

VETERANS' ADVANTAGE

FALL 2010

THE WELLNESS MAGAZINE

FOR NEW YORK / NEW JERSEY VETERANS

**Easier access
to PTSD care**

**How telehealth
can help**

**A home for
every Veteran**





From the Network Director:

A Veterans Day message

Dear Veteran,

On Veterans Day, Nov. 11, our nation will pay tribute to you, the dedicated men and women who have served our country in military service. Originally, as Armistice Day, it celebrated the end of World War I and the service members who helped win that war. In 1954, as an official federal holiday, Veterans Day was set aside to honor all American Veterans.

The focus of Veterans Day is on honoring our 23 million living Veterans. You are our parents, our children, our aunts and uncles, our friends and our neighbors—ordinary citizens called upon to perform extraordinary service. On Veterans Day, we celebrate your patriotism, your service and your sacrifice.

VA staff and volunteers consider every day Veterans Day and each of us plays a crucial role paying what Abraham Lincoln characterized as our nation's debt to Veterans and their families.

On behalf of all VA staff and volunteers, thank you for your service to America. We pay special tribute to you by ensuring you receive “the best care anywhere.” We are thankful for your service to us and are proud of our service to you.

Michael A. Sabo
VA Network Director

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www.nynj.va.gov



Get your prescriptions online

You asked for it, and you got it! You can now use My Health@Vet—VA's online service for Veterans—to refill your prescriptions and view your prescription history online. To take advantage of this service, you must be a registered user of My Health@Vet. As a registered user, you'll also have access to a Personal Health Journal where you can record and track your health statistics online. To register for these important benefits, visit www.myhealth.va.gov.

We're just a phone call away

Veterans, do you have questions about your health? During weekdays (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), staff at your VA Medical Center or VA Clinic are available to assist. After 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, weekends or holidays, call the VA Nurses Helpline at 1-800-877-6976 if you have a medical question. Remember to call 911 at any time if you're having a medical emergency.

New VA rules aid Veterans with PTSD

Our goal in the New York/New Jersey Veterans Healthcare Network is to provide the best care for our Veterans. A key part of our mission is to ensure those who were injured or have illnesses associated with their military service have what they need to heal.

Veterans traumatized by their military experience will be pleased

to know that VA recently made a critical step forward in providing an easier process for accessing health care and disability compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

PTSD is a medically recognized anxiety disorder that can develop from seeing or experiencing an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury to which a person responds with intense fear, helplessness or horror. The condition isn't uncommon among war Veterans.

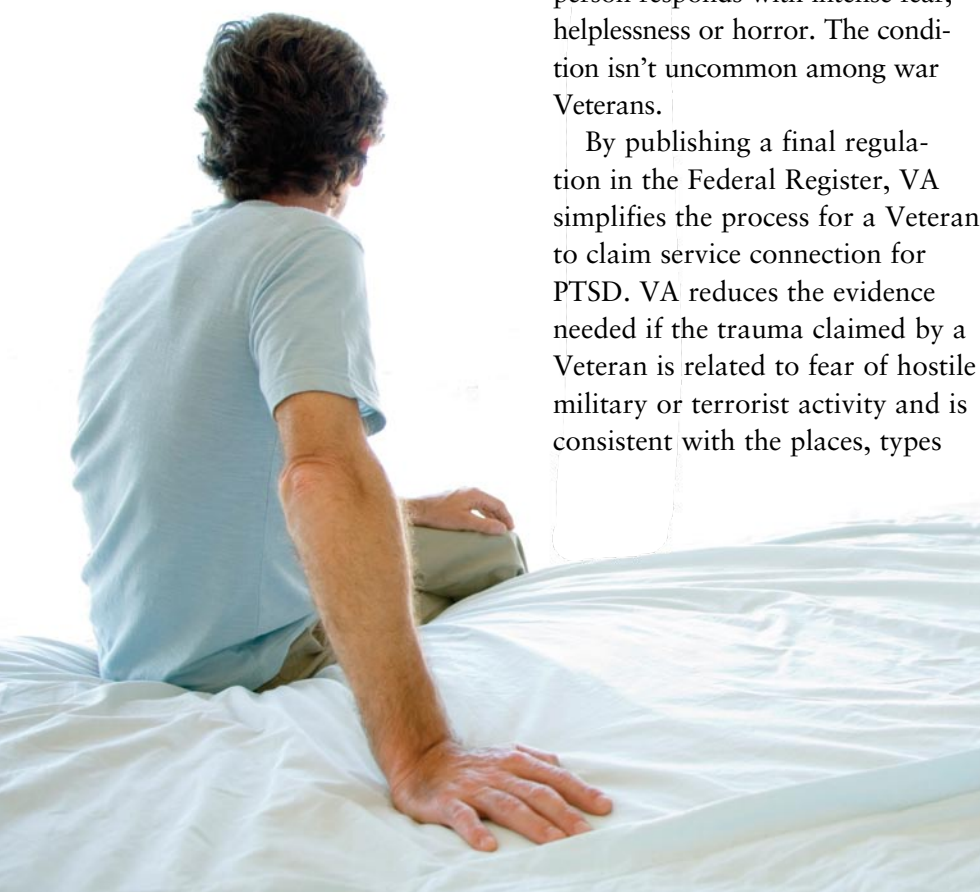
By publishing a final regulation in the Federal Register, VA simplifies the process for a Veteran to claim service connection for PTSD. VA reduces the evidence needed if the trauma claimed by a Veteran is related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity and is consistent with the places, types

