



UPDATE

January/February 2016

A bi-monthly newsletter for Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System, and for those who serve Veterans. Send news items and comments to St. Cloud VA Health Care System, Attn: Public Affairs Officer, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303, or via email to Barry.Venable@va.gov



Tim Cossalter, Office of U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar; Diane Losinski, Clinic Coordinator; Mark Aberle, Nurse Executive; Cheryl Thieschafer, Associate Director; Dr. Susan Markstrom, Chief of Staff; Dr. Christopher Churchill, Director of Extended Care & Rehabilitation; and Barry Bahl, Medical Center Director, cut the ribbon to open the new Rehabilitation Center at the St. Cloud VA on December 17, 2015. See story, page 6.

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HONORING SERVICE
EMPOWERING
HEALTH

Calendar of Events

Friday, January 1—**Outpatient Clinics Closed for Federal Holiday.** St. Cloud VA Health Care System outpatient clinics and administrative offices, including VA Clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria will be closed in observance of New Year's Day, a federal holiday. The Urgent Care Clinic at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center will be open. Hours of operation for the Urgent Care Clinic are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week, including federal holidays. The Community Living Center and residential treatment programs will be open.

Monday, January 4 & February 1 (9:10-9:30 a.m.)—Listen to the **Veterans Affairs Radio Show** on KNSI AM 1450/FM 103.3.

Tuesday, January 5 & February 2 (Noon-1 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Group** at the St. Cloud VA in Building 48, Room 204, and Brainerd VA Clinic via Vtel. Support group for family Caregivers of Veterans from all eras. Contact Jessica Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283, for more information.

Tuesday, January 5 & 19; February 2 & 16 (Noon-2 p.m.)—**Veterans Law Clinic** at the St. Cloud VA in Building 28, Room 126. Free legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320-253-0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

Tuesday, January 5 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, January 20 (6-7 p.m.); or Wednesday, January 27 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line.** Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for January is *Creating a Space for You: Caring for a Loved One at Home*. To register, call Jessica Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Saturday, January 9 (1-4 p.m.)—**Salute to Women Veterans 2016**, Marshall Armory, 500 Timmerman Drive, Marshall, MN. Free and open to all women who have or are currently serving. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility. To register, visit <http://wvswmn2016.eventbrite.com>.

Thursday, January 14 (5:30-7 p.m.)—**Health and Wellness Night**, Talahi Community School, 1321 University Drive SE, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Friday, January 15 & February 19 (noon-2 p.m.)—**Southwestern Minnesota Veterans Law Clinic** at the Montevideo VA Clinic. Free legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law and Employment. No criminal issues will be discussed. Please call 320-403-1051 to schedule an appointment.

Calendar of Events

Monday, January 18—**Outpatient Clinics Closed for Federal Holiday**. St. Cloud VA Health Care System outpatient clinics and administrative offices, including VA Clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria will be closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a federal holiday. The Urgent Care Clinic at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center will be open. Hours of operation for the Urgent Care Clinic are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week, including federal holidays. The Community Living Center and residential treatment programs will be open.

Wednesday, January 20 (5-6 p.m.)—**Veterans Town Hall Meeting**, St. Cloud VA, Auditorium (Bldg. 8). The town hall meeting is intended to provide Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health System an opportunity to hear from and have concerns addressed by St. Cloud VA officials. Beginning at 4 p.m., VA staff will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Wednesday, January 20 & February 17 (8:10-8:45 a.m.)—Listen to **Voices for Veterans Radio Show** on WJON AM 1240.

Thursday, January 21 (3-5 p.m.)—**2nd Annual Talent Summit**, River's Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss career opportunities.

Saturday, January 23 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**Annual Becker Chamber Business Expo**, Becker High School Field House, 12000 Hancock Street, Becker, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Saturday, January 23 (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) & Sunday, January 24 (9 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**St. Cloud Gun Show**, National Guard Armory, 1710 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Friday, January 29 (1-4 p.m.)—**Diversity Job & Internship Fair**, St. Cloud State University, Atwood Center, 651 1st Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss career opportunities.

