

Veteran Updates

Downtown Clinic's New Community Resource and Referral Center

The San Francisco Downtown VA Clinic is in the midst of remodeling to provide designated spaces to house a Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) for Veterans.

"The Downtown Clinic has always promoted community collaboration and invited providers in, but this program has provided staffing, and funding for the remodel to house them."

says clinic Administrative Officer Richard Rendon. "The idea is to bring community providers into our clinic to offer

an extended range of services to our Veterans. This way Veterans don't have to travel to multiple locations to receive all the services they need."

"So far, as part of the expansion plan, the clinic has added four additional offices especially for CRRC," says CRRC Manager and Comprehensive Homeless Center Director M. Jake Martin, LCSW.

The following community resources are on board now, with more to be added in the future:



- **San Francisco County Veterans Service Officer** (Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., provides benefits counseling and referrals, and help with disability claims.)
- The **San Francisco Vet Center** (For combat Veterans, military sexual trauma victims, and Vets with other than dishonorable discharges. Every other Tuesday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., representatives help Veterans readjust to civilian life, cope with PTSD, anxiety, anger management issues, and provide couples counseling.)
 - **'At Ease'** group (Wednesdays 5-8 p.m. By referral; assists Veterans with issues related to domestic violence.)
- **Alcoholics Anonymous** evening group (Thursdays 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.)
- **Swords to Plowshares Client Service Navigator** (Mondays and Fridays, 8 to 10 a.m. Helps connect Veterans to services offered by Swords to Plowshares.)
- **Free legal clinic** provided by attorneys (2nd and 4th Thursdays 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. to assist Vets with limited legal issues.)

SFVAMC's New Dialing Procedure

What Has Changed?

Effective now, when you dial San Francisco VA Medical Center's main phone number (415) 221-4810, you'll need to dial a "2" before an extension. Direct-dial phone numbers at the Medical Center have not been affected.

Why the Change?

This change comes as the Medical Center has upgraded our phone system and service.

Some Examples:

Old number for Eligibility and Enrollment:

(415) 221-4810, ext. 4066

New number for Eligibility and Enrollment:

(415) 221-4810, ext. 2-4066

Old number for Patient Travel:

(415) 221-4810, ext. 2116
New number for Patient Travel:

(415) 221-4810, ext. 2-2116

Old number for Womens Health Center:

(415) 221- 4810, ext. 2174

New number for Womens Health Center:

(415) 221- 4810, ext. 2-2174

Veteran Kudos

"These people have saved my life many times. I'm so thankful for the care I've received there. From what I've heard...the SFVA...is considered the gold standard of VA hospitals." –R.R.

"I'm with my Veteran Dad at the SFVA right now. I'm looking forward to volunteering here so that I can give back to those that helped save my Dad's life!" –A.B.

"As a Veteran who's been served at the SFVA, I have to say that I can't imagine any better organization in the world. These people are life savers pure and simple." –R.R.

"The SFVAMC is a direct gift from God!!" –S.T.

"Being a patient at the San Francisco VA Medical Center, be it eye clinic, medical practice, podiatry, orthopedics, X-ray, blood work, or pharmacy, it has been a 5-star experience." –R.C.

"Best hospital in the San Francisco Bay Area!" –F.F.

"Great no-nonsense healthcare, this is what we all should have. They take great care of me and go above and beyond in making sure I get the best care ever. The staff are kind, considerate and know their stuff." –R.B.

Health Library One-Stop Source

The online Veterans Health Library (VHL) offers Veterans, family members, and caregivers 24/7 access to comprehensive, Veteran-focused health information.

The Library is a one-stop source for health information to help Veterans stay well and well-informed. There are over 1,500 health sheets, over 150 videos, Go-to-Guides, and Flipbooks that have been approved by VA experts, and include topics specific to Veterans, for example, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat-related Traumatic Brain Injury, Agent Orange, and Cold Injury. All health information is available to Veterans, their family and the public, no matter where the Veteran receives care.

The VHL has a fresh, new look and feel that improves the users' experience to make it more responsive to users' needs:

The VHL's Home Page sports a new layout designed for easier

viewing and use and allows the library to now be viewed on both mobile devices and laptop computers.

Print and social media icons are now larger for easier access. Users can now see the subtopics when they move their cursor over a menu topic, and can see the trail of pages they've visited more easily.

The Search and A-Z tools are larger and easier to find, and appear under the navigation bar on each VHL page. Search terms also have been narrowed so that users have fewer results to review, and instructions help them get more specific search results.

A new feature, the En Español button, translates the entire top navigation into Spanish; clicking the En Inglés button translates the text back to English. **To access the VHL, visit: www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/22,welcome.**

VA Extends Benefits to Same-Sex Couples

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the federal Defense of Marriage Act discriminates against same-sex couples and that the federal government must treat all married couples equally.

This means the VA now must treat same-sex married couples the same as they treat opposite-sex married couples when providing

Veterans benefits. The VA has announced that same-sex married couples will now be able to share Veterans pensions, home loans, medical services, educational benefits, surviving spouse benefits, burial and memorial benefits, and other benefits previously unavailable to them.

