

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

VETERANS
HEALTH
ADMINISTRATION
75



2021 Fall | Issue 5

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Activities & Observances

September

- 6: Labor Day
- VA Remembers 9/11
- 14: Women Veteran Town Hall
- 15-10/15: National Hispanic Heritage Month
- 18: U.S. Air Force Birthday
- Suicide Awareness Month

October

- 13: U.S. Navy Birthday
- Domestic Violence Awareness
- National Disabilities Month
- Patient Centered Care Month

November

- 10: U.S. Marine Corps Birthday
- National Diabetes Month
- National American Indian Heritage Month
- Veterans & Military Family Appreciation Month



Message from our Director

Your mental and physical health is our #1 priority! And the pandemic should not prevent you from getting the primary and specialty care you need. If you don't feel well, are overdue for important annual screenings, diagnostic tests, or ongoing specialty care, we are here to support you. While we continue to maximize virtual care options, in some cases, you and your doctor may decide it is in your best interest to come for an in-person visit at one of our care facilities across Western

Washington. And trust that we continue to follow all CDC guidelines on masking (still required when inside any of our buildings), physical distancing (please stay at least six feet apart during visits) and environmental cleaning.

We understand and appreciate the continued need to remain vigilant as our number one priority is to keep our patients—and those who care for you—safe and healthy.

If you have questions about your care, we encourage you to contact your Patient Aligned Care Team to discuss your care needs.

With the recent 20th anniversary of 9/11, Veterans may question the meaning of their service or whether it was worth the sacrifices they made. They may feel more moral distress about experiences they had during their service. It's normal to feel this way. If you are feeling this way, we

"Your mental and physical health is our #1 priority!"

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

encourage you to talk with your friends and families, reach out to battle buddies, connect with a peer-to-peer network, or sign up for mental health services. Some of the many resources available to Veterans right now:

- Veterans Crisis Line - If Veterans are having thoughts of suicide, call 1-800-273-8255, then PRESS 1 or visit <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>
- For emergency mental health care, Veterans can also go directly to our facility 24/7 regardless of your discharge status or enrollment in other VA health care.
- Vet Centers – Veterans can discuss how they feel with other Veterans in these community-based counseling centers. 70% of Vet Center staff are Veterans. Veterans can call 1-877-927-8387 or drop by a local office.
- [VA Mental Health Services Guide \(www.va.gov/files/2020-11/mental-health-quick-start-guide.pdf\)](http://www.va.gov/files/2020-11/mental-health-quick-start-guide.pdf) - This guide will help you sign up and access mental health services.
- [MakeTheConnection.net \(www.maketheconnection.net\)](http://www.maketheconnection.net) - information, resources, and Veteran to Veteran videos for challenging life events and experiences with mental health issues.
- [RallyPoint \(www.rallypoint.com\)](http://www.rallypoint.com) - Talk to other Veterans online. Discuss: What are your feelings as the Taliban reclaim Afghanistan after 20 years of US involvement?
- [Download VA's self-help apps \(www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/\)](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/) - Tools to help deal with common reactions like, stress, sadness, and anxiety. You can also track your symptoms over time.

The VA Puget Sound Executive Leadership Team continues to monitor the increased COVID-19 transmission and impact across the nation due to the Delta variant and CDC's recent approval of the administration of an additional dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) to individuals with moderately to severely compromised immune systems at least 28 days after the second dose. The additional dose is expected to save the lives of those who are more at risk of serious, prolonged illness.

Our Vaccine Committee is comprised of relevant subject-matter-experts who are working hard on our local plans for implementation of the 3rd dose vaccines for both patients as well as staff. In the interim, we are encouraging individuals who meet the criteria for the 3rd dose to contact their community pharmacies. The first place you can get the 3rd dose is the best option! Veterans can access the VA Pharmacy finder (www.va.gov/find-locations/) to contact their local in-network pharmacy to find out if they carry the same vaccine as initially received.

