



UPDATE

September/October 2016

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

VA Summer Games, pg. 17



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HONORING SERVICE
EMPOWERING
HEALTH

Calendar of Events

Thursday, September 1 and 15; October 6 and 20 (11 a.m.-noon)—**Health Focus Thursday** at the St. Cloud VA, Building 29, Room 20E. Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA can help themselves stay healthy by attending one or more of a series of health education classes this fall on select Thursdays. The classes focus on health and well-being and each session covers a unique topic. No appointment or referral is needed, and Veterans may select the classes they want to attend. Co-pays may be required. One-way beneficiary travel reimbursement is available for eligible Veterans. For more information and to sign up, contact the Primary Care/Mental Health Integration staff at 320-252-1670, ext. 7531. See page 7 for more upcoming classes in this series.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Sep. 1:	Communicating with Health Care Providers
Sep. 15:	Alternative Pain Management Treatments
Oct. 6:	Improving Sleep
Oct. 20:	Yoga Introduction

Monday, September 5—**Outpatient Clinics Closed for Federal Holiday**. St. Cloud VA Health Care System outpatient clinics and administrative offices, including VA Clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria will be closed in observance of 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 6 (9-10 a.m.); Wednesday, September 21 (6-7 p.m.); or Wednesday, September 28 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! Topic for September is *Dual Caregivers: Surviving and Conquering Challenges*. To register, call Jessica Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Tuesday, September 6, October 4 & 18 (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.

Wednesday, September 7 (2-3 p.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers—right from your home phone! In *Writing for Wellness: Therapeutic Writing to Promote Self-Care* learn about the impact of suppressed emotions on physical and mental health and how therapeutic writing can be a vehicle for decreasing Caregiver stress and burnout. Open to family Caregivers of Veterans of all eras. If you would like to participate, please contact your Caregiver Support Coordinator, Jess Behrends, at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Calendar of Events

Thursday, September 8 (Noon-8 p.m.)—**Lac qui Parle Fair**, 705 Fair Street, Madison, MN. Live bands, 4-H events, free gate admission for senior citizens! Stop by the St. Cloud VA booth and learn about eligibility and health care services at the VA.

Sunday, September 11 (9 a.m.)—**Power of One Fun Run 5K**, Ben Franklin Readiness Center, 1536 Ben Franklin Street, Arden Hills, MN. The St. Cloud VA Suicide Prevention Coordinator will be on site to discuss eligibility and health care resources for Veterans. Hosted by the Minnesota Army National Guard, the intent of the Fun Run is to raise awareness about mental health issues and other life stressors that could lead to suicide, connect participants with resources in their communities, and educate participants on risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors. The Fun Run events will also look to provide comfort and assistance to those who have lost someone to suicide. Registration begins at 8 a.m., and the opening ceremony kicks off at 9 a.m. Go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/> and search for "2nd Annual Power of One Fun Run" to register.

Tuesday, September 13 (9-10 a.m.)—**VA Caregiver Support Line**. Free education and support for Caregivers--right from your home phone! In *A Caregiver's Story: Overcoming Barriers and Finding Resilience*, a Caregiver shares the wisdom gained from managing the challenges and rewards of her caregiving journey. Open discussion to follow. Open to family Caregivers of Veterans of all eras. If you would like to participate, please contact your Caregiver Support Coordinator, Jess Behrends, at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Friday, September 16 & October 21 (noon-2 p.m.)—**Southwestern Minnesota Veterans Law Clinic** at the Montevideo VA Clinic. Free legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security law, housing, consumer, child support, family law and employment. No criminal issues will be discussed. Please call 320-403-1051 to schedule an appointment.

Saturday, September 17 (11 a.m.-4 p.m.)—**Pride in the Park**, Lake George/Eastman Park, 1101 7th St. S., St. Cloud, MN. St. Cloud VA representatives will be available to answer Veterans' questions about eligibility and health care services at the VA. St. Cloud Pride, a group formed to raise awareness of issues of heterosexism and homophobia within the St. Cloud and surrounding community, hosts this fun event for all the family with booths, food vendors, music, games and more.

Saturday, September 17 (1-4:30 p.m.)—**4th Annual Rendezvous**, St. Cloud VA campus. Rendezvous is a day of comradery, activities, music and information about programs that may benefit Veterans. Please join us in recognizing those who served during the Vietnam War (November 1, 1955 - May 15, 1975). See page 8 for all the details or log into <https://www.facebook.com/events/757216544413275/>.

