

On The Beat

Minneapolis VA Health Care System
November/December 2011



Mission: Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well being.

VA Core Values:

- Integrity
- Commitment
- Advocacy
- Respect
- Excellence

On the Beat is a publication of the Minneapolis VA for staff, patients, and stakeholders. Comments are welcome. Send to: Public Affairs Office
Minneapolis VAMC
One Veterans Drive
Minneapolis, MN
55417

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Three WW II T6 aircraft fly above new clinic following dedication event

NW Metro VA Clinic Is Open

The long-awaited NW Metro Community-Based Outpatient clinic (CBOC), located in the city of Ramsey, opened to patients Nov. 15. An official opening celebration, attended by an estimated 500 people, was held Nov. 11, Veteran's Day.

"We are here to celebrate with you," said Steve Kleinglass, director of the Minneapolis VA Health Care System, who served as the emcee of the dedication event. "Veterans fought for us and have given us our freedoms and the treasures we enjoy as Americans."

"Veterans have given us our purpose to build this clinic," said Dr. Peter Duane, CBOC program medical director. He thanked the many VA staff who worked tirelessly behind-the-scenes so the clinic opened on time.

Janet Murphy, director of Veterans Integrated Service Network 23, said: "We honor our veterans today with this clinic. This clinic is a visible sign of the gratitude we feel for your service."

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Ken Burris sings closing anthem, "Let Freedom Ring."



They came dressed in patriotic colors for the dedication.

NW Metro Clinic Dedication (Continued from Page 1)

James Deal, of PSD Inc., which built the 20,000 square foot clinic, was also a speaker. He expressed appreciation to the veterans for their service, on behalf of his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Ramsey Mayor Bob Ramsey, a Gulf War veteran, said the VA clinic is a welcome addition to the downtown community, and would serve approximately 30,000 veterans in the Anoka County. Also attending were U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken.

Following the dedication, more than 1,000 people toured the clinic. Greg Hausker, RN, clinic director, said the day was busy but rewarding. He said all of the new staff enjoyed the opportunity to meet the veterans who would soon be their patients. "This is really their clinic," he said.



More than 500 people packed The Fountains across the street from the new clinic for the dedication event.



Infectious Disease Chief Receives 2011 Clinical Excellence Award

Greg Filice, MD, head of the infectious disease section in the Department of Medicine at the Minneapolis VA, could not attend the medical staff meeting in October when the annual Medical Staff Award for Clinical Excellence was presented. He was visiting his daughter, a pediatrician, on the East Coast.

“I was in a sports store, trying on swim goggles, when I got a call on my cell phone from the Chief of Staff office,” he recalled. “They said I had won the award. I told my daughter, and she smiled at me and asked, ‘You? Really!’”

For VA staff, patients, medical students and research collaborators who have worked with Dr. Filice since 1980 at the Minneapolis VA, it was no surprise!

According to the award nomination, “Dr. Filice is a strong patient advocate. He is a good communicator and leader. He is fair, even-handed and self sacrificing. He always goes the extra mile to ensure success for all. Dr. Filice has a down-to-earth approach to infectious disease issues and up-to-date knowledge of relevant scientific evidence. He worked tirelessly with a multidisciplinary team to create the antimicrobial CDSS system to enhance antimicrobial prescribing. And not only is he highly effective in navigating the VA bureaucracy to get things done, he is diplomatic, hard working, and ethical. Dr. Filice has dedicated his professional life to the VA and is a superb clinician.”

This was the ninth annual award, which recognizes a member of the medical staff who provides outstanding clinical care. There were 15 nominations this year. **(See Page 8 for other nominees).**

“This is a tremendous honor,” Filice said. “I am extremely flattered and humbled.”

Filice, a native Californian, became interested in infectious diseases as a medical student at Cornell University Medical College. After residency at the University of Minnesota, he spent two years as an epidemiologist for the Epidemic Intelligence Service at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. He investigated numerous outbreaks of illnesses in South Carolina, Washington and South Dakota. He also studied an outbreak of Hansen’s disease (leprosy) among trappers of Armadillos in Louisiana.

