

SAVE THE DATES:

• AT Educational In- Services at McGuire

- July 16—
App Exchange
- Aug 20—Specific
App Discussion
- Sept 17 -
Adaptive Sports

Location: OT Main Clinic

Contact Melissa Oliver x2134
for questions

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The GetWellNetwork in the VA!

...Tina Grell and Brian Burkhardt

The GetWellNetwork (GWN) is the company behind a new healthcare concept called Interactive Patient Care (IPC). IPC is an emerging, innovative care delivery model based on the premise that a more engaged patient is a better patient with better outcomes. IPC is an approach in health care that em-

phasizes providing educational and entertainment resources to the patient at the bedside through the in-room TV. This approach is supported by interactive programs and messages sent to the patient television that are designed to meet the patient's individualized needs.



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The GetWellNetwork provides health care workers with tools that deliver patient education, and provide increased patient-provider communication by way of those interactive programs and messages. Creating a patient experience that leads to improved outcomes stems from engaging the patient throughout their care journey. Hospitals and caregivers are able to deliver more efficient and

consistent education and care to their patients while improving operational efficiency.

McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond Virginia is one of a growing number of VA facilities nationwide currently using GetWellNetwork. 122 in-patient rooms at McGuire have active GWN systems with daily engagement activities designed for things such as informing the patients about the MyhealthVet program enrollment, as well as prompting patients to give feedback about their stay at McGuire.

Traditionally, at the VA, adapted access to the television and the nurse call can be handled through a sip and puff pneumatic switch, or in some cases voice activated Environmental Control Systems (ECU). The GWN has made this possible through an adaptive switch box, and is currently working with the AT Program and rehabilitation clinicians at the Tampa, San Diego, and Richmond VA Medical Centers to develop an adapted inter-

face that allows for complete access to the multitude of features in the GWN system. The current options for providing more comprehensive access include computer access technology, sip and puff switches, joysticks, and ECU systems with voice and/or touch control. VA and GWN personnel are working hard to find an array of adaptive control options to meet the individual access requirements of Veterans and Active Duty Service Members during their stay at VA Medical Centers.



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES through EES

Program Description:

This live – meeting program is designed for Rehabilitation Services physicians and rehabilitation clinicians to address the knowledge gap in providing assistive technology that addresses current health care requirements of Veterans with specific rehabilitative needs. This course will cross many areas of disability including, Polytrauma, Visual impairments, Physical limitations, Cognitive and communication deficits that may limit Activities of Daily Living. There are 5 Assistive Technology (AT) labs located at the Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers; however, this training would expand that knowledge and skills of providers beyond those 5 AT centers. The training will assist in increasing Veterans' level of function, independence and safe-

ty while providing consistency and care across the VHA system.

Audience: Health care professionals including physicians, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and other clinical staff such as physical therapists, recreation therapists, blind rehabilitation specialists and kinesiotherapists.

Topics:

- ◆ July 11, 2014 (1-2pm EST) - Applications for Visually Impaired Veterans
- ◆ August 1, 2014 (1-2pm EST) - Adaptive Devices for Visually Impaired Veterans
- ◆ September 5, 2014 (1-2pm EST) - Environmental Controls: Standard Evaluation/ Prescription

- ◆ October 3, 2014 (1-2pm EST) - Environmental Controls: Education & Training
- ◆ November 7, 2014 (1-2pm EST) - Outcome Measures
- ◆ December 5, 2014 (1-2pm EST) - Integration of Technology



Meet McGuire's AT Team ...Melissa Oliver, OTR/L

Melissa Oliver is a graduate of Shenandoah University with a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. After graduating with her degree, she worked for the Commonwealth of Virginia in the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services for 4 1/2 years followed by working for a private residential brain injury program for 3 years.

Here is a little more information about Ms. Oliver:

How long have you been at the VA?

I have been at McGuire for 7 1/2 years. I worked in the occupational therapy department where I was assigned to SCI for two years and then moved to the Polytrauma Transitional Rehabilitation Program. I have had the great opportunity to serve as the AT Program's Program Coordinator since the beginning of the program in 2010.

What do you like about working at the VA?

I feel it is a way to give back to those who have served our country. I have had several family members who served during World War II. I also enjoy the opportunities to assist a variety of veterans and active duty service members. In addition, I have had the great pleasure to work many different professionals in collaboration of care that strengthen the services we provide to our veterans.

What areas of AT are you interested in and like working with? And Why?

I really enjoy working in the areas of electronic cognitive devices as well as learning technologies as these are both areas that assist veterans and their families with improvement in their daily life functioning. These are also areas that are always changing with new and exciting technology as most of it is commercially available. I

enjoy learning about the newest and greatest technologies in hopes that it will be something that can help to improve those we serve.

Why are you passionate about AT?

