

VETERANS' health *matters*

VOLUME 1, 2012

“SOS, Health is on the Way!”

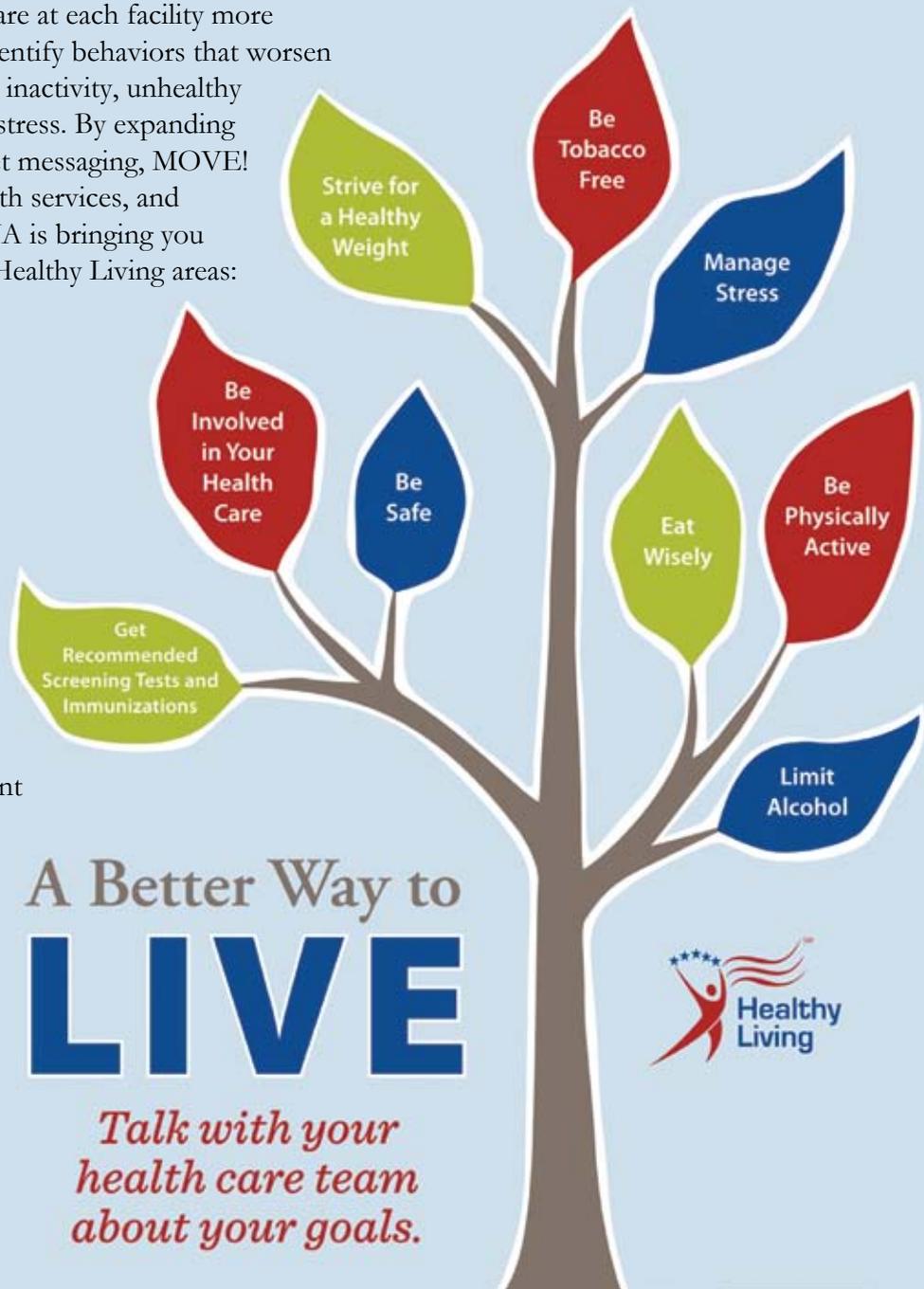
The Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program, created in 2011, is one way VA is making health care at each facility more patient-centered. This program helps identify behaviors that worsen chronic illnesses. Examples are physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, smoking, problem drinking and stress. By expanding patient Health Coaching, My HealthVet messaging, MOVE! weight management planning, TeleHealth services, and Behavior/Mental Health services, the VA is bringing you customized care in the following Nine Healthy Living areas:

1. Eat wisely.
2. Be physically active.
3. Strive for a healthy weight.
4. Get recommended screening tests and immunizations.
5. Be involved in your healthcare.
6. **Be tobacco free.**
7. Limit alcohol.
8. Manage stress.
9. Be safe.