At the Minneapolis VA, Filice wears many hats besides clinician. He trains residents from the University of Minnesota. He conducts research. He leads a group of infectious disease doctors who have a national reputation in the VA and infectious diseases community.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



Interim Leadership Announced - While the search and selection process takes place at the Minneapolis VA Health Care system for the Director and Associate Director, the following individuals will serve in an Acting capacity. Effective January 1, **Barry Sharp** (left), Director of the Iowa City Health Care System, will assume the duties of the Acting Director of the Minneapolis VA Health Care System, following the retirement of Steven Kleinglass. Effective January 15, **Ms. Sheila Sheridan**, Strategic Planner and Staff Assistant to the Director, will assume the duties of the Associate Director, replacing Dr. Marci Mylan, who has been named director of the Omaha - VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System.

VA Plans to Provide Historic Housing for Veterans



In an ongoing effort to eliminate homelessness among Veterans and their families, VA plans to enter into agreements to provide more than 3,000 units of permanent and transitional housing for Veterans at 25 VA medical center campuses nationwide. As part of the effort, Minneapolis VA plans to develop a 4-acre site on the Upper Post of Fort Snelling to provide 58 units for veterans and their families who have suffered from homelessness. The buildings that date back to the early 1900s will be transformed into housing.

CommonBond Communities, a non-profit in St. Paul, is teaming up with the Minneapolis VA to turn four old buildings into comfortable, apartment-style housing. Andrew Michaelson, CommonBond senior housing development manager, said most will be efficiency and one-bedroom units. The estimated \$10.2-million project will preserve the historical qualities of the brick structures.

Maplewood CBOC to Move to New, Larger Facility in 2012

The Minneapolis VA Health Care System (HCS) plans to relocate the Maplewood, MN, Community-based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) to a new site at the Northeast corner of Kennard Street and Legacy Parkway in Maplewood, a suburb 15 northeast of downtown St. Paul, beginning Nov. 1, 2012. The VA has operated the existing clinic at 2785 White Bear Avenue in Maplewood since 1999.

The VA will be leasing 14,000 square feet from MSP Commercial for a period of 10 years. Construction will begin in the spring of 2012. Services will include primary care, behavioral health and specialty telemedicine. The clinic will also be equipped with a laboratory and radiology equipment.

Maplewood CBOC provides primary and select specialty care to over 3,400 Veterans in Ramsey County. Due to the increase of enrollment of Veterans in the Ramsey County area, the current Maplewood CBOC space has become inadequate to meet access measures and expansion of more clinical space is necessary to better serve Veterans.

Study Looks at Behaviors of OEF/OIF Veterans Enrolled in College



Dr. Widome

College students who have served in the U.S. conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are more likely than their non-veteran peers to use tobacco, drink in excess and engage in behaviors that endanger their health and safety, according to a study that appeared in the November/December issue of *American Journal of Health Promotion*. “We also found some protective behaviors where veterans showed particular strengths,” said lead author **Rachel Widome, Ph.D.**, of the Center for Chronic Disease Outcomes Research at the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Medical Center. In the study, 8,651 Minnesota college students—7,813 nonveterans, 405 veterans who had served in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan (Operation

Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom or OEF/OIF) and 410 Veterans who had not served in OEF/OIF—completed a survey of health-related behaviors. More OEF/OIF Veterans said they were currently cigarette smokers or had recently used smokeless tobacco, compared with non-veteran students. On the positive side, OEF/OIF veterans reported being more physically active than other students: a significantly higher percentage engaged in strengthening exercise, and fewer spent over 2 hours a day watching TV or playing video or computer games, and were less likely to use marijuana.

