

Patient Handbook



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Welcome



Welcome to the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. I want to personally thank you for choosing our health care system.

We are proud to offer you world class medical care. We lead the nation in preventive health measures, clinical practice guidelines and patient satisfaction. Our Stanford affiliation further ensures our patients have access to the latest innovations in health care. Many of our staff physicians are also Stanford faculty.

We are able to provide comprehensive medical services at ten locations for your convenience. Some locations also offer a variety of special services.

Your care at VA Palo Alto Health Care System will start by assigning you a primary care provider. Your primary care team will partner with you in assuring your medical needs are met and that you are referred for any specialty care you may need.

At VA Palo Alto Health Care System, we never forget whom we serve. We are proud to provide care to our nations heroes - each of you. To ensure we meet your needs, you will receive patient satisfaction surveys. This will be your opportunity to tell us what we do well and where we can improve. We want you to be able to rate the overall quality of your care as excellent. You deserve nothing less.

Again, thank you for putting your care in our hands. Thank you for choosing VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth J. Freeman". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Elizabeth Joyce Freeman
Director

Putting Veterans First!

VAPAHCS' mission statement describes the fundamental purpose of our organization.

Mission Statement

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

Vision Statement

To be a patient-centered integrated health care organization for veterans providing excellent health care, research, and education; an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner; and a back-up for National emergencies.

Core Values

Trust, respect, excellence, commitment and compassion

Our Goals

- We want to be your provider of choice
- We want you to rate our care as excellent
- We want to partner with you in your healthcare
- We want you to get all the information you need to understand your medical care and treatment plan
- We want you to know why tests are ordered and how you'll receive your test results
- We want you to understand your medications and know about their potential side effects

Primary Care

When you come to the VA Palo Alto Health Care System, you will be assigned a primary care provider. This provider is a physician or nurse practitioner who is part of the primary care team that will be in charge of your medical care. Our goal is to have you be seen by your primary care provider, or another member of that team, when you want and need to be seen. Your primary care provider can refer you to a specialist when needed.

We utilize principles of Advanced Clinic Access to improve clinic appointment availability. When you are due for an appointment with your primary care provider, you will receive a post card in the mail asking you to call the Patient Scheduling Unit (PSU) to schedule an appointment at a time convenient for you. If you have an urgent health care need, you may be seen as soon as possible by calling the Telephone Care Program (TCP) at 1-800-455-0057. Primary care clinics have no walk-in availability.

Urgent appointments are all made through TCP.

First time visit reminders:

- Bring completed forms (Adult History Worksheet).
- Bring any records from other doctor visits and bring all of your medicines to your first visit.
- Please arrive early to allow time for check-in and health screening. A Health Screening Appointment is scheduled 20 minutes before your Primary Care Provider appointment.
- Come at least 2 hours early if you need to have laboratory work or x-rays done.
- Bring a list of your questions and concerns.
- If you are late for an appointment, your provider may not be able to see you. We consistently have a full schedule and late appointments often have to be rescheduled. Please arrive early!
- When laboratory tests are ordered, ask your provider how results will be shared with you and when you can expect to be notified.

Hours and Locations

Primary Care Clinics

Palo Alto

Building 5
2nd floor
(650) 493-5000
Clinic B ext. 63707
Clinic C ext. 63069

Livermore

Building 62
3rd floor
(925) 373-4700

Stockton

7777 South Freedom Dr.
French Camp, CA
1st floor
(209) 946-3401

Modesto

1524 McHenry Avenue
Modesto, CA
3rd floor
(209) 557-6201

Sonora

13663 Mono Way
Sonora, CA 95370
Phone: (209) 588-2601

San Jose

80 Great Oaks Blvd.
San Jose, CA
(408) 363-3000

Monterey

3401 Engineering Lane
Seaside, CA
(831) 883-3800

Capitola (closed on Fridays)

1350 41st Ave., Suite 102
Capitola, CA
(831) 464-5519

Fremont

39199 Liberty Street
Fremont, CA
(510) 791-4000

Ambulatory Care Clinics are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

The Ambulatory Care Clinics are closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Day

President's Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Columbus Day

Veterans' Day

Thanksgiving and Christmas

Emergency Care

Palo Alto is the only site with 24 hour emergency or urgent care services.

If you have an emergency: **DO NOT** try to drive to the Palo Alto emergency room or the other clinic sites. Seek emergency care by calling 911. VA does not provide emergency transportation to the hospital. Whether or not VA pays for an ambulance is determined **AFTER** you have been evaluated in the Emergency Room.

Important VA Phone Numbers

Telephone Care Program/Advice Nurse: 1-800-455-0057

- Make or change an appointment
- Urgent medical need
- Medical advice

Pharmacy: 1-800-311-2511

- Order Refills—automated system
- Check Status of your prescription—automated system (e.g. when was it mailed)
- Zero Refills or Expired prescriptions
- Medication related question (e.g. side effects, dosing)
- Need your prescription number

Your VA provider

- You need to relay medication changes from a private physician to your VA provider
- Laboratory or other test results

Capitola

(831) 464-5519

Livermore

(925) 373-4700 ext.35451

Modesto

(209) 557-6200

Monterey

(831) 883-3820

Palo Alto 2nd floor clinic

(650) 493-5000

Clinic B ext. 63707

Clinic C ext. 63069

San Jose

(408) 363-3000 ext.73516

Sonora

(209) 588-2600

Stockton

(209) 946-3400

Fremont

(510) 791-4000

Business Office: 1-866-347-2353

- Question about your bill
- Question about your eligibility

Release of Information:

- Get a copy of your medical records
- Want your medical records sent to another provider
- Want your VA provider to complete certain forms
Palo Alto: (650) 493-5000 ext.66406
Livermore: (925) 373-4700 ext.35217

Hospital Operator: (650) 493-5000

- Need a phone extension for a specific service

Join us on Facebook and Become a Fan!!

Please take a moment to check out the page, if you are on Facebook, we would appreciate it if you would become a Fan – it will be an excellent vehicle to get up-to-date information and to support our health care system. (If you are worried about your privacy, we cannot access your personal page when you become a Fan.) Please help pass the word to other staff and, most importantly, you our Veterans.

Please bookmark this page: <http://www.facebook.com/#/pages/Palo-Alto-CA/VA-Palo-Alto-Health-Care-System/248662598157>, or follow us on Twitter: [http:// www.twitter.com/va-paloalto](http://www.twitter.com/va-paloalto).

Telephone Care Program

The Telephone Care Program (TCP) gives you direct access to a Patient Services Advisor and an Advice Nurse who can assist you with the following:

- Give health care advice.
- Help you decide if you should come to the clinic or hospital.
- Suggest things you might try for home care.
- If the problem is urgent, Telephone Care can make you an appointment with the Sameday Clinic or your Primary Care Provider or team for either that same day or the next day.
- Answer questions about your appointments including canceling and rescheduling.

If you are unable to keep an appointment, please cancel it by calling the Telephone Care Program. Thousands of appointments were lost last year due to “No Shows.”