This issue of Health Matters shares how the VA and facilities and clinics in your area are working together to prevent smoking, to lower secondhand smoke exposure and to support Veterans who want to quit smoking.

The Department of Defense supported the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout on Nov. 17, 2011, encouraging military personnel, families and retirees to walk away from tobacco for 24 hours.

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A Better Way to
LIVE

*Talk with your
health care team
about your goals.*



Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance Maximum Coverage Increases



The maximum amount of Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance increased from \$90,000 to \$150,000, Oct. 1, 2011, under the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010. Maximum coverage further increased from \$150,000 to \$200,000 as of Jan. 1, 2012.

The Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance is issued to those severely disabled Veterans and Servicemembers who have received grants for specially adapted housing from VA. These grants are issued to Veterans and Servicemembers whose movement or vision is substantially impaired because of their disabilities.

For more information about VA's Insurance Program or other VA benefits, go to www.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000. Veterans are also encouraged to visit VA's web portal eBenefits - Insurance.

VA to Build Polytrauma-Blind Rehabilitation Center in Palo Alto

\$98.8 Million Contract Awarded

The VA has awarded a \$98.8 million contract to build a new rehabilitation facility located on the campus of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

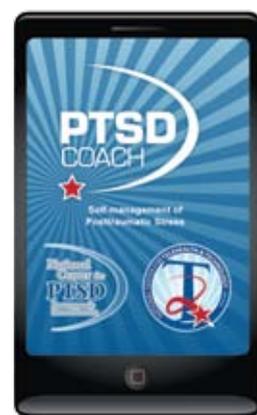


This will be VA's first and only Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center to be combined with a Blind Rehabilitation Center. At 174,000 square feet, this new facility is the largest consolidated rehabilitation center in VA. The Rehabilitation Center includes 24 beds for the polytrauma program, 32 beds for the blind rehabilitation program, and 12 beds for the polytrauma transitional rehabilitation program.

The center will also have an outpatient physical therapy/occupational therapy clinic, an outpatient physical medicine and rehabilitation clinic, and clinical programs for Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans. In addition to the new Polytrauma-Blind Rehabilitation Center, a 600-car, four-story parking garage will be constructed adjacent to the new facility to support the growing demand for onsite parking.

VA/DoD PTSD Coach App Wins FCC Award

On Oct. 11, 2011, the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Coach smartphone application, jointly developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense, was honored as one of seven recipients of the Federal Communications Commission Chairman's Award for Advancements in Accessibility.



"We are honored to be named as a recipient of this prestigious communications award," said Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert A. Petzel. "The PTSD Coach app has already helped more than 30,000 users connect with important mental health information and resources. It is a truly innovative tool which has revolutionized the way Veterans receive health care."

VA Introduces Make the Connection:

Shared Experiences and Support for Veterans

Make the Connection, a new campaign launched by the VA, is creating ways for Veterans and their family members to connect with the experiences of other Veterans — and ultimately to connect with information and resources to help them confront the challenges of transitioning from service, facing health issues, or navigating the complexities of daily life as a civilian.



“I have seen over and over again how important it can be for a Veteran to hear a message from another Veteran. This type of communication will be especially useful in helping to break down the stigma associated with mental health issues and treatment,” said Secretary Shinseki. “VA is leveraging this powerful connection using an approachable online resource that links Veterans to personal stories from their peers, to VA resources and support, and to reliable information about mental health and resilience.”

The campaign’s central focus is a Web site, www.maketheconnection.net, featuring numerous Veterans who have shared their experiences, challenges, and triumphs. The Web site also connects Veterans and their family members with services and resources that may help them live more fulfilling lives.

Obama Administration on Track to End Veteran Homelessness by 2015

Announces \$100 Million to Expand Homeless Prevention Program

The VA and Housing and Urban Development announced that a new national report shows that homelessness among Veterans has been reduced by nearly 12 percent between January 2010 and January 2011. The 12 percent decline keeps the Obama Administration on track to meet the goal of ending Veteran homelessness in 2015.

“This new report is good news for the tens of thousands of Veterans we have helped find a home. Our progress in the fight against homelessness has been significant, but our work is not complete until no Veteran has to sleep on the street,” said Secretary Shinseki.

