



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



### **VA Launches Outbound Women Veterans Call Center**

On June 1, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched an outbound Women Veterans Call Center (WVCC). The outbound call center is expected to contact approximately 40,000 Women Veterans a quarter.

Veterans contacted through the Women Veterans Call Center will be given the option to receive information on VA services via email or standard mail, based on their preference. Standard mail will include a pre-loaded flash drive that includes links to information on VA services and benefits.

As needed, Women Veterans will also be referred to VA health or benefit responders and referees will receive a 30 day follow up call from the contact representative to ensure their needs are getting met.

This is a major outreach initiative and a significant undertaking to bring more women into VA care. Please join us as we reach out to Women Veterans. Contact the Women Veterans Coordinator at a medical center near you for more information.



The PTSD Coach smartphone application (app), launched in April by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD), has helped more than 5,000 users connect. While 96 percent of the users so far are located in the United States, the app has also been downloaded in 25 other countries.

The app lets users track their PTSD symptoms, links them with public and personalized sources of support, provides accurate information about PTSD, and teaches helpful strategies for managing PTSD symptoms on the go.

Currently, the PTSD Coach app has received perfect customer review scores on iTunes App Store. One user described the app as “a must for every spouse who has a family member with PTSD.”

The app has already proven to be a useful tool for the staff at the Veterans Crisis Line. Within the first two hours of the app’s official launch, the Crisis Line staff were contacted by a distressed Veteran who reported being instructed by the app to call the crisis line and was subsequently given an appointment at the local VA medical center.

The app is one of the first in a series of jointly-designed resources by the VA National Center for PTSD and DoD’s National Center for Telehealth and Technology.

Information on the PTSD Coach app is on the VA’s National Center for PTSD website:  
[www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp). More apps from [DoD's National Center for Telehealth and Technology](http://www.t2health.org) can be found at: [www.t2health.org/apps](http://www.t2health.org/apps).

## Appointments feature added to My HealtheVet

Veterans can now keep track of their past and upcoming VA medical appointments and get e-mail appointment reminders through My HealtheVet ([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)).

Veterans who use My HealtheVet can view their VA appointments in the 'Get Care' section of their account. The system also allows them to set up e-mail reminders of upcoming appointments if they elect to subscribe to e-mail reminders for appointments on the Health Calendar within the website.

The feature is only available to Veterans who have registered for a My HealtheVet account and have been in-person authenticated. The in-person authentication process upgrades the Veteran's account, which allows them to take advantage of all the advanced features available on My HealtheVet. Veterans should contact the My HealtheVet Coordinator at their local VA Health Care System for more information or visit [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).

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## VA Processing Hundreds of Applications for New Family Caregiver Benefits

On May 9, 2011, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) began processing applications for eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Service members for new services under the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act 2010. In the first week VA assisted more than 625 Veterans, Service members and their Family Caregivers in applying for new services. New services for primary Family Caregivers of eligible post-9/11 Veterans include a stipend, mental health services, and access to health care insurance, if they are not already entitled to care or services under a health plan. The stipend portion of this service will be backdated to the date of the application. Comprehensive Caregiver training and medical support are other key components of this program. On top of receiving the 625 plus applications, Caregiver Support Coordinators have also assisted nearly 1,200 other Caregivers in finding more than two dozen other Caregiver benefits VA provides. Applications can be processed by telephone through the Caregiver Support Line at (855) 260-3274, in person at a VA medical Center with a Caregiver Support Coordinator, by mail or online at [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov) with the new Caregiver Application (VA Form 1010-CG). The website application also features a chat option that provides the Family Caregiver with a live representative to assist in completing the application form.



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## Upcoming Events

**June 2: Stars and Stripes Health Fair** -, Stars and Stripes Health Fair on the Des Moines VA Campus, 3600 30th St. **Des Moines, Iowa**. Event runs from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. and includes a booth for My HealthVet registration and information.

**June 4: My HealthVet at the Iowa State VFW Meeting**, 4800 Merle Hay Road, **Des Moines, Iowa**. A booth with information on My HealthVet and how the website's many features can put Vets in control of their VA Healthcare.

**June 16: My HealthVet Presentation** - 10 a.m. by the My HealthVet coordinator from the at the VFW Post 738 Monthly Meeting. 2801 Dean Ave. **Des Moines, Iowa**.

**June 18: Lincoln VA Flag Day Music Celebration** - Celebrate the symbol of America's freedom at the 2011 Veterans' Flag Day Music Celebration from 1 - 5 p.m. at 600 S. 70th St., **Lincoln Neb**. The event will include music from the Shaw Brothers, Salt Creek Symphony, Squeeker and the Oasis Bluegrass Band. KFOR's Dave Hilligoss will present the Bill Harris Friends of Veterans Award. It will also include VA informational booths, caricatures by Paul Zanderholm, flag trivia and prizes and American Legion riders. Bring your lawn chair and refreshments to this free event. No alcohol is permitted on VA property.

**June 24, Veteran Stand Down for homeless and other Veterans** – from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the National Guard Armory, **Wagner, South Dakota**; at 3 p.m. there will be a dedication of the sculpture, “Grandfather’s Breath, “ near the Wagner CBOC. The public is invited to attend and help celebrate the one year anniversary of the Wagner CBOC.

**July 1 & 2: Veterans Interagency Outreach event** - from 1 - 8 p.m. on July 1 and from 8 a.m. - noon at the American Legion, 1223 Central Ave, **Kearney, Neb**. Veterans are encouraged to stop in and talk to a VA representative to see if you may be eligible for benefits. Vets should bring their DD Form 214 if they are not currently enrolled.

**July 22: Veterans Interagency Outreach event** - from noon - 7 p.m. at the Hold County Courthouse Annex, 128 N. 6th Street, O'Neill, Neb. Veterans who are not enrolled in VA health care or who are not receiving VA benefits are encouraged to stop in with their DD Form 214 to visit with our eligibility staff to see if you can receive VA benefits.

## VA Websites Offer Calendar of Events, Weather Alerts, and Much More

For information on upcoming classes, special events, or weather related alerts, log on to your VA Health Care System's homepage.

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 HCS -	<a href="http://www.fargo.va.gov">www.fargo.va.gov</a>
Iowa City, Iowa VA HCS -	<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 HCS -	<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>
Department of Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.va.gov">www.va.gov</a>

For More information, call the Network Office at (612) 725-1968 or  
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