

NURSE HERO WINNER



Susan Ouellette, CRNP,
CSP, APRN-PMH

Baltimore Veterans Administration Medical Center

Susan Ouellette, the psychiatric and adult nurse practitioner for the Baltimore Veterans Administration Medical Center, is known for wholeheartedly embracing one of the most vulnerable populations: American veterans.

"In the very real world of the emergency room at the VA, she grapples with some of the most difficult health care and social issues in our culture today: substance abuse, acute and chronic psychological and psychiatric conditions," says Carolyn Stinson, principal with Perpetual Business Solutions Group.

"At the VA, I've been lucky enough to assess people with mental illness and their medical needs," says Ouellette. "I work full time with combat veterans and the chronically mentally ill."

In the case of those with chronic schizo-

phrenia, Ouellette is there to help them maintain their stability. "I try to help them to better live their lives when they go back into the world after a difficult hospitalization," she says. "I really find this work very fulfilling."

In many cases, Ouellette is the first contact when a veteran comes seeking help. "At the VA emergency room and clinic, I am dealing with an increasing number of veterans coming back from the war," she says. "My heart is especially opened to these men and women. I know that when I am there to help them get the resources they need to create a life back home, both the vet and his family are so grateful.

"There is no more powerful or impactful



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outcome as when a veteran is able to return to his or her job and feel hopeful about the future."

In addition to her full-time work with the VA, Ouellette works with another at-risk population — the underprivileged residents of Baltimore City. "I work through Urban Behavioral Associates, an organization that has a contract with Bon Secours Hospital, to provide psychiatric services for these men and women," she says.

— *Mary Medland*