

MONTANA VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

# Veteran Orientation Handbook

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
VA Montana Health Care System

PUBLISHED 2023

**THANK YOU FOR  
TRUSTING US WITH  
YOUR HEALTH CARE**



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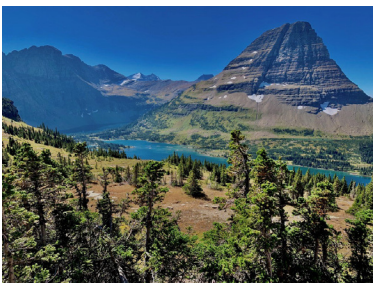
# QR CODES

This edition includes Quick Response or QR Codes for easier access to referenced websites. To be able to use these QR Codes, just download a QR code reading app from your Android or Apple App Store to your Smart Phone. Then use the app to scan the QR Code.

## For example:

Apply for VA Benefits Online Information	
<p><b>Apply for VA Benefits:</b> <a href="https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction">https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction</a></p>	 <small>Apply for VA health care</small>

All listed information, including website addresses and QR Codes, were accurate at the time of the publication.



Cover Photo by Tim Weidlich

# Message from Montana VA Health Care System Executive Director

As the Director of Montana VA Health Care System, it is my honor to lead our staff and volunteers in fulfilling our mission to serve Veterans. We have the privilege of providing safe, high quality care to the 47,000 Veterans who use Montana VA Health Care System. Not only are we able to serve our nation's heroes, but in many cases, we get to know our Veterans personally. These valued relationships make the experience for how we care for our Veterans our highest priority. Montana VA Health Care System provides services that meet the unique experiences and needs of Veterans. It is crucial that our Veterans have trust and faith in everything we do. As an organization our expectation is that every Veteran visit and interaction is conducted with excellence, respect, compassion and commitment.

If there is a Veteran or family member that does not find excellence, respect, compassion and commitment, please let us know by contacting the Veterans Experience Office at (406) 447-7990.

Sincerely,

Judy Hayman, Ph.D.

Executive Director



# About the Montana VA Health Care System

Montana is the fourth largest state geographically and has one of the highest per capita w Veteran populations in the U.S.; about 1 in 10 residents (9.4%) are Veterans. The Montana VA Health Care System (MTVAHCS) serves approximately 38,000 of the 47,000 enrolled Veterans across Montana—an area roughly 147,000 square miles in size. Veterans are cared for by a staff of nearly 1,400 at 18 sites of care across the state.

MTVAHCS provides healthcare to Veterans across Montana through a series of Community-Based Clinics (VA Clinics), a VA Health Care Center (HCC), an acute care medical center (at Fort Harrison outside of Helena), a nationally acclaimed sleep center, the Miles City Community Living Center (Montana VA's only nursing home), and robust telehealth services.

VA Clinics (formerly known as Community Based Outpatient Clinics or CBOCs) are located in Butte, Bozeman, Cut Bank, Glasgow, Glendive, Great Falls, Hamilton, Havre, Kalispell, Lewistown, Miles City and Missoula.

There is a Health Care Center (HCC) located in Billings that provides primary and specialty care for the largest metro area in Montana. In Billings, Veterans can access services such as outpatient surgical, physical therapy, audiology, dispensing pharmacy, primary care, behavioral health, and more. The Billings HCC also fills some of the need for outpatient specialty and surgical care for the vast rural area of the eastern half of Montana. Billings' secondary service area includes north central/northeastern Wyoming.

Fort Harrison VA Medical Center (VAMC) has a 29-bed acute care, medical/surgical facility which includes six Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds and offers a broad range of acute, chronic, and specialized inpatient and outpatient services for Veterans. Some of the outpatient services available at Fort Harrison include: Dermatology, Neurology, Eye and Low Vision, Podiatry, Nutrition, Physical Therapy, Amputee, Pain, Mental Health (individual and group), MOVE, Primary Care, Education, Occupational Therapy, and more. Fort Harrison operates a 24-bed residential rehabilitation unit for PTSD and substance abuse treatment.

A Primary Care Telehealth Outreach Clinic is located in Plentywood. Staff and contract specialists visit these clinics regularly and provide access to specialty care as needed. There is also a virtual appointment cube with the ATLAS (Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations--ATLAS) program located in Eureka.

A Community Living Center (CLC) in Miles City provides general and ventilator-dependent care.

All Veterans have access to telehealth services at all sites of care. Some of the available services include: Dermatology, Neurology, Eye and Low Vision, Podiatry, Nutrition, Physical Therapy, Amputee, Pain, Mental Health (individual and group), MOVE, Primary Care, Education, Occupational Therapy and more.

Another service available to all Veterans is VA Video Connect. This virtual option enables Veterans to connect with a primary or specialty care provider from the comfort of their home.

## Understanding/ Accessing Federal Benefits




The screenshot shows the top of the eBenefits website. On the left is the eBenefits logo with the tagline "My Gateway to Benefit Information". In the center are the seals of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense, with the text "A Service of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense". On the right are "Log in" and "Register" buttons. Below this is a navigation menu with links for "Apply", "Manage", "Learn", "National Resource Directory", "Employment Center", and "Contact", along with a search icon. A blue banner below the menu contains text about outage events and security. Below the banner is a dark blue section titled "What do you want to do?" with three buttons: "Apply", "Manage Benefits", and "Manage Health". A small box on the right of this section says "Need help? Appoint a claims agent, attorney, or Veteran Service Organization (VSO) to assist you."

### ABOUT VA/DOD EBENEFITS

Welcome to eBenefits! This site is the result of a collaboration between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD). We serve Veterans, Service members, Wounded Warriors, their family members, and their authorized caregivers.

#### What We Offer You

- A secure environment where you can safely access your personal information and perform self-service tasks.
- Applications (online and PDF) for disability compensation and various benefits.
- Employment resources.
- A personalized Dashboard that you can customize to suit your preferences and information needs.
- Access to the National Resource Directory, which enables you to find links to resource based on subjects that interest you.
- To register for your free account, you need a DS Logon.

eBenefits Online Resources		
 VA eBenefits Website	 DS Logon	 Veterans Benefits Book
<b>VA eBenefits:</b> <a href="https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage">https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage</a>	<b>DS Logon:</b> <a href="https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement/authenticate.do?execution=e1s1">https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement/authenticate.do?execution=e1s1</a>	<b>Information regarding Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors is available online at:</b> <a href="https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp">https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp</a>



# Who is Eligible for VA Health Care Benefits?



VA provides world-class health care to eligible Veterans. The Veterans Health Administration is America's largest integrated health care system, with more than 1,200 sites of care, and it is consistently ranked among the nation's top health care providers.

Many Veterans may be eligible for VA health care. Enrollment in VA health care satisfies your Affordable Care Act health coverage requirement — no add-on insurance plan is needed.

## VA encourages you to explore your health care benefits, including the following services:

- All enrolled Veterans have access to VA's comprehensive medical benefits package including preventive, primary, and specialty care; prescriptions; mental health care; home health care; geriatrics and extended care; medical equipment and prosthetics; and more.
- Most Veterans qualify for cost-free health care services, although some Veterans must pay modest copays for health care or prescriptions.
- Women Veterans can receive primary care, breast and cervical cancer screenings, prenatal care, maternity care coverage, and other gender-specific services.
- Eligible Veterans — and their family members — may visit VA's many community-based Vet Centers, which provide no-cost counseling, outreach, and referral services to help the whole family adjust to life after deployment. Learn more about eligibility for Vet Center Services.
- Combat Veterans who were discharged or released from active service on or after Jan. 28, 2003, are eligible to enroll in the VA healthcare system for five years from the date of their discharge or release, regardless of their disability claim status.
  - » Combat Veterans who enroll with VA under this enhanced Combat Veteran authority will continue to be enrolled after their enhanced eligibility period ends, although their enrollment priority group may change.
  - » Many Combat Veterans applying after their five-year special enrollment period ends are eligible for enrollment and are encouraged to learn more about these and other health care benefits on VA's health benefits page.

# How to Apply for VA Health Care

Apply for VA Health Care Resources			
 <a href="#">Apply for VA health care</a>	 <a href="#">Find VA Locations</a>		 <a href="#">Find a VA Form</a>
<b>Apply Online</b> The fastest and easiest way to get access to your benefits is to apply using your computer or mobile device. <a href="https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction/">www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction/</a>	<b>Apply In Person</b> Visit the nearest VA medical center or clinic. <a href="https://www.va.gov/find-locations/">https://www.va.gov/find-locations/</a>	<b>Apply By Phone</b> Call 1-877-222-8387 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST.	<b>Apply By Mail</b> Print, fill out, and mail VA Form 10-10EZ to: Health Eligibility Center Enrollment Eligibility Center 2957 Clairmont Road, Suite 200 Atlanta, GA 30329-1647 <a href="https://www.va.gov/find-forms/">https://www.va.gov/find-forms/</a>

## VA REQUIREMENTS

### Military Service Requirements

- Veterans must have served in the active military, naval, or air service and separated under any conditions other than dishonorable.
- Most Veterans who enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980, or who entered active duty after Oct. 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty. This includes current and former members of the Reserve or National Guard called to active duty by a federal order.

### Application Requirements

- Social Security number
- Proof of discharge papers such as DD-214
- Any additional health insurance information, including coverage through a spouse or domestic partner
- Wage and financial information, including previous calendar-year gross income for the Veteran, spouse, and dependent children
- Medical deductions, funeral expenses, and educational expenses

# How Do I File a VA Disability Claim?

Veterans who have disabilities, medical conditions or injuries incurred or aggravated during active military service — no matter when or where they served — may be eligible to receive tax-free monthly benefits.

## Disability Claim Online Resource

Service members may also file a claim for disability benefits up to 180 days before leaving the military. Visit the Pre-Discharge Claim webpage for more information.

<https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file/pre-discharge-claim/>



Pre-discharge claim

To support a claim for service connection, the evidence must show the following:

- You have a current physical or mental disability.
- You had an injury or disease in service or experienced an event in service that caused or aggravated an injury or disease.
- There is a link between your current disability and the event, injury or disease in military service.

If you have any of the following relevant items, you should submit them with your claim:

- Discharge or separation papers (the DD-214 or equivalent). Service treatment records and supporting statements.
- Private medical provider records and hospital reports.

## VA APPLICATION PROCESS

The simplest way to obtain a VA decision on a compensation claim is to submit all supporting documents and evidence together in a Fully Developed Claim (FDC) online at VA.gov or by mail. Typical steps to apply online include:

- Find an accredited attorney, claims agent or Veterans Service Officer (VSO) to assist you with your claim.
- Establish a profile and apply on VA.gov.
- Collect and upload your military, medical and other records.
- Gather private medical records.
- Gather the required evidence for each claimed disability.
- Scan and upload all documents and then click “Submit.”
- Track the status of your claim on VA.gov.

## Submitting a Claim Online

Submit a Fully Developed Claim Online. If you want to file a Fully Developed Claim but aren't quite ready, you can sign in and start a Fully Developed Claim, save your incomplete application, gather your documents and submit your claim up to one year later. Your effective date will be preserved if the claim is submitted within one year.

<https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/evidence-needed/fully-developed-claims/>



Fully Developed Claim (FDC) Program

# Enrollment Priority Groups (PGs)

## WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

When you apply for VA health care, we'll assign you to 1 of 8 priority groups. This system helps to make sure that Veterans who need care right away can get signed up quickly. It also helps to make sure we can provide high quality care to all Veterans enrolled in the VA health care program.

### Your priority group may affect:

- How soon we sign you up for health care benefits, and
- How much (if anything) you'll have to pay toward the cost of your care

### We'll base your priority group on:

- Your military service history, and
- Your disability rating, and
- Your income level, and
- Whether or not you qualify for Medicaid, and
- Other benefits you may be receiving (like VA pension benefits)
- We assign Veterans with service-connected disabilities the highest priority. We assign the lowest priority to Veterans who earn a higher income and who don't have any service-connected disabilities qualifying them for disability compensation (monthly payments).

If you qualify for more than one priority group, we'll assign you to the highest one.

### Priority Group 1

- Veterans with VA-rated service-connected disabilities at 50% or more disabling.
- Veterans determined by the VA to be unemployable due to service-connected conditions.
- Veterans awarded the Medal of Honor (MOH).

### Priority Group 2

- Veterans with VA-rated service-connected disabilities 30% or 40% disabling.

### Priority Group 3

- Veterans who are former Prisoners of War (POWs).
- Veterans awarded a Purple Heart medal.-Veterans whose discharge was for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.
- Veterans with VA-rated service-connected disabilities 10 to 20% disabling.
- Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38 U.S.C., 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation."

## Priority Group 4

- Veterans who receive aid and attendance or housebound benefits from VA.
- Veterans who are VA-determined to be catastrophically disabled.

## Priority Group 5

- Non service-connected Veterans and non-compensable service-connected Veterans rated 0% disabled by VA with yearly income and/or net worth below the VA income limit and geographically adjusted income limit for their resident location.
- Veterans who receive VA pension benefits.
- Veterans eligible for Medicaid programs.

## Priority Group 6

- Compensable 0% service-connected Veterans.
- Veterans exposed to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- Project 112/SHAD participants.
- Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975.
- Veterans of the Persian Gulf War who served between Aug. 2, 1990 and Nov. 11, 1998.
- Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for not fewer than 30 days beginning Aug. 1, 1953 and Dec. 31, 1987.
- Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after Nov. 11, 1998 as follows:
  - » Currently enrolled Veterans and new enrollees who were discharged from active duty on or after Jan. 28, 2003, are eligible for enhanced benefits for five years after discharge.
  - » Combat Veterans who were discharged between Jan. 2009 and Jan. 2011, and did not enroll in the VA health care during their five-year period of eligibility have an additional one-year to enroll and receive care.

## We may also assign you to Priority Group 6 if you meet all of the requirements listed below:

- Are currently or newly enrolled in VA health care, and Served in a theater of combat operations after Nov 11, 1998, or were discharged from active duty on or after Jan 28, 2003, and
- Were discharged less than 5 years ago.

Note: As a returning combat Veteran, you're eligible for these enhanced benefits for five years after discharge. At the end of this enhanced enrollment period, we'll assign you to the highest priority group you qualify for at that time.

## Priority Group 7

- Veterans with gross-household income below the geographically adjusted VA income limit

## Priority Group 8

- Veterans with gross-household income above the geographically adjusted VA income limit and who agrees to pay copays

### Priority Group Online Information

To find out more, go to:

<https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/priority-groups/>



Priority Groups (PGs)

# VA Health Care Copayments

## NO COPAYMENTS ARE CHARGED FOR THE TREATMENT OF SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITIONS.

### Outpatient Copayments\*

- \$15 - Primary Care Services: Service received in a primary care setting to address overall patient care.
- \$50 - Specialty Care Services: For the most part, service received in a specialty clinic by a specialist with a narrow health care/disease focus, such as:
  - » Podiatry
  - » Radiology
  - » Audiology
  - » Ophthalmology
  - » Cardiology
  - » Special tests, like:
    - MRI
    - CAT scan
    - Nuclear Medicine studies

\*There is no copay required for preventive care, such as screenings and immunizations.

\*Veterans who have a service-connected rating of 10% or higher are not required to pay a copayment for outpatient medical care.

### Medication Copay Rates (2022)\*

For the treatment of non-service-connected conditions, there is a copayment. Copayment is based on eligibility status and the number of days of medication received. Copayment is determined by the 'tier' the medication falls in. Please note: copays and tiers may change every year.

	1-30 day supply	31-60 day supply	61-90 day supply
<b>Tier 1 (preferred generics)</b>	\$5	\$10	\$15
<b>Tier 2 (non-preferred generics and some over the counter meds)</b>	\$8	\$16	\$24
<b>Tier 3 (Brand name)</b>	\$11	\$22	\$33
<b>\$700 Medication Copayment Cap</b>			

\*Veterans who have a service-connected rating of 50% or higher are not required to pay a copayment for any medications.

\*Veterans who have a service-connected rating of 40% or less, and whose income is at or below the applicable national income thresholds may wish to complete a medication copayment exemption test.


## Inpatient Copayments

Inpatient care occurs when a patient’s condition requires admission to a hospital. There are two inpatient copayment rates: the full rate and the reduced rate. Veterans living in high cost areas may qualify for a reduced inpatient copayment rate. Copayment rates for an inpatient hospitals stay are listed in the table below.

NOTE: Veterans who have a service-connected disability rating of 10% or higher are not required to pay a copayment for inpatient medical care.

Copayment Rates for an Inpatient Hospital Stay		
Veteran Priority Groups	Copay (2022)	Period of Service/Care
<b>Priority Group 7 Veterans</b> Veterans with gross household incomes below the geographically adjusted VA income limits for their resident location and who agree to pay copayments.	\$311.20	First 90 days of care during a 365-day period
	\$155.60	Each additional 90 days of care during a 365-day period
	\$2	Per day charge
<b>Priority Group 8 Veterans</b> Veterans with gross household incomes above the geographically adjusted VA income limits for their resident location, who agree to pay copayments, and meet other specific enrollment and service-connected eligibility criteria.	\$1,556	First 90 days of care during a 365-day period
	\$778	Each additional 90 days of care during a 365-day period
	\$10	Per day charge

This copay is charged in addition to a standard copay for each 90-days of care within a 365-day period, no matter the level of service (ICU, surgery, or general medical care); a per diem charge is assessed for each day in the hospital. If there are any copay or VA billing statement questions, please contact our local facility Revenue Customer Service at (406) 447-7844.

VA Health Benefit Costs Online Resource	
<p>The inpatient co-pay rates change each year. They can be found online at: <a href="http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/cost">www.va.gov/healthbenefits/cost</a> or by calling toll free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) Monday through Friday 6 am to 6 pm MST.</p>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">             VA Health              Benefit Costs              Website           </div>



## Geriatric and Extended Care Copayments

You do not need to pay a copay for geriatric care (also called elder care) or extended care (also called long-term care) for the first 21 days of care in a 12-month period. Starting on the 22nd day of care, your copays are based on 2 factors:

- The level of care you're receiving, and
- The financial information you provide on your Application for Extended Care Services (VA Form 10-10EC).

