

# HI veterinary clinics scheduled for much-needed facelift in '13

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HONOLULU -- Much-needed changes are coming to the veterinary treatment facilities at Fort Shafter and Schofield Barracks.

Both are scheduled to be renovated starting this year, with the Schofield location closing first, in March.

The Schofield Barracks VTF will close for several months beginning Feb. 28. There will be no appointments through March 8, while equipment is moved from the VTF to its temporary location, Building 934, which is adjacent to the current VTF on Duck Road. Beginning March 11, all services will be available to uniformed service members and their families from the VTF's temporary home. The VTF is scheduled to reopen in early June.

"The Schofield Barracks renovation provides a much-needed facelift to an older building that is currently in poor condition," said Lt. Col. Mark Richey, commander, Public Health Command District--Central Pacific, which oversees all veterinary services in the region. "The project scope does not allow for an increase in square footage, but will focus on structural and cosmetic improvements, and on more efficient use of the existing space to maximize the out-patient preventive veterinary care that is provided to the Schofield Barracks community.

"The end result will be a modern, attractive facility with improved traffic flow, and additional treatment areas," Richey continued.

Fort Shafter's VTF is scheduled to close in early September and is expected to reopen June 2014.

"(Even though) the Fort Shafter clinic will shut down completely, clients will be able to use the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam clinic, Schofield's new facility, or Marine Corps Base Hawaii-Kaneohe Bay's s veterinary facility during the construction time," said Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Theiss, operations noncommissioned officer, PHCD-CENPAC.

Veterinarians and animal techs who work at Fort Shafter's VTF will be temporarily reassigned to JBPHH's VTF to accommodate the increase in pets needing appointments displaced from Fort Shafter.

Public Health Command's mission responsibilities include health care for military working

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dogs, installation food protection and surveillance, and on a space and resource available basis, preventive medical health care for pets.

"The intent and end result of the facility renovation at Fort Shafter is to double the space for clinical veterinary care and to provide improved full-service medical care to the district's military working dogs (from) MCBH-KB, JBPHH and (all) U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii installations," Richey explained. "This facility will allow us to provide better care and more services in one centralized location for MWDs from all military installations within the local geographic area rather than duplicating services.

"It also results in improved fiscal management and efficient use of veterinary healthcare provider resources, which is a model for the future for Public Health Command veterinary facilities that serve larger Department of Defense communities, (such as Hawaii,)" Richey continued.

Military working dogs aren't the only four-legged patients that will benefit from the renovations.

"The (Fort Shafter) facility will also serve as a training center for Army veterinarians and animal care specialists, and will allow for additional capacity for privately-owned animal care," Richey said. "Expanded capabilities of the updated facility include short and long-term hospitalizations, x-rays, ultrasounds, major surgical support to include orthopedic and neurologic, endoscopy/laparoscopy, a full laboratory and dental care."

The veterinarian staff is asking their customers to be patient during the construction.

"The upgraded facilities will be well worth the wait and the inconvenience," Theiss said. "Customers can expect (the renovated) facilities to have much better flow, an increased access to care, and facilities with better capabilities to meet the clients' needs. The new facilities will give customers confidence that they are bringing their animals somewhere that they are going to get the best care possible."

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