

# South Texas Veterans Health Care System



## Patient Information Handbook

## **South Texas Veterans Health Care System**

I would like to welcome you to the South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS). The STVHCS is comprised of two medical centers, Audie L. Murphy Division in San Antonio and Kerrville Division in Kerrville, satellite clinics in Corpus Christi, Harlingen, Laredo, McAllen, Victoria and San Antonio and community based outpatient clinics throughout South Texas.

Our employees are dedicated to working toward one purpose – providing you the best possible health care. We welcome the opportunity to serve you, as you are the most important person in our medical center.

We hope that this “Patient Information Handbook” will answer most of the questions you may have and help you feel more comfortable with the services provided by the STVHCS. We encourage your comments and suggestions on how we can improve the care we provide to you. Your input will help us to continue to meet our goal of providing quality health care.



Sincerely,

Marie L. Weldon, FACHE  
Director

## **Mission**

The mission of the South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS) is to improve the health and quality of life of our patients providing appropriate, compassionate and quality care, to conduct education and research activities, and to support the Department of Defense.

## **Vision**

The vision of the STVHCS is to be the health system of choice for all veterans and all other eligible beneficiaries and to be recognized as a center of excellence and an employer of choice.

## **Values**

The values of the STVHCS are:

- **Commitment**
- **Compassion**
- **Ethics**
- **Excellence**
- **Integrity**
- **Innovation**
- **Respect Innovation**
- **Integrity**
- **Trust**

## **South Texas Veterans Health Care System**

Department of Veterans Affairs



## Table of Contents

Admission to the Medical Center	18
Advance Directives	16
Barber	26
Benefit Counselors	33
Billing (Revenue OFFICE/MCCF)	27
Chaplain Service	33
Clinic Appointments	27
Clothing	22
Dedicated Acute-assessment Rapid Response Team (DARRT)	19
Dental Service	34
Depression	14
Diabetes Education	34
Discharge from the Medical Center	18
End of Life Information	17
Escort Service for Cognitively Impaired Veterans	37
Ethics Advisory Committee	15
What do I do if I have an Ethical Issue?	16
Extended Care Services	20
Falls-Prevention of	42
Hand Hygiene	23
Identification Arm Bands	22
Infection Control	23
Laboratory Hours	28
Lodging	28
Lost items	25
Medication	23
Medical Administration Service	29
MyHealtheVet Website	31
Nutrition Service (Meals)	29
Off-Unit Notification	22

Organ Donation	17
Pain Management	15
Parking	25
Patient Advocate	34
Patient Education Resource Center (PERC)	30
Patient Rights and Responsibilities	11
Patient Travel	31
Personal Items	22
Pharmacy	35
Police Notification Procedure	41
Primary Care	35
Prohibited Articles	21
Recreation	35
Release of Information	32
Respiratory Therapy	36
Restraints	41
Safety	39
Social Workers	36
Spinal Cord Injury Unit	36
Staying Healthy	42
Telecare Services	32
Telecommunication Device for the Deaf	37
Telephones	25
Valuables	21
VA Shuttle Service	27
Veterans Canteen Retail Store and Food Court	32
Visiting Hours	26
Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST)	37
Voluntary Service	38
Weight Management	42
Women Veterans Program	38

**South Texas Veterans Health Care System**  
**Audie L. Murphy Division (ALMD) Medical Center**



7400 Merton Minter Blvd.                      Emergency Open 24 hours  
San Antonio, TX 78229

Phone: **(210) 617 5300**

Toll free: **(866) 560 6773**

**Kerrville Division (KD) Medical Center**



3600 Memorial Blvd.                      Urgent Care open 24 hours  
Kerrville, TX 78028

Phone: **(830) 896 2020**

Toll Free: **(866) 487 1653**

## Frank M. Tejada VA Outpatient Clinic



5788 Eckhert Rd.

San Antonio, TX 78240

Phone: **(210) 699 2100**

## South Bexar Outpatient Clinic



4610 East Southcross Blvd. Suite 100

San Antonio, TX 78222

Phone: **(210) 648-1491**

## North Central Federal Health Clinic



17440 Henderson Pass

San Antonio, TX 78232

Phone: **(210) 483 2900**

## Victoria VA Outpatient Clinic



1502 East Airline, Suite 40

Victoria, TX, 77901

Phone: **(361) 582 7700**

### **Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC)**

**Note:** STVHCS Fee Services Section must assign Veterans a contract CBOC. Prior to seeking care, please call the following: CBOC care in the San Antonio Area: Call **(210) 949 3453**. All other CBOC care: Call **(210) 949 3753**. You can also call the Telecare Nurse for information about CBOCs in your area at (210) 949 3994 or from anywhere in Texas (888) 686 6350.



## Frequently called Numbers or Extensions

	<b>San Antonio</b>	<b>Kerrville</b>
Main Hospital Number	(210) 617 5300 Toll free (877) 469 5300	(830) 896 2020
Telecare (Health Information 24 hours/day)	(210) 949 3994 Monday – Friday (Days)	Toll Free (888) 686 6350 Weekends, after hours & holidays
Automated Medication Refill Program	(800) 209 7377	(800) 209 7377
Admissions	Ext 14800	(830) 792 2512
Agent Cashier	Ext 15995	(830) 792 2550
Appointments/Scheduling	Ext 15173	(830) 792 4444
Beneficiary Travel	Ext 15999	(830) 792 2418
Billing/Insurance Information	Ext 15269	(830) 792 2435
CHAMPVA	(210) 616-8130	(210) 616-8130
Chaplain	Ext 15441	(830) 792 2542
Dental	(210) 949-8900	(830) 792 2461
Disabled American Veterans	Ext 15189	(830) 792 2509
Eligibility	Ext 15184	(830) 792 2514
Home Health & Extended Care	(210) 617 5115	(830) 792 2645
Laboratory	Ext 14996	Ext 12330

**San Antonio****Kerrville**

Medical Administration	Ext 15137	Ext 12113
Palliative Care	(210) 617 5115	(830) 7922484
Paralyzed Veterans of America	Ext 15275	Call ALMD 15275
Patient Representative	Ext 1514	(830)792 2414
Pharmacy	Ext 15174	(830) 792 2422
Police	Ext 15224	(830) 792 2520
Release of Information	Ext 15610	(830) 792 2503
Respiratory Therapy	Ext 14877	Ext 12249
Shuttle	Ext 15999	Ext 12418
Social Work	Ext 15113	(830) 792 2462
Texas Veterans Commission	Ext 15175	(830) 792 2553
TRICARE	(210) 616-8408	(210) 616-8408
Voluntary Service	Ext 15107	(830) 792 2580
Women Veterans Program	Ext 68181	Ask operator to page Janeth Del Toro



## **Patient Rights and Responsibilities**

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.

