



# **UPDATE**

May/June 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](mailto:Barry.Venable@va.gov)*



## **We Love Volunteers**

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## Calendar of Events

Sunday, May 3 (Noon-5 p.m.)—**Heroes at Home**, Sears, Crossroads Center, 4101 W. Division Street, St. Cloud. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

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

Tuesday, May 5 & June 2 (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, May 5 & 19; June 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, May 12 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, May 20 (6-7 p.m.); or Wednesday, May 27 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for May is *Goodbye to Going it Alone: Learning to Ask for Help*. To register, call Jessica Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Thursday, May 14 (8 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**Alexandria Stand Down**, Alexandria Technical and Community College, Law Enforcement Training Center, 1601 Jefferson Street, Alexandria. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA Homeless Veteran Outreach Team and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) will also be on site.

Friday, May 15 & June 19 (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, May 16 (9:45 a.m.)—**Old Glory Run**, Cold Spring Baseball Park, 700 1st Street South, Cold Spring. 5K walk/run/wheel event. Proceeds benefit Disabled American Veterans Foundation—all funds stay in the Central Minnesota area. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

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## Calendar of Events

Saturday, May 16 (8 a.m.-4 p.m.)—**Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) Salute to Women Veterans**, Cragun's Resort, 11000 Craguns Drive, Brainerd. Free event open to all ages, eras, branches, and transitioning military women. Workshops include *VA Health Care for Women*. Contact Jennell Stai at 612-970-5787 to register.

Tuesday, May 19 (7-9 p.m.)—**VA Benefits Overview**, St. Cloud VA in Building 48, Room 14. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility. Also on site will be representatives from the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and Stearns County Veteran Service Office (VSO) to answer questions about service connection/pension claims.

Tuesday, May 19 (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)—**VA2K Walk and Roll**, St. Cloud VA, Walking Path and Building 96 (Auditorium in case of inclement weather). Veterans and family members are invited to park at the VA. Community members can park at the Municipal Athletic Complex (MAC), 5001 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud. In addition to the walk/roll, two former homeless Veterans will speak about their experiences and there will be displays, music and representatives from the St. Cloud VA available to discuss health care services and eligibility. See [flyer](#) for full details.

Monday, May 25—**Outpatient Clinics Closed for Federal Holiday**. St. Cloud VA Health Care System outpatient clinics and administrative offices, including Community Based Outpatient Clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria will be closed in observance of Memorial 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, May 25—(10:30 a.m.) **Memorial Day** ceremony at the St. Cloud VA, sponsored by the MetroVets, kicks off with a parade of colors from Building 111 to Building 92. Memorial Day Service with speaker follows.

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

Saturday, May 30 (9 a.m.-1 p.m.)—**Frisbee Golf Tournament**, St. Cloud VA, Building 96. Hosted by St. Cloud VA Recreation Therapy. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

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## Calendar of Events

Sunday, June 7 (10 a.m.-6 p.m.)—**Red Bull Military Appreciation Day**, Central Park, 6250 Main Street, North Branch. Car show, military vehicles/memorabilia and children’s activities. Free. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, June 9 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, June 17 (2-3 p.m.); or Wednesday, June 24 (6-7 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for June is *Balance in the Eye of the Storm: Self-Care*. To register, call Jessica Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Wednesday, June 10 (5-6 p.m.)—**Montevideo Town Hall Meeting**, American Legion Post 59, 613 Legion Drive, Montevideo. 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., the Chippewa County Veteran Service Office and VA staff will be available to discuss enrollment in VA health care and provide information on the full range of Veterans benefit programs.

Wednesday, June 17 (11 a.m.-4 p.m.)—**Montevideo Blood Drive** at the Montevideo CBOC. Open to the public. Contact Michelle Thein at 320-269-2914 or michelle.thein@va.gov to sign up.

Saturday, June 20 (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) & Sunday, June 21 (9 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**Brainerd Gun Show**, National Guard Armory, 1115 Wright Street, Brainerd. Admission is \$5, under 12 free. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

Saturday, June 20 (1-4 p.m.)—**Thanks for Freedom**, St. Cloud VA, Circle Parking Lot. Sponsored by Legion Riders. A representative from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility.

