

St. Cloud VA

# UPDATE

September 18, 2020



*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](mailto:barry.venable@va.gov)*

---

## **Flu Vaccination Clinics for Eligible Veterans across Central Minnesota**

During this flu season, flu shots for Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System are available as part of most scheduled VA appointments, at multiple, convenient drive thru flu shot clinics, and through the VA Community Care Network.

The 2020-2021 flu season will coincide with the COVID-19 pandemic. Flu shots provide the best protection against influenza and help reduce illness and hospitalization. An annual flu shot is an important part of staying healthy and is more important than ever during this combined flu season and COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Flu shots for Veterans with a previously scheduled appointment**

- Social distancing and the need to minimize traffic in facilities play an important role in our approach to flu shots this year.
- Veterans attending most scheduled appointments can get a flu shot as

part of their pre-scheduled appointment. Some appointment areas, like lab and others, are not able to administer flu shots.

- Walk-in flu shots are not offered and flu-shot only appointments cannot be scheduled. This means if you have an appointment in an area that does not offer shots you should get a flu shot at a drive-thru clinic or via the community care network instead.

### **Flu shots for Veterans without a VA appointment**

We are also offering drive-up flu clinics for enrolled Veterans only. No appointment is necessary to get vaccinated at the drive thru clinics.

Veterans using the drive thru clinics will undergo screening for vaccine allergies and COVID-19 symptoms. Veterans are encouraged to prescreen for COVID-19 by using VA's [COVID-19 screening tool](#), available

<https://www.va.gov/covid19screen/>. To ensure everyone's safety, vaccinations for Veterans with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 will be deferred at the drive thru clinics and Veterans will be directed to other treatment locations.

Safety and weather related postponements or suspensions of drive thru clinic locations will be announced at

<https://www.stcloud.va.gov> and <https://www.facebook.com/stcloudvahcs>.

To facilitate efficient operations of the drive thru flu clinics, participating Veterans are asked to wear a mask, to have their Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC) ready, to wear a short sleeve shirt, to follow signage, and stay in their vehicle.

In September and October, drive thru clinics are available at several different locations:

**St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud**

Oct. 17 & 24, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., in Bldg. 116 Parking Lot (Rehabilitation Center)

**St. Cloud Municipal Athletic Complex (MAC) Parking Lot, 5001 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud (next door/west of the VAMC)**

-Sep. 28 & 29, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. & Oct. 13, 14 & 15, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

-Please enter via the MAC parking lot west entrance along 54<sup>th</sup> Ave. North/CR 134, by the City of St. Cloud water tower.

**Douglas County Fairgrounds, 800 3rd Ave. W., Alexandria**

Sep. 25, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. & Oct. 9, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Brainerd VA Clinic Parking Lot, 722 NW Seventh St., Brainerd**

Sep. 30, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. & Oct. 1, 27 & 28, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Montevideo VA Clinic Parking Lot, 1025 North 13th St., Montevideo**

Sep. 23, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. & Oct. 2, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

VA is offering the quadrivalent high dose vaccine designated for persons 65 and older and a quadrivalent standard dose vaccine.

The quadrivalent vaccine contains antigens from 4 strains of influenza virus. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) does not recommend any influenza vaccine over another as "preferred."

**Flu Shots Available through VA's Community Care Network**

Eligible Veterans can now receive their seasonal flu shots at no cost at more than 60,000 Community Care Network (CCN) retail pharmacies and urgent care locations. This replaces the Walgreens Retail Immunization Care Coordination Program, which ended in March 2020.

Veterans can use the [VA Locator](#) to find a VA facility, in-network retail pharmacy or urgent care location near them by using this link: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>.

[Click here](#) for a printable flyer to bring with you if you intend to visit an in-network retail pharmacy or urgent care location for a flu shot. Alternatively, Veterans can call 877-881-7618 to find a location.

Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system may also use in-network retail pharmacies to obtain flu shot.

Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system and who have received care from a VA or in-network community provider in the past 24 months may also use CCN urgent care locations to obtain a flu shot.

Veterans using the CCN should tell the in-network community care staff they are an eligible Veteran enrolled with VA, and show a government-issued identification (e.g., Veterans Health Identification Card or driver's license).

Stand-alone flu shot visits to in-network community urgent care providers are copay free and are not counted as an urgent care visit. Other vaccinations are not available through the CCN.

For more information on flu shots using the Community Care network visit:  
[https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/fluhot.asp](https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/flushot.asp)

VA is committed to keeping Veteran patients healthy, and vaccination is the best way to prevent the spread of flu.

## **National POW/MIA Recognition Day**

National POW/MIA Recognition Day was established in 1979 through a proclamation signed by President Jimmy Carter. Since then, each subsequent president has issued an annual proclamation commemorating the third Friday in September as National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

A national-level ceremony is held on every National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Traditionally held at the Pentagon, it features members from each branch of military service and participation from high-ranking officials.

In addition to the national-level ceremony, observances of National POW/MIA Recognition Day are held across the country on military installations, ships at sea, state capitols, schools and veterans' facilities. No matter where they are held, these National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremonies share the common purpose of honoring those who were held captive and returned, as well as those who remain missing.

[Click here](#) to read a story about a MN Soldier who is now home for burial after over 60 years.

## **September is Suicide Prevention Month**

September is Suicide Prevention Month and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) wants to remind Veterans and their loved ones through the [Be There](#) campaign that small actions can make a big difference to Veterans experiencing difficult times.

During this and every month the St. Cloud VA remains committed to spreading awareness of suicide prevention to Veterans and their supporters and connecting them to the resources they need.