New Online Tools for Veteran Job-Seekers

Secure Access to Military Records, Skill “Translators”

Veterans now have on-demand access and can download official data about their military training and experience, which can be used to help them find jobs and continue their careers. Their service data can be uploaded to job search and networking sites to help identify employment opportunities.

“Savvy employers look to Veterans for the excellent training and unique experiences they bring to the civilian workforce,” said Secretary Shinseki. “Now, Veterans can have state-of-the-art access to official data about their military service that we will help them land meaningful jobs.”

Veterans can use the VA’s online My HealthVet portal, www.myhealth.va.gov, to see official information about their military service, including deployment data, in-uniform experience, and Military Occupational Specialty codes which define the type of work performed and skills learned during their tour of duty. Veterans can electronically download that information to their personal computers by using an enhanced version of the Blue Button.

VA FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS

VA SIERRA NEVADA PACIFIC HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Breast Cancer Awareness Event

On Oct. 6, 2011, VA Sierra Pacific Health Care System sponsored an educational and fun event to stress the need for breast cancer awareness in both women and men. Staff and Veterans were encouraged to wear pink and were given pink ribbon pins. The male volunteers and medical support assistants received “Real Men Wear Pink” T-shirts. Female participants received pink “Fight Like a Girl” T-shirts.

The American Cancer Society supplied education and handouts on breast cancer prevention and awareness. Staff from the Women’s Clinic, Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program, MyHealthVet and Nutrition Services were available for questions and discussions. Various community agencies and health professionals provided education and techniques for stress management, including yoga demonstrations, massages, hypnosis, and herbal and aroma therapy.

Veterans who participated in the “Wear Pink” day theme received donated prizes. This event was a major success with over 250 Veterans receiving information and education about Breast Cancer Awareness and other healthy living messages.

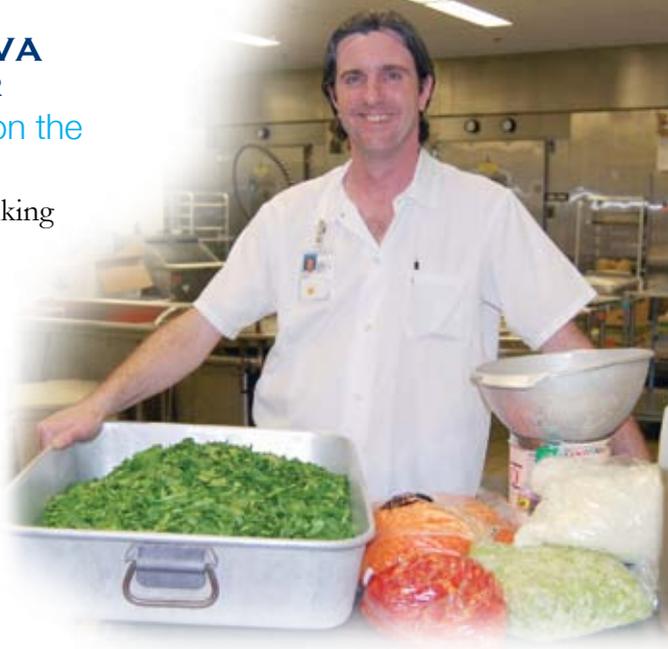
SAN FRANCISCO VA MEDICAL CENTER

Patient Meals: Bring on the Fresh and Tasty

“Add more taste; I’m thinking of bringing in a bottle of ketchup!” and “Add a little more variety; you can only take so much chicken!” are some comments Veteran patients and Community Living Center residents used to make about meals served to them at the San Francisco VA Medical Center. With a goal of providing tastier meals that contribute to the healing and comfort of Veterans, we changed our menu to include Veterans’ preferences, as well as meet VA Healthy Diet Guidelines.

“We now offer a healthier version of comfort foods using recipes like grandmother used to make,” said Nutrition and Food Service Chief Karen Arnold. Meals are created using fresh and local ingredients.

Surveyed patients and residents are now saying: “Overall, a great experience!” “Love the homemade soups!” “Excellent menu!” “Keep up the good work!”



VA NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM New Health Promotion Clinical Disease Program

Last April, Northern California Health Care System began a new Health Promotion Clinical Disease Program to help our Veterans develop and maintain healthy living habits and to take an active role in their health care. Veterans learn about the program from posters and materials in clinic waiting areas. At primary care visits, the vocational nurse, physician and nurse care manager discuss the benefits of the program and help the Veteran create goals, an action plan and a follow-up plan.

