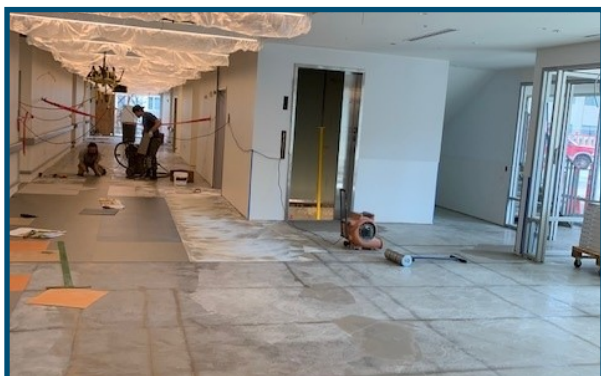




Live Whole Health

Official news from VA Puget Sound Health Care System



Everett Clinic to open soon!

On December 1, 2020, VA Puget Sound announced the groundbreaking of our new \$4.6 million, 26,000 sq. ft. outpatient clinic in Everett. And we're delighted to share doors

will open to patients in September—with virtual care beginning August 8.

Located at 220 Olympic Boulevard in Everett, the new clinic is designed with its Patient Aligned Care Teams at the heart of the facility, allowing for interdisciplinary consultation and patient care. Services will include comprehensive primary care and some specialty care at our new clinic. Services will include primary care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, diagnostic imaging (MRI, ultrasound, Echo and CT), social work, mental health, nutrition, pharmacy specialist and readjustment counseling services.

Approximately 8,000 Veterans will be enrolled to primary care at the new clinic—with the potential to increase.

Updated COVID-19 visitation policy regarding children under 18-years-old

We understand COVID-19 restrictions surrounding children visiting our care sites has been difficult. We appreciate your continued patience and understanding of our need to follow CDC and VA guidelines to ensure the safety of our Veterans, visitors and staff.

We are happy to share our updated VA Puget Sound Health Care System's visitation for children (under 18-years-old) and COVID-19 screening policies, which vary based on the active Health Protection Level at the care site you are visiting.

The Health Protection Level per care sites can be found on our website www.va.gov/puget-sound-health-care/operating-status/.

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Activities & Observances

July

- 4: Independence Day
- 27: National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day

August

- 4: U.S. Coast Guard Birthday
- 7: Purple Heart Day
- 14: V-J Day
- 26: Women's Equity Day

September

- Suicide Prevention Month
- 11: National Day of Service and Remembrance
- 15-10/15: National Hispanic Heritage Month
- 16: National POW/MIA Recognition Day
- 19: U.S. Air Force Birthday

Urgent care in the community

If you are registered with the VA and have seen your primary care provider within the last 24 months, you are eligible for VA's urgent care benefit. You can visit an in-network urgent care clinic to treat minor injuries and illnesses that are not life-threatening. To verify your eligibility for VA urgent care, call 844-MyVA311 (844-698-2311) and select option 1, then option 3. To locate in-network urgent care providers and pharmacies, visit www.va.gov/find-locations.

For more information visit: www.va.gov/communitycare/programs/veterans/Urgent_Care.asp.

Emergency care in the community

During a medical emergency, you should immediately seek care at the nearest hospital, whether it is a VA medical center or not. Veterans do not need to check with VA before calling an ambulance or going to a community hospital emergency department. However, for VA to coordinate and potentially pay for emergency care, VA must be notified within 72 hours of your hospital visit, at 844-72HRVHA (844-724-7842).

For more information visit: www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Emergency_Care.asp.

Beneficiary Travel Self Service System

The new Beneficiary Travel Self Service System replaced the old paper claims process. It provides an electronic interface to submit and track travel claims 24/7 using a PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone. It speeds up the processing of claims to a few days instead of several weeks under the old system. And receiving payments by electronic funds transfer helps eliminate fraud, waste and abuse in support of the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019.