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, September 20 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**Free Drop-In Legal Clinic for Veterans**, St. Cloud VA, Building 8 (Auditorium). Attorneys, MACV staff, County Veterans Service Officers and child support officers will be available to assist Veterans with questions about housing, employment, benefits, debt collection, expungement and family law including child support. For more information, contact Vetlaw Program-MACV at 651-200-4750.

Wednesday, September 21 & October 19 (8:10-8:45 a.m.)—Listen to **Voices for Veterans Radio Show** on WJON AM 1240.

Thursday, September 22 (9-10 a.m.)—**Sartell Senior Connection**, Country Manor Apartments, Garden Cove Room, 520 1st Street NE #1, Sartell, MN. The public is invited to find out what's new at the VA! St. Cloud VA representatives will be on hand to fill you in on benefits, the new mental health unit, urgent care, and more. *How to find us:* Enter the Country Manor Campus (County Rd 29 in Sartell) at the large white sign marked Main Entrance. Drive past the canopied entrance to Rapid Recovery & Aquatic Center, past the first wing of apartments and turn right into a small parking lot in front of East Door 2. Once inside the building, someone will direct you to the Garden Cove Room.

Tuesday, September 27 (11 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**Camp Ripley Health, Welfare, and Safety Day** at Camp Ripley, 15000 Highway 115, Little Falls, MN. Learn about Veteran eligibility and St. Cloud VA health care services, including tobacco cessation.

Tuesday, September 27 (12:30-4:30 p.m.)—**St. Cloud Area Job Fair**, River's Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN. Human Resources staff from the St. Cloud VA will be available to educate applicants on the federal hiring process and provide information on benefits, advancements, and pay scales. Event is free and open to the public.

Thursday, September 29 (4-6:30 p.m.)—**Foley Area Health Care Fair**, New Life Church, 931 Norman Ave. North, Foley, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer questions about eligibility and health care services. The St. Cloud VA Health Care System, designated as a Commemorative Partner in the national Vietnam War Commemoration, is committed to publicly thanking and honoring Vietnam Veterans and their families. Authorized by Congress, established under the Secretary of Defense, and launched by the President in May 2012, the Vietnam War Commemoration recognizes all men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975. Nine million Americans, approximately 7 million living today, served during that period, and the Commemoration makes no distinction between Veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years. All answered the call of duty. If you served during this era, you are invited to a pinning ceremony during this event. To learn more about the Vietnam War Commemoration, go to www.vietnamwar50th.com

Calendar of Events

Monday, October 3 (9:10-9:30 a.m.)—Listen to the **Veterans Affairs Radio Show** on KNSI AM 1450/FM 103.3.

Friday, October 7 (8 a.m.-4 p.m.)—**Statewide Veterans Conference**, St. Cloud State University, 720 Fourth Ave. South, St. Cloud, MN. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA, including the Suicide Prevention Coordinator, will be available to answer questions about eligibility and health care services for Veterans. Hosted by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the conference features speakers from the Minnesota National Guard, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and service organizations.

Saturday, October 8 (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) & Sunday, October 9 (9 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**St. Cloud Gun Show**, National Guard Armory, 1702 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN. If you've ever wondered if you're eligible for health care services at the VA, representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be available to answer your questions.

Monday, October 10—**Outpatient Clinics Closed for Federal Holiday**. St. Cloud VA Health Care System outpatient clinics and administrative offices, including VA Clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria will be closed in observance of 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 12 (9 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**Marshall StandDown & Mobile Flu Clinic**, YMCA, 200 South A. Street, Marshall, MN. St. Cloud VA representatives will be available to speak with Veterans about eligibility and health care services at the Marshall StandDown, a collaborative community event that provides supplies and services to homeless Veterans. St. Cloud VA will also have a mobile flu clinic on site 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.

Wednesday, October 12 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**Project Connect**, YMCA, 13337 Business Center Dr. NW, Elk River, MN. Project Connect is a one-day, one-stop event that offers people who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless access to vital services. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA Homeless Team will be on site to answer questions.

