



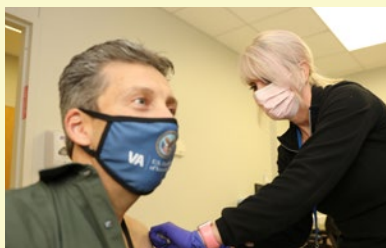
U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# To The Point

## VASNHS Newsletter

Fall 2020

### IN THIS ISSUE



*Flu Shots Are Here!*

• 2 •



*Caregiver Assistance  
Program Expanding*

• 4 •



*VASNHS Nurse  
Saves Lives*

• 6 •

## From The Director

VASNHS open for business, providing services amid COVID-19

**William J. Caron**, VASNHS Director/CEO

On behalf of our nearly 3,000 staff members here in Southern Nevada, I want to thank you for your patience as the Department of Veterans Affairs has responded to the coronavirus pandemic. We continue this fight while simultaneously working to restore care and services to our pre-COVID levels. As of Sept. 30, VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System has completed more than 12,400 COVID tests and directly cared for more than 600 positive patients. We have faced some challenges as more than 80 staff waged their own personal battle with the virus. While most of these individuals have clinically recovered, we have lost 18 Veterans and two staff members to this pandemic and some individuals continue to suffer long-term effects due to their exposure to COVID-19.



Our direct COVID response has slowed in recent weeks, but we will remain vigilant and ready to respond as we enter flu season and the State of Nevada has eased restrictions on public events and gatherings. We are working diligently on rescheduling appointments that were cancelled due to COVID closures and continue to reintroduce services using a combination of in-person and virtual care. Our VA is one of the national leaders for VA Video Connect, completing more than 47,400 telehealth appointments with Veterans in their homes in Fiscal 2020. Moving forward we will continue to expand capacity and use a variety of means including in-person, virtual or community care to ensure Veterans receive the appropriate level of care at the right time.

It is my belief that our success in providing high value health care is not only driven by our VA infrastructure and staff but also dependent on partnerships with our Veterans, stakeholders and the local community. We need you actively engaged in your care. My ask is that while we close out 2020 and look to 2021, you assist us by doing the following:

- 1. Continue to keep yourself safe by following COVID-19 universal masking, physical distancing and hand hygiene guidelines. Many of these items will also protect you from the flu, colds and other illnesses which are prevalent during the winter months.**
- 2. Please consider getting a flu shot. The VA has made it easier than ever for enrolled Veterans in 2020. We are currently offer walk-in or drive through options at all our sites of care in Southern Nevada as well as numerous options via the VA's Community Care network. (see page 2 for details).**
- 3. Don't put off preventative health measures and take care of yourself. If you have been putting off blood pressure or diabetes screenings, mammograms, colonoscopies, immunizations or any other preventative health actions due to COVID-19, please schedule these items as soon as possible.**
- 4. Take advantage of virtual options – even if it's not traditional and a bit comfortable. We will assist you with learning the technology and this will allow you to expand your access to appointments, classes, groups and other informational forums.**

In closing, we are partners in your wellbeing and will work to make sure you get the best care possible. As such we encourage open communication and direct involvement in your plan of care. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please communicate those with us so we can address your needs.

***Thank you for entrusting us to serve you!***

# Flu Shots Are Here

## VASNHS prepares for flu season, encourages Veterans to get vaccinated

As the world battles the coronavirus, medical professionals are asking individuals to take steps to prepare for the next potentially life-threatening event on the horizon – the seasonal flu. Thousands of Americans are hospitalized due to influenza annually, and the illness can be serious, particularly among young children, older adults, and people with certain chronic health conditions, such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes. As such, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyone six months or older gets an annual flu immunization.

Enrolled Veterans can currently receive their seasonal flu vaccination at the North Las Vegas VA Medical Center or any VA clinic throughout Southern Nevada. Additionally, all Las Vegas VA clinics (Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest) are currently offering drive-up flu shot clinics. The North Las Vegas VA Medical Center will offer drive-up flu shots beginning Oct. 13.