Under the management of Cynthia Wold, R.N., B.S.N. and Lorrie Strohecker, M.D., the program has shown signs of success. Veteran Ralph M. entered the program severely overweight with uncontrolled diabetes. With the help and encouragement of Lilly Lundy, R.N., Diabetic Nurse Manager, and Stephen Lippman, M.D., Ralph M. lost a significant amount of weight, now manages his diabetes with diet and exercise and no longer needs medications!

Once a month, the program conducts outreach events, such as AIDS awareness and “smokeouts.” These have been well received by Veterans and have generated greater awareness and participation.

VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM National Recognition for Performance Excellence

VA Palo Alto Health Care System was selected to receive the prestigious Carey Award in the category of Performance Achievement for its excellent performance in quality, safety, business practices, patient care and satisfaction.



“We are thrilled that our health care system — one of the largest, most complex systems in the VA — has been recognized for its excellent performance in a number of areas,” said Lisa Freeman, Director of the Healthcare System.

The Carey Performance Awards, presented annually, recognize VA organizations that have noteworthy performance levels in seven areas: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement analysis and knowledge management; workforce resource focus; process management and results.

“Our health care system strives to be a leader in health care excellence in VA and in the Nation,” Freeman continued. “This is accomplished by always striving to provide better care for our Veterans and never resting on our laurels.”

VA PACIFIC ISLANDS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM Veterans Treatment Court Planned for Hawaii

VA Pacific Islands Health Care System hosted a first-of-its-kind conference to establish a Veterans Treatment Court in Hawaii. About 140 community, representatives from federal, state, VA, government, medical, law enforcement and other agencies participated in the event. The keynote speaker, Judge Robert Russell from Buffalo, New York, established the first Veterans Treatment Court in 2008.

A planning session at the event discussed the barriers to establish a Veterans Treatment Court; develop a mentorship program; improve reentry support; increase outreach (especially to those transitioning from the military); streamline VA Justice Outreach services; and further educate law enforcement and the legal community about services and benefits offered to Veterans.

A plan will be presented to the Hawaii State Judiciary to show the extensive advocacy for a Veterans Treatment Court. It will also demonstrate the community’s commitment to our Veterans who have selflessly sacrificed and sometimes just need that “second chance” to heal, make amends and move forward to live healthy and productive lives in the country in which they defended.

VA CENTRAL CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Wellness Wall of Fame Unveiled in Fresno Medical Center

The Wellness Wall of Fame recognizes Veterans who have made dramatic health improvements by making lifestyle changes. Inductees on the Wall have written, in their own words, what they did to improve their health and why it was important to them to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

By eating healthier, walking, and using the VA’s MOVE program, the first six inductees lost an average of 62 pounds. One Veteran lost over 100 pounds! They also reduced their blood sugars and blood lipids to normal levels and were able to discontinue medications for high cholesterol and high blood sugar. The VA’s Diabetes Boot Camp taught Veterans how to control their blood sugars through lifestyle changes.

These first six patients, some of whom are in their late eighties, are wonderful examples of how it’s never too late to adopt lifestyle changes. They are inspirations to other Veterans who can see, first hand, how small changes in lifestyle can add up to big gains in wellness and quality of life.

VA Central California will develop a Wellness Wall of Fame at each of three Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

“SOS, HEALTH IS ON THE WAY!”

(Cont. from page 1)

VA Northern California Health Care System

A Great American Smokeout event was spearheaded by Diana Ruiz, lead Tobacco Cessation Clinic, and the Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program committee. At seven facilities Veterans received information, tobacco cessation survival kits, and encouragement from nurses, psychologists, pharmacists and peers. The tobacco cessation program is offered to all Veterans as a self-referral. Veterans can find out about tobacco cessation at any Behavioral Health Clinic or from their Nurse Care Manager or the Advice Nurse at (800) 382-8387.

VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System

In partnership with Voluntary Services, the staff in Reno raffled turkeys to Veterans who submitted “Commit to Quit” cards on Nov. 17, 2011. The cards were put on a public display. Veterans who quit tobacco in the past, quit for the day or set a future quit date were awarded name tag badges for quitting tobacco. Badges for non-smokers asking smokers to quit were also handed out. Classes to support smoking cessation were promoted and American Cancer Society volunteers provided educational materials. Reno offers comprehensive smoking cessation services for Veterans and employees.

