



UPDATE

September/October 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

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net
or text to 838255

1 CALL
can be a *FIRST STEP*
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

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HONORING SERVICE
EMPOWERING
HEALTH

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, September 1 (8 a.m.-4 p.m.)—**Military Appreciation Day at the Minnesota State Fair**, 1265 Snelling Avenue North, St. Paul, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, September 1 & October 6 (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, September 1 & 15; October 6 & 20 (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, September 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29; October 6 (3-5:30 p.m.)—**Farmers Market**, St. Cloud VA, wind turbine gravel parking lot (NE corner of campus). Looking for fresh, nutritious food to stay healthy? The Farmers Market is the place to go! Public welcome. Visitors to the VA campus are asked to follow the posted speed limits, to respect the privacy of Veteran patients, and are reminded that photography on VA property without prior approval is prohibited. The Farmers Market is sponsored by the Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Office and the Employee Wellness Committee in a joint effort with the Veterans Canteen Service. A portion of proceeds from the market is returned to Veterans through the Veterans Canteen Service.

Monday, September 7—**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 Labor 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, September 8 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, September 16 (6-7 p.m.); or Wednesday, September 23 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for September is *Building on Family Strength*. To register, call Jessica Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, September 9 (5-6 p.m.)—**Veterans Town Hall Meeting**, American Legion Post #255, 708 Front Street, Brainerd, 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., the Crow Wing VSO and VA staff will be available to discuss enrollment in VA health care and provide information on the full range of Veterans benefit programs.

Thursday, September 10 (7-9 p.m.)—**VA Benefits Workshop**, Apollo High School, Door 30, Room 415, 1000 44th Ave. North, St. Cloud, MN. Veterans are invited to learn about VA services and Veteran benefits whether enrolled or not at the VA. If not enrolled, please bring form DD214.

Tuesday, September 15, 22 & 29; October 6, 13, 20, & 27 (5:30-7:30 p.m.)—**Women Veterans Acrylic Workshop**, St. Cloud VA, Building 48, Room 14. In this free acrylic workshop, the student will learn to choose a photo reference and transfer the image to a canvas. Learn how to work in this medium mixing colors and maximizing the unique properties of acrylics. A perfect introduction for beginners and those with experience who wish to further their skills in a fun, relaxed atmosphere with plenty of individual guidance. Contact Julie at 320-252-1670, ext. 6655, for more information.

Wednesday, September 16 (Noon-6 p.m.)—**BBQ and Vet Service Event**, County Parking Lot across from courthouse on Highway 212, Olivia, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility. Other services being offered to Veterans include blood pressure checks, dietary counseling and County Veteran Service Officer services.

Wednesday, September 16 & October 21 (8:10-8:45 a.m.)—Listen to **Voices for Veterans Radio Show** on WJON AM 1240.

Friday, September 18 & October 16 (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.

Calendar of Events

Saturday, September 19 (1-4:30 p.m.)—**3rd Annual Veterans Rendezvous**, St. Cloud VA, near Building 96 and the Walking Path. Central Minnesota Veterans, Servicemembers, their families and friends are invited to rendezvous for support, music and fun. Among the day's activities is the Mental Health Anti-Stigma and Awareness Walk, live music, free hearing screenings, car and motorcycle show, PTSD Awareness presentation, acrylic painting, yoga, and more! St. Cloud VA representatives will be available to discuss health care services and eligibility, and a Veteran Service Officer will be on site to talk about earned benefits. Questions? Please email Kerri.Schwegel@va.gov.

Sunday, September 20 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**Camp Ripley Open House**, 15000 Hwy 115, Little Falls, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Wednesday, September 23 (10:30-11:30 a.m.)—**Veteran Appreciation Picnic**, American Legion Post #131, 220 1st Street West, Maple Lake, MN. Veterans are invited to learn about VA services and Veteran benefits whether enrolled or not at the VA. If not enrolled, please bring form DD214.

