



NWII Messenger

For the week of February 1, 2010

Provider Changes at Shenandoah CBOC

Veterans who use the VA NWIHCS Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Shenandoah, Iowa, will see a change in provider.

Dr. James Billups will transfer to the VA NWIHCS Omaha Division in February.

Although VA is recruiting a new physician to replace Dr. Billups at the Shenandoah CBOC, patients will continue to receive the same timely, high-quality care they are accustomed to.

Connie Holmes, a nurse practitioner, will continue to see

patients at Shenandoah. Providers from VA NWIHCS, Omaha will rotate into Shenandoah, as needed, to provide care to area Veterans.

In addition to the primary-care providers, the clinic staff includes a registered nurse, two licensed practical nurses and a part-time social worker.

Veterans who receive care at the CBOC were notified about the change in providers from letters recently sent to them from VA NWIHCS. To contact the Shenandoah CBOC, Veterans can call (712) 246-0092. The clinic is located at 512 Fremont Street.

Veterans Forum

Veterans are invited to attend a Veterans Forum Wednesday, Feb. 3 at VA NWIHCS, Omaha from 6 to 7 p.m. in the Education Conference Room (first floor of the main building).

The one-hour forum includes general information and small group breakout sessions. Small group sessions will give Veterans the chance to offer feedback about their experiences receiving health care at VA NWIHCS. Veterans will also receive an update about VA NWIHCS services and activities.

In addition, **Jan Carlin**, Veteran Health Promotion Coordinator will present "Be your own Valentine. Give Yourself the Gift of Heart Health." Adopting better lifestyle habits can help you reduce your risk for a heart attack. Learn what you can do to help prevent heart disease and stroke.

Representatives from VA NWIHCS Executive Leadership, Patient Advocate, Public Affairs, and others will be available to answer questions.

This new program is part of VA's goal to be better engaged with Veterans and stakeholders, to listen to their opinions about their health care experiences, and to continue down the path of continuous improvement of the VA health care system.

The Grand Island CBOC already has a focus group that the Assistant Director has been facilitating. A similar focus group will also be hosted at the Lincoln CBOC in the next couple of months, and may expand to community based outpatient clinics later this year.

For more information contact Maggie Oldham at (402) 995-5547.

CALENDAR

February

Black History Month

American Heart Month

Cancer Prevention Month

1-7 Patient Recognition Week

1-7 Women's Heart Week

2 Ground Hog Day

5 National Wear Red Day

8-14 Salute to Veterans Week

14-20 Cardiovascular Professionals Week

14 Valentines Day

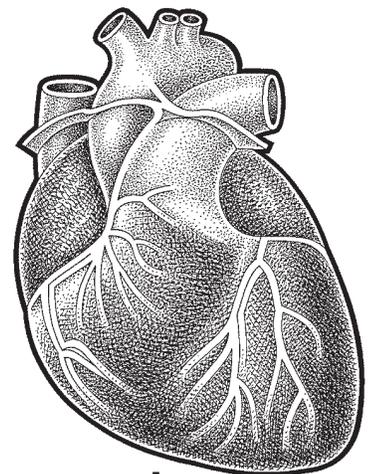
15 Presidents Day

24 Ash Wednesday

March

American Red Cross Month

National Nutrition Month



February is American Heart Month

Celebrate National Wear Red Day

Wear red apparel Feb. 5 to help increase awareness of heart disease prevention. You can prevent or control heart disease by making lifestyle changes.

Heart disease can lead to heart attacks in both men and women. But women are less likely to seek help because their symptoms are different. Heart disease is the leading cause of death among women in America. It kills one in every four women. By comparison, one in 30 women dies of breast cancer.

Tips for preventing heart disease

- Quit tobacco use
- Increase physical activity
- Aim for a healthy weight
- Eat for health
- Control high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes

Warning signs of a heart attack in women include:

- Chest discomfort
- Discomfort in one or both arms, neck, shoulder, jaw, back, or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea, vomiting
- Cold sweats, fatigue, light-headedness
- Anxiety

If you think you or someone else may be having a heart attack, get help. Call 911 immediately. Talk with your health care provider about any questions and concerns you may have.

