Guide to Behavioral Health Services
At Columbus VA

This guide is meant to provide an overview and contact information for the Veterans we are honored to serve:

• Psychotherapy
• Psychiatric medication management
• Case management and advocacy
• Substance use treatment
• Assistance with housing, employment and legal issues

Important Contacts and Walk-In Hours (Overall hours from 8am-4:30pm M-F)

• General Behavioral Health
  – Main Clinic (420 North James Road, Columbus, OH 43219) - (614) 257-5631
    • Walk-in (1st Floor): 8am – 4:30pm (Crisis only after 3:30pm)
  – Behavioral Health Clinic (2720 Airport Drive, Columbus, OH 43219) – (614) 388-5760
    • Some providers moved to this location in July 2016 as result of continued growth of staff and behavioral health services being offered.

• Recovery Services (614) 257-5440
  – Walk-in (4th Floor): 8am – 3:30pm (Starts at 10am on Fridays)

• Community Outreach (614) 257-5499
  – Walk-in (1st Floor): 9am – 11am; 1pm – 3pm

• PTSD Team (614) 388-7069
• 24/7 Veteran Crisis Line  (800) 273-TALK (8255), then select option 1
• Prescription refills (614) 257-5711
• 24/7 RN phone line for non-emergency concerns (888) 838-6446
• Billing, Non-VA (Fee) inquiries  (614) 257-5645
• National Call Center for Homeless Veterans  (877) 424-3838
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Department of Veteran Affairs Mission Statement

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan”. We do this by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s Veterans.

Core Values

The VA is committed to serving you and meeting your needs. To do this, we have identified five core values that reflect our obligations to you. These values are Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence.

- The core values define “who we are,” our culture, and how we care for Veterans and eligible beneficiaries. Our values are more than just words. They affect outcomes in our daily interactions with Veterans and eligible beneficiaries and with each other.
- Taking the first letter of each word—Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence—creates a powerful acronym, “I CARE.” These core values remind each VA employee of the importance of their role in this Department. These core values come together as five promises. We make these promises as individuals and as an organization to those we serve.

**Integrity:** Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

**Commitment:** Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA’s mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

**Advocacy:** Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

**Respect:** Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

**Excellence:** Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership. Be accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and thorough in correcting them.
Section I. Overview of Services

Our Views on Providing Care to Our Veterans

We are committed to supporting each Veteran receiving care from us. We will help each Veteran in reaching his or her self-identified goals, improving his or her overall quality of life and supporting independence. We believe in a concept called recovery. We define recovery as a journey of healing and transformation. This journey helps a person with mental health and/or substance use issues live a meaningful life in a community of his or her choice. This is done while striving to achieve his or her full potential. The foundation of our treatment philosophy is the belief that people are capable of change. We believe in you!

We are honored to serve all those who have served! We respect and appreciate the diversity of those Veterans we serve. We care for individuals who vary in terms of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socio-economic class, and a host of other factors. This diversity is why we start our treatment with a complete assessment so that we can better understand and help the unique individual that you are.

Getting Started with Behavioral Health

• Referrals or walk-in
  – You can get services through referrals from providers or by requesting services during walk-in hours.

• Orientation
  – At the beginning of treatment, you will learn about the services we offer, along with your rights and responsibilities as a patient. This is useful for all veterans new to Behavioral Health as we offer a wide range of services. In order to serve your unique needs we ask that you attend this brief presentation before meeting with a
clinician one to one - this is important even if you have already had an appointment in our walk in clinic.

• Assessment
  – We will ask you questions to understand your life experiences, your concerns, and your goals. This is an opportunity for us to really get to learn about your unique situation. We will work with you to find ways to best help you within our department.

• Treatment Plans
  – We will support you in identifying and reaching goals that matter to you. The foundation of our treatment philosophy is the belief that people are capable of change. We believe in you!
  – Treatment plans are the written road maps of how to reach your goals. You and your care provider will decide on the best path for you to take. However like any map you can make changes at any time. Plans are flexible and based on what you need to get better.

• Treatment
  – We provide a wide range of treatment options. Our treatments have research showing that they make meaningful improvements in people’s lives.
  – If you have a number of concerns, you may be working with more than one provider in Behavioral Health. To help coordinate your care, a staff member will be assigned as your Mental Health Treatment Coordinator.
  – After you reach your goals, you may be discharged from treatment with Behavioral Health. You have the option to return to treatment later if there is a need.

Issues We Address

• We provide care for **individuals** with …
  – Depression
  – Anxiety
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar disorder
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Trauma and other stressor related disorders
- Insomnia
- Substance use disorder
- Neurocognitive disorder
- Housing, employment, legal and other life concerns.
  - And a large number of other issues.

• We look forward to learning about your life experiences and how we can assist you with whatever challenges you are facing.

• Your symptoms are only one part of who you are. We also believe you have many strengths that have allowed you to cope so far with your concerns. You are a unique individual worthy of respect and understanding.

