

# Puget Sound News

## From the Director

### Core values for the 21st Century

*An organization's core values are more than just words – they are a promise to their customers and employees. Recently, VA adopted a new set of core values: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence or I CARE. Although I am proud to say that VA Puget Sound has always been committed to these values, I feel it is important to share with you these basic tenants of how we provide health care.*

*One example of our commitment to these values is the recent recognition of the VA pharmacy program by J.D. Power and Associates as a Customer Service Champion which is highlighted in this edition of Puget Sound News.*

*I look forward to sharing more stories of our commitment to these core values and the amazing Veterans we have the privilege of serving every day.*

*David A. Elizalde, Director*

## Pressing Issues

### Mail-order pharmacy recognized

VA Pharmacy is J.D. Power 2011 Customer Service Champion

The Department of Veterans Affairs' mail-order pharmacy program has been recognized as a J.D. Power and Associates 2011 Customer Service Champion – one of only 40 entities in the United States to earn the distinction this year.

“We are honored to receive this distinction and be included in this elite group of companies that focus on customer service excellence,” said Rita Brueckner, national quality management officer for VA's Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy program.

VA's Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy functions as a virtual extension of VA medical center pharmacies by mailing prescription medications and supplies directly to Veteran patients. Local VA medical center pharmacies typically process and dispense the initial prescription order; after that, the vast majority of refills are handled via mail-order.



The goal is delivery of medication or supplies to the patient within 10 days of provider or patient request - however VA typically delivers prescriptions in less than five days.

The VA Puget Sound pharmacy completed approximately 3 million pharmacy refills by mail last year to nearly 80,000 Veterans in the Puget Sound region.

To qualify for inclusion as a J.D. Powers Customer Service Champion, companies must not only excel within their own industries, but also must stand out among leading brands in 20 major industries evaluated by J.D. Power and Associates.

*Sign up for My HealthVet to refill prescriptions and manage your health records*

[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)



## Community Support

# Rock n' Roll for Veterans

It all started in October when former Guns 'n Roses and Velvet Revolver bassist and Seattle native Duff McKagan visited the Veterans at the Seattle Division of VA Puget Sound. His current band, Loaded, had just played the halftime show of the Seattle Seahawks Veterans Appreciation Day game (right), and McKagan had agreed to donate all the iTunes proceeds from two of their newest songs "Fight On" and "We Win" to the VA Puget Sound General Patient Fund.

During the band's visit, Veterans from eras ranging from Vietnam to Afghanistan were excited to visit with the rock icon. "I saw you in Tokyo in 1991!" one Veteran said. Former Marine and current Loaded lead guitarist Mike Squires repeatedly mentioned how inspirational it was to see these Veterans overcome their injuries.

In April of 2011, Loaded released their newest album, *The Taking*. At their record release concert, the band



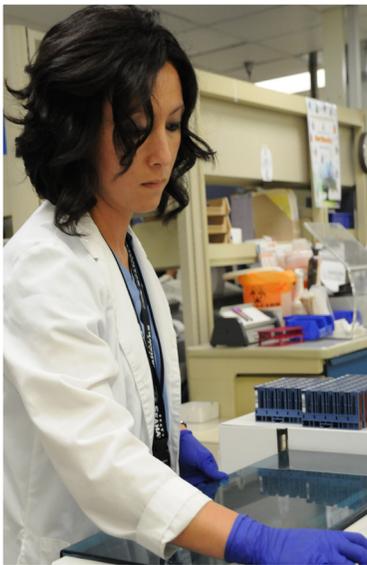
organized a silent auction and raffle to benefit the patient fund. Items included autographed music and sports items from music groups including Loaded, Pearl Jam, Fleetwood Mac, Aerosmith, Guns 'n Roses, Soundgarden, Queensryche and Elvis Costello. The University of Washington Huskies football team, local sports radio and rock radio stations also donated items.

