

South Texas Veterans Health Care System



Patient Information Handbook

STVHCS Executive Leadership Team



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Mission

The mission of South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS) is to honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

Vision

STVHCS will be a Veteran-centered organization that provides excellence in health care, research, education; to be an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner, and a resource for National emergencies.

Core Values and Characteristics

VA's **Core Values** define what is most important to us and what differentiates us from other organizations. They define our culture and commitment to our Veterans. Our Core Values are: **I**ntegrity, **C**ommitment, **A**dvocacy, **R**espect and **E**xcellence (ICARE).

Our **Characteristics** define "who we are". They guide the execution of our mission, shape our strategy, and influence resource allocations and other key decisions made within the VA. We are: Trustworthy, Accessible, Agile, Innovative, Integrated, and a Quality-of-Care orientated institution.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
South Texas Veterans Health Care System

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South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS)

Audie L. Murphy Memorial VA Hospital



7400 Merton Minter Blvd. Emergency Open 24 hours
San Antonio, TX 78229
Phone: **(210) 617-5300** Toll free: **(877) 469-5300**

Kerrville VA Hospital



3600 Memorial Blvd. Kerrville, TX 78028
Phone: **(830) 896-2020** Toll Free: **(866) 487-1653**

OUTPATIENT CLINICS

www.southtexas.va.gov/locations

**For all scheduling needs, please call the COPAC number
(210) 949-9702**

Frank M. Tejada Outpatient Clinic (FTOPC) Building Temporarily Closed
5788 Eckhert Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78240

South Bexar Outpatient Clinic (SBOPC)
4610 East Southcross Blvd. Suite 100
San Antonio, TX 78222

North Central Federal Health Clinic (NCFC)
17440 Henderson Pass
San Antonio, TX 79232

Shavano Park Outpatient Clinic (SPOPC)
4350 Lockhill-Selma Road, Suite 200
San Antonio, Texas 78249

Balcones Heights Outpatient Clinics (BHOPC)
4522 Fredericksburg Road
Gold-Suite A-10; Silver-Suite A-88
San Antonio, Texas 78201

Victoria Outpatient Clinic (VOPC)
1908 N Laurent Street, Suite 150
Victoria, TX, 77901

North Bexar Outpatient Clinic (NBOPC)
16019 Nacogdoches Road, Suite 101
San Antonio, Texas 78247

Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC)

NE 410 San Antonio CBOC

2391 NE Loop 410 Ste 101
San Antonio, Tx 78217
Phone: (210) 590-0247
Fax: (210) 590-3512

NW 410 San Antonio CBOC

4318 Woodcock Ste 120
San Antonio, TX 78228
Phone: (210) 736-4051
Fax: (210) 736-4449

New Braunfels CBOC

705 Landa Street, Suite C
New Braunfels, TX 78130
Phone: (830) 643-0717
Fax: (830) 629-2438

Pecan Valley CBOC

4243 E. Southcross, Ste 204
San Antonio, TX 78222
Phone: (210) 337-4316
Fax: (210) 337-4380

SW Military CBOC

1714 SW Military Dr., Suite 101
San Antonio, TX 78221
Phone: (210) 923-0777
Fax: (210) 923-0888

Sequin CBOC

526 E. Court Street
Sequin, TX 78155
Phone: (830) 372-1697
Fax: (830) 372-1257

Frequently called Numbers or Extensions

San Antonio

Kerrville

Main Hospital Number	(210) 617-5300 (877) 469-5300	(830) 896-2020 (866) 487-1653
Telecare (Health Information 24 hours/day)	(210) 949-3994 Monday – Friday (Days)	Toll Free (888) 686-6350 Weekends, after hours & holidays
72 hour notification hotline (Non – VA emergent care)	844-724-7842	
Automated Medication Refill Program	(800) 209-7377	
Admissions	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 14895	(830) 792-2512
Agent Cashier	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15995	(830) 792-2550
Appointments/Scheduling	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15173	(830) 792-4444
Barber Shop	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 16704	(830) 896-2020 Ext. 12149
Beneficiary Travel	(210) 617-5300 Ext 10281	(830) 792-2418
Billing/Insurance Information	(210) 616-8502	(830) 792-2435
Care Coordination	(210) 616-8363	
Chaplain	Ext 15441 or (210) 363-5045	(830) 792-2542
Community Care	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 13850	
Central Scheduling	210-949-9702	
Decedent Affairs	(210) 949-3981 Option 3	
Dental	(210) 949-8900	(830) 792-2461
Disabled American Veterans	Ext 15189 or (210) 699-5064	(830) 792-2509
Eligibility	(210) 949-3981	(830) 792-2514
Fisher House “home away from home” for families and patients	(210) 617 – 5542	

Home Based Primary Care	(210) 616-8240	(830) 792-2645
GYN Clinic	(210) 617-5300 ext. 17092	<i>"only at Audie Murphy"</i>
Lab (Blood Draws)	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 16093	(830) 896-2020 Ext. 12330
Medical Administration	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15137	(830) 896-2020 Ext 12113
Medication refills: VA Automated	1(800) 209-7377 (Opt 1 for refills; Opt 2 for questions)	
Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator	(210) 699-2147	
Palliative Care	(210) 314-9238	(830) 792-2484
Paralyzed Veterans of America	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15275	
Patient Advocate	(210) 949-3822 (210) 617-5300 Ext 15214	(830) 792-2494
Pharmacy: Telemed	1(800) 209-7377 (Opt 1 for refills; Opt 2 for questions)	
Police	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15168	(830) 896-2020 Ext. 12162 or 12210
Recreation Therapy	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 15125	<i>"only at Audie Murphy"</i>
Release of Information	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15610	(830) 792-2503
Respiratory Therapy	(210) 617-5300 Ext 14877	(830) 896-2020 Ext 12249
RESPITE Care	(210) 616-8363	
Shuttle	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15251	(830) 896-2020 Ext 12418
Social Work	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15113	(830) 896 – 2020
Spinal Cord Injury Center	(210) 617-5300 16838	<i>"only at Audie Murphy"</i>
Suicide Prevention Coordinator	(210) 617-5300 ext. 15824	
Telehealth Service	(210) 617-5300 ext. 68256	
Texas Veterans Commission	Ext 15175 or (210) 699-5076	(830) 792-2553
Transition and Care Management (OEF/OIF/OND)	(210) 617-5300 ext. 19240	

Travel Office	(210) 617-5300 ext. 10281, 10282, 10283	
Traveling Veteran Coordinator	(210) 392-9207	
Veterans Crisis Line	1 (800) 273-8255 Press 1	
Veteran Directed Home and Community Based Services	(210) 616-8202	
Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST)	(210) 949-8926	<i>"only at Audie Murphy"</i>
Voluntary Service	(210) 617-5300 Ext 15107	(830) 896-2020
Whole Health Program	(210) 617-5300 Ext. 15088	
Women Veterans Program	(210) 949-9449	

General Information



MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION SERVICE

The Medical Administration staff is available to assist you with general questions concerning the following:

- Eligibility and Enrollment Welcome Center, 1st floor near elevators)
 - Eligibility Updates
 - Transfer of enrollment from another VA facility
 - Traveling Veterans
 - Veteran ID cards
 - Change of Address
 - Name changes
 - Decedent Affairs
 - Lodging/Admissions/Patient Funds
 - Update Next of Kin List
 - Agent Orange Registry
 - Gulf War Registry
 - Burn Pits Registry
 - POW Registry
 - Nuclear Testing Examination
 - Eligibility Reform Act
- Patient Travel
 - Travel Reimbursement
- Release of Information (Welcome Center, 1st floor)
 - To obtain copies of your medical records

Eligibility and Enrollment Questions: contact a Health Benefits Advisor:

Audie L. Murphy – first floor, Welcome Center, (210) 949-3981 option 2

Kerrville - first floor, Room 112A, (830) 792-2444

Enrollment and Eligibility

You must be enrolled in the VA Health Care System to receive VA health care. You can apply:

1. In person at Audie Murphy VA Medical Center 7400 Merton Minter Blvd
Welcome Center (Enrollment and Eligibility), near main elevators on first floor.
 - a. You will complete a 10-10EZ Application for Health Care Benefits.
 - b. You will need:
 - i. a copy of your DD214 (service discharge document). This may be obtained at www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/.
 - ii. your household income from previous year.
 - iii. the Social Security numbers for yourself and qualified dependents.
 - iv. the account numbers for any current health insurance you already have (like Medicare, private insurance, or insurance from your employer).
2. By Phone: Call Health and Enrollment Center (HEC) at (404) 828-5257
Option 1. Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. ET. You will not be able to complete enrollment however until the documents as mentioned above have been presented.
3. By mail: The application form can be downloaded from www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/. Then call Enrollment and Eligibility at (210) 949-3981
Option 2 to complete enrollment and schedule your 1st Primary Care Provider (PCP) appointment.

As part of the enrollment process, you will be given the opportunity to select where you want to be seen for your primary care. A consult will be submitted to the facility closest to you or to one of your choice, if available. Choices may include: the Medical Center, a VA Outpatient Clinic, or a VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC).

FYI:

- You will be scheduled with a PCP and labs. Specialty care must be referred by a VA physician.

- Other-than-Honorable (OTH) Discharge Vets will be offered adjudication services for the OTH, and mental health services for a total of 2 episodes of care in 90 day increments. mental health services for a total of 90 days.
- Audiology and Optometry appointments can be directly scheduled by calling (Central Scheduling) (210) 949-9702.
- Veteran ID cards are made in the Enrollment and Eligibility Office
- You **must** complete 1010EZR to report changes in income **yearly**. You may be asked to report your income based upon the “priority group” you belong to; see www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/epublications.asp.

Decedent Affairs

For assistance with survivor next-of-kin burial benefits and transportation to funeral home, contact Decedent Affairs Office:

- Audie L. Murphy: (210) 949-3981 Option 3
- Kerrville: (830) 792-2444

Patient Travel

Veterans may be eligible for travel cost reimbursement. To determine if you are eligible, you may file a claim through Beneficiary Travel at the following locations:

- Audie L. Murphy first floor, Welcome Center, (210)617-5300 ext. 10281,10282, 10283
- Kerrville first floor in room 231, (830) 896-2020 extension 12418.

Release of Information

The Federal Privacy Act and Freedom of Information guidelines protect information contained in VA medical records. If you need information released from your VA, (for instance, an x-ray report), you will need to complete the appropriate form.

- Audie L. Murphy Campus (ALMC) - Release of Information is on the first floor, Room J103; Phone: (210) 617-5300 ext. 15610.
- Kerrville Campus - Release of Information is in the main building, Rm. 415; Phone: (830) 896-2020 ext. 12078

TRAVELING VETERAN

If you are traveling outside your VA, make sure you:

- Notify your Primary Aligned Care Team (PACT) of travel destinations and dates, 4 – 6 weeks before you travel.
- Notify PACT of temporary address and phone number where you can be reached.
- Sign up for MyHealthVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.
- Refill your prescriptions 10 – 14 days in advance and bring enough medications for your trip.
- Look up the name of the VA you would like to use while you are away.
- Take a copy of your health summary (or most recent progress note from clinic) with you, which should contain your medication list.
- If you are permanently transferring, as soon as you arrive, register at the local VA.

For more information contact your STVHCS Traveling Veterans Care Coordinator at (210) 392-9207.



Will I Have to Pay for Services or Medicines from the VA? *Well, Maybe.*
(BILLING)

The VA Medical Care Cost Fund (MCCF) Program may as appropriate recover funds due VA for the provision of health care services to Veterans, dependents and others using the VA system. Legislation has authorized the Revenue Office to:

- Submit claims to and recover payments from Veterans' third-party health insurance carriers for treatment of non-service-connected conditions.
- Recover co-payments from certain Veterans for treatment of or medication for non-service-connected conditions. Amounts of co-payments are generally indexed to your income (which you may have already presented to us at registration).

If you have any questions about VA billing activity or VA copayments, contact the Revenue Office at (210) 616-8502. Office Hours are: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday.

COMMUNITY CARE

- VA provides care to Veterans through community providers when VA cannot provide the care needed. For more information, please visit <https://www.va.gov/communitycare/>
- During a medical emergency, Veterans should immediately seek care at the nearest emergency room. It is important to notify the VA within 72 hours of the ER visit or admission to the community hospital. This allows VA to assist in coordinating necessary care or transfer and ensures the administrative and clinical requirements for VA to pay for the care, are met. To notify the VA, please call Patient Administration Service at (210) 949-3850 Monday thru Friday between 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. After hours, please call (210) 617-5300 ext. 15162 or 15940.
- VA has a 72 - hour notification hotline: 844-724-7842

- As a reminder, VA provides same day access for Primary Care and Mental Health services. However, if you are unable to be seen at the VA and need urgent care, you may go to an in-network urgent care clinic. Please know that you may have to pay a VA copayment after the visit, which is billed by VA separately. Find a VA in-network urgent care clinic at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/> .
- Prescriptions written by your in-network urgent care provider can be filled at an in-network retail pharmacy. You can find an in-network pharmacy at <https://vaurgentcarelocator.triwest.com/Locator/Rx> .
- For prescriptions of a 14-day supply or greater, or for routine, non-urgent medications, the prescription must be submitted to VA to be filled. Prescriptions can be sent thru e-prescribe to San Antonio VAMC Pharmacy or faxed to (210) 949-3595.
- For questions regarding VA's *Community Care Programs*, please call Patient Administration Service at (210) 949-3850 from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

LODGING

Lodging, paid by the VA, is available to Veterans with certain circumstances (see below). Lodgers may present to Enrollment and Eligibility Office (J103 on 1st floor by elevators) during regular business hours or to the AOD station, located in the Emergency Department, after business hours to request lodging. Criteria for lodging to be paid would include:

- Any Veteran who
 - Has scheduled clinical appointments for two consecutive calendar days, *and*
 - Has traveled 50 miles or further to receive care within STVHCS catchment area. (See Map pg. 100)
 - Has multiple Appointments

- Appointment requires you leave the house before 8:00 a.m. to arrive on time.
- Additional consideration for lodging may be given to the following patients:
 - Cancer treatment (to include radiation oncology).
 - Those traveling for Compensation and Pension (C&P) Exam.
 - Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT).
 - Cardiac Cath.
 - Spinal Cord Injury treatment (when possible, will be lodged on the unit, unless Veteran presents with caregiver/family member, then Veteran may be lodged at contracted hotel).
 - Surgery (excludes minor, non-invasive procedures). Includes 1 preop visit, 1 post op visit and surgical appointment. Must be preapproved.

The admissions clerk or AOD will determine if the any of the above criteria are met for lodging. If so, lodging is provided at VA expense. Questions may be directed to (210) 949-3981 Option 3.

STVHCS Fisher House

The VA Fisher House is a “home away from home” for families and patients receiving medical care within STVHCS. Veterans or active duty military personnel receiving treatment at STVHCS may stay at the Fisher House, if accompanied by a family member or caregiver. The family of a Veteran who is admitted to STVHCS is also eligible to stay at the Fisher House.

The Fisher House provides lodging free of charge, for these families during their stay, playing a critical role in supporting Veterans. The South Texas VA Fisher House features a common, fully stocked kitchen (food items/meals are not provided and must be obtained by the patient or family), a spacious dining room, an inviting living room, and laundry facilities.

Access to the Fisher House is through the STVHCS Social Work department. If you are an inpatient, please ask your nurse to contact the ward social worker.

For more information, please call the Fisher House at (210) 617- 5542.

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

Texas Veterans Commission Counselors are available remotely for Veterans and their families. This office can assist with filing of disability compensation claims and pension claims. The office is located on first floor, Rm. 107, but is temporarily closed until further notice. For claim assistance schedule an appointment with a Claims Benefit Advisor by email at Southwestclaims@tvc.texas.gov or call at 1-800-252-8387. If you are checking on the status of a claim, please call 1(713) 383-2756.

Kerrville:

This office can assist you on filing of disability compensation claims. The office is located in the main building on the third floor, Rm. 332. This office accepts walk ins only Monday – Thursday between 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and Friday 7:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Phone number: (830) 792- 2553.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV)

Nonprofit charity that supports Veterans by providing rides to medical appointments and assisting with benefit claims. Services are offered at no cost. You can reach the DAV at 210-699-5064.

LOST ITEMS

If you are admitted to the hospital, contact your nurse if you have lost something. He or she will provide you with instructions.

If you are an outpatient, and or visitor and have lost something, check with the Patient Transport desk in the front lobby of ALM (0730 – 1630). If your item has been found or turned in, you can retrieve the item here. If item has not been found or turned in, you can report the item as lost and if found or turned in, you will be contacted and the item will be returned to you.

Kerrville: Check with the operator.

VALUABLES

You are advised to keep all valuables at home. The STVHCS is not responsible for money or other valuables you might bring and store in your room. We ask you to keep no more than \$5 cash on hand. Any additional money should be deposited with the Agent Cashier, Monday - Friday (except holidays) 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. If more than \$400 are deposited to Agent Cashier, the Agent Cashier may not be able to refund (*in cash*) the portion of funds that exceed \$400 upon departure. (There may just not be that much cash in the till). It may be necessary to issue a check for the remaining funds. In order to access personal funds, you must first obtain a receipt from the Admissions office (J103) to present to Agent Cashier. If you are unable to go to the Agent Cashier in Rm. X112, ask a staff member to contact them:

Audie L. Murphy (210) 617-5300 ext.15995 **Kerrville** (830) 896-2020 ext. 12550

Financial Transactions (if you have cash deposited when admitted and are wanting to make a withdrawal) are made Monday - Friday by obtaining a withdrawal slip from the Travel Clerk located at **ALM room J103 (Eligibility and Enrollment) and Kerrville room 134 (across from Pharmacy).**

PHOTOGRAPHY

All photography, video and audio recording, must be preapproved by public affairs. Photographing any hospital personnel without their written consent is legally an invasion of privacy. Please contact a member of your clinic team for more information.

Public Affairs: (210) 617-5274 Room: R124

POLICE NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES



Everyone is encouraged to notify the VA Police as soon as possible when they are aware of suspected or actual criminal activity, suspicious activity, or emergency condition (i.e. theft, assault, disturbance, threat, etc.). At Audie L. Murphy, the police station is located in the main lobby (210) 617-5300 ext. 15911. At Kerrville the police station is adjacent to the main lobby (830) 896-2020 ext. 12911.

PROHIBITED ARTICLES



Patients are prohibited from possessing alcoholic beverages, narcotics, firearms, cameras, ammunition, knives or other weapons, lighter fluid, non-safety matches, straight-edge razors, or medicine not prescribed by a health care provider. While it is a good idea to bring in your medicines from home so your doctors can see exactly what you take, please arrange for those medications to be sent back home (you cannot keep them in the hospital).

Patients possessing any type of weapon are required to turn them over to the STVHCS Police Service located in the main lobby. (A receipt will be issued for the

weapon. The weapon will be returned to the patient upon discharge when receipt is turned in).

Electrical appliances are not permitted except under unusual circumstances and must be inspected prior to use.

PARKING AT STVHCS

San Antonio:

- Valet parking is available at no charge from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday – Friday. Drive your car to the main entrance of ALM and an employee will assist you. Tipping is not allowed.
- Also, a courtesy passenger cart is available in the ALM parking lot if you choose to park your own car. Hours of operation are usually 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday except federal holidays. The carts pick up anyone who wants a ride and delivers them to the main entrance and to the CLC entrance.
- There is no parking space available at ALM for your automobile while you are admitted to the hospital. Please make arrangements for safekeeping and storage of your automobile off hospital grounds.
- If you are admitted emergently (not scheduled), the VA police will allow one night of parking. If you need more than one night, contact the police at ALM at ext. 15168.

Kerrville: Both short term and long-term parking is available in Kerrville. Check with the VA police by the main elevator on the first floor or call extension 12162 or 12210 for more information.

VA SHUTTLE SERVICE

A no charge VA shuttle runs between Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital and the Kerrville VA Hospital. One person who is providing care/assistance to the Veteran can ride with the Veteran on the shuttle at no cost.

Other shuttles run between FTOPC, Villa Serena, and the Outpatient Clinics and Audie L. Murphy Hospital. The shuttle is for patients who have an appointment. One person who is providing care/assistance to the Veteran may ride with the Veteran at no cost.

For more information contact your local VA facility: ALM (210) 617-5300 ext. 17236 or Kerrville at (830) 896-2020 ext. 12212.

SHUTTLE SCHEDULES

AUDIE L. MURPHY(ALMC) — FRANK M. TEJEDA (FTOPC)	
ALM	FTOPC
8:15 a.m.	8:45 a.m.
9:15 a.m.	9:45 a.m.
10:30 a.m.	11:00 a.m.
11:45 a.m.	12:00 p.m.
1:15 p.m.	1:30 p.m.
2:15 p.m.	3:00 p.m.
3:30 p.m.	4:15 p.m.

Shuttle will pick up and drop off at front of ALMC and rear of FTOPC.

**ALM – VILLA SERENA (VS) – DATA POINT
EYE/AUDIO/DENTAL (DP) - PTRP**

ALM	DP	VS	DP	PTRP
7:00 a.m.	7:05 a.m.	7:10 a.m.	7:20 a.m.	7:25 a.m.
8:00 a.m.	8:05 a.m.	8:10 a.m.	8:20 a.m.	8:25 a.m.
9:00 a.m.	9:05 a.m.	9:10 a.m.	9:20 a.m.	9:25 a.m.
10:00 a.m.	10:05 a.m.	10:10 a.m.	10:20 a.m.	10:25 a.m.
11:00 a.m.	11:05 a.m.	11:10 a.m.	11:20 a.m.	11:25 a.m.
12:00 p.m.	12:05 p.m.	12:10 p.m.	12:20 p.m.	12:25 p.m.
1:00 p.m.	1:05 p.m.	1:10 p.m.	1:20 p.m.	1:25 p.m.
2:00 p.m.	2:05 p.m.	2:10 p.m.	2:20 p.m.	2:25 p.m.
3:00 p.m.	3:05 p.m.	3:10 p.m.	3:20 p.m.	3:25 p.m.
4:15 p.m.	4:20 p.m.	4:25 p.m.	4:35 p.m.	x
4:45 p.m.	No Stop	4:55 p.m.	x	x

ALM Pick up at outbound lane
 Data Point Pick up/Dropoff at front of building
 Villa Serena Pick up/Drop off at circle driveway
 PTRP Pick up/Drop off at front circle driveway

**AUDIE L. MURPHY – KD SHUTTLE
Departure Times:**

ALMC

7:30 a.m.; 11:00 a.m.

1:00 p.m.; 3:00 p.m.

Pick up and drop off at outbound lane

KC

7:30 a.m.; 11:00 a.m.

1:00 p.m.; 3:00 p.m.

Pick up and drop off at KTCC-1

G.I. FORUM/HAVEN 4 HOPE SHUTTLE SCHEDULE

Monday – Friday Departure Times: (Closed Federal Holidays)

From: G.I. Forum/Haven 4 Hope

8:15 a.m.

From: ALM

2:00 p.m.

**PATRIOT STORE AND CAFETERIA
Veterans Canteen (PX or BX) and Food Court**



ALMC

Patriot Store (1st Floor Lobby Area) Phone: ext. 15017

Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Weekends: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Patriot Café (Cafeteria) (1st Floor Lobby Area) Phone: ext. 15017

Monday - Friday 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Starbucks Polytrauma (1st Floor Polytrauma Entrance) Phone: Ext. 15017

Monday – Friday: 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Vending machines at entrance to food court are open 24 hours a day.

Kerrville

Retail Store (Basement)

7:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Monday - Friday

(Closed on weekends and holidays)

Food Department (Basement)

Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 1:45 p.m. Monday through Friday (Closed weekends)

Vending machines are open 24 hours a day.

CHAPLAINS



Chaplains are available for routine spiritual visits Monday through Friday (210 617-5300, ext. 15441) and for urgent needs seven days a week, 24 hours a day. For urgent or immediate needs, please call the hospital operator to have the call-back chaplain contacted. Services of worship are provided in the hospital chapel, and times of services are listed below. Family and friends may attend these services with you. Spiritual literature may be obtained in the ALM Main Chapel, located on the second floor, or in the Kerrville Main Chapel on the ground floor.

Audie L. Murphy Main Chapel:

Veteran Faith Family Fellowship (Ecumenical Service): Sundays at 915 a.m.

Catholic Mass: Sundays to Fridays at 1130 a.m. (televised at 1230 p.m. for inpatients); Saturdays at 1600.

Bible Study: Fridays at 930 a.m. VVC – contact Chaplain Services at ext. 15441

Kerrville Campus

Catholic Mass: Sundays at 900 a.m.

Veteran Faith Family Fellowship (Ecumenical Service): Sundays at 1030 a.m.

Last Roll Call: Quarterly, Chaplain Service sponsors with Social Work Service a Last Roll Call Ceremony of Remembrance, designed to honor Veterans who have passed on

in the last 90 days. The ceremony is inclusive of all faith groups and open to all. Invitation letters are sent to next -of-kin in advance.

Warrior to Soul Mate: TEMPORARILY ON HOLD. Chaplain Service provides quarterly Warrior to Soul Mate communication workshops for registered Veterans and their guest who are in a committed, long-term relationship. These events are non-religious in nature and designed to help good relationships improve, as couples hone their communication skills. A variety of providers assist with the training.

INTERPRETER SERVICES

Translation services are available to you, your family and/or significant other. These services include translation to and from English to another language as well as American Sign Language. Please ask your health care team if the service of an interpreter is needed.

PATIENT ADVOCATE

Got a problem with something at the VA?

“The Patient Advocate Program is established to promote positive experiences for all our Veterans. A fundamental value in VHA is for all our Veterans and their families, who are served in or through VHA facilities and clinics, to have their priorities and needs addressed in a proactive, convenient, and timely manner.”

We want you to resolve your concerns quickly and efficiently and have provided the following steps as a guide.

For Outpatient Concerns

Request to speak with a Clerk/Nurse/MD

No resolution?

Request to speak to a
Supervisor/Clinic Nurse Manager

No resolution?

Request to speak to a Patient Advocate

For Inpatient Concerns

Request to speak with a Unit Clerk/Nurse/MD

No resolution?

Request to speak to a Charge Nurse/Nurse
Manager/Attending Physician

No resolution?

Request to speak to a Patient Advocate

Patient Advocates



David Caudill
Supervisor



Quinn Brown
ALMC



Darnetta Brown
ALMC



Mary Rodriguez
ALMC



Tony Webber
ALMC



Christopher Regalado
Frank M. Tejeda/ Balcones
Heights/South Bexar Outpatient Clinics

Patient Advocate Office

Audie L. Murphy Campus – 210-949-3822
Frank M. Tejeda/Balcones Heights/South Bexar
Outpatient Clinics – 210-699-2219
Kerrville VA Medical Center – 830-792-2494

You may also contact us via e-mail at www.iris.custhelp.va.gov

or



Terry Garza
Patient Advocate
Kerrville Campus



VETERANS WITH LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) AND RELATED IDENTITIES

COMMITMENT TO LGBTQ+ VETERAN CARE.

VA is committed to addressing the health needs of LGBTQ+ Veterans. LGBTQ+ Veterans receive the same high-quality primary and specialty health care available to all Veterans, including mental health services and addiction care, as well as services for sexually transmitted illness—including prevention (condoms / PrEP), testing, and treatment. Providers may ask about sexual orientation and gender identity as a part of routine care. Veterans are encouraged to be open with providers to ensure that health risks associated with specific sexual orientations and gender identities are addressed appropriately.

RECOGNITION OF LGBTQ+ VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Department of Veterans Affairs prohibits harassment and discriminated based upon sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. These protections apply both to LGBTQ+ Veterans and their family members. VA defines “family” as anyone a Veteran identifies as family. This may include persons not legally related to the Veteran. Veterans may designate in their “advance directives” any persons they choose as their surrogate healthcare decision makers for times when they might become unable to make decisions for themselves. This includes same sex partners regardless of marital status. Also, all Veterans’ family members have equal visitation rights.

TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE VETERANS.

It is VA policy that staff use the names and pronouns specified by Veterans regardless of legal or physical transition status. Veterans may designate their self-identified gender in their medical record without providing legal documentation of gender marker correction. (Legal documents are required for all name changes in the medical record.) Room assignments are based upon self-identified gender with sensitivity to all involved. (Almost all patient rooms are single, private rooms, however).

All may use any restrooms (including communal restrooms) corresponding to their gender identity. Transgender and gender diverse Veterans receive wellness care and health screenings based upon anatomy (e.g., pelvic, breast, and prostate exams; mammograms, and cervical Pap smears). Cross-sex hormone therapy (including required health monitoring) is available following mental health screening. (Mental health evaluations conducted elsewhere may meet the screening requirement.) Voice retraining therapy and gender-affirming prosthetic devices are available. VA provides “medically necessary” surgeries except that VA is prohibited by law from providing surgeries for “gender identity revision.” However, VA does provide medical testing and physical exams required prior to gender-confirming surgeries, as well as post-operative care.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Learn more about VA policies and services for LGBTQ+ Veterans on the VA Office of Patient Care Services webpage for **Veterans with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Related Identities** (<https://www.patientcare.va.gov/LGBT/>).

STAFF CONTACTS: The following staff members are available to assist LGBTQ+ Veterans.

- LGBT Veteran Care Coordinator Michele Mick, PhD, at (210) 617-5300 Ext. 16645
- Transgender Primary Care Service Navigator Andrea Shomo, LMSW, at (210) 617-5300 Ext. 65095
- Gender Diversity Mental Health Navigator Alison Bess, PhD, at (210) 617-5300 Ext. [19340](#)
- PrEP Coordinator Quintin Tafoya, PharmD, at (210) 617-5300 Ext. 13070/17200
- Patient Advocates at (210) 949-3822

RESEARCH

The Audie Murphy VA clinician researchers do participate in many research studies, both by themselves but also along with our medical school (The Long School of Medicine, UT– Health, San Antonio), our nursing school, and with other VA medical centers or medical schools. The purpose is the advancement of medical science, and to find better ways to diagnose or treat patients (and in particular, Veteran patients). You may be asked to participate in such investigations. Please consider! Examples include studies with new vaccines (for instance, against a hospital-acquired diarrhea); better oral medicines for diabetes; newer medicines for cancer; novel approaches to post-traumatic disorder; etc. If you are curious about participating, you could ask one of your physicians if there is a project appropriate for you, or you can call the South Texas Veteran Health Care System Research Service at (210) 617-5300 ext. 15959 or 16904 or speak to our research foundation at (210) 617-5376.

We are always grateful for our Veteran patients for their selfless contributions to such investigations. Veterans being what they are, the VA is the envy of our medical schools who always wonder “how do you get so many patients to volunteer over there?” - they often do not know of the culture of “selfless service” that our Veterans absorbed during their military days.

LABORATORY HOURS FOR OUTPATIENTS

These are the hours when lab specimens (blood test, urine test, etc.) can be drawn or obtained at these sites:

Audie L. Murphy

6:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

8:00 a.m. – 12 noon Sat/Sun

Closed on Holidays

Lab is now located in Building 5



Frank M. Tejada Outpatient Clinic

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

Closed on Holidays

BUILDING TEMPORARILY CLOSED

Kerrville

7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

South Bexar Outpatient Clinic

8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

North Central Federal Clinic

7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

Closed Holidays

Victoria Outpatient Clinic:

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

Closed Holidays

NE 410 CBOC

8:00 a.m. – 11am; 1:00 pm – 3 p.m. Monday – Friday

NW 410 CBOC

8:00 a.m. – 11am; 1:00 pm – 1:30 p.m. Monday – Friday

Laboratory Hours continued:

SW Military CBOC

8:00 a.m. – 12pm; 1:00 pm – 3 p.m. Monday – Friday

Seguin CBOC

8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

New Braunfels CBOC

8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.; 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

PHARMACY

Pharmacists are available in your primary care clinic to provide medication counseling to you and your family. Pharmacists can provide medication information such as dosage and possible side effects. If you have any questions you should ask to speak to the pharmacist before you leave the clinic. If you have a question later about your medication, you can call the TeleMed number at 1(800) 209-7377, Option 2. A pharmacist will return your call within 24 hours, usually right away.

Audie L. Murphy Outpatient Pharmacy is open Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Friday 9:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Weekends: Saturday and Sunday 8:00 am – 4:30 p.m. Closed on holidays.

You may contact the Outpatient Pharmacy at ext. 19400.



Kerrville Outpatient Pharmacy is open from 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday. Wednesday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Frank M. Tejada Outpatient Pharmacy **Temporarily Closed** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Wednesday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Drop off till 4:00 p.m. Pick up till 4:30 p.m.

North Central Federal Outpatient Pharmacy is open Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

For Prescription refills we suggest using **My HealthVet** site (see page 77), or you can use the **Automated Refill Line**:

1 (800) 209-7377 Option 1; wait for the automated attendant to answer.

- Enter your entire Social Security Number, then press the # key. Wait for an answer.
- Press 2, then wait for an answer.
- Press 1, then wait for an answer.
- Enter your Prescription number, then press the # key. Wait for an answer.
- To refill additional prescriptions, press 1 and repeat the process.

All refills should be ordered at least two weeks prior to when the refill is due to ensure prompt processing and delivery time. In fact, for chronic medications, it may be

wise to request the next refill on the same day you receive the current one in the mail! The computer will remember where you are in the queue and mail the next refill to you on time!

My HealtheVet – Not signed up yet? See page 76 for instructions on signing up!

PATIENT SAFETY

STVHCS CARES ABOUT YOUR SAFETY

South Texas Veterans Health Care System is committed to providing safe health care for our Veterans and their families. We believe that everyone plays an important role in your safety, including you. Taking an active role in your health care is important in keeping you safe. These are steps you can take to help you keep safe and improve your care.

1. Ask questions if you have any doubts or concerns.

- Remember, it is okay to ask questions. Your health is too important to worry about being embarrassed if you don't understand something you are told.
- Write down your questions you have for your doctor so that you do not forget them.
- If you think something is wrong, speak up. You have the right to ask about your health care.
- Know what the treatment will include and how long the treatment should last.

2. Know all your medicines.

- Bring all your medicines you are taking with you to your next appointment, including all prescribed medicines, over the counter medicines, vitamins, food supplements, and herbal remedies.
- Tell your doctor and nurses if you have any drug allergies.
- Your prescriptions are written by computer. Whenever a new medicine is ordered you will be given an updated list of all your medicines.
- It is important to bring your VA card with you when you pick up your medicines. Proof of identification is needed to make sure you receive the right medicine. (Every

time you check into a clinic, the clerk should ask you to confirm the current mailing address and phone number he or she sees in the computer).

- Make sure the VA has your correct mailing address for medications to be mailed.
- Ask the pharmacist at the pick-up window if you have questions:
 - ✓ What is the medicine for?
 - ✓ How am I supposed to take it and for how long?
 - ✓ What are the common side effects and what do I do if they occur?
 - ✓ Is this medicine safe to take with over the counter medicines or dietary supplements?
 - ✓ What food, drink, or other activities should I stay away from while taking these medicines?
 - ✓ Ask about any instructions on the medicine bottles you do not understand.
 - ✓ Ask for medicine information sheets, pill cutters, pill boxes, and or medicine cups you may need.
- If you are an inpatient, the nurse will ask your name and check your wristband before you receive medications.

3. Get results of any test or treatments.

- Ask when and how you will get results of any test or treatments.
- Do not think that “no news is good news”. Ask your doctor or nurse for your results.
- Ask what the results mean for your care.

4. If you need surgery:

- Ask your surgeon:
 - ✓ What exactly will he/she be doing to you?
 - ✓ About how long it will take?
 - ✓ What will happen after surgery?
 - ✓ How can I expect to feel after my surgery?
- Make sure the surgeon explains, and you understand any possible problems.
- Get clarification on when you should stop eating or drinking. Eating and or drinking could cause a delay or possibly a cancellation of your surgery.

- If you will be going home the same day of surgery, the procedure will not begin without the staff verifying that a designated, responsible adult will accompany you at discharge. Satisfactory arrangements for transportation after the procedure must be made and verified. The procedure may be cancelled if prearranged, approved transportation is not verified.
- Please do not bring valuables with you to surgery as there are no lockers available.
- Tell all the doctors and nurses of any bad reactions you may have had to anesthesia medications.
- Before receiving any medicines or having any test done, make sure the nurse or technician asks your name, last 4 of social security number, and checks your wrist band for proper identification.
- Make sure that your doctor has clearly marked the correct side/body part to be operated on.
- Speak up if you have any concerns!

5. Know what to do after you are discharged from the hospital.

- Make sure you understand all discharge instructions and any follow up appointments given to you by your doctor and nurses.
- Get a written copy of the instructions to take home with you.
- Review all medicines you are given with the nurse or pharmacist including:
 - ✓ The name of the medicines,
 - ✓ How much to take,
 - ✓ The reason you are taking it, and
 - ✓ How often to take them.
 Verify which, if any, medication to *stop* taking.
- Ask your doctor or nurse to provide a phone number to call if you have any questions following your discharge.
- Get reliable health information from: www.myhealth.va.gov and access the Veterans Health Library.

Remember, you are an important part of your healthcare team. Patient safety is everyone's job. Speak up about any questions or concerns you may have about your healthcare.

At STVHCS, we “**Stop-the-Line**” for patient safety. This means we say something if something does not seem right, and any member of our team can say “STOP!”

IDENTIFICATION WRISTBANDS

Upon admission, you will be given an **ID wristband**. It is coded to allow safe identification for diagnostic procedures and medications. Please wear your wristband at all times. Lost ID wristbands should be reported to the health care team right away. Although it is difficult to accidentally rip off, please do not “fiddle” with it. It has your name, date of birth and social security number (hidden underneath) the band. As such, upon discharge, to protect your identification, the nurse will remove your wristband and shred it.

INFECTION CONTROL

Preventing the spread of infections in the health care setting is everyone’s responsibility. This includes patients, family members and visitors. Without proper precautions, germs can easily spread among patients, visitors and staff. Your cooperation is essential, is requested and we need your help!

HAND HYGIENE

Hand hygiene is the best way to stop the spread of germs. Washing hands with soap and water or rubbing with alcohol-based hand products contribute to decreasing infections among patients in clinics and in hospital settings. As a patient you should frequently perform hand hygiene.



Family members and visitors should perform hand hygiene before entering and when leaving the patient rooms. If hands are clean (no visible dirt, grease or saliva) you are encouraged to use the alcohol-based hand products that are placed in the hallways and patient

rooms.

We expect our health care workers to use hand hygiene as often as possible on our wards or in our clinics too. If you are nervous about whether someone from our team has washed their hands or used an alcohol-based product, we encourage you to mention a non-challenging statement such as “*you might want to use that alcohol rub, you can’t tell what I’ve got.*” You may be pleasantly surprised at the effect you get!

PATIENTS AND VISITORS

ASK FOR SAFE CARE
ASK FOR **CLEAN HANDS**



Germs that can cause serious infections are in every healthcare facility. They can be on your healthcare providers' hands and also your own.

It's OK to ask for clean hands. It could save your life. Make sure everyone around you has clean hands to protect against infection.

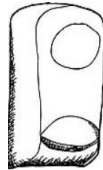
SPEAK UP FOR
CLEAN HANDS.



RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE PROGRAM

Stop the spread of germs that make you and other sick! If you seek care or are visiting in the STVHCS please wear a mask.

- Mask should cover your nose and mouth
- Masks should not be worn below the nose or under your chin
- Clean your hands often. Wash with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds; or Clean with alcohol - based hand cleanser.



Note:

Please let family and friends know if they are ill, they should not visit or come with you to the hospital or clinics. If you have any questions about the spread of germs and infections in the hospital, please ask your nurse or ask to speak to an Infection Control Professional.



What if you are put on “Contact Precautions?”

This may occur if you have been identified as having a particularly resistant, possibly dangerous germ somewhere on your body. This is when you will see your doctors and nurses come into your room in yellow gowns and gloves. Don't be put off by this, it is just our attempt to keep those germs from being spread (by contaminating our hands or clothes) to the next patient we see on the ward.

You of course will be treated for such germs if such treatment is necessary (often it is not; you may just be “colonized” and the germ tends to go away on its own). We also ask for you and your family's patience as we ask them to “gown up and glove” when they are in your room too.



ORGAN DONATION

Veterans Health Administration Policy supports the Veteran's right to be an organ donor. You should be routinely asked if you are an organ donor.

Facts about organ donation:

- Veterans of all ages are possible donors. A decision to donate does not change the high-quality care you receive.
- Organs and tissues that can be donated are, heart, kidneys, bones, intestines, ligaments, tendons, heart valves, eyes, liver, pancreas and skin.
- All major religions approve of organ and tissue donation.
- Your family does not pay any cost if you donate organs or tissues.
- Donating does not interfere with a funeral, nor does it change the look of the body.
- Organ donation gives someone else a second chance at life.
- At the time of death, the Texas Organ Sharing Alliance decides if organs or tissues can be used. They are external to the VA and do not try to influence you or your physicians regarding your donation decision.

What to do:

- Talk to your family about being an organ and tissue donor.
- On admission to the hospital, patients are asked if they are an organ donor. By signing a release of information for organ donation, you are giving permission that the Texas Organ Sharing Alliance be contacted at the time of death.

For more information contact the Texas Organ Sharing Alliance at:

(210) 614-7030 or visit www.DonateLifeTexas.org on the internet.

Clinical Topics



CLINIC APPOINTMENTS



“Don’t Be a No Show”

Clinic appointments are prescheduled visits. You should make every effort to keep your scheduled appointment. However, if you must reschedule your appointment, please contact the appropriate clinic clerk to request a cancellation and obtain another appointment.

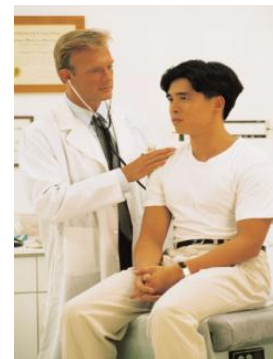
When reporting for a clinic appointment we ask that you check in no later than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled appointment time. Every effort will be made to see all patients at their scheduled time; however, in some cases due to unforeseen circumstances this may not always be possible.

Try not to “**walk-in**” to the clinic without an appointment as this may require extensive wait times. If you feel that you need to be seen before your scheduled appointment, you can call your primary care nurse or the Telecare nurse for advice. Telecare nurses are available 24 hours a day at **210-949-3994** or toll free at **888-686-6350**.

PRIMARY CARE

Primary Care: The PACT Teams

The VA organizes the provision of primary care, given by Family Medicine or Internal Medicine physicians (your primary care providers, or PCPs), around the “Patient Aligned Care Teams”, or PACTs. Your primary care is delivered by teams, headed by the PCP but including assigned nurses, pharmacists, mental health professionals, social workers, nutritionists, etc. They have at their disposal multiple consulting specialists or clinics. While some of the referral clinics can continue to be accessed by you directly



once you have completed an initial consultation with them (e.g., dermatology, oncology, infectious diseases), you usually have to access referral clinics through your PACT clinic's referral to them.

Please complete labs 1 week prior to your appointment.

Please remember, you must be seen by your PCP at least once a year to stay in your clinic or you may lose your preferred assignment to that particular clinic.

TELECARE SERVICES

The VA now offers telephone advice services to Veterans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (bilingual services are available). Call the TeleCare Nurse if you have symptoms, questions, or need advice about any health problem. If your symptoms are not serious, you may not need an appointment. The TeleCare Nurse may be able to tell you how to treat the problem at home. The VA TeleCare Nurse can also assist you if you would like to change PCPs, give you advice, information, or counseling and referrals to the nearest VA Medical Center or Clinic. Call the VA TeleCare Nurse at the first sign of a problem. Early treatment is a key factor in dealing with many health care problems. Please be prepared to give the nurse the following important information:

1. Your full name;
2. Your social security number;
3. Your current address;
4. Phone numbers and area code where you can be reached;
5. Your reason for calling the Tele-Care Nurse.

Call Toll Free: 1(888) 686-6350 or in San Antonio (210) 949-3994



VA Video Connect

VA Telehealth

Real-Time Access to Your VA Care Team Through VA Video Connect

Conduct Visits With Your Provider Through Live Video

VA Video Connect makes VA health care more convenient for you and other Veterans and Caregivers. VA Video Connect enables you to quickly and easily meet with your VA care team through secure and private videoconferencing sessions. You can visit with your provider in a virtual medical room, from anywhere, using the camera on your phone, computer, or tablet.



Talk with your provider about using VA Video Connect if:



You live far from your VA facility or have limited access to VA facilities.



You have health conditions that make traveling to the VA specialist you need difficult.



You lack time to regularly attend in-person appointments.



You don't require a hands-on physical examination.

A Step-by-Step Guide

1. **Visit the website.** Learn more about VA Video Connect at mobile.va.gov/appstore.
2. **Get set up.** Open VA Video Connect by selecting your appointment link. VA Video Connect opens in a web browser on Android, macOS, and Windows. (Apple iPhone and iPad users will need to download the mobile app from the Apple App Store.)
3. **Test your device.** On the VA Video Connect app page, select "Visit the VA Video Connect test site" to set up your microphone and speakers. You can also ask your VA care team for a practice session.
4. **Troubleshoot technical problems.** Need help? Call the VA National Telehealth Technology Help Desk at **866-651-3180** or **703-234-4483**, Monday through Saturday, **7 a.m. – 11 p.m.** Eastern Time.

Get Started Today!
[mobile.va.gov/app store](https://mobile.va.gov/appstore)



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT SERVICE TEAM (VIST) PROGRAM

The Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST) Program provides comprehensive services to Veterans who are legally blind or have a visual impairment. The goal of the program is to utilize resources in the VA as well as in the local community to help maximize adjustment to sight loss through services including low vision exams, local rehabilitation training, and comprehensive residential training.

For more information call:

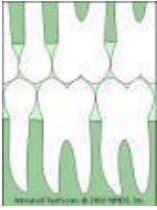
Visual Impairment Service Team Program Office
(210) 949-8926

TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICE FOR THE DEAF (TDD)

Hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing in the ears) are common with our Veterans. If you are having difficulty with hearing, understanding, or tinnitus, please call (210) 949-9702 for an appointment with Audiology. You do not need a referral from your primary care physician for this evaluation. Yes, we can provide hearing aids!

There are also devices that your audiologist can advise you on, and provide, for home use for some situations where hearing aids are not enough or are inappropriate. You should discuss these with your audiologist.

DENTAL SERVICE



The STVHCS Dental Service provides a full range of dental treatment to **eligible** Veterans. Unfortunately, there are limited number of such eligible Veterans. You may call to see if you fit such criteria.

Alternatively, your assigned clinic social worker may be able to arrange dental care outside the VA (usually with a wait).

ALMD Dental Clinic

(210) 949-8900

Kerrville Division

(830) 896-2020 ext. 12194

PAIN MANAGEMENT

Pain is a very personal experience and may be different for everyone. The health care team (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, therapists) wants to work with you to manage your pain. Be prepared to describe features of your pain to your health care provider (such as, when it started, where it is, what it's like, how severe, etc.).

Remember to Use the Pain Scale

0 - no pain - 10 - worst possible pain



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Pain Care Bill of Rights

As a person with pain, you can expect the following:

- Information about pain.
- Information about different methods of pain relief.
- Access to concerned health care providers committed to pain prevention and management who will respond quickly to your reports of pain and who believe your reports of pain.

- Access to dedicated pain relief specialists who provide appropriate state of the art pain management.
- That pain management will be part of your treatment plan.

The overuse of prescription narcotics has been recognized as a dangerous and frustrating problem for patients in the U.S. Pain specialists and primary care physicians have learned that the chronic use (for example, longer than 10 – 14 days) of these medications tends to be no more helpful than alternative medicine. Your physician may use alternative techniques to manage pain (like physical therapy, cognitive behavioral feedback, yoga, acupuncture, etc.). These alternatives are increasingly used, and your PCP may discuss these with you, rather than narcotic use, if needed.

SLEEP DISORDERS

Audie Murphy provides full service diagnostic sleep testing and treatment for Veterans. Access is by referral from your primary care provider, who is your first stop for many sleep concerns. They will determine if you need further services or testing. The Sleep Disorder Center has provided a wide array of information on various sleep matters that can be accessed by going to the following website:

www.southtexas.va.gov/services/Sleep_Laboratory_and_CPAP_Program.asp

The website has the following resources:

- Patient information regarding sleep studies.
- Frequently Asked Questions.
- Links to Sleep Resources

The Sleep Lab is located on the 7th Floor of Audie Murphy Hospital Room B703. Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (PCP referral needed)

For Information call: (210) 617-5320

For Cancellations/Reschedule call: (210) 949-9702 during normal business hours at least 48 hours in advance.

WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM



The South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS) recognizes the importance of the contributions made by women Veterans in the service to their country and encourages eligible Veterans to utilize VA health care benefits.

The STVHCS Women Veterans Program Manager advises and advocates for women Veterans with access to VA health care and provide information about the enrollment process, establishing Primary Care, available services, filing claims, and other resources.

In addition to a 24/7 Emergency Department (ER) and comprehensive and gender-specific Primary Care, specialty care services that include Mental Health (MH), Obstetrics, and Gynecology are available. The WVP team facilitates assignment and linkage with a Patient-Aligned Care Team (PACT) where a primary care provider (PCP) and other PACT members work with patients to coordinate health care needs. There are many PCPs who have the designation as a Women's Health PCP because they have the skills and competencies to provide comprehensive health care for women Veterans. Comprehensive care means Primary Care that includes female gender-specific health care (breast examinations, pap tests, and pelvic examinations).

MH services include, but not limited to, care related to depression and anxiety, thought of harming self or others, and military sexual trauma (MST). OB & GYN specialty care are also available with a consult/referral from the PCP. The GYN service has 3 fulltime physicians including a Urogynecologist who addresses chronic pelvic pain and bladder and/or vaginal prolapse concerns through pelvic floor therapy and minimally invasive surgeries. There is also a Pelvic Floor Therapist who is assigned to the GYN specialty service. Basic and advanced infertility services, to include in vitro fertilization (IVF), are available. Veterans must meet the non-negotiable criteria for VA's IVF program and have a GYN/medical indication.

For non-emergent assistance, Veterans are invited to call the Women Veterans Program @ (210) 949-9449, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday, excluding Federal Holidays.

The Maternity Care Coordinator, also assigned to the Women Veterans Program, can be reached at (210) 517-5300 extension 16098.

SPINAL CORD INJURY CENTER

The Spinal Cord Injury Center (SCIC) in the South Texas Veterans Health Care System serves Veterans and Active Duty Service Members (ADSM) with a spinal cord injury or disorder, providing a life-long continuum of services. The goal of SCIC is to help individuals maintain their health, independence, quality of life, and productivity after a spinal cord injury. Our dedicated interdisciplinary team provides individualized, comprehensive care in both the inpatient and outpatient setting. To receive care in our SCIC, a referral or consult is needed and eligibility criteria must be met. Once accepted and enrolled, arrangements are made for a transfer to our center. We encourage a tour of the SCIC prior to transfer to learn more about the services offered and an introduction to our rehabilitation team. During the tour, educational material will be provided to help gain an understanding of the issues related to spinal cord injuries, such as bowel and bladder, or caregiver support. To learn more about the SCIC, please contact Richard Czarnecki at (210) 617-5300, extension 16838.

MENTAL HEALTH

The VA offers a variety of research-based treatment options that can help Veterans recover from mental health and substance use concerns. Services are available in a range of settings (Primary Care, outpatient clinics, community, or the hospital) and can help with problems like depression, anxiety, relationship concerns, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), serious mental illness, and drugs/alcohol use.

Most of our clinics consist of interdisciplinary teams working together with Veterans and their families to help Veterans have a better overall quality of life.

To get connected to mental health services, request a referral from your Primary Care Provider. All Mental Health and Primary Care Clinics also provide Same Day Services, therefore, if you need immediate care you will be seen the same day or, if after hours, by the next day.

DEPRESSION

The next time you visit your health care provider, before you say, “I’m fine”, ask yourself if you feel:

- Nervous or empty
- Guilty or worthless
- Very tired and slowed down
- You don’t enjoy things the way you did in the past
- Like no one loves you
- Like life is not worth living
- Like things are hopeless

Or if you are:

- Sleeping more or less than usual
- Eating more or less than usual
- Having persistent headaches, stomach aches or chronic pain

These may be symptoms of depression, a treatable medical illness.

Your doctor can only treat you if you say how you are really feeling! Talk to him or her when you come to clinic.

Things going very bad. Clinic visit a long way off. Been thinking of suicide, that it’s the only way out? If this has occurred to you, give our counselors a chance to talk to you first! Please! There are ways we can help you out of that pit. Let our providers or social workers help with your situation and your symptoms; let our mental health

counselors help with that despair. Speak to your PCP, social worker, or mental health counselor; if after hours, talk to our Hot line at **1 (800) 273-8255 Press 1**. **You can also have a confidential chat on-line at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to 838255.**

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

There are many steps you can take to move forward after military sexual trauma (MST), and starting treatment may be one of them. The South Texas VA offers free, confidential counseling and treatment to Veterans for mental and physical health conditions related to experiences of MST. For more information you can speak with your VA health care provider; contact the South Texas VA (210-617-5300) and ask to speak to the MST Coordinator; or call the coordinator directly at (210) 699-2147.

STAND UP TO STOP HARASSMENT NOW! Reporting Resources

Resources for reporting harassment are available to everyone. Harassment, by a known entity or a stranger, should be reported as soon as possible after an episode of harassment has occurred.

Veterans and Visitors

VA Police

Anyone may report any incident of harassment, whether criminal or non-criminal to VA Police.

VA Police Department

Phone: (210) 617.5168

Location: Audie L. Murphy Campus, 1st floor main lobby

Patient Advocate

The Patient Advocacy Program is for all Veterans and their families who receive care at Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities. We want to ensure you know where to go to with your concerns, in a timely manner, and to help you receive care.

Office of Patient Advocacy
Phone: (210) 949-3822
Location: Audie L. Murphy Campus, Ground level Room 031

Women Veterans Program Manager and Call Center

Ms. Barbara Hector, South Texas Veterans Health Care System, Women Veterans Program Manager
Phone: (210) 949-9449
Location: Audie L. Murphy Campus, 3rd Floor, room E305

Women Veterans Call Center

Call or Text: 1-855-VA-WOMEN, 1-855-829-6636
Hours: Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. EST, Saturday 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. EST
All representatives at the call center are women.

Integrated Ethics Program

Ethical issues can occur when we express our values or morals about health care.

They occur when we make decisions about:

- Informed Consent;
- End of life care;
- Appropriate management of pain;
- Withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining treatment;
- Accepting or rejecting treatment (drug therapy);
- Chemotherapy, feeding tubes, operations;
- Organ/Tissue Donation.

What do I do if I have an ethical issue?

Discuss the issue with your physician or health care provider. Under most circumstances, your issue can be resolved by talking with your health care team. If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction you can contact a member of the Ethics team. An Ethics Consultation (EC) can assist the patient, family and treatment team to communicate effectively and ensure that the personal values of all parties have been explored. The EC team does not make treatment decisions, but it assists those

who do – you and your treatment team. The On-Call Ethics Team can be contacted through the hospital switchboard (210-617-5300) or the Integrated Ethics Program Officer at extension 15441 or 17970.

RECREATION THERAPY SERVICE

Recreation Therapy is a systematic process that utilizes recreation and other activity-based interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions as a means to psychological and physical health, recovery, and well-being. The purpose of the Recreation Therapy process is to improve or maintain physical, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual functioning to facilitate full participation in life.

Recreation therapy includes, but is not limited to, providing treatment services and recreation activities to individuals using a variety of techniques including arts and crafts, animal-assisted therapy, adaptive sports, creative writing, games, dance and movement, drama, music and community outings.

Recreation Therapists and recreation assistants work with Veterans on their particular units (Community Living Center, Domiciliary, DOMSA, Kerrville Transitional Care Center, In-patient Mental Health, Medical Foster Home, MOVE Aquatics, Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center, Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center, Polytrauma Transitional Rehabilitation Program, Spinal Cord Injury Center) by seeking to reduce depression, stress, and anxiety; recover basic motor functioning and reasoning abilities; build confidence; and socialize effectively.

The ALM Recreation Center (B101) is open to all Veterans Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Activities sponsored by the Recreation Center include Veteran Rock Positivity Project, Chair Yoga, and the San Antonio Military Adaptive Cycling Camp to name a few. In addition, the ALM Craft Room (B108) located within the ALM Recreation Center is open to all Veterans, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please check the bulletin board in the recreation center for more information.

The Kerrville Recreation Center (022) is open to Veterans Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Holiday hours and special events are posted based on

program needs. Craft kits are available. Contact Recreation Therapy staff for more information at ext. 15125.

WHEN YOU ARE ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL

If your admission is routinely scheduled, go to J103 (Enrollment and Eligibility) on the first floor for processing. If you are emergently admitted, all your processing will be handled by your medical teams.

If you are scheduled for a “same day” procedure or surgery, your team will have given you directions as to where to first show up for your processing (the site will depend upon your procedure).

If you have questions or concerns anytime during your stay at the medical center, ask a member of your health care team. They can help you find the right person to address your needs.

Audie L. Murphy Memorial VA Hospital Admissions:

Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Go to J103 (Enrollment and Eligibility) on the first floor near main elevators.

After-hour Admissions - go to the Emergency Department.

Kerrville VA Hospital Admissions:

All Admissions report to the Admission/Outpatient Area (Room 112 on first floor).



CLOTHING

CLOTHING

Inpatients are permitted to wear their personal clothing unless otherwise indicated. (Surgical patients are expected to wear VA provided gowns, for ease of access for procedures, and slipper socks). You may be asked, for your safety, to wear appropriate supportive footwear or pajamas of a certain color. Your healthcare team will talk to you in more detail if this is needed.

All patients are asked to keep one set of clothing and footwear with them for discharge. Patients are encouraged to have personal items with them when checking in, such as toothbrush, shaving kit, deodorant and toiletries, although these can be provided if needed.

PERSONAL ITEMS

You will be assigned a small clothing locker on the ward. If possible, mark your possessions with your name. Items that do not fit into the locker should be sent home or your nurse will inventory and turn in to the Patient Assistance Program Clerk (PAPC). Patients' personal valuables should be inventoried and then turned in for safekeeping and locked in the PAP safe. The hospital cannot be responsible for any valuables you keep with you on the unit.



TELEPHONES

Your inpatient room will have its own telephone with which you can make local calls if you do not have your own cell phone. (By the way, the most common lost item found in the laundry are patients' cell phones that get left behind; don't leave your

phone on your bed)! There is no charge for local calls. The bedside phones are not capable of making long distance calls. Please ask your nurse for assistance in making a long-distance call. Patients with disabilities or special needs should contact their nurse for assistance.

Local Calls Audie L. Murphy / Kerrville: Dial 9 + area code +number

NUTRITION SERVICE (MEALS)

Meals in the hospital will be ordered by your doctor and planned by a dietitian. The dietitian will be available to talk with your family about the diet ordered for you. Any friend or relative who prepares your meals will be invited to listen to the diet instructions.

- You may request a visit with the dietitian by contacting your nurse. A dietitian can help you get the foods for your meals that you prefer.
- You may also talk with a Meal Service Liaison by calling 210-949-3663 or 1FOOD on an inhouse phone.
- The unit staff will tell you when and where meals will be served.
- Do not keep food that will spoil or attract insects at your bedside.
- Store food in **non-breakable containers** only.
- There is a refrigerator on each unit that is stocked with snacks and beverages that can be requested at any time from nursing.

VISITING HOURS

The South Texas Veterans Health Care System has a liberal visitation policy in most areas. The hospital allows for the presence of a support individual of the patient's choice, unless the individual's presence oversteps other patient's rights, safety, or interferes with the patient's recovery. The individual may or may not be the patient's surrogate decision maker or legally authorized representative. The patient's physician

can limit or extend the visitation practice. Any limits or extensions to visitation will be noted in the patient's medical record.

Children under the age of 18 (minors) may visit if the patient's nurse determines that the visit is in the best interest of the patient and the child has no evidence of communicable diseases. A responsible adult must accompany the minor at all times. A responsible adult is defined as a parent or person over the age of 18 who is caring for the safety of the minor. The patient's physician may also make exceptions based on age, the patient's best interest, impact on other patients, and the safety of the minor.

Overnight stays by a family member in the room is generally not allowed. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis if nursing and physician agree.

Intensive Care Units (ICU) and Medical-Surgical Units

Visiting hours allow a family member, friend, or other individual to be present with the patient for emotional support during the course of the day.

Mental Health Units:

Weekdays – 5:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Weekends and Holidays- 10:00 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Friends may visit in the dayroom or designated areas. Visitors are not allowed to bring food or drink. **Exceptions** are made by the patient's physician and noted in the patient's medical record.

All visitors are requested to enter and exit the hospitals through the main entrances.

Community Living Centers:

All VA Community Living Centers (CLC) have unrestricted visiting hours. Please be considerate of all residents, especially with regard to noise. Children should not be left unattended.

The CLC resident may not wish to have visitors or may wish to set other limits on visits. We will respect the Veteran's wishes for visits.

Kerrville Campus visitors please contact the unit or hospital operator to gain entrance after 9:00 p.m. (830) 896-2020.

OFF-UNIT NOTIFICATION

Please remain on the unit so the health care team can find you. You may request permission to leave the unit for short periods. If you must leave, you should notify your nurse before leaving and when you return. Certainly, stay on the ward if it is close to the time for your next dose of medication or for a test/procedure.

PREVENTING FALLS

The STVHCS wants to help you remain safe while you are an inpatient. The risk for falls is highest in your first few days in the hospital. You are more likely to fall due to the following:

- You are sick and may be weak.
- You are in new surroundings and may not be sleeping as well as you do at home.
- You may be taking new medications.
- You may have tubes or machines that keep you from moving around on your own.
- You are in unfamiliar surroundings.

Here are some tips that can help keep you safe:

- CALL for staff assistance before you get out of bed or try to transfer to a chair.
- Sit on the side of bed for a few minutes to make sure you are not dizzy before you get up.
- Always keep the nurse call button within reach.
- Don't lean on your bedside stand/table for support as it may roll away.
- Wear the non-skid sock/slippers provided to you.

Our staff has had special training to help keep you safe!! If you have any safety concerns, please let one of our staff members know right away. Remember, **Call, Don't Fall.**

RESTRAINTS

We don't like to use restraints, but sometimes we must. It is the policy of South Texas Veterans Health Care System that patients receive care, free from the use of restraint devices except when necessary to protect the patient.

What are restraints?

Restraints are devices that prevent or limit movement of any part of the body.

Why are restraints used?

Some illnesses or medications can cause patients to become confused. Restraints are used to help prevent patients from hurting themselves.

We use restraints to help prevent:

- Behavior that pose immediate risk to a patient's own safety or to others.
- Removal of needed medical equipment or devices, for example; intravenous catheters (IV), breathing tubes, etc.
- Harm to wounds or bandages.

GETTING IMMEDIATE HELP IF YOUR CONDITION SUDDENLY WORSENS

The Dedicated Acute-Assessment Rapid Response Team (DARRT)

Communicating effectively with patients and families is very important to South Texas Veterans Health Care System. When a family sees a change in the patient's condition, for example something just doesn't seem right, the first thing to do is call for help from your nurse. However, if there is difficulty getting an immediate response, the patient or family can call for the DARRT team. (DARRT stands for "Dedicated Acute-Assessment Rapid Response Team).

To call the DARRT team:

- Pick up the phone in the patient's room.
- Call 15555 for the operator.
- The patient or family will say... "I am a family member of (Mr. Jones). I need the DARRT team. I am on the (5th) floor in room number (517)." (The items in

parentheses are just examples, please use your family members name and floor/room number).

This is what you can expect to happen:

- A Registered Nurse (RN) from the ICU and a Respiratory Therapist will respond within 10 minutes.
- They will evaluate the patient and actively involve the physician and RN in the plan of care for the patient.
- They may transfer the patient to a higher level of care if needed or they will assist the patient where they are.

DAY OF DISCHARGE FROM THE HOSPITAL

Patient Discharge Planning

We realize that one of the first things most people think about when they're admitted is when they will get to go home. Getting you well enough to leave the hospital is our goal too. It is important for you and your family to understand the plans for your discharge. The information below will help you plan for your discharge. Don't hesitate to ask if you have questions.

Preparation for Discharge

Your doctor will tell you and your care team a likely date for leaving the hospital. It is possible this date may change depending on your progress, test results, etc. You will receive written discharge instructions on the day of your departure. These discharge instructions will include information on:

- Medications you are to continue or to begin taking after you leave the hospital, as well as medications you will no longer take.
- Special instructions on how to care for yourself when you leave the hospital.
- Follow-up care, such as doctor appointments or other therapies.

It is important that you review and understand the information on the discharge instructions. Please ask questions of your doctor or nurse if there is something that you do not understand.

Day of Discharge

- Make sure you have all your personal belongings.
- Please let your nurse know if you need help arranging transportation.
- If you have questions after you are discharged from the hospital, call the Telecare nurse at (210) 949–3994 locally or toll free at (888) 686-6350.

After you go home

- Follow the instructions you were given by your doctor and nurse.
- Take your medications as you were instructed.
- If you were given a number to call to make an appointment, call as soon as you can.

For any medical Questions/Concerns/Appointments after you have been discharged:

Call STVHCS Central Scheduling (Weekdays, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.) 1 (210) 949-9702.

After-Hours Medical Questions/Concerns: (Weekdays, 4 p.m. – 8 a.m.)

(Weekends and Federal Holidays, 24 hours) 1 (888) 686-6350.



EXTENDED CARE SERVICES

The VA provides many services to help Veterans in the community. You may be referred to one of the following programs to help you recover from the current hospital stay or prevent re-hospitalization. **You can access these through the social workers in your clinic or ward.**

Home Care and Community Programs

1. Home Health Care: If you need skilled care in the home, the doctor may write an order for VA to arrange home health care. This is usually needed when:

- You have a wound you need to learn how to take care of.
- You need home intravenous medicines.
- You need to be educated about a new disease.
- You need skilled nursing, physical therapy, or occupational therapy; or
- You have a health problem that needs to be monitored.

Medicare provides the best home care benefits for most Veterans. If you don't have Medicare benefits, VA can provide services through other funding.

2. Home Based Primary Care: This is a program that offers clinical staff (nurse, social worker, rehabilitation therapist, dietitian or physician) who can make visits to your home. This special program is tailored for home-bound Veterans who cannot get to their primary care clinic.

3. Community Adult Day Health Care: Veterans are able to attend an adult day health care facility in the community. Scheduled visits by the Veteran to this site can provide skilled nursing care, socialization, therapeutic meals, or respite care for a caregiver. The adult day health care facility is responsible for providing transportation.

4. Homemaker/Home Health Aide(H/HHA): This is a program for eligible Veterans who are at high risk of imminent nursing home placement and are dependent in ADLs (activities of daily living), such as bathing, dressing toileting etc. Veterans who may also

be dependent on assistance with ADL (activities of daily living), such as companionship and mental support, transportation and shopping, preparing meals, managing medications, etc., may be eligible to receive a VA-paid personal care assistant in the home to assist in prevention of imminent nursing home placement.

5. Home Telehealth (HT): Veterans enrolled in this voluntary program are issued home monitoring devices or use their own cell phones to submit health related data to a team of RN Care Coordinators. The RN Care Coordinators review the data and contact patients when needed to prevent worsening health problems and hospitalization. Nurses can collaborate with the Veteran's physician and other team members when potential problems are identified.

6. Hospital in Home: This program provides close monitoring to recently hospitalized Veterans, not specifically every day, in the Veteran's home by a team of a physician, RN, social worker, pharmacist and dietician. Acute care is provided for up to 30 days and within a 30-mile radius from Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital. This program allows Veterans to return to their residence and have their care provided by VA staff, while possibly safely decreasing hospital days.

7. Respite: The goal of respite care is to give family caregivers temporary relief from the demands of daily care, thereby supporting the Veteran's desire to delay or prevent nursing home placement. Respite care has the unique purpose of providing temporary relief for unpaid caregivers from routine care-giving tasks, thus supporting caregivers in maintaining the chronically ill Veteran in the home. Outpatient Respite Care consists of a home health provider sitting with the Veteran in their residence for up to six hours. Inpatient Respite Care takes place at a contract nursing home. Veterans are eligible for 30 days a calendar year.

8. Nursing Home Care (Contract Nursing Homes): Veterans who are ready to be discharged, whose care cannot be successfully carried out at home, may be referred to a nursing home. You may be referred to one of VA's community nursing homes, if eligible and needed. You and/or your family are commonly enlisted to help choose the nursing home for example, a list of local nursing homes may be given for you to visit

and evaluate. This resource is available to Veterans with 70% or greater Service-Connected Disability Rating.

9. Home Oxygen Program: This program conducts home visits for Veterans placed on home oxygen. Nurses will assess the home for safety, check equipment, and supplies, and provide education.

Palliative Care

Palliative care is a program provided to treat and lessen severe symptoms from chronic illness or those who have a terminal illness. This care is delivered by an interdisciplinary team that focuses on improving the quality of life of seriously ill Veterans. The team provides support to both you and your family. Palliative care may be provided any time during a Veteran's illness.

VA Nursing Home Care

Nursing Home care may be provided also within one of two VA chronic care facilities. The Kerrville Transitional Care Center (KTCC) at Kerrville campus located 65 miles from San Antonio, can provide palliative care, skilled nursing care, respite care, and long-term care (the latter for Veterans with 70% or greater disability). The Community Living Center (CLC) at Audie L. Murphy Campus can provide skilled nursing care for patients with rehabilitative potential or palliative care for patients with end-of-life expectation.

Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM) Clinic

The Geriatric Evaluation and Management Clinic (GEM) provides comprehensive medical and psychosocial assessments that determine needs, including for memory care and support. These interdisciplinary teams (physicians, pharmacists, social workers, psychologists, nurses, etc.) provide care both at the Audie L. Murphy Campus as well as Kerrville Campus. They provide primary care for Veterans 65 years of age or older with the diagnosis of memory difficulties or dementia.

VETERAN – DIRECTED HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

Veteran-Directed Home and Community Based Services gives Veterans of all ages the opportunity to receive the Home and Community Based Services they need in a consumer-directed way.

Veteran-Directed Care is for Veterans who need skilled services, case management, and assistance with activities of daily living (e.g., bathing and getting dressed) or instrumental activities of daily living (e.g., fixing meals and taking medicines), are isolated, or their caregiver is experiencing burden.

Veterans in this program are given a flexible budget for services that can be managed by the Veteran or the family caregiver. Veteran-Directed Care can be used to help Veterans continue to live at home or in their community.

As part of this program, Veterans and their caregiver have more access, choice and control over their long-term care services. For example, Veterans can:

- Decide what mix of services will best meet their needs.
- Hire their own personal care aides (which might even include their own family member or neighbor).
- Buy items and services that will help them live independently in the community.

For more information, please call: (210) 616-8202.

SOCIAL WORKERS

Social workers are assigned to each inpatient unit, to each medical team within the hospital, and to each outpatient clinic and primary care team. Social workers are highly trained to help with the following:

- social, emotional, and family problems.
- obtaining community resources such as meals and shelter.
- obtaining home services such a home health aide.
- planning your care after discharge.

In addition, VA social workers are trained in mental health counseling, and often serve as the entry point to our counseling services. Indeed, they are often able to handle most clinic patients' counseling requirements.

If you need to contact a social worker, ask a member of your treatment team or call the Social Work office at:

Audie L. Murphy (210) 617-5113

Kerrville (830) 896-2020

Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center (PRC)

The STVHCS Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center is one of five facilities in the country designed to provide intensive rehabilitative care to Veterans and Service members who experienced severe injuries (including brain injuries) to more than one organ system.

The VA Polytrauma System of Care provides comprehensive, high-quality, and interdisciplinary care to patients. Teams of physicians from every relevant field plan and administer an individually tailored rehabilitation plan to help the patient recover as much as possible. Any medically stable Veteran entitled to benefits is eligible for admission into the Polytrauma System of Care. The patient must:

- Have sustained multiple physical, cognitive, and/or emotional injuries secondary to trauma;
- Have potential to benefit from rehabilitation;
- Need an initial, comprehensive rehabilitation evaluation and care plan;
- Not require one-to-one staffing for medical or behavioral reasons;
- Not require a ventilator to breathe.

If you are interested in more information about admission to the Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or want to schedule an evaluation, contact: Admissions Intake Coordinator at (210) 617-5300 ext. 18262.

Resources



BARBER



Barber service is available in the barbershop or by making an appointment through the unit nurse for patients confined to their bed.

Services provided include haircuts and yes, shaves (although nursing will shave you as well if it's clinically indicated). There is a charge for barber services.

The ALM barber shop is in Room 037 (ground level) and is open to the public.

Please allow one day's notice for service in the patient's room.

Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

For more information call: (210) 617-5300 Ext. 16704.

The Kerrville Barber shop is in the basement room 005 (ground level).

Hours of Operation: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays: 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.;

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

For information call: (830) 896-2020 ext. 12149.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Voluntary Service manages a Volunteer Program that consists of recruitment and placement of volunteers, sponsors for fundraisers, and support for special events.

Veterans, family members, and members of the community are encouraged to volunteer. The Voluntary Service Office is continually seeking Veterans and community volunteers who are willing to serve in various positions. Volunteers serve throughout the medical center, clinics, Vet Centers, Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, our Transportation Network, and community-based programs to enhance offered services. Volunteers are valuable partners in allowing us to work diligently to enhance VA's presence in the



community and expanding employee volunteer opportunities.

Veterans benefit from donations of books, packaged new clothes, toiletries, stamps, gift cards, puzzles and other table games. In addition, contributed monies assist with crisis situations and special needs. All donations are required to be processed through Voluntary Service.

Feel free to contact a member of Voluntary Service for more information.

STXVOLSVCS@va.gov

Audie L. Murphy: (210) 617-5107 or stop by the office in Room B109.

Kerrville: (830) 792-2580 Room 021A (Basement).

MY HEALTHeVET WEB SITE

My HealtheVet is a web-based application designed specifically for Veterans



and their families. The tools available will help Veterans partner with health care providers to achieve their best possible health. All your personal data will be secure and

private in your own “e-vault”. You will be able to share your online information with anyone you designate.

My HealtheVet is a powerful tool to help you better understand and manage your health.

My HealtheVet provides:

- a. Secure, web-based Personal Health Record (PHR) patient access to personal health information from the VA Electronic Health Record.
- b. The ability to download and share personal health information using the VA Blue Button. (The My HealtheVet VA Blue Button is a feature that allows you to view, print or download your personal health information stored in My HealtheVet).
- c. Ability to request prescription refills. (You don’t have to call the number on the bottle).

- d. Access to trusted health education resources.
- e. Secure messaging (e-mailing) between patients and their VA health care teams.
- f. View key portions of you DoD military service information and electronic record.
- g. Access to tracking tools. (Record and track your health information in one convenient location such as allergies, immunizations, blood pressure and body weight).
- h. Access to personal tracking journals. (keep track of your food intake, exercise routine, distance walked, weight, etc.)
- i. View your VA:
 - i. Wellness reminders
 - ii. Clinic appointments (detailed view of clinic appointments 24/7)
 - iii. Lab and test results

My HealtheVet puts you at the center of your VA care.

To register, go to www.myhealth.va.gov .

- a. Go to right side of screen and click the green “Register” button.
- b. Complete the registration page and accept the “Terms and Conditions” and Privacy Policy. You now have access to the basic features of the program.
- c. To enjoy all the features listed above and more, upgrade your account to Premium by doing the “in person authentication” at your next VA clinic visit.



STAYING HEALTHY

There are steps you can take to stay healthy.

- ✓ Limit alcohol
- ✓ Be tobacco free
- ✓ Strive for a healthy weight
- ✓ Eat wisely
- ✓ Be physically active
- ✓ Be involved in your health care
- ✓ Be safe
- ✓ Manage stress
- ✓ Get recommended screening tests and immunizations

Immunizations

Keeping your immunizations up to date is important to your health. We recommend:

- A yearly flu shot.
- A pneumococcal vaccine at age 65 (or sooner if you have chronic health problems).
- A tetanus shot every 10 years.

Traveling overseas to countries with infectious risks? There is a “Travel Clinic” at our Infectious Disease Clinic that your PCP (Primary Care Provider) can refer you to if needed (don’t wait till the week before traveling).

Screening Exams

Screening exams are done to find out if you are at risk for specific health problems. It is important to have the following screenings:

Blood Pressure Management

- All Adults, every visit

Cholesterol Screening

- Men older than 35.

- Women older than 45.
- Anyone with a history of heart disease or diabetes or anyone that smokes.
- Yearly.

Mammogram

- Yearly for all women 45 – 55 years.
- Option to begin screening at age 40.
- Option to screen every year or every other year 55 and older.

Pap Smear (to detect cervical cancer)

- Every 3 years for women up to age 21-65 and who have a cervix (have not had complete hysterectomy) or
- Pap Smear Cytology with or without human papillomavirus (HPV) testing every 5 years.
- Stop after age 65 if other exams are normal.

Colorectal Cancer Screenings

- Everyone over age 50 through 75 at regular intervals.
 - Colonoscopy every 10 years, or
 - FOBT (fecal occult blood test) yearly.

Prostate Exam

- Men between 50 -75 should discuss this test with their provider.
- Blood Test (PSA) should be discussed.

Tobacco Screening

- Anyone who has used tobacco, at every visit.

Alcohol Screening

- Everyone who has used alcohol, at every visit.

Depression Screening

- All adults, at least yearly.

Osteoporosis

- Women younger than 65 who have a fracture risk greater than or equal to that of a 65-year-old with no additional risk factors other than age.
- All women age 65 and older.

- Patients with newly diagnosed hip, wrist or vertebral fracture that may be due to osteoporosis, especially if occurred after minimal trauma.

Pain Assessment

- All adults, at every visit.

Hepatitis C Screening

- Men and women born during 1945 – 1965, at least once.
- Men and women of all ages with risk factors, (e.g., history of IV drug use).
- Risk assessment question review: at least once.
- Periodic screening is recommended for persons with continued or a new risk for HCV infection (e.g., ongoing injection drug users).

PATIENT HEALTH EDUCATION

It is your right to get the information you need to understand your health, health problems and health care. Please take an active part in learning about your health.

- Tell us what you want to learn.
- Ask us to help you get the care you need.
- Tell us if you need special help with hearing, seeing or understanding.
- Ask us for more information on all education classes and support groups available.

The STVHCS offers a variety of ways to get Health Information so you can take an active role in your health care as a partner with your providers:

- Patient Health Educator at extension 17090 at ALM;
- Special classes for Veterans and their families (Diabetes, Weight Management, Nutrition, Alcohol and Smoking Cessation, etc.);
- Support groups for Veterans and their families; (e.g. Alzheimer's & Dementia Support Group; Cancer Support Group, Bereavement, Caregiver etc.).
- Closed Circuit TV at ALM with health care information;
- Health Education Materials available in waiting areas and from your health care providers.

VETERANS HEALTH LIBRARY

The Veterans Health Library is your online source for Veteran-focused information. It contains printable health and medication information in both English and Spanish; more than 150 videos and workbooks with text, audio and visual learning elements are available. Visit the library 24/7 at: <http://www.Veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov> or via My HealthVet at <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>

DIABETES EDUCATION



The diabetes education program will teach you how to balance food with activity, how to check your blood sugar, use a blood glucose meter if needed, and help you with your medications. Patients are scheduled for individual or group appointments.

Call Ellen Kilpatrick, Diabetes Educator for scheduling your Face-to-Face/ VVC or telephone appointment at 210-483-2900 ext. 65713.

Veterans with diabetes are encouraged to schedule an annual retinal eye exam at 210-483-2900 ext. 65713.



Carrying extra weight? Losing weight and keeping it off can be one of the best things you can do to protect your health. Excess weight puts you at risk for problems like heart disease, diabetes, some cancers, sleep apnea and can also worsen back and joint pain.

The *MOVE!* Weight Management Program is a comprehensive nutrition, behavioral, and physical activity program designed for Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system who want assistance with managing their weight. *MOVE!* can help Veterans lose weight, keep it off, and improve their health.

Enroll in Virtual *MOVE!* today!

