NEWSLETTER FOR REGIONAL HEALTH COMMAND-ATLANTIC EMPLOYEES

RHC-ATLANTIC FOCUS

APRIL 2016

Good Catches help improve patient safety

By **David White**, Eisenhower AMC Public Affairs

Something just felt wrong.

The Eisenhower Army Medical Center's Emergency Department staff was treating a stroke victim who was within the four-hour window for stroke reversal through the use of tPA, a clot-busting drug. As nurse Agnieszka "Aggie" Sellers was preparing the medication, the size of the vial didn't seem right to her and, upon double checking, she discovered a 100ML vial that should have been a 50ML vial .

"It was an error in stocking," Sellers said. Had the wrong concentration been administered, the patient would have received a double-strength dose, exacerbating an already critical condition.

Sellers' "good catch" prevented a serious medication error. She later filed a Patient Safety Report (PSR) on the incident and the pharmacy reviewed its tPA stocking process with the staff.

"We can all learn from mistakes and protect patients," Sellers, who has been a nurse for 10 years, said. "Experience counts but … professionals continue to learn."

The web-based PSR system is a voluntary, confidential, non-punitive reporting system that gives health readiness platform personnel the ability to anonymously report medical events that impact the safety of patients. Voluntary event reporting is a passive form of vigilance for near misses or unsafe conditions.

"Filing a PSR is as simple as clicking on an icon on your computer desktop," said Amanda Newton, a patient safety manager at EAMC. All clinical computers have the icon on the desktop and there is also a button on IKEnet's home page that links to the patient safety page.

PSR "good catches" can be identified in areas including clinical processes or procedures; device, equipment or supply problems such as malfunctions or availability; falls; or unsafe administration of blood or blood products.

Agnieszka "Aggie" Sellers, a nurse on Eisenhower Army Medical Center's Emergency Department staff, made a "good catch" while treating a stroke victim who was within the four-hour window for stroke reversal through the use of tPA, a clot-busting drug.

"The target," Newton said, "is zero preventable harm. We strive to achieve this by having a PSR program that is transparent. Through teamwork and communication, we work to improve patient safety across all clinical activities as well as empower the entire staff – regardless of rank, position or job title -- to openly and honestly participate in the reporting process."

Making a "good catch" sometimes is as simple as something doesn't smell right … literally something doesn't smell right. This was the case when Shawna Dryden, a certified nursing assistant in EAMC's OB/GYN department, was preparing an indicator solution for a Pap smear.

As she was mixing the solution, she noticed a different smell than what she was used to. The solution calls for acetic acid, which is a weak acid usually found in household vinegar. The liquid she opened did not have a smell and Dryden knew right away that something was off.

After consulting with the clinic registered nurse, they found that trichloroacetic acid, which is used in chemical peels and the treatment of warts, had been improperly stored. The correct solution was used and the patient received a routine test.

As a result of Dryden filing a PSR, the clinic made procedural changes to prevent this occurrence from happening again.

"Be brave enough to stop and ask questions when something doesn't seem right," Dryden, who has been at EAMC for nine years, five as active duty, four as a civilian, said. "If I don't get answers that I feel comfortable with, I'll ask again."

Filing a PSR was easy, she said. "There was not a lot of paperwork."

"The process is simple," said Alice Pace, an EAMC health systems specialist. "We encourage everyone who encounters an experience where we can improve patient safety to take a few minutes to file a report.

"Everyone … especially patients … benefits from the input," Pace said.

FROM THE RHC-A (P) COMMANDING GENERAL

With Dignity & Respect For All

I can't imagine the courage it must take to share one of your lowest moments in life with a room full of high-ranking strangers listening and watching. Yet, that is exactly what four members of our military did a few weeks ago during a Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) workshop at the Command and Staff Officer School in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Their goal was to put their very real and painful stories in front of men and women who are charged with leading units within our Army.

Every year, the Department of Defense designates April as Sexual Harassment/ Assault Response and Prevention Month and encourages commands across our military to place emphasis on the negative impact sexual harassment and assaults have on our organizations. It is a time to raise awareness and to empower our battle buddies, co-workers, families, and friends whose lives are negatively impacted.

As I travel across our command, I've seen your dedication to caring for our patients and the pride you have in performing your jobs. Yet, I've also been told of instances across the region where "jokes" are not funny; "touches" are not appropriate, and "compliments" are harmful. No one should come to work in fear or feel betrayed by their teammates.

When leaders take command, they often capture the pulse of the organization using an anonymous command climate survey. These surveys help commanders assess the morale of the staff, and trends that can be leveraged or that need to be addressed/ eliminated. This is one way to help your command team and help us become workplaces that embrace a culture of dignity and respect. I encourage you to take the time to complete those surveys honestly.

There is another way to ensure that we are doing all we can to eliminate actions that are counter to good order and discipline within our workplace—STEP UP, SPEAK UP AND INTERVENE. We are a team and together we can achieve dignity and respect for all. I've included a few resources here to help us achieve a shared understanding of where help resides. I'm proud to be a part of this team; let's continue to make it better!

Resources for help

Sexual Assault

- DoD Safeline--877-995-5247 (24/7 anonymous assistance)
- Contact your local Sexual Assault Response Coordinator/Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Prevention Specialist, Victim Advocate/ SHARP Specialist or healthcare provider.
- In immediate danger? CALL 911

Sexual Harassment

- Confront the harasser
- Request assistance from another person
- Ask someone else to talk to the harasser
- Report the behavior to an immediate supervisor or others in the chain of command
- File an informal or formal complaint
- DA Civilians, former employees, or applicants seeking employment, and certain contract employees who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment can file an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint with a local Army EEO office.

