



# NWI Messenger

For the week of July 5, 2010

## Communication Survey

The VA NWIHCS Public Affairs Office is conducting a survey to seek feedback from our customers so that we may provide the most-effective communication products. The survey is attached to this issue of the *NWI Messenger*. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous.

The goal of VA NWIHCS's communications program is to use numerous products and tools to educate Veterans, stakeholders and the community about VA health care benefits and services. The secondary goal is to share stories and information about the outstanding work that staff and volunteers perform every day in their care for Veterans.

You may mail your completed, survey to: VA NWIHCS Office of Public Affairs (00PA), 4101 Woolworth Ave., Omaha, NE 68105. Please return it by July 15.

For those with access to the VA NWIHCS SharePoint site, the survey is available on the VA NWIHCS Public Affairs Office SharePoint Site at: <http://vaww.vishn23.portal.va.gov/nwi/SiteDirectory/PublicAffairs/Lists/VA%20NWIHCS%202010%20Communications%20Survey/overview.aspx>.

Click on "respond to the survey." The online survey will also close July 15. Thank you for helping the Public Affairs staff to continuously improve your communication program.

## Do You Have News or Events to Share?

With eight facilities and more than 2,000 employees, there are lots of good news and events to share. Public Affairs needs your help. If you have a good news or feature story that you think we should share with internal or external audiences, we want to know. Did your service or an employee in your area recently earn a significant achievement or award? Let us know. Do you have an event coming up that you want others to know about? We want to know that, too.

There are numerous communication tools in our arsenal to get your message out including digital media boards, *NWI Messenger*, *News Link*, *Daily Briefs* and the Intranet. We can also pitch story ideas or events to local media, or share with others in the VA through national products including *Vanguard* and the new social media tools.

There are lots of opportunities that our employees can help us find, please feel free to share your ideas with us.

You can e-mail William.Ackerman@va.gov or Margaret.Oldham@va.gov, or call Omaha ext. 4719 or 5547.

## OEF/OIF

### Welcome Home Event

The Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans Welcome Home Event is scheduled for July 31 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is at the Heartland Event Center, Grand Island, at 700 E. Stolley Park Road.

Activities will include informational booths, promotional items, and family activities. Tickets for the Island Oasis Waterpark or the Stuhr Museum will also be provided for OEF/OIF Veterans and their immediate family members.

## CALENDAR

### July

*Ultraviolet (UV) Safety Month*

4-9 National Veterans Wheelchair Games

6-12 Alzheimer's Awareness Week

21 VA Created (1930)

### August

*Cataract Awareness Month*

*National Immunization Awareness Month*

4 Coast Guard Day

26 Womens Equality Day

### September

*National Preparedness Month*

*Alcohol and Drug Addiciton Recovery Month*

*Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month*

*Cholesterol Education Month*

*Prostate Health Month*

6 Labor Day

5-11 Suicide Prevention Week

11 Patriot Day

17 POW/MIA Recognition Day

19-24 National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic

19-25 National Surgical Technologist Week

### October

*Breast Cancer Awareness Month*

*Pharmacy Month*

*Dental Hygeine Month*

*Hispanic Heritage Month*

*Physical Therapy Month*

*Cyber Security Month*

## You Spoke: We Listened

### More Parking Available for Veterans at VA NWHCS, Omaha

VA NWHCS has increased the number of parking opportunities for patients at VA NWHCS, Omaha.

**Parking lot 1:** This lot is adjacent to the main hospital entrance and just north of the front circle. Parking is reserved (unless specifically posted by signage) for patients and guests Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (excluding federal holidays).

**Service-connected lot:** This is the lot adjacent to the Emergency Department entrance. The entire lot is reserved for Emergency Department patients and service-connected Veterans who are present for an appointment. The lot is reserved Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays, during the hours of 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. A gold parking placard is used to denote service connection.

**Lot between Bldg 5 (Human Resources) and Bldg 4 (Engineering):** This lot has handicapped parking spaces reserved specifically for employees with handicapped parking privileges denoted by a blue placard or a handicapped license plate. Except for two parking spaces marked with specific signage, the entire lot is for employee handicapped parking and reserved Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays, during the hours of 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. There are three additional spaces for lift-equipped vehicles and eight additional handicapped spaces.

