



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



### Coaching into Care

#### VA's Telephone Service to Help Family Members Encourage Veterans to Seek Medical Care

In March, VA launched **Coaching into Care**, a telephone service designed to assist family members and friends who are trying to encourage their Veteran to seek health care for readjustment and mental health issues.

Family members and friends may not know what to say to encourage their Veterans to seek readjustment and health care. The **Coaching into Care** line will help them find the right words."

"**Coaching into Care** offers unlimited, free coaching for family or friends on solving specific logistical obstacles, encouraging sometimes reluctant Veterans to seek care.

Since March, **Coaching into Care**, has had more than 650 calls with family members or friends of more than 175 Veterans.

The phone line is connected to VA's Veterans Crisis Line, Caregiver Support Line, and the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans. If a Veteran is in an immediate crisis there is no wrong number for families to call.

Callers can reach VA's **Coaching into Care** program at the toll-free number 1-888-823-7458, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., Mon-Fri.



#### National Suicide Prevention Week, September 4-10 In VA – every week - is suicide prevention week!

[It's National Suicide Prevention Week](#) and VA offers confidential help for Veterans and their families. If you or anyone you know is in crisis, call 1-800-273-8255, [or use the 24/7 Veterans online chat](#).

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

The caring professionals at the Veterans Crisis Line are specially trained and experienced in helping Veterans of all ages and circumstances. Many of the responders are Veterans and understand what Veterans and their families and friends have been through and the challenges Veterans of all ages and service eras face.

Call them and tell them about anything that has been particularly stressful for you lately — the death of a loved one, relationship break-up, loss of job or unemployment, money problems, losing your home, or anything else that might be contributing to how you are feeling.

This website explains it all: [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net).

No Veteran should commit suicide. No man or woman who dedicated their life to preserving freedom for Americans should ever feel so hopeless that they would want to end their life. But it happens. At some point in everyone's life, we all...hit a wall.

That's why VA has the [Veterans Crisis Line](#).

## Medical Errors Decreasing



At all VA medical centers, doctors, nurses and other hospital workers are required to report medical errors and near misses. That requirement, along with VA's quality improvement efforts, is helping VA improve its patient safety record, making VA healthcare safer. A new Department of Veterans Affairs report shows that it's working. "The rate of reported actual adverse events per month and the severity of those events have significantly diminished in the operating room," noted Julia Neily, a nurse, lead author of the report, and associate director of VA's [National Center for Patient Safety](#) Field Office. Between mid-2006 and 2009, staff reported 101 surgical adverse events and 136 surgical close calls from both in and out of operating room settings. The report shows a decrease in reported adverse events from 3.21 to 2.4 per month, while reported close calls increased from 1.97 to 3.24 per month.

### Reporting "Close Calls" Essential to Patient Safety

The findings indicate that VA staff continue to report and investigate surgical and invasive adverse events and report close calls, which allow problems to be caught before any harm occurs. Close calls occur anywhere from three to 300 times more often than actual adverse events and in VA are given the same level of scrutiny as adverse events that result in harm to a patient. An increase in close call reporting is a very positive sign. A willingness to report problems is essential to safe care. The increase in close call reports indicates that doctors, nurses, and their co-workers are now more willing to speak up if something goes wrong, or if it looks like something could go wrong. Read the full story at <http://www.va.gov/health/NewsFeatures/20110825a.asp>

## Upcoming Events

**September 6-9: Survivor Wall - Suicide Prevention Week** - [Minneapolis VA Health Care System](#) from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (CDT) Minneapolis VA Medical Center, One Veterans Dr., Minneapolis, Minn. In the Cafe -- visit our Information Booth and place a ribbon on the remembrance wall if you know someone who has died by suicide. This wall will be displayed all week. Suicide Prevention Information will also be available at the table.

**September 7: Daughter of Suicide** - [Minneapolis VA Health Care System](#) from 12:30-2:30 p.m. (CDT), Room 4T-112, Minneapolis VA Medical Center, One Veterans Dr., Minneapolis, Minn. Dempsey Rice was 18 years old when her mother killed herself. Seeking closure, Dempsey endeavors to integrate her mother's suicide into her life and to reconnect with the woman who destroyed so much when she died. All are welcome to the showing of the 2000 HBO documentary by Dempsey Rice.

**September 8: Community Resources for Those Left Behind** - [Minneapolis VA Health Care System](#) from 12-1 p.m. (CDT), Room 1B-102, Minneapolis VA Medical Center, One Veterans Dr., Minneapolis, Minn. Losing a loved one to suicide is a difficult grieving process for many people. If you would like to know more about support groups, volunteering opportunities or just gain knowledge on the community resource available please join us! There will be short presentations from the S.A.V.E. Organization, Center for Grief and Loss and also the Survivor Support Group at the Bradshaw Funeral Home.

**September 9: Survivor of Suicide** - [Minneapolis VA Health Care System](#) from 8:30-9:30 a.m. (CDT), Auditorium, Minneapolis VA Medical Center, One Veterans Dr., Minneapolis, Minn. Jennifer Tuder, PhD, playwright and professor at SCSU, speaks on her experience as a Survivor of Suicide. Jennifer's father, a Vietnam veteran died by suicide leaving her and her family with the haunting question of "why."

**September 10: VA Outreach Team at Lincoln Airshow** - [VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System](#) from 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. (CDT), Lincoln Airport (Lincoln, Neb). VA health care's outreach team will have an



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information booth at the Lincoln air show. Stop by and learn about your VA eligibility and benefits.

**September 18: Camp Ripley Open House and Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home** - [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (CDT) Camp Ripley, Minn. (near Little Falls). Camp Ripley, the Minnesota Army National Guard's training center is hosting an Open House. Event activities include: Classic Car show, Inflatable obstacle course, rock wall climbing; State patrol display, Camp Ripley Environmental display, Military Museum and many more; HMMV and tank display, helicopter display; Food and beverages There will be a ceremony to honor our "Vietnam Hero's" at 1:00 p.m. themed "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans." Vietnam Veterans who want to participate in this event contact: SGT Timothy Krouth: 320.616.2714 The St. Cloud VA Health Care System will be distributing benefits information and offering enrollment opportunities to Veterans during the open house.

**September 19: Dementia Caregivers Support Group** - [VA Central Iowa Health Care System](#) from 1 - 2:30 p.m. (CDT) at the Paralyzed Veterans of America office - 3703 1/2 Douglas Ave St., Des Moines, Iowa. Parking and entrance are behind building. This is a support group that is co-sponsored by the VA and the Alzheimer's Association. Those who would benefit from this support group are persons who are caring for or are concerned about a loved one who has dementia. The group will provide education related to dementing illnesses and an opportunity for supportive visiting with other caregivers.

**September 27: Women Veterans Health and Wellness Event: Personal Safety for Women** - [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) from 5:30 - 7 p.m. at the St. Cloud VA Health Care System, 4801 Veterans Dr., St. Cloud, Minn., Building 96. 5:30 p.m. - Social Gathering and Flu Vaccinations; 6 - 8 p.m. - Program. Refreshments and Door Prizes! All women Veterans are welcome! Veterans do not have to be enrolled in VA care to attend this event. For more information, call 320.255.6371.

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

For information on special events, or weather related alerts, log on to your local VA facility's homepage.

VA Black Hills HCS	<a href="http://www.blackhills.va.gov">www.blackhills.va.gov</a>
VA Central Iowa 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 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>
VA Nebraska Western Iowa 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>
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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)