



On The Beat

Minneapolis VA Health Care System
May 2011

Mission:

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

Vision:

To be a patient-centered, integrated health care organization for Veterans providing excellent health care, research and education; an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner and a back up for national emergencies.

Values:

- Trust
- Respect
- Excellence
- Compassion
- Commitment
- Empowerment
- Continuous Improvement
- Collaboration

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**New CBOCs
Dedicated
in Mankato
& St. James
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Veterans and Friends Celebrate New Clinics

Despite rain and overcast skies, hundreds of Veterans, friends and public officials turned out April 30 for community-based outpatient clinic (CBOC) dedication events in St. James and Mankato. Above photo shows the crowd applauding in a makeshift meeting room at the motel adjacent to the St. James clinic where the event moved to avoid the rain. Left below, Dr. Peter Duane, acting medical director of the CBOC program, gives remarks. Below right, Minneapolis VA Health Care System medical director Steven Kleinglass addresses the Mankato gathering. U.S. Congressman Tim Walz was the keynote speaker at both events. Janet Murphy, Director, VA Midwest Health Care Network, also gave remarks. (On Page 1, the top/bottom photos show the Mankato clinic; the center photo shows the ribbon cutting in St. James).



Nurses Tell Their Amazing Stories

In the words of Medical Center Director **Steve Kleinglass**, “At the Minneapolis VA Health Care System, every day is Nurses Day.” But every year in May, Veterans and employees have the chance to formally celebrate the nursing care that takes place in this health care system. National Nurses Week was born out of a desire to honor individuals who dedicate their professions to caring for others. The celebration is supported and encouraged by the American Nurses Association.



The theme for this year’s Nurses Week was “Telling Our Story” — and tell it they did! On Tuesday, May 10, nurses from various disciplines took to the Auditorium to tell of their experiences caring for Veterans. On the docket were educational presentations for nurses considering certification; stories of diverse cultural experiences; personal anecdotes on working in VA; and a keynote speech from a nurse who served in the U.S. Army at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

The day began with a seminar outlining the personal and professional benefits of receiving LPN certification in conjunction with the VA “Let’s Get Certified” nursing campaign. Nurse educator **Robin Rabey** told prospective test-takers about the increase in self-confidence and ability to care for Veterans that result from certification. Plus, she quoted statistics that reveal that 86% of hiring managers would prefer to hire a certified nurse over an uncertified nurse.

The presentations continued with three VA nurses’ personal accounts of a cultural exposure experience in Guatemala. The three—**Wendy Barlow**, **Nancy Kirchner**, and **Emily Grimshaw**—traveled to the country through a graduate school program and spent seven days learning about Guatemala’s history and societal structure. **Paula Newinski** shared the benefits of receiving RN certification. Being a certified nurse herself, she provided valuable insight to RNs considering certification as a professional development tool.

Keynote speaker **Deanna Germain** recounted her experience operating as a soldier and a nurse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. She told a harrowing tale of the harsh conditions and enormous workload that she and her fellow soldiers endured in service to their country. She highlighted the importance of nursing care in helping Veterans and active duty soldiers recover from the wounds of war.

The afternoon saw presentations on finding nursing specialties through passion for excellence and on a nurse’s biography of working on a post-operative/orthopedic ward, delivered by **Sharon Stanke** and **Paula Tymesen** respectively. **Deadra Dahl** shared specific women’s health issues that are addressed in the Women’s Clinic, as well as updates in the field of women’s health. **Whitney Roe** shared stories that she has heard over the years from Veteran patients, and she told about the impact those Veterans and their stories have had on her nursing career.

The afternoon was rounded out by **Adam Herr** and **Katie Inveen**. Adam outlined some exciting technological advances in healthcare and their impact on nursing service. Katie educated attendees on the topic of hoarding and offered valuable suggestions on how clinicians can identify and seek healthy treatment for patients and family members with this tendency.

Throughout the presentation day, one theme rang true—nurses are at the heart of the VA’s business. And their stories are nothing short of inspiring.

