VETERAN HEALTH NEWS

VA SAN DIEGO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

December 2018

Happy Holidays

VA San Diego Healthcare System wishes you peace, love, and joy this holiday season and throughout 2019!

The new VA.gov

VA's redesigned website is optimized to provide the best customer experience for patients navigating the site. Now you can access all your health care, disability, education and records with the click of a button right from the homepage. To see the new features, please visit https://www.va.gov/

Mental Health for Other-Than-Honorable Veterans

Mental Health care is available to former service members with Other-than-Honorable (OTH) Discharges.

Effective since July 5, 2017, all VA medical centers offer emergency stabilization care for former service members who present at the facility with an emergency mental health need. Under the initiative, former service members with an OTH discharge may receive care for their mental health emergency for an initial period of up to 90 days, which can include inpatient, residential or outpatient care. During this time, the VA medical center and Veterans Benefits Administration will work together to determine if the mental health condition is service-connected, making the Veteran eligible for ongoing coverage for that condition.

Veterans in crisis should call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 (press 1), or text 838255.

Get Your Flu Shots

The flu shot clinic is open through Dec. 14, so if you're an enrolled Veteran, don't forget to get your vaccination. Here's the link for more information on locations and times.

December is AIDS Awareness Month

AIDS Awareness Month is dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection and mourning those who have died from the disease. More than a million Americans are living with HIV, and someone in the United States is infected with the disease every 9.5 minutes. Don't delay and get tested today!

Volunteers Needed at the Chula Vista Clinic

Voluntary Service is actively seeking volunteers to start up a new coffee service to provide coffee to our Veteran patients and visitors at the Chula Vista Outpatient Clinic. We are seeking friendly, personable, and committed volunteers to make and serve coffee at the clinic Monday through Friday. To inquire about joining our team, please contact VA San Diego Voluntary Service by calling (858) 642-3267.

Veterans Moving Forward

It's been five years since VA partnered with the San Diego Sherriff's Department for the Veterans Moving Forward (VMF) Program. In that time, a three-year study found that study subjects who were housed in the VMF unit were less likely to be convicted of a new crime within a year of being released from custody. More results on this study can be found here.

Holiday Backpacks

VA San Diego Voluntary Service is hosting the fourth annual Holiday Backpack drive on Dec. 15 for our inpatient Veterans. We will be stuffing 250 donated backpacks with numerous donated items to wish them Happy Holidays! If you would like to donate and assist in spreading holiday cheer to our Veterans, call our office at (858) 642-3267. Happy Holidays to all!

Get Instant Updates Through GovDelivery

Get all the latest in VA San Diego feature stories, newsletters and information by registering with our GovDelivery service. To participate, go to our internet homepage and enter your email in the box "Connect with VA San Diego Healthcare System."

Research Opportunities

Help us advance the science of health care by volunteering for a human subject research project at VA San Diego Healthcare System. More information can be found here.

Featured Program: **The Million Veteran Program: A Partnership With Veterans** is a national, voluntary research program funded entirely by the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Research and Development. MVP is designed to help researchers better understand how genes affect health and illness, with the goal of improving health care for Veterans. Across the nation, MVP has enrolled almost 720,000 Veterans. The San Diego MVP Site launched 11/09/2011 and has enrolled 19,400 (and counting) Veterans.

The only requirement to join MVP is to be a Veteran receiving care in the VA health care system. Participation includes filling out surveys in the mail, completing a one-time study visit to provide a blood sample for genetic analysis at a participating VA, permitting authorized MVP staff to access information in your medical record on an ongoing basis, and agreeing to future MVP contact.

VA Researchers have already started partnering with MVP to study Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes, Gene Variation, Gulf War Illness, Informatics, Kidney Disease, Macular Degeneration, Mental Health, Osteoarthritis, Parkinson's Disease, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Substance Use Disorders, Suicide Prevention, and Tinnitus.

To enroll, Veterans can: 1) walk-in to our MVP clinic at the main facility in La Jolla on the third floor, east wing; or 2) call the MVP Information Center toll-free at 1-866-441-6075 to schedule an appointment or get the days and hours at our Mission Valley or Oceanside Outpatient Clinics.

Our local site investigator is Samir Gupta. Staff members are: Ilanit Young, Sarbjit Kaur, and Cassandra Crumley. For more information about MVP, visit www.research.va.gov/mvp or call 1-866-441-6075.

Appointment Access

Appt. wait times:
(completed appts as of 10/31/18)

Primary Care: .90 days
Specialty Care: 5.07 days
Mental Health: 2.49 days

Choice referrals:

In fiscal year 2018, VASDHS referred **42,830** Veterans to the community for care at a total cost of **$103,490,589**.
The top five categories of care referred to the community in FY 18 were: mental health, physical therapy, dental, acupuncture, and chiropractic care.

Calendar

Hanukkah: Dec. 3 - 10
International AIDS Awareness Month
Winter Begins: Dec. 21
Christmas: Dec. 25
New Year's Day: Jan. 1

About VA San Diego Healthcare System

The VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) provides a wide range of inpatient and outpatient services at the medical center in La Jolla; and at six community clinics located in Chula Vista, Escondido, Imperial Valley, Mission Valley, Oceanside, Sorrento Valley and at the Rio Clinic. We provide medical, surgical, mental health, geriatric, spinal cord injury and advanced rehabilitation services. VASDHS has 296 authorized hospital beds including skilled nursing beds and operates several regional referral programs including cardiovascular surgery and spinal cord injury care.

We are affiliated with the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine and provide training for 1,399 medical interns, residents and fellows as well as 676 other health profession trainees in areas such as nursing, pharmacy, dental and dietetics. VASDHS has one of the largest research programs in the VA nationally with a budget of $41.3 million, 210 principal investigators and 698 projects.

Number of Veterans who received care from
VASDHS in FY 2018: …………………………………………………… 84,712
*Number of Veterans in San Diego County: ……………………240,926
*Number of Veterans in Imperial Valley: ……………………………6,148
Total Veterans living in SD & Imperial Valley Counties: …247,074

*from VetPop, 9/30/2018

Important Phone Numbers:

VASDHS Main Line: …….…………………………. (858) 552-8585
VASDHS Patient Call Center
(Appointments/Questions): ………..…….. (858) 552-7475
Health Benefits & Enrollment: ……………. (858) 552-7523
Billing (Copays, etc.): …………………………. (866) 802-6381
Billing (Community Care): ………………….… (858) 657-1313
Billing (Choice Program): …….………………. (855) 722-2838
Suicide Prevention: ……………….. (800) 273-8255, press 1

VA's Top 5 Priorities:

1. **Greater Choice for Veterans**

2. **Modernize Our Systems**

3. **Focus Resources More Efficiently**

4. **Improve Timeliness of Services**

5. **Suicide Prevention**