

VETERANS

RESOURCE

Colorado  
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



**VA**  
HEALTH  
CARE | Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

**GUIDE >**



## A Message from the Director

Welcome to the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS). This handbook was prepared to inform you about our services. The information should make it easier for you to use our healthcare system. If you have any questions that are not addressed in this book, please ask a member of your healthcare team to help you.

It is our priority to give you the highest quality care in a timely manner using the most up-to-date technologies and services. You are our customer and our reason for being here. All of us at Eastern Colorado Health Care thank you for your service to this country.

Lynette A. Roff  
Director  
VA Eastern Colorado HCS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement, Overview, Disclosure Statement	4
Customer Service Commitment	5
Patient Rights and Responsibilities	6
Local VA Name	7
Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCS)	8
Education and Research	10
Updating Your Personal Information, Billing Information	10
Release of Healthcare Information	11
Smoking, Tobacco Free Environment, Electronic Cigarette Policy	11
Parking, Healthcare Information all Center (HICC)	12
Volunteer Opportunities	12
VA Lodging Program, Fisher House	13
Social Workers, Advance Directive (Living Will)	14
Customer Advocacy Service	15
Ethics Consult Committee, Courtesy and Conduct	16
Missed Appointments	17
Women Veterans Health Care	18
My HealthVet, a Website for the Veteran	19
Social Media and Facebook, Telehealth	20
OEF/OIF Healthcare	21

## **OUTPATIENT CLINIC INFORMATION**

Health Care Team, Primary Care Provider	23
Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT), Primary Care Outpatient Clinics	24
Specialty Clinics, Emergency Situations	25
Emergency Care Information	26-27
Outpatient Mental Health Services	28-29
Military Sexual Trauma, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	29
Depression, Suicide Prevention	30
Eyeglass Benefits, Legally Blind & Low Vision Benefits	31
Hearing Care Benefits	31
Dental Benefits	32
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Prosthetics Treatment Center	33-34
Living a Healthy Lifestyle	35
Exercise, Immunizations, Nutrition, Healthy Diet	36
MOVE Program, Alcohol Use, Smoking and Tobacco Use	37
Screenings	38
Chronic Disease Self Management Program (Sick and Tired...)	39
Outpatient <b>Laboratory</b> , VA <b>Pharmacy</b>	40-44
Community Resources	46-49
Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office ( <b>Benefits Information</b> )	47
Joint Commission Accreditation Information	50-51

## MISSION STATEMENT

To honor America's veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

## OVERVIEW

This handbook is designed to give veterans and their families the information they will need to easily navigate through a very large system, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Eastern Colorado Health Care System is one of 155 facilities in the VHA. By reviewing this handbook, you will learn about many of the services provided by ECHCS.

## DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is pleased you have selected us to provide your health care. We want to improve your health and well-being. We will make your visit or stay as pleasant as possible. As part of our service to you 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.

# OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITMENT TO YOU

## Staff Courtesy

We will treat you with courtesy and dignity.

## Timeliness

We will provide you with timely access to health care.

## One Provider

We assure you that one health provider will be in charge of your care.

## Decisions

We will involve you in decisions about your care.

## Physical Comfort

We will strive to meet your physical comfort needs.

## Emotional Needs

We will provide support to meet your emotional needs.

## Coordination of Care

We will take responsibility for coordination of your care.

## Patient Education

We will strive to provide information and education about your health care that you understand.

## Family Involvement

We will provide opportunities to involve your family in your care when appropriate.

## Transition

We will provide smooth transition between your inpatient and outpatient care.

# PATIENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

As a patient and veteran in the VA, you have the right to:

## Respect and Nondiscrimination

- Be treated with dignity, compassion and respect
- Have privacy protected
- Have personal and religious values honored
- Hold and spend your money
  - If ECHCS holds the money, accounting of funds
- Respect of your personal freedom in treatment decisions
  - In rare cases, medication and physical restraints may be used to prevent harm to self or others
- Wear your own clothes and personal items (depending on condition)
- Social interactions and exercise
- Be provided the chance for religious worship and spiritual support
- Talk freely and privately
- Refuse visitors
- Participate in resident groups as long-term residents
- Be respectful of other patients and staff

## Information Disclosure & Confidentiality

- Be given information about health benefits that you will receive in a way that you can understand
- Be given information about cost of care, if any, before you are treated
- Be responsible for paying patient portion of costs
- Have medical records kept confidential and the right to information in the record
- Have nothing released without signed consent by patient unless authorized by law (Public Health reporting)
- Be told of all outcomes of care, including injury caused by the medical care and how to request compensation for that injury

## Participation in Treatment Decisions

- Be involved in all decisions of care including anyone you choose
- Understandable information about benefits and risks of treatment as well as other choices
- Agree with or refuse treatment
  - Refusing treatment will not affect right to future treatment
- Be provided with transportation to/from treatment as an inpatient or long-term care resident
- Be given, in writing, the name and professional title of provider in charge of care
- Choose a personal provider
- Receive education about the role and responsibility as a patient (decision-making and end-of-life care)

- Tell your provider about current condition, medications, and medical history, as well as share information about effect of health issues
- Pain assessment and to receive pain management
- Choose whether or not to participate in research
- Be included in any ethical issues about your care
- Receive help if patient or medical center believes that you have been neglected, abused, or exploited

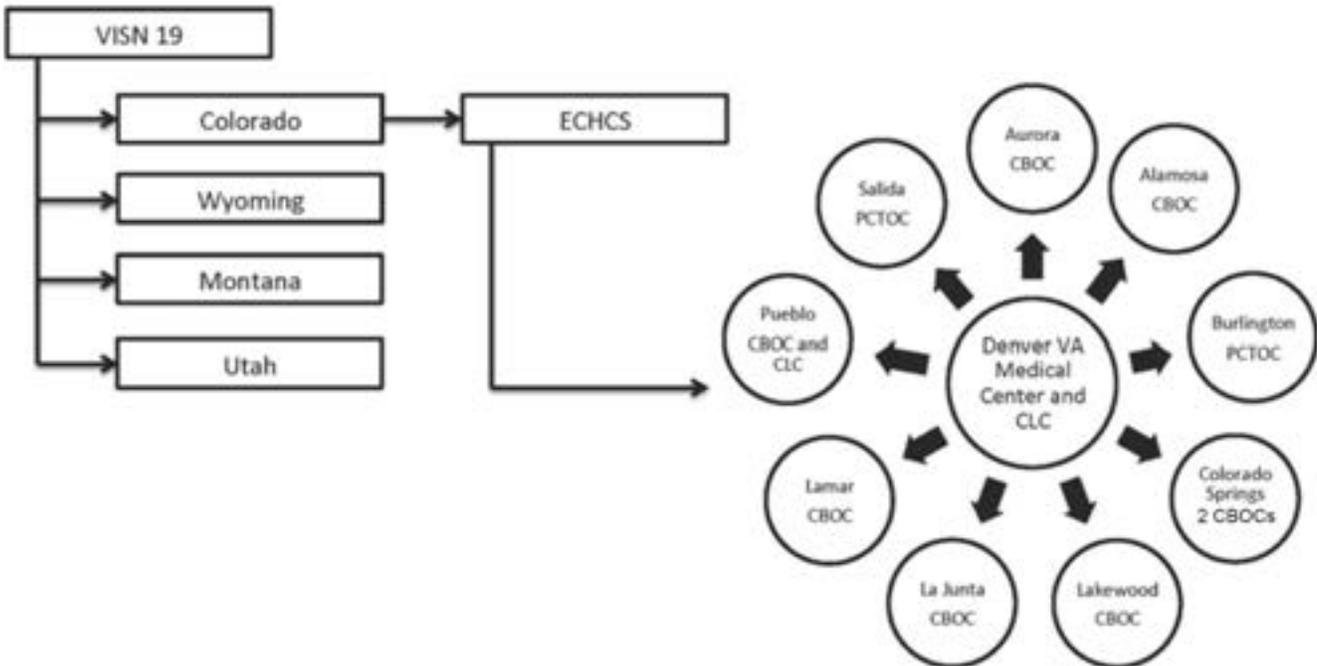
### Have Complaints Addressed

- Patients are encouraged to seek help from the treatment team or patient advocate, if you have problems or complaints
- Be given understandable information about the complaint process

## LOCAL VA NAME

The Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS) is part of the VISN 19. VISN means Veterans Integrated Service Network. A VISN is a network of health care facilities serving a specific region in the country. We are located in VISN 19 which includes Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and Utah. We are sometimes referred to as the Rocky Mountain Network.

