



Welcome to the VIP Initiative

DECEMBER 2020

An IDEAS –VISN 19 Service and Research Collaborative

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM VIP!!!!



During this festive time of the year, we wanted to say thanks to you. We recognize all of your efforts and appreciate you very much. Happy Holidays!! Best wishes to you during the holidays. Thank you for your dedication all through the year and all of your hard work.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Please Welcome, Andrea Nichols, BSN, RN



I started my nursing journey in 1991 after injuring myself in Marine Corps boot camp and being sent home. I had a friend whose mom worked at a nursing home, so I thought, why not. I became a CNA in a couple of months and went from skilled nursing care, to home care, went to school to get my AA degree (a first in my family) and eventually I found myself working as a CNA on an oncology unit of the local hospital where I lived in the Pacific Northwest. I struggled to find work as a new grad RN and spent my time volunteering. I was deployed with the Red Cross to help flood victims in Mississippi in 2011, deployed as a volunteer in 2012 on the USNS Mercy and visited the Philippines, North Vietnam, and Cambodia conducting medical outreach triage and surgical procedures for people in those countries. My first paying job as an RN was educating clinical staff on the use of hospital grade glucometers for a biomedical company. I moved back to San Diego, I landed a position as a Clinical Supervisor for home care nurses working with kids with multiple special needs and disabilities.

When I found the VA, I wanted more time being with patients. I have come to really love the role of RNCM. Early on, it was noticed that I may be a good fit for the VIP team and, to my surprise, I really like working with this patient population. It is a rewarding feeling to be allowed into these veterans lives and be trusted by them. It is rewarding to know I can literally make a difference in someone's life for the better. I absolutely love the positive vibe this team's staff gives off- it makes me want to be a better person. I am excited to learn and grow in this role. I know I was supposed to be a nurse, but I never knew where it would take me. It has been a pretty adventurous story so far and I look forward to the rest of the chapters. My real dream is in combining my love for clowning with nursing and to work with Clowns Without Borders. It is a real thing. Look it up. I went to clown college in 2005. My clown name is Bubbles and I can do balloon animals upon request!

Half & Half Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Waiver Trainings

Half & Half Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Waiver Trainings will be held on [January 9, 2021](#) from 11am to 3:15pm ET and [February 12, 2021](#) from 2pm to 6:30pm ET. To receive credit, attendees must attend the whole training and have a working webcam. For registration details email [Anissa Danner](#) and [Matthew Dungan](#).

SCOUTT INITIATIVE

The Stepped Care for Opioid Use Disorder Train the Trainer (SCOUTT) initiative is moving into Phase II, administering SCOUTT at more VA systems across the US. See the recent [publication](#) in *Substance Abuse* for details. For clinical and educational resources from SCOUTT, access their [HSR&D website](#) and their [University of Utah school of Medicine website](#).

PUBLICATION

Lei J, Valentino N, Butz A. Management of kratom dependence with buprenorphine/naloxone in a veteran population. *Subst Abus.* 2021. In press.

Kelley AT, Dungan MT, Gordon AJ. Barriers and facilitators to buprenorphine prescribing for opioid use disorder in the Veterans Health Administration during COVID-19. *J Addict Med.* 2020. In press.

Codell N, Kelley AT, Jones AL, Dungan MT, Valentino N, Holtey AI, Knight TJ, Butz A, Gallop C, Erickson S, Patton J, Hyte-Richins LJ, Rollins BZ, Gordon AJ. Aims, development, and early results of an interdisciplinary primary care initiative to address patient vulnerabilities. 2020. *Am J Drug Alcohol Abuse*

For resources, guidances, past newsletters and presentations, visit our VIP SharePoint site: www.tinyurl.com/vip-initiative