VA Puget Sound again nationally recognized for providing high-quality stroke care for third consecutive year



VA Puget Sound earned the American Heart Association Get With The Guidelines Stroke Award. This award recognizes its commitment and success in implementing a high standard of stroke care by ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to the latest nationally recognized, evidence-based guidelines based on the latest scientific evidence. Other VA Puget Sound quality achievements and accreditation include: The Joint Commission Gold Seal; ALS Association Certified Treatment Center of Excellence; Commission on Cancer Care; and eight CARF programs (Community Housing and Outreach Services, Community Reintegration Services, Mental Health Intensive Case Management, Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Program, Pain Program, Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center, and Rehabilitation Care Services and Spinal Cord Injury Unit). These quality achievements reinforce our commitment to quality care.



COVID-19 vaccine 2nd boosters available

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—CDC—strengthened its second booster recommendations. People ages 50 years and older and ages 12 and older who are moderately to severely immunocompromised **should** get a 2nd booster dose to be up to date. COVID-19 vaccines are available in Seattle (Building 101) and American Lake (Building 81). Walk ins are welcome or you can schedule with your primary care or specialty care teams at 206-762-1010. Vaccines are also available at our community outpatient clinics, contact your clinic for details. All vaccines are Pfizer only.

What matters to you at core of Whole Health

What matters to you is at the core of whole health. What matters might have shifted during the pandemic and what mattered two years ago might be different today. It's like taking vital signs, we can't just check them once. Asking what matters is therapeutic and starts to build trust by including you in your health care process and prioritizing your thoughts, needs and concerns. Explore at your own pace what matters to you by downloading the LIVEWholeHealth App and fill out the Personal Health Inventory (PHI)—all can be found through the website below. At your next VA appointment, give your healthcare team your filled out PHI—whether in person or virtual. Ask them to document what matters to you in your medical record to help inform your entire Patient Aligned Care Team. Drilling down to this answer this question can be transformative for your relationship with your care team and the care you receive. For more information about VA Whole Health visit www.va.gov/wholehealth.

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

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

Did you know high blood pressure leads to heart disease and other serious health problems? Want to learn how to manage and keep this “silent killer” from threatening your health? You can learn this and more by scanning the QR code to the right or visiting Veterans Health Library at www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/.

VA Puget Sound offers a wide variety of health education and wellness programs for Veterans to improve health and well-being—from diabetes education and pain management to sleep improvement and women's wellness. Veterans enrolled at one of our ten sites of care can self-refer to most of the classes. For information about co-pays, please call 1-800-329-8387, extension 76299. Download our Patient Education Programs guide www.pugetsound.va.gov/docs/VAPugetSoundPatientEducationClassBrochure-508c.pdf



For easy access to our classes and programs download a free QR code reader from your App store; and scan QR codes to be redirected to those websites.



Would you like to stop smoking or lose weight to become healthier? Are you interested in accessing your health information online? Scan the QR code to check out the Healthy Living Resource Guide, to find online resources for a variety of health topics and programs including websites, videos and phone apps.

Veterans have several transportation options

Did you know that Veterans have several transportation options to make getting care at one of VA Puget Sound's care facilities more convenient?

National Veterans Transportation Program rides are first come first serve since we have limited resources, and they are usually booked out two weeks in advance. They can be requested through your care provider, or you can call the Travel Office Call Center at 206-764-2120.

Veterans can schedule a ride at www.vetride.va.gov/ or contact: Broderick.Cooper@va.gov, 253 – 583 - 3121; Joseph.Martinez4@va.gov, 253-583-1328; or Stephanie.Lye@va.gov, 206-277-5181.

Veteran Transportation Network or VTN at VA Puget Sound Health Care System is a courtesy program intended to provide needed transportation for enrolled Veteran patients who generally have no other means of traveling to their VA appointment destinations. The service was essentially on hold for last two years due to pandemic and is just now back up-and-running with some capacity restrictions still in place. It is managed by both the Voluntary Service Office and the Fleet Management Office in partnership with Disabled American Veterans (DAV) - sponsored hospital service coordinators and regional community coordinators. Operations are based on Volunteer driver availability using vans donated by both national and local DAV chapters. DAV-donated vans are based out of the VA Puget Sound Seattle and American Lake campuses, and various other communities throughout its catchment area. Schedules are determined by the passenger need and available Volunteer drivers in the areas the VTN program services (e.g., Aberdeen, Bellingham, Grays' Harbor, Oak Harbor, Port Angeles, Seattle and Tacoma).

