

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
DELAWARE

Kent County CBOC

1198 S. Governors Ave., Ste. 201
Dover, DE 19901

Sussex County CBOC

21748 Roth Avenue
Georgetown, DE 19947

Get registered to use MyHealtheVet

www.myhealth.va.gov

Community Based Outpatient Clinics

NEW JERSEY

Atlantic County CBOC

1909 New Rd., Northfield, NJ 08225

Cape May County CBOC

1 Monroe Ave., Cape May, NJ 08204

Cumberland County CBOC

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

Patient Advocate

(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

Wilmington

newsletter for Veterans
SUMMER 2019

VA

MISSION ACT provides more choices for our Veterans

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs launched its new and improved community care program on June 6, 2019. The roll-out implements portions of the John S. McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka, and Samuel R. Johnson VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act of 2018, which both ends the Veterans Choice Program and establishes the new Veterans Community Care Program.

The MISSION Act serves to strengthen the nationwide VA Health Care System by empowering Veterans to have more options in their health care decisions. Under the new Veterans Community Care Program, Veterans can now work with their VA health care provider or other VA staff to see if they are eligible to receive community care. Eligibility for community care does not require a Veteran to receive that care in the community; Veterans can still choose to have VA provide their care. Veterans are eligible to choose to receive care in the community if they meet any of the following six eligibility criteria:

1. Veteran needs a service not available at a VA medical facility.
2. Veteran lives in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility. Specifically, this would apply to Veterans living in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire and U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands and U.S. Virgin Islands.

3. Veteran qualifies under the “Grandfather” provision related to distance eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program.
4. VA cannot furnish care in a manner that complies within certain designated access standards. The specific access standards are described below.
 1. Average drive time to a specific VA medical facility:
 1. Thirty-minute average drive time for primary care, mental health and noninstitutional extended care.
 2. Sixty-minute average drive time for specialty. (Note: Average drive times are calculated by VA using geo-mapping software.)
 2. Appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility:
 1. Twenty days for primary care, mental health care and noninstitutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.
 2. Twenty-eight days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.
5. The Veteran and the referring clinician agree it is in the best medical interest of the Veteran to receive community care based on defined factors.

(continued inside)

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



VA

Choose VA

Wilmington VAMC
1601 Kirkwood Highway
Wilmington, DE 19805
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.
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

(continued from cover)

VA has determined that a VA medical service line is not providing care in a manner that complies with VA's standards for quality.

Another benefit the MISSION Act offers is the use of Urgent Care for minor illnesses. This benefit lets Veterans enrolled with the VA Healthcare to visit participating urgent care clinics in their community for treatment of minor healthcare needs.

The urgent care benefit offers added convenience for eligible Veterans to use at any time, with any participating provider throughout the country – an excellent benefit for eligible Veterans that travel over the summer and winter months. Veterans do not need to receive VA authorization prior to visiting a participating urgent care provider nor do they have to make a co-payment at the time of their visit. Some Veterans may experience a VA copay after their urgent care visit based on their assigned priority group and the number of times they visit an in-network urgent care provider in a calendar year. A list of participating urgent care community providers is available at www.va.gov/find-locations.

To be eligible for urgent care benefits, Veterans must be enrolled in the VA health care system and have received care through the VA from either a VA or community provider within the past 24 months. To learn more about VA urgent care benefits contact your local VA facility or visit www.va.gov/communitycare. Veterans eligible for community care generally have the option of choosing to receive care from a VA medical facility or community provider. For Veterans who choose to receive community care, a VA staff member will discuss with them their preferences for getting care from a community provider. The selected community provider must be part of VA's network. If you would like to learn more about the VA MISSION Act talk to your primary care team, any VA health care provider or visit <https://missionact.va.gov/>.



VA is creating a healthier environment for our Veterans by going smoke-free

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) recently announced as part of their commitment to provide excellent health care for Veterans, under VHA Directive 1085, the department will implement a new policy restricting smoking by patients, visitors, volunteers, contractors and vendors at its health care facilities by October 1, 2019.

Although VA has historically permitted smoking in designated areas, there is growing evidence that smoking and exposure to secondhand and thirdhand smoke creates significant medical risks, and risks to safety and direct patient care that are inconsistent with medical requirements and limitations. Accordingly, VA's Veterans Health Administration has collaborated with key stakeholders to update and recertify the policy to be consistent with the department's commitment to Veterans and the community.

