



TELE-TOWN HALL NOTES

June 3, 2020

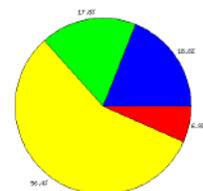
Moving Forward Plan for Brownwood, Palestine and Waco VA facilities

- Good afternoon, this is Mike Kiefer, Director for Central Texas Veterans Health Care System.
- Again, thank you all for joining us today for this Tele-Town Hall.
- As a Veteran myself, let me say thank you all for your service.
- This year has been one that will be forever in the history books. as the world combats the spread of the novel coronavirus or COVID-19 as we have come to call it.
- My leadership team and I are conducting this Tele-Town Hall to give you information about our Moving Forward plan as we begin phasing in services.
- Today’s Tele Town Hall is targeting Veterans who primarily use our Brownwood, Palestine and Waco facilities.
- Our “Moving Forward” plan as includes gradual and safe steps for expanding face-to-face services which were curtained out of an abundance of caution to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

POLLING QUESTION #1-Demographics results:

1 Demographics: From which Central Texas VA facility do you receive the majority of your health care?

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Brownwood	235	19
2	Palestine	218	18
3	Waco	707	57
4	Other	84	7



- **General COVID-19 Information:** Over the past few months, Central Texas Veterans Health Care System has been working very hard to respond to COVID-19 and keeping our Veterans, staff and others safe as we combat the spread of this invisible enemy attacking people around the world.

- Central Texas has been blessed to not be experiencing the extreme number of COVID-19 patients as New York, Louisiana, Washington and other states. We are prepared to respond to larger numbers and to meet our fourth mission if called on. We have built two dedicated COVID-19 units. One unit has 29-beds with negative pressure ICU-type rooms and the second unit with 29-beds that will be used as step-down unit. We have sent several staff to assist in other states hit hard by COVID-19.
- Mid-March, I directed our Incident Command Center for Central Texas Veterans Health Care System to be called up to oversee and direct our plans to address the challenges of COVID-19 in order to keep our Veterans, staff and others safe. These steps included reducing the number of people accessing our facilities. We accomplished this by postponing elective surgeries, converting face-to-face appointments to video or telephone encounters when appropriate, and allowing our staff to telework when possible. Our next steps were to heighten the safety of our environment by screening everyone coming to our facilities by asking screening questions and checking for symptoms of the virus, institute a no visitor policy and physical distancing.
- Another important step we took was to test our most vulnerable population—community living center patients and the staff charged with their care. I'm happy to report, that no patients and staff tested positive for COVID-19, and we continue surveillance with this population and staff. We also created several groups to oversee, plan and take action in response to COVID-19 to ensure we are following CDC guidance as well as VA and VHA mandates to ensure the safety of our Veterans and staff.
- As of May 28, we had a total of 39 cases-both Veterans and employees with 35 of those recovered. Currently, we only have 5 inpatient COVID-19 positive patients.
- Dr. Solomon Williams, our Deputy Chief of Staff, is heading up our Moving Forward group, and he will give you information about what's in store over the next month.
- **Dr. Williams --**
 - Good afternoon. After curtailing appointments due to COVID-19 since mid-March, I am happy to share with you information about our "Moving Forward" plan.

- First, I want to emphasize two words when I talk about this plan – **SAFE** and **GRADUAL**. We are moving forward to expand routine face-to-face appointments, but our actions will be **gradual** and based on **safety** for our Veterans and staff. Face-to-face care will be determined **based on clinical severity and symptoms**. What does this all mean? We will only see a fraction of our normal patient load as we begin expanding, so it is important that Veterans continue using video, telephone and MyHealthVet to connect with their clinical team.
- **Brownwood:** Because of the low prevalence of COVID-19 cases in Brown and its surrounding counties, the Brownwood VA Clinic was chosen to be our first facility to start our Moving Forward plan beginning June 8 with primary care face-to-face appointments.
- **Waco and Palestine:** On June 15, we plan for Waco to start expanding their face-to-face appointments, shortly followed by Palestine on June 22.
- Please note that all of these dates are based on current COVID-19 cases in the respective areas. As everyone is aware, cases vary and can unexpectedly change. We will respond accordingly for the safety of our Veterans and all others.
- Remember, our initial focus for expanding services will be for primary care face-to-face appointments. Over time we continue expanding to more Veterans over the coming weeks.
- Video and telephone appointments have become invaluable during this pandemic, and we will continue the use these types of appointments for Veterans who we are unable to be seen face to face. Some of you may even prefer to use these methods. When deemed appropriate by your provider, you may continue to use video or telephone for your appointments in the future.

