

VA PUGET SOUND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
AMERICAN LAKE AND SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



DEPLOYMENT HEALTH CLINIC

PATIENT HANDBOOK

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American Lake Division



Seattle Division



WELCOME TO VA PUGET SOUND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

VA Puget Sound Health Care System is pleased to be able to provide veterans, recently returning active duty, reservists and national guard troops with services designed to specifically address the health care needs of their military deployment. Our medical center is nationally recognized as a leader in health care and has been awarded designation as a Center of Excellence in many disciplines.

In addition to being a nationally recognized leader in health care services, VA Puget Sound has a vibrant array of research programs that allow us to pioneer the future of health and medicine. As a teaching and research setting, our physicians and health care providers are affiliated with one of the nation's top medical schools, the University of Washington School of Medicine. Our research programs rank among the top five in the VA health care system and we are the national leader in many cutting edge treatments. VA Puget Sound has advanced programs in the fields of mental health, rehabilitation medicine, women's health, cancer care and spinal cord injury to name a few.

Above and beyond the national recognition and state of the practice care, VA Puget Sound values you, the veteran. We continually strive to improve our service to meet your needs. One such example of our commitment to serving veterans is the steps we have and are continuing to take towards improving healthcare access for veterans. In addition to having two central Divisions, American Lake in Tacoma and Beacon Hill in Seattle, VA Puget Sound operates community based outpatient clinics either in conjunction with the University of Washington School of Medicine or operated directly by the VA. These clinics were created with the intent of bringing primary care close to veterans. VA Puget Sound plans on opening additional clinics in the near future to further serve the veterans of the Pacific Northwest.

At the core of VA Puget Sound is a solid commitment to the service of those who so faithfully served America. We are proud to provide care to the men and women who have defended our nation's freedom!



WORKING WITH THE DEPLOYMENT HEALTH CLINIC

The Deployment Health Clinic is dedicated to the care of veterans who are experiencing unique health concerns related to a specific military deployment. We are interested in being in contact at least once a year with any veteran who has deployment related health concerns, even if the veteran is receiving his/her health care outside the VA setting.

- PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) related to any deployment
- Ionizing radiation exposures during nuclear weapons testing
- Cold weather injuries related to service during the Korean War or WWII
- Chemical/biological agents exposures involved with Project SHAD
- Unexplained medical symptoms following a specific deployment
- Any other health concern associated with a specific deployment

emotional impairments related to physical injuries, physical stressors, toxic environmental exposures and psychological traumas. The various health effects of these experiences and exposures are often complex and difficult to separate. Most of these health changes involve diagnosable medical and mental health conditions. Some conditions, however, involve non-specific symptoms and impairments that may follow combat military deployment. Other health changes may be related to environmental exposures, the impacts of which are not yet fully understood. It is our belief that these health concerns are best managed by prompt intervention, which includes:

Deployment Related Health Concerns Include:

- Post-combat health evaluations for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan
- Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam
- Environmental agents exposures in the Persian Gulf

Deployment Health Clinic Philosophy

The Deployment Health Clinic recognizes that there are many potential health consequences that can result from participating in deployments involving combat or environmental exposures. These health consequences may include physical, psychological and/or

- Thorough medical evaluation, treatment and follow-up for specific diagnosable physical conditions
- Thorough mental health evaluation, treatment and follow-up for specific diagnosable mental health conditions



- Generic treatments and health recovery/health promotion interventions to manage non-specific physical symptoms and health disturbances
- Evaluation and long-term monitoring for potential effects of environmental exposures
- Primary care follow-up by clinicians knowledgeable about deployment health issues
- Periodic (annual) visits to the Deployment Health Clinic, for individuals who are not receiving their primary care from the VA
- Initial and intermittent counseling regarding VA benefits, new research findings and ongoing education relevant to veterans who have been involved in specific deployments
- A multi-disciplinary team including a primary care clinician, specialty clinicians, mental health clinicians, physical therapists, rehabilitation therapists, rehabilitation counselors, social workers, dietitians, chaplains, veterans benefits staff and veteran service officers.

These services are provided through individual contacts, groups, educational sessions and by phone. They are delivered through a coordinated program, which includes the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) in conjunction with veteran service organizations and other relevant veteran support groups. The Deployment Health Clinic team is responsible for assisting you in recovering and maintaining your health.

Clinic Features

The Deployment Health Clinic offers the following features:

- Care from practitioners who have training and experience in evaluating and managing deployment specific health concerns
- Male and female health care providers
- Integrated medical and mental health care

- Specialized mental health providers
- Therapy and educational groups available during morning and evening hours
- Drop-in times for medical and mental health services
- Daily appointments available
- Comprehensive care for acute and chronic problems in a single clinic
- Up-to-date treatments for specific diagnosed conditions
- Treatment for non-specific symptoms and health disturbances that are known to result from combat experiences
- Current research findings related to deployment health concerns
- Current information on benefits available to veterans

If you do not have a primary care provider, the Deployment Health Clinic will provide this service until a primary care provider can be established.



PRIMARY CARE SERVICES

Primary care integrates the delivery of care under one umbrella. You are seen by a provider who will track and monitor all of your health care needs to ensure that you are getting the right care at the time for the right reasons. Primary care provides integrated, accessible health care services by providers who are responsible for addressing a large majority of personal health care needs. Primary care brings about a change from previously fragmented care to the delivery of a coordinated, continuum of care and provides the best mechanism to ensure quality health care.

What Primary Care Provides You:

Primary care is a coordinated package of health care services that focus on keeping you fit and healthy.

This includes initial assessment of your health care needs, specialty referrals, treatment plans, and inpatient services.

Our primary care services include all necessary care for chronic illnesses and assessments of new problems. Emergency and urgent care is available when needed; you will receive guidance for promoting your individual health and well-being.

Should you begin to show signs of ill health, need to attend health classes, or need assistance with your medications or health care needs, call us at the Deployment Health Clinic designated phone line (206) 764-2636.

Primary Health Care Team:

The team includes a clinic coordinator, physicians, nurse practitioners and mental health providers. The team also includes pharmacists, dietitians, social workers, medical clerks, other

support services and you as a partner in your health care.

- Your primary care provider is a general medical practitioner (MD, physician assistant or nurse practitioner). Your primary care provider will direct your care and involve specialty and support services.
- Your clinical coordinator works closely with your primary care provider to direct your care. Often, he/she identifies problems and potential solutions associated with your care.
- You, the veteran, are the most important member of the health care team. You are the reason we are all here. Take an active role in your health care. Be assertive and recognize your important role. Be a partner and leader in your health care.
- Other team members include: dietitians, pharmacists, social workers, mental health providers, physical/rehabilitation therapists and specialty providers.



Communicating With Your Primary Care Team:

- Know the name of your health care providers. Ask for their business cards, or write the information down. Keep the information in your wallet.
- Keep an on-going list of questions to ask your provider or nurse.
- At your appointment write down questions and comments. If you cannot do this, or if you have trouble remembering things, or you do not understand your provider's plan, bring someone with you to your appointment. If this is not possible, ask your provider or nurse to write out the plan for you to take home.
- Keep a current list of medications. Include what you are taking, why you are taking them and how often you are taking them. This list should include non-prescription (over the counter) and herbal preparations. These medications can interact with your other medications and can have other effects on your health.

