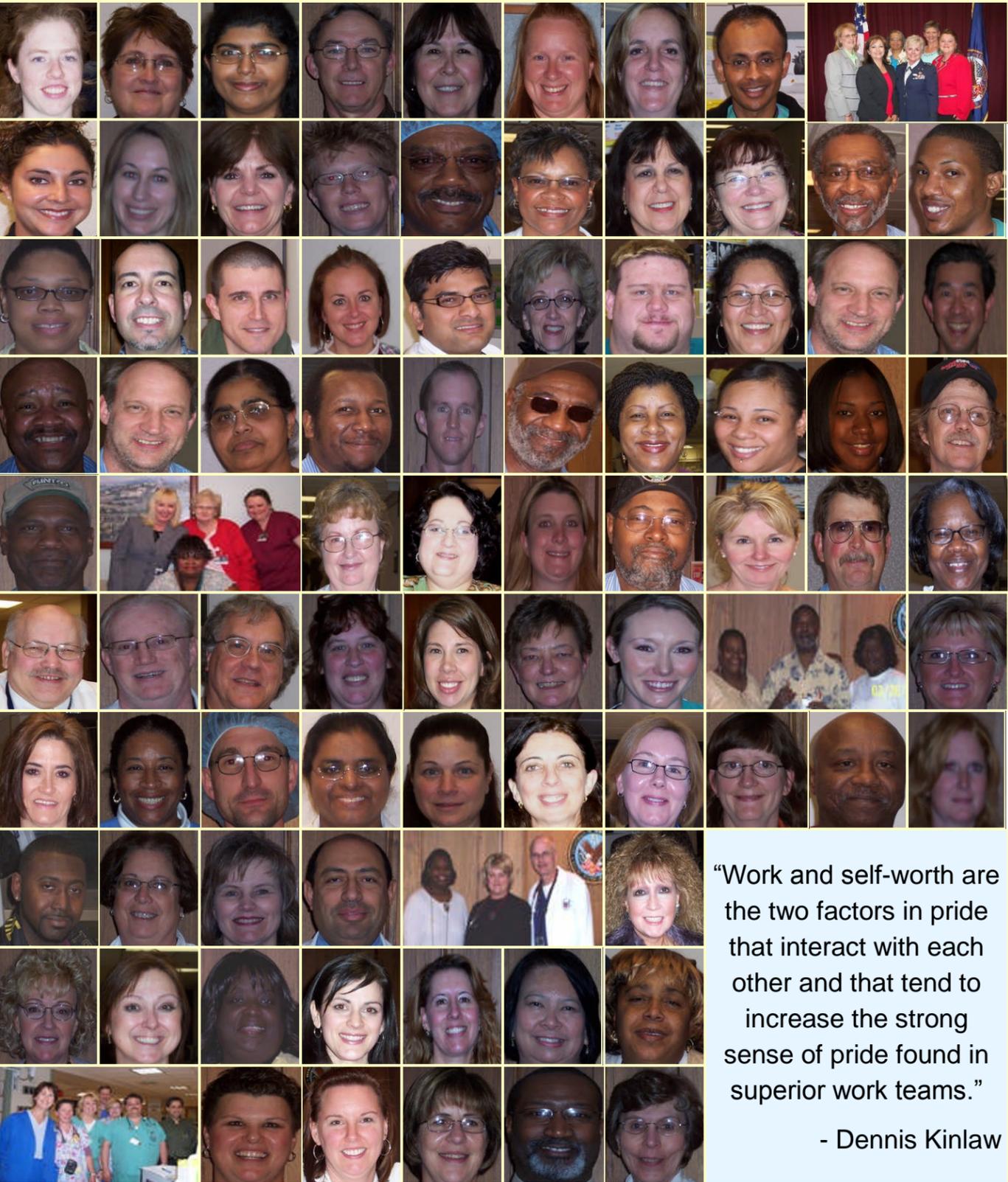





Oklahoma City

VA Medical Center

All Employee Survey Edition



“Work and self-worth are the two factors in pride that interact with each other and that tend to increase the strong sense of pride found in superior work teams.”

- Dennis Kinlaw

Director's Message

"Pride is a personal commitment. It is an attitude which separates excellence from mediocrity" (William Blake). When I reflect upon the successes at the Oklahoma City VAMC over the past year, I think of this William Blake quote. The pride of our organization affects not only employee satisfaction but also customer satisfaction.

