

St. Cloud VA UPDATE

February 19, 2021



*A monthly newsletter for Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System, and for those who serve them.
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*

COVID-19 Vaccination Scheduling Update

To receive a vaccine at the St. Cloud VA you must be a Veteran enrolled for VA health care benefits.

As of Feb. 19, we have provided more than 10,000 total doses of vaccine.

We are scheduling enrolled Veterans 75 and older for vaccination--call now!

All enrolled Veterans 75 years and older who receive care within the St. Cloud VA Health Care System, or enrolled Veterans who are frontline essential workers regardless of health condition or age, and who have not yet received a COVID-19 vaccine should now schedule their COVID-19 vaccination appointments by calling 320-252-1670 and select option 8.

Enrolled Veterans who are considered frontline essential workers include:

- Health Care employees
- First responders (e.g. firefighters and police officers)
- Education (teachers and support staff members, including daycare)

- Food and agriculture employees
- Manufacturing employees
- Corrections officers
- U.S. Postal Service employees
- Public transit employees
- Grocery store employees

If you already have an appointment, please report to the clinic at your scheduled date and time; there is no need to confirm your appointment.

We are getting ready to start vaccinating those 65 and older--indicate your interest online!

Enrolled Veterans 65 to 74 years of age, or those younger than 65 with a high-risk condition listed in the table below, are encouraged to indicate their interest in getting a vaccine by filling out the vaccine interest form at:

<https://www.va.gov/health.../covid-19-vaccine/stay-informed>.

After you have indicated your interest, we will reach out to you to let you know when it is time to schedule an appointment. The high-risk conditions are:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD
- Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions
- Immunocompromised
- Organ transplant
- Obesity [BMI] of 30kg/m2 or higher
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Type1 & 2 diabetes
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cerebrovascular disease
- Guillain-Barre syndrome
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or
- Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Liver disease
- Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
- Chronic kidney disease

If you are currently not eligible to receive a vaccine at this time, please monitor our website at www.stcloud.va.gov or our [Facebook page](#) for updates.

If you are a Veteran that is interested in receiving care at the VA but are not yet enrolled, please apply for VA health care by calling 320-255-6340.

Thank you--we look forward to seeing you!

Travel Pay Claim Process is Online

The St. Cloud VA Health Care System is using the new Beneficiary Travel Self-Service (BTSSS) to reimburse eligible Veterans and beneficiaries for travel to and from VA medical appointments.

Click on [step-by-step instructions](#) for more information on how to use BTSSS.

This system allows users to submit and track transportation reimbursement claims using a secure web-based portal on the [Access VA](#), available 24/7, 365 days a year.

BTSSS has many advantages, for example, it:

- Reduces the need for completing hard copy claim submissions in-person at the facility by replacing and eliminating the previous kiosk method.
- Provides an easy to use web-based application that allows you to enter your claim over the internet via [AccessVA](#).
- Ensures timely processing and payment of travel reimbursements and reduces manual intervention and improper claim payments through automated features.
- Authenticates the Veteran or Beneficiary by:
 - 1.) VA PIV card;
 - 2.) A DS Logon Level 2 account.

Veterans will need to visit [AccessVA](#), to select submit a travel claim, and logon using a DS Logon account. A DS Logon is an ID issued by DoD that will allows Veterans and caregivers to access many DoD and VA sites with one user username and password. If you need a DS Logon ID log into [Need a DS Log on?](#) to get started.

Here are some questions and answers about the BTSSS travel claim process:

Q1: Who is eligible for Beneficiary Travel Reimbursement?

Veterans and caregivers may be eligible for travel pay. A list of eligibility requirements can be found on the [VA Travel Pay Reimbursement](#) webpage.

Q2: How do I submit a travel reimbursement claim?

The St. Cloud VA Health Care System has implemented the new web-based portal to submit and process beneficiary travel claims. The new portal, the Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS), is VA's preferred method to receive travel reimbursement claims. BTSSS will phase out claims submitted through the facility kiosks. However, in-person claims, and hard-copy submissions will still be available but will take longer to process. BTSSS is available through the [AccessVA](#) website.

Q3: Are there advantages to using the Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS)?

