

MAY 2019



BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

# FOCUS



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O U R C O M M I T M E N T



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BAMC Family,

As many of you are aware, change is on the horizon for BAMC. On Oct. 1, BAMC, along with Wilford Hall Ambulatory Service Center and Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, will transition under DHA authority and control. This change was directed by Congress through the National Defense Authorization Act and is aimed to help standardize care throughout the Military Health System.

We are making great strides in moving forward, looking at patient care delivery as a San Antonio Military Health System market rather than as individual institutions. For our patients, this transition should be transparent. Overall, the standardization will improve the patient experience across the military services.

Here at BAMC, our focus will remain the same — providing safe quality healthcare for our patients and developing elite healthcare professionals who are ready to respond quickly and efficiently when called upon, whether here in San Antonio or deployed overseas.

We recently had a visit from DHA Director VADM Raquel Bono. During the visit, she conducted a town hall meeting with our staff to answer questions and foster an environment of open and transparent communication. VADM Bono stressed the importance of feedback from across the services to help shape the future of military medicine. She also encouraged everyone to continue to focus on patient care and that is exactly what we will do.

CSM Oates and I appreciate your support as we work together to continue to improve military healthcare. We will be sure to keep everyone informed in the months ahead as we move forward.

George N. Appenzeller  
*Brigadier General,*  
*U.S. Army Commanding General*

Thomas R. Oates  
*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!*

## DHA Director Discusses Healthcare Transformation at Town Hall

BY LORI NEWMAN

*Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs*

U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Raquel Bono, Defense Health Agency director, held a town hall meeting at Brooke Army Medical Center May 14 to answer questions about the Military Health System transformation and how it will further improve healthcare delivery for warfighters, family members and military retirees.

“We have the potential to create the very best healthcare system ever,” Bono said, “not just for our military, but for the United States, our nation, and across the world.”

As part of the National Defense Authorization Act, Congress called for changes in the Military Health System. These changes redefine the roles of DHA and the military departments, specifically addressing the administration and management of military hospitals and clinics.

On Oct. 1, BAMC will transition under DHA command and authority. Following the transition, DHA is responsible for healthcare delivery and business operations across the MHS, and will provide guidance in all matters related to budget, information technology, health care administration and management; administrative policies and procedures; and military medical construction.

For patients, this transition should be transparent. Their physicians and coverage will remain the same, but it will standardize how patients access care and make appointments no matter their location or service.

The intent is to drive better integration and standardization of care by creating an enterprise-wide medical delivery system that integrates readiness and health.

During the town hall, Bono discussed the importance of consistent care across the services. It doesn't matter what uniform you wear as a provider or as a patient when it comes to patient care, she said. “We need to be a lot smarter about



U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Raquel Bono, Defense Health Agency director, discusses the DHA transition during a town hall meeting at Brooke Army Medical Center, May 14. On Oct. 1, 2019 BAMC will transition under DHA command and authority. *U.S. Army photo by Jason W. Edwards*

how we are using all of our resources” across our regions and military medicine.

Bono stressed the importance of feedback from across the services to help shape the future of military medicine.

“Take a moment to see how you can contribute,” Bono said. “You can help inform and design what our healthcare system needs to look like going forward. This is very doable, and it's only doable if we all work collectively with each other to make this happen.”

Above all, Bono encouraged everyone to remain focused on patient care.

“Keep your eyes on the patients,” she said. “I need you to take care of our patients in the very best way. Let's continue to lead and show others how healthcare should and can be designed to best meet the needs of our patients.”

BAMC remains committed to providing the same level of patient care as it has for the past 140 years, the BAMC commanding general said.

“Our commitment remains on providing the highest quality of care for our patients while ensuring the medical readiness of our warfighters,” said Brig. Gen. George Appenzeller.



# Virtual Medical Center Wins MEDCOM Mercury Award

BY LORI NEWMAN

Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs

A team from the Virtual Medical Center at Brooke Army Medical Center and Regional Health Command-Central has been selected as the 2018 U.S. Army Medical Department Mercury Award winner for Health Information Technology Team of the Year. The award winners were announced April 26, 2019.

The Mercury Awards recognize Army Medical Department personnel who have made significant contributions and demonstrated outstanding excellence and achievement in health IT.

The team, led by Army Maj. Daniel Yourk, deputy director of operations at the V-MEDCEN, developed the Virtual Health Care Coordination Application, or VHCCA, to support virtual health services and care delivery across the Military Health System.

