



Fillmore County VSO Newsletter - Summer 2007

Fillmore County Service Office

Greetings from your CVSO

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General Questions: vso@co.fillmore.mn.us

The Fillmore County Veterans Service Office is located in the Fillmore County Office Building. This building is located across from the sheriff's office in Preston. We are located in the lower level of the building. Parking is available on the east side of the building on the corner of County 17 and Farmer's Street. We are immediately inside the doors on the right.

We are open from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. No appointment is required to be served, however if you would like to know for sure if we are available, please do give us a call.

We now have a web page on the Fillmore County web site. You can reach it off the main Fillmore County Web page under departments or you can go there directly via this link. <http://www.co.fillmore.mn.us/Veterans/Web/default.htm>.

Note: Once a quarter we be sending out a newsletter with any updated information we have received. This newsletter will be sent to all the Fillmore County Veterans Service Posts and Auxiliaries. Please contact us at vso@co.fillmore.mn.us if you would like to receive this newsletter or be removed from the mailing list. Also, if you have any notices for special events etc. please contact us and we would be happy to include them!

I hope that those who went to the WWII dedication in St. Paul enjoyed themselves. I would like to thank Chatfield for organizing transportation to this event.

We have a busy summer coming up. Once again I will be at the Fillmore County fair. If you need some assistance during that time, please come and see me there. Also, a large contingent of MN National Guard troops will be returning this summer. I will be part of a group of CVSO who will go to Ft McCoy to start the reintegration process. I will be gone for about 3 days. The exact timing of this is still to be determined.

Heather will be on maternity leave from the middle of July to the end of August. We will have a temp, Bethany Johnson, answering the phones while Heather is away.

Have a great summer!

VA Medical Center Important Phone Numbers

MINNEAPOLIS

Toll Free Main Number

1-866-414-5058

By dialing the main number you get the following options to speed up your call.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Medications | 2 Cancel Appointments |
| 3 Eligibility | 4 Health Concerns |

Toll Free Pharmacy Refills

1-800-661-0827

Toll Free Urgent Care

1-866-NURSE-VA (687-7382)

Telephone Care

1-612-725-2242

Appointment Confirmation

1-866-414-5058 ext 92095

Primary Care Call Center

1-866-414-5058 ext 91100

Remember, you now need to dial "9" before any extension you use.

We also have a full list of extensions to each clinic within the VA Hospital. If you need to have a direct number, please contact us and we will be happy to give you the extension you need.

OTHER FACILITIES

Rochester VA Primary Care Clinic

(507) 252-0885

Tomah VA Medical Center

(608) 372-1777

LaCrosse VA Primary Care Clinic

(608) 784-3886

Fillmore County Van Transportation

Fillmore County has a van that transports any veteran to the VA Hospital in Minneapolis twice a week. Any veteran that has an appointment is more than welcome to ride this van. There is no direct fee to ride the van, however we do ask, that if you receive travel pay, you donate at least \$15 of that money to the van fund.

Our current van has been purchased with our county's gracious Post and Auxiliary donations as well as money from the county funds. It is our hope that everyone will know about this van and the service it provides.

If you have an appointment on a van day, or would like an appointment changed to ride the van, please contact our office and we will be glad to add you to our van list as well as change any appointment you may have.

July, August, September 2007 Van Schedule

<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>September</u>
2 - Monday	1 - Wednesday	4 - Tuesday
4 - Wednesday	7 - Tuesday	5 - Wednesday
10 - Tuesday	8 - Wednesday	12 - Wednesday
11 - Wednesday	15 - Wednesday	13 - Thursday
18 - Wednesday	16 - Thursday	19 - Wednesday
19 - Thursday	22 - Wednesday	21 - Friday
25 - Wednesday	24 - Friday	24 - Monday
27 - Friday	27 - Monday	26 - Wednesday
30 - Monday	29 - Wednesday	

LODGING NOTICE FOR VAMC

As of Friday, June 1, 2007, we will not be able to place any new lodgers in Bldg 10 until further notice

During the remodeling process of Building 10, a potential problem of asbestos has been discovered. In order to most efficiently deal with this issue, Facilities Management will need to have access to an entire floor at a time to facilitate asbestos abatement procedures.

During the upcoming week of May 28 through June 1, we will be moving long term lodgers on 3rd floor to available rooms on 2nd floor. As of June 1st, therefore, the entire third floor will remain empty until any asbestos issue on that floor has been resolved. Next, patients on 2nd floor will be moved to the third floor and the 2nd floor will remain empty until the process is completed. Finally, patients on 1st floor will be moved to the 2nd floor to complete the process on the 1st floor.