Mr. Kiefer:

- As we move forward, our staff will continue screening everyone coming into our facilities by asking questions about COVID-19 symptoms, taking temperatures, and requiring everyone to wear face coverings. This will help us ensure your safety as well as our staff and other Veterans. Face coverings are mandatory and should be worn throughout your visit at all of our facilities and grounds. If you are claustrophobic, we recommend wearing a bandana that is less restrictive.

POLLING QUESTION #4 – Future use of video and telephone appointments Results:

4 Future use of video and telephone appointments: If you have used the video or telephone technology for your health care appointments

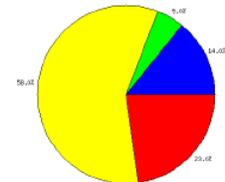
ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Very likely	347	42
2	Maybe likely	322	39
3	Not likely at all	154	19



POLLING QUESTION #5 Care Modality Results:

5 Care Modality: Since COVID-19 started up, how have you received care from VA?

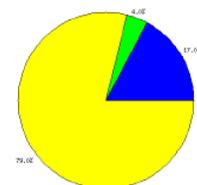
ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Face-to-face in clinic	102	14
2	VA Video Connect	36	5
3	Telephone	417	58
4	A combination of 1-3	164	23



POLLING QUESTION #6-Care Modality Preference-video Results:

6 Care Modality Preference-video: Please select the response that best represents your situation and opinion regarding video

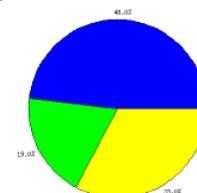
ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	have participated in a video appointment with a VA healthcare pr	108	17
2	have participated in a video appointment, with a VA healthcare p	27	4
3	have NOT participated in a video appointment with a VA provider	504	79



POLLING QUESTION #7-Care Modality Preference-Telephone Appointment Results:

7 Care Modality Preference-Telephone Appointment: Please select the response that best represents your situation and opinic

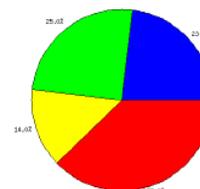
ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	have participated in telephone appointment with a VA provider an	28	48
2	have participated in telephone appointment with a VA provider an	11	19
3	have NOT participated in a telephone appointment with a VA provi	19	33



POLLING Question # 8: Barrier to VA Video Connect Results:

8 Barrier to VA Video Connect: What is your biggest barrier to having VIDEO appointments with a healthcare provider?

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	no internet or unreliable internet	125	23
2	do not know how to use the technology	138	25
3	have no desire to have video appointments about your health or h	75	14
4	have no barriers	204	38



CLOSING

- Our goal is to open our services back up gradually and in a safe, incremental plan that meets the needs of our Veterans.
- We care for the safety of our Veterans, and therefore, encourage physical distancing as we reopen clinics in a safe and gradual manner.
- Should you have immediate needs, please contact your PACT team first, either by telephone or secure messaging. We will make a telephone appointment or VA Video Connect appointment at the earliest. Please, please call before you decide to come in. Our toll free number is 1-800-423-2111.
- If you have a personal issue that you would like assistance with, please push 7 or stay on the line and you will be transferred to a voicemail where you can leave your name, phone number and briefly describe the issue so that we can appropriately follow up with you during normal business hours. One of our staff will follow-up with you within 3 business days.
- Thank you for your service to our country, thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you, and thank you for Choosing VA.

COMMERCIALS:

- If you haven't already, please visit www.myhealth.va.gov to sign up for MyHealthVet today! With MyHealthVet you can refill your prescriptions, keep track of your upcoming appointments, send secure messages to your health care team and even view your electronic health record.

- To stay connected with us online, make sure to like us on our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/CentralTexasVA/ and visit our website at www.Centraltexas.va.gov