

**LOCAL UPDATE**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- Dr. Curtis Cornelius has been appointed Acting Deputy Chief of Staff
- Ms. Jenny Wasielewski has been appointed Acting Assistant Director
- Veterans can contact their primary care team by telephone or through [MyHealththeVet](#)
- Veterans can request refills through [MyHealththeVet](#) the same day they receive it in the mail. Narcotic medications refills can be requested 10-14 days before they are due

**SAVAHCS AVERAGE WAIT TIME (as of 2-25-2021)**

- **Primary Care New Patients-** Ranges from Safford CBOC 8 days to Northwest CBOC 16 days
- **Primary Care Established Patients-** Ranges from Main Campus/Southeast CBOC 2 days to Sierra Vista CBOC 8 days
- **Mental Health New Patients-** Ranges from Northwest CBOC 5 days to Sierra Vista CBOC 20 days.
- **Mental Health Established Patients-** Ranges from Southeast and Yuma CBOCs 1 day to Safford CBOC 20 days
- **Main Campus Specialty Care**
  - **Audiology-** New 37 days/Established 26 days
  - **Cardiology-** New 32 days/Established 11 days
  - **Dermatology-** New 14 days/Established 25 days
  - **GI-** New 10 days/Established 29 days
  - **GYN:** New 9 days/Established 4 days
  - **Ophthalmology:** New 8 days/Established 7 days
  - **Optometry:** New 54 days/Established 10 days
  - **Ortho-** New 11 days/Established 10 days
  - **Urology-** New 30 days/Established 7 daysSource: <https://www.accesstocare.va.gov/>

**SAVAHCS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

***March Events, Resource Fairs & Town Halls***

- SAVAHCS Monthly VSO meeting- March 2
- SAVAHCS Quarterly Congressional Update-March 3
- UAV Membership Meeting- March 6
- January 2 Sierra Vista Veterans Council Meeting- March 6

- City of Tucson Veterans Affairs Committee- March 10
- Marana Chamber of Commerce Veteran's Committee Meeting- March 10

## **SAVAHCS COVID-19 VACCINE DISTRIBUTION**

- The Southern Arizona VA Health Care System is currently providing the COVID-19 vaccine to Veterans 65 and older at our mobile tent units in parking lot H (south end of the campus). Veterans 65 and older who have not been contacted to receive a vaccine can contact their Primary Care Team.
- Vaccine administration at Casa Grande, Yuma, Sierra Vista and Safford CBOCs will continue based on CDC priority categories and vaccine availability by appointment only
- Urban CBOCs (Northwest, Southeast and Green Valley) patients will be appointed to receive the COVID vaccine at the Main Campus
- Communications to Veterans who wish to opt in or out continue using a text and via telephone through our Audio Care platform
- The Tucson VA has begun administering COVID-19 vaccines to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) personnel.
  - Registration and scheduling for DHS vaccinations started February 5<sup>th</sup>
- We encourage ALL Veterans interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine to sign up at the following link <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/stay-informed>. As we move to the next phase of the recommended Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) vaccination guidelines and our vaccine supplies increase, those that have indicated their interest on the website link will be contacted to receive the vaccine.

## **4<sup>th</sup> MISSION**

- The SAVAHCS has an agreement with Indian Health services (IHS) to provide 4 beds (2 COVID and 2 non- COVID), based on bed availability through 2021

## **FLU SHOTS**

- Flu shots will be provided to Veterans on a walk-in basis, Monday – Friday, from 6:30am to 3:00 pm (except Federal holidays) in Bldg. 3, Room 109 at the main Tucson VA campus. They are also available in all Clinics

## **CONSTRUCTION UPDATES**

- Northwest CBOC is currently under construction; the new Northwest CBOC should be ready for occupancy in late 2021

## [NATIONAL VHA NEWS](#)

### **VA CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION**

- Veterans and the community can get up-to-date information on VA's COVID-19 vaccine webpage where vaccination data and cumulative COVID 19 cases are published. Veterans can also sign up to receive regular updates on the vaccine. The VA's COVID-19 Stay Informed page can be found [HERE](#)

### **PROGRAM OF COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY CAREGIVER EXPANSION**

- Eligibility for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) is expanding new "Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) Improvements and Amendments" changes began in October.
- For more information, please click [HERE](#)