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## Bldg. 115 Open for Business



A ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Mental Health building was held at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center on Monday, March 23. The ceremony location was in the new building, which is located north of Bldg. 28 and west of Bldg. 9.

The approximately 19,000 square foot building will provide a safe, secure and modern environment appropriate for acute, inpatient psychiatric care. The building will also enable the physical arrangement of mental health programs in order to improve efficiencies and begin to close a significant mental health space deficit. Construction began on April 1, 2013, and the building began serving Veterans on April 1, 2015.



Pictured are the people who made the new building happen, including: Deb Corrigan, MH Nurse Educator; Collette Bresnahan, MH Nurse Manager; Justin Lappin, St. Cloud VA Supervisory General Engineer; Bruce Corzine, RSP Architects; Andy Shilling, Project Manager Paradigm Construction; Chris Carlson, President Paradigm Construction; Sandy Ruprecht, MH Nurse Manager

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## Under Construction



Pictured in early February, crews are busy inside and out working on the new Rehabilitation Center.



After a long winter of inactivity, work on the new Kitchen resumed in early April. The goal is to get the structure up and “dried in” before next winter.

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## **Mark A. Aberle Appointed as Associate Director of Patient Care Services/Nurse Executive**



The St. Cloud VA Health Care System recently appointed Mark A. Aberle, of St. Cloud, as the Associate Director of Patient Care Services/Nurse Executive. Aberle begins his new position in September upon return from a period of active military service.

Aberle received a Master of Science in Nursing from South Dakota State University, and is a Certified Family Nurse Practitioner.

Aberle's VA service began in 1992, and he has served at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center and the Montevideo and Alexandria Community Based Outpatient Clinics as a Nurse Practitioner. Most recently, Aberle served as the Extended Care and Rehabilitation Administrative Director/Nurse Administrator at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, where he directed the operations of a 225-bed Community Living Center, Rehabilitation Clinic, Home Based Primary Care service and an Adult Day Health Care program. Aberle is a Veteran and current member of the U.S. Army Reserve.

The St. Cloud VA Health Care System delivers health care to over 37,000 Veterans per year at the medical center in St. Cloud and community based outpatient clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria.

All Veterans are encouraged to enroll in the VA Health Care system. For information on enrolling for VA health care, contact the St. Cloud VA HCS Eligibility Office at (320) 255-6340.

### **Homeless Veteran and Vocational Rehabilitation Programs Receive Accreditation**

On April 27, CARF International notified the St. Cloud VAHCS that the Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program had received renewed accreditation through April 2018, based upon a survey conducted March 23-25, 2015.

CARF is the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services agencies.

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## National Nurses Week May 6-12

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has one of the largest nursing staffs of any health care system in the world. Numbering more than 89,000 nationwide, the VA integrated nursing team – composed of Registered Nurses (RNs), Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses (LPNs/LVNs), and nursing assistants – provides comprehensive, complex, and compassionate care to the nation’s Veterans, helping to prevent, maintain, or regain health, and learn to live with their disabilities and eventually to die with dignity.



VA Nursing provides the largest clinical training and cooperative education opportunities in association with undergraduate and graduate programs at numerous colleges and universities. In the 1990s, VA provided clinical experiences to one out of every four professional nursing students in the country. VA nurses are highly valued members and leaders of the health-care team, contributing their knowledge and expertise to the care of patients. In addition to clinical care, VA Nursing is also a significant part of advancing research in VA and keeping up with the latest technological innovations. Nurse researchers help to promote inclusion of evidence into practice to provide quality care for Veterans. Lastly, VA nurses also play a considerable role in emergency planning, preparedness, response, and recovery.

### **A Short History**

In 1921, shortly after the end of World War I, Congress established the U.S. Veterans Bureau. A year later, Public Health Service hospitals were assigned to the Veterans Bureau, transferring 1,400 nurses. The Veterans Administration was established in 1930 to consolidate and coordinate government activities affecting war Veterans. Approximately 2,500 registered nurses were employed in VA Nursing Service. During World War II and the Korean War, the military demand for nurses caused a shortage at VA hospitals. Throughout history, VA nurses have continued to answer the call to serve their country and maintain status as reservists. Today, many VA nurses are currently deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan with their reserve units.

