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USU Research Days, Commencement Bring Educational Community Together

By Julie Smith
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer

Uniformed Services University (USU) graduated 280 health care providers May 17 at its commencement ceremony held in Washington, D.C., at the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall.

Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Jessica Wright served as commencement speaker for the event celebrating graduates from the university's F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine, Daniel K. Inouye Graduate School of Nursing and Postgraduate Dental College.

Wright, herself a 35-year veteran of military service, spoke of her confidence in the abilities of the new graduates.

"I know we are in good hands. While I know that many of you are brilliant, I celebrate and admire most [of] your disciplined work and your character," Wright said. "What I want you to remember about today is the feeling that you have right now ... the feeling of expectation, the feeling of excitement, the feeling of accomplishment and the feeling that your hard work paid off. You clearly have made it."

As the senior policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense, Wright makes recommendations regarding recruitment issues, career development, pay and benefits for active duty, National Guard and Reserve personnel, and Department of Defense civilians.

"I am passionate about military health on many different levels. People are the very essence of military readiness," Wright said. "Our national security strategy cannot be achieved without healthy, fit and resilient men and women in uniform."

She reminded the gradu-



Photos by Julie Smith

Doctor of Medicine graduates recite the Hippocratic Oath during the Uniformed Services University commencement ceremony May 17 at the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall.

ates as health care providers, they should treat each patient with compassion, respect and enthusiasm.

"Treat each patient, whether they're a retiree or a family member, a warrior or a survivor, as a person, not as a statistic or a medical issue. You have an awesome responsibility and a privilege to care for each one of them," Wright said.

For some of the graduates, the day held even more meaning as they took part in a promotion ceremony and administration of their respective service oaths. Several students and faculty members were also recognized with awards. Doctor of Medicine graduates recited the Hippocratic Oath, promising to uphold

professional ethical standards throughout their careers.

As the ceremony concluded, retired Marine Corps Col. Leon Moores, president of the USU Alumni Association, welcomed the new graduates to the USU alumni family. He urged the graduates to know their personal and professional limits and to keep themselves and their patients safe by practicing within them.

"But those limits will expand more than you can imagine throughout your career," Moores said. "I envy all of you. You're starting on a great journey."

For Navy Lt. Michelle Bongiorno, the ceremony was bit-

See USU page 14



Army Capt. Megan Mahowald and Navy Lt. Michelle Bongiorno embrace after the Uniformed Services University commencement.

Commander's Column

This weekend is Memorial Day weekend, and it gives us an opportunity to come together in celebration, or reflect in private, and pay tribute to and remember those service members who have fought and died in defense of our country, and freedom and democracy around the world. Let us together honor those who have gone before us in service to our nation, and also remember the sacrifices that they and their families have made. I'd like to provide a bit of background and context on this very important holiday.



Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day, and was started as a day of remembrance for those who died in our nation's service. There are many stories about its beginning and a number of towns and groups laid claim as the birthplace of Memorial Day. Each of those towns and every planned or spontaneous gathering to honor the dead from war, all the way back to the 1860's, has driven a need to pay honor to those who fought and died. From Gen John A. Logan's official proclamation on May 5, 1868 in his General Order No. 11, Memorial Day was first observed on May 30, 1868. Flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873, and by 1890 it was recognized by all of the northern states. There was a time when the South honored their dead on separate days until after World War I. That is when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who fought and died fighting in any war. Memorial Day is about coming together to honor those who gave their all. On May 1966, Waterloo N.Y. was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon B. Johnson. With the National Holiday Act of 1971 (P.L. 90 - 363) passed by Congress, it is now celebrated on the last Monday in May.

In 1915, inspired by the poem "In Flanders Fields," Moina Michael replied with her own poem:

We cherish too, the Poppy red
That grows on fields where valor led,
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies.

She then conceived of an idea to wear red poppies on Memorial Day in honor of those who died serving the nation during war. She sold poppies to her friends and co-workers using the profits to benefit servicemen

in need. Shortly before Memorial Day in 1922, the VFW became the first veterans' organization to nationally sell poppies. Two years later their "Buddy" Poppy program was selling artificial poppies made by disabled veterans. In 1948, the US Post Office honored Ms. Michael for her role in founding the National Poppy movement by issuing a special stamp with her likeness on it. Traditional Memorial Day observances continue in various forms around the country. Since the late 1950's, on the Thursday before Memorial Day,

the 3rd U.S. Infantry places small American flags at each gravestone at Arlington National Cemetery.

