

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System

CAVHS

Where

Veterans

Come First



John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital
Little Rock Campus

Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center
North Little Rock Campus

INDEX	1-6
WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR	7
INTRO TO CENTRAL ARKANSAS VETERANS HEALTHCARE SYSTEM	
Mission, Vision, Values statements for CAVHS	8
Preface.....	9
Notice to Veterans.....	9
OEF/OIF PROGRAM INFORMATION	10
CAVHS TELEPHONE CARE SERVICES	
Overview	11
Life-Threatening Emergencies	11
Telephone Care Program.....	11
Primary Care Appointment Center (PCAC)	11
Automated Telephone Information	12
Who to Call for Complaints	12
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ER) PROCEDURES	12
MAKE, CHANGE, OR CANCEL AN APPOINTMENT	
Appointment Center.....	13
Self-Scheduling Clinics	13-14
Change or Cancel Appointments for Community Based Outpatient Clinics..	14
PRIMARY CARE	
Primary Care at CAVHS	14
Women Veterans Healthcare Program.....	15
Community Based Outpatient Clinics	15
Primary Care Provider Responsibilities.....	15
Getting the Most out of VA Health Care	16
Primary Care Appointment Expectations.....	16
Privacy with Your Primary Care Provider	16
Your Primary Care Team.....	16
PHARMACY	
Getting Your Prescriptions	17
Co-Payment for Prescriptions.....	17
Calculation for Prescription Co-Payment	17
Exceptions for Co-Payment.....	17
Filling Private Provider Prescriptions	17
Drug Formularies.....	17
Private Doctors Prescribing Medication that is not on the VA Formulary	18
Current Prescriptions not on the VA Formulary.....	18
What to Know about Your Medications	18

Storing Medications.....	18
Side Effects	18
Expired Prescriptions	19
Medicare Part D	19-20
Prescription Refills	20
Automated Telephone Refill System	20
Internet Refill	21
Mail Refill.....	21
Drop-Off Box Refill	21
Hours of Operation	21
DENTAL CARE	
About Our Office.....	21
Dental Eligibility.....	22
PHYSICAL MEDICINE & REHABILITATION (PM&RS)	23
PROSTHETIC TREATMENT CENTER.....	23
NEUROLOGY	23-24
Chronic Pain Management Program	24
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	
General Information.....	24-25
Program Descriptions	
Acute Inpatient Mental Health	25
Intermediate Inpatient Mental Health	25-26
Seriously & Persistently Mentally Ill/Geropsychiatric Inpatient	26
Substance Abuse Treatment Programs.....	26-27
Mental Health Outpatient Clinic.....	27-28
Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (RRTP).....	28-29
Veterans Industry/Transitional Residence (VI/TR).....	29-30
Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Programs (HCHV).....	30-31
Psychosocial Rehabilitation Recovery Center (PRRC)	31
Vocational Rehabilitation.....	31-32
Mental Health Evaluation and Consultation Service	32
Psychology Mental Health and Behavioral Program	32-33
Occupational Therapy	33
Recreational Therapy	33
Kinesiotherapy.....	33
PARTICIPATE IN YOUR CARE	
Be Actively Involved in Your Care	34
Pain Management	34
What to expect	34-35
Questions You will be Asked.....	35

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Where to go for Admission Processing	35
ID bracelet	35
Money and Valuables	35-36
Check Cashing	36
Lodging.....	36-37

ELIGIBILITY & ENROLLMENT

Overview	37
Enrollment	37-38
Obtaining Your DD214	38-39
Financial Assessment (Means Testing)	39
Geographically-Based Means Testing	39
Enrollment Priority Groups	40-41
VA Service-Connected Rating.....	41
VA “Catastrophically” Disabled	41
Ineligible Enrollment Care	41-42

BENEFITS & SERVICES

Acute Care Standard Benefits	42-43
Long-Term Care Standard Benefits.....	43-44
Financial Assessment for Long-Term Care Services	44
Limited Benefits	44
Voting Assistance for VA Patients.....	44
Other VA Benefits.....	45
Who to Call for More Information	45

CHARGES & CO-PAYMENTS

Types of Co-Payments	45
Outpatient Co-Payments	45
Medication Co-Payments	45
Inpatient Co-Payments.....	46
Long-Term Co-Payments	46
Annual Changes to Co-Payment Rates.....	46

PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

Coverage	46
Care Outside the VA System at VA Cost.....	47
Private Insurance Information	47
Insurance Collections.....	47

CHAMPVA

Overview	47-48
Where to get Information.....	48

EMERGENCY CARE IN NON-VA FACILITIES

Overview	48
Criteria to Qualify	48-49
Do Not Cancel Current Insurance to Meet Requirements	49
Timeline to File	49
Emergency Services VA Will Cover	49
Covered Pharmacy Items	49
Do You Need Approval Before Going to the ER.....	49
Length of Stay in Private Hospital	50
If You Do Not Wish to Leave the Private Medical Center	50
Reimbursement for Ambulance Bill to Non-VA Medical Center.....	50
If the Private Hospital Bills You	50
If You are a Victim of Crime.....	50
For More Information.....	50

CO-MANAGED CARE: VA AND PRIVATE PHYSICIANS

Receiving care from both a VA and local community health provider	50-51
Participating in Co-Managed Care	51
Getting prescriptions filled at the VA without seeing a VA doctor	51

PATIENT PRIVACY

Purpose and Background	51
Understanding HIPAA	51
Medical Center Directory Information.....	51-52

YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

Patient Safety	52-53
Identification Bracelet.....	53
Calling Your Nurse	53
Conduct and Behavior.....	53
Prohibited Personal Property and Activities	54
Smoking.....	54
Noise	54
Meals.....	54
Fire/Disaster Drills.....	54-55
Televisions	55
Hearing Impaired.....	55
Telephones.....	55
Passes.....	56

FACILITIES & SERVICES INSIDE THE HOSPITAL

Patient Education Resource Center	56
Canteen Services	56
Cafeteria.....	57
Retail Store.....	57
Barber Shop	57

Information Desk	57-58
Library	58
Lost & Found	58
Patient Mail.....	58
Parking	59
Release of Medical Information.....	59-60
Chaplain Services	60-61
Social Workers.....	61
Nutrition and Food Services.....	61-62
VA Regional Office	62
Voluntary Services	62
Diversional Activities	62-63
 VISITING HOURS & GUIDELINES	 63
 VETERAN RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITES	
Overview	63
Patient Advocate	64
Respect and Non-Discrimination.....	64
Information, Disclosure, and Confidentiality.....	64-65
Participation in Treatment Decisions.....	65
Complaints	65-66
 INFORMED CONSENT	
Right to Refuse Medical Treatment.....	66
Understanding Consent Forms work	66
Loss of Decision Making Capacity	66
Selection of Surrogate Decision-Maker.....	66-67
In Medical Emergencies	67
 ADVANCED HEALTHCARE PLANNING	
Advanced Directives.....	67
Copies	68
Getting More Information.....	68
If Unable to Manage Financial and Medical Affairs.....	68
Guardianship.....	68-69
 ORGAN DONATION	
CAVHS and Organ Donation.....	69
ARORA.....	69
Become a Donor.....	69
Donor Registrant and Effect on Healthcare.....	69
What Can Be Donated	69-70
Cosmetic Effects of Donation	70
Cost of Recovery Procedures.....	70
Payment for Donating.....	70

Burial Arrangements and Funeral Costs	70
Brain Death	70
Required Request	70
Religious Views	70
Who Receives the Donation.....	71
Family Information.....	71
DISCHARGE FROM THE HOSPITAL	
Overview	71
Preparation for Discharge	71-72
Things you need to have.....	72
TRANSPORTATION	
Veteran/Staff Shuttle Services	72
Departure Schedule	72
Transportation to/from Outlying Areas (DAV).....	73
Schedules.....	73
VOLUNTARY RESEARCH	
Research Service at CAVHS.....	73-74
What is a Research study	74
Questions to ask before volunteering.....	74-75
If someone asks if you to take part in a research study	75
Informed Consent.....	75
VET CENTER.....	75-76
QUALITY & SATISFACTION	
Being Sure You are Getting Quality Care	76
Facts about Joint Commission	76
Benefits of Joint Commission	76
Facts about CARF.....	77
Benefits of CARF Accreditation and Certification.....	77-78
IMPORTANT CAVHS TELEPHONE NUMBERS.....	79-83



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS)
4300 West 7th Street
Little Rock AR 72205

In Reply Refer To: 598/003

Welcome from the Director

Dear Veteran:

Welcome to the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS). I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing CAVHS for your healthcare. The CAVHS staff and I truly consider you as a hero for all that you have done for our country and for your committed military service. Please be assured we are here for one reason and this is to provide you with quality healthcare and excellent customer service. CAVHS is one of the largest veterans' healthcare systems in the country that provides a comprehensive array of services including primary, tertiary, and extended care. Our healthcare system has two campuses, John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock and the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in North Little Rock; which provide a broad spectrum of inpatient and outpatient healthcare services, ranging from disease prevention through primary care, to complex surgical procedures, to extended rehabilitation, to vocational, to mental health care services. In addition, there are several community-based outpatient clinics throughout Central Arkansas. Throughout its rich history, CAVHS has been widely recognized for excellence in education, research, and – first and foremost – for a tradition of quality and caring services for veterans.

If you have not already done so, we encourage you to enroll in our Primary Care Clinic. Our Primary Care staff can take care of your health needs, provide preventive and wellness care, and refer you to specialists if you need specialty care.

We are grateful to all veterans, and their families, for their service to our country. It is an honor and a privilege to serve you. I wish you good health and we look forward to serving you for years to come. Thank you again for choosing the CAVHS as your healthcare provider.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael R. Winn", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael R. Winn
Medical Center Director

Mission

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

Vision

To be a patient-centered, integrated healthcare 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.

Values

Desirable qualities, characteristics and behaviors of importance and value are: Trust, Respect, Commitment, Compassion, and Excellence.

Preface

This handbook provides some general information about the healthcare services that are provided here at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS). If you have trouble reading or understanding the handbook, and/or if you need additional information, please give us a call. Use the CAVHS Telephone Directory located at the end of this handbook to assist you with important telephone numbers. We want to give you the best care possible. Thank you for choosing Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare.

Notice to Veterans

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is pleased you have selected us to provide your health care. We want to improve your health and well-being. We will make your visit or stay as pleasant for you as possible. As part of our service to you, to other veterans, and to the nation, we are committed to improving health care quality. We also train future health care professionals, conduct research, and support our country in times of national emergency. In all of these activities, our employees will respect and support your rights as a veteran and patient.

OEF – OIF Program Staff

Our OEF-OIF Program Staff are here to assist OEF-OIF combat veterans with their VA care. The abbreviation stands for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. This program covers veterans who have served since September 11, 2001 in Iraq or Afghanistan. This also covers adjacent countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, the Philippines, the country of Georgia, Guantanamo Bay (Cuba) and the waters of the Persian Gulf. Service must be in one of the above combat zones and must be since September 11, 2001. These veterans are considered priority veterans.

Veterans who served in combat during a period of war after the Gulf War or against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998 qualify and are eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for a period of time after discharge from the military for any illness. Co-payments may be charged for those conditions which the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) finds resulted from a cause other than such combat service. National Guard and Reserve personnel who were activated and who served in combat support or direct combat operations, may also be eligible for the combat related health care benefits. Certain requirements, which essentially satisfy the definition of “veteran”, must be met to qualify.

The OEF-OIF program staff assists with completing a one-time post-deployment health risk assessment that helps with issues related to deployment injuries or illnesses, and helps navigate the VA system. Timely access to care is emphasized. Poly-trauma veterans and veterans with traumatic brain injuries are of special concern. These staff members also perform courtesy visits with OEF-OIF inpatients admitted to CAVHS. We can help coordinate care with other services and interface with the VA Regional Office in facilitating contacts regarding compensation and pension claims, vocational rehabilitation and other benefits. Our OEF-OIF staff also attends outreach activities with military units throughout much of the state of Arkansas. Questions may be directed to:

OEF-OIF Program Manager:

(501) 257-6706

OEF-OIF Case Manager:

(501) 257-4945

Patient Transition Advocate:

(501) 257-5414

CAVHS Telephone Care Services

The CAVHS created its Telephone Care Services as part of its on-going efforts to provide: safe, timely and consistent health care information; improve overall access, reduce waits and delays; reduce unnecessary clinic and emergency room visits; establish triage and determine the urgency of the problem, provision of advice, documentation of care, and ensure continuity and timely follow-up. It consists of three major programs: Telephone Care Program, Primary Care Appointment Center (PCAC), and Automated Telephone Information.

Life-threatening Emergency

Telephone Care Services are not for life-threatening emergencies. If you have a life-threatening emergency, immediately call 911.

Telephone Care Program

The Telephone Care Program is designed to provide you with healthcare information. If you have a healthcare question that cannot wait until your next appointment, call the Telephone Care Program. You may avoid a trip to the Walk-In Clinic or the Emergency Room by calling. When you call a Reception Clerk will answer, ask you some basic questions, and then refer your call to the correct Telephone Care Program area:

1. Telephone Care Triage - Can help you treat your minor medical problems.
2. Telephone Care Pharmacy - Can talk with you about your prescription questions
3. Telephone Care Eligibility - Can explain your VA eligibility and assign you a Primary Care doctor.

The Telephone Care Triage is available 24 hours, 7 days a week including weekends and holidays. The Telephone Care Pharmacy and Eligibility area is available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except holidays. The Telephone Care Program can be reached by calling (501) 257-5656 and out of area toll-free at 1-800-224-8387. If you receive your Primary Care from the Women's Health Clinic and it is Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., you may call (501) 257-5662.

Primary Care Appointment Center (PCAC)

Veterans treated in the Primary Care Clinics should call the PCAC to schedule or cancel their appointments. If you can not make your scheduled appointment, we ask that you notify the clinic as soon as possible by calling (501) 257-3999 or for the Women's Health Clinic (501) 257-5662. Other Veterans are negatively affected by missed appointments. It's also important to make sure the Primary Care Team has your most current telephone number and address. The PCAC operates Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. except holidays. The local PCAC number is (501) 257-3999 and out of area toll-free at 1-866-722-4838.

Automated Telephone Information

This service allows you with a touch tone telephone to more easily and time effectively, refill prescriptions, access appointment information, and access billing questions. This recorded information system makes access to important information only a telephone call away and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The local Automated Telephone Information number is (501) 257-1549 and out of area toll-free at 1-888-492-7845.

I have a complaint. Should I call one of the Telephone Care Services?

No. The Telephone Care Services are not complaint lines. Please limit your calls to questions about your health. Contact your local VA medical center and ask to speak with a patient advocate. Call (501) 257-5410 out of area toll-free 1-800-224-8387.

Emergency Department Procedures

The CAVHS Emergency Department is located at the John L. McClellan VA Hospital in Little Rock only and is located directly next to the main entrance. The CAVHS Emergency Room (ER) functions under an Emergent Care Triage Protocol System and is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This means critical cases such as cardiac emergencies, pneumonia, stroke and difficulty breathing are seen before non-critical ones – no matter when a veteran comes in. It is not a treatment area for veterans with chronic cases. It is a place where veterans with life threatening problems can be stabilized before being admitted to the hospital. Visits for chronic non-life threatening problems may result in extended waits, examples include but are not limited too; colds, ingrown toenails, rashes, minor cuts, prescription refills, chronic pain, or minor illness that have been present for several days. Remember there are no emergent care services at the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) or Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in North Little Rock.

The Emergency Department is not designed to serve as a primary care provider for veterans. Veterans are assigned a Primary Care Team at CAVHS to ensure continuity of care. Primary care providers are supported by a team of nurses, patient service assistants, social workers, registered dietitians, pharmacists, and other skilled professionals to assure veterans receive well-coordinated medical care. If you have not been assigned a Primary Care Team, call Telephone Care at (501)257-5656 and out of area toll-free at 1-800-224-8387. If you have a non-emergency medical problem after hours and cannot wait until your next appointment, call Telephone Care Triage at (501) 257-5656 and out of area toll-free at 1-800-224-8387. Professionally trained staff is ready to help answer health care questions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Make, Change, or Cancel an Appointment

If you are already enrolled in the VA system and you need an appointment at the CAVHS, please call the appointment center at (501) 257-3999, or toll free at 1-866-PCC-4VET (1-866-722-4838). Or you can contact the clinic directly at the numbers listed below. To schedule an initial appointment, call (501) 257-1000 or 1-866-722-4838. It is important for you to keep your scheduled appointments. If you cannot use the slotted time, another veteran might be able to do so. Keeping your scheduled VA health care appointments ensures your continued access to care and medications from CAVHS. Failure to keep appointments may result in your removal from your primary care provider's panel of patients and cancellation of specialty care consultations. If you are taking certain medications requiring continuous medical monitoring, missing appointments may force your health care provider to cancel your refills.

If you cannot keep your appointment, please immediately call the CAVHS Helpline at (501) 257-5656 or toll-free 1-800-224-8387 and reschedule or cancel. Please cancel at least 24 hours in advance so we can offer your appointment to another veteran.

Self-Scheduling Clinics

Departments at CAVHS schedule their own appointments. Please call these clinics directly to make an appointment, cancel, or reschedule.

Clinic/Services	Contact Information
North Little Rock Primary Care	(501) 257-3999
Little Rock Primary Care Firm A, B, Resident	(501) 257-3999
Audiology – North Little Rock/Little Rock	(501) 257-1085/(501) 257-5250
Cardiology – Little Rock	(501) 257-5795
Dental	(501) 257-2201
Diabetic Clinic	(501)257-5663
Diabetes Education	(501) 257-5815
Gastroenterology	(501) 257-5776
Geriatric Primary Care	(501) 257-2061
Dermatology	(501) 257-5757
Ear, Nose, and Throat	(501) 257-5757
Enterostomal (wound and skin care)	(501) 257-5900
Hematology	(501) 257-4542
OEF-OIF	(501) 257-5414
Orthopedics	(501) 257-6895
Physical Therapy	(501) 257-6414
Radiology	(501) 257-6669
Rheumatology/Infectious Disease	(501) 257-5814
Mental Health Clinics	(501) 257-3131
Disorders	
Post-Traumatic Stress Recovery	
Mental Health Intensive Case Management – North Little Rock	(501) 257-3155
Mental Health Intensive Case Management – Little Rock	(501) 257-6604
Neurology (Renal)	(501) 257-5825

Sleep Clinic	(501) 257-6064
Visual Impairment Services	(501) 257-5070
Women's Clinic	(501) 257-5662

Change and/or Cancel Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) Appointments by calling:

- ❖ El Dorado Community Based Outpatient Clinic at (870) 862-2489, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- ❖ Hot Springs Community Based Outpatient Clinic at (800) 310-5881 or (501) 881-4112 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- ❖ Mountain Home Community Based Outpatient Clinic at (870) 424-4109, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- ❖ Mena Community Based Outpatient Clinic at (479) 394-4800, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- ❖ Pine Bluff Community Based Outpatient Clinic at (870) 541-9300, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Primary Care

Primary Care, means having one provider in charge of your health care. Primary Care Providers are Family Practice or Internal Medicine physicians and/or nurse practitioners. The Primary Care Provider is supported by a team of nurses, patient service assistants, social workers, registered dietitians, pharmacists, and other skilled professionals who assure you receive well-coordinated high quality care. One healthcare team will be in charge of your care. Because healthcare often involves many different providers, it is important that one provider or team has overall responsibility.

