



VA HEALTH CARE Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

Veteran Connection

VA Portland Health Care System Newsletter

Keeping the Promise - Advancing Excellence



VA Portland Health Care System

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Produced by the VAPORHCS Public Affairs Office

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS ??

Please email us at...
VHAPOR-PublicAffairs@med.va.gov
or call 503-402-2975

Lincoln's Promise (VA Mission Statement)

"To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|---|
| Director's Message | 1 |
| Veterans Health Library | 2 |
| Get your flu shot | 3 |
| Advance Directives Podcast | 4 |
| VAPORHCS earns Healthcare Equality Index for LGBT care | 4 |

For [VAPORHCS Events and Classes](#)—got to the VAPORHCS Web page...
www.portland.va.gov/calendar.asp

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Message from the Director



Joanne M. Krumberger
Director, VA Portland Health Care System

On November 14, 45 VAPORHCS staff members participated in the first ever [VA National Access Stand Down](#). Across the nation, teams of clinical leaders, administrators, and volunteers were on site at every medical center to contact Veterans who are need of care.

In all, direct contact was made with 730 Veterans across multiple services - 435 in Primary Care alone. Staff discussed Choice Program non-VA care options and especially focused on urgent/emergent care needs. It was a very effective effort helping ensure our Veterans are getting the care when and where they want it. Over the past several months, VAPORHCS staff called more than 14,000 Veterans direct and having conversations about their appointments and ensuring they were offered the Choice Program as an option for care. As of Nov. 10, 9,498 Veterans within VAPORHCS have utilized the Choice Program option of care with nearly 15,000 separate authorizations for care. VAPORHCS has one of the highest Choice Program utilization rates in the country, largely due to our proactive approach to ensuring Veterans are aware of their authorized care options.

I hope everyone had a wonderful Veterans Day. We at VAPORHCS have a humbling mission and we are honored and thankful to be able to serve our heroes. If you did not read it previously, please see my [Veterans Day Letter](#) published earlier this month on our [Web site](#).

Our community partners are key in enabling us to provide the best care possible. As part of our ongoing implementation of the MyVA Transformational Plan, VAPORHCS announced earlier this year the selection of Veterans Kimberly Douthit (Coast Guard) and Tom Mann (Army) as the co-chairs of the MyVA Community Pacific Northwest Advisory Board. This 15-member community Veterans engagement board will bring together local stakeholders, Veterans, families, and service providers to improve service delivery and outcomes for Veterans. The board's first meeting was on November 21. More information about that and future meetings will be communicated later. I look forward to working closely with the board to gain their insight and perspective to improve service delivery and outcomes for Veterans from the VA.

For more information about the MyVA Community model, please visit www.va.gov/icbc/myVA.asp.

Thank you for your service to our country and it is an honor for us to care for you.

I wish you all a great Thanksgiving holiday.

In Service to Veterans,
Joanne M. Krumberger



VA announces plan to consolidate community care programs

WASHINGTON - VA released a plan on Oct. 30 proposing improvements for health care delivery to Veterans. The plan consolidates existing community care programs and focuses on how VA can enhance partnerships between VA and community providers and deliver care in the community more seamlessly. VA's goal is to provide Veterans the best care anywhere. [Click here](#) to see the entire VA Plan to Consolidate Community Care Programs.



Veterans Health Library

Your source for health information

VA announces newly upgraded Veterans Health Library

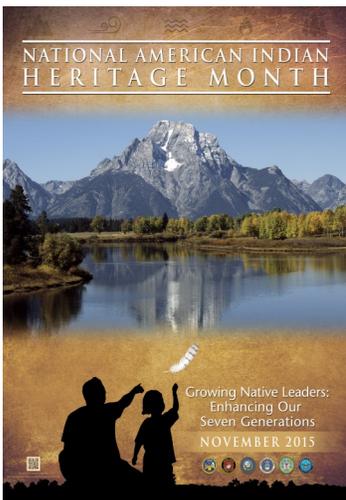
One-stop source for reliable health information for Veterans

Using its recently redesigned, easy-to-navigate interface, Veterans will find content created especially for them on topics such as:

- Posttraumatic stress disorder
- Combat-related traumatic brain injury
- Agent Orange
- Cold injury
- A full spectrum of other health subjects

Try out the Veterans Health Library to see how it can assist you.

