



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veteran Connection

VA Portland Health Care System Newsletter

Keeping the Promise - Advancing Excellence



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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.

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

Message from the Director



Michael W. Fisher
Director, VA Portland
Health Care System

With all the recent changes in VA leadership, I wanted to provide you the latest information on the priorities of the VA straight from VA Secretary Shulkin, which, to a large degree, are mirrored at the local level.

Greater choice for care

- Redesigning the Choice Program 40/30 rule (There are reported legislative changes in the making now in Washington D.C. More information is to follow in the near future on this.)
- Improving transparency (Examples include the new website www.accesstocare.va.gov and posted [Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning \(SAIL\)](#) data on the web).
- Building a high performing, integrated network of care. (Locally, for example, in October 2016, VAPORHCS had zero dental provider agreements in our catchment area, today we have 175; for Home and Community Based Services we had zero agreements in November 2016 and today we have 82).

Modernize systems

- Announced this month, [VA is adopting a new Electronic Health Record \(EHR\)](#) system; the same state-of-the-art solution selected, and currently being deployed, by the Department of Defense.
- Improving infrastructure and streamlining services.

Focus resources more efficiently

- Strengthening of foundational services.

- VA/DOD Community coordination.

Improve timeliness of services

Access to care and wait times (For VAPORHCS, according to the VHA Patient Access Data - www.va.gov/health/access-audit.asp, VAPORHCS completed appointment times for the period ending April 2017 (50,256 total appointments) was 94% of total appointments were completed within 30 days; 79% within 0-7 days; and nearly 7% within 8-14 days; we are continually working to improve on our access to care.)

Suicide prevention

- VA "Getting to Zero" campaign.
- The VA Office of Suicide Prevention is taking the lead on this incredibly important endeavor to reduce suicide risk among our nation's Veterans which is currently estimated at 20 Veterans/day who are taking their own lives. The campaign will focus on key facets of VA's approach, including leveraging partnerships to raise awareness of resources among Veterans and their support networks, and use data and technology to enable the VA to identify and provide specialized care for Veterans at heightened risk for suicide. More information on related VAPORHCS resources are on page 3-4 of this newsletter.

As we continue down the path over the next several months and years to implement these priorities, I intend to keep our stakeholders informed of the progress and gain your feedback.

Thank you for your service and for letting us serve you.

Michael Fisher

VA staff member provides inspiration out of tragic event in Portland — his actions helped save a life



This is the most shared [VA Portland Facebook post](#) ever reaching nearly 72,000 people



VA staff member Marcus Knipe in a photo posted on the [VA Portland Health Care System Facebook](#) page on May 31. Marcus provided on-site first aide to a survivor after a horrifying stabbing on a Trimet Max line on May 26 in Portland. His actions were, in a large part, what saved the life of the victim.

There are heroes among us! When the horrific events on Friday (May 26, 2017) unfolded on the TriMet MAX train in Portland, Army Veteran Marcus Knipe was waiting on the platform, on his way to go downtown to the Portland

Rose Festival fun center. It was his day off from VA Portland Health Care System, the sun was shining, and he was happy to spend time with his family and friends.

Suddenly, he heard a commotion from another train stopped at the station and was surprised to see people running from the train and hear screaming. Just then, one of the Good Samaritans who was severely injured with stab wounds to his neck stumbled from the train and yelled for help.

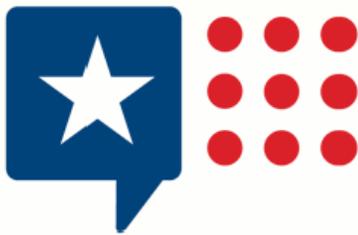
Marcus sprang into action without thinking about his own safety, while his family escaped the scary scene, and immediately applied pressure to the victim's wound. Marcus' Infantryman basic medical training kicked in and he kept the young man calm and talking during the ordeal before ambulances arrived. He even helped the young man call his mom to tell her he was injured. After speaking with police, Marcus joined his family for their planned evening. The young man is recovering from his wounds but sadly two other Good Samaritans on the train did not survive.

Thank you Marcus for stepping in without regard to your own safety and using your military skills to help where desperately needed. We are humbled by your heroic lifesaving actions on Friday and thank you today, and every day, for serving other Veterans at VA Portland Health Care System.