Tuesday, February 2 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, February 17 (6-7 p.m.); or Wednesday, February 24 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for February is *Leaning Into Love: Building Strong Relationship Bonds*. To register, call Jess Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Calendar of Events

Friday, February 5 (noon-9 p.m.); Saturday, February 6 (10 a.m.-8 p.m.); & Sunday, February 7 (10 a.m.-5 p.m.)—**Sportsmen’s Show**, River’s Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Saturday, February 6 (9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.)—**Foley Business Expo**, Foley High School Gym, 621 Penn Street, Foley, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Monday, February 15—**Outpatient Clinics Closed for Federal Holiday**. St. Cloud VA Health Care System outpatient clinics and administrative offices, including VA Clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria will be closed in observance of Presidents’ Day, a federal holiday. The Urgent Care Clinic at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center will be open. Hours of operation for the Urgent Care Clinic are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week, including federal holidays. The Community Living Center and residential treatment programs will be open.

Tuesday, February 23; Wednesday, February 24; & Thursday, February 25 (9 a.m.-4 p.m.)—**Farm Show**, River’s Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

FACTS

William Rufus DeVane King was the first and only U.S. vice president to take the Oath of Office from outside the United States. He did this in Havana, Cuba in 1853.

The U.S. state of Maine has 3,500 miles of coastline.

QUOTATION

"Once a newspaper touches a story the facts are lost forever, even to the protagonists."

- Norman Mailer

Medication Drop Boxes Added

Seven additional medication drop-off disposal boxes have been installed in Central Minnesota police departments. With these additional seven, a medication drop box is now located in every police department in Stearns County but St. Cloud.

Earlier this year, the Justin Pearson Foundation, a foundation established by Dan Pearson, owner of Pleasureland RV after the overdose death of his son, hosted a golf tournament to raise funds to provide medication disposal boxes for every police agency in the tri-county area that requested one. Stearns and Benton Counties now have medication disposal boxes in the following law enforcement agencies: Albany, Avon, Cold Spring, Kimball, Melrose, Paynesville, Sartell, Sauk Centre, St. Joseph, Waite Park, Rice, Sauk Rapids, Benton County and Stearns County Sheriff's Offices. Belgrade will receive one soon.

These boxes are available for residents to safely dispose of their unused/unwanted medications. This proper disposal process incinerates the medications rather than having them flushed or dumped in landfills, which both end up contaminating the ground water supply. Disposing of medications also keeps them out of the hands of people who may abuse these drugs.

Every year the amount of medications collected through drop boxes in Stearns County rises. In 2011, when the program began, Stearns County collected 1,513 pounds of medications. By November of this year, that number stood at 4,451 pounds.

The need for medication drop boxes was realized about six years ago after a Take Back Event at Lake George resulted in 7 – 55 gallon barrels of medications being collected. That equals approximately 53,000 doses.



Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold met with William Jarnot and Dan Pearson of the Justin Pearson Foundation to demonstrate how medication drop boxes work.

New Rehabilitation Center



A ribbon cutting ceremony for the new St. Cloud VA Rehabilitation Center was held on Thursday, December 17.

The newly constructed, 19,000 square foot Rehabilitation Center offers expanded treatment areas, space for state-of-the-art rehabilitation equipment, more private treatment spaces and provisions for enhanced safe patient handling. The center will initially house the Physical Therapy and Speech Therapy Departments; a planned enhancement the following year will complete the space necessary to house the Occupational Therapy and Psychiatry Departments, a Low Vision Clinic, Spinal Cord Clinic, and Independent Living Skills apartment.



Highlights of the ceremony included Veterans Rick Stang and John Jordan, who provided beautiful music, and the color guard from the American Legion Post #323 in Clearwater, who added dignity and Veteran presence to the ceremony.

VA May Not Issue Veteran ID Cards Until 2017



The Veterans Identification Card Act 2015 (Public Law 114-31) was enacted on July 20, 2015. The Act creates a new identification card (ID) for a requesting Veteran who is neither entitled to military retired pay nor enrolled in the VA health care system. VA currently only provides Veterans enrolled for VA health care with an ID card.

