



# PRIMARY CARE

## Patient Information

## \*\*\*\*\* Handbook

*Access to Quality Care*

### VA New England Healthcare System

**Connecticut:** VA Connecticut HCS. **Maine:** Togus.

**Massachusetts:** VA Boston HCS, Bedford, Northampton.

**New Hampshire:** Manchester.

**Vermont:** White River Junction. **Rhode Island:** Providence.

## Table of Contents

	Page
<b>VA New England Healthcare System</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Welcome to Primary Care</b>	<b>4</b>
▪ What is Primary Care	
▪ Primary Health Care Firm/Team	
▪ Your Primary Care Provider	
<b>Enrollment Eligibility</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Co-Payments</b>	<b>5</b>
▪ VA Priority Groups	
▪ Medical Insurance	
▪ Medicare	<b>6</b>
▪ Questions - Resources	<b>6</b>
<b>Women Veterans Services</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>How to Prepare for Your First Visit</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Patients Rights &amp; Responsibilities</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Health Promotion</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Move! - Weight Management</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>VA Pharmacy</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>After Hours Telephone Care Program</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>My Health_eVet - Health Benefits &amp; Services</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Don't be a "No Show"</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Holidays - Clinics Closed</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>VA Medical Centers / Clinics</b>	<b>12</b>



## VA New England Healthcare System

The VA New England Healthcare System welcomes you as a new patient to our health care system. It is our mission to provide each veteran with high quality, innovative, comprehensive and compassionate care.

The VA New England Healthcare System is an integrated health care delivery system comprised of eight VA Medical Centers and many Community Based Outpatient Clinics located throughout the six New England states in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Our Medical Centers combine to offer the full range of health care services available to veterans, from basic outpatient care to specialized services such as open heart surgery and radiation therapy. Affiliations with some of the world's most highly respected medical schools exist including Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Brown, Boston University, and Universities of Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont Schools of Medicine.

We are committed to providing quality health care services to the veterans we serve. Our goal is to provide the right care, at the right time and at the right place to compassionately meet the unique needs of each veteran.

We want to make it easy for you to access your VA health benefits. This handbook explains the basics of VA health care and the important role of your primary health care team. Remember that you are the most important member of the team responsible for continuity and coordination.

Thank you for your service to our country. It is our duty and our honor to serve you!



## Welcome to Primary Care!

**If you don't have a Primary Care Provider – please ask for one today!**

### What is Primary Care?

Primary Care provides health care services to meet your personal health needs.

We deliver care through primary care clinics. We partner with patients and families to provide care. Areas covered by primary care include:

- Health Promotion
- Disease Prevention
- Acute and chronic disease management
- Referral for sub-specialty services
- Coordination of care for complex medical conditions
- Patient and Family Education

### Primary Health Care Firm/Team

These clinics, or FIRMS/Teams, are groups made up of doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, health technicians, pharmacists, dietitians, social workers and clinic assistants. FIRMS is the VA's word for a group of clinicians working together as a team to provide you with the best care we have to offer.

Your **Primary Care Provider** is a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant. Your primary care provider is **your personal doctor**. Your primary care provider will direct your care and involve specialty and support services as needed.

Your **Primary Care Provider** is: \_\_\_\_\_

Your **Primary Care Firm** is: \_\_\_\_\_

**You, the veteran**, are the most important member of the health care team. **YOU** are the reason we are here. Take an active role in your health care. Be assertive and recognize your important role.

**Be a Partner in Your Health Care!**



VA New England Healthcare System



## Enrollment Eligibility

- Veterans must be enrolled with the VA to receive VA medical care.
- Veterans can apply for enrollment at any VA health care facility, Veterans Benefits Office or online at [www.1010ez.med.va.gov](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov)
- Most veterans remain enrolled from year to year without further action.
- If you move your care from one VA facility to another, you are not required to repeat the enrollment process.
- Inform the eligibility office at the new VA facility of your enrollment status at your old VA facility. You will need to give the new facility personal identifying information such as your full name, social security number, date of birth and gender.

## Co-Payments

**VA Priority Groups** - VA has eight Priority Groups based on service connected disability and/or income level. Veterans may be required to provide income information (Means Test) to determine and maintain their priority level. To learn more about co-payments, visit: [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility)

**Priority Group 1** - Veterans with a 50% or greater service connected disability. There is no co-payment required for any outpatient care or inpatient stay.

**Priority Groups 2 to 5** - Veterans with less than 50% service disability and/or with incomes below a certain level. Veterans in this group may be exempt from co-payments.

**Priority Group 7 & 8** - Veterans are charged co-payment for outpatient, inpatient and medication services. The co-pay is charged for:

- Routine outpatient primary care visits
- Specialty Care visits (regardless of the specialty)
- Medications
- Inpatient stays are charged a flat rate that includes room, board, doctor's visit, etc.