This special edition employee newsletter highlights our employees, our organizational pride and our commitment to "Caring for America's Heroes." For example, last year the Oklahoma City VAMC piloted the CREW initiative (Civility, Respect and Engagement in the Workplace) in Environmental Management Service. The CREW program strives at building a respectful team environment. The National Center for Organizational Development has also assisted in developing a team environment and resolving issues. In addition to these team building programs, there are numerous employee development programs highlighted in this newsletter.

Last May, an all-employee survey was conducted at the Oklahoma City VAMC and I am pleased to say that we had a 84% response rate. Individual services and departments within the Medical Center met with employees to discuss these survey results. We listened to what you said. We found out that sometimes it is the small things that matter most. In a few weeks all, employees will be re-surveyed based on the same questions. I hope you take a few minutes to complete this survey so your voice may be heard again and we can continue to improve and sustain our culture of excellence. Your dedication to the veterans we serve is inspiring. Thank you for your continued commitment to "Caring for America's Heroes."

Sincerely,
David Wood



David Wood, MHA, FACHE
 Medical Center Director

**The Power of Performance –
 Dr. Kussman Challenges VHA Employees To Strive for Excellence**

"If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude." Former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Under Secretary of Health Michael J. Kussman, MD, is challenging VHA employees to establish excellence as a "prevailing attitude" in VHA. Dr. Kussman has outlined this challenge in four easy to remember goals.

These four goals, or priorities, are part of an awareness campaign titled "Power of Performance." They include the following:

- Put Patient Care First
- Practice Progressive Leadership
- Promote Improved Business Processes
- Produce Meaningful Performance Measures



Michael J. Kussman, MD
 Under Secretary for Health

Compliment Corner

"Yesterday I had an appointment at your medical center in OKC, OK. It was a delightful experience indeed. Your personnel are professional in action and appearance.

They accorded me every courtesy, making it the least stressful that I can remember at any hospital. My sincere congratulations to you and your professionals—please tell them I said so."

- Very Truly Yours

To: Achamma Samuel, RN 2E

"I appreciate you for all the hard work you do and the leadership you give us each and every day. If we had more employees like you, with your big heart and loving hands, our work would be better."

- Way to go Boss Lady!

To: Cliff,

"I appreciate you for going out of your way to make sure I was taken care of. You walked me to an appointment and helped me follow up on locating my DD214. Cliff went outside his job requirements to help me."

- Thanks

To: 2E Evening and Day Shifts,

"I appreciate all your hard work and your teamwork. I couldn't work with a better bunch of folks! Keep up the good work! Keep Smiling!!!"

- LPN

To: Michael Augustine,

"Thanks for taking time out of your busy day to assist me with getting a new lab coat and setting me up in the system. Your kindness and generous attitude made a task I thought would be difficult to complete both easy and pleasant. Your attitude brightened my day and reminded me that there are people who care and who are not too busy to help someone in need!"

- Sincerely

To: Nurse Teichman,

"I commend nurse Teichman for going above and beyond in caring for the patients at North May Clinic. She has stepped up a number of times to help me in the lab to make it easier for patient care. Many times it wasn't a patient of hers."

- Thank You

Special Thanks to: Medical Media and Pittsburg VAMC.
 Editor: Travis Villani, Administrative Fellow

Career Enhancement Opportunities

Executive Career Field (ECF)



The Executive Career Field (ECF) Candidate Development Program is a national program that identifies and prepares high-potential leaders selected from the top end of the mid-management ranks (GS-13/14 and Title 38 equivalents) to move into ECF Member Positions within VHA.

ECF **members** are incumbents in senior executive, management, and senior staff positions reporting to senior executives (for example, Associate Directors, Chiefs of Staff, Associate Directors for Nursing/Nurse Executives, and their VISN and VHACO equivalents).

ECF **candidates** are the incumbents in positions reporting to ECF members (service chiefs, local care line/service line directors, health systems specialists, other senior staff, and their VISN and VHACO equivalents) **who apply and are selected** as candidates in the Executive Career Field Candidate Development Program (ECFCDP).

For more information please contact the HPDM Office.

The networking opportunities in the ECF program allowed not only myself to benefit but our facility through the sharing of best practices.