Celebrate Black History Month

The month of February is designated Black History Month.

In 1915, educator and historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, later renamed the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. It was through this organization that Negro

History Week was first celebrated in 1926 and, subsequently, Black History Month established in 1976.

During Black History Month, we celebrate the accomplishments and contributions that African Americans have made at home and abroad and the diversity that supports VA's transformation into a people-centric 21st Century organization.

The 2010 Black History Month theme is "Recognizing the Future of Black Economic Empowerment." Last year, African-American employment reached 24 percent of VA's permanent workforce. Nearly 10 percent of VA's permanent workforce are African-American Veterans and 2.8 percent are disabled African-American Veterans. In fiscal year 2009, the number of African Americans in VA's GS-13 through GS-15 leadership pipeline grew by 13.4 percent.

Data Privacy

Around the globe, people use powerful technologies and devices every day to improve their lives and enhance individual productivity, communications and safety. We have come to depend on mobile communications, instant access to information, and intelligent services. We are empowered by these technologies in ways that those who have lived before us could never have imagined. It's never been a more important time to think about ways to protect information to protect privacy.

National Data Privacy Day was recognized Jan. 28 as an annual international celebration to raise awareness and generate discussion about information privacy. VA employees were encouraged to discuss, examine materials and explore technologies in an effort to bring information privacy into their daily thoughts, conversations and actions.

The web site, Data Privacy Day 2010 offers a plethora of privacy resources, including information on how you can protect your health information, social media privacy, information security and identity management. Access the site at <http://dataprivacyday2010.org/activities/commercial-business/>.

For more information about how to properly protect data, contact the VA NWIHCS Information Security Officer, **Joe Elbaum**, at Omaha ext. 3558.

Voice of VA Winter Survey

Some VA NWIHCS employees have received an e-mail from the National Center for Organization Development (NCOD) requesting their voluntary participation in the 2010 Winter Voice of VA (VOVA) Survey. The e-mail provided a link to the survey.

Employees are randomly selected to take one of three surveys. Survey questions cover learning, employee health and business practices. Responses are confidential and anonymous and cannot be linked to individuals. In order to maintain individual confidentiality, no data from groups smaller than ten will be released.

The VOVA Survey is being administered through Feb. 19. The All Employee Survey (AES) will continue to be administered annually in the spring.

Share Your Favorite Recipes

Do you have a healthy recipe you would like to share? Send it in and be included in the VISN 23 employee healthy cookbook.

Employees are encouraged to submit recipes for light and nutritious main dishes, healthy ethnic recipes, side dishes, beverages, appetizers and desserts. Recipes can be low or reduced calorie, low salt, reduced fat, gluten free or vegetarian. You may enter more than one recipe.

Entries must be received by close of business Feb. 26. Recipes will be reviewed by a registered dietician.

E-mail recipes to judith.thomes@va.gov. Include the name of the recipe as well as your full name, duty station, telephone number, including area code and e-mail address with each entry. Be specific with measurements, directions, and size of cans, packages and pans so others can successfully make your recipe. Be sure to include serving size and variations.

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-Recipes continued from page 2

If duplicate recipes are submitted, the recipe with the earliest time and date will be considered. No hand written recipes will be accepted. Everyone who submits a recipe that is published in the cookbook will receive a copy of "The WINing Cookbook".

For more information, contact **Quin Kelly**, Employee WIN coach, at Lincoln, ext. 7902.

Tai Chi Opportunity

Omaha Tai Chi starts Feb. 3. Tai Chi is a no-impact series of repetitive movements that help to improve strength, endurance, flexibility and balance. It is also a great relaxation and stress management tool. This is not an aerobic activity.

