



# Moving Forward

# Safely 2021

VASDHS Annual Report

**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

VA San Diego Healthcare System

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP (L-R)

**Sarah E. Guerard, MHA**  
Assistant Director

**Cynthia E. Abair, MHA**  
Associate Director

**Robert M. Smith, MD**  
Director/Chief Executive Officer

**Kathleen Kim, MD, MPH**  
Chief of Staff/Medical Director

**Carmen Concepcion, MSN, MHA, RN**  
Associate Director, Patient Care Services/Nurse Executive



# 2021

## VASDHS Annual Report

# Director's Message

Over the last year, our staff has done an incredible job responding to the ongoing challenges of a pandemic that is nearing the two-year mark. As we **Move Forward Safely**, we will continue to reflect on our successes and the lessons we have learned over the last year.

The campaign to administer COVID-19 vaccines began in December 2020. More than 95 percent of our staff are fully vaccinated, and our outreach to Veterans and their family members has resulted in over 80 percent of Veterans we care for being vaccinated. We will shortly pass the 100,000 mark of administered doses—the largest number among the Southwest region of VA facilities. Booster shots and third doses are now available for the general community, and we encourage eligible Veterans to continue protecting those around them as we move into 2022.

The demand for alternatives to face-to-face care continues to increase, with more than 47 percent of all outpatient encounters delivered using a virtual care modality in FY2021. With those increases in virtual care and with our ongoing efforts to expand access, we surpassed one million outpatient visits per year for the first time!

While we emphasize moving forward, we are also improving the quality of in-person experiences with upgrades to our current services at the San Diego VA Medical Center and the opening of new state-of-the-art facilities in Chula Vista and Kearny Mesa. The latter clinic nearly doubled the amount of space compared to the Mission Valley VA Clinic, and it replaced and added specialty services like dental, dermatology, GI, ortho, pain, podiatry and more.

Construction has begun at the San Diego VA Medical Center on a major new building that will house our Spinal Cord Injury Center and Community Living Center patients and will be accompanied by a new parking garage with over 900 spaces. While construction will not be completed until 2024, together these projects will relieve the pressure on our existing hospital and add important new capacity.

I want to remind Veterans that our commitment to your safety is our top priority, and we will continue to provide an environment and staff you can trust as we move through the new year. See you in 2022!

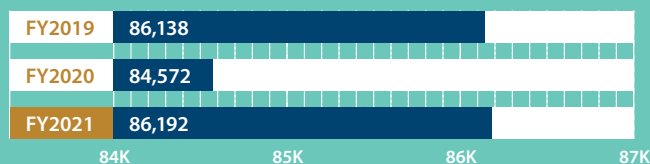
**Robert M. Smith, MD**

Director/Chief Executive Officer  
VA San Diego Healthcare System  
VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network

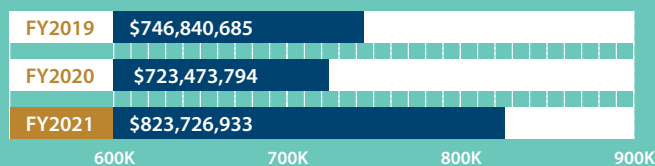
# FY2021 Financial Report & Statistics

## OPERATING EXPENSES & NUMBER OF VETERANS SERVED

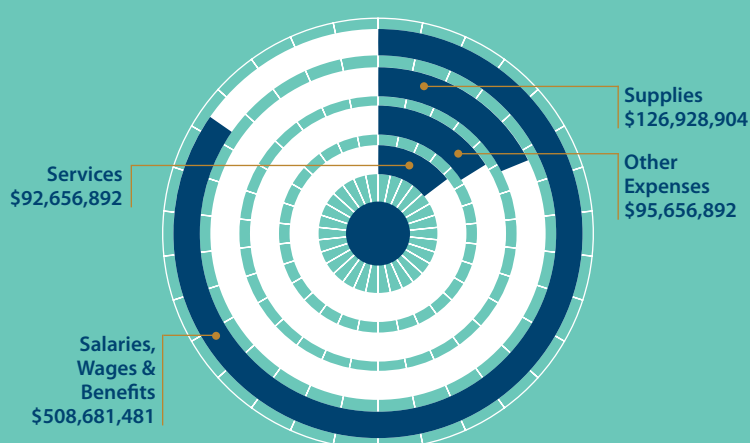
### Veterans Served (PATIENTS TREATED)