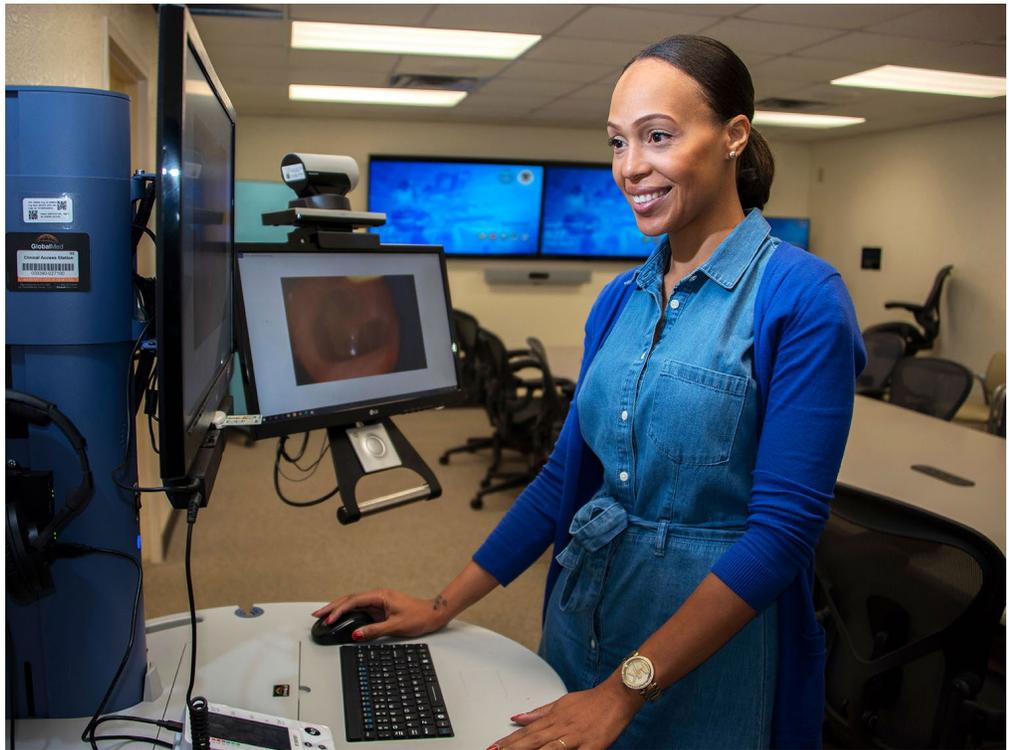
The team included Army Lt. Col. Sean Hipp, V-MEDCEN director; Gina Domis, core operation functional program manager; Sam Perrow, SharePoint developer; Jeffery Burgwin; Army Lt. Col. Jennifer Stowe; Justin Herrera; Gary Crouch; Rashad Green; Anna Moore and Zekelia Rembert.

"I am extremely proud of this team for their hard work and dedication that allowed us to quickly develop the Virtual Health Care Coordination Application (VHCCA), the only MHS level application available to coordinate virtual health services between military treatment facilities," Yourk said.

VHCCA supports virtual health referrals and appointment management between MTFs through the Virtual Management Appointment Office (VAMO) located at the V-MEDCEN at BAMC.

"VHCCA was originally developed on the RHC-C SharePoint site for beta testing, then transitioned to the Defense Health Agency CarePoint site," explained Domis.

CarePoint is the DHA's Enterprise information delivery portal designed to promote self-service business intelligence, user collaboration, content



Zekelia Rembert, virtual health nurse care coordinator, reviews patient photos using the virtual health cart at the Virtual Medical Center at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, May 10. The team at the Virtual Health Center at Brooke Army Medical Center and Regional Health Command-Central has been selected as the 2018 U.S. Army Medical Department Mercury Award winner for Health Information Technology Team of the Year. U.S. Army photo by Jason W. Edwards

delivery and information transparency. The objective of CarePoint is to improve healthcare quality, access and delivery across the MHS.

"CarePoint is a DHA-approved site to host applications that store PII (Personally Identifiable Information) and PHI (Protected Health Information)," she said.

VHCCA is a centralized system for managing VH providers, scheduling VH appointments, submitting referral documentation and follow up appointment requests.

"There is also a place to provide feedback, so the application can be improved based on the users' needs," Domis said.

Currently, the VHCCA application is being used by the V-MEDCEN here, 47 Army MTFs and one Air Force MTF across the MHS to support virtual health expansion. The number of supported MTFs is expected to grow to over 100 in 2019,

with the addition of Navy sites as well.

Additionally, the VHCCA application currently supports the referral and appointment management of 45 specialty providers. The number of supported providers is expected to grow to over 150 in 2019.

In 2018, VHCCA was successfully used to coordinate VH services for more than 200 patient encounters. That number is expected to expand to over 4,000 patient encounters in 2019.

The Mercury Awards will be presented at this year's Defense Health Information Technology Symposium in July.

"This is an incredible honor for the Virtual Medical Center and Regional Health Command-Central team to be selected as the recipients of the 2018 Mercury Team Award and to be recognized by the Health Information Technology Community for our contributions to virtual health," Yourk said.



Rashad Green, lead referral coordinator, schedules virtual health appointments using the Virtual Health Care Coordination application at the Virtual Medical Center at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, May 10. U.S. Army photo by Jason W. Edwards

JUNE IS

**ALZHEIMER'S & BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH**

Military Health System  
health.mil

# New Horizons Ophthalmology Teams Give 262 Guyanese the Gift of Sight

BY SENIOR AIRMAN DEREK SEIFERT  
12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern) Public Affairs

U.S. military ophthalmology teams deployed in support of New Horizons exercise 2019 and partnered with Guyanese doctors at the Port Mourant Hospital in Port Mourant, Guyana, May 6-16, 2019.

The ophthalmology center at the Port Mourant Hospital was established to provide aid to the Guyanese population by screening and selecting patients to receive cataract and pterygium surgery in support of NH19.

Many of the Guyanese patients have been waiting years to receive either cataract or pterygium surgery to regain their vision.

"Normally, we see over 1,500 patients a month and we have a backlog of over 800 patients who have been waiting for surgery, some over five years," said Dr. Devendra Radhy, Port Mourant Hospital doctor in charge. "Unfortunately, the ophthalmology clinic was unable to perform cataract surgeries until last week when we had a team partnered with a Guyana doctor who was able to do 22 surgeries. That was a kick start and hopefully we can continue this flow and get through our backlog."