To read more about the panel discussion during the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention workshop, visit http://www.army.mil/article/164885.

Ron Place
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

AROUND THE REGION

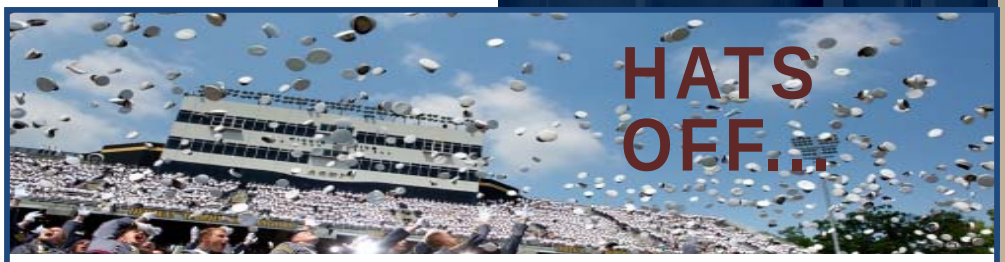
Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center, Fort Meade, Maryland, became a Smoke Free Medical Campus March 1. New signs are being posted throughout the campus.

Lyster Army Health Clinic, Fort Rucker, Alabama, Nutrition Care Department hosted a healthy cooking demonstration at the Fort Rucker Commissary March 15 for Registered Dietician Day.

Dunham Army Health Clinic, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, hosted a Transport of Biomedical Materials Course facilitated by the Army Public Health Center training team. Approximately 22 personnel from installations across Pennsylvania, Maryland, Indiana, and Virginia attended the training.

Fort Drum MEDDAC, Fort Drum, New York, Public Health Nursing section will host an Amazing Race health promotion May 19.

U.S. Army Element-North, Naval Support Activity-Bethesda, Maryland, hosted a Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Cadet visit March 11. Nine Howard University ROTC Cadets visited USAE-N, Walter Reed and the Uniformed Services University of Health Services for professional development information to assist them with their branch choices.



HATS OFF...

Rhonda Scott, Womack Army Medical Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was named the 2016 American Association of Electrodiagnostic Technologist of the Year. Ms. Scott's nomination letter praised not only her technical proficiency and dedication, but also her compassion and professional bedside manner.

Tiara Nicholas, Referral Management, Rader Army Health Clinic, Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia, assisted in clearing a backlog of over 600 referrals. She also took the time to teach others how to ensure that referrals are booked and cleared correctly.

Congratulations to **Capt. Steven Brewer,** Kirk Army Health Clinic, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, for his daughter **Lorelei's** selection as the Military Child of the Year-Army. Lorelei makes and distributes pediatric heart compression pillows and memorial heart pillows for sick children. She will be honored in a Washington, D.C. ceremony, April 13-15.

Kudos to **Jerry Silva**, **Celia Murray**, and **Staff Sgt. Donald Cureton** at **Kenner Army Health Clinic**, Fort Lee, Virginia, for volunteering to assist with tornado relief efforts in Waverly, Virginia.

ABOUT PEOPLE

Be Ready and Resilient

The Ready and Resilient Campaign integrates and synchronizes multiple efforts and initiatives to improve the readiness and resilience of the Total Army -Soldiers (active duty, Reserve, National Guard), Army civilians and Families. Ready and Resilient will build upon mental, physical, emotional, behavioral and spiritual resilience in our Soldiers, Families and civilians to enhance their ability to manage the rigors and challenges of a demanding profession.

At the heart of this initiative is a focus on building the person as an enabler to achieve enhanced performance, which directly links to the increased readiness of the individual, their unit and the Total Army.

Why Is It Important?

- A healthy mind and body are essential to individual and unit readiness.
- Resilience combines mental, emotional, and physical skills to generate optimal performance (i.e. readiness) - in combat, healing after injury, and in managing work and home life.
- Resilient individuals are better able to bounce back and overcome adversity by leveraging mental and emotional skills and behavior by seeking out training.
- Individual resilience can be built, maintained, and strengthened when viewed as an enduring concept and acquired through regular training.

How to Get Help!

Military Crisis Line (U.S.)
(800) 273-8255 (TALK)

Safe Helpline - Sexual Assault Support for the DoD Community
(877) 995-5247
Text: 55-247 (inside the U.S.)

Source for this article: www.army.mil/readyandresilient

Happy Anniversary Medical Specialist Corps

Since World War I, Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapists (formerly known as reconstruction aides) and Dietitians have served the Army in a civilian capacity. On April 16, 1947 the Women's Army Specialist Corps, comprised of officers from those three professions, was established by Public Law 80-36. The law was amended in 1955 to allow commissioning of males and the corps was renamed the Army Medical Specialist Corps (AMSC).

In 1992, Physician Assistants were converted from warrant to commissioned officers and added to the corps' skill inventory. By providing direct medical care as independent practitioners and physician extenders, AMSC officers play a key role in ensuring military medical readiness both on and off the battlefield. AMSC officers have served in every major conflict and humanitarian mission since the corps inception.

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April 2016

Events/Observances

- Military Children's Health Month
- Sexual Assault Awareness Health Month
- National Alcohol Awareness Month
- Occupational Therapy Month
- National Public Health Week (April 4-10)
- World Health Day (April 7)
- Medical Specialist Corps Anniversary (April 16)