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Spring | 2016

# NFS Express

## Newsletter

DELIVERING PREMIER LEVEL NUTRITION PROGRAMS  
TO VETERANS AND STAKEHOLDERS



## National Nutrition Month 2016



**SAVOR  
THE FLAVOR  
OF EATING  
RIGHT**

**NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH® 2016**

**eat  
right.** Academy of Nutrition  
and Dietetics  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

*Nutrition and Food Services (NFS) teach Veterans how to “Savor the Flavor of Eating Right” in celebration of National Nutrition Month.*

National Nutrition Month® (NNM) is an annual campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to promote nutrition education and to highlight Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN) as experts in providing science-based food and nutrition information. This year, the theme for NNM is “Savor the Flavor of Eating Right,” encouraging people of all ages to develop mindful eating habits. Continue reading to view unique ways VAs across the country promote and enhance the health of our Veterans and community members.

## James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital: Haley's Healthy Farmers Market

A nervous excitement, fueled by months of preparation and anticipation, spread across the campus of the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital (JAHVH) and clinics on Friday, March 25, 2016 as the inaugural Haley's Healthy Farmers Market unfolded. Early that morning local farmers, vendors and Veteran health and wellness groups trickled into the hospital parking lot behind the Fisher House. Tents were assembled and balloon arches rose into the air, signaling the celebration of the forthcoming event. Fresh produce, local meats, honey, herbs, plants, and freshly baked breads were displayed across the vendors' tables and with an energetic burst of live music – the hospital's first farmers market had officially begun.



Various produce items available for sale at the Haley's Healthy Farmers Market

The mission statement of the market was, "Promoting health and wellness to the Tampa Bay Veteran community during National Nutrition Month (NNM)." Haley's Healthy Farmers Market truly brought the Veteran community together, starting from the early planning stages. The farmers market began as a vision of several hospital employees, including those from NFS, Wellness Works and most significantly, Hospital Director Joe Battle. Without Director Battle's unwavering support, the farmers market could not have become a reality.

The task of creating the market was assigned to the JAHVH 2016 class of dietetic interns as part of the NNM celebration. These six young women formed a committee called Dietetic Intern Nutrition Experts (DINE) and embraced the challenge of starting the first farmers market. Collaboration with multiple hospital departments and community resources for Veterans, along with creativity, allowed DINE to finally bring the farmers market to life.

The market increased exposure and accessibility to locally grown fresh produce and provided nutrition education in an exciting atmosphere. According to visitor questionnaires, 20 percent of visitors had never been to a farmers market and 99 percent reported that they would return to the market again. Cooking demonstrations featured the local products and showcased healthy ways to incorporate fresh produce and herbs, following with NNM theme of "Savor the Flavor."

The services provided by Haley's Healthy Farmers Market honor America's Veterans and help improve their health and well-being, in direct alignment with the JAHVH mission. The sustainability goal of this market is to increase access to fresh and local foods and to provide nutrition education in an environment that is both entertaining and convenient for the Veteran community. The next Haley's Healthy Farmers Market will be hosted on Friday, April 22 and Friday, May 20. The market will take a break over the summer and then restart at the beginning of the Florida growing season in the fall through collaboration with local farmers and Veteran groups within the community.



Local orange and grapefruit tasting at the citrus stand

Submitted By: Dietetic Interns— Hillary Markey, Meredith Rockey, Jennifer Hughes, Ericka Hardin, Elisabeth Bermel, and Jordan Holland; Supervised By: [Melody Chavez](#), RDN; JAHVH

### Yummy Benefits Cookbook Volume II



***The Yummy Benefits Cookbook Volume II is available for download! The latest of edition of the cookbook features an interactive table of contents—click on a recipe name in the table of contents to view the full recipe.***

## Milwaukee VAMC: Flavor Experience Fair

The 2016 NNM fair was a success at the Milwaukee VAMC. Sarah Breitrack, Supervisory Administrative Clinical Dietitian led the way in planning the fair this year with the help of interns Abby Lutz, Cindy Dexter, Ben Mohr, and Kaitlyn Hoefs. RDNs and Dietetic Technicians also volunteered their time at the fair to help provide the Veterans with nutrition information.

The 2016 theme of "Savor the Flavor of Eating Right" was celebrated at the fair with booths dedicated to the different flavors: sweet, salty, umami, sour and bitter. The Veterans got to experience each flavor with a sample to taste. A poll at the fair, found that most Veterans and employees preferred sweet flavors. At the "Sweet Booth," Veterans enjoyed a sample of dried fruit and were encouraged to reduce the amount of added sugars in their diet to less than 10% of their daily calories. Veterans were also provided recipes for banana ice cream and fruit skewers with a yogurt dip.



Abigail Lutz, Dietetic Intern,  
at the "Sweet Booth"



Ben Mohr, Dietetic Intern, demonstrates  
how to make a Greek Yogurt Ranch Dip

Veterans explored the sour flavor of Greek yogurt at the "Sour Booth" with a homemade sample of ranch dip made by intern, Ben Mohr and were encouraged to add more green leafy vegetables to their diet at the "Bitter Booth." Additionally, Veterans became acquainted with the savory flavor of umami by sampling a miso broth. Umami is a flavor that comes from the presence of glutamate, an amino acid found in foods such as soy sauce, fish sauce, Worcestershire sauce, mushrooms, miso and kelp. Participants received a recipe for reduced-fat meatballs that incorporated more mushrooms in place of meat to enhance the flavor of umami. Lastly, at the "Salty Booth," a display was set up to show a variety of salt free seasonings, such as Mrs. Dash. Veterans received tips on how to decrease sodium in their diet. Participants were interested to know the difference between sea salt and table salt, both of which have about the same amount of sodium.

Overall, the individuals who attended the fair gave positive feedback and were happy to learn more about the different flavors. The fair illustrated the importance of mindful eating and exploring all the flavors in new and creative ways.

