



Great Lakes VA HEALTHVIEWS

The Newsletter about Health for Veterans in VISN 12



Volume 6, Issue 3

Fall 2008



Patient Self- Management

Put **YOURSELF** in the driver's seat when it comes to managing your health!!!

Your healthcare team wants you to become actively involved in your health care. Our goal is to plan a course of treatment for you that works best for you and your lifestyle.

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In order to do this, we need you to:

1. Ask Questions.

Never leave an appointment or end a phone call until you feel that you have had all your concerns answered. Be sure you understand the answers. Know your medicines, what they do and what the side effects are. Tell us if something is not working for you.

2. Tell your healthcare team what your goals are.

You know best what your lifestyle and habits are and what will work for you. Goals that are too high can mean defeat before you even get started. We will provide you with education and help, but it is *your* choice to make the changes.

3. Tell us what is working and what is not.

The best way to do this is write things down as they happen. Then

bring these notes to your appointment or use them when you call.

4. Keep your follow-up appointments.

Even if you are feeling better, we still want to go over your treatment plan with you.

5. Bring someone along to your appointments.

The best support is a relative or friend. Your treatment plan may involve changes for them also. For example, if you need to change your diet, this may affect your spouse.

Patient Self-Management is your tool to improve your health and your health care experience!

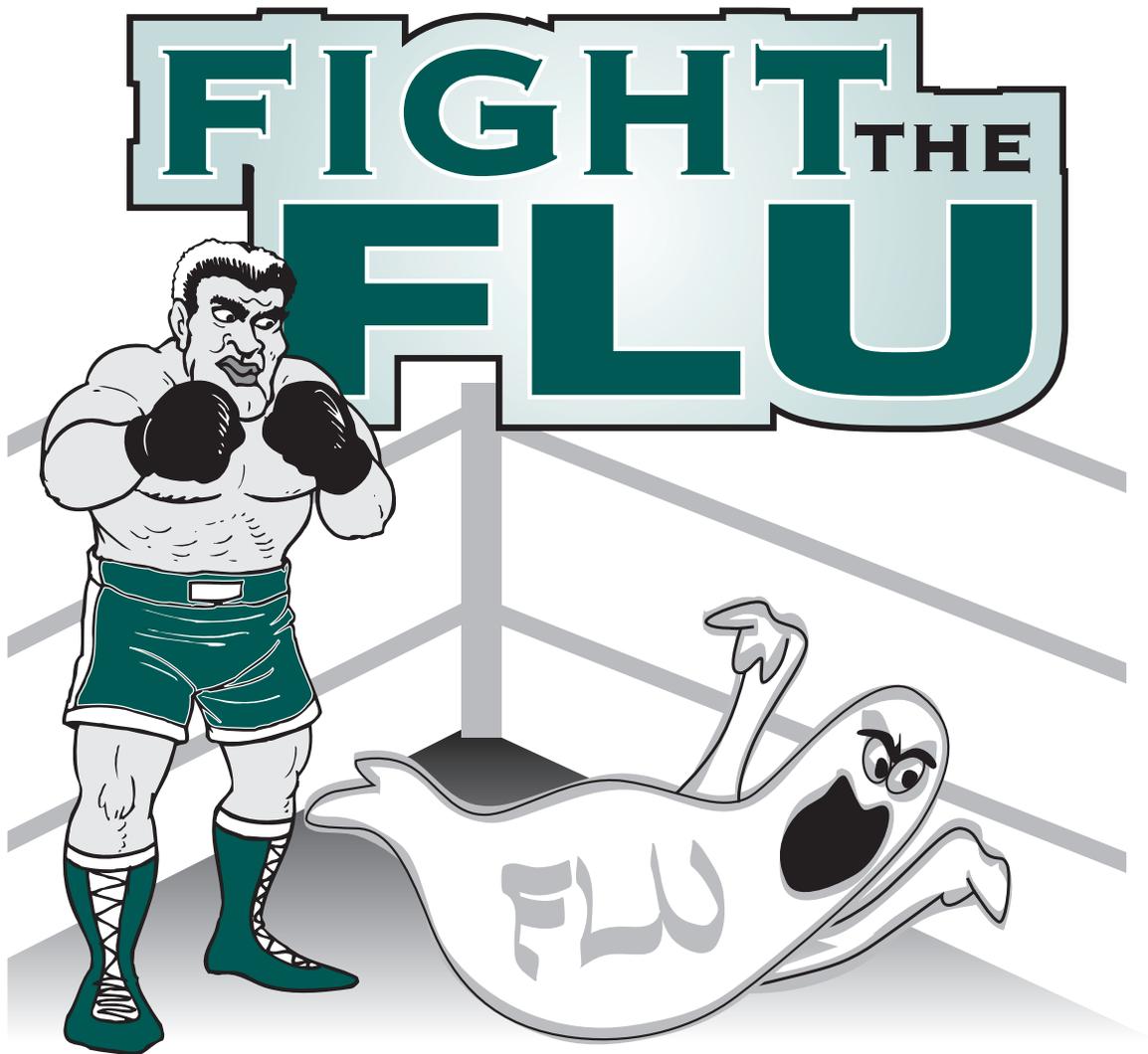
Submitted by:
Sherry Lynn Aichner, RN, MA Ed
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VAMC, Iron Mountain, Mich.

