

WELCOME TO VA PALO ALTO Health Care System



Patient Handbook

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Palo Alto Health Care System



Our Mission

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

Our Vision

To be a patient-centered integrated health care system that provides exceptional care, research and education to Veterans.

Your satisfaction and experience with every encounter in the health care system will be a key measure of our success in achieving this vision.

Welcome to the VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Our Commitment to You



Welcome to the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Thank you for trusting us with your care.

This handbook was created by VA Palo Alto staff, with valuable input from Veterans and family members. We hope you find the information about preventive care, outpatient services, inpatient care, and other resources useful.

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 affiliation with the Stanford University School of Medicine further ensures access to the latest care practices. Many of our staff physicians are also faculty at Stanford.

We are committed to offering you safe, high quality, Veteran and family centered care. As a disabled Veteran, who receives care here, I know first-hand how important it is to get the care and services right for each Veteran coming through our doors. We are proud to serve those who have served.

Thank you putting your care in our hands and choosing the VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Fitzgerald III

Director

U.S. Army Veteran

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About Us

VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) is part of VA Sierra Pacific Network (VISN 21), which includes facilities in California, Nevada and Hawaii. VAPAHCS consists of three inpatient facilities located at Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Livermore, in addition to seven Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) in San Jose, Capitola, Monterey, Stockton, Modesto, Sonoma, and Fremont. VAPAHCS is a teaching hospital, providing a full range of patient care services, with state-of-the-art technology as well as education and research.

VAPAHCS operates one of the largest integrated health care systems in VA in terms of specialized programs, research and graduate medical education (GME). Comprehensive health care is provided through primary, tertiary and long-term care in areas of medicine, surgery, psychiatry, physical medicine and rehabilitation, neurology, oncology, dentistry, geriatrics and extended care.

Specialty Care Programs Include:

- Acute Psychiatry (VISN 21's Primary Referral Site)
- Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center/Traumatic Brain Injury (1 of 5 centers in VHA)
- Domiciliary Care (VISN 21's Primary Referral site – only Domiciliary in the Network)
- Hospice / Palliative Care
- Gero-psychiatric Inpatient Care (VISN 21's Primary Referral Site)
- Regional Amputee Center (1 of 7 in VHA)
- Med/Surg Tertiary Care (1 of 2 Tertiary Care Centers in VISN 21)
- Organ Transplant (1 of 5 National Centers in VHA)
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (1 of 7 National Centers in VHA)
- Spinal Cord Injury (1 of 24 Centers in VHA)
- War Related Injury and Illness Study Center (1 of 3 Centers in VHA)
- Western Blind Rehabilitation (1 of 13 Centers in VHA)

Graduate Medical Education and Research

- Primary Academic Affiliation: Stanford University School of Medicine
- 240 Active Affiliations
- Over 1,800 trainees
- 2nd largest Research Program in VHA
- 200 Investigators, 600 active research projects at any given time



Palo Alto Division

3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304
650-493-5000



Menlo Park Division

795 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650-614-9997



Livermore Division

4951 Arroyo Road
Livermore, CA 94550
925-373-4700



VA Capitola CBOC

1350 41st Avenue, Suite 102
Capitola, CA 95010
831-464-5519



VA Fremont CBOC

39199 Liberty Street, Bldg. B
Fremont, CA 94538
510-791-4000



VA Modesto CBOC

1225 Oakdale Road
Modesto, CA 95355
209-557-6200



VA San Jose CBOC

5855 Silver Creek Valley Pl
San Jose, CA 95138-1059
408-574-9100



VA Stockton CBOC

7777 South Freedom
Road, French Camp, CA
95231, (209) 946-3400



VA Sonora CBOC

13663 Mono Way
Sonora, CA 95370-2811
(209) 588-2600



**M.G. William H.
Gourley VA-DoD
Outpatient Clinic**

201 9th Street
Marina, CA 93933
831-884-1000



Free Interfacility Shuttle Service

A free VA shuttle travels to the VA Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Livermore campuses, as well as to our clinics in Fremont, Modesto, Sonora, Stockton, Monterey, Capitola and San Jose. Shuttle service to Oakdale and San Benito is available by appointment only. Please always have your VA ID card with you when you use the shuttle service. For information on the shuttle schedule go to: <https://www.paloalto.va.gov/shuttleschedule.asp>

Boarding Points:

VTA Light Rail Cottle Station: Westbound 27 & Northbound 68 stop

Palo Alto 3801 Miranda Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94304
Building 100, first covered shelter

Livermore 4951 Arroyo Road, Livermore, CA 94550
In front of Building 62 (white curb)

Menlo Park 795 Willow Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Building 334 and 331 (Shuttle E only)
Disembark at B-324 or Menlo entry upon request

Capitola 1350 41st Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010
Parking Lot

Fremont 39199 Liberty Street, Fremont, CA 94538

Modesto 1125 Oakdale Road, Modesto, CA 95355

Monterey 201 9th Street, Marina, CA 93933

Oakdale* 76 Gas Station
1590 East F Street, Oakdale, CA 95361

San Benito (SB)* 649 San Benito Street, Hollister, CA 95023

San Jose 5855 Silver Creek, PL San Jose, CA 95138.