- Bring the list to all of your clinic appointments.
- If you monitor your blood pressure, pulse, weight or blood sugar at home, bring this record to all appointments.
- Keep a log of things that are not normal: pain, loss of appetite, frequent urination, lightheadedness, etc.

Services Offered by Deployment Health Clinic by Direct Telephone:

- Make and cancel appointments
- Verify appointments
- Triage calls to appropriate clinician of health care team
- Schedule special tests, lab work and x-rays according to the provider's orders
- Assist patients in getting records from private care providers
- Make changes to address and phone number

- Schedule Gulf War, Agent Orange, Ionizing Radiation, Ex-POW, Project SHAD Registry exams
- Assist obtaining means test for financial information
- Answer general eligibility questions

How to Make Appointments During Your Visit:

- Make future appointments with the clinic coordinator at the time of check out. If the clinic coordinator is not available, call the Deployment Health Clinic the same or next day for an appointment at (206) 764-2636.
- Please verify that your phone number and address are correct.



Communication During Your Appointment or by Telephone:

- When you call, remember to state your name clearly and have the last four digits of your social security number available.
- Take notes during your appointment for later review.
- Make sure you know the name of the person to whom you are speaking.
- Make sure you have the name of the person to contact in case of problems.
- Ask questions when you are unsure of what the provider tells you.
- Ask the provider to use words you can understand, not medical terms.
- If possible, have a family member or friend come with you to your appointment.
- Tell your provider how much you are able to follow the plan of care.
- If you have been unable to follow the provider's advice, discuss this with him/her.

Medications:

- Why do I need this medication?
- Are there any side effects?
- How soon should my symptoms improve?
- Are there any special instructions?

Tests:

- Why do I need this test and what will it show?
- How accurate is it?
- Are there any risks or side effects?
- Do I need to do anything special before or after the test?

Treatment and Surgery:

- What are the benefits and risks?
- How soon will it improve my condition?
- Are other treatments available?
- Are there other questions that you need answered?

Thoughtful Reminders:

- We encourage you to talk about your concerns with your primary care provider.
- Do not withhold information. Something you think is serious might be minor and easily remedied.
- Something you think is minor could seriously affect your treatment.

Accessing the System:

The primary access to the Deployment Health Clinic is (206) 764-2636. This line is staffed during normal working hours to assist you with your questions and scheduling. If you are not able to schedule a same day appointment in the Deployment Health Clinic, the Patient Evaluation Center (PEC) is available on a 24-hour basis for your emergency or urgent care needs and can be reached at (206) 764-2600.



Patient Rights:

The Department of Veterans Affairs respects the rights of the patient, recognizes each patient is an individual with unique health care needs, and because of the importance of respecting each patient’s personal dignity, provides considerate, respectful care focused upon the patient’s individual needs. The Department of Veterans Affairs assists the patient in the exercise of his/her rights and informs the patient of any responsibilities incumbent upon him/her in the exercise of those rights.

The following patient rights are assured for each patient unless otherwise indicated for medical reasons. You have the right to consent to or refuse recommended treatment and to be informed of the medical consequences of such refusal. This facility has mechanisms in place for the consideration of ethical issues arising in the care of patients and to provide education to caregivers and patients on ethical

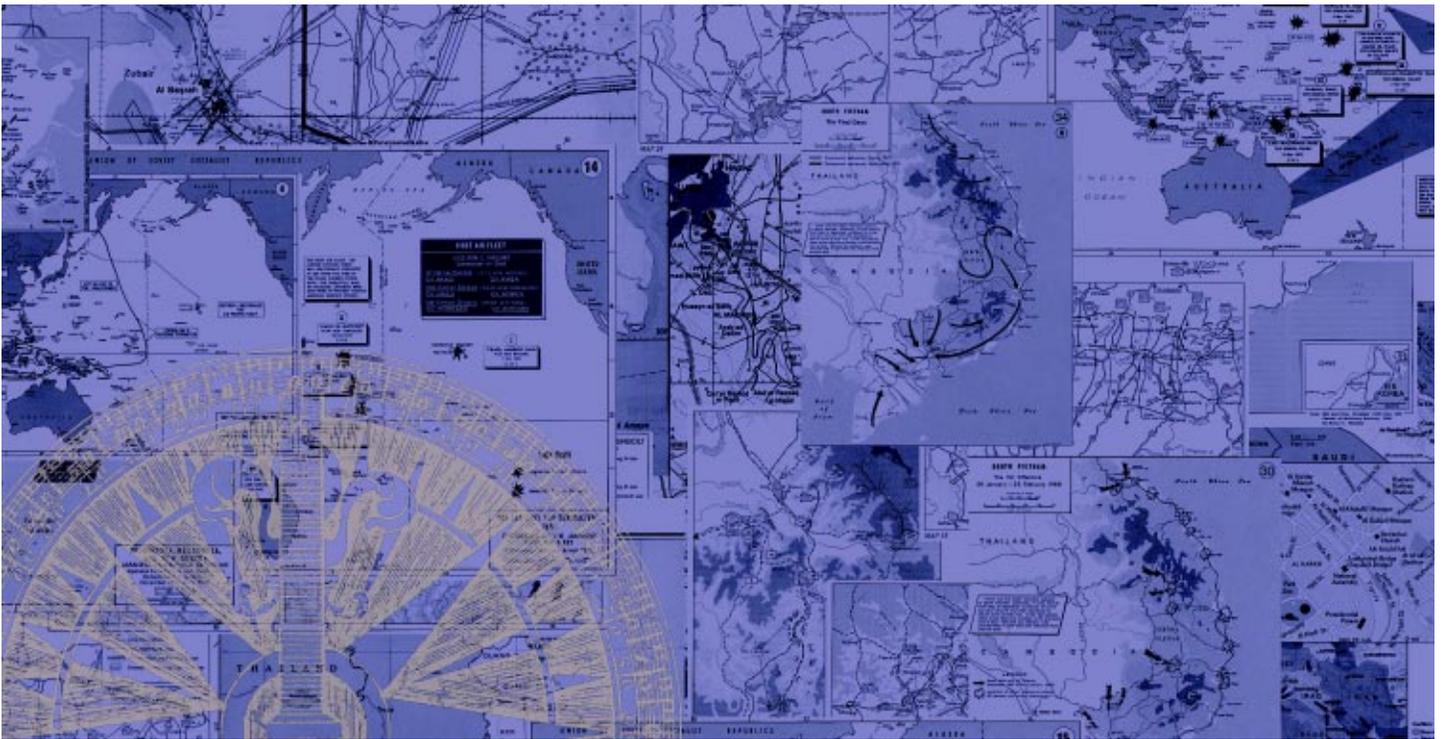
issues in health care. You have the right to present grievances if you feel these rights have not been provided.

What are My Rights and Responsibilities as a Patient?

