The Department of Veterans Affairs’ fourth mission is to prepare and respond during times of national crisis. VA’s Disaster Emergency Medical Personnel System (DEMPS) provides the resources and medical personnel essential to recovery and care. Recently, hundreds of VA employees deployed for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. VA Salt Lake City Health Care System (VALSCHCS) sent its own team. Each person on the ground is just one small part of a much larger picture of what hope and humanity look like.

“Medicine is one of those things. You can take it and use that skill in any part of the world and any setting and potentially make an impact,” said Marissa Grotzke, MD VASLCHCS, who deployed to Puerto Rico. “Even if the impact is to let someone know that there are people who care.”

Through careful coordination with other federal agencies, VA doctors and nurses created a hospital in the middle of a basketball stadium. “The VA had everything in place—the people and the resources to aid in this disaster. And we were there within two weeks of everything happening,” recalled Cheryl Walsh, VASLCHCS. “Those patients were inpatients,” said Glenn Reedy emergency manager, VA Rocky Mountain Network. “They were on hospital beds, hooked to ventilators in some cases, that require 24/7 monitoring and care.”

Outside the facility, other VA employees brought a sense of calm and caring to a grateful community immersed in chaos. However, the people of Puerto Rico never lost their spirit. “I don’t know that there is any one person that we changed their life, but I think on little things it helps for folks to know that there was a place

Deployed continued on page 4
Driving Positivity

From Rock Springs, Wyoming to Elko, Nevada, from Idaho Falls, Idaho to St. George, Utah, and spots all over Utah, every morning a group of selfless servants climb behind the wheel of a fleet of passenger vans. Their mission—to ensure their priceless cargo, our nation’s Veterans, make it safely to their medical appointments at the George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center.

The VA Salt Lake City Health Care System (VASLCHCS) covers one of the largest geographic areas in the VA Health system. To help Veterans get to their appointments, VASLCHCS’s Veteran Transportation Service, along with the Utah Disabled American Veterans Volunteer Transportation Network, offers a free shuttle system. Driving those vans, volunteers, many of them Veterans themselves.

“It’s good to be able to help these Veterans,” said volunteer driver and Air Force Veteran, Richard Kearsley. “Some Veterans either lack the means or their health just doesn’t permit them to drive that far, so they schedule a trip on the van. And it helps gives them the service they need to get their medical care.”

Richard drives from Idaho Falls twice a month. During his drive, he makes stops in Pocatello, Inkom, Malad, and Tremonton, Utah. Vietnam Veteran, Calvin Stewart, makes his trip three times a month from Richfield, Utah—his route takes him through Sanpete County. In 2017, our drivers logged over 1.3 million patient miles, more than 12,000 trips accident free, and 95 percent of our drivers are volunteers like Richard and Calvin.

While neither Veteran is paid for his service to his fellow Veterans, they both reap rewards. “It is common feeling that we have among all Veterans—that we’ve all served and it’s important to help each other,” said Richard. “That’s where the real benefit comes—knowing you’ve been able to do that.”

“You get the satisfaction of helping out,” said Calvin. “The patients really thank you a lot and that’s the reward. They appreciate you bringing them up, and they let you know.”

Driving continued on page 4
Deployed continued from page 2

they could go where, for a moment, they could feel safe and listen to them,” recalled Dr. Grotzke.

“It really surprised me how cheery they were in spite of the devastation that was so prevalent around them,” said David Cloward, VASLCHCS Engineer, who deployed to Puerto Rico. “If you live through it, and your family lives through it, then you have everything that is the most important things in your life.”

VA employees believe strongly in the mission of serving people. Thank you to the hundreds of DEMPS volunteers willing to leave their homes and families and offer assistance for weeks on end.

For more on the DEMPS program visit: www.va.gov/vhaemergencymanagement/cemp/cemp_demps.asp.