According to Radhy, cataract and pterygium surgery can cost between \$80,000 to \$100,000 Guyanese dollars, which is close to \$500 U.S. dollars. Many of the patients range between the ages of 50 to 80 and are poor, with an average annual household income of less than \$4,000 U.S. dollars.

With the support of the U.S. military and NH19, Radhy has seen a dramatic change in his patients.



U.S. service members perform postoperative checks on the last ophthalmology center patient during New Horizons exercise 2019 at Port Mourant, Guyana, May 16, 2019. The ophthalmology clinic was established to provide aid to the Guyanese population by screening and selecting patients to receive cataract surgery in support of New Horizons 2019. Photos by Senior Airman Derek Seifert

"Having the Americans here at this moment changes everything in the sense of how people look at the ophthalmology center," said Radhy. "They can readily say that we are providing the service they have been waiting for a long time for. With this, you can see a different look in the patients, it's more positive. Even from last Monday, when we started calling the patients, you see more smiles, laughing and joy knowing they will have the surgery done."

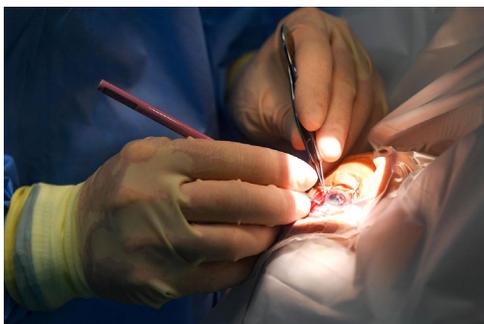
This exercise provides U.S. military members an opportunity to train for an overseas deployment. It promotes bilateral cooperation by providing opportunities for U.S. and partner nation military engineers, medical personnel and support staff to work and train side by side.

"Our primary purpose is to train our [U.S. service members] on combat relevant eye care," said U.S. Army Col. Darrel Carlton, regional health command central consultant for ophthalmology from Brooke Army Medical Center, Texas. "Our component of the exercise is the ophthalmology side where we will be conducting cataract and pterygium surgeries, while at the same time training our Airmen and Soldiers to take care of cataracts because the techniques we use in this setting are similar to what we can expect to see in places like Iraq and Syria without seeing the trauma."

The ophthalmology component of New Horizons exercise 2019 came to an end on May 16, 2019 with a closing ceremony and remarks from a Guyanese patient.

"I want to say that you have done an excellent job for us Guyanese, whichever part of Guyana they came from looking for a service that they badly in need of," said Joyce Marks, Guyanese patient. "I want to let you know, on behalf of all the Guyanese that you attended to, that we are very, very, very grateful for that service. And I ask that God continues to bless you all with the gift and knowledge that he has imparted in all of you for the benefit of not only yourself, but for all of mankind that comes in contact with you."

Another team of U.S. military medical professionals will replace the ophthalmology team to conduct a two week surgical readiness training exercise at a women's health clinic.



A U.S. service member performs cataract surgery to a Guyanese patient during New Horizons exercise 2019 at Port Mourant, Guyana, May 6, 2019. The ophthalmology clinic was established to provide aid to the Guyanese population by screening and selecting patients to receive cataract surgery in support of New Horizons 2019. Photos by Senior Airman Derek Seifert

## Cataract Awareness Month

# JUNE 2019

Cataracts are the leading cause of vision loss  
in the United States & it is the leading  
cause of blindness in the world.



MHS  
Military Health System  
health.mil

# Officer Learns of Cancer After Blood Donation Visit

BY ALAIN M. POLYNICE

U.S. Army Medical Department Activity Bavaria  
Public Affairs Office

Earlier this year, then 1st Lt. Eric S. Anderson Sr., executive officer for the U.S. Army Health Clinic Hohenfels, attended a blood drive, run by the Armed Services Blood Program -- Europe. Anderson was there to donate blood, something he had done several times in the past. It was at this blood drive Anderson's life would forever change.

To meet the basic requirements for donating blood, ASBP requires that an individual be in good health. The individual's pulse, blood pressure and temperature are checked to ensure they are within normal limits.

In addition to being free of infections that could be transmitted through a blood transfusion, the individual's blood sample is drawn using the finger prick -- prick to the fingertip -- to ensure the individual has a normal blood hemoglobin level, a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen throughout the body.

"I went to donate blood," explained Anderson. "And when you go there, they prick you to check your hemoglobin and to make sure you can donate."

His hemoglobin level was anything but normal that day. Anderson's hemoglobin level was well below the normal range.

"When they did [the finger prick], it was extremely low," he said. "So they did it twice and when they did it again, it was a lower reading."

Anderson left the blood drive and went back to the clinic and had his hemoglobin level checked at the clinic. When the clinic also confirmed his



Lt. Col. Sam Preston (left), U.S. Army Health Clinic Hohenfels commander, administers the oath of commissioned officers to newly promoted Capt. Eric S. Anderson Sr., AHC Hohenfels executive officer, May 17, at the AHC Hohenfels Clinic Helipad, Hohenfels, Germany. Anderson was diagnosed with having chronic lymphocytic leukemia, or CLL, a type of cancer in which the bone marrow makes too many lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell. CLL is one of the most common types of leukemia in adults. Anderson, a native of Fort Worth, Texas, is being assigned as a patient at Brooke Army Medical Center Warrior Transition Battalion at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. His family will accompany him to Texas. U.S. Army photo by Alain M. Polynice

hemoglobin level was extremely low, he went to the emergency room that same day. Anderson ended up receiving a blood transfusion.

