



**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**  
**VA MIDWEST HEALTH CARE NETWORK**  
*Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23*  
**Network Update**  
**March 2011**  
[www.visn23.va.gov](http://www.visn23.va.gov)



***“We Honor Veterans” – A  
National Campaign of  
Awareness and Recognition***



VISN 23 has committed to participate in the ***“We Honor Veterans”*** campaign sponsored jointly by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the VA. As chronic illness or an acute condition affects a veteran’s health, it is essential that the appropriate resources be identified and used. ***“We Honor Veterans”*** involves improved communication with community hospices and other healthcare providers. By working together, we commit to helping Veterans and their families through the last stages of life. Our community partners will become more aware of the specific needs of our Veterans and the VA will improve their ability to coordinate community care more effectively and efficiently. For more information contact the Hospice and Palliative Care Team at your VA Medical Center or go to [www.WeHonorVeterans.org](http://www.WeHonorVeterans.org).

**VA Adds Chat Feature to Online Application**

Veterans will find it easier and faster to apply for their health care benefits now that the Department of Veterans Affairs has enhanced and streamlined its online Form 10-10EZ, “Application for Health Benefits.” This revised online application now features a chat function which will allow Veterans to receive live assistance while they are filling out the form. Additional enhancements to the process include simplification of questions relating to military service in Southeast Asia during the Gulf and in the Vietnam wars. Several additional minor enhancements make the application easier and faster for Veterans to complete.

Since November 2000, nearly 400,000 Veterans have already used the online 10-10EZ to start receiving health care benefits from VA. Future enhancements to the online application will include a 10-10 EZR Health Benefits Renewal Form for Veterans to update their personal information and a special 10-10EZ designed specifically for demobilizing military service members.

Veterans may complete or download the 10-10EZ form at the VA health eligibility Web site at [www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez). Veterans may also contact VA at 1 (877) 222-8387 (VETS), visit the VA health eligibility Web site at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility) or apply for health care benefits at any VA medical center at <http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp>. For more information contact a VA health care eligibility specialist at the nearest VA medical facility.

**We Want Veterans To Give Us Feedback**

Every employee at VA, especially your treatment team, wants to be involved in providing the best care possible. If you have a compliment, suggestion or concern regarding your care, first speak with a member of your treatment team. Your treatment team includes your doctor, nurse, social worker, dietitian, pharmacist, chaplain, therapist and other professionals associated with your medical care. If you feel your concerns are not being addressed by your treatment team, you may contact a VA Patient Advocate. A Patient Advocate is designated by your VA facility Director to manage the feedback received from veterans, family members and friends. Your VA Patient Advocate works directly with management and employees to facilitate resolutions. Contact your VA Patient Advocate if you feel your concerns are not being addressed.

## MOVE Celebrates 5 Years of Helping People Lose Weight



February marked the fifth anniversary of the MOVE! Weight Management Program for Veterans. For the past five years, more than 300,000 Veterans who chose to lose weight and become more physically active have had MOVE! as a resource to help them achieve their goals and improve their health. MOVE! is an evidenced-based weight management program developed in 2005 by the VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP) in collaboration with staff in the field. Through hard work and staff dedication, MOVE! was launched nationally in 2006 and has rapidly become the largest weight management program offered by an integrated health care system. The MOVE! Program is designed for veterans enrolled in the VA healthcare system who want assistance with managing their weight. Typically, the program is offered to veterans who are overweight or obese. Veterans are encouraged to talk with their

VA healthcare team about MOVE!. We invite Veterans to tell their story. If you are a MOVE! Participant and want to share your story with others, contact a VA Public Affairs Officer.

