



INPATIENT HANDBOOK



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

WELCOME

Welcome to the Phoenix VA Health Care System.

Our staff is dedicated to working toward one purpose - fulfilling your needs as our patient. You are the most important person in our health care system. We welcome the opportunity to serve you.



The Phoenix VA Health Care System provides the most technologically advanced forms of health care delivery including our renowned electronic medical record. Our organization improves each day through our continuous quality improvement methods.

Our primary care clinics are based on managed care principles of health promotion and disease prevention. These programs increase the emphasis on health care delivery thus increasing efficiency and patient satisfaction.

As a member of the Veterans Integrated Service Network 18 (VISN 18), the Phoenix VA Health Care System is developing

health care approaches designed to improve sharing of health care services among VA facilities.

We hope that this Inpatient Handbook will answer any questions you may have and help you feel more comfortable during your inpatient stay. We welcome comments or suggestions concerning your hospitalization and we encourage you to fill out the VA survey forms provided. Your comments will help us continue to meet our goal of providing high quality health care to veterans.

We hope we can make your stay here pleasant and we wish you a speedy recovery.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, enclosed in a green rectangular box.

DONALD MOORE, R. Ph., MBA
Medical Center Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Telephone Numbers	4, 5
Mission/Vision/Value Statements	6
Access to VA Care	6
Admissions	6
Advance Clinic Access Appointments	6
Advance Directives	7
Assessing & Reporting Abuse	7
Automatic Teller Machine (ATM)	8
Bedside Telephones	8
Chaplain Department	8
Cleaning & Linens	8
Clinic Appointments	8
Customer Service Standards	9
Dental Department	10
Discharge	10
Dress	10
Emergency Care Services	11
Integrated Ethics Committee	11
Fire/Disaster Drills	11
Food Service	11
Guest Services	12
Home Health Care Services	12
Identification	12
Income Verification Matching	12
Infection Control/Isolation	12
Insurance (Medical)	13
Joint Commission	13
Library Department	13
Lost & Found	13
Mailing Information	13
Medications	14
Mental Health	14
Newspapers	15
Notary Services	15
Community Living Center (CLC)	15
Organ & Tissue Donation	15

Operation Enduring and Iraqi Freedom Veterans	16
Pain Management	16
Parking.....	16
Passes	16
Patient Advocate.....	16
Patient Education	16
Patient Funds	17
Patient Rights & Responsibilities.....	17-19
Patient Safety	19
Patient Transportation Service	20
Pharmacy	21
Police Department	21
Primary Care Clinics	21
Prohibited Items.....	22
Release of Medical Information	22
Respite Care	22
Restrictions	22
Retail Store.....	23
Safety	23
Service Animals for the Disabled	23
Smoking.....	23
Social Work Department.....	24
Stamp Machine	24
Teaching Hospital	24
Televisions.....	25
Travel/Beneficiary Travel.....	25
VA Help Line	25
Valuables & Personal Belongings	25
Veterans Benefits Counselors.....	25
Visiting Hours.....	26
Visiting Rules and Guidelines.....	26
Voluntary Department	26
Voting	27
Women Veterans Program	27
Notes	28, 29

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

PHOENIX VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

650 E. Indian School Road
Phoenix, AZ 85012-1892
(602) 277-5551, 1-800-554-7174

VA HELP LINE

(602) 222-6550
1-888-214-7264 (Toll-Free Line in Arizona only)
Hours: 24 Hours, 7 days a week

PHOENIX VA HEALTH CARE CLINICS

Buckeye VA Health Care Clinic
306 E. Monroe Ave.
Buckeye, AZ 85326
(623) 386-4814
Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Globe VA Health Care Clinic
5860 S. Hospital Drive, Suite 111
Globe, AZ 85501
(928) 425-0027

Northwest VA Health Care Clinic
10147 W. Grand Avenue
Sun City, AZ 85351
(602) 222-2630 or 222-2631
For appointments call (602) 222-6501
Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Payson VA Health Care Clinic
1106 North Beeline Hwy
Payson, AZ 85541
For appointments call (928) 472-3148
For enrollment call (602) 277-5551 ext. 5033
Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Show Low VA Health Care Clinic
2450A Show Low Lake Rd., Suite 3A
Show Low, AZ 85901
(928) 532-1069
For appointments call (602) 222-6501
Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Southeast VA Health Care Clinic
6950 E. Williams Field Road, Bldg. 23
Mesa, AZ 85212-6033
(602) 222-6568
For appointments call (602) 222-6501
Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

MEDICAL CENTER NUMBERS

Medical Center Operator	(602) 277-5551 ext. 0
Admissions Office	(602) 222-2621
Chaplain Department	(602) 222-6422
Clinic Scheduling.....	(602) 222-6501
Eligibility Information	(602) 222-6508
Library	(602) 222-6411
Lost and Found	(602) 277-5551 ext. 7200
OEF/OIF Manager	(602) 277-5551 ext. 3116
Patient Advocate Office.....	(602) 277-5551 ext. 7394
Public Affairs Office	(602) 200-6279
Release of Information	(602) 277-5551 ext. 2619
Registration & Enrollment.....	(602) 277-5551 ext. 6508
Social Work Department.....	(602) 222-6400
VA Help Line.....	(602) 222-6550
<i>Toll free number</i> (Arizona only).....	1-888-214-7264
VA Police.....	(602) 222-6420
Veterans Benefit Counselor.....	(602) 277-5551 ext. 7340
Women Veterans Program Manager	(602) 277-5551 ext. 6764

VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

American Legion	(602) 277-5551 ext. 6602
AMVETS.....	(602) 277-5551 ext. 6602
American Ex-P.O.W.	(602) 627-3296
Veterans of Foreign Wars.....	(602) 277-5551 ext. 7446

MISSION

The Mission/Vision and Value Statements guide our performance improvement activities.

The Mission of VA is: “To Honor America’s veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.”

VISION

The Vision Statement is: To be a patient-centered, integrated health care organization for veterans; providing excellent health care, research, and education; an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner; and a back-up for national emergencies.

VHA CORE VALUES

- Trust
- Respect
- Excellence
- Commitment
- Compassion

ACCESS TO VA CARE

If you need to obtain information regarding your medical benefits, please contact one of our eligibility clerks at (602) 222-6508.

ADMISSIONS

If you are admitted to the hospital, please bring the following:

- A list of all current medications and dosages (Do not bring the actual medication)
- Insurance card or other insurance information
- Advanced Directives/Living Will
- Personal hygiene items such as a toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, deodorant, etc.

ADVANCE CLINIC ACCESS APPOINTMENTS

Ambulatory Care is now using Advanced Clinic Access Appointments so your provider will be available to, “provide quality care for you when you need it.”

