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# VETERANS ADVOCATE

**October 2016**

## In the News



**VA Awards \$6.8 Billion for Medical Disability Examinations** - The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced the awarding of 12 contracts between 5 firms totaling \$6.8 billion to improve the Medical Disability Examination process (Compensation and Pension or Comp and Pen Examinations) for Veterans. The awards are intended to reduce Veterans' wait times for examinations for service-connected benefits, thereby providing faster claims decisions in a more efficient and streamlined way. For the full article go to: <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2821>

**Opiate addiction's 'heartbreaking toll' on veterans is focus of discussions** - Veterans will be a focus of discussion about the opiate addiction epidemic in the United States, which has led to the deaths of tens of thousands in recent years. Veterans Affairs Secretary, Robert McDonald will discuss the VA's efforts to assist veterans that are addicted to opiates. The VA is emphasizing on reducing reliance of pain medication, and teaching long term strategies for coping with and managing your pain. **Work with your primary care provider to manage your chronic pain, or contact the Chronic Pain intake line at: (612) 467-1921**



# Honor. Valor. Legacy.

Celebrate the virtues and values we as a Nation hold dear: duty, honor, service, humility, and heroism.

**October 4-8, 2016**

**US Bank Stadium  
401 Chicago Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN**

The Medal of Honor is America's highest military award for valor in combat.  
Minneapolis-St. Paul will host the 2016 Medal of Honor Convention.

Accommodations: Hyatt Regency Minneapolis, make a reservation at:  
<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/MedalofHonor2016> or call 888-421-1442 OR  
Hotel Ivy Minneapolis <http://www.thehotelivy.com> or call 612-353-3513

For questions, or more information about the event, call: 763-432-7384

# PRESCRIPTIONS

**Requesting your refills by mail, AudioCare, or MyHealthVet will help reduce the waiting times at the pharmacy.**

The Minneapolis Health Care System Pharmacy uses AudioCare™ the automated communications system to order refills at your convenience 24 hours a day seven days a week. Please call **1-855-560-1721** using a touchtone telephone to access the AudioCare™ system. Please have your social security number and prescription number available in order to follow the voice prompts. Plan on ordering your refills 3-4 weeks in advance to ensure your medication arrives on your desired date.

## Prescriptions from non-VA doctors

If you are a veteran who receives health care from a doctor/provider outside of the VA system, you may be eligible to have them filled at a VA pharmacy. You will need to provide us with information about the prescription. In general, you will have to provide:

A referral and request for medication fill from the other facility physician, to the VA

A copy of the original prescription (s)

A copy of the notes from the appointment when your non-VA doctor/provider prescribed the medication

A copy of the current lab tests and/or procedures related to the requested prescription

All information can be faxed to your Primary Care Provider at 612-467-1913 for your provider's approval of these medications. If your provider is in agreement with the new/changes in medications, your provider will write for them to be filled at the VA pharmacy.

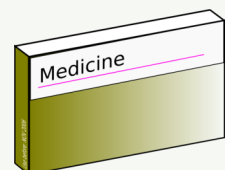
This process may take 2-3 weeks to be completed and medication filled.

You can also call the pharmacy direct at: (612) 725-2090.

You can also go on <https://www.myhealth.va.gov>

Set up an account, and re-order prescriptions with the click of a button.

If you need further assistance, do not hesitate to contact our office: 507-328-6355



**Olmsted County Veteran's Services**

# RED CARPET ORIENTATION



Would you like to learn how to navigate the VA system?

Come join us for an informational meeting!

Some of the topics that will be covered:

Co-managed care

Mental health

Women's health

Every 3rd Thursday of the month in room 117, at 2:00pm

This month, Thursday, October 20th, 2016

At the Rochester VA Clinic, 3900 55th Street NW

Please call County Veteran Services to make an

appointment at 507-328-6355

# Flu Shot Clinic

**The Rochester VA Clinic, 3900 55th Street NW, Rochester, MN will host a walk-in flu shot clinics on Tuesday, October 25, Wednesday, October 26, and Thursday, October 27.**



**The seasonal flu shot is a yearly vaccine administered to protect against the flu, or influenza. In the United States, flu shots are recommended for everyone ages 6 months and older, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.**