Vitamin D Levels Not Related to Acute Exacerbations of COPD



Dr. Kunisaki

Vitamin D levels are not related to acute exacerbations of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (AECOPD) in patients with severe COPD, according to a large prospective cohort study involving 973 North American patients. The findings were published online ahead of the print edition of the American Thoracic Society’s *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*. In the study, a secondary analysis of data from a randomized, controlled trial of the effects of azithromycin on the frequency of AECOPD, no relationship was found between baseline Vitamin D levels and time to first AECOPD or between vitamin D levels and AECOPD

exacerbation rates. “Vitamin D insufficiency and deficiency are common in patients with COPD, and patients with severe COPD are at the highest risk for exacerbations, so we hypothesized that low vitamin D levels might increase the risk of AECOPDs,” said **Ken M. Kunisaki, M.D.**, of the Minneapolis VAMC. “Our negative results are in contrast with earlier studies in which lower vitamin D levels were associated with higher rates of respiratory infections in adults and more frequent asthma exacerbations in children.” The study had some limitations. Vitamin D levels were only assessed at baseline, and so may have changed during the study period. Seasonal changes in vitamin D levels may also have occurred.



DISCOVERY → INNOVATION → ADVANCEMENT

Million Veteran Program:
A Partnership with Veterans

Research & Health Advancement
Research & Development
Improving Veterans' Lives

Minneapolis VA Tops 1,000 Participants In National MVP Research Program

In less than 6 months, the Minneapolis VA has enrolled more than 1,000 veterans in the important national study to better understand how genes affect health and illness in order to improve health care for Veterans. For more information, call Toll-free: 866-441-6075. The clinic is located in the hospital in 4M-103. Walk-ins accepted. Only a blood draw is required.

AROUND THE VA



Mike Phelps, Director of Biomedical Instrumentation Service at the Minneapolis VA, has achieved the status of Certified Clinical Engineer (CCE). Currently, there are fewer than 250 CCEs in the United States. Certification requires passing a written and oral examination. "This has been a career goal of mine for a long time," said Phelps, who has worked at the Minneapolis VA for 10 years. The purpose of certification is to promote healthcare delivery improvement through the continuing assessment and recognition of the competency of professionals who support and advance patient care by applying engineering and management skills to healthcare technology.



Minneapolis VA to Provide Behavioral Health Video Consults Into Patient's Homes

The Minneapolis VA Health Care System will work with American Well, a Boston-based company, to create a behavioral health practice to provide video consults for veterans who can't easily reach the facility. Under the American Well Online Care program, VA patients will have online access to their own physicians in their own homes. The VA announced in early November that American Well has received a VA Innovation Initiative (VAi2) Industry Innovation award to develop the program. "VA is renowned for embracing the latest technologies in service of those who have served our country. We are honored to work with them and support the provision of quality, accessible healthcare for Veterans," said Danielle Russella, executive vice president at American Well.

Minneapolis VA, German Institute OK Prosthetics Research Agreement

Researchers at the Minneapolis VA and the Fraunhofer Institute for Manufacturing Engineering in Stuttgart, Germany, will collaborate in the development of prosthetics devices. The project pairs two of the world's leading prosthetics scientists – Dr. Andrew Hansen of the Minneapolis VA and Dr. Urs Schneider of Fraunhofer -- who will seek to develop new biomechanical devices for veterans and the general public.



Pictured (L-R): VA researcher Dr. Hansen; Dr. Schneider of Fraunhofer; Steven Kleinglass, director of the Minneapolis VA; and Dr Kristin Nichol, associate chief of staff/research, at the Minneapolis VA.



2011 Military Order of the Purple Heart Youth/Student Volunteers

FRONT ROW (L to R): Carrie Lindberg, Helen Korbel, Michael Jacobson, Hope Johnson, Hannah Brummund, Brian Liepa. **BACK ROW** (L to R): William Lundgren, Sereen Waletski, Sarah Lundgren, Nadeen Waletski, Mondraya Howard, Alex Brummund, Caitlin Schweiger, Julie Quinn (Voluntary Assistant/Student Volunteer Coordinator), Taylor Sorenson and Mark Browne, Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Officer.



VHA Official Schoenhard Visits Center

On Dec. 19, William Schoenhard, Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (L), visited the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. Here, he receives instructions from Beau Bedore in the Spinal Cord Injury and Disorder Center on how to use adaptive technology equipment.