You will no longer need to come in for unnecessary visits. This allows for more available appointments when you need to be seen.

At your appointment with your Primary Care Provider, a time for a return visit will be discussed. It is your responsibility to call and schedule an appointment a month before you need to be seen. An appointment will be scheduled for a date and time that will be convenient for you and when your provider is available. If you develop a problem and need to be seen sooner, call VA Helpline 24 hours a day and a RN will discuss your symptoms. They will assist you to be evaluated by the clinic staff by sending them a message or giving you home care advice. To contact VA helpline, call (602) 222-6550.

To schedule an appointment please call (602) 222-6501.

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

(Living Will/Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care)

Recent medical advances have made it possible to maintain a person's life, in certain circumstances, by means other than the body's own natural processes. Some people have strong feelings about whether or not they would want such treatment if they were terminally ill and there was little or no hope of getting well. For example, you might consider whether you want:

- A machine outside your body to keep you breathing.
- Tubes placed in your nose or stomach to give you food and/or fluids.
- Dialysis to rid your body of waste products.

In some cases, these and other treatments are considered life sustaining. This means that under the circumstances, these treatments are not expected to improve your medical condition, but are expected to maintain you for a period of time in your current condition.

A patient must always give his or her consent for any treatment. As long as you have decision-making capability, nothing will be done to which you have not agreed.

Sometimes, however, your condition may be such that you cannot make informed decisions any longer.

Under these conditions, your family and health care providers are best able to follow your wishes if you have stated them in writing while you were still capable of making choices for yourself. Such documents are called **Advance Directives** and there are two kinds:

- A **Living Will** states that you have a terminal condition and you give permission for life sustaining treatment to be withdrawn or withheld.

- A **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care** gives your permission for a person you name to make decisions about your health care when you can no longer do so yourself.
- These decisions are yours to make.
- Our staff wants to follow your wishes.
- You can change or revoke an Advance Directive at any time.
- There are people who can help you.

We suggest that you talk to your loved ones about these choices. Let them know how you feel about such treatments. If you have questions about your medical condition and what types of treatments might become necessary, ask your physicians to give you the facts and express your wishes to them.

If you are interested, we suggest that you ask for a social worker to help you complete the forms, obtain appropriate witnesses, and place the information in your medical and computer record, or you can schedule an appointment in the Advance Directive Clinic. If you prefer, one of our chaplains will also be glad to assist you.

ASSESSING & REPORTING ABUSE/NEGLECT

Arizona State Law requires reporting when there is evidence of abuse or neglect and when the potentially abused child, dependent adult, or elder abuse case is being treated.

Arizona State Law requires disclosure to appropriate law enforcement agencies. Please talk to your social worker or provider if you have concerns regarding this.



AUTOMATIC TELLER MACHINE (ATM)

To obtain cash, an ATM is located on the first floor of the main hospital building in the Canteen Vending Room (room 1321).

BEDSIDE TELEPHONES

Telephones are available at each bedside on each medical/surgical unit. Payphones are located on the Mental Health Units, the lobby of the Emergency Department, the Ambulatory Care Lobby, the Community Living Center and the VA Gallery on the 7th Street entrance. Phones are available in the intensive care units by checking with your nurse.

CHAPLAIN DEPARTMENT

The Chapel is on the first floor and is open 24 hours a day for prayer and meditation.

Your spiritual welfare is of primary concern to our Chaplain Department staff. Our chaplains are on duty seven days a week, visit the units daily, and are available for private consultation.

The VA Chaplain Department's primary mission is to provide for the religious and spiritual care of patients and their family members. The Chaplains provide individual patient care as well as group leadership.

If you should desire a special visit, please ask your nurse to call the Chaplain Department to make arrangements. To contact the Chaplain Department directly, call ext. 6422 Monday through Friday. After hours ask the nurse caring for you to contact the Chaplain on call.



Protestant Worship Services

Sunday Worship Service (Chapel) 10 a.m.

Catholic Worship Services

Sunday through Friday Mass (Chapel) 11 a.m.

Saturday Mass (Chapel) 4 p.m.

CLEANING AND LINENS

Environmental Management Department is responsible for ensuring that your surroundings are clean and that you have an adequate supply of linens. Please help us maintain a clean environment by not keeping food at your bedside.

If you have concerns regarding the cleanliness of any area, contact the Environmental Management Help Desk at ext. 6600. Linens (gowns, robes, bath towels, and wash cloths) are provided during your hospitalization.

CLINIC APPOINTMENTS

Clinic appointments are scheduled visits. You should make every effort to keep your scheduled appointment. However, if you must reschedule your appointment, please contact Centralized Scheduling at (602) 222-6501 or 1-800-359-8262 to request cancellation and obtain another appointment.

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Staff Courtesies: We will treat you with courtesy and dignity.

Timeliness: We will provide you with timely access to health care. You may receive urgent care 24 hours a day. If you are a new patient desiring routine care, a health care provider will see you within one hour of your scheduled appointment. Some specialty clinics may take longer. If you have been assigned a primary care provider, you will be able to schedule an appointment with your provider within fourteen calendar days.

One Provider: One health care team or provider will be in charge of your care. Because health care often involves many different providers, it is important that one provider team have overall responsibility to help ensure smooth coordination of your care. This way you will know who to contact when you need help or have a problem.

Patients, please remain on the ward and near your room from 7 to 9 am each morning so that we can be sure your doctor has a chance to talk with you. It is important that you have time with your doctor each day to discuss your condition and have your questions answered

Physical Comfort: We will strive to meet your physical comfort needs. This includes help with pain management, eating, bathing, or getting to the bathroom while in our health care system. It also includes maintaining privacy during examinations and tests. We will ensure that we provide proper facilities for veterans with special needs.

Emotional Needs: We will provide support to meet your emotional needs. We encourage you to share any anxieties and fears you may have about your condition or treatment. You can

expect our staff to be sensitive to your feelings and help you throughout your health care experience.

Coordination of Care: We will take responsibility for coordination of your care. Health care can be very complicated, and many patients may need to see more than one health care professional. We will ensure that your providers communicate with each other and give you a clear plan for your care.

Patient Education: We will strive to provide you with information and education about your health care. You can also expect us to try to answer your questions honestly and in a way you understand.

Family Involvement: We will provide opportunities to involve your family in your care when appropriate. The decision to involve your family should generally be your choice.

Transition: We will provide a smooth transition between your inpatient and outpatient care. You can expect to understand what medicines you are to take, the common side effects of any of your medicines, the diet you should follow, and the activity level you can have after discharge. You can expect to know whom to contact if you need help or advice right away, and when your first follow-up appointment is scheduled.



