



NWVI Messenger

For the week of March 15, 2010

Employee Fitness Centers Will Hold Grand Openings this Week

Three new employee fitness centers will open in VA NWIHCS this week. It's truly a win-win situation. The VA Wellness is Now (WIN) Program's new employee fitness centers are in Omaha (Building A), Lincoln (Room 320) and Grand Island (basement of main building).

Employee VA WIN Health Coach **Quin Kelly** encourages employees to take advantage of the opportunity to visit the new centers, see the equipment and talk with personal fitness trainers. "Come and see what you have in your facility that's available to you to use for free," said Quin.

Grand opening activities also include booths with information on nutrition and physical fitness, free refreshments and massage therapy sessions. Events are open to all employees.

Grand openings are scheduled:

VA NWIHCS-Lincoln: March 17, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

VA NWIHCS-Grand Island: March 17, 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Employees who would like to use the new centers must first complete several requirements. "They just have to do the paperwork and attend an orientation," said Kelly.

Paperwork requirements include signing a personal fitness certification form and a VA NWIHCS liability waiver for the fitness center and completing a personal wellness profile and StressMap grid at the Wellness is Now (WIN) VA Web site <http://vaww.portal.va.gov/sites/EmpWell/default.aspx>. These requirements are to ensure

safety and to gather confidential data as the fitness centers are pilot sites in VISN 23.

Omaha and Lincoln employees should send all completed paperwork to **Quin Kelly** in Lincoln: Mail code 11AC. Grand Island employees should send all completed paperwork to **Laura Mader** in Grand Island: Mail code 11AC.

Fitness center orientation is scheduled at the centers:

VA NWIHCS-Lincoln

March 18-19, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Classes will start at the top and bottom of each hour.

VA NWIHCS-Grand Island

March 18, 11 a.m. to noon; 1 to 2 p.m.; 3 to 4 p.m.; **March 23**, 4 to 6:30 p.m.

VA NWIHCS-Omaha

March 22 to 24, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Classes will start at the top and bottom of each hour.

The new facilities add a lot to the workplace environment, can serve as a recruitment tool, and are in line with fitness centers offered at private businesses and corporations.

"It's a big plus, and fits in well with the four core areas of the WIN VA Program—activity, tobacco cessation, nutrition and stress management," Kelly said. "The fitness centers bring so much to the environment to have them available to employees."

CALENDAR

March

American Red Cross Month

National Nutrition Month

National Kidney Month

Social Work Month

Women's History Month

Ethics Awareness Month

14-20 National Pulmonary Rehabilitation Week

17 St. Patrick's Day

20 Spring Begins

28-April 2 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic

30 Doctor's Day

April

Alcohol Awareness Month

National Donate Life Month

Physical Wellness Month

Occupational Therapy Month

1 April Fool's Day

1-7 Medication Safety Week

4 Easter

9 POW Recognition Day

11-17 Health Information Privacy and Security Week

11-17 Patient Advocacy Week

13 National Radiology Nurses Day

14 PVA Established

18-24 Medical Lab Professionals Week

18-24 National Volunteer Week

21 Administrative Professionals Day

22 Earth Day



Eat Healthy, Learn About Vegetable Gardening

The VA NWHCS Clinical Nutrition Department is sponsoring a series of lunch 'n learns in March to celebrate National Nutrition Month. Come learn all about vegetable gardening; no green thumb needed.

Each lunch 'n learn is presented by master gardeners from the Douglas/Sarpy County Extension Office. Bring your lunch and learn how easy it is to grow a garden.

The last session is March 24: fruit and vegetable preservation, from noon to 12:45 p.m. Locations are: Omaha site 2; Lincoln site 1; and Grand Island site 1. Audio dial-in for CBOCs is (402) 943-5467. Thirty minutes of education credit is given.

Shenandoah CBOC to Mark One-Year Anniversary

The Shenandoah, Iowa Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) will host an open house and one-year anniversary celebration March 23.

The clinic serves Veterans in western Iowa, southeastern Nebraska and northwest Missouri. Veterans and community members are encouraged to stop by and see what Veterans health care services are available, meet the staff and tour the clinic from 1 to 3 p.m. at 512 S. Fremont St., Shenandoah.

To learn more about their services, visit <http://www.nebraska.va.gov/visitors/shenandoah.asp>.

Veterans Outreach Open House

A Veterans Interagency Outreach Open House will be held March 26 and March 27 in Carson, Iowa, at the Carson Community Center, 316 S. Commercial Street.

