

EACH Inpatient Behavioral Health Unit Opens

By Sgt. William Smith

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Photo by Sgt. William Smith

From left, Lt. Col. Michael Brennan, commander, U.S. Army Health Facility Planning Agency, Falls Church, Va.; Brig. Gen. John Cho, commander, Western Regional Medical Command, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.; Col. Dennis P. LeMaster, commander, Fort Carson Medical Department Activity; and Brian Hogan, Bryan Construction, cut a ribbon during a ceremony to open the new Inpatient Behavioral Health Unit at Evans Army Community Hospital, Jan. 30.

The Inpatient Behavioral Health Unit at Evans Army Community Hospital officially opened its doors following a ribbon-cutting ceremony Jan. 30.

The facility will be used for inpatient care for active-duty service members with acute mental health concerns who are at risk to harm themselves or others around them, and can no longer be treated by an outpatient care program.

The ceremonial ribbon was cut by Brig. Gen. John Cho, commanding general, Western Regional Medical Command, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., and Col. Dennis P. LeMaster, commander, Fort Carson Medical Department Activity.

LeMaster, who took command in January, said EACH has led the way in behavioral health care since he started watching the organization back in 2009.

“The first big accomplishment was the embedded behavioral health concept put into the brigade combat teams, and now this will allow us to provide more acute care for those that need it.

“This facility can accommodate up to 14 patients,” he said. “The amenities are state of the art to ensure a safe healing environment for our active duty service members. The unit staff will include two psychiatrists, one psychologist, six nurse officers, one noncommissioned officer psychology technician, eight registered nurses, 11 behavioral health technicians and one medical support assistant. The staffing model allows us to provide a proactive innovative patient-centered behavioral health care system.”

Cho talked about an obligation to take care of those who serve.

“We know that 85 percent of those with combat-related stress and post traumatic stress stay in our footprint and continue to wear the cloth of our nation,” he said. “They get better because of the behavioral health teams; that is a story not often told.

“The Army has recognized that if you come forward to receive that care, this team and others like it across the country will ensure they receive it. Army Medicine is here to holistically wrap our arms around you to get you better, so you can continue to serve with honor and distinction.”

Cho went on to say that the other 15 percent that transfer to the Veterans Affairs health care system will still get the help they need.

“To those 15 percent who transfer to the VA, I take the words from George Washington: ‘The willingness with which young people are willing to serve in future wars, no matter how just, is directly dependent on how they perceive veterans from previous wars were cared for by their nation,’” he said.

“Well I am here to tell you as we transition those veterans, the healing and caring starts here,” Cho said. “We are delivering on our obligation to care for those that have been on point for this nation and protecting this nation from harm.”