

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

VA San Diego
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VA San Diego Healthcare System Highlighted in Healthcare Equality Index 2016
VA San Diego Healthcare System Named as “Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality” by National Survey

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – March 24, 2016 – VA San Diego Healthcare System, has been recognized as a [*“Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality”*](#) by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, the educational arm of the country’s largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization.

The findings were part of HRC Foundation’s *Healthcare Equality Index 2016*, a unique annual survey that encourages equal care for LGBT Americans by evaluating inclusive policies and practices related to LGBT patients, visitors and employees.

VA San Diego Healthcare System earned top marks in meeting non-discrimination and training criteria that demonstrate its commitment to equitable, inclusive care for LGBT patients, and their families, who can face significant challenges in securing the quality health care and respect they deserve.

Acting Director, Cynthia Abair, states, “We’re very proud of this award and have worked very hard to promote non-discrimination policies and to improve the quality of care for LGBT Veterans. We’re very grateful to our LGBT Work Group for their leadership and all the work they do.”

VA San Diego Healthcare System is one of a select group of 496 healthcare facilities nationwide to be named *Leaders in LGBT Healthcare Equality*. Facilities awarded this title meet key criteria, including patient and employee non-discrimination policies that specifically mention sexual orientation and gender identity, a guarantee of equal visitation for same-sex partners and parents, and LGBT health education for key staff members.

“Despite all the progress we’ve made, far too many LGBT people still lack inclusive and affirming healthcare. Leaders in LGBT Healthcare Equality are

helping to change that, and, in the process, making the lives of LGBT patients and their families better each and every day,” said Chad Griffin, President of the Human Rights Campaign. “LGBT people have a right to be treated equally in all aspects of our lives, and HRC celebrates VA San Diego Healthcare System for its work to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all patients.”

The *Healthcare Equality Index* offers healthcare facilities unique and powerful resources designed to help provide equal care to a long-overlooked group of patients, as well as assistance in complying with regulatory requirements and access to high-quality staff training. The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Health Equity coordinates facility participation in the Healthcare Equality Index. This office is responsible for championing equitable health for all Veterans including Veterans from LGBT communities.

For more information about the *Healthcare Equality Index 2016*, or to download a free copy of the report, visit www.hrc.org/hei.

For more information about the VA Office of Health Equity, visit www.va.gov/healthequity.