



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Veteran Connection

VA Portland Health Care System Newsletter

**Keeping the Promise - Advancing Excellence**



Fall 2018

Volume 6, Issue 1

## VA Portland Health Care System

3710 SW U.S. Veterans Hospital Rd.  
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Produced by the VAPORHCS  
Public Affairs Office

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS ??

Please email us at...

[VHAPOR-PublicAffairs@med.va.gov](mailto:VHAPOR-PublicAffairs@med.va.gov)

or call 503-402-2975

### Lincoln's Promise (VA Mission)

*"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 Engagement Day	2
Flu Shot Details	3
VA Hiring Fair	4
Military Sexual Trauma Info	5
LGBTQ Support	6
Chronic Pain Workshop	7
Parkinson's Support Group	8
NAMI Homefront	9
Caregiver Support	10-11
Self-referral VA Services	12

For [VAPORHCS Events and Classes](#)—got to the VAPORHCS Web page...

[www.portland.va.gov/calendar.asp](http://www.portland.va.gov/calendar.asp)

## Farewell Message from the Director



Michael W. Fisher  
Director, VA Portland  
Health Care System

Some of you may not have heard this news yet, but I was offered and accepted a position as the [Veterans Integrated Service Network \(VISN\) 22: Desert Pacific Healthcare Network](#) Director. My last day serving as the VAPORHCS Director is October 5. Tracye Davis, the VAPORHCS Deputy Director, will be appointed as the Interim Director until a new director is onboard.

Since June 2016, I have been privileged to serve as your health care system Director. I am deeply grateful to the thousands of VA staff who I have had the honor to work with serving our nation's Veterans. Every day I witnessed our employees place the interests of Veterans above and beyond their own self-interests, serving with compassion, dignity, and dedication to VA's core values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence.

Over the course of the last several years, VAPORHCS has made significant and lasting progress in expanding access for Veterans while continuously improving the quality of care and customer service our Veterans deserve and expect. We have come a long way together in bringing this health care system into the 21st Century in ways that will serve Veterans well into the future. Yet, there is more work still to be done, and I have no doubt this health care system will achieve all it sets out to do in the interest of Veterans.

I want to thank all those involved in the many partnerships we have that without, we would not be successful. The members of our Veterans and Family Advisory Board provide immeasurable assistance with their candid and insightful perspectives and their support of projects and initiatives across a broad spectrum of services, challenges, and topics. Thank you for your many dedicated hours of volunteering to help us improve in the way we provide care and services.

The VSO Committee is a key and inclusive group of partnering Veteran Service Organizations and Veteran Service Officers. This group actively participates in monthly discussions about the services we provide and shares invaluable feedback on the way we deliver those services. Thank you to all 80+ members of that committee and for all you do to serve Veterans in our communities across the Pacific Northwest.

Thank you to our federal congressional stakeholder offices who we work with regularly to help set the conditions to enable the VA to provide the best care possible.

Lastly, thank you to all our 95,000+ Veterans we serve every year across VAPORHCS. This is our VA - yours and every staff member who walks in our doors to serve you. We are here to care for all of our Nation's heroes whose service and sacrifice inspires us all. That is our important and non-negotiable mission. I'm honored to have served you here and excited to continue in another capacity elsewhere.

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

Michael Fisher



# VETERANS ENGAGEMENT DAY

SPONSORED BY:

VA PORTLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

PORTLAND CAMPUS

VANCOUVER CAMPUS

**MONDAY, NOV. 19, 2018**

9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**MONDAY, NOV. 26, 2018**

9 a.m. – 2 p.m.



## What are the benefits of participation?

Connect with employees who don't normally encounter Veterans in their work. These might be employees in administrative departments, such as human resources, accounting, etc.

Refreshments Provided

## Who can participate?

Any **Veteran** who is willing.

Accepting the first 40 Veterans who ask to participate!

## What can you expect?

You will have a conversation with one or a few VA employees. Share your story! If you're comfortable, share experiences from your time in active duty and as a Veteran. Tell them about your experiences at the facility.

