



UPDATE

March/April 2015

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

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month



Among cancers that affect both men and women, colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon or rectum) is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. Every year, about 140,000 Americans are diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and more than 50,000 people die from it. But this disease is highly preventable, by getting screened beginning at age 50. Talk to your provider about your screening program, and stay healthy.

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HONORING SERVICE
EMPOWERING
HEALTH

Calendar of Events

Monday, March 2 & April 6 (9:10 a.m.)—Listen to the **Veterans Affairs Radio Show** on KNSI AM 1450/FM 103.3.

Tuesday, March 3 & April 7 (Noon-1 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Group** at the St. Cloud VA in Building 48, Room 204, and Brainerd CBOC 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, March 3 & March 17; April 7 & 21 (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.

Friday, March 6 (Noon-3 p.m.)—**Understanding PTSD for Caregivers** at the St. Cloud VA in Building 48, Room 14. Caregivers of Veterans are invited to attend a video training designed to increase Caregiver knowledge and understanding of PTSD and coach Caregivers on how to provide support to Veterans with PTSD. Space is limited! Registration is required. Register with Jessica Behrends at (320) 252-1670, ext. 7283, or jessica.behrends@va.gov.

Friday, March 6 (Noon-9 p.m.); Saturday, March 7 (9 a.m.-7 p.m.); and Sunday, March 8 (10 a.m.-4 p.m.)—**Home Show** at River's Edge Convention Center, 10 Fourth Ave. South, St. Cloud. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, March 10 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, March 18 (2-3 p.m.); & Wednesday, March 25 (6-7 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for March is *Creating a Space for You: Caring for a Loved One at Home*. To register, call Jessica Behrends at (320) 252-1670, ext. 7283.

Wednesday, March 11 (5-6 p.m.)—**St. Cloud VAHCS Town Hall Meeting** at VFW Post #936, 1102 3rd Ave. East, **Alexandria**, MN. The town hall meeting is intended to provide Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System an opportunity to hear from and have concerns addressed by St. Cloud VA officials. Beginning at 4 p.m., Human Resources, Voluntary Services, Eligibility and My HealthVet from the St. Cloud VA along with the Douglas County Veterans Service Officer will be available to answer questions. VFW Post #936 is sponsoring a free will offering supper of sloppy joes, chips, cookies, water and coffee starting at 4 p.m.

Calendar of Events

Saturday, March 14 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Community Connections Expo** at North Branch High School, 38175 Grand Avenue, North Branch, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Wednesday, March 18 & April 15 (8:10 a.m.)—Listen to **Voices for Veterans Radio Show** on WJON AM 1240.

Wednesday, March 18 (5 p.m.)—**Public Meeting for Homeless Housing Building**, St. Cloud VA, Building 48, Room 14. Interested parties, stakeholders and the public are invited to attend a public meeting to provide input on plans to construct a homeless supportive housing building on the St. Cloud VA Medical Center campus. The public is invited to attend the meeting and encouraged to submit comments on the proposed project in writing prior to the hearing to: David Ruder, Chief Engineer, St. Cloud VA Health Care System, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303, or David.Ruder@va.gov.

Thursday, March 19 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**Project Homeless Connect** at River's Edge Convention Center, 10 Fourth Ave. South, St. Cloud. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA Homeless Veteran Outreach Team and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) will be on site.

Friday, March 20 & April 17 (Noon-2 p.m.)—**Southwestern Minnesota Veterans Law Clinic** at the Montevideo CBOC. 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.

Saturday, March 21 (9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.)—**Central Minnesota Wellness Expo** at River's Edge Convention Center, 10 Fourth Ave. South, St. Cloud. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Saturday, March 21 (9 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**Community Showcase** at Rocori High School (gym), 534 5th Ave. North, Cold Spring, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Friday, March 27 (9 a.m.-7 p.m.), & Saturday, March 28 (10 a.m.-5 p.m.)—**Brainerd Lakes Everything Expo** at Essentia Health Sports Center, 502 Jackson Street, Brainerd, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Calendar of Events

Friday, April 10 (8 a.m.-Noon)—**Whitney Center Health & Fitness Fair** at Whitney Senior Center, 1527 Northway Drive, St. Cloud. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Wednesday, April 15 (1:30 p.m.)—**Quarterly Memorial Service** at the St. Cloud VA Chapel for all Veterans who have recently passed away.

