This Mental Health Month, Share the Possibilities

What do the words “mental health” mean to you? For some, these words bring to mind symptoms and conditions — struggles with anxiety, insomnia, anger, isolation, depression.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. Mental health can also mean reconnecting with a son or daughter, realizing you don’t need alcohol and moving on, regaining confidence and going back to school, acing an interview and landing your dream job. Every day, Veterans prove that mental health means building a stronger you.

This May, in observance of Mental Health Month, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will highlight those life-changing outcomes and the possibilities that stem from mental health treatment. Whether you’re a Veteran sharing your story, a family member providing support, or a friend lending a hand, focusing on these positive outcomes can be a powerful way to provide encouragement and shape how Veterans think about treatment when they’re facing mental health challenges.

Visit https://maketheconnection.net/ to learn more about these real-life possibilities, and what mental health means to countless Veterans across the country.

Partner with VA to Help Keep Veterans Safe

To help keep Veterans safe, the St. Cloud VA Health Care System is distributing free gun locks to Veterans and their family members, and invites area businesses, organizations and individuals to help distribute the gun locks. Additionally, the St. Cloud VA offers suicide prevention training and outreach to community groups concerned about Veterans.
For someone in crisis, a locked firearm can mean the difference between a tragic outcome and a life saved. Gunlocks are free and offered without condition. Veterans Crisis Line contact information is included with each gun lock.

Always take these simple steps to keep everyone in your family safe:

- Keep firearms locked and unloaded when not in use.
- Store ammunition separately from firearms.
- Regularly reassess steps to ensure safe storage and use of firearms, especially during periods of increased stress or emotional crisis.

There are a variety of actions everyone can take to help Veterans, Service members, and their families stay safe, especially in times of crisis. VA can’t end Veteran suicide alone—everyone’s help is needed. Contact Mary Jo Pine, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, via email at Mary.Pine@va.gov or 320-252-1670, Ext. 6719, to arrange training and education and to obtain the free gun locks.

If you or a Veteran you know is in crisis, call the Veterans Crisis Line. The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

St. CLOUD VA HCS AWARDED TOP HONOR

In recognition for continuing achievement and innovation in health care sustainability, the St. Cloud VA Health Care System recently received the Top 25 Environmental Excellence Award from Practice Greenhealth, the nation’s leading organization dedicated to environmental sustainability in health care. The award is one of the Environmental Excellence Awards given each year to honor environmental achievements in the health care sector.

This is the third straight year that the St. Cloud VA has earned the Top 25 distinction.

The 25 hospitals presented with Practice Greenhealth's highest honors exemplify environmental excellence and are setting the highest standards for environmental practices in health care. Award winners are leading the industry with innovation in sustainability—and have the data and documentation to prove their success.

Recycling, waste reduction, organics composting, paper conservation, green purchasing, laundry water reuse, LED lighting, renewable energy systems, electric utility vehicles, use of green space for healthy activities, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and Green Globe Certified buildings, all demonstrate the St. Cloud VA’s commitment to
environmental excellence, and its dedication to continuous improvement, systematically achieving incremental changes in processes to improve efficiency and quality.

**St. Cloud VA Earns Numerous Circle of Excellence Awards**

The St. Cloud VA also was recognized in six out of 10 categories with Circle of Excellence Awards, which celebrate sustainability programs that excel in a given category (in contrast to awards given for overall achievement).

These awards highlight hospitals that are pushing the envelope and driving innovation in sustainability performance in each sustainability category.

To learn more about Practice Greenhealth visit: [www.practicegreenhealth.org](http://www.practicegreenhealth.org).

**Veteran Job Fair**

Eighteen area businesses seeking to fill job openings with Veterans will attend the Veteran job fair on Friday, May 4, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the St. Cloud VA auditorium (Bldg. 8), 4801 Veterans Drive, in St. Cloud.

The job fair is open to all Veterans. No preregistration is required.

For more information, contact Brad Steele at 320-333-0222 or Bradley.Steele@va.gov.

**Veterans Choice Billing Number**

The Veterans Choice billing number is 866-606-8198. Veterans can call this number for all Veterans Choice Program claims.

For billing issues for VA care only, billing service representatives are available at the St. Cloud VA in Bldg. 5, Rm 121, Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to Noon. Veterans can also call the Veterans Health Resource Center at 1-866-347-2352, Monday to Friday, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For assistance with other Care in the Community (Non-VA Care programs) claims Veterans should contact 320-252-1670, Ext. 6483.