The law allows VA to charge a fee for the card and the law did not establish a set date when the cards will be available. Congress did not provide additional funding to VA to manage the card program.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is drafting regulations that will allow VA to implement and enforce the legislation. However, this is a lengthy process that requires time for a public comment period as well as approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The rule making process is expected to take 12 months or more. VA is also in the process of developing procedures and policies to implement the VA ID card program. VA currently estimates the program will be implemented in 2017.

The new ID card is intended to serve as proof that the Veteran has a DD-214 or other military service record. However, the card will not serve as proof of entitlement to any VA benefits.

Veterans enrolled for care with the VA should not confuse the new card with the existing **Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC)**, which is issued for identification and check-in at VA appointments. To enroll for care contact the St. Cloud VA Eligibility Office at 320-255-6340.

With the new ID cards, Veterans will not have to carry around their DD-214s, which decreases the potential for identity theft and fraud because they will not contain the same personal information that is contained on a DD-214.

The new VA ID card will be available to all honorably discharged Veterans. A Veteran requesting an ID card will have to provide a name, photograph and proof of his or her military service.

American Legion System Worth Saving Committee Visits St. Cloud VA



The American Legion System Worth Saving Committee visited the St. Cloud VA, conducting a Veterans Town Hall on December 15, and meeting with facility representatives on December 16-17.

The committee annually conducts a series of site visits to VA medical facilities. While on site, they meet with Veterans and their families, and administrators and employees from the facilities. They determine how each facility uses resources, and they note the successes, challenges and limitations at

each site. These observations are compiled into after-action reports distributed to members of Congress and VA officials, and distributed online. Their last visit here was in 2012.

The committee was appreciative of the support provided and candor exhibited during the visit. The committee acknowledged outstanding program reviews from accreditation agencies, as well as very high quality and efficiency scores.

The committee articulated four findings:

1. Construction projects move too slowly to meet current needs.
2. Contracting structure is not responsive or timely to facility needs.
3. Non-VA Care program was effective, and introduction of the Choice Program has caused confusion and delays in care. Non-VA Care budget limitations do not allow facilities to meet Veteran needs.
4. Space is a significant issue at St. Cloud; existing space does not meet needs.

A key recommendation was to increase education to front-line staff and focus on creating understanding of strategic plan elements, Women Veterans Program, and status of primary care provider recruitment and panel sizes.

The committee voiced understanding that some long waits in some specialty clinics (Optometry, Audiology, for example) are due to patients preferring to wait on VA care instead of using Choice.

The Town Hall attracted approximately 70 participants; estimated number of Veterans in attendance was 45. In total, 20 Veterans made comments; approximately one-half were supportive of VAMC service delivery while the other half were critical of particular episodes of care. Themes included frustration with the Choice Program; inadequate funding levels; encouragement of more research into Complementary and Alternative Medicine; and

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concerns over recent media reports of workplace environment. A group of former and serving employees aired specific grievances regarding Nutrition and Food Service management practices. Compliments were provided about the local Women Veterans Program and Women's Clinic. St. Cloud VA is reaching out to every Veteran who voiced a concern and will follow-up with concerns.

As part of the visit the committee delivered a \$7,857 Operation Comfort Warrior grant to American Legion Post 621 in St. Augusta, MN, who used the grant to purchase items on the St. Cloud VA Voluntary Service Needs List. Read more about this story on the following page.

Additionally, the committee attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Rehabilitation Center held on December 17 (see page 6 of this publication for more on the opening).

Operation Comfort Warrior Grant Delivered to St. Cloud VA

As part of The American Legion's System Worth Saving Committee visit to the St. Cloud VA on December 15-17, 2015, the committee delivered a \$7,857 Operation Comfort Warrior grant to the St. Cloud VA to help meet the immediate needs of Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA. Using donations from around the country, the grant provides essential health and comfort items to Veterans, including such items as toiletries, snacks, cold weather clothing, reading glasses, women's apparel and other personal need items. American Legion Post 621 from St. Augusta, MN, took the grant money and went shopping, loading over 12 shopping carts of merchandise at just one local store, and then delivered it to Voluntary Services at the St. Cloud VA for distribution to Veterans.