## Special Environmental Health Registry Evaluation

The VA Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards has recently published a new brochure titled "Special Environmental Health Registry Evaluation Programs for Veterans: What You Need to Know." The four-fold, four-color brochure gives a quick look at five health registry evaluation programs that track the health of Veterans exposed to environmental hazards during their military service. These programs are: 1) Ionizing Radiation Registry, 2) Agent Orange Registry, 3) Gulf War Registry, 4) Depleted Uranium Follow-Up Program, and 5) Toxic Embedded Fragments Registry.

Highlights of the brochure include:

- What exposures the programs cover
- Why Veterans should get a health registry evaluation and what are the benefits
- How to schedule a registry evaluation
- Specific participation criteria for each of the five programs

Copies of the brochure are being sent to VA medical centers and CBOCs or you can obtain a copy and more information online. The brochure and more information on the registries are available at [http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/health\\_care.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/health_care.asp).



## VA Deploys Automated System To Deliver Faster And More Accurate Payments



VA has successfully deployed a new automated system that is delivering faster, more accurate payments to Veterans attending school under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The technology relies upon information from Veterans and specialized rules-based software to streamline the process for calculating Veterans' benefits. The new processes and software available to VA's claims personnel

replace the interim tools in use since August 2009, when the Post 9/11 GI Bill became effective. VA has issued more than \$8 billion in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit payments to nearly 440,000 students and their educational institutions.

Further information about the Post-9/11 GI Bill is available on the Internet at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov).



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## VAMCs Renamed VA Health Care Systems

All VA medical facilities in the [VA Midwest Health Care Network \(VISN 23\)](#) have been re-named as health care systems. Recently, William C. Schoenhard, Veterans Health Administration deputy under secretary for health for operations and management, approved the following names changes:

- [Minneapolis VA Health Care System](#)
- [Fargo VA Health Care System](#)
- [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#)
- [Sioux Falls VA Health Care System](#)
- [Iowa City VA Health Care System](#)

Schoenhard directed the name changes from VA Medical Center (VAMC) to VA Health Care System (VAHCS) because it better reflects the overall integration of medical services provided at the medical center and multiple community-based outpatient clinic locations. Previously approved name changes at VA Health Care Systems within the network occurred after medical center integrations for the [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#) based in Fort Meade, S.D. and Hot Springs, S.D.; VA [Central Iowa Health Care System](#) based in Des Moines, Iowa; and the [VA Nebraska/Western Iowa Health Care System](#) which is based in Omaha, Neb.

## Announcements and Calendar of Events for March – April 2011

**March 1** - [Fargo, ND](#) - My HealtheVet presentation from 7:30-8 p.m. at the American Legion Post 2, 505 3rd Ave N.

**March 2** – [Sioux Falls VA HCS](#) - All Veteran Craft Show, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., 4<sup>th</sup> floor auditorium. Craft kits, original art, photography, and all forms of art will be on display. This event is sponsored by Recreation Therapy and Help Hospitalized Veterans.

**March 3** – [Benson, MN](#) - Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist and several distinguished panelists will speak to a law enforcement training seminar in Benson, MN. The seminar titled “Echoes of War: The Combat Veteran In-Contact with Law Enforcement.” Sponsored by the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court in southwest Minnesota, this half-day training program provides cutting edge training on combat trauma, how it can lead to contact with law enforcement, and presents real-world crisis intervention techniques police officers should use when confronting troubled, and potentially dangerous, combat Veterans. Law enforcement personnel desiring to attend should contact [Cheryl.Torgerson@courts.state.mn.us](mailto:Cheryl.Torgerson@courts.state.mn.us).

**March 4 & 5** - [Weeping Water, Neb.](#) - My HealtheVet presentation at the Veterans of the Armed Forces Outreach Open House March 4 from noon-7 p.m. and on March 5 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Cass County Fairgrounds, 8420 144<sup>th</sup> St.

**March 11** – [Sioux Falls VA HCS](#) - Open House of recently renovated Dental Service, 2-4 p.m., first floor.

**March 9** – [Lincoln, Neb.](#) - My HealtheVet booth at the Lincoln Patient Advisory Council Veterans Fair from 4-8 p.m. at the VA clinic located at 600 South 70th St.