### **Respect and Nondiscrimination**

- You have the right to be free from mental, physical, sexual and verbal abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- You will be treated with dignity, compassion and respect as an individual.
- Your privacy will be protected. You will receive care in a safe environment. We will seek to honor your personal and religious values and beliefs.

- You or someone you choose have the right to keep and spend your own money. You have the right to receive an accounting of VA held funds.
- Treatment will respect your personal freedoms. In rare cases, the use of medication and physical restraints may be used if all other efforts to keep you or others free from harm have not worked.
- As an inpatient or long-term care resident you may wear your own clothes and keep personal items. This depends on your medical condition.
- As an inpatient or long-term care resident, you have the right to social interaction, and regular exercise. You will have the opportunity for religious worship and spiritual support. You may decide whether or not to participate in these activities.
- As an inpatient or long-term care resident, you have the right to communicate freely and privately. You may have or refuse visitors. You have access to public

telephones. You may participate in civic rights.

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

### **Information Disclosure and Confidentiality**

- You will be given information about the health benefits that you can receive. The information will be provided in a way you can understand.
- You will receive information about the costs of your care, if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying for your portion of the costs associated with your care.

- Your medical record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your consent unless authorized by law (i.e. State public health reporting). You have the right to information in your medical record and may request a copy of your records. This will be provided except in rare situations where your VA physician feels the information will be harmful to you. In that situation, you have the right to have this discussed with you by your provider.
- You will be informed of all outcomes of care, including any injuries caused by your medical care. You will be informed about how to request compensation for injuries.
- Informed consent is obtained.
- Consent is obtained for recording or filming made for purposes other than the identification, diagnosis, or treatment of the patients.

### **Participation in Treatment Decisions**

- You and any persons you choose will be involved in all decisions about your care. You will be given

information you can understand about the benefits and risks of treatment. You will be given other options. You can agree to or refuse treatment. Refusing treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you have the responsibility to understand the possible results to your health. If you believe you cannot follow the treatment plan you have a responsibility to notify the treatment team.

- As an inpatient or long-term resident, you will be provided any transportation necessary for your treatment plan.
- You will be given, in writing, the name and professional title of the provider in charge of your care. As a partner in the healthcare process, you have the right to be involved in choosing your provider. You will be educated about your role and responsibilities as a patient. This includes your participation in decision-making and care at the end of life.
- Tell your provider about your current condition, medicines

(including over the counter and herbals) and medical history. Also, share any other information that affects your health. You should ask questions when you don't understand something about your care. This will help in providing you the best care possible.

- You have the right to have your pain assessed and to receive treatment to manage your pain. You and your treatment team will develop a pain management plan together. You are expected to help the treatment team by telling them if you have pain and if the treatment is working.
- You have the right to choose whether or not you will participate in any research project. Any research will be clearly identified. Potential risks of the research will be identified and there will be no pressure on you to participate.
- You will be included in resolving any ethical issues about your care. You may consult with the Medical Center's Ethics Committee and/or other staff knowledgeable about health care ethics.

- If you or the Medical Center believes that you have been neglected, abused or exploited, you will receive help.

### **Complaint**

- You are encouraged and expected to seek help from you treatment team and/or patient advocate if you have problems or complaints. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process available to you. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.
- You have a right to access protective and advocacy services. Contact Social Services for a list of advocacy groups available.

If you are concerned that your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint to VHA or to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with VHA you may contact your VA health care facility Privacy Officer, the VHA Privacy Officer, or VHA via <http://www.va.gov> or dial 1-877-222-8387. Complaints do not have to be in writing, though it is recommended.

You will not be penalized or retaliated against for filing a complaint.

### **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 your used to
- Restless or irritable
- Like no one loves you
- Like life is not worth living

**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!**

## 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.

Tell your healthcare provider:

- How much it hurts;
- Where it hurts;
- How the pain feels...sharp, dull, burning, aching or tingling;
- When the pain started;
- What makes the pain better;
- What makes the pain worse;
- Whether the pain is constant or whether it comes and goes;
- How the pain affects your daily life;
- Past treatments for pain.

### Pain Care Bill of Rights

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

- Pain management will be part of your treatment plan;
- Information about pain;
- Information about different methods of pain relief.
- Dedicated pain relief specialists who provide appropriate state of the art pain management

- Concerned health care providers who are committed to pain prevention and management and respond quickly to your reports of pain and who believe your reports of pain.

### Remember to Use the Pain Scale

**0 - no pain - 10 - worst possible pain**

**0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**



## Ethics Advisory Committee

### What are Ethical Issues?

Ethical issues can occur when we express our values or morals about health care. People who work in the health care profession notice that they occur when we make important decisions. We especially notice that they occur when we make decisions about:

- Informed Consent;
- End of Life decisions;
- Appropriate management of pain;
- Decisions to withhold and/or withdraw life-sustaining treatment;

- Decisions to accept or reject treatment (drug therapy);
- Chemotherapy, feeding tubes, operations;
- Decisions about 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.

