

May 2014

VA Midwest
Health Care Network
Honoring Service. Empowering Health.

NETWORK UPDATE

www.visn23.va.gov

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Online Training for Providers Who Want to Help Veterans and Families

A free online training series debuted in March for community and VA health care professionals to assist them in providing mental health care to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans and their families.

The 2014 *“From the War Zone to the Home Front: Supporting the Mental Health of Veterans and Families”* is designed to help doctors, nurses, psychologists, clinical social workers and other health care professionals identify key diagnostic features of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), recognize re-integration challenges, and familiarize them with the approaches available to address mental health issues. In previous years the lectures attracted more than 8,700 clinicians nationwide. Following the training, 88 percent said they feel better prepared to address the mental health needs of returning Veterans and their families.

Content covers many aspects of working with Veterans and their family members, including: Physical health after deployment, reproductive mental health for Women, Complementary therapies for PTSD, Veterans on campus, and Building resilience in military-connected children.

To learn more log on at:

<http://mghcme.org/page/from-the-war-zone-to-the-home-front>

Veterans Highly Satisfied with Quality of VA Health Care



VA Health Care Among Highest in Patient Satisfaction:

The 2013 American Customer Service Index (ACSI) reports Veterans enrolled and using the VA health care system are “highly satisfied”

with the quality of their care and their relationships with their clinical providers. In nearly all of the categories measured, VA health care exceeded private sector health care. Reflected in the outcomes were the strong loyalties Veterans feel as users of the Nation’s largest integrated health care system. This is the fifth year that VA scores in the ACSI index have demonstrated superior customer satisfaction. The VA model of care, based on the philosophy of delivering care that is personalized, proactive, and patient driven and utilizing VA inspired electronic health innovations continues to garner positive satisfaction and excellent health outcomes.

Feedback from Veterans: Survey participants are asked for their feedback on customer expectations, perceived value and quality, responsiveness to customer complaints, and customer loyalty. Results for 2013 reflect a high degree of loyalty among Veterans with a ranking of 93 percent. This score has been reported for five of the last six years. Customer service is the greatest strength for VA with a score of 91. Medical providers and appointment personnel remain highly courteous and supportive with scores of 92 and 91, respectively. Medical providers are also considered “highly professional,” with a score of 90. Respondents rank inpatient care at 91 and outpatient care at 92. Impressively, Veterans indicated they would use VA health care again and recommend it to their friends. On the inpatient side, Veterans said they were 96 percent likely to use VA services again and in the outpatient category they were 95 percent likely to be repeat users of VA health care. For more information, visit www.va.gov.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

VA Midwest Health Care Network offers treatment for a wide range of mental health challenges. These conditions may include, but are not limited to, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. VA uses treatments that have been proven to be effective for specific mental health disorders. VA mental health professionals can develop a treatment plan to specifically meet your needs. If you or a loved one needs mental health care, talk with your VA health care provider to get the help you need. Learn more about [VA Mental Health](#) programs at

<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/gethelp.asp>

[Principles that Guide VA Mental Health Care for Veterans:](#)

- Focus on Recovery
- Coordinated Care for the Whole Person
- Mental Health Treatment in Primary Care
- Mental Health Treatment Coordinator
- Around the Clock Service
- Care that is Sensitive to Gender and Cultural Issues
- Care close to Home
- Evidence-Based Treatment
- Family and Couple Service

[“Guide to VA Mental Health Services for Veterans & Families”](#) is available online. This brochure describes in greater detail the guiding principles of VA mental health care. It provides information on how to find mental health care and the different treatment settings where VA offers mental health care, such as hospitals (inpatient care) or clinics (outpatient care) or through telemedicine (where mental health providers in one location can talk with, evaluate, and treat Veteran at another location through closed-circuit video). You can download a copy of the 28-page brochure from VA’s mental health website at

http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/MHG_English.pdf

Do You Know Your Blood Pressure Numbers?

Blood Pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps. If this pressure rises and stays high over time, it can damage the body in many ways. About 1 in 3 adults in the United States has high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. Hypertension is sometimes referred to as the ‘silent killer.’ You can have it for years without knowing about it. It usually has no signs or symptoms but over a period of time, hypertension can damage your heart, blood vessels, kidneys and other parts of your body. So, knowing your blood pressure numbers is important, even when you’re feeling fine.

Your blood pressure reading consists of two numbers:

Systolic Pressure –top number, is the force that blood exerts on artery walls during a heart beat

Diastolic Pressure –lower number, is the force that blood exerts on the arteries between heart beats.

You should know your numbers and track them over time. If you have high blood pressure, your health care provider may suggest that you exercise, eat less salt and quit smoking. You may also need to take medicines to keep your blood pressure down. If your blood pressure is normal, you can work with your health care team to keep it that way. If your blood pressure is too high, treatment may help prevent organ damage. Talk with your health care professional and get to know your numbers.

The table below shows normal blood pressure numbers for adults. It also shows which numbers put you at greater risk for health problems. [Source: [National Heart Lung and Blood Institute](#)]

Categories for Blood Pressure Levels in Adults (measured in millimeters of mercury, or mmHg)

Category	Systolic (top number)		Diastolic (bottom number)
Normal	Less than 120	<i>And</i>	Less than 80
Prehypertension	120–139	<i>Or</i>	80–89
High blood pressure			
Stage 1	140–159	<i>Or</i>	90–99
Stage 2	160 or higher	<i>Or</i>	100 or higher

The ranges in the table apply to most adults (aged 18 and older) who don't have short-term serious illnesses.