### Veteran Integrated Service Network (VISN 19)



## COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS (CBOCs)

1. 622 Del Sol Drive  
Alamosa, CO 81101  
(719) 587-6800
2. 13701 E. Mississippi Ave.  
Suite 201  
Aurora, CO 80012-3697  
(303) 398-6340
3. 1177 Rose Avenue  
Burlington, CO 80807  
(719) 346-5239
4. 320 E. Fontanero  
Colorado Springs, CO 80905  
(719) 327-5660  
Toll-free: 1 (800) 278-3883
5. 25 N. Spruce Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80905  
(719) 327-5660  
Toll-free: 1 (800) 278-3883
6. 1100 Carson Ave., Ste.#104  
La Junta, CO 81050  
(719) 383-5195  
Toll-free: 1 (877) 329-2625
7. 155 Van Gordon Street, Ste. #395  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
(303) 914-2680
8. 301 Kendall Drive  
High Plains Medical Center  
Lamar, CO 81052  
(719) 336-5972  
Toll-free: 1 (866) 240-2279
9. 4112 Outlook Blvd  
Pueblo, CO 81008  
(719) 553-1000  
Toll-free: 1 (800) 369-6748
10. 920 Rush Dr.  
Salida, CO 81201  
(719) 539-8666

# General Information

## EDUCATION & RESEARCH

Educating health care professionals is part of our mission. Resident doctors and other health care students will provide some of your care. This care is closely supervised. For example, when you enter the ECHCS, you are assigned a Primary Care Provider who will be responsible for your care. If a resident is assigned to you, a physician will supervise the care you receive from the resident doctors.

Research is also part of the mission of many VA Medical Facilities. You may be asked to participate in a research study; this is strictly voluntary on your part. Our patients will still get the same quality of care even if they decide not to take part in a research study.

## UPDATING YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Your personal information is important and must be accurate. Therefore, please update any changes to your address, telephone number, marital status, next-of-kin, insurance, or service-connected disabilities. The Central Registration desk at the 9<sup>th</sup> Street entrance to the Medical Center in Denver will supply you with VA form 10-10EZR. These forms may also be obtained online ([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)) to make necessary changes. These forms can be turned in to your assigned clinic areas or registration desk.

Current information is needed in order to provide you with timely notification of appointments, cancellations, or changes, and to ensure accurate delivery to your home for medicines or medical supplies (see page 69 for further important information). Updated information also provides us the opportunity to notify you of upcoming events, or to provide you with information that may be of interest to you.

## BILLING INFORMATION

By law, the VA is required to bill health insurance carriers for treatment provided to veterans for non-service connected conditions. This means the VA must bill any health insurance plan providing coverage for you, including policies held by your spouse.

To do this, the VA needs information about your health insurance coverage. You may be called as a reminder to bring the information when you come for treatment. It is advised to give no personal information over the phone. Always bring your insurance card(s) when you come to the VA, because it provides most of the insurance information needed.

Remember, eligibility for treatment is not affected by your insurance coverage. ALL of the money the VA collects from health insurance companies and from your co-payments is returned to the local VA network to pay for programs for veterans. Our staff is always willing to address any concerns you may have if you are billed for medical care or if you have other questions. Please note there is no billing staff available at any VA facility. Only use the phone number (866) 393-1846 for questions regarding billing.

## RELEASE OF HEALTH CARE INFORMATION

If you wish to have medical information provided to your private physician, insurance company or other agency, you must complete and sign a Release of Information form.

For your protection, we do not accept verbal authorization to release information about your medical treatment. Patients are given one copy of their record at no cost. Subsequent copies of documents will be provided for a nominal fee per page.

Call the Health Information Management Section (HIMS) at 303-399-8020, ext. 2873 for help in obtaining and filling in the form.

## SMOKING/TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Smoking and side effects from smoking are a health hazard, even to non-smokers. For the safety of veterans and their families, ECHCS is a smoke-free facility. In-patients may be asked to sign an agreement to not smoke during hospitalization. Hospital police will be called for violators of this agreement. If hospitalized patients continue to violate this policy, they may be discharged from the hospital. Hospitalized patients will be offered nicotine replacement therapy. We do provide an outside smoking area for outpatients, visitors, and employees only. Please respect this policy and only smoke in designated areas.

## THE ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE AND SMOKE-FREE HOSPITAL CAMPUS POLICY

What is the Electronic Cigarette (e-cigarette)?

E-cigarettes (or electronic cigarettes) are battery-powered devices that claim to provide inhaled doses of nicotine by way of a vaporized solution. E-cigarettes do not contain tobacco and are considered unapproved/unsafe nicotine delivery devices. E-cigarette companies are making unproven health claims about their products, saying that they are safe or safer than traditional cigarettes. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Division of Pharmaceutical Analysis has recently analyzed samples of two brands of electronic cigarettes. The identified ingredients include diethylene glycol (a component of antifreeze) and nitrosamine (a known carcinogen). The FDA has determined that e-cigarettes meet the definition of a combination drug device product and, therefore, should be regulated. The VA does not dispense or pay for electronic cigarettes.

Please note: portable oxygen tanks are not allowed in any smoking area.

## PARKING

A free parking garage is available for your use as a VA outpatient. The primary intended use of the VA garage is for outpatient services.

At the medical center, the VA parking garage is located at the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bellaire Street. The garage may be accessed from 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Bellaire Street (ONLY street between VA and University Hospital) or from Colorado Boulevard and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Turn east on 11<sup>th</sup> and proceed to Bellaire Street, turn south on Bellaire Street to the garage entrance.

The number of parking spaces is limited. Therefore, if you are going to be admitted, we request that you make arrangements so that you do not leave your car in the VA garage for more than 24 hours.

Visitors are not allowed to park in the VA garage! The VA garage is for veterans only. Visitors may use the “metered parking” located on the Clermont Street side of the Medical Center.

## HEALTHCARE INFORMATION CALL CENTER (HICC)

The overall goal of the Healthcare Information Call Center (HICC) at the Denver Medical Center is to improve patient satisfaction by having dedicated staff answer your calls personally. When you dial the main number of (303)399-8020, or toll-free (888) 336-8262, follow the prompts as directed.

After normal business hours, weekends, and holidays, you can also speak to a Registered Nurse by calling 1(866)369-8020.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are many volunteer opportunities offered at the Denver VA Medical Center, Outpatient clinics, and our Community Living Centers, or CLCs, formerly known as Nursing Home Care Units in both Denver and Pueblo. Volunteers are needed to transport patients within the hospital, drive DAV vans that transport patients to and from appointments at the hospital, visit patients, perform clerical tasks, and help with recreation therapy.

For more information about how you can become a VA volunteer please call (303) 393-2802 for Denver VA. For southern CBOC volunteer information, call (719) 295-7263.

## VA LODGING PROGRAM

Lodging patients are housed at local hotels in a semi-private, non-smoking room. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, which are documented by the health care provider, all veterans will share a room with another veteran of the same gender.

Meals will continue to be provided at the medical center in the Canteen and in the Nutrition and Food Service area.

Medication and oxygen needed by lodger patients is totally the responsibility of the patient.

Patients returning to lodging after a procedure must be medically cleared. See your nurse.

The patient should contact the Lodging Program Assistant at 1-888-336-8262, ext. 4596 to confirm lodging request at least one (1) week in advance of scheduled appointment.

The VA is not authorized to provide lodging to non-veterans except when a non-medical attendant is necessary.

Veterans accompanied by a family member or caregiver will be referred to the Fisher House.