Santa Cruz Santa Cruz County Veterans Office
842 Front St, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Sonora 13663 Mono Way, Sonora, CA, 95370

Stockton San Joaquin General Hospital, 500 W. Hospital Road,
French Camp, CA 95231
*(Clinic Circle, Clinics 4-6 adjacent to Lot 4 Patient and
Visitor Parking)*

***Oakdale and San Benito stops are by appointment only.**

To schedule a pick-up, call 650-493-5000, extension 1-4-42601 (for Oakdale), or 650-333-7063 for San Benito

Services/Locations/Phone Numbers

Service	Location	Phone Number
Admissions/Eligibility/ Benefits (Customer Service)	Palo Alto	650-493-5000 extension 11-66266
Appointment/ Scheduling	All Sites	800-455-0057, Option 3
Billing - Healthy Resource Center	Topeka, Kansas	866-347-2353
Chaplain Service	Palo Alto	650-493-5000 extension 11-65532
Chaplain Service/ Spiritual Care	Menlo Park	650-493-5000 extension 12-23102
Chaplain Service/ Spiritual Care	Livermore	650-493-5000 extension 13-35370
Compensation & Pension (C&P)	Palo Alto	650-493-5000 extension 11-65912
Defenders Lodge	Palo Alto	650-493-5000 extension 11-61333 extension 11-62824
Disabled American Vets	VA Regional Office Oakland Federal Building	510-834-2921
Emergency Department	Palo Alto	650-849-0221
Hospital Operator	Palo Alto	650-493-5000
Human Resources	Mountain View	650-694-6001
Information Desk	Palo Alto	650-493-5000 extension 11-60026
Information Desk	Livermore	925-373-4700 extension 13-35331
LGBT Resources	Palo Alto	650-493-5000 extension 11-68274
Lost & Found	Palo Alto	650-493-5000 extension 11-65800
Mental Health	Palo Alto	650- 614-9997 extension 11-22234
Mental Health Clinic- New Patients	Menlo Park	650-614-9997 extension 12-23421

Services/Locations/Phone Numbers

Service	Location	Phone Number
Mental Health Clinic- Currently Enrolled Patients	Menlo Park	650-614-9997 extension 12-22234
MyHealththeVet	Palo Alto	650-849-0393 www.myhealththevet.va.gov
Office of Community Care	Menlo Park	650-617-2732
Patient Advocate	Palo Alto	650-493-5000 extension 11-65544
Pharmacy	Automated Refill Line:	800-311-2511
Police Service	Palo Alto	650-493-5000 extension 11-65891
Police Service	Menlo Park	650-493-5000 extension 12-22699
Police Service	Livermore	650-493-5000 extension 13-35471
Release of Information/ Medical Records	Palo Alto	650-493-5000 extension 11-67298
Release of Information/ Medical Records	Menlo Park	650-493-5000 extension 12-22899
Telephone Care Program (Advice Nurse)	24/7	800-455-0057 Option 4
Tele-Health	Palo Alto (Tele-Health is Offered at Various Locations)	650-849-0421 800-455-0057 extension 11-62258
VA Benefits Councilor/ VA Regional Office	Regional Office	650-493-5000 extension 11-65539
Veteran Crisis Line	All Sites	800-273-TALK (8255)
Whole Health	All Sites	650-849-0131
Women's Health Center	Palo Alto	650-852-3229

Veterans are strongly encouraged to call an Advice Nurse at 1-800-455-0057 (select #4) for any medical concerns. Clinic sites do not have walk-in appointments available.

Please note: Emergency services are only available at the Palo Alto Division

Smoke Free Campuses

What does this mean?

No one can smoke tobacco, vapes or e-cigarettes at any of the VA locations to include Palo Alto, Livermore, Menlo Park, or any of the community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs). No smoking is allowed at all.

What happens if someone does smoke?

VA police will fine the person, who will also have to appear in Federal Court to resolve the ticket. The person may be asked to leave the property.

We encourage any Veteran who is currently smoking to use the available resources to quit smoking. VAPAHCS offers a Tele Quit program that is free of charge for Veterans and VA employees. Call 650-493-5000, ext. 60557 (Palo Alto Division) or visit www.paloalto.va.gov/services/telequit.asp.

Coordinators are available to take calls Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. After 4:30 p.m. you can leave a message with your information to receive a call back.



Checklist for New Enrollees to VA Health Care

Welcome to VA Health Care! We want to make it easy for you to get started.

Below is a checklist to make sure you have all the information you need.

- The name of your Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT)
- How to contact your Primary Care PACT
- Register for My HealtheVet at www.myhealth.va.gov
- Use secure messaging through My HealtheVet
- Make, change, or cancel appointments
- Fill, refill, and renew prescriptions
- Get after hours advice
- Play an active role in your health in partnership with your providers
- Understand the Whole Health Concept and how to access services
- Understand the New Mission Act and what it means to you
- Know your priority group and copayment status



My Important Phone Numbers

My Patient-Aligned Care Team (PACT) is: _____

Located in _____

My PACT Phone Number is: _____ - _____ - _____

- Primary Care Provider: _____
- Registered Nurse (RN) care manager: _____
- Clinical Pharmacist: _____
- Medical Support Assistant/Licensed Vocational Nurse:

Schedule a routine appointment Monday - Friday; 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. :
1-855-632-8262

To cancel/change my appointment: **1-800-455-0057**

My Pharmacy phone number is: **1-800-311-2511**

Advice Nurse phone number is: **1-800-455-0057**. Option 4.

Veterans Crisis Line is: **1-800-273-8255**. Option 1.

Hospital Operator Phone Number is: **650-493-5000**

Veterans Crisis Line

Support is available 24/7

If you or someone you know is in emotional crisis,
PLEASE call the Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-TALK (8255) & Press #1

Or

Text the Veterans Crisis Text line

838255

Press #1 for Veterans. Someone who can help you will answer right away.

You can also chat anonymously with a counselor in real time, online at:
www.veteranscrisisline.net

For information about resources on Mental Health Crisis, please contact the local suicide prevention team, at **813-972-2000, extension 6617**.

For emergencies, please call 911 or dial the Veterans Crisis Line.

**Veterans
Crisis Line**



1-800-273-8255

PRESS 1

Your Care Team

At the VA, we take a team approach to health care—with you at the center. Research shows this leads to better quality care, more satisfied patients, and fewer hospital visits.