"We want to increase the high-quality of care to our Veterans by creating a smoke-free campus by eliminating exposures to secondhand smoke and other tobacco products that may present harm to our Veterans," said Director Vince Kane who oversees the Wilmington VAMC and its five outpatient clinics in Delaware and southern New Jersey. The Wilmington VA Medical Center and its five outpatient

clinics include Dover and Georgetown, Delaware and Northfield, Cape May and Vineland, New Jersey are scheduled to go smoke-free by October 1.

VHA's new smoke-free policy applies to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, any other combustion of tobacco and non-Federal Drug Administration approved electronic nicotine delivery systems, including but not limited to electronic or e-cigarettes, vape pens or e-cigars.

Veterans, if you want to stop using nicotine products contact the VA Quit Line at 855- QUIT-VET (855-784-8838), or text, "VET" to 47848.

The Wilmington VA Medical Center offers smoking cessation classes every Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. in room 7070 on the seventh floor to eligible Veterans, no consult needed. For additional smoking cessation resources visit <https://veterans.smokefree.gov/>.

OCTOBER 1ST



One of the VA Core Characteristics is Quality

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides the highest standard of care and services to Veterans and beneficiaries while managing the cost of its programs and being efficient stewards of all resources entrusted to it by the American people. The Wilmington VA Medical Center is dedicated to fulfilling this mission of providing the highest standard of care.

The Quality Management (QM) Department provides the Wilmington VA Medical Center and its five community based outpatient clinics in Delaware and southern New Jersey support and guidance on their internal strengths and weaknesses and focuses on the hospitals most efficient and effective efforts.

The Quality Management Department includes Risk Management, Patient Safety, Utilization Management, Accreditation, Clinical Applications Coordinators, and Performance Improvement.

Additionally, the QM Department has hosted regular visits from The Joint Commission, Long-Term Care Institute, Office of Inspector General and Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.

If you would like to learn more about access and quality in VA healthcare go to <https://www.accesstocare.va.gov/>.

VA expands Veterans care through virtual technology

Veterans traveling long distances or seeking specialized care to the Wilmington VA Medical Center or one of its five community-based outpatient clinics now have additional VA Telehealth services available to them. Veterans who live in rural areas, recovering at home from a severe injury, or cannot travel long distances and live too far to frequently visit a VA hospital or clinic for an appointment may benefit using VA Telehealth Services.

VA is recognized as one of the world leaders in this new area of health care. Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) uses these telehealth technologies to make diagnoses, manage care, perform check-ups, and provide care.

CVT allows for clinicians and non-clinicians to deliver service from VA site to VA site. This synchronous form of encounter is supported by clinical staff at one location; who receive the patient and prepare them to engage clinical encounter with their provider. CVT eliminates the cost and inconvenience of traveling to see a specialist and provides the service of the specialist coming to see you.

CVT services from site to site include:

- TeleCardiology
- TelePulmonology

- TeleNephrology
- TeleInfectious Disease
- TeleRheumatology;
- TeleEndocrinology (Diabetic Ed)
- TeleGastroenterology
- TelePodiatry
- TelePre-Op
- Telepharmacy
- Telenutrition
- TeleMental Health

Clinical Video Telehealth also allows the Wilmington VA Medical Center to receive clinical services from partnering Medical Centers that have a resource our Medical Center does not have such as: TelePharmacy Transplant; TeleRenal Transplant; TeleLiver Transplant; TelePADRECC (Parkinson's) TeleLactation ED; TeleGYN; Tele-Sleep; TelePCMHI (Primary Care-Mental Health Integration); TeleStroke; TeleICU; and TelePrimary Care. These resources delivered through the clinical video medium help to bring services closer to the Veteran and increase the Veterans experience through reduction of travel and timeliness of services.

While the Wilmington VA Medical Center continues to improve delivery of services to Veterans in the community through our Community Outpatient Clinics; we have gone a step further to offer whenever possible synchronous encounters to Veteran in their



homes. Through VA Video Connect (VVC). Veteran can engage in encounters with various services and clinicians, without even leaving the home. Imagine the impact this has on incapacitated Veterans who can't travel; but need to touch base with their providers. Wilmington has engaged in a replacement appointment pilot for both Mental Health and Primary Care; in which Veterans are offered a chance to replace a cancelled face to face appointment with video into the home. This platform is Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) capable and can be used on any operating system with webcam and internet. While this does not take the place of face to face and hands on care, it does offer the Veteran the opportunity to touch base with their clinician until their next in-person appointment.

