

2021

Year In Review



B R O O K E A R M Y M E D I C A L C E N T E R



- 4 **2021 Trauma Review**
STORY BY ELAINE SANCHEZ
- 5 **BAMC Takes On Additional Trauma Patients**
STORY BY ELAINE SANCHEZ
- 6 **San Antonio Military Health System Starts Next Phase Of COVID Vaccine Rollout**
STORY BY ELAINE SANCHEZ
- 7 **Army Hospital Powers Through Record-Breaking Winter Storms**
STORY BY ELAINE SANCHEZ
- 8 **Mobile Medics Leverage Virtual Health To Aid Military Trainees With COVID**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 9 **Fort Sam Houston Community Pharmacy Relocates To New Exchange**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 10 **BAMC Relocates COVID-19 Vaccination Operations**
STORY BY DANIEL J. CALDERÓN
- 11 **New Infusion Clinic Offers Treatment Option For Some COVID Patients**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 12 **San Antonio Military Health System Starts Next Phase Of COVID Vaccine Rollout**
STORY BY ELAINE SANCHEZ
- 13 **Virtual Program Helps Diabetic Patients Better Manage Their Insulin**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 14 **New Kiosks Available For Prescription Pick-Up**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 15 **BAMC Installs Lactation Pods For Patients, Staff**
STORY BY DANIEL J. CALDERÓN
- 16 **BAMC Dedicates Auditorium To Hospital's Longest-Serving Civilian**
STORY BY ELAINE SANCHEZ
- 17 **San Antonio Market to Standardize, Optimize Local Healthcare**
STORY BY ELAINE SANCHEZ
- 18 **Infectious Disease Physician Takes Command Of BAMC**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 19 **BAMC Receives Greenhealth Award For Environmental Sustainability Efforts**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 20 **BAMC Expands COVID-19 Vaccine Program to Inpatients**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 21 **After The Ventilator, COVID Survivor Advocates For Vaccine**
STORY BY ELAINE SANCHEZ
- 22 **New Health Maintenance Resource Available For Military Beneficiaries**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 23 **BAMC Nurse Helps Support Vaccination Effort For Afghan Evacuees**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 24 **MHS GENESIS: New Electronic Health Record Coming Soon To The San Antonio Market**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 25 **New Walk-In Clinic Provides Contraception To Female Service Members**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 26 **Virtual Appointment Management Office Reaches Significant Milestone**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 27 **Cancer Diagnosis Leads Airman To BAMC For Treatment**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 28 **BAMC Receives National Recognition For Surgical Quality**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 29 **BAMC COVID-19 Vaccine Site Closes After Nearly A Year Of Operations**
STORY BY LORI NEWMAN
- 30 **Brooke Army Medical Center: Staff Accolades**

BG Clinton K. Murray
Commanding General

CSM Thurman L. Reynolds
Command Sergeant Major

Elaine Sanchez
Chief,
Communications Division

Lori Newman
Editor

Justin Rodriguez
Layout / Design

BAMC Year in Review is an authorized publication for members of Brooke Army Medical Center and Defense Health Agency, published under the authority of AR 360-1. Contents are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, or Brooke Army Medical Center.

Follow Us & Subscribe



For more information, click below to visit us on the web:

 <https://bamc.tricare.mil/>



COMMANDING GENERAL
BG CLINTON K. MURRAY



COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR
CSM THURMAN L. REYNOLDS

BAMC Family,

CSM Reynolds and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone -- both patients and staff -- for your dedication, patience and support over the past year. You should be incredibly proud of the strides you've made while continuing to combat COVID-19.

A key milestone was standing up the COVID-19 Vaccination Site on Fort Sam Houston in February 2021. This joint effort provided the capability to vaccinate up to 2,000 beneficiaries per day in a safe environment. To conserve resources and based on conditions, we fortunately were able to close the site in early December and move vaccinations back to the clinics.

We also successfully conducted ongoing drive-thru COVID-19 screening and testing in the parking garage. Our exceptional personnel continue to serve our beneficiaries and staff to this day, working through the extremes of Texas weather. Meanwhile, our hard-working laboratory professionals continue to efficiently process hundreds of COVID-19 tests each day.

Over the summer, in the midst of the pandemic and after years of collaboration, San Antonio's military treatment facilities officially unified as a market with the Defense Health Agency. As the San Antonio Market, we are leveraging the best of our capabilities and expertise to optimize the continuity, standardization, and access to care for our patients; because they deserve our very best.

We also made it through an unprecedented winter storm (dubbed Snow-mageddon), opened a new pharmacy location in the JBSA-Fort Sam Houston Exchange, and spent months training and preparing for our transition to MHS GENESIS on Jan. 22, 2022. Throughout it all, our team continued to support military and COVID missions around the world, while maintaining its focus on safe, quality, compassionate health care.

These are just a few of the milestone events of 2021. CSM Reynolds and I look forward to what this new year will bring. No matter what happens, we will prevail, and as a team, become stronger and more resilient than ever.

On behalf of the entire Command Team, I want to thank each and every member of the BAMC Family for their dedication, professionalism, expertise and compassion over the past year. We also owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to our patients and this amazing community for their support and flexibility as we've rapidly adjusted programs and services to ensure safety during the ongoing pandemic and now our MHS GENESIS implementation.

Moving forward, please stay safe and keep up the great work! We hope you enjoy this special Year in Review highlighting your incredible efforts.

One Team, One Purpose!

Clinton K. Murray
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Commanding General

Thurman L. Reynolds
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major



MISSION

We protect the Nation by ensuring Total Force Readiness through innovative, high quality care and the development of elite healthcare professionals.

VISION

*To be the pinnacle of military healthcare
— Anytime, Anywhere!*



In 2021, Brooke Army Medical Center's Trauma and Critical Care Service evaluated more than 5,600 trauma patients and admitted over 3,900.

BAMC is the only Level I trauma center within the Department of Defense and one of two Level I trauma centers within San Antonio. BAMC partners with University Health System and Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council, or STRAC, to serve the 2.8 million people in San Antonio and the surrounding 22 counties in Southwest Texas, covering 26,000 square miles. STRAC develops, implements and maintains the regional trauma and emergency healthcare system for Trauma Service Area-P.

During the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic, BAMC worked with community partners to maintain the regional trauma system during three separate COVID surges. This led to an increase of almost 30 percent in trauma admissions.

Over the past year, blunt injuries remained the most common mechanism of injury for trauma patients admitted to BAMC. Of those types of injuries, falls and motor vehicle crashes were by far the most common types of injuries. However, during the pandemic, BAMC has seen some change in injury presentation with a 1-2 percent increase in penetrating trauma wounds, to include gunshots and stab wounds. Penetrating trauma injuries accounted for almost 20 percent of trauma evaluations.

The vast majority of BAMC's trauma patients, about 85 percent, are from the civilian sector. BAMC is able to see civilian trauma

patients through a special secretarial designee program. The remaining patients are active duty and military beneficiaries. Fortunately, the number of combat injured patients was exceedingly small.

Even through the pandemic, BAMC continued to work on clinical advancements with UHS and STRAC, including participating in the whole blood collaborative with STRAC. Because of these joint efforts, this region continues to lead in the advancement of using low titer type "O" whole blood both in the field and hospital settings. Over the past three years, the BAMC trauma service has experienced an increase of 55 percent in the use of whole blood for the resuscitation of trauma patients. This advancement in civilian care is directly related to lessons learned on the battlefield.

BAMC's trauma education and outreach remained engaged and busy despite the pandemic. BAMC staff taught over 6,000 individuals bleeding control techniques in 2019-2020 using the Stop the Bleed course, including training every staff member in Judson Independent School District, as well as many other school employees. They also extended their outreach to the entire south central Texas region.

BAMC staff are working to prevent injuries of all kinds by partnering with local agencies to decrease retaliatory gun violence, decrease impaired driving crashes,

and prevent domestic violence. With a special focus on connecting with the older adult community, BAMC is collaborating with other hospitals and Fire and Emergency Medical Service partners to prevent falls and make homes safer.

Additionally, Army Col. Tyson Becker and the BAMC Trauma Division have developed a unique pre-deployment trauma readiness program, Strategic Trauma Readiness Center of San Antonio, or STaRC. The intense three-week program consists of a combination of didactic and hands-on trauma events designed to test individual skills and team performance. The first week encompasses a combination of didactic and laboratory training. During the next two weeks, the forward surgical team breaks down into two separate teams. One team goes to Camp Bullis for live fire field training with a combination of training platforms. The second team works together as a clinical team at BAMC under the supervision of trauma and critical care staff.

The first team completed the course in June 2020 and since then a total of 221 personnel (160 Army, 31 Navy, and 30 Army Special Operations Forces) have been through the training.

JANUARY 7

Trauma personnel receive an extracorporeal membrane oxygenation or ECMO patient into the Emergency Department at Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. BAMC has been re-verified as a Level I Trauma Center by the American College of Surgeons for its dedication to providing optimal care for injured patients. Photo By Corey Toye

BAMC Takes On Additional Trauma Patients

Brooke Army Medical Center expanded its ability to care for critically injured community members to help ease the COVID-19 burden on the local healthcare system.

With the demand for COVID-19 care increasing, BAMC began accepting a higher percentage of trauma patients through transfers from other hospitals throughout the region, as it did during the summer COVID-19 surge the previous year.

The trauma patients were transferred from community hospitals based on their need for higher level care.

By sending additional critically ill patients to BAMC, the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council, which manages the trauma region, was able to reduce stress on the University Hospital Trauma Service as the COVID-19 census increases. BAMC and University Hospital are the only Level I trauma centers within Trauma Service Area-P, a 26,000-square-mile, 22-county expanse.

"Unfortunately, traumatic injuries and other emergent medical conditions do not

stop during a pandemic so the baseline requirements of a health care system remain," said Air Force Col. Patrick Osborn, BAMC's deputy commander for surgical services. "Our increased role helps ensure the regional trauma system remains intact despite the increasing healthcare system stress caused by the current surge."

To ensure BAMC's healthcare professionals are poised to support an increased need for acute inpatient care and to preserve capacity for beneficiaries and trauma patients, SAMHS delayed many non-urgent, elective surgical cases, particularly those requiring an overnight stay. Most other surgeries, to include trauma-related care, remained unaffected.

"SAMHS had to adopt this posture twice since the pandemic started, and we have shown the agility to quickly reopen elective surgical access once conditions warrant," Osborn said.

"We will continue to assess conditions daily and adjust as needed," he added. "We greatly appreciate everyone's pa-

tience and support as we work to ensure everyone's safety."

STRAC's redistribution of high-level trauma care was accomplished seamlessly due to the history of collaboration between the two Level I facilities, noted Air Force Lt. Col. Valerie Sams, BAMC trauma medical director.