and circumstances of the Veteran's service. Under the new rule, VA doesn't require corroboration of a stressor related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity if a VA doctor confirms that the stressful experience recalled by a Veteran adequately supports a diagnosis of PTSD and the Veteran's symptoms are related to the claimed stressor.

Previously, VA claims adjudicators were required to corroborate that a noncombat Veteran actually experienced a stressor related to hostile military activity. This final rule simplifies the requirements for these cases.

Each medical center within VA has PTSD specialists who provide treatment. Plus, specialized PTSD treatment programs are available in our network. Your VA doctor can help you decide which program is best for you. ■

VA recently made a critical step forward in providing an easier process for accessing health care and disability compensation for PTSD.



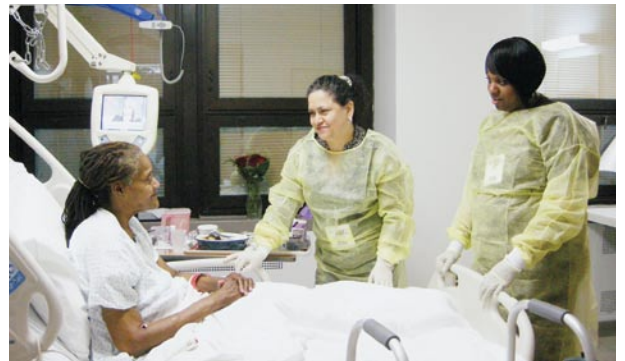
Working to satisfy Veterans' needs

Every patient has questions and concerns, and most can be satisfactorily answered by the nurse or doctor in the hospital or clinic setting or explained in materials presented upon admission to the unit or at outpatient appointments.

However, at times, a little more assistance is needed in communicating with patients or family members. For example, patients and family members need answers to questions involving wait times for care, the quality of food or parking. Understandably, they want to be part of the decision-making process for these and other care-related issues.

At VA New York Harbor Health Care System (VA New York HHS), a team of six Patient Representatives has the necessary

skills and commitment to seeing that patients have the answers they need and are satisfied with their care. Patient Representatives welcome the opportunity to help resolve problems and concerns quickly so patients can relax and concentrate on healing and family members know their loved ones are in good hands. For example, Patient Representative John Fredericks recently received great satisfaction from helping the elderly mother of a critically ill patient find a safe place to stay for the weekend. Likewise, Patient Representative Annabelle Lopez, R.N., was pleased to help Veterans



Specialized staff members help patients with even the smallest questions about their care.

find low-cost parking near the VA facility. Often, a patient just wants a good explanation or help resolving a situation. Many times, a Patient Representative will help patients and caregivers communicate better. They often help patients find solutions to issues that require attention to detail and follow-up. ■

Here for you

If you need assistance from a VA New York HHS Patient Representative, contact:

BROOKLYN

Phone: (718) 630-7500

Inpatient Units: dial #, 4 and ext. 3510.

Location: 1st Floor, Room I-208

Website: www.brooklyn.va.gov/patients/customerservice.asp

NEW YORK

Phone: (212) 686-7500, ext. 7080

Inpatient Units: dial #, 4 and ext. 7080.

Location: 3rd Floor, Room 3037 W

Website: www.manhattan.va.gov/patients/customerservice.asp

ST. ALBANS

Phone: (718) 298-8351

Inpatient Units: dial #, 4 and ext. 8351

Location: 1st Floor, Room E-111

Website: www.stalbans.va.gov/patients/customerservice.asp

Colorectal lab research to focus on genetic studies

Colorectal cancer (CRC) remains a major public health challenge in the United States with approximately 150,000 new cases diagnosed a year, resulting in approximately 50,000 deaths. CRC is the No. 1 solid tumor cancer killer among nonsmoking adults in our country. Screening for CRC among the general adult population has been proven effective and saves lives, but screening rates remain low, especially for certain high-risk populations.

Thomas Weber, M.D., Chief

of Surgery, Brooklyn campus, has proposed research with the goal of improving the understanding of the causes of CRC, particularly in families affected by multiple cases of the disease. This knowledge will help identify individuals at increased risk of developing this illness. Directing CRC screening to individuals at increased risk would help reduce the number of patients who suffer from this preventable, but often fatal, disease.