The following day, he underwent a bone biopsy. The biopsy confirmed the reason for the low hemoglobin level.

Anderson was diagnosed with having chronic lymphocytic leukemia, or CLL, a type of cancer in which the bone marrow makes too many lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell. CLL is one of the most common types of leukemia in adults. It rarely occurs in children.

Story continued on page 8



With his youngest daughter standing in front of him, newly promoted Capt. Eric S. Anderson Sr. (left), executive officer for the U.S. Army Health Clinic Hohenfels, speaks to family, friends, clinic staff and senior leadership at his promotion ceremony, May 17, at the AHC Hohenfels Clinic Helipad, Hohenfels, Germany.

**WORLD**  
JUNE 14  
**BLOOD DONOR DAY**  
Safe Blood for All

MHS Military Health System  
health.mil

## Officer Learns of Cancer After Blood Donation Visit (Continued)

According to the National Cancer Institute at the National Institute of Health, in CLL, too many blood stem cells become abnormal lymphocytes and do not become healthy white blood cells. The abnormal lymphocytes may also be called leukemia cells. The lymphocytes are not able to fight infection very well. As the number of lymphocytes increases in the blood and bone marrow, there is less room for healthy white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. This may cause infection, anemia, and easy bleeding.

In CLL, the leukemia cells often build up slowly. Many people don't have any symptoms for at least a few years. But over time, the cells grow and spread to other parts of the body, including the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen.

"I had a tumor in my spleen and that's where the white blood cell were populating," Anderson explained. "They were not dying. They were not producing as they should."

Usually CLL does not cause any signs or symptoms and is found during a routine blood test.

"So I found out [about my condition] because I went to give blood," said Anderson.

Treatments for patients with CLL include radiation therapy, chemotherapy, surgery to remove the spleen, and targeted therapy. Targeted therapy uses substances that attack cancer cells or block the growth and spread of cancer cells.

"I'm taking chemotherapy which is helping out tremendously," Anderson claims. "My blood work is going back to normal."

The current survival rate for patients with CLL is 83 percent, meaning 83 out of every 100 people with CLL will be alive five years after diagnosis, according to the National Cancer Institute at the National Institute of Health.



Newly promoted Capt. Eric S. Anderson Sr. (center), executive officer for the U.S. Army Health Clinic Hohenfels, is gathered with his wife, Shondra, and their five children, at the AHC Hohenfels Clinic Helipad, Hohenfels, Germany, May 17.

With the help of his chain of command, Anderson applied for and was granted a compassionate reassignment: a change of duty assignment to another installation, in a different geographical area, that is better equipped to deal with an individual's medical needs, whether it is the service member or a family member.

Anderson, a native of Fort Worth, Texas, will be assigned as a patient at Brooke Army Medical Center Warrior Transition Battalion at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. His family will accompany him to Texas.

Besides having his wife and five children by his side, Anderson will also have the support of his family who still lives in Fort Worth, which is less than five hours north of San Antonio. Anderson

will also be able to see his eldest daughter who currently lives in Fort Worth.

Just before heading off to Texas, Anderson, who had been selected for promotion, was promoted to captain by his clinic commander, Lt. Col. Sam Preston. Anderson's promotion ceremony took place at the clinic's helipad with family, friends, clinic staff and senior leadership from both Regional Health Command -- Europe and MEDDAC Bavaria in attendance to wish him and his family well.

Blood donation is one of the most significant contribution that a military service member can make to another service member. Blood donation saves lives. To find out if you are eligible to donate, go to [www.militaryblood.dod.mil/](http://www.militaryblood.dod.mil/)

**BROOKE ARMY MEDICAL CENTER**

**BE PREPARED FOR  
EXTREME HEAT**

**Extreme heat often results in the  
highest annual number of deaths  
among all weather-related disasters.**

**FEMA**

# BAMC Auxiliary Provides Grants to Help Support Patient Care

BY LORI NEWMAN  
*Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs*

“The Brooke Army Medical Center Auxiliary held its annual Welfare Recognition Ceremony May 6 in the auditorium.

This year, the welfare committee approved 25 grants totaling \$28,000 to help support patient care at BAMC.

“Volunteerism is a big deal at BAMC,” said BAMC Commander Brig. Gen. George Appenzeller. “I’m amazed at the dedication everyone has to this organization, to the BAMC Family and to all those we serve.”

“This is all about giving back to the community,” the general said.

Grant recipients received funding for a variety of items including patient education materials, toys and crafts for pediatric patients and clothing for burn patients.

“Our welfare committee prioritizes grants that directly impact patient care and education,” said Sarah Kelly, BAMC Auxiliary president. “We appreciate the medical community here at BAMC that takes the time to go above and beyond to support their patients.”

The staff in Antepartum requested Comfort Cubs again this year. The 7-pound stuffed bears are presented to parents who have suffered the loss of a newborn to help with their grieving process.

Some of the other more unique requests were the redecoration of a family consultation room and supplies for a bereavement cart.

Amanda Appenzeller recognized the board members and volunteers for their continued support of the BAMC mission.

“Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects,” she said, quoting



Several Brooke Army Medical Center Auxiliary board members pose for a photo after the annual Welfare Recognition Ceremony held May 6 in the auditorium. This year, the Auxiliary provided 25 grants totaling \$28,000 to help support patient care at BAMC. Photos by Daniel Calderon

the Dalai Lama. “All positions are significant and you are not an organization or a board of one. As a board, you are 18 pebbles, your ripples are far reaching, impacting many patients and families for several years to come.”