We aim to coordinate all your care, including any referrals to specialists, within the VHA or with community providers. We will work with you to arrange for outpatient care, based on your specific needs, including:

- Managing acute and chronic health conditions
- Urgent care
- Health goal setting

Who will provide care for me at VA?

After you sign up for VA health care and choose your main VA location, we will assign you to a health care team called a Patient Aligned Care Team (or PACT). Your team will be made up of you, those who support you (such as your family members and caregivers), and your health care providers, including a:

- **Primary care provider** (your doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant)
- **Clinical pharmacist** (a pharmacist who works with you and your PACT to make sure you are taking the medicines that are right for you and your overall health)
- **Registered Nurse (RN) care manager** (the nurse who coordinates your care across all providers and services, your health goals, and your plan for care)
- **Licensed vocational nurse (LVN) or medical support assistant and clerk** (team members who help to support you and other health care providers on your team)

When you need other services to meet your goals and needs, your team may call other providers—including social workers or specialists—to help with your care.

Your PACT will:

- **Build a partnership with you.** As an active member of the team, you will work with your PACT to plan and make decisions to meet your personal health goals. Your PACT will help you stay healthy with wellness care, education and lifestyle coaching.
- **Provide or arrange for preventive care**, such as immunizations (for example flu shots) to prevent illness and screenings to help identify diseases like cancer in their earliest stages—when treatment is most likely to be successful.

- **Help you get care in the ways that work best for you.** This may include visits with your primary care provider, group clinics, and 24/7 telephone care.
- **Coordinate your care.** Team members will meet often to talk with you, and each other, about your progress and goals. They will also coordinate any specialty care.

How do I find a primary care provider?

You will choose the main VA location where you would like to get care. We will assign a health care team—including your primary care provider—based on the location you choose.

If you decide you want to change to a different primary care provider, you can talk to your health care team leader or to the patient advocate at your VA medical center.

How do I talk to someone right now?

Whatever you are struggling with—chronic pain, anxiety, depression, trouble sleeping, anger, or even homelessness—we can support you. Our Veterans Crisis Line is confidential (private), free, and available 24/7.

To connect with a Veterans Crisis Line responder any time day or night:

- Call **1-800-273-8255**, then press 1
- Text **838255**
- Call **911**
- Go to the nearest emergency room.

How to Get Medical Advice

Call the **Advice Nurse 1-800-455-0057, option #4, available 24 hrs/day.**

If you do not feel well, the nurse can make an urgent appointment for you or help you decide the next steps.



Online Resources

My HealtheVet is an online resource where you can:

- Request prescription refills and track delivery
- View and make VA appointments
- View lab results
- View or download your health care data (via the Blue Button)
- Secure message with your healthcare team
- View trusted health information in the Veteran Health Library
- Take a healthy living assessment

Register at www.myhealth.va.gov. For more information, contact the VA Palo Alto My HealtheVet Coordinator at 650-849-0393, or visit the MHV Resource Center on the Palo Alto campus, Building 5 main floor.

Vets.Gov

Easy to use website from the Department of Veterans Affairs to help discover, apply for, track, and manage benefits. Use Vets.gov from a mobile phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop to:

- Apply for and manage VA health care
- Apply for and manage benefits that help pay for college and training programs
- Get help building your career skills and finding a job
- Check the status of a disability or pension claim
- Refill VA prescriptions
- Send a secure message to your health care team

MyHealtheVet

You may email your primary care or specialist team for non-urgent matters by signing up at www.myhealth.va.gov. Replies to emails may take up to five-business days.



How to Schedule a VA Appointment

By Phone:

1-855-632-8262 Patient Scheduling Unit (8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Monday-Friday) to schedule the following routine appointments:

- With your doctor or specialists;
- For an eye exam, hearing exam or hearing-aid evaluation (these no longer require a doctor's referral);
- For a test ordered by your doctor; or to leave a message for your primary care team or a specialist team.

Online

VA now offers online scheduling for some appointments and facilities. We hope to expand the number of VA facilities and types of appointments in the future.

You can schedule a VA primary care appointment online if you have had an appointment at that VA medical facility within the last 2-years

And, you must have one of these free accounts:

- A premium My HealtheVet account
- Or, a premium Data Security Logon account (used for eBenefits and milConnect)

How to schedule through secure messaging

If you have a Vets.gov account or a My HealtheVet Premium account, you can send secure messages to your health care team about non-urgent, health-related questions like scheduling and canceling appointments.

Send a secure message or sign up now through:

- Vets.gov or My HealtheVet Premium

Please note: *These online tools allow you to schedule only VA appointments. For appointments with non-VA facilities through the Community Care Program, contact the health care facility directly.*

With your online account, you will also be able to:

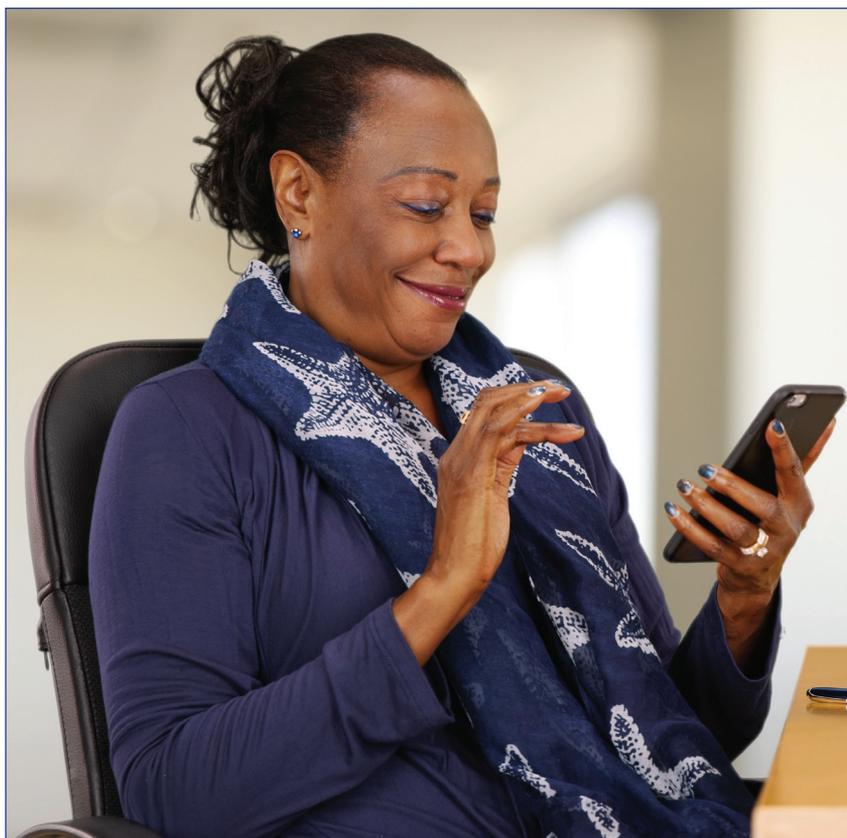
- Track the status of requests
- Send messages about requested appointments
- Get notifications about appointments
- Cancel appointments

How to Change or Cancel Your Appointment

If you cannot keep an existing appointment, please contact us as soon as possible by calling toll-free **1-800-455-0057**. This will allow us to reschedule you sooner as well as schedule one of your fellow Veterans for the original appointment date and time.

Use VEText

- An automated, interactive text message system to remind you of upcoming VA appointments. You can respond to confirm or cancel an appointment.
- Allows a download of the reminder to a calendar file.
- Just update or provide an active cell phone number with VA staff.





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How to Get Your Medications

As a Veteran enrolled in VA health care, you are eligible for prescription medications. You may be required to make a co-payment for prescriptions not related to a service-connected condition. VA prescriptions must be written by a VA provider and filled at a VA pharmacy, or via mail.

Pharmacy Hours of Operation

Palo Alto Outpatient Pharmacy

Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays 9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Menlo Park Mental Health Clinic Pharmacy

Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. & 1:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Livermore Outpatient Pharmacy

Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.



Medication / Prescription Refills

All medication refills will be mailed to your home. To avoid delays:

- Make sure that your prescription has refills available
- Order refills at least two weeks before your medication runs out
- Medications for long-term use may be ordered as soon as you receive your prescription
- Most medications are available in a 90-day supply

There are three ways to order refills:

1. Refill Online:

Connect directly to My HealthVet and order your refills over the Internet. Simply log on, enter your prescription numbers, and your refill medications will be filled and delivered to your doorstep. <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>.

2. Refill by Phone:

Call the automated prescription refill line at **1-800-311-2511**, 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. Be sure to have your prescription number and full 9-digit social security number available.

3. Refill by Mail: (allow minimum of 14-days to receive medications)

Mail in the refill slips you received with your last prescription to:

VA Palo Alto Health Care System
Pharmacy Service (119)
3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304

For more information about taking your medications, please visit the Pharmacy website at: https://www.paloalto.va.gov/services/pharmacy/Pharm_MedQu.es.asp



Primary and Specialty Care Services

- Primary Care (General Internal Medicine)
 - Women's Health
 - Hematology
 - Infectious Disease
 - Inpatient Medicine
 - Nephrology
 - Oncology
 - Pulmonary
 - Rheumatology
 - Cardiology (Interventional/Non-Interventional)
 - Endocrinology
 - Gastroenterology
 - Dental (additional eligibility required)
 - Neurology
 - Laboratory (blood draw)
 - Pain Management
 - Radiology (Interventional/Non-Interventional)
 - Nuclear Medicine
 - Dermatology
-

Surgical Specialty Services

- Cardiac Surgery
 - Ear, Nose and Throat
 - Head and Neck
 - General
 - Gynecology
 - Neurosurgery
 - Plastics and Hand
 - Cardio Thoracic/Thoracic
 - Urology
 - Podiatry
 - Ophthalmology
 - Optometry
 - Orthopedic Surgery
 - Vascular
-

Rehabilitation Services

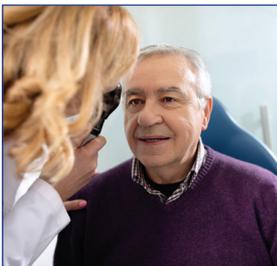
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- Physical/Occupational Therapy
- Polytrauma System of Care
- Acupuncture

Mental Health Care Services

A variety of mental health care programs and services are available. Services may include inpatient, outpatient, or residential care:

- Individual psychotherapy
- Group sessions
- Couples/family therapy
- Crisis intervention
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance abuse programs
- Smoking cessation
- Suicide Crisis Programs
- Military Sexual Trauma

Additional services may be available at your outpatient clinic. Please ask.



Programs for Homeless Veterans

We offer specialized VA programs to serve homeless and at-risk Veterans. VA programs provide Veterans with housing solutions, employment opportunities, health care, justice, re-entry-related services, and more. Programs include residential care for sheltered and unsheltered Veterans with multiple challenges, illnesses or rehabilitative care needs. The programs provide structured settings to foster male and female Veterans' independence and mutual support.

Our outreach teams work with homeless, OEF/OIF, justice-involved, female, and medically compromised Veterans throughout Northern California. We aim to educate and provide links to an array of supportive services within VA and in the local communities. The Justice and Re-entry Program visits Veterans in prisons and jails throughout Northern California and local Veteran courts.

