



Fact Sheet

PCC Pharmacy Initiative

VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System

Media Contact: Charles Ramey, Public Affairs Office, (702) 791-9003

March
2016

In order to improve operational efficiency, the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System discontinued processing routine prescriptions at our Primary Care Clinics (PCCs) **Friday, March 4, 2016**. For routine prescriptions, patients have the option of using our Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP) system or filling prescriptions in person at the VA Medical Center.

History

A vast majority of the VA clinics across the nation do not have an onsite stand-alone dispensing pharmacy. Dispensing pharmacies were added to the PCCs when they opened because the North Las Vegas VA Medical Center wasn't built and the outpatient dispensing pharmacy at the time had only one dispensing window and was unable to handle the prescription volume for the entire VASNHS. In the absence of the main hospital dispensing pharmacy, the satellite pharmacies at the PCCs allowed quick access to medications to our veterans, however their purpose has always been to fill only emergently needed medications – not routine prescriptions.

Advantages to Veterans

- The PCC satellite PCC pharmacies were only open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. while contract pharmacies located within a short distance of the PCCs are open extended hours, including weekends & holidays. The change allows Veterans to obtain emergently needed non-controlled substances such as antibiotics or blood pressure medications soon after their appointment with a provider.
- The former pharmacy space at PCCs will be made available to provide for much needed Primary Care and behavioral health services across the valley.
- Effective March 21, Outpatient Pharmacy hours at the Medical Center will be:
 - 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Weekdays (currently 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.)
 - 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays (currently 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturdays and CLOSED on Sundays & Holidays)

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Other Advantages

- The Primary Care Clinic Pharmacy closure will yield a \$1.6 million annual cost savings/avoidance.
- The Pharmacy closures eliminate redundant services and ensure VASNHS better-utilizes resources via the Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP).
 - CMOP is an award-winning, highly automated and cost effective system.
 - Prescriptions for controlled and non-controlled substances are delivered within three (3) days to patient's home address.

Refill Options

Window prescription services are available at the Medical Center. However, patients are strongly encouraged to process all prescriptions via the Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP).

To order prescription refills through automated system or speak to our pharmacy staff, patients should call (702) 791-9061 or 1-888-633-7554. Patients may also use My HealthVet (<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/index.html>) for online prescription ordering services.

If unable to use automated system or online services, patients may mail in refill slips **at least two (2) weeks in advance** to:

VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System
Pharmacy Services (119)
6900 North Pecos Road
North Las Vegas, NV 89086

VASNHS highly recommends planning ahead and requesting refills/renewals **at least two (2) weeks in advance** to avoid running out of medications.

For more information about the Pharmacy change, please visit our web page at: <http://www.lasvegas.va.gov/services/Pharmacy.asp>



Questions

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Why did the VA close pharmacies at Primary Care Clinics (PCCs)?

- When benchmarked against other VA medical center pharmacy services of similar size and complexity, it was found that majority of the VA facilities across the nation have only one dispensing pharmacy in any given geographic area. The VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System's decentralized pharmacy model was inefficient and consolidation is intended to improve efficiency.

When did PCC dispensing pharmacies close?

- The PCC pharmacy operations closed effective **Friday, March 4, 2016.**

How much money will it really save?

- Pharmacy closure at PCCs will yield greater than \$1.6 million in annual cost savings/avoidance.

Is prescription pick up service still available to patients?

- Window prescription services is available at the VA Medical Center. However, patients are strongly encouraged to process prescriptions via the Consolidated Mail Order Pharmacy system.

For patients who live far from the VA Medical Center, how do they get their medications?

- Prescriptions will be mailed directly to patients' home addresses. More than 80 percent of all prescriptions within the VA are mailed to veterans by Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP). The CMOP is:
 - o A highly automated, accurate and cost effective system
 - o Scored highest in the mail order pharmacies for five consecutive years by the J.D. Power and Associates' National Pharmacy Study in customer service and cost competitiveness
 - o Mails 474,000 prescriptions each day
 - o Delivers prescriptions within 3 days of mailing
 - o Provides higher accuracy and lower cost than manual systems
 - o Reduces patient wait times and parking congestion at the VA medical center
 - o Allows online prescription tracking to patients

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If a patient uses VA medical center pharmacy, are there any limitations to what medications he/she can get?

- The VA medical center pharmacy carries more items than the PCC pharmacies but some items are still mail only and available from CMOP only.

If a patient is ill, cannot drive to VA medical center and need to pick up medication same day, what should he/she do?

- In an emergency, patients may pick up a temporary supply of non-controlled medications at a local contract pharmacy. Patient's VA Providers may write prescriptions to be filled at a nearby contract pharmacy, at **NO COST** to the patient.