Friday, September 25 (11 a.m.-1 p.m.)—**Celebration of Caregivers Resource Fair**, St. Cloud VA, Building 96. Family Caregivers are VA's essential partners in ensuring that our Veterans receive the very best care. Come enjoy coffee and refreshments while you learn about the services VA has to offer Caregivers! Caregivers, Veterans and the public are welcome. For more information, contact Jess Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Saturday, September 26 (9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.)—**VFW Fall Conference**, Best Western Kelly Inn, 100 4th Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Saturday, September 26 (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) & Sunday, September 27 (9 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**St. Cloud Gun Show**, National Guard Armory, 1710 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Monday, October 5 (9:10-9:30 a.m.)—Listen to the **Veterans Affairs Radio Show** on KNSI AM 1450/FM 103.3.

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, October 6 (5-6 p.m.)—**Veterans Town Hall Meeting**, National Guard Armory, 1200 Adams Street SE, Hutchinson, MN. Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System are invited to participate in a town hall meeting. The meeting is intended to provide Veterans an opportunity to hear from and have concerns addressed by St. Cloud VA officials. St. Cloud VA will have a mobile flu clinic on site for Veterans receiving VA health care and unable to attend VA facility clinics from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. (please bring VA I.D. card). Representatives will also be available to discuss VA health care services and eligibility.

Tuesday, October 6 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, October 21 (6-7 p.m.); or Wednesday, October 28 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for October is *Choosing Your Words: Harnessing the Power of Communication*. To register, call Jessica Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Monday, October 12—**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 Columbus Day, a federal holiday. The Urgent Care Clinic at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center will be open. Hours of operation for the Urgent Care Clinic are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week, including federal holidays. The Community Living Center and residential treatment programs will be open.

Wednesday, October 14 (9 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**Marshall Stand Down**, Marshall YMCA, 200 South A Street, Marshall, MN. Stand Downs are collaborative events between local VAs and community agencies to help homeless Veterans access resources. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility. In addition, a mobile flu clinic is available for Veterans receiving VA health care through the St. Cloud VA Health Care System (please bring VA I.D. card).

Wednesday, October 21 (1:30 p.m.)—**Quarterly Memorial Service**, St. Cloud VA Chapel, for Veterans who have recently passed away.

Friday, October 30 (9 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**St. Cloud Stand Down**, National Guard Armory, 1710 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN. Stand Downs are collaborative events between local VAs and community agencies to help homeless Veterans access resources. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about health care services and eligibility.

Veterans Town Hall Meeting



**September 9, 2015
5 p.m.**

**American Legion Post #255
Located at:
708 Front Street, Brainerd, MN**



Integrity Commitment Advocacy Respect Excellence

**We Want You to
Stay Healthy
This Flu Season!**

Flu shots are an important part of staying healthy during the flu season, and the St. Cloud VA Health Care System is making it easier than ever to get your flu shot. As always, flu shots are available in conjunction with other scheduled appointments at the St. Cloud VA Health Care System and at any of the Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) locations in Alexandria, Brainerd and Montevideo. In addition to the annual clinics at the St. Cloud VA and the VA clinics in Alexandria, Montevideo and Brainerd, we also offer mobile flu shot clinics in several counties across central Minnesota.



The following two pages contain the list of flu shot clinics—print them out and paste on your refrigerator to remind you to stay healthy this year by getting your flu shot!

If you plan on attending one of the mobile clinics, take care of your buddy and bring along a non-enrolled Veteran with a copy of their DD214. While we can't give them a flu shot, we can determine eligibility and provide information on how to apply for VA health benefits.

Any changes to the flu vaccination clinic schedule will be announced on the flu shot information line: (320) 255-6444.

Flu Facts

- The flu vaccine will not give you the flu.
- The flu is caused by a virus. It can't be treated with antibiotics.
- The flu can be life-threatening, especially for people in high-risk groups. This includes the very young, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems. About 36,000 people die of complications from the flu each year.
- Influenza is not the same as "stomach flu," the 24-hour bug that causes vomiting and diarrhea. This is most likely due to a GI (gastrointestinal) infection—not the flu.

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Walk-in Flu Clinics at VA Facilities

(no appointment needed)

Please bring your VA I.D. card.

St. Cloud VAMC

Building 96 (West side of campus)

October 1: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

October 2: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Building 1 (Main Building)

During October, shots are available every Tuesday from 4:30 to 6 p.m., and every Saturday, from 8 a.m. to Noon.