DENTAL DEPARTMENT

Established eligibility for dental care is required to receive dental care from the Dental Department. If you are without service-connected eligibility for dentistry, and your medical condition may be aggravated or adversely affected by your dental condition, you may be evaluated and treated upon consultation between your physician and the Dental Department.

Dental Eligibility can assist you if you are unsure of your eligibility for dental care, by calling ext. 2931.

DISCHARGE

The doctors, nurses, and social workers on your unit will be planning your discharge with you. If you have any special concerns about leaving the medical center, please let them know.

When you are told you are going to be discharged, there may be certain information you need to know. A member of your health care team will supply this information including:

- What illness you were treated for.
- What symptoms to report to a physician and how to contact him or her, if necessary, after discharge.
- What activities you should and should not do.
- What care is needed for any tubes or dressings.
- What treatments you should continue at home, for how long, and how often.
- What diet to follow and what foods you can and cannot eat.
- What medication to take and how to take it.
- Any special instructions for taking your medication as well as possible side effects.
- A clinic appointment or follow-up care recommendations.

Also, be sure you have:

- A friend or family member who knows how to help you in your care at home.
- Transportation arranged to get home and to return for appointments.
- Supplies/equipment you will need at home.
- Medications you are to take home and how to get your medications refilled.
- Information regarding follow up care.

If you need a return to work statement, please discuss this with your health care team before leaving the hospital.

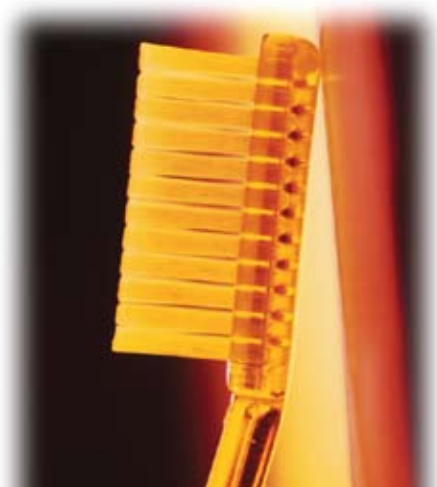
Discharge, Irregular

You may be given an irregular discharge from the health care system for any of the following reasons:

- Violation of the health care system rules.
- Leaving against medical advice (AMA).
- Leaving the premises without authorized leave (AWOL).
- Noncompliance with a treatment plan.

DRESS

Pajamas, gowns, bathrobes and slippers are provided for inpatients. You may be allowed to wear your own pajamas. If you are on a Mental Health Unit you are encouraged to wear street clothes, in accordance with your treatment plan. When you are off the unit, a bathrobe should be worn in addition to the pajamas and slippers.



EMERGENCY CARE SERVICES

- If you have an emergency outside of the Medical Center, call 911. *This is not an authorization for VA to pay for these services.*
- At the Medical Center, medical personnel are available in our Emergency Department (ED) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for urgent or emergency medical needs. You will be seen according to the severity of your illness or injury.
- If you have an urgent question, call VA Help Line at (602) 222-6550.
- If you are an inpatient, press your nurse call button for immediate assistance.

INTEGRATED ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Medical Center Ethics Advisory Committee is available to help you and your family address ethical issues related to patient care.

Such issues might be in relation to ethical issues that arise in the provision of your health care, which may include resolution of conflict, withholding of resuscitative services or withdrawal of life sustaining treatment, or participation in investigational studies and/or clinical trials.

Other issues might include personal privacy and confidentiality of information, designation of a representative decision-maker in the event that you are incapable of understanding a proposed treatment or procedure or are unable to communicate your wishes regarding care.

The Integrated Ethics Committee meets monthly and whenever the need arises. The Integrated Ethics Committee, or an Ethics Consultation Team is available for you, your family, and staff at any time by calling the Hospital Telephone Operator.

FIRE/DISASTER DRILLS

Our VA medical center has a fire and disaster plan and all of our employees have been trained for this. Practice drills are held to ensure prompt and efficient action in case of a real fire or disaster. If you hear fire alarms, be calm and follow the instructions given to you by the personnel in your area.

FOOD SERVICES

Canteen (Cafeteria)

Our cafeteria on the first floor is open from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. A wide selection of entrees, salads, sandwiches, drinks, and desserts are served. Vending machines are located throughout the hospital. The main vending area is located in Room 1321.

NUTRITION & FOOD DEPARTMENT

Meals: Good nutrition is key to good health and an important part of your treatment. Your physician may order either a regular diet or a special diet suited to your needs. A registered dietitian will visit you to discuss your eating habits, any food allergies you may have, and may suggest changes in your diet. Depending on your nutritional needs, you and your family will be shown how to continue your special diet plan at home. Visitors are asked not to bring food or snacks to patients without checking with the registered dietitian or nurse. Patients are asked not to eat foods brought by visitors or from the cafeteria without checking with the nursing staff.

Should you have a problem with your diet, please notify the nursing staff on your unit.

Meals are served from:

Breakfast: 6:45 to 8 a.m.

Lunch: 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Dinner: 4:45 to 6 p.m.



Please check with your Unit Host/ Hostess for the specific time frame your meal tray will arrive. You need to be at your bedside when meals are delivered.

If you have Special Food Preferences that need to be addressed, please ask your unit host/hostess or nurse for a “Food Preference” form.

GUEST SERVICES

There are a variety of activities available to you. Guest Relations staff will deliver reading material, cards, puzzles, games, movies, stationery, combs, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and lap robes. This service is available from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday to Friday. Please call ext. 7343 for this service.

HOME HEALTH CARE SERVICES

The Phoenix VA Health Care System is very pleased to offer home health care services (Visiting Nurse, Home Health Aide or Homemaker and Hospice) for eligible veterans. Please contact your Primary Care Provider to inquire if you are eligible or in need of a referral to home health care services. To contact Home Health Care Services directly for additional information, call ext. 6128 or 5180.

IDENTIFICATION

Upon admission to the medical center, an identification band will be fastened to your wrist. This wristband must be worn at all times. Even though you will be wearing a wristband you will notice that staff will ask you to repeatedly say your name when they are in the room to provide you some service. This wristband serves as a VA method of a second patient safety check prior to dispensing medication or conducting procedures. In an emergency, this information will be helpful. If this wristband becomes damaged, please tell the clerk on your hospital unit.



INCOME VERIFICATION MATCHING

The purpose of income verification matching is to be sure each veteran is receiving VA medical care according to the correct eligibility assignment. If your eligibility for VA medical care is based on income, you will be asked to provide health insurance, employment, and income information for yourself, your spouse, and dependents. Your VA means test is based on your prior year income and will be updated annually. Public Law 101-508 provides for VA to compare means test income data with the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration on non service-connected veterans whose eligibility for medical care is based on income. Contact Eligibility at ext. 6508 if you have questions.

