



UPDATE

May/June 2014

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



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VA HEALTH CARE | Defining **EXCELLENCE** in the 21st Century

Calendar of Events

Monday, May 5 and June 2 —Listen to the **Veterans Affairs Radio Show** on KNSI, AM 1450/FM 103.3, at 8:10 a.m.

Tuesday, May 6; Wednesday, May 7; Thursday, May 8—**10th Annual Physically Disabled Veterans Turkey Hunt** at Camp Ripley near Little Falls. For application instructions, call Dennis Erie at 320-255-6365.

Tuesday, May 6 & 20, June 3 & 17 - **St. Cloud Area Veterans Law Clinic**, 12 to 2 p.m. 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. Appointments are held at the St. Cloud VA in Building 28, Room 126.

Thursday, May 8—**Mental Health Awareness Fair**, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Shepherd of the Valley Church, 312 Hwy 71, East Clarissa, MN. Visit the St. Cloud VA booth to learn how to apply for health care benefits. Veterans/PTSD/Mental Health speaker from 10:45-11:00 a.m. St. Cloud VA Mental Health Issues speaker from 11:00-11:30 a.m.

Friday, May 9 & June 13—**Montevideo CBOC Caregiver Support Group**, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Contact Jess Behrends at 320-252-1670, ext. 7283 for more information. If you need transportation, call the Yellow Medicine County Veterans Service Officer at 320-313-3038.

Saturday, May 10—**Tribute to Women Veterans**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at North Heights Lutheran Church, 1700 W. Hwy 96, Arden Hills. Visit the St. Cloud VA booth to learn how to apply for health care benefits.

Tuesday, May 13 (9-10 a.m.), or Wednesday, May 28 (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 Jess Behrends, St. Cloud VA, 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

Calendar of Events

Thursday, May 15—**Program to Recognize Former POWs**, 9 a.m. to Noon, at the St. Cloud VA Auditorium (Bldg. 8). By invitation only.

Friday, May 16 & June 20—**Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic**, Noon to 2 p.m. at the Montevideo CBOC. FREE legal consultation for Veterans. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320-403-1051 to schedule an appointment.

Saturday, May 17—**VA Women's Wellness Expo**, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center, hosted by St. Cloud VA Health Care System. Free admission, live entertainment, massages, food sampling, fitness demonstrations, stress management, wellness checks, and much more. Learn about VA health care and benefits. Please bring a friend.

Saturday, May 17—**The Old Glory Run** at Cold Spring Baseball Park, 700 1st Street South, in Cold Spring. Proceeds benefit MN Disabled American Veterans. Visit www.theoldgloryrun.com for more information.

Wednesday, May 21 & June 18—Listen to the **Voices for Veterans Radio Show** on WJON AM 1240, at 8:10 a.m.

Monday, May 26—**Memorial Day Program**, parade of colors at 10:30 a.m. followed by ceremony, St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 92 (just SE of main flag pole). Hosted by St. Cloud Area Metropolitan Veterans Council. Keynote speaker is Frank Presfield, Commander for Veterans of Foreign Wars, Dept. of MN. Music by St. Cloud Municipal Band. Public invited and encouraged to bring lawn chairs as seating is very limited.

Thursday, May 29—St. Cloud VA Medical Center **Pharmacy Ribbon Cutting Ceremony** at 2 p.m., Bldg. 5 (Pharmacy).

Saturday, May 31—**Vet Thanks Run (motorcycles)**, 1:00-4:30 p.m. at St. Cloud VA. Sponsors American Legion and Patriot Guard encourage you to bring a Veteran. Veterans not currently enrolled at the St. Cloud VA are asked to bring a copy of their DD Form 214 if interested in enrolling.

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, June 3—**Montevideo CBOC Blood Drive**, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thursday, June 5, & Friday, June 6—**VFW Convention**, 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Kelly Inn, 100 4th Ave. South, St. Cloud. Visit the St. Cloud VA booth to learn how to apply for health care benefits.

Saturday, June 7—**Health & Resource Fair**, 1-5 p.m. at Promise Neighborhood building, 1114 9th Ave. SE, St. Cloud. Visit the St. Cloud VA booth to learn how to apply for health care benefits.