**March 10** – [Chariton, Iowa](#) - My HealtheVet presentation to the District 4 Iowa County Veterans Association, Carpenters Hall, 1215 Court.

**March 10** – Monticello, Iowa- My HealtheVet presentation at the Jones County Veterans Open House from 4-8 p.m. Veterans Memorial Hall, Mary Lovell LeVan Renaissance Center, 220 E. First St.

**March 19** – St. Cloud, MN - The City of St. Cloud and area businesses are hosting a “Welcome Home” event. The event is scheduled for 9 a.m. on March 19 at the St. Cloud Civic Center. The impetus for the event was the return in early December of more than 300 members of the 367<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, which spent the past year in Iraq. The celebration will feature a veterans services fair, activities for children and a ceremony at which some members of 367th will be presented with awards and all recently returned veterans will be thanked. For more information or to offer assistance, contact the St. Cloud Times Editorial Board at 320-255-8762, [letters@stcloudtimes.com](mailto:letters@stcloudtimes.com) or care of St. Cloud Times, P.O. Box 768, St. Cloud, MN 56302.

**March 24**- St. Cloud MN – The St. Cloud VAHCS is hosting a seminar titled “We Honor Veterans: Partnering on End of Life Care for Community Hospice/Palliative Care Providers and the VA Health Care System” at the CentraCare Health Plaza in St. Cloud, MN. The conference is to facilitate on-going collaboration of government and non-government organizations and health care providers to ensure that Veterans and their families have access to appropriate, high quality hospice and palliative care. The conference beings at 8:30 a.m. and concludes at 3 p.m. For more information contact Catherine Anderson, 320-255-6480, x7339, [Catherine.Anderson3@va.gov](mailto:Catherine.Anderson3@va.gov).

**April 12**- Fargo, ND - My HealtheVet booth from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Kidney Community Town Hall, Fargo VA Healthcare Center, 2101 Elm Street.

**April 1** - St. Cloud VA HCS - is hosting a Former Prisoner of War Recognition Program from 9 a.m. until approximately 12:30 p.m., in the Auditorium (Bldg. 8) on the St. Cloud VA HCS main campus. Major General (Retired) Larry W. Shellito, Minnesota Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, is scheduled to participate in the program. For more information contact [Patricia.Aljets@va.gov](mailto:Patricia.Aljets@va.gov).

**April 28** – Sioux Falls, SD - Volunteer Recognition Luncheon, VFW Post 628, 12 noon.

**For more information about upcoming events, classes or weather alerts log on at:**

Black Hills Health VA System (HCS) -	<a href="http://www.blackhills.va.gov">www.blackhills.va.gov</a>
Central Iowa VA HCS–	<a href="http://www.centraliowa.va.gov">www.centraliowa.va.gov</a>
Fargo, ND VA Medical Center -	<a href="http://www.fargo.va.gov">www.fargo.va.gov</a>
Iowa City, Iowa VA Medical Center–	<a href="http://www.iowacity.va.gov">www.iowacity.va.gov</a>
Minneapolis VA HCS –	<a href="http://www.minneapolis.va.gov">www.minneapolis.va.gov</a>
Nebraska Western Iowa VA HCS-	<a href="http://www.nebraska.va.gov">www.nebraska.va.gov</a>
Sioux Falls VA Medical Center –	<a href="http://www.siouxfalls.va.gov">www.siouxfalls.va.gov</a>
St. Cloud VA HCS –	<a href="http://www.stcloud.va.gov">www.stcloud.va.gov</a>

**HCS** – Health Care System

**VA** – Department of Veterans Affairs

For More information, call the Network Office at (612) 725-1968 or  
Log on at [www.visn23.va.gov](http://www.visn23.va.gov) or email [sharyl.schaepe@va.gov](mailto:sharyl.schaepe@va.gov)