



# VETERAN HEALTH NEWS

VA SAN DIEGO HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

September 2019

## September is Suicide Prevention Month



Every September, Suicide Prevention Month gives individuals and communities across the country an opportunity to reflect on the ways we can all prevent suicide, including among Veterans.

You don't need special training to help prevent suicide, and even simple actions of support can make a real difference to a Veteran going through a difficult time. For instance, asking how a Veteran is doing — and listening — shows you care. Other thoughtful ways you can **Be There** include:

- Calling an old friend to say hello
- Sending a text to check in (for example, “Hey, we haven’t talked in a while ... how are you?”)
- Reaching out and sharing resources when you read a social media post that may indicate thoughts of suicide
- Sharing stories of hope and positivity on your social media accounts
- Getting S.A.V.E. suicide prevention training online from PsychArmor Institute to learn how to talk to a Veteran who is having suicidal thoughts

Suicide is preventable, and each of these actions could help save a life. To end Veteran suicide, we all must work together. We all have a role to play, in Suicide Prevention Month and every month. Thank you for joining us in this mission.

If you believe that a service member or Veteran in your life may be contemplating suicide, call the Veterans Crisis Line at **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, text to 838255, or [chat online](#). Qualified and compassionate VA responders are on call 24/7/365 to connect service members and Veterans with support and keep them from harm.

## The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic





The **National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic Program (NVSSC)** provides more than 100 Veterans with disabilities an opportunity for self-development and challenge through education and recreational activities. It promotes rehabilitation by teaching summer sporting activities to Veterans with significant physical or psychological impairments. Events such as **sailing, surfing, kayaking, archery, pickleball, and cycling** are offered.

This year’s program will be held Sept. 15 – 20 at various locations around San Diego. For more information, please visit

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/nvspse/>

## Nutrition – Class Offerings



**Take advantage of these nutrition and healthy lifestyle-based classes and taught by registered dietitians at VA San Diego Healthcare System. Here are some upcoming courses and their contact information.**

**“Lighten Up”**, a one-time two-hour nutrition class which covers basic nutrition principles for healthier eating behaviors, healthy food choices, grocery shopping, menu planning, and reading labels.

**“Diabetes Diet Class”** teaches you what foods to eat and how much, menu planning, grocery shopping, eating out, weight control to support glycemic control.

**“Diabetes Prevention Class”** This class offers information about diet, exercise, and other lifestyle factors that are proven to help prevent progression to diabetes.

**“Diabetes Prevention Program”** If you have pre-diabetes or think you are at risk for diabetes, you are invited to join the six-month Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). A variety of topics are discussed with the focus being activity, nutrition, stress management, and weight loss. The education offered is designed to support lifestyle changes to improve your health and ultimately lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

**“MOVE!”** The eight-week MOVE! series classes provide information about lifestyle modification to help with each person's goal for weight management. The focus of the program is to help Veterans lose weight, keep it off, and improve their health.

For more information on how you can get involved, visit here:

<https://www.sandiego.va.gov/patients/patientedclasses.asp>

## Take Charge with Whole Health



Whole Health is a personalized, proactive, patient-driven approach to health care that empowers and equips YOU to take charge of your health and well-being and live your life to the fullest! It is about you as a whole person – putting YOU, rather than illness or disease at the center of your health and healthcare. Whole Health includes self-care and complementary integrative health approaches along with

your conventional medical care and is rooted in a healing partnership to optimize your overall health and well-being with a focus on what matters most to you. In Whole Health care, you are a more active partner with your health team, putting you in the driver's seat of your own health.

A variety of classes are available beginning September 2019 through December at the VA Medical Center in La Jolla. In September, there are two classes available – on the 12th, 1:00-3:00pm in room 1525A; also the 24th, 10:00am – 12:00pm in the same room. No need to pre-register, walk-ins are welcome.

For more information please contact one of the Whole Health Orientation Facilitators: Johnny Lewis, Patient Relations Specialist/Retired Navy at (858) 552-4328, or Joe Sturdivant, Transition Patient Advocate at (858) 623-1809.

## Wifi at VA Locations



These facilities have guest wi-fi:

- **San Diego VAMC**
- **Oceanside Clinic**
- **Chula Vista Clinic**
- **Imperial Valley Clinic**
- **Sorrento Valley Clinic**
- **Rio Clinic**
- **Aspire Center**
- **Comp & Pen office**
- **Homeless Counseling Center**

## 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  
7/31/19)

Primary Care: 3.45 days  
Specialty Care: 5.13 days  
Mental Health: 2.62 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 Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

Labor Day: Sept. 2

National Disabled Veterans Tee Tournament: Sept. 8 – 13 (Iowa City, IA)

National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic: Sept. 15 – 20 (San Diego, CA)

POW/MIA Recognition Day: Sept. 20

First Day of Fall: Sept. 23

**Comments and suggestions about our newsletter? Send them to  
[Christopher.menzie@va.gov](mailto: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