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We Are Better Together: No Decision About  
Your Health Without You!

Volume 3, Issue 3

# Whole Health & Wellness Newsletter

## Spotlight: Complementary and Integrative Health

Complementary and Integrative Health (CIH) approaches are available to Veterans to help equip them with tools that support a healthy lifestyle, personal empowerment, and a sense of well-being. According to the National Center for Complimentary and Integrative Health, when a non-mainstream practice is used together with conventional medicine, it's considered "complementary." Integrative approaches involve bringing conventional and complementary approaches together in a coordinated way.

The use of integrative approaches to health and wellness has grown within care settings across the United States.

CIH approaches are not used to replace generally recognized and agreed upon conventional care known to be effective and efficient. Each VA facility has flexibility in how the services are provided. In some cases, VA facilities may provide these internally, through use of volunteers, via telehealth, or in the community through our community partnerships or the Community Care Network.

Several CIH approaches are available and covered by Veterans Medical Benefits package. Some are available for treatment of medical conditions, and some are available for general well-being.

### What approaches are available to me?

The following approaches are provided on-site or in the community if you and your care team believe they would be of benefit to you:

#### Approaches for Treatment

- Acupuncture
- Biofeedback
- Clinical Hypnosis
- Targeted Therapeutic Massage (for pain)

#### Approaches for Well-Being

- Meditation
- Tai Chi/Qi Gong
- Yoga
- Guided Imagery

### Inside this issue:

Well-Being Offerings	2
Taking a Moment	3
Whole Health In the News!	3
Women Veterans	4
Useful Resources	5
My HealtheVet Corner	5

**Interested in learning more about CIH approaches?** Ask your healthcare team to place a Whole Health consult! You can also learn more about Whole Health [here!](#)



## Well-Being Offerings at VA Eastern Kansas

VA Eastern Kansas is here to support your health and well-being! We want to highlight some of our wellness offerings to assist you with your health goals. Below are just a few of the wonderful classes offered to our Veterans at VA Eastern Kansas.

### Want to learn more about Whole Health or explore other wellness options?

Ask your healthcare team for a Whole Health consult today!

#### Music Therapy

Music therapy is the process of using songs and instruments to help achieve therapeutic goals.



We have several options available for you to improve your health and wellness through music, including:

- Virtual Music Listening & Processing Group
- Virtual Music-Assisted Relaxation Group
- Virtual and in-person guitar and ukulele lessons

To learn more or sign up:  
Contact Recreation Therapy: 785-350-3111  
ext. 53517

Interested in trying a music therapy exercise yourself? [Click Here](#) to check out one of our Live Whole Health blog episodes: Music Therapy and Movement!

#### Whole Health Meditation

Meditation is a means of retraining your brain to remain focused and grounded, even during times of stress. It can offer a way of discovering your inner peace to lead a more fulfilling, meaningful, and happy life. Benefits of meditation include:



- Enhance self-awareness
- Promote emotional health
- Reduce stress
- Manage pain

Virtual classes are available Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30am – 11:30am.  
Individual sessions also available.  
Contact Recreation Therapy: 913-682-2000  
ext. 52345

Interested in learning more about Meditation and Mindful Awareness? [Click Here](#) to read more or try one of our guided meditation audio files!

## Chronic Pain Self-Management Group (Pain School)

The Chronic Pain Self-Management Group (Pain School) teaches you about chronic pain. It also provides information about a wide variety of effective resources available to you through VA Eastern Kansas.

Classes are held at both Topeka and Leavenworth campuses. An introductory workshop is offered the first Monday of each month and is required before attending the 11-week series of classes. The classes are then held each Tuesday 2pm – 3:30pm.



**Ask your healthcare team for a consult to Pain School Introductory Workshop!**



## Healthy Living Messages

### Ask About Low Blood Sugar

If you have diabetes, talk with your healthcare team about selecting a safe and effective blood glucose target range based on your goals, priorities, and lifestyle. Learn more [here](#)!

### Focus on Vaccines

Recommendations for preventive services depend on your age, sex, health status, and family history. Find out which screening tests and immunizations are recommended for you. Learn more [here](#)!

### Be Safe: STIs

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are infections you can get by having sex with someone who has an STI. Getting tested and knowing your status is an important part of reducing the spread of STIs. Learn more [here](#)!

## Taking a Moment... #LiveWholeHealth Blog Series

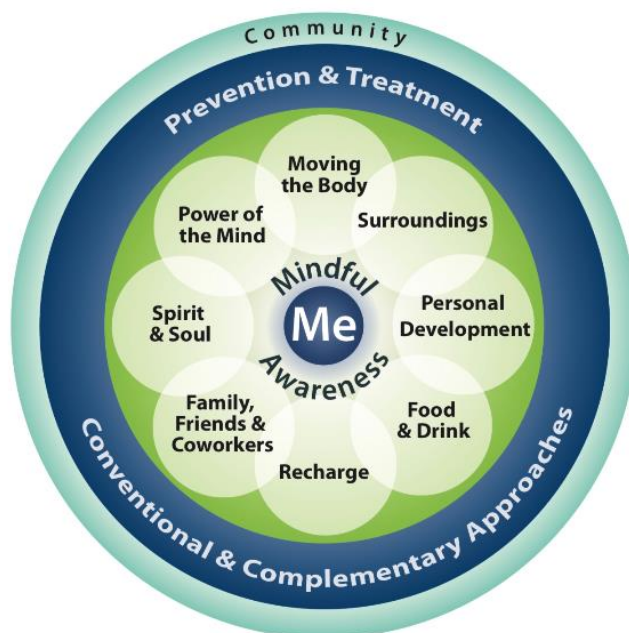
VA has an ongoing self-care blog series: [#LiveWholeHealth](#). The blog series highlights Whole Health resources – such as video sessions for yoga and meditation – that you can follow along at home to live healthier and happier. Here are some of our favorite [#LiveWholeHealth](#) blog posts!

