



VETERAN HEALTH NEWS

VA SAN DIEGO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

June 2019

New Mission Act Urgent Care Benefit

VA MISSION Act

VA's new urgent care benefit and how it will provide more choices for Veterans.

What is the Urgent Care benefit? As part of the VA MISSION Act of 2018, VA will start offering urgent care services in the community to provide Veterans with greater choice and access to timely, high-quality care. Urgent care providers treat injuries and illnesses that require immediate attention but are not life-threatening, such as influenza, minor burns and skin infections. This benefit is considered open access, allowing Veterans to access urgent care within VA's community care network and receive care without prior authorization from VA. The benefit will be available in June 2019.

Difference between Emergency Care vs. Urgent Care: Urgent care is medical services provided for illnesses or injuries which require prompt attention but are not life-threatening such as strep throat, pink eye or influenza. Emergency care is defined as inpatient or outpatient hospital services that are necessary to prevent death or serious impairment of health such as severe chest pain; seizures or loss of awareness; heavy uncontrollable bleeding; or moderate to severe burns. Urgent care is not a replacement for care a Veteran might need in an emergency. If you have a medical emergency or require immediate assistance due to an accident or injury, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Eligibility: Veterans are eligible for this benefit if they are enrolled in VA health care and have received care through VA within 24 months prior to receiving this care. Veterans can access an urgent care provider in VA's network and receive care without prior authorization from VA.

Use the urgent care locator to find your nearest provider:

<https://vaurgentcarelocator.triwest.com/>

Upcoming Stand Down



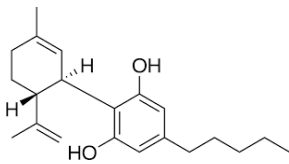


This year's Stand Down will be held June 28-30 at San Diego High School in downtown San Diego. The Stand Down for homeless Veterans began in 1988 to help Vietnam Veterans and has since expanded to help all Veterans who may be down of their luck. In partnership with other community organizations, VA San Diego Healthcare System manages the medical tent and provides social work services during the event. Here's a few stats from last year showing many Veterans have been helped:

Medical Tent Numbers at San Diego Stand Down 2018.

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| 1. Total Patients Treated. | 281 |
| 2. Total Episodes of Care. | 405 |
| 3. Total ineligible Patients Treated. | 74 |
| 4. Total Spouses treated. | 12 |
| 5. Total Children's Treated. | 5 |
| 6. Total New Enrollees. | 9 |
| 7. Total HEP-A Vaccination. | 45 |
| 8. HEP-C Test Administered | 78 |
| 9. HIV Test Administered | 78 |
| 10. Million Veteran Program Enrolled | 12 |
| 11. San Diego VAMC had 121 medical center employee volunteer | |
| 12. VA Medical worked with 244 community medical volunteers | |

San Diego Researcher Testing Cannabidiol Treatment for PTSD



In addition to comprehensive treatment for PTSD, VA also conducts extensive research toward finding new treatments and improving effectiveness of current treatments. VA San Diego is conducting one such study testing cannabidiol (CBD) as an add-on to prolonged exposure therapy, a proven psychotherapy for PTSD. The \$1.3-million study will enroll 136 Veterans from all service eras. Dr. Mallory Loflin, a research scientist is leading the study. Loflin says past research suggests CBD can increase extinction learning in PTSD. This has to do with people "unlearning" unhelpful responses and behaviors in the wake of trauma. This could boost the speed and effectiveness of prolonged exposure therapy, which helps patients gradually work through their traumatic memories. This is the first VA-funded study of a cannabinoid medication.

Women's Health Week Recap



In participation with Women Veterans Health Week, May 12-18, 2019, VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) hosted an informational table on its women's programs on Thursday, May 16, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Spinal Cord Injury Center Atrium entrance at the San Diego VA Medical Center. "The purpose of this event is to support women Veterans on their health journeys within the VA and to focus on the needs of Veterans building new families," said Jennifer Roberts, LCSW, Women Veteran Program Manager and coordinator of the event.

Staff from the Women Veterans Healthcare Program, Maternity Care Program, Mental Health Service and Health Benefits and Enrollment were available to provide information and answer questions to approximately 50 Veterans.

At present, there are 9,927 women Veterans enrolled with VASDHS, and the system provides comprehensive health care with 41 women's health primary care providers and four gynecologists.

If you missed the opportunity to visit the women's health information table but would like to know more, start here:

<https://www.sandiego.va.gov/services/women/index.asp>

Cancer Survivor Fair



Come celebrate cancer survivors at VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) on Wednesday, June 19 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in the multipurpose room. This fair is a collaborative effort between VASDHS, the American Cancer Society and other community partners. The goal of anyone living with cancer is to enhance overall wellness and wellbeing.

There are many aspects to overall health including good sleep habits; eating a healthy balanced diet, addressing cancer related fatigue including interventions to alleviate it.

This event will feature VA San Diego health experts and community partners to share information on many topics including:

- Nutrition as prevention
- Recommendations on risk reduction and screening for skin, breast, prostate, colorectal, liver and other cancers
- Stress reduction strategies including humor and mindfulness
- Pain management
- Complementary and Integrative Health
- Smoking cessation
- MOVE! & healthy habits (Health Promotion, Disease Prevention)
- Nutrition services
- American Cancer Society

And more!

Update on Chula Vista and Mission Valley Replacement Clinics



The VA Chula Vista Clinic is scheduled to open in Spring 2020. This new clinic will be triple the size of the current Chula Vista Clinic and will offer more services to Veterans living in the South Bay.

The planned Mission Valley replacement clinic will hold its ground breaking on Friday, October 4, 2019 with an expected clinic opening date in 2021. The new clinic will be twice the size of the current clinic and will offer expanded services.

Health Chat now on Mobile App



Reach a VA health care team member without having to call or step foot into a VA clinic or hospital. With the VA Health Chat app, you can ask health care questions, schedule an appointment or refill your prescriptions. All you need to login is your VA credentials. Learn more: <https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat>

Make Sure Your Contact Information is Up-To-Date

To best serve you, we need your current phone number, mailing address and e-mail address. You can update your information by logging into www.va.gov, calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or at the medical center or clinic.

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
4/30/19)

Primary Care: .97 days
Specialty Care: 4.15 days
Mental Health: 2.55 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 PTSD Awareness Month: June

National Safety Month: June

VVSD Stand Down for Homeless Veterans: June 28 - 30

**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