Additionally, enrolled Veterans can also receive a standard or high-dose flu shots vaccination at more than 60,000 Community Care Network (CCN) retail pharmacies and urgent care locations.

No appointment or VA referral is required. Veterans need to present a valid government-issued photo identification (e.g. Veterans' Health ID Card, Department of Defense ID card, state-issued driver's license or ID card, etc.).

Veterans can also use the VA Locator to find a VA facility, in-network retail pharmacy or urgent care location near them by using this link: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

By getting immunized from influenza, individuals are less likely to transmit the virus to others, which helps health care system – including VASNHS – from being overwhelmed with flu patients during events such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.



VASNHS Director Bill Caron kicks off the flu season by getting the first flu shot for VA employees, flu shots are mandatory this year for all VA employees.



"We typically see an increase in our hospital census between 20-40 percent during the peak flu season months of October to March as compared with the late spring and summer months," said Dr. Myron Kung, a VASNHS critical care pulmonologist. "When combined with COVID-19, the flu could compound community illness and the strain on the local health care system."

Flu and COVID-19 can each lead to serious health complications resulting in hospitalization or death. However, both diseases can be prevented by wearing a mask, practicing physical distancing, washing your hands frequently, and coughing into your elbow.

One of the most concerning consequences of flu season occurring in the middle of a pandemic is the potential for a patient to become infected with COVID-19 and the influenza simultaneously. "It's called a super-infection," said Kung. "One can get COVID and a bacterial pneumonia as well as flu and COVID."

For more information on local clinic hours or to find in-network community locations, please visit our website at: <https://www.lasvegas.va.gov/flushots.asp>



# Staying Healthy During COVID-19

## VASNHS offers virtual nutrition classes, counseling

Courtesy of VASNHS Food and Nutrition Service

Nutrition classes and individual nutrition counseling are key components in the health promotion and disease prevention services the VA offers.

So, when COVID-19 began and all optional services and in person group classes were halted to protect Veterans' health, dietitians at the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS) quickly changed how they were providing care to maintain the same level of services for our veterans. "These are tough and challenging times for a lot of our Veterans," said VASNHS Dietitian Monica Lobo, "and it is important for us to maintain the relationships we had already established before COVID."



VASNHS Nutrition Specialist Charlene Degan conducts a virtual Healthy Kitchen Class

To maintain those relationships, VASNHS' Nutrition and Food Service (NFS) initially converted all patient appointments and classes to phone

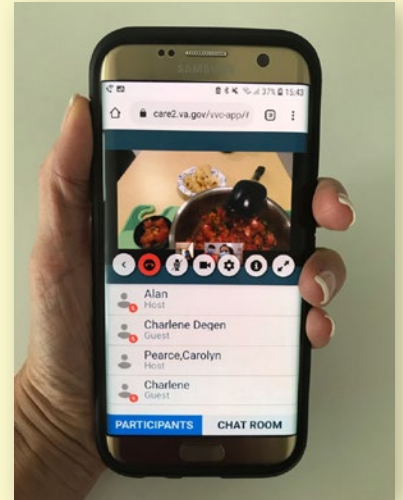
visits, and the dietitians and support staff immediately jumped in to contact the nearly 1,400 veterans with nutrition appointments in April to let them know of the changes. In May, the MOVE! weight management program started using VA Video Connect (VVC) to connect Veterans to their providers from the safety of their home via computers, smartphones and tablets. While VVC has been around since 2016, many Veterans and providers had not used this technology fully until COVID-19. "The most positive outcome for our veterans I feel has been the continuity of support that was offered," said MOVE! Dietitian Brodie Waite. "There has been so much uncertainty with all that has happened, but we were able to have classes available providing some familiarity. The virtual platform [VVC] has allowed for more class options as veterans can now participate on a day/time that may have only been offered across the valley." As with anything new, people often feel a bit of discomfort when using

VVC for the first time. To support veterans through this process, dietitians and telehealth staff spent time with Veterans completing individual practice sessions to help them feel comfortable with the technology. "Once Veterans have used VVC once or twice, they are excited to use the technology again and see their providers and classmates. VVC has been a fantastic way to create the human connection so many are lacking right now," said VASNHS Nutrition Specialist Charlene Degan.

