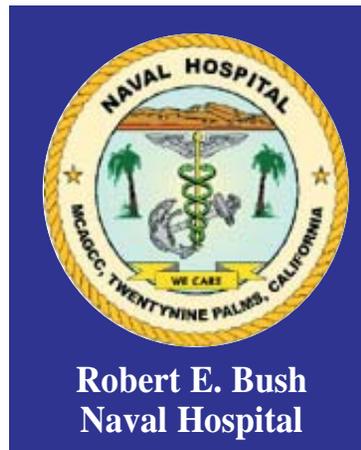


Happy Birthday Medical Corps



Established March 3, 1871

Robert E. Bush
Naval Hospital

Patient Safety Awareness Week will be recognized the week of 8 through 14 March 2009. The week is a time to provide education and raise awareness for improving patient safety.

See page 3

*Did you know?...*

You have the right to express your concerns about patient safety and quality of care.

There are several avenues open to you:

- * Through the ICE website.
- * Through the Naval Hospital Customer Comment Cards.
- * The Hospital's Customer Relations Officer at 760-830-2475, or any of the Customer Relations representatives in the hospital's clinics.

Or Directly to the Joint Commission via:

E-mail at
complaint@jointcomission.org

Fax:
Office of Quality Monitoring
630-792-5636

Mail:
Office of Quality Monitoring
The Joint Commission
Oak Renaissance Boulevard
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

THE EXAMINER*An Award Winning Publication*
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhttp/pages/default.aspx>

New doctor? Make the most of your first visit

By Brian P. Smith
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

During your first visit to a new doctor, there is a good reason they suggest you arrive at least 15 minutes early for your appointment.

There will be a clipboard. And there will be forms.

Giving your doctor information about your health allows you to be an active participant in your health care. You are visiting a health professional because of their medical knowledge; until your appointment, your doctors and nurses might not know anything about you. Clear communication with your health care providers can help ensure that before the appointment is over, you have your questions answered and that you can answer any they may have based on the information you've provided.

For information about TRI-

Continued on page 7

Bush Family, Friends Visit Hospital



Friends and family recently took a tour and visited the staff of the Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital. Standing in front of the Portrait of Robert E. Bush from left to right are Patty Turner, Chuck Huhta, Barbara Hamal, Ursula Huhta, Mick and Betty Bush. Captain Don C. B. Albia, Commanding Officer, Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms is far right.

Presort Standard
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
YUCCA VALLEY
CA 92284
PERMIT NO. 40

Commanding Officer
Naval Hospital Public Affairs Office
Box 788250 MAGTFC
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8250

Colon Cancer Screening Saves Lives...It Can Save Yours

By Martha Hunt, MA
Health Promotion and Wellness

If you are over age 50 you have a 50 percent chance of having a pre-cancerous polyp or growth in your colon. Besides that fact, there are two other reasons why you may need a colonoscopy which is a form of colon cancer screening. First of all, a colonoscopy will help test for and maybe help prevent colorectal cancer. Secondly, when you access the age or risk appropriate annual screening that you need, you bring funds into the Naval Hospital so that we can continue to offer the same high quality care we now provide. Remember, there is no free lunch in life and when you do not access the annual tests needed for your gender and age, then not only are you putting your health at risk but Navy Medicine can then cut our budget impact-

ing the staffing and services we offer.

What is a colonoscopy? Colonoscopy examines the entire colon with the use of a flexible tube with a camera at one end. The test generally lasts about 30 minutes, is safe and usually painless. There may be some discomfort, but you are usually given a sedative to help you to relax. Colonoscopy is usually needed only once every 10 years if the test results are normal.

Colonoscopy detects more than 95 percent of early colon cancer. Colonoscopy is the only test that can also prevent cancer because the doctor can remove polyps -- small growths that may develop into cancer if left alone -- before they turn into cancer. Other colon cancer screening tests do not examine the colon as thoroughly or remove polyps.

