



UPDATE

July/August 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

No More Lines!



**Beneficiary Travel Payments
Now Cashless-see pg. 13**

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HONORING SERVICE
EMPOWERING
HEALTH

Calendar of Events

Friday, July 1, & Saturday, July 2 (10 a.m.-6 p.m.)—Representatives from the St. Cloud VA and the Montevideo VA Clinic will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility at the **Vietnam Traveling Wall**, which will be at Robbins Island Park, Willmar, MN. Social workers will also be on site to discuss VA counseling services. Robbins Island Park is located in the NE section of Willmar, between Foot Lake and Willmar Lake, off Business Hwy 71/23 (across from the National Guard Armory).

Monday, July 4—**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 Independence 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, July 5 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, July 20 (6-7 p.m.); or Wednesday, July 27 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for July is Preserving Caregivers on the Frontlines. To register, call Jessica Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Tuesday, July 5 & July 19; August 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.

Thursday, July 7 (9:30 a.m.)—The public is invited to attend a **deployment ceremony** for B Co., 2-211th General Support Aviation Battalion, at the Army Aviation Support Facility (AASF) #2, 2185 45th Ave. SE, St. Cloud. The St. Cloud VA Transition and Care Management Team and the Suicide Prevention Coordinator will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility at this event.

Thursday, July 7 (10 a.m.-9 p.m.)—After you've visited the 4-H shows, take some time to stop by the St. Cloud VA booth at the **Aitkin County Fair**. Representatives will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility. Location is 632 Minnesota Avenue North, Aitkin, MN.

Saturday, July 9 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.), & Sunday, July 10 (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.)—Stop by the St. Cloud VA booth at the **Brainerd Gun Show**. Representatives will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility. The gun show will be at the National Guard Armory, 1115 Wright Street, Brainerd, MN.

Calendar of Events

Monday, July 11 & August 1 (9:10-9:30 a.m.)—Listen to the **Veterans Affairs Radio Show** on KNSI AM 1450/FM 103.3.

Thursday, July 14—After you've visited the food stands and exhibits, make sure and stop by the St. Cloud VA booth at the **Redwood County Fair**. Representatives will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility. Fairgrounds are located at 201 N. Dekalb Street, Redwood Falls, MN.

Friday, July 15 (1-10 p.m.)—While you're enjoying **Todd County Fair Senior Day** on Friday, July 15, make sure to visit the St. Cloud VA booth and learn about health care services and eligibility. Fairgrounds are located at 9th Street NE, Long Prairie, MN.

Friday, July 15 & August 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.

Tuesday, July 19 (8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)—The St. Cloud VA Health Care System is hosting its **Community Mental Health Summit** at the Holiday Inn, 75 37th Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. This annual event is held to enhance the mental health and well-being of Veterans and their family members through increased collaboration between the VA and the community. Our goal is to engage in active dialogue on how we as a community can address the mental health care needs of Veterans and their families. The objectives/topics of this year's discussion will be focused on access and suicide prevention. Area mental health providers, community providers and partners, state policy makers, government officials, and Veterans are invited to attend. If you have questions or would like to join the 2016 planning team, please feel free to contact Julie Wolf, 320-252-1670, ext. 7511, or julie.wolf@va.gov.

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

Wednesday, July 20 (11 a.m.-6 p.m.)—Sun, fun and great food! There will be a **BBQ and Vet Service Event** in Olivia, MN. The St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about eligibility and health care services. Other services offered to Veterans include blood pressure checks, dietary counseling, and health care screening. The County Veteran Service Officer will also be available to discuss the full range of Veteran benefits. Visit the mobile Vet center at the county parking lot across from the Courthouse on Highway 212.

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, July 20—If you've ever wondered if you're eligible for health care services at the VA, make sure you visit St. Cloud VA's booth at the **Isanti County Fair**. Representatives will be on site to answer your questions. Fairgrounds are located at 3101 Hwy 95 NE, Cambridge, MN.

Wednesday, July 27 through Sunday July 31—After you've enjoyed the 4-H shows, food, and exhibits at the **Chippewa County Fair**, make sure and check out the St. Cloud VA booth. VA and County Veteran Service Office representatives will be available to answer questions about eligibility, health care services and the full range of benefits. On Saturday, July 30, in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, commemorative pins will be given to Veterans who served from November 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975. If you served during this era, we invite you to stop by our booth and pick up your pin on July 30. Fairgrounds are located at 584 1st Street East, Montevideo, MN.