Saturday, October 15 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**Veterans Resource Fair**, 5525 School Blvd., Monticello, MN. Veterans are invited to learn about benefits and resources available to them. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA will be on site to answer questions about eligibility and health care services.

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, October 19 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.)—**Project Connect**, River's Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN. Project Connect is a one-day, one-stop event that offers people who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless access to vital services. Representatives from the St. Cloud VA Homeless Team will be on site to answer questions.

Tuesday, October 25 (6:30-8 p.m.)—**VA Benefits Workshop**, Great River Regional Library, Bremer Room, 1300 W. St. Germain Street, St. Cloud, MN. Veterans are invited to learn about St. Cloud VA services and Veteran benefits whether enrolled or not at the VA. If not enrolled, please bring form DD214.

Friday, October 28 (9 a.m.-2 p.m.)—**St. Cloud StandDown**, St. Cloud National Guard Armory, 1710 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN. St. Cloud VA representatives will be available to speak with Veterans about eligibility and health care services at the St. Cloud StandDown, a collaborative community event that provides supplies and services to homeless Veterans.

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 and at any of the VA Clinics in Alexandria, Brainerd and Montevideo. In addition to the annual clinics at St. Cloud, Alexandria, Montevideo and Brainerd, we also offer mobile flu shot clinics in several counties across central Minnesota.

See pages 9 and 10 for schedule of flu shots.



*Primary Care Mental Health Integration
is pleased to present our wellness classes:*

Health Focus Thursdays

~Fall Edition~

WHO: All Veterans Welcome

WHAT: Classes Focus on Health and Well-Being
New Topics Every Week!

WHEN: Select Thursdays: Sept. 1st – Dec. 16th
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
NO Appointment Needed – Walk-ins Welcome

WHERE: Building 29, Room 20E

WHY: Learn creative strategies to improve your
health and well-being!

Wellness Topics:

Sept. 1: Communicating with
Healthcare Providers

Nov. 3: Health Benefits of
Volunteering

Sept. 15: Alternative Pain
Management Treatments

Nov. 17: How to Communicate
Assertively

Oct. 6: How to Improve Sleep

Dec. 1: How to Cope with Grief

Oct. 20: Introduction to Yoga

Dec. 15: Manage Holiday Stress

For more information, please call:
252-1670 ext. 7531



St. Cloud VA Health Care System

4TH ANNUAL

VETERANS RENDEZVOUS 17 SEP 2016 HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

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

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





Walk-in Flu Clinics at VA Facilities

*no appointment needed on the
following dates, times, and locations:*

Please bring your VA I.D. card.

St. Cloud VA Medical Center

Building 96 (West side of campus)
Wed., September 28: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Thurs., September 29: 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. Beilke VA Clinic

515 22nd Avenue E. - Alexandria, MN
October 14: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Brainerd VA Clinic

722 NW 7th Street - Brainerd, MN
October 4: 1 to 4 p.m.
October 7: 1 to 4 p.m.
October 18: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Montevideo VA Clinic

1025 North 13th Street - Montevideo, MN
October 5: 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

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www.stcloud.va.gov

www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS

2016 Flu Shot Clinics

Spread the Word,
Not the Flu

FREE FLU SHOTS
for Veterans &
Volunteers

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

Aitkin County

McGregor, Oct. 25, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

*McGregor Community Center,
41442 MN Hwy 65*

Aitkin, Oct. 25, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

*American Legion, Aitkin Lee Post 86,
20 1st Avenue NE*

Cass County

Longville, Oct. 18, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

*St. Edwards Catholic Church,
4905 MN-84*

Backus, Oct. 18, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

*American Legion, Post 368,
426 Wren Trail NW*

Crow Wing County

Pequot Lakes, Sep. 30, 9 to 10:30 a.m.

*American Legion, Ben Krueger Post 49,
4435 Main Street*

Crosslake, Sep. 30, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

*American Legion, Potz Heartland Post 500,
35112 County Road 3*

Crosby-Ironton, Sep. 30, 3 to 4 p.m.

*American Legion, Myrin-James Post 443,
232 4th Street, Ironton*

Garrison, Oct. 27, 9 to 10:30 a.m.

*VFW Andrew F Kokesh Post 1816,
27234 Monroe Street*

Kandiyohi County

Willmar, Oct. 11, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

*American Legion Post 167,
220 19th Avenue SW*

Lyon County

Marshall, Oct. 12, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

YMCA, 200 S. A Street

Meeker County

Litchfield, Oct. 11, 1 to 3 p.m.

