



UPDATE

November/December 2012

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

You're taking care of the Veteran you love.



Caregivers: Key to Health ... pg. 14

In This Issue

- Calendar of Events... pg. 2
- State asks Boomers to plan ahead ... pg. 6
- A Recipe for Health ... pg. 19
- Veterans Day Parade Information ... pg. 21
- Mobile App: PTSD Coach ... pg. 22
- The Accidental Hero Performance ... pg. 23
- VA Prescription Label Improvements... pg. 26
- MyHealtheVet adds Secure Messaging ... pg. 27

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VA
HEALTH
CARE | Defining
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Calendar of Events

Tuesday, Nov. 6—**St. Cloud Area Veterans' Law Clinic** - 12 noon 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.

Sunday, Nov. 11— **Veterans Day Ceremony**—A Veterans Day ceremony, hosted by the St. Cloud Metropolitan Veterans Council (MetroVets), is scheduled for 1:30 p.m., in the Auditorium (Building 8) on the St. Cloud VA campus. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend. The ceremony includes remarks from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran Capt. Jeremy DeGier, who currently serves the Facility Maintenance Officer of Army Aviation Support Facility #2, St. Cloud, Minnesota.

Sunday, November 11 — **Veterans Day Parade** - St. Cloud VA HCS Main Campus, Parade begins at 3p.m. Parking is available at the VA and Apollo High School. There is an open house at the Apollo High School following the parade and light refreshments will be served. All area Veterans, active duty military, reservists, and National Guard members are encouraged to march in the parade. The community is invited to honor Veterans at the parade and open house.

Monday, Nov. 12—**Veterans Day Holiday** - Outpatient Clinics and Services closed for the federal holiday. Urgent Care Clinic in St. Cloud open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 14—**Voices for Veterans** radio show on WJON, AM 1240. Program begins at 8:10 a.m.

FACT:

Los Angeles's full name is "El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de los Angeles de Porciuncula" and it can be abbreviated to 3.36% of its size: "LA"

Favorite Quotation:

**"If a man does his best, what else is there?"
-General George S. Patton (1885-1945)**

Calendar of Events, cont.

Friday, Nov. 16— **Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic**, 12 noon to 2 p.m., at the Montevideo CBOC. FREE legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer Law, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal issues will be discussed. Please call 320-430-1051 to schedule an appointment.

Saturday, Nov. 17—**"Accidental Hero" one man play**—2 p.m., Bldg. 8, Auditorium. Written and performed by the grandson of a WWII hero, this performance tells the extraordinary true story of a modest farm boy from the Midwest who ended up liberating the very towns in Czechoslovakia where his grandparents once lived. Told with rare color WWII film footage, music, and photos from the 1940s. The VA performance is for residential and inpatient Veterans only, but everyone can catch the show at the College of St. Benedicts. For more on the show: <http://www.csbsju.edu/Fine-Arts/Performing-Arts/Accidental-Hero-1213.htm>

Tuesday, Nov. 20—**Celebration of Caregivers Event**—Veterans, Caregivers of Veterans, and other interested individuals are invited to the Celebration of Caregivers Event. We will learn about VA services for Caregivers, network with other Caregivers of Veterans, discover tips for self-care and relaxation and have fun doing it. The event starts at 11 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m. at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, Building 8 (Auditorium). Light refreshments will be served.

Tuesday, Nov. 20—**St. Cloud Area Veterans' Law Clinic** - 12 noon 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.



Veterans
Eligible for VA Health Care?
Find Out. Apply.
320.255.6340 • www.1010ez.med.va.gov

You Served.
Now Let Us Serve You.

St. Cloud VA
Health Care System
Brainerd | Montevideo | Alexandria



Calendar of Events, cont.

Thursday, Nov. 22—**Thanksgiving Day Holiday** - Outpatient Clinics and Services closed for the federal holiday. Urgent Care Clinic in St. Cloud open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 1—**Flu Clinic at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center** - Veterans who are registered for care at the VA are invited to get their flu shot. Flu shots will be offered from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Please enter through Building 1, Main Entrance. The clinic will be conducted in the main lobby area.

Tuesday, Dec. 18—**St. Cloud Area Veterans' Law Clinic** - 12 noon to 2:00p.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.