What are the risk factors for colon cancer? Being over age 50 is the leading risk factor for

colon cancer as more than 90 percent of colon cancers occur after age fifty. Also, if you have ever had anyone in your family with colon cancer, your risk is very high. If you have a family member with colon cancer, your provider may even suggest a colonoscopy well before age fifty.

Other risks for colon cancer include tobacco use, obesity, being either African American or of Ashkenazi (Eastern European) Jewish ancestry. Having other colon diseases such as Ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease may also increase your risk of developing colon cancer.

There are other tests for colon cancer screening that are available besides colonoscopy. Fecal

Occult Blood Test (FOBT) and Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) Tests are tests that check for hidden blood in the stool. This test should be done every year. Sigmoidoscopy is a test similar to colonoscopy but because it examines less than half of the colon (not the entire colon as colonoscopy does), it can miss some cancer. This test should be done every five years.

How can you lower your risk of developing colon cancer? Stop using tobacco. Talk to your provider about accessing medications for tobacco cessation if you prefer to use the meds available. The formal tobacco cessation class is no longer mandatory but Health Promotions is still available to help you through the process of becoming tobacco

free. You can call health promotions at 830-2814 for more information. Maintain a healthy weight and exercise regularly with at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity (such as a brisk walk) at least 5 days a week. Also, eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables will help prevent colon cancer.

If you have any of the risk factors for colon cancer, ask your regular doctor about colon cancer screening. And remember, the more age and risk appropriate annual testing you take advantage of, the better your health and the more funds are given to the naval hospital. This increased funding then allows us to maintain or expand the staffing and services we offer.

Getting to Know Desert Critters

By Martha Hunt, MA Health Promotions
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital

Most of the dangerous creatures of Morongo Basin have been tucked away hibernating for the last few months. However, as spring is quickly approaching, the desert and its creatures will be re-awakening to begin the cycle of life again.

If you have been in Twentynine Palms for a while, some of these may not be so scary anymore. If you are new to Twentynine Palms, you think that everything that crawls, slithers, creeps or flies is going to either kill you or leave you maimed for life. Here is a brief overview of some of these critters, which in the end are not so scary after all when you learn how to avoid them.

The best form of critter prevention is to stay away from them, to eliminate all inviting, homey spots around your home such as piles of lumber and debris, and to seal all cracks and crevices that they can use to crawl into your home. A little spackle and paint does wonders as far as sealing tiny cracks and holes where the critters can enter your home.

Most critters, either poisonous or semi-poisonous, prefer nice dark, quiet, undisturbed places such as out buildings, wood or debris piles, closets, attics, etc. and they usually only wander out of these spaces when they are hungry. In fact, most critter/ human contact is purely accidental on both parts, resulting in the critter biting out of fear.

The two scariest spiders in this area are the Black Widow and Brown Recluse spiders. While it's correct that there are no true Brown Recluses here in Morongo Basin, their first cousins live here, and at first glance can be mistaken for a true Brown Recluse. This cousin of the Brown Recluse also causes necrotising bites and so should also be viewed as potentially dangerous. A necrotizing bite is a bite that doesn't heal and continues to fester and spread from the original bite spot. Brown Recluse bites can take up to two months to heal and need to be kept clean like any open wound.

Continued on page 7

Published by Hi-Desert Publishing, a private firm in no way connected with the Department of Defense, the United States Marine Corps, United States Navy or Naval Hospital, Twentynine Palms under exclusive written contract with the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense, the United States Marine Corps, the United States Navy or Hi-Desert Publishing of the products or services advertised. Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use, or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other non-merit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. If a violation or rejection of this equal opportunity policy by an advertiser is confirmed, the publisher shall refuse to print advertising from that source until the violation is corrected. Editorial content is prepared by the Public Affairs Office, Naval Hospital, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Commanding Officer

Captain Don Cenon B. Albia, MSC, USN

Executive Officer

Captain Bruce Laverty, MC, USN

Command Master Chief

HMCM (FMF) Kevin Hughes, USN

Public Affairs Officer/Editor

Dan Barber

Public Affairs Assistant

SK1 Kimberly Blain-Sweet

Command Ombudsman

Lacy Richey

Care Line 830-2716

Cell Phone (760) 910-2050

The Examiner welcomes your comments and suggestions concerning the publication. Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month for the following month's edition. Any format is welcome, however, the preferred method of submission is by e-mail or by computer disk.

