VETERAN’S GUIDE
TO CHARLES GEORGE VA MEDICAL CENTER

THANK YOU for your service to our country.
IT IS OUR HONOR to serve you now!
Asheville * Franklin * Hickory * Rutherfordton
Freedom’s Price is Paid

This piece was created as a result of my desire to honor the Veterans that I have had the privilege to care for over the last 8 years here at the Charles George VA Medical Center. I drew on my 26 years as a VA Nurse working in Long-Term Care units and many more as an eclectic artist when thinking about bringing this work to life. I wanted to take my experiences and create a piece of art to honor these veterans with respect and imagination.

Hands make bold statements . . .

Hands are as unique as the individual. They are a familiar part of all our lives; they help us do wondrous things. Most of us would be lost without our hands, but we often take them for granted.

The goal of this project was to look closely at the hands of the men and women I care for and find a way to display their uniqueness and value. They are all familiar to me; hopefully, as you view each photograph, you too will appreciate that uniqueness and value while gaining a greater appreciation of these veterans who have paid freedom’s price.

This piece was donated and dedicated to the Veterans of the first floor of the Community Living Center on Veterans Day, November 11, 2015.

Everyone is always invited to view this piece in the lobby of the Community Living Center, Charles George VA Medical Center.

Deb Anderson, BSN, RN
A Message from the Director

Welcome to Charles George VA Medical Center (VAMC). Charles George VAMC is a five-Star Quality medical center with a team of more than 1900 medical professionals and support staff who are dedicated to providing the very best care to our nation’s heroes.

Charles George VAMC is a tertiary care facility that provides the full spectrum of health services to nearly 50,000 Veterans residing in a 24 county area of Western North Carolina. In addition to services offered at the main campus, Charles George VAMC operates community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) in Franklin, N.C., Rutherford County, N.C., and Hickory, N.C.

Charles George VAMC has academic affiliations with 84 different colleges and universities, including Duke University, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, and Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Charles George VAMC has a robust research and development program consisting of 30 active research projects in areas of study ranging from Surgery and Oncology to Mental Health. The medical center is also a national leader for implementing the Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) model of care—a team-based approach to plan for the whole-person care and life-long health and wellness of every Veteran who receives VA health care.

At Charles George VAMC, our top priority is to provide the outstanding quality health care that you deserve and have earned as America’s heroes. Our goal is to deliver not only the health care you need, but also the health care you want while providing the ideal customer experience.

Thank you for your service to our nation. It is truly an honor to serve you alongside this team of excellent, dedicated staff.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Young
Director, Charles George VA Medical Center
I CARE: INTEGRITY, COMMITMENT, ADVOCACY, RESPECT, AND EXCELLENCE

Customer Service
The Charles George VA strives to provide the highest quality of customer service to our Veterans. If you have any questions about our service, please let us know so that we may help you.

Our Common Purpose
We honor Veterans by creating compassionate care experiences that exceed expectations.

Our Service Standards and Expectations of Our Employees

Safety
I will know and follow all emergency and safety policies and procedures.
I will protect personal identifiable information.
I will identify, correct, and immediately report safety concerns.
I will wash my hands and remind others to do so.

Kindness
I will smile at Veterans and employees.
I will assist lost Veterans to reach their desired locations.
I will listen to and prioritize the needs of Veterans before my own.
I will thank Veterans for their service to our country.

Professionalism
I will help Veterans throughout their visit to the facility.
I will be respectful and courteous in all my interactions.
I will ensure my conduct, appearance, and work area reflects positively on the VA.

Organizational Excellence
I will welcome, receive, and act on feedback.
I will review patient surveys and always strive to improve.
I will look at current data to predict the organization’s future needs.

If you have any thoughts of hurting yourself or others, or would like to speak to a mental health professional for any reason, please contact the Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 Option 1.
Charles George VA Medical Center
Information

Charles George VAMC Main Telephone Numbers
(828) 298-7911 or toll-free (800) 932-6408

Telephone Call Center
When you call the Charles George VAMC during normal business hours, follow the prompts to reach the Telephone Call Center, or use the extensions listed in this guide to reach specific departments. If you call after hours, on weekends or holidays, you will reach the VA Nurses Hot Line. You can also call the VA Nurses Hot Line directly at (888) 838-7890.

If you have a non-emergency health question or concern during regular business hours, select the option to speak to a nurse.

The Telephone Call Center is not an emergency service.

*If you have a medical emergency, call 911 immediately!*

Charles George VAMC Main Address
Charles George VAMC
1100 Tunnel Road.
Asheville, NC  28805

Hours of Operation for the Charles George VA Medical Center
Normal business hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Main entrance is intended for Veterans and those accompanying Veterans with appointments. The visitor's entrance is intended to visitors of Veterans admitted to the inpatient portion of the hospital.

Extended hours for select Primary Care services may be available. Ask your primary care provider.

Outpatient services are closed on Federal Holidays. Acute care services and emergency services are open 24 hours, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.

If visitors need help after hours, they can call the Administrative Officer of the Day (AOD) at (828) 298-7911, ext. 2505.
Suicide Prevention: Veterans Crisis Line
The Veterans Crisis Line is a national hotline that offers help for Veterans in emotional distress. If you are a Veteran or are concerned about one, call
- 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1,
- Chat online at www.veteranscrisisline.net, or
- Send a text message to 838255
to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available at www.veteranscrisisline.net.

If you are thinking of harming yourself, please call for help before it is too late!
Services and Programs Available at Charles George VAMC

We are pleased to offer our Veterans excellent, comprehensive health care. Some of our services and programs require a referral from your Charles George VAMC health care provider. The availability and locations of these services and programs are subject to change.