**Please note:** If you are in **Priority Groups 2 to 8**, you are required to update your Means Test annually. If you do not update your Means Test annually, you will be charged a co-pay for medications, outpatient visits and inpatient stays.

### Medical Insurance

- When you change insurance, inform the Billing Office at your local VA as soon as possible.
- The VA is mandated by federal law to collect insurance information. The VA will bill your insurance for any non-service connected charges. Money collected from your insurance company is used to lower the amount you owe out of pocket.



## Medicare

- VA requires Medicare information to coordinate benefits with third party insurance plans.
- Failure to provide insurance or Medicare information may result in a co-pay charge without adjustment.
- By law the VA cannot bill Medicare. However, VA is obligated to collect Medicare insurance information.
- Payments received from health insurance plans can reduce or eliminate a co-payment charge.

## Questions

- Visit: [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility)
- Call the Health Revenue Center at 1-866-450-9099
- Call the Billing Office at your local VA

## Women Veterans Services

The Women Veterans Program promotes quality health services designed to enhance the physical and mental well being of women veterans. The program provides equal access to primary and preventive health care for women within a safe and private setting.

Women Veterans Program Managers are located at each medical center. They coordinate care and advocate for the needs of women treated within the VA New England Healthcare System.

We invite you to contact a Women Veterans Program Manager who can answer your questions and assist you with enrollment.

## How to Prepare for Your First Visit

### What to bring:

- A copy of your medical record from your community doctor - including your most recent physical exam, lab reports and x-rays.
- Records of your immunizations
- Dates and results of screening procedures such as colonoscopy, mammogram and pap smear.
- A list of all medicines you take - both prescription and over-the-counter. Bring the medication bottles with you.



## Patient Rights & Responsibilities

Copies of Patient Rights and Responsibilities are posted and visible in each VA New England medical facility in a variety of locations. If you would like a copy of the Patient Rights and Responsibilities, please contact your Patient Representative at any of our medical centers.

View Patient Rights and Responsibilities on line at: [www1.va.gov/vhapublications](http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications)

## Health Promotion

Our goal is to help you stay healthy. Prevention and wellness are important aspects of your health care.

### Major VA Health Care Initiatives

The VA has focused programs to improve the health, wellness, and well-being of our veterans in the following areas:

- Weight management
- Diabetes
- Smoking cessation
- High Blood Pressure
- Substance Abuse
- PTSD

Contact your local facility to see what programs are available to help you improve your health.

## Move!

**MOVE!** is a national weight management program that provides guidance on nutrition and physical activity and allows you to set the pace through goal setting.

### The **MOVE!** Program can help you . . .

- Lose weight
- Keep it off
- Improve your health

Each program is tailored to meet the individual needs of the veteran. Your local health care team will provide you with lots of support and follow-up.

Learn more at: [www.move.va.gov](http://www.move.va.gov)



## VA Pharmacy

### What is a “drug formulary?”

- A list of medications available at a facility

### Can I get the same medicines at the VA that I have been taking?

- If the drug is not on the VA formulary, similar products are available.
- Most of the time VA providers can prescribe an alternative formulary product without a major change in your condition.
- Alternative formulary products are equally effective to non-formulary products.

### If my outside doctor prescribes a medication not on the VA formulary, can I obtain the drug through the VA pharmacy?

- VA does not have a “medication-only program.”
- To receive medication from the VA pharmacy, you must be seen regularly in the VA Primary Care clinic.
- VA providers cannot automatically rewrite prescriptions for non-formulary medications prescribed by your private doctor.
- Documentation must be provided by your community provider for you to obtain a non-formulary medication from the VA, such as past medical history, medication history and recent laboratory results.

The VA formulary can be found at: [www.pbm.va.gov/NationalFormulary](http://www.pbm.va.gov/NationalFormulary)

### How Do I get my refills?

VA patients can request refills by mail, phone or on the Internet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

**The process at each Medical Center may be different. Ask for specific information at your local facility.**

**Our goal is to make sure you get the right treatment!**



## After Hours Telephone Care Program

VA New England offers telephone advice services to veterans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Veterans can reach this after-hours service by dialing the same telephone numbers used for advice during the day. The After Hours Telephone Care Program staff will have full electronic access to your appointments and health records.