*VFW Admiral Benson Post 2818,
915 E. U.S. Highway 12*

McLeod County

Hutchinson, Oct. 4, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

*National Guard Armory,
1200 Adams Street SE*

Mille Lacs County

Isle, Oct. 27, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

*MSA Flagship,
5357 Whistle Road*

Morrison County

Little Falls, Oct. 7, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

*Morrison County Government Center,
213 SE 1st Avenue, Meeting Room 1*

Pope County

Glenwood, Oct. 5, 9:30 to 11 a.m.

*Courthouse Community Room,
130 E. Minnesota Avenue*

Take care of your buddy!

*Encourage a fellow Veteran to apply for
VA health care; eligibility staff available at
mobile flu shot clinics, **bring DD214.***

Sherburne County

Zimmerman, Oct. 13, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

*American Legion, Kriesel-Jacobsen Post 560,
12674 Fremont Avenue*

Elk River, Oct. 13, 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.

*Sherburne History Center,
10775 27th Ave SE*

Stearns County

Sauk Centre, Oct. 28, 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.

*American Legion, Sauk Centre Post 67,
128 Main Street S.*

Belgrade, Oct. 28, 12:30 to 2 p.m.

*VFW Saboe-Levorson Post 1825,
231 Morrison Street*

Paynesville, Oct. 28, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

*American Legion, Paynesville Post 271,
770 Diekmann Drive*

Stevens County

Morris, Oct. 5, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Stevens County Courthouse, 400 Colorado Avenue

Todd County

Long Prairie, Oct. 17, 9 to 11 a.m.

*American Legion, WM. T. Lewis Post 12,
714 Commerce Road*

Wadena County

Wadena, Oct. 17, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

*VFW Elmer Goche Post 3922,
213 1st Street SE*

Enhancing Veterans' Lives

Carol Kottom, Department President for the American Legion Auxiliary, presents a donation of \$2,500 to Patricia Aljets, Voluntary Service program manager, on behalf of the Buffalo American Legion Post 270. Their donation will be used to support the St. Cloud VA's Recreation Therapy program. Recreation programs have a tremendous impact on the quality of life for the Veterans who reside at our facility. They enjoy a variety of outings to local attractions such as local festivals, movie theater, museums, the zoo and an occasional meal at a restaurant. Other activities include games, parties, entertainment, cooking/baking groups, crafts, and gardening. Outdoor experiences like fishing on local lakes, golf, disc golf and picnics are also popular. Of course many Veterans prefer quieter activities like reading donated books, listening to music and watching movies.



Aug. 22, 2016



Pictured (left to right): Rose & Richard Hedberg; Patricia Aljets, Voluntary Service Officer; Darlene & Robert Nelson.
Aug. 11, 2016

Organizers of the "Support the Troops" fundraiser in St. Francis, MN, presented a check for \$1,890 to the St. Cloud VA. The funds will be used to purchase three new grills to be used in the Recreation Therapy program. Thanks to everyone who participated in the "Support the Troops" fundraising events - your support has made a huge difference in the lives of Veterans who reside with us at the St. Cloud VA. Because of your support, we have been able to maintain a clothing room for Veteran patients who are in need.

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Patricia Aljets, Voluntary Service Officer, accepts a \$500 donation from Marvin Binstock, MCL Detachment Commander. Many thanks to the Marine Corps League Valhalla Detachment 171 for the donation of \$500! The funds will be used to support recreation therapy programming for Veterans residing in the St. Cloud VA's Community Living Center. The Recreation Program provides activities such as fishing, musical entertainment, crafts, parties, picnics and outings to ballgames and local events.



Jul. 29, 2016



Aug. 11, 2016

Tom Tauber, 6th District Commander, and Deanne Reynolds, 6th District President, were on hand to help their members husk 20 dozen ears of corn in preparation for their recent Annual Turkey BBQ for Veterans residing at the St. Cloud VA. The afternoon was filled with music, food and comradery - thank you Sixth District VFW & Auxiliary!!

Volunteers and donations enhance the quality of life for the Veterans we serve - if you would like to help, contact the Voluntary Service Office at (320) 255-6365 or vhastcvavsstaff@va.gov.



Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans invites you to participate in a:

FREE DROP-IN LEGAL CLINIC FOR VETERANS

HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, BENEFITS, DEBT COLLECTION, EXPUNGEMENT, FAMILY LAW INCLUDING CHILD SUPPORT

Tuesday, September 20, 2016 | 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

St. Cloud VA HCS | Auditorium - Building 8

4801 Veterans Drive | St. Cloud, MN 56303

Attorneys, MACV staff, County Veterans Service Officers, and child support officers will be available throughout the day to assist veterans with questions, legal forms, and counsel.

For more information contact: Vetlaw Program – MACV | 651-200-4750

Cashless Beneficiary Travel Reimbursements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



No More Lines!

**Direct Deposit
of Travel Reimbursement
Now Required**

Three easy steps:

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

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

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

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

Questions and Answers:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DID YOU KNOW?

—In 1930, Fred Newton became the only man to swim the Mississippi River – lengthwise (1,826 miles over a six-month period).

—France's King Louis XIV bathed only once a year.

St. Cloud VA Summer Games

On August 6, the St. Cloud VA held the Second Annual VA Summer Games on campus. This event was an opportunity for Veterans to show off their athletic abilities and offered healthy competition among other local Veterans. The events included weightlifting, badminton, horseshoes, 1 mile race, rowing and billiards. Eighty-four Veterans registered and participated in the games and over 200 family, friends and fellow Veterans were there to cheer the athletes. One of the competitors said this about the games, "Veterans, old and young, their friends and families shared camaraderie, friendship, brotherhood, and of course stories. There was great competition, great company, there was laughter, and there were tears of joy...it was a perfect day." Thank you to the Capital One employees for the great lunch and to all who made the event possible. Starting training now for next year's games!



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ZIKA: THE BASICS OF THE VIRUS AND HOW TO PROTECT AGAINST IT



About Zika

Zika virus spreads to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito (*Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus*). Zika can also be passed through sex from a person who has Zika to his or her sex partners and it can be spread from a pregnant woman to her fetus. People can protect themselves from mosquito bites and getting Zika through sex. This fact sheet explains who's most affected and why, symptoms and treatment, and how to protect against Zika.

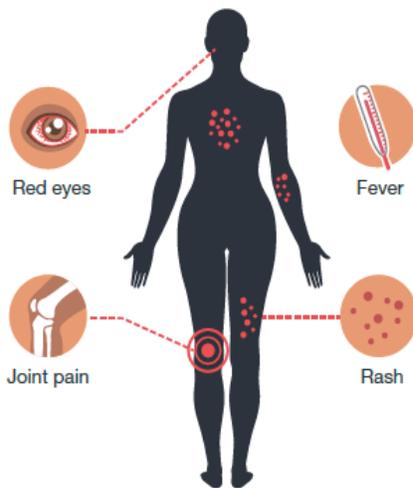
How Zika Spreads

Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites all day and night, whether you are inside or outside. A mosquito becomes infected when it bites a person already infected with Zika. That mosquito can then spread the virus by biting more people.



Zika virus can also spread:

- During sex with a person who has Zika to his or her sex partners.
- From a pregnant woman to her fetus during pregnancy or around the time of birth.
- Through blood transfusion (likely but not confirmed).



Zika Symptoms

Many people infected with Zika won't have symptoms or will only have mild symptoms. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes. Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache. Symptoms can last for several days to a week. People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. Once a person has been infected with Zika, they are likely to be protected from future infections.

www.cdc.gov/zika

CS265799A August 12, 2016



Current Zika Outbreak

Zika outbreaks are currently happening in many countries and territories. The mosquitoes that can become infected with and spread Zika live in many parts of the world, including parts of the United States.

[Specific areas where Zika virus is spreading](#) are often difficult to determine and are likely to change over time. If traveling, please visit the [CDC Travelers' Health website](#) for the most recent travel information.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Why Zika is Risky for Some People

Zika infection during pregnancy can cause fetuses to have a birth defect of the brain called microcephaly. Other problems have been detected among fetuses and infants infected with Zika virus before birth, such as defects of the eye, hearing deficits, and impaired growth. There have also been increased reports of Guillain-Barré syndrome, an uncommon sickness of the nervous system, in areas affected by Zika.