By calling to cancel your appointment at least 48 hours in advance, you will open up a space for another veteran to be seen.

Hours of Operation

The TCP operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, except holidays. The TCP appointment line experiences a high call volume during Mondays and Tuesdays. In order to provide better customer service, if your call is not urgent, we recommend that you call during non-peak times. The non-peak times are on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

For **urgent health concerns**, an Advice Nurse is available 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays.

Call Toll Free: 1-800-455-0057

If it's an emergency: Seek emergency care by calling 911. VA does not provide emergency transportation to the hospital. Whether or not VA pays for an ambulance is determined AFTER you have been evaluated in an Emergency Room.

Pharmacy / Prescriptions

VA has excellent pharmacy benefits. There is a national formulary for medications. VA doctors, pharmacists and nurses have developed this list of medications that are safe and cost-effective. If you are transferring your pharmacy needs to VA, your new providers may need to replace some of your medications with similar medications carried by the VA pharmacy. Therefore, it is very important to bring a current list of medications to your first doctor visit. Medications for psychiatric or nervous disorders must be evaluated by a VA psychiatrist.

We encourage you to obtain ALL of your care through the VA, but we recognize that there may be situations where you choose or need to have some of your care provided in the community. To provide safe, quality care, you must also have a VA provider to receive medications from the VA. Your VA provider must see you at regular intervals and have access to outside records and information about your care. By law, VA pharmacy CANNOT fill a prescription written by a non-VA doctor. So if a private physician gives you a new prescription or makes a change to your current prescription, you need to contact your VA provider. Based on your eligibility, you may be required to make a small co-payment for each VA medication.

All refills come through our mail order pharmacy. You may not pick-up your refills at the local pharmacies. Refills are mailed from the VA mail order pharmacy located in Tennessee, so please order **AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE YOU WILL RUN OUT OF MEDICATION**. There are three ways you can order refills:

1. Using your touch tone phone
2. Online by registering at the MyHealthVet website:
www.myhealth.va.gov
3. By mail with a medication refill form

Our automated telephone system allows you to check the status of your prescription order and talk to pharmacy personnel. Pharmacy personnel are available to answer medication related questions during regular business hours.

Pharmacy Locations

Palo Alto: Bldg 100 C1
Monday through Friday
9:00 am–7:00 pm

Saturday, Sunday & Federal
Holidays*
9:00 am–5:00 pm

**Discharge and Emergency
Room Prescriptions Only*

Livermore: Bldg 62, 1st floor
9:00 am–5:00 pm

San Jose: Main waiting room
9:00 am–4:30 pm

Monterey: Main waiting room
9:00 am–4:30 pm

Pharmacy Frequently Asked Questions

Why are refills processed by mail only?

Processing refills by mail increases the amount of time our pharmacists can spend discussing new prescriptions with you face to face. It also reduces waiting time for new prescriptions.

How soon in should I call or mail in my order for refills?

We recommend you call 1-800-311-2511, order online at www.myhealth.va.gov or mail in your next.refill request at least 2 WEEKS BEFORE YOU RUN OUT OF MEDICATION. You may order ROUTINE medications as soon as you receive your refill in the mail. Our computer system calculates an appropriate date for your prescription to be mailed. Remember, medications are mailed from Tennessee. If you mail in your refill requests, it may add another week to the processing time.

Why are refills not automatically mailed on a regular basis?

The reason is your SAFETY! The pharmacy does not always know when a provider tells you to stop taking a medication. If we mailed refills automatically, you might receive a medication your provider does not want you to use anymore.

Why do I sometimes receive items I did not order?

This can happen when your provider orders a new prescription or renews your prescriptions. The pharmacy processes and mails all prescriptions renewed by your provider. This ensures you will continue to have active prescriptions for your medications and supplies.

To prevent getting medications you do not need or did not order (and being charged a co-payment), you should talk with your provider at your appointment to verify which medications he or she is ordering for you. Also, talk with your pharmacists and let them know which medications you need and do not need at this time. Remember, pharmacy cannot accept returned medications and remove a co-pay once the medication has been mailed to you.

My VA doctor called and told me to increase my medication from 1 tablet to 2 tablets a day. Does my doctor need to write a new prescription?

YES. If your provider increases the number of tablets you take each day, you will run out of medication before your next refill arrives. Remind your provider to write a NEW prescription to prevent this from happening.

My PRIVATE Doctor gave me a new prescription OR my PRIVATE Doctor increased my dose of medication. Can the VA pharmacy fill this prescription?

NO. The VA pharmacy can only fill prescriptions written by VA providers. You must contact your VA provider directly (not the pharmacy) to discuss the change in your medication therapy.

My medication has expired or has no refills and I am almost out of medication. What should I do?

You may call the pharmacy TCP line at 1-800-311-2511 to request refills. Pharmacy may send a refill request to your VA provider. Your provider must authorize additional refills before medication may be sent to you.

Prescriptions from Non-VA Providers:

To see if the VA carries your current medication, you can ask your VA pharmacist or provider or go to the following website: <http://www.pbm.va.gov/PBM/natform.htm>

1. Click on OUR WEBSITE
2. Click on NATIONAL FORMULARY (left hand side)
3. Click on VA NATIONAL FORMULARY

Will I be able to get prescriptions that are written by my private physician from the VA pharmacy?

Your VAPAHCS primary care provider will review your outside records, and then if he/she agrees that the medication is safe, appropriate and available through our pharmacy, the provider will order the medication for you to be filled by the VA pharmacy.

Can't the VA provider just rewrite my prescriptions from my private doctor?

No. The VA provider will not rewrite a prescription that you bring from your private doctor until he/she has had a chance to review your outside records. If your private doctor writes you a new prescription and you want your VA provider to give you the medication you must bring in records from your private physician that explain why the medication was prescribed, the name of the medication and the dosage.

Does that mean in order to get my medications from the VA, I must give up my private doctor and change to a VA provider?

No. If you want to be followed by both your private provider (local doctor), and VA provider, it is your responsibility to:

- 1) See the VA provider at regular intervals.
- 2) Be sure your VA provider has the name and phone number for your private physician.
- 3) Be sure your VA provider has current updates on hospital admissions, test results and out-patient visits to your private physician.

If I decide to change to a VA provider, will I receive my medication on the first visit (today)?

Possibly. VA providers will prescribe medication(s) for you when they have enough information about your medical problem. Usually that means the VA provider will need to review your records from your former doctor. You can help your VA provider by bringing in your outside medical records to each of your VA visits.

Can I see a specialist at the VA and keep my family doctor?

You may see a specialist here and keep your local private doctor. However, the specialist can give you medications to treat only that specific problem. They cannot give you any other medications written by your private doctor.

What if I am admitted to an outside hospital and my medications are changed?

Your VA provider will need to know what happened. If you wish to get the new medications from the VA pharmacy, you must get a copy of the medical records from the outside hospital when you are discharged and consult your VA provider.

