



## Dialed in: Your guide to the Access to Care Line

Spc. Kaila Muggli  
*MEDDAC Public Affairs*

There's more to the Access to Care Line than you might think. Many people believe 526-2273 is just there to make or change an appointment at one of the local military installations' medical treatment facilities.

Although it is used for appointments, it can also be used for much more. Beneficiaries who call the Access to Care line will also find options to order medication refills, find out more about the status of a referral, or get questions answered about TRICARE benefits. In addition, callers can use the phone number to get connected to various MEDDAC clinics.

"The Access to Care is really the only number you need to remember," said Maj. Chris Sloan, Chief of Clinical Operations.

Started in 2005, the phone service now serves more than 172,000 beneficiaries enrolled at Evans Army Community Hospital, Peterson Air Force Base and the U.S. Air Force Academy and is contracted out by the Colorado Springs Multi-Service Market Office. The standard is for phone calls to be answered within seven seconds. If personnel at the Access to Care Line cannot help with an issue or if it is a medical question, they can transfer you to someone medically qualified for additional assistance.

Sloan added, "The goal is to facilitate patient centered care by creating a singular point of access. We want beneficiaries to feel like

*(Phone continued on page 4)*



**Piglet is the lone cat in the Red Cross Animal Therapy Program at Evans Army Community Hospital.**

## A purr-fect visitor at EACH

Spc. Kaila Muggli  
*MEDDAC Public Affairs*

A rare opportunity is strolling down the halls at Evans Army Community Hospital. So rare in fact, that there are only a few like it in the state of Colorado. If you smell the scent of oranges, see a plush purple stroller and a pair of alien-like eyes staring back at you, smile. You are about to be greeted by the sweater dress-wearing therapy cat named Piglet.

Piglet is a 13-year-old, hairless, lavender sphinx with a wardrobe collection that could make most women jealous.

Owner Debbie Polelli recognized something special about Piglet. She doesn't

run from loud noises, strange hands, or new places. Sphynx cats naturally love to cuddle with people. Their soft, warm suede feel makes them the perfect heat pack to cuddle with for some soothing relaxation time. These qualities keep the cat employed as a registered therapy animal with Pet Partners and the American Red Cross.

During a visit to the Family Care Ward in February, Piglet crawled immediately to work as a quick companion for an 18-month-old boy and his 4-year-old brother. Piglet's big eyes met the 4-year-old's as he curiously checked her over. His mood lightened as he asked about each of the badges that she wears *(Cat Therapy continued on page 4)*

# Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day There's an App for That!

Christine N. Levy  
MEDDAC Registered Dietitian

How often do you hear people give reasons or justifications on why they are not eating healthy foods or even eating on a regular basis? Everyone's life is busy. It's rare that a work deadline or project is set aside yet your daily fuel to help you accomplish these projects is pushed into the back seat.

Healthy eating and weight loss are always on the top 10 list of New Year's resolutions. By March, most of these resolutions are long forgotten. This month marks the 40th Anniversary of National Nutrition Month and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics wants to encourage everyone to develop a healthy eating plan that recognizes our individual food preferences, lifestyle, health, and cultural and ethnic traditions.

Fortunately for you, your six Registered Dietitians here at Evans Army Community Hospital want to get you back on track with those healthy eating goals. We know that not everyone



has time to meet with us, but we also know that you are probably one of the more than 955 million active users who spend an average of six hours and 35 minutes per month on Facebook and/or the internet. So we'd like to share information about 10 nutrition links available to you, most with no fees.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has published a "Top 10 Nutrition App" list for National Nutrition Month to help you, "Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day". As individuals, every person needs to find something that works for them. These applications make it easy to stick with whatever plan you choose:

- My Fitness Pal's Calorie Counter and Fitness Tracker
  - Calorie Counter: Diets and Activities
  - Calorie Counter by About, Spark-People.Com
  - Calorie Tracker by Livestrong
  - Lose It!
  - Tap & Track-Calorie Counter
  - Calorie Counter by Fat-Secret
  - Restaurant Nutrition and Fooducate
- The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetic's main site is also a great reference and resource, [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org). The EACH Dining Facility will be hosting weekly nutrition quizzes throughout March and all correct quizzes will be entered into a drawing for a weekly prize. Test your nutrition IQ while you eat and possibly win a prize!
- Lack of time to plan or pack meals is probably the biggest reason people give as they are heading through the drive-thru to pick up their fast food. These apps can provide you with menu planning and nutrition information and make the task less daunting and more fun. ❀

## Have a new primary care manager?



Warrior Family Medicine Clinic's Dr. Richard Beitz gives an exam to Anthony Tribozio.

