

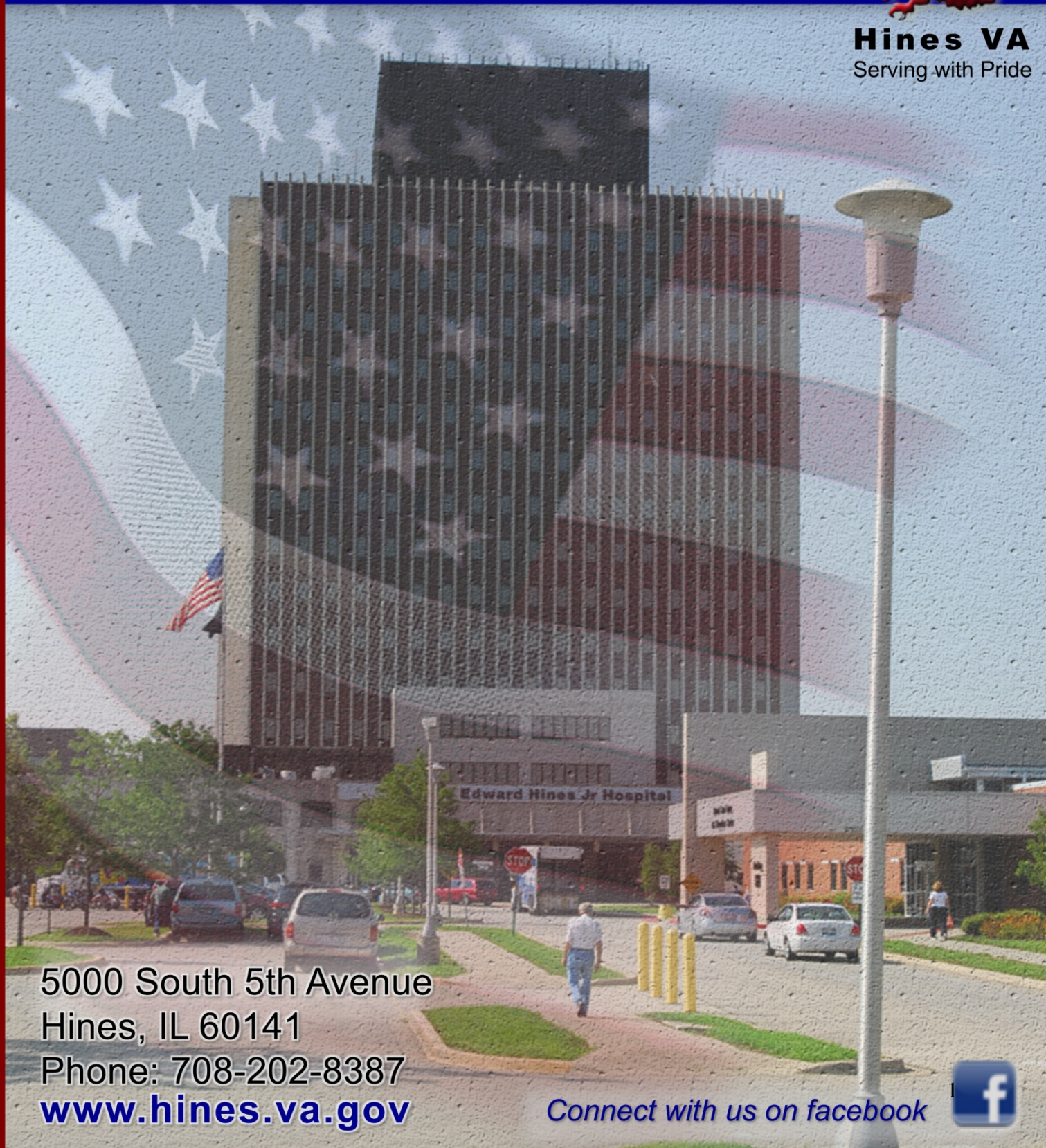
*Welcome to the*

# **Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital**

## **New Patient Orientation Handbook**



**Hines VA**  
Serving with Pride



5000 South 5th Avenue  
Hines, IL 60141  
Phone: 708-202-8387  
[www.hines.va.gov](http://www.hines.va.gov)

*Connect with us on facebook*



Dear Veteran,

The staff and volunteers of Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital extend a warm welcome to you! We appreciate the opportunity to work with you in striving for your best health. In doing so, we encourage you to actively partner with your team of health care providers. Become involved in your care and involve your family/caregivers, too.

Our goal at Hines is to provide you with high quality, preventive and medical care with excellent outcomes. Staff is dedicated to caring for you, the Veteran. We choose our employees with care, looking for people who symbolize our mission.

Thank you for choosing Hines and allowing us to serve you. We look forward to seeing you and will do our best to make your visit as pleasant, efficient and complete as possible.

Hines VA Leadership



<b>Table of Contents</b>	
<b>Mission, Vision, and Values</b>	5
<b>Checklist for New Enrollees</b>	6
<b>How VA Health Care Works for You</b>	7
• List of Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs)	7
• Primary Care and Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT)	8
• Specialty Care Programs Offered at Hines	9
• If You Live in More than One Place or Travel a Lot	9
• Fee Basis	10
• Please Don't Be a No-Show	10
<b>Co-Pay Requirements for Prescriptions</b>	11
<b>Disability Compensation Benefits</b>	12
<b>Emergency Care</b>	14
<b>Your Medicine</b>	17
<b>Co-Managed, Dual Care (Care from private doctor <i>and</i> VA)</b>	20
<b>Mental Health Services</b>	22
<b>Services for OEF/OIF/OND Combat Veterans</b>	24
<b>Crisis Prevention</b>	26
<b>VA Health Care Services</b>	28
• Inpatient Care Services	28
• Ancillary Care Services	29
• Specialty Care Services	29
• Long Term Care	30
• Dental Care	31
• Health Promotion and Disease Prevention	31

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care Management and Social Work Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)</li> <li>▪ Medical Foster Home</li> <li>▪ Caregiver Support</li> <li>▪ Lodging: Fisher House and Hoptel</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	31
• Prosthetics	32
• Women’s Health Program	33
• Minority Veterans Program	33
<b>Veteran Experience (Advocacy) Program</b>	35
<b>Advance Directives</b>	36
<b>Health Education Programs and Services</b>	38
<b>Hines Services and Facilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Chapel</li> <li>• Retail Store</li> <li>• ATM</li> <li>• Post Office</li> <li>• Barber Shop</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Release of Information</li> <li>• Outpatient Pharmacy</li> <li>• Voluntary Service</li> </ul>	39
<b>Eligibility and Benefits</b>	41
<b>How to Access VA Health Care</b>	43
<b>Patient Rights and Responsibilities</b>	45
<b>Therapeutic Boundaries</b>	47
<b>Partner with Your VA Providers</b>	49
<b>My HealtheVet</b>	51
<b>Healthy Living</b>	53
<b>Ethics Consultation</b>	59
<b>Important Phone Numbers</b>	60
<b>Contributors</b>	61



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## Hines Mission, Vision, and Values

### Mission:

Proudly serving our Veterans by providing compassionate, comprehensive care of the highest quality supported by experience, education and research.

### Vision:

Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital is committed to providing the highest quality compassionate, timely care through evidenced based, patient centered, integrated health care. Hines VAH is educating the leaders of tomorrow's health care delivery through academic affiliations and the pursuit of the most advanced medical practices through world renowned research programs. Hines VAH is an employer of choice, an active community partner and a participant in national emergencies.

### Values:

**P—Professionalism:** Our success depends on creating a highly-skilled, involved and diverse workforce. We create a culture that fosters collaborative practice and innovation in a healthy work environment that allows staff to excel.

**R—Respect:** We respect Veterans, their families, guests, stakeholders and each other.

**I—Integrity:** We practice open, truthful and timely communication with Veterans, employees and external stakeholders.

**D—Dedication:** We are dedicated to increase our service to Veterans, both in volume and method and to promote wellness of our patients and interdisciplinary teamwork.

**E—Excellence:** We strive to exceed the expectations of Veterans and their families. We strive to perform at the highest level of competence and take pride in our accomplishments.