- Audiology and Speech Pathology
- Anticoagulation Clinic
- Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Cardiology (including Catheterization (CATH) Lab, EKG, Echocardiogram (Echo), and Stress Test)
- Chaplain Services
- Community Living Center (CLC)
- Compensation and Pension
- Dental Services
- Dermatology
- Details Office/Decedent Affairs
- Diabetes Management
- Dialysis
- Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT)
- Electroencephalogram (EEG)
- Emergency Services
- Endocrinology
- Eye Care Services (including Ophthalmology, Optometry, Optical Dispensary, Laser eye surgery, and Tele-retinal Imaging)
- Gastroenterology (GI)
- Geriatrics and Extended Care
- Home and Community Care
- Hospice and Palliative Care
- Imaging Services (including Angiography, CT Scan, Mammogram, MRI, PET/CT, Ultrasound, and X-ray)
- Intensive Care Services
- Internal Medicine Services
- Interpersonal Violence
- LBGTQ and Transgender Support Groups
- Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences
- Military Sexual Trauma
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Nuclear Medicine/Nuclear Imaging (Standard and cardiovascular diagnostics)
- Nutrition and Food Services (Nutrition Counseling and Weight Management)
- Oncology/Hematology
- Orthopedics
- Pain Management
- Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (Blood draws and specimen collection)
- Patient Advocate
- Pharmacy (Pharmacist consultation, medication pick up, and other services)
- Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services
- Podiatry and Foot Care Clinic
- Polytrauma Care Program
- Primary Care Medicine
- Prosthetics and Sensory Aids
- Pulmonary Medicine
- Radiation Oncology
- Rheumatology
- Risk Management
- Sleep Management
- Social Work Services
- Spinal Cord Injury and Disorders (SCI/D)
- Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP) and Substance Abuse Counseling
- Surgery (Inpatient and Outpatient)
- Therapeutic Recreation Services (Recreation Therapy, Music Therapy, and Activities Service)
- Transition and Care Management Program [formally called Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND)]
- Urology Services
- VA Community Care (formerly NVCC)
- Women Veterans Health Care
- Wound Care
Services and Programs Available at Other Veterans' Offices

These offices provide Veterans with information on benefits and services, including compensation and pension, home loans, jobs, eligibility, and new activities. The Community Based Outpatient Clinics also provide medical care.

Franklin Community Based Outpatient Clinic
647 Wayah St
Franklin, NC 28734
Phone: (828) 369-1781

Hickory Community Based Outpatient Clinic
2440 Century Place SE
Hickory, NC 28602
Phone: (828) 431-5600
Rutherford County Community Based Outpatient Clinic
374 Charlotte Road
Rutherfordton, NC 28139-2916
Phone: (828) 288-2780
Fax: (828) 288-7266

Mountain Home National Cemetery
53 Memorial Avenue, Bldg. 117
Mountain Home TN 37684
Phone: (423) 979-3535
Fax: (423) 979-3521
Winston-Salem Regional Benefit Office
Federal Building
251N. Main Street
Winston-Salem NC 27155
Phone: (800) 827-1000

VISN 6: VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network
3518 Westgate Drive
Durham NC 27707
Phone: (919) 956-5541
Fax: (919) 956-7152
Vet Centers

Life isn't always easy after a deployment. That's where Vet Centers can help. Vet Centers across the country provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to combat Veterans and their families. Vet Centers guide Veterans and their families through many of the major adjustments in lifestyle that often occur after a Veteran returns from combat. Services for a Veteran may include individual and group counseling in areas such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), alcohol and drug assessment, and suicide prevention referrals. All services are free of cost and are strictly confidential.

**Charlotte Vet Center**
2114 Ben Craig Dr., Suite 300
Charlotte, NC 28262
Phone: (704) 549-8025 or (877) 927-8387
Fax: (704) 549-8261

**Greenville, SC Vet Center**
3 Caledon Court, Suite B
Greenville, SC 29615
Phone: (864) 271-2711 or (877) 927-8387
Fax: (864) 370-3655

**Greensboro Vet Center**
3515 W Market St., Suite 120
Greensboro, NC 27406
Phone: (336) 333-5366 or (336) 333-5366
Fax: (336) 333-5046

**Roanoke Vet Center**
350 Albemarle Ave., SW
Roanoke, VA 24016
Phone: (540) 342-9726 or (877) 927-8387
Fax: (540) 857-2405

**Vet Center Call Center**
1-877-WAR VETS (1.877.927.8387) is an around the clock confidential call center where combat Veterans and their families can call to talk about their military experience or any other issue they are facing in their readjustment to civilian life. The staff is comprised of combat Veterans from several eras as well as family members of combat Veterans. The service is free for combat Veterans and their families so they may find resources they need at their nearest Vet Center.
Before Your Visit
Determine Your Eligibility and Enroll for Health Care

If you have questions about enrolling for VA health care, call (828) 298-7911 ext. 2509.

Make, Change, or Cancel an Appointment

- To make, change, or cancel an appointment at the Charles George VA Medical Center or at our VA community clinics located in Franklin, N.C., Hickory N.C. or Rutherfordton N.C., please call (828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408 and follow the prompts.
- If you already have an appointment, you will receive a reminder postcard about two weeks prior to your appointment. It is important that we have your current address so you will receive these reminders.
- Plan to arrive at least fifteen minutes before your appointment.
- Bring the following items with you when you come to each appointment:
  - Picture identification, such as your VA Identification Card or driver’s license
  - All medical records and test results from other facilities and from non-VA health care providers
  - All bottles of medicines you take, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, food supplements, and herbal remedies
  - A list of questions you may have for your health care team
  - Your blood pressure and/or blood sugar readings, if you have them
  - Your health insurance information
- Please do not be a “no-show!” If you cannot keep your appointment, tell us as soon as possible so that we can give another Veteran your original appointment time.
- Our facilities are closed and do not schedule appointments on the following federal holidays: New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Washington’s Birthday (also known as Presidents’ Day), Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

The Charles George VA Medical Center Emergency Department is open every day, 24 hours a day, and seven days a week.
During & After Your Visit
During Your Visit

**Information Desk**
The Information Desk at the Charles George VA Medical Center is located in the Main Building (Bldg. 47) in the main lobby. Volunteers are at the Information Desk Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. They provide information about Charles George VA as well as community resources, such as local bus schedules and restaurants. To reach the desk, dial ext. 3995.

**Fire and Disaster Drills**
Charles George VAMC has periodic fire and disaster drills. If you hear the fire alarm, stay calm and follow the staff’s instructions.

**Gifts**
Please do not give gifts or money to any of our employees. It is our privilege to take care of you.

**Health Care Team**
Your Charles George VA health care team consists of doctors, nurses, nursing assistants, social workers, pharmacists, and all the members of our staff who provide care for you. Your health care team is committed to providing you the best care possible.

**Interpreters and Limited English Proficiency**
If you need an interpreter for hearing, vision, speech, foreign language, or limited English proficiency, tell your health care team to make arrangements.

**Lost and Found**
The Lost and Found Office at the Charles George VAMC is located in the Main Building (Bldg. 47) on the first floor at centralized check-in. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can call them at ext. 2509. After these hours let someone know you need your items and they will assist you.