Submitted by: Kaitlyn Hoefs, Dietetic Technician Intern  
[Amy Giffin, MS, RDN, CD](#); Milwaukee VAMC

## Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VAMC: Live Stream on Facebook



RDNs Michelle Whiteman, Carol Phillips, Rachel McAndrew,  
Elizabeth Korb provide healthy eating information  
to Veterans and employees

In celebration of NNM, RDNs at the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VAMC in Philadelphia hosted a healthy eating and wellness event promoting this year's theme – "Savor the Flavor." The event was streamed live on our local VA Facebook page which enabled Veterans and employees to send in questions to their RDNs. At the event, participants were encouraged to touch and smell various dried herbs and spices during an interactive game of "Name That Spice". Heart healthy recipes were provided as well as information on popular nutrition topics such as eating well on a budget, breakfast ideas, and eating healthy on the run. RDNs spent time discussing mindful eating with Veterans and employees and encouraged all to "Savor the Flavor" and enjoy your meal!

Submitted by: [Elizabeth Korb, MS, RDN, LDN](#)  
Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VAMC

## Memphis VAMC: Adding Southern Spice to Everyday Life

RDNs at the Memphis VAMC utilized the NNM theme “Savor the Flavor of Eating Right” to provide Veterans with hands-on educational opportunities that made healthy eating unbelievably flavorful.

Lauren Collier, RDN, LDN organized this year’s activities for NFS. We started the month off with a “BAM!”—cue Emeril Lagasse; unfortunately, prior cooking engagements prevented him from taking a trip to the home of BBQ and Blues. Instead, we had our very own chef- trained Patricia Prince-Griffin, MS, RDN, LDN lead our NNM culinary program. Veterans participated in grocery store tours, cooking demonstrations, food tastings and educational opportunities under her instruction.

In our ambulatory clinics, outpatient RDNs “kicked it up a notch” by providing interactive experiences with both Veterans and staff. Activities included mindful eating classes, healthy snack samples utilizing fresh herbs and spices, and education sessions covering a wide variety of topics.

For our technology-savvy Veterans and staff, RDNs shared tips on Facebook, Twitter, and VA Pulse with links to additional healthy recipes and nutrition materials. The local nutrition web team was able to reach over 1,000 additional Veterans and staff with utilization of social media platforms.

Although NNM has come to an end, our RDNs will continue to find vast, innovative ways to nutritionally spice up the lives of our Veterans and fellow VA employees. In the words of Emeril, “If you think big, then it’s going to be big.”

Submitted by: [Lauren Collier, RDN, LDN](#); [Laura Ford, RDN, LDN](#); [Deidra Nelson, MS, RDN, LDN](#); [Kimberly Thompson, MS, RDN, LDN](#) and [Angela Wallick, MS, RDN, CSR, LDN](#); Memphis VAMC



*Deidra Nelson, MS, RDN, LDN and Laura Ford, RDN, LDN promote NNM at the Memphis VAMC*

## VA Illiana Health Care System: Nutrition Trivia



*Angie Sebree RDN, Jaquie Worthington RDN, and Haleigh Kneebone, Dietetic intern provide samples of healthy recipes*

VA Illiana kept the enthusiasm going all month long for NNM! The events hosted included:

- On Mondays, we sent out weekly nutrition trivia email to employees. Each week employees could enter to win a Fitbit Charge.
- We hung posters around the VA to promote NNM.
- We hosted an event in the Canteen where Veterans and employees could sample healthy recipes, get nutrition information, and submit a trivia response in person for a chance to win the Fitbit Charge. The featured recipes were “Peanut Butter Honey Yogurt Dip” with celery and pretzels for dipping and a “No Pasta Pasta Salad” made with spaghetti squash.
- On Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day, we hosted a potluck and an intern presented a case study.

During Monday nutrition trivia, over 175 people submitted responses. The emails promoted NNM, but also provided educational information too. Each week we would provide a different education topic, like the balanced plate, what an RDN can do for you, power up with breakfast, and 7 tips to eat healthy and take care of the planet. We had an overwhelming response to our events and are thankful to our veterans and employees for participating.

Submitted by: [Angie Sebree MS, RDN, LDN](#); VA Illiana HealthCare Systems



## VA Salt Lake City Health Care System: Mindful Eating and Reducing Sugar in Drinks

In honor of NNM, RDNs at the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System (VASLCHCS) educated patients and VA employees on mindful eating and encouraged them to reduce the sugar content of their beverages..

Distractions while eating can lead to increased intake and in turn, increase weight gain and health risks. Mindful eating allows for recognition of hunger and satiety. For the month of March, the VASLCHCS RDNs created a nutrition display that encouraged patients and employees to focus on mindful eating. The display challenged participants to be fully connected with the five senses while eating. The RDNs discussed the different stages of hunger and how to apply the hunger scale, before, during, and after meals.



*"Rethink Your Drink"  
spin the bottle activity*

RDNs also uncovered the truth about sugar content in popular drinks and challenged participants to "Rethink Your Drink." RDNs created a fun and interactive activity to test participants' knowledge of sugar content in beverages. The activity included a spin the bottle game that allowed participants to answer questions about popular drinks. For example, when the bottle landed on 100% orange juice, the RDNs would ask, "Is it healthy for me to drink as much 100% juice as I want?" The RDNs encouraged participants to answer and educated them on healthier beverage alternatives. Included at the display was the duration of exercise (minutes of brisk walking at 3.5 mph) needed to burn off the calories in certain beverages. Many participants were alarmed not only at the amount of sugar in their favorite drinks, but also the amount of time and exercise it took to burn off those calories. To encourage participants to decrease the sugar content in their daily beverages the RDNs provided them with healthy, refreshing beverage recipes, which expanded the theme of "Savor the Flavor" to drinks.

Submitted by: [Sara Mickelson, MS, RDN, MBA](#) and Morgan Renz, Dietetic Intern; VASLCHCS

## VA St. Louis Health Care System: Employee Wellness Health Fair

The annual NNM Employee Wellness Health Fair was a success again this year with over 215 employees in attendance. The events were sponsored by the Employee Wellness Committee and included booths hosted by Dietetic Interns, Veteran Canteen Service (VCS), Occupation Therapy, the Employee Assistance Program, Volunteer Services, and the Union.