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## Checklist for New Enrollees to VA Health Care

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

- Find the VA health care facility nearest you. A Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) may be an option for you. See the listing of CBOCs on page 7.
- Learn the names of your Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) (eg. Primary Care Provider, RN Care Manager, Health Associate or LPN, Health Clerk)
- Learn how to make and cancel (if necessary) appointments.
- Learn how to transfer your medical records and prescriptions to VA.
- Learn how to fill and refill prescriptions.
- Learn how to use VA telephone care.
- Learn what to do in case of emergency.
- Learn where to get care after hours.
- Learn how to take an active role in your health care as a partner with your PACT.
- Learn how to take care of your health.
- Register for My Health eVet to take full advantage of all its online features for Veterans.



## Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital

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# How VA Health Care Works for You

## Choose a Facility

You have a choice of facilities where you can receive primary care. You may receive primary care at one of the primary care clinics at the main hospital:

Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital  
5000 South 5th Avenue  
Hines, IL 60141

Hines is a 471 bed hospital located 12 miles west of downtown Chicago on a 147-acre campus. Hines is the largest VA in the state of Illinois, where more than one million Veterans live.

Or, you may receive primary care at one of the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs):

### **Aurora CBOC**

161 South Lincolnway  
North Aurora, IL 60542  
Phone: 630-859-2504  
Fax: 630-859-2508

### **Kankakee CBOC**

581 William Latham Dr  
Bourbonnais, IL 60914-2435  
Phone: 815-932-3823  
Fax: 815-932-3827

### **Elgin CBOC**

450 Dundee Ave  
Elgin, IL 60120  
Phone: 847-742-5920  
Fax: 847-742-6124

### **LaSalle CBOC**

4461 North Progress Blvd  
Peru, IL 61354  
Phone: 815-223-9678  
Fax: 815-223-9683

### **Joliet CBOC**

1201 Eagle Street  
Joliet, IL 60432  
Phone: 815-740-8100  
Fax: 815-740-8101

### **Oak Lawn CBOC**

10201 S. Cicero Ave  
Oak Lawn, IL 60453  
Phone: 708-499-3675  
Fax: 708-499-3715

Choose the facility that is most convenient for you. Once you choose a facility, go there for your care so you will get to know your provider and primary care team, and they will get to know you.

## Get a Primary Care Provider and Become Part of PACT

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

You will be assigned a primary care provider—a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician’s assistant—who is part of a team. The VA is calling this a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT). Your core team, which we call a “teamlet,” consists of your provider, nurses and a clerk. Your team may also include pharmacists, social workers, dietitians, other health professionals, and support staff.

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

The team will:

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

As part of the team, we ask that you:

- Be prepared for your visit – make a list of your questions or concerns.
- Arrive on time with a proper ID.
- Provide at check-in, updated insurance information and any changes in your phone numbers, address and emergency contact.
- Bring all of your medicines.
- Bring any forms you would like completed.

Between visits, we ask that you:

- Contact the 24-hour Nurse Advice Line at 708-202-3800, if you have symptoms you are concerned about.

## Other Primary Care Services

Certain Veterans may receive primary care in specific clinics. These include women Veterans and OEF/OIF/OND Veterans or those with spinal cord injury or HIV. Other primary care services include:

- **Geriatric Clinic** – Provides primary care to elderly Veterans in a clinic setting at the Community Living Center (CLC).
- **Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)** – HBPC provides primary care services in the Veteran’s home. It is for elderly or disabled Veterans who



are homebound or for whom routine clinic based care is not an option. Home care services have some limits. The services are also based on your personal treatment plan. Talk to your primary care provider if you have questions. **For more information, call the HBPC main office at 708-202-2051.**

- **Home Telehealth (HT)** – HT provides a special telemessaging device to Veterans in their home. The Veteran or caregiver is taught to send certain information, such as blood pressure, weight, blood glucose, etc., to Hines through the telemessaging device. This allows health care providers to review the data and make any changes to your treatment plan. Talk to your primary care provider if you have questions. **For more information, call the HT office at 708-202-7352.**

## If You Need to See a Specialist

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

### Specialty Care Programs Offered at Hines (among others as listed throughout this handbook)

- Substance Use Programs
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Program
- Homeless Program
- Polytrauma Network Site for severely injured Veterans
- Blind Rehabilitation Center
- Spinal Cord Injury Acute Care and Residential Care Facility
- Community Living Center
- Women's Health, including co-located gynecological services, social work services, and mental health services
- Preservation, Amputation, Care and Treatment Program
- Hospice Care and Respite Care
- Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Combat Veteran Case Management
- Comprehensive Inpatient Rehabilitation Program

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

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

If you travel a lot or live in more than one location, you may need to arrange for care at more than one VA facility. When you plan extended travel outside your usual VA care area, please give your primary care clinic and pharmacy:

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

Routine prescription refills can be sent to you at your temporary address. Be sure to allow time (approximately 2 weeks) for the refills to arrive at your temporary address by mail.

## **Fee Basis Care**

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

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

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

## **Please Don't Be a No-Show**

Did you know that when you don't show up for your appointment, it causes negative effects?

- When you do not show up, you miss out on having your medical condition checked. This may lead to a delay in you getting a diagnosis or treatment of a problem that arose since your last visit. This may also affect our ability to provide you with the best possible care.
- When you do not show up for an appointment, we are unable to use that time to serve another Veteran. This causes some Veterans to wait longer for a visit. It also deprives them of the quality care they deserve.
- Data shows that it costs an average of \$182.00 when a Veteran does not show up for a visit. Each year it costs the VA over half a billion dollars when Veterans do not show up for appointments. We would rather use the money to improve Veterans' health.

How can you help? Call and cancel your appointment if you are unable to show up. Also note that someone from the clinic will call you 2-3 days before your next appointment. We will remind you of that appointment and schedule a new visit if the time no longer works for you.

Each PACT teamlet has contact information. For non-urgent issues, call one of the PACT teamlet phone numbers and leave a message. For urgent issues, call the 24-hour Nurse Advice Line at 708-202-3800.



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## Co-Pay Requirements for Prescriptions

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

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



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## Disability Compensation Benefits

### What Is VA Disability Compensation?

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

### Who Is Eligible?

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

### How Much Does VA Pay?

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

- Very severe disabilities or loss of limb(s)
- A spouse, child(ren), or dependent parent(s)
- A seriously disabled spouse

### How Can You Apply?

**1. Apply online (recommended):** <http://www.vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp>.

--OR--

**2. Use a paper form**

Fill out VA Form 21-526, *Veterans Application for Compensation and/or Pension*. If you have any of the following materials, please attach them to your application:

- Discharge or separation papers (DD214 or equivalent)
- Dependency records (marriage and children's birth certificates)
- Medical evidence (doctor and hospital reports)

Bring your application to: Hines VA Hospital, Compensation & Pension Clinic,  
Building 1, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Room C129, --OR--

Mail to: VA Regional Office, 2122 W. Taylor Street, Chicago, IL 60612

### **Related Benefits**

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

### **For more information**

Call toll-free 1-800-827-1000

or visit the website: <http://www.va.gov>.





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## Emergency Care

### In VA Facilities

If your VA facility has an emergency department and you live nearby, you should go there for emergency care.

### In Non-VA Facilities

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

### What is emergency care?

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

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

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

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

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

### If the doctor wants to admit me to the hospital, must I obtain approval from the VA?

- If the admission **is an emergency**—**NO**.
- If the admission **is not an emergency**—**YES**. You, a friend, a family member, or someone from the non-VA hospital must call the closest VA medical center and speak to the patient transfer or patient administration representative. This must be done within 72 hours of your arrival at the emergency room. If a VA bed is available and if you can be safely transferred, you must be moved. If you refuse to be transferred, VA will not pay for any further care.

## **Does my enrollment in the VA Health Care System change my coverage for emergency care?**

Yes, it might. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can explain your options.

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

Yes, it might. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can explain your options.

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

Yes, but this coverage is very different. VA will only pay for emergency care outside the US if your emergency is related to a service-connected condition. Contact the VA Health Administration Center at (877) 345-8179. You can find more information on the Foreign Medical Program at <http://www.va.gov/hac/hacmain.asp>.

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

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

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

Please file your claim with the nearest VA medical center quickly. If your regional office recently determined your benefits, you should submit a reimbursement claim as soon as you can. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can explain the time limits for filing claims.

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

You may have to pay for a portion of your emergency care, depending on the care you received. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can explain these factors and how they affect your obligation to pay for part of your care.