Microcephaly

How to Prevent Zika

There is no vaccine to prevent Zika. The best way to prevent diseases spread by mosquitoes is to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites. **Here's how:**



- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Stay in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Take steps to control mosquitoes [inside and outside your home](#).
- Treat your clothing and gear with permethrin or buy pre-treated items.
- Use [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-registered](#) insect repellents. Always follow the product label instructions.
- When used as directed, these insect repellents are proven safe and effective even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Do not use insect repellents on babies younger than 2 months old.
- Do not use products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol on children younger than 3 years old.
- Mosquito netting can be used to cover babies younger than 2 months old in carriers, strollers, or cribs to protect them from mosquito bites.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if air conditioned or screened rooms are not available or if sleeping outdoors.
- [Prevent sexual transmission of Zika by using condoms or not having sex](#).

What to Do if You Have Zika

There is no specific medicine to treat Zika. Treat the symptoms:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Take medicine such as acetaminophen to reduce fever and pain.
- Do not take aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.
- If you are taking medicine for another medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider before taking additional medication.

To help prevent others from getting sick, strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the first week of illness.



www.cdc.gov/zika

Prostate Cancer

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. Problems with the prostate (a gland in the male reproductive system) become more common as a man ages. These problems include prostate cancer, a common cancer in men. Whether screening for prostate cancer results in fewer men dying from prostate cancer is not clear; experts disagree on the value of prostate cancer screening. Men should talk with their health care providers about whether they want to be screened for prostate cancer.

Prostate Cancer

Cancer is an uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells. These cells form in one area and can spread through the body. Prostate cancer causes no symptoms in its early stages. In fact, urinary problems are more likely to be symptoms of another condition.

Risk Factors for Prostate Cancer

The things that can increase a man's chance of developing prostate cancer are called risk factors. These include:

- **Age.** The risk of developing prostate cancer increases as you grow older.
- **Family history.** If your father or brother has had prostate cancer, your risk of developing it is higher.
- **Race.** African American men are more likely than other men to develop prostate cancer. They are also more likely to die of prostate cancer than other men with this disease.

Screening for Cancer

If a man wishes to be screened for prostate cancer, he should first understand both the possible benefits and also harms that may result from screening. A blood test called prostate specific antigen (PSA) is good at finding prostate cancer. But, for many men, prostate cancer is very slow growing and would not have caused any problems over their lifetime, even if not found or treated. Current tests are not very good at figuring out which prostate cancers are fast growing and which are slow growing. Men who are treated for prostate cancer by surgery or radiation treatments often suffer from loss of control of their urinary bladders (incontinence) and from loss of ability to have sexual activity (impotence).



PSA is a blood test

Factors That Affect PSA

Many factors can affect PSA levels. Some, such as age, an increase in the size of the prostate gland that often comes with getting older, and prostate cancer, are ongoing. Others, such as an infection in the prostate gland called prostatitis or recent sexual activity, have only a temporary effect on PSA. Your health care provider can explain how these factors may affect the timing of the PSA test and your results.

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Further Testing

A high PSA level doesn't always mean cancer. More tests need to be done. After looking at the results of your screening tests, your healthcare provider may recommend other tests.

Biopsy

This test involves taking tissue samples from the prostate. With an instrument that makes harmless sound waves across the prostate gland as a guide, a thin needle is used to remove samples. The tissue samples are then checked in a lab to see whether there are cancer cells and, if so, how likely they are to grow quickly.

Studies to Check for Spread of Cancer

If cancer is found, studies may be done to check for its spread. Bone scans check whether cancer has spread to bones. Other tests look for cancer in bones and other tissues.

Other Prostate Problems

Prostatitis is an infection or inflammation that causes the prostate to become painful and swollen. This narrows the urethra and can block the bladder neck. Prostatitis can cause a burning sensation during urination. You may also feel pressure or pain in the genital area. In some cases, prostatitis can cause fever and chills, and can make you very sick.

Cancer occurs when abnormal cells form a tumor (a lump of cells that grow uncontrolled). Some tumors can be felt during a physical exam, others can't. Prostate cancer often causes no symptoms at all, especially in its early stages. Prostate symptoms are more likely to be caused by a problem that is NOT cancer.