The CAVHS operates two active Primary Care Clinics, one located at the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital campus in Little Rock and one at Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center campus in North Little Rock. CAVHS offers an extensive range of Primary Care Services with emphasis on health care prevention. Services provided at the Primary Care Clinics include annual physicals, preventive health care and screening, patient education, routine lab and x-rays, immunizations, medication review, and provide specialty care referrals when needed.

To enroll in Primary Care, please call the Telephone Care Eligibility at (501) 257-5656 or toll free at 1-800-224-8387.

To schedule follow-up appointments with your assigned Primary Care Provider in Little Rock or North Little Rock, please call the appointment center at (501) 257-3999 or 1-800-722-4838.

Women Veterans Healthcare Program

The mission of the VA Women Veteran Healthcare Program is to provide healthcare to women who served in our Armed Forces. During the past 200 years, women have been making tremendous sacrifices and overcoming enormous odds to serve our nation bravely and with distinction. We also serve the spouses of 100% service-connected veterans and military retirees. To check your eligibility, contact the Eligibility Office at (501) 257-5715. The CAVHS Women's Health Center is designed to provide high quality, compassionate and comprehensive healthcare to women. In addition to providing Primary Care and Mental Health services, specific services provided to women include: pap smears, breast exams, mammograms, birth control, cervical cancer screenings, fertility and genetic testing and prenatal care. We have a full-time gynecologist on staff. Referrals for sexual trauma counseling are also available. The Women's Health Clinic is located at the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital campus in Little Rock on the 1st floor off the Red Atrium. To schedule an appointment with the Women's Health Clinic call (501) 257-5662.

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

Satellite outpatient clinics in Mountain Home, El Dorado, Hot Springs, Pine Bluff, and Mena also provide Primary Care services to veterans outside of CAVHS local range.

El Dorado CBOC

460 West Oak
El Dorado, AR 71730
Phone: (870) 862-2489
Fax: (870) 881-4442
Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Hot Springs CBOC

1661 Airport Road, Suite E.
Hot Springs, AR 71913
Phone: (501) 881-4112 or 1-800-310-5001
Fax: (501) 767-6501
Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mena CBOC

1706 Hwy 71 North
Mena, AR 71953
Phone: (479) 394-4800
Fax: (479) 394-4805
Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Mountain Home CBOC

405 Buttercup Dr
Mountain Home, AR 72653
Phone: (870) 424-4109
Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Fax: (870) 424-4309

Pine Bluff CBOC

4014 Old Warren Road
Pine Bluff, AR 71603
Phone: (870) 541-9300
Fax: (870) 541-9342
Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Primary Care Provider Responsibilities

- Managing any acute and chronic health problems you may have
- Health promotion and prevention services
- Immunizations

- Coordination of your health care
- Women's health services (you may elect to receive care at the Women's Health Clinic)
- Referrals for VA specialty care and services such as Audiology, Optometry, Urology, Orthopedics, etc.
- Management of your medications
- Office visits for acute and chronic medical illnesses and periodic physical exams

Getting the Most out of VA Health Care

To get the most from your visit with your Primary Care Provider, bring your Veterans Identification Card or picture ID, insurance cards, appointment letter, all prescribed medications, all over-the-counter medications/vitamins you are taking, and a copy of your medical records from your local doctor, when applicable. Tell your health care provider everything you think or feel about your diagnosis and treatment plan; ask questions about your tests, medications, side effects, or symptoms; and know your personal and family medical history.

Primary Care Appointment Expectations

Patients need to arrive at least 30-minutes prior to their scheduled appointment time to ensure all necessary pre-appointment health information and screenings are performed. You are asked to check in at your assigned station in the Primary Care Clinic before reporting to the lab. The clerical staff will inform you of any lab work needed before you see the provider. Please remain in the Primary Care waiting area until you are called to see a clinician to ensure that you are not skipped over. Leaving the area may result in longer wait times.

Privacy with Your Primary Care Provider

In order to protect the privacy of all veterans, please do not enter the examination area unless you are escorted by a Primary Care staff member. You are strongly discouraged from walking into the exam areas to find any provider, social worker, or nurse. If you need assistance, check in at the patient services station. The patient service assistants will assist you to contact the staff member you need to see. Because of the limited space in the exam rooms, only one family member should accompany the patient in to see his or her health care provider. All other family members are asked to wait in the waiting area.

Your Primary Care Team

If you have already registered with the CAVHS, you can find out your Primary Care Provider by calling the Telephone Care Program at (501) 257-5656 or toll-free 1-800-224-8387. If you are not registered with CAVHS, you must first register at the Admissions/Registration Office. You may also apply via the Internet at www.va.gov/elig. The form you will complete to apply for enrollment is called the 10-10 EZ. Once you are registered, you can call the Primary Care Appointment Center at (501) 257-3999 directly for an appointment.

Pharmacy

How do I get my prescriptions?

When your provider orders a new prescription, Pharmacy Service will mail it to you. If you wish to pick up your new prescription, you must report to the pharmacy and take a number to speak with a Pharmacy staff member. Refills are always sent by mail except for items requiring constant refrigeration. It usually takes 7 to 14 days for medications to arrive in the mail.

What is the co-payment for prescriptions?

Effective January 1, 2007, co-payments are \$8 per prescription for each 30-day (or less) supply. Pharmacy will dispense a 90-day supply of some medications, and the co-pay charge for these prescriptions will be \$24 for a 90-day supply. However, there is a \$960 yearly cap for veterans enrolled in Priority Groups 2 through 6. There is no annual cap for veterans enrolled in Priority Group 7 or 8.

How is the co-payment for prescription drugs determined?

The following income levels are used to determine co-payment for prescription drugs:

- Veterans with no dependents and an income of \$10,929 or above will require a co-payment.
- Veterans with one (1) dependent and an income of \$14,313 or above will require a co-payment.
- These rates change annually

Are there exceptions for the prescription drug co-payment?

If you are a Former Prisoner of War, a veteran with a 50% or greater service connected disability, or are receiving a VA NSC pension, there will be no charge for medications. If you have a service-connected disability rated at up to 40%, there will be no charge for prescriptions for your service-connected condition. However, there may be a co-payment for those prescriptions not related to your service-connected condition.

Can VA fill my prescriptions from a private provider?

The VA will provide medications that are prescribed by VA providers in conjunction with VA medical care. VA will not fill prescriptions prescribed by your private physician. Medications are an important part of your health care. Managing medications is serious business. Medications need to be monitored and some require ongoing laboratory tests. Multiple medications taken together can cause dangerous side effects or become ineffective because of the combination of drugs. Some medications can cause side effects even without other medications being involved. Because of these risks, your VA provider cannot prescribe medications without managing your health care.

Drug Formulary

A drug formulary is a list of medications that are readily available for use within our medical center. Medications are selected by your VA provider from a list of approved

drugs (the VA "formulary"). The formulary helps to prevent duplication in the same medication class, reduces health care costs, and provides the best possible care to you. Drugs that are not on the VA formulary are generally not available; but in most cases, there is a drug on our formulary that can be substituted safely.

If my outside doctor prescribes a medication that is not on the VA formulary, can I obtain the drug through the VA pharmacy?

The VA does not have a "medication-only program." In order to receive medication from the VA pharmacy, you will need to be followed regularly by a VA provider. If you wish to continue taking the medication prescribed by your private physician, you will be expected to purchase this medication through an outside pharmacy. Patient safety is our utmost concern. Specific documentation must be provided by your community provider in order for you to obtain a non-formulary medication from the VA. This documentation must include past medical history, medication history and recent laboratory results.

What if the drug I am currently taking is not on the VA formulary?

If the drug you take is not on the VA formulary, there is at least one similar product already there. Most of the time, our providers can change you to our alternative formulary product without a major change in your condition. Our alternative formulary products are equally effective to non-formulary medications.

What to know about your medications

To take medications safely and effectively, ask yourself if you can answer these questions about your medications:

- What is the name of the medication?
- What is it supposed to do?
- How do I take the medication?
- Should I expect any side effects?
- Have I told my health care provider about my allergies to foods or medications?
- Should I avoid alcohol or certain foods?
- Can this affect my other medications?
- How do I get prescription refills?

Before taking any medication, always check to see that each prescription bottle has YOUR name on it, and it is not another family member's medication. If you have any questions about how to take your medication, the possible side effects, or any precautions you should take, please ask your provider or a Pharmacist.

Storing medications

Medications should be stored in a cool, dry place unless the bottle says to refrigerate.

Side effects

If you have side effects, call the Telephone Care Pharmacy at (501) 257-5656 or toll free 1-800-224-8387.

Expired prescriptions

Every time you see your provider, take a list of the medications you are currently taking and verify that you have enough refills to last until your next appointment. If you run out of refills or a prescription expires before your next scheduled appointment, call the Telephone Care Pharmacy at (501) 257-5656 or 1-800-224-8387 to speak to a Pharmacist who will assist you in getting more refills.

How does Medicare Part D affect me?

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the nation's largest health care system. Many of the veterans enrolled in the VA health care system are also eligible for coverage by Medicare. With the advent of Medicare's new prescription drug program (Medicare Part D), VA offers the following information about this new program and its impact on veterans.
- Starting January 1, 2006, prescription drug coverage will be available to everyone with Medicare through Medicare prescription drug plans. All Medicare prescription drug plans will provide at least a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans might also offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium.
- The VA has determined that its prescription drug coverage for veterans enrolled in the VA health care program is at least as good as the standard Medicare prescription drug coverage benefit, meaning that enrollment in VA health care provides veterans with "creditable coverage" for Medicare Part D purposes.
- Veterans with Medicare were able to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan from November 15, 2005 through May 15, 2006. An annual enrollment period will be available each year from November 15 through December 31.
- Although some people who choose to enroll later may be subject to a penalty, veterans enrolled in the VA health care system can be assured that they can choose to delay enrolling in Medicare Part D until later enrollment periods without penalty because VA enrollment provides "creditable coverage."
- Veterans should remember that in addition to prescription drugs, VA's Medical Benefits Package provides a full range of health care benefits. Veterans will still be eligible to receive all current health and prescription drug benefits if they choose to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan.
- Veterans do not have to choose between VA coverage and a Medicare prescription drug plan; they may participate in either or both. However, if a veteran decides to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan and dis-enroll from VA, he or she may not be able to re-enroll later if VA is not enrolling all priority groups.

- If the VA takes some action that causes a veteran to lose VA coverage (e.g., VA makes an enrollment decision that would further restrict access to certain Priority Groups), affected veterans can enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan, without penalty, within 62 days of the end of VA coverage. Enrollment in the Medicare Part D program must be applied for within the 62 day time limit to avoid the penalty.
- In addition, a veteran who is or who becomes a patient or inmate in an institution of another government agency (for example, a state veterans home or a corrections medical center), may not have creditable coverage from VA while in that institution. Veterans who are unsure whether this may apply to them should contact the Eligibility Center or the VA Health Benefits Service Center at 1-877-222-8387.
- Individuals with limited income and resources may be eligible for extra help paying for a Medicare prescription drug plan. Information about this extra help is available from the Social Security Administration at www.socialsecurity.gov or by calling them at 1-800-772-1213.

For information on how the Medicare prescription drug program may affect survivors and dependents of veterans eligible for benefits under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA), call 1-800-733-8387 or visit www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/forbeneficiaries.asp.

Additional information about the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plan can be found by calling 1-877-222-8387 or visiting the VA's comprehensive Web site, www.va.gov/healtheligibility/home/hecmmain.asp; Medicare Web site, www.medicare.gov; or the Social Security Administration Web site; www.socialsecurity.gov.

Prescription Refills

When your health care provider orders a new prescription, Pharmacy Service will mail it to you. Refills are always sent by mail except for items requiring constant refrigeration. To avoid the risk of running out of medicine, it is recommended that you order your refills the same day you receive them so that you receive them in the mail at least 2 weeks before you need them. There are several easy and fast ways to receive your medications from the CAVHS.

Automated Telephone Refill System – Fastest Easiest Way!

The CAVHS Pharmacy's Automated Telephone Prescription Refill System is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The telephone number is (501) 257-1549 or toll-free 1-888-492-7845. You will need a touch-tone telephone, your social security number, and your prescription number. Your prescription number is located on the top left corner of your prescription container. Please note that not all telephones are touch-tone compatible. If you attempt to access the automated telephone refill system and have trouble, please check your telephone for touch tones.

By Internet Access

My Health_eVet is a web-based application designed specifically for veterans and their families (<http://www.myhealth.va.gov/>). It will help veterans work better with healthcare providers to achieve the best possible health. You must register to use the new features on My Health_eVet. A Registration Wizard will guide you through the seven step registration process.

By Mail

You may mail in the refill request forms that you received with your prescriptions when they were filled by Pharmacy. Because of postal delivery processing times, this method may increase the time it takes to receive your prescription refills.

By Mail when Refill Slips Are Not Available

To request refills when you do not have the computerized refill slip, just mail us your request in the form of a letter. This letter should contain your complete name, social security number, and the prescription number or name of medication. Mail your request to.

CAVHS Pharmacy Service 119 NLR
2200 Fort Roots Dr
North Little Rock, AR 72114

By Drop-Off Box

For those patients who would like to drop off their refill requests and do not need to speak with the Pharmacy staff, a drop box is available at the outpatient Pharmacy window. In Little Rock this is located in the green atrium on the ground floor and in North Little Rock in Building 66 on the 1st floor.

Hours of Operation

The CAVHS Outpatient Pharmacy in Little Rock is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. On Saturdays and Sundays, and federal holidays, the hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Outpatient Pharmacy in North Little Rock is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and closed weekends & holidays.

Dental Care

It is our mission to provide comprehensive oral care for eligible veterans in a timely, compassionate and professional manner. Outpatient dental care benefits are provided in accordance with law. In some cases, the dental care may be extensive, while in other cases the treatment may be limited. Please note: all veterans are required to contact the Dental Eligibility Office at (501) 257-2576 to determine their eligibility BEFORE requesting an appointment.

CAVHS Internet Information Site - <http://www.littlerock.va.gov/>

The Dental Clinic is located at the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center campus in North Little Rock in Building 170 Room 2B-102. Normal clinic hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Emergent care is from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. We ask all patients to come to every scheduled dental appointment. If for some reason you cannot make your appointment please contact us as soon as possible so we can schedule another veteran in your place. No show appointments and short notice cancellations are missed opportunities for other veterans. The Dental Clinic's telephone number is (501) 257-2200.

Dental Eligibility

Veterans are eligible for outpatient dental treatment if they meet one or more of the following criteria. For questions concerning dental benefits or eligibility please call the Dental Eligibility Office at (501) 257-2576.

- Have a service-connected compensable dental disability or condition are eligible for any needed dental care.
- Recently discharged veterans with a service-connected non-compensable dental condition or disability who served on active duty 90 days or more and who apply for VA dental care within 180 days of separation from active duty, may be authorized any treatment as reasonably necessary for the one-time correction of the service connected non-compensable condition.
- Have a service connected non-compensable dental condition or disability adjudicated as resulting from combat wounds or service trauma are eligible for repeat care for the service connected condition.
- Prisoners of War (POWs) are eligible for any needed dental care, including repeat care.
- Have a dental condition professionally determined by VA to be currently aggravating a service connected medical condition is eligible for dental care to satisfactorily resolve the problem.
- Veterans whose service connected disabilities have rated at 100 percent or who are receiving the 100 percent rate by reason of individual un-employability is eligible for any needed dental care including repeat care.
- A service connected, disabled veteran who has been approved by VA for vocational rehabilitation training and for whom an objective has been selected, or who is pursuing this training, may be provided limited dental care.
- Any veteran scheduled for admission or who is receiving outpatient care under Title 38 United States Code may receive dental care if the dental condition is clinically determined to be complicating a non-service connected medical condition currently under VA treatment.

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services (PM&RS)

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service offers physician evaluation, physical therapy, occupational therapy and Kinesiotherapy in Little Rock and North Little Rock. Services are offered to inpatients and outpatients. Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation offers services to Veterans referred who need treatment to gain strength and skills after an illness or injury. Individualized programs are available to provide targeted treatment for a variety of medical conditions. Some of the medical conditions treated are stroke, brain injury, amputation, back pain, neck pain, shoulder pain, hand injuries, and wounds. For more information about Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services, please call (501) 257-2992.

Prosthetic Treatment Center

This program provides equipment and training for assistive equipment or external devices that require custom fabrication in order to improve function and increase independence in your activities of daily living. To utilize these services, you must be enrolled in the VA system and your VA provider must request prosthetic consult and provide proper medical justification for need. We offer a variety of services including but not limited to: custom fabricated artificial limbs and braces, hearing aids, eyeglasses, oxygen and respiratory equipment, blind aids, communication devices, hospital beds, blood pressure monitors, orthotic shoes, wheelchair and equipment, automobile adaptive equipment, and home improvement and structural alteration grant (HISA). If you have any questions about these services, be sure to discuss them with your primary care provider.

If you would like to schedule or cancel appointment, have equipment repair needs or questions about equipment, please call the Prosthetic Treatment Center at (501) 257-1610.

Locations:

John L. McClellan Memorial Hospital
Little Rock campus
Room 2D-114

Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center
North Little Rock campus
Building 89, Room 201

Neurology

Neurology is a branch of medicine that cares for patients who have non-surgical diseases involving the brain, spinal cord, nerves, and muscles. We primarily provide care for patients with strokes, epilepsy, degenerative brain diseases (Alzheimer and

Parkinson's), nerve degeneration due to diabetes or other illnesses, and a variety of other related diseases. We provide inpatient care both on regular wards and intensive care units. As well, we provide inpatient and outpatient consultations for Primary Care physicians, and we follow patients with neurological disorders in our outpatient continuity clinics. We also provide a variety of neurological testing such as memory testing, EEG (brain wave testing), EMG/NCV (needle and electrical testing for nerve and muscle diseases), and diagnostic procedures such as lumbar puncture (spinal tap). Patients in Neurology are seen by referral only, either through Primary Care, Specialty Clinics, or the Emergency Department.

