St. Cloud VA Recognizes September as Suicide Prevention Month

In observance of Suicide Prevention Month, the St. Cloud VA is bringing awareness to its #BeThere campaign by encouraging community leaders, colleagues, and Veterans’ families and friends to help prevent suicide by showing support for those who may be going through a difficult time.

Suicide is a complex national public health issue that affects communities nationwide, with more than 45,000 Americans, including more than 6,000 Veterans, dying by suicide every year. But suicide is preventable. VA is using a community-driven approach to prevent suicide and finding innovative ways to deliver support and care to all 20 million U.S. Veterans whenever and wherever they need it.

“The St. Cloud VA is working hard to end Veteran suicide, but we know that only about a third of Veterans come to VA for health care,” said Acting Director Martina Malek. “That’s why we need everyone in the community to get involved. This September, and all year, I encourage everyone to take a moment to be there for Veterans in need. One act of thoughtfulness can make a big difference and may even save a life.”

You don’t need special training to prevent suicide. Everyone can play a role by learning to recognize warning signs, showing compassion and care to Veterans in need, and offering your support. Here are some actions anyone can take to Be There:

▪ Reach out to the Veterans in your life to show them you care. Send a check-in text, cook them dinner, or simply ask, “How are you?”

▪ Educate yourself on the warning signs of suicide, found on the Veterans Crisis Line website.

▪ Watch the free S.A.V.E. training video to equip yourself to respond with care and compassion if someone you know indicates they are having thoughts of suicide.
Check out VA’s Social Media Safety Toolkit to learn how to recognize and respond to social media posts that may indicate emotional distress, feelings of crisis or thoughts of suicide.

Contact VA’s Coaching Into Care program if you are worried about a Veteran loved one. A licensed psychologist or social worker will provide guidance on motivating your loved one to seek support.

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a Veteran in crisis, can call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support available 24 hours a day, seven 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.

Flu Vaccination Clinics for Eligible Veterans across Central Minnesota

A flu shot is an important part of staying healthy during the flu season, and this year Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System have multiple options to get a flu shot.

During flu season, flu shots are available as part of any scheduled VA appointment. Just ask the nurse or doctor at your next appointment.

In October, numerous walk-in clinics are also available at local VA facilities:

St Cloud VA Medical Center, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud
- Oct. 1 & 2, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., in Bldg. 96
- Oct. 3, 4, 7-11, 15-18, 21-25, & 28-31, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., in the Canteen
- Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29 (Tuesdays), 4:30 – 6 p.m., in Bldg. 1
- Oct. 5, 12, 19 & 26 (Saturdays), 8 a.m. – Noon, in Bldg. 1

Alexandria VFW Post 936, 1102 3rd Ave. E., Alexandria
- Oct. 25, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Brainerd VA Clinic, 722 NW Seventh St., Brainerd
- Oct. 4 & 24, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Montevideo VA Clinic, 1025 North 13th St., Montevideo
- Sept. 30, 1 – 4:30 p.m.

VA flu clinics are for enrolled Veterans only. No appointment is necessary to get vaccinated at a walk-in clinic.

This year VA is again offering the quadrivalent, standard-dose vaccine for all Veterans.
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.”

Once again, VA has teamed up with Walgreens Pharmacies nationwide to allow all Veterans who are currently enrolled in the VA health care system to be able walk into any Walgreens to receive a vaccination at no cost.

The immunizations available at Walgreens under this program use quadrivalent flu vaccine: other formulation flu vaccines are not available using the VA Walgreens program.

Veterans wishing to receive the vaccination at Walgreens simply need to present a Veterans Health Identification Card and a photo ID at any participating Walgreens to receive the vaccination.

In addition, after the Walgreens pharmacist administers the vaccine Walgreens will transmit that information securely to VA to become part of the patient’s medical record.

Veterans can also get a flu shot under the Mission Act Urgent Care benefit through an in-network walk-in urgent care or retail clinic. Except for a flu shot, vaccinations and other preventative care services are not covered through the Urgent Care Benefit.

VA is committed to keeping Veteran patients healthy, and vaccination is the best way to prevent the spread of flu. No matter where Veterans live, they can visit a local VA clinic, Walgreens, or a VA network clinic to get a free flu shot.

Veterans Health Care Enrollment Fair in Buffalo

The Wright County Veterans Service Office and the St. Cloud VA Health Care System are hosting a Veterans health care enrollment fair on Sep. 26, from 1:30 to 3 p.m., at the Wright County Government Center, 10 2nd St. NW, Room C-118, in Buffalo.

The fair is a walk-in event and Veterans will be served as soon as possible upon arrival.

