



VETERAN HEALTH NEWS

VA SAN DIEGO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

October 2018

Learn How to Golf With PGA Professionals



Learn how to golf with the new PGA Hope session this November. PGA Hope is a military program of PGA REACH, the charitable foundation of the PGA of America. PGA Hope introduces golf to all Veterans to enhance their mental, social, physical and emotional well-being.

Free sessions are taught by local PGA professionals with assistance from trained volunteers and include all necessary equipment if needed, training aids, range balls and weekly golf course access.

Instructional sessions start Thursday, Nov. 15 and continue until Dec. 27 10:00 a.m. – noon. No session on Thanksgiving.

Space is limited, register today by contacting Scott Mahlberg at smahlberg@sbcglobal.net

Anywhere to Anywhere Telehealth



VA San Diego is ramping up the expansion of Anywhere to Anywhere Program. Patients enrolled in this program may be seen at home on their computer or on a mobile device by their Primary care or Mental health providers. These “video to home” appointments work through an internet-based program called VA Video Connect (VVC). Appointments scheduled in VVC generates an email to both the provider and patient. Emails allow entry to a secure Virtual Medical Room (VMR), where both the provider and veteran may have a live video chat.

Benefits to having a video appointment versus going to the doctor’s office seem obvious - the Veteran can stay at home, save gas, driving and parking time, and no waiting in clinic lines. This allows Veterans to continue with their daily activities without the time loss of driving to a doctor appointment. Every veteran will soon have a choice to schedule an in person, telephone, or video visit with their providers, depending on their preferences for health care delivery.

Nationally to date, more than 105,000 video visits have been logged using VA Video Connect and continues to grow.

If you are a Veteran who is interested in using VA Video Connect, consult with your VA care team to see if video appointments can become a part of your own care

plan. You can read more about how to get started with VA Video Connect in this [My HealtheVet article](#)
[Learn More About VA Video Connect](#)

Flu Shots Available Now



Get your **FREE FLU SHOTS** now through Dec. 14 at the flu clinic in designated locations or with your primary care provider during scheduled appointments. Here's the [link](#) for more information.

VetText Appointment Reminders



Did you know more than 9 million VA health care appointments go unutilized each year across the VA due to missed appointments? To increase access to health care for all Veterans, the Veterans Health Administration has created VEText, an interactive mobile solution to remind Veterans of upcoming appointments via text messaging. Our goal is to offer a quick and easy way to confirm and/or cancel appointments and then make every attempt to schedule another Veteran into that time slot.

VASDHS was an early adopter of this text messaging appointment reminder system and we continue to expand the list of clinics that utilize this valuable tool. Since August of 2017, we have sent over 600,000 text messages. Our Veterans receive a text notification one week prior, and another reminder just a couple of days before their appointment date. Through this system, we have received a little over 11,000 appointment cancellations which has allowed our scheduling team to offer that time slot to other Veterans who may still be waiting for an appointment, or who may be scheduled farther into the future. VEText works for VA health care appointments only and the text messages do not currently replace the letters and automated phone calls Veterans already receive for appointment reminders. There are more features planned for the VEText system in the future and VASDHS will continue to strive to offer these enhanced features for our Veterans as soon as they become available.

For a preview of the VEText messaging, text the word DEMO to 909-245-9443. Text messaging rates may apply depending on your individual cell phone plan.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.va.gov/HEALTH/VEText.asp>

Check out the New Patriot Brew Cafe



The Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) is pleased to announce the grand opening of their new Patriot Brew Coffee Shop in the front lobby of the San Diego VA Medical Center on Friday, September 21, 2018 at 10 a.m. The shop provides all the Starbucks coffee beverages you love along with a selection of “Simply to Go” food items including breakfast pastries, sandwiches, fruit, cookies and salads.

VCS is opening the Patriot Brew in the front lobby to provide a more convenient location and to enhance the customer experience. With its modern design and natural lighting, the new shop provides a cheerful, relaxing atmosphere for patients, visitors and staff to grab a small bite or a quick pick-me-up. The new location is replacing the former coffee shop located in the Patriot Café cafeteria. The hours will stay the same as they were for the previous shop: Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (closed Saturday and Sunday). In addition to expanded menu options, the new shop will have more staff to provide faster service.

VA San Diego Health Benefits & Enrollment Team



San Diego VA Health Benefits & Enrollment assists in accordance with its name. We are also a one-stop service for insurance updates, Veteran Identification Cards, address changes, financial assessments combat veteran health care coordination including environmental agents such as Agent Orange, Camp Lejeune Water Contamination and Burn Pit Registries. We also offer a comprehensive explanation of your VA Benefits. We offer appointments as well as walk-ins at our La Jolla, Chula Vista, Oceanside, and Chula Vista locations. All of this is accomplished in a private, comfortable, quiet setting as to protect your privacy. Please visit your local Benefits and Enrollment office or use the below link to apply today.

<https://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/apply/>

Veterans Canteen Online Store



Looking for something special you can't find at our Patriot Store? The Patriot Store Direct offers merchandise not sold in store such as tires, flowers, computers, large appliances, jewelry, tools and toys. Call 1-800-664-8258 Monday-Friday 7am to 5pm CST or visit our website vacanteen.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](#).

SHEP Patient Experience Survey

You may receive a survey in the mail (or in your email inbox) within the next few weeks. By sharing your thoughts and feelings with us on the survey, you can help us improve the care we provide to our nation's heroes. Thank you for trusting the VA with your health care. It is our mission that we take to heart.

Appointment Access

Appt. wait times: (completed appts as of 8/31/18)

Primary Care:	1.02 days
Specialty Care:	4.82 days
Mental Health:	2.55 days

Choice referrals: In fiscal year 2017, VASDHS referred **35,891** Veteran episodes of care to the community for a total cost of **\$69,891,170**.

Calendar

Columbus Day: Oct. 8

Halloween: Oct. 31

Marine Corps Birthday Celebration: Nov. 7 10:30a.m. in the MPR

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 1,440 medical interns, residents and fellows as well as 751 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 \$41.3 million, 210 principal investigators and 698 projects.

Number of Veterans who received care from VASDHS in FY 2017: 83,014
***Number of Veterans in San Diego County:**243,369
***Number of Veterans in Imperial Valley:**6,225
Total Veterans living in SD & Imperial Valley Counties: ...249,594

**from VetPop, 9/30/2017*

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's Top 5 Priorities:



1. **Greater Choice for Veterans**



2. **Modernize Our Systems**



3. **Focus Resources More Efficiently**



4. **Improve Timeliness of Services**



5. **Suicide Prevention**