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## News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
**March 5, 2012**

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### **VA San Diego Healthcare System Celebrates 40 Years of Veteran Care**

VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) will celebrate 40 years of Veteran service with a ceremony to commemorate the official opening date on March 15. The 40th anniversary commemoration ceremony will take place in the multipurpose room at the San Diego VA Medical Center at La Jolla from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. "We're proud to offer 40 years of quality care and innovative achievements at our healthcare system," said Robert M. Smith, acting director for VASDHS. "While the technology and the methods may have changed since 1972, our drive to provide the highest quality service remains the same."

On May 30, 1969, ground was broken for a new Veterans Administration Hospital on 26 acres of what was once Marine Corps Rifle Range, Camp Calvin B. Matthews. The 400,000 square foot project, designed by Charles Luckman and Associates and constructed by the Bateson Construction Company, was estimated to have cost \$35.5 million. The official dedication ceremony was held on March 15, 1972. Planned employment at the facility was about 1,600 (including 1,100 local hires,) with a planned operating budget of \$15-16 million.

By contrast, we were estimated to have 2,544 employees during the fiscal year 2011, with an operating budget of \$546,596,108. Some other changes from 1972 to last fiscal year include:

- Currently provide care for the largest population of Veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan in the nation -- 34,370 OEF/OIF/OND Veterans enrolled since 2003;
- An estimated 800 patients at the end of 1972 versus the 72,419 patients VASDHS had at the end of 2011;
- Added five community clinics in Chula Vista, Escondido, Imperial Valley, Mission Valley and Oceanside.
- No reliance on computers on 1972, versus complete integration of computers into our health care system in 2012;
- VA San Diego was the first medical center in San Diego to have a fully implemented computerized medical record system in 1998;
- Five to ten research projects in 1972, versus the 516 research projects in 2011;
- Research budget of \$300,000 in 1972 versus \$55,500,000 budget in 2011.

For more information, please contact Cindy Butler at (858) 552-4373.

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