For most Veterans, entry into the VA health care system begins with a simple application and documentation of service and income. Veterans should bring their DD 214 and 2018 annual household income.

Military service is valuable to the nation, and in return VA health care enrollment provides a lifetime of valuable benefits to eligible Veterans and their families.

VA health care features no enrollment fees, monthly premiums, coinsurance fees or deductibles, and low or no medication co-pays with a $700 yearly cap on prescription medications. VA health care benefits are also flexible in they can be co-managed with health insurance plans and Veterans can seek treatment at over 1,000 sites of
care across the nation, including the St. Cloud VA.

Veterans who applied for benefits earlier in life and were deemed not eligible may now be eligible due to changes in the benefits program or changing personal situation and are encouraged to reapply.

**St. Cloud VA seek Volunteers as Hospice Unit Attendants**
The St. Cloud VA Medical Center seeks volunteers to honor and support Veterans on hospice care. An informational session for potential volunteers is planned on Oct. 7, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., in the Auditorium (Bldg. 8) at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, located at 4801 Veterans Drive, in St. Cloud.

The purpose of this volunteer assignment is to provide support to hospice patients and their families during evenings, nights and weekends. Volunteers will actively participate in visitation, companionship, emotional support, and meaningful engagement. Specialized training and resources will be provided to participating volunteers.

Please contact Angie Paulson, Voluntary Service Specialist, at (320) 255-6365, or vhastcvavsstaff@va.gov to express your interest or for more information.

**Coffee Talk scheduled in Brainerd**
VA health care enrollment provides valuable benefits to Veterans and their families. Non-enrolled Veterans, Veterans new to the VA health care system, and enrolled Veterans who want to learn how to most effectively use VA systems of care are encouraged to attend a Coffee Talk at the Brainerd VA Clinic, located at 722 NW 7th St., in Brainerd on October 12 from 9 to 11 a.m.

Coffee Talks are informal conversations intended to provide Veterans an opportunity to have their questions answered about VA health care, Whole Health and Connected Care. Enrollment opportunities will also be available. Call (320) 255-6340 for more information about VA health care. No pre-registration is required.

**Community Care Walk-in Service**
Veterans with questions about obtaining Community Care can now visit the Community Care Walk-in Service Point in Bldg. 29, Room 20C, open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. The former location in Bldg. 4 (Referral Center) is no longer available for walk-in service.

As a reminder, all community care billing questions, to include those about filing claims for reimbursement, can no longer be addressed or processed at the St. Cloud VA. The single point-of-contact for community care claims and billing issues is (877) 881-7618.

Veterans may mail claims for VA Care in the Community medical care to the address listed below. Veterans filing claims for prescription medication reimbursement should include a copy of the prescription (pharmacy label) and receipt.

OCC Claims Processing – St. Cloud
PO Box 1004
Fort Harrison, MT 59636-1004
UPCOMING EVENTS

Connected Care Class
Monday, September 23    2-3:30 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Patriot Café
(Bldg. 95, Canteen)
Veterans enrolled at St. Cloud VA HCS are invited to attend hands-on training for all things connected care, including MyHealtheVet, VA Video Connect, Annie App and more!

Taking Charge of My Life & Health
Wednesday, September 25    2-4 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Patriot Cafe (Bldg. 95, Canteen)
After completion of Intro to Whole Health, Veterans may also choose to participate in an expanded Whole Health Pathway learning program referred to as Taking Charge of My Life and Health. These courses are designed to provide a group-based experience in camaraderie with other Veterans, and in the interests of privacy and respect for others, are limited to Veterans enrolled for care.

Veterans Health Care Enrollment Fair
Thursday, September 26    1:30 - 3 p.m.
Wright County Government Center, 10 2nd St. NW, Room C-118, Buffalo MN
For most Veterans, entry into the VA health care system begins with a simple application and documentation of service and income. Veterans should bring their DD 214 and 2018 annual household income.

VA health care features no enrollment fees, monthly premiums, coinsurance fees or deductibles, and low or no medication copays with a $700 yearly cap on prescription medications. VA health care benefits are also flexible in they can be co-managed with health insurance plans and Veterans can seek treatment at over 1,000 sites of care across the nation, including the St. Cloud VA.

The fair is a walk-in event and Veterans will be served as soon as possible upon arrival.

Veterans who applied for benefits earlier in life and were deemed not eligible may now be eligible due to changes in the benefits program or changing personal situation and are encouraged to reapply.