While dietitians still have phone appointments available for individual counseling, they now also offer individual appointments via VVC. In addition, both the diabetes support group and Healthy Teaching Kitchen (HTK) classes have restarted utilizing via VVC. HTK classes teach hands-on nutrition and basic cooking skills for our Veteran. With VVC, Veterans are invited to cook along with the dietitian from home and to share pictures of the healthy meal options they cooked the previous week with their fellow Veterans. Multiple cameras provide close ups of the food being prepared as well as a view of the entire kitchen and teaching staff.

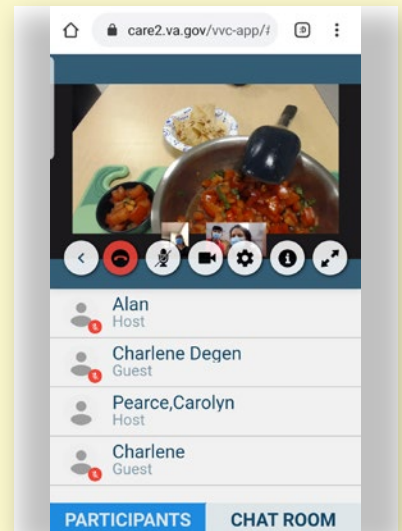
"I have found the VVC experience most closely replicates a face to face encounter," said HTK Dietitian Carolyn Pearce. "We can see each other's facial expressions and share thoughts and ideas via the chat box while someone else is speaking. I love how Veterans are still interacting with each other. They say goodbye to one another, encourage each other, and are engaged once again." "The most positive outcome from the pandemic has been that people realize they can get good healthcare from the comfort of their homes while avoiding the frustration of traffic, parking and weather." said Adrienne Guesman, a VASNHS diabetes specialty dietitian. "It's also really important for Veterans to know that we are here to support them and meet their needs in the best way possible under challenging circumstances. It speaks to reliability in providing care." NFS dietitians provide medical nutrition therapy and promote wellness and disease prevention through nutrition education classes and individual counseling.

## VASNHS Uses VVC For Virtual Nutrition Services Nutrition At Your Fingertips



Enrolled Veterans who are interested in individual nutrition counseling with a VASNHS dietitian or participating in MOVE! Weight Management, Diabetes Support Group, or Healthy Teaching Kitchen classes via VVC should contact the VASNHS call center at 702-791-9024.

No referrals are required for an appointment with a dietitian. Those who are new to VVC, should ask their scheduling assistant to let NFS know that they wish to do a practice VVC session in advance.



Screen shot from VA Video Connect (VVC) session with VASNHS nutrition department on Healthy Cooking Kitchen

# Caregiver Assistance Program Expanding

## WWII, Korean and Vietnam-era Veterans eligible Oct. 1



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will expand a key program designed to allow Veterans who need extra care at home to stay with their loved ones as long as possible. Effective Oct. 1, the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) will begin an expansion, which will eventually provide stipends and additional resources to caregivers of eligible Veterans, regardless of era of service. PCAFC will expand in two phases. First, effective Oct. 1, the program opens to eligible World War II, Korean and Vietnam-era Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty in the active military, naval or air service on or before May 7, 1975.

Two years after this expansion (on or around Oct. 1, 2022), the PCAFC will expand eligibility again to include eligible Veterans from all eras regardless of when an eligible Veteran's serious injury was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service. Previously, PCAFC was only available to family caregivers of eligible Veterans seriously injured in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001. In addition to the expansion, minimum eligibility criteria will change, and all current participants and future applicants must have a single or combined VA service-connected disability rating of 70% or higher to be considered for participation in the program. Other improvements to the PCAFC include changes the PCAFC stipend payment methodology, new procedures for revocation and discharge, and requirements aimed at improving transparency, communication and information sharing between VA and PCAFC participants. VA is also standardizing operating procedures for the Caregiver Support Program, providing new training for staff and caregivers, and boosting operational capacity by hiring additional staff. With this expansion, Primary Family Caregivers in PCAFC will also have access to financial planning and legal services.