### **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. The On-Call Ethics Team Member can be contacted through the operators at:

**Audie L. Murphy (210) 617-5300**  
**Kerrville Division (210) 896-2020**  
**Living Will**

A Living Will allows you to tell your doctor what treatments you want if you cannot talk or make decisions. For example:

- Do you want medical staff to use heroic measures to bring you back to life if you suddenly 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 Order**

An Out of Hospital DNR is the same order written by you and your doctor that states that you desire to die naturally. Veterans usually buy a bracelet or necklace that they wear so that Emergency Medical Services staff will know that they desire to die naturally and not be resuscitated. Talk with your VA Primary Care Provider about a Texas Out of Hospital DNR form and how to fill it out. **Note:** A copy of the VHA Advance Directive



Form is located at the back of the handbook.

### **Life-Threatening Emergency Care**

In Behavioral Health and Long Term Care Settings emergency care, to include first aid and basic life support (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) will be provided within the hospital system. You will be treated immediately on the unit to which you are assigned. If you require a higher level of care, you will be transferred to an acute medical/critical care unit or the Urgent Care Department at your facility or another organization as appropriate.

### **“End of Life” Information**

For information on burial benefits such as VA cemeteries, headstones, burial flags, transportation & reimbursement of expenses contact the VA Detail Office:

**Audie L. Murphy**

(210)617-5300 ext. 15656

**Kerrville**

(830) 896-2020 ext. 12113

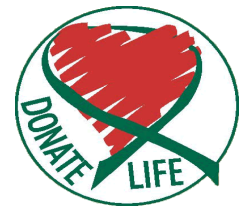
### **Organ Donation**

Veterans Health

Administration Policy

supports the Veteran’s

right to be an organ donor. Routinely you will be 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.

**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 the Organ Donor Referral Line at 1-800-275-1744.**

**Admissions to the Hospital**

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 just the right person to address your needs.

**Audie L. Murphy (ALMD)**

Monday - Friday 8AM - 4:30 PM

Go to Station 6 (first floor near the Urgent Care/Triage area)

After-hour Admissions

Go to Station 1 (first floor near the Urgent Care/Triage area)

**Kerrville Division Admissions:**

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

**Discharge from the Medical Center****Patient Discharge Planning**

We realize that one of the first things most people think about when they're admitted is when they 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 from the hospital. 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 that this date may change depending on your progress, test results, etc. You will be given written discharge instructions on the day of your departure. These discharge instructions will include information on:

- Medications that you are to continue or to begin taking after you leave the hospital;
- Special instructions on how to care for yourself when you leave the hospital;
- Follow-up care, such as doctor appointments or therapy.

**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**

- **Discharge time is typically 11:00 AM.** We appreciate your assistance in respecting this time schedule to enable your room to be ready for the next patient.
- Make sure you have all of your personal belongings.
- Please let your nurse know if you need help arranging transportation.
- Be sure to stop at the nurse's desk and let the staff know that you are leaving at the time of discharge.
- The phone number of the Telecare nurse in case you have questions.

### **After you go home**

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

### **Dedicated Acute-assessment Rapid Response Team (DARRT)**

Communicating effectively with patients and families is very important to South Texas Veterans Health Care System. When families see a change in the patient's condition, for example something just doesn't seem right, the patient or family can call for the DARRT team. DARRT stands for "Dedicated Acute-assessment Rapid Response Team." This is what you are to do:

- 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).

- Hang up the phone when finished speaking to the operator.

This is what you can expect to happen:

- A Registered Nurse from the ICU and a Respiratory Therapist will respond within 10 minutes.
- They will be able to help the patient.
- They may transfer the patient to ICU if needed or they will assist the patient where they are.

South Texas Veterans Health Care System seeks and respects input from patients and family members. Thank you for your assistance providing the best care to veterans.

## **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.

**1. Home Health Care:** If you need skilled care in the home, the doctor may write an order for the VA to arrange home health care. This is usually needed when you have a wound that you need to learn to take care of, need to be educated about a new disease or have a health problem than needs to be monitored. Medicare provides the best home care benefits for most Veterans. If you don't have Medicare benefits, the VA can provide services through other funding.

**2. Home Based Care:** This is a program that offers clinic staff to make visits in your home. The nurse, social worker, rehabilitation therapist, dietitian or physician can come to your home. This program is for veterans who have a very difficult time getting to clinic. In addition, there is an Adult Day Health Care for veterans who need a special team to help adjust to chronic illness and re-integrate into community care.

**3. Nursing Home Care:** 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 the VA's nursing home care units or to a community nursing home.

**4. Palliative Care:** Veterans who have severe symptoms from chronic illness or those who have a terminal illness may be referred to our Palliative Care Program. Palliative care is a special kind of care that provides support for people in the final phase of a terminal illness. Palliative Care helps patients to live their last days with dignity and quality at home or in a home-like setting.

**For more information about  
discharge planning call:  
Audie L. Murphy (210) 617 5115  
Kerrville (830) 792 2484**

### **Valuables**

You are advised to keep all valuables at home. The Medical Center is not responsible for money or other valuables that you might bring and store in your room. We ask that you keep no more than \$10 cash on hand. Any additional money should be deposited with the Agent Cashier, Monday through Friday except holidays. If you are unable to go to the

Agent Cashier, ask a staff member to contact the Agent Cashier:

**Audie L. Murphy** extension 15999

**Kerrville** extension 12250

**Financial Transactions** are made by obtaining a withdrawal slip from the Travel Clerk located at **ALM Room 113 and KD Room 146C.**

The Agent Cashier may cash the following:

- U.S. government checks;
- Traveler's checks;
- Certified checks drawn in your name;
- Cashier's checks;
- Postal, telegraphic or bank money orders;
- Checks and money orders must be endorsed in the presence of the Agent Cashier;
- Personal checks require clearance from the bank, which usually takes two weeks.

### **Prohibited Articles**

Patients are prohibited from possessing alcoholic beverages, narcotics, firearms, cameras, ammunition, knives, other



weapons, lighter fluid, non-safety matches, straight-edge razors and medicine not prescribed by a health care provider or medicine from home. Patients possessing any type of weapon are required to turn them over to the Medical Center Police Service located in the main lobby. Electrical appliances are not permitted except under unusual circumstances and must be inspected prior to use.