Wednesday, Dec. 19—**Voices for Veterans** on WJON, AM 1240. Program begins at 8:10 a.m.

Friday, Dec. 21—**Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic**, 12 noon to 2 p.m., at the Montevideo CBOC. FREE legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer Law, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal issues will be discussed. Please call 320-430-1051 to schedule an appointment.

Tuesday Dec. 25—**Christmas Holiday** - Outpatient Clinics and Services closed for the federal holiday. Urgent Care Clinic in St. Cloud open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tuesday Jan. 1, 2013—**New Year's Holiday** - Outpatient Clinics and Services closed for the federal holiday. Urgent Care Clinic in St. Cloud open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

FACTS:

- A newly formed nerve cell is called a neuroblast.
- Rubies and sapphires are made of corundum, the hardest known rock after the diamond.

Health Care System Updates

New Clinic Coordinator at Brainerd CBOC- The St. Cloud VA Health Care System announces the selection of Nicole M. Finnegan, of Warroad, as the Clinic Coordinator for the VA's Brainerd Community Based Outpatient Clinic. In this new role, Finnegan is responsible for overseeing the clinical and administrative operations of the clinic, which provides primary care and other health services to over 5,000 Veterans per year. Finnegan previously served as Clinic Supervisor at Riverwood Healthcare Center's Garrison Clinic. A Minnesota native, Finnegan graduated from Warroad High School, and received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at The College of St. Scholastica.

Building 3 Corridor is open - The Bldg. 3 connecting corridor is now open under temporary circumstances. Please excuse our mess as the Bldg. 3 Dental expansion is still under construction. Throughout the remainder of the project, portions of the corridor may be closed for short durations. We will schedule after hours work as much as possible for remaining corridor work in order to provide the maximum convenience for Veterans, visitors and staff. Thank you for your patience while we work to improve services to our Veterans!

PACT Phone Center Trial - The St. Cloud VA HCS is currently trialing the integration of our call center into our PACT teams. If you are a patient wanting to reschedule or talk to PACT 1, which includes providers Firestone, Sather, Domingo, Rich, Faundeen, or Pittman-Leyendecker (Women's Clinic) the staff member can transfer you, the patient to another extension, which will be directed to and answered by clerical staff in PACT 1. We believe that this will increase patient satisfaction, as we will be able to assist the patients/callers in a more timely manner due to the call center being answered in the PACT team. More information will follow in future editions of the UPDATE! to inform you of the status of the trial.

*One Number....One Mission
To get you help when you need it most.*

**Veterans
Crisis Line**



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

State asks boomers to plan ahead



If you are a Minnesotan between the ages of 40 and 65, chances are good that you will be getting a letter from the Governor.

The letter will tell you to please plan now for your future need for long-term care. It advises that you can contact the new state/federal [Own Your Future support service](#) for information and advice about how to proceed. (Or call the state's Senior Linkage phone line, 1-800-333-2433.)

Why all the fuss? Minnesota's senior population has been exploding by the day since 2011 as the huge baby boomer generation, born between 1946 and 1964, reaches age 65. By 2030, the share of the state's population older than 65 will top 20 percent, up from about 13 percent today. *(cont. next page)*

Today's 65-year-olds have a 70 percent chance of someday needing long-term care -- that is, regular help with cleaning, bathing, eating and other daily tasks. Estimates are that over 30 percent of Minnesota baby boomers will be financially unprepared to shoulder the cost of such care.

Additionally, Minnesota has long been a state with one of the nation's longest life expectancies, and the components are present for deepening money trouble for state government. *.(cont. next page)*

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Additionally, Minnesota has long been a state with one of the nation's longest life expectancies, and the components are present for deepening money trouble for state government.

Fortunately, this is a crisis that Minnesotans can see coming and can avert by acting in their own best interests.

The Governor's letter is part of a public information and counseling service designed to get Minnesotans thinking about long term care.

Other efforts are underway to reform Medicaid and other programs, so that seniors are not forced to drain their assets and let the government take over when care needs arise.

While the VA offers an array of extended care services to eligible Veterans, each Veteran is unique and so is their eligibility for VA health services. That is why it is important that Veterans consider the potential long-term care needs of themselves and their families, and plan accordingly...now.





