



# New Volunteer Orientation

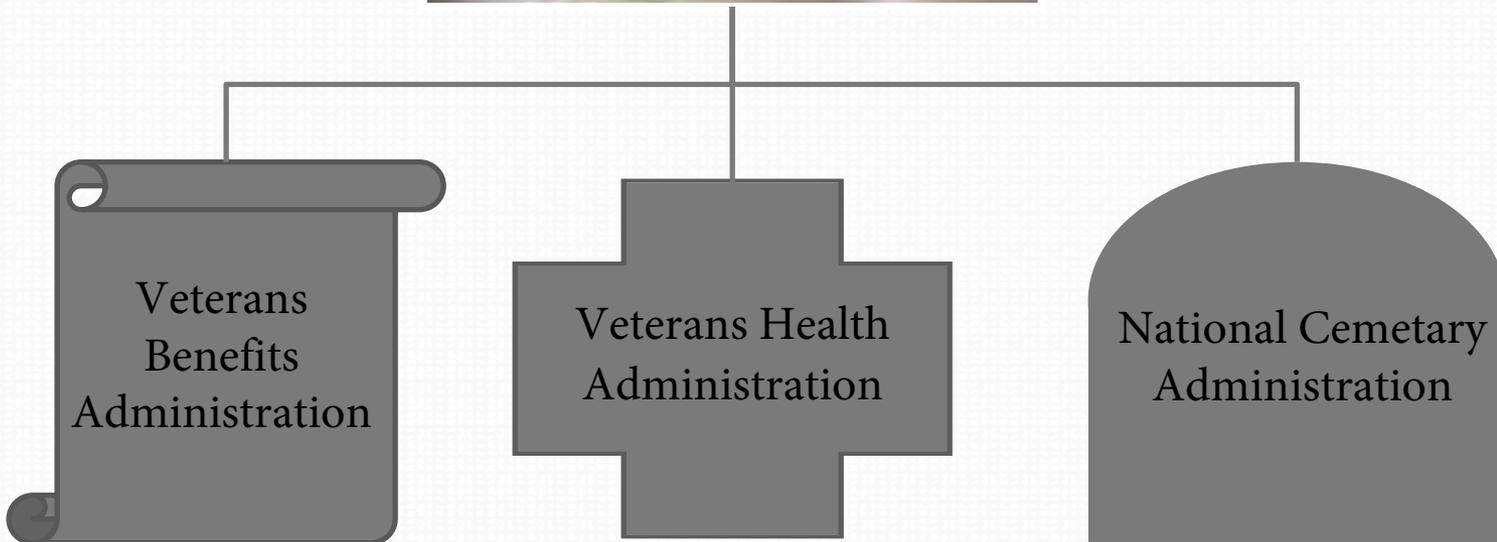
With the words, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan,” President Lincoln affirmed the government’s obligation to care for those injured during the war and to provide for the families of those who perished on the battlefield. Thank you for considering serving those who served.

While our primary mission is Honor America’s Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being, which makes volunteering here a little different from most hospitals. If you enjoy working in a health care environment and showing appreciation for those who bought your freedom through sacrifice, we know you will enjoy serving where the price of freedom is visible every day.

# Expectations

- Our program requires a 100 hour minimum commitment. If you cannot make this commitment, please STOP now and call or email us to talk about short-term needs.
- Talk to us if:
  - Your personal/work schedule changes and you need to change your Volunteer assignment or schedule.
  - You aren't enjoying your assignment. – We are happy to try to find something different (about 1 in 7 volunteers change assignments, so you won't be alone).
- **Follow the rules!** Note that most of what you'll find here are health care rules, not government rules and are designed for patient safety.