"We have an active and long-standing partnership with STRAC and University Hospital, which enables us to act as a cohesive, efficient system in times of crisis," Sams said.

Alongside University, BAMC provides lifesaving care to more than 4,000 trauma patients each year, including 750 burn patients, from an area that stretches across 22 counties in Southwest Texas. About 85 percent of BAMC's trauma admissions are community members without military affiliation. BAMC is able to accept civilian trauma patients for care through the DoD's Secretarial Designee Program and related special authorities.

JANUARY 27



Air Force Senior Airman Kasey Ginn, medical technician, administers the COVID-19 vaccine to Army Capt. Christine Kasprisin, physical therapist, at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Jan. 26, 2021. The San Antonio Military Health System is starting the next phase of the Department of Defense's COVID-19 vaccine rollout -- expanding the scope of who is eligible to get vaccinated against the virus. Photo by Jason Edwards

San Antonio Military Health System Starts Next Phase of COVID Vaccine Rollout

The San Antonio Military Health System started the next phase of the Department of Defense's COVID-19 vaccine rollout -- expanding the scope of who was eligible to get vaccinated against the virus.

Phase 1b included beneficiaries age 75 and older, personnel who performed critical national capabilities, personnel preparing to deploy to locations outside of the U.S., and frontline essential workers.

"We are doing everything we can do to put shots in arms as quickly as possible," said Air Force Maj. Gen. John J. DeGoes, SAMHS market director and commander of 59th Medical Wing, which oversees Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center. "We continue to focus on efficiency while maintaining the highest emphasis on safety."

In a cooperative market effort, BAMC and Wilford Hall each took on distinct vaccination roles. BAMC focused on vaccinating eligible 1b military personnel, while Wilford Hall finished vaccinating their eligible 1b military personnel and began vaccinating civilian TRICARE beneficiaries age 75 and older starting Feb. 3.

Vaccinations for eligible 1b military personnel was coordinated by their military units. Wilford Hall opened a limited number of appointments for beneficiaries age 75 and older.

As the market expanded to additional populations, SAMHS remained committed to the completion of Phase 1a vaccinations, which included personnel in the vaccine program's top priority tiers:

healthcare providers, support staff and service members directly supporting the national COVID-19 response.

With an ongoing Level I trauma mission and over 8,600 staff members at BAMC alone, Phase 1a was a considerable undertaking, noted Army Col. Michael Wirt, BAMC's deputy commanding officer.

"It was a milestone to expand to the next phase of the vaccine process while still ensuring we provided our healthcare workers vaccine opportunities," he said. "We could not have moved out as quickly without the efforts of our entire team, from planning and logistics to clinical vaccination teams and support staff."

FEBRUARY 19

Army Hospital Powers Through Record-Breaking Winter Storms



With record-cold temperatures and potential power outages looming in South Central Texas, Brooke Army Medical Center immediately launched into action to ensure continuity of patient care despite the impending storms.

With safety at the forefront and to conserve resources, BAMC first delayed all non-urgent medical appointments and procedures to ensure emergency services and trauma support to the city remained unaffected. This measure enabled patients and non-emergency-essential staff to stay off icy roads and safely at home.

To ensure continuity of care, BAMC's healthcare professionals stayed for hours past their shifts, in some cases overnight, until icy roads thawed and personnel relieving them could safely travel to the hospital.

Many staff members went above and beyond, pitching in to replenish supplies and aid with bed coordination for staff needing to stay overnight. In one case, nursing supervisor Michelle Garrish spent three nights in the hospital to help cover shifts, while Staff Sgt. Russell Johnson offered to pick up staff who were unable to drive in. Air Force 1st Lt. Cruz Williamson stayed three hours past her shift, with another three hours spent driving to

her house, which was without electricity. Still, she assured her supervisor she would just take a quick nap in case she needed to come back to work.

With the ongoing below-freezing temperatures and intermittent snow and ice, BAMC also temporarily closed outlying clinic services for the week to include COVID screening and testing and vaccine administration.

Additionally, at the request of CPS Energy and as part of Joint Base San Antonio's city support, BAMC transitioned to generator power for close to 48 hours earlier this week to aid the community's power conservation efforts. The city's power reached critical levels this week due to the increased demand on the system, spurring many planned rolling power outages across the region to conserve power.

The power transition, which was transparent to patients, did not impact BAMC's inpatient care mission or support of the city's trauma mission. Alongside Univer-

sity Hospital, BAMC is one of two Level I Trauma Centers in the region, providing support across a 26,000-square-mile, 22-county expanse.

BAMC's ongoing training and recent response to the pandemic were key factors in the hospital's rapid and successful response to the weather this week, BAMC Commanding General Brig. Gen. Shan K. Bagby noted.

As for the staff, the weather event marked another challenge surmounted in an already difficult year.

"I am so proud and grateful for the way our people rise to this and every occasion," said Air Force Col. Heather Yun, deputy commander for medical services. "Every one of our teammates has been personally affected by the storm, but nevertheless show so much compassion, empathy, diligence and professionalism. We will all have stories to tell after this week, and we will be telling stories of grit, care and an incredible community that rose to yet another remarkable occasion."

FEBRUARY 26

Mobile Medics Leverage Virtual Health To Aid Military Trainees With COVID

Service members with COVID-19 may have been in quarantine, but they were far from being alone.

A new virtual health program was used to leverage technology providing round-the-clock care for military trainees who tested positive or who were deemed at risk due to exposure or symptoms.

“This has been a tremendous collaborative effort between Brooke Army Medical Center, the Virtual Medical Center and the Army Medical Center of Excellence to provide medical support to Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors,” said Army Maj. Daniel Yourk, deputy director of operations, Virtual Medical Center.

The program, which monitors service members via smart phone, was first initiated to provide support to military trainees after holiday leave. Upon their return, students were screened for COVID-19 and, if they tested positive or were deemed at high risk, quarantined at a designated barracks at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland for 10 or more days.

“This was the first time we were faced with this type of situation due to the pandemic,” Yourk said. “We had limited time to create a solution that would enable continuity of care to potentially hundreds of troops with finite medical resources.”

Borrowing a text capability from the U.S. Army Dental Command on Fort Sam Houston, the Virtual Medical Center devised a system to care for trainees in isolation.

Each day, trainees receive a text with a link to a survey, which includes questions such as: are your symptoms worsening, do you have shortness of breath and do you need behavioral health support? The responses are reviewed by providers and medics each morning. If the responses indicate additional care is needed, the service member will either receive a virtual encounter



Pvt. Madison Marvel, assigned to B Company, 188th Medical Battalion, is fully recovered after a bout with COVID-19 in January 2021. While quarantined, Marvel received medical assistance from mobile medics as part of a collaborative effort between Brooke Army Medical Center, the Virtual Medical Center and the Army Medical Center of Excellence at Joint Base San Antonio. Courtesy photo

with a nurse practitioner or an in-person visit by a mobile medic from Brooke Army Medical Center or MEDCoE, explained Leslie Smith, nurse practitioner with the Virtually Integrated Patient Readiness and Remote Care Clinic, or VIPRR.

Mobile medics, a unique Army asset, are able to take vital signs and communicate with a health care provider via video conferencing to determine the best course of action for treatment.

“Using a secure system, we are able to monitor for worsening symptoms as well as provide a final wellness check before trainees return to their unit,” Smith said. “We offer virtual and direct engagements, and medication as needed. It is going very smoothly.”

Among those screened was Pvt. Madison Marvel, who had been visiting her family in Georgia for the holidays and, shortly after her return, lost her sense of taste and smell. A positive test confirmed her suspicions.

Mobile Medics Leverage Virtual Health To Aid Military Trainees With COVID

"I also had body aches and headaches so figured I had COVID," said Marvel, assigned to B Company, 188th Medical Battalion. "After a few days, I thought I was getting better, but my symptoms got worse."

Marvel filled out the survey, noting she had worsening symptoms, and the mobile medics were at her door that afternoon. "I thought it was very considerate they came so quickly," she said. "My mom was very relieved as well. She was worried about me and it was comforting for her to know I was being taken care of so well."

The medics took Marvel's vital signs, which were conveyed to the nurse practitioner on duty, and provided medication to relieve her symptoms.

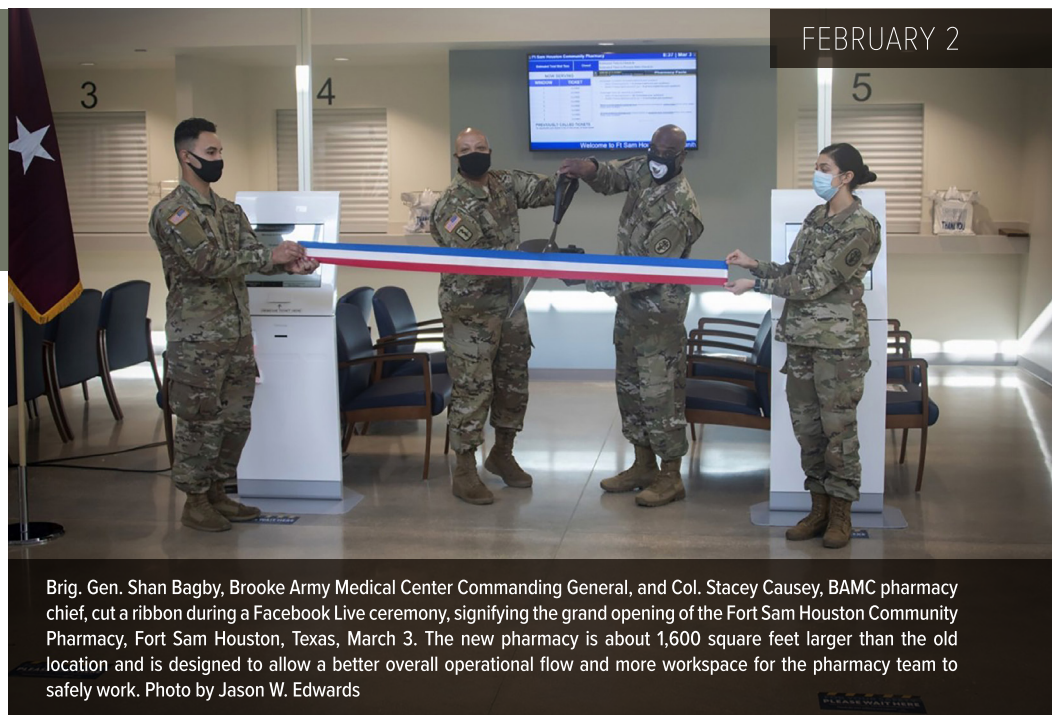
After 12 days in quarantine, Marvel received a clean bill of health and returned to her unit.