### Services provided by the After Hours Telephone Care Program include:

#### Medical Services

- Medical advice
- Self-help medical information
- Medical education
- Triage

#### Appointments

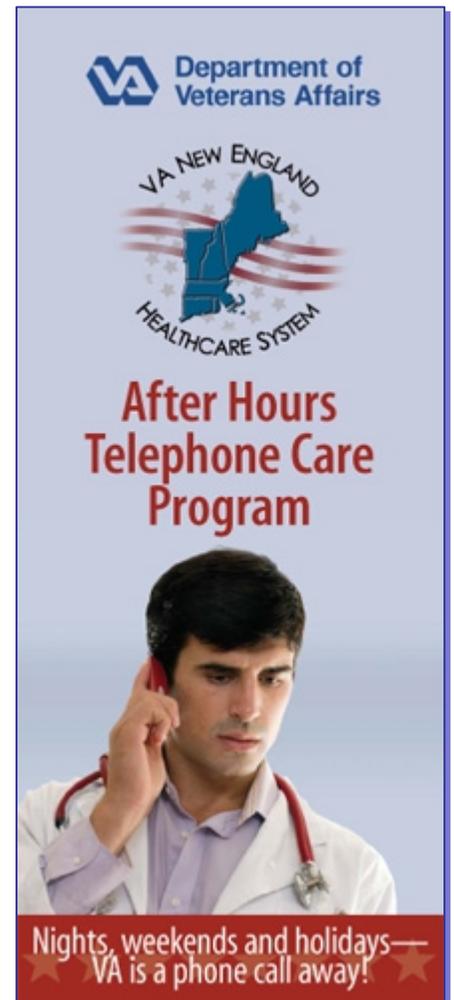
- Medical appointments confirmed
- Notify your hospital to cancel, make or reschedule an appointment. This way you only have to call one time.

#### Prescription Assistance

- Prescription information
- Medication order status
- How to use the auto-refill system for medications
- Transfer to the telephone refill system and/or give phone number
- How to request new medications or renewals
- Inform hospital of request for new medications or renewals

### Please have the following information when calling:

1. Name
2. Social Security Number
3. Address
4. Phone number and area code where you can be reached
5. What VA Hospital or Clinic you go to for treatment
6. Your doctor's name or Primary Care Team
7. Medications you take. It may be helpful to get your medications so you can read the information on the bottle.
8. How can we help you?





My Health\_eVet is the gateway to veteran health benefits and services.

**It provides access to:**

- Trusted health information
- Online VA prescription refill
- The Personal Health Journal
- Links to Federal and VA benefits and resources

Veterans and their families can create accounts on the My Health\_eVet Web site. Registrants have the ability to enter and track personal health information, with the data ready to print and take to medical appointments.

**Take an Active Role in your Health Care**

- Learn about your health, take part in decision-making, and follow the treatment plan you worked out with your health care team.
- You can use the My Health\_eVet Medical Library to learn about a wide variety of conditions, diseases and wellness.
- Use the My Health\_eVet Pharmacy to keep a list of all your medicines and supplements.
- Ask your pharmacist for help if you have questions about your medicines. If you see more than one doctor, it's important that they all know the medicines you're taking.
- Ask your provider for written information you can keep.
- Learn the name of your health problem, what you need to do, and why it's important for you to do those things.

You may see many benefits from taking an active role in your health care, and you'll also see how much your health care team wants to help you gain those benefits.

**Visit the My Health\_eVet Web site at: [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)**





**Please...  
Don't be a "No Show"**

**We need your help to reduce "no shows"  
Here is how you can help:**

- ✓ **If you cannot keep your scheduled appointment, always call to cancel as soon as possible. This will allow us to offer that appointment to another veteran!**
- ✓ **Please inform us of changes in your address or phone number.**

**Holidays**

The VA New England Healthcare System observes the following holidays - **All Clinics are closed on these holidays:**

January	New Year's Day
	Martin Luther King, Jr.
February	President's Day
May	Memorial Day
July	Independence Day
September	Labor Day
October	Columbus Day
	Veterans Day
November	Thanksgiving Day
	Christmas Day



**VA MEDICAL CENTERS (VAMC)**

**COMMUNITY BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS (CBOC)**



**CONNECTICUT  
VA Connecticut  
Healthcare System**

Newington Campus  
555 Willard Avenue  
Newington, CT 06111  
(860) 666-6951

West Haven Campus  
950 Campbell Avenue  
West Haven, CT 06516  
(203) 932-5711

**MAINE  
Togus VAMC**  
1 VA Center  
Augusta, ME 04330  
(207) 623-8411

**MASSACHUSETTS**

**Bedford VAMC**  
200 Springs Road  
Bedford, MA 01730  
(781) 275-7500

**VA Boston Healthcare System**

Brockton Campus  
940 Belmont Street  
Brockton, MA 02301  
(508) 583-4500

Jamaica Plain Campus  
150 S. Huntington Avenue  
Boston, MA 02130  
(617) 232-9500