Tuesday, June 10 (9-10 a.m.), and Wednesday, June 25 (2-3 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 When Caring for a Loved One With Mental Health Concerns*. To register, call Jess Behrends, St. Cloud VA, 320-252-1670, ext. 7283.

USELESS FACTS —

The first letter of five continents' names is the same as the last: Antarctica, Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa.

Asked how to improve a player's golf game, Ben Hogan replied: "Hit the ball closer to the hole."

QUOTATION —

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

- Fred Allen

HOW *do I*

GET INVOLVED

with  MY  own

HEALTH CARE?

www.veteranshealthlibrary.com



VA
HEALTH
CARE | Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century



You served.

Now let the St. Cloud VA serve you.

VA Women's Wellness Fair

Saturday May 17, 2014

9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

River's Edge Convention Center St. Cloud

Free admission, live entertainment, massages, food sampling, fitness demonstrations, stress management and relaxation sessions, wellness checks, and much more!

RSVP by May 2, 2014 to receive lunch.

To RSVP call 320-255-6353 and for additional information visit www.st.cloud.va.gov.

Bring a friend or Battle Buddy!

Sponsored by: the generous donations of the Central MN Community Foundation Women's Fund.

**St. Cloud VA
Health Care System**

ALEXANDRIA, MN • BRAINERD, MN • MONTEVIDEO, MN



www.stcloud.va.gov



You served. Now let the St. Cloud VA serve you.

VA Women's Wellness Fair

Program Highlights

Key Facts

The VA Women's Wellness Fair is being held at the River's Edge Convention Center, Terry Haws Hall C, on Saturday, May 17, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Free admission; women Veteran participants are encouraged to bring a guest or battle buddy.

Please RSVP at 320-255-6353 to receive lunch; otherwise, no reservations required. Catered lunch includes a sandwich and salad bar.

The Wellness Fair features an *a la carte* menu of small group sessions, presentations, and exhibits throughout the day. A detailed schedule of events will be available at the door. The Wellness Fair features the following attractions:

Fitness Demonstrations

- Zumba (Caryn's Studio)
- Karate/Self-Defense Demonstration (National Karate & Evolution Tae Kwon Do)
- Yoga (St. Cloud VA staff)

Health & Wellness Presentations

- Women's Health, presented by Michelle Pittman-Leyendecker WHNP-BC (Women's Health Clinic Provider)
- Mindful Eating, presented by St. Cloud VA Nutrition & Food Service
- Mindful Art Craft. Design and construct your own Mindful Labyrinth, presented by St. Cloud VA
- Massage, by 360 Chiropractic; Hjort Chiropractic; and Accelerated Rehabilitation Services

(continued)

Resource Vendors

Education

St. Cloud State University Veteran Resource Center
St. Cloud Technical College Advanced Manufacturing Education
Higher Education Veterans Program - Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

Financial Health

Vicki Lokken-Paverud, Military Program Coordinator, Better Business Bureau
Don Christenson- Great River Financial

Wellness

St. Cloud VA Health Care System
 Women's Health Program
 Telehealth Program
 Wellness Checks
 Enrollment & Eligibility Information
 Voluntary Services
 Vision Impairment Services Team/Spinal Cord Injury/Traumatic Brain Injury
 Caregiver Support Program
 Suicide Prevention Program
 Dental Services
 Audiology Department
 Recreation Therapy
 MyHealthvet
 OEF/OIF/OND Team
 Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Program
 Homeless Veteran Program
Synergy Chiropractic & Wellness
Good Earth Food Cooperative
Young Living Essential Oils
Project Healing Waters
Foot Support
Odor Eliminators
Sunshine, by Brenda Spain

Employment

Hero 2 Hire
St. Cloud VA HCS Human Resources

Benefits

Veterans Benefits Administration, St. Paul Regional Office
Stearns County Veteran Service Office

Tina & Lena

Hilarious Comedy and Beautiful Music come together to create Great Entertainment!

Performing For You...

VA Women's Wellness Expo, May 17, 2014

On-stage at 12:30 p.m.

www.tina-lena.com



Annual Means Test Eliminated

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is eliminating the annual requirement for most Veterans enrolled in VA's health care system to report income information beginning in March 2014. Instead, VA will automatically match income information obtained from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration.

"Eliminating the requirement for annual income reporting makes our health care benefits easier for Veterans to obtain," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "This change will reduce the burden on Veterans, improve customer service and make it much easier for Veterans to keep their health care eligibility up-to-date."