Please Don't Be A NO SHOW



Each year, many appointments are wasted because someone did not show up or call to reschedule.

Please help your fellow veterans by ALWAYS calling in advance to cancel or reschedule if you cannot keep your appointment.



It's Flu Shot Time Again!

Don't forget to get your flu shot! The best time to do this is between October and December. It usually takes a week or two before it starts to protect you. If you don't get one by December, you can still get one up to the following March.

Get a flu shot every year. Remember – you will NOT get the flu from a flu shot.

If you are enrolled in the VA health care system, you can get a flu shot from your nearest VA medical center or clinic. There is no charge (or co-pay) for the flu shot. CHAMPVA members are also able to get the flu shot.

Check with your VA Medical Center or Clinic to find out when flu shots will be given.

HOME CARE CORNER

DUAL CARE

VA and COMMUNITY PROVIDERS

The VA wants to be sure that the healthcare you receive is right for you and that it is safe. Some Veterans choose to go to both a private doctor and the VA. This is called “Dual Care.”

Although the VA would like to provide all of your healthcare, we will work with you and your private doctor to coordinate your care.

There are several things that you need to know about Dual Care.

1. You must have a primary care provider at the VA. This person will coordinate your care and make the final decision about what medicines are right for you. You must come to the VA once a year to SEE this provider and go over your outside health records and treatment plan.
2. You must tell both your private doctor and your VA provider that you want to have your care coordinated.
3. The VA must have the name, address and phone number of your private doctor(s) and you should give your private doctor(s) the same for your VA provider.