If you're vaccinated it reduces hospitalizations and reduces death. So please make sure you get your COVID-19 and flu vaccines!

Sincerely,



Michael Tadych, FACHE
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Director

Need to find Urgent Care? Visit www.va.gov/find-locations/

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



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Women Veterans Town Hall September 14

Please join us for our Women Veterans Town Hall. All are welcome to join! We'll be presenting information on our Women Veteran health care programs, COVID-19 and more.



September 14

7-8 p.m. Pacific Time

Participant Dial-In: 833-380-0677

Streaming URL: access.live/womenveterans/VISN20

Speakers will share information about women Veteran health care programs and services. Participants will have the opportunity to have live questions answered by a team of VA's women health care experts.

Have ideas about how we can eliminate barriers to care and services? Want to team with us to improve the care experience for women Veterans?

Contact VA Puget Sound Health Care System Women Veterans Program Manager Janice Muhammad at Janice.Muhammad@va.gov or (206) 264-2441, to participate in our Women Veterans focus groups.

Contraception on Demand

Women's health and pharmacy teams are teaming up to make it easier for women Veterans to get birth control! You can now schedule a virtual visit with someone on our pharmacy team to get a prescription for birth control. Our pharmacists can give you information about all methods that VA provides, as well as same day access to methods including the pill, patch, ring, shot (Depo Provera), condoms and emergency contraception. We are hoping this will make it easier for women Veterans to get their birth control needs met. You are welcome to take part whether you need a new prescription for birth control or already have one and have questions. You can also ask about getting a 12-month supply of birth control!

Ask your primary care team to place a *Contraception on Demand Consult* or call 206-277-5585 and visit <https://www.pugetsound.va.gov/services/women/index.asp> for more info.

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Contracted Chehalis outpatient clinic to close

VA Puget Sound Health Care System announced will close our contract-operated South Sound/Chehalis Community Based Outpatient Clinic October 31, 2021, welcoming Chehalis enrollees to its new VA-operated Olympia clinic that opened its doors to patients August 16, 2021.

VA Puget Sound has a responsibility to both you—the Veterans we care for, and to taxpayers who fund that care. This move will not only reduce the cost to taxpayers, it will expand the number of Veterans residing in Mason, Pierce and Thurston counties able to get their care at the new VA Puget Sound Olympia clinic—not only the approximately 3,500 enrolled Chehalis patients, but for an additional 2,000 more from the Olympia area.

“This move, in combination with VA Puget Sound’s new VA-operated clinics in Edmonds, Olympia, Puyallup and our anticipated \$4.6 million, 26,000 sq. ft. clinic in Everett in mid-2022, on the heels of our Silverdale clinic and Community and Resource Referral Centers openings in 2019, are all part our larger system redesign to better serve Western Washington,” said VA Puget Sound Health Care System Director Michael Tadych. “VA Puget Sound is also exploring new care sites in the Auburn/Kent and North King County areas. Together, our new clinical footprint will allow VA Puget Sound to directly serve Everett and Olympia, two major metropolitan areas in Western Washington with no VA facilities currently. Additionally, it will create new capacity for our areas of highest growth in South King and Pierce counties as well as provide better outreach to rural Veterans in North King County.” The new Olympia clinic (located at Memorial Medical Plaza, 500 Lilly Rd. NE, Suite 201, Olympia, WA 98506) will have up to 10 Patient Aligned Care Teams (known as PACTs), supporting approximately 10,000 enrolled Veterans (growth will take place over time, based on patient needs). Across the three new VA operated clinics in Olympia, Edmonds, and Puyallup, that total capacity for enrolled Veterans in that region will increase to approximately 16,000 across those three new care sites alone.

Here are answers to some Frequently Asked Questions to help Veterans understand the change:

Q: How many Veterans currently receive care at the Chehalis contracted clinics?

A: Approximately 3,500 Veterans are enrolled to primary care at VA Puget Sound’s South Sound/Chehalis clinic.