INFECTION CONTROL/ISOLATION

The goal of infection control is to prevent the spread of infections among patients, staff and visitors. Hand washing is the single most important way to prevent the spread of infections. In addition to hand hygiene, standard precautions are used by all health care workers.

Standard precautions require health care workers to wear gloves, gowns, masks, and/or goggles as needed to protect themselves from coming into contact with another person's body fluids. Some diseases require health care workers to follow similar but more strict infection control procedures called isolation.

If you are required to be in isolation, you will need to stay in your room. You may have visitors but they may need to wear protective clothing when in your room. Visitors should always check at the nurses' station before entering an isolation room. Patients and visitors should never share personal belongings or equipment, or enter the room of a patient in isolation. The

staff will be able to answer additional questions you have about your type of isolation.

INSURANCE (MEDICAL)

The VA is required to determine if you are covered by an insurance policy. Please bring your health insurance card with you every time you apply for care. The VA or your insurance company will NOT bill you for any amounts not paid by your insurance, except for pharmacy co-payments and co-payments charged to Discretionary Category patients.

In 1985, the U.S. Congress passed the Medical Care Cost Recovery Act providing for the Department of Veteran Affairs to bill third-party health insurance carriers for medical care provided to veterans for treatment of their non service-connected disabilities.

Contact Medical Care & Cost Recovery (MCCR) at (602) 277-5551 ext. 2173 or the Health Revenue Center at 1-866-802-6819 for more information or if you have questions.

Please ensure that any changes to your health insurance are communicated to any clinic support staff. This includes change of address, phone and next of kin.

JOINT COMMISSION

A number of external agencies review this medical center. They assist us in our mission to provide the highest quality and safe care for all our patients. One of these agencies, the Joint Commission, has developed standards that deal with quality of care and safety issues. The Joint Commission visits our facility approximately every three years to determine whether these standards are being met. Anyone may contact the Joint Commission to let them know about quality of care or safety issues at:

Division of Accreditation

Operations
Office of Quality Monitoring
Joint Commission
One Renaissance Boulevard
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
Faxed to: (630) 792- 5636
E-mailed to: complaint
jointcommision.org.

LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

The Medical Center Library is located on the third floor of the main building in Room 3114. The library is open for you and your family from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. The library has large print books, talking books and players, and magnifying lenses, available for you to borrow. The nurse or unit clerk may request these items from the Library Department. Paperback books are also available. The library has computers for the veteran's use. Ask the Library.

LOST AND FOUND

The lost and found is located in the main building on the second floor in the Patient Clothing Room, Room C232. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

MAILING INFORMATION

Your mail will be delivered to you on your medical ward or unit. All mail received after you have been discharged will be forwarded to your home address. It is important to ensure that we have your **current** address. Mail sent to you while a patient should be addressed as:

Your Full Name, Unit & Bed #
Phoenix VA Health Care System
650 E. Indian School Road
Phoenix, AZ 85012



MEDICATIONS

If you are to be admitted, please do not bring any medications from home. Any medicine brought with you will be returned to a family member or destroyed. Your physician will order appropriate medications for you and, if necessary, medications will be furnished to you at the time of discharge. This is a legal requirement and a safety issue. We ask for your cooperation in this matter.

MENTAL HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE SERVICE

MH&BSS Mission Statement:

The mission of Mental Health and Behavioral Services is to provide effective, basic, and specialized mental health care for eligible veterans.

Hours of Operation:

Mental Health Services are offered 24 hours.

Urgent Care Services are offered:

Administrative Hours:

8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Phone Numbers:

Jade and Opal Clinics

(602) 222-2752 or (602) 222-2761

PTSD

(602) 277-5551, ext. 7449

Business Office

(602) 277-5551, ext. 6855

MHICM

(602) 277-5551 ext 6145

Substance Abuse & Homeless Program

(602) 277-5551 ext 7640

MENTAL HEALTH TELEPHONE TRIAGE

The telephone triage nurse evaluates, advises patients experiencing a life-threatening crisis situation, and refers you to a safe, timely, and effective treatment based on your condition. Your situation will be assessed for emergent needs and you will be classified at one of three levels:

- **Emergent:** may require actions such as calling 9-1-1 to immediately transport you to an emergency room. If you are having suicidal thoughts and the Mental Health team is unavailable, contact the VA Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).
- **Urgent:** signs or symptoms indicate that a condition is serious enough to warrant a physician visit within 24 hours.
- **Non-emergent or non-urgent:** non-life threatening, but may require a clinical assessment or perhaps a clinic visit in one or two days.

The telephone triage nurse is available 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday at (602) 222-2757 or 2761

MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

Your mental health care providers may include a physician, psychologist, nurse, social worker, therapist and pharmacist. They will coordinate your mental health care and provide referrals to other medical and specialty clinics as needed. You will be given scheduled appointments as needed for continued evaluation and treatment. Mental health services are offered 24 hours a day. Two patient care units provide inpatient services when needed. Urgent care services are offered during administrative hours 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and are provided by the Jade/Opal Clinic.

EMPLOYMENT REFERRAL SERVICES

Employment Referral Services works with veterans to evaluate their employment status and needs, assesses work history and suitability for employment, provides pre-employment counseling and guidance, makes referrals to agencies, employers and other appropriate professionals for optimum development of potentials of veterans.



Jade and Opal Outpatient Mental Health Clinics

Coordinates veterans mental health care and provides referrals to other medical and specialty clinics as needed, including Mental Health groups.

Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM)

Coordinates the proper care with the patient's mental health providers and arranges necessary care for patients in their homes or in community care facilities.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Treats Post-Traumatic stress disorder from combat or combat-related duty during military service.

Recreation Therapy Program

Recreation Therapy for arts, music, fitness and other crafts is done by referral only. This therapy can help patients enjoy some of life's recreation that may be limited due to disability.

Substance Abuse, Substance Abuse Residential Rehab Treatment Program (SARRTP) and Homeless program

Treats substance abusers, alcoholics and addicts, veterans with co-occurring psychiatric substance abuse issues and provides assistance to their families. It provides support for outpatients to maintain an alcohol-free drug-free life while learning and practicing new coping skills, recovery tools and allowing them to begin and continue work. The Homeless program provides alternatives to homelessness through aggressive outreach at homeless shelters, homeless conditions, soup kitchens and other places where the homeless veteran is likely to be found.

NEWSPAPERS

The hospitality team (host/hostesses) on each unit can provide inpatients

with a daily newspaper that will be delivered with your breakfast tray. Newspapers are also available for purchase in the vending room located on the first floor of the main hospital near the cafeteria. They are also available at the Espresso Cart located on the first floor of the ACC.

