

*Olmsted County
Veteran Services
Veterans Advocate Newsletter
July 2020*

Changes in Olmsted County Veteran Services!

The Veteran Services Office will only meet face-to-face with veterans if they have a scheduled appointment. We are currently not accepting walk-ins with clients until further notice. Our objective is to offer as many services as possible without face-to-face contact. We will do our best to schedule phone appointments as needed or to address needs through the mail, via email, or fax. Many of the stakeholders we are working with are also in the process of implementing similar practices. We are working together to find the best possible solutions that effectively comply with efforts while also minimizing the impact on our veterans and their families.

Office Phone: 507-328-6355

Office Fax: 507-328-7950

Emails:

Admin: Karen Applen, applen.karen@co.olmsted.mn.us

Supervisor and Service Officer: Nathan Pike, pike.nathan@co.olmsted.mn.us

Service Officer: Jennifer Shumaker, shumaker.jennifer@co.olmsted.mn.us

Service Officer: Ashley Laganiere, laganiere.ashley@co.olmsted.mn.us



MACVSO WISHES MINNESOTA A VERY

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

Proudly Serving Minnesota Veterans
and Families for 75 years!



Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers

We can safely say, this has been a unique year. While Minnesotans across the state have all experienced COVID in different ways, one thing we share is the fact that *all* of our plans have been disrupted over the last three-plus months. However, while much has changed, one thing has remained; our commitment to honor and remember. We have not let our current circumstances keep us from honoring those who served throughout history, including those who are still serving. The 4th of July is truly America's Birthday. County Veterans Service Officers think of America as our older relative. Our Association, while not 243 years old... is still immensely proud to reflect on a legacy that stretches back 75 years. Although the services, programs, and processes to help Veterans have evolved over the decades, the founding principles remain the same; they are written into law! Every day CVSOs, like us, connect with Veterans and families. We will never forget. We are eternally grateful, and together we are united.



Message from Commissioner Larry Herke



A Reminder to Minnesota Veterans

If you're feeling ill and have these symptoms:



100° F Fever



Cough



Shortness of breath

The VA Health Care System asks that you call **FIRST**.

Minneapolis: 612-467-1100

Fargo: 701-239-3700, extension 2319

St. Cloud: 320-252-1670 or 800-247-1739

Sioux Falls: 605-336-3230 or 605-336-5001

The medical staff will advise you on next steps based on your symptoms.

In a medical emergency, call 911.

STAY SAFE MN

[MN.gov/covid19](https://mn.gov/covid19)





My VA Primary Care Team: Rochester Clinic

WHAT TO DO....

	If you have or need...	You should...
URGENT EMERGENCY	Any serious medical emergency Possible Stroke Chest Pain Extreme Shortness of Breath	1 Call 911 or go to the nearest ER immediately a. Call the Veteran Crisis Line at 800.273.8255 ; available 24/7 to talk with someone if you're thinking of harming yourself or someone else 2 Within 72 hours : Notify the VA of any Non-VA ER care/hospital admissions by calling 612.467.2019 3 Fax your Non-VA ER visit documentation to the number given to you by the Non-VA care staff 4 Schedule a follow-up appointment with your primary Care Team as soon as possible.
	Thoughts of harming yourself and/or others. You can always go to the Minneapolis ER, but in an emergency, get help fast!	
NON-EMERGENCY NON-URGENT	Any non-emergent or non-urgent medical issues or concerns: Cough or Congestion Back Pain Problems with urination	Call 612-467-1100 , option # 3. After hours call the nurse line at 866.687.7382 Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
	Pharmacy Needs: Medication refills or questions Diabetic supplies (syringes, lancets, and test strips only) Glucometers are issued by your Primary Care team only.	Call the Pharmacy Refill Line at: 855.560.1721 Have your full social security number and prescription numbers ready. To speak with pharmacy staff call: 612.467.2090 ext # 3
	Problems with your Glucometer	Call Accu-Chek Customer Care @ 800.858.8072
	Secure Messaging Is Used to: Alert your team to any non-urgent questions Update on health conditions Refill medications See your appointments Access medical records and lab results	Go to www.myhealth.va.gov Click the button: Send a message to your provider!
ROUTINE	Still need an appointment with your Primary Care Team? Need an appointment in Minneapolis?	Call the Appointment Call Center at 612.467.1100
PHONE NUMBERS/ ADDRESSES	Veteran Crisis Line: 800.273.8255	Transfer Primary Care to different VA: 612-467-1991
	Triage Line: 612-467-1100 option 3	Minneapolis billing office: 1-866-347-2352
	After hours nurse line: 866.687.7382	Outstanding bill from outside provider: 1-877-881-7618
	Pharmacy Refills: 855.561.1721	Dental Billing: 1-888-795-0773
	Pharmacy Staff Questions: 612.467.2090 ext #3	Tri-West Billing: 1-866-606-8198
	Appointment Call Center: 612.467.1100	Travel or Ambulance Question: 612-467-1396
	Local Appointment Call Center: 507-252-0885	Prior Authorization for Community Care: 612-467-6565
Rochester VA: 3551 Commercial Dr SW Suite 400, Rochester, MN 55902		
Minneapolis VA: 1 Veterans Dr, Minneapolis, MN 55417		

Prepare for a visit: Everyone entering our facilities is screened, and visitors are limited. Face coverings are mandatory: we encourage you to bring your own, or you can use one we provide. Please contact us first before going to any of our locations. For some needs, you may be able to get care at home by phone or video.