Chronic Pain Management Program

Our affiliated Chronic Pain Management Program provides inpatient and outpatient consultations, and pain control stabilization to patients enrolled in Primary Care. The Chronic Pain Program treats patients with non-malignant pain who have had pain for more than six months. We utilize pain procedures, acupuncture, biofeedback, hypnosis, and psychological intervention, in addition to medication adjustments for the control of chronic pain. Chronic Pain Clinic services are available only through referral by patients' Primary Care Provider. Entry into the Pain Clinic is contingent on patients' participation in a psychological evaluation process, and providing ongoing proof of abstinence from illicit drugs by agreeing to submit to voluntary urine drug testing. The Neurology Service may be contacted at (501) 257-6050, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mental Health Services (MHS)

The Mental Health Care Services at CAVHS are primarily located at Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center campus, in North Little Rock. CAVHS Mental Health Services offer a comprehensive range of exemplary inpatient and outpatient services for veterans and their families with mental health needs. CAVHS focuses on providing mental health services in a timely manner, with emphasis on a continuum of care, multidisciplinary treatment, veteran satisfaction, and improvement of human life. CAVHS Mental Health Services serve as a tertiary referral site for South Central VA Network Medical Centers and other Veteran Integrated Service Networks, particularly for PTSD, substance abuse and Seriously and Persistently Mentally Ill (SPMI). Mental Health Services here at CAVHS provide a wide range of professional disciplinary approaches throughout programming including; Psychiatry, Psychology, Nursing, Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Recreational Therapy, Nutrition, Vocational Support, Kinesiotherapy, and Peer Support. It is the goal for CAVHS Mental Health Services to educate the Veteran and/or family/caregiver when appropriate to improve Veteran health outcomes by promoting recovery, a speedy return to function, healthy behavior, and appropriately involving the veteran in his or her care decisions.

The Mental Health Clinic (MHC) is the outpatient clinic for the Mental Health Service Line and where most treatment begins. While many patients are initially referred by their primary care provider, the MHC also allows self referrals. Appointments can be

made by calling Mental Health Services at (501) 257-3131 or the Mental Health Administration Office at (501) 257-3092. Urgent or emergent mental health services for patients not already followed in MHC are available at all times through the Little Rock VA Emergency Department. Veterans may present to the Emergency Department Triage area Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to request same-day services in the Psychiatry Evaluation Clinic, or contact (501) 257-6604 for more information. The On-Call Psychiatrist provides these services after 4:30 p.m. weekdays, and on weekends. Substance Abuse Evaluations are available as well by presenting to the Little Rock VA Emergency Department, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

There are five levels of Mental Health Care within this medical center.

- Level 1: Brief intensive services (acute short-term). These services are time limited and consist of Acute Admission Inpatient Program and the Outpatient Detox Program.
- Level 2: Prolonged intensive services. These services consist of Intermediate Inpatient Psych Program, Chronically Mentally Ill Inpatient Program, PTSD Intensive Outpatient Program, Intensive Outpatient Program, and the MHICM Program.
- Level 3: Low-intensity (short or long-term). These services consist of Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program 2D/2E/2L and the Outreach Program.
- Level 4: Aftercare/Mental Health Maintenance. These services consist of the Mental Health Clinic Program (MHC), PTSD Outpatient Clinic, Outpatient Recovery Program (ORP), Transitional Residence Program (VITR), Homeless Program, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC).
- Level 5: Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PMCHI). In these settings a social worker/psychologist and a psychiatrist provide immediate mental health services to the veteran enrolled in the Primary Care Clinic. Services will be brief 5-6 visits and accomplished in the Primary Care Setting. Services will include evidence based therapy as well as medication management. Referrals will be made by the Primary Care Staff.

Program Descriptions

Acute Inpatient Mental Health

The Acute Inpatient Mental Health program is an 18-bed, controlled access, unit offering services appropriate for veterans who are experiencing a wide range of severe emotional, behavioral, and psychological problems and are not able to function in their usual social environment. Their disorders are of such magnitude that they require intensive treatment and monitoring in a hospital setting. Treatment is individualized and provided to veterans based on condition and needs. Care is provided on a 24-hour basis by an interdisciplinary team. Services include therapeutic interaction, medication management, Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit, Electroconvulsive Therapy, behavioral restraint (when required to prevent injury to self/others), crisis intervention, observational level, patient educational/recovery oriented groups, diagnosis and treatment or care planning. Veterans admitted to this program will be stabilized as quickly as possible to allow further treatment in a less restrictive environment.

Intermediate Inpatient Mental Health

The Dual Diagnosis Rehabilitation Program is an interdisciplinary 20 - bed inpatient open unit which includes outpatient programming. The program is designed for veterans with a psychiatric diagnosis of Schizophrenia, Bipolar, PTSD, and substance abuse. This program offers two tracks, PAT I (Psychiatric Addiction Treatment) which is up to 7 weeks duration, and a PAT II for more cognitively impaired which is 4 weeks long. There is also an inpatient step down program for patients with mental illness who need more stabilization. The outpatient program consists of 5 aftercare meetings that include PAT I, PAT II, DRA (Dual Recovery Anonymous) and 2 open AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) meetings weekly. There is an outreach component that takes inpatients into a community based AA and DRA meeting weekly.

Seriously and Persistently Mentally Ill/Gero-Psychiatric Inpatient Mental Health

This is a 30 - bed unit that serves Veterans who are experiencing a wide range of severe emotional, behavioral and psychological problems and who require more than 5 –10 days for inpatient care. This structured program offers a variety of services which include but are not limited to ECT, diagnostic assessments and two tracks of educational classes where veterans are taught daily to manage and understand their illnesses. Care is individualized and is provided by an interdisciplinary team. Patients admitted to the Gero-Psychiatric Unit should be medically stable, and should not require IV therapy and/or continuous oxygen. The geriatric veterans are provided cognitive and physical assessments, medication treatment and nursing observation. The seriously mentally ill are given detailed bio-psychosocial assessment, and psychopharmacologic adjustments are made to refine their treatment. Respite Care is also available for families who care for the seriously mentally ill veterans. All veterans on the unit are assisted with activities of daily living to include medication, exercise, orientation and socialization. Care providers and veterans are encouraged by the interdisciplinary team to be involved in treatment planning. Information regarding community resources (e.g. post-hospital placement) is also shared with the veterans and their family, and social workers assist patients with complex post-hospital care needs.

Substance Abuse Treatment Programs

There are three components to the Substance Abuse Program: Outpatient Detoxification Program, the Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), and the Outpatient Recovery Program (ORP).

- **Outpatient Detox:** The outpatient detoxification program provides safe detoxification for veterans with mild to moderate withdrawal. The program lasts an average of 3-5 days. The eligibility requirements are that veterans must be medically and psychiatrically stable, alert and oriented, and there must have been 14 days or less since their last alcohol or drug use. Veterans are referred to the Primary Care Clinic for health maintenance and disease prevention, as indicated.
- **Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)** - This program provides services to meet the needs of veterans with substance abuse problems. Programming is provided, as

needed up to 31 days with follow-up referrals to local and/or VA recovery/aftercare support models. The interdisciplinary team works from a contact person model to meet the needs of each individual patient. There are two components to the IOP. These include the Basic Intensive Outpatient Morning Program (15 hours/week) and the Domiciliary IOP Support Afternoon Program (9 hours/week).

- **Outpatient Recovery Program (ORP)** - This is an outpatient substance abuse program. It is an entry program as well as an aftercare program, and offers supportive services to assist veterans in maintaining a substance-free lifestyle and enhancing the quality of life. Programming is for two years with possible extensions. Every enrolled veteran has available to them treatment in the form of individual and group therapy. Family members/significant others are encouraged to attend the Family Education Group. Veterans are enrolled in the appropriate level of care based on their needs and their current level of severity. There are three components to the ORP. These include the "Opportunities" Program, 9 weeks, (beginning phase), "Better Choices" Program, 6 months (intermediate phase), and "Right Stuff", up to two (2) years (advanced phase) from date of enrollment.

Mental Health Outpatient Clinic

There are four components to the Mental Health Clinic (MHC). The General Clinic, the Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) Clinic, the CBOC/Telemedicine Clinic, and the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Outpatient Clinic.

- **MHC General Clinic** - The Mental Health General Clinic offers mental health services to an outpatient population of veterans, their families and significant others. In addition, the Mental Health General Clinic provides consultation and emergency services to inpatient medicine, rehabilitation units and primary care medicine outpatient clinics. Mental health services are provided by psychiatrists, psychologists, advanced practice nurses, pharmacists, and social workers.
- **MHC Outreach/Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) Program** - The MHC Outreach/MHICM Program offers mental health services to an outpatient population of veterans, their families, and significant others. Services provided by the program are based upon acuity of the veteran, the veteran's needs, and the availability of resources. These services encompass both clinic visits and home/residence/community visits (visits limited to a 50-mile radius). Services are based on the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Model (PSR).
- **MHC Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)/Telemedicine Clinic** - Mental Health Services are provided in the five CBOC's by a social worker based in the CBOC and by a Psychiatrist either on site or by telemedicine consultation to the social worker from the MHC at North Little Rock. The primary role of the Social Worker providing mental health care in the CBOC setting includes, but is not limited to, evaluation/assessment, patient education, crisis intervention, individual, group and family counseling. The MHC CBOC/Telemedicine Clinic offers outpatient mental health services to veterans, their families and significant others who are

geographically distant from CAVHS. Current clinics are El Dorado, Hot Springs, Mena, Mtn. Home and Pine Bluff. Other clinics being established are Searcy, Conway and Russellville all will be active by September 2010. Medical services are provided in each of the clinics through a contract.

- **PTSD Clinical Team** - The PCT offers mental health services to an outpatient population of PTSD-diagnosed veterans, their families, and significant others. In addition, the PCT provides psychotherapy to veterans residing on the Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (RRTP). Mental health services are provided by psychiatrists, psychologists, advanced practice nurses, social workers, and recreational therapists. Services include medication management, individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, exposure therapy, marital therapy, psychological testing, consultation, patient education, and community-based outreach workshops.

Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (RRTP)

There are three behavioral health components to the Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs (RRTP): the Domiciliary Care Program for Homeless Veterans (DCHV), the Substance Abuse Support Domiciliary, and the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Domiciliary. An additional program, Veteran Industries Therapeutic Residence Program (VI/TR) is organizationally aligned with the RRTP Programs and is under the Employment and Community Services Programs.

- **Domiciliary Care Program for Homeless Veterans (DCHV)** - The Homeless Veterans Program provides a treatment program with emphasis on stabilization of health care problems, psychosocial rehabilitation and adjustment to community living. This staff carries out clinical program functions such as psychosocial and medical evaluation, assessment of vocational rehabilitation potential, treatment planning, monitoring of progress and discharge planning and case management. The Homeless Program refers medical, surgical, dental or psychiatric problems, which are beyond its scope of care to the Primary Care Clinic and appropriate outpatient clinic areas. The Domiciliary Care Program for Homeless Veterans is a progressive four-phase program with a goal of returning the veteran to successful independent neighborhood living. Emphasis is placed upon saving, budgeting and other key elements of successful independent community living. In addition to the required program activities veterans may also elect to participate in the Veterans Upward Bound and the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE) programs to enhance their employability. Within the Residential Program, certain beds are dedicated to veterans with no sobriety time, veterans with acute mental illness issues, and veterans with chronic mental illness also followed by the MHICM Program. We encourage the widest spectrum of referrals. Certain veteran populations with significant medical problems which would preclude their participation in the program are encouraged to deal with these issues prior to admission.

- **Substance Abuse Support Domiciliary** - The Substance Abuse Support RRTP Program provides a treatment program with emphasis on support of substance abuse problems, psychosocial rehabilitation and adjustment to community living. This staff carries out clinical program functions such as psychosocial and medical evaluation, assessment of vocational rehabilitation potential, treatment planning, educational groups, discharge planning and case management. The staff provides outpatient substance abuse treatment. The staff refers medical, surgical, dental or psychiatric problems, which are beyond its scope of care to the Primary Care Clinic and appropriate outpatient clinic areas. Veterans are encouraged to apply for other RRTP programs following their successful completion of this 28 day program.
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Domiciliary** - The PTSD RRTP Program provides a treatment program with emphasis on improving management of PTSD symptoms, psychosocial rehabilitation, increasing awareness, identification and management of self-defeating behaviors, education, and improving quality of life. Services are provided by an Interdisciplinary Team that administers clinical program functions such as psychosocial and medical evaluation, individual treatment planning, monitoring of treatment progress, discharge planning, therapeutic group and individual activities. The staff refers medical, surgical, dental or psychiatric problems, which are beyond its scope of care to the Primary Care Clinic and appropriate outpatient clinic areas. The PTSD program is a seven week residential program for veterans continuing to experience problems related to their military experiences. The program's basic structure is a cognitive behavioral model incorporating an eclectic approach to the multi-faceted aspects of PTSD. Veterans are encouraged to develop new ways of thinking and behaving as they learn to manage this chronic condition. The majority of the classes are group experiences, but individualized interventions such as psychosocial and medical evaluation, treatment planning, case management, and discharge planning are also provided.

The referral process into the RRTP has been designed to maximize treatment and establish a continuity of care between the veteran and the referring medical center for continued treatment after the program is completed. As part of this process, it is important that veterans applying to the PTSD program be actively involved in treatment before sending an application to the program. Veterans are therefore diagnosed and evaluated at the referring medical center and must be free of active medical problems that would interfere with their PTSD treatment.

Veterans Industry/Transitional Residence (VI/TR):

The Transitional Residence (TR) Program provides a Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PRRTP) with emphasis upon development of socially appropriate behaviors, self-reliance and transition from homelessness to independence in the community. TR staff develops treatment plans based upon the veterans' desired outcomes and abilities. The presence of TR staff allows residents

opportunity to identify areas of concern, to develop changes and to examine those changes in a therapeutic milieu. TR staff work in harmony with recovery support groups of STS, transitional work experience of CWT, and counseling/medication management of the Mental Health Clinic. Community housing enhances the independence, dignity, personal choice and privacy of the persons receiving services. For veterans in substance abuse programs, TR is focused on providing living environments to increase the likelihood of sobriety and abstinence, and to decrease the potential for relapse.

The [Veterans Industries/ Transitional Residence Program](#) (TR) is a work-based Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PRRTP) offering a therapeutic residential setting for veterans involved in [Veterans Industries](#) (also known as Compensated Work Therapy or CWT). TR provides a bridge between hospitalization or intensive outpatient treatment and successful community reintegration. The program utilizes a residential therapeutic community of peer and professional support, with a strong emphasis on increasing personal responsibility and achievement of individualized rehabilitation.

Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program

There are five components that make-up the HCHV Program. These components are: Day Treatment, Homeless Chronically Mentally Ill (HCMI), VA Supported Housing (VASH), HCMI Supported Housing (HCMI-SH) and Special Needs – Chronically Mentally Ill Programs. Case management is the primary treatment modality for each of these HCHV Program components. The purpose of the case management system is to provide goal-oriented and individualized support for homeless clients. This is accomplished through assessment, planning, linkage, advocacy, coordination and monitoring case management activities. Additionally, the program partners with the Jericho Housing Coalition to provide scattered housing options for clients who do not qualify for regular Section 8 Housing vouchers because of past legal problems. You must visit the Drop-In-Center to access these services. You can reach this office by calling (501) 257-4499 and is located at 1101 West 2nd in Little Rock, AR 72201.

- **Day Treatment Program** - The Drop-In Day Treatment Center is designed to provide homeless veterans with a safe stable environment during the day. The Day Treatment Center is located at 1101 West 2nd Street in downtown Little Rock. It serves as a pick-up site for this population of primarily indigent veterans with limited access to transportation resources, thereby increasing the potential for veterans to adhere to outpatient aftercare requirements. Veterans seen at the Center are encouraged to develop a service delivery plan during each visit. Veterans that agree to a service delivery plan are assigned a case manager and provided case management services. Those who decline a service delivery plan are eligible to receive basic services such as food, shower, laundry, and educational groups. Veterans with case management are provided more intense services.
- **Homeless Chronically Mentally Ill Program** - The HCMI Program is an outpatient program that is designed to identify homeless veterans through street outreach.

This program consists of five core phases. The first phase involves outreach and assessment to homeless veterans on the street, in shelters and local soup kitchens. They also work with homeless veterans who present at the Drop-In Day Treatment Center. Phase two consists of treatment. During this phase, clients are referred to the CAVHS Medical Center for inpatient and/or outpatient treatment for identified medical or psychiatric problems. Phase three involves residential treatment services. This consists of clients receiving contracted residential treatment services in the community to compliment their primary VA treatment. Phase four involves finding permanent housing in the community. Veterans are provided housing assistance through the VASH and HCMI-SH Programs.

- **VA Supported Housing (VASH)** - VASH is a joint venture between Housing and Urban Development and the VA. Veterans who participate in the program receive a housing voucher that subsidizes their rent. A minimum of \$1,000.00 in savings is required. Veterans interested in the program must also agree to aftercare involvement, as well as close follow-up from the program.
- **HCMI Supported Housing** - The purpose of the HCMI-Supported Housing Program is to assist homeless veterans with locating affordable housing in the community through private landlords and public housing programs. The HCMI-Supported Housing Program provides supportive after-care follow-up primarily to veterans who have completed treatment in the HCMI Program.
- **Special Needs Chronically Mentally Ill Programs** - The purpose of this program is to provide intensive case management services for persons diagnosed with serious chronic mental illnesses. It is programmatically designed to link with the Critical Time Invention component that is located at one of our Grant and Per Diem facilities, St. Francis House. The ultimate goal of the SN-CMI Program is to assist this client population with reaching a level of stability that would allow transition into independent housing in the community.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation Recovery Center (PRRC)

The PRRC is an outpatient/inpatient treatment modality that provides client driven, recovery oriented, and a supportive therapeutic environment for veterans who have been identified with severe and persistent mental illness and are frequent users of VA inpatient or crisis mental health services. Recovery is defined as a veteran's successful journey to Living, Learning, Working and Socializing in their chosen role and environment of their choice. This supportive services modality provides an alternative to inpatient hospitalization as well as a transitional setting for veterans who have achieved maximum benefit from inpatient hospitalization and will require additional assistance in making an adequate adjustment to living within the community setting. This treatment modality is also targeted for those individuals who have frequently utilized crisis intervention mental health services but could maintain recovery with PRRC support and assistance. The PRRC is currently located at the North Little Rock campus in building 89, room 207 for more information you can call (501) 257-1668.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation Section of Mental Health Service provides vocational rehabilitation services for the CAVHS. Our Vocational Counselors are active in treatment team meetings in the Mental Health Center's SMI Program, and participate in team meetings and treatment planning with Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service, Comprehensive Homeless Center, Special Treatment Services, Spinal Cord Injury, and Acute and Intermediate Psychiatry units. This program offers counseling services, assessment, skill training and exploration, job placement, computer training, and community liaison

- **Rehabilitation Employee Development Services** - Employee Development Services are comprehensive, individualized services assisting veterans that are seeking employment or are in need of employee-related quality improvement(s). Depending on the veteran's individual needs, these services assist veterans in reestablishing skills, developing transferable work skills and improving work behaviors, learning new skills, higher education preparation, functional capacity evaluations, and job search support, in order to achieve positive employment outcomes. These services are provided through an individualized Employee Development Service Plan that may include vocational counseling, vocational testing, job performance evaluations through Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) or Incentive Therapy (IT), and coordination with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Workforce Development Center.
- **Vocational Capacities Clinic (VCC)** - The Vocational Capacities Clinic (VCC) is a cooperative clinic with Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service (PM&RS) and Mental Health Services and offers a comprehensive assessment of a veteran's current functional vocational capacities. Referrals are accepted as described in the general section above. Referred veterans are screened for appropriateness for the VCC or for referral to other services within the Vocational Rehabilitation Section. If appropriate for VCC, veterans are scheduled for a daylong evaluation of vocational functioning.

