Patient safety awareness promoted during week-long event

By Edwin Hanson, USNH Yokosuka

In a concerted effort to empower beneficiaries and strengthen collaboration between them and their healthcare providers, U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka has joined other leading healthcare organizations in celebration of Patient Safety Awareness Week March 6-12.

This year's theme: "Are You In? Commit to Safe Health Care" focuses on involving all participants in the healthcare process, from patient to provider.

"We have a very proactive patient safety program here at Naval Hospital Yokosuka," said USNH Yokosuka Executive Officer Capt. Kevin Knoop. "Providing safe high quality care is our number one priority and that requires a culture of safety in the hospital. It's not something that happens on its own; we have to remain vigilant in its pursuit at all times."

During patient safety week, USNH Yokosuka patient safety officials will be engaging staff and patients throughout the hospital for brief lessons and awareness building activities. The most visible of which will be a patient safety booth located on the hospital quarterdeck.

"Improving patient safety means that everyone – from the patient to their healthcare providers – must be involved, informed and invested in safe care. Engaging each participant in the process is vital to giving patients the best care and making healthcare safe, for all," said Diane Pinakiewicz, president of the National Patient Safety Foundation and the sponsor of National Patient Safety Week, on the organization's website.

Prior to this week, the hospital has actively engaged the community with a variety of programs including the "Speak Up" campaign, sponsored by The Joint Commission who is the accrediting organization for the hospital. The goal of "Speak Up" is to encourage beneficiaries to engage in their own care thereby creating a two-way conversation between provider and patients.

HM1 Lillian Ramirez, USNH Yokosuka Laboratory leading petty officer, draws blood from Cpl. Melinda Schulz, assigned to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni. In a concerted effort to empower beneficiaries and strengthen collaboration between them and their healthcare providers, USNH Yokosuka has joined other leading healthcare organizations in celebration of Patient Safety Awareness Week March 6-12.
U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Mikey Mulcare

Actively working to master the National Patient Safety Goals created by the Joint Commission is another year round process for patient safety. Goals include improving processes to properly identify patients throughout the care process, actively promoting hand hygiene and other care related activities.

A project new to the hospital was the Halloween themed Hospital Room of Horrors in which patient safety officials staged a vacant hospital room with more than 50 violations of the patient safety policy for hospital staff members to find. The staff member, including providers, nurses, corpsman and administrators, who found and documented the most errors won a prize.

"It was a great event that really amplified a culture of safety vigilance" said USNH Yokosuka Infection Preventionist and perioperative nurse Lt. Cmdr. Richard Lawrence who helped set up the room. "We have to be on our game every day and programs like this help us to refine our skills in a fun and productive way."

Now, more than ever in the patient safety landscape, a focus on empowering patients and strengthening patient-provider communications are of paramount priority for reducing error within the healthcare system and ensuring the highest quality of care.

For additional information on Patient Safety Awareness Week, please visit www.npsf.org.

Operational Stress Control course offered to Navy leadership

From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

The Navy Operational Stress Control (OSC) Leader course, a pre-conference workshop being offered in San Diego April 25, provides E-7 and above the latest practical training and delivers the most intensive and practical learning experience to date.

The six-hour course is characterized by dialogue, case studies and personal accounts of the impact of stress on individuals, families and units and presents tools and leadership interventions needed to build and maintain wellness.

"Chiefs and officers will learn how to assess individual and unit stress responses, and then how to apply practical tools to reduce unnecessary stress, identify problems early, and reduce the stigma associated with psychological stress issues," said Capt. Lori Laraway, OSC director.

According to Laraway, this specialized, practical and effective training program will enhance leaders' knowledge and skills, so their Sailors and commands can realize the benefits of prevention and early intervention.

"The OSC tenets of prompt treatment and reintegration will help leaders balance the needs of mission requirements with individual needs," Laraway said. "Taking ownership of OSC, and applying its strategies is the best way to prevent stress injuries and reduce the need for treatment."

The OSC Leader course enhances leadership capabilities and is not a "medical" course. It uses the stress continuum model to focus leaders on the importance of recognizing and attending to personnel in the early stages of stress reactions, and provides those from the chief's mess and wardroom with the skills they need to promote resilience.

The course will be offered April 25, as a pre-conference workshop at the Town and Country Resort and Convention Center, San Diego, Calif., the day prior to the start of the Navy and Marine Corps Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) conference. The conference runs from April 26-29. Attendance is free, but seats are limited. While participation in the conference is encouraged, it is not a prerequisite for OSC Leader course registration.

To sign up for the course, go to http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcsd/nccosc/Pages/coscConference2011.aspx and look on the right-hand side of the page for pre-conference workshop registration.

Navy Surgeon General sends Medical Corps birthday message

From U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs

The Navy Surgeon General sent a message to the Navy Medical Corps in honor of its birthday, March 3.

"Today we celebrate the 140th birthday of our Medical Corps," said Vice Adm. Adam M. Robinson, Jr., Navy surgeon general and chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. "From the countless humanitarian relief and disaster response missions, to the larger role of expeditionary care around the world, the Medical Corps is integral to Navy Medicine's ability to support our maritime strategy."

The Medical Corps was founded March 3, 1871, by the 41st Congress who enacted the Appropriations Act which established the Medical Corps with the mission of providing medical care to U.S. Navy personnel aboard ships and shore stations.

Today, nearly 5,000 active duty and reserve Navy doctors serve with both the Navy and the Marine Corps throughout the world, providing exemplary care to Sailors, Marines and their families, from the garrison to the deck plates and to the battlefield.

According to Robinson, the Navy Medical Corps is broad and diverse. It is comprised of physicians who are practicing or training in dozens of medical and surgical specialties with more than 200 subspecialties. Navy doctors serve in complex and diverse positions including the White House, the Attending Physician's Office to Congress and as astronauts exploring the frontiers of space.

Robinson also said the Navy Medical Corps continues to break new ground in biomedical research, medical education and training, and patient care delivery at Navy clinics, hospitals, aboard Navy afloat platforms and in combat theaters.

"It is the honor, courage and commitment of these personnel we honor today," said Robinson. "We celebrate their spirit of service in everything they do to ensure our nation has a medically ready, fit and fighting force. It is our responsibility to ensure that those who've served our nation, along with their families, can always count on Navy Medicine to help provide quality and compassionate patient and family-centered health care.