

Veteran Updates

News and updates on Veterans issues from the San Francisco VA Health Care System • November 2015

Have You Received Your New Veterans Health ID Card (VHIC)?

The purpose of the Veterans Health Identification Card (VHIC) is for identification and check-in at VA appointments. It cannot be used as a credit card or an insurance card, and it does not authorize or pay for care at non-VA facilities.

Benefits of the VHIC Include:

- Increased security for your personal information – no personally identifiable information is contained on the magnetic stripe or barcode.
- Unique Member Identifier – Department of Defense assigns an electronic data interchange personal identifier that allows VA to retrieve the Veteran's health record.
- A salute to your military service – The emblem of your latest branch of service is displayed on your card. Several special awards will also be listed.
- Accessibility – Braille "VA" helps visually impaired Veterans to recognize and use the card.
- Anti-Counterfeiting – Microtext helps thwart reproductions.



How to Receive a VHIC:

The VHIC is issued only to Veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system. If you are not enrolled, you may apply for enrollment online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll or by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387) Monday – Friday from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST. You may also apply for enrollment in person at your local VA medical facility.

Once your enrollment is verified, you may have your picture taken at your local VA facility, so that a VHIC can be mailed to you. VA will mail you a Veterans Health Benefits Handbook and you will also receive a call welcoming you to the VA, typically within 5-7 days after your enrollment. [Veterans who are already enrolled in VA healthcare need only bring their ID and have their picture taken at their local VA facility, and a new VHIC will be mailed to them.]

For more information, including what forms of ID are needed to receive a VHIC, visit www.va.gov/healthBenefits/vhic/index.asp.



Ready to quit smoking? Join us at SFVAMC on Thursday, November 19 from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. in the Teak Room (Bldg. 200, Floor 1, Room 1A-122) for the Great American Smokeout.

Activities will include:

- Breath sample carbon monoxide testing
- Quit-smoking resources
- Medication counseling
- Kick boxing demo at 11:30 a.m.
- Testimonials from former smokers at 12 p.m.
- Yoga demo at 12:30 p.m.
- Raffle for prizes (drawing is at 2 p.m.)

Additionally there will be an information table in the Stairwell Alcove (Intersection of Bldgs. 2 and 7, Ground Floor)

For tips and resources to help you quit smoking, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking or talk with your VA health care provider.

Recruiting for Research Studies

Alcohol and PTSD Study

For Veterans with PTSD who would like to decrease their alcohol use. For more info contact Brooke Lasher at brooke.lasher@va.gov or (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-4495.

Alcohol, PTSD and mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI)

For Veterans with PTSD and mTBI. For more info contact Brooke Lasher at brooke.lasher@va.gov or (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-4495.

Brain on Pain Study

For Veterans 18-55 years old who have lower back pain, with or without having been exposed to combat trauma. Study researches whether combat-related trauma affects pain sensitivity and brain functioning. Compensation up to \$250. For more info call (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-4849.

CREST-2 Study

For Veterans age 35 and over who have 78 percent or more narrowing of at least one carotid artery. This study compares different methods of stroke prevention to find the safest and most effective treatment. For more info call Christine at (415) 221-4810, ext. 2-4708.

It's Diabetes Awareness Month

November is Diabetes Awareness Month. Did you know that over 25 percent of Veterans have diabetes?

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a group of diseases characterized by high levels of blood glucose (sugar) that result from deficiencies in the body's ability to produce and/or use insulin.

Some complications of diabetes are kidney disease, heart disease, vision problems, and stroke.

Diabetes is a serious condition, and early detection and treatment can decrease the chance of developing life-threatening complications.

If you already have diabetes, don't worry, there's still a lot you can do to reduce symptoms and stay healthy.

What Can You Do?

Weight loss through more physical activity and a healthy diet will improve certain symptoms.

Talk with your VA provider, ask for diabetes information, and about programs such as "MOVE!" to help avoid or manage diabetes.

Are You at Risk?

You can take the American Diabetes Association's 60-second diabetes risk test at www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/diabetes-risk-test/.

For more diabetes information, research and education, check out the Centers for Disease Control diabetes resource page at www.cdc.gov/diabetes/home/index.html.



Please join us
for our annual

VETERANS Day Ceremony

Tuesday, November 10 at 11:00 am
Auditorium, Building 7, 1st Floor

Guest speakers will be:

Norissa McLorin, US Marine Corp Veteran
Stewart Barbee, Army Veteran
Suzanne Gordon, Author