Some Veterans applying for enrollment for the first time are still required to submit income information. There is no change in VA's long-standing policy to provide no-cost care to indigent Veterans, Veterans with catastrophic medical conditions, Veterans with a disability rating of 50 percent or higher, or for conditions that are officially rated as "service-connected."

VA encourages Veterans to continue to use the health benefits renewal form to report changes in their personal information, such as address, phone numbers, dependents, next of kin, income and health insurance.

For more information, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/cost or call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

(See fact sheet on next page for more information)



VA Eliminates Veterans' Annual Financial Reporting Requirement (Means Test)

Description

Beginning in March 2014, most Veterans will no longer be required to complete the annual financial assessment known as a Means Test. Instead, VA will receive income information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Social Security Administration (SSA), and will contact the Veterans only if the information received indicates a change in their VA health benefits may be appropriate; however, Veterans who are eligible for enrollment only because their income is below an established threshold will be required to complete a means test when applying for VA health care enrollment.

What is Changing

VA continues to look for ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its exceptional health care service and reduce the burden on Veterans. Beginning in March 2014, most Veterans will no longer be required to complete the annual financial assessment known as a Means Test.

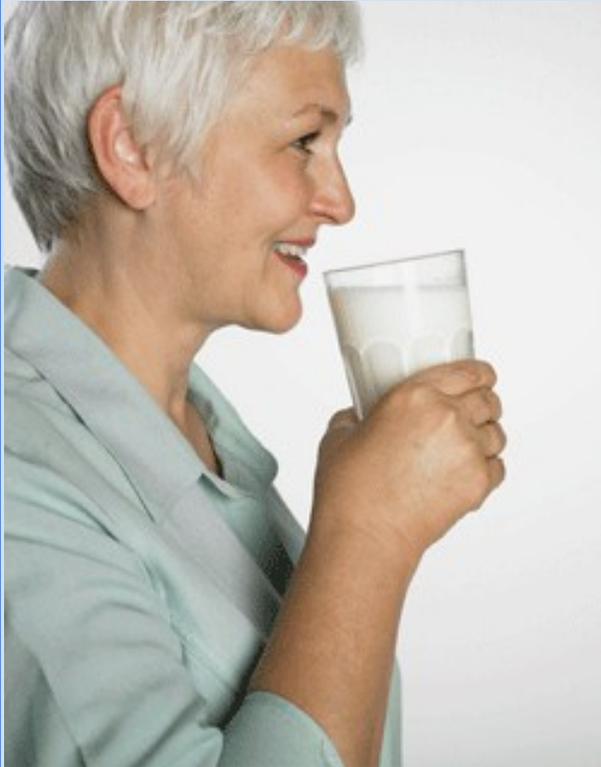
The elimination of the annual means test frees enrolled Veterans to enjoy their VA health care benefits without worrying about completing annual income assessment forms. Under the new process, Veterans will be required to have one financial assessment on file – their current file if they're already enrolled, or the assessment they provide when they apply. That assessment will be maintained and monitored by VA and updated only as substantial income changes occur.

VA will receive income information from the IRS and SSA, and will contact the Veteran only when the information received indicates a change in VA health benefits may be appropriate. Consistent with VA's current income verification processes, no changes to the Veteran's health benefits will occur unless the review process confirms the Veteran's income exceeds applicable thresholds.

Veterans applying for enrollment for the first time are still required to submit income information.

There is no change in VA's long-standing policy to provide no-cost care to indigent Veterans, Veterans with catastrophic medical conditions, Veterans with a disability rating of 50 percent or higher, or for conditions that are officially rated as "service-connected."

