

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA San Diego Healthcare System

KEEPING VETERANS SAFE 2020

VASDHS Annual Report

2020 Director's Message

VASDHS Annual Report

VHA MISSION

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

VHA VISION

- VHA will continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in health care and benefits by providing exemplary services that are both patient-centered and evidence-based.
- This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery and continuous improvement.
- It will emphasize prevention and population health and contribute to the Nation's well-being through education, research and service in national emergencies.

ACCREDITATION & CERTIFICATION

- The Joint Commission
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF): Aspire Center, Spinal Cord Injury, Medical Rehabilitation, Wellness and Vocational Rehabilitation Enhancement, Homeless Veterans Programs, and Substance Abuse Recovery and Rehabilitation Treatment Program
- College of American Pathologists
- American College of Radiology (ACR): Mammography, CT and MRI
- American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC)
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- American Association of Blood Banks (AABB)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): Registered Blood Bank and Mammography Program
- Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA)
- Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)

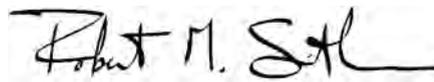
As part of the front-line response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have faced many challenges over the past year. Our focus continues to be **Keeping Veterans Safe** and providing excellent care. In early spring, we set up our Hospital Incident Command System and worked to assure we had adequate amounts of personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID-19 testing capacity and additional COVID-19 surge beds. We also implemented screening and testing areas, both at the hospital and community clinics, and we developed COVID-19 communications for Veterans and staff.

During fiscal year 2020, we provided care to more than 90 inpatient and more than 600 outpatient COVID-19-positive Veterans; and those care needs are still increasing. As part of the VA's Fourth Mission to provide medical support in the time of national emergencies, we sent clinical staff to nursing homes and health care facilities in the southwest to support civilian facilities overwhelmed by COVID-19 cases. We are already preparing to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine to Veterans and our staff as soon as it is available.

For our Moving Forward efforts, we are providing a combination of virtual and in-person care. As we begin fiscal year 2021, our workload is approximately 85% of pre-COVID-19 levels. We are actively reaching out to Veterans to encourage them to catch up on the routine care they may have missed during the pandemic and to make them aware of the breadth of services that we can provide virtually.

I want to assure all Veterans that we are here to serve you and we continue to focus on providing the highest quality health care and services every day.

We look forward to serving you in 2021.



Robert M. Smith, MD

Director/Chief Executive Officer
VA San Diego Healthcare System
VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP (L-R)

Sarah E. Guerard, MHA
Assistant Director

Cynthia E. Abair, MHA
Associate Director

Robert M. Smith, MD
Director/Chief Executive Officer

Kathleen Kim, MD, MPH
Chief of Staff/Medical Director

Carmen Concepcion, MSN, MHA, RN
Associate Director, Patient Care Services/
Nurse Executive

FY2020 Financial Report & Statistics

FY 2020 (10/1/19 – 9/30/20)

Operating Expenses	\$723,473,794
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$461,171,657
Services	\$78,518,475
Supplies	\$112,739,650
Other Expenses	\$71,044,012

COMMUNITY CARE

Total **\$124,843,016**

In FY 2020, the VA transitioned from the Patient Centered Community Care (PC3) Network of community providers to the Community Care Network (CCN) of community providers.



STAFFING STATISTICS

(FTE = Full Time Equivalent)

Employees (FTE)	3,378
Physicians (FTE)	288
RNs (FTE)	709
Other (FTE)	2,381

EDUCATION STATISTICS

Total	1,782
Medical Residents and Students	1,256
Other Clinical Trainees	526

VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

Volunteers	511
Volunteer Hours	39,376
Donations including Summer Sports Clinic	\$789,662
COVID-19 Donations	\$223,661
Total Volunteer Impact, Value of Hours Worked Plus Donations	\$1,860,689

RESEARCH STATISTICS

Total Research Funding	\$44,300,000
Principal Investigators	>250 active
Research Projects	677