Ordering Your Prescription Refills and checking the status of your order

****YOU MUST HAVE A TOUCH TONE PHONE TO ORDER YOUR REFILLS****

- Refills are mailed from a VA mail order pharmacy located in TENNESSEE, so please order your next.refill AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE YOU RUN OUT OF MEDICATION.
- We recommend you order your next.refill for routine medications as soon as you get your medication order in the mail to avoid delays.

How do I order my refill?

1. From a touch tone phone, call:
1-800-311-2511 (Northern California)
1-650-496-2580 (Outside Northern California)
Press in your whole social security number and press the # key.
3. Press the **2** key for Pharmacy.
4. Choose from one of the following 3 options:
 - Order refills
 - Check the status of your prescription order
 - Talk to pharmacy staff

Sample Prescription Label

VAMC PALO ALTO, CA 94304
640PAD 800-311-2511 (7110/)
RX #3546612 May 1, 2010 Fill 1 of 2
DOE, JOHN 11-1234
TAKE ONE TABLET BY MOUTH EVERY DAY

**Prescription
Number** →

DR. JOE SMITH
QTY: 30 TAB
E.C. ASPIRIN 325 MG TABS

TO ORDER REFILLS, PRESS 1

- Enter your prescription number (NO LETTERS) followed by the # key. Your prescription number is located on the prescription label (see sample label).
- If there is more than one refill, stay on the line and wait for instructions to Press **1** again to order the next.refill.
- All refills will be mailed to you.
- Use your most recent prescription number when ordering. Older numbers will not work, even if the medication is the same. The pharmacy can print you a list of your most recent medications and prescription numbers upon request.
- We do not accept verbal refill requests. If you do NOT have a touch tone phone or cannot order your refills over the phone, you may continue to mail in your refill request forms to:

VA Palo Alto Pharmacy Service (119)
3801 Miranda Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94304

TO CHECK THE STATUS OF YOUR PRESCRIPTION ORDER, PRESS 2

- Enter your prescription number (NO LETTERS) followed by the # key.

TO TALK TO PHARMACY STAFF, PRESS 8

Staff is available Monday through Friday, except federal holidays, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. You can find out more about your medications, check for side effects, or drug interactions, and what to do if you are running out of medication.

Medication Co-payment information

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

You do NOT need to pay for medicines if:

- You are service-connected rated 50% or more.
- The medicine is for a service-connected condition.
- You have a prescription for medical supplies (syringes, tape etc.), however there may be limits to the quantity the VA will provide.
- Prescriptions for Aspirin
- You get a VA pension.
- You are taking an investigational medicine.
- Your income level is below that set by law.

You DO have a small co-payment if you are:

- Non-service connected and above a certain income level set by law.
- Service-connected less than 50% and receiving treatment for a non-service connected condition.

Co-payment charges: \$8.00 for up to a 30-day supply of each medicine that you receive and \$24.00 for up to a 3-month supply of each medicine you receive.

When you pick up the medicine from our pharmacy, you may pay the Agent Cashier. If we mail them to your home, you can pay by money order or check when you receive them. PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH! If you do not pay, you will receive a bill.

Admissions & Benefits Section

Business Office Locations:

Palo Alto Division

Building 100,
Room C1-100

Menlo Park Division

Building 334,
Room B-201

Livermore Division

Building 62,
Room 102

San Jose Clinic

Room D-100

Monterey Clinic

Building 99,
Room B-103

Stockton Clinic

777 Freedom Drive

Sonora Clinic

19747 Greenley Rd.

Modesto Clinic

1524 McHenry Ave., Suite 450

Business Hours:

Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Admissions & Benefits Services Customer Service Line: (650) 493-5000, ext. 66266

The Admissions & Benefits Section gathers information required to establish and verify a Veteran's eligibility for VA health care. The information is also used to decide the Veteran's priority group. Staff will also check income to find out if co-payments will be charged for medical visits or prescription medications. Some Veterans qualify for cost-free health care services because of a service-connected condition or other factor. However, most Veterans need to complete a financial assessment (Means Test) every year to find out if they qualify for cost-free services. Veterans whose household income and net worth exceed the set threshold, and those who choose not to complete the financial assessment, must agree to pay the required co-pays to become eligible for VA health care services.

Non-VA/Purchased Care (Fee Basis) Section

Fee Basis Customer Service Location:
Building 6, Room 112E

Business Hours:
Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Purchased Care (Fee Basis) Services Customer Service Line:
650-493-5000, ext. 67220

The Purchased Care Section processes claims for Non-VA Hospitalization and Outpatient Fee Services. The staff process each claim, decide if VA can pay the claim, and send the Veteran written notification about the decision.

Emergency* Care in a non-VA Hospital/Facility may be covered by VA(*situations in which any delay in medical attention would endanger your health or life). If you are treated in a non-VA hospital/facility for a medical emergency, notify:

VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Purchased Care (Fee Basis) Unit (650-493-5000 ext. 67220)

Please notify us as soon as possible. There are filing limits for paying claims. VA may pay for your care if you are service-connected for the condition, highly service-connected and/or you have no other health care coverage. You may also be covered under the Millennium Emergency Act.

To qualify under the Millennium Emergency Act:

- You must be enrolled in the VA Health Care System
- You have received care from a VA provider/clinician within the last 24 months
- You received care in a hospital emergency department or similar emergency care providing facility
- You have no other form of health insurance, including Medicare, Medi-Cal, etc.
- You do not have coverage under any other VA programs
- VA or other Federal facilities were not feasibly available at the time of the emergency
- A reasonable lay person would judge that any delay in medical attention would endanger your health or life
- You are financially liable to the provider of the emergency services
- You have no other contractual or legal recourse against a third party that will pay all or part of the bill (i.e. automobile insurance, civil suit- tort claim, etc.).

Medical Care Cost Recovery Section (MCCR)

MCCR Customer Service Location:
Building 6, Room 112E

Business Hours:
Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

MCCR Customer Service Line:
1-866-347-2353

The primary function of the MCCR Section is to recover the cost for treating patients for non-service connected care at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Federal law authorizes VA to bill reasonable charges to Veterans' third party health coverage. Health insurance payments are used to eliminate or decrease a Veteran's co-payment responsibility, if applicable.

Veterans who are unable to pay their co-payments, or who cannot pay their accounts, should call the MCCR Customer Service Line to make payment arrangements (e.g.: requesting a repayment plan or to have the co-pay debt waived because of financial hardship). Federal law requires VA to refer debts to Debt Management Collection or the Department of the Treasury, Financial Management Service, to offset or intercept federal payments to repay delinquent debts after failed attempts have been made to collect monies due.