### Operating Expenses (10/1/20 – 9/30/21)



### Detail of Operating Expenses (FY 2021)



### FY 2021 (10/1/20 – 9/30/21)

<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$823,726,933</b>
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$508,681,481
Services	\$92,459,655
Supplies	\$126,928,904
Other Expenses	\$95,656,892

### COMMUNITY CARE

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$144,345,514</b>
In FY 2021, the VA transitioned from the Patient Centered Community Care (PC3) Network of community providers to the Community Care Network (CCN) of community providers.	

### STAFFING STATISTICS

(FTE = Full Time Equivalent)

<b>Employees (FTE)</b>	<b>3,487</b>
Physicians (FTE)	292
RNs (FTE)	811
Other (FTE)	2,384

### EDUCATION STATISTICS

<b>Total</b>	<b>1,602</b>
Medical Residents and Students	1,271
Other Clinical Trainees	331

### VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>285</b>
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	<b>12,294</b>
<b>Donations including Summer Sports Clinic</b>	<b>\$557,509</b>
<b>COVID-19 Donations</b>	<b>\$6,792</b>
<b>Total Volunteer Impact, Value of Hours Worked Plus Donations</b>	<b>\$908,401</b>

### RESEARCH STATISTICS

<b>Total Research Funding</b>	<b>\$44,200,000</b>
<b>Principal Investigators</b>	<b>&gt;200 active</b>
<b>Research Projects</b>	<b>&gt;650</b>

### WORKLOAD STATISTICS

<b>Medical Center Beds</b>	
<b>Total (authorized)</b>	<b>311</b>
Acute	134
Community Living Center	43
Spinal Cord Injury	50
Domiciliary/Aspire	84

<b>Admissions Total</b>	<b>6,602</b>
Acute	6,235
Community Living Center	181
Domiciliary/Aspire	80
Substance Abuse Recovery Rehabilitation Treatment Program (SARRTP)	106

<b>Patient Days Total</b>	<b>61,497</b>
Acute	46,201
Community Living Center	6,365
Domiciliary/Aspire	6,167
SARRTP	2,764

<b>Average Length of Stay</b>	
Acute	7.1 days
Community Living Center	25.8 days
Domiciliary/Aspire	27.4 days
SARRTP	39.8 days

<b>Surgeries Total</b>	<b>4,659</b>
Inpatient surgery	1,446
Outpatient surgery	3,213

### Outpatient Visits Total 1,059,990

Chula Vista Clinic	48,756
Escondido Clinic	18,519
Imperial Valley Clinic	6,351
La Jolla Medical Center	714,874
Mission Valley Clinic	155,427
Oceanside Clinic	104,384
Rio Clinic	7,404

### Outpatient Care by Modality Totals

In-person Visits	557,205
Telephone Visits	307,603
Virtual Care Visits*	195,182

\*VA Video Connect, Secure Messaging, VA Home Telehealth, Clinical Video Telehealth, TeleRetinal and TeleDerm Imaging visits, and Telehealth appointments.