Mental Health Evaluation and Consultation Service

Mental Health Evaluation and Consultation Service is usually the first access point for veterans seeking mental health services. The Little Rock campus mental health team consists of psychiatrists, advanced practice nurses, and social worker. This program provides mental health services to veterans on an urgent/emergent basis. This is accomplished through consultations performed in the outpatient evaluation clinic, in the emergency room, and also on an inpatient basis for patients on medical or surgical units. The following services are offered: screening to determine appropriate mental health services, psychiatric and substance abuse assessment, referrals, consultation to Primary Care/Specialty Clinics/Medicine/Surgery Services, initiation of safety assessments for patients awaiting transfer, emergency consultation, diagnostic evaluations, medication management, veteran education, coordination of care, and

transfer to Mental Health or Substance Abuse Units in the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center at the North Little Rock campus.

Psychology Mental Health and Behavioral Program

Another part of the Mental Health Evaluation and Consultation Service is made up of Psychologists who provide mental health and behavioral medicine services as a consult and liaison service. The Psychology Offices are located on the 7th floor of the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital at the Little Rock campus. This team serves inpatients and outpatients who are referred from the Evaluation Clinic, from Primary Care, or from specialty medicine services within the hospital. They are also members of inpatient interdisciplinary teams. Services offered include short term psychotherapy and psychological assessment to inpatients and outpatients, organ transplant assessments, bariatric surgery assessments, evaluation and follow-up of patients who are undergoing interferon treatment for Hepatitis C, Cognitive Behavioral Treatment for insomnia, and preventative medicine interventions (smoking cessation, weight management).

Occupational Therapy Services

Occupational Therapists receive consults primarily from program physicians and APN's throughout Mental Health Services. They are also assigned to certain units.

Occupational Therapists focus on assisting the veteran in developing adaptive skills and performance capacity, with the primary concern being the factors that serve as barriers or impediments to the individual's ability to function in chosen environments and activities. Occupational Therapists also attend to those factors which promote, influence or enhance performance. While providing a safe environment, the occupational therapist uses activities such as individual assessment and treatment planning, educational groups, crafts/hobbies, community re-entry, functional tasks, health wellness education, assistive equipment, perceptual and cognitive skills training, and social attitudes and behaviors sufficient for coping with life tasks and mastering elements within their environment.

Recreation Therapy

Recreation Therapy is offered for veterans who receive care at the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center. Recreation Therapist's conduct recreation therapy assessments utilizing professionally accepted procedures including structured interview, direct observation, standardized testing, medical record review and documents assessments in the medical record. Assessment findings including clinical summaries and recommendations are reviewed with physicians and other interdisciplinary treatment teams and documented in the medical record. Recreational Therapists plan, implement and evaluate a wide range of recreational therapy interventions utilizing appropriate modalities to address treatment needs and plans. This treatment is accomplished in accordance with MHS and Extended Care policies and in compliance with Joint Commission and professional standards.

Kinesiotherapy

The Kinesiotherapy (KT) Clinic functions within MHS to treat the needs of mental health inpatients as well as outpatients upon referral. The clinic treats veterans from various programs throughout Mental Health Services.

Participate in Your Care

You are encouraged to be actively involved in your care.

To make get the most out of your health care visits:

- Arrive on time.
- Keep an on-going list of questions or problems to ask your Primary Care provider and remember to bring the list with you to your appointment.
- Be prepared to talk about any changes in your health. Keep a diary of things that are not normal such as pain, loss of appetite, frequent urination, lightheadedness, etc. Tell your provider about any unusual symptoms or lifestyle changes.
- Ask about recent test results.
- If you monitor your blood pressure, pulse, weight, or blood sugars at home bring this record with you.
- Bring your current medications or prescriptions (not more than 1 year old) with you. Include what you are taking, the reason, and how often you are taking them. This should also include nonprescription, over the counter and herbal medicines. These "medicines" can interact with your prescription medications. They also can have other effects on your health. Bring these items with you to all of your appointments.
- Ask about your treatment options.
- Tell your provider if you receive care from other providers.
- Tell your provider if you need help from other members of the Primary Care team. The team includes the nurse, social worker, registered dietitians, and pharmacist.
- Bring a copy of medical records from any recent visit to a non-VA health care provider.
- Bring something to take notes on at your appointment. If you have trouble remembering or making sense of your provider's plan, bring someone with you. If this is not possible, ask your provider or nurse to write out the plan for you to take home with you.

Pain Management

Has your pain affected your lifestyle? Relationships? Work? Sleep? Appetite?

It is important for your provider to know what diagnostic tests you have had. Keep a log of tests, medications, and their doses, and whether they worked or not. Also keep track

of any side effects you experience. If you have pain for six months, your Primary Care Provider may refer you to CAVHS' Chronic Pain Management Program.

In order to better serve our veterans, your health care provider will work with you to develop a plan for pain management. Contact your health care provider about controlling your pain.

As a patient, you can expect:

- * Health professionals who respond quickly to reports of pain.
- * State-of-the-art pain management
- * Information about pain and pain relief measures.
- * A concerned staff committed to pain prevention.

As a patient, we expect that you will:

- Ask your doctor or nurse what to expect regarding pain and pain management
- Discuss pain relief options with your doctor or nurse
- Work with your doctor or nurse to develop a pain management plan
- Ask for pain relief when pain first starts
- Help the doctor or nurse measure your pain
- Tell the doctor or nurse if your pain is not relieved
- Ask about managing side effects such as constipation
- Participate actively in non-medication management of your pain

You will be asked to answer these questions:

- Where do you hurt?
- Describe the quality of your pain (gripping, stabbing, burning, dull ache, stinging, crushing, sharp, gnawing, penetrating, etc.).
- What is the level of the pain on a scale of 0 to 10, with 5 being moderate and 10 being unbearable?
- Describe its pattern-occasional, continual, clusters.
- What makes it better? Worse?
- When did it first start?
- What are you doing for it now? Medication? Exercise? Do these things help?

Admission Procedures

Where do I go for admission processing?

The Express Admissions Office in John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital campus in Little Rock is located in Room 1D-146 on the first floor (next to Release of Information); if it is after 4:30 p.m. you will report to the Emergency Room Department. At the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center campus in North Little Rock you will report to the unit to which you are being admitted.

ID bracelet

Upon admission to the CAVHS, an identification band will be fastened to your wrist, or badge will be issued depending on the unit. This wristband/badge must be worn at all times, as treatment cannot be given to you without proper identification. In an emergency, this tag could save your life.

Money and Valuables

Money and valuables (eyeglasses, dentures, hearing aids, jewelry, etc.) you bring or receive while you are a patient should be checked in and deposited for safekeeping. We urge you not to bring personal items such as jewelry, keys, large quantities of cash, and credit cards; as it is difficult to track these items when transfer between units occur. If you bring them, we suggest that you have a family member if available take valuable items with them. It is recommended that you do not keep valuable articles or more than \$5 cash at your bedside. For your convenience, you may deposit excess cash with the Agent Cashier located in Room 1D-119 at the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital campus in Little Rock, and on the 1st floor of Building 66 on the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center campus in North Little Rock.

If you are admitted to the hospital after regular working hours, the Administrative Officer of the Day (AOD) will accept your cash and valuables for safekeeping in a locked safe until the next work day, where cash will be turned over to the Agent Cashier. You will be given a receipt for your cash/valuables. If you think you might be discharged on Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday, you should arrange, if possible, with the nursing unit clerk to withdraw your funds on Friday. When you are admitted, your valuables such as watches, rings, etc. should be checked in at that time where they will be secured in a locked safe. You can pick up your valuables at any time during your stay or when you are discharged. It is recommended that valuables such as credit cards, driver's license, jewelry, etc. be sent home with a relative or friend.

Please remember the following important points about money and valuables:

- 1) Keeping money and valuables on the care unit is done at your own risk.
- 2) Any funds deposited with the Agent Cashier in Little Rock may only be picked up between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Any funds deposited with Agent Cashier at North Little Rock may only be picked up between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.
- 3) The medical center cannot assume responsibility for lost or misplaced money, valuables, eyeglasses, dentures, hearing aids, jewelry or other personal property.

There are individuals that will steal your valuables if they are not locked up. If you become a victim of theft during your stay, please call our VA Police at (501) 257-6550.

Check Cashing

The Agent Cashier cannot cash any check. They can only deposit the following into patient funds with no deferral waiting periods: U.S. Government checks; state benefit checks; postal, telegraphic or express money orders; traveler's checks; cashier's checks and certified checks. Personal checks in the amount of \$100.00 or less can be deposited into patient funds, but will have a deferral date of 12 workdays for checks

from in-state banks and 21 workdays for checks from out-of-state banks. The Agent Cashier is not authorized to cash any type of payment for outpatients or non-veteran inpatients. Volunteers, employees and others are not authorized to cash checks.

Lodging

To be eligible to stay on Lodging Unit the following criteria must be met whether it is for the patient or caregiver:

- A. Single lodgers must be able to ambulate on their own. Those that cannot must have a caregiver (someone that helps with their daily needs) with them. Lodging for caregivers is provided on a space available basis.
- B. You must live 50+ miles from the medical center and have a diagnostic treatment/procedure or admission to observation appointment before 10:00 a.m.
- C. You may be eligible for lodging if you are being released from outpatient, diagnostic/treatment, and admission or observation status after 2:00 p.m. the day of lodging or after the DAV van on which you were riding has departed.
- D. You must request lodging through your provider.
- E. It is requested that you bring toiletries and personal items as if you were staying in a motel.
- F. Please bring money with you for meals because we only provide one meal ticket per day of stay for the veteran. Caregivers are responsible for their own meals.

Check-in time is noon and checkout time is 8 a.m. the next morning unless you are staying multiple days.

Eligibility/Enrollment

Overview

Most veterans must be enrolled to receive VA health care. While some veterans are not required to enroll due to their special eligibility status, all veterans—including those who have special eligibility—are encouraged to apply for enrollment. Enrollment helps us to determine the number of potential veterans who may seek VA health care services and, thus, is a very important part of our planning efforts. Enrollment in the VA healthcare system provides veterans with the assurance that comprehensive healthcare services will be available when and where they are needed during that enrollment period. In addition to the assurance that services will be available, enrolled veterans will appreciate not having to repeat the application process—regardless of where they seek their care within the VA System. VA enrollment also allows health care benefits to become completely portable throughout the entire VA system. Enrolled veterans who are traveling or who spend time away from their primary treatment medical center may obtain care at any VA health care medical center across the country without the worry of having to reapply.

Enrollment

You can apply for enrollment at any VA health care medical facility. Veterans can apply for enrollment in the VA health care system by completing VA Form 10-10EZ,

APPLICATION FOR HEALTH BENEFITS. The application form can be obtained by visiting, calling, or writing any VA health care medical center or veterans' benefits office. To apply for enrollment at the CAVHS, you can call the local Eligibility Center at, (501) 257-2614 or toll free at 1-800-224-8387. You may also visit the local CAVHS web site (<http://www.littlerock.va.gov/>) click on "Become a Patient" and then "Application for Health Care Benefits" and apply online.

You may either submit the application on line or print it and mail it to the address below.

Central Arkansas Healthcare System
Eligibility Center (136A1;LR)
4300 West 7th Street
Little Rock, AR 72205

Another option offered to veterans for checking their eligibility is the VA Eligibility and Enrollment link also located on the local CAVHS web site. Forms can also be requested toll-free from VA's Health Benefits Service Center at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or accessed from our web site at www.va.gov/1010ez.htm. Completed applications must be signed and dated and may be returned in person or by mail to any VA health care medical center. If you apply in person at a VA health care medical center, VA staff will assign you to an initial priority group. After your application is processed, the VA Health Eligibility Center in Atlanta will confirm and notify you of your enrollment status by mail.

You are *NOT* required to apply for enrollment if you fall into one of the following categories:

- If you are seeking care for a VA-rated service-connected disability.
- If VA has rated you with a service-connected disability of 50% or more.
- If less than one year has passed since you were discharged for a disability that the military determined was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, but that VA has not yet rated.

If you have previously enrolled, your enrollment will be reviewed annually without any action necessary on your part. Veterans who are required to update their financial information are still required to provide their income information on an annual basis using the form VA 10-10EZR. Depending on your priority group and the availability of funds for VA to provide medical benefits to all enrollees, your enrollment will be automatically renewed without any action on your part. Should there be any change to your enrollment status, you will be notified in writing.

Obtaining Your DD214

You may need your DD214 for enrollment. The Department of Veterans Affairs does not maintain records of veteran's military service, except as are necessary for providing benefits. For information about obtaining your military record, please visit the Military

Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, which is part of the National Archives and Records Administration, on the Internet at www.nara.gov/regional/mpr.html. The VA Regional Office, at 1-800-827-1000, can also send you the necessary request form. If discharge or separation documents (i.e., DD214) are lost, veterans may obtain duplicate copies by completing forms found on the Internet at <http://www.archives.gov/research/index.html> and mailing or faxing them to the NPRC. Alternatively, write the National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Ave., St. Louis, MO 63132-5100. Specify that a duplicate separation document is needed. The veteran's full name should be printed or typed so that it can be read clearly, but the request must also contain the signature of the veteran or the signature of the next of kin, if the veteran is deceased. Include the veteran's branch of service, service number or Social Security number and exact or approximate dates and years of service. Use Standard Form 180, "Request Pertaining To Military Records."

For additional information or to get your eligibility and enrollment questions answered, please call the CAVHS VA Eligibility and Enrollment Office at (501) 257-2614 or toll free at 1-800-224-8387. The Eligibility Center is located at the Outpatient entrances in both North Little Rock (the north entrance of Bldg. 170) and Little Rock (the green atrium 1st floor). Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Financial Assessment (Means Testing)

While many veterans qualify for enrollment and cost-free health care services based on a compensable service-connected condition or other qualifying factor, veterans will be asked to complete a financial assessment as part of their enrollment application process. Otherwise known as the Means Test, this financial information will be used to determine the applicant's enrollment priority group and whether he/she is eligible for cost-free VA health care. Higher-income veterans may be required to share in the expense of their care by making co-payments. Veterans who choose not to complete the financial assessment must agree to pay the required co-payments as a condition of their eligibility. Due to VA's restricting enrollment of new Priority Group 8 veterans who applied on or after January 17, 2003, higher income veterans or veterans who decline to provide financial information and who agree to co-payments will not be accepted for enrollment.

Veterans who are required to provide their financial information must provide it on an annual basis. To simplify this annual reporting requirement, VA recently introduced a new, shorter version of its application form to be used for this annual reporting requirement. The new form, VA Form 10-10EZR, is to be used by enrolled veterans to update their previously reported information such as address, insurance, employment and financial information. It will save veterans time by eliminating the collection of information previously collected. The form can also be requested toll-free from VA's Health Benefits Service Center at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or accessed from our web site at www.va.gov/1010ez.htm. If you have questions contact the CAVHS Enrollment Office at (501) 257-2614 or toll free at 1-800-224-8387.

Geographically-Based Means Testing

Recognizing that the cost of living can vary significantly from one geographic area to another, Congress added income thresholds based upon geographic locations to the existing VA national income thresholds for financial assessment purposes. This law assists lower-income veterans who live in high-cost areas by providing an enhanced enrollment priority and reducing the amount of their required inpatient co-payment. Please note that the geographically-based co-payment reductions apply ONLY to INPATIENT SERVICES. Outpatient services, long-term care, as well as medication co-payments are NOT affected by this law.

Enrollment Priority Groups

Upon receipt of a completed application (must include signature and date), the veteran's eligibility will be verified. Based on his/her specific eligibility status, he/she will be assigned to one of the following priority groups. The groups range from 1 through 8 with Priority Group 1 being the highest priority and Priority Group 8 the lowest.

Priority Group 1:

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50% or more disabling

Priority Group 2:

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30% or 40% disabling

Priority Group 3:

- Veterans who are former POWs
- Veterans awarded the Purple Heart
- Veterans whose discharge was for a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty
- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 10% or 20% disabling
- Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C., Section 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation"

Priority Group 4:

- Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits
- Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled

Priority Group 5:

- Non-service-connected veterans and non-compensable service-connected veterans rated 0% disabled whose annual income and net worth are below the established VA Means Test thresholds
- Veterans receiving VA pension benefits
- Veterans eligible for Medicaid benefits

Priority Group 6:

- Compensable 0% service-connected veterans
- World War I veterans

- Mexican Border War veterans
- Veterans solely seeking care for disorders associated with exposure to herbicides while serving in Vietnam, exposure to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for disorders associated with service in the Gulf War, or for any illness associated with service in combat in a war after the Gulf War or during a period of hostility after November 11, 1998

Priority Group 7:

- Veterans who agree to pay specified co-payments with income and/or net worth above the VA Means Test threshold and income below the HUD geographic index
- Sub-priority a: Non-compensable 0% service-connected veterans who were enrolled in the VA Health Care System on a specified date and who have remained enrolled since that date
- Sub-priority c: Non service-connected veterans who were enrolled in the VA Health Care System on a specified date and who have remained enrolled since that date
- Sub-priority e: Non-compensable 0% service-connected veterans not included in Sub-priority a above
- Sub-priority g: Non service-connected veterans not included in Sub-priority c above

Priority Group 8:

- Veterans who agree to pay specified co-payments with income and/or net worth above the VA Means Test threshold and the HUD geographic index
- Sub-priority a: Non-compensable 0% service-connected veterans enrolled as of January 16, 2003 and who have remained enrolled since that date
- Sub-priority c: Non service-connected veterans enrolled as of January 16, 2003 and who have remained enrolled since that date
- Sub-priority e: Non-compensable 0% service-connected veterans applying for enrollment after January 16, 2003
- Sub-priority g: Non service-connected veterans applying for enrollment after January 16, 2003

VA Service-Connected Rating

A service-connected rating is an official ruling by VA that your illness/condition is directly related to your active military service. Service-connected ratings are established by VA Regional Offices located throughout the country. In addition to compensation and pension ratings, VA Regional Offices are also responsible for administering educational benefits, vocational rehabilitation, and other benefit programs including home loans. To obtain more information or to apply for any of these benefits, contact your nearest VA Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000 or visit us online at www.va.gov.

VA “Catastrophically” Disabled

To be considered catastrophically disabled, you must have a severely disabling injury, disorder, or disease which permanently compromises your ability to carry out the activities of daily living. The disability must be of such a degree that you require personal or mechanical assistance to leave home or bed, or constant supervision to

avoid physical harm to yourself or others. To request an evaluation, contact Primary Care at CAVHS. If it is determined by a VA health care provider that you are catastrophically disabled, your priority may be upgraded to Priority Group 4. If, however, you were previously required to make copayments, that requirement will continue until your financial situation qualifies you for cost-free services.

Ineligible Enrollment Care

A veteran who is not enrolled will still be eligible for hospital and outpatient care for conditions related to military sexual trauma, head or neck cancer related to nose or throat radium treatment while in the military, readjustment counseling services, and treatment related to service-connected conditions. If you need more information, please contact the CAVHS Enrollment Office at (501) 257-5715 or toll free at 1-800-224-8387.