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

This depends on your VA eligibility status and other factors. VA may pay all, some, or none of the charges after you are admitted. Your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor can explain these factors and their impact on your situation.

## Where can I get more information?

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

**Health Benefit Advisor Enrollment Coordinators at Hines:  
708-202-8387, x24486**



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## Your Medicine

### VA Pharmacy Benefits

VA has excellent pharmacy benefits. You can get medicines and medical supplies your VA provider orders for you.

If you are transferring your prescriptions to VA, your VA providers may need to replace some of your medicines with similar ones carried by the VA pharmacy. VA providers will work closely with your community provider to coordinate your care. You must bring information from your community provider that explains why the medicine was prescribed, the name of the medicine, and the dose.

Some medicines are restricted to patients meeting certain criteria. They may be provided to you if you meet these criteria developed based on efficacy, safety, and cost.

By law, VA pharmacy cannot fill a prescription written by a non-VA provider. VA is not responsible to pay for medicines filled at a private pharmacy. Refer to the **Co-Managed/Dual Care** section for further information.

### Pharmacy Co-payments

Depending on your eligibility, you may need to pay a co-payment for your medicines. Depending on your finances, you may apply for free medicines. You can get information about patient eligibility from the benefits counselor at your local VA facility.

By law, the pharmacy cannot take back medicines from patients. In some cases, refunds may be provided if the payment made was the result of pharmacy error and the medicine was dispensed from the VA pharmacy.

### Pharmacy Telephone Care System

This system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can use it to:

- Check on a prescription.
- Learn about your medicine.
- Order refills for your medicines.
- Talk to someone in the Hines VA pharmacy during business hours (Mon – Fri, 8am to 4:30pm).

You need a touch-tone telephone to use this service. Before you call, have at hand your Social Security Number and the prescription number printed on the bottle. The automated phone system will give you step-by-step instructions. Please make sure your telephone is set on tone rather than pulse so that the automated system works properly. **The number to call is 708-202-2375.**

## New Prescriptions

A pharmacist will talk with you about any new medicine your provider orders for you. You can pick up new prescriptions at the Hines VA Outpatient Pharmacy or have them mailed to your home. Mailed prescriptions take about 14 days to arrive.

## Refills for Prescriptions

You can request refills in any of these ways:

1. Call the telephone ordering system using a touch-tone phone **708-202-2375**.
  - The automated phone system will give you step-by-step instructions.
  - Before you start, have at hand your full Social Security Number and the prescription number printed on the bottle.

--OR--

2. Mail the refill slip that comes with your prescription.

--OR--

3. Use the Internet
  - Enroll in My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet to use the prescription refill feature. Log on to the website at <http://www.myhealth.va.gov> for more details on how to create an account.

--OR--

4. Drop off your refill slip at the Hines VA Outpatient Pharmacy.

Request refills at least 2-3 weeks before you need more medicine to allow time for your prescription to be refilled and mailed to you. Note that there may be delays in shipping due to national shortages.

When you get your refill, check the bottle to make sure these things are correct:

- Your name on the bottle.
- The name of the medicine.



- The color and shape of the medicine matches the description printed on the label.
- The amount you should take for each dose.
- The directions you should follow for each dose.

**If you have any questions about your refill, please call the Pharmacy Call Center at 708-202-2375.**

You will need a new prescription when your current prescription has no more refills if you need to stay on the medicine. Contact your VA provider as soon as possible to have the new prescription ordered. It's a good idea to check your medicines before each visit with your provider, to see how many refills are left. Then you can ask for a new prescription at the visit.

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

### **Additional Information**

You can get more information about your medicines in several ways:

- Talk to a VA pharmacist
- Talk to your provider
- Use these websites on the Internet:
  - Log on to the My Health<sup>e</sup>Vet website at <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>
  - Log on to the National Library of Medicine website at <http://www.medlineplus.gov>



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## **Co-Managed Care/Dual Care**

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

### **VA Policy**

If you are seeking care, medicines, or supplies from VA, you must enroll in VA health care and have a primary care provider who manages your care. You must do this even if some of your care is provided in the community.

Specialty services will be provided according to the local facility or Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) policy, once you are enrolled in primary care.

### **VA Provider Responsibilities**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Patient Responsibilities**

You need to give your VA provider the name, address, and telephone number of all your private doctors. You should also give your private doctors the same information about your VA provider.

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

If you would like information from your VA medical record sent to your private doctor, you may need to sign a form allowing the VA to send the records.

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

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

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



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## Mental Health Services

The Mental Health Service Line (MHSL) offers the full spectrum of behavioral health care services. Our programs include integrated primary care, psychiatric, substance abuse, and social work services. Care is provided for inpatients and outpatients. Residential, transitional, and recovery-oriented treatment is also provided. Mental Health services are offered at the main campus and the six CBOCs. The number of staff in the MHSL and available programming has greatly expanded in the past few years. The MHSL has done very well in meeting local and VA Central Office performance measures and monitors. Our goal is to help Veterans maintain health. We support recovery and enable Veterans with mental health problems to live meaningful lives in their communities and achieve their full potential.

VA mental health services and programs include:

- Addiction Treatment Program
- Compensated Work Therapy
- Geriatrics
- Home Based Primary Care
- Homeless Veteran Program
  - ✓ There is also a VA National Homeless Call Center
  - ✓ Toll free phone number is: 1-877-424-3838
- Inpatient Psychiatric Care
- Integrated Primary Care Behavioral Health
- Mental Health Intake Center
- Mental Health Intensive Case Management
- Military Sexual Trauma
- Neuropsychological Assessment
- OEF/OIF/OND Post Deployment Services
- Opioid Substitution Clinic (methadone maintenance)
- Outpatient Mental Health Clinic
- Psychiatric Consultation (for medically hospitalized patients)
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Services
- Research
- Social Work Services

- Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program
- Suicide Prevention Programs
- Telemental Health
- Tobacco Use Cessation
- Trauma Services Program (PTSD)





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## Services for OEF/OIF/OND Combat Veterans

The VA has set up some vital policies and services to enhance the ease of access and quality of care for certain returning service members. These include Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation New Dawn (OND). The services will help you readjust to civilian life and your Veteran status.

**5 Years of Cost Free Health Care** — OEF/OIF/OND combat Veterans may be eligible to receive cost free medical care. This would be for any potential combat related injury or illness sustained during your service in the Iraq/Afghanistan theater. It would last for five years after the date of your discharge or release. For more information, visit <http://www.oefoif.va.gov> or speak with an eligibility specialist at Hines VA Hospital: **708-202-8387, x28838**.

**180 day dental benefit** — OEF/OIF/OND combat Veterans may be eligible for one-time dental care. NOTE that you **must** apply within 180 days of your separation date from active duty. For more information, visit <http://www.oefoif.va.gov> or speak with an eligibility specialist at Hines VA Hospital: **708-202-8387, x28838**.

### Primary Care

At Hines VA Hospital OEF/OIF/OND combat Veterans may be assigned to a Primary Care Provider in our Iraqi/Afghanistan Post Deployment Clinic. There, your concerns will be addressed regarding any combat related injuries and illnesses that you may have received during service in the Iraq/Afghanistan theater. Please read more about the medical services offered at Hines VA Hospital starting on page 28 of this handbook.

### Mental Health Services

Hines VA Hospital knows how important it is to address your emotional health. We have developed specialized Mental Health Programs to help OEF/OIF/OND combat Veterans to readjust. These include Trauma Services Program (open to all eligible combat Veterans) and Addictions Treatment Program (open to all eligible Veterans). Please read more about our mental health services starting on page 22 of this handbook.

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

TBI/Polytrauma care is for Veterans and returning service members who have injuries to more than one physical region or organ system. One of the injuries is life threatening and results in physical, cognitive, psychological, or psychosocial impairment and functional disability. Hines VA Hospital TBI Clinic provides

specialized treatment and care for TBI related injuries. Some examples of Polytrauma include:

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

The team includes a Psychiatrist, Registered Nurse, Registered Nurse Educator, Social Worker, Physical Therapist, Recreational Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist, Neuropsychologist, and Speech Pathologist. They provide thorough, complete and high-quality care. More information about the program can be found at <http://www.polytrauma.va.gov/index.asp>.