**Off-site parking:** VA NWHCS leadership is actively looking for off-site parking that will be used for employee overflow parking. There are spaces available at the Center Mall. To assist with pedestrian access, steps were constructed on the hill along Center Street. In addition, two shuttles provide transportation to and from the main parking lot and the Center Mall. Each shuttle driver has a cell telephone. Their numbers are 547-6972 or 547-8018.

The Omaha Parking Committee continues to explore options to ease the difficulties associated with finding a place to park at VA NWHCS, Omaha.

## Medication Co-Payment Changes

Effective July 1, Veterans with higher incomes and no service-connected disabilities enrolled in Priority Groups 7 and 8 will pay an additional \$1 for each 30-day supply of outpatient medications. The increase from \$8 to \$9 is the first change in VA's medication co-pay since 2006.

This change does not impact Veterans in Priority Groups 2 through 6 who will continue to pay \$8 for each 30-day supply of medications for their non-service connected conditions unless otherwise exempted. Veterans in Priority Group 2 through 6 will also continue to have their out-of-pocket expenses for VA outpatient medications capped at \$960 per calendar year. Veterans who have an injury or illness connected with their military service resulting in a disability rated 50 percent or greater—enrolled in Priority Group 1—are exempt from this co-pay.

Veterans who have difficulty paying co-payments for outpatient medications should discuss the matter with their local VA enrollment coordinator. Veterans may also contact VA at (877) 222-VETS (8387) or visit VA's health eligibility Web site at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility).

## Miss Nebraska 2010 Visits Grand Island Veterans

Miss Nebraska USA 2010, **Belinda Wright**, visited Veterans at VA NWHCS, Grand Island July 2. Miss Wright visited the Community Living Center, Hospice Care Wing, and outpatient clinics to thank Veterans for their service.

Miss Wright, who is from North Loup-Scotia, said she comes from a long background of family members in the military, including her father and grandfather.



*Photo by Will Ackerman*  
Miss Nebraska USA 2010 Belinda Wright shares a laugh with Veteran Bob Stroup in the Grand Island Community Living Center July 2.

## Farmers Market Comes to VA NWHCS, Omaha and Lincoln

VA NWHCS is well-known for providing Veterans high-quality health care. The staff also seeks opportunities to help Veterans and their families prevent disease and live healthier lives through initiatives including an upcoming farmers market.

The first of the summer farmers markets was held July 6 at VA NWHCS, Omaha in the parking lot at 4101 Woolworth Avenue. The farmers market will be held every Monday through Sept. 20, with the exception of Labor Day. The market will move to Sept. 7 following Labor Day. The hours are 1 to 5 p.m.

A farmers market was held July 7 at VA NWHCS, Lincoln near the entrance to the outpatient clinic.

Veterans and the community are invited to stop by and purchase

from a selection of locally grown vegetables and fruits.

The farmers market is being hosted in collaboration with local farmers by the VA NWHCS Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in Learning Resource Services.



*Photo by Will Ackerman*  
Susie Huerta and Colleen Evans, VA NWHCS, Omaha Recovery Center employees, talk to Al Kirkpatrick at a farmers market in the VA NWHCS, Omaha parking lot July 6.

## Omaha Construction Updates

The Remodel Building 6 (Dental Clinic) project continues with work in progress on the interior and the new addition. Fences are in place for safety. Recent heavy rain delayed the work on the outside, but completion is still scheduled for November. A temporary walkway by Building 5 is open for access to the 42nd Street sidewalk.

Water damage repairs to the Chapel at VA NWIHCS, Omaha and the adjacent corridor is in progress. Work in the corridors is accomplished primarily on nights and weekends.

The Positron Emission Tomography (PET-CT) site prep project is underway. This is a new and updated piece of equipment for the Radiology Department. The construction is expected to be complete early next year.

For more information, contact Roy Mockelstrom at Omaha, ext. 4449

## Microsoft Office Home Use Program Offers Discount for VA Employees

Employees can purchase Microsoft Office 2010 (Home Use Program) for \$9.95 for download only or \$21.95 with a DVD. The instructions on how to proceed are at <http://vaww.r02.portal.va.gov/sites/VISN%2023/Document%20Library/HomeUse.aspx>.

Although the Web page may still state this purchase is for Office 2007, once you click the link on the page, it will take you to the page listing the purchase for Office 2010. VA has not yet transitioned to Office 2010 and does not currently support Office 2010 applications. Microsoft Office 2010 is only for use at home.