Tuesday, April 21 (Noon-6 p.m.)—**Veterans Information Night** at the National Guard Training and Community Center, 711 South 17th Street, Montevideo, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Wednesday, April 22 (9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.)—**Veterans in Pain: Pain Management Event** at the St. Cloud VA Auditorium (Building 8). Veterans, family and caregivers, come and join this free seminar to help you effectively manage your chronic pain. Must register by calling 800-533-3231.

Thursday, April 23 (11 a.m.-6 p.m.)—**Drug Take Back Day at SCSU**, St. Cloud State University Public Safety Parking Lot on 6th Street South, which is behind the Public Safety Center (Safety Center is located at 526 4th Avenue South), St. Cloud. Drop off any drugs, legal or illegal, prescription or nonprescription, without any questions asked!! No sharps, needles or thermometers can be accepted.

DID YOU KNOW

- A diamond will not dissolve in acid. The only thing that can destroy it is intense heat.
- A lump of pure gold the size of a matchbox can be flattened into a sheet the size of a tennis court.

USELESS FACTS –

- The first letter of five continents' names is the same as the last: Antarctica, Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa.
- Asked how to improve a player's golf game, Ben Hogan replied: "Hit the ball closer to the hole."

QUOTATION OF THE DAY

"I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people that annoy me."

- Fred Allen

Ely Fishing Trip for Veterans Enrolled at St. Cloud VAHCS

The idea of a fishing trip for Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA was first conceived by Al Loehr, former St. Cloud mayor, and Laurel Bennet, a past resort owner in the Ely area. The fishing trip is sponsored by many different service organizations throughout the state of Minnesota and will be held from **May 18-21, 2015**, on the Lake Resort at Ely, Minnesota. There is no charge to Veterans, and transportation is provided from the VA to Ely and back.



Eligibility requirements:

1. You must be a Veteran enrolled at the St. Cloud VA Health Care System for your medical services.
2. You must be an outpatient for at least 30 days.
3. You must be independent with administration of your medications; no medical staff will be available.
4. You must agree to abstain from alcohol and drug usage on this trip.
5. You must have a valid Minnesota fishing license.
6. You must be independent with activities of daily living such as eating, dressing, toileting, getting in and out of a vehicle, wheelchair or scooter. No staff will be available to help you.

OR

If you qualify for all of the above except #6 and you would like to bring a caregiver, we have limited spots available.

Click on [application](#). Submit by **March 27, 2015**. A screening committee will review applications, and all applicants will be notified by mail whether they have been selected or not. Confirmation phone calls will be made to those Veterans who have been selected.

For more information about this trip, contact:

Karon Scherer

VA Health Care System (EC-117)

4801 Veterans Drive

St. Cloud, MN 56303

(320) 252-1670, ext. 6804, or Karon.Scherer@va.gov



Respiratory Dependent Unit Upgrades

The St. Cloud VA is in the middle of a major remodeling project on the Respiratory Dependent Unit (RDU) in the Community Living Center (Unit. 50-2).

Facilities Management staff have been working on remodeling the rooms to enhance the overall

appearance and to accommodate installation of new specialized equipment.

All of the RDU rooms have been upgraded with new ceiling lifts and several have new “tele-CLC” equipment in place to allow for quick communication with an Intensive Care Unit specialist at the Minneapolis VA.

Special articulating arms and environmental control units (ECU) for six of the beds will allow Veterans with physical limitations to control their environment with adaptive switches, eye gaze input or sip/puff controls.

The Veterans will be able to independently turn off/on their TV and lights, make a phone call, adjust their bed or call for a nurse.



They will also be able to access a computer, a communication system and the Internet through alternative means.

The new equipment will have a significant and positive impact on the lives of Veterans who reside in the RDU. The remodeling process and installation of the new equipment will continue until the complete RDU has been upgraded.

Financial Distress

Having difficulty paying your copay bills?



VA has programs that may help you with your copay requirements!

- **Hardship** - If your income has recently changed, you may qualify for VA medical care without copays.
- **Repayment Plan** - You can establish a plan to spread your current health care debt over a specified period of time.
- **Compromise** - You can request a one-time monetary settlement eliminating your current health care debt.
- **Waiver** - You can request your current medical copay debts be waived for charges less than 6 months old (180 days). If a waiver is approved, you may also qualify to have Beneficiary Travel mileage reimbursement deductibles eliminated.

