Department of Veterans Affairs **VHA NOTICE 2025-04**
Veterans Health Administration
Washington, DC 20420 **August 8, 2025**

COMMUNITY NURSING HOME PROGRAM

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) notice replaces VHA Notice 2023-07, Community Nursing Home Program, dated September 5, 2023, which expired on September 30, 2024.

1. PURPOSE

By direction of the Office of the Under Secretary for Health, this VHA notice maintains existing interim policy while a new Community Nursing Home (CNH) directive is being prepared. This VHA notice addresses nursing home mandatory and discretionary eligibility under all purchasing authorities and eligibility for the Community Nursing Home Program (CNHP) under the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) MISSION Act of 2018, P.L. 115-182. It also provides quality expectations for Nursing Homes (NH) participating in CNHP. In addition, this VHA notice addresses the use of CNHs to provide respite and hospice care, traveling and permanently relocating Veterans, and copayments for CNH care. Each CNHP is required to have a dedicated VA medical facility CNH Program Coordinator who oversees and participates in the quality oversight and administrative functions of the CNHP.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY NURSING HOME CARE

To be eligible for CNH care, a Veteran must:

a. Be eligible for nursing home care from VA (see paragraph 3) and

b. Meet the requirements for CNH care (see paragraph 4).

3. ELIGIBILITY FOR CARE IN A COMMUNITY NURSING HOME

a. **Mandatory Eligibility.** Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. § 1710A, VA is required to furnish necessary nursing home care, under all purchasing authorities, when clinically indicated, to the following:

(1) Any Veteran in need of nursing home care for a service-connected (SC) disability.

(2) Any Veteran in need of nursing home care who has a single or combined SC disability rating of 70% or greater. This includes Veterans with a single disability rated 60% but has a total disability rating of 70% or greater based on individual unemployability.

b. **Discretionary Eligibility (As Resources Allow).** VA may, in its discretion, authorize nursing home care for Veterans in need of this level of care who are not

covered in paragraph 3.a. above. ***NOTE:*** *If VA places a Veteran described in paragraph 3.b. in a CNH at VA expense, that placement may not exceed 6 months per episode. The VA medical facility Director may authorize an extension of no more than 45 calendar days for circumstances described in 38 C.F.R. § 17.60. Veterans who are terminally ill and have a life expectancy medically determined to be less than 6 months are not subject to the 45 calendar-day limitation.*

4. ELIGIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY CARE

To receive CNH care, Veterans eligible for nursing home care under paragraph 3 must also satisfy one of the below eligibility criteria for the Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP) established by the VA MISSION Act of 2018 (38 C.F.R. § 17.4000 et seq.):

a. The Veteran needs a service that is not available at VA.

b. The Veteran resides in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility (Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands).

c. The Veteran has temporary grandfathered eligibility under the expired Veterans Choice Program because the Veteran was eligible under the distance criteria under the Veterans Choice Program on the day before the VA MISSION Act was enacted into law (June 6, 2018) and continues to reside in a location that would qualify the Veteran under the Veteran Choice Program and lives in one of the five states with the lowest population (North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Alaska, or Wyoming).

d. The Veteran and the Veteran's referring health care provider determine it is in the best medical interest of the Veteran, for the purpose of achieving improved clinical outcomes, to access the care or services the Veteran requires from an eligible entity or health care provider, based on one or more of the factors outlined in 38 C.F.R. § 17.4010(a)(5).

e. The Veteran needs care from a VA medical service line that VA determines is not providing care that complies with VA’s quality standards.

NOTE: *The designated access standards under MISSION eligibility described in the above MISSION regulations do not apply to institutional extended care services which includes community nursing home placements.*

NOTE: *VA medical service lines that are designated as underperforming to give effect to this particular eligibility are announced in Federal Register Notices as applicable. VHA cannot utilize this eligibility criterion unless and until such Federal Register Notices announce underperforming VA medical service lines.*

5. RESPITE CARE IN A COMMUNITY NURSING HOME

When respite care in a CNH is clinically indicated, the care must be provided as part

of the medical benefits package, 38 C.F.R. § 17.38. This care may be provided in a VA Community Living Center or in a CNH if VCCP eligibility is met.