Homeless Veterans Rehabilitation Program (HVRP)

The main goal of the Homeless Veteran's Rehabilitation Program (HVRP) is to help Veterans return to work and provide stable housing while maintaining a clean and sober lifestyle. The program involves approximately 90-days of personal problem-solving and life-skills training in a peer-support format. There is an added 90-days for job search and work. This 70-bed residential program has a strong record of success during its 20+ years of service. It has aided over 3,000 Veterans to rebuild their lives. Alumni, outpatients, and residents interact in an extended community that promotes and supports the long-term success of Veterans coming through HVRP.

For more information, please call 1-800-848-7254
Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

First Step

First Step is a Residential Rehabilitation program focused on the treatment of addiction. First Step is a therapeutic community that provides ongoing assessment, recovery planning, psycho education, and support within a social setting. Personal responsibility, problem-solving, practice, relationships, and play are highly valued.

Within this framework, First Step integrates a variety of strong treatment approaches, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). An ongoing weekly aftercare group is also offered.

How to Apply – First Step

For additional information or to set up a phone screening regarding this program, please contact the consultation team at:

650-493-5000, extension 22734, Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m., or 1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.



Whole Health

Whole Health is the next evolution in the care we provide, focusing on self-care. In addition to Veteran visits with their regular care team, Veterans are encouraged to engage with their own health and wellness through self-reflection:

- What really matters to **YOU**?
- Why do **YOU** want to stay healthy and live a healthier life?

Whole Health also supports Veterans trying new approaches they might like, such as **Tai Chi**, **Yoga**, and **Whole Health Coaching**, as well as **other activities** both within VA and in their local community.

How to get started? Call 650-849-0131 to talk to a Health Coach.

Introduction to Whole Health: This 60-minute class is offered at all locations. Veterans learn about the Whole Health Program. Based on your preferences:

- Non-clinical health coaches are available to navigate the program.
- Veterans are introduced to other Whole Health offerings and resources.

Disabled, Elderly and Long-Term Care

- Community Living Centers (residential nursing home care) at the Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Livermore Divisions.
- Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) is a special program that provides care in the home for severely disabled patients with chronic illness or who are terminally ill. Health care staff visit patients in their own home to deliver needed care. Ask a member of your health care team if you might be eligible for HBPC.
- Homemaker/Home Health Aide
- Hospice and Palliative Care Center offers medical, nursing and psycho-social spiritual care to patients with serious life-limiting disease.
- Respite Care is a short-term stay that helps caregivers take a break from the daily routine and stress of caring for a sick individual.

Caregiver Program

The VA Palo Alto Health Care System has two distinct programs for caregivers of Veterans. The first, called the General Caregiver Program, has been established for caregivers of Veterans of all eras. Any caregiver who provides routine assistance to a Veteran receiving VA health care services is eligible to participate. General caregivers are eligible for:

- Caregiver education and training
- Mental health counseling
- Respite care
- Information on other VA services

The second program, called the Family Caregiver Program, has been established for caregivers of Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001. Family caregivers are eligible for:

- Monthly Stipend
- ChampVA
- Hero Miles Program
- Caregiver education and training
- Mental health counseling
- Respite care
- Information on other VA services

For more information regarding eligibility criteria and how to apply for the General Caregiver Program, contact the toll-free # at 1-855-260-3274 or visit www.caregiver.va.gov.



LIVING WILL

Items purchased from hikgk are made pursuant to a shipment of
the risk of loss and title for such items pass to you upon our

DESCRIPTIONS

Adiighuith and its associates attempt to be as accurate
and warrant that product descriptions or other content
correct, or error-free. If a product offered by astar
remedy is to return it in unused condition.

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Advance Directives

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

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 cannot make them yourself. This person is called 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 is best to choose someone you trust and who knows you well. You should talk to that person to make sure they are willing to be your health care agent.

What is a living will?

A living will is a legal form that communicates what kinds of health care treatments you would or would not want if you become ill and cannot decide for yourself.

Should I have an advance directive?

Yes, it is a good idea to have one. An advance directive helps protect your right to make your own choices. Make sure people respect your values and wishes if you cannot speak for yourself. Your advance directive is used only when you are not able to make decisions yourself.

How do I complete an advance directive?

Fill out VA Form 10-0137, "VA Advance Directive: Durable Power of Attorney and Living Will." Or use any valid state advance health care directive form. You can also fill out more than one type of form. But if you do this, you should make sure they do not conflict with each other. Your health care provider or legal advisor can help determine which form is best for you. You can fill out the form on your own or get help from a health care professional at your local VA health care facility. This might be a social worker, your primary care doctor, or your mental health professional. You could also talk to your spiritual advisor or attorney.

What should I do with my advance directive?

Give your advance directive to your VA health care provider so they can put it in your medical record. Also give a copy to your health care agent and anyone else who might be involved in making health care decisions for you.

Veteran Services

Agent Cashier - Available to Veterans wishing to make co-payments.

Beneficiary Travel - Certain eligible Veterans may receive reimbursement for travel to their VAPAHCS appointment, or to their VA-authorized community outpatient appointment. For more information, please call the Travel Office at 650-493-5000, extension 65687, or visit the Travel Office on the first floor of Building 101 at the Palo Alto Division. If you do not qualify for mileage reimbursement, you may contact Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) if you need transportation assistance to your appointments. The VTS line is 650-496-2542.

Chaplain Service - Specially trained Chaplains work with patients, families and staff to provide for their spiritual needs.

Chaplain Services are available at the following locations:

Palo Alto Division

3801 Miranda Ave
Palo Alto, CA 94304
Bldg. 101, Room A1-132

Menlo Park Division

795 Willow Rd
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Chapel, Bldg. 322

Livermore Division

4951 Arroyo Rd
Livermore, CA 94550
Chapel, Bldg. 64

Defenders Lodge - Veterans and caregivers who travel either 50-miles or at least 2-hours from home are eligible to stay overnight at the Defenders Lodge. Patients undergoing extensive treatment or procedures, such as an organ transplant or chemotherapy, are eligible for temporary lodging for the duration of the episode of care, as well. Your health care provider will refer you to stay at the Defenders Lodge by means of a consult.