Max J. Bielke CBOC

515 22nd Avenue E. - Alexandria, MN

October 7 : 12:30 to 3 p.m.

October 22 : 12:30 to 3 p.m.

Brainerd CBOC

722 NW 7th Street - Brainerd, MN

October 2: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. & 1 to 3 p.m.

October 8: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. & 1 to 3 p.m.

October 23: 1 to 3 p.m.

Montevideo CBOC

1025 North 13th Street - Montevideo, MN

October 2: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Any changes to the flu vaccination clinic schedule will be announced on a recorded message at: (320) 255-6444.



Our Mission:

To “honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.”

We strive to provide Veterans with world-class benefits and services they have earned, and will adhere to the highest standards of integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, and excellence.

**Thank you for your service.
Now let us serve you.**

St. Cloud VA Health Care System
4801 Veterans Drive
St. Cloud, MN 56303-2099
320-252-1670 | 800-247-1739

Created By: Public Affairs
Created Date: 6/25/2015

www.stcloud.va.gov

www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS

2015 Flu Shot Clinics



Veterans and VA Volunteers are encouraged to get a free flu shot so everyone stays healthy!

Shots are available during routine appointments, or at one of the many VA Flu Shot Clinics being offered

throughout Central Minnesota.

HONORING SERVICE
**EMPOWERING
HEALTH**

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Mobile Flu Clinics

*Flu shots delivered to a location
near your home!*

Please bring your VA I.D. card.

Crow Wing County

Pequot Lakes, Oct. 1, 9 to 10:30 a.m.
*American Legion, Ben Krueger Post 49,
4435 Main Street*

Crosslake, Oct. 1, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
*American Legion, Potz Heartland Post 500,
35112 County Road 3*

Crosby-Ironton, Oct. 1, 3 to 4 p.m.
*American Legion, Myrin-James Post 443,
232 4th Street, Ironton*

Kandiyohi County

Willmar, Oct. 5, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
*American Legion Post 167,
220 19th Avenue SW*

Meeker County

Litchfield, Oct. 5, 1 to 3 p.m.
*VFW Admiral Benson Post 2818,
915 E. U.S. Highway 12*

McLeod County

Hutchinson, Oct. 6, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
*National Guard Armory,
1200 Adams Street SE*

Stearns County

Sauk Centre, Oct. 8, 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.
*American Legion, Sauk Centre Post 67,
128 Main Street S.*

Belgrade, Oct. 8, 12:30 to 2 p.m.
*VFW Saboe-Levorson Post 1825,
231 Morrison Street*

Paynesville, Oct. 8, 3 to 4:30 p.m.
*American Legion, Paynesville Post 271,
770 Diekmann Drive*

Morrison County

Little Falls, Oct. 9, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
*Morrison County Government Center,
213 SE 1st Avenue, Meeting Room 1*

Lyon County

Marshall, Oct. 14, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
YMCA, 200 S. A Street

Sherburne County

Zimmerman, Oct 19, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
*American Legion, Kriesel-Jacobsen Post 560,
12674 Fremont Avenue*

Elk River, Oct 19, 1 to 3 p.m.
*American Legion,
Davis-Darrow-Meyer Post 112,
525 Railroad Drive*

Big Lake, Oct. 20, 9 to 11 a.m.
*Big Lake Senior Center,
160 Lake Street N.*

Becker, Oct. 20, 1 to 3 p.m.
*American Legion, Oscar Peterson Post 193,
12155 Hancock Street SE*

Pope County

Glenwood, Oct. 21, 9:30 to 11 a.m.
*Courthouse Community Room,
130 E. Minnesota Avenue*

Stevens County

Morris, Oct. 21, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
*Stevens County Courthouse,
400 Colorado Avenue*

Aitkin County

McGregor, Oct. 27, 10 to 11:30 a.m.
*McGregor Community Center
41442 MN Hwy 65*

Aitkin, Oct. 27, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
*American Legion, Aitkin Lee Post 86,
20 1st Avenue NE*

Isle, Oct. 29, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
*MSA Flagship,
5357 Whistle Road*

Crow Wing County

Garrison, Oct. 29, 9 to 10:30 a.m.
*VFW Andrew F Kokesh Post 1816,
27234 Monroe Street*

Todd County

Long Prairie, Nov. 3, 9 to 11 a.m.
*American Legion, WM. T. Lewis Post 12
714 Commerce Road*

Wadena County

Wadena, Nov. 3, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
*VFW Elmer Goche Post 3922,
213 1st Street SE*

The Power of 1: Your Actions Could Save a Life

Every year, organizations across the country recognize September as Suicide Prevention Month. This year, join the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), local and national organizations, and individuals across the country in supporting The Power of 1: Show how one act can encourage Veterans, Service members, and their loved ones to seek confidential crisis support from the [Veterans Crisis Line](#).