WORKLOAD STATISTICS

Medical Center Beds

Total (authorized)	296
Acute	134
Community Living Center	43
Spinal Cord Injury	50
Domiciliary	69

Admissions Total	6,169
Acute	5,807
Community Living Center	180
Domiciliary/Aspire	79
SARRTP*	103

Patient Days Total	59,868
Acute	41,601
Community Living Center	6,849
Domiciliary/Aspire	8,720
SARRTP*	2,698

Average Length of Stay	
Acute	7 days
Community Living Center	24 days
Domiciliary/Aspire	27 days
SARRTP*	41 days

Surgeries Total	3,899
Inpatient surgery	1,487
Outpatient surgery	2,412

Outpatient Visits Total

885,076	
Chula Vista Clinic	29,321
Escondido Clinic	16,043
Imperial Valley Clinic	6,335
La Jolla Medical Center	589,279
Mission Valley Clinic	144,151
Oceanside Clinic	94,258
Rio Clinic	5,689

Telehealth Medicine**	
Visits	71,978

Enrolled Patients **84,572**

Number of Veterans in San Diego and Imperial Counties	
Total (estimate)	261,009
San Diego	255,315
Imperial Valley	5,694

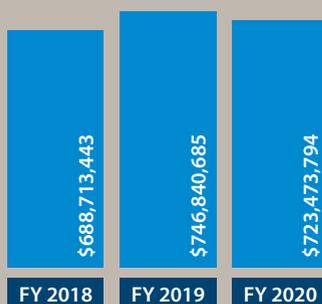
*SARRTP: Substance Abuse Recovery and Rehabilitation Treatment Program
 **Telehealth Technologies include: Home Telehealth, TeleRetinal and TeleDerm Imaging and Telehealth appointments with VA community clinics or the Veteran's home or mobile device using VA Video Connect.

ALTERNATIVE REVENUE VASDHS collected \$29.35 million, composed of \$27.75 million in Medical Care Cost Funds (MCCF), plus external sharing revenue of \$1.6 million. These funds stay at our local facility to enhance services for San Diego Veterans.

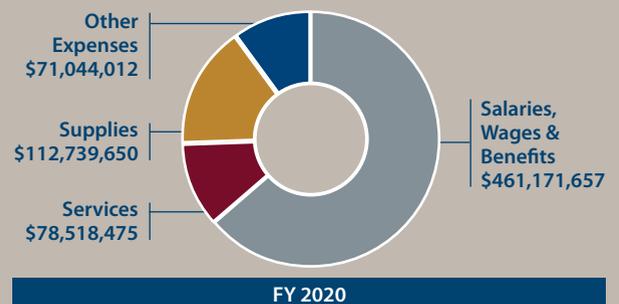
OPERATING EXPENSES & NUMBER OF VETERANS SERVED



Veterans Served



Operating Expenses



Detail of Operating Expenses

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Starting in late February 2020, as the nation became aware of the pandemic's magnitude, VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) staff quickly established an incident command post and started developing plans to adjust care for a possible surge of COVID-19 patients.

- VASDHS has taken all precautions to keep Veterans and our staff safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. That included following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and VA guidance and screening at all of our facilities. Precautions included taking temperatures, requiring face covering in our facilities and referring to secondary screening if the Veteran or staff member had symptoms.
- Converted 15 rooms to negative pressure for a total of 27 rooms to accommodate a surge of COVID patients if needed.
- Established two-day COVID-19 testing turnaround, a COVID-19 drive-up testing tent and provided testing for all admissions.
- Dramatically increased our telehealth care with more than 71,978 VA Video Connect telehealth appointments for primary care, mental health and specialty care since October 2019.
- Established regular communications on COVID-19 precautions to staff and Veterans including emails, posted information on the intranet and internet, digital information boards and social media.
- To help fulfill VA's Fourth Mission of supporting the nation's healthcare system during national emergencies, 13 VA San Diego Healthcare System nurses were deployed to Los Angeles County, San Bernardino County nursing homes and Tuba City, AZ to provide medical support for a surge of non-Veteran patients at risk of contracting COVID-19.
- VASDHS held an Honoring Our Health Care Heroes campaign to recognize staff.