Driving continued from page 3

All Veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare are eligible for the free shuttles, but top priority is given to Veterans with disabilities, wheel-chair bound Veterans, and cancer patients. Unfortunately, recently some of these trips have been cancelled due lack of drivers. VA is currently looking for volunteer drivers in the following areas: St George, Richfield, Price, and Vernal, Utah, Elko and Ely, Nevada, Idaho Falls, Idaho, and the Rock Springs, Wyoming area.

Calvin, who has picked up extra shifts due to the shortage, has simple plea for folks, “[You] need to get out there and help society—don’t want everyone else to do it.”

While Calvin and Richard are Veterans, anyone with a valid drivers license can volunteer. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver, call Belinda Karabatsos, chief of Voluntary Services, at 801-584-1241, ext. 2.
Bundled up in cold-weather clothing, an army of volunteers march out into the dimly lit areas of Salt Lake City at four in the morning in search of the city’s homeless. Among that army, a dozen or so volunteers from the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System—deployed as part of the annual point-in-time (PIT) homeless count.

The PIT count is a federally-mandated count of the sheltered and unsheltered homeless people on a single night in January. From Jan. 25 to 27, the volunteers scour Salt Lake for three early mornings to seek out and count folks who spent the night of Wednesday, Jan. 24, on the streets.

“We are out here because we want to end Veteran homelessness,” said Edward Varley, a VA Salt Lake City Homeless Program social worker, as he and his team head under an I-15 overpass around 4:30 a.m. Jan. 26. They cross train tracks used by Front Runner and Amtrak, and come to a BMX course. Weaving their way around mounds of dirt jumps, they come across a small encampment not visible from the street, despite being just 50 yards away. The camp houses three homeless couples—one in a tent and the two others trying to sleep under mounds of blankets with tarps on top.

Ed, and his co-workers, Sam Vincent and Meisha Jensen, announce themselves as “homeless
outreach” and ask if the couples are interested in answering questions for the PIT survey. The man they first encounter agrees. While Ed interviews him, Sam and Meisha chat with the other couples. Only one other couple consents to the survey. As cars and semis whiz by on I-15 overhead, Ed and Meisha work their way through the 22 question survey. The most important for VA, number 10, “Have you ever served active duty in the United States Armed Forces?”

A Front Runner train barrels by on its way to pick up morning commuters as the group wraps up their interviews. The VA team gives the couples some food, water, blankets, socks and $5 gift cards to a fast food place and head out to find the next group. The scene replays itself three more times throughout the next couple of hours, as one group of homeless folks point Ed, Meisha, and Sam to another homeless encampment.

In the span of two and a half hours, they find 18 folks living on the streets and complete 11 surveys. None of the 11 are Veterans, but VA still gains a lot by having staff volunteer for the yearly count.

“HUD [Department of Housing & Urban Development] uses those numbers to allocate resources..., said Ed. So, the better job we do of finding really vulnerable people, people experiencing homelessness, getting these surveys done—theoretically the more funding that could come into supply HUD/VASH [Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing] vouchers for my program or housing vouchers for our community partners.”

Building those community relationships is also a valuable benefit of the PIT. “Without those relationships, housing just doesn’t happen,” said Ed emphatically. “No independent agency can do it alone. It’s a team effort.”

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Helping Homeless Veterans

serve hundreds of thousands of homeless and at-risk Veterans each year. Independently, and in collaboration with federal and community partners, VA programs provide Veterans with housing solutions, employment opportunities, health care, justice- and reentry-related services and more. Learn more about these programs at www.saltlakecity.va.gov/services/homeless/index.asp.

This collaborative program between HUD and VA combines HUD housing vouchers with VA supportive services to help homeless Veterans and their families, find and sustain permanent housing.
Local Veterans experience “Miracles on a Mountainside” at Winter Sports Clinic

More than a dozen VA Salt Lake City Health Care System (VASLCHCS) Veterans put their courage to the test and came out on top at the 32nd National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic held April 1 to 6, in Snowmass, Colorado. “It was pure joy to see our Veterans be so successful,” said Dayna Geiger, a physical therapist from George E. Wahlen Medical Center who attended the clinic with a team of 13 local Veterans, numerous volunteers and staff. “I loved how the team bonded and seeing the friendships made,” Geiger said. “Everyone comes away exhausted, yet motivated, and ready for more opportunities.”

