U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center

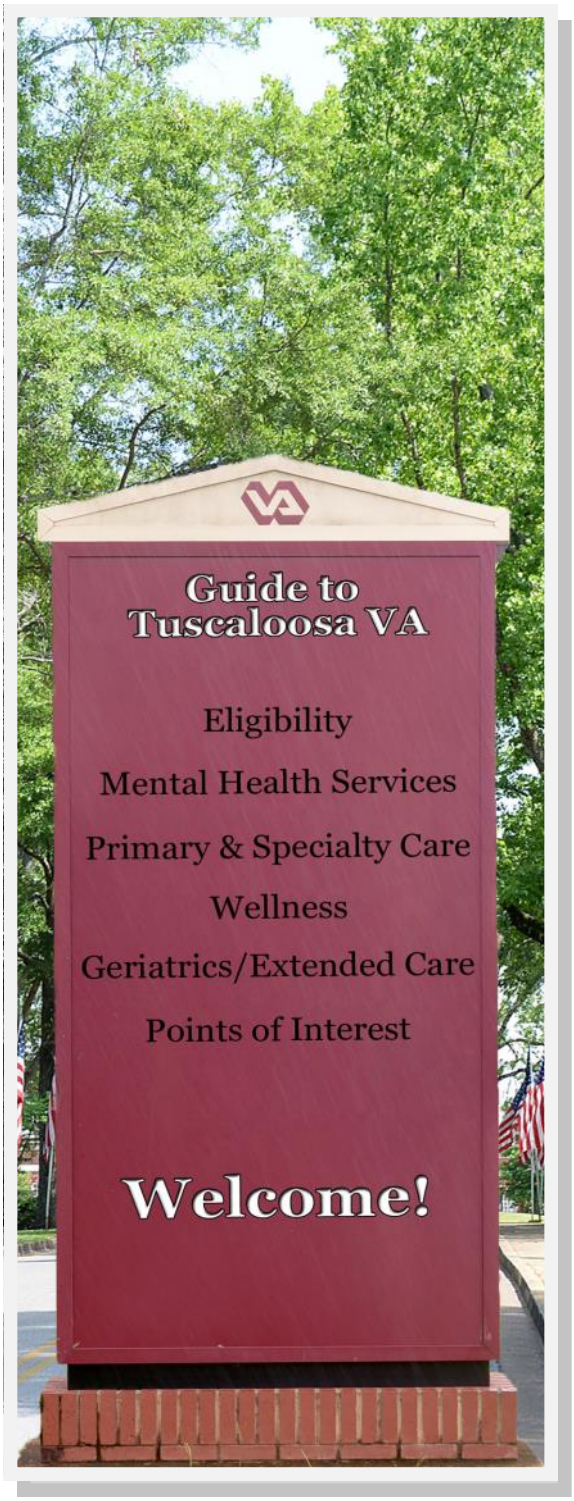
Updated January 2017

Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center

Guide to Services for Veterans and Families

www.tuscaloosa.va.gov

What's Inside



Introduction
Welcome
Quick Tips to Use This Guide
Mission, Vision and Values
Care Close to Home
Choice Program
Affiliations
Accreditation

1. Eligibility
Enrollment,VA Dental Insurance, My Healthevet, Transitioning to VA Health Care

2. VA Mental Health Programs and Services
Crisis Hotline · How to Access VA Mental Health Care · MH Treatment Settings· MH Services · Homeless Services ·

3. Primary Health Care and Specialty Services
Dental · Lab · Pharmacy · Primary Care · Primary Care Behavioral Health ·Rehabilitation and Adaptive Equipment · Returning Veterans ·Specialty and Acute Care · Telehealth · VetLink · Women Veterans · Visual Impairment ·

4. Wellness
Fitness Center · MOVE! · Nutrition · Recreation Therapy · Smoking Cessation ·

5. Research

6. Geriatric and Extended Care
Adult Day Health · Caregiver Program · Post 9/11 Caregivers · Community Living Centers (CLCs) · Geriatric Evaluation Management · Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC) · Home Health Aide Services Hospice and Palliative Care · Respite · Skilled Nursing Care

7. Connect With Us!
Annual Events · Canteen · Chaplaincy · Community Links Facebook · Give or Donate · Map of Grounds ·

Questions or Updates?

Email Public Affairs Officer or Medical Media

Welcome

John F. Merkle, FACHE
Medical Center Director

On behalf of the staff of the Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center, welcome and thank you for your service to our nation.

At Tuscaloosa VAMC, we proudly serve our Veterans by providing timely access to quality care. We provide primary care, long-term health care, rehabilitative care, mental health care and limited specialty services. For services we do not provide we coordinate and manage your care with our local community providers and sister VA facilities. Please consider this a personal invitation to redeem the health care that you have earned through your service and sacrifice.

Included in this guide is valuable information about resources, services and opportunities at Tuscaloosa VAMC, in the community, and online to support you and your unique needs.

While you review our guide, I hope you will begin to feel the welcome that awaits you at our medical center by volunteers, staff and fellow Veterans. Our dedicated staff is eager to serve each and every one of you.

We are deeply honored to provide you with the best health care anywhere.
You have served our great nation with honor and now it is our turn to honorably serve you.

Sincerely,

John F. Merkle

John F. Merkle

Welcome, we're glad you're here!

This e-booklet takes you on an inside tour of the programs and services at the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center to assist you in discovering what health services our facility has pledged to provide to Veterans and how to access these services. Save the link to this booklet or find it on our homepage, as it is updated frequently, and linking to it will ensure you have our latest information.

Section 1 provides information about eligibility, and enrollment with online or in person instructions.

Section 2 describes treatments available for the most common mental health problems of Veterans (such as depression, substance abuse, and posttraumatic stress disorder) and describes special programs offered for particular groups of Veterans (such as women Veterans, Veterans who are homeless or older Veterans). How to access Mental Health Services and the continuum of services is described.

Section 3 provides information about treatments available for primary care, and specialty care with resources for our returning Veterans.

Section 4 describes some of our Wellness offerings.

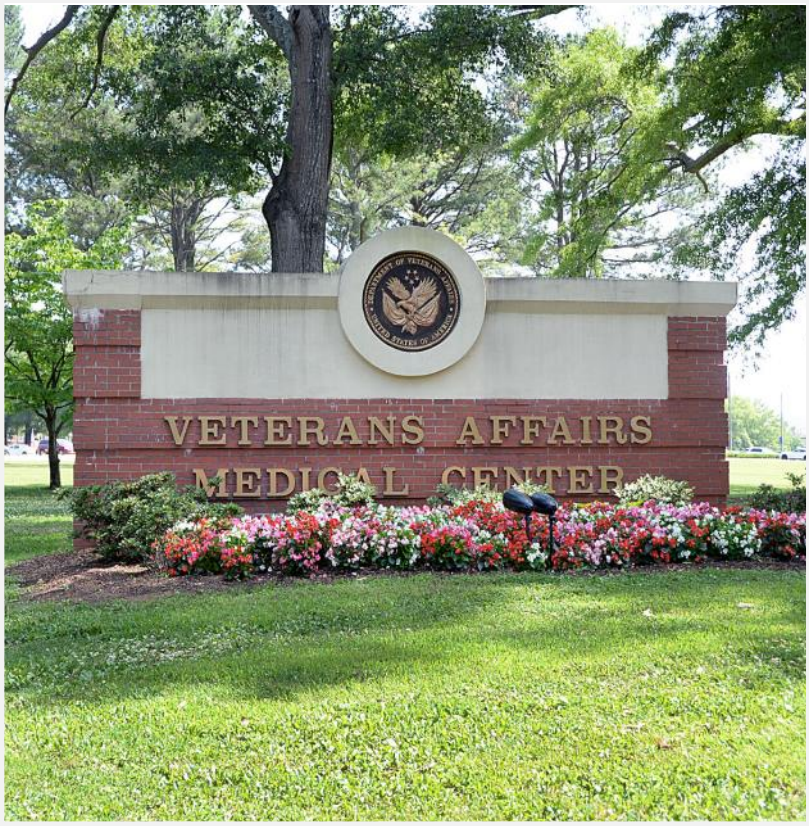
Section 5 is an overview of Geriatric and Extended Care Services at TVAMC, including the Caregiver program and contact information for eligible post 9/11 Veterans.

Section 6 provides information on ground breaking research at TVAMC.

Section 7 lists ways and opportunities to connect with us including frequently used telephone numbers and specialized 1-800 numbers that can link you to care in urgent situations.

You will also find a map to programs, transportation information, and links to our website and our Facebook page. We've included descriptions of some of the annual events cherished by the TVAMC community.

We hope you will visit us soon, in person and online at www.tuscaloosa.VA.gov.



Welcome!

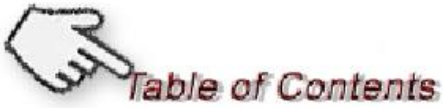
Five Tips for Using this Guide

1 This *e*-Book conserves paper and financial resources and allows us to update information without having to reprint and redistribute paper copies. **Save the link (not the guide)** and each time you come back you will be accessing our most current version. Download Adobe Reader for free to view this guide.

2 This document can search for words within the text using keywords you provide. Click the "**Ctrl**" key and the "**F**" key to generate a Finder window. Enter what you are looking for. Click through the NEXT arrows until you find the page you want.

3 The **blue ribbons** on the right are linked to corresponding chapters.
Click the ribbon to jump to that section of this guide.

4 Each page has a **Table of Contents** link on the bottom right.
Click it to return to the Guide's Main Contents.
Click Chapter titles to jump there.
Click names to send an email. HINT: Do NOT send personal details in email, use MyHealtheVet for secure communication.



5 **QR Codes** (Quick Response) or "snap codes" are included to ease sharing with smart phone users. These are scanned with smart phones and capture relevant webpages or data to facilitate the sharing of important information. Free apps are available for QR barcode readers from your favorite app store. Help our Vets reach the care they have earned! Share this information widely!

About Us

The Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center (TVAMC) is responsible for the delivery of health care services to eligible Veterans in west-central Alabama. These services are delivered at the Medical Center's main campus located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and at its Selma Outpatient Clinics (Selma, Alabama) as well as through our Rural Health Mobile Clinic. The Tuscaloosa VA is closely affiliated with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) as well as multiple other nursing and allied health affiliations.

The Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center is located on 125 acres in West Alabama. The Medical Center includes a historical, multi-building campus. Located near interstate 20/59, the medical center is conveniently located for Veterans in Tuscaloosa and the surrounding West Alabama counties.

The Medical Center operates a total of 295 inpatient beds, providing a full range of healthcare. Clinical services focus on a comprehensive, compassionate continuum of care. Inpatient beds include:

- 104 Nursing Home beds
- 43 Psychiatry beds
- 136 Homeless Domiciliary (DRRTP) beds
- 12 Psycho-Social Residential Rehabilitation Treatment (RRTP) beds

In addition, the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center offers hospice beds within our long-term care units.

Connect with us, for more information regarding holiday closings.

Mission, Vision and Values

VA Purpose

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise "*To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan*" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.

VHA Mission

Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

VHA Vision

VHA will continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in health care and benefits by providing exemplary services that are both patient-centered and evidence-based. This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery and continuous improvement. It will emphasize prevention and population health and contribute to the nation's well-being through education, research and service in national emergencies.

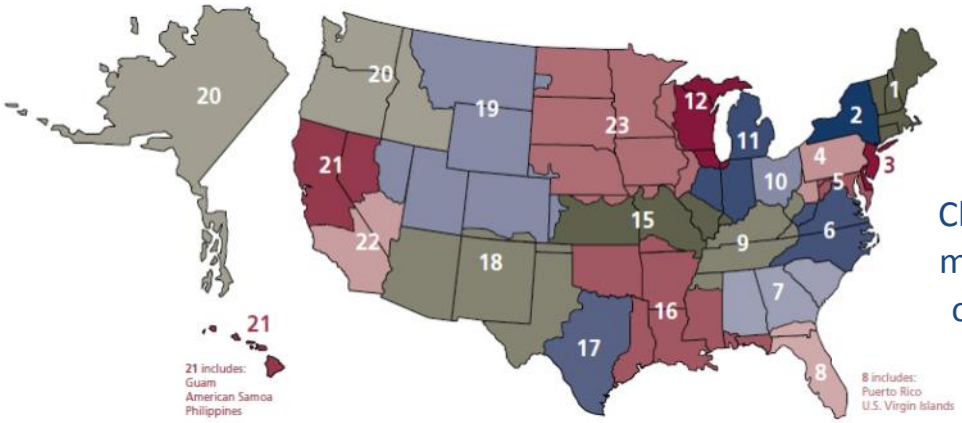
VA Core Values - "I CARE"

- **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, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

Care Close to Home

VA is organized into Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs). Each VISN has at least two medical centers, and each medical center has outpatient clinics onsite and community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) throughout the VISN. VA classifies these CBOCs according to size. Very large CBOCs treat more than 10,000 individual Veterans per year. Large CBOCs treat 5,000-10,000 individual Veterans per year. Mid-sized CBOCs treat 1,500-5,000 individual Veterans per year, and small CBOCs treat fewer than 1,500 individual Veterans per year. Veterans can seek care at the location closest to their home. Veterans can be referred to a larger clinic or medical center if needed.

The map shows VA VISN locations throughout the United States.



Click on the map to find out more.

Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center is located in VISN 7 and includes 1 Outpatient Clinic in Selma.

Selma Outpatient Clinic
206 Vaughan Memorial Dr.
Selma, AL. 36701
Phone: 334-418-4975
Fax: 334-875-9073
Mon-Fri 8:00am - 4:30pm

Click the picture for Directions to each Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)

Choice Program

What is the Choice Program?

If you are already enrolled in VA health care, the Choice Program allows you to receive health care within your community. Using this program does NOT impact your existing VA health care, or any other VA benefit.

Am I Eligible?

If you are already enrolled in VA health care, you may be able to receive care within your community, instead of waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility.

You are eligible if any of these situations apply to you:

- ✔ You have been (or will be) waiting more than 30 days for VA medical care
- ✔ You live more than 40 miles away from a VA medical care facility or face one of several excessive travel burdens.

Click to Learn More!

Call to Get Started

866-606-8198
If you have questions about other aspects of VA health care visit
www.va.gov/health

Need Help? Live Chat

Monday Thru Friday
8am - 8pm Eastern
Click Here

For information on the CHOICE Program at the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center,

Contact 205-554-2000 ext. 3581 or email Kimberly.Parker2@va.gov

Medical School Affiliations

The Tuscaloosa VAMC is primarily affiliated with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Medicine, ranked #21 by U.S. News as one of the Best Medical Schools: Primary Care .

The Tuscaloosa VAMC formal affiliation with UAB's School of Medicine supports more than 100 total students, residents, and interns any given year with nearly 100% of the graduating class completing medicine and psychiatry rotations through the Tuscaloosa and Birmingham VA Medical Centers. Those students consistently rank the VA superior to their non-VA training options. The facility's high quality supervision of medical graduate and post-graduate trainees focuses on patient safety and veteran care and the Medical Center is identified as a leader in psychiatric, geriatric, and primary care options for America's veteran population.

Our Chief of staff is a Colonel in the US Army Reserve and a clinical affiliate professor of psychiatry and behavioral medicine at the University of Alabama, School of Medicine. He is board certified in Psychiatry. All permanent VA staff physicians at Tuscaloosa VAMC qualify for UAB faculty appointment. This affiliation has also provided the substrate to support the National Center for PTSD, the National Women's Health Program, and the National Center for Patient Safety. Local specialty and primary care programs include Preservation Amputation Care and Treatment (PACT) clinics; podiatry; neurology; Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST); spinal cord injury and Geriatric Primary Care. The Medical Center has also implemented a Care Coordination program which includes: Case Management for the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Combat Veterans, Care Coordination/ Home Telehealth and many other programs.