For additional information and to see if you qualify for these specific VA programs, contact

1-877-222 VETS (8387)

For more information, call toll-free
1-877-222 VETS (8387) or visit our website at
www.va.gov/healthbenefits
Poster IB 10-380 Revised May 2013

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Chief Business Office
Health Eligibility Center

Online Prescription Tracker Gives Veterans 24/7 Online Access to Status

Recommendation Made by VA Employee, 2013 SAVE Award Winner



She knew her VA prescriptions would arrive today.

Veterans can now track the status of most of their prescriptions online, thanks to an innovative idea by a Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) employee. The new 24/7 service allows online tracking for most prescriptions mailed from the VA Mail Order Pharmacy.

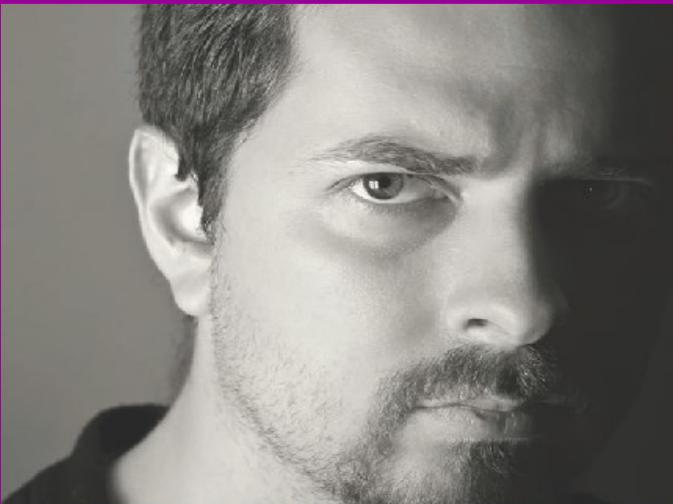
The Prescription Tracker was recommended by VA employee Kenneth Siehr, a winner of the President's 2013 Securing Americans Value and Efficiency ([SAVE](#)) Award. Siehr's idea focused on the use of technology

as a way to save money and improve the services VA provides to its patients.

"Our nation's Veterans deserve a first-class pharmacy and quality customer service as a part of the exceptional health care available from VA," said Siehr, the National Director for Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacies. "It is an honor to be part of serving Veterans and to have been recognized for an idea that enhances our services to them."

More than 57,000 Veterans are currently using the service through [My HealthVet](#), an online feature that allows Veterans to partner with their health care team. The number is expected to grow as VA starts to educate Veterans about the new feature. Later this month, the tracking feature will include images of the medication that dispensed. Over the next year, a secure messaging alert will be added so that Veterans know when a medication was placed in the mail.

"VA prescription refill online is an excellent example of how one employee looked at the process of VA prescription tracking through the eyes of our Veterans and came up with an idea that better serves Veterans," said Interim Under Secretary for Health, Carolyn M. Clancy. "This idea is both innovative and transformative, and it is certainly one, when put into action, improves customer service for America's Veterans."



Financial Hardship

Loss of Job or Reduced Income?



VA's Medical Care Hardship program may help you qualify for VA Health Care enrollment

If your income has recently changed, you may qualify for enrollment even if it was denied previously based on your household income. Or, perhaps you have put off applying for enrollment because you think your income is too high. Now may be the time to provide updated financial information or apply for enrollment.

Personal circumstances such as loss of employment, sudden decrease in income, or increases of out-of-pocket family health care expenses factor into VA's hardship determination.

If your current and projected household income puts you below the VA National Income Threshold or Geographic Means Test Threshold for your area, you may qualify for enrollment and cost-free VA medical care.

For additional information and qualifications for this program, contact your local VA Medical Center Enrollment Coordinator at:

1-877-222 VETS (8387)

For more information, call toll-free
1-877-222 VETS (8387) or visit our website at
www.va.gov/healthbenefits/
Poster IB 10-381 Revised May 2013



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Chief Business Office
Health Eligibility Center

Seeking New Customer Service Committee Volunteers

The St. Cloud VA is seeking two Veteran representatives to serve a two-year term as a Customer Service Committee volunteer. The committee meets once a month on the first Wednesday, from 10:30 until 11:30 a.m., at Building 4, Room 225, on the St. Cloud VA campus. Some work outside the committee may be required.