Guide to Long Term Care

Explore Your Options

VA recently published a **Guide to Long Term Care** on the VA Geriatrics website. Explore the site to learn more about the Long Term Care options provided by VA to eligible Veterans. For specific questions on eligibility please contact your County VSO. Click the following link or paste it into your browser to view the site! <http://www.va.gov/geriatrics/Guide/LongTermCare/>

Nursing Home and Residential Care

Places where you can live and get care when home and community based services cannot meet your needs.



Community Living Centers



Community Nursing Homes



State Veteran Homes

Other Residential Care Options

Places where you can live and get care other than nursing homes.



Adult Family Homes



Assisted Living



Medical Foster Homes

Other Services

Other services are available to Veterans no matter where they live, such as Hospice and Palliative Care.



Other Helpful Sites

Disclaimer

The VA does not necessarily endorse the information, products or services of the linked websites in this section.

eBenefits

- eBenefits has benefit-related information and tools for Veterans, including:
My eBenefits – a tool for updating personal information, monitoring claims, applying for benefits and managing health
- Links to other websites that provide information about military and Veteran benefits
- www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal

VA Social Work

The VA Social Work website includes:

- What social workers do
- How social workers can help Veterans
- Social work Web links
- www.socialwork.va.gov/socialworkers.asp

GovBenefits

- GovBenefits provides information on over 1,000 Federal and state benefit programs, including:
- The Benefit Finder – a free, confidential tool for finding government benefits
- Information on eligibility for benefits such as food, housing and Medicare/Medicaid
- Information on how to apply for government benefit programs
- www.Benefits.gov

LOGO: National Clearing-house for Long Term Care

- The National Clearinghouse for Long Term Care provides resources to plan for Long Term Care, including:
- Understanding Long Term Care: definitions, services and providers
- Planning for Long Term Care: planning steps, information and resources
- Paying for Long Term Care: costs, public programs and private financing
- www.longtermcare.gov/LTC/Main_Site/index.aspx

Medicare.gov

- Medicare.gov provides information on planning for Long Term Care, including:
Long Term Care Planning Tool – a tool to find out what services are available, how much they may cost, and how to pay for them
- Descriptions of different types of Long Term Care services and facilities
- Information on Medicaid and Long Term Care
- Steps to choosing Long Term Care
- www.medicare.gov/LongTermCare/Static/Home.asp

"You Betcha" you're from Minnesota when.....

You own only 3 spices...salt, pepper, and ketchup.

You have more miles on your snow blower than on your car.

You know Ole and Lena personally.

You design your Halloween costumes to fit over snowmobile suits.

You know which leaves make good toilet paper.

You know the 4 seasons... winter, still winter, not winter, and almost winter.

You owe more money on your snowmobile than your car.

You thought the movie "Grumpy Old Men" was a documentary.

You think everyone from a different state has an accent.

You have 10 favorite recipes for venison.

You think wild rice is exotic and white rice is a hot dish.

Somewhere in the state is a piece of frozen metal with bits of your tongue stuck to it.

You consider a six inch snowfall a blessing for "the cities" because it provides instant urban renewal.

You keep the snow tires on your truck all year because it isn't worth taking them off for only two months.

You believe that the Vikings would have won four super bowls by now if they were still playing in the Met Stadium.

Keep Cholesterol Levels in Check!

Everyone has heard the saying, “too much of a good thing can be bad.” The saying holds true for cholesterol levels. The body produces all the cholesterol it needs, but depending on a person’s diet, cholesterol can soar to dangerous levels putting them at risk for heart disease.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance produced by the body, that is also found in many foods. Too much cholesterol in the blood can contribute to the buildup of cholesterol on the walls of arteries. This buildup of fatty deposits and other items known as plaque can reduce the flexibility of arteries. Over time, plaque causes them to become narrow and blood flow to and from the heart to decrease and at times become blocked.

Several factors affect cholesterol levels including diet, weight, physical activity, age, gender and heredity. Below is a list of several ways people can maintain lower cholesterol levels through lifestyle changes including:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise regularly
- Don’t smoke
- Treat high cholesterol

www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS



Connect with us on Facebook!

National Caregiver Month!

During the month of November, VA is making a nationwide effort to reach out and celebrate those amazing family members, friends, and others who help Veterans with daily activities and health care needs.



At the St. Cloud VA, we consider ourselves very lucky to have so many wonderful Caregivers who selflessly provide support and care to the Veterans who receive services here. Did you know that St. Cloud has a program specifically designed to help Caregivers of Veterans?