Allied Health Affiliations

The Tuscaloosa VAMC maintains over 75 other current academic affiliations with area colleges, universities and vocational/technical schools, in providing a variety of professional and technical experiences for students in nursing, pharmacy, optometry, psychology, physical and occupational therapy, social work, radiology, medical technology, and other fields. The VA Office of Academic Affiliations provides stipend support for those enrolled in qualifying programs.

The Tuscaloosa VAMC maintains nursing affiliations with The University of Alabama, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of North Alabama, University of South Alabama, University of West Alabama, Auburn University, Jacksonville State University, Jefferson State Community College, Judson College, Lawson State Community College, Mississippi University for Women, Samford University, Snead State Community College, Shelton State Community College, Tennessee Board of Regents, Troy University, and Wallace State Community College. These programs include didactic and clinical training toward attainment of the Licensed Practical Nurse, and Registered Nurse (AND, BSN, MSN, DNP) degrees.

Accreditation

The Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center is a Joint Commission accredited Tertiary Care Level 3 Facility, caring for Veterans across west Alabama. Located on a 125 acres with 25 major buildings, the TVAMC provides a full range of primary care, long-term health care, mental health care and specialty care. As an academic medical center, TVAMC is equipped with state-of-the-art technologies that support clinical care, education, and research missions and drives TVAMC's emergency preparedness responsibilities. The TVAMC is a member of the VA Southeast Healthcare System (VISN 7), which includes facilities in the three Southeastern states (Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina) It operates one outpatient clinic located in Selma, Alabama. The Tuscaloosa VA has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval. For more information visit www.jointcommission.org. To see how we compare to non VA hospitals check here.

CARF International accreditation demonstrates a program's quality, transparency, and commitment to the satisfaction of the persons served. CARF International is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services. (888) 281-6531. For more information visit www.carf.org.

Other Awards and Accolades

2005 Alabama Excellence Award

In 2005, TVAMC was honored to receive the Level 3 Award - Alabama Excellence Award, the highest level achievable.

2006 Excellence for Continuous Productivity and Quality Improvement

This award by the Alabama Productivity Center honored the Tuscaloosa VAMC in 2006. Only organizations who have won the prestigious Alabama Excellence Award during the past three years can compete for this award.

2009 Outstanding Employer Award

In July 2009, TVAMC was rated as one of the top psychiatric hospitals in the country by US News and World Report. A total of 4,861 hospitals were judged in 16 specialties, with psychiatry being one of the 16 specialists.

Eligibility

Basic Eligibility

If you served in the active military, naval or air service and are separated under any condition other than dishonorable, you may qualify for VA health care benefits. Current and former members of the Reserves or National Guard who were called to active duty (other than for training only) by a federal order and completed the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty may be eligible for VA health care as well.

Minimum Duty Requirements

Most Veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered active duty after October 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty in order to be eligible. This minimum duty requirement may not apply to Veterans who were discharged for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, discharged for a hardship, or received an "early out."

Since there are a number of other exceptions to minimum duty requirements, VA encourages all Veterans to apply in order to determine their enrollment eligibility.

www.VA.gov/Explore

Enrolling in VA Healthcare

The first step to receive Veteran's health care is to enroll in in the VA health care system.

Why apply for VA health benefits?

1. There is no cost to apply.
2. Enroll once – comprehensive health care services will be available when and where you need them.
3. You will remain enrolled as long as you complete your annual 10-10EZr even if you don't use VA for your health care. It's never too late to enroll.
4. Enrollment in the VA health care system provides "creditable coverage" required by some healthcare programs, including Medicare Part D, and states requiring all individuals to have health coverage.

To begin the process, you must complete VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits.

Don't Wait
Apply Now!

Already enrolled? Keep your financial information updated to avoid billing and copay errors.

For more information about the enrollment process at Tuscaloosa VAMC call or visit us near the Admissions Desk in Building 135, on the 1st Floor.

You may also enroll online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll

New Patient Information

Before attending your first appointment, you can learn more at http://www.tuscaloosa.va.gov/TUSCALOOSA/patients/index.asp

If you mail in your enrollment form or completed it online, you will receive an enroll instructing you to contact us at 800-VETMED (1-800-838-6331).

2016 Guide to Benefits

Download or Review online:**Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents, and Survivors**

For more information on Enrollment/Eligibility, Contact 205-554-2000 ext. 3221/3746/2228/2220

VA Dental Insurance Program

Eligible Veterans, plus family members receiving care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA), can now purchase affordable dental insurance.

The new program is a partnership between VA, Delta Dental and MetLife. More than eight million Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care can choose to purchase one of the offered dental plans. This three-year pilot has been designed for Veterans with no dental coverage, or those eligible for VA dental care who would like to purchase additional coverage. Participation will not affect entitlement to VA dental services and treatment.

There are no eligibility limitations based on service-connected disability rating or enrollment priority assignment. People interested in participating may now complete an application online through either Delta Dental, or MetLife, available throughout the United States and its territories. Click to learn more.

My Health*e*Vet

My Health*e*Vet is the gateway to web-based tools that empower you to be an active partner in your healthcare. With My Health*e*Vet you can access trusted, secure and informed VA health and benefits information at a time that works best for you.

My Health*e*Vet is VA's online personal health record. It was designed for Veterans, active duty Service-members, their dependents and caregivers. It provides you opportunities and tools to make informed decisions and manage your health care.

Specific features in My Health*e*Vet are available to you based on your account type. All users who have a Basic account are able to view their self-entered information. If you are a VA patient, you can upgrade your account to Advanced or Premium. For more information about account types and what you can view, visit My Health*e*Vet Account Types.

Among the newest features available to Veterans with a Premium Account is VA Notes. These are clinical notes that your health care team records during your appointments or hospital stays. Also available are your VA Immunization records, more detailed lab reports and a list of your current medical issues. These features are in addition to prescription refills, VA Appointments and Secure Messaging – all very popular with Veterans!

The Tuscaloosa VAMC MyHealth*e*Vet Program Manager can assist you in obtaining a user ID and Password to log in. For more information, please log on to www.myhealth.va.gov or contact our MyHealth*e*Vet program manager, dial the main hospital number **205-554-2000** then **extension 2671.**

Making the Transition to VA Health Care For Recently Demobilized or Transitioning Service members/Veterans

Welcome! Thank you for your Service!

Here is a short video clip for Service members who are demobilizing or will soon be transitioning out of the military.

click to play

We're excited to help you access the healthcare benefits you have earned.

Please see OEF/OIF/OND Returning Veterans page for more information or call Stephanie Massey, RN, MSN**, Transition and Care Management Program Coordinator at 205-554-2000 x-2426**

VA TCM Transition and Care Management Program

CLAIMS INFORMATION Veterans Benefits Administration

1-800-827-1000 a toll free number that provides information on the following VA Benefits:

- Payments for service connected disabilities
- Educational Benefits (GI Bill)
- VA-No Down Payment Home Loans
- Vocational Counseling/Employment Training for Service Connected Disabilities
- Life Insurance

Table of Contents: Mental Health

How to Access VA Mental Health Care

- Crisis Hotline
- Emergency Care and After Hours
- Scheduled Evaluations and Referrals and Walk In Clinic

MH Treatment Settings

- Treatment Options
- Serious Mental Illness
- Inpatient
- Mental Health Evaluations Center and Walk In Clinic
- Mental Health Recovery Services
- Residential Treatment Programs
- Supported Education (VITAL)
- Supported Employment
- TeleMental Health
- Vet Centers

Mental Health Services, Treatments for Specific Needs

- Genesis & Community Care
- Individual and Group Therapy and Case Management
- Make the Connection (Online Resource for Veterans)
- Medication
- MH Recovery Services, Individual, Group & Case Management
- Mental Health Intensive Case Management
- Military Sexual Trauma
- Moving Forward (Online Resource for Veterans)
- Peer Services
- PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Recovery Through Employment and Volunteering
- Serious Mental Illness
- Substance Abuse and Addictions
- Suicide Prevention Services

VA and Community Partner Mental Health Resources

Homeless Services

- Case Management, Emergency Beds, Walk In Clinic
- DOM (Domiciliary, inpatient)
- Grant and Per Diem
- Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence
- National Call Center 24/7
- VASH
- Veterans Justice Outreach

How to Access VA Mental Health Care

Emergency Access:

In a mental health emergency, go to the nearest emergency room or CALL 911

Go to the nearest hospital emergency room or call 911 if you have a mental health emergency, *(such as wanting to hurt yourself or someone else).* If it is not a VA hospital, you may be able to move to a VA facility depending on your circumstances. If you are feeling suicidal, you can also call, text, or chat online with the **Veterans Crisis Line** to connects Veterans in crisis or their families and friends with qualified, caring VA responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

To **speak** with a responder by phone in an **emergency,** call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1.**
To **chat** online go to www.veteranscrisisline.net.
To **text** with a responder, **text 838255**.

After Hours at Tuscaloosa VAMC go to your nearest medical facility.

Making Appointment for Non-Emergency Services 205-554-2010

Types of MH Treatment Settings

■ **Short-term, inpatient care** for Veterans suffering from very severe or life-threatening mental illness

■ **Mental Health Recovery Services,** regular outpatient care, which may include telemedicine services, for Veterans during a difficult time in life.

■ **Outpatient care in a psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery center** for Veterans with serious mental illness and significant problems in functioning. **See: Veterans Community Care Center.**

■ **Residential Treatment Programs**■ Residential Treatment Programs Veterans with a wide range of mental health problems (such as posttraumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders) and/or rehabilitative care needs (such as homelessness, job training, and education) who would benefit from treatment in a structured environment for a period of time may consider residential treatment. At the TVAMC this program is referred to as "The Dom" (for Domiciliary Care). The TVAMC Dom is comprised of several different treatment tracks such as a PTSD DOM, Substance Use Disorder DOM (SUD DOM), Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV), Compensated Work Therapy – Transitional Residence (CWT-TR), and coming soon in 2016 a General DOM (Gen DOM). While under the umbrella of the Domiciliary, each of the treatment tracks offer Veterans unique opportunities with an end goal of recovery and community reintegration. See DOMICILIARY CARE for more information. At Tuscaloosa VAMC this program is referred to as **"The Dom"** (for Domiciliary).

■ **Primary Care:** Many common mental and behavioral problems are addressed within primary care by mental health experts working in the primary care team. This is referred to as **Integrated Care**. For example, depression, anxiety, sleep problems, and problems managing chronic medical illnesses can often be addressed. Please ask your primary care team for more information about these services.

■ **Transition Services:** A dedicated, primary care-Mental health, co-located, integrated team serving OIF/OEF/OND Veterans. Psychosocial evaluations are conducted with each new veteran enrolled with the team. Evidence-based psychotherapy is provided for anxiety (PTSD), grief, depression, insomnia, and chronic pain. Walk-in mental health support is also available.

■ **Supported work** settings to help Veterans join the work force and live well in the community. At Tuscaloosa VAMC this program is called "**CWT**" (for Compensated Work Therapy).

■ **Supported education** such as the **VITAL Initiative** or **Supported Education** through Compensated Work Therapy. See VITAL for more information.

Different treatment settings are appropriate for different problems at different times. For example, a Veteran who is severely ill or suicidal might need inpatient treatment in a hospital for several days. VA provides short-term inpatient care with the expectation that with continuing mental health treatment, the Veteran would be offered care in the least restrictive environment. When the illness becomes less severe, he or she may return home and receive treatment as an outpatient in a VA clinic.

■ **Inpatient treatment** typically includes medication and individual and group counseling. For Veterans who receive inpatient and residential mental health treatment, VA will check on the Veteran's progress within one week after she/he leaves the hospital. This evaluation might be by telephone or, possibly, in person, just to make sure the Veteran is doing well. VA will also ask the Veteran to come back for a follow-up appointment no later than two weeks after discharge from the hospital. **See: Inpatient Psychiatry**

■ **Telehealth** allows Veterans who live a long distance from the VA medical center to receive treatment remotely. Mental health providers at can talk with, evaluate, and provide treatment for Veterans at **community-based VA clinics** through closed-circuit video. Telemedicine services, like face-to-face mental health services, are confidential.

Treatments for Specific Mental Health Needs

Treatments for Depression and Anxiety

are common among the general public and among Veterans. Treatments include:

■ **Medications** including antidepressants , anti-anxiety medications, and medications to improve sleep and other problems.

■ **Evidence-Based** (also called psychotherapies or talk therapy), such as: Cognitive behavioral therapies (CBT) to help individuals understand the relationship between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, learn new patterns of thinking, and practice new positive behaviors (relaxation techniques, using calming tapes to improve sleep, exercising, or socializing with friends). Examples include: CBT for depression, insomnia, chronic pain, PTSD (PE and CPT), and other anxiety disorders.

■ **Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)** to help people overcome their struggles with emotional pain and worries, and to assist them to recognize, commit to, and achieve what's important to them.

■ **Interpersonal therapy (IPT)** to help people promote positive relationships and resolve relationship problems.

(See Mental Health Recovery Services)

Substance Abuse

problems are common in the general public and among Veterans. People can misuse or become addicted to alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs and prescription medications. Treatments for substance use disorders include:

■ **Medications** to decrease cravings and ease withdrawal from alcohol and drugs.
■ **Talk therapies** (also called psychotherapies), such as motivational enhancement therapy may help a Veteran strengthen his/ her commitment to recovery. Cognitive behavioral therapy may help the Veteran identify the risks for relapse and learn new coping skills to avoid relapse.

■ **Opioid Replacement Therapy and Maintenance (ORT/M)** helps Veterans who misuse Opioids. Opioids include illegal substances, such as heroin, and legally prescribed medications such as some prescription pain medications. Opioid Treatment Programs offer talk therapies and provide carefully monitored medication to help Veterans manage cravings for opioids.

■ **Residential treatment programs** for substance use disorders allow Veterans to receive intensive treatment in a supervised residential setting. This treatment environment provides support and structure to help the Veteran develop a foundation for long-term recovery.

■ **Work therapies** are commonly prescribed for Veterans to promote and support recovery.

(See **Recovering from Addictions, Substance Abuse)**

Treatments for Serious Mental Illnesses such as Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder and Bipolar Disorder

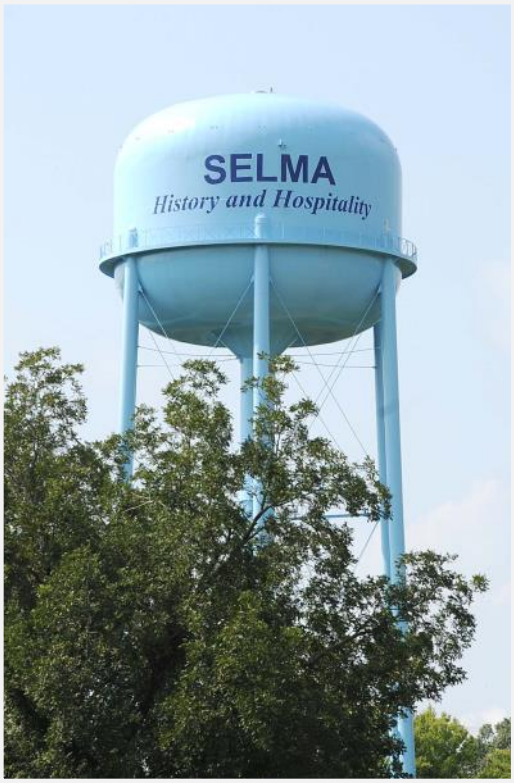
These mental health problems are less common than others and may occur intermittently – that is, they typically improve at some times and get worse at other times. These problems can be so severe that a Veteran may lose touch with reality. VA offers a range of treatments and services for Veterans with serious mental illnesses. These Veterans typically benefit from psychosocial rehabilitation services designed to promote recovery and improve everyday functioning at home and in the community. Treatments for serious mental illnesses include:

- Antidepressant medications, mood stabilizing medications, antipsychotic medications and other medications to stabilize mood, organize thoughts, reduce hallucinations, and ease related symptoms.
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Services to optimize functioning
- Work therapies to promote and support recovery
- Social skills training
- Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs allow for intensive treatment for Veterans with severe mental illness within a structured, supervised setting

Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) and MHICM Rural Access Network Growth Enhancement (RANGE)

The goal of the MHICM programs is to provide services provided by a team of mental health physicians, nurses, psychologists, and social workers who treat Veterans in their homes and in the community. MHICM helps eligible Veterans experiencing symptoms of severe mental illness to manage and cope with symptoms and to live more successfully at home and in the community. The MHICM teams collaborates with families and other community resource inside and outside of VA. MHICM RANGE provides care for our Selma CBOC.