**Types of Services We Provide**

• **Assessment** – Interview to get an idea your concerns. It may involve psychological testing.

• **Psychotherapy** – Talk therapy to address behavioral health issues. We work with you to develop healthier thoughts and habits. We use a wide range of treatments backed by research.

• **Psychiatric medication management** - Psychiatric medication may be prescribed to help improve behavioral health symptoms and conditions.

• **Case management** - Help you navigate the VA healthcare system. Get community resources. Help you define and reach your goals.

• **Intake** – Help get you the care you need based on your goals and needs. We talk about treatment options and educate about physical and
behavioral health topics. We start the assessment process. We may prescribe medication and evaluate for psychiatric hospitalization.

• **Peer Support** - Promote and maintain recovery by Veteran staff who share their own recovery stories, provide support, offer a sense of hope, and teach coping skills.

**Organization of Services**

• **General Behavioral Health**
  – **Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP) Teams**
    • Various types of mental health professionals working together to provide comprehensive (full) outpatient mental healthcare.
    • Similar to the team approach used in Primary Care
  – **Crisis and Acute Care**
    • Urgent behavioral health services, such as suicide & violence risk assessments, crisis care and follow-up after a hospitalization
    • Walk-in appointments are available.
  – **Suicide Prevention**
    • Provide support to Veterans at mild or high risk of suicide – by helping to connect them to the services they need to address their concerns.
  – **Community Based Outpatient Clinics**
    • Behavioral health services may vary by CBOC location.

• **Community Outreach Division**
  – **Emergency Housing & Grant Per Diem**
    • Provide temporary and short-term emergency housing and case management services that go along with the program.
- **Healthcare for Homeless Veterans**
  - Provide care to Veteran who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
    - Help homeless Veterans access VA services and community resources for medical, psychiatric, and substance use. This is done using community outreach.
    - Provide referrals for shelter, safe and affordable housing, and other basic needs.

- **Homeless Patient-Aligned Care Team**
  - Complete primary care team designed to meet the unique healthcare needs of Veterans experiencing homelessness.

- **Housing and Urban Development - VA Supported Housing (HUD-VASH)**
  - Provides permanent affordable housing and ongoing case management treatment services for homeless Veterans who require support to live independently

- **Veterans Justice Outreach**
  - Works to redirect those involved in the legal system with mental health and/or substance use issues into Veterans Courts. These courts are designed to engage Veterans in effective treatment as another option to incarceration.
  - Collaborates with Legal Aid to offer walk-in Legal Clinics providing free legal consultation/advice

- **Vocational Services**
  - Provides Veterans experiencing homelessness or mental illness with assistance in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment
• **Intensive Treatment Division**
  – **Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment (IDDT)**
    • Individual therapy and case management for Veterans with both serious mental illnesses and substance use issues
  – **Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM)**
    • Provides intensive case management services to Veterans with serious mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression with psychosis) who need support to be successful with living in the community
  – **Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC)**
    • Help Veterans with serious mental illness who are ready to work on recovery skills and to learn to live in the community.
    • Services include education on wellness and recovery, individual and group therapy, peer support, and recreational activities.

• **Integrated Behavioral Health**
  – **Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI)**
    • Provide same day/as needed access to mental health assessment and treatment services for Veterans in Primary Care
    • Offer up to date methods directed toward behavior change to help physical and mental health
    • Common issues include anxiety & worry, sadness, grief, coping & problem solving, tobacco cessation and chronic illness management.
- **Pain Psychology**
  - Offer a range of structured group treatments as well as individual sessions with pain psychologist for Veterans with chronic pain issues

- **Home-Based Primary Care**
  - Offer behavioral health services to Veterans enrolled in Home-Based Primary Care.
  - Services include individual, couples and family therapy, a wide range of evidence based psychotherapies, caregiver support and education. Check ability to make different types of decisions.

- **Neuropsychology**
  - Offer comprehensive evaluations of Veterans who may have issues with their cognitive abilities
  - Identify cognitive challenges in various life skills
  - Examinations for brain impairments due to a wide range of medical and psychiatric conditions

- **Recovery (Alcohol/Substances)**
  - **Outpatient Rehabilitation and Aftercare**
    - Offer therapy, usually groups, for Veterans with substance use issues who do not require a residential program or have recently completed one
    - Dual diagnosis treatment for Veterans with mental health and substance use issues - group and individual options
  - **Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOT)**
    - Offer therapy, usually group, to Veterans with substance use issues who need more support than once a week Outpatient Rehabilitation and Aftercare groups but who don’t want or require residential treatment.
  - **Detoxification Treatment**
• Provide inpatient or outpatient detoxification to Veterans dependent upon their need and situation
  – Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET)
    • Services for Veterans on chronic pain medications with a positive urine drug screen
    • Help Veterans with concerns about their use of alcohol and/or other drugs. Help explore these issues in a safe and supportive environment.
  – Opioid Dependence Treatment
    • Outpatient methadone maintenance treatment
    • Outpatient Suboxone maintenance treatment
    • Group and individual supportive therapy
  – Tobacco Cessation
  – Gambling Use Disorder Treatment
    • Provide individual counseling or referral to inpatient services for Veterans with gambling issues

