



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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[Mid-CitiesMedical.com](https://www.Mid-CitiesMedical.com)



## September is National Recovery Month

**VA News** – The VA provides a wide range of mental health resources, information, and treatment options that are available to Veterans, their supporters, and the general public. Its goal is to connect individuals with both clinical care and peer support to help manage and overcome mental health challenges.

After leaving the military, Veterans may face a variety of life events, opportunities, and challenges. At times, symptoms – whether mild, moderate, or severe – can make daily life harder to manage. Whatever you may be going through, support is available to help you get back on track. Countless Veterans have found strength in reaching out and making a connection.

With more treatment options and easier access to care than ever before, the VA offers support for many mental health conditions and related issues, while also encouraging Veterans to prioritize their mental health and share their experiences as a step toward improved wellbeing.

Through [MakeTheConnection.net](https://www.MakeTheConnection.net), Veterans and their loved ones can find information and resources on issues that affect their mental health, daily lives, and overall wellness. In addition, the VA offers programs tailored to the unique stressors and experiences Veterans face, ensuring that mental health support is personalized to meet their needs.

## Check on Your Veteran Buddy!

VA News – Veteran Buddy Checks encourage Veterans to connect – or reconnect – with fellow Veterans, simply to check in. The program builds on the success of the American Legion's Buddy Check initiative and the Veteran Wellness Alliance's Get Involved program.

The goal is to strengthen peer-to-peer connections, support mental health, and increase access to both VA and community resources. Veteran Buddy Check training equips you to recognize signs of distress and introduces resources you can recommend when needed.

Ways to get involved:

- **Take the pledge** – Commit to reaching out and checking in.
- **Take the training** – Watch the Buddy Check Week peer wellness training video.
- **Find buddies** – Connect with peers, families, and fellow service members on **TogetherWeServed** and **RallyPoint** to share stories and ask questions.



## Advanced Travel Notice Requirements

Due to a growing number of patients neglecting the required two-week notification for travel, we want to reiterate the importance of timely communication. This policy is essential to ensure proper coordination and to avoid service disruptions.

Failure to provide at least 14 days' notice may result in the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) declining to cover transportation costs. In such cases, patients will be responsible for:

- Coordinating and paying for their own oxygen services
- Arranging any necessary services at their end destination
- Covering all associated travel costs until VAMC coordination is reestablished

**NOTE:** To ensure availability and proper coordination, we strongly recommend submitting your request at least 14 days in advance, with 30 days' notice being ideal.

This policy applies not only to outbound travel but also to return trips. Patients planning to return to the area should contact us between 14 to 30 days prior to travel to ensure their request is documented, necessary paperwork is completed, and their name is added to the appropriate branch's route.

While we make every effort to accommodate all patients, Mid-Cities Medical cannot guarantee services for requests made with short or no notice. Early planning is key to ensuring smooth coordination and uninterrupted care.



## Fire Safety Goes Beyond “Just Smoking”

As patients using oxygen, it is crucial to remain aware of potential fire hazards. While oxygen itself is not flammable, it acts as an accelerant. This means that when combined with heat or an open flame and a fuel source such as clothing, skin, or hair, it can lead to a fire. Like gasoline on a woodpile, oxygen increases the risk of combustion, but a fire will not start unless heat, flames, or sparks are introduced.

As you move around your home and community, it's essential to recognize heat sources that could pose a danger to you, your family, and others. Always remember that anything that generates heat, has an open flame, or produces sparks presents a fire risk for you. Stay alert for potential fire hazards such as gas or propane appliances, barbecue grills and fire pits, candles, incense burners, cooking equipment with heating elements, matches, lighters, and various tools.

Patients and caregivers often emphasize “Smoking” when considering oxygen safety, but it's important to think beyond cigarettes and vape pens. Instead, focus on identifying heat sources by asking, “What's hot?” “What's dangerous?” and “What could ignite my oxygen?” Always prioritize oxygen safety by turning off your oxygen, staying at least 25 feet away from your equipment, and waiting 15 minutes before engaging with any source of fire, heat, or open flame. **Your life, health, and safety should always be your top priority.**



## Holiday Calendar



### SEPTEMBER

- 1st Labor Day – **OFFICE CLOSED**
- 9th California Admission Day (CA)
- 11th Patriot Day
- 18th Air Force Birthday
- 19th National POW/MIA Recognition Day
- 26th American Indian Heritage Day
- 28th Gold Star Mother's Day