If you lose or find an item at any of our VA community clinics, contact the staff at the facility’s front desk.
**Pain**
Managing your pain is important to the healing process. If you have pain, your health care providers will ask you to rate your pain on a pain scale. They will also ask you where your pain is, when your pain started, how long it lasts, what makes your pain better or worse, and if any medicines or treatments have helped you with your pain. Please alert your health care team before your pain becomes unbearable.

**Patient Education and the Learning Resource Services (LRS)**
The Charles George VA provides our Veterans and their families with important patient education, programs, and support groups on many health topics, including diabetes, weight management and cancer. We want you to have all the information you need so that you can be an active partner in your health care.

The Learning Resource Services (LRS) has pamphlets, books, and videos that provide patient education on many medical conditions, medicines, and treatments. Computers in the LRS can be used by patients for health and job information, and to access the websites for My HealthVet and MOVE!

The LRS is located at the Charles George VA Medical Center in the Main Building (Bldg. 47), in the basement past the tower elevators. You can call the Learning Resource Center at ext. 5859.

**Pharmacy**
The **Charles George VA Medical Center Outpatient Pharmacy** is located in the Main Building (Bldg. 47). It is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., excluding federal holidays.

**Pharmacy Telephone Care System**
To use the Pharmacy Telephone Care System, call (828) 298-7911, and follow the prompts (option 1)

Use the Pharmacy Telephone Care System to:
- Order your prescription refills at least two weeks before you run out of your medicines.
- Check the status of a prescription.
- Request a renewal of a prescription that has no refill.
- Talk to Pharmacy staff Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., excluding federal holidays.
Parking Lot Shuttle Service
The Charles George VA Medical Center Shuttle Service operates Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., excluding federal holidays, and can be contacted at (828) 337-5975 or by calling Voluntary Service at ext. 3995.

Tobacco-Free Policy
The Charles George VA Tobacco-Free policy prohibits tobacco use by employees, patients, volunteers, visitors, students, and vendors on all property owned or leased by the Charles George VA, except in designated smoking areas. This policy covers all tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and chewing tobacco. Failure to comply will result in federal fines.

Weapons
Do not bring any weapons onto VA property. This includes: firearms of any type, knives which blade length exceeds 3”, device which can disable or incapacitate (mace, pepper spray, etc.). If you have weapons, you must give them to the VA Police Service to hold during your stay here. You may contact Police Service at ext. 5310.

Veterans Canteen Service
The cafeteria at the Charles George VA Medical Center is in the Main Building (Bldg.47) on the basement level. It is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and closed on weekends and Federal holidays. The bistro offers hot and cold entrees, beverages, and desserts.

The Coffee shop at the Charles George VA Medical Center is in the Main Building (Bldg. 47), near the main entrance. It is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. excluding federal holidays. They offer coffee, sandwiches, snacks, and beverages.

The Patriot Store is in the Main Building (Bldg. 47) on the basement level of the atrium. They offer snacks, clothing, electronics and household items. All purchases are tax free.

While You Are at the Charles George VA
- Please be considerate of others while you are at Charles George VA.
- Please keep your voices low, so you do not disturb other patients.
- If anyone threatens you, or bothers you by using a loud voice or bad language, let our staff know immediately.
- Do not use alcohol or illegal substances while on VA property.
- Do not gamble while on VA property.
- All bags and packages brought on VA property are subject to inspection. People who refuse to have their bags or packages inspected may be denied entry onto VA property.
- Do not record, videotape, or take pictures of your health care team or other patients without their written permission.
After Your Visit

Billing, Insurance, and Copayments
If you have private health insurance, please bring your health insurance card with you to your appointment at Charles George VAMC. The VA bills private health insurance companies for care received by Veterans at VA facilities. The VA has established guidelines for Veterans and their copayments. Copayments may be charged for different services, including inpatient care, outpatient care, prescriptions, and long-term care.

Copayments can be paid at the Charles George VA Medical Center at the Agent Cashier’s office in the Main Building (Bldg. 47), Room 1B185, or by mail. If your insurance company pays for some of your charges, you will receive a credit on your bill.

For more information on billing, health insurance, and copayments, please visit: https://www.pay.va.gov/site_links_landing.htm

If you have questions regarding your VAMC Account, you may call the Health Resource Center at (866) 290-9438. They may offer assistance in regards to bill statement questions, payment plans, waiver requests, write-off requests, and hardship requests.

Be sure to update your “Health Benefits Renewal Form” 1010EZ (Means Test/Copay Test) annually.

CHAMPVA and Tricare Benefits
If you have questions about CHAMPVA or Tricare Benefits, you may contact the CHAMPVA Customer Service Call Center at (800) 733-8387. For more information on CHAMPVA, please visit http://www.va.gov/purchasedcare/programs/dependents/champva/

Concerns or Questions After Your Visit
If you have concerns or questions after your visit here, please tell your health care team. You may also ask for a referral to a nurse or social worker if you have problems or need more care.

Post-care Surveys
Since we can only get better at caring for you if you tell us what we need to change, you will get surveys in both mail and email to get your feedback. Please complete these surveys and share your thoughts. While you are at the Medical Center, please ask for the Nurse Manager in whatever unit or clinic you are being seen if there is anything we can do to make your stay or visit the best it can be.
Information, Programs, and Services
Information, Programs, and Services

Advance Directives
Advance Directives are legal forms that state your preferences about your future medical and mental health care. If you become too ill to make decisions about your care, an Advance Directive can help your doctors and family understand what you want. It is up to you to decide if you want an Advance Directive. Your decision will not affect your access to health care or other Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services.

There are two types of Advance Directives: Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care and a Living Will. In the VA these two types can be completed in one form.

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care
In this type of Advance Directive, you select a person as your Health Care Agent. If you are not able to make your own health care decisions, your health care team will contact your Health Care Agent to make those decisions for you.

Living Will
In this type of Advance Directive, you state your preferences about treatments you would want or not want in different situations when you cannot make treatment decisions yourself. A Living Will helps your Health Care Agent or others know what treatments you would choose.

Your Rights:
- You have the right to accept or refuse any medical treatment.
- You have the right to complete a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care.
- You have the right to complete a Living Will.

Your Responsibilities:
- If you have an Advance Directive, it is important to give the Charles George VAMC a copy for your health record.
- If you have questions about filling out an Advance Directive, please ask our staff to help you.

