

THE SCOPE



CTVRF – Temple, TX
Vol. 5 Fall 2012

Are You Ready? Disaster & Pandemic Preparedness Conference

Health professionals are on the frontlines of disaster response and to better equip them for such emergencies, the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System will offer a comprehensive day of training on September 28.

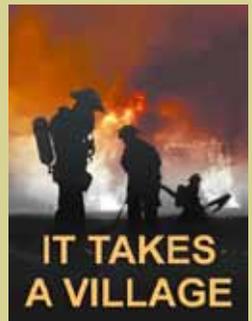
Key topics include:

- Business continuity after a major disaster
- Preparedness considerations from a local to national perspective
- Bio terrorism, current and potential threats
- Pandemics: What we have learned and what we should expect
- Survivalist skills: Everything you ever want to know, and some things you don't!
- Should you stay or should you go? Evacuation vs. sheltering in place

The conference is made possible through a collaboration of Scott & White Health Care System, Bell County Public Health District, McLennan County Public Health District, Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, Heart of Central Texas Independent Living (HOCTIL), and the Central Texas Veterans Research Foundation. Registration funds collected through We Pay are collected by the Central Texas Veterans Research Foundation, a 501c3 organization that supports Veterans research.

For more information, contact Dr. Sylvia Baack (254) 297-3435, Sylvia.baack@va.gov or Dr. Robin Keene (254) 743-2913, Robin.Keene@va.gov.

Need to Know Info - "It Takes A Village – A Community Collaboration"



- ▶ Friday, September 28 from 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- ▶ Temple VA Medical Center Building 171, Conference Center, Room A25
- ▶ Registration: \$35 includes lunch and emergency kit "Go-bags" provided to the first 100 paid.
- ▶ Event is open to the public
- ▶ Continuing education credit (6 CEUs) available.
- ▶ Online registration, sponsored by the Central Texas Veterans Research Foundation at: <https://www.wepay.com/events/disaster-preparedness-it-takes-a-village>.

Unlocking Liver Disease



Dr. Frank Anania

From his lab at the Emory Clinic in Atlanta, Dr. Frank Anania is discovering clues to liver disease that might have implications for a growing segment of the population. Dr. Anania will share his findings with fellow researchers at the Digestive Disease Symposium

to be held at the Temple VA Medical Center September 28.

[See page 3 for Digestive Disease Symposium details](#)

Obesity, alcohol consumption and Hepatitis C are just some of the risk factors for liver fibrosis, which is an accumulation of tough, fibrous scar tissue that can ultimately result in liver failure. According to

statistics from the National Institutes of Health (2009), liver disease alone affects 2.6 million people and contributes to 36,000 deaths.

Dr. Anania is credited with 50 scholarly publications including contributing to current discussions on the growing role of the Western diet and liver disease.

Salute to 2012



Air Force Association
(AFA) Awards

AFA VA Employee of the Year



Lt. Col. David Tharp

What motivates a family man with two young children and a busy career as a clinical research psychologist to volunteer for a tour of duty on the frontlines of a war zone?

A chance to make a difference.

Lt. Col. David Tharp knew his skills as a mental health professional along with his experience in the Air

Force were in demand by a growing number of service personnel serving in Afghanistan suffering the scars of war.

Little did he know when he took on the assignment in October 2010, he would see and serve so much. Stationed at Kandahar Airfield, the world's largest and busiest NATO base, he would devote long days and nights in the epicenter of much of the action for war casualties. As the medical advisor to the commander of Kandahar Airfield, Dr. Tharp was responsible for 28 countries' medical assets, including medical response to rocket attacks for both military and civilian personnel. He also served as an advisor to the U.S. Army mental health team as well as preventative medicine advisor to the base commander. His unique talents of a mental health professional, computer engineer, hospital chaplain and strategic management liaison enabled him to make active contributions to the war effort.

During deployment, Dr. Tharp developed a health condition known as a transverse myelitis, which created a serious compression of the spinal cord resulting in nerve pain and damage. Despite his own personal health problems, he convinced his commander to remain in theater until fulfilling his ten-month tour of duty. Back home, his wife, who is a medical student at Texas A&M College of Medicine, did triple duty attending to her course work, managing household activities and caring for their two young sons. Dr. Tharp's Skype visits with the family would be the highlight of his days, a half a world away!

Dr. Tharp has been a licensed clinical psychologist at the VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network's Center of Excellence since 2009 while also holding the rank of Major in the US Air Force Reserve. August was a month of celebration for Tharp, as he was not only notified that he will be presented the Air Force Association 2012 Department of Veterans Affairs Employee of the Year Award, he also was promoted from the rank of Major to Lieutenant Colonel. Congratulations to VA's Lt. Col. (Dr.) David Tharp – a warrior who is dedicated to serving those who served!

Invisible Wounds

VA National Center for PTSD Stats

- About 7-8% of the population will have PTSD at some point in their lives.
- About 5.2 million adults have PTSD during a given year.
- Women are more likely than men to develop PTSD. About 10% of women develop PTSD sometime in their lives compared with 5% of men.

www.ptsd.va.gov

IRRITABLE?

TROUBLE SLEEPING?

FLASHBACKS ?

BAD DREAMS?

FEELING EMOTIONALLY NUMB?



