

St. Cloud VA

UPDATE

October 2018



A monthly newsletter for Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System, and for those who serve them. Send news items and comments to St. Cloud VA Health Care System, Attn: Public Affairs Officer, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303, or via email to barry.venable@va.gov.

Flu Clinics

A flu shot is an important part of staying healthy during the flu season, and this year Veterans served by the St. Cloud VA Health Care System have multiple options to get a flu shot.

During flu season, flu shots are available as part of any scheduled VA appointment. Just ask the nurse or doctor at your next appointment.



In October, numerous walk-in clinics are available at local VA facilities:

St Cloud VA Medical Center, 4801 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud

· Oct. 2, 3 & 4, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., in Bldg. 96

· Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30 (Tuesdays), 4:30 – 6 p.m., in Bldg. 1

· Oct. 6, 13, 20, & 27 (Saturdays), 8 a.m. – Noon, in Bldg. 1

· Oct. 1-5, 9-31 (weekdays), 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., in the Urgent Care Clinic

Alexandria VFW Post 936, 1102 3rd Ave. E., Alexandria

· Oct. 12 & 26, Noon – 3:30 p.m.

Brainerd VA Clinic, 722 NW Seventh St., Brainerd

· Oct. 2, 10 & 22, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Montevideo VA Clinic, 1025 North 13th St., Montevideo

· Oct. 1 & 22, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Hutchinson National Guard Armory, 1200 Adams St. SE, Hutchinson

· Oct. 25, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

VA flu clinics are for enrolled Veterans only. No appointment is necessary to get vaccinated at a walk-in clinic.

This year VA is offering one vaccine: the quadrivalent, standard-dose product with the brand name Afluria.™ High dose formulation flu vaccines (intended for those aged 65 and older) are not available through VA.

The quadrivalent vaccine contains antigens from 4 strains of influenza virus. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) does not recommend any influenza vaccine over another as “preferred.”

Veterans electing to pursue a different vaccine outside the VA are responsible for all associated costs.

Once again, VA has teamed up with Walgreens Pharmacies nationwide to allow all Veterans who are currently enrolled in the VA healthcare system to be able walk into any Walgreens to receive a vaccination *at no cost*.

The immunizations available at Walgreens under this program use quadrivalent flu vaccine: other formulation flu vaccines are not available using the VA Walgreens program.

Veterans wishing to receive the vaccination at Walgreens simply need to present a Veterans Health Identification Card and a photo ID, at any participating Walgreens to receive the vaccination.

In addition, after the Walgreens pharmacist administers the vaccine Walgreens will transmit that information securely to VA where it becomes part of the patient’s electronic medical record.

Veterans getting vaccinated outside the VA or through Walgreens are asked to tell us about it at your next appointment.

VA is committed to keeping Veteran patients healthy, and vaccination is the best way to prevent the spread of flu. No matter where Veterans live, they can visit a local VA clinic or Walgreens to get a free flu shot.

St. Cloud VA Becomes Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Employer



Major General Neal Loidolt, Deputy Adjutant General, Joint Force Headquarters MN Army National Guard; Steve Simon, MN Secretary of State; Stephen D. Black, FACHE, Director, St. Cloud VA Health Care System; and Annette Brechon Kuyper, Director of Military Outreach, State of MN, display a banner in a proclamation ceremony at the St. Cloud VA on Sept. 17, 2018, welcoming the St. Cloud VA Health Care System as a new Yellow Ribbon Company, which are organizations that connect and coordinate resources, education, outreach and support to meet the needs of Servicemembers, Veterans, and military families

The St. Cloud VA Health Care System was proclaimed a Yellow Ribbon Company by the State of Minnesota at a ceremony conducted on Monday, Sept. 17, at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center in St. Cloud. A formal proclamation signed by Governor Mark Dayton was presented to the St. Cloud VA by Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon and Major General Neal Loidolt, Deputy Adjutant General, Joint Force Headquarters, Minnesota Army National Guard.

The St. Cloud VA is the first federal entity in Minnesota to receive this designation and is the 63rd organization across the state to achieve Yellow Ribbon Company designation. In the greater St. Cloud area, other Yellow Ribbon Companies include Rasmussen College and St. Cloud State University.

“Taking care of those who are serving or have served requires many more hands than are available in the VA,” said St. Cloud VA Director Stephen Black.

Black emphasized that this is not a new idea in the greater St. Cloud area, but becoming a Yellow Ribbon Company will allow the St. Cloud VA to expand the bonds with community members and organizations serving Veterans.

As an example, Black noted the contributions of the Central Minnesota Warrior to Citizen Initiative and Yellow Ribbon Community, which has united area cities on behalf of service members, families and Veterans since 2007.