Co-sponsored by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Disabled American Veterans (DAV), this year’s clinic brought together more than 400 of our nation’s disabled Veterans, allowing them to overcome obstacles and challenge their perceived limitations through adaptive sports. The yearly event includes Nordic and downhill skiing, sled hockey, rock climbing, scuba diving, paddling and a wide variety of other sports and workshops. It is the largest rehabilitative event of its kind in the world.

Among the local Veterans attending was 56-year-old Monty Monserret. A second-year attendee, he was looking forward to not only skiing, but socializing with friends from last year’s event. Like many disabled Veterans, Monserret experienced depression after he lost his eye sight and often isolated himself. “I didn’t want to get out of the house,” he said of life before Winter Sports Clinic. “I was lazy and the only thing I looked forward to was feeding the birds.” This year, Monserret felt more confident after a year of practicing with team Salt Lake City. “I was a lot more excited to come this year.”

Monserret was also able to act as a mentor for newbie team members, which included three members who were skiing for the first time, Geiger said. “They all looked me in the eye and said, ‘I can’t believe I have to wait another year to do this again.’”
Veteran attendees from the Salt Lake City team included: Robert Ahlborn, Monty Monserret, William Eskridge, Anna Kennedy, Shane Housley, Steven Bosson, Kerry Conway, Arthur Seanz, Reginald Wells, David Wood, John Paxman, Darrell Bonzo and Hal Baird.
Winter Sports Clinic photos on Facebook at Sports4Vets
It was a privilege and an honor to attend the 2018 Women Veterans Celebration. This important annual event for our Utah Women Veterans honors Women Veterans for serving their country and making the ultimate sacrifice. These brave, strong, courageous women have gone above and beyond in their lives and that is just one of the many reasons we celebrate them.

Over 200 Women Veterans packed the Founders Room in the Zion Bank Building in downtown Salt Lake City. Every one of them smiling throughout the evening and so proud to be there. Special touches made the event memorable, like: the lavender table decorations, wellness gift boxes from Scentsy for every Veteran, hors d’ouvres from MacCools and a dessert table to die for. A military band played throughout the evening, and my lovely friend, Tammi Wright, sang the National Anthem for us. She did a beautiful job.

Resources for Women Veterans were set up and available during the event. The VA Office of Communications photographer provided the Veterans the chance to get their portrait taken. A raffle was going throughout the event. The women won some very nice items.

Brigadier General Christine Burckle, the first female commander of the Utah Air National Guard, inspired the women with her words and leadership. I commend her for paving the way for our future female military leaders. She reminded all the women gathered to speak up and stand up for yourself when you may be treated less than because you are a woman.

Thank you,

Audrey Miner
US ARMY VETERAN

For more information about the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System’s Women’s Program, visit our website at www.saltlakcity.va.gov/services/women/index.asp or call 801-582-1565, ext. 5414.
VA Salt Lake City now offers Veterans with Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia an alternative to surgery.

Men at the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System (VASLC), looking for BPH relief, now have a new treatment option: the Rezūm System.

What is BPH?
Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) is a localized enlargement of the prostate gland in aging adult men. It affects approximately 50% of men over the age of 50, and up to 90% of men over 80. More than 12 million men across the U.S. suffer from BPH.

BPH is an excess growth of prostate tissue that compresses and obstructs the urethra, reducing the flow of urine from the bladder and sometimes blocking it entirely. Although the absolute size of the prostate does not correlate to severity of symptoms, symptoms are extremely common in men. As symptoms increase, they can greatly impact a man’s quality of life. BPH symptoms include waking up multiple times during the night to urinate, frequency, urgency, irregular and weak urinary flow, anxiety, challenges with sexual function and limitations on daily activities.