Whether it's something as simple as striking up a conversation with a Veteran, or encouraging those on your social networks to support Veterans in your area, every little bit counts. Your actions could save a life.

Free, Confidential Crisis Support Anytime by Phone, Chat, or Text

The [Veterans Crisis Line](#) is a free, confidential crisis resource that Veterans and their families and friends can access any day, anytime. Trained responders — some of them Veterans themselves — are ready to listen, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

VA counts on grass-roots networks and community organizations to spread the word that support is just a call, click, or text away — because we're all in this together, and one small act shows you care.

Identifying Signs of Crisis

Sometimes, a crisis may involve thoughts of suicide. The following signs require immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.

If you notice any of these in a Veteran or Service member you know, connect him or her with the Veterans Crisis Line's 24/7/365 resources: Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat](#), or text to 838255.

Spread the Word

During Suicide Prevention Month, be the reason a Veteran you know finds support during times of crisis. Take a minute today to show your support for Veterans and spread the word about the Veterans Crisis Line — because when we come together as a community to show we care and encourage our Veterans to reach out in times of crisis, we can save lives.

Visit [VeteransCrisisLine.net/ThePowerOf1](#) to learn how you and others in your community can work together to prevent suicide. Download free Suicide Prevention Month materials, including flyers to print and distribute, digital ads to display on your website, and content to post on social networks or publish in newsletters or blogs. Visit [VeteransCrisisLine.net](#) to learn more.

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH



Confidential chat at
VeteransCrisisLine.net
or text to **838255**

1 PERSON
can REACH OUT



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



**Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

How to Recognize When to Ask for Help

Sometimes problems seem like they are impossible to solve for many different reasons. Sometimes we are not even fully aware a problem is building up. We just know something is wrong.

When problems build up, even the strongest individuals may think about suicide. Yet suicide is not the answer. Are you, or someone you know, at risk for suicide? Seek help if you notice any of the following warning signs:

- Threatening to hurt or kill self
- Feeling trapped, like there's no way out
- Looking for ways to kill self
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Trying to get pills, guns, or other means to harm oneself
- Withdrawing from friends or family
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- Having dramatic changes in mood
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling like there is no reason for living, no sense of purpose in life
- Experiencing rage, uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- Giving away possessions



If you are experiencing any of these warning signs, the first thing to do is ask for help. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net), or send a text message to **838255** to receive free, confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. The crisis line is staffed around the clock, 365 days a year, by trained professionals who know how to get you the help you need.

Typical Myths and Realities

Myth: Asking about suicide will plant the idea in a person's head.

Reality: Asking about suicide does not create suicidal thoughts. The act of asking the question simply gives the Veteran permission to talk about his or her thoughts or feelings.

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Myth: There are talkers and there are doers.

Reality: Most people who die by suicide have communicated some intent. Someone who talks about suicide gives the guide and/or clinician an opportunity to intervene before suicidal behaviors occur.

Myth: If somebody really wants to die by suicide, there is nothing you can do about it.

Reality: Most suicidal ideas are associated with treatable disorders. Helping someone find a safe environment for treatment can save a life. The acute risk for suicide is often time-limited. If you can help the person survive the immediate crisis and overcome the strong intent to die by suicide, you have gone a long way toward promoting a positive outcome.

Myth: He/she really wouldn't commit suicide because...

- he just made plans for a vacation
- she has young children at home
- he made a verbal or written promise
- she knows how dearly her family loves her

Reality: The intent to die can override any rational thinking. Someone experiencing suicidal ideation or intent must be taken seriously and referred to a clinical provider who can further evaluate their condition and provide treatment as appropriate.

