

Veteran Updates

News and updates on Veterans issues from the San Francisco VA Medical Center • September 2013

SFVAMC Welcomes New Director

The San Francisco VA Medical Center has announced the appointment of Bonnie S. Graham as the new Director of the San Francisco VA Medical Center. Ms. Graham will oversee delivery of health care to more than 61,000 Veterans.

“We are excited to bring Ms. Graham on board as the new director of the San Francisco VA Medical Center,” said Sheila Cullen, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 21 Director. “Her sound leadership qualities and proven experience will be valuable assets for the facility, the employees and volunteers, and most importantly, for the Veterans we are honored to serve.” Ms. Graham will begin her duties the week of September 23.

Ms. Graham joined the VA 9 years ago as the Business Manager of Spinal Cord Injury & Rehabilitation at the New Mexico VA Health Care System in Albuquerque, NM, and has held progressively responsible leadership positions since that time, including Associate Director at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, a three-hospital division academic medical center. Most recently, she served as Deputy Director for the Veterans Health Administration Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation in Washington, D.C. In that role, she was responsible for Patient Centered Care national operations, strategy and roll-out of



Medical Center Director Bonnie S. Graham

this new program to create innovative programs and tools focused on providing personalized, patient-driven health care.

Prior to her VA experience, Ms. Graham held several high level executive positions in the private sector including Vice President for Medical Group Operations at Lovelace Health Systems, Inc., in Albuquerque, NM; Vice President for Medical Services at The Rehabilitation Center of Greater Waterbury in Waterbury, CT; and Executive Director of the Center for Nutrition and Rehabilitation, P.C., in Norwalk, CT.

Ms. Graham holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Connecticut School of Business in Stamford, CT.

A Faster Way to Check in for Appointments

The VetLinks are here! These self-serve kiosks, with touch-screen technology, allow Veterans to check in for their scheduled appointments and manage personal information.

Veterans can use VetLink to check in for an appointment; update contact and demographic information; update next of kin information; review insurance information; view account balance and print a list of future appointments.

“So far we’ve had over 2,000 successful check-ins. We’re getting lots of good feedback from patients and they like it,” said Aaron Nguyen, project coordinator. “Veterans say the kiosks are easy to operate.”

VetLinks are currently installed at the Medical Center, and will soon be operational at all six of our VA clinics in the coming weeks.

New Office of Patient Centered Care

SFVAMC is proud to announce the creation of a new Office of Patient Centered Care, dedicated to increasing patient satisfaction, improving customer service, and fostering a patient-centered health care culture. The new office is charged with ensuring that the voices of Veterans and their loved ones have a significant and sustained impact on Medical Center operations and policies.

Patient Advocate Janice Savengrith has recently been joined by new Advocates Craig Hill and Terrance Jones—both of whom are Veterans and are committed to promoting patient centered care at SFVAMC.

You can contact the Patient Advocates at (415) 750-6650.

Suicide Prevention Month

September is Suicide Prevention Month, a chance for Veterans and their loved ones to focus on the things that matter. And, anyone who knows a Veteran can help. This year's theme, "It Matters," emphasizes the people, relationships and experiences that matter to Veterans and their loved ones, reinforcing their personal connections and giving their lives hope and meaning.

Whether a Veteran has just returned home, or served years ago, their experiences remain with them. Their wounds might not be visible, but they need our attention. We can support Veterans who are dealing with challenges of all kinds; we're in this together.

Veterans, or anyone concerned about a Veteran, can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat or text to 838255 to receive support—even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. All



Veterans Crisis Line resources are optimized for mobile devices.

Anyone can support Veterans by:

- Encouraging a Veteran who needs help to call the

Veterans Crisis Line. Remind them that it takes courage to seek help.

- Connecting with a local Suicide Prevention Coordinator and taking part in a local event.

- Watching the new Suicide Prevention Month public service announcement, "Talking About It Matters"

- Tweeting your friends and loved ones with the following message: "One small act can make the difference. Help #Veterans access the support they've earned: VeteransCrisisLine.net."

Since 2007, the Veterans Crisis Line has answered more than 890,000 calls and made more than 30,000 lifesaving rescues. In 2009, the Veterans Crisis Line added the anonymous chat service, which has had more than 108,000 chats.

Thank you for your service!

Don't Get the Flu, Take Care of You!

It's flu season and time to protect yourself and others from the influenza virus by getting a flu shot. This is the best defense from getting the flu. In addition, washing hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and trying to avoid those who are sick are other effective practices to keep you healthy and flu-free.

Beginning **September 9**, Veterans can be vaccinated in our Drop-in Flu Clinic (Medical Practice, Bldg. 200, 1st Floor) Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 1 – 3:30 p.m. You can also receive a flu vaccine at a regularly scheduled appointment. Don't wait, get your vaccine today!