This co-pay is based on three levels of care:



- Inpatient: Up to \$97 per day:
  - » Short-term or long-term stays in a community living center (formerly called nursing homes).
  - » Overnight respite care (in-home or on-site care designed to give family caregivers a break, available up to 30 days each calendar year).
  - » Overnight geriatric evaluations (evaluations by a team of health care providers to help you and your family decide on a care plan).
- Outpatient: Up to \$15 per day:
  - » Adult day health care (care in your home or at a facility that provides daytime social activities, companionship, recreation, care, and support)
  - » Daily respite care (in-home or onsite care designed to give family caregivers a break, available up to 30 days each calendar year)
  - » Geriatric evaluations that don't require an overnight stay (evaluations by a team of healthcare providers to help you and your family decide on a care plan)
- Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans: Up to \$5 per day:
  - » Short-term rehabilitation
  - » Long-term maintenance care

Extended Care Online Resources	
 VA Form 10-10EC	 Geriatrics and Extended Care
<b>Application for Extended Care Services (VA Form 10-10EC)</b> <a href="https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-10EC%20Fill%202017.pdf">https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-10EC%20Fill%202017.pdf</a>	<b>For more information about Geriatrics and Extended Care, visit:</b> <a href="https://www.patientcare.va.gov/geriatrics.asp">https://www.patientcare.va.gov/geriatrics.asp</a>



# VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP)

Department of Veterans Affairs provides comprehensive dental care to Veterans who meet eligibility standards (for example, former Prisoners of War and those 100% or greater service-connected); however, the benefit is not available to many Veterans. To check on your specific eligibility, please go to:

VA Dental Insurance Program Online Resources	
 <small>VA Dental Benefits Eligibility</small>	
<b>VA Dental Benefits Eligibility</b> <a href="https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB10-442_dental_benefits_for_veterans.pdf">https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB10-442_dental_benefits_for_veterans.pdf</a>	<b>VA Dental Insurance Program VADIP Website:</b> <a href="http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/VADIP">For more information, visit: www.va.gov/healthbenefits/VADIP.</a>

VA would like all Veterans and beneficiaries to have access to good oral health. Good oral health is more than just a nice smile or ability to chew favorite foods – it impacts a person’s overall health throughout his or her life.

VA’s Dental Insurance Program (VADIP) offers enrolled Veterans and beneficiaries of VA’s Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA) the opportunity to purchase dental insurance at a reduced cost.



VA has selected Delta Dental of California and MetLife to once again offer private insurance coverage for VADIP.

## Eligibility for VADIP:

Veterans enrolled in the VA health care program and CHAMPVA beneficiaries are eligible to participate in VADIP. Participation in VADIP does not affect Veterans’ eligibility for VA dental services and treatment.

Dependents of Veterans, except those eligible under CHAMPVA, are not eligible for VADIP; however, the insurance carriers may offer dependents separate coverage options.

For more information about available coverage, please contact the these insurance providers:

VA Dental Insurance Program Provider Online Information	
 <small>Delta Dental Website</small>	 <small>MetLife Dental Website</small>
<b>Delta Dental</b> <a href="https://feds.deltadentalins.com/vadip/index.php">https://feds.deltadentalins.com/vadip/index.php</a> Phone: 1-855-370-3303	<b>MetLife Dental</b> <a href="https://www.metlife.com/vadip/">https://www.metlife.com/vadip/</a> Phone: 1-888-310-1681

Once enrollments begin, qualified individuals can enroll at any time - there is no specific enrollment period.

If you want to know if you qualify for Dental Services, please contact our Health Benefits Business Office at 406-447-7350, Monday-Friday from 8 am to 4:30 pm; one of our Health Benefits Assistants can review your eligibility with you.

# Other Health Insurance Coverages

## HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Health insurance can be obtained by you or your spouse through an employer, in the private market, or a federal agency other than VA.

### **The benefits of having private health insurance include:**

- It may reduce or eliminate your VA copayments
- It does not affect your eligibility for VA care
- It allows VA to directly bill your insurance company for care for a non service-connected condition

VA can bill your health insurance for care for a non service-connected condition, whether that care is provided directly by VA or through a community provider. You are required to provide information to VA about your health insurance coverage, including coverage provided under your spouse's policies.

While many Veterans qualify for free health care services based on a VA compensable service-connected condition or other special eligibilities, most Veterans are required to complete a financial assessment or means test at the time of enrollment to determine if they qualify for free health care services. Veterans whose income exceeds VA income limits, as well as those who choose not to complete the financial assessment at the time of enrollment, must agree to pay required VA copayments for health care services to become eligible for VA health care services. The copayment amount is based on the type of health care service you receive and your financial situation.

You also have the option to use a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) for medical care and services for nonservice connected conditions. HDHPs are usually linked to a Health Savings Account (HSA) which can be used to pay VA copayments. VA can bill your insurance company directly or can be reimbursed using a linked Health Reimbursement Account (HRA).

## TRICARE

If you are eligible for VA care and TRICARE (called "dual eligibility") and seek treatment at a VA health care facility for nonservice-connected conditions, you can choose whether to use your VA benefits or TRICARE benefits for each visit. Our staff will ask you which benefit you want to use prior to each visit, and if you choose to use TRICARE benefits, you, as the beneficiary, will be asked to complete a TRICARE Affirmation Form. In many instances, VA costs and benefits for non-service-connected conditions will be different from TRICARE costs and benefits. Covered cost shares, benefits, and services will vary depending on your TRICARE plan, and our staff can assist you with determining the best option for each visit.

# MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

While VA bills other health insurance for care for non-service-connected conditions, VA does not bill Medicare or Medicaid for such care.

When a Veteran receives emergency community care for non-service-connected illnesses, the community provider must bill the other health insurance, including Medicare or Medicaid, prior to billing VA. In these instances, you will be responsible for any cost shares, including copayments and deductibles, required by the insurance.

## You may choose to sign up for Medicare for several reasons:

- VA health care benefits eligibility may change over time, so having access to both Medicare and VA health benefits could provide you with more robust health care coverage.
- Having Medicare means you are covered if you need to go to a non-VA hospital or doctor—so you have more options to choose from.
- If you delay signing up for Medicare Part B (coverage for doctors and outpatient services) and then need to sign up later because you lose your VA health care benefits or need more choice in care options, you will pay a penalty. This penalty gets bigger each year you delay signing up—and you will pay it every year for the rest of your life.
- If you sign up for Medicare Part D (coverage for prescription drugs), you will be able to use it to get medicine from non-VA doctors and fill your prescriptions at your local pharmacy instead of through the VA mail-order service. But you should know that VA prescription drug coverage is better than Medicare coverage—and there is no penalty for delaying Medicare Part D.

# Community Care: Care in the Community

## COMMUNITY CARE ELIGIBILITY

Veterans may be eligible for care through a provider in their local community depending on their health care needs or circumstances, and if they meet specific eligibility criteria. Even if a Veteran is eligible for community care, they generally still have the option to receive care from a VA medical facility.

In most cases, Veterans must receive approval from VA before receiving care from a community provider to avoid being billed for the care. VA staff members generally make all eligibility determinations for community care.

## Please note the following about eligibility for community care:

- Veterans must receive approval from VA prior to obtaining care from a community provider, in most circumstances.
- Veterans must either be enrolled in VA health care or be eligible for VA care without needing to enroll to be eligible for community care.
- Eligibility for community care will continue to be dependent upon a Veteran's individual health care needs or circumstances.
- VA staff members generally make all eligibility determinations.

### Care in the Community Program Online Information

#### Care in the Community Program

If there are any questions concerning Community Care consults, please contact the Community Care Consult Call Center at 406-447-7400, Monday-Friday, from 8am to 4pm, or visit the Community Care National Program website at: [https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/General\\_Care.asp](https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/General_Care.asp).



Community Care Program

## Primary Care & Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT)

### WHAT IS PACT?

Each patient has one team assigned to his/her care. Primary care providers are responsible for the overall health care of their assigned patients. They refer patients to specialists as needed.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO MY FIRST VISIT?

- Medical Record: Bring a copy of your medical record from your current doctor, if he/she is not a VA provider.
- List of Medicines: Bring a list of each medicine you take - both prescribed and over-the-counter. The list needs to include the dose you take and how often you take each medicine.
- List of allergies
- List of immunizations
- List of health issues (most important listed first)

### WHAT HAPPENS AT MY FIRST PRIMARY CARE VISIT?

**The provider does a complete medical history and physical exam - this includes:**

- a physical exam
- health care screening
- your immunization history and needs

#### **Based on your needs:**

- prescriptions are ordered, so you can obtain them at the VA Pharmacy (more information on page 62)
- diagnostic tests or blood work may be ordered
- referrals for other care and evaluation

#### **How long will the first visit take?**

- Plan to spend at least 1 hour with your Primary Care Provider at your first visit.

#### **Be prepared for your health care visit:**

- See page 28 for a list to help you prepare for your first health care visit.

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT A SCHEDULED PRIMARY CARE APPOINTMENT?

- If you are to have labs or x-rays done for a visit, plan to have testing done about a week before your scheduled appointment.
- Arrive 15 minutes before your appointment is scheduled.
- A nurse will do a pre-assessment.
- Bring your medicine list and/or bottles of medicines with you – even if prescribed by a non-VA doctor. Be sure to include over-the-counter medicine you use on a regular basis.

If you have diabetes, or high blood pressure, bring your home glucose record and blood pressure record with you.

## CAN I CHANGE THE SITE WHERE I GET MY PRIMARY CARE?

Yes. Discuss this with your primary care provider. He/she will coordinate your request through the Administrative Officer for Primary Care.

## CAN I CHANGE MY PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER?

Yes. You can request to change your provider. We encourage you to discuss any concerns you have with your current provider first to see if any issues can be resolved.

If you cannot reach an agreement, contact one of the front line medical support assistants at your clinic and complete a change request or call the Patient Advocate at 406-447-7990. Either will be happy to assist you in finding another provider.

## PACT TEAM MEMBERS:

- Primary Care Provider: Physician, Nurse Practitioner (NP) or Physician Assistant (PA)
- Nurse Care Manager: Registered Nurse (RN)
- Clinical Associate: Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) or Health Technician (HT)
- Administrative clerk: Medical Support Assistant (MSA)

## OTHERS IN PRIMARY CARE:

- Social workers
- Dietitians
- Clinical Pharmacy Specialist
- Peer Health Coaches
- Mental Health (PC-MHI) – Primary Care-Mental Health Integration
- VA Clinics:
  - » Phlebotomist
  - » Telehealth Technicians

# WHAT IS A PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM (PACT)?

A team of health care professionals who work with you to plan all your health and wellness care. Your team focuses on:

- Partnerships between you and your health care team
- Access to care using diverse methods
- Coordinated care among team members
- Team-based care with you as the center of the PACT

## PACT = PARTNERSHIP

What does this partnership mean to you? You will partner with your health care team to make decisions about your health and wellness. Rather than having a focus on an illness or an episode of care, your team will focus on your overall health. There is a much greater emphasis placed on wellness, prevention and health promotion through:

- Early detection screenings
- Preventive or wellness care services
- Educational materials
- Lifestyle coaching
- Use of technology to give you greater access to care and information

## PACT = ACCESS TO CARE

PACT is designed to improve your access to care. You will have scheduled visits with your primary care provider. You may also schedule visits with other members of your health team. You also have access to group clinics and educational programs. You can contact your PACT by phone, and through My HealtheVet's online Secure Messaging feature.

## PACT = COORDINATED CARE

Your PACT coordinates all aspects of your care. Each member of your team has a clearly defined role and knows how to relate to other members of the team. The key is open and frequent communication among team members and with you.

Team members will meet with you and with each other to discuss your health care goals and progress. Sometimes additional services are needed that aren't available from the PACT. If needed, your team will coordinate any transition in care that is required by staff outside primary care.

## PACT = TEAM BASED CARE

The fourth component of PACT is the concept of team-based care. Patients are at the center of their PACT. If additional services are needed to meet your health care goals and needs, other clinicians are called in to help. This may include social workers, dietitians, pharmacists, mental health practitioners, or other health care specialists. The PACT and other clinicians will work with you to coordinate a wide array of health care resources. Though you may only see your primary care provider 1-2 times a year, you might have several appointments throughout the year with other clinical members of the team to manage your care.

# Home Based Primary Care

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) is designed for Veterans with ongoing illnesses that affect their health and daily functioning. These Veterans have difficulty making and keeping clinic visits due to their illness. Often, they are homebound. HBPC provides the Veterans with ongoing clinic visits in his/her own home. HBPC uses a team plan to manage the Veteran's medical and social health care needs. HBPC helps the Veteran and family in finding and selecting services that will help the Veteran remain safely in his/her preferred surroundings.

HBPC can also provide short term care, in coordination with your Primary Care Provider.

## HOW DO I GET ENROLLED IN HBPC?

Anyone can be referred by his or her primary care provider to the HBPC program. You will be evaluated by a HBPC nurse and/or by other team members in your home.

## WHAT CAN HBPC DO FOR YOU?

- Provide primary care in the home if you live within 115 minutes from Billings, 100 minutes from Great Falls, 100 minutes from Fort Harrison, or 115 minutes from Missoula.
- Provide education and counseling about medical conditions, emotional well-being, diet and home safety.
- Regular visits to see how you and your family are doing in meeting your health care needs
- Coordination of your care with community and VA services based on your needs

## WHAT CAN'T HBPC DO FOR YOU?

- Urgent or emergent services
- Daily nursing care or therapy
- Homemaker services
- Help with personal care needs such as bathing and dressing
- Visits by team members after business hours, on weekends or holidays

## WILL I HAVE TO PAY FOR HBPC SERVICES?

Payment depends on your individual VA eligibility. Some Veterans will have a co-payment for visits and medications. If co-payments are needed, HBPC staff will review payments with you during the first home visit. See information on pages 12-14 of this booklet for more information.

## HOW OFTEN WILL I HAVE VISITS?

Visits will be based on your needs. You, your caregiver and the HBPC team will decide how often visits will be made. The first two nursing visits may take 1-2 hours.

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT A SCHEDULED HBPC APPOINTMENT?

Nurses, rehabilitation therapists, social workers, mental health professionals, pharmacists and dietitians will complete assessments, treatments and education.

# Women's Health Program

We are committed to providing high quality women's healthcare services to our female Veterans. The Women Veterans Health Program is your primary source to receive healthcare services and to address your preventive female-specific needs. We have designated women health providers in every Primary Care clinic and two gynecologists on staff.

All new enrollee women Veterans are assigned to a women's health provider. These providers are trained in delivering comprehensive healthcare services to women. If you are unsure about whether your team is led by a designated women's health provider, please ask at your next appointment. You can also contact the Women Veterans Program Manager for more information.

Below are some of the services offered Women's Health Services and through your assigned women's health provider:

- Contraception
- STI Testing
- Breast Cancer Screening
- Pelvic Cancer Screening
- Osteoporosis Screening
- Mental Health Care (MST/PTSD)
- Menopause Management
- Hormone Replacement Therapy
- Maternity Care
- Prenatal Care
- Pregnancy Option Counseling [including abortion counseling and abortion services benefit (if the life or the health of the Veteran is endangered)]
- Reproductive Health Care
- Infertility Evaluation


If you need specialty women's healthcare services, your primary provider will refer you to our gynecologist for appropriate care. Staff Gynecologists are located at the Fort Harrison facility and Billings clinic.





## WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM MANAGER

Each VA facility has a Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM). This person can help women understand their benefits and coordinate their care. The WVPM assists women Veterans in establishing eligibility, understand their benefits and obtaining their health care in the VA system. WVPM is a healthcare professional responsible for continuous improvement and support for women Veterans' healthcare. She is available to assist you if you have any questions or concerns about your healthcare needs. You can contact your local WVPM by calling your main facility and asking to speak with the "Women Veterans Program Manager". You can also visit our network women's health website, which lists specific contact information by facility at:

Women Veterans Program Online Information	
<p><b>Montana VA Health Care System Women Veterans Health</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.montana.va.gov/services/women/index.asp">https://www.montana.va.gov/services/women/index.asp</a> or contact the Montana VA Health Care System Women Veterans Program Manager at 406-438-1684.</p>	 <small>Montana VA HCS Women Veterans</small>

## WOMEN VETERANS NATIONAL HOTLINE AND CALL CENTER

1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636). This call center is staffed by all women who are ready to receive and respond to questions from women Veterans across the nation about VA services and resources.

### Call Center Agents can help with questions on:

- Eligibility
- Benefits
- Health care and other services
- Route calls with the VA as needed

### Call Center Agents can respond to crisis situations such as

- Suicidal behavior
- Homelessness
- Sexual trauma
- Domestic violence

# Post-9/11 Military 2VA (M2VA) Case Management Program

**(FORMERLY OEF/OIF/OND\* CLINIC)**

## Who Is Eligible For M2VA?

- Current Combat Veterans (post 9/11)
- Active Duty Service Members
- Transitioning Post 9/11 Service Members
- Referrals from Military Treatment Facilities
- Referrals from WRIISC\*\*



## Eligibility Criteria

VA provides combat Veterans with free healthcare for conditions potentially related to their combat service for up to five years following their separation from active duty. At the end of the five-year period, you will retain enrollment eligibility. Based on individual circumstances you may be required to make a copayment.

The primary factor in determining basic eligibility for VA benefits is “Veteran Status.”

- Active Duty in the Armed Forces with a discharge or release from active service under conditions “other than dishonorable” establishes Veteran status (with or without Combat service).
- Reserve/Guard Component members can establish eligibility for VA healthcare benefits if they were activated on federal Title 10 orders by the President and in support of OEF/OIF/OND.
- Reserve/Guard Component members who are never called to active duty may qualify for some benefits through Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA).

FREE dental care within 180 days of discharge from active duty is available for Veterans who have 90 consecutive days on active duty and did not receive dental care at time of discharge.

