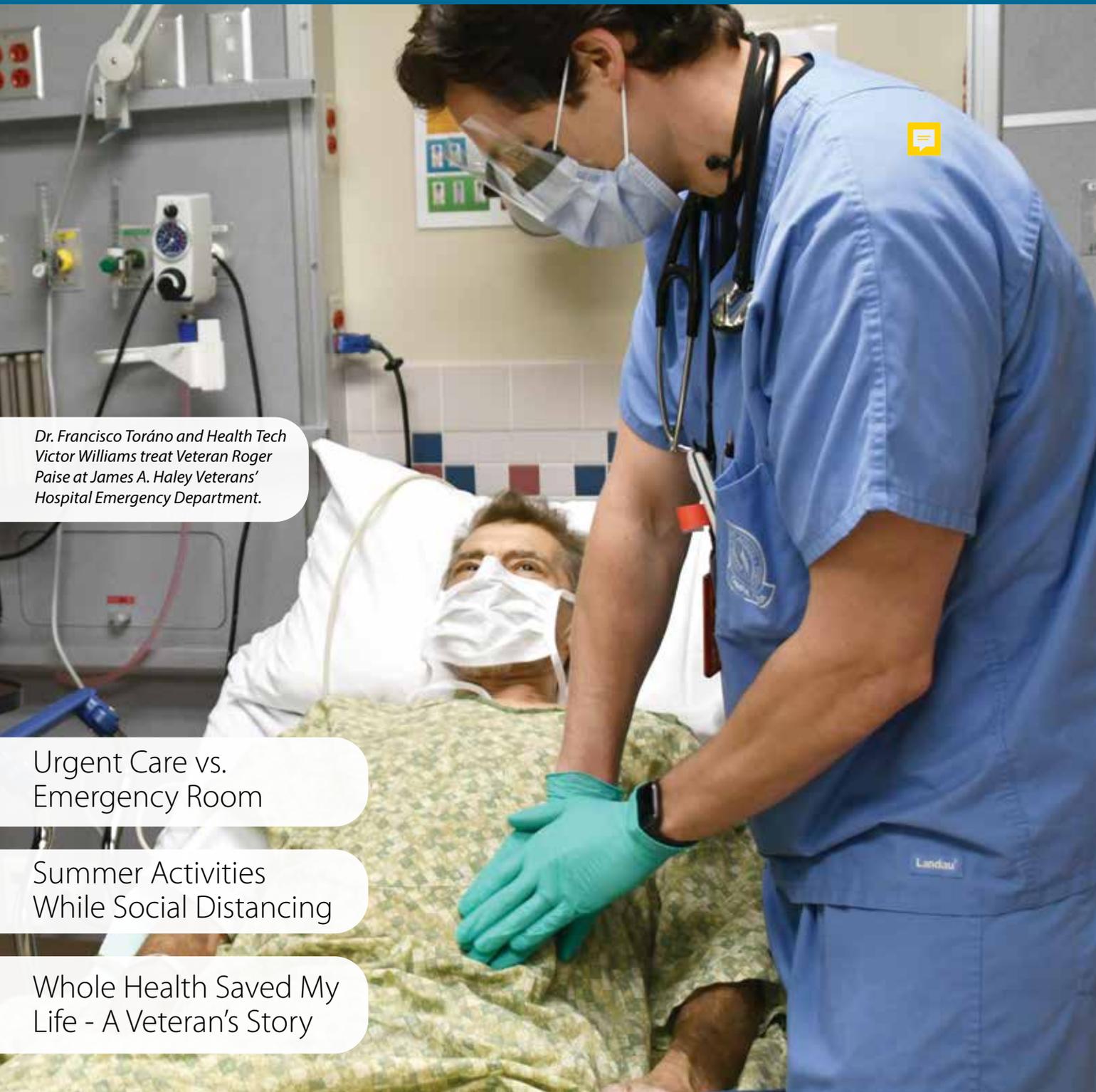


TAKE THIS ISSUE HOME!