No one understands the true meaning of this holiday better than we do. Over the past 13 years, we have lived this Memorial Day remembrance in ways that only those who have worn the cloth of our nation can comprehend. I salute you and your service, and along with our civilian staff, remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Summer is approaching, and Memorial Day weekend also marks the start of the recreation and travel season and the 101 Critical Days of Summer. This summer safety campaign begins on Memorial Day weekend and ends after Labor Day. The sun is shining and people are out swimming, boating, playing and having a good time visiting family and friends. It's also a time of celebration and recreation, with possible hours awake and driving more miles than your body has the energy to complete. The main areas of focus are heat Injuries, boating safety, drinking while boating, swimming safety, rip currents, firework dangers, barbeque safety, sports injury and prevention, playground safety, walking and jogging safety, bicycle safety, vehicle trip preparation and safety, off-road vehicle safety, motorcycle safety, and drinking and driving/riding. I ask that you carefully consider the potential risks involved with all of your summer activities and that you remain aware of and resist reckless behavior. Please stay safe. We need and care about each and every one of you.

I want to wish each and every one of you an enjoyable Memorial Day weekend, and a productive, pleasurable and safe summer.

**All ahead flank,
Capt. David A. Bitonti
Naval Support Activity Bethesda
Commanding Officer**

Bethesda Notebook

Asian-American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month

The Bethesda Multicultural Committee will sponsor a celebration for Asian-American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month today at 11:30 a.m. in the America Building atrium. The event will feature dancers, speakers and food. Everyone is invited to attend. For more information, call Sgt. 1st Class Jason Zielske at 301-400-3542.

'Life With Cancer'

The Murtha Cancer Center at Walter Reed Bethesda is sponsoring a program for all cancer patients and their families. The program, "Life with Cancer: Practical Tools for Living with Uncertainty," will be May 29 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Walter Reed Bethesda in the America Building, second floor, Room 2525. Guest speakers will be Dr. Jim David, a board certified psychotherapist, and Dr. Peter Fagan, associate professor of medical psychology at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. All are welcomed to attend. No registration is required. Military ID is required for base access to Walter Reed Bethesda. For those without a military ID, call Prostate Center at 301-319-2900 at least two business days prior to event for base access. For more information, contact retired Col. Jane Hudak at 301-319-2918 or 2900, or email jane.l.hudak.ctr@health.mil.

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WRNMMC Celebrates Birthday of Navy Nurse Corps

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public Affairs
staff writer

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) onboard Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) celebrated the 106th birthday of the Navy Nurse Corps on May 13 with a cake-cutting ceremony in the Building 10 flag lobby.

Navy Capt. Sarah L. Martin, WRNMMC chief of staff, a nurse, and guest speaker at the celebration, explained the Navy Nurse Corps has remained an integral portion of Navy Medicine since the corps was officially designated on May 13, 1908. May 1908, Congress established the nurse corps within the U.S. Navy, and by October of that year, 20 women had been appointed to the Navy Nurse Corps and were readying for their tours at several naval hospitals. These nurses, who came to be called "The Sacred Twenty," were the first women to formally serve as members of the U.S. Navy representing the Nurse Corps, according to the Navy History and Heritage Command.

Martin added the Navy Nurse Corps "has come a long way" since it was established, and "it's a honor to be a nurse every day. Even though we may not practice at the bedside absolutely every single day, what we contribute in each of our areas is valuable."

Army Col. Ray Antoine, acting director of nursing at WRNMMC, agreed the Navy Nurse Corps has "a rich tradition. From the induction of The Sacred Twenty to today, we've had outstanding Navy Nurse Corps officers who have served to care for our wounded, ill and injured. As a sister service, [the Army Nurse Corps] is so proud to serve shoulder-to-shoulder with you as we continue to move forward caring for America's sons and daughters."

In a letter read at the celebration saluting the Navy Nurse Corps from Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, the U.S. Navy surgeon general and chief of the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, he stated, "the men and women of the Nurse Corps have honorably served and evolved with the nation's needs in times of war and peace."

"Today we honor the outstanding accomplishments, courage, and commitment of



Photos by Bernard S. Little

Navy Capt. Shirley Bowens (left) and Ensign Mia Galassi, by date of rank, the most senior and junior commissioned officers in the Navy Nurse Corps at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center respectively, cut the ornate birthday cakes with the Navy sword, continuing another military tradition, during the celebration for the 106th birthday of the Navy Nurse Corps at Walter Reed Bethesda on May 13 in Building 10's flag lobby.

Navy Nurses who have set the bar high for military medicine around the world. Our Nurse Corps officers fly with wounded from battle-torn areas; provide care in the fleet and on hospital ships; establish native nursing schools, clinics, and small hospitals in remote areas of the world; and administer or command Navy medical treatment facilities worldwide. Our nurses are published and renowned scientists, researchers, teachers, providers and clinicians. Their continued work and dedication have earned them a prominent place in the United States Navy. They are an integral part of readiness, ensuring our Sailors and Marines are medically ready to complete their mission, anytime, anywhere. To the more than 4,000 active duty and reserve Nurse Corps personnel, I thank you for your service, sacrifice and dedication," Nathan concluded.