VA New York Harbor Health Care System researchers are also enthusiastic about participating



Thomas Weber, M.D., Chief of Surgery, Brooklyn campus

with VA in the nation's effort to understand the connection between genetics and risk of CRC. This will allow Veterans to participate in state-of-the-art cancer and genomics research.

"I believe completion of these research goals will make novel contributions to our understanding of the causes of CRC," says Dr. Weber, "and will directly support efforts to improve CRC prevention, screening and treatment." ■

Sharing best practices

British Veterans visit Manhattan campus

Experts at VA's Manhattan campus recently hosted two British Veterans of



Visiting British Veterans spent more than an hour talking about best practices with Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans and Prosthetics Lab staff at VA's Manhattan campus.

the war in Afghanistan. Clinical Psychologist Michael Kramer, Ph.D., briefed the visitors on Virtual Reality Therapy, a treatment used for patients with PTSD. Following the discussion, the Veterans toured VA's state-of-the-art prosthetics lab and discussed technologies used to design and produce the most-advanced artificial limbs. The presentation was of particular interest to both male and female visitors who had below-the-knee amputations.

The visitors also participated

in a discussion that lasted more than an hour with a group U.S. Veterans who are part of the Wounded Warriors Project. The British Veterans said that the visit's purpose was to get an idea of how VA meets the needs of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans in terms of the U.K. applying best practices. They were visiting on behalf of Gen. Evelyn Webb Carter of the Army Benevolent Fund and will draft a report for him. ■

VA NY Harbor Health Care System

www.brooklyn.va.gov

www.manhattan.va.gov

www.stalbans.va.gov

Music is in the air

NY Guard troops donate time, efforts for Veterans

On Tuesday, July 20, New York's all-volunteer state defense force commander, Maj. Gen. Ferg Foley, presided over the donation of dozens of restored musical instruments for the patients of the James J. Peters (JJP) VA Medical Center. The donation was made possible through the efforts and interest of New York Guard volunteer Maj. Bob Coulombe, from Chappaqua, N.Y. Coulombe, who had worked with the medical center staff on a number of patient outings, came up with the idea for collecting the instruments after visiting with recreation therapy staff. Foley joined Coulombe and senior staff of the medical center for the presentation in the facility's historic chapel.

"I heard volunteers were willing to teach the Veterans how to play various instruments, but they didn't have the instruments," says Coulombe. "I put out the word in my community, and the donations came rolling in."

The current total is 32 instruments and counting, Coulombe says, including a player piano, three keyboard pianos, electric keyboard, guitars, a violin, cello, saxophone, flute, clarinet, trombone, accordion, trumpet and auto harp. Many of the instruments had not been played in years and were in need of repair and tuning.



Veteran George McGinnis (left) receives a few pointers from VA employee Kim Farrier.

"We're grateful to the Guard and to our friends in the community for their efforts on behalf of our Veterans."

—MaryAnn Musumeci, Medical Center Director

Not one to be discouraged by a challenge, Coulombe went to his network to see if he could remedy the situation.

"One of the Guard soldiers conscripted her boyfriend, Mark Hitt, a professional musician, to come to Camp Smith and tune and repair the string instruments," says Coulombe. Hitt enjoyed the project so much that he agreed to perform for the patients during the presentation event, which was broadcast throughout the medical

center on closed-circuit television.

"This was a wonderful and generous undertaking," says Medical Center Director MaryAnn Musumeci. "We're grateful to the Guard and to our friends in the community for their efforts on behalf of our Veterans. We look forward to some beautiful music resulting from this project." ■

James J. Peters VAMC
www.bronx.va.gov

Don't be a "no show"

VA doctor collaborates with VA graphic artist to bring awareness to Veterans

A concern facing all VA medical centers, and an avoidable inconvenience to other patients, is the alarming rise in patient "no shows." This is a name used to describe patients with previously scheduled appointments who don't show up at their appointed time. Sometimes no shows occur for legitimate, unavoidable reasons or a simple misunderstanding of the impact this action has on the clinic staff and the other patients waiting for appointments. Put simply, no shows are detrimental to clinic operations, patient care and general productivity.

Daniel E. MacDonald, D.M.D., James J. Peters VA Medical Center Dental/Research Service, recognized that the rising no-show rate was negatively impacting his clinic and the clinics of many of his colleagues. He sympathized with patients whose appointments were unnecessarily prolonged by backlogs in scheduling caused by no shows.

"When I schedule a surgery, it can take anywhere from 1.5 to 2.5 hours to complete the procedure," says Dr. MacDonald. "A no show is devastating to my schedule, creating missed opportunities for patients waiting for needed care."

Dr. MacDonald felt an effective

approach to reduce no shows would be to develop an awareness campaign. He conceived of a poster that would alert patients that such behavior harms everyone—the clinician, staff, other patients and the medical center. In an effort to develop a meaningful campaign, he teamed with Yang Zhao, Chief of Medical Media and a graphic artist with a background in private-sector marketing campaigns. Together, they created an attractive no-show poster to be displayed in all medical center waiting areas.

