VA HEALTH CARE | Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

# Sioux Falls VA Health Care System

# PATIENT HANDBOOK
## Information & Education Guide

### SIOUX FALLS VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

2501 W. 22nd Street
PO Box 5046
Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57117-5046
1-605-336-3230
1-800-316-8387

9/15

# Table of Contents


Directions ..... 3
About the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System ..... 4
Mission, Vision, and Values ..... 5
Checklist for New Enrollees ..... 6
How VA Health Care Works for You ..... 7
- Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs)
- Primary Care and Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT)
- Specialty Programs
- VA Care for the Traveling Veteran
- Choice

Disability, Pension & Compensation Benefits ..... 11
Emergency Care ..... 14
Medications ..... 17
- Pharmacy Benefits
- Co-pay Requirements for Prescriptions
- Refill Services
- Anticoagulation Clinic

Private Care and VA Care (Dual Care or Co-Managed Care) ..... 23
Mental Health Services ..... 25
Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) ..... 26
Crisis Assistance for Veterans ..... 28
VA Health Care Services ..... 29
- Inpatient
- Ancillary
- Specialty
- Long-Term Care
- Dental Care
- Prosthetics
- Women's Health
- Health Promotion Disease Prevention
- Care Management and Social Work Service

Patient Advocacy Programs ..... 38
Advance Directives ..... 39
Sioux Falls Services and Facilities ..... 42
How to Access VA Health Care ..... 47
Patients' Rights and Responsibilities ..... 50
Patient Visitation ..... 54
Speak Up ..... 55
Healthy Living ..... 57
My Health*e*Vet online VA ..... 60
Patient Safety ..... 62

# Directions to the
# Sioux Falls VA Medical Center

The Sioux Falls Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center is located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota at 2501 West 22nd Street. Please use the following directions to get to this medical center.

**From the North:**
Travel south on I-29 and take Exit 79 east on 12th Street. Turn south on Kiwanis, then east on 22nd Street.
**From the South:**
Travel north on I-29 and take Exit 79 east on 12th Street. Turn south on Kiwanis, then east on 22nd Street.
**From the East:**
Travel west on I-90 and go south on I-29. Take Exit 79 and go east on 12th Street, then turn south on Kiwanis. Turn east on 22nd Street.
**From the West:**
Travel east on I-90 and go south on I-29. Take Exit 79 and go east on 12th Street, then turn south on Kiwanis. Turn east on 22nd Street.

Smoking is not permitted inside the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center or Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). All facility buildings, including all entrances on the medical center campus and all government vehicles, are designated as smoke-free areas. Smoking is permitted only in designated smoking shelters and open areas on the grounds. No smoking is allowed within 75 feet, or otherwise marked, of any patient entrance and 50 feet of all other entrances to the medical center. The Sioux Falls VA offers classes to help Veterans and staff stop smoking.

Know Your VA

This handbook is produced by the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System. It is intended to provide a brief overview of services and care offered at the time of publication.

# About the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System

The Sioux Falls VA Health Center System includes the medical center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and five Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) in Aberdeen, Watertown, and Wagner, South Dakota and Sioux City and Spirit Lake, Iowa. The medical center and outpatient clinics serve Veterans from eastern South Dakota, northwestern Iowa and southwestern Minnesota.

The medical center is located on a beautiful 40-acre campus and was named for South Dakota Congressman Royal C. Johnson, who worked diligently to consolidate Veterans' benefits into what was the Veterans Bureau, then became the Veterans Administration, and now is the Department of Veterans Affairs(VA).

The health care system has over 1,000 employees and 550 volunteers. It is affiliated with 30 universities and colleges in the region including The Sanford School of Medicine of the University of South Dakota, South Dakota State University, Augustana University and the University of Sioux Falls to provide training for a variety of clinical and allied health specialists. As part of VA's Midwest Health Care Network, we focus on providing preventive and rehabilitative health care. Some specialized health care services are also provided through local providers and other VA health care systems.

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Dakotas Regional Office is co-located with the medical center and has a long history in the community. A benefits office was first established here in 1921 following the close of World War I. The Dakotas Regional Office provides over $90 million in disability and pension benefits to Veterans of South Dakota. Also on campus are Veterans Service Organization representatives (Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion and Paralyzed Veterans of America, plus the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs).

# Our Mission, Vision & VA Core Values

## Mission

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

## Vision

To be a patient centered, integrated health care organization for Veterans providing excellent health care, research and education; an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner and a backup for national emergencies.

## VA Core Values

***Because I CARE, I will…***

**Integrity** — Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

**Commitment** — Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

**Advocacy** — Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

**Respect** — Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

**Excellence** — Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

# Checklist for New Enrollees to VA Health Care

Welcome to VA health care! We want to make it easy for you to get started. Use this checklist to make sure you have all the information you need.

- ☐ Find a VA health care facility nearest you
- ☐ Learn the name of your primary care provider and team
- ☐ Learn how to make appointments
- ☐ Learn how to transfer your medical records and prescriptions to VA
- ☐ Learn how to fill and refill prescriptions
- ☐ Learn how to use VA telephone care
- ☐ Learn what to do in case of emergency
- ☐ Learn where to get care after hours
- ☐ Learn how to take an active role in your health care as a partner with your provider
- ☐ Learn how to take care of your health
- ☐ Register for My Health*e*Vet to take full advantage of all its online features for Veterans

My healthevet

www.myhealth.va.gov

My Health, My Care: 24/7 Online Access to VA

# How VA Health Care Works for You

## Choose a Facility

You have a choice of facilities where you can receive primary care. You may receive primary care at the main hospital or one of the **C**ommunity **B**ased **O**utpatient **C**linics, also known as CBOCs. Choose the facility that is most convenient for you.

Once you choose a facility, go there for your care so you will get to know your provider and primary care team; and they will get to know you.

**Aberdeen, SD**
2301 8th Ave. NE, Suite 225
Aberdeen, SD 57401
605-229-3500

**Spirit Lake, IA**
1310 Lake St.
Spirit Lake, IA 51360
712-336-6400

**Sioux City, IA**
1551 Indian Hills Drive, Suite 206
Sioux City, IA 51104
712-258-4700

**Watertown, SD**
917 29th St. SE
Watertown, SD 57201
605-884-2420

**Wagner, SD**
400 W Hwy 46-50
Wagner, SD 57380
605-384-2340

# You are the Center of PACT

Primary care is your gateway to VA health care. Your primary care provider can take care of most of your health care needs or refer you for specialty care.

You will be assigned a primary care team. VA calls this a Patient Aligned Care Team or PACT. Your core team, or "teamlet," consists of your provider, nurses and a scheduler. Your team may also include pharmacists, social workers, other health professionals, and support staff.

YOU are the center of your team. Your team members become your health partners. We want to provide you with the best care, based on your individual needs.

## The team will:

- Build a partnership with you to promote your health and well-being.
- Provide or arrange for preventive health services, such as immunizations and screenings.
- Give you medical care and coordinate care with other providers.
- Educate you about healthy living habits, your health problems, and any treatment you may need.

## As part of the team, we ask that you:

- Be prepared for your visit; make a list of your questions or concerns.
- Arrive on time with a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) or photo ID.
- At check-in provide: updated insurance information and any changes in your phone numbers, address and emergency contact information.
- Bring all of your medicines.
- Bring any forms you would like completed.
- For minor health concerns between visits, we ask you first contact the 24-hour Nurse Advice Line at:

  1-866-NURSE VA (1-866-687-7382).

# Other Primary Care Services

Certain Veterans may receive primary care services in specifically designed clinics. Examples of groups include: combat and women Veterans, or those with specific concerns such as spinal cord injury or HIV.

## Other primary care services include:

- **Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)** HBPC is a special program that provides health care for Veterans in their homes with a team consisting of a provider, nurse, social worker, psychologist, dietitian, and physical therapist. The program is for patients with chronic illness or patients who are terminally ill. Health care providers visit patients in their own homes to deliver care. HBPC may also use technology to assist in providing at-home care. This secure easy-to-use technology lets patients send daily progress reports to their VA care providers. Providers are able to work closely with the patients through interactive systems such as videophones, telemonitoring devices, in-home messaging devices, telephone, etc. Ask a member of your health care team if you would benefit from HBPC.

- **Home TeleHealth (HT)** HT provides a special telemessaging device to Veterans in their homes. The Veteran or caregiver is taught to send certain information, such as blood pressure, weight, blood glucose, etc., to Sioux Falls through equipment connected to the telephone line. This allows health providers to review the data and make any changes to treatment plans. The program is 100 % free to Veterans; talk to your primary care team if you have questions. For more information, call the HT office at 605-336-3230, Ext. 7871.

## If You Need to See a Specialist

Your primary care team will coordinate all care for you. If you need to see a specialist, your primary care provider will request a consult for you. The specialty care area will contact you about an appointment or the next step in your care.

- Substance Use
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Combat Veteran Case Management (OEF/OIF/OND)
- Homeless Outreach
- Polytrauma Clinic
- Spinal Cord Injury Clinic
- Women's Health, including gynecological services, social work services, and mental health services
- Palliative Care
- Hospice Care
- Military Sexual Trauma

# If You Live in More Than One Location or Travel a Lot

Once you are enrolled in VA health care, you are eligible for care at any VA facility. We encourage you to receive the majority of your care through your preferred facility and your primary care team.

If you travel a lot or live in more than one location, you may need to arrange for care at more than one VA facility. When you plan extended travel outside your usual VA care area, please contact **your primary care team, pharmacy and patient registration at 605-336-3230, ext. 5001** and provide the following:

- A temporary address and phone number
- The departing date and the expected date of return

Routine prescription refills can be sent to you at your temporary address. Be sure to allow time (approximately two weeks) for the refills to arrive at your temporary address by mail. Questions? Call the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System Traveling Veteran Coordinator at 605-336-3230, ext. 7646

# Non-VA Care Coordination

In certain circumstances, your VA medical center may pay for care you receive from a non-VA provider. This can happen if:

- The services you need are not available in VA
- The services are available in VA, but at a great distance from your home

Services provided by the community health care facilities at VA expense, must meet VA's quality standards and be authorized in advance.

# Choice

The Choice Program covers scheduled hospital care and medical services under the Medical Benefits Package (see 38 CFR 17.38), which includes pharmacy and other benefits, such as beneficiary travel. All care under the Choice Program must be pre-authorized. The Choice Program does not include unscheduled (emergency) care. All care is scheduled by calling toll-free 1-866-606-8198.

For additional questions, please call the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System Choice Champion at 605-336-3230, ext. 7921

# Disability Compensation Benefits

## What Is VA Disability Compensation?

Disability compensation is a tax-free benefit paid to a Veteran for disabilities caused or made worse by injuries or diseases that happened while on active duty, active duty training, or inactive duty training. Disability compensation is also paid to certain Veterans who are disabled from VA health care.

## Who Is Eligible?

You may be eligible for disability compensation if you have a service-related disability, and you were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

## How Much Does VA Pay?

The amount of basic benefit paid ranges from $129 to $2,816 per month, depending on how disabled you are. You may be paid additional amounts, in certain instances, if:

- You have very severe disabilities or loss of limb(s)
- You have a spouse, child(ren), or dependent parent(s)
- You have a seriously disabled spouse

## How Can You Apply?

Local Veterans service organizations are advocates for Veterans and partner with VA to provide Veterans needed services and benefits.