NOTARY SERVICES

Notary services are available for inpatients. Please check with your unit clerk or see the patient advocates.

COMMUNITY LIVING CENTER (CLC)

The CLC is a skilled nursing facility located at this VA Medical Center providing transitional and rehabilitative palliative and post surgical or restorative care. A team consisting of a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, nurses, social workers, dietitians, rehabilitation specialists, recreational therapists, clinical pharmacists and others provide care as needed. Request for admission to the CLC must be initiated by the patient's physician and supported by sufficient medical findings to meet necessary admission criteria.

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

If you wish to be an organ or tissue donor please be sure to check the pamphlet given to you on admission or check with your physician or nurse for further information.



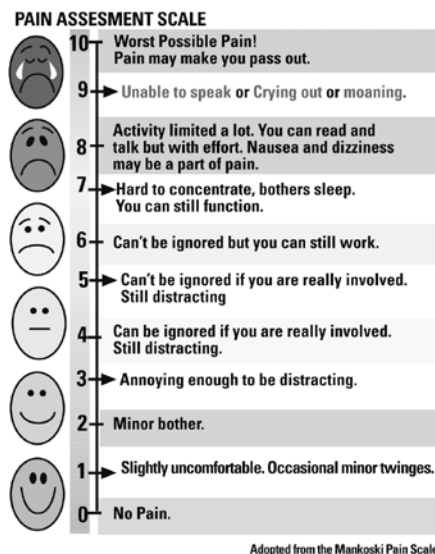
OPERATION ENDURING AND IRAQI FREEDOM VETERANS (OEF/OIF)

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides cost free health care services and nursing home care for conditions possibly related to military service to veterans with combat service after November 11, 1998, for a pay period of five years, beginning on the date of their separation from active military service. For more information please call the OEF/OIF program office at (602) 277-5551 ext. 3116.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

In order to help us determine how to help manage your pain, we need your assistance in describing your pain, identifying the location, determining the intensity, and the frequency and duration of your pain. We also need your help for us to determine what makes the pain worse and what makes the pain better. To help assess this, we use the Pain Assessment Scale.

With regard to your pain, the nurses may ask you the following questions:



- The location of your pain
- When did it start?
- What makes it worse?
- What makes the pain better?
- The intensity of the pain
- The frequency/duration of the pain

Finally, be sure to inform them about the quality/description of the pain such as aching, dullness, pressure, burning, sharpness, tightness, knot-like, crushing, nagging, numbness, pounding, and shooting.

PARKING

Parking lots have been designated as patient/visitor parking. If you are to remain overnight or for any extended period, you must acquire a parking pass from the VA Police. Our parking facilities are very limited so campers and motor homes are discouraged. Sleeping in your vehicle while parked in the VA lot is prohibited. If you are to be with us for any extended period, please arrange with a relative or friend to return your vehicle to your residence until your discharge. VA is not responsible for any theft or damage that may occur while on VA property.

PASSES

Passes allow you to leave the facility for a short period of time. Passes are only available under certain conditions to CLC and Mental Health patients. If you have a pass, you must return by the specific date and time or you are considered to be a missing patient.

PATIENT ADVOCATES

Department level patient advocates are available to assist you with concerns you may have as an inpatient or outpatient. Your complaint will not compromise your right to current or future care. Your concern will be handled in a private and confidential manner. Your questions, concerns and suggestions for improved care and service are always appreciated.

PATIENT EDUCATION

The Patient Education and Resource Center (PERC) in our library contains books, videos, models, charts, computer programs and journals

about health concerns. Please ask for a patient education brochure for a list of classes. Individual consults with specialists can be arranged through your primary care clinic. Category 7&8 veterans will have a co-payment fee for some education classes.

My HealtheVet: My HealtheVet is an internet based program created to provide veterans with one stop shopping for information regarding health, veteran news and VA benefits. The website www.myhealth.va.gov allows you to easily link to a wide variety of benefits and resources available throughout the VA and other federal resources. The website can be reached from any PC with internet access. In the Library on the third floor of the main hospital (Room 3114) there are two PCs dedicated specifically to this website and three other PCs with internet access availability for you and your family.

PATIENT FUNDS

To withdraw any funds you have placed on deposit with the patient funds clerk located on the first floor of the Ambulatory Care Clinic (ACC), ***you must first go to Clothing Room/ Patient Funds Room in C232 to get the proper paperwork for withdrawing your funds.*** You can then present your paperwork to the agent cashier on the first floor of ACC. Their hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Funds cannot be released in full after normal business hours. ***Check with your nurse*** before you leave for any other discharge instructions.

PATIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each patient has the right to:

1) Reasonable response to requests and access to treatment or service, within the medical center's capacity, its stated mission, and

- applicable laws and regulations.
- 2) Care that is considerate and respectful of your personal values and beliefs, as well as access to pastoral counseling and/or spiritual services. This includes the opportunity for you to express these beliefs to the extent this does not harm others or interfere with treatment.
 - 3) Be informed about and participate in decisions involving your health care, which include ethical issues of conflict resolution, withholding resuscitative services, foregoing or withdrawal of life sustaining treatment, end of life care, and participation in investigational studies or clinical trials.
 - 4) Access to protective services, as appropriate. You may be referred to a social worker for assistance with guardianship or fiduciary services.
 - 5) Information necessary to enable you to make treatment decisions, including expected benefits, potential discomforts, risks, alternatives, and possible results of nontreatment, as appropriate.
 - 6) Be informed about, consent to, or refuse recommended treatment to the extent permitted by law and to be informed of the medical consequences of such refusal. Refusal to participate in investigational studies will not compromise your access to services.
 - 7) Be advised of advance directives and the opportunity to execute an advance directive. You may give directions about future medical care verbally or in writing or may designate one or more persons to make medical decisions if you lose decision-making capacity. Advance directives may include living wills, durable powers of attorney, or similar documents expressing your