Several volunteers were recognized with the President’s Volunteer Service Award and Cody Ross received the Commander’s Award for Public Service for her exceptional service to BAMC, Fort Sam Houston and Army Medical Department missions from 2016 to 2019.

“The BAMC Auxiliary would like to send a special thank you to those who provide world-class care to our service members, retirees and their families,” Kelly said. “Remarkable things are happening in military medicine at Brooke Army Medical Center. The BAMC Auxiliary stands in awe of what you do and we are humbled to have the opportunity to support your efforts.”



Cody Ross, center, receives the Commander’s Award for Public Service from Brooke Army Medical Center Commanding General Brig. Gen. George Appenzeller, right, and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Oates, left, during the annual BAMC Auxiliary Welfare Recognition Ceremony May 6. This year, the Auxiliary provided 25 grants totaling \$28,000 to help support patient care at BAMC. Photo by Daniel Calderon

NOT ALL  
**WOUNDS**  
 ARE VISIBLE

**PTSD Awareness Day**

JUNE 27th

MHS

Military Health System

health.mil

## SAUSHEC Awards Dinner Honors Best in Military Medicine, Medical Education

BY LORI NEWMAN

*Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs*

The third annual San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium awards dinner was held May 18 at the Parr Club at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

Retired Lt. Gen. Paul K. Carlton Jr., former Surgeon General of the Air Force and guest speaker for the event, presented a 25-year history of military medicine and its impact on the San Antonio community.

Carlton addressed the audience of medical professionals lauding their dedication to healthcare and healthcare education.

"It's a team that accomplishes healthcare, with all players making it work," he said. "All specialties contribute to the military mission. I am convinced that the military-unique training San Antonio has been focused on is absolutely critical for the future."

He encouraged them to focus on the future and remember the past.

Carlton described 43 medical innovations and how those innovations saved lives on the battlefield. He also noted that 40 of these innovations came from San Antonio.

"This is something you are living," He said. "It's something you can be proud of, and it's a culture of innovation that needs to not just be nurtured; it needs to be expanded. The team approach is absolutely critical."

"The world is changing, it's not a safer place then before, so we have to be ready," he added. "You have done a tremendous job, but we can't rest on our laurels, you cannot rest on your laurels."



Air Force Maj. Gen. John DeGoes, left, 59th Medical Wing commander, and Army Brig. Gen. George Appenzeller, right, Brooke Army Medical Center commanding general, present the 2019 Gold Headed Cane Award to Army Col. (Dr.) Andrew Cap, chief of Coagulation and Blood Research at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research, during the San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium awards dinner May 18, 2019 at the Parr Club at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph. The Gold Headed Cane Award focuses on four areas: patient care, resident teaching, clinical research and operational medicine. *U.S. Army photo by Corey Toye*

in our trainees."

True spoke about the importance of training medical professionals so they are ready to serve throughout the world.

"I hope you take a little time each day to reflect on just how important it is to do the job that we have," he said. "It's a very important task."

Last year's recipient of the coveted Gold Headed Cane Award, Air Force Col. Heather Yun, introduced the candidates and announced this year's winner, Army Col. (Dr.) Andrew Cap, chief of Coagulation and Blood Research at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research.

"The Gold Headed Cane Award really symbolizes the best that military academic medical has to offer," Yun said.

The Gold Headed Cane Award focuses on four areas: patient care, resident teaching, clinical research and operational medicine.

The tradition of the Gold Headed Cane originated in 1689 with John Radcliffe the personal physician to King William III. Radcliffe began the tradition of passing the cane to a successor whom he considered to be the greatest English physician of his time. The original Gold Headed Cane is now prominently on display at the Royal College of Physicians in London.

Retired Lt. Gen. Paul K. Carlton Jr., former Surgeon General of the Air Force, speaks at the San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium awards dinner May 18, 2019 at the Parr Club at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph. Carlton presented a 25-year history of military medicine and its impact on the San Antonio community. *U.S. Army photo by Corey Toye*

Along with the words of encouragement from the former surgeon general, several awards were presented during the ceremony.

"We are here tonight to celebrate what we do at SAUSHEC," said Air Force Col. Mark True, SAUSHEC interim dean. "We are here to celebrate the privilege of serving in SAUSHEC, where we enjoy the opportunity to instill values

### Other Awards Presented Were:

*Housestaff Hall of Fame Resident*

Army Capt. Patrick Reeves, Pediatrics

*Housestaff Hall of Fame Fellow*

Air Force Maj. Matthew Koroscil,

Pulmonary/Critical Care

### Faculty Awards:

*Scholarship in Action for each quarter in 2018:*

Army Maj. Michael April, Emergency Medicine

Army Lt. Col. Angelo Paredes, Gastroenterology

Army Maj. Steven Schauer, Emergency Medicine

Air Force Col. Heather Yun, Infectious Disease

### Professionalism

Air Force Maj. Stuart Brigham, Internal Medicine

### Quality Improvement/Patient Safety

Air Force Capt. Brandon Kuiper, Internal Medicine

### Graduate Allied Health Educator

Army Lt. Col. Matthew Douglas, General Surgery

Physician Assistant

### Lt Gen PK Carlton Faculty Award

Air Force Maj. Dana Blyth, Infectious Disease

"Each nominee in the award categories has clearly risen to the top of their field and is a winner in their own right," True said.