Release of Information

We can assist you with:

- Access to your medical records;
- Obtaining copies of your medical records;
- Requests to amend your medical records;
- Completion of forms for benefits, insurance, and other reasons

How to Request Information

Please see our website for forms:

http://www.paloalto.va.gov/release_of_information.asp

Palo Alto
Mon-Fri 8 am - 4:30 pm
Building 100
First Floor
Room A1-302 & A1-304
(650) 493-5000 ext. 66406 or ext. 67298

Menlo Park
Tues & Thurs 8 am - 4:30 pm
Building 334
Second Floor
Room A3-304
(650) 493-5000 ext. 52-22899

Livermore
Mon-Fri 8 am - 4:30 pm
Trailer 34
Room 106
(925) 373-4700 ext. 35217

San Jose
Mon, Wed, & Fri 8 am - 4:30 pm
Room A304
(408) 363-3000 ext. 73554

Social Work Service Information

Social Work Service is available to help you and your family with the stresses that often arise during an illness. Please contact your Social Worker by dialing (650) 493-5000 and press 0 for the operator and ask to be connected to the Social Work Department at ext. 65455 and someone can direct you to the appropriate social worker. On the weekends or holidays, you can ask the operator to have the Social Worker on call paged for assistance with the following:

A. Emotional Support or Counseling

- Assistance in coping with separation from families and friends
- Assistance in coping with the stress of illness or disability
- Individual and family counseling services
- Grief Support and Bereavement Counseling
- Review of Spiritual Support

B. Planning for Discharge from the Hospital

C. Financial Assistance

- VA Benefits
- Social Security Disability
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicare
- State Disability
- Medi-Cal

D. Legal Services

- Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care
- Disability-related legal issues
- Conservatorship

E. Referrals to Housing

- Independent Living
- Assisted Living/Residential Care
- Nursing Home
- Emergency Housing
- Transitional Living Centers
- Subsidized Housing

F. Referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation Services

G. Referrals to VA/Community Resources such as:

- Respite
- Transitional Care Unit (TCU)
- Hospital Based Home Care
- Adult Day Health Programs
- In-Home Support Services
- Meals on Wheels
- Transportation
- Hospice
- Chaplain Service
- Other VA & Community Services

H. Information about your Illness

- Support Groups
- Written Materials & Classes

I. Drug and Alcohol Assessment and Referral

Suicide Prevention

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Suicide is *not* the answer.

Are you, or someone you love, at risk of suicide? Following is a list of warning signs:

- Talking about wanting to hurt or kill self*
- Trying to get pills, guns, or other ways to harm self *
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide *
- Hopelessness
- Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- Acting in a reckless or risky way
- Feeling trapped, like there's no way out
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from friends, family and society
- Anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
- Dramatic changes in mood
- No reason for living, no sense of purpose in life

If you have answered “yes” to the first three (*), don't wait – get help today by:

- Going to your local VA Mental Health Clinic
- Going to the nearest emergency room
- Going to the VA emergency room
- Calling 911

OR

- Calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and talking with a VA professional.
The toll-free number is:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

If you have answered “yes” to any of the others, make an appointment to see a mental health professional.

Patient and Nursing Home Resident Rights and Responsibilities

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is pleased you have selected us to provide your healthcare. We want to improve your health and well being. We will make your visit or stay as pleasant for you as possible. As part of our service to you, to other veterans and to the Nation, we are committed to improving healthcare quality. We also train future healthcare professionals, conduct research, and support our country in times of national emergency. In all of these activities, our employees will respect and support your rights as a patient. Your basic rights and responsibilities are outlined in this document. Please talk with VA treatment team members or a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights.

I. 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 seek to honor your personal and religious values.
- You or someone you choose has the right to keep and spend your money. You have the right to receive an accounting of any VA held funds.
- Treatment will respect your personal freedoms. In rare cases, the use of medication and physical restraints may be used if all other efforts to keep you or others free from harm have not worked.
- As an inpatient or 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.

II. Information Disclosure and Confidentiality

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

III. Participation in Treatment Decisions

- You, and any persons you choose, will be involved in all decisions about your care. You will be given information you can understand about the benefits and risks of treatment. You will be given other options. You can agree to or refuse treatment. You will be told what is likely to happen to you if you refuse treatment. Refusing treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you take responsibility for the possible results to your health.
- Tell your provider about your current condition, medicines (including over-the-counter and herbals), and medical history. Also, share any other information that affects your health. You should ask questions when you do not understand something about your care. Being involved is very important for you to get the best possible results.
- You will be given, in writing, the name and title of the provider in charge of your care. As our partner in healthcare, you have the right to be involved in choosing your provider. You also have the right to know the names and titles of those who provide you care. This includes students, residents and trainees. Providers will properly introduce themselves when they take part in your care.
- You will be educated about your role and responsibilities as a patient or resident. This includes your participation in decision-making and care at the end of life.
- If you believe you cannot follow the treatment plan, you have a responsibility to notify your provider or treatment team.
- You have the right to have your pain assessed and to receive treatment to manage your pain. You and your treatment team will develop a pain management plan together. You are expected to help the treatment team by telling them if you have pain and if the treatment is working.

- As an inpatient or nursing home resident, you will be provided any transportation necessary for your treatment plan.
- You have the right to choose whether you will participate in any research project. Any research will be clearly identified. Potential risks of the research will be identified and there will be no pressure on you to participate.
- You will be included in resolving any ethical issues about your care. You may consult with the Medical Center's Ethics Consultation Service and/or other staff knowledgeable about healthcare ethics.
- If you or the Medical Center believes that you have been neglected, abused or exploited, you will receive help.

IV. Complaints

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

Patient Advocates:

Between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday – Friday, call (650) 493-5000 and choose from the following ext.s:

Palo Alto/Menlo Park Divisions
(650) 493-5000 ext. 63543

Livermore Division
(925) 373-4700 ext. 35129

San Jose Clinic
(408) 363-3000 ext. 75449

Monterey and Capitola Clinics
(831) 883-3800 ext. 75449

Stockton Clinic
(209) 946-3401 ext. 43437

Modesto and Sonora Clinics
(209) 557-6201 ext. 46221

After 4 p.m., on weekends and on holidays call the Administrative Officer of the Day at ext. 65866.

VA Palo Alto Health Care System is accredited by The Joint Commission (TJC). You may contact TJC with quality of care concerns at:

The Joint Commission Office of Quality Monitoring
1 Renaissance Blvd
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
1-800-994-6610
www.jointcommission.org/GeneralPublic/complaint

It is TJC policy to treat your name as confidential information. No retaliatory actions will be taken against employees for reporting quality of care concerns.

Other Services and Information

Canteen

There are canteen services at Palo Alto and Menlo Park. There is a coffee shop at Livermore. Some other sites have vending machines. The canteen consists of a retail store and vending services. The cafeteria has a variety of food choices, as does the vending operation. Many items are available in the store, including snacks, personal hygiene items, men's and women's clothing, and electronics.

The cafeteria and retail store are closed on weekends and holidays. The Menlo Park Division offers a barber shop. The barber works part-time in the shop and part-time on the wards. To obtain the barber's schedule call (650) 493-5000 ext. 52-27381 or 63965.

There is an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) located on the Palo Alto campus, on the 1st floor of Building 101. The ATM machine belongs to the Meriwest Credit Union. ATM fees may apply.