- Clare O'Geary

High Performance Development Model (HPDM) Award

Winning the HPDM award for our facility during the graduation event in Muskogee was the highlight of my EVAL experience with the 2004B class. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet and discuss issues with fellow employees and management that I would not have met in my daily work.

- Leanna Eversmeyer



You spoke up – We heard you!

Based on what you told us in the FY 2007 All Employee Survey, we used your feedback to develop action plans to improve. Your feedback helps guide us in making changes and developing new programs that are meaningful to you – changes that will help improve your satisfaction and in turn, improve the satisfaction of the men and women we are honored to serve.

You told us there were not enough promotion opportunities so we did the following:

- Offered training on Performance Based Interviewing.
- Offering continuation training on July 16, 2008, to bridge the gap between EVAL graduates and LDI.
- Funded one additional participant in the FY08 Leadership Development Program.
- Funded one additional participant in the FY08 Emerging VA Leaders Program.
- Awarded four additional \$500 career development grants in FY07 and will exceed that number in FY2008.
- Funded 452 Employee Education Tuition Requests in FY07 and will exceed that number in FY2008.
- Offering multiple customer service training opportunities in FY2008.

You told us that staffing was an issue so we did the following:

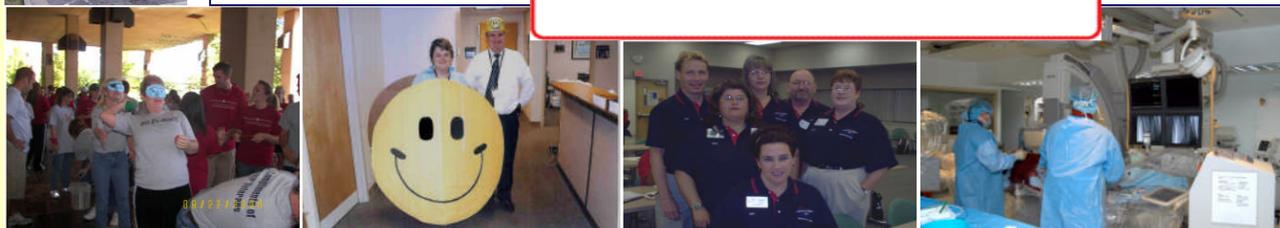
- Improved Nursing Recruitment Process, resulting in 100 new applicants in March 2008.
- Submitted requests to the VISN and received funding for several strategic initiatives resulting in new FTEE for dental service, the emergency department, inpatient physician weekend/night coverage, and in multiple departments related to opening a new inpatient unit on 6 North.
- Revised the Executive Resource Board approval process for backfilling vacancies in order to streamline and eliminate delays.

You told us that high morale in your unit was important so we did the following:

- Implemented action plans in every service to address the survey results (such as developing a postcard system for second pair of diabetic shoes in Prosthetics Service and regular laugh yoga sessions put on by Chaplain Service to build a trusting environment).
- Implemented Civility, Respect and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) and teams are meeting regularly.
- Centralized the Customer Service Department..
- Re-implemented On-the Spot Awards Program.

Other initiatives include the following:

- With support of the AFGE, we have worked with the Partnership Council to share employee survey results at meetings, special presentations, and via the intranet, email and newsletters.
- Services developed employee action plan teams.
- Staff from multiple services were selected to participate in the National Center for Organizational Development Assessment of the Work Environment. Confidential one-on-one, as well as small group, interviews were organized by NCOD.
- Funded three participants in the FY08 School at Work program.
- Offering six retirement briefings to all employees in June 2008.
- Option to purchase parking at OMRF for employees so they can park closer to the Medical Center.
- Implemented the patient post card reminder system to reduce the letters mailed by services.





Educational Assistance Opportunities

Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP)

Scholarships awarded to employees to cover tuition costs and related education expenses for title 38 and hybrid title 38 occupations. Employees who have worked at VA for at least one year seeking degrees in certain clinical fields can apply.



I was accepted to the program and began classes in the Fall of 2005. The EISP program will generously pay 54 of the 77 hours of my tuition and the books for these classes. The benefit to me by completion of an advanced degree will fulfill a personal goal. I have always endeavored to better my technical skills and knowledge of occupational therapy through continuing education seminars. This degree is carrying that quest for knowledge to the next level. Also, the lifted burden of not having to get student loans or write a check for college costs is a plus for my mental well-being.