# FEMALE VETERANS WELLNESS & PAMPERING RETREAT



## OCTOBER 14-16, 2016

*We appreciate the women who have served our country! Join us to relax, reflect, rejuvenate and connect with other female Veterans. Get the special treatment you deserve. Enjoy the beauty of the north woods, learn new ways to unwind and cope with stress and how to enhance your self-care! You will check in Friday between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm. Meals are included. Cost is \$50.00 for the weekend. \*Massages are offered for an additional \$30.00 per ½ hour and must be booked and paid for in advance.*

PAMPER yourself

**To register:** Fill out the registration on the back and return it with your payment to Camp Bliss – 6150 Camp Fish Road  
PO Box 879 - Walker MN, 56484 or [office@campbliss.org](mailto:office@campbliss.org)



For more information about Camp Bliss please go to our website:  
[www.campbliss.org](http://www.campbliss.org)  
Camp Bliss is located at: 6150 Camp Fish Road, Walker, MN 56484  
218.547.4004 - [office@campbliss.org](mailto:office@campbliss.org)



### COME UP NORTH AND FIND YOUR BLISS!

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE

To assist income eligible clients with their heating and/or electric costs. Service provided includes: monetary grant paid directly to clients heating and or electric accounts.

**Eligibility:** Income eligible client who completes application. **Who:** Any home owner or renter with a heating and or electric bill, living in Goodhue, Olmsted, Rice, or Wabasha counties.

**Where:** Applications can be sent out via mail or can be download from this website.

<http://threeriverscap.org/energy/energy-assistance>

**2016-2017 application period is October 1, 2016 to May 31, 2017**

### Energy Information:

A great source for energy information is the Minnesota Department of Commerce-Energy website: <http://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>

Some of the topics on the web site include: Clean Energy, Conservation Improvement Programs, Energy Projects and Rates, Efficiency, and Financial Assistance. The Information Resources page includes tips about how to save energy in your home, frequently asked questions on energy-related topics, and step-by-step guides to help you reduce the energy use in your home.

Funding for this program provided by Federal Low Income Home and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Funds.

The Minnesota Energy Assistance Program uses the past 3 months of household income prior to signing the application and/or last year's federal tax forms for self-employment income for making eligibility determination.

- *Based on 50% of State Median Income or 110% of Federal Poverty, whichever is greater.*



Household Size	Annual	3-month
1	\$24,541	\$6,135
2	\$32,092	\$8,023
3	\$39,643	\$9,910
4	\$47,194	\$11,798
5	\$54,745	\$13,686
6	\$62,296	\$15,574
7	\$63,712	\$15,928
8	\$65,128	\$16,282
9	\$66,544	\$16,636
10	\$67,959	\$16,989
11	\$69,375	\$17,343
12	\$70,791	\$17,697





## **PTSD Support Group for Veterans, Friends, and Family Members**

SEMCIL's Veteran Services Program 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. Maybe you need to talk or just be in the company of your extended Veteran family. The support group will be a place for Veterans to share, heal and talk about their experiences in dealing with PTSD. We will be there for each other.

We are our brothers and sisters keepers because the oath we took to never leave a fallen comrade has no expiration date. For many of us, combat veterans, there are daily reminders of deaths of brothers and sisters.

The group will be facilitated by Jennifer Shumaker, Veteran

### **Upcoming meetings:**

**Thursday, October 27, 2016**

**Thursday, NOVEMBER 17th, 2016**

**Thursday, DECEMBER 29, 2016**

**6:30pm-8:30 p.m.**

**American Legion  
315 1st Ave NW,  
Rochester, MN, 55901**



# VA RETAIL IMMUNIZATION CARE COORDINATION PROGRAM

## MORE OPTIONS, EASIER ACCESS, SEAMLESS RECORDS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is partnering with Walgreens to offer greater choices of time and location for VA enrolled patients to get their seasonal flu shot.

### JUST THE FACTS:

- VA enrolled patients can get their seasonal flu shot at any VA health care facility or Walgreens.<sup>1</sup>
- To get a seasonal flu shot at Walgreens, VA enrolled patients must tell their pharmacist that they receive care at a VA health care facility, show their VA ID and Photo ID card. To get a No-cost flu shot from Walgreens from August 15, 2016–March 31, 2017, enrolled VA patients must also use Group Code # 5933XBAYV.
- After vaccination at Walgreens, that information is sent safely and to the patient's VA health record—and within the established requirements of the eHealth Exchange.<sup>2</sup>
- The type of vaccine, date given, and who gave the vaccine will be part of the patient's health care record.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

To find the closest Walgreens store, visit [www.walgreens.com/findastore](http://www.walgreens.com/findastore). For questions or more information about the program, call 1-877-771-8537 or go to <http://go.usa.gov/3umba>.