Shown are Myron Schill, Jack Loch, Mitch Pelarske, Chuck Katka, Dale Olmscheid and Mike Zenzen, all from AL Post 621. Bruce Drake, national coordinator for the Operation Comfort Warrior program, shakes the hand of Department of Minnesota Commander Jim Kellogg as the group completes the delivery to the St. Cloud VA on December 16, 2015.

Thyroid Cancer

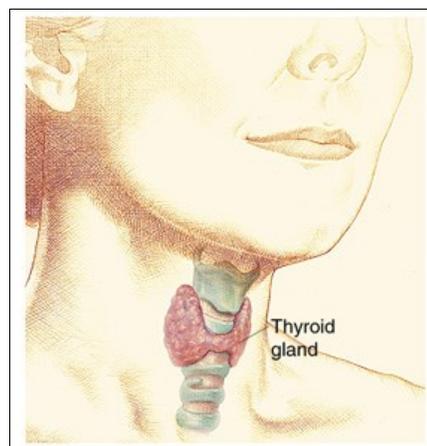
January is Thyroid Cancer Awareness Month

What is Thyroid Cancer?

Cancer occurs when cells in the body begin changing and multiplying out of control. These cells can form lumps of tissue called **tumors**. Cancer that forms in the thyroid is called thyroid cancer.

Understanding the Thyroid

The **thyroid** is a small, butterfly-shaped gland in the neck, just below the Adam's apple. The thyroid controls the rate at which every part of the body works. This is called **metabolism**. The thyroid gland regulates the metabolism by making **thyroid hormone**, a chemical that carries messages from the thyroid to the rest of the body through the bloodstream.



When Thyroid Cancer Forms

Cells in the thyroid may grow out of control, forming small lumps called nodules. The thyroid may also enlarge (swell). Thyroid cancer can spread from the thyroid to other parts of the body. This spread is called **metastasis**. The more cancer spreads, the harder it is to treat.

Treatment Options for Thyroid Cancer

You and your health care provider will discuss a treatment plan that's best for your needs. Treatment options may include:

- **Surgery** to remove part or all of the thyroid gland.
- **Radioiodine therapy**, which uses radioactive iodine to destroy thyroid cancer cells in the body.
- **External radiation therapy**, which uses directed rays of energy to kill cancer cells.
- **Chemotherapy**, which uses strong medications to kill cancer cells.



Getting the Most Out of MOVE!®

**Obesity puts your health and well-being at risk.
Losing 5–10% of your weight and keeping this off
can help you protect your health!**

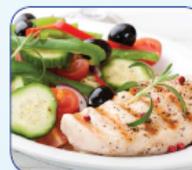
Based on the reports of fellow Veterans and research findings, here is how to get the most out of MOVE!®:



- **Stick with MOVE!® as long as you need to achieve your goals**— Veterans who have at least a 4-month participation in MOVE!® are nearly twice as likely to lose 5% of their initial weight.
- **Check in with the MOVE!® team as frequently as possible**— Veterans who have 8 or more contacts with the MOVE!® team are twice as likely to lose 5%.
- **Even better, do both**— The combination of having frequent contact with the MOVE!® team and working with them for at least 4 months produces even better results.
- **Weigh yourself every day**— For both the process of losing weight and for maintaining your weight loss, weighing yourself every day will help you meet your goals. It gives you immediate feedback and will let you know if you need to change your food intake and/or your level of physical activity.



- **Use both diet and physical activity to meet your goals**— Relying on diet OR physical activity alone is not a good long-term plan.



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- **Write it down (or use an App)**– Unless you monitor what you are doing, it's pretty hard to know if there are problems. Writing down your weight, daily food intake, and your physical activity will help you meet and maintain your goals.

- **Work it, baby!**– All Americans should be getting a minimum of 150 minutes of physical activity per week. That number should double to either 300 minutes of moderate physical activity or 150 minutes of vigorous physical activity per week if you are managing your weight. A common story for Veterans who have lost a great deal of weight and kept it off is that they are now exercising for 1 hour per day. The research suggests that you get this time back, plus some. You will extend the length and quality of your life by being physically active.



- **Mix it up over the long haul**– Many Veterans sharing their success stories say that they have participated in MOVE!® in many different ways. For example, starting off with individual sessions, then groups, then virtual programs like TeleMOVE!. Losing a lot of weight takes time. It can help to change up how you participate in MOVE!® as you progress.



