



VETERAN HEALTH NEWS

VA SAN DIEGO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

February 2019

Implementing the VA Mission Act



Under President Trump, VA is embarking on the largest transformation and modernization effort to VA's health care system in the Department's recent history. As part of this effort, VA is tackling head-on issues that have lingered for years.

Congress passed and the President signed major legislation to reform the Department including the [VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act](#) and the [VA MISSION Act of 2018](#).

The MISSION Act provides Veterans more choice to access care where and when they need it.

- The law strengthens VA's ability to deliver the quality care and timely service Veterans have earned by consolidating VA's community care programs; strengthening VA's ability to recruit and retain the best medical providers; expanding eligibility for Caregivers; and strengthening VA's infrastructure and internal capacity.

As part of implementing the MISSION Act and improving Veteran's access to care, VA has proposed new access standards, one of six eligibility criteria for when Veterans can receive community care.

Change in Bus Route 41



Temporarily, Bus Route 41 is only stopping at the UCSD Gilman Transit Center. The replacement bus stop on Villa La Jolla Dr. will open on Monday, Feb. 11. For those two weeks, employees and patients will need to use the stop on UCSD at the Gilman Transit Center.

Passengers can take the northbound Route 30 at the Gilman Transit Center to reach the VA Medical Center but will need to plan their trip for the additional travel time. MTS Trip Planning can assist customers with the planning the trip. MTS Trip Planning can be reached at 619-233-3004 Monday-Friday 5:30am-8:30pm and Weekends 7am-7pm.

February is American Heart Month



Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, taking more lives than all forms of cancer combined. Someone you know and love may be affected — at any age. Heart disease and stroke claim the lives of 1 in 3 women — a third of our mothers, sisters and friends. It's time to change this fact. While nearly 80 percent of cardiac events can be prevented through education and lifestyle changes, cardiovascular diseases continue to be a woman's greatest health threat. To treat, beat and prevent heart disease and stroke, women should understand family health history, know their five key personal health numbers to help determine risk and make healthy behavior changes like moving more, eating smart and managing blood pressure.

Annual Report 2018

Our new annual report is available now. For a copy, please ask the San Diego VA Medical Center welcome desk or click [here](#).

Billing by Community Providers



VASDHS uses the Veterans Choice Program to coordinate various medical service in the community and we're aware that a few Veterans have been erroneously billed for that service. If you, or someone you know, have been authorized by the VA to receive care in the community and then are billed for those service, please notify us immediately so we can address this with your community provider.

You can reach our VASDHS Community Care Customer Service Team at:
1-858-623-1879

If your care was coordinated through TriWest, you can also reach them at:

TriWest Veterans Choice Program Customer Service Line
1-866-606-8198
<https://www.triwest.com/veteran/complaint-grievance>

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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: Primary Care: .79 days
 (completed appts as of 12/31/18) Specialty Care: 5.06 days
 Mental Health: 2.94 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

World Cancer Day: Feb. 4

North County Stand Down: Feb. 7 - 10

National Salute to Veteran Patients: Feb. 10 – 18

President’s Day: Feb. 18

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