M2VA Case Management Program Online Resources	
 <small>VA Health Care Benefits Online Application</small>	 <small>Post-9/11 Transition and Case Management</small>
<h3>Enrollment</h3> <p>In order to receive healthcare services a Veteran must enroll in VA healthcare. You can enroll online at: <a href="https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction">https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction</a> or download the application VA Form 10-10EZ and mail or hand carry to the nearest VA Medical Center.</p>	<h3>Registries</h3> <p>We encourage all Veterans who served in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan and who may have been exposed to certain environmental hazards during their military service to complete a free, voluntary online medical assessment.</p> <p>For more information, please call the M2VA Clinic directly at (406) 447-7832 or (406) 437-2800 or visit <a href="https://www.va.gov/post911veterans/">https://www.va.gov/post911veterans/</a></p>

\*OEF/OIF/OND – Operations Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom/New Dawn

\*\*War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC)

# Co-Managed (Dual) Care

We urge you to receive all your health care through VA. VA will provide you with a primary care provider (PCP) who will coordinate all aspects of your care. However, we are willing to work with your “outside” private doctors to provide and coordinate your healthcare. We call this Co-Managed Care or Dual Care. Dual Care means that your VA and private doctors work together to provide safe, appropriate, and ethical medical care. There are some important things you need to know about Dual-Care.

- VA will not pay for your care you choose to have outside VA. You are responsible to pay for care you decide to receive outside VA. This includes doctor visits, laboratory tests, special procedures, prescriptions, x-rays etc.
- You must have a VA primary care provider (PCP). Your VA PCP makes the final decision on what medicines are right for you, and what he/she will prescribe.
  - » Your VA provider must see you to review your healthcare, outside health record reviews and treatment plan of care.
  - » You must tell your VA provider the names of all the medicines you receive from any other doctor(s) you see.
  - » Some medicines are high-risk and require blood tests to ensure your safety. You must have these tests done to receive any high-risk medicine from the VA.
  - » You may need to see a VA specialist to prescribe certain medicines.
- VA providers are under no obligation to follow a treatment or medicine plan recommended by a doctor outside the VA. Your VA provider will explain his/her decision.
- If you receive controlled substances on an ongoing basis, close monitoring is required by one designated VA provider. Dual care is avoided unless your community provider and VA provider both agree it is in your best interest.
- You must tell both your private physician and your VA physician that you want to have your care coordinated.
- You will need to fill out a “Release of Information” form so that the VA has access to your medical records from the private doctor and they have access to the VA records.
- VA will only fill your private doctor’s prescriptions after your VA provider has reviewed and approved the medicines that you will receive from the VA.
- If your VA doctor decides a different medicine is right for you, and you prefer the prescription medicine your private doctor has requested, you are responsible for having that prescription filled outside of VA at your own expense.

# Scheduling Clinic Appointments

To schedule with any clinic where you've already established care, please call the Scheduling Call Center at 1-877-468-8387 and select option '2'

## VA Online Scheduling (VAOS) App

- View upcoming appointments and video visits
- Cancel appointments
- Join video visits
- Request appointments and video visits
  - » Primary Care
  - » Mental Health
  - » and many others

VA Mobile App Store



Download the VAOS app from the VA Mobile App Store.  
<https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>



VA Mobile App Store

# Cancelling Clinic Appointments

It is a VA goal to provide appointments within 14-days of your request for non-urgent problems. You can help us meet this goal by calling us as soon as you know you cannot make a scheduled appointment. This gives staff a chance to schedule another patient who is waiting for an appointment.

The clinic where you are seen may give you a specific number to call to make, cancel or reschedule appointments. If not, call the Scheduling Call Center at 1-877-468-8387 and select option 2. When you call to cancel an appointment, be ready to provide all the information listed below. If you leave a voice mail message, you still need to provide all this information.

- Your Full Name (spell your last name too)
- Last 4 of Social Security Number
- Appointment Date and Time
- Tell us if you want a new appointment scheduled
- Name of the Clinic (if you contact the Scheduling Call Center)

## NO SHOWS = MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

A no show happens when patients do not cancel or report for a scheduled visit. Last year, thousands of patients “no showed” for an appointment.

### What a “No Show” means:

- The patient did not call to cancel the appointment
- There is missed opportunity for another Veteran who is waiting for an appointment to be scheduled into that time slot
- Poor use of staff time. This causes an increase in the costs of providing care and service to Veterans.

**Please call to cancel your appointment as soon as you know you won't be able to keep your scheduled date or time.**

# Be Prepared for Your Health Care Visits

## WE WANT YOU TO MAKE THE MOST OF EACH VISIT WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER.

### Before you go to your visit:

- Prepare a list of questions you want to ask.
- Find out from your PACT team if you need to fast for any lab tests the day of your appointment. If you do, ask if you should still take any prescribed medications the morning of your lab tests.
- Think about what is most important in your life right now. Share this with your provider.
- Think about what you might need help with and share this with your provider. This might include:
  - » Ways to make a healthy change in your life; what help can the VA offer
  - » Problems you have at home that might affect your life and health
  - » Concerns about your condition or treatment
  - » Feelings of depression or suicide
  - » Feeling anxious
  - » Trouble sleeping
- Medications: Make a list of all the medicines you are taking that were not prescribed by a VA doctor. This includes:
  - » Prescriptions written by non-VA doctors or dentists
    - Report any side effects from your medications.
    - If you haven't been able to take any medicine as prescribed, let your provider know.
  - » Over-the-counter medications
  - » Herbals and supplements
- Try to bring a family member or close friend with you. It can be a help to have someone else with you to listen to instructions.
- ASK ME 3: come prepared to ask questions
  - » About Your Health...
    - What is my main problem?
    - What do I need to do?
    - Why is it important for me to do this?
  - » About Your Medications...
    - Why do I need this?
    - How will it help me?
    - What are the side effects?

# Clinic Appointment Reminders

## POST CARDS

- A Post Card is sent 2 weeks prior scheduled appointment.
- An additional Post Card is sent to call and reschedule when an appointment is missed.

## MY HEALTHVET SECURE MESSAGES

- An automated reminder email is sent approximately 5 days prior to a scheduled appointment.
- This feature is only available on Premium Level accounts.
- Do not reply to this email. Follow instructions provided to contact VA representative.

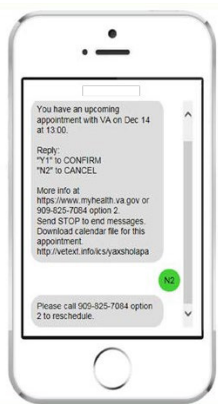
## AUDIOCARE

- A phone call occurs 3 days prior to your scheduled appointment.
- Calls generally occur between 2pm and 8:30pm.
- For questions, call the Scheduling Call Center at 1(877) 468-8387, option2.

## VETEXT

- A text message is sent 7 days and 2 days prior to scheduled appointment.
- Appointment can be confirmed or cancelled through text.
- Text message rates may apply.
- One message per appointment sent.
- Option to opt out of receiving texts by replying "Stop".

PLEASE keep your address and phone number up to date with your VA PACT team!!



# Beneficiary Travel Pay

Beginning July 1, 2021, the Travel claim process is changing to an online, automated system. Veterans, caregivers, and beneficiaries who are eligible for reimbursement of mileage and other travel expenses to and from approved health care appointments can now enter claims in the new Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS). The BTSSS website simplifies the current claim submission process for beneficiaries and ensures timely processing and payment of travel reimbursements.



**You must have a two-factor authenticated account to submit a claim for travel. There are currently four VA Partners that offer 2 factor identification:**

- DS Log On (E-Benefits Account)
- ID Me
- My HealthVet
- A Government issued PIV Card

**With the online, automated travel claim website the Veteran will be able to:**

- Submit claims online 24/7, 365 days a year
- Track the status of submitted claims
- Reduce processing time for submitted claims
- Use self-help tools to make claim submissions fast and easy.

My HealthVet; E-Benefits and ID.me are NOT the travel claim submission site; you are only using the same user ID and password to get access to the travel website.

Beneficiary Travel Pay Online Resources	
	
<p><b>AccessVA (Travel Claims)</b></p> <p>The new Beneficial Travel Pay Website is called Access VA. It can be found at: AccessVA, then select "I am a Veteran"; then submit a travel claim, and logon using a DS Log on or ID me or an MHV account.</p> <p><a href="https://eauth.va.gov/accessva/">https://eauth.va.gov/accessva/</a></p>	<p><b>DS Logon</b></p> <p>A DS Logon is an ID issued by DoD that will allows Veterans and caregivers to access many VA and DoD sites with one user username and password.</p> <p><a href="https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/">https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/</a></p>



# Traveling To and From Appointments

## DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) provides ambulatory Veterans with transportation to and from VA approved appointments, including Care in the Community. This program is available due to the willingness and availability of volunteer drivers. To use this service, Veterans must be able to get from their home to the vehicle pick up location and into the vehicle and medical Center without assistance. DAV does not have the ability to transport Veterans who use a wheelchair or oxygen. Veterans are transported for scheduled appointments only. Attendants who assist in the medical care of a Veteran are welcome to ride along (must be 18 years old or older). To inquire about services offered in your area, please contact the DAV office at (406) 447-7760. Services are not available in every county.

## VETERANS TRANSPORTATION SERVICE (VTS)

Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) transports ambulatory Veterans as well as Veterans who are visually impaired, elderly or mobilized in wheelchairs due to disease or disability, particularly those living in remote and rural areas who face challenges traveling to their VA health care appointments. Veterans who are eligible for VA health care benefits and have VA-authorized appointments are eligible for transportation through the VTS program. Attendants who assist in the medical care of our Veterans are welcome to ride along (must be over 18 years old or older). To inquire about services offered in your area, please contact the VTS office at (406) 447-6270. Services are not available in every county.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR TRAVEL PAY

- You are service connected (SC) 30% or more
- You are traveling for treatment of a service-connected condition
- You receive a monthly VA pension
- Your income doesn't exceed the maximum annual VA pension rate
- You are traveling for a scheduled Compensation & Pension examination
  - » You only have 30 days after your appointment to request travel reimbursement

## MILEAGE RATES

Mileage is paid at 41.5 cents per mile. This is subject to change. There is a required deductible of \$3.00 one-way (\$6.00 round trip) with a monthly maximum deductible of \$18.00. If your income is at or below the pension rate, you may be eligible to have this waived.

## TRAVEL PAY

Toll free: 1 (877) 468-8387 ext. 7409

Direct: (406) 447-7409

FAX: (406) 447-7987

ADDRESS: Department of VA  
PO Box 168 (ATTN: TRAVEL)  
Fort Harrison, MT 59636

Hours: 8:00am - 4:30 pm, Monday-Friday

# Emergency Care

## IF YOU COME TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT...SIGN IN WITH THE CLERK FIRST.

### Triage Nurse:

After you sign-in with the clerk a triage nurse will see you. The nurse will take your vital signs and do a brief assessment, and then decide which level of care you need. The triage nurse may send you to see your PACT Team.

## EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED)

Patients assigned to the ED are critically ill and have the highest level of acuity. They have life-threatening emergencies. Close monitoring and extensive work-ups are needed. If you are assigned to the ED, you are encouraged not to leave until a provider has completed your evaluation and written discharge orders.

## PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY

We also provide care for acute mental health issues or care for detox from alcohol or drugs.

## NARCOTICS:

### The Emergency Department will not refill narcotic prescriptions.

- If you need a narcotic prescription refill see your primary care doctor.
- If you have acute pain from a new problem, the ED doctor may write no more than a 3-day prescription to treat “new” and acute pain.

## PLEASE NOTE

\*If you call 911 the EMS will take you to the closest emergency room. You may be responsible for the cost of ambulance and emergency care at a Non-VA or Community Hospital. Within the first 24 hours of initiating care, tell the outside hospital that you are a patient at the VA and want your care coordinated with VA. The outside hospital will need to give VA this information within 72 hours to have the care coordinated. See The 72 Hour Community Hospital Notification Rule information on page 46.

### Other details:

- If VA beds are full and a transfer cannot be arranged, it does not guarantee that VA will cover the care at an outside hospital.
- If you’ve been seen at an outside hospital, it’s important to let your PACT team know so they can help coordinate your care afterwards.

## EMERGENCY PROBLEMS:

If you have a life-threatening emergency or serious injury, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room right away.

## **KNOW THE HEART ATTACK WARNING SIGNS**

- Uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain anywhere in the chest lasting more than a few minutes
- Pain spreading to the shoulder, neck, in one or both arms, stomach or back
- Chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea, vomiting or shortness of breath
- Chest discomfort with a feeling of doom or imminent death

### **What do I do if I have signs of a heart attack?**

- CALL 911
- Take 1 regular aspirin (do not take if you have an aspirin allergy)
- Have the Life Squad take you to the nearest Emergency Room
- DON'T WAIT!!!

## **KNOW THE STROKE WARNING SIGNS**

- Numbness, weakness or paralysis in the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden blurry or decreased vision
- Trouble speaking or understanding what others are saying
- Loss of balance or coordination

SPECIAL NOTE: Not everyone has all of these signs, and some symptoms may come and go.

### **What do you do if you have any signs of a stroke?**

- CALL 911
- Have the Life Squad take you to the nearest Emergency Room
- DON'T WAIT!!

A stroke is an EMERGENCY! Doctors have medicine that may save your life if you get to the hospital in time.

# For Health Care Issues, Who do you Contact and When?

## FOR ROUTINE (NON-EMERGENCY) QUESTIONS:

During the week, if you have a problem or symptoms that can be addressed by your provider in a day or two, please call your PACT team. However, do not delay in calling at the first signs of a problem. Early treatment is the key to dealing with many health care problems.

- Call your PACT Team.
- Call the Telephone Triage Nurse to ask questions or get advice. If the triage nurse thinks you need to be seen, he/she can direct you to the Emergency Department.
  - » Monday - Friday Business Hours: Call the Scheduling Call Center at 1(877) 468-8387, then Option '2'
  - » After Hours, Holidays, Weekends: Call the Nurse Triage Line 1(844) 262-3845
  - » Veterans Crisis Hotline: 1-800-273-8255, then Press 1

## When you call, be ready to answer these questions:

- Full Name
- Social Security Number
- Current Address
- Phone Number (and area code)
- Which VA Medical Center or Clinic you go to for your care
- Your Primary Care Physician
- All prescribed and over-the-counter medicines you currently take. It will help if you have the medicines you take by the phone when you call.
- Reason for your call, and any medical or physical problems you have that will help the nurse answer your question


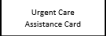


## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY?

**CALL 911 ~ Go to the Closest EMERGENCY ROOM**

# Urgent/Walk-In Care

VA now offers an urgent/walk-in care benefit for minor injuries and illnesses, such as pink eye or ear infections. To be covered by this benefit, you must be enrolled in the VA health care system and have received care from VA within the 24 months prior to seeking this care. If you have a service-connected disability, you may be eligible for three free in-network urgent care visits in a calendar year. Otherwise, there will be a \$30 copay for each visit.

Veteran Priority Groups	Copayment Amount
1-5	First three visits (per calendar year): \$0 Fourth and greater visits (per calendar year): \$30
6	If related to a condition covered by a special authority: First three visits (per calendar year): \$0 Fourth and greater visits (per calendar year): \$30 If not related to a condition covered by a special authority: \$30 per visit
7-8	\$30 per visit
1-8	\$0 copay for visit consisting of only a flu shot

Urgent Care Online Information	
 	 
<p><b>Urgent Care Assistance Card</b></p> <p>Before utilizing this modality of care, please download the Urgent Care Assistance Card at:  <a href="https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/docs/programs/UC_Assistance_Cards.pdf#">https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/docs/programs/UC_Assistance_Cards.pdf#</a></p>	<p><b>Find and Urgent Care</b></p> <p>Eligible Veterans can use an urgent care facility or walk-in retail health clinic that is part of VA's community provider network. To find an available urgent care provider in VA's provider network of community providers, go to:  <a href="https://www.va.gov/find-locations/">https://www.va.gov/find-locations/</a></p>

## Mental Health Care

The VA offers a range of treatment services to improve the mental health of Veterans. See page 38 for innovative treatment options available for mental health.

### **PRIMARY CARE MENTAL HEALTH INTEGRATION (PCMHI):**

Mental health providers located in the Primary Care Clinic offer short-term treatment for common issues, such as stress, grief, mild depression, anxiety, and poor sleep. Medication management and referral to more intensive mental health programs are also provided. Your PACT can assess your needs and get you started with services. This is available at all sites.

### **MENTAL HEALTH HOME TELEHEALTH:**

A free daily monitoring program from home; a supportive tool for: Anxiety, Bipolar Disorder, Depression, Nicotine Cessation, Schizophrenia, TBI, PTSD and Substance Abuse. Ask your PACT for a Home Telehealth consult or call (406) 202-3827.

### **OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT:**

Treatment for a wide range of mental health issues and substance use. Services include medication management, evidenced based therapy, and group treatment. Services can be provided via face to face sessions, groups, telehealth and VA Video Connect. (Location: Fort Harrison and VA Clinics) (406) 447-6000. Same day appointments available at Fort Harrison, Billings, Missoula Kalispell, Great Falls, and Bozeman (same day appointment times vary by VA Clinic).

### **NEUROPSYCHOLOGY:**

In-depth evaluations of thinking, memory and other brain functions. Veterans are referred by a provider if there is concern about a decline in functioning related to a neurological condition. (Locations: Fort Harrison and Billings).

### **NEW FRONTIERS POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH CENTER:**

7.5 week residential treatment for Veterans who experienced traumatic events, including military sexual trauma (MST). (406) 447-6025. (Location: Fort Harrison)

### **NEW FRONTIERS SOBRIETY AND WELLNESS CENTER:**

Residential treatment program for Veterans with addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. (406) 447-6025. (Location: Fort Harrison)

### **HOMELESS VETERAN PROGRAM:**

Services are offered for homeless Veterans. Assistance provided for eligible Veterans for emergency, transitional and permanent housing, case management, referrals to mental health, primary care, addiction treatment, and employment assistance. (Location: Fort Harrison and CBOCs) (406) 447-6144

### **VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH (VJO):**

Services for justice-involved Veterans to assist with eligibility and referral to VA mental health and addiction treatment and if eligible to Veteran Treatment Courts (located in Missoula, Great Falls, Butte, Bozeman and Billings); (406) 447-6021--Western Montana; (406) 437-1686--Eastern Montana

## EMERGENCY SERVICES:

Veterans who present to Fort Harrison in mental health crisis, Triage and Rapid Evaluation Clinic (TREC) works with the Emergency Department to assess the Veteran, identify and facilitate most appropriate level of psychiatric care (Fort Harrison Emergency Room)

## INTENSIVE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:

Veterans with a long-term serious mental health diagnosis may qualify for community-based intensive case management services to help improve independence, quality of life and social supports. (ICMHR RANGE Program). (Location: Fort Harrison) (406) 447-6000

## WEBSTAIR:

12-week skills training program for Veterans who have experienced trauma, focused on improving relationships and increasing emotional coping, through combination of online modules and personal coaching over VA Video Connect to home. Call (406) 447-6067 for more information.