VASDHS has taken all precautions to keep our facilities safe, including screening and testing.



2020 Awards & Accomplishments

VASDHS Annual Report



NEW VA CHULA VISTA CLINIC OPENS

VASDHS opened the new VA Chula Vista Clinic on October 16, 2020 with a virtual grand opening ceremony. The new \$27 million clinic, located at 353 H Street in Chula Vista, replaces the former Chula Vista Clinic. The spacious new facility is three times larger than the old clinic and offers expanded capacity for appointments with the ability to serve up to 25,000 Veterans. Primary care will expand to 28 exam rooms as compared to 11 at the old clinic and mental health will have 12 consultation rooms. New services now available are gynecology and women's health and audiology testing booths.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION TREATMENT PROGRAM OPENS

On Monday, June 29, 2020, VASDHS celebrated the re-opening of its Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (SARRTP) unit on the second floor of the San Diego VA Medical Center. The new 29-bed unit offers comprehensive treatment for addiction recovery and includes 16 private counseling rooms, three group session rooms, a dining room, and a recreation room.

SPECIALTY CLINIC AREA OPENS

On June 16, VASDHS opened a newly remodeled clinic on the medical center fourth floor offering pain management/ anesthesia, wound care, cardiology, plastic surgery, Hepatitis C Virus, liver fibro scan, podiatry and sleep services.

THERAPEUTIC NEUROMODULATION PROGRAM SUITE OPENS

VA San Diego Healthcare System welcomed the grand opening of the Therapeutic Neuromodulation Program Suite on August 31, 2020 at the 2 South Wing of the Medical Center. The suite provides state-of-the-art equipment and space to consolidate and expand the range of neurostimulation and neuromodulation interventions offered by the Mental Health Care Line at VASDHS. Cutting-edge interventions such as repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulations (rTMS), intranasal esketamine (SPRAVATO®) and intravenous ketamine infusions for Veterans with Treatment Resistant Mental Health Conditions including Major Depressive and Bipolar Disorders and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder are among the program treatments. The suite offers dedicated private rooms for rTMS, SPRAVATO and ketamine infusions as well as for treatment recovery, education, and relaxation.



ENERGY STAR AWARD

San Diego VA Medical Center earned the highly sought-after ENERGY STAR award for the 10th year. To be certified as ENERGY STAR, a building must meet strict energy performance standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). "ENERGY STAR certified buildings save energy, save money, and help protect the environment by generating fewer greenhouse gas emissions than typical buildings," according to the U.S. EPA.

THE JOINT COMMISSION ACCREDITATION

VASDHS achieved a three-year accreditation in November 2019.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Projects and Design Section completed projects for FY20:

- Specialty Clinic on 4W – Created 9 exam rooms
- Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program which created 29 beds – 11 double and 7 single beds
- Psychiatric expansion
- New blood draw area
- Chula Vista Outpatient Clinic
- Facility infrastructure upgrades



PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

Here is a list of the 2020 accomplishments:

VASDHS outperforms the local community and National VHA in the CMS 30-day mortality rate.



- Performed better than the top 10% in Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) Inpatient Performance Measures
- Outpatient Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measures sustained top 10% performance
- SAIL “Patient

Experience Stress Discussed” improved from 3rd to 1st quintile between FY19Q3 and FY20Q2

- Successful completion of The Joint Commission triennial survey
- Journey toward a High Reliability Organization: completed Clinical Team Training for approximately 50 employees
- Hospital Incident Command System (HICS): Organized the COVID-19 testing of approximately 300 CBOC employees at four locations in four days
- HICS: California Veterans Home – coordinated the COVID-19 testing of approximately 200 employees

TELEHEALTH

VA San Diego Healthcare System dramatically increased our telehealth care with more than 71,978 VA Video Connect telehealth appointments for primary care, mental health and specialty care since October 2019. Veterans increasingly chose virtual care through VA Video Connect during the COVID-19 pandemic. VA Video Connect allows Veterans and their caregivers to meet virtually with their VA care teams on any computer, tablet, or mobile device with an internet connection. As in-person interactions decreased in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, VA Video Connect supported Veterans’ ability to continue care and remain safely at home.