- VAPORHCS -

Free, confidential support 24/7/365

Veterans Crisis Line



1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1

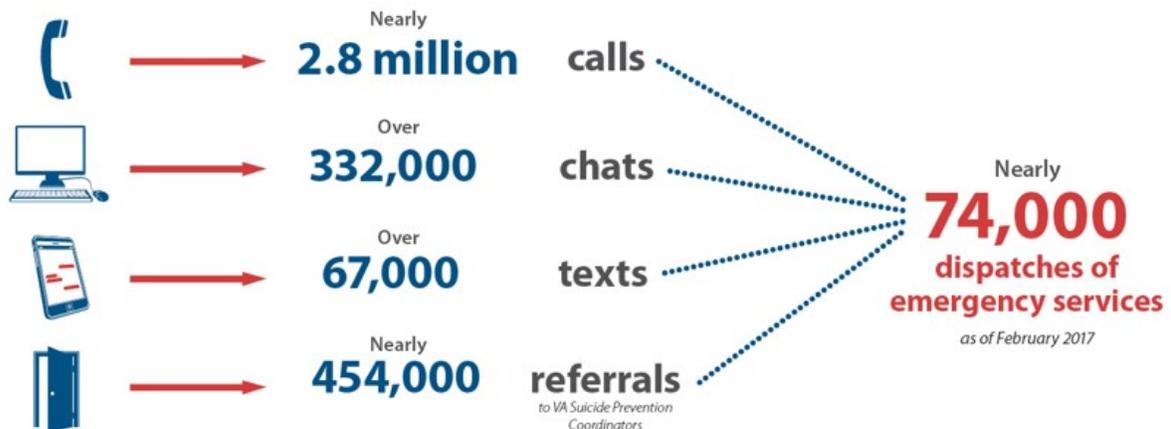
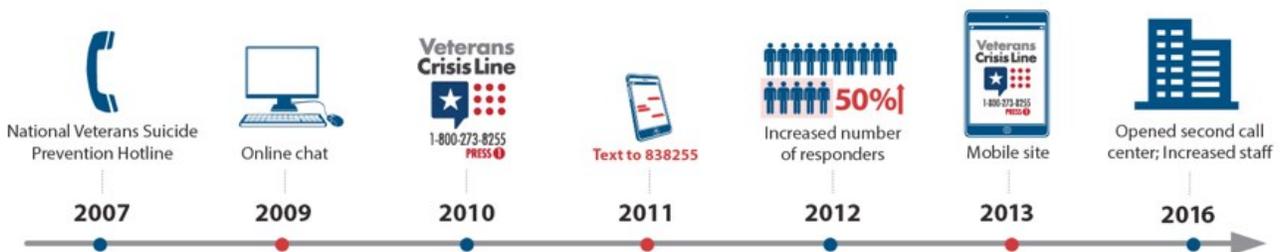
- Veterans
- Family members
- Friends
- Service members

Did you know?

- The Crisis Line answers more than 90% of calls within 8 seconds, and only approximately 1% of calls are being rerouted to a backup call center.
- Since May 2017, calls for service have increased from 2,000 a week to more than 2,250.
 - The center handles 500,000+ calls per year, and has initiated nearly 75,000 emergency service responses since 2007.

•••• Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to **838255** ••••

Veterans Crisis Line: 9 years of saving lives



Suicide Prevention: Everyone's Business

Those in crisis often display warning signs:

Learn to recognize these warning signs:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

**VA Portland
Suicide Prevention Team
provides outreach &
training**

Contact:
Monireh Moghadam, LCSW
VAPORHCS Suicide
Prevention Coordinator

Monireh.Moghadam@va.gov
Team Line; 503-402-2857

The presence of the following signs requires immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.

**R
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VA's center of excellence for research and education on the prevention, understanding and treatment of PTSD.
Phone: 1-802-296-6300

www.ptsd.va.gov

Community
Provider Toolkit



Information on VA services and resources, understanding military culture and experience, and tools for working with a variety of mental health conditions.

www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/



Coping and Symptom Management Phone Apps

- <http://www.t2health.dcoe.mil/products/mobile-apps>
- <https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>

New VA Online Tool Helps Veterans Learn About and Compare Effective PTSD Treatments

VA recently launched a new online tool that can help Veterans compare various treatment options for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The [PTSD Treatment Decision Aid](#) is a free, interactive online tool that helps educate patients about effective treatment options for PTSD and encourages them to participate actively in decisions about their care.