## **Clothing**

All medical and surgical patients are expected to wear VA provided pajamas, robe and slippers or shoes. Patients on the Transitional Care Units, Extended Care Treatment Center, and Psychiatry are permitted and encouraged to wear their personal clothing unless otherwise indicated. All patients are asked to keep one set of clothing and footwear with them for discharge. Have personal items with you when you check in such as tooth brush, shaving kit, deodorant and toiletries.

**If you are unable to provide your own toilet articles or other necessities, contact your nurse.**

## **Identification Arm Bands**

Upon admission, you will be given an ID wristband. Please wear your wristband at all times. Lost ID wristbands should be reported to the health care team right away.

## **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.

## **Personal Items**

You will be assigned a small clothing locker on the unit. If possible, mark your possessions with your name. Items that do not fit into the locker should be sent home or stored in the Patients' Clothing Room. Valuables should be turned in for safekeeping in the Patients' Clothing Room or sent home. The hospital cannot be responsible for any valuables you keep with you on the unit.

## Medications

- Tell your doctor about any medications you are taking.
- If you brought medications with you, the admitting clerk will give the medications to a relative or significant other so that they can be taken home. All medications not taken home will be destroyed.
- All medications will be ordered by your doctor and given to you by a nurse while in the hospital.
- It is important that you are at your bedside to receive medications.
- During admission to the hospital, your medications might change. After discharge you should take only those medications prescribed by your doctor as part of your discharge treatment plan. Be sure to read the labels carefully. Take the medicines as directed and do not stop taking the medicine without medical advice.

## 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 and appreciated.

**Hand Hygiene** is the best way to stop the spread of germs. Washing hands with soap and water and/or using 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 wash their hands 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.



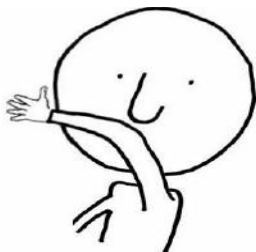
## Respiratory Etiquette Program

**Stop the spread of germs that make you and other sick!** If you seek care in the STVHCS and have a cough, the hospital staff will ask you to do the following:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze;



- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands;



- Put your used tissue in the trash can;



- Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing;
- Wash with soap and water or;



- Clean with alcohol based hand cleanser.



**Note:** You may be asked to put on a surgical mask to protect others.



Please let family and friends know that 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 that are in the hospital, please ask your nurse or ask to speak to an Infection Control Professional.



## Parking at STVHCS



### At San Antonio (ALMD):

- Valet parking is available at no charge (tipping is not allowed). Drive your car to the main entrance of ALMD and an employee will assist you.
- Also, a courtesy passenger cart is available in the ALMD parking lot if you chose to park your own car. The carts pick up anyone wanting a ride and deliver them to the main entrance and the ECTC entrance.
- There is no parking space available at ALMD 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 ALMD at ext. 15168.

### At Kerrville (KD):

- Both short term and long term parking is available at the Kerrville Division. Check with the VA police by the main elevator on first floor of KD or call ext. 12162 or 12210.

## Lost items

If you are admitted to the medical center, contact your nurse if you have lost something. He/she will provide you with instructions. If you are an outpatient and have lost something, check with the information window in the front lobby of ALMD or the operator at the KD.

## Telephones



You may receive calls at your bedside phone between 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. each day. Patients with disabilities or special needs should contact their nurse. There is no charge for local calls.

### Audie L. Murphy Division

Local calls: Dial 9 + number

Long distance:

Dial 9 + 0 + area code + number

### Kerrville Division

Local calls: Dial 7 + number

Long Distance:

Dial 9 + your phone company

## 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 infringes on others' rights, safety, or is medically or therapeutically contraindicated. 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 make exceptions based on age, the patient's best interest, impact on other patients, and the safety of the minor.

### **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. to 8:30 p.m.

Weekends and Holidays- 1:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Friends may visit in the dayroom or designated areas. **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.

## **STVHCS Services**

### **Barber**

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



**ALMD** barber shop is located in Room 038 (ground level) 7:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

**KD Barber** shop is located in room 005 (ground level) Tuesday and Thursday 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

### **Billing (Revenue Office/MCCF)**

The mission of the VA Medical Care Cost Fund (MCCF) Program is to maximize the recovery of 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 non-service-connected conditions
- Recover co-payments for medications from certain veterans for treatment of non-service-connected conditions.

If you have any questions about VA billing activity, contact the Revenue Office at 210-616-8100. Office Hours are: 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

### **VA Shuttle Service**

A no charge VA shuttle runs between Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital and the Kerrville VA Hospital. Others shuttles run between FTOPC, Villa Serena, and the Outpatient Clinics and Audie L. Murphy Hospital. The shuttle is for patients who are receiving care.

For more information contact your local VA facility.

### **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 earlier than 15 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.

**Don't "walk-in" to the clinic without an appointment.** If you have an emergency, go the nearest emergency room. If you feel that you need to be seen before your scheduled appointment, you can call the Telecare nurse or your primary care nurse for advice. Telecare nurses are available 24 hours a day at **1-888-686-6350** or in **San Antonio call 210-949-3994.**

### **Interpreter Services**

A list of VA staff members is available who are fluent in a variety of languages and American Sign Language. Please ask your health care team if you or your family need the services on an interpreter.

### **Laboratory Hours for Outpatients**



#### **Audie L. Murphy**

7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

#### **Frank Tejada OPC**

7:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m. Monday - Friday

#### **Kerrville**

7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

### **Lodging**

Lodging is available under certain circumstances.

#### **1. Lodgers must:**

- Medically clear through Emergency Department
- Obtain written clearance (lodging ticket) from ALMD
- Present lodging ticket at the hotel desk with ID upon check-in.

#### **2. Only patients living outside a 50-**

**mile radius of the ALMD or KD are**

**eligible for lodging. Exception:**

Patients scheduled for outpatient surgical or medical procedures the following day may be lodged for one night when medically indicated.