Laura Moore, hosted the "VA Exercise Opportunities" booth, providing information about VA yoga classes, upcoming VA walks, and tips for exercising at your desk. The "Farmers Markets/CSAs" booth, hosted by Morgan Cooper, offered fresh fruit samples and provided information on local markets and CSAs and the benefits of eating produce. Holly Plamann hosted the "Employee Wellness Website" booth and showed employees where to find valuable lifestyle change information and meals plans on the website. The "Get Your Measurements" booth was a busy stop with Stephanie Calhoun obtaining weights and calculating body mass indexes and body fat analysis data. Emily Willems hosted the "Ask the Nutritionist" booth, providing the latest information about MyPlate, the new Healthy Guidelines, Mrs. Dash samples, and freshly made popcorn. The popular "Nutrition Jeopardy" game, hosted by Jerimy Parsons, allowed employees to compete with each other and win a variety of prizes, including gym bags, lunch bags, and cookbooks. The VCS booth, hosted by RDN Brittany Zaring, provided information about their healthy menu options and offered a prize basket drawing. VCS also donated the fresh fruit, bottled water, popcorn, and fruit and nut mix packages enjoyed by employees.

Employees were excited to enter their names into the "Gym Bag Bonanza" drawing for six gym bags loaded with healthy resources, including as a fitness ball, pedometer, diet and fitness journal, and two healthy eating cookbooks.

Additionally, Morgan Cooper, Jerimy Parsons and Emily Willems received second place in the Missouri Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Student Poster Award Competition on 4/15/16. Click [here](#) for more information.



*Front Row: Laura Moore, Morgan Cooper, Stephanie Calhoun  
Back row: Emily Willems, Jerimy Parsons, Holly Plamann.*

Submitted by: [Kim Matwiejow, MS, RDN, LD, VHA-CM](#); VA St. Louis Health Care System

## West Texas VA Health Care System: "Spice It Up!"



Top: Kelsey Jones, Dietetic Intern, helps Veterans "Spice It Up!"  
Bottom: Salt-free seasoning blends

West Texas VA Health Care System (WTVAHCS) RDNs promoted NNM with events each week for both Veterans and employees. RDNs emailed a monthly calendar of healthy tips with recipes and special events corresponding with the calendar. Activities included classes, taste-testing healthy recipes, and grocery store tours.

One of our favorite events was engaging our fellow employees during our low sodium week and challenging them to a "Salt-Free Seasoning" contest. Our VHA coworkers submitted their own creations of salt free spice blends and RDNs used the seasonings on both a vegetable and a protein dish in our Healthy Teaching Kitchen classes. Our Veterans were in charge of tasting recipes and voting on their favorites. Of course, the two winners had BBQ-themed spice blends as BBQ is a popular dish in Texas! Explaining to our Veterans that using less salt is not equivalent to a lack of flavor, this "Spice It Up!" NNM event allowed us to both promote and enhance the health and happiness of our Veterans and fellow employees!

Submitted by: Michelle Huynh, RDN  
WTVAHCS

## VA Southern Nevada: Master Gardener Collaboration



Master Gardeners Lori Evans and Cameron Stay

NNM events at the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS) taught everyone something new this year! Feature events included: "Rate Your Plate" interactive MyPlate assessment, Seasoning with Herbs food demonstration and sampling, and "Ask-a-Dietitian" open forums in the primary care clinics. Our RDNs creatively approached NNM with the aim to showcase techniques to season foods healthfully and make wiser food decisions.

We collaborated with the University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension team for gardening and horticulture expertise to cultivate the NNM theme. Our two volunteer Master Gardeners shared tips with our Veterans on how to garden in a container and provided education about native herbs. We also relied on the Medical Media team to integrate visual arts with science to create seamless and clear nutrition messages.

We often infer that the higher the number of attendees, the greater the success of an event; however, the conversations beyond the presentations created the greatest impact. Veterans and clinicians engaged in meaningful dialogue about food, gardening, and motivation to make lifestyle changes. Veterans were encouraged at these events by saying "Congratulations for trying something new today!" During NNM, we wanted to make a difference in a life at our VA while collaborating with our internal teams and community. At each event debriefing, our project teams shared at least one patient success story—we achieved our goal!

Submitted by: Deidra Devereaux, MS, RDN  
VASNHS

## John H. Bradley VA Outpatient Clinic: Cooking Demonstrations



Lori Gosz, RDN, CDE, Viva Johanknecht, MS, RDN, CDE and Heather Stumpf, RDN

The John H. Bradley VA Outpatient Clinic celebrated NNM with two cooking demonstrations provided by RDNs. The Appleton RDNs educated the Veterans and staff using new recipes with ingredients they may not have had an opportunity to try before. The RDNs prepared a pumpkin black bean soup, couscous fruit salad, and kiwi-mango salsa. Handouts were provided along recipes, cooking tips, and health facts regarding some of the uncommon foods used in the recipes. Nutrition facts information and ways to season recipes with herbs was appreciated by participants. The cooking demonstrations provided an opportunity to see how new ingredients can be utilized in recipes and improved confidence for Veterans and employees to try the recipe at home. Several participants expressed appreciation for the samples and were eager to try the recipes on their own. The RDNs received positive feedback from the demonstrations; one Veteran provided the following response, "Just a quick thank you for last week's "Savor the Flavor" event, and particularly for the Pumpkin Black Bean Soup recipe-family hit! Please continue to offer healthy eating/cooking ideas from time to time."