TOP RESEARCH AWARD

The VA Office of Research and Development announced in August that Dr. Kirk Hammond was the recipient of the VA Biomedical Research & Development Senior Clinician Scientist Investigator Award for his work on gene transfer to treat heart failure and insulin resistance.



Dr. Hammond is participating in gene transfer of beneficial peptides and proteins in animal model studies as a therapy for treating heart disease and insulin resistance. Dr. Hammond has made remarkable contributions to VHA through his continuous service as a staff physician and researcher at the VA San Diego Healthcare System since 1987 and as a professor of Medicine in Residence at the University of California San Diego.

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS GERIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ACCREDITATION

The VASDHS Emergency Department received the American College of Emergency Physicians Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation. This represents our Emergency Department’s commitment to providing the highest standards of care for older adults.



2020 VHA ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS SERVICE EMS MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Ethan Woods, Acting Chief of EMS, received the VHA EMS Manager of the Year Award.

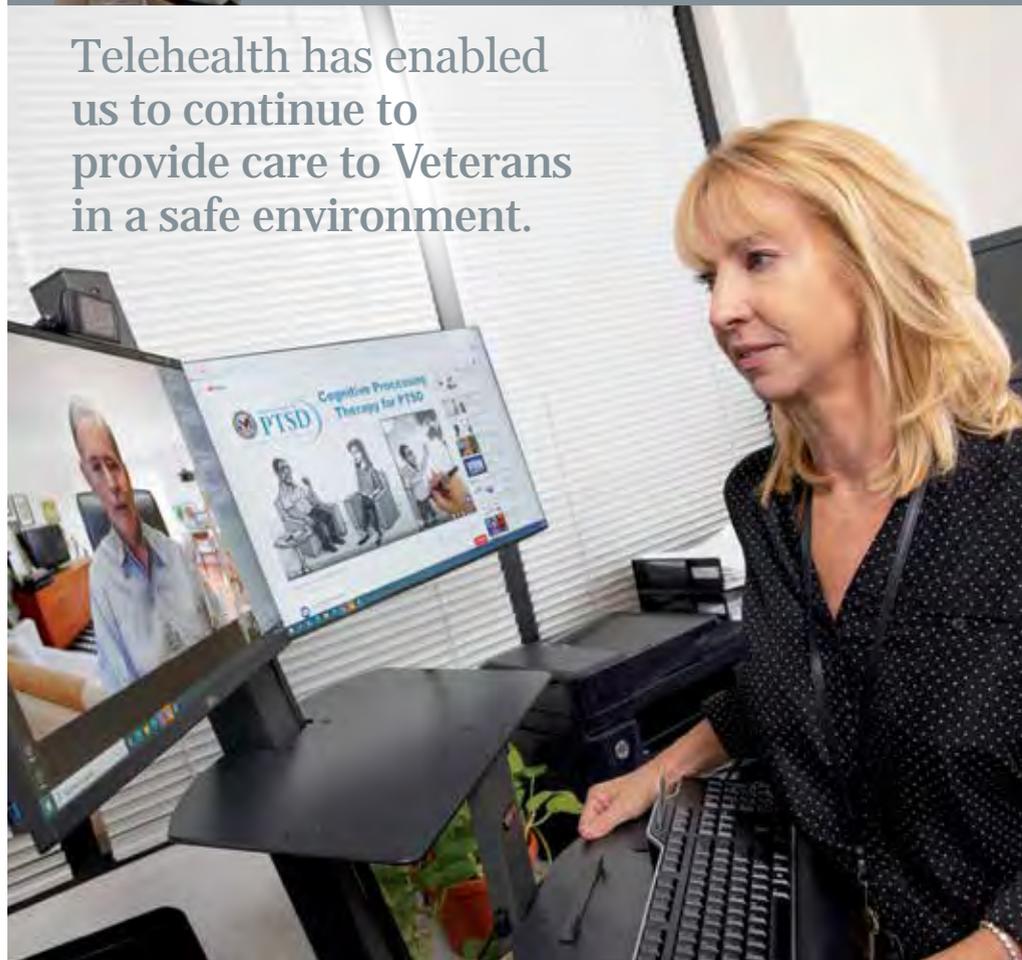
ROBERT L. JESSE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