Palo Alto

The cafeteria and retail store are located on the first floor of Building 101. Cafeteria hours are 7:00 am-3:00 pm and the retail store is open from 8:00 am-3:30 pm Monday through Friday, except Thursdays, when the retail store is open until 4:30 pm.

Menlo Park

The cafeteria and retail store are located on the 1st floor of Building 334. The hours are 8am-2:00 pm for the cafeteria and 8:00 am-3:30 pm for the retail store, Monday through Friday.

Chaplain Services

Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Buddhist, Eastern Orthodox and other faith group Chaplains are available on call to provide spiritual support and religious guidance to both patients and their families. Catholic and Protestant religious services are also held regularly at Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Livermore. A protestant minister is available at San Jose. For more information, please contact the Chaplains office at (650) 493-5000 ext. 65532.

Contraband

It is against the law to bring any of the following items onto VA grounds or into any VA building:

- Guns or any type of firearm
- Knives with blades over 3 ½ inches
- Mace, Tazers, martial arts equipment
- Explosives or any type
- Alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia

If you have any questions please ask VA staff. Additional items may be unsafe in certain clinical areas.

Fisher House

Fisher House is a temporary lodging facility on the Palo Alto VA campus for families of active duty military personnel and families of veterans who are undergoing treatment through the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Families must be coming from over 50 miles away and needing lodging for at least 3 nights. Referrals are made by a VA staff member from the patient's treatment team who screens family members for appropriateness. Veterans or active duty military personnel may stay at the Fisher House if accompanied by a family member or caregiver while they receive outpatient treatment. Fisher House can accommodate children as long as they have adult supervision. Only a maximum of three people total can be housed in one room. Each room has its own bathroom and laundry facilities are available. Families are asked to provide their own food and can cook in the shared kitchen. Check-in is weekdays 11:00 am - 11:30 pm, and photo-I.D. is required. Check-in for after hours, weekends, and holidays is provided at the AOD (Administrative Officer of the Day) in the main hospital. Contact: 650-493-5000 ext. 69914

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)

Locations

Palo Alto, San Jose and Modesto

Program Overview

HBPC is a program that provides medical care in the homes of Veterans with complicated health problems when routine clinic care is not effective. HBPC primarily serves home bound patients needing long-term follow-up. The program may also care for terminally ill patients and those temporarily home bound.

Services provided include medical care, nursing care and education, rehabilitation services, nutritional counseling, social work services, pharmacy services, psychological assistance and bereavement counseling. HBPC provides help with medications, supplies and equipment, and can help with some necessary home improvements.

Who is Eligible?

- Patient is enrolled for VA care.
- Patient has a health problem that requires care by a team of different health care providers.
- Patient and/or caregiver accepts HBPC as the primary care provider.
- Patient's care needs can be met by the HBPC program.
- Patient lives within the HBPC's service area.
- Patient has two or more of the following needs:

- Multiple long term medical problems
- No other accessible primary care provider
- Difficulties with self care
- Non-ambulatory
- No caregiver or support network
- Problems that prevent access to services
- Frequent use of the Emergency Room
- Terminally ill

Contact the HBPC Program for further information at 650-493-6000 ext. 62140.

Hometel

The purpose of Hometel is to provide lodging for a veteran who has an outpatient appointment or a procedure at the Palo Alto or Livermore site and is traveling from a distance greater than 50 miles or has significant transportation difficulties. For more information regarding either site, please call (650) 493-5000 ext. 61333. If you need a hometel consult, contact your primary care provider. If you do not have a primary care provider, please contact a Social Worker.

Information Desk

There is an information desk in the main lobby of building 100 at Palo Alto, staffed with volunteers to assist you. The desk is open from Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The volunteer desk at Livermore campus is in the main lobby, building 62 and open from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm.

Lost and Found

Attempts are made to locate owners whenever possible, but after 90 days all unclaimed items are disposed of in accordance with VA regulations. Found items should be turned in to the Police and Security Service. Questions about lost items can be directed to Voluntary Service at ext. 65800. At other clinics, please see clinic clerks regarding lost and found items.

Medical Library

The library has information on health topics, videocassette programs on health, newspapers, magazines, and popular paperbacks. The library is located at the Palo Alto division, in Building 101, second floor, room A2-120 and operates from 8:00 AM-4:30 PM weekdays. You may reach the Library at (650) 493-5000 ext. 65703.

My HealtheVet

My HealtheVet is a national VA Internet-based program that helps veterans be more active partners in their health care.

www.myhealth.va.gov

My HealtheVet allows you to create your own electronic Personal Health Record. Use My HealtheVet to renew prescriptions, view wellness reminders, and record your contact information, military health history, medications, tests or allergies. You can use My HealtheVet to record your home health measures: blood pressure, blood sugar, heart rate, weight, temperature or pain levels. My HealtheVet will also give you access to health libraries so you can learn about medical conditions, medications, health news and preventive health.

To use My HealtheVet you must register online. To register, log on from home, your local library or from one of the VAPAHCS kiosks to establish a basic account. You then need to complete the In-Person Authentication process to obtain an upgraded account. (This is done at the Release of Information Office, the Business Office, or with the clinic staff depending on the site. You will need to bring a government picture ID with you and sign a release form. Please ask a clinic staff member for assistance if needed.) An upgraded My HealtheVet account will allow you to view your medication names, how many refills remain and your wellness reminders. You will also have full access to upcoming releases such as viewing appointments, receiving lab results, and the ability to e-mail your healthcare team.

Parking

Parking is extremely limited at Palo Alto and patients are encouraged to take public transportation whenever available. Facilities are not responsible for theft or damage to vehicles parked on the grounds. Visitors and outpatients may park in any areas not specifically designated for others. When visiting the Palo Alto Division, patients and visitors are encouraged to park in Lots 100N and 100S. These parking lots are located directly in front of Building 100 as you enter the campus from Miranda Avenue. Upon entering these lots, patients and visitors will be greeted and directed to open parking. Please be careful to park in appropriate spaces, as our VA Police may issue a ticket on cars parked illegally.

Development, Expansion and Construction

VAPAHCS is undergoing a record amount of construction and expansion to improve health care for Veterans throughout our health care system. Each project is an opportunity to advance the delivery of services to Veterans. VAPAHCS requests your patience and cooperation as we work towards transforming our facilities. Please visit the VAPAHCS Construction Website for the latest information on construction and development throughout our health care system. <http://www.paloalto.va.gov/construction.asp>.

Patient Advocates

VAPAHCS and each employee want to provide you the best care possible. It is our mission to put Veterans first and provide exceptional care that improves your health and well-being. Our highest priority is to meet and exceed your needs and expectations. Therefore, if you have a suggestion, concern or compliment regarding your care please contact your treatment team.