Contact: 205-554-3837



Genesis Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC)

Genesis PRRC interfaces with the community-based programs to provide a continuum of care that assists Veterans integrate into meaningful self-determined roles in the community.. The Genesis PRRC team assists Veterans to learn social skills that enable and empower them to care for themselves in the community as independently as possible. Team members provide education to assist Veterans to obtain personal recovery goals in the following areas: psychosocial skills, hygiene, medication management, safety, job skills, and management of finances. The Provider's consult requesting evaluation for Genesis PRRC will include the diagnosis and the purpose for referral. Each referral will be screened for admission. Inpatients may be referred to Genesis PRRC when they are stabilized and meet the admission criteria. Inpatients may attend Genesis PRRC prior to discharge to support the Veteran's transition into the community.

Contact : 205-554-2000 ext. 2709

Community Residential Care (CRC)

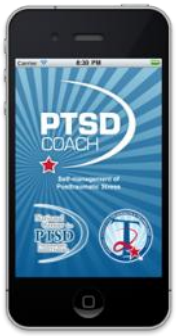
Community Residential Care (CRC) is an outpatient placement program that enables Veterans to live under VA supervision in residences other than their own. It is designed to provide care in a family-like and safe environment for Veterans who are able to live outside the medical center but for various reasons cannot return to their homes. The CRC program officially began at the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center in 1953 and continues to a successful and valuable resource for Veterans returning to the community.

Contact 205-554-2000 ext. 2458

MHICM, MHICM RANGE, Genesis PRRC and CRC have all earned accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

Treatments for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur after a person has a very serious or life threatening or traumatic experience. For Veterans, this life threatening event often occurs during combat. However, other noncombat related events – such as natural disasters, motor vehicle accidents, or sexual trauma – can also threaten life and can result in PTSD.



A mobile telephone application, PTSD Coach, was released by VA in 2011.
It provides information about PTSD, self-assessment and symptom management tools, and information on how to get help.

PTSD Coach can be downloaded for **free** from **iTunes** (iOS) or **Google Play** (Android).

Treatments for PTSD include:

■ **Medications** including antidepressant medications, anti-anxiety medications, mood stabilizing medications, and other medications to ease nightmares, irritability, sleeplessness, depression, and anxiety.

■ **Psychotherapy (Talk therapies)**, VA has been a national leader in the development of psychotherapies for PTSD.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) helps Veterans understand the relationship between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, learn new patterns of thinking, and practice new positive behaviors .

Cognitive processing therapy (CPT), a form of CBT that involves correcting negative thought patterns so that memories of trauma don't interfere with daily life. It may also include writing about one's traumatic experience. Clinical guidelines strongly recommend CPT for PTSD treatment. CPT has been shown to be one of the most effective treatments for PTSD. Watch the video on the right for more information.

See video clip about CPT

Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) helps people reduce fear and anxiety triggered by reminders of the trauma. This is done by confronting (or being exposed to) trauma reminders in a safe treatment environment until they are less troubling. In this way, individuals can stop avoiding and reacting to trauma reminders and live their lives more fully in the present with greater freedom from the past. PE has been shown to be highly effective and is considered the "gold standard" treatment for PTSD, therefore, clinical guidelines strongly recommend PE for PTSD.

■ **Comprehensive Assistance to Family Caregivers of Post 9/11 Veterans**

■ **Residential PTSD Programs** are available at the Tuscaloosa VAMC.. Referrals to specialized treatment for PTSD within a structured, 24/7 care setting are available. Tuscaloosa VAMC can help you to evaluate your treatment options. Contact the Mental Health Clinic or your Primary Care Provider for further details.

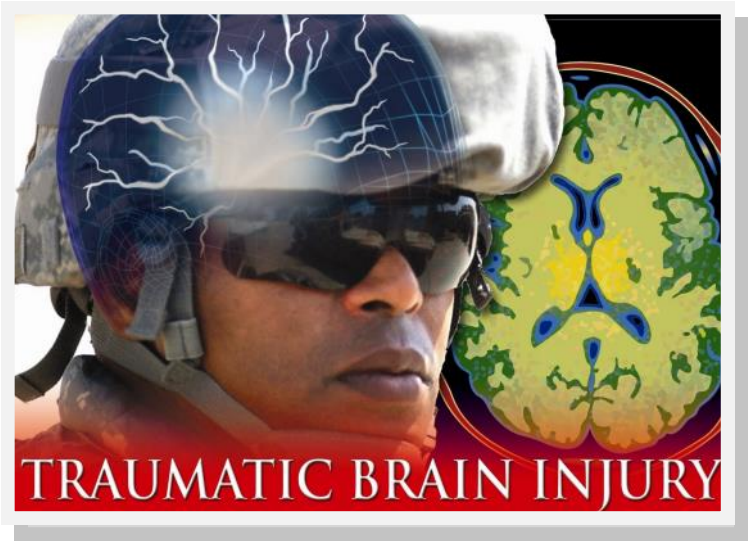
Treatments for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) cont.

The Department of Mental Health at Tuscaloosa VAMC (TVAMC) offers services to persons with history of Concussion/Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The multidisciplinary Poly-Trauma Team consist of a Clinical Rehabilitation/Neuropsychologist, Physiatrist, Speech-Language Pathologist, Social Worker, and two Nurses. The Rehabilitation Psychologist plays a key component in the TBI program. TVAMCs TBI team is part of VISN 7 Poly-Trauma team. The Rehabilitation Neuropsychologist is also part of TVAMCs interdisciplinary Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation treatment team and offers inpatient and outpatient clinical services to both Veterans and their families. Specifically, neuropsychological evaluations with standardized tests, stress management, relaxation training, and cognitive-behavioral therapy for depression and anxiety. There are also two support groups available at TVAMC for persons with history of TBI and their caregivers. One monthly support group and one weekly support group (SMART group).

Rehabilitation Psychology is a subspecialty of Psychology. The Rehabilitation Psychologist helps Veterans with various disabilities due to illness or injury (e, g., acquired brain injury, stroke, brain tumors, amputation, diabetes, spinal cord injury) via evidence based assessments and treatments. Each individual treatment plan is tailored in collaboration with Veterans and their families to improve quality of life. Neuropsychological assessment reveals a person's strengths and relative weaknesses in various domains, such as problem-solving, memory, attention, language, and visuospatial skills.

Contact Person: **Mia A Bergman, PhD, ABPP 205-554-2000 Ext. 1-2732**

Find out more about TBI, what it is and how it happens...



Learn more about VA and TBI **HERE**

Mental Health Recovery

Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is a tool used in conjunction with a Mental Health Care Plan that is developed, implemented and revised by the individual themselves. It is a system that helps reduce and/or eliminate symptoms or behaviors in order to maintain health and wellness.

Mental Health Suite is a computerized Mental Health Care Plan based on Mental Health Recovery by the Treatment Team with input from the Veteran, Veteran's family and the Clinical Team in a Mental Health Treatment setting.

Peer Support

Vet-to-Vet is a Peer led support group for the purpose of Veterans helping Veterans by sharing experience, strength and hope with their fellow Veterans. Meetings are held every Friday at 11am in Building 2, Room 101

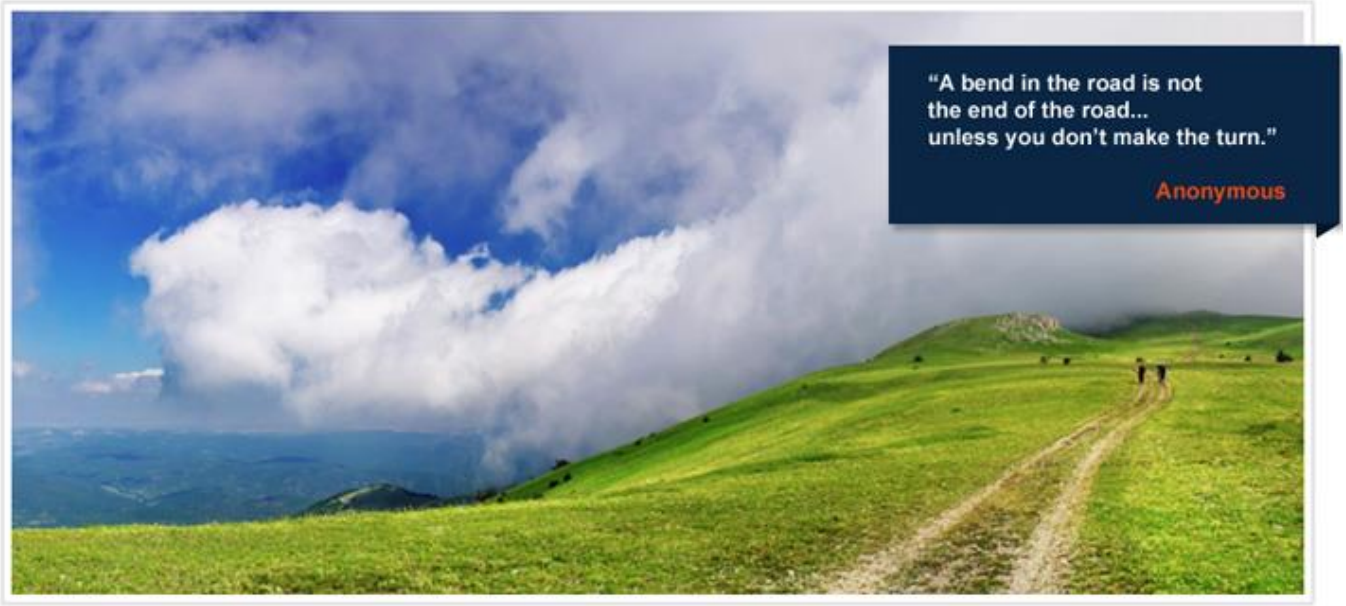
Veterans Advocacy Council is a Veteran led committee for the purpose of establishing a partnership between Veterans, and their families, Mental Health professionals, community partners and Veteran Service Organizations in order to improve the quality of care and promote best use of these services. Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 1pm in Building 137, Room A4-102 (4th Floor Classroom)

Contact: 205-554-2000 ext. 2640

For more information about national VA Peer Support

And PTSD, click HERE

Moving Forward *(additional on-line resource)*



What is Moving Forward?

Moving Forward is a free, on-line educational and life coaching program that teaches Problem Solving skills to help you to better handle life's challenges. It is designed to be especially helpful for Veterans, Military Service Members and their families. However, Moving Forward teaches skills that can be useful to anyone with stressful problems.

Free classes and help can be found at **www.veterantraining.va.gov**

Suicide Prevention Services

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1,** chat online at **www.veteranscrisisline.net,** or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The hotline is located in Canandaigua NY, and answered by Veterans or other staff trained in Veteran services. The call can is 100% confidential but if you choose, a consult will be put in to us at the Tuscaloosa VAMC (or your closest VAMC), which will be responded to within 24 *business* hours.

Our local team is reached through our national support system day and night to provide needed support. A consult will automatically be placed if a rescue is needed.

Suicide prevention coordinators work with mental health care teams to monitor and support Veterans at high risk for suicide. A personal safety plan that helps the Veteran recognize signs that often precede his/her suicidal ideas and lists strategies that help the Veteran manage those thoughts and feelings. The plan also identifies people that the Veteran can turn to for help. Safety plans are created with the mental health provider and the Veteran (including family members, if desired). This way, a plan is designed specifically for the Veteran and his/her problem areas. At Tuscaloosa VAMC you can reach the Suicide Prevention team during normal hospital hours by calling **205-554-2835 or 205-534-1564**

Use the crisis line if you need immediate attention any time. 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1

Community Partner Resources

Connect with VA! We believe that the most effective care for Service Members and Veterans will come from a strong connection between the community and VA. We invite you to consider us as a member of your treatment team and to look at how VA services can supplement and support the care you are providing. Veteran status can open the door to a large number of resources, including eligibility for VA healthcare. **Enrollment** in VA healthcare can ensure that a Veteran has health coverage when he or she most needs it.

Thank you for your interest and commitment to serving Veterans!
We recognize the excellent care you provide to Veterans and invite you to check out the newest online trainings and other tools developed by VA that may support you in your practice.

Screening for Military Service A military background is not always assessed by clinicians or spontaneously shared by Veteran clients. Asking if the individual in your office has served in the military is simple, quick, and can have important implications for available benefits and care. **Learn more.**

Understanding Military Culture Membership in a military culture may be one of the most powerful and enduring determinants of a person's values, beliefs, expectations, and behaviors. All Service Members are part of a shared culture, however their individual experiences will depend on many factors. For example, experiences can vary tremendously depending upon: Military Branch Time and Place of Service Military Occupation. It is vital that you send the message to your client that you recognize the importance of their military background and have taken the time to better understand military culture. **Learn more.**

Tuscaloosa Mental Health Alliance To serve as a proactive alliance of local citizens, community leaders and health care providers with the focus on issues and concerns regarding mental health in the community. To work together collaboratively in an effort to identify those areas that are problematic in the provision of services, such as access to care, crisis intervention, education, stigma etc., and to find solutions to those areas identified. **Learn more.**

Tuscaloosa National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness through education, advocacy. **Learn more.**

Community Partners Toolkit is a free online resource to provide current information, screening and support for the work you do on behalf of our Veterans. **Click here.**

Learn More About Tuscaloosa VAMC Let us know how we can help you help our Veterans. We'd love to meet you, arrange a tour of our campus, our share information and ideas that will serve our Veterans. Contact the **Office of Public Affairs** at **205-554-2000 x-3015**

Make the Connection

Resources and On-line Self-Assessment:

One of VA's national outreach campaigns is called Make the Connection. It helps Veterans and their family members and friends connect with information and services to improve their lives. At the user-friendly web site: **www.MakeTheConnection.net,** Veterans and their families and friends can privately explore information. Veterans and family members can watch stories similar to their own, and find information about mental health issues and treatment. They can find support and information that will help them live more fulfilling lives. Make the Connection shows true stories of Veterans who faced life events, experiences, physical injuries, or psychological symptoms; reached out for support; and found ways to overcome their challenges from Veterans of all service eras, genders, and backgrounds. VA encourages Veterans and their families to "make the connection" with strength and resilience of Veterans like themselves, with other people who care, and with information and available sources of support for getting their lives on a better track. Taking a self-assessment may indicate whether it's a good idea for the Veterans in your life to seek further treatment. Take the **self-assessment here.**

See also **How to Access Help:**

Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL)

This initiative provides VA outreach and access on college and university campuses. The VITAL Initiative focuses on providing services to Veteran communities at local institutions of higher learning. This program provides services such as seamless access to VA healthcare through enrollment and case management services. The program offers an on-site VA clinician which provides direct clinical services and referrals through care coordination and case management practices. VITAL also provides education and training services on Veteran related topics through professional development presentations and consultation services to the entire learning community.

In conjunction with the National Center for PTSD, the VITAL initiative sponsors the VA Campus Toolkit to provide faculty, staff, and administrators resources to support student Veterans on campus. VA currently has twenty one sites nationwide.

The mission of VITAL is to provide world-class healthcare and improve the overall mental health of Veterans, while supporting their successful integration into college and university campuses, through seamless access to VA healthcare services and on-campus clinical counseling."

Contact : 205 554-2000 x-2196
The University of Alabama VITAL Office: (205)348-4392 (direct line)

The University of Alabama Office of Veteran and Military Affairs Office: (205)348-0983 (front desk)

Shelton State Community College Veterans Information Center: (205)391-2383

Helpful Links & Contacts

- UA Link: https://vets.sa.ua.edu/
- UA Contact email: vma@bama.ua.edu
- UA VITAL Link: https://vets.sa.ua.edu/resources/vital/
- UA VITAL email: vitaloutreach@ua.edu
- Shelton State CC email: veteransinfocenter@sheltonstate.edu

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Table of Contents

Mental Health Clinic Hours

Monday - Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm

Mental Health Extended Clinic Hours

Tuesday evenings - 4:30pm-6:00pm
Saturday mornings - 8:30am-11:00am

Outpatient Mental Health Clinic Contact (205)554-2000 ext. 2836

Mental Health Same Day Access

As part of the My VA Access Initiative, VHA is committed to providing timely Mental Health (MH) care, including same day services as needed. This breakthrough initiative is being implemented to ensure that any Veteran reaching out for care receives prompt, personal attention. For many Veterans, the hardest step is asking for help. It is vital to ensure that Veterans are offered same day services. This includes all entry points across the facility (e.g., by phone or in person at any outpatient clinic, emergency department or at any CBOC).

After-Hours Mental Health Emergencies

Use the Veterans Crisis Line
if you need
Immediate attention any time
1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 or call 911

Table of Contents

Individual, Group Psychotherapy and Case Management

VA offers evidence-based psychotherapies (EBPs) to Veterans who can benefit from them for PTSD, depression, insomnia, chronic pain, substance abuse disorders and serious mental illness. Each of the EBPs includes socialization to treatment and motivational enhancement components to promote treatment knowledge, engagement, and a collaborative therapy process.

Each of the EBP protocols places significant emphasis on the therapeutic relationship and on tailoring interventions to specific needs of the Veteran guided by a careful case conceptualization and individualized treatment plan developed in collaboration with the Veteran.

Various therapies are offered at Tuscaloosa VAMC and the Community Based Outpatient Clinics in person and via telemental health. Veterans can speak with their health care or mental health care provider for more information about beginning therapy.

For more information on participating in EBPs:
Non-OIF/OEF/OND - 205-554-2000 ext. 3836
OIF/OEF/OND - 205-554-2000 ext. 3823
Residential - 205-554-2000 ext. 3588
Substance Abuse Disorder - 205-554-2000 ext. 2472

Group Therapies

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) helps Veterans understand the relationship between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, learn new patterns of thinking, and practice new positive behaviors .
- Cognitive processing therapy (CPT), a form of CBT that involves correcting negative thought patterns so that memories of trauma don't interfere with daily life. It may also include writing about one's traumatic experience. Clinical guidelines strongly recommend CPT for PTSD treatment. CPT has been shown to be one of the most effective treatments for PTSD.
- Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) helps people reduce fear and anxiety triggered by reminders of the trauma. This is done by confronting (or being exposed to) trauma reminders in a safe treatment environment until they are less troubling. In this way, individuals can stop avoiding and reacting to trauma reminders and live their lives more fully in the present with greater freedom from the past. Clinical guidelines strongly recommend PE for PTSD.

For more information on participating in Group Therapies:
Non-OIF/OEF/OND - 205-554-2000 ext. 3836
OIF/OEF/OND - 205-554-2000 ext. 3823
Residential - 205-554-2000 ext. 3588
Substance Abuse Disorder - 205-554-2000 ext. 2472

Telemental Health

- Tele-psychology (CVT) evidence-based psychotherapy for PTSD and Insomnia are available to veterans who receive care at the Selma Outpatient clinic.
- Tele-psychiatry (CVT) services are available to veterans who receive primary care services at the Selma Outpatient Clinic.
- Tele-psychology (CVT) evidence-based psychotherapy for PTSD and insomnia are also available to Veterans on campus at the University of Alabama VITAL program.
- Tele-psychology (CVT) to the home is also available to rural OIF/OEF/OND veterans for whom access to weekly therapy at TVAMC is a barrier. Evidence-based psychotherapy for PTSD and insomnia are available.

Inpatient Psychiatry

When a Veteran requires crisis care at an inpatient level we provide acute inpatient services on two units consisting of 41 beds. These restricted non-smoking bed units specialize in the care of the critically ill patient that requires intensive psychiatric and/or nursing care for a short period of hospitalization. Services include intensive assessment, monitoring, medication adjustment, treatment, aftercare planning, and nursing care for psychiatrically ill patients requiring acute episodic care. Acute care interdisciplinary teams specialize in the treatment and stabilization of the acute psychiatric patient.

Admission Process

Screening for admission occurs when a veteran presents to the Medical Center seeking admission. All Veterans are evaluated according to established criteria for intensity of service and severity of illness.

After-Hours Mental Health Emergencies

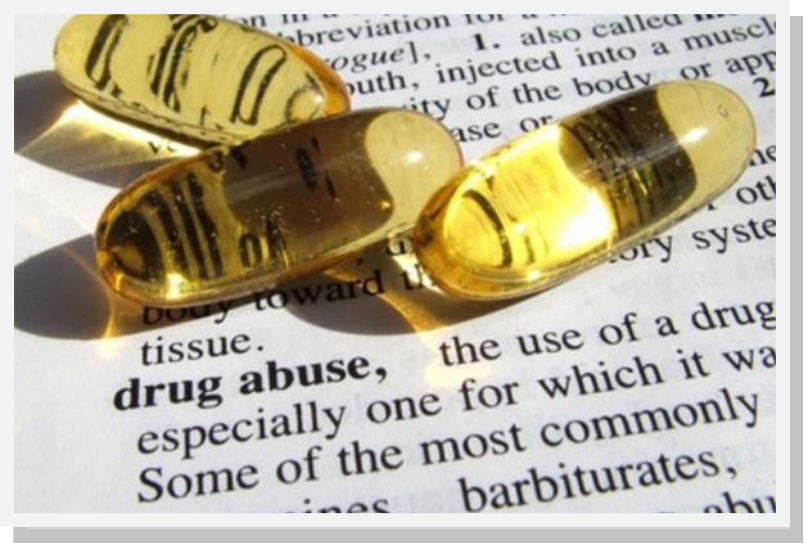
Use the Veterans Crisis Line if you need immediate attention any time
1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 or call 911

Comprehensive Outpatient Substance Addiction Treatment (CO-SAT)

The Comprehensive Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment (COSAT) Program is designed to help put your life back on track and to help you reach success well after you have completed the program. The program addresses a full range of issue to include drug and alcohol abuse, mental health and emotional issues. We want to provide the tools to you that are necessary for continued success and reintegration into the community.

The following COSAT services are provided in the Outpatient Mental Health Clinic :

- **Screening**
- **Assessment & Evaluation**
- **Outpatient Substance Abuse and/or Dual Treatment**
- **Intensive Outpatient SUD and/or Dual Treatment**
- **Relapse Component**
- **Vocational Rehabilitation**
- **Aftercare Program**
- **Vet-to-Vet & Peer Groups**
- **Urine Drug Screen/and or Breathalyzer Tests**
- **Ambulatory Detox**
- **Care Management**
- **Family Member/Significant Others' Involvement**
- **Self-Help Meetings**



To learn more about the types of treatment offered in our COSAT Program,
Contact 205-554-2000 ext. 2472

Neuropsychological Evaluations

If a patient has concerns related to cognitive functioning (e.g., memory, attention, language), a neuropsychological evaluation can help document the possible causes of problems, provide objective documentation of the patient's current level of functioning, and suggest ways to improve functioning. Questions of capacity can also be addressed through neuropsychological evaluations. Problems in cognitive functioning can be caused by conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, brain tumor, Huntington's disease, vascular dementia, stroke, depression, ADHD, heart attack, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson's disease.

Please contact Kim Lindbergh at 205-554-2000 ext.2139 for more information.

Memory and Aging Care Clinic (MACC)

The MACC is a resource for Veterans and their families who are affected by memory-related concerns. The MACC is an interdisciplinary team that provides specialty care services focused on dementia and related disorders.

Typical services available through the MACC:

- Differential diagnosis, information about prognosis, and the impact of other medical conditions on functioning
- Prescription of nootropic medications (cognitive-enhancing), when indicated
- Medication review to eliminate unnecessary medications
- Education on opportunities to optimize functioning (strategies for the home, cognitive rehabilitation) and manage anxiety or depressed mood
- Treatments (behavioral, environmental, pharmacological) for behavioral or personality symptoms of dementia
- Assistance in managing safety-related topics: driving, gun safety, wandering, aggressive behavior

Family / caregiver support, advance care planning, psycho-education, system navigation (VA benefits, community resources)

For more information contact the MACC Nurse or TVAMC Call Center:

Pam King, RN at (205) 554- 2000, then 1 + Ext. 4192; or the Call Center at (205) 554-2010 or Toll Free at: 1-888-651-2685

Services for Veterans Who are Homeless

VA offers programs and initiatives to help homeless Veterans live as self-sufficiently and as independently as possible. VA provides substantial hands-on assistance directly to homeless Veterans. Services at Tuscaloosa VAMC include programs offered under the name of Health Care for Homeless Veterans, (HCHV).
Contact **205-554-2000 ext. 3096** more information.

National Call Center and Live Chat

This toll free 24/7 hotline links Veterans to the nearest VA resources or use internet for 24/7 live chat.

Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment (TVAMC Domiciliary)

Initially established in the late 1860's to provide services to economically-disadvantaged Veterans, Domiciliary Care is the oldest VA health care program. The TVAMC is proud to offer four Domiciliary Care Treatment Tracks (48-bed DCHV, 21-bed SUD DOM, 15-bed PTSD DOM, 12-bed CWT-TR) with a fifth track (52-bed Gen-DOM) anticipated to open in 2016.

Objectives of the TVAMC Domiciliary:

- Providing residential rehabilitation and treatment services that focus on the Veteran's strengths, abilities, needs, and preferences rather than on illness and symptoms.
- Providing residential rehabilitation and treatment services utilizing a therapeutic community based on peer and professional supports in a structured and supervised setting.
- Providing rehabilitation and treatment services that address medical conditions, mental illness, addiction, and psychosocial deficits.
- Assisting Veterans in choosing, accessing, and utilizing the community and natural supports needed to be independent, self-supporting, and successful in their individual recovery.

Contact 205-554-2000 ext. 3588

The Palace of Athena (Women's Wing)

Located within the Domiciliary unit, the Palace of Athena was constructed as a separate, 10 bed wing for female Veterans. All female Veterans admitted to the Domiciliary unit reside on this wing and during their treatment they have access to several Women's groups as well as evidenced based therapies for PTSD, substance abuse, and other mental health conditions. Female Veterans have access to their own home-like common area with comfortable furniture, a dining room, and television. Self-care is an extremely important aspect of the recovery process, and often the female Veterans admitted to the Domiciliary have difficulty engaging in pleasurable activities and doing positive things for themselves. In order to encourage self-care and recovery, the Palace of Athena contains amenities like a whirlpool and hair salon, which facilitate reintegration and discovery of a life worth living for female Veterans. The Palace of Athena is a unique space and the Tuscaloosa VAMC is proud to offer this resource to the female Veterans.

Compensated Work Therapy Program (CWT-TR)

The Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence (CWT/TR) Program is a 12-bed residential program designed to provide a safe, supportive therapeutic environment for Veterans living with substance abuse disorders, psychiatric problems, homelessness and/or vocational deficits.

The primary goals of the program are to assist veterans in learning how to remain sober and/or improve their mental health status, assist in obtaining and sustaining employment and stable housing in the community, assist in learning to manage their lives in an independent and productive manner and to minimize their reliance on institutional care.

For more information, contact 205-554-2000 ext.. 2141

Learn more about Veterans Employment by visiting the

Veterans Employment Center (VEC) website.

Transitional Housing

The Tuscaloosa VA offers transitional housing assistance through the help of the Salvation Army by offering beds to homeless Tuscaloosa VA Veterans. For more information about services offered by the Salvation Army, click HERE or call **205-553-1600**

VA Supported Housing (VASH)

The VA Supported Housing program is a joint partnership between the VA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD provides Section 8 housing vouchers to homeless Veterans identified by VASH to meet eligibility for vouchers. The goal of the program is to transition Veterans from homelessness to independent housing by providing supportive, community-based long term case management services. Vouchers are limited and applications are only accepted at scheduled information sessions with the exception of homeless Veterans with dependent children, who may apply at any time.

To be eligible for VASH at Tuscaloosa VAMC, Veterans must be

- Registered with the Tuscaloosa VAMC
- If inpatient, within 4-6 weeks of graduation from program
- Clinically stable, including
  - -Not in imminent danger of suicide or homicide and
  - -Clean and sober
- Functionally able to live independently in the community
- In need of case management services
- Willing to participate in case management
- Homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness
- Free on inclusion on any lifetime sexual offender registry
- Within eligible income limits

Contact 205-554-2000 ext. 4403

Valor Grove Apartments

Built in 2014, the Valor Grove Apartments, located on the campus of the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center, is a 50-unit apartment complex. As a joint project between the VA and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development , the apartments offer first-choice to homeless Veterans in the Tuscaloosa area. It allows Veterans to participate in Recovery Programs while living on-campus and helps during their transition to more permanent housing.

For more information on applying for housing at Valor Grove Apartments, contact **205-554-2000 ext. 4403**

Services for Veterans Involved in the Criminal Justice System (Justice Involved Veterans)

An eligible Veteran who is not currently incarcerated can access VA health care regardless of any criminal history, including incarceration. Only when an otherwise eligible Veteran is currently incarcerated, or in fugitive felon status, is he or she not able to access VA health care.

VA has two programs serving Veterans across the criminal justice system. Their shared goal is to provide the earliest possible intervention to link Veterans to the full array of VA services that will promote treatment while preventing homelessness and further contact with the criminal justice system.

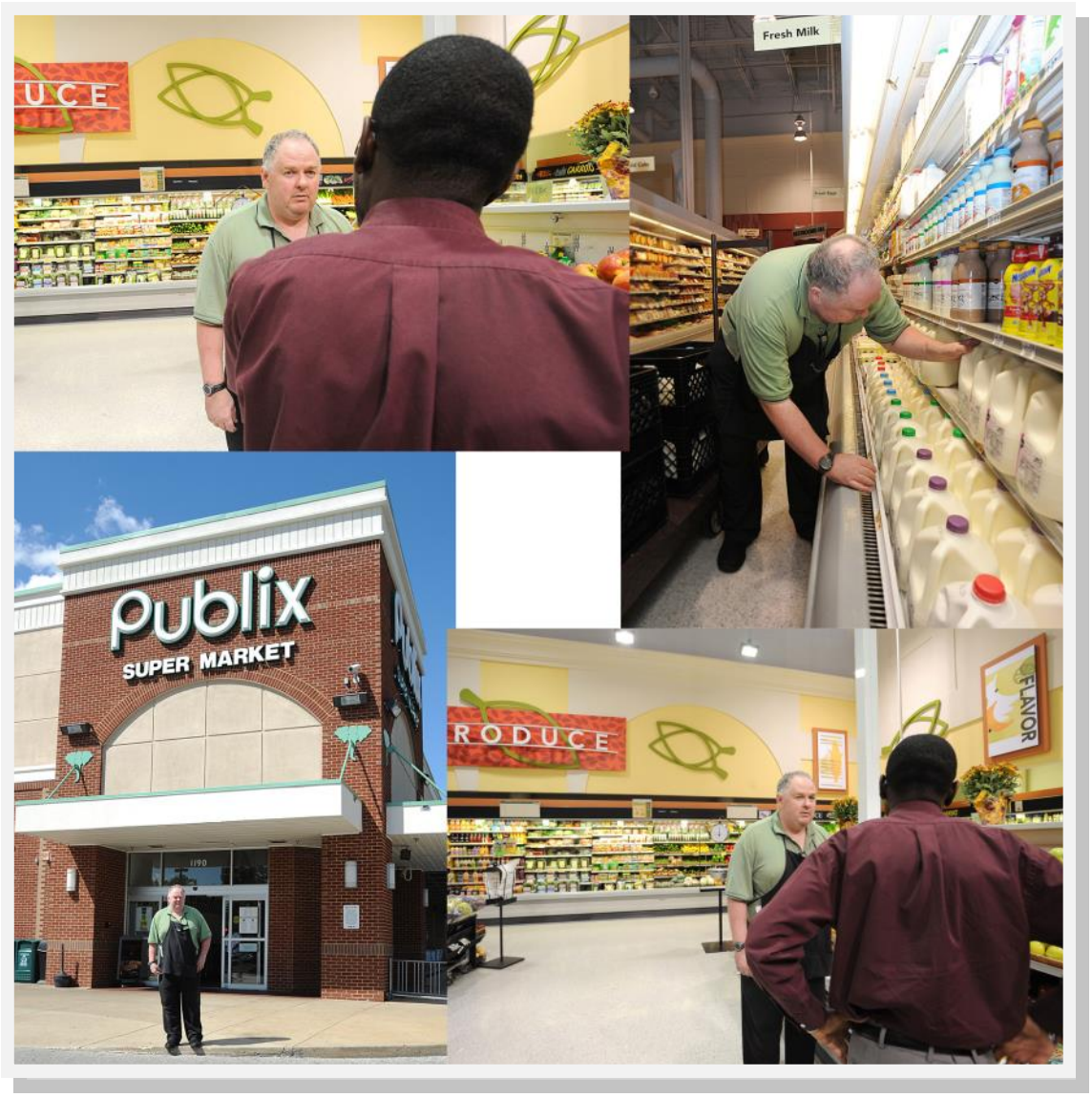
Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program

This program provides outreach and linkage to VA medical, mental health, and homeless services for justice-involved Veterans. The VJO Specialist serves as a liaison between VA and the local criminal justice system. This program provides services to Veterans who have pending criminal-related legal problems that demonstrate some correlation with their diagnosed or suspected mental health related issues. The primary goal of VJO is to build a bridge between local law enforcement, the judicial system and VA in order to prevent unnecessary incarceration of Veterans. This is accomplished by VJO working with VA and Non-VA programs to connect Veterans in need of specialized mental health service in lieu of incarceration, and provides training to local law enforcement and judicial staff on Veteran specific issues. VJO accepts referrals for from all sources for Veterans currently enrolled and not enrolled in VA services. Contact **205-554-2000 ext. 2710** for more information.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Vocational Rehabilitation is an adjunct program to your VA clinical treatment team supporting Veterans whose employment status has been impacted by homelessness, mental health issues, or vocational displacement. We provide assistance by addressing barriers to finding work and/or keeping work. Our mission is to assist you in defining and achieving your vocational goals; explore vocational opportunities; assess your vocational needs and interests; guide you in making vocational choices; and empower you to reach and maintain your highest level of vocational functioning and realize your personal potential.

Contact 205-554-2000 ext. 2156



Learn more.

Readjustment Counseling Services (Vet Centers)

VA operates 300 community-based counseling Vet Centers. Many providers at Vet Centers are Veterans of combat themselves. Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to all Veterans who served in any combat zone or who have experienced Military sexual trauma (MST). PTSD, MST and bereavement counseling are also provided. Services are available for family members for military related issues, and bereavement counseling is offered for parents, spouses, and children of Armed Forces, National Guard, and Reserves personnel who died in the service of their country. Veterans have earned these benefits through their service, and all are provided at no cost to the Veteran or family. We've listed some of the Vet Centers closest to Tuscaloosa VAMC here:

There is no waitlist for services and no fee for services.

Birmingham Vet Center:

400 Emery Drive, Suite 200 Hoover, AL. 35244

205-212-3122 or 877-927-8387

Monday & Friday 8:00am - 4:30pm

Tuesday - Thursday 8:00am - 8:00pm

Saturday 8:00am - 12:00pm (every 2nd/4th Sat.)

Sunday - Closed

What is readjustment counseling?

Readjustment counseling is a wide range of psycho social services offered to eligible Veterans and their families in the effort to make a successful transition from military to civilian life.

They include:

- Individual and group counseling for Veterans and their families
- Family counseling for military related issues
- Bereavement counseling for families who experience an active duty death
- Military sexual trauma counseling and referral
- Outreach and education including PDHRA, community events, etc.
- Substance abuse assessment and referral
- Employment assessment and referral
- VBA benefits explanation and referral
- Screening & referral for medical issues including TBI, depression, etc.

For assistance after hours, weekends and holidays, call:
1-877-WAR-VETS (1-877-927-8387)

Military Sexual Trauma Treatment

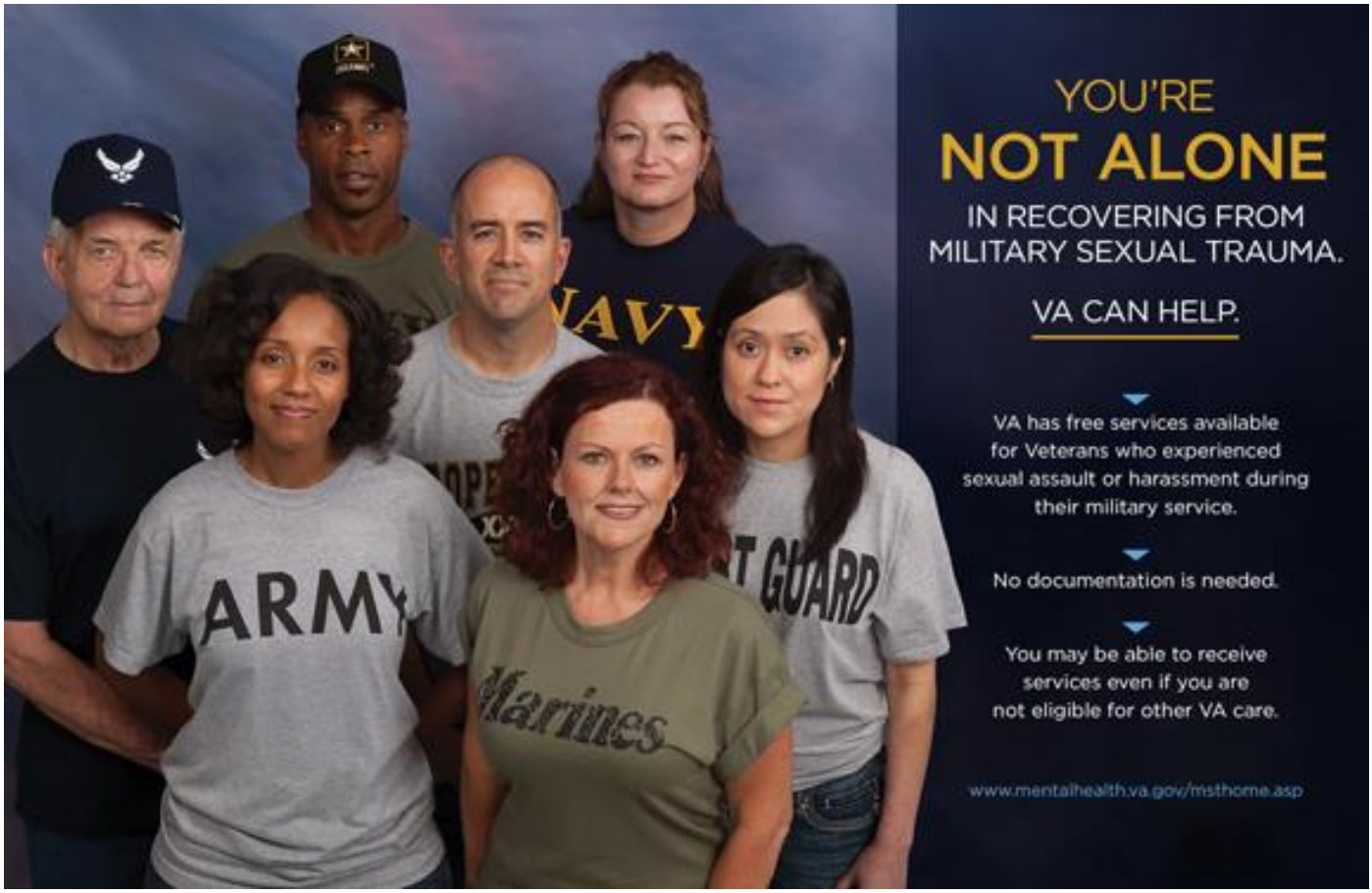
Both women and men can experience military sexual trauma (MST), and for some, the experiences can affect their health even many years later. Because MST is an experience, not a diagnosis, Veterans who experienced MST can benefit from the range of treatment options VA has available to treat conditions commonly associated with MST, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, substance abuse, and others. VA also has MST-specific outpatient, inpatient, and residential services available to assist Veterans in their recovery. It's important to know that VA provides all treatment for MST-related mental and physical health conditions free of charge. A service-connected disability rating is not required, and Veterans may be able to receive MST-related care even if not eligible for other VA services. Veterans need not have reported the incident or have other documentation that it occurred.

For more information, contact
205-554-2000 ext. 2682

Click HERE to learn more.

VA Services for Military Sexual Trauma:

Help
Hope
Healing



Primary Care and Specialty Care

Table of Contents: Primary & Specialty Care

Dental

Lab Service

Pharmacy

Primary Care

Minute Clinic

Primary Care Behavioral Health

Rehabilitation and Adaptive Equipment

Returning Veterans

Specialty and Acute Care Services

Telehealth

VetLink

Visual Impairment (VIST)

Women Veterans

Diagnostic Service

The Lab Service is located on the 1st floor of Building 135 and offers services like Radiology, Laboratory and Respiratory Services.

If you can, we ask you to come in the day before so that your provider may have all your test results waiting when you arrive for your appointment. Our slowest times are in the afternoon, so if you come in around 1pm to 2pm, you will most likely get speedy service.

Many tests no longer require that you be fasting. Ask your provider, and if your tests do not require you to fast, then have a nice meal before you come to us. You will feel better for it.

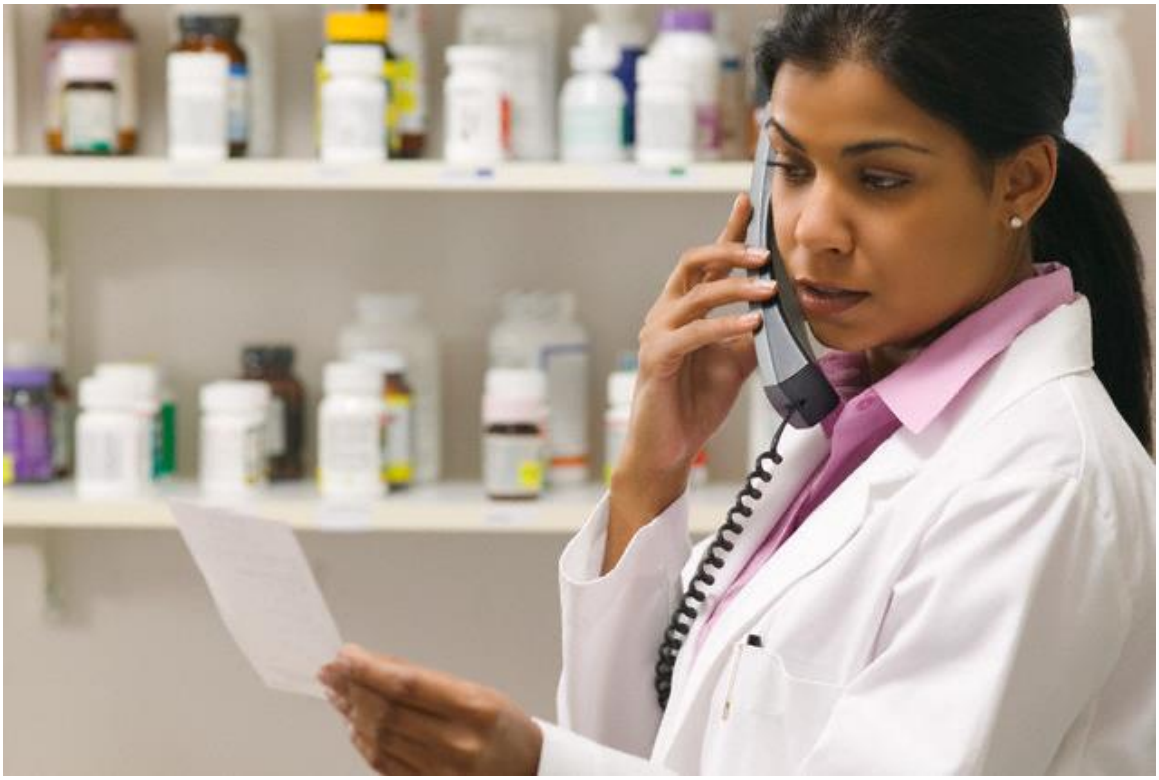
7:00 am to 9:00 am are our busiest hours. If you come during that time, you may have a moderate waiting time to have your blood drawn.

Please make sure to bring your VA identification card. A state driver's license or a passport or other legal ID can be used as an alternate ID card as long as it has your picture and your full name, but they are not preferred. WARNING: if you do not bring a picture ID, your blood will not be drawn by the outpatient laboratory, even if you have come from a distance away. If you are driving an elderly relative here, make sure you bring their ID. There are no exceptions to this rule.

If you have questions or concerns please contact the service directly at **205-554-2000 ext. 4377.**

Lab Service hours are Monday - Friday 7:00am - 4:30pm

Pharmacy



Providing accurate, efficient and timely pharmaceutical needs is critical to the well-being of Veterans. We are here to take your prescription refill requests when it works best for you! Refills are available to be mailed to your home through an automated prescription refill service by calling 1-888-651-2685. This refill request telephone service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you prefer to order your refills to be mailed to your home in person, our Pharmacy hours are Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 8am to 4:30pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays 8am to 6:30pm, and Saturdays 8am to 12noon (by appointment). We are located on the ground floor of the main Tuscaloosa VA building 135, just around the corner from the front desk. Only **NEW** prescriptions from your provider may be filled for WINDOW pickup.

****Please note:** ALL refills are mailed from a Centralized Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP) located in another state, so please order your refills at least 10-14 days in advance so you will not run out of medications.

Prescription refills may also be requested online using VA's "My Health*e*Vet Program". The Tuscaloosa VAMC MyHealth*e*Vet Program Manager can assist you in obtaining a user ID and Password to log in. For more information, please log on to www.myhealth.va.gov or contact the MyHealth*e*Vet program manager at: **205-554-2000 x-2671**

VetLink

Tuscaloosa VAMC has adopted a state-of-the art technology, called VetLink, intended to improve patient experience, safety and access to information.