SUMMER 2020

VETERANS Health MATTERS

Award Winning Wellness Magazine for **VISN 8** Veterans
in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico & the U.S. Virgin Islands



Dr. Francisco Toráno and Health Tech Victor Williams treat Veteran Roger Paize at James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital Emergency Department.

Urgent Care vs.
Emergency Room

Summer Activities
While Social Distancing

Whole Health Saved My
Life - A Veteran's Story

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Veterans Health Matters is a quarterly health and wellness magazine for Veterans produced by the VISN 8 Office of Communication. VISN 8 is the country's largest network of VA hospitals and clinics serving Veterans in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Your feedback is welcome. If you'd like to comment on the content, please e-mail or write to:

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To Our Readers



As summer arrives, staying healthy and living with the 'new normal' of COVID 19 are on everyone's minds. And that means many physical activities are difficult to do right now, like visiting a fitness facility or playing group sports. The good news is there are still plenty of options for safely exercising and moving your body in outdoor spaces. Check out page three for tips on enjoying outdoor summer activities while maintaining social distancing.

Do I need to visit an urgent care clinic, or should I go to the emergency room? Knowing which one to choose can be confusing. And when accidents happen or symptoms of serious illness occur, Veterans want to make the best choice to get the care they need. Check out pages four and five for some helpful guidance in choosing where to get the appropriate medical help when you need to decide right away.

More and more Veterans are experiencing how VA's Whole Health model of care is making a positive difference in their lives. Read on page six why one Veteran describes Whole Health as being a 'lifesaver.'

Finally, please enjoy the recipe for a healthy summer dessert along with this issue's word search puzzle, both found on page seven.

Be well and stay safe!

Miguel H. LaPuz, M.D., MBA
Network Director, VISN 8

Social Distancing & Cloth Face Covers

The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 can spread from a person before they have any



symptoms. To help prevent or reduce this spread, it's important to practice social distancing. Keep at least six feet of physical distance from others when outside your household. Avoid gathering in groups and visiting crowded places where it will be difficult to maintain a six foot physical distance.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also recommend wearing a cloth face mask or cover in public, especially where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. When you wear a cloth face mask, it protects others. When others wear one, it protects you. This is a 'win-win' for everyone.

You can make your own cloth face cover from items around your home, such as cotton t-shirts or bandanas. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick.

Healthy Summer Physical Activities

While social distancing

Staying physically active is one of the best ways to keep your body and mind healthy. But many physical activities are difficult to do right now with so many social distancing guidelines in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19. For example, visiting a fitness facility or playing group sports may not be possible this summer.

But that still leaves plenty of options for safely exercising and moving your body in outdoor open spaces. Plus, by being outside, there is an added mental health boost, especially if you can be where Mother Nature is on display, like parks, nature trails, beaches, and gardens.

Outdoor Activities to Enjoy While Social Distancing

- Walk or hike
- Jog
- Swim at the beach
- Paddle
- Cycle
- Garden
- Fish
- Golf
- Roller blade
- Yoga and tai chi
- Strength training



General Safety Tips

- **Prepare before you visit:** Make sure the park or outdoor recreation facility is open and whether or not the visitor centers, concessions, and bathroom facilities are also open. Check with your local health department and community or state leaders for the latest guidance on social distancing and staying safe.
- **Stay at least six feet apart from others:** If that's not possible due to over-crowding, choose a different outdoor location to visit that day.
- **Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds:** Do this after using the bathroom, before and after eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- **Wear a face covering:** Some recreational areas, along with local and state social distancing guidance, may require or strongly advise wearing one.

Some Activities

May Not Be Safe

Check with local facilities about the safety of visiting the following outdoor recreational facilities this summer. They may be too crowded and challenging to keep surfaces clean and disinfected.

- Playgrounds
- Swimming pools and water parks
- Amusement parks

Taking an online exercise class might be a good option also, especially when bad weather hits.

