

SAVAHCS August 2025 Director's Report



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Interim Director

*Serving with Purpose, Passion and Pride for V.E.T.s (Veterans * Value * Excellence * Team)*

Hot Topics



SAVAHCs Virtual Veteran Engagement Town Hall

Join us virtually on Wednesday, August 6 at 1:00 p.m. for our 4th Quarter Virtual Veteran Engagement Event where Veterans, their families, and caregivers will receive updates on healthcare operations from SAVAHCs leadership and also learn more about VA health care services offered to Veterans in southern Arizona.

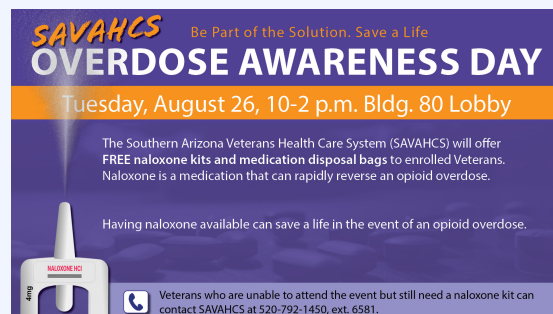
This is your chance to connect, share feedback, and stay informed about the latest updates and resources available for Veterans and their families, and caregivers.

To take part in the Veteran Engagement event click on the registration link below:

Virtual Veteran Engagement Town Hall Registration

Before the event, you can send an email to pao.savahcs@va.gov with any questions you may have.

International Overdose Awareness Day



We invite you to join us at the Tucson VA main campus for International Overdose Awareness Day on Tuesday August 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the lobby of Building 80.

Our staff from Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program, Suicide Prevention, and more will be on hand to provide valuable information on Naloxone, substance use disorder services, suicide prevention, and other resources.

Together, we can make a difference. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more and connect with our community.

If you are unable to attend but still need a Naloxone kit, please contact the Suboxone Clinic at (520) 792-1450, extension 1-6581.

National Unsheltered Veteran Outreach Surge Event

Join us for the National Unsheltered Veteran Outreach Surge Event, from August 25-29, 2025, aimed at addressing homelessness among Veterans.

Monday, Aug. 25, Preparation Day: Community partners and VA staff collaborate and prepare resources for the week long Surge Event.

Tuesday, Aug. 26, Outreach with Community Partners: Outreach teams will connect homeless Veterans to housing resources and services. Free legal assistance and referral to legal services will also be available. **Location: Bldg. 90 Homeless Clinic, SAVAHCS Main Campus, from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

Wednesday, Aug. 27, Connecting Unsheltered Veterans to Housing & Services: VA staff and community partners will bring services and resources to Veterans and Tribal Veterans in need of housing support.

Thursday, Aug. 28, Homeless Veteran Resource Fair at Casa Maria: Available services will include housing assistance, Mobile Medical Unit, Mobile Vet Center, haircuts, hygiene kits, and soup-kitchen meals. **Location: 352 E. 25th St., Tucson, AZ 85713, from 7 a.m. -11:30 a.m.**

Friday, Aug. 29, SAVAHCS Homeless Solutions Summit: Guest speakers, food and resource booths will be available for Veterans. **Location: 3601 S. Sixth Ave., Tucson AZ, 85723, Bldg. 4 Auditorium., from 9 a.m.-1:00 p.m.**

For more information call the SAVAHCS Homeless Program at (520) 629-1839.

Make a Difference as a Volunteer Driver



In the past year, our amazing DAV volunteer drivers provided over 1,049 rides for Veterans.

We are seeking more volunteer drivers around Sierra Vista to help transport Veterans to their medical appointments in Tucson.

Ideal candidates have flexible schedules, good driving records, and can commit to at least one year of volunteering. A valid state-issued license and a basic VA physical are required.

For details on how to become a volunteer driver, get in touch with the SAVAHCS Center for Development and Civic Engagement Office at (520) 629-1822 or email TucsonCDCE@va.gov.

SAVAHCS Volunteer Visitors



The SAVAHCS seeks volunteers to visit homebound and isolated Veterans. As a Volunteer Visitor, you'll provide social interaction without any hands-on care, giving caregivers a needed break. Activities include conversations, art, games, walks, gardening, and hobbies.

Initial registration requires trips to Tucson VA Medical Center; ongoing assignments will be near the volunteer's residence. The flexible schedule averages 1-4 hours per week.

To apply or for more information, contact the Tucson VA CDCE Office at (520) 629-1822 or email TucsonCDCE@va.gov.



Maternity Care Coordinators

Every VA facility has a Maternity Care Coordinator, ready to support, provide health screenings, and ensure pregnant women Veterans have access to needed education, resources, and supplies throughout their pregnancy and year one of the baby. Maternity Care Coordinators understand the unique needs of women Veterans. Having a coordinator at their side means they've got an advocate to ensure they and their baby receive the best care.