• Trauma Recovery Division
  – PTSD & Military Sexual Trauma treatment
Diagram of Services – BHIP teams at the core, surrounded by specialties

Your Providers

• We have a wide range of highly trained providers to help you with your concerns and improve your quality of life.
• Most of our staff fall into the following groups - nurses, peer support specialists, psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers.
• An important part of treatment is the quality of the relationship between the provider and patient. Please feel free to ask our staff about their training or experience.
• We also have non-clinical staffs that support the work that we do in many important ways and share our focus on excellent customer service.

**Different ways to deliver services**

• We offer individual and group treatment. We also provide family and couples treatment.

• You can have friends or family members (as you define “family”) involved in your care.

• Face to face options
  
  – [Video-teleconferencing](#) – we can offer services using high quality video connection between main clinic and community-based outpatient clinics
  
  – [Home Telehealth](#) - a case management program using a tele-messaging device in your home or your cell phone. This allows you to read from a screen and answer questions. Program helps you to learn more about how to cope with mental health issues. An RN or Social Worker works with you for assistance and support.
  
  – [MyHealthyVet & Secure Messaging](#) – a way to communicate securely by email with your provider
  
  – Please ask your provider for more information about these options.

**We Value Your Input in Improving the Care We Provide**

• To address your personal issues, talk to your provider first. If this does not resolve things, contact service level or patient advocates.

• Consider joining or attending Central Ohio Veterans Behavioral Health Council (covbhc@gmail.com) – purpose is for making system improvements
  
  – meets on 2nd and 4th Fridays from 1-2 pm in room 1A201

**Veteran Experience**
You are very important to us. Please ask questions if something is not clear about our services or the care you receive. Your participation will help us improve our services to make sure that we meet your needs and expectations.

To know we are providing the best possible services to you, we may ask for your opinion from time to time. This may be done through surveys, interviews or other methods. **We want your feedback at any time if you have a concern or compliment about your care!**

**Accessibility:**

Staff will make all reasonable accommodations to help you get our services. Barriers can be in many forms like stairs, language differences, hearing problems, or an unsatisfactory contact you have with a staff member. Talk to your providers about any concerns you have about barriers.

**Grievance Procedure:**

If there is something about your care you would like to change or if you have a compliment, please feel free to contact the following individuals in this order:

1. Please meet with the staff member about your concern or compliment.
2. If you are still unable to solve your concern, contact a service level or patient advocate. The patient advocates can be reached in-person on the 1st floor or by telephone at: 614-257-5449, 614-257-5279 or 614-257-5290.

**Your Treatment Plan & Family Involvement**

Your involvement in developing a treatment plan is important to your care. You can include your family or others supporting your treatment. You will develop a recovery plan that lays out your goals and how to achieve them.
You and your care provider may review and update your plan. You may also request a copy of your plan at any time. This plan will help you and your provider see what progress has been made on your goals as time goes on.

**Family Members and/or Trusted Support Persons:**

You have the right to have family members and/or others supporting you involved in your care. In order for a support person to be involved in your care, you will need to sign a release of information (ROI). This states that it is okay for VA staff to communicate with who you choose about your care.

**Why involve personal support persons in your care?**

- Your treatment team will only see you when you are participating in services. Your personal support persons will likely spend much more time with you. If they know your plan of care, your goals and what you are working on, they will be better able to help support you.

- Your personal support persons will be able to assist you in communicating your needs and questions to your treatment team when needed.

- Your treatment team will be able to offer support and guidance to your personal support persons to assist them in helping you as much as possible.

- Your treatment team will be able to offer referrals to other services/support for your personal support persons as needed (for example: family therapy, Al-anon, caregiver support, etc.)

- It will be easier for your treatment team to notify your loved ones of an emergency. If you do not have reliable phone service, your treatment team may be able to reach your personal support person(s). This may avoid delays in care.
What can your personal support persons expect if they are involved in your care with signed ROI?

- They may call your provider to share information and ask questions. Your provider will only discuss information that is permitted by you and necessary to your personal support person.

- Work together in treatment planning. Your provider will ask your personal support person(s) for feedback and opinions on your needs and progress towards your goals. You have the final choice in what you would like addressed and what goals you work towards.

- When it is possible your provider(s) will offer referrals to your personal support person(s).
  - Referrals may include:
    - VA’s “SAFE” program (Support and Family Education)
    - Al-Anon (Central Ohio Al-Anon Family Groups)
    - CHAMP-VA
    - Caregiver Support Program

It is your choice whether or not to involve any personal support persons in your care.
Section II. Emergency Procedures & Charges

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND NON-VA CARE

The Columbus VA has walk-in behavioral health crisis services available during normal business hours (Monday-Friday 8:00AM and arriving by 3:00PM).