### For More Information or to RSVP:

Contact Rachelle Powers | [Rachelle.powers@va.gov](mailto:Rachelle.powers@va.gov)



# Veterans: Get Your Flu Shot Now!

You have lots of ways to get a flu shot

## 1. In Portland, visit the PVAMC Atrium Walk-in Clinic.

Monday - Thursday, except holidays

Portland Main Hospital in the Atrium, Bldg. 100

9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. until November 21, 2018



## 2. Ask for a flu shot during your visit today.

## 3. Visit the VA clinic in the community where you get your care.

Monday - Friday, except holidays

Walk in during open clinic hours

You may be asked to wait 15-20 minutes

[Click here for all you need to know about the flu shot.](#)

## *Can't do it today or at a VA clinic?*

## 4. Visit your local Walgreens Pharmacy.

No-cost regular flu shots for Veterans until March 31, 2019

Show your Veteran's ID card and a second photo ID.





**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
VA Portland Health Care System



**50+ open  
positions  
available!!**



# Saturday, October 20, 2018

**9:00 to 11:00 a.m.**

*Last applicants will be received at 11am.*

*Check in at the PVAMC main lobby*

*3710 SW U.S. Veterans Hospital Rd.,  
Portland, OR 97239*

**Bring your resume!**

*Additional documentation*

- 2 forms of government issued ID
  - Veterans: DD-214
- Current Federal employees: SF-50
- List of Professional References

Interviews will be conducted onsite for the following positions:

**Housekeeping Aides**

**Sterile Processing Technicians**

**Medical Support Assistants**

## VA Services for Military Sexual Trauma:



Help  
Hope  
Healing

**For help with treatment and health care related to experiences of MST, please contact VAPORHCS MST Coordinator Aysha Crain or Guy Tyler at 503-220-8262, ext. 53476.**

Military sexual trauma (MST) is the term that the VA uses to refer to sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that occurred while the Veteran was in the military. It includes any sexual activity in which one is involved against one's will - he or she may have been pressured into sexual activities, may have been unable to consent to sexual, or may have been physically forced into sexual activities. Other experiences that fall into the category of MST include unwanted sexual touching or grabbing; threatening, offensive remarks about a person's body or sexual activities; and/or threatening or unwelcome sexual advances.

[Click here for all VA MST information on programs, articles & resources.](#)

## Help for Veterans Affected By Recent Public Discussions About Sexual Abuse

In recent months, many women and men have spoken up publically about being sexually assaulted or sexually harassed. Many Veterans of all backgrounds have had unwanted sexual experiences during their military service or at other times. Because of this, public discussions about these topics may bring up painful memories and feelings. Even if you think the public discussion is a good thing, it may still be difficult.

Click [HERE](#) for a VA handout that has information and resources to help.

### Things that can help..

- *Remind yourself it is okay to feel upset.*
- *Inspire yourself.*
- *Do what works for you.*
- *Limit exposure to media.*
- *Get support.*
- *Remind yourself recovery is a journey.*
- [Learn more.](#)



# LGBTQ Support Group

*VA Portland Health Care System is dedicated to providing diverse services for all Veterans. We currently offer two LGBTQ Support Groups at the main Portland VA campus and the Fairview VA Clinic.*

## **PORTLAND CAMPUS**

Every Other Wednesday 11:00 a.m. - Noon

For more information contact:

Dr. Gina Ortola,  
503-220-8262, Ext. 56610  
or Dr. Stephanie Rodriguez,  
Ext. 53089

## **FAIRVIEW Clinic**

Every 3rd Thursday Noon – 1:00 p.m.