### **OEF/OIF/OND Combat Veteran Case Management**

The Hines OEF/OIF/OND Case Management Team supports the OEF/OIF/OND service members during the transition process from soldier to civilian. The team does this by providing case management services. These services include linkage and referrals to VA and community services, chart management, supportive counseling, and advocacy. The purpose is to address the medical and emotional needs of the Veteran and his/her family. It is also to provide supportive services that help to reduce the stress of meeting basic needs and life goals. The team is lead by the OEF/OIF/OND Program Manager who:

- Coordinates program services
- Ensures that all administrative needs are met
- Oversees all outreach efforts

### **Contact the OEF/OIF/OND Program Manager at 708-202-2076.**

Case Managers screen every returning Veteran for combat stress, depression, PTSD, TBI, and any other service-related claims and benefits. They also provide ongoing care management as clinically needed. Our Transition Patient Advocates help the Veteran to understand and apply for VA, state, and community benefits and resources. They also provide transition assistance and support to active duty military and severely injured. The team is committed to providing excellent service to our nation's heroes.



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## Crisis Prevention

People experience emotional and mental health crises in response to a wide range of situations—from difficulties in their personal relationships to the loss of a job. For Veterans, these crises can be heightened by their experiences during military service. When emotional issues reach a crisis point, it's time to call on the Veterans Crisis Line for support.

### Sometimes a crisis may involve thoughts of suicide. Learn to recognize these warning signs:

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

### The following signs require immediate attention:

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

If you are a Veteran or know a Veteran who is showing any of the above warning signs, call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, [chat online](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/) at <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/> and click on the **Confidential Veterans Chat** button, or send a text message to **838255** to receive free, confidential support from an experienced, caring VA responder 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

## Resources

### Veterans Crisis Line

- 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1
- Chat online <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net> and click on the **Confidential Veterans Chat** button
- Send a text to **838255**
- Visit [www.Veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.Veteranscrisisline.net)

### VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators

- Each VA Medical Center has a suicide prevention coordinator to make sure Veterans receive needed counseling and services
- Resource locator - <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

### Mental Health

- VHA provides specialty inpatient and outpatient mental health services at its medical centers and community-based outpatient clinics. All mental health care provided by VHA supports recovery, striving to enable a person with mental health problems to live a meaningful life in the community and achieve his or her full potential.
  - For more information on VA Mental Health Services visit [www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov)

### Make the Connection

- MakeTheConnection.net is a one-stop resource where Veterans and their families and friends can privately explore information about physical and mental health symptoms, challenging life events, and mental health conditions. On this site, Veterans and their families and friends can learn about available resources and support. Visit [www.MakeTheConnection.net](http://www.MakeTheConnection.net) to learn more



## Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital

5000 South 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Hines, IL 60141  
708-202-8387



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## VA Health Care Services

Hines places a high priority on providing excellent health care to men and women Veterans from all eras. Hines provides a full spectrum of health care services, including health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis, therapy, rehabilitation, and palliative care.

VA currently operates 153 Medical Centers located across the United States that provide many kinds of treatment services, such as surgery, critical care, mental health care, orthopedics, pharmacy, radiology, and physical therapy. Hines is proud to provide a team of highly qualified health care professionals dedicated to the health care needs of all Veterans.

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

### Inpatient Care Services

VA inpatient care nationally includes a full spectrum of services:

- Acute Care Inpatient Units
  - Medical
  - Surgical
  - Psychiatric
- Dialysis acute treatment
- Intensive Care Units
  - Medical
  - Surgical
  - Psychiatric
  - Cardiac Specialty
- Transplant Care Units
- Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs



- Spinal Cord Injury Units
- Traumatic Brain Injury Units
- PolyTrauma Centers

## Ancillary Services

VA health care providers often use ancillary services to help diagnose and/or treat a Veteran's medical condition. These services include:

- Audiology (hearing)
- Blind Rehabilitation
- Dentistry
- Diagnostic Laboratory
- Kinesiotherapy
- Nutrition and Food Service
- Nuclear Medicine (imaging)
- Occupational Therapy
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Prosthetics (artificial limbs, equipment, devices)
- Radiology (x-rays and imaging, including mammography)
- Radiation Oncology (cancer care)
- Recreation Therapy
- Respiratory Therapy
- Social Work (case management services, discharge planning, family/caregiver support, community liaison/resource development)
- Speech Therapy
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Traumatic Brain Injury

## Specialty Care Services

Specialty care services provide expert knowledge to optimize the treatment provided in unique or complicated courses of care. Specialty care providers focus on a particular area of care and have extensive training and education. VA medical and surgical specialty care services include:

- Anesthesiology
- Bariatric Surgery (weight loss surgery)
- Cardiology – Vascular (heart and blood circulation)
- Cardiology – Interventional Cardiology and Cardiovascular Surgery
- Chaplain (spiritual support)
- Dermatology

- Diabetes and Endocrinology
- Eye Care (Optometry & Ophthalmology)
- Geriatric Care
- Gynecology
- Infectious Disease
- Nephrology (kidney)
- Neurology (nerves)
- Oncology (cancer)
- Pacemaker (heart)
- Pain Management
- Podiatry (feet)
- Pulmonary (lungs)
- Transplantation (heart, lung, liver, etc.)
- Urology

## Long Term Care

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

Institutional long term care includes:

- VA Community Living Centers, which were formerly known as VA Nursing Home Care Units. Most VA Community Living Centers are located on or near the grounds of VA medical centers throughout the United States. They serve Veterans of any age who:
  - Require post hospital short-term rehabilitation or skilled nursing services such intravenous therapy or wound care.
  - Have chronic stable conditions including dementia.
  - Need comfort and care at the end of life.
- State Veterans Homes, which are owned and operated by the states. VA pays a portion of the construction costs and a per diem for eligible Veterans. States set admission criteria.
- Contract Community Nursing Homes. VA contracts with privately owned community based nursing homes for nursing home care for eligible Veterans.

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

## Dental Care

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

**For more information about eligibility for VA dental benefits, contact VA at 1-877-222-8387 or <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility>.**

## Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

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

Veterans take part in health education programs to help them manage their health problems. They also take part in health promotion programs to learn healthy living skills.

## Care Management and Social Work Services

VA social workers are assigned to all patient treatment programs. This includes CBOCs. They provide services to Veterans across all programs and settings. Social workers coordinate care for psychosocial needs. Examples include case management services for Veterans at risk for homelessness, frail elderly, catastrophic illness or injury, and terminal illness. Social workers assure Veterans have appropriate care and needed services upon discharge from an inpatient or outpatient treatment program. Social Workers work with all eligible Veterans. They also assist family members and caregivers as part of the Veteran's treatment.

### Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)

HBPC provides primary care services in the Veteran's home. It is for elderly or disabled Veterans who are homebound or for whom routine clinic based care is not an option. Home care services have some limits. The services are also based on your personal treatment plan. Talk to your primary care provider if you have questions. **For more information, call the HBPC main office at 708-202-2051.**

### Medical Foster Home (MFH)

The Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) and Medical Foster Home (MFH) Programs provide a choice instead of nursing home placement. The Veteran, family or legal representative will pay for the care. The MFH caregivers will provide care as directed by HBPC. MFH focuses on improving the quality of life of disabled Veterans. It is not "shift care" that is the standard in assisted living or nursing homes. It is also not a transitional housing arrangement. Caregiver services include: personal care, room and board, living in a family home, and health care in a home to end-of-life. HBPC provides nursing, social work, pharmacy, medicine and recreation therapy. Optional services include psychology and psychiatry. Caregiver homes must be inspected. **Contact the Medical Foster Home Coordinator at 708-202-7878.**

## Caregiver Support

Hines VA Hospital provides a variety of services to offer support, education, and assistance to our family caregivers of our Veterans. Hines VA Hospital currently holds a Monthly Telephone Support Group for Caregivers of Older Persons and a Spouse Telephone Support Group for OEF/OIF/OND Veterans. Hines also supports the Building Better Caregivers online workshop and the Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program for Veterans who served post 9/11/2001.

There is also a toll free **Caregiver Support Help Line: 1-855-260-3274**. The help line will be open Mon – Fri, 7am to 10pm, and Sat, 9:30am to 5pm.

To learn more about these programs, contact your **Caregiver Support Coordinator, Jillian Inserra, LCSW, MSW, at (708) 202-2643**.

