



VHA Voice

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Client Partner Spotlight



Harold Fortis, one of VHA's research client partners, has been the shining star on many recent research initiatives. Harold became connected with VHA when his daughter received services due to her complex medical needs. VHA provided lifesaving nursing, personal support and wound care that greatly improved her quality of life.

A few years ago, Harold attended a research advisory meeting presenting VHA's strategic research vision and the department's five-year strategic priorities. "I felt fascinated by the process of the Research team moving through the earlier years of visibility and support in 2009, to collaborating with partners in 2015, and ultimately to driving solutions in 2020, and decided I wanted to play a role," shares Harold.

Recently, Harold was part of the hiring panel for a new Research Manager for VHA. Harold wanted to ensure the new team member would allow the department to grow and become even more collaborative. His overall goal working with the Research team has been to help raise their profile, to support their long-term vision, and to remove any stigma around the word and idea of 'research', to make sure it is accessible and that VHA's research projects are making a valuable contribution.

"Joining VHA's Research team has been quite rewarding for me," says Harold. "There is never a dull moment as you work through the ever expanding list of projects, funding, and partnerships, all in an effort to raise VHA's profile and impact."

Have you heard about Smiley?

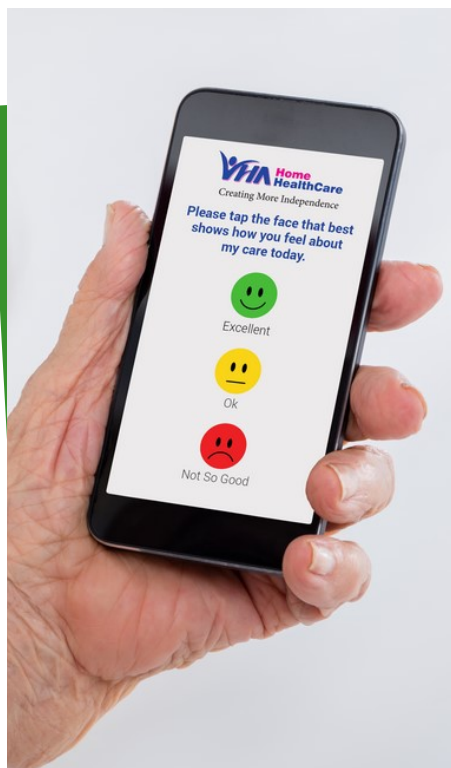
VHA is introducing an innovative, easy way for you to give feedback – and it's called Smiley!

Our PSWs want to provide you with the best care possible – and want to know you're happy with their care.

We know our PSWs can make a huge difference in your life and we have heard directly from clients who want to share compliments and feedback about PSWs providing care. So, over the past six months we've worked together with clients and PSWs to design and test Smiley – a new and simple way for you to give feedback in less than 10 seconds!



Smiley is a smartphone app that puts the ability to give instant feedback right into your hands. To use it, you simply tap the face on your PSW's mobile phone to express how you feel about the care you received that day. It's easy, instant and helpful.



Each Smiley response is anonymous, but all responses are then grouped together on a 'Smiley Dashboard' so that PSWs and Supervisors can see the overall results and know how clients feel about their care.

We're introducing Smiley gradually. If you haven't yet participated, our goal is to offer Smiley to all of our clients receiving personal support services by year end. So far we have about 40% of our PSW team using Smiley and we have over 8000 taps to date. 97% of clients have rated their PSW care as excellent and we are thrilled. We know we have a great team of PSWs and are excited to embrace all of your feedback to make sure that your care is the best.

Smileys are not the only way to give feedback – we continue to welcome your feedback to our VHA Call Centre and through the LHIN and VHA surveys. **If you have any questions about Smiley, please contact smiley@vha.ca or call us at 416-489-2500.**

WHAT CLIENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT SMILEY

"Giving Smileys is easy!"

"Thank you for giving me an easy way to tell you how much I appreciate my PSW"

"I WANT MY PSW TO KNOW HOW MUCH I APPRECIATE HER"

"I really like it! It's very easy to use!"

"I want to thank the Smiley survey for the possibility to express my feelings"

WHAT PSWS ARE SAYING ABOUT SMILEY

"It makes a difference to me what my clients think and makes me pay more attention"

"I am so happy and excited using the Smiley App. I first introduced it to my client yesterday and their responses and reactions were awesome!"