## VETERANS CRISIS LINE:

### Veterans have same-day access to emergency mental health care

Connect with the Veterans Crisis Line to reach caring, qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of them are Veterans themselves.

- They provide support, problem-solving, and connection to local resources.
- Available every day, 24/7, and serves all Veterans, Service members, their family and friends.
- Veterans may also send a text message to 838255 or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net

### Montana VA Health Care System's Suicide Prevention Program offers:

- Support and follow-up for Veterans who are receiving care through the MTVAHCS
- Training and resources in the community to raise awareness and ability to respond effectively to prevent suicide.



You never know when  
a crisis could happen.



# Innovative Treatment Options in Mental Health:

The Montana VA Health Care System (MTVAHCS) is pleased to offer innovative treatment options for mental health care, for Veterans diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) who have not improved with traditional measures including psychotherapy and medication management. This means that if you have tried at least two medications for depression that have not been effective, there are other options you can explore with your mental health provider.

## WHAT IS MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER (MDD)?

MDD is a disabling mental health condition characterized by feelings of sadness or despair, loss of interest in activities, changes in appetite, sleep and energy, and feelings of guilt or worthlessness. MDD can lead to trouble functioning at work or at home, and can contribute to suicidal thoughts. MDD is one of the most common conditions treated in Outpatient Mental Health, and unfortunately, some Veterans do not improve adequately with standard treatments (medications and psychotherapy). MDD that does not resolve with standard treatment is called treatment resistant MDD (trMDD).

## Advanced Treatment Options for treatment resistant MDD (trMDD) Include:

- Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)
- Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)
- Ketamine or Esketamine therapy

## MTVAHCS TMS Program:

MTVAHCS is proud to provide innovative and evidenced-based treatment options for mental health. Within MTVAHCS, we strive to ensure all Veterans can access this life-saving treatment, similar to what would be provided in an academic center. Our TMS Program is rapidly expanding to provide access to this highly-effective treatment for MDD, for Veterans living throughout Montana.

This will include:

- TMS treatment locations in Billings, Kalispell
- Potential future treatment location in Helena
- A mobile-medical unit. This unit will house a TMS device and can be deployed to the location of the Veteran, throughout the state and to rural areas.

## What is TMS?

TMS therapy is an alternative treatment option for patients living with Major Depressive disorder (MDD). TMS uses magnetic fields to stimulate nerve cells in the brain to improve symptoms of depression. TMS is safe, non-invasive and effective. TMS has been approved by the FDA since 2008 to treat depression.

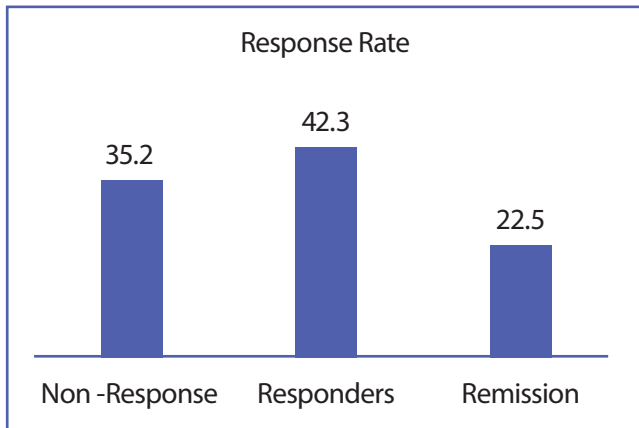
## How does TMS work?

During a TMS treatment session, an electromagnetic coil is placed against the scalp. The electromagnet delivers a magnetic pulse that stimulates nerve cells in a region of the brain that is involved in controlling mood. For depression we stimulate the "dorsolateral prefrontal cortex", one of the major control centers in the brain. Stimulation of this region is thought to enhance the brain's ability to control of various symptoms of depression.



## Clinical Outcomes:

TMS has been shown in large, controlled studies to be consistently effective in treating treatment-resistant depression. This means it often works for patients who have not previously responded to antidepressant medications. The following results were obtained from treating more than 800 Veterans with treatment-resistant depression with TMS at outpatient VA clinics across the country.



Responders = >50% reduction in symptom levels

Source: VA National Clinical rTMS Program, VA Palo Alto Precision Neuromodulation Clinic

## What Veterans are saying about their treatment experience at Montana VA:



"I have not felt this good in many years."

"I felt like I was coming out of a coma and waking up again."

"It felt like each session another layer of dirt (depression) was being lifted off of me."

## Want to learn more?

Call: Montana VA Health Care System TMS program (406) 373-3911

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) Program Online Resources	
	
<b>TMS Stories - Testimonials from real TMS therapy patients</b> <a href="https://www.magstim.com/row-en/patient/tms-stories/">https://www.magstim.com/row-en/patient/tms-stories/</a>	<b>Precision Neuromodulation Clinic</b> <a href="https://www.va.gov/palo-alto-health-care/programs/precision-neuromodulation-clinic/">https://www.va.gov/palo-alto-health-care/programs/precision-neuromodulation-clinic/</a>

# Specialty Services

There are many specialty services at the Montana VA HCS VA. Your PACT Provider will work with you to access all of your healthcare needs. Your provider may refer you to specialists or request a non-VA or Community Care provider when services are not available or limited.

Some specialties available at Montana VA HCS are listed below, (this list is subject to change at any time):				
Audiology	Diabetes Education	Laboratory	Pathology	Rheumatology
Cardiac Rehabilitation	Endocrinology (coming)	Mental Health	Physical Therapy	Sleep
Cardiology (limited)	Eye/Ophthalmology	Music Therapy	Plastic Surgery	Speech and Language Pathology
Chiropractic	Gastrointestinal (GI)	Neurology	Podiatry	Spinal Cord Injury
Clinical Pharmacy	General Surgery	Nutrition	Prosthetics	Traumatic Brain Injury
Dental	Gynecology	Occupational Therapy	Pulmonology (coming)	Urology
Dermatology	Hematology/Oncology	Orthopedics	Radiology	Wound Care
	Infectious Disease	Pain Management	Recreation Therapy	

## Direct Scheduling Services

### AUDIOLOGY

- Veterans can now Self-Refer to Audiology for scheduling needs without having to see their Primary Care Provider (PCP) first.
- Call (406) 373-3961 for scheduling.
- An Audiology service clerk will ask you several screening questions.

### MOVE PROGRAM

- Veterans can now Self-Refer to the MOVE weight management program (this is no-cost to the Veteran)
- Call (406) 447-7334 to schedule an appointment.

### NUTRITION

- Veterans can now Self-Refer to Nutrition, for routine nutritional counseling, without having to see their Primary Care Provider (PCP) first.
- This covers ONLY routine Nutrition counseling (healthy eating and sports nutrition) and does not cover MOVE, diabetic needs, feeding tubes, etc. Those services will still require a consult prior to scheduling.
- Call (406) 447-6755 to schedule an appointment.
- A Nutrition service clerk will ask you screening questions.

### PODIATRY

- Veterans can now Self-Refer to Podiatry for scheduling needs without having to see their Primary Care Provider (PCP) first.
- Call (406) 447-6769 to schedule an appointment.
- A Podiatry Service clerk will ask you several screening questions. You may talk to a Triage Nurse to make sure you are seen in a timely manner.

# Liberty House – “A Home Away from Home”

Opened in 2007, Liberty House is a one level facility that provides overnight lodging for families of critically ill Veterans who are inpatients at the Fort Harrison VA Medical Center. These rooms provide lodging, at no cost, within walking distance of the Medical Center. If not all the rooms have been reserved for family members, eligible Veterans may stay there. The Liberty House has 8 room options.

Fort Harrison Medical Center continues to grow in size, as does the number of patients coming here for medical care. Having a sudden illness usually comes without notice and poses a financial hardship on the family. Hotel costs, especially for an extended time, are often beyond the means of most Montana Veterans and their families. Helena is in the middle of the Rocky Mountains and if you are a Montanan, you are probably aware of all of the geographical hurdles it takes to arrive at our VA Medical Center. Many family members do not drive at night or cannot drive at all. We are very fortunate to have the Liberty House available for the families of our hospitalized Veterans.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

There is NO FEE for families staying at the Liberty House and they may stay as long as their Veteran or military member is hospitalized or undergoing treatment. There are eight guest suites with two queen beds in each. Maximum of four guests per room. Also, there are two service dog friendly rooms. Each room is professionally decorated and beautifully furnished.

### **In addition to private bedrooms and bathrooms, the house includes:**

- A communal kitchen
- Inviting living room/dining room
- Laundry facilities
- In-room telephone and TV/DVD player
- Wi-Fi availability

## WHO CAN STAY AT THE LIBERTY HOUSE?

### **Eligibility/Guidelines**

- Guest must live 50 miles or more from the Liberty House.
- Guests must be medically stable to care for themselves and/or family members independently.
- Only one room assigned to each family. No more than four persons per one room.

### **How do I make arrangements to stay at the Liberty House?**

- Contact the lodging department and ask about the Liberty House at (406) 447-7707.
- Lodging is dependent on eligibility and availability.

# Special Programs

## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

IPV refers specifically to violence and aggression between intimate partners. IPV can include physical, sexual or psychological abuse or stalking. It can happen to women or men who have intimate relationships with women, men or both. Our mission is to provide a comprehensive recovery-oriented assistance program for Veterans, their families and caregivers who experience intimate partner violence. Services include:

- Link to community-based support groups, advocacy and legal services
- Referral to and coordination with other VA treatment providers
- Connection to domestic violence shelters and other supported housing
- Interventions for Veterans who use violence

For more information about IPV services, please call (406) 439-1786

## LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER VETERANS

Montana VA Health Care System is committed to providing top quality care to all Veterans including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Veterans. We recognize that diverse populations have distinct needs. The Montana VA Health Care System embraces national policies that guarantee access for LGBT Veterans. Services include:

- Non-Discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and equal respectful health care.
- Change of name and/or sex in the medical record, see VA Privacy Officer
- Support groups available for gay men and gay women who are HIV positive, and transgender Veterans.

For more information, please call the LGBT Veteran Care Coordinator at (406) 475-4713.

## MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

Military sexual trauma, or MST, is the term used by VA to refer to experiences of sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that a Veteran experienced during his or her military service.

MST can occur on or off base and while a Veteran is on or off duty. Veterans do not need to have reported the incident(s) when they happened or have other documentation that they occurred. Both men and women can experience MST. MST affects both mental and physical health.

- Every VA health care system has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues. Through individual consultation, this person can help Veterans find and access VA services and programs, as well as explore other community supports and programs.
- VA provides free, confidential treatment for all mental and physical health conditions related to MST. To receive free treatment for mental and physical health conditions related to MST, Veterans do not need to be service connected (or have a VA disability rating). Veterans may be able to receive this benefit even if they are not eligible for other VA care.
- MST-related services are available at every VA health care system. There are also specialized mental health services, including: outpatient (psychological assessment and evaluation; psychiatry; and individual and group psychotherapy), inpatient, and residential care available for MST survivors.

For more information, please call the MST Coordinator at (406) 447-6012.

## MINORITY VETERANS

The goal of Montana VA Health Care System Medical Center Minority Veterans Program (MVP) is to increase local awareness of minority Veteran related issues and develop strategies for increasing their participation in existing VA benefits programs for eligible Veterans. The program also ensures that minority veterans receive benefits and services on par with other Veterans, encounter no barriers or impediments in their attempts to access those services, and are treated with respect and dignity by VA service providers.

The program is designed to act as a mediator and facilitator. As such, the program does not process claims, handle equal employment complaints, or employee related problems. The program is dedicated to ensuring that all Veterans are aware of benefits, services and programs offered by the VA.

### Montana VA Health Care System Minority Veterans Program (MVP) services all Veterans including:


- African-American/Black Veterans/Service Members
- Asian-Americans and Pacific Islander Veterans/Service Members
- Hispanic Veterans/Service Members
- American Indian and Alaskan Native Veterans/Service Members

### The Montana VA Health Care System has designated a Minority Veterans Program Coordinator (MVPC) whose role is to:

- Assist management of the Health Care System in their efforts to address the needs of minority Veterans
- Focus on the needs of minority Veterans in our local community
- Identify barriers and create a more accessible environment for minority Veterans
- Inform Veterans of VA benefits, services and programs

Minority Veterans may be eligible for a wide variety of benefits available to all U.S. military Veterans. VA benefits include disability compensation, pension, education and training, health care, home loans, insurance, vocational rehabilitation and employment, and burial.

Montana VA Health Care System, Minority Veteran Program Coordinator: (406) 447-7332 or (406) 447-7376

Minority Veteran Program Online Information	
<p><b>Minority Veteran Program</b> <a href="https://www.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/">https://www.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/</a></p>	 <small>VA Center for Minority Veterans</small>

## RECREATION THERAPY AND CREATIVE ARTS THERAPY (RCAT):

RCAT services utilize skillful application of evidence-based therapy to the meaningful activities that we look forward to doing in our real lives. Activities that might be considered leisure, the arts and recreation are expertly adapted by a qualified clinician to gain significant and lasting treatment outcomes. The purpose of these direct-care interdisciplinary services are to improve and enrich bio-psycho-social functioning through active therapy for the purpose of maintaining or improving functional independence and quality of life.

As each of the specialized RCAT therapy disciplines is based on person-centered care and health promotion and disease prevention. They are an excellent resource when developing Whole Health goals and Personal Health Plan.

If interested in learning more about how Recreation Therapy and Creative Arts Therapies can be incorporated into your treatment, please ask your Primary Care Provider.

# Lab Tests

## NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS:

### Hospital:

- Monday – Friday 8am – 4:30pm

### VA Clinic Labs:

- by appointment only\*
- Monday – Friday 8am – 4:30pm

\*Contact the VA Clinic Labs at 1(877) 468-8387, Option '0' (for the operator)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BLOOD TESTS

### Do I need to fast?

Not all blood tests require fasting. Your PACT team will advise you if fasting is required.

### How long should I fast?

If you are told to fast, do not eat, drink or smoke for 8 to 10 hours before your test. You may drink water.

### Should I take my medicine if I am asked to fast?

- Unless told otherwise, take your blood pressure and heart medicine with a little water the day of your test.
- If you take diabetes medicine or insulin, ask your provider for instructions.
- After the test is done, you may resume your diet and medicines unless given different instructions by your provider.

### How many tubes of blood will be drawn for my tests?

Many times, several tests ordered together require multiple tubes of blood to be obtained.

### How long does it take for Lab reports to be completed?

This depends on both the type of test and how fast your health provider asked for the test to be done.

### Do I call the Lab for my results?

No, the provider that ordered the labs should discuss your results with you. Often, your PACT team will send a Lab letter to your home with your Lab results and an explanation of the test/results.

You may also receive results on your My HealtheVet account if you have the Premium Account. Most often, results are available about 7-days after they are drawn.

# Traveling Veteran Information and Traveling Veteran Coordinator (TVC)

## ARE YOU PLANNING ON TRAVELING SEASONALLY? ARE YOU PLANNING AN EXTENDED TRIP AWAY FROM MONTANA VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM OR AFFILIATED CBOC'S?

### If so, you may need some coordination of your medical care with another Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility:

- To ensure your care, including medication refills, continues uninterrupted during periods of extended travel, please inform your Primary Care or Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) of such plans in advance of your departure date. Be sure to tell us your temporary address and telephone number so that your medication refills will reach you and we can assist with your care.

## TRAVELING VETERAN RESPONSIBILITIES:

### Prior to traveling:

- Inform PACT of travel dates, temporary address, phone number
- Discuss any specific health concerns with PACT

### For non-urgent care while traveling:

- Contact PACT for routine, non-urgent needs while traveling, PACT will contact MTVAHCS Traveling Veteran Coordinator (TVC). TVC will try to coordinate care with the alternate VA Facility

### For urgent/emergent care while traveling:

- Go to the nearest appropriate Emergency Department or Urgent Care (care cost might not be covered by VA)
- If receiving care at a non-VA facility, call 1-844-724-7842 within 72 hours of that care.

## The Traveling Veteran Coordinator:

- Phone: 406-791-3242
- You can use secure messaging in My HealthVet

### My HealthVet Online Information

My HealthVet  
[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)



VA myHealthVet

# 72 Hour Community Hospital Notification Rule

## ONE PHONE NUMBER TO CALL, NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE! 1-844-724-7842 OR (1-844-72HRVHA)

During a medical emergency, Veterans should immediately seek care at the nearest medical facility. A medical emergency is an injury, illness or symptom so severe that without immediate treatment, you believe your life or health is in danger. Veterans do not need to check with VA before calling for an ambulance or going to an emergency department.

After you access emergent community health care, VA needs to be notified right away (or maximum within 72 hours). When you do this, we can continue to coordinate and address any care issues or needs for you. Plus, this how your Montana VA Health Care System PACT Team knows about care that you receive emergently at another facility. We can then address your stay, your follow up, and your upcoming needs.

In addition, the 72-hour hospital notification is the first step in requesting that VA pays for your community hospital stay. This applies to both an emergency room visit and inpatient community hospital admissions. If the 72 Hour Community Hospital notification is not placed, those bills may be sent directly to you.

The community hospital, emergency room, you or your family can make this notification to the new VHA Centralized Emergency Notification Center at 1-844-724-7842.

The QR code below will connect you with more information.

## WHEN YOU CALL, THIS IS THE INFORMATION THAT MONTANA VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM NEEDS:

- Name of the community hospital
- City of the community hospital
- Time and date of check in to the community hospital
- Why you were there
- Emergency room only or if the Veteran was admitted to the community hospital
- Discharge time and date and where the Veteran went. For example: home or rehab.

To find out more about Urgent Care/Walk-In Care, look on page 35 in the Primary Care & PACT section.