Thursday, July 28 (10 a.m.-10 p.m.)—**Senior Citizens Day at Stearns County Fair**. After you've enjoyed food and 4-H, make sure and check out the St. Cloud VA booth to find out about eligibility and health care services. Address of fairgrounds is 1105 Ash Street South, Sauk Centre, MN.

Tuesday, August 2 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, August 17 (6-7 p.m.); or Wednesday, August 24 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for August is *Setting Boundaries: Defining What is Best for You, the Caregiver*. To register, call Jess Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Wednesday, August 3 (3:30-4:30 p.m.)—Veterans wanting to learn the latest in how to quit tobacco are invited to attend a **“How to Quit”** seminar led by Dr. Chen, in Bldg. 116 (Rehabilitation Center), at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. Pre-registration is not required, and Veterans are encouraged to bring a buddy. You'll walk away with fresh knowledge on how we can help you quit. See page 10 of this publication for more information.

Sunday, August 7—**St. Cloud Rox Baseball** is hosting **Military Appreciation Night** at Joe Faber Field, 5001 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN. Game starts at 5:05 p.m. but come early when the gates open at 4:05 p.m. and check out the St. Cloud VA booth. Representatives will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Calendar of Events

Friday, August 19—Veterans get in free and the first 200 Veterans get a free food voucher on **Veterans Appreciation Day** at the **Swift County Fair**. Stop by the St. Cloud VA booth and talk with representatives about eligibility and health care services. In honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, commemorative pins will be given to Veterans who served from November 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975. If you served during this era, we invite you to stop by the Chuck Brown Building at 3 p.m. for a pinning ceremony. Fairgrounds are located at 500 W. Reuss Avenue, Appleton, MN.

Saturday, August 20 (8 a.m.-noon)—While enjoying the **Expo for Seniors** make sure and stop by the St. Cloud VA booth. Representatives will be available to answer questions about eligibility and health care services at the VA for the Veteran in your family. Event is being held at River's Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN.

Tuesday, August 30 (8 a.m.-4 p.m.)—Good eats, rides, and ***Military Appreciation Day** at the **Minnesota State Fair!** Don't forget to stop by the St. Cloud VA booth. Representatives will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility. Address of the fair is 1265 Snelling Avenue North, St. Paul, MN. **On August 30, active military families, retired military and spouses, and Veterans and spouses receive discount admission with valid military service documentation.*

DID YOU KNOW?

—Your stomach has to produce a new layer of mucus every two weeks or it will digest itself.

—The Sanskrit word for “war” means “desire for more cows.”

— $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$

—If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle; if the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died as a result of wounds received in battle; if the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

Another Resource for Veteran and Family Lodging in St. Cloud

The St. Cloud Hospital Gorecki (Go-ret'-ski) Guest House welcomes family members of patients who are receiving medical care in the St. Cloud community, a tradition since the first St. Cloud Hospital hospitality house — River Oaks — opened its doors in 1996. Through a recent partnership initiative, the St. Cloud VA is excited to further enhance our relationship with the Gorecki Guest House to provide a place to stay for family members of Veterans.

The house offers a comfortable, homelike atmosphere that allows families the opportunity to stay close to their loved ones. Veterans traveling to St. Cloud for medical appointments or procedures may find the house a comfortable alternative to early morning commutes.

Amenities include:

- 28 guest rooms with private bath
- Family-style kitchen and dining areas
- Large living room
- Complimentary self-laundry
- Exercise room
- Meditation room
- Free wifi
- Free parking
- Tobacco and alcohol free
- Security system



The Gorecki Guest House is conveniently located across the street from the St. Cloud Hospital, at 1309 Sixth Avenue North, in St. Cloud. This location is just a few minutes away from the St. Cloud VA and numerous other medical facilities in the St. Cloud community. The Gorecki Guest House does not provide medical care or assistance on site. Rooms are guaranteed 24 hours before arrival. However, call the guest house as soon as you know your anticipated arrival date so your name can be placed on their wait list. The Gorecki Guest House charges a modest fee of \$45 per room, per night. This fee helps defray some of the operating costs, and remaining costs are met through financial contributions from individuals and the community. Financial assistance is available to those who qualify.