Dr. Leonie Heyworth, VA Director of Synchronous Telehealth, received the 2020 Robert L. Jesse Award for Excellence in Innovation. Since taking on a leadership role in the Office of Connected Care, Dr. Heyworth has led the development, implementation and clinical adoption of real-time telehealth solutions, including VA Video Connect and



Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations (ATLAS). Additionally, she has overseen the delivery of real-time virtual care during national emergencies as the driving force behind VA’s growing telehealth-based emergency response capabilities. Her efforts have enhanced the VA’s ability to meet critical needs during Hurricanes Harvey, Maria, Florence and Michael, multiple wildfires in California and Oregon, west coast mudslides, numerous severe storms and most recently, COVID-19.

Telehealth has enabled us to continue to provide care to Veterans in a safe environment.



JOURNEY TOWARD A HIGH RELIABILITY ORGANIZATION (HRO)

VASDHS is one of 18 lead sites across each Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) selected to lead the implementation of HRO principles, focusing on eliminating patient harm from medical error. As part of the 18 lead sites, VASDHS participated in diagnostic assessments to establish a baseline understanding of the HRO culture, Clinical Team Training (CTT) Champions Courses to initiate team-based error prevention techniques at the unit-level, Just Culture Training to instill a culture of transparency and just accountability, and an HRO Collaborative to apply group learning to process improvements projects. As an HRO, VASDHS strives to be an organization that attracts and develops highly engaged and empowered employees. The three pillars of HROs are leadership commitment, culture of safety, and continuous process improvement.



SYSTEMS REDESIGN (SR) AND INNOVATION

VASDHS is committed to using Systems Redesign and Innovation to improve the way we deliver health care. Over 1,300 staff members completed SR/Lean process improvement training.

Improvement project outcomes include:

- Improved Home Telehealth Program Workflows
- Standardized Orientation Processes for the Aspire Center
- Streamlined Emergency Department Patient Flow
- Improved Management and Tracking of Implant Items
- Optimized Use of Extended Recover Unit (ERU)
- Improved Environment of Care Using Lean 5S Projects

Innovation projects chosen by the VA Center for Innovation as "Innovation Investments" include:

- Teleglaucoma, Expanding Teleophthalmology to Monitor Stable Glaucoma Patients
- VEST (Virtual Emotional Support for Teams)
- The Equine-imity Project, Equine-Assisted Therapy for Prevention of Recurrent Homelessness Among Veterans
- Listen Act Develop Model, A Strategy to Reduce Burnout and Promote Engagement Among Clinicians



VA Core Values and Characteristics:

I CARE

Integrity

Commitment

Advocacy

Respect

Excellence



All of our services are committed to keeping Veterans and staff safe.





MEDICAL CENTER

VA San Diego Healthcare System
3350 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161
(858) 552-8585
(800) 331-VETS (8387)

WEB ADDRESSES

For more information, visit us at:
www.sandiego.va.gov
www.facebook.com/VASanDiego
www.twitter.com/VASanDiego

CLINICS

VA Chula Vista Clinic
353 H Street
Chula Vista, CA 91910
(619) 409-1600

VA Escondido Clinic
815 East Pennsylvania Avenue
Escondido, CA 92025
(760) 466-7020

VA Imperial Valley Clinic
1115 S 4th Street
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 352-1506

VA Mission Valley Clinic
8810 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 400-5000

VA Oceanside Clinic
1300 Rancho del Oro Drive
Oceanside, CA 92056
(760) 643-2000

VA Sorrento Valley Clinic
10455 Sorrento Valley Road
San Diego, CA 92121
(858) 657-1980

VA Rio Clinic
8989 Rio San Diego, Suite 360
San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 228-8000