The program brings representatives from the following agencies to allow Veterans in rural communities to learn about VA benefits and to talk one-on-one with enrollment counselors VA NWHCS, VA Regional Office, Vet Centers, Iowa Transition Office, State of Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, and county Veterans service officers.

The open house is from noon to 8 p.m. March 26, and from 8 to 11:30 a.m. March 27. For more details, call **Cindy Niemack-Brown** at Grand Island, ext. 2287.

Focus Group for Women Veterans

Women Veterans in the Omaha area are invited to attend a Women Veterans Focus Group meeting March 30 at the VA NWHCS-Omaha. The meeting is from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Education Conference Room.

The program is sponsored by VA NWHCS as well as Veterans service offices in Douglas, Sarpy and Pottawattamie Counties. The women Veterans program manager, women's health provider consultant, Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Team and representatives from the Douglas, Sarpy and Pottawattamie County Veterans Service Offices will be available to answer questions about VA health care.

For more information, call **Cindy Niemack-Brown** at Grand Island, ext. 2287.

Employee Poem Highlights Service to Veterans

There are many employees at VA NWHCS who have dedicated many years of their lives to caring for our Veterans. **Marsha Gilsdorf**, who recently celebrated 45 years of serving our Veterans in Lincoln, wrote the following poem that commemorates why our employees take care of our Veterans:

Forty-five years have flown by, my how time flies by.
Along the way, I'd like to say, although tis been many a day
A labor of love, it has been, with many miracles seen
Some large, some small, on my life, there has been a call
To help and heal the broken-hearted, in spirit, body and mind
To share a word and be kind, their cross to share
And help to bear the burdens they bring, sometimes
I sing, it helps a heart to become once again a part
Of whom they are to be, and lighten their load, so they may see
That the possibility of joy and blessings again will be
In their lives as they reach beyond and clear the way
I'd like to say, it is indeed, a grand life, sometimes filled with strife
Yet, forging ahead and trying again truly that's the way we will win
Our brothers and sisters over to love, live, give and laugh again
After the battle and having been scarred, we will continue to love them
No matter how far it takes us to the ends of the Earth, where they have served.
What a joy it has been these past 45 years, having the privilege of serving
through sharing
In Veterans' lives a the deeper levels of living life...

Thank you to Marsha for this inspiring poem that is a shining example of our commitment to serving America's Veterans. And thanks to all of you for continuing to keep the spirit and sacrifice of the North Platte Canteen alive at the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System!



Al Washko, Director

Seeking Iwo Jima Veterans

To celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the end of the Battle of Iwo Jima (March 26, 1945), the Strategic Air and Space Museum at Ashland, Neb. invites area Iwo Jima Veterans to be their guests at weekend events March 26 and 27.

On March 26, the museum will host a dinner for six Marines who served side-by-side with the Iwo Jima flag raisers. These Marines are all Veterans of the 5th Marine Division, 28th Marines, Easy Company; their stories have been immortalized in the book and film, "Flags of Our Fathers." Four of the six Marines are Purple Heart recipients, and one is a Silver Star recipient. On March 27, the Marines will again gather at the museum for autographs, followed by a book signing.

Iwo Jima Veterans are asked to call (402) 944-3100, ext. 245 for an invitation to this event. Members of the public who wish to attend may register by phone at (800) 595-4849 or www.SASMuseum.com.

Lincoln Forum Provides Patients With Opportunity to Provide Feedback

Veterans are invited to attend a Patient Forum April 6 at VA NWIHCS, Lincoln from 6 to 7 p.m. in the Prairie/Pioneer Conference Room.

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.

The VA NWIHCS Director, Patient Advocate, Public Affairs, and others will be available to answer questions.

In addition, attendees will learn about the Support And Family Education (SAFE) Program at VA NWIHCS Lincoln, presented by Pamela Neujahr. Family and friends are often the first to notice emotional changes in Veterans later

diagnosed with mental illnesses. SAFE provides education and emotional support for family members and friends of Veterans with mental illness.

The patient forum 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. A similar program was held in Omaha in February and is also being offered at VA NWIHCS Grand Island.

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

New Hospice Wing Will Open at Grand Island CLC

A new Hospice and Palliative Care unit wing at the VA NWIHCS Grand Island Community Living Center (CLC) officially opens April 7 at 10 a.m.

The Hospice and Palliative Care Team is a team of providers and staff to help Veterans spend their final days with dignity and comfort. The team is committed to VA's mission of honoring a Veteran's preference at the end of life, which includes the relief from pain, the integration of the physical, social and spiritual aspects of care and bereavement counseling for their families. This opening will also serve as an opportunity to educate Veterans, the public and the media about VA's increasing focus on hospice and palliative care.