For more information, call 320-251-2700, ext. 51774, or visit www.centracare.com/patients-visitors/gorecki-guest-house/.

TOP HONORS AWARDED TO ST. CLOUD VA BY PRACTICE GREENHEALTH



Named Top 25 in the U.S. for Environmental Stewardship in health care in the Environmental Excellence Awards.

The St. Cloud VA Health Care System has been awarded the most prestigious environmental achievement award offered by Practice Greenhealth, the nation's leading health care community dedicated to transforming health care worldwide so that it reduces its environmental footprint, becomes a community anchor for sustainability and a leader in the global movement for environmental health and justice.

The Top 25 Environmental Excellence Awards recognize health care facilities that exemplify environmental excellence and are setting the highest standards for environmental practices in health care. Award winners are chosen from hospitals that have the highest scores for the Greenhealth Emerald Award using Practice Greenhealth's thorough scoring and evaluation system.

The 25 hospitals presented with Practice Greenhealth's highest honors vary greatly in size, but are all leading the country in health care sustainability and have the data and documentation to prove their success. These facilities have innovative programs and also show leadership in their local communities and in the health care sector.

"St. Cloud VA prioritizes green practices in our day-to-day operations as an organizational imperative," said Green Environmental Management Services Coordinator Mary Wenck. "It's an honor to be recognized for our commitment to the health and safety of our Veterans, staff, environment, and the community at large."

"We are also excited about this award because it validates the ongoing investments in our historic campus. Many of our buildings are over 90 years old, yet they are as efficient and sustainable as many new buildings," Wenck added.



Health Care System Director Barry Bahl and Mary Wenck, St. Cloud VA Green Environmental Management Systems Coordinator, accept the Practice Greenhealth 2016 Environmental Excellence Award from Richard Hofman, Acting Green Environmental Management System Program Manager, Veterans Health Administration, on June 2, 2016.

The Practice Greenhealth Environmental Excellence Awards were presented in Dallas, Texas, May 19 at the CleanMed Conference & Exhibition, the premier national environmental conference for leaders in health care sustainability.

About Practice Greenhealth:

Practice Greenhealth is the nation's leading health care community dedicated to transforming health care worldwide so that it reduces its environmental footprint, becomes a community anchor for sustainability and a leader in the global movement for environmental health and justice. To learn more about Practice Greenhealth visit www.practicegreenhealth.org.

SAVE THE DATE

2016 ST. CLOUD VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

July 19, 2016

8 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. (registration beginning at 7:30)

The purpose of the Mental Health Summit is to enhance the mental health and well-being of Veterans and their family members through increased collaboration between the VA and the community. Our goal is to engage in active dialogue on how we as a community can address the mental healthcare needs of Veterans and their families. The objectives/topics of this year's discussion at the MH Summits will be focused on access and suicide prevention.

Who Should Attend: St. Cloud VA HCS and area mental health providers, community providers and partners, state policy makers, government officials, and Veterans.

St. Cloud Holiday Inn & Suites
75 South 37th Ave
St. Cloud, MN 56301

If you have any questions or would like to join the 2016 planning team, please feel free to contact Julie Wolf by phone at 320-252-1670x7511 or email at julie.wolf@va.gov



VA Community Mental Health Summit 2016

Thieschafer Appointed as Acting Director



Cheryl L. Thieschafer, a Long Prairie native and resident of Sartell, has been appointed as Acting Director, St. Cloud VA Health Care System, beginning June 4, 2016. Thieschafer will serve as Acting Director until a permanent Director is selected.

Prior to her appointment, Thieschafer served as the Associate Director of the St. Cloud VA Health Care System. Appointed in April, 2012, she was responsible for the financial and administrative operations of the St. Cloud VA Health Care System. Previously, she served as an Analyst and Staff Assistant to the Health Care System Director, and as the Facility Planner.

She is a graduate of the 2012 VA Health Care Leadership Program and is a Member of the American College of Healthcare Executives. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition and Food Service from North Dakota State University and a Master of Health Administration from Baylor University. Her prior experience includes a number of progressively responsible appointments at the St. Cloud VA Health Care System, and 12 years of service in the U.S. Army.