Rear Adm. Rebecca McCormick-Boyle, director of the Navy Nurse Corps, agreed, stating in a letter also read during the celebration, "Navy nurses have and will continue



Capt. Sarah L. Martin, chief of staff at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and a nurse, discusses the 106-year legacy of service with care and compassion of the Navy Nurse Corps during a birthday celebration for the corps at Walter Reed Bethesda on May 13 in Building 10's flag lobby.

to serve worldwide giving fully and selflessly to advance the health and wellness of others. Over the past 106 years, the role of Navy nurses has strengthened and expanded." She concluded the members of

the Navy Nurse Corps embody the essence of nursing — care, compassion and promptness.

Following the reading of the letters, Navy Capt. Shirley Bowens and Ensign Mia Galassi, by date of rank, the

most senior and junior commissioned officers in the Navy Nurse Corps at WRNMMC respectively, cut the ornate birthday cakes with the Navy sword, continuing another military tradition.

Hurricane Season Begins June 1

By Sharon Renee Taylor
WRNMMC Public Affairs
staff writer

Despite predictions for a lighter hurricane season this year than in the past, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) Emergency Manager Chris Gillette and Program Manager Melissa Knapp say it's still important to be informed, stay alert and prepare.

The two urge Walter Reed Bethesda staff members to develop a plan, checklist and kit for each area of their lives — at home, work, in their car — and include considerations for children, pets, seniors and those with disabilities.

“The Atlantic Hurricane season kicks off June 1 and lasts until Nov. 30. Although the number of storms and categories are predicted to be lower this year, we still need to be prepared,” Gillette said.

“We are a hospital with a 24/7 mission, and it seems we



Courtesy photo

just finished experiencing a more frequent winter storm season which led to changes to our hospital and government status on several occasions. Just as we prepared for winter storms, we need to implement

the same level of planning during the hurricane season to ensure we can maintain our mission essential functions when destructive weather is predicted to hit our region. So we put a lot of planning in place with

our staff,” the emergency manager explained.

Just as the medical center and Naval Support Activity Bethesda have checklists and key planning strategies, it's important for individuals to have

the same, such a food contingency plan and core supplies, as well as gasoline for cars and generators.

“The same things that we have on a checklist to get the hospital ready, the staff need to do to get ready,” Knapp explained. “They need to gas up their own cars, they need to charge up their electronics. They need to have cash on hand, [and] check their supplies, because this area has been impacted by hurricanes — the last big one was 2003, Hurricane Isabel.”

The program manager in charge of emergency management plans, training and exercises at WRNMMC recalled the early dismissal by the Federal Government on a Thursday and a shutdown the following Friday due to Hurricane Isabel. Knapp said parts of Maryland and Virginia were heavily impacted by the storm, cited as the costliest, deadliest, and

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Darnall Medical Library Goes High-Tech

Facility Increases Services to Better Serve Patrons

By Cat DeBinder
WRNMMC Public
Affairs staff writer

“Where will everything go?”

That was the concern by some when the E.R. Stitt Medical Library downsized from its 15,000 square-foot location and merged with the 5,000 square-foot Darnall Dental Library to create the Darnall Medical Library in the Tower at Walter Reed Bethesda.

However, thanks to modern technology, actual library shelf space has become less of a concern. Computer technology has allowed the Darnall Medical Library to house more information than could fit into both of its predecessors.

“We have approximately 7,500 e-journals and 1,800 e-books, in addition to a print collection of 5,300 books,” said Kimberly Adams, director of the library. She added its new user-friendly website has more than tripled its remote access, from 250 to 800, and “[it’s] growing.” Patrons can access journals and other electronic resources from home and other remote locations with a user password.

Adams added the library’s remote authentication system provides seamless remote access across different databases and platforms, and allows access to all electronic content from any device with internet connectivity.

The library also offers instruction in two of the largest medical literature databases, as well as those offering continuing medical education credits, and literature searches.

“Our [turnaround time] goal is two business days on the literature searches,” Adams said.

Another service the library provides is a clinical program providing information service at the point of care, Adams continued. Sarah Cantrell, the library’s clinical librarian, explained her



Photos by Cat DeBinder

Kimberly Adams (left), director of the Darnall Medical Library, reviews information with Sarah Cantrell, clinical librarian, who gathered it on her computer tablet while on hospital rounds with medical providers.

role in this program.

Cantrell joins rounds with teams from Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, and helps providers support their decision-making at the point of care.

“When working with the teams, I help identify the best available, up-to-date evidence from clinically-relevant research, found in our wealth of research resources, based on the questions that arise,” said Cantrell. “I help overcome the time and search expertise barriers.”

