

the link

December
2013



VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System



SERVING UP VALUE,
6 CONVENIENCE
& SERVICE



Although most of us have purchased something from the Veterans Canteen Service, many may not realize their mission has far-reaching impact.

The VCS supports quality of life programs that directly benefit Veterans, their families and employees. They support returning Veterans by providing assistance to polytrauma centers and provide coupons for purchases through their VCS programs. In addition, when you spend

money at one of their programs, some of this is returned to the health care system in the form of a percentage of profits generated through their sales.

Another program that many may not be familiar with is the Telephone-Initiated Guided Response (TIGR) system. The program is an on-demand, self-controlled education and information system that is available for inpatient Veterans in Omaha and at the Community Living Center in Grand Island. TIGR puts health care information at the patient's fingertips to help them become better informed about their specific health care conditions.

As we finish 2013 and reflect back upon the work we have accomplished this year, I am constantly impressed with the dedication that you demonstrate to honor our Veterans, regardless whether you deliver direct care or perform a support function.

I encourage you to relax this holiday season and take a few moments to enjoy your family and friends. Regardless of how you celebrate the holidays, I encourage you to reflect upon our freedoms that were secured by the sacrifice of America's Veterans and armed forces. We are truly blessed to have the honor of serving them every day at the VA.

Marci Mylan

DIRECTOR AND PUBLISHER
Marci Mylan, Ph.D., MHA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
Will Ackerman

THE LINK EDITORIAL STAFF
Editor | Will Ackerman

Photographer | Bruce Thiel
Designer | Becky Brown

FACT: VETERANS CANTEEN SERVICE PARTNERS WITH VA TO REDUCE AND/OR ELIMINATE VETERAN HOMELESSNESS BY PROVIDING COUPONS WHEN THEY'RE PLACED INTO HOUSING AND FREE MEALS BEFORE THEIR FIRST VA APPOINTMENTS.

Cover: Janet Walden prepares a wrap for a customer at the VA NWHCS, Grand Island Patriot Cafe. Walden is a food service employee. Photo By Will Ackerman.



the link

CONTENTS

“As a Veteran myself, I enjoy serving the Veterans to be able to give back to those who sacrificed and fought for our freedom.”

Ryan Baker, LPN
Shenandoah CBOC | Veteran



Meet an Employee | VA Views | Calendar



Veterans Canteen Service Offers Convenience, Service



NWHCS Earns Accreditation in Two Health Care Programs



Interactive System Puts Health Care Education at Patients' Fingertips



This magazine is an authorized publication for VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (VA NWHCS). Contents of The Link are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, or the Department of Veterans Affairs. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the VA NWHCS Public Affairs Office.

CONTACT US

Have a story idea? Call the VA NWHCS Public Affairs Office; Will Ackerman at 402-995-4719, Anna Morelock at 402-995-5547, or email vhanwipublicaffairs@va.gov.

VISIT US ONLINE

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meet kevin smith



Program Support Assistant
Learning Resources Service
Nebraska National Guard

Q: How long have you worked at the VA?

A: "Six years."

Q: What does your job entail?

A: "I provide assistance to LRS by teaching classes, performing administrative work, timekeeping and myriad things."

Q: What do you like best about your job?

A: "The variety and the people."

Q: What are you doing when you are not at work?

A: "A lot of time in the Nebraska National Guard, which I am retiring from after 32 years of military service Dec. 7. When I'm not with the Guard, I spend time with my wife and daughter." 📞

What is your favorite memory from 2013?



"My trip to Alaska; we drove there and back."

Shelly Dix, RN
Grand Island
Community
Living Center



"My favorite moment was when my daughter got married."

Jackie Schneider
Purchasing Agent,
Prosthetics
Lincoln CBOC



"Retired from the Air Force and my son joined in May."

Mike Schoenberger Program Support Assistant, Prosthetics
Omaha VAMC | U.S. Air Force Veteran



"I just graduated high school and finished two classes at Metro Community College plus got hired in a government job here at 19 years old."

Meghan LaFrancois Clerk, VCS Patriot Store | Omaha VAMC



"The day a Veteran cried tears of thanks because I told him he was eligible for VA health care."

Shantell Kleinschmit Medical Support Assistant | Norfolk CBOC

EVENTS what's going on?