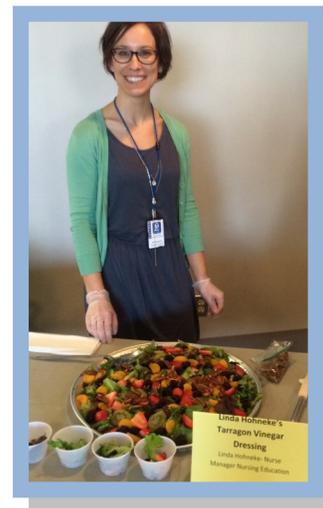
Submitted by: [Lori Gosz, RDN, CDE](#); John H. Bradley VA Outpatient Clinic

## William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital: Recipe Challenge

NFS celebrated NNM at William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin by hosting a Recipe Challenge. Employees were asked to submit a favorite recipe and prepare the dish the day of the event. Thirteen recipes were submitted from a variety of departments and also a group of Veterans from the inpatient Substance Abuse Treatment Program. Attendees were able to sample all of the delicious dishes and vote for a favorite recipe. Cookbooks of the participating dishes were also provided and made available on SharePoint for employees to access. In addition to the recipe challenge, attendees were provided roasted squash seasoned with three different spice blends and were given samples of those spice blends to use at home. Community Supported Agriculture and Farmer's Market vendors were also present to answer questions about products and services that are available at the hospital this spring, summer and fall.

Submitted by: [Ashley Olson, MS, RDN, CD](#); William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital

Photo (Right): Mackenzie Dougherty, RDN, provides samples of Linda Hohnke's Tarragon Vinegar Dressing, second place winner in the Recipe Challenge



## Wilkes-Barre VAMC: 4th Annual Healthy Recipe Cook-Off



Front Row—Judging Panel: Catherine Brewster, RDN; Emily Richters, RDN; Christopher English (Chief of Facility Management Service) and Mr. Petrillo (Veteran). Back Row—Cook-Off Employee Team: William Vassell (NFS Cook) and Brian James (Motor Pool); Cook-Off Dietetic Intern Team and Golden Spoon Champions: Rachel Pacala and Taylor Christy

In celebration of NNM, the Wilkes-Barre VAMC hosted the 4th Annual Healthy Recipe Cook-Off competition. During the competition, our Dietetic Interns took on an employee team in a 30-minute cooking challenge. Employees and Veterans enjoyed this educational and entertaining event. The time-sensitive challenge included preparation of a healthy entrée and dessert option, each including at least three spices. The event was judged by a panel and the winners were crowned "Golden Spoon Champions!" The winners for this year were Rachel Pacala and Taylor Christy of the Dietetic Intern Team.

Submitted by: [Gina Foltz, MS, RDN, LDN](#)  
Wilkes-Barre VAMC



# Room Service and Veteran Experience In Action

## Central Iowa Health Care System Expands Room Service Dining to Include Specialized Diets

VA Central Iowa Health Care System has recently expanded its NFS Room Service to include texture-modified and specialized diets. Staff are honored to offer room service to Veterans as a means to improve their health care experience during a hospitalization. Empowering individuals to be active participants in their nutrition plan of care embodies Veteran-centered care and supports the medical center's culture of excellence.

RDNs nutrition education to Veterans receiving acute care services. With this information, Veterans have the autonomy to select foods and fluids within their diet prescription. The printed menu provides healthy eating guidelines and promotes awareness of high-sodium foods and carbohydrate exchanges.

The Diet Communication Center assists the Room Service ordering process with the support of Computrition, a food service software designed to complete functions such as diet order management, menu administration, and tray ticket generation. Upon receiving a Veteran's order, meals are promptly prepared and delivered to the individual's hospital room. Liz, a United States Marine Corps Veteran and Food Service worker, recognizes the value of Room Service; "the small act of ordering dinner makes a big difference in the Veteran's stay, especially when they feel they have no control over their situation." She proudly considers her job as an opportunity to positively influence the Veteran's experience.

Staff who provide direct patient care have been an integral component of the implementation and maintenance of a successful room service program. Reflecting on positive feedback as a result of the initiative, one nurse notes, "it honors the Veteran's independence and promotes a healing environment." Press Ganey Patient Satisfaction survey results have indicated increased satisfaction regarding the taste, visual appeal, temperature, and timeliness of meals served.

Furthermore, NFS has recently transitioned from a cook-chill to a cook-serve food production system to increase Veteran satisfaction and ensure service of the highest quality standards. This transition was preceded by a conversion from tray service to cafeteria style dining for all Community Center Living and Domiciliary patients. Future goals are established to incorporate scratch cooking in place of prepackaged, convenience foods and to offer Room Service to those receiving outpatient Hematology and Oncology services. NFS maintains a valuable role in the Veteran health care experience; as one Veteran states, "this is excellent care!"

Submitted By: [Carla Huebner, MS, RDN](#); VA Central Iowa Health Care System



*Jamin prepares Veteran-centered meals at the Central Iowa Health Care System*

### Strategic Goal Update:

**Strategic Goal Leader:** [Kayleen Wichlinski](#)

**NFAC Subcommittee:** Food Service Business

**Goal:** Plan and design improved Veteran health care food service delivery systems through increasing the number of facilities with Room Service, as evidenced by increasing the number of facilities with Room Service in FY16.

**Baseline:** 7 facilities with room service

**Target:** 9 facilities with room service as measured by field inquiry

**Update:** Draft 1 of the toolkit is complete, revised, and now being reviewed by EES for publication. Portland VA, Indianapolis VA, and Puget Sound VA are on schedule to go live with room service this year. The team is developing a toolkit for 'Restaurant Style Dining' to be utilized to promote Veteran-centric food service operations.



# Nutrition Care Process: Malnutrition In Action

## Quality Improvement Project Addresses Malnutrition Identification Across Disciplines

A quality improvement project was implemented to address the discrepancy in the number of patients identified with malnutrition by RDNs compared to the number of patients diagnosed with malnutrition by physicians. A literature review was conducted to explore the effects of proper coding along with the underlying causes for a lower diagnosis rate in comparison to the RDN identification rate. An [education tool](#) and standardized [template](#) were created to improve communication between providers and to alert physicians of the identification of malnutrition. Data was collected before and after the use of the template. This quality improvement project led to a 500% increase in diagnosis of malnutrition using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth revision (ICD-9) codes recommended by American Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN). Collaboration with key stakeholders including physicians, RDNs, and health and information management systems increased the effectiveness of communication and improved the documentation of malnutrition. It is recommended that each facility meet with key stakeholders to develop an improved process to communicate the identification of malnutrition and to capture the appropriate case severity index and complexity of our patients.