If you feel your concerns are not being addressed, you may contact a Service-level Patient Advocate; this is a staff member on your unit. Each service has selected a designee as their Service-level Patient Advocate (SPA). A Service-level Patient Advocate is an employee who assists front-line staff in resolving issues if attempts at resolution with your treatment team have not been successful. A Service-level Patient Advocate resolves patient issues and works in collaboration with Patient Advocate Program Director to identify opportunities for improvement. The Patient Advocacy program was established to ensure that all veterans, and their families, who are served in VHA facilities and clinics, have their complaints addressed in a convenient and timely manner. We want to use your feedback to make systems improvements.

If a Veteran's complaint cannot be resolved at the point of service, you may contact the Patient Advocate Program Director. The Patient Advocate Program Director works directly with Service Chiefs and Service Management to facilitate resolution to problems beyond the scope of front-line staff, and participate in resolutions. If you wish to talk to the Patient Advocate Program Director during normal business hours, call (650) 493-5000 ext. 63543. The Patient Advocate office is located at Palo Alto in Building 101, third floor, room B3116.

Smoking

The VA Palo Alto Health Care System is committed to providing a safe environment for patients, visitors and staff, and providing an environment that models health promotion and disease prevention. This includes promoting a smoke free environment. To achieve this goal, smoking is limited to certain designated areas throughout the health care system.

Smoking is NOT allowed:

- In any buildings
- On walkways

Smoking is allowed: *(You may request a map of designated smoking areas)*

Palo Alto:

- Inside the smoking shelter in front of Bldg 5
- In designated parking lots, at least 35 feet from the walkways
- Outside of Bldg 100, near the Nuclear Medicine entrance

Livermore:

- Designated outdoor areas, please request a map

Menlo Park

- Designated outdoor areas, please request a map

San Jose, Monterey, Capitola, Stockton, Modesto, Sonoma and Fremont:

- Parking lots, at least 35 feet (where applicable) from entrances.

If you are a smoker, quitting smoking is likely the single most significant thing you can do to improve your health. VA Palo Alto Health Care System encourages you not to smoke.

Stop Smoking Clinics at the Palo Alto Health Care System

Help is available if you would like to quit smoking. Patients may contact the TeleQuit program at 1-800-999-5021 ext. 60557. Or you can call for an appointment in the Smoking Cessation Clinic:

Palo Alto (650) 493-5000 ext. 67915

San Jose Clinic (408) 363-3037

Stockton Clinic (209) 946-3400 ext. 43407

Veterans Service Representatives

Call for hours of service and/or an appointment

Palo Alto

AMVETS (650) 493-5000 ext. 65392

American Legion (650) 493-5000 ext. 65388

Disabled American Veterans (650) 493-5000 ext. 63644

VA Benefits Counselor (650) 493-5000 ext. 65539

Livermore

AMVETS (925) 373-4700 ext. 35673

Regional Office 1-800-827-1000

Vet Center Services

If you served in a combat zone or were sexually harassed while in the military, you are eligible to receive free counseling services at any Vet Center. This part of the VA has been designated a “front line” in the outpatient treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). No financial statement is required. Every Vet Center has at least one counselor who is also a veteran, often a combat veteran.

Services are comprehensive and personal. Here are just a few things we can offer you:

- **Individual and Group Counseling:** One-on-one counseling is a Vet Center standard.

We offer group sessions that cover everything from symptom management (PTSD, anger, stress) to quality of life issues. Groups also offer skills training in meditation, T'ai C'hi, mindfulness, art therapy. We have personal growth seminars from Bay Area experts on topics such as communication and managing relationships.

- **Gold Standard Care:** Vet Center counselors are mental health professionals. They are licensed psychologists and social workers as well as readjustment counseling therapists. All have specialized in the treatment of PTSD.
- **Benefits Assistance:** You can speak with a benefits counselor on-site who will help you begin or appeal a claim with the VA and who will follow your claim to its completion.
- **Marital and family counseling:** You partner and family are an essential part of your life and can be included as part of your treatment.
- **Job Counseling and Placement:** A veteran's specialist from the state's Employment Development Department is available on site.

The Palo Alto Health Care System supports three community-based Vet Centers. Please call us for more information or to make an appointment.

- Peninsula Vet Center: (650) 299-0672
- San Jose Vet Center: (408) 993-0729
- Santa Cruz County Vet Center: (831) 464-4575
- Concord Vet Center: (925) 680-4526
- Modesto Vet Center: (209) 527-1359
- Oakland Vet Center: (510) 763-3904

Voluntary Service

The Voluntary Service is affiliated with over 50 different community groups and service organizations and provides volunteers to assist the health care system with daily activities. The staff at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System is reinforced by approximately 1,600 community volunteers who contribute over 340,000 hours of service per year to our patient care activities.

Walking Maps

Do you know that you can get in some exercise at anyone of our VA clinics? Check out our walking maps and take a step toward better health.

www.paloalto.va.gov/walkingmaps.asp

Women's Health

The Women's Health Center at the Palo-Alto Campus was designated as a Center of Excellence in Women's Health in 2008, the first in the country to receive this award. We are proud to provide Comprehensive Interdisciplinary Care for Women in a comfortable, private and safe environment. We provide a full range of medical and mental health care.

The services include

- Comprehensive Primary Care
- Reproductive Health Care
- Services for OEF/OIF Veterans
- Specialty Care
- MST screening and counseling
- Physical Therapy
- Musculoskeletal Clinic
- Gynecological Care
- Preventive Care
- Comprehensive Breast Care
- Mental Health Care
- Cancer Support Groups
- Yoga

Women's Health Center Staff includes:

Women Veterans Program Manager, Women's Health Primary Care Providers, Registered Nurse Practitioner, Gynecologist, Specialty Providers, Breast Surgeon, Psychologist, Social Work, Chaplain, Nutritionist, Physical Therapist, Yoga Trainers

Please contact Nicole Guerrero
(650) 493-5000 ext. 64194

Linda Kleinsasser, RN
Women Veterans Program Manager
(650) 493-5000 ext. 64915

Samina Iqbal, MD
Director, Women Veterans Health Center

For Community Based Outpatient Clinics please contact:

Kim Bowlby, RN
Liaison, VA Livermore Division
(925) 373-4700 ext. 35451/35311

Denise Scott, RN
Liaison, VA Modesto Clinic
(209) 557-6201 ext. 46201

Marilyn Burton, LVN
Liaison, VA San Jose Clinic
(408) 363-3000 ext. 73521

Andrea Jaramillo, RN
Liaison, VA Fremont Clinic
(510) 791-4000 ext. 84021

Janis Marquez, RN
VA Monterey Clinic
(831) 883-3800 ext. 43820

Debbie Deverel, RN
Liaison, VA Sonora Clinic
(209) 588-2601 ext. 42623

Joanne Walter, LVN
Liaison, VA Stockton Clinic
(209) 946-3401 ext. 43411

Women's Resource Center

The Women's Resource Center is located on the third floor of building 5 at Palo Alto. The Center offers a restful, comfortable setting for education, discovery, relaxation and socialization. Access to consumer friendly, up-to-date health and medical information on a wide range of health topics is available.