Carrying a tablet with internet capabilities while on rounds, Cantrell says having immediate access to the medical literature is important because questions arise at a rapid rate in clinical practice and the evidence is always changing.

“I love [my] job — it’s fast-paced, intellectually-stimulating, and rewarding and I’m always happy to help out with questions that arise,” said Cantrell.

Adams said resource center users seem pleased with its capabilities.

Lt. Cmdr. Maria Barefield, an occupational therapist at Walter Reed Bethesda, said she has used the library’s re-

sources since January 2013 when she began her Post-Professional Occupational Therapy Doctorate Degree. The occupational therapist said she feels the library and its staff members have been “heaven sent.”

Barefield said the most beneficial aspect of the library’s new technology for her is she can access it from home, where she does all her doctorate degree reading and research. She took both the PubMed and OVID training offered by the library, which gave her the search skills she needed.

“I was able to obtain log-in information to find and retrieve my own journals/resources from home and work at home,” she said. “This capability has been great,” she added.

Barefield said the service is not only convenient, but cost effective. She requests her course books through the library’s interlibrary loan service and receives them a couple of days later.

“Because of [the library], I have been able to save over \$1,000 on books this past year,” she said.

Adams said users can easily determine which

journals the library has by doing a simple search with the name of the publication. Popular journals,



The Darnall Medical Library, located in Building I (the Tower), Room 3458, offers patrons a variety of resources for their research needs, according to Kimberly Adams, the library director.

such as the Journal of the American Medical Association and the New England Journal of Medicine, have direct links on the library’s website.

One of the goals of the Darnall Medical Library is to reduce the number of old print journals according to Adams. “We want to remove shelving and replace it with a lounge area so the atmosphere will not only be educational, but

social too,” she added.

The Darnall Medical Library is located in Building 1 (the Tower), Room 3458, and is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information on the library’s services, call Kimberly Adams at 301-400-3041, or visit the website at: www.wrnmmc.libguides.com/home.

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Sharpening Nursing Skills

The Semi-Annual Nursing Skills Fair was held at Walter Reed Bethesda May 13 through 15 to help improve nursing care at the medical center. This was the first time the event was held in the high-tech simulation center in the Heroes Building at the medical center, according to Army Col. Joy Napper, department chief for education, training and research. During the fair, nurses sharpened and improved their skills in restraint application, use of the automated external defibrillator, pressure ulcer staging, central line dressing changes, medication administration safety and rapid neurological assessment. There were also educational sessions on diabetes, anticoagulation, evidence-based practice and infection control. Corpsmen and medics also participated in the event.



Photos by Bernard S. Little

Walter Reed Bethesda nurses receive instruction in rapid neurological assessment during the semi-annual nursing skills fair.



Nurses, corpsmen and medics sharpen their skills in the use of the automated external defibrillator at the semi-annual nursing skills fair in the Walter Reed Bethesda simulation center.

NSAB Education Fair Connects Service Members to Schools, Resources



Photos by Julie Smith

Bobby Teagle, manager of the military outreach program at Ashford University, discusses the university's programs with potential students at the 7th Annual Navy College Education Fair May 15.

By Julie Smith
NSAB Public Affairs
staff writer

Several colleges, universities, and educational support programs took part in Naval Support Activity Bethesda's (NSAB) 7th Annual Navy College Education Fair May 15 at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC).

The fair was held on the 40th anniversary of the inception of tuition assistance in the United States Navy, and Deputy Chief of Naval Operations Vice Admiral William F. Moran proclaimed May 14 as "Voluntary Education Assistance Day."

"Active duty service members can use their tuition assistance benefit to pursue an associate, bachelor's or master's degree while they're on active duty," Elizabeth Baker, director of Navy College Bethesda, said. "Each of the services has counselors to assist the service members in picking a school that will help them reach their goals, so we have this event to bring everyone together."

Baker said the event is open to anyone, and for the first time this year, was co-sponsored by WRNMMC hospital education and training, led by Col. Joy Napper.



Col. Joy Napper, hospital education and training department chief, discusses continuing education opportunities with university representatives.

"This opportunity is critical for the professional development of our civilian and medical staff. We need to bring the resources to them instead of having them shop online to get it," Napper said. "It's all about bridging those career pathways."

NSAB Commander Capt. David A. Bitonti believes providing an opportunity to achieve an education is a significant retention tool for today's military.

"This is really important to me personally and as a commanding officer because our most important and critical resources are people," Bitonti said. "Anything we can do to support them is a mission for all of us."

Full Sail University military liaison Ray Sands welcomed the op-

portunity to educate the military population about the Orlando, Fla., school and its programs.

"What we've found is our military students are some of our best students," Sands said. "They're a little more mature, they've had a lot of worldly experiences, they know how to commit to things, and they do extremely well."

