



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



SEE WHAT'S BREWING

This week, our SDDVA team traveled to Yankton for the Yankton County "What's Brewing" program.

Special thanks to VSO Robert Stickney for hosting the event.

SDDVA's Secretary Greg Whitlock, Field Service Officer DJ Montreal, Claims Office Manager Brett Dickerson, and Cemetery Director Erin Brown provided briefings.

These events are great opportunities for the Department to visit with veterans and hear about the challenges they might be experiencing first-hand. As the advocate for South Dakota veterans, we love to be boots on the ground visiting one-on-one with veterans.

SDDVA plans to hold a few more of these events later this fall.

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STATE VETERANS HOME MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will host a Memorial Day program on Monday, May 27, at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. The program will be held by the Flag Pole Plaza at the Home (2500 Minnekahta Avenue), in Hot Springs and will begin at 10:00 am (MT).

John and Carol Sides will provide the key address.

Musical performances will be provided by the Sandstone Singers and the Hot Springs Community Band.



SD VETERANS CEMETERY MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will host a Memorial Day program on Monday, May 27. The program will begin at 12:00 pm (CT) at the SD Veterans Cemetery (25965 477th Avenue) in Sioux Falls.

“Memorial Day is an opportunity to pay our respects and to reflect on the high cost of freedom,” said South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Greg Whitlock. “Americans who put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms and our way of life have stories worth telling. It’s on us to tell their stories, to honor their lives, and to offer their families and loved ones our eternal support.”

“Memorial Day is the day we pause and honor those that have given so much,” said South Dakota Veterans Cemetery Director Erin Brown. “We hope you can join us in providing the proper remembrance they deserve.”

Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs.



*A Day to Remember and Honor
SDDVA Memorial Day Program
South Dakota Veterans Cemetery*

Monday—May 27, 2024

12:00 Noon



*25965 477th Avenue
Sioux Falls*

POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

Governor Kristi Noem, in coordination with the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, is proclaiming the month of June as “Posttraumatic Stress Injury Awareness Month,” a time to reflect on the causes, symptoms, and treatment of post-traumatic stress injuries.

“The brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who proudly serve and risk their lives to protect our freedom deserve the investment of every possible resource to ensure their lasting physical, mental, and emotional well-being,” the Governor’s proclamation states.

PTSI, which is commonly known as Posttraumatic Stress Injury, is a normal reaction to abnormal circumstances and affects millions of Americans each year. It is most commonly associated with veterans – and has been known by many other terms, including shell shock and combat fatigue. PTSI can affect anyone at any age.

“Our veterans face many life-changing and dangerous situations when they put their lives on the line in defense of our nation’s freedoms,” said Greg Whitlock, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “Raising awareness of PTSI is an important step in ensuring veterans have the support they need to make a successful transition back to civilian life. This will help with increased understanding of unseen emotional struggles resulting from PTSI and is critical to the health and well-being of our returning heroes.”

It is estimated that between 11 and 20 percent of service members and veterans experience symptoms of PTSI. However, less than half of those struggling with the injury seek treatment.

“Every veteran processes their military experiences differently, but for those that are experiencing nightmares, flashbacks, irritability or other symptoms of PTSI, help is available,” said Whitlock. “As with any other service-connected injury, treatment is key to recovery. The better veterans understand their PTSI and the impact it has on their mental and emotional well-being, the more effectively they can treat it and began to heal.”

Specialized treatment for PTSI is available through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>.



VANDERWERFF NAMED HAND/HYDE COUNTY VSO

Amber VanDerWerff has been named the new county veterans service officer for Hand and Hyde County.

In 2007, Amber enlisted in the South Dakota Army National Guard with the 139th Brigade Support Battalion out of Miller as an 88M Motor Transport Operator. Those veterans had a very impactful influence on the start of her career and she is honored to have the opportunity to serve her fellow veterans.

In 2013, she volunteered to deploy with the 1742nd Transportation Company to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. While in Afghanistan they provided convoy security and aided in the downsizing of forces in the southern part of the country.