- Dec. 1 – 7** National Influenza Vaccination Week
- Dec. 1** World AIDS Day
- Dec. 2** VA Pantry, Lincoln
Exercise Class for Veterans
- Dec. 3** Lunch 'N Learn: Healthy Up Your Baking
International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- Dec. 4** VA NWHCS Summit on Veteran Homelessness
VA Pantry, Omaha
Employee Wii Bowling League begins
Exercise Class for Veterans
- Dec. 5** DAISY Award Ceremony, Omaha
International Volunteer Day
- Dec. 7** National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- Dec. 9** Last day for Open Season for Federal Employee Benefits
Exercise Class for Veterans
- Dec. 11** Community Book Club, Lincoln
- Dec. 12** Lunch 'N Learn: Dealing with People Who Drive You Crazy
- Dec. 15** Last day to donate to Combined Federal Campaign (Omaha and Grand Island)
Bill of Rights Day
Exercise Class for Veterans
- Dec. 18** VA Pantry, Omaha
- Dec. 20** VA Coffeehaus, Lincoln
Last day to take OI&T Satisfaction Survey
- Dec. 21** Winter Begins
- Dec. 25** Christmas Day
- Dec. 26** Kwanzaa Begins
- Dec. 31** New Year's Eve

For more information about VA NWHCS events, visit www.nebraska.va.gov.



Veterans Canteen Service

OFFERS CONVENIENCE, SERVICE



Will Ackerman | Public Affairs

Looking for a quick bite or a good deal on a retail item? The Veterans Canteen Service offers this and much more.

VCS operations include retail stores, inpatient food services, vending machine operations, cafes and catering.

Patriot Cafes at VA NWHCS' campuses in Grand Island and Omaha provide customers with hot and cold selections for breakfast and lunch. Whether you want a burger, hand-made wrap or a healthy "Smart Choice" meal with less than 500 calories, VCS has it.

Although VCS offers standard menus, the café staff can cater to special requests.

“Our goal is to focus on what our customers want.”

Janet Hansen
VCS Operations Clerk | Grand Island VA

PatriotBrew shops are popular, offering a variety of coffees, teas, pastries and sandwiches.

The inpatient food service provides meals to patients in the Omaha VA Medical ▶



Photo by Will Ackerman

▶ Center's intensive care unit (ICU), medical-surgical wards and psychiatric ICU. At Grand Island, they serve the residential substance abuse treatment unit and Community Living Center. There are set menus for each meal; however, patients can select food options from a menu card.

“We have dieticians in VCS who ensure the Veterans get the right nutrition based upon their health care needs,” said Tom Ereth, VCS Chief for NWHCS.

Clyde Fischer, an Army Veteran, who is a CLC resident, enjoyed a fried chicken meal recently during lunch.

“The food is very good,” Fischer said. “It may be even better than private restaurants.”

Patriot Stores at Omaha and Grand Island offer items from health and beauty care products to snacks and beverages to large-screen plasma televisions. In addition to no sales tax, prices are generally much less than commercial stores.

For added convenience, an Employee Payroll Deduction program is available for full-time VA staff. There is no interest, a \$1,350.00 limit and automatic payroll deduction. Apply at the Patriot stores.

Ereth said his goal is to provide customers “great service and a great experience every time.”

Can't find what you want in the store? Veterans and VA employees can access items from more than 70 retailers through the VCS catalog online at www.vacanteen.va.gov/onlinecatalog.

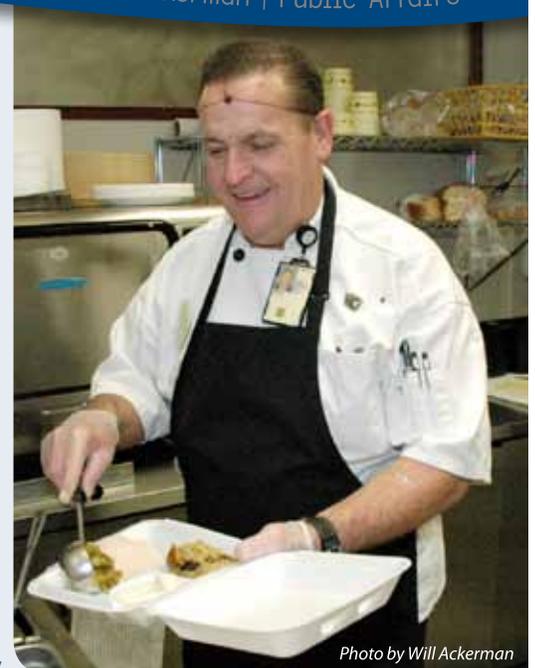


Photo by Will Ackerman

Kelvin Roberts, a food service worker at the VA NWHCS, Grand Island Canteen, serves lunch to a customer at the Patriot Café.