VA's Caregiver Support Program offers a wide range of support services for all caregivers (regardless of PCAFC eligibility) of covered Veterans enrolled in VA health care who need personal care services. These include training, peer mentoring, respite care, a telephone support line, and self-care courses. Caregivers can visit VA Caregiver support website: <http://www.caregiver.va.gov/> or call the **Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274** for any questions.

## VA Implements Web-based Travel Benefit System

VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System has transitioned to a new web-based system to reimburse eligible Veterans and beneficiaries for travel to and from VA medical appointments. The Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS) allows users to submit and track transportation reimbursement claims at any time via Access VA, - a secure single sign-in web-based portal for multiple VA applications.

"Thanks to the important innovations and dedication to information technology, we are proud to say we have streamlined this process making it easier for users," said William Caron, VASNHS Executive Director. "BTSSS replaces the need for older, manual tracking methods, bringing this process in line with many of our other web applications."

BTSSS has many advantages, for example, it:

- Reduces the need for completing hard copy claim submissions in-person at the facility by replacing and eliminating the previous kiosk method.
- Provides an easy to use web-based application that allows users to enter their claims over the internet via AccessVA.
- Ensures timely processing and payment of travel reimbursements and reduces manual intervention and improper claim payments through automated features
- Authenticates the Veteran or beneficiary by: 1.) VA PIV card; or 2.) A DS Logon Level 2 account.

With BTSSS now live, use of travel claim kiosks will be discontinued. However, VASNHS will still accept in-person and hard-copy claim submissions. For information on eligibility for travel pay, visit VA's Travel Pay Reimbursement site (<https://www.va.gov/health-care/get-reimbursed-for-travel-pay/>) or the VASNHS home page ([https://www.lasvegas.va.gov/services/Beneficiary\\_Travel.asp](https://www.lasvegas.va.gov/services/Beneficiary_Travel.asp)).

# Improving Veterans Experience

## VASNHS Patient Experience Call Center considered for national best practice

VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System strives to meet the care needs of every Veteran, but occasionally, issues arise that need to be elevated for resolution. As such, it is critical that patients have a resource to address any problems or concerns. VASNHS' Veterans Experience service is under consideration for a national Best Practices for creation of a new Patient Experience Call Center.

When Monica Smith arrived in Las Vegas as VASNHS' Veterans Experience chief in March 2019, she was impressed by the team spirit of the staff and their commitment to serving Veterans. However, she saw some room for improvement.

"I noticed that there were a lot of missed opportunities where Veterans would call in and leave a message on voicemail, and we would get back to them as soon as we could, but it wasn't always timely," she said. "The idea was to create the Patient Experience Call Center to ensure that our Veterans have a direct line of communication with our patient advocate team." The call center officially debuted in January and saw promising results over the first two months. "Once we hit March with the pandemic, though, we found that our call center calls increased dramatically," said Smith.

"We currently average about 250 calls a week, and from January up until July 30, we have handled over 4,200 calls." Smith recently presented the success of the Patient Experience Call Center



Patient Advocate Sherina Perkins assists a Veteran over the phone in VASNHS' Patient Experience Call Center

to the National VA Office of Veterans Experience. "We are being looked at as a 'best practice,' with hopes that other facilities can mimic our call center model. Not every VA has the capabilities of setting something like this up, but those who can, could see improvements in overall patient experience."

Smith and her team laid the foundation for the call center at the end of 2019. The members of the Patient Experience Call Center team are all patient advocates and used their collective experience to brainstorm the best way to implement the call center.

Four advocates handle a majority of Veteran interactions. Their job is to make sure Veterans issues are resolved or escalated through to the proper service. The call center team has a wealth of experience to draw upon. Sherina

Perkins has been a patient advocate for more than eight years, says that it takes certain qualities to work with Veterans.

"You definitely have to be a good listener," Perkins said. "Often when people call, they are frustrated or upset, so you need be compassionate and empathetic. You need to genuinely want to help the Veteran."