Beginning May 1, 2017, the Columbus VA Urgent Care Center is open 7 days a week.

- Weekdays – 7:30am to 6pm
- Weekends & Holidays – 8am to 4pm

(Specific services or program hours may vary.)

Call the Columbus VA at 614-257-5200 for more information.

However, in case of a serious mental health, substance use and/or physical medicine emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

There are instances when an emergency room visit or hospitalization can be avoided. If you call us at the first sign of a problem, we can often prevent you from being admitted to the hospital. Our staff will work with you and your caregivers to identify your treatment options.

CHARGES

NOTE: Please call VA fee services (614-257-5645) if you are admitted to the hospital or taken to the emergency room. You must inform fee services of any non-VA care within 72-hours for VA to consider payment. We also highly suggest you inform the facility in which you are being treated of any healthcare coverage (for example, VA, Medicare, Medicaid, etc.)
Veterans who do not pay co-pays for regular VA clinic visits will not pay for Behavioral Health visits.

- Veterans who pay a co-pay for VA clinic visits may pay a co-pay for certain services within Behavioral Health.

Medication co-pays do not change after Behavioral Health enrollment. For more information please discuss with your primary care provider or call the Eligibility Office at 614-257-5608.
OTHER TYPES OF EMERGENCIES

In the event of a natural disaster, inclement weather or emergency, we will make every effort to continue providing you care. However, the safety of our staff must be considered. When roads are too dangerous to travel, our staff will contact you by phone, if possible, to let you know that they are unable to see you that day. Every possible effort will be made to make sure that your needs are met.

■ Contact the provider of the service if you experience loss of necessary services such as electric, telephone, natural gas, or water.

■ Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency service number if you experience:
  ○ A local emergency such as:
    ▪ Someone falls and can’t get up
    ▪ Someone’s heart and/or breathing stops
    ▪ A fire
    ▪ Someone has intolerable pain and/or shortness of breath

■ Local support, information and resources can be reached by calling 2-1-1 or calling HandsOn Central Ohio at 614-221-6766. (not for emergencies, please dial 9-1-1 in an emergency)
  ○ 2-1-1 is a free and confidential service that helps people across North America find the local resources they need. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Speak with a live, highly trained service professional in your area from any cell phone or landline. All calls are private and confidential.
  ○ The name of organization in central Ohio is HandsOn Central Ohio – 614-221-6766.

■ You can reach your city services by call 3-1-1. (not for emergencies, please dial 9-1-1 in an emergency). The full number is 614-645-3111.

■ Please notify your provider(s) if you evacuate to another location or emergency shelter.
Section III. Rights and Responsibilities

For Veteran receiving services in Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Division:

Your Rights…

1. Be cared for with respect and kindness.
2. Be told about your health problems and how they are usually treated.
4. Agree to your treatment and take part in treatment decisions.
5. Refuse any part of your treatment (the reason for refusal must be explained)
6. Be told what will happen to you if you refuse any treatment.
7. Make Advance Directives.
8. Privacy and confidentiality.
   a. No one, except the treating staff, can find out about your health problems unless you give written permission or the provider is legally mandated to disclose information (e.g., cases of imminent harm to self or others, child abuse, elder abuse).
9. Have your home and possessions treated with respect and dignity.
10. Complain if you feel your rights have been denied.

Your Responsibilities…

1. Treat the staff and Veterans with courtesy and respect.
2. Ask questions about any part of your care that you do not understand.
3. Tell the staff about any changes in your condition or how you feel.
4. Tell the staff about all medications and home remedies you are using.
5. Tell the staff about other health problems you have had in the past.
6. Follow the staff recommendations when agreed upon.
7. Let the staff know if you are having problems following any instructions.
8. Let the staff know if you decide not to follow certain instructions.
9. Work together with staff to set your treatment goals and plans.
   a. Including:
      i. Take part in assessment by identifying your needs, concerns, strengths and resources
      ii. Making a list of your goals in your treatment plan with your provider(s)
      iii. Working toward your goals independently and letting your provider(s) know if barriers present in your way to reaching them.
10. Keep agreed upon appointments with staff, and call to cancel if you are unable to attend.
11. Get rid of any dangerous or potential hazards from your place of residence – including letting staff know when you have other individuals in your home during home visits.
12. Tell us about any advance directives and provide copies.
13. Not smoke during visits or drink alcohol

*Non-adherence to these rights and responsibilities may result in permanent or temporary program/service restrictions and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.*
National VHA Patient Rights and Responsibilities

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is pleased you have selected us to provide your health care. We will provide you with personalized, patient-driven, compassionate, state-of-the-art care. Our goal is to make your experience as positive and pleasant as we can. As part of our service to you, to other Veterans and to the Nation, we are committed to improving health care quality. We also train future health care 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 or resident of a community living center (CLC). Your basic rights and responsibilities are outlined in this document. You will receive this information in your preferred language. Please talk with the VA treatment team members who are providing your care or to a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights and responsibilities.