"Veterans have earned the best care and services VA can provide,"

says Dr. MacDonald, "however, Veteran patients also share a responsibility to their fellow Veterans to cancel appointments far enough in advance for the staff to make effective use of the available time."

Early indications are that the poster campaign is making a positive impact. Clinics are reporting fewer missed appointments and increasing numbers of calls from patients who are canceling appointments. Time will tell if awareness equals productivity, but certainly we're moving in the right direction. ■



Daniel E. MacDonald, D.M.D., JJP VAMC Dental/Research Service (left), worked with Yang Zhao, Chief of Medical Media, on reducing clinic no shows.

The link between diabetes and exercise

Exercise is a key element of diabetes control. It helps burn fats, which ultimately improves muscles' use of sugar and reduces medication requirements.

Exercise, while reducing stress—which could increase blood sugar levels—also decreases weight, strengthens and conditions muscles (including the heart), lowers blood pressure and improves cholesterol. Thus, exercise impacts overall cardiovascular fitness and is as important as diet and medication in diabetes control.

Before starting any exercise program, talk with your VA doctor about medications that are affected by exercise, and the time of day when your diabetes medications are at their maximum effectiveness. Take notes so that you can

discuss any issues with your doctor at your next visit.

Exercise tips for someone with diabetes

- Check your blood sugar at the start and 15 minutes after your exercise session. If you exercise for an hour or more, check your blood sugar every 30 minutes, especially if you take insulin or other diabetes medications.

- Never exercise if your blood sugar is less than 100 milligrams (mg) or over 250 mg (or over 250 mg with ketones—acids that build in the blood and appear in the urine when your body doesn't have enough insulin—in your urine). Never exercise with a blood sugar above 300 under any circumstance.

- Never take your insulin before exercising to prevent your blood sugar from dropping too low.

- Exercise increases your metabolism for up to 12 hours and, in some cases, up to 24 hours if you are well-conditioned. Be aware of the signs that indicate your blood sugar is low including lightheadedness/weakness, excessive sweating, racing of the heart and headaches. If this is the case, eat immediately.

- Eat a light snack such as crackers before beginning an exercise session, or carry raisins in your pocket when you exercise. If you show symptoms of low blood sugar, stop exercising, eat the raisins and recheck your blood sugar in 10 minutes. You aren't out of the danger zone until your blood sugar is above 70 mg, but you should shoot for least 100 mg. If it's less than 100 mg, eat a meal as soon as possible.

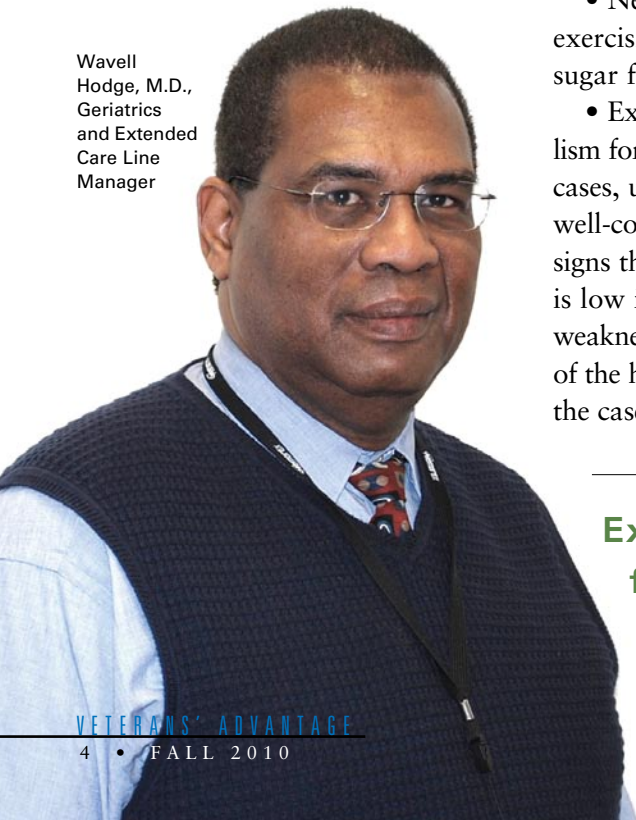
- Always drink water before, during and after exercise sessions to prevent dehydration and the buildup of ketones and avoid exercising in high temperatures.

- When walking for exercise, wear properly-fitted, well-padded shoes and clean socks. This prevents blisters and damage, which can lead to foot ulcers.

- Always wear your diabetic identification when exercising.