The tool includes information about evidence-based PTSD treatments, such as talk therapy and prescription medication options. It also includes useful information designed for people who have served in the military. Users can watch videos of providers explaining different treatment options and what to expect with those treatments, and hear from Veterans who have benefited from them.

Veterans can also build a chart to compare the treatments they prefer and print a personalized summary to share with their providers. All personal information is erased once the tool is closed to protect users' privacy.

According to VA findings, approximately eight of every 100 people will experience PTSD at some point in their lifetimes, and almost 620,000 of the Veterans treated by VA have a diagnosis of PTSD.

PTSD
TREATMENT DECISION AID:
 THE CHOICE IS YOURS

LEARN

Learn about PTSD and how this decision aid can help

- HOW THIS DECISION AID WORKS
- PTSD BASICS

COMPARE

Compare effective PTSD treatment options

- WHAT I WANT IN A TREATMENT
- TREATMENT COMPARISON CHART
- MY TREATMENT PREFERENCES

ACT

Take action to start treatment

- TALKING WITH YOUR PROVIDER
- FAQs
- NEXT STEPS

National Center for PTSD
 POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER



VA National Center for PTSD resources... www.ptsd.va.gov/about/ptsd-awareness/

Respite Care for Caregivers

As a caregiver, to be strong for your Veteran you must first be strong. Respite care is an occasional way to take a break from your caregiving duties and relax, renew your energy, and avoid caregiver burnout.

Veterans who require a caregiver may be eligible for up to 30 days of respite care each year. This care can be offered in your home, at a VA community living center, at a VA-contracted community residential care facility, or at an adult day health care center.

To see if you are eligible for respite care services, call the Caregiver Support Line—1-855-260-3274, or enter your zip code and call your [local Caregiver Support Coordinator](#).



VA Portland Health Care System Caregiver Support Coordinator

Contact:

Leah Christensen, LCSW

Leah.Christensen@va.gov

503-273-5210

Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program

This program needs caregivers who want to serve as mentors or be mentored. Mentoring relationships can be very valuable. Mentors often report feeling satisfaction in helping others in similar situations, while those being mentored describe gaining emotional support, acceptance, and recognition that they are not alone. Contact your Caregiver Support Coordinator for more information.



With VA's Caregiver Support Line assistance is just a quick phone call away. Whether you're in need of immediate assistance or have questions about what services you may be eligible for, the caring licensed professionals who answer the support line can:

- Tell you about the assistance available from VA.
- Help you access services.
- Connect you with the Caregiver Support Coordinator at a VA Medical Center near you.
- Just listen, if that's what you need right now.

**CAREGIVER
SUPPORT LINE**
1-855-260-3274

If you're just getting started with VA, calling the Caregiver Support Line is a great first step to take to learn more about the support that's available to you.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

VA Portland recognized nationally for environmental excellence in health care

[Practice Greenhealth](#), the nation's leading organization dedicated to environmental sustainability in health care, recognized VAPORHCS with the Greening the Operating Room (OR) award. Only five VA facilities in the nation earned this recognition.

The Greening the OR category honors hospitals for leadership in implementation and innovation in the surgical department. Winners have demonstrated innovative approaches to waste minimization, clinical plastic recycling, reformulation of operating room kits, single-use device reprocessing, use of reusable sterilization cases, and a range of other programs and associated metrics. This recognition encompasses efforts ranging from energy reduction, to green building design, to long-term commitments to healthier environments.

VA Portland Health Care System

Recipient of the



VA Portland earns recognition 3rd year in a row

The [Human Rights Campaign](#), the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) civil rights organization, recognized VAPORHCS as a leading healthcare organization related to policies and practices regarding the equity and inclusion of their LGBTQ patients, visitors and employees. The HEI 2017 evaluated a total of 1,619 healthcare facilities nationwide.