Black noted that the local communities of St. Cloud, St. Augusta, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, St. Joseph, Waite Park, Cold Spring, Rockville and Richmond are better because of their efforts, and that their example of service and partnership motivated the St. Cloud VA to pursue Yellow Ribbon Company status.

Sponsored by the State of Minnesota, the Yellow Ribbon Company network is comprised of broad, organizationally structured companies with national, regional or statewide influence that unite all areas of the company in connecting and coordinating resources, education,

outreach and support to meet the needs of Servicemembers, Veterans, and military families.

In presenting the proclamation, Annette Kuyper, Director of Military Outreach for the State of Minnesota, noted that Yellow Ribbon Companies “develop a formal action plan and establish a steering committee to unite all key areas of the company to create a workplace culture that supports service members, Veterans and military families.”

St. Cloud VA Associate Director Cheryl Thieschafer, Chair of the St. Cloud VA’s Yellow Ribbon Steering Committee, also noted that the proclamation “is only a beginning.”

“We now are charged with continuing actions to support Veterans recruiting, hiring and retention, military employee support, and military connected community support.”

Dr. Christopher Churchill Named Physician of the Year



Dr. Christopher Churchill, Service Line and Medical Director for the St. Cloud VA Health Care System's Extended Care and Rehabilitation Service, accepts the American Legion, Department of Minnesota Physician of the Year award from Wilson Spence of the American Legion, Department of Minnesota's Rehabilitation Committee

In recognition of “outstanding performance, encouraging attitude and superior dedication to ensuring Veterans receive the

highest quality of health care” Dr. Christopher Churchill was recently named by the American Legion, Department of Minnesota as the Physician of the Year.

The award was presented by Wilson Spence of the American Legion, Department of Minnesota’s Rehabilitation Committee.

Dr. Churchill has served as the Service Line and Medical Director for the St. Cloud VA Health Care System's Extended Care and Rehabilitation Service since September 2015. In this time, he has promoted several continuous improvement initiatives, including:

- Implementation and development of comprehensive reviews for psychotropic medication use and management of residents with disruptive behaviors.
- Adopting the Behavioral Recovery Team model within the St. Cloud VA.
- Continued development of the Hospice and Palliative Care Program.

Congratulations Dr. Churchill!

Expanded Services at the Brainerd VA Clinic

The VA Clinic in Brainerd has added new services as the result of a recent physical expansion.

The physical expansion provided the space to develop full service, on-site audiology and optometry services that were previously available on a limited basis or at the Medical Center in St. Cloud. The enlarged clinic provides additional space to

serve the growing number of Veterans seeking care at the Brainerd VA Clinic.

The expansion added 3,900 square feet to the clinic, increasing gross square footage to just over 20,000 square feet. Included in the expansion are:

- **An audiology booth with an exam suite.** Audiology services were previously provided by the mobile audiology van, which visited two weeks per month. The expansion allows us to conduct 40-50 audiology exams per week (instead of 40-50 exams per month using the van). Exams, cerumen removal, hearing aid fittings and hearing aid repairs can now be obtained at the clinic.
- **Two fully equipped Optometry exam rooms** and another room designated for auxiliary optometry testing including a visual field, optical coherence tomographer and retinal camera. This expansion allows us to conduct 70 optometry appointments per week, and Veterans are now able to obtain their eyeglasses at the clinic.
- **15 new exam rooms** with supporting medical storage to support additional or expanded services, including: additional physical therapy, podiatry and primary care space and a dedicated Women’s Health room.
- **Additional administrative space.**

Other services at the clinic include: podiatry, telemedicine, mental health

services, medication management, clinical pharmacy services, physical therapy, social work services, nutrition services, laboratory services, imaging services (X-ray, Ultrasound), home telehealth, and home-based care.

Women's health services available at the Brainerd clinic include a full range of primary care services, and IUD insertions, colposcopies and Nexplanon implants are also available.

"We are pleased to be able to expand the health care services we provide to the area's Veterans," said Stephen Black, Director of the St. Cloud VA Health Care System. "This expansion will enable us to offer full service, on-site audiology and optometry services, and to better serve the increasing numbers of Veterans seeking care close to home."

The clinic, located at 722 NW 7th Street in Brainerd, is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Veterans may contact the clinic at (218) 855-1115.

To use VA health care, Veterans must apply for enrollment. To apply, Veterans should contact a County Veteran Service Officer, call the St. Cloud VA at 320-255-6340, or apply online at www.vets.gov.



New Approach to Health Care

The St. Cloud VA is taking a new approach to improving health and treating chronic pain by offering alternative and complementary therapies as part of a new Whole Health program.

The concept of Whole Health is to teach Veterans that they have the power to take charge of their life and involves the teaching and learning of different ways of dealing with pain and stress management that ultimately improves health and wellness.