The WIN (Wellness Is Now) Program has another great opportunity for employees. Beginning Feb. 3, Tai Chi classes will be available for Omaha VA employees. Tai Chi classes are Wednesdays from 4:35 p.m. to 5:25 p.m. in the Education Conference Room. Classes are free, and you do not need to change clothes, just come as you are.

For more information, contact **Quin Kelly**, WIN Employee Health Coach at Grand Island, ext. 7902.

H1N1 Vaccine is Available for Eligible Veterans

All eligible Veterans are encouraged to receive the H1N1 flu vaccine at a VA NWIHCS facility. Veterans can find their local facility at www.nebraska.va.gov. Contact your local VA to get vaccinated.

Vaccinations are available free to any eligible Veteran in regularly scheduled clinic appointments, or upon request.

"This is an especially challenging influenza season this year," stated **Dr. Marvin Bittner**, epidemiologist for VA NWIHCS. "Many people have suffered severe consequences from the flu. It is important for Veterans to get the 2009 H1N1 flu shot, especially those who might be pregnant, or have medical

conditions such as asthma, chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, or weakened immune systems."

The H1N1 flu vaccine is the best measure of protection from the virus. Also remember to wash your hands frequently, cover your coughs and sneezes, and stay home and away from others if you are sick.

This season, flu may pack more of a punch than usual because of the 2009 H1N1 flu virus (sometimes called "swine flu"). Many people do not have immunity to this virus so more people are likely to get sick or suffer severe illness which could result in death. For this reason, it's more important than ever to get your facts straight about flu—and the vaccines available to prevent flu.

For more information about VA and flu, check out www.publichealth.va.gov. The main federal Web sites are www.flu.gov and www.cdc.gov/flu.

Omaha Construction Update

The new south stairway to the Center Street sidewalk can now be used. The temporary handrail is in place. The permanent one has been delayed until the week of Feb. 1. Exercise caution and only use the sidewalk to access the crosswalk at 42nd Street. A layer of coarse sand will be placed in case of icy conditions. If a heavy ice storm occurs, use the shuttle bus service.

In other construction news, the second Center Mall office remodel is being populated as network connections become available.

Security camera installation phase two has started and is expected to be complete in February. This will place cameras in the floors that aren't yet covered.

The project to remodel Building 6 / Dental Clinic has begun. For your safety, don't go into the building or parking lot. Contracting and Fiscal Services have moved to the new Modular Building C. A temporary walkway by Building 5 is now open for access to the 42nd Street sidewalk.

The first modular building is now occupied by Contracting and Fiscal and is called Building "C" since it is the farthest from Nimitz Drive. The second modular building, building "B", is now occupied by Safety, Design, and EMS.

The last modular building, Building "A", is scheduled to have the Fitness Equipment delivered Feb. 9.

The remodeling project for X-Ray Room 2571 is progressing. This will accommodate the new bi-plane radiology equipment. This project is about 72 percent complete and is moving forward.

Replacement of steam piping in the pipe tunnel has been stopped for the season due to cold weather. This project is 50 percent complete.

The laundry chutes in the main building are being refurbished to bring them in line with current safety codes. Work on the west side chute is complete, and the east side has started. This work is on schedule.

Questions should be directed to **Roy Mockelstrom** at Omaha ext. 4449.

WIN VA Activities

Wellness is Now (WIN), the VA Employee Wellness Program will offer a number of healthy eating and fitness activities this year. Activities include: Tobacco cessation classes; E-MOVE for weight loss; yoga and Tai Chi classes; nutritional lunch and learns; new fitness centers with personal fitness trainers; 21 day club for stress mastery; chair massages.

Employee fitness centers are scheduled to open in February in Grand Island, Lincoln and Omaha. Several requirements must be met prior to use, including attending employee fitness center orientation, signing a fitness consent form and a VA NWIHCS liability waiver for the fitness center and completing a personal wellness profile and StressMap grid at <http://vaww.portal.va.gov/sites/EmpWell/default.aspx>.

Upon completion of these items, print off your personal wellness profile and your StressMap scoring grid. Send both surveys to **Quin Kelly** in Lincoln: Mailing code 11AC.