Veterans should arrive at the Denver VA medical center and check in with the Lodging Program Assistant, who is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor near Central Registration at the 9<sup>th</sup> Street entrance of the medical center.

Feel free to contact the Lodging Program Assistant at 303-399-8020 extension 4596, if you have any comments or questions.

## FISHER HOUSE

The Fisher House is a home-away-from-home for veterans or active duty military who are in the area to visit a hospitalized family member or for the family of hospitalized veterans or active duty military. Also welcome to stay at the Fisher House are veterans or active duty military from out of town who are undergoing an extended episode of outpatient therapy, are able to care for their own personal needs, and are accompanied by a family member or friend. Fisher House is located at 1954 Quentin Street, Aurora, CO 80010 near the old Fitzsimons Army Base. The Fisher House has:

- Fully furnished bedrooms with attached bath
- In-room telephone
- Community kitchen
- Living and dining areas
- Laundry facilities

For information contact Fisher House at 303-399-8020 Ext. 2049

## SOCIAL WORKERS

Social Workers are assigned to each facility in the ECHCS. They can help you with personal or family problems. The Social Worker knows about many community agencies and resources that give service to veterans. Social Workers can get help for your family while you are in the hospital and help those who need special care after discharge from the hospital. If you wish to talk to a Social Worker, please tell a health care worker and it will be arranged or call (303)399-8020, ext. 2556 for Denver VA. For Pueblo CBOC call (719) 553-1054 and for Colorado Springs CBOC call (719)667-5590.

Another valuable service the Social Worker offers is helping you to complete an Advance Directive document. The VA recognizes the right of a patient/veteran to have an Advance Directive and will comply with directives outlined in the document. For help with starting and completion of your Advance Directive, call (303)399-8020, ext. 2299.

## ADVANCE DIRECTIVE (LIVING WILL)

An Advance Directive is a written document you have made in advance that tells the physician what you want or do not want if you become unable to make your wishes known about health care treatments. You may state whether you want life-sustaining treatment to be withheld or withdrawn in certain circumstances, for example, in the event of terminal illness, or other specific requests that are important to you regarding your treatment. You do not need a lawyer or a notary to complete the VA Advance Directive form.

You have the right to accept or refuse any medical treatment. You may also create a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care to designate someone to make health care decisions for you. That person is called your Health Care Agent (HCA). Ask your clinic patient service clerk for the name and telephone number of the Social Worker assigned to help you complete your Advance Directive.

## CUSTOMER ADVOCACY SERVICE



It is always best to try to handle a complaint or issue at the lowest level where the complaint occurred. However, if for whatever reason this is not possible, follow the Chain of Command as described above.

It is perfectly natural if direct communication is not a comfortable action for you. Nor do you need to drop an issue because you are uncomfortable with confrontation or are not satisfied with a response. The next step is to ask to speak to the supervisor or the nurse manager. If for some reason speaking with the supervisor or manager is not possible or you are still not satisfied with the results, please contact the Patient Advocate.

A Patient Advocate is an employee who is specifically designated at each VHA facility to manage the feedback received from veterans, family members, and friends.

The Patient Advocate assigned at the Denver medical center can be reached at (303) 393-4607, Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Patient Advocate assigned to the Southern CBOCs and Pueblo Community Living Center can be reached at 1-(800) 208-1679.

It is the policy of ECHCS that those patients/veterans who voice concerns or identify problems will not be denied appropriate health care, benefits, or made to feel pressure or retaliation. Lodging a complaint will in no way compromise your medical care or right to future care.

## EASTERN COLORADO ETHICS CONSULT COMMITTEE

The Ethics Consult Committee is available to help you and your family address ethical issues related to your health care. Ethical situations might include: Solving conflicts, withholding of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment, or participation in investigational studies and/or clinical trials. Another ethical concern may include designation of a representative to make decisions for you in the event that you are unable to do so yourself.

The Ethics Consult Committee meets monthly or more often if the need arises. A member of the Ethics Consultation Team can be reached during weekday business hours by calling the Patient Advocacy Office at (303) 393-4607 for a referral.

Additional ethical issues might include personal privacy and confidentiality of information. The ECHCS Privacy Officer can be reached at 303-399-8020 extension 2080. The facility Compliance Officer can be reached at extension 5657 or you can call the Compliance and Business Integrity (CBI) Helpline at 1-866-VHA-HELP.

## COURTESY & CONDUCT

The VA Health Care system is the largest and most successful healthcare system in the world. It is crucial that we do everything that we can to protect the health and welfare of our veterans, visitors, and staff.

We also want to deliver your care in a timely and efficient manner. In order to assist us in this goal, please arrive at least 15-30 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment. Arriving early allows for the check-in process and being ready when your PCP is ready to see you. Most often the following activities will take place:

- Check-in process and finishing of paperwork
- Checking your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, respirations, etc.)

Because our providers are scheduled every 30 minutes to see another veteran, if you arrive late 10 minutes or less the clerk will check with your PCP and you may or may not be seen depending if time allows.

If you arrive more than 10 minutes late you will likely be re-scheduled to be seen at another date and time.

### If You CANNOT Keep Your Clinic Appointment

Always call. It is very important to CALL and CANCEL within 24 hours prior to appointment date/time. This allows the clinic to give your time slot to another veteran if you cannot use it. If 24 hours is not possible, due to an illness or accident just prior to your appointment, call (303) 399-8020 or your particular clinic using the contact information on page 7, anyway, to prevent your record indicating a “no call/no show” for the appointment.

## Chronically Missed VA Appointments

If you miss 3 appointments in a row, you risk being discharged from the VA clinic system. If you miss 5 appointments within 12 consecutive months, you risk being discharged from the VA clinic system.

As our customers, we expect our employees to treat every patient and visitor with dignity and respect. However, please be respectful and civil to our employees as they are here to assist you. When expressing your opinions, please keep your actions and voice respectful at all times as “disruptive behavior” may lead to limited health care benefits or complete denial of care.

**The following behaviors will not be tolerated:**

*Threats of disruptive behavior*

*Acts of disruptive behavior*

*Threats of violence*

**Swearing**

**Shouting**

*Acts of violence*

All incidents of disruptive behavior will be reviewed by a medical center committee which has the authority to limit or ban VA health care benefits.

In addition, know that the following items are “prohibited” or restricted in all VA facilities:

- Weapons (guns, ammunition, knives, straight edge razors, etc.)
- Alcohol/illegal drugs
- Cell phone use in certain POSTED areas (cell phones can interfere with safe operation of some medical equipment in certain areas).

## WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

We are pleased that more women veterans are receiving their health care from ECHCS. Gender specific care is provided by the medical center, and specialty care is also offered to those women who are enrolled and eligible.

Our women veterans can expect to receive quality, sensitive, and personal care in the ECHCS. To ensure this, we have a Women's Office located in the VA medical center to help with questions and concerns. The program can be reached at (303) 399-8020, ext. 2467. The Women Veterans Program requires a referral consult from your PCP. If you are already registered with the Women's Clinic, call ext. 3880 for an appointment.

Women Veteran Benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Primary Care Services
- Specialty clinics as referred by the PCP
- Mental Health Services
- GYN Clinic/Annual exams
- Pap smears
- Breast exams
- Mammography
- Menopause care
- Contraception

Maternity Benefits if eligible:

- Prenatal care
- Delivery costs
- One post-partum visit
- Infertility Specialist referral if determined by the GYN staff to be indicated

## A WEBSITE FOR THE VETERAN



[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

Myhealthvet.gov is a VA website made specifically for veterans and their families. This site will help veterans communicate with healthcare providers to achieve the best possible health.

To register for Myhealthvet, from your personal computer or the computers located in the Patient Education Resource Center (2B117) on the second floor simply enter [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) into the address bar of your internet browser. Look for the link "Register today" on the right side of the webpage and fill out the requested information.

With an authenticated Myhealthvet account:

- Refill your prescriptions.
- Learn more about your health and medical conditions.
- Look up information to explore options for improving your health.
- Secure Messaging communicate non-emergency health related information with your Primary care provider.
- Enter information about your health status into your private health journal.
  - You decide who gets to see the information.
- Keep track of your health status by entering personal health readings information.
- Manage prescription refills and track prescription history.
- Link to VA benefits, resources, and other federal sources.

