

Charles George VA Medical Center
1100 Tunnel Road
Asheville, North Carolina 28805



PATIENT SERVICES AND INFORMATION GUIDE



This booklet contains information as of July 2009. Changes in programs and services may occur. For the most up-to-date information, go to: www.va.gov/health/index.asp

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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Welcome to the VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network, Charles George VA Medical Center, at Asheville, North Carolina. We have provided this booklet for you and your family so you may become familiar with the services we offer. Inside, you will find important information about the care we offer: preventive health care, outpatient services, inpatient care, etc.

Whether you served in war or in peacetime, on battlefields around the world, or in cities and towns closer to home, we work hard to provide you with the highest quality health care. Your satisfaction is a key measure of our success. At Charles George VA Medical Center, Asheville, we strive to provide you with outstanding services.

Our Mission:

To improve the health of the served veteran population.

Our Vision:

To be your first choice for healthcare in Western North Carolina.

Our Values:

Trust
Excellence
Respect
Compassion
Commitment



Department of Veterans Affairs – Mission: *"To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan."*

These words, spoken by Abraham Lincoln during his Second Inaugural Address, reflect the philosophy and principles that guide VA in everything we do, and are the focus of our endeavors to serve our Nation's veterans and their families today.

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THANK YOU VETERANS



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO VA HEALTHCARE COVERED

This booklet is a reference guide for veterans and their family to better understand VA Health Care services in the Mid-Atlantic Healthcare Network (VISN-6)

VA Health Care has evolved to meet the changing needs of our nation's veterans. The VA has health care programs and services to meet the needs of all veterans. Many veterans have not used VA because they believe that a veteran has to be disabled or have been in combat to receive care. This is not a requirement. If you have been on active duty and have an honorable discharge, you may be eligible for VA Health Care. For additional information see the eligibility page on the national VA Web site:

www.va.gov/healtheligibility/

Standard Benefits

The following services are available to all enrolled veterans:

- Preventive Care
- Immunizations
- Physical Examinations (including eye and hearing)
- Health Care Assessments
- Screening Tests
- Health Education Programs

Ambulatory (Outpatient) Diagnostic & Treatment Services

- Medical
- Surgical
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse

Hospital (Inpatient) Diagnostic & Treatment Services

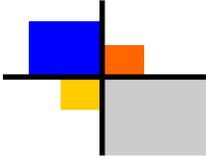
- Medical
- Surgical
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse

Prescription Drugs (when prescribed by a VA physician)

Limited Benefits

The following care services (partial listing) have limitations and may have special eligibility criteria:

- Ambulance Services
- Dental Care
- Durable Medical Equipment
- Eyeglasses
- Hearing Aids
- Home Health Care
- Non-VA Health Care
- Travel Benefits



Patient Services

Agent Cashier

The Agent Cashier is available to veterans wishing to make co-payments or receive reimbursement for eligible travel. For inpatients with patient fund accounts, the Cashier serves as a teller who processes cash and check transactions. Payments for pharmacy, doctors' visits and co-pays, are accepted in person in the form of cash, checks and credit/debit cards. The office hours are Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., and is located in **Room 1B185 of Building 47**. The Cashier may be reached at **828-298-7911 Ext. 15315**.

Canteen/Cafeteria/Retail Stores

The Veterans Canteen Service
Proudly Serving Veterans

The canteen/cafeteria/retail stores offer a varied daily menu at reasonable, tax-free prices. The Retail Store offers retail sales and a wide range of other services for your convenience:

Retail Store Located in the Basement

Hours 8:00am-4:00pm M-F 828-298-7911 Ext. 15637

Cafeteria Located in the Basement

Hours 7:00am-3:15pm M-F Ext. 15783

Chaplain/Pastoral Care

The Medical Center Chaplains are clinically trained in the healthcare setting, in theology and pastoral care at the graduate level, in order to minister to VA patients and their families, as well as to the staff who provide care. VA Chaplains are available at any time to ensure that patients receive appropriate spiritual and pastoral care. In addition to the 24/7 coverage Chaplains are involved in weekly Chapel Services, Committees and Events, Counseling, Funeral and Graveside Rites. Your spiritual welfare is of primary concern to our Chaplain staff. If you would like to speak with/meet one of our Chaplains call the **Chaplain Service at 828-298-7911 Ext.12554**.

At Charles George VA Medical Center Asheville the main Chapel is located on 1st Floor of Building 47 in Room E125. The Main Chapel and Eucharist Chapel are open 24/7 for prayer and meditation.



Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN)

The VTN provides transportation to ambulatory Veterans in need of medical care at VA facilities. This program is available due to the willingness and availability of volunteer drivers.

To use these services, Veterans must be ambulatory; this means a veteran must be able to get from their home to the vehicle and into the vehicle and medical center/clinic with minimal assistance. VTN cannot accept veterans who use a motorized wheelchair or scooter. The need for VTN transport is based primarily on a veteran's inability to obtain any other mode of transportation. Veterans are transported for scheduled appointments only.



Transportation to the following areas is available: Andrews, Asheville, Burnsville, Lenoir, Morganton, Murphy, Rutherfordton, Shelby, Spartanburg, SC and Waynesville. There is also transportation

available to the Community Based outpatient Clinic in Franklin and Rutherfordton.

For requests for transportation please contact the Hospital Service Coordinator no later than **48 business hours prior to** the scheduled appointment at **828-298-7911 Ext. 15349** to make arrangements for transportation.

Homeless Veterans

The Medical Center offers comprehensive services for homeless veterans. Some of which include evaluations, referral to medical services and assistance with housing. Contact the Social Work department for more information on services and programs for Homeless Veterans at **828-298-7911 Ext. 15335** and ask to speak to the Homeless Veterans Coordinator.

Interpreter Services

Interpreter services are available for deaf, speech impaired, and non-English speaking veterans and their family members. Please contact your health care team or Social Work at 828-298-7911 Ext. 15335 to arrange for interpreter assistance.

Library

Medical Library services are available for inpatients, and their families. General reading material (books and magazines) are available through Voluntary Service. Volunteers may bring a book cart to the patient floors. The Librarian at your medical center can provide additional information and assistance. Please call **828-298-7911 Ext. 12525**



Lodging (Temporary)

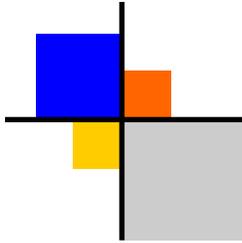
Temporary Lodging may be available to limited family members or caregivers with a critically ill hospitalized veteran if they live more than 50 miles from the medical center and have a financial need. The Temporary Lodging Center (TLC) is a welcoming, 1920's era home where caregivers can lodge, free of charge, in a caring, supportive environment while their loved one is receiving medical treatment at Charles George VA Medical Center. Family members must have the ability to climb two flights of stairs and function independently. Contact Social Work Service for a referral and more information on the TLC at **828-298-7911 ext 15335**.

Lost and Found

If you lose any personal items while at VA, tell your health care team. If needed, contact the Mailroom at **828-298-7911 Ext. 15307**. Please take any items you find while at VA to your health care team or Building 14 Mailroom.

Minority Veterans Program (MVP)

The VA is dedicated to serving all veterans regardless of race, origin, religion, or gender. To support the VA in executing this effort, the Center for Minority Veterans was established through Congress to administer local MVP. The MVP is designed to assist minority veterans including Pacific Islanders, Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanic/Latinos and Native Americans with concerns regarding services and eligibility for benefits. Contact a member of your health care team if you need assistance or EEO Manager at **828-298-7911 Ext. 14490**.



My HealtheVet
<http://www.myhealth.va.gov>



Enter VA's *new* Veteran Health Portal
Discover what VA has for you and your family

Log on to www.myhealth.va.gov



Begin the journey today...



It's All About You!