Rights and Responsibilities that apply only to residents of community living centers will be covered at end of this section

Nondiscrimination and Respect

- You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. Consistent with Federal law, VA policy, and accreditation standards of The Joint Commission, you will not be subject to discrimination for any reason, including for reasons of age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

- You will receive care in a safe environment free from excess noise, and with sufficient light to ensure comfort and safety.

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National VHA Patient Rights and Responsibilities (continued)

Definition of Family

- When a loved one is involved in support and care of a VA patient or CLC resident, VA considers a patient or CLC resident’s family to include anyone related to the patient or CLC resident in any way (for example, biologically or legally) and anyone whom the patient or CLC resident considers to be family. If you are an inpatient, any persons you choose can be with you to support you during your stay. Medical staff may restrict visitors for inpatients if medical or safety concerns require it. You will be told promptly about any visitor restriction and the reason for it.

Health Information and Privacy

- Your privacy will be protected.

- You will be given information about the health benefits you can receive. The information will be provided in a way you can understand.

- You will receive information about the costs of your care (for example, co-payments), if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying your portion of any costs associated with your care.

- Your health record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your authorization unless permitted by law (an example of this is State public health reporting). You have the right to have access to or request a copy of your own health records.

- Please respect the privacy of other patients and CLC residents and do not reveal their health information that you may overhear or otherwise become aware of.

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National VHA Patient Rights and Responsibilities (continued)

Partnering in Care

- You have a right to express your preferences concerning future medical care in an advance directive, including designating a health care agent to make health care decisions on your behalf when you can no longer do so.

- You, and any person(s) 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 in your preferred language. You will be given other options. You can agree to or refuse any treatment.

- You will be told what is likely to happen to you if you refuse a treatment. Refusing a treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you take responsibility for the impact this decision may have on your health.

- 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 do not understand something about your care. This will help us provide you the best care possible.

- You will be given, in writing, the name and title of the provider in charge of your care. You have the right to be involved in choosing your provider. You also have the right to know the names and titles of those who provide you care. This includes students and other trainees. Providers will properly introduce themselves when they take part in your care.

- You will be educated about your role and responsibilities as a patient or CLC resident. This includes your participation in decision-making and care at the end of life.

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National VHA Patient Rights and Responsibilities *(continued)*

- If you believe you cannot follow the treatment plan, you have a responsibility to tell your provider or treatment team.

- You will be informed of all outcomes of your care, including any possible injuries associated with your care. You will be informed about how to request compensation and other remedies for any serious injuries.

- 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. If you have ethical issues or concerns, you may speak with the Medical Center’s Ethics Consultation Service for help.

**Concerns or Complaints**

- You are encouraged and expected to seek help from your treatment team or a patient advocate if you have problems or complaints. Any privacy complaints will be addressed by the facility Privacy Officer. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process in your preferred language. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.

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National VHA Patient Rights and Responsibilities (continued)

- If you believe that you or your family member has been neglected, abused or exploited by VA staff, please report this promptly to the treatment team or patient advocate. You will receive help immediately.

- If you believe the organization has failed to address or satisfy your concerns about health care quality and safety, you may contact the Joint Commission’s Office of Quality Monitoring at 1-800-994-6610. If you believe that the organization has failed to address your concerns about suspected criminal activities, fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement, you may contact the VA Office of the Inspector General at 1-800-488-8244 or email vaoighotline@va.gov.

Additional Rights and Responsibilities of Community Living Center Residents

- You have a right to have access to the outdoors.

- We will seek to honor your cultural and personal values, beliefs, and preferences. We ask that you identify any cultural, religious, or spiritual beliefs or practices that influence your care.

- You or someone you choose has the right to keep and spend your money. You have the right to receive an accounting of any funds that VA is holding for you.

- We will respect your personal freedoms in the care and treatment we provide you. This includes trying to accommodate your normal sleep and wake cycles, food likes and dislikes, and other personal preferences.

- In the Community Living Center, you have the right to be free from chemical and physical restraints. In the inpatient acute care setting, and only in rare cases, the use of chemical and physical restraints may be used if all other efforts to keep you or others free from harm have not worked.

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National VHA Patient Rights and Responsibilities (continued)

- In the Community Living Center, you may keep personal items and are expected to wear your own clothes. As an inpatient, you may wear your own clothes depending on your medical condition.

- You have the right to keep and use personal items as long as they are safe and legal.

- 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 to participate in these activities. You may decide whether or not to perform tasks in or for the Medical Center or in the Community Living Center.