Left: Karyn Stodden, VA NWHCS Privacy Officer, browses for a holiday gift at the VA NWHCS, Omaha Patriot Store.

NWIHCS **EARN**s accreditation in two health care programs

Will Ackerman | Public Affairs

Two programs at VA NWIHCS were recently awarded accreditation by commissioning organizations. VA NWIHCS received first-time accreditation for three Veterans community support programs through the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities Oct. 1. The accreditation is through August 2016.

The Compensated Work Therapy programs were accredited in three areas: Community Employment Services for Employment Support and Job Development, and Community Housing.

CWT is a VA vocational rehabilitation program that endeavors to match and support work-ready Veterans in competitive jobs, and to consult with business and industry regarding their specific employment needs.

NWIHCS also earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for accreditation by demonstrating compliance with its national standards for health care quality and safety in behavioral health care. The accreditation recognizes VA NWIHCS's dedication to continuous compliance with The Joint Commission's state-of-the-art standards.

VA NWIHCS underwent a rigorous on-site survey in July. A team of Joint Commission expert surveyors evaluated VA NWIHCS for compliance with standards of care specific to the needs of individuals served and families, including infection prevention and control, leadership and medication management.

“With Joint Commission and the CARF accreditation, we are making a significant investment in quality on a day-to-day basis from the top down. Achieving these accreditations for our organization is a major step toward maintaining excellence and continually improving the care we provide.”

Marci Mylan, PhD. | Director, VA NWIHCS

The Joint Commission's behavioral health care standards address important functions relating to the care of individuals served and the management of behavioral health care organizations. The standards are developed in consultation with behavioral health care experts, providers, measurement experts, individuals served and their families. 

employees | NEW | LEAVING

HELLO

Oct. 6 to Nov. 2

Charinne Abellira, Primary Care and Speciality Medicine

Bradly Anderson, Primary Care and Speciality Medicine

Katherine Banks, Mental Health

Curt Batcheller, Business Office

Rodney Black, Social Work

Jill Brunner, Human Resources

Albert Beute, Mental Health

Piyush Das, Mental Health

Shelly Dix, Nursing

Dany Duch, Social Work

Duenna Francis, Veterans Canteen Service

Gary Gordon, Business Office

Tina Guinto, Business Office

Daniel Henderson,

Business Office

Velvet Hunt, Primary Care and Speciality Medicine

Taneshia Horton, Human Resources

Keri Ingold, Veterans Canteen Service

Mitzi Jahn, Mental Health

Janet Johnson, Primary Care and Speciality Medicine

Lori Berkland-Jones, Nursing

Kenly Keil, Social Work

Sean Kruse, Business Office

Trevor Lolley, Fiscal

Tara Lorenson, Social Work

Diane Losey, Nutrition

Joshua Lyon, Fiscal

Angela Lyon, Social Work

Angela Mancuso, Occupational Therapy

Becky Moore, Social Work

Michael Nickel, Business Office

Jayne Peters, Nutrition

Charla Rasmussen, Social Work

Kevin Rathjen, Biomedical Engineering

Kalan Root, Social Work

Patricia Ryan, Surgery

Allen Sackett, Mental Health

Destynie Sewell, Human Resources

Michael Salomon, Imaging

Debra Thompson, Laboratory

Karen Tvedt, Mental Health

Steven Whitworth, Safety

Lucia Wilson, Business Office

Vanessa Quevedo-Wools, Business Office

Michael Young, Primary Care and Speciality Medicine

GOODBYE

Oct. 6 to Nov. 2

Laurie Armes, Mental Health

Wendy Little Elk, Veterans Canteen Service

Joseph Krzywicki, Nursing

Christopher Lathrop, Human Resources

Carla Lefrancois, Human Resources

Christopher Masek, Quality Management

Tanya Payne, Surgery

Nicolas Sanchez, Veterans Canteen Service

RETIRING

Oct. 6 to Nov. 2

Benjie Boedeker, Surgery

Thomas Sinnette, Director's Office



Interactive system puts health care education at patients' fingertips

Will Ackerman | Public Affairs

Information is a powerful tool. VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System offers Veterans a variety of health care information at their fingertips through the Telephone-Initiated Guided Response (TIGR) system.