They came to us because they are unable to get their issue resolved on their own, so I make it a point to do everything I can do to make sure the Veteran gets taken care of."

With their continued commitment to Veterans and the efficiency of the new call center, the Experience Service hopes to continue to see positive results. "Our call log used to get so backed-up with the voicemails, but now every call is getting answered live and addressed and escalated as necessary," said Perkins. "We hear from other facilities some of the struggles that we used to deal with, and we are showing them how we have been successful in reducing our call log and making sure Veterans' issues are resolved as quickly as possible."

**The Patient Experience Call Center can be reached at 702-791-9000 ext. 15436 and is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays).**

### Did You Know: VASNHS improves access by increasing telehealth visits

The VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS) has completed 47,438 video telehealth appointments with Veterans in their homes to date in 2020. This represents an increase in video telehealth appointments of more than 3,500% since January 1, 2020. Video telehealth allows Veterans and their caregivers to meet virtually with their VA care teams on any computer, tablet, or mobile device with an internet or data service connection. As in-person interactions decreased in response to the coronavirus pandemic, video telehealth has supported Veterans' abilities to continue care and remain safe at home. All primary care and mental health professionals at VASNHS can provide video telehealth care to Veterans in their homes or other locations of their choice. In addition, **almost 60% of all specialty professionals are currently capable of providing video telehealth visits** with more staff being trained daily. **More than 14,500 individual Veterans served by the VASNHS** have completed video telehealth visits.



# Critical Skills Saves Lives

## VASNHS Emergency Department nurse takes charge at fatal highway accident

On the afternoon of June 20, an SUV traveling a lonely stretch of highway between Las Vegas and St. George, Utah, experienced a sudden tire blow-out, overturning and flipping off the road. The event threw several passengers from the vehicle and trapped others inside.

Maria VanHart, a VASNHS emergency department nurse, was heading home to Utah after her shift at the North Las Vegas Medical Center. Nearly 30 minutes into her commute, she happened upon the single-vehicle accident. While a few onlookers had stopped to assist the victims, none of them were trained to manage the scene.

VanHart assessed the situation, and then quickly acted. “I did what I was trained to do,” she said. “I didn’t panic... just immediately did what needed to be done.” One of VanHart’s first challenges was communicating with the victims. She soon learned that the family had travelled to the United States from Syria for a wedding. Of the 10 passengers, only a 10-year-old boy was able to speak English. “He was walking around with some minor bumps and bruises, but overall looked OK,” said VanHart. He would serve as translator for all her patient care questions. “The first thing I told him was ‘I need you to show me everyone who was in the vehicle.’”

The driver of the vehicle was the father, who had suffered only minor bruises. An older teenage girl holding a baby were walking around the scene, both seemingly unscathed. The boy’s immediate concern was for his brother, a 14-year-old who was trapped inside the overturned vehicle.

“He was not breathing and (based on his condition) I knew immediately that he was dead.” VanHart quickly turned her attention to others who needed immediate care. The mother of the family was thrown from the vehicle during the accident and was laying 10 feet behind the wreckage. VanHart concluded that she had suffered a severe pelvic injury and had potential internal bleeding.

At the front of the vehicle were two more victims on the ground: a boy in his late teens who had a broken leg and an infant girl who didn’t initially appear to have any injuries.



VASNHS RN Nurse Maria VanHart checks on a patient while performing her duties at the VASNHS medical center.

While bystanders told VanHart that the infant was fine, she wanted to examine her just in case. “When I did my assessment on her, I could see some facial bruising, agonal breathing, and one of her pupils was blown, so I knew she had a head injury. She may have been having some seizure activity because her eyes were fluttering. She and the mother needed to be flown to a hospital immediately.” Soon after, the Moapa Police Department arrived on site. “The scene was very active,” said Officer Alex Cruz. “Between attempting to stop traffic, rendering first aid and requesting additional units, it was hectic to say the least. Maria was calm and knew what she was doing. She was directing people on what to do while rendering aid herself. She was like an orchestra conductor.”

