

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
VA Puget Sound Health Care System

# Live Whole Health

Official news from VA Puget Sound Health Care System



2020 Fall | Issue 2



## Message from our Director

At VA Puget Sound, we are committed to caring for all Veterans with dignity and respect, and strive to provide our patients with the highest standard of care. To do this, our facility must be a space where all feel safe, comfortable, and respected. And creating such a place is the responsibility of our staff and Veterans alike.

One of the biggest factors that can compromise the comfort and safety of a health care system is harassment. This includes sexual behaviors such as sexual comments or jokes, staring, asking for a date, or touching someone in an unwanted way.

Unfortunately, instances of patients directing these behaviors at healthcare staff are common. These experiences can negatively impact a staff member's work performance, work satisfaction, and mental health. In a recent survey, 64 percent of our staff, many of whom are Veterans themselves, reported experiencing some form of these behaviors while at VA Puget Sound.

These behaviors negatively affect the safety of a health care facility as well as the care provided within it. Consistent with VHA Patient Rights & Responsibilities that entitle our Veterans to non-discriminatory and respectful care, we want to ensure our staff members also feel respected

*“Our facility must be a space where all feel safe, comfortable and respected.”*

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## Observances

### October:

- 9/15-10/15: Hispanic Heritage Month
- 10/13: U.S. Navy Birthday
- Disabilities Month
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month

### November:

- American India Heritage Month
- 11/10: U.S. Marine Corps Birthday
- Veteran & Military Family Appreciation

### December:

- 12/13: U.S. National Guard Birthday
- 9/18: U.S. Air Force Birthday

# Message from our Director *(continued from page 1)*



and safe in their workplace. Therefore, we are taking steps to address all forms of harassment, including patient-to-staff inappropriate sexual behaviors. We recently adopted a policy that provides guidance for

to punish, but to educate. Too often, these behaviors are not addressed. And without this direct feedback, they are more likely to happen again in the future.

Finally, another important part of this policy is informing you, the Veterans we serve. We are asking you to play a critical role in making this a safe space for all. In addition to treating your providers and other VA staff with respect, we also ask you to hold your fellow Veterans accountable to the same standard. If you hear an inappropriate comment being directed at anyone, staff member or otherwise, speak up.

We can all work together to ensure everyone is treated with respect, making VA Puget Sound a safe and comfortable place for both Veterans and staff alike.

staff on how to report such behaviors. In addition, our staff are being trained on respectful ways to address these behaviors when they happen. We collaborated with VA Puget Sound’s Veterans and Family Advisory Council and Women Veterans Advisory Group on our new policy. We all agreed the goal of the policy is not

Sincerely,

Michael Tadych, FACHE  
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Director

Moving Forward Together:  
**Safe Care** is our Mission

**Safe care is our mission!**  
Wearing a face masks keeps your fellow Veterans, your family, & your community safe!

**WHAT TO WEAR** (Images of various approved face masks)

**WHAT NOT TO WEAR** (Images of disapproved items: no face paint, no goggles, no balaclavas, no scarves, no respirators)

**HOW TO WEAR** (Image of a person wearing a mask correctly)

**HOW NOT TO WEAR** (Images of people wearing masks incorrectly: covering mouth only, not covering nose, or not covering face)

**No mask, no entry. No waivers.** | VA

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## Our robust safety measures remain in place

As we continue our phased approach to safely and responsibly resume services that have been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our risk-based framework prioritizes patient health needs, staff safety and resource considerations to guide our expansion, scheduling decisions and timeline.

Our first phase includes restarting prioritized medical and surgical care, on top of the emergent, urgent and telehealth (primary and some specialty) care. Subsequent phases would further expand total patients and services.

We are proactively contacting Veterans to make appointments, so our policy of no walk-in patients outside of emergent care needs remains in place. If you have health care concerns, please first call us at 800-329-8387 or reach out to your primary care team.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER:

**Safe Care** is Our Mission

Patient and staff safety remain paramount, and our rigorous safety measures remain in place:

- **100%** screening for signs of COVID-19 infection.
- **100%** use of approved face masks for everyone entering and inside any of our care sites (if you don't have one, we will provide you with one).
  - ⇒ **Medical Waivers are not an option for Veterans who refuse to wear a mask.** While wearing a face mask can be particularly challenging for some, it is a **required safety measure during COVID-19**. For those unable to wear masks, we have many virtual care options using VA Video Connect on their computers, smartphones or tablets. Veterans are encouraged to send their care team a secure message on My HealthVet by visiting [myhealth.va.gov](http://myhealth.va.gov). While Veterans may also call us at 1-800-329-8387, we are requesting Veterans only call with urgent needs at this time.
- **No walk-in patients** outside of emergent care needs.
  - ⇒ If Veterans are not seeking care at the ED, they have two choices: to proceed to the COVID-19 Risk Assessment & Treatment Clinic (see below) when available, where you'll be screened and may receive a telehealth visit if possible, or to return home and contact your care team to make a different plan. Patients will not be allowed into the facility without following required masking or meeting one of the options above.
  - ⇒ COVID-19 Risk Assessment & Treatment Clinics are pathways for Veterans that minimize exposure to staff, other patients and visitors, and where physical distancing is possible between the patient and providers with video capabilities for triage. Clinic locations: Seattle, Station 2 main entrance screening area; American Lake, Station 2 in the parking lot.