### Community Care: Emergency Medical Care Online Information

#### Community Care: Emergency Medical Care

For additional information, please visit:

[https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Emergency\\_Care.asp](https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Emergency_Care.asp)



VA Emergency Care/72 Hour  
Notification Information



# Social Work

There is a social worker for all PACT sites. The role of the social worker is to assess and help you manage psychosocial and environmental factors that impact your health and wellness including mental health, ability to cope with changes in your health, family or support system concerns, or issues with finances or housing. Social workers are here to help you access resources and better manage life's challenges.

## **ACCESS TO CARE: WHERE CAN YOU FIND HEALTH CARE AND HOW TO PAY FOR IT?**

- Prepare advance directives – durable power of attorney for health care and living will.
- Answer questions about the VA means test, co-pays and bills from the VA.
- Answer questions about Medicare, Medicaid and referrals for dental care.
- Transportation options.
- Information about Handicapped parking placards

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT: DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH MONEY FOR YOUR NEEDS?**

- Information about temporary financial assistance and financial counseling
- Referrals to employment services.
- Referrals for vocational rehabilitation programs.
- Information about disability applications (VA and Social Security).

## **HOUSING: DO YOU NEED HELP TO REPAIR YOUR HOME OR TO FIND OTHER SUITABLE HOUSING?**

- Home weatherization and improvement programs. Information on affordable housing. Assistance with making your housing more handicapped accessible. Information on group homes, assisted living, nursing homes, Montana Veterans Homes and homeless shelters.
- SOCIAL SUPPORT: Do you want to improve the quality of your relationships?
- Assess your social support and provide treatment or referrals to treatment.
- Help for the caregivers of Veterans.

## **FUNCTIONAL SUPPORT: DO YOU NEED HELP WITH BATHING, DRESSING, EATING, CLEANING, LAUNDRY, SHOPPING OR MANAGING MONEY?**

- Assess your ability for self-care.
- Assess for needed referrals from your provider for homemaking services, home health aide services, adult day health care, Meals on Wheels, respite care, payees, fiduciaries, or guardians.

If you need help with any of these concerns, contact your PACT to schedule a visit to see a social worker. Primary Care Social Workers are part of your PACT team. Call 1-877-468-8387 and select option 2 to make an appointment.

# Advance Directives

Advance Directives are decisions that you should make before you are sick or as soon as you become sick. You may not always be able to make decisions on your own. Advance Directives tell those who are caring for you what you want.

## THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF ADVANCE DIRECTIVES:

### Living Will

- This is a legal document.
- It does not deal with anything you own or want to pass to your heirs.
- It tells your wishes – what you do or do not want if you are not able to make your wishes known.

### Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care

- This is a legal document.
- You may choose a person you trust to make health care choices for you, if you are not able to speak or make your own decisions. Be sure to tell that person what you want. You should also talk to your doctor.

**Without a health care power of attorney, your legal next of kin is the person who will make medical decisions for you.**

### You have the right to:

- Be told about your health and health problems and the plans for your treatment
- Appoint someone to make healthcare decisions for you if, in the future, you are not able to make those decisions for yourself
- Accept or refuse any medical treatment
- Indicate what medical treatment(s) you do or do not want, if in the future, you are not able to make your wishes known

### Who can help you decide about a Living Will?

- Talk with your family, doctor, social worker or chaplain. Our social workers and chaplains can provide the forms to you.

# Telehealth Services

## THE RIGHT CARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

### Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT)

Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) uses real-time video conferencing to provide remote care to patients. Sometimes other technology is used along with CVT. CVT can be used for both primary and specialty care. It can be used to:

- Link a health care provider with a patient at home
- Link a health care provider(s) at one site to patients at a VA Clinic

### Store and Forward Telehealth (SFT)

Store and Forward Telehealth (SFT) is used to get, store and forward patient information to a provider at another site. It can be used for screening, diagnosis and treatment. Current programs include:

- Teleretinal Imaging (TRI) takes pictures of the eye and retina. It stores and sends the images to an expert for review. TRI is used for patients with diabetes. It checks for diabetic retinopathy and other diseases that affect the eye.
- Teledermatology is used to take pictures of skin rashes, stores and sends them to an expert for review. A dermatologist reviews the images and completes the consult. A diagnosis and/or treatment options are sent to the patient's primary care doctor.

### Home Telehealth (HT)

Home Telehealth (HT) programs provide individual RN case management along with technology to improve patient care and outcomes. It can help the patient at home monitor: blood pressure, blood glucose, pulse oximetry, and weight. It benefits patients with high risk chronic disease in these ways:

- Fewer complications
- Reduced ER visits
- Fewer hospitalizations

For more information contact Montana VA HCS Telehealth Coordinator at (406) 447-7620.

# VA Video Connect

## REACH YOUR VA CARE TEAM OVER LIVE VIDEO

### Real-time access to VA care in a way that works best for you!

VA Video Connect is a new VA solution that enables Veterans to virtually meet-up with their VA healthcare providers, in something called a virtual medical room, using encrypted video to ensure the session is secure and private. It allows Veterans to see and talk to their health care team from anywhere, making VA healthcare more convenient and reducing travel times for Veterans, especially for those in very rural areas with limited access to VA health care facilities.

When a VA Video Connect (VVC) visit is scheduled, VVC sends an email to both the provider and Veteran. The email includes a web link. When the web link is clicked, it takes the Veteran or provider into a virtual medical room. Once both the Veteran and Provider are in a virtual medical room, they can see each other, hear each other, and start their clinical session. VVC uses an internet connection, VA Video Connect app if using iOS device, and the camera/microphone on a phone, computer, or tablet.

### Talk with your provider about using VA Video Connect if:

- You live far away from your VA facility.
- You're dealing with health conditions that make it difficult to travel to the specialist you need.
- You lack time to attend an in-person appointment.
- A hands-on physical examination is not required.



#### VA Video Care Connect Online Information

##### VA Video Care Connect

Get started today! Learn more about VA Video Connect at <https://mobile.va.gov/apptstore>



VA Mobile App Store

# PACT Act

#### PACT Act Online Information

**Important Information About the PACT Act can be found here:**

<https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/>



# Environmental Health Registry

VA's health registry evaluation is a free, voluntary medical assessment for Veterans who may have been exposed to certain environmental hazards during military service.

The evaluations alert Veterans to possible long-term health problems that may be related to exposure to specific environmental hazards during their military service. VA has established several health registries to track and monitor the health of specific groups of Veterans. The registry data helps VA understand and respond to these health problems more effectively.

## You may be eligible to participate in one or more of these health registries:

- Veteran and family health and disability benefits for Camp Lejeune.
- Qualifying health conditions
- Blue Water/Brown water Navy and Agent Orange Presumptions.
- For updated contact information regarding registries, call (406) 447-7292

## Use this chart to help determine your eligibility

Period of Military Service	Agent Orange	Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit	Depleted Uranium Follow-Up	Gulf War	Ionizing Radiation	Toxic Embedded Fragments
1940s-1950s					●	
1960s	●				●	
1970s	●					
1990s		●	●	●		
2000s-Present		●	●	●		●

Contact your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator (see link below) about getting a registry evaluation. You do not need to enroll in VA's health care system to take part. The registry evaluation is separate from VA's disability compensation process and does not confirm exposure to environmental hazards during military service.

Veterans who want to be considered for disability compensation for exposure-related health problems must file a claim for disability compensation.

During the claims process, VA will check military records to verify exposure to the claimed environmental hazard or qualifying military service. If necessary, VA will set up a specific compensation examination.

\*Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn

Environmental Health Registry Online Information	
<p><b>Environmental Health Registry</b></p> <p>For more information, go to:  <a href="https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/benefits/registry-evaluation.asp">https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/benefits/registry-evaluation.asp</a></p>	 <p>Environmental Health Registry Evaluation for Veterans</p>

## Whole Health Care

The Montana VA Health Care System is shifting from a health care system focused primarily on treating disease to one based on healing relationships that support you in achieving your greatest overall well-being.

During military service, you committed your life, health, and well-being to mission success to defend our country. Now, the Department of Veterans Affairs' is committed to helping Veterans to be mission-ready for life. In other words, it's care that is centered on "what matters to you," not just "what's the matter."

So, what matters most to you in your life? When you think about these priorities, ask yourself if you are doing everything you can to achieve these goals. The human body and mind have tremendous healing abilities that we can work together to strengthen. Your health team wants to support you in this journey.

Rather than focusing on challenges in your life, think about what encourages you to work through those challenges. What drives you to stick with your rehabilitation, to watch your diet, or to seek help for issues you are facing? Then envision yourself at your healthiest. What do you see? Whole health care starts here, with these questions.

This means your health team will get to know you as a person, before working with you to develop a personalized health plan based on your values, needs, and goals.

The whole health approach supports Veterans with traditional healthcare providers and trained Veteran peers, wellness instructors, coaches, and community partners.

### WHAT'S YOUR MISSION, ASPIRATION, AND PURPOSE IN LIFE?

### HOW DOES THAT GUIDE YOUR EFFORTS TO BE HEALTHY?

### WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR YOUR HEALTH LATELY?

Often, we wait until we have health problems before we act. Here is another way to think about our health. Three unhealthy habits lead to four chronic diseases which leads to 50% of all deaths. Isn't it time to think "What have I done for my health lately?"



3 Unhealthy Habits Lead to 4 Chronic Diseases	
<b>HEALTH BEHAVIORS</b>	Tobacco Use Unhealthy Food Choices Physical Inactivity
Leads to	
<b>MAJOR CHRONIC DISEASES</b>	Heart Attack, Stroke, High BP Type 2 Diabetes Chronic Lung Disease Many Cancers
Which Lead to..	
<b>50% OF DEATHS WORLDWIDE</b>	50 Percent of all Deaths

# Whole Health System

The VA Whole Health System supports the partnership between Veterans and their health care teams. This Whole Health System is made up of three components; helping to empower, equip, and treat Veterans to help them live their lives to the fullest.

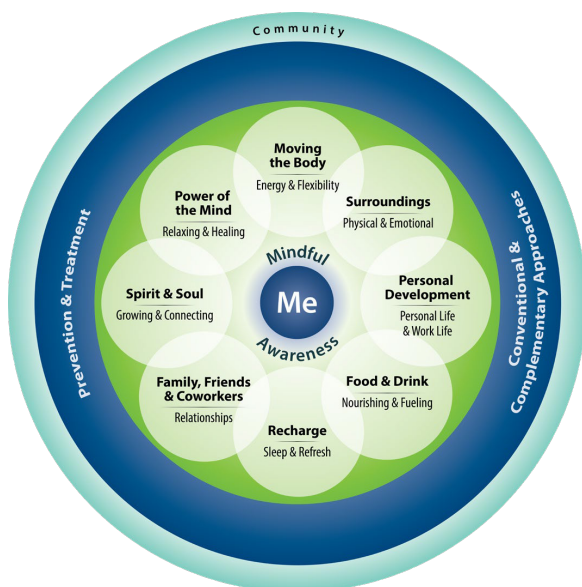
## THE PATHWAY OFFERS A PLACE TO START ON THE WELLNESS JOURNEY. VETERANS MAY ENTER THE PATHWAY THROUGH:

- The Red Carpet Welcome Online Videos – Coming Soon!
- My HealtheVet HealthLiving Assessment – Complete the assessment on the My HealtheVet website and share it with your healthcare team.
- Introduction to Whole Health Class - This class will help you explore your life mission, aspiration and purpose by reflecting on what really matters to you and what you want your health for. You will learn the practice of mindfulness and set goals in a supportive environment. Additional classes and continued support are available after the first class. Ask your Pact team for details.

VA Whole Health System Online Resources	
 <small>VA myHealtheVet</small>	 <small>VA Whole Health for Life</small>
<p><b>My HealtheVet</b></p> <p>Complete the HealthLiving assessment on the My HealtheVet website and share it with your healthcare team.</p> <p><a href="https://www.myhealthevet.va.gov">https://www.myhealthevet.va.gov</a></p>	<p><b>VA Whole Health</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.va.gov/wholehealth/">https://www.va.gov/wholehealth/</a></p>

## WELLNESS PROGRAMS (COMPLIMENTARY AND INTEGRATIVE HEALTH)

Wellness Programs support each area on the Wheel of Health and include complimentary and integrative programs including yoga, meditation, whole health coaching, tai chi, massage, bio-feedback, chiropractic care, reiki, CBT-insomnia (Cognitive Behavior Therapy), Chaplain services, stress management, nutrition, MOVE (free weight loss program) and more.



# Personalized Health Plan

VA recognizes that healthcare is more than addressing health problems. Just like a mission in the military, we believe that the BEST care is proactive: well prepared and executed. We encourage you make it your mission to become resilient to disease and illness.

## WHAT'S YOUR MISSION FOR LIFE?

**Only you know what really matters to you. Only you know WHY it's important for you to be healthy.**

When healthcare is centered on your mission and what's important to you, it has purpose and meaning. It involves more than simply keeping medical appointments and taking medication. To develop and maintain resilience, it's important to adapt to adversity and overcome barriers. Assessing your strengths and areas for growth is the first step. It involves looking at all aspects of life that contribute to a sense of well-being. A personalized health plan is a tool to help you explore these aspects, prioritize your needs, mobilize resources, and execute a plan.

### Step 1: Personal Health and Wellness Assessment

There are several ways to get started:



- Ask your PACT (primary care team) to assist you in filling out a Personal Health Inventory
- To do the Personal Health Inventory online, go to <https://www.va.gov/wholehealth/>
- Go to My HealtheVet, <https://www.myhealthvet.va.gov>, to complete a Healthy Living Assessment and send it to your team by Secure Message.

### Step 2: Develop Your Plan

Work with your team to review your assessment. Your team will help you develop a plan based on your vision for health.

### Step 3: Support for You and Your Plan

Support might include other VA programs, health coaching, or support and encouragement from your friends, family and the community.

Personalized Health Plan Online Resources	
 <small>VA Whole Health for Life</small>	 <small>VA myHealtheVet</small>
<b>Personal Health Inventory</b> Complete a Personal Health inventory <a href="https://www.va.gov/wholehealth/">https://www.va.gov/wholehealth/</a>	<b>My HealtheVet</b> Complete a HealthLiving Assessment and send it to your team by secure message. <a href="https://www.myhealthvet.va.gov">https://www.myhealthvet.va.gov</a>



# Wellness Strength for Life

## MONTANA VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IS PLEASED TO OFFER A VARIETY OF WELLNESS PROGRAMS.

This program is fueled by the power of knowing yourself and what will work for you in your life. What's in the center of the Wheel? YOU!!! You are the most important factor in determining your health. Every choice you make, whether to eat healthy or not, whether to take a medication or not, impacts your health.

## WHEEL OF HEALTH

The Wheel of Health has several areas that are important for achieving the best health and highest level of well-being. All the areas are important, and some are strongly connected to other areas. For each area consider where you are now and where you would like to be.



## MINDFUL AWARENESS

Mindfulness is simply being fully aware or paying attention. It's a skill you may have developed and used in the military, like when learning to discharge a firearm. It allowed you to be fully alert and aware of the process from moment to moment to perfect your technique. Taking the time to slow down and breathe allows you to be mentally present and physically relaxed. Your body and mind send you signals constantly. But, if your attention is elsewhere, you don't notice the signals. Then, the signals that began as whispers become screams. Being mindful or aware of your health allows you to make conscious proactive choices.

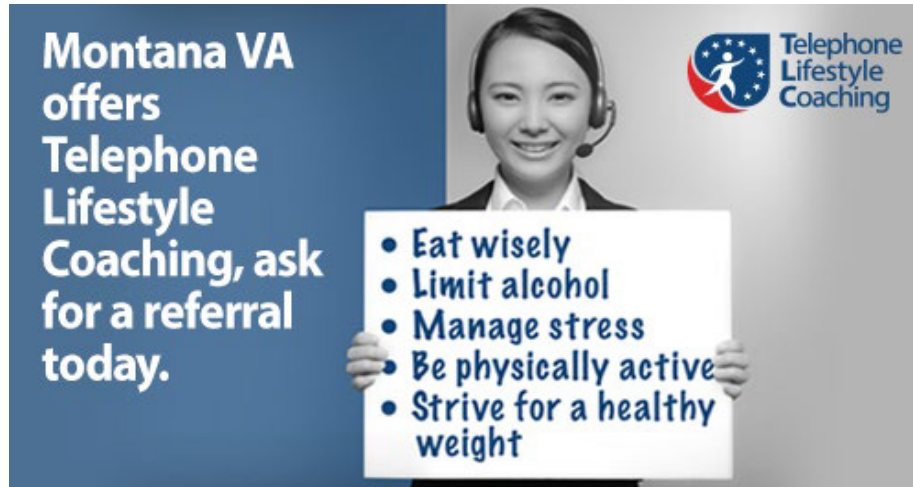


# Telephone Lifestyle Coach

## CONSIDER ASKING YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM FOR A TELEPHONE LIFESTYLE COACH!

**A health coach is an accountability partner and can help you set and reach the goals YOU set! This is a free service!**

- Personalized health coaching
- When and where Veteran prefers
- One-to-one telephone contact
- Explore and identify healthy living goals
- Create a plan to reach goals
- 10 calls over 6 months
- May re-enroll for continued support or new goals



**Montana VA offers Telephone Lifestyle Coaching, ask for a referral today.**

**Telephone Lifestyle Coaching**

- Eat wisely
- Limit alcohol
- Manage stress
- Be physically active
- Strive for a healthy weight



# Wheel Of Health Areas

Some services are only offered at certain clinics

## EAT WISELY

What would you be doing differently if you could lose 25 – 50 pounds? There are several benefits to eating healthy like weight loss, improved blood pressure, reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, some forms of cancer, gallstones and diabetes, improved sleep, reduced joint and back pain, and increased energy and function. There are several VA resources to help you every step of the way.



- MOVE Weight Management Program: Classes over the phone, video conference, or in person– Call (406) 447-7334
- MOVE Individual Visits
- MOVE! Coach Mobile App–<https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>
- Diabetes Your Way classes
- Talk with your PACT about a consult to talk with a dietitian
- Telephone Lifestyle Coach (see page 56)
- Do you need assistance with food? Montana Food Bank Network: <https://mfbn.org>

Eat Wisely Online Resources	
 <small>VA Mobile App Store</small>	
<b>MOVE! Coach Mobile App</b> <a href="https://mobile.va.gov/appstore">https://mobile.va.gov/appstore</a>	<b>Montana Food Bank Network</b> <a href="https://mfbn.org">https://mfbn.org</a>

## BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

No matter your health concerns, it's generally more dangerous to NOT be physically active. During your military career, you may have been in top physical condition. VA self-management programs can help you set small manageable goals to rebuild your physical resilience.