The BTSSS automates the claims process to ensure timely processing and payment of travel reimbursement claims. With BTSSS, turnaround time to evaluate and settle a

claim is less than 5 days. BTSSS allows Veterans and caregivers to submit claims 24/7, 365 days a year from a computer or mobile device. It also allows users to electronically track the status of a claim request.

Q4: Can I get help to file my first claim?

There are several sources of help for filing a claim. BTSSS was built with several self-help tools to guide users through the process of logging on and submitting/tracking claims. Additionally, a user's guide for BTSSS is available on the [VA Travel Pay Reimbursement](#) webpage. Lastly, Veterans with a DS Logon who do not have access to a computer can get help from a travel clerk at the facility.

Q5: How do I access BTSSS?

BTSSS is available through the [AccessVA](#) webpage. To submit a claim, Visit [AccessVA](#), select submit a travel claim, and logon using a DS Log on Level 2 account. A DS Logon is an ID issued by DoD that will allows Veterans and caregivers to access many VA and DoD sites with one user username and password. [Need a DS Log on?](#) If you need assistance obtaining a DS Log On, you may contact 1.800.538.9552 Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Central Time.

Q6: Why did VA change to BTSSS?

The current claims submission processes are 100% manual. BTSSS will significantly reduce human intervention for each reimbursement claim request and improve tracking, reporting, and the auditing capability for all stages of the claims process.

Chat with a Pharmacy Representative Through VA Health Chat



Medication Question? Start a Chat with a VA Pharmacist.

VA Health Chat makes health care simpler for Veterans by giving you access to care without having to step foot into a facility. With VA Health Chat, Veterans can chat online with VA staff members, receive medical advice, schedule appointments, refill prescriptions, and more. With the launch of a NEW pharmacy feature, you can also use VA Health Chat to ask your medication questions to a VA pharmacy representative.

Chat hours are Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CST, excluding federal holidays. Only Veterans receiving care at select locations are eligible to use VA Health Chat.

VA Health Chat is available on the [VA App Store](#) and through the VA Launchpad app. It is also available for download on the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store.

To view participating locations and learn more about VA Health Chat, visit the [VA App Store](#).

Parking Ramp



RENDERED IMAGE - VIEW OF PROPOSED PARKING STRUCTURE FROM BUILDING 1 LOOKING EAST/SOUTHEAST

On Feb. 1, construction began on a new patient parking ramp at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center.

Construction is estimated to be completed by the fall of 2022.

The parking ramp is to be located east of the main drive, south of Bldgs. 1 and 2. Construction will require closing the existing parking lot to the east of the main drive, by Bldg. 92.

A temporary addition the existing patient/visitor lot on the west side of the main drive will be available for Veterans and families to use.

During construction, the main drive and roadway in front of Bldgs. 1 and 2 will remain open for traffic.

When completed, the new parking ramp will feature 254 parking spaces, 200 more than are currently offered in the parking lot on the east side of the main drive.

The parking ramp will have two levels and is a fully accessible design. The ramp is not a sloped style parking ramp; instead it will feature two flat parking levels and will be equipped with elevators and a heated entrance shelter.

Construction is estimated to be completed by the fall of 2022.

We apologize for any disruption.

COVID Copay Billing Statements

After pausing debt collection in April 2020, VA was scheduled to resume billing for VA copay debt in January 2021. On Jan. 22, 2021 President Biden signed an Executive Order delaying debt collection from Veterans. Implementing guidance from VA has not yet been received. As soon as it is available, we will share it with you.

CPAC staff at the St. Cloud VA can print out a current VA account summary for Veterans. This can be printed at the CPAC Customer Service point for VA billing questions from 9-Noon in the Building 5 (Pharmacy) area, Mon – Thurs., or via phone at 320-255-6384, or attached to secure messages.

FAQs from VA.gov:

Do I have to pay my VA copays at this time?

We've stopped sending monthly copay billing statements for all Veterans. This means you won't receive a statement for any copays during this time. Please check back regularly for updates.

What if I can't pay my existing VA debt?

We've taken action to stop collection on newly established Veteran debt and make it easier for Veterans to request extended repayment plans and address other needs

during this time. Please check back regularly for updates.

