

Veteran Updates

Lifestyle Changes for a Healthier You

It's a new year, and it's the perfect time for a "new you"! Here are some classes and programs that the San Francisco VA Health Care System (SFVAHCS) offers. Your primary care provider can request a dietary consult or a recreational therapy/strength and wellness consult to get you started.

MOVE!® Session With a VA Dietitian – You can discuss nutrition, weight control, diabetes and blood pressure with a registered dietitian, plus attend a weekly support group. For more information call VA Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator Gary Yee (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-3354. Other nutrition programs offered include **Veterans cooking classes, and Living Well with Diabetes**. For more information about these, you can call a dietitian at (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-4262. Nutrition classes are also available at each of our six VA community clinics.

Women Veterans MOVE!® – This is a 12-week weight management program especially for women that



explores nutrition education, health coaching, and light physical activity. For more information call Janet Faccenda, MA, RDN, at (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-2895.

MOVE!® Strength and Wellness – This weight management-focused program provides 10 weeks of classes, held at the San Francisco VA Medical Center and at the Stonestown YMCA. Participants work with a dietitian, recreational therapist, and behavioral health coach to move toward a healthier weight and manage their overall health and wellness. For more information call VA Strength and Wellness Coordinator Chris Geronimo at (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-3471.

And finally, our **Veterans Strength and Wellness Program** provides the following community-based exercise and wellness classes held at the Richmond YMCA:

Functional Flexibility Class – The goal of this class is to improve concentration, range of motion, flexibility, and mental and physical health. For more information call VA Rec Therapist Christian Dillon at (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-3471.

Circuit Training Class – This class targets strength building and muscular endurance. For more information call Chris Geronimo at (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-3471.

Looking to help market your skills, kick-start your career, or do more of what you do best? Visit explore.va.gov/employment-services to learn how VA Employment Services can help Veterans like you start or advance your post-military careers.

The Veterans Employment Center can help create a résumé, translate military skills into civilian equivalents, and match interests with potential careers: www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs.

Veterans with certain service-connected disabilities may qualify for additional benefits for tuition, books, fees, supplies, and monthly subsistence payments through the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program: 1.usa.gov/1SlfWZn.

Check out education and training benefits at explore.va.gov/education-training.

Looking for a private-sector or Federal job? Search nearly 3 million jobs at the Jobs Bank: www.vets.gov/veterans-employment-center.

Recruiting for Research Studies

COPD or Emphysema Study

For Veterans with COPD or Emphysema, to study how COPD affects the lung's ability to fight infection. Compensation up to \$470. For more information call (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-4009, or email LungResearch@ncire.org.

Vascular Health Study

For Veterans who are age 35 and older who have poor circulation in their legs and pain in their legs when walking. Participants will take fish oil supplements. For more information call Hugh Alley at (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-4708.

Preventing Loss of Independence Through Exercise (PLIÉ)

For those who care for someone with dementia or memory loss, who are willing to have their loved one participate in an exercise class at an adult day center for 45 minutes 2 days/week for 4 months. Compensation up to \$30 in gift cards. For more info call (844) 366-6866.

Alcohol and PTSD Study

For Veterans with PTSD who would like to decrease their alcohol use. Compensation up to \$470. For more information call Brooke Lasher at (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-4495, or email brooke.lasher@va.gov.

VA Grants Same-Sex Spouse Benefits

On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court held in Obergefell v. Hodges that the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution requires a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex and to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-state.

Accordingly, VA may now recognize all same-sex marriages without regard to a Veteran's state of residence. VA has developed guidance to process cases involving same-sex spousal benefits, and to implement necessary changes swiftly and smoothly in order to deliver the best services to all our nation's Veterans.

All Veterans in same-sex marriages who believe they are entitled to benefits should apply for benefits. Veterans whose claims were previously denied based on prior guidance should re-apply for benefits.

For same-sex married couples in every state, restrictions have been lifted on dependency

claims for Veterans' pensions, survivor benefits and disability compensation, education (GI bill), VA-backed home loans, burial rights, survivor benefits, and health care.

The Defense Department has identified the following VA benefits for which Servicemembers may designate beneficiaries of their choosing, regardless of sexual orientation:

Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI): www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp.

Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI): www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/veap.asp.

Post Vietnam-era Veterans Assistance Program (VEAP): www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/veap.asp.

Montgomery GI Bill: www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/montgomery_bill.asp.

Presentation of the Flag of the United States: www.cem.va.gov.

No Slips, Trips or Falls this New Year

Stay safe this new year! Many slips, trips and falls can be prevented by following these simple tips:

Clean up spilled food, liquids, and other substances right away.

Avoid standing on a chair or table to reach overhead objects; instead use a sturdy stepladder or stepstool.

Ensure floors and stairs are free of clutter and objects that could cause you to trip.

Wear proper footwear that's in good condition for best support.

If you're carrying something large, ensure you can see around it and that it doesn't obstruct your vision.