VetLinks are touch-screen and easy-to-use devices that allow patients to perform tasks such as:

- Check-in for previously scheduled medical appointments
- Update contact and demographic information
- Update next of kin information
- Review insurance information
- Print an appointment itinerary slip

Information is kept secure via the following:

- Veterans must use their Veterans Identification Card (VIC) and answer challenge questions to authenticate their identity.
- Information entered into VetLink is not stored on the device.
- Each device has privacy screens that allow only the user to view their information.
- Each device has a proximity sensor; once a user steps away from the kiosk, the screen resets.
- If the user takes longer than expected to complete a screen, VetLink will alert the user and ask the user if more time is needed.

Trained staff, volunteers and navigators nearby to provide assistance. Visually impaired Veterans can also use VetLink by inserting their ear buds into the scanner located at the bottom right of the kiosk.

Primary Care

Primary Care provides preventive care services and disease management at our Tuscaloosa VAMC and our Community Based Outpatient Clinics. Our preventive care includes: cancer screening, blood pressure, vaccinations, labs, obesity screening, smoking cessation and overall individual wellness needs.

Primary Care is provided through a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) partnership. The team includes Veterans, providers, nurses, and clerks to best meet the Veterans personal health care goals. Primary Care Behavioral Health (PCBH) and Primary Care are co-located to support your same-day behavioral health needs.

In addition to meeting your Primary Care needs your PACT will provide the coordination for all your clinical needs. For example they can refer you to our fitness center, nutrition, MOVE!, rehabilitation services and any specialty or Mental Health Services you may require.

Our call center is available to support access to your PACT 24/7. A nurse or clerk is available to speak with you at any time day or night. My HealtheVet is another option to secure communicating with your PACT.

No matter when you need support, reach us by dialing

205-554-2010

The Minute Clinic

The Minute Clinic serves as an extension of the Primary Care Clinics and is designated to provide care for TVAMC Veterans and Veteran Employees seeking healthcare services for common illnesses such as coughs and colds as well acute injuries to maintain continuity of care.

The Minute Clinic **is not** an Emergency Room and does not provide urgent or emergent medical care (i.e. chest pain, shortness of breath, seizure, stroke like symptoms etc.)

A Veteran requiring medical emergency care **should not** be escorted to the Minute Clinic. The medical emergency process should be initiated from the area where the Veteran has presented in the facility to prevent a delay in care.

Located in Building 135 - 1st floor

Specialty Care Area

No appointment needed!

Our goal is within 1 Hour!

No matter when you need support, reach us by dialing

205-554-2010

Primary Care - Mental Health Integrated Care Team

PCBH is a patient-centered, team-based service integrating mental health and primary care. PCBH aims to identify Veterans' comprehensive health care needs, to deliver timely evidence-based assessments and short term treatments, or facilitate referrals to specialty services, thereby empowering Veterans to obtain an optimal level of functioning and to reduce stigma.

Services

The Primary Care Behavioral Health Program (PCBH) is dedicated to treating Veterans living with emotional, adjustment, behavioral difficulties, or clinical health problems. The PCBH Program collaborates with the VA Primary Care team to offer Veterans optimal mental and physical health services. To ensure that Veterans have ready access to services that can address all aspects of health & wellness, PCBH services are on-site and available directly within the primary care setting.

Services are offered to Veterans coping with any number of emotional or behavioral difficulties including:

- Anxiety and Depression
- Adjustment difficulties
- Chronic pain management
- Weight management
- Stress management
- Diabetes management
- Alcohol abuse or misuse
- Smoking cessation
- Sleep difficulties
- Difficulties coping with illness/disability
- Interpersonal losses

Screening evaluations, Assessment and diagnosis,
Psychopharmacological consultation/treatment,
Brief Psychotherapy (individual and group),
Psycho-education for veterans and families,
Coordinating referrals to specialty mental health and other services as appropriate

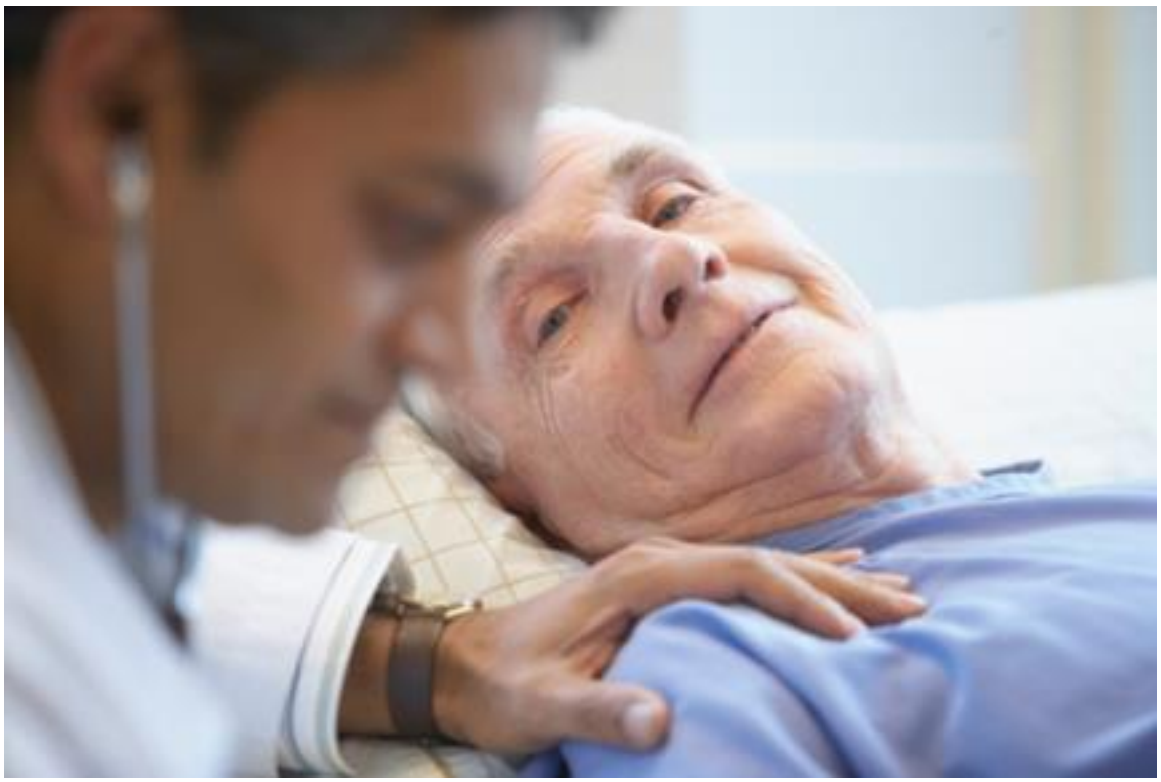
Typical Course of Treatment

Referral by Primary Care Provider (Self-referrals also welcome); Initial telephone or in-person screen; Brief therapy and/or medication consultation and management, depending on Veteran's treatment needs; referral to specialty services.

Ask your primary care doctor for a referral.

Serving the whole veteran by promoting mind & body wellness

Specialty & Acute Care Services



Your Primary Care Physician can refer you to:

- Cardiology
- Pulmonary
- Dermatology
- Neurology
- Rheumatology
- Hepatitis C/HIV Clinic
- Vascular Surgery
- General Surgery
- Orthopedics
- Urology

Telehealth

There are multiple Telehealth services available such as Mental Health, MOVE! Groups, Home Telehealth, Pain, OT, Smoking Cessation, Nutrition, and Dermatology.

Veterans with chronic health conditions can utilize Telehealth technologies to live independently, and to access their health care. When partnered with their health care team the Veterans have an improved overall quality of life.

Telehealth changes the location where health care services are provided. Using Telehealth brings the care you need closer to home, saving you time, money and a long ride into the hospital. Telehealth allows you to meet with your provider at the medical center using video technology.

If you are interested in learning if you are medically eligible to participate in one of our Telehealth programs talk to your VA physician during your next appointment.

The Right Care In The Right Place At The Right Time through Tuscaloosa VAMC Telehealth Team:

Click to watch video

Facility Telehealth Coordinator
205-554-2000 ext. 2163

Tuscaloosa Telehealth Clinical Technicians (TCT)
205-554-2000 ext. 2974

Home Telehealth Care Coordinator
205-554-2000 ext. 3835

Rehabilitation and Adaptive Equipment

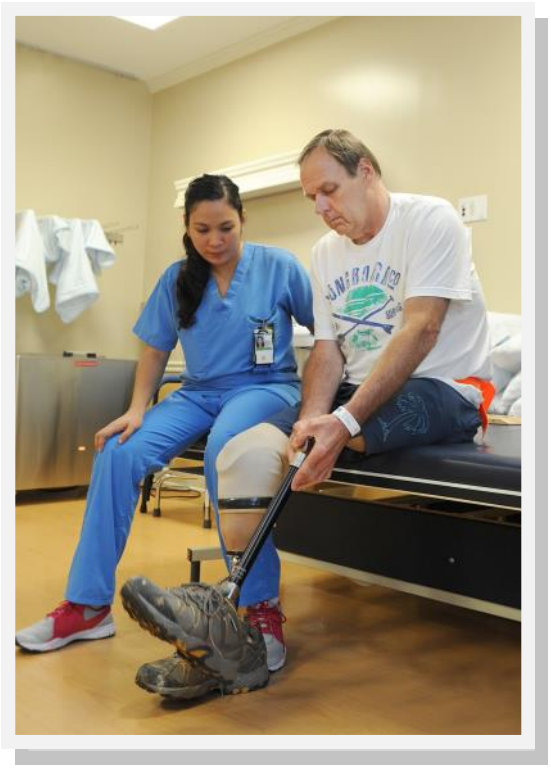
Rehabilitation, prosthetic and durable medical equipment enhance and/or improve the lives of the Veterans who need them.

Durable medical equipment refers to aids from walkers, scooters, grab bars, canes, and elastic shoelaces to vertical porch lifts and just about everything between! Veterans are reminded to check with us before they buy anything because it may be something we can provide. Learn what you may be eligible for before you buy. Contact Program Manager **205-554-2000 ext. 2353**

We also offer aquatic Physical Therapy in our Olympic pool, and a state-of-art fitness center staffed with attentive, informed and responsive care givers. Beneficial Rehabilitation is available for stroke victims, swallowing evaluations and much more! Our team will keep you in touch; Tuscaloosa VAMC's speech language pathologist will assist with using technology and support education where needed.

Your primary pare provider (PCP) can refer you for all your rehabilitation, prosthetic and durable medical Equipment needs, and a visit may not be needed. In some cases, your PCP can let us know what is needed and we can ship your device directly to your home.

Our physical and occupational therapists provide in-home safety assessments to identify your specific needs. Ask your provider if this service is appropriate for you.



Returning Veterans OEF/OIF/OND Reintegration

ACCESS YOUR FREE VA HEALTH CARE BENEFITS TODAY

OEF/OIF/OND (Operation Enduring, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn) combat Veterans can receive five years of cost free medical care for injuries or illness related to their active duty or military service. Comprehensive VA health benefits, including preventative care, mental health care, prescriptions, emergency and surgical care are available to all Veterans with a copay.

Who is Eligible?

Veterans, including activated Reservists and members of the National Guard.

How do I Enroll?

Online at **www.oefoif.va.gov** or by phone (**877-222-VETS**), mail or in person at any VA Medical Center.
See Enrollment

The OEF/OIF/OND program can be a point of contact for newly returned Operation Enduring, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn Veterans to access the VA system and establish care. The OEF/OIF/OND Program provides case management, care coordination, and outreach to Veterans and their families in the community. Veterans can be referred by various sources within the hospital, the community or self refer. The OEF/OIF/OND social worker will assist with access to benefits and care, and follow up for those severely injured or new to the system. There is an OEF/OIF/OND interdisciplinary team comprised of individuals from services across the hospital that have been identified as "champions" in the area of issues facing OEF/OIF/OND Veterans. Complex cases can be referred to this team for consultation.

Call **205-554-2000 x-2046** for more information.

Visual Impairment Services (VIST)

The Tuscaloosa VAMC VIST Program helps legally blind and severely visually impaired Veterans and their families adjust to vision loss. The program identifies and informs eligible Veterans about services and benefits, ensures that health care and rehabilitation services are made available, and helps those Veterans cope with the devastating loss of vision.

Services include:

- VA Blind Rehabilitation Training Programs
- Community-Based Training Programs
- Computer training programs which are adapted for use by blind or visually impaired persons
- Low Vision Examination by a Low Vision Optometrist
- Library of Congress Talking Book Program
- Issuance of Blind or Low Vision Aids

Contact the VIST Coordinator:
205-554-2000 x-3542

Veterans are often issued prosthetic/blind aids which may include optical devices such as hand magnifiers, electronic magnifiers such as CCTV, a large print or talking computer system, canes, talking watches, audible prescription readers, adapted recreational devices or other adaptive devices based on the outcome of the assessments by Low Vision Optometrist and/or the VIST Coordinator.

Any Veteran who is legally blind or severely visually impaired, even while wearing conventional glasses, and who is eligible for VA health care may participate in the VIST program. If you are unsure about eligibility for VA health care benefits, please contact the VIST Coordinator to assist in determining eligibility. Referrals can be made by the Veteran, family, health care professional or other concerned individuals.

If a Veteran requires the assistance of another person or exhibits any of the following functional problems, a referral to VIST may be indicated:

-Difficulty reading mail, newspaper, medication labels or standard size print while using conventional glasses.

-Difficulty performing activities of daily living, such as managing their medications, grooming, cooking, using the phone, telling time, etc., as a result of their visual impairment.

-Veterans who have difficulty ambulating safely and independently as a result of blindness or visual impairment.

Women Veteran Services

Our Women's Health Clinic includes a private waiting room and seating area as well as exam rooms specifically designed for female patients. Services at the clinic include primary care (including women's primary care such as cervical cancer and breast cancer screening), and specialty care (including the management and screening of chronic conditions, reproductive health care, rehabilitation and long-term care.)

Specialty mental health services are available to target problems such as PTSD, substance abuse, depression, conditions related to military sexual trauma (MST), and homelessness in treatment environments that can accommodate and support women with safety, privacy, dignity and respect. Providing world-class health care for Women Veterans is a priority. Our Veteran Women Program Manager understands your unique needs and is here to serve you.

For more information contact Women Veteran's Program Manager: 205-554-2000 x-4250

*We are not only your grandfather's VA, we are **your** VA! At Tuscaloosa VAMC, our Women's Health Clinic is designed to provide female Veterans with the privacy, dignity and sensitivity our Women Veterans have earned.*

Dental

Tuscaloosa VAMC provides excellence in clinical care as well as oral health education. Patients are treated by compassionate and responsive dental staff familiar with the unique health care needs of Veterans. Our dental staff includes many current and former members of the U.S. Armed Forces who understand Veterans' health concerns because of their own military experience. Tuscaloosa VAMC uses the latest dental procedures and pain control techniques. Veteran dental care is provided in a clinical setting that adheres to the highest standards of hygiene and infection control.

Services Provided for Eligible Patients:

Restorative Dentistry	(fillings, crowns and bridgework)
Prosthodontic Services	(partial and full dentures, implant dentistry)
Periodontics	(management and education of gum disease)
Endodontics	(root canal)
Oral Surgery	(extractions, pathology)
Dental Hygiene	(cleanings, oral health education. management of gum disease)

Eligibility

Veterans often have questions about whether or not they are eligible for dental care at the VA. Federal law limits the dental benefits provided by the VA. See **VA Dental Website** for information on eligibility.