**New Canteen Store**

The ongoing remodeling of the Veterans Canteen Service facilities at the St. Cloud VA celebrated another milestone on April 6, 2018, with the opening of the new Patriot Store retail shop.

The new store features an updated look and a modern atmosphere, and is a full-service retail store with products such as electronics, cosmetics, toiletries, and clothing. Items may be purchased tax-free. The retail store is open to patients, staff, and caregivers, and is open Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to Noon. The store is closed on Sundays and holidays.

Veterans Canteen Service is a self-sustaining entity that provides merchandise and services to Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system, their families,
caregivers, VA employees, volunteers and visitors. Revenues generated from VCS sales are used to support a variety of VA programs supporting Veterans.

At the St. Cloud VA location, some work remains to finish the entire project, including completing the restrooms and fitting out the remainder of the dining area, but with the opening of the retail store Veterans can once again find all VCS services in one location.

**Baby Shower**

To honor and support Veterans welcoming new children into their families in 2018, the St. Cloud VA is hosting a baby shower on May 9, from 5 to 8 p.m., in the Auditorium (Bldg. 8), at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 4801 Veterans Drive, in St. Cloud.

The goal of the baby shower is to celebrate Veteran parents — especially moms — while also increasing awareness of VA’s comprehensive maternity care services and to encourage women Veterans to choose VA to support their health and wellness goals. Spouses are welcome to attend, and food, games, gifts and information are all part of the shower.

Reservations are required to attend the shower. Veterans can call 320-252-1670, Ext. 6655 or Ext. 7625, to sign up.

Women make up approximately 10 percent of the Veteran population in the United States, and nearly half of the nation’s 2 million women Veterans are of reproductive age. VA offers comprehensive primary care, prenatal and preconception (pre-pregnancy) care, infertility services, maternity care services and the first seven days of newborn care.

St. Cloud VA is one of 60 VA medical centers around the country hosting baby showers between May 5-16, the weeks surrounding Mother’s Day.

For more information about VA’s benefits and services for women Veterans, as well as the Nationwide Baby Shower, visit [https://www.va.gov/womenvet](https://www.va.gov/womenvet).

**VA Now Offers Adoption Reimbursement**

Veterans with a service-connected disability that results in infertility will now be able to receive reimbursement for adoption expenses as a result of a new rule recently approved by VA. The final interim rule was published in the [Federal Register](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2018-03-05/pdf/2018-05814.pdf) on March 5, 2018, and became effective upon publication.

With this rulemaking, VA may provide reimbursement for qualifying expenses in the adoption of a child under 18 years of age.

**Who is eligible?**

Any Veteran with a service-connected disability that results in the inability to procreate without the use of fertility treatment.
What expenses are covered?

For expenses to be reimbursable, adoptions must be arranged by a qualified adoption agency as defined in DoD Instruction 1341.9. Reimbursement is capped at $2,000 for a covered Veteran or two covered Veterans who are spouses of each other. In the case of two married Veterans, only one spouse may claim reimbursement for any one adoption. Additionally, no more than $5,000 may be paid to a covered Veteran in any calendar year, or in the case of two married covered Veterans.

Expenses such as clothing, bedding, toys and books, travel expenses and expenses incurred in connection with an adoption arranged in violation of Federal, State, or local law are not reimbursable.

When should application be made?

The application for reimbursement must be submitted no later than two years after the adoption is final or, in the case of adoption of a foreign child, no later than two years from the date a certificate of United States citizenship is issued.

Apply online: VA Form 10152, Reimbursement Request for Qualifying Adoption Expenses.

Camp Lejeune: Past Water Contamination

From the 1950s through the 1980s, people living or working at the U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, were potentially exposed to drinking water contaminated with industrial solvents, benzene, and other chemicals.

Disability compensation

VA has established a presumptive service connection for Veterans, Reservists, and National Guard members exposed to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune from August 1, 1953 through December 31, 1987 who later developed one of the following eight diseases:

- Adult leukemia
- Aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- Bladder cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Liver cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

Presently, these conditions are the only ones for which there is sufficient scientific and medical evidence to support the creation of presumptions; however, VA will continue to review relevant information as it becomes available.

Read the final rule.