1st Lt. John McCracken  
Clinical Operations Division

Here at Evans Army Community Hospital, we are dedicated to improving patient continuity. What does that mean for you? It means we make every effort to get you an appointment with your assigned primary care manager. We know that seeing someone familiar with your medical history is comforting and improves your health.

In recent months, some of our primary care providers found themselves with too many or too few patients assigned to them. EACH just completed an initiative to balance those numbers and some of our beneficiaries may have received a notice that their

primary care manager had changed.

This is great for you! Balancing panels throughout the clinics will provide increased access for appointments and increase the chances of patients seeing their primary care manager. Our primary care clinics operate on the patient centered medical home concept. Decreasing the size of panels keeps our patients as our focus and empowers healthcare professionals and staff to meet your needs.

Finally, our facility receives a monetary reimbursement for each patient who is seen by their PCM. Being able to bring in more money will allow us to continually improve our quality of care for the patients.

Patient satisfaction is our goal. ❀

# Class promotes healthy thinking

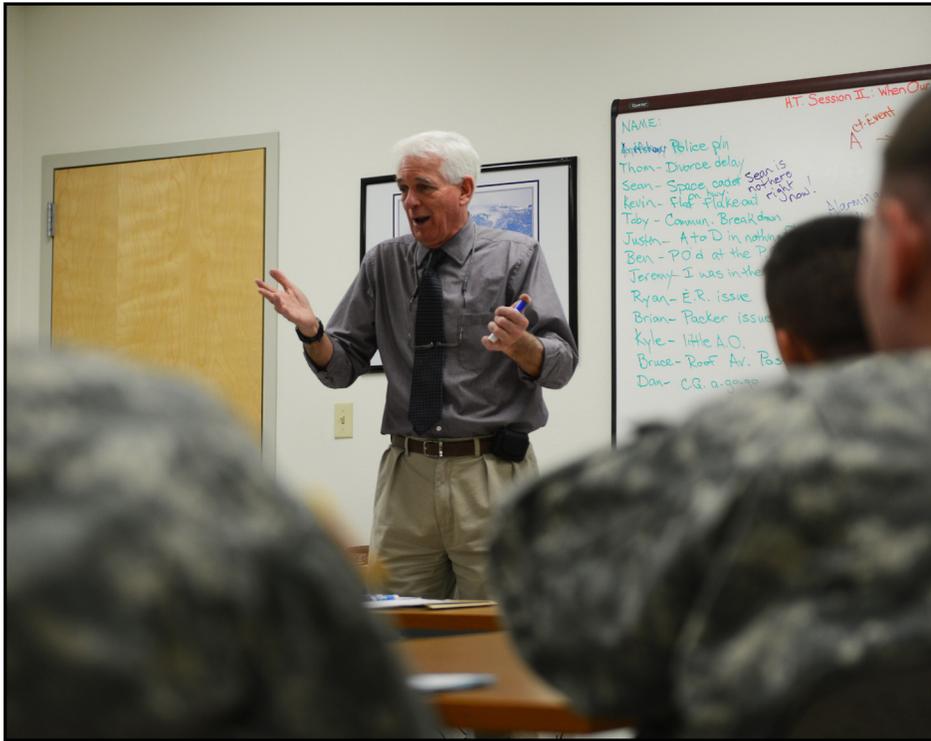


Photo by: Spc. Kaila Muggli  
**Dr. Bob Stewart, Embedded Behavioral Health Services Team 3, helps Soldiers apply behavioral health models to their lives by sharing anecdotes from his own life.**

Stacy Neumann  
 MEDDAC Public Affairs

The instructor elaborated on cognitive models and the Yerkes-Dodson law. The students recited the three types of responses to a situation: physical, emotional and behavioral. It's the kind of lecture you might expect to find in any college psychology class across the country. But this class is in a Fort Carson conference room. The MEDDAC Department of Behavioral Health debuted its "Behavioral Health 101" class in November of last year. Each of the Embedded Behavioral Health teams around the post conducts the course for Soldiers within their brigades who have sought behavioral health help. At EBHT #3, the four week course starts on the first Wednesday of every month and introduces troops to the scope of behavioral health services offered on post. Most of the course, though, focuses on basic behavioral health concepts. "It's really important for people to