VA Aspire Center
2121 San Diego Avenue
San Diego, CA 92110
(855) 297-8397

VET CENTERS

San Diego Vet Center
2790 Truxtun Road, Suite 130
San Diego, CA 92106
(858) 642-1500

San Marcos Vet Center
One Civic Center Drive, Suite 150
San Marcos, CA 92069
(760) 744-6914

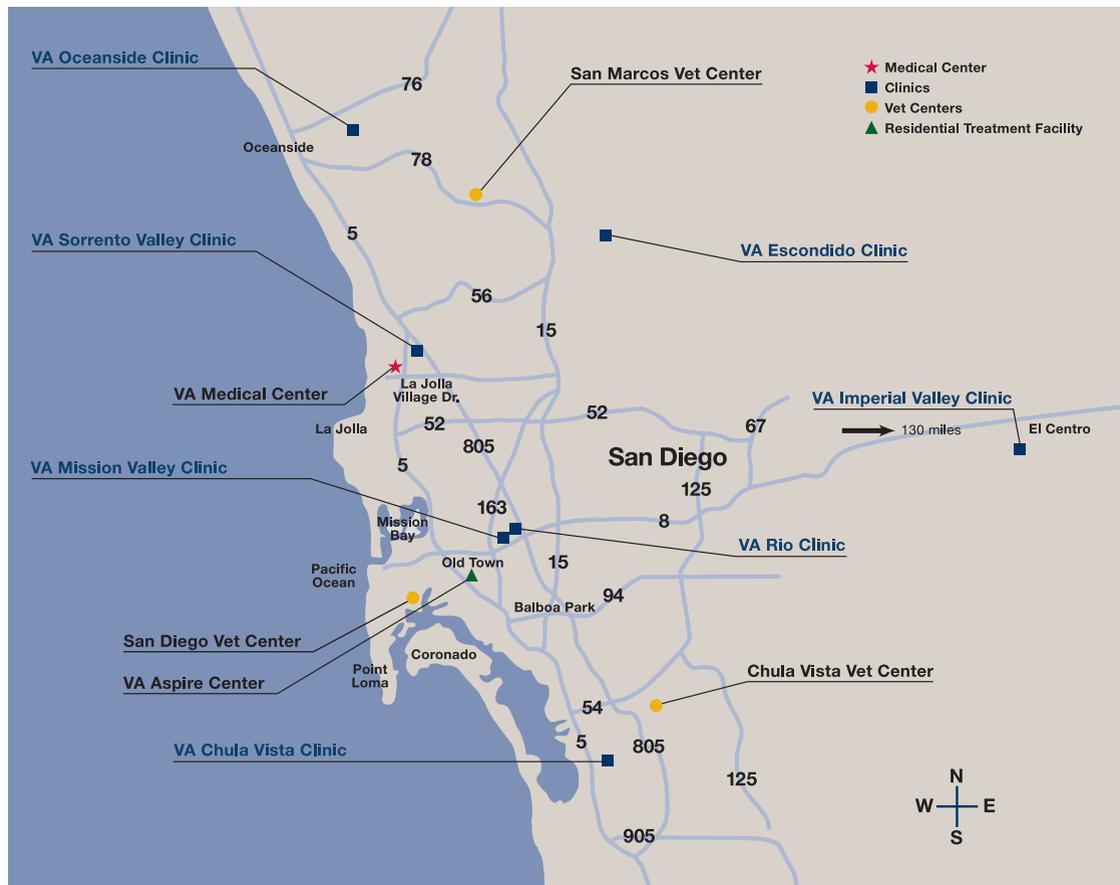
Chula Vista Vet Center
180 Otay Lakes Road, Suite 108
Bonita, CA 91902
(877) 618-6534

PROFILE

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 in Chula Vista, Escondido, Imperial Valley, Mission Valley, Oceanside and Sorrento Valley. 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 1,256 medical interns, residents and fellows, as well as 526 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 \$44.3 million budget, more than 250 principal investigators and 677 projects.



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ELIGIBILITY
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