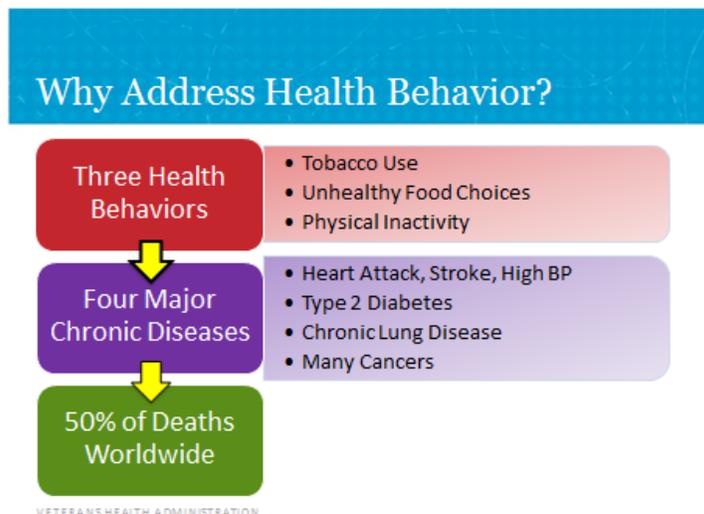
We're 'Upping' our Game—Join Us!

VA wants Veterans to live healthy. Quitting tobacco use is key to achieving a healthier life. To help Veterans quit, VA provides comprehensive, evidence-based tobacco cessation interventions to Veterans who receive VA health care.

On August 3 and 4, St. Cloud VA staff are updating our “tool kit” to better help Veterans quit tobacco use. We’ve invited Dr. Timothy Chen, Director of the VA Tobacco Cessation Clinical Resource Center, to visit and update us on all the current tools and strategies to help you quit tobacco use.

Veterans wanting to learn the latest in how to quit are invited to join us and attend a “How to Quit” seminar led by Dr. Chen, on August 3, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., in Bldg. 116 (Rehabilitation Center), at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center.

Pre-registration is not required, and Veterans are encouraged to bring a buddy. You’ll walk away with fresh knowledge on how we can help you quit.



43

Tobacco use is one of 3 behaviors that contribute to the development of 4 major chronic diseases: CVD, type 2 diabetes, chronic lung disease, many cancers, which together are responsible for 50% of global mortality.

Ready to Quit Smoking? Make a Quit Plan.

The VA has resources available to make sure you succeed. The first step is to S.T.A.R.T. Set a quit date. Tell your family and friends. Anticipate and plan for challenges. Remove cigarettes from your home, car and work. Talk to your doctor.

Your doctor can counsel you and prescribe medication to help you. Counseling and medication are tools that give you the best chance of quitting smoking for good. Counseling will help you build smoke-free habits. Once you quit, it continues to help you avoid tobacco for good.

Medication: nicotine replacement therapy and other medications will ease the physical symptoms of withdrawal.

Counseling and medication work together to help you cope with cravings and deal with triggers. Counseling and medication have higher success rates compared to counseling alone. Together, the number of counseling sessions (up to 8) increases your success. 32.5% of people successfully quit using medication together with 8 or more counseling sessions compared to only 12.4% who quit without any help.

The VA can help you with your quit plan. Talk to your doctor. Attend a tobacco cessation group. Call **1-855-QUIT-VET**. Talk to your doctor about using the patch, gum, lozenge & other meds to help you quit.

Find other tips for quitting and VA resources at www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking. Support: Talk to your family & friends. **Text the word VET to 47848** for tips and help quitting. Quitting smoking is the single best thing you can do to improve your health. You have the power to quit smoking and to stay smoke free, and the VA has resources available to help. **Call 1-855-QUIT-VET today.**

Ready to quit smoking?

Make a Quit Plan. The VA has resources available to make sure you succeed. The first step is to **S.T.A.R.T.**





ST. CLOUD, MN VA SUMMER GAMES August 6, 2016

Schedule

8:30 Registration Starts

9 a.m. Opening Ceremony

9:30 a.m. Events Start

12:00 Lunch *(provided by Capital One)*

1p.m. Final Competitions start

2:00 p.m. Awards Ceremony

Events

- **Badminton**
- **Rowing**
- **Horseshoes**
- **Weightlifting**
- **1 Mile Walk/Run**
- **Billiards/Pool**

Registration

Registration packets can be picked up in the
Fitness Clinic in Bldg. 48, Rm. 16.

For more info contact

Leah Egan at **320-252-1670 x6180**

**Open to all Veterans enrolled at the
St. Cloud VA!**

Wheelchair & Ambulatory divisions.



