THE northern

The Official Voice of VA Northern California Health Care System

Artist's rendering of the new Veterans Administration outpatient clinic to be constructed in east Chico.

Chico Groundbreaking

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VA Northern California
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
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Fall 2017

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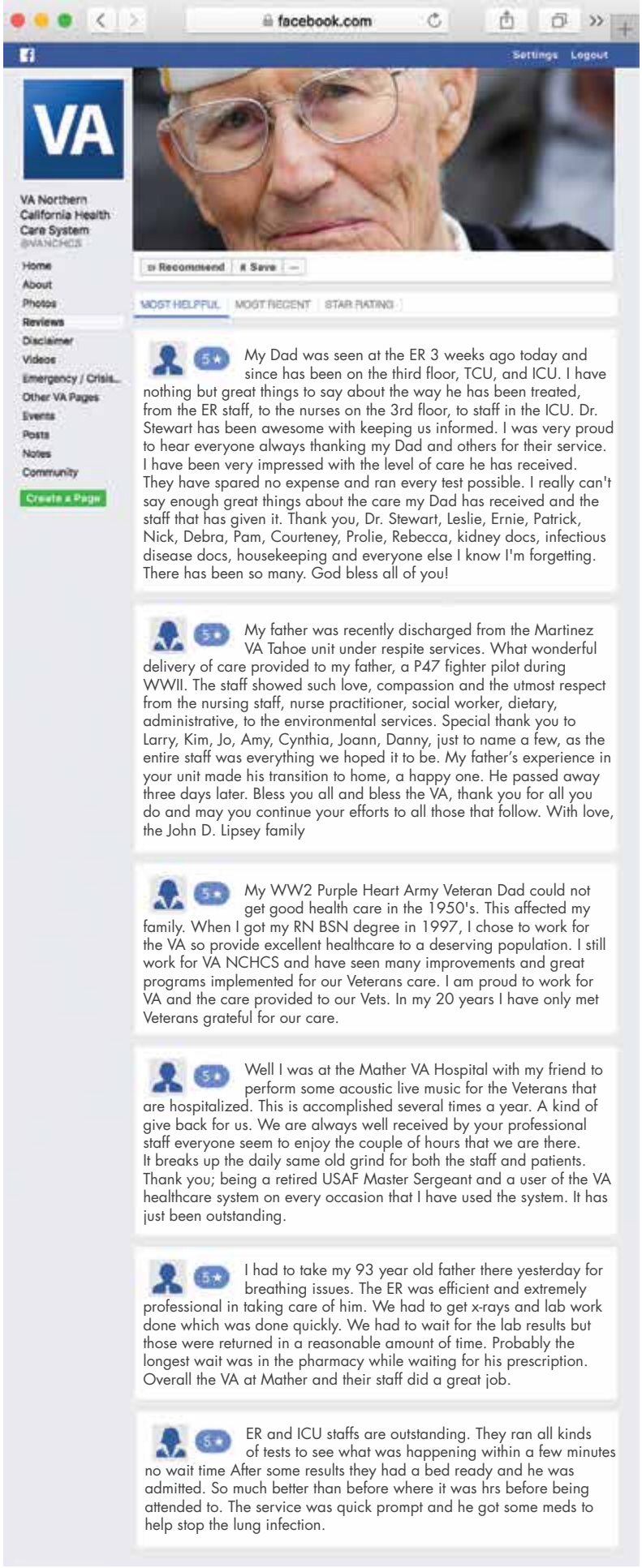


IMPROVING ACCESS: Veteran Appointment Request App

By Tara Ricks, Public Affairs Officer

Use the New Veteran Appointment Request (VAR) App to Simplify Scheduling Appointments with Your VA Care Team

Skip the phone call. For your next VA care visit, download and use the new Veteran Appointment Request (VAR) app—making scheduling and tracking appointments easier than ever.

The VAR app is customized for the unique features of the Lawrenceville Clinic and is accessible across multiple devices. Whether you're scheduling a routine doctor's visit or seeking mental health support for the first time, VAR can get you there in a few easy steps.

With VAR, you also have the ability to:

- Self-schedule an appointment with your PACT team
- Request assistance from a VA scheduler for booking an appointment online
- View upcoming appointments
- Cancel appointments

To get started, visit the VAR page on the VA App Store at www.mobile.va.gov/app/veteran-appointment-request

VAR is backed with the security of DS Logon, keeping all your personal health information safe. Learn how to access your account here: mobile.va.gov/dslogon.