...and much, much more with new information accesses being developed for future use!

The website [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) is accessible from your home computer, or through the VA computers located in the Patient Education Resource Center (2B117) on the second floor.

# EASTERN COLORADO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM SOCIAL MEDIA AND FACEBOOK

Log onto: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and set up your own page. It only takes about a minute and it is fairly easy to follow the directions.

Then it is as simple as navigating to: [www.facebook.com/DenverVAMC](http://www.facebook.com/DenverVAMC)

Or Twitter: [www.twitter.com/VADenver](http://www.twitter.com/VADenver)

## TELEHEALTH

The VA is doing whatever is necessary to ensure that veterans get the right treatment in the right place at the right time.

VHA utilizes “State of the Art” technology allowing patients to access Providers and Services throughout the system via “Telehealth”. Specialty Consults can include Diabetic eye and skin exams transmitted electronically for diagnostic consultation.

Other frequently used applications of this Technology are:

### Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT)

An interactive exchange between Patients and their Providers (clinical video teleconferencing). This technology is used to educate and provide care to Veterans in our Community Based Outpatient Clinics. Some of the examples are:

- Patient Education & Orientation
- Tele-primary Care
- Tele-specialty Care
- Mental Health Care

### Care Coordination Home Telehealth (CCHT):

Under the direction of a Primary Care Provider, patients are monitored in their home with devices that report specific information to a Nurse related to ongoing treatment of the following conditions:

- Diabetes
- Chronic Heart Failure (CHF)
- High Blood Pressure (HTN)
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Mental Health

## OEF/OIF HEALTH CARE

The VA is working together with veterans to provide comprehensive medical and mental health care to all of our newest combat veterans.

- OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom)
- Afghanistan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan,
- Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, the Philippines
- OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom)
- Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Turkey
- OEF/OIF Combat Veterans have served in an area of combat operations after Nov. 11, 1998, or off the coastal waters
- Any care provided that is determined by their health care provider to be potentially related to their military experience, is not subject to a co-pay regardless of income for five (5) years from the date of separation.
- Medical issues not related to combat or that existed prior to service are subject to a co-pay based on the veteran's income.
- OEF/OIF Combat Veterans are eligible for a dental exam in the first six (6) months after separation if this was not previously taken care of while on active duty. If you have a question regarding this benefit contact a member of the OEF/OIF team by calling the VA hospital at (303)399-8020.

# Outpatient Clinic Information

## HEALTH CARE TEAM

Your “Healthcare Team” consists of a variety of healthcare workers. The team consists of dedicated individuals such as:

- Physician
- Nurse Practitioner
- Nurse
- Pharmacist
- Dietician
- Physical therapist
- Occupational therapist
- Social worker
- Specialists
- Appointment schedulers
- And many more ...

All healthcare workers are partners with you in your health. Our goal is ‘To honor America’s veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well being.’

## PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

Each veteran will be assigned a personal Primary Care Provider (PCP) who will be associated with a particular primary care clinic. This individual may be a physician or a nurse practitioner.

### Role of A Primary Care Provider

A PCP works with you and your “health care team” on your health care needs. They will coordinate the health care you receive by:

- Completing a history and physical
- Completing age/gender related preventive screenings
- Ordering your medications
- Ordering medical and laboratory tests
- Making referrals to specialists

## PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM (PACT)

What is a PACT?

A Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) is a partnership between the veteran and their health care team to make sure they receive whole-person care. This is personalized care to meet the Veteran's individual health care goals. The care team looks at all aspects of the veteran's health with an emphasis on prevention and health promotion.

A PACT offers many ways to access health care. In addition to personal visits with the primary health care provider, Veterans may schedule visits with other members of the team. The coordinated care is achieved through collaboration. The PACT members meet often to talk with the veteran and each other about the veteran's progress toward achieving health goals.

Veterans may have access to group clinics and educational seminars, plus a wealth of information on the Internet through MyHealthvet ([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)).

## PRIMARY CARE OUTPATIENT CLINICS

Clinic Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday

7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Closed all federal holidays and weekends

Outpatient clinics operate by appointment only. DO NOT “walk-in” to be seen in any Primary Care Clinic.

Primary Care Teams are available within the medical center. You will be assigned to one of these primary care teams, if Denver is the closest clinic area to where you live.

With your first visit to your Primary Care Clinic, bring all your prescription medications, over-the-counter medications you regularly take, and all vitamin supplements you take on a regular basis. Bring the medications in their original prescription bottles. Any recent/current outside patient information/records are also very important to bring with you. Various medications may interact adversely with vitamin supplements and vice-versa.

For follow-up appointments, you will be advised of a preferred time for your next appointment by your PCP.

## SPECIALTY CLINICS

Most Specialty Clinics are held at the ECHCS Medical Center in Denver. Before you can be seen in a Specialty Clinic, your Primary Care Provider must enter a CONSULT into the VA computer system.

Once this is done, the computer system will allow the scheduling of an appointment by that clinic. If you have problems when trying to schedule with the Specialty Clinic, please contact the Outpatient Clinic Supervisor at extension 2301.

## EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

- Emergency situations are life threatening and should be taken seriously!
- The most common emergency situations are:
  - Chest pain
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Unusual bleeding that does not stop
  - Stroke

Following is specific information and action plan for one of the most common life-threatening situations

Signs of a Heart Attack:

- Pressure, fullness, squeezing, dull ache, or sharp pain anywhere in the chest
- Nausea/vomiting
- Sweating
- Pain radiating to neck, jaw, upper back or arm
- Difficulty breathing

Action Plan for a Heart Attack:

- Recognize the signs of a heart attack (see above)
- Stop activity, call 911 immediately and describe symptoms
- Chew 2 baby aspirin (unless you are allergic to aspirin)
- In addition to the baby aspirin and if you have known heart problems, take 1 nitroglycerin tablet at 3 to 5 minute intervals to a maximum dose of 3 tablets.
- Know the nearest location of a 24-hour emergency service.

## EMERGENCY CARE INFORMATION

Veterans and their relatives should know benefits and assistance are available to them in the event of an emergency involving the veteran. If VA facilities are not readily available and the veteran must be admitted to a private hospital because of an acute emergency, the veteran, a relative, a representative, or a member of the private hospital staff should take the following actions within 72 hours so that eligibility can be established and authorization for payment of care may be considered.

Immediately contact the nearest VA Medical Center. Contact directory assistance to obtain the telephone number of a VA Medical Center.

### In Colorado:

During normal business hours, call the VA "Contract Hospital Clerk": (303)393-4630 or (303)393-4655 Toll-free: 1(888)336-8262, ext. 4630

After hours, call the VA "Administrative Officer of the Day":(303)393-2805  
Toll-free: 1(888)336-8262, ext. 2805

- Give the veteran's name, social security number, the hospital's name and telephone number, name of the doctor, diagnosis, date and time hospitalized, and if the veteran is service-connected for the condition requiring emergency medical intervention, if known.
- The attending physician or designee at the private hospital should contact the Denver VA Medical Center Transfer Coordinator at (303)399-8020, ext. 5284, toll-free number 1(888)336-8262, ext. 5284 as soon as he/she determines the veteran's condition is stable enough to permit their transfer to the VA Medical Center.

Under recent legislation, there are some instances/cases in which the VA may authorize payment for non-VA care. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

In the Denver area, the VA has certain procedures that veterans and relatives of veterans need to be aware of. The Denver VA Medical Center does not provide emergency ambulance service. If you call with such a request, we will divert you to the 911 emergency system.

If the veteran's condition is emergent, they should always be transported to the nearest community emergency facility that can potentially save the veteran's life. Saving the veteran's life should be the primary concern.

## Payment Terms for Private Hospital:

The VA is not always responsible for private medical bills that may result from this type of an emergency. As mentioned above, decisions about VA liability for payment are made on a case-by-case basis.

The VA will arrange transfer to the VA Medical Center at the earliest time possible, if there is an available bed and the veteran is safe to travel. Again, remember to always notify the nearest VA about your emergency situation immediately.