Veterans Law Clinic (by appointment only)
Tuesday, October 1    Noon-2 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 28, Room 34
Free legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security law, housing, child support, family law, employment and expungement. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call (320) 253-0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

Introduction to Whole Health for VA Community Clinics
Wednesday, October 2    2-4 p.m.
Brainerd VA Clinic, 722 NW 7th Street, Brainerd MN, Veterans at Montevideo VA Clinic and Max J. Beilke VA Clinic can participate via videoconference.
VA clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria now offer Introduction to Whole Health educational classes taught by Veteran peers that equips you to take charge of your health by emphasizing a self-focus on body, mind, spirit and soul, surroundings and other factors that help you create a personal system of life care. Pre-registration is not required.
Veterans and family members desiring to attend can contact their care teams to register.
**Introduction to Whole Health**  
Friday, October 4  2-4 p.m.  
St. Cloud VA, Patriot Café (Bldg. 95, Canteen)  
An education class taught by Veteran peers that equips you to take charge of your health by emphasizing a self-focus on body, mind, spirit and soul, surroundings and other factors that help you create a personal system of life care. Pre-registration is not required.

**Veterans Affairs Radio Show**  
Monday, October 7  8:10 - 8:30 a.m.  
KNSI AM 1450/FM103.3

**Coffee Talk**  
Friday, October 11  2-3 p.m.  
St. Cloud VA, Patriot Café (Bldg. 95, Canteen)  
Veterans are invited to attend Coffee Talk to learn "How to use" the VA effectively, services overview, Q & A and a tour. Spouses and caregivers are welcome. Dial-in to Coffee Talk via telephone at 800-767-1750 and enter participant code number 11242. Pre-registration is not required.

**Free Drop-In Legal Clinic for Veterans**  
Tuesday, October 15, 10 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.  
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 8 (Auditorium)  
Free legal consultation for Veterans for housing, employment, benefits, debt collection, expungement, family law including child support. For more information please call 651-200-4750.

**Outpatient Clinics Closed for Federal Holiday**  
Monday, October 14  
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.

**Veterans Law Clinic (by appointment only)**  
Tuesday, October 15  Noon-2 p.m.  
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 28, Room 34  
Free legal consultation for Veterans for Social Security law, housing, child support, family law, employment and expungement. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call (320) 253-0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

**Voices for Veterans Radio Show**  
Wednesday, October 16  8:10-8:30 a.m.  
WJON AM 1240
Taking Charge of My Life & Health
Wednesday, October 16 2-4 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Patriot Cafe (Bldg. 95, Canteen)
Completion of Intro to Whole Health is a prerequisite.
Veterans may also choose to participate in an expanded Whole Health Pathway learning program referred to as Taking Charge of My Life and Health. These courses are designed to provide a group-based experience in camaraderie with other Veterans, and in the interests of privacy and respect for others, are limited to Veterans enrolled for care.

Introduction to Whole Health
Monday, October 21 2-4 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Patriot Café (Bldg. 95, Canteen)
An education class taught by Veteran peers that equips you to take charge of your health by emphasizing a self-focus on body, mind, spirit and soul, surroundings and other factors that help you create a personal system of life care. Pre-registration is not required.

Taking Charge of My Life & Health
Wednesday, October 23 2-4 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Patriot Cafe (Bldg. 95, Canteen)
Completion of Intro to Whole Health is a prerequisite.
Veterans may also choose to participate in an expanded Whole Health Pathway learning program referred to as Taking Charge of My Life and Health. These courses are designed to provide a group-based experience in camaraderie with other Veterans, and in the interests of privacy and respect for others, are limited to Veterans enrolled for care.

Connected Care Class
Monday, October 28 2-3:30 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Patriot Café (Bldg. 95, Canteen)
Veterans enrolled at St. Cloud VA HCS are invited to attend hands-on training for all things connected care, including MyHealththeVet, VA Video Connect, Annie App and more!

Introduction to Whole Health
Friday, November 1 2-4 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Patriot Café (Bldg. 95, Canteen)
An education class taught by Veteran peers that equips you to take charge of your health by emphasizing a self-focus on body, mind, spirit and soul, surroundings and other factors that help you create a personal system of life care. Pre-registration is not required.
For a complete Calendar of Events, go to https://www.stcloud.va.gov/calendar.asp

Quick Reference Phone List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main St. Cloud VA HCS Phone Number</td>
<td>320-252-1670 or 800-247-1739</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDD User</td>
<td>320-255-6450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max J. Beilke VA Clinic, Alexandria</td>
<td>320-759-2640</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brainerd VA Clinic</td>
<td>218-855-1115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montevideo VA Clinic</td>
<td>320-269-2222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterans Crisis Line</td>
<td>800-273-8255 Press 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Veteran Hotline</td>
<td>877- 424-3838</td>
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Billing:
- VA Care 866-347-2352
- Care in the Community (non-VA care) 877-881-7618

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

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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. There are also options presented to sign up for updates from other government sites.