The St. Cloud VA Health Care System will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, marital status, public assistance status, familial status or sexual orientation. Upon request, accommodations will be provided to allow people with disabilities to participate in all VA programs and activities.



Cashless Beneficiary Travel Reimbursements

Beneficiary travel reimbursement at the St. Cloud VA Health Care System is going cashless and the effort to convert all beneficiary travel reimbursements to electronic payments is underway. The goal is to have all Veterans converted to electronic reimbursement by Oct. 1, 2016. Converting to electronic payments will keep you and fellow Veterans from waiting in long lines or waiting a long time for travel reimbursement.

If you receive beneficiary travel, you will need to follow these three simple steps:

- 1. Sign up for direct deposit at the Beneficiary Travel office.**
- 2. Submit your claim for travel reimbursement after your appointment.**
- 3. Go home. With direct deposit, you'll receive payment as soon as we can process the request.**

The Direct Deposit Enrollment Form for beneficiary travel purposes is available at the Travel Office window in Bldg. 5 or at the VA Clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria. This form can be turned in at the window, faxed to our secure fax line at 320-654-7636, or mailed to:

St. Cloud VA Health Care System
4801 Veterans Drive
Attn: RM-04 222
St. Cloud, MN 56303

Once you've submitted the Direct Deposit Enrollment Form you can begin to submit your claim using the kiosk or by filing written claims.

1-- Use a **VA self-service kiosk** to file beneficiary travel claims. Simply find the nearest kiosk and follow the prompts on the touch screen to request your travel reimbursement. Kiosks are available in Bldg. 111, Bldg. 1 (PACT 2/3), Bldg. 1A (PACT 4/5), Dental Clinic, Bldg. 29, Room 107, and at the Montevideo and Brainerd VA Clinics.

No More Lines!



**Direct Deposit
of Travel Reimbursement
Now Required**

Three easy steps:

1. Sign up for direct deposit at the Beneficiary Travel office.
2. Submit your claim for travel reimbursement after your appointment.
3. Go home. With direct deposit, you'll receive payment as soon as we can process it.

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2—**File a written claim** in person at the Travel Office window in Bldg. 5 during normal business hours. You may also drop the claim form in one of several drop boxes located throughout the medical center. Veterans at the VA clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo or Alexandria can submit the claim form to the clerk at each location. You may also fax it to 320-654-7636, or mail it to:

St. Cloud VA Health Care System
Attn: Beneficiary Travel
4801 Veterans Drive
St. Cloud, MN 56303

That's it! With direct deposit, you'll receive payment in your bank account as soon as staff can process your claim.

Questions and Answers:

What is changing? Cash payments for beneficiary travel are changing to electronic funds transfer (EFT) by direct deposit to your bank or credit union account.

When will this change occur? Now. We want to complete the process before October 1, 2016.

Why is VA making this change? The U.S. Department of Treasury has directed that Federal non-tax payments, with few exceptions, will be made by EFT as a part of Government-wide cost reduction. It will also benefit Veterans from waiting in long lines or waiting a long time for their travel reimbursement.

What is the benefit of these changes to me? Waiting in long lines to receive payment is eliminated. EFT provides a faster and more reliable method of reimbursement, with reimbursements normally being credited to your account as soon as we can process the claim. EFT payment processing is more efficient and accurate.

How do I sign up for electronic payments? Signing up for direct deposit is easy. All you need to do is complete and submit the Direct Deposit Enrollment form. This can be done by visiting the local VA Travel department or any VA Clinic during business hours and completing the form.

What happens to the form after I fill it out and turn it in? The information you provide will be processed electronically by VA. The information is used solely for the purposes of enrolling you for direct deposit payments.

What if I don't have a bank or credit union account? You need to open an account in order to receive payment by direct deposit.

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Once my direct deposit is set up, what do I need to do to get my beneficiary travel reimbursement? You will request reimbursement for your travel with your Beneficiary Travel clerks, completing VA Form 10-3542 or by accessing one of the Kiosks located throughout the medical center. The Beneficiary Travel clerks will then enter your name into the travel database and the travel office will process your voucher. As soon as we can process the claim, the reimbursement will be deposited to your account.

I need some cash in order to return home. Will I still be able to receive some of my reimbursement in cash? Cash will remain available to Veterans who meet Treasury exemption guidelines and, on a limited basis, to Veterans in order to return home as we implement this payment process change. However, you need to plan for this in the future and carry sufficient cash with you to return home.

