

*From the Summer/Fall 2002 Newsletter*

## **SPOTLIGHT ON EVENTS**

### **Significant Changes Anticipated in VHA's Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Policy**

The National Center for Ethics is revising VA policy on DNR protocols, found in VA Handbook M-2, Part I, Chapter 30. The current policy will be replaced by a more comprehensive policy on ethical decisions in end-of-life care. Center staff members are drafting the revised policy based on written comments solicited from the field and input from a working group that met in Washington DC in early April. The Center continues to welcome comments or suggestions. Please contact [Kate Stockhausen, PhD](#), if you wish to share your ideas.

### **VA Receives Top Government Ethics Award**

On December 13th, 2001 the VA Office of General Counsel (OGC) received the Outstanding Ethics Program Award from the Office of Government Ethics (OGE), an Executive branch agency that examines the ethics activities of all federal agencies.

While the National Center for Ethics deals with the ethical issues that arise in the context of health care, VA's government ethics is managed by the OGC.

"Government ethics" refers to ethics requirements set out in federal law for employees of the Executive branch. In order to ensure compliance, OGC staff reviews financial disclosure reports, provides training, and counsels employees on these requirements of federal law.

Amy Comstock, director of the OGE, praised VA's "ethically active leadership" and cited a "multitude of complex and difficult ethics issues" that face VA lawyers. VA is the largest agency ever to receive the award. For more information about this award, VA staff with Intranet access can go to: <http://vaww.va.gov/pressrel/gcaward.doc>. For more information about government ethics, its role in VA, and how it differs from health care ethics please go to: <http://www.va.gov/vhaethics/2001-1/briefs2.cfm>.

### **Ethics Center Launches New Educational Initiative: Regional IEP Training**

Following on the success of its Intensive Ethics Training last summer, the National Center for Ethics has launched a new series of regional training sessions that aim to assist VISNs and facilities in improving the effectiveness of their local ethics programs. The first training session, sponsored by VISN 11, took place in Detroit in mid-February. These programs introduce the concept of the integrated ethics program (IEP) and help facility and VISN ethics leaders develop plans for instituting IEPs locally. Stay tuned to our [education calendar](#) for upcoming events, or e-mail us at [vhaethics@med.va.gov](mailto:vhaethics@med.va.gov).