- Patricia Berry

Education Debt Reduction Program (EDRP)

EDRP provides education loan repayments to newly appointed VA employees (within six months in hard-to-recruit health care occupations).



The EDRP program is an excellent example of one of the many benefits offered by the VA! After six years of college and one year of residency, I had acquired a significant amount of debt. I was thrilled when I qualified for the EDRP and, after five years of service, I am proud to say that I am free of student loan debt. I am very grateful to the VA for their assistance and would recommend this program to anyone.

- Chanda Jones, Pharm.D., BCPS

Career Development Grant (CDG)

If you are a full-time permanent VAMC employee pursuing courses in formal academic programs that benefit and support the goals of the OKC VA Medical Center, you are eligible to apply for a \$500 education grant.



As long as I live, I will continue to learn. The VA has helped make this goal possible for me. With financial assistance from the Career Development Grant, I completed an Associate Degree in Health Information Technology and earned my Registered Health Information Technician certification in 2004. The knowledge and skills I acquired through the degree program have made it possible for me to move into a position in Medical Records Quality Management, and I love what I do. As if that was not enough, in 2007 I was selected as a participant in the Emerging VA Leaders training program. This too was a wonderful opportunity. The EVAL program is without a doubt the best training program I have ever been associated with. Thank you.

- Mary Lou Crum

National Nursing Education Incentive (NNEI)

This scholarship is awarded to registered nurses to cover tuition costs and related educational expenses. Full and part time registered nurses who have worked at the VA for at least one year are eli-



I was a participant in NNEI and was able to complete my Master's degree while working full time. I felt fortunate that the entire degree was paid for by the VA. Obtaining a graduate degree has helped me become more upwardly mobile in the VA.

- Melanie Knight

For more information about these programs contact our Education Specialist Barbara Curry @ ext. 4382.

All Employee Survey Results

JOB SATISFACTION AVERAGES

Component	OKC 2007
Work Type	3.97
Work Amount	3.49
Pay Satisfaction	3.06
Coworker	3.97
Supervision	3.63
Senior Management	2.98
Promotion Opportunity	2.59
Work Condition	3.25
Customer Satisfaction	3.7
Praise	3.1
Work Quality	4.32
Satisfaction	3.56

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT AVERAGES

Component	OKC 2007
Cooperation	3.52
Conflict Resolution	3.26
Diversity Acceptance	3.64
Coworker Support	3.62
Supervisory Support	3.56
Customer Service	3.49
Innovation	3.21
Resources	3.68
Safety Climate	3.55
Leadership	3.33
Rewards	3.32
Employee Development	3.41
Work/Family Balance	3.63
Planning/Evaluation	3.51
Job Control	2.95
Demands	3.73
Retention	3.32
Engagement	3.47
Psychological Safety	3.13

Response Averages Comparison

The purpose of the 2007 All Employee Survey was to gather information from our employees on their perceptions of the workplace. The survey process is anonymous and could be completed either electronically via the VA intranet, over the telephone or by hardcopy paper. Employees were requested to answer specific questions based on the following scale:

- (1) Not at all satisfied
- (2) Not very satisfied
- (3) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- (4) Somewhat satisfied
- (5) Very satisfied

These two tables compare Job Satisfaction and Organizational Assessment. Job Satisfaction Averages — This comparison table measures individual employee satisfaction with key job features. As you will note in this newsletter, leadership has immediately addressed this issue by focusing attention on programs most likely to assist our employees in professional development and promotion opportunity. As a result of our Employee Development Programs we have increased the development of our employees to their full potential. Our efforts to further assist employees have centered on educational opportunities. At all levels our focus is on personal employee development to provide the highest quality care to our nations biggest asset.