1. You will be treated with dignity, courtesy, compassion and respect. Your privacy will be protected, and you will receive care in a safe environment. We will seek to honor your personal values and beliefs, regardless of race, creed, sex, religion, national origin or disability.
2. You will receive clinically appropriate treatment for your health care needs. You, and any persons you choose, will be involved in decisions regarding your care.
3. You will be given the name and professional title of the provider in charge of your care. You will be

informed of the benefits and risks of treatment, as well as the consequences of non-treatment. You may choose to consent to or refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law.

4. You have the right to have your pain assessed and to receive treatment to manage your pain.
5. Your medical record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your consent, unless the medical facility is legally authorized to provide information about you or your care to another agency.
6. You have the right to see your records, to provide comment and request correction of your personal health information. Data about your care may be grouped with data from other patients, excluding your name and personal information, to allow us to study the quality of the health care we provide.



7. You have the right to determine whether or not you will participate in any research or educational projects that affect your care or treatment.
8. You have the right to complete an Advance Directive (to plan in advance what your wishes would be if faced with a life/death situation, an unexpected death or a terminal illness). You may name someone else to make health care decisions for you in case you become unable to do so for yourself.
9. You may consult with the medical facility's Ethics Advisory Committee if you are unable to resolve an ethical dilemma in your care.
10. You have the right to express a complaint and receive prompt attention to your concerns without fear of reprisal or your access to care being compromised. You have the right to pursue resolution of problems or complaints with your primary care provider, treatment team and/or a patient advocate.
11. You have the right to protective services if you and/or the medical facility believe that you have been the victim of neglect, abuse or exploitation.
12. You have the right to receive information about financial costs related to your care before you are treated.
13. You will retain your legal rights while hospitalized, except in cases where state law intervenes.
14. You have the right to communicate freely and privately with people. You may have or refuse visitors. You will have access to public telephones for making and receiving calls.
15. You may write letters and may receive help in writing letters, if needed.
16. You will be allowed to wear your own clothes and to keep personal possessions based on your medical condition and facility rules.
17. You have the right to keep and spend your own money. You also have the right to receive an accounting of VA held funds.
18. Your mental, emotional, social, spiritual and cultural needs will be considered. You will have the opportunity for religious worship, spiritual support, social interaction and regular exercise.
19. You have the right to freedom from chemical or physical restraint, unless clinically required. You have the right to be free from unnecessary or excessive medication.
20. You may decide whether or not to participate in social, spiritual or community activities. You may decide whether or not to perform tasks in or for the medical center, unless your treatment program requires it.



Patient Responsibilities:

Your complying with the following list of Patient Responsibilities is necessary to ensure that you receive the highest quality of care. It shows the importance of your contribution to your care. You are responsible for the following:

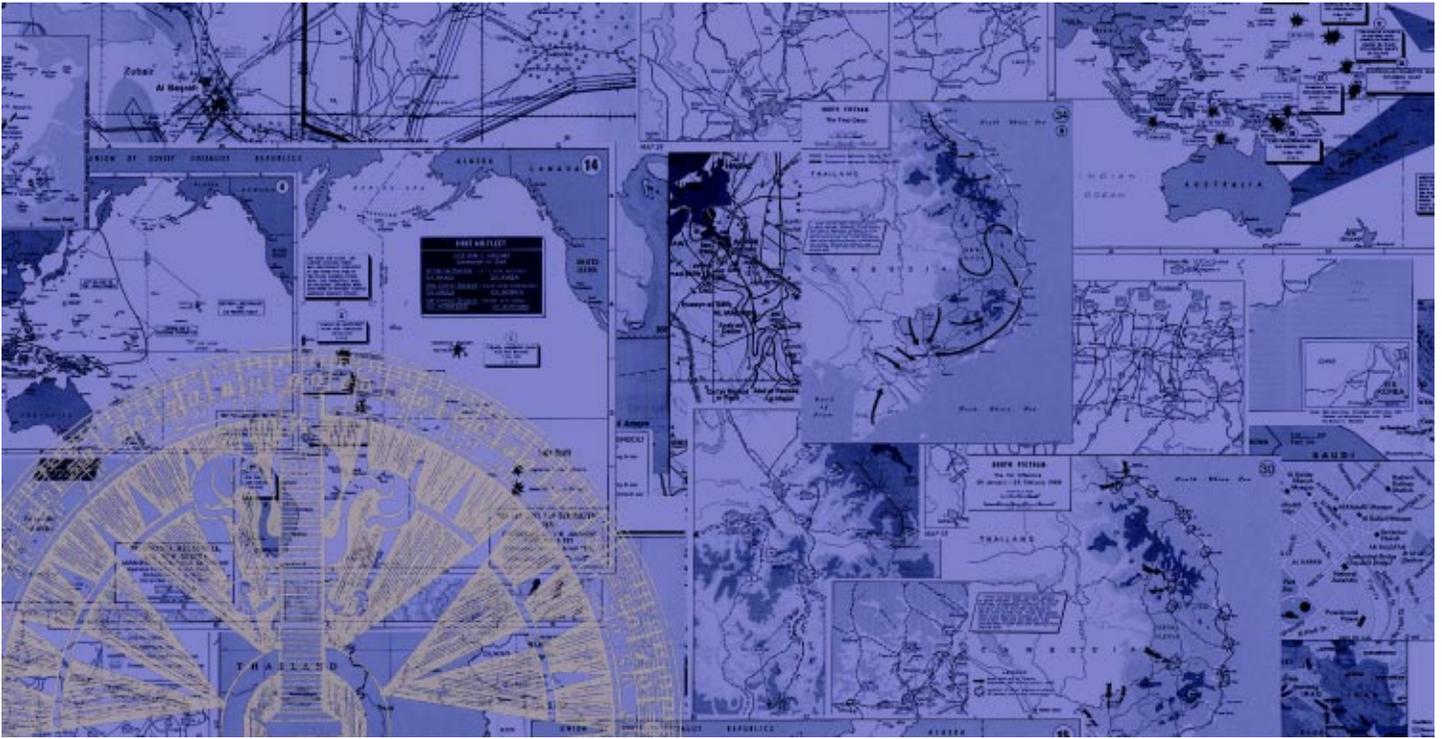
1. To follow all of the medical center's safety rules and posted signs.
2. To be considerate and respectful of all medical center personnel and other patients.
3. To cooperate with your treatment staff. If you have questions or disagree with your treatment plan, you are responsible for discussing it with your treatment staff.
4. To prevent injury to yourself, other patients, visitors and staff members by your own actions and to be responsible for the safekeeping of clothing, money and personal possessions you choose to keep with you while you are in this facility.
5. To make all of your scheduled diagnostic or treatment appointments on time.
6. To avoid interfering with treatment of other patients, particularly in emergency situations.
7. To assist by alerting staff when another patient is having any difficulty.
8. To tell your visitors to be considerate of the patients and medical center personnel and to observe the visiting hours.
9. To be understanding and patient if you encounter delays.
10. To make sure you understand what medications you must take following discharge from the medical center and whether you are scheduled for outpatient follow-up visits.
11. You are responsible for sharing complete and accurate information about your medical condition with your health care providers.