For more information contact:

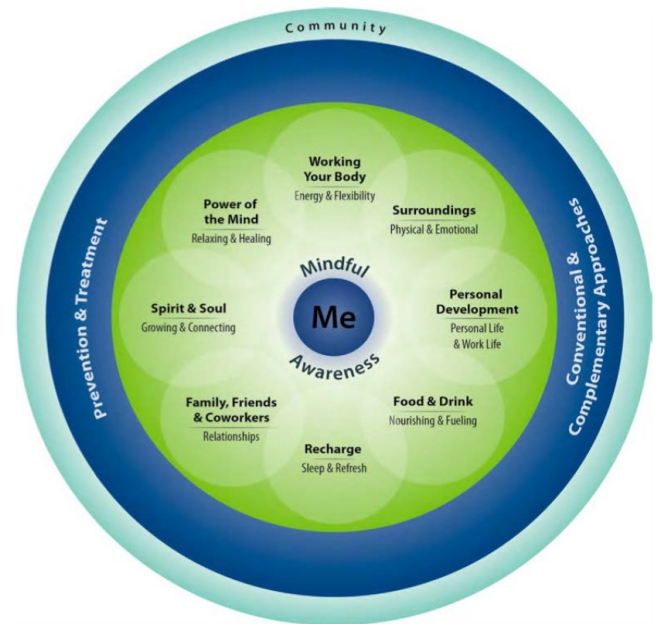
Dr. Aakash Kishore  
(503-660-0677), or  
Sarah Campbell  
(503-660-0710)

These groups are a safe place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning Veterans to discuss and explore topics related to relationships, sexuality, health, identity, stress, and more. Topics are selected by group members, with facilitation provided by VA staff.

**VAPORHCS encourages LGBT Veterans and families to be aware of their rights and VA policies.**

**For more information call LGBT Veteran Care Coordinator:  
Rebecca X. Casanova at (503) 220-8262, ext. 56237  
or go to the [VAPORHCS LGBTQ web page](#).**

# Managing Chronic Pain and Suffering: A Whole Health Resource Workshop



**Nov. 13, 2018 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**Portland VA Medical Center, Bldg. 101, Rm. 201**

Do you live with chronic pain? Join us to hear about the many resources available at VA Portland to help you manage chronic pain and increase your quality of life.

Presenters will include experts in:

- Pain Medicine
- Medications
- Complementary Medicine
- CBT for Chronic Pain
- Nutrition
- Movement Therapies
- Sleep
- Yoga/Tai Chi
- Stress Management

**For more information or to sign up, call Dr. Timothy Wright**

At (503) 220-8262, ext. 55612

Program offered by the VA NW Pain Clinic



[Please share on Facebook](#)

# Parkinson's Disease Support Group

*Supporting. Sharing. Uplifting.*



**Parkinson's  
Disease**  
Research,  
Education &  
Clinical Center

**Starting November 9, 2018**  
**Second Friday of each month**  
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.  
Portland VA Medical Center

Participants must register.  
For more information or to  
sign-up, please contact:  
Kristi Ketchum, LCSW  
(503) 220-8262 ext. 58594

You are invited to join a monthly support group for Veterans with Parkinson's disease and their care partners.

Our support group provides an opportunity for people to meet regularly for mutual support and to exchange coping skills with

others in matters relating to Parkinson's disease. We will also feature quarterly guest speakers.

-VAPORHCS-



**PADRECC** *Portland/Seattle*  
Parkinson's Disease Research, Education and Clinical Center

[The Northwest Parkinson's Disease Research, Education and Clinical Center \(NW PADRECC\)](#)

is a collaborative effort of

the VA Portland Health Care System (affiliated with OHSU, Oregon Health & Science University) and the VA Puget Sound Health Care System in Seattle. Both sites offer clinical, research, and educational services and activities for Veterans living in the Northwest PADRECC service area as well as interested clinicians.

-VAPORHCS-





**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
VA Portland Health Care System



**NAMI** Southwest  
Washington  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
We are dedicated to helping people affected by mental illness.

# ***Do You Have a family member or friend who is a Veteran or military service member living with mental illness? You are not alone!***

NAMI Homefront is a free, six-session class for family, friends, significant others of Veterans, and Military Service Members with mental health conditions.