"This program gives us the ability to have personal interaction with service members and a broader scope of care than they would have received otherwise," said Sgt. 1st Class Ramsey Kantuncaamal, the Virtual Medical Center noncommissioned officer in charge. "That is what the Virtual Medical Center is here to do – support service members above all else."

With the holidays over and travel reduced, the demand for virtual COVID care and monitoring has decreased among trainees; however, the lessons learned from this event will have a lasting impact, Yourk noted. The Virtual Medical Center is currently working with the training commands to develop a flexible, enduring capability using their own medics and resources.

While this application was focused on military trainees, the concept could be applied to a number of settings, including nursing homes and other areas with people in close quarters and at a higher risk of infection.

"This program certainly underscored the importance of virtual health and the value and agility of the mobile medic program," Yourk said.



Brig. Gen. Shan Bagby, Brooke Army Medical Center Commanding General, and Col. Stacey Causey, BAMC pharmacy chief, cut a ribbon during a Facebook Live ceremony, signifying the grand opening of the Fort Sam Houston Community Pharmacy, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, March 3. The new pharmacy is about 1,600 square feet larger than the old location and is designed to allow a better overall operational flow and more workspace for the pharmacy team to safely work. Photo by Jason W. Edwards

Fort Sam Houston Community Pharmacy Relocates To New Exchange

The Fort Sam Houston Community Pharmacy moved into the new Army and Air Force Exchange Service (Exchange) located at 2500 Funston Road on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

A virtual ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Feb. 16 on the Brooke Army Medical Center Facebook page (www.facebook.com/BrookeArmyMedicalCenter).

"The relocation of the Community Pharmacy into this new facility will provide customers with a one-stop shopping experience for both their prescriptions and other shopping needs," said Army Col. Stacey Causey, BAMC pharmacy chief. "It will also allow us to provide the best pharmacy experience for the JBSA community."

The new pharmacy is about 1,600 square feet larger than the old location and is designed to allow a better overall operational flow and more work space for the pharmacy team to safely work.

"The pharmacy has eight prescription windows, which is a vast improvement over our old location," Causey said. "Additionally, the pharmacy now has a dedicat-

ed patient counseling space to allow for private one on one counseling. The location of the pharmacy also provides a safer and larger parking experience for patrons as the previous parking lot became heavily congested with patient traffic."

The Community Pharmacy fills an average of 330 new prescriptions and 1,440 refills daily.

"That's more than 417,600 new and refilled prescriptions a year," Causey said. "Those are some impressive numbers and with this new space I'm sure we will be able to do even more."

"We are proud of our pharmacy staff," Causey said. "They work very hard to serve our patients and we want our patients to have the best experience possible when they visit any of our pharmacies."



MARCH 1

BAMC Relocates COVID-19 Vaccination Operation



Military and civilian personnel wait the required 15-30 minutes after receiving their COVID-19 vaccination shot at the Fort Sam Houston COVID Vaccine Site, which is located in Building 4110, 2536 Garden Ave. The new location is currently taking personnel in categories 1a 1b in addition to civilian TRICARE beneficiaries 65 and older by appointment only, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Photo by Corey Toye

Brooke Army Medical Center relocated its vaccine operations to a new location on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort San Houston in February to safely accommodate a greater number of daily vaccinations.

"We made the change to this facility because of the availability of space for social distancing and it can accommodate our desired throughput," said Army Col. Elizabeth M. Stanley, chief of the Department of Preventive Medicine and officer in charge of the COVID Vaccination Clinic. "It will enable us to increase the number of vaccinations per day in a safe and efficient manner."

Leaders worked to put a plan in place to ensure a safe and more efficient vaccination process.

"This is a one-stop shop," said Cheryl Crochran, BAMC's telecommunication officer for Information Management Division and infrastructure manager for network operations. "So, they'll check in, vaccinate, then they'll exit with their second appointment scheduled."

Patients who come in for their first vaccination will be scheduled their appointment for the second dose while they are at the clinic. Crochran and her staff have ensured the computer systems at the vaccination site are connected with the systems at BAMC. She said the team has set up more than 40 computers, both wireless and wired connections to update patients' records.

The overall effort to prepare and run the new clinic is the result of a strong partnership among several organizations. BAMC personnel, along with personnel from the 502nd Air Base Wing, U.S. Army North and the U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence on JBSA Fort Sam Houston worked together to get the facility ready, and will continue working together throughout the life of the clinic. In addition, volunteers from BAMC's Volunteer Services are on hand to provide assistance.

BAMC Staff Accolades 2021



Army Lt. Col. Deanna Hutchings
Critical Care Nurse

Received the 2021 American Association of Critical Care Nurses Circle of Excellence Award, which recognizes and showcases excellent outcomes of individuals in caring for high acuity and critically ill patients and their families.

BAMC physicians who made the 2021 List of San Antonio's Best Doctors:

Air Force Col. (Dr.) Patrick Osborn
Deputy Commander for Surgical Services and Orthopaedics Foot & Ankle Surgeon

Air Force Maj. Julia Nuelle
Orthopaedic Hand Surgeon

Army Lt. Col. Thomas Dowd
Orthopaedics Foot & Ankle Surgeon

Army Lt. Col. Jeanne Patzkowski
Orthopaedics Sports Surgeon





New Infusion Clinic Offers Treatment Option For Some COVID Patients

Brooke Army Medical Center opened a new Infusion Clinic to help high risk COVID-positive patients whose symptoms are mild to moderate.

The treatment involves IV infusion of investigational antibody medications that are not Food and Drug Administration approved, but are authorized under an FDA emergency use authorization.

“The goal of this treatment is to halt the progression of COVID, and to hopefully prevent inpatient admission,” said Air Force Maj. (Dr.) Joseph Yabes Jr., Infectious Disease Clinic officer in charge. “Overall people have had good responses to this therapy.”

The infusion therapy can be given to patients 12 and older who weigh at least 88 pounds. However, the most benefit from this treatment has been seen in patients who are more than 65 years old and those with a body mass index over 35.

“People who are immunocompromised, diabetic, or people who are age 55 with hypertension or COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) may also benefit from this therapy,” Yabes explained.

A primary care manager must refer the patient to the COVID Infusion Clinic. If the patient meets the criteria, someone

from the infusion clinic will contact them to schedule the appointment. Once the patient arrives at BAMC, they have a designated parking space and are instructed to call the clinic.

“We don’t want to bring someone who is acutely sick with COVID and infectious to sit next to someone who is immunocompromised,” Yabes said. “The clinic was opened to provide a safe and monitored environment to facilitate antibody infusion and to prevent potential exposures to others.”

“The goal of this is to prevent hospital admission,” Yabes said. “If you are at the point where you need to be admitted to the hospital, the best course of action is to be admitted and receive alternative therapies not a monoclonal antibody.”

Currently, the COVID Infusion Clinic can support up to four patients per day. Prior to the clinic opening, patients were able to receive the antibody infusion therapy in the emergency department.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Cardona, 69, and his wife, retired Sgt. 1st Class Marie Cardona, 66, tested positive for COVID-19 and fit the criteria for the monoclonal antibody therapy.

“Before I received the treatment, I was feeling pretty bad,” the retired command sergeant major said.

He had a sore throat, headache, chills and body aches.

“I was hurting all over,” he said. “As soon as I received the antibody treatment, within days my symptoms started to calm down and went away. I started feeling 100 times better.”

Marie Cardona’s COVID symptoms included extreme fatigue, body aches, cramps and an intense headache.

“I had seen the reaction Paul had to the treatment so I went in and did it,” Marie Cardona said. “The first night after the treatment I didn’t see a difference, but the next day the cramps, body aches and the headache were better.”

People who have already received their COVID vaccination are not eligible for this treatment, and patients who receive the infusion therapy should wait at least 90 days before getting the COVID vaccine.

The Cardona’s were thankful they were able to receive the monoclonal antibody infusion therapy.

San Antonio Military Health System Starts Next Phase Of COVID Vaccine Rollout

In March, the San Antonio Military Health System started the next phase of the Department of Defense's COVID-19 vaccine rollout – expanding the scope of who was eligible to get vaccinated against the virus.

Brooke Army Medical Center began booking appointments for high-risk beneficiaries ages 16 to 64 and started administering the vaccine to high-risk beneficiaries ages 16-64 and beneficiaries 65 and older at its vaccination site on Fort Sam Houston (main post).

"We were very pleased to extend this care to our higher risk beneficiaries sooner than originally anticipated, while still administering the vaccine to critical military units and medical personnel," said BAMC Commanding General Brig. Gen. Shan K. Bagby.

About the Vaccine

SAMHS is administering the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine under special authorization by the Food and Drug Administration. The vaccine, which is administered in two doses 21 days apart, is expected to have a 95 percent efficacy rate following receipt of the second dose, according to the CDC website. For detailed information on the Pfizer vaccine, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/pfizer/index.html>.

Even with such a high efficacy rate, people should stay vigilant even after getting the vaccine until more is learned about the protective immunity these vaccines confer, noted Air Force Col. Heather Yun, BAMC's deputy commander for medical services and an infectious disease physician.

"Remember the 3 Ws -- wear a mask, wash hands or hand sanitize regularly, and watch your physical distance," she said. "Taking protective measures and getting the vaccine when available are the best ways to protect ourselves, our families and our communities and put an end to this terrible pandemic."

SCHOLARSHIP IN ACTION 2021 AWARD WINNERS



COL Thornton S. Mu
*SAUSHEC Associate Dean
for Graduate Medical Education*

Received the 1st quarter Scholarship in Action award for his research article "ECMO with vasopressor use during early endotoxic shock: Can it improve circulatory support and regional microcirculatory blood flow."



LTC (Dr.) David Kauvar
Vascular Surgeon

Received the 2nd quarter Scholarship in Action award for his research article, "Hard signs gone soft: A critical evaluation of presenting signs of extremity vascular injury."



LTC G. Travis Clinton
Surgical Oncology

Received the 3rd quarter Scholarship in Action award winner for his article "SARS-CoV-2 Infection Risk Among Active Duty Military Members Deployed to a Field Hospital — New York City, April 2020."



LTC Timothy Vreeland
*SAUSHEC Associate Dean
for Graduate Medical Education*

Received the 4th quarter Scholarship in Action Award for coauthoring the article, "A Phase IIb Randomized Controlled Trial of the TLPLDC Vaccine as Adjuvant Therapy After Surgical Resection of Stage III/IV Melanoma: A Primary Analysis."