Dr. Filice Receives Clinical Staff Award (From Page 3)

“This is an exciting and interesting place to work,” Filice said. “Teaching students means you must stay up to date on the latest clinical and scientific information. You must walk the walk if you are going to talk the talk.” He attributes the qualities that led to this recognition to his opportunities to work with outstanding staff and the emphasis on excellence at the Minneapolis VA. Research and teaching ultimately impact patients. “We must serve them to the best of our ability because they served us. First and foremost, taking care of veterans is what we are about,” he said.



Medical Staff members who were nominated for this year's award are pictured left-to-right: **Othmane Alami, MD.,** *Psychiatry, Maplewood CBOC*; **John Nolan, M.D.,** *Rochester CBOC*; **Larisa Kusar, M.D.,** *Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*; **Albertine Beard, M.D.,** *General Internal Medicine/Hospitalist Team*; **Brian Fiedler, M.D.,** *Radiology*; **Mark Burke, M.D.,** *Community Living Center*; **George Sarosi, M.D.,** *General Internal Medicine*; **Punit Wadhwa, M.D.,** *Hematology/Oncology*; **Brian Bell, M.D.,** *Radiology*; **Amy Candy Heinlein, M.D.,** *General Internal Medicine*; and **Brian Kanter, M.D.,** *General Internal Medicine*. **NOT PICTURED:** **Clyde Markon, M.D.,** *Twin Ports CBOC*; **Eleonore Okosdinossian, M.D.,** *Maplewood CBOC*; and **Gregory Rifleman, DPM,** *podiatry*.

Previous Clinical Excellence Award Recipients

2002 – Donald Masler, M.D.

2003 – Gordon Pierpoint, M.D.

2004 – Rosemary Kelly, M.D.

2005 – Gloria Niehans, M.D.

2006 – Glennon Park, M.D.

2007 – Gary Goldish, MD

2008 – Norman Steinberg, M.D.

2009 – Bruce Templeton, DDS

2010 – Kathy Rice, M.D.

2011 – Greg Filice, M.D.

Career Awards - Congratulations!

<p>40 Years Jane Spain William C. Duane Jr. Kristin Palfe Duane Crossen</p> <p>35 Years Cary Brostad Kathleen DeRoos Gregory Filice Dixie Hilton Karen Schlies Carol Ward</p> <p>30 Years Mary Ann Kolosky Debra Pederson Michael Zak Patricia Scepaniak David Rabb Mary Lou Olson</p>	<p>30 Years (cont) Gail Jury Marilyn Clark Michelle Reed Steven Stadther John Carlson</p> <p>25 Years Susan McDaniel Annette Townsend William Horstman Brenda Ellingson Mona Olson Cheryl White Teresa Nelsen Teresa Mark Burke Karl Reid Michael Rosecrans</p>	<p>20 Years Catherine Proebstle Theresa Huber David Griffin Joseph Medvec Jeraldine Young Anne Steckler James Stephenson Roger Scaiano Scott Skeesick</p> <p>15 Years Craig Smith Alesia Wricks Sandra Anderson Danita Erickson David Andersen Christa Kramer Todd Taylor James Cochran Thomas Lockhart</p>	<p>10 Years Deborah Kedrowski Joahn Wickstrom Ellen Lafans Deborah Johnson Julia Ehasz Kovatec McPipe Danny Correll Mary David Melanie Blahnik Kathryn McGuire Eric Affeldt Marietta Gasper Cedric Wall Daniel Fremont Alice Ivey Kurt Virnig Peggy Walsh</p>
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School at Work Graduates Receive Diplomas



Pictured (L-R): Head, Wren, Hill, SAW Coach Norm Hendrickson, Warren and Storozuk. Shown in the insert photo is Walker. (Unavailable for the photo was Spencer).

Congratulations to Donna Head, Lasonia Wren, Iden Hill, Larry Warren, Mike Storozuk, Linda Walker, and Kaarn Spencer, seven recent graduates of Catalyst Learning's, School at Work (SAW) program, conducted here at the MVAHCS. They completed a 24 week, career development program for workers in the healthcare industry. A graduation reception was hosted by the Education Department on October 14. Family members, supervisor/managers and executive leadership staff were present to recognize these graduates.

The Webs We Weave

By Jason Rolfe - Minneapolis VAHCS Web Content Manager

I often get asked the question about putting something on “the web.” Most times I need to respond with, “Which web?” The truth of the matter is that there are multiple meanings to what most people consider the web.