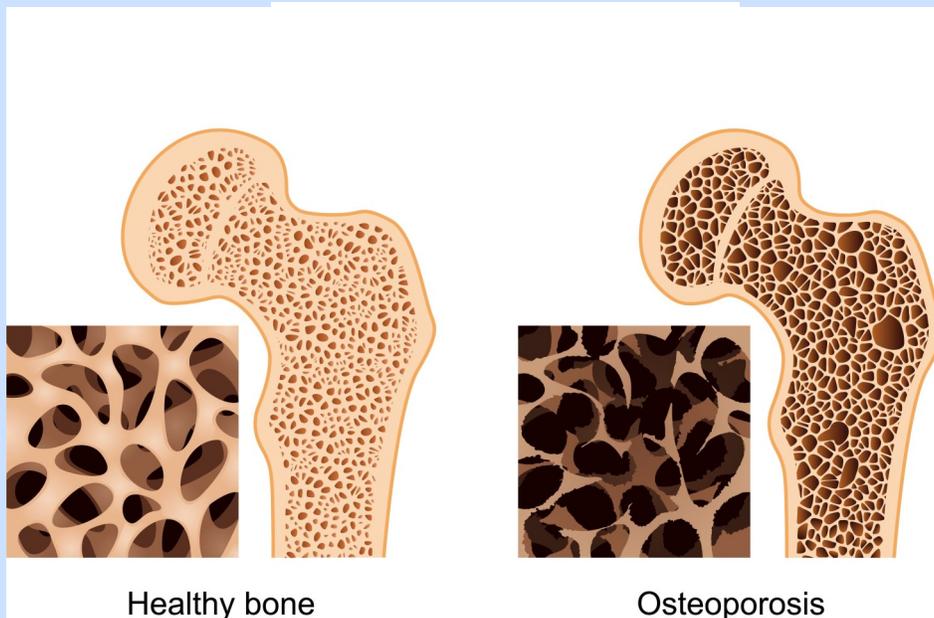
If at any time the Veteran's financial status changes, the Veteran may submit an updated financial assessment. VA encourages Veterans to continue to report changes in their income information as well as their personal information, such as address, phone numbers, dependents, next of kin, and health insurance using VA Form 1010EZR available online or at their local medical center.



Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens the bones. Weakened bones are more likely to fracture (break). Osteoporosis affects men and women, but postmenopausal women are most at risk. To help prevent osteoporosis, you need to exercise and nourish your bones throughout your life.

In later years, both men and women need to take extra care of their bones. By this point, the body loses more bone than it makes. If too much bone is lost, you may be at risk for fractures. You can lessen bone loss by staying active and increasing your calcium intake. If you have osteoporosis, you can also learn ways to increase everyday safety.

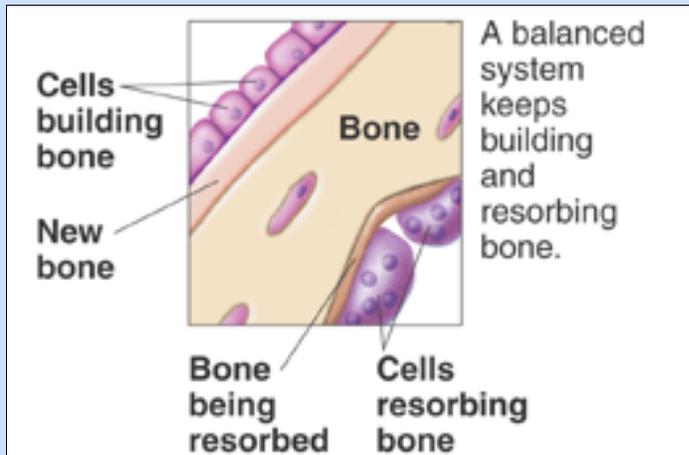


Osteoporosis: Understanding Bone Loss

The body has a natural system for maintaining bone. Understanding this system can help you learn how to maintain your bones.

A Balanced System Supports the Body

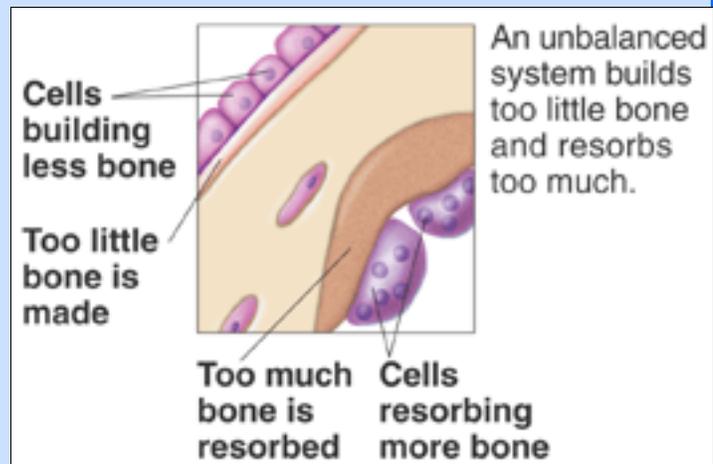
The body is always making and losing (**resorbing**) bone. This process is called remodeling. Bone-making cells form new bone using calcium and other minerals.