MARCH 19



Nichole Carreon, a registered nurse with the Diabetes Remote Electronic Assisted Monitoring program, talks with a patient about their weekly glucose readings at the Military Health System Virtual Medical Center at Brooke Army Medical Center, Texas, March 18, 2021. The DREAM program offers patients help from a registered nurse to review their blood sugars and to help them identify patterns related to lifestyle that may impact their blood glucose levels. Patients also learn how to titrate their basal insulin according to the appropriate protocol as ordered by their provider. Photo by Lori Newman

Virtual Program Helps Diabetic Patients Better Manage Their Insulin

The Diabetes Remote Electronic Assisted Monitoring, or DREAM, program focuses on teaching patients how to measure and adjust their insulin independently based on their provider's instructions.

A team from the Military Health System Virtual Medical Center worked with the Diabetes Center of Excellence at Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center to develop a program to help augment a patient's diabetes treatment plan, providing support to the patient between provider appointments. The program is available for patients and providers across the San Antonio Military Healthcare System.

"The main idea was that patients are often told to titrate (go up or down) on their basal insulin based on a pattern of fasting glucoses," explained Air Force Maj. Darrick Beckman, endocrinologist and Diabe-

tes Center of Excellence medical director. "However, it is not uncommon for patients to be overwhelmed at appointments. And, even with having written handouts on how to titrate their insulin, when they return in three months, there have been no adjustments made to their insulin and their diabetes is not better controlled."

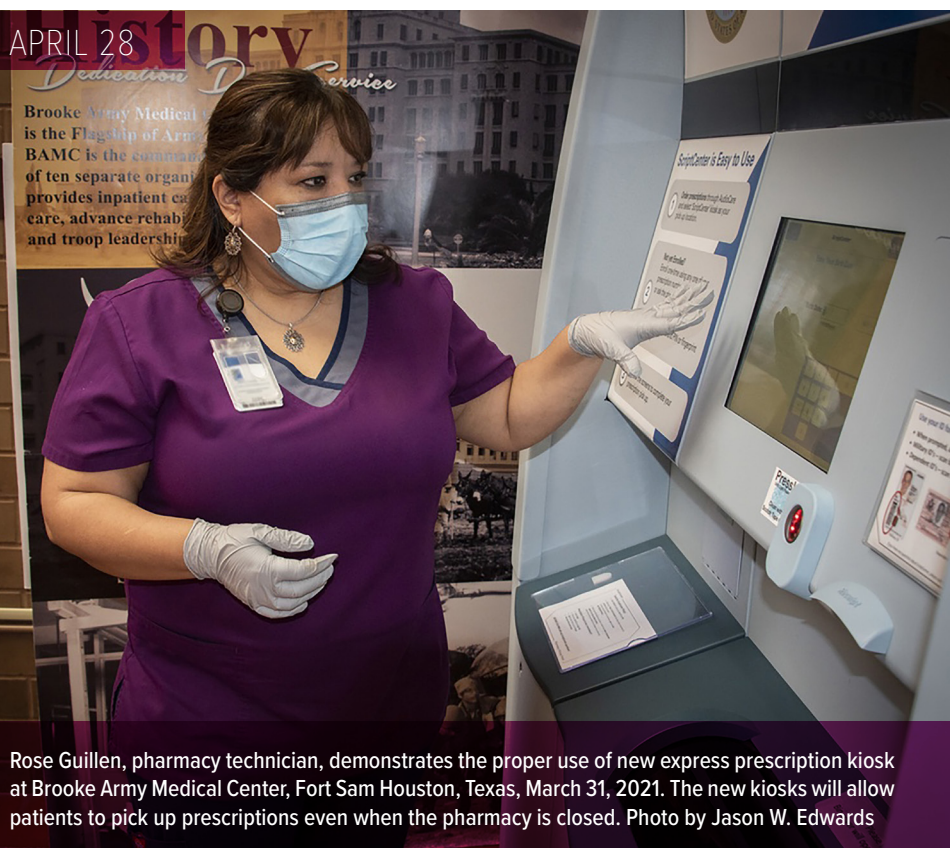
The DREAM program offers patients help from a registered nurse to review their blood sugars and to help them identify patterns related to lifestyle that may impact their blood glucose levels. Patients also learn how to titrate their basal insulin according to the appropriate protocol as ordered by their provider.

After a provider refers a patient to the DREAM program, a registered nurse will contact them by phone to make sure they are suitable for the program and willing to participate.

"Each week we have remote encounters by telephone to go through their weekly glucose readings and help them with their basal insulin through a titration protocol," said Nichole Carreon, one of the two DREAM registered nurses. "The goal is to get patients into their prescribed target range for four weeks or titrating independently on their own for six weeks before we consider graduation from the program."

Once the patient is appropriately educated and feels comfortable to titrate on their own, they no longer need the program, Beckman explained. "This titration capability is something the patient can use life-long."

Providers interested in learning more about the DREAM program can email the Virtual Medical Center Remote Patient Monitoring Clinic at dha.san-antonio-tx.healthcare-ops.list.vmc-fo-rhm-nursing-support@mail.mil.



Rose Guillen, pharmacy technician, demonstrates the proper use of new express prescription kiosk at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, March 31, 2021. The new kiosks will allow patients to pick up prescriptions even when the pharmacy is closed. Photo by Jason W. Edwards

New Kiosks Available For Prescription Pick-Up

Brooke Army Medical Center added another option for patients picking up prescriptions.

The new express prescription kiosks are located in the Medical Mall at BAMC and in the new Exchange at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston.

"This new kiosk allows our patients to pick up their prescriptions even when the pharmacy is closed," said Army Col. Stacey Causey, Department of Pharmacy chief. "We also hope to increase patient satisfaction by reducing lines and wait times in the pharmacy."

How to Enroll

"Patients will first need to go to one of the two kiosks and enroll to use the service," explained Army Capt. Ashley Roberts, chief of Pharmacy Operations. "At the time of enrollment, they will need an active prescription number."

During enrollment, the patient will have the option to create a User ID and PIN. They can also add their fingerprint and/or military ID to use instead of a User ID.

Once enrolled, eligible beneficiaries can order their prescription refills through Audio-Care by calling the number on their prescription bottle, 1-800-469-7170 or 210-916-8700. They will need to select either "BAMC Main Outpatient Pharmacy ScriptCenter Kiosk" or "Fort Sam Houston PX Pharmacy ScriptCenter Kiosk" as their pick-up location.

"The prescriptions are filled by pharmacy staff and loaded into the ScriptCenter kiosk for the patient to pick up," Roberts said. "Regular prescriptions will be ready in three duty days after 1 p.m. and non-formulary medications will require up to 10 duty days to be ready."

Prescriptions not picked up after seven days will be returned to the pharmacy.

When the patient arrives at the kiosk, they will log in using one of three options: fingerprint and PIN; military ID and PIN or User ID and PIN. They will review their prescription information on the screen and sign to acknowledge the prescription information is correct. The prescription will be dispensed from the drawer or larger items may be stored in a larger bin, which will open automatically.

It is important to note, prescriptions that require refrigeration cannot be stored in the kiosk and must be picked up from the pharmacy.

"If the patient has any questions about their medication, they can call the pharmacy during business hours and speak with a pharmacist," Roberts said.

"The ScriptCenter kiosk is a faster, more convenient option for patients," Roberts said.

For more information or questions regarding the new prescription pick-up kiosk, call 210-916-1536, select option 6.

DAISY AWARD WINNERS

The DAISY Award is a nationwide program that rewards and celebrates the extraordinary clinical skill and compassionate care given by nurses every day.

Ms. Annabelle Martinez

Registered Nurse
5NE NICU

Ms. Dani Reinhart

Registered Nurse
5NE Labor and Delivery

Mr. Jonathan Stevens

Registered Nurse

Air Force Capt. Heber Hoil

Registered Nurse

2021 Army Central Simulation Committee Annual Awards Recipients

Air Force Capt. Lauren Sattler

Internal Medicine Physician
Received the Army Central Simulation
Committee Research Award

Rob Coffman

BAMC Simulation Center
Administrative Director
Received the Outstanding Simulation
Administrator Award

Air Force Maj. John Hunninghake

BAMC Simulation Center Chief
& Pulmonary/Critical Care
Staff Physician
Received the Roth Award



APRIL 28



BAMC Installs Lactation Pods For Patients & Staff

Brooke Army Medical Center installed two new lactation pods in April for use by staff members and beneficiaries.

The pods will augment the three lactation rooms already at BAMC. Mothers who choose to use the rooms can either bring their breast pump equipment or they can feed their children in the pods.

“Some women are embarrassed to even ask if there is a space where they can express,” said Michelle Valdez, BAMC’s Graduate Medical Education executive manager and project manager for the Lactation Pods Project. “It’s true that moms can feed anywhere, but we wanted to make sure that we had a place where they could have their privacy.”

Although by law, mothers can pump or breastfeed in any location they choose, BAMC’s lactation rooms and new lactation pods provide privacy for staff and beneficiaries who choose to use them.

“For staff, we realized that each unit had to develop its own dedicated space (for lactating mothers),” said Dena Miller, an inpatient lactation consultant at BAMC.

“Units usually had makeshift rooms.”

This meant that for many years, BAMC staff who needed to express breast milk would use a designated space like a locker room or a closet that had been cleaned out and cleared for use. However, the only space for beneficiaries to either express or feed their infants was in the pediatric area or in their rooms if they were inpatients.

Over the course of several years, BAMC did designate three locations as lactation rooms. These rooms satisfied Army Directive 2015-43, the Revised Breastfeeding and Lactation Support Policy. However, the new pods will ensure there are adequate facilities for mothers who wish to nurse or express in areas other than pediatrics.

“We’re a medical facility so our staff really needed to have adequate spaces,” said Carolyn Lowe, BAMC’s outpatient lactation consultant. “If they didn’t have time, then they wouldn’t pump. And, if they didn’t pump, then their milk supply would just go away.”

Although there are alternatives, many health providers do encourage breastfeed-

ing, or using a mother’s breast milk, as the primary source of nourishment for newborns and babies. The new facilities at BAMC will give moms a secure and private location to either breastfeed or pump. The pods are lighted, have two bench seats – one on either side of the egg-shaped pod and have electrical outlets so moms can plug in their own equipment. The pods do not have breast pump equipment.

One pod is located on the second floor adjacent to the C elevator and the second is right outside BAMC’s OB/GYN clinic. The pods, both of which are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, are accessible 24 hours a day via the free Mamava app. Moms can download the app to unlock the pods. Instructions how to unlock the pods is on each of them.

“This was truly a team effort,” said Valdez. “The lactation consultants, the leadership, and everyone involved in this project, and in this process, put in a lot of work. I’m glad we have these facilities for our staff and for our patients.”

SUPERHERO 5K

NURSES WEEK

APRIL 2021



MAY 12

Carolyn Putnam, secretary to the commander, reacts to the announcement of the dedication of Brooke Army Medical Center's auditorium as the "Carolyn D. Putnam Auditorium" at BAMC, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, May 11, 2021. The dedication in her name was a surprise to Putnam, who has been in federal civil service for 66 years, 61 of which have been at BAMC.

