

# the MEDDAC-Fort Carson Healthbeat

Serving the Front Range Military Family



A Fort Carson MEDDAC Publication

Vol. 2, Issue 4, January 2013

## MEDDAC welcomes 2013 Hospital plans to expand services

Stacy Neumann  
MEDDAC Public Affairs

New clinics, the debut of two renovated floors and thousands of new beneficiaries - 2013 promises to be a busy year for the U.S. Army Medical Department Activity and Evans Army Community Hospital.

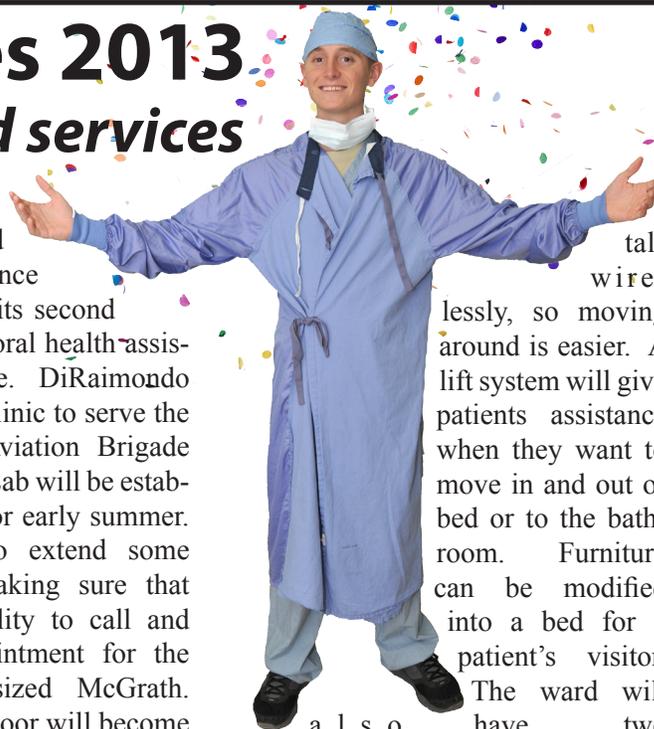
"We want to better meet Family and patient needs through facility growth. We want to be responsive and improve the patient experience," said Col. John M. McGrath, commander.

McGrath said he expects beneficiaries to see improved access to care, including more Family member entry to some of the more sought-after specialty clinics like physical therapy, dermatology and gastroenterology. New GI and Pain procedure rooms will become operational, freeing up the oper-

ating room for other surgeries. The Child and Family Assistance Center is expanding its second team, making behavioral health assistance more accessible. DiRaimondo West will open as a clinic to serve the incoming Combat Aviation Brigade and a four bed Sleep Lab will be established in late spring or early summer.

"We're planning to extend some clinic hours and making sure that people have the ability to call and get that acute appointment for the same day," emphasized McGrath.

In April, the fourth floor will become home to the new Family Care Ward. Designed for people who have to be admitted to the hospital, it features 28 individual rooms. It includes new technology that monitors a patient's vi-



also have two Family Respite Rooms with games and other amenities. Vincent Visuth, chief of transition management, said, "This gives a Family some- (Services continued on page 5)

## Helping little ones with eczema

Tess Cox  
MEDDAC Pediatric Hospitalist



Eczema in babies and children is a form of dry skin that results when the skin loses moisture easily. The top layer of our skin, called the epidermis, is our first line of defense from our environment. An intact epidermis keeps irritants, allergens and germs from entering our body. In some children, there is a defect in the skin's barrier cells that allows extra water loss. It leads to severe irritation, dryness, and itching.