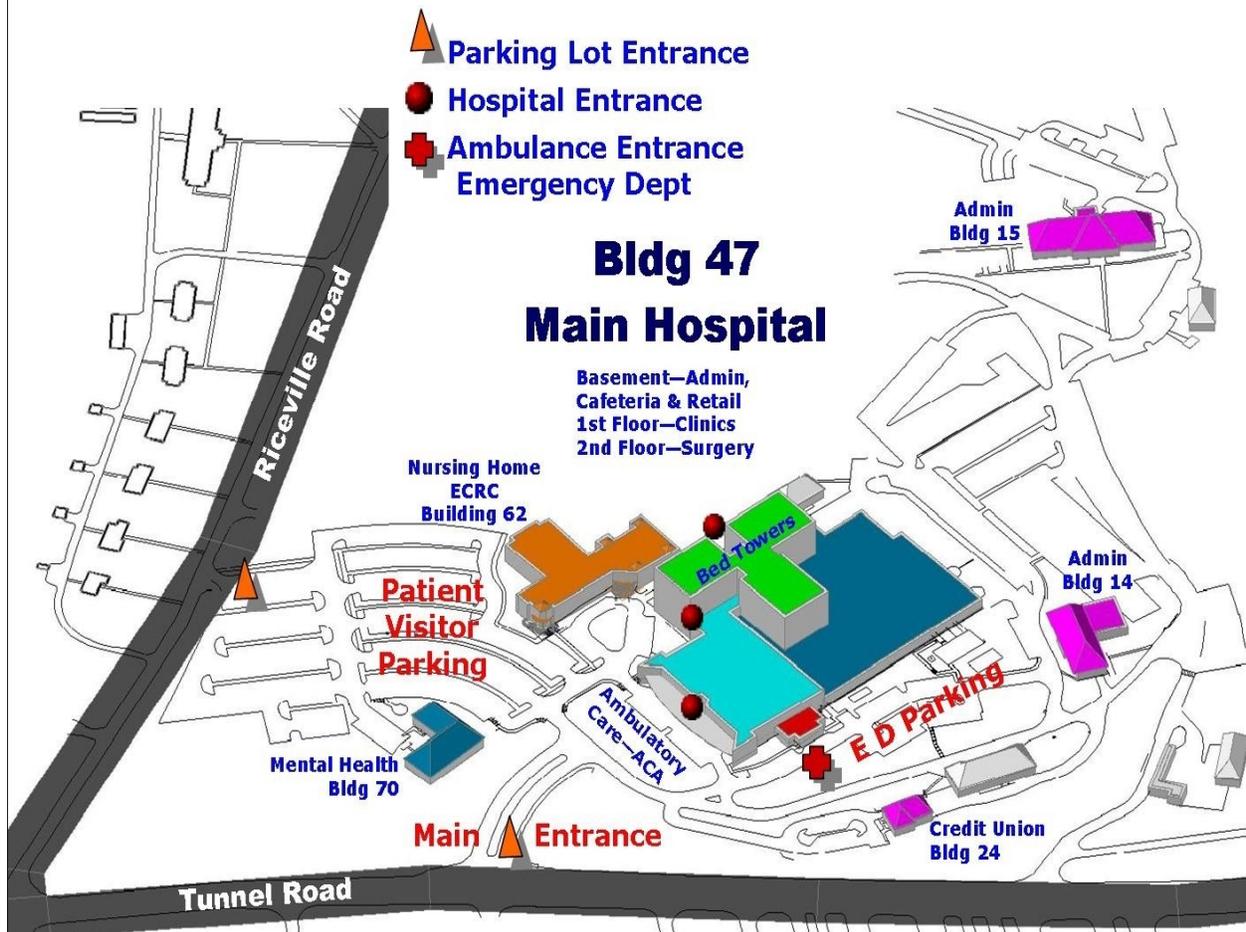
My HealtheVet

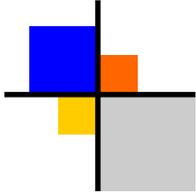
My HealtheVet is VA's award-winning e-health Web-site, which offers veterans, active duty service members and their dependents and caregivers Internet access to VA health care information services, anywhere, anytime. My HealtheVet is a free, online Personal Health Record that empowers veterans to become more informed partners in their health care. With My HealtheVet, America's Veterans can access trusted, secure, and informed health and benefits information at their convenience. Veterans can also record and store important health and military history information. To register, Veterans simply need to go to: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>.

Registered veterans can find health information, maintain their own health record and even refill VA prescriptions. Veterans who receive care at a VA facility should ask for "In Person Authentication" or IPA, to obtain an upgraded account that offers additional access to key features of their Personal Health Record. Contact your facility's Library for more information and registration at **828-299-2525**.

Parking

Parking areas are designated for visitors, employees, volunteers, patients, and the handicapped. Please obey the posted signs and ground painted symbols. We ask that patients and visitors use the parking lots in front of the medical center. Please do not park in spaces that are restricted or marked as reserved. Handicapped parking spaces are marked for use by individuals possessing a valid handicapped placard or license plate issued by a state Department of Motor Vehicles. Some handicapped parking spaces are specifically marked for use by persons having wheelchair lifts or ramps, or having special equipment installed to allow handicapped drivers to operate the vehicle. Please allow those spaces to be used by vehicles with the modifications. The speed limit on medical center grounds is posted. VA police enforce all regulations and will issue warnings and tickets to drivers who violate the rules. Parking for VA patients and visitors is free of charge.





Patient Advocates and Customer Service Manager

Every VA Medical Center has a Patient Advocate who can assist you with questions and concerns regarding VA care, policy or procedures. Our main concern is the Quality of Care you receive as a patient. Our goal is to show courtesy, compassion and concern for you, your family, and your friends. Our Customer Service Manager serves as a liaison between staff, veterans, family members and the Medical Center Director to ensure you receive the best possible service. Our Patient Advocates represent the Medical Center Director in dealing with patients, their families, and/or significant others in resolving complaints or concerns. Here at the Charles George VA Medical Center, the Patient Advocate is located on the 1st Floor of the main hospital, across from the Agent Cashier . Please feel free to contact the Patient Advocate at your facility:

Asheville (828) 298-7911 Ext 1-5200

Franklin CBOC 1-800-932-6408 Ext 1-2878

Toll Free: 1-800-932-6408

In addition, the Charles George VA Medical Center has a large Service Level Patient Advocate Program that has staff from every service who can answer questions and concerns about their specific service.

Research

Charles George VA Medical Center has an active research and development program. This Human Research Protections Program was awarded full accreditation status by the Association for Accreditation of Human Research Protection Program (AAHRPP) in June 2008. The majority of studies at this facility involve cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Additional areas of research include diabetes related disorders, dyslipidemia and provision of care. The research program has 23 active research projects and approximately 20 Investigators and Research Coordinators. Funding sources include both industry and government agencies. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is constituted under an active Federal-Wide Assurance filed with the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP). The Charles George VAMC and IRB records are subject to regulation and inspection by governmental regulatory agencies that includes the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Government Accountability Office (GAO), Office of Inspector General (OIG), Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), and the VA Office of Research Oversight (ORO).

The Research Office is open Monday – Friday from 7am to 430pm. You may reach the Research Office at **828-299-5909** or the Administrative Officer for Research & Development at **828-298-7911 Ext. 15788**.

Release of Information (ROI)

If you need copies of your medical record, lab results, X-rays, disability and/or insurance forms, etc. contact the ROI. Prior to releasing any information you will need to sign a consent form allowing us to copy and release your medical records. Please go to your ROI office for additional information and assistance. If you are interest in transferring your health record from a non-VA physician, please discuss this with your provider.



Records are often referenced to maintain your appropriate care, but we encourage you to keep your own copies of the non-VA records because we cannot guarantee that these records will be returned to you. Original records (for example, from DoD or a community provider) should not be given to your Provider nor the Medical Record File Room. We recommend that you keep a copy for yourself and return the records to the provider from whom you received them. Records from other VA facilities will only be requested as authorized by your provider. For more information please contact **ROI at 828-298-7911 Ext. 12508.**

VA Health Care Enrollment

Today's Veterans have a comprehensive medical benefits package, which the VA administers through an annual patient enrollment system. If you served in the active military, and are separated under any condition other than dishonorable, you may qualify for VA health care. Current or former members of the Reserves or National Guard who were called to active duty (other than for training only) by a federal order and completed the full period for which they were called to active duty may be eligible for VA health care as well. Veterans can apply for enrollment in the VA health care system by completing VA Form 10-10EZ Application for Health Benefits. The application can be obtained by visiting, calling or writing any VA health care facility or VA benefits office or at website www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/.

Forms may also be requested toll free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387). The completed application must be signed and dated and submitted in person or by mail to any VA health care facility. To contact the Health Administration Service at the Charles George VA please call **828-298-7911 Ext. 12509** where someone is available to assist you Monday through Friday from 8am to 4:30 pm.

VA Co-Payments

While many Veterans qualify for cost-free health care services based on a compensable service-connected condition or other qualifying factor, most veterans are asked to complete an annual financial assessment, to determine if they qualify for cost free care. Veterans whose income exceeds the established income threshold as well as those who choose not to complete the assessment must agree to pay required co-pays for prescriptions, inpatient care and/or outpatient visits. Please call the Health Administration Service at **828-298-7911 Ext. 12509** for more information about co-payments.

Health Insurance

The VA is required to bill your private health insurance company for medical treatment provided for non-service- connected conditions. Payment received from private insurance is applied to VA co-payment charges.

Veterans Benefits Counselor

Veterans Benefits Counselors are assigned to VA medical centers and community based outpatient clinics with specific office hours. They can help you with your VA benefits (compensation, pension, government insurance, education, GI loans, vocational rehabilitation, etc.). If you need information or assistance, contact Veterans Benefits at the national toll free number at 1-800-827-1000. You may reach the local Counselor at **828-298-7911 Ext. 15349**.

Veterans Service Offices (VSO)

The VSO provides services for veterans who need assistance in filing veterans benefit claims or answer questions you may have regarding benefits. They are available to assist you, Monday – Friday, 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM. To reach a nationally accredited VSO call **828-298-7911 Ext. 12514**.



Visual Impairment Services

Patients with visual impairments are referred to the Visual Impairment Services Coordinator for information about special services. Visually impaired patients who are hospitalized are entitled to visually impaired prosthetics. The mission of Blind Rehabilitation Service is to coordinate a healthcare service delivery system that provides a continuum of care for blind veterans extending from their home environment to the local VA facility and to the appropriate rehabilitation setting. These services include adjustment to blindness counseling, patient and family education, benefits analysis, comprehensive residential inpatient training, outpatient rehabilitation services, the provision of assistive technology, and research. The coordinator also provides follow-up for visually impaired patients after discharge. Please contact your local coordinator at **828-298-7911 Ext. 15432**.

Volunteers



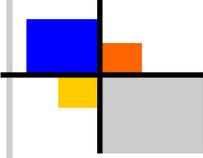
Our Voluntary Service program provides opportunities for individuals and community groups to give of their time and resources. Many individuals, Veterans service, and community organizations enhance the high quality of service provided at this facility. It may be through volunteering, providing financial support for identified unfunded patient needs, or through material donations.

Volunteers often assist with special events, activities, clerical tasks, and transporting patients to appointments. If, during your stay, you need assistance, or you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact **828-298-7911 Ext. 12514** or visit 4-South, Room 401.