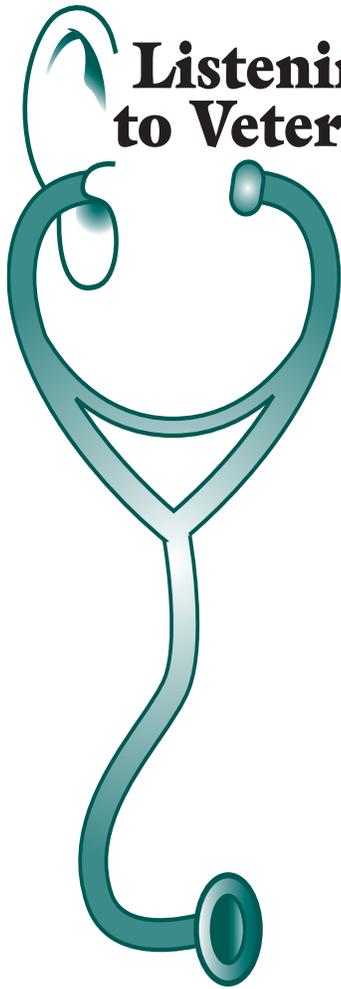


4. You will need to fill out a “Release of Information” form to ensure that the VA has access to your medical records from the private community and your private doctor has access to the VA records.
5. The VA will not pay for your care outside the VA. This includes doctor visits, lab tests, special procedures, x-rays etc. If you prefer to have them done in the community, you will need to pay for them on your own and the VA will need a copy of the test results.
6. Your VA provider must know the names of all the medicine you are receiving from your private doctor(s).
7. The VA pharmacy will NOT automatically fill your private doctor’s prescriptions.
8. Your VA provider will make the final decision on the medicines that you receive from the VA pharmacy. There are some medicines, such as warfarin (Coumadin), lithium, heart pills, thyroid medicines and chemotherapy drugs that involve higher risks for your safety. Your VA provider will need to do some monitoring and tests before ordering these medicines for you.
9. If your VA provider decides a different medicine is right for you, and you prefer the prescription drug your private doctor has requested, you will need to have that prescription filled outside of the VA and you will have to pay for it.



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Source:
The Office of Primary Care: Miyako Chambliss: Dual Care



Answered by:

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Hines VA Hospital
PM&R Program Support Assistant

Do I Need a Medical Alert Bracelet?

There are times when it is important to let others know about your medical information if you cannot speak for yourself.

If you have a chronic medical condition, drug or food allergies, or are taking multiple medicines, you should consider wearing a medical ID. In an emergency, a medical ID bracelet or necklace can provide information about your unique conditions and needs.

Consider getting an ID if you have:

- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ Heart disease (angina, atrial fibrillation, pacemakers)
- ✓ Drug allergies (such as Penicillin)
- ✓ Food allergies (such as peanuts)
- ✓ Insect allergies (such as bee stings)
- ✓ Anemia
- ✓ Ankylosing Spondylitis
- ✓ Asthma



- ✓ Bariatric surgery
- ✓ Blood disorders
- ✓ Breathing disorders
- ✓ Cerebral Palsy
- ✓ COPD
- ✓ Cystic Fibrosis
- ✓ Emphysema
- ✓ Epilepsy, seizures
- ✓ Hearing or sight problems
- ✓ High Blood Pressure
- ✓ Kidney failure
- ✓ Multiple Sclerosis
- ✓ Parkinson's Disease
- ✓ A rare disease
- ✓ Risk of stroke
- ✓ Tourette Syndrome



An ID can also be helpful if you are taking:

- ✓ Blood thinners (Coumadin/Warfarin)

You can also list mental health issues on medical alert jewelry:

- ✓ Autism
- ✓ Attention Deficit Disorder
- ✓ Alzheimer's, dementia, or memory problems
- ✓ Bipolar disorder
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Schizophrenia

Medical alert jewelry with a phone number and address of your caregiver or physician will help provide the best protection. Discuss this issue with your healthcare providers and your family members.

**Check with your primary care provider
if you are interested in getting
medical alert jewelry.**

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Important note: We are not able to mail this newsletter to you. It can be found in waiting rooms of your VA Medical Center and outpatient clinics.

You can also subscribe to the electronic version of this newsletter by going to www.visn12.med.va.gov/subscribe.htm



Your best source for information about your health will always be your health care team. We hope this newsletter will encourage you to ask questions about your health concerns.

Phone Numbers for VISN 12 Hospitals

Hines:	708-202-8387
Iron Mountain:	906-774-3300
Jesse Brown:	312-569-8387
Madison:	608-256-1901
Milwaukee:	1-888-469-6614
North Chicago:	1-800-393-0865
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***"Ask An Expert" Question
or Idea for Future Articles***

Do you have an "Ask An Expert" question or an idea for a future article? Your ideas can be e-mailed or mailed to the Senior Editor.

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VISN 12 VA Healthcare facilities are accredited by The Joint Commission. Joint Commission evaluates healthcare facilities on quality, safety of patient care and safety of the environment.

If you have any concerns about patient care or safety in your facility, first contact the person in charge. If your concern cannot be resolved, the VA encourages you to contact Joint Commission. You may request a "public information interview." Requests can be made to:

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