Veteran Specific Risks

- Frequent deployments
- Deployments to hostile environments
- Exposure to extreme stress
- Physical/sexual assault while in the service (not limited to women)
- Length of deployments
- Service related injury

No matter what the numbers or rates, one suicide is too many. The VA understands why some Veterans may be at increased risk. Knowing this, we continue to look for warning signs and take immediate action. The goal of the VA is to eliminate suicides among Veterans.

**Veterans
Crisis Line**



**1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1**

Quit Tobacco Now

"What's the best way I can quit? Cold turkey? Use the patch?" It's good to think about these questions because quitting isn't easy. The odds are in your favor—more than half of all adults who ever smoked have quit.

Plan to Succeed

Research shows that a person has the best chance of quitting tobacco for good when they:

- Use [smoking cessation medication](#) approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Take part in [tobacco cessation counseling](#)

Successful quitting also involves support from the people who love and care about you. Family and friends can be a great source of encouragement so let them know [what they can do to help you](#).

Make a quit plan. VA's [smoking quitline](#) counselors can help. Call them at 1-855-QUIT-VET.

Reap the Rewards of Quitting

Quitting tobacco has many positive benefits like lowering your blood pressure and improving your lung function. Quitting also reduces your risk of cancer and heart disease. Learn more about tobacco's [negative health effects](#), including issues specific to [women](#).

Any of these reasons for quitting sound familiar?

- I want to feel good and have more energy.
- My kids need me. I want to live to raise them and be a role model for them.
- I'd have more money if I wasn't buying cigarettes.
- I want to improve my [mental health](#).
- My child won't be exposed to [secondhand smoke](#) and will be healthier.
- I'm in recovery for [alcohol abuse](#) and whenever I smoke, it makes me want to drink.
- I want to better manage my [HIV](#).

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Visit Smokefree.gov to learn more about the benefits of quitting tobacco.

Visit BeTobaccoFree.gov to learn how quitting improves your short and long-term health.

Get Help from VA

As you take this huge step in improving your health and life, VA is there for you.

Veterans enrolled in VA health care have access to:

- [Medication](#) and [counseling](#)
- 1-855-QUIT VET (1-855-784-8838), VA's [smoking quitline](#)
- Text message support from [SmokefreeVET](#)

Talk to your VA health care provider to customize a quit strategy.

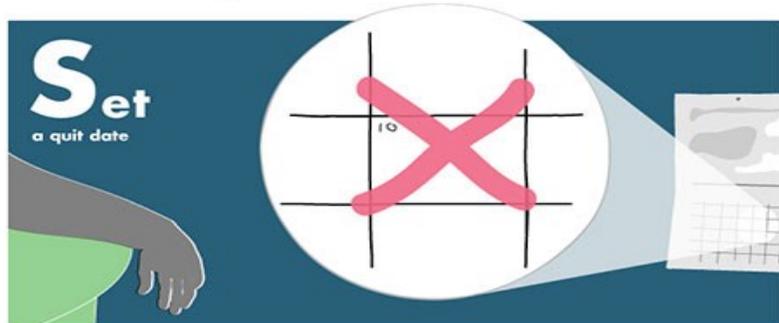
Not enrolled in VA health care? [Find out if you're eligible](#).

Don't Give Up

Quitting takes practice. Even the most motivated person may try to quit five or six times before they quit for good. Knowing why you want to quit is part of a successful quit strategy.

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.



Your doctor can counsel you and prescribe medication to help you



Randy Falknor at the 2015 National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Dallas, TX , earlier this year

St. Cloud Veteran Participates in National Veteran Wheelchair Games

Randy Falknor is a St. Cloud area Veteran who embraced the opportunity to compete in this year's National Veterans Wheelchair Games, conducted June 21-26, in Dallas, Texas.

Randy wants to share his experience with everyone and encourage other Veterans to compete.

“A few days ago, former President George H. W. Bush was speaking on television. He said something that really struck a chord with me,” Randy said.

According to Randy, Former President Bush said, “Just because you’re an old guy, you don’t have to sit around drooling in the corner.”

“Carrying through with that remark, I’d like to say that just because you are in a wheelchair or disabled, you don’t have to sit around drooling in the corner,” Randy said. “You should try new things. Now I’m not suggesting jumping out of an airplane like our former president. I have something more fun and more doable in mind.”