Submitted By: [Chelsey Westbrook, RDN, LD/N](#)  
James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital

## Community Outreach Opportunities Improve Identification of Malnutrition



*Amy Booi, MS, RDN, CNSC, provides nutrition education*

On March 16th and 17th, VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS) RDNs provided 32 hours of service to at risk Veterans at the Las Vegas Veterans Stand Down. The collaborative community outreach event hosted by United States Veterans Initiative, provided an array of services to our homeless

Veteran population. RDNs provided nutrition education and offered every Veteran a malnutrition screening. During the Stand Down, our RDN team screened for loss of subcutaneous fat or lean body mass, which is a key indicator of malnutrition. Specific impacts from the Stand Down can be found [here](#).

RDNs collaborated with our Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team (HPACT) to coordinate a comprehensive nutrition evaluation consult for at-risk Veterans as a follow-up to receiving screenings at the Stand Down. Utilizing community events, such as a Stand Down to provide nutrition screening, serves as a catalyst for proactive healthcare and effective coordination of care. At VASNHS, we plan to begin offering walk-in RDN services at our Community Resource and Referral Center, where our HPACT is based, to expand nutrition services and improve ongoing accessibility for our homeless Veterans.

Submitted By: [Deidra Devereaux, MS, RDN](#); VASNHS

### Strategic Goal Update:

**Strategic Goal Leader:** [Kelli Horton](#), [Gail Schechter](#), [Kristy Becker](#)

**NFAC Subcommittee:** Clinical Nutrition Subcommittee (CNS)

**Goal:** Improve staff competencies through interdisciplinary identification and treatment of Veteran's Malnutrition in health services networks by providing increased education to health care providers by end of FY16.

**Baseline:** To be determined by Quarter 1 QPI report of number of trainings provided to healthcare providers

**Target:** 30% increase from Quarter 1 trainings

**Update:** Quarter 1 results indicate 91 trainings occurred. Please keep track of how often training to providers (MD, NP, PA, RN) is provided at your. A sample PowerPoint presentation for training providers can be accessed [here](#).



# Veterans Without A Home In Action

## Nutrition Classes Aim to Help Veterans Adopt Healthy Eating Habits



Healthy recipe provided during nutrition classes

The Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) RDNs at the Miami Veterans Healthcare System provide nutrition classes through the Veteran's Homeless Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD). The aim is to help Veterans adopt healthy eating habits and learn quick, affordable, and nutritious recipes.

The GPD is dedicated to assist community agencies that provide services to homeless Veterans. The goal is for homeless Veterans to achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels, and obtain greater self-determination. The HBPC RDNs implemented this program in the Harding Village, located in Miami Beach, Florida as the first GDP site for the nutrition classes. Based on the success of the program, the goal is to expand to other GDP sites located across South Florida. Some of the topics include 'Rise and Shine with breakfast', healthy teaching cooking demonstrations, and food safety tips to decrease the risk of food borne illnesses.

Last fall RDNs Marcia Hagley, Damaris Cruz, Monica Diaz, and Pasco County Dietetic Intern, Catherine Hibbitt, presented on the importance of fruits and vegetables. This discussion focused on the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables, tips to increase intake of these foods, food safety, and shopping smart. The Veterans were provided with a handout highlighting the information reviewed in the class and healthy recipes. Veterans were eager to participate in the class and many stated they would try the recipes provided with their family and friends. Overall, the nutrition classes continue to be popular among Veterans. The HBPC RDNs look forward to supporting more Veterans as they transition back into the community and adopt healthy lifestyles.

This type of nutrition service meets the requirements of an Advanced Program for Veterans without a home and experiencing food insecurity by providing group counseling in the community. Please contact the author listed below if you have questions on this program or would like more information.

Submitted By: [Marcia Hagley](#); Miami Veterans Healthcare System

### Strategic Goal Update:

**Strategic Goal Leaders:** [Polly Carroll](#), [Kathleen Saren](#)

**NFAC Subcommittee:** Food Service Business

**Goal:** NFS will advance quality and value by measuring and supporting efficient processes to end homelessness through increasing the number of "Advanced" Veterans Without a Home Nutrition Programs, as evidenced by 5% increase in the number of "Advanced" Veterans Without a Home Nutrition Programs by end of FY 16. "Advanced" programs are those such as food donations programs, SNAP sign up, collaboration with VSO/community organizations, Specialized HTK curriculum, and Homeless PACT Shared Medical Appointments.

**Baseline:** Current number of Advanced programs to be determined by field inquiry

**Target:** Baseline +5%

**Update:** The updated SME inquiry indicated there are currently 174 Advanced Nutrition Programs for Veterans without a home. This will be used as the baseline for the metric. Based on the responses from the inquiry, the committee has begun to identify the SMEs who have thriving advanced level nutrition programs for homeless and food insecure Veterans, and will be contacting them to start building a database of best practices. The co-chairs had their first meeting with the NFS Learning Consult with EES. They will begin development of training materials for the field on implementation of advanced nutrition programs. The committee continues the collaborative efforts with the NFS Marketing/Nutrition Informatics group in the development of a cookbook featuring recipes that tailored for Veterans without homes. The group is also working with the Healthy Teaching Kitchen (HTK) Metric Group in the development of a HTK Classes curriculum for Homeless Veterans.



# Healthy Teaching Kitchens In Action

## VISN 1 Creates Goals to Expand HTK Programs

In May of 2015, the VISN 1 Population Health Committee tasked a team within the VISN to look more closely at obesity within our population. One of the action items that stemmed from this work was enhancing the Healthy Teaching Kitchen (HTK) programs at all VISN 1 facilities. From this, a team came together with a HTK Lead from each of the 8 sites to evaluate the current status of HTK programs and compile data.



