

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO CLIP AND SAVE

Appointment Scheduling Center

(800) 461-8262, press 2

Nurse Call Center

(800) 461-8262, press 3

Veterans Crisis Line

(800) 273-8255 (Press 1)

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

Kent County CBOC

Nurse Manager Oluyemi Awoyida

(302) 463-8440

1198 S. Governors Ave., Ste. 201

Dover, DE 19901

Sussex County CBOC

Nurse Manager Meg-Marie Ryan

(302) 300-5189

15 Georgetown Plaza, DE 19947

Atlantic County CBOC

Nurse Manager Cynthia Murray

(302) 388-5540

1909 New Rd., Northfield, NJ 08225

Cape May County CBOC

Nurse Manager Saino Henries

(302) 354-0414

1 Monroe Ave., Cape May, NJ 08204

Cumberland County CBOC

Nurse Manager Susan Trimboli

(302) 300-5208

79 W. Landis Ave, NJ 08360

Beneficiary Travel

(800) 461-8262, ext. 5212/4000

Billing Information

(800) 461-8262, ext. 5130

Medical Records/Release of Information

(800) 461-8262, ext. 4133/5242

MyHealtheVet Coordinator

(800) 461-8262, ext. 5849

Customer Service

(800) 461-8262, ext. 5556

Prescription Refill Line

(800) 450-8262

Returning Veterans

(800) 461-8262, ext. 4763/4576

VA Benefits

(800) 827-1000

Vet Centers

Sussex Vet Center

(302) 225-9110 or (877) 927-8387

Ventnor N.J. Vet Center

(609) 487-8387

Wilmington Vet Center

(302) 994-1660 or (877) 927-8387

Get registered to use MyHealtheVet

www.myhealth.va.gov

Wilmington

newsletter for Veterans

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

SPRING 2017

HEP C screening encouraged for all Veterans

The Wilmington VA Medical Center sent a letter to enrolled Veterans urging them to be tested for Hepatitis C virus.

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends all persons born between 1945 and 1965 to be tested for Hepatitis C virus, the VA is offering testing for all enrolled Veterans to ensure they are getting the health care and support they need. If positive for Hep C virus, Veterans will receive treatment and also learn how to prevent the spread of the virus.

Early Hepatitis C infection may not cause symptoms, over many years it may cause liver disease, including cirrhosis, liver failure or even liver cancer.

During just the first week after the letter was sent, over 200 new screenings for Hepatitis were completed resulting in three percent newly diagnosed Hepatitis C patients. During October and December of 2016, there were 442

Hepatitis C screens that resulted in approximately three percent positive results.

Bob Callahan, Interim Medical Center Director said, "Our initiative to expand testing for Hepatitis is effective. More Veterans are getting tested who normally wouldn't, we are finding instances of Hepatitis C far earlier before the disease progresses and we are able to engage treatment faster, improving health outcomes for our Veterans. Early discovery and treatment is critical to avoid the long term complications associated with chronic untreated Hepatitis C infection." Because of the expanded testing, Veterans will now receive potentially lifesaving therapy.

Hepatitis C is a virus carried in the blood that can cause liver disease. Hepatitis C can be spread in several ways including recreational drug use, needle sharing, accidental needle sticks, sharing of personal care items like a razors or toothbrushes, tattoos or body piercings,

(continued pg. 7)

Putting Veterans first by increasing Same Day Access to care

VA embarked on the largest transformation to occur in VA history by establishing MyVA Access the initiative is designed to improve the Veteran experience and improve patient satisfaction.

When Veterans require primary care right away during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., weekdays), they are able to get services the same day, Veterans may call the Nurse Call Line (302) 994-2511, press 3. (for more information see page 2)

If a Veteran is in crisis or has another need for care right away in mental health, they will receive immediate attention from a health care professional. Additionally, any Veteran new to mental health with a non-urgent need will receive an initial screening evaluation by the next business day.

"We've included open access appointments in our clinic schedules, opened a Nurse Call Center, staffed a local call scheduling call center, placed an emphasis on team care concepts and increased staffing in our primary and mental health clinics," said Bob Callahan, Interim Director. "When a Veteran contacts us, we will address their need that day or schedule appropriate follow up care, depending on the urgency."

