

VETERANS UPDATE

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VA RELEASES OPIOID PRESCRIBING RATES



Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David J. Shulkin announced Jan. 11 that VA has begun publicly posting information on opioids dispensed by VA, along with strategies to prescribe these medica-

tions appropriately and safely.

With this announcement, VA becomes the only health-care system in the country to post information on its opioid-prescribing rates.

The interactive map, located at

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 19, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Legal Help Day for Veterans, Classroom 2, 5th floor of the main hospital building.

Jan. 24, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Interfaith Service of Remembrance, 3rd Floor Chapel, main hospital building.

Feb. 16, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.
VBA & VAMC Joint Veterans Town Hall Meeting, 5th floor auditorium, main hospital building.

<https://www.data.va.gov/story/department-veterans-affairs-opioid-prescribing-data>, displays opioid-dispensing rates for each facility and how much those rates have changed over time.

HAVE A DENTAL EMERGENCY? DON'T WAIT!

If you are a Veteran who receives VA dental care and have a dental emergency, don't wait for your next scheduled appointment, get care as soon as possible!

The dental clinic at the Providence VA Medical Center reserves appointments for emergency use during clinic hours. Veterans can also visit a VA emergency room for emergency dental care during evenings, weekends and holidays.

VA offers dental care benefits to Veterans with a service-connected dental condition, former prisoners of war, and Veterans with service-connected disabilities who are rated at 100 percent or are unemployable and paid at the 100 percent rate. For more information, visit <https://www.va.gov/dental/>.



SERVING IN PROVIDENCE AND AFRICA



Dr. Robert Parker, a surgeon at the Providence VA Medical Center, lectures medical and surgical residents at the Providence VAMC Dec. 15, 2017. (Providence VA Medical Center photo by Kimberly DiDonato)

Service to something greater than one's self is something that sets Veterans apart.

VA employees serve those who served our country, and some serve in other ways, too, such as volunteering. Dr. Robert Parker, a surgeon at the Providence VA Medical Center, is one of them. He splits his time between Rhode Island and Kenya.

"I went to medical school because I wanted to deliver health care to populations without it," said Parker. "Medicine is a calling and I've seen how it can change the life of an individual, and entire communities, too."

Parker spent a year in Kenya, working on esophageal cancer research with Dr. Russ White, a thoracic surgeon associated with Brown University who spends the majority of his time at Tenwek Hospital in Kenya.

The connection enabled Parker and his wife, Andrea, to do their surgery residency training in Providence, where Parker did some training at the VA medical

center, and where he continued to work after residency.

In 2015, Parker moved to Kenya with his family to work at Tenwek, where he and his wife practice medicine and teach surgery.

"The challenges we face can be immense," said Parker, "but more incredible are the solutions we develop through partnerships with organizations from the community through global levels."



Dr. Robert Parker, a surgeon at the Providence VA Medical Center, center, performs surgery at Tenwek Hospital in Kenya. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Robert Parker)



Providence VA Medical Center

830 Chalkstone Ave
Providence, RI 02908
401-273-7100

Veteran's Crisis Line:
800-273-8255 press 1

www.providence.va.gov

Today Parker continues to serve both Veterans at the Providence VAMC, and patients in Kenya.

"I'm grateful to Brown University and the VA hospital in Providence," Parker said. "My work at VA allows us to volunteer, training local doctors and providing care for patients in Kenya who may not otherwise have access to the care they need."