Amber is currently assigned to Detachment 1, 740th Transportation Company based out of Aberdeen. Besides her deployment, some highlights of her military career have been multiple stateside convoy missions to both the west and east coasts; soldier exchange program to Scotland; United Kingdom, and Germany; and many leadership and specialized schools.

Along with being a motor transport operator, Amber is also a master resiliency trainer and a victim advocate for soldiers of sexual assault. She takes great pride in not only training soldiers to operate in a combat environment but also helping them in many different aspects of their lives with resiliency training and support. She recently joined the cadre team for the South Dakota Warrior Fit course which gives her the platform to train resiliency skills to soldiers across the state.

Amber believes the training she has received, and her experiences, will help her greatly in serving the veterans.

In addition to her duties as VSO, Amber will be working part time at the Hand County Title Company.

Amber can be reached at: 605-853-2389 or emailed at: handhydevso@handcountysd.org.



D-DAY SCREENING

As the 80th D-Day Anniversary approaches, we wanted to let you know that our great partners at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance will be hosting a pre-screening showing of the upcoming D-Day remembrance special.

The pre-screening will be held Monday, June 3, 2024, at 4:00 pm (CT) at the Alliance (1600 W. Russell) in Sioux Falls.

This great event is open to the public. Also, KELOLAND has done numerous stories and videos on National D-Day and they can be viewed at: <https://www.keloland.com/d-day-anniversary/>.



D-DAY
THE GREATEST VICTORY

the ALLIANCE
South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance, Inc.

Kelo
KELOLAND MEDIA GROUP

PRE-SCREENING EVENT
MONDAY, JUNE 3 AT 4PM

1600 W Russell St, Sioux Falls

FREE EVENT - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



WHOLE HEALTH COACHING

Optimizing well-being by assisting you to achieve your health goals based on what is important to you.



Whole Health Point of Contact

Name Dustin Saffel

Phone 1-605-347-2511 ext. 16668

Facility Ft. Meade and Rapid City



va.gov/wholehealth

Health Coaching helps you to realize your goals based on your values and strengths. As you work with a health coach you can expect to:

- ✓ Explore mindfulness
- ✓ Explore what matters to you
- ✓ Participate in self-care strategies
- ✓ Make behavior changes based on your values



Whole Health Coaching addresses all aspects of you as a person, including your mind, body, and spirit. Whole Health Coaching does not replace your current health care team. Coaches do not provide therapy or give clinical advice.



You focus on changing behaviors that are important to your life. Behavior and lifestyle changes become less of "one more thing to do," and more about living the life you want to live.



Health coaches believe a client is an expert in their own health. Coaching services are FREE, and available in-person (individual or group) and via the telephone or computer to best fit your lifestyle.



Live Whole Health. Whole Health

Start exploring what matters to you

Join fellow Veterans and be empowered to explore what matters most to you, support one another as you set and achieve goals, and learn ways to optimize your health and well-being.

Complete your personal health inventory, create SMART Goals, and engage in self-care activities.

All Veterans Welcome

Groups Available

Hot Springs First Monday of Each Month at 1:00 PM

Black Hills V-Tel Room Bldg.53 Room 102

Rapid City CBOC, First Tuesday of Each Month 3:00 PM

Check in at the Mental Health Waiting Area

Fort Meade, First Thursday of Each Month 3:00 PM

Check in at Bldg. 145 Room 108 Education Class Room



Whole Health partners with Veterans to improve health and well-being. It is also helpful for those with complex health problems, chronic pain, and the invisible wounds of war. Veterans getting care at the VA Black Hills believe Whole Health improves their health outcomes.

Early research from Whole Health sites shows:

- Thirty-one percent of Veterans with chronic pain engaged in some Whole Health services.
- Among Whole Health users, opioid use for chronic pain decreased 38%. Those who did not use Whole Health experienced only an 11% decrease.

