

ALBANY VAMC

WOMEN'S HEALTH NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
Stratton VA Medical Center



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WHOLE HEALTH

"Caring for Your Health and Well Being"

WHAT IS WHOLE HEALTH

Whole Health supports your health & well-being. Whole Health centers around what matters to you, **NOT** what is the matter with you. This means your health team will get to know you as a person, before working with you to develop a personalized health plan based on your values, needs, & goals



WHOLE HEALTH COACH

JENNIFER BETANCOURT, Whole Health Coach
Jennifer will provide an overview of the Whole Health approach to care.

CONVERSATION TOPICS

- Reflecting on what REALLY matters to you
- Defining or refining your mission, aspiration, & purpose
- Learning about areas of self-care
- Introduction to the Personal Health Inventory (PHI)



WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 18, 2026 11 AM TO 12 PM

**WOMEN'S HEALTH CONFERENCE ROOM D805
AND FOR THE 1ST TIME
VIRTUALLY**

RSVP TO JAMIE HARRIGAN AT 518-626-7274



THE NATION GOES RED IN FEBRUARY

In 2004, the American Heart Association (AHA) faced a challenge. Cardiovascular disease claimed the lives of nearly 500,000 American women each year, yet women were not paying attention. In fact, many even dismissed it as an older man's disease. To dispel the myths and raise awareness of heart disease & stroke as the number one killer of women, the American Heart Association created Go Red for Women, a passionate, emotional, social initiative designed to empower women to take charge of their heart health.

Go Red for Women encourages awareness of the issue of women and heart disease, and also action to save more lives. The movement harnesses the energy, passion and power women have to band together and collectively wipe out heart disease. It challenges them to know their risk for heart disease and take action to reduce their personal risk. It also gives them the tools they need to lead a heart healthy life.

In the past, heart disease and heart attack have been predominantly associated with men. Historically, men have been the subjects of the research done to understand heart disease and stroke, which has been the basis for treatment guidelines and programs. This led to an oversimplified, distorted view of heart disease and risk, which has worked to the detriment of women. Because women have been largely ignored as a specific group, their awareness of their risk of this often-preventable disease has suffered. Only 55 percent of women realize heart disease is their No. 1 killer and less than half know what are considered healthy levels for cardiovascular risk factors like blood pressure and cholesterol. The Go Red for Women movement works to make sure women know they are at risk so they can take action to protect their health.

From landmarks to online communities, neighborhoods to news anchors, this annual groundswell unites millions of people for a common goal: saving more women's lives. Wear red to be seen, to be counted, to be heard, and to make an impact. Together, we are stronger than heart disease and stroke.

***Did you know that February is the only month that can pass without a full moon?
With the next happening 2037.***



NATIONAL
**GO RED
FOR WOMEN**

FEBRUARY 6, 2026

Join the Women's Health Team
in the main lobby
8 to 10 am

Love your heart, learn more
about keeping it healthy.

Cardiovascular disease is
the No.1 killer of women —
but together, we can
rewrite the story.

www.heart.org



WOMEN AND STRESS

Chronic Stress and Women's Health

Adapting to stress is important because chronic, unmanaged stress can lead to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. These problems impact more than 1 in 5 women in the United States.



Stress can also lead to unhealthy habits:



Overeating



Physical inactivity



Smoking

Healthy Ways To Cope With Stress



Speak to your health care professional about stress in your life and how it may impact your health.

Take care of your body.



Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.



Exercise regularly.



Get plenty of sleep.



Avoid tobacco and excessive alcohol use.



Take deep breaths, and stretch regularly.



Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.



Connect with your community or faith-based organizations. Get in touch online, or by phone or mail.



Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to news stories.

Learn More at heart.org/Stress

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CENTER FOR WOMEN VETERANS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Center's mission is to advocate for improved outcomes and access to VA benefits, services, and opportunities for women Veterans through education, outreach, and collaboration. The vision to empower and encourage women Veterans to trust and choose VA.

Check out OWH new Facebook Page.



Center for Women Veterans, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

27K followers • 188 following

Message

Following

Search

Did you know that February comes from Februa, a Roman purification festival held on Feb 15?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ARMY NURSE CORPS

FOR OVER 125 YEARS, THE ARMY NURSE CORPS HAVE SERVED OUR NATION WITH UNWAVERING COMMITMENT, COMPASSION, & BRAVERY, PROVIDING ESSENTIAL MEDICAL CARE TO OUR SERVICEMEMBERS IN TIME OF NEED.