- o Contract pharmacies for NORTHEAST Primary Care Clinic are:

- Kmart Pharmacy, 2975 E Sahara Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89104
- Smith's Pharmacy, 4965 E Sahara Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89104

- o Contract pharmacies for NORTHWEST Primary Care Clinic are:

- Kmart Pharmacy, 4500 N Rancho Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89130
- Walgreens Pharmacy, 1445 W Craig Road, Las Vegas, NV 89032

- o Contract pharmacies for SOUTHEAST Primary Care Clinic are:

- Walgreens Pharmacy, 101 E Lake Mead Parkway, Henderson, NV 89015
- Walmart Pharmacy, 300 E Lake Mead Parkway, Henderson, NV 89015

- o Contract pharmacies for SOUTHWEST Primary Care Clinic are:

- Vons Pharmacy, 7405 S Durango Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89113
- Walgreens Pharmacy, 8565 W Warm Springs, Las Vegas, NV 89113

- o Contract pharmacies for Community Resource & Referral Center (CRRC) are:

- CVS Pharmacy located at 1425 West Lake Mead, Las Vegas, 89106
- Walgreens Pharmacy, 900 Rancho Drive, Las Vegas, 89106

- o Contract pharmacies for LAUGHLIN Clinic are:

- CVS Pharmacy, 2350 Miracle Mile, Bullhead City, AZ 86442
- Smith's Pharmacy, 1775 E Lakeside Drive, Bullhead City, AZ 86442
- Walmart Pharmacy, 2840 Highway 95, Bullhead City, AZ 86442

- o Contract pharmacies for PAHRUMP Clinic are:

- Smith's Pharmacy located at 601 S Hwy 160, Pahrump, NV 89041
- Walmart Pharmacy located at 300 S Hwy 160, Pahrump, NV 89041

Can medications be called in to the contract pharmacy by VA provider or renewed by phone?

- No. Patient must be evaluated by a VA provider, the emergency prescription must be hand-written by VA provider, and patient must be given an authorization document to submit to the contract pharmacy. These prescriptions are for a temporary supply only and refills are not allowed. All routine medications must be filled by the VA, either at the medical center pharmacy or at CMOP.

How do patients fill prescriptions for controlled substances?

- Due to DEA requirements, controlled substances are only available from the VA using tracked mail via the Consolidated Mail Order Pharmacy, or via pick up from the VA Medical Center Pharmacy.

How do patients who cannot get to VA Medical Center pharmacy before 6 p.m. get their medications?

- Under the centralized dispensing model, we will extend outpatient pharmacy hours at the VA Medical Center March 21.

How does PCC pharmacy closure improve VA pharmacy efficiency?

- The VA pharmacy efficiency will improve from:
 - Increased use of VA's award winning mail out CMOP services
 - Centralized pharmacy operation and staff oversight as well as inventory management
 - Even workload distribution among pharmacy staff members
 - Improved access to supervisors and administrators for all staff members
 - Outpatient pharmacists focusing on providing patient education and improving patient safety
 - Inpatient pharmacy staff focusing on caring for acutely ill patients instead of dispensing duties

What will happen to space at the PCCs where the pharmacies were previously operating?

- Pharmacy space at the PCCs will be available to support the increasing demands for primary care, behavioral health, and telehealth services across the valley.

How can patients order CMOP prescription refills/renewal requests?

- Patients have current options available to order prescription refills/renewal requests:
 - To use automated system or speak to local pharmacy staff, patients can call (702)791-9061 or 1-888-633-7554.
 - To use online service, patients can visit My HealtheVet https://www.myhealthvet.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=rxRefill
 - If patients are unable to use automated system or online services, they may mail in prescription refill slips **at least two (2) weeks in advance** to:

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6900 North Pecos Road
North Las Vegas, NV 89086

- Patients are highly recommended to plan ahead and request refills/renewals **at least two (2) weeks in advance** to avoid running out of medications.

How do I get prescriptions issued by CHOICE providers to the VA pharmacy to fill?

- You can mail or drop off CHOICE prescriptions and episode of care authorization to VA medical center pharmacy or have the CHOICE provider's office fax to 702-224-6900. CHOICE prescriptions for controlled substances must be mailed or dropped off to VA medical center pharmacy.

Did the VA pharmacy staff at PCCs lose their jobs or were they moved to another service line?

- No. All current VA outpatient pharmacy staff members continue to be employed by the VA Outpatient Pharmacy at the Medical Center.

Are PACT Pharmacy services still available at PCCs, Laughlin and Pahrump clinics?

- PACT pharmacy services will continue to be available at PCCs. Availability of similar services at Laughlin and Pahrump clinics will depend on the approved staffing. If/when staffing is available, PACT pharmacy services for Laughlin and Pahrump will be handled by tele-pharmacy.

What type of pharmacy support is available to PCC, Laughlin and Pahrump clinic staff members?

- VA staff members have a contact number to reach a clinical pharmacist at the medical center in case of questions/concerns.

Is the Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) available to pick up prescriptions from the Medical Center?

- No. The VTS ride needs to be scheduled in advance of an appointment. For more information visit: http://www.lasvegas.va.gov/docs/VTS-Final-3_26_14.pdf

Can patients using the Veterans Transportation Services (VTS) for a scheduled VA appointment use the VTS to pick up emergent prescriptions at a contract pharmacy?

- Yes. If an emergent pharmacy need for a non-controlled substance is identified during a VA or VA-referred appointment, VTS drivers can stop at a contract pharmacy for the patient to fill the prescription.

Are patients eligible for travel pay when they pick up prescriptions from the Medical Center?

- No. Travel pay will not be available for prescription pick up from the medical center.

Are there free rides available for Veterans to go from primary care clinic to the medical center to pick up medications?

- Yes. VA shuttle service is available twice a day from all primary care clinics in Las Vegas valley. For more information visit: http://www.lasvegas.va.gov/Documents/Shuttle_Schedule_032104.PDF