



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

NEWS RELEASE

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Pittsburgh Veterans' Hospitals Implement Further Measures to Protect Veterans and Staff from COVID-19

While the Centers for Disease Control still considers COVID-19 to be a low threat to the general American public, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System is paying special attention to it.

As part of this process, everyone who enters the campus will be pre-screened. This may lengthen entry times, so patients are advised to allow for that when arriving for their appointments.

The screening consists of three questions:

1. Do you have a fever or worsening cough or shortness of breath or flu-like symptoms?
2. Have you or a close contact traveled to an area with widespread or sustained community transmission of COVID-19 within 14 days of symptom onset?
3. Have you been in close contact with someone, including health care workers, confirmed to have COVID-19?

Per CDC guidance and VA protocols, individuals known to be at risk for a COVID-19 infection are immediately isolated to prevent potential spread to others.

Veterans and staff are encouraged to take everyday preventive actions to avoid being exposed to the virus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you are sick or becoming sick.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- If you have symptoms or have been exposed to someone with symptoms, call the VA before going to the facility.

UNIVERSITY DRIVE CAMPUS, OAKLAND UPDATES

Beginning March 12, all University Drive entrants – Veterans, staff, visitors, vendors and contractors – will access the medical facility through the first-floor parking garage or the building 29 atrium (two loading docks and the emergency department ambulance entrance will be available as appropriate). All other entrances to University Drive will be closed.

Visiting hours for University Drive inpatients is 1 to 8 p.m., restricted to one visitor only and no one under 16 may visit. Visitors may only see one patient when they visit and should stay at home if they have a cough, cold or feel sick, and should clean their hands before and after visits.

H.J. HEINZ III CAMPUS, O'HARA TOWNSHIP UPDATES

All entrants must enter through building 71 to undergo screening. There will be an additional point of screening that will operate from Monday at 6 a.m. through Friday at midnight only. Only people with business in buildings 50 and 51, Veterans with appointments, and family members and designated caregivers of Veterans in hospice or palliative care units are permitted in buildings 50 and 51.

While we have also temporarily paused large group activities and offsite trips for CLC residents, our staff is working hard to bring activities and entertainment to each CLC unit. Religious services at both campus chapels and events at the Fisher House at University Drive have also been paused.

Volunteer support has been temporarily paused at both campuses, with the exception of DAV drivers bringing patients for appointments.

Veterans experiencing fever, cough, or shortness of breath, should call 412-360-6000 and select option 3 to speak to a nurse before visiting the facility.

Veterans can also use virtual care options such as [Telehealth](#) or [MyHealtheVet Secure Messaging](#).

More information for Veterans is here: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/72615/vas-recommendations-help-slow-covid-19-virus/>

For more information about the Coronavirus, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

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About VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (VAPHS) is one of the largest and most progressive VA health care systems in the nation. More than 4,000 employees serve nearly 80,000 veterans every year, providing a range of services from complex transplant medicine to routine primary care. VAPHS is a leader in virtual care delivery through telehealth technology; a center of research and learning with 116 research investigators and \$17 million in funding; and a provider of state-of-the-art health care training to some 1,500 student trainees annually. VAPHS provides care at medical centers in Oakland and O'Hara Township in Pennsylvania and five outpatient clinics in Belmont County, Ohio, and Beaver, Fayette, Washington and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania. Veterans can call 412-360-6993 to check eligibility or enrollment. Stay up to date at pittsburgh.va.gov and facebook.com/vaphs