- You have the right to communicate freely and privately. You will have access to public telephones and VA will assist you in sending and receiving mail. You may participate in civic rights, such as voting and free speech.

- In order to provide a safe treatment environment for all patients or CLC residents and staff, you and your visitors are expected to avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please immediately report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

- As an inpatient or CLC resident, you will be provided any transportation necessary for your treatment plan.

Because the CLC serves as your home for short or long-stay services, you have the following additional rights and responsibilities as a CLC resident:

- Staff will knock on your bedroom door prior to entry.

- You have the right to receive care from the same staff member every day to the extent that consistent assignment is possible.

(Continued on next page)
You may have visitors at any time of the day or night provided visitors are respectful of you, your need for privacy and the privacy of others. You may refuse visitors at any time.

You have a right to conjugal visits and you have a right to privacy during those visits.

Your care will be delivered in a setting that resembles home. Therefore, you will be invited to have your meals in a designated dining area and you will have access to those activities that contribute to meaningful use of time.

In preparation for being discharged to your own home, you and or your caregiver may be invited to participate in activities that prepare you to go home such as self-administration of medications and treatments.

You and your caregivers have a right to attend treatment-planning meetings and participate in household or resident council.
Section IV. Advance Directives and Mental Health Care Preferences

What You Should Know about Advance Directives

As a VA patient, you have a say in the health care you receive. Normally your doctor explains your options for health care and you get to decide what is best for you. However, what happens if you are too ill to make decisions for yourself? Who would you want to make decisions for you? Does this person know what you would or would not want?

Questions like these can be hard to think about, but they are important. That is why VA wants you to know about a legal form you can complete. It is called an advance directive.

What is an advance directive?

An advance directive is a legal form that helps your doctors and loved ones understand your wishes about medical and mental health care. It can help them decide about treatments if you are too ill to decide for yourself - for example, if you are unconscious or too weak to talk. There are two types of advance directives: durable power of attorney for health care and living will.

What is a durable power of attorney for health care?

This form lets you name a person to make health care decisions for you if you cannot make them yourself. This person is called your “health care agent.” He or she will have the legal right to make health care decisions for you. You can choose any adult to be your agent. It is best to choose someone you trust and who knows you well. You should talk to that person to make sure they are willing to be your health care agent.

Do I have to fill out a durable power of attorney for health care?

It is up to you whether you complete a durable power of attorney for health care. If you do not choose a health care agent, your doctor will
choose a spokesperson to make decisions for you in the following order: legal guardian (if you have one), spouse, adult child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or a close friend. If your doctor cannot find anyone from this list, VA staff or a court will make decisions for you.

What is a living will?

A living will is a legal form that communicates what kinds of health care you would or wouldn’t want if you become ill and can’t decide for yourself.

Do I have to fill out a living will?

It is up to you whether you fill out a living will. The purpose of a living will is to help your spokesperson and your doctor make decisions about your care. Whether or not you decide to fill out a living will, it is important to discuss your wishes with others. Talk to your health care agent, your loved ones, your doctors, and your health care team so they understand what is important to you.

Does my spokesperson have to follow my living will?

Your spokesperson must try to respect your wishes if they are known. But it can be hard to imagine the future and say just what treatment you would want at that time. Your spokesperson may have to interpret your wishes. In a VA advance directive, you can say how strictly you want your wishes followed. You can tell your health care agent to do just what your living will says, or you can tell them to make the decision they think is best for you even if it is not what the living will says.

Do health care providers have to follow my living will?

Your advance directive provides important guidance for your health care providers. Generally, your advance directive will be followed, unless there is conflicting information about your wishes or it is unclear how to apply your wishes. In a few cases, advance directives can’t be followed because they conflict with legal or professional standards.
Should I have an advance directive?

Yes, it is a good idea to have one. An advance directive helps protect your right to make your own decisions. It helps make sure people respect your wishes if you can’t speak for yourself.

Your advance directive is used only when you are unable able to make your own health care decisions.

What types of advance directive forms are available?

VA recognizes all types of legal advance directives, including VA, state, and Department of Defense (DoD) advance directives.

- The VA Advance Directive (Form 10-0137) contains more detail than most other advance directive documents. It also allows you to attach worksheets and other documents if you choose to do so. This lets you provide a more complete understanding of your wishes.
- State advance directives are legally binding under a certain state’s laws. Some states may require you to use a particular form. Other states may have restrictions about language.
- A DoD advance directive is drafted by a military lawyer for military personnel. It is legally binding in VA and in every state.

How do I complete an advance directive?

Fill out VA Form 10-0137, “VA Advance Directive: Durable Power of Attorney and Living Will.” Or use any valid state advance directive form. You can also fill out more than one form. But if you do this, you should make sure they do not conflict with each other. Your health care provider or legal advisor can help determine which form is best for you. You can fill out the form on your own or get help from a health care professional at your local VA health care facility. This might be a social worker, your primary care doctor, or your mental health professional. You could also talk to your spiritual advisor or attorney.
What should I do with my advance directive?