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Published for the Veteran patients of the Wilmington VAMC. This newsletter is offered to provide reliable health information. It is not intended to take the place of medical advice, which should be obtained directly from your health care provider. If you have questions or comments, please call 302-633-5389.

Wilmington VAMC
1601 Kirkwood Highway
Wilmington, DE 19805

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



VA

Who should you Call First When You Are Feeling Sick?

The Nurse Call Center is available when you need to speak with a health care professional about a medical or mental health condition. To contact the Nurse Call Center, simply dial 800– 461-8262 and press 3. The Nurse Call Center is designed to improve access to care and to provide answers to questions you have when you aren't feeling well or have questions about your care.

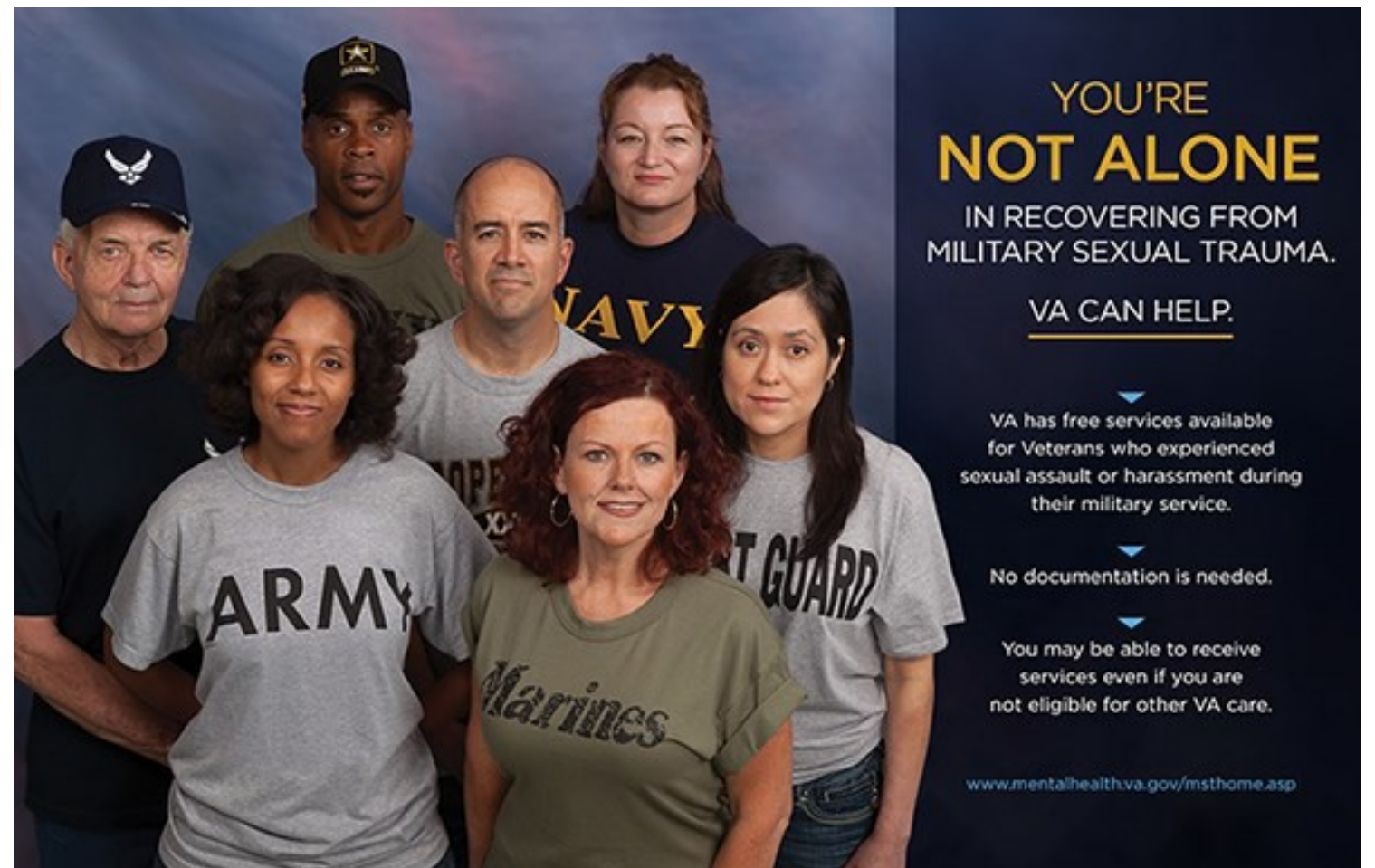
The Nurse Call Center provides telephone medical advice for Veterans from a Registered Nurse (RN) and is a first step resolution for specialty, and mental health care questions.