Veterans who are experiencing other health conditions that they think may be related to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune are encouraged to contact their primary care provider and to file a claim. VA reviews and decides disability compensation claims on a case-by-case basis.

Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012

Veterans’ health care
In accordance with the 2012 Camp Lejeune health care law, VA provides cost-free
health care for certain conditions to Veterans who served at least 30 days of active duty at Camp Lejeune from January 1, 1957 and December 31, 1987.

Qualifying health conditions include:

- Esophageal cancer
- Breast cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Renal toxicity
- Female infertility
- Scleroderma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Lung cancer
- Bladder cancer
- Leukemia
- Myelodysplastic syndromes
- Hepatic steatosis
- Miscarriage
- Neurobehavioral effects

Veterans eligible for health care under the 2012 Camp Lejeune health care law may enroll in VA health care and receive medical services for the 15 covered health conditions at no cost (including copayments).

Not yet enrolled in VA health care? Apply online, call 1-877-222-8387 for help, or visit the Eligibility Office at the St. Cloud VA, which is located on the ground floor of Building 1.

Inform VA staff that you served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days during the covered time period.

**Family member health care reimbursement**

Family members of Veterans who also resided at Camp Lejeune during the qualifying period are eligible for reimbursement of out-of-pocket medical expenses related to the 15 covered health conditions. VA can only pay treatment costs that remain after payment from your other health plans. Apply online for reimbursement or call 1-866-372-1144 for help.

For a quick recap, view this video in which former VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin describes Veteran disability compensation and health care benefits available for Veterans and, in some cases, family members stationed at Camp Lejeune.

**Expanded Training and Education Classes**

VA health care enrollment provides a lifetime of valuable benefits to Veterans and their families. Recently transitioned service members, Veterans new to the VA health care system, and enrolled Veterans can learn how to use the VA system and take charge of their health and well-being and to live their lives to the fullest by attending the recently expanded orientation and education classes at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center.

Two classes are now offered.

The Patient Orientation Coffee Talk class focuses on VA eligibility and the nuts and bolts of accessing and using VA systems of care, and answering Veteran questions. Patient Orientation Coffee Talk is scheduled for May 11, from 2 to 3:30 p.m., in Bldg. 4., Room 114, at the St. Cloud VA Medical
Center. Participants may also dial-in via telephone at 800-767-1750, participant code 11242#.

The Introduction to Whole Health class focuses on a fundamental approach to health care—Whole Health—that empowers and equips people to take charge of their health by emphasizing self-empowerment, self-healing, and self-care. Introduction to Whole Health is scheduled for May 4, from noon to 2 p.m., or on May 21, from 10 a.m. to noon, Bldg. 4., Room 114, at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center.

The Introduction to Whole Health class is highly encouraged for Veterans recently transitioned from active military service, and is taught by peer (Veteran) facilitators.

On January 9, President Trump signed an executive order that allows newly minted Veterans transitioning from active duty to contact the nearest VA medical center or Vet Center, ask for mental health services, and start receiving care for up to a year. These new Veterans must have served in the active military, naval, or air service, and have been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

The two-hour Intro to Whole Health class provides these new Veterans, and other Veterans in attendance, with information to develop a plan focused on achieving whole health for a lifetime.

Attendees at both courses should enter the medical center via the Building 1 entrance. No pre-registration is required, and Veterans may attend one or both classes.

Memorial Day

Memorial Day will be observed at the St. Cloud VA on Monday, May 28, with a parade at 10:30 a.m. and an outdoor ceremony at 11 a.m. Both events will be held in front of Bldg. 92, immediately southeast of the main facility entrance. The St. Cloud Municipal Band will provide music.

The ceremony is free and the public is encouraged to attend. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs as seating is very limited.

The observance events are coordinated by the St. Cloud Area Metropolitan Veterans Council (Metro Vets), who encourages all citizens to pause for a moment on Memorial Day, to honor those who have died in their nation’s defense and to keep the true meaning and spirit of Memorial Day alive.