Women Veterans Program

Every VA facility is committed to meeting the unique needs of Women Veterans by delivering the highest quality health care to every patient. The Charles George VA Medical Center offers comprehensive Primary Care for all eligible female veterans. Women are assigned to a Primary Care provider and also have access to a Gynecologist. Annual cervical screening exams and breast exams are done by our Staff Gynecologist. Women are assured that access to all VA benefits and services are made by our competent and caring staff. The VA Women Veterans Program also ensures that VA programs are responsive to the gender-specific needs of women veterans. Contact the Women Veterans Program Manager who can help coordinate services including medical services, mental health care, and sexual abuse counseling at **828-297-7911 Ext. 15434**.





Health Care Information

Advance Directives

An Advance Directive is a general term that refers to several legal forms that help your doctors and family members understand your wishes about health care should you be unable to communicate for yourself. ***Your advance directive is used only when you aren't able to make decisions yourself.*** There are two types of advance directives: durable power of attorney for health care and living will. VA patients who wish to complete an Advance Directive are encouraged to use the VA forms located in the back of this booklet. Fill out VA Form 10-0137, "VA Advanced Directive: Durable Power of Attorney and Living Will" and give it to a member of your health care team. It is up to you whether you complete the durable power of attorney for health care, the living will, or both. You may also choose to use any valid state advance directive form should you choose not to use the VA form. If you need more information about Advance Directives or help in making decisions, talk to a member of your health care team or your attorney. Other resources for advance directives: *Your Life, Your Choices* has exercises to help you think about important questions. It's available on My Health_eVet at <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>.

Co-Managed Care

If you are receiving care from both a VA provider and a private community provider, it is important for your health and safety that your care be coordinated into one treatment plan. Your VA and private community providers should communicate about your health status, medications, treatments, and diagnostic tests.

In order to facilitate this, you need to supply your VA provider the following information about your private community provider's care, especially if you want your VA provider to write a prescription for medication that your non-VA provider recommends:

- Name, address and phone number of your community provider

- Any prescriptions(s) written by your community provider

- Office visit notes supporting the prescription(s)

- Blood work lab results

- Test results

This information should be brought with you to your VA appointment. Any questions, call your VA health care provider prior to coming in for your visit to make sure you have the proper information. Please understand that it is the responsibility of your VA provider to use their own clinical judgment to decide what medical treatment, prescriptions and test(s) are appropriate and necessary.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)

DNR means cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and/or other heroic health or life saving measures will not be started when cardiac or respiratory arrest occurs. After talking with your doctor, you can make the **DNR** decision. If you are too ill to make that decision, your family, or health care proxy/power of attorney can make that decision with your doctor. **The order is not permanent and may be stopped at any time.**

Emergency Care Department Services

The emergency department (ED) is committed to providing excellent care to America's heroes; however, it is not a substitute for your primary care team.

The ED is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

WHEN TO GO TO THE ED

- Chest pain that lasts at least 10 minutes
- Bleeding that continues for 10 minutes
- Sudden, severe or unrelieved pain
- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Trouble breathing, shortness of breath
- Sudden dizziness or weakness
- Sudden change in vision, loss of vision
- Sudden change in mental status, such as loss of consciousness or confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Thoughts of harming yourself or others

EMERGENCY EXAMPLES

DO NOT DRIVE YOURSELF! YOU CAN HARM YOURSELF OR OTHERS!

Chest pain – A pressure, squeezing or pain in the upper part of the body that lasts more than 15 minutes. It may cause you to have a breathing problem, become sweaty or dizzy. If this happens contact 911.

Suicidal or homicidal thoughts

Threatening to hurt or kill self or others. Seeking access to pills, weapons or other means. Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide. Call 911.

Stroke – You may have a headache, drooping in your face, sudden numbness or weakness or trouble speaking. Lie down and call 911.

Internal bleeding – May happen after a trauma. Suspect this if a sudden change in behavior like confusion or agitation, shivering, thirst, weakness, dizziness. Call 911.

Low blood sugar – You may feel weak, shaky, confused, and sweaty. Drink fruit juice or a soda and eat crackers or a meal as soon as possible.

Allergic reactions – Trouble breathing, swelling of tongue and face, rash. Call 911.

Seizures – Loss of muscle control and often jerking movements of arms, legs and head. Protect person from injury. Call 911.

NONEMERGENCY EXAMPLES

Toothache – Mouth pain related to teeth are treated or referred from primary care. Dentists do not come to the ED. Take over the counter pain medication and rinse mouth with salt water or Listerine until seen by provider.

Medication Refills – The ED physician will not refill narcotic or non narcotic prescriptions except in extreme situations. The primary doctor or clinic will handle all refills. Call the pharmacy or primary doctor if you have questions.

Chronic Pain Conditions – Pain conditions such as gout, low back pain or headaches are best handled by your primary physician. If your symptoms are not an emergency, contact your primary care clinic and arrange an appointment.

What to Expect at the Emergency Department (ED)

1) ARRIVAL TO THE ED

When you first arrive at the ED you will need to register at the admissions desk in the Emergency Department for treatment. New patients will need to provide their DD-214 and eligibility information to the admission clerk.

2) TRIAGE

Triage is a system used to sort patients into categories of priority or medical need. Patients are seen in order of urgency not order of arrival. Critical patients are treated first. The triage nurse will perform an assessment to determine the reason for your visit. If your visit is not an emergency you will be referred to your primary care clinic to meet your needs.

3) TREATMENT

A variety of services is provided in the ED. Due to various types of problems treated, it is impossible to predict the amount of time you will be in the treatment area so be prepared, this may take an extended amount of time depending on individual circumstances.

4) DISPOSITION

You will be admitted to the hospital; transferred to another facility; sent to Primary or Specialty Care clinic; or discharged home.

5) VISITORS

Visitation while you are in the ED is restricted. It is allowed at the nurse/physician discretion. Due to patient privacy not all patients receiving treatment will be able to have visitors.

6) SMOKING and CELL PHONES

Smoking and/or cell phone use are **NOT** allowed while you are in the ED. All phones **MUST** be turned OFF before entering the ED.



Ethics Advisory Committee

The Ethics Advisory Committee is a group of VA staff who can provide guidance if you are having trouble making choices about care (i.e. performing heroic measures at the end-of-life, feeding tube, etc.). If you or your family have questions about the ethics of any treatment or other issues, talk to your health care team. If you still have concerns, you may ask for a review of those issues with the Ethics Advisory Committee. To request this review, ask your health care team for a referral.

Health Care Proxy and Living Will

If you would like to complete a health care proxy and/or living will (also known as advance directives), a member of your health care team can assist you. These forms can be found in the back of this booklet. You may choose to appoint a health care proxy to speak for you and make decisions about your health care if you are unable to speak or make decisions for yourself. Your doctor, nurse, social worker or chaplain can discuss this further with you. If you already have a health care proxy, living will, or durable power of attorney, please tell our staff and provide us with a copy for your file. If you have completed an advance directive and you wish to change your mind, please tell our staff right away. You do not have to complete an advance directive to receive treatment.

Organ Donation

Veterans can make organ, eye, tissue, body and other anatomical gifts. Talk to your family members about organ and tissue donation so they know your wishes. Donations will always be handled with discretion and sensitivity to you and your family's circumstances, beliefs, and desires. Under no circumstances will a patient or family member be pressured into making anatomical gifts. Contact a member of your health care team if you wish to donate. Or you may contact [LifeShare of the Carolinas](#) toll free at **1-800-932-4483** for more information.

Pain Management

We are committed to helping you get the best possible pain relief. Only you can describe your pain. You will be asked to rate the amount of pain you have on a "0 to 10" scale. Zero means no pain and ten describes the worst pain you could imagine having.

Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom /Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF)

Enhanced eligibility for health care benefits for combat veterans of OEF/OIF was signed into law January 28, 2008. **Veterans, including activated Reservists and National Guard members are eligible for cost-free health care services**, including medications and long term care, for conditions related to their combat service if they served on active duty in a theater of combat operations and have been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. The OEF/OIF Program entitles veterans to free medical and/or mental health care for **5 years from discharge from active duty**. Free care applies to conditions that are possibly related to service, regardless of income. This program also offers dental care within 180 days of discharge from active duty. Veterans under this program are screened for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and positive screens are referred to Salisbury VA Medical Center for a follow-up evaluation. For more information and enrollment, please contact your local OEF/OIF Program Coordinator at **828-298-7911 Ext. 15554**.



Thank You Veterans

TeleCare 1-828-296-4481 or 1-800-032-6408 ext O and ask for 4464

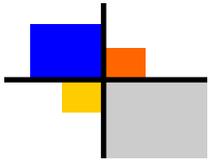
TeleCare is a toll free medical advice line for veterans. It is a program with qualified professionals who speak to you directly to answer your health care questions 24 hours per day, 7 days per week (including holidays). When possible, please call **TeleCare** before you go to the emergency room. **If you are in the midst of an emergency, hang up and dial 911**

TeleCare can:

- Assist you and your family members with questions and concerns about your health.
- Advise the proper course of treatment based on the urgency of your symptoms using VA-approved clinical/health care guidelines.
- Provide education regarding diseases and medications.
- Clarify pre- and post-procedure treatment (or clinical procedure) instructions.
- Clarify/explain inpatient hospitalization discharge instructions.

TeleCare Cannot:

- Give lab, X-ray or other test results to you. Your provider will give you that information via phone or letter.
- Transfer calls to other hospital departments, inpatient rooms or your primary care provider.
- Give out telephone numbers.
- Schedule specialty appointments (cardiology, orthopedics, audiology, etc).
- Enroll patients in primary care.
- Provide authorization for payment of services provided by non-VA facilities (including ambulance transportation).
- Provide or fax patient records to non-VA facilities.



