** Press Release**

San Francisco VA Health Care System

 Office of Public Affairs

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**VA Announces Opening of Memory Care Unit at San Francisco VA Health Care System**

**San Francisco, Cal.–** On December 2, 2022, San Francisco VA Health Care System (SFVAHCS) celebrated the opening of a new Memory Care Unit within the Community Living Center (CLC), located on the San Francisco VA Medical Center Campus. The CLC Memory Care Unit will address the critical needs of Veterans requiring specialized accommodations and care modalities due to cognitive decline.

As the number of Veterans who will require memory care in the coming years is projected to grow, SFVAHCS formed a multidisciplinary team to imagine, design, and plan for the new unit. To incorporate the full spectrum of patient care needs in planning, the team had representatives from Mental Health, Geriatrics, Palliative, & Extended Care, the Community Living Center (CLC) and Nursing Services leadership. They worked collaboratively to plan for the construction of the new unit.

“We are excited to open this new unit that has a secure and supportive environment and is staffed by a specialized care team. Our goal in creating the unit was to ensure Veterans, diagnosed with dementia, have the best care possible,” said Jia Li, Director of the San Francisco VA Health Care System.

The 14-single bed unit uses existing Community Living Center space but required construction to implement a design to minimize the environmental factors which can trigger unsafe behaviors. The Engineering Construction Team renovated the C wing on the ground floor of the CLC to establish a secure area. The team prioritized special measures to prevent wandering and elopement of Veterans by allowing for seamless staff integration and direct observation of Veterans in group and common areas. Future construction plans of a secure outdoor walking space will allow for time outside to garden and for activities promoting mind-body engagement.

The Interior Design section included elements evocative of a home like environment by ensuring rooms feature a soothing, quiet, and de-cluttered atmosphere with reassuring sensory interventions. The common areas, such as the activity room, dining room and hall, are equipped with way-finding resources for ease of navigation, wall art used for activities, and a low-stimuli environment.

The Memory Care Unit is staffed by an interdisciplinary team of professionals with specialized training and experience to serve Veterans diagnosed with dementia. The goals of the new unit are to provide therapeutic activities and supportive medical care in an environment with creative alternatives for behavioral management, while honoring the dignity of each Veteran.