How to reach us...

Commanding Officer Naval Hospital
Public Affairs Office
Box 788250 MAGTFTC
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8250
Com: (760) 830-2362
DSN: 230-2362
FAX: (760) 830-2385
E-mail: d.barber@nhnp.med.navy.mil
Hi-Desert Publishing Company
56445 Twentynine Palms Highway
Yucca Valley, CA 92284
Com: (760) 365-3315
FAX: (760) 365-8686



Dealing with Post-Combat Issues

Mental health resources for service members and families

By Shari Lopatin
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Whether gone for two months or two years, returning from combat is grueling.

Service members readjusting back into society need time to recover from the stress of a

highly charged war zone. Most adapt well after some time; however, if problems continue and interfere with daily activities, it's time to seek help from a healthcare professional.

If these individuals don't find help when they or a family member suspect a problem, their symptoms may worsen, causing a spiral of reckless or self-destructive behavior, domestic

problems, career challenges and even death.

TRICARE offers behavioral health benefits for eligible beneficiaries who need it.

Beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE Prime may receive the first eight behavioral healthcare outpatient visits per fiscal year (Oct. 1 - Sept. 30) from a TRICARE network provider without prior authorization from

their regional contractor.

Active duty service members (ADSMs) should always seek care first at a military treatment facility (MTF), when available. ADSMs must have a referral from their primary care manager (PCM) and have prior authorization from their regional contractor before seeking behavioral healthcare services outside the MTF. ADSMs enrolled in TRICARE Prime Remote may call TriWest to help obtain authorization for civilian behavioral health care.

TriWest Healthcare Alliance offers a number of additional resources for service members and families throughout TRICARE's west region who are coping with depression, PTSD or other post-combat struggles:

* "Help From Home" Video Series: Available at no cost via streaming video or as a 2-DVD set on www.triwest.com, this series offers advice from behavioral health experts who are also combat veterans and military families that have coped with effects of PTSD. Find it at www.triwest.com/beneficiaryservices/behavioralhealth/HelpFromHome.

* Behavioral Health Portal at www.triwest.com: Find articles and links to additional resources on a variety of topics spanning from children's behavioral issues to dealing with depression or suicide. Find it at

www.triwest.com/beneficiary/behavioralhealth

* TriWest Crisis Line (1-888-284-3743): Accredited by the American Association of Suicidology and staffed with specially trained clinicians, this support line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for anyone struggling with depression, PTSD or thoughts of suicide, including family members concerned about these signs in a loved one.

* Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN) USA Brochure: What You Need to Know about Warning Signs and Getting Help: Information about the signs of depression or other concerns that may lead to suicide. Find it at www.triwest.com/beneficiary/handbooksandbrochures/

Here are a few additional places to find help, separate from TriWest:

* The National Resource Directory: Links to resources for recovering service members, veterans, their families and caregivers at www.nationalresourcesdirectory.org.

* National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (273-8255).

* This is not a detailed list of benefits. For more comprehensive information about behavioral health support or benefits, visit www.triwest.com or call 1-888-TRIWEST (874-9378).

Patient Safety Awareness Important to Naval Hospital

Patient Safety Awareness Week will be recognized the week of 8 through 14 March 2009. The week is a time to provide education and raise awareness for improving patient safety. This year the theme is "A prescription for patient safety -- one partnership, one team." Educational activities are centered on educating patients on how to become involved in their own health care, as well as working with hospitals to build partnerships with their patient community.

