



Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)  
VA MIDWEST HEALTH CARE NETWORK  
*Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23*  
Network Update  
January 2012  
[www.visn23.va.gov](http://www.visn23.va.gov)



**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

*As we welcome in the New Year, we say goodbye to 2011 and approach the New Year with enthusiasm and excitement.*

*It is a privilege to serve the men and women who once served us. We will never forget the sacrifices made by our Veterans and their families and we will never settle for being second best. The New Year gives us an opportunity to re-commit ourselves to their service.*

*We thank our employees, volunteers and the thousands of Veteran Advocates who help us deliver the highest quality health care VA has to offer. We could not do our job without this support.*

*On behalf of our entire staff we extend greetings and best wishes for a prosperous, healthy and happy New Year.*

Janet P. Murphy,  
Network Director

## 2012 New Year's Resolutions for Veterans

It's that time of year when many Veterans look forward to a fresh start in life and resolve to improve their health. However, the problem with the start of a new year is that most good intentions are often derailed within a few weeks.

Millions around the world make New Year's resolutions. The idea that you get a clean slate at the start of the calendar year is a powerful notion that cuts across cultures. Yet for so many it ends in failure, often within a week or even 24 hours.

How can you harness that instinctive desire for change to create enough will power to make it succeed?

Mental strength matters. What you believe about self-control affects the goals you set and go on to achieve.

If you think you'll be able to achieve a goal, you're more likely to set it in the first place.

Successful resolutions are more likely if you're highly confident with plenty of drive.

Make this year the year you make good on your New Year's resolutions. Let this be the year you get on the path to good health in 2012.

Whether your goal is to lose weight, exercise regularly or stop smoking, VA is here to help you maintain your motivation and avoid common pitfalls.

What's your priority for 2012: smoking, weight loss, fitness?

See your VA health care professional and make your New Year resolutions stick.

[This Year, Stick with Your Resolutions](http://www.va.gov/health/NewsFeatures/20111229a.asp) read more at  
<http://www.va.gov/health/NewsFeatures/20111229a.asp>

## Workload and Resource

The Network ended the fiscal year 2011 in good shape. The budget for VISN 23 in FY2012 is \$2.43B with an MCCR collection target of \$207M

<b>Network Workload and Resource Totals</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Estimated 2011</b>
Veteran Patients treated	285,195	293,290	299,646	302,469
Outpatient Visits	2.5M	2.7M	2.8M	2.9M
Annual Budget	\$1.84B	\$2.0B	\$2.24B	\$2.41B
Pharmacy costs	\$209.8M	\$217.5M	\$228.2M	\$252.4M
Prosthetics obligations	\$66.0M	\$78.8M	\$86.6M	\$94.1
MCCR collections	\$159.5M	\$182.5M	\$186.4M	\$187.5M
Staff FTE	10,364	11,179	11,411	12,019

## Network Performance

The VISN's performance in FY2011 was excellent. VISN 23 has been actively engaged in VHA's transformational initiatives, meeting performance, spending, and staffing targets for the various initiatives. As a Network we met, or exceeded, the majority of the performance goals on the VHA FY2011 performance plan. Noteworthy progress was made in eliminating homelessness, providing care to Veterans in non-institutional settings, improving business practices for processing non-VA care claims, expanding telehealth services, submitting high quality compensation & pension examinations in a timely manner, and ensuring timely access to clinic appointments. Additionally, VISN 23 was one of the first Networks to implement a Tele-ICU program.

## VA Celebrates National Salute to Veterans in February

Proud American men and women are serving and sacrificing for freedom around the world as America's military defends us against terrorism. Many of these veterans are coming to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with special needs and challenges that require the hearts and hands of a new generation of VA volunteers. VA facilities across the Network invite citizens young and old to join our staff in honoring veterans and learning more about VA's volunteer program during the National Salute to Veteran. You can "Visit a Vet for Valentine's Day" program or stop by anytime during National Salute week to visit a Veterans at a VA facility and remind them that their sacrifices are not forgotten. Every citizen can make a positive difference in the life of a Veteran patient. Visits from community groups do much to lift the spirits of our patients. I invite every member of our community to participate. Call your VA Voluntary Service office to schedule a visit or to learn more on how you can join in the celebration to honor America's Veterans.

## Veterans Crisis Line



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 number.

If you or anyone you know is in crisis, call 1-800-273-8255, [or use the 24/7 Veterans online chat](#). 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](#); this website explains it all: [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net).



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## VA Posts Draft 2011 Report of the Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Task Force

The 2011 Report of the Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Task Force 30 day public comment period closed November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Users visited the [online forum](#) to weigh in the seven sections of this year's report and posted over 450 comments and ideas related to Gulf War care and services. The Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Task Force sincerely appreciates the feedback provided by the community and is now conducting an analysis of the information received and expects to publish the final report in January 2012. Download a [copy of the draft report](#) for review at [http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/Draft\\_2011\\_GWVI-TF\\_Report.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/Draft_2011_GWVI-TF_Report.pdf)

## Calendar of Events – January 2012

**January 6:** [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#) - Additional forums will be held to discuss and gather input on a proposal to enhance and maintain high quality, safe, and accessible care.

Veterans, family members, community and business leaders, and the general public are invited to attend additional public forums to ask questions and share ideas and concerns about the VA Black Hills Health Care System proposal for the improvement of Veterans' health care in parts of Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming.

- **Chadron, Neb.**, 1-2 p.m., American Legion Hall, 123 Bordeaux St.
- **Alliance, Neb.**, 5-6 p.m., Performing Arts Center -Alliance High School, 1604 Sweetwater

**Go to VA facility websites for more information on upcoming events and classes.**

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

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)