



TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

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Sleep Lab grand opening
By Sgt. Matthew Coleman
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TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER-October 18 marked the Grand Opening of the Tripler Army Medical Center four-bed Sleep Lab, one of the facility's newest additions to improve access to care and service to patients who suffer from sleep disorders.

Dr. (Maj.) Sean Dooley and Dr. Christine Fukui, two of the physicians overseeing the effort, addressed what they look for in a sleep study. Beyond difficulty sleeping, issues such as sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, and sleepwalking are all addressed. Because of this, the Sleep Lab offers a multi-disciplinary approach to care in order to target specific body systems causing the problem.

The Sleep Lab is open Monday through Friday for daytime and overnight monitoring of patients.

The average person would normally find it hard to sleep overnight at a hospital, but with the proper setting, such as sound proof walls, improvised tiles and cozy sleeping quarters, patients will not find it hard at all to get a good night's rest.

"The rooms are homey with dark curtains, mirrors above the sink, a television on the wall and overall less-sterile looking than the average hospital room," said Brenda Horner, the VA liaison to the Sleep Lab.

The lab will be manned by administrative staff, sleep technicians that will do the monitoring and physicians who will play an active role with the patients.

Until now, Tripler and the VA have had to refer over 2,500 patients annually to outside organizations. With the opening of the Sleep Lab, at least 600 of those will be able to receive care at Tripler, reducing network referrals.

"In the future, we hope to do Home Sleep Studies, which is really the only feasible way to do enough. With recent technology, home studies have become quite accurate," Fukui said.

“We are really excited about the plan to be a Sleep Disorder Center that provides follow-up care for all sleep issues; not simply a Sleep Lab that only performs obstructive sleep apnea studies,” Dooley said.

“There really are no labs with facilities and technologists like these. We want to be the best Sleep Disorder Center in the state,” said Fukui.

“The Sleep Disorder Center will enable soldiers to get the care that they need all within the confines of Tripler,” said Brig. Gen. Keith Gallagher, the commanding general of Tripler.

“This will certainly add to the repertoire of services that we have here at Tripler to better health and to better life for many of the patients coming through here,” Gallagher said.

The Sleep Lab works on a referral system, so any prospective patients must first visit with their Primary Care Provider in order to have the referral placed.