Taking Care of Yourself and Staying Healthy:

You can stay healthy by being aware of what makes you sick, knowing when you need help and where to get help. The following are some areas that, together, we can manage and monitor to keep you healthy and fit.

Blood Pressure

Know your blood pressure (BP) and if it is abnormal. High BP is the "silent killer," often present without symptoms. High BP can lead to heart attacks and strokes. Weight loss (in obese patients) and exercise can help control mild high BP. A normal blood pressure for most people without chronic disease is a systolic (top number) of 130 and diastolic (bottom number) of 85 or less. If your BP is consistently over 140/90, you have high blood pressure. You should also know if your pulse is regular or not.



Cholesterol

Know your cholesterol level and if it is normal. High cholesterol is also symptom free and can lead to heart attacks or strokes. It should be checked every five years. A cholesterol level of less than 200 or an LDL (bad cholesterol) of less than 130 is recommended.

Know what your weight should be and if your body mass index (based on height and weight) is more than 20% ideal. Also, know how to control it. If you have gained or lost weight for no reason, you need to let your provider know. You can attend classes and counseling on healthy eating. Obesity is linked to heart and vascular disease, cancer and diabetes. We can give you information on a healthy diet or other special diets such as for diabetes.

Physical Activity

Know the role of physical activity in maintaining your health. Thirty minutes of light to moderate exercise five

times per week is recommended. An inactive lifestyle is linked to heart and vascular disease. Regular exercise can help control diabetes, weight gain and depression.

Live Safely

Know how to live safely. Wear seatbelts while driving or riding in a car. In Washington State, the use of seat belts reduces the risk of dying in a vehicular collision by 70%. Do not drink and drive. Observe posted speed limits. Wear helmets while riding bicycles and motorcycles.

Vaccinations

Get a Pneumovax shot to prevent pneumonia. Pneumonia can occur in all age groups and can be severe and even fatal. The vaccine is usually recommended for anyone over the age of 65 and for those with chronic illnesses (i.e., diabetes or high blood pressure). This shot does not prevent all pneumonia from occurring.

Get a flu vaccine every year. Influenza can be a killer in the elderly or people with chronic illness. It can also lead to complications like pneumonia. Each year, a new vaccine is prepared for the circulating strain or strains of flu virus. If you still get the flu, you may have been exposed to a virus that was not covered by the vaccine.

Get a tetanus and diphtheria vaccination every 10 years. Tetanus and diphtheria have been well controlled with the current vaccine. However, they need to be updated every 10 years. If there is a recent injury earlier immunization may be required.

If you are in a high-risk group, you may also want to ask your provider about Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations. High-risk groups include food handlers for Hepatitis A and those involved in high-risk behaviors (IV drug abuse, risky sexual behavior) or medical personnel for Hepatitis B.



If you work with people with these diseases or in these high-risk group categories, you may be at higher risk yourself.

Contraception

If you are of childbearing age, you should know about contraception and pregnancy prevention. We can provide you with information and guidance on contraception, as well as give you information on sexually transmitted diseases.

Substance Abuse

Tobacco can play a huge role in your health. Tobacco use contributes to emphysema, heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and oral cancer. It is the main avoidable cause of death in the United States. For most local veterans, VA Puget Sound offers a smoking cessation program and counseling service that is staffed with clinical pharmacists and nurses. The program involves telephone consultation and includes appropriate medication treatment.

Alcohol and drugs can affect your health in negative ways. Substance abuse contributes to physical and mental illness, crime, violence and many other social problems. It causes alcoholic liver disease, brain damage, mental retardation, malnutrition and heart damage. Drinkers are more likely to be involved in motor vehicle accidents, falls or industrial accidents. Homicide and suicides are often linked to substance abuse. There are also effects on family, financial stress, divorce, violence and children born with the disease. Use of IV drugs can lead to HIV and Hepatitis B transmission. VA has substance abuse programs to help you manage these types of health issues.

Depression

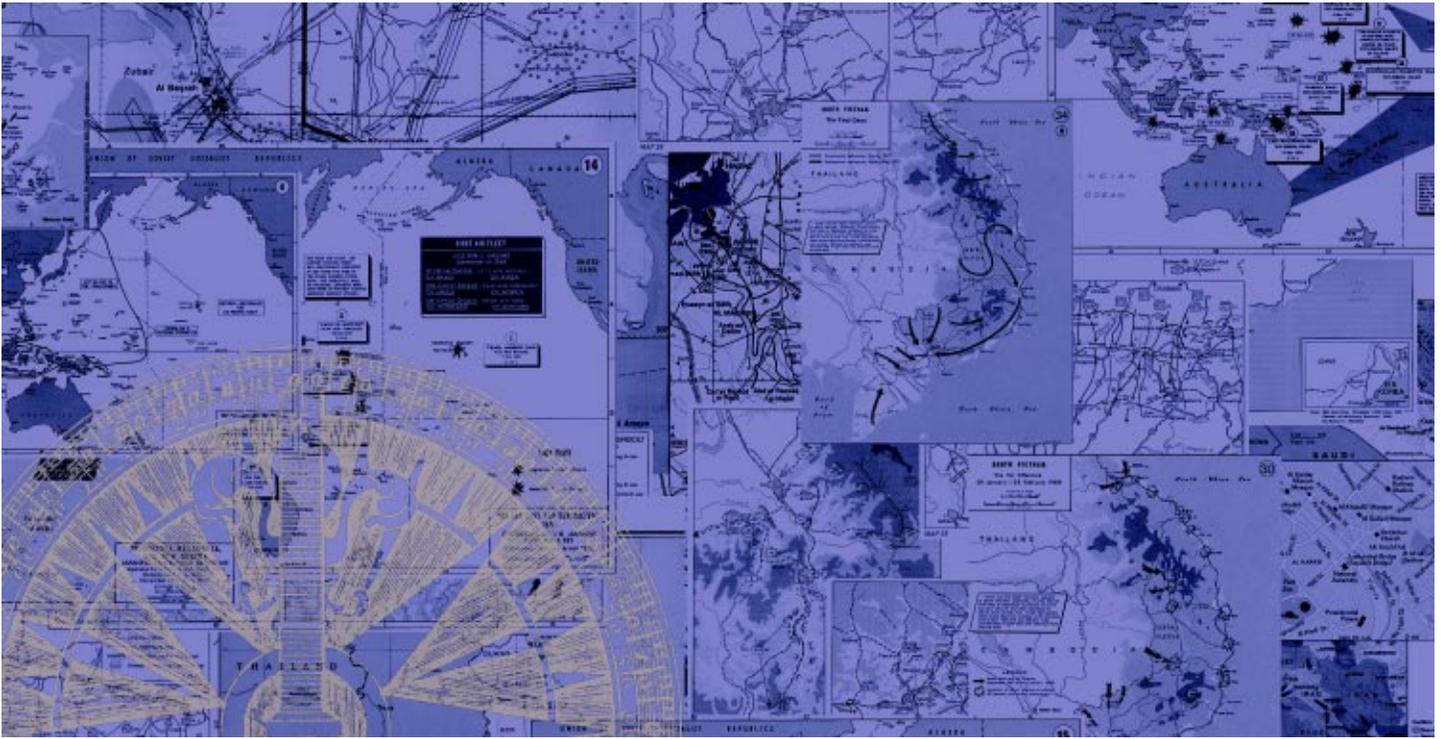
If you have feelings of hopelessness and lack of interest in things that used to make your life interesting, you may be experiencing depression. Discuss this with your provider. VA can help you deal with depression with counseling or medication or both. Depression knows no age limit.

