

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO QUIT

Last month, Army Veteran Christine Vierra was recognized at the annual Healthy Living Recognition Event for her efforts to quit smoking. After more than 40 years of smoking, Christine is now smoke-free.

Christine could tell that she was losing energy and strength, and that it was getting hard to breathe. She knew smoking was bad for her. So, one day she told her doctor at the Michael A. Marzano VA Outpatient Clinic that she was quitting, plain and simple.

"I didn't think about it; I just did it. My doctor gave me Wellbutrin and

within three days I had quit smoking. It was August 28, 2014 and I have not smoked since."

Veterans have the best chance of quitting smoking if they use smoking cessation medications, like the nicotine patch and gum, while also getting counseling from their VA provider or a quitline counselor (1-855-QUIT VET (1-855-784-8838)). Christine was mentally prepared to quit, but there was still that physical addiction, so she occasionally chewed Nicorette



to help in her quit efforts.

Quitting smoking is the single best thing you can do to improve your health. Quitting is never easy, but you don't have to do it alone. VA Butler Healthcare offers support and resources to aid you.

"At the VA clinic in Hermitage, the staff is so wonderful. My doctor was willing

to do whatever it took to help me quit," said Christine. "The moment I told them I quit, they were actually calling people into the room to congratulate me. Their support was tremendous."

Now more than a year since she quit, Christine has noticed significant change. "There's a change in my energy and endurance, and even my sleep is better! I can breathe quite a bit better too. It's just amazing."

Christine hopes other Veterans seek support from VA and

quit smoking. "Just do it. Talk to your VA doctor. If Wellbutrin or Chantix will help, do it. Stack the deck against smoking. It's never too late to quit."

Talk to your VA Provider today about how to quit tobacco, including getting medication to improve your chances of quitting or a referral to VA's tobacco cessation classes and support groups. For more information on VA's smoking cessation services, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking.

“Stack the deck against smoking. It's never too late to quit.”
— Christine Vierra, Army Veteran

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY...FEBRUARY

- 3** Four U.S. Army Chaplains die saving others as the *Dorchester* sinks during World War II. They gave up their own life jackets when the supply ran out, joined arms, said prayers, and sang hymns as they went down with the ship [*February 3 is known as Four Chaplains Memorial Day*] (1943)
- 4** The United Service Organizations (USO) is created to entertain American troops [*75th anniversary*] (1941)
- 7** The first National Wear Red Day is celebrated to promote awareness of heart disease [*The 2016 National Wear Red Day is Friday, February 5*] (2003)
- 13** The first medal of honor is awarded (1861)
- 23** Desert Storm Ground War begins [*25th anniversary*] (1991)

QUIT SMOKING

Avoid the runny nose and frostbitten toes that come with smoking outdoors. Text the word "VET" to 47848 to get tips and encouragement while you quit. www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking/smokefreevet.asp



FLU VS. COLD KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

You can prevent the spread of flu and colds this winter by...

- 1) Getting your flu shot
- 2) Staying home when sick
- 3) Cleaning your hands
- 4) Covering your coughs and sneezes
- 5) Keeping surfaces clean (i.e., countertops, computer keyboards, door handles, etc.)

2016 WHEELCHAIR GAMES REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

The 36th National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) will be held in Salt Lake City, UT, June 27 – July 2. The 36th NVWG will offer 19 events plus one additional sport – triathlon. Keeping with the mountain theme, bobsledding will be offered as the year’s exhibition sport.

Every year more than 600 athletes come together for the NVWG. Will you be one of them? The deadline for registration is April 15. Learn more: www.wheelchairgames.org.

SYMPTOMS	FLU	COLD
Fever	Usual - 100 F or higher	Rare
Chills	Common	Uncommon
Body or muscle aches	Common - can be severe	Uncommon or mild
Headache	Common - can be severe	Uncommon
Feeling tired and weak	Common - can be severe	Sometimes - usually mild; you don't feel tired
Cough	Common - can last 2-3 weeks	Common - mild to moderate hacking
Sneezing	Sometimes	Common
Runny or stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common
Chest discomfort	Common - can be severe	Sometimes - can be mild or moderate



STAYING UPDATED ON THE NEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

Construction is progressing on the 168,000 square foot Health Care Center (HCC) located on North Duffy Road. Completion is anticipated to be next year! You can keep up-to-date on the building progress by visiting www.butler.va.gov/news/building.asp or attending the quarterly HCC Town Hall Meetings. View the VA Butler web calendar to check for upcoming meetings, www.butler.va.gov/calendar.asp.

We want to hear from you! Email amanda.kurtz2@va.gov to share your story with us!

EVENTS



800.362.8262
724.287.4781

www.butler.va.gov



butler.va.gov



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www.butler.va.gov/news/MediaCenter.asp

5 National Wear Red Day

Friday, February 5

VA Butler Healthcare

Wear red to support women's heart health!

9 Veterans Behavioral Health Council Meeting

Tuesday, February 9 • 10am

Room 218WS, VA Butler Healthcare

14 National Salute to Veteran Patients Week

Sunday, February 14—Saturday, February 20

www.volunteer.va.gov/NationalSaluteVeteranPatients.asp



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