Bobby Teagle, a retired Marine Corps master gunnery sergeant and manager of the military outreach program for Ashford University, agreed with Sands. As an active duty service member Teagle attended Ashford University, graduating in 2010. When he retired in 2013, he didn't have to look hard to find a civilian job – the university actually called him and offered him a position.

"Getting an educa-

tion is huge, especially out in the civilian world, and getting that education before you leave the military is a tremendous plus because now you're bringing out to the industry military experience with education as a background," Teagle said.

Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Joel Smith took time to at-

tend the education fair in the hopes of finding information about getting a master's degree in physical therapy. The Cincinnati, Ohio, native currently works with Wounded Warriors at WRNMMC, but said he wants to stay open to other options. Either way, he thinks education is important.

"I want to better my-

self while I'm here," Smith said. "Any education is absolutely beneficial to your military career."

For more information about tuition assistance or to speak with an education advisor, please call the Navy College Bethesda office at 301-295-2014 or visit www.navycollege.navy.mil.

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101 Critical Days of Summer Begin Tomorrow

Safety Training Encourages Staff to Consider Safety At Work, Play

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public Affairs
staff writer

To prepare staff members for the 101 Critical Days of Summer beginning tomorrow through the Labor Day weekend, the Walter Reed Bethesda Safety Office hosted a series of mandatory briefings on May 14 in the Memorial and Clark auditoriums.

Army Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Clark, director of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), said the video presentations should serve as reminders for people not to lose focus on safety at home or at work. The videos focused on seatbelt safety, water safety, avoiding heat injuries and staying hydrated, preventing fire injuries and more.

"I ask you to remind yourselves and remind each other that as we go into the summer months, we need to remain safe," Clark said.

"I also want to point out that oftentimes when bad things happen, alcohol is involved," Clark added. "That's another area we need to look out for each other. If you drink, drink responsibly. If you drink, do not drive, have a designated driver."

The WRNMMC director added alcohol involvement has been one of the key factors in sexual harassment and certainly, sexual assault, "which are absolutely unacceptable."

"Look out for each other," the general continued. "Drink responsibly, and be safe."

It is during the 101 Critical Days of Summer, this year from May 23 through Sept. 1, accidents increase because of more outdoor activity, safety officials explained. According to the National Safety Council (NSC), more than 400 fatal vehicle crashes and 43,500 medically-consulted injuries are estimated to take place during the Memorial Day weekend alone.

"The 101 Critical Days of Summer safety campaign is intended to remind us that we can't afford to lose focus on safety while either on or off-duty," explained Maria Rus-



Courtesy photo

sell, WRNMMC safety manager. "Family barbecues, swimming, fishing, softball, hiking, boating, skiing, and camping are just some of the activities we like to engage in during the summer. The prolonged hours of daylight encourage us to jam as many of our favorite pastimes into our day as possible and more activities means more potential for accidents," she added.

"The summer months are also when people tend to travel, vacation or partake in other activities that inherently come with a higher risk for danger," Russell continued. "Arguably one of the most dangerous hazards, impaired driving, is common during summer months. Although impaired driving is a serious risk, there are other safety concerns associated with driving that are prevalent during the summer months, such as motorcycle, bicycle and pedestrian safety."

As part of the training, one of the safety videos encouraged people not to leave their

children, the elderly and pets unattended in vehicles, especially when the temperature rises. "Look before you leave," was the safety message.

Another video stressed fireworks can reach temperatures in excess of 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit and result in serious burns. The video urged adult and professional supervision in the use of fireworks.

Wearing proper personal protection equipment while biking, motorcycling, working and playing sports was also discussed during the training. This includes wearing helmets, reflective vests, eye wear, gloves and more.

PoolSafety.gov offers information to help prevent drowning deaths and injuries, reporting an average of 390 children ages 0-14 die in pool and spa drownings each year. About 5,200 more are treated for injuries in emergency rooms. Also when boating, everyone is encouraged to wear a life vest.

Distracted driving, includ-

ing texting and talking on the phone, was a focus of another video. Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. In addition to texting and using a cell phone or smartphone, distractions include eating, drinking, talking to passengers, grooming, reading (including maps), using a navigation system, watching a video, and adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player, according to the website distraction.gov <http://distraction.gov>. According to the website, an estimated 3,000 people are killed each year in distraction-affected crashes, and approximately 400,000 are injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver.

"Sunshine and warm weather are the most appealing aspects of summer, but it is important to know the risks associated with them and practice safe outdoor routines," Russell

added. "Two sunburns before the age of 18 can double the risk of melanoma, according to the NSC.

"During the overly hot, humid days, make sure to stay hydrated and limit intense, outdoor exercise," she continued. "Focus on replacing lost salt and minerals with water and sports drinks and avoid alcohol and caffeinated drinks.