This is a good option for enrolled Veteran patients who generally have no other means of traveling to and from their VA appointments at the both the American Lake or Seattle Divisions and designated community based outpatient clinics. It is also a great solution for a Veterans who is not enrolled but seeking enrollment as they can request a ride on a space available basis as well as those Veterans who either do not or should not drive; do not have family members or friends available to drive them or do not have access to or are unable to utilize public transportation. You must be ambulatory, require very little assistance boarding or disembarking and be mentally cognitive if traveling without an attendant. DAV-donated vans are not equipped for wheelchair transport and cannot accommodate passengers with non-portable oxygen containers.

For eligible Veterans and their caregivers who prefer to handle your own travel, you can submit claims for mileage reimbursement and other travel related expenses using **Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System**. The portal is VA's preferred method to receive claims and includes supporting documentation for reimbursement of general health care travel. This includes regular transportation expenses, such as personally owned vehicle miles driven and tolls with receipt. Visit <https://eauth.va.gov/accessva> to create a profile and submit a claim.

Finally, **Highly Rural Transportation Grants** are provided to many Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and State Veteran Service Agencies to support transportation services for Veterans seeking VA and Non-VA approved care in highly rural areas. These grants are available in counties that have fewer than seven people per square mile. So be sure to check with your local Veteran Service Organizations as they may offer transportation services to meet your need.



Coping with military sexual trauma

The VA uses the term military sexual trauma or MST to refer to sexual assault or sexual harassment experienced during military service. MST includes any sexual activity during military service in which you were involved against your will or where unable to say no due to the fear of repercussions.

People of all genders, ages, sexual orientations, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and branches of service have experienced MST. Like other types of trauma, MST can negatively affect a person's mental and physical health, even many years later. Things you may experience could include: disturbing memories or nightmares, difficulty feeling safe, feelings of depression or numbness, using alcohol or other drugs to numb or escape from negative feelings, feeling isolated from other people, difficulties with anger, irritability or other strong emotions, self-doubt, self-blame, or decreased self esteem, issues with sleep and physical health problems.

If you are struggling, please know you are not alone, and we are here to help. We are here to support you in whatever way will help you best—from learning more about how MST affects people, to treatment that helps you cope with how MST is impacting your life currently, or if you prefer, treatment that involves discussing your experiences in more depth.

We have special services available to help you including free, confidential counseling and treatment for related mental and physical health conditions. You do not need to have a service-connected disability or injury and may be able to receive this benefit even if you are not eligible for other VA care. You do not need to have reported the incidents when they happened or have other documentation that they occurred to receive these services.

As a result of Deborah Sampson Act passed by Congress in January 2021, eligibility for MST care was extended to National Guard State active duty status, the word "repeated" was removed from the definition of sexual harassment, specialized teams were appointed to process MST claims and Veterans have a choice of gender specific provider. All providers undergo mandatory training on MST.

Every VA facility has a designated MST coordinator who is there for you, to advocate for you, and to help you find and access VA services and programs, state and federal benefits, and community resources. At VA Puget Sound, the American Lake coordinator can be reached at 253-583-1930, and for the Seattle campus coordinator, 206-277-1816.

Recovery can look different for each person and is not always a linear process. Our providers will help you navigate your options, decide together with you what course is best, and facilitate a connection with other Veterans who understand your experience. We know that trauma, especially interpersonal trauma, can have a very isolating effect and we're here to help you build a healthy support network and get back to living your life.

HAVING TROUBLE COORDINATING YOUR CARE?

Contact a Patient Advocate

E-mail:

PugPatientAdvocatGroup@va.gov

Send My HealtheVet

secure message to:

Patient Advocate

Office_Puget_Sound_Admin

Phone:

Monday-Friday | 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Seattle: (206) 764-2160

American Lake: (253) 583-2585

New visitation (continued from page 1)

on our website at www.va.gov/puget-sound-health-care/operating-status/.

Just follow the visitation and screening policy based on the Health Protection Level indicated at the care site you are visiting.

Expectations for visiting children regardless of Health Protection Level

- All adult caregivers will confirm screening responses for children accompanying them at campus and clinic entrances.
- Medical grade masks must be worn for anyone 2-years-old or older.
- Children must be in the direct supervision and physically near their accompanying adult while in any VA facility.
- It is not permitted for staff to care for children of adult patients.