Health Care Programs

Advanced Illness and Palliative Care

Facing an illness that is not getting better and cannot be cured can be very hard. You may have many questions about your illness and the choices you must make. A member of the Advanced Illness/Palliative Care Consultation Team can meet with you and your family to talk about your concerns. They can help you obtain information, offer support and guidance, help you with your choices, coordinate your care, work with your health care team, and help you and your loved ones deal with issues of advanced illness. This team can help you sort out the details to give you choices, dignity, and peace of mind. You may initiate this consultation or ask a member of the health care team to contact them for you.

Ambulatory Surgery

Surgery or other diagnostic tests will be completed on an outpatient basis whenever possible. Your health care team determines the decision for outpatient services. The ambulatory surgery staff will manage your surgical care, pre-operative teaching, and post-operative follow-up.

Blood Donor Program

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 questions about blood donation, speak with your health care team at least two weeks prior to your surgery.

Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)

Your health care team will arrange for outpatient care based on your specific needs. Based on the area in which you live it may be possible for you to receive outpatient services from our Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), which is located in Franklin, NC. This Community Based Outpatient Clinic offers outpatient services that include Primary Care, Mental Health, Optometry, Home Based Primary Care and Pharmacist. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday 7:30am – 4:30pm. For more information call **(828) 369-1781**.

Coming in 2010, there will be another CBOC located in Rutherfordton, NC for you convenience.

Care Coordination/Home Telehealth (CCHT)

In the battle for your health sometimes you need a BUDDY to WATCH your BACK. Living with chronic conditions requires learning to monitor your health every day. With Care Coordination/Home Telehealth, participants are given an appliance to plug into an ordinary phone line and electrical outlet. Each day the appliance displays questions, asking about your health. With 4 easy buttons you answer then transmit to the care coordinator who evaluates your health and will help to manage your condition.

Is the Care Coordination /Home Telehealth Program right for you?

In the past year, have you:

- Been admitted to the hospital 2 or more times
- Visited Urgent Care or the Emergency Room 2 or more times
- Seen 2 or more specialist
- Had more than 10 primary care visits
- Take or have taken more than 10 prescription medications.
- Had difficulty understanding or taking medicine correctly

You have:

- Asthma
- Coronary Artery Disease
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Heart Failure
- High Blood Pressure
- Lung Disease
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Home telephone with a landline

If you answered YES to any of these questions, contact **Care Coordination** at **(828) 298-7911 Ext. 15792** or your Primary care provider to find out if you are eligible for the Home Telehealth Program.

Chiropractic Care

VA medical centers and community based outpatient clinics may offer chiropractic therapy. Eligible veterans may receive chiropractic care after receiving a referral from their primary care provider. Many people find relief for back pain with chiropractic therapy, a form of manual massage that corrects bone and joint misalignments. Ask your VA primary care provider if chiropractic therapy is right for you.



Community Living Centers/Long Term Care

VA community living centers/long term care units provide compassionate care to veterans with chronic, stable conditions (including dementia). It also provides care for veterans who need rehabilitation or short term specialized services (such as respite, intravenous therapy, or comfort and care at the end-of-life). To find out if you are eligible for VA community living center/long term care, contact **828-298-7911 ext. 13127** for more information. You may also visit the website: www.va.gov/healtheligibility .

Community Residential Care

Community residential care is available for veterans who are not in need of skilled nursing facility but who cannot live independently. Speak to your primary care provider or social worker for more information.

Contract Adult Day Health Care

A veteran who is in need of a therapeutic supervised day setting (due to dementia or physical impairment) while a family member works, may be eligible for Contract Adult Day Health Care (ADHC). The ADHC program is a therapeutic day care program, providing medical and rehabilitation services to disabled Veterans in a combined setting. Speak to your primary care provider or social worker for more information.

Contract Nursing Home Care

Service connected veterans who need nursing home placement for their service connected condition may be eligible for a VA contract in a community nursing home. For more information speak to your primary care provider or social worker.

Dental

There are special eligibility requirements that must be met in order to receive dental care. Please call **(828) 298-7911 Ext. 12509** for more information.

Geriatrics and Extended Care Service (GEC)

Geriatrics and Extended Care Service provides an array of services that are both institutional and community based. Health care, personal care and social support services are delivered by an interdisciplinary team to veterans with multiple and chronic medical problems, functional disabilities, cognitive impairments and weakened social support systems. The types of services provided include Hospice – both inpatient and in the home; respite services – to include in the Community Living Center (CLC) and in the home; long term care in the CLC; short term rehabilitation services as well as skilled care in the CLC; Contract Adult Day Health Care; Community Residential Care for veterans who are not in need of a skilled nursing facility but who cannot live independently; Purchased Skilled Home health care services; Homemaker/Home Health Aide Services; Community Contract Nursing Home Services; Home Based Primary Care services for veterans with chronic, complex medical, social and behavioral conditions who are at risk of hospitalization, nursing home or recurrent emergency care. To contact your local GEC please call **828-298-7911 Ext 13127**.

Homemaker/Home Health Aide

A veteran who is in need of assistance with a bath may be eligible for homemaker/home health aide assistance. The primary care provider will determine the frequency and amount of time and care to be provided. Speak to your Primary care provider for more information or a referral.

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)

This program provides long-term primary care in the home for veterans who have numerous complex and chronic diseases and who have difficulty getting the care they need in the primary care clinic. The goal of HBPC is to keep frail veterans out of an institution. HBPC has an interdisciplinary team who works under the direction of a physician and members of the team see the veteran at his/her own home. The program serves veterans in a geographical radius within 35 miles from the Asheville VA and the Franklin CBOC. For more information or for a referral, speak to your primary care provider.

Hospice Care

Hospice care is for veterans who are nearing the end of their life due to an illness. Since a cure is not possible, the goal is to reduce the patient's pain and discomfort as much as possible. It strives to help patients stay as comfortable as possible in a home-like setting.

The patient's and family's personal choices are supported to help enrich the time the patient has as they near the end of their life. Talk to your health care team for more information and locations. There are no copays for hospice care provided in any setting.

Mental Health Care Services

VA offers a variety of mental health care programs and services for veterans. At the Charles George VA Medical Center Mental Health Services is an integral part of the overall continuum of patient care. Mental Health Services provide veterans with consultation, evaluation, and treatment for a variety of issues that can impact emotional well-being. Mental Health professionals from multiple disciplines (i.e., psychiatrists, social workers, nurses, psychologists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, etc.) work with veterans and their families to provide the highest quality of treatment possible. Treatment services include but are not limited to such issues as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, substance use behaviors, relationship difficulties, vocational issues, skills building (anger management, stress management, etc.), distress from medical problems and/or pain, confusion or memory problems, thought disorders, aggressive behaviors, and/or self-harming thoughts or behaviors. Mental Health Services oversees and participates in many programs throughout the medical center. These programs work toward a healthy and productive life. Mental Health Care Services which include inpatient and/or outpatient care are:

1. Mental Health Consultation Team: mental health assessment and consultation services are embedded near the Emergency Department of the medical center to work with Veterans referred from Primary Care, outside referrals, or the Emergency Department.
2. Mental Health/Primary Care Integration: offering consultation and short-term services for Veterans within the Primary Care services.
3. Mental Health Clinic: offering individual and group psychotherapy services, psychoeducation for Veterans and their families, and psychopharmacology medication management.
4. Inpatient Psychiatry: inpatient, secure (locked) unit for Veterans with acute psychiatric issues as well as persons needing medical detox.
5. Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (SARRTP): residential treatment unit with a primary focus on substance abuse issues and relapse prevention.

6. Compensated Work Therapy (CWT): vocational specialists assist persons with mental health issues in finding employment through Transitional Work Experience (TWE) or Support Employment (SE).
7. Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) - Rural Area: offering outreach mental health services to chronically mentally ill persons in rural communities.
8. Home-Based Primary Care: offering adjunctive mental health services to veterans who are receiving home-based primary care services.
9. Community Based Outpatient Clinics: currently, mental health services are provided at the satellite clinic in Franklin, NC, with a new clinic opening in Rutherfordton, NC by end of 2009.

If you are a veteran interested in receiving Mental Health Services, contact your Primary Care doctor or call the Mental Health Clinic directly: **(828) 299-2519** for more information about available services or scheduling an initial appointment.

VA has established a 24-hour National Suicide Crisis Line where you can get understanding, compassion, and help from trained mental health professionals.

**Reach out and call
1-800-273-TALK (8255) for help.**

Help is only a phone call away.

MOVE! Program

Managing Overweight/Obesity for Veterans Everywhere (MOVE!) is a national weight management program designed by VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP), a part of the Office of Patient Care Services to help veterans lose weight, keep it off, and improve their health. The **MOVE!** Program is designed for veterans who want assistance with managing their weight. Typically, the program is offered to veterans who are overweight or obese. The program combines nutritional counseling with exercise and ongoing support. It assesses a veteran's personal eating habits, physical activity and behavioral health. Most important, it addresses a patient's medical conditions to develop a safe and helpful program. Talk with your health care team about **MOVE!** For more information call **828-298-7911 Ext 1-2868**.

Nutrition and Food Services

Besides providing nutritious regular and therapeutic meals to inpatients, Nutrition and Food Services offers a full range of services including medical nutrition therapy and nutrition counseling by registered dietitians for inpatients as well as outpatients.

Classes on diabetes are taught weekly by a dietitian and nurse. Individual counseling sessions can be scheduled to suit your needs. To obtain help in achieving your dietary goals, ask your primary care provider to refer you to the dietitian. You can contact Nutrition and Food Services at **828 299-2521**.