- preferences. You have a right to change your mind regarding any written or verbal advance directive.
- 8) Be provided reasonable privacy based upon the current physical environment and VA resources. Staff will demonstrate respect for your privacy.
 - 9) Confidentiality of information. You and/or a legally designated representative will have access to the information contained in your medical record, within limits of the law.
 - 10) Respectful, responsive care in the event of terminal illness. Care is directed to fostering your comfort and dignity, providing appropriate treatment for primary and secondary symptoms that respond to treatment, as desired by you or the designated representative; aggressively managing pain by establishing a treatment plan and providing supportive care. The staff will respond to you and your family's emotional, psychosocial, spiritual, and cultural concerns related to dying and expressions of grief. The staff will also demonstrate sensitivity in addressing issues such as tissue and organ donations.
 - 11) Expect reasonable safety insofar as the hospital practices and environment are concerned.
 - 12) Know the names of your caregivers. Staff must wear ID badges and should identify themselves.
 - 13) Present grievances without fear of repercussion.
 - 14) Timely and appropriate responses to inquiries or complaints.
 - 15) Visit and communicate with others inside and outside the medical center. Restrictions will apply, if in the opinion of the professional staff, visitation and/or communication will be harmful to other patients, visitors, or the safe operation of the medical center. Restrictions will be evaluated for their therapeutic effectiveness, explained to you and your family, and determined with their participation.
 - (a) Patients and/or designees who have a language barrier will be referred to the Medical Center Language Bank program (contact persons: Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program Manager and telephone operators) for assistance in language translation. In addition, Spanish language resources will be available in the medical center library.
 - (b) For the hearing impaired, the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) will be made available via the telephone operator. Closed-captioned videos and compatible televisions will be available in the medical center library. Patients will be referred to Audiology and Speech Pathology Department for additional assistance, such as sign language interpretation.
 - (c) For the visually impaired, large print material, talking books, and information about Braille will be available in the medical center library.
 - 16) Access the Integrated Ethics Committee to address ethical dilemmas related to your health care services. This also applies to family members or representatives of the patient.
 - 17) Family participation in your health care. In addition, you may exclude any and all family members from participating in your care decisions.
 - 18) To information about organ and tissue donation and may accept or decline the opportunity to become an organ or tissue donor.

- 19) Perform or refuse to perform tasks in or for the hospital in regard to a work therapy program.

Each resident/inpatient has the right to:

- 1) Wear your own clothing, except where this conflicts with treatment policy.
- 2) Keep and use personal possessions, consistent with local ward management.
- 3) Regular and frequent exercise as well as to be outdoors at regular and frequent intervals. Facilities and equipment for such exercise shall be provided, consistent with local ward management.

Restrictions:

You have the right to be free from physical restraint or seclusion except in situations in which there is a substantial risk of imminent harm to yourself or others and less restrictive means of preventing such harm have been determined to be inappropriate or insufficient

Medication:

You have a right to be free from unnecessary or excessive medication. If you require emergency medication for control of behavior and are deemed dangerous to yourself or to others, you should be evaluated by a physician prior to the ordering of such medication. If this is impractical, a written order may be entered on the basis of telephone authority received from a physician. In such an event, the physician must countersign the written order within 24 hours of the ordering of the medication or, if the physician is serving as Medical Officer of the Day, by the end of his/her tour of duty. The attending physician shall review the drug regime of each patient under his or her care at least every 30 days, or more

frequently if necessary. Medication shall not be used as punishment, for the convenience of the staff, or in quantities that interfere with your treatment program.

PATIENT SAFETY

Your safety is important to us and we need your help to keep you safe. If you feel anything is unsafe, please let a staff person know right away. If there is an emergency, our trained staff will help you stay safe.

The risk for you falling is the highest in your first few days in the hospital. You are at a high risk for falling, because you may be:

- Sick and feel weak.
- In different surroundings.
- Not getting the sleep you usually get at home.
- On new medications.
- Have tubes or equipment that keep you from moving freely.
- Further away from the toilet than you are used to.
- Used to lights in a different place.
- Away from your loved ones and the help they give you.

Some tips to help keep you safe:

- If you use a walking aid (cane, walker, or a wheelchair), let the staff person know.
- Get up slowly from a lying or sitting position.
- Sit on the side of the bed for a few minutes and let your feet hang down before walking.
- Learn how to use hospital equipment safely (Walkers, Wheelchairs, etc.).
- Learn your new surroundings in your hospital room and hallway.
- Do not lean your head back sharply.
- Do not lean on bedside tables, the tables have wheels and may move.

- Lean only on heavy, stable objects.
- Ask for help, by putting on your call light when you need to get up or go to the bathroom.
- Go to the bathroom before going to sleep.
- Allow plenty of time when going to the bathroom.
- Do not wear loose shoes or socks when walking. Ask for slippers with non slip soles.
- Be careful when opening doors.
- Go around corners slowly.
- If there is an emergency, our trained staff will help you stay safe.
- If you think anything is unsafe, please let a staff person know right away.
- Tell your provider about any prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, herbs, vitamins, or supplements you take at home.
- Tell your doctor about any previous allergies or medication reactions.
- Ask about tests being done; what are they for and what will they show?
- Understand all consent forms before you sign them.
- If the provider or staff uses words you don't understand ask for an explanation.

Additional safety tips for Mental Health patients:

- Tell your provider if you feel like harming yourself
- Tell the mental health clinician about your complete psychological history
- Don't leave the clinic without expressing your concerns or getting your questions answered.
- Call the provider back if you get home and realize you still have questions.

Be clear about the medications that are ordered for you:

- What are they for?
- What do they do?
- What are the possible side effects?
- When should you report side effects?
- What is the dose?
- How many hours apart should the doses be?
- Can you take different medications at the same time?

Here are some ways to help you remain safe while you are at home:

- Take your medications as prescribed
- Throw away all outdated medication

If you choose to leave hospital grounds, we strongly recommend using the established cross walks located on both Indian School Road and 7th Street.

PATIENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

The Patient Transportation Service (PTS) is committed to your safe and timely transportation within the Phoenix Metropolitan Area. This service is operated and funded through our VA to provide transportation services to our veterans who are in need of medical care. Established eligibility requirements are necessary to ensure that those who are transported meet local and federal program guidelines. For further information contact the traffic manager at (602) 200-6272. Transportation needs to be requested seven days in advance of your appointment.



PHARMACY

The Pharmacy Department is responsible for the distribution of all medication used at this medical center. Upon discharge, the nursing staff will arrange for your medications, which can be picked up at the outpatient pharmacy window from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Pharmacy Department is located on the first floor of the Ambulatory Care Clinic. The pharmacy can be contacted at (602) 277-5551, ext. 7210.

PHARMACY CO-PAYMENTS

Certain eligible veterans may be charged a co-payment. For more information on co-payments or if you have questions, please contact the Medical Care Cost Recovery office at (602) 222-6470.

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

Your medication refills will be sent to you by mail. You must order your refills since medicines are not sent automatically. To avoid running out of your medications, order your refills at least 14 business days before you will run out of medicine. You may order your refill by phone or by mail.

To order by phone, you must use a touch-tone telephone and follow the voice instructions. Call (602) 222-6598 for the Phoenix dialing area or if you are outside the Phoenix dialing area call 1-800-359-8262. You will need to know your social security number and the prescription number, which is located in the upper left-hand corner of your medicine bottle above your name. Enter numbers only, and only one prescription number at a time. Do not enter letters.