- **Remember you're always welcome**– Managing your weight is a lifelong process. We don't encourage anyone to drop out of MOVE!®. But we know that many Veterans try MOVE!® for a few sessions, drop out, and then come back. Many of these Veterans go on to success. Also, it can be easy to lose ground and regain some weight. You're always welcome to return to MOVE!®!

Find out more about this program by contacting Debbie Baumgartner, RD, MOVE Weight Management Program Coordinator, St. Cloud VA, 320-252-1670, ext. 6640.



Top 3 Reasons to Use the Veterans Health Library

Have you heard about the Veterans Health Library (VHL) found at www.Veteranshealthlibrary.org ? It's a Veteran's one-stop shop on the Internet for health information.

It's also a resource to help Veterans be more involved in their health, like one who was told that he needed a heart operation. Not knowing much about the operation, the Veteran and his significant other stopped by his local VA Patient Education Library, where they connected to the VHL on a computer. Within minutes, they were able to watch heart surgery videos and print helpful guides from the [heart health section](#). The information helped them feel less anxious and answered questions they didn't even know they had.

There are a lot of reasons to use the VHL, but here are the top three:

1. It's created especially for Veterans.

"Every piece of information in the VHL was designed for Veterans, their families, and caregivers. The information is also reviewed by VA experts regularly," says Becky Hartt Minor, MA, Health Educator at VA's National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP). "The VHL includes information on issues that affect Veterans specifically, such as [post-traumatic stress disorder](#), [combat-related traumatic brain injury \(TBI\)](#), and [spinal cord injury](#)."

2. It can help you get the most out of your medical visits.

"Sometimes Veterans may leave a medical appointment not really understanding what they need to do," Minor says. "The VHL can help them prepare for their clinical visit by asking their health care provider the right kinds of questions."

For example, this article on [Talking to Your Healthcare Provider](#) offers tips that may help you feel less nervous when talking about sensitive subjects. [Preparing for a Visit with Your Healthcare Provider](#) includes important items to bring, such as a list of your medications or a notepad for note taking on how to care for yourself once you're home.

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3. It can help you stay well.

If you want advice on how to stay healthy, look no further than the VHL. It offers the following resources:

- A [Living Well](#) section that suggests things you can do to feel better, such as managing stress and losing weight
- A [Living With](#) section that can help you deal with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes
- More than 2,000 pages of information about [medications](#)
- A link to [My HealthVet](#), a Web site that helps you manage personal medical information, order medications, and privately contact your health care providers

In addition to Web pages, you'll find:

- Over 150 [Videos](#)
- Illustrated On-line [Flipbooks](#) that can be printed for easy reference
- [Interactive Go-to-Guide Workbooks](#) that include audio, video, and quizzes

So the next time you have a medical appointment, don't think of yourself as just a patient. Be a partner in your VA care by visiting the VHL at www.Veteranshealthlibrary.org and learning more about your health. [Preparing yourself](#) with health information, strategies, and helpful tips from the VHL can help you [get the most out of your medical visits](#) and [get more involved in your health](#).

And if you want to learn more about what the VHL has to offer, go online and take a [video tour](#) of the **Veterans Health Library** today.

Construction Update

Space is a key challenge at the St. Cloud VA. Most of our 90 plus year old buildings were solidly constructed and have been well-maintained. Our challenges are that there are not enough of them for the numbers of Veterans we serve today, and the buildings we do have were designed for the way medicine was practiced in the early 20th Century.

This means many of our buildings' internal structures require significant renovation or replacement. Clinics are very crowded and the spaces were not designed to support current care delivery models. This situation is compounded because more and more Veterans continue to seek us out for care.

We've long known that we have a space challenge, and have a plan to address most of the issues. Addressing those issues takes time and money, and we have to compete our projects against the other 151 VA medical centers across the country.

Our efforts have been successful and our Veterans have benefitted.