Whole Health goes beyond illnesses, injuries, or disabilities and instead focuses on an individual's values, goals, health and well-being. Whole Health provides alternative tools and therapies to complement conventional medical care. This type of approach is especially beneficial to Veterans with chronic pain.

As one Veteran related in a recent letter, it "treats the whole ME."

The use of complementary and alternative therapies are a part of Whole Health that is quickly gaining popularity among Veterans. These complementary therapies help manage pain naturally with limited reliance on medications.

The Whole Health approach will eventually become the norm across VA and is currently in the initial stages of formal VA-wide implementation at several medical centers across the nation.

St. Cloud VA currently offers treatments including manual treatments, mindfulness, and Tai-Chi classes in addition to Whole

Health coaching, and will soon offer battlefield acupuncture.

Interested Veterans who are currently enrolled at the St. Cloud VA or the clinics in Alexandria, Montevideo or Alexandria can attend an Introduction to Whole Health orientation class to learn more about the program. Upcoming classes include:

- Oct. 5, Nov. 2, and Dec. 7, at Noon, in Bldg. 28, Room 67
- Oct. 15, Nov. 19, and Dec. 17, at 10 a.m., in Bldg. 4, Room 114

All classes are held at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center in St. Cloud. Advance registration or a referral to the orientation class is not required. Many Whole Health services are available via referral from your Primary Care Provider, and the Whole Health orientation classes cover those services in detail.

Click on [Introduction to Whole Health](#) for a printable flyer.

Memorial Walk for Pregnancy and Infant Loss scheduled at the St. Cloud VA



The St. Cloud VA Women Veterans Program is hosting a memorial walk for Veterans and their families who have experienced pregnancy or infant loss. The walk is scheduled on Oct. 15 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, at 4801 Veterans Drive, in St. Cloud.

The walk will be held on the campus walking path, near Bldg. 92 on the south side of campus. In case of inclement weather, the event will be held in the Auditorium (Bldg. 8) on the north side of campus.

“Oct. 15 is National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day, and in coordinating maternity care for Veterans we often encounter those who have experienced a pregnancy loss,” said Amber Willert, Women Veteran Program Manager at the St. Cloud VA.

“We simply want them to know they are not alone, and to provide a way for others in the community to do the same,” Willert added.

Registration is not required and the public is invited to attend. VA staff members will be available to answer questions and to discuss pregnancy and infant loss. Individuals wanting to learn more about the walk can contact Amber Willert, Women Veterans Program Manager, at Amber.Willert@va.gov, or by phone, (320) 252-1670, Ext. 6655.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month event at the St. Cloud VA

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Learn more about risk factors and signs and symptoms of breast cancer by painting a breast cancer awareness themed canvas on October 25 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the St. Cloud VA, Building 4, Room 129. Please RSVP by calling Amber Willert, Women Veterans Program Manager, at 320-654-7656, or through

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/women-veterans-breast-cancer-awareness-event-tickets-50094090774>.

Billing Number Change

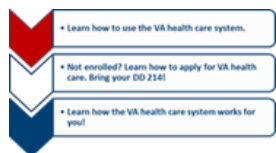
The new phone number to contact for Veterans Care in the Community (non-VA care) payment questions is 1-877-881-7618.

Contacts for billing issues for VA provided care remain the same:

- Billing service representatives are available in Bldg. 5, Room 121, Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to Noon, at the St. Cloud VA.
- You can also call the Veterans Health Resource Center at 1-866-347-2352, Monday to Friday, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Coffee Talks

VA health care enrollment provides a lifetime of valuable benefits to Veterans and their families. Recently transitioned service members, Veterans new to the VA health care system, and enrolled Veterans can learn how to use the VA system most effectively by attending a patient orientation class at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center.



The patient orientation class focuses on VA eligibility and the nuts and bolts of

accessing and using VA systems of care, and answering Veteran questions.

Titled "Coffee Talks" because of their informal format, upcoming patient orientation sessions are scheduled for Oct. 12, Nov. 9, and Dec. 14 from 2 to 3:30 p.m., in Bldg. 4, Room 114, at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. Participants may also dial-in via telephone at (800) 767-1750, participant code 11242#.

Attendees for these courses should enter the Medical Center via Building 1 (Main Entrance). Advance registration is not required.

UPCOMING EVENTS



See cover page of this publication for all flu clinic dates.

Veterans Affairs Radio Show

Monday, Oct. 1 8:10-8:30 a.m.
KNSI AM 1450/FM 103

Veterans Law Clinic (by appointment only)

Tuesday, Oct. 2 Noon-2 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 28, Room 34
Free legal consultation for Veterans. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Please call 320-253-0138 or 1-800-622-7773 to schedule an appointment.