Based on the severity of the victim’s injuries, VanHart asked Cruz to request immediate evacuation. “I trusted her expertise and ended calling three helicopters and four ambulances due to her triaging the scene,” he said. “You could tell that she knew what she was doing and there was no time to question her capabilities.”

After the helicopters were loaded with patients, VanHart finally took a step back and realized what had happened. She had been on the scene for two hours in 105-degree heat and was exhausted. “When the adrenaline goes away, there’s a crash. It’s an emotional and physical crash. I was dehydrated and physically shaky afterwards. I sat down, drank some water and called my friends for reassurance.”

VanHart has a unique philosophy when it comes to assessing her work: “At the end of the day, there are two things that let me know if I have done my job that day. One is ‘what was my patient-to-hug ratio?’ And the other one is ‘had my mother been the last person I had cared for, would I have done anything differently?’ Everyone out there is someone’s parent or child and they all deserve to be cared for as if they were my own.”

# Pharmacy Operations

## VASNHS working to ensure timely delivery of medications during pandemic

As COVID-19 continues to impact health care, Veterans who regularly receive prescription medications from VA may be wondering what will happen with their refills. VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS) wants Veterans to know we're working hard to ensure prescriptions are delivered on time.

"We ask that you request refills of your VA Prescriptions as soon as possible but no later than 14 days prior to your prescription running out," said Dr. Hyo Ju Kim, Associate Chief of Outpatient Pharmacy Services. "VASNHS will process your refill request, and have it sent before the patient is scheduled to run out."

To prevent waste and reduce the risk that unneeded medications could fall into the wrong hands, VASNHS does not automatically refill medications. To receive a medication refill authorized by your VA prescriber, Veterans must request a refill using one of the methods described below:

Online with My HealtheVet: Veterans can request refills of your refillable VA-issued prescriptions, track VA prescription deliveries, and view VA prescription history online.

### **NEW Rx Refill Mobile App:**

Veterans can request refills of their refillable VA-issued prescriptions, track VA prescription deliveries, and view VA prescription history from the convenience of your mobile device.



**Telephone Call:** VASNHS has an automated telephone refill line. Veterans can find the phone number on their prescription label. To order refills by phone, Veterans will need the prescription number (shown as RX # on the prescription label) and your Social Security Number. For many prescriptions that are no longer refillable, the automated system will allow you to send a request to renew the medication. For some medications, the health care team will need to contact you first.

**By Mail:** VASNHS provides a refill request form with each prescription filled. To refill by mail, please complete the request form and mail it to your VA pharmacy at the address listed on the paperwork that arrives with your prescription. Due to mail delays it is advised that this is mailed in as soon as possible after receiving a refill.

The COVID-19 situation is changing regularly and VASNHS and the Consolidated Mail Order Pharmacy are monitoring the situation daily to minimize any delays. Veterans should remember to take their medications or refill prescriptions in a timely manner. To help reduce the burden, VASNHS' Pharmacy is sending up to 90-day supply of maintenance medications whenever possible. Please be assured increased supply is not an error, it is done to prevent you from running out of maintenance medications and help reduce burden on mail system.

Not having certain medications could result in health issues that require medical attention. Veterans who forget to re-order their medications in time have three options: contact the VA medical center pharmacy, call the phone number on the prescription label, or use My HealtheVet Secure Messaging to contact their health care team, especially if a prescription is no longer refillable.



Finally, Veterans may visit the VA Medical Center pharmacy in person to request a refill. Delivery times can be affected by weather and the COVID-19 pandemic. By using the Track Delivery feature on My HealtheVet Veterans can obtain the U.S. Postal Service or UPS tracking number.

