

Veteran Updates

Women's Health Clinic Helps You Take Care of Your Heart

February is Women's Heart Health Month, and the San Francisco VA Medical Center (SfVAMC) has many offerings to raise our awareness of heart disease. National Red Wear Day is **February 1**, so if you're here that day, stop by the stairwell alcove

on the way to the Canteen for some important information and a free red dress appliqué. On **February 6**, you're invited to the Teak

Room, Bldg. 200, 1st floor, across from Medical Practice, from 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. to explore Women's Heart Health presentations and activities.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death of American women and women Veterans. While 1 in 31 American women dies from breast cancer each year, 1 in 3 dies of heart disease. Many women aren't aware that heart disease is their leading health threat, and haven't made the connection between conditions such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and the risk of developing heart disease.

Women are the fastest growing subgroup of U.S. Veterans, and about 300,000 women Veterans use VA medical services nationwide.

With this in mind, and since its opening in 1995, the Women's Comprehensive Health Center at the SfVAMC has provided high quality health care to eligible women who have served in our armed forces.



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SfVAMC's

women's care

includes services such as: primary care, gynecological care, medical and surgical care, social services, substance abuse treatment, weight loss counseling, mental health evaluation and treatment, and much more. A vital part of providing this care involves raising awareness of cardiovascular disease, especially among women Veterans ages 45 to 64—critical years for heart health.

To make an appointment with the SfVAMC Women's Health Clinic call (415) 750-2174. The clinic is located in Bldg. 203, 1st floor, Room 1B-72.

National Salute to Veterans

Each year we honor our Veteran patients during VA's *National Salute to Veteran Patients* held the week of **February 10-16**. The week includes the distribution of hundreds of Valentine's cards and donations arriving from area schools and the local community. Volunteers are joined by organizations from the Bay area, and together they hand out Valentine's cards to all patients. Food and Nutrition Service adds cards to food trays for patients.

"On Valentine's Day, **February 14**, Voluntary Service teams up with community organizations for our Gift Distribution," said Chief of Voluntary Service Owetdia Dupree. "Volunteers will distribute gift bags and Valentines to residents at our Community Living Center, and to our inpatients." The carts are festively decorated with balloons and canopies, and are sure to bring a smile.

To find out how you can participate, contact our Voluntary Service Department at (415) 750-2144.

Paperless Checks: Are You Ready?

Starting **March 1**, the U.S. Treasury Department will stop issuing paper checks for Social Security and other federal benefit payments and disburse payments instead only in the form of direct deposits to bank or credit union accounts, or a Direct Express card.

This change affects anyone who receives Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Veterans Affairs, Railroad Retirement Board or Office of Personnel Management benefits, or black lung benefit payments from the Department of Labor. About 94 percent of Social Security beneficiaries currently receive their monthly benefits in the form of direct deposits, which offer convenience and added security.

Still haven't signed up for paperless payment? It's not too late! Visit www.godirect.org.



Service Dogs Are Welcome

Veterans, we welcome you and your service dogs! For anyone not familiar, service dogs are specially trained and designated as such because they have specific skills to help someone with a physical illness or disability. Pets and companion animals are not the same as service dogs and must be kept outside the Medical Center.

Service dogs are allowed most anywhere except for sterile areas such as operating rooms. They are to be kept on leash and controlled by their owners at all times.

Patients who bring a service dog to our Medical Center are asked to also bring a friend or family member who can look after it in the event the patient needs to receive treatment in a sterile area.

We ask all of our patrons to respect the purpose of service dogs, recognize that they're working animals, and that they should not be distracted from their job by petting or socializing.

Resources

Billing Office
(866) 347-2353

Mental Health/Substance Abuse
(415) 750-6674

OEF/OIF/OND Program
(415) 221-4810, ext. 4405

Pharmacy (Auto Refill)
(415) 750-2233

Veterans Crisis Line
(800) 273-8255

Telephone Linked Care
(800) 733-0502

Town Hall

When: **February 23**, 9-11 a.m. and again from 5-7 p.m.

Where: War Memorial Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave, Room 207, 2nd Floor

What: Presentations on VA benefits, services and other Veterans resources.

Info: This event is hosted by Ed Ramirez, SFVAMC Minority Veterans Coordinator, (415) 740-4399.

This event is held the fourth Wednesday of every month.

Thank you for your service!



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