PTSD

If you have had a traumatic life event that is still affecting your life, discuss the possibility of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) with your provider.

Cancer

Early cancer detection is very important to enhance your health and longevity. Screening for colon cancer should be done regularly. Hemoccults, or testing for microscopic blood in the stool, should be done every year. Once you turn 50 years old and every five to eight years thereafter, a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy should be done.



For Men

Once you turn 50, prostate cancer screening should begin. Ask for a rectal examination, PSA test or both. A positive PSA does not necessarily mean you have cancer, and a negative test does not necessarily mean you do not have cancer. Ask your primary care provider or clinical nurse manager about this.

- From age 50 to 69, get a mammogram every two years or as advised by your provider. In women over age 35, breast cancer rates climb.
- Discuss with your provider if you have had a hysterectomy or removal of the ovaries, or have gone through the change of life. We can provide you information about managing your symptoms with medication or diet/lifestyle modifications that may be helpful.

For Women

- From age 18 to 65 years old, get a PAP smear every three years or sooner as advised by your provider.
- For women of childbearing years, discuss the need for Rubella (measles) screening and vaccination. Rubella can result in birth defects and is preventable.
- Perform a self-breast exam every month.

Additional Information:

Do you know about Advance Directives and organ donation? In the event that you become severely ill, these directives give your provider information about your wishes regarding life support. Have you thought about the possibility of organ donation? Ask to speak with a social worker for more information.

Additional Services

Services Offered by Pharmacy:

- Prescription medication and supplies
- Over the counter medications
- Medication counseling
- Written medication information
- Pharmacy hours:
Seattle Division
8:00 am to 8:00 pm, Mon-Fri
8:00 am to 3:00 pm, Sat

American Lake Division
8:00 am to 5:30 pm, Mon-Fri
Closed on Saturday

For a New Prescription:

- Go to the pharmacy and give your prescription to the pharmacist
- The pharmacist will greet you and start processing your prescription and tell you about your new medication.
- A video monitor will let you know when your prescription is ready. This is located near the Pharmacy pick-up window.



- You can have the prescription mailed, which will take 10-14 days.
- It is highly recommended that you wait for new prescriptions to be filled on the same day.

For a refill of a current or expired prescription:

- The best way to have your prescription filled in a timely manner is to call the refill line and request a refill.
- For expired prescriptions that need a refill, contact your primary care provider's office or go to the PEC for a refill.

Services Offered by the Laboratory:

- Lab tests are performed when the primary care provider orders them.
- Tests are ordered in the computer after each provider appointment is complete.
- Requests for lab tests for a return appointment will be ordered the same day. You will receive a lab number with your appointment date.

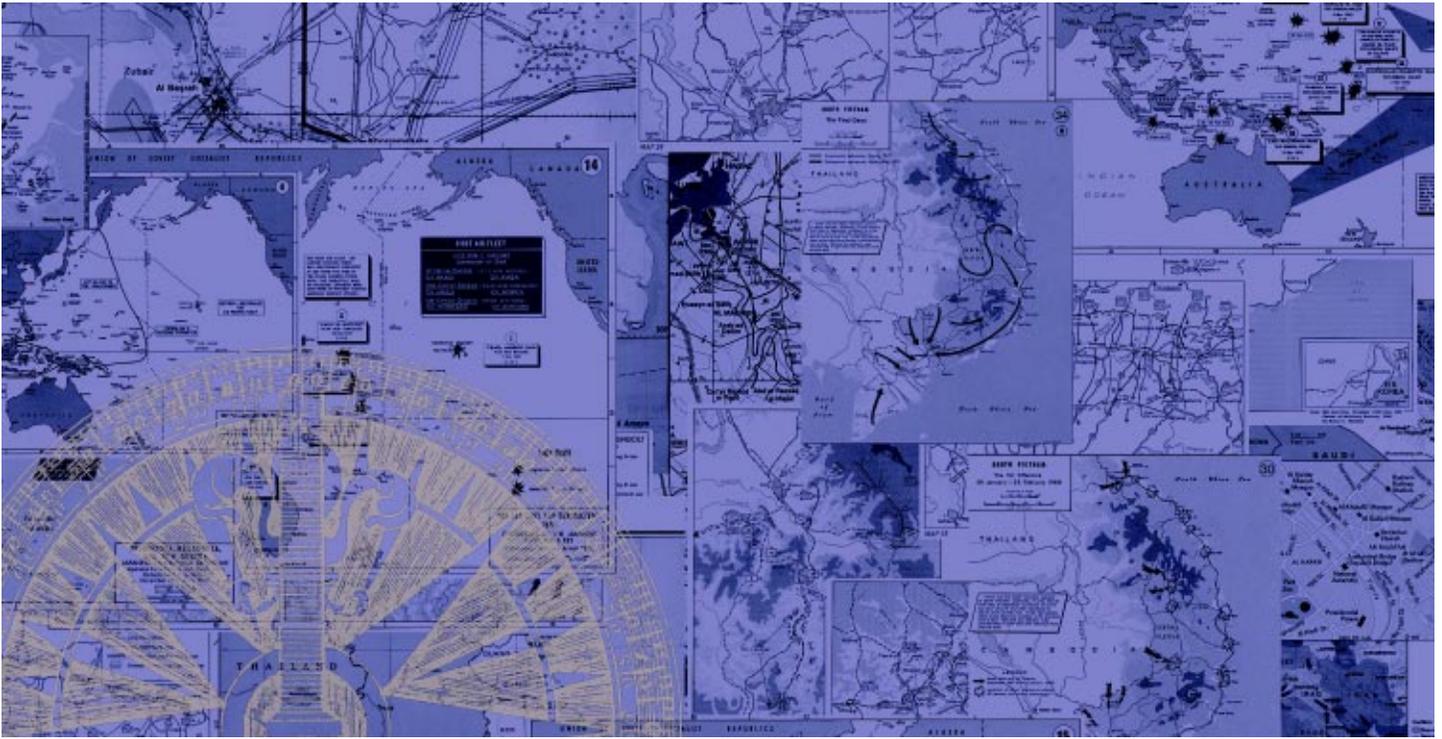
- Lab hours are from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.
- Samples collected at home must be delivered to the lab in person or brought with you at your next appointment.

Services Offered by Radiology:

- Diagnostic radiologic imaging
- General radiography and ultrasound
- Diagnostic and therapeutic nuclear medicine
- Requests for x-rays ordered by your primary care provider.
- Patients are notified by phone and also by mail.
- Exam results are sent directly to the provider who ordered the test. Your provider will then notify you of the results.
- Questions about scheduling should be directed to their scheduling desk at (206) 764-2409.