Compared to Veterans who did not use Whole Health services, Veterans who used Whole health services reported:

- Greater improvements in perceptions of the care received as being more patient-centered.
- Greater improvements in engagement in healthcare and self-care.
- Greater improvements in engagement in life indicating improvements in mission, aspiration and purpose.
- Greater improvements in perceived stress indicating improvements in overall well-being.

What is Whole Health?

This means that your care team will get to know you as a person. They will work with you to develop a personalized health plan. This plan will be based on your values, needs, and goals - What matters to you!

Why is VA changing the way health care is provided to YOU?

Health outcomes in our country are poor. The US is now ranked 37th in life expectancy. Currently, we spend more on health care than any other country. It is time to create a health care system, rather than a disease care system. A system that empowers and helps Veterans to find a path to health and well-being.

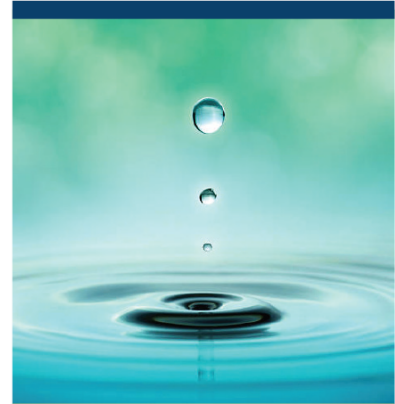


U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Black Hills Health Care System

113 Comanche Rd.
Fort Meade, SD 57741

2165 Promise Rd.
Rapid City, SD 57701

500 North 5th St.
Hot Springs, SD 57747



Whole Health, It Starts With Me

Whole Health is VA's approach to care that supports your health and well-being.

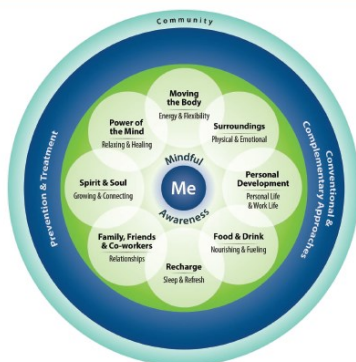
For More Information
Scan the QR CODE



WHOLE HEALTH: WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU ???



For More Information Scan the QR CODE



Whole Health Education

Introduction to Whole Health

This class introduces you to the VA Whole Health approach to care.

Taking Charge of My Life & Health

This 6-9-week peer-led class will provide you with a chance to think about what really matters to you.

THRIVE

This is a 14 week program/group which focuses on Transforming Health and Resilience Through Values Based Experiences whole health group available by VA Video Connect or in person.

#Live Whole Health



Whole Health Services

- Acupuncture
- Battlefield Acupuncture
- Biofeedback
- Chiropractic Care
- Health Coaching
- Nutrition
- Yoga
- Tobacco Cessation Behavior
- Health & Skill Building Classes



When Can I Start Whole Health?

Whole Health Services are available through your VA health care facility. Speak with your care team or contact Whole Health for more information. Whole Health tools, resources, and the Whole Health app are available to you through the website va.gov/wholehealth.

Please call for more information

1-605-347-2511 ext. 16668
or ask your Primary Care Team for more information

THRIVE

whole health group

THRIVE=Transforming Health and Resilience Through Values
Based Experiences

14 Week Whole Health Group

Topics Include: Sleep, Food and Drink, Recharging, Financial
Health, Sexual Health, Work Life Balance.