The Women Veterans Program Manager is available to help women Veterans access the VA services they need:

Linda Kleinsasser, RN
Women Veterans Program Manager
(650) 493-5000, ext. 64915

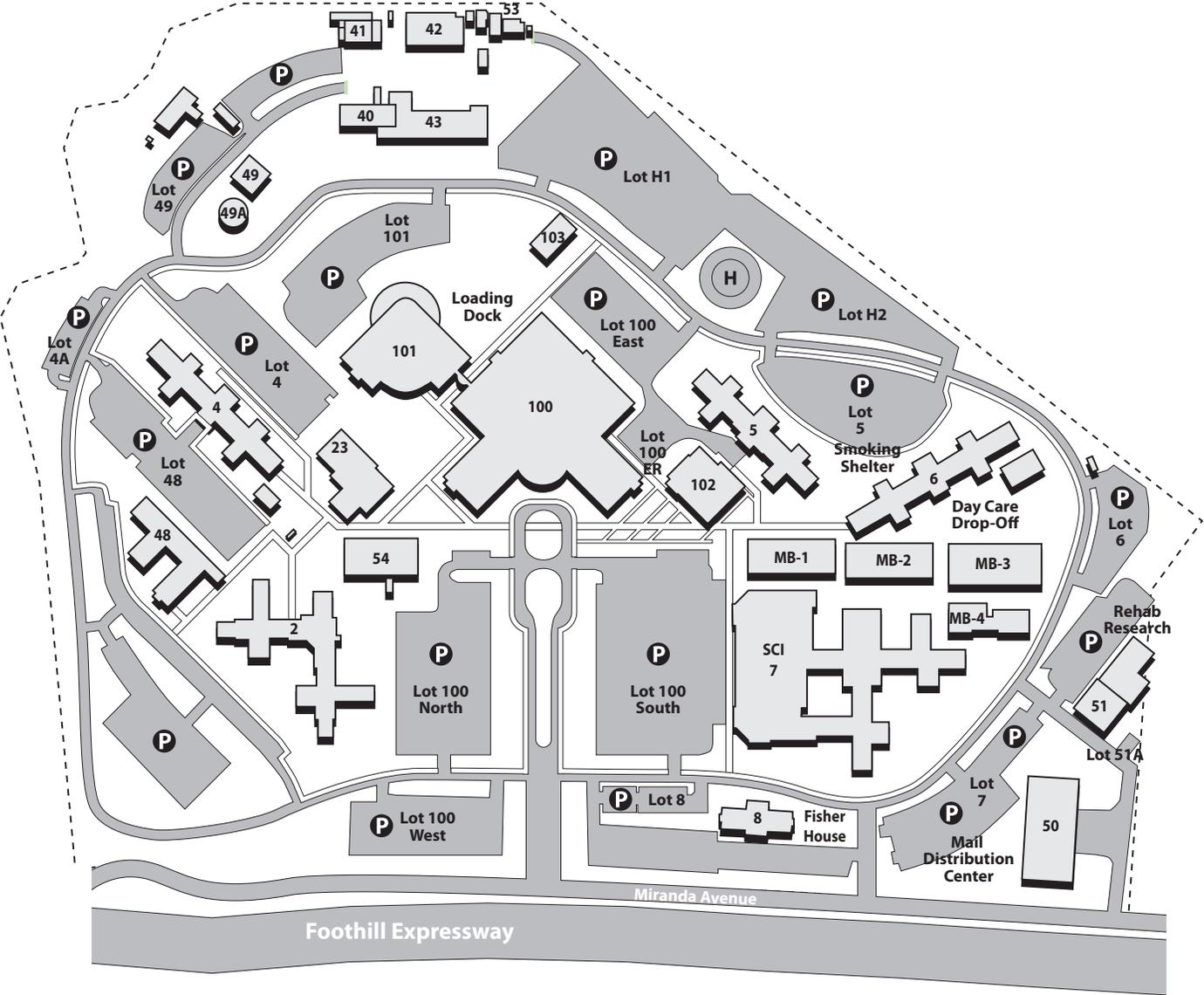
Specialty Clinics

Most specialty clinics at Palo Alto are located in Bldg 100 on the 1st and 2nd floors. Livermore clinics are located on the 1st and 3rd floors of Bldg 62.