If you have VA debt that we've already transferred to the U.S. Department of the Treasury

The U.S. Department of the Treasury won't take any more action on your debt during this time. This means they won't add more fees or interest, reduce or withhold part of your federal or state payments or job wages to pay your debt, or refer your account to a private collection agency.

If you have VA debt being managed by VA

We'll work with you to decide whether you'd prefer us to temporarily stop collection action, including stopping the addition of fees and interest, during this time or extend your repayment terms.

- **If you have debt related to VA benefits**, please contact the VA Debt Management Center at 800-827-0648 to make arrangements. We're here Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET.
- **If you have debt related to VA health care**, please contact the Health Resource Center at 866-347-2352 to make arrangements. Be sure to have your account number ready.

How do I pay my VA copay bill?

You can pay your bill in any of these 4 ways:

Online: Pay directly from your bank account or by debit or credit card on the secure [Pay.gov website](https://pay.gov).

By phone: Call us at 888-827-4817. Be sure to have your account number ready.

By mail: Send your payment stub, along with a check or money order made payable to "VA," to the address below. Be sure to include your account number on the check or money order.

Department of Veterans Affairs
PO Box 3978
Portland, OR 97208-3978

In person: Visit your nearest VA medical center and ask for the agent cashier's office. Bring your payment stub, along with a check or money order made payable to "VA." Be sure to include your account number on the check or money order.

Note: We can deposit your check through either a one-time electronic funds transfer or as a check transaction. If we make an electronic funds transfer, your bank may withdraw the funds from your account on the same day as we process your payment and you won't receive your check back from your bank.

If you need help understanding your patient statement

- [View our guide to understanding your VA patient statement \(PDF\)](#)

- Call us at 866-400-1238. We're here Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. -9 p.m. ET.
- Or visit your nearest VA medical center or other health facility and ask to talk with a member of the facility's revenue staff.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Veterans Affairs Radio Show

Monday, March 1 8:10-8:30 a.m.
KNSI AM 1450/FM 103.3

Coffee Talks

Friday, March 12 2-4 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 29, Rm. 20E, or virtually
Coffee Talks are informal conversations intended to provide Veterans an opportunity to have their questions about VA health care answered.
To attend, call the Health Hub at 320-252-1670 ext. 7271 to reserve a spot! Limit 6 for in-person attendance, reservations are required.

Voices for Veterans Radio Show

Wednesday, March 17 8-8:30 a.m.
WJON AM 1240

For a complete Calendar of Events, go to
<https://www.stcloud.va.gov/calendar.asp>

Quick Reference Phone List

Main St. Cloud VA HCS Phone Number	320-252-1670 or 800-247-1739
TDD User	320-255-6450
Max J. Beilke VA Clinic, Alexandria	320-759-2640
Brainerd VA Clinic	218-855-1115
Montevideo VA Clinic	320-269-2222
Veterans Crisis Line	800-273-8255 Press 1
Homeless Veteran Hotline	877- 424-3838

Billing:

• VA Care	866-347-2352
• Care in the Community (non-VA care)	877-881-7618
Caregiver Support Team	Ext. 7283
Chaplain Service	Ext. 6386
Community Care Referrals	Ext. 6401
Discrimination Complaints	Ext. 6304
Eligibility	Ext. 6340
Nutrition Clinic	Ext. 6376
Transition & Care Management Program	Ext. 6453
Patient Advocate	Ext. 6353
Pharmacy Refill Line	855-560-1724
Privacy Officer	Ext. 6408
Public Affairs Office	Ext. 6353
Release of Information (Medical Records)	Ext. 6336
Transportation	Ext. 7622
TRICARE	844-866-9378
Voluntary Service	Ext. 6365
VA Police	Ext. 6355

Stay in Touch

Visit our Website: www.stcloud.va.gov

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS

Visit us on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/stcloudvahcs/>

Sign up for our automated email service. Visit the St. Cloud VA Website at: <http://www.stcloud.va.gov> and on the right-hand side of the page is a request to sign up for email updates. Enter your email address and you are automatically signed up to receive email updates from our web page.