

# The Eagle



Newsletter for Veterans, Stakeholders, and Employees of the Coatesville VA Medical Center

Spring 2017

## What You Need to Know About Hepatitis C



### What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a liver disease that results from infection with the hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV can persist for 10 to 30 years before there are any symptoms, which is why most people are unaware they are infected. Long-term effects of Hepatitis C include developing cirrhosis or liver cancer.

### Who is at Risk & Who should be Tested?

- ✓ Were born during 1945-1965
- ✓ Anyone who is a current or former injection drug user or shared needles
- ✓ A history of alcohol abuse or dependence
- ✓ Received a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992
- ✓ Treated for a blood clotting problem before 1987
- ✓ Obtained tattoos or body-piercings in a non-regulated setting
- ✓ Have abnormal liver tests or liver disease
- ✓ Anyone with HIV or weakened immune system
- ✓ Had multiple sex partners
- ✓ Were on long-term kidney dialysis

### How is a Hepatitis C Infection Diagnosed?

A blood test lets you know if you have HCV.

Stop by the Coatesville VA Medical Center laboratory in building 3 for a blood test (no appointment needed).

Screenings are also available at the Spring City & Springfield Outpatient Clinics (by appointment):

- Spring City: Thursdays from 8:30am to 1:15pm
- Springfield: Tuesdays & Wednesdays from 8:30am to 1:15pm

### Is there a Cure for Hepatitis C?

Yes, so it's important to seek treatment early. HCV is treated with antiviral medications.

Visit [www.hepatitis.va.gov](http://www.hepatitis.va.gov) for more on Hepatitis C

### Veteran Information

Who to contact at Coatesville VAMC  
Main Medical Center #: 610-384-7711

Call Center ..... 610-383-0239  
Audiology ..... 610-383-0217  
Optometry ..... ext. 4239  
Billing:  
a) Fee Basis - Michelle DiDavide ..... ext. 4507  
b) Choice billing - Rene Williams ..... ext. 3659  
Gigi Hayes ..... ext. 3649  
MyHealthVet - ..... ext. 6230  
Prescription refill ..... 610-380-4357  
Pharmacy - Mark Gillespie ..... ext. 4801

## Decrease in Medication Copay

Effective February 27, 2017 the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) changed the federal regulations concerning copayments charged to Veterans for medications required on an outpatient basis to treat non-service connected conditions.



Under the new regulation, copayment amounts are fixed and vary depending upon the class of outpatient medication outlined in the newly developed three-tier structure.

- Tier 1 – Preferred Generics  
 â \$5 for a 30 day or less supply
- Tier 2 – Non-Preferred Generics, including over-the-counter  
 â \$8 for a 30 day or less supply
- Tier 3 – Brand Name  
 â \$11 for a 30 day or less supply

These changes apply to non-service connected conditions or to disability ratings of less than 50 percent who are receiving outpatient treatment for a non-service connected condition, and/or to Veterans whose annual income exceeds the limit set by law.

Medication copayments do not apply to former Prisoners of War, catastrophically disabled Veterans, or those covered by other exceptions as set by law.

More information can be found at: [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-12-12/pdf/2016-29515.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-12-12/pdf/2016-29515.pdf)

The Eagle is a publication of the Coatesville VA Medical Center. For questions concerning the contents of this publication, contact Kirk Fernitz at 610-380-4348 or [Kirk.Fernitz@va.gov](mailto:Kirk.Fernitz@va.gov).

## Opening of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation



The Coatesville VA Medical Center hosted a dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony of our renovated Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R) building on February 3, 2017. This \$4.9 million dollar improvement project offers a state-of-the-art facility, allowing all of the PM&R services to be under one roof to better serve our Veterans.

PM&R includes:

- Audiology
- Kinesiotherapy (KT)
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- Physical Therapy (PT)
- Patient Gym
- Physiatrists
- Prosthetics Department
- Therapy Pool

These essential programs help maintain independence at home and improve mobility and function. PM&R services are critical for our Veterans to improve their physical function and quality of life.

## New VA Online Tool

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a new online tool that provides Veterans an easy-to-use, easy-to-understand way of accessing patient wait time and quality of care data. Veterans can make informed decisions based on the data that displays how your VA medical facility measures up.

The Access and Quality Tool allows Veterans to access:

- Average times patients experience in their local area
- How Veterans describe their experiences scheduling primary and specialty care appointments at specific VA facilities
- Timeliness of appointments for care needed right away
- Quality of health care delivered at VA medical centers compared with local private-sector hospitals.

Visit the new site at [www.accesstocare.va.gov](http://www.accesstocare.va.gov).

## Additional Specialty Care Available at Coatesville VAMC

The Coatesville VAMC is partnering with other VA facilities within our network to share services to improve care and to reduce the travel burden for Veterans. Through this partnership the medical center receives medical and surgical services from VA facilities such as Wilmington and Lebanon. Dr. Elizabeth Robison from the Wilmington VAMC will be providing general surgery consults and follow up visits monthly.



