



(December 28, 2015)

In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

Alma L. Lee
National VA Council, President

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**In This Briefing:** [U.S. Medicine Focus - HIV/HCV](#)

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SEATTLE - For the VA, the combination of effective treatment options and much lower prevalence of HCV in younger veterans may offer a light at the end of the tunnel - and a turning point in the steady rise of HCV-associated complications such as cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma in only a few years. The VA estimates that 233,000 veterans have HCV, with about 180,000 of them having received a diagnosis.

[More](#)

<http://www.usmedicine.com/agencies/department-of-veterans-affairs/cirrhosis-expected-to-peak-by-2021-in-va-liver-cancer-epidemic-continues/>

For Treated Patients, HIV Status No Greater Risk for Surgery Than Older Age

WEST HAVEN, CT - Historically, high post-operative mortality rates among HIV-infected patients caused many physicians and patients to defer or avoid surgery all together. For today's veterans with HIV, however, the infection poses no greater risk of death following surgery than a number of other conditions. In fact, a recent study found that age and nutritional status can have similar effect. [More](#)



Joseph King, MD

<http://www.usmedicine.com/agencies/department-of-veterans-affairs/for-treated-patients-hiv-status-no-greater-risk-for-surgery-than-older-age/>

Pharmacy Update

TRICARE Promises Cost Savings for Everyone with RX Shift

WASHINGTON - It's a case of bad news-good news: TRICARE beneficiaries now have fewer options for getting certain prescriptions filled, but their costs are lower. As mandated by the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act, beneficiaries who take brand-name maintenance medications must fill their prescriptions at military treatment facilities or through TRICARE's mail-order pharmacy. Generics and medications for acute illnesses can still be filled through retail pharmacies, many of which opposed the changes. [More](#)

<http://www.usmedicine.com/non-clinical-topics/pharmacy/tricare-promises-cost-savings-for-everyone-with-rx-shift/>

Dermatology Clinical Consult

Scarce Sun Protection in Iraq, Afghanistan Put Troops at Risk

NASHVILLE, TN - It wasn't only the climate that increased the risk of skin cancer for military personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Lack of sun protection also was a contributor, according to a new study, as was length of sun exposure day to day. That made scarce education about sun exposure and limited access to sunscreen even more

dangerous.  [More](#)

<http://www.usmedicine.com/clinical-topics/dermatology/scarce-sun-protection-in-iraq-afghanistan-put-troops-at-risk/>

Gout Clinical Consult

Evaluation of Allopurinol Use for Acute Gout Attack

OMAHA, NE - Comorbid conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, or congestive heart failure raise the mortality risk for lung cancer patients compared to those without the conditions, according to a study funded by the VHA. Patients with comorbidity were found to have poorer survival at each stage, although the difference in survival between patients with and without comorbidity seemed to be greater in less advanced stages  [More](#)

<http://www.usmedicine.com/rheumatology/evaluation-of-allopurinol-use-for-acute-gout-attack/>

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