*(continued on page 4)*



*Need Community  
Care referral?  
Call  
206-277-4545 or  
206-764-2876*

## Safety measures *(continued from page 3)*

### •No routine visitors:

#### ⇒ **Inpatient Visits:**

- ◇ Exceptions must be coordinated with your care team in advance.

#### ⇒ **Inpatient Visits (continued)**

- ◇ Visits 30 minutes or less unless care team believes a longer visit is in the best interest of the patient.

#### ⇒ **Outpatient Visits:**

- ◇ Patients can bring one person as an escort if they are needed to navigate the care system.

#### ⇒ **Approved Visitors:**

- ◇ Must be approved by care team in advance of visit.
- ◇ Must be at least 18-years-old.
- ◇ Must adhere to all safety measures.
- ◇ Must use hand gel when entering/exiting care areas.
- ◇ Are not allowed in the room during aerosol-generating procedures.

### •No visitors under 18 allowed, except at American Lake's Child Care Center.

### •Do not leave unaccompanied minors outside during your visit.

### •100% physical distancing and environmental cleaning recommendations as outlined by the CDC.

## Working to give more family caregivers access

As part of the VA MISSION Act, the VA is working to give more family caregivers access to this program so the VA can support them as they care for Veterans of all eras. Announced in July, the VA published its final regulation to improve and expand the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). The final regulation went into effect Oct. 1, 2020.

Under the final regulation, PCAFC will include eligible Veterans that have a single or combined service-connected disability rating by VA of 70% or higher, regardless of whether it resulted from an injury, illness or disease. This is a notable change to the definition of serious injury from the current regulations, among other improvements aimed at standardizing the PCAFC and improving transparency in the program.

Expansion to eligible Veterans of earlier eras will occur in two phases. First expansion is the program to include family caregivers of eligible Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975. Then two years after this first expansion, we'll further expand the program to include family caregivers of eligible Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty between May 7, 1975, and September 10, 2001. Please visit [www.caregiver.va.gov/](http://www.caregiver.va.gov/) or call the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274 for questions.



## Whole Health: What matters to you?

The fall season is a wonderful time to reflect on what is most important to you and your health. Live Whole Health is an approach to health care that empowers and equips people to take charge of their health and well-being and to live their life to the fullest by aligning with what really matters.

Whole Health is about more than just an illness or a symptom a Veteran may have. This patient centered approach considers the full range of physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual and environmental



factors that can influence a person's health. Veterans set goals based on what matters most to them. Those priorities drive the health planning decisions they make with their care team. In addition to clinical care, Veteran health plans may include Well-being Programs that enhance their self-care. From physical and creative activities to mindfulness meditation or complementary approaches such as yoga and acupuncture, Veterans choose the combination of care that helps them achieve what is important to them.

Get involved and start this fall season with living Whole Health.

1. Sign up for the *Introduction to Whole Health VVC class*. This is a **2-hour educational and experiential session** based on a specific curriculum that exposes participants to the foundational concepts of Whole Health, allows time for self-care and self-exploration, and for completion of a Personal Health Inventory (PHI).

2. Participants in the *Introduction to Whole Health* session are encouraged to join the *Taking Charge of My Life and Health VVC course* **which** is a longer-term group program where Veterans can **delve deeper into self-exploration** of areas in their lives they wish to enhance and to create **SMART goals with action steps** that will help them attain these goals.

Call Lamont Tanksley, peer support specialist, at 206-716-5797 or Rehabilitation Care Specialty at 206-764-2202 to start your Whole Health journey. Questions? Visit [www.va.gov/wholehealth](http://www.va.gov/wholehealth) and <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/tag/livewholehealth/>.

## Volunteer today!

- Veteran Engagement Group for Research (Seattle Campus)**  
 Willing to share unique military backgrounds, life experiences? Want to help VA research focus on patient and family members' priorities and needs? Contact SeaVetEngagementGroup@va.gov or 206-277-3622 to learn more or to join!
- Veteran & Family Advisory Council (Seattle Campus)**  
 Want to constructively help improve the health care experience patients entrusted to us? We're looking for family member vacancy (must have a family member who is or was a Veteran) to join our team. Contact Rick Royse, patient experience officer, at richard.royse@va.gov.
- Patient Advisory Board (Silverdale CBOC)**  
 Live in Kitsap County and are enrolled at our Silverdale CBOC? If so, we want your input to improve services! For questions or to volunteer, contact Tammy Todd at 360-307-6963.