For more information, call Grand Island ext. 2147. For the CLC location, visit http://www.nebraska.va.gov/visitors/grand_island.asp.

New Standards for Paper Shredders

VA NWIHCS employees are now required to follow new standards of shredding. The particles of shredding must now be 1x5mm in size. VA will no longer use shredders that produce a particle size that is larger than the new standard.

To follow the new standards, VA-owned shredders that are non-compliant should be turned in using VA

Form 2237. All other personal shredders should be removed from the premises immediately. Staff are encouraged to use the locking paper shred bins and to contact the Environment Management Services (EMS) supervisor at Omaha, ext. 4567 if one is needed. If you have questions, contact **Janice Sandquist**, Privacy Officer, at Omaha ext. 3427.

ROI Office Handles Requests for Information

Changes have been made to the way VA NWIHCS Omaha's Release of Information (ROI) office handles requests for information. Use the following office location and phone numbers.

Walk-in assistance for Veterans is available in Room 1201. This room is staffed primarily by Ginny Warner from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, with very few exceptions (lunch, breaks, training, unplanned employee absence, etc.).

All phone calls requiring ROI assistance should be directed to the following at the Center Mall:

Brenda Gregoire, (402) 599-2148

Lori Pirie, (402) 599-2149

Nick Osborn, (402) 599-2150

Fax number, (402) 599-2147

To transfer a call to ROI, use the 8-887 prefix and the extension (i.e., 8-887-2148).

Diversity/Special Emphasis Programs Need Members

VA NWIHCS Special Emphasis Programs are seeking members to lead and participate in these groups.

The Black Special Emphasis Program meets the second Thursday of every month at 11:30 a.m. in the Director's Conference Room (DCR) in Omaha.

The Women's Special Emphasis Program meets the second Tuesday of every month at 11 a.m. in the DCR in Omaha and at site 1 in Lincoln and

-Continued on page 4

-Diversity continued from page 3

Grand Island. This program is currently recruiting a co-chair.

The Persons with Disabilities Committee meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at 11 a.m. in the DCR in Omaha and at site 1 in Grand Island. The Hispanic Special Emphasis Program is recruiting a chairperson and members.

The Asian/Pacific Islander Special Emphasis Program is currently recruiting a chairperson and members.

If you would like to participate from any other site, email Bradley.shaff@va.gov.

National Nursing Education Initiative (NNEI) Scholarship

Are you a bachelor's of science nursing registered nurse interested in earning a master's degree with a nurse practitioner (NP) focus, or post master's credit hours with an NP focus (adult practice NP for placement in a medicine, surgery or mental health service line practice area)?

VA offers the NNEI scholarship program to support nurses with such an interest. Application packets will be accepted through June 1 for consideration of scholarship support starting with the August 2010 school term.

To be eligible, the employee applicant must:

- Have been continuously employed a minimum of one year with VHA at the time of signing the NNEI application. Applicant must meet this one-year requirement by June 1.
- Have a record of employment that demonstrates a high likelihood that the employee will be successful in completing the education and employment in the field.
- Submit written evidence (on school letterhead paper, signed by the nursing program dean) of being unconditionally accepted for or enrolled in an accredited school of nursing, dated by June 1.
- Submit a semester-by-semester, written plan of study that was developed in collaboration with the

school's nursing academic advisor.

- Apply for all and be willing to be placed in any VA NWHCS medicine, surgery, or mental health service line vacancy for NP upon completion of the degree/credit hours in order to meet a calculated service payback obligation of up to three years; placement will be at any VA NWHCS division or CBOC, depending on the need at the time of the participant's graduation. Relocation fees will not be paid.
- Not be obligated under any other federal program to perform service upon completion of the course of education.
- Be willing to incur a liability to VA for failure to successfully complete the program of study and/or licensure examination.
- Be willing to be interviewed for the limited scholarship positions available. Only those who submit a complete application packet by the deadline will be interviewed.
- Be willing to remain at VA NWHCS for the duration of the academic program.

If interested, apply by:

Contacting **Sharon Fusco** at Lincoln ext. 6717 by March 30 to obtain a scholarship application packet and to set up a time to review the packet/forms.

Submitting an accurate, complete application packet to **Sharon Fusco** at 142E/Lincoln by June 1.

Qualified applicants will be considered regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, marital status, non-disqualifying disabling condition, age, membership/non-membership in a labor organization, or other non-merit factors.

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.