Throughout Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms and the Branch Clinics you will find information about the Ask Me Program offered through Tricare. The program introduces five steps to safer health care. The program encourages patients to use five steps to help make health care safer. The five steps are:

1. Speak up if you have questions or concerns.
2. Keep a list of ALL the medicines you take.
3. Make sure you get the results of any test procedure.
4. Talk with your doctor and health care team about your options if you need hospital care.
5. Make sure you understand what will happen if you need surgery.

Information regarding each step is included in brochures located throughout the hospital and Branch Clinics. Take a moment to read this information prior to speaking with your physician. Be prepared to ask any questions you may have. The Ask Me Program also encourages patients to create a checklist to remember concerns or questions that may be asked. Use these five steps and the checklist to become actively involved in your health care. Communication has been identified as having a very important role in healthcare. The communication process must include the patient and family as well as staff members. The more patients become involved in their health care, the safer that health care will be.

During Patient Safety Awareness Week, information will be posted throughout the hospital to raise awareness of patient safety. Everyone plays a large role in patient safety. Just as every staff member of Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms plays an important part in patient safety, you as the patient play an important role as well. We encourage you to help us provide you the safest care possible. We welcome your questions and comments.

Life's Lesson...

One advantage of getting old -- Things you buy now won't wear out.

Super Stars...



HM2 Seth Bryan, Education and Training receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



HM2 Billy Busby, Physical Therapy, receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



YN3 Brandon Dobbs, Manpower, receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



HM2 Robert Hartley receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



CS2 Christopher Lowery, Food Services, receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



HM2 Jose Mata, Health Care Operations, receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center..



HM3 Erika Abarca, receives a Letter of Appreciation from the CO of the USNS Mercy.



HM2 Fernando Bobadilla, Mental Health, receives his fourth Good Conduct Award.



CS2 (AW) Kaydine Erskine, Food Services, receives her third Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.



HM3 Phillip Miller, Education and Training, receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



HM2 Raymundo Romero, Education and Training, receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



HN Marcella Lillis, Main Operating Room, receives a Letter of Appreciation from the CO of the USNS Mercy.



HM3 Jason Mitchell, Security Department, receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



HM3 William Roots, Main Operating Room, receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



CS3 Giam Magpayo, Food Services, receives a Letter of Appreciation from the CO of the USS Boxer.



HM2 Maria Morales, Pharmacy receives a special thanks for her participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



HM2 Clifford Salviejo, Human Resources, receives a special thanks for his participation in the Health Information Forum held at the Combat Center.



HN Meghan Moore, receives her first Good Conduct Medal.

Ombudsman Corner

Oh Yeah! Spring Break!

Whether you are in school or not, Spring Break is a fun time to look forward to for all! So what's the plan for this year? There are so many things to choose from... the beach, the slopes, out of town/country vacation, or relaxing at home. Whatever it is you decide to do, be prepared.

1. Plan to get stuck in traffic - Pack the vehicle with snacks, water, phone charger for the car, games for the kids, fill up the gas, and make sure your insurance is up to date and the registration is easy to find.

2. Plan on your activities - Here are some suggestions for some places you might go: The beach - sunscreen, water, towel, change of clothes and shoes, and a small first aid kit, and know the flag conditions for the water.

Red -- Stay out of the water, strong undertow and riptides

Yellow -- Use Caution, some undertow and riptides possible

Blue -- Calm water, swim safely

3. The slopes - sunscreen, water, insurance card, over the counter pain reliever.
4. Out of country - Passport, translation dictionary, a list of important laws to read on the ride there, conservative clothing (no flashy jewelry), insurance requirements.

Of course, these are merely four out of an infinite number of activities for Spring Break. The best way to have fun is to be well prepared. Remember to use caution when drinking alcohol, and always have a plan before your night starts. Know where you plan to go, who is in your group, who is driving home or if you're taking a cab, and the name of your hotel.

Groups are safer than going solo, and if a situation doesn't seem right, it probably isn't. So, whether you are in a different city, state, or country, it's better to err on the side of caution. Remember to check your surroundings before using the ATM, and don't walk around with a ton of cash.