Photo by Jason W. Edwards

BAMC Dedicates Auditorium To Hospital's Longest-Serving Civilian

With friends, family and a host of former bosses cheering her on, Brooke Army Medical Center dedicated its fourth floor auditorium to Carolyn D. Putnam, the hospital's longest-serving government civilian, during a ceremony May 11.

The 85-year-old commander's secretary has been a civil servant for 66 years, with 61 of those years at BAMC.

"Ms. Putnam embodies the character and dedication of the very best our nation has to offer, and is a shining example to all Americans," wrote John E. Whitely, acting Secretary of the Army, in his dedication approval memo. "She has earned a place of honor in U.S. Army history."

The surprise ceremony caught the normally stalwart secretary off guard. Along with 17 of her colleagues, Putnam had been called to the auditorium that morning to accept a Lifetime of Service award, a new BAMC recognition honoring government civilians with 45-plus years of service. After the last certificate was handed out, leaders called Putnam and her son, Chip, back to the stage. She was visibly shocked as they unveiled the ornate dedication plaque.

Speechless at first, Putnam soon rallied for the crowd.

"I feel so privileged, so honored," she said as tears filled her eyes. "The best part of my career has been the 61 years I've spent at BAMC."

Four of Putnam's former bosses attended the event and six sent in video messages. In total, as commander's secretary, Putnam has worked for 17 generals and nine colonels.

"Ms. Putnam is the epitome of a civil servant," said Maj. Gen. George Appenzeller, assistant director for combat support, Defense Health Agency.

"She is a civil servant who has spent her entire life taking care of others and those folks who put their lives on the line for the rest of us."

Maj. Eileen Cassidy, chief, Business Operations Division, initiated the approval process, which took over a year and required signatures at four levels of command.

"When the Secretary of the Army approved this dedication, I hoped that Ms. Putnam, and all civilians within BAMC and across the Military Health System, would know how deeply we all value their service and sacrifice," she said. "We are so grateful to the leaders at all levels who recognized Ms. Putnam's incredible contributions over the past six decades."

Other opportunities cropped up over the years, but Putnam dismissed them all without a second thought. "I could never leave BAMC," she said with tears in her eyes. "I love my job, the people, the sense of patriotism, being around the wounded service members and other patients... I've always been happy here. Every single day, no matter how small the task, I feel a sense of contribution and reward."

After over six decades of service, Putnam said it's surreal to now have an auditorium named in her honor.

During the ceremony, Putnam recalled driving down Interstate Highway 35 years ago with her then-young son and his friend in the backseat.

"Chip would point at the old main post hospital and tell his friend, 'That's mommy's hospital,'" she said. "And now, I don't just have a hospital, I have an auditorium. I am so honored and so grateful."

"From the bosses to my co-workers to staff throughout the hospital, I've loved every minute of my time at BAMC," she added. "This place is a part of me."

JULY 16

Army Lt. Gen. Ronald J. Place, director of the Defense Health Agency, unfurls the DHA flag as Air Force Brig. Gen. Jeannine M. Ryder, 59th Medical Wing commander and San Antonio Market director, unveils the new San Antonio Market flag during the market establishment ceremony at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, July 16, 2021. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Michael L. Gragg, Defense Health Agency senior enlisted leader, and Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Marc Schoellkopf assist in unveiling the flags. Photo by Jason W. Edwards

San Antonio Market to Standardize, Optimize Local Healthcare

After years of collaboration, San Antonio's military treatment facilities officially unified as a market with the Defense Health Agency during a ceremony at Brooke Army Medical Center July 16.

The newly designated San Antonio Market will work together to optimize personnel and resources and improve access to care for more than 250,000 military beneficiaries across the region, explained Lt. Gen. Ronald Place, DHA director.

"The San Antonio Market has always been one of the largest and most influential multi-service markets in the Military Health System," said Place during the ceremony. "For decades, the men and women of the San Antonio Market have been leaders in showing the rest of the Military Health System what effective joint operations can look like."

The San Antonio Market is sprawled across the region, encompassing Brooke Army Medical Center, Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center, 10 stand-alone military treatment facilities, and over 100 specialty services – staffed by about 11,000 Army, Navy, Air Force, civilian and contract personnel.

As the Department of Defense's only Level I Trauma Center, the market partners with the community's trauma system to administer critical care to civilian emergency patients across 22 counties in Southwest Texas.

Additionally, all military medical enlisted forces train at the Medical Education Training Campus on Fort Sam Houston.

"The San Antonio Market is a big deal," said Place, also citing the market's cutting-edge research, clinical and specialty care. "It's a diverse military community with profound responsibility for our nation's defense; a community that's proud of its tradition in delivering the full spectrum of services our forces demand."

While formally established today, the market has been fostering cooperative efforts for nearly a decade as an enhanced multi-service market, or eMSM, noted Brig. Gen. Jeannine Ryder, San Antonio Market director and commander, 59th Medical Wing. As an eMSM, the 59th Medical Wing and Brooke Army Medical Center, a flagship of military medicine, have collaborated to deliver safe, quality health care to more than 250,000 beneficiaries since 2013.

"There is no doubt we are better together," she said. "I cannot express the pride I feel, being part of an outstanding and cohesive market team working toward the purpose of unified effort for an integrated health system."

The market's cooperative efforts have never been more apparent than over the past 18 months, Ryder noted.

Military Spouse Appreciation

In honor of Military Spouse Appreciation Day, BAMC hosted a Spouse Appreciation Ceremony at the Garden entrance. Family members presented a medallion to their loved one who also serves and sacrifices. Thank you to all of our Military Spouses at BAMC and around the world!



AUGUST 3

Infectious Disease Physician Takes Command Of BAMC



Army Brig. Gen. Shan Bagby, Regional Health Command – Central commanding general, presents Brig. Gen. Clinton Murray, Brooke Army Medical Center commanding general, with the BAMC guidon during an assumption of command ceremony in the Carolyn D. Putnam Auditorium, BAMC, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Aug. 2, 2021. Murray completed his fellowship at BAMC in 2002 and served as BAMC's chief of Infectious Disease Service from 2011 to 2015.

Photo by Jason W. Edwards

Army Brig. Gen. Clinton Murray stepped into the role of commanding general after being promoted to his new rank on July 29.

"A promotion to the rank of general officer is rare," said Army Maj. Gen. Telita Crosland, deputy surgeon general, during the promotion ceremony. "To be more specific, (he) was one of only three selects in an eligible population of over 1,000 colonels that places him in a .03 percent. I share this to underscore the trust and faith our Army has in this officer, this leader, to serve at the most strategic levels of our Army and our nation."

Crosland said Murray is a quintessential professional with a servant heart.

"I know Clint is humbled by his selection, and maybe even a bit overwhelmed, but I also know he is absolutely ready for this next step," she said.

Murray, who is also an internal medicine physician, has a longstanding history with BAMC. He previously served as chief of the Infectious Disease Service at BAMC from 2011 to 2015 and was program director for the combined Army and Air Force ID Fel-

lowship in San Antonio from 2005 to 2011.

Army Brig. Gen. Shan Bagby, commanding general, Regional Health Command-Central, was the presiding officer for the assumption of command.

"It's a tremendous honor to take the reins of this amazing team, but quite frankly, you are ready," Bagby told Murray. "You have arrived at BAMC during a pivotal time in the practice of modern medicine and in the face of change within the military health system."

Bagby highlighted how beneficial Murray's infectious disease experience is in the current COVID-19 environment.

"I know you will continue to provide the ready, relevant, responsive and reliable multi-disciplinary capabilities that BAMC brings to the fight every day for the (Department of Defense), for its surrounding communities and for Bexar County," Bagby said. "I look forward to having you on the team and working with you. I am honored to serve alongside you."

The new BAMC commanding general thanked everyone for helping him with

his transition to his new position. He also thanked his family for their continued support throughout his military career.

Murray said he and his family spent "a fair bit of time" in San Antonio throughout his military career.

"Our dream job was actually to come back here to San Antonio and the ultimate dream was to come back and command BAMC," Murray said. "No one has the mission or the people like BAMC. It's truly a special place."

Murray reflected on BAMC's broad mission, partnerships and its impact to the South Texas community.

"BAMC without a doubt has the largest volume, diversity and acuity of cases of any facility in the DoD," he said, praising all the assets within BAMC's arsenal.

"If you look at the four pillars of military medicine – operational medicine, patient care, education and training, research and innovation – no one can compare to BAMC," Murray said. "That's why it is so exciting to come back here."

AUGUST 2

Assumption of Command CEREMONY



AUGUST 17



Helen Mann cleans using environmentally friendly products at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Aug. 17, 2021. BAMC received the 2021 Practice Greenhealth Environmental Excellence award, which recognizes superior performance in environmental sustainability, covering a range of different sustainability programs and activities. Photo By Lori Newman

BAMC Receives Greenhealth Award For Environmental Sustainability Efforts

Brooke Army Medical Center received the 2021 Practice Greenhealth Environmental Excellence award. The award recognizes superior performance in environmental sustainability, covering a range of different sustainability programs and activities. Winners have also made substantive progress on mercury elimination.

"This achievement means that BAMC has gone above and beyond being a good steward for the environment and has been recognized for its superior performance in environmental sustainability," said Army Capt. Ryan Wells, BAMC chief of environmental health. "We have set the standard for all medical treatment facilities to follow."

Over the past year, BAMC has recycled more than 705,000 pounds of waste materials.

"This effort significantly reduced our disposal costs while simultaneously protecting the environment," Wells said.

BAMC was also able to reach 100 percent use of green cleaning chemicals in five target areas: general purpose cleaners, window/glass cleaners, bathroom/restroom cleaners, carpet cleaners and floor cleaners.

In another initiative, the laboratory at the CPT Jennifer M. Moreno Primary Care Clinic began used heat sensitive labels on the urine collection cups. This initiative allowed the cups to be recycled while protecting the patient's personal information. This effort reduced the clinic's regulated medical waste costs by 30 percent.

"Biomedical Clinical Engineering collects used circuit boards and recycle them as scrap metal," Wells said. "This significantly reduces the weight of our solid waste as well as cost. These are just a few examples of how BAMC is working to sustain our environment."

Future goals include implementing new policies to reduce waste by an additional 10 percent, utilizing procurement to reduce unnecessary purchases, and increasing staff education about sustainability and waste management.

"In a shifting health care landscape, a focus on sustainability can help build resilience while better protecting the health of patients and the community," said Gary Cohen, Practice Greenhealth founder. "BAMC demonstrates the kind of leadership, innovation, and performance that can drive the entire health sector toward more environmentally responsible practices."