To order prescription by mail, simply return the refill slip to the Pharmacy using the address label provided. If you lose your refill slip, write your name, your social security number

and the medicines that you need on a piece of paper (include the prescription number) and mail to the VA Medical Center, Attention: Outpatient Pharmacy.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Please be considerate of others and help us maintain a quiet atmosphere. Regulations do not permit the use of loud, abusive or profane language; loud music or televisions; gambling; soliciting; bartering; selling; use or possession of intoxicants or unauthorized drugs.

If you should observe such misconduct by anyone, please report it to a unit nurse. VA Police and Security Department is located in room D106, or by phone at ext. 6420. We are here to serve and provide a safe environment.

Weapons are not allowed on federal property. Additionally, illegal substances and alcoholic beverages are not allowed.

It is a federal crime to take VA property. Your assistance is needed to ensure that VA property is not removed from the Phoenix VA Health Care System. The money used to replace VA property significantly reduces the availability of money for health care activities.

PRIMARY CARE CLINICS

The purpose of the Primary Care Clinics is to:

- Provide a complete physical examination along with a comprehensive assessment of your health status, medical history, life style, etc.
- Provide consultations with other physicians or health care providers, depending on your needs.
- Develop a treatment plan based on your examination and assessment. This plan will be developed and



discussed with you and will address acute and chronic problems and risk factors.

- Refer you to classes such as managing diabetes, weight reduction, stop smoking, and stress management.
- Provide prevention screening such as blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, etc., and evaluation and counseling on diet and exercise.

Clinic visits are by scheduled appointments. If you cannot keep your appointment, we ask that you call (602) 222-6501 to cancel and reschedule.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

VA regulations require that we take every precaution to protect the health and welfare of all patients; therefore, you are not allowed to bring the following items:

- Guns or other weapons (includes all knives, straight-edge razors, etc.)
- Ammunition
- Alcohol
- Narcotics or drugs
- Cellular phones may not be used in posted areas. Check with staff if unsure (they can interfere with the safety and operation of medical equipment and computers)
- Electrical appliances, blankets, heating pads, fans, and space heaters (no personal electrical appliances are allowed on inpatient units). Any prohibited item brought into the medical center will be confiscated and become property of the VA Police. Depending on the item, you may or may not be allowed to pick it up from the Police upon your discharge.

We take your safety seriously, please help us in promoting a safe environment by not bringing any of the

prohibited items into the medical center and by reporting the use or possession of prohibited items by anyone in the medical center to your health care provider or the VA Police.

RELEASE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION

Medical information will be released upon receipt of your written request and consent. If you wish any medical information released, please contact the unit clerk located at the nursing station or a Release of Information clerk located in the main building, first floor, Room 136B or at ext. 2619, ext. 7380, or ext. 5129.

RESPITE CARE

The Community Living Center Inpatient Respite Program offers assistance to veterans with chronic illnesses who are being cared for at home and who are regularly followed in a VA Clinic. Respite care is a scheduled short term (two weeks twice a year) admission to the CLC. The CLC offers skilled nursing care, health education, and physician availability, should problems develop. To apply to the Respite Program, contact CLC administration at ext. 6442 or a Social Worker at ext. 7777.

RESTRICTIONS

Please remain on your assigned unit. The nursing staff needs to know where you are to monitor your condition and your possible reactions to treatment or medication.

You are expected to be at the bedside for doctor's rounds, laboratory rounds, and other treatments.

Do not borrow or lend money to other patients or employees. Do not eat food brought by visitors or from the cafeteria or retail store without notifying your nurse. Patients in isolation need to remain in their rooms.



RETAIL STORE

Our Retail Store is located on the first floor Room 1322 (down the hall from the cafeteria). It is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday; and 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday. The store offers a variety of products including personal hygienic products, radios, small appliances, music, and much more. Additional services include photo developing and flowers-by-wire.

Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) operates as a self-sustaining business, at no cost to American taxpayers. Every dollar of income generated by the VCS is returned to the Medical Center to improve the quality of life for the veterans and improve the quality of the workplace for VA employees.

SAFETY

Patients on the Mental Health units are; not permitted cigarette lighters or lighter fluid. (Disregard of this policy may result in discharge)

SERVICE ANIMALS FOR THE DISABLED

Some of our veteran patients have service dogs. A service dog is individually trained to perform tasks for persons with disabilities. Service dogs are working animals, not pets. We welcome you and your service dogs. We ask everyone to respect the animals and recognize that they are working and should not be distracted for petting or socializing. If you have a service animal you need to know that there are places where your animal cannot accompany you. These places include minor surgery, general surgery, and procedure rooms, for example, where procedures are being conducted under sterile conditions. If you are scheduled for a procedure you need to make arrangements in advance for a friend to come along and take your animal until

such time that you are awake and able to have the service dog by your side. Our hospital and clinic personnel are not able to care for your animal under any condition. Please ask about this when procedures are being planned. For emergency or unplanned procedures, always have the name and phone number of a friend or family member that we can contact to come and care for your service dog.

Other than service dogs, pets are not allowed in the hospital in any area.

SMOKING

This medical center is a smoke and tobacco-free facility. Use of tobacco products is permitted only in the designated smoking areas outdoors. Should you desire to smoke, you must ask the nursing staff for permission to go to a smoking area. There are nine permitted smoking areas at the medical center:

1. North entrance of the ACC
2. Indian School Road--D wing patio (south end)
3. Director's patio
4. Canteen patio--west side
5. CLC courtyard and the CLC smoking lounge by the courtyard
6. Inside the smoking shelter at the LSU entrance
7. Building 21--west entrance
8. Building 2--patio
9. Building 4--north entrance at the table by the tree.

All tobacco products must be extinguished and placed in proper disposal containers (e.g. ash trays for cigarettes and trash cans for chew) before entering the medical center. Only disposable, self-containing lighters and book safety matches are allowed at the medical center. You are responsible for purchasing your own smoking materials. You are also responsible for storing and using the materials in acceptable locations as determined by the Nurse



Manager.

SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

Social Workers at the VA Medical Center are trained professionals who can assist you with social issues that may affect your medical or mental well-being. They can identify services within the VA or within the community that can help resolve these problems. Some areas of their responsibilities include:

- Community Liaison
- Crisis Intervention
- Financial, legal, housing, homelessness, substance abuse
- Nursing Home Placement and in-home services
- Patient advocate

Social Workers are here to assist you with any social issue that interferes with your continued health and wellbeing.

STAMP MACHINE

There is a stamp machine located in Room 1321 on the first floor of the main building in the vending machine area.

TEACHING HOSPITAL

The Phoenix VA Health Care System is a teaching hospital that combines learning and teaching with patient care.