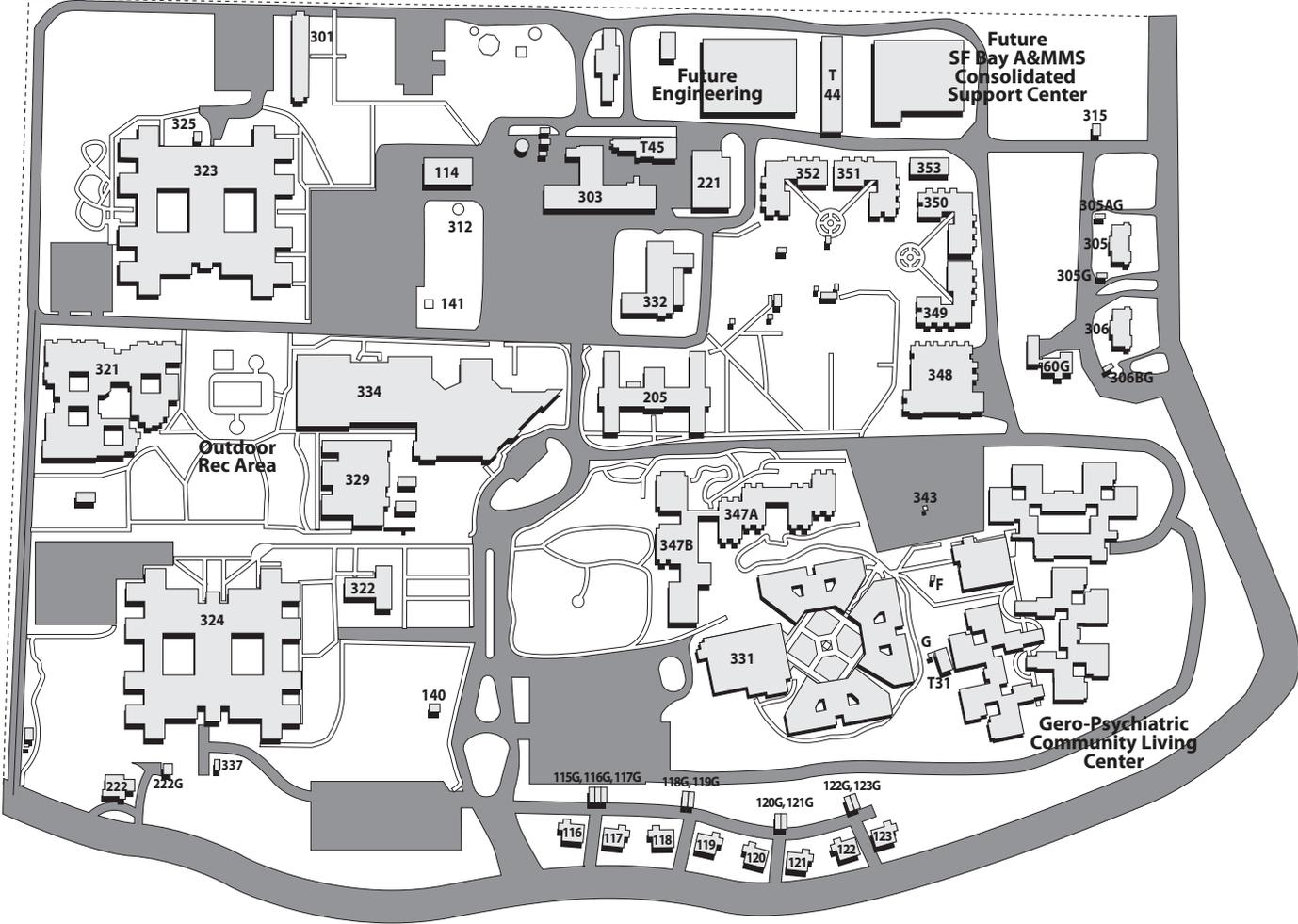
	Palo Alto	Livermore	Monterey	San Jose	Capitola	Fremont	Stockton	Modesto	Sonora
Ambulatory Infusion Center	■	■							
Andrology	■								
Anticoagulation	■	■	■						
Cardiology	■	■	■	■					
Cardiothoracic	■								
Cystoscopy	■	■							
Dental	■	■							
Dermatology	■	■	■	■					
Diabetes	■	■		■					
Dialysis	■								
Diet	■	■	■	■					
Endocrine	■								
Ear, Nose, Throat	■	■							
Erectile Dysfunction	■								
Eye	■	■	■	■					
Gastric Bypass	■								
Gastrointestinal (GI)	■	■	■						
General Surgery	■								
Geriatrics			■						
Gynecology	■								
Hand	■	■							
Hematology	■	■	■						
Hypertension	■								
Infectious Disease	■								
Immunology	■	■		■					
Neurology	■		■						
Neurosurgery	■								
Nursing Treatment	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Oncology	■	■							
Ophthalmology	■	■	■						
Optometry	■	■	■	■					
Orthopedics	■	■	■						
Orthopedics/Spine	■			■					
Pain	■								
Palliative Care	■								
Pharmacy	■	■	■	■					
Plastic Surgery	■	■							
Podiatry	■	■	■	■					
Prostate Needle Biopsy	■	■							
Pulmonary	■	■		■					
Renal Clinic	■	■							
Rheumatology	■	■							
Smoking Cessation	■	■		■			■		
Urodynamics	■								
Urology	■	■	■						
Vascular Clinic	■								
Vasectomy	■	■							
Women's Health	■		■						

VA Facility Maps

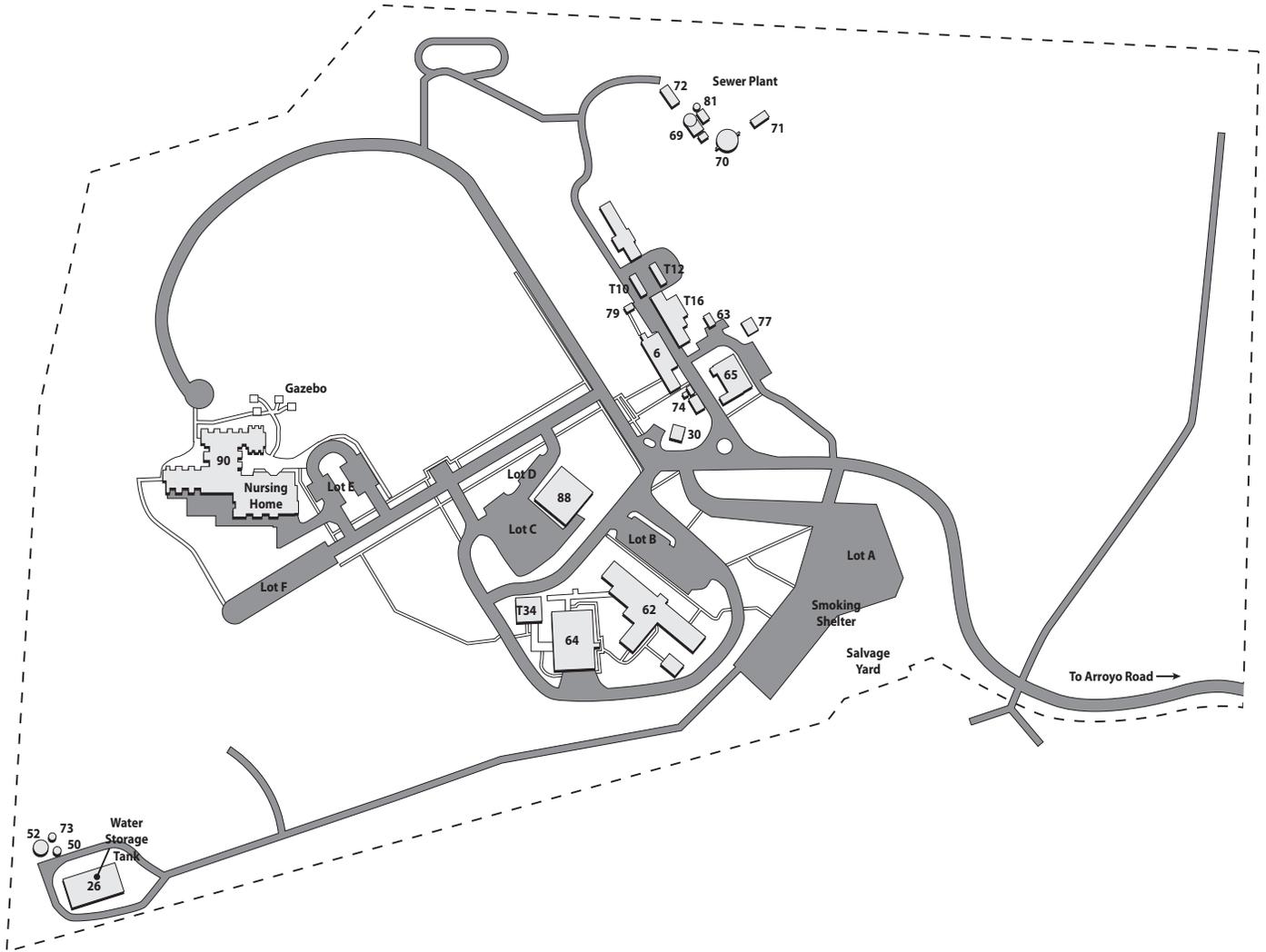
Palo Alto Division



Menlo Park Division



Livermore Division



Notes



**Reviewed by the
Patient Education Committee**



3801 Miranda Avenue • Palo Alto, CA 94304
(650) 493-5000 • www.paloalto.va.gov

May 20, 2010

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