In the 1950s, VA expanded its affiliations with nursing schools to produce steady growth in the number of nurses receiving clinical experience in VA medical centers and, thus, aiding recruitment. In the following decade, advancements in medicine required specialized training programs creating the need for advanced practice nurses (e.g. nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists) in such areas as coronary care. Education and research became integral components of VA Nursing Service. *Cont. on next page*

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During the Vietnam era, the VA medical system was faced with patient needs that were different from those of previous wars. Nurses were required to care for disabilities on a larger scale due to the increased efficiency with which wounded Veterans were evacuated from the battlefield and treated. As a consequence of the recent wars, VA nurses are once again seeing new types of poly-trauma injuries and helping Veterans face these new challenges with specialized expertise, creativity, and compassion. Geriatric and long-term care became specialized needs for Veterans of earlier conflicts. In the 1970s, Nurse Practitioners were appointed as primary providers of patient care and the use of Clinical Nurse Specialists was expanded. VA nurses met the new challenges and continue to respond with competent caring approaches to constant changes in health care.

### **Components of VA Nursing**

Professional nursing supports the mission of the VA health care system by providing state-of-the-art, cost-effective nursing care to patients and families as they respond to health and illness. VA Nursing Service integrates a wide array of services, encompassing patient care, clinical practice, education, research, and administration. In addition to medical, surgical and psychiatric units, VA nurses work in intensive care, spinal cord injury, geriatric, dialysis, blind rehabilitation, specialty care (e.g. diabetes clinics), hospice, domiciliary, oncology, and organ transplant units. VA nurses provide a continuum of care across primary, ambulatory, acute, geriatrics, rehabilitation, and extended care settings. They work in outpatient clinics, nursing home units, and home-based primary care programs. VA nurses proudly serve America's heroes by practicing the art and science of nursing in order to provide holistic, evidence-based, high quality care.

The personal contact and professional care provided by VA nurses is pivotal to each Veteran's health experience in VHA. VA Nursing Service is dedicated to promoting optimal health, patient safety, quality health care, and the highest professional standards, in order to ensure that our Veterans receive the best possible care and that our staff works in the best possible health care system.

#### **Did you know?**

Annually, National Nurses Week begins on May 6, marked as Nurse Recognition Day, and ends on May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, founder of nursing as a modern profession.

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HOW *do I*

GET INVOLVED

with  MY  own

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## Concussion Coach



Concussion Coach was designed for Veterans, Servicemembers, and other people who have symptoms that may be related to concussion, or mild to moderate traumatic brain injury. This app can be used by itself, but it may be more helpful when used along with treatment from a health provider.

Features include:

- Education about concussion symptoms and treatment options.
- Tools for screening and tracking your symptoms.
- Relaxation exercises and tools for managing problems related to concussion.
- Direct links for community-based resources and support.
- Personal contact list, photos and music.

### Download the mobile app

Free Concussion Coach download from: [iTunes \(iOS\)](#)\*.

### How to Use Concussion Coach

Concussion includes any blow to the head that results in a change in perception, loss of consciousness, or a loss of memory for the events right after the injury.

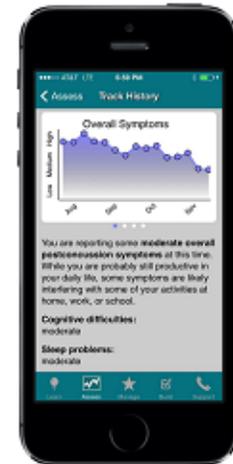
Symptoms that can result from concussion include emotional challenges (such as getting angry more easily), physical problems (such as headaches and dizziness), and cognitive issues (such as concentration or memory problems).

Concussion Coach offers tools to assess symptoms and cope with related symptoms. This app is best used when you are in face-to-face treatment with a health provider.

NOTE: Concussion Coach is not meant to be a replacement for diagnosis, medical treatment, or rehabilitation therapy with a health provider.