## Veterans, get your flu shot!

The VA is ramping up for the upcoming flu season as it prepares to battle influenza during the coronavirus pandemic. There are many options for Veterans to receive a flu shot at VA facilities or in the community. Free flu shot options for Veterans this season are as follows:

- **Walk-up/Drive-thru at Main campuses:** Oct. 19-23 & Oct. 26-30 | 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (then once a week—check the VA Flu Hotline) at Seattle Campus (walk-up tent outside main entrance) and American Lake (drive-thru).
- **Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs):** Call Flu Hotline 1-800-329-8387, ext. 64040, for updated CBOC options & general information.
- **Community Care options:** Eligible Veterans can receive the seasonal flu vaccine at in-network retail pharmacies and urgent care locations (Veterans must show VA identification card for free flu shot). There are many new free flu shot options near you. Veterans may visit [www.va.gov/find-locations/](http://www.va.gov/find-locations/) to find community vaccine locations.
- **During scheduled, primary care and specialty appointments (face-to-face)**

*Veterans will need to go through COVID-19 screening prior to receiving flu vaccine. **Face mask and physical distancing required.***

Questions? Call VA Flu Hotline 1-800-329-8387, ext. 64040.

## Are you serving on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic?

VA Puget Sound Health Care System Researchers are conducting a nationwide study—ATTEND—aimed at learning how health care workers and first responders are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants will be

asked to complete online surveys about their experiences and reactions to working on the front lines, completing about 20 online surveys over the span of nine months. This study is completely remote and open to health care workers and first responders in all U.S. states and territories. An optional part of the study is open to Veterans eligible for care at VA Puget Sound. This part will test whether an investigational drug, prazosin, can help treat acute stress in members of this group who are also Veterans. Participants in this portion of the study will take a mailed prescription of prazosin for three months. Learn more at [bit.ly/ATTENDSTUDY\\_FB](https://bit.ly/ATTENDSTUDY_FB).

*Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System is available to VA Puget Sound Veterans beginning Oct. 5, 2020!*

**BENEFICIARY TRAVEL** 24 / 7 / 365

NEW ONLINE PORTAL TO SUBMIT TRAVEL CLAIMS

access.va.gov

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



## Staying fit during the pandemic

Many Veterans have been doing their part with physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect yourselves, your families, and your communities against infection.

### SOME CONDITIONS CAN BE HARD TO TALK ABOUT

The Veterans Health Library is a credible, no-hassle way to get answers to your health questions. Try it today.



Unfortunately, many Veterans have found it difficult to keep up their previous exercise and wellness habits. Social isolation and daily stress have also had negative impacts on the physical and mental wellness for so many of us.

Your medical and rehabilitation care teams at VA Puget Sound Health Care System are here to support you during this time! And you can participate in many programs—both individual evaluations and group classes—virtually from the safety of your own home. Working with other Veterans who are experiencing similar challenges might even be motivating! Here are some of your options:

- **Whole Health introduction:** a live video interactive class that provides information about VA resources to maximize your health with traditional and alternative healthcare (offered in both group and individual formats).
- **Complementary Integrative Health programs:** Rehabilitation Care Services offers several alternative approaches for well-being including tai chi, biofeedback, mindfulness/meditation, recreation therapy and wellness coaching.
- **Gerofit:** a video-telehealth based exercise class for Veterans aged 65 and up ([https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/gerofit\\_Home.asp](https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/gerofit_Home.asp)). Call 206-764-2723 to learn more.
- **Individual video appointments with a rehabilitation physician or therapist:** one-on-one evaluation of musculoskeletal or neurological problems interfering with your function by a skilled professional.
- **Blind Rehabilitation Fitness Group:** weekly telephone exercise groups for Veterans with vision loss. No referral needed, just contact Blind Rehabilitation at 253-583-1261.

Please ask your Patient Aligned Care Team for a referral if you would like to participate in any of these programs.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
VA Puget Sound Health Care System

**Official news from:**

VA Puget Sound Health Care System  
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1660 S. Columbian Way  
Seattle, WA 98108  
206-762-1010

# Live Whole Health

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American Lake  
Lakewood  
9600 Veterans Drive  
Tacoma, WA 98493  
253-582-8440



Bellevue  
13033 Bel-Red Road  
Suite 210  
Bellevue, WA  
98005  
425-214-1055



Mount Vernon  
307 S. 13th Street  
Suite 200  
Mount Vernon, WA  
98274  
360-848-8500



Silverdale  
9177 Ridgeway Blvd.  
NW  
Silverdale, WA 98383  
360-307-6920



## Divisions

## Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs)



North Olympic  
Port Angeles  
1114 Georgiana St.  
Port Angeles, WA  
98362  
360-565-7420



Seattle  
1660 S. Columbian  
Way  
Seattle, WA 98108  
206-762-1010



Federal Way  
34617 11th Place South,  
Suite 301  
Federal Way, WA  
98003  
253-336-4142



North Seattle  
Lake City  
12360 Lake City Way  
NE #200  
Seattle, WA 98125  
206-384-4382



South Sound Chehalis  
151 NE Hampe Way  
Chehalis, WA 98532  
360-748-3049

## Community Resource & Referral Center

Community Resource  
& Referral Center  
305 S. Lucile St.  
Seattle, WA 98108  
206-764-5149



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## Have story ideas?

Office of Public Affairs

206-277-1711

[PublicAffairsPugetSound@va.gov](mailto:PublicAffairsPugetSound@va.gov)

