



**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
VA MIDWEST HEALTH CARE NETWORK
Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23
Network Update
September 2013**
www.visn23.va.gov



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Home safe. Drive safe. Stay safe.



Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Veterans in the early years after returning from deployment. Tips for the road:

- **Don't drink and drive**
- **Don't ride with a drunk driver**
- **Always wear your seat belt when driving in the passenger seat, or in a back seat**
- **If you ride a motorcycle, always wear a helmet and ride sober**
- **Mile for mile, your risk of a fatal crash is about 35 times higher on your motorcycle than in your car**

Learn more at www.safedriving.va.gov



It Matters.

Confidential help for Veterans and their families

Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to **83825**

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

This Suicide Prevention Month Show Veterans They Matter

September is Suicide Prevention Month, a chance for all of us to focus on the things that matter. When it comes to Veterans who face difficult challenges, we're all in this together.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) urges everyone to stay alert for [signs of crisis](#) in Veterans. If a Veteran you know shows [signs of crisis](#), such as: hopelessness, anxiety, or social withdrawal, feelings of being a burden to someone, financial or medical hopelessness, caring professionals at the [Veterans Crisis Line](#)—many of them Veterans themselves—are ready to listen and provide support.

The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource that Veterans in need and their loved ones can access any time. Call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text to **838255** for free, confidential support, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

You can start the conversation today. Visit VeteransCrisisLine.net/SPMToolkit to download free Suicide Prevention Month materials.

Let the Veterans that you love know: Support is just a call, click, or text away.

It Matters.

Women Veterans Health & Wellness

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

*You served, you deserve
★ the best care anywhere.*



The Women Veterans Program at the St. Cloud VA HCS will host the Sixth Annual Women Veterans Health and Wellness Day on Sept 24, from

5:30 to 8:00 p.m., in Building 96 on the St. Cloud VA Medical Center campus. The event celebrates women Veterans and their military service by emphasizing healthy lifestyles and medical care unique to women. Social gathering and registration starts at 5:30 p.m. and the program begins at 6:00 p.m. Register early, attendance is limited to 50 participants. Contact the Women Veterans Coordinator at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center for more information or log on at www.stcloud.va.gov.

Ask Now About Your Flu Shot



Flu season is upon us. It's not too early to ask about your flu shot – VA health care facilities across the network will begin offering flu shots in October and some already have clinics scheduled. Influenza (flu) presents health challenges not only to us as individuals, but to our families and our VA and neighborhood communities. Flu is a respiratory illness that spreads easily. It is caused by viruses that can change from year to year. Each year in the U.S., flu causes more than 226,000 hospitalizations and about 36,000 deaths. Even though most of these cases are among people age 65 and older, anyone can get the flu. This is why it is important for all of us to “step up” to help stop the spread of flu! Check with your

VA provider or nearest VA facility to learn when flu shots will be offered in your area. Follow these six simple steps to prevent the spread of influenza. To learn more go to <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/prevention/index.asp>

Step 1 – Get Your Flu Shot

Step 2 – Know How Flu is Spread

Step 3 - Know the Symptoms

Step 4 - Keep your Hands and Surfaces around you clean

Step 5 - Cover your cough and sneezes

Step 6 - Stay Home When Sick



VA continually strives to be at the forefront of modern health care. My HealthVet is the gateway to Veterans' health and wellness. It is a free, online personal health record available to Veterans, their family members, and VA employees.



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Are you a Caregiver for a Veteran?



VA is committed to providing Caregivers with the support they need and Building Better Caregivers™ can help. Building Better Caregivers™ is a program recognized for its ability to reduce Caregiver stress, depression and increase their overall well-being.

Building Better Caregivers™ is a free online, six-week workshop for family caregivers of Veterans. The workshop helps Caregivers learn a variety of skills to manage time and stress, healthy eating, exercise and dealing with difficult emotions. Participants log on two to three times each week to review lessons, exchange ideas with other Caregivers and access tools to make caregiving easier. This comprehensive online workshop addresses specific needs of Caregivers who care for Veterans with dementia, memory problems, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, or any other serious injury or illness.

Caregivers of Veterans interested in participating in Building Better Caregivers™ can contact your VA Caregiver Support Coordinator for more information and referral. To find a VA Caregiver Support Coordinator visit, www.caregiver.va.gov and enter your Zip code in the Zip code finder.