3. Lodging is only prior to scheduled appointments and is usually only for one night.

### **Exception to the one night stays for lodging**

- Patients scheduled for outpatient surgical or medical procedures may be lodged one night prior to the procedure and one night following the procedure.
- Radiation and chemotherapy patients who meet the eligibility requirements may lodge more than one night.

4. When a patient is in need of lodging contact the following:

- Admitting Office on first floor, station “6” at ALMD
- Admissions area at KD

### **Medical Administration Service**

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

- Eligibility for care
- Agent Orange Registry
- POW Registry
- Nuclear Testing Examination

- Eligibility Reform Act
- Change of address
- Update Next of Kin List
- Release of information for your medical records

**Eligibility Questions:** contact a Health Benefits Advisor.

**Audie L. Murphy** – first floor, Station “7” extension 15184

**Kerrville** - first floor, Room 112 extension 12123

### **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.
- 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.

## Food Preference Program

Audie- 949-FOOD (3663)

## 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 healthcare as a partner with your providers:

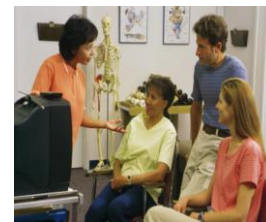
- Patient Health Educator at extension 17090 at ALMD;
- Special classes for veterans and their families (Diabetes, Weight

Management, Nutrition, Alcohol and Smoking Cessation, etc);

- Support groups for veterans and their families;
- Closed Circuit TV at ALMD with health care information;
- Health Education Materials available in waiting areas and from your healthcare providers.

### Patient Education Resource Center (PERC)

The PERC is a place where a wide variety of health, wellness and medical



information is available for both the veteran patient and their families. The entire center is dedicated to patient health education and general resources. Our goal is to provide access to current health information.

#### Where is the PERC located?

The PERC is located on the 3rd Floor, D304.3A. Hours of operation are between 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday – Friday except federal holidays. If you cannot visit the PERC, call us at 210-949-9250 or toll free at 1-877-469-5300 ext. 19250 and we can mail or fax you information.

## How can the PERC help you?

- Staff is available to assist you in obtaining and answering health related questions.
- Pamphlets are available on a wide variety of health topics.
- Online access to health information.
- Quick access to medication information
- Health videos
- Current magazines
- Local newspapers

Patients or family members are encouraged to ask the PERC staff for assistance in locating health-related information. Web-based medical and drug information databases are used to provide information requested by patients. My HealthVet Computers are located in the PERC.

## My HealthVet Web Site



**My HealthVet** is a web-based application designed specifically for veterans and their families. The tools

available will help veterans partner with healthcare providers to achieve their best possible health. All your personal data will be secure and private in your own eVault. And you will be able to share your online information with anyone you designate. Today's healthcare is really a strategic partnership between patients and providers. My HealthVet is a powerful tool to help you better understand and manage your health. It is a powerful tool for sharing information with your family, with your caregivers, with anyone you choose. My HealthVet puts you at the center of your VA care. The My HealthVet (MHV) web site is located at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).

## Patient Travel

Certain veterans are eligible for travel cost reimbursement. If you have any questions or would like to file a claim, Beneficiary Travel is located at:

- Audie L. Murphy first floor by the Agent Cashier, Room X113, ext. 15603
- Kerrville first floor in Room 146C, 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 file, you will need to complete the appropriate form.

- **ALMD** - Release of Information is located on the first floor, room Q106, in the Medical Administration Offices, extension 15610
- **KD** - Release of Information is located in main building, extension 12122.

## Telecare Services



The VA now offers telephone advice services to veterans 24 hours a day, 65 days a year. 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 will

tell you how to treat the problem at home. The VA TeleCare Nurse can also give you advice, information, 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**

## Veterans Canteen Retail Store And Food Court

**ALMD  
Retail Store**

**(1st Floor Lobby Area)**

7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

**Weekends & Veterans Day Hours:**

8:00a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

**Food Department**





Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Monday through Friday

Weekend Hours:

8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Vending machines are open 24 hours a day.

### **Kerrville**

#### **Retail Store (Basement)**

Hours: 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.

## **People who can help you at the STVHCS?**

### **Benefits Counselors**

Veteran's Benefits Counselors and Texas State Veterans Affairs

Counselors are available to visit with veterans and their families: At **Audie L. Murphy** the counselors visit the units Monday through Friday to see each new patient. You may also visit their offices on the first floor. At

**Kerrville**, the Texas Veterans Commission is in the main building on

the third floor, room #336. Phone number is 830 792 2553.

## **Chaplains**

Chaplains are available for spiritual visits

Monday through Friday

and for urgent needs seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Services of

worship are provided in the hospital chapel. The times of Services are

announced on the Chapel Bulletin

Board. Family and friends may attend with you. Hospital clothing is proper

dress for all services. Although

chaplains visit the units and outpatient clinics frequently, you may see any of

the chaplains in their offices or you

can request a chaplain by contacting any staff person.

### **Audie L. Murphy**

Sunday services are televised on

Channel 13, Protestant Worship

Service at 9:45 a.m. and Mass at 11

a.m. Religious literature may be

obtained in the main Chapel, located on the second floor.

### **Kerrville**

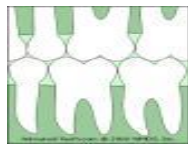
Worship services are provided in the hospital chapel located on the ground



level of the main building. The Chapel Bulletin Board maintains a current listing of Chaplain Service activities. Protestant Service is at 9 a.m. and Catholic Mass at 11:00 a.m. Religious literature may be obtained in the chapel.

### **Dental Service**

The STVHCS Dental Service provides a full range of dental treatment to **eligible** veterans.



#### **ALMD Dental Clinic**

(210) 949-8900

#### **Frank Tejada Outpatient Clinic**

(210) 699 2100 ext 13104

#### **Kerrville Division**

(830) 896 2020 ext 12194

### **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 and help you with your medications.



Patients are scheduled for individual appointments. In addition, there is a

1-day class from 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. every Tuesday in the Patient Classroom in 1G at the Audie L. Murphy Hospital.