There used to be a belief that most eczema was caused by allergic reaction to food or environmental causes. Now we know that food and (Eczema continued on page 4)

## Flu hits early and hard

Lindsay Huse  
MEDDAC Nurse Epidemiologist

It's an easy thing to put off, but if you or your family hasn't yet been vaccinated against influenza, it's time to move it to number one on your to-do list. Evans Army Community has already had its first patient test positive for Influenza B. Flu season is here in full swing, and it has potential to be more severe than usual. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control report that national flu numbers are already higher this year than they were for all of the 2011-2012 flu season. In the last 30 years, the most severe influenza seasons caused up to 49,000 deaths and countless severe illnesses. Influenza is caused by a virus that spreads through the air when infected people cough, (Flu continued on page 4)

# Baby, it's **COLD** outside

## How to safely heat up

Jody Hughes  
MEDDAC Safety Specialist

I don't know many people who truly enjoy the cold weather, as a matter of fact, I can't think of anyone. This fall was exceptionally mild, and if you are a Colorado native, you might have contemplated storing your summer clothes away for a while. I have reluctantly decided that I will probably not wear shorts again until April or May. Most people hang onto the holiday spirit and cheer with the same attitude. Who wants to let go of the festivities yet? That means taking the tree and Christmas lights down. For those who want to hang on to the spirit a little longer, and compensate for any bitter-cold weather, here are a few thoughts to keep you doing it safely.

### Candle Safety

Who doesn't like candles? They smell nice, are mesmerizing to look at, and provide favorable ambient lighting for cozy activities. You probably received at least one candle for Christmas, right? Well, from 2006 to 2010, U.S. fire departments responded to more than 11,000 home structure fires started by candles per year. Annually, these fires caused an average of 126 deaths, 953 injuries, and \$438 million in property damage. Thirty-five percent of those fires started in bedrooms, 16 percent started in living rooms, 14 percent in bathrooms, and 11 percent started in kitchens.

More than half of the home fires began because combustible materials were too close to a candle. Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn. Blow them out when you leave the room.

Did you ever dip your finger in the hot wax when you were young? Fire can be fascinating to young children. Kids playing with candles started four percent of these fires. Never leave a child unattended with a candle.

Inappropriate containers or candles being bumped or knocked over caused another four percent of these fires. Keep them in a container that is not combustible, is sturdy, and away from surfaces where they may get hit.

Finally, do not fall asleep with candles burning. Eleven percent of the fires pointed to sleep as a factor, resulting in 43 percent of deaths in home candle fires.

### Heating Equipment

Now that we have candles under control, we need to concentrate on keeping warm. In 2010, heating equipment was involved in an estimated 57,100 home struc-

ture fires in the U.S. This includes things like fireplaces, wood stoves, space heaters, central heating units, and water heaters. The fires killed 490 people, caused 1,530 injuries and cost \$1.1 billion in property damage.

Mechanical failure or malfunction are responsible for 12 percent of home heating fires. Always have a qualified professional install stationary heating equipment according to local codes and the manufacturer's instructions. Have this equipment inspected and serviced by a qualified professional every year. Most home heating fires occur during the late afternoon and early evening. Turn the heat down when temperatures are at their daily high and you are not likely to be home.

Portable space heater use results in far more fire losses than central heating equipment. If you insist on using portable space heaters, keep them at least three feet away from anything that can burn. Turn the heater off when you leave the room or go to bed. Inspect it for cracked or broken plugs and loose connections. Do not use extension cords or surge protectors with your electric space heaters. Plug them directly into the wall. If you use a portable kerosene heater, use the appropriate grade fuel and use the heater in a properly ventilated area, preferably outside. Never store the fuel near the heater and ensure that you have a functioning carbon monoxide alarm in your home.

### Fireplaces

Nothing is as inviting as a roaring fire after shoveling snow in sub-zero temperatures. Although they are cozy, wood fireplaces require special safety considerations. Creosote is a by-product of wood burning. It is a combustible, oily, sticky substance that accumulates in your chimney as smoke rises and condenses to the chimney wall. Creosote can ignite if it builds up. These fires produce an estimated 14,380 home fires a year. Have your chimney inspected every year and cleaned, if necessary.

Make sure a sturdy screen is in front of your fireplace to stop sparks from flying into the room and igniting something. Most importantly, never leave the fireplace unattended.

