

NETWORK UPDATE

www.visn23.va.gov

April 2015

VA Midwest
Health Care Network
Honoring Service. Empowering Health.

New and Improved VA Prescription Label

“We heard you.”

VA asked hundreds of Veterans to tell us what they liked and didn't like about the labels on their prescriptions.

VA has changed the format of your VA prescription label to make the most important information more visible.

We've cleaned up the look and made the following changes:

- Your name has been moved to the top of the label.
- Directions on how to take your medication are now larger and bolded.
- The date the prescription can no longer be refilled is clearly stated.
- The new design makes it easier to identify important drug and safety information.



4.8 Million Veterans Benefit from New Labels

VA has now adopted this new label as the standard format for all VA pharmacies. The 4.8 million Veterans receiving VA prescription benefits now receive prescription labels with standardized information.

See more at: www.va.gov and learn more about VA Prescription Refills online from MyHealthVet.



Veterans Crisis Line



1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1

Statement from Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald on Oscar Win for HBO Documentary Highlighting Life-Saving Work of Veterans Crisis Line

“We are pleased that this film has highlighted the challenges our Veterans can face and the work of our dedicated Veterans Crisis Line staff to save lives and get Veterans into care,” said VA Secretary Robert McDonald. *“We are hopeful that this documentary will help raise awareness of this important issue with the American public. Our Veterans in crisis need to know that there is hope and asking for help makes them stronger.”*

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.

Glaucoma: Silent Cause of Vision Loss

Cutting Edge Research VA is working hard to help prevent Veterans' eye problems at the VA Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Visual Loss based at the Iowa City VA.

The Center conducts innovative research in the diagnosis of vision loss and works to understand the underlying mechanisms and causes of vision loss. With this research, the center can study new approaches toward rehabilitation and treatment of visual loss, while improving education and clinical care of our nation's Veterans.

According to Dr. Randy H. Kardon, director of the center, "Glaucoma is one of the silent causes of vision loss. Patients are unaware that they are slowly losing vision until it is too late, at which time the loss is permanent. That is why it is so important for Veterans to have regular eye exams to check for any sign that glaucoma is developing and to be treated, if glaucoma is detected."



The test for glaucoma is painless

VA spends a significant portion of its medical care dollars toward detecting and monitoring of treatment of vision loss. Last year there were more than 2.9 million Veteran visits in VA eye care optometry and ophthalmology clinics.

To read the entire article on-line visit: www.va.gov.

By Hans Petersen, VA Staff Writer

Women Veterans Painting Workshop



If you were a recovering alcoholic who changed your life by deciding to become an artist, how would you spend your Tuesday evenings?

If you are Jennifer Hill of St. Cloud, Minnesota, you would spend it leading an

acrylic painting workshop for women Veterans at the St. Cloud VA, working to help women Veterans enrich their lives through art.

The recently concluded six-week workshop provided six women Veterans, ranging in ages from their mid-30s to late 50s, an opportunity to learn to paint. Moreover, the workshop provided the women Veterans time to "be together."

"That's important," says Women Veterans Program Manager Julie Roman Vera. "Women Veterans don't traditionally think of themselves as Veterans, and do not seek each other out."

"But, there aren't many other groups who so readily identify with one another as Veterans, and giving these women an opportunity to simply get together is therapeutic on a number of levels," she added.

The joy of painting in a group setting is that it allows each person to dive into their own painting experience, but to also be able to share immediately, says Hill. "During a typical two-hour session there are

long periods when the women would get into a 'peaceful, meditative zone,' and then all of a sudden group discussions would occur," Hill said.

At the beginning of the workshop, each woman started with a blank canvas and selected a photo that was meaningful to her to paint. "We worked through a few exercises and before we knew it they were painting," Hill said.

It is wonderful to provide an environment with positive feedback and an immediate reward, Hill says. "Painting with acrylics also offers the opportunity to not make any mistakes," Hill says. "If you make a boo-boo then it's easy to fix—you simply paint over it."

Hill became involved with the acrylic workshop because of the close association between the arts and music programs at the College of Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota, and the St. Cloud VA's Music Therapist Beverly "BJ" Gross.

Hill says that while this workshop was her first experience leading a class for women Veterans, it will not be her last. "We think for the next session we may extend it to eight weeks," she said.

For more information about the Women Veterans Health Program contact Julie Roman Vera, Women Veterans Program Manager, at 320-255-6480, ext. 6655.



See more at:
www.stcloud.va.gov

Instructor Jennifer Hill teaches student Isabelle Schmidt during the Women Veterans Acrylic workshop

VA Eliminates Net Worth as Health Care Eligibility Factor

Elimination of Net Worth Makes More Veterans Eligible for Health Care

The VA is updating the way it determines eligibility for VA health care, a change that will result in more Veterans having access to the health care benefits they've earned and deserve.