San Francisco VA Medical Center

The Health Promotion Disease Prevention Smoking Cessation Committee, led by Dr. Carmody, Ph.D., held its annual Great American Smokeout with a special emphasis on TeleQuit.



This VA smoking cessation program is coordinated by telephone and is available to Veterans and VA employees. It offers free education, counseling and smoking cessation medication. Other services provided to Veterans and employees on “Quit Day” were head and neck massages, yoga, meditation, Zumba, pharmacy consults, oral screenings by Dental Services, and personalized health coaching and counseling. Find out about TeleQuit from www.paloalto.va.gov/telequit.asp or call your primary care provider.

VA Central California Health Care System

The Fresno facility held their Great American Smokeout event in conjunction with National Rural Health Day. Information was provided on smoking cessation and the effects of smoking and secondhand smoke. “Quit for Good” smoking cessation group classes begin the first Thursday of every month. For information, Veterans can call (559) 225-6100, ext. 5197.

VA Palo Alto Health Care System

The majority of our medical teams have gone through specialized training on how to talk to Veterans to encourage them to take control of their health and set realistic goals for healthy lifestyle changes. Staff can assist Veterans both in person and on the phone. Think about your healthy living goals and talk with your PACT medical team. Also, the Palo Alto Health Care System uses social media to help Veterans and staff learn to eat better using healthy recipes, find ways to quit smoking, set up exercise routines and much more. If you aren’t a fan yet, take a moment and visit www.facebook.com/vapahcs.

VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System

The Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program has developed a SharePoint site using colorful and helpful “Be Tobacco Free” resources to refer Veterans to stop smoking services. On Nov. 17, 2011, a Great American Smokeout information table was set up in the lobby of the Ambulatory Care Center to encourage Veterans to “Walk Away for a Day” and promote “Quit Tobacco Make Everyone Proud,” as well as the Hawaii Quit Line. Learn more at www.clearthesmoke.org/home.

RESOURCES FOR HELP TO QUIT TOBACCO

TeleQuit	For Palo Alto Health Care System Veterans: (800) 445-0057, ext. 60557 or www.paloalto.va.gov/telequit.asp . For Veterans of Northern California Health Care System, Sierra Nevada Health Care System and San Francisco VA Medical Center, contact your primary care provider for TeleQuit.
Quit for Good	VA Central California Health Care System: (559) 225-6100, ext. 5197
Hawaii Tobacco Quitline	(800) QUIT-NOW (784-8669)
California Smokers' Helpline	(800) NO-BUTTS (662-8887)
Nevada Tobacco User's Helpline	(800) QUIT-NOW (784-8669)
Other Quitlines	National Cancer Institute's National Quitline: (877) 44U-QUIT (448-7848) Local and state Quitlines: (800) QUIT-NOW (784-8669)
Freedom from Smoking	Online self support: www.ffsonline.org
Nicotine Anonymous	(877) TRY-NICA (879-6422) http://nicotine-anonymous.org
Smokefree Women	An online step-by-step tobacco cessation guide from the National Cancer Institute's instant messaging service: http://women.smokefree.gov

WORD SEARCH

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| <input type="checkbox"/> CESSATION | <input type="checkbox"/> COACH | <input type="checkbox"/> DISEASE PREVENTION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GUIDE | <input type="checkbox"/> GOALS | <input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH PROMOTION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HELP | <input type="checkbox"/> ONLINE | <input type="checkbox"/> MANAGE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NICOTINE | <input type="checkbox"/> QUIT DAY | <input type="checkbox"/> SECONDHAND |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SMOKEFREE | <input type="checkbox"/> SOS | <input type="checkbox"/> TELEQUIT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TOBACCO | <input type="checkbox"/> VETERAN CONNECT | <input type="checkbox"/> WALK AWAY |

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Kerri Childress, Editor
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Where to find us!