**South Dakota Dept. of Veterans Affairs,** 605-333-6869
**Veterans of Foreign Wars** Post #628, 605-338-9421
**American Legion** Post #15, 605-336-3470
**Vietnam Veterans of America** Chapter #959, 605-830-2011
**Disabled American Veterans** Arthur Muchow Chapter, 605-332-6866
**Paralyzed Veterans of America** North Central Chapter, 605-336-0494
**Military Order of the Purple Heart 5355** Sioux Falls Chapter,
1519 W. 51st St, Sioux Falls, SD 57105-6648

**The above list is for informational only and is not an endorsement of these organizations.**

You may find your local county Veterans Service Officer at the following websites. These individuals provide a wide range of help for Veterans and their families, including help with VA claims.

**Dept. of Veterans Affairs -- http://www1.va.gov/vso/**

South Dakota -- http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/

Minnesota -- http://macvso.org/directory.aspx

Iowa -- https://va.iowa.gov/counties/

If you have any of the following materials, please bring them.

- Discharge (DD214) or separation papers
- Copies of marriage or birth certificates, medical history (paperwork or contact information)

For additional application information
you may contact your VA regional office at:

**Dakotas Regional Office**
2501 W 22nd St., PO Box 5046
Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5046
1-800-827-1000

**You may apply on line at http://benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/applying.asp**

## Related Benefits

- Priority Medical Care
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Clothing Allowance
- Grants for Specially Adapted Housing
- Automobile Grant and Adaptive Equipment
- Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance
- Federal Employment Preference
- State/Local Veterans Benefits
- Military Exchange and Commissary Privileges

## For up-to-date information

- Call toll-free 1-800-827-1000
- Visit www.va.gov
- Visit www.myhealth.va.gov

## Health Resource Center: 866-347-2352

For billing questions please contact the VA Health Resource Center (HRC) at 1-866-347-2352. Trained VA Health Resource Center Staff can assist with your VA billing statement questions. The HRC provides accurate, secure and confidential information to help you get answers quickly.

# Eligibility and Benefits

All Veterans are encouraged to enroll in the VA Health Care System. To begin the process, Veterans must complete an Application for Health Care Benefits, VA Form 10-10EZ. This form can be obtained at the medical center eligibility office or on the Internet at: www.siouxfalls.va.gov/forms/vha1010ezrfill.pdf

You apply online at: www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/
The form can also be brought to the eligibility office at the medical center or sent by mail. The eligibility office is located on the ground floor in Room A27.
Whether mailing or bringing your application, please include the following items:

- A copy of both sides of your current insurance cards (including Medicare or Medicaid)
- A copy of your DD214, Armed Forces Report of Transfer or Discharge (separated under any condition other than dishonorable)
- Purple Heart recipients; a copy of your award letter if "Purple Heart" is ***NOT*** noted on your DD214

You may be required to pay co-pays, depending on your priority group.
To speak to someone in our eligibility office, please call 605-373-4196 or 1-800-316-8387, ext. 5903

Completed and signed forms may be mailed to:

**VA Health Care System**
Business Office-Eligibility
PO Box 5046
Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5046

To get more information about VA health care eligibility and benefits call: Toll-free 1-877- 222-VETS (8387)

# Emergency Care

## In VA Facilities

If your VA facility has an emergency department and you live nearby, you should go there for emergency care. The Sioux Falls VA Medical Center has an emergency department.

## In Non-VA Facilities

When it is not possible for you to go to a VA medical center, you should go to the nearest hospital that has an emergency department. If you are in an ambulance, the paramedics will usually take you to the closest emergency department.

### Emergency Care Instructions for Sioux Falls VA Health Care System Veterans

- For specific information about your eligibility for non-VA care, call 1-866-347-2352.
- To help us keep your records up to date, please notify VA of your admission to a non-VA facility. You may contact your PACT nurse care manager or call 605-336-3230 8:00 am-4:30 pm weekdays. On weekends and holidays call 605-336-3230, ext. 6355 and ask for the Administrative Officer of the Day (AOD).
- For hospitals or doctors to arrange your transfer to VA, advise them to call VA at 605-336-3230. When the VA operator answers, the doctor should say to the VA operator, "I want to set up an admission call."
- If you are too unstable for transfer, have someone call 605-336-3230 Monday-Friday 8:00 am-4:30 pm or 605-336-3230, ext. 6355 weekends/holidays/nights and ask the operator for the Administrative Officer of the Day
- For specific information about non-VA emergency care coverage, call 605-336-3230, ext. 6355. Non-VA hospitals may want to check on payment details and may call 319-688-3888.
- The VA Nurse Line is available to provide direction during evenings, weekends and holidays.

**1-866-NURSE VA or 1-866-687-7382**

# Common Emergency Care Questions

## What is emergency care?

A medical emergency is when you have an injury or illness that is so severe that without immediate treatment, you could become severely ill or even die.

## How do I know if what is wrong with me is an emergency?

Use your best judgment. If you believe you are suffering from something that is described in the section above, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.

## Do I need to call VA before I obtain emergency care?

No. Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. If you are admitted, your family, friends, or the hospital staff should contact the nearest VA medical center as soon as possible to provide information about your emergency department visit.

## If I am being admitted to a non-VA hospital, must I obtain approval from VA?

If the admission **is an emergency** you, a friend, a family member, or someone from the non-VA hospital must call the closest VA medical center and speak to a patient transfer or patient administration representative. This must be done within 72 hours of your arrival at the emergency department. If a VA bed is available and if you can be safely transferred, you must be moved. If you refuse to be transferred, VA will not pay for any further care.

## Does my other insurance (TRICARE, Medicare, Medicaid, Blue Cross, etc.) change my VA coverage for emergency services?

Yes, it might. Your local VA medical center's eligibility department staff can explain your options. Please call 605-333-6827 or 1-800-316-8387, ext. 6827 or Option 4.

## Will VA pay for emergency care if I am in jail?

No. Usually the jail is responsible for providing medical care.

## How long do I have to file a claim for reimbursement for emergency medical care?

Please quickly file your claim with the nearest VA medical center. If your regional office recently determined your benefits, you should submit a reimbursement claim as soon as you can.

## Will I have to pay for a portion of my emergency care?

You may have to pay for a portion of your emergency care, depending on the care you received.

## If I am admitted to the hospital as a result of an emergency, what will VA pay?

This depends on your VA eligibility status and other factors. VA may pay all, some, or none of the charges after you are admitted.

For service-connected conditions, here are some of the criteria that must be met:

1. Care or services were provided in a medical emergency, and
2. VA or another federal facility were not feasibly available, and
3. VA was notified within 72 hours of the admission.
4. Ask your local VA medical center's Non-VA Care Office for further eligibility guidance.

For nonservice-connected conditions, some criteria must be met:

1. Veteran is enrolled in the VA Health Care System, and
2. Veteran has received health care services from VA within the previous 24 months, and
3. Veteran has no other health insurance coverage.

Ask your local VA medical center's Non-VA Care Office for eligibility guidance.

## Will VA pay for emergency care received outside the United States?

Yes, but this coverage is very different. VA will only pay for emergency care outside the U.S. if your emergency is related to a service-connected condition. You can find more information on the Foreign Medical Program at www.va.gov/hac/hacmain.asp or contact the VA Health Administration Center at 1-877-345-8179.

## Where can I get more information?

You can get more answers to your questions on the Health Administration Center Internet website at http://www.va.gov/hac/hacmain.asp under Non-VA Care. You may also contact a eligibility department staff at your VA medical center for details about your situation.

# Your Medicine

## VA Pharmacy Benefits

VA has excellent pharmacy benefits. You can get all medications and medical supplies your VA provider orders for you. If you are transferring your prescriptions to VA, your VA providers may need to replace some of your medications with similar medications carried by the VA pharmacy. VA providers will work closely with your non-VA provider to coordinate your care. You must bring information from your non-VA provider that explains why the medication was prescribed, the name of the medication, and the dose.

By law, VA pharmacy cannot fill a prescription written by a non-VA provider.

- Prescriptions given to the VA pharmacy **must** be written by a VA provider.
- Prescriptions written by providers outside VA **cannot** be filled at VA.

To obtain these medications through VA, you must make an appointment with your primary care provider. At that appointment you must bring the copy of the prescription or the prescription bottle with you and a copy of your non-VA medical record. Your VA primary care provider will determine if that medication is appropriate to be filled at VA. VA is not responsible to pay for medications filled at a private pharmacy. Refer to the co-managed or dual care section of this handbook for further information.

## Non VA-Drug Prescriptions

It is your responsibility to purchase any new prescriptions written for you by your local doctor until your next scheduled primary care appointment. If your local doctor changes a dose of a medication you currently receive from VA, please have their records faxed to VA for your doctor's review.

The fax sent to a VA clinic will need to include records and the prescription. If the only item sent is the prescription, the VA team will not be able to help you. The local doctor must fax their progress note indicating the medication to be changed, new dosage, the reason for the change and pertinent labs.

This is very important information for your provider. If you see a local physician, please bring a copy of his/her progress notes to your scheduled primary care appointment. The notes will allow your VA team to learn about changes in your health since the last visit.

## Pharmacy Co-payments

Depending on your eligibility, you may need to make a co-payment to get VA medications.

- If you have questions about a bill or a charge for VA medication, please call the Health Resource Center at 1-866-347-2352.

Depending on your finances, you may apply for free medications.

- If you have questions about this or other eligibility questions call 1-877-347-2352.

## Co-Pay Requirements for Prescriptions

| | | Co-pay Amount | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Priority Groups** | **1-30 day supply** | **31-60 day supply** | **61-90 day supply** |
| **2 through 6** | **$8** | **$16** | **$24** |
| **7 and 8** | **$9** | **$18** | **$27** |

## Co-Pay Requirements for Prescriptions

| | |
|---|---|
| Nonservice-connected Veterans | Required co-pay |
| Service-connected Veterans rated less than 50% | Required co-pay |
| Service-connected Veterans rated 50% or greater | No co-payment |
| Medication dispensed for service-connected conditions | No co-payment |
| Veterans who were former POWs | No co-payment |
| Medication authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1710(e) for Vietnam era, herbicide-exposed Veterans, radiation-exposed Veterans, Persian Gulf War combat-exposed Veterans | No co-payment |
| Medication for treatment of sexual trauma as authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1720D | No co-payment |
| Medication for treatment of cancer of the head and neck authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1720E | No co-payment |
| Medication provided as part of a VA approved research project authorized by 38 U.S.C. 7303 | No co-payment |
| Medication administered during treatment | No co-payment |

## How do I Pay for Medications?

The medication co-payment will be billed to you and mailed separately from the medication. You can make a payment by:

- Mail
- Calling 1-888-827-4817
- In person at the Agent Cashier's Office at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center.

If you have questions about medication bills or other VA services, please call the Health Resource Center at 1-866-347-2352.

## New Prescriptions

After your first clinic visit at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center, check in at the outpatient pharmacy kiosk. Please take a ticket and wait for your ticket number to be called before approaching the counseling booth. At this time, you will meet with a pharmacist who will review new medication and check your record for allergies and drug interactions.

A pharmacist will talk with you about any new medicine your provider orders. New prescriptions may be picked up at the VA pharmacy or mailed to your home. Mailed prescriptions may take up to 14 days to arrive.

## Refill Prescriptions

There are many options to get prescriptions refilled. Request refills two to three weeks before you need more medicine to allow time for your prescription to be refilled and mailed to you. If you do not have any refills remaining on your prescription, please contact the pharmacy or your provider.