West Roxbury Campus  
1400 VFW Parkway  
West Roxbury, MA 02132  
(617) 323-7700

**Northampton VAMC**  
421 North Main Street  
Leeds, MA 01053  
(413) 584-4040

**NEW HAMPSHIRE  
Manchester VAMC**  
718 Smyth Road  
Manchester, NH 03104  
(603) 624-4366  
(800) 892-8384

**RHODE ISLAND  
Providence VAMC**  
830 Chalkstone Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908  
(401) 273-7100  
(877) 417-9421

**VERMONT  
White River Junction VAMC**  
215 North Main Street  
White River Junction, VT 05009  
(802) 295-9363

**CONNECTICUT**

**Danbury CBOC**  
7 Germantown Road  
Danbury, CT 06810  
(203) 798-8422

**New London CBOC**  
4 Shaw's Cove  
New London, CT 06320  
(860) 437-3611

**Stamford CBOC**  
Stamford Health System  
1275 Summer Street  
Stamford, CT 06904  
(203) 325-0649

**Waterbury CBOC**  
95 Scovill Street  
Waterbury, CT 06706  
(203) 465-5292

**Windham CBOC**  
96 Mansfield Street  
Willimantic, CT 06226  
(860) 450-7583

**Winsted CBOC**  
115 Spencer Street  
Winsted, CT 06098  
(860) 738-6985

**MAINE**

**Bangor CBOC**  
304 Hancock Street  
Bangor, ME 04401  
(207) 561-3600

**Lincoln Clinic**  
99 River Road  
Lincoln, ME 04457  
(207) 403-2000

**Calais CBOC**  
50 Union Street  
Calais, ME 04619  
(207) 904-3700

**Caribou CBOC**  
163 Van Buren Road  
Caribou, ME 04736  
(207) 493-3800

**Rumford CBOC**  
431 Franklin Street  
Rumford, ME 04276  
(207) 369-3200

**Saco CBOC**  
655 Maine Street  
Saco, ME 04072  
(207) 294-3100

**MASSACHUSETTS**

**Causeway Street CBOC**  
251 Causeway Street  
Boston, MA 02114  
(617) 248-1000

**Dorchester CBOC**  
895 Blue Hill Avenue  
Dorchester, MA 02121  
(617) 822-7146

**Fitchburg CBOC**  
275 Nichols Road  
Fitchburg, MA 01420  
(978) 342-9781

**Framingham CBOC**  
61 Lincoln Street  
Framingham, MA 01702  
(508) 628-0205

**Gloucester CBOC**  
298 Washington Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
(978) 282-0676

**Greenfield CBOC**  
143 Munson Street  
Greenfield, MA 01301  
(413) 773-8428

**Haverhill CBOC**  
108 Merrimack Street  
Haverhill, MA 01830  
(978) 372-5207

**Hyannis CBOC**  
233 Stevens Street  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
(508) 771-3190

**Lowell CBOC**  
130 Marshall Road  
Lowell, MA 01852  
(978) 671-9000

**Lynn CBOC**  
225 Boston Street  
Lynn, MA 01904  
(781) 595-9818

**New Bedford CBOC**  
175 Elm Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
(508) 994-0217

**Pittsfield CBOC**  
73 Eagle Street  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
(413) 443-4857

**Quincy CBOC**  
114 Whitwell Street  
Quincy, MA 02169  
(617) 376-2010

**Springfield CBOC**  
25 Bond Street  
Springfield, MA 01104  
(413) 731-6000

**Worcester CBOC**  
605 Lincoln Street  
Worcester, MA 01605  
(508) 856-0104

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**Conway CBOC**  
7 Greenwood Avenue  
Conway, NH 03818  
(603) 447-2555

**Littleton CBOC**  
Littleton Regional Hospital  
600 St. Johnsbury Rd  
Littleton, NH 03561  
(603) 444-9328

**Portsmouth CBOC**  
302 Newmarket St  
Portsmouth, NH 03803  
(603) 624-4366 x5500  
(800) 892-8384x 5500

**Somersworth CBOC**  
200 Route 108  
Somersworth, NH 03878  
(603) 624-4366 x5700  
(800) 892-8384 x5700

**Tilton CBOC**  
NH State Veterans Home  
139 Winter Street  
Tilton, NH 03276  
(603) 624-4366 x5600  
(800) 892-8384 x5600

**RHODE ISLAND**

**Middletown CBOC**  
One Corporate Place  
Middletown, RI 02842  
(401) 847-6239

**VERMONT**

**Bennington CBOC**  
325 North Street  
Bennington, VT 05201  
(802) 447-6913

**Colchester CBOC**  
162 Hegeman Ave  
Colchester, VT 05446  
(802) 655-1356

**Rutland CBOC**  
215 Stratton Road  
Rutland, VT 05702  
(802) 773-3386