### Who Created Concussion Coach

Concussion Coach was created by the VA's National Center for PTSD in partnership with [VA's Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services](#) and the [DoD's National Center for Telehealth & Technology](#).



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## June is Hernia Awareness Month

### What Is a Hernia?

A hernia (or “rupture”) is a weakness or defect in the wall of the abdomen. This weakness may be present at birth. Or, it can be caused by the wear and tear of daily living. If left untreated, a hernia can get worse with time and physical stress.

### When a Bulge Forms

A weak area in the abdominal wall allows the contents of the abdomen to push outward. This often causes a noticeable bulge under the skin. The bulge may get bigger when you stand and go away when you lie down. You may also feel pressure or discomfort when lifting, coughing, urinating, or doing other activities.

### Type of Hernias

The type of hernia you have depends on its location. Most hernias form in the groin at or near the *internal ring*. This is the entrance to a canal between the abdomen and groin. Hernias can also occur in the abdomen, thigh, or genitals.

### Types of Hernias

An *incisional hernia* occurs at the site of a previous surgical incision.

An *umbilical hernia* occurs at the navel.

An *indirect inguinal hernia* occurs in the groin at the internal ring.

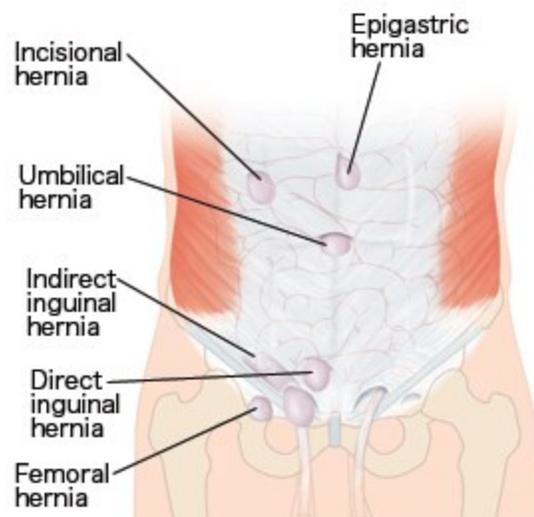
A *direct inguinal hernia* occurs in the groin near the internal ring.

A *femoral hernia* occurs just below the groin.

An *epigastric hernia* occurs in the upper abdomen at the midline.

### Surgery: The Best Treatment

A hernia will not heal on its own. Surgery is needed to repair the defect in the abdominal wall. If not treated, a hernia can get larger. It can also lead to serious medical complications. The good news is that hernia surgery can be done quickly and safely. In most cases, you can go home the same day as your surgery.



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## Thinking About Changing...

Do you want to lose weight, quit smoking, eat healthier, get fit, manage stress, drink less alcohol?

First, ask yourself:  
Are you ready to change?

Meg Baker, director of Employee Wellness at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, says while the focus on self-improvement is good, you must be ready to make a change in order to actually do so. To help prepare for any lifestyle change, Baker offers some tips:

- Develop small, short-term goals that will fit into your schedule. Make them realistic.
- Consider the benefits and reasons for the change.
- Talk to a family member, friend, or coworker about goals. Sharing your goals with others will increase the likelihood of your staying committed to a new gym regimen or stop smoking plan, and they may want to join you.

“If the new behavior has lost its luster, switch things up,” Baker said. “Variety is the key to life and can keep you from getting burned out. Spice things up by changing your normal exercise routine, finding new healthy recipes online, or joining a new exercise class.”





U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Fact Sheet

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
www.va.gov

April 24, 2015

### VA Expands Choice Program Eligibility

#### Background

On August 7, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146) (Choice Act). Technical revisions to the Choice Act were made on September 26, 2014, when the President signed into law the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-175) and on December 16, 2014, when the President signed into law the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Public Law 113-235).

The Choice Act required VA to implement the Veterans Choice Program through an interim final rule, and on November 5, 2014, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published an interim final rulemaking. In that rulemaking, VA adopted a straight-line method for determining eligibility for the Program based on the distance between a Veteran's place of residence and the closest VA medical facility.