understand what's available but also to get a firsthand view of methodology. Our soldiers should know how to use the cognitive-behavioral concepts presented in this group," said Dr. Bob Stewart. "I want them to go out and take this with them into every facet of their lives. They're essentially adding to their psychological armor." Stewart is a psychologist with EBHT #3. He likes to call his class "Healthy Thinking." On one Wednesday morning, he scrawled "Session II: When our thoughts work against us" onto the white board. Thirteen Soldiers pulled out blue folders with worksheets, started laughing and trading stories about an "activating event" that had occurred in the last week. The group broke down and dissected anecdotes about getting pulled over by police, trouble at the post office, divorce delays and more. "I'm big on techniques. Resources are helpful. I need concepts and strategies," said one female Soldier. "This is teach- (Thinking continued on page 4)

## TriWest transition nears completion

TRICARE West Region beneficiaries should keep their eyes on their mailboxes. United Healthcare Military & Veterans, the incoming West Region health care support contractor, is sending out welcome packages in late February and early March. The welcome packets include contact information, where to file claims, and information on continuing automatic payments, new case managers, referrals and authorizations. TRICARE beneficiaries should read their packets carefully to see if they have to take any actions to prepare for the April 1st transition to United Healthcare.

One important date is March 11th when beneficiaries must switch their automatic payment authorizations to United Healthcare to maintain uninterrupted coverage.

Also highlighted are new features and benefit enhancements to improve access to quality providers and decrease wait times. Enhancements include Convenience Care Clinics, the UnitedHealth Premium Designation Program of providers and expanded telemedicine opportunities.

The packets contain information about how beneficiaries can request that their current providers remain part of the TRICARE network after the transition to UnitedHealth care takes place. Beneficiaries can ask their providers if they are members of the United Healthcare network, and if not, encourage them to sign up.

West Region beneficiaries can access additional information about the transition by visiting the United Healthcare website at: [www.uhcmilitarywest.com](http://www.uhcmilitarywest.com)

or reach United Healthcare customer service at 1-877-988- 9378. They may also visit the TRICARE website at [www.tricare.mil/westtransition](http://www.tricare.mil/westtransition). ❁

## Therapy Cat

(Cont. from page 1)

on her vest and Polelli explained them all in simple terms to satisfy the boy's curiosity.

"Is that a dog?" the little boy asked pointing to the picture on the cat's badge.

"That's the cat, Piglet," Polelli smiled back.

Piglet drew more attention to herself as she moved between rooms on her visits.

"She's not just here for the patients but for the staff, too," Polelli explained as a crowd of people surround the plush purple stroller.

"Does she meow? Was she born with hair?" the questions quickly turned in to statements. "She doesn't even have whiskers!"

After the quick morale boost for the staff, it was on to the other side of the ward.

"[Piglet] acts more like a dog," a young female patient said as Piglet curled up on her lap. "It would be so nice if everyone in the hospital had one. It's a nice distraction."

Piglet then visited five patients



**Richard Bergstrom gets a visit from Piglet as he recuperates in the hospital's Family Care Ward. Bergstrom said he is an animal lover with many pets at home, including a fox.**

on the Family Care Ward, six on the Mother Baby Ward, a little boy in the Intensive Care Unit, and wrapped up with almost every smiling face waiting in the pharmacy.

Piglet has been working with the American Red Cross since 2011 and is one of ten registered therapy animals at the hospital. The program started in January of 2009, placing strict requirements on their therapy animal teams.

"They have to already be registered with an organization," pet therapy coordinator Amy Sorrels-Mourabit began. "Their handler has to pass background checks and be a fully registered volunteer, and the animals have to get cleared from the veterinarian here on post annually." She paused and smiled, "The main difference between here and other places I've seen therapy animals? Our handlers are required to offer hand sanitizer at the end of the session."

Piglet currently resides with Polelli in Castle Rock after living in the Springs Area for many years. It means visits to Evans Army Community Hospital aren't as frequent, but she's dedicated to her work. Just don't ask Piglet to do it outside.

"She gets sunburned outside!" Polelli recalled, "But in 90 degree heat, Piglet still spent four hours supporting the victims of the Waldo Canyon Fire." ❀

## Thinking

(Cont. from page 3)

ing me how to approach my anger."

Animated and energetic, Stewart went on to talk about how beliefs and perceptions can shape a person's reactions to stressful events. Through personal stories, some theoretical models and self-monitoring, Stewart wants to help Soldiers respond to adverse situations more effectively.