What are the treatment options?
Previously, BPH treatment required long-term use of BPH medications, which often have significant side effects, or a surgical procedure that required general or spinal anesthesia in a hospital setting with the high potential for long-term side effects.

But now, VHASLC is offering Rezūm water vapor therapy to its BPH patients. Rezūm is a minimally invasive alternative to BPH medications that relieves symptoms safely and effectively in an office or out-patient setting, with minimal side effects. The procedure is done during one visit, and patients return to activities within a few days.

How does it work?
Rezūm is a minimally invasive, in-office treatment option that uses the natural energy stored in water vapor, or steam. It is a safe and effective treatment available to relieve lower urinary tract symptoms associated with benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH.

During each treatment, sterile water vapor is released throughout the targeted prostate tissue. When the steam turns back into water, the cells are gently and immediately damaged, causing cell death.

Over time, the body’s natural healing response removes the dead cells, shrinking the prostate. With the extra tissue removed, the urethra opens, reducing BPH symptoms.

Most patients begin to experience symptom relief in as soon as two weeks with the majority of benefit occurring by 3 months and maintained out to 3 years.

Why do our veterans choose Rezūm?
- Alternative to BPH medications, thus avoiding side effects
- Relieves symptoms safely and effectively
- Simple in-office therapy
- Does not require general anesthesia
- Can treat patients early in the disease state
- Noticeable symptom improvement within two – four weeks
- Preserves erectile and ejaculatory functions
- Ability to return to regular activities within a few days

If you are a VA Salt Lake City Health Care System Veteran with Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) and would like to be considered for the Rezūm procedure, please contact your Primary Care provider.

* Individual benefits may vary and we will help you verify eligibility.

Advanced Low Vision Rehabilitation Clinic
The Low Vision Clinic works collaboratively with the VIST Coordinator to assess the Veteran’s needs and interests as well as determine goals to assist the Veteran in adjustment to vision loss.

801-582-1565, ext. 1574

Choice Program
Serving Veterans waiting more than 30 days for an appointment or living greater than 40 miles away from the closest VA facility.

1-866-606-8198
www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/

Community Residential Care (CRC) Program
CRC provides supervision to eligible Veterans who are not in need of hospitalization or nursing home placement but who, because of mental health or psychosocial conditions, would benefit from living in a home setting.

Decedent Affairs
Patient Representatives are here to assist you when a loved one passes. We can answer all of your questions about burial reimbursements, grave markers and bereavement assistance.

801-582-1565, ext. 1900

Fisher House
This home away from home provides a place for families (who live 50 miles away or farther) to stay, free of charge, while their loved one is receiving treatment. Reservations are required.

801-582-1565, ext. 5900

Holistic Medicine
Holistic Medicine provides pain medicine, palliative care and integrative health services to our Veterans.

• Pain Medicine service provides care for patients with persistent or “chronic” pain, including medicines to control pain and psychological care.

• Palliative Care service provides supportive care for patients with serious medical illness, pain and management symptom control, psychosocial and spiritual care; advanced care planning, end of life care and bereavement support to families.

• Integrative Health service offers several options for patients: acupuncture, meditation, manual therapies, hypnosis, Qigong, Yoga and a Choose to Heal class to introduce various strategies and multicultural approaches to physical, emotional, spiritual wellbeing and better health.

Referrals from your primary care provider are required.

801-581-1565, ext.
Pain Medicine 4942
Palliative Care 2059
Integrative Health 2661

Complementary and Integrative Health Classes

• QiGong Gentle movements performed in a relaxed meditative state to promote health and healing.

• Choose to Heal Expand awareness of how mind, body and spirit integrate to promote healing.

• Mind Body Bridging Integrates mind, body, and spirit in a self-help therapeutic process.

• Intro to Mindfulness Explore the basic mindfulness practices and concepts.

• Meditation and Relaxation Training Experiential group that includes participating in a 40-minute mindfulness exercise.

