

Veteran Updates

“Musicians On Call” Bring Joy to Veterans

An exciting new partnership with Musicians On Call is allowing Veterans in the San Francisco VA Medical Center’s (SFVAMC) Community Living Center to experience the joy of music to promote healing and well-being. Musicians On Call is an organization that sends volunteers to hospitals to give live, one-to-one bedside performances to patients. The program began in 1999 and has already brought music to over half a million patients and family members across the country.

Now, these hardworking volunteers are bringing their talents to the San Francisco VA Medical Center to brighten the days of our Veterans. “There are so many therapeutic benefits to music and song,” says Leanne Young, Supervisory

Recreational Therapist at SFVAMC’s Community Living Center. “Music can improve your mood and lift your spirits. Many of our Veterans have depression and PTSD. Music can help them build coping skills.”

Leanne notes that many of the Veterans in our Community Living Center are bed-bound or have limited mobility. The Musicians On Call volunteers are able to bring music directly to them. The volunteer musicians have a pre-selected list of classic and popular songs for Veterans to choose from, so Veterans can request songs that trigger positive memories and associations for them.

Volunteers from Musicians On Call made an inaugural visit to the Community Living Center on November 10, just in time for Veterans Day. They were accompanied by volunteers from Pandora Internet Radio, who made a generous donation of ten smart tablets that came pre-programmed with complimentary Pandora accounts. Veterans can check out the tablets at their convenience and listen to music of their choice at any time. Pandora co-founder and CEO Tim Westergren was even on hand to explain how Pandora works and help the Veterans find music channels they might enjoy.



In addition to the musical performances, our Veterans were treated to an extra special Veterans Day performance from San Francisco-based singer-songwriter Matt Nathanson. “Our Veterans were thrilled to have a live concert. We’re looking forward to providing even more live music for our Veterans with our friends at Musicians On Call,” says Leanne.

Musicians On Call will return to the Community Living Center twice a month to perform starting this December. To learn more about this great organization visit their website at www.musiciansoncall.org.

If you’d like to volunteer at the Community Living Center or anywhere else in the San Francisco VA Health Care System, visit www.sanfrancisco.va.gov/giving/index.asp.



Introducing: MyVA311

VA is introducing 1-844-MyVA311 (1-844-698-2311) as a go-to source for Veterans. This new national toll-free number will help eliminate the feeling of frustration and confusion that Veterans and their families have expressed when navigating the 1000-plus phone numbers that currently exist.

With 1-844-MyVA311, Veterans, families, and caregivers can access information about VA services like disability, pension, healthcare eligibility, enrollment, and burial benefits, in addition to a self-service locator to find the nearest VA facility. And, if they're looking for immediate assistance with housing or are having a mental health crisis, MyVA311 will route callers to the Homeless Veteran help line and the Veterans Crisis Line.

If you know what number you're calling – keep calling it. None of the existing VA numbers will go away. The future vision is that 1-844-MyVA311 will become a 24/7 one-stop information service platform for all VA services.

The new MyVA311 phone number is just one step in a larger effort to modernize VA contact centers so Veterans have a seamless, positive experience when reaching out to VA.

Million Veteran Program Now Recruiting at SFVAHCS

The San Francisco VA Health Care System is one of 50 VA Health Care Systems selected across the nation to serve as an enrollment site for the Million Veteran Program (MVP), a research program that will help us better understand how genes affect Veterans' health and illness. The ultimate goal of the program is to transform health care for many generations to come.

MVP aims to enroll at least one million participants nationally. Enrollment is currently open to Veterans registered in VA healthcare, with plans for expansion in the future to welcome non-VA users, active duty, and other relevant populations.

Those interested in joining are asked to complete a one-time study visit (approx. 20 minutes) to review what is involved in the program and provide a blood sample for genetic analysis. Participation also includes

filling out health surveys, allowing ongoing access to medical records and agreeing to future contact. This research program has already become one of the largest databases of genes and health history with more than 500,000 Veterans already enrolled. The results of MVP may lead to new ways of preventing and treating common illness and research is underway on topics such as PTSD, diabetes, and heart disease.

Participation will not affect access to health care or benefits. Visit the website of the Million Veteran Program at www.research.va.gov/mvp to learn more. For more information or to participate, call toll-free 866-441-6075. Additionally, you can stop by Building 200, 2nd Floor, Room 2B-117/118 (Lab Check-In) at the San Francisco VA Medical Center during normal business hours, Monday-Friday to learn more.



**MILLION
VETERAN
PROGRAM**

DISCOVERY ★ INNOVATION ★ ADVANCEMENT