**Be There** suggests several simple actions that can help make a difference for a Veteran to include:

- Learning about the warning signs of suicide, found on the [Veterans Crisis Line website](#).
  - Watching the free [S.A.V.E. training video](#) to learn how to respond with care and compassion if someone indicates they are having thoughts of suicide.
  - Contacting VA's [Coaching Into Care](#) program where a licensed psychologist or social worker will provide loved ones with guidance for motivating Veterans to seek support.
  - Sharing stories of hope and recovery from VA's [Make the Connection](#).
  - Reaching out to the Veterans in your life to show them you care by sending a check-in text, cook them dinner or simply asking, "How are you?"
- Veterans with thoughts of suicide or harming themselves or others should call the Veterans Crisis Line to receive free, confidential support and crisis intervention available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Call [1-800-273-8255](#) and **Press 1**, text to 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#), or call 911 or go to the nearest community hospital emergency department.

For more information and resources visit [BeThereForVeterans.com](#).

Community members interacting with Veterans are asked to [#BeThere](#) for them, and to know the local and national points of care that are available to them:

- Veterans concerned about mental health issues can receive same-day services at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center in Bldg. 111, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday, or from the Urgent Care Clinic in Bldg. 1, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. 365 days a year. Veterans can also call a VA Nurse at 320-252-1670, and Press 3, 24 hours a day.

## **St. Cloud VA Virtual Summer Games**

Games, virtually! The games are open to all Veterans enrolled at the St. Cloud VA Health Care System. With 8 events to compete in, you can participate at-home and send in your scores. For complete event descriptions, rules and regulations visit: <https://www.stcloud.va.gov/>

We look forward to our first virtual competition! For more information contact the Recreation Department by calling 320-252-1670 Ext. 6180.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic

Montevideo VA Clinic Parking Lot  
Wednesday, September 23 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

### Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic

Douglas County Fairgrounds  
Friday, September 25 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

### Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic

St. Cloud Municipal Athletic Complex (MAC) Parking Lot  
Monday, September 28 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Please enter via the MAC parking lot west entrance along 54<sup>th</sup> Ave. North/CR 134, by the City of St. Cloud water tower.

### Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic

St. Cloud Municipal Athletic Complex (MAC) Parking Lot  
Tuesday, September 29 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Please enter via the MAC parking lot west entrance along 54<sup>th</sup> Ave. North/CR 134, by the City of St. Cloud water tower.

### Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic

Brainerd VA Clinic Parking Lot  
Wednesday, September 30 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

### Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic

Brainerd VA Clinic Parking Lot  
Thursday, October 1 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

### Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic

Montevideo VA Clinic Parking Lot  
Friday, October 2 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

### Veterans Affairs Radio Show

Monday, October 5 8:10-8:30 a.m.  
KNSI AM 1450/FM 103.3

### Appointments by phone only: Veteran's Law Clinic

Tuesday, October 6 Noon -2 p.m.  
Free legal consultation for Veterans by appointment only. This clinic is not for criminal issues. For more information or to schedule an appointment please contact Central Minnesota Legal Services at 320-257-4855 or 800-622-7773.

### Virtual Intro to Whole Health Class

Wednesday, October 7 2-4 p.m.  
Learn about the Whole Health approach to healthcare, discover what matters to you and how you can be at the center of your own care. Call: 1-320-255-6339 to schedule.

### Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic

Douglas County Fairgrounds  
Friday, October 9 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

### Federal Holiday

Monday October 12  
Outpatient clinics and administrative offices, including VA Clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria will be closed. Urgent Care at the St. Cloud VA will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic

St. Cloud Municipal Athletic Complex (MAC) Parking Lot  
Tuesday, October 13 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Please enter via the MAC parking lot west entrance along 54<sup>th</sup> Ave. North/CR 134, by the City of St. Cloud water tower.

**Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic**

St. Cloud Municipal Athletic Complex (MAC)  
Parking Lot

Wednesday, October 14 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Please enter via the MAC parking lot west  
entrance along 54<sup>th</sup> Ave. North/CR 134, by  
the City of St. Cloud water tower.

**Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic**

St. Cloud Municipal Athletic Complex (MAC)  
Parking Lot

Thursday, October 15 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Please enter via the MAC parking lot west  
entrance along 54<sup>th</sup> Ave. North/CR 134, by  
the City of St. Cloud water tower.

**Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic**

St. Cloud VA Medical Center, Bldg. 116  
Parking Lot (Rehabilitation Center)

Saturday, Oct. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Voices for Veterans Radio Show**

Wednesday, October 21 8:10-8:30 a.m.  
WJON AM 1240

**Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic**

St. Cloud VA Medical Center, Bldg. 116  
Parking Lot (Rehabilitation Center)

Saturday, October 24 9 a.m. – 3  
p.m.

**Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic**

Brainerd VA Clinic Parking Lot

Tuesday, October 27 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Drive Thru Flu Vaccination Clinic**

Brainerd VA Clinic Parking Lot

Wednesday, October 28 11 a.m. – 3  
p.m.

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

# Quick Reference Phone List

<b>Main St. Cloud VA HCS Phone Number</b>	<b>320-252-1670 or 800-247-1739</b>
TDD User	320-255-6450
<b>Max J. Beilke VA Clinic, Alexandria</b>	320-759-2640
<b>Brainerd VA Clinic</b>	218-855-1115
<b>Montevideo VA Clinic</b>	320-269-2222
<b>Veterans Crisis Line</b>	<b>800-273-8255 Press 1</b>
<b>Homeless Veteran Hotline</b>	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](http://www.stcloud.va.gov)

Like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS](https://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.