VAPORHCS was one of eight hospitals in Oregon to achieve 2017 HEI Leader status and the only VA facility in VISN 20 to achieve Leader Status this year. Of the 122 VA hospitals/health care systems who participated in the HEI this year, only 43 (35%) achieved Leader Status.

Go to the VAPORHCS website [HERE](#) for more information on LGBT related services.



Opioid overdose can happen.

Even when you take your medications as prescribed



Know your risk.



Veterans are two times more likely to die from an opioid overdose.



Half of those who overdose on opioids are also taking benzodiazepines.

For example: diazepam, lorazepam, alprazolam



Mixing opioids with alcohol increases your risk.



Protect yourself.

Ask your provider how to reduce your risk.

For more information visit:
www.visn20.med.va.gov/VISN20/services/pain/



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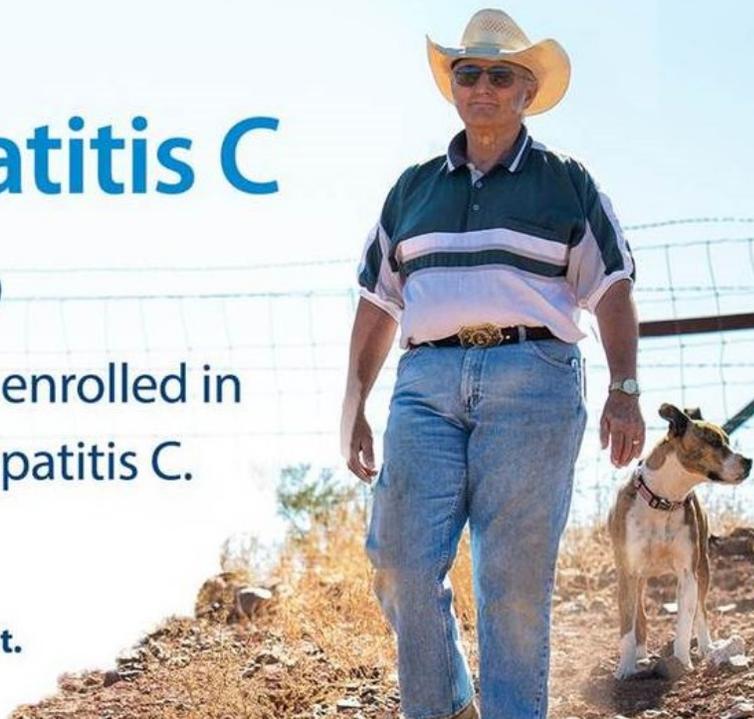


U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

I'm free of hepatitis C You can be, too

Tens of thousands of Veterans enrolled in
VA care have been cured of hepatitis C.

Ask about hepatitis C testing and treatment.
Learn more at www.hepatitis.va.gov



Hepatitis C—Request the Test!!! Everyone should be tested!!!

Were you born between 1945 - 1965?

- 3 in 4 people with Hepatitis C were born between these years
 - You are 5 times more likely to have Hepatitis C

More than 1 million people living with Hepatitis C DO NOT KNOW they are infected!

Hepatitis C is...

- ... a leading cause of Liver Cancer
- ... the #1 reason for Liver Transplants

NEW treatment includes Pills or Tablets only

- Average 8-12 weeks of Treatment
- Typically the side effects are mild

What to do?

If you want to be tested call the VAPORHCS hotline NOW:

If you know you have Hepatitis C, call the VAPORHCS hotline NOW:

(503) 220-8262 Ext 53471



OREGON
SPIRIT OF
REMEMBER AND BE INSPIRED



Spirit of '45 Day

Willamette National Cemetery
Sunday, August 13, 2017, 11 AM

To Celebrate, attend Spirit of '45 Day, Willamette National Cemetery Aug 13, 11:00 a.m. with General Jimmy Doolittle's granddaughter, Jonna Doolittle Hoppes

To Honor, submit your WWII military photo at:
www.orspiritof45.org/photo

To Inspire, sponsor your hero in one of our Oregon Veterans Day Parades

The Spirit of '45 mission: *To commemorate the achievements and virtues of the World War II generation, on the 2nd Sunday of every August, so as to inspire future generations*