"It is also important to recognize the signs of heatstroke and heat exhaustion," Russell added. "According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fatigue, heavy sweating, confusion, extreme thirst, dizziness, cramps and nausea are all symptoms and must be taken seriously.

"Summertime should be spent having fun with friends and family, but let's do it safely," Russell concluded.

For more information about safety at Walter Reed Bethesda, call Occupational Safety Service at 301-319-4558 or 301-295-4663.

'A Very Rewarding Tenure'

Director of Health Care Operations Moving On After Moving WRNMMC Forward

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public Affairs staff writer

As the only civilian director to sit on Walter Reed Bethesda's board of directors (BOD), Chisun S. Chun said one of the highlights of her tenure as director of health care operations was helping to lead the integration and transformation of various departments at the nation's largest combined military medical center.

"We led the business transformation of the most complex merger in the history of the Military Health System, which consolidated the two largest medical centers in Navy and Army medicine into a single world-class integrated health care system," Chun explained.

This integration occurred in the fall of 2011 with Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) and the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) joining forces to form Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), and



U.S. Navy photo

Chisun S. Chun

brought the following departments under Chun's watch: patient safety and quality, hospital accreditation, patient relations, strategic communications, strategic planning, managed care, clinical systems support and medical management departments.

"We proactively brought WRAMC and NNMC health care oper-

ations teams together to develop joint mission and values statements," said Chun, director of health care operations since November 2009, and before that, assistant director for health care operations. She added in her role to integrate WRAMC and NNMC health care operations together, a Joint Access to Care Summit was organized

"specifically focused on improving access and referral management as a priority focus for Base Realignment and Closure [BRAC] transition."

Chun also credits her marketing and strategic communications teams with helping to produce branding products, as well as "revamp" the WRNMMC public website, "incorporating effective website design and organization. We also introduced the use of social media to communicate with beneficiaries," she added.

While director of health care operation, Chun also provided oversight for the start of a hospital telephone operator program in response to patient needs to reach a live agent and obtain basic information, such as directions, clinic hours, and prescription refills. In addition, her directorate managed the multi-billion dollar contract for managed care services for military beneficiaries to receive care in the regional network.

During a recent leadership forum and series of town halls, Chun explained to WRNMMC staff members' "efforts in moving the dial" at the medical center have resulted in positive results. Those results include decreasing deferrals and cost for private sector care. She explained WRNMMC's unfilled appointment rate decreased from 39 percent in October 2013 to 20 percent in April 2014, and the number of referrals deferred by WRNMMC decreased 23 percent from fiscal year 2013 third quarter to fiscal year 2014 second quarter.

Chun also sought to improve communication at WRNMMC and within her directorate, authoring an "Inclement Weather FAQs for Patients," overseeing publication of the directorate's bi-monthly newsletter, developing leadership retreats, creating a quarterly directorate awards program, and developing a week-long command-wide staff appreciation week for its

7,000 staff members. Army Brig. Gen. Jeffrey B. Clark, WRNMMC director, said Chun "excelled as a senior leader for five years in our organization during a time of immense change." He explained the merger of WRAMC and NNMC to form WRNMMC occurred during a time of war with wounded warriors and their families being evacuated here. "Joint Task Force-National Capital Region Medical transitioned to National Capital Region Medical (NCRMD), the establishment of the NCR enhanced Multi-Service Market and our Fort Belvoir Community Hospital/WRNMMC One Team, and new fiscal reality imposed stewardship and accountability following a decade of abundant resources," the general added.

"For me personally, it has been a privilege to serve with someone so dedicated, committed and selfless [as Ms. Chun]," he continued. "I hope she is

See **CHUN** page 10

Center for Service Support Encourages Safety, Smart Choices During Memorial Day Weekend

By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Shawn D. Graham
Center for Service Support Public Affairs

Center for Service Support (CSS) is urging Sailors, Department of the Navy (DoN) civilians and their families to be safe this Memorial Day weekend.

Memorial Day weekend, May 23 to 26, marks the first weekend of summer and the beginning weekend of the Critical Days of Summer.

"We place a lot of emphasis on safety, especially during the summer because it deals with our people," said Chief Culinary Specialist Fred Butts, culinary special-

ist training manager. "We should never lose a team member to an accident that's preventable. We must work together to prevent any tragedies and mitigate any unnecessary risks."

The Critical Days of Summer stretch throughout the main summer holidays - Memorial Day, Fourth of July and into Labor Day. And it's during those periods, those holidays, that traditionally the Navy loses Sailors and Marines," said Butts.

According to Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist Joel Huval, CSS safety coordinator, it is everyone's responsibility to look out for each other and act sensibly so that no lives are lost dur-

See **SAFETY** page 10



U.S. Navy photo illustration by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Daniel Barker

A poster created for the U.S. Navy highlighting the importance of summer safety for Sailors both at work and off. Every year thousands of military members are unnecessarily injured.