About the position: This volunteer position is designed to provide insight into the St. Cloud VA Health Care System's Customer Service Committee in identifying customer service needs and expectations of the Veteran community. The person(s) filling this position will actively participate in committee functions in meeting his/her responsibilities.

QUALIFICATIONS/SKILLS:

1. Sincere desire to improve service to Veterans.
2. Should be a Veteran.
3. Knowledge of the St. Cloud VA.
4. Knowledge of principles of good customer service.
5. Ability to communicate clearly, both orally and in writing.
6. Ability to collaborate with others.
7. Ability to maintain confidentiality.

DUTIES:

1. To participate fully in monthly meeting.
2. To assist the committee with reviewing patient representative data, service line data and annual survey data.
3. To participate in work groups or task forces focused on specific customer service issues.
4. To function as a liaison with the Veteran community to identify areas of improvement at the St. Cloud VAMC.

To apply, fill out and drop off or mail the application on the following page by **MARCH 13, 2015**, to:

Veteran & Community Service
Attn: Customer Service Committee Membership
Building 48, Room 237
4801 Veterans Drive
St. Cloud, MN 56303



**APPLICATION FOR
CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:
POSITION: Non-employee Veteran Community Representative**

Please provide the information requested below:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: (home) _____ (work) _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Identify any education or experience related to customer service, personal communications, personnel management, or other education that dealt with business and customer and personnel relations.

Please provide information on your activities with Veterans Service Organizations.

Please state why you would like to be a member of this committee. (use additional paper if necessary)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Return by March 13, 2015, to: Veteran & Community Service, Attn: Customer Service Committee
Membership, Building 48, Room 237, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303**

**The Clothesline Project and
Overcoming Sexual Trauma
April 28-30, 2015
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Auditorium (Bldg. 8)
St. Cloud VA**



The Clothesline Project (CLP) is a program started in Cape Cod, MA, in 1990 to address issues of Sexual Assault. It is a way for those affected by this trauma to express their emotions by decorating a shirt. The shirt is then hung on a clothesline to be viewed by others as testimony to the problem of Sexual Assault.

This visual display raises awareness of military sexual trauma, sexual trauma, and sexual abuse. Male and female Veterans design shirts that reflect their experience of sexual trauma and recovery to “Break the Silence” that can often surround these experiences. Designing a shirt allows Veterans to speak up about experiences they may have previously kept silent. Completed shirts are then hung side-by-side to bear witness to the impact sexual violence has had on their lives.

Veterans can decorate a shirt at the St. Cloud VA or pick one up to decorate at home.