What if VBA already has my bank account information? You will still need to submit a direct deposit form to the Travel Office as we cannot share banking information with VBA.

What if I don't want to receive my payment by direct deposit? If you decline receiving payment by direct deposit, you can apply for a Direct Express Debit MasterCard as soon as the debit card program is available at our facility later this year.

The Treasury Department will grant exceptions only in rare circumstances. Check recipients living in remote areas without sufficient banking infrastructure may apply for a waiver as well as check recipients for whom electronic payments would impose a hardship due to a mental impairment. Automatic waivers are granted to people born on or before May 1, 1921. People who qualify for this waiver do not need to submit an application. To obtain a waiver based on these criteria, you must (1) Call the Department of Treasury (800-333-1795) and have a conversation about your eligibility for the waiver; (2) Fill out your waiver form; (3) have it notarized; and (4) send it in to the Department of Treasury.

If I have questions about this change in process, who should I contact? Questions regarding the beneficiary travel payment change can be directed to the beneficiary travel staff at 320-255-6442.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

**"Doing nothing is very hard to do ... you never know when you're finished."
- Leslie Nielsen (1926 - 2010)**

A Shiny New Home

The peacocks and pheasants at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center flew into a shiny new home this year! With the construction of the new Rehabilitation Center, a new aviary was needed for our feathered friends. The talented Carpentry Shop built the birds a great new home behind Bldg. 51.

The birds on our grounds remind us of the past, back to a time when the VA was a self-sufficient farm and the grounds were full of gardens, livestock and poultry. Moreover, the birds are a very therapeutic and popular attraction and offer Veterans, family members and visitors countless hours of enjoyment. Donated by generous Veterans organizations, St. Cloud VA has three aviaries on campus, all maintained by the Facilities Management service. One aviary is for chickens, one is for shelter in the winter and the third is for peacocks and pheasants.



Save the date!

St. Cloud VA Health Care System

**4TH ANNUAL VETERANS
RENDEZVOUS
17 SEP 2016
HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

*Please join us in recognizing those who served
during the Vietnam War (November 1, 1955 - May 15, 1975)*

- Music by: The Killer Vee's; with Jeff, Tommy & Matt Vee
- Car Show
- Golf Lessons
- Mental Health Awareness Walk
- Live Catch & Release Trout Pond
- Diabetes/Nutrition Presentation (1 & 4 p.m.)
- Live Eagle Show (1:30 & 3:30 p.m.)
- Vietnam Era Veterans Ceremony (2:15 p.m.)
- Veteran Workout (3 p.m.)
- Veteran Benefits Workshop (3:15 p.m.)
- Food and Merchandise available for purchase
- Plus many more activities...from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.
- Call 320.654.7623 to register as a vendor



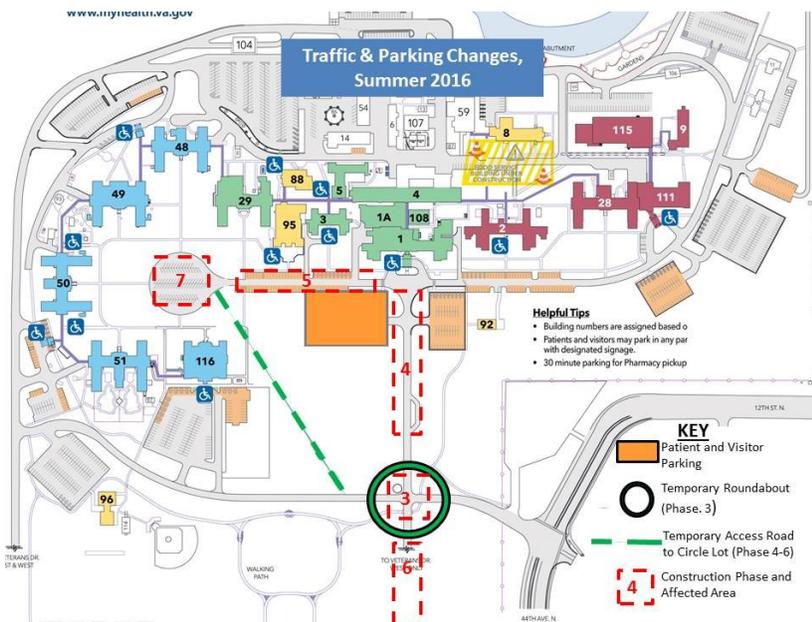
Traffic & Parking Changes at St. Cloud VA, Summer 2016

We apologize, but the construction project to improve the Main Drive and Circle Parking Lot will continue over the summer. The project involves repaving and installation of curb and gutters in parking areas and streets in the front (south) of campus. Please be alert for changes in traffic patterns and parking locations, and use caution at all times.