*Caption Requested*

Using this data and the VA HTK Toolkit and Business plan, a vision for the programs was developed: " All VAMCs within VISN 1 will have a HTK Lead, offer a series of HTK classes with a set curriculum, track qualitative outcomes, be adequately staffed by RDNs, and have facility support for funding and space." The vision expanded into a proposal that was approved in December 2015 by the VISN 1 Population Health Committee and the VISN Executive Leadership Board. The proposal included specific details regarding outcomes, anticipated return on investment and costs. The proposal was estimated to cost each facility \$7,500-\$12,000 per year.

### VISN 1 HTK Program Goals:

- All VAMC's within VISN 1 will offer a group HTK program, which will include the following:
  - Mobile cooking demonstration cart with appropriate supplies
  - dedicated space with adequate utilities for classes and storage
  - Funding (less than \$50/class) from NFS to support and sustain the HTK program
  - 4 RDN hours per week per site
  - A series of classes with set curriculum
  - Collection of qualitative data using standardized pre and post questionnaires
  - Administrative support for scheduling
- At least 1 site within the VISN will offer a hands-on cooking class series, grow food on-site to use in classes, and/or offer night and/or weekend classes.
- Monthly calls with HTK Leads at each site will be established.
- A VISN SharePoint site to share materials will be developed.
- HTK VISN Lead will be appointed.
- Video HTK class series will be developed for patients to view.

Recommendations were made for each facility to work towards meeting the program goals by FY17. Since this time, a VISN 1 HTK group was established and is meeting monthly. A SharePoint site was also developed to share materials and track data. An up-to-date gap analysis is in process, which includes site specific goals and action steps. The team is excited to receive VISN and facility support for this improvement project and look forward to evaluating the impact these changes have for Veterans within VISN 1.

Submitted By: [Robin LaCroix, RDN, CSO](#); White River Junction VAMC

### Strategic Goal Update:

**Strategic Goal Leaders:** [Jessica Mooney](#), [Anna Skillings](#), [Gail Schechter](#), and [Joan Ramirez](#):

**NFAC Subcommittee:** Food Service Business

**Goal:** NFS will advance value by measuring and supporting efficient processes to improve Veterans' health outcomes in clinical metrics (BMI, A1C, Weight) through Healthy Teaching Kitchen programs in FY16.

**Baseline:** 34 facilities collecting at least one of three clinical measures (BMI, A1C, Weight)

**Target:** 39 facilities as measured by field inquiry of SMEs

**Update:** 40 facilities are collecting at least one of the three clinical measures



## Social Media In Action

 [Facebook](#)

 [YouTube](#)

 [Vantage Point](#)

 [Twitter](#)

### Get Involved with Social Media!

On March 23th, the social media group held an education call discussing all forms of social media: Facebook, Twitter, Blog, YouTube, and Website. If you missed the call, you can access the PowerPoint presentation [here](#).

How can you get involved?

The easiest way to be more active on social media is to use the links below to read, share, like, retweet and interact with our VA nutrition posts!

- <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/health/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/veteranshealth>
- <https://twitter.com/VeteransHealth>
- <https://www.youtube.com/user/VeteransHealthAdmin>
- <http://www.nutrition.va.gov/>

Currently, the Facebook and Twitter posts are uploaded every Friday. If you forget to check in on Friday, most posts use the hashtag #VANutrition so you can easily search for them and share at any time.

Next, if your facility doesn't already post nutrition information on your local site, talk to your Public Affairs Officer or your site's responsible person for online media. You can develop your own posts or use the ones we already make for the national site and tailor them to be more specific to your local site. A lot of you may have posted on your facility's social media pages for National Nutrition Month, but don't stop there! We send our posts to the VHA NFS Social Media email group so it is easy to keep posting nutrition messages on your local pages throughout the year. Please contact [Krista Hagert](#) or [Deb Murphy](#) if you have any questions about getting started.

#### Strategic Goal Update:

**Strategic Goal Leader:** [Deborah Murphy](#), [Krista Hagert](#)

**NFAC Subcommittee:** Marketing and Nutrition Informatics

**Goal:** Develop "active" communications social media capability for national and local messages to positively impact Veteran contact and awareness of NFS programs, as evidenced by 20% increase in the number of facilities "actively" using social media by end of FY16.

**Baseline:** 20 sites actively using social media

**Target:** 24 sites as measured by QPI reports

**Update:** National Nutrition Month (NNM) social media included a blog post, Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. This is the month that local sites are most active on social media and some of them said they will be starting for NNM and then continuing throughout the year. An education call was held on March 23th to educate the local facilities on each social media platform (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blog, Website). The VHA NFS Social Media email group continues to grow and become more active with various outreach methods. National Facebook and Twitter posts continue to be posted on the SharePoint for individual sites to use.



## South Texas Goes RED for Women

South Texas' Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP) Program Manager, Rene' Jacob, RDN, co-lead a partnership between HPDP, Women Veterans Program, and NFS to provide an interactive event entitled "VA Goes Red for Women's Heart Health" on February 5, 2016. The event was held from 11 am – 1 pm in the Audie L. Murphy Veterans Memorial Hospital Recreation Center. Over 100 Veterans and Staff attended the event.

Attendees had the opportunity to hear presentations, visit with subject matter experts, learn healthy recipes, and participate in a short exercise activities. Key messages covered: **(1) VHA has tools available to help Veterans and staff stay informed, obtain correct health information, and assess their current lifestyle.** To highlight this, presentations were given on MyHealthVet, Veterans Health Library, and Healthliving Assessment. **(2) Listen to your body.** Not all heart disease patients have the typical symptoms of a heart attack. Two heart disease survivors provided testimonials stressing that heart disease can happen to anyone, pay attention to your body's signals, and don't delay seeing a physician if you have any concerns. **(3) Choosing to eat wisely, be physically active, and manage stress are three ways to improve your cardiovascular health.** Subject matter experts were available at healthy living booths on these topics. Local gym representatives presented their program offerings and led attendees in a short exercise to get the body moving!