2nd Monday runs 09-08-25  
3rd Monday runs 09-15-25

*\*Mercedes only*

1st Tuesday runs 09-02-25  
1st Monday runs 09-03-25  
2nd Monday runs 09-29-25

4th Monday runs 09-22-25  
1st Monday runs 09-29-25

*\*Redlands only*

3rd Wednesday runs 09-17-25  
3rd Thursday runs 09-15-25  
4th Thursday runs 09-25-25  
4th Friday runs 09-26-25



### OCTOBER

- 1st–2nd Yom Kippur
- 13th U.S. Navy Birthday
- 13th Columbus Day & Indigenous People's Day – **OFFICE CLOSED**
- 16th Bosses' Day
- 24th United Nations Day
- 31st Halloween

2nd Monday runs 10-06-25  
1st Tuesday runs 10-29-25

*\*Mercedes only*

1st Monday runs 10-06-25  
1st Tuesday runs 10-07-25

1st Thursday runs 10-30-25  
1st Friday runs 10-31-25

*\*Redlands only*

3rd Wednesday runs 10-15-25  
3rd Thursday runs 10-16-25  
4th Thursday runs 10-23-25  
4th Friday runs 10-24-25

# Important Health Contact Numbers


**EMERGENCY**  
**DIAL 9-1-1**

**EMERGENCY SITUATION**  
**DIAL 7-1-1**  
*Use if you have a TTY and cannot obtain emergency services.*

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**  
**DIAL 2-1-1**

**NON-EMERGENCY OR DOWN EQUIPMENT**  
Phone: **TEXAS (888) 450-6676**  
Phone: **AZ & CA (833) 986-4267**

**YOU CAN QUIT SMOKING**  
Phone: **(800) QUIT-NOW**  
Website: **www.SmokeFree.gov**  
**www.BeTobaccoFree.gov**

**HOW TO STAY SAFE WHILE USING OXYGEN IN THE HOME**

**VETERANS CRISIS LINE**  
**DIAL 9-8-8**  
Email: **ConfidentialChat@VeteransCrisisLine.net**

**VA CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM**  
Phone: **(855) 260-3274**  
Website: **www.caregiver.va.gov**

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
Website: **https://tinyurl.com/52uvkwu9**

**REPORT ABUSE. BREAK THE SILENCE.**  
Phone: **(800) 252-5400**

**SPEAK-UP CAMPAIGN**  
Website: **https://tinyurl.com/5n68nt29**  
*Rights patients have if they feel they are being discriminated*

## Perfect Potato Soup

*Say goodbye to ho-hum potato soup!  
Easy to prepare with ingredients you probably have on hand.*

- Prep Time:** 30 mins  
**Cook Time:** 50 mins
- Total Time:** 1 hr 20 mins  
**Servings:** 6
- 6 russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
  - 5 slices bacon, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
  - 3 tbsps butter
  - 2 stalks celery, cut into 1/4-inch slices
  - ½ large onion, diced small
  - 20 baby carrots, cut into 1/4-inch pieces
  - 2 tsps kosher salt, divided
  - 1-½ tsps freshly ground black pepper, divided
  - 3 tbsps all-purpose flour
  - 2 cups half-and-half
  - 1-½ cups chicken broth
  - ¼ tsp dried thyme
  - ¾ tsp cayenne pepper
  - 1 dash ground nutmeg
  - 4 green onions, finely sliced
  - 1 dash paprika, or to taste

- Step 1** – Place potatoes into a large pot and cover with water; bring to a boil. Cook about 10 minutes. Drain.
- Step 2** – Place bacon in a large saucepan and cook over medium-high heat, turning occasionally, until crispy. Drain bacon on paper towels. Pour out bacon grease.
- Step 3** – Melt butter in the saucepan over medium heat, scraping the bottom of the pan with a flat-edged wooden spoon. Add celery, onion, carrots, 1 tsp salt, and 1/2 tsp pepper; cook and stir until tender, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle in flour; cook and stir for 2 minutes.
- Step 4** – Pour half-and-half and chicken broth into the saucepan. Add potatoes, 1 tsp salt, 1/2 tsp pepper, thyme, cayenne pepper, and nutmeg. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Stir in bacon pieces. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring often, until flavors combine, about 10 minutes.
- Step 5** – Ladle into serving bowls. Garnish with 1/2 tsp pepper, green onions, and paprika.

## Word Search

- acorn  
apple  
autumn  
brown  
changing  
chilly  
cider  
colorful

corn  
cornucopia  
deciduous  
fall  
farm  
feast  
football  
gourd

harvest  
hay  
haystack  
leaf  
moon  
November  
October  
orange

pilgrim  
pumpkin  
rake  
red  
ripe  
scarecrow  
September  
turkey

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