- VA Yoga, Tai Chi or Walk with Ease or MOVE exercise group
- Team Red, White, and Blue [www.teamrwb.org/join/](http://www.teamrwb.org/join/)
- Ask for a Fit for Life DVD or Strength Training DVD: Contact: (406) 447-6897
- Telephone Lifestyle Coach (page 56)
- VA National Sports Program and Special Events

Be Physically Active Online Resources	
 <small>Team Red, White and Blue</small>	
<b>Team Red, White, and Blue</b> <a href="http://www.teamrwb.org/join/">www.teamrwb.org/join/</a>	<b>VA National Veterans Sports Programs &amp; Special Events</b> <a href="http://www.blogs.va.gov/nvspse">www.blogs.va.gov/nvspse</a>

## FEEL SPIRITUALLY CONNECTED -- VA CHAPLAIN SERVICE

Everyone has an embedded spirituality that can be defined as the desire to bring meaning, purpose and hope into our experiences. Religion is the organization designed to help a person bring meaning, purpose and hope into their experiences. The loss of health, or trauma or grief brings out questions that have simmered under the surface in better times. Chaplains can address these spiritual questions and provide religious resources.



We work in the mental health departments as well as in the medical floors. We also provide virtual groups and 1-on-1 meetings.

You can request to meet with a chaplain by calling (406) 447-7640 or (406) 447-6128.

## LIMIT ALCOHOL AND BE DRUG-FREE

Veterans are at greater risk for abusing alcohol and drugs than others. Such addictions can lead to many other problems, such as work, marriage, family, financial and health. Take action to overcome addiction. VA Substance Use Disorders Programs (SUDS) are here to help you on your path to recovery. Your provider can help you get connected to these programs.

- Substance Use Disorder Program (406) 447-6000
- Naloxone Distribution and Training
- Talk with your PACT
- VetCHANGE Mobile App <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/change>
- Telephone Lifestyle Coach (page 56)
- Vet Center in your community <https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>
- For those who need more than outpatient care, the New Frontiers Sobriety and Wellness Center at the main campus provides residential care Contact: (406) 447-6025

Limit Alcohol and Be Drug-Free Online Resources	
 <small>VA VetCHANGE Online Program</small>	 <small>VA Vet Center</small>
<b>VetCHANGE Mobile App</b> <a href="https://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/change">https://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/change</a>	<b>Vet Center in Your Community</b> <a href="https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/">https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/</a>

## INVEST IN MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY

As you move through life transitions, you may find that you're not able to do the things you've done in the past. It's important to remain active and involved in life, no matter how your health or relationships change. Consider these resources to help you.

Invest in Meaningful Activity Online Resources				
 <small>Project Healing Waters</small>	 <small>VA Vocational Rehabilitation</small>	 <small>Veterans Upward Bound</small>	 <small>VA Careers for Veterans</small>	
<b>Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing</b> <a href="https://projecthealingwaters.org/">https://projecthealingwaters.org/</a>	<b>Vocational Rehabilitation, also known as Veteran Readiness and Employment</b> <a href="https://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp">https://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp</a>	<b>Veterans Upward Bound</b> <a href="https://www2.ed.gov/programs/trio/vub/index.html">https://www2.ed.gov/programs/trio/vub/index.html</a>	<b>VA Careers for Veterans</b> <a href="https://www.vacareers.va.gov/veterans/index.asp">https://www.vacareers.va.gov/veterans/index.asp</a>	<b>Seek out volunteer opportunities in your community</b>

# MANAGE STRESS AND FEEL RESTED




Sleep problems are very common among Veterans. A recent survey reported that 76% do not get enough sleep; 91% reported feeling tired, fatigued or sleepy during the day. Sleep can make a difference in how you cope with stress. Over time, stress builds up and can lead to physical and emotional issues.

## Consider these programs to help with sleep:

- Ask for a referral to sleep clinic
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I)
- Primary Care-Mental Health Integration (PC-MHI)

## Consider these programs to help with stress:

- Mindfulness group through behavioral health
- Telephone Lifestyle Coach (page 56)
- Stress Management workbook
- Tai Chi, Yoga Nidra and Qi Gong
- Reiki
- Biofeedback
- Message Therapy -- Ask your PACT team for information
- Vet Center in your community <https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>
- Homeless Veteran Call Center 1-877-424-3838.
- Veteran’s Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 or dial 988, then press 1.
- Veteran Justice Outreach (406) 447-6021
- Anger, Irritability and Management Skills (AIMS) Online Course <https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims/index.asp>
- Moving Forward Online Course and Mobile App <https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward/>
- Montana VA offers residential care for PTSD in our New Frontiers Post-Traumatic Growth Center Contact: (406) 447-6025
- Mobile Apps – [www.mobile.va.gov/appstore](http://www.mobile.va.gov/appstore)
  - » CBT-I Mobile App | Mindfulness Coach | PTSD Coach | Breathe2Rest

Manage Stress and Feel Rested Online Resources			
 <small>VA Vet Center</small>	 <small>VA Anger, Irritability and Management Skills (AIMS) Online Course</small>	 <small>VA Moving Forward</small>	 <small>VA Mobile App Store</small>
<b>Vet Center in Your Community</b> <a href="https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/">https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/</a>	<b>Anger, Irritability and Management Skills (AIMS) Online Course</b> <a href="https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims/index.asp">https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims/index.asp</a>	<b>Moving Forward Online Course and Mobile App</b> <a href="https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward/">https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward/</a>	<b>VA Mobile Apps</b> <a href="https://mobile.va.gov/appstore">https://mobile.va.gov/appstore</a>

# HAVE SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the backbone of military service. Healthy, supportive relationships, whether they include family, friends, caregivers, fellow Vets, church members, co-workers or others, are valuable in times of health and illness. There are several resources to help you build and maintain healthy relationships.

- Support Groups
  - » Check out your local Vet Center (see page 87 for locations in Montana)
    - Will be able to provide information about Peer Support Groups
    - 70% of Vet Center staff are Veterans themselves
- Primary Care-Mental Health Integration (PC-MHI)
- Online Caregiver Support Program – <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>
- Caregiver Support Line – 1-855-260-3274
- Veteran Parenting Course – [www.veterantraining.va.gov/parenting/](http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/parenting/)
- Parenting2Go Mobile App- [www.mobile.va.gov/appstore](http://www.mobile.va.gov/appstore)

Have Supportive Relationships Online Resources		
 <small>VA Online Caregiver Support Program</small>	 <small>VA Veteran Parenting Course</small>	 <small>VA Mobile App Store</small>
<b>Online Caregiver Support Program</b> <a href="https://www.caregiver.va.gov/">https://www.caregiver.va.gov/</a>	<b>Veteran Parenting Course</b> <a href="http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/parenting/">www.veterantraining.va.gov/parenting/</a>	<b>Parenting2Go Mobile App</b> <a href="http://www.mobile.va.gov/appstore">www.mobile.va.gov/appstore</a>



## BE INVOLVED IN YOUR HEALTH CARE

As a soldier, your unit was a source of strength and commitment. You would never consider going into battle alone. Banding together with fellow Veterans who share similar wellness goals can strengthen your commitment to each other and the mission. VA wellness programs are available to support you.



- Home Telehealth - Contact: (406) 447-7620
- Diabetes Self-Management Education - Contact: (406) 493-3771
- Ask your PACT team for patient education information that is right for you.
- Living Life Well - Classes in your community. Do you have an ongoing health problem like arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, anxiety or depression? Does it stop you from doing the things you enjoy? Learn what you can do to feel better and take control of your health. Call 1-844-684-5848 or visit, <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/chronicdisease>
- Community Based Programs and workshops (interactive map) <http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/chronicdisease/CommunityBasedPrograms>

Be Involved in Your Health Care Online Resources	
 <small>State of Montana Chronic Disease Management Bureau</small>	 <small>State of Montana CDBM Community Based Programs</small>
<b>Living Life Well Class</b> <a href="https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/chronicdisease">https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/chronicdisease</a>	<b>Community Based Programs and workshops (interactive map)</b> <a href="http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/chronicdisease/CommunityBasedPrograms">http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/chronicdisease/CommunityBasedPrograms</a>

## BE TOBACCO FREE

Quitting tobacco is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health. It's also one of the most challenging habits to change. Studies show that most people make several quit attempts before quitting for good. Those who use Nicotine Replacement Products greatly improve their chances of success. Adding a support service more than doubles the chance for success. Consider one or more of these VA resources.

- Quit Tobacco Program -- Contact: (406) 447-6822
- Nicotine Replacement Products prescribed by your Primary Care Provider
- VA Tobacco Quit Line – Quit Vet – 1-855-784-8838.
- VA Text Support for Tobacco Treatment – [www.smokefree.gov/Vet](http://www.smokefree.gov/Vet) or text the word “Vet” to 47848.
- Home Telehealth for Tobacco Treatment – ask your provider
- Mobile App – Stay Quit Coach <https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>

Be Tobacco Free Online Resources	
 <small>Online Text Support for Tobacco Treatment</small>	 <small>VA Mobile App Store</small>
<b>VA Text Support for Tobacco Treatment</b> <a href="http://www.smokefree.gov/Vet">www.smokefree.gov/Vet</a>	<b>Mobile App – Stay Quit Coach</b> <a href="https://mobile.va.gov/appstore">https://mobile.va.gov/appstore</a>

## Montana VA Pharmacies

### PACT PHARMACY PROVIDER

The pharmacist provider is a Clinical Pharmacy Specialist who works as part of the PACT team to:

- Manage your chronic medical issues by prescribing and adjusting medications
- Answer medication-related questions
- Review and discuss lab results, allergies, and medication

What does the PACT Pharmacist Provider do?

- Provide disease management services, for example: Diabetes, cholesterol, high blood pressure, low vitamin D, thyroid issues, heart issues, tobacco cessation, gout, and more
- Prescribe medication and order labs
- Work with your PACT team to manage your care

### PRESCRIPTIONS

There are several ways to get your prescriptions filled. First, you must be under the care of a VA provider. Or you must be approved by the VA for Community Care.

#### Picking-Up Prescriptions

The outpatient pharmacy at Fort Harrison and Billings is open to all patients on Monday through Friday from 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. When you pick-up a prescription at the VA, you need to check in at the pharmacy and can talk to a pharmacist. This is to make sure you understand your medications, the side effects and how to take them. Please ask the pharmacist any questions you might have about your medications.

#### Mailed Prescriptions

If you aren't getting a new prescription filled, and if you have a 7 to 14-day supply at home, you do not need to come to the Outpatient Pharmacy to pick-up your prescription(s). VA policy is to mail out refill prescriptions with the use of our Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP). Montana VA Health Care System does not have an "automated" refill system. Patients must request refills for their medications and should do so at least 14 days before needed to allow time for delivery.

#### May I get my prescriptions filled at an outside pharmacy? "Yes"

- You may have prescriptions filled at an outside Pharmacy at your own expense. Your provider may be willing to call or fax prescriptions to an outside pharmacy, or you may be given a paper copy to take to an outside pharmacy.
- Prescriptions from approved Community Care may be filled for a 14-day supply at your own expense. You may submit a receipt for reimbursement consideration to the Community Care Office. Please note that medication supplies in excess of 14 days, non-emergent prescriptions, and subsequent prescriptions, are not eligible for reimbursement.
- Prescriptions from an approved Urgent Care visit may be filled at a local VA pharmacy or local in-network pharmacy for up to a 14-day emergency supply with expense covered by VA




## COPAYMENTS

For the treatment of non service-connected conditions, there may be a copayment (copay). Copay is based on eligibility status and the number of days of medication received. If your income is below a certain level, copays may be waived. Copay cost is determined by the 'tier' the medication falls in. Please note: copays and tiers may change every year (see information on medication copayment on page 12).

Copays apply to both prescribed and over-the-counter medications. It may be less costly for you to obtain some over-the-counter medications, such as aspirin, from non-VA sources at your own expense than from the VA with a copay. There is no copay for supplies such as glucose test strips and syringes.

If you have any questions regarding copays, please call 877-222-8387 or visit <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits>

VA Copayment Online Information	
<p><b>VA Health Benefit Costs</b></p> <p>If you have any questions regarding copays visit: <a href="http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits">visit http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits</a></p>	 <p>VA Health Benefit Costs Website</p>

## THE VA FORMULARY SYSTEM

### What is a formulary?

The VA Formulary is a list of preferred medications available to VA patients. A decision on what is included on the VA Formulary is made at the national level and is based on the benefit and safety of each medication. VA providers are encouraged to order medications that are on the approved formulary. Medications not on the VA Formulary require prior authorization with justification for use, which are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### Will I be able to get the same medications at the VA that my private doctor ordered?

You are able to get medications that treat all of the problems or conditions that you have. The medications ordered may be different than the ones that a non-VA doctor prescribed.

- Your VA Provider will not simply re-write the prescriptions that your doctor outside the VA was giving you. The VA Provider must complete an assessment and decide which medications are most appropriate for you.
- Community Care/Non-VA care: If you are approved to see a Community Care provider, you may bring your authorized prescriptions to the VA Pharmacy, have your provider fax them, or have your provider electronically prescribe them to the VA pharmacy. Community Care prescriptions must conform to the VA Formulary.
- "Equivalent Medications" are medications that are different from those you received from a non-VA provider, but that are designed to treat the same problem.
- Specialist Referrals: Sometimes your VA primary care provider will refer you to a VA specialist to prescribe a "specialty" medication. Examples: you may need to see a VA cardiologist (for heart problems), an oncologist (for cancer treatment), etc.

# Prescription Refill Information

## HOW DO I GET MY PRESCRIPTIONS REFILLED? ORDER EARLY!

Order your refill at least 14 days before you will need it. You can order over the internet, by mobile Rx Refill app, by phone, or by returning refill slips to us in the mail.

## HERE ARE WAYS TO REFILL YOUR PRESCRIPTION(S):

### Internet (24 hours a day – 7 days a week)

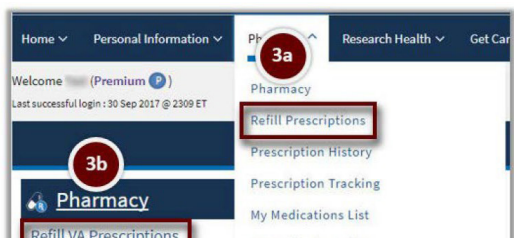
### Online at My HealtheVet ([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov))

First you need to enroll in My HealtheVet and create an Advanced or Premium account: (see additional information starting on page 70)

1. Go to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)
2. Click on the green Register button on the upper right side of the screen.
3. Fill out the registration form then click the blue Create Your Account button at the bottom of the page. Veterans and VA Patients automatically get Advanced accounts. Premium account users can use Secure Messaging to contact their health care team or pharmacist with medication questions.
4. Ask your healthcare team for more information or assistance.

To request refills:

1. Go to [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) and click on the green Sign in button on the upper right side of the screen.
2. Click the blue Sign in with My HealtheVet button at the bottom of the next page; enter your User ID and Password then click the blue Sign in button.
3. Select one of the following to open the Refill VA Prescriptions page:
  - a. Refill VA Prescriptions from the Pharmacy drop-down menu at the top of the page or;
  - b. Refill VA Prescriptions link in the Pharmacy box on the page.
4. In the “Select to Refill” column, check the box for the desired medication to be refilled.
5. Select the Submit Refills button



A screenshot of the Refill VA Prescriptions table. The table has columns for Refill Status, Refill Submit Date, Fill Date, Refill Remaining, Prescription, Facility, Select to Refill, and Prescription Tracking. A red box highlights the 'Select to Refill' column, and a red circle labeled '4' is next to the first row. A red box labeled '5' highlights the 'Submit Refills' button at the bottom of the table.

Refill Status	Refill Submit Date	Fill Date	Refill Remaining	Prescription	Facility	Select to Refill	Prescription Tracking
Active	07/24/2017	07/22/2017	9	FINOXIDE 2MG TAB 8062713398		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Active	03/31/2017	03/26/2017	10	CIBON 10 CAP 8062713398		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Active	03/31/2017	03/26/2017	10	NOBLOXACIN 800MG TAB 8062713398		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Active	03/31/2017	03/26/2017	10	YESAPYRIL HCL 200MG SA TAB 8062713398		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Active		03/16/2017	11	METRONIDAZOLE 250MG TAB 8062713398		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Submitted	07/14/2014	07/14/2014	5	CIBON 10 CAP 8062713398		<input type="checkbox"/>	

### My HealtheVet Online Resource

#### My HealtheVet

<https://www.myhealthvet.va.gov>



VA myhealthvet

## Mobile RX Refill App (24 hours a day – 7 days a week)

This app allows Veterans to request refills of their refillable VA-issued prescriptions, track VA prescription deliveries, and view VA prescription history from the convenience of their mobile device. For additional security, you must have a My HealtheVet Premium account set up to use this mobile app.

- Download the mobile app to your iPhone or Android smart phone by going to the VA App Store page at [www.mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill](http://www.mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill).
- Sign in to the Rx Refill App using one of the log in options.
- Select the action desired:
  - » Refill VA Prescriptions
  - » Track Delivery
  - » Prescription History
  - » Medication Information on My HealtheVet

Mobile Rx Refill App Online Information		
	<p><b>Mobile Rx Refill App</b> <a href="http://www.mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill">www.mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill</a></p>	 <small>VA Mobile Rx Refill</small>

## Phone (Automated Refill Line is available 24 hours a day – 7 days a week) 1-877-468-8387

Option 1 – is for Pharmacy

- Before calling, you must have your Social Security number and RX number available.
- Follow the system prompts.

Option 2 – is for talking to a Pharmacy Representative. Representatives are available Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM.

## Mail

When you receive medications in the mail, there will be refill slips enclosed for each medication. To request refills, mail the refill slip(s) to:

VA Pharmacy  
3687 Veterans Drive  
PO Box 190  
Fort Harrison, MT 59636

The VA Pharmacy is NOT like other retail pharmacies!

