



**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)  
VA MIDWEST HEALTH CARE NETWORK  
Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23  
Network Update  
June 2012**



[www.visn23.va.gov](http://www.visn23.va.gov)

### ***Third VA Gulf War Health Survey since 1995 to Take Place***

For the third time since the 1990-1991 Gulf War, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) researchers will contact Gulf War-era Veterans as a part of a long-term study of their health.

Gulf War Veterans were previously contacted for a baseline survey in 1995 and a follow-up survey in 2005. This continuing study includes about 15,000 Gulf War Veterans and 15,000

VA Researchers began contacting participants for this study at the end of May 2012.

Veterans will be asked about health issues that affect them, including chronic medical conditions such as cancer, neurological, respiratory and immunological conditions, as well as general health perceptions, functional status, chronic fatigue syndrome-like illness, unexplained multi-symptom illness and women's health. Veterans will be queried about their level of physical activity and their use of alcohol and tobacco. They also will be asked about their use of VA health care and satisfaction with their care.

For more information [read VA's news release here](#).



### **VA/DoD PTSD Coach App Wins Innovation Award for Telemedicine Advancement**

The Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense (DoD) Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) coach mobile application marked its first anniversary with receipt of an award for innovation in the advancement of telemedicine from the American Telemedicine Association.

PTSD coach, collaboratively developed by VA's National Center for PTSD and DoD's National Center for Telehealth & Technology, provides education, symptoms-tracking tools, self-assessment and connections to support individuals with PTSD.

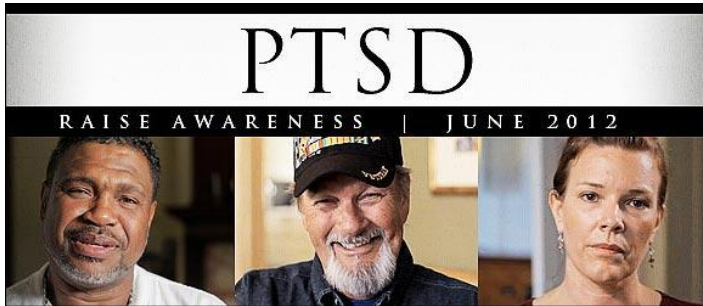
Since its public release on April 11, 2011, the app has been downloaded more than 53,000 times in over 60 countries.

It is available for free download for both iPhone and Android devices.

The application is one of many in a series of jointly designed resources by VA and DoD to help Service members and Veterans manage and cope with readjustment challenges. For more information on the PTSD Coach app, visit the [VA's National Center for PTSD Website](#).

For more information on apps from [DoD's National Center for Telehealth and Technology](#).

## June is PTSD Awareness Month



[Posttraumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\)](#) is a mental health problem that can occur after someone goes through a traumatic event like war, assault, or disaster. VA's [PTSD](#) website is dedicated to help you understand the illness, the symptoms, and the steps you can take to help a loved one who is diagnosed with PTSD. Visit VA's National Center for [PTSD](#) website all month long to learn more about [PTSD](#).

Log on at the [National Center for PTSD website](#).

## VA Small Business Conference, Open House and Hiring Fair

The Department of Veterans Affairs host the first VA Small Business Conference, Open House & Hiring Fair in Detroit – June 26-28, 2012 - As the largest nationwide conference of its kind, this event focuses on helping Veteran-owned businesses maximize opportunities in the federal marketplace. You are invited to join 6,000 participants in Detroit for the opportunity to:

- Connect with **procurement decision makers** from other businesses and federal agencies
- Expand knowledge through over 200 **training and business requirement sessions**
- Engage with other attendees and gain visibility in the **Expo Hall** of nearly 500 booths
- Use VetGovPartner to facilitate **online and onsite networking** including face-to-face sessions with senior procurement decision makers

All interested persons and businesses are invited to attend. Log on at [www.nationalveteransconference.com/](http://www.nationalveteransconference.com/)

- [Get info about the small business conference and open house](#)
- [Get info and register for the hiring fair](#)
- [Watch the YouTube video](#)

## Hot Springs VA Medical Center Designated Historic Landmark



Over 120 people were in attendance at the Hot Springs VA Medical Center on Wednesday, May 30th to celebrate the formal presentation of the plaque designating the site of the original Battle Mountain Sanitarium as a National Historic Landmark. The Battle Mountain Sanitarium was one of eleven Veteran's homes established by Congress between 1865 and 1930 to care for the nation's growing number of volunteer Soldiers. On May 29, 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the bill establishing the Battle Mountain Sanitarium, allocating \$150,000 to build the facility. The citizens of Hot Springs donated the

land, then valued at \$50,000. The sanitarium was not intended to be a long-term Soldier's home, rather a short-term treatment facility for current residents suffering with lung or respiratory problems. Ground broke on August 13, 1903 and the main group of buildings was completed April 1, 1907. Water from Mammoth Springs provided the water to all parts of the building, including two plunge baths with hot and cold water. The sanitarium was useful for the thousands of malaria-stricken Soldiers from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. To learn more, [read the full story here](#).