Enjoy the remainder of the holiday season, but do so safely. Take a minute to determine safe placement of space heaters and candles. Initiate a three foot "no play zone" around heaters and candles for kids. Finally, when you are done getting the lights down from the house, why don't you bring that ladder in and check those smoke detectors before you curl up by the fire? ❄️

**To make or cancel appointments: 719-526-CARE (2273)**

# Be Smart: Be Prepared!



Photo by: Spec. Kaila Muggli

**A Soldier braces against the cold December wind as he walks by Evans Army Community Hospital.**

Lindsay Huse  
MEDDAC Nurse Epidemiologist

Walking in a winter wonderland is all fun and games until the snow is blowing so hard you can't see, you can't get your car out of your parking spot, and the power suddenly goes out. While winter emergencies are rare, they are one of the more likely ones to occur in Colorado. The inability to leave your home for food, medicine, and other needs for several days and the potential for power outages can mean injury, illness, and severe health problems. It pays to be prepared before an event ever happens. The Centers for Disease Control recommends families be proactive in preparing for any public health emergency that may arise. While some individuals are quite extreme in their preparedness plans, you don't have to build a bunker in your basement to start the process.

While emergencies can be very diverse in their causes and outcomes, some basic preparedness ideas hold true no matter the event. Having access to safe food, water, shelter, and medi-

cal care are vital whether the emergency is related to weather, disease, or terrorism. Most agencies, such as the CDC and American Red Cross, recommend having at least 72 hours worth of food, water, and medication on hand for each person in the family. It can be daunting to figure out where to start. Here are a few basic things you can do to begin preparing:

Stock up on food and water. Water is especially important. The CDC recommends at least one gallon of water per person and pet, per day. Some agencies recommend even more. Store at least three days worth. Use either sealed water products, such as bottled or jug water, or buy food-grade storage containers at your local sporting goods store.

In an emergency, you may need to go without bathing for a few days, but don't ration drinking water. Preventing dehydration is vital. When planning food supplies, consider that you may not have a heat source to prepare it, or plan for an alternate heat source. Items should be non-perishable. Canned and dehydrated foods may be easiest to both store and prepare. Don't forget to store basic prep items, like can openers, and don't forget to stock for pets! Rotate and replace your water supply every three months, and your food supply every six months. Also, ensure you have necessary items such as extra blankets, clothing, shoes, and even an emergency shelter such as a tent.

Make a plan. Making a plan helps you identify items you may want to have on hand and helps keep your family safe. Have both a shelter-in-place plan and an evacuation plan. Each member of the family should know what to do in either of those situations. Check your plan several times yearly to ensure you have necessary supplies, and drill with your family. Camp indoors to simulate a power outage, drill your evacuation plan and make it into a family outing.

*(Preparations continued on page 5)*

## Why you should know your numbers

Krystal Bankard  
Army Wellness Center

You know to dial 911 for emergencies and 411 for information. There are other important numbers that can save your life. Do you know them?

Every adult should know their waist circumference, body fat, and body mass index. Men's waists should measure at or below 40 inches while women should measure 35 inches or below. Body fat should be at or below 20 percent for men or at or below 30 percent for women to be categorized as moderately lean for good health. Body mass index should be less than 25 for a healthy classification.

These numbers matter because they are linked to current epidemic of overweight and obese children and adults. Many people focus on a single number, their weight. However, weight can fluctuate throughout the day. A better measure of overall health is the composition of that weight. This reveals the relative proportions of fat and lean mass in the body.

One place to discover your numbers is the Army Wellness Center at Fort Carson. Staff can test your resting metabolic rate to tell you how many calories your body burns in a day. VO<sub>2</sub>max assesses your cardiorespiratory fitness. The bod pod measures your fat and fat-free mass as you sit in an egg shaped machine. The results from your assessment can be used to identify risks, personalize your exercise program, and evaluate how well your current exercise and nutrition program is working for you.

Remember, participation in regular exercise, physical activity, and a healthy diet are key to reaching and maintaining a healthy body composition and living longer. To make an appointment at the Army Wellness Center, call (719) 526-3887.

## Flu (Cont. from page 1)

sneeze, or talk, and can also spread when a person comes in contact with an infected surface and then spreads it by hand to the eyes, nose, or mouth. Symptoms appear one to three days after infection and may include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, and occasionally vomiting and diarrhea. While many people recover from the flu without any problems, it can be deadly for others. Infants and young children, elderly, people with health conditions and pregnant women are at higher risk for more severe flu and complications such as secondary bacterial pneumonia, dehydration, worsening of other health problems, and even death.