Read the Guest Guide (<https://www.paloalto.va.gov/services/defenderslodge.asp>) to learn more about the Lodge and find out if you are eligible.

Please note: Service animals specifically trained to aid a person with disabilities are permitted at the Defenders Lodge. We require up-to-date immunization records for service animals.

- 650-493-5000 extension 61333
- 650-493-5000 extension 62824

Fisher House - Provides free, high-quality, temporary lodging to families of Veterans and active duty military personnel who are undergoing treatment.

Referrals are made through the patient's treatment team. Lodging is dependent on eligibility and availability.

Read the Fisher House brochure for more information (<https://www.paloalto.va.gov/services/fisherhouse.asp>)

Interpreter Services - are available for hearing or speech impaired, and non-English speaking Veterans and their families. Language interpretation is provided over-the-phone and in-person. Translation services are available for patients, their families, and caregivers with limited English proficiency. Over-the-phone interpreting services are available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week in over 200 languages. To request an in person, onsite, interpreter, please ask a member of your health care team. It is best to give staff 48 hours notice, when possible.

Canteen and Patriot Brew Café - Visitors are welcome to eat in the Canteen and/or Patriot Café, which are located on the first floor of Building 101. We offer hot and cold entrees, beverages, and desserts. Vending machines are also available for your convenience.

Canteen Hours:

- **Palo Alto:** Building 101, 1st Floor
Monday– Friday 6:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (except Holidays)
Closed Saturday and Sunday
- **Menlo Park:** Building 334, 1st Floor
Monday– Friday 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (except Holidays)
- **Livermore:** Building 64, 2nd Floor
Monday– Friday 7:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (except Holidays)

Patriotic Brew Hours: Monday– Friday 6:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Saturday 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Closed on Sunday and all Federal Holidays

Patriot Store - is a full-service retail store with a variety of products, including clothing, toiletries, cosmetics, and electronics. Items may be purchased tax-free. The store is located on the first floor of Building 101 near the Patriot Café.

- **Palo Alto Store Hours:** Building 101, 1st Floor
Monday– Friday 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. (except Holidays)
- **Menlo Park Store Hours:** Building 334, 1st Floor
Monday– Friday 7:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. (except Holidays)

****Hours are subject to change with limited notice.***

Request Your Medical Records

You may request:

- Military Service Records (DD214) at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>
- Release of Medical Records/Health Information (VA Form 10-5345) <https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-5345-fill.pdf>
- Copy of Own Health Information (VA Form 10-5345a) <https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-5345a-fill.pdf>

How to request information (by mail)

Please visit the website <https://www.paloalto.va.gov/patients/roi.asp> for forms or access links above. Complete the requested information, sign, date the form, and mail it to the following address:

VA Palo Alto Health Care System
Release of Information (11MR)
3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304

You can also fax request to 650-617-2603.

Because forms must contain an original signature, emailed forms cannot be accepted.

How to request information (walk-ins)

Call us toll-free at 1-855-780-7962, or 650-849-0403 for more information.

If you would like copies of your medical record, lab results, x-rays, disability and/or insurance forms, please contact the Release of Information:

Facility	Open	Location
Palo Alto	Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.	Building 100, First Floor Room F1-115
Menlo Park	Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30p.m.	Building 334 Room A-102A
Livermore	Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30p.m.	Building 62, Second Floor Room 230
San Jose	Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30p.m.	TBD
Monterey	Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30p.m.	Business Administration Service 1st Floor, Room 180, ROI (Cubicle 1)



Veteran Benefits Administration

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is a branch of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides a variety of benefits and services to Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families. Below are some of our major program offices within VBA.

- **Compensation Service:** Oversees the delivery of disability compensation, a tax-free monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service.
- **Pension and Fiduciary Service:** Provides program oversight that helps wartime Veterans, their families, and survivors with financial challenges by providing supplemental income through Veterans Pension, Death Pension, and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Protects the benefits paid to our most vulnerable beneficiaries who, because of disease, injury, or infirmities of advanced age, are unable to manage their VA benefits.
- **Insurance Service:** Maintains life insurance programs that give financial security and peace of mind for Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families.
- **Education Service:** Administers VA's education programs that provide education and training benefits to eligible Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve Servicemembers, Veterans, and dependents.
- **Loan Guaranty Service:** Provides oversight of the VA Guaranteed Home Loan Program that guarantees home loans in varying amounts. Ensures Veteran's rights are protected when purchasing a home under this program. Oversees administration of specially adapted housing grants for certain severely disabled service members and Veterans so they can adapt or acquire suitable housing.
- **Office of Transition and Economic Development:** Partners within and outside of VA and with numerous federal agencies to advance the economic empowerment and independence of servicemembers, Veterans and their families through increasing access to VA benefits, programs and services that support a seamless transition from military service to civilian life.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) Service:** Assists Servicemembers and Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment; start their own business; or receive independent-living services. Oversees their education and provides career counseling to help guide career paths and ensure the most effective use of VA benefits.

- **Office of Field Operations:** Provides operational oversight to the district offices and **56 regional offices** within the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. OFO also facilitates outreach and public contact services across the VA and ensures quality and training for VBA employees who engage with Service members, Veterans, and their families through client services such as the National Call Center.
- **Appeals Management Center:** Responsible for implementing the Veteran Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017. The Appeals Modernization Act modernizes the current claims and appeals process, includes three review options for disagreements with decisions, requires improved notification of VA decisions, provide earlier claim resolution, and ensure you receive the earliest effective date possible.





Vet Centers

Vet Centers across the country provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to combat Veterans and their families. Vet Centers help to guide Veterans and their families through many of the major adjustments in lifestyle that often occur after some Veterans return from combat. Services for a Veteran may include individual and group counseling in areas such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), alcohol and drug assessment, and suicide prevention referrals. All services are free of cost and are strictly confidential.