Serenity

By Tara Ricks, Public Affairs Officer

"It is my hope and prayer my mural will add to the serenity of the garden and to the lives of those who visit it."
—Artist Robin Moyher

Veterans, staff, and members of the community joined together in the meditation garden at Sacramento VA Medical Center to dedicate the beautiful mosaic, titled "Serenity."

Two years ago the area between the new hospital and the clinic was nothing but a rock bed. Thanks to a generous community and members of service organizations, the area is now a beautiful garden. With the addition of "Serenity," the garden provides a colorful, peaceful focus for everyone visiting the Sacramento VA Medical Center.

Artist Robin Moyher relates the story behind this beautiful work of art:

"It was about a year ago that I first heard about the City of Rancho Cordova's Community Enhancement Fund grant program. Always wanting to expand my mosaic art into the public art arena, I looked for an area within the city that I would feel comfortable offering a mosaic installation. I then discovered the recently created meditation garden at the Sacramento VA Medical Center in Rancho Cordova and heard how staff, patients, and visitors enjoy sitting in the peaceful area. Lacking in any color in the rather protected space, I felt it was the perfect area to consider. With the enthusiastic support and help from VA Voluntary Services Program Director, Maria Almes, I applied for—and was awarded—a grant, which covered material costs, as I wanted to donate my labor completely. Having participated in various 'calls to artists' community mosaic projects from Facebook mosaic groups, I decided to reach out to my mosaic friends worldwide, inviting them to donate mosaic flowers. I was overwhelmed when over 40 artists donated over 100 flowers coming from 16 states and three foreign countries. When I hosted a workshop for Veterans to help create leaves for the mural, I got additional volunteers. Altogether, a total of 50 people have volunteered their labor on this project. My design evolved into much greater detail than I originally proposed, so seven months and over 500 hours later it was completed. On February 28, 2017, the mosaic mural was installed with help from VA Engineering. From the start I knew I wanted to create a design that would add something colorful and uplifting, as well as tranquility and serenity to the area. So it was only fitting to title my completed piece 'Serenity.' It was inspired by the full poem version of the Serenity Prayer. It is my hope and prayer my mural will add to the serenity of the garden and to the lives of those who visit it."

Groundbreaking for New Chico VA Outpatient Clinic

By Tara Ricks, Public Affairs Officer

VA Northern California Health Care System hosted a groundbreaking for the new Chico VA Outpatient Clinic on June 29, 2017, at 2000 Concord Ave, Chico, CA 95928.

The new Chico Outpatient Clinic will serve more than 9,000 Veterans when it opens in the summer of 2019. It will replace the current clinic at 280 Cohasset Rd, Chico, CA 95926.

"Our new VA outpatient clinic will more than double the current clinic space at 53,000 square feet," said David Stockwell, Director of VA Northern California Health Care System. "We are honored and privileged to continue providing care to our Veterans in the North State area with better access and more services."

In addition to the new state-of-the-art primary care space, the clinic will provide services in audiology and speech pathology, eye care, dental care, physical and occupational therapy, prosthetics fitting and adjustment, podiatry, mental health, and telehealth services.

The clinic is being built with roughly $43 million in federal funding. Construction on the clinic will start this summer and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2019.

During the groundbreaking, VA leadership was joined by officials from U.S. Congressman Doug LaMalfa's office, California's 1st District; California State Senator Jim Nielsen, 4th District; Sean Morgan, Mayor for the City of Chico; the Chamber of Commerce; local Veterans organizations; and members of the local community.

veteran connect@ the library

Vets Connect at the Library

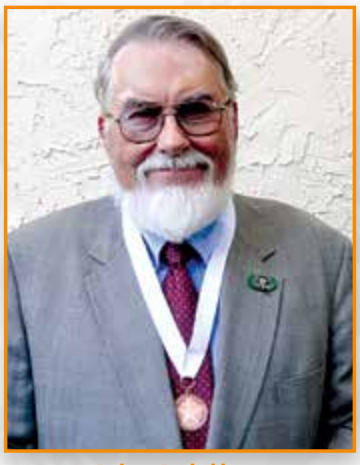
By Jeff Fortner, Public Affairs Specialist and Charlene Wetmore, Public Affairs Volunteer

"Big things happen at this little station," says Evelyn Figeroid, coordinator for the Veterans Connect Program at the Sacramento Public Library in Rancho Cordova.