<sup>1</sup>Vaccine subject to availability. State, age and health-related restrictions may apply. No-cost flu shots are available at Walgreens from August 15, 2016–March 31, 2017. Use Group Code: 5933XBAYV

<sup>2</sup>If your local pharmacy is not participating in the VA Retail Immunization Care Coordination Program, it may participate in the future as the program expands. References to Walgreens or other non-VA pharmacies do not constitute or imply VA endorsement of these companies, their services or products.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**Walgreens**  
AT THE CORNER OF **HAPPY & HEALTHY**<sup>SM</sup>

## FLU SHOTS NOW AVAILABLE AT ANY WALGREENS



It's easy to get your flu shot from an expertly trained pharmacist at your local Walgreens.<sup>1</sup> You don't need an appointment. In partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Walgreens<sup>SM</sup> will even send an electronic record of your flu shot to your local VA health care facility.

You can always get a free flu shot at your local VA health care facility.<sup>2</sup> \*Stop by any Walgreens for your flu shot today. No-cost flu shots for VA enrolled patients are available at Walgreens from August 15, 2016–March 31, 2017. Bring in this card, your VA ID, and another form of ID to get your flu shot. Use group code 5933XBAYV.

To find the closest Walgreens store, visit [www.walgreens.com/findstore](http://www.walgreens.com/findstore). For questions or more information about the program, call 1-877-771-8537 or go to <http://go.usa.gov/3umba>.

<sup>1</sup> Vaccine subject to availability. State, age and health-related restrictions may apply. No-cost flu shots are available at Walgreens from August 15, 2016–March 31, 2017. Use Group Code: 5933XBAYV

<sup>2</sup> If your local pharmacy is not participating in the VA Retail Immunization Care Coordination Program, it may participate in the future as the program expands. References to Walgreens or other non-VA pharmacies do not constitute or imply VA endorsement of these companies, their services, or products.



# No-Cost Flu Shots for VA Enrolled Patients

If you're enrolled in the VA Health Care System, getting your flu shot at Walgreens or Duane Reade is easy:\*



1. Just fill out the flu form below
2. Bring the completed form, your VA ID card and a photo ID to your neighborhood Walgreens or Duane Reade location
3. Walgreens or Duane Reade will automatically update your VA Electronic Health Record in the VA Health Care System

Nearby locations | Walk in anytime

A wellness benefit brought to you by Walgreens and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

Information below must be completed prior to receiving your flu shot.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Home ZIP code: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan ID IMZ Recipient # (Social Security Number): \_\_\_\_\_

Group #: 5933XBAYV

Walgreens pharmacist:

- Only veterans enrolled in the VA Health Care System are eligible. Family members and TRICARE members are NOT eligible.
- Verify information by checking VA ID card and a photo ID.
- Use the Social Security Number in the Recipient # field.

To find a location near you, call 800-WALGREENS (800-925-4733) or visit [Walgreens.com/FindAStore](http://Walgreens.com/FindAStore)

**Walgreens** | **DUANE reade**

For questions or more information about the program, call 866-964-1812 or go to [www.eHealth.va.gov/immunization.asp](http://www.eHealth.va.gov/immunization.asp)



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**Walgreens**  
AT THE CORNER OF **HAPPY & HEALTHY**<sup>SM</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vaccine subject to availability. State-, age- and health-related restrictions may apply. This does not constitute an endorsement of Walgreens or Walgreens products.

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# Fall Fun



## **Fall Festival on the Farm-Red Barn Learning Farm**

27251 State Highway 30, Hayfield, MN 55940  
**Every Weekend from September 24th-October 30th**  
**Saturday 10am-4pm**  
**Sunday 12pm-5pm**

## **Barktoberfest, Bring your well mannered, vaccinated dogs!**

Eagles Club Rochester  
917 15th Ave SE, Rochester, MN 55904  
**Saturday, October 1**  
**12pm-3pm**

## **Harvest Fest at the YMCA**

709 1st Ave SW, Rochester, MN 55902  
**Saturday, October 8**  
**10am-1pm-Bring a picnic and join in the backyard**  
**1pm-3pm-Open Swim**