To learn more or to find a Vet Center near you, visit <https://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>.

You can also call 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387) for an around the clock confidential call center where combat Veterans and their families can call to talk about their military experience or any other issue they are facing in their readjustment to civilian life. The staff is comprised of combat Veterans from several eras as well as family members of combat Veterans. This benefit is prepaid through the Veteran's military service.

Emergency Care

If you have a life-threatening problem, call 911 or go to nearest Emergency Department

Examples of life-threatening problems include:

- Sudden difficulty breathing
- Severe bleeding
- Chest pain
- Seizures
- Deep cuts
- Broken bones
- Poisoning from chemicals
- Sudden severe headache
- A drug overdose, or

Call 911 if you have:

- Sudden **facial, arm** or **leg** numbness/weakness especially **on one side** of body
- Sudden confusion, **trouble speaking** or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache without a reason

If you experience any of these symptoms, you may be having a **stroke** or mini-stroke. Remember to act **F-A-S-T** (**F**ace, **A**rms, **S**peech, **T**ime to call 911). Go to www.stroke.org for additional information.

If you have warning signs of heart attack or stroke, or potentially serious symptoms, call 911 and tell the ambulance driver that you have chest pain/signs of a stroke. Driving yourself to the hospital or driving farther to VA can delay care and may be too dangerous for you and other drivers.

Emergency Services ONLY located at Palo Alto Division.



Business Administration Service

Member Services: Enrollment and Eligibility

Helps Veterans who need to update insurance or personal contact information, complete a financial assessment, has billing questions, or needs help with enrollment and eligibility questions.

If you have any changes to your mailing address, phone number, health insurance, your emergency or next-of-kin contact, or experience a significant change in income, please contact the eligibility office at (650) 858-3944.

The Mission Act at a Glance

The VA MISSION Act is the foundation that will fundamentally transform elements of VA's health care system, fulfilling the President's commitment to help Veterans live a healthy and fulfilling life. It was signed into law by the President on June 6, 2018.

For general information about the Mission Act, go to:

<https://vawww.paloalto.va.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Enhanced-VA-Options-under-the-MISSION-Act-Web-Based-Final.pdf>

For specific information about this new process, please contact VA MISSION Act at 844-698-2311, option 1.

All non-emergency community care referrals, such as outpatient medical and dental services, must be pre-approved and meet MISSION Act eligibility requirements. These referrals must be initiated by your VA provider(s). Once a community care referral is generated, staff from the Office of Community Care department will assist in coordinating a community appointment with an in-network provider. If you have questions about an existing community care referral, please contact the VAPAHCS Community Care line at 650-617-2732. If you do not have an active community care referral, please contact your provider to discuss the most clinically appropriate options.

Community Emergency Care FAQs

What is an emergency?

A medical emergency is an injury or illness so severe that without immediate treatment, it threatens life or health. If a Veteran believes their life or health is in danger, call 911 or go to the nearest ER right away. If experiencing a mental health crisis, please contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255, press 1, or text 838255.

Must VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) be contacted before dialing 911 for an ambulance or going to an ER?

No. During a medical, life-threatening emergency, the VA encourages all Veterans to seek medical attention right away.

When should VA be contacted regarding an emergency room visit?

It is important to notify VAPAHCS within 72-hours of receiving emergency care or upon admission at a community (non-VA) hospital.

How should VA be notified? What information needs to be provided?

Call the VA Centralized Notification Center at 844-72HRVHA.

Please provide: Veteran's full name, last 4 of the social security, and date of birth; date of ER visit; community hospital name; and reason for ER visit.

If a community hospital wants to admit the Veteran, is advanced approval needed from the VA?

No, not if the admission is an emergency. The admission will be reviewed as part of the emergency visit. If it is not an emergency, then yes.

If a VA bed is available and the Veteran can be safely moved, does the Veteran have to transfer to the VA hospital?

For VA to pay for the care, the Veteran must be transferred when safe to do so. If the Veteran chooses not to transfer, VA can only pay up until the point VA was available for transfer.

What will VA pay?

VA may pay all, some, or none of the charges. For authorized emergency care (38 U.S.C. 17.4020c), most costs, such as hospital and provider bills, will be covered. The criteria that must be met are:

- VAPAHCS was notified within 72-hours of receiving emergency care or upon admission at a community (non-VA) hospital.

- Care was provided by an in-network provider.

What if the Veteran went to an out-of-network provider?

VA will review under two other emergency authorities: service-connected (38 U.S.C. 1728) or non-service connected (38 U.S.C. 1725) emergency care. VA may pay for community emergency care for a **service-connected** condition if:

- Treatment is for service-connected disability or an adjunct condition,
- The Veteran believes a delay in seeking immediate medical attention would be hazardous to life or health, and VA or other federal facility was not feasibly available

What is a service-connected condition?

A service-connected condition is one that has been approved by the Veterans Benefits Administration. An adjunct condition is one that is medically considered to aggravate or worsen a service-connected condition.

What if the ER visit was not related to a service-connected condition?

If a Veteran went to the ER for non-service-connected conditions, VA may pay for the ER visit. The criteria that must be met include:

- Veteran is enrolled in VA and has received health care services from VA within the last 24 months, and
- Claim(s) must be submitted within 90-days of being discharged from the community hospital. Please remind the community facility to submit the claim(s) and medical records to VA.

If the Veteran has no other health insurance (OHI), VA may pay as primary. If a Veteran has OHI, VA may serve as secondary payer for remaining costs owed to the provider. Examples of remaining costs that are reimbursable by VA include, but are not limited to, deductibles, co-insurance, and cost-shares other than co-payments. VA cannot reimburse for co-payment amounts owed by Veterans under their OHI. The community provider should send a copy of the explanation of benefits (EOB) for VA to review. This should be sent to:

VHA Office of Community Care
P.O. Box 30780
Tampa, FL 33630-3780

What happens if a Veteran goes to the ER for a motor vehicle accident?