### Enrolled Patients 121,074

<b>Number of Veterans in San Diego and Imperial Counties</b>	
<b>Total (2021 estimate)</b>	<b>249,975</b>
San Diego	244,541
Imperial Valley	5,434

### ALTERNATIVE REVENUE

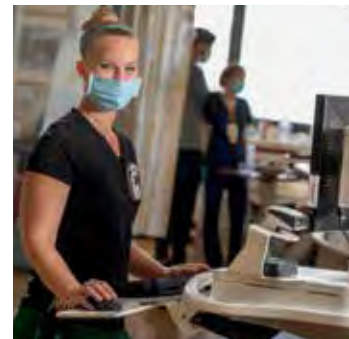
VASDHS collected \$22.6 million, composed of \$21.97 million in Medical Care Cost Funds (MCCF), plus external sharing revenue of \$627 thousand. These funds stay at our local facility to enhance services for San Diego Veterans.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA San Diego Healthcare System



# Moving Forward Safely



# 2021

VASDHS Annual Report

VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) staff is committed to providing care to Veterans in a safe environment. We continued efforts to keep our facilities safe during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and VA guidance. At the same time, our services and facilities are expanding to improve care and meet growing needs in many different areas, including the increased demand for telehealth services.

# Accomplishments



## COVID-19 RESPONSE

Beginning in late 2020, VASDHS started vaccinating staff against COVID-19, followed by Veterans and their families in April 2021. As of November 29, over 95 percent of our staff and over 78 percent of patients were fully

vaccinated. Third doses and booster shots are also available to all Veterans and staff.

VA San Diego Healthcare System's medical facilities adhere to COVID-19 visitor guidelines to maximize safety for patients and staff.

## HIGH RELIABILITY ORGANIZATION (HRO) INITIATIVE

VA San Diego Healthcare System is a lead site in the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) journey to High Reliability. As a lead site, VASDHS developed a roadmap that supports an HRO culture, including Clinical Team Training to initiate team-based error prevention techniques at the unit level. The goal is to apply group learning to process-improvement projects and use HRO training to develop a foundation of transparency and just culture. As an HRO, VASDHS strives to be an organization that attracts and develops highly engaged and empowered employees. The three pillars of HROs are leadership commitment, culture of safety and continuous process improvement.

## NEW KEARNY MESA VA CLINIC OPENS

The new Kearny Mesa VA Clinic opened on November 12 with an in-person ceremony. The \$110 million renovation, located at 8875 Aero Drive in San Diego and built on the site of a former bank vault, replaces the Mission Valley VA Clinic. The new outpatient facility is twice as large as the previous clinic, with expanded capacity for an estimated 600 to 800 patients daily. Ten specialties and over 100 new employees have been added to the services and personnel transferring from Mission Valley.



## SPECIALTY CLINIC AREAS OPEN

A new hemodialysis unit opened in the fall on the San Diego VA Medical Center's 3rd floor, which replaced the previous center. The new unit added four stations for a total of 20, a negative pressure room and a separate contact isolation room.

## PROSTHETICS AND SENSORY AID CLINIC OPENS

With more unique consults and patients than any other facility in the VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network

and growth continuing, VASDHS began construction to expand its prosthetics and sensory aid clinic and service. The first of two phases of construction on the new clinic was completed in May and added 4,417 square feet of space, increased the number of exam rooms from two to five, added two dedicated clinic rooms and expanded amputee and wheelchair-evaluation clinic rooms.



The second phase, to be complete in FY22, will add 18 workstations for administrative staff and a large storage area.

## CONSTRUCTION

### San Diego VA Medical Center

- Relocated and expanded Prosthetics Service area
- Opened a new Hemodialysis area completing the first of three phases of construction on the West wing of the 3rd floor
- Installed new radiology equipment
- Upgraded steam, electric and plumbing utilities to support new medical waste sterilization and compactor equipment
- Renovated the Clinical Lab and Blood Draw areas
- Installed new dietetic cart washer, including site construction and upgrading steam, electrical and plumbing systems to accommodate the new equipment
- Upgraded medical air compressors and suction (vacuum) system
- Installed 14 fan filter units in procedure rooms



### Kearny Mesa VA Clinic

- Completed construction on our new outpatient clinic

### VASDHS

- Installed accessories improvements for Veteran privacy and dignity in public unisex, male, female and family restrooms in all VASDHS facilities to meet Women's Privacy Project goals.

## CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON NEW SPINAL CORD INJURY CENTER AND COMMUNITY LIVING CENTER

In June, VASDHS broke ground on the future site of a 197,000 square-foot facility on the San Diego VA Medical Center campus for Spinal Cord Injury Center and Community Living Center patients. The stand-alone, four-story building will accommodate 50 private inpatient beds and 32 outpatient and therapy clinic beds. Opening is projected for fall 2024.

## VIRTUAL CARE

As in-person interactions decreased in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, VA's virtual care tools allowed Veterans and their caregivers to meet virtually with their VA care teams over telephone and internet-connected computers, tablets and mobile devices, allowing them to continue receiving care while remaining safely at home. In FY 21, VASDHS increased the virtual health care services it delivered by more than 34 percent over the previous year with nearly 150,000 of those visits conducted via VA Video Connect technology in primary care, mental health and specialty care.



## PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT 2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS):

#### 30-day Mortality Rate

- Outperformed the local community and VHA nationally

### Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS):

#### Outpatient Measures

- Sustained top 10 percent performance in *Prevention Composite* measures

### Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL):

#### Inpatient Performance Measures

- Sustained top 10 percent performance in *The Joint Commission's ORYX® Global Measures*

#### Patient Experience

- Sustained 1st quintile for *Patient Experience, Stress Discussed*, score between FY20Q4 and FY21Q3

#### Employee Satisfaction Domain

- *All Employee Survey (AES) Data Use Engagement* score improved from the 2nd to the 1st quintile between FY20Q4 and FY21Q3
- *Overall Employee Satisfaction* score improved from the 2nd to the 1st quintile between FY20Q4 and FY21Q3



## SYSTEMS REDESIGN AND INNOVATION

Our organization is committed to using Systems Redesign (SR) and Innovation to improve the way we deliver health care. Our standardized Lean Training Program supports a culture of continuous process improvement by introducing staff members to Lean thinking and methods to increase organizational effectiveness. Human-Centered Design (HCD) is also offered as an iterative approach to problem solving that involves the human experience and perspective at every step of the improvement process.

### SR/Lean Improvement projects outcomes include:

- Improved Environment of Care using Lean 5S
- Optimized opioid treatment processes
- Streamlined implant inventory management
- Standardized Primary Care transfer of care
- Improved Home Telehealth workflows
- Standardized employee check-out processes

### Innovation projects chosen by the VHA Innovators Network as "Innovation Investments" include:

**Tinnitus Group Counseling:** Provides Veterans with information about treating tinnitus

**Clinician Peer Support Program:** A pathway to a High Reliability Organization

**The SleepCompare Solution:** Better assesment of patient-generated sleep data collected using sleep monitoring devices

**LISTEN-SORT-EMPOWER:** A strategy to reduce burnout and promote engagement among clinicians

**The Equine-imity Project:** Equine-assisted therapy for Veterans



## VHA MISSION

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

## VHA VISION

- VHA will continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in health care and benefits by providing exemplary services that are both patient-centered and evidence-based.
- This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery and continuous improvement.
- It will emphasize prevention and population health and contribute to the Nation's well-being through education, research and service in national emergencies.

## ACCREDITATION & CERTIFICATION

- The Joint Commission
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF): Aspire Center, Spinal Cord Injury, Medical Rehabilitation, Wellness and Vocational Rehabilitation Enhancement, Homeless Veterans Programs, and Substance Abuse Recovery and Rehabilitation Treatment Program
- College of American Pathologists
- American College of Radiology (ACR): Mammography, CT and MRI
- American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC)
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- American Association of Blood Banks (AABB)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): Registered Blood Bank and Mammography Program
- Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA)
- Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)



VA Core Values  
and  
Characteristics:  
**I CARE**

**I**ntegrity  
**C**ommitment  
**A**dvocacy  
**R**espect  
**E**xcellence

## Awards

### TOP RESEARCH AWARD

2020 Biomedical Laboratory R&D Clinician Scientist Investigator Awards went to Dr. Michael McCarthy and Dr. Prabhleen (Sheena) Singh. Dr. McCarthy received the award for research in "Circadian Rhythms in Neuronal Models of Bipolar Disorder," and Dr. Singh was recognized for "Renal Oxygenation and Mitochondrial Function in the Pathophysiology of Kidney Disease."