Please keep in mind that this information is general in nature and every case will be weighed and handled on its own merit. For consideration of bills incurred in the private community, claims may be submitted to the VA Network Authorization and Payment Center at 1(888)795-0773. Mail correspondence to:

The Network Authorization & Payment Center (NAO/NPC)  
P.O. Box 1004  
Fort Harrison, Montana 59636

# OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Hours of operation: Monday through Friday (hours vary by location) Closed weekends and federal holidays

- Denver VA Medical Center – 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (located in E-Wing)
- Alamosa CBOC – Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Aurora CBOC – 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Burlington PTOC – Monday-Thursday from 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Colorado Springs CBOC – 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Lakewood CBOC – 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- La Junta CBOC – Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Lamar CBOC – 8:00 A.M. - 5:00 p.m.
- Pueblo CBOC – Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.
- Salida PTOC – Monday-Thursday from 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

ECHCS offers treatment for common mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and substance use. In addition, we also offer the following specialty programs:

- Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Family therapy (limited basis)
- Military sexual trauma (MST) (women or men)
- Homelessness
- OEF/OIF (Operations Enduring/Iraqi Freedom)

## Veterans New to Mental Health

The Mental Health Clinic at the Denver VA is the ONLY clinic that accepts “self-referral,” so you do not need a consult from your PCP to be seen. You may call (303) 393-2835 or present in person to the Mental Health Clinic for screening/triage and to schedule an appointment.

Urgent care is available for mental health needs (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)

New patients for CBOC Mental Health Clinic must be referred by their PCP. CBOC-based mental health services do not accept walk-ins.

If you are experiencing thoughts of hurting yourself, others, or having a psychiatric crisis, you may present to the Mental Health Clinic and be seen by the clinician on call. You may also call the Mental Health Clinic at (303) 393-2835, call 911, or go to the nearest emergency room.

During non-clinic hours you may present or call the VA Emergency Room, (303) 399-8020, and talk to the psychiatric clinician on call. You may also call 911, go to the nearest emergency room to your location, or call the National Suicide Hotline: (800) 273-talk (8255).

## Follow-up Appointments

Follow-up appointments are made at the time you see a mental health provider or you may need to phone your mental health provider to make an appointment. Contact your assigned clinic for help and further information.

## Military Sexual Trauma

A number of veterans, both women and men, have experienced sexual trauma during their military service. Some veterans have sought counseling and treatment to deal with the effects the trauma has had on their lives. Others may be uncomfortable expressing their feelings or talking about these incidents. They may wonder if they should try to talk about their feelings, or if it will even matter. Yet, these women and men know they have “not felt the same” since the trauma occurred.

Sexual trauma can include sexual harassment or sexual assault. Sexual harassment is any repeated, unwelcome sexual behavior that occurs in the workplace. Sexual harassment includes such things like offensive sexual remarks, unwanted sexual advances, or pressure for sexual favors. Sexual assault is any sort of sexual activity in which one person is involved against his or her will. Physical force may or may not be used. Military sexual trauma means that a veteran experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault during his or her military service.

The Denver VA provides priority counseling and treatment for eligible veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma. It is important to know that military sexual trauma counseling is offered even if a veteran did not report the incident when it occurred or has not filed a claim for benefits. For more information, please contact the Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator at (303) 399-8020, ext. 3243. We are here to help!

## Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a condition that can happen after “being in” or “seeing” life-threatening events such as combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or violent personal assaults such as rape. People who have PTSD often relive the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, have problems sleeping and feel cut off from others. These symptoms can be bad enough and last long enough to hurt the person’s ability to do things in their daily life.

PTSD is also connected with problems in the person’s social or family life, such as losing jobs, marital problems and divorces, family conflicts, and difficulties in parenting. If you are experiencing any of these types of problems, please contact the VA Mental Health Clinic at (303) 399-8020, ext. 2835, to ask for an appointment with a mental health professional.

If you are already in treatment for PTSD and would like more intensive treatment, you may call (303) 399-8020, ext. 4602, to reach the VA PTSD residential rehabilitation program to find out more information about entering that program.

## Depression

Depression is common in America today. Depression is an illness that can affect a person's body as well as mind. Depression can lead to withdrawal from people and activities, loss of pleasure and enjoyment of life, feelings of sadness, disappointment or loneliness, physical discomfort, fatigue, sleep disturbances, aches, and pains.

You are NOT alone. Call the Mental Health Clinic at the Denver VA at (303) 393-2835 or present in person to the Mental Health Clinic for immediate attention.

## Suicide Prevention

Recognize the suicide warning signs:

- Thinking about or planning to hurt or kill yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.

Additional warning signs may include:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

The presence of these signs requires immediate attention. All veterans, including you, are our #1 priority!! Call the national suicide toll-free hot-line number, (800) 273-TALK (8255), or the Mental Health Clinic at the Denver VA, (303) 393-2835 for personal contact and help.

## EYEGLASS BENEFITS

Eyeglass benefits are “limited” and handled through our Prosthetics Treatment Center. You must qualify in order to receive eyeglass benefits by meeting one of the following criteria:

- Service-connected for eye/vision conditions
- 10% or more service-connected for any condition
- Ex-POW
- Receive aid and attendance
- Purple Heart recipient
- Legally blind

Please contact the VA Prosthetics Treatment Center directly for more information at (303) 393-4633.

## LEGALLY BLIND & LOW VISION BENEFITS

Blind and low vision veterans may be eligible for services through the Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinator. Legally blind/low vision veterans enrolled in the ECHCS may qualify for VA low vision and blind aids. Legally blind veterans may be eligible for a referral to a VA Blind Rehabilitation Center. For more information, please contact the Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinator at (303) 399-8020, ext. 3040.

## HEARING CARE BENEFITS

Hearing aid evaluations are “limited.” You must qualify in order to receive a Hearing Aid evaluation. Contact the Audiology (hearing) department directly for more information at (303) 393-2871. To qualify for an evaluation, you must meet one of the following criteria:

- Service-connected for any conditions
- Enrolled for care
- Ex-POW
- Receive aid and attendance
- Purple Heart recipient
- Legally blind

## DENTAL BENEFITS

Dental services are “limited.” You must qualify in order to receive benefits by meeting one of the following criteria:

- Service-connected dental injury
- 100% service-connected disability for any condition
- Ex-POW
- Recently discharged or retired from Active Duty
  - Must present application within 90 days of discharge
  - VA will determine a treatment plan; once treatment plan is complete, the dental benefit ends
- Be enrolled in VA-sponsored Vocational Rehabilitation program (benefits limited)
- If your dental condition is aggravating a medical problem under VA treatment

For more information, please contact one of the following VA Dental Departments:

- Denver Medical Center Dental Department: (303) 393-2823
- Colorado Springs CBOC Dental Department: (719) 327-5693
- Pueblo CBOC Dental Department: (719) 553-1064

## PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION PROSTHETICS TREATMENT CENTER

The Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department is a full service treatment program. We are accredited through the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). We have Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation services at the Denver Veterans Administration Medical Center and the Jewell Clinic in Denver, and the CBOC's in Pueblo and Colorado Springs. Please refer to page 2 for further information.

If we are not able to provide the services directly there is the possibility of providing services through a fee basis system. Please discuss with your Primary Care or Specialty Care Provider.

Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday 8am-4:30 p.m. Some services are available for our in-patients on Saturdays and holidays 8am-4:30pm.

We also offer in-patient and out-patient Case Management services please call the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department at 303-399-8020 ext 2819 for information.