- Both aerobic exercise—which helps burn fat and tones the heart—and strength training—which promotes muscle growth and long-term sugar control—are important. Avoid lifting very heavy weights; this may lead to sudden increases in blood pressure. It's better to use elastic bands for strength training. ■

Wavell Hodge, M.D., Geriatrics and Extended Care Line Manager



VA Hudson Valley Health Care System

www.hudsonvalley.va.gov
www.castlepoint.va.gov

Exercise impacts overall cardiovascular fitness and is as important as diet and medication in diabetes control.



Regular meditative practice leads to greater powers of concentration.

A place to relax and heal

Garden labyrinth completed for VA Hudson Valley

With much planning and many hours of volunteerism, an innovative garden labyrinth, measuring 50 feet in diameter, has a new home behind one of VA's Long Term Care Buildings in Montrose, N.Y.

It was in December 2007 that this cylindrical undertaking was suggested by Eagle Scout candidate Jamie McCulloch, who approached Julia Anderson, Chief of Recreation Therapy, about his innovative project. His concept of a garden labyrinth was a new one for VA, but has profound ancient ties to health and medicine. It would involve many contributors to see his plan through, as he ended up needing 10 cubic yards of stone dust (donated by Dakota

Masonry), 1,400 bricks (donated by the town of Peekskill) and more than 500 hours of labor.

Garden labyrinths have a single meandering path, which ends in an inner circle. As the labyrinth winds through, it becomes a mirror for where we are in our lives; it touches our sorrows and releases our joys. Thus, it is not a maze with blind alleys, dead ends and puzzles. People are encouraged to walk with an open mind and heart as there are stones Jamie placed at specific spots along the path that read "HOPE," "LOVE," "PEACE," "CALM," "LISTEN" and, at the center, "RELEASE."

Research conducted by Herbert Benson, M.D., at Harvard Medical School's Mind/Body Medical

Institute has found that focused walking meditations are highly efficient at reducing anxiety and eliciting what Dr. Benson calls the "relaxation response." This effect has significant long-term health benefits, including lower blood pressure and breathing rates, reduced incidence of chronic pain, decreased insomnia and improved fertility.

Regular meditative practice leads to greater powers of concentration and a sense of control and efficiency in one's life. Labyrinth walking is among the simplest forms, and the demonstrated health benefits have led hundreds of hospitals, health care facilities and spas to introduce them in recent years. ■

A national resource: The War Related Illness and Injury Study Center

The War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) is a National VA program devoted to post-deployment care of Veterans through clinical evaluation, research, education and risk communication. Three WRIISCs are located at VA Medical Centers in East Orange, N.J.; Washington, D.C. and Palo Alto, Calif.

In 2010, the WRIISC received funding from VA's Employee Education System to develop and

host a conference series, "Caring for Veterans with Post-Deployment Health Concerns: Past, Present, and Future," for VA primary care physicians, social workers, mental health specialists and environmental coordinators and clinicians from across the country. The series included information about Medically Unexplained Symptoms, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, Research, Complementary Alternative Medicine, Military Culture, Environmental Exposure, Risk Communication and general information about the WRIISC. Participants developed new skills and gained knowledge that they will use in working with our nation's heroes.

Log on to learn more

To learn how the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) is meeting Veterans' needs, log on to WRIISC's home page at www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/videos/AVeteransMissionForBetterHealth.asp or their YouTube page at www.youtube.com/user/VeteransHealthAdmin#p/a/u/0/HI25lr8xo04.

The WRIISCs want to help as many Veterans as possible. For more information about the WRIISC program, visit their website at www.warrelatedillness.va.gov or call 1-800-248-8005. ■

VA NJ Health Care System

www.eastorange.va.gov
www.lyons.va.gov

Trenton clinic relocates

VA New Jersey Health Care System is proud to announce the relocation of the Trenton Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) to the University Plaza I complex located at 3635 Quakerbridge Road in Hamilton, N.J.

In addition to primary care and mental health services, the clinic now offers social work, nutrition, wellness, telehealth, women's health and medication management services. Clinic hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The CBOC is located along New Jersey Transit bus route 609, and the new phone number is (609) 570-6600. ■



Make a difference— Volunteer

The VA Voluntary Service Program at the VA New Jersey Health Care System has a variety of volunteer activities just for you. Weekday, evening or weekend opportunities are available. The program fulfills a national commitment to care for and enhance the lives of America's Veterans.

Our devoted volunteers and corporate participants offer ongoing support to brighten the lives of the men and women who fought so bravely to preserve our freedom. Many of our volunteers bring their diverse backgrounds and unique skills to their volunteer assignments, while others bring a desire to learn and explore, always finding the experience beneficial.

You're encouraged to join our VA Voluntary Service team and discover the satisfaction



Sign up today!

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer, contact Mary Beth Hynoski, Voluntary Service Program Manager at the Lyons Campus, at **(908) 604-5814** or Tyrone Steed, Voluntary Service Program Manager at the East Orange Campus, at **(973) 395-7258**.

you'll receive by "earning your stripes." Your participation makes a difference, and it's guaranteed that volunteering will be memorable and rewarding. ■

The VA Voluntary Service Program fulfills a national commitment to care for and enhance the lives of America's Veterans.