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services (PM&RS)

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service (PM&RS) is a medical specialty concerned with adaptation to disability. It is characterized by the utilization of medical, surgical and allied health professional diagnostic evaluation and management activities for the treatment of the individual with disability. It promotes optimum adaptation to the demands of normal life. The provisions of continuity of care, team multi-disciplinary action and services by allied health professionals are intrinsic to the program. Treatment is provided to inpatients and outpatients on a referral basis. There are four therapy sections: Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Kinesiotherapy. For more information call **828-298-7911 Ext. 1-2517**.

Recreation Therapy

Also part of PM&RS, is Therapeutic Recreation which helps patients improve functional abilities, enhances well-being and facilitates independence through rehabilitative activities, recreation services and leisure experiences. Our services include Project Healing Waters (PHW), Fly Fishing, Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV), Craft Kit Program, adapted sports, games, exercise & fitness activities, music and other creative arts, therapeutic outings, educational activities and much more. For more information and to see if you are eligible please call **828-298-7911 Ext. 1-5346**.

Former Prisoner of War (POW)

Former prisoners of war are placed on a special list and may be eligible for certain health and dental benefits, as well as special medical exams. If you are a former POW, please contact your Veterans Service Officer for more information.



Prosthetics and Sensory Aides

Prosthetics provides specialized quality patient care by furnishing properly prescribed prosthetic equipment, sensory aids and devices within the most economical and timely manner as outlined by authorizing laws, regulations and policies. Prosthetics serves as the pharmacy for assistive aids and as a case manager for prosthetic equipment needs of the disabled veteran. Prosthetics works closely with interdisciplinary teams to assure top-quality care is given and that the appropriate appliances, sensory aids, medical equipment and medical supplies are provided to the veteran. For more information please call **828-298-7911 Ext 1-2542 or 1-5380**.

Special Registry Programs

Certain veterans can participate in a VA health registry and receive free medical examinations, including laboratory and other diagnostic tests deemed necessary by an examining clinician. VA maintains health registers to provide special health exams and health-related information. To participate, contact **828-298-7911 Ext 5234** or visit: www.va.gov/enviroagents

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

Many veterans with spinal cord injuries qualify for disability compensation because their health problems occurred during military service. Veterans with spinal cord injuries unrelated to their military service may receive VA medical care under rules governing veterans with catastrophic disabilities or low incomes. VA integrates vocational, psychological, and social services with a continuum of care and addresses changes needs throughout the veteran's life. VA provides supplies, preventive health care, and education for veterans with SCI. VA has numerous SCI centers across the country. Contact **828-298-7911 Ext 2517** for more information.

Surgery Service



Surgery Service provides inpatient and outpatient evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of patients with surgical needs. Our goal is to deliver compassionate, efficient and comprehensive care to our Veterans. The Surgery Service as a whole is composed of the following specialty areas: Cardiac Surgery, General Surgery, Ophthalmic Surgery, Otolaryngologic Surgery, Orthopedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Podiatry Surgery, Thoracic Surgery and Vascular Surgery. Your primary care provider will make appointments for you should

you need services from these areas. For more information please call **828-298-7911 Ext 1-2540** Monday-Friday 7:00am to 4:30pm.

Preventive Health Care

Prevention is the best medicine. As your health care provider, we are very interested in your health and well-being. **Please partner with us by staying up-to-date on your health care screening exams, tests, and lab work.**

SCREENING EXAMS TESTS

- *Blood Pressure Screen (yearly)*
- *Colon Cancer Screen (over 50)*
- *Tobacco Screen (yearly)*
- *Hepatitis C Screening*
- *Cholesterol Screening (every 3 years if results are acceptable)*
- *Depression Screening (yearly)*

FOR MEN

- *Prostate Cancer Education (annually)*
Prostate Screening if appropriate (over 50)

FOR WOMEN

- *Self Breast Exam (monthly)*
- *Mammogram (yearly over age 40)*
Pelvic Exam (yearly)

IMMUNIZATIONS

- *Influenza “Flu Shot” (yearly over 50 or high risk)*
- *Pneumovax (once at 65 or before if risk)*
- *Td Toxoid “Tetanus” (every 10 years if under 65, a booster shot may be needed against Pertussis)*

Primary Care

Your health care team (**Primary Care - PC**) provides comprehensive, coordinated continuous, compassionate and competent medical care to those patients who are assigned to one of the PC teams, or one of our Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC). Your PC team will arrange for outpatient care based on your specific needs. All patients are encouraged to enroll in primary care to benefit from a wide array of outpatient health services. Your care is coordinated in primary care, including referrals to specialists. Your PC team consists of physicians, nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, nursing assistants, clerical staff, pharmacists, social workers, and dieticians.

HOURS: The PC Clinics are open Monday to Friday 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. **Last scheduled appointment time is 3:00 pm. PC is closed on weekends and holidays.** There is limited appointment availability on Wednesday afternoon.

LOCATIONS: PC1 first floor on the right just past the Atrium. PC3 first floor on the left as you enter. .

Our goal is to see you on time and for you to have a quality healthcare experience. We have same day appointments to ensure access for your urgent needs. Please call your PC team if you wish to make or cancel an appointment or have a question or concern between regular scheduled visits.

Please call your assigned team (PC1, PC2, or Franklin CBOC) at: **(828) 296-4442**

Making an Appointment

To make an appointment, please call your assigned Primary Care Team.

Canceling an Appointment

If you are unable to keep an appointment, please call your Primary Care Team as soon as possible. Your cancelled appointment will be used for another patient.

Missed Appointment Policy

Please keep all your scheduled appointments or call to cancel the appointment at least 48 hours in advance. Should you fail to keep an appointment or arrive after the scheduled appointment time without prior notification to the clinic your appointment time is lost. We consider this a loss of our valuable resources, therefore a single No Show may result in your discharge from PC.

Polytrauma

VA Healthcare has Polytrauma Coordinators at each medical center. Polytrauma care is for veterans with injuries to more than one physical region or organ system, of which may be life threatening, and which results in physical, cognitive, psychological, or psychosocial impairments and functional disability. Some examples of Polytrauma include:

Traumatic brain injury (TBI)

Hearing loss

Amputations

Fractures

Burns

Visual impairment

Teams of physicians from every relevant field administer an individually tailored rehabilitation plan to help the patient recover as much as possible. Each VA medical center in VA Healthcare can provide Polytrauma care.



Prescriptions/Pharmacy

The staff at the Charles George VA Pharmacy is here to serve you and respond to any of your medication questions and concerns. As a veteran enrolled in VA Health Care, you are eligible for prescription medications. **You may be required to pay a co-payment for prescriptions not related to a service connected condition.** VA prescriptions must be written by a VA provider and filled at a VA pharmacy. VA health care providers work closely with your private physician to provide you with continuity of care. It is important for you to supply your VA provider with your medical records from your private physician.

Formulary

Like all health care systems, VA manages its medications via a formulary. This list has been carefully developed to include a full range of medications necessary to treat a variety of conditions. Under certain conditions, your VA provider may request this non-formulary medication for you by completing a special request form. The non-formulary medication request must be approved by a committee. Your VA provider will discuss the decision with you and the use of alternative medications should the request be denied.

New Prescriptions

Newly prescribed medications can be picked up at the VA pharmacy. To pick up a prescription at the window, please notify the pharmacist when you check in at the pharmacy. Prescriptions that are mailed come from a VA centralized pharmacy. Prescriptions that are mailed usually arrive within 10-14 days.

Refills

Refills are processed through the mail and not for pickup at the pharmacy window. They should be requested at least three weeks before you run out of medication. Maintenance medication should be re-ordered as soon as it is received. This will allow time for processing and delivery. **Please be sure to keep the VA informed of any changes in your address that would result in your medications being delayed or shipped incorrectly.**

You can order refills by:

- Completing and mailing the refill request slip that comes with each prescription. **Please allow 10-14 days for delivery.**
- Leaving the refill slip with the Pharmacy
- Internet utilizing My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov

Veterans who want to order prescriptions online need to be registered users and verified in person (see the Web site for further information).

- When ordering by phone, you will need your social security number and the prescription number(s) (Rx #). Using a touch-tone phone, call our automated refill request system at **1-888-776-4508 Or 828-298-7911 and selecting option 2 anytime during the greeting message.**

If you do not have any refills remaining, and need to continue the medication, please contact your primary care provider as early as possible for a renewal.

If you have questions about your medication, call the outpatient pharmacy and ask to speak to a Pharmacist during regular business hours. Monday – Friday 8 am to 4:30 pm. Please call 828-298-7911 Ext. 1-2511.

Controlled Substance Agreement

The prescribing and dispensing of narcotics medications are highly controlled by state and federal law. Your Primary Care provider will only provide these medications if indicated by your medical condition. Patients on these medications for control of pain must sign a **controlled substance agreement**. Please be sure to read the agreement carefully. The agreement stipulates that only one designated provider (generally your primary care provider) will monitor your use of narcotics medication and will be the sole prescriber. Narcotics will not be provided if you fail to sign the agreement or violate the terms of the agreement.

Respite Care

The VA respite program allows dependent veterans to remain in a VA nursing home in order to give the family caregiver a break. Veterans may use up to 8 hours a day up to 30 days per year. Speak to your primary care provider or social worker for more information.

Social Work

The Medical Center Social Workers are trained at the graduate level to provide services to VA patients and their families. Social Workers are involved in every level of treatment from primary care, through inpatient care to long term residential treatment. The Social Workers provide counseling and supportive services for veterans adjusting to their illness, or dealing with grief, anger management issues, depression or other issues. Social Workers also assist veterans with more direct services, providing services to homeless veterans, assisting with the completion of advance directives, and referring veterans for community or disability programs. Our social workers have valuable information regarding community agencies and resources that may be of help to you and your family. The social worker can also help with long term care/eligibility, post-hospital care, community services, and preparation for discharge. To see a VA Social Worker ask a member of your health care team to call **828-298-7911 Ext. 15335**.