Give your advance directive to your VA health care provider so they can put it in your medical record. Give a copy to your health care agent and anyone else who might be involved in making health care decisions for you.

Can I change my advance directive?

You may change or cancel your advance directive at any time. In fact, you should review your advance directive often, especially if there is a change in your health, to make sure it is up to date. If you change it, be sure to tell your health care team and have them put it in your health record. Share your new directive with your family members and other loved ones.

What if my family members or health care providers disagree about how to interpret my advance directive?

All VA health care facilities and most non-VA facilities have an Ethics Consultation Service that can help resolve conflicts. Talking with your spokesperson, loved ones, and health care providers ahead of time can help to prevent conflicts in the future.

I have homes in two states. Is my advance directive valid in both places?

States often have different laws and different forms. Check with your health care providers or legal advisors in each place. However, the VA advance directive is valid throughout the VA system.

Outside of VA, will my advance directive be legal in all 50 states?

The laws vary from state to state. Most states will recognize an advance directive from another state. If you have a home in more than one state, check with your health care provider or legal advisor in each state.

A VA advance directive is valid throughout the VA system, no matter where your facility is located. A VA advance directive may or may not be legally binding outside of VA, depending on state law.
YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

Advance Directives.

Advance directives are legal forms that state your preferences about your future medical and mental health care. If you become too ill to make decisions about your care, an advance directive can help your doctors and family members understand what you want.

It is up to you to decide if you want an advance directive. Your decision will not affect your access to health care or other VHA services.

There are two types of advance directives. In the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the two types are in one form. You may complete either:

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care

In this type of advance directive, you name a person as your Health Care Agent who is to make health care decisions for you if you are not able to do so. Your Health Care Agent is the first person your health care team contacts for decisions about your care.

Living Will

In this type of advance directive, you state your preferences about treatments. A living will helps your Health Care Agent or others know what treatments you would choose.

Your Rights:

1. You have the right to accept or refuse any medical treatment.

2. You have the right to complete a durable power of attorney for health care.

3. You have the right to complete a living will.
Your Responsibilities:

1. If you have an advance directive, it is important to give the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) a copy for your health record.

2. To get more information about advance directives, or help filling out the forms, contact your primary case manager to do so.

Mental Health Care Preferences

Individuals with mental illness can add a Mental Health Care Preferences Worksheet to their Advance Directive to guide their psychiatric care if they have a mental health crisis.

Do I need to complete a Mental Health Care Preferences Worksheet if I have a mental illness?

- No, like the advance directive it is voluntary and done along with those involved in your care and knows you best.

What are the advantages of voicing my wishes regarding mental health treatment?

- Your healthcare team will know what your wishes are if you are unable to express them.
- You can let others know what medications and treatments have been most helpful and tell which medications and treatments you would like to avoid because of negative side effects.
- Tell whom you would want to be informed or visit you while in treatment.

Do my providers have to follow everything I document in my advance directives?

- The VA requires providers to respect and follow your written wishes to the fullest extent possible.
- Your wishes may not be followed if it goes against VA policy, state or federal law or if your wishes endanger others.
Do I need to choose a health care surrogate?

- Choosing someone who knows your wishes and treatment preferences is very important if you are unable to make decisions for yourself.
- This person will be asked to make decisions for you based upon how you would answer if you were able to.

How do I complete a Mental Health Care Preferences Worksheet?

- You can ask your primary case manager who will work with you to answer your questions and add the correct documents to your record.
- The VA accepts all state authorized advance directives unless in conflict with VA law or policy.

If you have a completed Mental Health Advance Directive from outside the VA, please bring your document to the attention of VA staff.
Informed Consent for Outpatient Behavioral Health/Case Management Services

Welcome to mental health treatment at the Columbus VA. This document contains important information about our professional services and policies. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions you might have so that you can discuss them with your provider.

Your mental health treatment will have the best chance for success if you have a good working relationship with your mental health provider(s). As a participant in your treatment, you have certain rights that are important for you to know. You should also be aware that there are certain limitations to those rights. Your mental health treatment providers at the VA have the following responsibilities to you:

Privacy:

You have the right to the confidentiality of your treatment. This means we cannot and will not tell anyone else what you have told us, or even confirm that you are in treatment with us, without your specific written permission to do so. You may direct us to share information with whomever you choose (e.g. your spouse, partner, boss, etc.). You can change your mind and revoke that permission at any time. The following are legal exceptions to your right to confidentiality. We would inform you of any time when we think we will have to put these into effect.

1. There are some situations in which we are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm. In these cases, we may have to reveal some information about your treatment. For example, if we believe that a child, elderly person, or dependent adult is being abused, we must file a report with the appropriate county agency.