The Minneapolis [Internet](http://www.minneapolis.va.gov) (www.minneapolis.va.gov) is our public website. This is the place where our Veterans, patients, community members and staff can find public information about the Minneapolis VA Health Care System. Here, we highlight Feature News Stories, services available to our Veterans, how to become a patient, visitor directions and much more.

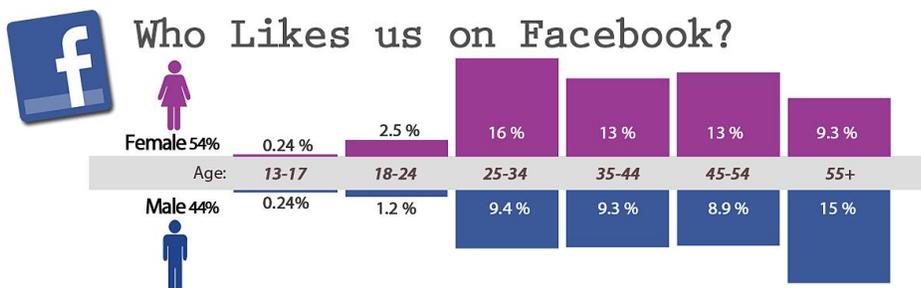
The Minneapolis [Intranet](http://vaww.minneapolis.va.gov) (vaww.minneapolis.va.gov) is a portal to information important to our staff. It holds information about various departments; information about the facility or VA specific programs and processes; and, most importantly, links to resources. A few of the things you might find on the Intranet are a link to the Staff Directory (VA Phonebook), TMS and other training websites, Library Resources, various SharePoint sites, and even photos from events around the VA.

Microsoft [SharePoint](#) is also often referred to as a website. The Minneapolis VA SharePoint site is an internal resource for our staff that holds many important documents, calendar and resources specific to VA departments. VA staff will find policies, training documents or program contact information here.

And finally, Minneapolis VA operates social media sites such as [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). With these new media tools, we share information about events, programs, health campaigns and VA news. It provides a real time access and, many times, discussion on current events and issues important to VA health care.

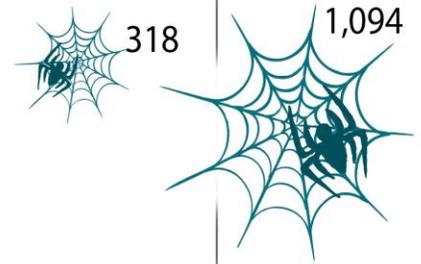
In a world where knowledge is power, becoming more in-tuned to just how to find information within the VA’s web environment will help you succeed. The following documents might just help you keep the right information at your fingertips.

- [How to set your default home page in Internet Explorer.](#)
- [How to create a desktop shortcut for the Minneapolis VA Intranet page.](#)

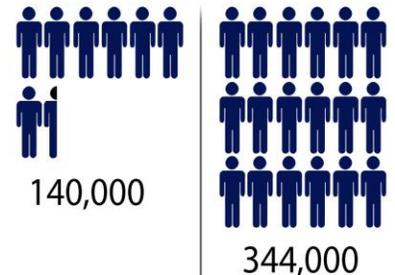


Intranet vs Internet
vaww. vs www.

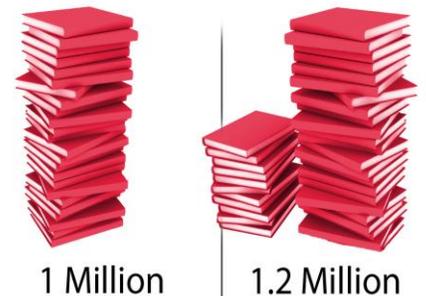
Average Daily Visits



Visits in 2011



Page Views in 2011



Most Viewed Pages

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Homepage | 1. Homepage |
| 2. Clinical Schedules | 2. Careers |
| 3. MPLS VA Photos | 3. Contact Us |
| 4. Careers | 4. Feature Stories |
| 5. Staff Education | 5. Directions |