



**VA Health Care Upstate New York
VA Western New York Healthcare System**
3495 Bailey Avenue | Buffalo, NY 14215
222 Richmond Avenue | Batavia, NY 14020
www.buffalo.va.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VA Western New York Healthcare System Celebrates Volunteers

April 18-22

BUFFALO, NEW YORK – April 18-22 is the week VA Western New York Healthcare System (VAWNYHS) will celebrate National Volunteer Week. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will use the opportunity to thank more than 74,000 citizen volunteers who give back to Veterans every day at VA medical facilities across the Nation.

Locally, Buffalo VA Medical Center will recognize the 544 regularly scheduled volunteers for the 80,502 hours they contributed in fiscal year 2015 toward caring for Veterans - driving, directing, sitting, serving, and comforting on a regular basis. The value of time volunteered multiplied by the actual number of hours served puts the estimated value of our volunteer contributors at \$2.16 million dollars. At Batavia VAMC, 133 volunteers and 22 Veteran Service Organizations put in 21,047 hours of volunteer service worth \$143,498.

“I am always impressed by the enormous contribution our VA volunteers provide day in and day out, and year to year. Our volunteers provide us an enormous value of added service,” said Brian Stiller, Medical Center Director.

National Volunteer Week also presents an opportunity for citizens to join the ranks of volunteers serving Veterans. There are as many ways to volunteer. For instance, important patient medicine or lab results need delivery daily throughout the hospital, and volunteers assist with these deliveries. Mark Francis, Program Manager for VA Volunteer Service at VAWNYHS, “Our volunteers selflessly make positive contributions on a daily basis, and I am proud to work with them. It’s a great and personally rewarding experience and program.”

In order to highlight the many contributions and hours served by local volunteers, on April 20, 2016, the annual VA Volunteer Recognition Ceremony and luncheon will take place at noon at Classic V Restaurant, 2425 Niagara Falls Blvd., Amherst, NY 14228. Batavia volunteers will be recognized at the Clarion Hotel on Friday, April 22 at noon. While National Volunteer



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Week officially kicked off April 10 for the nation, VA is inviting everyone in the community this week to explore how they can use their unique assets and skills to thank Veterans with volunteer service of their own. No medical experience is necessary and volunteers are encouraged to share ideas how they would like to give back using their unique skills. To find suggested opportunities, please visit your nearest VA medical facility or visit www.volunteer.va.gov. In Buffalo, please call Sharon Shelton, Volunteer Program Assistant, at 716-862-8671, or email her at Sharon.Shelton@va.gov and in Batavia, contact Mark Francis, Volunteer Program Manager at 585-297-1197 or email Mark.Francis@va.gov.

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