• Mindfulness and Compassion Helps manage stress, chronic pain, physical disease and mental health disorders.

• Warrior Yoga Focuses on breath and body awareness to increase relaxation and mental clarity for wellbeing, management and prevention of disease.

• Mind-Body Skills Breathing techniques, gentle body movement and postures to reduce stress and promote health.

801-582-1565, ext. 2325

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)
The mission of HBPC is to provide comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and primary care in the homes of Veterans with complex medical, social and behavioral conditions for whom routine clinic-based care is not effective. The team evaluates needs, identifies resources and assists with obtaining federal or community services. Veterans must meet criteria to be eligible for HBPC. Referrals to the HBPC program are made by the VA primary care provider.
Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP) program

It is VA’s goal to keep Veterans “well and well-informed.” We strive to improve the quality of life for Veterans by providing VA clinicians with evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention practices.

For more information on classes and programs, contact

801-582-1565, Ext. 4246

• **Living well with Chronic Conditions**
  This is a six-week program to help any Veteran with any chronic condition to manage symptoms, work with your health care team and improve your health. Learn self-management techniques and skills needed in the day-to-day management of any type of ongoing health condition.

  801-582-1565, ext 4246

  Community locations also available at


• **MOVE! Weight Management program**
  VA’s weight management program designed to help Veterans lose weight, keep it off and improve their health. The MOVE! program offers patients several weight management options from group classes focusing on topics of nutrition, behavior modification and exercise.

  801-582-1565, ext. 2149

• **Walk with Ease walking class**
  Twice a week walking program to reduce pain and improve overall health. Available at the Salt Lake City VA Medical Center, plus Orem and St. George CBOC’s.

  801-582-1565, ext. 2149

• **Tobacco Cessation program**
  Our Tobacco Cessation program is designed to help Veterans quit smoking, chew or e-cigarettes. The program consists of tobacco cessation group treatment, pharmacist consultation, telephone coaching and text coaching.

  **VA telephone quit-line:** Counseling free of charge, any time between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Mountain time. The quitting telephone coaches provide up to four phone calls and can be reached at

  1-855-QUIT-VET (1-855-784-8838)

• **VA 24/7 texting support service:** For Veterans that can receive text messages. Sign up by texting VET to 47848 from your mobile phone, or visit [www.smokefree.gov/VET](http://www.smokefree.gov/VET). When you need support they will text you tips and encouragement.

  801-582-1565, ext. 2088

• **Living Well classes for specific diseases**
  These four-week classes will help you manage and reduce your risk for specific conditions. Also available at VA community-based outreached clinics via Teheleath.

  **Living Well with Heart Disease**
  **Living Well with Chronic Lung Disease**
  **Living Well with Diabetes**

  801-582-1565, ext. 2088 or 4286

• **Stepping On, fall prevention program**
  A seven week program shown to help adults improve balance and reduce the risk of falls.

  801-582-1565, ext. 1682

Library

The library features regular and large print books and magazines. Internet access is also available.

Bldg. 14, basement
Monday – Friday
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Medical Foster Home program

MFH is a voluntary program that offers safe, long-term care in a home setting. MFH is a great alternative to institutionalized care. The program includes regular comprehensive case management visits by a VASLC Home Care Team.

801-582-1565, ext. 2183

My HealtheVet

My HealtheVet is VA’s online personal health record that allows Veterans to take charge of their own healthcare.

• Communicate with your VA providers and clinics through secure messaging
• Access your VA medical records through the Blue Button
• View appointment information
• See lab results
• Prescription refills
• Get personalized wellness reminders

...and much more!

801-584-1209

[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)
Nutrition and Food Services (NFS)
NFS provides expertise in nutrition assessment, diagnosis and intervention to help the Veteran improve his/her nutrition condition, medical outcomes and overall quality of life. We provide group or one-on-one sessions.

Pain Management
Pain Medicine service provides care for patients with persistent or “chronic” pain, including medicines to control pain and psychological care. A referral from your primary care provider is required.