Another aspect of Connected Care deliver involves asynchronous services; in which imaging is done and sent to a remote provider diagnose and recommend a plan of care through your Primary Care Provider. Through Tele-Dermatology Veteran patients can have a skin abnormality imaged, reviewed, and interpreted by a remote Dermatologist over a three-day business time. Another resource Wilmington VA offer is the ability to screen diabetics for retinopathy. Through imaging, this screening can occur within 15 - 30 minutes. This screening can be done outside of an optometry visit and won't incur a co-pay.

Veterans, you and your health care providers can jointly decide whether to use VA Video Connect for a medical visit. Please speak with your VA care team if you are interested in potentially receiving care through VA Video Connect. Ahead of a VA Video Connect appointment, you will receive an email or calendar invite with a link to launch the session.

VA Video Connect works on nearly any device that has an internet connection and a web camera. It works on Windows-based PCs and laptops, Windows mobile devices, iOS mobile devices, and Android mobile devices.

Veterans who are interest in VA Virtual Care can prepare for their VA Video Connect visit by downloading the free VA Video Connect iOS application from the Apple Store. If you have an Android, no application download is required instead the session will launch automatically in your web browser after the session link is selected from your e-mail invitation.

Remember to speak to your primary care team or any VA healthcare provider if you are interested in using the VA Virtual Care and how it works.

To learn more about VA telehealth services visit <https://www.telehealth.va.gov/index.asp>.

2018 Annual Report

During 2018, Wilmington VA Medical Center and outpatient clinics had an operating budget of \$200 million. With 1,020 employees, 231 were Veterans, which is roughly 23 percent. Veteran patient counts increased to 31,277 unique Veterans. That total number continues to trend up from

29,917 Veterans in 2016 and 30,606 Veterans in 2017. Currently there are 2,497 patients who are women Veterans. Emergency room visits have dropped from 9,173 to 8,732 this year. Paired with those numbers, outpatient visits have climbed from 317,618 to 338,184 this year. Outpatient

Numbers & Statistics

calls were abandoned before those calls could be answered. That exceeds the set goal of 5 percent. Voluntary service received \$86,985 in monetary and non-monetary donations. Monetary contributions, for example, support activities at the community living center and elsewhere. Also in 2018, roughly 260 volunteers contributed over 14,000 hours. The Veterans outreach team attended more than 400 community events in two states and enrolled over 420 Veterans in VA health care and associated services.



\$200 Million Budget

For fiscal year 2018, Wilmington VA Medical Center had a total operating budget of \$200 million.



1,021 Employees

Roughly 1,021 employees were on staff across the medical center and community clinics during fiscal year 2018.



231 Veteran Employees

During fiscal 2018, Wilmington VAMC and clinics had a staff comprised of 231 Veterans. That is roughly 23 percent.



31,277 Unique Patients

In 2018, Wilmington VAMC and community based outpatient clinics had 31,277 unique Veteran patients.



338,184 Outpatient Visits

Roughly 338,184 outpatient visits took place in 2018 at the medical center and clinics.



2,497 Women Vets

About 2,497 women Veterans were actively enrolled in VA health care in fiscal year 2018.



144,141 Calls

For 2018, about 144,141 calls were received. Average speed to answer was 27 seconds (Goal < 30 seconds). 4.85 percent of calls disconnected before answered (Goal < 5 percent).



\$86,985 Donations

During fiscal year 2018, Wilmington VAMC's voluntary service received \$86,985 in monetary and non-monetary donations.



260 Volunteers

Wilmington VA Medical Center has 260 regularly scheduled volunteers. In fiscal year 2018, they gave 14,000 hours.



17,333 Care Consults

Community care consults for Fiscal Year 2018 were 17,333. That is a rise from 13,049 the year before.



400 Outreaches

Outreach planned, organized, and/or attended more than 400 outreach events in Delaware and New Jersey. At least 420 Veterans were enrolled in VA health care and other services.



967 Admissions

There were 967 hospital admissions during fiscal year 2018 at Wilmington VAMC.

encounters equally climbed from 433,830 to 463,028. Proactive measures to get Veterans to scheduled appointments as well as reaching out to them has positively impacted emergency room visits. Community care consults also trended up, moving from 13,049 to 17,333. There were 967 admissions in fiscal year 2018. Answering phone calls and inquiries in a timely manner has been a major focus in 2018. About 144,141 calls were received by Wilmington VAMC call center this year. The average speed to answer was 27 seconds, which exceeds the goal of 30 seconds. Only 4.85 percent of incoming

Have you considered the VA for your health care needs? VA offer comprehensive services ranging from preventive screenings to long-term care. Wilmington VAMC proudly serves Veterans in multiple locations for convenient access to the services we provide. In addition to the medical center, community based outpatient clinics are located in Delaware and southern New Jersey.