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## Be Wise – Protect Your Eyes



Summertime...and the living is...well, hot.

The sun is bright — ultraviolet radiation from the sun's rays can potentially cause skin cancer and affect your overall health. It can also be damaging to your eyes and potentially harm your vision. Every Veteran should wear sunglasses.

Long-term UV radiation exposure puts you at a greater risk of developing ocular conditions such as cataracts and macular degeneration. Good quality sunglasses are recommended when outdoors, even if it's for a few minutes at a time. The sunglass frame should be wide and adequately cover the eyes and fragile tissue around the eyes including the eyelids.

A hat with a brim is also beneficial to block out those sun rays coming in over the top of your sunglasses.

## New Help Desk Service Available for My HealtheVet



Veterans can now call 1-877-327-0022 (toll free) to get help resolving any problems they are having with their My HealtheVet ([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)) account or if they simply have questions about VA's health care portal.

The help desk is available from 6 a.m. – 7 p.m. (CDT) Monday-Friday with the exception of federal holidays.

My HealtheVet is a web portal designed to help Veterans better manage their health care. The portal offers the ability for Veterans to refill their VA prescriptions with a click of a mouse. Veterans also view their past and future VA appointments, plus get appointment reminders sent to their personal email account. Another key feature to My HealtheVet is Secure Messaging. With Secure Messaging Veterans can send safe and secure electronic messages to their VA health care team. With Secure Messaging Veterans don't have to wait on hold or worry about missed phone calls from their health care team.

Other features of My HealtheVet include:

- View VA lab results
- Keep a personal online health record
- Tools to track various vital health statistics
- Online medical library

To sign up for a My HealtheVet account Veterans should go online to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).

## Announcements and Calendar of Events for June 2012

**June 5:** [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) - **Veterans' Law Clinic** from Noon-2 p.m. at St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 4801 Veterans Dr., St. Cloud, Minn., Bldg T-100. Free legal consultation for Veterans on Social Security Law, Housing, Consumer, Child Support, Family Law, and Employment. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320.253.0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

**June 7:** [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#) - **Pine Ridge Stand Down**. The Stand Down will be held at Pine Ridge High School, 100 Mission Dr, Pine Ridge, S.D. from 10 a.m.-2 pm. (MDT).

**June 13:** [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#) - **OEF/OIF/OND Veteran Outreach**. Get your health care eligibility questions answered, find out about care coordination and get resources and referrals. The event will be held from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (MDT) on the third floor of Crites Hall of Chadron State College, 1000 Main St., Chadron, Neb.

**June 13:** [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#) - **Veterans Enrollment and Information Fair**. Area Veterans are invited to attend a Veterans Enrollment and Information Fair at the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Veteran Service Office in Eagle Butte, S.D., Wednesday, June 13, 2012 from 1-5 p.m. (MDT). The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Veteran Service Office is located at 448 West Frontier.

**June 15:** [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) - **Southwestern Minnesota Veterans' Law Clinic** from Noon-2 p.m. at the Montevideo VA 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.

**June 23:** [VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System](#) - **Welcome Home event/Veterans Freedom Music Festival**. All Veterans, their families and the community are invited to a very special free event June 23 at the beautiful Lincoln VA Campus (600 S. 70th Street, Lincoln, Neb.) – the Veterans Freedom Music Festival and Welcome Home Event. The day is a celebration of America's heroes, and to recognize their sacrifices.

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

Black Hills Health VA System (HCS) - [www.blackhills.va.gov](http://www.blackhills.va.gov)  
Central Iowa VA HCS - [www.centraliowa.va.gov](http://www.centraliowa.va.gov)  
Fargo, ND VA Medical Center - [www.fargo.va.gov](http://www.fargo.va.gov)  
Iowa City, Iowa VA Medical Center - [www.iowacity.va.gov](http://www.iowacity.va.gov)  
Minneapolis VA HCS - [www.minneapolis.va.gov](http://www.minneapolis.va.gov)  
Nebraska Western Iowa VA HCS - [www.nebraska.va.gov](http://www.nebraska.va.gov)  
Sioux Falls VA Medical Center - [www.siouxfalls.va.gov](http://www.siouxfalls.va.gov)  
St. Cloud VA HCS - [www.stcloud.va.gov](http://www.stcloud.va.gov)  
VA Midwest Health Care Network - [www.visn23.va.gov](http://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](http://www.visn23.va.gov) or email [sharyl.schaepe@va.gov](mailto:sharyl.schaepe@va.gov)