Mental Health Recovery Outreach Group

Wednesday, Oct. 3 5-6 p.m.
Good Earth Co-Op
2010 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN
Hosted by the St. Cloud VA, Veterans and family members are welcome to attend. VA

enrollment or pre-registration is not required to attend the meeting. Call 320-252-1670, Ext. 6503, or email leigh.vandewalker@va.gov for more information.

St. Cloud Gun Show

Saturday, Oct. 6 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
National Guard Armory
1710 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN
A Veterans Service Officer and VA staff will be on site to discuss enrollment in VA health care and provide information on the full range of Veterans benefit programs.

Women Veterans Benefits Seminar and Painting Workshop

Saturday, Oct. 6 1-5 p.m.
Kilowatt Community Center
600 Kilowatt Drive, Granite Falls, MN
An event for Women Veterans to learn more about Veterans benefits and an opportunity to paint a breast cancer awareness themed canvas. Visit [Women Veterans Benefits and Painting Workshop](#) to register.

Outpatient Clinics Closed for Federal Holiday

Monday, Oct. 8
Outpatient clinics and administrative offices, including VA Clinics in Brainerd, Montevideo and Alexandria will be closed. Urgent Care at the St. Cloud VA will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Let's Talk About It

Wednesday, Oct. 10 5-7 p.m.
Buffalo High School
877 Bison Blvd., Buffalo, MN
Stop and visit our Suicide Prevention Team and learn about the mental health programs at the VA.

Coffee Talk

Friday, Oct. 12 2-3:30 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 4, Rm. 114
Learn how to most effectively use VA systems of care. If you can't come in person, dial-in via telephone at: 800-767-1750, participant code 11242#. All Veterans are welcome.

Memorial Walk for Pregnancy and Infant Loss

Monday, Oct. 15 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Walking Path (near Bldg. 92)
The public is invited to attend a memorial walk for Veterans and their families who have experienced pregnancy or infant loss. No registration required.

Veterans Law Clinic (drop-in)

Tuesday, Oct. 16 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Auditorium (Bldg. 8)
Free legal consultation for Veterans. No criminal law issues will be discussed. Questions? Please call MACV at 651-200-4750.

Voices for Veterans Radio Show

Wednesday, Oct. 17 8:10-8:30 a.m.
WJON AM 1240

Women Veterans Breast Cancer Awareness Event

Thursday, Oct. 25 5-8 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 4, Room 129
Learn about risk factors and signs and symptoms of breast cancer by painting a breast cancer awareness themed canvas. RSVP to Amber Willert at the St. Cloud VA, 320-654-7656, or through <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/women-veterans-breast-cancer-awareness-event-tickets-50094090774>

St. Cloud Stand Down

Friday, Oct. 26 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
National Guard Armory
1710 Veterans Drive, St. Cloud, MN

A Veterans Service Officer and VA staff will be on site to discuss enrollment in VA health care and provide information on the full range of Veterans benefit programs.

For a complete Calendar of Events, go to <https://www.stcloud.va.gov/calendar.asp>

DID YOU KNOW:

- *It is against the law to sing out of tune in North Carolina.*
- *The least-liked vegetable of all time is the turnip.*
- *Barbers are not allowed to eat onions between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. in Waterloo, Nebraska.*
- *France's King Louis XIV bathed only once a year.*

QUOTATION OF THE DAY:

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it." — Groucho Marx

Quick Reference Phone List

Main St. Cloud VA HCS Phone Number	320-252-1670 or 800-247-1739
TDD User	320-255-6450
Max J. Beilke VA Clinic, Alexandria	320-759-2640
Brainerd VA Clinic	218-855-1115
Montevideo VA Clinic	320-269-2222
Veterans Crisis Line	800-273-8255 Press 1
Homeless Veteran Hotline	877- 424-3838

Billing:

- VA Care 866-347-2352
- Care in the Community (non-VA care) 877-881-7618

Chaplain Service	Ext. 6386
Community Care Referrals	Ext. 6401
Discrimination Complaints	Ext. 6304
Eligibility	Ext. 6340
Nutrition Clinic	Ext. 6376
Transition & Care Management Program	Ext. 6453
Patient Advocate	Ext. 6353
Pharmacy Refill Line	855-560-1724
Privacy Officer	Ext. 6408
Public Affairs Office	Ext. 6353
Release of Information (Medical Records)	Ext. 6336
Transportation	Ext. 7622
TRICARE	844-866-9378
Voluntary Service	Ext. 6365
VA Police	Ext. 6355

Stay in Touch

Visit our Website: www.stcloud.va.gov

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/StCloudVAHCS

Sign up for our automated email service. Visit the St. Cloud VA Website at: <http://www.stcloud.va.gov> and on the right-hand side of the page is a request to sign up for email updates. Enter your email address and you are automatically signed up to receive email updates from our web page. There are also options presented to sign up for updates from other government sites.