Effective 2015, VA eliminated the use of net worth as a determining factor for both health care programs and copayment responsibilities. This change makes VA health care benefits more accessible to lower-income Veterans.

Instead of combining the sum of Veterans' income with their assets to determine eligibility for medical care and copayment obligations, VA will now only consider a Veteran's gross household income and deductible expenses from the previous year. Elimination of the consideration of net worth for VA health care enrollment means that certain lower-income, non-service-connected Veterans will have less out-of-pocket costs. Over a 5-year period, it is estimated that 190,000 Veterans will become eligible for reduced costs of their health care services.

In March 2014, VA eliminated the annual requirement for updated financial information. VA now uses information from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration to automatically match individual Veterans' income information which reduces the burden on Veterans to keep their healthcare eligibility up to date.

Veterans may submit updated income information at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/, or by visiting their nearby VA health care facility.

For more information, visit: www.va.gov/healthbenefits or call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

**Veterans
Annual Financial
Assessment (VFA)**

Equity of Care Award Honorees

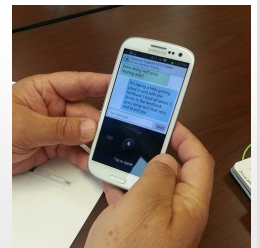


Iowa City VA Health Care System has been recognized by the American Hospital Association (AHA) for "best in class" excellence in Diversity Management and Strengthening the Workforce.
Congratulations!

*Need an audiologist?
There's an app
for that.*

Find out more online:

www.blogs.va.gov



The 2015 NVWG registrations are available: www.wheelchairgames.org.

Don't wait, the events fill up fast and no applications after April 15, 2015, are accepted. Talk with your local VA rehabilitation therapist to get involved.

On the Beat Newsletter

Minneapolis VA
Health Care System
February 2015



See all issues online:

www.minneapolis.va.gov

April - Calendar of Events

Current as of
3/18/2015

Nebraska-Western Iowa

Wednesdays	VA Regional Office Field Office	Grand Island VA Clinic - Room S508	10:00 AM - 2:30 PM
Tuesdays	Lincoln Regional Benefit Office Field Office	Lincoln VA Clinic - Room B20	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Tuesdays	Lincoln Regional Benefit Office Field Office	Omaha VA Medical Center - Room 1103	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
4-Apr	VA CoffeeHaus	Lincoln VA Clinic Auditorium	9:00 AM
17-Apr	VA CoffeeHaus	Lincoln VA Clinic Auditorium	call - (402) 423-5771

Minneapolis

Weekdays	Red Carpet Orientation	Sioux Falls VA Medical Center - 4th Floor Auditorium	3:30 - 4:30 PM
1-Apr	MOVE! Introduction Class	Minneapolis VA Medical Center - Room 4E-136	5:30 - 6:30 PM
Tuesdays and Thursdays	MOVE! Introduction Class	Minneapolis VA Medical Center - Room 4E-136	12:00 - 1:00 PM
9-Apr	National Ex-POW Recognition Day		
14-Apr	Minneapolis Legal Clinics for Veterans	Minneapolis VA Medical Center - 2nd Floor Flag Atrium Balcony	9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
23-Apr	Red Carpet Welcome at Twin Ports Outpatient Clinic	Twin Ports Outpatient Clinic - 3520 Tower Avenue, Superior, WI	1:00 - 2:00 PM

St. Cloud

6-Apr	Veterans Affairs Radio Show	KNSI AM 1450/FM 103.3	9:10 - 9:30 AM
7-Apr	VA Caregiver Support Group	St. Cloud VA Medical Center - Bldg. 48, Room 204 and Brainerd CBOC via Vtel	12:00 - 1:00 PM
7-Apr	Veterans' Law Clinic	St. Cloud VA Medical Center - Bldg. 28, Room 126	12:00 - 2:00 PM
10-Apr	Whitney Center Health & Fitness Fair	Whitney Senior Center	8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
15-Apr	Voices for Veterans Radio Show	WJON AM 1240	8:10 - 8:45 AM
15-Apr	Quarterly Memorial Service	St. Cloud VA Chapel	1:30 PM
17-Apr	Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic	Montevideo CBOC	12:00 - 2:00 PM
21-Apr	Veterans' Law Clinic	St. Cloud VA Medical Center - Bldg. 28, Room 126	12:00 - 2:00 PM
21-Apr	Veterans Information Night	National Guard Training and Community Center - Montevideo, MN	12:00 PM - 6:00 PM
22-Apr	Veterans in Pain: Pain Management Event	St. Cloud VAMC Auditorium (Informational Flier)	9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

For more information:
www.visn23.va.gov | Margaret.Wheelden@va.gov | (651) 405-5600

Produced by VISN 23 Office of Public Affairs
Bobbi Hauptmann, Public Affairs Specialist
bobbi.hauptmann@va.gov