

NAVAL HOSPITAL CAMP PENDLETON

HEALTHWATCH

&

NEWSLETTER



Vol.1, No.3

"Health in Garrison. Readiness in Deployment."

May/June 2004

MSS Streamlines Patient Care

JOSN Dustin Q. Diaz



HM2 J.D. Rawson

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Michael Valverde (standing), a physical therapy technician in Musculoskeletal Services (MSS), instructs Marine Sgt. Steven Anfield as he does leg extensions. Extensions are part of Anfield's rehabilitation exercises as he convalesces from a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) a broken tibia and a partially torn medial collateral ligament (MCL).

Patient-centered care continues to improve at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, thanks to the inauguration of a new directorate.

The Musculoskeletal Services directorate, or MSS, offers comprehensive treatment for muscle, bone and ligament injuries, according to LCDR Larry Loomis, Director for MSS.

MSS consists of Sports Medicine, Orthopedics, Podiatry, Chiropractic, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and the Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Therapy (SMART) Clinic at the 52 Area Branch Medical Clinic.

"Before the change, we had three separate departments, three budgets, four check-in desks, and too many redundant processes," Loomis said. "Sometimes it was

frustrating and hard to get anything done for both us and the patients."

Since the reorganization, average patient access-to-care wait time has improved by more than 50 percent, according to Loomis.

Previously, these services spanned three departments and directorates. According to Loomis, this led to unnecessary work and extra appointments, due to the fact that referrals often would be written for several different clinics simultaneously.

Now, referrals are written directly to MSS. Specialists in each area communicate better with each other while providing care since they work more closely with one another, both physically and organizationally. This allows them to share staff and utilize assets more efficiently.

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Naval Hospital Continues To Lead Way In Volunteerism

JOSN Dustin Q. Diaz

For the third consecutive year, Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton (NHCP) was recognized as Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton's top volunteer unit at an on-base ceremony on Apr. 23.

Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton Com-

manding General Maj. Gen. William Bowdon III presented the Camp Pendleton Outstanding Volunteer Unit award to the hospital at the South Mesa Club during the Volunteer Recognition Ceremony, which fell on the last day of National Volunteer Week.

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New VTC Equipment Brings Front Lines Closer To Home For Fathers-To-Be

JOSN Dustin Q. Diaz

Soon, deployed Camp Pendleton Marine and Sailor fathers will be able to communicate with, and see, their spouses and newborn babies using recently donated real-time video teleconferencing (VTC) equipment.

Two internet video cameras were presented to the command in the Labor & Delivery suite at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, with more to follow. The donations were presented by Freedom Calls Foundation (FCF) consultant Kevin

Woodbridge and country music singer Rodney Atkins.

FCF, a New York-based non-profit organization, specializes in communications technology connecting deployed servicemembers with their families back home.

The VTC equipment is ready for use in Labor & Delivery, according to Colin Archibald, director for Information Resource Management Services. The full system is expected to be up and running within two to three weeks.

"More significant than the equipment we received is the connection being provided to us," Archibald said. "It's a free satellite connection that they've made incredibly easy for us to use."

After Woodbridge and Atkins presented the cameras, they toured a Labor & Delivery room and the nursery. They visited the Inpatient Ward where Atkins sat and talked with injured servicemembers, signed autographs, and posed for pictures. He also played an

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To speak with the editorial department, call 760-725-1271, or e-mail at healthwatch@cpen.med.navy.mil.

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NHCP also received the President's Volunteer Service Award, which is a new award that was established this year.

The President's Volunteer Service Award is so named because it is given to those commands who have answered President Bush's challenge to all Americans, made in January 2002, "to dedicate at least 4,000 hours during their lives to serve others at home and abroad."

"I congratulate you and all American families and groups who have answered this call by volunteering a total of at least 200 hours during the last year," President Bush wrote in a letter to the hospital and all recipients of the award. "Through service to others, you demonstrate the outstanding character of America and help strengthen our country."

Hospital Commanding Officer, CAPT R.R. Jeffries, said, "I

congratulate the hospital staff on this recognition as the most Outstanding Volunteer Unit on Camp Pendleton again and recipients of the President's Volunteer Service Award. I thank all who give of their precious time to make our command so special."

Pastoral Care Office Manager Vicki Miller said that Sailors at the hospital gave more than 3,000 hours of their time during the last year to take the award.

Miller said she expects Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton to continue its volunteer service to the base and surrounding communities in the coming year. Anyone interested in doing volunteer work through the hospital can call Miller at (760) 725-1223.

Healthwatch submissions and remarks should be submitted to Journalist Chief Stephen K. Robinson at skrobinson@cpen.med.navy.mil.

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Marine Cpl. Patrick Francis stands on one foot during a balancing exercise on the Biomechanical Ankle Platform System (BAPS). The exercise helps Francis increase his range of motion as he rehabilitates a broken fibia sustained during an accident.

"Recently, we had a patient who came in and saw a specialist in Sports Medicine," Loomis said. "He was immediately diagnosed with torn knee cartilage. Then he was seen by an orthopedic surgeon who set up a surgery date, and we established a schedule of physical therapy appointments. All this was done in one day."

Marine Sgt. Lisa Bunem, who had shoulder surgery on Jan. 16, at the hospital, said she was able to set up her orthopedic and physical therapy appointments at the same time due to how closely

the clinicians now work together.

"Also, when we decided I needed to change an appointment, I got a call back and was able to set a new one the same day," Bunem said.