6. EXTENDED CARE COPAYMENTS

a. Veterans receiving care in CNHs may be responsible for extended care copayments. See 38 C.F.R. § 17.111(b)(1) or Community Care National Portal Chapter 7.5, Copayments for Extended Care Services, for VA's guidance on extended care copayments.

b. Guidance related to VA copayments can be found on the Office of Community Care's Knowledge Management web portal at: https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en%20US/portal/554400000001031/content/554400000069139/Chapter%206.%20Applications%20%20and%20Copayments%20for%20Extended%20Care%20Services. ***NOTE:*** *This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

c. Procedural guidance can be found on the Member Services' Knowledge Management web portal at: https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en%20-US/portal/554400000001046/content/554400000048948/Long-Term-CarePrograms?query=%22long%20term%20care%22. ***NOTE:*** *This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

7. QUALITY EXPECTATIONS FOR COMMUNITY NURSING HOMES

a. To participate in VA's CNHP through local contracts or Veterans Care Agreements (VCAs), NHs are expected to have either (1) a three- to five-star overall rating, or (2) a two-star overall rating with a four-star or greater quality measures score on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) Nursing Home Compare website (https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/search.html). NHs that sign a VCA must also meet VA's credentialing and certification standards.

b. NHs with lower scores may participate in the CNHP only when a specific need is identified by the VA medical facility CNH Program Coordinator and participation is approved by the Chief Operating Officer or designee (e.g., the Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) Director or VISN Rehabilitation Extended Care Integrated Clinical Community Lead). Waiver approval must be obtained prior to placement of Veterans in the CNH.

c. All NHs in the CNHP must be certified by CMS under Title XVIII (Medicare) or Title XIX (Medicaid) or have received special approval from the Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care. NHs are responsible to the state of jurisdiction and CMS for the care provided. VA does not regulate the care or inspect CNHs. VA acts as an informed purchaser of care to purchase quality services for Veterans and enhance the Veterans' experience in the home.

d. The VA medical facility CNH Program Licensed Social Worker, Registered Nurse,

or other licensed clinical staff responsible for the catchment area where the CNH is located must conduct quality oversight activities to ensure the quality of care and safety of CNHP-enrolled Veterans through:

(1) Initial and Annual CNH Facility Assessments utilizing the required Facility Assessment form and following CNHP guidelines located in the Office of Integrated Veteran Care (IVC) Field Guidebook.

(2) On-site Veteran Assessment Visits a minimum of every 45 calendar days or as identified by the CNHP guidelines located in the IVC Field Guidebook. Visits must be documented utilizing the standardized CNH Resident Assessment note templates. The IVC Field Guidebook is available at, https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001031/topic/554400000023630/05-IVC-Field-Guidebook.
NOTE: *This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

8. COORDINATION. When a VA medical facility makes a CNH placement outside its primary service area or catchment area, the referring VA medical facility pays for the first 100 calendar days of care, unless arranged specifically otherwise in advance with the receiving VA medical facility. If the need for CNH care continues beyond 100 calendar days, the receiving VA medical facility is responsible for payment.

9. COMMUNITY NURSING HOME PROGRAM COORDINATOR. It is a CNHP requirement that each VA medical facility have a dedicated VA medical facility CNH Program Coordinator who oversees and participates in the quality oversight and administrative functions of the CNHP.

10. POLICY OWNER: The Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (12GEC) is responsible for the content of this VHA notice. Questions may be addressed to VHA Purchased LTSS Support Group at VHAPurchasedLTSSSupportGroup@va.gov.

11. REFERENCES

a. P.L. 115-182.

b. 38 U.S.C. § 1710A.

c. 38 C.F.R. §§ 17.38; 17.57 – 17.60;17.111(b)(1); 17.4000 et seq.

d. IVC Field Guidebook.
https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001031/topic/554400000023630/05-IVC-Field-Guidebook.
NOTE: *This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

e. Member Services' Knowledge Management web portal at:
https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en%20-US/portal/554400000001046/content/554400000048948/Long-Term-CarePrograms?query=%22long%20term%20care%22. ***NOTE:*** *This is an internal VA*

website that is not available to the public.

f. Member Services' Knowledge Management web portal at: https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en%20US/portal/554400000001031/content/554400000069139/Chapter%206.%20Applications%20%20and%20Copayments%20for%20Extended%20Care%20Services.
NOTE: *This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

g. CMS Nursing Home Compare website https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/search.html.

12. This VHA notice will expire and be archived on August 31, 2026.

BY DIRECTION OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH:

/s/ Mark A. Koeniger, MD
Acting Assistant Under Secretary for Health
for Patient Care Services, VHA

DISTRIBUTION: Emailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List on August 8, 2025.