## Lodging

### Fisher House

Hines Fisher House is a “home away from home.” It provides comfortable, temporary lodging to family members of Veteran’s in the hospital. The Fisher House is within walking distance to the hospital. It is located on Tripp Avenue in front of the campus residential quarters. It is a 20 bedroom facility and features a common kitchen, spacious dining room, living room and laundry room. There is no charge to stay at the Fisher House, but all guests do need to reside 50 or more miles from Hines VA Hospital and be medically stable to stay there. Please ask to speak with the Veteran’s Social Worker for more information or for a referral. **Contact the Hines Fisher House Manager at 708-202-7154, Mon – Fri, 7:30am to 4pm.**

### Hoptel

Hines Hoptel is a place to stay overnight at Hines VA. It may be used when your provider decides that you need overnight lodging, as part of your **outpatient** medical care. You need to meet certain criteria to use the Hoptel. These include:

- Being able to take care of yourself without any help
- Being able to get to appointments by yourself without any help
- Having all your medicines with you and being able to take them without any help
- Being able to use the toilet without any help
- Being medically and psychologically stable

**For information, call: 708-202-8387 ext 20432**

## Prosthetics

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

## Women's Health Program

Hines VA is committed to meeting women Veterans unique care needs. We deliver the highest quality health care, while offering the privacy, dignity, and sensitivity you deserve. The health care team, in our beautiful, redesigned Women's Health Center, is dedicated to serving you. We offer a range of comprehensive, women-specific, primary care services, including but not limited to:

- Gynecology/Urogynecology services
- Maternity care services, including delivery and care of the newborn
- Breast care services, including mammography
- Menopause management
- Reproductive health counseling, including birth control options
- Women's Mental Health services
- Military Sexual Trauma treatment
- Nutrition services
- Social Work services
- Clinical Pharmacist services

The Women's Health Center at Hines has several new features to better serve you. These include a spacious waiting area with a children's corner, a lactation room, adjoining restrooms for each patient exam room, and much more.

Hines' CBOCs also offer comprehensive primary care services. There are Primary Care Providers who are fully proficient in women's health at all six CBOCs. They are available to assist you. Hines also has a Women's Health Medical Director and has a full-time Women Veterans Program Manager, to ensure you receive the best care you deserve!

**For more information, contact the Hines VA Women Veterans Program Manager at 708-202-2075.**

## Minority Veterans Program

Our goal at Hines is to ensure that all Veterans are treated fairly and receive the best quality care. The Minority Veterans Program was established by the Center for Minority Veterans to focus mainly on underserved Veterans.

### **Veterans we serve**

- African American
- Alaskan Native
- Asian American
- Hispanic / Latino
- Native American / American Indian
- Native Hawaiian
- Pacific Islander

**The Minority Veterans Program Coordinator can help you by:**

- Serving as an advocate for Veterans who are both users and non-users of the VA system.
- Addressing your issues and concerns regarding VA services and benefits
- Linking you to resources available in your community.
- Educating and helping you access VA programs, services and benefits.

**For more information, contact the Hines VA Minority Veterans Program Coordinator at 708-202-2090.**



## Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital

5000 South 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Hines, IL 60141  
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## The Veteran Experience (Advocacy) Program

A Patient Advocate is an employee whose job is to help resolve your issues. The Patient Advocacy Program is for all Veterans and their families who receive care at VA facilities and clinics. This includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, minorities and disabled Veterans. We want you and your family to have someone to go to for discussion of your concerns or complaints, or to offer a compliment.

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

If you or your family member believes your concerns are not being addressed by your treatment team, you may contact a VA Patient Advocate. The Patient Advocate works directly with management and employees to help resolve your issues.

**If you need help getting care or getting problems resolved, please contact the Patient Advocate:**

**Location:** Building 228, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, room 1055  
**Hours:** Mon – Fri, 7:30am to 4pm  
**Phone:** 708-202-2716





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## Advance Directives

As a VA patient you have a say in the health care you receive. When you are ill, your doctor should explain what treatments there are for your illness so that you can decide which one is best for you. But if you were too ill to understand your treatment choices or to tell your doctor what treatment you want:

- Who would you want to make decisions for you?
- What type of health care would you want?
- What health care wouldn't you want?

Questions like these may be hard to think about, but they're important. That's why VA wants you to know about a legal form you can complete. It's called an advance directive.

### What is an Advance Directive?

An advance directive is a legal form that helps your doctors and family members understand your wishes about health care. It can help them decide about treatments if you are too ill to decide for yourself. For example, if you are unconscious or too weak to talk. There are two types of advance directives: durable power of attorney for health care and living will.

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

This form lets you name the person you trust to make health care decisions for you if you can't make them yourself—your “health care agent.” He or she will have the legal right to make health care decisions for you. You can choose any adult to be your agent. It's best to choose someone you trust, who knows you well and who knows your values. You should make sure the person is willing to serve as your agent. If you don't choose an agent, your doctor will choose someone to make decisions for you in the following order: legal guardian (if you have one), spouse, adult child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or a close friend. Your health care team, or a court, will make decisions for you in accordance with VA policy if none of the above is available.

### What is a Living Will?

A living will is a legal form that states what kinds of treatments you would or wouldn't want if you become ill and can't decide for yourself. It can help your health care agent and your doctor make decisions the way you want them to. Writing down what kind of treatment you would or wouldn't want can help make it easier for those who are asked to make decisions for you. Talk with your family, your health care agent, and

your doctor about your wishes so they won't have to wonder what you want and if they're doing the right thing.

### **For more information**

**For more information, contact Social Work Services at 708-202-8387, x25593.**

**For VA Form 10-0137, VA Advance Directive, go to:  
<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-0137-fill.pdf>**



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## Health Education Programs and Services

We provide many different types of health education programs and services at Hines and at the CBOCs. Participating in these programs will help you:

- Maintain your health and well-being.
- Learn to manage any health problems you may have.

Here are some of the program topics that we offer. A complete listing is on the Hines internet site at: <http://www.hines.va.gov/monthview.asp>.

### **Examples of Classes / Programs / Support Groups:**

- Addiction Treatment Family Program
- Addiction Treatment Program for Women Veterans
- Advance Directives (End-of-Life Treatment Decisions)
- Blood Glucose Monitoring
- Cancer Education and Support
- C.H.E.F. Cooking Class
- Diabetes Classes
- Family Empowerment Network Educational Workshop
- Healthy Eating
- High Blood Pressure
- Housing Urban Development / VA Supported Housing (HUD/VASH)
- Just for Women: Life Enrichment
- Low Vision
- Memory Workshop
- MOVE! (Weight management)
- Multiple Sclerosis
- S.A.F.E Program: **S**upport and **F**amily Education – Mental Health Facts for Families
- Tobacco Use Cessation

Please talk to your VA provider if you have questions. Details are listed on the Hines internet site: <http://www.hines.va.gov/monthview.asp>. You may also call the **Veterans Health Education Coordinator at 708-202-5687**.

Hines VA Hospital provides a Patient Health Information Center (PHIC). The PHIC is a resource center (library). The PHIC provides general health information for you and your family. You can get health information from a handout, DVD, or computer. There are models of body parts and books to read. If you cannot get to the PHIC, call and information can be mailed to you.

**PHIC Location:** Hines Library, Building 1, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Rm G100

**Contact:** Librarian, 708-202-4430 or 708-202-2000

## Services and Facilities

**Food Court/Canteen (VCS PatriotCafé)** – Sells hot lunch specials, sandwiches, salads, snacks, and beverages. Located on the 1st floor of Building 1. Hours: Mon – Fri, 7am to 4pm; Sat and Sun, 8:30am to 1:30pm. Closed on all federal holidays.

**The Coffee House** – Sells coffee, beverages, some breakfast items and sandwiches. Located in the Main Hospital Lobby (Building 200). Hours: Mon - Fri, 6:30am to 4pm; Sat, 7am to 2pm; Closed Sun and all federal holidays.

