

# Veteran Updates

## SFVAMC a National Leader and Model in the Treatment of HIV/AIDS

The San Francisco VA Medical Center is a national leader in the treatment of HIV/AIDS. Through the Infectious Diseases Clinic, we provide comprehensive primary medical care for HIV-infected Veterans.

The clinic is unique in its multi-disciplinary approach to treating Veterans with HIV, creating a caring environment that focuses on the Veteran's whole health.

The clinic's focus on research and education as well as state-of-the-art care has allowed it to stay on the cutting edge of breakthroughs in the treatment of HIV, which increases the life expectancy of HIV patients as treatment improves.

"Our clinic has been a model for multidisciplinary care from the start," says Harry Lampiris, MD, Director of the Infectious Diseases Clinic.

"In addition to primary care, we have mental health, social work, and pharmacy resources integrated into the clinic," says Dr. Lampiris. "Our Veterans have access to truly comprehensive care that helps them live healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives while coping with HIV."

In recent years, the clinic has developed additional expertise in treating complications of aging in the HIV population, using new drugs to cure Hepatitis C (HCV) in HIV-HCV co-infected patients, and research in the area of HIV persistence despite

effective treatment. Additionally, the clinic has been on the forefront of providing medication for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to Veterans for prevention of HIV.

"Many patients have difficulty accessing PrEP or feel uncomfortable talking to their providers about it," says Dr. Lampiris. "However, we have extensive experience with medication adherence monitoring which is essential to PrEP efficacy, and other risk reduction strategies for Veterans at risk for HIV."

"I encourage Veterans who are living with or are worried about HIV to ask questions and request to meet with our providers," says William Hua, PhD, a clinical health psychologist who works in the Infectious Diseases Clinic. "We have been around for a very long time and we have learned so much about the treatment of HIV. There are many exciting and innovative things happening in the clinic, and we want to be able to offer these services to as many Veterans as possible."

If you have questions about HIV or would like to get tested, talk to your primary care provider. If you are living with HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, or other conditions/diseases, you can reach the Infectious Diseases Clinic at (415) 750-6902.

The Infectious Diseases Clinic offers same-day appointments on Monday and Wednesday from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. and on Friday from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., in Bldg. 203, First floor, Ward B.

## American Legion Honors ID Clinic

The San Francisco VA Medical Center Infectious Diseases (ID) Clinic was honored by Alexander Hamilton Post 448 of the American Legion for its service to the LGBT Veteran community.

Alexander Hamilton Post 448 is the only predominantly LGBT chapter of the American Legion, and it has been heavily active in the San Francisco LGBT community since 1984. Mario Benfield, the Commander of Alexander Hamilton Post 448, wanted to recognize the clinic's long-time service and support.

"They've always been a step ahead of the general population both in treatment and in attitude," says Mario. "They're a smart group of people. They were right there with every breakthrough, coming up with new ways to support and treat Veterans."



*Clinic Director Harry Lampiris, MD, accepts the award from Commander Mario Benfield.*

## Veteran Kudos

“(Dr.) Ben Davoren has been taking care of (my husband) for over 10 years...He is the best. Also thanks to (Dr.) Shelley Miyasaki and her team who recently made (my husband) a customized radiation tray for his lower teeth. Folks at Marin Cancer Institute Radiation Dept. say it was the best they have ever seen.” –M.H.



“The Audiology clinic at Fort Miley took care of my friend by seeing him the same day he walked in, sending him supplies to clean his old hearing aid and ordering a new hearing aid for him. He is very happy about that. I’m also a patient at this clinic, and their service is top notch!” –R.S.



“I would love very much to thank the most outstanding of all nurses, Erin Morikawa of the MP Back Up Team for the excellent care recently received. I will find a way to have the outstanding medical services of this most professional and caring NP recognized by the superiors of the SFVAMC, the greatest medical facility in the US. Thank you Nurse Morikawa!” –S.T.



“I would be dead today if not for the SFVA psych programs. I have checked myself into the PICU a few times. I still use Bldg. 8 and their therapist. Mine is Maisie. And if it weren’t for Keith Armstrong, our couples’ counselor, I would no longer be married.” –R.R.

## Rural VA Clinic Upcoming Events

The **Eureka VA Clinic** will host a **Veterans Town Hall** meeting on Tuesday, **June 7**, from 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Come share your ideas, suggestions, and concerns. The clinic is located at 930 West Harris St. in Eureka. For more information, call the clinic at (707) 995-7200.

The **Santa Rosa VA Clinic** is hosting a lunch to honor women who have served in the U.S. military who reside in the Santa Rosa area. The lunch is on Friday, **June 10**, at 11:30 a.m. Limited seating; RSVP to (707) 569-2312 by **June 3** to reserve your spot. This event is free. The Clinic is located at 3841 Brickway Blvd. in Santa Rosa.

All local Veterans are invited to attend a **Veterans Town Hall** meeting, co-hosted by the **Santa Rosa VA Clinic** and the Santa Rosa VA Veterans and Family Advisory Council on Monday, **June 20** from 6 - 8 p.m. at the **Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building**, 1351 Maple Avenue in Santa Rosa. Come learn more about VA health care services and programs, MyHealthVet, how to enroll in VA health care, and

have your questions answered. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, please call Phila Cole at (707) 659-2333, or Kathy King at (707) 569-2431.

**Ukiah VA Clinic** is partnering with the One Justice bus project to provide a Free Legal Clinic and Resource Fair for Veterans on Monday, **June 20** from 1 - 5 p.m. at **Veterans Memorial Hall**, 293 Seminary Drive in Ukiah. Meet with volunteer attorneys to prepare estate planning documents, including simple wills, power of attorney, and advance health care directives. To be seen during the free legal clinic, Veterans need to call in advance and make an appointment: (415) 834-0100, ext. 314. The rest of the event is drop-in. Get information about VA and community benefits for which you may qualify. Meet with community agencies such as Cal Fresh, Consolidated Tribal Health, and Walk and Bike Mendocino; learn more about our Veterans Garden Project, check out the Mobile Vet Center, and much more. Light snacks will be served. For more information, call the clinic at (707) 468-7700.

## Resources for Veterans

### National VA Phone Numbers:

**VA Benefits/Claims**  
(800) 827-1000

**Education (GI Bill)**  
(888) 442-4551

**Health Care Benefits**  
(877) 222-8387

**Veterans Crisis Line**  
(800) 273-8255 (Press #1)

**Women Veterans Call Center**  
(855) 829-6636

### SFVAHCS Phone Numbers:

**Billing Office**  
(866) 347-2353

**Mental Health/Substance Abuse**  
(415) 750-6674

**Pharmacy (Auto Refill)**  
(415) 750-2233

**Patient Experience Specialist**  
(415) 750-6650

**Telephone Linked Care**  
(800) 733-0502

