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News Release

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VA San Diego Healthcare System staff walk in Pride Parade for the first time

SAN DIEGO (July 11, 2013) - For the first time this weekend, VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) will have over 100 employees walking in the San Diego Pride Parade. This historic event will showcase the commitment to provide comprehensive, inclusive, patient-centered care to all Veterans, including LGBT Veterans. "The VA San Diego Healthcare system has formed an LGBT Work Group to improve the quality of care to LGBT Veterans, through policy changes that insure non-discrimination and equal access to visitation and care, staff training and education, outreach to our LGBT Community partners and the development of clinical services to address the unique needs of LGBT Veterans, said Jeri Muse, PhD, psychologist at the San Diego VA Medical Center and chair of the VASDHS LGBT Workgroup. Muse is recipient of the 2013 Stonewall Community Service Award for her leadership and contributions toward promoting full equality and inclusion for LGBT Veterans at the San Diego VA.

"The repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell began the movement to acknowledge and support LGBT service members. Up until that point, many LGBT service members faced significant adversity through harassment, discrimination and fear of being discharged. By virtue of the relationship with the military, a similar culture was also prominent in the VA Healthcare System. The VA San Diego Healthcare System is committed to changing that culture. It is with great pride, the VA San Diego Healthcare System employees walk in the Pride Parade this weekend, in support our LGBT Veterans," said Muse.

VASDHS staff will also manage a VA information booth both days of the LGBT Parade events, encouraging Veterans to enroll for VA health care. "We want to encourage all Veterans to use the benefit they earned through their service to our nation," added Muse.

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