CHUN

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as proud of what she has done for our MISSION/PEOPLE as we have been to serve with her.”

Similar sentiments were expressed by Army Col. Michael R. Nelson, director of Education, Training and Research at WRNMMC who sat on the BOD with Chun. Nelson described her as “a passionate and people-focused leader who expertly balances the business of health care with patient and staff needs. She is a friend and leader who will be sorely missed.”

Dr. Loretta Hobbs, organization development practitioner at WRNMMC, said, “Bringing together the business operations of two stellar, but very differently run military hospitals, serving dissimilar patient volumes, has been a complex feature of inte-

gration. We owe Ms. Chun our gratitude for her servant leadership and uses of data analytics to help us better understand how to strengthen services and improve patient access.”

For her part, Chun said her tenure at WRNMMC has been “very rewarding. Every year, we have gotten better at what we do and to see the exciting changes happening now is really rewarding. I’d like to think that my part has been helping us all stretch toward higher levels of excellence while keeping our focus on our service members and families.”

Chun, who will soon leave WRNMMC for a new job in San Diego as director for clinical operations at Rady Children’s Hospital, added, “One of my most enjoyable aspects of my job has been relationships with my subordinate leaders and helping them develop and advance as leaders. For example, learning that then Cmdr. Nancy Condon, my assistant director, was selected for the rank of captain was one of my proudest moments.”

SAFETY

Continued from 9

ing the upcoming holiday weekend.

“Ultimately it’s the individual’s responsibility, but responsibility also falls squarely on leaders as well,” said Huval. “We must be aware of the risk involved in activities we’re doing, who we are doing it with and even conditions we are conducting our activities. We must think logically about the steps needed to ensure that everyone is safe. There are many factors that influence safety and well-being.”

“It’s a big responsibility and we must be aware of the hazards that are all around us and our families,” said Huval. “We should also take advantage of the great programs already in place and use these training sessions to promote smart choices. Leaders should also use the Naval Safety Center’s website to enhance training for our Sailors and staff members.”

NSC’s Web site, www.safetycenter.navy.mil, and Navy Knowledge Online, www.nko.navy.mil, offer the Travel Risk Planning System or TRiPS. TRiPS is an automated risk-assessment tool online. Sailors can use it before driving outside command travel limits for liberty or leave.

These systems help Sailors and DON employees recognize and avoid the hazards they face on busy streets and congested highways. These systems also keep the Sailors’ commands involved in their travel safety.

“Always think about your location, what you’re doing and make a commitment to yourself, your shipmates and your family, to conduct all activities safely,” said Huval. “We need all hands to come back alive.”

CSS and its learning sites provide Sailors with the knowledge and skills needed to support the fleet’s warfighting mission. More than 300 staff and faculty work hand-in-hand with the fleet and are dedicated to ensure training is current and well executed on behalf of 10,000 Sailors who graduate from CSS courses annually in the administration, logistics and media communities.

For more news from Center for Service Support, visit: www.navy.mil/local/css/.

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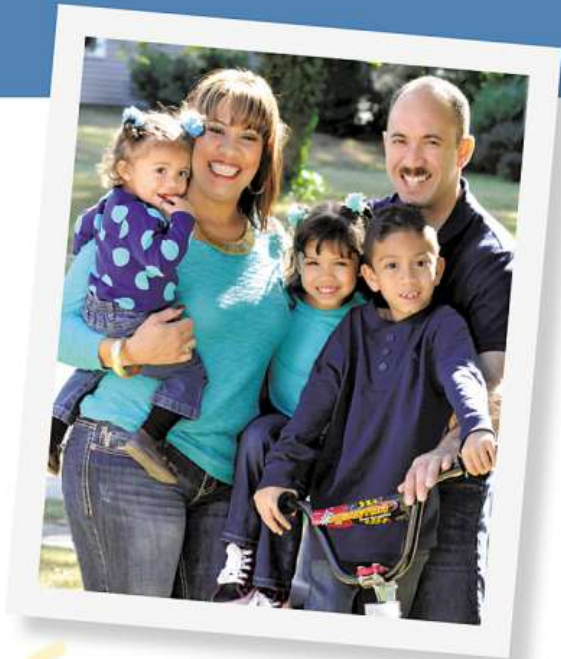


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HURRICANE

Continued from 4

strongest hurricane in the 2003 Atlantic hurricane season.

“Just because we’re inland doesn’t mean we can’t be affected by a hurricane,” she said, citing Hurricane Irene in 2011. The tropical cyclone forced an earlier move than originally planned for patients from the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. to then National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda as the two medical centers integrated in August 2011.

Gillette recalled the straight-and-direct band of high-winded storms called a ‘derecho’ that battered the District, Maryland and Virginia-area in July 2012.

