember/Veteran

While attending the VA BHS' Women Veterans' Expo I meet Navy Veteran, **Tina McGrath**. Tina, a service-connected Veteran, volunteers for the Quincy Animal Shelter and the VA BHS (Prosthetics Department). Tina shared with me that she thought the Expo was very informative and it was nice gathering women Veterans. "I was really impressed by the turn-out- even though the weather was so bad." I asked Tina which Event Presenters impressed her the most. She had quite a list to share: "The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, the Women's PTSD program, Vocational Rehabilitation, the **MOVE** program, MASS Veterans Support Services Yellow Ribbon Program, Women's Health, Women Veterans Network and Disc Jockey **'Mistress Carrie'** from radio station WAAF FM 107.3." In closing, Tina wanted to thank all women Veterans.



Navy Veteran Tina McGrath

Strength of the Bulletin: Readers' Submissions/Thoughts... FAQ's

From Carolyn Mason-Wholley, LICSW:

"Women are now the fastest growing subgroup of U.S. Veterans. As of 2007, **14.3%** of active duty military (all branches) are women. **11** percent of the fighting force in Iraq and Afghanistan are women. The number of women Veterans is expected to increase dramatically in the next 10 years, and VA Health Care is expected to be in high demand by the young women Veterans of **OEF** and **OIF**. The Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to ensuring they have affordable and equal access to care."

You can contact Carolyn at **(857) 364-5994**. Also feel free to view the VA BHS Services for Women Website at:

<http://www.boston.va.gov/services/women.asp>



Photo of the Month:

I welcome what you believe is a great photo. There will be a vote on the best photo from the past year. I look forward to receiving your photo.

Before sending a photo:

Please contact me for photo requirements and specifications.



This Month's Photo:

Features VA BHS Employee, Tracy Knowles. Tracy is currently serving in Iraq.

Tracy mentioned that she will continue to keep in touch with her family, friends and fellow employees through the Bulletin. Tracy last appeared in the May Bulletin of this year.

"I enjoy going on missions," Tracy remarked in a recent e-mail to me. Tracy has been assigned as her Unit's **(101 Engineer Battalion)** Public Affairs NCO (Non-commissioned Officer). Tracy has been doing a lot of wrting and taking plenty of picutres for her Unit.

This monthly bulletin is published courtesy of the Latest Generation Committee. Its purpose is to show support for returning **OEF/OIF** Veterans among employees, their families and friends. If you would like to submit (info/photos/etc.) or have a question/concern send an

e-mail to: Anthony.Falvey@VA.gov

Visit the VA BHS at www.boston.va.gov