Be Physically Active to Look and Feel Better

VA Midwest health care professionals strive to be the benchmark of excellence and value in health care by providing exemplary services that are both patient centered and evidence based. We know there is evidence that shows physical exercise can improve your health and well being. We want you to be physically active and Spring is the perfect time of the year to get started on an exercise plan. In May, landscapes in the Midwest are coming alive, flowers are blooming, and there are lots of opportunities for active living. Talk with your health care provider about what you can do to make it easier for you to get started. Brainstorm on how to fit exercise into your activities of daily living. Here are some general guidelines for adults: (1) Do strengthening activities at least twice a week; (2) Do at least 2-1/2 hours a week (30 minutes a day) of moderate-intensity activities, such as brisk walking or at least 1 hour and 15 minutes a week of vigorous activity such as aerobic dancing or swimming laps; (3) Activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes and preferably spread out through the week. For more information on how you can be physically active log on My HealthVet at www.myhealth.va.gov



Calendar of Events – May 2014

- May 1 Minneapolis** [DAV MN Convention 2014, Rochester](#) - Ramada, 1517 16th Street SW, Rochester, 55902
- May 1 Sioux Falls** [Volunteer Recognition Luncheon](#) - 12:00 PM - 2:30 PM (CST) Sioux Falls VFW
- May 2 Minneapolis** [Amvets National Commander visits Minneapolis VA Medical Center](#) - Minneapolis VAMC
- May 5 Nebraska** [VA Food Pantry](#) - 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM (CST) VA Clinic, Bldg. 40, Rm 105, 600 S. 70th St, Lincoln
- May 5 Nebraska** [Veterans Group Exercise Class](#) - 5:15 PM - 6:15 PM (CST) Omaha VA Medical Center
- May 5 St. Cloud** [Veterans Affairs Radio Show](#) - KNSI AM 1450/FM 103.3
- May 6 St. Cloud** [Veterans' Law Clinic](#) - 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CST) St. Cloud VAMC, Bldg. 28, Rm 126
- May 6 St. Cloud** [10th Annual Physically Disabled Veterans Turkey Hunt](#) - Camp Ripley near Little Falls
3rd Floor TV Studio, 4101 Woolworth Ave, Omaha, Nebraska
- May 6 Nebraska** [Veterans Freedom Music Festival Planning Meeting](#) - 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CST) Prairie Room, 600 S. 70th St., Lincoln
- May 7 Nebraska** [Omaha VA Pantry for Veterans](#) -10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CST) 825 Dorcas St, Ste. 200, Omaha,
- May 7 Nebraska** [Veteran Group Exercise Class](#) - 5:15 PM - 6:15 PM (CST) Omaha VA Medical Center 3rd Floor TV Studio, 4101 Woolworth Ave, Omaha, Nebraska
- May 7 St. Cloud** [10th Annual Physically Disabled Veterans Turkey Hunt](#) - Camp Ripley near Little Falls
- May 8 St. Cloud** [10th Annual Physically Disabled Veterans Turkey Hunt](#) - Camp Ripley near Little Falls
- May 9 St. Cloud** [Montevideo CBOC Caregiver Support Group](#) - 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM (CST) Montevideo CBOC
- May 11 Minneapolis** [Director provides "VA Update" on Minnesota Military Radio](#) - on the radio
- May 11** [Mothers Day](#)
- May 11-16** [Hospital Week](#)
- May 15 St. Cloud** [Program to Recognize Former POWs](#) - 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CST) Auditorium (Bldg. 8)
- May 16 St. Cloud** [Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic](#) - 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CST) Montevideo CBOC
- May 16 Nebraska** [VA CoffeeHaus-Lincoln](#) - 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CST) Auditorium, 600 S. 70th St, Lincoln, NE
- May 16 Nebraska** [VA CoffeHaus](#) 600 S. 70th St, Lincoln, Neb (canteen on lower level)
- May 17 Sioux Falls** [Armed Forces Day](#) - 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM (CST) VA grounds
- May 17 St. Cloud** [Women Veterans Wellness Expo](#) - 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM (CST) St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center
- May 19 Minneapolis** [Consumer Advisory Board meeting](#) - Minneapolis VA Medical Center
- May 20 St. Cloud** [Veterans' Law Clinic](#) - St. Cloud VA Medical Center, Building 28, Room 126
- May 21 Minneapolis** [Wellness Wednesday - VA 2K Walk and Roll](#) - Minneapolis VA Medical Center
- May 21 Nebraska** [Omaha VA Pantry for Veterans](#) - 825 Dorcas St, Ste. 200, Omaha, NE
- May 21 Sioux Falls** [VA2K Walk](#) - 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CST) Front Lobby
- May 26** [Memorial Day](#)
- May 27 Nebraska** [Veterans Freedom Music Festival Planning Meeting](#) - 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CST) Prairie Room, 600 S. 70th St., Lincoln
- May 27 Minneapolis** [Chronic Pain researcher Erin Krebs, MD, appears on Minnesota Military Radio](#) - on the radio

* Dates and times are correct as of April 23, 2014. 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