*Rene' Jacob, MBA, RDN, LD and  
Dr. Michele Clements-Thompson*

South Texas RDN, Christy Murphy, was the programs keynote speaker. Ms. Murphy's presentation, "The Heart of the Matter: Understanding Risks for Heart Disease and Dietary Approaches to Improve Your Health" elicited audience participation on how to adjust recipes by substituting healthier ingredients. She concluded with a cooking demonstration of a heart healthy recipe, and delicious samples were enjoyed by all.

Submitted By: [Michele Clements-Thompson, PhD](#) and [Rene' Jacob, MBA, RDN, LD](#); South Texas Veteran Health Care System

## Memphis RDNs Gain Tools to Identify and Care for Veterans with Disordered Eating

In light of National Eating Disorder Awareness Week February 21st-27th, RDNs at the Memphis VAMC wanted to gain additional tools to help identify and better serve Veterans with or at risk for developing disordered eating patterns.

Millicent Meeks, MS, RDN, CDE, CEDRD, LDN—chair for the National NFS VA Subcommittee for Eating Disorders—provided staff with information and resources to improve Veteran care. To promote awareness of eating disorders to other medical staff, education was provided to Ambulatory Care providers, nursing staff, and Women's Center staff for early detection and treatment.

Submitted By: [Angela Wallick MS, RDN, CSR, LDN](#); Memphis VAMC



Photo (back row): Angela Wallick, MS, RDN, CSR, LDN; Deanna Wallace, MS, RDN, CSG, LDN; Cody Giovannetti, RDN, LDN; Kimberly Thompson, MS, RDN, LDN; Glynda Montgomery, MS, RDN, LDN; Erin Hartmann, RDN, CSG, LDN; Deidra Nelson, MS, RDN, LDN. (front row): Rosemary Greenwood MPA, RDN, LDN; Laura Ford, RDN, LDN; Michelle Grabowski, RDN, LDN; Millicent Meeks, MS, RDN, CDE, CEDRD, LDN



## Ellen Bosley Retires—Farewell, but Not Goodbye



*David and Ellen Bosley at their dream residence in Marco Island*

It has been my privilege to work with each of you. My husband David and I plan to spend our time with Mom in Northern Virginia, finish my doctoral degree, and to continue his work as a professional photographer in the next few years. We plan to retire permanently to Marco Island, Florida and live at a beachfront condominium with the ocean, palm trees and sand between our toes.

I am delighted to leave you in the great hands of Dr. Anne Utech as Acting National Director, NFS; Christin Bregman, Chair, Nutrition Field Advisory Committee; Mark Morgan, Vice Chair, Nutrition Field Advisory Committee and the Nutrition Field Advisory Committee Leaders. They will continue to forge forward with your help as you continue to develop and contribute significantly to current and future innovations.

Remember that each of you is a Leader in Veterans Health Administration and we count on you. In the words of Isaiah 43: 1-2 “Fear not for I have redeemed You, I have summoned You by name, You are mine”. I believe that each of us has received a calling of sorts to join the VA, and to care for those who have borne the battle. Despite the challenges that work brings us, we hold our heads high and forge on together in caring for our great nation of Veterans.

Please use my home email address if you want to keep in touch at [ellenbosley@gmail.com](mailto:ellenbosley@gmail.com).

God bless and keep you all,  
Ellen Bosley, MBA, MS, RDN



## Awards and Recognition



***Katie Braun, MS, RDN, LD, CNSC***  
***Houston VAMC***  
***Outstanding Dietetics Preceptor***

Each year the Nutrition and Dietetics Educators and Preceptors (NDEP) practice group of the Academy recognizes outstanding preceptors across the US during preceptor month. The purpose of the Outstanding Preceptor Award is to recognize the teaching, mentoring, and leadership activities of preceptors in ACEND-accredited dietetics education programs. Programs are able to nominate preceptors and send forth application packets to NDEP for review. The dietetic interns and Mrs. Kristy Becker of the Michael E. DeBakey Veteran Affairs Medical Center (MEDVAMC) submitted nominees to Area 4 which includes, TX, OK, NM, NV, UT, CO, AZ, and KS. Mrs. Katie Braun was selected as the 2016 NDEP Area 4 Outstanding Preceptor of the year. She will be recognized this fall at the 2016 Academy FNCE in Boston in addition to being listed as an outstanding preceptors in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and NDEP-Line. Mrs. Braun has worked at the MEDVAMC since graduating from the MEDVAMC dietetic internship in 2010. She is the RDN for the medical and cardiac intensive care unit along with a part of its step-down unit. Each year she works with the eight dietetic interns at the MEDVAMC and enjoys fostering their development into future leaders within the field. She also takes the opportunity and time to learn from her students as they enhance her teaching and communication methodology while helping her looking at work with a fresh set of eyes.



***Katie Black, BS, RDN***  
***James A. Haley Veteran's Affairs Hospital***  
***Patient Care Services (PCS) Nutrition Research***

Ms. Black received a commendation from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics for her contributions to the national Oncology Dietetic Practice Group (DPG) on current evidence-based practices in May 2015. She presented her published research "Predictive Factors for Enteral Nutrition use during Concurrent Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy for Head and Neck Cancer" in the DPG peer-reviewed publication in May 2015 and presented findings at Clinical Nutrition Week at American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN) in January 2014.



## Awards and Recognition



**Joanne Cooke, MS RDN CSR CNSC**  
**Kansas City VA Medical Center**  
**PCS Clinical Nutrition Practice**

Ms. Cooke serves as Chair Elect, Chair, and Immediate Past Chair for the Renal Dietitians Practice Group (part of the Academy for Nutrition & Dietetics) from 2013-2016. During this time, she expanded the funding for nutrition research grants and dietetic student education stipends, initiated the development of new educational materials by the Renal Practice Group, and developed the winning FNCE spotlight session in October 2014. In her earlier contributions, to gain the FNCE spotlight, she partnered with the Public Healthy Community Practice Group: "The Power of Prevention: Reducing the Burden of Type 2 Diabetes and CKD through Public Health Interventions and the Affordable Care Act" in particular speaker Williams, MD PhD, Associate Branch Chief; Epidemiology and Statistic Branch, Div. of Diabetes Translation, Centers for Disease Control.