Notify VA within 72-hours of receiving emergency care or upon admission at a community (non-VA) hospital by calling 844-724-7842.

If the care is approved under (38 U.S.C. 17.4020c) or service-connected (38 U.S.C. 1728) emergency care, VA will serve as primary payer for hospital and facility claims.

If the care is authorized under non-service connected (38 U.S.C. 1725) emergency care, the community hospital should first bill any insurance coverage for care related to the motor vehicle accident. Once all payment resources have been exhausted, the VA Regional Counsel will review the case and determine if VA may serve as secondary payer. Please provide documentation to the VAPAHCS Office of Community Care by mail or fax (650-614-9901).

Documentation can include a police report, explanation of benefits, or verification of insurance that they do not cover for medical expenses.

Will the VA pay for emergency transportation (e.g., ambulance and air transport)?

VA may reimburse for emergency transportation.

If the emergency care is authorized (38 U.S.C. 17.4020c), emergency transportation will be paid if you meet beneficiary travel eligibility. If emergency care is authorized under service-connected conditions (38 U.S.C. 1728), emergency transportation will be paid.

If emergency care is authorized under non-service connected conditions (38 U.S.C. 1725), VA will review the claim on a case-by-case basis. Generally, VA cannot pay for an ambulance except for the following:

- Other health insurance paid for the emergency treatment but did not pay for transportation cost, or
- Death occurred during the transportation to receive emergency care

How can pharmacy reimbursements for emergency care be requested?

Send a copy of the prescription, receipt, and medical records to:

VAPAHCS Office of Community Care
795 Willow Road (MC 136C)
Menlo Park, CA 94025

What does it mean when a claim is rejected?

A rejected claim does not mean it is denied. It often means additional information is needed. For example, VA may require additional documentation from you or the community provider. There may also be billing issues the community provider may need to update. VA will inform the community provider on what documents are needed for review.

Requested information should be sent to:

VHA Office of Community Care
P.O. Box 30780
Tampa, FL 33630-3780

Where can community care emergency care statements or invoices be sent for review?

Statements or invoices should be sent to:

VHA Office of Community Care
P.O. Box 30780
Tampa, FL 33630-3780

Who can be contacted for additional questions?

Please call the VAPAHCS Community Care Line at 650-617-2732.



Addressing Compliments, Suggestions or Concerns

Patient Advocates

The Patient Advocacy Program is for all Veterans and their families, who receive care at Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities and clinics. We want to ensure you have someone available to hear your concerns in a timely manner and assist you access the resources and services you need to receive care. We want to provide you with world-class Veteran customer service and this is just one important way in which we do that.

Let us Know What You Think

Whenever and wherever you receive VA care — outpatient, inpatient or long-term care, medical center or community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), VA wants you to receive timely, compassionate care and to get the most out of your visit or stay. Please give us your feedback so we can provide the best customer service possible.

After your clinic or hospital visit, you may receive a confidential survey in the mail or online from VA, or our contractors, asking you about your satisfaction with recent outpatient or inpatient treatment at our medical center. Please use the survey to let us know of any concerns, complaints, or questions about your care. We also appreciate compliments about what we are doing right. Each survey is used to help VA identify opportunities for improvement and to note positive trends.

We want all staff to respect and support your rights as a patient. If you would like more information about your rights as a patient, please talk with your VA treatment team members or if necessary, the Service Level Patient Advocate. Patient Rights and Responsibilities are posted in outpatient and inpatient areas.

Steps to Address Your Concerns

- Share your concern with a member of your care team. Your care team includes your doctor, nurse, social worker, dietitian, pharmacist, chaplain, therapist and other professionals associated with your medical care.
- If your concern is not addressed to your satisfaction, ask to speak with a Supervisor or Service Chief.
- If the concern is still not resolved, you may contact the VA Service Level Patient Advocate. A Service Level Patient Advocate is specifically designated to manage the feedback received from Veterans, family members and friends and to address any issues.
- If the Service Level Patient Advocate is unable to resolve the problem, the issue will be escalated or referred to the Hospital Patient Advocate, as a last resort.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

Nondiscrimination and Respect

- You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. Consistent with Federal law, VA policy, and accreditation standards of The Joint Commission, you will not be subject to discrimination for any reason, including for reasons of age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.
- You will receive care in a safe environment free from excess noise, and with enough light to ensure comfort and safety.
- You have a right to have access to the outdoors.
- We will seek to honor your cultural and personal values, beliefs, and preferences. We ask that you identify any cultural, religious, or spiritual beliefs or practices that influence your care.
- You or someone you choose has the right to keep and spend your money. You have the right to receive an accounting of any funds that VA is holding for you.

Additional Rights and Responsibilities of Community Living Center

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

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

Common Abbreviations

VAPAHCS VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Locations

PAD	PALO ALTO DIVISION
LVD	LIVERMORE DIVISION (SOMETIMES LD)
MONT	MONTEREY CLINIC (LOCATED IN MARINA)
CAC	CAPITOLA CBOC
MPD	MENLO PARK DIVISION (MPD)
SJC	SAN JOSE CBOC
FRC	FREMONT CBOC
MOC	MODESTO CBOC
SOC	SONORA CBOC
STC	STOCKTON CBOC

Appointment Acronyms

MH	Mental Health
PACT	Patient Aligned Care Team
TH	Tele Health
Tele	Telephone
GMC	General Medicine Clinic
CBOC	Community Based Outpatient Clinic

VA Palo Alto Health Care System

3801 Miranda Avenue • Palo Alto, CA 94304

(650) 493-5000 • (800) 455-0057

www.paloalto.va.gov

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