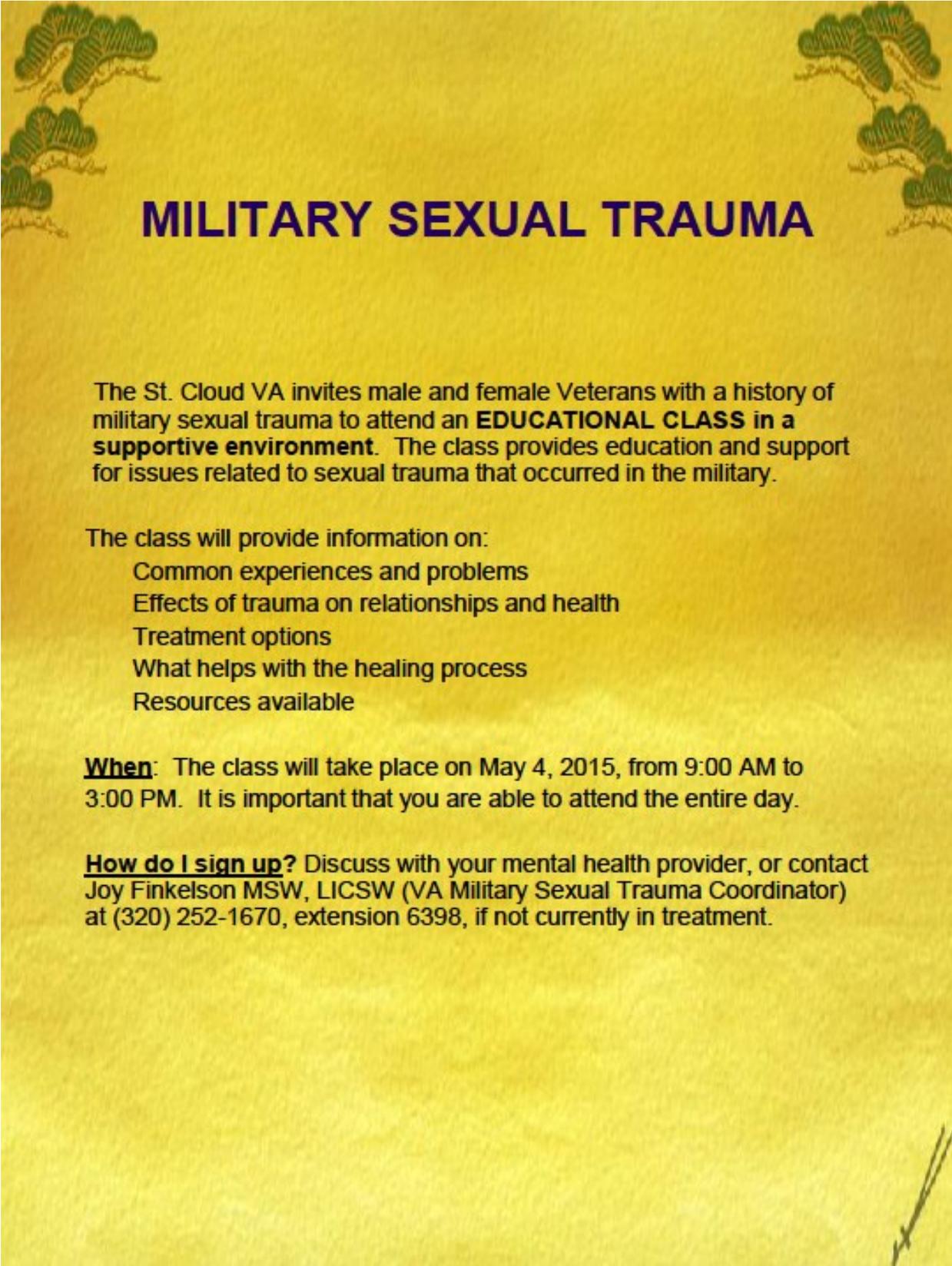
- Veterans decorating shirts elsewhere are asked to deliver the shirt to the St. Cloud VA by April 15.
- Those decorating T-shirts will remain anonymous. However, your voice will be heard.
- Drop-off locations include the Montevideo, Alexandria and Brainerd CBOCs or the St. Cloud VA in the Admission Office, Room 123, in Building 1, or the Mental Health Clerk desk in Building 111.
- Shirts will also be available for decoration in the St. Cloud VA Auditorium from April 28-30 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. during the display period.

For more information on the Clothesline Project or to decorate a shirt please contact Joy Finkelson, MST Coordinator, at 320-252-1670, ext. 6398.

**T-shirts donated by Veterans organizations and are available for Veteran participants free of charge.*

Refreshments
provided by:





MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

The St. Cloud VA invites male and female Veterans with a history of military sexual trauma to attend an **EDUCATIONAL CLASS in a supportive environment**. The class provides education and support for issues related to sexual trauma that occurred in the military.

The class will provide information on:

- Common experiences and problems
- Effects of trauma on relationships and health
- Treatment options
- What helps with the healing process
- Resources available

When: The class will take place on May 4, 2015, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. It is important that you are able to attend the entire day.

How do I sign up? Discuss with your mental health provider, or contact Joy Finkelson MSW, LICSW (VA Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator) at (320) 252-1670, extension 6398, if not currently in treatment.

St. Cloud VA in the News

On February 18, KMSP-TV in Minneapolis aired a story headlined “Millions ‘Wasted’ on St. Cloud VA Medical Center.” See: <http://www.myfoxtwincities.com/story/28143349/millions-wasted-on-st-cloud-va-medical-center>.

Many of the claims made about the St. Cloud VA construction program are based on something other than facts. Indeed, the headline of the story rightfully should have read “Millions ‘Invested’ at St. Cloud VA: Veterans Reap Benefits.”