Services Offered by Social Work Services:

- Adjustment to illness
- Help with resolving financial, housing, transportation, placement and family or personal problems
- Help in getting services needed from the VA
- Community resources that can help
- Information and help in filling out Advance Directives
- Patients are referred by their primary care provider or may call the Seattle Division at (206) 764-2646 or the American Lake Division at (253) 582-8440 ext. 76800.
- For an unscheduled meeting, check in at the PEC and ask to speak to a social worker.



Services Offered by Mental Health:

- Assessment and treatment for a wide variety of mental health disorders for eligible veterans
- Acute inpatient treatment services include inpatient psychiatric care provided at both the American Lake and Seattle Divisions
- Detoxification from alcohol and other addictive substances (Seattle)
- Brief inpatient PTSD treatment (Seattle)
- Outpatient treatment services available at both Divisions include general mental health clinics
- Specialized PTSD services
- Alcohol and drug treatment
- Specialized services for the chronically mentally ill
- Specialized services for homeless veterans
- Domiciliary residential services and rehabilitation at American Lake, including specialized rehabilitation program services for veterans with PTSD and veterans with substance abuse disorders.

Specialized evaluation and treatment services are available for veterans who have experienced traumatic events during their military service that still bother them. Examples of traumatic events include deployment in a combat zone, sexual or other physical assault or involvement in a serious accident. Examples of adjustment problems resulting from such exposures include nightmares and sleep disturbance, depression, alcohol abuse and feeling emotionally numb. If you have any of these problems resulting from your military service, ask for assistance from your medical provider at VA Puget Sound.

- Veterans are referred by their primary care provider
- Veterans without primary care providers can request referral by presenting to the PEC
- For emergency mental health services, check into the PEC

Services Provided by Nutrition and Food Service:

- Nutrition assessments, nutrition education and nutritional consultation for a variety of diets
- Classes or individual counseling dealing with the following topics: diabetes, weight management, eating disorders, nutrition for wellness, pre-renal, Parkinson's, healthy heart, hypertension, nutrition and migraines, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, eating well on a budget
- Patients are referred to the Nutrition Clinic by a health care provider.

Services Offered by Home Based Primary Care:

- Home care for patients who are housebound and in need of skilled care such as RN visits, physical therapy and occupational therapy.



- Referrals are made by the primary care provider and coordinated through the Home Based Primary Care Program.
- The Home Health staff will contact patients to arrange home visits.

Services Offered by the Audiology Program:

- Diagnostic testing to find out the degree and type of hearing loss, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), the best kind of rehabilitation and the fitting of hearing aids
- Counseling on hearing loss, hearing conservation and candidacy for hearing aids
- Listening assistance devices and tinnitus maskers to eligible patients
- Generally, patients are referred by their primary care provider
- Certain eligibility requirements must be met in order to receive audiology services

Services Offered by the Eye Care Team:

- Services for veterans with vision problems includes:
 1. Ophthalmology and optometry services
 2. Low vision services
 3. Blind rehabilitation services
- The services range from a simple eye exam to surgery, including inpatient and outpatient visual rehabilitation services.
- Your primary care provider makes referrals to the eye clinic.

Services Offered by Speech Pathology:

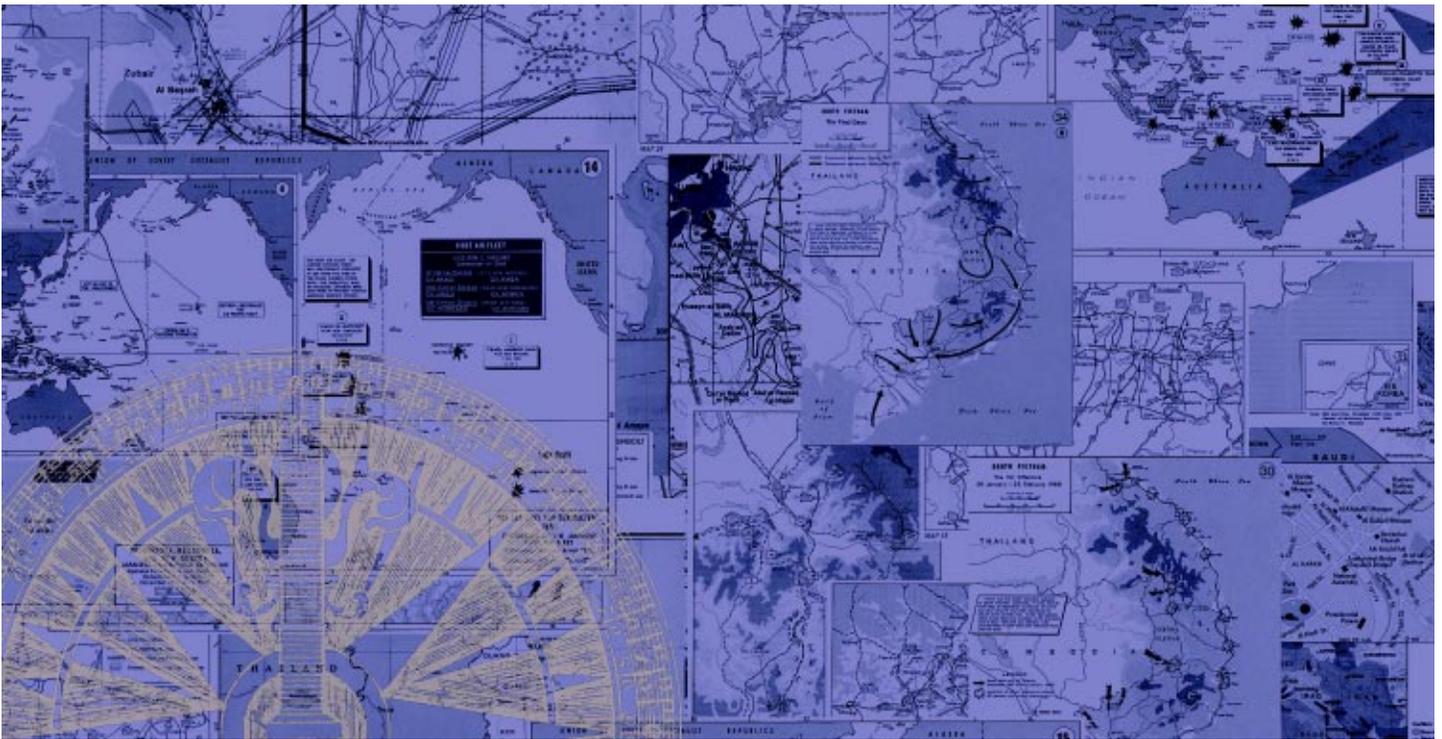
- Evaluation and individual and group treatment services to eligible veterans with acquired speech, language or swallowing problems.
- Communication assistance devices for eligible veterans
- Patients are referred to this program by their primary care provider or other health care professional.

Services Offered by Physical Therapy:

- The goal of physical therapy is to:
 1. Help restore or achieve optimal movement and function
 2. Help relieve pain
 3. Deal with neuromuscular-skeletal problems
- Patients' goals may be to obtain:
 1. Self-care and independence
 2. Relieve pain
 3. Return to work safely and without added injury
- You are referred from your primary care provider.
- Patients are to call and make their own first appointment at (206) 762-1010, ext. 63872.