Wind Turbine Update

As many may recall, in October, 2014, the Contracting Officer informed the contractor that Contract Number VA776-C-0015, "Wind Turbine Electric Generating System," at the St. Cloud VAMC campus was terminated for default. The basis of the termination was the contractor's failure to provide the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with a fully operational, commissioned wind turbine, in accordance with and as required under the contract.

The contractor filed notice to appeal the termination with the United States Civilian Board of Contract Appeals. The parties negotiated a settlement, pursuant to which VA rescinded the Termination for Default and instead issued a Termination for Convenience. VA received a sizeable settlement payment from the contractor and surety. Prior to reaching the settlement, VA assessed the litigation risks and costs, and determined that settlement was appropriate. VA also determined that pursuing the litigation would have further delayed the project and would not have resulted in an operable wind turbine.



VA intends to conduct a study to assess future plans for the wind turbine site. VA anticipates that this study will include a wind resource assessment, an assessment of the structural integrity of the existing tower and foundation, and recommendations regarding turbine models best suited to placement on the existing tower, and that the study will be reviewed by the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory. The study is currently anticipated to be complete in 2018.



September is Recovery Month (Mental health and substance abuse disorders)

Recovery Month promotes the societal benefits of prevention, treatment, and recovery for mental and substance use disorders, celebrates people in recovery, lauds the contributions of treatment and service providers, and promotes the message that recovery in all its forms is possible. Recovery Month spreads the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, that prevention works, treatment is effective and people can and do recover.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Problems

Some people have an [alcohol or drug problem](#) and a mental health problem. Experts call this a dual diagnosis. You need to treat both problems to fully recover. Mental health problems that can happen with alcohol or drug abuse include depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, [posttraumatic stress disorder](#) (PTSD), and [schizophrenia](#).

Either problem may come first. If you have a mental health problem, you may use alcohol or drugs to try to feel better. Or a substance abuse problem may lead to mental health symptoms such as depression, anxiety, or rage.

People with mental health problems may use drugs and alcohol:

- **To feel normal.** You may use drugs or alcohol because it helps you feel normal and accepted. It may make you feel like you don't have a mental health problem or are not different from others.
- **To self-medicate.** You may use drugs or alcohol to reduce anxiety, depression, sleep problems, tension, [hallucinations](#) (like hearing voices), and the side effects of medicines.

Using drugs or alcohol when you have a mental health problem harms your health and your relationships. You may have more mental health symptoms, think about suicide, or need to stay in a hospital or other facility.

It's best to treat the mental health problem and the substance abuse problem at the same time. If you don't get treatment, one problem can make the other one worse. If you treat only one problem, treatment may not work as well. When you treat both problems, you have a better chance of a full recovery and less chance of returning to drugs or alcohol.

The first step often is [detoxification](#), or detox. During detox, you use no drugs or alcohol so your body can clear itself of them. You may have [withdrawal](#) symptoms, so detox usually takes place while you are getting medical care. If your problems are severe, you may need treatment at a hospital or another facility. Detox is followed by therapy and sometimes medicine. You most likely will attend individual and group therapy for both problems. You also will learn about alcohol and drugs, exercise, and healthy eating.

The St. Cloud VA provides a number of special emphasis programs for Veterans including residential substance abuse, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychiatric residential rehabilitative treatment program (PRRTP), dual diagnosis, and outpatient programming for seriously mentally ill. To find out more about these programs, call 320-252-1670, ext. 6390.

A Recipe for Health

Mushroom Barley Beef Soup

Ingredients

1 to 1½ lbs. stew meat (visible fat removed and cut into bite-size pieces)
1 T. oil
2 c. chopped onions
1 c. diced carrots
½ c. diced celery
1 lb. sliced mushrooms

1 tsp. minced garlic or 1 clove
¼ tsp. thyme
1 can or 2 c. beef broth
1 can or 2 c. chicken broth
2 c. water
½ c. pearl barley
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper

Directions

Brown stew meat in oil. Add vegetables and cook until soft. Add mushrooms, garlic, thyme, broths, water, barley and seasonings. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer 1½ hours. Garnish with 3 tablespoons chopped parsley. Ladle into bowls and serve. **Crockpot method:** After browning meat, add rest of ingredients to pot and cook on low for 8-10 hours. Makes about 6 servings.

Nutritional Information

192 calories, 7g fat, 13g carbohydrates, 15g protein, 869mg 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.vets.gov

www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS



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