**For an appointment please call**

**Barbara Walz, RN, CDE**

**(210) 617-5300 ext. 16754**

### **Diabetes classes at the STVHCS**

#### **Outpatient Clinics**

Most of the outpatient clinics have diabetes classes. Please contact the outpatient clinics for dates and times.

### **Patient Advocate**

As your Patient Advocate, we want to function as a link between you and the hospital staff. If you have a concern or compliment, please ask to see us. We are here to assist you. Do not hesitate to express your concerns. By identifying problem areas, you are assisting in improving patient care. Your suggestions for improved care and service are welcome.

#### **Patient Advocates**

##### **Audie L. Murphy**

Mary C. Scott, Room L126

210 617-5235

David Q. Ramirez, Room L127

210 617-5214

David Caudill. Room L129  
210 617-9419

### **Kerrville**

Diane McIntosh  
830-792-2414

### **Pharmacy**

Pharmacy Service  
is part of your  
treatment team  
and is available to



all patients. Pharmacists are available  
to provide medication counseling to  
you and your family. Pharmacists will  
provide medication information such  
as dosage and possible side effects.

#### **Audie L. Murphy** Outpatient

Pharmacy is open from 8:00 a.m. to  
8:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

**Kerrville** Outpatient Pharmacy is open  
from 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Monday - Friday.

For Prescription refills use the

#### **Automated Refill Line:**

1 (800) 209-7377 and follow the  
directions. You will need:

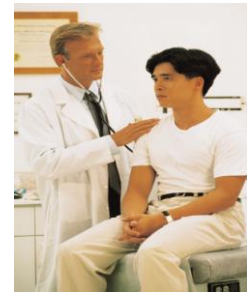
- Your complete Social Security Number
- Your Prescription numbers in order to refill your medications.

### **Primary Care**

Primary Care

means

having one provider  
(doctor or nurse  
practitioner) who



takes care of most of your health care  
needs. Sometimes you need a  
specialist for complex problems. Your  
Primary Care provider will arrange for  
a specialist appointment and continue  
to oversee your care.

### **Recreation**

A variety of activities are available in  
the Recreation Center (first floor at the  
ALMD, ground level at the KD) for  
inpatients, outpatients, and families in  
an effort to maintain/increase leisure  
interests. Activities may include  
parties, shows, competitive games and  
movies. Check bulletin boards for  
times of activities. Your doctor may  
prescribe Recreation Therapy as part  
of your overall treatment while  
hospitalized. Recreation Therapy is  
the treatment of illnesses and  
disabling conditions through the use of  
therapeutic recreation activities,  
leisure education and leisure

participation. These programs are designed to increase function, enhance development and prevent disability. Recreation Therapy is given under the supervision of a Recreation Therapist.

## **Respiratory Therapy**

Respiratory Therapy provides services to patients in the hospital, in clinics, as well as in the home. Respiratory



Therapy provides a wide range of pulmonary and respiratory testing as well as providing oxygen and breathing equipment used in the home. Respiratory Therapy personnel educate patients, family members and caregivers in the most current, up-to-date treatments available.

For more information call:

### **ALMD Respiratory Therapy**

(210) 617-5300 ext 14877

### **KD Respiratory Therapy**

(830) 896-2020 ext 12249

## **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 as home health aides
- planning your care after discharge

If you need to contact a social worker, call the Social Work office at:

Audie L. Murphy (210) 617-5113

Kerrville (830) 792-2462

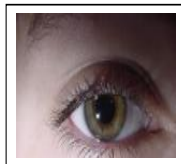
## **Spinal Cord Injury Center**

The Spinal Cord Injury Center (SCIC) in the Audie Murphy Division of the South Texas Veterans Healthcare System is proud to serve the needs of veterans with spinal cord injuries and dysfunction. In addition, we accept under an established sharing agreement, active duty members of the armed services who suffer or develop a spinal cord injury or

dysfunction. To access our Spinal Cord Injury program, a referral or consult is needed. After verification of eligibility, and exchange of needed medical documentation, we will arrange for transfer to our facility. We encourage family and friends to arrange for a visit to the facility prior to the transfer. This visit will include a tour of the Center. At the tour, educational materials will be given to help all involved understand the issues facing spinal cord injured veterans. The SCIC provides a vast array of services to the veteran using an interdisciplinary approach to care both in inpatient and outpatient treatment settings. Our staff is very dedicated to serving the needs of the SCI patient on a continuum of care appropriate to the individual's needs. To Contact the **Spinal Cord Injury Center call: (210) 617 5300 ext 16838.**

### **Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST)**

VIST provides unique rehabilitation and equipment to veterans who are legally blind or significantly visually impaired.



VIST is a program that works to help in the adjustment to sight loss. Some training is provided locally and some at a Regional Blind Rehab Center. The VIST office is located at 8410 Datapoint, Suite 200. For more information contact : **Larry Belote at (210) 949-8927.**

### **Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD)**

A telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) is an electronic device for text communication via a telephone line. A TDD is used when one or more of the parties have hearing or speech difficulties. TDD phones are available at both the Audie L. Murphy and Kerrville Hospital Divisions. Please contact Social Work Service during normal business hours or Nursing Service after hours for inpatient TDD use or for business related to inpatient care.

### **Escort Service for Cognitively Impaired Veterans**

Escort service is available for cognitively impaired veterans at both the Audie



L. Murphy and Kerrville Hospital Division. Inpatients are routinely escorted to and from appointments by staff and or volunteers. Escort service is also available for the outpatient veteran who needs assistance for scheduled appointments. Contact Voluntary Service at Audie extension 15107 or Kerrville at 12183 in advance of the need.