MINNEAPOLIS VA NEWSMAKERS



VA Physician Studies Gambling Addiction in Veterans

About 8% of U.S. veterans are problem gamblers who report between one and four gambling-related problems, and an additional 2% are pathological gamblers with five or more such problems, a study of 2,185 veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs care reveals. Age, education level, and ethnicity were not big predictors of pathological gambling risk. "The one that does show a lot of difference is unemployment, which is not necessarily what you expect. People need money to gamble, and they need a lot of money," **Dr. Joseph J. Westermeyer** said at the annual meeting of the *American Psychiatric Association* in May. The unemployed in the study, however, included part-time and seasonal workers who had some access to money, he said, and others were "homebodies" (typically unemployed men who were married to women with jobs). Interestingly, male veterans and female veterans had almost identical rates of both problem gambling and pathological gambling, which is not – so far – what you see in the general population." Men usually outnumber women by a factor of two to three or more, **Dr. Westermeyer** said. *Internal Medicine News* carried an article about the presentation on May 20.



Study Shows Paper Handout Works Fine in Surgery Informed Consent

A simple paper handout may be just as effective as videos and nurse instruction at educating surgery patients about their procedure, a new study suggests. **Dr. Terence Gioe** of the Minneapolis VA who led the study, which tested whether having nurses educate the patients or showing them a video – both common strategies – would offer any advantage over a simple paper handout before knee replacement surgery. Researchers divided 151 patients about to have a total knee replacement at the Minneapolis VA into three groups. One group filled out a computer-based informed consent called iMedConsent and received a handout about the risks and benefits of the surgery. The second group also watched a video, while a nurse spoke with the third group after they had received the handout and seen the video. The patients filled out a multiple choice questionnaire about the surgery when they consented to it and on the morning of the surgery and six weeks later. Overall, they usually scored about 75 to 80 percent correct answers on knowledge about the procedure, and there was no difference between the three groups. The findings appear in the *Journal of Arthritis Care and Research*. A story was carried by *Reuters News Service*.

VA Provides Caregiver Support for post-9/11 Veterans

May 21 article in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* profiled the new VA program for caregivers of veterans of post-9/11 conflicts. A new federal rule provides for stipends, training and health insurance for those people who provide care to the veterans at home. Parents and spouses of wounded vets already are making the sacrifices to care for veterans, and many have lost their jobs, homes and their own health care in the process, said **Mike Reckard**, Minneapolis VA caregiver support coordinator, who was quoted in the article.



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Career Awards - Congratulations!

<p>35 Years Charles W. Hiivala Valerie A. McCarty</p> <p>30 Years Ronald F. Patire</p> <p>25 Years Keith Donald Kivi Martha E. Manthie Alan J. Olson Mark G. Penzenstadler</p> <p>20 Years Inderjit S. Anand Ronald R. Bach Kathryn E. Cullen Marylee E. Druck Todd J. Duncan</p>	<p>20 Years Jill C. Hansen Mark B. Hetland Sara A. Kobes Debbie M. Miller Jillian Oliveri Robert J. Riley Mary V. Ring Manya L. Teorey Jacqueline A. Waite Russell S. Woodstrom</p> <p>15 Years Joelle K. Blasig Michael Anthon Chapman Brenda Jarmoluk Eileen M. Klevann Guy C. Lesch Ellen M. Murphy Dorian L. Scott Marilyn S. Weber</p>	<p>10 Years Laura J. Beem David L. Blade Robert G. Amell Sarah R. Burrows Nicholas D. Clubb James J. Foster Sheila V. Greene Heather J. Hansen Cortney J. Pone Tia M. Saint Onge Geoffrey Shannon Elmer L. Tate Stacy M. Tepper Chester A. Tomcheck Christopher L. Trembley Jerry M. Zimmerman</p>
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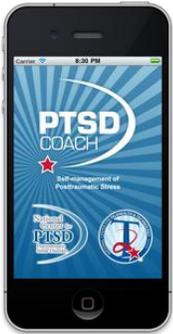