“Out of nowhere we had a derecho. Folks were without power for days — and nobody expected it ... it was just a quick gust of 85 to 90 mph winds for a very short period of time but it came out of nowhere and caused mass devastation,” the emergency manager said.

The destructive storm stresses the need for continued preparedness, Gillette added. Baby and pet supplies, an extra set of car keys, and medications are some things forgotten during a last-minute scramble prior to a hurricane. According to Knapp, drivers should



Courtesy photo

keep needed essentials like food, water, blankets, shoes, flashlight and flares in their cars.

“Just as you have your kit at home, and in your car, you have a small kit at work: a change of clothes, a box of granola bars, some bottled water, extra medication, that way if you are stuck here, you’ve got what you need,” Knapp said. “No one memorizes phone numbers anymore. Write down the phone numbers, they’re all in your phone; and don’t forget the charger.”

Think ahead about everything you may need for the 24 to 48 hours you are immobilized by a storm, Gillette urged.

“People should take their important documentation — marriage certificate, insurance policies, credit card informa-

tion, phone numbers — and make copies of all that, scan it, put it on a computer, [place] it on a disk you can keep a copy of that at work, a copy in your bank safety deposit box, and have a copy at home. That way, unless all three places are affected, you’re going to have a copy of your important information,” Knapp added.

If you have a kit with your clothes in it, add food, a spare pair of glasses or contacts, along with needed medications, so you can grab it and go.

“We have to make sure that our staff that we depend on to be here away from their families can function here, and as long as we know their family has been taken care of and their personal preparedness has been taken care of, they’re going to be much more effective to stay here and care for our patients for a continued, prolonged period of time,” he added.

Gillette offered key questions individuals should ask to ready their homes.

“Is your home prepared? Do you have any areas that can flood your house? Do you have access to sand bags? Do you have to take special precautions with your windows? How about your basement? It’s real important to plan and the time to take action is really when we first get notified which is normally days in advance. When it gets down to 96 hours and the projection of the storm has not changed, and it’s imminent, it’s

going to hit our area, that’s really the time to prepare,” Gillette said.

In case of a hurricane or tornado, the lowest-level room of a building is the best place to be, preferably a room without windows, Knapp and Gillette agreed.

The two said the medical center trains continuously for this type of activity so patients and staff who are here should feel extremely confident in the team who makes these decisions.

“It’s up to our department to facilitate, but it’s up to each and every staff member, from the senior leader down, to buy into the process and continually reinforce the training. We do this through drills, we do this through exercises like HURREX CITADEL GALE 14,” which ended last week, Gillette said. “We do this through walk-throughs, and most importantly, we hope that when the real incident happens, it’s that continuous preparedness that [provides staff with the understanding that will enable them] to maximize their safety of both themselves and our population served.”

For smartphones, the Red Cross website offers a hurricane tracker app for download, as well as a tornado app that provides an immediate warning if you’re in an affected location. The website also includes a Hurricane Safety Checklist. For more information on disaster and emergency preparedness, visit RedCross.org.

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USU

Continued from 1

tersweet. As a transitional intern, Bongiorno will soon head to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), but that means she might lose touch with individuals she has grown close to during her education.

“I’m sad I won’t see these people for a while or some of them ever again,” Bongiorno said as tears welled in her eyes. “But I couldn’t have graduated with a better group. It feels wonderful.”

The commencement ceremony capped off a busy week at USU, which included the university’s annual Research Days May 14 to 15, an opportunity for students, faculty and staff to promote current research projects in the areas of basic science, medicine, nursing, public health and behavioral science.

“It’s really about showcasing our principal investigators’ research,” Mary Kay Gibbons, administrative officer for the office of research at USU, said. “It’s a great way for everybody to share their sciences with each other.”

Posters displayed the work of 255 university-sponsored research projects, including Sasha Larson’s project entitled “Differential Restimulation-Induced Cell Death Sensitivity in Effector T-cells Derived from Human Memory CD8+ T-cell Subsets,” which



Photo by Julie Smith

Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Jessica Wright served as the USU commencement speaker.

won Outstanding Poster in the Graduate Student Poster Competition.

“We’re looking at how activated effector T-cells die and why,” said Larson, a third year student in the Emerging Infectious Disease Ph.D. program. “What we found is there are subsets that die differently and that’s going to give us a tool for teasing apart the ‘why.’”

Research Days also included educational lectures, symposiums, award ceremonies and receptions. Susan Rasmussen, director for the office of program development at USU, believes Research Days is a collective effort that benefits everyone.

“It’s the culmination of everyone’s research during the year that encompasses not only the students, but it includes our postdoctoral fellows and our faculty. It brings them all together,” Rasmussen said. “I think it fosters collaboration. For the students, I think it shows what can be done and it gives them that confidence and ability to talk about their research.”



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