## Voluntary Service



Voluntary Service manages a Volunteer Program that consists of volunteers and voluntarily sponsored patient activities. Through the support of volunteers and donations, Voluntary Service provides direct services to veterans. Most of the patient recreation activities are sponsored by an organization. Patients also benefit from donations of books, clothes, toiletries, stamps, cards and other table games. In addition, monies contributed assist with crisis situations and special needs. Volunteers serve

in the hospitals, clinics, Vet Centers, Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, Transportation Network and community-based programs to enhance the services offered to veterans. To contact voluntary service:

**Audie L. Murphy: (210) 617-5107** or stop by the office in Building #4 (in front of the main hospital entrance).

**Kerrville: (830) 896-2020 ext 12183**  
Room 021A (Basement).

## Women's Veterans Programs



Women Veterans Coordinators (WVC) are located at ALMD and KD. They can provide you with information about the with information about the Women Veterans Health program and assist with arrangements for Pap smears, mammograms, women's health examinations, or for counseling related to sexual trauma that occurred on active duty. At each Satellite Clinic division, there is a representative for the Women's Veteran Health Program.

**Audie L. Murphy**

Barbara Hector at ext. 68181

## **Kerrville**

Janeth Del Toro at (830) 896-2020 and ask the operator to page her.

## **Patient Safety- STVHCS Cares About Your Safety**

South Texas Veterans Health Care System is committed to providing safe health care for our patients 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 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.
- Ask the pharmacist:
  - ✓ What is the medicine for?
  - ✓ How am I suppose 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?
  - ✓ About any directions on the medicine bottles you do not understand.
  - ✓ For medicine information sheets, pill cutters, pill boxes, and or medicine cups.
  - Before you receive medicines, be sure the nurse asks your name and checks your arm band.
- 3. Help prevent the spread of infection.**
- Remind health care givers, family and friends to wash their hands or use an alcohol based hand product before coming into contact with you. Hand washing is the most important way to prevent the spread of infection.
  - Ask providers if they washed their hands before examining you.
  - Discourage family or friends with an active cough from visiting you.
  - If you are place in isolation while in the hospital, please ask your family or friends to follow all instructions posted on the room isolation sign.
- 4. 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.
- 5. Understand what will happen if you need surgery.**
- Ask your surgeon:
    - ✓ What exactly will he be doing to you?
    - ✓ About how long it will take?
    - ✓ What will happen after surgery?
    - ✓ And, how can I expect to feel after my surgery?
  - Make sure the surgeon explains and you understand any possible problems.
  - Tell all the doctors and nurses any bad reactions you had to anesthesia medicines.
  - Before receiving any medicines or have test done, make sure the



nurse or technician asks your name and checks your name band.

- Make sure that your doctor has clearly marked the body part to be operated on you.
- 6. 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.
- Ask your doctor or nurse to provide a phone number to call if you have any questions following your discharge.

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

## Police Notification Procedures

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



## Restraints

It is the policy of the 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 things that prevent or limit movement of any part of the body.

### Why restraints are used?

Some medications or illnesses can cause patients to be confused.

Restraints are used to help keep patients from hurting themselves.

We use restraints to help prevent:

- Behavior that poses immediate risk to patient's own safety or to others
- Removal of needed medical equipment
- Harm to wounds or bandages

## Preventing Falls

The STVHCS wants to tell you some ways to help you remain safe while you are a patient. The risk for falls is highest in your first few days in the hospital. Remember,

**Call Don't Fall.**

## Weight Management

**MOVE!**

If your weight keeps you from doing what you want or feeling your best please ask a about our weight reduction programs– we can help!

## Staying Healthy

There are steps you can take to stay healthy.



- ✓ Avoid drinking alcohol and smoking;

- ✓ Eat a healthy diet;
- ✓ Get regular check-ups and screenings;
- ✓ Control your weight;
- ✓ Prevent accidents and injuries;
- ✓ Get 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);
- Tetanus shot every 10 years.

## 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**

- All women  
40-80 years
- Screening exam at age 35 and  
annual mammogram every year  
after 40



## **Pap Smear (to detect cervical cancer)**

- Women up to age 75
- Yearly with history of STDs or  
multiple sex partners
- Every 3 years after 2 normal  
annual exams
- Stop after age 75 if other exams  
are normal

## **Colorectal Cancer Screenings**

- Everyone over age 50
- Colonoscopy every 10 years or
- FOBT (fecal occult blood test)  
yearly.

## **Prostate Exam**

- Men between 50 -75 should  
discuss this test with their provider
- As recommended

## **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

## **Pain Assessment**

- All adults
- At every visit

## **Hepatitis C Screening**

- All adults
- Yearly

**Notice:**

The South Texas Veterans Health Care System and all of its programs and facilities in San Antonio, Kerrville and South Texas, are pleased to announce that the quality of services provided are of the highest caliber, as expressed by the 3-year accreditation decision of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), for the period 2005-2008. “Patients and their families, patient advocates and advocacy groups, members of the community for whom services are provided and staff members are able to communicate with JCAHO by writing or calling. The public may contact the Joint Commission’s Office of Quality Monitoring to report any concerns or register complaints about a Joint Commission–accredited health care organization by either calling (800) 994-6610 or emailing [complaint@jcaho.org](mailto:complaint@jcaho.org).





**Department of Veterans Affairs**

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

This advance directive form is an official document where you can write down your preferences about your medical care. If some day you become unable to make health care decisions for yourself, 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 and/or to describe your preferences about how you want to be treated. When you complete this form, it is important that you also talk to your doctor, your family, or others who may be involved in decisions about your care, to make sure they understand what you meant when you filled out this form. A health care professional can help you with this form and can answer any questions you might have. If more space is needed for any part of this form, you may attach additional pages. Be sure to initial and date every page that you attach.