Narcotics and certain controlled medications cannot be refilled. A new prescription is needed for each supply. You and your VA provider should discuss how and when you can get these prescriptions.

**Computer On-Line:**

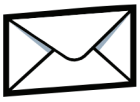
Veterans may order and track VA medication shipments online. VA has created My Health*e*Vet, a national website for Veterans to use from anywhere in the world. Go to: **www.myhealth.va.gov**

**Telephone:**

If you have a touch tone phone you may use the automated refill line. The service will give you step-by-step instructions. Before you dial, have your full Social Security number and prescription number (on the bottle) readily available.

**Sioux Falls (24 hour) automated refill line:**
**1-855-560-1723 or toll free 1-800-316-8387**

**To speak with a local pharmacy representative 7:30 am-5:00 pm, call 1-605-336-3230, press 1 then 2.**



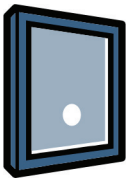
**Mail:**

Return the refill slip that arrives with each new prescription. If you cannot find the slip or there is not one in the shipment, write the checked items on a blank piece of paper and send it to the address listed. Allow two weeks for

Processing and delivery.

- full name
- full Social Security number
- name of medication to be refilled

**Pharmacy (119)**
**Sioux Falls VA**
**Health Care System**
**PO Box 5046**
**Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5046**



**Pharmacy Drop Off:**

Drop off your refill slip at the VA pharmacy. If you choose this option, be aware refills must be requested at least two weeks before you run out to allow enough time for mailing. Medication refills do not come from the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center but from a distribution center called the Consolidated Medication Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP) in Leavenworth, KS or Murfeesboro, TN.

## Medication Safety

Medication safety is an ongoing concern. When you get your refill, check the bottle to make sure these things are correct:

- Your name
- The name of the medicine
- The color and shape of the medicine
- The amount you should take for each dose
- The directions you should follow for each dose

For your safety, it is important for the health care team to know ALL medications you are currently taking. Medications include:

- Prescription medications from both VA providers or non-VA providers
- Topical medications such as creams, ointments or patches
- Eye or ear drops
- Over-the-counter medications (available without prescription). Examples are aspirin, cold medicine or antacids
- Vitamins and herbal products or foods/drinks not in the usual, recommended American diet. Examples are ginseng, Ensure and fish oil.

## Anticoagulation Clinic

Anticoagulants, such as warfarin (Coumadin) decrease the clotting ability of the blood and help prevent harmful clots from forming in your blood vessels. Warfarin is often used to prevent blood clots in the leg or the lung, and abnormal heart rhythms.

Do not be alarmed, but call your doctor or the Anticoagulation Clinic promptly if you develop any of the following:
Unusual bleeding from gums (use a soft toothbrush)

- Excessive bleeding or oozing from cuts or wounds
- Nosebleeds
- Unexplained bruising or purplish areas on skin
- Excessive menstrual bleeding
- Red or dark brown urine; red or black stools
- Severe or prolonged stomach pain or backaches
- Severe or continuing headaches

## Anticoagulation Clinic Contact Information

Anticoagulation Clinic hours:

**Monday-Friday 8:00 am-4:30 pm at 605-336-3230, ext. 7029.**

For emergencies during non-clinic hours call the:

**Emergency Department at 605-336-3230, ext. 6952 or**

**Nurse VA Help Line 1-866-687-7382 or 911**

## Renewing Prescription Refills

The provider will need to write a new prescription when refills run out, and the medication is still needed. Contact your VA provider as soon as possible to have the new prescription ordered, preferably prior to running out.

It's a good idea to check your medicines before each visit with your provider to see how many refills remain and the dosage is correct. You are the center of the team; it is okay to remind your PACT if it is time to reorder the medication.

## Medication Contact Information

Contact PACT if:

- You experience side effects-CALL IMMEDIATELY.
- You have questions about your medication.
- You have problems with your medication.
- There are no refills remaining on a prescription.
- Your private physician changes a medication.

The Sioux Falls Pharmacy Call Center is also available to answer your questions. If you would like to check on a prescription, ask questions or learn about your medicine, order refills, ask about drug interactions, side effects or appropriate over-the-counter medication call one of the numbers listed below:

1-800-316-8387 (toll free) or 1-605-336-3230 (local) then press 1

You can get more information about your medicines by talking to your Patient Aligned Care Team or logging onto the Internet. VA recommends the following sites for reliable information:

- My Health*e*Vet website at www.myhealth.va.gov
- The National Library of Medicine website at www.medlineplus.gov

# Co-Managed Care/Dual Care

We encourage you to receive all your medical care through VA and have a single VA primary care provider to coordinate all aspects of your care. However, we are willing to work with your private doctors to provide and coordinate your health care. We call this co-managed care or dual care. It means that your VA and private doctors will work together to provide safe, appropriate, and ethical medical care.

## VA Policy

If you are seeking care, medicines, or supplies from VA, you must enroll in VA health care and have a primary care provider who manages your care. You must do this even if some of your care is provided in the community. Specialty services will be provided according to the local facility or regional Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) policy, once you are enrolled in primary care.

## VA Provider Responsibilities

Your VA provider has the final say about how VA will meet your health care needs. Your VA provider is not required to write prescriptions or order tests for any health problem that the VA provider does not directly manage.

Your private doctor may write a prescription for a medicine that is not on VA list of approved medicines. If this happens to you, your VA provider may offer you another medicine that is very similar, safe, and effective for your condition. If you choose, you may talk to your private doctor before changing to VA medicine.

Some medicines need special blood tests. Your VA provider will not write prescriptions for any high-risk medicines unless you agree to have the tests done by VA. If you live far away or have difficulty traveling, you have the option of providing the written results from your private doctor's blood tests to your VA provider.

If you request a highly specialized medication, you must be seen by a VA provider competent in that specialty. Otherwise, the prescribing clinician must communicate directly with a VA provider competent in that specialty, either verbally or in writing.

VA providers are under no obligation to follow a treatment or medication plan recommended by community physicians if they disagree with that plan or if that plan conflicts with national or local policies related to prescription of medications. VA providers will explain their reasons for changing or refusing a treatment or medication plan to you.

If you receive controlled substances on an ongoing basis, close monitoring is required by one designated provider. Dual care is avoided unless your community provider and VA provider both agree this is in your best interest.

## Patient Responsibilities

You need to give your VA provider the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all your private doctors. You should also give your private doctors the same information about your VA provider.

If your VA team needs help in getting your private doctor's records, you may need to get the copies yourself or go to the private doctor's office and request they be sent.

If you would like information from your VA medical record sent to your private doctor, you will need to sign a form allowing VA to send the records. This form is available from Release of Information.

For your safety, let your VA provider know about all medicines you're taking. These should include prescriptions written by your private doctor, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbals. You will also want to tell your private doctor about any medicines prescribed by your VA provider.

You need to tell your VA provider about any changes in your health, or changes in treatment or medicines made by your private doctor. You will also want to tell your private doctor about any changes made by your VA provider.

Please feel free to talk further with your VA primary care provider about co-managed/dual care health benefits.

# Mental Health Services

The Mental Health Service Line (MHSL) offers a full range of behavioral health care services. Our programs include integrated primary care, psychiatric, substance abuse, and social work services. Care is provided for inpatients and outpatients. Transitional and recovery-oriented treatment is also provided.

Mental health services are offered at the medical center and outpatient clinics. Our goal is to help Veterans maintain health. We support recovery and enable Veterans with mental health problems to live meaningful lives in their communities and achieve their full potential.

VA Mental Health Services and Programs include:

- Addiction Treatment Program
- Compensated Work Therapy
- Geriatrics
- Home Based Primary Care
- Homeless Veteran Program
- Inpatient Psychiatric Care
- Integrated Primary Care Behavioral Health
- Military Sexual Trauma
- OEF/OIF/OND Post Deployment Services
- Opioid Substitution Clinic (methadone maintenance)
- Outpatient Mental Health Clinic
- Psychiatric Consultation (for medically hospitalized patients)
- Research
- Social Work
- Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program
- Suicide Prevention Programs
- Telemental Health
- Tobacco Use Cessation
- Trauma Services Program (PTSD)

## Mental Health Services: 605-333-6890

# Services for OEF/OIF/OND Combat Veterans

VA has set up policies and services to ease access to and increase quality of care for returning service members. These include Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND). These services will help with readjustment to civilian life and Veteran status.

## 5 Years Of Cost Free Health Care For Potential Tour Related Issues:

OEF/OIF/OND combat Veterans may be eligible to receive cost-free medical care for any potential combat related injury or illness sustained during your services in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

OEF/OIF/OND combat eligibility begins at the completion of terminal leave and is for a period of five years after the date of your discharge or release from service.

OEF/OIF/OND combat Veterans may be seen for non-tour related issues at VA, but there may be co-pays associated with these visits and/or medications. For more information, visit www.oefoif.va.gov or speak with an eligibility specialist at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center: 605-373-4196 or 1-800-316-8387, ext. 5903.

## 180 Day Potential Dental Benefit:

OEF/OIF/OND combat Veterans may be eligible for one time dental care (cleaning, exam and any repairs) if qualified. NOTE: You must apply within 180 days of your separation date from active duty, and box 17 of your DD214 must be checked NO to be eligible for this dental benefit. For more information, visit www.oefoif.va.gov or speak with an eligibility specialist at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center: 605-373-4196 or 1-800-316-8387, ext. 5903.

## OEF/OIF/OND COMBAT VETERAN CASE MANAGEMENT:

The Sioux Falls OEF/OIF/OND Case Management Team supports the OEF/OIF/OND service member during the transition process from soldier to Veteran. The team does this by providing case management services. These services include:

- Establishing care and arranging appointments for your individual needs
- Answering questions regarding transition to civilian life
- Providing information about VA and community services and resources
- Advocating on your behalf
- Reviewing potential VA benefits

The purpose is to address the medical and emotional needs of the Veteran and his/her family.

Our OEF/OIF/OND team provides transition assistance and support to active duty military and severely injured. The team is committed to providing excellent service to our nation's Veterans.

**CONTACT THE OEF/OIF/OND PROGRAM AT 605-336-3230, ext. 4157.**

## Polytrauma Program/Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Clinic Outpatient Program

TBI/polytrauma care is for Veterans and returning service members who have injuries to more than one physical region or organ system. One of the injuries is life threatening and results in physical, cognitive, psychological, or psychosocial impairment and functional disability. The TBI Clinic provides specialized treatment and care for TBI related injuries. Some examples of polytrauma include:

- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Hearing Loss
- Amputations
- Fractures
- Burns
- Visual Impairment

The team includes a physiatrist, social worker, physical therapist, occupational therapist, psychologist, and speech pathologist. They provide thorough, complete and high-quality care. More information about the program can be found at http://www.polytrauma.va.gov/index.asp.

**WWW.MENTALHEALTH.VA.GOV/SUICIDE_PREVENTION/**

## Get immediate help if you notice any of these signs

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior, such as drug abuse or use of weapons

## Additional Warning Signs

- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

Call us if you experience any of these warning signs. VA provides a confidential 24/7 Veterans Crisis Line for Veterans in crisis and their families.

Pick up the phone if you are experiencing any emotional crisis and need to talk to a trained VA professional. You'll be immediately connected with a qualified caring provider who can help you.

# VA Health Care Services

The Sioux Falls VA places a high priority on providing excellent health care for men and women Veterans from all eras. We provide a full spectrum of health care services, including health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis, therapy, rehabilitation, and palliative care.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently operates 153 medical centers across the United States that provide many kinds of treatment services, such as surgery, critical care, mental health care, orthopedics, pharmacy, radiology, and physical therapy. VA is proud to provide a team of highly qualified health care professionals dedicated to the health care needs of all Veterans.

VA strives to ensure Veterans have access to all needed services wherever they receive VA health care. This may be on-site during inpatient hospitalization, at one of the primary or specialty care clinics, at a Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), in a Community Living Center, in a residential care facility, or in a Veteran's home. However, all services are not provided at every site where VA health care is provided. Sometimes Veterans need to travel to another VA facility or a community care facility to obtain the needed service. If travel is necessary, your VA provider will work with you to obtain these services.

## Inpatient Care Services

The Sioux Falls VA includes a full spectrum of inpatient services:

- Medical and Surgical Acute Care Inpatient Units
  - Medical and Surgical Intensive Care Unit
- Mental Health Acute Care Unit
- Acute Hemodialysis Treatment
- Residential Rehabilitation

If you are having surgery at a VA medical center, you may be able to pre-donate your own blood for the procedure. If you have any questions about blood donation, speak with your health care team at least two weeks prior to your surgery.

# VA Health Care Services

## Ancillary Services

VA health care providers often use ancillary services to help diagnose, and/or treat a Veteran's medical condition. Many are offered through telehealth at the outpatient clinics. These services include:

- Audiology (hearing)
- Blind Rehabilitation
- Dentistry
- Diagnostic Imaging (x-ray, CT, MRI, Ultrasound, Nuclear Medicine, and Mammography
- Diagnostic Laboratory
- Integrative Health
- Nutrition and Food Service
- Occupational Therapy
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Prosthetics (artificial limbs, equipment, devices)
- Radiation Oncology (cancer care)
- Recreation Therapy
- Respiratory Therapy
- Social Work (discharge planning, family & caregiver support, link to community resources)
- Speech Therapy
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Traumatic Brain Injury

## Specialty Care Services

Specialty care services provide expert knowledge to give the best treatment to unique or complicated courses of care. Specialty care providers focus on a particular area of care and have extensive training and education. Many of these are offered through telehealth at the outpatient clinics. VA medical and surgical specialty care services include:

- Cardiovascular (heart and blood circulation)
- Chaplain (spiritual support)
- Dermatology
- Diabetes and Endocrinology
- Eye Care (Optometry & Ophthalmology)
- Gastroenterology (abdomen)
- Geriatric Care
- Infectious Disease
- Nephrology (kidney)
- Neurology (brain and nervous system)
- Oncology (cancer)
- Orthopedics
- Pain Management
- Podiatry (feet)
- Pulmonary (lungs)
- Sleep Medicine (diagnostics/treatment)
- Rheumatology (joints)
- Urology
- Women's Health (Gynecology)

## Long-Term Care

Long-term Care includes a variety of services for Veterans who no longer require inpatient hospital care but need resources and support to help them function at the highest level. The goals of care are to restore Veterans to maximum function, prevent further decline, maximize independence, and/or provide comfort when dying.

Institutional long term care includes:

- VA Community Living Centers, which were formerly known as VA Nursing Home Care Units. Most VA Community Living Centers are located on or near the grounds of VA medical centers throughout the United States. They serve Veterans of any age who:
    - Require post-hospital, short-term rehabilitation or skilled nursing services such intravenous (I.V.) therapy or wound care.
    - Have chronic stable conditions including dementia.
    - Need comfort and care at the end of life.

## Long-Term Care

- State Veterans Homes, which are owned and operated by the states. VA pays a portion of the construction costs and a per diem for eligible Veterans. States set admission criteria.
- Contract Community Nursing Homes. VA contracts with privately owned community based nursing homes for nursing home care for eligible Veterans.

VA also provides long-term care through a spectrum of home and community-based services, generally to Veterans with chronic advanced disabling conditions. Services in the home may be provided directly by VA staff, through home telehealth, or through community services purchased by VA. The services include home-based primary care, skilled home care, home hospice, homemaker home health aide services, respite, and adult day health care.

## Audiology

When requested by a physician, audiology provides hearing evaluations. Rehabilitation, including hearing aids, is provided based on eligibility.

## Dental Care

Eligibility for VA dental benefits is based on very specific guidelines and differs significantly from eligibility requirements for medical care. In some instances, VA may provide extensive dental care, while in other cases treatment may be limited. Eligibility for outpatient dental care may differ from eligibility for inpatient dental care.

For more information about eligibility for VA dental benefits, contact VA at:

1-877-222-8387 or www.va.gov/healtheligibility

## Health Promotion and Disease Prevention & Veterans Health Education (VHE)

Veterans receive clinical preventive services from their primary care teams. These services include immunizations to prevent disease, screening tests to detect disease at an early stage, and behavioral counseling to avoid or reduce risk factors for disease.

Veterans may choose to participate in health education programs to help them manage their health problems. They also may participate in health promotion programs to learn healthy living skills.

## Integrative Health:

Integrative Health blends western medicine with alternative and complementary techniques. This may include therapies such as acupuncture, therapeutic massage, aromatherapy and integrative health coaching. Integrative health care takes a slightly different approach to complement and support the care provided by traditional medicine. This is accomplished by emphasizing wellness and healing of the whole person; body, emotions, mind and spirit. Integrative Health may help Veterans with chronic illness by offering ways for each person to help herself or himself. For example, meditation is a self-help technique used to teach people how to reduce their stress, anxiety, depression and pain.

## Veteran Centered Care

Veteran Centered Care involves a partnership between patients, caregivers, clinicians and the health care system. Veteran Centered style of care asks the Veteran and his/her health care team to work together to find common ground. The goal is to find a balance between Veteran needs and preferences to line up with the medical team recommendations for treatment. Focus is placed on treating the Veteran as a whole, individual person and tailoring the care to meet specific needs.

## GetWell Network

The GetWell Network uses interactive software to help Veterans be more involved in their care. Using the bedside TV, the GetWell Network system enables patients to get health information on the television, watch movies, access the Internet, order their meals, and play games to achieve a more Veteran centered care. Health education and communication with providers and other staff will soon be tied in with the electronic medical record to the Veterans' bedside TVs.

## Telehealth

Telehealth provides clinical care where distance separates Veterans receiving services and those who provide services. Telehealth increases Veterans' access to care and improves their care by providing the right care in the right place at the right time.

Clinical video telehealth is real-time, where there is instantaneous interaction between the patient and the provider or even two providers, by videoconferencing. Many specialty services are offered including cardiology, infectious disease, mental health, caregiver support, nutrition, pain management, oncology, and many more.

Home telehealth is an optional program where easy-to-use equipment is provided for Veterans' use in their homes and connected to VA. There is no charge to Veterans for this program. The equipment is connected to VA by a landline phone, Internet router, or a cellular modem. The equipment monitors blood sugar, blood oxygen, blood pressure, pain and temperature. A trained RN will receive and monitor the daily health data and communicate with Veterans on a regular basis. Veterans who have chronic physical and mental health conditions are eligible.

Store-and-forward telehealth is where digital images, video, audio and clinical information are captured, stored, and securely transmitted to a medical specialist in another location. Sioux Falls currently uses this to screen diabetic patients for potential eye problems.

Another optionfor telehealth uses secure videoconferencing on a Veteran's Internet and home computer to connect with his/her provider for scheduled appointments. A telephone, a computer with speakers, and a webcam or an iPad are required. VA can also supply a videoconferencing unit to the patient's home if he/she does not own a computer or iPad. Current services include caregiver support, med management, mental Health, MOVE (Managing Overweight for Veterans Everywhere), suicide prevention, and social work.

## Managing Overweight/Obesity for Veterans Everywhere! *MOVE!*

MOVE! is a national program to help Veterans lose weight, keep it off, and improve their health. It combines nutrition, physical activity and behavior change to help Veterans meet goals. The MOVE! program is about making

healthy lifestyle changes one step at a time in a supportive environment. MOVE! is available in Sioux Falls and at each CBOC by telemedicine. Ask a member of your health care team if you would benefit from MOVE!

## Social Work

VA social workers are assigned to all patient treatment programs, including Community Based Outpatient Clinics. They provide services to Veterans across the continuum of care and across all programs and settings.

Social workers provide care coordination such as case management services for Veterans at risk for homelessness, frail elderly, catastrophic illness or injury, and terminal illness. Social workers assure Veterans have appropriate care and needed services once they are discharged from an inpatient or outpatient treatment program.

In addition to working with all eligible Veterans, social workers assist family members and caregivers as part of a Veteran's treatment. Social workers are key members of interdisciplinary teams in the provision of health care services.

## Caregiver Support

VA is implementing caregiver support initiatives across VA medical centers. A variety of caregiver support services may be available including support groups, caregiver resource fairs, and other education and training. Additional information for caregivers can be found at:

**www.caregiver.va.gov** or **www.myhealth.va.gov**

The Sioux Falls Caregiver Support Coordinators may be contacted at: 605-336-3230, ext. 7720 or ext. 7898.

**Caregiver Support National Line: 1-855-260-3274**

## Palliative Care and Hospice

Having an illness that is not improving and cannot be cured can be very hard. The hospice and palliative care team will meet with you and your family to talk about your concerns. They can help you obtain information, offer support, help with your choices and planning, coordinate your care, work with your health care team, and help you and your loved ones cope with issues of advanced illness.

Hospice care is for Veterans who have a life expectancy of six months or less. The goal is to enhance the Veteran's quality of life by managing pain and other unpleasant symptoms. Ask your health care provider for more information.

## Prosthetics

VA Prosthetics furnishes properly prescribed prosthetic equipment, sensory aids, and devices to Veterans in accordance with authorizing laws, regulations, and policies. Prosthetics serves as the pharmacy for assistive aids and as case manager for the prosthetic equipment needs of disabled Veterans.

## Recreation Therapy

Recreation Therapy provides services to teach and enhance recreation skills and attitudes, improve abilities to participate in recreation, and to promote health and growth in a rewarding and enjoyable manner. Therapy is offered on the inpatient units, in the auditorium, and in the community for special events, dining out, and other attractions. Information regarding activities is posted on bulletin boards in the Community Living Center Units as well as at the bedsides of all patients.

## Rehabilitation Services

Rehabilitation Services (physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology) concentrate on helping Veterans be the best they can be. Rehab helps Veterans to be able to perform daily tasks, to help alleviate pain and to assist them in gaining strength. Rehab staff may provide equipment to help Veterans walk, speak or do routine things in their homes. Rehabilitation services are located on the ground floor of the medical center.

## Intermediate Low Vision Clinic and Visual Impairment Services Team

The Low Vision Clinic and Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST) serve Veterans who have vision loss beyond what can be fixed by ordinary glasses, medication and surgery. For example, we help Veterans who can no longer read a newspaper, even with new glasses. Services include an in-depth eye exam, magnifiers or other types of assistive technology, daily living skills training, and support and adjustment counseling. The purpose of the clinic is to provide rehabilitation and health services to maximize vision and improve the quality of life for Veterans with vision loss.

## Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation is a program designed for service-connected disabled Veterans who require assistance obtaining or preparing for medically suitable employment and independent living. Veterans voluntarily apply by submitting VA Form 28-1900. This form is available on line at the VBA Internet web site: **www.vba.va.gov/VBA/** and available on paper in the Dakotas Regional Office. Services range from simple job placement assistance, adaptive equipment assessments and referrals, to full range training. For more information, call 605-333-6845.

## Women's Health

VA is committed to meeting women Veterans' unique needs by delivering the highest quality health care, while offering privacy, dignity, and sensitivity. The Sioux Falls VA offers a variety of services, including:

- Health Promotion
  - Healthy living, nutrition and weight management, help to stop smoking
- Disease prevention
  - Osteoporosis and cancer screening
- Primary care and women's gender-specific health care
  - Mammograms, menopause evaluation and treatment, hormone replacement therapy, birth control, breast and gynecological care, maternity, and infertility services
- Medical and Surgical Care Services
- Emergency services, including VA Nurse Help Line, are available to Veterans by telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-866-687-7382 *(NURSE VA)*
- Mental Health
  - Help with depression, anxiety, and stress; adjustment from deployment; counseling and treatment for military sexual trauma; parenting and caregiver issues; counseling and treatment for violence and abuse; and substance use disorders
- Special Programs
  - Vocational rehabilitation, educational opportunities, links to job and career counseling, services for homeless Veterans and long-term care

**Contact the Sioux Falls VA Women Veterans Program Manager at: 605-336-3230, ext. 7747 for assistance or questions about services.**

# Patient Advocacy Program

A patient advocate is an employee whose job is to help resolve Veterans' issues. The Patient Advocacy Program is for all Veterans and their families who receive care at VA facilities and clinics. We want Veterans and their families to have someone to go to for discussion of their concerns or complaints, or to offer a compliment.

We want you to get the best care possible. Your treatment team is your first point of contact. This team includes your doctor, nurse, social worker, dietician, pharmacist, chaplain, therapist, and other professionals who provide your medical care.

If you or your family member believes your concerns are not being addressed by your treatment team, you may contact the VA patient advocate. The patient advocate works directly with management and employees to help resolve Veterans' issues.

If you need help getting care or getting problems resolved, please contact the patient advocate.

**Advocate Office Location:** Room 172, Building 5

**Direct Phone Number:** 605-336-3230 Ext. 6688

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday 7:00 am to 3:30 pm

**After hours, federal holidays and weekends: emergency concerns may be addressed by calling the toll-free hospital number and requesting the Administrative Officer on Duty at:**

**1-800-316-8387.**

# Advance Directives

## Introduction

As a VA patient, you have a say in the health care you receive. When you are ill, your health care provider (doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) should explain the treatments for your illness so you can decide which one is best for you.

If you are too ill to understand your treatment choices or to tell your provider what you want:

*Who would you want to make decisions for you?*

*What type of health care would you want?*

*What type of health care would you not want?*

Questions like these may be hard to think about, but it is even more unpleasant to think that your choices would not be known if you couldn't talk to your provider directly. The best way to make sure these decisions are handled exactly as you would want them is to complete an advance directive.

## What is an Advance Directive?

An advance directive is a legal form. It is a set of orders you specify while you are healthy and not under stress. You choose the types of care you would and would not like to have if you become too ill to talk to your doctor yourself. This legal form helps your health care provider and family understand your wishes about health care. It can help them decide about treatments if you are too ill to decide for yourself.

There are two types of advance directives:

- Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care
- Living Will

### What is a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care?

A Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care is a legal form that lets you name the person you trust to make health care decisions for you if you cannot make them yourself. This person becomes your health care agent and will have the legal right to make health care decisions for you. It's best to choose someone you trust, someone who knows you well and knows your values. You should make sure the person is willing to serve as your health care agent. If you do not choose a health care agent, your doctor will choose someone to make decisions for you in the following order: legal guardian (if you have one), spouse, adult child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild or a close friend.

### What is a Living Will?

A Living Will is a legal form that states what kinds of treatments you would or would not want in different situations when you cannot make treatment decisions yourself. It can help your health care agent and your doctor make decisions the way you want. For example, you could have the document tell your doctor not to use heroic measures to keep you alive or prolong the process of dying if you are terminally ill.

### Should I have an Advance Directive?

Yes, it's a good idea to have an advance directive. It helps protect your right to make your own choices. It helps make sure people respect your values and wishes if you can't speak for yourself.

Some people name a health care agent, and they also complete a living will. It's up to you; you choose how general or specific you want your instructions to be.

### What should I do with my advance directive?

You should give a copy of your advance directive to your health care agent (appointed spokesperson) and your health care providers. You should also keep a copy with your important papers in a safe place. Be sure to give a copy to your VA provider so it can be placed in your medical record.

### Can my advance directive be changed?

Yes, but only by you. You may change or revoke it at any time. You should also review it periodically to make sure it reflects what you want. If you make changes, give the new version to the people listed above and make sure the new copy is in your medical record.

### For more information:

You can view and download the form (VA Form 10-0137, VA Advance Directive) from the Internet at the VA website or My Health*e*Vet website:

**www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-0137-fill.pdf**

**www.myhealth.va.gov.**

If you would like more information about advance directives or help filling out the form, please contact your primary care social worker

# Sioux Falls Services and Facilities

## Patriot Café

Cooking up hot breakfast, lunch specials, sandwiches, salads, snacks, and beverages. The café is located on the second floor of the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center.

Hours: Weekdays 7:00 am to 3:00 pm

Closed on weekends and all federal holidays

## Patriot Brew

The coffee shop sells Starbucks coffee, beverages, some breakfast items, baked goods, sandwiches and salads. The coffee shop is located near the elevator on the ground floor of the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center.

Hours: Weekdays 6:00 am to 1:00 pm

## Vending Machine Areas

Vending machines containing food and drink products are located in two areas within the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center:

- Ground floor by the restrooms
- First floor, connecting corridor inside double doors
- Front lobby of the Regional Office

## Patriot Retail Store

A retail store offering value and convenience is located on the first floor of the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center by the elevators. The store offers a little of everything, such as personal hygiene items, snacks, seasonal items and electronics.

Hours: Weekdays 7:30am to 4:00pm

# Medical Center Services

## Cashier

The agent cashier is on the ground floor near the Pharmacy. The agent cashier is open 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Patients can make co-payments during business hours. All beneficiary travel will be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Funds deposited with the agent cashier can be withdrawn during normal office hours, not to exceed $500. If you are discharged after the agent cashier has closed and you have not withdrawn your patient funds, they will be sent to you via EFT. The cashier is not allowed to make change; he/she only makes or receives payments.

## Chapel

Ask your nurse to call the Chaplain Service if a visit from a Protestant, Catholic, or other chaplain is desired. Traditional American Indian religious ceremonies can be arranged through the Chaplain Service or Minority Veterans Coordinator. The Chaplain Channel on Channel 19 on the hospital TV system provides spiritual music, videos, and information 24 hours a day. Ecumenical services are held in the chapel each Sunday at 10:30 am. Roman Catholic Mass is held every Thursday (except holidays) at 1:15 pm in the chapel on the third floor. Holy Day services are announced. There is an area available in the chapel for private spiritual counseling for you and your clergy.

## ATM

Located in the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center on the ground floor by the restrooms and vending machines.

## Parking

Parking on Sioux Falls VA property is for patients, visitors, volunteers and staff. We request patients who are admitted to have a friend or family member drive them to the medical center. We also ask Veterans to allow enough time before your appointment to find parking.

Free Valet Parking Service is offered at the main entrance to the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center for Veteran patients and/or their drivers. The service is provided during normal Federal business days between 7:00 am to 4:30 pm Central Time.

## Police Services

The Sioux Falls VA Medical Center provides 24-hour patrols of the facility and parking lots. For general police assistance, please dial ext. 7376. In case of an emergency, dial 444. Please report all suspicious or criminal activity, vehicle accidents, and personal property losses to VA Police as soon as possible. The Sioux Falls VA Medical Center and CBOCs are federal property; all persons and bags are subject to search.

## Travel

Veteran patients may qualify for travel benefits and mileage reimbursement for travel to and from the medical center or CBOCs. To be eligible for travel benefits, a Veteran must meet one of the following criteria:

- Be 30-100% service connected
- Receive a VA pension
- Have aid and attendance status
- Have housebound status
- Have a gross annual household income not exceeding the maximum annual rate of a VA pension
- If you have less than a 30% service disability, you must be treated for your service-connected disability or meet financial guidelines

Veterans needing rides to VA can:

- Obtain bus tickets for transportation in Sioux Falls from the outpatient social workers.
- Use DAV van transportation within Sioux Falls and surrounding areas. Vans are housed in communities throughout the area. Call 605-336-3230, ext. 6551 for information.
- For rides to other health care facilities or VA health care systems outside of Sioux Falls, contact the Sioux Falls VA Travel Office at 605-336-3230, ext. 6372.

**Notice**

- **Veterans using DAV shuttle service do not qualify for travel pay.**
- **Emergency Department visits are only paid for one-way travel.**

## Release of Information

You may find that you need a copy of your medical records. You may need information from your records sent to a third party, such as attorneys, insurance agents, private physicians or for Social Security claims. Information from your records can be released only if we have a signed consent from you.

The Release of Information Office is located on the ground floor of the medical center.

Hours: Weekdays 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Closed weekends and federal holidays

**Contact Numbers**

Phone: 605-333-6848 or 605-333-6686

FAX: 605-333-6887

## Privacy and HIPAA Policy

The Privacy Rule protects the privacy of your health information. It says who can look at and receive your health information and gives you specific rights over that information.

By enforcing the Privacy Rule, the U.S. Government helps to protect the privacy of your health information held by health insurers and certain health care providers. Some of these providers and insurers may include:

- Doctors and nurses
- Pharmacies
- Hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes
- Health insurance/employer health plans/health maintenance organizations (HMOs)
- Certain government programs that pay for health care, such as Medicare and Medicaid

You may contact the Privacy Officer if you have any concerns about your privacy. The Privacy Officer can be reached at 605-336-3230, ext. 6784.

## Voluntary Service

Volunteers are an important part of the VA Health Care System. They serve Veterans throughout the United States.

Volunteers are a valuable addition to the staff. They are considered without compensation (WOC) employees. Within the Sioux Falls Health Care System, we have over 450 regularly scheduled volunteers. They assist the staff by performing many useful services. Our volunteers help supply the wards with personal care items, do clerical work, staff the information desk in the lobby, and provide transportation to and from outlying communities.

Voluntary Service accepts monetary and non-monetary donations. We receive personal care items, reading material, etc. Donations are made by individuals, groups, and service organizations. The value of the donations is more than a million dollars per year. Many Veterans are volunteers, who enjoy serving their fellow Veterans. For more information, call 605-333-6851 or 605-333-6806.

# How to Access VA Health Care

## VA Telephone Care

## During Business Hours (Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm)

Call your primary care/specialty clinic to:

- Make an appointment, change an appointment, or cancel an appointment. If you know you are going to miss an appointment, please cancel it as soon as possible so another Veteran can get an appointment.
- Get advice about your health concerns.
- If you are feeling sick, please call your primary care clinic. The clinic will assess your medical needs and work with you to address them.
- Calling the primary care clinic will help us make arrangements with your own primary care provider as much as possible.
- Please understand if you "walk in" to a primary care clinic without a scheduled appointment, we will evaluate your condition; and you will then be seen according to the severity of your medical situation.

## Nurse VA Health Care Advice

Toll Free Number: 1-866-687-7382
*(NURSE VA)*

Available evenings, nights, and 24 hours/day on weekends and federal holidays.

During regular office hours (8:00 am to 4:00 pm CT), call your local VA medical center: 1-800-316-8387.

# How to Access VA Health Care

## Appointments

If you need to be seen by your health care team, please call to make an appointment. Contact your clinic if you need to be seen by your provider before your next scheduled visit.

If you are unable to keep an appointment, please call 1-800-316-8387 or 605-336-3230 to cancel at least 24 hours in advance. This will allow another Veteran wanting an appointment to take your place.

Before your appointment, please fill out all forms given or mailed to you.

- Write down any questions you may have.
- List all problems or symptoms.
- Have you tried any remedies? Did they work?
- Do you have any pain?
- Have you changed your daily routine in any way? Exercise? Diet?
- Have you lost or gained weight recently?

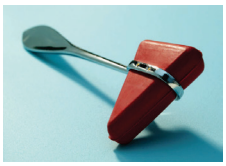
What to bring:

- Any medications you are taking, including prescriptions, vitamins, over-the-counter medications, and herbals. Include name, strength, and dosage with how many and what time of day taken.
- A list of any outside health care providers you may see.
- Wear clothing that is easy to take off and put on.
- Bring something to read while in the waiting area.
- Bring paper and pen to take notes.
- Bring/wear glasses, contacts, and hearing aids.
- If you think you will have trouble understanding or hearing, bring a relative or a friend.
- Prosthetics, medical supplies and equipment (CPAP, BiPAP), artificial limbs, oxygen, dentures.

## Transportation

If you cannot drive yourself to appointments, you can arrange a ride by calling the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) transportation service at:

605-336-3230, ext. 6551.



# Audio Care Services

For your convenience, the Sioux Falls VA has made Audio Care Services available to all patients.  Audio Care offers the following four services by phone:

**For all of these AudioCare Services, just dial 1-855-560-1723.**

## AudioREFILL

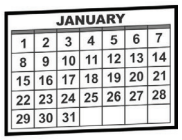
The automated prescription refill system may be accessed at your convenience by touch-tone phone. The status of any refills ordered may also be checked by phone at any time. Please note the phone number for refills is 1-855-560-1723

## AudioINQUIRY

This is an easy way to verify or cancel your VA appointments, 24-hours a day from any touch-tone telephone.

## AudioREMINDER

The automated reminder service will call to remind you of future appointments.




## AudioCOMMUNICATOR

This is a service which will place calls to patients with notifications of weather delays, emergencies or other conditions which may affect upcoming appointments

# Patient Rights and Responsibilities

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is pleased you have selected us to provide your health care. We will provide you with personalized, patient-driven, compassionate, state-of-the-art care. Our goal is to make your experience as positive and pleasant as we can. As part of our service to you, to other Veterans and to the Nation, we are committed to improving health care quality. We also train future health care professionals, conduct research, and support our country in times of national emergency. In all of these activities, our employees will respect and support your rights as a patient or resident of a community living center (CLC). Your basic rights and responsibilities are outlined in this document. You will receive this information in your preferred language. Please talk with the VA treatment team members who are providing your care or to a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights and responsibilities.

## Respect and Nondiscrimination

- You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. Consistent with Federal law, VA policy, and accreditation standards of The Joint Commission, you will not be subject to discrimination for any reason, including for reasons of age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.
- You will receive care in a safe environment free from excess noise, and with sufficient light to ensure comfort and safety.
- You have a right to have access to the outdoors.
- We will seek to honor your cultural and personal values, beliefs, and preferences. We ask that you identify any cultural, religious, or spiritual beliefs or practices that influence your care.
- You or someone you choose has the right to keep and spend your money. You have the right to receive an accounting of any funds that VA is holding for you.
- We will respect your personal freedoms in the care and treatment we provide you. This includes trying to accommodate your normal sleep and wake cycles, food likes and dislikes, and other personal preferences.
- In the Community Living Center, you have the right to be free from chemical and physical restraints. In the inpatient acute care setting, and only in rare cases, the use of chemical and physical restraints may be used if all other efforts to keep you or others free from harm have not worked.
- In the Community Living Center, you may keep personal items and are expected to wear your own clothes. As an inpatient, you may wear your own clothes depending on your medical condition.

- You have the right to keep and use personal items as long as they are safe and legal.
- You have the right to social interaction and regular exercise. You will have the opportunity for religious worship and spiritual support. You may decide whether to participate in these activities. You may decide whether or not to perform tasks in or for the Medical Center or in the Community Living Center.
- You have the right to communicate freely and privately. You will have access to public telephones and VA will assist you in sending and receiving mail. You may participate in civic rights, such as voting and free speech.
- When a loved one is involved in support and care of a VA patient or CLC resident, VA considers a patient or CLC resident's *family* to include anyone related to the patient or CLC resident in any way (for example, biologically or legally) and anyone whom the patient or CLC resident considers to be family. If you are an inpatient, any persons you choose can be with you to support you during your stay. Medical staff may restrict visitors for inpatients if medical or safety concerns require it. You will be told promptly about any visitor restriction and the reason for it.
- To provide a safe treatment environment for all patients or CLC residents and staff, you and your visitors are expected to avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please immediately report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

## Information Disclosure and Confidentiality

- Your privacy will be protected.
- You will be given information about the health benefits you can receive. The information will be provided in a way you can understand.
- You will receive information about the costs of your care (for example, co-payments), if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying your portion of any costs associated with your care.
- Your health record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your authorization unless permitted by law (an example of this is state public health reporting). You have the right to have access to or request a copy of your own health records.
- Please respect the privacy of other patients and CLC residents and do not reveal their health information that you may overhear or otherwise become aware of.

## Participation in Treatment Decisions

- You have a right to express your preferences concerning future medical care in an advance directive, including designating a health care agent to make health care decisions on your behalf when you can no longer do so.

- You, and any person(s) you choose, will be involved in all decisions about your care. You will be given information you can understand about the benefits and risks of treatment in your preferred language. You will be given other options. You can agree to or refuse any treatment. You will be told what is likely to happen to you if you refuse a treatment. Refusing a treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you take responsibility for the impact this decision may have on your health.
- Tell your provider about your current condition, medicines (including over-the-counter and herbals), and medical history. Also, share any other information that affects your health. You should ask questions when you do not understand something about your care. This will help us provide you the best care possible.
- You will be given, in writing, the name and title of the provider in charge of your care. You have the right to be involved in choosing your provider. You also have the right to know the names and titles of those who provide you care. This includes students and other trainees. Providers will properly introduce themselves when they take part in your care.
- You will be educated about your role and responsibilities as a patient or CLC resident. This includes your participation in decision making and care at the end of life.
- If you believe you cannot follow the treatment plan, you have a responsibility to tell your provider or treatment team.
- You will be informed of all outcomes of your care, including any possible injuries associated with your care. You will be informed about how to request compensation and other remedies for any serious injuries.
- You have the right to have your pain assessed and to receive treatment to manage your pain. You and your treatment team will develop a pain management plan together. You are expected to help the treatment team by telling them if you have pain and if the treatment is working.
- As an inpatient or CLC resident, you will be provided any transportation necessary for your treatment plan.
- You have the right to choose whether or not you will participate in any research project. Any research will be clearly identified. Potential risks of the research will be identified and there will be no pressure on you to participate.
- You will be included in resolving any ethical issues about your care. If you have ethical issues or concerns, you may speak with the Medical Center's Ethics Consultation Service for help.

## Concerns or Complaints

- You are encouraged and expected to seek help from your treatment team or a patient advocate if you have problems or complaints. Any privacy complaints will be addressed by the facility Privacy Officer. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process in your preferred language. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.
- If you believe that you or your family member has been neglected, abused or exploited by VA staff, please report this promptly to the treatment team or patient advocate. You will receive help immediately.
- If you believe the organization has failed to address or satisfy your concerns about health care quality and safety, you may contact the Joint Commission's Office of Quality Monitoring at 1-800-994-6610. If you 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 e-mail vaoighotline@VA.gov.

## Additional Rights and Responsibilities of Community Living Center Residents

Because the CLC serves as your home for short or long-stay services, you have the following additional rights and responsibilities as a CLC resident:

- Staff will knock on your bedroom door prior to entry.
- You have the right to receive care from the same staff member every day to the extent that consistent assignment is possible.
- You may have visitors at any time of the day or night provided visitors are respectful of you, your need for privacy and the privacy of others. You may refuse visitors at any time.
- You have a right to conjugal visits and you have a right to privacy during those visits.
- Your care will be delivered in a setting that resembles home. Therefore, you will be invited to have your meals in a designated dining area, and you will have access to those activities that contribute to meaningful use of time.
- In preparation for being discharged to your own home, you and or your care giver may be invited to participate in activities that prepare you to go home, such as self administration of medications and treatments.
- You and your caregivers have a right to attend treatment planning meetings and participate in household or resident council.

## VA Ethics Consultation Service

Veterans often have questions about what course of treatment to choose. Your providers will make recommendations; but as a VA patient, you have the final say in health care decisions. Sometimes the decisions are very difficult and personal. Other times it may be hard for you to understand how the choices match what is important to you. VA ethics consultants can help you with these hard decisions. They can meet with you, your family, and your treatment team to help everyone better understand what is right for you, or what should be done, and why.

### What do I do next?

The first step is to let your doctor, nurse, or other team member know that you need help making or understanding a difficult decision. Together, you may be able to work it out.

Your providers may also seek help from a VA ethics consultant social worker, chaplain, or other professional.

You always have the option to request an ethics consultation yourself when something just doesn't seem right to you, or when you and your health care team are having trouble agreeing on the best option.

**For an ethics consultation send e-mail to Ethicscommittee3@va.gov *or* call the Integrated Ethics Consult Coordinator at ext. 7714 *or* the Patient Advocate at ext. 6688**

## Patient Visitation

There is open visitation for all patients/residents at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center. Visitation is allowed by family members, friends, or other individuals for emotional support during the course of stay unless contraindicated by the Veteran's condition or the Veteran/physician requests visitation restrictions.

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System prohibits discrimination based on age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. This prohibition is extended to all patients and all visitors.

Visiting during the hours of 9:00 pm and 6:00 am are considered "quiet hours" for all units. During this time, it is expected a quiet environment will be maintained in all patient care areas. Anyone with a cold, fever, cough, sore throat or any other contagious diseases is advised not to visit patients/residents due to the risk of spreading a communicable disease.

## Complaints - SPEAK UP program

We encourage you to seek help from your treatment team or a patient advocate if you have problems or complaints.

**S**

### Speak Up if you have questions or concerns.

- If you still don't understand, ask again. Your health is very important.
- If you're having surgery, ask the doctor to mark the area that is to be operated on.
- If you are in pain, let your provider know.

**P**

### Pay attention to the care you get. Always make sure you are getting the right treatments and medicines by the right health care professionals.

- Tell your nurse or doctor if something doesn't seem right.
- Expect health care workers to introduce themselves. Look for their identification (ID) badges.
- Notice whether your care givers have washed their hands. Hand washing is the most important way to prevent infections. Don't be afraid to remind a doctor or nurse to do this.
- Know what time of the day you normally get medicine.
- Make sure your nurse or doctor checks your ID. Make sure he or she checks your wristband and asks your name and full Social Security number or date of birth before he or she gives you your medicine or treatments. Don't be afraid to tell a health care professional if you think he or she has confused you with another patient.

**E**

### Educate yourself about your illness. Learn about the medical tests you get and your treatment plan.

- Look for information about your condition. Good places to get that information are from your doctor, your library, respected websites and support groups.
- Write down important facts your doctor tells you. Ask your doctor if he or she has any written information you can keep.
- Make sure you know how to work any equipment that is being used in your care. If you use oxygen at home, do not smoke or let anyone smoke near you.

**A**

### Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate (advisor or supporter)

- Your advocate can ask questions that you may not think about. . He or she can speak up for you when you cannot speak up for yourself...
- Make sure this person understands the kind of care you want. Make sure he or she knows what you want done about life support and other life-saving efforts.
- Go over the consents for treatment with your advocate before you sign them. Make sure you both understand exactly what you are about to agree to.

**K**

### Know what medicines you take and why you take them. Medicine errors are the most common health care mistakes

- Whenever you get a new medicine, tell your doctors and nurses about allergies you have, or negative reactions you have had to other medicines.
- If you are taking a lot of medicines, be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist if it is safe to take those medicines together. Do the same thing with vitamins, herbs and over-the-counter drugs.
- Don't be afraid to tell the nurse or the doctor if you think you are about to get the wrong medicine
- Carry an up-to-date list of the medicines you are taking in your purse or wallet. Write down how much you take and when you take it. Go over the list with your doctor at your appointments.

U

## Use a hospital or other type of health care organization that has been carefully checked out.

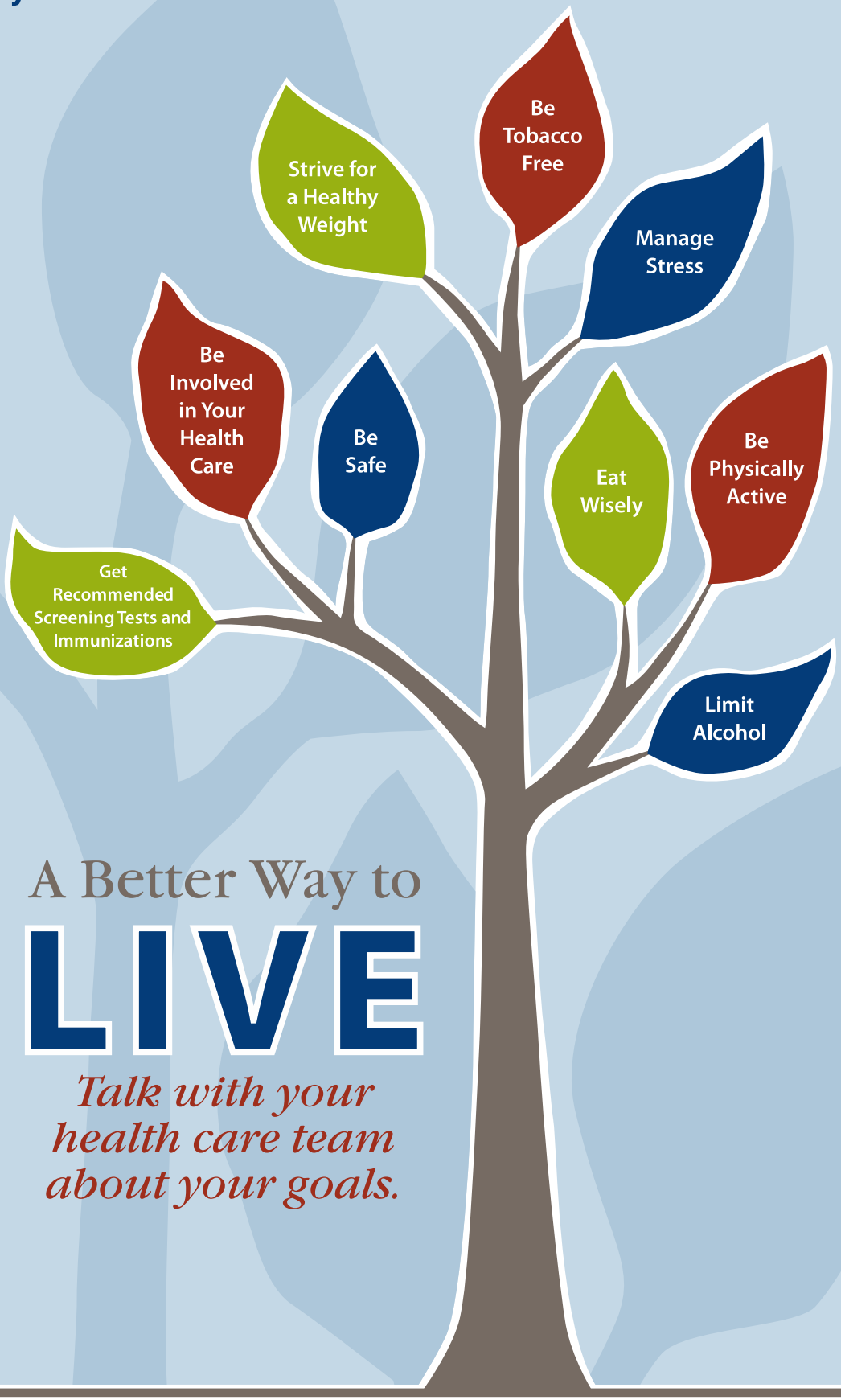
- Ask about the health care organization's experience in taking care of people with your type of illness. How often do they perform the procedure you need?
- Before you leave the hospital or other facility, ask about follow-up care and make sure that you understand all of the instructions.
- Go to Quality Check at www.qualitycheck.org to find out whether your hospital or other health care organization is "accredited." Accredited means that the hospital or health care organization works by rules that make sure that patient safety and quality standards are followed.

P

## Participate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of the health care team

- Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion. If you are unsure about the best treatment for your illness, talk with one or two additional doctors.
- Talk to your doctor and your family about your wishes regarding resuscitation and other life-saving actions.
- Sioux Falls VA Medical Center has a Rapid Response Team. The Rapid Response Team (RRT) is to provide an immediately available resource to clinical staff, patients, and/or families for acute assessment of patients whose status is rapidly deteriorating/changing, and the condition appears to be worsening. If you or a family member feels that your condition is deterioration please ask a health care provider to call the rapid response team.

Healthy Living℠




# A Better Way to LIVE

*Talk with your health care team about your goals.*

## Be Involved in Your Health Care

- Take an active role.
- Work with your health care team to improve your health.

## Be Tobacco Free

- Quitting smoking is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and protect the health of your family members.
- Don't use tobacco in any form.

## Eat Wisely

- Eat a variety of foods including vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Limit salt, fat, sugar, and alcohol.

## Be Physically Active

- Avoid inactivity.
- Aim for at least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week.

## Strive for a Healthy Weight

- If you need to lose weight, losing even a little will help.
- If you are of normal weight, maintain it.

## Limit Alcohol

- If you choose to drink alcohol, drink in moderation (women no more than 1 drink a day; men no more than 2 drinks a day).
- Avoid "binge drinking."

## Get Recommended Screening Tests and Immunizations

- Recommendations for preventive services depend on your age, gender, health status, and family history.
- Ask which screening tests and immunizations are recommended for you.

## Manage Stress

- Pay attention to stress.
- Learn about ways to help you manage and reduce your stress.

## Be Safe

- Find out how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, falls, and motor vehicle crashes.
- Take action to protect yourself and those you love from harm.

Healthy Living

# Be Involved in Your Health Care

You can play an active role when you have a visit with your health care team. To get the most out of your visit, plan the questions you want to ask and the things you want to discuss. Be sure to leave the visit with information about your care. Here are some suggestions to help you be involved in your health care.

## How do I become involved in my own health care?

- To help your health care team provide you with better care, make sure you give them complete information about your current health.
- Let your team know about your health problems, your concerns about your health, any past illnesses, and past hospitalizations.
- Be sure to tell your team about all medications you take. Remember to include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbals.

## How do I plan for my health care visit?

- Before your visit, write down the questions and concerns you want to ask your team. Make sure to let your team know about your questions at the beginning of each visit.
- Share your ideas and beliefs about your health problems and treatments with your team. Talk with your team about any other matters related to your health.
- Tell your health care team about any stressful aspects of your life that affect your health and your ability to manage daily activities.

## How can I help my health care team create a treatment plan that will work for me?

- Work with your health care team to create your treatment plan and share in making decisions about your health care.
- Talk with your provider about the treatment options you prefer.

A Better Way to **LIVE**

*Talk with your health care team about your goals.*

- Ask your team to clarify anything that's not clear to you.
- Tell your team if you have any problems following your treatment plan or if your condition changes.
- Speak up if you have any concerns about the care you are receiving or if you think something is wrong.

- How can I get the most out of my visit?
- Ask your provider for written information and instructions that you can keep and share with your family or caregiver.
- Get information about your health problems from your health care team and the MyHealtheVet website.
- Know the names of your medicines and why you take each one.
- Ask when and how you will get the results of any tests or treatments.
- Ask your team for the name and telephone number of the person to call if you have a problem with symptoms, medications or treatments.
- Bring a family member or friend to your appointment to help you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- VHA National Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention: www.prevention.va.gov
- MyHealtheVet - www.myhealth.va.gov
- Healthfinder - Quick Guide to Healthy Living, Take Charge of Your Health*: www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=78
- Ask Me Three - National Patient Safety Foundation*: www.npsf.org/askme3/

* Indicates that the link leads to a non-VA website. The VA is not responsible for content on the site.

If you have questions about how to make healthy living changes, please talk with your health care team.

# My Health Choices

Circle your choice below.

Be Involved in Your Health Care

Be Tobacco Free

Eat Wisely

Be Physically Active

Strive for a Healthy Weight

*Limit Alcohol*

*Get Recommended Screening Tests & Immunizations*

*Manage Stress*

*Be Safe*

*Your Choice*

_____

_____

My goal for the next week is: Be specific: what, where, how much, how often.
(Example: I will walk at least 3 times this week for 15 minutes each, after I get home form work.)

_____

_____

Things that might get in my way: (Examples: weather, pain, time)

_____

_____

What I can do to overcome these things: (Examples: exercise indoors, walk with a friend)

_____

_____

I believe that I can reach my goal: (Circle the number that matches how confident you feel.)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not at All Sure | | | | Somewhat Sure | | | | | Very Sure |

Follow-up Date:_____ Follow-up Method: ❑Phone ❑In-person ❑Other

My healthevet
www.myhealth.va.gov

My Health, My Care: 24/7 Online Access to VA

www.myhealth.va.gov

# VA's Personal Health Record (PHR)

**Register Today!**
**Start Here**

1. Type www.myhealth.va.gov in the address bar on your web browser, and then select Enter.
2. When the My HealtheVet homepage opens, go to the green box in the right-hand column and select Register Today! Start Here.
3. When the registration page opens, complete all the information, and review and accept the Terms & Conditions and the Privacy Policy for using My HealtheVet. Then select the Save button at the bottom of the page.
4. After you have registered, go to www.myhealth.va.gov again. Then select the Go to My HealtheVet Enter Here button at the top right corner of the page.
5. When the My HealtheVet homepage opens, enter your User ID and Password in the Member Login box found in the right-hand column, and select Login. Bookmark www.myhealth.va.gov for future use.

## Get an Upgraded Account with In-Person Authentication (IPA)

To get the most out of My HealtheVet, Veterans are urged to visit their local VA health care facility to get an upgraded account, known as In-Person Authentication (IPA). Before VA patients can refill their VA medications by name, access their VA Wellness Reminders, and participate in the future features of My HealtheVet, Veterans need to complete the IPA process (takes approximately 10 minutes) as a security measure. The purpose of the one-time IPA process is to verify the Veteran's identity, in-person. This complies with VA policy and protects Veterans' identities. It's a simple process that will enhance a Veteran's use of My HealtheVet and allow access to other features as they become available.

## About My HealtheVet

My HealtheVet is VA's award-winning online Personal Health Record (PHR), located at www.myhealth.va.gov. It oȧers users anywhere, anytime access to health care information, resources and tools online 24/7. To get the most out of your My HealtheVet Personal Health Record, visit your local VA facility to get an upgraded account, known as In-Person Authentication (IPA).

## My HealtheVet Mission

The mission of My HealtheVet is to improve health care for all Veterans, independent of where you receive care. My HealtheVet provides one-stop, online access to better manage your overall health, make informed health decisions, and record and store important health and military history information.

## My HealtheVet Features at a Glance:

- VA Prescription Refills
- VA Wellness Reminders*
- VA Appointments*
- Secure Messaging*
- VA Allergies and Adverse Reactions*
- VA Chemistry/Hematology*
- VA Blue Button
- Healthy Living Centers
- VA Benefits & Services
- Personal Health History
- Tracking & Graphing Vitals
- Military Health History
- Activity & Food Journals
- Trusted Health Information

** Requires In-Person Authentication (IPA)*

# 5 Reasons You Should Be Using My HealtheVet

## 1 Be empowered to control your health

You can update the status of your Personal Health Record 24/7, refill your VA prescriptions online, and e-journal, all on our award-winning, easy to use website.

## 2 Avoid duplicate tests and procedures

You can self enter results from diagnostic tests and procedures performed outside the VA health care system and share that information with your VA providers and you can update your Personal Health Record before each visit.

## 3 Move easily from doctor to doctor with the VA Blue Button

You can view, print, download or save your personal health information in your My Health*e*Vet account. Sharing it with your health care team eases the transition from VA providers to non-VA providers.

## 4 Improve the efficiency and safety of your health care

You can update your personal health records and save valuable time, which may help prevent unwanted drug interactions and help you inform your provider or caregiver of your diagnoses and treatments.

## 5 Receive personalized information from your VA Electronic Health Record

You can get online VA Wellness Reminders, view VA Appointments, access VA Allergies and Adverse Reactions, get VA Chemistry/Hematology Test Results and use Secure Messaging with participating health care teams*

# www.myhealth.va.gov

## LOG ON. SIGN UP. TODAY!

* You can upgrade your account through In-Person Authentication. Learn more by going to My HealtheVet. Select In-Person Authentication from Quick Links. Select In-Person Authentication from Quick Links.

# Patient Safety

Your safety, while in one of the Sioux Falls Heath Care System facilities or in your home environment, is important. The information provided in this handbook will help you be safe and healthy.

## Patient Identification

To safely link patients with the proper medical record, medication and personal treatment plan, VA staff members are required to ask for two unique patient "identifiers." For this reason, staff should ask you for your full name, full Social Security number or date of birth.

## Hand Washing

Germs are everywhere around us. Normally, we live with germs without getting sick. In certain circumstances, harmful germs cause us to get sick with an infection. Or, we can spread harmful germs to others and cause them to get sick. Keeping your hands clean is the best way to prevent getting or spreading germs that cause infection. Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

**Tips for Good Hand washing**

- Use warm water and plenty of soap and work up a good lather.
- Clean the whole hand, under your nails, between your fingers, and up the wrists.
- Wash for at least 15 seconds. Don't just wipe. Scrub well.
- Rinse, letting the water run down your fingers, not up your wrists.
- Dry your hands well. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door.

**When to Clean Your Hands**

- After using the bathroom
- Before and after eating
- After coughing or sneezing
- After using a tissue
- After touching or changing a dressing or bandage
- After touching any object or surface that may be contaminated

# Patient Safety

## Multi-Drug Resistant Organisms (MDRO)

Some bacteria and germs have become resistant to antibiotics, meaning antibiotics will no longer help heal specific infections. These types of bacteria or germs are known as drug-resistant organisms. When a germ or organism is resistant to more than one antibiotic, it is known as a multiple-drug resistant organism or MDRO.

Drug-resistant organisms can be spread easily and are difficult to treat. This is why it is important everyone — health care workers, patients, and family — follow strict infection prevention rules.

If you are diagnosed with a drug-resistant organism, here's what you should do while in the health care facility and at home to help prevent spreading the drug-resistant organism to others:

- Clean your hands.
- While in the hospital or clinic, staff, family members may be asked to wear protective clothing.
- During hospitalization, stay in your room at all times.
- Clean your house thoroughly and regularly.
- Do not share towels, washcloths, bars of soap and other personal care items with others in the household.
- Avoid touching body fluids directly.
- Tell your regular doctor, other health care providers, visitors and family members if you have or have had a drug-resistant organism.

When patients, family members, visitors and health care providers act together, we can make a big difference. We can get drug-resistant organisms under control!

Ask your health care team for more detailed information about MDROs.

## Falls

Falls are the leading cause of injury for the older adult. Bones may become more brittle with aging. For this reason, a fall may cause a serious injury like a broken hip. All falls are serious. Call your doctor or physical therapist even if you think you are not hurt. A fall can be a symptom of serious problems. Your doctor or physical therapist may offer advice and assistance to prevent future falls.

Help us make improvements by reporting your concerns about safety to the nursing supervisor.

You may also contact:

**The Patient Safety Manager at 605-336-3230, ext. 6341**

## Fall Prevention

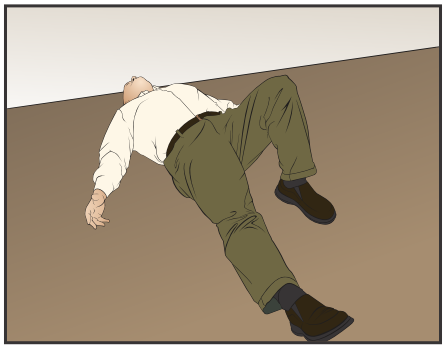
Most falls occur because of an environmental hazard, loss of balance, or slowing reaction time. If you are prone to falling, it is important to take some steps to prevent the falls from happening.

- Remove rugs, cords and clutter to reduce trip hazards.
- Install lights near beds and stairs.
- To make stairways safe install handrails, secure loose carpet and make stair edges visible.
- In the bathroom, install handrails, shower benches, non-slip mats and raised toilet seats.
- Avoid using ladders and step stools unless someone else is around.
- Place commonly used items in easy to reach places.
- Wear safe shoes and use a cane or a walker if needed.
- Get your eyes checked regularly.
- Stay in shape and focus on balancing exercises.
- Review medications with the health care team.

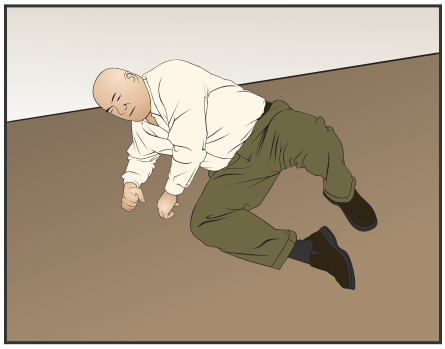
# Patient Safety

## Falls without Injury

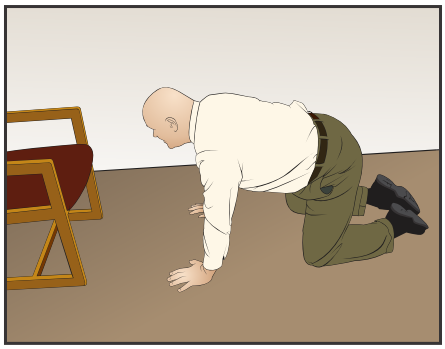
1. **Don't panic.** Remain calm and determine if you are hurt.



2. **Roll over slowly and try to sit up...** Moving slowly will help prevent dizziness.

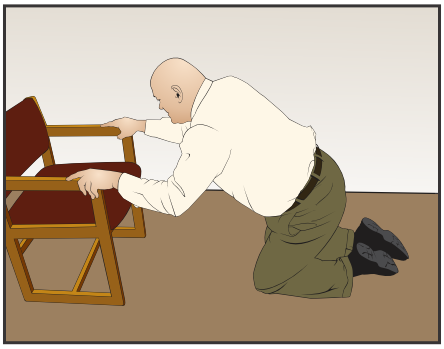


3. **Look for the nearest sturdy couch, bed, or chair...** preferably in a carpeted area. Slide, crawl or scoot towards it.

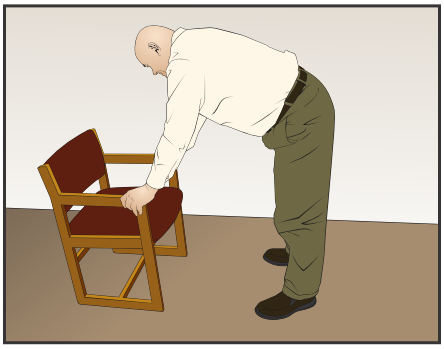


Avoid trying to get up in the bathroom where surfaces are hard and can be slippery.

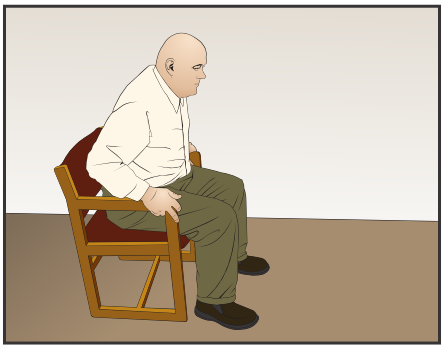
4. **Kneel if you can, getting up on one knee at a time...**



5. **Then, stand up using your stronger leg, and use the sturdy chair, couch or bed for support...**



6. **Turn carefully, and sit down.**



# Patient Safety

## Falls with Injury

**If you cannot get up: Call for help. If you are alone, crawl slowly towards the telephone and call 911 or relatives. It is important to keep at least one phone where it can be reached from the floor.**

**If you cannot move to a sitting position: keep warm by wrapping yourself in any nearby furniture covers, pillows, towels, jackets, comforter or other available material. Call, if possible, for help.**

## If a Family Member Falls

1. **Check for injury: Do NOT get the person up until you are certain there is no serious injury.**
   a) Are they breathing? If not, call 911.
   b) Are they bleeding? Put pressure on the site of the bleeding and call for help.
   c) Did they lose consciousness? Are they more confused?
   d) Where do they hurt? If light touch increases the pain, there may be a fracture.
2. **Do NOT attempt to lift the person by yourself.** If you try to lift the person by yourself, this may injure both of you.
3. **Call for help.** Keep a list of friends, neighbors, church members and emergency numbers near your phone.
4. **Reassure the person.** They may be confused, frightened or embarrassed. If possible, provide a cover for them. Stay with them until help can arrive.
5. **Ask for details** about the fall from anyone who may have witnessed it.
6. **Tell your health care team about falls.** A fall can be a symptom of serious problems. Most falls can be prevented. Your doctor, nurse and physical therapist can offer advice and assistance on preventing future falls.

***Acknowledgements:***

- Thank you Age Concern Scotland and American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) for partial content.
- Thanks for contribution from Brewer, K. (2001). Clinical tips: Preventing falls in the elderly. Geritopics, 8(6), 28.