



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



www.visn23.va.gov



A **Veteran** is a fellow citizen; an ordinary person who at one significant point in time made out a blank check payable to The United States of America for any amount up to and including life, itself.

These Americans stepped out of the crowd and swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies. They uttered the words of that soldier's oath. They served under those words; some bled and others died for them. May we never forget the bravery of these brave men and women, their resourcefulness and their patriotism.

Enjoy the holiday and remind others of why it is important to celebrate Veterans Day.



We've Moved

2805 DODD ROAD, SUITE 250
EAGAN, MN. 55121
PHONE: 651.405.5600
FAX: 651.452.0399

We've moved! The VISN 23 Network staff has moved in order to allow the Minneapolis VA Health Care System to expand space within the Minneapolis VA Medical Center to enhance health care delivery. Our phone and fax numbers have changed. Please note our new address and phone numbers.

New Address: 2805 Dodd Road, Suite 250
Eagan, Minnesota 55121

Phone 651-405-5600
Fax 651-452-0399



May you have a wonderful time this Thanksgiving, with friends and family, Happy Thanksgiving!

VA Offers a New Tool to Help Veterans Prevent Diabetes



The Minneapolis VA Health Care System announced a new program to help prevent diabetes. The **Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)**, a pilot program being promoted nationally by the VA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is aimed at reducing the number of Veterans who develop diabetes. Program participants will be offered a tool to help them lead healthier, fuller lives, reducing their risk for diabetes. Enrollees are Veterans who are pre-diabetic — overweight and with blood glucose (blood sugar) levels higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes. Studies have shown that those who lose a modest amount of weight through dietary changes and increased physical activity, sharply reduced their chances of developing diabetes. Approximately 24 percent of Veterans have Type 2 diabetes. Program participants will attend a series of group sessions and will be given predetermined weight loss and physical activity goals. For more information on this program, contact Jay Shiffler (jay.shiffler@va.gov) at the VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. To learn more about the VA's prevention program, visit <http://www.prevention.va.gov/index.asp>.

VA BHHCS Expands Dialysis Unit



Patients in western South Dakota in need of dialysis treatment now have access to improved quality of care, thanks to the seven-station, upgraded dialysis unit at the VA Black Hills Health Care System (BHHCS) Hot Springs Medical Center. On September 17, the expanded and newly remodeled VA BHHCS dialysis unit started treatments. The expansion included several patient amenities, including lockers for patients to keep personal comfort items while on dialysis. Each station has individual reading lamps and a heating panel above it, so the patients can adjust temperature settings to their liking. Dialysis units in western South Dakota have been at, or near, capacity in recent years. This has made patient placement difficult and also presented difficulties for dialysis patients traveling to the Black Hills. This recent expansion and remodel will increase the dialysis unit capacity from 20 patients to 28. In 2001, the unit did approximately 2,400 treatments per year. It now averages approximately 2,800 and is expected to continue increased treatments per year.

Fargo VA HCS and Theatre B Announce Regional Tours

The Fargo VA Health Care System and Theatre B, with license from Play scripts, Inc, is proud to announce a regional tour of Emily Ackerman and KJ Sanchez's *ReEntry*. An unflinching look at the lives of Marines getting ready for and returning from combat, *ReEntry* is a docudrama exploration of the relationships between Marines and the civilians they fight for overseas and must contend with when they return home. Honest, moving, and surprisingly funny, this play is based entirely on interviews with Marines and their families. How do you go from battlefields to backyard barbecues? What is the price paid by families at home when husbands, mothers, sons and sisters go to war? This surprising new play gives troops a voice as it puts aside politics and takes you into their world. **All performances are FREE and OPEN to the public.** VA staff from the Fargo VA Health Care System and North Dakota Military Service Center will be available after each performance for assistance. **Performances will be in Grand Forks, Fargo, and Bismarck as follows:**

- Friday, November 9th at 7:00 pm at the Empire Theater, Grand Forks
- Sunday, November 11th at 3:00 p.m. at the American Legion Hall, Fargo
- Saturday, November 17th at 7:00 p.m. at the Bismarck Stage College Sidney J. Lee Auditorium, Bismarck
- Tuesday, November 20th, at Noon and 3:00 p.m. at the Fargo VA Health Care System, 2101 N. Elm, Fargo, ND



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Cancer Screening Saves Lives



