

SAVE THE DATES:

- **AT Educational In-Services at McGuire**

- May 20—AAC
- June 17—Learning Technologies

Location: OT Main Clinic

Contact Melissa Oliver x2134 for questions

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

AT Education Opportunities	2
Lifeware	2
AT Product Review	3
Nuts & Bolts	4

Richmond AT Program to Host 1st VA Innovation Creation Series Challenge

The Richmond AT Program in collaboration with the Veterans Administration Center for Innovation (VACI) are putting together the 1st VA Innovation Creation Series challenge. This event, in the form of an innovation challenge will bring together staff from across the VA and DoD, veterans and the public to solve challenges related to Assistive Technology and Prosthetics. These challenges will be identified by VA subject matter experts and veterans.

The vision for this event is to help encourage more collaboration among innovative thinkers inside and out of the VA and provide a pathway for new ideas to be recognized and pushed forward. This will facilitate the development of improved services and technologies, increasing access to and quality of the care provided to veterans.

The goals of this VA Innovation Creation Series challenge are to:

1. **Improve Veteran Care and Quality of Life:** Bring together an ecosystem of government employees and the private sector to improve patient experience and quality of life for veterans with disabilities.

2. **Launch an Online Platform for Collaborating:** Develop on an online platform to help facilitate connections internal and external to the VA, bringing together stakeholders to raise challenges and propel forward developments of services and technologies to better support veterans with disabilities.

3. **Create an Ecosystem:** Build a community of stakeholders in the assistive technology and prosthetic space across the VA to allow for sharing of best practices through an online forum to discuss ideas, identify resources, develop lessons learned and better paths forward. In addition, this can help us identify challenges that impact the organization such as hiring and procurement, to allow the development of policies and processes to combat these challenges.

4. **Provide Shared Repository of Solutions:** Create a shared repository of solutions for prosthetics and assistive technology challenges to help share and build upon existing solutions to accelerate the speed of development, share re-

sources to save time and money, and also lower the barrier for providing these capabilities to veterans.

5. **Spread Awareness:** Spread awareness of the solutions developed through the Innovation Creation Series Challenge to employees and front line clinical staff across the VA, along with marketing these solutions to external stakeholders so that they may contribute to and support these efforts.

6. **Demonstrate Value:** Demonstrate the value of these healthcare solutions by integrating them into everyday healthcare practices and ensuring that they are properly resourced for sustainability moving forward.

If you are interested in participating in this challenge, please contact Andrea Ippolito Andrea.Ippolito@va.gov so she can keep you up to date. The challenge will kick off in May 2015 and consist of 3 months of online collaboration and iteration of ideas, commencing with an in person Make-a-Thon finale event on July 28-29, 2015 here at McGuire VAMC.



FY15 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.

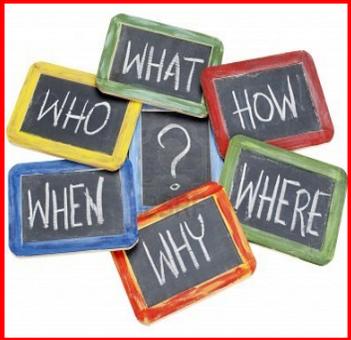
- ◆ September 4, 2015 (1-2pm EST) Low Vision Driving

Continuing Education is offered for AOTA and ASHA.

Registration is always through TMS.

Topics:

- ◆ June 5, 2015 (1-2pm EST) - Adaptive Seating
- ◆ July 10, 2015 (1-2pm EST) - Communication
- ◆ August 7, 2015 (1-2pm EST) Technology Devices for the Deaf & Heard of Hearing



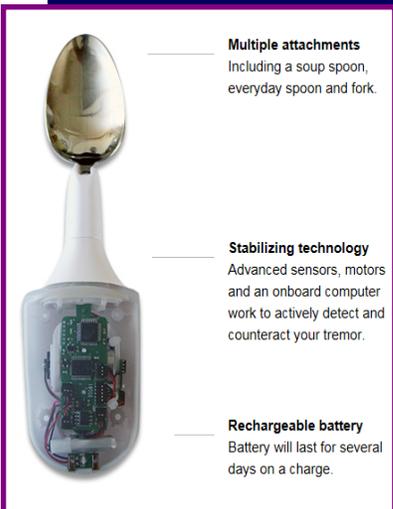
AT Device... LiftWare System

Liftware is a stabilizing handle and a selection of attachments designed to help people with hand tremor eat more easily. The Liftware stabilizing handle contains sensors that detect hand motion and a small onboard computer that distinguishes unwanted tremor from the intended movement of the hand. To stabilize the utensil, the computer directs two motors in the handle to move the utensil attachment in the opposite direction of any detected tremor. It automatically stabilizes so the attached utensil shakes 70% less than your

hand. Liftware may not be for everyone, and works most effectively for people with mild to moderate (between 4 and 12 Hz) postural, intentional tremor in the upper limbs. There are no known risks associated with the use of Liftware. There are also no contraindications for people using medications to treat their tremor, or for people who have undergone Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) surgery.

kit (\$295.00), which includes the stabilizing handle and a soup spoon attachment. Additional attachments are sold separately (\$19.95 each)

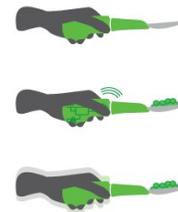
To get started with Liftware, order the Liftware starter



Multiple attachments
Including a soup spoon, everyday spoon and fork.