### **PREPARING FOR THE END OF VA'S DEBT RELIEF PROGRAM**

- Veterans facing economic hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic will soon see extended debt relief options from VA. The VA has extended debt relief through September 30, 2021
- VA will continue the suspension of collection on all Veteran benefit overpayments and medical copayment debts incurred after April 1, 2020
- To assist Veterans with making informed choices for their individual situation, VA will notify them of the existence of their current debt and the availability of [expansive relief options](#). These options include making payments, or extending repayment plans, waivers, compromises and temporary hardship suspensions
- Veterans and beneficiaries with questions regarding benefit overpayments can see [frequently asked questions](#), go online to [submit requests](#) or call 800-827-0648.
- For [health care co-payment debts](#), Veterans should contact the Health Resource Center at 866-400-1238 for payment information
- The SAVAHCS have reminded our Veterans to prepare for the end of the VA's debt relief program via our Tip of the Week email sent out to over 56,000 Veterans

### **SATISFIED VA WORKFORCE RESONATES WITH VETERANS' POSITIVE EXPERIENCE**

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made strides in recent years to improve the work environment, ensuring the department is not only a place where Veterans want to receive care and services, but also a place where employees want to work. Applying for VA health care
- The business magazine Forbes announced VA has been chosen as one of America's Best Large Employers of 2021

- 9 out of 10 Veterans report they feel respected by the VA
- 8 out of 10 Veterans who are inpatients feel heard and recommend VA
- Veterans receive care almost half a day sooner at VA facilities when interfacing with satisfied employees
- The list of recognized employers and rankings can be found at [Forbes](#)
- In the 2020 VA All Employee Survey, the SAVAHCS received the highest Best Place to Work score within our network, which is a summary measure of our employee's satisfaction with the job, organization, and likelihood to recommend VA as a good place to work

## **VA RECEIVES ADDITIONAL 200,000 COVID-19 VACCINE DOSES TO ADMINISTER TO VETERANS AND EMPLOYEES**

- On February 11<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care facilities were notified they are receiving a one-time supplemental allocation of 200,000 Moderna COVID-19 vaccine doses from the Department of Health and Human Services
- This distribution is in addition to VA's normally scheduled delivery of approximately 125,000 doses of both Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines each week
- To view the latest data on the COVID-19 vaccination data at the SAVAHCS, please visit <https://www.accesstocare.va.gov/Healthcare/COVID19NationalSummary>

## **VA ADMINISTERS 1 MILLION COVID-19 DOSES, PUBLISHES FACILITY VACCINATION NUMBERS**

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reached a milestone in just a month and a half's time administering 1 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to Veterans and VA health care workers
- As of Feb. 2, VA has dispensed at least one dose of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine to more than 582,000 Veterans and has fully vaccinated over 44,000, totaling more than 626,000 doses. This is in addition to administering more than 401,000 doses to VA employees, and more than 1,200 vaccine doses to federal partners
- In addition to administering 1 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, VA has begun publishing the number of Veterans who have received Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna vaccines at each facility across its enterprise. The number of doses administered to Veterans at each facility will be updated daily on the [VA COVID-19 National Summary website](#)

## **LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS) Main Line 520-792-1450 or 1-800-470-8262

- Caregiver Support Program (520) 792-1450 extension 5390
- Care in the Community 520-792-1450 extension 6555
- Compensation and Pension (520) 629-4662
- Eligibility and Enrollment Section 520-792-1450 extension 6572 or 1740
- Homeless Program Coordinator 520-792-1540 extension 1839
- Medication Automated Refill Line (Toll Free) 1-800-470-8262, Press 1, then press 1 again to use the automated line to refill/renew a prescription
- Mental Health Clinic 520-629-4884
- My HealtheVet (520) 792-1450 extension 6889
- Native American Program 520-792-1450 extension 6622
- Patient Advocate Office 520-629-4933
- Public Affairs 520-629-1819
- Release of Information Office 520-792-1450 extension 4665
- Suicide Prevention Coordinator 520-792-1450 extension 6415
- Transition Care Management for Veterans recently separated from military 520-629-1684
- Voluntary Services 520-629-1822
- Women's Health Clinic 520-629-4885

## **VA NATIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION**

- 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) for all VA related questions about care, benefits, and services
- General VA Billing Questions 1-866-400-1238
- National Caregiver support line 1-855-260-3274
- National Memorial Cemetery Phoenix 480-513-1412
- Phoenix Regional Office (VBA) 1-800-827-1000
- VA Billing and collections Consolidated Patient Account Center (CPAC) 866-802-6819
- VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network Nurse Advice Line 1-877-252-4866
- VA Health Care 877-222-8387 (VETS)
- Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 Press 1, text 838255, or chat [VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat)