

*Leading Health Care
In The 21st Century*



Patient Handbook

A Guide to Patient and Visitor Services



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Welcome to the VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York. We have provided this guide to you and your family so that you can become familiar with the services we offer. We are here to provide you with excellent health care.

More than 95,000 veterans in 49 counties receive medical care from the VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York, in an atmosphere of caring, compassion and respect.

As part of the nationwide VA Healthcare System, we strive to meet the needs of our veterans. We are a patient-focused organization committed to delivering quality service. No population is more deserving of the finest health care available.

Whether you served us at war or in peacetime, on battlefields around the world or in cities and towns closer to home, we work hard to provide you with the highest quality health care. Your satisfaction is a key measure of our success. At VA Healthcare, we strive to provide you with outstanding services.

WILLIAM F. FEELEY
Network Director

Mission

To care for our veterans with compassion and excellence.

Vision

To be the health care provider of choice, achieving the highest quality in health care delivery, education, and research.

Critical Success Factors

1. Provide excellence in health care quality.
 - Surpass community and national standards for prevention and health screening, clinical interventions and veteran outcomes.
 - Provide excellent medical and allied health education, leading the nation in educating the health professionals of the future.
 - Conduct medical research through increased funding, achieving significant improvements in the lives of veterans and the general public.
2. Achieve outstanding veteran satisfaction.
 - Surpass community and national standards in patient satisfaction at all facilities and outpatient clinics.
 - Assure that veterans participate in decisions about their health care in an environment characterized by courteous, coordinated patient-focused services.
3. Provide the best health care value.
 - Fulfill our responsibility to the public by providing excellent value for all health care services provided.
 - Increase revenue and efficiency through excellent business practices, technology and community partnerships.
4. Provide easy access to care.
 - Provide veterans with timely access to all primary care, specialty services and health care information.
 - Provide easy access to health care services for special veteran populations.



Admission to a VA Medical Center

Your Stay at the Medical Center

If you have questions or concerns any time during your stay at a VA medical center, ask a member of your health care team. Your health care team consists of your licensed clinician (physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner, psychologist), nurse, social worker, dietitian, or pharmacist. Health care teams may also include other health care professionals depending on the setting, such as addiction, vocational rehabilitation, recreation and rehabilitative therapists. Your health care team will help you find the health care professional who can best address your needs.

Co-Payments

A VA co-payment may be charged for prescriptions and various other services. Contact the Veterans Service Center (VSC) for current information about co-payments or refer to the Veterans Healthcare Benefits Guide for more information.

Insurance

The VA is required to bill your private health insurance company for medical treatment provided for non-service connected conditions. Payments received from private insurance are applied to the VA co-payment charges. You are responsible for any unpaid co-payment balances that remain after private insurance company payments are made.

Medications

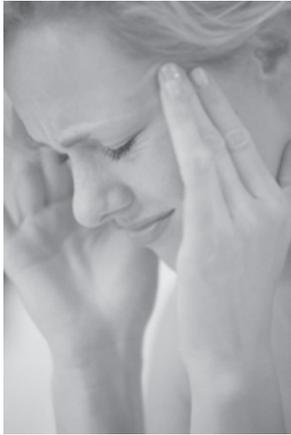
Please do not bring medications from home. Instead, make a list of all the medications you are taking (prescription and over-the-counter). Medications brought to the medical center will be sent home with your family, otherwise it may not be returned to you upon discharge. Your doctor will order the medication you need during your stay and upon discharge.

Exception: If you are taking part in a research project and are on special research medication, please bring them to the hospital and tell your health care team.

Planetree

The VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York believes in the Planetree philosophy. Planetree helps us find ways to enhance patient care without losing site of the individual. Planetree helps us implement new models of health care. It strives to cultivate the healing of mind, body, and spirit through patient-focused, value-based, and holistic care.





Pain Management

We are committed to helping you get the best possible pain relief. Only you can describe your pain. You will be asked to rate the amount of pain you have on a “0 to 10” scale. Zero means no pain and ten describes the worst pain you could imagine having.

Blood Donor Program

If you are having surgery at a VA medical center, you may be able to pre-donate your own blood for the procedure. If you have questions about blood donation, speak with your health care team.



Mail

Mail will be delivered to you on your ward. All mail received after you are discharged will be forwarded to your home address. Please be sure that we have your current address. Mail should be addressed as follows:

Stratton VA Medical Center

Your Full Name and Ward
113 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12208

Bath VA Medical Center

Your Full Name
Ward or Section
76 Veterans Avenue
Bath, NY 14810

Canandaigua VA Medical Center

Your Full Name
400 Fort Hill Avenue
Canandaigua, NY 14424

Syracuse VA Medical Center

Your Full Name and Ward
800 Irving Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13210

VA Western New York Healthcare System at Batavia

Your Full Name
Ward or Section
222 Richmond Avenue
Batavia, NY 14020

VA Western New York Healthcare System at Buffalo

Your Full Name
Ward or Section
3495 Bailey Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14215

*Domiciliary patients will receive mail in their sections.
Mailboxes are available for each domiciliary patient.*

Stamps may be purchased at most canteen/retail stores.



Clothing

All patients are expected to wear pajamas, robe, and slippers or shoes. A robe is provided in case you need to leave your room. Patients are asked to keep one set of clothing and footwear for discharge. Nursing home patients are encouraged to wear their own clothing. Domiciliary patients wear their own clothes and are responsible for personal laundry needs. Washing machines and dryers are available for domiciliary patients.

You should bring the following items with you when you check in: toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving kit, deodorant, toiletries, glasses, dentures, and canes. We encourage you to label all of your personal belongings.

Telephones

Pay phones are available throughout the medical center. Outside callers may call the switchboard operator (main hospital phone number) and ask for you by name and ward. You can call long distance by calling collect or using a calling card.

- **Albany** - Bedside telephones are provided in all wards with the exception of the psychiatric ward.
- **Bath** - Bedside/portable telephones are available upon request with the exception of the domiciliary.
- **Syracuse** - Most patient rooms have bedside telephones. Your bedside phone number is a five-digit number. Callers should dial (315) 425-4400, and then enter your five-digit number.
- **VA Western New York Healthcare System** - Bedside telephones are provided on all wards with the exception of the intensive care unit and psychiatric ward.

Identification (ID) Wrist Bands

Upon admission, you will be given an ID wristband. Wristbands are to be worn at all times. Lost ID wristbands should be reported to your health care team. Domiciliary patients will be provided with photo ID upon admission.

Off Ward Notification

Please tell a member of your health care team before you leave the ward. Domiciliary patients need to carry their photo ID and display it when requesting services or assistance.



For Your Safety

Valuables

For safekeeping, you are asked to keep your valuables at home. The medical center is not responsible for money or other valuables that you keep in your room. We ask that you limit your on-hand cash to \$10. Any additional money should be deposited with the Agent Cashier. Coupon books and phone cards may be purchased at the canteen/retail store. Domiciliary patients are advised to lock valuables in their locker.

Agent Cashier

The Agent Cashier helps veterans with check cashing, travel funds, and cash co-payments. Families are encouraged to obtain coupon books at the canteen/retail store for patient use.

Prohibited Items

Patients are not allowed to have alcoholic beverages, narcotics, firearms, ammunition, knives, other weapons, lighter fluid, non-safety matches, straight edge razors, or any medication from home. Cellular telephones, televisions, radios, and personal computers are also not permitted.

Smoking Policy

All VA medical centers are smoke-free facilities. Staff, visitors, volunteers, and patients may not smoke anywhere indoors, or within any exits or entranceways. Please be considerate of non-smokers. The VA police may issue fines if the smoking policy is not obeyed. Follow the signage posted at each facility.

Fire/Disaster Drill

For the protection of patients and staff, each medical center has its own fire and disaster plan. If you discover a fire, tell a staff member right away. If you are on a ward that needs to be evacuated, follow the instructions from the staff. Exit signs show the location of emergency exits. Fire alarms are near each exit.

Restraints

We strive to keep our medical centers free of restraints. Occasionally, restraints may be necessary. The least restrictive method will be used to ensure that your needs, rights, and dignity are maintained. If you have any questions, please talk to your health care team.

Zero Tolerance for Violence

To maintain a safe environment for patients, staff, visitors, and volunteers, our medical centers have a zero tolerance for violence. Behavior that is disruptive, threatening or violent will result in immediate action.

Cameras, Video Equipment, Tape Recorders, and Cellular Phones

For reasons of patient privacy, cameras, video equipment, tape recorders, and cellular phones are not allowed in the medical centers. If your family or friends wish to bring in one of these items, special arrangements must be made with your health care team. Cellular phones are prohibited as they effect sensitive medical equipment.

VA Police

VA police are on duty 24 hours/day for your care and protection. If you need assistance, or your family/friends need an escort to their car, contact the VA police.



General Information

Rules and Guidelines

Your family and friends are welcome to visit you at the medical center. Visiting hours are:

Albany 11:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

MICU/CCU visiting hours are at the discretion of the medical staff.

Behavioral Health visitors should report to the Communication Center on the ward.

Bath

Acute Care 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Domiciliary 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Nursing Home Care Unit 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Canandaigua 11:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Syracuse 10:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

ICU 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Rehab Unit (weekdays) 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Rehab Unit (Saturdays) Noon - 8:00 p.m.

VA Western New York 10:00 a.m. -

Healthcare System at Batavia 8:30 p.m.

VA Western New York 10:00 a.m. -

Healthcare System at Buffalo 8:30 p.m.

ICU visiting hours are flexible and at the discretion of the nurse. No visiting is permitted during shift changes (5:30 a.m. - 6:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.).

When visiting patients who are seriously ill, visits are permitted at any time and limited only by the patient's health condition.

- Lounge areas are available throughout the medical centers. Please ask staff for the nearest location. Televisions and reading materials have been placed in these areas for your enjoyment.
- Some precautions may be necessary because of risk of infection to both you and your visitors. We ask that you follow posted signs. Visits may need to be kept short. We ask that guests are respectful of all our patients. Patients in the ICU may be limited to one or two visitors for up to 15 minutes at a time. Special arrangements may be made through your health care team.
- Visitors are not to bring food or beverages to patients without permission from staff members. Visitors are asked not to eat in patient rooms.
- Domiciliary patients may have visitors in common areas such as section lounges. Visitations should not interfere with programming/appointments.
- Children are generally not permitted to visit due to the danger of infection to the children, you, and other patients. If you have a child who would like to come visit you, let a member of your health care team know so that special arrangements can be made.

Parking

Parking areas are designated for visitors, employees, volunteers, outpatients, and the handicapped. Please obey the posted signs and ground painted symbols. Inpatients are requested to keep their cars at home. If this is not possible, VA police should be notified. Domiciliary patients need clearance through their treatment team to have a vehicle at the medical center. The speed limit on medical center grounds is posted. The VA police enforce all regulations and will issue warnings and tickets to drivers who violate the rules.

- Syracuse VA Medical Center outpatients and visitors may park in the VA parking garage free of charge.



Hoptel/Hospitality Suite

The hoptel offers overnight lodging for veterans and families on a first-come first-serve basis. It was developed to provide accommodations for veterans who travel a long distance and don't have transportation readily available. Family members of hospitalized veterans may use it to be nearby in times of serious illness. Ask a member of your health care team if you need to make a reservation.

Greeters

Volunteer and staff greeters, identified by their maroon vest, jacket, or ribbon are located at most facilities Monday - Friday. They are there to assist patients and visitors. They will be happy to assist you with directions and get answers to many of the questions you may have. Floor maps are often available upon request.

- Greeters at the Syracuse VA Medical Centers are located at the two Veterans Service Center lobbies.
- There are no greeters in Batavia.

Patient Representative (Advocate)

If you have a concern, do not hesitate to ask for help from anyone on your health care team. Issues should first be addressed with the supervisor/manager of that area. If you are not satisfied or need additional assistance, please contact the Patient Advocate. This person helps veterans and their families get answers and solve problems.

Veterans Benefits Counselors

Veterans Benefits Counselors are assigned to the medical centers to help you with matters about your VA benefits (compensation, pension, government insurance, education, GI loans, and vocational rehabilitation). If you need information or assistance contact the Veterans Benefits Counselor at your facility or call the national toll free number at 1-800-827-1000.

Women Veterans Program Manager

Specific concerns of female veterans should be referred to the Women Veterans Program Manager.

Minority Veterans Program Coordinator

The Minority Veterans Program Coordinator focuses on the needs of minority veterans. You may contact them for assistance.

Visual Impairment Services Coordinator

Patients with visual impairments will be referred to Visual Impairment Services Coordinator for information about special services. Visually impaired patients who are hospitalized are entitled to visually impaired prosthetics. The coordinator also provides follow-up for visually impaired patients after discharge.



Homeless Veterans Coordinator

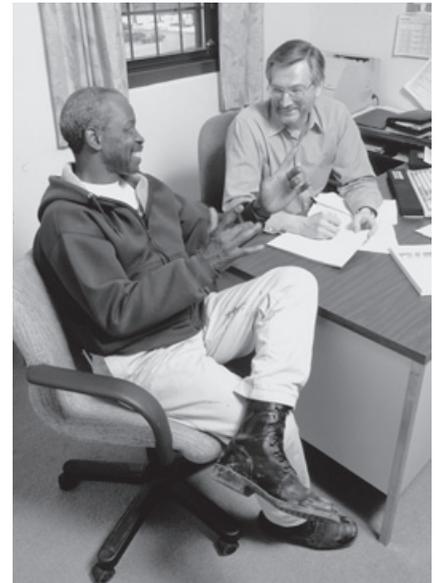
The goal of the Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program is to end homelessness among veterans through outreach efforts and community partnerships. Veterans are engaged in treatment and rehabilitation programs to enable them to achieve a better quality of life.

Social Work

Social workers are assigned to all inpatient wards and outpatient teams. They are available to help you with personal or family problems. Our social workers have valuable information regarding community agencies and resources that may be of help to you and your family. The social worker also helps those in need with special post-hospital care plans, arranging for community services, and preparation for discharge.

Notary Public

Notary Public is available at each medical center. If you need this service, ask a member of your health care team for assistance.



Veterans Service Center (VSC)

The VSC provides one-stop services for veterans who need to update their insurance or home address, complete a financial assessment, or ask billing questions, etc. Veteran's benefits counseling is also available. The Patient Advocate can be reached through the VSC. VSC staff can provide information about eligibility, outpatient care, and appointments. They can be reached by calling toll free at 1-888-823-9656.

Pharmacy

Inpatient

The VA has its own pharmacy and pharmacists. They work with the hospital staff as part of your health care team. Only prescriptions written by VA doctors can be filled at the VA pharmacy. You will be given drug information about any new medication. Pharmacists also provide you with information about dosage and possible side effects. They are available to review your medications with you before discharge. Any medication you are going to take home will be filled in the pharmacy. Your nurse will tell you where to pick-up your medications before you leave.

Outpatient

Only prescriptions written by VA doctors can be filled at the VA pharmacy. The VA outpatient pharmacy service is available to veteran patients who are not using the TRICARE health plan. TRICARE patients must use a TRICARE approved pharmacy.

Refill Policy

Your doctor will decide how many times you can refill a prescription. You can request refills by mail or in person. We do not automatically refill prescriptions. If you wish to receive your prescription through the mail, please mail the refill slip as soon as you go home. Your prescription request will be kept in the computer until it is time for your refills to be filled.



Voluntary Service

Our voluntary service program provides opportunities for individuals and community groups to voluntarily give of their time and resources to benefit hospitalized veterans.

Volunteers often assist with transporting you for tests, shopping, letter writing, and other personal activities. In special circumstances, voluntary service provides toiletries and comfort items to patients in need.

Pastoral Care and Services

VA chaplains provide religious care to all patients and their families. VA care utilizes a holistic approach that offers pastoral support for the seriously ill, the terminally ill, as well as bereavement counseling. Chaplains can be contacted through your health care team.

Disabled American Veterans Volunteer Transportation Network (DAV VTN)

The DAV VTN is available to transport veterans to medical appointments at VA facilities. Try to notify the DAV VTN of your needs at least two weeks before your appointment, as space may be limited.



Canteen/Cafeteria/Food Court

The canteen/cafeteria/food court offers a varied daily menu at reasonable prices. It is closed on weekends and holidays. For medical, therapeutic reasons, patients on restricted diets should not eat in the canteen/cafeteria/food court.

Canteen/Retail Stores

These stores offer retail sales, newspapers, photo developing, laundry and dry cleaning services*, and a wide range of other services for your convenience. The canteen/retail store hours vary by location. Ask a member of your health care team for specific hours at your facility.

**Laundry and dry cleaning is not available at the Stratton VA Medical Center.*

Barbershop/Barber Services

These services are available to hospitalized veterans on a fee-for-service basis (some sites take cash or canteen book coupons for payment). Hours and location of the barbershop can be obtained at the canteen. Please see a member of your health care team or a clerk to schedule these services.

- *Through the generous support of Voluntary Service, this service is offered to inpatients at the Syracuse VA Medical Center at no charge.*

Vending Machines

Vending machines are located throughout the facility for your use and your family's use. Patients on restricted diets should not eat items from vending machines.



Library

Library services are available for inpatients, outpatients, and their families. General reading material (books and magazines) are available. Volunteers may bring a book cart to the wards but the librarian will visit a patient any time when called.

Television Health Information/On Demand

A variety of health information resources can be found on the televisions throughout our medical centers. Ask a member of your health care team for assistance. Special programming, videos, and a customer service survey are just a few of the patient health educational opportunities available.

- *This service is not available in Canandaigua at this time.*

The Health Touch Kiosk

This is an interactive education center. It provides current information about medications, disease topics, health and lifestyle issues, foot, hair, skin care, nail care, nutrition, weight control, and healthy recipes. The system features a unique, interactive, touch system that is easy to use. Information is available in English and Spanish. It is located in different areas of each facility. Ask a member of your health care team for assistance if you are interested in using this service.

Release of Medical and Administrative Information

If you need copies of your labs, x-rays, hospital records, disability and/or insurance forms, you need to go to the Release of Information (ROI) office.

Absentee Voting

You can still vote while you are hospitalized. Contact your social worker for assistance. Veteran patients who are expecting an extended admission and are registered voters can obtain an absentee ballot. The procedure should be started a few weeks before Election Day.

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)

TDD is available. It is located in different areas at each facility. Ask a member of your health care team for assistance if you need to use this service.

Interpreter Services

These services are available for deaf, speech impaired, and non-English speaking veterans/family members. Please contact your health care team to arrange for interpreter assistance.



easy access



team care



urgent care



primary care

Outpatient Care

Access to VA Care

We have taken steps to provide easier access to outpatient care by cutting down on waiting times for appointments. We have involved more disciplines in team care delivery and do more work over the phone or in groups. We try to see patients the same day if an urgent need arises.

Outpatient Primary Care

Upon discharge, your health care team will arrange for outpatient follow-up based on your specific needs. All patients are encouraged to enroll in a primary care program to benefit from a wide array of outpatient health services. Your care is coordinated in primary care, including referrals to specialists.

Ambulatory Surgery

Surgery or other diagnostic tests will be completed on an outpatient basis whenever possible. Your health care team determines the decision for outpatient service. The ambulatory surgery staff will manage your surgical care, pre-operative teaching, and post-operative follow-up.

Ambulatory Surgery is provided at Stratton VA Medical Center, Syracuse VA Medical Center and VA Western New York Healthcare System at Buffalo.

Dental

Dental care is only provided to eligible veterans. Most outpatients must be 100% service connected or recently discharged from the military to qualify. Talk to the Veterans Service Center for more information about dental eligibility.



Emergency Care Services

Emergency Care is available at the Stratton VA Medical Center, Syracuse VA Medical Center, and VA Western New York Healthcare System at Buffalo. Emergency care for patients not near those medical centers should be sought at the nearest hospital when life-threatening situations occur.

- **Bath** - Care is available 24 hours/day, seven days/week for urgent or emergency needs. Patients are seen according to severity of his/her illness in the Life Support Area.
- **Canandaigua** - Medical personnel are available in the triage area from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to treat patients with medically urgent or emergent needs.

If you utilize our Telcare service and are directed to go to the nearest facility for treatment, this advice does not imply automatic approval for payment of the treatment received by the community hospital.

Do not delay treatment because of fear of financial implications. Veterans with no other means of payment are encouraged to submit bills for emergency services for payment under the Millennium Health Care Act if payment is denied after routine review.



VA Telcare

This is a toll-free program that can be used whenever you need help. Dial 1-888-838-7890. A VA representative is available 24 hours a day to assist you with medical and health care questions. If you need emergency care, you will be instructed on where to receive immediate attention. If you need to be seen for non-emergent care, you will be given a prompt appointment.

Clinic Appointments

Clinic appointments are pre-scheduled outpatient visits. You should make every effort to keep your scheduled appointment. However, if you must reschedule your appointment, please call your primary care team.

Changing Doctors

If your doctor is no longer a member of the VA, we will send you a letter offering you another physician who can continue your care and treatment. If desired, you may, at any time, request to be assigned to another doctor. These changes should be coordinated with your health care team.



Significant Care Issues

Advance Directives

You will be asked at different times about your health care decisions. You have the right to accept or refuse medical care. To be sure we do what you wish, it is important we know in advance, what you want done. An advance directive or living will can protect this right if you ever become mentally or physically unable to choose or state your wishes due to an injury or illness. If you would like information on advance directives (living wills, health care proxy, etc.) please ask your health care team for assistance.

If you have a living will, or durable power of attorney, tell our staff. We will need a copy for your file. If you have completed an advance directive and you wish to change your mind, please tell our staff right away.

You do not have to complete an advance directive to receive treatment.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)

DNR means cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and/or other heroic health or life saving measures will not be started when cardiac or respiratory arrest occurs. After talking with your doctor, you can make the DNR decision. If you are too ill to make that decision, your family, or power of attorney, can make that decision with your doctor. The DNR order is not permanent. It can be stopped if you change your mind or your family changes their mind. Inform your health care team. The health care team's concern for your medical needs and comfort will stay the same. You will be given whatever is needed to relieve pain and make you comfortable. You will also have the option of limiting aggressive treatment short of CPR.

Ethics Committee

Sometimes patients or their caregivers have trouble making choices about care (i.e. performing heroic measures on a patient at end-of-life, if a terminally ill person should have a feeding tube, etc.).

The Ethics Advisory Committee is a group of VA staff that meets to discuss these problems and make suggestions when the need arises. If you or your family have questions about the ethics of any treatment or other issues, talk to your health care team. If you still have concerns, you may ask for a review of issues with the Ethics Advisory Committee. To request this review, ask your health care team for a referral to the Ethics Advisory Committee.

Advanced Illness/Fair Care

Facing an illness that is not getting better and cannot be cured can be very hard. You may have many questions about your illness and the choices you must make. A member of the Fair Care Team can meet with you and your family to talk about your concerns. This program can assist you and your family by talking about your concerns. It can help you obtain information, offer support and guidance, help you with your choices, coordinate your care, work with your health care team, and help you and your loved ones deal with issues of advanced illness. This team can help you sort out the details to give you choices, dignity, and peace of mind.

You may initiate this consultation or ask a member of the health care team to contact them for you.

Organ Donation

The VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York provides veterans the opportunity to make organ, eye, tissue, body, and other anatomical gifts. Talk to your family members about organ and tissue donation so they know your wishes. Donations will always be handled with discretion and sensitivity to you and your family's circumstances, beliefs, and desires. Under no circumstances will a patient or family member be pressured into making anatomical gifts. Contact a member of your health care team if you wish to donate.



Discharge from the Medical Center

Discharge Procedures

Early in your stay, your health care team should talk to you about your after hospitalization care/needs, your anticipated discharge date, and any needed follow-up with your primary care doctor. Your social worker will assist you if you need counseling or assistance with aftercare facilities such as a nursing home, a residential care facility, or a boarding facility.

If medication is prescribed, your medication and other supplies will be discussed with you prior to discharge. You may ask questions and receive an individual consultation from a pharmacist at the outpatient pharmacy area. Other supplies may be brought to you on the ward or you may need to make a special stop. Check with your nurse when you get your discharge instructions before you leave the hospital.

Remember to pick up your VA identification card from the nursing station. We will work with you to have all of your discharge arrangements made at least one day prior to your discharge. If you require help in arranging transportation home or other special needs, your social worker can assist you.

48-Hour Post Discharge Survey

You may be contacted for feedback about your stay once you are discharged. Your comments will help us continue to improve our services. It is important that we have your correct phone number at time of discharge.

Diets

If you are on a special diet, a dietitian will counsel you and your family on how to follow your diet at home. Let your health care team know if you wish to speak with a dietitian before discharge.



Lost and Found

If you lose any personal items during your stay, tell your health care team. If needed, contact the VA police. Please take any items you find while at the medical center to your health care team or the VA police.

Collecting Your Personal Belongings

Make sure you have collected everything from your bedside area and are completely ready to leave. If you have any money on deposit in patient's funds/Agent Cashier, plan to withdraw your balance.

If you have funds and are not physically able to get to the Agent Cashier, tell a member of your health care team. Remember if you are being discharged on a weekend, you will need to do this ahead of time.

Home Care Services

Home care services are available for eligible veterans who need assistance after being discharged from the hospital. The social worker will coordinate these services with your health care team before your discharge. They will make the arrangements with Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) staff or a community based agency for you. Any VA doctor can make HBPC referrals.

Nursing Homes

Social workers can help you and your family resolve problems affecting your care, discharge planning, and VA and/or community resources. If you need counseling or assistance with locating a care facility (nursing home, residential or boarding facility) see the social worker assigned to your ward or clinic. They are here to help you with any concern.



Patient Rights and Responsibilities

Veterans Health Administration (VHA) employees will respect and support your rights as a patient. We are pleased you have selected us to provide your health care. We plan to make your visit or stay as pleasant for you as possible. Your basic rights and responsibilities are outlined in the following pages. Please talk with VA treatment team members or a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights.

Respect and Nondiscrimination

- You will be treated with dignity, compassion and respect as an individual. Your privacy will be protected. You will receive care in a safe environment. We will 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 facility. 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 facility's rules. Avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please immediately report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

Information Disclosure and Confidentiality

- You will 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.
- 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.
- You will be informed of all outcomes of care, including any injuries caused by your medical care. You will be informed about how to request compensation for injuries.



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. Refusing treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you have the responsibility to understand the possible results to your health. If you believe you cannot follow the treatment plan you have a responsibility to notify the treatment team.
- As an inpatient or long-term care resident, you will be provided any transportation necessary for your treatment plan.
- You will be given, in writing, the name and professional title of the provider in charge of your care. As a partner in the health care process, you have the right to be involved in choosing your provider. You will be educated about your role and responsibilities as a patient. This includes your participation in decision-making and care at the end of life.
- 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 don't understand something about your care. This will help in providing you the best care possible.
- 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.
- You have the right to choose whether or not 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 Committee and/or other staff knowledgeable about health care ethics.
- If you or the Medical Center believes that you have been neglected, abused or exploited, you will receive help.



Complaints

- 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.



Reaching Us Is Easy

VA Medical Centers:

Albany

113 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12208
(518) 626-5000

Batavia

222 Richmond Avenue
Batavia, NY 14020
(585) 343-7500

Bath

76 Veterans Avenue
Bath, NY 14810
(607) 664-4000

Buffalo

3495 Bailey Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14215
(716) 834-9200

Canandaigua

400 Fort Hill Avenue
Canandaigua, NY 14424
(585) 394-2000

Syracuse

800 Irving Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 425-4400

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics:

Auburn

Auburn Memorial Hospital
17 Lansing St.
Auburn, NY 13021
(315) 255-7002

Bainbridge

109 North Main Street
Bainbridge, NY 13733
(607) 967-8590

Binghamton

425 Robinson Street
Binghamton, NY 13001
(607) 772-9100

Catskill

Greene Medical Bldg.
159 Jefferson Heights
Catskill, NY 12414
(518) 943-7515

Clifton Park

1673 Route 9
Clifton Park, NY 12065
(518) 383-8506

Cortland

1104 Commons Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045
(607) 662-1517

Dunkirk

The Resource Center
325 Central Avenue
Dunkirk, NY 14048
(716) 366-2122

Elizabethtown

P.O. Box 277, Park St.
Elizabethtown, NY 12932
(518) 873-3295

Elmira

Health Services Bldg.
200 Madison Ave.
Suite 2E
Elmira, NY 14901
(877) 845-3247

Fonda

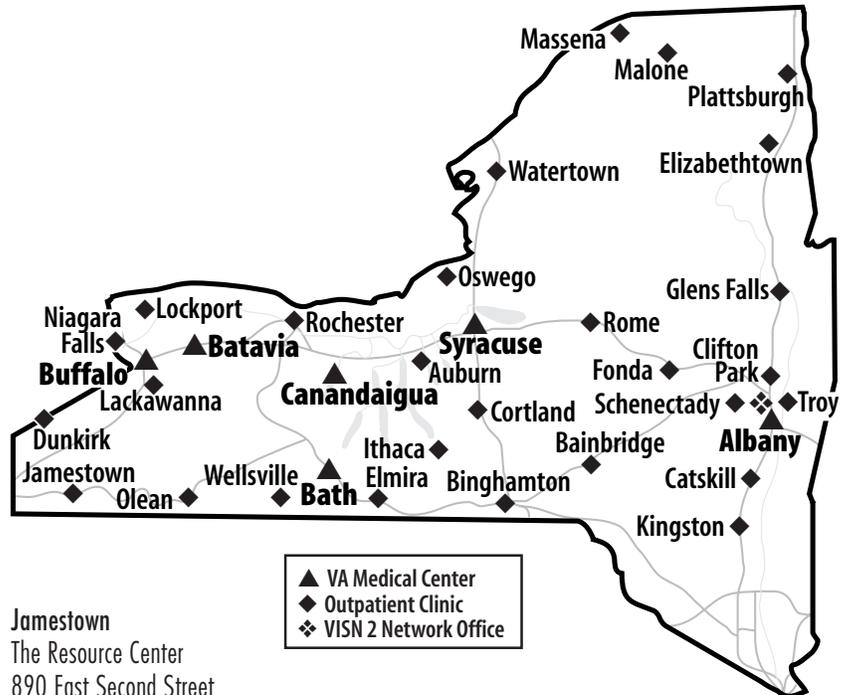
Camp Mohawk Plaza
Rt. 30A
Fonda, NY 12068
(518) 853-1247

Glens Falls

84 Broad Street
Glens Falls, NY 12801
(518) 798-6066

Ithaca

10 Arrowwood Drive
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 274-4680



Jamestown

The Resource Center
890 East Second Street
Jamestown, NY 14701
(716) 661-1447

Kingston

63 Hurley Avenue
Kingston, NY 12401
(845) 331-8322

Lackawanna

Our Lady of Victory
Family Care Center
227 Ridge Road
Lackawanna, NY 14218
(716) 822-5944

Lockport

Ambulatory Care Center
5875 S. Transit Road
Lockport, NY 14094
(716) 433-2025

Malone

183 Park Street, Suite 3
Malone, NY 12953
(518) 481-2545

Massena

1 Hospital Drive
Massena, NY 13662
(315) 769-4253

Niagara Falls

620 10th Street, Suite 709
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
(716) 285-6663

Olean

Olean General Hospital
623 Main St.
Olean, NY 14760
(716) 375-7555

Oswego

Seneca Hills Health
Services Center
County Route 45A
Oswego, NY 13126
(315) 343-0925

Plattsburgh

43 Durkee Street
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
(518) 561-8310

Rochester

465 Westfall Road
Rochester, NY 14620
(585) 463-2600

Rome

125 Brookley Road,
Bldg. 510
Rome, NY 13441
(315) 334-7100

Schenectady

1475 Balltown Road
Niskayuna, NY 12309
(518) 346-3334

Troy

500 Federal Street
Troy, NY 12180
(518) 274-7707

Watertown

218 Stone Street
Watertown, NY 13601
(315) 788-5050

Wellsville

Jones Memorial Hospital
Health Care Center
15 Loder Street
Wellsville, NY 14895
(585) 596-4111

