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**FOR  
IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**

**VA PITTSBURGH AWARDED FOR EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS**  
***Dialysis and heart failure care recognized by independent organizations***

PITTSBURGH – November 30, 2010 – VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System’s (VAPHS) renal dialysis and heart failure treatment programs were recently recognized for excellence by two separate independent organizations.

To help promote patient safety values, [The Renal Network, Inc.](#) implemented the 5-Diamond Patient Safety Program. The goal of this voluntary program is to help dialysis facilities better implement patient safety principles among both staff and patients. Dialysis facilities that choose to participate receive one “diamond” for each patient safety training module completed and implemented, up to a maximum of five diamonds. The Renal Network, Inc. is the ESRD Network contractor for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) providing quality oversight for patients with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. The 5-Diamond Patient Safety Program is endorsed by the Renal Physicians Association and the American Nephrology Nurses Association

VAPHS is the first dialysis facility in Pennsylvania and the only VA in the nation to achieve 5-diamond status. Only a handful of dialysis facilities nationwide have achieved this distinction. The VAPHS provides dialysis for Veterans with ESRD, providing options of in-center hemodialysis, home hemodialysis and home peritoneal dialysis.

VAPHS also received the [Get With The Guidelines®](#)–Heart Failure Silver Performance Achievement Award from the American Heart Association. This recognition signifies that VAPHS has reached an aggressive goal of treating heart failure patients with 85 percent compliance for one year to core standard levels of care as outlined by the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology secondary prevention guidelines for heart failure patients.

Get With The Guidelines is a quality improvement initiative that provides hospital staff with tools that follow proven evidence-based guidelines and procedures in caring for heart failure patients to prevent future hospitalizations. This is the second time VAPHS has received a Get With The Guidelines award.

For more information about VAPHS’s renal dialysis or heart failure treatment programs, please contact [Shelley Nulph](#) at 412-822-3536.

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