Allow me to introduce myself – I'm Jess Behrends, a social worker and the coordinator of the Caregiver Support Program. I'm excited to be able to help Caregivers navigate the VA system and identify services that might help them in their Caregiving roles, like respite or in-home care. This issue of UPDATE describes a number of resources for Caregivers that are available through the VA. If you are a Caregiver, please feel free to give me a call at my number below if you would like to discuss any of these programs further.

I especially want to draw your attention to the notice about our **Celebration of Caregivers Resource Fair on Nov. 20, 2012** from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the St. Cloud VA auditorium. This event on Nov. 20 will feature representatives from many of the programs you'll see described here, and some that aren't! We'll have coffee and refreshments as well, and an opportunity for you to network with other Caregivers. I hope you will be able to join us.

Please give me a call if you have any questions about the Caregiver Support Program. If you know any Caregivers, be sure to give them a big "thank you" this November!

Sincerely,
Jess Behrends, LICSW
St. Cloud VAHCS Caregiver Support Coordinator
(320) 252-1670 ext 7283



You Are Invited To A Celebration of Caregivers

WHO: Veterans, Caregivers
of Veterans, and other
interested individuals

WHEN: Tues., Nov. 20, 2012
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

WHERE: St. Cloud VA
Auditorium (Bldg. 8)

WHY:

- To learn about VA services for Caregivers
- To network with other Caregivers of Veterans
- To discover tips for self-care and relaxation
- To have fun!

Coffee &
refreshments
will be served!



"There are only four kinds of people in the world – those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers". [Rosalynn Carter]

WHAT IS A CAREGIVER?

- Someone who provides care services to an enrolled Veteran, such as assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) like dressing, bathing, eating, and wound care; and/or
- Someone who provides supervision or protection to a Veteran due to symptoms of neurological impairment or injury.



WHO CAN BE A CAREGIVER?

- Caregivers are often family members such as spouses, parents, siblings, or children – but close friends, roommates, neighbors, and church or social supports may also be Caregivers.
- Caregivers do not always live with the Veteran. They may live next door, across town, or even on the other side of the country. Some “long distance” Caregivers help their care-recipient Veterans by coordinating health care and other services from far away.

HOW DOES VA SUPPORT CAREGIVERS OF VETERANS?

- Jess Behrends, LICSW, is the St. Cloud **Caregiver Support Coordinator** (CSC) and acts as a point of resource and referral for Caregivers of Veterans. She can help Caregivers access various services for their Veterans within the VA.
- The VA has established a toll-free **Caregiver Support Line** (1-855-260-3274) and a **website** (<http://www.caregiver.va.gov>) to provide additional resources and support to Caregivers.
- Eligible Veterans can receive 30 days of **respite care** per year. This can provide a much-needed break for Caregivers.
- Depending on medical need, Veterans may be eligible to access **in-home services** such as Home Based Primary Care, home health aides, or skilled nursing. These services can help ease Caregiver stress by helping with some of the more challenging tasks of Caregiving.
- VA also has a wide variety of **other services** that can help Caregivers meet the needs of their care-recipient Veterans, such as home telehealth, adult day health care, adaptive equipment, home modification, and hospice.
- Caregivers may be eligible for **mental health services** in connection with their Veteran's treatment, such as counseling, education, support groups, or family therapy.



Flu Vaccinations Available for Eligible Veterans

Sites include Montevideo, Brainerd, Alexandria, and St. Cloud



Did you miss the flu shot clinics? There is an additional Flu Shot Clinic scheduled for December 1 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 4801 Veterans Drive, in St. Cloud. All Veterans who are registered for care at the VA are invited to get their flu shot. Please enter Building 1, Main Entrance for the Flu Clinic.

Additionally, seasonal flu shots are available during scheduled appointments, or from Primary Care Teams on a walk-in basis at any of the St. Cloud VA locations. Walk-ins may have a short wait.

Further updates to the flu shot program at the St. Cloud VA will be announced on the flu shot information line: (320) 255-6444.

Make your child's school lunch creative and filled with nutrients

There are many different ways to add fun foods to your brown paper bag with a variety of nutrients to enjoy during the day.

