



# VETERAN HEALTH NEWS

VA SAN DIEGO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

June 2020

## Congress Approves funds for Major Construction Projects




On May 28, the House of Representatives passed the Major Medical Facility Authorization Act of 2020, which allows for seven major medical facility projects around the nation, including one project moving ahead at the San Diego VA Medical Center. That project calls for an expansion of the Spinal Cord Injury Inpatient Unit and construction of a new parking garage to accommodate employees who work onsite. Details are forthcoming on the exact dates when those projects will begin, although we will be sure to update you before they do.

See more information here: <https://scottpeters.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congress-approves-new-funds-to-improve-medical-facilities-for-san-diego>

## June is PTSD Awareness Month



Raise awareness for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in June. Following the outbreak of COVID-19 and current economic uncertainty, Veterans this year may be in special need of support. If you're a Veteran in need of some tips to come, follow our tips below.

- **Get PTSD treatment.** Resources for finding a therapist are located [here](#)
- **Do activities that feel meaningful to you.**
- **Use good self-care skills.**
- **Reach out for help.** If you see a therapist or other mental health professional or have seen one in the past, reach out to them for support during this time. You may find you need only a few meetings in order to get back on track with your recovery. It may be possible to continue treatment by telephone or video. Talk to your mental health provider to determine the best option for you. If you are feeling overwhelmed:
  - Call 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) anytime to talk to a crisis counselor. Press "1" if you are a Veteran. The call is confidential (private) and free.
  - Or chat online with a crisis counselor anytime at <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
  - Call the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)  : 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
  - You can also call 911 or go to your local emergency room

## Prescription Tracking



If your prescription is coming from the Consolidated Mail-Out Prescription center, you can track your shipping on My HealthVet: [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

Select prescriptions mailed out from the San Diego VA can be better tracked with email messages sent to you that includes tracking numbers. In order to notify you, we need your current email address. You can provide or update your email address as follows:

- Walk into the medical center or any of our clinics and notify the staff at any of our check-in locations
- Update your email address at our kiosks at the medical center or clinics
- Call Member Services & Enrollment office at (858) 552-7523
- Update your email via E-Benefits: [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov)

## COVID Update

VA medical facilities around San Diego and Imperial Counties are ramping up once again to resume full services for Veterans, including face-to-face visits and elective procedures. In the meantime, we want all Veterans to call ahead through the call center to see if we can deliver care virtually (via video conferencing or phone). When you do visit the medical center, please remember to bring a face covering.

We're working to expand COVID-19 testing for Veterans and currently offer curbside testing for patients with procedures.

Please remember to continue using vigilance around the community by practicing hand-hygiene, social distancing and using face coverings whenever recommended.

## Donate Blood Now

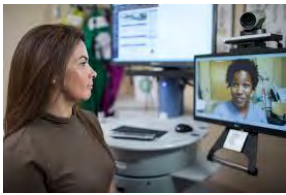
Give blood.  
Every 18 seconds someone  
in the U.S. needs blood.  
American Red Cross



**The San Diego Bloodmobile will be back on station July 2 from 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., seeking donations to help the many who are in need right now. The time is right to give. Please set up an appointment to donate today!**

ARC Blood Mobile  
VA San Diego Healthcare System  
3350 La Jolla Village Dr., San Diego, CA 92161  
Main Entrance Drive-Through; park in visitor lot  
To make an appointment, please sign up online  
at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org), Code: VASD

## Urgent Care Through Telehealth



The [VHA Office of Community Care](#) (OCC) is pleased to announce that Veterans who need same-day [urgent care](#) for a minor illness or injury may have the option to use [telehealth](#) (i.e., phone- or video-based visits) instead of in-person visits at VA or in-network community urgent care clinics. Telehealth offers Veterans the convenience of care from their homes and added protection against possible exposure to [coronavirus](#) or other viruses.

Some VA or community urgent care clinics may be affected by closures, limited services, quarantining, or social distancing based on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and local health department guidelines. For their safety, Veterans should be encouraged to call before visiting any location to ask about options to receive their care virtually by telephone or video.

Veterans who need same-day urgent care for a minor illness or injury should use the [VA Facility Locator](#) and select “urgent care” under facility type, then select community providers as the service type. Veterans can also find an in-network urgent care or walk-in clinic by [contacting their local VA medical facility](#) or calling the VA OCC National Contact Center at 877-881-7618.

## Tips for VA Medical Center Donations

We are very grateful for items donated by our community partners as of April 30 reveal donations of:

- Surgical Masks: 28,160
- N95 Masks: 4,860
- Handmade Cloth Masks: 3,800
- Carbon Filters: 50
- Gloves: 2,000 pairs and 82 cases
- Goggles: 40
- Face Shields: 925
- Protective Lab Gowns: 70

Would you like to donate? Follow these simple instructions:

- Contact Voluntary Service to coordinate the donation @ 858 642-3267. A letter of appreciation is generated to the donor within 30 days.

During this pandemic, we are allowed to receive food donations or emergency supplies for staff, but this is not the normal procedure. VA staff are only allowed a gift value limit of \$20 per occasion and \$50 per year according to VA policy.

## Non-VA Emergency Care Notice

Veterans who receive Emergency care in a community hospital (non-VA) are required to notify the VA within 72 hours of the visit. Contact:

- Email: [VHAEmergencyNotification@va.gov](mailto:VHAEmergencyNotification@va.gov)
- Phone: 1-844-72HRVHA or (844-724-7842)

## National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic Postponed



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced June 8 that the [National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic](#), scheduled to occur Sept. 20 to 25 in San Diego, Cali., has been canceled amid concerns surrounding COVID-19.

VA made this decision out of an abundance of caution for the health, safety and well-being of Veterans and their families, our employees and community partners. Our goal is to limit exposure to vulnerable populations like older Veterans and those with underlying medical conditions, as identified by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

We look forward to serving Veterans for the 2021 National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic in San Diego.

## VA San Diego COVID-19 Resource Guide

Times can be challenging for Veteran families right now and we'd like to help. Please check out this [collection](#) of resources to help families who are having difficulties.

## 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](#).

## Calendar

**July 3: Federal Holiday**

**July 4: Independence Day**

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 \$44.3 million, >211 principal investigators and 676 projects.

**Number of Veterans who received care from VASDHS in FY 2019:** ..... 86,138  
**\*Number of Veterans in San Diego County:** .....238,352  
**\*Number of Veterans in Imperial Valley:** .....6,069  
**Total Veterans living in SD & Imperial Valley Counties:** ....244,421

*\*from VetPro, 9/30/2019*

### 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  
Community Care Authorization Line: (858) 623-1879  
Billing (Community Care):.... (858) 657-1313  
Billing (TriWest): .....(855) 722-2838  
Request your Records: ..... (858) 642-3661  
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