The CDC reports the current influenza vaccine is well-matched to the flu viruses that are going around. This means that the vaccine is so far proving to be effective. One of the most effective, proven methods for pre-



Photo by: Spec. Kaila Muggli

**Stations around MEDDAC facilities provide sanitizer, tissues and protective masks for those worried about the flu.**

venting the flu is getting a flu vaccination. Everyone over six months of age

should be vaccinated. If you or your family still needs to be vaccinated, you can get it by walking in to your assigned medical clinic and requesting it. All MEDDAC Family Medicine Clinics have stocks of the vaccine on hand. You can also request to get the vaccine if you have a regularly scheduled appointment. In addition, TRICARE covers flu vaccinations for military and their families at participating area retailers as well. Some age limits apply at these retailers, so call first if you are seeking vaccination for your children.

If you've been putting it off, the time to make it a priority is now! Keep yourself and your family healthy and protected from the flu this year!

For more information on influenza, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm> and the Evans Army Community Hospital Preventive Medicine flu page at [http://www.evans.amedd.army.mil/PM/flu\\_information.htm](http://www.evans.amedd.army.mil/PM/flu_information.htm). 

## Eczema (Cont. from page 1)

environmental allergens are the cause of only a small number of cases. The main issue is loss of moisture.

Eczema, also known as atopic dermatitis, looks like dry, red patches of skin that can occur anywhere on the body in infants. Most young children are diagnosed by five years old and 60 percent will be diagnosed under one year of age.

As children get older, the skin condition can go away or localize to certain parts of the body, such as the inside of knees or elbows. Eczema can be a difficult skin condition to manage during childhood. For those who don't outgrow it, they must learn to care for their skin over a lifetime.

Here in Colorado, the greatest enemy of our children's skin is the very dry climate. Skin needs a humidity of around 40 percent. Our humidity is normally around 15 to 20 percent.

What can you do to help our child's skin stay healthy or to treat mild eczema?

Protect a child's skin from losing moisture. Use a cool mist humidifier in their room and make sure they drink plenty of water to keep the skin hydrated.

High emollient creams are better than lotions. Lotions are water based, meaning the water can evaporate and even cause more drying! Stick with thick creams that come in a jar. These create a great barrier to lock in mois-

ture. You may also use ointments such as petroleum jelly, non-scented shea butter or even a little olive oil mixed with creams. Use them liberally several times a day.

Gentle or no soap! Soap is very drying. Let your child take a plain water, soaking bath every night. Use soap two to three times a week, applying it to soiled skin, groin areas and underarms. Avoid bubble baths as these are very drying to the skin and can cause urinary tract infections in girls. Pat, never rub the skin dry to avoid irritating the skin.

If your child has a lot of itching and scratching, there are several ways to help control this. Use a tepid bath for five to ten minutes, followed by application of a high emollient cream. An oral anti-histamine such as Benadryl may be helpful. Apply a topical over-the-counter steroid cream applied two to three times a day.

If your child suffers from red, inflamed, dry, itching or scaly skin, see your primary care manager. If atopic dermatitis or eczema is diagnosed, it can be managed effectively most of the time but you must be persistent. There is no cure for eczema, only constant management, and a cause is rarely found. As always, consult your medical provider prior to giving/using any medications. 

# What do we expect of you?

Adalia Solero  
MEDDAC Patient Advocate  
Commentary

Our staff at Evans Army Community Hospital works very hard to provide efficient, timely, professional, compassionate, and caring service to all of our beneficiaries. Communication and a good partnership between beneficiaries and providers is essential to this process.

Here are some of the things we ask of our patients during their time here:

- Provide Information
- Ask questions
- Follow instructions
- Accept consequences
- Meet financial commitment
- Show respect and consideration
- Follow rules and regulations

In particular, communication and mutual respect goes a long way, and if our



staff fails to afford you that courtesy, we hold them accountable. We also ask you to treat our staff in the way you would like to be treated. Fowl or abusive language is not necessary.

As a Patient Advocate, my goal is to educate, afford communication, and help build bridges of trust. This is the

reason we must ask for your help. If you come to Evans Army Community Hospital, we want you to know that we feel as strongly about your care and how you are treated as we do about the time and effort our staff puts in every day.