My HealthVet— Now better than ever

My HealthVet is VA's award-winning health website, which offers Veterans, active duty service members, their dependents and caregivers Internet access to VA health care information and services.

My HealthVet is a free, online personal health record that empowers Veterans to become informed partners in their health care. With My HealthVet, America's Veterans can access trusted, secure and current health and benefits information as well as record, track and store important health and military history information at their convenience. Those enrolled for care can refill their VA prescriptions and more.

Using My HealthVet is easy and it's for you. Take charge of your health and register today at www.myhealth.va.gov. ■





20 years after the storm

Research studies created to help treat Gulf War Veterans

This past August marked the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the Gulf War, launched with Operation Desert Shield and followed by Operation Desert Storm.

In the years since they returned from war, nearly a quarter of the 697,000 men and women who served in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm have experienced chronic symptoms such as fatigue, weakness, gastrointestinal problems, cognitive dysfunction, sleep disturbances, persistent headaches, skin rashes, respiratory conditions and mood changes. The symptoms are known collectively as “Gulf

War Veterans’ illnesses.”

A report by the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Gulf War and Health, “Health Effects of Serving in the Gulf War,” notes that chronic multi-symptom illnesses affect an estimated 250,000 Gulf War Veterans. Given the findings, VA is embarking on a national Gulf War Veterans’ illness research program to identify and adopt the most effective treatments for Veterans.

In July, VA announced it will fund three new research studies that focus on testing or developing new treatments for illnesses affecting Veterans who served in the Gulf War from 1990 to 1991.

For Gulf War Veterans, VA has recognized certain unexplained clusters of symptoms existing for six months or more as associated

with military service in the Gulf. The illnesses must have appeared during active duty in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations or by Dec. 31, 2011, and be at least 10 percent disabling. Illnesses include medically unexplained clusters of symptoms that have existed for six months or more, such as:

- chronic fatigue syndrome
- fibromyalgia
- irritable bowel syndrome
- any diagnosed or undiagnosed

illness that VA’s Secretary determines should be presumed to be associated with Gulf War service

Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness may include:

- abnormal weight loss
- cardiovascular signs or symptoms
- fatigue
- gastrointestinal signs or symptoms
- headache
- joint pain
- menstrual disorders
- muscle pain
- neurologic signs or symptoms
- neuropsychological signs or symptoms
- signs or symptoms involving the skin
- signs or symptoms involving the upper and lower respiratory system
- sleep disturbances

Infectious diseases

On March 18, 2010, VA published a proposed regulation that will establish nine specific infectious diseases as associated with military service in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War from 1990 to the present and in Afghanistan on

Northport VAMC

www.northport.va.gov

My HealtheVet— Now better than ever

My HealtheVet is VA's award-winning health website, which offers Veterans, active duty service members, their dependents and caregivers anywhere, anytime Internet access to VA health care information and services.

My HealtheVet is a free, online personal health record that empowers Veterans to become informed partners in their health care. With My HealtheVet,

America's Veterans can access trusted, secure and current health and benefits information as well as record, track and store important health and military history information at their convenience. Those enrolled for care can even refill their VA prescriptions and more.

Using My HealtheVet is easy and it's for YOU! Take charge of your health and register today at www.myhealth.va.gov. ■



“Like” us on Facebook

Northport VA Medical Center is now using the social media website Facebook. Our page will keep you up to date with all the events that are going on at our facility. It will also feature news, information and photography. Facebook is another tool we're using to connect more Long Island Veterans with the entitlements they earned by serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Check us out at www.facebook.com/NorthportVAMC. ■



Learn more about My HealtheVet

If you have any questions about My HealtheVet, contact Theresa Laberdee, R.N., Patient Education Coordinator, at (631) 261-4400, ext. 7773.

or after Sept. 19, 2001. The nine diseases are:

- brucellosis
- Campylobacter jejuni
- Coxiella burnetii (Q fever)
- malaria
- Mycobacterium tuberculosis
- nontyphoid Salmonella
- Shigella

- visceral leishmaniasis
- West Nile virus

A final regulation will be published after VA considers all the comments it received on the proposed regulation. Eligible Veterans may receive disability compensation for these diseases when the regulation becomes final. Veterans

may apply now, so VA can begin development of their claims.

If you know a Gulf War Veteran—or any U.S. Veteran—who hasn't availed himself or herself of VA care, encourage him or her to call Northport VA Medical Center at (631) 261-4400 or log on to www.northport.va.gov. ■



(l-r) Latanya Heyword, JJP VAMC Homeless Program Manager, and Rose Sheffield, a one-time homeless Veteran and VA Compensated Work Therapy program graduate—who holds a full-time job as a nursing assistant in the Bronx—talk with Julie Irwin, VISN 3 Homeless Care Line Manager, about the challenges and rewards of a demanding schedule.