These minerals come from the food you eat. Bone-resorbing cells take bone apart. They do this so the minerals can be used to repair an injury or make new bone. When this bone-making system is in balance, the same amount of bone is built and resorbed.

An Unbalanced System Can't Give Support

Changes in hormone levels, activity, medications, or diet can affect the bone-making system. When the system gets out of balance, the amount of bone lost is greater than the amount of bone made. When bone loss reaches a certain point, it is called osteoporosis. Weak bones can't support the body. In fact, they can fracture just from the weight of your body. This often happens in vertebrae (bones of the spine). When vertebrae fracture, parts of the spine compress. This causes the back to bend or hump over.



Living with Osteoporosis: Regular Exercise

If you have osteoporosis, exercise is vital for your health. It can prevent bone fractures and spine changes. It will slow bone loss. Exercise will strengthen your body. It can also be fun. A variety of exercises is best. See below for exercises that can help you. Before you start, though, talk to your healthcare provider to be sure these exercises are right for you.



Resistance exercises. These build muscle strength and maintain bone mass. They also make you less prone to injury. Exercises include lifting small weights.

Weight-bearing activities. These help your whole body. They also help you maintain bone mass. Activities include walking, dancing, and housework.



Non-weight-bearing exercises. These help prevent back strain and pain. They do this by building the trunk and leg muscles. Exercises that help with flexibility can prevent falls. Examples include swimming, water exercise, and stretching.

Living with Osteoporosis:

Preventing Fractures

If you have osteoporosis, you can do a lot to reduce its effect on your life. Knowing how to prevent fractures and spinal curvature can help you live more comfortably and safely with this disease.

Reducing Your Risk of Fractures

The most common fracture sites in people with osteoporosis are the wrist, spine, and hip. These fractures are often caused by accidents and falls. All fractures are painful and may limit what you can do. But hip fractures are very serious. They require surgery, and it can take months to recover. To reduce your risk of fractures:

- Get regular exercise. Try walking, swimming, or weight training.
- Eat foods that are rich in calcium, or take calcium supplements.
- Make your home safe to avoid accidents.

Understanding Spinal Fractures

Your spine is made up of many bones called vertebrae. Osteoporosis can cause the vertebrae in your spine to collapse. As a result, your upper back may arch forward, creating a curvature. Spine fractures may also result from back strain and bad posture. You will also lose height. Your lower spine must then adjust to keep your body balanced. This can cause back pain. To prevent or lessen these spinal changes:

- Practice good posture.
- Use proper techniques if you need to lift heavy objects.
- Do back exercises to help your posture.
- Lie on your back when you have pain.

Ask your health care provider about these and other ways to help your spine.



Experience Health for Life

Does your health matter to you? At the St. Cloud VA, our goal is to assist you in establishing your own personal health plan which enables health and well-being so that you can pursue everything else that matters to you!

Health for Life Tips on Facebook is designed to provide you convenient health coaching and support messages and reminders on a wide variety of topics in support of your health goals.

It's free... "like" us on Facebook to help you stay healthy!

www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS

Stay healthy!

Like us to learn how!



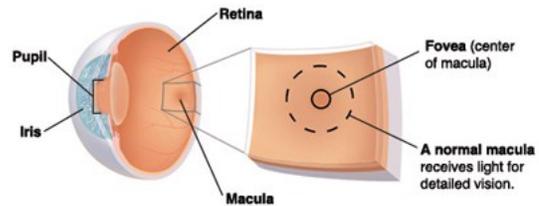
Adapting to Age-Related Macular Degeneration

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of vision loss in adults after age 50. One or both eyes may be affected. The macula (the part of the eye that controls central, detailed vision) becomes damaged. Central vision becomes limited. However, side vision remains clear. There are two types of macular degeneration: “dry” and “wet.”