Q: How many Veterans are within the required 30-minute drive-time?

A: Of the 3,500 patients enrolled at the Chehalis clinic, approximately 2,000 are within the 30-minute drive-time.

Q: What’s going to happen to the 1,500 who live outside the 30-minute drive-time?

A: For Veterans unable to be treated virtually or at the Olympia location, VA Puget Sound will work with them individually to meet their care needs. Additionally, virtual care either by phone or through a smart device is effective for over 50 percent of visits. Veterans who do not have smart devices or a

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Chehalis *(continued from page 4)*

wireless connection can request devices from the VA. This allows care to occur from locations convenient to Veterans.

Q: How and when were Veterans notified of this change?

A: Notification to Veterans enrolled in the South Sound Clinic in Chehalis took place by email on July 28, 2021 and mailed letters August 6, 2021.

Q: What's being done to address the lack of available Community Care Network providers in the South Sound area?

A: The process of getting providers added to the Community Care Network is the responsibility of VA's regional contract administrators. For VA Puget Sound, it is TriWest. We continue to make suggestions to them about the shortages in more rural areas. Unfortunately, the implementation of the new Community Care Network in August 2020 led to the additional challenges of providers who were previously enrolled under the CHOICE program (MISSION Act replaced CHOICE) declining to enroll in the new network which has also contributed to gaps in the network in areas with the most need.

Q: When VA Puget Sound announced in December 2020 the opening of its new clinics in Edmonds, Puyallup, and Olympia, it stated that it would initially enroll 4,060 Veterans at the Olympia site. How will it accommodate the Chehalis enrollees?

A: In December 2020, VA Puget Sound announced that the Olympia clinic, when opened, would support approximately 4,060 Veterans initially, with the ability to expand the clinic to feature up to 10 Patient Aligned Care Teams to support approximately 10,000 Veterans. This forward planning is allowing VA Puget Sound to achieve that expansion before the closure of the Chehalis clinic. VA Puget Sound is essentially doubling its staff in the new Olympia clinic to support a smooth transition of care.

Q: Where is the Olympia clinic located?

A: The new 9,739 sq. ft. VA Olympia clinic is located at the Memorial Medical Plaza, 500 Lilly Rd. NE, Suite 201, Olympia, WA 98506.

Q: How can I contact the Olympia clinic team?

A: The Chehalis clinic will continue to see Veterans through October 31, 2021. On November 1, 2021, Veterans who were reassigned to get primary care at the new Olympia clinic can contact their Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) directly by calling 253-583-2621, using My HealtheVet or contacting

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Did you know?

- Veterans, are you ready to take the next step in your Whole Health journey? It is now easier than ever thanks to VA's new Live Whole Health mobile app. The app was designed for Veterans like you interested in taking charge of their health needs and goals. With this new tool, you develop a personalized plan and get virtual coaching to achieve your health goals. Download the Live Whole Health app today—<https://mobile.va.gov/app/live-whole-health>
- VA Puget Sound's Silverdale Clinic Veteran Advisory Board is a collaborative partnership between patients, Veteran advocates, and clinic staff to advance the delivery of patient-centered care. The Advisory Board serves as a formal mechanism for soliciting and integrating patient input and feedback on clinic policies, operations, services, and strategic planning, ensuring that the voices of patients and families are communicated to clinic leadership. Big thanks to all our new members! If you have specific service issues or board ideas please contact Board Liaison Tammy Todd at 360-307-6963.

VA Puget Sound Wall of Heroes

SACRIFICE. VALOR.
BRAVERY. HEROISM.
CONNECTION TO
VA PUGET SOUND.

Know of a Veteran with
these characteristics?

Submit a Wall of Heroes nomination today!

Hurry, submissions must be postmarked
by September 10, 2021

Please email
PugetSoundWallOfHeroes@va.gov
with your nominations or for more information!



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Chehalis

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VA Puget Sound's call center at 253-582-8440, extension 71234.