WOMEN HAVE BEEN PIVOTAL IN SUPPORTING OUR ARMED FORCES, DATING BACK TO THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. FROM FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE'S GROUNDBREAKING WORK IN THE CRIMEAN WAR TO THE NURSES WHO SERVED BRAVELY DURING WWI, WWII, KOREAN WAR, VIETNAM WAR, & ONGOING CONFLICTS GLOBALLY, THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN IMMEASURABLE.

AS WE HONOR THE ARMY NURSE CORPS ON THEIR 125TH BIRTHDAY, LET US ALSO RECOGNIZE THE BROADER CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALL WOMEN VETERANS. THEIR LEGACY OF SERVICE CONTINUES TO PAVE THE WAY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, ENSURING OUR MILITARY REMAINS STRONG AND COMPASSIONATE.



ESTABLISHED FEBRUARY 2, 1901

IN THE NEW YEAR

It's easy to leave the doctor's office and immediately feel a sense of regret. Have you ever left an appointment, only to later realize you forgot to mention a certain health condition, or a new medication that you wanted to discuss? This is common. When you're sitting in an exam room, often feeling rushed or nervous, it's easy for your carefully prepared mental list of questions to vanish.

The environment of a medical appointment—often referred to as the “white coat effect”—creates pressure. Appointments are timed, doctors are efficient, and your attention is naturally focused on the interaction and the results being shared with you. Relying solely on memory is risky, but a simple written list puts you back in control of the conversation. One rule of thumb, before your visit, is to list your top three concerns and goals.

IT'S ALSO HELPFUL TO FOLLOW THESE TIPS:

- **Start early and keep it handy:** Don't wait until the night before. Start your list the moment you book the appointment. Use a dedicated space—a small notebook, a note-taking app on your phone, or a piece of paper taped to your refrigerator. This allows you to add items as they occur to you over days or weeks.
- **Be specific, not vague:** When writing down a symptom or concern, include the Who, What, When and Where details. Vague: “I have chest pain.” Specific: “Chest Pain: A sharp pressure, happens only when I climb stairs, lasts about 30 seconds, and goes away when I rest.” The more specific you are, the faster your doctor can narrow down a diagnosis.
- **Prioritize your concerns:** Put your two or three most critical, urgent or worrisome items at the very top. This ensures that even if the appointment runs short, the most important topics are addressed first. You can let the doctor know, “I have four things I want to discuss, starting with the pain in my knee.”
- **Include medication details:** If you have questions about side effects, dosage or interactions with supplements, write down the exact names and doses of every drug or vitamin in question.

A prepared list transforms your doctor's visit from a passive conversation into a focused, collaborative discussion. It demonstrates that you are an engaged partner in your own health care.



Wellness Workshop for Veterans

-Interactive Workshop-

A ONE DAY WORKSHOP:

- ◊ Learn about wellness and what it can mean for you
- ◊ Make the best use of your mental and physical health services
- ◊ Learn how mental health, emotional health and physical wellness will help you to achieve your goals
- ◊ Learn how to manage day-to-day stress
- ◊ Stay well by connecting with others



March 6, 2026 TIME: 9:30-3:00

LUNCH PROVIDED

Location: 3rd Floor Auditorium

For more information or to RSVP please Contact:

Sarah Mulhall, LCSW 518-414-6327 or

Dr. Michelle Browne (518) 626-5343

****SPACE IS LIMITED. RSVP REQUIRED****

Women's Winter Coats Available

Center for Development
&
Civic Engagement

9th Floor D-Wing



BLACK HISTORY MONTH—REBECCA LEE CRUMPLER, MD

If you were to take a quiz on African Americans in the United States and their contributions to the medical profession, one may not know the name [Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler](#). Dr. Crumpler was the first Black female physician in the United States.

Born Rebecca Davis in Delaware on February 8, 1831, she grew up in Pennsylvania, where her aunt provided care for the ill and exposed her to the field of medicine. Rebecca attended a prominent private school, the West-Newton English and Classical School in Massachusetts, as a “special student.” In 1852, she moved to Charlestown, Massachusetts, and worked as a nurse. In 1860, unbeknownst to her, she was the first Black woman to apply to medical school and was accepted into the [New England Female Medical College](#), the first women’s medical college globally.