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Mark your calendar and register for these events:

Feb. 20—Trek up the Tower. Vertical challenge races are the newest trend in fitness competitions nationwide. Locally, Omaha is home to Trek up the Tower, a race up 40 floors to the top of the First National Tower in downtown Omaha. Employees from all sites are welcome to participate.

Registration is now open at <http://www.trekupthetower.org/>. Select NWI VA Health Care System as your team. Registration is \$45 per person. All participants will receive a commemorative long-sleeve T-shirt. Registration is limited and previous years have sold out prior to race day, so be sure to sign-up soon. For more information on the race, including a format overview, visit the Frequently Asked Questions section of <http://www.trekupthetower.org/>. You can also contact **Jan Carlin** at Omaha ext 4987.

May 23—Tour de Cure. Ride your bike 20 or 50 miles and benefit the American Diabetes Association. See www.diabetes.org/tour for more information. Team Captain: **Jerry Trumble** at Omaha ext. 5961.

Inclement Weather Information Posted on the Internet

Information regarding impacts on VA NWIHCS operations due to inclement weather or other unusual situations is available on the Web. Veterans, stakeholders and employees can access emergency information through the “Emergency Response and Information link on the VA NWIHCS Web Site at <http://www.nebraska.va.gov>.

The emergency page is also accessible directly at <http://www.nebraska.va.gov/emergency/index.asp>. Similar information is also available on the VA NWIHCS official Twitter account at <http://twitter.com/VANWIHCS>.

Employee information is also available through the VA NWIHCS Web page <http://www.nebraska.va.gov>, which is accessible from non-VA computers. Employees should also follow the

“Emergency Response and Information” link, and then access “Emergency Information for VA Employees”, the first link on the top right.

The emergency page for employees is also accessible directly at http://www.nebraska.va.gov/emergency/employee_emergency.asp. Pertinent employee information is also posted on the Intranet at <http://vaww.visn23.med.va.gov/nwi/index.asp>.

Pharmacy Service Changes

The Pharmacy Service is now providing onsite 24/7 pharmacist coverage at VA NWIHCS, Omaha. The inpatient pharmacy in Omaha is now staffed at all times with a pharmacist to provide coverage for Veterans and staff.

The Omaha inpatient pharmacy will also provide coverage to the Grand Island Community Living Center when the Grand Island pharmacy is closed. To contact an Omaha inpatient pharmacist, call Omaha ext. 3154.

Keeping Healthy During Flu Season

Stay healthy during the flu season by:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick and staying home when you are sick
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue away after use.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Using personal protective equipment when appropriate.
- Getting a seasonal flu vaccine and a H1N1 flu vaccine, if you are in the target groups identified by the CDC.
- Having a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues and other related items on hand to help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are contagious.

We are doing everything we can as a health care system to prevent influenza and are implementing these safety measures for employees and patients.

If you have any questions, contact **Lesley Royal** at Omaha ext. 4226.

2010 Mandatory Review Flyer

All employees should have received a blue, three-page flyer that describes the 2010 mandatory review requirements. These requirements are to be completed in the national Learning Management System (LMS) and the My Peak System.

Employees who have not received the flyer should check with their service or section program assistant who distributes mail.

Employees who are unsuccessful in obtaining a flyer should contact **Kelly Loftus**, Omaha, ext. 5333; **Judy Janovec**, Grand Island, ext. 2456 or **Sharon Fusco**, Lincoln, ext. 6717.

This newsletter is for VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha, Norfolk, Holdrege, North Platte, Bellevue, Nebraska and Shenandoah, Iowa). It is published weekly to provide employees, patients and visitors with information about VA programs and activities. This newsletter may be found on the Intranet at <http://vaww.visn23.med.va.gov/nwi/index.asp>. Submit news items through e-mail to G. POSTINGS in VistA or to VHANWI MESSENGER in Outlook by close of business each Tuesday.

For further information, call **Maggie Oldham** at (402) 995-5547.