Stewart said, "They're responsible for their behavioral health and they are responsible for their behavior or responses to various situations. After this class, some have said to me, 'I have control over my anxiety. I always thought I was just an anxious person.'"

A male Soldier said just one week of the course has already helped him.

"It changed my week. I look at everything differently. I can examine situations before I get irate. Instead of worrying about something, I smiled and laughed. Ev-

erything got easier." He smiled and added, "I already told one Soldier that his anger was counterproductive."

Stewart said the first two iterations of the class have been popular. He's hoping to start offering two courses a month. Soldiers who feel they need help are screened and diagnosed by behavioral health specialists. They can then be referred to the class.

Near the end of the session, Stewart turned to the Soldiers and threw up his hands. "How much control do we have over situations that occur in our lives?"

"Zero," answered a chorus of voices. "That's right," the recently retired Colonel affirmed. "What we have control over is how we respond to the events that occur. Stuff happens."

When Soldiers walk out of Healthy Thinking, they'll know how to react. ❀

## Phone

(Cont. from page 1)

they can access everything they need in a direct and easy manner."

The Access to Care Line is staffed during weekdays from 6 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 526-2273 or 524-2273. Beneficiaries must be fully enrolled with TRICARE before calling the service.

Families eligible for TRICARE benefits but not enrolled locally can contact UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans. Visit [www.uhcmilitarywest.com](http://www.uhcmilitarywest.com) for more information. ❀

# Exercise balls: Not an office chair

John Pentikis  
U.S. Army Public Health Command

There has been much research in the past few years devoted to trying to make workers healthier while working. One of the more popular ideas is the use of an exercise ball to replace a traditional office chair. However, there seems to be a great deal of debate comparing the pros and cons of this.

Exercise balls were not originally intended as a piece of exercise equipment, but rather as a therapy tool to improve balance and strength. The instability of the exercise ball forces the use of the core muscles of the midsection. As an exercise tool, this is a positive feature because it is important to strengthen the muscles of the low back and abdomen. However, those same features are not necessarily desirable for a chair.

There has been little research done on the effects of using an exercise ball as a full-time seat. One study suggested that extended sitting on an unstable seat sur-

face does not really affect the overall spine stability. Sitting on a ball appears to spread out the contact area, which could explain the reported discomfort. Another study's results found an increase in muscle use in certain back muscles as well as an increase in discomfort while sitting on the stability ball.

From an ergonomics point of view, stability balls are not an effective solution for reducing low back pain in the workplace for these reasons:

- Active sitting increases the rate of fatigue due to constantly being off balance. In addition to fatigue, continuously maintaining your balance throughout the day may be an issue for some individuals and people with previous back injuries.
- Exercise balls do not have armrests or back supports, key features in supporting the body.
- A reclined sitting position is the most comfortable position for the back, and an exercise ball does not

allow you to sit in this position.

- There are also safety concerns if someone is not using the exercise ball properly. Exercise balls do not have a stable balance and present a potential safety risk of falling off of them, or the ball may pop, causing the user to fall. In addition, a general user may not realize that a fully inflated exercise ball is going to be much more difficult to sit on than a less inflated ball.

The only situation recommend for extended use of an exercise ball is as a form of exercise. In an office setting, an exercise ball should only be used for a few minutes at a time spread throughout the day for an exercise break. They are not a suitable addition to a comprehensive ergonomic computer workstation. The best way to reduce low back fatigue and discomfort from sitting is to limit prolonged exposure to sitting to one hour and to choose a chair that allows you to change your sitting posture frequently throughout the day.✿

## When is the best time to get labs done?



Photo by: Spc. Kaila Muggli  
An EACH phlebotomist draws blood from Private 1st Class Amanda Mata.

*Provided by the Dept. of Pathology*

Welcome to the Evan's Army Community Hospital's phlebotomy room, part of the Department of Pathology. Our mission is to implement an integrated laboratory sup-

port system that ensures accurate and timely laboratory results in support of our active duty military, Family members and retirees. We operate from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We see approximately 5,500 to 6,300 patients on a monthly basis. Our average wait time is four minutes per patient and 97 percent of our patients are seen within 15 minutes. Our busiest times of the day are Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to noon.

It is our goal to maintain a clean, safe and caring environment to each and every customer who comes through our department. Our phlebotomists work very hard to ensure that all of our customers receive the best care available, their needs are met, and they get through in a timely manner. In addition, we allow parents to bring their children with them for all their laboratory needs.

