



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CAVHCS Reactivates Inpatient COVID-19 Unit

MONTGOMERY, AL – Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System reactivated its inpatient COVID-19 Unit Aug. 17. Our community's health care systems have seen a rise in COVID-19 admissions due to the Delta variant, which is highly transmissible among the unvaccinated.

Data shows that 80-90% of the current hospitalizations are among the unvaccinated in Alabama. On Aug. 23, 2021, CAVHCS scaled back certain outpatient clinic services to 50% face-to-face to support inpatient nursing need for COVID-19 patients. Currently, we are seeing the highest rate in six months, with the Delta variant causing most cases.

We have taken steps to minimize impact to other clinical operations but, to support inpatient COVID needs, certain nursing dependent services, including Primary Care, Ambulatory Care, Geriatrics and Extended Care, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services and Mental Health, will reduce to 50% face-to-face and 50% virtual after clinical assessment of needs.

Other clinics will remain at 100% face-to-face availability. Specialty Services will adjust the percentage of face-to-face visits based on the clinical need of our Veterans. Surgical service is working with nursing services to help support scheduled procedures, limiting non-urgent surgeries to outpatient surgeries.

VA prioritizes the safety of our Veterans and employees. During this time, visitors are only permitted for medical necessity and end-of-life care. However, allowing safe interactions through visitation or virtual options is vital for Veteran patients' support and well-being.

Visitation for CAVHCS Facilities

Essential Companions for Outpatient Veterans: One essential companion (**under the age of 18 is not permitted**) should be allowed if their in-person presence is necessary for the care or comfort of a Veteran receiving outpatient care. Examples include a family member taking a Veteran home after a procedure involving sedation, a caregiver required to provide bedside care for a Veteran due to the specifics of the Veteran's disability, or a chaperone helping a Veteran navigate the facility.

Restrictions:

- **No visitors under the age of 18 are permitted, including infants.**
- **No visitors will be allowed to wait in common areas (waiting rooms, vending areas, etc.).**

VHA is sensitive to the separation this restriction causes our patients and their loved ones, which keeps people safe. CAVHCS does not allow visitors for patients suspected of having the virus or who tested positive for COVID-19 to minimize the risk of transmission.

We urge our Veterans to accept virtual care appointments instead of face-to-face appointments for their safety, the safety of our staff and the community. These non-traditional, virtual care appointments include [VA Video Connect](#), [HealtheVet Secure Messaging](#), telehealth, telephone calls and video visits, which increases Veterans' convenience, access and comfort.

Updates regarding clinic operations will be available at www.centralalabama@va.gov or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/VACentralAlabama>.

About Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System

Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System exists to provide excellent services to Veterans across the continuum of health care. We take pride in providing delivery of timely quality care by staff members who demonstrate outstanding customer service; the advancement of health care through research; and the education of tomorrow's health care providers. Achieving the best possible outcomes for Veterans is our top priority. Stay connected with us on [Facebook](#).

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