Other safety suggestions can be found in droves online. Do the right thing and prepare, review and plan your activities and you're sure to have a fun, safe and memorable Spring Break 2009!

Enjoy!

TRICARE Update

Specialty Care Authorization and Referral Process

By Tyler Patterson
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Has your Primary Care Manager (PCM) decided to refer you for specialty health care? TriWest Healthcare Alliance, the West Region TRICARE administrator, offers a powerful, easy-to-use online tool to help you schedule your specialty appointment more quickly than ever before: QuickAlert.

QuickAlert, TriWest's automated authorization and referral status notification system, e-mails you a notice that your request has been processed and provides a link for you to view the result online. This means that instead of waiting for notification by mail, you may proceed with scheduling your specialty care appointment (if approved) within one day of

your request being processed.

To use QuickAlert to set your appointment faster:

1. Obtain a referral request. Your PCM will send this to TriWest.

2. Register on www.triwest.com, or just log in if you're already registered. Registered users are automatically enrolled in QuickAlert.

3. Set your QuickAlert preferences. Once logged in to your secure www.triwest.com account, you can change your preferences to have QuickAlerts sent to the e-mail address of your choice.

4. Schedule your appointment once you receive a QuickAlert e-mail notice that your referral is approved. Use the recommended provider, or select a provider of your choice from the online provider directory at www.triwest.com.

5. Notify TriWest at 1-866-876-2383 of your appointment.

Have your appointment date, tracking number and Sponsor's SSN ready, and remember to notify TriWest again if you reschedule your appointment. TriWest will then help to ensure that your consultation and test results are returned to your PCM in a timely manner.

Without QuickAlert, once your doctor issues a referral you will receive an authorization letter in approximately seven days. At that time you can schedule your appointment.

QuickAlert is free to use and does not disclose any personal information; it simply lets you know the status of your request is available for viewing online. Once you log on, you'll be able to see whether your request for authorization or referral has been approved. For your convenience, your e-mail notification will contain a direct link to the login page.

Whether enrolled in QuickAlert or not, you will continue to receive written notification by standard mail. As always, you are welcome to contact TriWest at 1-888-TRI-WEST (874-9378) with any questions about your authorization or referral status.

Life's Lesson...

Secret about growing old... forget the health food, I need all the preservatives I can get!

New doctor...

Continued from page 1

CARE coverage, referrals and authorizations or for an online provider locator, visit TriWest Healthcare Alliance's Beneficiary Services section at www.triwest.com. Health care for active duty service members will be coordinated through a primary care manager (PCM), who will also manage required referrals and authorizations.

Whether you are seeing a health professional for a specific issue or as a preventive check-up or exam, you will have to answer some questions about your health and your lifestyle. This information will help your doctors and nurses plan your care, so it is important that you are complete and honest. When it comes time to fill out and sign those forms, your provider or the office staff should be able to answer any questions you might have.

Your personal information: In order to file claims correctly, and for their own records, providers will need your contact and personal information, including your Social Security Number, and will also need information about your TRICARE sponsor.

Your health history: Save time in the doctor's office by writing out your health history before your appointment. Be sure to include:

- o Current medical concerns
- o Allergies
- o Hospitalizations
- o Immunizations
- o Medications (prescription and non-prescription)
- o Exercise and physical activity
- o Tobacco and alcohol use
- o Family health history

Privacy and protected health information: By law, health care providers must protect your personal health information and must make you aware of your privacy rights. You may also be asked to allow the provider to share your information with other providers involved with your health care.

Statement of patient responsibility: Civilian providers who accept TRICARE may ask you to acknowledge that you will be financially responsible for any charges not covered by TRICARE. This will not authorize the provider to charge you any additional amount beyond what is allowable under your TRICARE coverage. A list of copays and cost-shares for TRICARE-covered services can be found at www.tricare.mil/tricarecost.