Substance Abuse Residential Treatment Program (SARRTP)

The residential program is a variable length of stay program that is based on the Veteran's needs. The length of stay is usually 28 days with a required commitment to 90 days of aftercare counseling. Each Veteran will meet with their counselor to develop an individualized treatment plan. Treatment consists of group therapy, individual therapy, 12-step meetings, coping and skill-building classes, video education, job readiness counseling, physical conditioning and recreation therapy. For more information on SARRTP, please call **(828)296-4434**.

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Suicide Crisis Line

VA has established a 24-hour National Suicide Crisis Line where you can get understanding, compassion, and help from trained mental health professionals. Reach out and call 1.800-273-TALK (8255) for help.

Or call your local office at **828-298-7911 Ext. 13155**

Your call is free and confidential

Help is only a phone call away.

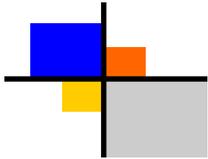
Veterans Industries/ Compensated Work Therapy (VI/CWT)

CWT is a Psychosocial Rehabilitation Program which falls under the Mental Health Service Line. This program has two components, Transitional Work Experience (TWE) and Supported Employment (SE). These programs are strictly outpatient mental health services.

TWE is targeted for veteran experiencing chronic unemployment, homelessness and diagnosed with persistent alcohol and or drug addiction. TWE is a time limited transitional work program. SE is targeted for veterans suffering from severe mental illness and must have a current diagnosis of psychosis. SE is a competitive work program. Enrollment in both programs requires a consult from a treating Mental Health physician. Veterans should be engaged in some form of outpatient mental health treatment. For more detailed information contact the CWT Program Coordinator at (828) 298-7911 at Ext. 14279; Monday – Friday 0800 – 1600.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation can help you obtain employment or assist in re-training that could lead to a new career or employment. Vocational counselors help you identify your strengths and skills as they relate to the current job market and can assist you in identifying any accommodations necessary to obtain and maintain employment. We work with the Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits Office as well as the State Vocational Rehabilitation Program. If you have a disability or illness that interferes with working, ask for a referral for Vocational Rehabilitation from your primary care physician.



Safety



Cell Phones, Cameras, Video, Tape Recorders

For reasons of patient privacy, visitors should not bring cameras, video equipment, tape recorders, and cellular phones to patient care areas of the Medical Center. If your family or friends wish to bring in one of these items, special arrangements can be made with your health care team. Cellular phone usage is limited to non-patient care areas.

Fire/Disaster Drills

For the protection of patients and staff, our medical center has a fire and disaster plan. If you discover a fire, tell a staff member right away. If you are in an area that needs to be evacuated, follow the instructions from the staff. Exit signs show the location of emergency exits. Fire alarm pull stations are near each exit.



Police Service

Veterans who use our facilities can and should expect the finest in protection and police services. Our mission includes ensuring that our VA facilities deliver quality police services to our hospitalized and ambulatory veterans, their families and visitors, and to the staff who serve them. This medical center has VA Police on duty 24/7 for your care and protection. If you need assistance you may contact a member of the VA Police Service by calling **828-298-7911 Ext. 15310**.

Prohibited Items

Patients are not allowed to have alcoholic beverages, narcotics, firearms, ammunition, knives, other weapons, lighter fluid, non-safety matches, straight edge razors, or any medication from home. Cellular telephones, televisions, radios, and personal computers are also not permitted. If a patient has any of these items, they will need to be left with VA Police or sent home with a family member.

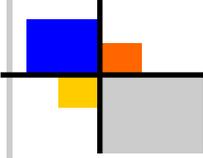


Smoking

VA Facilities are smoke-free. Staff, visitors, volunteers, and patients may not smoke anywhere indoors or within any exits or entranceways. Please be considerate of non-smokers and only smoke in designated smoking shelter only. **VA Police may issue fines to anyone smoking outside the designated area.**

Zero Tolerance

To maintain a safe environment for patients, staff, visitors, and volunteers, our medical center has a **zero tolerance** for violence. Behavior that is threatening or violent will result in immediate action.



Outpatient Information

Appointments

Outpatient visits are pre-scheduled clinic appointments. You should make every effort to keep your scheduled appointment time. If you must reschedule your appointment, please call as soon as possible so we can fill that appointment slot with another patient.

**To get the most from your appointment, try some of these tips.
REMEMBER—GO TO CENTRALIZED CHECK-IN FIRST**

Before Your Appointment

Complete all the paperwork that is given to you or mailed to you.

- Think about what you want to know about your health. Write down the questions you want to ask. List one or two of your most pressing concerns.
- Write down the answers to the following questions:
 - Describe the problem or symptoms. Where is it? When did it start?
 - Does anyone else at home have the same problem? What do you think is causing it? What have you tried? Did it work?
 - Do you have any pain? If so, where and what type of pain? How long does it last?
 - Have you recently begun a diet or started exercising? Have you lost weight?
- Be as accurate as possible. Do not exaggerate, understate or leave facts out.

The Day of Your Appointment

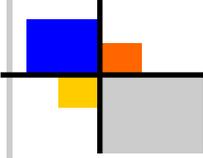
- Follow any instructions you are given, especially if you are told not to eat or drink before your appointment.
- Bring a list of all your medications, including any herbs and nutritional supplements you may be taking. Include the name, strength or dose amount, and the number of pills you take each time and what time(s) of day you take them.
- Bring any logs, diaries or records of your symptoms that you have kept.
- Be on time and be sure to check-in.
- Wear clothing that is easy to take off and put on.
- Bring something to do or read while waiting.
- Bring paper and pen to take notes. Remember to bring/wear your eye glasses and/or hearing aids

At the Appointment

- If you think you might have trouble understanding or hearing, consider bringing a relative or friend to help you ask questions.
- Repeat what the provider says to you in your own words to be sure you understand.
- Keep the conversation on track. Focus on the questions that matter to you.
- Tell the provider if you don't understand. It's okay to say, "Wait a minute, I don't get it," or to ask what a word means.

Closing the Visit

- What is the next step in your care? Let the provider know if you cannot or will not do what is suggested.
- Ask for written information about your medication(s), condition, illness and treatment. Make sure you know exactly how to take your medication(s), including the time of day you should take it/them.
- If you have more to discuss with your provider than time permits, ask for another appointment.
- Make sure you know who to call if you have questions or concerns. Call your provider if you think of something you forgot to ask during your appointment.
- Don't leave without understanding what to do to be as healthy as possible.



Inpatient Information

Absentee Voting

You can still vote while you are hospitalized. Contact your social worker for assistance. Veteran patients who are expecting an extended admission and are registered voters can obtain an absentee ballot. The procedure should be started a few weeks before Election Day.

Clothing

All patients are expected to wear pajamas, robe, slippers or shoes. A robe is provided in case you need to leave your room. Patients are asked to keep one set of clothing and footwear for discharge. Community Living Center/ Long Term Care patients are encouraged to wear their own clothing.

Identification

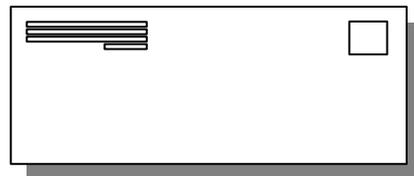
Upon admission, you will be given an identification wristband. Wristbands are to be worn at all times. Lost wristbands should be reported to your health care team.

Mail

Mail will be delivered to you. All mail received after you are discharged will be forwarded to your home address. Please be sure we have your current address. Mail should be addressed as follows:

Charles George VA Medical Center

Your Full Name
1100 Tunnel Road
Asheville, NC 28805



If you wish to mail letters, there is a mail box located on the Basement level in the Release of Information Office. Postage may be purchased from the retail store located in the basement. Bedfast patients may give their outgoing letters to the ward clerk of nursing staff to mail. If you need assistance in writing a letter simply ask your nurse to request a volunteer for assistance.

Medications

Please do not bring medications from home. Instead, make a list of all the medications you are taking (prescription and over-the-counter). Medications brought to the medical center will be mailed to your home or sent home with your family. Your doctor will order the medication you need during your stay and upon discharge.

Exception: If you are taking part in a research project and are on special research medication, please bring it to the hospital and tell your health care team. Please tell a member of your health care team if you are allergic to any medication.

Off Unit/Floor Notification

Please tell a member of your health care team before you leave the unit/floor.

Oxygen



Special regulations are in effect in areas where patients are receiving oxygen. Electrically-operated equipment and aerosol products are not permitted in these areas. Absolutely no smoking is permitted in any room anywhere oxygen is in use or standby. Portable oxygen tanks must be secure and **MUST NOT** be transported into the designated smoking shelters

Patient Funds

For safekeeping, inpatients are advised to leave cash at home. The Medical Center is not responsible for money brought in and stored in patient rooms. Patients with cash on hand may deposit their money with the Agent Cashier. However, arrangements need to be made to obtain patient funds if discharge takes place outside the posted hours of the Agent Cashier. Inpatients in extended care programs can open a patient fund account through the Veterans Service Center. An ATM is located in the basement of the main hospital near the elevators.

For Your Safety and Security

Hospitals across the country are working to make health care safety a priority and the Charles George VA Medical Center is one of them. We encourage our patients to be active participants in their health care.

Speak Up. Ask if you have questions or concerns and if you don't understand, ask again.

Educate yourself about your diagnosis, medical test, and your plan of care.

