

**VA**



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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Veterans benefit from Adaptive Tai Chi Chuan**

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** – Veterans at the VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System (TVHS) Alvin C. York hospital are taking part in “Adaptive Tai Chi,” which is designed to be practiced in a wheelchair.

The unique program was developed by Dr. Zibin Guo, a medical anthropologist and Tai Chi master at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. It integrates wheelchair motion -- the rolling and turning of the chair -- with the dynamic, gentle, flowing movements of Tai Chi.

“It’s not just sitting doing Tai Chi,” said Dr. Guo. “It incorporates the wheelchair movements into the Tai Chi movements.”

Dr. Guo said the program gives participants a sense of uplifting and inspiration, and it provides something especially appealing to Veterans’ warrior spirit.

“We’re not just promoting Tai Chi as fitness ... rather it’s empowerment,” said Dr. Guo. “Tai Chi is a martial art. It’s a way of using slow motion to create a sense of order -- like power. Yield, re-direct. So, something weak becomes more powerful,” he said.

TVHS is using Dr. Guo’s Adaptive Tai Chi as an element of its ‘whole health’ construct. The whole health approach focuses on health planning to empower Veterans and equip them to take charge of their health care. Whole health is not a program or an intervention, it is a new perspective of delivering care that impacts all aspects of VA healthcare.

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“The whole health system approach to healthcare is working to shift Veterans’ and providers’ perspective that TVHS is here to treat the person and not their symptoms,” said Charles Noel, TVHS’s Whole Health program manager. “This approach to care provides a shift from a ‘find-it, fix-it’ mentality to empowering and equipping a Veteran to take charge of their life.”

Dr. Guo has plans to bring Adaptive Tai Chi to VA facilities nationwide next year. Until then, the class is exclusive to TVHS.

Veterans meet at 10 a.m. on Thursdays for the class.

TVHS is an integrated tertiary health care system comprised of two hospitals, the Alvin C. York Campus in Murfreesboro and the Nashville Campus, as well as more than a dozen community-based outpatient clinics located in Tennessee and Kentucky. TVHS provides ambulatory care, primary care, and secondary care in acute medicine and surgery, specialized tertiary care, transplant services, spinal cord injury outpatient care, and a full range of extended care and mental health services.

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