We understand that sometimes patients feel frustrated about their care. When patients make complaints, concerns, or comments via the Patient Advocate Office, through a survey, or Facebook, we take the issues and we work hard to learn, correct, adapt, and improve. We also report back to you on our corrective measures. Please help us ensure that quality of care, courtesy, and respect flows freely at Evans Army Community Hospital where our goal is to reach the highest levels satisfaction. You can contact the Patient Advocate office at 719-526-7256

## Services (Cont. from page 1)

place to go if the patient needs to meet privately with a provider. Everything is focused around evidence-based design. The goal is to improve patient outcomes and make them feel more comfortable during their recovery.”

Springtime will bring the addition of a new community based medical home in southeastern Colorado Springs. Called the Mountain Post Medical Home, the off-post clinic is expected to serve more than 8,000 beneficiaries, employ six primary care providers and one behavioral health provider. It will also have a pharmacy and limited laboratory services. “Your healthcare team works with you and your family to take care of health issues as they develop,” Micheal Wheeler, group practice manager, said. “We are not just shifting care from the post hospital. The community based clinics are an expansion of the quality health care Families of active-duty service members currently get at other military clinics. We’re just bringing it closer to where they live and work.”



Active duty Family members currently enrolled at EACH will be offered the opportunity to enroll in the Mountain Post Medical Home. In addition, MED-

DAC will eventually realign beneficiaries who live around the MPMH from their TRICARE network providers and enroll them in the new clinic.

Finally, EACH will introduce a new capability in 2013. Near the end of the year, the fifth floor of the hospital will become an Inpatient Behavioral Health Ward. With 16 beds, it will be geared towards the treatment of active duty Soldiers. This will keep them in a familiar military hospital for their care, close to their Families, friends and units.

“We are continually improving,” emphasized McGrath. “We want to hear from beneficiaries and we encourage you to fill out your Army Provider Level Satisfaction Surveys. It’s your opportunity to tell us if you are satisfied and how we can best serve you.”

## Preparations (Cont. from page 3)

Not only is it practical to ensure everyone knows what to do, it can help foster a feeling of normalcy and decrease anxiety for your family in the event your plan has to be put to real use.

Be informed. Know the most likely emergencies are in your area, and understand terms such Evacuation, Shelter in Place, Isolation, and Quarantine. Know where information will come from in an emergency and ensure you have

ways to access it. If internet or cable service is down, do you have a battery-operated radio to ensure you are connected?

Visit any of the many excellent websites that exist to help you prepare for an emergency: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/plan/> or [www.elpasocountyhealth.org/service/disasteremergency-preparedness-and-response](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/service/disasteremergency-preparedness-and-response), or [www.redcrosslv.org/disaster/materials.html](http://www.redcrosslv.org/disaster/materials.html)

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### Happy New Year!

MEDDAC wishes all of you a happy and healthy 2013. We look forward to our continued partnership with our military, Families and veterans in a journey towards personal wellness!

### Self Care Card

Why head to the local grocery store and pay for over-the-counter medications? Get your Self Care card and get cold and flu remedies, pain relievers and basic care medications at the Evans Army Community Hospital pharmacies! There are two ways to earn the card. (1) Take the 30 minute class offered every third Wed. of the month at 1 p.m. at Evans, Room 2513, Cochrane Hall. (2) Complete the online class at [www.evans.amedd.army.mil/pm/self-care-program.htm](http://www.evans.amedd.army.mil/pm/self-care-program.htm). Print the last page, sign and give to the Pharmacy to get your card. You can use the Self Care card at any military treatment facility.

### Suicide Prevention

There are a number of resources designed to help our Soldiers, Families and veterans in crisis. If you need help, you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK, call Military One Source at 1-900-342-9647, or find confidential help with the Veterans Crisis Line at [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net). You can also text the Veterans Crisis Line at 838255.

### 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.

### Secure Messaging

We have begun to offer a FREE Secure Messaging service to enrolled hospital patients to allow 2-way electronic com-

munications 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.

### 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 719-526-7111.

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](mailto: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