We're All in This Together

It's important that we all do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19. Try to limit social interactions when possible. Stay home if you're feeling sick and call your VA provider for the best way to manage your symptoms.

Urgent Care Clinic vs. Emergency Room

Which should I use?



Entrance of the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital Emergency Department.



Dr. Francisco Toráno and Health Tech Victor Williams treat Veteran Roger Paize at James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital Emergency Department.

By Ed Drohan, Public Affairs Specialist, JAHVH

When Congress passed the MISSION Act, it added a new benefit for Veterans who receive their health care through the VA. The additional benefit is the ability to use neighborhood Urgent Care Clinics without a referral from the VA. But when should you choose Urgent Care over a trip to the ER?

According to James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital Emergency Department Assistant Director Dr. Brian Coe, the answer depends on the severity of the health issue. That's especially true, considering that ERs can use their monitoring systems to track a patient's status much more so than a UCC.

"Patients who are really sick should not be in a UCC due to our (ER) monitoring capabilities," Coe said. "In the ER, we can manage anything that comes in."

Dr. Timothy McGuirk, JAHVH Emergency Department director, explained that UCC visits are appropriate for sprained or pulled muscles, low back pain, rashes, superficial lumps or skin infections, or medication refills. If somebody has chest pains, breathing trouble, major trauma, low or very high blood pressure, severe mental illness to include suicidal or homicidal thoughts, or any problem that could be threatening to life or limb, they should head to the nearest ER.



Another Urgent Care Option

Eligible Veterans can call the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center to speak with a nurse or provider for health advice if they have concerns or questions. They can also contact their primary care provider, either by phone or through My Health eVet secure messaging, if they have questions about their health care.



Urgent Care Clinic Eligibility

To be eligible for the UCC benefit under the MISSION Act, Veterans must be enrolled in the VA Health Care System AND have received care through the VA or a community provider within the past 24 months. An in-network urgent care provider must be used as well, and the Veteran must pay a VA copayment, if applicable. To find an in-network provider, go to www.va.gov/find-locations and select "Urgent Care" under facility type.

If a Veteran does visit a civilian hospital emergency room, they should also notify the VA Medical Center from which they receive care within 72 hours to ensure that proper payment is made to the hospital for the visit.

The Urgent Care benefit under the MISSION Act gives Veterans more flexibility in their health care access. This benefit can also help reduce over-crowding in emergency rooms when a visit is not necessary. Knowing when to use each will help Veterans take maximum advantage of that flexibility.



Watch the Video!

Check out the video, "Urgent Care or Emergency Care: Which Should I Use" at www.visn8.va.gov/VISN8/news/publications.asp.

Urgent Care

vs.

ER

When accidents happen or serious symptoms occur, deciding where to go 'in the moment' can be difficult. It's important to get the best care from the right place.

VA's Urgent Care Clinic benefit can be used to treat minor injuries and illnesses that are not life-threatening such as:



Sprained or pulled muscles



Eye irritation or ear infection



Low back pain



Rashes



Insect bite



Superficial lumps or bumps



Skin infections



Medication refills

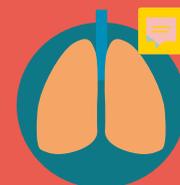
An emergency condition can threaten your life and needs immediate medical care at a hospital such as:



Chest pain / heart attack symptoms



Major trauma (eg. head injury)



Trouble breathing



Stroke symptoms



Low or very high blood pressure



Severe mental illness (eg. suicidal thoughts)



Broken bones



Spine injury, serious burns, etc.

If a Veteran is experiencing a life-threatening injury or condition, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department immediately. For more information on VA urgent care and emergency care services visit www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans.

Whole Health Saved My Life – A Veteran’s Story

By Jason Dangel, Deputy Communication Manager, VISN 8

For years, U.S. Navy Veteran Sam Martino struggled with deep depression and became more and more isolated from his family and friends. At his lowest point, Sam contemplated ending his life. Then he found Whole Health.