Our Prosthetic Treatment Center is a full service department with a complete in-house fabrication lab. It is located at the Jewell Clinic with limited services available at the main hospital and the CBOC's at Pueblo and Colorado Springs. Please refer to page 2 or call 303-270-6434 for further information

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services  
Programs and Locations

Clinic Name	Locations Services are offered:							
	Main Hospital	Jewell Clinic	Colorado Springs	Pueblo	Other CBOC's	Home based Primary Care	Domiciliary for Homeless Veterans	Community Living Center
For the following services contact the Rehabilitation Department at 303-399-8020 ext 2819								
Occupational Therapy Services	X							
Driver Rehab/Adaptive Transportation	X	X						
Therapeutic Recreation	X	X					X	X
Adaptive Sports	X	X					X	X
National Veterans Rehabilitation and Special Events	X	X					X	X
Speech Therapy	X	X						X
Audiology	X	X						X
Physical Therapy Services	X	X	X	X				X
Assistive Technology	X	X						
Brain Injury	X							
Multiple Sclerosis	X							
Spinal Cord Injury	X							
Veterans Fitness Program	X							
Polytrauma	X							
Special Rehabilitation Equipment (SRE)	X							
For the following services please call the Jewell Clinic at 303-270-6400								
Wheelchair Team	X	X						X
Vision Impairment Services Outpatient Rehabilitation (VISOR)/ Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialist (BROS)		X						
Amputation Care Clinic	X	X	X	X				X
For the following Services please call the Prosthetics Treatment Center at 303-270-6434								
Orthotic and Prosthetic Lab		X						
Shoe Clinic/services	X	X	X	X				X
Brace Clinic/services	X	X	X	X				
Eyeglass Fitting	X							
Inpatient services	X							X

# LIVING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



A Better Way to  
**LIVE**

*Talk with your  
health care team  
about your goals.*



## Be Involved In Your Health Care

- Take an active role.
- Work with your health care team to improve your health.



## Be Tobacco Free

- Quitting smoking is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and protect the health of your family members.
- Don't use tobacco in any form.



## Eat Wisely

- Eat a variety of foods including vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Limit salt, fat, sugar, and alcohol.



## Be Physically Active

- Avoid inactivity.
- Aim for at least 2 1/2 hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week.



## Strive for a Healthy Weight

- If you need to lose weight, losing even a little will help.
- If you are of normal weight, maintain it.



## Limit Alcohol

- If you choose to drink alcohol, drink in moderation (women no more than 1 drink a day; men no more than 2 drinks a day).
- Avoid "binge drinking."



## Get Recommended Screening Tests and Immunizations

- Recommendations for preventive services depend on your age, gender, health status, and family history.
- Ask which screening tests and immunizations are recommended for you.



## Manage Stress

- Pay attention to stress.
- Learn about ways to help you manage and reduce your stress.



## Be Safe

- Find out how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, falls, and motor vehicle crashes.
- Take action to protect yourself and those you love from harm.

[www.prevention.va.gov](http://www.prevention.va.gov)

8-10-02 P0642 Apr 2011



All staff members at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System are interested in your health and want to help you prevent or delay several serious diseases, which commonly cause disability or death. By identifying YOUR risk factors for cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and infectious disease, we can help YOU learn ways to enhance your health.

Nurses and other healthcare providers will review yearly those risks that can be changed or altered for common diseases and recommend changes in your habits and lifestyle, which may improve or protect your health. The following section will give you information which may help you in making healthy lifestyle choices:

## Exercise

Physical activity and fitness may help prevent or reduce the severity of the following chronic conditions:

Diabetes	Obesity
Heart Disease	Osteoporosis Disease
High Blood Pressure	Mental health disorders

An exercise program should provide 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity. Try to exercise every day, but at least 3 times a week. Moderate intensity physical activity is activity that can be done comfortably for at least 60 minutes, such as walking, bicycling, lawn mowing, swimming, or racket sports.

Check with your PCP before beginning an exercise program if you are over 50 years old, have not been active in the past, have heart, lung, bone, joint, or neurological problems. Your PCP can give you a clearance form for FREE use of the Exercise Gym located in Building 7 where a variety of exercise equipment has been set up for you. Hours and times for gym use by non-staff veterans are Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., and Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

## Immunizations

If you are 65 years or older or have diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, or certain other conditions, various immunizations are offered seasonally and are essential to maintain your continual good health.

## Nutrition

Major diseases in which diet plays a role include heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes. Eating habits over a lifetime can have a major impact on the occurrence and severity of these illnesses. Overweight adults have three times higher rates of diabetes and high blood pressure. Obesity can affect the quality of life by limiting mobility and physical endurance.

## Promoting a Healthy Diet

- Reduce intake of dietary fat, especially saturated fats.
- Emphasize intake of whole grain foods, cereals, vegetables, fruits.
- Increase your intake of dietary fiber.

Consultation with a registered dietitian can be scheduled. Discuss with your provider any questions you may have.

## MOVE! Program

The Eastern Colorado Health Care System offers a 6-week comprehensive multi-disciplinary team approach with behavior modification, nutrition education, and physical activity components to help with weight management. This free class is for the serious-minded veteran ready to make a commitment to his/her weight control. Contact your PCP for a referral to the MOVE! Program.

## Alcohol Use

Too much alcohol in any form (beer, wine, or hard liquor) may cause physical and emotional health problems. Pregnant women should not drink alcohol during their pregnancy. Alcohol lowers your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. The Substance Abuse Clinic helps veterans with alcohol or drug use problems. For more information, please talk with your healthcare provider.

## Smoking and Tobacco Use

Smoking or chewing tobacco has serious health risks. The majority of cases of the following cancers are related to the use of tobacco:

- Lung cancer
- Mouth cancer
- Throat cancer
- Esophageal cancer

Smoking is also the leading risk factor for heart attack and stroke. Quitting tobacco use (at any time) greatly decreases risk.

Tobacco use is an addiction. Stopping is hard for most people. The VA Smoking Cessation Clinic uses education, peer support, and nicotine replacement to help you stop using tobacco. Statistics show that using two products (nicotine gum, patch, lozenge, or zyban, etc.) along with peer support are more effective than “cold turkey.” Contact your healthcare provider to enroll in the Smoking Cessation Clinic. Group and individual counseling classes are offered.

You can also call the Tobacco Quitline operated by your State Health Department. The Quitline line offers tailored, proactive tobacco use cessation information, counseling, and self-help materials at NO cost.

Colorado Tobacco Quitline: 1(800) 639-QUIT (7848)

# SCREENINGS

## TB Screenings

Tuberculosis (TB) in the United States continues to be a serious communicable health problem. Your healthcare provider will determine if you are at high risk for TB and order a TB skin test, if necessary.

## Hepatitis C Screening

The number of veterans who carry this virus is unknown. The VA is working to identify veterans who are at risk. Risk factors include:

- Receiving a blood transfusion prior to 1992
- Use of illicit IV drugs
- Definite blood exposure during combat
- Excessive alcohol use
- Having multiple sexual partners
- Intranasal cocaine use
- Multiple body piercings or tattoos

Are you at risk? If yes, please advise your PCP as soon as possible.

## Cervical Cancer (female)

Pap tests check for cancer of the cervix – the lower end of the uterus. Pap tests do not just detect cancer; they help prevent it by identifying any changes at an early stage. Contact your health care provider if you have vaginal discharge, bleeding, or pain.

## Colorectal Cancer (male and female)

Eligible veterans at average risk need to be offered screening for CRC beginning at age 50. The American Cancer Society recommends the following procedures be performed:

- Digital rectal exam every year after age 40
- Stool occult blood test yearly after age 50 (ALWAYS return your stool cards!!)
- Sigmoidoscopy exam every 3-5 years after age 50
- Colonoscopy every 10 years after age 50

These guidelines are only for people without symptoms. If you have a change in bowel habits or experience rectal bleeding, see your health care provider immediately.

## Prostate Cancer (male)

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed type of cancer among men in the United States today. Testing for prostate cancer is controversial. Early detection and treatment may save lives and avert cancer-related illness, but there is no conclusive evidence of the benefits of screening. Digital rectal exams, as well as blood tests for prostate cancer can give false-positive and false-negative results. For these reasons, we recommend that you discuss this with your health care provider if you wish to have screening or further information.

## CHRONIC DISEASE SELF-MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Dealing with or caring for someone with any chronic physical illness or disease? Come join a 6 week workshop that teaches self management skills! Call for more information: 303-399-8020 ext 4931



**Sick and Tired...  
of Being Sick and Tired?**

Join one of our **FREE** six week workshops:  
**Healthier Living  
with  
Chronic Conditions**

Learn skills that empower you to deal with  
chronic illness and *take charge* of your health!