### Vending Machine Areas

Main Hospital (Building 200): 2nd floor; 3<sup>rd</sup> floor - GMC Clinic;

4<sup>th</sup> floor - Medicine Subspecialty Clinics; and 5<sup>th</sup> floor

Building 1, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, in the D-lobby and F-lobby; 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, D-section; 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, B-section; 4<sup>th</sup> floor, D-section

Building 228 – Mental Health, 1<sup>st</sup> floor in room off of main hallway

Building 128 – Spinal Cord Injury

Building 113 – Blind Center

Building 217 – CLC (ECC), 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in dining room; 1<sup>st</sup> floor dining room

VCS PatriotExpress located in between Canteen and Retail Store

### Chapel – Main Chapel located in Building 200, 1st Floor

- *Catholic Mass held 12 noon Mon – Fri, and 8:30am Sun, in Main Chapel*
- Catholic Mass held 11am Sun, in Bldg 217, CLC (ECC), Rm 2A-26
- Jewish Services held on Jewish holidays in Main Chapel - to be announced
- Muslim Prayer Service held 1:15pm Fri, in Main Chapel
- Protestant Worship Service held 8am Sun, in Bldg 228, 2 South
- *Protestant Worship Service held 9:45am, Sun and Wed, 1pm in Main Chapel*
- Protestant Worship Service held 11am Sun, CLC (ECC), 2-C Dining Room

*NOTE: Italics above means that Mass/service is available on Channel 3 on inpatient TVs*

**Retail Store / VCS PatriotStore** – Hours: Mon - Fri, 7am to 4:30pm; Sat, 8:30am to 3:30pm; Sun 8:30am to 1:30pm. Closed on all federal holidays.

**ATM** – Located in Building 1, 1st floor, in the F-lobby and another inside Patriot Express Vending Room (in between Canteen and Retail Store)

**Post Office** – (Zip code: 60141) - Hours: Mon - Fri, 7:30am to 3:30pm. Closed on Sat, Sun, and all federal holidays. Lobby is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Mail

boxes are located in the post office and in the glassed-in entryway of the Main Hospital (Building 200).

**Barber Shop** - Hours: Mon - Fri, 8am to 3pm. Closed on Sat, Sun, and all federal holidays.

### **Parking**

Parking is free on the Hines campus for all patients and visitors. Patients being admitted are asked to have a friend or family member drive them to the hospital. If this cannot be done, park in any parking lot on campus.

We offer free valet parking when you come to the facility for an outpatient appointment. It is located at the front entrance of the Main Hospital. Valet hours are from 6:30am to 6pm. If you have any questions about where to park when you come to the facility, ask at an Information Desk.

### **Release of Information**

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

The Release of Information Office is located down the hall from the Food Court / Canteen in the F Section of the hallway, in room 104. Hours are Mon – Fri, 7:30am to 4:30pm. Contact this office by calling **708-202-2121**.

### **Outpatient Pharmacy**

Building 200, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, room B130  
Telephone: 708-202-7845  
Weekdays: 8am to 6pm  
Weekends: 8am to 4:30pm

### **Voluntary Service**

Volunteers are an important part of the health care system provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs. They serve Veterans throughout the United States. Volunteers are a valuable addition to the staff. They are considered without compensation (WOC) employees. At Hines, we have over 850 regularly scheduled volunteers. They assist the staff by performing many useful services.

Voluntary Service accepts monetary and non-monetary donations. We receive clothing, personal care items, reading material, etc. Donations are made by individuals, groups, and service organizations. The value of the donations is more than a million dollars per year. Many Veterans themselves are volunteers, who enjoy serving their fellow Veterans. For more information, contact Voluntary Service at **708-202-2523**.



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## Eligibility and Benefits

Every year VA publishes a booklet, *Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Overview*, which contains up-to-date information on eligibility, enrollment, and VA health care benefits. This booklet explains eligibility and health benefits for all Veterans. You got a copy of this booklet when you enrolled in VA health care. You can also download a copy of the booklet at:  
<http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/library/pubs/healthcareoverview>.

It is a very helpful booklet, and we encourage you to refer to it whenever you have questions about your eligibility for specific health care benefits. It also provides answers to frequently asked questions about eligibility and benefits.

Here are the topics in the booklet:

- **Online access to VA health information and services** using My HealtheVet
- **Eligibility and medical program benefits**
  - Basic eligibility
  - Minimum duty requirements
  - Women Veterans eligibility
  - Readjustment counseling services
  - Suicide prevention lifeline
  - Medically related travel benefits
- **VA health care enrollment**
  - Enrollment restriction
  - Recently discharged combat Veterans
  - Financial assessment (Means testing)
  - Catastrophically disabled
  - Income verification
  - Financial hardships
  - Veterans identification card
  - Updating your information
  - Private health insurance
  - Insurance collections
  - Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage

- **Priority Groups**
  - Priority Group 8 enrollment relaxation
- **Co-pays**
  - Types of co-pays—outpatient, medication, inpatient, long-term care
  - Veterans who are not required to make co-pays
  - Services exempt from inpatient and outpatient co-pays
- **Acute care benefits**
  - Standard benefits—preventive care services, outpatient diagnostic and treatment services, inpatient diagnostic and treatment services, prescription drugs
  - Limited benefits—emergency care, ambulance services, dental care, durable medical equipment, eyeglasses, hearing aids
  - General exclusions
  - VA foreign medical program
- **Long-term care benefits**
  - Standard benefits
  - Financial assessment for long-term care services
  - Limited benefits
- **Additional VA health benefits for dependents and survivors**

To get more information on VA health care eligibility and benefits, call toll-free 1-877-222-VETS [8387] or call Hines at 708-202-8838.





## Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital

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## How to Access VA Health Care

### VA Telephone Care

You can access VA care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Use VA's telephone service to:

- Schedule appointments for all clinical areas, including primary/ambulatory care, CBOCs, and specialty clinics.
- Call the VA pharmacy to access the automated telephone refill services for medications or supplies.
- Get advice about your health care concerns.

### During Business Hours (Mon – Fri, 8am to 4:30pm)

Call your primary care/specialty clinic to:

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

### After Business Hours (Evening, Night, Weekend, Federal Holidays)

Call the after-hours 24-hour Nurse Advice Line at **708-202-3800**.

Use this service to:

- Make an appointment, change an appointment, or cancel an appointment. If you know you are going to miss an appointment, please

cancel it as soon as possible so that another Veteran can get an appointment.

- Get advice about your health concerns.

The advice line is staffed by registered nurses who will discuss your medical concern and work with you to determine the care you need. The registered nurse will document the telephone call in your electronic medical record and notify the appropriate medical provider.

Some VA medical centers use an automated telephone call to remind patients of an upcoming clinic appointment. This helps reduce no-shows and improves access for all Veterans.



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## **Patient and Community Living Center Resident Rights and Responsibilities**

We are honored that 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, other Veterans and the Nation, we are committed to improving the quality of health care. We also train future healthcare professionals, conduct research, and support our country in times of national emergency.

In all these activities, our employees will respect and support your rights as a patient. Your rights and responsibilities are outlined in this document. Please talk with your treatment team 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 will honor your personal and religious values.
- You or someone you choose has the right to keep and spend your money. You will receive an accounting of any funds VA holds for you.
- Treatment will respect your personal freedoms. In rare cases, medication or physical restraints may be used, if all other efforts to keep you or others free from harm have not worked.
- As an inpatient or nursing home resident, you may wear your own clothes. You may keep personal items. This will depend on your medical condition.
- As an inpatient or nursing home 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 nursing home 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 nursing home resident, you can organize and take part in resident groups in the facility. Your family also can 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, residents, 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 receive 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, if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying your portion of any costs related to your care.
- Your medical record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your consent unless required 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 discuss this with 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 receive 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.
- Being involved in your care is very important for you to get the best possible results. 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. Ask questions when you do not understand something about your care.
- 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 nursing home 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 should help the treatment team by telling them if you have pain and if the treatment is working.
- As an inpatient or nursing home resident, you will receive any transportation needed 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. 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

- We encourage you to seek help from your treatment team or a patient advocate if you have problems or complaints. You will receive information you can understand about the complaint process. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.

## Therapeutic Boundaries

We have certain codes of conduct for our employees to follow at Hines VA Hospital. Some of them have to do with what we call “**Therapeutic Boundaries.**” This means that we are expected to deal with you only on a professional level.

It is not acceptable for the following things to occur.

- Employees are not allowed to have any type of business relationship with you. Here are some examples. **Employees may not:**
  - Buy something for you at a nearby store or Hines Canteen with your money.
  - Buy anything from you or gamble with you.
  - Borrow or lend money to or from you.
  - Accept gifts from you or your family.
  - Give you a ride in our personal vehicle.
  - Mail packages at the Post Office with your money.

