

# NETWORK UPDATE

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**VA Midwest**  
Health Care Network  
*Honoring Service. Empowering Health.*

## Network hosts technology evaluation summit

*By André Kok, VA Midwest HCN Public Affairs Officer*

EAGAN, MN – Radiologists, radiology technologists, physicians and healthcare technology managers from around the Midwest Health Care Network met here on December 15 and 16 to take part in a Radiology Ultrasound Technology Evaluation Summit. Participants evaluated presentations and demonstrations from five different ultrasound vendors before working together to make a recommendation for which system to purchase.

The purchase will include a total of 43 radiology ultrasound units for 11 different locations throughout the network. This purchase is part of a larger network-wide lifecycle replacement plan that ensures Veterans continue to have access to up to date medical equipment when they are seen at network facilities.

The summit is the culmination of a larger process, which works to make sure that all Health Care Systems in the network have an opportunity to provide input on the equipment that is purchased. When equipment gets to the point where it needs to be replaced and updated, administrative officers and radiologists from across the network are asked to identify representatives from their facility that can participate in the process.

Those identified form a working group, which conducts market research and develops requirements for the purchase. The requirements are provided to the VA National Acquisition Center and they solicit bids from qualified vendors.

“It has worked very well for us,” said Dr. Stanley

Parker, Network Clinical Director for Imaging. “It creates a collaborative unified approach and ensures everyone feels that they have had a say in the selections.”

Attendees worked together with the network biomedical engineering office and a representative from the VA National Acquisition Center to develop questions to be asked of each vendor before viewing their presentations and demonstrations.

“This is the first time I’ve attended a summit like this as part of an acquisition process,” said Michelle Mallicott, Contracting Officer from the VA National Acquisition Center. “I’m very impressed with how the summit has gathered everyone together, considering inputs from physicians, radiologists and technologists in their evaluation and review process.”

Once the group has made a recommendation of which vendor best meets their needs, the NAC will approve or disapprove the selection.

The Veterans Affairs Midwest Health Care Network serves more than 430,000 enrolled Veterans residing in the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and portions of Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Through an integrated system of 8 hospitals, 63

community based outpatient or outreach clinics, 8 community living centers and 4 domiciliary residential rehabilitation treatment programs the network aims to fulfill President Lincoln's promise, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan,” by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s Veterans.



# Laparoscopic Surgery Testing Center Established

MINNEAPOLIS, MN – The Minneapolis VA Medical Center is the first VA facility in the nation to be approved by the Society for Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons as a Fundamentals of Laparoscopic Surgery (FLS) testing center.

Laparoscopic surgery, also known as minimally invasive surgery, is a technique in which an operation is performed through a small incision with the aid of a camera. The procedure can be used to inspect and diagnose a condition, or to perform actual surgery.

“Our FLS education and assessment program enables the learning of minimally invasive techniques in a completely safe environment, without putting patients at risk,” said David Adriansen, who manages the Minneapolis VA’s Simulation Center. “The Society for Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons and the American College of Surgeons recommend all surgeons who practice laparoscopic surgery be certified through the FLS program.”

Dr. Archana Ramaswamy, a staff surgeon with the Minneapolis VA’s Surgery Specialty Care unit, spearheaded the application process that enabled his facility to become the first FLS testing center in the VA system.

“The FLS program is a comprehensive educational module and assessment tool designed to teach the fundamental knowledge, clinical judgement and technical skills required in the performance of basic laparoscopic surgery,” Ramaswamy explained. “The educational module consists of a web-based multimedia presentation and ‘watch and do’ exercises that focus on manual skills training. The assessment tool includes two components: a computer-based cognitive assessment and a performance based manual skills assessment.”



**Matthew Boble, MD, of the Minneapolis VAMC, tests his skills with FLS simulation equipment. (VA Photo by April Eilers)**

## Upcoming Veteran Town Halls

- 20 Jan 16
  - St. Cloud Health Care System – St. Cloud VAMC

**Check your Health Care System’s Facebook page and web page for additional information on upcoming town halls and other scheduled events.**



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**VA** Defining  
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