Receive information about the *MOVE!* program and a brief introduction to the basics of weight loss. *Orientation class is by appointment only, please follow instructions below to schedule your appointment.*

ALM Internal Medicine Clinic 1G	1 st Friday of Month from 9:00-10:30am
Balcones Heights Clinic (BHOPC)	4 th Wednesday of month from 2:00-3:30pm
Kerrville Medical Center	4 th Thursday of month from 1:00-2:30pm 4 th Friday of month the from 2:00-3:30pm
Frank Tejada Clinic (FTOPC)	3 rd Wednesday of month from 11:00-12:30pm
North Central Federal Clinic (NCFC)	3 rd Monday of month from 1:00-2:30pm 2 nd Tuesday of month from 10:00-11:30am

Schedule to attend a class: call 210-949-3995

For more questions about the MOVE! program or if you don't receive a call back within 24 hours, please contact the following:

Cristina Elizondo STVHCS MOVE! Coordinator at 210-993-3576

BE TOBACCO FREE

One of the most important things you can do to improve your health and protect your family's health is to quit tobacco. Tobacco use is linked to cancers, heart disease and stroke, diabetes and lung/breathing problems. (And have you added up what a months' worth of packs cost you nowadays?) It is never too late to quit: Your chance of getting lung or mouth cancer, for instance, drops off dramatically within a year or two after you stop. The VA has resources to help you be tobacco free. **Ask your provider about help with quitting tobacco.**

The VA also has a Smoking Cessation Program! This program will help you:

- Become aware of your smoking habits.
- Recognize “triggers” and learn new ways to deal with them.
- Receive support and boost your motivation.
- Learn new ways to manage stress without smoking.
- Learn tips to limit weight gain.
- Learn how to stay tobacco free.

Team up with a Smoking Cessation Coach and a Pharmacy Expert. **If needed you may receive smoking cessation medications.** (Yes, we have medications to help you quit, but they are more effective when used in conjunction with a cessation program).

For information on virtual Smoking Cessation Classes, please call 210-617-5300 ext. 16765.

Other resources available to you: www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking,

www.smokefree.gov/Veteran

VHA National Tobacco Cessation Quitline for Veterans: 1(855) QUIT VET (1-855-784-8838). Counseling is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET.

SmokefreeVET: Text the word “VET” to 47848 from your mobile phone. You can also visit www.Smokefree.gov/VET for the Smokefree VET text messaging system.

Please Join Us for an Introduction to Whole Health

What is this Introduction to Whole Health About?

- This introduction session will familiarize you with the VA Whole Health approach to care.
- Our number one goal is that you accomplish the mission you create for yourself.
- Through our programs and services and most importantly your own strengths and abilities we will work together in a healing partnership to optimize your health and well-being with a focus on what is important to YOU.
- Transitioning from military service and life as a veteran can pose unique challenges and opportunities. We will talk about how a Whole Health approach is helpful in meeting these challenges and capitalizing on your opportunities.
- We'll also describe areas of self-care and well-being that make up all the different aspects of who you are as an individual.



What is Whole Health?

- Whole Health recognizes you as a whole person and helps support your unique answer to the question, “What would I do if my health were the best it could be?”
- Whole Health goes beyond your illnesses, injuries, or disabilities.
- Whole Health focuses on your values and aspiration, your health and well-being, and includes self-care and complementary therapies (such as acupuncture, massage, yoga, and tai chi) along with your conventional medical care.
- In Whole Health care you are a more active partner with your health team.

Dates and Times: The second Tuesday and third Thursday of every month at 10:00am and the fourth Wednesday of every month at 5:30pm.

Location: Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital on 7400 Merton Minter, San Antonio, TX 78229. **Tuesday/Thursday** orientation is located in the main hospital recreation room, B101.

Wednesday evening orientation is located in Polytrauma building on the First Floor, Room 108.

Appointments: Reserve your seat by calling 1-877-537-7348. Classes fill up quickly.

Questions and Information: Contact your Whole Health Coaches 210-617-5300 Ext. 15088.

There are well-being programs available for direct scheduling (no consult needed) by calling (210) 949-9702 (Central Scheduling): Battlefield Acupuncture; Mindfulness Meditation; Nutrition Clinic; Tai Chi; and Yoga.

For the tech savvy, there are free mobile apps available to help you on your wellness journey. You can download these and many more at:

<https://mobile.va.gov/appstore/Veterans>

- Anger and Irritability
- Ask a Pharmacist
- Breathe2Relax
- CBT-I Coach (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia)
- Mindfulness Coach App
- Mood Coach
- Move! Coach App (Weight Management)
- Moving Forward
- Parenting2Go
- PTSD Coach App
- PTSD Family Coach App
- Stay Quit Coach (Smoking Cessation)
- VA Online Scheduling
- Vet Change (concerned about drinking?)



Advance Directives

The following pages describe what advance directives are, as well as living wills and durable power of attorney. You may use the forms found on pages 91 – 97 to complete those documents if you desire (copy them or just rip/cut them out!). Notice you need 2 witnesses, and if you want it observed outside the VA too, a notary signature.



ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

It is important for you to talk with your family or significant other about health care treatments you want in case you cannot make decisions for yourself. There are several VA documents that you can fill out that will help your doctor and health care team know what treatments you want if you ever get very sick and are not able to talk or make sense to others. It is up to you to decide if you want an Advance Directive. The VA will also accept appropriate advanced directives from outside the VA. Any decision about advanced directives will not affect your access to health care or other VHA services.

A copy of the VHA Advanced Directive Form is located at the back of the handbook. Ask your provider or social worker in your clinic or on the ward to discuss with you how to initiate this process.

LIFE-SUSTAINING TREATMENT (LST)

Life-sustaining treatments are therapies or regimens that may or may not help you live longer when you may be nearing end of life, and which you may or may not want. Examples of these treatments are feeding tubes, mechanical ventilation, dialysis, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Speak to your doctor or health care provider (or they may speak to you) about life sustaining treatments.

- Do you want medical staff to use heroic measures to bring you back to life if you suddenly start to die?
- Do you want to be fed artificially if you are unable to eat and are chronically ill?
- Do you want dialysis if your kidneys stop working and you are chronically ill?

OUT OF HOSPITAL DO NOT RESUSCITATE (DNR) ORDER

An out of hospital DNR is the same order as the above inpatient order, written by you and your doctor, that indicates if you desire to die naturally. Veterans may choose to wear a bracelet or necklace to notify Emergency Medical Services staff of their desire to die naturally and not be resuscitated. If interested, talk with your VA Primary Care Provider about a Texas Out of Hospital DNR form and assistance with filling it out.

You have the right to accept or decline any recommended medical treatment. Normally, your doctor explains your options for health care and you get to decide what is best for you. But what happens if you are too sick to make decisions for yourself? Who would you want to make decisions for you? Does this person know what you would or wouldn't want? Questions like these can be hard to think about, but they're important. That's why VA wants you to know about advance directives.

What is an advance directive?

If you are ever too sick to make health care decisions for yourself, your surrogate will make health care decisions for you. You can name a specific person to be your surrogate in an advance directive, and that person is known as your Health Care Agent. An advance directive can also help your surrogate and health care team understand what medical and mental health care you would or would not want.

There are two types of advance directive forms. A **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care** is a form that you can use to name any adult as your Health Care Agent. This person will have the legal right to make health care decisions for you if you are not able to do so. A **Living Will** is a form you can use to state your preferences about treatments you would or wouldn't want if you cannot make treatment decisions yourself. It can help your surrogate and others know what your preferences are.

You have the right to complete neither, one, or both types of advance directive forms. You will not be discriminated against based on whether or not you have an advance directive, and your decision to have or not have an advance directive will not affect your access to health care or other VHA services.

Who should I choose as my Health Care Agent?

When deciding on a Health Care Agent, it's best to choose someone you trust and who knows you well, because they will be asked to speak for you if you can't make health care decisions yourself. When you choose someone, you should talk to that person to make sure they are willing to be your Health Care Agent and willing to carry out your wishes.

If I don't choose someone to be my Health Care Agent, who will make decisions for me?

If you don't choose a Health Care Agent to be your surrogate and you lose the ability to make decisions for yourself, your surrogate will be identified from this list, in the following order of priority: legal guardian (if you have one), spouse, adult child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or a close friend. If your doctor can't find anyone from this list, VA staff or a court of law will make health care decisions for you.

Does VA have an advance directive that I can complete?

Yes. VA's advance directive is VA Form 10-0137. It includes both a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care section and a Living Will section. On the VA advance directive form, you can choose how strictly you want your surrogate and health care team to follow the preferences included in your Living Will.

Does VA recognize other advance directive forms?

Yes. VA recognizes all types of legal advance directives, including VA, state, and Department of Defense (DoD) advance directives. If you have a VA advance directive, you may also have a DoD advance directive and/or one or more state advance directives. Talk with your health care team about which advance directive form is right for you and, if you do have multiple advance directives, make sure they don't conflict with each other.

Does my surrogate and health care team have to follow my living will?

Most of the time, yes. Your surrogate and health care team must try to respect your wishes. Because your living will can't cover every potential situation, your surrogate and health care team may have to interpret your wishes, especially if there is conflicting information about your wishes, or if it is unclear how to apply your wishes. Also, your health care team won't be able to follow your living will if it conflicts with legal or professional standards.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ADVANCE DIRECTIVES CONTINUED

What should I do if I want to complete an advance directive?

You can fill out an advance directive form on your own or get help from a health care provider. This might be a social worker, your primary care doctor, or your mental health professional. You could also talk to your spiritual advisor or attorney.

The VA advance directive is available for download here: https://www.ethics.va.gov/for_veterans.asp. Your health care team can also give you a copy of the VA advance or help you access other advance directive forms.

If you'd like more information about advance directives, or you would like help filling out advance directive forms, please contact a member of your VA health care team.

VA Health Care facilities may include additional contact information here:

What should I do with my completed advance directive?

If you have an advance directive, it's important to give a copy to your VA health care facility and to your Health Care Agent.

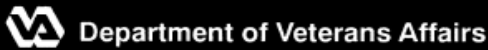
Can I cancel or change my advance directive?

Yes. You can change or cancel your advance directive at any time. If you change or cancel it, give a copy of the new advance directive to your VA health care facility and to your Health Care Agent.

Where can I find VA's policy on advance directives?

Ask your health care team to provide the policy to you, or go to <https://www.ethics.va.gov/policy.asp>.

Whether or not you decide to fill out an advance directive, it's important to discuss your wishes with others. Talk to your Health Care Agent, your loved ones, and your health care team so they understand what is important to you, so that if you lose the ability to make health care decisions, everyone will have an understanding of your wishes.



VA ADVANCE DIRECTIVE DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE AND LIVING WILL

INSTRUCTIONS

This advance directive form is an official document where you can write down your preferences for your health care. If someday you can't make health care decisions for yourself anymore, this advance directive can help guide the people who will make decisions for you.

You can use this form to:

- Name specific people to make health care decisions for you
- Describe your preferences for how you want to be treated
- Describe your preferences for medical care, mental health care, long-term care, or other types of health care

You may complete some, none, or all sections of this form. If you need more space for any part of the form, you may attach extra pages. Be sure to initial and date every page that you attach. You also must initial the sections you complete and sign the form. If you are unable to initial or sign the form because of a physical impairment, you can place an "X", thumbprint, or stamp on the form instead of your initials and signature. If a physical impairment prevents you from doing any of these things, you can ask someone else who is with you to sign, place an "X", thumbprint, or stamp on the form.

When you complete this form, it's important that you also talk to a member of your health care team, family, and other loved ones to explain what you meant when you filled out the form. A member of your health care team can help you with this form and can answer any questions that you have.

PART I: PERSONAL INFORMATION

NAME (<i>Last, First, Middle</i>):		LAST FOUR DIGITS OF SSN:
<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>		<input style="width: 10%;" type="text"/>
STREET ADDRESS:		
<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		
CITY, STATE, ZIP:		
<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>		
HOME PHONE WITH AREA CODE:	WORK PHONE WITH AREA CODE:	MOBILE PHONE WITH AREA CODE:
<input style="width: 30%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30%;" type="text"/>

Privacy Act Information and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice

The information requested on this form is solicited under the authority of 38 C.F.R. §17.32. It is being collected to document your preferences for your health care in the event that you can't speak for yourself anymore. The information you provide may be disclosed outside the VA as permitted by law. Possible disclosures include those that are described in the "routine uses" identified in the VA system of records 24VA10P2, Patient Medical Records-VA, published in the Federal Register in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974. This is also available in the Compilation of Privacy Act Issuances. You may choose to fill out this form or not. But without this information, VA health care providers may not understand your preferences as well. If you don't fill out this form, there won't be any effect on the benefits you are entitled to receive. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires us to let you know that this information collection follows the clearance requirements of section 3507 of this Act. We estimate that it will take you about 30 minutes to fill out this form, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the information you write down. A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information, unless it displays a current valid OMB control number. The OMB Control No. for this information collection is 2900-0556.