"LOOKING AT MY DASHBOARD MAKES ME FEEL REALLY GOOD ABOUT MY WORK"

Let us know what you think!

We are interested to hear your feedback about this newsletter. Please contact Senior Communications & PR Manager **Tracey Turriff** at tturriff@vha.ca or (416) 280-8426 with any comments or if you would prefer to receive this newsletter by email. Thank you!





Every day, VHA caregivers create opportunities for more independence for the clients they serve. We always encourage clients to tell us about the care they receive, and each year we invite clients to nominate caregivers who have done an exceptional job for **VHA's Client Choice Awards**. This year, the response was once again overwhelming with over 200 nominations full of stories of extraordinary efforts and tremendous passion and commitment. Here are some comments from clients about our winners:

Amleset Tewelde, Personal Support Worker (PSW): "Amleset eases the burden of stress for me," says Claudette. "When Amleset enters the room, she brings joy," adds Malcolm.

Carmen Villatoro, PSW: "Sometimes my mom doesn't want Carmen to leave. She wants her to stay, as if she was another daughter," says Maha.

Chandra Naipaul, PSW: "Once the door opens and Chandra comes in, Evangelia thinks the sun came up," shares Nic.

Kaila Jonsen, PSW: "In my heart, Kaila is like a daughter. I never had somebody care for me as much as she has cared for me," says Sue-Ellen.

Maria Reyes, PSW: "Maria is a God-send to us," says Adel. "When she is around I feel that my mom is in safe hands," he adds emotionally. "Out of one to ten, she is an 11."

Meghan Lloyd, Home Support Worker: "My grandmother has trouble with her language, so Meghan takes the time to speak with her in a really positive and dignified way that she can understand," says Ronald.

Richie Molo, Physiotherapy Assistant: "Many of our clients are sad or depressed. Richie takes her time to listen to their stories, because behind them is the real person," says Lily, a Registered Physiotherapist at VHA.

Regat Ogbasilasie, PSW: "Regat is just an absolute joy...She's the most wonderful woman and we are thrilled to have her in our lives and we hope we keep her forever as a friend," explains Janice.

Roderick Que, Registered Practical Nurse: "Roderick provided my wife and myself with the confidence that we could manage her care at home. He wasn't just taking care of Sue, he was taking care of our family, and that made a huge difference," shares Peter.

Uma Sud, Child and Family Support Worker: "The moment my daughter Abigail saw Uma, my heart melted. Just the way Uma talks to Abigail, holds Abigail, walks around with Abigail... what else could I ask for," says Charlene.

You can watch videos of the Client Choice winners with their clients at <http://bit.ly/2019ClientChoice>.

Client Partners Help to Guide Research

Client partners are involved with VHA's research initiatives in a number of ways. Some have helped hire new members of the Research team and others have been involved in decisions for VHA's Junior Researcher Development Award and the internal fellowship program. "Client partners review the applications alongside the Research staff members. We discuss the applications and make decisions together," says Sonia Nizzer, Research Associate at VHA. "This is a collaborative process. Client partners have an equal voice to staff members in these decisions which means they are having a big impact on our research going forward," adds Nizzer.

"Some clients have told us that they think research is hard to understand and involves confusing language. We want to bring down those barriers as much as possible. We want people to feel comfortable participating, and to get excited about research. When clients who have never been involved in a research project tell us what a positive experience they had, that makes us feel that we are doing something well."

A new project VHA Research is working on with client partners is called Parent Home Hacks. It is an online resource for parents of children with medical complexities. The website is a hub for parents to share 'hacks'—homemade short-cuts or innovations—that they've created at home to solve practical care challenges for their children. Visit www.parenthomehacks.com to search ideas, add your own, and share with a caregiving community.

VHA's Research team is always looking for more client partners to participate in various projects. If you're interested in becoming a research client partner or getting involved with research at VHA, contact researchhelp@vha.ca.



Become a client partner and share your voice!

VHA is always looking to improve. Join the conversation. If you would like to share your thoughts and become a Client Voice partner at VHA, please contact **Stacey Ryan** at **647-460-8595** or sryan@vha.ca for more information.