For more information on local pharmacy procedures or refill options visit: <https://www.lasvegas.va.gov/services/pharmacy.asp>

## Upcoming Events Oct - Dec 2020 (Go to [www.lasvegas.va.gov](https://www.lasvegas.va.gov) for current dates & times)

**October-** National Patient Centered Care Month

**Oct. 13** - US Navy Birthday

**Oct. 21** - VASNHS Virtual Veterans Town Hall

**November** - National Family Caregivers Month

**Nov. 11** - Veterans Day - Federal Holiday

**Nov. 19** - Great American Smokeout

**December** - VA "Manage Stress" and Womens Health Month

**December** - Worldwide Food Service Safety Month

**Dec. 5** - International Volunteer Day

**Dec. 25** - Christmas Day - Federal Holiday

**VASNHS NEWSLETTER IS  
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY**  
VASNHS Public Affairs  
North Las Vegas VA Medical Center  
6900 North Pecos Road  
North Las Vegas, NV 89086  
Email: [VHALASPAO@va.gov](mailto:VHALASPAO@va.gov)

## Changing Behavior for Better Health

The VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (VASNHS) *"To The Point Newsletter"* was designed to give Veterans, families, caregivers, and stakeholders information on the programs, services and the knowledge to better educate them of whole-health approaches to wellness.

Together, with a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT), each Veteran works together with health care professionals to plan for whole-person care and life-long health and wellness. The Veteran is the focal point at the center of the health team so he or she can make informed decisions about their health care plan with the provider, nursing, nutrition, mental health, and services in the VA and local community.



# Suicide Prevention Awareness

## VASNHS highlights #BeThere campaign

With the stressors of 2020, VASNHS is encouraging friends and family to #BeThere for Veterans. Every day, nearly 20 Veterans or active duty servicemembers take their own lives, but of those, about 14 are either not connected or have not received recent VA care. To help reach those Veterans, VASNHS wants to raise awareness about how to recognize the signs and how to intervene through #BeThere.

"Suicide prevention is everyone's business," said VASNHS Chief of Staff Ramu Komanduri. "We can all play a vital role in suicide prevention by reaching out to someone who is exhibiting warning signs of crisis or suicide risk and by showing our support. Helping someone feel included can make a big difference during a challenging time. The #BeThere campaign is focused on simple yet impactful ways we can all reach out to and engage Veterans."

VASNHS encourages Veterans and their loved ones to take action, start a conversation, and share available resources when the signs of suicidal ideation are apparent.

### Take Action Your support can give hope to a Veteran going through a difficult time. This support includes:

- Direct Veterans to appropriate resources, such as safe gun and medication storage, to work towards suicide prevention in your community.
- Normalize and speak openly about suicide with Veterans. This does not make them want to die by suicide or plant those ideas—and it can reduce the stigma of suicide.
- Visit [www.ReportingOnSuicide.org](http://www.ReportingOnSuicide.org) for important guidance on how to safely communicate about suicide. Start the Conversation Help prevent suicide by starting a discussion. *Learn how to start the conversation at [www.starttheconversation.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.starttheconversation.veteranscrisisline.net)*

Ask someone if they are having thoughts of suicide and promote discussions about current life challenges, such as financial hardship or relationship strain. Share Resources and Support

**Suicide is preventable.** If you know a Veteran facing a tough time, there are resources that can help you provide hope and support. These include:

- **S.A.V.E. Training:** This online suicide prevention training video teaches you how to talk to Veterans who may be at risk for suicide.
- **Community Outreach Toolkit:** This resource can help anyone host or participate in events to raise awareness about mental health and suicide prevention.
- **Social Media Safety Toolkit:** This guide includes best practices and sample posts for responding to social media content that may indicate that someone is in emotional distress.
- More resources can be found at [www.BeThereForVeterans.com](http://www.BeThereForVeterans.com)
- **VASNHS also offers several local, in-person resources.** All VASNHS sites of care provide same-day services for Veterans with urgent mental health needs during regular business hours, as well as after-hours care in the Emergency Department at the North Las Vegas VA Medical Center.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive free, confidential support and crisis intervention available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. **Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, text to 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).**



For the latest information in the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System check out the following social media apps and WEB links:

VASNHS Website  
Free Email Alerts



Scan Here to Sign-up!



[www.facebook.com/LasVegasVA](https://www.facebook.com/LasVegasVA)



[www.twitter.com/VALasVegas](https://www.twitter.com/VALasVegas)



[www.instagram.com/VALasVegas](https://www.instagram.com/VALasVegas)



The 9-Line Podcast

VASNHS YouTube



Scan Here for videos!