Benefits & Services

Acute Care Standard Benefits

The following acute care services are available to all enrolled veterans.

Preventive Care Services

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

Ambulatory (Outpatient) Diagnostic and Treatment Services

- Medical
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Surgical (including reconstructive/plastic surgery as a result of disease or trauma)

Hospital (Inpatient) Diagnostic and Treatment Services

- Medical
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Surgical (including reconstructive/plastic surgery as a result of disease or trauma)

Prescription Drugs (when prescribed by a VA physician)

Limited Benefits

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| • Ambulance Services | • Non-VA Health Care Services |
| • Dental Care | • Rehabilitative Services |
| • Durable Medical Equipment | • Readjustment Counseling |
| • Eyeglasses | • Sexual Trauma Counseling |
| • Hearing Aids | • Orthopedic, Prosthetic, and Rehabilitative Devices |
| • Home Health Care | |
| • Homeless Programs | |

- Maternity and Parturition Services— usually provided in non-VA contracted hospitals at VA expense, care is limited to the mother (costs associated with the care of newborn are not covered)

General Exclusions (partial listing)

- Abortions and abortion counseling
- Cosmetic surgery except where determined by VA to be medically necessary for reconstructive or psychiatric care
- Gender alteration
- Health club or spa membership, even for rehabilitation
- In-vitro fertilization
- Drugs, biological, and medical devices not approved by the Food and Drug Administration unless part of formal clinical trial under an approved research program or when prescribed under a compassionate use exemption.
- Medical care for a veteran who is either a patient or inmate in an institution of another government agency if that agency has a duty to provide the care or services.
- Services not ordered and provided by licensed/accredited professional staff
- Special private duty nursing

Long-Term Care Standard Benefits

The following long-term care services may be available to all enrolled veterans.

Geriatric Evaluation

Geriatric evaluation is the comprehensive assessment of a veteran's ability to care for him/herself, his/her physical health, and social environment, which leads to a plan of care. The plan could include treatment, rehabilitation, health promotion, and social services. These evaluations are performed by inpatient Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM) Units, GEM clinics, geriatric primary care clinics, and other outpatient settings.

Adult Day Health Care

The adult day health care (ADHC) program is a therapeutic day care program, providing medical and rehabilitation services to disabled veterans in a combined setting.

Respite Care

Respite care provides supportive care to veterans on a short-term basis to give the caregiver a planned period of relief from the physical and emotional demands associated with providing care. Respite care can be provided in the home or other non-institutional settings.

Home Care

A variety of home health care services are provided by CAVHS to veterans who are homebound with chronic and disabling illnesses. The services provided include

primary care, nursing, occupational/physical therapy, nutrition therapy, and social services.

Palliative Care Program

The palliative care program offers pain management and symptom control, to terminally ill veterans in an outpatient clinic for as long as the veteran can travel to the hospital. When travel is no longer an option, the palliative care staff will make a referral to a community hospice program. Palliative Care staff becomes the primary care provider and works with the hospice program to provide needed services in the home.

Hospice

CAVHS provides hospice care through community hospice programs. These programs offer comprehensive services to both terminally ill veterans and veterans in the late stages of chronic illnesses. Services also include respite care as well as bereavement counseling to family members.

Financial Assessment for Long-Term Care Services

For veterans who are not automatically exempt from making co-payments for long-term care services (see Co-payment Requirements on page 15), a separate financial assessment (VA Form 10-10EC, APPLICATION FOR EXTENDED CARE SERVICES) must be completed to determine whether they qualify for cost-free services or to what extent they are required to make long term care co-payments. For those veterans who do not qualify for cost-free services, the financial assessment for long term care services is used to determine the co-payment requirement. Unlike co-payments for other VA health care services, which are based on fixed charges for all, long-term care co-payment charges are individually adjusted based on each veteran's financial status.

Limited Benefits

Nursing Home Care

While some veterans qualify for indefinite nursing home care services, other veterans may qualify for a limited period of time. Among those that automatically qualify for indefinite nursing home care are veterans whose service-connected condition is clinically determined to require nursing home care and veterans with a service-connected rating of 70% or more. Other veterans—with priority given to those with service-connected conditions—may be provided short-term nursing home care if space and resources are available.

Domiciliary Care

Domiciliary care provides rehabilitative and long-term, health maintenance care for veterans who require some medical care, but who do not require all the services provided in nursing homes. Domiciliary care emphasizes rehabilitation and return to the community. VA may provide domiciliary care to veterans whose annual income does not exceed the maximum annual rate of VA pension or to veterans who have no adequate means of support.

Voting Assistance for VA Patients

VHA is committed to assisting veterans exercise their Constitutional right to vote; longstanding Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy ensures patients' assistance and the opportunity to exercise their voting privilege. The facility Voluntary Service Officer or designee is responsible for: establishing a uniform approach to assembling and providing information on voter registration and voting to veterans who request it. The contact number for the CAVHS Voluntary Services is (501) 257-5416. Information is also available at: <http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Voting/Register.shtml> and www.eac.gov, also the National Voter Registration Form is available at: <http://www.eac.gov/voter/Register%20to%20Vote> and <http://www.fabnit.com/nvra-update-09-12-06.pdf>).

Other VA Benefits

Compensation & Pension Service administers a variety of benefits and services for veterans, their dependents and survivors, including, but not limited to: service-connected compensation, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), non-service connected pension, burial & accrued benefits, guardianship and public contact services. For all non-medical related Compensation & Pension (C&P) benefit questions, you may call our toll-free number, at 1-800-827-1000. Or visit our local web site for more information at (<http://www.littlerock.va.gov/>).

Who to Call for More Information

For more information on the Uniform Benefits Package, priority groups, or the application process, call toll-free 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387) or access information on the Internet at www.va.gov/elig. At the CAVHS, call the Eligibility and Enrollment Office at (501) 257-2614.

Charges & Co-Payments

While many veterans qualify for cost-free health care services based on a compensable service-connected condition or other qualifying factor, most veterans are required to complete an annual financial assessment or Means Test to determine if they qualify for cost-free services. Veterans whose income and net worth exceed the established Means Test threshold as well as those who choose not to complete the financial assessment must agree to pay required co-payments to become eligible for VA health care services. Note that new veterans who apply for enrollment after January 16, 2003 and who decline to provide income information are not eligible for enrollment. Along with their enrollment confirmation and priority group assignment, enrollees will receive information regarding their co-payment requirements, if applicable.

Outpatient Co-payments* - based on the highest of two levels of service on any individual day.

- Primary Care Services - services provided by a primary care clinician is considered the lower level of service related to co-payments.
 - Specialty Care Services - services provided by a clinical specialist such as surgeon, radiologist, audiologist, optometrist, cardiologist, and specialty tests such as magnetic resonance imagery (MRI), computerized axial tomography (CAT) scan, and nuclear medicine studies is considered the higher level of service related to co-payments.
- *There is no co-payment requirement for preventive care services such as screenings, immunizations, and other services that do not require the immediate presence of a physician.*

Medication Co-payments*—applicable to each prescription including each 30-day supply or less of maintenance medications.

**Includes an annual cap for some enrollment priority groups.*

Inpatient Co-payments—in addition to a standard co-payment charge for each 90 days of care within a 365-day period regardless of the level of service (such as intensive care, surgical care, or general medical care), a per diem charge will be assessed for each day of hospitalization.

Long-Term Care Co-payments*—based on three levels of care (see Long-Term Care Benefits on page 18 for definitions).

- Nursing Home Care/Inpatient Respite Care/Geriatric Evaluation
- Adult Day Health Care/Outpatient Geriatric Evaluation/Outpatient Respite Care
- Domiciliary Care

** Co-payments for Long-Term Care services start on the 22nd day of care during any 12-month period—there is no co-payment requirement for the first 21 days. Actual co-payment charges will vary from veteran to veteran depending upon financial information submitted on VA Form 10-10EC.*

Annual Changes to Co-payment Rates

Because of the annual changes to co-payment rates—including the annual cap on medication co-payments—they are published separately. Current year rates can be obtained at any VA health care medical center or on the eligibility page on our web site www.va.gov/elig.

Private Health Insurance

Private Health Insurance Coverage

Since VA health care depends primarily on annual congressional appropriations, VA encourages veterans to retain any health care coverage they may already have—especially those in the lower enrollment priority groups as further described on pages 7 & 8, Enrollment Priority Groups. Veterans with private health insurance or with federally funded coverage through the Department of Defense (TRICARE), Medicare,

or Medicaid, may choose to use these sources of coverage as a supplement to their VA benefits.

CAUTION! Before canceling insurance coverage, enrolled veterans should carefully consider the risks.

- There is no guarantee that in subsequent years Congress will appropriate sufficient funds for VA to provide care for all enrollment priority groups.
- Non-veteran spouses and other family members generally do not qualify for VA health care.
- If participation in Medicare Part B is cancelled, it cannot be reinstated until January of the next year and there may be a penalty for the reinstatement.
- Care at a non-VA healthcare facility may not be authorized for payment.

Care Outside the VA System at VA Cost

Veterans seeking health care at VA expense should obtain their care at a VA health care facility. Community care or the use of the Fee Program is generally authorized when appropriate VA services are not available or cannot be economically provided to eligible veterans. The use of community care is not considered a permanent solution for veteran health care needs. The Fee Program is not an entitlement program. The Fee Program is a method of health care delivery for those eligible veterans.

There may be times when VA cannot provide all of the necessary medical care and services. VA may authorize medical care in the community for those veterans who meet the eligibility requirements. Individual eligibility determinations are difficult, and therefore outside the scope of this general information. These situations can be coordinated through your VA physician and the CAVHS Fee Basis staff. To learn more about Fee Basis care and whether or not you are eligible, contact the CAVHS Fee Basis staff at (501) 257-2577.

Private Health Insurance Information

By law, VA is obligated to bill health insurance carriers for services provided to treat nonservice-connected conditions. To ensure that current insurance information is on file—including coverage through employment or the veteran's spouse - VA staff is required to ensure that veterans' health insurance information is updated during each visit. Identification of insurance information is essential to VA since collections received from insurance companies help supplement the funding available to provide services to veterans. Veterans are asked to cooperate by disclosing all relevant health insurance information.

Insurance Collections

Since the start of insurance collections in 1986, veterans' health care services have been supplemented by over \$7.7 billion – allowing us to provide additional services to numerous veterans.

CHAMPVA

What is CHAMPVA?

CHAMPVA is a health care benefits program for dependents of veterans who have been rated by VA as having a total and permanent disability; survivors of veterans who died from VA-rated service-connected conditions, or who at the time of death, were rated permanently and totally disabled from a VA-rated service-connected condition; and survivors of persons who died in the line of duty and not due to misconduct who are not otherwise entitled to DOD Tricare benefits.

Under CHAMPVA, VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries. Due to the similarity between CHAMPVA and TRICARE (formerly known as CHAMPUS--a program administered by the Department of Defense for military retirees as well as families of active duty, retired, and deceased service members), the two programs are easily and often mistaken for each other. For more information about TRICARE, call (501) 257-2593, toll free 1-800-444-5445 or visit www.tricare.osd.mil on the Internet.

Where do I get more information about CHAMPVA?

On the Internet, visit www.va.gov/hac/champva/champva.html. You can call CHAMPVA, which is managed by the VA's Health Administration Center, at 1-800-733-8387 or you mail your questions to them at the address listed below. However, the quickest way to obtain answers to questions is by sending an e-mail message to the following address: hac.inq@med.va.gov.

CHAMPVA

PO Box 65023

Denver CO 80206-9023

Emergency Care in Non-VA Facilities

VA may reimburse or pay for medical care provided to certain enrolled or otherwise eligible veterans by non-VA facilities only in cases of medical emergencies where VA or other federal facilities were not feasibly available. Other conditions also apply. In 2001, the U.S. Congress provided VA with authorization (called the Millennium Healthcare Act) to pay for emergency care in non-VA facilities for veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. The benefit will pay for emergency care rendered for non-service-connected conditions for enrolled veterans who have no other source of payment for the care. You may be eligible if the non-VA emergency care is for a service-connected condition or, if enrolled, you have been provided care by a VA clinician or provider within the past 24 months and have no other health care coverage or ability to pay for the services. Also, it must be determined that VA health care facilities were not feasibly available; that a delay in medical attention would have endangered your life or health, and that you are personally liable for the cost of the services. However, VA will only pay to the point of medical stabilization. Claims must be filed with the VA within 90 days from the last day of the emergent care.

CAVHS Internet Information Site - <http://www.littlerock.va.gov/>

Criteria for Qualifying

This benefit is a safety net for enrolled veterans who have no other means of paying a private medical center emergency bill. If another party (i.e., health insurance provider) pays all or part of a bill, VA cannot provide any reimbursement. To qualify, you must meet all of these criteria:

- You were provided care in a hospital emergency department or similar medical center providing emergency care.
- You are enrolled in the VA Health Care System.
- You have been provided care by a VA health care provider within the last 24 months (excludes Compensation & Pension, Agent Orange, Ionized Radiation and Persian Gulf exams).
- You are financially liable to the provider of the emergency treatment for that treatment.
- You have no other form of health care insurance.
- You do not have coverage under Medicare, Medicaid, or a state program.
- You have no other contractual or legal recourse against a third party (such as a Workman's Compensation Claim or a Motor Vehicle Accident) that will pay all or part of the bill.
- VA or other Federal facilities were not feasibly available at time of the emergency.
- The care must have been rendered in a medical emergency of such nature that a prudent layperson would have reasonably expected that delay in seeking immediate medical attention would have been hazardous to life or health.

Do Not Cancel Current Insurance to Meet Requirements

VA encourages you to keep all current health insurance coverage. If you cancel your current insurance, your spouse may not retain health insurance coverage and spouses of veterans generally do not qualify for VA health care. Cancellation of current insurance coverage could result in you being disqualified for reinstatement based upon any pre-existing illnesses. If you are covered by Medicare Part B and you cancel it, it cannot be reinstated until January of the next year. If you are covered by a program or plan that would pay for the emergency care received, you would not qualify for this benefit.

Timeline to File

Veterans have a responsibility to ensure that the VA is notified immediately upon any hospital admission. The CAVHS can be reached during regular business hours at (501) 257-2577. Claims must be filed with the nearest VA medical center to where the services were rendered within 90 days of the discharge date of medical service; otherwise, the claim will be denied because it was not filed in a timely manner.

Emergency Services VA Will Cover

If approved, VA will reimburse health care providers for all medical services necessary to stabilize your condition up to the point you can be medically transferred to an approved VA health care medical center.

Covered Pharmacy Items

The VA's authority for reimbursement of pharmacy items to veterans from non-VA providers follows a strict set of guidelines. The veteran must be actively enrolled in a Fee Basis Program; the pharmacy item must be considered as urgent or emergent by the initiating physician; the pharmacy item cannot be reimbursed past a ten day supply; and the prescription and receipts must be turned in to the Fee Basis Unit. The reimbursement is based upon the U.S. Government's Red Book cost and no taxes can be reimbursed. Enrollment in the Fee Basis program is limited to veterans rated 50% or more service connected or in receipt of a VA pension with Housebound or Aid and Attendance benefits.

Do you need approval before going to the emergency room?

No. If you are an eligible veteran, and a VA medical center is not feasibly available when you believe your health or life is in immediate danger, report directly to the closest emergency room. If hospitalization is required, you, your representative, or the treating medical center should contact the nearest VA within 24 hours to arrange a transfer to VA care by calling Fee Services at (501) 257-2577.

Length of stay in the private hospital

If you are hospitalized, and the VA is notified, the VA will be in regular contact with your physician at the private hospital. As soon as your condition stabilizes, the VA will assist the private medical center with arrangements to transport you to a VA, or VA-designated medical center.

If I you do not wish to leave the private medical center

If authorized, VA will pay for your emergency care services only until your condition is stabilized. If you stay beyond that point, you are responsible for the payment of costs associated with treatment.

Reimbursement for ambulance bill to the non-VA medical center

If the VA accepts responsibility for the emergency room visit and/or admission, the ambulance will be paid from the scene of the incident to the first non-VA medical center providing necessary care.

If the private hospital bills you for services

If you are billed for emergency care services that has been approved for payment by VA, contact the CAVHS Fee Basis office at (501) 257-2577 and a representative will assist you in resolving the issue. Under the law, payment from the VA is considered as "payment in full" for the dates authorized.

If you are a victim of a crime

If you are a victim of a crime, the claim must be filed with your local municipality because the state of Arkansas has various victim relief funds available. These claims cannot be supplemented by a payment from the VA.

For more information

For more information about emergency care in non-VA facilities, please call the CAVHS Fee Basis office at (501) 257-2577.

Co-Managed Care: VA and Private Physicians

Can I receive care from both a VA and local community health care provider?

Yes, but if you do, you will want to participate in VA's Co-Managed Care. Co-Managed Care is when you and your VA health care provider team up with your community health care provider and agree to work together and share information about your health care. This ensures that any treatments, medications, or supplies VA provides are what you need and are safe for you. VA will not reimburse you for medications you purchase at a community pharmacy.

How do I participate in Co-Managed Care?

To participate in Co-Managed Care, you should ask to be assigned to a VA Primary Care Team who will monitor, diagnose, and treat your medical problems and change your treatment, if needed. You must give the VA the name, address, and telephone number of your community health care provider. Ask your community health care provider for a copy of your medical reports and bring them with you to your first VA appointment. The information will help your VA health care provider understand the status of your health care.

Can I get my prescriptions filled at the VA and not see VA doctors?

Please remember the VA cannot be used only as your pharmacy. VA health care providers need to review and follow your care before prescribing medications and supplies. Your VA provider is responsible for prescribing medications that are safe and effective. Sometimes, it is necessary to have blood tests done or to visit the clinic more frequently to make sure your medications are working well and not causing you any problems. In most cases, this kind of monitoring must be done at a VA medical center. If a medication prescribed by your community health care provider is not available through the VA Pharmacy, you must purchase this medication at your own expense.

Patient Privacy

Purpose and Background

In 1996, Congress passed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). On December 28, 2000, Health and Human Services Department (HHS) published the final rule for standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information, known as the HIPAA Privacy Rule. Revisions have been published and VA was required to be in compliance with the Privacy Rule as revised by April 14, 2003.

HIPAA means

HIPAA protects your individual health information when it is maintained or transmitted electronically, in written format, or communicated verbally. It is important for all our staff to safeguard all patient health information. The safeguards and extensive legislation that have now been put in place by HIPAA are designed to safeguard confidential health information, as the healthcare industry increasingly relies on computers for processing health care transactions. The VA has established procedures to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of protected patient health information.

