



VETERAN HEALTH NEWS

VA SAN DIEGO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

August 2019

Facilities to be Smoke-Free on Oct. 1



As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) commitment to provide excellent health care for Veterans, the department will implement a new policy restricting smoking by patients, visitors, volunteers, contractors and vendors at its health care facilities on Oct. 1.

In preparation for the change, we offer smoking cessation programs, including:

Smoking Cessation Classes

Mission Valley

Every **Tuesday 1:00-2:00 pm**, second floor, Room 2141

Veterans only: Check in at mental health clinic window

Oceanside

Every **Monday, 1:00-2:00 pm**, Oceanside, 2nd floor, Conference Room A.

Veterans only: Check in at blue primary care clinic desk

Chula Vista

Every **Wednesday, 5:00-6:00 pm**, Chula Vista, Suite 133

Veterans only: Check in at primary care clinic window

La Jolla

Every **Tuesday, 12:00 – 1:00 pm**, La Jolla 2-North, Room 2436.

Veterans only: Check in at mental health clinic window (2-North)

Smoking Quitline

Quit VET is a proactive, national telephone smoking cessation quitline for Veterans who receive their health care in VA. The quitline is available at 1-855-QUIT-VET (1-855-784-8838), Monday – Friday, 9:00a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time and closed on Federal holidays.

Text Reminders

At [SmokefreeVet](#)

Using FDA-approved medications, such as nicotine replacement therapy, bupropion, and varenicline, while you're quitting can help you manage nicotine withdrawal symptoms and cope with the urge to smoke. For questions and more options, please contact Dr. Mark Myers at 858-642-3436.

Learn the Signs and Symptoms of Stroke



Rich or poor, old or young, famous or unknown, stroke can change your life, severely disable you, or kill you.

By recognizing the signs and symptoms of stroke, you can give yourself the best chance of survival and recovery.

Learn BE FAST and call 911 at the first sign of stroke. Do not delay, Time is Brain!



License Plates for Disabled Veterans



Waiver of registration fees and free "DV" handicap parking license plates:

Who May Be Eligible: A "disabled veteran" is any person who, because of injury or disease suffered while on active service with the armed forces of the United States, has related impaired mobility and suffers any of the following:

1. Has a disability which has been rated at 100 percent by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the military service from which the veteran was discharged, due to a diagnosed disease or disorder which substantially impairs or interferes with mobility or,
2. Is so severely disabled as to be unable to move without the aid of an assistant device or,
3. Has lost, or has lost use of, one or more limbs or,
4. Has suffered permanent blindness, as defined in Section 19153 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

Obtain a signed doctor's statement that indicates that the veteran in question has a service-connected disability with at least one of the above listed mobility impairments, complete DMV forms REG 195 and REG 256A, and mail the completed package to:

DMV PLACARD
P.O. Box 942869
Sacramento, CA 94269-0001
1-800-777-0133
www.dmv.ca.gov

Stand Down Recap



VA San Diego Healthcare System managed the medical tent for the 32nd Annual Veterans Stand Down at the San Diego High School athletic field. Stand Down offers support to homeless Veterans and their families for one weekend a year, with the goal of providing resources to end homelessness.

Some of the services provided to Stand Down includes: health care and benefits enrollment, housing and HUD/VASH support, mental health support, family and caregiver support, medical and pharmacy support, optometry and dental support, Veteran treatment courts and legal services, chaplain and clergy services, integrative medicine services, cosmetology and barber services, veterinarian services, culinary and hygiene support services and attire and apparel support services.

Preliminary numbers for Stand Down services provided by the medical tent this year:

1. Total Patients Treated.	253
2. Total Episodes of Care.	367
3. Total ineligible Patients Treated.	77
4. Total Spouses treated.	15
5. Total Children's Treated.	—
6. Total New Enrollees.	—
7. Total HEP-A Vaccination.	—
8. Total Influenza Vaccination.	—
9. HEP-C Test administered	80
10. HIV Test administered	86
11. Urine Pregnancy	4
12. Glucose	15
13. Advanced Care Directives (new)	24 (17 for Veterans w/VA care and 6 for spouses/partners w/UCSD)

San Diego VAMC had 95 medical center employees that volunteered, and they partnered with 102 community medical/admin. volunteers.

Earthquake Preparedness



Considering the recent earthquake activity in Southern California, we would like our Veterans to know VA San Diego Healthcare System enacted both procedural and infrastructural systems to help reduce the effects of an earthquake:

- Established evacuation plans and service-specific procedures for staff responsibilities, response and recovery requirements.
- The medical center is retrofitted with structural bracing and non-structural strapping of essential equipment is required.
- We ensure redundant communications are available and tested and provide evacuation devices in key areas with applicable training.
- Disaster Response Team Floor Captains are established for the evacuation of patients/staff and assistance during and post event.
- VA San Diego participates in community exercises such as the Annual Great CA Shake Out drill.

- We have also partnered with other hospitals in the community and within VA through memorandum of agreements and coordination through a county disaster coalition.

There are many things you can do to plan during and after an emergency or disaster event. It all starts with knowing your threats and hazards and then developing a list containing key contact information, evacuation locations, and building an emergency go kit that are unique to yourself and family needs. Kit and plan samples can be found at the San Diego County [Ready San Diego](#) page.

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](#).

Appointment Access

Appt. wait times: (completed appts as of 6/30/19)

Primary Care:	.85 days
Specialty Care:	4.13 days
Mental Health:	2.34 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

National Breastfeeding Month: August

National Immunization Awareness Month: August

**Comments and suggestions about our newsletter? Send them to
Christopher.menzie@va.gov**

Please Take Our Patient Satisfaction Surveys

We need feedback on your health care experience to continue improving the high-quality care and customer service we provide. We send our patient satisfaction surveys via mail and email on a regular basis and if you receive one, please take a moment to complete it. We are listening and want to improve – if you have a good or bad experience, we want to hear from you. We want you to Choose VA!

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 \$42.2 million, >200 principal investigators and 611 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 Secretary Wilkie's Priorities:

- Customer Service
- Implementing the MISSION Act
- Electronic Health Record
- Transforming our Business Systems