**Angel Planells, MS, RDN, CD**  
**VA Puget Sound**  
**Patient Care Services (PCS) Clinical Nutrition Practice**

Mr. Planells was recently named a Hero in the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics Food & Nutrition Publication for September –October 2015. The Academy Hero designation describes an Academy member whom makes a difference both nationally and internally to increase public awareness of the services, expertise and dedication of RDNs. Mr. Planells served as the Chair, Academy National Organization of Men in Nutrition (NOMIN), promoted his desire to recruit and retain men as well as persons of color in the field of nutrition and dietetic. Mr. Planells was also featured in 2 Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics videos "[RDNs Nourishing the World](#)" and "[Men in Dietetics](#)".

### **Congratulations!**

**Roaxana Tamijani MS, RDN, LD, FAND was awarded the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year Award for Texas**



## Awards and Recognition



**Angela DiTucci, RDN, LDN**  
**VA Boston Healthcare System**  
**PCS Clinical Nutrition Practice**

During the American Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN) Clinical Nutrition Week in January 2015, Ms. DiTucci served as the script writer for, "Ethical Dilemmas In Communication Across the Age Spectrum: A Theatrical Presentation." She was appointed in 2015 as chairperson of the sub-unit Dietitians in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) Dietetic Practice Group (DPG) Medical Nutrition Therapy . Co-author of 2 articles in ASPEN Nutrition in Clinical Practice journal on nutrition and advanced dementia.



**Lucia Hisse, MS, RDN, LD**  
**Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center**  
**Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year**

Ms. Hisse has been an RDN for 4 years. She currently serves as the Outpatient Cancer Clinic RDN for the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, Texas. Lucia completed her Master's Degree in Nutrition through Texas Woman's University in 2012 and is currently working towards her Board Certification in Oncology Nutrition. Throughout her years at the VA, Lucia has covered several clinical areas including long term care, neurology and rehabilitation, mental health, inpatient oncology, general medicine, and the TeleMOVE® weight management program. Lucia is an active member of the health care team and enjoys serving on hospital and department wide committees. She has served as a member of the Malnutrition Diagnosis and Coding Interdisciplinary Team, the Home Enteral Supply Standardization Task Force Committee, the Malnutrition Awareness Week committee, the Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Protocol Task Force, and the Cancer Committee. Lucia has a passion for educating Veterans , other medical disciplines, and students. She created a Nutrition and Cancer PowerPoint presentation which is available to all clinicians and students on the Oncology Nutrition DPG national website. Lucia's drive to promote wellness also thrives outside of the hospital setting. She is a part time Registered Yoga Instructor and teaches heated, powerful flow yoga. She recently held two Mindful Eating workshops at her local yoga studio to which over 100 yoga students attended. Lucia's long term goal is to open a wellness practice, combining yoga and nutrition. This year she was awarded the 2016 Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year Award for the Houston Area.



## Awards and Recognition

**Catherine Austin, MS, RDN, LDN, FADA**  
**Memphis VAMC**  
**NFS Leadership Award**

Ms. Austin's accomplishments have proven her unyielding commitment to improving the Veteran's experience as well as improving Nutrition and Food Services. Some of her noteworthy contributions include: increasing staff to better meet the needs of the Veteran (improved access), implementing a new advanced meal delivery system, chairing the VISN 9 COTS purchase and implementation, establishing a Dietetic Internship with full accreditation status, and implementing a Quality Improvement program and Research program for the RDNs and the Dietetic Interns. She chaired the original national workgroup which developed the VA NFS initial nutrition screening and nutrition assessment computer software (1980s). She has expanded the awareness and importance of medical nutrition therapy over the last 30 years through her publications and presentation at the local, state and national level. As a leader, she encourages her staff and interns to take leadership courses, seminars and attend conferences in order to continuously improve skills and learn best practices.



**Marie V. Miller, BS, NDTR**  
**San Francisco VAMC**  
**NFS Dietetic Technician Award**

Through her commitment to meeting national goals for Nutrition and Food Services, Ms. Miller has "shown a level of dedication above and beyond the scope of her job" according to her Supervisor, Ms. Marilyn Benito. Over the past year she volunteered as the Chair of the NFAC Education council as well as being co-chair of the Committee on Conversion Dietetic Technician to Hybrid Title 38. Because of her efficiency, dependability, and commitment to our Veterans, she is highly respected in the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit and the Medical-Surgical Care Unit where she is assigned. She was an integral part in developing and applying for the SF VAHCS Mini Grant proposal for the PICU Veterans this past year. Marie acts as coach/mentor for an average of 11 Nutrition Student volunteers each year, identifying and supporting relevant nutrition and food services volunteer experiences. She participates in mentorship and coaching for Dietetic Technician Interns, supporting the fulfillment of goals and competencies required by their school.



# NFS In the News

**Amy Giffin, MS, RDN, CD and Annemarie Price, MS, RDN discussed NFS purchasing practices in “Green Purchasing News”\*\***



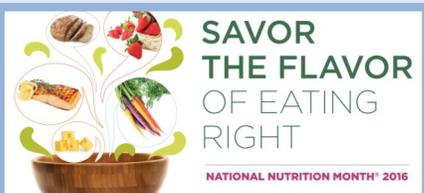
**Angel Planells, MS, RDN, CD was featured in “Today’s Dietitian’s Seventh Annual Showcase of 10 RDs Who Are Making a Difference”\*\***

## Vantage Point

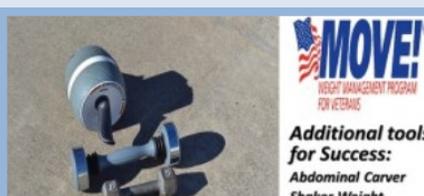
Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



**“Veteran Shares His Experience With Gardening, Weight Control”**



**“VA Dietitian: During National Nutrition Month, Savor the Flavor of Eating Right”**



**“Texas Veteran Uses MOVE! Program to Lose Weight and Keep the Pounds Off”**



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### NFS Resources

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Next Deadline for Article Submission:

**May 27, 2016**

Click [Here](#) to Submit Articles

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