The Patient and Visitor Parking Lot located on the west side of the Main Drive, in front of Building 1 (Phase 1), is complete and available for use. We consolidated the existing paved and gravel lots into one lot. This added additional spots and all are now paved and fully accessible. Additionally, the repaving of the street, drop-off and bus stop areas in front of Building 1 (Phase 2) is complete.

Additionally, the 4-way intersection on the Main Drive has been resurfaced (Phase 3).

Phase 4 involves the resurfacing of the Main Drive Building 1 south to the 4-way intersection. Traffic headed for the usual Building 1 parking areas has been re-routed along a temporary road which runs from just west of the 4-way intersection into the Circle Parking lot. The Circle Parking Lot as well as both lots in front of Building 1 are available for patient and visitor parking.



Phase 5 is scheduled to begin July 6, and involves resurfacing the road and parking areas running east to west in front of Building 1, 3 and 95 (Canteen). Again, the Circle Parking Lot as well as both lots in front of Building 1 will be available for Patient and Visitor parking. Access to the Circle Parking lot can be gained by using the temporary entrance road located just past the 4-way intersection. This phase is scheduled to last approximately 17 days.

Phase 6, scheduled to begin in late July, resurfaces the Main Drive from the 4-way intersection to Veterans Drive. The Veterans Drive entrance will be closed. Please use the McLeland Road entrance or the 12th St. N. / 44th Ave N. entrances.

Phase 7 is scheduled to occur in late August/early September and involves resurfacing the Circle Parking Lot.

The Canteen is Undergoing Renovation!

Beginning Wednesday, July 6, 2016, the front entrance of Building 95 (Canteen) will be closed for approximately six months. During the time the front entrance is closed, please use the corridor system to enter and exit the canteen.



Women's Military Sexual Trauma Group

Military sexual trauma (MST) is a term used by the Department of Veterans Affairs to refer to sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that occurred during a Veteran's military service.

St. Cloud VA Health Care System will be implementing a Women's Military Sexual Trauma (MST) group beginning in July. This is a 14-week group therapy which offers psychoeducation about MST and coping skills to manage MST related symptoms. The goals of this group therapy are to increase accessibility to this special population, provide survivors with information regarding sexual assault and subsequent difficulties, and provide basic coping skills. This treatment may be an adequate stand-alone intervention; however, participants will be provided psychoeducation about trauma-processing therapy and how to access an increased level of care, if applicable.

Ask your provider about details.

Saint Cloud VA Health Care System
Military Sexual Trauma
Group Therapy



MST affects both mental and physical health. Sexual assault is more likely to result in symptoms of PTSD than most other types of trauma, including combat. Symptoms of depression and substance abuse are also common. Sexual trauma can also have severe consequences for physical health and is associated with higher rates of headaches, gastrointestinal difficulties, sexual dysfunction, chronic pain, and chronic fatigue. Even survivors who do not experience problems at the level of formal diagnosis may still struggle in certain situations with emotional reactions, memories related to their experiences of MST, or interpersonal issues.

Military sexual trauma (MST) is a term used by the Department of Veterans Affairs to refer to sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that occurred during a Veteran's military service.

A significant number of men and women report having experienced MST. About one in five women and one in 100 men have told their VA health care provider they experienced sexual trauma in the military. Though rates of MST are higher among women, because of the high ratio of men to women in the military, there are, in fact, only slightly less men than women seen in VA who have experienced MST.

Group Coordinators:
Joy Finkelson, MSW, LICSW
John Ross, Psy.D.
Telephone 320.252.1670 Ext. 6322
4801 Veterans Drive, Saint Cloud, MN 56303



Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century



MST Group Therapy

- 14 Group Sessions
- Gain Coping Skills
- Psychoeducation
- Multiple Offerings Per Year
- Ask Your Provider for Details

VA Proposes to Grant Full Practice Authority to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

Proposed Rule Will Improve Veteran Access to Care and Use of Resources

On May 29, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposed a rule to grant full practice authority to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) when they are acting within the scope of their VA employment. Full practice authority will help optimize access to VA health care by permitting APRNs to assess, diagnose, prescribe medications and interpret diagnostic tests. This action proposes to expand the pool of qualified health care professionals authorized to provide primary health care and other related health care services to the full extent their education, training, and certification to Veterans without the clinical supervision of a physician.