Practice Greenhealth is the leading membership and networking organization for sustainable health care, delivering environmental solutions to more than 1,100 U.S. hospitals and health systems.

"We have only one planet and we should not waste it," Wells said. "Being good environmental stewards means protecting our resources for future generations while simultaneously protecting the health of our communities. It also saves us a lot of money."

SEPTEMBER 2021

20th
ANNIVERSARY

9/11
Remembrance
Service



SEPTEMBER 2



Patrinia Thomas, licensed vocational nurse, administers the COVID-19 vaccination to patient, Genesis Crockett, at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Sep. 2, 2021. BAMC is now offering the COVID-19 vaccine to all hospital inpatients ages 12 and older. Photo by Jason W. Edwards

BAMC Expands COVID-19 Vaccine Program to Inpatients

In an effort to protect its most vulnerable patients from illness, Brooke Army Medical Center is now offering the COVID-19 vaccine to all hospital inpatients ages 12 and older.

BAMC administered its first inpatient vaccine to a postpartum patient Sept. 1.

"We are honored to offer this lifesaving vaccination to our inpatients, to include our military beneficiaries and civilian emergency/trauma patients," said Christina Kramer, chief nurse, Department of Pediatrics.

The new program enables inpatients to either start or complete the vaccination process during their hospital stay.

"Being vaccinated against COVID-19, whether fully or partially, increases the chances of a milder or shorter illness compared to those who are unvaccinated," Kramer explained, citing CDC data.

According to the CDC, COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to provide protection against severe illness and hospitalization among people of all ages eligible to receive them. And, in the case of COVID vaccines, for maximum benefit, two doses are better than one.

Either a patient or healthcare team member can initiate the vaccine discussion. Once patients opt in and are cleared to receive the vaccine, they are given the screening form, the Pfizer vaccine and instructions for V-Safe, the CDC's post-vaccine health checker.

For outpatients, BAMC continues to offer the Pfizer vaccine to all beneficiaries ages 12 and up at its vaccination site on main post Fort Sam Houston. The vaccination site also offers an additional dose to patients with moderately to severely compromised immune systems.

"The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective," Kramer said. "Being vaccinated is a vital part of reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, protecting yourself, your family, and your community."

SEPTEMBER 10

AFTER THE VENTILATOR

COVID Survivor Advocates for Vaccine

A nearly fatal bout with COVID-19 drove the Harris family to do something they had been on the fence about before. They got the vaccine.

With a wife and three sons, Tim Harris was not willing to take another gamble with his life.

"I've been in rocket attacks in Afghanistan, motorcycle and car accidents, and gun shots at the club, but I never had that feeling of impending doom," said Harris, a mobilization and planning specialist, U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, and Army retiree. "There were many moments when I thought I was going to die from COVID."

As with most people, the symptoms started gradually, he said. He woke the morning of June 15, 2020, with body chills, aches and a headache, and immediately went for a COVID test. He received word he was positive the next day. While he hoped for mild symptoms, he soon began to decline. He lost his appetite, had difficulty breathing and suffered from hallucinations as his fever spiked to 104.

"I felt so bad one night, I told my wife to call 911," he said. "It was the scariest moment of my life."

On June 25, the ambulance crew wheeled him away, leaving his wife, Dionne, to wait and pray. At that time, patients were unable to have any visitors with them in the hospital unless in the most dire of conditions.

"I felt so helpless," Dionne said. "As a helpmate, that is a hard emotion to accept."

Harris was admitted to Brooke Army Medical Center and, despite interventions, became increasingly worse. One night, exhausted and gasping for breath, Harris called his wife in desperation.

"Help me," he pleaded with his wife. "I can't breathe. Help me."

"I got off the phone and told God, 'I'm ready. I am so tired,'" he said, choking up. "It was so much on the body, I couldn't take it anymore. The harder I tried to live, the more I was dying."

Alarmed by her husband's tone, Dionne did her best to stay calm. "I knew I needed to keep it together and get him some help," she said.

She immediately called the nurses' station. "Within minutes, his physician called me," Dionne said. "He informed me that Tim would need to be intubated that evening or he would not survive through the night."



Tim Harris, a mobilization and planning specialist, U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence, is sedated while on a ventilator at Brooke Army Medical Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, June 27, 2020. Courtesy photo

Shortly after, Harris' care team inserted a breathing tube and placed him on a ventilator. He knew of several people who did not wake up after that type of intervention, and prepared himself for that same fate. "Just before they put me under, I asked myself, 'Is this the end?' I asked God to forgive me for all my sins and begged him to take care of my family."

As the doctors explained to Harris, a mechanical ventilator partially or fully takes over the breathing process, helping to support patients as they battle severe respiratory symptoms. According to a study published in the *Journal of Medical Ethics* in July 2020, approximately 2.5 percent of patients require mechanical ventilation while their body fights COVID-19. While further data is needed, current literature indicates that patient mortality for those needing ventilation ranges between 35 and 40 percent.

"We continue to see many very sick patients with COVID-19 hospitalized, admitted to the ICU, intubated for ventilator support, and even needing extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (heart-lung support) in an attempt to save their lives," said Air Force Col. Heather Yun, infectious disease physician and BAMC's deputy commander for medical services. "No one thinks they will be the one to need a ventilator or have a bad outcome with COVID, but we see this every day."

"Unlike 2020, in 2021, these events are almost entirely preventable with the vaccine," she added. "Mr. Harris is one of the fortunate ones to recover and be reunited with his family."

Harris was on the ventilator for just over 24 hours. When he woke up, his first thought was one of gratitude. "I thought of my family and I thanked God," he said.

Aided by the period of rest, Harris slowly began to recover from the virus and was discharged from the hospital on July 4, 2020.

"I'll never forget when I first saw my wife's face when she came to pick me up," he said. "I was so excited to see her."

Harris said he will forever be grateful for BAMC's lifesaving care. "I received excellent care and appreciate the hard work and dedication to duty from the entire staff. I know they don't do it for the accolades or the glory. They do it because they love helping others and I will never forget that."

Harris isolated himself to keep his family safe, but after his isolation period ended, he reunited with his then-2-year-old son. "He was so amazing and loving," he said. "He is normally very energetic, but that day, he just sat next to me on the couch and watched TV with me."

Harris was hospitalized again a few days later due to stomach pain. It was a short stay, but worthwhile, he said. "My roommate had COVID and I saw the same fear I felt in his eyes," he said. "God put me in that room for a reason. I was able to encourage my roommate, pray with him, and let him know he was going to make it. And he did. We both made it."

While he had been uncertain about the vaccine in the past, Harris did not hesitate when offered the shot in February 2021. "I knew, even if I got COVID again, that the vaccine would lessen the symptoms," he said. "I didn't want to go through another hospitalization, and I wanted to do my part for my community."

Since his illness, Harris has become a staunch advocate of the vaccine, especially after losing several of his closest friends to COVID. "If you have something against the vaccine, before you decide not to take it, do your research first. Don't take someone else's word for it. Look at the facts."

While he's come a long way, Harris still struggles with symptoms such as lung pain and short-term memory loss – a small price to pay for the gift of life, he said.

"I've often wondered, 'why did I survive,' when so many others didn't," he said. "I'm not sure of the answer. I'm just trying to live a better life and not take anything for granted. But I would give anything to have another moment with my friends."



Please Note

The following guidelines apply to healthy adults in the general population. The right

Colorectal Cancer Screening

Starting at age 45

- Colonoscopy (preferred method of screening) - Every 10 years
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy - Every 5 years (may extend to 10 years with annual FIT testing)

Cholesterol Screening

Blood Test

- Every 5 years starting at age 40 or earlier based on risk. A referral or order from your Primary Care Manager is required.

New Health Maintenance Resource Available For Military Beneficiaries

The San Antonio Market has developed a comprehensive tool to help military beneficiaries understand the current recommended health maintenance guidelines.

The guidelines are displayed in an easy-to-read format with space for the patient to record their screening information details.

"Preventive care is the key to maintaining the health and wellness of our patients, but there are numerous guidelines out there for patients to sort through," said Army Col. (Dr.) Timothy Switaj, market assistant director for clinical operations. "This health maintenance guide provides a summary of the key nationally accepted, evidence-based guidelines for preventive care in the United States. We added a tracking section to this guide so that patients are able to track their own preventive care and participate in the maintenance of their health.

"The conditions through the COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the need for us, as healthcare providers, to do everything we can to help keep our patients healthy," Switaj added. "We hope this will help empower our patients to more actively pursue preventive care."

It is important to note, the guidelines apply to healthy adults and children. Someone's health plan may differ based on their medical history. People should speak with their primary care manager to develop a specific preventive plan.

"The goal of screening is an opportunity for a clinician to identify risk factors for disease, prevent disease, and develop a specific plan tailored to a patient's health and wellbeing," said Air Force Maj. (Dr.) Dianne Frankel, Internal Medicine and Preventive Medicine physician, Office of the Command Surgeon, Air Education and Training Command. "Preventive screening guidelines are developed by subject matter experts using evidence-based medicine decision making. Utilization of preventive health screening guidelines can prevent illness and death from the leading causes of diseases in the United States."

Frankel said both adult and pediatric preventive health screening guidelines are updated by the CDC, United States Preventive Services Task Force and other agencies on a frequent basis as they obtain additional evidence-based information.

Additionally, health disparities occur among populations of different races, sexual identities, disabilities and socioeconomic status in utilization of preventive health screenings. This has been recognized and published in both civilian and military health systems.

"A patient should not hesitate to contact their PCM if they have questions on the application of these guidelines to their health," she said. "Virtual health appointments can

be utilized to discuss and identify a patient's risk factors with the assistance of preventive health screening guidelines for many diseases to include; certain cancers, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes."

For example, lung cancer screening requires risk-based dialogue between the clinician and patient prior to a referral from the PCM for radiological services. A comprehensive discussion weighing the risks and benefits of screening tests/exams can be critical for a patient's health and peace of mind.

Along with adult screening guidelines, it is also important to follow the recommended pediatric guidelines for well-baby visits and vaccinations.

"Routine well-child visits are so important because they provide critical growth and developmental screenings to optimize your child's physical, mental and social health," said Air Force Lt. Col. (Dr.) Crystal Palmatier, pediatrician, Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center. "These visits also give you and your child the opportunity to become comfortable with their medical team and to ask any questions that you have about nutrition, sleep, behavior, etc. Well visits aren't only about medical concerns, it is looking at the whole child."