* OPC = Outpatient Clinic

VA Central California Health Care System

VA Central California Health Care System

2615 E. Clinton Avenue
Fresno, CA 93703-2286
(559) 225-6100

VA South Valley OPC

1050 North Cherry Street
Tulare, CA 93274
(559) 684-8703

NEW Merced OPC

340 E. Yosemite Avenue
Merced, CA 95340
(209) 381-0105

NEW VA Oakhurst CBOC

40597 Westlake Drive
Oakhurst, CA 93644
(559) 683-5300

VA Northern California Health Care System

VA Sacramento Medical Center

10535 Hospital Way
Mather, CA 95655
(916) 843-7000

VA Martinez OPC

150 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 372-2000

VA Redding OPC

351 Hartnell Avenue
Redding, CA 95926
(530) 226-7555

VA McClellan OPC

5342 Dudley Blvd.
McClellan Park, CA 95652-1074
(916) 561-7400

VA Mare Island OPC

201 Walnut Ave.
Mare Island, CA 94592
(707) 562-8200

Oakland Behavioral Health Clinic

525 21st Street
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 587-3400

VA Oakland OPC

2221 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 267-7800

VA Fairfield OPC

103 Bodin Circle, BLDG. 778
Travis AFB, CA 94535
(707) 437-1800

VA Chico OPC

280 Cohasset Road
Chico, CA 95926
(530) 879-5000

VA Yreka Rural Clinic

101 E. Oberlin Road
Yreka, CA 96097
(530) 841-8500

Yuba City Outreach Clinic

1231 Plumas Street
Yuba City, CA 95991
(530) 751-8455

VA Palo Alto Health Care System

VA Palo Alto Division

3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304-1290
(650) 493-5000

VA Menlo Park Division

795 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 493-5000

VA Livermore Division

4951 Arroyo Road
Livermore, CA 94550
(925) 373-4700

VA Capitola OPC

1350 N. 41st Street Suite 102
Capitola, CA 95010
(831) 464-5519

VA Stockton OPC

500 W Hospital Road
Stockton, CA 95231
(209) 946-3400

VA Modesto OPC

1524 McHenry Ave. Suite 315
Modesto, CA 95350
(209) 557-6200

VA Monterey OPC

3401 Engineer Lane
Seaside, CA 93955
(831) 883-3800

VA San Jose OPC

80 Great Oaks Boulevard
San Jose, CA 95119
(408) 363-3011

VA Sonora OPC

13663 Mono Way
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 588-2600

VA Fremont OPC

39199 Liberty Street
Fremont, CA 94538
(510) 791-4001

San Francisco VA Medical Center

4150 Clement Street
San Francisco, CA 94121-1598
(415) 221-4810

Downtown S.F. VA OPC

401 3rd Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 281-5100

VA Eureka OPC

714 F Street
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 442-5335

VA San Bruno OPC

1001 Sneath Lane
San Bruno, CA 94066
(650) 615-6000

VA Santa Rosa OPC

3841 Brickway Blvd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 569-2300

VA Ukiah OPC

630 Kings Court
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 468-7700

Clearlake VA Clinic

15145 Lakeshore Drive
Clearlake, CA 95422
(707) 995-7200

VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System

Ioannis A. Lougaris VA Medical Center

1000 Locust Street
Reno, NV 89502-2597
(775) 786-7200

VA Lahontan Valley OPC

345 West A Street
Fallon, NV 89406
(775) 428-6161

VA Sierra Foothills OPC

11985 Heritage Oak Place
Suite #1
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 889-0872

VA Carson Valley OPC

925 Ironwood Drive, Suite 2102
Minden, NV 89423
(775) 786-7200 Ext. 4000

NEW VA Diamond View OPC

110 Bella Way
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-4550

NEW Winnemucca Rural Outreach Clinic

Army 735 4th Street
Winnemucca, NV 89445
(877) 320-4990

VA Pacific Islands Health Care System

Spark M. Matsunaga VA Medical Center

459 Patterson Road
Honolulu, HI 96819
(808) 433-0600

VA PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Program

459 Patterson Road
Honolulu, HI 96819
(808) 433-0004

VA Maui OPC

203 Ho'ohanna Street, Suite 303
Kahului, HI 96732
(808) 871-2454

VA Hilo OPC

1285 Waiuanuenue Ave., Suite 211
Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 935-3781

VA Kona OPC

75-377 Hualalai Road
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
(808) 329-0774

VA Kauai OPC

3-3367 Kuhio Hwy., Suite 200
Lihue, HI 96766
(808) 246-0497

NEW VA Guam CBOC

498 Chalan Palasyo
Agana Heights, Guam 96910
(671) 475-5760

VA American Samoa OPC

Fitele Teo Army Reserve Building
Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799
(684) 699-3730

VA Lanai Outreach Clinic

628-B Seventh Street
Lanai City, HI 96763
(808) 565-6423

VA Saipan OPC

Marina Heights Business Park
P.O. Box 500938
Saipan, MP 96950
(670) 323-9000

NEW Manila OPC

Seafront Compound
1501 Roxas Boulevard
1302 Pasay City, Philippines
(011) 632 833-4566