Veterans may call the Nurse Call Center to:
Ask a medical or mental health question
Report symptoms you may have for further care
Seek medical advice about a medical or mental health condition

The Wilmington VANurse Call Center is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year to improve timely, same day access for over 30,000 Veterans throughout the Delaware, Pennsylvania, and southern New Jersey.

Noted changes when calling the CBOCCS?

To ensure your calls are being answered quickly, a Scheduling Call Center was established in January 2016. Staff in the Call Center answer the phones so front-line staff in the clinics can focus on the needs of Veterans who need face-to-face service. Ultimately improving the Veteran experience and enhancing Patient Satisfaction.



**YOU'RE
NOT ALONE**
IN RECOVERING FROM
MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

VA CAN HELP.

VA has free services available for Veterans who experienced sexual assault or harassment during their military service.

No documentation is needed.

You may be able to receive services even if you are not eligible for other VA care.

www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp

Did You Experience Military Sexual Trauma?

The term “military sexual trauma,” or MST, refers to any sexual activity where a Servicemember was involved against his or her will -- he or she may have been pressured (for example, with threats of negative consequences), may have been unable to consent (for example, when intoxicated), or may have been physically forced into sexual activities. Other examples include unwanted sexual touching or grabbing; threatening, offensive remarks about a person's body or sexual activities; and threatening and unwelcome sexual advances.

At least one in four women and one in 100 men respond “yes,” that they experienced MST, when screened by their VA provider. Although rates are higher among women, because there are so many more men than women in the military, there are actually significant numbers of women and men seen in VA who have experienced MST.

MST is an experience; not a diagnosis or a mental health condition. As with other forms of trauma, there

are a variety of reactions Veterans can have in response to MST – and for some Veterans, the experience continues to affect their health in significant ways, even many years later.

All treatment for conditions related to MST is provided free of charge to Veterans. This includes outpatient, inpatient, residential, and pharmaceutical treatment. To receive this free MST-related care, Veterans do not need to be service connected, and do not need to have reported the incident when it happened. For more information, visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp or <https://maketheconnection.net/conditions/military-sexual-trauma>, contact MST Coordinator Dr. Kristin Salber-Black at (302) 994-2511 extension 2451, send a secure message to “Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator” in MyHealtheVet, or attend an information session for MST survivors at 10 a.m. on the first Wednesday (women) or second Wednesday (men) of every month in Behavioral Health (3rd floor).

Kick the habit with help from VA

You can **DO IT!** We want to help

Patients, visitors and employees throughout the VA deserve to be treated and to work in an environment that actively supports health promotion and disease prevention.

The leading cause of preventable death is smoking according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Worldwide, tobacco use causes nearly 6 million deaths per year and more than 16 million Americans are living with a disease caused by smoking. The CDC reports that smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung disease, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

Creating a smoke-free environment is essential to providing safe, quality and compassionate health care to Veterans. During the transition to becoming a smoke-free health care system, you will notice signage and information identifying designated smoking areas and tobacco cessation resources.

Many know that smoking is the most preventable cause of premature death. Yet smokeless tobacco, such as dip and chew, can also be dangerous and is often overlooked. Smokeless tobacco products can increase users' risk of death from heart disease and stroke; can cause cancer of the mouth, esophagus, and pancreas; and can result in dental problems such as mouth sores and tooth loss. Dip and chew tobacco also contains more nicotine than cigarettes, which may cause an even stronger addiction than smoking.