Other VA pain management programs:
- Women’s Comprehensive Pain program
  801-582-1565, ext. 5414 or 2151
- Chronic Pain Management group (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) is six-week class designed to improve your quality of life and physical/emotional functioning despite the presence of pain.
  801-582-1565, ext. 3497

Pathways
Coping with life’s problems and/or mental illness can be difficult but getting help should not be. Pathways can help you access the right care. This is not a therapy group; it is an orientation group. Walk-ins welcome!

Recreation Therapy
Recreation Therapy is a process that utilizes recreation interventions based on the interests, abilities and needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions. Veterans can choose from dozens of seasonal activities including skiing, bowling, golf, water volleyball, fishing, rock climbing, art, guitar, singing and many more.

Sweat Lodge
Healing Native American Sweat Lodge ceremonies are held at 7 p.m. each Friday; and a women’s only ceremony is held at 2 p.m. the third Saturday of each month at the Purtkwahgahm Healing Ground (southeast corner of Bldg 4). Call for information about other Native American Ceremonies.

Transfer & Lodging Center (TLC)
Lodging is available for Veterans traveling more than 50 miles for medical appointments in Salt Lake City. Veterans should check in at the Transfer & Lodging office.

Veteran Directed Home and Community Based Services program (VD-HCBS)
An alternative for (long-term) nursing home placement, Veterans are able to live in their own home.

Veterans Transportation Service (VTS)
The Veterans Transportation Service in partnership with Utah, Idaho, Wyoming and Nevada Veteran Service Organizations proudly support the transportation needs of Veterans traveling for appointments in Salt Lake City. Van service is available from Ely and Elko, Nevada; Idaho Falls and Pocatello, Idaho; Afton and Rock Springs, Wyoming; and from Vernal, Price, Richfield, Logan, and St. George, Utah. Wheelchair transportation is available on some routes.
Veterans Health Library
Evidence-based health information designed for Veterans. Includes educational information and tools to help manage your health.

www.veteranshealthlibrary.com

VIST
The VIST Team Program has primary responsibility for identifying and serving the needs of visually impaired and blinded Veterans. Services include:

• periodic total health reviews
• support and adjustment counseling for Veteran and family
• review and facilitation of individually appropriate benefits and services
• referral to the Advanced Low Vision Rehabilitation Clinic
• referral to a VA Blind Rehabilitation Center

Volunteer Services
VAVS volunteers are a priceless asset to the Nation’s Veterans and to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Please call us for information regarding volunteer opportunities.

801-582-1565, ext. 1241

RECREATION FAIR
OPEN HOUSE
FRIDAY JUNE 8
10:00-2:00
VA SLC
Medical Center
Building 8
(MPC; Gym; Pool; Wellness Room)

Community Partners involved include...
National Ability Center
Art Access | Splore
Wasatch Adaptive Sports
TRAILS | Salt Lake Adaptive Team
Red White & Blue
Common Ground
Team River Runner
...And More

• Come and try several recreational activities!
  • Biking
  • Kayaking (bring swimsuit)
  • Boccia Ball
  • Basketball
  • Fishing
  ...and many more recreational opportunities to experience!

• Recreation Demonstrations!

• Meet some of the many amazing organizations that make recreation accessible to the community in Utah!

• Recreation Giveaway at 1:00pm, you must be a Veteran and present to accept.

  Open to VA Staff and ALL Veterans of All Abilities

For more information, please contact Heather Brown: 801-582-1565, Ext. 1559, heather.brown2@va.gov.
Join us in celebrating the birth of your little one!

Women’s Service

Baby Shower

Games
Educational Presentations
Gifts for you and your baby
Light lunch

To RSVP and for more information contact Julie Carney at 801-582-1565 ext. 2613

05•11•18 11am-2pm
George E. Wahlen Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center
500 Foothill Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84148, Bldg 8, MPC

WWW.SaltLakeCityVA.Gov
Facebook.Com/VASaltLakeCity
Twitter.Com/VASaltLakeCity