Ending Veteran homelessness

Across the country, an estimated 107,000 Veterans are homeless on any given night. Twice as many experience homelessness during the course of a year. Poverty, lack of support and substandard housing put many Veterans at risk for homelessness. In 2009, President Obama pledged to “provide new help for homeless Veterans, because those heroes have a home—it’s the country they served, the United States of America. And until we reach a day when not a single Veteran sleeps on our nation’s streets, our work remains unfinished.” Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki subsequently unveiled a

five-year plan to end homelessness among Veterans.

An array of services

VISN 3 works toward this goal with various programs that help homeless Veterans live more independently. Medical centers offer outreach, clinical assessment, case management and referral for medical, mental health and substance abuse treatment. Homeless Veterans may also choose residential rehabilitation treatment, vocational rehabilitation and employment assistance, transitional housing through the Grant and Per Diem Program and supported permanent housing

through the HUD-VASH program. VA follows a “no wrong door” policy, allowing Veterans access to these services from any other clinic or program.

VISN 3 partners with health and human service community providers to use housing vouchers and run programs for homeless women Veterans. A Safe Haven demonstration program is in development to get street homeless Veterans into housing immediately. Through the new Veterans Justice Outreach initiative, VISN 3 interfaces with police, courts and jails to provide treatment alternatives. ■

Help is here

Homeless Veterans and friends and family of homeless Veterans can contact their nearest VA medical center for assistance or call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at **1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838)**.

Telehealth: 21st century Veterans' care

All medical centers within VISN 3 have telehealth programs that provide increased access to care for Veterans in and close to their homes through the use of telehealth technology. In-home messaging devices connect Veterans with chronic health conditions to providers in the medical centers, and videoconferencing units connect Veterans in community-based outpatient clinics to main medical center campuses. Additionally, special cameras allow screening for diabetic retinopathy to occur at the time of a Veteran's primary care visit.

Everyday monitoring

Veterans with chronic health conditions benefit from using in-home messaging devices which connect to VA providers over regular telephone landlines. Veterans transmit information about their health status daily and receive important education about their condition. Various devices offer unique features, and blood pressure cuffs, blood glucose meters and scales may be connected to meet the Veterans' needs.

"This is another one of VA's great programs," says Navy Veteran and Northport VAMC telehealth user Bill Conrad. "It is

easy to use and provides essential daily feedback. I have been recommending it to every Veteran I meet who has diabetes." If you have a chronic health condition, talk with your primary care physician about the telehealth program.