<http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/>



National Native American Heritage Month is a time to reflect, honor, and celebrate the diverse American Indians' and Alaska Natives' (AI/IN) traditions and heritage. It's also a time to learn about the unique role AI/AN have played in the shaping of our Nation's history and culture.

Some of the unique and important contributions AI/ANs have made can be found in medicine, literature, language, music, arts, and agriculture. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are over 150,000 AI/AN U.S. Veterans and ten percent of these AI/AN Veterans are women.

Questions?

Call us at (503) 402-2975 or email us

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Get your flu shot at the VA

A VA facility near you is offering shots for Veterans



FREE FLU SHOTS
MORE ACCESS, MORE CHOICE.



#FightFlu



VA
HEALTH CARE
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Walgreens
AT THE CORNER OF HAPPY & HEALTHY™

It's time to get your flu shot!

The Annual Influenza (Flu) Immunization Drive began September 15, 2015, in the VA Portland Health Care System Atrium of the main hospital and at your local VA health clinic. The walk-in flu clinic in the main hospital is open from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, Monday to Thursday, except holidays. For local clinic hours, please call the telephone message line at 503-808-1923, and press the number for your clinic.

You also can get your flu shot at a local [Walgreens Pharmacy](#) (subject to availability; other restrictions may apply). If you have other health insurance, tell the pharmacist that you get your care at VA, and show your VA ID card. Veterans must use Group Code #5933XBAYV. More details are available on the Web [here](#).

You do not need an appointment to get a flu shot at a VAPORHCS walk-in flu clinic or a Walgreens Pharmacy. Veterans with scheduled medical appointments at any VA facility can ask for their flu shot at that time.

Why should you get a flu shot each year?

Influenza or “the flu” is caused by a virus and can be a serious infection. The flu can be prevented or at least made less severe by getting a flu shot. The best time to get a flu shot is as soon as the vaccine becomes available in September. However, getting a flu shot later still will protect you from the flu.

The flu spreads easily from person to person. The infection can be mild, but it also can cause severe illness or death. Certain people are at greater risk for severe illness if they get the flu. This includes older persons, young children and pregnant women; people with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, asthma or heart disease; and people who live in places like nursing homes.

All persons aged 6 months and older should get a flu shot, including persons with minor egg allergies. For most people with minor egg allergies, the benefits of getting a flu shot are greater than the risks of getting the flu. If you are allergic to eggs, please tell your health care provider so that special precautions can be made.

Other things you can do to avoid getting or spreading the flu:

- Wash your hands often;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- If possible, stay home when you are sick; and
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

For more information about dates, times and locations of walk-in Flu Vaccination Clinics...

- ... please call the hotline at **(503) 808-1923**, and press the number for your clinic.
- If you get your flu shot outside the VA or Walgreens, please leave us a voice mail message to let us know at **(503) 273-5225**.

The flu shot is safe and it works. While it is not 100% effective in preventing the flu, if you get the shot and still get the flu, it is usually far less serious than if you did not get the shot. Sometimes there are side effects from the shot that may be mistaken for the flu, such as a sore arm, body aches or a slight fever.

Protect yourself, the ones you love, and others around you by getting a flu shot this year.

New Podcast Series Helps Veterans with Advance Directives

Dialed In: Helping Veterans Take Control of Their Health Care

What's An Advance Directive, and Why Should I Complete One? (6:35)

Veterans have the right to make their own decisions about their health care, but what if they're too ill to decide? Listen to the voices of Veterans and VA staff describe advance directives. Text only transcript also provided in addition to the VA Advance Directive Form, and a one-page fact sheet explaining a Veterans rights related to advance directives.

http://www.ethics.va.gov/Podcasts/dialed_in_advance_directives_for_veterans_podcast_062515.asp



VAPORHCS has been recognized as a *“Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality”* by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, the educational arm of the country’s largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization. VAPORHCS has received this recognition on a yearly basis since 2013.

VAPORHCS earned top marks in meeting non-discrimination and training criteria that demonstrate its commitment to equitable, inclusive care for LGBT patients, and their families, who can face significant challenges in securing the quality health care and respect they deserve.

Questions?

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