Homeless Dental Services

The dental needs of homeless Veterans are well documented. Dental problems, such as pain and/or missing teeth can be tremendous barriers in seeking and obtaining employment. Studies have shown that after dental care, Veterans report significant improvement in perceived oral health, general health and overall self-esteem, supporting the notion that dental care is an important aspect of the overall concept of homeless rehabilitation.

VA's **Homeless Veterans Dental Program** provides dental treatment for eligible Veterans in a number of programs: The Dom, Grant and Per Diem, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (contract bed), and Community Residential Care. Contact the manager of any eligible program or the Health Care for Homeless Veterans program manager for more details.

For information regarding Dental Service, please call: **205-554-2000 x-2262**
Dental Clinic Hours: 8:00am - 4:00pm

Wellness

Table Of Contents: Wellness

A Mindful Approach to Wellness

Fitness Center

MOVE!

Nutrition

Recreation Therapy

Smoking Cessation

Wellness, A Mindful Approach

Click the diamonds to find wellness help and opportunities at VA

Click for additional community resource pages

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Table of Contents

Enrollment & Eligibility
Mental Health
Primary Care
Wellness
Elder Services
Research
Points Of Interest

Fitness Center

Gymnasium: Visit our gymnasium for a variety of fitness and wellness programs including individualized exercise programs, cardio/ universal weight equipment instruction, and our basketball league. Programs are based on veteran interest and availability.

Therapeutic Pool: The benefits of an aquatic therapy program are numerous, the potential include help with pain management, joint problems or individuals with difficulty engaging in a land-based program. Aquatic therapy can be useful for pain management, relaxation, reducing edema, increasing circulation and cardio capacity, reducing weight, increasing flexibility, strength, endurance, and motivation to work on goals. Engaging in aquatic exercise enables opportunities for independent movement, social interaction, and success in reaching fitness/wellness goals. Pool temperatures are maintained between 85-92 degrees for therapeutic benefits.

GYM HOURS*

Sunday	Closed
Monday	8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Thursday	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Friday	8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Saturday	Closed

Gym Phone: (205)554-2000 ext. 2602; 2646

POOL HOURS*

Sunday	Closed
Monday	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Thursday	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Friday	Closed
Saturday	Closed

Pool Phone: (205)554-2000 ext. 3554;2506

*Please call ahead to check gym and pool hours as times are subject to change especially during holidays and changing weather conditions.

**Veterans must have Tuscaloosa VAMC physician clearance to utilize the gym and pool.
Questions regarding the gym and pool should be directed to:
205-554-2000 ext. 2506/3554/2707/2502/2646

MOVE!

MOVE!® is a weight management program for Veterans who want to lose weight and improve their health.

The Tuscaloosa VAMC offers:

Group weight management classes

Individual nutrition and behavioral health psychology assistance

TeleMOVE! including

Home Messaging which provides daily written messages using a device connected to your home phone.

Interactive Voice Response which provides audio coaching messages using your home or cellular phone.

Both versions of TeleMOVE! are supported by a Care Coordinator who will monitor your progress and call you as needed.

If you are interested, talk with your health care team. They will schedule an orientation session where you will learn more about the MOVE! weight management program and determine which participation options work best for you. There you will set your weight loss goals and begin to identify your specific plans for increasing activity and decreasing calorie intake.

You are encouraged to complete the **MOVE!11 Questionnaire**. You will be given a paper copy or you can complete it **online**. You will receive a personalized report based on your answers to help identify your specific needs. Bring this report to discuss at your next primary care visit.

For more information, speak with your primary care team, visit **www.move.va.gov**, or call the MOVE! Coordinator at **205-554-2000 x-3492**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Table of Contents

Nutrition

Nutritional Services are available for inpatient and outpatient Veterans. Our dedicated outpatient dietitians provide nutrition education on a variety of topics, including:

Good Nutrition
Therapeutic Diets
Weight Management
Diabetes Self-Management
MOVE!

Contact your Primary Care Provider for a referral or call Nutrition Services **205-554-2000 ext. 3810**

Recreational Therapy

Recreation Therapy is designed to restore, remediate and rehabilitate a person's level of functioning and independence in life activities, to promote health and wellness as well as reduce or eliminate the activity limitations and restrictions to participation in life situations caused by an illness or disabling condition.

Recreation offerings include:

- Shuffleboard & Spades Tournaments
- BINGO
- Chess & Crochet Classes
- Pool & Ping Pong Tournaments
- Dances
- Pet Therapy
- Individualized Therapy
- Community Reintegration

The recreation therapy staff members in our Community Living Centers and inpatient mental health program are here to provide and help Veterans create daily meaningful leisure opportunities. Veterans have the chance to engage in programs from group sing-alongs to community integration trips. Residents can speak to the unit secretary to find out who your recreation therapist is.

To get involved call **Irene Thomas at 205-554-2000 ext. 2580** or email the Irene.thomas@va.gov

Smoking Cessation

Thinking of Quitting?

Did you know that you can double your chances of successfully quitting by…

Using medications to help you deal with withdrawal symptoms and smoking urges?
Getting expert counseling to help you quit and prevent relapsing after you quit?

Smoking Cessation Counseling offers support, coping skills, and coordination of smoking cessation medications using:

- Individual counseling
- Telephone counseling
- Evaluations for smoking cessation aids including medication

Veterans Smoking Cessation Drop In Group offered for those interested in quitting or those who need additional support before, during and after quitting

For more information, speak with your primary care team or contact the Smoking Cessation Program at 205-554-2000 ext. 4196

Table of Contents: Geriatrics and Extended Care

Caregiver Program
Post 9/11 Caregivers

Community Living Centers (CLCs)

GERIATRIC EVALUATION MANAGEMENT (GEM)

Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC)

Home Health Aide Services

Hospice and Palliative Care

Respite

Skilled Nursing Care

Caregiver Program

VA has a number of services designed specifically to support you in your role as a Family Caregiver. VA values your commitment as a partner in our pledge to care for those who have "borne the battle," and we have several support and service options designed with you in mind. The programs are available both in and out of your home to help you care for the Veteran you love and for yourself.

Caregiver Support Coordinator

Your local Caregiver Support Coordinator is a licensed professional who can support you by matching you with services for which you are eligible, and providing you with valuable information about resources that can help you stay smart, strong and organized as you care for the Veteran you love. Below are links or descriptions of various services available to Family Caregivers of Veterans.

General Caregiver Support is designed for veterans who served prior to September 11, 2001 and require assistance with their everyday living skills i.e. bathing, dressing, mobility, eating etc.. There is no formal application process required for benefits in this program.

Comprehensive Family Caregiver Support is designed for veterans who served in the military after September 11, 2001 and who were seriously injury in the line of duty requiring assistance with their daily care needs. Caregivers under this program are required to complete an application process to determine their administrative and clinical eligibility.

You can learn additional information about resources, eligibility criteria and benefits offered by the programs above HERE

You may also contact the Veterans Primary Care Social Worker or by calling the Caregiver Support office at **205.554.2000 ext. 3415.**

Whether you are new to family caregiving or looking for fresh tips and resources, VA has created a **Caregiver Tool Box** to help you find tools that work for you. This online toolkit offers resources and information to help you stay on top of things and manage the daily stresses of family caregiving. Features include: Care Sheets by Diagnosis, Everyday Tips and Checklists, Staying Organized, RESCUE Website for Caregivers of Veterans who have had a stroke.

Caregiver Support Line

CAREGIVER SUPPORT LINE
1-855-260-3274

Our sole purpose is to help you – the wife or husband, mother or father, sister or brother, daughter or son, or loving family member or friend – who cares for a Veteran. VA's Caregiver Support Line has licensed caring professionals standing by. We can:

- Tell you about the assistance available from VA.
- Help you access services and benefits.
- Connect you with your local family Caregiver Support Coordinator at a VA medical center near you.

Just listen, if that's what you need right now.

VA's Caregiver Support Line Call toll-free to 1-855-260-3274
Monday- Friday 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m. ET, Saturday 10:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. ET

Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers of Post 9/11 Veterans

Under the "Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010," additional VA services are now available to seriously injured post-9/11 Veterans and their Family Caregivers through a new program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. VA is now accepting applications for these services.

Who Is Eligible?

Veterans eligible for this program are those who sustained a serious injury – including traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma or other mental disorder – incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, on or after September 11, 2001. Veterans eligible for this program must also be in need of personal care services because of an inability to perform one or more activities of daily living and/or need supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological impairment or injury.

To be eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, Veterans must first be enrolled for VA health services, if not enrolled previously.

Services Available to Family Caregivers through this Program

The law will provide additional assistance to primary Family Caregivers of eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Servicemembers.

Services for this group include:

Monthly stipend
Travel expenses (including lodging and per diem while accompanying Veterans undergoing care)
Access to health care insurance (if the Caregiver is not already entitled to care or services under a health care plan)
Mental health services and counseling
Comprehensive VA Caregiver training provided by Easter Seals
Respite care (not less than 30 days per year)

Contact 205-554-2000 ext. 3415

Community Living Centers (CLCs)

A Community Living Center (CLC) resembles "home" as much as possible. There are activities for Veterans of all ages. There are family friendly places for visiting. Veterans are invited to decorate their rooms, and pets are allowed to visit or live in the Community Living Center.

Veterans may stay for a short time or, in rare instances, for the rest of their life. Here Veterans can receive nursing home level of care, including help with activities of daily living (e.g., bathing and getting dressed) and skilled nursing and medical care. CLC home settings are available in Buildings 61 and 145.

The mission of the Community Living Center is to restore each Veteran to his or her highest level of well-being, to prevent declines in health and to provide comfort at the end of life.

Eligibility is based on clinical need and setting availability. The VA will provide Community Living Center (VA Nursing Home) care IF you meet certain **eligibility** criteria involving your service connected status, level of disability, and income.

Learn more at Va.gov or contact or call 205-554-2000 x-2374

Inpatient and Home Based Services

GERIATRIC EVALUATION MANAGEMENT: Our 31 day inpatient rehabilitation program is specifically designed to help service connected Veterans return to living an independent and active lifestyle as quickly as possible. Skilled physical, occupational, speech, and recreational therapists evaluate and treat Veterans to support maximum independence.

SKILLED NURSING CARE: The Skilled Home Care service provides a medical professional who comes to your home to help care for a homebound Veteran. Some of the care a Veteran can receive includes basic nursing services and physical, occupational, or speech therapies. To be eligible for this service, a Veteran must be homebound, which means he or she has difficulty traveling to and from appointments and so is in need of receiving medical services at home. The Skilled Home Care service is similar to Home-Based Primary Care, but it involves VA purchasing care for a Veteran from a licensed non-VA medical professional. We provide up to 90 days of 24 hour nursing, medical care, and assistance including; Clinical supervision and assistance, Medication Administration, monitoring and management, wound care, ostomy care, intravenous therapy and nutritional management and tube feedings.

RESPITE: If a Veteran requires a Caregiver, you are eligible to receive respite services. The care can be offered in a variety of settings including at your home or through temporary placement of a Veteran at a VA Community Living Center, a VA-contracted Community Residential Care Facility, or an Adult Day Health Care Center. Staying strong for your Veteran means staying strong yourself. Our goal is to provide family caregivers temporary relief from the routine daily care of their chronically ill or disabled Veteran at home. A planned respite admission begins on Thursday and may be from one to two weeks depending on the caregiver needs. Respite is not available on an emergency basis.

Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) Centers are a safe and active environment with constant supervision designed for Veterans to get out of the home and participate in activities. It is a time for the Veteran you care for to socialize with other Veterans while you, the Family Caregiver, get some time for yourself. ADHC Centers employ caring professionals who assess a Veteran's rehabilitation needs and help a Veteran accomplish various tasks so he or she can maintain or regain personal independence and dignity. The Veteran you care for will participate in rehabilitation based on his or her specific health assessment during the day (ADHC centers are generally open Monday through Friday during normal business hours). The ADHC Centers emphasize a partnership with you, the Veteran you care for and Centers' staff. **Tuscaloosa does not offer this service at this time**

Homemaker and Home Health Aide Program is designed to help a Veteran with personal care needs. Your local VA medical center can help arrange for a home health aide who will come to your home on a regular schedule to allow you time to take care of your own needs. Caring for yourself helps you stay strong for yourself and the Veteran you care for.

Memory and Aging Care Clinic (MACC) The MACC is a resource for Veterans and their families who are affected by memory-related concerns. The MACC is an interdisciplinary team that provides specialty care services focused on dementia and related disorders.

Social Work Service can assist you with referrals and eligibility requirements to these programs.
Call **205-554-2000 ext. 2418** to be directed to the appropriate program.

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)

HOME SAFE and SOUND

Home Based Primary Care is health care services provided to Veterans in their home. A VA physician supervises the health care team providing the services. Home Based Primary Care is for Veterans who have complex health care needs for whom routine clinic-based care is not effective. **The program's primary goal is to assist with management of health care needs and to support Veterans living safely at home.**

Home Based Primary Care is for Veterans who need skilled services, case management, and assistance with activities of daily living (e.g., bathing and getting dressed), or instrumental activities of daily living (e.g. fixing meals and taking medicines); are isolated or their caregiver is experiencing burden. Home Based Primary Care can be used in combination with other Home and Community Based Services.

Let us help you be *home safe and sound*. To learn more about the VA HBPC contact the HBPC Director **205-554-2000 x-3713**

Hospice and Palliative Care

Hospice is a comfort based form of care for Veterans who have a terminal condition with 6 months or less to live.

Palliative care is a form of treatment that emphasizes comfort care but does not require the Veteran have a terminal condition. Hospice is a comfort based form of care for Veterans who have a terminal condition with 6 months or less to live.

Since Hospice and Palliative Care are part of the VHA Standard Medical Benefits Package, all *enrolled Veterans* are eligible **IF they meet the clinical need for the service.** Copays are NOT charged for Hospice and Palliative Care, whether they are provided by the VA or an organization with a VA contract.

Hospice and Palliative Care provides treatment that relieves suffering and helps to control symptoms in a way that respects your personal, cultural, and religious beliefs and practices. Hospice also provides grief counseling to your family.

You and your family are assessed by a care team and a plan of care is developed to meet your medical, social, spiritual and psychological needs. This care is available to Veterans in their home, community, outpatient or inpatient settings.

Your physician or other primary care provider can answer questions about your medical needs. If Hospice or Palliative Care seems right for you, your VA social worker can help you locate and coordinate those services.

Become a Hospice Volunteer so that No Veteran Dies Alone

No Veteran Dies Alone is a volunteer program that provides the reassuring presence of a volunteer companion to dying patients who may otherwise be alone. Companions are able to help provide patients with a most valuable human gift: a dignified death.

For more information, contact
205-554-2000 x-2365

Research

The Research and Development conducts studies focused on geriatrics and extended care, PTSD, supported employment, depression, treatments of addictions and relapse prevention, health services, and other clinical treatment studies. The Tuscaloosa Research and Development service leads several national studies on implementing improved care in geriatric extended care settings and in vocational rehabilitation.