Services Offered by Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service:

- Prosthetic appliance: aids needed to replace, support or substitute for a deformed, weakened or missing part of the body



- Sensory aids: aids needed for loss of hearing, speech or visual impairment
- Medical accessories: supplies needed for medical treatment
- Prosthetics or sensory aids require a request from your primary care provider or authorized medical staff. You must meet certain eligibility requirements.

Services Offered by the Addictions Treatment Center:

- Inpatient stabilization involves short-term inpatient program for veterans with chemical addictions.
- Intensive outpatient program involves intensive treatment, six weeks to six months duration. In addition to addictions treatment, program offerings accommodate a wide range of concerns for male and female veterans, including those with mild to significant mental health concerns.

- The Women’s Program (WATC) offers gender-specific outpatient treatment for female veterans with substance abuse and/or dual diagnosis issues.
- Dual Recovery Program is an outpatient program for substance abuse treatment for those who also have significant psychiatric illnesses.
- 6E Intensive is a daily outpatient program for veterans who need daily counseling for a short period of time.
- Opioid Agonist Treatment offers pharmacologic treatment with opioid medications along with behavioral counseling for veterans with opioid dependence.

How to contact ATC:

Call the Seattle Division at:
(206) 764-2457

Call the American Lake Division at:
(253) 583-1603

Health Information and Your Right to Privacy

As a patient, you have the right to:

- Request a copy of the VA Notice of Privacy Practices
- Access, view and/or obtain a copy of your health information
- Request an amendment to your health information
- Request an accounting of disclosures of your health information
- Ask us to correspond with you by an alternative means or at an alternative location
- Ask us to restrict the uses and/or disclosures of your health information. You also have the right to ask to restrict disclosure of your health information to your next-of-kin, family or significant others involved in your care.
- File a complaint with VA Puget Sound Health Care System or with Veterans Health Administration (VHA) or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)



Release of Information:

The Health Information Management Section (HIMS) provides copies of health information from a patient's medical records to the patient, private physicians, insurance companies or whomever the patient authorizes. The information is provided only after the patient signs an authorization.

- Requests are generally processed within 10 working days from the date the request is received. There must be a valid, signed authorization.
- The patient can show up in person at the HIMS' Release of Information Desk at either site where staff process the request.
- Through the mail, patients may request Release of Information. If a valid, signed authorization form accompanies the request, it can be processed within 10 working days.

How to contact Release of Information:

Call the Seattle Division at:

(206) 764-2014

Call the American Lake Division at:

(253) 583-1507

Services Offered by Fee Basis:

- Fee Basis pays non-VA providers for their medical services to the eligible veteran (for example: veterans who are in need of treatment for a service-connected disability and live more than 50 miles from their VA medical center).
- Eligible veterans must apply for a fee card and can initiate the application process by calling (206) 764-2525.
- You, your primary care provider or other VA Puget Sound Health Care System staff may request Fee Basis services.

Compensation and Pension:

- Compensation and Pension (C&P) exams are scheduled to determine the level of eligibility for benefits (i.e. disability rating).
- The VA Benefits Office (VBA) will request that a C&P exam be scheduled. VA Puget Sound providers will conduct the C&P exam for a rating to be issued by VBA.
- A veteran may contact VBA directly to initiate the process to request the exam.

How to contact C&P:

To cancel your C&P appointment call: 1-800-827-1000. For other questions regarding the C&P process call: Seattle (206) 764-2140.



Services Offered by the Patient Advocate:

- The Patient Advocates are here to provide the patient with avenues to seek solutions to issues, concerns and unresolved needs.
- Locations:
 Seattle Division
 Main hospital
 Building 100/ Room 1D-143
 8:00 am to 4:30pm, Mon-Fri;

- American Lake Division
 Building 8, Room 214
 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Mon-Fri.

How to contact Patient Advocate:

- Call the Seattle Division at:
(206) 764-2160.
- Call the American Lake Division at:
(253) 582-8440, ext. 72585.

Services Offered by the Women's Health Program:

- Comprehensive evaluation of women's health care needs.
- Mammography.

- Annual gynecological exams are by women providers.
- Primary health care by women providers.
- Maternity benefits

How to contact Women's Clinic:

- Referral from your primary care provider.
- Call the Women's Clinic at:
(206) 768-5314
- Call the Women's PTSD Clinic at:
(206) 764-2131

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS AND WEB SITE INFORMATION:

Gulf War Helpline:

1 (800) 749-8387

1 (800) PGW-VETS

VA Web Sites for Deployment Health

Environmental Health Issues:

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

Clinical information

on Deployment Health:

<http://www.pdhealth.mil/>

Support information for clinicians, veterans, and their families:

<http://deploymentlink.osd.mil/>

VA web site for general information on VA services/benefits:

<http://www.va.gov/opa/feature/>



Institute of Medicine web site for
Deployment Health Issues:
<http://veterans.iom.edu/>

Website for VA Puget Sound
Health Care System:
www.Puget-Sound.med.va.gov

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION:

VA Puget Sound Health Care System

Seattle Division
1660 S. Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108
(206) 762-1010 or 1 (800) 329-8387

American Lake Division
9600 Veterans Drive
Tacoma, WA 98493
(253) 582-8440 or 1 (800) 329-8387