Q: The Lewis County Veterans Relief Fund has a contract to be able to provide transportation for appointments. But that is going to be full very quickly. Is the Olympia clinic going to be able to provide proper and timely care for Thurston and Lewis County?

A: VA Puget Sound provides transportation services to VA appointments for eligible Veterans living in our service area which includes Olympia. Veterans may access the VA Transportation program through their VA provider or by calling VA Puget Sound's Travel office at 206-764-2120.

Q: Is the Olympia clinic going to be able to provide proper and timely care for Thurston and Lewis County?

A: VA Puget Sound's Olympia clinic,

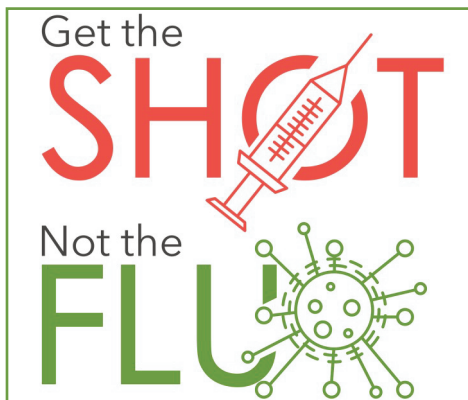
which began caring for patients August 16, 2021, has expanded its primary care teams to provide timely care to all its patients, including those enrolled at the Chehalis clinic closing after October 31, 2021. Current appointment availability for enrolled Veterans is within 15 days. If the Olympia Clinic is outside the drive time criteria under the MISSION Act, VA Puget Sound will work with the Veterans on individual care plans that may be more convenient.

Q: What will happen with the Chehalis staff?

A: Chehalis clinic employees are currently employed by the contractor. All new positions will be posted on USA Jobs and open to all existing VA employees and all U.S. citizens.



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You have the power to protect yourself.
Flu shots coming to a facility near you
in October!

Walk-up/Drive-thru at Main Campuses

October 12-16 & 19-23 | Tuesday to Saturday

No appointment needed.

Seattle Campus: Walk-up Tent &
Drive-Thru (enter Parking Lot B)

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

Please [call your specific outpatient clinic](#) location for more information on flu shot dates and hours of operation.

Community Care Flu Shot options

Eligible Veterans can receive a free flu shot from one of our community partners, find an in-network location near you, please visit:

www.va.gov/communitycare/flushot.asp

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 and more information, please call
[VA Flu Hotline 1-800-329-8387](tel:1-800-329-8387), ext. 64040.

Did you know many patient education classes are available virtually, such as meditation, stress management, cancer support, and even an exercise program? Scan the QR codes below to see a full listing of programs.



[Veterans Health Library](http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/)

www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/



[Healthy Living Resource Guide](http://www.pugetsound.va.gov/docs/VAPugetSoundPatientEducationClassBrochure-508c.pdf)

[www.pugetsound.va.gov/docs/
VAPugetSoundPatientEducationClass
Brochure-508c.pdf](http://www.pugetsound.va.gov/docs/VAPugetSoundPatientEducationClassBrochure-508c.pdf)

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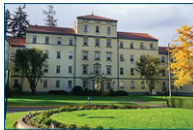
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206-762-1010

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American Lake
9600 Veterans Dr.
Lakewood, WA 98493
253-582-8440



Main Campuses



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



Edmonds
21616 76th Ave. West,
Suites 107 and 112
Edmonds, WA 98026
206-716-5858



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

Outpatient Clinics



Olympia
Memorial Medical Plaza
500 Lilly Rd. NE, Suite 201,
Olympia, WA 98506
253-583-2621

Opening in 2022

Everett: 220 Olympic Blvd.
Everett, WA 98203



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

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



Puyallup
Sunrise Medical Center
11216 Sunrise Blvd. East
Bldg. 3, Suite 209
Puyallup, WA 98374
253-583-3821



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

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?

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