Randy got involved in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games this past spring, when St. Cloud VA Recreational Therapist Leah Egan provided some information to him.

In jest, Randy says Leah “bullied me into applying. She’s pretty strong-minded, and I’m just a little guy.”

Leah helped Randy fill out an application for the games, and she “became my advocate and helped line up my sponsors, booked my flight and hotel room, and registered me for the proper events,” Randy said. “She also arranged for my wife to accompany me.”

Randy says he received a “ton of help” from a number of people at the St. Cloud VA and from Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

In describing his experience at the games, Randy writes:

“When my wife and I got to the opening ceremonies, we were absolutely amazed! There were 675 participants, all in wheelchairs. The opening ceremony I’m sure affected us as much as the Olympic ceremonies affect those athletes. The participants paraded in much as the Olympians

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do, by state and country. There were speeches by a number of dignitaries including the mayor of Dallas and the governor of Texas who I am proud to say is a fellow wheelchair user.

I participated in shot put, bowling, and weight lifting. Other events including hand cycling, slalom (an obstacle course), Super G (an obstacle course for the best slalom competitors), powered and unpowered wheel chair races, table tennis, nine-ball, rugby, soccer, softball, and basketball, as well as swimming, trap shooting, air rifle and pistol, and rowing. Some athletes compete in as many as 12 events although three to five events are both challenging and enjoyable. It is a ton of fun to watch as many of the events as you can.”

Randy adds that “the games can be a life-changing experience. I would encourage anyone who wants to get out of his or her corner to give it a try.”

The 36th National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be held in June 2016, in Salt Lake City, and offer 19 wheelchair sports.

Randy recommends Veterans talk to a Recreation Therapist at 320-255-6480, ext. 6180, to learn more about the games and added that “next year, our goal is to take a team of six athletes from St. Cloud and 50 the year after.”

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games is co-presented by Department of Veterans Affairs and Paralyzed Veterans of America. To learn more visit: <http://wheelchairgames.org/>.



Randy Falknor in the shot put competition at the 2015 National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Dallas, TX earlier this year

3RD ANNUAL The St. Cloud VA Welcomes You!
VETERANS RENDEZVOUS
 Saturday, Sept. 19, 2015 1:00 - 4:30 p.m.

In military parlance, a rendezvous is a pre-arranged meeting point to return to following an operation. In that tradition, we welcome all Veterans, current Servicemembers, their families, and friends to rendezvous for a day of music & fun activities. Connect with other Veterans and learn how the St. Cloud VA and its programs can benefit you.

Music By: **VA & Community Information Booths**
 Charlie Roth and the Healers

Mental Health Anti-Stigma & Awareness Walk
 FREE Hearing Screenings
 Acrylic Painting (1 & 3 p.m.)
 PTSD Awareness Presentation (2 p.m.)
 Drum Circle
 Yoga

Car Show Featuring the Flag Bike
and much more!

The St. Cloud VA is located at 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN

3rd Annual Veterans Rendezvous Announced

Central Minnesota Veterans, Servicemembers, their families, and friends are invited to rendezvous for support, music, and fun on Saturday, September 19, from 1 to 4:30 p.m., near Building 96 and the Walking Path at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 4801 Veterans Drive, in St. Cloud.

In military parlance, a rendezvous is a pre-arranged meeting point to return to following an operation.

“The Veterans Rendezvous is a chance for Veterans to connect with each other and to VA services and to have some fun in a relaxing and welcoming environment,” said Brett Jagodzinski, a VA employee assisting with organizing the event.

Among the day’s activities is the Mental Health Anti-Stigma and Awareness Walk. Veterans and community members are invited to participate to show their support and raise awareness for Veterans seeking mental health care. The event is a self-paced walk on the St. Cloud VA walking path. The course is rated easy and will accommodate most participants. Register at Bldg. 96 prior to starting. The walk may be completed anytime between 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Live music by Charlie Roth and the Healers as well as other entertainment will be available from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Other planned activities include: free hearing screenings, car and motorcycle show, PTSD Awareness presentation, acrylic painting, yoga, fun activities for the whole family, and much more.