Here are a few simple steps and ideas in order to pack a tasty and nutritious lunch:

- Let your child help you pack his/her lunch. This will introduce them to foods that are healthy and they will enjoy their lunch more the next day knowing that they helped to prepare it.
- Go green by eliminating the use of plastic sandwich bags. Find a reusable and fun colored Tupperware container to use that your kids will enjoy.
- Packing your child's lunch will allow for them to have more time to actually eat during lunch time if they don't have to buy it. Most kids have around 20 minutes to eat lunch, so provide them with easy to eat and easy to open packages to save time.
- Fill their lunch box with small foods that are easy for the kids to handle as well as fun to eat. For instance, pack the ingredients for a sandwich and let the child put together his/her own sandwich to add some fun to lunch time.
- Finish up by packing something fun: a sticker, small note, small cookie wrapped in plastic with a ribbon, fruit on a stick, dessert cut into a playful shape.
- Do not forget the drink to top off the meal. Send water, low-fat milk to add calcium and vitamin D or 100% fruit juice. Avoid sweetened beverages that contain excess sugar such as any soda. According to dietitians, sweet soft drinks provide essentially no key nutrients and are sweetened with either sugar or high-fructose corn syrup.

If you have other questions about healthy eating, cooking, or meal planning contact your St. Cloud VAHCS dietitian at (320) 255-6376.

National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic



One of our St Cloud Veterans, Ryan Pomahatch, participated in the National Veterans Summer Sports clinic September 15th-22nd, in sunny San Diego, CA.

Ryan served in the Army during Persian Gulf War. An incident within the last year left him with a brain injury affecting primarily his verbal communication. He often has difficulty getting out the words he wishes to express, but when it came to his experience in San Diego, "All awesome. Guy that's blind, guy with no leg and arm with five different pieces (prosthetic adaptations). Anybody can do it. I did everything. I feel dumb with not being able to talk, but no one said anything, they were accepting."

He returned with enthusiasm and can be found sharing his experiences with all who will listen. Throughout the clinic, Ryan learned skills in track & field events, archery, rowing, rock climbing, cycling, kayaking, surfing, and sailing. Ryan states rock climbing as his most favorite event throughout the week. He assisted his team Nautilus to overall victory with his excellent time acquired during his climb.

He's already anticipating his participation in the National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in 2013 and looks forward to encouraging others towards participating in the various VA National Events as, "Anybody can do it!".



Above: Ryan Pomahatch with his trophy. Below: Ryan in action.

A Recipe for Health

Hawaiian Pork Chops

Ingredients

4 (4-oz.) boneless pork loin chops, 3/4 inch thick
1 (8-oz.) can unsweetened pineapple chunks, undrained
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/3 c. chopped green pepper
1/3 c. thinly sliced onion rings
1 can reduced-fat beef broth
Hot cooked rice
1/4 c. ketchup
2 T. brown sugar
1 T. cider vinegar
2 T. cornstarch
3 T. cold water

Directions

Sprinkle pork chops with salt and pepper. In a large non-stick skillet coated with cooking spray, cook the chops for 4-5 minutes on each side or until lightly browned. Remove and keep warm. In the same skillet, sauté green pepper and onion for 2 minutes or until almost tender. Stir in the broth, pineapple, ketchup, brown sugar and vinegar. Bring to a boil. Return pork chops to the pan. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 6-10 minutes or until meat juices run clear. Combine the cornstarch and water until smooth; stir into skillet. Bring to a boil; cook for 1-2 minutes or until thickened. Serve over rice if desired.

History of Veterans Day



Veterans Day originated as "Armistice Day" on Nov. 11, 1919, the first anniversary of the end of World War I. Congress passed a resolution in 1926 for an annual observance, and Nov. 11 became a national holiday beginning in 1938. Veterans Day is not to be confused with Memorial Day, a common misunderstanding, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Memorial Day (the fourth Monday in May) honors American service members who died in service to their country or as a result of injuries incurred during battle, while Veterans Day pays tribute to all American Veterans—living or dead—but especially gives thanks to living Veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime.



In Honor of our Heroes

VETERANS DAY PARADE

Sunday,
Nov. 11, 2012

VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION

Parade Time: 3:00 p.m.