Technology is all around us and for some it is part of who they and others it is a foreign language. I found AT to be another "tool in the toolbox" that therapist can use to assist veterans in becoming more independent and functional. AT comes in all shapes and sizes and I love the opportunity to share its versatility with staff and veterans. I work with a great staff who are as passionate and excited about AT as I am. Veterans are always grateful for the opportunities and options the AT Program as to offer them which makes my day.

Tell us about other interests outside of the VA.

I enjoy spending quality time with family and friends as well as my two rescue Shelties. I also enjoy going to the beach, working in my yard, and listening to music. I stay active through playing tennis, swimming and taking long walks with friends.



**Melissa Oliver, MS OTR/L
AT Program Coordinator**

Veteran's Story... Captain James Howard, Ret.

Captain James Howard, Ret. served in the Army performing combat engineer demolitions. James is the president of REACHCycles, a Richmond, VA based organization dedicated to providing mobility and independence to children with disabilities. As a Veterans Advocate he is also the Mid-Atlantic Regional Coordinator for the Christopher Reeve Foundation, the Executive Director for Veterans and Athletes United, and a Family Support Case Manager for the Quality of Life Foundation. James was referred to the Assistive Technology Program in 2013.

Tell us about your experience with the Assistive Technology Program (Speech, driving rehab, OT/PT/RT).

I came to the Assistive Technology Program wanting to know what options were available for my new home and van.

What challenges were you having that had you referred to the program?

I moved to Richmond into a new home and couldn't lock my front door or adjust my thermostat. Also, I couldn't drive my van, or participate in hobbies like shooting my rifle or fishing.



Who did you see?

Brian, Nicole, and Eric

What device/program did you get?

I received a Control 4 home automation system for my home that allows me to control my front door lock and thermostat from my cellphone. My van was also adapted with special gas, brake, and steering controls so I can drive it on my own. Also, I received an adapted trigger / mount for my rifle, and an adapted fishing rod holder.



Is there anything we have not covered that you would like to include?

Everybody has been extremely helpful. It's been really wonderful. The process has been great. I found out what my options were and received the things I needed quickly.

How has the device changed your life or impacted your life?



It's really great. I can do things now that I haven't been able to do since my injury. These devices have given me a greater quality of life and independence.

What activities are you doing now that you were not able to do before?

Driving, locking the front door, controlling the thermostat by myself, target practice with my rifle, and fishing.

Would you say your quality of life has improved?

Yes, great deal

“These devices have given me a greater quality of life and independence”

Local Low to No Traffic Cycling Opportunities

... Nicole Shuman , CRTS

Pocahontas State Park

Terrain: Several mountain bike trails of various lengths and difficulties as well as a 3 mile paved section that is mostly flat with some moderate and small hills. Lots of variety, great trails for every style of bike. Beautiful scenery and most of the trails are shaded by the surrounding trees and greenery

Path Style: earth, gravel and paved

Upcoming: Construction will begin soon on a longer paved trail ideal for new riders, hand cycles and recumbent trikes!

Website: <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/pocahontas.shtml>

Petersburg National Battlefield Park

Terrain: 8.5 miles of hiking and bike trails as well as central road that has a marked bike path. There are several large hills on the main road and some flat areas. This is a great place to visit for a scenic ride. The main road has several stops along the way with historical land marks.

Path Style: earth trails and a paved bike path

Website: <http://www.nps.gov/pete/index.htm>

Deep Run Park

Terrain: 3.4 of paved trails with various levels of difficulty. Some with moderate hills and one relatively flat trail around a nice pond. This is a very popular group of trails because of the location and variety. There are great opportunities for a good workout or have a nice scenic ride around the park.

Path Style: paved

Website: <http://www.nps.gov/pete/index.htm>

Virginia Capital Trail

Terrain: A variety of flat sections and hills.

Path Style: paved

Review: A great trail along Route 5 that will eventually connect from Richmond to Williamsburg. Currently there are a few sections completed; .8 miles of Richmond Riverfront, 7.3 miles of Charles City Courthouse, 4.8 miles of Chickahominy Riverfront and 4.8 miles of Green springs/James Town.

Upcoming: The trail is set to be completed by September 1, 2015.

Website: <http://viriniacapitaltrail.org/>

Bryan Park

Terrain: A 1.8 relatively flat trail used for criterion races is also a great place to ride and develop your cycling skills.

Path Style: paved



Visual Impairment Services Outpatient Rehabilitation (VISOR) Program

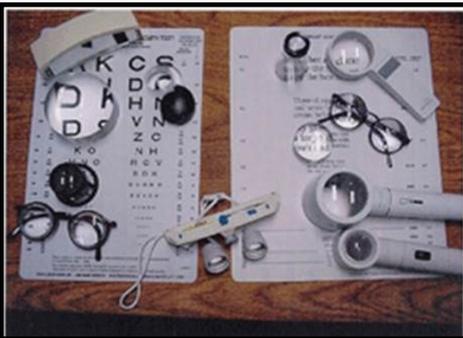
...Rosemary Duda, Chief of VISOR

The VISOR Program is a sub specialty service aligned under the Eye Clinic, providing outpatient vision and blind rehabilitation for patients with visual impairments to help restore mastery and skills in managing life with vision loss. Services are available for VHA eligible Veterans and Active Duty Service members with a diagnosed vision impairment who are experiencing difficulties with daily tasks and activities, often from vision diseases like macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, as well as from vision deficits.