On April 24, 2015, VA published a [second interim final rule](#) that changed the way VA measures distance for purposes of determining eligibility. VA now considers the distance a Veteran must drive to the nearest VA medical facility, rather than the straight-line or geodesic distance to such a facility. This results in an expansion of eligibility for the Choice Program.

VA is pleased to announce this expansion effective today.

Effective immediately, VA is also changing the mileage calculation for beneficiary travel. The change will ensure consistency in VA's mileage calculations. The beneficiary travel mileage calculation will now be made using the fastest route instead of the shortest route.

#### Summary

A Veteran who meets threshold eligibility criteria may be eligible for the Choice Program based on the distance from his or her place of residence to the closest VA medical facility. VA previously determined eligibility based on place of residence using a straight-line measure of distance. VA is now using a driving distance measure.

For example: Under the new distance calculation, a Veteran who lives 40 miles or less, measured using a straight-line distance, from the nearest VA medical facility, but who needs to physically drive more than 40 miles to get there would be eligible for the Veterans Choice Program. Under the previous straight-line distance calculation, this Veteran would not have been eligible for the Program unless he or she was required to

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wait for an appointment longer than 30 days from his or her preferred date or the date determined to be medically necessary by his or her physician.

The expansion in eligibility increases Veterans' access to high quality, timely healthcare. VA looks forward to continued collaboration with Veterans and our partners to ensure the success of the Veterans Choice Program.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Q: When is this rule change effective?**

**A:** The interim final rule was published in the Federal Register on April 24, 2015, and is effective immediately upon publication.

**Q: Why is VA changing this criterion now?**

**A:** The change in criterion to the program will allow more Veterans to access care when and where they want it. VA believes a driving distance calculation is consistent with the law. The Choice Act does not state how distance should be calculated for purposes of determining eligibility based on place of residence. The straight-line measure adopted by the first interim final rule was consistent with language in the legislative history of the Choice Act.

**Q: What mapping tool is used to calculate the 40 miles?**

**A:** VA will use the commercial product that is used by VA's long-established beneficiary travel program. Because different mapping tools use different proprietary programming, the results may vary among products.

**Q: Is the distance calculated the same way that is used to calculate mileage for beneficiary travel?**

**A:** The mapping tool for beneficiary travel will now calculate the driving distance using the fastest route rather than the shortest route. This is a change to the beneficiary travel program that will make the distance determinations under the beneficiary travel program consistent with distance calculations under the Veterans Choice Program. The fastest route was chosen as the standard to ensure fairness to Veterans.

**Q: Is it still 40 miles from any VA medical facility or is it 40 miles from a VA medical facility that actually provides the care needed?**

**A:** This Choice Act requires VA to measure the distance from the Veteran's residence to the closest VA medical facility, even if that facility does not provide the care that is needed. Absent a statutory change, VA does not have the flexibility to adopt an alternative approach. We are working with Congress to seek possible alternatives.

**Q: How does VA plan to notify newly eligible Veterans?**

**A:** All potentially eligible Veterans already received a Veterans Choice Card. VA will send follow-up letters notifying Veterans who are eligible under the revised mileage calculation.

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**Q. Who can a Veteran call if they have questions about the Veterans Choice Program or do not remember receiving their Veterans Choice Card?**

**A.** If a Veteran does not remember receiving a Veterans Choice Card or has other questions about the Choice Program, they can call (866) 606-8198.

**Q: Where can I get more information about the program?**

**A:** Please review the VA Choice website at <http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/>

**Key Points:**

- The change is effective immediately (April 24, 2015).
- The 40 miles distance is now measured in driving distance based on the fastest route (not the shortest route).
- The rule change is expected to double the number of eligible Veterans under Choice.
- Mailings explaining the program will be sent to Veterans who are newly eligible based on the rule change.
- 40 mile eligibility is still based on distance to the closest VA facility, not the closest facility that can provided the needed.

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## Volunteer Recognition Ceremony



Doris Anderson, Department President for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary, Audrey Youngdahl, and Cheryl Thieschafer, Associate Director. Youngdahl was recognized for 17 years of volunteer service at the St. Cloud VA during the Volunteer Recognition Ceremony held at the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud on April 16.

