



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

Office of Public Affairs (310) 478-3340
Media Relations VHAGLAPublicAffairs@va.gov

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 13, 2019

VAGLAHS to implement smoke-free policies at the beginning of the fiscal year

LOS ANGELES – As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) commitment to a smoke-free health care environment for Veterans, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System will begin enforcing VA smoke-free policies for patients, visitors, volunteers, contractors, employees, and vendors in October.

Implementation of the employee smoke-free policy will be completed no later than January 2020, based on employee union-negotiated timelines.

“This policy change is consistent with our mission to promote a healthy environment for patients, visitors and employees at our facilities and is an important element of improving our health care system,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “It will reduce the harmful effects of smoking, including exposure to second and third-hand smoke, as well as increase safety and reduce fire hazards caused by smoking.”

There is overwhelming evidence that smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke creates significant medical risks, and a growing body of evidence suggests that exposure to third hand smoke creates additional risks to safety and direct patient care.

“Beginning Oct. 1, 2019, VAGLAHS will enforce VHA’s smoke-free policies on our campus and ensure we provide every resource possible for those who need help to quit smoking,” said VAGLAHS Executive Director of Care Centers and Clinics in the Community and Acting Director, Robert McKenrick. “The introduction of this new policy will only serve to create a healthier,

cleaner and safer health care environment for us all and further aid GLA in fulfilling our mission of providing the best quality of care to our Veterans and their loved ones.”

GLA will continue deconstruction of its smoking shelters throughout the month of September. This smoke-free policy applies to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and any other combustion of tobacco and non-Federal Drug Administration approved electronic nicotine delivery systems, including but not limited to electronic or e-cigarettes, vape pens or e-cigars. The policy will be enforced on every part of the campus where medical treatment is administered; it does not apply to certain Enhanced-Use Leased areas or residential areas of the campus.

To learn more about health risks associated with smoking, visit the Surgeon General’s website at <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/tobacco/index.html> or <https://smokefree.gov/>.

VHA has resources and programs to assist employees in their smoke free journey and these can be found at the following VHA website at <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco/>.

For additional information about the policy visit:

https://www.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=8242.

For information about the employee policy visit:

https://vaww.va.gov/vhapublications/admin/ViewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=8424.

ABOUT VAGLAHS: VAGLAHS is one component of the VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network (VISN22) offering services to Veterans residing in Southern California. VAGLAHS consists of three ambulatory care centers, a tertiary care facility and 9 community-based outpatient clinics. VAGLAHS serves Veterans residing throughout five counties: Kern, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura. There are approximately 1.4 million Veterans in the VAGLAHS service area. For more information, call [\(310\)268.3340](tel:3102683340) or visit us at www.losangeles.va.gov. Veterans in need can call the VA hotline toll-free at [877-4-AID-VET](tel:8774AIDVET).



Smoke free VHA

Better starts today

Join the VHA as we go smoke free on
OCTOBER 1st

Group Program Options for VA Patients	
Clinic Site & POC	Time & Location
West Los Angeles Medical Center Dr. Capone-Newton: 310-701-1289	Weekly on Thursday 2PM-3PM (60 MIN APPT) Building 500, Room 1606 Patient Education Resource Center (PERC)
Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center Rachel Rosen: 818-895-9569	Weekly on Friday 9AM-10AM (60 MIN APPT) Building 200, Conference Room A
Los Angeles Ambulatory Care Center Kenneth Cobb: 213-253-2677 x24564	Weekly on Tuesday 10AM-11AM (60 MIN APPT) Patient Education Resource Center (PERC) Room A-336
Santa Maria CBOC Angelica Dzvonic (telehealth): 805-354-6000	Weekly on Tuesday 10AM-11AM (60 MIN APPT) Cyber Café Room A155 (TELEHEALTH APPT)
Bakersfield CBOC Dr. Ekram Michiel: 661-632-1859	Weekly on Thursday 10AM-11AM (60 MIN APPT) Room 614 (Room 607A if group is big)