

Happy New Year! I hope y'all got some fun toys for Christmas. And, I hope, the New Year will bring many blessings to Roseau County veterans and their families.

I mentioned in a previous article that if you are currently receiving your prescription meds through the VA system, then you don't have to worry about signing up for Medicare part D. But, if you want to, you can, just for the convenience of getting your meds locally. Each of you will have to make that decision on your own, depending on what you think is best for your situation.

OK, this is important **only** if you are a veteran receiving **total** disability benefits based on **unemployability**. Employment questionnaires were sent out in October to veterans with the aforementioned classification. If you received one of these, you **absolutely must** complete it and return it as instructed. Questions?

Now, back to the prescriptions subject. Beginning **January 9, 2006**, the Fargo VA Medical Center will implement three changes to the prescription refill process. They are attempting to concentrate efforts on improving service for patients needing **immediate** prescription service, without inconveniencing others.

Change # 1:

They will require the use of the **"No Waiting"** prescription refill service to pick up prescription refills in person at the pharmacy. This can be accomplished by the following methods.

1. Call the 1-800-661-0827 refill line.
Specify "Window" pickup service.
The refill order will be ready for pick up in two hours.
- OR**
2. Use the "PICK UP TOMORROW" box.
Drop your refill slip in the box next to the pharmacy window.
Your order will be ready for pick up after 10:00 am the next business day.

Both services are available Monday thru Friday, **excluding Holidays**, 8:00 am - 6:00 pm.

Both methods eliminate waiting in line to request refills in person, and refills will be ready for pick up at your convenience.

Change # 2

Prescriptions written or renewed during clinic visits will be mailed, with the following exceptions:

- New medication that should be started immediately
- Renewals/refills where the veteran has less than a 7-day supply on hand, in which case the VA will provide a 10-day partial supply and mail the balance. Delivery is normally 4 working days.

Change # 3

Window pickup prescriptions left **unclaimed** for 7 days will be returned to stock and the refill credited back. In the past, prescriptions left for 3 days were mailed to the veteran's home.

If you have any questions or concerns, please phone **1-800-410-9723**, extension 2493 or 2494, and ask the pharmacy personnel to explain just how these changes might apply to your situation. I don't know about you, but I'd say this is about all I want to write about prescriptions and pharmacies for awhile!

On to a new subject! If you're thinking about college or other post-high school education, keep reading. The VA has readjusted the GI Bill Basic Payment rate to reflect the increased cost of education tuition and other expenses associated with pursuing a college degree. Now wait a minute, don't get your hopes up too much, these are increases, but fairly small ones. But then again, better than nothing! The Active Duty GI Bill will increase from \$1004 a month for a full-time student to \$1034 a month. The Selective Reserve (S.R.) GI Bill will go from \$288 a month to \$297. The Activated Reserve GI Bill will be up to \$827 depending on the length of activation. The GI Bill OJT and Apprenticeship program jumps from \$753 (\$216 for S.R.) to \$879 (\$252 for S.R.). The DEA rate increases to \$827 a month. You can use this website [Military.com School Finder](http://Military.com/School-Finder) to contact military-friendly schools who offer programs tailored for service members.

Ok, sorry, seems there's not anything real exciting to write about right now. If you have any suggestions for topics or areas you'd like more info about, please give me a call at 463-3308. I'll be out of the office from 10-14 Jan., but if you leave a message and a phone

number, I'll call you back. And, remember, if you did leave me a message and you have not heard back from me, it's because my answering machine "has it in for me" and I am fighting hard with it to convince it to straighten up or I'll get a new system. Another subject: **APPOINTMENTS**. If you really need/want to see me, I strongly recommend a phone call to set up an appointment. This gives me time to review/study your situation, to make any necessary calls prior to your arrival, and lets me get back to you on any additional info you need to bring with you.

Over and out.