To address this, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Tobacco and Health program office is partnering with other federal agencies — including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office of

*The smoking cessation program is available to all Veterans and employees. Contact the Smoking Cessation Coordinator or a primary care provider if you would like to sign up. Our **Smoking Cessation Coordinator Heather C. Murphy**, can be reached by calling **302-994-2511, ext. 4112**.*

*Patients and employees can attend smoking cessation programs at the **Wilmington VAMC Mondays at 1p.m. - 2p.m. on the first floor BHS group room or at each of the five CBOCs in the New Jersey and Delaware areas. The groups are held each month and patients are scheduled to attend weekly in order to help them get the support and information that they need to help them quit. The Coordinator also can see you individually if you do not feel that you can attend the groups.***

Smoking and Health, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the National Cancer Institute (NCI), NCI's Smokefree.gov Initiative and the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Tobacco Products.

This nationwide observances prompt smokeless tobacco users to quit for good by committing to a "quit date." For more information on tobacco cessation, please visit:

www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking/index.asp



Customer Feedback is Critical to Improving Services

We're listening to you! Whether it's good, bad, or ugly, we want to know what you think. To foster better communication with our Veteran patients, the Wilmington VA is holding quarterly Information and Resource Fairs at the main medical center and in the local community.

During the meetings, Veterans and their family members have an opportunity to speak with Wilmington VA leadership to share their concerns, ask questions and make suggestions about their health care services. Veterans can also learn important information about accessing VA health care services such as the process for scheduling clinic appointments, how to contact a health care professional when you are sick, tips on renewing prescription medications, and more. VA staff members will be available to answer questions and to assist Veterans completing applications for health care benefits and disability claims.

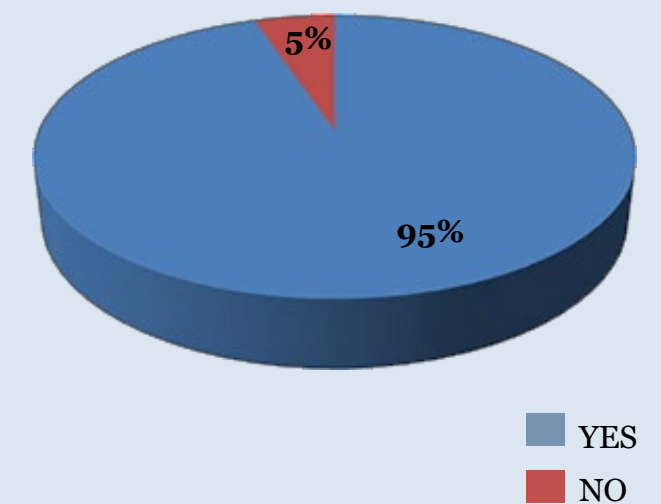
Events are tentatively scheduled in June, and September. The event will be announced at www.wilmington.va.gov/calendar.asp.

Another way for Veterans to communicate with the Wilmington VA is through "Tell the Director" comment cards available throughout the medical center and at each of our five CBOCs. Veterans are encouraged to complete the card to let us know what we are doing right as well as what we can improve.

Additionally, the Patient Advocates are conducting "in-person" surveys, asking Veterans about their experience while they are at their appointments.

We are proud of the many services we offer to Veterans, but we need your feedback if we are going to continue to meet your expectations.

Would you recommend the Wilmington VA Healthcare System and staff to other Veterans?



Total = 239



U.S. Representative Frank LoBiondo (center) joined by Dr. Michael Adelman, VISN 4 Network Director, Vince Kane, Interim Associate Director of Operations for the Wilmington VAMC, Susan Trimboli, Nurse Manager and others during Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Cumberland County VA clinic officially opens in Vineland, NJ

The Cumberland County Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) located at 1051 West Sherman Ave., in Vineland, N.J., moved to 79 W. Landis Ave.

"This new facility is further evidence that the VA recognizes the growing number of Veterans in southern New Jersey and is committed to providing them the best health care available," said Bob Callahan, interim director for the Wilmington VAMC.

For an improved Veteran experience, audiology services, previously provided at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home, has also been moved to the new location.

The new building nearly doubles the size of the former clinic and allows for future expansion of services. The clinic has eight primary care exam rooms, eight behavioral health consultation rooms; three dedicated telehealth rooms, two medical specialty, two clinical procedure rooms, two dedicated women's health rooms, as well as audiology and optometry suites.