The award is given "To recognize and retain outstanding clinician scientists engaged in VA research while they continue to provide high quality and timely clinical care to Veterans."



### NAMI SAN DIEGO CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

Dimitri Perivoliotis, Ph.D. has been awarded the 2021 National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) San Diego Inspiration Award for Champion of the Year. This award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated significant leadership in mental health and has directly made an impact in San Diego County. Dr. Perivoliotis supervises the Center of Recovery Education, a program that helps Veterans envision the life they want and takes steps toward making that vision a reality through guidance and help with various mental health issues.

### ENERGY STAR AWARD

San Diego VA Medical Center earned the highly sought-after ENERGY STAR® award for the 11th year. To be certified as ENERGY STAR, a building must meet strict energy performance standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Specifically, to be eligible for ENERGY STAR certification, a building must earn an ENERGY STAR score of 75 or higher, indicating that it performs better than at least 75 percent of similar buildings nationwide while meeting national indoor environmental quality standards. "ENERGY STAR certified buildings save energy, save money, and help protect the environment by generating fewer greenhouse gas emissions than typical buildings," according to the EPA.



## MEDICAL CENTER

VA San Diego Healthcare System  
3350 La Jolla Village Drive  
San Diego, CA 92161  
(858) 552-8585  
(800) 331-VETS (8387)

## WEB ADDRESSES

For more information, visit us at:  
[www.va.gov/san-diego-health-care](http://www.va.gov/san-diego-health-care)  
[www.facebook.com/VASanDiego](https://www.facebook.com/VASanDiego)  
[www.twitter.com/VASanDiego](https://www.twitter.com/VASanDiego)

## CLINICS

### Chula Vista VA Clinic

353 H Street  
Chula Vista, CA 91910  
(619) 409-1600

### Escondido VA Clinic

815 East Pennsylvania Avenue  
Escondido, CA 92025  
(760) 466-7020

### Imperial Valley VA Clinic

1115 S 4th Street  
El Centro, CA 92243  
(760) 352-1506

### Kearny Mesa VA Clinic

8875 Aero Drive  
San Diego, CA 92123  
(619) 400-5000

### Oceanside VA Clinic

1300 Rancho del Oro Drive  
Oceanside, CA 92056  
(760) 643-2000

### Sorrento Valley VA Clinic

10455 Sorrento Valley Road  
San Diego, CA 92121  
(858) 657-1980

### Rio VA Clinic

8989 Rio San Diego, Suite 350  
San Diego, CA 92108  
(619) 228-8000

### VA Aspire Center

2121 San Diego Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92110  
(855) 297-8397

## VET CENTERS

### Chula Vista Vet Center

180 Otay Lakes Road, Suite 108  
Bonita, CA 91902  
(877) 618-6534

### San Diego Vet Center

2790 Truxtun Road, Suite 130  
San Diego, CA 92106  
(858) 642-1500

### San Marcos Vet Center

One Civic Center Drive, Suite 150  
San Marcos, CA 92069  
(760) 744-6914

## PROFILE

The VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS) provides a wide range of inpatient and outpatient services at the medical center in La Jolla and at six community clinics in Chula Vista, Escondido, Imperial Valley, Kearny Mesa, Oceanside and Sorrento Valley. We provide medical, surgical, mental health, geriatric, spinal cord injury and advanced rehabilitation services. VASDHS has 311 authorized hospital beds including skilled nursing beds and operates several regional referral programs including cardiovascular surgery and spinal cord injury care.

We are affiliated with the University of California San Diego School of Medicine and provide training for 1,271 medical interns, residents and fellows as well as 331 other health profession trainees in areas such as nursing, pharmacy, dental and dietetics.

VASDHS has one of the largest research programs in the VA nationally with a \$44.2 million budget, more than 200 principal investigators and 650 projects.



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Member of the VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 22