Medical Center Directory Information

Under the HIPAA privacy regulations, we have developed a directory that contains only the following information: patient's name, location, and the patient's condition described in general terms. If a patient chooses to be included in the medical center directory, staff is allowed to provide limited information about the patient's location and general condition to individuals who ask for the patient by name. Patients have the choice to either be included in the medical center directory or to opt out. If the patient opts out of the directory, staff may not disclose any information about the patient (including location or condition) unless other legal authority would apply. Each patient, during the admission process, must be informed of the existence and use of the medical center directory and given the opportunity to "opt-out" of being listed. The hospital can release directory information to any person who requests the information by the name of the patient; in other words, if someone asks for information about Mary Smith, the information can be provided. The hospitals are not permitted to give out information if the caller merely asks "who has been admitted in the last hour." For more information on the VHA privacy policy contact the CAVHS Privacy Officer at (501) 257-2972.

Your Hospital Stay

Patient Safety

Patient safety is of utmost importance at CAVHS, we are dedicated to making your healthcare safe. As a means of promoting patient safety, you are encouraged to be an active participant in the care you receive.

- Don't hesitate to ask questions about your care or any safety concerns
- To make sure that we are treating the correct person. We will need to verify two identifiers; one being your name and the second one either your Social Security Number or Date of Birth
- If you are having a surgical procedure done, make sure staff; explains to you what we are going to do (including risks and benefits), marks the correct site of the procedure, signs a special arm band, or discusses the surgical site with you.
- Involve a family member or friend in your care
- Learn as much as you can about your disease process, diagnosis, medical treatments and plan of care.

- To keep you safe, we need to know all of the current medications you are taking. We will ask you to either bring all of your medications, or a list of all of your medications, with you whenever you come to a clinic appointment, or are admitted to the hospital. This includes the medications that other doctors give you as well as any medicine that you buy at the store without a prescription, including herbal medicines.
- Know what medications you are taking and why they have been prescribed.
- You will be given an updated list of your medications before you go home.
- Help prevent the spread of infections by washing your hands after using the bathroom, before meals and before and after participating in other activities. Also ask staff if they have washed their hands before interacting with you.
- To help keep you from being injured from falls. We will screen you for fall risk once a year in Primary Care, every time you come to the ER, or are admitted. You need to tell us if you have been falling.
- Medication, weakness caused by illness, and unfamiliar environment can cause falls. If you are placed at bed rest and need something not at your bedside, please use the call button provided. We will be glad to assist you as needed.
- Ask your doctor about your flu and pneumonia shots.
- To prevent your skin from breaking down when you are in the hospital, we will assess your skin, but also need you to tell us if you think you are developing a sore.
- Report any concerns regarding your care to your healthcare provider or unit management. If the concern is not satisfactorily addressed, request to speak to the patient advocate or call them at (501) 257-5410. After hours (501) 257-5714. *Home Care Patients*, call (501) 257-5080.

Identification Bracelet

The bracelet with your name and social security number placed on your wrist when you are admitted to the hospital is an important part of your care. In North Little Rock some units issue a badge instead of a bracelet. The bracelet/badge is used by your doctors and all other hospital staff to positively identify you. You must have this bracelet/badge in order to receive medications and other services on the inpatient units. We ask that you leave your bracelet or badge on until you are discharged. If you lose your bracelet/badge, let your nurse or the clerk on your unit know immediately.

Calling Your Nurse

A button to call your nurse is located at your bedside. When you press the button, the nursing station is alerted that you need assistance and a light flashes above your door. A staff member will respond to your call as soon as possible either by intercom or in person. Your safety is one of our primary concerns; please let a member of your nursing staff know when you leave your unit.

Conduct and Behavior

As a patient in our medical center, you are expected to conduct yourself in an orderly manner at all times. Regulations do not permit the use of loud, abusive, or profane language; loud music or televisions; gambling, soliciting, bartering, or panhandling; or

the sale, use, or possession of intoxicants or unauthorized drugs. Please be considerate of others and help us maintain a quiet atmosphere. If you should observe such misconduct by anyone, please report it immediately to unit staff. The VA Police are authorized to make arrests on the premises.

We ask that you be at your bedside for patient care rounds, laboratory evaluations, treatments, vital checks, and medications. If you have any doubt about whether or not it is an appropriate time to leave your patient care unit, always check with a staff member before leaving.

Employees are prohibited by law from accepting gifts or money from patients. Please do not embarrass them by offering gifts, which they are required to refuse. If you wish to donate funds to the medical center, please contact Voluntary Service.

PATIENTS AND EMPLOYEES ARE ALSO PROHIBITED FROM BORROWING/ LENDING MONEY, or engaging in any other financial transactions with each other.

In order to maintain a clean and sanitary unit environment for all veterans and staff, we ask that you do not keep food in your rooms or clothing locker.

Prohibited Personal Property and Activities

VA regulations require us to take every possible precaution to protect your health and welfare while you are a patient in our medical center. Consequently, during your hospital stay you are not permitted to have in your possession any of the following items: firearms, ammunition, knives or other weapons, liquor/beer/wine, narcotics or drugs, lighter fluids, and mace or pepper spray.

Only VA approved cellular telephones and laptop computers are allowed in Intensive Care and Cardiac Telemetry areas because they may interfere with VA equipment.

Any packages or baggage you have in your possession, while a patient in the hospital, is subject to inspection by medical center personnel. If prohibited personal property is found, it will be removed and the VA Police will cite you for possession of contraband.

Smoking

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has joined with healthcare organizations nationwide to implement a smoke-free policy. The goals of our policy are to protect you, your family and friends as well as our employees from the dangers of secondhand smoke and to encourage everyone to be smoke-free. We have restricted smoking by our patients, employees, visitors and volunteers to the identified outdoor smoking areas.

There is a smoking shelter at the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital campus in Little Rock located right outside the outpatient visitor entrance. If you do smoke, we ask that you sign the book on your unit before leaving and return to the unit at least every hour for any medications or treatment you may need. We also ask that you remain on your unit at shift change. Ask your nurse on your unit for these specific times.

If you are found smoking in an undesignated area, you could be subject to a possible fine and/or disciplinary action (including discharge from the hospital). The serious health consequences of smoking as well as requirements of the Joint Commission make such rules and actions necessary for the safety of all our patients. If you smoke, we encourage you to participate in a program to quit, with the consent of your doctor. Ask your unit staff for information about the program.

Noise

Please be as quiet as possible. Loud sounds are disturbing to patients who are resting.

Meals

Good nutrition is the key to good health and an important part of your medical care and treatment. Your physician will order a regular diet or a modified diet, which will be planned to meet your medical requirements. A registered dietitian will visit you to discuss your nutritional needs, eating habits, allergies, etc. A nutrition staff member will give you information about your diet. If you are discharged from the hospital with a modified diet and if you desire, or the medical team determines in-depth education is necessary, you will receive additional modified diet instruction or be scheduled to see a registered dietitian in a primary care setting. The medical provider or nursing staff will consult the registered dietitian to provide the information to you and your caregiver before discharge or schedule an appointment for you with the Primary Care registered dietitian at a later date.

Visitors are requested to check with the nurse or registered dietitian before bringing food or snacks for patients to ensure that such items are included in the menu plan. Patients are asked to check with their nurse or registered dietitian before eating food brought in or purchased in the cafeteria, retail store, or from vending machines. Notify the nursing staff should you have a need to speak with a registered dietitian.

- Breakfast is served daily from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.
- Lunch is served daily from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Dinner is served daily from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Fire/Disaster Drills

The CAVHS has a fire and disaster plan in which all of the employees have been trained. Practice drills are held to ensure prompt and efficient action in the event of a real fire. If you hear fire bells, be calm and follow the instructions given to you by the nursing personnel in your area.

Televisions

Television sets are provided for your entertainment and comfort. Televisions are to be turned off by 10:30 p.m. Please notify the unit staff if you need assistance with enforcement of this rule.

Hearing Impaired

TDDs and TV captioners are available by request. Ask the unit staff to contact the Audiology Clinic as soon as you are admitted so these services are provided to you.

Telephones

There are bedside telephones in most patient rooms (Local calls are free). Long distance calls can be made using credit cards or by calling collect.

Placing Long Distance Calls:

To make a credit card call, just dial 9 + 0 + area code + telephone number. You will receive a recording that asks for your credit card number. To place a collect call, dial 9-1-800-COLLECT (9-1-800-265-5328).

Placing Calls within the Medical Center:

Dial the 5-digit extension number, for example: if you need to call a patient advocate at (501) 257-5410 dial only (75410).

To report any problems with your telephone, please notify the Nursing staff.

Passes

Under limited conditions, your physician may allow you a short period of authorized absence from the CAVHS. If you are permitted an authorized absence, you must return to your unit by the specified date and time or you will be administratively discharged.

Facilities & Services inside the Hospitals

Patient Education Resource Center

Do you need information about the new prescription your doctor gave you? Do you want to find out more about medical conditions such as hernia, heart disease, migraines, or high blood pressure? CAVHS has a Patient Education Resource Center (PERC). The PERC has health books, handouts and videos on many health conditions. Veterans can learn about their health condition and wellness. They also have computers where you may also access the Internet and My HealtheVet. My HealtheVet is a secure web portal for veterans. You may order your medicines online through My HealtheVet.

We encourage veterans and their families to stop by the PERC. The PERC is located in Little Rock on the 1st floor of the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in the Red Atrium room 1A-132. The PERC staff is trained to provide veterans and their family members with important health information. The PERC staff can also assist you with setting up a My HealtheVet account. If you cannot visit the PERC, they can send health information to you by mail. The PERC staff will even deliver health brochures to the bedside for inpatients. The PERC is open 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Feel free to call the PERC at (501) 257-4504 to make a request. You can leave a voice mail if you are calling after normal business hours.

CAVHS Internet Information Site - <http://www.littlerock.va.gov/>

Canteen Services

The Veterans Canteen Service at John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock is located on the first floor near the Red Atrium entrance to the Medical Center. The Canteen Service consists of a Retail Store, Cafeteria, Papa's Best Pizza, Starbucks Coffee Shop, and Vending Services.

The Veterans Canteen Service at the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in North Little Rock is located on the ground floor near the main entrance to the Medical Center and also operates a Retail Store, Cafeteria, Papa's Best Pizza, Starbucks Coffee Shop, Vending Services, and a Barber Shop located on the ground floor room GH100.

The Retail Stores have a wide selection of retail merchandise to include but not limited too health and beauty aids, candy and snacks, men and ladies clothing, gift items, greeting cards, electronic products, and long distance telephone calling cards for tax free purchase.

Cafeteria hours of operation

The cafeteria located at John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock, is open:

Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Closed - Saturday, Sunday, & Holidays

The cafeteria located at Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in North Little Rock, is open:

Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday, 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Closed - Holidays

5th Avenue Deli hours of operation

Monday through Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Closed - Saturday, Sunday, & Holidays

Papa's Best Pizza hours of operation

Monday through Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Closed - Saturday, Sunday, & Holidays

Retail Store hours of operation

Retail Store at John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Closed - Saturday & Sunday/Holidays

Retail Store at the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in North Little Rock

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 Tuesday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 Saturday & Sunday 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Closed - Holidays

Barber Shop hours of operation:

Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.
 Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.
 Closed - Saturday, Sunday, & Holidays

Information Desk hours of operation

The information desks located at John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock, are on the first floor in both the Red and Green Atrium lobbies, and they are open:

Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 Closed - Saturday, Sunday, & Holidays
 Phone number: (501) 257-5725

The information desk located at Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in North Little Rock, is on the ground floor in the main lobby, and is open:

Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
 Closed - Saturday & Sunday
 Holidays, 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
 Phone number: (501) 257-2629

At the information desk you can obtain information on such topics as the location of offices and services within the CAVHS, location of inpatients (with their consent), where to register for emergency care services, where to report for admission, where to check in for outpatient clinic visits, set up of wheel chair and veteran escort to appointment location if requested, and how to get to the regional office.

Library

Our Patient Library is located on the ground floor near the Canteen in North Little Rock at the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center. You are welcome to visit the library, browse around and check out books and magazines. You may read current issues of local newspapers and magazines. We have donated paperback books and magazines for your use. You must return all books to the library before you leave the hospital. If you discharge after hours, you may place your books in the book drop. We have patient computers for you to use while in the hospital. You may access the internet or log on to My HealthVet. Hours of operation are:

Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and
 Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
 Closed - Saturday, Sunday, & Holidays

At the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock, recreational reading materials are available through Voluntary Service in the Orange Atrium on the ground floor. The Library in Little Rock also offers the Patient Education Resource

Center (PERC) in the Red atrium on the ground floor where medical information for patients can be obtained and provides computer access to the patients. Hours of operation are:

Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00p.m.

Lost and Found

All articles classified as lost and found are forwarded to the Patient's Clothing Room, Room BA-203 in North Little Rock; you also can check with front desk in the lobby area in North Little Rock and in GE 100 in Little Rock. Individuals searching for any lost item should report to these areas, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Patient Mail

To simplify mail delivery; please inform your family and friends to use the following mailing address while you are a patient in our medical center:

Little Rock

Your Name

c/o Unit

John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital
4300 W. 7th Street
Little Rock, AR 72205

North Little Rock

Your Name

c/o Unit

Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center
2200 Fort Roots Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72114

Your mail will be delivered to your nursing unit Monday through Friday. If you wish to mail letters, there is a mailbox outside the front doors off the Red Atrium at the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital. At the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in North Little Rock, you may deposit mail at the postal drop box located on the ground floor of building 170.

Parking

Parking on VA grounds is free. However, parking is restricted to veteran patients and their family members or visitors. All other individuals parking on VA grounds will be ticketed or towed. There are transportation carts in the Little Rock and North Little Rock veteran/visitor parking areas to trolley individuals from their vehicles to the hospital entrance and from the hospital entrance to their vehicles. This service will operate Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. A "No Tipping" policy is strictly enforced. In Little Rock, the visitor lot is located at the west end of the campus, Lot "D".

In North Little Rock, you may park in short term in Lot #1, which is the first parking lot on the left next to the lake when coming from Pershing Blvd.

Handicapped persons can be dropped off at the main entrance, and handicap parking spaces are also available. Veteran Service Organization vans are able to drop off and pick up patients at the main entrance, and are directed to a designated area if they wish to park. If you are being admitted for more than 48 hours, we ask that you not bring your vehicle to the hospital due to our limited parking. If you can, ask a family member or friend to take care of it for you. We cannot accommodate Recreational

Vehicles (RVs) to be parked/utilized on medical grounds. Anyone bringing an RV to the medical center will be directed to take it to one of the local RV parks.

Veterans and visitors who are parking at CAVHS should be sure to park in patient and visitors designated parking areas only. Failure to park in these, marked areas can lead to tickets and/or towing of the vehicle. The Department of Veterans Affairs cannot assume responsibility for the theft of or damage to any car on medical center property, so be sure you lock it securely and put any valuables in the trunk. If you are going to be admitted, please have a family member accompany you so that your vehicle may be taken home until your release.

Handicap parking spaces are clearly marked by a standard sign indicating that they are reserved for those vehicles which either a VA handicap sticker or the appropriate handicap placard assigned by the State of Arkansas. Restricted parking areas include curbs painted with either yellow or red paint, and areas marked with signs prohibiting or limiting parking.

Release of Medical Information

The Release of Information Staff is knowledgeable about veteran rights and their medical records. They can assist veterans with the following; accessing their medical records, obtaining copies of their medical records, requesting amendment to their medical records, completion of forms for benefits, insurance, and other medical record information. Because forms must contain an original signature, e-mailed or faxed forms cannot be accepted.

You can find the forms to request a medical record by visiting the CAVHS website at <http://www.littlerock.va.gov/patients/roi.asp>. You can bring the forms to the Release of Information Office located in the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital building, on the First floor, room 1D-151 or mail it to the address listed below. Requests for records will be processed within 20 business days. The Release of Information Office is located in the Little Rock, John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital building, on the First floor, room 1D-151. There is no cost to the veteran who needs copies sent directly to another health care provider. However, if copies are for a veteran's personal use, photocopying fees may be assessed.

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System
Release of Information/136D-LR
4300 West 7th Street
Little Rock, AR 72205

Medical information from your CAVHS records cannot be released without your written permission. If you wish any information released to your family doctor, insurance company or other agency, ask the unit staff to prepare the necessary forms for you to sign. Be sure that you can provide us the complete name and correct address of the person or agency to which the information is to be sent. Also, you must state, in

writing, your reason for the requested release. The Release of Information staff will be happy to assist you with requests for your medical records.

Chaplain Service

Chaplain Service provides pastoral and spiritual care which addresses the needs of veterans and their families, while insuring their religious freedom. Veterans' spiritual and religious needs are met through sensitive and compassionate attention.

Professional chaplains serve as integral members of healthcare teams as they provide spiritual care in a variety of settings, including but not limited to, the following: acute care, long-term care, mental health, outpatient, addiction treatment, rehabilitation, hospice and palliative care, as well as home based primary care.

Religious literature available through Chaplain Service: Bibles, New Testaments, booklets and daily devotional materials may be found in the chapels, Chaplain's office and day rooms. The Qur'an is available for our Moslem veterans. Hebrew Scriptures can be obtained for our Jewish veterans. Other faith group scriptures and language Bibles and New Testaments may be requested. There is no charge for religious literature.

Chaplains are available on both campuses Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. They can also be reached after hours for crisis calls as determined by the Administrative Officer of the Day. Any hospitalized veteran may request the services of a Chaplain through these avenues: inform staff of the request, call the Chaplain Office number at (501) 257-2151, or come by the appropriate office.

- **John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital, Little Rock:** The Chaplain's office and chapel, located on the 2nd floor, are open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Chaplain's office is room number 2D100. The chapel is room number 2D109. The prayer room is identified by a sign above the door. It is located to the left as you exit the elevator, and is open 24 hours. Worship services are held in the chapel every Sunday. Protestant Worship is at 9:00 a.m. Catholic Mass is at 11:00 a.m. For other faith groups, contact the Chaplain's office.
- **Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center, North Little Rock:** The Chaplain's office, chapel and prayer room, located on the ground floor, are open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Chaplain's Office is room number GH104. The chapel is room number GH109. The prayer room is located by the Chaplain's office. Worship services are held in the chapel every Sunday. Catholic Mass is at 9:00 a.m. Protestant Worship is at 10:30 a.m. For other faith groups, contact the Chaplain office.

Social Workers

At each medical center location, there is a Social Worker available on each inpatient unit and in the Ambulatory Care areas to assist you and your family with a wide variety of services. The social worker has information about many community agencies and resources, which may be of assistance to your family while you are undergoing hospital treatment. The social worker can help those who need special post-hospital care to

plan and prepare for whatever is needed. If you are in need of legal services your social worker can help you identify resources in the community. Please notify medical center staff if you need to contact your social worker. The focus of the Social Worker is to work to improve your mental as well as physical well being. In order to accomplish this, the Social Worker will ask you a variety of questions in order to better assist you.

Social Work Service is located on 7B of John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital campus in Little Rock and on 3L at the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center campus in North Little Rock. In the event you are unable to come to the Social Work Service office, and you are in need of assistance, simply ask any member of the unit staff to have a Social Worker stop by and visit with you. If you are at either medical center location, you may contact the Social Work Service at extension 76740, or by calling direct to (501) 257-6740 for the Little Rock division and extension 73304 or (501) 257-3304 for North Little Rock division.