A variety of Veteran-focused VA and community information booths will also be available throughout the day. Veterans can also discuss eligibility and apply if not currently enrolled for VA health care benefits, sign up for My HealthVet, and talk with a Veteran Service Officer about earned benefits.

For more details visit www.stcloud.va.gov or go to the St. Cloud VA’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/stcloudvahcs. Veterans organizations wanting space for an information table should email Kerri.Schwegel@va.gov.

St. Cloud VA Caregiver Support
is proud to present the 4th annual

Celebration of Caregivers Resource Fair

Family Caregivers are VA's essential partners in
ensuring that our Veterans receive the very best care.



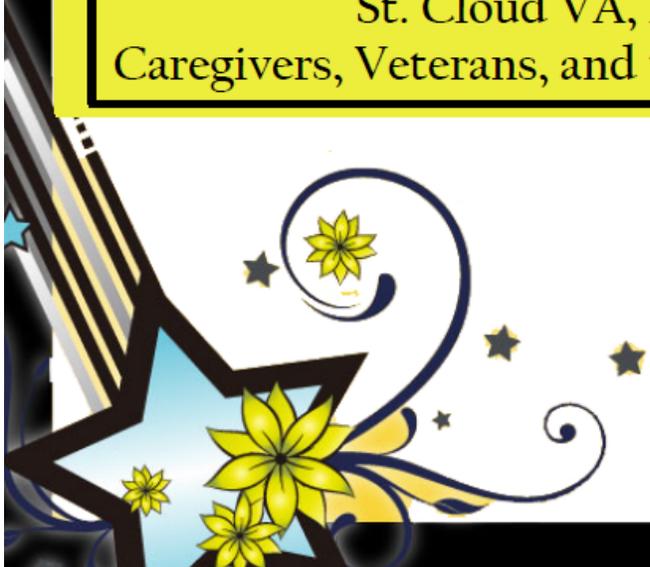
Come enjoy coffee and refreshments while you learn
about the services VA has to offer Caregivers!

Friday, September 25, 2015

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

St. Cloud VA, Building 96

Caregivers, Veterans, and the Public are welcome





New Infusion Clinic opens

The Infusion Clinic meets Veterans' needs by expanding services and increasing capacity to deliver infusion therapy to Veterans in central Minnesota.

Infusion therapy is the intravenous (IV) administration of medicines and nutrition. Patients include those who need pain management, are dehydrated, have nutrition deficiencies, infections, diabetes, cancer or renal failure.

Infusion therapy decreases time spent in clinics, hospitals and nursing homes. It allows patients to return to work or school with a decreased risk of infections. Outpatient status decreases medical costs and allows the patient more time with friends and family in their own environment.

Treatments include:

- Chemotherapy
- Antibiotics
- Fluids for dehydration
- Arthritis treatment

The 1,750 square-foot Infusion Clinic is equipped with state-of-the-art infusion equipment and expands services available to Veterans. The clinic:

- Expands capacity from 3 to 8 chairs in a dedicated clinic space.
- Provides a dedicated waiting room for privacy and infection prevention.
- Features new Oncology chairs including heat, massage and pillow speakers connected to private TVs.
- Is located in close proximity to hematology and oncology providers.
- Provides adequate treatment space to ensure patient privacy and allow for staff efficiency.
- Features wireless technology to enable staff mobility.

According to historical documents, Building 29 was originally constructed in 1932 as a "continued treatment infirmary building." The interior of the northeastern wing of the 83-year-old building was completely gutted during the remodeling, and now includes up-to-date health care design and safety features.

Veterans Town Hall Meeting



October 6, 2015
5 p.m.

National Guard Armory
Located at:
1200 Adams Street SE
Hutchinson, MN

A mobile flu clinic will also be available from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. for Veterans receiving VA health care and unable to attend VA facility clinics. Please bring your VA I.D. card.

Any changes to the flu vaccination clinic schedule will be announced on a recorded message at (320) 255-6444.



Integrity Commitment Advocacy Respect Excellence

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM



The Veterans Choice Program provides eligible Veterans the option to receive VA Community Care from approved providers in their communities.

Am I eligible?



Have you been told by your local VA medical facility that they can't schedule your appointment **within 30 days** of the clinically indicated date or if no such date can be determined, your preferred date?