Service to Veterans drives our construction program. The news coverage omitted that VA construction efforts have delivered to Central Minnesota Veterans an Urgent Care Clinic, an Ambulatory Surgery Center, an expanded Women’s clinic, an MRI suite, an expanded Pharmacy, an expanded Audiology Department, an Expanded Dental Clinic, and many other smaller projects like elevators, generators, bathrooms and heating and cooling systems which have enhanced the experience of care for our patients...in just the past five years.

Additionally, we are building a new Mental Health building and Rehabilitation Center, and were just approved to expand the Optometry Clinic and build a patient parking structure. These projects and others are planned because the growing numbers of Veterans seeking care at the St. Cloud VA need them.

With regard to several topics covered in the media story:

- The claim that “millions and millions” of dollars are “wasted” every year is misplaced and not supported by facts. The allusion in the story to an unanswered FOIA request provides scant justification to make such a claim. We continue to gather the information necessary to process the FOIA request, and will provide the requested information to the media outlet when it is available.
- As the customer, care provider to Veterans, and as good stewards of Government resources, we do not have any interest in purposely trying to delay projects or causing the price to increase.
- There are processes in place and available for any contractor that believes Government error produced delays or added cost. These contractors are openly invited to file claims, which are addressed as quickly and as accurately as possible by the Contracting Office in Minneapolis. A claim that is awarded to a contractor is considered fair compensation—it is not “waste.”

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- The claim that Veterans are “given work” simply because they have a service connected disability is erroneous.

-The Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-183), Section 308, established a procurement program for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses. This procurement program provides that federal contracting officers may restrict competition to SDVOSB firms and award a sole source or set-aside contract where certain criteria are met.

-Once an SDVOSB firm is selected for a particular contract, they are still required to deliver the service to the specifications required by the contract.

- We exert significant effort in helping SDVOSB contractors successfully complete projects, and treat them with the same courtesy and respect as we provide to the Veterans we serve.
- The health and safety of our patients is a requirement: we cannot accept deficient work or products.
- Once the issues in Building 49 and the Audiology Clinic surfaced, a team was brought together to affect solutions and the contractor was compensated for additional work.

Construction at the St. Cloud VA is a complex undertaking for several reasons, primary among them is our requirement that we do not allow construction to interfere with the delivery of patient care.

Finally, VA facilities are required to maintain a proactive and comprehensive construction safety program in order to ensure a safe and healthy worksite for Veterans, staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors and the general public during construction and renovation-related activities. Recurring, weekly reviews of active construction work sites is one element of this program, and are validated as effective. It is unfortunate that anyone would consider safety as something of little value and subject to ridicule.

Thank you for your service. As always, the St. Cloud VA Health Care System remains focused on delivering high quality health care in a timely manner and with a positive experience to our Veterans.

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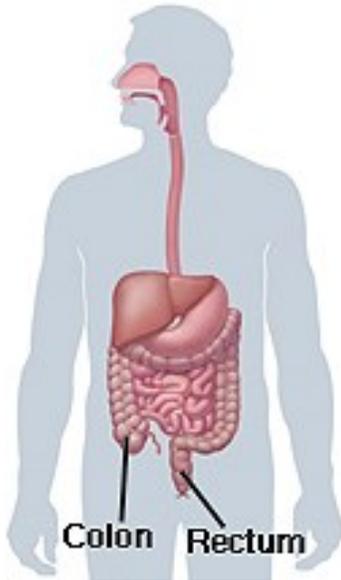
**Alexandra Cooper
Outreach Expert**

Phone: 612-300-1565

Alexandra.Cooper@outreachexpertsinc.com

903-530000AC 12/14

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month



Colorectal cancer is a leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. But it doesn't have to be. When this cancer is found and removed early, the chances of a full recovery are very good. Because colorectal cancer rarely causes symptoms in its early stages, screening for the disease is important. It's even more crucial if you have risk factors for the disease. Learn more about colorectal cancer and its risk factors. Then talk to your doctor about being screened.

Risk Factors for Colorectal Cancer

Your risk of having colorectal cancer increases if you:

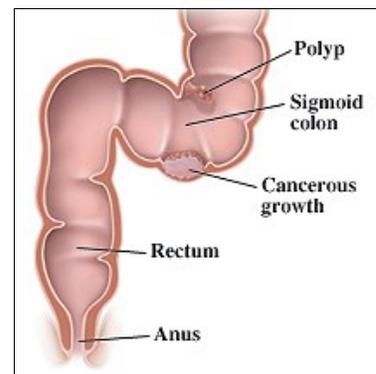
- Are 50 years of age or older.
- Have a family history or personal history of colorectal cancer or adenomatous polyps.
- Have a personal history of certain kinds of colorectal polyps, Crohn's disease, or ulcerative colitis.
- Have a family history of colorectal cancers.
- Have colorectal polyps.