“Before I was engaged in Whole Health, I was in a really dark place,” said Martino. “I wanted to end my life, my physical being was wearing me out. I’ve had a lot of surgeries, I couldn’t walk on my own anymore, and I really did not want to be here.” Martino, who receives care at The Villages Outpatient Clinic operated by the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, said he was introduced to Whole Health by his psychologist, Dr. Susan Forbes.

Whole Health for a Whole You

Whole Health is VA’s cutting-edge approach to care that supports Veteran health and well-being. Whole Health centers around “what matters to you,” not “what is the matter with you.” This means a VA patient’s health team will get to know them as a person before working with them to develop a personalized health plan based on their values, needs, and goals.



Navy Veteran Sam Martino meets with his Whole Health coach Kelley Johnson at The Villages, Florida VA Outpatient Clinic. Martino credits Whole Health with saving his life. VA Photo by Joseph McKee, North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System



Dr. Forbes explained that the first time she met Mr. Martino, “he reported his struggle with depression for many years. He had a lot of physical problems, mobility problems, and was kind of defeated, really kind of down and just about to give up.” Forbes explained that she felt that he would greatly benefit from the program and connected him to Kelley Johnson, a Whole Health coach at the clinic.

Martino was skeptical at first, but slowly began to realize how Whole Health was making a positive difference in his life. Over time, he was able to manage his depression, became more confident, and started to go out to dinner with his wife again. He even started connecting with family and friends he had not spoken with in years. “My emotional state before being in the Whole Health program to now is just a world of difference,” he said. “I’m a different person. I’m not the same person who started in this program, and I thank God for that, I really do. Whole Health is just a lifesaver, and I wish everybody would try it.”

To watch the video version of this story visit <https://youtu.be/g9YrXnowLWU>.

To learn more about VA Whole Health visit www.va.gov/wholehealth.

Word Search

Find these words from the stories in this issue and other summer activities. Remember to look up, down, and backwards. Good luck!

BEACH	C	R	M	M	I	W	S	M	L	E
CORONAVIRUS	O	F	A	D	C	K	K	J	P	M
EMERGENCY	R	A	S	H	R	W	H	O	L	E
GARDEN	O	P	K	G	T	A	E	P	L	R
GOLF	N	W	B	A	B	L	A	B	N	G
HEALTHEVET	A	V	M	R	E	K	L	C	I	E
MASK	V	G	O	D	A	I	T	L	A	N
RASH	I	Q	O	E	C	N	H	E	R	C
SPRAIN	R	M	C	N	H	G	E	H	P	Y
SWIM	U	R	G	E	N	T	V	L	S	K
URGENT	S	X	G	N	F	P	E	J	L	T
WALKING	F	L	O	G	U	Z	T	H	A	M
WHOLE										

Peach Crumble

Ingredients

- 4 peaches (4 cups sliced)
- 2 tablespoons soft margarine
- 3/4 cup quick cooking oats
- 1/2 cup sugar
(reduce to 1/4 cup if desired)
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Wash then rub gently with a paper towel to remove the peach fuzz.
3. Slice the peaches and spread them on the bottom of a baking pan lightly coated with cooking spray.
4. Over low heat, melt the margarine in a saucepan, then mix with the rest of the ingredients in a small bowl until well blended.
5. Crumble the oat mixture evenly on top of the peaches.
6. Bake for 20 minutes.

Enjoy the peach crisp warm or cold with a dollop of unsweetened Greek yogurt.

Nutritional information: (6 servings). Per serving (no yogurt): 197 calories, 5 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 37 g carbohydrates, 3 g dietary fiber, 3 g protein, and 34 mg sodium.