## **Topics include . . .**

- PTSD, Bipolar Disorder, Depression, Anxiety, Schizophrenia, . . .
- Basics of Brain Biology & Medications
- Dealing with Crisis & Relapse
- Navigating the VA Medical System & DOD
- Communication & Empathy Skills
- Self-Care, Fighting Stigma and Advocacy

**Wednesday evenings 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.**

**October 17 – November 21, 2018**

**5411 E Mill Plain Blvd, Suite 4**

**Vancouver, WA 98661**

To register:

(360) 695-2823

[info@namiswwa.org](mailto:info@namiswwa.org)

*Presented in partnership by the VA Portland Health Care System & NAMI SW Washington*



## ***Mindfulness-Based Drop in Support Group***

**Day: Mondays**

**10:00 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Portland VA Medical Center,  
Bldg. 101, Rm. 207**



The Caregiver Support Program offers a weekly Support Group for:

- ◇ Supporting family caregivers in a confidential space to share their stories
- ◇ Learning self-care practices
- ◇ Promoting health and well-being
- ◇ Building community support through engaging conversation

***Open to family caregivers of Veterans of all eras.***

*For more information, contact your  
Caregiver Support Coordinator at 503-273-5210.*



## ***Managing Stress for Caregivers***

**November 28, 2018**

**9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Columbia Room, VA Vancouver Campus**

Are you a Caregiver? Would you like to learn how to deal with the daily stressors you are facing? There are tools, strategies, and techniques that can help you manage the stress in your life. The Caregiver Support Program invites Caregivers of Veterans who receive care from VA and Veterans who are Caregivers to attend this free program. Talk with your Caregiver Support Coordinator (CSC) to learn more and register to attend, as class is limited to 25 Caregivers. The course is 3 hours in length and taught by a Memphis Caregiver Center Trainer. Everyone will receive a Managing Stress Workbook and a CD with Relaxation Exercises to take home.

### **What You Will Learn:**

- To Identify the Sources of Stress in your Life
- To Change Negative Self-Talk to Positive
- Stress Management Skills:
  - Soothing Sensory Massage and Stretching Exercises
  - Deep Breathing and Muscle Relaxation
  - Imagery and Mindfulness Meditation
  - How to Make Relaxation Exercises Work for You
  - Journaling to Reduce Stress
  - Developing and Using a Personal Action Plan

*For more information,  
contact your  
Caregiver Support  
Coordinator at  
503-273-5210.  
Pre-registration  
is required.*



## Self Referral now offered for Podiatry, Nutrition Services, and Amputee/Wheelchair Clinics

Podiatry, Nutrition Services, and Amputee/Wheelchair clinics can all now see patients by Self-Referral, meaning they do not need a consult placed to be able to see a provider in one of these areas. In the community, depending on a person's insurance they may or may not need a referral to see a specialist. This option reduces the number of times a Veteran has to physically travel to a clinic since they do not need to see their PCP first and it gives them the ability to seek the care they need at the time they need it, with the goal of improving Veteran satisfaction and their health.

<b>What are the changes</b> <b>Why is it important for our Veterans?</b>	<b>How to contact or direct dial number</b>
<p><b>Podiatry</b> – does the Veteran have new foot pain or open wounds on feet? They can call the Specialty Call Center and be referred directly to the Podiatry service for scheduling. The Veteran no longer needs to go through their PCP to have a consult entered.</p> <p><b>Nutrition Services</b> – If a Veteran would like to see a dietitian, they can call the NFS direct dial number to be scheduled. The Veteran no longer needs to go through their PCP or Specialist to have a consult entered.</p> <p><b>Amputee clinic</b> – for our Veterans who are missing a body part, they can call or come by the clinic to be scheduled. No consult needed.</p> <p><b>Wheelchair clinic</b> – for Veterans in need of a wheelchair, power wheelchair/scooter they can call or come by the clinic to be scheduled. No consult needed.</p>	<p><b>Podiatry</b> – through the Specialty Call Center, (503) 220-8262 ext. 50820</p> <p><b>Nutrition Services</b> – (503) 273-5112</p> <p><b>Amputee &amp; Wheelchair clinics</b> – (503) 273-5018</p>