Many people talk about taking care of our Veterans, but on April 16 more than 160 VA volunteers were honored who not only talk the talk, but also walk the walk.

For the 68th year, the VA Medical Center in St. Cloud honored volunteers for the support and care they provide for our Veterans on a day-to-day basis. This year, volunteers offered 81,778 hours, which provides the equivalent service of more than 42 full-time employees.

Those who work with the volunteers on a daily basis can't say enough about the support of the volunteers.

Audrey Youngdahl was honored this year for 10,397 hours of total service over 17 years of volunteering. "When Audrey arrives at the pharmacy in her crisp pink smock and friendly smile she brightens our day. One word is not enough to describe this wonderful lady," said Shannon Corrigan, Pharmacist. Shannon went on to describe the many traits Pharmacy staff use to describe Audrey, including "dependable, helpful, kind, concerned, youthful, awesome, outspoken, sweet, precious, and our favorite, spunky."

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Student volunteers are an important part of our team. Olivia Schomer has been volunteering for three years and received recognition for 1,000 hours of service. Olivia volunteers in the escort office, helping Veterans get to their appointments across the campus. Olivia says volunteering has given her the opportunity to build her confidence and good work habits. She is excited to be starting a part-time job this summer, but plans to continue to volunteer when she can, she added.

"I am very pleased to thank the volunteers who honor Veterans with their time, talent and tender hearts," said Cheryl Thieschafer, Associate Director. "They make such a difference in our Veterans' lives and let them know that their service to America has not been forgotten."

There are many volunteer opportunities available at the St. Cloud VA HCS. You can volunteer as an individual, in a group or as a family. Volunteers do not need to be a Veteran or affiliated with a Veteran service organization. For more information on the VA Voluntary Service program, call us at 320-255-6365 or find us on the Web at <http://www.stcloud.va.gov/giving/index.asp>.



Director of Voluntary Service Trish Aljets discusses volunteer options with student volunteer Olivia Schomer at the Volunteer Recognition Ceremony held at the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud on April 16.

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## New Health Hub

Primary Specialty Medicine is excited to announce the opening of the Health Hub!

The Health Hub will serve as the St. Cloud VA one-stop shop for Veterans to learn about virtual health modalities. These modalities include My HealtheVet, Secure Messaging, Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER), Healthy Living Assessment, and Telehealth. As the Connected Health program grows, the Health Hub will also offer support of mobile apps, text messaging and Direct technologies.



The Health Hub is located in Building 29, Room 105 (current staff and equipment in Building 29, Room 20 (basement level) are all moving to Room 105). The Health Hub offers multiple kiosks as well as the convenience of Veterans being able to register for multiple virtual resources in one place!

The Health Hub will be available for Veteran use from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

The Building 1 (Main Entrance) MHV kiosk will remain available for assistance with My HealtheVet, Secure Messaging and VLER.

We encourage Veterans to stop by our new location and learn about all the great virtual resources available to them.

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# *A Recipe for Health*

## **Taco Soup**

### *Ingredients*

|                                                   |                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1 lb. lean hamburger                              | 1 can peppers (opt.)                           |
| 1 c. onion, chopped                               | 1 can Ro-Tel tomatoes                          |
| 3 (16-oz.) cans chili or pinto beans, not drained | 1 pkg. taco seasoning                          |
| 1 can whole kernel corn, not drained              | 1½ c. water                                    |
| 1 can diced tomatoes                              | 1 pkg. Hidden Valley Ranch dressing mix (opt.) |

### *Directions*

Fry the hamburger and onion; drain off the excess grease. Combine all other ingredients and add water to desired consistency. Simmer for 20 minutes. Makes 12 (1-cup) servings.

### *Nutritional Information*

211 calories, 8g fat, 13.4g protein, 763mg sodium, 26.5 carbohydrates



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for VA healthcare.  
Contact your County Veteran  
Service Officer, call the St.  
Cloud VA at 320-255-6340,  
or apply online at  
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