- Handle money transactions for you at the Agent Cashier.
- Employees may not have a dating, personal, social, or sexual relationship with you.
- If you have been in a relationship with an employee before getting care here, there are certain rules also. That employee is not allowed to provide care to you when you come to a clinic or hospital, unless it cannot be avoided.

**Our goal is to treat you with dignity and respect. We do not want to overstep any boundaries with you when care is provided. If you have any questions or concerns about this, we have someone for you to contact. Call the Patient Advocate at 708-202-2756.**



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## **Partner With Your VA Providers**

### **Veteran-Centered Care**

VA provides Veteran-Centered care. We will focus all our efforts on giving you a treatment plan based on your individual needs. We will treat you with dignity and respect. We will ask you about and honor your values, preferences, and needs. We will provide safe, high quality care that is designed for you. You will receive the right care, at the right time, in the right care setting. We will coordinate your care to make sure we meet your needs. We will explain your health problems and treatment options in ways you can understand. We will teach you about self-care and help you learn to manage your health problems.

You are the center of your treatment team. The team wants to work with you to design the best care plan for you. The clinicians on the team have expertise in preventing, diagnosing, and treating illness. You have expertise about your body and your life. Together, you can create a plan to maintain your health and well-being.

### **Health Care Partnerships**

We know that patients who are actively involved in their health care have better results and are more satisfied with their care.

There is no single “right” way to partner with your treatment team. There are many ways to work together, and they may change over time. Your VA providers will talk with you about this. Together, you can find ways to build a partnership that meets your needs and offers you the best possible outcomes.

### **What You Can Do**

You can take an active role in your health care in many ways.

- Give your treatment team accurate and complete information about:
  - Your current health problems
  - Your concerns about your health
  - Past illnesses
  - Hospitalizations
  - Your medicines, including over-the-counter and herbals
  - Other matters related to your health



- Plan ahead for your visits by writing down the questions and concerns you want to raise; share them with your provider at the beginning of each visit.
- Share your beliefs about your health problems and your treatment.
- Share your preferences for treatment options.
- Ask questions about anything that's not clear to you.
- Ask for written information and instructions you can keep and share with your family.
- Gather information about your health problems from your treatment team, the VA library, and websites such as My Health eVet.
- Participate in decisions about your health care—you and your provider should agree on what will be done during each step of your care.
- Know your medicines and why you take each one.
- Ask when and how you will get results of any tests or treatments.
- Make sure you have the name and telephone number of a person to call if you have a problem.
- Let your team know if you face any obstacles to your care or if your condition changes.
- Have a family member or friend come with you to help you, if you wish.
- Know the next steps in your care.
- Speak up if you have any concerns about the care you are receiving or if you think something is wrong.

## What Your VA Providers Will Do

Your providers will help you take an active role in your health care. They will:

- Ask if you have questions or concerns you want to discuss.
- Encourage you to talk about your health concerns and the impact on your life.
- Explain your health problems and treatment options in ways you can understand.
- Tell you their own treatment recommendations.
- Work with you so that, together, you can create a treatment plan that works for you.
- Ask you to take some responsibility for following the treatment plan you have developed together.



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## My HealthVet

### Website Features

My HealthVet is a website created especially for Veterans. You can use it to:

- Get accurate health information from sources you can trust.
- Refill your VA prescriptions and get information about your medicines.
- Communicate electronically with your VA provider for non-urgent health care questions and issues.
- View your VA appointments and your lab reports.
- Create your own personal health journal.
- Read VA news and feature stories.
- Link to VA benefits and services.

### Personal Health Journal

Your Personal Health Journal should fit your personal needs. You can use it to do any of these things:

- Keep track of all your providers.
- Keep track of your military health information.
- Record your personal health history.
- Keep track of your own vital readings, such as blood pressure or blood sugar, and monitor them over time.
- Keep a list of your medicines.
- Record your physical activity or food intake each day.
- Record your emergency contacts.

### Registration and Authentication

To take advantage of all the features of My HealthVet, you need to register on the website and be authenticated in person at Hines or a CBOC. The authentication process protects your privacy and your personal health information. Here's what to do:

1. Go to the website: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>.

2. Click on the “Register Today” button and follow the instructions to register as a VA patient.
3. Go back to the My HealtheVet home page.
4. Click on the “In-Person Authentication” link.
5. Watch the brief orientation video.
6. Print out, complete, and sign the My HealtheVet Release of Information form (Form 10-5345a-MHV).
7. Bring the form and a photo ID (Veterans ID card or driver’s license) to your next outpatient appointment and give it to the clerk.
8. The staff will verify who you are and complete the process.

## Coming Soon

New features will soon be added to My HealtheVet to give you more ways to take an active role in your health care. You will be able to:

- Check on possible drug interactions for your medicines.
- Decide who should have access to your personal health information—for example, family members, doctors, etc.

## More Information

**For more information on My HealtheVet, call the My HealtheVet Coordinator at 708-202-5633.**



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## Healthy Living

We are committed to providing you the highest quality health care. We also want to help you take care of yourself. There has been a lot of research in recent years on the best ways to maintain health and well-being. The behaviors listed below are among the ones that have the most impact on your health. We encourage you to make these behaviors part of your daily life.

At Hines and the CBOCs, we have a program focusing on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (HPDP). This program works to educate you and your Health Care Team about how to best to improve your health in these areas. For more information, talk to your VA Health Care Team and review the directory of VA health education programs and services. You may also visit the HPDP website at: <http://www.hines.va.gov/patients/hpdp/index.asp>

### **Contact information:**

Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program Manager  
708-202-8387 ext. 21228

Health Behavior Coordinator  
708-202-8387 ext. 23143

## Eat Wisely

Healthy eating habits can make a big impact on your health. Everyday food choices affect your body and how well it works. We should all eat a wide variety of foods to get the daily nutrients that we need. A typical adult would need the following nutrients if they are following a 2,000 calorie diet:

- 2 cups of fruit
- 2 ½ cups of a variety of colorful vegetables
- 6 servings of grains with at least half whole grains
- 6 ounces of meat, eggs, or cheese or 1 cup of cooked beans
- 5 teaspoons of oil, margarine, or salad dressing

To find out what you would need visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> and click on MyPlate.

**Nutrition and Food Service:** Healthy eating habits can make a big impact on your health. Everyday food choices affect your body and how well it works. The

dietitians at Hines are committed to providing services to meet your nutrition needs. Hines VA Nutrition and Food Service offers nutrition counseling for a healthy lifestyle and treatment for disease. Group nutrition classes are also available. If you have a nutrition question, please ask your provider to refer you to a nutrition clinic or class.

**Contact information:**

Clinical Nutrition Manager: 708-202-2345

Nutrition and Food Services Scheduling Clerk: 708-202-8387, ext. 23303

## Maintain Healthy Weight

To find the weight range that is right for you, check your Body Mass Index (BMI). It measures body fat based on your height and weight. Go to the BMI calculator from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at <http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>.

To stay at a healthy weight, balance calories from what you eat and drink with calories you burn off by your activities. To prevent gradual weight gain over time, make small decreases in food and beverage calories and increase physical activity.

**The MOVE! program** at Hines offers many options for treatment. All options focus on a patient centered lifestyle approach to weight loss. We help and encourage patients to incorporate healthy lifestyle changes focused on better nutrition and fitness while addressing their individual likes and dislikes. One size doesn't fit all! A consult is required from your provider to participate in the MOVE! program.

For more information on MOVE!, go to <http://www.move.va.gov/>.

**Contact information:**

Hines MOVE Coordinator: 708-202-7190

Nutrition and Food Services Scheduling Clerk: 708-202-8387, ext. 23303

## Be Physically Active

Staying active is central to a healthy lifestyle. Talk with your doctor about starting an exercise program that is right for you. For more information, go to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans at <http://www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/>.

## Be Tobacco Free

Smoking and other tobacco products can increase your risk of cancer, heart disease, and other health problems. All adults should avoid tobacco products. If you smoke, talk to your doctor about quitting. If you are pregnant and smoke,

quitting now will help you and your baby. Your doctor or nurse can help you, and you can also help yourself.

For tips on how to quit, go to: You Can Quit Smoking Now:  
<http://www.smokefree.gov>.

To talk to someone about how to quit, call the National Quitline:  
1-800-QUITNOW.

For more quit-smoking resources, go to: <http://www.healthfinder.gov/>, and search for "smoking." Another resource is: <http://www.ucanquit2.org>.