The Colon and Rectum

Waste from food you eat enters the colon from the small intestine. As it travels through the colon, the waste (stool) loses water and becomes more solid. Intestinal muscles push it toward the sigmoid—the last section of the colon. Stool then moves into the rectum, where it's stored until it's ready to leave the body during a bowel movement.

How Cancer Develops

Polyps are growths that form on the lining of the colon or rectum. Most are benign, which means they aren't cancerous. But in a small number of people, polyps can become malignant (cancerous). This occurs when cells in these polyps begin growing abnormally. In time, malignant cells invade more and more of the colon and rectum. The cancer may also spread to nearby organs or lymph nodes or to other parts of the body. Finding and removing polyps can help prevent cancer from ever forming.



Your Screening

Screening means looking for a medical problem before you have symptoms—during this time, treatment works better. During screening for colorectal cancer, your doctor will ask about your medical history, discuss the options with you, and recommend one or more tests.

Check-up on your screening program at your next provider appointment!

Veterans in Pain Pain Management Event

DATE:
April 22, 2015

TIME:
9:30 a.m.
until
3:00 p.m.
Lunch on your own

PLACE:
**St. Cloud, MN VA
Auditorium
4801 Veterans Drive
Saint Cloud, MN
56303**

**FOR REGISTRATION
AND INFORMATION**

**CALL:
800.533.3231**

**For Veterans and Clinicians
Must Register by phone**

*There is no charge to
register or participate*



Presented by



American Chronic Pain Association

www.theacpa.org

Supported by a grant from:



Presenter: Penney Cowan, Founder and CEO
of the American Chronic Pain Association

The workshop objectives include :

- ☆ Educate attendees on the impact of pain
- ☆ Discuss innovative approaches and resources available to help a person with pain
- ☆ Share tools and coping strategies to bridge the gap between patients and health care providers
- ☆ Explore how to establish and maintain a peer led educational support group

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Abuse and Dependence Cause

It's not clear why some people abuse alcohol or become addicted to it and some do not. Alcoholism often runs in families (genetic). But if you have a family history of alcohol problems, it does not mean you will have a problem. A parent with alcoholism will not always lead to a child with alcoholism. And in some cases a person with no family history of drinking problems can become alcohol-dependent.

Drinking habits also are affected by a person's environment. They can also be affected by life situations such as friends or stress levels.

Signs of Alcohol Addiction (Alcoholism)

Do you want to have more fun, to fit in, to cope better with your problems? It's as easy as taking a drink—if you believe what you see on television. But if you think that alcohol will improve your life, you're fooling yourself. The more you regularly rely on alcohol to relax you or get you "up," the closer you move toward addiction. If you decide you are on the path to addiction, you can take action to keep it under control or find caring people to help you.

Check Your Addiction Level

You may drink to feel more charming or carefree and relaxed. But in reality, alcohol can lead to impaired speech, poor judgment, and inappropriate or risky behavior. Alcohol can also lead to serious health problems, such as liver disease and heart disease. It can also cause loss of mental function.

To find out if you may have a problem with alcohol, read the following statements and answer. Answering "yes" to three or more questions may be a signal that alcohol is taking over your life.



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- Do you think a party or social gathering isn't fun unless alcohol is served?
 - Have family members, friends, or coworkers ever commented on your drinking?
 - Do you have friends you drink with?
 - Do you look forward to your next drink?
 - If you only drink after work or on weekends, do you think you don't have a problem?
 - Are family members or friends beginning to avoid you?
 - Have you unsuccessfully tried to cut down or quit using alcohol?
 - Do you hide your use from other people?
 - Are you beginning to distrust and avoid some people?
 - Do you get up the day after drinking and not remember what happened the night before?
 - Do you have health problems as a result of your drinking?

Exams and Tests

Alcohol use problems may be diagnosed during a routine health care provider visit or when you see him or her for another problem. Many people don't go to a health care provider for alcohol problems but for problems that are caused by long-term alcohol use.