Dr. Crumpler experienced racism, sexism, and constant questioning of her intellectual prowess. Her reality was one that most people could not comprehend nor thrive within. Regardless, she understood that the Black community’s health was not crucial for many. Thus, she worked in poor communities of Richmond, Virginia, and Boston,



The legacy of [Dr. Crumpler's passion](#) is documented in “[A Book of Medical Discourses in Two Parts](#),” which was published in 1883 by Cashman, Keating, and Co., of Boston. Dr. Crumpler’s writings are the first textbook authored by a Black academic. The book is divided, as the title implies, into two sections. The first part focuses on “treating the cause, prevention, and cure of infantile bowel complaints, from birth to the close of the teething period, or after the fifth year.” The second section contains “miscellaneous information concerning the life and growth of beings; the beginning of womanhood; the cause, prevention, and cure of many of the most distressing complaints of women, and youth of both sexes.” The volume, which may well be the first medical text by an African American author, is dedicated “to mothers, nurses, and all who may desire to mitigate the afflictions of the human race.”

Did you know that the odds of being born on February 29th are about 1 in 1,461?

BLACK HISTORY MONTH—SHIRLEY CHISHOLM

Shirley Anita Chisholm (November 30, 1924 – January 1, 2005) was an American politician who, in 1968, became the first black woman to be elected to the United States Congress. Chisholm represented New York's 12th congressional district, a district centered in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn for seven terms from 1969 to 1983. In 1972, she became the first black candidate for a major-party nomination for President of the United States. Throughout her career, she was known for taking “a resolute stand against economic, social, and political injustices”, as well as being a strong supporter of black civil rights and women's rights.

She earned her Bachelor of Arts from Brooklyn College in 1946, majoring in sociology and minoring in Spanish (a language that she would employ at times during her political career). She won prizes for her debating skills and graduated *cum laude*. During her time at Brooklyn College, she was a member of Delta Sigma Theta sorority and the Harriet Tubman Society. As a member of the Harriet Tubman Society, she advocated for inclusion (specifically in terms of the integration of black soldiers in the military during World War II), the addition of courses that focused on African-American history and the involvement of more women in the student government.

Chisholm entered the world of politics in 1953, when she joined Wesley "Mac" Holder's effort to elect Lewis Flagg Jr. to the bench as the first black judge in Brooklyn. The Flagg election group later transformed into the Bedford-Stuyvesant Political League (BSPL). The BSPL pushed candidates to support civil rights, fought against racial discrimination in housing, and sought to improve economic opportunities and services in Brooklyn.

Chisholm sought to run for Thomas R. Jones’ seat in the NYS assembly in 1964. She faced resistance based on her sex, with the UDC hesitant to support female candidates. Chisholm was a member of the New York State Assembly from 1965 to 1968, sitting in the 175th, 176th and 177th New York State Legislatures. By May 1965, she had already been honored in a “Salute to Women Doers” affair in New York. In 1968, Chisholm ran for the U.S. House of Representatives from New York's 12th congressional district. Her campaign slogan was “Unbought and unbossed”. In the June 18 Democratic primary, Chisholm defeated two other black opponents, State Senator William S. Thompson and labor official Dollie Robertson. In the general election, she staged an upset victory over James Farmer, the former director of the Congress of Racial Equality, winning by an approximately two-to-one margin. Chisholm thereby became the first black woman elected to Congress, and she was the only woman in the first-year class that year.



CHARITY ADAMS EARLEY

Charity Adams Earley (December 5, 1918 – January 13, 2002) was a United States Army officer. She was the first African-American woman to become an officer in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (later WACs) and was the commanding officer of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, which was made up of African-American women serving overseas during World War II. Adams was the highest-ranking African-American woman in the army by the completion of the war.

Adams was born on December 5, 1918, in Kittrell, North Carolina, and grew up in Columbia, South Carolina. She graduated from Booker T. Washington High School as valedictorian and from Wilberforce University in Ohio in 1938, majoring in math and physics. Charity Adams Earley was initiated into the Beta chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority while attending Wilberforce University. After graduation, she returned to Columbia, where she taught mathematics at the local high school while studying part-time for a M.A. degree in psychology at the Ohio State University, receiving her master's degree in 1946.

Adams enlisted in the U.S. Army's Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) in July 1942. She was one of the first African-American women to be an officer in the WAAC. At the time, the U.S. Army was still segregated, so she was placed in a company with fellow female African-American officers and stationed at Fort Des Moines. In 1943, she was assigned to be the training supervisor at base headquarters.

In December 1944, Adams led the only battalion of Black WACs ever to serve overseas. They were stationed in Birmingham, England. The women began to socialize with the citizens and broke through prejudices on both sides. Adams was put in charge of a postal directory service unit. Another part of her job included raising the morale of women. Adams achieved this by creating beauty parlors for the women to relax and socialize in.

In January 1945, she was appointed the commanding officer of the first battalion of African-American women, the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion. They were stationed first in Edgbaston, a suburb of Birmingham, England. Three months later they were moved to Rouen, France, and then to Paris. They were responsible for the delivery of millions of pieces of mail to soldiers during World War II.