## Days of Remembrance Teaches About Holocaust, Honors Survivors

BY LORI NEWMAN

Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs

Brooke Army Medical Center held a Day of Remembrance observance on May 15 to remember those killed during the Holocaust and honor those who survived.

BAMC Commanding General Brig. Gen. George Appenzeller opened the ceremony by acknowledging the observance wasn't like most of the equal opportunity celebrations held at the hospital.

"This is a time we remember millions that were needlessly killed," the general said. "This is where we remember the perseverance, courage and resilience of those who survived and we are thankful for those who put their lives at risk for others.

"The human beast can do horrible things, and it takes courage, sacrifice, honor, resilience and love for others to keep it from happening again, and that's why we remember today," Appenzeller said.

Dr. Steven Rosenblatt, guest speaker and the son of a Holocaust survivor, talked about Adolf Hitler's rise to power and his mother's journey as a Holocaust survivor.

"The stories are what make the history real, and pictures are worth more than a 1,000 words," Rosenblatt said, as he launched into his slide presentation which included images of the horrors of the concentration camps and the many Jews who died there.

His mother, Mathilide, was 15 years old and living in Vienna when German troops invaded Austria in March 1938, he explained. The Austrian people did not resist, and Hitler quickly folded Austria into the German Reich.

Rosenblatt spoke about the Kristallnacht, or Night of Broken Glass, where Jews were pulled in the streets and beaten, their business and stores looted, synagogues destroyed and Holy books burned.

During the chaos, he said, his mother went out into the street and saved a small piece of a page from what was left of a book.

"She took that fragment and stuck it in her bible," Rosenblatt said. "It was the only possession she had besides the coat on her back when she came to the United States."

After his mother's death, the family decided to donate the small fragment to the United States



Dr. Steven Rosenblatt, guest speaker, lights a candle to honor the 6 million Jews killed during the Holocaust May 15 during the Days of Remembrance observance at Brooke Army Medical Center. Rosenblatt, the son of a Holocaust survivor, talked about Adolf Hitler's rise to power and his mother's journey as a Holocaust survivor. U.S. Army photo by Jason Edwards

Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"What we didn't know is there are only three such fragments that exist in the world," Rosenblatt said.

Mathilide and her family moved to Warsaw to stay with a family member, but were soon pushed into a Nazi ghetto.

"She said she couldn't stand the crying babies, who were hungry," he said. "She would sneak out of the ghetto at night through the sewers and go to the black market and bring bread back."

Eventually, the American Consulate in Vienna sent a message that if she could make it back to Vienna she would be given papers to travel to the United States.

"Her parents realized that if they tried to go together they wouldn't make it," Rosenblatt said. She said goodbye, knowing they would probably never see each other again.

At 16 years old, she began the more than 450 mile trek alone. As she was crossed at one of the borders, she was running with others who were also trying to escape. A woman running next to her, who was carrying a baby, was shot, but Mathilide had to keep running.

"I think she thought about that baby every night (for the rest of her life)," he said, equating it to a form of post-traumatic stress.

On Feb. 3, 1940, she was granted permission to travel to the U.S., and about a week later, she was on a boat departing from Europe.

Rosenblatt described his mother as a slight woman, who only weighed about 100 pounds. She had to travel more than 650 miles by train across Germany to get to the port.

"That's when my brother and I realized what a survivor she was," he said, showing a photo of her documents with all the travel stamps.

Rosenblatt also spoke about Auschwitz.

"Jews were placed in two lines," he said. "Doctors decided who could handle slave labor – the young and frail went to the left and the others to the right. The ones on the left were killed in the gas chamber."

A total of 11 million people – 6 million Jews and 5 million others – systematically died at the hands of the Nazis before the camps were liberated by Allied soldiers in the mid-1940s. The victims included 1.5 million children and represented about two-thirds of the 9 million Jews who had lived in Europe.

A candle-lighting ceremony was held to honor the Jews killed in the genocide. The final candle was dedicated to the next generation, who are left to "carry the flames of remembrance."

"The Holocaust teaches us that you should not judge a person by the way they look," said BAMC Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Oates. "More importantly, it teaches us that we should ever be so mindful that all people should be treated with dignity and respect."

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH 2019

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# BAMC Celebrates Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage

BY JASON EDWARDS

Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs

Patients, staff and family members celebrated Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month at a ceremony in Brooke Army Medical Center's Medical Mall, May 23.

"I've always said our nation's strength is our diversity," said Brig. Gen. George Appenzeller, BAMC commanding general. "What other place in the world can say that?"

Army Maj. Jessica Higa, BAMC neuropsychology fellow and guest speaker for the ceremony, elaborated on that strength in diversity.

"If we look around, if we really open our eyes, be present in this moment, you will see the diversity that's here in this area and throughout this hospital," said Higa.

"Every single one of us has our own story," she added. "We all have our own experience."

Higa went on to discuss how diversity and inclusiveness are key to humanity.

"This powerful message is for all of us," said Higa. "It's not just May. It is not just for Asian Pacific Islanders."

"As I walk these hallways every day, sometimes at night, I see it," she continued. "It's interactions between people, between generations, between



U.S. Army Maj. Jessica Higa, neuropsychology fellow, talks about diversity at the Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month observance at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, May 23, 2019. Higa is a native of Laguna Beach, Calif. and Kapa'a, Hawaii. U.S. Army photo by Jason W. Edwards

men and women, service members and veterans."

"This is what unites us," said Higa. "This is our unity."

Attendees were also treated to a lively ukulele performance by Timothy Kanoia Kamaka.