Evelyn is referring to the area in the library where a Veteran and his or her family can find everything from a warm welcome to resources that can help them find information about benefits they may not even be aware of, both from the VA and the community. "The station is a place for Veterans to 'happen' across a variety of benefits," says Evelyn.

A team of passionate volunteers, many of whom are Veterans themselves, donate their time and hearts to assisting Veterans at this station. These volunteers have received training from the California Department of Veteran Affairs, and are well equipped to assist the Veteran and his or her family.

There are hundreds of stories of Veterans or their families who have stopped in at this station who leave with encouragement and information that lead to hope. "It doesn't seem like much, but we get people big things," says Robert Pacholik, an Army Veteran and volunteer.



Robert Pacholik, an Army Veteran and volunteer

The Southgate Library here in Sacramento is currently offering a three-month writing program for female Veterans. The workshop is designed to help women Veterans deepen their writing and story-telling skills for personal fulfillment, and to share their stories with others. Operation Internet, which allows Veterans exclusive use of the computers, is another program at this library open to all Veterans each Friday morning.

If you are a Veteran seeking assistance or support, check out your local library to see if they have a Veteran Connect Program in place. If you are a Veteran who would like to volunteer to help and assist other Veterans and their families find hope and help, contact your library for further information.

Breast Cancer

AWARENESS MONTH

Breast Cancer Early Detection Saves Lives—Let VA Help

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and VA wants to underscore the importance of early detection.

Women are now the fastest growing sub-group of U.S. Veterans. The number of women Veterans is expected to increase dramatically in the next 10 years, and VA health care is expected to be in high demand by the women Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

VA understands the health care needs of women Veterans and is committed to meeting these needs. Women Veterans who served deserve the best quality care. Find out more below about what your VA is doing to help the fight against breast cancer:

Please call VA Northern California Health Care System today for an appointment: 916-843-7205

Healthy Recipe!

Everything Fall Chili

Ingredients

1 Tablespoon Olive Oil
½ Onion
3 Cloves Garlic
7 Mini Peppers
¼ Cup Shredded Carrots
Any other veggies you feel would be a tasty addition! (Squash, anyone?)
½–1 lb Hamburger or Sausage
½ 12 oz Beer (I use Great White)
6 pieces Thick-Cut Bacon
1 16 oz Kidney Beans
1 16 oz Black Beans
1 11 oz Tomato Sauce
Spice Mix:
2 Teaspoons Cumin
2 Teaspoons Oregano
3 Teaspoons Brown Sugar
1 Teaspoon Salt
3 Teaspoons Chili Powder
2 Teaspoons Paprika

Directions

1. Cook bacon (oven method is easiest)
2. Chop veggies to bite-size (I do small strips of peppers and diced onions, minced garlic.)
3. Heat olive oil until it sizzles when veggies touch it.
4. Throw in veggies and cook on high until soft and slightly caramelized (5–10 min).
5. Add in hamburger or sausage and brown (5–10 min).
6. Strain.
7. Put back into pot on high and pour in beer.
8. Reduce until the alcohol cooks off (the liquid will reduce about half; takes 5–10 min).
9. Add in spices, beans, sauce, and bacon.
10. Simmer until ready to eat!

(Makes about 7 cups of chili.)

My healthevet
www.myhealth.va.gov

My Health, My Care: 24/7 Online Access to VA

To register, please call Kristi Scott, MyHealtheVet Coordinator, at 916-843-7108 or email her at Kristi.Scott@va.gov

Connect with VA Northern California Health Care System

Valley Division–Sacramento VA Medical Center
10535 Hospital Way
Mather, CA 95655
916-843-7000 | 800-382-8387

East Bay Division–Martinez Outpatient Clinic
150 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553
925-372-2000 | 800-382-8387

Call Center

800-382-8387 Mon–Fri 7 a.m.–6 p.m.

Prescription Refills

Automated Telephone Refill System: 1-866-600-VARX (1-866-600-8279) Toll-Free