APRNs are clinicians with advanced degrees and training who provide primary, acute and specialty health care services. APRNs complete masters, post-master or doctoral degrees. There are four APRN roles: Certified Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist and Certified Nurse Midwife. All VA APRNs are required to obtain and maintain current national certification.

“The purpose of this proposed regulation is to ensure VA has authority to address staffing shortages in the future,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David J. Shulkin.

“Implementation of the final rule would be made through VHA policy, which would clarify whether and which of the four APRN roles would be granted full practice authority. **At this time, VA is not seeking any change to VHA policy on the role of CRNAs**, but would consider a policy change in the future to utilize full practice authority when and if such conditions require such a change,” Shulkin said. “This is good news for our APRNs, who will be able to perform functions that their colleagues in the private sector are already doing.”

The [American Nurses Association](#) (ANA) applauds VHA’s leadership for proposing to grant full practice authority to the four types of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses. “VA will be able to more effectively meet the health care needs of our nation’s Veterans,” said ANA President Pamela Cipriano. “This proposal removes barriers that prevent APRNs from providing a full range of services and will assist VA in its ongoing efforts to address staff shortages and improve Veterans’ access to care. APRNs are critical members of the health care workforce and an integral component of the health care delivery system with a proven track record of safe quality care and high patient satisfaction.”

The proposed rule can be found for comment at www.regulations.gov.

August is Psoriasis Awareness Month

What Is Psoriasis?

Psoriasis is a chronic skin disease. It most often first appears between the ages of 15 and 35 and may run in families. Psoriasis affects nearly equal numbers of men and women. In people with this disease, the skin grows too fast. Dead skin cells build up on the skin's surface to form inflamed, thick, silvery scales called plaques. Psoriasis does not spread from person to person, but what causes this disease is unknown.

About Your Symptoms

Psoriasis plaques tend to form on the elbows, knees, scalp, navel, arms, legs, or buttocks crease. They can be unsightly, painful, and itchy. Plaques on the joints can limit movement, and people with psoriasis can have associated arthritis of the joints. On the fingernails or toenails, psoriasis can cause pitting, a change in nail color, and a change in nail shape. Symptoms may come and go on their own. Factors such as stress, climate change, infection, and certain medications may cause flare-ups. If symptoms bother you, know that medical treatment can help relieve them. Discuss your treatment options with your healthcare provider.



Plaque psoriasis is the most common form of the disease and appears as raised, red patches covered with a silvery white buildup of dead skin cells. These patches or plaques most often show up on the scalp, knees, elbows and lower back. They are often itchy and painful, and they can crack and bleed.

External Medical Treatments

There are many types of external medical treatments. These are used on the outside of your body. Your health care provider may prescribe one of many types of topical medications, which are put on your skin. Topical medications can include topical steroids to reduce thickness of the plaques and inflammation, topical vitamin type medications (including vitamin D and vitamin A), or agents such as coal tar, which is now more limited in use. In some cases, the skin may be exposed to a special light in the health care provider's office.

Internal Medical Treatments

Internal treatments are taken orally (by mouth) or given by injection. There are a number of oral medications. Your health care provider can tell you more about these treatments.

To learn more about psoriasis, visit <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/psoriasis/whatispsoriasis/01.html>

A Recipe for Health

Berry Parfait

Ingredients

½ c. nonfat light strawberry yogurt
½ c. sliced strawberries

1 T. fat-free whipped cream
Chopped walnuts

Directions

Layer strawberries and yogurt in glass or dessert bowl. Top with whipped cream and chopped walnuts. Serves 1.

Nutritional Information

121 calories, 1.3g fat, 5.7g protein, 82mg sodium, 23.6g carbohydrates



Take care of your buddy!

Help a fellow Veteran enroll
for VA healthcare.
Contact your County Veteran
Service Officer, call the St.
Cloud VA at 320-255-6340,
or apply online at
www.vets.gov

www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS



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