Kamaka performed Hawaiian standards as well as his own interpretation of pop stars, such as Michael Jackson, Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry.

Command Sgt. Major Thomas Oates, BAMC command sergeant major, closed the ceremony.

"We have ordinary people that walk the halls of BAMC," said Oates. "But when you invest in those ordinary people, you add something extra to the ordinary, they become extraordinary."



Timothy Kanoia Kamaka performs at the Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month observance at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, May 23. Kamaka delighted attendees with his electrifying performance of Chuck Berry's, "Johnny B. Goode." U.S. Army photo by Jason W. Edwards



The Department of Defense (DoD) Warrior Games were created in 2010 and designed to introduce wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans to Paralympic-style sports. The Warrior Games showcase the resilient spirit of today's wounded, ill or injured service members from all branches of the military.

# BAMC App Now Available for Patients, Visitors & Staff

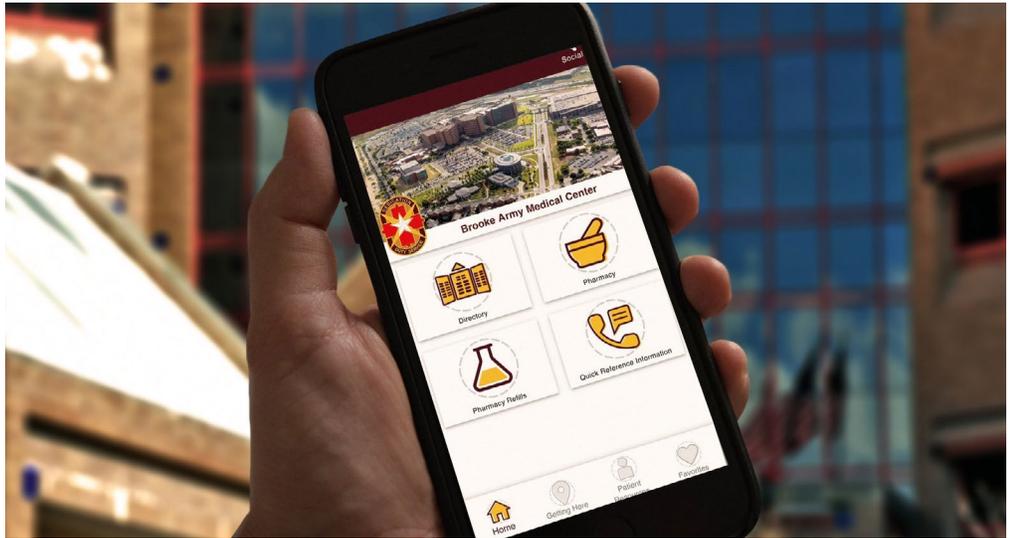
BY LORI NEWMAN  
Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs

To further improve patient experience, Brooke Army Medical Center now has an app available for download on any mobile device.

The app, designed by the Defense Health Agency, allows patients, visitor and staff to quickly access information such as pharmacy wait times, facility directory, and quick reference information from their cell phone.

“The app is currently in Phase 1 of its launch,” said Bradley Snyder, Information Management Division project manager. “We encourage people to try it out and give us feedback. Once we gather feedback, we will submit the changes for review this summer.”

Under the Patient Resources tab people can find information about dining options, gate information, making appointments, TRICARE resources and more. They can even pay their bill from their mobile device.



Brooke Army Medical Center as launched a new app for patients, visitors and staff. The app, designed by the Defense Health Agency, allows users to quickly access information such as pharmacy wait times, facility directory, and quick reference information. Photo graphic by Corey Toye

## GOING ON VACATION?

### DON'T BRING HOME MEASLES AS A SOUVENIR

Measles is a health risk in many destinations, and it can spread easily through coughing and sneezing. It can cause serious illness, even death. When you travel, bring home photos, keepsakes and memories - not the Measles!

#### TRAVELING OVERSEAS?

**YOUR BEST PROTECTION IS TO GET VACCINATED.**

The measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine protects against all three diseases.



AGE GROUP	DOSES OF MMR VACCINE
Infants 6-11 months	1 Dose
Children 12 months or older	2 Doses Separated by at least 28 days
Adolescents & adults who have not had measles or been vaccinated	2 Doses Separated by at least 28 days

# Former CFI Patient Brings Barbecue Lunch to BAMC

BY LORI NEWMAN

Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs

A former Special Forces medic who spent time recovering here at the Center for the Intrepid decided to make a stop at Brooke Army Medical Center May 20 to provide a barbecue lunch for patients, staff and family members.

Jarrid "Jay" Collins was wounded in combat and is a below the knee amputee. He is currently cross country running, biking and hand-cycling across America from Los Angeles, California to Tampa, Florida, the site of the 2019 DoD Warrior Games. On his journey, he stopped at BAMC to honor staff and patients by serving more than 8,000 meals of barbecued brisket, sausage, beans and cold slaw.

"I am an alumni of this area right here, the Center for the Intrepid and BAMC," he said. "We would not be able to do these things that we do without people first investing in us. I want to say thank you for what you guys do every single day. It does not go unnoticed. We are a reflection of what you do."

BAMC Commanding General Brig. Gen. George Appenzeller thanked Collins and the volunteers who put the event together.

"I just want to say thank you," the general said. "You do a lot for people and their families and you are about to do a lot for thousands of people and their families (here at BAMC)."

Collins is currently the director of non-disaster programs for Operation BBQ Relief which provides meals during natural disasters. As part of the Operation BBQ Relief's Non-Disaster Program, The Always Serving Project is visiting eight cities in 50 days as part of The Breaking Bread Tour.

