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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System Honored with Prestigious Lotus Recognition™ Award for Excellence in Caring Science

Deerfield Beach, FL: — **Watson Caring Science Institute (WCSI)** is proud to award the **Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS)** with the prestigious **Lotus Recognition™ Award**. We honor their exceptional commitment to **Watson's Caring Science** and the **10 Caritas Processes®** across leadership, caregiving practices, and healing environments.

The **Lotus Recognition™ Award** celebrates organizations that do more than embrace caring in theory— it recognizes those who live it every day. At **CAVHS**, Caring Science is woven into the fabric of the organization, shaping how Veterans are cared for, how staff are supported, and how leadership shows up with presence and purpose.

Serving more than 100,000 Veterans across Arkansas, **CAVHS** has intentionally created environments that uplift dignity, foster connection, and honor the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. Through visible caring arts and humanistic expressions, the organization creates caring moments for Veterans, families, and staff alike.

"Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System is proud to receive the first Lotus Recognition that has been awarded to a VA facility. The Lotus Recognition identifies organizations that demonstrate ongoing commitment to authentic caring in the healing and wellness environments. This commitment is evident in the VA mission and in the multiple ways we strive to provide caring and healing every day to our Heroes, their caregivers and to each other"

- Salena Wright-Brown PhD, MNSc, APRN, RN, Associate Director, Patient Care Services

Across **CAVHS** facilities, Gratitude Trees stand as living symbols of hope, resilience, and appreciation. These evolving displays invite reflection and participation from both staff and Veterans, creating shared moments of meaning and connection. Caritas-inspired visuals such as posters, calendars with daily reflections, and creative media. These serve as daily reminders of the values that guide care and reinforce a culture rooted in compassion and healing.

Caring Science is also brought to life through deep and meaningful caring moments, especially those that honor dignity and human connection. **CAVHS** has been recognized for their acts of loving-kindness, authentic presence, and extraordinary compassion. These moments, often shared through storytelling and reflection, affirm the sacredness of everyday care and celebrate staff who go above and beyond for Veterans and their families.

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Leadership commitment plays a vital role in sustaining this culture. **CAVHS** nursing leaders utilize **Watson Caring Science** through visible presence, intentional grounding, and relational engagement. Caring Science is embedded into nurse role expectations, onboarding, and shared governance. This safeguards that new staff are introduced to the **10 Caritas Processes®** not as an abstract concept, but as a lived practice from day one.

"This Lotus Award honors nurses whose "loving-kindness" shapes a culture of excellence, advancing Veteran-centered care at CAVHS through unwavering integrity, steadfast accountability, and authentic compassion in service to those who have borne the battle"

- Darla Dee Pettis, MSN, RN, VHA-CM, Deputy Associate Director, Patient Care Services

The organization has also made a significant investment in care for the caregiver. Dedicated Wellness Rooms throughout **CAVHS** provide restorative spaces for staff to pause, reflect, and recharge. These environments are designed with calming imagery, mindfulness tools, and healing aesthetics to offer emotional and spiritual renewal during demanding workdays.

Further strengthening staff well-being, **CAVHS** has implemented Healing Circles, creating safe and supportive spaces for reflection, storytelling, and connection. Offered both in person and virtually, these circles foster resilience, empathy, and a sense of shared humanity—helping staff feel supported, seen, and less alone in their work.

By honoring the **VA Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System** with the **Lotus Recognition™ Award**, WCSI celebrates an organization that exemplifies what it means to care deeply and intentionally—for Veterans, caregivers, and the communities they serve. **CAVHS** stands as a powerful example of how Caring Science can transform environments, elevate experiences, and sustain healing at every level of care.

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About CAVHS

The Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) is a tertiary level 1a facility with 505 beds and 3,800 employees. As a flagship of the South-Central VA Health Care Network (VISN 16), CAVHS provides comprehensive medical, surgical, and psychiatric care to Veterans across the state of Arkansas. Learn more at: https://www.va.gov/central-arkansas-health-care/

About Watson Caring Science Institute (WCSI):

The Watson Caring Science Institute (WCSI) is an international non-profit organization that advances the philosophies, theories, and practices of Human Caring/Caring Science, founded by Jean Watson, Ph.D., RN, AHN-BC, FAAN, LL (AAN), WCSI's Founder & Director. Focusing on research, education, praxis, leadership, and legacy, the institute aims to widen the development and understanding of Watson's Caring Science to inform our notion of quality care and healing environments through various educational programs, nurse scientific research, partnerships, events and affiliations. For more information, please visit www.watsoncaringscience.org.

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