Dry Macular Degeneration

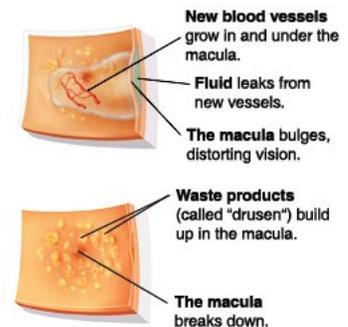
Dry is the most common type of macular degeneration. In the early stages, changes in vision may be hard to notice. Over time, your central vision may slowly worsen. You may notice wavy lines and blank spots in the center of your vision. Colors may look dim.

There is no way to restore vision lost from dry macular degeneration. But you need to monitor it because it can turn into wet macular degeneration.



Wet Macular Degeneration

Wet macular degeneration is less common but more serious. Vision loss is quick and severe. You may suddenly notice dark spots, blank spots, wavy lines, and dim colors in the center of your vision. If wet macular degeneration is caught early, laser treatment and/or eye injections may help slow further vision loss.



What You Can Do to Lower the Risk

- Don't smoke
- Eat healthy food, especially green leafy vegetables
- Control your blood pressure
- Control your weight
- Exercise

If you have vision loss from macular degeneration, you can continue with many of the activities you do now. Vision aids can help you with tasks that require detailed vision. Keep monitoring your vision and call your doctor if you notice any changes. For more information, contact your local SCVAHCS Vision Impairment Services Team (VIST) coordinator, Heidi Ampe, at (320) 252-1670 ext 7235.

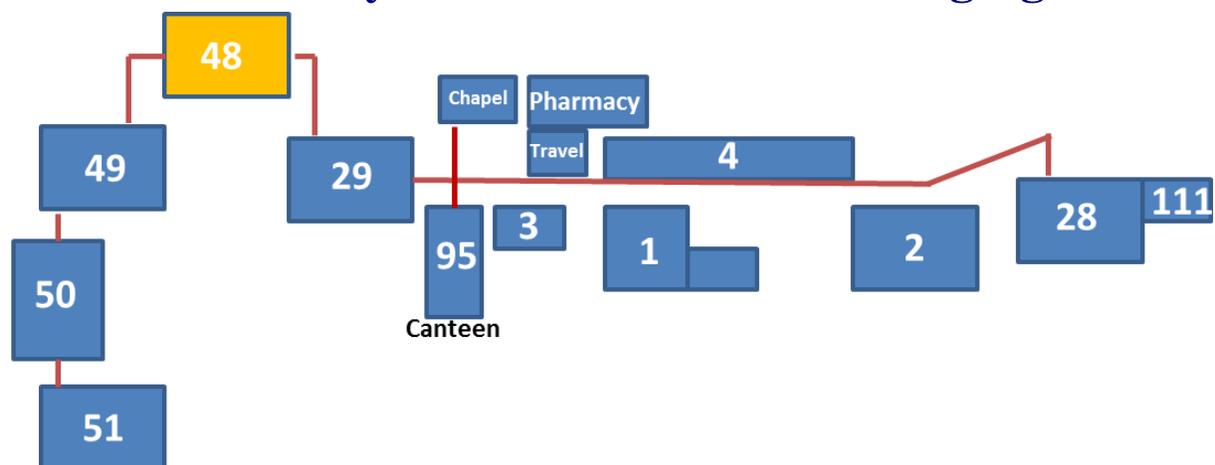
The Patient Advocate Office has moved... but we still want Veterans to find us!

Patient Advocate Office/ VSO/VBA/American Legion

**is now located in
Bldg. 48, Room 237 (2nd Floor)**

**Contact us at:
320-255-6353**

or via MyHealthVet secure messaging.



A Recipe for Health

Granny's Cheddar Salad

Ingredients

2 lg. Granny Smith apples
8 oz. low fat white cheddar cheese
1 T. chopped chives
10 oz. spring mix

1 T. honey
3 T. almonds
½ c. extra virgin olive oil
2 T. apple cider vinegar

Nutritional Information: 213 calories, 16g fat, 6g carbohydrates, 12g protein, 269mg sodium.

Directions

Cut Granny Smith apples and cheddar cheese into bite-size pieces. Toss first 5 ingredients together. Chop almonds into small chunks. Toss almonds with honey and roast in oven at 250° until light golden brown (usually about 5-10 minutes). Mix with salad. Whisk olive oil and vinegar together; toss with salad. Serving size: 3.5 ounces.



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



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