



VETERAN HEALTH NEWS

VA SAN DIEGO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

May 2019

Mission Act



The VA MISSION Act of 2018 empowers Veterans and enhances care options.

VA will:

- Continue to be a trusted, caring partner;
- Meet you where you are, with the right care at the right place and the right time;
- Provide telehealth in your home, in a VA facility, or in the community;
- Focus on providing an excellent experience for you and the important people in your life.

<https://www.va.gov/oei/missionAct/>

Veterans Memorial Service



On Wednesday, 29 May 2019, the VA Chaplain Service will hold its semiannual memorial Service to honor Veterans who have passed away in the previous six months. The families and friends of those deceased Veterans will be invited to the service and they will be asked to bring photos of their loved ones. The program will include the Presentation of the Colors, special prayers, a meditation, the reading of names and distribution of flags, and the playing of Taps. The Service will be held at the Center for Spiritual Wellness (Chapel) and will start at 2:00 p.m., and it will be followed by a reception in the Multipurpose Room. Both sites are located on the First Floor, East Wing, of the VA Medical Center.

Hepatitis Awareness Month



From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): May is Hepatitis Awareness Month. In the United States, the most common types of viral hepatitis are hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. While each can produce similar symptoms, each hepatitis virus has different routes of transmission and has different populations that are commonly affected.

CDC developed an online [Hepatitis Risk Assessment](#) to help people find out if they should get tested or vaccinated for viral hepatitis. The assessment, which takes only five minutes, will provide personalized testing and vaccination recommendations for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.

MOVE! Weight Control Program



MOVE! is a VA national comprehensive weight management program established for veterans with a body mass index (BMI) of 25 or greater. Eligible veterans seeking assistance with weight loss and/or improving their health status will benefit from the following:

New Patient Orientation

- Required for new or returning patients who have not participated in the past two years
- On-site orientation is offered at: La Jolla, Mission Valley, Oceanside
- Clinical Video Telehealth orientation is offered for: Chula Vista, El Centro & Escondido

Education Options (after completion of orientation)

- 8-week MOVE! classes (La Jolla, Mission Valley & Oceanside) or
- Diabetes MOVE! classes (La Jolla) or
- Flexible once/month Weight Control Education (Chula Vista only) or
- 90-day TeleMOVE! At-Home Weight Loss Program (Telehealth services)

Program Focus

- Health and wellness for healthy eating, physical activity and behavior change
- Self-management tools provided
- Setting SMART achievable goals

Information/Registration:

- Now accepting self-referrals. Call 858-552-8585 x4360 or 1-800-331-8387 (VETS) ext. 4360 for an Orientation Appointment.
- A Referral from a Primary Care Provider is required for any of the following situations:
 - Requesting onsite El Centro orientation via TeleConferencing
 - Active or recent history of alcohol or substance use
 - Hospitalization within last 30 days
 - History of weight loss surgery

For more information:

https://www.sandiego.va.gov/services/MOVE_Weight_Control.asp

Infertility Options

Infertility is when a couple does not become pregnant after 12 months of trying. Some couples should seek infertility evaluation earlier than 12 months. For example, women over 35 years old or people with a known cause of infertility, such as having blocked fallopian tubes or being unable to produce sperm.

Who is eligible for infertility services?

VA provides infertility evaluation, management, and treatment services to Veterans who are enrolled and are eligible for VA health care. All enrolled and eligible Veterans may be provided with infertility services regardless of service connection, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, relationship, or marital status.

What infertility services are available at VA? Infertility care is available either at your local VA medical facility or through referral to health care providers in your community.

For more information on infertility services, please call the Women's Program Manager at (858) 642-3676.

Intro to Whole Health



Learn better proactive strategies for managing your health with the Whole Health Program at the San Diego VA Medical Center. No consults required. See the [link](#) for more details on dates and contact information. See you there!

Mental Health Awareness Month in May



Here are some tips to think about this month and throughout the year:

- Mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being, and mental illnesses are common and treatable.
- A healthy lifestyle can help to prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions, as well as chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. It can also help people recover from these conditions.
- For those dealing with a chronic health condition and the people who care for them, it can be especially important to focus on mental health. When dealing with dueling diagnoses, focusing on both the physical and mental health concerns can be daunting – but critically important in achieving overall wellness.
- Humor, spirituality, recreation, animal companionship, and work-life balance are important for everyone, but may be of special importance to people also living with chronic health conditions and those who care for them.
- Finding a reason to laugh, going for a walk, meditating, playing with a pet, or working from home once a week can go a long way in making you both physically and mentally healthy.
- The company of animals – whether as pets or service animals – can have a profound impact on a person's quality of life and ability to recover

from illnesses. A pet can be a source of comfort and can help us to live mentally healthier lives.

Prescription Mail-Out Tracking – We Need Your Email Address



We are pleased to announce a new service for Veterans – for some select prescriptions mailed out from the San Diego VA, we can now send you an email message with the tracking number. 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

This only applies to select prescriptions mailed out from the San Diego VA. If your prescription is coming from the Consolidated Mail-Out Prescription center, you can track your shipping on My HealthVet: www.myhealth.va.gov

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
3/31/19)

Primary Care: .84 days
Specialty Care: 4.04 days
Mental Health: 2.68 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

Memorial Day: May 27

National Safety Month: May

National Veterans Golden Age Games: June 5 - 10

**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!

Informational Content

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