Healthy Eating Tips

Eat wisely to maximize your health

- Eat a variety of foods including vegetables, fruits and whole grains
- Eat moderate portions
- Limit salt, fat, sugar and alcohol
- Reduce, don't eliminate certain foods
- Balance your food choices over time
- Make changes gradually

Learn more at www.move.va.gov

Find us on the Web:

VA Black Hills HCS

www.blackhills.va.gov

VA Central Iowa HCS

www.centraliowa.va.gov

Fargo VA HCS

www.fargo.va.gov

Iowa City VA HCS

www.iowacity.va.gov

VA Nebraska-Western Iowa HCS

www.nebraska.va.gov

Minneapolis VA HCS

www.minneapolis.va.gov

Sioux Falls VA HCS

www.siouxfalls.va.gov

St. Cloud VA HCS

www.stcloud.va.gov

VISN 23

www.visn23.va.gov

Ask Me 3

Ask Me 3 is a patient education program designed to improve communication between patients and health care providers, encourage patients to become active members of their health care team, and promote improved health outcomes. The program encourages patients to ask their health care providers three questions:

What is my main problem?

What do I need to do?

Why is it important for me to do this?

Studies show that people who understand health instructions make fewer mistakes when they take their medicine or prepare for a medical procedure. They may also get well sooner or be able to better manage a chronic health condition. Learn more at www.npsf.org/askme3*



Calendar of Events – September 2013

- Sep 2 - [Veteran Exercise Class](#), 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM (CST) Education Conf Room, Omaha VAMC, 4101 Woolworth Ave
- Sep 3 - [Law Clinic](#), 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CST), St. Cloud VA Medical Center Bldg T-100
- Sep 3 - [Red Cross Blood Donation](#), 11:30 AM - 5:25 PM (CST) Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium
- Sep 3 - [Farmers Market](#), 2:00 PM - 5:15 PM (CST) Minneapolis VA Medical Center - Northeast Corner parking lot
- Sep 4 - [Farmers Market](#), 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CST) Lincoln VA Clinic, 600 S. 70th Street, Lincoln, NE
- Sep 4 - [Veterans Exercise Class](#), 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM (CST) Education Conf Room, Omaha VAMC, 4101 Woolworth Ave
- Sep 5 - [Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting: Community Resource & Referral Center, Victory Apartments](#), 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM (CST) 825 Dorcas Street, Omaha, NE
- Sep 6 - [Red Cross Blood Donation](#), 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CST) Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium
- Sep 6 - [Tobacco Cessation](#), 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CST) Room F07 in the Main Lobby, Sioux Falls VA Medical Center
- Sep 9 - [VA Pantry-Lincoln](#), 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CST) Building 105, Room 50, VA Clinic, 600 S. 70th St, Lincoln, NE
- Sep 10 - [Red Cross Blood Donation](#), 11:30 AM - 5:25 PM (CST) Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium
- Sep 10 - [Farmers Market](#), 2:00 PM - 5:15 PM (CST) Minneapolis VA Medical Center - Northeast Corner parking lot
- Sep 12 - [Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training](#), 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM (CST) St. Cloud Library, Mississippi Room-1300 W Germain St, St Cloud, MN 56301
- Sep 13 - [Tobacco Cessation](#), 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CST) Room F07 in the Main Lobby, Sioux Falls VA Medical Center
- Sep 13 - [Red Cross Blood Donation](#), 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CST) Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium
- Sep 14 - [Suicide Prevention/Awareness 2K walk/run/stroll](#), 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CST) St. Cloud VA
- Sep 15 - [Camp Ripley Open House](#), 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM (CST) Camp Ripley: 15000 Highway 115 Little Falls, MN 56345
- Sep 17 - [Red Cross Blood Donation](#), 11:30 AM - 5:25 PM (CST) Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium
- Sep 17 - [Law Clinic](#) 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CST) St. Cloud VA Medical Center/Building T-100
- Sep 18 - [Voices for Veterans radio show](#), 8:10 AM - 8:45 AM (CST) AM 1240 WJON
- Sep 17 - [Farmers Market](#), 2:00 PM - 5:15 PM (CST) Minneapolis VA Medical Center - Northeast Corner parking lot
- Sep 20 - [Red Cross Blood Donation](#), 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CST) Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium
- Sep 20 - [Tobacco Cessation](#), 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CST) Room F07 in the Main Lobby, Sioux Falls VA Medical Center
- Sep 20 - [Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic](#), 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CST) Montevideo CBOC
- Sep 27 - [Tobacco Cessation](#), 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CST) Room F07 in the Main Lobby, Sioux Falls VA Medical Center

* Dates and times are correct as of Aug 31, 2013. Information may change, please check local VA Health Care System websites for the latest information.

For More information, call the Network Office at (651) 405-5600 or
Log on at www.visn23.va.gov or email sharyl.schaepe@va.gov