VA ADVANCE DIRECTIVE: DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE AND LIVING WILL		
NAME (Last, First, Middle):		LAST FOUR DIGITS OF SSN:
PART II: DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE		
<p>This section of the advance directive form is called a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care. It lets you appoint a specific person to make health care decisions for you in case you can't make decisions for yourself anymore. This person will be called your Health Care Agent.</p> <p>Your Health Care Agent should be someone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You trust • Who knows you well • Who is familiar with your values and beliefs <p>If you get too sick to make decisions for yourself, your Health Care Agent will have the authority to make all health care decisions for you. This includes decisions to admit and discharge you from any hospital or other health care institution. Your Health Care Agent can also decide to start or stop any type of health care treatment. He or she can access your personal health information, and medical records, including information about whether you have been tested for HIV or treated for AIDS, sickle cell anemia, substance abuse or alcoholism.</p> <p>NOTE: If you wish to give general permission for VA to share your medical records or health information with others, you can complete VA Form 10-5345 (Request for and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information). You can get VA Form 10-5345 from your VA health care provider or you can get it using a computer from this website http://www4.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-5345-fill.pdf.</p>		
A - HEALTH CARE AGENT		
Place your initials in the box next to your choice. Choose only one.		
Initials []	I don't wish to appoint a Health Care Agent right now. (Skip this section and go to Part III, Living Will.)	
Initials []	I appoint the person named below to make decisions about my health care if I can't decide for myself anymore.	
Name (Last, First, Middle):		Relationship to Me:
Street Address:		
City, State, Zip:		
Home Phone with Area Code:	Work Phone with Area Code:	Mobile Phone with Area Code:
[]	[]	[]
B - ALTERNATE HEALTH CARE AGENT		
Fill out this section if you want to appoint a second person to make health care decisions for you, in case the first person isn't available.		
Initials []	If the person named above can't or doesn't want to make decisions for me, I appoint the person named below to act as my Health Care Agent.	
Name (Last, First, Middle):		Relationship to Me:
Street Address:		
City, State, Zip:		
Home Phone with Area Code:	Work Phone with Area Code:	Mobile Phone with Area Code:
[]	[]	[]

VA ADVANCE DIRECTIVE: DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE AND LIVING WILL

NAME (Last, First, Middle):

LAST FOUR DIGITS OF SSN:

PART III: LIVING WILL

This section of the advance directive form is called a Living Will. This section of it lets you write down how you want to be treated in case you aren't able to decide for yourself anymore. Its purpose is to help others decide about your care.

A - SPECIFIC PREFERENCES ABOUT LIFE-SUSTAINING TREATMENTS

In this section, you can indicate your preferences for life-sustaining treatments in certain situations. Some examples of life-sustaining treatments are:

- CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation)
- a breathing machine (mechanical ventilation)
- kidney dialysis
- a feeding tube (artificial nutrition and hydration)

Think about each situation described on the left and ask yourself, "In that situation, would I want to have life-sustaining treatments?" Place your initials in the box that best describes your treatment preference. You may complete some, all, or none of this section. Choose only one box for each statement.

	Yes. I would want life-sustaining treatments.	I'm not sure. It would depend on the circumstances.	No. I would not want life-sustaining treatments.
If I am unconscious, in a coma, or in a vegetative state and there is little or no chance of recovery.	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>
If I have permanent, severe brain damage that makes me unable to recognize my family or friends (for example, severe dementia).	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>
If I have a permanent condition where other people must help me with my daily needs (for example, eating, bathing, toileting).	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>
If I need to use a breathing machine and be in bed for the rest of my life.	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>
If I have pain or other severe symptoms that cause suffering and can't be relieved.	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>
If I have a condition that will make me die very soon, even with life-sustaining treatments.	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>
Other: <input type="text"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>	Initials <input type="checkbox"/>

VA ADVANCE DIRECTIVE: DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE AND LIVING WILL

NAME (*Last, First, Middle*):

LAST FOUR DIGITS OF SSN:

B - MENTAL HEALTH PREFERENCES

This section is optional. You may skip this section if you do not have a serious mental health problem or if you do not want to write down your preferences for mental health care. If you have a serious mental health condition, you might want to write down medications that have worked for you in the past and that you would want again, or you might want to write down the mental health facilities or hospitals that you like and those that you don't like. If you need more space, you may attach extra pages and use this space to refer to attached pages. Be sure to initial and date every page that you attach.



C - ADDITIONAL PREFERENCES

This section is optional. In this space, you can write other important preferences for your health care that aren't described somewhere else in this document. For example, these might be social, cultural, or faith-based preferences for care, or preferences about treatments such as feeding tubes, blood transfusions, or pain medications. If you need more space, you may attach extra pages and use this space to refer to attached pages. Be sure to initial and date every page that you attach.



VA ADVANCE DIRECTIVE: DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE AND LIVING WILL

NAME (Last, First, Middle):	LAST FOUR DIGITS OF SSN:
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D - HOW STRICTLY YOU WANT YOUR PREFERENCES FOLLOWED

Place your initials in the box next to the statement that reflects how strictly you want others to follow your preferences. Choose only one.

Initials []	I want my preferences, as expressed in this Living Will, to serve as a general guide. I understand that in some situations, the person making decisions for me may decide something different from the preferences I express above, if they think it's in my best interests.
Initials []	I want my preferences, as expressed in this Living Will, to be followed strictly, even if the person making decisions for me thinks that this isn't in my best interests.

PART IV: SIGNATURES**A - YOUR SIGNATURE**

By my signature below, I certify that this form accurately describes my preferences.

SIGNATURE (Sign in ink):	DATE
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B - WITNESSES' SIGNATURES

Two people must witness your signature. Witnesses to the patient's signing of an advance directive are attesting by their signatures only to the fact that they saw the patient or designated third party sign the VA Advance Directive form. Neither witness may, to the witness' knowledge, be named as a beneficiary in the patient's estate, appointed as health care agent in the advance directive, or financially responsible for the patient's care. Nor may a witness be the designated third party who has signed the VA Advance Directive form at the direction of the patient and in the patient's presence.

Witness #1

I personally witnessed the signing of this advance directive. I am not the designated third party who signed this VA Advance Directive form at the direction of the patient and in the patient's presence. I am not appointed as Health Care Agent in this advance directive. I am not financially responsible for the care of the patient making this advance directive. To the best of my knowledge, I am not named as a beneficiary in the patient's estate.

SIGNATURE (Sign in ink):	DATE
--------------------------	------

Name (Printed or Typed):

Street Address:

City, State, Zip:

Witness #2

I personally witnessed the signing of this advance directive. I am not the designated third party who signed this VA Advance Directive form at the direction of the patient and in the patient's presence. I am not appointed as Health Care Agent in this advance directive. I am not financially responsible for the care of the patient making this advance directive. To the best of my knowledge, I am not named as a beneficiary in the patient's estate.

SIGNATURE (Sign in ink):	DATE
--------------------------	------

Name (Printed or Typed):

Street Address:

City, State, Zip:

VA ADVANCE DIRECTIVE: DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE AND LIVING WILL

NAME (Last, First, Middle):

LAST FOUR DIGITS OF SSN:

PART V: SIGNATURE AND SEAL OF NOTARY PUBLIC (Optional)

This VA Advance Directive form is valid in VA facilities without being notarized. However, you may need to have it notarized to be legally binding outside the VA health care setting. Space for a Notary's signature and seal is included below.

On this _____ day of _____, in the year of _____, personally appeared before me

_____ ,

known by me to be the person who completed this document and acknowledged it as their free act and deed.

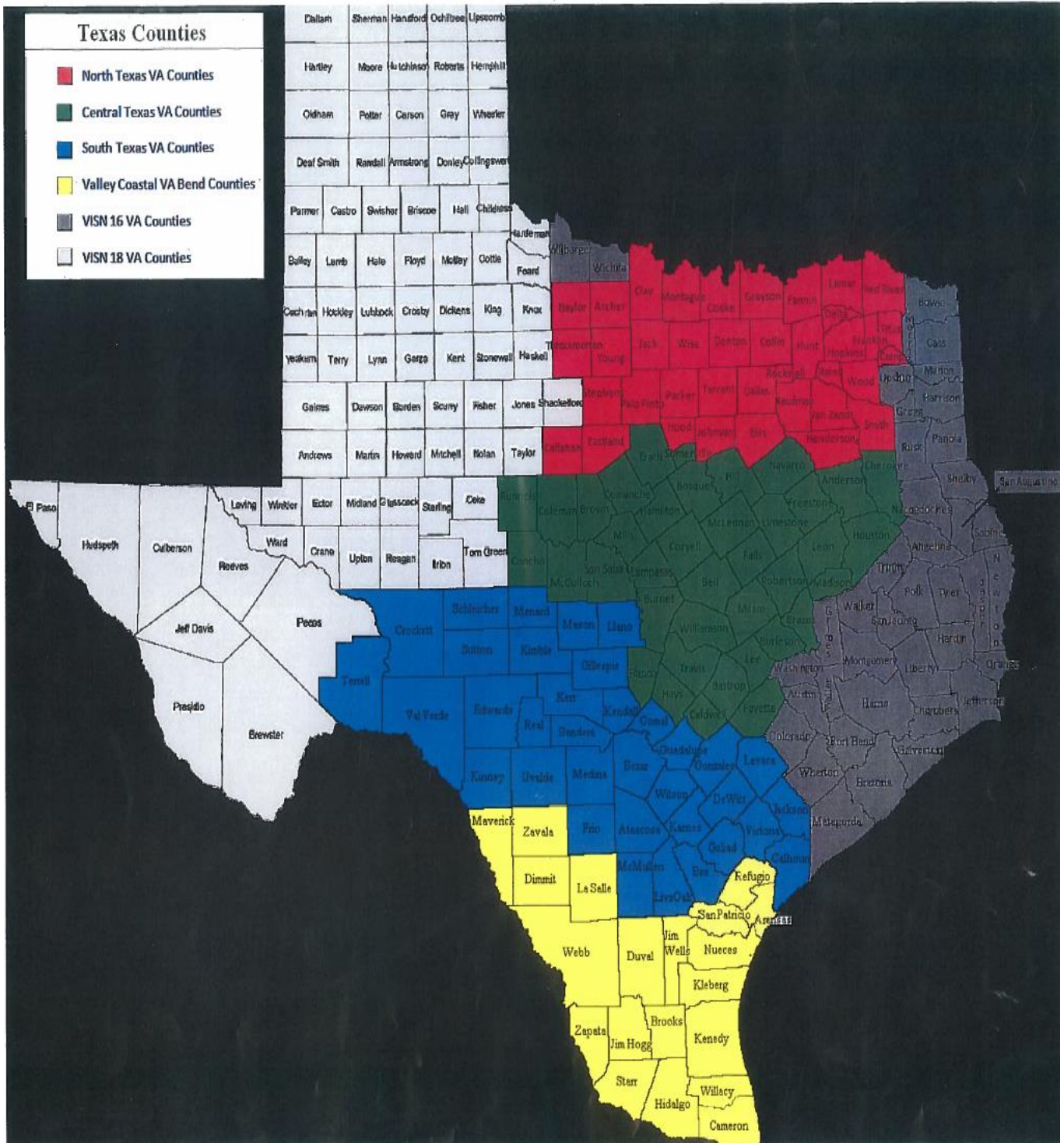
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and affixed my official seal in the County of _____ ,

State of _____ , on the date written above.

Notary Public: _____ Commission Expires: _____

[SEAL]

Texas Catchment Area (South Texas VA Counties in Blue)



Rights and Responsibilities of South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS) Patients

STVHCS aims to provide you and your family a positive experience while you are in our facilities. In the spirit of mutual trust and respect, we ask that you consider the following when entering the facility/clinic:

Reference: STVHCS Policy Memorandum 11-18-67

Patient Rights	Patient Responsibilities
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You will be treated as an individual with respect and dignity. You will not be subject to discrimination for any reason, including age, race, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.2. You will receive care in an environment free from excess noise and with sufficient light to ensure comfort and safety.3. STVHCS will seek to honor your cultural, religious, or spiritual beliefs, values, and preferences.4. You have the right to keep and spend your money and receive an accounting of any funds that VA is holding for you.5. You have the right to keep and use personal items so long as they are safe and legal.6. You have the right to have loved ones support you during your stay. However, medical staff may restrict visitors for inpatients if medical or safety concerns require it.7. Your privacy will be protected. Your health record will be confidential, and your information will not be released without your authorization unless as permitted by law. You have the right to have access or request a copy of your health records.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You are expected to treat your clinic team hospital staff with courtesy and respect.2. You have the responsibility to follow the organization's rules and regulations, limit your visitors, follow smoking regulations, and use the telephone, television, and lights courteously so that you do not disturb others.3. Threats, violence, damage to property, disrespectful communication to include sexual harassment of other patients or of any medical center staff member, for any reason, whether in-person, by phone, by email, or any other method of communication will not be tolerated.4. You should support a safe treatment environment and avoid unsafe acts as well as report any unsafe conditions.5. Tell your providers about your medical condition, medications, and medical history. Ask questions when you do

<p>8. You will be given information about the health benefits you can receive in a way you can understand, to include any costs of your care.</p> <p>9. You have the right to express your preferences concerning future medical care in an advanced directive, including designating a health care agent who can make healthcare decisions on your behalf when you may no longer be able to do so.</p> <p>10. You will be involved in all decisions about your care. You will be given information that you can understand about the benefits and risks of treatment in your preferred language. You can agree or refuse any treatment.</p> <p>11. You will be given the names and roles of your care team. You have the right to be involved in choosing your provider.</p> <p>12. You have the right to choose whether or not you will participate in any research project. Any such research will be clearly identified as such. Potential risks of the research will be identified and there will not be pressure to participate.</p> <p>13. You are encouraged to seek help from your treatment team or a patient advocate (210-949-3822) if you have problems or complaints. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process in your preferred language. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.</p> <p>14. If you believe our organization has failed to address or satisfy your concerns about healthcare quality or safety, you may contact the Joint Commission's office of Quality Monitoring at 1-800-994-6610. If you believe that our organization has failed to address concerns about suspected criminal activities, fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement, you may contact the VA Office of the Inspector General at 1-800-488-8244.</p>	<p>not understand something about your care. Let your treatment team know if you can't follow the treatment plan.</p> <p>6. You should respect the privacy of other patients, and not reveal their health information.</p>
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Please email Enelda.Romo@va.gov with your comments, suggestions or corrections or call ext. 17090