For more information, visit [www.asheville.va.gov/patients/advance.asp](http://www.asheville.va.gov/patients/advance.asp)

The Life Sustaining Treatment Directive Initiative (LSTDI)
The goal of this project is to honor your values, goals and preferences about your care. You have the right to accept or decline recommended medical treatments and procedures, including life-sustaining treatments (LST). At each hospital admission a conversation takes place between you (or surrogate if the patient lacks decision-making capacity) and a health care practitioner to clarify your goals and preferences for care. Based on that discussion, a decision is made about whether to start, limit, or stop life-sustaining treatments.
ATM Machines

An ATM machine is located at the Charles George VA Medical Center in basement of the Main Building (Bldg. 47) near the tower elevators as well as outside the Federal Employees Credit Union.

Audiology/Hearing Aids

Veterans with VA-issued hearing aid problems can be seen during the Audiology Minute Clinic, which is a walk-in clinic for hearing aid problems offered from 9a.m. -11a.m. and 1p.m. - 3p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Veterans should call the Minute Clinic Information Line at (828) 298-7911 ext. 2826 any time after 7:45am the day of travel to check the Minute Clinic operating schedule for that day.

The Audiology & Speech Pathology Clinic conducts comprehensive assessment and rehabilitation of patients with speech, language, swallowing, and hearing disorders. Clinicians determine the need for hearing aids or other assistive communication devices, provide them as needed, and instruct patients on their use and maintenance.

Barber Shop

The Barber Shop at the Charles George VA Medical Center is open to patients, staff, and visitors. The Barber Shop is located in the basement of the Main Building (Bldg. 47) in Room A130.

Hours: Tuesday-Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m. For information and prices, call (828) 298-7911 extension 5332 or (800) 932-6408, ext. 5332.

Caregiver Services

Charles George VAMC offers many services for people who care for Veterans. For more information, please call (855) 260-3274 or (828) 298-7911 ext. 5433 or 5554.

Chapels/Religious Services

Chaplain service strives to provide friendly, courteous and respectful support by helping to draw upon individual spiritual resources through pastor care visits, on-call availability and scheduled chapel services.

A nondenominational chapel is located on the first floor of the Main Building (Bldg. 47) at the intersection of Main and Freedom Streets. Protestant worship services and Catholic Mass are held on a regular basis. Please contact Chaplain Service at ext. 2554 for additional information or to speak with one of our Chaplains.

Catholic Mass – Tuesdays at 2:00pm in the Main Chapel.

Protestant services are held Sunday at 9:30 am in the main chapel and at
10:30 in the Community Living Center. Both the services are broadcast on live VA internal television.

Quarterly Memorial Service is held at the Community Living Center. Contact Chaplain services for dates and times.

Ashe Wednesday and Christmas Eve Services are held. Please Contact Chaplain Services for dates and times.

### Hospice and Palliative Care

The Hospice and Palliative Care program provides emotional, physical, and spiritual support to veterans and their loved ones dealing with chronic illnesses. Palliative Care uses comfort care with a focus on relieving suffering and controlling symptoms so that veterans can carry out day-to-day activities, and continue to do what is most important to them. Palliative care aims to improve quality of life – in mind, body and spirit. Solace Hospice provides inpatient hospice care in a home-like setting. It is located on the first floor of the Community Living Center (Bldg. 62). Please call (828) 298-7911 ext. 1760, 3158, 4243, or 5312 or visit: http://www.asheville.va.gov/services/Hospice_and_Palliative_Care.asp for more information.

### LGBTQ Care Coordination

The VA has identified LGBT Veteran Care Coordinators (VCC) at each facility. Our LGBT VCCs are Dr. Lynn Marlow (5707) and Amy Parsons (4335). They are the LGBT Veteran community’s resources for services, information, and advocacy. Among services provided are LGB and transgender support groups, culturally competent mental health care, evaluations and information regarding medical transgender care, and LGBT Veteran advocacy.

### Mail Drop

Mail boxes are located in the Release of Information department in the Main Building (Bldg. 47) in the basement room BB22.

### Minority Veterans Program (MVP)

The Minority Veterans Program (MVP) serves the needs of minority Veterans, including African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other minorities. For more information on MVP, visit www.asheville.va.gov/contact or call (828) 298-7911 ext. 4490.
MOVE!
MOVE! is a weight management program which helps Veterans lose weight and keep it off. There is no co-payment for MOVE!. Talk to your health care provider if you are interested in this program. Please visit www.move.va.gov for more information.

My Health eVet (MHV)
My Health eVet is a secure website that allows Veterans to take an active part in their health care. Users can register for basic MHV accounts online at home or at the Charles George VA Medical Center in the Main Building (Bldg. 47) in the My Health eVet (MHV) office located on Liberty Street.

Veterans can upgrade their MHV account at the MHV office. Upgraded accounts allow Veterans to use Secure Messaging to email their VA health care providers for non-emergency medical concerns, order prescription refills online, and view their VA medical appointments and selected VA laboratory reports. For information on MHV, visit www.myhealth.va.gov or call (828) 298 - 7911 ext. 3511.

Newspapers
The Asheville Citizens Times and Charlotte Observer are sold at newspaper racks located at the main entrances of the Charles George VA Medical Center.
Optical Shop (Eyeglasses)
The Charles George VAMC Optical Dispensary provides corrective eyeglasses when prescribed by a VA or fee-basis ophthalmologist or optometrist. Fees are charged for special features such as tint, UV-filter, and scratch coating. The Optical Dispensary is located in the Main Building (Bldg. 47), Room 103 near Eligibility. Please call (828) 298-7911 ext. 4456 for more information.

Pets
Pets are not allowed on VA property, except for service dogs or animals involved in pet therapy programs. Do not leave pets in your car.

Rathbun House
Charles George VAMC has one temporary lodging program. To be eligible, you or your family must live more than 50 miles from the Charles George VA Medical Center. Our Social Work Service refers and assists guests for these programs. For more information, please visit http://www.asheville.va.gov/index.asp or call please (828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408, ext. 1350.

Rathbun House is located off the Charles George VA Medical Center campus. It is a home away from home for families of acutely hospitalized Veterans.

Release of Information (ROI)
The Release of Information (ROI) staff will help you obtain copies of your Charles George VAMC medical records. ROI may charge for some services. For more information, please visit www.asheville.va.gov/patients/roi.asp. The ROI Office at the Charles George VA Medical Center is in the basement of the Main Building (Bldg. 47), Room BB07.

Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 8a.m.-3p.m., excluding Federal Holidays.
Phone: (828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408, ext. 2508

Retail Store (Patriot Store)
The Patriot Store at the Charles George VA Medical Center is open to patients, staff, and visitors. It sells products such as electronics, toiletries, clothing and food. The Patriot Store is located on the basement floor of the Main Building (Bldg. 47) in the atrium.