Loomis said that specialists are now able to focus on their strengths more. For example, doctors in Sports Medicine are able to concentrate on patients not needing surgery, while the orthopedic surgeons can see mostly surgical patients.

"I'm happy about it because this way, I can focus more on working on upper extremities," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Heath Wilhoit, a physical therapy technician. "The continuity of care is much more consistent."

"Physical Therapy and Chiropractic working together is the kind of thing that doesn't usually happen," said LT Karen Kilman, a physical therapist. "Having that kind of continuous care makes perfect sense."

Loomis said that other military treatment facilities have done similar reorganizations, but that Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton has gone beyond what others have done.

"We're hitting all our goals, but we're not satisfied," Loomis said. "We'll continue to improve in providing patient-centered care, and we're better equipped to do that now."

"Now we have one vision for the entire directorate."

While active-duty patients remain the directorate's top priority,

the integration allows MSS to provide greater care to active duty family members, retirees and their eligible family members as well.

For more information about MSS, check out their website at <http://www.enhcp.com>.

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impromptu concert of three songs, including his Top 5 country hit, "Honesty."

For his part, Atkins said he is more than happy to do anything for the Marines, saying "it's the absolute least I can do."

"I've played in front of 20,000 people, but playing for these guys is a far bigger honor than anything I've ever done," Atkins said.

Woodbridge said that FCF has been working with the military and more than 13 corporations since it was founded in September. When all is said and done, millions of dollars of equipment and services will have been donated, all at no cost to the troops or the government.

Woodbridge said that FCF will be servicing 10 bases in Iraq within 90 days, and between 50,000 and 70,000 troops by the time they're finished.

With all the hard work behind them, the real reward now for FCF will be connecting new fathers with their loved ones back home.

For information on FCF, visit <http://www.freedomcalls.org>. For information on NHCP, visit <http://www.enhcp.com>.

Announcements

TRICARE Reorganizes For Improved Beneficiary Services

The Department of Defense has made some changes to the TRICARE program to better serve beneficiaries using TRICARE Prime, Prime Remote, Extra, or Standard. The TRICARE Regions have been realigned to better assist beneficiaries in the administration of TRICARE benefits. Regions 9 (Southern California and Yuma, Arizona), 10 (Northern California), 12 (Hawaii), and Alaska have been incorporated into the West Region.

Beginning July 1, TriWest Healthcare Alliance will replace Health Net Federal Services as the TRICARE health service support contractor for this region.

While the name and phone number of our new TRICARE contractor are changing, the benefits and services you currently receive as a TRICARE beneficiary will not change. Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, Health Net Federal Services, and TriWest are working together to ensure that excellent service for your enrollment, specialty care referrals, and claims processing continues without interruption during the administrative transition of contractors.

During the next few months, you may continue to contact Health Net Federal Services at 1-800-242-6788 to inquire about the status of a specialty care referral or a claim. Health Net Federal Services may need to refer you to TriWest at 1-888-TriWest (1-888-874-9378) for certain services.

Beneficiaries can receive authorized Provider and other information by:

- Calling 888-TriWest (888) 874-9378
- Visiting the TriWest Web site at www.triwest.com
- Visiting any of the TRICARE Service Centers (one at NHCP)

"We are committed to providing customer-focused service as we continue to do 'Whatever It Takes' to deliver access to world-class health care to our nation's finest," said David J. McIntyre, Jr., president and chief executive officer, TriWest Healthcare Alliance.

NHCP Health Education

Health Promotions is offering a new Hypertension Awareness Class, "Healthy Heart." This class is designed to help individuals and families make healthy lifestyle changes. Class discussions cover explaining the two parts of blood pressure, defining hypertension, identifying possible complications of hypertension, and discussing the dietary and lifestyle changes that can help to control hypertension. To register, call (760) 725-1002.

Pacific Plaza Pharmacy Services Change

Starting June 1, 2004, no new prescriptions will be filled at the Pacific Plaza Branch Pharmacy. Only refill service will be available.

Patrons of the Pacific Plaza Branch Pharmacy can still get new prescriptions filled at the main pharmacy in the Naval Hospital.

"This change of service is being driven by decreased funding, reduced manning and rising pharmaceutical costs," said CAPT Richard R. Jeffries, commanding officer, Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton.

"Wait times and the volume of pharmaceutical services required to support the MEF and the hospital has drastically increased," CAPT Jeffries said. "To help we've added new equipment to the main pharmacy and by consolidating services we can improve our overall access and support."

CAPT Jeffries said that if funding is reestablished and additional manpower found, the hospital will resume filling new prescriptions at the Pacific Plaza Branch Pharmacy.

Current users of the pharmacy, as well as other TRICARE beneficiaries, have two other options for filling their prescriptions.

The first is the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) system. Patients can save time and money by filling prescriptions through the mail instead of going to the hospital. Information is available by calling (866) 275-4732 or on the web at www.express-scripts.com.

The second option is the TRICARE Network Pharmacy program which uses civilian pharmacies, such as Rite Aid, Sav-on or Walgreens, for prescription filling. Patients can locate a TRICARE network pharmacy close to them by calling (877) DOD-MEDS or by visiting the Web at www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy/retailnetwork.cfm.

General questions about the TRICARE Pharmacy Programs can be answered by calling (877) DOD-MEDS or visiting the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy.

For more information about Naval Hospital, Camp Pendleton's change of pharmacy services call the Pharmacy Benefits Assistance line at (760) 725-1477.