Depending upon how long it takes to procure the necessary contracts for this abatement process, Building 10 could potentially remain UNAVAILABLE to new lodgers for several months. New lodgers for PPH and ADS program can only be placed as other patients, currently in rooms for such programs, complete their programs and move out to make room for other patients.

Building 10 rooms will NOT BE AVAILABLE for sleep study, or any other lodger coming for outpatient appointments. Veterans who are eligible for travel pay and have scheduled clinic appointments will be eligible for \$40 reimbursement for staying in local hotels. A copy of the existing lodging referral list is attached for clinical coordinators who wish to provide it to patients coming for scheduled procedures. Patients requiring "in-house" lodging will be assisted as space is available within existing resources.

All patients who have already contacted the Patient Family Center for lodging requests after 6/1/07 will be contacted and notified that accommodations will not be available and advise them of their option for reimbursement if eligible.

Hotel Reimbursement Criteria

Veterans with scheduled outpatient appointments, traveling more than 50 miles, may be eligible for reimbursement of \$40 for hotel accommodations IF they meet any one of the following criteria:

- a. Service connected 30% or more for any condition, or
- b. Service connected for the condition that requires treatment during that outpatient appointment, or
- c. In receipt of VA pension, or
- d. Veterans appearing for a compensation and pension examination, or
- e. Veterans whose household income is less than the current VA pension rate. In other words, veterans who are currently "Exempt" from rx co-payments.

The VA will NOT be making individual arrangements for patients to stay in hotels. They will be given a listing of known hotels that offer reduced rates and they will need to make their own arrangements. Veterans meeting any of these criteria may bring in a copy of a receipt for their local hotel and request reimbursement from the lodging staff in the Patient Family Center.

Veterans are still encouraged to contact the Patient Family Center at 1-866-414-5058 ext. 2106 to inquire about lodging availability so we can advise them when conditions return to normal

Any questions or concerns should be addressed to Chris Erickson, Director, Patient Family Center at ext 2373.

VAMC TRAVEL PAY

Certain veterans may be reimbursed for travel costs to receive VA medical care. Reimbursement is paid at \$.11 per mile -- or \$.17 per mile if called for a repeat Compensation & Pension (C&P) exam -- and is subject to a deductible of \$3 for each one-way trip and an \$18-per-month maximum payment. Two exceptions to the deductible are travel for C&P exam and special modes of transportation, such as an ambulance or a specially equipped van.

Eligibility: Payments may be made to the following:

- 1 Veterans whose service-connected disabilities are rated 30 percent or more.
- 2 Veterans traveling for treatment of a service connected condition.
- 3 Veterans who receive a VA pension.
- 4 Veterans traveling for scheduled compensation or pension examinations.
- 5 Veterans whose gross household income does not exceed the maximum annual VA pension.
- 6 Veterans whose medical condition requires a special mode of transportation, if they are unable to defray the costs and travel is pre-authorized. Advance authorization is not required in an emergency if a delay would be hazardous to life or health.

Beware of Casualty Notifications from the American Red Cross New Scam Targets Military Spouses Scam Impersonates the American Red Cross

New Scam Targeting Military Spouses: The American Red Cross has learned about a new scam targeting military families. This scam takes the form of false information being told to military families as described below:

The caller (young-sounding, American accent) calls a military spouse and identifies herself as a representative from the Red Cross. The caller states that the spouse's husband (not identified by name) was hurt while on duty in Iraq and was med-evacuated to a hospital in Germany. The caller states they couldn't start treatment until paperwork was accomplished, and that in order to start the paperwork they needed the spouse to verify her husband's social security number and date of birth.

In this case, the spouse was quick to catch on and she did not provide any information to the caller.

American Red Cross representatives typically do not contact military members/dependents directly and almost always go through a commander or first sergeant channels. Military family members are urged not to give out any personal information over the phone if contacted by unknown/unverified individuals, to include confirmation that your spouse is deployed.

It is a federal crime, punishable by up to 5 years in prison, for a person to falsely or fraudulently pretend to be a member of, or an agent for, the American National Red Cross for the purpose of soliciting, collecting, or receiving money or material. In addition, American Red Cross representatives will contact military members/dependents directly only in response to an emergency message initiated by your family. The Red Cross does not report any type of casualty information to family members. The Department of Defense will contact families directly if their military member has been injured. Should any military family member receive such a call, they are urged to report it to their local Family Readiness Group or Military Personnel Flight.