**Sign  
Up  
Now!**

Call the Veteran Health Education Coordinator at:  
**303-399-8020 x 4931**



# OUTPATIENT LABORATORY

Open Monday through Friday  
7:00 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.  
Closed weekends and federal holidays

Operating hours vary by clinic location.  
Walk-ins are appropriate or patients may have appointments through his/her provider.

Allow 24 hours for lab results or as advised by your PCP.

You will be notified of any “abnormal” lab results.

## VA PHARMACY

### HOURS OF OPERATION

#### Main Denver VA Hospital Pharmacy

Check-in/Prescription Drop-off window  
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
(If checking in after 4:30 p.m.,  
there will be a sign directing you to check in at the  
Pick-up window.)

Medication Pick-up window  
8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

#### CBOC Pharmacies

Pueblo CBOC Pharmacy  
8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Colorado Springs CBOC Pharmacy  
8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

All out-patient pharmacies are closed weekends and federal holidays.

## Prescriptions

The VA is prohibited from filling prescriptions for medications written by non-VA providers. All prescriptions dispensed by a VA pharmacy must be issued by a VA provider.

The medication must be carried in the local VA formulary.

If you want your VA MD to order a prescription from a non-VA MD;

- You must schedule an appointment with your VA Primary MD
- Bring the prescription and Progress notes from the non-VA MD telling why he ordered the medication
- Request your VA MD order this medication through the VA Pharmacy
- You must see the VA provider at least once a year.

\*Most medication is sent to your Home address-be sure your address is current.

If your VA Primary Care MD wants you to pick up a medication ordered that same day the following will happen:

- Prescription will be electronically sent to the VA pharmacy from the FIRM or CBOC.
- Prescriptions WILL NOT be processed until you check-in at the pharmacy.
- A pharmacist will educate you about your new medication.
- You must present your VA I.D. card upon check-in. In addition, please bring a photo ID with you.
- After you have checked in at the pharmacy window, the pharmacist will begin to process your medication. This will take about 30 minutes and your name will appear on the pharmacy television screen when your medication is ready to be picked up at the pharmacy “pick up” window. When you arrive at the pick up window, our pharmacy staff will give you a “bag” containing your medications

## Location Of Pharmacy Check-In Areas

- Room 1B-137, 1<sup>st</sup> floor across from pharmacy
- Room 6C-151, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, next to check-in desk
- Out-Patient Mental Health – 1E-102 next to waiting area
- Specialty Clinic or if above areas were closed - 1<sup>st</sup> floor pharmacy at room 1B-137
- Pueblo CBOC – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, room 253
- Colorado Springs CBOC – 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, room 304

## Additional Information

Attached outside the medication bag you will find a list of all active medications (this list will include all medications that the VA believes you are taking, not just the ones inside the bag). Inside the medication bag, you will find the following:

- Medication
- Refill order slips
- Drug information sheets
- Change of address slip
- List of your adverse reactions and allergies
- VA address label
- Tablet cutter, if needed

## VA Formulary “Facts”

- Medications carried by a particular pharmacy are referred to as a “formulary.”
- The local VA can only dispense medications that are listed in its formulary.
- Not all pharmacies carry all medicines.
- If the medication you need is not listed in our local VA formulary, your primary care provider may give you a similar medication that IS carried by our local VA pharmacy.

## Medication Refills

Refills are not handled at the local VA pharmacy. Refill medications for our veterans come from our Consolidated Mail Out-Patient Pharmacy (CMOP) in the state of Kansas. You can ONLY receive medications refills by mail. Due to time necessary to process and mail your prescriptions and to be sure you receive your medication in time, please always order at least 14 days in advance.

## How To Get Medications Refilled

The local VA pharmacy DOES NOT handle refills for your medications. Requests for medication refills are sent to the National VA Consolidated Mail Out-Patient Pharmacy in Kansas. Always plan ahead so that you do not run out of your medications!

The VA has 4 ways to obtain refills from our Consolidated Mail Out-Patient Pharmacy (CMOP) in Kansas.

1. Mail refill slip (Bar code) that comes with your medicine as soon as you receive it (established next mail out at correct time) “BEST WAY”
2. Automated phone system  
Denver Metro Area – (303)399-8020, ext. 3244  
Outside Denver Area – toll-free 1-(888)336-8262, ext. 3244  
(Enter numbers only; do not enter the letters at the end of Rx number.)
3. Order online 14 days in advance  
[www.Myhealth.va.gov](http://www.Myhealth.va.gov)  
(Shows when the prescription was “filled” and when it was “mailed out.”)
4. Drop off refill slip while at the Medical Center  
Comes with your medicine  
Drop at “prescription mailbox” at the VA pharmacy

### **Example of a Refill Slip**

**VAMC DENVER, CO 80220**  
554 (17929) | Ph: 888-3368262X3244

**Rx# 30108054 JAN 5,2006 Fil 2 of 4**  
**TIU,CPRS AA 00-1121**  
TAKE ONE TABLET BY MOUTH EVERY 4 HOURS AS NEEDED - DO NOT TAKE MORE THAN 8 TABLETS PER DAY

Discard after JAN 5,2007 Mr. \_\_\_\_\_  
May refill 2X by JAN 25,2006

Qty: 100 TAB MATHIS,JAYDENE  
**ACETAMINOPHEN 500MG TAB**

DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES when taking this medication.

ABX (118) 555 CLERMONT STREET Jan 05, 2006  
DENVER, CO 80220

REGULAR MAIL-  
CPRS AA TIU  
DO NOT MAIL  
DENVER, CO 80220

WINDOW

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554 (17929) JAN 5,2006@10:17  
Rx# 30108054 JAN 5,2006 Fil 2 of 4  
**TIU,CPRS AA 00-1121**  
TAKE ONE TABLET BY MOUTH EVERY 4 HOURS AS NEEDED - DO NOT TAKE MORE THAN 8 TABLETS PER DAY

Qty: 100 TAB MATHIS,JAYDENE  
**ACETAMINOPHEN 500MG TAB**  
MR \_\_\_\_\_ LOSS \_\_\_\_\_  
Text \_\_\_\_\_ RPTs \_\_\_\_\_  
Routing: WINDOW Days supply: 30 Cap: SAFETY  
Iss: JAN 24,2005 Exp: JAN 25,2006 Last Fil: JAN 24,2005

**PHONE IN OR MAIL THIS REFILL REQUEST**  
Follow the refill instructions provided with your prescription.  
For Refill Call 888-3368262X3244  
**TIU,CPRS AA 00-1121**  
**Rx# 30108054 JAN 5,2006 Fil 2 of 4**

PROVIDER: MATHIS,JAYDENE  
**ACETAMINOPHEN 500MG TAB**  
**5111-0489-78**  
May refill 2X by JAN 25,2006  
NO COPAY

DENVER VAMC-554

DRUG WARNING & Pat. Stat ONSC Clinic: Z2MA1

“I need medicine, but I have NO refills left”

Call (303)399-8020, where a nurse will assist you; toll-free (888)336-8262. This will give you a phone tree; select the option of the service that can best help you.

### Information About Pharmacy Co-Pays

If a co-pay is required, the cost will be \$8.00 or \$9.00 depending upon income for each prescription for a 30-day supply or less

If you have a co-pay, you will be billed for any VA pharmacy dispensed medications. Co-pay charges CANNOT BE REFUNDED.

## Returning Medications:

Federal law prohibits pharmacies from accepting any medication return for reuse. This law applies to:

- Partially used medications
- Unopened medications
  - This includes medication mailer packages with unopened medications
- Mailed or pick-up medications that have been cancelled by provider
- Non-VA obtained medication (such as over-the-counter medications):
  - Some medications may cost less than the \$8.00 VA co-pay (examples include aspirin, acetaminophen, hydrocortisone cream/ointment, antacids, certain vitamins, and cough/cold/allergy preparations).
  - Tell your PCP and Pharmacist not to order medication if you wish to obtain medications from an outside source, as the examples above.