FROM VA ROCHESTER CBOC

Your safety and the safety of our employees is our top priority during this COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic.

PLEASE READ

- 1. IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION AND DO NOT NEED TO BE SEEN URGENTLY, PLEASE RETURN HOME AND CALL THE CLINIC AT 507-252-0885. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, please call 911.**
- 2. We do NOT TEST FOR COVID-19 at this clinic, if you have concerning symptoms, return home and call 612-467-1100 option #3 to speak with an RN.**
- 3. Routine appointments are on hold. Our team will contact you with options, including-phone, video to home, or rescheduling of your appointment. You may have one care attendant assist if medically necessary and we direct you to keep your in-clinic appointment. (No visitors under the age of 18 are allowed.)**
- 4. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, please call the Veteran Crisis Line at 800-273-8255. The Mental Health team will be available in the clinic if you present with a crisis.**
- 5. Please call the pharmacy for medication refills at 855-561-1721 or to speak with a Pharmacist call 612-467-2090.**

Prepare for a visit: Everyone entering our facilities is screened, and visitors are limited. Face coverings are mandatory: we encourage you to bring your own, or you can use one we provide. Please contact us first before going to any of our locations. For some needs, you may be able to get care at home by phone or video.

Safe Mental Health Care During the COVID-19 Outbreak

MINNEAPOLIS, MN Now more than ever, the Minneapolis VA Health Care System (MVAHCS) is committed to providing high-quality mental health care while keeping Veterans safe from exposure to the coronavirus. To help reduce the risk of infection at the facility, MVAHCS asks that Veterans use VA's online resources for routine or non-urgent mental health care and questions. This will help protect Veterans from contracting COVID-19 while enabling providers at MVAHCS to focus on care for Veterans with the most acute needs.

"Due to COVID-19 precautionary measures, and out of concern for our local Veterans, we are honoring current physical distancing guidelines," said Patrick Kelly, the Director at MVAHCS. "Through VA's virtual care tools, we are able to leverage available technology to make sure that our patients and staff are as safe as possible during this time."

VA offers Veterans a variety of at-home resources, including the following:

Veterans Crisis Line – Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) is available 24/7 by phone, 1-800-273-8255, Press 1. Chat options are available online at veteranscrisisline.net and by Text 838255. Support for deaf and hard of hearing 1-800-799-4889. VCL serves all Veterans, All Service members, National Guard and Reserve, as well as their family and friends.

Telephone or Video Appointments – Veterans should maintain their existing mental health appointments — and may receive care at home — using VA Video Connect on their computers, smartphones, or tablets. To set up telephone or video appointments, Veterans can send their health care provider a secure message on My HealtheVet by visiting myhealth.va.gov. Veterans can learn more about VA Video Connect at mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect.

Prescription Refills and Safety – Veterans should continue taking all medications as prescribed and talk to their mental health provider if they have any concerns. Veterans may request prescription refills and order shipments of medications to their homes using My HealtheVet, the Rx Refill mobile app, which can be downloaded at mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill, or calling the Prescription Refill Line at 1-855-560-1721. You will need to have your Social Security and prescription numbers ready for the Prescription Refill Line. Make sure you refill your prescriptions at least 14 days before they are due. For questions, please contact the Minneapolis VA Pharmacy Call Center at 612-467-2090. VA's [Safe Home Environment handout](#) provides information on safely storing medications in the home.

Mental Health Information and Resources – VA provides information on ways for Veterans and their families to maintain and enhance their mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 outbreak. Information about managing stress and anxiety, as well as mental health resources, are available at www.mentalhealth.va.gov/coronavirus/resources.

Text Message Reminders – Veterans can use Annie's Coronavirus Precautions protocol to send automated text messages with information about COVID-19. This application helps Veterans monitor their symptoms and can assist those who need to contact their VA facility for care. Veterans may enroll in the app at mobile.va.gov/annie.

VA Health Chat - Veterans who receive care from the Minneapolis VA Health Care System can access VA care from home through the VA Health Chat app. Use VA Health Chat to receive medical advice, refill VA prescriptions, send non-urgent messages to your care team, and more through online chat on your computer, mobile device, or tablet. Learn more: [VA Health Chat app](#)

For more information on ways for Veterans to maintain and enhance their mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 outbreak, visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov/coronavirus.