Source: ChooseMyPlate. U.S. Department of Agriculture



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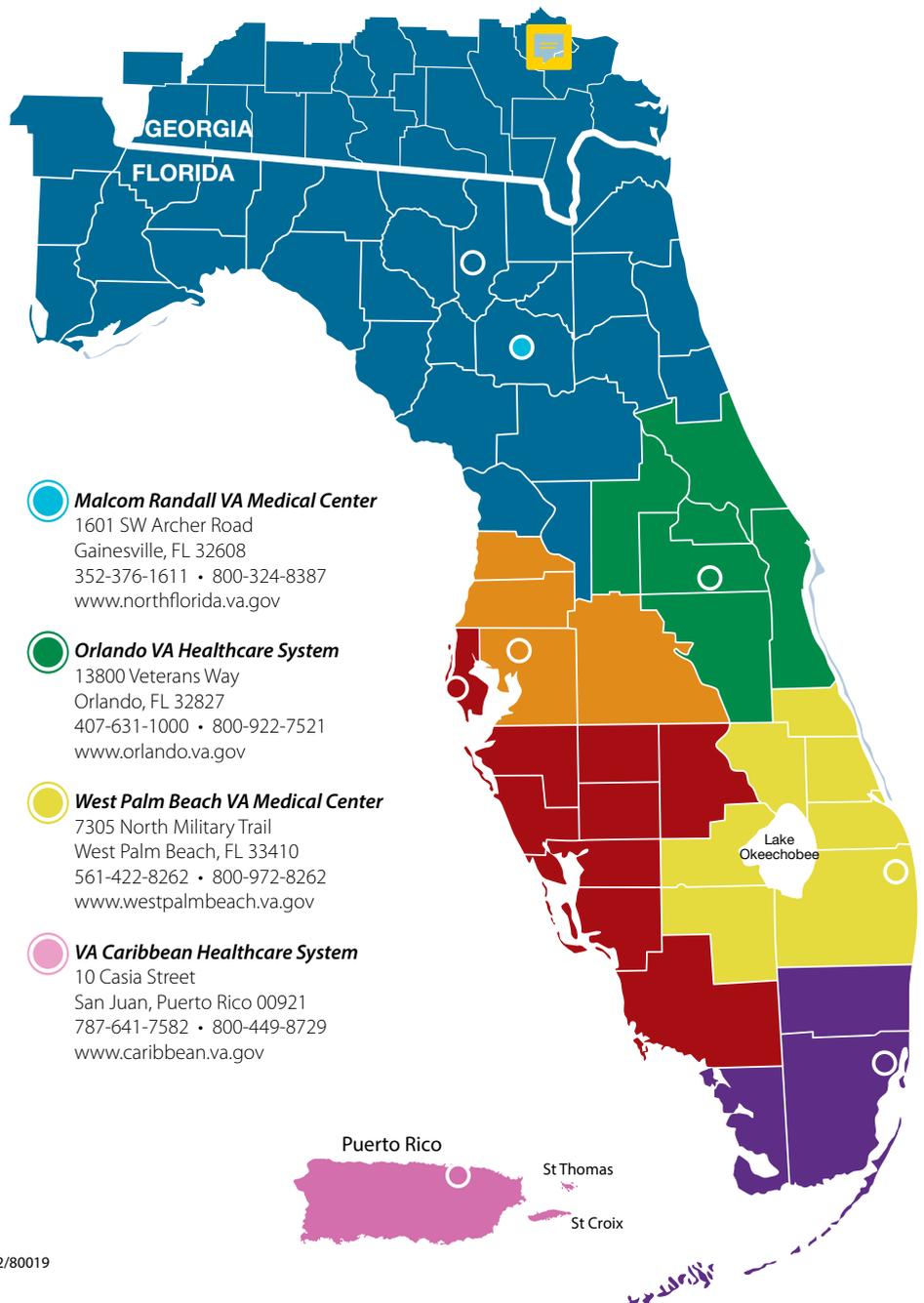
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VA Sunshine Healthcare Network
www.visn8.va.gov



Find a VA hospital or clinic near you:
www.va.gov/health/FindCare.asp



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