Health Protection Level: **HIGH**

- Screening: At campus and clinic entrances.
- Children:
 - Outpatient appointments and visits to laboratory:
 - ◆ One child permitted.
 - Pharmacy and other administrative visits:

◆ Children not permitted.

◦ Inpatient:

◆ Children not permitted.

Health Protection Level: **MEDIUM**

- Children:
 - Outpatient appointments and visits to laboratory:
 - ◆ Children permitted.
 - Pharmacy and other administrative visits:
 - ◆ Children permitted.
 - Inpatient:
 - ◆ Children are not permitted.

Health Protection Level: **LOW**

- Children:
 - Outpatient appointments and visits to laboratory:
 - ◆ Children permitted.
 - Pharmacy and other administrative visits:
 - ◆ Children permitted.
 - Inpatient visitation:
 - ◆ Children not permitted.

Situations outside of these guidelines will be reviewed at the time of visit by local clinical leadership, upon screening. If outside general business hours (Monday – Friday), review and approval is determined by the care team on site.

How My HealtheVet users can prepare for the new electronic health record system

Veterans who use My HealtheVet can prepare for the launch of the new electronic health record by signing up for a free Premium My HealtheVet account. There's a step-by-step guide on upgrading on myhealth.va.gov/premium. It's also important to have the most up-to-date web browser (Internet Explorer is not compatible with the new patient portal). Veterans should also make sure their contact information and addresses are up to date in their VA profile at VA.gov before the new My VA Health patient portal is launched at VA Puget Sound with the rollout of our new health record. To make updates, Veterans can log in to their VA Profile or through VA.gov using their Premium DS Logon account, Premium My HealtheVet account or a verified ID.me account. And if you need help, contact the My HealtheVet Help Desk at 877-327-0022 or 800-877-8339 (TTY), Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Central Time).



STAY CONNECTED: www.pugetsound.va.gov

Message from our Director



VA Puget Sound Veterans,

VA Puget Sound now has more than 156,000 Veterans enrolled at one of our care sites across Western Washington. Our new clinic in Everett opening in September becomes our 11th care site. And we continue to grow. In fact, the VA's Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) report—which was a comprehensive review of all of VA's health assets and infrastructure across the nation—reflects VA Puget Sound's growth of another 8,000 enrolled Veterans in the next seven years.

Included in the VA's AIR report recommendations planned to take place over the next decade, are our plans to open new outpatient clinics in Auburn and Northeast King County. Additionally, this also include the eventual replacement of the new Everett Clinic (opening soon) with a larger Everett medical center with services like those at American Lake—including a new community living center. Also, we plan to replace the current Olympia clinic with a larger multi-specialty clinic. And all the recommendations validate our ongoing primary care expansion plans to better serve Veterans by making getting care more accessible to you.

So what makes VA Puget Sound unique? Its our dedication, compassion, and ability to go above and beyond for our patients. Our team of nearly 5,000 health care and support staff dedicate their lives to providing you with outstanding health care, state of the art medical facilities, and with the latest medical practice methodologies available. VA Puget Sound places Veterans needs at the center of all these efforts.

Changing gears, we continue to experience high COVID-19 transmission rates. Currently our VHA Health Protection Level is high. This means continued COVID-19 screening, medical grade masks, limited visitation and physical distancing at all our care sites in keeping with CDC and VA recommendations and guidelines.

COVID, however, should not prevent you from getting the primary and specialty care you need. If you don't feel well, or overdue for important annual screenings, diagnostic tests, or ongoing specialty care, we are here to support you.

Vaccinations continue to provide important protection to you, your families, caregivers, survivors and the VA staff who care for you. So, please...if you can get vaccinated, do so. This virus is still very real and is constantly searching for its next host—its next victim.

Thank you for allowing us to be your health care system.

Warmest regards,

Thomas Bundt, PhD., FACHE

VA Puget Sound Health Care System Executive Director (acting)



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



Main Campuses



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



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



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

Outpatient Clinics

Everett Opening September 2022

220 Olympic Blvd.
Everett, WA 98203

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



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



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

Community Resource & Referral Centers

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



Community Resource
& Referral Center
419 South 2nd Street
Suite 2
Renton, WA 98057
425-203-7201

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Have story ideas?

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PublicAffairsPugetSound@va.gov

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