The VA and the DOD are performing a clinical drug trial to improve treatment of PTSD. If you were involved in a traumatic event during OEF/OIF, feel that you may suffer from PTSD, and would like to consider participation in this study call (254) 534-0370 or (254) 534-1044 for further information.

CENTER FOR APPLIED HEALTH RESEARCH



The Data is in the Details

“**W**as the patient wearing shoes when he stepped on the scale?” Such a question might escape typical data collectors, but at least two investigators pause to question how that an inch or two might make a difference is a large data set over time.

The explanation is only obvious to some: Body Mass Index (BMI), a current measurement known to describe patient obesity, is calculated using height and weight. Paying attention to small details can reveal a great deal about a population in a study, and it also reveals how careful study designers must be to draw correct conclusions.

Such is the sleuthing that VA investigators Drs. John Zeber and Laurel Copeland conduct on a regular, if not prolific, basis. This dynamic data duo conduct health services research at the Center for Applied Health Research (CAHR), which is a collaboration of the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (CTVHCS) and Scott & White Health Care System.

Their quest for useful data assists these organizations make informed decisions about quality of care

(e.g. Does patient BMI class predict getting preventive screenings?) and assess combinations of mental health treatment in conjunction with primary health care: Ethnicity and Race Variations in Receipt of Surgery among Veterans with and without Depression. Their many publications cover a broad range of health research topics ranging from issues affecting women Veterans, policy evaluation, health disparities and dozens of other subjects of interest to healthcare providers and leaders, policy makers and even national media.

The partners serve as Co-directors for the CAHR as well as lead the Center for Health Outcomes. Together, the two VA investigators hold many appointments as faculty and adjunct professors at Texas A&M Health Science Center, Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health, and University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

The body of knowledge developed by the Center for Applied Research continues to grow. But as this pair has discovered, by looking at mountains of data through a very sharp lens, true health outcomes come into focus.

Digestive Disease Symposium Offers Multidisciplinary Insights

A scientific look at many of the implications of liver disease, as well as other gastrointestinal conditions are just some of the areas to be examined at an conference sponsored by the Central Texas Veterans Research Foundation.

Named for donors who have supported Scott & White Health Care Digestive Disease Research Center (DDRC) and the Nicholas C. Hightower Chair of Gastroenterology, the Joseph E. and Martha E. Kutscher DDRC Symposium will take place on Friday, September 28, 2012.

The educational event aims to share new findings and exchange information on areas about liver damage, gastrointestinal disorders and the related cancers that result from digestive diseases. Speakers will represent

various disciplines and a number of leading research centers including the local DDRC, which is a collaboration of Scott & White Health Care and VA medical scientists and researchers; as well notable representatives from Yale University, Texas A & M University, University of Pittsburgh, University of Texas Southwestern, and The University of Texas - MD Anderson Cancer Center.

The keynote address will be given by Frank Anania, M.D., FACP, AGAF; Professor of Medicine and Interim Director of the Division of Digestive Diseases at Emory University. Dr. Anania recently published two studies in the journal *Hepatology* that link an alarming trend of high-fructose corn syrup use and hepatic metabolism that converts such ingredients into long chain fatty acids.

Dr. Alpini and members of the DDRC team will report on their findings, which look at numerous facets of gastrointestinal impacts from a molecular level to revealing markers for cancers and other long term health conditions such as cirrhosis.

The research foundation will gather results from the forum to be shared with other key researchers in the field. The event is free and open to the public.

**The Joseph E. and Martha E. Kutscher
DDRC Symposium**

Friday, September 28, 2012

7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Temple VA Medical Center
Research Building 205 (R01-R02)**

Community Connections

MISSION OF VA'S MAKE THE CONNECTION CAMPAIGN: LISTEN, LEARN AND LOCATE HELP

Make the Connection is an online tool to help Veterans and their family members connect with the experiences of other Veterans—and ultimately to connect with information and resources to help them confront the challenges of transitioning from military service, facing health issues, and navigating the complexities of daily life as a civilian.

This dynamic and user-friendly web site: www.MakeTheConnection.net is a one-stop resource where Veterans and their families and friends can privately explore information, watch stories similar to their own, research content on mental health issues and treatment, and easily access support and information in their local area.

According to Koby South, communication specialist, who is managing the initiative for VA from Central Texas, "Make the Connection has made it possible for Veterans and their loved ones to hear directly from people like them who faced challenges and found support to live healthier lives. Since the campaign's launch in November, the website has attracted more than 1 million visits and the video stories of recovery and resilience have been watched over 2.9 million times. We also recently added a Facebook page, which has had an overwhelmingly positive response and is the fastest growing community in the government/military space to date, reaching over 775,000 'likes' in just three months."



The mission of CTVRF

Those who courageously serve our nation's military deserve exceptional care. The **Central Texas Veterans Research Foundation** strives to enhance the health of Veterans of all generations through research and education.

We represent a public charity that serves and supports the research community found within the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System. Together, with your help, we can accelerate promising research from "bench to bedside" to improve the quality of life for Veterans.

THE SCOPE

To make a gift please contact:
Maggie McCarthy at 254-744-4162 or
ctvresearchfoundation@gmail.com

Checks should be payable to
Central Texas Veterans Research Foundation -
CTVRF is a Texas nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation
and your donation is tax deductible.
The tax I.D. number is [74-2623309](http://www.irs.gov/efile)

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