Attendees may park in the lot to the west of the main drive in front of Building 1 (Main Entrance) or the Apollo High School parking lot immediately adjacent to the 44th Ave. N. / 12th St. N. entrance to the VA Medical Center.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Veterans Law Clinic (by appointment only)
Tuesday, May 1 & May 15  Noon-2 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 28, Room 126
Free legal consultation for Veterans. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320-253-0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

Vietnam Veteran Recognition Ceremony & Town Hall Meeting
Tuesday, May 1  5-6 p.m.
Brainerd VA Clinic
722 NW Seventh Street, Brainerd
Vietnam Veterans and families desiring to participate in the commemoration event can simply show up and check in; the town hall immediately follows the recognition ceremony. A Veterans Service Officer and VA staff will be available at 4 p.m. to discuss enrollment in VA health care and the full range of benefit programs.

Recovery Night
Tuesday, May 1  6-7:30 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Auditorium (Bldg. 8)
The public is invited to hear Veterans share stories of hope, success, resilience and recovery. A Recovery Resource Fair will also be available.

Mental Health Recovery Outreach Group
Wednesday, May 2  5-6 p.m.
Good Earth Co-Op
2010 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud
Hosted by the St. Cloud VA, Veterans and family members are welcome to attend. VA enrollment or pre-registration is not required to attend the meeting.

Veteran Job Fair
Friday, May 4  11 a.m.-1 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Auditorium (Bldg. 8)
Open to all Veterans. No preregistration is required.

Introduction to Whole Health
Friday, May 4  or  Monday, May 21
Noon-2 p.m.  10 a.m.-Noon
St. Cloud VA  St. Cloud VA
Bldg. 28, Rm. 67  Bldg. 4, Rm. 114
A class that equips Veterans to take charge of their health by emphasizing self-empowerment, self-healing, and self-care.

Veterans Affairs Radio Show
Monday, May 7  8:10-8:30 a.m.
KNSI AM 1450/FM 103

St. Cloud VA Baby Shower
Wednesday, May 9  5-8 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Auditorium (Bldg. 8)
Veterans and their spouses welcoming new children are invited to attend.

Coffee Talk
Friday, May 11  2-3:30 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 4, Room 114
Learn how to most effectively use VA systems of care. If you can’t come in person, dial-in via telephone at: 800-767-1750, participant code 11242#. All Veterans are welcome.

Voices for Veterans Radio Show
Wednesday, May 16  8:10-8:30 a.m.
WJON AM 1240

Memorial Day--Outpatient Clinics and Administrative Offices Closed
Monday, May 28
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.

Memorial Day Parade & Ceremony
Monday, May 28
Parade begins at 10:30 a.m. at the St. Cloud VA followed by an outdoor ceremony at 11 a.m. Free and open to the public.

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

DID YOU KNOW

• The watch pocket in pants is also known as the “fob.”

• In ancient China, doctors received payment only if their patients were kept healthy. If their health failed, the doctor sometimes paid the patient.

• The national anthem of Greece has 158 verses.

• Six people can eat on one scrambled ostrich egg.

• Wilt Chamberlain was 7 feet, one inch tall while playing basketball – his parents were only five feet, eight inches tall.

QUOTATION OF THE DAY
“Until I was thirteen, I thought my name was 'Shut Up.' “
- Joe Namath
### Quick Reference Phone List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main St. Cloud VA HCS Phone Number</td>
<td>320-252-1670 or 800-247-1739</td>
</tr>
<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>
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<td>Homeless Veteran Hotline</td>
<td>877-424-3838</td>
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<tr>
<td>Billing</td>
<td>866-347-2352</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chaplain Service</td>
<td>Ext. 6386</td>
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<td>Discrimination Complaints</td>
<td>Ext. 6304</td>
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<td>Eligibility</td>
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<td>Non-VA Medical Care Billing</td>
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<td>Non-VA Medical Care Referrals/Choice</td>
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<td>Nutrition Clinic</td>
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<td>Transition &amp; Care Management Program</td>
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<td>Patient Advocate</td>
<td>Ext. 6353</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacy Refill Line</td>
<td>855-560-1724</td>
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<td>Privacy Officer</td>
<td>Ext. 6408</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Affairs Office</td>
<td>Ext. 6353</td>
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<tr>
<td>Release of Information (Medical Records)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Ext. 7622</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRICARE</td>
<td>844-866-9378</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary Service</td>
<td>Ext. 6365</td>
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<tr>
<td>VA Police</td>
<td>Ext. 6355</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Stay in Touch

Visit our Website: [www.stcloud.va.gov](http://www.stcloud.va.gov)

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

Sign up for our automated email service. Visit the St. Cloud VA Website at: [http://www.stcloud.va.gov](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.