Contact:
Brad Doboszinski
Public Affairs, Minneapolis VA Health Care System
651-467-3012
brad.doboszinski@va.gov



Women Veteran Support Group

SUMMER KICK OFF!

**TUESDAY NIGHTS
JUNE 2ND – JULY 28TH
5:30-7PM**

Female veterans are unique and exclusive. This women's group will offer an opportunity to develop friendships, share about your military experiences, and work on skills for healthy lives and relationships. Come and join us as we meet outside in local parks! Bring a friend, everyone is welcome!

**Alone we can do so little;
TOGETHER we can do so much
– Helen Keller**

**Build
Relationships**

**Learn New
Strategies**

**Participate in fun
activities!**

Guest Speakers

Please Join US!

ASHLEY HALL
Lutheran Social Service
CORE Case Manager

507-327-5283

Ashley.hall@lssmn.org

Call or Text!



PTSD Support Group

SEMCIL, and Olmsted County Veteran Services is offering a support group for Veterans that have been diagnosed with PTSD, or those who have signs and symptoms of PTSD, and their family members. Sometimes the most painful injuries aren't physical. Whether it's PTSD, TBI, combat stress, or any other mental health condition, we're here to help you get through it. The group will be facilitated by Jennifer Shumaker, Veteran and Olmsted County Veterans Service Officer.

CANCELLED

Thursday, July 30th

630pm-800pm

VFW

2775 43rd Street NW

Rochester, MN 55901

Jennifer Shumaker

(507) 328-6324

shumaker.jennifer@co.olmsted.mn.us

LOCAL MEETINGS

Some organizations have resumed meetings. Call each one respectively for more information.

Rochester American Legion Post 92

(507)282-1322
915 21st Ave SE
Rochester, MN 55904
3rd Tuesday of each month
7pm
Auxiliary Unit 92
3rd Tuesday of each month
5:30pm
Sons of the American Legion
2nd Thursday of each month
6PM
Legion Riders
3rd Thursday of each month
7pm

Rochester VFW Post Meeting

(507) 289-9818
2775 43rd St. NW
Rochester, MN 55901
2nd Tuesday of each Month VFW Post 1215
7pm
Marine Corps League
2nd Tuesday of each month
7pm

Byron American Legion Post 119

(507) 775-6871
505 Frontage Road NW, Byron, MN
3rd Monday of the month
7pm

Vietnam Veterans of America

(507) 990-1347
Meets 4th Monday each month
at 7:00pm,
Vietnam Veterans Spouse Support Group
Meets 4th Monday each month
At 7:00pm
Thor Detachment 606 Marine Corp League Meeting
4th Tuesday of the month, 7pm
MOPH
3rd Thursday of the month 6pm
VFW Post 1215
2775 43rd St NW, Rochester, MN 55901

Stewartville American Legion Post 164

(507) 533-9281
1100 2nd Ave NW, Stewartville
Meeting 3rd Monday each month, 7:30pm

Stewartville VFW Post 8980

(507) 533-9281
1100 2nd Ave NW, Stewartville
Meeting 1st Monday each month, 7pm

DAV Meeting

(507) 773-5055
1652 Hwy 52 N, Rochester, MN 55901
2nd Monday, of each Month Rochester's Elks Lodge
5:30pm dinner, meeting at 6:00pm

Korean Veterans

Every Monday at Grandmas Kitchen
1514 N Broadway, Rochester, MN 55906
(Silver lake plaza)
8 AM

Kasson American Legion Post 333

(507) 634-4353
212 West Main Street , Kasson, MN 55944
Third Thursday of the month, 8pm

Chatfield VFW Post 6913

(507) 867-3144
9- 2nd St SW, Chatfield, MN
2nd Monday of the month 7:00pm

Eyota American Legion Post 551

(507) 545-2688
2nd Monday each month 6:30pm
11 Madison Ave NW
Eyota, MN 55934
Legion Riders
4th Wednesday each month 7:30pm

Pine Island American Legion Post 184

(507)356-8991
2nd Monday of the month 7PM
108 1st Ave SE
Pine Island, MN

Oronoco VFW Post 9647

(507) 367-4635
First Monday of each month 7pm
Auxiliary meeting same time, separate meeting
5 MN Avenue S
Oronoco, MN 55960

Dodge Center American Legion Post 384

(507) 633-6420
401 Highway St W
Dodge Center, MN 55927
2nd Monday each month 7pm

“To promote the interests and welfare of veterans, their dependents and survivors and to enhance their quality of life through counseling, claims assistance, education, advocacy and special projects.”

Veteran Services
2100 Campus Drive
SE, Suite 200
Rochester, MN 55904