Stabilizing technology
Advanced sensors, motors and an onboard computer work to actively detect and counteract your tremor.

Rechargeable battery
Battery will last for several days on a charge.



Pick it up
Sensors in the handle detect your hand tremor.

Start eating
Liftware quickly responds to your tremor and steadies what you hold

Spill less
Shift attention away from spilling and onto the people you're with.

Assistive Technology...Product Reviews

When we are helping a veteran select the appropriate assistive technology, much time and consideration is involved in choosing the right device. We want to



make sure that the device will offer the right combination of elements to allow the individual to meet his or her goals.

But, how can we be assured it

is a good product, and just as importantly, that it is the right fit for a particular patient? In the real world, we have a wide range of options to obtain objective feedback on everything from restaurants to washing machines. In this smaller field of very specialized (and often expensive devices), however, it can be difficult to find good information for the AT professional and the end-user.

As a part of the collaboration between National VA AT Centers and the University of Pittsburgh, VA Assistive Technology clinicians have taken the lead in reviewing assistive technology products, including hardware and software. These reviews rely on the following:

- Selection of clinically relevant assistive technology;
- Systematic review of each device; and

- Input and feedback, via the blog format, from rehabilitation professionals at the four VA AT Centers.

Reviewers provide an overview of the specific product and possible clinical applications, and provide specific comments on its affordability, dependability, durability, ease of assembly and maintenance, and Consumer/supplier reparability. Reviewers also provide input on the device/system's effectiveness, flexibility, learnability, the extent to which the device is easy to operate, and personal acceptability. In comments, these factors also are rated numerically (on a Likert 5-point scale) to combine into overall rating for the device.

To date, the Assistive Technology Center clinicians have completed reviews over 40 products. Some examples of recent product reviews including:



- Medication reminder app for iPad/iPhone
- Power wheelchair
- Laser pointer communication device
- Specialized cognitive device for TBI patient
- Handcycle

To obtain information on specific product reviews, or for more information about the product review process, contact an AT professional at one of the national VA AT Centers (Richmond, Palo Alto, Tampa, and Minneapolis).



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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....

VA Pulse: A Great Collaboration Tool for VA Staff...Ben Salatin, AT Rehab Engineering

I would like to introduce you to VA Pulse. Finding the information you need VA Pulse provides a collaborative environment for discussing best practices, discovering expertise, and connecting with colleagues at VA. This is a great new resource for VA employees to encourage increased collaboration and knowledge sharing across the giant organization that is the VA. Just to be clear, this is for VA staff only so it is open to anyone with a VA.gov email address only. The main uses for it I see are:

- Connecting with colleagues to solve problems
- Sharing best practices
- Streamlining your workflow

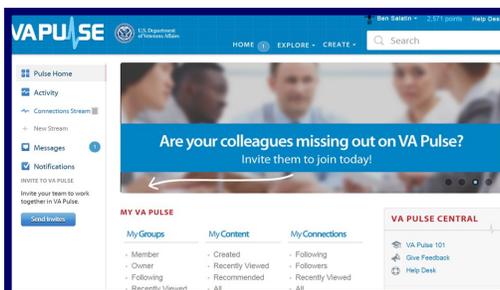
You can think of VA Pulse as sort of a combination of Facebook and LinkedIn specifically built for and fully supported by VA Central Office. Things you can do to create content in the software are:

- Start a conversation or ask a question
- Upload a file or video to share
- Collaborate on a document
- Create an idea for others to see and vote on
- Share your thoughts
- Take a poll to gather community opinion on the topic
- Status Updates
- Private messaging similar to Facebook

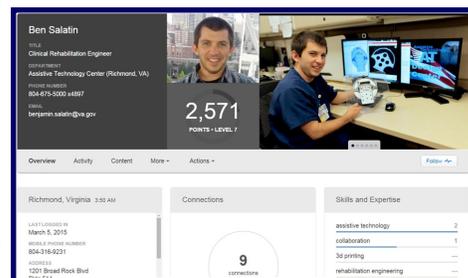
One of the really useful things I see coming out of using VA Pulse is the ability to reduce (or in a perfect world, eliminate) our use of email communications internally within the VA. Here's how this can happen:

1. to be using a VA computer.)
2. Enter your VA email address under "New Users."
3. Check your VA email inbox for a confirmation message with a link and instructions for completing your registration and profile.

After signing up, please join the Assistive Technology Group. If you are interested in 3D printing, you can also join the 3D Printing for Healthcare Group.



- Avoid duplicating effort
 - ⇒ Past work, docs, discussions easily searched
 - ⇒ Prevents email thread fragmentation & lost or misfiled emails
- Create group conversations
 - ⇒ Collaborate openly
 - ⇒ Recall earlier discussions easily
 - ⇒ Add new voices to the conversation
- Other experts and engaged users will be able to find information and participate, learning from your experience and adding new perspectives to the conversation



I wanted to leave you with the instructions for signing up with VA Pulse in case I have convinced you.

1. Visit www.VAPulse.net (You don't need