



COMPASS

News and Information from your VA Medical Center
Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System

CAHVS' Teresa West wins Secretary of VA's Award for Excellence in Nursing



Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System's own Teresa West has been awarded the Secretary's Award for Excellence in Nursing, RN category, for 2020.

VA nurses have been widely recognized for their instrumental work in initiating, developing, implementing, and monitoring the practices and policies that has made VA one of the world's foremost authorities in patient safety and quality outcomes, evidenced by performance measures – an exceptional achievement by any assessment.

The VA Secretary's Awards in Nursing Excellence program, established in 1984, annually honors one Medical Center Director, Nurse Executive (NE), Registered Nurse (RN) in a staff nurse role and one in a non-staff nurse role, i.e. advanced practice nurse, nurse manager, instructor, etc., a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)/Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), and a Nursing Assistant (NA) actively engaged in the care of patients at a VA Medical Center (VAMC). The recipients' contributions to the care of patients in any VA health care setting are patient-driven and demonstrate such excellence as to merit recognition from peers. This award is given only once to an individual.

The Secretary's Awards consists of three major areas: *Excellence in Nursing*, *Advancement of Nursing Programs by a Medical Center or Health Care System Director*, and *Advancement of Nursing Programs by a Medical Center or Health Care System Nurse Executive*. The award categories for Medical Center or Health Care System Director and Medical Center or Health Care System Nurse Executive were added in 1993 and 2003, respectively. The Health Care Technician (HCT) was included in the Nursing Assistant award category in 2006.

Click [HERE](#) to see the official announcement from the VA.

CAVHS wins EPA award

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System has been recognized by the EPA for our achievements in the Federal Green Challenge.

CAVHS won in the *Transportation* category by reducing our internal combustion engine vehicles from 100 in 2018 to 11 in 2019, resulting in an 89 percent improvement.

The 2020 FGC awards recognize the achievements of participating facilities in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019. In FY19, 260 federal facilities took steps to improve efficiency, save resources and reduce costs as part of the Challenge. Participants saved over \$36 million across natural gas, fuel oil, paper purchasing, water and municipal solid waste (MSW) categories.



Click the image above to watch the official announcement!

Virtual screening clinic set up at CAVHS

Low-dose CT lung cancer screening via video keeps Veterans safe

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System's Imaging Service conducted their first virtual video Low-Dose CT (LDCT) lung cancer screening clinic July 14, allowing affected Veterans to participate via computer, tablet or mobile device.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and limited re-opening of services, the virtual LDCT lung cancer screening clinic was developed to provide Veterans detailed information on the benefits and potential risks of LDCT, and a forum to ask questions that help them make informed decisions. Seven Veterans have participated since the clinic began.

Lung cancer continues to be a challenging problem for some Veterans. In 2017, the Deputy Undersecretary for Health authorized VA medical centers to offer LDCT screening to Veterans at high risk for developing lung cancer. The screening is designed to educate patients not only on the benefits of the program, but on risks and potential harm as well.

"Many of those who have participated have expressed appreciation for the ability to understand more clearly the risks and benefits of the program, and to make an informed choice," said Misty Walthall, nurse manager of the CAVHS Imaging Service.

As the COVID-19 pandemic widens throughout the U.S. and Arkansas, CAVHS has seen a significant rise in Telehealth appointments, including a rise of more than 9,600 VA Video Connect sessions since the beginning of the year.

Veteran's melon legacy lives on in ER doc's garden

by Dr. Derek Bryant, CAVHS chief of Emergency Services

Three years ago in late July, I was working a night shift in the VA emergency department when a patient was brought in around midnight for heat exhaustion. He was 83 or so and had been out on the side of the road selling watermelons in 95 plus degree heat. He was given IV fluids. When he perked up after a few hours he refused admission, wanting to go home.

I told him he could go home if he promised to stay out of the heat for a week. He looked me in the eye and said he wouldn't do that. That's when I found out about the watermelons that *had* to be sold before they went bad. It turns out he had eight still in the back of the truck he had driven himself to the VA Medical Center.

I asked him what he was selling them for and he told me they were \$3.00 each. I handed him \$25.00 for the lot.





At the truck a health technician and I found eight 30-35 lb beautiful watermelons. I gave one to every staff member working that night. Right after that, his wife arrived and thanked me for "taking those infernal watermelons so he'll come inside," and took him home.

Before leaving, he said he'd been growing the same watermelons from seeds his father had from the 1920s, Charleston Grey and Jubilee varieties.

My wife is a gardener who likes heirloom seeds, so we saved the seeds from each variety and promptly lost them over the winter. Three years later we found them and planted them despite their poor condition.

Thanks to that determined Veteran we are continuing his father's watermelon legacy with spectacular results.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System

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