To find out more about Research throughout the VA, click here or contact or call **205-554-2000 x-1-2536 or 888-269-3045 x- 1-2536**

Points Of Interest

Table of Contents: Points of Interest

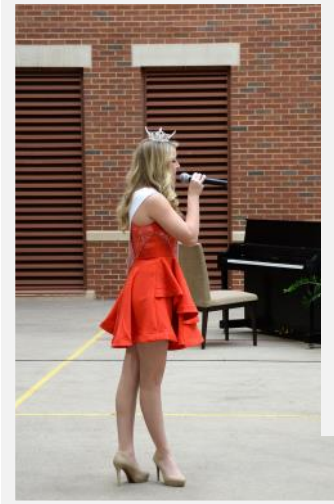
Annual Events
Chaplain Service
Community Links
Facebook and Frequently Dialed Numbers
Map Of Grounds
Patient Safety & Ethics
Patient Advocate
Public Affairs
Shuttle and Transportation
VA Careers
Volunteer or Give
Report Error in Guide
Mission

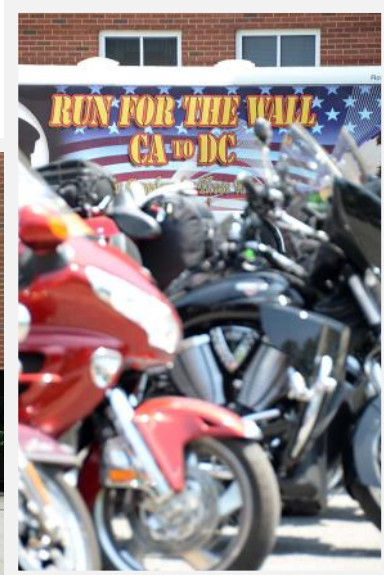
Annual Events

- Tuscaloosa VAMC/Tuscaloosa Co. PARA Memorial Day Program
- Alabama All Veterans Reunion Weekend
- Run For the Wall
- Annual Walk and Roll
- VFW Post 6022 POW Remembrance Ceremony
- Black History Month Program
- Stand Down
- Veteran Job Fair
- National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans

..many more!

For more information on annual events, contact **205-554-2000 ext. 3015**





Chaplain Service

Mission Statement: Honor America's veterans by integrating the spiritual dimension of health into all aspects of patient care while protecting the patients' free exercise of religion.

Scope of Service: The ministry of Chaplain Service encompasses a full range of patient care activities. This includes a ministry of spiritual and religious support through pastoral care, counseling, ward visitation, sacramental rites and chapel services. As well as Hospice/Palliative Care and Homeless Veterans Services. Chaplain Service contributes in an active collaborative effort to the Medical Center's concept of clinical pastoral care and holistic health.

Services Chaplains Provide

- We are a resource for help with Ethical issues. Serving on Ethics Council/Committees, Treatment Teams
- We provide inspirational reading material on a variety of subjects.
- We provide Holy Communion and Sacramental ministry, both at the bedside and in the Chapel.
- We provide for the anointing of the sick or bed-side pastoral prayer.
- We provide a weekly Spiritual Group on various units
- We provide Ministry to families during end-of-life care and in times of grief.
- We are a resource for help with the PTSD Team and Moral Injury.
- Provide resources for Pastoral and marriage counseling to individual Veterans and family members.

Worship Schedule (Chapel-Building 46):

General Protestant Service (Sunday at 9:00am)
Catholic Rosary Service (Wednesday at 10:00am)
Catholic Mass (Third Fridays at 10:00am)

Unit worship services are provided throughout the week

Chief Chaplain
205-554-2000 x- 4230

Chaplain (CPE Supervisor)
205-554-2000 x-6555

Staff Chaplain (CLC)
205-554-2000

Staff Chaplain
(Mental Health)
205-554-2000 x-2985

Staff Chaplain (RRTP)
205-554-2000 x-2985

Secretary, Chaplain Services
205-554-2000 x-6561

Click HERE for more information on how VA Chaplain Services can help you.

Community/National Links

Tuscaloosa Mental Health Alliance

Tuscaloosa Mental Health Alliance

Military One Source

www.vetcenter.va.gov

American Red Cross

PVA

Southeastern Chapter

Still Serving Veterans

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration

Small Business Association (SBA)

Social Security Administration

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

DAV

Veterans Rehabilitation and Education

Narcotics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous

Stay Connected!

Like us on Facebook!

Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center

Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center Phone Directory

Quick Reference to Frequently Dialed Numbers

Observed Federal Holidays

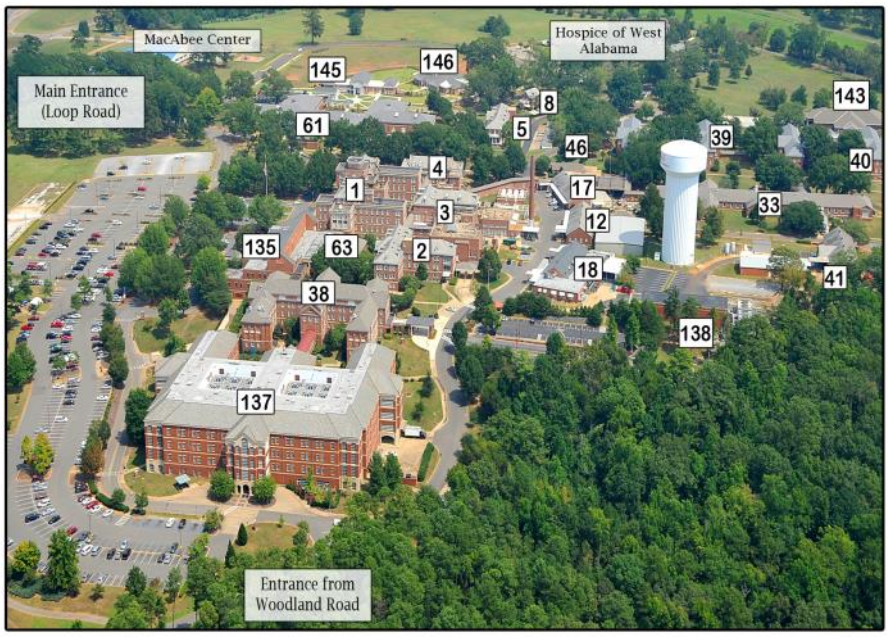
Clinics are closed on the observed Federal Holidays below:

New Years Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday	Columbus Day
Washington's Birthday	Veterans Day
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
Independence Day	Christmas Day

Find updated listing of dates here

Map of Grounds

Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Site Map



Building Number/Floor/Service Department

1 Basement: Optometry, Dental, Speech, Pathology, Audiology
1st Floor: Patient Advocate, Voluntary Services, DAV, Release of Information, Primary Care & GEC Administrative Offices
2nd Floor: Health Administration Services, Billing
3rd Floor: Resource Management Service, Human Resources, Mental Health Administration, Employee Health, Medical Media
4th Floor: Education Department

2 Ground Floor: Credit Union, Compensation & Pension Offices
1st & 2nd Floors: Outpatient Mental Health Clinics

3 Ground Floor: EMS Offices, Electric Shop, Boiler Plant, Emergency Ops
1st Floor: Research & Development Offices, SPS
2nd Floor: OI&T Offices

4 Ground Floor: Home-Based Primary Care
1st Floor: Auditorium

5 Basement: Contracting, CAM Offices
1st Floor: A&MMS, VISN 7 Offices
2nd Floor: Engineering Service, Safety Office, Interior Design

8 Sunrise Center- Hospice of West Alabama

12 Warehouse

17 Engineering Maintenance Shops

18 Laundry

33 Valor Grove Mission for Homeless

38 Ground Floor: Canteen, Retail Store, Prosthetics, Physical Therapy
1st & 2nd Floors: Primary Care Clinics, Women's Clinic

39 Basement: OI&T Offices, AFGE Union Offices

40 Basement: OIT Offices, Child Care Center
1st Floor: OIT Offices
2nd Floor: VISN 7 Travel Offices

41 Grounds/Garage

46 Chapel

61 Community Living Centers (CLC)

63 Ground Floor: Agent Cashier, Patient Education Center
1st Floor: Director's Office

135 Basement: Police Service, Quality Management Service
Ground Floor: AOD, Specialty Clinics, Pharmacy, Transition Center
1st Floor: Laboratory, Radiology, EKG, Respiratory

137 1st Floor: Rehab, Psychology, Print Shop, MHICM, Genesis
2nd Floor: Community Living Centers
3rd Floor: Mental Health Units
4th Floor: MHRRTP/HCHV

143 Nutrition & Food Service

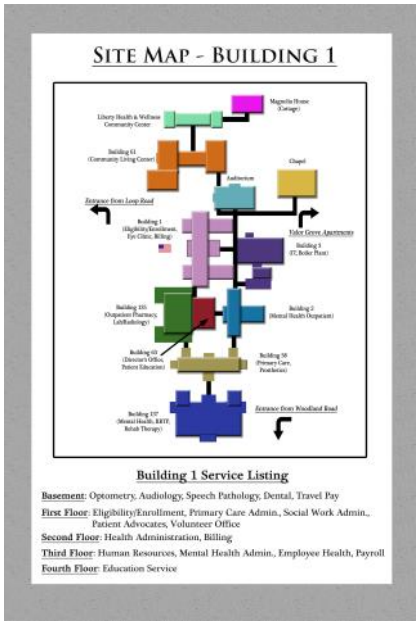
145 Liberty Health & Wellness Center

146 Community Living Center-Magnolia House

March 2014

Location Maps

Individual PDFs for each building can be downloaded and printed to help you find your way from each connected building in the medical center. Click HERE to download.



Patient Safety

The Patient Safety Office encourages the reporting of all incidents and safety concerns. Whether it is an actual event or a close call, we want to know about it so that we can make every attempt to prevent any harm from occurring.
In addition to the electronic incident reporting system, there is an anonymous hotline where you can leave information without fear of reprisal.
Your anonymity is guaranteed by law!

NCPS
VA National Center for Patient Safety
Safer Systems • Safer Care

The Patient Safety Hotline
205-554-2000 ext. 2265
anonymous reporting guaranteed

Learn more about
National Patient Safety!

Patient Safety

Ethics

Do you have a question about Ethics?
Do you have a situation that involves
a decision between two "right options?

Ethics Consultation is a service provided by specially trained VA staff. When there is an uncertainty or conflict about the right thing to do, ethics consultants work with patients, families and staff to help them make good decisions to resolve these concerns.

The Patient Safety Hotline
205-554-2000 ext. 2265
anonymous reporting guaranteed

IntegratedEthics

Ethics

Learn more about
Integrated Ethics in VA!

Patient Advocate

The Tuscaloosa VA Patient Advocate serves as a point of contact to Veterans facing issues with their care. At the Tuscaloosa VAMC, we employee a Service Level Advocate Program to meet our Veterans needs at the unit/service level. If at any time you experience issues that cannot be Resolved on a service level, you are encouraged to contact our Lead Patient Advocate. The Patient Advocate also provide Notary Services, free of charge, to our Veterans.

Susan Higgins, Lead Patient Advocate
O-205-554-2957
C-205-534-1063
F-205-554-3657

Lead Patient Advocate

Tours, News, Events & Media

Ready to be of assistance, Public Affairs is here to share information and to support your interest in our programing, subject matter experts, ground breaking research, tours and events. This office will support and assist members of the media with:

- Fact sheets and statistical information
- Interviews
- Photographs and digital images
- Responses to stories in the media
- Special Events
- Subject matter experts

** Please note media outlets requesting interviews or filming will require lead time to secure approvals.

The Office of Public Affairs is the designated Congressional point of contact. How can Public Affairs serve you?

Email Public Affairs Office damon.stevenson@va.gov
or call **205-554-2000 ext.3015**

Public Affairs Officer

Find out the latest news about the Department of Veterans Affairs !

Here

Veterans Transportation Service

Assisting Veterans who lack the transportation resources needed to make it to appointments here at the Medical Center as well as Tuscaloosa VAMC Veterans who need transportation to the Birmingham VA Medical Center.

Now Offering!

Beginning August 3, 2016, the TVAMC VTS Program will be initiating a new transportation shuttle service. We are starting a dedicated shuttle service from the Selma CBOC to the Birmingham BVAMC and to the Tuscaloosa VAMC. The shuttle will be transporting Veterans to their VA medical appointments at both facilities . The shuttle bus can accommodate 10 passengers plus two wheelchair passengers.

Schedule	Times	From	To	Return Time
Wednesdays	6:30 am	Selma CBOC	Birmingham VAMC	4:30 pm
Thursdays	6:30 am	Selma CBOC	Tuscaloosa VAMC	4:30 pm

The shuttle will depart the Selma CBOC at 6:30am, and return at approximately 4:30pm, or whenever the last patient is seen. The shuttle will continue to provide VTS trips on Mondays and Tuesdays

Contact the Selma CBOC at 334-418-4975, their social worker, or Stephen Bates at 2334.

Call **205-554-2000 ext. 2334** to reserve seating.

OTHER LOCAL TRANSPORTATION:
Tuscaloosa Trolley

Tuscaloosa Trolley V.A./University Mall Route

VA Careers

I'm not just a mental health professional.

I'm helping Veterans build fuller, richer lives.

As a Department of Veterans Affairs employee and an Olympic medal winner, I know the real champions are those who have served this country. And so does VA. Want to learn more? Visit **VAcareers.va.gov**

Natalie Dell, VA Project Coordinator

Olympian medalist, Natalie Dell attributed her flexible work schedule at VAMC as being instrumental in helping her to reach her Olympic dreams. Learn how to join our diverse and exceptional team.

Visit **VAcareers.va.gov** to learn about exciting opportunities to serve our nation's heroes.

CANTEEN

Monday-Friday

Patriot Store
8:00am-4:00pm

Patriot Cafe
7::30am-2:30pm

Saturday
7:30am-1:00pm

Contact Canteen Chief at

205-554-2000 x- 2250

Volunteer or Give

Tuscaloosa VAMC benefits from the services of over 310 individual volunteers each year. Multiple volunteers are on duty each day helping to make this a health care center of excellence. We are seeking assistance from volunteers of all ages and life experiences to support Veterans here at TVAMC.

There are a wide variety of Volunteer Opportunities available to suit your individual interests during the day, evenings and weekends. Some examples for volunteering include support at the Veteran Information Desk, Greenhouse, Escorting Veterans to events and Chapel services, office administration, drivers, Adopt a Veteran or a ward programs, support recreational activities, and to share coffee with our Veterans.

Volunteer opportunities are great and the needs are ever-evolving. For more information please call Volunteer Service at **205-554-2000 x-2653**

Donating just got easier!

The Tuscaloosa VAMC Resource Guide for Veterans and their Families...

seeks to be up-to-date on all of the information contained within the guide.

If you spot an error in this guide,
please contact Medical Media
at 205-554-2000 x-2413 or x-2409
Or the Public Affairs Office
At 205-554-2000 x-3828

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

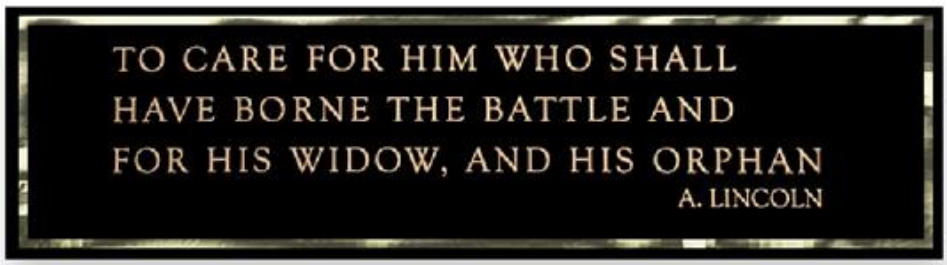
Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Table of Contents

Our Mission

Our Servicemembers and Veterans have sacrificed to keep our country - and everything it represents - safe.

We honor and serve those men and women by fulfilling President Lincoln's promise "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan."

We strive to provide Servicemembers and Veterans with the world-class benefits and services they have earned, and will adhere to the highest standards of compassion, commitment, excellence, professionalism, integrity, accountability, and stewardship.

Thank you for your service.
Now let us serve you.