

St. Cloud VA

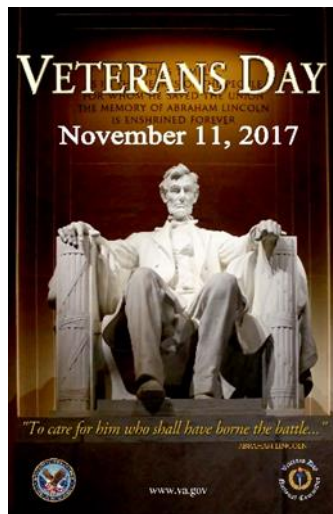
UPDATE

November 2017



*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.*

Director's Briefing



November 11 is Veterans Day, a day we salute and honor those men and women who have served in the United States armed forces. It's a day we reflect on the contributions and sacrifices of our service members and their families. It's a day we demonstrate that our gratitude toward Veterans is more than mere words. On Veterans Day, countless ceremonies are held across the country as we pause to honor those patriots who have safeguarded our liberty. All of us are the beneficiaries of

their vigilance and determination to uphold the democratic beliefs on which our nation was founded. What better way to thank our Veterans than to make sure they receive the care and support they need when they need it?

This Veterans Day, we are proud to report that Veterans have good access to quality care at the St. Cloud VA, and are cared for by a tremendously dedicated and talented team of professionals.

In addition to attending events and ceremonies, I ask everyone to please help to make sure that our Veterans are receiving the services they need and deserve. If you know a Veteran who needs assistance, please encourage them to enroll for VA health care by visiting any St. Cloud VA facility, by contacting our Enrollment Office at 320-255-6340, by visiting <https://www.vets.gov/health-care/apply/>, or by contacting a county Veteran Service Officer. Our Veterans served, and it is now our turn to serve them.

Mobile App Empowers Veterans to Be Full Partners in Their Own Care



One afternoon last month, Dr. Jennifer Roth (pictured above) called to check on a patient and got no answer. It turned out the Veteran was at the gym.

Dr. Roth, a graduate psychologist at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, was thrilled by this news – but not just because her patient was getting a healthy workout. “This individual had withdrawn from other people socially and really wasn’t leaving the house anymore,” she explains.

So, what made the difference? Annie did.

If you’re wondering, “Who’s Annie?” the question is better asked, “What’s Annie?”

Annie is VA’s new mobile text messaging system that reminds Veterans to tend to their own self-care between VA appointments. It can be customized to send Veterans text messages with reminders, like – “Hello, this is Annie reminding you to take your medication. Please reply ‘med yes’ or ‘med no,’” or “Hi, this is Annie. Just a quick reminder that your glucose readings are due.”

Annie will soon be available for VA care teams across the country to customize in ways they believe will help patients with

their at-home self-care. Currently, about 200 Veterans and 100 staff members at 16 sites across the VA network are testing Annie.

Roth and some of her patients are part of the test. She says all of them have reported positive results, even though they span a range of demographics – male and female, 20s-50s in age, and all different employment statuses.

You can learn more about the Annie App for Veterans on the VA App Store. Even though Annie is available as an app, Veterans don’t need a smartphone to use it. The system works on any basic cell phone with text messaging capability, which will make it more widely available to Veterans everywhere, once it becomes available nationwide.

Veterans Open House

On November, 1, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., the St. Cloud VA Medical Center is hosting an Open House for Veterans. The purpose of the open house is to familiarize Veterans with the VA health care services their service has earned. Veterans and family members who have never used the VA health care system, are newly enrolled or those who want to learn how to effectively access and use VA systems of care may attend. The open house will be held in Building 48, Room 124, at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 4801 Veterans Drive, in St. Cloud. Veterans who need assistance may gather at 1:15 p.m. at the main entrance to the medical center (Building 1) for escort to the open house location.

Bringing Care Closer to You in a Virtual Medical Room



“Beam me up, Scotty!” was a catchphrase popularized on the *Star Trek* television show anytime Captain Kirk needed to be teleported back to the Starship Enterprise.

VA hasn’t yet developed a teleportation machine, but we can now allow you and your provider to “beam in” to a virtual medical room using everyday technology.

To start using this service, simply tell a member of your care team.

In the virtual medical room, you participate in video health care visits where a hands-on physical examination is not required. You access your provider on a scheduled date and time – just like a face-to-face appointment in an exam room. In the virtual medical room, you communicate with your provider over the Internet using a microphone and web camera. Text messaging is also included in a virtual medical room visit.

To use the virtual medical room, you need an electronic device, such as a personal computer or laptop equipped with microphone and web camera, a smart

phone or a tablet computer. A personal email account is also required.

If you need help establishing a personal email account, stop by the St. Cloud VA Health Hub in Bldg. 29, Room 20.

Once a virtual medical room session is scheduled, you will receive an email with a link to join the virtual medical room. At the time of your appointment, you simply click on the link, enter your name, and launch the session.

Viruses or Bacteria: What’s Got You Sick?

Each year in the United States, at least 2 million people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics and at least 23,000 people die as a direct result of these infections. Many more people die from other conditions that were complicated by an antibiotic-resistant infection.

The use of antibiotics is the single most important factor leading to antibiotic resistance around the world. Antibiotics are among the most commonly prescribed drugs used in human medicine. However, up to 50% of all the antibiotics prescribed for people are not needed or are not optimally effective as prescribed. Antibiotics are also commonly used for promoting growth in food animals, one type of use that is not necessary.