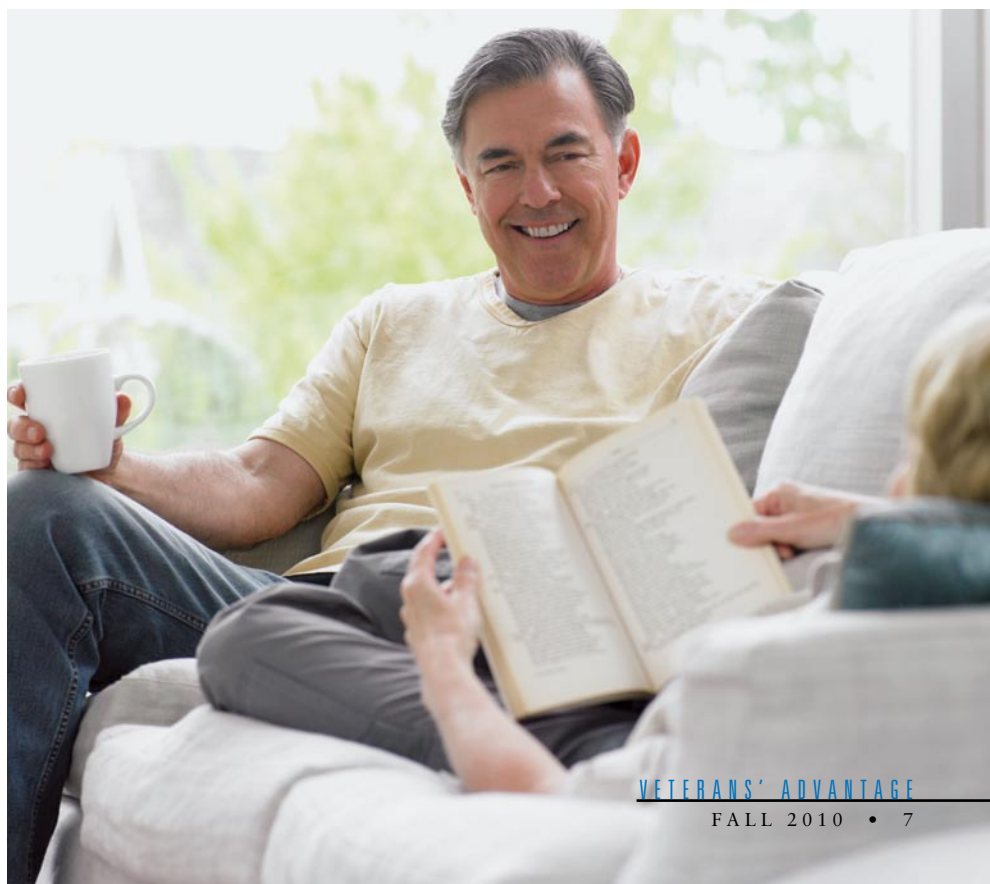
Specialized eye care

Through the use of teleretinal imaging cameras, Veterans may have pictures taken of their retina when visiting their primary care provider in the community-based outpatient clinics. This allows valuable screening for retinopathy due to diabetes and other condi-

tions. If retinopathy is suspected, the Veteran is referred to an eye clinic for further evaluation.

Convenient counseling

Veterans in community-based outpatient clinics receive mental health counseling by connecting to providers in main medical center campuses in New Jersey and the Hudson Valley through videoconferencing units. Veterans can remain close to home where they can fulfill family, work and educational commitments while getting the ongoing counseling they need. ■





http://www.nynj.va.gov

NY/NJ Veterans Integrated Service Network 3
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Bronx, NY 10468

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Where YOU CAN FIND US—ANYTIME

Bronx

Medical Center:

130 West Kingsbridge Road
Bronx, NY 10468
(718) 584-9000

Community Clinics:

23 South Broadway
White Plains, NY 10601
(914) 421-1951

124 New Main Street
Yonkers, NY 10701
(914) 375-8055

41-03 Queens Boulevard
Sunnyside, NY 11104
(718) 741-4800

VA New York Harbor Health Care System

Medical Centers:

Brooklyn Campus
800 Poly Place
Brooklyn, NY 11209
(718) 836-6600

New York Campus
423 East 23rd Street
New York, NY 10010
(212) 686-7500

VA Primary and Extended
Care Center
179th Street & Linden Boulevard
St. Albans, NY 11425
(718) 526-1000

Community Clinics:

40 Flatbush Extension—8th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 439-4300

1150 South Avenue
3rd Floor—Suite 301
Staten Island, NY 10314
(718) 761-2973

55 West 125th Street—11th Floor
New York, NY 10027
(646) 273-8125

VA New Jersey Health Care System

Medical Centers:

East Orange Campus
385 Tremont Avenue
East Orange, NJ 07018-1095
(973) 676-1000

Lyons Campus
151 Knollcroft Road
Lyons, NJ 07939
(908) 647-0180

Community Clinics:

970 Route 70
Brick, NJ 08724
(732) 206-8900

654 East Jersey Street—Suite 2A
Elizabeth, NJ 07206
(908) 994-0120

University Office Plaza I
3635 Quakerbridge Road
Hamilton, NJ 08619
(609) 570-6600

385 Prospect Avenue
Hackensack, NJ 07601
(201) 487-1390

115 Christopher Columbus Drive
Jersey City, NJ 07302
(201) 435-3055

317 George Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(732) 729-0646

340 West Hanover Avenue
Morristown, NJ 07960
(973) 539-9791
(973) 539-9794

20 Washington Place
Newark, NJ 07102
(973) 645-1441

Patterson Army Health Clinic
Stephenson Avenue—Building 1075
Fort Monmouth, NJ 07703
(732) 532-4500

275 Getty Avenue
Paterson, NJ 07503
(973) 247-1666

VA Hudson Valley Health Care System

Medical Centers:

Montrose Campus
Route 9A/P.O. Box 100
Montrose, NY 10548-0100
(914) 737-4400

Castle Point Campus
Castle Point, NY 12511
(845) 831-2000

Community Clinics:
Jefferson Professional Plaza
60 Jefferson Street
Unit 3
Monticello, NY 12701
(845) 791-4936

150 Pike Street
Port Jervis, NY 12771
(845) 856-5396

345 North Main Street
Upper level
New City, NY 10956
(845) 634-8942

30 Hatfield Lane—
Suite 204
Goshen, NY 10924
(845) 294-6927

488 Freedom Plains Road
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
(845) 452-5151

1875 Route 6
Provident Savings Bank—
2nd Floor
Carmel, NY 10512
(845) 228-5291

2881 Church Street
Route 199
Pine Plains, NY 12567
(518) 398-9240

55 Sturgis Road
Monticello, NY 12701
(845) 791-4936

Northport (Long Island)

Medical Center:

79 Middleville Road
Northport, NY 11768
(631) 261-4400

Community Clinics:
4 Phyllis Drive
Patchogue, NY 11772
(631) 758-4419

1425 Old Country Road
Plainview, NY 11803
(516) 694-6008

Westhampton Air Base
(by appointment only)
150 Old Riverhead Road
Westhampton, NY 11978
(631) 898-0599