1. [Live Whole Health #125: Grounding Exercise and Connecting with our Senses](#) – Life unfolds in this present moment. It does not exist in the future or the past, nor does it live in our minds. This grounding exercise practice will help you connect with the here and now.
2. [Live Whole Health #126: Introduction to Qigong](#) – Active qigong techniques primarily focus on body movements, especially of the whole body or arms and legs. Passive techniques can be practiced in any posture that can be maintained and involve breath and mind exercises.

## Whole Health: Explained! Eight Self-Care Practices

Last time we wrapped up **Personal Development**, which focuses on different ways you can grow in different areas of your life. We will now focus on the next area of self-care: **Food & Drink**. Making healthy choices about what you eat and drink is a powerful way to help care for yourself. Food and drink give our bodies the fuel used to work properly, stay healthy, and fight disease. People often do not realize their food choices affect the way they feel, both physically and emotionally. Choosing foods that nourish rather than harm your body may help prevent chronic conditions and the need for certain medications in the future.

There is a lot of information on healthy eating, it can be hard to figure out where to begin! Start by considering your reasons why you want to consume food and drink that is healthy for you and get help from your primary care team.



## In the News!! What is Monkeypox?

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Resources are available for you!

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder; and monkeypox is rarely fatal. Monkeypox is not related to chickenpox. Monkeypox can make you sick including a rash or sores (pox), often with an earlier flu-like illness.

Symptoms of monkeypox can include:

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| • Fever                 | • Chills  |
| • Headache              | • Exhaustion                                    |
| • Muscle aches/backache | • A rash that can look like pimples or blisters |
| • Swollen lymph nodes   |   |

Monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact including:

- Direct contact with monkeypox rash, sores, or scabs
- Contact with objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox
- Through respiratory droplets or oral fluids from a person with monkeypox

If you have symptoms of monkeypox, you should see your healthcare provider, even if you don't think you had contact with someone who has monkeypox.

If You or Your Partner Have Monkeypox...

- Follow the treatment and prevention recommendations of your healthcare provider
- Avoid sex or being intimate with anyone until all your sores have healed and you have a fresh layer of skin formed.

[Learn more about the symptoms of monkeypox, including images of monkeypox rashes.](#)

## Women Veterans – What is Ovarian Cancer?

Ovarian cancer starts in your ovaries. It can spread from the ovaries to other parts of the body. This spread is called metastasis. The more cancer spreads, the harder it is to treat.

Ovarian cancer Signs and Symptoms can include:

- Abdominal bloating or swelling
- Full feeling quickly when eating.
- Weight loss.

- Discomfort in pelvic area
- Feeling very tired
- Back Pain
- Changes in bowel habits, such as constipation.
- A frequent need to urinate.

If you are experiencing signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer, notify the Women's Health Clinic.

If you are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, you and your healthcare provider will decide

On the treatment plan that's best for you. Treatment choices may include:

- Surgery.
- Chemotherapy.
- Targeted therapy using medicines
- Hormone therapy
- Radiation therapy.

### Women's Health Clinics:

**Leavenworth:** 913-682-2000 ext. 54160

**Topeka:** 785-350-3111 ext. 53247

## Useful Resources: LGBTQ+ Resources and Support at VA

### Services and Support Available at VA

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) welcomes all Veterans, families, caregivers, and survivor beneficiaries, including diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. LGBTQ+ refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer identities. The “+” sign captures identities beyond LGBTQ, including but not limited to questioning, pansexual, asexual, agender, gender diverse, nonbinary, gender-neutral, and other identities. LGBTQ+ Veterans have faced stigma and discrimination, which can affect health. As a healthcare institution, we need to make sure that LGBTQ+ Veterans know they are welcome at the VA.

Several care services are available, including but not limited to:

- Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy
- Care for Veterans at risk for HIV (PEP and PrEP)
- Military Sexual Trauma
- Whole Health
- Infertility
- Speech Therapy Services



VA Eastern Kansas offers group and individual support designed to create a validating and supportive atmosphere for Veterans who identify with at least one LGBTQ+ identity. If you would like to be connected, ask your healthcare team for a consult, or contact us directly:

**Leavenworth:** 913-682-2000 ext. 53481

**Topeka:** 785-350-3111 ext. 53475



## My HealthVet (MHV) Corner

### Upgrade to Premium to Use Secure Messaging Today!

To use Secure Messaging, you must have a Premium My HealthVet (MHV) account. Stay in better contact with your VA health care team by [upgrading your account](#) today!

You can't always go to your doctor's office or call your health care team for every question, request, or concern. This is where MHV's Secure

Messaging feature can help. Secure Messaging allows you to contact your health care team and other VA services for non-urgent and non-emergency health care concerns for those call 911.

### Who receives my message?

When sending a [Secure Message](#) (*sign in required*), you choose a recipient from within your VA medical center. Many Veterans send messages to their primary health care providers.

You also have the option to contact specialty care providers that you have seen within the last year, such as Orthopedics, Dermatology, and Mental Health.

### When will I hear back?

Your team will respond within at least 3 business days. Only for non-urgent or emergency health concern

[My HealthVet Coordinator, Shawn Hoffman:](#)  
913-682-2000 ext. 51640  
(or directly at 913-946-1640)