Hours of operation: Monday-Friday 7a.m.-4p.m., Saturday and Sunday 8a.m.-4p.m. Closed for Federal holidays.
Phone: (828) 298-7911, ext. 5640 or (800) 932-6408, ext. 5640.
Spinal Cord Injury and Disorders (SCI/D)
The Charles George VAMC SCI/D system of care provides treatment and services for Veterans with spinal cord injuries and other disorders of the spinal cord. Our SCI/D team works closely with the SCI/D Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center providing health care services to Veterans in eastern Georgia and western South and North Carolina.

Telephones
Public telephones are available at both the Charles George VAMC and associated CBOC facilities for visitors and patients to make free local calls. Ask the staff for locations of the public telephones.

Tobacco-Free Program
If you use tobacco products and would like to cut back or quit, Charles George VAMC offers a Tobacco-Free Program. For more information, please call (828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408, ext. 4922.

Transition and Care Management Program (TCM, formally Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND)
The TCM Program assists Post 911 Service Members and Veterans as they transition from the DoD health care system to the VA system of care. The TCM team coordinates care to meet their distinct needs as they enter the VA system. For more information, please call the TCM office at (828) 298-7911, ext. 5554 or visit www.oefoif.va.gov.

VA Community Care (VACC) - (Formerly Non-VA Medical Care Coordinator Service (NVCC) or Fee Basis Service)
If you are seen at or admitted to a non-VA facility for emergency care, please tell them you are a Veteran. You must report your non-VA inpatient admissions and/or emergency room visits within 72 hours of arrival at the non-VA facility to the transfer coordinators at the Charles George VAMC at (828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408, ext. 5219. However, notifying the VA does NOT guarantee VA payment. Please visit www.nonvacare.va.gov for more information.
**Voluntary Service**

If you would like to volunteer to help our Veterans and staff, or to donate monetary or other items, call the Voluntary Service at call (828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408, ext. 2514 or visit the Voluntary Services office at the Charles George VA Medical Center in the Main Building (Bldg. 47), Room B401. For more information on volunteering at Charles George VAMC, please visit http://www.volunteer.va.gov/.

**Escort Service:** Volunteers are available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to help patients at the Charles George VA Medical Center go to their appointments in the Main Building (Bldg. 47). Please call (828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408, ext. 5320 if you need their assistance.

**Voting:** Voluntary Service at the Charles George VA Medical Center will help Veterans complete voter registration forms and/or absentee ballots. For more information, please visit: www.volunteer.va.gov/voterassistance.asp.

**Women Veterans Health Care**

Charles George VAMC provides Primary Care and specialty services for women Veterans. This includes family planning, breast, gynecologic, infertility, and maternity care services. For more information please call (828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408, ext. 5268 or (855) 829-6636 (VA-Women).
Inpatient Information
Inpatient Information

Thank you for choosing Charles George VAMC. In order to make your admission to the hospital as easy and efficient as possible, a pre-admission coordinator will contact you several days prior to admission to verify basic information, such as your employer, insurance eligibility, pre-authorization, and co-payments.

What to bring to admission:
It is important to bring your VA ID card or a current photo ID, current insurance card and list of current medications (prescription and over-the-counter). If you have established an Advance Directive, please bring it or one can be provided for you at the hospital. An identification (ID) band will be securely placed on your wrist to identify and treat you. If it becomes damaged or lost, please inform the nurse or staff for replacement.

Visitation Policy

The Charles George VAMC Visitation Policy prohibits discrimination based on age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or family makeup. Our Visitation Policy is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) inclusive, and includes equal rights for same-sex couples and same-sex parents.

VISITATION GUIDELINES
Visitation is essential to healing and well-being of our Veteran patients and their families. It is the VA Medical Center Policy to provide visitation practices that are consistent with patient rights, VHA and accreditation requirements, and promote a welcoming environment that is supportive of the involvement and presence of family and friends during the delivery of health care services.

Visitor and patient access to the Main Hospital and Community Living Center (CLC) is via the main entrance doors, located in the front of each building. All main entrances are open from 6AM – 6PM, after which time access can be granted by pushing the red automated air phone button located inside each entrance foyer. Follow the directions on the access instructions signs posted inside each main entrance foyer. You will be connected to a VA Police Dispatcher for automated access and you will be asked to sign the Visitor Registry or you may call VA Police direct at (828) 296-4493.
As a public institution charged with the health and welfare of our Nation’s heroes, it is our duty to provide an environment conducive to health and healing. In an effort to provide this environment, all inpatient Veterans will not be allowed to leave the unit without a physician’s order to do so. This ensures that you are being seen and treated in a manner that will allow your providers to return you to a state of health quicker.

No orders will be written to allow smoking while you are admitted to the facility. Assistance will be offered for tobacco cessation upon admission and to follow through discharge. Please leave all tobacco and smoking products at home when coming for admission.

**Visiting Hours at the Charles George VA Medical Center**

**Main Hospital (Bldg. 47)**
Charles George VAMC is open 24 hours per day.

**Intensive Care Units (ICU’s)**
The ICU is open 24 hours per day for visitors, but to ensure the safety and privacy of our Veterans, access to the ICUs is controlled. Visitation plans are individualized for each Veteran who will identify, if able, a support person who may or may not be a family member. A visitation plan is coordinated with the Veteran, their support person, and the health care team.

**Substance Abuse Recovery Residential Therapy Program (SARRTP)**
Monday-Thursday: No Visitors please  
Friday, Saturday and Sunday: 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Mental Health**
Monday-Friday: 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Saturday, Sunday and Holidays: 1:00pm to 5:00pm, 6:00pm to 8:00p.m.  
Visitors are not allowed to bring food, bags, pocket books, or cellphones on the unit.  
No children under 12 years old  
No more than two visitors at a time please.

**Community Living Center (CLC)**
Visitors allowed 24 hours per day.  
No unaccompanied children under 12 years old.

**Inpatient Wards**
Visitors allowed 24 hours per day.  
No unaccompanied children under 12 years old.
Inpatient Guidelines

Family and Friends play an important role in the healthcare of love ones. Please help us ensure the safety and comfort of all patients by following these guidelines:

- Individuals with contagious disease should not visit the patient.
- Patients must stay on their unit in order to receive specific care.
- A written consent must be provided by your physician for permission to leave their designated unit.
- Visitation may be limited or restricted when a patient has a specific medical concern, risk of infections or contagious disease, and when there are safety concerns related other patients, visitors, or those working at the facility.
- If you are in a semi-private room, please respect your roommate’s needs for quiet and privacy to include: phone, voice conversation and TV volume.
- Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Calling Your Nurse

A nurse call button is located at your bedside. If you need help, press the button to notify the staff at the nursing station and they will help you as soon as possible.

