



MICHAEL E. DeBAKEY  
VETERANS AFFAIRS  
MEDICAL CENTER

## SPRING 2018 VOLUME 3

- GEC
- CLC
- HBPC
- Palliative Care
- Geriatric Clinic
- Wound Care

### SAIL Update:

The SAIL CLC rating is no longer used; VA is now using a 5-Star rating based on CMS methodology.

The system considers survey results, staffing and quality measures.



Overall Rating

**Submissions requested:  
The next edition of the  
Extended Care  
Newsletter  
will be in August, 2018.  
YOUR submissions  
are requested.  
Please submit for review  
by July 27.**

# Newsletter Geriatrics & Extended Care

Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center

## Notes from the Editor



Angela Catic, MD

Welcome to the spring edition of the ECL newsletter! It is an exciting time in Extended Care, with the new Geriatrics and Wound Clinic space opening on the 4th floor, reopening of the 1C CLC, the upcoming geriatric fellowship graduation, and anticipation of the arrival of our six incoming geriatric fellows in July. Happy spring!

*A pleasant atmosphere and friendly faces greet visitors to the NEW Extended Care Specialty Clinic.*

*See article on Page 2.*



## Notes from the Medical Director



Syed N. Imam, MD

It is our desire to empower Veterans and the Nation to overcome the challenges of aging, disability, and serious illness. The goal is always to improve health, maintain independence, improve quality of life, and facilitate aging with dignity for all older people.

Now we are responsible for the safety, dignity and comfort of those who once nurtured and took care of us.

May is celebrated as Older Americans Month. Please join us to achieve our mission by improving our geriatrics knowledge base, recruiting high quality professionals to the field of geriatric medicine, and raising public awareness of the culture sensitive high-quality care needs of the elderly.

## Palliative Care News

Our palliative care group was fortunate to host Dr. Rajagopal in April. Dr. Rajagopal, a pioneer physician from Trivandrum and the father of Palliative Care in India, has received many awards for his work and is nominated for a 2018 Nobel Peace Prize. Dr. Rajagopal has tirelessly worked on relieving suffering in cancer patients at the end of life and was recently awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award presented by the Government of India, for his pioneering work in palliative care. Dr. Raj is Chairman of Pallium India and the India Co-Chair of a Palliative Care Fellowship Program in collaboration with M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. The ultimate goal of this program is to help underserved patients and families in India who are suffering from cancer pain and are facing death.

Based on Dr. Raj's dedicated work with patients with terminal cancer in India and the role he played in changing morphine rules and accessibility to deserving patients, a documentary named "Hippocratic" was made about him and his journey, by Australian filmmakers. The movie has been shown to rave reviews in cities throughout Australia and Canada. It is now being presented across the US and we were honored to have a showing in Houston on April 12th.

Dr. Rajagopal and Dr. Suresh Reddy (MDACC Palliative Care Fellowship Director) visited the Houston VAMC on 04/12. They gave a presentation to our geriatric fellows and GEC staff and followed by a tour of the inpatient palliative care unit.



## Extended Care Specialty Clinic

The Geriatric Medicine, Wound Care and Supportive Care clinics made the much-anticipated transition to the new space on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. We are all very much enjoying having a dedicated clinic which is designed to serve the needs of our patients. Highlights of the clinic include a non-slip flooring, exam rooms with widened doorways, and a room which can accommodate a patient on a stretcher. Multiple patients and family members have already commented on how much they like the new space! Please stop by 4A-370 (across from the library) to visit the new clinic!



*One of the exam rooms in the NEW Extended Care Specialty Clinic*

**F**or those who may not be aware, geriatric clinic PA Rose Dust will be leaving the VA on May 11<sup>th</sup> to accept a new position with a post-acute care group in Denver, Colorado.

Rose completed the PA Residency in Geriatrics here at MEDVAMC in 2017 and assumed her current roles as Geriatrics Clinic PA, PA Residency Director and Clinical Preceptor for 90 BCM PA students per year. She has been a great asset to Extended Care, excelling in her clinical and educational roles.

Dr. Catic will be the interim director of the Geriatric PA Residency Program following Rose's departure. We appreciate her willingness to take this on.

*~ Goodbye Rose ~  
All the best  
in your next  
adventure!*



## CLC News

LeShea Nixon was recently recognized for her work in the STAR-VA program by Michele J. Karel, PhD, ABPP, who is the Psychogeriatrics Coordinator for the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, VA Central Office. Please see the letter of commendation below. Congratulations, LeShea!

Hello,

I am writing to acknowledge and express our gratitude for LeShea Nixon's service to the STAR-VA training program the past few years. As you know, in STAR-VA, we train CLC teams in this interprofessional, behavioral approach for managing distressed behaviors among CLC residents with dementia. (See program information here: <https://www.vapulse.net/groups/star-va>).

As a STAR-VA Nurse Champion Training Consultant, LeShea has collaborated in developing training materials for our annual virtual training workshop, provided didactic and experiential group training during that workshop, and co-facilitated two monthly STAR-VA Nurse Champion consultation groups between May and October the past three years. She has significantly helped to shape, organize, and continue to improve our Nurse Champion consultation process. Her experience as a Nurse leader, and her model collaborative partnership with Dr. Karen Benson, STAR-VA psychologist leader, are both strong assets for our program.

Over the past two years, we have been able to offer and provide VACO funding to your facility, through the Office of Nursing Services, to cover the time that LeShea and others dedicated to the program. Unfortunately, this year we are unlikely positioned to offer funding given recent changes in VA Central Office budgets. We are thrilled that LeShea remains interested to serve as a STAR-VA trainer and consultant this coming year (if feasible given current responsibilities and emerging roles) and hope that she will have ongoing support from your local VAMC leadership to do so. To the extent that LeShea remains available, this role is estimated to take 1-2 hours/week from December 2017 through April 2018, as we plan for this year's training program, and then 2-3 hours/week from May to October 2018 to offer consultation to this year's Nurse Champion trainees.

Thank you so much for supporting LeShea's leadership in the STAR-VA training program. We look forward to working with her again this coming year with your support.

Best, Michele

## HBPC News

We are pleased to present musings from Michael Anderson, PA-C who recently joined the HBPC staff...

"After completing the Physician Assistant Residency in Geriatric Medicine in January 2018, I was grateful for the opportunity to join the Home Based Primary Care Program.

As providers in the VA, we are all blessed with the opportunity to serve those who have served our great nation. Being a Veteran myself, I am granted the chance to serve my fellow Veterans - those in whose footsteps I followed.

What a delight it is to sit down with a 90-something World War II Veteran and hear his stories! To see men and women who have pictures and treasures from years ago, from far off lands, where they fought, faced hardships, perils, and problems most of us will never know.

Along with their memories, these aging Veterans share their current struggles with health, family, the loss of their friends and spouses, and living with illness, pain, and debility/disability. I've walked into many humble homes, some of which should not be considered livable. Recently, I sat at the bedside of a double-amputee, who struggles with a lengthy list of medical conditions, an ongoing battle with nicotine dependence, a home that is not fit for his mobility needs, and a lack of resources for transportation in a rural area. And yet he was gracious, polite, and laughed along with me when the chair I sat on broke under my weight. He just asked me to set it aside so that he could try to fix it the next time he had the energy to get out of bed and tinker with it a bit.

If you have the opportunity in your busy days, take a moment to get to see the lives of your patients. This may be doing a home visit. It may be looking at a picture they brought with them. It may be asking a question that is more personal than your standard review of systems or social history.

Learn your patient's goals of care. Get to know who the caregivers are. Document in detail, practice good medicine, and CARE."