Ask a trusted friend or family member to be with you if you are unable to speak or ask questions, or you easily forget information you are told, or if you just want another person to hear your medical information.

Know the medications you are taking by name and dosage, have them written down to share with your health care team even if you got them from us.

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

Your Bed: Hospital beds are electrically operated, and your nurse will show you how to work your bed properly. Your hospital bed is probably higher and narrower than your bed at home. Bedside rails may be used for your protection. They may be raised at night or during the day if you are resting, recovering from surgery or taking certain medications. At no time should you try to crawl over the rails or out the foot of your bed. Simply turn your call light on and the nursing staff will assist you in lowering the rails and getting out of bed.

Restraints

We strive to keep our medical center free of restraints. Occasionally, restraints may be necessary. The least restrictive method will be used to ensure that your needs, rights, and dignity are maintained. If you have any questions, please talk to your health care team.

Telephones

Telephones are provided in each room, except for the critical care areas. Patients may receive calls in their room from 9 am to 9 pm. Outside callers may call the switchboard operator **(828-298-7911)** and ask for you by name and floor/unit. You can call long distance by calling collect or using a calling card. Phone cards may be purchased at the canteen/retail store. Local calls may be made at anytime from your room by dialing 9 and then the number. Cell phones are not permitted on the units as they may interfere with certain equipment. However, they may be used outside or on the ground floor of the hospital.

Televisions

Television sets are provided for your entertainment and comfort. Televisions should be turned off by 11:00 pm. Please notify your nurse or the ward clerk if your TV is not working properly.

Valuables

For safekeeping, you are asked to keep your valuables at home. The medical center is not responsible for personal property and valuables that you keep in your room. Any money should be deposited with the Agent Cashier. Phone cards may be purchased at the canteen/retail store.

Visiting Hours

Your family and friends are welcome to visit you at the medical center. Visiting hours are typically 8:30 am to 8:30 pm. Please look for posted signs for specific/recommended visiting hours on your unit/floor. Special arrangements can be made with staff as needed. When visiting patients who are seriously ill, visits are permitted and limited only by the patient's health condition.

- Lounge areas are available throughout the medical centers. Please ask staff for the nearest location. Televisions and reading materials have been placed in these areas for your enjoyment.
- Some precautions may be necessary because of risk of infection to both you and your visitors. We ask that you follow posted signs.
- Visits may need to be kept short. We ask that guests are respectful of all our patients.
- **Patients in the Intensive Care Units – SICU & MICU** may be limited to one or two visitors for up to **10 minutes at a time** depending on the patient's condition. **SICU & MICU visiting hours: 10:00 am, 12:30 pm, 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm and 8:30 pm.**

- Visiting hours for Medical & Surgical Units are 12 Noon to 8:30 pm daily.
- Visiting hours for Psychiatric Unit is 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm Monday through Friday and 1:00 pm to 8:30 pm Saturday, Sunday and Holidays.
- Substance Abuse Treatment Program visiting hours are 2:00 pm to 8:30 pm on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Federal Holidays .

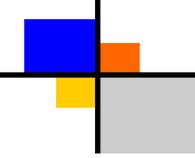
Basic Visiting Rules and Guidelines

- Patients are limited to two visitors at any one time.
- Children over 12 years of age may visit inpatients and patients on the Psychiatric Unit.
- Children under 12 are not permitted above the first floor, but inpatients may visit them in the lobby of the main hospital.
- Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.
- Members of the Clergy may visit during other than regular visiting hours at the discretion of the physician or nurse.
- Visitors **should not** bring food or beverages to patients without permission from staff members. Visitors are asked not to eat in patient rooms.

Wheelchairs

Wheelchairs are available on all nursing units, but getting in and out of them without assistance may be hazardous. Please ask for help from a member of the hospital staff.





Discharge Information

Early in your stay, your health care team should talk to you about your after hospitalization care, your anticipated discharge date, and any needed follow-up with your primary care doctor or other providers. Your social worker will assist you if you need counseling or assistance with aftercare facilities such as long term care, residential care, boarding facility or home health assistance. If you have any special concerns about leaving the Medical Center, please let a member of your healthcare team know them. If you need a “return to work statement” please discuss this with your physician before leaving the hospital.

If medication or other supplies are prescribed, such as oxygen tanks, adaptive equipment or other supplies they will be discussed with you prior to discharge. You or your family will be asked to pick them up prior to discharge and bring them back to the ward for the discharge nurse to check and discuss with you and your family. When you are notified that you are being discharged, check with your nurse to make sure you have your discharge instructions and everything you will need before you leave the hospital. Your discharge nurse will discuss the instructions with you, confirming that you have all your medications and understand the discharge instructions. If your provider advises you that you will be discharged the next day, you should let your family know of the plan to arrange transportation or we will assist you with making arrangements for discharge if you have special needs.

Discharge Survey

You will be asked to complete a short survey about your care prior to discharge. This is your chance to tell us how we are doing. Then you may be contacted by telephone 48-hours after discharge for feedback about your stay. Your comments will help us continue to improve our services. It is important that we have your correct phone number at time of discharge.

Collecting your Personal Belongings

Make sure you have collected everything from your bedside area and are completely ready to leave. If you have any money on deposit at the Agent Cashier, you should be aware that the Agent Cashier is open Mon-Fri until 4:00 pm. **Remember, if you are expected to be discharged after hours or on holidays or weekends you should plan to withdraw your funds the day before discharge.** If you are unable to get to the Agent Cashier, tell a member of your health care team so they can arrange for the cashier to come to your bedside with your funds. If you are due travel pay, you will not

be able to receive this until discharge is complete and you have been removed from inpatient status. Unit staff will assist you to meet your family or significant other at the front of the Medical Center for the ride home.

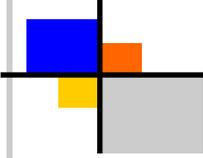
HOME CARE SERVICES

The Charles George VA Medical Center Asheville is very pleased to be able to offer Home Based Primary Care Services, Care Coordination Home Telehealth, IV infusion services, wound care and Homemaker Home Health Aides. We also offer Hospice, Respite, and skilled home care. If you have a need for one of these services your social worker will assist you in making these arrangements prior to discharge.

EXCELLENT SERVICE

Earned by Veterans. Delivered Here.

VA Medical Center - Asheville



Patient & Community Living Center

Resident Rights and Responsibilities

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is pleased you have selected us to provide your health care. We want to improve your health and well-being. We will make your visit or stay as pleasant for you as possible. 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. Your basic rights and responsibilities are outlined below. Please talk with VA treatment team members or a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights.

Respect and Nondiscrimination

- You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. Your privacy will be protected. You will receive care in a safe environment.
- We seek to honor your personal and religious values.
- You or someone you choose has the right to keep and spend your money. You have the right to receive an accounting of any VA held funds.
- Treatment will respect your personal freedoms. In rare cases, the use of medication and physical restraints may be used if all other efforts to keep you or others free from harm have not worked.
- As an inpatient or Community Living Center resident, you may wear your own clothes. You may keep personal items. This will depend on your medical condition.
- As an inpatient or Community Living Center resident, 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.

- As an inpatient or Community Living Center resident, you have the right to communicate freely and privately. You may have or refuse visitors. You will have access to public telephones. You may participate in civic rights, such as voting and free speech.
- As a Community/ Living Center resident, you can organize and take part in resident groups in the facility. Your family can also meet with the families of other residents.
- In order to provide a safe treatment environment for all patients or residents and staff, you are expected to respect other patients, resident and staff and to follow the facility's rules. 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

- You will be given information about the health benefits you can receive. This information will be provided in a way you can understand.
- You will receive information about the costs of your care, if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying your portion of any costs associated with your care.
- Your medical record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your consent unless authorized by law (an example of this is State public health reporting). You have the right to information in your medical record and may request a copy of your medical records. This will be provided except in rare situations when your VA physician feels the information will be harmful to you. In that case, you have the right to have this discussed with you by your VA provider.
- You will be informed of all outcomes of care, including any potential injuries. You will be informed about how to request compensation for any injuries.

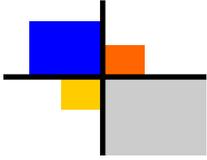
Participation in Treatment Decisions

- You, and any persons 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. You will be given other options. You can agree to or refuse treatment. You will be told what is likely to happen to you if you refuse treatment. Refusing treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you take responsibility for the possible results to 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. Being involved is very important for you to get the best possible results.
- You will be given, in writing, the name and title of the provider in charge of your care. As our partner in health 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, residents and 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 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 notify your provider or treatment team.
- 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 Community Living Center resident, you will be provided any transportation necessary for your treatment plan.
- You have the right to choose whether 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. You may consult with the Medical Center's Ethics Consultation Service and/or other staff knowledgeable about health care ethics.
- If you or the Medical Center believes that you have been neglected, abused or exploited, you will receive help.

Complaints

You are encouraged and expected to seek help from your treatment team or a patient advocate if you have problems or complaints. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.



Joint Commission

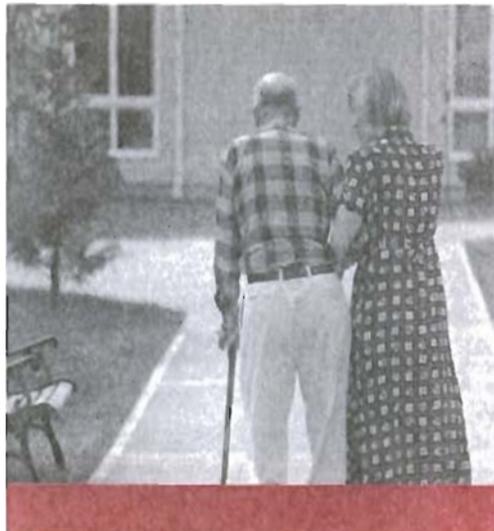
Do you have a complaint about the quality of care at a Joint Commission-accredited care organization? The Joint Commission wants to know about it. Send them your complaint by mail, fax or e-mail. Summarize the issues in one to two pages and include the name, street address, city, and state of the health care organization. When submitting a complaint to the Joint Commission about an accredited organization, you may either provide your name and contact information or submit your complaint anonymously. Providing your name and contact information enables the Joint Commission to inform you about the actions taken in response to your complaint, and also to contact you should additional information be needed.