A VA health care provider or local Women Veterans Program Manager can connect the women Veteran to a Maternity Care Coordinator near them. Learn more by visiting the <https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/.../maternity-care.asp> or call the Tucson VA Women's Health Center at (520) 629-4885.

Beneficiary Travel Self Service System (BTSSS)

Attention Veterans! We encourage you to use the Beneficiary Travel Self Service System (BTSSS) for all your travel claims. As a reminder, the old beneficiary travel voucher claim form has officially expired. You can also find the forms online at **VA Form 10-3542**. For any questions, please contact Beneficiary Travel at (520) 792-1450, extension 1-4626. Make the switch to **BTSSS** today for a smoother and faster process!

My HealtheVet on VA.gov Transition



The VA's patient portal, My HealtheVet, is moving to VA.gov. With the new **My HealtheVet on VA.gov**, Veterans will have a secure, single online location to manage their health care and other VA benefits and services.

Veterans are no longer able to sign in using My HealtheVet user ID and password. The two-remaining sign-in options will be Login.gov and ID.me. Login.gov offers streamlined setup and integration with other federal services like TSA Precheck and FEMA. ID.me provides additional verification methods, including video calls and can be used for military discounts.

If you or the Veterans you serve have questions about this change, please call the SAVAHCS Virtual Health Resource Center at (520) 629-1713 or send an email to TucsonVHRC@va.gov.

Whole Health at SAVAHCS

Whole Health is VA's approach to care that supports the Veteran's or individual's health and well-being. This means the health care team develops a personalized health plan based on the Veteran's values, needs, and goals, and what's important to them.

For more information about Whole Health classes and resources, Veterans can contact SAVAHCS at (520) 792-1450, extension 1-4971.

Community Engagements & Partnerships

DAV Chapter 26 from Benson, led by Division Commander John Ingraham, State Commander Bruce Nogar and Former State



Commander Ronald Cox, generously donated \$25,000 to the Tucson VA Fisher House! This significant contribution will have a profound impact on supporting our Veterans and their families.

John Ingraham shared this about the donation: "We have a small working group yard sale where people donate stuff, and we resell it. So, we got the funds from it and wanted to donate to you guys at the Fisher House to help Veterans."

Fisher House Manager Mike Ramsey added, "This funding will also assist Veteran family members who stay with us. We do have some renovations coming up, like furniture and some appliances. Some of that money, of course, will assist with those things as well."

A huge thank you to DAV Chapter 26 from Benson for their generosity and continued support of our Veteran community!



together for street outreach to locate and assist Veterans in need.

If you or a Veteran you know is experiencing homelessness, please contact our Homeless Program at (520) 792-1450, extension 1-1839.

Every Wednesday morning, our Homeless Program, along with community providers and National Community Health Partners (NCHP), come



We are incredibly grateful to the **Arizona Transportation Builders Association (ATB)** for their

generous donation of clothes, food, and hygiene items to our Patriot Pantry. These contributions will greatly assist our food-insecure Veterans and support our Homeless Program.

Lisa Hagins, Executive Director at ATB in Tucson, shared, "With the help of our members and many local business community leaders, we were able to raise money and provide food for the VA pantry here in town. We donated a check for \$4,500 and provided an additional \$1,000 worth of food."

Thank you, Arizona Transportation Builders Association, for your unwavering yearly support and for helping us serve those who have served us. Your generosity is making a significant difference for some of our Veterans and active-duty troops who face food insecurities from time to time.

If you or your organization would like to make a donation to our Patriot Pantry or Homeless Program please contact our Center for Development & Civic Engagement at tucsoncdce@va.gov.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 549 Commander Stuart Jensen and Tony Fennell, generously donated two checks to support the CLC Luau and the Patriot Pantry. Their contributions greatly assist both community-based and inpatient Veterans.



Mental Health Building 90 renovation project to convert the Agave clinic into a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT)-compliant layout: The Mental Health Renovation project has completed the demolition of the Agave Clinic. The Renovation Construction is ongoing and is scheduled to be completed by 2026. The staff from the Agave Clinic have relocated to the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) Mental Health Clinic.

Emergency Department (ED) Renovations and Expansion: The connection to the existing water main on the North end of the building has been completed. The project completed drilling the 32 caissons which is the beginning of the foundation of the new section of building.

Expand and Renovate Clinics Bldg. 80: The General Contractor has poured the landing for the 2nd floor and the South stairs and installed the new exterior staircase. Due to this construction, the east entrance of Building 80 is closed until December 2025. In the meantime, patients should use the west entrance by the Emergency Department. We understand this may be inconvenient, but it's necessary to ensure everyone's safety during the structural work.

Auditorium Stage Restoration: The installation of the exterior Rose Garden stage, drainage, door, and hardware has been completed. The Auditorium was open to use in July.