Deployment Health Clinic
(206) 764-2636

VA Regional Office

915 2nd Ave,
Seattle, WA 98174
1 (800) 827-1000

Veterans Outreach Centers

2030 9th Ave, Suite #210
Seattle, WA 98121
(206) 553-2706

4916 Center St, Suite E
Tacoma, WA 98467
(253) 565-7038

3800 Byron St, Suite #124
Bellingham, WA 98226
(360) 733-9226

Tahoma National Cemetery

18600 SE 240th St
Kent, WA 98042
(425) 413-9614

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

505 East Union, #150
PO Box 41155
Olympia, WA 98504-1150
www.dva.wa.gov

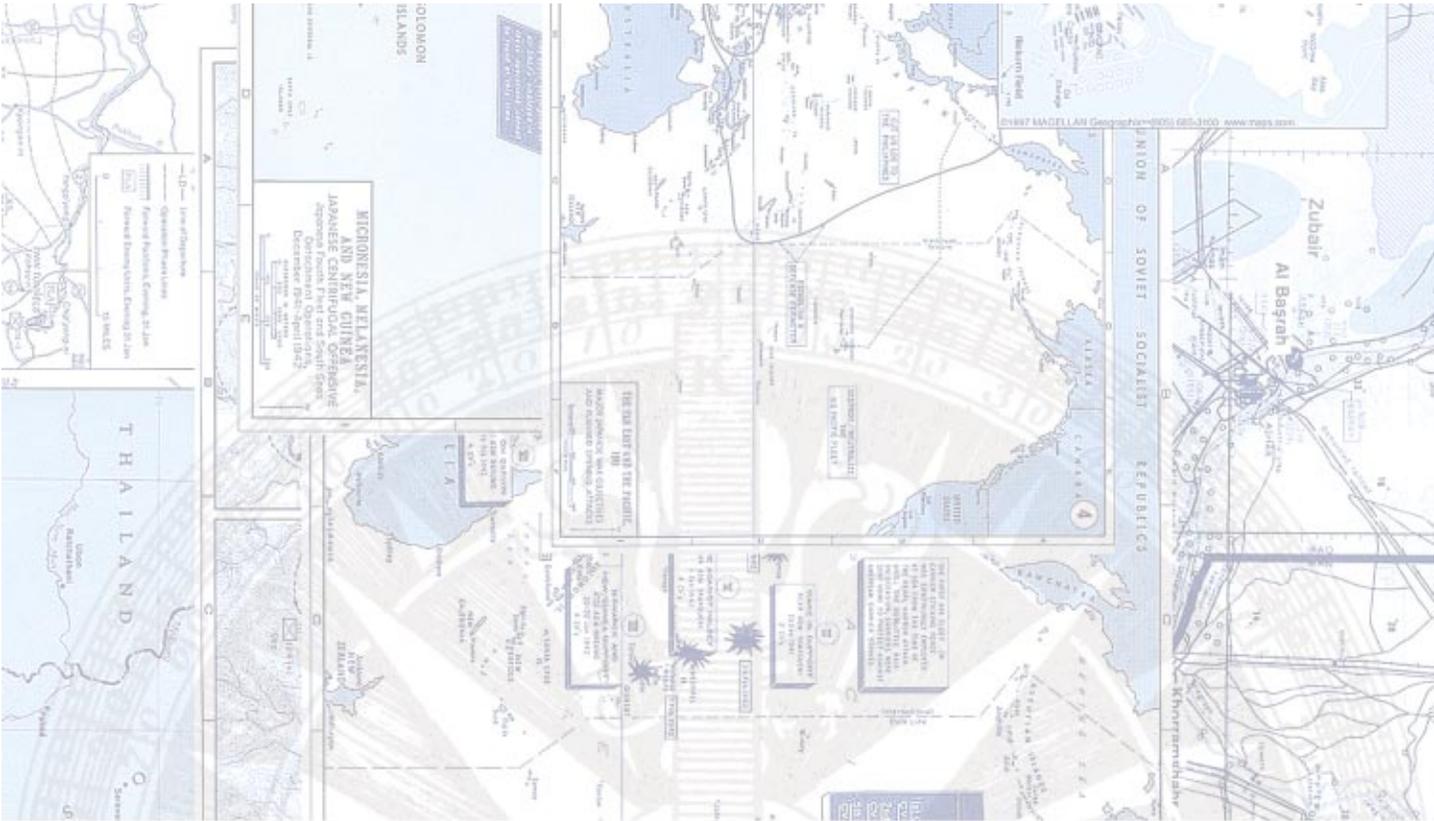
Benefits and Claims
1 (800) 562-2308

PTSD Program
(360) 586-1076
Tom Schumacher, Program Director

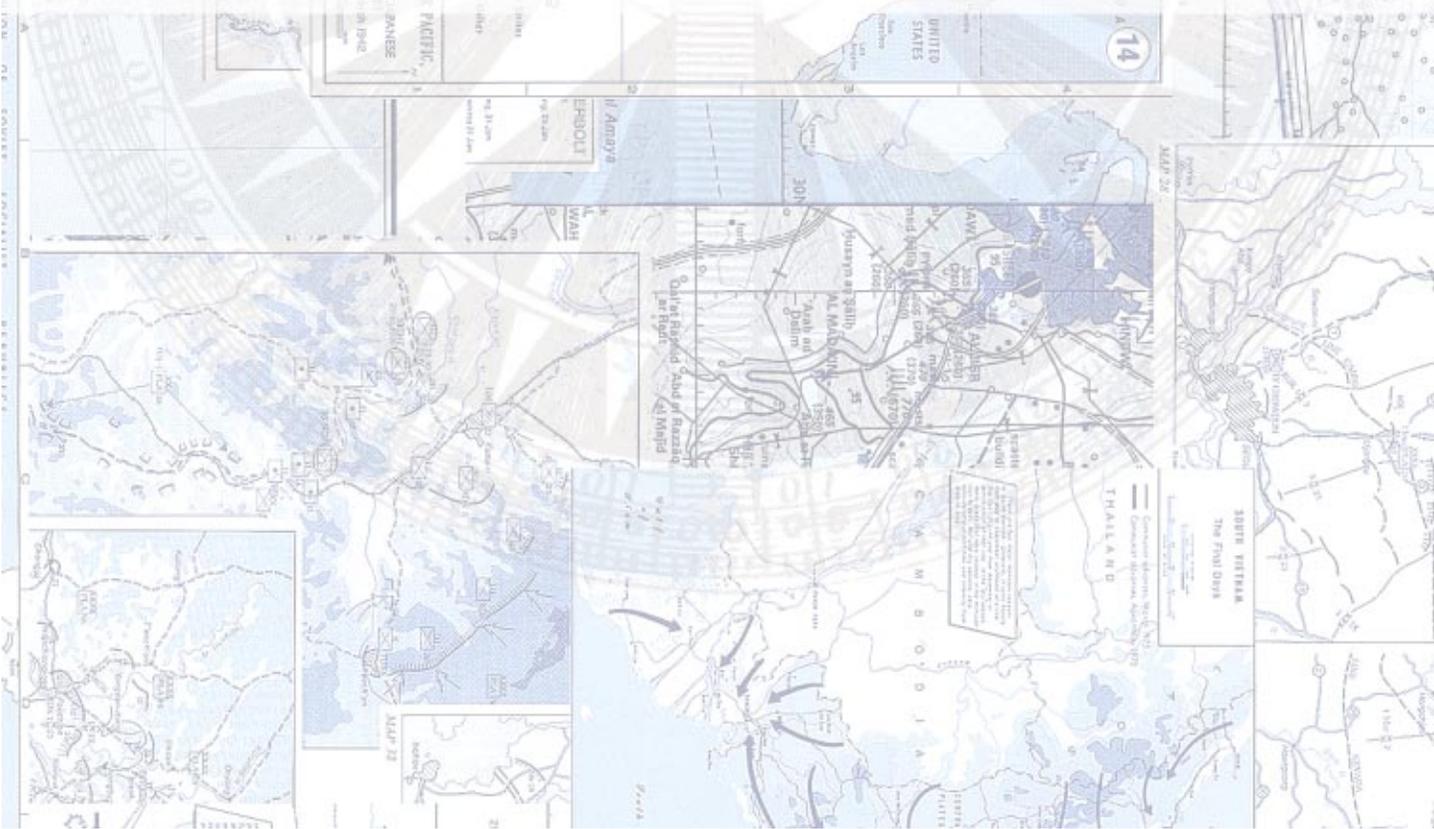
Homeless Veterans Program
1 (800) 562-2308

Homeless Women Veterans Program
1 (800) 562-2308

Veterans Homes Admissions
1 (877) 838-7787
Web Site: www.dva.wa.gov



DEPLOYMENT HEALTH CLINIC PATIENT HANDBOOK





**This handbook was produced as a collaborative effort by
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Deployment Health Clinic
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1660 South Columbian Way
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