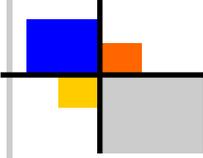
It is Joint Commission policy to treat your name as confidential information and not to disclose it to any other party. However, it may be necessary to share the complaint with the subject organization in the course of a complaint investigation.

Mail:

**The Joint Commission
Office of Quality Monitoring
One Renaissance Boulevard
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181**

If you have questions about how to file your complaint, you may contact the Joint Commission toll free in the U.S from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time, Week-days
Toll Free: **1(800) 994-6610**





Health Care Proxy and Living Will

Information about the VA Advance Directive (VA Form 10-0137):

This is an important legal form. Before signing this form, you should understand the following facts:

1. This form gives the person you choose as your agent the authority to make all health care decisions for you, except to the extent you say otherwise in this form. "Health Care" means any treatment, service or procedure to diagnose or treat your physical or mental condition.
2. Unless you state otherwise, your agent will be allowed to make all health care decisions for you, including decisions to remove or with-hold life-sustaining treatment.
3. Unless your agent knows your wishes about artificial nutrition and hydration (nourishment and water provided by a feeding tube), he or she will not be allowed to refuse or consent to those measures for you.
4. **Your agent will start making decisions for you when doctors decide that you are not able to make health care decisions for yourself.** You may write on this form any information about treatment that you do not desire and/or those treatments that you want to make sure you receive. Your agent must follow your instructions (oral and written) when making decisions for you. **If you want to give your agent written instructions, do so right on the form.** For example, you could say:

"If I become terminally ill, I do/don't want to receive the following treatments..."

"If I am in a coma or unconscious, with no hope of recovery, then I do/don't want..."

"If I have brain damage or a brain disease that makes me unable to recognize people or speak and there is no hope that my condition will improve, I do/don't want..."

"I have discussed with my agent my wishes about and I want my agent to make all decisions about these measures."

Examples of medical treatments about which you may wish to give your agent special instructions are listed below. This is not a complete list of the treatments about which you may have instructions.

- artificial respiration
- artificial nutrition and hydration (nourishment and water provided by feeding tube)
- cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- antipsychotic medication
- electric shock therapy
- antibiotics
- psychosurgery
- dialysis
- transplantation
- blood transfusion
- abortion
- sterilization

Talk about choosing an agent with your family and/or close friends. You should discuss this form with a doctor or another health care professional, such as a nurse or social worker, before you sign it to make sure that you understand the types of decisions that may be made for you. You may also wish to give your doctor a signed copy. **You do not need a lawyer to fill out this form.**

You can choose any adult (over 18), including a family member, or close friend, to be your agent. If you select a doctor as your agent, he or she may have to choose between acting as your agent or as your attending doctor. A physician cannot do both at the same time. Also, if you are a patient or a resident of a hospital, Community Living Center/ Long Term Care facility or mental hygiene facility, there are special long term care facility restrictions about naming someone who works for that facility as your agent. You should ask the staff at the facility to explain those restrictions.

You should tell the person you choose that he or she will be your health care agent. **You should discuss your health care wishes and this form with your agent. Be sure to give him or her a signed copy.** Your agent cannot be sued for health care decisions made in good faith. **Even after you have signed this form, you still have the right to make health care decisions for yourself as long as you are able to do so, and treatment cannot be given to you or stopped if you object.** You can cancel the control given to your agent by telling him or her or your health care provider orally or in writing.

Filling Out the 10-0137 Form:

Part (1): Write your name, home address, SSN and telephone number(s).

Part (2) Write name of the person you are selecting as your agent, their address and phone number(s). You may also appoint a second person in the event the first person you appointed is unavailable.

Part (3B): If you have special instructions for your agent, you should write them here. Also, if you wish to limit your agent's authority in any way, you should say so here. If you do not state any limitations, your agent will be allowed to make all health care decisions that you could have made, including the decision to consent to or refuse life-sustaining treatment.

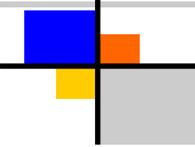
Part (4): Your signature and the signatures of two people, at least 18 years of age, who witness your signature. Medical Center employees of the Chaplain Service or Social Work Service may serve as witnesses. Family members may sign as witnesses. **The person who is appointed agent or alternate agent cannot sign as a witness.**

Part (5): Signature and seal of Notary Public is optional. The Advance Directive does not have to be notarized to be valid in VA facilities. However, you may need to have this document notarized for it to be recognized outside the VA health care network. This form will remain valid indefinitely unless you set an expiration date or condition for its expiration.

**FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE
VA FORM 10-0137
IS ATTACHED AT THE BACK
OF THIS BOOKLET**

You may also request a copy of this form from Social Work Service or a member of your Health Care Team.

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Important Phone Numbers

National Suicide Crisis Line

The National Suicide Crisis Line has been enhanced to provide a new service for veterans in crisis. Veterans will be connected immediately to VA suicide prevention and mental health service professionals by calling **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** and pressing 1. You can call for yourself, or someone you care about. Your call is free and confidential.

National Cemetery—North Carolina

New Bern, Raleigh, Salisbury, Wilmington
(704) 636-2661 ext. 4621

VA Regional Office

251 North Main Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27155
Statewide 1-800-827-1000

Loan Guaranty Certificate of Eligibility Center

1-888-244-6711

For additional information, visit

www.va.gov



NETWORK
VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network (VISN6)
300 W. Morgan Street, Suite 700
Durham, NC 27701
Phone: (919) 956-5541

VA Medical Centers Within VISN 6

Charles George VAMC
 1100 Tunnel Road
 Asheville, North Carolina 28805
 Phone: (828) 298-7911
 Toll-Free: (800) 932-6408

Beckley VAMC
 200 Veterans Avenue
 Beckley, West Virginia 25801
 Phone: (304) 255-2121
 Toll Free: (877) 902-5142

Durham VAMC
 508 Fulton Street
 Durham, NC 27705
 Phone: (919) 286-0411
 Toll-Free: (888) 878-6890

Fayetteville VAMC
 2300 Ramsey Street
 Fayetteville, North Carolina 28301
 Phone: (910) 488-2120
 Toll Free: (800) 771-6106

Hampton VAMC
 100 Emancipation Drive
 Hampton, Virginia 23667
 Phone: (757) 722-9961
 Toll-Free: (866) 544-9961

Hunter Holmes McGuire VAMC
 1201 Broad Rock Boulevard
 Richmond, Virginia 23249
 Phone: (804) 675-5000
 Toll-Free: (800) 784-8381

VA Medical Center
 1970 Roanoke Boulevard
 Salem, Virginia 24153
 Phone: (540) 982-2463
 Toll-Free: (888) 982-2463

W.G. "Bill" Hefner VAMC
 1601 Brenner Avenue
 Salisbury, North Carolina 28144
 Phone: (704) 638-9000
 Toll Free: (800) 469-8262

VA Community Clinics Within VISN 6

Charlotte Clinic 28213 (8601 University East Drive, NC) **704-597-3500**
Charlottesville OPC 22911 (650 Peter Jefferson Parkway, VA) **434-293-3890**
Danville CBOC 24540 (705 Piney Forest Road, VA) **434-710-4210**
Durham Clinic 27705 (1824 Hillandale Road, NC) **919-383-6107**
Franklin CBOC 28734 (647 Wayah Street, NC) **828-369-1781**
Fredericksburg CBOC 22401 (1960 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Suite 100, VA) **540-370-4468**
Greenville Clinic 27858 (800 Moye Boulevard, NC) **252-830-2149**
Hamlet OPC 28345 (100 Jefferson Street, NC) **910-582-3536**
Hickory OPC 28601 (1170 Fairgrove Church Road, NC) **828-431-5600**
Hillsville CBOC 24343 (702 Pine Street, VA) **276-779-4220**
Jacksonville CBOC 28540 (241 Freedom Way Dr. Ste B Midway Park, NC) **910-353-6406**
Lynchburg CBOC 24501 (1600 Lakeside Drive, VA) **434-316-5000**
Morehead City Clinic 28557 (5420 Highway 70, NC) **252-240-2349**
Raleigh Clinic 27610 (3305 Sungate Boulevard, NC) **919-212-0129**
Tazewell CBOC 24651 (123 Ben Bolt Avenue, VA) **276-988-2526**
Virginia Beach CBOC 23462 (244 Clearfield Avenue, VA) **757-726-6070**
Wilmington CBOC 28401 (736 Medical Center Drive, Suite 102, NC) **910-763-5979**
Winston-Salem OPC 27103 (190 Kimel Park Drive, NC) **336-768-3296**

EXCELLENT SERVICE

Earned by Veterans. Delivered Here.

VA Medical Center - Asheville

**INFORMATION KIOSKS ARE NOW AVAILABLE JUST INSIDE THE
MAIN ENTRANCE AND THE VISITORS ENTRANCE.**

These Kiosks will help Veterans and visitors with general information about the Medical Center. They also have the capability to print maps from “you are here” to locations within the medical center.

With these Kiosks we have the technology to add a number of informational and educational options as we grow.