2. If we believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to a specific person or place where people may be harmed, we are required by law to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking involuntary hospitalization. If you threaten to harm yourself and we cannot get in contact with you to determine you are safe, we may be obligated to seek
hospitalization for you or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. Should this occur we will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

3. Your treatment provider may find it helpful to consult other professionals about your case. During a consultation, we make every effort to avoid revealing your identity. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you have multiple providers at the VA they may discuss your case so they can provide you with better treatment. If you don’t object, we will not tell you about these consultations unless we feel that it is important to our work together. Progress notes will be written and included in your electronic medical record that can be accessed by other VA health providers involved in your healthcare. Electronic communications (such as secure messages or emails) may be stored within the medical record.

4. In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent us from providing any information about your treatment. In some proceedings in which your emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order our testimony if he/she determines that the issues demand it. This is a very rare occurrence and we would continue to work to protect your privacy in these circumstances. Information may also be released if a negligence suit is brought against this provider or if there is a complaint with the licensing board or other state or federal regulatory authority.

**Diagnosis and Treatment:**

Diagnoses are technical terms that describe the nature of your problems and something about whether they are short-term or long-term problems. You have a right to know what your diagnosis is and we will always be happy to discuss it with you.

You have the right to ask questions about anything that happens in your treatment. We are always willing to discuss how and why we have decided to do what we are doing, and to look at alternatives that might work better. You can feel free to ask us to try something that you think will be helpful. You can ask us about our training and qualifications for
working with your concerns. You can request a referral to be transferred to another provider if you decide that your provider is not a good fit for you. Also, remember that you are free to leave treatment at any time.

**Our Services: Risks and Benefits:**

Your mental health treatment may include medication and/or psychotherapy and/or peer support. You and your provider will determine the frequency of your appointments and discuss the anticipated course of treatment. Mental health services can have benefits and risks. Therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life. You may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness, and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. However, there are no guarantees of what you will experience. Similarly, if medication is part of your treatment your psychiatrist, or medical provider, will discuss with you the risks and benefits of each medication and alternative treatments. You may also work with our peer support specialist. Peers can be beneficial in supporting your participation in services and assist with achieving your recovery goals. It may be uncomfortable to disclose your thoughts and feelings with a peer, but it is often helpful to share with another Veteran who can relate to your experiences.

**Your Responsibilities:**

You are responsible for coming to your appointment on time. Sessions vary in length depending on the nature of your appointment. If you are late, we will end on time and not run over into the next person's appointment. If you are 15 mins late for an hour appointment, we may reschedule your appointment. Please contact the clinic at (614) 257-5631 if you are going to be late or need to cancel your appointment. If you miss an appointment without canceling, or cancel with less than twenty-four hours' notice, it is up to you to reschedule your appointment. If you frequently no-show for appointments we cannot guarantee that you will be seen again.
at your usual time and it may require you to wait to be seen by the next available provider. The only exception to this rule is if you are in crisis and in danger of harming yourself or someone else. In this case you may

1). Call your provider during work hours 8am-4:30pm.
2). Use the Mental Health Walk-In clinic 8am-3pm Mon-Fri.
3). Contact the Veteran’s suicide hotline at 1-800-273-TALK.
4). Go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

Complaints:

If you are unhappy with your treatment please talk about it with your provider. If you feel that your provider is unwilling to listen to you, please contact the patient advocate, Ladessa Madison, at 614-257-5279.

I have read this Informed Consent handout and understand it. I have discussed the information with my provider. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby give my informed consent for treatment.

*VETERAN’S COPY FOR PERSONAL RECORDS. DO NOT REMOVE FROM HANDBOOK*
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5. There are some situations in which we are legally obligated to take action to protect others from harm. In these cases, we may have to reveal some information about your treatment. For example, if we believe that a child, elderly person, or dependent adult is being abused, we must file a report with the appropriate county agency.

6. If we believe that a patient is threatening serious bodily harm to a specific person or place where people may be harmed, we are required by law to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking involuntary hospitalization. If you threaten to harm yourself and we cannot get in contact with you to determine you are safe, we may be obligated to seek
hospitalization for you or to contact family members or others who can help provide protection. Should this occur we will make every effort to fully discuss it with you before taking any action.

7. Your treatment provider may find it helpful to consult other professionals about your case. During a consultation, we make every effort to avoid revealing your identity. The consultant is also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you have multiple providers at the VA they may discuss your case so they can provide you with better treatment. If you don’t object, we will not tell you about these consultations unless we feel that it is important to our work together. Progress notes will be written and included in your electronic medical record that can be accessed by other VA health providers involved in your healthcare. Electronic communications (such as secure messages or emails) may be stored within the medical record.

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I have read this Informed Consent handout and understand it. I have discussed the information with my provider. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby give my informed consent for treatment.

_________________________     ________________
Signature of Veteran       Date

________________________
Signature of Guardian

________________________
Signature of Provider/or witness

*Provider, please remove this from handbook and scan to medical record*