Nutrition and Food Services

Your doctor has ordered the foods you are served. All patients DO NOT receive the same type meals. Certain medical problems require a special diet. You should NOT trade food or take food from other patient's trays because all foods may not be permitted on your special diet order. If between meals snacks are a part of your diet, they will be served to you in the afternoon and evening.

A clinical registered dietitian will visit you to ask you some questions about your nutritional well-being and help determine your nutritional needs. If you are on a special diet, check with the registered dietitian or your doctor before buying food, soft drinks, coffee, etc., from the canteen or vending area. Many foods may not be permitted if you are on a special diet or taking certain medications. Registered dietitians are available to provide nutritional education for you and your family members. Our Clinical Nutrition staff can also help you select foods to fit your special needs.

VA Regional Office

The North Little Rock VA Regional Office offers services to veterans in the State of Arkansas and the city of Texarkana in Bowie County, Texas. The Regional Office determines entitlement to disability compensation and pension, survivors' benefits, vocational rehabilitation and counseling, and various ancillary benefits such as clothing allowance, automobile grants, and specially adapted housing. The VA Regional Office is located in Building 65 of the North Little Rock campus and they can be reached by mail or telephone at:

North Little Rock VA Regional Office
2200 Fort Roots Drive, Building 65
North Little Rock, AR 72114-1756
Phone: 1-800-827-1000

Voluntary Service

Voluntary Service is affiliated with different community groups and service organizations that provide volunteers to assist the medical center's patients and staff with

their daily activities. The American Legion Auxiliary, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, American Veterans, and others groups provide personal care and many other items to in-patients as needed. Please notify your nursing unit staff if you are in need of these items. If you would like a volunteer to visit you, please contact the Volunteer Office or your nursing unit staff will assist you in getting in touch with Voluntary Service.

Volunteers are an integral part of the health care system provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers serving veterans throughout the United States. Volunteers are a valuable supplemental addition to the staff at the CAVHS. To find out how you or your family and friends can be a part of the volunteer team contact the Volunteer Office at (501) 257-3288 or (501) 257-6986 or stop by the North Little Rock office in the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in room GH127-170-N or the Little Rock office in John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in room 1D143-01-L.

Diversional Activities

The Diversional Activities program is an element of recreation responsible for providing activities and events that address the human leisure needs of our veterans and their families at the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center campus in North Little Rock. Though housed under Mental Health Service, all programs and activities coordinated are open to all inpatients and active outpatients in the Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center at the North Little Rock campus. Internal recreation areas include a Recreation Center, a 2 lane Bowling Alley and the Help Hospitalized Veterans sponsored Craft Care Room. External facilities include, two tennis courts, a basketball court, a covered pavilion with outdoor grills, and stocked fishing ponds. Authorization is required for use of the pavilions and grills. For Authorization contact the Supervisor of Mental Health Recreational Therapy at (501) 257-3086. A variety of activities are held each month, which are sponsored, by local service and civic organizations.

The Recreation Center and Bowling Alley hours of operation for Inpatients are from 12:30 p.m. to 8:15 p.m., 7 days a week, including holidays. Outpatient access is limited to Monday through Friday 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Visiting Hours & Guidelines

Your family and friends are welcome to visit you at the hospital. Because your medical care is the primary focus of your stay, we have visiting hours and certain rules to make sure your healthcare comes first.

General visiting hours are 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Some unit visiting hours may differ slightly from this; you may ask unit staff for unit specific hours. Exceptions to these hours can be made for your relatives who travel long distances or who might be unable to visit during these hours, due to work schedules, etc.

Children under 13 years of age must be accompanied by an adult at all times when visiting the medical center. Visitors are responsible for the supervision of children while on medical center grounds.

Visitors who create a disturbance and disrupt the orderly functioning of the medical center may be requested to leave the grounds.

Please limit your visitors to two at a time except for special situations.

Veteran Rights & Responsibilities

Veterans Health Administration (VHA) employees are pleased you have selected us to provide your healthcare and it is our goal to respect and support your rights as a veteran and patient. We plan to make your visit or stay as pleasant and beneficial 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. 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.

Patient Advocate

The Patient Advocate is a link between you and the medical center staff. If you have a concern, compliment, or question about hospital policy or procedures, please ask to speak with a patient advocate. He/she is available to assist in resolution of your concerns. If you would like to speak to a patient advocate, please ask any of the CAVHS staff to page a patient advocate and ask them to come visit you or to set up a meeting if you are not staying in the medical center.

Little Rock Patient Relations Office: Telephone number is (501) 257-5410

North Little Rock Patient Relations Office: Telephone number is (501) 257-2195

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 have the right to keep and spend your own money. You have the right to receive an accounting of 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 long-term care resident, you may wear your own clothes and keep personal items. This depends on your medical condition.
- As an inpatient or long-term care 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 or not to participate in these activities. You may decide whether or not to perform tasks in or for the medical center.

- As an inpatient or long-term care 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.
- As a long-term care resident, you can organize and take part in resident groups in the medical center. Your family also can meet with the families of other residents.
- In order to provide a safe treatment environment for all patients and staff, you are asked to respect other patients and staff, and to follow the medical center's rules. Avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please immediately report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

Information Disclosure and Confidentiality

- You will be given information about the health benefits that 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 for your portion of the costs associated with your care.
- You will be informed of any injuries caused by your medical care. You will be informed about how to request compensation for injuries.
- Your medical record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your consent unless authorized by law (i.e., state public health reporting). You have the right to information in your medical record and may request a copy of your records. This will be provided except in rare situations where your VA physician feels the information will be harmful to you. In that situation, you have the right to have this discussed with you by your VA provider.

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.

Complaints

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

Informed Consent

Can I refuse medical treatment?

Every veteran has the right to accept or refuse treatment based on informed participation in decisions involving his or her health care. This process of informed consent requires a practitioner to carefully describe a procedure or treatment such that the patient, or the patient's surrogate decision-maker:

- Understands the nature of the treatment or procedure.
- Understands the benefits and risks of the treatment.
- Understands the alternatives to the proposed treatment or procedure.
- Understands the expected outcome if the treatment or procedure is declined.
- Is offered the opportunity to ask questions.
- Is allowed to make a decision freely without coercion or duress.

How do consent forms work?

Consents are valid for up to 30 days providing there is no change in the patient's condition that might alter the treatment decision, the effect on the patient, or may constitute an increased risk. Signature consent is not required for administration of most drugs or the performance of minor procedures. However, the practitioner must discuss these treatments or procedures with the patient and should document the discussion in a progress note.

What happens when there is a loss of decision-making capacity?

The patient's right to accept or refuse treatment is not diminished by a loss of decision-making capacity that may be due to physical or mental impairment, disease, influence of medications, intoxicants or unconsciousness.

A surrogate decision-maker must be identified who will assume this responsibility using substituted judgment. If feasible, the proposed treatment or procedure should be explained to the patient even when the surrogate decision-maker has given consent.

How is a surrogate decision-maker selected?

The surrogate decision-maker is selected based on the following priority:

- Health care agent as named in a Durable Power-of-Attorney for Health Care (DPAHC) executed by a patient when s/he possessed decision-making capacity.
- Court-appointed (legal) guardian of person or for medical decision-making.
- Spouse.
- Consensus of children who must be 18 years of age or older.
- Parent.
- Consensus of siblings who must be 18 years of age or older.
- Grandparent.
- Grandchild who must be 18 years of age or older.
- Close friend or relative not listed above who must be 18 years of age or older and familiar with patient's activities, health, religious beliefs and values. A close friend must present a signed written statement to be filed in the medical record that describes (with specific examples) that person's relationship to and familiarity with the patient which must be concurred with in the medical record by Social Work Service.
- If none of the above surrogate decision-makers are available, then the attending physician and CAVHS Chief of Staff or designee can authorize consent for a treatment or procedure except for consent to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining treatment that requires review by the Ethics Committee and the Chief of Staff. Consideration is given to whether the appropriate court should be petitioned to appoint a guardian.

What happens in a medical emergency?

In medical emergencies, the patient's consent is implied by law. The practitioner may provide necessary medical care in an emergency situation if immediate medical care is necessary to preserve life or prevent serious impairment when the patient is unable to consent to the treatment or procedure, and the patient has no surrogate or the practitioner

determines that the waiting time to obtain consent from the patient's surrogate would increase the hazard to life or health of the patient or others.

Advanced Healthcare Planning

You have the right to decide which treatments you want or DO NOT want if you should become terminally ill with no chance of recovery and are unable to communicate your

wishes. Taking care of yourself, and your family, involves making decisions about medical care, while your health allows you to do so.

Advance Directives

Advanced Directives are documents called a Living Will or a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care:

- A Living Will allows you to state, in writing, your wishes concerning the use of life sustaining treatment if you become terminally ill and unable to communicate. A living will must be witnessed to be legal; therefore, a person must be competent when he or she signs it. Requirements vary from state to state, but usually the witnesses must be unrelated to the patient, cannot be creditors or heirs to the patient's estate, and cannot be the patient's doctor. It is wise to prepare a living will at a time when you are healthy, not when you have been seriously ill or are in the hospital. A Living Will can be cancelled at any time by contacting your doctor or any member of your treatment team and destroying all copies of the document.
- A Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care (DPAHC) allows you to appoint someone such as a family member or friend to act in your behalf to see that your wishes are carried out if you are unable to communicate. This person has legal authority to make health care decisions for you if you are unable to do so.
- An Advance Directive goes into effect if you are diagnosed with a terminal illness by your doctor and another doctor in consultation, and you are no longer able to communicate your wishes regarding life-sustaining treatment.

Copies

Once signed, these legal documents should be kept in a safe place, but not in a safe deposit box where they may not be accessible when they are needed. It is a good idea to discuss your wishes with your friends, family members, and your physician. Providing these individuals copies of your living will or DPAHC also is advisable. Making sure CAVHS has a copy of the documents is very important. In that case, should you become incapacitated; others will have access to the documents that express your wishes.

Getting more information

The VA has advance directive forms that include both the Living Will and Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care directives that are honored in any VA setting. The physician, nurse, or social worker caring for you can answer many of the questions that you have. Information can also be obtained by calling: Chaplain Service at (501) 257-2151 or Social Work Service at (501) 257-6740.

The VA forms are not honored in community (non-VA) hospitals or clinics, which require that an advance directive be executed under state law. Since the "rules" vary from state-to-state, the Choice in Dying Organization will provide a copy of state-specific advance directives free to anyone who contacts them. Their address is Choice in Dying, 200 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014. Their telephone number is 1-800-989-WILL. Your state health department, local hospitals, or state bar also may be able

to provide you with state specific advance directives. You may wish to consult your lawyer about advance directives and drawing up a durable power of attorney for health care or a living will and a standard will that conform to the laws in your state.

What happens if I am already incompetent or physically unable to manage my own financial and medical affairs?

Some veterans are unable to manage their own affairs due to medical illness or a mental impairment. The central issue is whether that veteran can understand and make decisions involving medical and financial choices. A person can be confused about time and place; nonetheless, may be able to understand his or her choices if they are carefully explained. It is also possible for a veteran to be capable of making decisions about his or her health but not about finances. Physicians are often asked to evaluate the competency of a patient, but a doctor can only make a medical determination about someone's decision-making ability. A court must make any legal determination about competency.

What is a guardianship?

All states allow the courts to establish limited guardianships (also called conservatorships) and unlimited guardianships.

- Limited guardianship allows the appointed guardian to make decisions for someone in areas where the court has determined that the person lacks the ability to function. This type of arrangement is often made for managing finances. Someone judged incompetent for financial purposes is still able to make decisions regarding his or her health.
- Unlimited guardianship removes all rights of the individual to vote, to decide where to live, and to manage his or her money and health. That person is said to be incompetent for all purposes and receives the protections generally given to a child.

Organ Donation

CAVHS is affiliated with the Arkansas Regional Organ Recovery Agency (ARORA). Any person, from newborn to the elderly, can be a donor. While some age guidelines do exist for organ donation, most tissues and bone have fewer limitations. Certain diseases and other medical conditions can also be a factor, but everyone can be considered for donation.

ARORA

The Arkansas Regional Organ Recovery Agency was established in 1987 to recover organs and tissues, and to educate residents of Arkansas about the benefits of organ donation and transplantation. Located in Little Rock, ARORA is a nonprofit, federally subsidized procurement organization. For more information please call 1-800-727-6727 or (501) 224-2623. Their website address is www.arora.org.

How to become a donor

It's easy in Arkansas. You can simply make your request known by joining the Organ Donor Registry, a confidential databank maintained by ARORA. If you have "donor" on your driver's license, then you are already in the registry. If you don't have that designation on your license, then you can request a free driver's license data change form from ARORA or any State Revenue Office. In Arkansas, living next-of-kin must still approve any organ and tissue recovery, so tell your family about your decision.

If I sign the Donor Registry, can it affect the level of health care I receive?

No. Medical personnel are trained to help save lives and that is their first priority. Only when someone is declared "brain dead" can they be considered for organ donation.

What can be donated

- **Kidneys** - They are the most frequently transplanted organ. Kidneys, which cleanse the body of harmful wastes and maintain the body's fluid balance, can give people a better life, free from life attached to an artificial kidney machine.
- **Heart** -The heart is the body's blood pump, and, for certain diseases, the only chance for survival is a healthy transplanted heart.
- **Lungs** - The lungs work with the heart to deliver nourishing oxygen to every organ, tissue and cell in the body.
- **Liver** - The liver filters waste from the blood and produces bile to aid in digestion. For many on the waiting list, a liver transplant is their only hope for survival.
- **Pancreas** - The pancreas produces insulin, which controls blood sugar levels. Many people with severe diabetes must receive a pancreas in order to live.
- **Corneas** - The clear tissue over the front of the eye, cornea transplants make it possible for people with diseased or injured vision to experience sight, in some cases for the first time.
- **Bone, Skin and Valves** - Skin transplants are used to promote healing and prevent infections in adults and children who have been severely burned. Bone transplants are used to repair diseased, injured, and malformed bone. Heart valves can be used to replace diseased valves.

Will donation disfigure my body?

Not at all, recovery of organs and tissue is simply a surgical procedure done by a medical team under sterile conditions in an operating room. The donor is treated with respect and dignity. Upon completion of the procedure, incisions are stitched closed.

Who pays for the recovery procedure?

VA. All procedures associated with the recovery process are billed to and paid for by ARORA. Families will still need to pay for lifesaving procedures, but never for donor-related costs.

Will my family be paid for donating?

No. The National Transplant Act of 1984 makes it illegal to buy or sell organs in the United States. Donation is considered to be the ultimate human gift.

What about burial arrangements and funeral costs?

Donation does not interfere or delay funeral arrangements. The funeral director, whom the family picks, is told when surgery is complete. Funeral costs, memorial services and burial plans remain the responsibility of the family.

What exactly is brain death?

Brain death is the medical criteria one must meet to be considered for organ and tissue donation. When someone is brain dead, it means that there is no blood flow or oxygen to the brain, and it is no longer working in any way.

What is Required Request?

It is a Federal law which states that all hospitals must discuss organ and tissue donation options with the family or every patient when death is imminent. Family discussions about organ donation, before a tragic accident occurs, can make it much easier for the family to reach a decision.

What are religious views concerning organ donation?

We encourage families to talk with clergy for religious guidance. Most religions support organ and tissue donation on the basis that it is a gift of life from one human to another.

Who will receive my donation?

ARORA is part of the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), a national computerized system which matches donor organs with recipients. The names of all potential recipients are registered with UNOS to assure that the donor's gift is received by the patient with the best biological match and greatest medical need.

Will my family know who receives the organs?

Not by name. Information is confidential. However, we do let families know what organs and tissues were transplanted. ARORA can arrange correspondence between donor families and recipients, but only when both parties agree.

Discharge from the Hospital

The doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists and other health care professionals on your unit will plan your discharge with you. If you have any special concerns about leaving the medical center, please let them know. You and/or your family member will need to pick up your discharge medications and supplies before you leave. Your physician and nurse will provide you with information regarding your discharge and answer any other questions you may have.

When it's the day of your discharge our goal is to have you depart the hospital by 10:00 a.m. However, there may be times when lab tests, x-rays or therapies may delay your discharge. If delays occur, we will keep you and your family informed about your discharge plans. Ask you family or friends to be at the hospital prior to 10:00 a.m. If

you need assistance with travel to your home, please let your social worker know as soon as possible.

Regular Discharge - A veteran who has received hospital care and treatment and whose condition is considered stabilized and requires no further hospitalization or treatment, will be given a regular discharge from the hospital.

Irregular Discharge - A patient who refuses, neglects, or obstructs examination or reasonable treatment may be given an irregular discharge from the hospital. Other reasons for an irregular discharge are: refusing to accept transfer to another medical center, leaving the medical center without approval or against medical advice, and being found guilty of disorderly conduct.

The following information is important to know for preparing to be discharged:

- Understand your diagnosis
- Know how to use your equipment for therapy or treatments
- Understand how to manage your pain
- Recognize the limitations of your physical activity that, possibly short term, may include lifestyle changes
- Know what your diet should be, the types of food you can and can't eat
- Understand the procedures for doing your post discharge treatments
- Know what symptoms to report after discharge to your physician or health care contact at CAVHS
- Understand your medications, including purpose, when and how to take medication, side effects and any special instructions
- Know what activities that may improve or worsen your condition
- Know some resources in your community for follow-up care when appropriate

Also, be sure you have:

- A friend or family member who knows how to help you with your care at home.
- Transportation arranged to get home and to return for appointments.
- Supplies/equipment you will need at home.
- Medications you are to take home and instructions about how to get your medications refilled.
- A clinic appointment if your doctor wants you to return for a follow-up.
- Withdraw any funds you have on deposit with the Agent Cashier during the operating hours, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Transportation

Veteran/Staff Shuttle Services

The Veteran/Staff Shuttle Service runs Monday through Friday, leaving Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center (THC), Building 170, North Little Rock, at 8:00 a.m. The shuttle proceeds to 18th Street Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Housing, North Little Rock, *Vet Center (4th and Broadway Streets, North Little Rock), Homeless

CAVHS Internet Information Site - <http://www.littlerock.va.gov/>

Center (2nd and Ringo Streets, Little Rock), and on to John L. McClellan (JLM) Memorial Veterans Hospital, Little Rock, where it arrives at approximately 8:20 a.m. This shuttle sequence continues from 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. The schedule of departure times is listed below.

Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center:

Shuttle departs at 8:00 a.m.	Shuttle departs at 12:00 noon
Shuttle departs at 9:00 a.m.	Shuttle departs at 1:00 p.m.
Shuttle departs at 10:00 a.m.	Shuttle departs at 2:00 p.m.
Shuttle departs at 11:00 a.m.	Shuttle departs at 3:00 p.m.

John L. McClellan Veterans Memorial Hospital:

Shuttle departs at 8:30 a.m.	Shuttle departs at 12:30 p.m.
Shuttle departs at 9:30 a.m.	Shuttle departs at 1:30 p.m.
Shuttle departs at 10:30 a.m.	Shuttle departs at 2:30 p.m.
Shuttle departs at 11:30 a.m.	Shuttle departs at 3:30 p.m.