Left to Right:
 Robert McCaffree, MD, Chief of Staff
 Anne Kreutzer, FACHE, Associate Director
 Margie Carlton, RN, MS, Associate Director for Patient Care & Nursing Services
 David Wood, MHA, FACHE, Medical Center Director

All Employee Survey Results 2007

2007 VHA All Employee Survey VISN 16 Response Rate				2007 VHA All Employee Survey VISN 16 Facility Response Rates			
VISN 16 Results	2004	2006	2007	Location	Employees	Respondents	Response Rate
Respondents	11,227	12,181	13,448	Total VISN	16183	13448	83.10%
Employee Count	16,729	15,202	16,183	Alexandria	1213	950	78.32%
				Central Arkansas HCS	2870	2421	84.36%
				Fayetteville	966	929	96.17%
				Gulf Coast HCS	1620	1361	84.12%
				Houston	3214	2495	77.63%
				Jackson	1749	1393	79.65%
				Muskogee	779	756	97.05%
Response Rate	67.11%	80.13%	83.10%	Oklahoma City	1672	1408	84.21%
				Shreveport	1196	888	74.25%
				SE Louisiana HCS	812	744	91.63%
				VISN 16 Office	92	103	111.96%

“Individual commitment to a group effort.... that is what makes a team work a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”

- Vince Lombardi



“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

- Henry Ford



Career Enhancement Opportunities

Leadership Development Institute (LDI)

The Leadership Development Institute (LDI) was established to prepare a diverse group of employees for leadership roles within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The program strengthens individual skills and provides opportunities for employee self-development based on the High Performance Development Model (HPDM) <http://vaww.va.gov/hpdm/>. In addition, LDI provides opportunities for dialogue between staff and leaders at all levels of VA. Participants learn about the key issues facing the VA organization, its multiple components, and the veteran.

The Leadership Development Institute of VISN 16 was a blast! I've never had so much fun at work. This program allowed me to meet with peers throughout our network, and I've had connections that have lasted through the years. It allowed me to expand knowledge and apply that to my performance and network so that I have contacts throughout that share their knowledge with me. LDI shows you how to maximize your potential and the potential of those around you to achieve a common goal - Caring for America's Heroes.

- Toby Turley



Leadership Development Institute helped me improve my communication skills and gave me such great point of contacts at the other facilities. I have been able to use these resources in my continued career development with the VA.

- Tricia Dear



I am currently a participant in the LDI class. The LDI class has given me a greater insight into the big picture when it comes to the Veterans Health Administration. I have gained new confidences and strengths to take on new and greater tasks. I am able to see how I fit into the big picture. Being a part of this class has taught me to strive for the best and has shown me how to reach and accomplish the goals I have set for myself.

- Taneil James



The next LDI class will be accepting applications in the Fall 2008. For more info please contact Vicki Randall @ ext. 3392.

School At Work (SAW)



The OKC VA has offered School At Work (SAW) the past 3 years. Fifteen students have either been through or are currently in the program. SAW offers students an opportunity to refresh their education and learn basics about becoming a healthcare professional using DVD and online courses with a local SAW coach. The program's focus is to "grow our own" and move students into higher paying positions and or get them ready to take classes to learn a new trade or career. From our group we have students go on to take online courses, Vo-Tech courses, begin nursing programs, move into new positions and more importantly realize their potential to set a goal and achieve it giving promise to new dreams and new goals.

For more information contact our Education Specialist Barbara Curry @ ext. 4382 or Joan Stirlen @ ext 5032.