Parking available at the VA and Apollo

**Open House - Following parade,
Apollo High School**

Light refreshments will be served

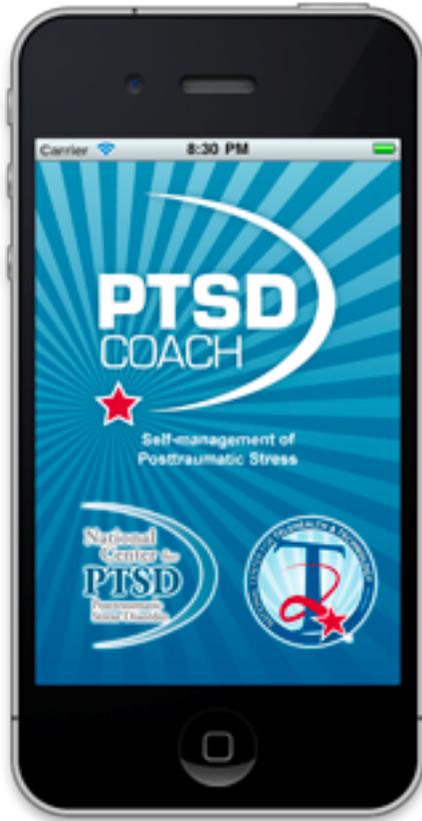
All ages veterans, active-duty military, Reservist and National Guard members are encouraged to march in the parade. The community is invited to honor veterans at the parade and open house.

*PLEASE JOIN US IN THANKING OUR
MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM...
PAST AND PRESENT.*

St. Cloud Times | sttimes.com



Mobile App: PTSD Coach



The PTSD Coach app can help you learn about and manage symptoms that commonly occur after trauma. Features include:

- Reliable information on PTSD and treatments that work.
- Tools for screening and tracking your symptoms.
- Convenient, easy-to-use skills to help you handle stress symptoms.
- Direct links to support and help.
- Always with you when you need it.

To learn more about the mobile app for PTSD go to the following website:

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/ptsdcoach.asp>

Download the mobile app
Free PTSD Coach download from:
[iTunes \(iOS\)](#) and [Google Play \(Android\)](#)



Written and performed by the grandson of a WWII hero, this performance tells the extraordinary true story of a modest farm boy from the Midwest who ended up liberating the very towns in Czechoslovakia where his grandparents once lived. Told with rare color WWII film footage, music, and photos from the 1940s, this show has wowed audiences in New York and across the Midwest.

**You can see this performance at the VA Medical Center in St. Cloud at 4801 Veterans Drive on
Nov. 17, 2012, 2 p.m.
in the Auditorium (Bldg. 8)**

**All Veterans, family, and friends welcome to attend.
Join us after the play for a social with the performer/writer of
the play.**

Quitting Smoking: A Winnable Goal



Smoking and Tobacco Use Facts

Smoking is the leading preventable cause of premature death and a leading cause of illness and mortality.

Smoking and tobacco use cessation persists as one of the VA's biggest public health challenges. Many Veterans began using tobacco while in the military. The rate of smoking among Veterans in the VA health care system is higher than among the U.S. population.

Approximately 70 percent of all smokers say they want to quit, but even the most motivated may try to quit five or six times before they are able to quit. Over 3 million Americans successfully quit smoking every year.

To help Veterans quit smoking and tobacco use, VA offers:

- Screening for tobacco use during primary care visits
- Individual counseling
- Prescriptions for nicotine replacement therapy, such as a nicotine patch or gum, or other medications
- Participation in evidence-based smoking cessation programs

This year the **Great American Smokeout is on November 15!** This would be a great day to quit and embark on the journey to better health!



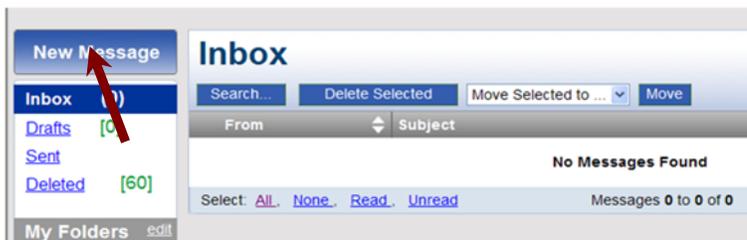
Just think - no more phone tag!