► [Click Here For Full View Of Health Maintenance Guidelines](#)

OCTOBER 14



BAMC Nurse Helps Support Vaccination Effort For Afghan Evacuees

Pvt. Hayden McClure, an Army medic assigned to 1st Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, administers an MMR vaccine to an Afghan evacuee at Rhine Ordnance Barracks, Germany, Sept. 18. A diverse team of Army medical professionals vaccinated nearly 5,500 Afghan evacuees in less than 72 hours at ROB to protect them from the diseases and to help ensure the health and well-being of the military and local communities. Photo Credit: Gino Mattorano

A Brooke Army Medical Center clinical nurse specialist used her training and experience to help vaccinate Afghan evacuees at Rhine Ordnance Barracks, Germany, Sept. 17-18.

Army Maj. Giang Martinez recently graduated as a clinical nurse specialist doctor of nursing practice from the Army Medical Department's Long Term Health Education and Training program at Louisiana State University Health Science Center in New Orleans, where she focused, in part, on disaster relief and preparedness. The team she was part of was able to vaccinate more than 1,600 evacuees over a two-day period.

"It felt amazing to be able to use my knowledge and background to help all these people," Martinez said. "That's what being a nurse is about – helping people."

The humanitarian mission, led by the 30th Medical Brigade with assistance from Regional Health Command-Europe and operational units around Europe, administered measles, mumps and rubella, or MMR, and chickenpox vaccines to pro-

vide protection for the Afghan evacuees. In total, the vaccination teams administered MMR and chickenpox vaccines to nearly 5,500 people.

"We originally estimated that it would take a week to vaccinate that many people, but set a goal to get everyone vaccinated in five days," said Lt. Col. Julie Hundertmark, the 512th Field Hospital commander, who was responsible for setting up many of the vaccination sites and staffing them with the appropriate mix of specialties.

"I never dreamed we could finish in less than three days, but our diverse team of medical professionals came together quickly and functioned like a single medical element," Hundertmark said. "This is a testament to how the Army medicine team does such a great job of coming together to meet our patient care needs when called upon."

Vaccinations were administered at the request of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention due to a small number of measles cases in the United States among newly arrived evacuees from Afghanistan.

"I relied on my training as a nurse in the military, and my personal experience as second generation Vietnamese immigrant," Martinez said.

"This mission is a true testament to the training in the Army Nurse Corps."

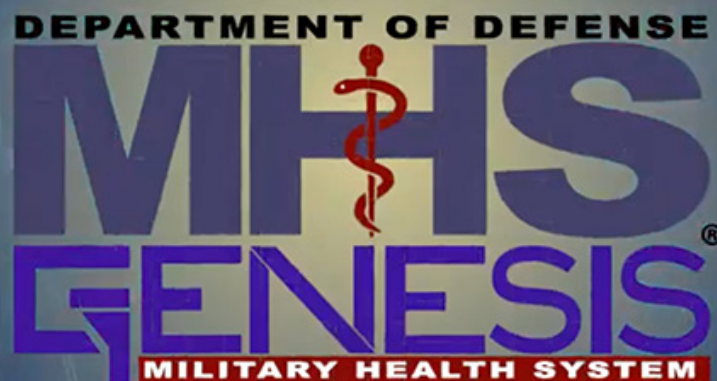
Army Col. Jana Nohrenberg, the RHCE regional nurse executive, praised Martinez for her efforts.

"Maj. Martinez's contributions to the unique mission supporting the Operation Allies Refuge/Welcome response were vital in ensuring the highest quality, safe and efficient care was provided to the evacuee population and exemplifies the value that the (clinical nurse specialist) brings to the mission," she said.

Martinez said for many the mission provided closure after serving multiple deployments and witnessing the aftermath of constant conflict.

"This mission brought us full circle, spoke to the soul of military nursing, and was a reminder of why we joined (the military)," she said.

OCTOBER 6



New Electronic Health Record Coming Soon To The San Antonio Market

The San Antonio Market will transition to the new electronic health record system – known as MHS GENESIS – in January 2022.

The new electronic health record, shared by the Defense Department, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Coast Guard, delivers data to healthcare teams wherever a patient receives treatment. In the past, a patient's medical record resided within the facility where they received care. The new shared record makes a patient's records available digitally anywhere they receive care.

"This new electronic health record will provide better quality of care and enhanced safety for service members and their families by becoming the single medical and dental record that all healthcare providers will use to manage patients' care," said Army LT. Col. Dorian Walton, BAMC MHS GENESIS lead.

The goal for MHS GENESIS is to consolidate health information into a single platform and provide a continuum of care at any military treatment facility worldwide.

"Once a patient has a health record in MHS GENESIS he or she can access the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal account using their DS Logon username and password," said Army Lt. Col. Patricia Hodson, BAMC MHS GENESIS communication lead. "The patient must have a DS Logon Premium (Level 2) account to view their MHS GENESIS health record. If the patient has an existing DS Logon account, he or she will need to upgrade their account to Premium."

To access the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, visit: patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil. Beneficiaries can log in to the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal using their DS Logon.

Premium Access (Level 2) is required to view the health record. In preparation for the new MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, log in to milConnect and create your DS Logon. Beneficiaries with an existing DS Logon should upgrade their account to Premium Access. A link to the "My Access Center" is available via the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal landing page.

With the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, a patient can:

- Manage primary care medical & dental appointments.
- Review clinical notes, lab, and test results.
- Request prescription renewals.
- Exchange secure messages with their health care team.
- Monitor health information & view their portal profile.
- Complete a pre-visit, dental health history questionnaire online
- Look up high-quality, provider-approved health information related to health issues, lab results, and medications.

There, patients receive instructions about how to obtain their DS Logon credentials.

Once members are registered in the MHS GENESIS system, they will have 24/7 secure access to personal health information and lab results through the Patient Portal. Users can even access patient health education materials related to health concerns and medications.

"The MHS GENESIS Patient Portal securely connects a patient with their health care team and empowers them to become the driver of their health care," Hodson said.

"The standardization of workflows and processes across the enterprise is one of the most important things about this system," said Army Maj. Gen. (Dr.) George "Ned" Appenzeller, DHA's assistant director for combat support in a previous interview.

As with any new technology, the MHS Genesis transition team has advised that it will take time for clinic staff to learn how to efficiently navigate the system, which may cause longer than routine wait times at the pharmacy, radiology, and laboratory. It may also affect clinic appointments as the staff works through the implementation.

"BAMC staff have received online and facilitator-led training for the past few months," Hodson said. "However, in order to optimize the functional improvements of MHS Genesis, it will be necessary for BAMC providers, nurses and support staff to use the MHS GENESIS system during real-time, daily clinic operations. We will try to make sure it's as seamless as possible for our patients."

OCTOBER 20



New Walk-In Clinic Provides Contraception To Female Service Members

Brooke Army Medical Center now offers female service members a walk-in clinic for contraception on Wednesdays from noon to 2 p.m. in the Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine Clinic at the CPT Jennifer M. Moreno Clinic.

The Patients in Need of Contraception (PINC) clinic is open to all female permanent party active duty service members assigned to Joint Base San Antonio.

“A team of providers and nurses are available to help with decision making, prescription refills or starting a new form of contraception altogether, including Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) options that might require a procedure,” said Elaine Boshoff, registered nurse.

“PINC clinics are a point of care system for receiving birth control pills, patches, vaginal rings, birth control shots, etonogestrel implants or an intrauterine device.”

The staff also hopes to address issues such as questions that arise while choosing an appropriate form of contraception, provide education on menstrual suppression, unplanned pregnancy, personal health, and hygiene-related issues to improve force readiness and mission accomplishment.

The team established a similar clinic earlier this year at McWethy Troop Medical Clinic for female trainees. These clinics were so popular, we decided to offer them to our permanent party personnel as well, Boshoff explained.

“Receiving contraception should not have a negative impact on training, education or the mission,” Boshoff said. “Care needs to be delivered faster, be more structured, and meet the needs of women in uniform.”

Army Maj. (Dr.) Kayla Jaeger, Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine chief, discusses contraception options with patient, Air Force Capt. Jacqueline Wade, while Benesha Jackson, licensed vocational nurse, gathers instruments for an exam at the CPT Jennifer M. Moreno Primary Care Clinic, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Oct. 20, 2021. Photo by Jason W. Edwards

OCTOBER 27

Virtual Appointment Management Office Reaches Significant Milestone

Last October, the Virtual Appointment Management Office celebrated a significant milestone. They scheduled more than 100,000 Virtually Integrated Patient Readiness Remote, or VIPRR, clinic appointments.

"I am extremely amazed with this accomplishment," said Army Lt. Col. Jenny Hayes, Virtual MEDCEN deputy director of administration. "The VAMO staff performs daily as a high functioning team and answers each call with professionalism, providing accurate, compassionate and timely scheduling for service members. Their efforts make a tremendous impact on the readiness of our warfighters."

The VIPRR was developed by the Army in 2016 to improve readiness for remotely located Soldiers without organic Army medical support in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Today, the VIPRR Clinic offers remote primary care virtual health and medical readiness to all military services.

These services include synchronous personal health assessments, pre- and post-deployment health assessments, post-deployment health reassessments and other readiness health services for active duty service members.



The Virtual Appointment Management Office, assigned to the Virtual Medical Center, celebrate a significant milestone. They scheduled more than 100,000 Virtually Integrated Patient Readiness Remote clinic appointments. Back row (left to right): Garrett Johnson, Dayna Kelm, Army Lt. Col. Gary Legault, Cheryl Burgin and Jeffrey Burgwin. Middle row (left to right): Susana Manriquez, Julia Cardona and Lisa Martin. Front row (left to right): Erica Banda, Army Lt. Col. Jenny Hayes and Valerie Escobedo. Courtesy photo

"VIPRR is the most productive periodic health assessment clinic in the direct care system," Hayes said. "They completed more than 33,000 PHAs and other readiness exams in (fiscal year) 2020, compared to less than 1,000 in FY 2019 and they completed over 60,000 visits in FY 2021."

The virtual assessments helped service members avoid more than one thousand miles of travel in FY 2020, saving both travel funds and lost duty time, Hayes explained.

"Additionally, VIPRR began integrating with Military Treatment Facility appointing centers and the Nurse Advice Line to provide additional acute primary care capacity," she said.

In the future, the Military Health System plans to explore expansion of this capacity for more readiness exams and also to inte-

grate into regional appointing centers to increase available capacity in geographical areas where the network is not as robust.

"Our VAMO staff is a remarkable team, with outstanding leadership from Lt. Col. Hayes," said Jeff Burgwin, Virtual MEDCEN deputy director.

"Scheduling 100,000 virtual health appointments is an amazing milestone. We are so proud of their accomplishment and dedication to the VMC mission to synchronize, standardize and coordinate virtual medical services across the enterprise supporting readiness programs.

"They serve as the first line in care coordination to make sure the patient and provider are in the right place for the virtual health encounter," he added.