Career Enhancement Opportunities

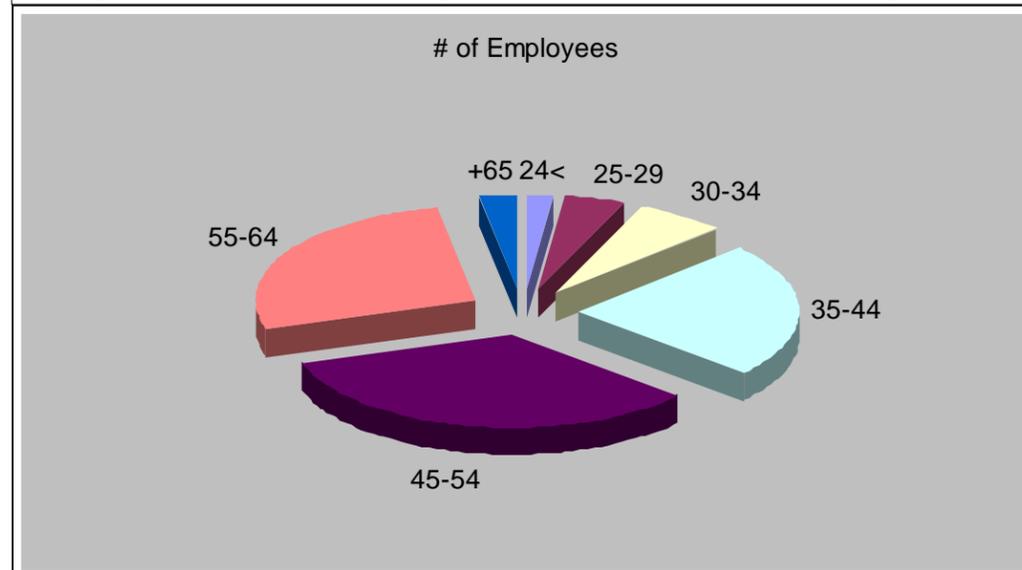
Succession Planning

The Oklahoma City VAMC actively participates in numerous career development programs that are targeted to advance employee satisfaction and succession planning efforts. These programs include the following:

- Executive Career Field (GS 13 and above or equivalent)
- Emerging VA Leaders (GS 5 to GS 8 or equivalent)
- Leadership Development Institute (GS 9 to GS 12 or equivalent)
- Graduate Health Administration Training Program
- School at Work (GS 1 to GS 4 or equivalent)
- Technical Career Field
- Education Debt Reduction Program
- Employee Incentive Scholarship Program
- National Nursing Education Incentives
- VA Nursing Education for Employees Program
- Student Educational Employment Program
- Health Systems Management Trainee (HSM) Program
- Career Development Grant

Other opportunities that have been established for employees include the establishment of Assistant Chief positions for succession planning, education grants through the facility's Education Council, the provision of granting authorized absence to attend conferences, and retention/recruitment incentives offered to various employees in hard-to-recruit and retain positions.

The graph below represents the age distribution of our employees during FY2007.



Due to the high percentage of our employees that are retirement eligible, the Oklahoma City VAMC has developed initiatives designed to assist in succession planning. In addition to the establishment of Assistant Chief positions, various employees are eligible for market pay, performance pay, recruitment and retention incentives, and the work study program.



As a class project, the 2007 EVAL participants worked with senior managers in evaluating the all-employee survey scores.



The logo above depicts the High Performance Development Model. The VHA national HPDM office is located in downtown OKC.



Medical Center Director David Wood speaks to Environmental Management employees at the CREW kick-off event. The OKCVAMC has embraced the CREW initiative which emphasizes civility, respect and engagement in the workplace.

Emerging Veterans Affairs Leader (EVAL)

Emerging Veterans Affairs Leader (EVAL) is a comprehensive program designed to identify employees who have an interest in career development within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and have demonstrated leadership potential. Candidates selected for this program will participate in a broad spectrum of developmental experiences over a six-month period. These experiences are based on the High Performance Development Model (HPDM) Program and include participants pairing with a mentor. The ultimate goal of the program is to support the Network's Strategic Plan and to develop our employees. EVAL's purpose is to enhance job skills so that participants provide the highest quality care and service to our veteran patients and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The EVAL program pointed me in the right direction to further my career at the VA. It gave me insight, both at a personal and career level, in what I need to do to improve myself to take advantage of promotion or career progression potentials. This class is an invaluable tool for anyone who wants to move forward in the career at the VA.

- Michael Popenhagen



My EVAL experience was great. It gave me a broader understanding of all the different areas of the hospital and opened doors to be on committees. I learned about myself and how to better deal with others. I would recommend it for anyone that wants to remain within the VA system.

- Peggy Adams



The EVAL program equipped me with the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence needed to excel to the next level. I learned several new approaches that I cannot only use professionally but can also apply in my personal life. The instructors in the program were all top notch, and the coordinator truly cared about the participants and the program's success. I would truly recommend the program to anyone who wants to enhance their VA career.

- Carlos Rodriguez, M.Ed.



I participated in the EVAL program in 2006. It was a great experience for me. The program opened my eyes to more possibilities than I thought existed in the VA. At the beginning of my employment, I was just working a job, servicing the veteran population at my post. After completing the EVAL program I realized this is more than just a job, it is a career in caring for a population to which our country owes a debt of gratitude. The EVAL program also helped funnel my knowledge, skills and abilities to become more marketable to other departments within the VA. The program showed me areas to improve and to capitalize on my strengths. I am glad to have had the opportunity to continue through the EVAL program of the Oklahoma City VA.

- Curley McCarrell



* The next EVAL class will be accepting applications in the Fall 2008. If you would like additional information about the EVAL program please contact Tricia Dear @ ext. 3305.