With Secure Messaging thru My Health e Vet, you can contact your VA Healthcare team without waiting on hold or playing phone tag. Secure Messaging is as easy to use as email, but completely safe and secure. It's great for non-urgent communication and general healthcare-related questions.

No Waiting on Hold!
No Waiting for a Call Back!
Don't Delay, Opt-in Today!

How to use Secure Messaging:

- 1) Log into your My Health e Vet account at: www.myhealth.va.gov
(Forgot your User ID or Password? Simply click on the 'Forgot User ID' or 'Forgot Password' link directly below the sign in box. Note, you only need to answer one of the two security questions that will appear.)
- 2) Select "Secure Messaging" on the top navigation bar, then click on the orange "Open Secure Messaging" tab in the middle of the screen.
- 3) If it's the first time you're accessing your Secure Messaging inbox, you will need to read the terms and conditions and select 'Opt In'.



- 4) Click 'New Message' and your provider's name will automatically be in the 'To' line of the message.

We hope you take advantage of Secure Messaging. If you have any questions about Secure Messaging or My Health e Vet, please contact me via phone or email. I'll be happy to explain this time-saving tool.

You can also stop by my office during your next visit to the St. Cloud VA and I'll help you get on-track with Secure Messaging and many of the other great tools and features of My Health e Vet.



Brian Vetter
My Health e Vet Coordinator
St. Cloud VA Healthcare System
Phone: 320-252-1670, dial 9 then ext: 7335





We Asked... You Answered...

VA Changed to Better Meet Your Needs

A New and Improved VA Prescription Label

We have changed the format of your VA prescription label to make the most important information more visible. If you have any questions about your medications, please contact your local VA pharmacist at any time.

Important information is now highlighted.

Your name has been moved to the top of the label.

Directions on how to take your medication are now larger and bolded.

VETERAN NAME (LAST, FIRST)
TAKE 1 TABLET BY MOUTH TWICE A DAY

IBUPROFEN 400 MG TAB
Rx# 6543210 Refills Left: 1 (of 3)
DR. KATHLEEN LANCASTER Qty: 60 TAB

VAMC FACILITY NAME
000XX (10297/10001) Ph: (800) 000-0000

Avoid alcoholic beverages.
May cause dizziness.
Do not take other medicines without checking with your doctor or pharmacist.
Filled 01/15/2012
Order refills by: 08/15/2012
Discard after: 01/15/2013
54 Round White 54
733

The date the prescription can no longer be refilled is clearly stated.

We Need Your Feedback...

To help us improve even more for you, please provide feedback on the new VA prescription label to your local VA pharmacist.

*Note: Your specific label may be different than the one shown.

03-2012



Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

My HealthVet adds Secure Messaging!



Veterans with a My HealthVet (www.myhealth.va.gov) account will notice that the next time they log in they will be asked to read new terms and conditions of use of the website. They will also be able to opt-in to Secure Messaging at the same time they accept the new terms and conditions.

“We wanted to make it easier for Veterans to participate in Secure Messaging,” said Brady Bautch, My HealthVet Coordinator for the VA Midwest Health Care Network. Secure Messaging allows Veterans to communicate electronically with their VA health care team in a completely safe and secure environment.

“It’s a fantastic way to stay connected without waiting on hold, playing phone tag, or burning cell phone minutes. Veterans can send a message to their VA health care team whenever they want,” Bautch explained. He added that Secure Messaging is not for urgent medical needs, but ideal for questions about prescriptions, appointments or general health care.

For Veterans just signing up for My HealthVet they will also be able to opt-in to Secure Messaging at the same time they accept the website’s terms and conditions. “The registration page for My HealthVet has a new layout that makes it easier to sign up for Secure Messaging,” Bautch said.

He added that before any Veteran can participate in Secure Messaging or enjoy the more advanced features of My HealthVet they must first complete the VA’s In-Person Authentication form which can be printed off from the My HealthVet website. Forms are also available at all VA medical centers and clinics. Veterans need to fill out the form and then take it and a government-issued ID with them during their next visit to their local VA medical center or clinic.

If Veterans have any questions about My HealthVet or problems registering on the site, they are encouraged to contact the My HealthVet coordinator at the St. Cloud VA HCS, Brian Vetter at (320) 252-1670 ext. 7335



Take care of your buddy!

**Help a fellow Veteran enroll for
VA health care.**

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

www.1010ez.med.va.gov