The Minneapolis VA will be participating in a National 2K event on **June 2**. The walk will benefit homeless Veterans and promote health and wellness. To help homeless Veterans, we are requesting gift cards (for gas, groceries or retail stores, pre-paid

phone cards) or bus passes, which can be dropped by 3B-139 Monday- Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. With every donation, you will receive a visor or button; supplies are limited. Gift-card donations also will be accepted the day of the walk. The 2K walk will be around the medical center campus, weather permitting. Maps will be provided. The walk will start in the first floor flag atrium. If you have any questions, contact Cynthia Tomczak at 612-629-7642 or email Cynthia.tomczak@va.gov. The walk is scheduled at 8-9 a.m., 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 5-6 p.m. In case of inclement weather, the walk will be inside.

NEWS FROM VACO

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder App Helps Thousands



The PTSD Coach smartphone application (app), launched in April by VA and the Department of Defense (DoD), has already helped more than 5,000 users connect with important mental health information and resources. Since its launch, the PTSD Coach app has been downloaded by thousands of individuals. While 96 percent of the users so far are located in the United States, the app has also been downloaded in 25 other countries. The app lets users track their PTSD symptoms, links them with public and personalized sources of support, provides accurate information about PTSD, and teaches helpful strategies for managing PTSD symptoms on the go. Information on the PTSD Coach app is on the VA's National Center for PTSD Website:

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp>. More apps from [DoD's National Center for Telehealth and Technology](http://www.t2health.org/apps) can be found at: <http://www.t2health.org/apps>.

Hundreds Seek Family Caregiver Benefits in First Week

In the first week for open applications, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has assisted more than 625 Veterans, Service members and their Family Caregivers in applying for new services under the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act 2010. New services for primary Family Caregivers of eligible post-9/11 Veterans include a stipend, mental health services, and access to health care insurance, if they are not already entitled to care or services under a health plan. The stipend portion of this service will be backdated to the date of the application. Comprehensive Caregiver training and medical support are other key components of this program. Applications can be processed by telephone through the Caregiver Support Line at (855) 260-3274, in person at a VA medical Center with a Caregiver Support Coordinator, by mail or online at www.caregiver.va.gov with the new Caregiver Application (VA Form 1010-CG).

VA Putting “Point-of-Care Research” to the Test

A team from the VA and Stanford University is exploring a new approach to clinical trials that experts say will cost less and be easier to translate into practice. A paper released online in the journal *Clinical Trials* describes a “point-of-care” study now under way that will involve more than 3,000 Veterans with diabetes. The trial will compare two methods of treatment like many randomized clinical trials, but the approach embeds research into routine clinical care. It compares treatments that doctors are already using, and collects data on which treatments work best within the context of real-world, everyday practice. Key features of the new model include: • Enrollment and randomization of study volunteers occurs during regular care -- within the framework of a patient's visit to their usual health care provider; • Providers draw on data from electronic medical records -- or receive electronic alerts, delivered at the point-of-care -- to determine if a patient is right for a study; and • Patients who agree to take part are randomized into one of the study's treatment arms and continue to receive care from their regular providers, with little or no deviation from routine care.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT

PBS'S NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT: AN AMERICAN TRADITION OF HONORING OUR SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN

For over two decades, PBS's National Memorial Day Concert has led the nation in honoring the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, their families at home and all the fallen who have given their lives for our country. The nation's memorial service will air live in HD on PBS from the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol. This year, the concert will include:

- The first national welcome home to our troops who have been serving in Iraq;
- The poignant story of a woman who lost her father in Vietnam and how her experiences are helping a new generation of children who have suffered the same loss after their parents served in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- A 10-year commemoration of Sept. 11; and
- A tribute to World War II veterans 70 years after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Featuring Gary Sinise, Joe Mantegna, Gen. Colin Powell, Kris Allen, Dianne Wiest, B.B. King, Hayley Westenra and Daniel Rodriguez with the National Symphony Orchestra.

JOIN US SUNDAY, MAY 29, 2011 on PBS

7 –8:30 pm CST (check local listings)

A TIME TO REMEMBER, TO HEAL AND BRING OUR NATION TOGETHER