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Winter Weather Can be Treacherous

Watch Your Step

Extreme winter conditions can make walking on wet or slippery surfaces difficult. If you must walk on wet or slippery surfaces be careful and take precaution. Here are some tips for helping you prevent slips, trips, and falls:

- Take short steps and walk at a slower pace.
- Walk like a penguin. It may look silly but it works. Walking with your toes pointed outward provides a wider, more stable base of support for keeping your balance.
- Turn gradually and slowly.
- Keep both hands free for balance.
- Use handrails when walking up or down steps.

Walking on snow or ice is especially treacherous. Wear proper footwear. A pair of well insulated boots with good rubber treads is a must for walking during or after a winter storm. We want you to stay upright during the winter months – take precautions – stay warm – and visit your VA medical facility if you are injured.

Are You Protected?

What Veterans Should Know About Influenza (flu)

Influenza continues to be a serious health threat. Influenza levels appear to be nearing a peak; however, the virus is expected to continue to circulate for the next several weeks. We continue to recommend vaccination as the best way to reduce the risk of acquiring influenza, especially in persons with medical conditions that place them at increased risk of serious health outcomes should they develop influenza.

It's not too late to Protect yourself

The VA suggests taking these six steps to prevent getting and spreading the flu:

- Step 1: Get your flu shot.
- Step 2: Know how flu is spread.
- Step 3: Know the symptoms of flu.
- Step 4: Keep your hands clean.
- Step 5: Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Step 6: Stay home when you are sick.

The Flu Shot is safe

There is a misconception that flu shots can give you the flu. This is simply not true. Flu experts believe this notion may come from people who've gotten the flu right after the flu shot, or know someone who has. It takes about 2 weeks for the vaccine to stimulate your immune system enough so that you are protected from the flu. If you get the flu right after your shot, you were going to get it anyway. You were probably already exposed to it and the vaccine hasn't had time to protect you.

Learn More

To learn more call our toll free Flu information and education line at 1-888-686-0479. You can also visit the Veterans Health Library at www.veteranshealthlibrary.org, or VA public health website at www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/vaccination/index.asp

National Wear Red Day - February 7

Heart Disease is the No. 1 killer of women in the United States, claiming more lives than all forms of cancer combined. Join us on February 7, 2014 to celebrate National Wear Red Day to raise awareness in the fight against heart disease in women. Learn more at www.goredforwomen.org



TO EDUCATE WOMEN VETERANS ON RISKS OF HEART DISEASE

Read more at: <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/8136/va-goes-red-to-educate-women-veteran-on-risks-of-heart-disease/>

Design 2014 Veterans Day Poster



Do you have an idea for a national Veterans Day poster? If so, the Veterans Day National Committee wants to hear from you. The committee is seeking submissions for the 2014 national Veterans Day poster. The poster is distributed to VA and military installations around the world. It also graces the cover of the official program for the Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

A selection committee will convene in May 2014 to review submissions and select a finalist. The final poster must be 18" x 24" at a resolution of 300 dpi (dots per inch), but please scale down submissions to 9" x 12" and submit the electronic versions as JPEG images or PDF files, via e-mail to: vetsday@va.gov.

Alternatively, send copies of artwork or a CD with artwork files to: Department of Veterans Affairs (002D), 810 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20420. Please do not send originals. The deadline for submissions is April 15, 2014. To view Veterans Day posters from previous years, visit

<http://www.va.gov/vetsday> and click on "Poster Gallery."

For more information contact the Veterans Day National Committee point of contact Micheal Migliara at (202) 461-5386 or micheal.migliara@va.gov.

February 2014

VA Midwest
Health Care Network
Honoring Service. Empowering Health.

NETWORK UPDATE

www.visn23.va.gov

National Salute to Veteran Patients – February 9-15, 2014



The purpose of the National Salute to Veteran Patients Program is to:

- Pay tribute and express appreciation to Veterans;
- Increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center;
- Encourage citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and become VA Volunteers.

The week of February 14 is your opportunity to say thank you to a special group of men and women of the U.S. armed services who are cared for every day in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, outpatient clinics, domiciliaries, and nursing homes. Last year, more than 310,424 valentines were received at VA medical center and 18,770 members of the public visited more than 72,000 Veteran patients. Throughout the week, VA medical centers will host special events to salute Veterans. For information on how you can get involved, contact the Director of Voluntary Service at your local VA medical center.

C. Perry and Lola Schenk, recreation volunteers at the St. Cloud VA HCS, paused to take their picture at the Sweetheart Luncheon for CLC Veterans & spouses. The luncheon is held each year as part of National Salute to Veteran Patients.