## **Fall Fest**

Peace Plaza  
Downtown Rochester  
**Saturday, October 15**  
**10am-2pm**

## **Dover Country Pumpkin Festival**

Dover City Park  
359 N Chatfield St, Dover, MN 55929  
**Saturday, October 15**  
**10am-2pm**

## **Harvest Moon Festival**

History Center of Olmsted County  
1195 West Circle Drive SW, Rochester, MN 55902  
**Thursday, October 20**  
**1pm-4pm**

## **Creatures of the Night**

Quarry Hill Nature Center  
701 Silver Creek Road NE, Rochester, MN 55906  
**Friday, October 21**  
**430pm-8pm**

## **Fright at the Farm**

47385 US 52 Blvd, Zumbrota, MN 55992  
**Friday, and Saturday Nights September 30th-October 29th**  
**7pm-11pm**  
**Thursdays, October 13, 20 ,27**  
**7pm-10pm**

## **Monster Bash Haunted House**

225 3rd Ave SW, Harmony, MN 55939  
**Thursdays and Fridays, October 20-28 7pm**  
**Saturday October 22 5pm**  
**Saturday, October 29, Sunday, October 23-30**  
**7pm**  
**Monday, October 31 7pm**





## **Over 2,400 military service members still eligible to claim 2012 military tax credit**

The Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone for service in 2012 will expire for most qualifying service members on October 15, 2016. The Minnesota Department of Revenue is reminding Minnesota service members to take advantage of the refundable tax credit before it expires. The 2012 credit is \$120 per month, or partial month served.

The department recently sent letters explaining how to claim the credit to over 2,400 service members who may qualify. Service members have already claimed more than \$2.4 million in refunds for the 2012 credit, with an average refund of \$600.

“The expiring credit could be worth hundreds of dollars to Minnesota service members and their families, and we want to remind them to claim the credit before the mid-October deadline,” said Revenue Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly.

### To qualify for the credit, service members must have:

- served in a combat zone or qualified hazardous-duty area anytime on or after January 1, 2012,
- been a Minnesota resident during the time of service, and
- received combat pay which is exempt from federal and Minnesota income tax.

### To receive the credit, service members must:

file Form M99, Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone, and

- attach corresponding Form DD-214 for each period of qualifying service.
  - If still on active duty, attach Leave and Earnings statements for each month of qualifying service.



## Other upcoming local events

### **Rochester American Legion Post 92**

**3rd Tuesday of each month**

**315 First Ave NW**

**Rochester, MN 55901**

**7pm**

### **Legion Riders**

**2nd Thursday of each month**

**7pm**

**Forty et eight at the American Legion**

**2nd Tuesday of each month**

**7pm**

### **Rochester VFW Post Meeting**

**2nd Tuesday of each Month VFW Post 1215**

**16 6th Street SW, Rochester, MN 55902**

**7pm**

### **Byron American Legion Post 119**

**1st Monday of the month**

**8pm**

**505 Frontage Road NW, Byron, MN**

### **Vietnam Veterans of America**

**Meets 4th Monday each month**

**at 7:00pm, at the Rochester American Legion**

**315 First Ave NW**

**Rochester, MN 55901**

### **MOPH**

**3rd Thursday of the month 6pm**

**VFW Post 1215**

**16 6th St SW**

### **DAV Meeting**

**2nd Monday, of each Month Rochester's Elks Lodge**

**1652 Hwy 52 N, Rochester, MN 55901**

**5:30pm dinner, meeting at 6:00pm**

### **Korean War Veterans**

**Every Monday at Grandmas Kitchen**

**1514 N Broadway, Rochester, MN 55906**

**(Silver lake plaza)**

**8 AM**

### **Marine Corp League Meeting**

**4th Tuesday of the month, 7pm, VFW Post 1215**

**16 6th Street SW, Rochester, MN 55902**

### **Kasson American Legion Post 333**

**Third Thursday of the month**

**March 19 , 7pm**

**212 West Main Street , Kasson, MN 55944**

### **Chatfield VFW Post 6913**

**2nd Tuesday of the month**

**9- 2nd St SW, Chatfield, MN**

### **Gulf War Veterans of America**

**1st Monday of each month**

**7pm, at the Rochester American Legion**

**315 First Ave NW**

**Rochester, MN 55901**



***“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.”***



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