Confidential chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net) or text to 838255



## Home Based Primary Care

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) provides health care services to Veterans who are homebound and have chronic and disabling

medical conditions. An interdisciplinary team provides comprehensive primary care to the Veteran in their home. Currently, HBPC serves over 200 Veterans and covers a 30 mile radius around the medical center and both Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs).

### Who is eligible for Home Based Primary Care?

- Be enrolled in the VA healthcare system (*to enroll, please contact the Eligibility & Enrollment Coordinator at 610-383-0266*).
- A Veteran who is homebound, suffering from chronic disabling condition, requiring the use of an assistive device or dependent on a caregiver.
- A Veteran with a high rate of unplanned urgent care visits, and/or hospitalizations.
- Consults are required by the Veteran's current primary care provider.

### Who makes up the Interdisciplinary Team?

- **Provider:** responsible for the overall management of the Veteran's care at home.
- **Nurse:** performs routine health assessments, monitors medications, and provides health education.
- **Social worker:** assists in obtaining VA benefits and community resources.
- **Physical therapist:** assesses functional abilities, home environment, and provides adaptive equipment as needed.
- **Pharmacist:** reviews medications regularly and makes recommendations to the provider.
- **Dietitian:** assesses nutritional status, recommends dietary modifications, and provides education.
- **Psychologist:** provides psychosocial assessments and counseling for the Veteran or caregiver as needed.

### What are the goals of Home Based Primary Care?

- To optimize independence and quality of life through the coordination of VA and community services.
- Provide Veterans the opportunity to stay in their home for as long as possible.
- Assist caregiver in coping with the stress of chronic illness.
- Equip the home to be a safe and therapeutic environment.

The HBPC Team recognized that congestive heart failure (CHF), coronary obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and pneumonia were the leading causes of hospitalizations in our HBPC population. A project was implemented with the goal of decreasing hospitalizations for these respiratory diagnoses, by educating respiratory patients and developing a new tool called the *Zoning Tool*. The Zoning Tool is used as a quick reference to alert Veterans and caregivers if they are in the Green, Yellow or Red Zone.

- **Green Zone** means for the patient to continue following routine medical orders.
- **Yellow Zone** indicates caution is needed and patient should call the HBPC RN or VA nurse hotline.
- **Red Zone** indicates signs and symptoms need immediate medical attention to call 911.

In it's first year, the Zoning Project showed a decrease in the incidence of respiratory hospitalizations by 35% in our HBPC Veteran population. For more information on HBPC, please call (610) 384-7711, ext. 3381.

**Your Life  
Your Health  
Your Schedule**

**Features:**

- Self-schedule primary care appointments
- Request dates and times for primary care and mental health appointments
- See details for all pending, confirmed and upcoming appointments (both those requested through the app or through a VA scheduler), including date, time, clinic, care team and reason for visit
- Send up to two messages to a VA scheduler about requested and booked appointments
- Get email notifications about appointment updates
- Cancel an appointment if you are unable to make it to that appointment

**Get the App.**  
Visit the VA App Store to learn more:

[mobile.va.gov/app/veteran-appointment-request](http://mobile.va.gov/app/veteran-appointment-request)



What are our Veterans thinking about the meals being served at the dining facility at the Coatesville VA Medical Center?

James Johnson, U.S. Army Veteran (1972-1976)

"The food is not bad. I'm enjoying it; the food is planned, balanced and nutritious."

Wanda Smith, U.S. Army Veteran (1985-1987)

"I like the food. I'm quite satisfied. I like the ice cream days and the salad bar."

Stacy Washington, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran (1979-1983)

"The food is sufficient and I appreciate it. I would like a little more variety. I am ever so grateful to the VA for their food service."

James Foote, U.S. Navy Veteran (1978-1991)

"For breakfast I would like to see more variety.

Everything else seems to be good. Overall it's a good place."

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## Complimentary Mail

"Ms. Marian Feister RN walks me through each health concern and makes sure I understand what I should do with the medications provided. I appreciate her and always leave this VA with positive feelings."

- Submitted by Veteran C.W.

"Dr. Debra Morrison addressed my hearing problems with sensitivity and professionalism. I left the audiology department with a very positive feeling."

- Submitted by Veteran H.P.

"My heart filled thanks to your staff for the outstanding job these past 4.5 years in caring for a close friend. I realize the challenge when caring for an Alzheimer's patient. Your staff handled this challenge competently, professionally and with grace."

- Submitted by Veteran G.C.

"I could not be in better hands then with Dr. Marc Myers. When I called the VA and explained my problem, I was able to see Dr. Myers that same day, get the medicine I needed and within a day my eye pain was gone."

- Submitted by Veteran T.R.

"Dr. Sudol has helped me more with my PTSD than any other ever did. She is a true asset to the hospital and really cares about us vets."

- Submitted by Veteran C.F.

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