"The Breaking Bread Tour is Operation BBQ's launch for our non-disaster programs," Collins explained. "As we do this, it's important for people to understand that it doesn't matter where we come from or what our beliefs are, there are so many things that unite us."

The volunteers, who are used to serving between



U.S. Army Brig. Gen. George N. Appenzeller, Brooke Army Medical Center commanding general, Command Sgt. Major Thomas Oates, BAMC command sergeant major, and Sgt. Major James Brown, chief clinical sergeant major, serve lunch to BAMC staff, patients and family members during the Operation BBQ Relief event at Brooke Army Medical Center May 20. Volunteers provided 8,000 meals during the event. U.S. Army photo by Jason W. Edwards

50,000 to 55,000 people, efficiently ran the meal lines. They were able to provide to-go meals for people who could not attend to the event and night shift staff members.

"The food was fantastic," said BAMC employee Anthony Hopkins. "It was great for the troops." Jessica Prieto agreed.

"It was nice to see a former patient coming back to provide this event for our staff," Prieto said. "He has overcome so much, hopefully other warriors can see that they too can have a positive recovery."

According to their website, Operation BBQ Relief was founded in May 2011 in response to a need for relief efforts in tornado-stricken Joplin, Missouri. They continue to respond to natural disasters and other situations to help feed displaced residents and emergency personnel.



Volunteers prepare brisket at the Operation BBQ Relief event at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, May 20. Volunteers provided 8,000 meals for BAMC staff, patients and family members during the event. U.S. Army photo by Jason W. Edwards

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MONTH**

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HAPPY.  
STRONG.**

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# BAMC Family Ties A Generational Affair

BY LORI NEWMAN

*Brooke Army Medical Center Public Affairs*

Everyone says the military is a tight knit community, but for one family the connection to Brooke Army Medical Center and Fort Sam Houston is formidable, spanning three generations.

Claire Murtha was born at BAMC in March 2019 to Air Force Capt. (Dr.) Andy Murtha and his wife, Caroline. Andy Murtha was also born at BAMC, in 1989, when the hospital was located on Fort Sam Houston. He is currently a fourth-year resident in Orthopaedic Surgery at BAMC. Caroline Murtha, too, recently worked at BAMC, as an Oncology registered nurse.

But the family connection goes much further.

“I was born during the intern year of my dad’s residency in Anesthesiology,” Andy Murtha said.

His father, Scott Murtha, added, “I have great memories of my time at the old BAMC, and I visit the post to reminisce every time we are in San Antonio. It was a privilege to take care of our dedicated military men and women and their families. I have great respect for them and our country through this experience and have passed these values on to my children.”

Coincidentally, Caroline’s father, Steve Mueller, was also born in old BAMC when his father, Army Capt. (Dr.) Arnold Mueller, was stationed there in 1958.

“It’s a blessing to have a healthy granddaughter,” Mueller said. “Sharing the same hospital as our common birthplace 60 years later makes it even more special. What are the odds on that happening?”

“It means a lot that Claire was born at BAMC,” Andy Murtha said. “I was excited to press the button and hear the lullaby announcing her birth.”

Andy’s mother, Jeani Murtha, agrees. “We thought it was interesting that both of the families had connections to BAMC when Andy and Caroline started dating years ago, but we never imagined that they, too, would be at BAMC at the time of their daughter’s birth. It’s rare to have this unique experience for three generations of a family in the same military medical facility.”



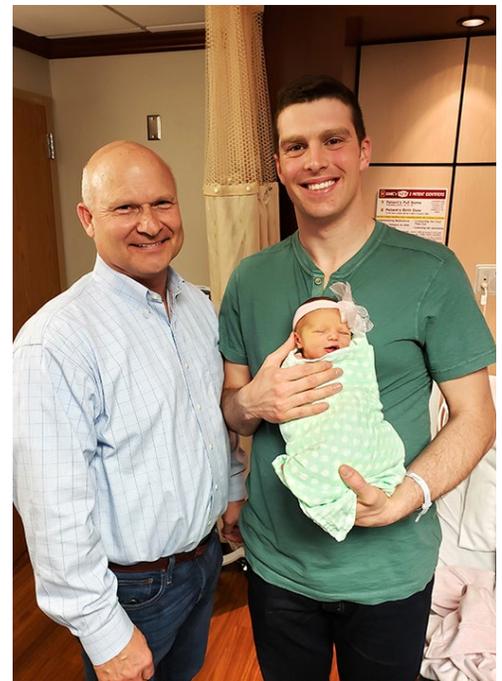
Army Capt. (Dr.) Arnold Mueller holds 2-year-old Steve Mueller. Steve Mueller was born in old BAMC when his father was stationed at BAMC in 1958.



Caroline and Andy Murtha with baby Claire at Brooke Army Medical Center March 28, 2019. Claire is the third generation of her family to be born at BAMC.



Army Capt. (Dr.) Scott Murtha with sons Kevin and Andy, and wife Jeani, at his residency graduation ceremony at Brooke Army Medical Center in June 1992. Air Force Capt. (Dr.) Andrew Murtha was born at old BAMC in 1989 and is now completing his residency here.



Air Force Capt. (Dr.) Andy Murtha holds baby Claire with Steve Mueller, Claire’s maternal grandfather, March 27, 2019 at Brooke Army Medical Center. The photo marks three generations of their family being born at BAMC.





# **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  
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