TRUNK OR TREAT 2021



Cancer Diagnosis Leads Airman To BAMC For Treatment

Airman 1st Class Chelsea Kernan was at her first duty station at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Montana, when she began experiencing pain in her left hip.

"I was in a lot of pain and I was limping," said the 25-year-old Security Forces specialist. "When I coughed, sneezed or laughed it would give me excruciating pain."

An MRI revealed a three-inch mass. She was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma, a rare type of cancer that occurs in bones or in the soft tissue around the bones. It most often begins in the leg bones and in the pelvis. Kernan was sent to BAMC for treatment in September 2020.

"Ewing's sarcoma happens at a rate of one in a million in the United States," explained Air Force Lt. Col. (Dr.) Della Howell, pediatric hematologist/oncologist. "It's more common in the second decade of life."

In Chelsea's case, it was in her pelvic bone."

Before being treated for the cancer, Kernan underwent in vitro and egg preservation to help sustain her ability to have children.

"Sometimes the cancer treatments can damage the ovaries and make women, even young women, go into premature menopause," said Air Force Maj. (Dr.) Samantha Simpson, reproductive endocrinologist. "By doing in vitro and freezing her eggs, she is assured of her future fertility and increases the chance she can have her own children."



Kernan's cancer treatment began with six inpatient chemotherapy treatments, which took about three months to complete. She then underwent a hemipelvectomy, a surgical procedure to remove a portion of her pelvic girdle. After she recovered from the surgery, she had 11 more cycles of chemotherapy.

"She spent almost a year with our Pediatric Oncology service from the time she was diagnosed until the time she finished her treatments," Howell said. "Since she has no signs of any cancer at this time, we are hopeful she will have a very good prognosis. Our goal of treatment was to cure her of her cancer."

Kernan celebrated this significant milestone Oct. 15 by ringing the bell in the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Clinic. This is a

festive rite of passage when someone finishes their cancer treatment.

"We don't say that someone is fully cured until they've had about five years of time being cancer-free," Howell said. "She'll need to keep getting imaging studies to make sure the cancer doesn't come back."

The young airman is currently undergoing physical therapy at the Center for the Intrepid. Her goal is to continue her Air Force career in Security Forces.

Even though Kernan's treatment was grueling, she is thankful.

"I love BAMC and my doctors and nurses," she said. "I think BAMC was honestly the best place I could get treatment."



NOVEMBER 2021



Thanksgiving Day Visit

BAMC Commanding General BG Clinton Murray and BG Jeannine Ryder, 59th Medical Wing Commander, visit with hospital staff and patients on Thanksgiving Day. They gave a special thanks to everyone working on the holiday and the dining facility team for their hard work in preparing a special holiday meal for patients, staff and family members.



Members of the 555th Forward Surgical Team operate on a simulated trauma patient during training with the Strategic Trauma Readiness Center of San Antonio (STaRC) at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The STaRC training program leverages the expertise and capabilities across multiple healthcare disciplines at BAMC, the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research, the Medical Center of Excellence, the Joint Trauma System and the Air Force 59th Medical Wing to provide deploying surgical teams with the most realistic and comprehensive wartime skills certification. Photo by Jason W. Edwards

BAMC Receives National Recognition for Surgical Quality

The American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program has recognized Brooke Army Medical Center for achieving meritorious outcomes for surgical patient care for three years running, ranking the hospital among the top 10 percent of participating hospitals for surgical care.

BAMC is one of 90 ACS NSQIP participating hospitals across the nation that have achieved meritorious recognition for surgical patient care, and the only one in San Antonio. Additionally, BAMC was among 71 hospitals on its "High Risk" Meritorious list, and the only Army military treatment facility.

As a Level I Trauma Center, "BAMC is unique within the Department of Defense," said Air Force Col. Patrick Osborn, Surgeon-in-Chief, San Antonio Military Health System, and BAMC Deputy Commander for Surgical Services. "This was particularly true in 2020, when we provided this exemplary level of care while also supporting pandemic missions across the nation and military missions around the world.

"This amazing team also increased support to our community by accepting additional trauma patients," he added. "Not only did we provide superb surgical care to our beneficiaries and civilian patients, this team was instrumental in sustaining the regional trauma and emergency response system for Southwest Texas."

Achieving meritorious recognition means that BAMC ranks in the top 10 percent of over 706 hospitals on this composite surgical quality score.

"The recognition of excellence for 'High-Risk' patients exhibits the unique knowledge and skills in-

stitutionalized within the San Antonio Market. I am proud and elated that this comprehensive care team garnered the recognition they deserve," said Osborn.

As a participant in ACS NSQIP, BAMC is required to track the outcomes of inpatient and outpatient surgical procedures and collect data that directs patient safety and the quality of surgical care improvements.

The ACS NSQIP recognition program commends a select group of hospitals for achieving a meritorious composite score in either an "All Cases" category or a category which includes only "High Risk" cases. Risk-adjusted data from the July 2021 ACS NSQIP Semiannual Report, which presents data from the 2020 calendar year, was used to determine which hospitals demonstrated meritorious outcomes.

Each composite score was determined through a different weighted formula combining eight outcomes. The outcome performances related to patient management were in the following clinical areas: mortality, unplanned intubation, prolonged ventilator use, renal failure, cardiac incidents including cardiac arrest and myocardial infarction; respiratory illness such as pneumonia; surgical site infections-superficial and deep incisional and organ-space; or urinary tract infection.

ACS NSQIP is the only nationally validated quality improvement program that measures and enhances the care of surgical patients. This program measures the actual surgical results 30 days postoperatively as well as risk adjusts patient characteristics to compensate for differences among patient populations and acuity levels.

DECEMBER 6



Pvt. Eduardo Toruno administers a vaccine to Kingston Dye at the Brooke Army Medical Center COVID-19 Vaccine Site, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Dec. 3, 2021. The Vaccine Site is closing after nearly a year of operations due to the wide availability of the vaccine within the community and subsequent decline in demand at the site. Photo by Jason W. Edwards

BAMC COVID-19 Vaccine Site Closes After Nearly A Year Of Operations

The Brooke Army Medical Center COVID-19 Vaccination Site on Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston closed Dec. 3 after nearly a year of operations.

The site, which opened in February, was a joint effort to vaccinate up to 2,000 personnel and military beneficiaries per day in a safe environment. During the height of operations, more than 100 personnel worked at the vaccine site.

“Standing up and providing mass vaccinations has been a monumental team effort, supported not only by BAMC personnel across the organization, but by many tenant units across the installation,” said Army Col. (Dr.) Duncan Gillies, BAMC deputy chief of Preventive Medicine and officer in charge of the vaccination site.

Gillies said many lessons were learned and shared as similar vaccine efforts were set up both stateside and overseas.

“This led to the success of not only the Fort Sam Houston COVID Vaccination Site, but numerous other sites across the force,” he said. “We were able to decrease the risk for our service

members and beneficiaries from being infected with COVID-19 by increasing protection, helping to maintain the readiness of the force.”

There are a number of reasons why the vaccination site is closing, including the wide availability of the vaccine within the community and subsequent decline in demand at the site. Another factor is a consolidation of resources in preparation for the launch of the new electronic health record, MHS GENESIS, in January 2022.

While the site is closing, BAMC will continue to monitor COVID infection rates within the community and adjust operations as needed.

“This site demonstrated our ability to adapt to current conditions quickly and safely,” said BAMC Commanding General Brig. Gen. Clinton Murray. “We are extremely proud of the hard work and tremendous efforts of the vaccination site personnel and leadership, and are grateful to our JBSA partners for their outstanding support. Our community benefited greatly from their efforts.”

DECEMBER 2021

HOLIDAY TREE

Lighting CEREMONY



BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

STAFF ACCOLADES

Air Force Lt. Col (Dr.) Christopher Allam

One of nine urologists nationwide to be awarded the Young Urologist of the Year Award by the American Urology Association



Army Maj. Christopher Alferez Optometry Residency Program Director

Received the 2021 Military Health System (MHS) Allied Health Leadership Excellence Award in the category of Senior Non-Provider



Army Capt. Jessica Darbouze

Office in Charge of the Main Emergency Department/Pediatric Pharmacies

Nationally recognized as the Army Pharmacy Junior Officer of the Year



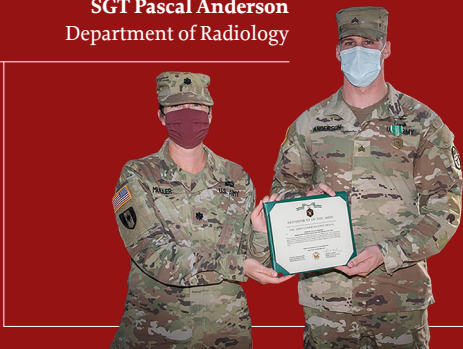
Dr. Gillian Schmitz

Associate Professor at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
Vice Chair of Education at BAMC

Selected by the American College of Emergency Physicians as its president for the 2021-2022 term



SGT Pascal Anderson Department of Radiology



Congratulations to SGT Pascal Anderson from the Department of Radiology and SSG Ryan Figueroa from the Emergency Department on their successful completion of the U.S. Army Air Assault School. SGT Anderson and SSG Figueroa are also BAMC's Soldier and NCO of the Year! Way to represent with excellence!

SSG Ryan Figueroa Emergency Department



Army Col. Jane Shen-Gunther

Chief of the Department of Clinical Investigation
Inventor of the Customized Human & Animal Papillomavirus Database

The database was incorporated into bioinformatics software for the advancement of Papillomavirus research globally

Army Lt. Col. Anish Patel

Chief of the Division of Gastroenterology/Hepatology

Selected as a Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, Uniting to Care & Cure Award winner

Army Col. Timothy Switaj

San Antonio Market Assistant Director for Clinical Operations

Selected as a Family Medicine Boundary Breaker by the American Academy of Family Physicians

Army Lt. Col. Elizabeth Markelz

Infectious Disease Service Chief

Received the Outstanding Physician Award from the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States

Dr. Kimberly Tansey

BAMC Data Analyst

Awarded the Federal Excellence in Healthcare Management Award

Army Maj. Kayla Jaeger

Officer in charge of the Adolescent & Young Adult Clinic

Named Army Pediatrician of the Year for the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Uniformed Services Chapter West

Tamarh Scott

Selected as a Technology Rising Star for the 2021 Women of Color STEM Awards

Army Maj. Daniel C. Davis

Awarded the Order of Military Medical Merit



BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

OUR FAMILY TAKING CARE OF YOURS

MISSION

We protect the Nation by ensuring Total Force Readiness through innovative, high quality care and the development of elite healthcare professionals.

VISION

*To be the pinnacle of military healthcare
— Anytime, Anywhere!*