You may also want to know that, while we have many experienced phlebotomists, we also train students who are given the opportunity to learn from some of the best. This will allow us to continue to provide you with an outstanding experience for many years to come.

We want you to get the quality care you have come to expect from Evans Army Community Hospital.✿

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### Seeking volunteers for shaving study

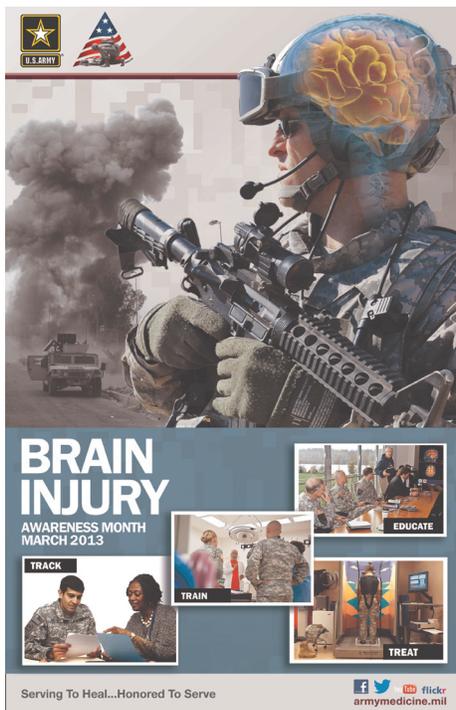
The Evans dermatology clinic is performing a research study looking at various razors and topical products to assist with shaving bumps. Soldiers must have at least 10 lesions and be available for three office visits over a 12 week period. Male and female participants will be provided with shaving supplies, a tote bag and topical creams. Call 526-7185 for more information. No referral from your primary care manager is necessary.

### American Red Cross Fun 5K Run/Walk

Join us at the Fort Carson American Red Cross "Luck of the Volunteer" 5K on Friday, March 15th at 4 p.m. at the Iron Horse Fitness complex. Pre-registration is at the Evans Hospital office or the main Red Cross office at 1675 Ellis St., Bldg. 1217, Rm. 101. Same day registration begins at 3 p.m. at Iron Horse. For more information, call 526-2311.

### Evans Social Media

Join the conversation! Evans Army Community Hospital is now on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/EvansArmyCommunityHospital](http://www.facebook.com/EvansArmyCommunityHospital). You can also find us on Twitter. We are @EvansHospital.



### Brain Injury Awareness Month

There will be a static display in front of the EACH DFAC in March. There will also be a display at the Fort Carson Post Exchange from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Friday in March. For more information or to schedule your own unit for a class on TBI, call 526-8636.

### Secure Messaging

We have begun to offer a FREE Secure Messaging service to enrolled hospital patients to allow 2-way electronic communications between you and your assigned Primary Care Team. Use the secure system to refill medication or review

lab tests & to get your medical questions answered. The confidential exchanges between you and your PCM team become part of your permanent electronic record. Enroll at your clinic's reception desk.

### Self Care Card Program Suspended

Due to fiscal constraints, Evans Army Community Hospital is suspending the Over-The-Counter medication Self-Care Program. All Self-Care classes have been cancelled pending further information and training information will be removed from the Evans Preventive Medicine webpage. We do not know if or when the program may restart; please keep your self-care card in case it is reinstated. For additional questions, contact Preventive Medicine at 526-8201.

### EACH ambulance service

Evans Army Community Hospital has its own ambulance service. In a life or limb threatening emergency or injury, there is no need to head to the Emergency Department in a personal vehicle. Just call 911 and let skilled paramedics and ambulance crews begin administering the critical care needed. They are on duty 24/7. For more information, contact 526-7111.

This is an unofficial Army newsletter and the contents are not necessarily the views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, or this command. It is published monthly. For information about this newsletter, or to submit articles for consideration, contact: Public Affairs, each.pao@amedd.army.mil. Mailing address: Fort Carson MEDDAC, ATTN: PAO, 1650 Cochrane Circle, Fort Carson, CO 80913



Col. John M. McGrath  
Commander, Fort Carson MEDDAC  
Command Sgt. Maj. Ly M. Lac  
Command Sergeant Major, Fort Carson MEDDAC  
Roger Meyer  
Public Affairs Officer  
Stacy Neumann  
Editor & Public Affairs Specialist  
Spec. Kaila Muggli  
Public Affairs Intern