Services offered include Primary Care, Comprehensive

Women's Health, Laboratory Services, Telehealth Services (including tele-retinal, tele-dermatology), Podiatry, Psychiatry, Optometry, Behavioral Health counseling, Social Work, and Audiology. Expanded telehealth clinics will be added at a later date.



Exterior photo of the new Cumberland County Community Bas Outpatient Clinic in 79 W. Landis, Ave., Vineland, N.J.

VA Express — New Transportation Service for Veterans

Veterans now have easier access to medical appointments at the Wilmington VA thanks to a free program launched by the medical center called VA Express.

"This is a much-improved service that will help Veterans reach their medical appointments faster, safer, and more comfortably. We've had a shuttle service for quite some time, but it was slow, and uncomfortable for Veterans using the service," said Vince Kane, Interim Associate Director of Operations. "This new service will be a lot more comfortable for our Veterans. The vehicles are smaller than the old buses and the ride much smoother."

Veterans who have scheduled medical appointments at the VA in Wilmington, Delaware will be given access to the free service, which will provide safe and expedited transportation to and from the facility.

The transportation program is a free, five-day-a-week service provided by the Wilmington VA.

The official start for the new service began on Feb. 1, and the Wilmington VAMC continues to stress the importance of Veterans taking advantage of the program.

"It is critical to get the word out to Veterans in order for this type of program to be up and running so they are given the help they need," said Kane.

There are two different VA Express vehicles running each day to southern New Jersey and one in

Delaware. The first is the Atlantic County and Cape May County VA Express whose pickup and drop off locations are at the Atlantic County CBOC, 1909 New Road, Northfield, at 8:30 a.m. and then at 9 a.m. at the bus stop located at the Dept. of Education County Building, 6260 Old Harding Highway, Mays Landing. The VA Express begins the return trip to southern New Jersey at 2 p.m.

The second VA Express provides service from the Cumberland County CBOC, 79 W. Landis Ave., Vineland at 9:30 a.m. and arrives at the Wilmington VA at 10:30 a.m. The VA Express leaves from the Wilmington VA for the return trip at 1:30 p.m.

VA Express is also providing service from Sussex and Kent County, DE.

Servicing lower Delaware, the VA Express departs from the Sussex County CBOC at 8:30 a.m. and stops at the Kent County CBOC in Dover, DE. At 9 a.m. Veterans depart the medical center no later than 2:30 p.m. for the return trip.

To be eligible to use the VA Express service, Veterans must first have a scheduled clinic appointment at the medical center, and they must call their primary care team scheduler in advance to make a reservation. Family members over the age of 16 may accompany Veteran patients for scheduled clinic appointments.

Veterans Encouraged to be Tested for HEP C (continued from pg.1)

receiving a blood transfusion or organ transplants before 1992, long-term kidney dialysis, being a Vietnam Era Veteran, and, in rare instances, sexual contact with someone who is infected with the virus.

"The newer drug regimens are much more tolerable than the older interferon-based antiviral treatments," said Rena Johnson, nurse practitioner and hepatitis treatment coordinator at the Wilmington VA Medical Center. "We're finding by using newer drugs like Olysio, Solvadi and Harvoni we are having very high rates of success curing Hep C, something not possible in the past. This is great news because it means the treatment is becoming simpler, has less side effects, a shorter length of treatment and more likely to result in a permanent cure."

"Given what is known about the risks of Hepatitis C, as well as having new therapies with a very high likelihood of cure, it is important for Veterans to undergo testing for the virus," said Robert Boucher, M.D., M.P.H., chief of staff at the Wilmington VA Medical Center. "Being proactive, getting screened and receiving treatment, if necessary, will help many Veterans avoid the serious complications caused by long-standing Hepatitis C infection. New drug therapies are extremely effective in curing Hepatitis C and have few serious side effects."

Veterans who wish to be tested for Hepatitis C, may contact their Primary Care Team, request testing directly at the outpatient lab at the Wilmington VA or at any one of the community clinics located in Dover, Georgetown, DE, or Vineland, Northfield, or Cape May, N.J. Once test results are completed, Veterans will receive a follow-up letter or a phone call explaining the results.