Claims submissions: If you use a provider outside of the TRICARE network, you may be required to submit your own TRICARE claim. Refer to the Beneficiary Services section of www.triwest.com for more information. Simply choose 'Claim Info' on the left-side menu.

Maintain TRICARE eligibility: Keeping your personal information up to date in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) will help ensure that you keep your TRICARE eligibility and that your claims will be processed smoothly and quickly. DEERS is a database of uniformed services members, their family members, and others who are eligible for military benefits, including TRICARE. Find more information on updating DEERS at www.tricare.mil/deers.

Desert Critters...

Continued from page 2

Spider and scorpion bites are rarely fatal, and when handled properly, can be easily treated as well. Black Widow bites and scorpion stings feel like a pin-prick and progresses in pain and swelling until the whole area is red, warm, and swollen. The pain may spread to other parts of the body and symptoms may also include nausea, sweating, convulsions and, in rare cases, death.

The only people seriously at risk from Black Widow bites and scorpion stings are the very young or old and those individuals with compromised immune systems. If you are bitten or stung, call your health care provider or poison control number immediately and seek help.

A bite from a Brown Recluse may go unnoticed for several hours before turning red, swelling and beginning to blister. On rare occasions, a severe bite from a Brown Recluse can cause the skin to not just blister up, but to leave an open sore. Healing may take a month or longer and may leave a scar where the sore was. As with the Black Widow bites, Brown Recluse bites should be promptly treated to prevent further health risks.

Regarding snakes, don't tease snakes! They bite

to defend themselves and the snake usually ends up paying for your teasing with its life. It has been estimated that as many as half of all snakebites are provoked by humans purposely scaring the snakes. Of those bites that are not provoked by people, most are below the knee and half are dry (meaning that no venom was injected).

A good rule to follow in Morongo Basin is -- "if it rattles, it's poisonous." Snakes who do not have rattles in Morongo Basin are either non-poisonous or semi-poisonous (they'll just make you ill if bitten, not kill you).

If any snake bites you or someone you are with, seek medical help immediately! Keep the victim calm, do not ice the wound and do not try to suck the venom from it. Snakebites are rarely fatal, but all snake bite victims need medical assistance! If you or someone around you is bitten, call 911 immediately!

Remember that the best way to avoid the dangerous creatures of Morongo Basin is to steer clear of them. Clean up the debris in your yard and get rid of those comfy hiding places that they live in. Seal all openings to your home and watch where you walk in your yard or when hiking. These creatures will try their best to avoid you and they are hoping you do the same as well.

Hospital Lab Does Not Accept Outside Provider Requests

Since September of last year, the Naval Hospital Laboratory Department discontinued the acceptance of outside provider requests for all laboratory procedures.

This decision was based on a concern for patient safety and privacy.

When your outside healthcare provider orders laboratory services for you, and you have concerns about the laboratory selected, you can contract the TRICARE Service Center here in the hospital to ensure they are in the TriWest network. There are several satellite facilities in the area that support local network providers and accept TRICARE patients. Or you can contact TriWest by calling 1-888-874-9378.



Theresa Weseman, left, receives a Five Year Federal Length of Service Award.



Audrey Waters, right, receives a Five Year Federal Length of Service Award.



Lt. Darcy Wright, Customer Relations Officer, receives a special thanks for his participation in the recent Health Care Forum held at the Combat Center.



CS2 Enrico Roque, Food Services, receives Flag Letter of Commendation from Commander Navy Medicine West.



Lt. Willam Roulaine, Emergency Medicine Department receives a Gold Star in Lieu of a third Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal.



CS3 Allan Villanueva, Food Services, receives a Flag Letter of Commendation from Commander Navy Medicine West.



Lt. Kirsten Vesey, Audiologist, receives a special thanks for her participation in the recent Health Care Forum held at the Combat Center.



FC2 Sarah Sweet, Security Department, receives a special thanks for her participation in the recent Health Care Forum held at the Combat Center.