## Personnel Notes

Gayla Cook is the new Patient Satisfaction Coordinator. Gayla was previously with Faith Regional Health Services in Norfolk where she served in a similar role as service excellence coordinator. Gayla brings a knowledge of the Press Ganey Patient Satisfaction process and Centers for Medicare

& Medicaid Services (CMS) Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey process. Further, she has coordinated the efforts of multi-disciplinary teams to enhance patient experience.

## myPay System Replaces Employee Express Pay System

VA migrated to a new employee pay system June 24. Employee Express (EEX) has been replaced by myPay. MyPay is convenient and easy to use, anytime, anywhere, by users with access to the Internet.

myPay began notifying VA employees (only employees without a myPay account) of their new myPay temporary passwords. Employees should not contact myPay staff members before they receive their temporary password. MyPay staff members cannot set up employees until the official temporary passwords have been sent.

Employees will have "view only" access to EEX to view and print historical data such as LES for pay covering May 12, 2007, through June 19, and W-2's for calendar years 2006 through 2009.

### Users will have the option to:

- Create up to seven allotments
- Make changes to their deposits
- Change addresses
- Manage U.S. savings bonds, thrift savings plans (TSP), and more

### Enhancements through myPay:

- Provides users confirmation of changes/elections within three days versus 14 days with EEX
- Allows VA employees to view their LES on Thursday before payday
- Allows VA employees who are retired military or Reservists to access their military and civilian accounts with one personal identification number
- Allows VA employees to establish/change a limited access login for those who wish to grant another individual (such as a spouse) view access to his or her account
- Confirmation of all account changes is sent to a user's e-mail account

## Check Your Listing in the NWI Intranet Telephone Directory

Telephone Operations is asking all employees to check their contact information in the intranet phone directory. Employees should visit <http://vaww.visn23.med.va.gov/nwi/Telephone/branch.asp>, select "Employee Extensions" from the drop-down menu, and enter their name to check the listing for errors or omissions. Services should also check their listing. If you need to make a change, send an e-mail to [PhoneDirectory.NWIHCS@va.gov](mailto:PhoneDirectory.NWIHCS@va.gov) with the change.

## Casual Wear

VA NWIHCS dress code policy applies to all employees, work-study, residents, students, contract personnel, and volunteers while on official duty in the health care system. As summer begins, it's a good time to remember what you choose to wear affects how you are perceived by patients, fellow employees, and the public.

If in doubt about appropriate dress policy, refer to Health Systems Policy, DIR-012 Dress Code, dated July 25, 2008. The policy is available at <http://vaww.nebraska.va.gov/>. From the left menu, click on "policies," and then search on the words "dress code."

Employees with questions about whether a particular item of attire is appropriate should discuss it with their supervisor and/or union representative.

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.



The purpose of this survey is to seek feedback from employees, patients and other stakeholders of VA NWIHCS publications and communication mediums. **Your participation is voluntary and anonymous.**

Please return completed paper surveys to Maggie Oldham, Deputy Public Affairs Officer (OOPA) by July 15.

You may also mail your completed survey to:

VA NWIHCS Office of Public Affairs (OOPA), 4101 Woolworth Ave., Omaha, NE 68105.

Thank you for participating!

**1. How often do you read the NWIHCS Daily Briefs?**

Never		Occasionally		Frequently	
1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Have Access

**2. How much of the NWIHCS Daily Briefs do you read?**

Little		Some		All	
1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Have Access

**3. Which items in the NWIHCS Daily Briefs are most useful to you? Check as many as apply.**

- NWIHCS in the News
- VA News Bytes (VA news stories)
- VA items (Hey VA! Have You Heard? Links to VA News, Vanguard and the American Veteran)
- NWI Current Events
- Team NWI, Recognizing Employees
- Education Calendar
- NWI Omaha VA Employee Association Announcements
- Today in History
- Training and Education Links

**4. How could the NWIHCS Daily Briefs be improved?**

**5. How often do you read the NWI Messenger?**

Never		Occasionally		Frequently	
1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Have Access

**6. How could the NWI Messenger be improved?**





**The following questions are for demographic purposes only (for VA employees only).**

**22. Are you a supervisory or non-supervisory staff member?**

- Supervisory
- Non-Supervisory

**23. What are your work hours at VA NWIHCS?**

- Day Shift (between hours of 7 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.)
- Non-Day Shift
- Other
- N/A

**24. What is your role at VA NWIHCS?**

- Clinical
- Administrative/Support
- Other

**25. How long have you worked at VA NWIHCS?**

- 0-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15+ years