For a quick overview of “Virus or Bacteria?” visit the [Center for Disease Control’s website](#).

Great American Smokeout

On Thursday, Nov. 16, the American Cancer Society's 41st annual Great American Smokeout calls on smokers to make a plan to quit or light their last cigarette.

While public awareness about the physical health risks of smoking has never been higher, many people are not as familiar with the mental health risks of smoking. Fifteen percent of Veterans enrolled in VA health care still smoke, and many are unaware that quitting can improve your mood, decrease feelings of depression and anxiety, and even help certain medications work better.

The good news is that about two-thirds of adult smokers want to quit, and more than half of smokers enrolled in VA health care have attempted to quit in the past year. In fact, some 74 percent of enrolled Veterans who smoked have successfully quit — so it's possible, especially with support.

VA offers Veterans resources to guide them every step of the way. Check out the Tobacco and Health [website](#) to learn more about quitting, and share the resources and information that VA and local VA providers offer to help Veterans stop smoking for good.



Veterans Health Library

The Veterans Health Library (VHL) offers Veterans, family members, and caregivers

24/7 access to comprehensive, consistent, Veteran-focused health information.

The VHL is available online at [Veterans Health Library](#) or via [My HealtheVet](#). The VHL:

- Provides credible, consistent information about a variety of health topics
- Is tailored to the needs of Veterans, and features Veteran-specific topics and design
- Has been enhanced with feedback from field testing by Veterans, family members, and clinicians
- Is available anywhere there is Internet access



The Library brings together an array of resources to help Veterans and their families understand and manage health problems, communicate more effectively with their health care team, make informed decisions about their care, and stay well and well-informed. The Library also helps VHA clinicians educate Veterans in face-to-face, telephone, and secure messaging encounters.

The Library's content includes:

- Over 1,500 printable health and medication information sheets, in both English and Spanish
- More than 150 videos

- Interactive online workbooks with text, audio, and visual learning elements

Visit the [Veterans Health Library](#) and take charge of your health today!

MOVE!

Christopher Froelich received a diabetes diagnosis in early February and decided it was finally time to get healthy. As a Veteran at the St. Cloud VA, he had previously tried MOVE!, a weight management, health promotion program designed to improve the lives of Veterans, but had little success. However, this time was different: he was serious and motivated.

“It worked well for me because I was motivated to lose weight. I took the information that was given and actually used it (did the food logs, watched my portions, got more exercise). Previous times I just took the handout and put it in a folder in the garage. I have the support of other Veterans which is a big help for me.”

Christopher believes the MOVE! program is as good as other programs “on the street” but because he’s enrolled at the VA, the program is free of charge to him.

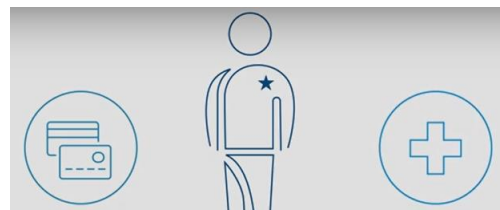


Christopher started the MOVE! program weighing 300 pounds with a 50-inch waist. He lost over 100 pounds and his waist is now 36 inches!

If you’d like to learn more about the MOVE! program, talk to your primary care provider or contact Sarah Rose, St. Cloud VA MOVE! Coordinator, at 320-252-1670, ext. 6640.

Private Health Insurance: How it Helps You

The VHA Office of Community Care (OCC) is pleased to announce the release of a new video, “[Private Health Insurance: How it Helps You](#),” designed to explain why VA asks Veterans to provide their private health insurance information when they come to VA to receive care for non-service connected conditions.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Veterans Open House

Wednesday, Nov. 1 1:30-3:30 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 48, Rm. 124
Veterans are invited to learn how to effectively access and use VA systems of care.

Veterans Law Clinic (drop-in)

Thursday, Nov. 2 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
American Legion, 708 Front Street, Brainerd
Free legal consultation for Veterans.
Questions? Call MACV at 218-722-8763.

Veterans Day Parade & Social

Sunday, November 5 1-3 p.m.
St. Cloud VA/Apollo High School
Public is invited to honor the men and women who have served our country.

Veterans Day Ceremony

Saturday, Nov. 11 1:30 p.m.
St. Cloud VA, Auditorium (Bldg. 8)
Keynote speaker is retired U.S. Army Major David Hintgen. Public is invited.

VA Health Care 101

Tuesday, Nov. 7 9-11 a.m.
Saturday, Nov. 18 9-11 a.m.
St. Cloud VA, Bldg. 4 – enter via Bldg. 1
Choose one session. Learn how to effectively use the VA. Pre-registration is not required.

Veterans Law Clinic (by appointment only)

Tuesday, Nov. 21 Noon-2 p.m.
St. Cloud A, Building 28, Room 126.
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.

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

Did You Know?

- Octopuses have three hearts.
- Octopus arms have a mind of their own; two-thirds of an octopus' neurons reside in its arms, not its head.
- Octopus ink doesn't just hide the animal, it also physically harms enemies.

Quotation of the Day

"Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There's plenty of movement, but you never know if it's going to be forward, backwards or sideways."

H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

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	866- 347-2352
Chaplain Service	Ext. 6386
Discrimination Complaints	Ext. 6304
Eligibility	Ext. 6340
Non-VA Medical Care Billing	Ext. 6483
Non-VA Medical Care Referrals/Choice	Ext. 6401
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	877-988-9378
Voluntary Service	Ext. 6365
VA Police	Ext. 6355

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