- Not all medicines are stocked in the local VA pharmacy. Most Montana VA Health Care System prescriptions are filled by the Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP). Even with mailing costs, it is less expensive to have prescriptions sent from the CMOP. Also, automation at the CMOP provides less risk for human error when filling prescriptions.
- Filling new prescriptions is the priority work for the local VA pharmacy. Therefore, when refills are requested at the Outpatient Pharmacy, they will be mailed to you.
- We want to save you time and reduce waiting times for others. Pharmacy waiting times can be reduced if patients with refills are not waiting in line with patients getting new prescriptions. Please use the refill system options identified above to receive your medicines by mail as much as possible.

### Protect Your Mail

- Make sure your mailbox is secure.
- Promptly remove mail from your mail box – do not leave your medicines sitting in your mail box.
- Notify the pharmacy and the post-office immediately if you change your address.
- If you do not receive a prescription, report it to the pharmacy.
- Inform the post-master or postal inspector right away if your medicine is stolen and file a police report.

How do I know when to expect my medications?

- Sign up for US Postal Service Informed Delivery
- Sign up for United Postal Service (UPS) My Choice

## IMPORTANT PRESCRIPTION REORDER TIPS

- Request your next refill at least 14 days before you need to receive it.
- Use one of the options listed above to request refills on your medications.
- If you are using the phone system and do not understand the questions, choose option 2 to speak to a pharmacy representative.
- If you have questions or prescription problems, choose option 2 to speak to a pharmacy representative.
- If you do not get your refill within 10 days, call the pharmacy and choose option 2.
- Track medication deliveries sent from CMOP online with a My HealtheVet Premium account or the mobile RX Refill app.
- Request prescription renewals using My HealtheVet secure messaging if you have a My HealtheVet Premium Account. Ask-A-Pharmacist secure messaging can be used for non-urgent or emergent pharmacy needs.

# Controlled Substances

VA Pharmacy has more specific prescription handling requirements for some medications, typically referred to as “Controlled Substances.” These include, but are not limited to:

Controlled Substances include, but not limited to:		
<b>Opioids (for pain)</b>	Hydrocodone/ acetaminophen Oxycodone	Morphine Codeine Tramadol
<b>Benzodiazepines</b>	Alprazolam Clonazepam	Diazepam Lorazepam
<b>Stimulants</b>	Adderall	Ritalin
<b>Sleep medications</b>	Zolpidem	
<b>Other</b>	Pregabalin	

## FOR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE PRESCRIPTIONS:

- Renewals need to be requested by phone through the Pharmacy Call Center or through secure messaging. It is important to place your request at least 10 business days before your refill is due.
- Pharmacy is unable to provide partial or emergency supply fills without a new prescription from the provider.
- Pharmacy is unable to refill a medication early without prior approval from the provider.
- You may be required to sign for your medication when it arrives in the mail. If there is a problem with receiving medications by mail at your address, you may have to fill your prescriptions in person. Discuss this with your healthcare team.
- Plan ahead! The pharmacy may be closed on weekends, holidays, and after regular clinic hours.

VA monitors use of these medications closely because there is more risk with their use. It is very important for you to tell your provider if you receive any controlled substances from outside the VA. Your healthcare team is required to track when you renew and refill controlled substance prescriptions from both inside and outside of the VA, using state-run prescription drug monitoring programs. They will check before you start a new controlled substance prescription and periodically thereafter, for as long as you continue to use any controlled substances. Urine drug testing is required at least twice a year for most Veterans using medications for pain (including opioids).

## Veteran Health Education

Montana VA Health Care System provides a wide range of educational programs and support groups on a variety of topics to help you and your family members. Your health care team is a great resource for health information. Ask them!

We also provide printed handouts and pamphlets on a wide-range of topics. Ask staff for copies on health care topics of interest to you. In addition, you can also access handouts on almost any topic from your home computer by going to the Veterans Health Library...

### VETERANS HEALTH LIBRARY

VA's health information website is available 24/7 via My HealtheVet ([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)) or at [www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov](http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov)

#### What is the Veterans Health Library (VHL)?

The VHL provides Veterans with an easy to use source of up-to-date health information reviewed by VA clinical experts.



#### Benefits of using the Veterans Health Library?

The VHL provides information on a wide range of health topics, including wellness and prevention, understanding a diagnosis, making treatment decisions, preparing for a test or procedure, rehabilitation and recovery, medications and self-managing your health.

It also includes Veteran-specific health topics such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat-related traumatic brain injury, and Agent Orange.

The VHL offers thousands of resources including health sheets, booklets, and videos, as well as workbooks on how to manage specific diseases. This health information can help you:

- Live healthier
- Prepare for health care visits
- Understand medical conditions and treatments
- Partner and talk with your health care team
- Share in health care decisions and be more involved in your health care

Veterans Health Library Online Resources	
 <small>VA myhealthvet</small>	 <small>Veterans Health Library</small>
<b>My HealtheVet</b> <a href="https://www.myhealthvet.va.gov">https://www.myhealthvet.va.gov</a>	<b>Veterans Health Library</b> <a href="http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov">www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov</a>

## To find the health information you are looking for:

From the VHL home page you can view specific topics in a few ways.

- The home page features different topics. Simply scroll down the home page to view these topics and click the underlines title to view more.
- The “Health Encyclopedia” A-Z index will list topics in alphabetic order which is helpful when unsure of the name or spelling.
  - » The tool bar can be used to search a category such as:
    - » Living well
    - » Diseases & conditions
    - » Tests & treatments
    - » Medications... etc.
- The search box can be used to find a specific topic you are interested in. Use your mouse or the up/down arrows on your keyboard to navigate through the suggested search terms.
- If you didn’t find what you were looking for, try placing quotes around the keywords and searching again. Adding quotes to your search term will return more specific results.

## There are videos available in the Veterans Health Library:

There is a video library and other multimedia tools. On the home page, last gray box on the right “Additional Resources”, you may link to the Multimedia section which contains:

- VHL Library’s video content
- To view the featured video, simply hover over the arrow to preview it.

My healthvet **Veterans Health Library**  
Your source for health information

En Español

Living Well Diseases & Conditions Tests & Treatments Medications Rehabilitation Mental Health Library Living With... Additional Resources

Search Health Library...

HEALTH ENCYCLOPEDIA  
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

**eKidneyClinic**  
Learn how to take care of your kidneys and make choices that will help you feel your best...  
[Read More](#)

Help improve the VHL. Share your opinions! Click here for brief survey

**Web Tour Video**

**MULTIMEDIA**  
Rollover to preview, click to watch  
[Myasthenia Gravis](#)

**MENTAL HEALTH LIBRARY**  
[Posttraumatic Stress Disorder](#)

**VETERANS RESOURCES**  
[Agent Orange and Other Exposures](#)  
[AllMS: Anger and Irritability Management Skills Course](#)  
[DoD Traumatic Brain Injury](#)  
[Ebola Virus Disease](#)  
[eKidney Clinic](#)

# My HealthVet

## MY HEALTHEVET IS A WEBSITE JUST FOR VETERANS WITH LINKS TO:

- VA Health Records
- Secure messaging
- Prescription refills on-line
- VA Appointments & Labs
- Logs & Journals
- VA news and services
- Library of healthcare topics

My HealthVet is VA's online personal health record. It was designed for Veterans and caregivers. My HealthVet helps you partner with your health care team. It provides opportunities and tools to make informed decisions and manage your health care.

## FEATURES ARE AVAILABLE BASED ON YOUR ACCOUNT TYPE.

### Basic Account:

Online registration gives you (or your family members) the option to enter personal information, look up VA benefits, and use the health library.

### Premium Account:

If you "authenticate" and upgrade to this account you get access to your VA appointments, health records, secure messaging, and much more.

After you register, your account type will be displayed in the Member Login box, with an icon after your name. For the Basic Account a after your name and for the Premium Account a after your name.

### My HealthVet Basic Account Features:

- Add information to a personal health journal: over-the-counter medications, allergies, military health history, medical events, and tests.
- Record and track personal information: contact info, emergency contacts, doctors and providers, and health insurance.
- Monitor and graph personal health measures in Vitals & Readings: blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, heart rate, body temp, weight, and pain level.
- Print a wallet ID card.
- Set goals in "My Goals"
- Complete a Healthy Living Assessment
- Link to the Veterans Health Library

### My HealthVet Advanced Account Features:

This higher level account is for those who register as a VA patient. It provides you the option to view some information in your VA and DoD records and allows you to refill VA prescriptions online.



## My HealtheVet Premium Account Features (\*Authentication Required)

If you are an enrolled VA patient and upgrade to the premium account (<https://www.va.gov/resources/get-a-premium-my-healthevet-account/>), you can:

- Access parts of your official VA health record
- View VA Appointments, Lab results, and Allergies
- View VA health records using Blue Button
- View your electronic DoD Military Service Information
- Use Secure Messaging to communicate with VA health care teams



### Blue Button Download My Data

Use VA's Blue Button to view, save, download and/or print your VA health records and available DoD Military Service Information (after 1980). You may also share this with your caregiver, non-VA provider or others you trust.

With a Premium Account, you can use the VA Blue Button to view key portions of your VA health record that may include your VA:			
Admissions and Discharges Allergies Appointments (future)	EKG Immunizations Laboratory Results Medication History	Pathology Reports Progress (Doctor's) Notes Problem List	Radiology Reports Vitals and Readings Wellness Reminders

## Secure Messaging:

It is a secure, web-based message service that allows you to send non-urgent, non-emergency health information and messages to your VA health care team. You may send messages to request online prescription renewals; ask about lab results; and request or cancel VA appointments. Health care teams have 72-business hours to respond to a message, but often reply sooner.

In addition, you may:

- Download your VA Continuity of Care Document (VA CCD). This is a summary of important VA health information from your electronic VA health record.
- Use the Healthliving Assessment (HLA) tool to determine your "Health Age" under the Track Health Tab. HLA helps you set health goals. You can send your HLA to your healthcare team using secure messaging.

\*Authentication: An identify authentication process is required to access the Premium My HealtheVet account. The process verifies your identify before allowing access to your VA or DoD records. Get Authentication at a VA health facility Release of Information or My HealtheVet Office.

My HealtheVet Help Desk: If you need help with your account or have a concern Call Toll Free at 1-877-327-0022 Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 8:00pm or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY). You may also reach the local Montana VA HCS My HealtheVet Office at (406) 447-7437 during business hours.

My HealtheVet Online Resources		
		
<b>My HealtheVet</b> <a href="https://www.myhealthevet.va.gov">https://www.myhealthevet.va.gov</a>	<b>Veterans Health Library</b> <a href="http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov">www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov</a>	<b>My HealtheVet Premium Account</b> <a href="https://www.va.gov/resources/get-a-premium-my-healthevet-account/">https://www.va.gov/resources/get-a-premium-my-healthevet-account/</a>

## Patient Rights

### RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VA PATIENTS AND RESIDENTS

**Copies of the Rights and Responsibilities are posted at each of our sites. The key tenets of your rights include your right to:**

- Nondiscrimination and Respect
- Information Disclosure and Confidentiality
- Participation in Treatment Decisions
- Concerns or Complaints
- Additional Rights for Community Living Center Residents

If you would like a full copy of the Patient Rights and Responsibilities, please contact your Patient Representative.

### RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FAMILY MEMBERS OF VA PATIENTS AND RESIDENTS OF COMMUNITY LIVING CENTERS (CLC)

**The key tenets of the Rights and Responsibilities of Family Members include the right to:**

- Nondiscrimination and Respect
- Keeping Health Information Private and Secure
- Partnering in Care
- Family Members' Role in Treatment Decisions
- Visiting the Veteran
- Concerns or Complaints

### MEASURING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Our goal is to provide impressive care and service.

The VA has a national satisfaction survey tool that is mailed to Veterans, called the Survey of Healthcare Experience of Patients (SHEP).

- A random sample of Veterans is selected to receive a mailed survey each month.
- All patient responses are confidential.
- We receive our scores quarterly and make changes continuously to try and improve our Veterans' satisfaction.

If you receive one of these surveys, please take the time to complete it. We have made many improvements in the care we provide based on the feedback from these surveys.

# Patient Advocate/Veterans Experience Office (VEO)

## IF OUR CARE OR SERVICE DOES NOT MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS, WE WANT TO KNOW RIGHT AWAY.

### To solve your issue as quickly as possible, please take the steps outlined below:

- Try to solve your issue at the point-of-service. Please discuss your concerns with your provider, caregiver or support staff.
- If the staff do not resolve the issue to your satisfaction, please ask to speak with a supervisor or the Administrative Officer for the Service.
- If your concern is still not resolved after meeting with the above staff, please contact a Patient Advocate. The Patient Advocates work on your behalf to ensure your satisfaction with VA health care services. They work directly with management to seek resolutions.
- Montana VA has three Patient Advocates on staff, 2 located at Fort Harrison and 1 in Billings. To reach the Patient Advocate Office call (406) 447-7990 or stop by one of our offices.
  - » Fort Harrison – Room S103 (Located inside the Patient Business Office)
  - » Billings – Room 1019 (Located in the Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow Clinic/Primary Care)
- If you believe that the organization has failed to address your concerns about suspected criminal activities, fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement, you may contact the VA Office of the Inspector General at 1(800) 488-8244 or email [vaighotline@va.gov](mailto:vaighotline@va.gov).

## WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN MAKING IMPROVEMENTS?

### Here are some ways....

Veterans Town Hall- held quarterly in different locations check the Montana VA Health Care System internet and Facebook pages for details.

Patient and Family Advisory- The mission of the Patient & Family Advisory Council is to ensure that the voices of the Veteran and families are represented to enhance their entire experience at the Montana VA Health Care System Medical Center. For additional information or to share feedback with the Council on services, please leave a detailed voice message at (406) 447-7960.

Veterans Mental Health Council- The mission is to “improve the quality of VA mental health services, to improve Veterans’ understanding of those services, and to promote the best use of those services.” Veterans may share concerns and suggestions for improvement with the council or may apply to become a member of the council by calling (406) 447-7960.

Veteran Signals Survey – Veteran Signals survey is sent out to Veteran’s email address by random sample. This survey asks about a recent encounter at the Montana VA Health Care system. Any Veteran who received outpatient or pharmacy services within the previous week is eligible to receive a survey.

Survey of Healthcare Experience of Patients (SHEP) - also mentioned on previous page, every month a random sample of Veterans who were seen in any clinic or discharged from the hospital may receive a survey in the mail asking about your experience with the care you received. Please take the time to fill this out if you receive it.

# Ethical Concerns & Patient Care

Ethical decisions often involve a conflict of moral values and beliefs. Each medical center has an Ethics Consultation Team. Qualified consultants are here to help you with the difficult decisions you may need to make.

## TYPES OF ISSUES THAT VETERANS (OR FAMILIES) MAY NEED ADVICE ABOUT:

- Patient Rights
- Do Not Resuscitate Orders
- Advance Directives, Living Wills
- End of Life issues
- Health care agent issues
- Honoring of religious beliefs

## ETHICS CONSULTATION TEAM MEMBERS:

Ethics Consultation members include administrators, patient advocates, chaplains, social workers, nurses and providers.



## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN AN ETHICS CONSULT IS MADE?

A member is assigned to serve as a consultant to help address the issue or concern.

### The consultant will:

- Identify an ethics question/issue.
- Meet with all the parties involved and listen to each person's concerns
- Review and explain policies that need to be considered in reaching a decision
- Research issues
- Make recommendations
- Help develop a plan

## WHO CAN REQUEST AN ETHICS CONSULT?

- Patients
- Family
- Staff

**Patients and family members can access the service through their Social Worker or the Patient Advocate.**

**There is no charge for this service!**



## Organizations Within the Department of Veterans Affairs

### **Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)**

- Disability
- Education
- Family and Survivor Benefits
- Home Loan Guaranty
- Life Insurance
- Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment

### **National Cemetery Administration (NCA)**

- Burial of Veterans in a VA National Cemetery
- Memorial Remembrances: headstones, markers, presidential memorial certificates and burial flags

### **Veterans Health Administration (VHA)**

- Home Health Care
- Mental Health & Substance Abuse
- Nursing Homes/Long Term Care
- Prescription Medicines
- Preventive Medicine Services
- Primary and Specialty Care
- Rehabilitation Services
- Respite and Hospice Care
- Surgery
- Women Veterans Health Programs

### **Transportation**

- Contact local county Veterans Service Officer (VSO)

National VA Phone Numbers	
Bereavement Counseling	1-202-461-6530
Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA)	1-800-733-8387
Caregiver Stipend	1-877-733-7927
Debt Management Center	1-800-827-0648
Education	1-888-442-4551
Foreign Medical Program	1-303-331-7590
Headstones and Markers	1-800-697-6947
Health Care	1-877-222-8387
Homeless Veterans	1-877-424-3838
Home Loans	1-888-827-3702
Life Insurance	1-800-669-8477
National Cemetery Scheduling Office	1-800-535-1117
Pension Management Center	1-800-827-1000
Presidential Memorial Certificate Program	1-202-565-4964
Spina Bifida Program	1-888-820-1756
Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD)	1-800-829-4833
VA Benefits	1-800-827-1000
Vet Center Call Center	1-877-927-8387
Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255 press 1
Women Veterans	1-877-222-8387