The **6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion**, nicknamed the "**Six Triple Eight**", was a predominantly-Black, multi-ethnic battalion of the US Women's Army Corps (WAC) that managed postal services. The 6888th had 855 women and was led by Major Charity Adams. It was the only Black and multi-ethnic US Women's Army Corps unit sent overseas during World War II. The group motto was "No mail, low morale". The battalion was organized into five companies: Headquarters, and Companies A, B, C, and D. Most of the 6888th worked as postal clerks, but others were cooks, mechanics and held other support positions, so that the 6888th was a self-sufficient unit.

By the completion of the war, Lieutenant Colonel Adams was the highest ranking African-American woman in the military. At the conclusion of the war, when asked about her groundbreaking achievements, Adams responded simply: "I just wanted to do my job." After celebrating victory, she left the service in 1946 to continue her education.

Adams received many honors and awards, including a Woman of the Year from the National Council of Negro Women in 1946, the Top Ten Women of the Miami Valley Dayton Daily News in 1965, and Service to the Community Award from the Ohio State Senate in 1989. In 1987, she received the Senior Citizens Gold Watch Award. She was listed on the Smithsonian Institution's 110 most important historical Black women list, *Black Women Against the Odds*, in 1982. She was inducted into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame in 1979 and the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame in 1993. She was also inducted into the South Carolina Black Hall of Fame and named citizen of the year by The Montgomery County Board of Commissioners in 1991. In 1995, she was given public recognition at the groundbreaking of the Military Women's Memorial; located at the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington County, Virginia, and in 1996, she was honored by the National Postal Museum.

On August 8, 2022, The Naming Commission of the U.S. Department of Defense made recommendations for U.S. Army post name changes. Fort Lee, Virginia, was to be redesignated Fort Gregg-Adams, after Lieutenant General Arthur J. Gregg and Lieutenant Colonel Charity Adams Earley. The name change officially occurred on April 27, 2023 and became the first US military fort named for African Americans.

On June 12, 2024, the Dayton Veterans Affairs Medical Center honored her by renaming their women's clinic as the "Lieutenant Colonel Charity Adams-Earley Women's Clinic."



KINGS CAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 2 (17.5-ounce) cans jumbo cinnamon rolls with icing
- 2 ounces cream cheese
- Sugar crystals in purple, yellow, & green
- Pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees & spray a Bundt or tube pan with non-stick cooking spray.
2. Pop open the cinnamon roll tubes & remove the icing. Then line the bottom with the rolls. You may have to squeeze them in there.
3. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the cinnamon rolls are no longer gooey.
4. Turn out onto platter to cool.
5. In the meantime, mix the two icing packets with 2 ounces of softened cream cheese.
6. Once the cake is cool, spread the icing and decorate with alternating sugar colors.



NUTRITION

Calories: 456kcal | Carbohydrates: 62g | Protein: 6g | Fat: 21g | Saturated Fat: 10g | Polyunsaturated Fat: 0.1g | Monounsaturated Fat: 1g | Trans Fat: 1g | Cholesterol: 7mg | Sodium: 912mg | Potassium: 9mg | Sugar: 27g | Vitamin A: 95IU | Calcium: 7mg | Iron: 2mg

Kings Cake History

The King Cake is believed to have originated in France around the 12th century. These early Europeans celebrated the coming of the three wise men bearing gifts twelve days after Christmas calling it the Feast of the epiphany, Twelfth Night, or King's Day.

The main part of the celebration was the baking of a King's Cake to honor the three Kings. The cakes were made circular to portray the circular route used by the kings to get to the Christ Child, which was taken to confuse King Herod who was trying to follow the wise men so he could kill the Christ Child. In these early King Cakes a bean, pea, or coin was hidden inside the cake. The person who got the hidden piece was declared King for the day or was said to have good luck in the coming year.

In Louisiana, Twelfth Night also signifies the beginning of the carnival season which ends with Mardi Gras Day. The bean, pea and the coin have been replaced by a small plastic baby to symbolize the Christ Child. The person who gets the baby is expected to carry on the carnival festivities by hosting the next King Cake party.



NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY®

Friday, February 6

**CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE
IS THE NO. 1 KILLER OF WOMEN.**

We wear RED for every woman's story of
strength, survival, and sisterhood.

Because no woman should face
cardiovascular disease alone.

Together, we create a community
where every heart is seen,
every voice is heard, and
every life is celebrated.

WearRedDay.org | #WearRedDay

Go Red for Women is nationally sponsored by



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