Discharge Procedures

Your health care team will help you plan for your discharge. They will provide you with aftercare instructions to continue the recovery process at home to include the following:

- Discharge summary explaining what you were treated for, what to expect during your recovery process, and any potential side effects.
- Any restrictions, such as food, diet, activities, etc. If symptoms worsen, please call your doctor or go directly to the emergency room for immediate treatment.
- Up-to-date list of medications along with any post discharge prescriptions if required. Prescriptions can be filled at the outpatient pharmacy during normal business hours. After hours, prescriptions can be filled at the inpatient pharmacy at any time.
- List of contacts and phone numbers if you should have any questions about medical care or billing.
- If a return to work statement is needed, please inform the medical staff prior to leaving the hospital.
- Follow-up appointment if needed.
- Other instructions to include any equipment and medical supplies needed after discharge as well as care instructions for any tubes, dressings, etc.
- Upcoming scheduled appointments.
**Patient Directory**

During the admission process, you have an option to be listed in the Patient Directory to receive phone calls and visits. If you decide at any time during your stay to opt out, please inform the medical staff immediately.

To contact a patient at Charles George VAMC, please call (828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408. Provide the full name of the patient or room number and the operator will connect you.

TV and Videos are offered at no charge; a channel will be provided.

**TV and Video Listings**

Charles George VAMC has a Television System for your use at no charge. Please ask for a channel guide. The C.A.R.E Channel (20) provides relaxing natural scenery, sounds and music to promote rest and relaxation.

**Telephones for Inpatients**

Telephones are located at the bedside and in the Community Living Center. Your phone number is (828) 298-7911; ask for the extension for your room.

To use the bedside telephone:
- Incoming or outgoing calls: Pick the telephone up and hit the red button.
- Local calls only (no charge): Dial 9 + the telephone number.
- Long distance calls can be arranged with your nurse.

**Voluntary Service Programs for Inpatients**

Voluntary Service offers many programs for Inpatients. Volunteers try to visit each new patient. They offer lots of interesting services and resources to Veterans, including reading to them, helping them write letters, and bringing games, magazines, and paperbacks upon request.

Tell your nurse if you would like a volunteer to help you with these services, or call (828) 298-7911 ext. 2514.
Patient Safety
Charles George VAMC Cares About Your Safety

Our goal at Charles George VAMC is to provide our patients with safe and excellent care. Everyone has a role in making your care safe: physicians, nurses, clinicians, and you. We hope you will be an active and involved member of your health care team. If you have concerns about your safety and care at Charles George VAMC, SPEAKUP and tell your health care team, nurse manager, program manager, supervisor, service chief, or other management staff. If you think your concerns are not being met, you may contact the Patient Advocate, Administrative Officer of the Day (AOD), or Joint Commission (JC).

Infection Control

Hand Hygiene

Clean hands save lives! Over 80 percent of infectious diseases are spread by hands. Germs are everywhere (on our bodies, on other people, animals, surfaces, etc.) Hand hygiene is the key to infection control. Wash your hands when they look or feel dirty. Rub and lather all surfaces of your hands for 15 to 20 seconds. Rinse your hands and dry them with a paper towel. Use a paper towel to turn off the water in public places.

Clean your hands often and well, especially before and after:

- Eating and preparing food
- Taking medicine
- Going to the bathroom
- Visiting or caring for the sick
- Touching cuts, wounds, blood, or body fluids
- Touching or blowing your nose
- Touching garbage or dirty items

Make sure your health care staff, family, and visitors clean their hands before they take care of you or visit you. Prevent the spread of infections by practicing the following:

- Cough and sneeze in your sleeve, or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Discard the tissue after use. Clean your hands with soap and water.
- If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR). Apply the ABHR to all surfaces of your hands, and rub until your hands are dry. Do not wipe off the ABHR.
• If you have a respiratory illness such as a cold or flu, try to avoid public places.
• If you need to go out in public, try to stay at least six feet away from other people. Use a face-mask to stop the spread of germs
• If you are near other people who are coughing or sneezing, try to stay at least six feet away from them.

For information on Infection Control, call (828) 298-7911 or (800) 278-6408, ext. 5280.

Germs (ARG’s and MRSA)
An Antibiotic-Resistant Germ (ARG) is a germ that many common antibiotics do not kill. Special antibiotics are used to treat ARG infections. ARGs can live on people, animals, and surfaces for weeks. ARGs can sometimes cause serious infection and death.

Clean hands and good hygiene can help prevent the spread of ARGs in hospitals, clinics, the Community Living Center, homes, and other places. People at risk for getting ARGs include the young, elderly, people who have recently taken antibiotics, have chronic diseases or invasive devices (tubes and drains going into the body), and people who have been in crowds. ARG carriers have an ARG living in or on their body and can pass the germs to others. Charles George VAMC uses many precautions to prevent the hospital spread of ARGs, such as placing patients with an ARG in a private room (or in a room with others having the same ARG), wearing gowns and gloves, extra cleaning, and educating others.

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is an example of an ARG. Charles George VAMC provides MRSA testing for all VA patients. MRSA testing is done by the staff rubbing a cotton swab in the patient’s nose. All VA patients have the right to accept or refuse any treatment or procedure, including MRSA testing. Your decision will not affect your right to receive VA health care.

Safe Patient Handling and Mobility
We are committed to providing patients with the care and assistance they need in the safest possible way for both patients and caregivers. Healthcare workers have one of the highest work-related injury rates of any job because of the physical demands that come with providing assistance to patients.

Our healthcare workers will be assisting you to move when you need it, but they will be using equipment to do so.
VA Police Service
The VA Police provide a full range of law enforcement services to our patients, staff and visitors. You can reach the VA Police at ext. 5310.

Preventing Falls
- Use your eyeglasses, hearing aids, and personal assistive devices, such as canes and walkers. If you need a device to use while you are here, ask your nurse.
- Wear non-slip footwear when you are out of bed.
- Call for help if you feel unsteady when moving from your bed to a chair, walking, or when you need items that are hard to reach.
- Make sure your wheelchair is locked and the foot pedals are up before sitting down or standing up.
- Pause a few seconds when changing position (such as lying down to sitting, or sitting to standing) to allow your body time to adjust to the change.
- Avoid bending to pick up items. Ask your nurse for help.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if you feel dizzy or lightheaded.
- If you are on bed rest and need an item, use the nurse call button at your bedside to ask for help.