You and every patient hospitalized here are under the care of a medical or surgical team, which consists of:

- **Medical Student:** A second or third year medical student who is observing the residents on the team.
- **Intern:** A physician, who has completed four years of medical school and has a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO) degree. On the medical ward, this is the physician who will be your primary hospital contact and whom you will see the most frequently while you are hospitalized.

- **Resident:** A physician who has completed his or her internship and is in specialist training. On the surgical ward, the chief resident is the primary contact that you will see most frequently during your hospital stay.
- **Attending Physician:** A VA staff physician, board certified in his or her specialty, who supervises both resident and intern.
- **RN:** A registered nurse is a professional trained to provide coordination of your in-patient and out-patient care needs.
- **LPN:** A licensed practical nurse is trained to provide special technical assistance to you in both their in-patient and out-patient settings.
- **Social Worker:** A professional trained to assist with non-medical problems, i.e., social issues.
- **Clinical Pharmacist:** A professional trained to provide coordination of your inpatient and out-patient medications.
- **Dietitian:** A professional trained to provide you coordination and guidance on special diet issues and nutritional needs.

Your team may also include practitioners and students from other professions, such as respiratory therapy, speech therapy, etc.

During your hospitalization, your medical team becomes your medical care provider. Your Primary Care Physician (PCP) does not participate in your inpatient hospital care. You will return to your Primary Care Clinic (PCC) after your discharge. All surgical patients will have follow-up care in the surgical clinic. The details of your hospitalization will be carefully communicated to your PCP.

We want you to feel comfortable and secure with your care. If you're uncertain who is working with you, please be sure to ask them for clarification.



TELEVISIONS

Television sets are provided for your entertainment and comfort. Televisions should be turned off by 11:30 p.m. Please notify your nurse or the unit clerk if the television in your room is not working properly.

TRAVEL/BENEFICIARY TRAVEL

Beneficiary Travel provides travel reimbursement to veterans reporting to this medical center by privately owned vehicle outside a 27-mile radius of this medical center for medical appointments and no mileage restrictions for veterans reporting to this medical center for rating appointments.

Beneficiary Travel provides transportation to veterans who are determined by their medical physician as requiring special mode transportation (ambulance, wheelchair van, stretcher van). For beneficiary travel eligibility, please call (602) 222-6440.

VA HELP LINE

We encourage you to call VA Help Line if you have new or urgent medical concerns. VA Help Line is staffed by Registered Nurses who can review your medical record and assist you to sort problems according to urgency. VA Help Line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

During regular working hours the phone will be answered locally by RN's, during evenings, weekends and holidays the calls will be answered by a contracted service.

If appointments need to be changed or cancelled it is important to call during regular working hours. For medical assistance required between scheduled appointment dates, VA Help Line nurses will communicate with your clinical provider and nurses to find solutions to meet your needs efficiently. Using set protocols, the VA Help Line nurses can give test results,

education, home care instructions, provide counseling, and advise you to call 911 for immediate care when indicated.

As with any telephone service wait time may increase during high volume calls. A wait can be avoided by requesting option 5 and leaving a message. Your call will be returned the same day.

VA Help Line numbers:

(602) 222-6550 or toll-free in Arizona 1-888-214-7264

Pharmacy issues:

(602) 222-6550, option 1

Appointment issues:

(602) 222-6501

VALUABLES & PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Because of minimum storage we recommend you bring only those belongings needed for your short stay and leave all valuables at home. Upon admission you will be asked to send money, credit cards, jewelry, and excess clothing home. The medical center cannot be responsible for loss of or damage to your personal property. In most cases, a small amount of cash can be kept for your personal needs. Cellular phones are prohibited in designated areas as they may interfere with medical equipment. Radio and television services are provided in most settings.

VETERANS BENEFITS COUNSELORS

Veterans Benefits Counselors are assigned to the Medical Center to assist you in matters concerning VA benefits such as compensation, pension, government insurance, education, GI loans, vocational rehabilitation, etc. If you need information or assistance, ask your unit staff to contact the Veterans Benefits Counselor for you. Service of-



ficers representing Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), and the State Department of Veterans Services are also available for consultation on veterans' benefits.

VISITING HOURS

Medical & Surgical Units:

1 p.m. to 8 p.m., daily.

Mental Health Units:

1 p.m. to 8 p.m. daily in the dayroom. Visitors to Mental health units are restricted to relatives and significant others. Visiting is only allowed in the Day Rooms.

Intensive Care Units (SICU/MICU/CCU):

Two members of the immediate family (or significant others) are allowed to visit for 15 minutes each hour at the discretion of the nurse manager/designee.

Community Living Center:

10 a.m. to 8 p.m., daily.

VISITING RULES AND GUIDELINES

We encourage you to be visited by family and friends except when medically inappropriate. Some basic rules and guidelines to follow include:

- Patients are limited to two visitors at any one time.
- Children under 12 years of age may visit inpatients only when the attending physician or nurse has granted permission. Children who have been exposed to a communicable disease such as chickenpox or have been ill within the last 48 hours should not visit. An adult must accompany children at all times.
- Visitors may not bring food or beverages to patients without authorization from unit physicians or nurses. Visitors are asked not to eat in patient rooms.
- Members of the clergy may visit during other than regular visiting hours at the discretion of the

physician or nurse in charge.

If you may receive visitors, you may do so in specifically designated areas only. Contact your unit staff on where to receive visitors.

VOLUNTARY DEPARTMENT

The medical center has many community volunteers who contribute thousands of hours of service each year to the medical center and its hospitalized veterans. Services include patient escort, arts and crafts, and the provision of personal hygiene items. If you need assistance with these services, contact your nurse or unit clerk.

Voluntary Department is affiliated with over 50 community groups and veterans service organizations. There are over 1,200 volunteers at this medical center to assist the patients and staff with various activities.

PERSONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

Volunteers provide scheduled and emergency courier service and they transport patients throughout the medical center, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. If you need help writing letters, making phone calls, running errands, or you just want someone to talk to or read to you, give Voluntary Department a call. Your unit staff can assist with contacting Voluntary Department.

Are you interested in helping other veterans? If you would like to become a volunteer, please call ext. 6419.



VOTING

Hospitalized veterans who wish to vote in a general election may do so by completing an application for an absentee ballot during the prescribed time frame. Absentee ballots are available from the Voluntary Department.

WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

The medical center welcomes the many number of women who have chosen the VA as their healthcare provider. Many specialized services are available as part of the Women's Health Program. The Women Veterans Program Manager is your advocate for both inpatient and outpatient services. She is also interested in hearing your feedback. Contact the Women Veterans Program Manager at (602) 277 5551, ext. 6764, if you have questions or concerns.





650 East Indian School Road, Phoenix, AZ 85012-1892
(602) 277-5551
www.phoenix.va.gov