Your health care provider will ask about your medical history and do a physical exam. He or she also may ask questions or do tests to look for health problems linked to alcohol problems, such as cirrhosis.

People who drink also may have mental health problems. These may include depression, anxiety disorders, or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). If you have a drinking problem and a mental health problem, it's called a dual diagnosis. A dual diagnosis can make treatment for an alcohol problem harder. If you don't get treatment, one problem can make the other one worse. If you treat only one problem, treatment may not work well. When you treat both problems, you have a better chance for a full recovery and less chance of drinking again.

If your health care provider thinks you have a mental health problem, he or she may do a mental health assessment.

Veterans Town Hall Meeting



**March 11, 2015
5 p.m.**

**Veterans of Foreign Wars
Post #936
Located at:
1102 3rd Ave E, Alexandria, MN**

The VFW is sponsoring a free will offering of sloppy joes, chips, cookies, water, and coffee starting at 4 p.m.



Integrity Commitment Advocacy Respect Excellence

Public Meeting for Homeless Housing Building



Artist's rendering of proposed homeless Veterans' supportive housing

Interested parties, stakeholders and the public are invited to attend a public meeting to provide input on plans to construct a homeless supportive housing building on the St. Cloud VA Medical Center campus. The meeting will be held in Building 48, Room 14, St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, Minnesota, on Wednesday, March 18, 2015, beginning at 5 p.m.

The public is invited to attend the meeting and encouraged to submit comments on the proposed project in writing prior to the hearing to: David Ruder, Chief Engineer, St. Cloud VA Health Care System, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303 or David.Ruder@va.gov.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in accordance with 38 U.S.C. Sec 8161, et seq., and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, is providing updated notice of a public meeting to present VA's proposal and receive views on an Enhanced-Use Lease (EUL) project at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center campus. Since the project is a Federal undertaking, the VA must consider the effects of the proposed project on historic properties pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470 et seq.). The purpose of this meeting is to invite public consultation on these processes.

The St. Cloud VA Medical Center proposes to establish an EUL for homeless supportive housing facility of not less than 35 units on the St. Cloud VAMC property. The contemplated homeless housing facility will be located on approximately six acres of VA land located in the southeastern edge of the St. Cloud VAMC campus, along 44th Avenue N / 12th Street N immediately to the north of Apollo High School and to the east of the Al Loehr Veterans and Community Studio Apartments. The contemplated EUL land parcel is part of the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In December 2011, the VA awarded an Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) to CBVA St. Cloud Limited Partnership, to construct a new building as part of the VA's Building Utilization Review and Repurposing (BURR) initiative. The BURR initiative is a VA strategic effort to identify and repurpose underutilized VA land and buildings nationwide in support of VA's goal to end Veteran homelessness. The initiative assesses existing federal real estate with the potential to develop new housing opportunities for homeless Veterans through public-private partnerships and VA's EUL program. The proposed project is to construct a homeless supportive housing building of not less than 35 units on the St. Cloud VAMC property. The Enhanced Use Lessee will be required to finance, design, develop and maintain the new VA housing facility in accordance with applicable Federal, State and local requirement. The Lessee's leasehold interest will revert to VA upon the expiration of the lease.



Black Violin

A concert for Veterans sponsored by the Saint John's University Fine Arts Series.

Friday, March 27 at 2 p.m. • Auditorium, Building 8

With style and swagger, Black Violin smashes musical stereotypes and captivates lovers of both Bach and Beyoncé. The duo breaks all the rules, blending classical with modern to create a fresh fusion that audiences love!

The concert will last 45 minutes.

FREE ADMISSION



COLLEGE OF
Saint Benedict  Saint John's
UNIVERSITY

A Recipe for Health **California Vegetable Soup**

Ingredients

2 (16 oz.) bags California Blend
vegetables
2 cans low-sodium chicken
broth

8 oz. light Velveeta cheese
1 can Ro-Tel tomatoes

Directions

Cook veggies in broth until tender. Add 8 ounces light Velveeta. Melt cheese in broth and vegetables. Add one can Ro-Tel tomatoes.
Serves 8.

Nutritional Information

120 calories, 1.2g fat, 6.2g protein, 534mg sodium, 23.2g 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.1010ez.med.va.gov

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