Speak Up
SPEAKUP is a national campaign to urge patients to take a role in preventing health care errors by being active, involved, and informed partners of their health care team. SPEAKUP stands for:

- S peak up if you have questions or concerns. If you do not understand, ask again. It is your body and you have a right to know.
- P ay attention to the care you are receiving to make sure you receive the correct treatments and medicines by your health care providers. Do not assume anything.
- E ducate yourself about your diagnosis, the medical tests you are having, and your treatment plan.
- A sk a family member or friend you trust to be your advocate.
- K now what medications you take and why you take them.
- U nderstand the quality of care you receive.
- P articipate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of your health care team.
In-Service and Patient Advocates

Veterans are encouraged to share concerns or questions with an In-service Advocate, who are Veteran advocates working within each clinic. In-Service Advocates work with the Veteran, families and clinic providers to find a resolution for grievances and concerns. Veterans may request for an appointment with their In-Service Advocate within a clinic. Additional efforts to seek a resolution may be sought through the Patient Advocate.

The Patient Advocate protects patients’ rights, monitors patient safety, and serves as a liaison between patients, families, and the Charles George VAMC health care staff.

Patient Advocate Office
Charles George VA Medical Center
Main Building (Bldg. 47) Room 1E-240.
Hours of operation: Monday – Friday 9a.m. - 3p.m.
Available for appointments 8a.m. - 430p.m.
(828) 298-7911, ext. 5200
For concerns after hours:
Contact the Administrative Officer of the Day (AOD) at ext. 2505.

For more information visit:
www.asheville.va.gov/patients/customerservice.asp
For Other Important questions regarding Safety:
Patient Safety: (828) 298-7911 ext. 5220
Safe Patient Handling: (828) 298-7911 ext. 1492
Information on Infection Control: (828) 298-7911 ext. 5280 or
(800) 278-6408 ext. 5280

The Joint Commission

Charles George VAMC is accredited by The Joint Commission (TJC) and is regularly inspected to make sure patient safety, quality of care, and environmental issues meet TJC standards.

If you have a safety or quality of care concern or complaint, you may report it to The Joint Commission: (800) 994-6610 online:
www.jointcommission.org
Email: complain@jointcommission.org
Patient Rights and Responsibilities

Rights and Responsibilities of VA Patients and Residents of the Community Living Center

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

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

You have the right to keep and use personal items as long as they are safe and legal.

In the Community Living Center, you may keep personal items and are expected to wear your own clothes. As an inpatient, you may wear your own clothes depending on your medical condition.

You have the right to social interaction and regular exercise. You will have the opportunity for religious worship and spiritual support. You may decide whether to participate in these activities. You may decide whether or not to perform tasks in or for the Medical Center or in the Community Living Center.

You have the right to communicate freely and privately. You will have access to public telephones and VA will assist you in sending and receiving mail. You may participate in civic rights, such as voting and free speech.

When a loved one is involved in support and care of a VA patient or CLC resident, VA considers a patient or CLC resident’s family to include anyone related to the patient or CLC resident in any way (for example, biologically or legally) and anyone whom the patient or CLC resident considers to be family. If you are an inpatient, any persons you choose can be with you to support you during your stay. Medical staff may restrict visitors for inpatients if medical or safety concerns require it. You will be told promptly about any visitor restriction and the reason for it.

In order to provide a safe treatment environment for all patients or CLC residents and staff, you and your visitors are expected to avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please immediately report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

2. Information Disclosure and Confidentiality

Your privacy will be protected.

You will be given information about the health benefits you can receive. The information will be provided in a way you can understand.

You will receive information about the costs of your care (for example, copayments), if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying your portion of any costs associated with your care.

Your health record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your authorization unless permitted by law (an example of this is State public health reporting). You have the right to have access to and to request a copy of your health records.

Please respect the privacy of other patients and CLC residents and do not reveal their health information that you may overhear or otherwise become aware of.
3. Participation in Treatment Decisions

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

- You are encouraged and expected to seek help from your treatment team or a patient advocate if you have problems or complaints. Any privacy complaints will be addressed by the facility Privacy Officer. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process in your preferred language. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.
- If you believe that you or your family member has been neglected, abused or exploited by VA staff, please report this promptly to the treatment team or patient advocate. You will receive help immediately.
- If you believe the organization has failed to address or satisfy your concerns about health care quality and safety, you may contact The Joint Commission’s Office of Quality Monitoring at (800) 994-6610. If you believe that the organization has failed to address your concerns about suspected criminal activities, fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement, you may contact the VA Office of the Inspector General at (800) 488-8244 or e-mail at vaoighotline@VA.gov.

5. Additional Rights and Responsibilities of Community Living Center Residents

- Because the CLC serves as your home for short or long-stay services, you have the following additional rights and responsibilities as a CLC resident:
  - Staff will knock on your bedroom door prior to entry.
  - You have the right to receive care from the same staff member every day to the extent that consistent assignment is possible.
  - You may have visitors at any time of the day or night provided visitors are respectful of you, your need for privacy, and the privacy of others. You may refuse visitors at any time.
  - You have a right to conjugal visits and you have a right to privacy during those visits.
  - Your care will be delivered in a setting that resembles home. Therefore, you will be invited to have your meals in a designated dining area and you will have access to those activities that contribute to meaningful use of time.
  - In preparation for being discharged to your own home, you and/or your caregiver may be invited to participate in activities that prepare you to go home, such as self-administration of medications and treatments.
  - You and your caregivers have a right to attend treatment planning meetings and participate in household or resident council.
In accordance with requirements from The Joint Commission, the VA has added the following statement to visitation policies for all hospitals throughout the system:

“The Medical Center respects the patient’s right to make decisions about his or her care, treatment, and services, and to involve the patient’s family in care, services, and treatment decisions to the extent permitted by the patient or surrogate decision-maker. ‘Family’ is defined as a group of two or more persons united by blood, or adoptive, marital, domestic partnership, or other legal ties. The family may also be a person or persons not legally related to the individual (such as significant other, friend, or caregiver) whom the individual considers to be family. A family member may be the surrogate decision-maker, as defined in VHA Handbook 1004.02, if authorized to make care decisions for the individual, should he or she lose decision-making capacity. The Medical Center allows a family member, friend, or other individual to be present with the patient for emotional support during the course of a stay. The Medical Center allows for the presence of a support individual of the patient’s choice, unless the individual’s presence infringes on others’ rights or safety, or is medically or therapeutically contraindicated. The individual may or may not be the patient’s surrogate decision-maker or legally authorized representative. The hospital prohibits discrimination based on age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression.”