Veteran Health Care Information

WWII Veterans' new eligibility for VA Health Care
If you served in World War II and are not currently enrolled in VA health care, this recent legislation ensures that you are now eligible for VA health care. WWII is defined as the period beginning December 7, 1941, and ending December 31, 1946. The Cleland-Dole Act was signed into law December 29, 2022. Section 101 of this law expands eligibility for VA care for Veterans of World War II.

Veterans Crisis Line Number
Dial 988, then Press 1- Veterans in crisis or those concerned about a Veteran can call to reach trained responders 24 hours a day, seven days a week to receive confidential crisis support.

Veterans can chat online at www.veteranscrisisline.net or text 838255 to reach trained crisis responders.

VA Resource Navigator

Are you a Veteran but you're not sure where to start with the VA?

Check out the new 2025 **VA Resource Navigator**, a short, sweet combination of all the most valuable resources to get you started on your way to VA benefits and health care.



Local & National Contacts

SAVAHCS Local Contacts:

- Southern Arizona VA Health Care System Main Line (520) 792-1450 or 1 (800) 470-8262
- Caregiver Support Program (520) 792-1450, extension, 1-5390
- Care in the Community (520) 792-1450, extension, 1-6555
- Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE) (formerly Voluntary Services) (520) 629-1822
- Compensation and Pension (520) 629-4662
- Eligibility and Enrollment Section (520) 792-1450, extension, 1-6572 or 1-1740
- Homeless Program Coordinator (520) 792-1540, extension, 1-1839
- Medication Automated Refill Line (Toll Free) 1 (800) 470-8262, Press 1, then press 1 again to use the automated line to refill/renew a prescription
- Mental Health Clinic (520) 629-4884
- Virtual Health Resource Center (520) 629-1713 (for assistance with My HealtheVet and other virtual care technologies)
- Native American Program (520) 792-1450,

extension, 1-6622

- Patient Advocate Office (520) 629-4933
- Public Affairs (520) 629-1819
- Release of Information Office (520) 792-1450, extension, 1-4665
- Suicide Prevention Coordinator (520) 792-1450, extension, 1-6415
- Post-9/11 M2VA Case Management for Veterans recently separated from military (520) 269-1684
- Women's Health Clinic (520) 629-4885


VA National Contacts:

- 1 (800) MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) for all VA related questions about care, benefits, and services
- General VA Billing Questions 1 (866) 400-1238
- National Caregiver support line 1 (855) 260-3274
- National Memorial Cemetery Phoenix (480) 513-1412
- Phoenix Regional Office (VBA) 1 (800) 827-1000 VA Billing and collections Consolidated Patient Account Center (CPAC) 866-802-6819
- VA Health Care (877) 222-8387 (VETS)
- VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network Nurse Advice

Future Events



Gila River Indian Community Veteran & Family Services Office ENROLLMENT AND CLAIMS CLINIC



Join us for a special collaboration between the Phoenix VA, Tucson VA, and the Gila River Indian Community to bring vital services to our Native and rural Veterans!

AVAILABLE RESOURCES:

- ◆ PACT ACT CLAIMS CLINIC
- ◆ ELIGIBILITY & ENROLLMENT ASSISTANCE
- ◆ MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT
- ◆ TELEHEALTH SERVICES
- ◆ SOCIAL WORK SERVICES
- ◆ NATIVE AMERICAN DIRECT (HOME) LOAN ASSISTANCE
- ◆ AND MORE!

For more information, please call Shawndin Tracy, Phoenix VA Rural Health Coordinator, at (602) 288-2856, or Laura Ybarra, Tucson VA Native American Veteran Program Manager, at (520) 792-1450, extension 1-6622, or Darrell Whitman, Gila River VFSO, at (520) 610-2037.

AUGUST 22, 2025
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Gila River/Sacaton
Multi-Purpose Bldg. District 3
18 E Pima St
Sacaton, AZ

16th Gathering of
American Indian Veterans
Organized by Federal, State, Tribal and Local Community Members

September 6, 2025
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Casino Del Sol of Tucson
5655 W. Valencia Rd.
Tucson, AZ 85757 

- Bring your DD214 (to determine benefits eligibility)
- PACT Act Toxic Exposure Screenings Available
- VBA Benefits Claims
- VHA Eligibility & Enrollment
- Veteran and Community Resource Tables
- Warrior Honoring Ceremony & Coin Presentation

Event Venue and Meals to be graciously provided by Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Casino Del Sol, Desert Diamond Casino and AZ Complete Health. Funded in part by the Arizona Department of Veterans Services as made available through the Arizona Veteran's Donation Fund.

For more information contact: Laura Ybarra (520) 792-1450 Ext. 1-6622 or Magdalena Sanchez Ext. 1-2719