When: Starting June 20th 1300-1500

Where: Hot Springs Campus-- In person only

Contact: Brittany Epperson, 605-720-7342 or connect with
your PCP for referral.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 27—Sioux Area Veterans Council Memorial Day—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
- May 27 SDDVA Memorial Day Program—State Veterans Home—10:00 am (MT)
- May 27—SDDVA Memorial Day Program—SD Veterans Cemetery—12:00 noon (CT)
- Jun 1—Rich Schild Memorial Poker Run—Keg—Tabor—1:00 pm (CT)
- Jun 5—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 20—Welcome Home Ceremony—Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (CT)
- Jun 7—8—VFW State Conference—Holiday Inn—Spearfish
- Jun 14—Midwest Honor Flight Day of Sweetness—Chick-fil-A—(4005 W. 41st St)—Sioux Falls—7:00 am — 10:00 pm (CT)
- Jun 20—23—American Legion State Conference—Pierre
- Jun 29—LT Donald R. and SGT Fred H. Harms Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—American Legion Post 142—(102 S. Main Street)—Tripp— 2:00 pm (CT)
- Jun 30—Midwest Honor Flight Honor Ride—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls—Registration—1:00 pm/Ride Begins at 2:30 pm (CT)
- Jul 3—SGT Lelund M. Kahler Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Rec Center—(1111 National Street)—Belle Fourche—2:00 pm (MT)
- Jul 10—T/5 Harald Haraldsen Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Lions Civic Center—(210 State Road 20)—Buffalo—2:00 pm (MT)
- Jul 15—6th Annual Tee it up for the Troops Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—Arrowhead Country Club—(3675 Sheridan Lake Road)—Rapid City—7:15 am (MT)
- Jul 17—SD Veterans Council Meeting—VFW Post 17—(802 S. Main St)—Aberdeen
- Jul 19—CPL Russell N. Ferdig Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—United Parish—(2102 E. Main Street)—Elk Point—2:00 pm (CT)
- Jul 24—CPL John C. McDowell Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Travel Plaza—(HWY 281 and Main Street)—Corsica—11:00 am (CT)
- Aug 1—2—South Dakota Suicide Prevention Conference—Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls
- Aug 2—PFC John Tuin Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—American Legion Post 184—(222 Main Street)—Estelline—1:30 pm (CT)
- Aug 5—RM2 Eugene L., RM2 Ordien F., and LT LeRoy M. Herr Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—High School Gym—(500 S. 3rd Street) Bristol— 1:30 pm (CT)
- Aug 10—SGT Terry G. Rada Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Multi Purpose Center—(409 Michigan Avenue)—Geddes—12:00 noon (CT)
- Aug 17—SGT Dennis D. Lawver Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—American Legion Post—(402 S. Broadway Avenue)—Miller—2:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 18—PFC Gunnar D. Becker Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Sanborn County 4-H Building—(23237 405th Avenue)—Forestburg—2:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 21—SD Veterans Council Meeting—VFW Post 791—(209 S. Cedar)—Yankton
- Aug 21—1LT Daniel J. Kirchgesler Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—St Thomas More High School—(300 Fairmont Blvd)—Rapid City—2:00 pm (MT)
- Aug 26—Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—The Barrel House—(4701 E. 54th St)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—8:00 pm (CT)

(Continued)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Aug 28—Sep 2—SD State Fair—Huron
- Aug 29—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair—Northwest Energy Freedom Stage—Huron
- Sep 3—5—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls
- Sep 18—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Rapid City
- Oct 12—Midwest Honor Flight Third Annual Elvis Night—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls
- Oct 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post—(1229 Western Ave)—Brookings
- Nov 9—Fifth Annual Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair We've Got Your Six—Sturgis Community Center—(1401 Lazelle Street)—Sturgis—11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 9—Third Annual Day County Veterans Banquet—Webster Armory—5:00 pm (CT)
- Nov 11—1LT Josef Thorne Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Beresford High School Gym—(301 W. Maple Street)—Beresford—1:30 pm (CT)
- Nov 18—Wreaths Across America Fundraiser—The Barrel House—(4701 E. 54th St)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—8:00 pm (CT)
- Nov 20—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV—(1519 W. 51st St)—Sioux Falls
- Nov 20—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Sioux Falls
- Nov 21—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown
- Nov 22—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City
- Nov 23—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Pierre
- Dec 3—Governor's Budget Address—1:00 pm
- Dec 14—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)

2025 Events

- Jan 14—Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm
- Jan 14—Legislative Session starts
- Jan 15—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Pierre
- Feb 14—16—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Oacoma
- Jun 12—15—VFW State Convention—Ramkota—Pierre
- Jun 19—22—American Legion State Conference—Huron
- Dec 13—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)

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