To learn more about how you can get involved at VA Puget Sound, visit:

<http://www.pugetsound.va.gov/giving/>

## The Best Care Anywhere

# "The Lab" keeps VA Puget Sound humming



Hidden in the basement of the Seattle Division, "The Lab" as it's called by patients and staff, is home to pathologists, medical technologists, histotechnologists, medical laboratory technicians and health technicians who support nearly 90 percent of all diagnoses at VA Puget Sound.

Although sometimes overshadowed by other medical services at VA Puget Sound, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, led by Dr. Roberto Nicosia, is a key component of high quality of care; providing fast and efficient laboratory services to Veterans.

Laboratory personnel often go unnoticed because they work at the bench or behind a microscope, away from the wards or clinics. "We're largely invisible but are comprised of a highly educated and skilled staff," said

Dr. Nicosia.

For most Veterans, blood draws are their only direct contact with the lab. Conducted by phlebotomy staff for testing, these Veterans are serenaded by the almost constant humming of testing machines working on the more than 3 million tests they conduct each year for health care, teaching and medical research purposes.

The services that depend on the lab for support and quick results recognize their importance. "As an attending physician in busy outpatient clinics and the intensive care unit, I feel fortunate to have the excellent lab support that we enjoy here," said Dr. William Schubach, head of oncology at VA Puget Sound.

"We have an amazing operation now that will only get better," added Nicosia. "Upcoming improvements to the blood draw area will increase both privacy and efficiency."

As for the teaching mission of VA, the lab trains the next generation of pathologists and medical technologists. "We are consistently rated highly by University of Washington medical residents for their experiences here," Nicosia said.

Leading From The Front

# VA Puget Sound welcomes VA Secretary

VA Puget Sound Director David A. Elizalde welcomed VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki to the Seattle Division June 1 (right). During his visit he visited our Women's Clinic (below) and the Center of Excellence for Limb Loss Prevention and Prosthetic Engineering (lower right).



More photos can be found at  
[www.facebook.com/vapugetsound.com](http://www.facebook.com/vapugetsound.com)



# This summer in social media



VA Puget Sound is devoted to bringing you information where you want it - on our homepage, our social media pages or via email.

If you aren't following us online you missed:

- Groundbreaking Alzheimers Research
- The inaugural VA2K run/walk event
- The latest list of VA Puget Sound Top Docs as rated by Seattle Magazine
- and more!



You can find us at [www.pugetsound.va.gov](http://www.pugetsound.va.gov) or on Facebook ([facebook.com/vapugetsound](https://facebook.com/vapugetsound)) and Twitter ([twitter.com/vapugetsound](https://twitter.com/vapugetsound)).



## Facility Locations

### American Lake Division

9600 Veterans Drive  
Tacoma, WA 98493  
(253) 582-8440 | (800) 329-8387

### Seattle Division

1660 South Columbian Way  
Seattle, WA 98108  
(206) 762-1010 | (800) 329-8387

### Bellevue

13033 Bel-Red Road Suite 210  
Bellevue, WA 98005  
(425) 214-1055

### Bremerton

925 Adele Avenue  
Bremerton, WA 98312  
(360) 782-0129

### Federal Way

34617 11th Pl South Suite 301  
Federal Way, WA 98003  
(253) 336-4142

### Mount Vernon

307 S. 13th Street Suite 200  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
(360) 848-8500

### North Seattle

12360 Lake City Way NE Suite 200  
Seattle, WA 98125  
(206) 384-4382

### Port Angeles Extension

1005 Georgianna Street  
Port Angeles, WA 98362  
(360) 565-9330

### South Sound

151 NE Hampe Way Suite B2-6  
Chehalis, WA 98532  
(360) 748-3049



Our mission is to honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being. Our vision is to continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in health care and benefits by providing exemplary services that are both patient-centered and evidence-based. This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery and continuous improvement. It will emphasize prevention and population health and contribute to the Nation's well-being through education, research and service in national emergencies. For more information about the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, visit our homepage at [www.pugetsound.va.gov](http://www.pugetsound.va.gov).