Some types of cancer can be found before they cause symptoms. Checking for cancer (or for conditions that may lead to cancer) is called screening. Cancer screening often results in reducing the number of people who die from cancer every year. Talk to your health care provider about when to begin screening for cancer, what tests to have, benefits and risks (potential harms) of each test, and how often to schedule appointments. For more information click here:

http://www.siouxfalls.va.gov/features/Cancer_Screening_Saves_Lives.asp

Flu Season is Here – Step Up to Prevent the Flu

Flu season is upon us. Influenza (flu) presents health challenges not only to us as individuals, but to our families and our VA and neighborhood communities. Flu is a respiratory illness that spreads easily. It is caused by viruses that can change from year to year. Each year in the U.S., flu causes more than 226,000 hospitalizations and about 36,000 deaths. Even though most of these cases are among people age 65 and older, anyone can get the flu. This is why it is important for all of us to “step up” to help stop the spread of flu! Check with your VA provider or nearest VA facility to learn when flu shots will be offered in your area. To learn more go to <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/prevention/index.asp>

[Step 1 – Get Your Flu Shot](#)

[Step 2 – Know How Flu is Spread](#)

[Step 3 - Know the Symptoms](#)

[Step 4 - Keep your Hands and Surfaces around you clean](#)

[Step 5 - Cover your cough and sneezes](#)

[Step 6 - Stay Home When Sick](#)



November is National Family Caregivers Month

VA has a number of services designed specifically to support Family Caregivers. Asking for help isn't always easy – especially if you're not exactly sure what kind of support would best fit your needs. Learn more about how VA's trained professionals can help you find the services and support available to caregivers who serve Veterans. Assistance is just a quick phone call away. Whether you're in need of immediate assistance or have questions about what eligibility or services available, the caring licensed professionals who answer the support line can: Tell you about the assistance available from VA; Help access services; Connect you with the Caregiver Support coordinator at your local VA medical center; or Listen to what you need right now.

Call the **Caregiver Support Line** at – 1-855-260-3274 –for more information or log on at http://www.caregiver.va.gov/support_services.asp

Announcements and Calendar of Events for November 2012

November 6: [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#) - **OEF/OIF/OND Outreach** at the Pine Ridge Veterans Building in Pine Ridge, S.D., from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (MST) Veterans can get answers to VA health care eligibility questions and information on care coordination, resources/referrals, and much more.

November 6: [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) - **Veterans' Law Clinic** from Noon-2 p.m.(CST) at St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 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 320.253.0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

November 8: [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#) - **OEF/OIF/OND Outreach** at the Western Nebraska Community College, 1601 East 27th Street, Scottsbluff, Neb., from 8 a.m.-Noon (MST) Veterans can get answers to VA health care eligibility questions, care coordination, resources/referrals, and much more.

November 9: [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#) - **Family Caregivers of Veterans Information Fair** from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. (MST) at the Fort Meade VA Medical Center located at 113 Comanche Road Fort Meade, S.D., in building 145, room 341B. The VA's Caregiver Support Program was developed to support Caregivers of Veterans, the VA's partners in ensuring the best care of Veterans. The program provides a wide range of services to Caregivers of eligible Veterans of all eras. Services included assistance with accessing additional VA services as well as provide education and emotional support. We encourage Caregivers of eligible Veterans to inquire about the program at the informational fair or by calling the Caregiver Support Coordinator, Kay Ermish at 605.745.2000, extension 2347. [Learn more about VA's Caregiver Program](#).

November 16: [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) - **Veterans' Law Clinic** from Noon-2 p.m. (CST) 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.

November 17: [VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System](#) - **Stand Down-Omaha** at the Exhibition Hall at the Civic Auditorium, 1804 Capitol Ave, Omaha, Neb., from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (CST) VA Health Care and other services offered include: Vet Center, health screening, Veterans Benefit Information, foot and eye care, legal services, social services and benefits, employment and education assistance, and housing information.

Free child care for those Veterans attending who have children. Veterans are encouraged to enroll for VA health care at the Omaha VA Medical Center, 4101 Woolworth Ave., Omaha, Neb., prior to the event.

November 20: [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) - **Veterans' Law Clinic** from Noon-2 p.m.(CST) at St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 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 320.253.0138 or 1.800.622.7773 to schedule an appointment.

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 W. Iowa HCS - www.nebraska.va.gov
Sioux Falls VA HCS - www.siouxfalls.va.gov
St. Cloud VA HCS - www.stcloud.va.gov
VISN 23 - www.visn23.va.gov

HCS – Health Care System VA – Department of Veterans Affairs

For More information, call the Network Office at (651) 405-5600 or
Log on at www.visn23.va.gov or email sharyl.schaepe@va.gov