



**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
VA MIDWEST HEALTH CARE NETWORK
Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23
Network Update
August 2012**
www.visn23.va.gov



"Coaching Into Care" is a valuable service for family members and friends of Veterans who might be reluctant to seek mental health care.

"Coaching Into Care" service offers free coaching to callers, with no limit to the number of calls they can make.

The goal is to connect a Veteran with VA care in his or her community with the help and encouragement of family members or friends.

Callers are coached on solving specific logistical problems and ways to encourage the Veteran to seek care while respecting his or her right to make personal decisions.

The service is available toll-free at **1-888-823-7458**, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Central time, Monday through Friday, and online at <http://www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/>.

If a Veteran is experiencing an acute crisis, callers should contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 for immediate help. "Coaching Into Care" works directly with the Veterans Crisis Line and the Caregiver Support Line to provide guidance and referrals.

To learn more go to:
www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/



On July 18, 2012, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that 1.67 million Veterans and Service members have registered for the secure, joint VA-Department of Defense (DoD), self-service web portal, [eBenefits](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov), which provides online information and access to a wide variety of military and Veteran benefits resources.

Veterans and Service members can now register for a premier account, which allows maximum ability to update personal information and learn about benefits without having to visit a VA facility. With the premier account, one password—called a single sign-on—allows Veterans to access multiple applications on the secure portion of the website.

A premier account also allows Veterans to check the status of compensation and pension claims. This feature, the most popular within the eBenefits application, had over 700,000 visits in June alone.

Improved functionalities to the *eBenefits* application includes benefits eligibility email messages to Service members as they reach career milestones and a new Career Center page with employment self-assessment tools, a resume builder, and a translator that relates military expertise to civilian work skills. The Career Center, which received over 8,000 visits in its first week, has single sign-on connectivity to VA's Veteran hiring site, "VA for Vets." Another key function added is a single sign-on capability for Veterans to transition securely between benefits information on *eBenefits* and health information on VA's *myHealthVet* website without an additional log-on step.

To learn more go to: www.ebenefits.va.gov

Quit Tobacco – Make Everyone Proud



Smoking is the leading preventable cause of premature death and a leading cause of illness and mortality. Smoking and tobacco use cessation persists as one of the VA's biggest public health challenges. Many Veterans began using tobacco while in the military. The rate of smoking among

Veterans in the VA health care system is higher than among the U.S. population.

Approximately 70 percent of all smokers say they want to quit, but even the most motivated may try to quit five or six times before they are able to quit. Over 3 million Americans successfully quit smoking every year.

To help Veterans quit smoking and tobacco use, VA offers:

- Screening for tobacco use during primary care visits
- Individual counseling
- Prescriptions for nicotine replacement therapy, such as a nicotine patch or gum, or other medications
- Participation in evidence-based smoking cessation programs

For information on enrolling in a smoking cessation program, talk with your VA primary care provider or mental health professional.

Stepping On – Fall Prevention Class to be held at Fargo VAMC



'*Stepping On*' is a fall prevention class that will begin at the Fargo VA Healthcare System on September 7th. This innovative 7-week session, will provide valuable information with a focus on prevention of falls. Participants will receive ankle weights and will get the chance to exercise with a physical therapist. Guest speakers include a pharmacist and vision specialist. Following the 7-week session, a booster class will also be offered to participants. The booster class is conducted three months after the initial class. It's a great opportunity to follow up with the participants to see how they are doing, if they have made any changes and if they have any questions. **If you are interested in signing up or learning more about '*Stepping On*,' contact Amanda Hoffer at 701-232-3241, dial 9 then ext 4591 or Liz Laney at ext 3047.**

You Can Help Get Information to Veterans

We want Veterans to know about their health care benefits. We need your help in getting information about VA health care services to Veterans. If you know a Veteran, print out this one page flyer that gives them information on how Veterans can maintain their physical and mental wellness. To print the flyer, go to:

[www.va.gov/health/docs/Print This for a Vet.pdf](http://www.va.gov/health/docs/Print%20This%20for%20a%20Vet.pdf)

- It may be a homeless Veteran you pass on the street every day — you can suggest they take the list to a public library computer to learn what VA has to help them.
- It may be a young Veteran recently returning from a combat zone, who is not aware of the benefits he or she is entitled to or a Vietnam Veteran who is unaware of how VA has changed over the years.

There are many potential opportunities for you to help Veterans make the connection to the services VA has for them, benefits they have earned! In addition to the doctors and nurses who provide our Veterans with high-quality health care, the Veterans Health Administration has many programs to help Veterans reach their optimal health. – Help us spread the word



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Announcements and Calendar of Events for August 2012

August 7: [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) - **Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic** from Noon-2 p.m. (CDT) at the Montevideo VA Outpatient Clinic, 1025 North 13th St., Montevideo, Minn. Free legal consultation for Veterans for: Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320.430.1051 to schedule an appointment.

August 8: [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#) - **OEF/OIF/OND Veteran Outreach** from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. (MDT) on the third floor of Crites Hall on the campus of Chadron State College, 1000 Main St., Chadron, Neb. Veterans will be able to learn about VA health care eligibility questions, care coordination and resources/referral.

August 15: [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#) - **OEF/OIF/OND Veteran Outreach** from 1-4 p.m.(MDT) at the Scottsbluff VA Clinic, 1720 East Portal St., Scottsbluff, Neb. Veterans will be able to learn about VA health care eligibility questions, care coordination and resources/referral.

August 15: [Sioux Falls VA Health Care System](#) - **Veterans & Spouses Job Fair** from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (CDT) at the VFW, 3601 S. Minnesota Ave., Sioux Falls, S.D. More than 50 employers will attend this event that is for Reserve, National Guard, those no longer on active duty, and those on active duty and their spouses.

August 15, 20, & 27: [Fargo VA Health Care System](#) - **Living Well Workshop** -- Living Well: Helping Veterans Manage Their Health. Join us for the Chronic Disease Self-Management workshop. This workshop is designed to help participants develop the skills needed for improved management of your chronic health condition(s). Participation is open to any Veteran with a chronic health condition. Pre-registration is required. To register call 701.232.3241 or 1.800.410.9723, ext. 9-3314 or 3655.

August 21: [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) - **Veterans' Law Clinic** from Noon-2 p.m. (CDT) at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center Bldg T-100, 4801 Veterans Dr., St. Cloud, Minn. Free legal consultation for Veterans for: Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320.430.1051 to schedule an appointment.

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

VA Black Hills HCS - www.blackhills.va.gov
VA Central Iowa HCS - www.centraliowa.va.gov
Fargo VA HCS - www.fargo.va.gov
Iowa City VA HCS - www.iowacity.va.gov
Minneapolis VA HCS - www.minneapolis.va.gov
VA Nebraska Western Iowa HCS - www.nebraska.va.gov
Sioux Falls VA HCS - www.siouxfalls.va.gov
St. Cloud VA HCS - www.stcloud.va.gov
VA Midwest Health Care Network - www.visn23.va.gov

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 or email sharyl.schaepe@va.gov