Is your current residence **more than 40 miles** from the closest VA medical facility?



Do you need to travel by air, boat or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to your home?



Do you face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to a VA medical facility based on the presence of a body of water or a geologic formation that cannot be crossed by road?

If you were enrolled in VA Health care on or before Aug 1, 2014 or you are eligible to enroll as a combat Veteran, and answered

"YES"

to any of the questions, you may be eligible!

How do I set up an appointment?

Call:
866-606-8198

1

Gather your information about any other health insurance coverage you may have (e.g., employer, union-based health plans)



2

Call 1-866-606-8198 to make sure you qualify + schedule an appointment. When you call, we will walk you through the following steps:

- You will be asked to enter your ZIP code, and first and last name.
- We will check to make sure you are eligible for this program.
- We will check which of your needs are covered by the VA.
- You will be asked for your address and the name of your preferred VA Community Care. Unfortunately, not all providers will be eligible to participate so if your preferred provider is not available, we will recommend other providers in your area.



3

We will then work with you to schedule an appointment.



This hotline is exclusively for making sure you are eligible for the Choice Program and setting up a VA Community Care appointment. If you have questions about other aspects of your VA medical care or want to learn more about enrolling in VA health services, please visit www.va.gov/health.



Attention Women Veterans:

Join the Minneapolis VA Health Care System for a special event!

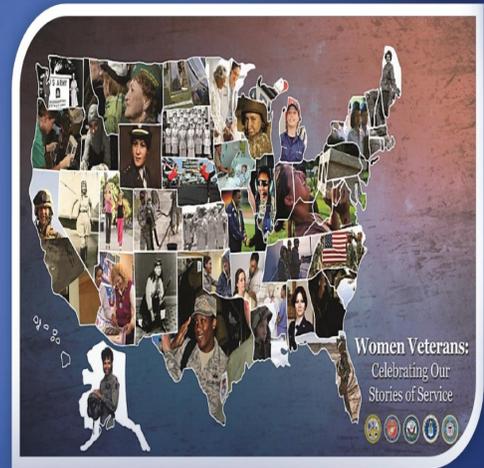
Who: All Women Veterans

What: Women Veterans Campaign Event

Where: Minneapolis VA Health Care System,
2nd Floor Flag Atrium

When: Monday, September 14, 2015
10:00 a.m. – 3:00p.m. (formal program
begins at 12:30)

Why: To honor Women Veterans while
showcasing women health care
services and VA benefit entitlements.



Questions? Contact Jamie Matthews,
at 612-725-2000 x2487. Register on-line
at www.minneapolis.va.gov

WOMEN VETERANS CAMPAIGN |

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Construction Update

Rehabilitation Center



Work on the new Rehabilitation Center continues to progress. This view shows the main (south) entrance. The connecting corridor to Bldg. 51 is visible on the left. Photo taken on 8-



View of the installation of the main entrance doors on the Rehabilitation Center, south side view. Photo taken 8-31-15

Food Service Building

View from the south showing the concrete foundation. A portion of the original connecting corridor and the laundry building are visible in the back of the photo. Photo taken 8-31-15.



A Recipe for Health

Crockpot Chicken Soup

Ingredients

1 sm. whole chicken	1 can corn with juice
1 med. onion, sliced or chopped	2 c. cooked barley or brown rice
3 cans Del Monte (or alternative brand) tomatoes, zesty Italian or chili flavored	1 c. water
1 can fat-free El Paso (or alternative brand) refried beans	Salt
	Cajun jerk spice
	Rosemary (opt.)

Directions

Sprinkle chicken with Cajun jerk spice, salt and rosemary. Place chicken in crockpot. Add onion. Pour two cans tomatoes over chicken. Cook on high 8-10 hours or low 12-14 hours. After cooking, remove chicken to cool. Stir refried beans into tomato mixture. Add cooked barley or rice, corn and juice. Remove chicken from bone, dice into chunks, add to tomato-bean mixture. Add another can of tomatoes and water; stir into soup mixture. Makes about 8 servings.

Nutritional Information

265 calories, 10g fat, 29g carbohydrates, 18g protein, 739mg sodium



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

www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS



Connect with us on Facebook!