Evaluation and training may include and often starts with:

A Low Vision Examination- located in the Eye Clinic, evaluation of decreased distance, intermediate and near vision, central and/or peripheral vision loss, reduced contrast sensitivity, disabling glare, depth perception loss, and includes refraction, and prescription of low vision aids.

Low Vision Therapy- instruction with prescribed tints, optical, lighting, electronic aids, and skills to enhance visual motor and perceptual skills for near, intermediate, and distant visual needs, and may include biopic telescopic pre driving awareness training.



Orientation and Mobility- orientation to the environment, sensory awareness, and safe indoor/outdoor travel

skills for independence at home, work or community, which may include the use of a long cane, sighted guide, and dog guide referral.



Communication Skills- typing, handwriting, braille, telephone use, record keeping and recording information, including dual sensory needs.

Activities of Daily Living- money management, grooming, cooking and meal preparation, telling time, organizational skills

Computer Access and Technology (CAT) evaluation and training with large print, voice output software systems, reading machines. Learn office tools, scanning, E-mailing, Internet access, appointment management, downloading books, mobile/tablet computers and adaptive apps for people with visual impairment.

Manual Skills- tactual abilities, simple repairs, adaptive measuring, hand tools, hobbies, crafts

Adjustment to Vision Loss Assistance- supportive counseling to address the losses, stress, anxiety, depression, isolation and/or the impact on family and relationships; referrals and resources available.

Overnight Hoptel Lodging Program, up to 5 days per session, for intense training, requiring medi-

cal authorization, and independence in medical management and self-care. This program serves Veterans in the regional area of VISN 6, which includes most of Virginia and all of North Carolina.

Home visits for transfer of skills/needs as determined by the rehabilitation team.

For referral to the VISOR Program, contact Evelyn Cabrera- Heatwole, Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST) Coordinator, 804-675-5221.





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Assistive Technology Program Mission

- To enhance the ability of Veterans and Active Duty members with disabilities to fulfill life goals through the coordination and provision of appropriate interdisciplinary assistive technology services.
- To serve as an expert resource to support the application of assistive technology within the VA health care system.

Nuts and Bolts of Rehab Engineering....

Do-It-Yourself Assistive Technology

...Ben Salatin, AT Rehab Engineering

You've probably heard the phrase "Necessity is the mother of invention." This is what leads people with disabilities to be some of the most creative people around. Since the environment they live in usually is not very accessible, they are quick to invent methods and devices to enable themselves to navigate their inaccessible world. Cost is also a big motivator for people to find simpler home-made solutions since most assistive technology is very expensive.

So welcome to the world of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Assistive Technology. If you Google that, you will be met with a wide variety of websites offering an enormous array of ideas. To help narrow it down, I'll take you through a few of my favorites.

http://www.instructables.com/group/Assistive_Tech/

Instructables is a website that lets you explore, document, and share your creations in nice tutorials. The Assistive Technology group is meant for projects or discussions related to adaptive equipment and assistive technology. Currently there are 82 different projects documented, ranging from an adaptive canoe paddle to alternative computer access through a MaKey MaKey electronics kit.

<http://www.atsolutions.org/browse/>

ATS is a website similar to Instructables which is completely focused on assistive technology. Their goal is to create an environment that fosters the innovation of new assistive technology. It archives and disseminates information, particularly engineering information and fabrication instructions for replicating the assistive



technology devices with local fabrication resources. Currently they have about 80 devices documented, ranging over a variety of categories from workplace to aids to daily living.

<http://abledata.com/abledata.cfm?pageid=19327&top=15707>

AbleData, the world's largest repository of assistive technology product information has a DIY product section with over 1,400 projects.

<http://www.pinterest.com/simontechcenter/diy-assistive-technology/>

I'm sure you've heard of Pinterest. We'll the Simon Technology Center in Minneapolis, MN has a board with over 200 ideas from all over the internet.

<http://www.handihelp.net/>

Handi Help was started by a gentleman from New York that has lived with a spinal cord injury for many years. He wanted a way to share the many pieces of adaptive equipment he has designed for himself over the years. With lots of pictures and videos, he describes items for hunting, fishing, and everyday needs.

After browsing some of these websites, I hope you've gained a new appreciation for how simple everyday items can be modified into useful assistive devices. If you have a device of your own that you'd like to share, then pick your favorite website and start posting away.