If you would like information about VA programs to help you quit smoking, please contact your VA Health Care Team.

## Limit Alcohol

If you choose to drink alcohol, drink in moderation (women should average no more than 1 drink a day AND drink no more than 7 drinks total per week; men should average no more than 2 drinks a day AND drink no more than 14 drinks total per week). Avoid "binge drinking." Binge drinking means drinking so much on one occasion that it leads to health and safety risks such as car crashes and injuries. For women, this usually occurs after about 4 drinks and for men after about 5 drinks. If you are concerned about your drinking, talk to your VA health care team about getting help. A standard drink is one 12-ounce bottle of beer or wine cooler, one 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits. If you are pregnant, do not drink any alcohol.

### **For more information go to:**

National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention website  
<http://www.prevention.va.gov>

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/moderate-binge-drinking>

Healthfinder: Drink Alcohol Only in Moderation

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=16>

## Get Recommended Screenings and Immunizations.

Talk to your provider about the preventive services you should have. The recommendations are based on your age and health status. They include immunizations and screening tests for potential health problems.

You can find a list of the recommended services for men and women at these websites:

Men: Stay Healthy at Any Age: <http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/healthymen.html>.

Women: Stay Healthy at Any Age: <http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/healthywom.html>.

My Healthfinder:

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/myHealthfinder.aspx>

## **Manage Stress**

Most people have some stress in their lives. It's important to learn how to manage the stress in your life because stress contributes to your risk for physical, social, financial, emotional, and cognitive health problems. You may not be able to remove stress from your life, but you can learn what causes you stress and how to take care of yourself during periods of stress.

VA also has excellent programs to help you manage post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Talk to your provider about your concerns, and learn about the many ways VA can help you manage stress in your life including information about our Trauma Services Programs.

### **For more information go to:**

National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention website

<http://www.prevention.va.gov>

Healthfinder: Manage Stress

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=45>

People who have strong ties to family and friends have higher levels of well-being than those without such support. These networks give you many benefits:

- a feeling of connection to other people
- the knowledge that other people consider you a friend
- the security of knowing you can help others and they will help you.

## **Be Safe**

There are actions you can take to protect yourself and those you love from harm. Common safety issues are sexually transmitted infections, falls, and motor vehicle collisions. Speak with your provider if you have questions or concerns with safety.

### **For more information go to:**

National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention website

<http://www.prevention.va.gov>

Healthfinder: Get Tested for Sexually Transmitted Infections

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicID=32&cnt=1&areaID=0>



Healthfinder: Lower Your Risk of Falling  
<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicID=17>

Safe driving resources  
<http://www.safedriving.va.gov/resources/driving.asp>

## Be Involved in Your Health Care

There are many ways to take an active role. Work with your health care team to improve your health. Give your health care team accurate and complete information about:

- Your current health problems
- Your concerns about your health
- Past illnesses
- Past hospitalizations
- Your medicines, including over-the-counter and herbals
- Other matters related to your health

Plan ahead for your visits by writing down the questions and concerns you want to raise. Share them with your provider at the beginning of each visit.

Share your ideas and beliefs about your health problems and treatments with your provider.

### For more information go to:

National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention website  
<http://www.prevention.va.gov>

My Health@Vet website  
<http://www.myhealth.va.gov>

Healthfinder: Take Charge of Your Health  
<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx/topicid=78>

Many VA facilities have health education programs and services to help you make healthy behaviors part of your daily life. Check out the directory of VA health education programs and services in the next section to see what's available for you.



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## Ethics Consultation

In health care, patients and families often face the difficult question of “what should be done?” The right choice for one patient may be the wrong choice for another. If you are unsure, or if you cannot agree with your health care team or your loved ones about what is best, you can ask for an ethics consultation.

### What is an Ethics Consultation?

Ethics consultation is a service provided by specially trained VA staff. When there is uncertainty or conflict about the right thing to do, ethics consultants work with patients, families, and staff to help them make good decisions to resolve these concerns. Ethics consultants will not investigate complaints or allegations of misconduct. Complaints or allegations of misconduct are handled by the Patient Advocate Office (708-202-2716).

### When should I think about asking for an Ethics Consultation?

Here are some examples of why Veterans and families ask for an ethics consultation:

- “I have to make a serious decision about a treatment that could affect how long I may live. After talking it over with my health care team, I am still not sure I agree with the doctor’s recommendation.”
- “My mother is too sick to make her own decisions. How do I know what is best for her now?”
- “Our family is unsure and upset. We don’t agree about the right thing to do for our brother’s care.”

### What Happens in an Ethics Consultation?

Ethics consultants will not make a decision for you, but they will help you figure out what is best for your situation. They will also:

- Ask about your concerns.
- Gather information from all the people involved.
- Determine if other experts are needed. For example, lawyers will be asked for legal opinions; medical specialists will be asked for medical opinions.

- Identify possible options.
- Make recommendations to you and the other people involved.
- Write a note in your health record if the ethics consultation relates to your medical care.

### **Who can request and Ethics Consultation?**

Any member of the health care team – physicians, nurses, social workers, the patient, and/or significant others – can request an ethics consultation at any time. To request an ethics consultation, you can speak with a member of your health care team or contact the Ethics Consultation Service Coordinator directly at 708-202-4128.

## Important Phone Numbers – Hines VA Hospital

**Main Hospital Phone Number: (708) 202-8387**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Extension</b>	<b>Direct Dial</b>
Admissions	20438	No direct dial
Agent Cashier	25520	(708) 202-5520
Appointment Scheduling	22707	(708) 202-2707
Canteen – Retail Store	21048	No direct dial
Chaplain Service	22531	(708) 202-2531
Compensation and Pension	27957	(708) 202-7957
DAV Transport	22575	(708) 202-2575
Eligibility	28838	(708) 202-8838
Eye Clinic	22061	(708) 202-2061
Mental Health Clinic	22002	(708) 202-2002
Patient Advocate	22716	(708) 202-2716
Patient Travel	22568	(708) 202-2568
Pharmacy Questions	23254	No direct dial
Pharmacy Refills	22375	(708) 202-2375
Public Affairs	25627	(708) 202-5627
Release of Information	22121	(708) 202-2121
Service Officer – American Legion	22569	(708) 202-2569
Service Officer – AMVETS	22564	(708) 202-2564
Service Officer – Paralyzed Veterans of America	25623	(414) 902-5655
Service Officer – Purple Heart	25904	(708) 202-5904
Social Work Service	22055	(708) 202-2055
Triage Nurse / 24 Hour Nurse Line	23800	(708) 202-3800
Veterans Benefits Counselor	22715, 22564, 25904	(708) 202-2715
Voluntary Service	22523	(708) 202-2523

### Specific Inpatient Unit Extensions

2 North	22023	Blind Center	22271
2 South	22815	CLC-1B (ECC-1B)	25095
7 East	22074	CLC-1C (ECC-1C)	22248
7 West	22039	CLC-2C (ECC-2C)	25104
8 <sup>th</sup> Floor	22723	CMICU	22760
9 East	22731	Emergency Dept.	22187
9 West	22737	RCF	22057
10 West	22045	SCI-North	22020
11 East	21256	SCI-South	22035
11 West	22773	SICU	21747

**Outpatient Numbers will be provided by your PACT Team or Primary Care Provider.**

## **Contributors**

Developed by the Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) New Patient Orientation Subcommittee:

### **Chairperson:**

Kitty Thomas, RN, MSN

### **Members:**

Ashley Bergmann, RD, CPT  
Kate Byrnes, MA, Licensed Social Worker  
Stella Caro, Supervisor P.A.S.  
Kathleen A. Ford, MSN, RN-BC  
Liz Gallichio, LCSW  
William S. Hohman, RN  
Allyn Keenan, LPN  
Madhavi Kottapalli, MD  
Laura Labbe, Pharm.D., BCPS  
Jennifer Lachtara, RN  
Lorry Luscri, MPH, CPH, RD, LDN  
Angela Morris, MPH, LCSW  
Mary Muth, Supervisor P.A.S.  
Latha Panicker, RN  
Tyrone Reed, Supervisor Beneficiary Travel  
Ann Sproat, PA-C  
Amy Taetzsch, RD  
Kellee Watkins, LCSW  
Julie Wilson, RD, LDN  
Erin O. Zerth, PhD, Psychologist

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