February is Black History Month



We invite you to take time this month to remember and pay tribute to the sacrifices and service of Black Americans in the Military. From Bunker Hill and the Forts of South Carolina to the Mountains of Afghanistan, Black Americans have served with honor throughout our history.

Learn about the courage and sacrifice of Black American Veterans by visiting the US Army African Americans Website at <http://www.army.mil/africanamericans/index.html>.

Here you will read profiles of bravery, and learn about the service of these brave men and women that span the history of Black American service from 1700 to present.

“For more than two hundred years, African Americans have participated in every conflict in United States history. They have not only fought bravely the common enemies of the United States but have also had to confront the individual and institutional racism of their countrymen.” Lt. Col. [Ret] Michael Lee Lanning, author, *“The African-American Soldier: From Crispus Attucks to Collin Powell.”*

Calendar of Events – February 2014

- Feb 1 St. Cloud** - [Foley Business Expo](#) - 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CST) Foley High School Gym
- Feb 3 St. Cloud** - [Audiology Clinic Open House](#) - 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CST) Building 29, Room 6
- Feb 3 Nebraska** - [VA Food Pantry](#) - VA Clinic, Bldg 40, Room 105, 600 S. 70th St, Lincoln NE
- Feb 5 Nebraska** - [Omaha VA Pantry for Veterans](#) - 825 Dorcas St, Ste. 200, Omaha, NE
- Feb 6 Minneapolis** - [Red Cross Blood Donation at the Minneapolis VA](#) - 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CST) 2nd Floor
Flag Atrium
- Feb 7 Sioux Falls** - [GO Red Walk](#) - 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CST) Front Lobby of Medical Center
- Feb 7 Sioux Falls** - [Tobacco Cessation](#) - 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CST) Room F07 in the Main Lobby
- Feb 7 St. Cloud** - [Sportsmen Boat, Camping & Vacation Show](#) - River's Edge Convention Center
- Feb 8 St. Cloud** - [Sportsmen Boat, Camping & Vacation Show](#) - River's Edge Convention Center
- Feb 9 St. Cloud** - [Sportsmen Boat, Camping & Vacation Show](#) - River's Edge Convention Center
- Feb 9-15** [National Salute To Veterans Week](#)
- Feb 13 Nebraska** - [Veterans Information Forum](#) - 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CST) Auditorium, Lincoln VA clinic,
600 S. 70th Street
- Feb 14 Minneapolis** - [Red Cross Blood Donation at the Minneapolis VA](#) - 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CST) 2nd Floor
Flag Atrium
- Feb 14 Minneapolis** - [National Salute to Veteran Patients Day](#) - Minneapolis VA Medical Center
- Feb 14 St. Cloud** - [Montevideo CBOC Caregiver Support Group](#) - 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM (CST) Montevideo CBOC
- Feb 14 Sioux Falls** [Tobacco Cessation](#) - 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CST) Room F07 in the Main Lobby
- Feb 15 Sioux Falls** [2nd annual Valentines for Veterans Concert](#) - 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CST) Washington Pavilion
- Feb 15 Sioux Falls** - [Valentines for Veterans concert](#) - 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CST) Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls
- Feb 15 Minneapolis** - [George Washington's Birthday & Veterans Honoring Veterans Dinner](#) - 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM
(CST) Coon Rapids American Legion Post 334 Coon Rapids, MN 55433
- Feb 17** [Presidents' Day](#) - Federal Holiday
- Feb 19 Nebraska** - [Omaha VA Pantry for Veterans](#) - 825 Dorcas St, Ste. 200, Omaha, NE
- Feb 21 Sioux Falls** - [Tobacco Cessation](#) - 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CST) Room F07 in the Main Lobby
- Feb 21 St. Cloud** - [Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic](#) - 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CST) Montevideo CBOC
- Feb 21 Minneapolis** - [Red Cross Blood Donation at the Minneapolis VA](#) - 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CST) 2nd Floor
Flag Atrium
- Feb 21 Sioux Falls** - [Veterans and Employee Health Fair](#) - 7:00 AM - 4:00 PM (CST) Front lobby & 4th floor
auditorium
- Feb 24, 26 St. Cloud** - [Spa & Lunch](#) 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM (CST) Model College: 201 8th Ave S, Saint Cloud
- Feb 28 Minneapolis** - [Red Cross Blood Donation at the Minneapolis VA](#) - 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM (CST) 2nd Floor
Flag Atrium

* Dates and times are correct as of January 29, 2013. Information may have changed, 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