The American Red Cross ensures that the American people are in touch with their family members serving in the United States military by operating a communications network that is open 24-hours, 7 days-a-week,

365 days-a-year. Through a network of employees and volunteers at Red Cross national that link families during emergencies, access to emergency financial assistance, confidential counseling, community support headquarters, local chapters, on military installations, and deployed with troops, the Red Cross offers a broad range of services.

Among these services, the Red Cross provides communications for families left behind, assistance to veterans, and preparedness courses for military personnel and their families. For more information visit the

American Red Cross website at <http://www.redcross.org/>.

(Source: http://www.redcross.org/pressrelease/0,1077,0_314_6732,00.html)

HOME FINANCING ASSISTANCE

The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, a public agency, has low-cost home loans available for low- to moderate-income veterans. As a MHFA-approved lender statewide, we at Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation are interested in providing this information to Minnesota Veterans. We are providing a flyer to you in the hopes that you could post or distribute this information.

FYI, participating veterans must have not been dishonorably discharged and must provide the lender with a numbered Certificate of Service or Discharge from Active Duty, DD form 214.

We realize that you may want know more about MHFA and MMCDC before distributing information. Website addresses for both MHFA and MMCDC are on the flyer. To see the listing of approved MHFA lenders, go to the listing of lenders by city at www.mhfa.state.mn.us/homes/HO_GM_List.pdf. We are listed under Detroit Lakes—MMCDC.

Please call me if you have questions.

Jamie Marks Erickson
Development Officer, MMCDC
218-844-7025
www.mmcdc.com

CANES FOR VETERANS:

Can-Am Care, LLC, announced in APR the “HUGO Salutes Our Veterans” program to provide folding canes to World War II and Korean War Veterans. The HUGO Folding Canes with Interchangeable Handles will be provided at no charge to Veterans who may be in need of mobility assistance. According to Can-Am Care, the program is instituted to recognize the support and efforts members of the United States Armed Forces made for our country during World War II and the Korean War. Can-Am manufactures the HUGO Folding Cane and a number of related mobility assistance products. Veterans are encouraged to contact Can-Am Care at 1(888) 412-4992 M-F 08-1600 EST or refer to www.HUGOSalutes.com. Proof of service may be required. [Source: NAUS Weekly Update 13 Apr 07 ++]

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROGRAM

“A Hero to the Nation – A Hero in the Skies” – with that theme in mind today on Capitol Hill, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Veterans Benefits Administration officials unveil FAA’s Veterans Employment Program. A product of a memorandum of understanding signed by the two agencies last November, the new program establishes a framework for providing transition for veterans with disabilities into the civilian workforce through on-the-job-training programs administered by FAA. Through this partnership, disabled veterans will be able to take advantage of VA vocational rehabilitation benefits while training for select positions in FAA such as air traffic control specialist and airway transportation systems specialist. The FAA Office of Human Resource Management in collaboration with the Academy and Air Traffic Organization has developed a training plan for veterans entering this program. The training, approved by VA, will allow disabled veterans who apply and are approved by VA to use their vocational rehabilitation benefits to attend classes at the Academy. The Academy offers a wide array of training assistance and offers the best aviation training available. Veterans will complete the same training requirements as current FAA employees. Veterans must apply through VA’s Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service. The VR&E Web site, www.vetsuccess.gov, has detailed information on the program.

RETIREE APPRECIATION DAYS 2007

There are currently three RADs scheduled for this year in Minnesota. The first is at the Air Force Reserve base in the Twin Cities on the 24th of August. The second is sponsored by our Chapter 115 at Camp Ripley near Little Falls on the 25th of August. The third and final one is scheduled for the 29th of September at Mystic Lake Casino near Shakopee. Information on Long Term Care, Dental, Defense Finance Accounting, I.D. cards, Tricare and more will be available at all of the RADs.

UPCOMING VETERANS FOCUSED EVENTS

4th of July In Harmony

“Hometown Proud” Honoring all military service persons who are serving and have served our country!

County Veterans Booth at Fillmore County Fair

July 17-21, 2007 at Fairgrounds

Dobie Days—A Salute to Veterans

August 17-18, 2007 in Harmony

For More Info. Call Cory Scrabeck—(507) 456-6122