In order to meet and be responsive to veteran/staff transportation needs the Veteran/Staff Shuttle Service reviews and prioritizes each shuttle request. The following veterans/staff shuttle priorities have been established:

- 1) Veterans with appointments.
- 2) Staff accompanying veterans with appointments.
- 3) Family members of veterans with corresponding medical justification.
- 4) Staff going between facilities.

Thank you for your cooperation with the Veteran/Staff Shuttle Service drivers. If you have questions about the Veteran/Staff Shuttle Services contact the Supervisory Motor Vehicle Operator at (501) 257- 4045.

Transportation to and from CAVHS for outlying areas

Transportation to and from the CAVHS: (John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock and Eugene J. Towbin Healthcare Center in North Little Rock) are offered from outlying areas. This free service is offered by the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) of Arkansas. To utilize this service, call the telephone numbers listed below for availability, pick-up point, and schedule information. It is a good idea to call at least one week before your scheduled appointment if possible to arrange your ride. For further information please contact the DAV Coordinator at (501) 257-6991.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Running Days</u>	<u>Scheduling Numbers</u>
Batesville	M W F	(870) 793-8812
Camden/El Dorado	M W	(870) 837-2216
Heber Springs	M T W F	(501) 362-6211
Hope	M W F	(870) 777-4115 or 5460
Hot Springs	M F	(501) 262-0456
Jonesboro	M W F	(870) 932-1052

Mena	M F	(479) 394-8147
Newport	T TH	(501) 344-8410

***continued next page

Pine Bluff	M F	(870) 541-5495
Russellville	M W F	(479) 968-1665
Fayetteville	M F (stops at Alma)	1-800-691-8387 ext 5041
Mountain Home	M W F (western side)	1-870-425-8155
	T TH (eastern side)	
Monticello (VFW)	T TH	1-870-460-5257

Voluntary Research

CAVHS Research Service serves to provide research studies that are trying to learn more about medical problems that affect veterans. Many veterans volunteer in research studies at VA's across the United States. VA research is an important part of all research in the United States. Some research topics that are being studied at CAVHS include diabetes, heart disease, circulatory diseases, PTSD and aging. All research involving humans is approved by expert committees. The Medical Center Director oversees the Research Committees and assigns the Research Compliance Office to monitor research studies to assure that research participant (volunteers) rights are being protected and federal regulations are followed.

If you have any general questions about research please call CAVHS Research Administration at (501) 257-4816. If you are considering participating in a research study, or have volunteered for a research study and have questions you should direct them to the Investigator in charge of the study. If you feel that your concerns or questions have not been appropriately addressed, you should contact the Research Compliance Office at (501) 257-5558. You can obtain information about volunteer research on the internet at www.research.va.gov/programs/PRIDE. The following information is provided to assist you in understanding more about research studies and your rights as a volunteer in research.

What is a research study?

A research study is an organized activity to learn more about a problem or answer a question. A research study may be done to:

- Understand health needs, problems or feelings people have about an illness or their general health
- Test if a product, such as a drug or equipment, is safe and effective
- Determine the best way to treat an illness, or how to prevent an illness
- Find out what health care practices work best

One specific type of research study is a clinical trial. A clinical trial is a medical study

that tries to determine whether medicines, new therapies or new devices are safe and effective. In a clinical trial, a drug or treatment is often compared to a placebo (an inactive substance given as if it were a therapy, but typically has no value to treat or prevent an illness).

Questions to ask before volunteering for a research study

Here are some questions you might ask before deciding to take part in a research study at CAVHS:

- Who is doing this study and what questions might it answer?
- Who reviewed or approved this study?
- How long will this study last?
- What could happen to me, good or bad, if I take part in this study?
- What tests or procedures will I have during the study?
- Who will be told I am taking part in this study?
- Will this research help in understanding my condition? If so, how?
- Is it possible that I will receive a placebo (inactive substance)?
- What happens to any specimens I give?
- Could my condition get worse during the study? What happens if it does?
- What other options or choices do I have if I decide not to take part?
- Who will be in charge of my care? Can I continue seeing my own doctor?
- Will I be charged anything or paid anything to be in this study?
- If I decide to participate, how will it affect my daily life?
- Will I have to make extra trips to the VA?
- What will happen to me at the end of the study?
- Will I be told the results of the study?
- How do I end my participation in this study if I change my mind?
- Whom do I contact for questions and information about the study?

What to do if someone asks if you want to take part in a research study?

If anyone asks you to take part in a research study, you have the right to say “no”. Your decision will not affect your VA health care or benefits. You need to weigh both the risks of the study and the benefits. It may be helpful to talk with family members, friends or your health care providers before you make a decision. If you decide to take part in a study, you do so as a Volunteer. This means YOU decide. You can change your mind and stop or leave a research study at any time without losing any of your VA health care benefits. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about VA research, or if you would like to talk to someone about the VA Research Program, please contact the Research & Development office at (501) 257-4816 or 1-800-224-5656 (option 1, ask for 74816 or Research Administration).

Informed consent when volunteering for research

Informed consent is the process of learning important facts about the research study before you decide whether or not to volunteer. If you agree to volunteer, it should be based on a clear understanding of what will take place in the study and how it might affect you. Informed consent begins when the research staff explains the study to you. These facts include details about the study, tests or procedures you may receive, the

benefits and risks that could result, and your rights as a research volunteer. Once your questions have been answered and you fully understand the facts about the research study, you will be asked to sign an “informed consent form”. You should take your time when you read the informed consent form. If you have any questions, ask the research staff to explain.

Vet Center

The Vet Center is a community based service for veterans and their families, providing a continuum of quality care that adds value for veterans, families and communities. Care includes professional readjustment counseling, community education, outreach to special populations, the brokering of services to community agencies, and provides a key access link between the veteran and other services in the Department of Veteran Affairs. Direct services provided include; PTSD Assessment and Treatment, Marital/Family Counseling, Vocational and Educational Counseling, Job Development and Placement, and Information regarding local and national organizations. Team members work closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Services and other federal, state and city organizations with a goal of linking veterans to eligible resources. For more questions call (501) 324-6395 or visit the following location:
 201 West Broadway, Suite A
 North Little Rock, AR 72114
 Hours of Operation:
 Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Evenings by appointment only)

Quality & Satisfaction

How can you be sure that you are getting high quality care?

CAVHS is committed to providing you high quality medical care. We base medical decisions, including what tests, treatments, and other interventions to provide you concerning your health care needs, on not only top professional training but also on national standards and guidelines.

We meet or exceed the same standards for quality and safety that private health care facilities do. The CAVHS is fully accredited by The Joint Commission, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons, American Dental Association, American Psychological Association Office of Accreditation, American Dietetic Association, College of American Pathology, as well as several other external review organizations.

Facts about The Joint Commission

The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits nearly 15,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation’s predominant standards-setting and accrediting body in

health care. Since 1951, The Joint Commission has maintained state-of-the-art standards that focus on improving the quality and safety of care provided by health care organizations. The Joint Commission's comprehensive accreditation process evaluates an organization's compliance with these standards and other accreditation requirements. The Joint Commission accreditation is recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality that reflects an organization's commitment to meeting certain performance standards. To earn and maintain The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval™, an organization must undergo an on-site survey by The Joint Commission survey team at least every three years.

Benefits of The Joint Commission accreditation and certification

It is important to be an accredited healthcare organization because it strengthens the communities' confidence in the quality and safety of care, treatment and services CAVHS provides. Accreditation also:

- Provides a competitive edge in the marketplace
- Improves risk management and risk reduction
- Provides education on good practices to improve business operations
- Provides professional advice and counsel, enhancing staff education
- Enhances staff recruitment and development
- Recognized by select insurers and other third parties
- May fulfill regulatory requirements in select states

Facts about the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

CARF serves as a catalyst for improving the quality of life of the persons served by CARF accredited organizations and the programs and services they provide. CARF's accreditation, research, and educational activities are conducted in accordance with its mission and the utmost integrity. Since its inception in 1966, CARF has benefited from national organizations joining together in support of the goals of accreditation. These organizations provide a broad range of expertise through membership on the CARF's International Advisory Council.

Benefits of CARF accreditation and certification:

- Provides continuous improvement of both organizational management and service delivery.
- Ensures diversity and cultural competence in all CARF activities and associations.
- Enhances the involvement of persons served in all of CARF's activities.
- Ensures persons served are active participants in the development and application of standards for accreditation.
- Enhances the meaning, value, and relevance of accreditation to the persons served.



The Joint Commission requires that all organizations provide staff and patients information about reporting concerns about safety and quality of care. No adverse effect or disciplinary action will be associated with patients or staff reporting to the Joint Commission. You may use any of the following methods to contact the Joint Commission:

**Toll Free Telephone: 1-800-994-6610
E-mail: complaint@jointcommission.org
Fax: (630) 792-5005 Mail: Office of Quality Monitoring
The Joint Commission, One Renaissance Boulevard,
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181**

CAVHS Internet Information Site - <http://www.littlerock.va.gov/>

Helping our veterans by doing things right and doing the right things.

VHA has established the Compliance and Business Integrity Helpline in a effort to correct and prevent business errors, thereby assuring that we are serving our veterans ethically and being good caretakers of our communities' resources.

Compliance and Business Integrity Officer for CAVHS:

Location: 2C-168 (Little Rock)

Email Address: casper.nehus@va.gov

Telephone number: (501) 257-5492

Or toll-free

1-866-842-4357

Important CAVHS Telephone Numbers

Title	LR Phone #	NLR Phone #
Adult Day Health Care	N/A	(501) 257-3340
Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs	(501) 257-5396	N/A
Arkansas Regional Organ Recovery Agency	1-800-727-6727	(501) 224-2623
Agent Cashier	(501) 257-5525	(501) 257-2491
Agent Orange Information	(501) 257-5054	N/A
Ambulatory Surgery Waiting Room	(501) 257-4502 (501) 257-6774	N/A
Administrative Officer of the Day	(501) 257-5714	N/A
Appointment Center	1-866-722-4838	(501) 257-3999
Audiology & Speech Pathology Svc	(501) 257-5250	(501) 257-1085
Automated Telephone Information	(501) 257-1594	1-888-492-7845
Barber Shop	N/A	(501) 257-2137

CAVHS Internet Information Site - <http://www.littlerock.va.gov/>

Canteen Service Office	(501) 257-5281	(501) 257-2130
Cardiology	(501) 257-5795	N/A
Community-Based Outpatient Clinic - Hot Springs	(501) 881-4112	1-800-310-5001
Community-Based Outpatient Clinic - Mena	(479)394-4800	N/A
Community-Based Outpatient Clinic - Mountain Home	(870) 424-4109	N/A
Community-Based Outpatient Clinic - Pine Bluff	(870) 541-9300	N/A
Community-Based Outpatient Clinic - El Dorado	(870) 862-2489	N/A
Community-Based Outpatient Clinic Program Manager	(501) 257-5050	N/A
Central Business Office	N/A	(501) 257-2193
CHAMPVA	1-800-733-8387	N/A
Chaplain Service	N/A	(501) 257-2151
Chief of Staff Office	(501) 257-5300	N/A
Chronic Pain Management	(501) 257-6050	N/A
Compensation & Pension Unit	1-800-827-1000	(501) 257-2621
Crisis Telephone	N/A	(501) 257-3229
DAV Transportation Network Officer	(501) 257-6991	N/A
Dental Service	N/A	(501) 257-2201
Dermatology	(501) 257-5757	N/A
Diabetes Education Clinic/LR	(501) 257-5815	N/A
Dialysis	(501) 257-5822	N/A
Directors Office	(501) 257-5400	(501) 257-4000
Eligibility and Enrollment Center	(501) 257-5715 or 1-800-224-8387	(501) 257-2614
Emergency Medicine (ER)	(501) 257-1000 extension 55055	N/A
Emergency Care	911	N/A
Endocrinology	(501) 257-5814	N/A
Eye Clinic (Ophthalmology)	(501) 257-6781	(501) 257-2276
Family Representative	(501) 257-5761	N/A
Fee Services Office	(501) 257-1000 extension 52574	(501) 257-2577

Geriatrics Research Education and Clinical Center	(501) 257-5542	(501) 257-2503
Health Benefits Service Center	1-800-222-8387	N/A
Hematology	(501) 257-6460	N/A
Holter Heart Monitoring	(501) 257-1000 extension 55837	(501) 257-1000 extension 55836
Homeless Program	N/A	(501) 257-2305
Information Desk	(501) 257-5725	(501) 257-2629
Information Security	N/A	(501) 257-2008
Library	(501) 257-5620	(501) 257-2550
Mammography Clerk/Scheduling	(501) 257-6645	N/A
Medical Services	(501) 257-5866	N/A
Medical Services Firm A and B	(501) 257-5861	N/A
Mental Health Administrative Office	N/A	(501) 257-3092
Mental Health Clinic	N/A	(501) 257-3131
Mental Health Consults	(501) 257-6604	(501) 257-3155
Mental Health Clinic Outreach	N/A	(501) 257-3179
Mental Health Clinic Outreach Program	N/A	(501) 257-3142
MRI Clerk/Scheduling	(501) 257-6658	N/A
National Archives and Records Administration	N/A	1-866-272-7272
National Cemetery	(501) 324-6401	N/A
Neurology Office	(501) 257-6050	N/A
Neuro-Psychology	(501) 257-6604	N/A
Nuclear Medicine Office	(501) 257-6100	N/A
Nursing Service	(501) 257-6150	(501) 257-2250
Oncology Outpatient Clinic	(501) 257-1000 extension 54749	N/A
Operation Iraqi/Enduring Freedom Program	(501) 257-6706	(501) 257-5414
Pathology & Laboratory Medicine Service	(501) 257-6431	(501) 257-3057
Patient Account Line	1-866-802-6381	N/A
Patient Education	(501) 257-5621	(501) 257-4504

Patient Escort	(501) 257-1000 extension 56985	(501) 257-2892
Patient Relations Office / Patient Advocate	(501) 257-5410	(501) 257-2195
Persian Gulf Coordinator	(501) 257-6706	N/A
Pharmacy Outpatient	(501) 257-6325	(501) 257-2900
Pharmacy Service Admin.	(501) 257-6330	N/A
Physical Medicine & Rehab Services	(501) 257-6405/6486	(501) 257-2992
Police Service	(501) 257-6550	(501) 257-6550
Prescription Refill System	(501) 257-1549	1-888-492-7845
Primary Care Administrative Office	(501) 257-5050	N/A
Primary Care Appointment Center	(501) 257-3999	1-866-722-4838
Primary Care Clinics	(501) 257-6060	(501) 257-5655
Primary Care Nutrition Clinic	(501) 257-6760	(501) 257-2017
Prisoner of War Exams (POW)	(501) 257-5060	N/A
Privacy Officer	(501) 257-2972	N/A
Prosthetics Treatment Center	N/A	(501) 257-1610
Patient Education Resource Center	(501) 257-5621	(501) 257-4504
PTSD Outpatient Program (2D NLR)	N/A	(501) 257-3468
Public Affairs Office	(501) 257-5400	N/A
Pulmonary	(501) 257-5786	N/A
Radiology Service Admin	(501) 257-6615	N/A
Radiology Service / NLR	N/A	(501) 257-3258
Radiology Service Diagnostic-Scheduling	(501) 257-6579	(501) 257-3258
Records Transfer Clerk	(501) 257-5705	N/A
Regional Counsel	1-800-827-1000	(501) 257-4122
Release of Information	(501) 257-5696	N/A
Renal	(501) 257-5824	N/A
Respiratory Care/LR	(501) 257-1000 extension 55828	(501) 257-2675
Rheumatology	(501) 257-5660	N/A
Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs	N/A	(501) 257-2300

Residential Rehabilitation Homeless Program Unit 2D/E	N/A	(501) 257-2305
Residential Rehabilitation PTSD Program Unit 2K	N/A	(501) 257-2843
Residential Rehabilitation Substance Abuse Program 2L	N/A	(501) 257-2319
Severe & Persistently Mentally Ill Unit 1H	N/A	(501) 257-2840
Social Work Service	(501) 257-6740	(501) 257-3304
Social Security Administration	1-800-772-1213	N/A
Spinal Cord Injury	N/A	(501) 257-3309/3474
Special Treatment Section (STS) - Intensive Outpt Program	N/A	(501) 257-3215
Special Treatment Section (STS) - Outpatient Detox	N/A	(501) 257-2846
Special Treatment Section (STS) - Outpatient Program	N/A	(501) 257-3212
Sub-Acute Inpatient Unit 2J	N/A	(501) 257-1000 extension 52842
Suicide Hotline	1-800-273-8255	N/A
Surgical Service	(501) 257-6850	N/A
TDD Information	N/A	(501) 257-1435
Telephone Care Program	(501) 257-5656	1-800-224-8387
Vascular Lab	(501) 257-6917	N/A
Vascular Nurse (INPT)	(501) 265-1401	N/A
Vascular Nurse (OUTPT)	(501) 688-9607	N/A
Veterans Benefits Administration (Regional Office)	N/A	1-800-827-1000
Vet Center	(501) 324-6395	N/A
Visual Impairment Coordinator	(501) 257-5070	N/A
Vocational Rehab Program	N/A	(501) 257-1668
Voluntary Services	(501) 257-6986	(501) 257-3288
Ward 1B Nursing Home Care Unit	N/A	(501) 257-2836
Ward 3H Nursing Home Care Unit	N/A	(501) 257-2838
Ward 1E Nursing Home Care Unit	N/A	(501) 257-2839
Ward 1H Psych. Inpatient	N/A	(501) 257-2840
Ward 2C Adult Day Health Care	N/A	(501) 257-3340

Ward 2J Dual Diagnosis Inpatient	N/A	(501) 257-1000 extension 52842
Ward 3B Geriatric Primary Care	N/A	(501) 257-2061
Ward 3C NLR Geriatric/Rehab	N/A	(501) 257-2844
Ward 3D Primary Care Podiatry	N/A	(501) 257-2619
Ward 3E Primary Care	N/A	(501) 257-2626
Ward 3K Psychiatric Inpatient	N/A	(501) 257-2847
Ward 2C Little Rock Surgical Intensive Care Unit	(501) 257-4650	N/A
Ward 2E Ambulatory Surgery	(501) 257-6880	N/A
Ward 4B General Surgery/Thoracic	(501) 257-4653	N/A
Ward 4C LR Post Surgical Ward	(501) 257-4656	N/A
Ward 5B LR Recovery Room	(501) 257-6830	N/A
Ward 5D LR Critical Care Unit (CCU)	(501) 257-4659	N/A
Ward 5D LR Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICCU)	(501) 257-4660	N/A
Ward 5E LR General Medicine	(501) 257-4662	N/A
Ward 5E LR Step Down	(501) 257-4521	N/A
Ward 6B LR Dialysis	(501) 257-5822	N/A
Ward 6C LR Oncology	(501) 257-4669	N/A
Ward 6D LR General Medicine	(501) 257-4673	N/A
Women's Primary Care Clinic	(501) 257-5662	N/A