## Questions: Billing, Co-Pay Exemption or Payment Options

If you have any questions about billing issues, co-pay exemptions or various payment options, be advised that the local VA pharmacy CANNOT answer these type questions. ONLY the “Call Center” can answer questions about billing, co-pay exemptions, or payment options: toll-free 1-(866) 393-1846.

If you are planning on a lengthy vacation or a temporary seasonal address, you may continue receipt of your refills by ordering your meds prior to leaving and supplying the address to the VA.

## Narcotic Agreement

Long-term narcotic use requires the veteran to sign a written Narcotic Agreement. A pharmacist can discuss this agreement with you if you are required to use long-term narcotics. Short-term narcotic use does NOT require such an agreement.

# Community Resources

## VET CENTERS

The Vet Center Program helps eligible veterans readjust to a satisfying post-military life. They offer a wide range of counseling, outreach, and referral services.

The goal of Vet Centers is to welcome home with honor the veteran by providing quality readjustment services in a caring manner and guiding them and their family members toward a successful post-military adjustment in or near their respective communities.

For more information, visit our website at [www.va.gov/RCS/Index.htm](http://www.va.gov/RCS/Index.htm) or you may contact the closest community Vet Center by telephone:

Boulder Vet Center (303) 440-7306  
Colorado Springs Vet Center (719) 471-9992  
Denver Vet Center (303) 326-0645  
Ft. Collins Vet Center (970) 221-5176

## DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Division of Veterans Affairs is the state agency that is mandated by state statute to help veterans and their family members and survivors in securing any benefits they may be entitled to because of service in the military. The Division does this by serving as a central source of information on veterans' benefits, rights and issues, and by training, directing, and helping the county veterans' service officers who are the local veteran aid agencies in every county in Colorado.

The Division can help any claimant for federal or state veterans' benefits in applying for and securing benefits. The Division can also help in initiating and prosecuting appeals to the Board of Veterans Appeals or the Military Discharge Review Boards. The Division is open to the public from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday, except for official state holidays. For more information, please check our homepage or call

Division of Veterans Affairs Office  
7465 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Suite C  
Denver, Colorado 80230  
(303) 326-0645

Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs website: [www.dmva.state.co.us](http://www.dmva.state.co.us)

Located at: 1355 South Colorado Blvd Suite 113 Bldg C, Denver CO 80222

A list of current Colorado Veterans' Service Officers by county can be found at:  
[www.dmva.state.co.us](http://www.dmva.state.co.us)

If you do not have computer access, you may call for help and information: (303) 284-6077

# DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE (VARO)

155 Van Gordon Street  
Lakewood, CO 80229  
1 (800) 827-  
1000

[www.vba.va.gov/ro/denver/index.htm](http://www.vba.va.gov/ro/denver/index.htm)

Please contact the VARO for any of the following services or for information concerning:

## Benefits Programs

- Service-Connected Rating
- Compensation and Pension Examinations
- Disability Compensation
- Appeals
- Life Insurance
- Home Loan'
- Education and Training
- Burial Benefits
- Financial Conservatorship

## National Service Organizations

- The American Legion (303) 914-5585
- Blind Veterans Association (303) 914-5830
- Colorado Veterans Affairs (303) 914-5835
- Disabled American Veterans (303) 914-5570
- Paralyzed Veterans of America (303) 914-5590
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (303) 914-5595

## NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Alzheimer's Association  
National: 1 (800) 272-3900  
Local: (303) 813-1669  
[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

American Association of Retired  
Persons (AARP)  
National: 1 (888) 687-2277  
[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

American Cancer Society  
National: 1 (800) 227-2345  
Local: (303) 758-2030  
[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

American Diabetes Association  
National: 1 (800) 232-3472  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

American Heart Association  
(heart disease & stroke information)  
National: 1 (800) 242-8721  
Local: (303) 369-5433  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

American Lung Association  
National: 1 (800) 586-4872  
Local: (303) 388-4327  
[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

American Parkinson's  
Disease Association  
National: 1 (800) 223-2732  
[www.apdaparkinson.org](http://www.apdaparkinson.org)

Arthritis Foundation  
National: 1 (800) 283-7800  
Local: (303) 756-8622  
[www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)

Brain Injury Association of America  
National: 1 (800) 444-6443  
[www.biausa.org](http://www.biausa.org)

Centers for Disease Control Information  
National: 1 (800) 232-4636  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

National Association for Continence  
National: 1 (800) 252-3337  
[www.nafc.org](http://www.nafc.org)

National Association for Rare Disorders  
National: 1 (800) 999-6673  
[www.rarediseases.org](http://www.rarediseases.org)

National Digestive Disease  
Information Clearinghouse  
National: 1 (800) 891-5389  
[www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov)

National Institute of Mental Health  
National: 1 (866) 615 6464  
[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped  
National: 1 (800) 424-8567  
[nls@loc.gov](mailto:nls@loc.gov)

National Suicide Hotline  
National: 1 (800) 273-TALK (8255)  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

## THE JOINT COMMISSION ACCREDITATION

The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits nearly 15,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation's predominant standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Since 1951, The Joint Commission has maintained state-of-the-art standards that focus on improving the quality and safety of care provided by health care organizations. The Joint Commission's comprehensive accreditation process evaluates an organization's compliance with these standards and other accreditation requirements. The Joint Commission accreditation is recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality that reflects an organization's commitment to meeting certain performance standards.

The ECHCS consistently meets the standards as set forth by The Joint Commission. Continuing with the standards, all patients, family members and staff may contact The Joint Commission IF they feel the hospital has not addressed an issue they have reported.

However, the VA does have a "chain of command" that is recommended which includes:

When a quality or patient safety issue has been identified:

1. Contact the supervisor of the area with your concern. A report may be issued. Then...
2. Report to the Patient Safety Manager who will perform a follow-up review and take the necessary steps for correction as appropriate.
3. If the issue continues and you do not feel the concerns have been addressed, you may then contact The Joint Commission to voice these concerns.

Following is a notice from The Joint Commission identifying means and goals, as well as contact information:

## ACCREDITATION INPUT

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations will be periodically conducting unannounced surveys of the VA Eastern Colorado Healthcare System and the associated Community Based Outpatient Clinics. The purpose of these surveys will be to evaluate the organization's compliance with nationally established Joint Commission standards. The survey results will be used to determine whether the conditions under which accreditation should be awarded to the organization.

The Joint Commission standards deal with organization quality and patient safety issues, as well as, the safety of the environment in which care is provided. Anyone believing that he or she has pertinent and valid information about such matters may request a public information interview with the Joint Commission's field representatives, at the time of the unannounced survey. Information presented at the interview will be carefully evaluated for relevance to the accreditation process. Requests for a public information interview may be made in writing and should be sent to the Joint Commission at any time. This request must indicate the nature of the information to be provided at the interview. Such requests should be addressed to any of the below methods for communication:

### Mail:

Division of Accreditation Operations  
Office of Quality Monitoring  
Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations  
One Renaissance Boulevard  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

### Telephone:

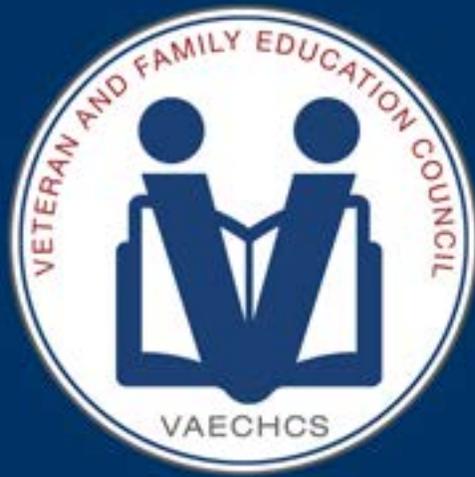
1 (800) 994-6610

### Email:

[complaint@jcaho.org](mailto:complaint@jcaho.org)

### Web:

[www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org)



**VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System**  
1055 Clermont Street, Denver, CO 80220  
(303) 399-8020