National VA Websites	
Burial and Memorial Benefits	<a href="https://www.cem.va.gov/">https://www.cem.va.gov/</a>
Caregiver Support	<a href="https://www.caregiver.va.gov/">https://www.caregiver.va.gov/</a>
CHAMPVA	<a href="https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/Programs/dependents/champva/index.asp">https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/Programs/dependents/champva/index.asp</a>
eBenefits	<a href="https://www.ebenefits.va.gov">https://www.ebenefits.va.gov</a>
Education Benefits	<a href="https://gibill.va.gov">https://gibill.va.gov</a>
Environmental Exposures	<a href="https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/">https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/</a>
Federal Recovery Coordination Program	<a href="https://www.va.gov/VADODHEALTH/FRCP.asp">https://www.va.gov/VADODHEALTH/FRCP.asp</a>
Health Care Eligibility	<a href="https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/">https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/</a>
Homeless Veterans	<a href="https://www.va.gov/homeless/">https://www.va.gov/homeless/</a>
Home Loan Guaranty	<a href="https://benefits.va.gov/homeloans/">https://benefits.va.gov/homeloans/</a>
Life Insurance	<a href="https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/">https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/</a>
Memorial Certificate Program	<a href="https://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp">https://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp</a>
Mental Health	<a href="https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/">https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/</a>
My HealtheVet	<a href="https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home">https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home</a>
National Resource Directory	<a href="https://nrd.gov/">https://nrd.gov/</a>
Records	<a href="https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/military-personnel">https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/military-personnel</a>
Returning Servicemembers	<a href="https://www.oefoif.va.gov/">https://www.oefoif.va.gov/</a>
State Veterans Affairs Offices	<a href="https://www.va.gov/statedva.htm">https://www.va.gov/statedva.htm</a>
Women Veterans Health Care	<a href="https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/">https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/</a>
VA Vet Center	<a href="https://vetcenter.va.gov/">https://vetcenter.va.gov/</a>
VA Forms	<a href="https://www.va.gov/vaforms/">https://www.va.gov/vaforms/</a>
VA Home Page	<a href="https://www.va.gov/">https://www.va.gov/</a>
Veteran Readiness and Employment	<a href="https://www.va.gov/vre/">https://www.va.gov/vre/</a>

# Montana VA Health Care System Phone Numbers

(NOTE: Fort Harrison Address— 3687 Veterans Drive, Fort Harrison, MT 59636)

Note: Most Specialty Care services require a consult from your Primary Care team

Scheduling Call Center Phone Number: 1 (877) 468-8387, then choose '2'

OFFICE	LOCATION	PHONE NUMBER
72 Hour Community Hospital Notification	All Locations	1-844-724-7842
*American Legion	All Locations	406-495-2082
Appointments–Scheduling Call Center	All Locations	1-877-468-8387, Option'2'
Beneficiary Travel	All Locations	406-447-7409
Billing Office	Fort Harrison	406-447-7844
Call Management Center (Scheduling Appts)		1-877-468-8387, Option 2
Caregiver Program	Fort Harrison	406-431-7456 406-447-6797
Chaplain and Religious Services	All Locations	406-447-7640
Chronic Disease Management Bureau	State of Montana	1-844-684-5848
Community Care Coordinator	All Locations	406-447-7400
Delta Dental	All Locations	1-855-370-3303
Dementia Services	Fort Harrison	406-447-6797
Dental Services	Fort Harrison	406-447-7358
Diabetes Self-Management Education	All Locations	406-493-3771
*Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	All Locations	406-447-7760
EAGALA (Equine Therapy)	Fort Harrison	406-447-6000
Fraud, Waste and Abuse Reporting (VA Inspector General Office)	All Locations	1-800-448-8244
Eligibility Office	Fort Harrison	406-447-7460
Emergency Department	Fort Harrison	406-447-6801 406-447-7190
Environmental Health Registries	All Locations	406-447-7292
Ethics Consultation Service	All Locations	406-447-6729
Extended Care and Rehabilitation	All Locations	406-442-6410
Health Benefits (Business Office)	All Locations	406-447-7350
Home Telehealth Program	All Locations	406-447-7620
ID Badges (VA Healthcare Enrollee ID Badges)	All Locations	406-447-7457
Information Desk (All Locations Operator)	All Locations	1-877-468-8387, Option '0'




OFFICE	LOCATION	PHONE NUMBER
Inspector General (VA) Office (Fraud, Waste and Abuse Reporting)	All Locations	1-800-448-8244
Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Coordinator	All Locations	406-439-1786
LGBT Veterans Coordinator	All Locations	406-475-4713
Liberty House	Fort Harrison	406-447-7707
Low Vision Clinic and Services for Blind Veterans	All Locations	406-447-7565
Medical Foster Home	All Locations	406-447-6721
Medical Records	Fort Harrison	406-447-7234 406-447-7846
Mental Health	All Locations	406-447-6000
Met Life Dental	All Locations	1-888-310-1681
Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Coordinator	All Locations	406-447-6012
Minority Veteran Program Coordinator	All Locations	406-447-7332 406-447-7376 406-447-7832
Montana Veterans Affairs Division	All Locations	406-495-2082
MOVE! Weight Management	All Locations	406-447-7334
My HealthVet Office	All Locations	406-447-7437
New Frontiers Post Traumatic Growth Center	Fort Harrison	406-447-6025
Nurse Triage Line (after hours, weekends, holidays)	All Locations	1-844-262-3845
Nutrition and Food Service	Fort Harrison	406-447-7366 406-447-7375
Ophthalmology	Fort Harrison	406-447-6769 406-447-7144
Palliative and Hospice Care	All Locations	406-447-7622
Patient and Family Advisory Council	All Locations	406-447-7960
Patient Advocate	Fort Harrison	406-447-7990
Pharmacy Call Center (questions and refills)	All Locations	1-877-468-8387
Podiatry	Fort Harrison	406-447-6769
Poison Control (Drug and Poison Control)	All Locations	1-800-222-1222
Police	Fort Harrison	406-447-7911
Prosthetics	Fort Harrison	406-447-6200
Quit Tobacco Program	All Locations	406-447-6822
Release of Information	Fort Harrison	406-447-7234 406-447-7846
Returning Service Members	All Locations	406-447-7665 406-447-7832
Revenue Customer Service	All Locations	406-447-7844
Scheduling Call Center	All Locations	1-877-468-8387, Option'2'
Sleep Clinic	2271 Deerfield Lane, Helena, MT	406-447-7443







OFFICE	LOCATION	PHONE NUMBER
Spinal Cord Injury	Fort Harrison	406-447-7625
Substance Dependence Program	All Locations	406-447-6000
Suicide Prevention (Veterans Crisis Line)	All Locations	1-800-273-8255, Option'1'
Surgical Pre-Operative Info	Fort Harrison	406-447-6769
Telehealth Coordinator	Fort Harrison	406-447-7620
Telephone Triage Nurse	All Locations	1-844-262-3845
Tobacco (Quit Tobacco Program)	All Locations	406-447-6822
Transition and Care Management (TCM) [formerly known as OEF/OIF/OND] Clinic	All Locations	406-447-7832 406-437-2800
Volunteer Transportation Services (VTS)	All Locations	406-447-7760
Women Veterans	All Locations	406-438-1684
Travel Pay (Business Office)	All Locations	406-447-7409
Traveling Veterans Program	All Locations	406-791-3242
**Veteran Benefits Counselor (VBA)	All Locations	1-800-827-1000
Veterans Experience Office (VEO)	All Locations	406-447-7990
*Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)	All Locations	406-495-2082
Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)–Eastern Montana	Eastern Montana	406-437-1686
Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)–Western Montana	Western Montana	406-447-6021
Veterans Mental Health Council	All Locations	406-447-7960
Veterans Transportation Service	All Locations	406-447-6270
Visual Impairment Services(VIST)	All Locations	406-373-3943
Vocational Services	All Locations	406-447-6144
Volunteer Services	All Locations	406-447-7407

\*Veterans Service Offices (VSOs) – can help with disability claims

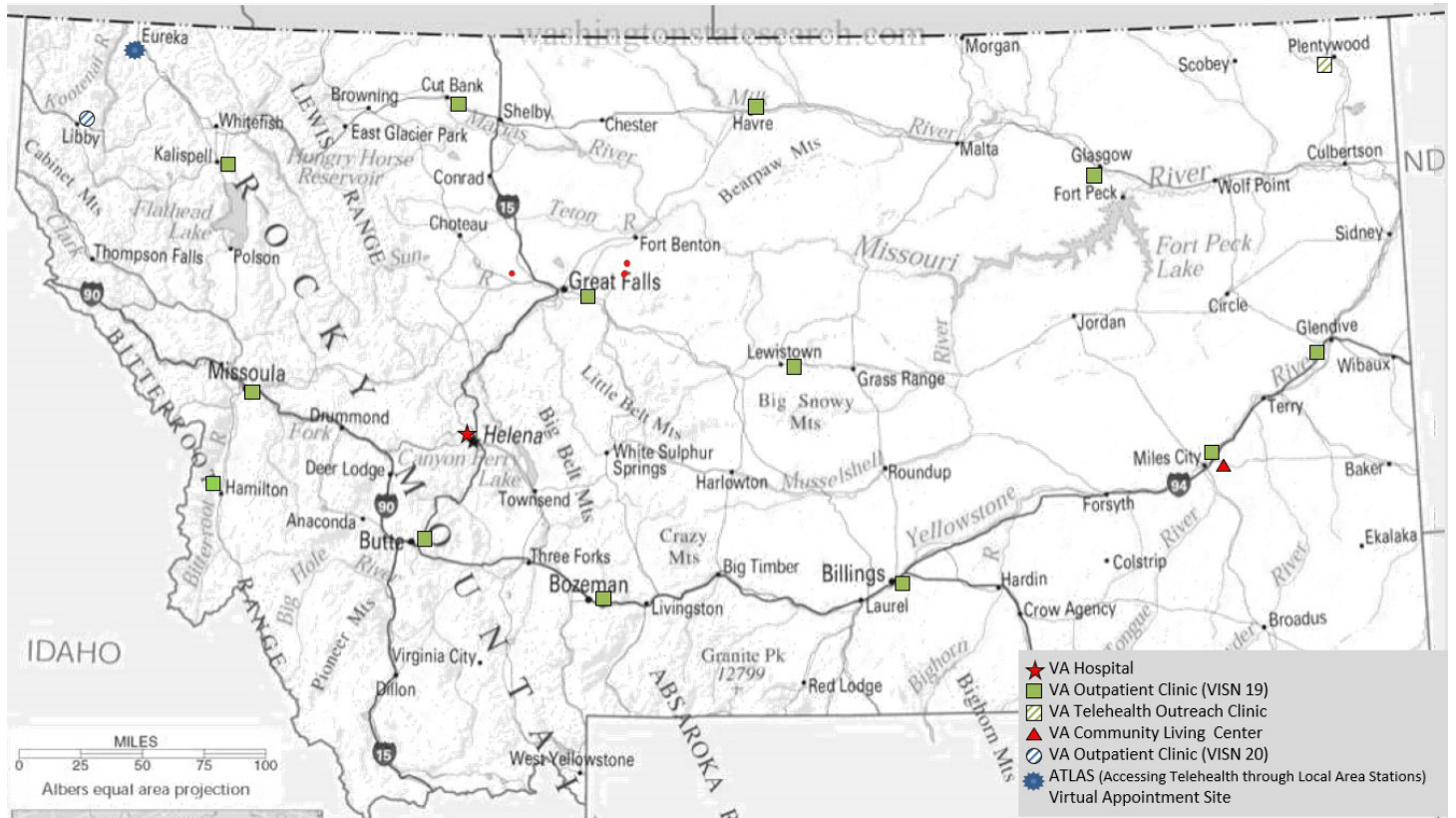
\*\* Veterans Benefits Counselors – Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA) representative

Montana VA Health Care System “A to Z Services” Online Information	
<p><b>Montana VA Health Care System “A to Z Services”</b> Including Descriptions and phone numbers for each program/service. <a href="https://www.montana.va.gov/services/">https://www.montana.va.gov/services/</a></p>	 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">             Montana VA HCS A to Z Services           </div>

# Let's Connect! (with Social Media)

Montana VA Health Care System Social Media and Website		
 <small>Montana VA Facebook Page</small>	 <small>Montana VA Twitter Page</small>	 <small>Montana VA HCS Website</small>
 <b>Follow Us on Facebook</b> @VAMontana For the latest updates, news, and tips, follow the Montana VA on Facebook. Search for Montana VA Health Care System <a href="http://www.facebook.com/VAMontana">http://www.facebook.com/VAMontana</a>	 <b>Find Us on Twitter</b> @VAMontanaHCS Search for Montana VA Health Care System <a href="https://twitter.com/vamontanahcs">https://twitter.com/vamontanahcs</a>	 <b>Find Us Online</b> Search for Montana VA Health Care System <a href="https://www.montana.va.gov">https://www.montana.va.gov</a>

# Map Of Montana VA Clinics



# Fort Harrison VA Medical Center Campus Map



## MONTANA VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM FORT HARRISON MEDICAL CENTER (MAIN CAMPUS)

3687 Veterans Way Fort Harrison, MT 59636

1-877-468-8387

# Montana VA Health Care Locations and Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs)



## Montana VA Health Care System (Fort Harrison--Main Campus)

3687 Veterans Drive  
Fort Harrison, MT 59636  
1 (877) 468-8387  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Billings Specialty Care: Benjamin Charles Steele VA Clinic

1766 Majestic Lane  
Billings, MT 59102-6759  
Phone: (406) 373-3500  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Liberty House at Fort Harrison

The Liberty House is a temporary lodging facility for families and caregivers of those being treated at the medical center.  
Fort Harrison, MT 59636  
(406) 447-7707



## Billings Primary Care Clinic: Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow VA Clinic

1775 Spring Creek Lane  
Billings, MT 59102-6754  
Phone: (406) 373-3500



## Helena VA (Sleep Center) Clinic

2271 Deerfield Lane  
Helena, MT 59601-8643  
Phone: (406) 447-7443



## Bozeman: Travis W. Atkins VA Clinic

1101 East Main Street, Suite 201  
Bozeman, MT 59715-3956  
Phone: (406) 582-5300  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



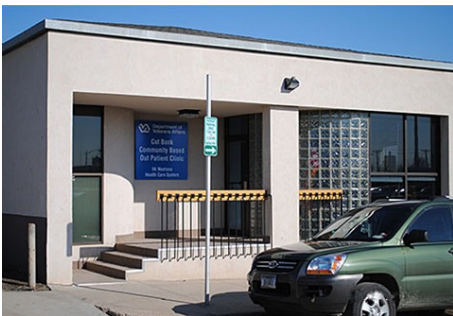
## Butte VA Clinic

40 Three Bears Drive  
Butte, MT 59701  
Phone: (406) 496-3000  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Glendive VA Clinic

2000 Montana Avenue  
Glendive, MT 59330-3700  
Phone: (406) 377-4755  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Cut Bank VA Clinic

8 Second Avenue Southeast  
Cut Bank, MT 59427-2909  
Phone: (406) 873-9047  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Great Falls VA Clinic

1400 29th Street South, Suite 1 (lower level)  
Great Falls, MT 59405-5315  
Phone: (406) 771-5800  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Glasgow VA Clinic

630 2nd Avenue South, Suite A  
Glasgow, MT 59230-2304  
Phone: (406) 228-4101  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Hamilton VA Clinic

299 Fairgrounds Road, Suite A  
Hamilton, MT 59840-3199  
Phone: (406) 363-3352  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Havre: Merrill Lundman VA Clinic

Holiday Village Mall  
1753 US Hwy 2 NW, Suite 3  
Havre, MT 59501-3464  
Phone: (406) 265-4304  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Kalispell VA Clinic

31 Three Mile Drive  
Kalispell, MT 59901-1400  
Phone: (406) 758-2700  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Lewistown VA Clinic

629 Northeast Main Street, Suite 1  
Lewistown, MT 59457-2082  
Phone: (406) 535-4790  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



## Miles City VA Clinic

316 South Haynes  
Miles City, MT 59301  
Phone: (406) 442-6410  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000

## Community Living Center

210 South Winchester Avenue  
Miles City, MT 59301-4798  
Phone: (406) 874-5600



## Missoula: David J. Thatcher VA Clinic

3885 West Broadway Street  
Missoula, MT 59808  
Phone: (406) 218-3700  
Mental health care: 406-218-3800



## Plentywood VA Clinic

440 West Laurel Avenue  
Plentywood, MT 59254-1526  
Phone: (406) 765-3718  
Mental Health Care: 406-447-6000



# Veteran Benefit Offices & Vet Centers



## Billings Vet Center

2795 Enterprise Avenue, Suite 1  
Billings, MT 59102-7479  
Phone: 406-657-6071

## Great Falls Vet Center

615 2nd Avenue North  
Great Falls, MT 59401

## Fort Harrison Regional Benefit Office

3633 Veterans Drive  
Fort Harrison, MT 59636  
Phone: 1(800) 827-1000

## Helena Vet Center Outstation 1

301 Elm Street, Suite C  
Helena, MT 59601  
Phone: (406) 457-8060

## Kalispell Vet Center

690 North Meridian Road, Suite 101  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
Phone: 406-257-7308

## Missoula Vet Center

910 Brooks St.  
Missoula, MT 59801  
Phone: 406-721-4918 Phone: 406-452-9048

# Federal Holidays VA Clinics Are Closed

## THE MONTANA VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM OBSERVES THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS. CLINICS ARE NOT OPEN ON THESE HOLIDAYS.

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King (January)
- President's Day (February)
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day (October)
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas

## WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE OUTSTANDING EFFORTS FROM THESE STAFF MEMBERS IN HELPING TO CREATE THIS HANDBOOK:

Holly Allastra

Christina Baker

Katie Beall

Leslie Boor

Rebecca Brown

Melanie Bullock

Amber Burgin

Roy Caldwell

Sue Calentine

Tom Carlson

Amy Claridge

Duane Cunningham

Carissa Dobrinski

Todd Dunlap

Mike Garcia

Miranda Garding

Susan Geubtner

Lisa Giese

Deziah Gilliam

Paul Harman

Dr. Judy Hayman

Andrea Hernandez

Wendy Jaynes

Angela Johnson

Rustin Johnson

Tamara Jost

Alina Joyce

Traci Kailen

Eric Kenneda

Karen Kidder

Tammy Kuusisto

Jaime Larese

Vance Lavinder

Durand Lindbo

Christine Lundstrom

Scott Marshall

Ilda Martinez

Rob McAlpin

Rob McCrory

Dr. Emily McMillan

Susan Mead

Cherie Mitchell

Chase Natalie

Laura Pickens

Krisal Richards

Matt Rosine

Dan Reeser

Megan Williams

Joel Simpson

Christine Snyder

Terry Stephens

Doug Stepina

Kiersten Taylor

David Thunstrom

Tracey Tillinger

Teresa Turville

Jason Vaughn

Jeanne Walker

Dr. Elizabeth Walter

Timothy Weidlich

Helen Williams

Angela Kay Wright

Doug Wright

Luke Yanny

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**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
*VA Montana Health Care System*