Since 2010, we've:

- Remodeled Surgical and Specialty Care spaces
- Opened a new Urgent Care Clinic
- Opened an Ambulatory Surgery Center
- Opened a Vocational Resources Laboratory
- Added an MRI Suite
- Expanded Pharmacy, Dental and Audiology Clinics
- Started remodeling CLC buildings; one-half of Bldg. 49 is complete
- Opened a new Acute Psychiatry Building
- Remodeled existing space to create an Infusion Clinic
- Expanded and Improved the Ventilator Dependent Unit
- Opened a new Rehabilitation Center (see pg. 6)
- Remodeled existing space to expand the Optometry Clinic (see pg. 13)

Projects underway include:

- Construction of a new Food Service building
- Remodeling of the second half of Bldg. 49 CLC
- Remodeling and Expansion of Bldgs. 9 and 28 for RRTP
- Modernizing the Laundry facility
- Renovation of Canteen

Approved projects for the future include:

- Construction of two CLC cottages
- Construction of an Acute Diagnostic Imaging Center
- Expansion of the Mental Health Outpatient Clinic
- Construction of an Adult Day Health Care Building

St. Cloud VA Optometry Clinic Expansion



Photo of Slit Lamp, Phoropter and Visual Acuity Chart taken in the expanded Optometry clinic in Bldg. 29 on 12/21/15. This additional equipment will help increase the number of Veterans who can be treated in the Optometry Clinic.



Photo of Retinal Camera and Optical Coherence Optometry equipment taken in the expanded Optometry Clinic in Bldg. 29 on 12/21/15. This equipment helps diagnose eye diseases.

We've expanded the Optometry Clinic to serve more Veterans! While the main clinic and check-in desk are still located in the Building 29 basement, additional rooms have been added on the first floor of Building 29 to accommodate growing Veteran demand for optometry services. We have also hired a new Optometrist, Dr. Rachael Lloyd, who will be working in these new rooms.

The eye clinic now consists of 5 full-time Optometrists, 2 part-time Ophthalmologists, 8 technicians, and 2 Opticians. In addition to our growing staff, the eye care services we provide continue to expand. We provide comprehensive eye examinations and disease management to include care for: diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts, and double vision. We also provide traumatic brain injury evaluations with vision therapy and low vision evaluations with assessments for adaptive devices.

We treat urgent and emergent conditions including red eyes and foreign body removals. We offer cataract surgery, YAG laser capsulotomies, minimally invasive glaucoma procedures, and certain eyelid surgeries. Our optical department offers glasses to eligible Veterans. The new rooms on the first floor of Building 29 consist of two fully functional eye lanes which will allow us to see approximately 70 more Veterans per week. We also have a room dedicated to auxiliary testing for formalized visual field assessments, retinal photography, and optical coherence tomography. These specialized pieces of equipment allow us to better diagnose and treat eye diseases like diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and macular degeneration.

All Veterans will still check-in for their appointments in Building 29, Room 5. If the appointment is on first floor, someone from the Eye Clinic will escort them to the appropriate location.



Kitchen Sept. 2, 2014



Kitchen Dec. 24, 2015

The new Kitchen provides a larger dining room and larger food preparation areas; in a location closer to the residential Veterans it serves. Following construction of the Kitchen, a planned follow-on project will remodel the current kitchen space into an additional Primary Care Clinic in the central core of the campus (Bldg. 4).



Bldg. 28, June 4, 2015



Bldg. 28, Dec. 17, 2015

This project in-fills the areas between the wings on the north side of Bldg. 28. Once complete, the project allows us to add additional beds to the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Program (RRTP).

Veterans Town Hall Meeting



**January 20, 2016
5 p.m.**

**St. Cloud VA Auditorium
(Bldg. 8)
Located at:
4801 Veterans Drive
St. Cloud, MN**

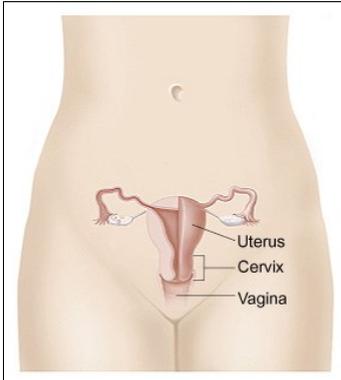


Integrity Commitment Advocacy Respect Excellence

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

What is Cervical Cancer?

