

VA Cooperative Studies Program Research Pharmacy Receives 2009 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

ALBUQUERQUE December 7, 2009 - President Barrack Obama and Commerce Secretary Gary Locke announced today that the Albuquerque Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Cooperative Studies Program Clinical Research Pharmacy Coordinating Center received the 2009 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

Congress established the award in 1987 to recognize American companies that exhibit exemplary and long term achievement in seven areas: leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, employee focus, process management, and results. The Center is the second New Mexico organization and the first VA organization to receive the coveted award.

Dr. Mike Sather, the Center Director, believes that embracing the Baldrige criteria brought a sensibility to the operations of the organization.

“We accept this award for the Veterans who have defended and died for our freedom for more than 200 years and for those who are currently serving our country.” he stated. “There is no question that we must provide quality work and ensure ethical conduct in the clinical trials with which we are associated so that we fulfill our mission to improve the health of our veterans and the nation. The credit for earning this national recognition clearly goes to all Center employees whose loyalty, dedication and commitment to achieving the very best allows us to provide a service and benefit to our veterans that ranks superior and second to none.”

The Center manages drugs and devices used in clinical trials conducted worldwide by the VA Cooperative Studies Program (CSP) and other federal agencies. In the last three years, the Center supported studies benefited 90,000 patients per year at 1,576 different sites. Recent Center clinical trials include using robotics to help stroke patients regain limb function, and treatments for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Other landmark CSP studies include deep brain stimulation to treat advanced Parkinson’s disease, taking aspirin to prevent heart attacks, establishing the effectiveness of the shingles vaccine, drug treatments for heroin addiction, and revolutionary treatments for heart failure.

The presentation of the Baldrige award will occur at a ceremony in Washington, DC in early 2010.

The Center also actively participates in the New Mexico state quality awards program administered by Quality New Mexico from which it received the organization's highest award, the Zia.

In October of this year, the Center and two other facilities received the VA's highest award for **sustained** performance excellence, the 2009 Robert W. Carey Circle of Excellence Award.

Employee engagement is key to the Center's recognition as a New Mexico Federal Executive Board Employer of Choice for 2008 and 2009 and last week's recognition as one of the top 10 New Mexico Best Places to Work. The Center is the first VA organization to be International Organization for Standardization (ISO) ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 15378:2007 registered.