You are encouraged and expected to seek help from your treatment team or a patient advocate if you have any problems or complaints. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.
Right and Responsibilities of Family Members of VA Patients and Residents of the Community Living Centers (CLC)

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is pleased to provide health care to Veterans. We will provide personalized, patient-driven, compassionate, state-of-the-art care. Our goal is to make the experience as positive and pleasant as we can. As part of our service to 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 the rights of patients and residents of community living centers (CLC) as well as your rights as a family member. This document outlines the basic rights and responsibilities of family members. Please talk with the VHA treatment team or a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about these rights and responsibilities.

1. Nondiscrimination and Respect
   • Our staff will create a treatment environment based on dignity, compassion, and respect. Consistent with Federal law, VA policy, and accreditation standards of The Joint Commission, Veterans and their family members will not be subject to discrimination for any reason, including for reasons of age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.
   • We seek to honor the cultural and personal values, beliefs, and preferences of all patients, CLC residents, and their families. When a loved one is involved in support and care of a VA patient or resident, VA considers a patient or resident’s family to include anyone related to the patient or resident in any way (for example, biologically or legally) and anyone whom the patient or resident considers to be family.
   • Please help us offer care in a safe and respectful manner by treating patients, CLC residents, other family members, and staff with respect and by following the facility’s rules. Family members are not allowed to do things that threaten the care of patients or interfere with staff members’ ability to do their job.

2. Keeping Health Information Private and Secure
   • The Veteran’s private health care information will be protected to the fullest extent authorized by law. Information about the Veteran may be disclosed to you if the Veteran authorizes the release or if you are the Veteran’s personal representative.
   • Please respect the privacy of patients, residents, and other family members and do not reveal private health care information that you may overhear or otherwise become aware of.
3. Partnering in Care

- Families are valued members of the VA care team. As members of the care team we encourage you to:
  - Share your insights, opinions, and observations about the Veteran’s care and progress.
  - Let the nursing staff know right away if you feel that the Veteran’s condition has changed.
  - Tell us right away if you are worried about the Veteran’s care or treatment. Please ask questions if you do not understand the purpose of any part of the Veteran’s care.
  - If you are a family member of a CLC resident, you have a right to participate and share your voice and opinions in family, resident, or household councils.

4. Family Members’ Role in Treatment Decisions

- Veterans have a right to make their own health care decisions as long as they are able to understand and tell their doctor and health care team what they want. Veterans have a right to include or not include others, such as family members or friends, in decisions about their care.
- Veterans have a right to express their preferences about future medical care in an advance directive. This includes the right to name a health care agent who will make health care decisions on their behalf if they can no longer communicate for themselves. We will respect these preferences.
- If you are asked to make health care decisions for a Veteran in VHA, the treatment team will offer you:
  - Treatment options based on the Veteran’s unique medical circumstances and needs
  - Information you can understand about the benefits and risks of these treatment options
  - An interpreter or assistive device, if needed, to help you understand the Veteran’s medical circumstances and treatment options
  - As the health care decision maker, you generally have the same rights and responsibilities as the Veteran would have in making treatment decisions.
  - You may agree to or refuse any treatment option offered by the treatment team.
  - Refusing treatment will not affect the Veteran’s right to future care.
  - Your decision about whether to accept or refuse treatments must be based on what you know the Veteran would want. If you do not know what the Veteran would want, the treatment team is available to help you consider what decisions are in the Veteran’s best interest.
- When you are the health care decision maker, please:
  - Share accurate and complete information about the Veteran’s medical history to help us develop the best treatment plan.
  - Take part in discussions and decisions about the Veteran’s care.
• Help the treatment team understand how they can provide care that takes into account the Veteran’s cultural and personal values, beliefs, and preferences.
• Talk with the treatment team when you think the Veteran’s treatment plan may need to be changed.
• Let the treatment team know if you are not willing or able to follow the treatment plan. If the treatment team understands why the plan may be a problem, they may be able to make changes that address your concerns.
• Help us plan for the Veteran’s move to the next level of care.

5. Visiting the Veteran
• Family visits can help you support the Veteran as he/she copes with illness or injuries. Schedule your visit to meet the Veteran’s medical and emotional needs. For example, many patients get tired easily, so short visits may be better.
• VA Community Living Centers have unrestricted visiting hours.
• On VA acute care inpatient units, medical staff may need to restrict visiting hours or place other visiting restrictions if medical or safety concerns require it. You will be promptly informed about any visitor restriction and the reason for it.
• Children under 12 years of age should be accompanied at all times.
• At times, patients or CLC residents may not wish to have visitors or may wish to set other limits on visits. We will respect the Veteran’s wishes for visits.

6. Concerns or Complaints
• If you need advice on how to resolve an ethical concern about the Veteran’s care, you may speak with the Medical Center’s Ethics Consultation Service.
• You are encouraged and expected to seek help from the VA health care treatment team and/or a patient advocate if you have problems or complaints. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process. Any privacy complaints will be addressed by the facility Privacy Officer. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.
• If you believe that you or the Veteran has been neglected, abused, or exploited by VA staff, please report this promptly to the treatment team or patient advocate. You will receive help immediately.
• If you have concerns about the quality of the health care that the Veteran is receiving, you may contact the VHA Office of the Medical Inspector at (800) 634-4782. If you believe the organization has failed to address or satisfy your concerns about the quality of health care, you may contact the Joint Commission’s Office of Quality Monitoring at (800) 994-6610. If you believe that the organization has failed to address your concerns about suspected criminal activities, fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement, you may contact the VA Office of the Inspector General at (800) 488-8244 or e-mail at vaoighotline@VA.gov.
Charles George VA Medical Center Frequently Called Telephone Numbers
(828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408, and then enter the extension.

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Charles George VA Medical Center
1100 Tunnel Road
Asheville, North Carolina 28805
(828) 298-7911 or (800) 932-6408
Monday-Friday 8am to 4:30pm – extended hours for some services

Franklin Community Based Outpatient Clinic
647 Wayah Street
Franklin, North Carolina 28734
(828) 369-1781
Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Hickory Community Based Outpatient Clinic
2440 Century Place SE
Hickory, North Carolina 28602
(828) 431-5600
Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Rutherford County Community Based Outpatient Clinic
374 Charlotte Road
Rutherfordton, North Carolina 28139
(828) 288-2780
Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.