Cancer occurs when cells in the body begin changing and multiplying out of control. These cells can form lumps of tissue called **tumors**. Cancer that starts in the cervix is called cervical cancer. Cervical cancer can spread from the cervix to other parts of the body. This spread is called **metastasis**. The more cancer spreads, the harder it is to treat.



Understanding the Cervix

The **cervix** is the neck of the **uterus** (organ that holds the baby when a woman is pregnant). The cervix connects the uterus to the **vagina**.

When Cervical Cancer Forms

When cells in the cervix begin to grow in ways that are not normal, it is called **dysplasia**. Dysplasia is NOT cancer, but it can lead to cancer if not treated. Once cancer forms, there are three possible types:

- **Squamous cell carcinoma** starts in the thin, flat cells on the surface of the cervix. This is the most common form of cervical cancer.
- **Adenocarcinoma** starts in gland cells near where the cervix meets the uterus.
- **Mixed carcinoma** is cancer in both types of cells.

Treatment Options for Cervical Cancer

You and your health care provider will discuss a treatment plan that's best for your needs. Treatment options may include:

- **Surgery** to remove the uterus.
- **Radiation therapy**, which uses directed rays of energy to kill cancer cells.
- **Chemotherapy**, which uses strong medications to kill cancer cells. It may be used along with radiation.

What Is a Pap Test?

During a Pap test, samples of cells are taken from a woman's cervix and checked for changes that may signal dysplasia or cancer. This can help catch cervical cancer early, when it is still treatable. Have a Pap test as often as your healthcare provider suggests.



Some Veterans identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT) and with that identity comes special healthcare needs. With a focus on meeting those needs, St. Cloud VA Health Care System has met all of the Core Four* Criteria and has achieved 2015 and 2016 status as Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality! St. Cloud VA will be featured as an Equality Leader in the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) 2016 report online and in print. The HEI 2016 report will be released in March of 2016 during LGBT Health Awareness Week.

The [Healthcare Equality Index](#) (HEI) asks healthcare organizations whether they meet four foundational criteria for LGBT patient-centered care known as the “Core Four.” The annual [HEI report](#) indicates, for each rated organization, which of the Core Four criteria were met. Organizations that meet all Core Four criteria are awarded the status of “[Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality](#).”

The HEI also provides healthcare organizations with a unique opportunity to assess themselves against 30+ additional best practices in LGBT care. Responses to these questions are returned to the participants in a comprehensive document for their use in needs assessment and strategic planning, and are shown in aggregate in the annual [HEI report](#).

***Core Four** (taken from www.hrc.org/hej)

Patient Non-Discrimination

- a. Patient non-discrimination policy (or patients' bill of rights) includes the term "sexual orientation" and the term "gender identity"
- b. LGBT-inclusive patient non-discrimination policy is communicated to patients in at least two documented ways AND is communicated to staff

Equal Visitation

- a. Visitation policy explicitly grants equal visitation to LGBT patients and their visitors
- b. Equal visitation policy is communicated to patients in at least two documented ways AND is communicated to staff

Employment Non-Discrimination

- a. Employment non-discrimination policy (or equal employment opportunity policy) includes the term “sexual orientation” and the term “gender identity”
- b. Employment non-discrimination policy is communicated to the public in at least one documented way

Training in LGBT Patient-Centered Care

- a. Staff receive training in LGBT patient-centered care (HRC offers free, expert online training to staff at all levels)
- b. All staff involved in patient care services must be informed of the free LGBT training opportunities available through the HEI

A Recipe for Health

HEART HEALTHY CREAM CHEESE DESSERT

Ingredients

8 oz. fat-free cream cheese
3 c. milk, skim
2 boxes sugar free white
chocolate pudding

8 oz. fat-free Cool Whip
6 T. crushed graham crackers

Directions

Mix cream cheese with 1 cup milk. Add pudding and rest of milk. Mix in Cool Whip. Put graham crackers in bottom of pie plate, reserving small amount for top garnish. Pour cream cheese mixture on top of graham crackers and sprinkle on garnish. Serves 8.

Nutritional Information

189 calories, 1.6g fat, 8g protein, 591mg sodium, 23.3g carbohydrates



Take care of your buddy!

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