TIGR is currently available for inpatients at the VA NWIHCS, Omaha medical center. The system will soon be available for residents at the Community Living Center in Grand Island.

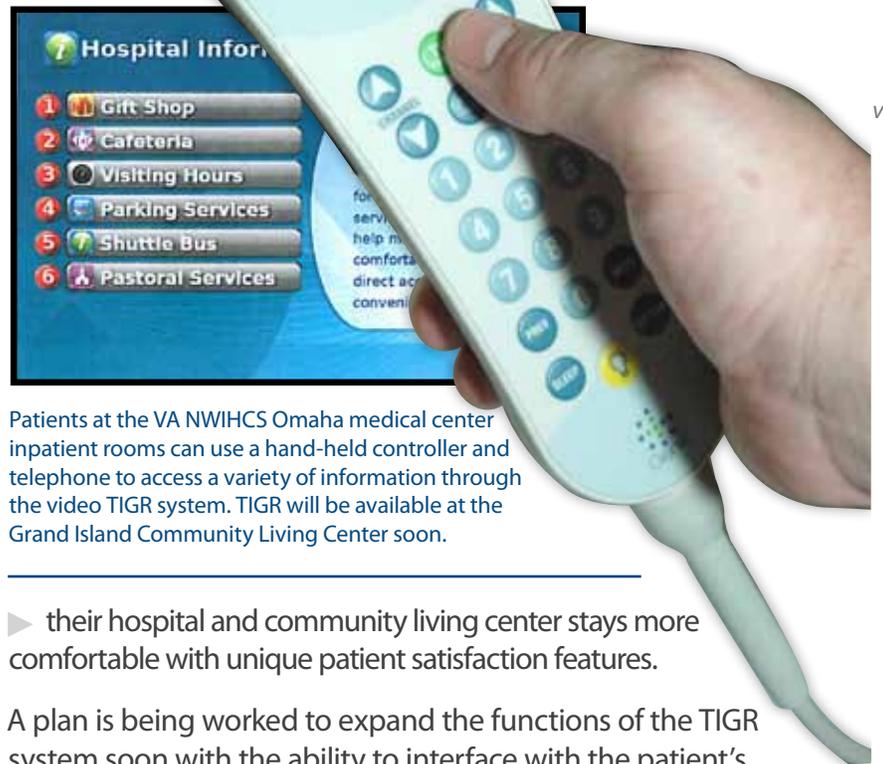
TIGR is an interactive patient education and information system that features video-on-demand access to a library of educational videos at VA NWIHCS. Topics range from pain management, inpatient smoking cessation and steps to take after suffering a stroke.

“TIGR information answers detailed questions that patients or the families may have. It can help them to ask the doctors or nurses more informative questions.”

DeLisa Weyhrick, RN
5E Charge Nurse | Omaha VAMC

Using the telephone to order, patients can access educational videos 24 hours a day, seven days a week from their beds.

Other features that patients can access using TIGR include patient services and hospital and community living center information. TIGR offers patients the tools to make ▶



Patients at the VA NWIHCS Omaha medical center inpatient rooms can use a hand-held controller and telephone to access a variety of information through the video TIGR system. TIGR will be available at the Grand Island Community Living Center soon.

▶ their hospital and community living center stays more comfortable with unique patient satisfaction features.

A plan is being worked to expand the functions of the TIGR system soon with the ability to interface with the patient's electronic medical record, perform surveys and quizzes and provide staff education.

“TIGR was definitely needed within NWIHCS,” said Mary McElmeel, VA NWIHCS Patient Education Coordinator. “Our old system was very outdated and not very patient centered. It was a streamlined channel that ran constantly. We did not have a lot of videos on the site.”

“Now patients and families can watch videos at a time that is best for them,” McElmeel said.

Although the system is currently only available for inpatients, the VA NWIHCS education staff is working to make it available to outpatients at Omaha and Grand Island.

“It really supports the clinical staff in their education of patients and families and has become a tool that is now used,” McElmeel said. “It also helps standardize our education. 📞”



VA and the health care law

What Veterans need to know.

Starting in 2014, most Americans must have health care coverage that meets a minimum standard.

If you are enrolled in VA health care, there is nothing else you need to do. The new health care law will not change your VA health care or your out-of-pocket costs.

Veterans Not Enrolled – Apply Now

- Apply online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll
- Call 1-877-222-VETS (8387)
- Visit your local VA health care facility



To learn more about VA health care and ACA, go to www.va.gov/aca or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387)



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