**PART I: PERSONAL INFORMATION**

NAME (Last, First, Middle)		SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER
STREET ADDRESS		
CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE		
HOME PHONE WITH AREA CODE	WORK PHONE WITH AREA CODE	MOBILE PHONE WITH AREA CODE

**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 about your medical care in the event you are no longer able to express these preferences. The information you provide may be disclosed outside the VA as permitted by law; possible disclosures include those described in the "routine uses" identified in the VA system of records 24VA19, Patient Medical Record-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 via online GPO access at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/privacyact/index.html>. Completion of this form is voluntary; however, without this information VA health care providers may have less information about your preferences. Failure to furnish the information will have no adverse effect on any other benefits which you may be entitled to receive. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires us to notify you that this information collection is in accordance with the clearance requirements of section 3507 of this Act. The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 minutes, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. No person will be penalized for failing to furnish this information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

<b>VA ADVANCE DIRECTIVE: DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE AND LIVING WILL</b>	
NAME (Last, First, Middle)	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

**PART II: DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE**

This section of the advance directive form is called a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care. This section of the form allows you to appoint a specific person to make health care decisions for you in case you become unable to make decisions for yourself. This person will be called your Health Care Agent. Your Health Care Agent should be someone you trust, who knows you well, and is familiar with your values and beliefs. If you become too ill to make decisions for yourself, your Health Care Agent will have the authority to make all health care decisions for you, including decisions to admit you to 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 clinical treatment, and can access your personal health information, including information from your medical records. **NOTE: Information about whether you have been tested for HIV or treated for AIDS, sickle cell anemia, substance abuse or alcoholism cannot be shared with your Health Care Agent unless you give special written consent. Ask your VA health care provider for the form you must sign (VA Form 10-5345) if you wish to give permission for VA to share this information with your Health Care Agent.**

**A - HEALTH CARE AGENT**

Initial the box next to your choice. *Choose only one.*

Initials	I do not wish to designate a Health Care Agent at this time. (Skip this section and go to Part III, page 3.)
Initials	I appoint the person named below to make decisions about my health care if there ever comes time when I cannot make those decisions.

Name (Last, First, Middle)	Relationship	
Street Address	City, State and Zip Code	
Home Phone with Area Code	Work Phone with Area Code	Mobile Phone with Area Code

**B - ALTERNATE HEALTH CARE AGENT**

Complete this section if you want to appoint a second person to make health care decisions for you in case the first person you appointed is unavailable.

Initials	If the person named above cannot or will not make decisions for me, I appoint the person named below to act as my Health Care Agent.	
Name (Last, First, Middle)	Relationship	
Street Address	City, State and Zip Code	
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)	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER
----------------------------	------------------------

**PART III: LIVING WILL**

This section of the advance directive form is called a Living Will. This section of the form allows you to write down how you want to be treated in case you become unable to make decisions for yourself. Its purpose is to inform the people who will be making decisions about your care.

**A - SPECIFIC PREFERENCES ABOUT LIFE-SUSTAINING TREATMENTS**

This section gives you a place to indicate your preferences about life-sustaining treatments in particular situations. Some examples of life-sustaining treatments are CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), breathing machine (mechanical ventilation), kidney dialysis, feeding tubes (artificial nutrition and hydration), and medicines to fight infection (antibiotics). 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 to have life-sustaining treatments.	It would depend on the circumstances.	No. I would not want to have life-sustaining treatments.
If I am unconscious, in a coma, or in a persistent vegetative state and there is little or no chance of recovery	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>
If I have permanent severe brain damage (for example, severe dementia) that makes me unable to recognize my family or friends	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>
If I have a permanent condition that makes me completely dependent on others for my daily needs (for example, eating, bathing, toileting)	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>
If I am confined to bed and need a breathing machine for the rest of my life	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>
If I have pain or other severe symptoms that cannot be relieved	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>
If I have a condition that will cause me to die very soon, even with life-sustaining treatments	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text" value="Initials"/>

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

NAME (Last, First, Middle)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

**PART III: LIVING WILL (Cont'd)**

**B - ADDITIONAL PREFERENCES**

You may use this space to write any other preferences about your health care that are important to you and that are not described elsewhere in this document. This may include general preferences about how you would like to be cared for, or specific requests. For example, you might have clear opinions about whether you would want a particular treatment (for example, a feeding tube or blood transfusions). You might want to comment on treatment of pain, or whether you would want life-sustaining treatments on a trial basis. Or you might want to write about your preferences regarding treatment of mental illness.

**C - HOW STRICTLY YOU WANT YOUR PREFERENCES FOLLOWED**

Initial the box next to the statement that reflects how strictly you want your preferences to be followed. Choose only one.

Initials	I want my preferences, expressed above in this Living Will, to serve as a <i>general guide</i> . 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 is in my best interest.
----------	--

Initials	I want my preferences, expressed above in this Living Will, to be followed strictly, even if the person who is making decisions for me thinks this is not in my best interest.
----------	--



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

NAME <i>(Last, First, Middle)</i>	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER
-----------------------------------	------------------------

**PART IV: SIGNATURES**

**A - YOUR SIGNATURE**

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

SIGNATURE	DATE
-----------	------

**B - WITNESSES' SIGNATURES**

Two people must witness your signature. *VA employees of the Chaplain Service, Psychology Service, Social Work Service, or nonclinical employees (e.g., Medical Administration Service, Voluntary Service or Environmental Management Service) may serve as witnesses. Other individuals employed by your VA facility may not sign as witnesses to the advance directive unless they are your family members.*

**Witness #1**

I personally witnessed the signing of this advance directive. I am not appointed as Health Care Agent in this advance directive. I am not financially responsible for the care of the person making this advance directive. To the best of my knowledge, I am not named in the person's will.

SIGNATURE	Date
-----------	------

Name *(Printed or Typed)*

Street Address

City, State and Zip Code

**Witness #2**

I personally witnessed the signing of this advance directive. I am not appointed as Health Care Agent in this advance directive. I am not financially responsible for the care of the person making this advance directive. To the best of my knowledge, I am not named in the person's will.

SIGNATURE	Date
-----------	------

Name *(Printed or Typed)*

Street Address

City, State and Zip Code

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

NAME (Last, First, Middle)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

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

This VA Advance Directive form does not have to be notarized to be valid in VA facilities. However, you may need to have this document notarized for it to be recognized 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]