

**VA**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Press Release

Office of Public Affairs  
VA Northern California  
Health Care SystemSacramento Medical Center 10535  
Hospital Way, Mather, CA 95655  
(916) 843-9247

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Will Martin, Chief of Public Affairs  
916-843-9247 or [William.Martin6@va.gov](mailto:William.Martin6@va.gov)

## VA NorCal hosts Sexual Assault Awareness Month events across Northern California

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** — Of the Veterans who receive VA health care, 1 in 100 men and 1 in 4 women report experiences of sexual assault during military service. To support their recovery, [VA Northern California Health Care System](#) (VA NorCal) offers free assessment and treatment to Veterans for [Military Sexual Trauma](#) (MST).

“Sexual assault is not a women’s issue, it’s a crime that can happen to anyone,” said Dr. Catherine Novotny, VA NorCal MST Recovery Coordinator. “Everyone has a responsibility to confront and play a role in ending sexual violence.”

Each year in April, VA NorCal joins the nation in recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) to raise awareness about sexual assault and its prevention and to offer support to those recovering from MST trauma.

### **VA NorCal Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) events throughout April**

- **April 11, 18 & 25, Martinez VA Outpatient Clinic, Building 19:** stop in for information and help create a trauma & recovery-themed coloring book
- **April 10-11, 15 & 18-19, Sacramento VA Medical Center, Building 650:** MST-recovery resource booth
- **April 10, 16 & 26 — Sacramento VA Medical Center, Building 650:** make a t-shirt for the “Clothesline Project”
- **April 23, Sacramento VA Medical Center, Building 650 Auditorium,** lunch and presentation on MST-recovery resources
- **April 24, Nationwide Denim Day:** show your support by wearing jeans or teal scrubs
- **April 26, Fairfield Outpatient Clinic** (Travis Air Force Base): SAAM block party at the Family Readiness Center from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. to promote local MST-recovery options
- **April 29, Martinez Outpatient Clinic:** sign up for empowerment self-defense training with VA Police in the Behavioral Health Clinic

Last year, VA NorCal **provided MST-related treatment to 2,239 Veterans across Northern California**. At the heart of VA NorCal's MST-recovery effort are its General Mental Health teams, providing individual therapy, support groups at all 11 VA NorCal sites, and referrals for national VA MST residential programs. VA NorCal also offers web-based recovery tools and a growing number of VA Video Connect appointments that Veterans may access from home.

### **Further resources**

*Veterans experiencing a life-threatening emergency should dial 911 for immediate medical or mental health attention. Veterans having thoughts of harming themselves should call the **Veterans Crisis Line** at **1-800-273-8255 (press 1)** or visit the [Veterans Crisis Line website](#).*

*[VIDEO](#): Dr. Novotny discusses MST and VA NorCal's MST-recovery resources. For more on MST programs, please contact Dr. Novotny at 925-372-2554.*

***Credentialed media seeking coverage and interviews** should contact Will Martin, VA NorCal Chief of Public Affairs, at 916-843-9247, [William.Martin6@va.gov](mailto:William.Martin6@va.gov), or via Twitter at [www.twitter/wmartin89](https://www.twitter/wmartin89).*

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