# VA Structure



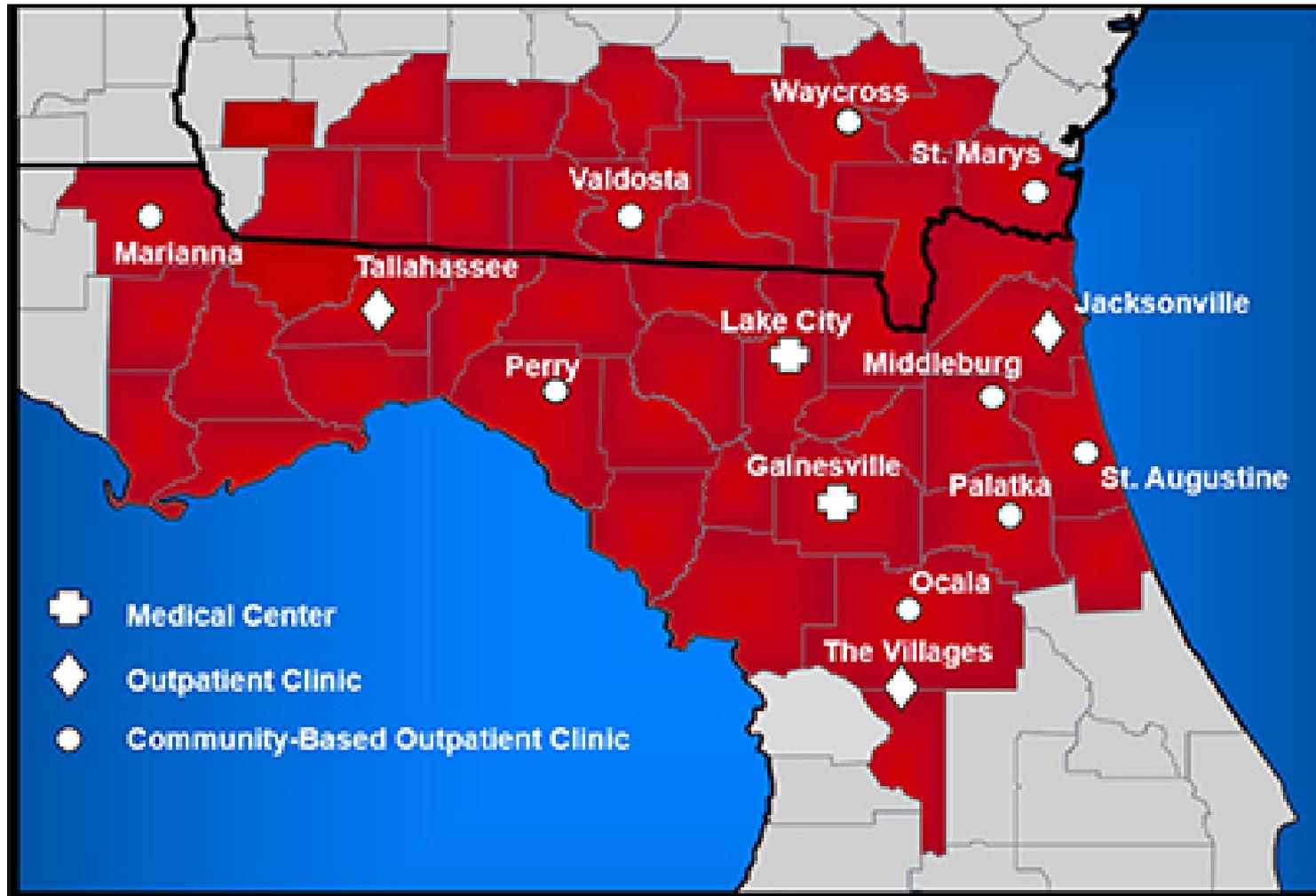
# VISN 8 Access Points



# North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System (NF/SGVHS) Executive Leadership

- David Isaacks, Director, NF/SGVHS
- Wende Dottor, Deputy Director, NF/SGVHS
- Ilona Schmalfluss, M.D., Chief of Staff, NF/SGVHS
- Chad Adams, Associate Director, Lake City VA Medical Center

# NF/SGVHS Access Points



# NF/SGVHS (Gainesville Office)

- Nicky Adams – Chief, Voluntary Service
- Paula Cummings – Voluntary Service Specialist
- Ulysses Aaron – Program Support Assistant
- Office Phone: (352) 548-6068
- Staff Email: [VHANFLVAVSStaff@va.gov](mailto:VHANFLVAVSStaff@va.gov)

# NF/SGVHS (Lake City Office)

- Robert Coon - Assistant Chief, Voluntary Service
- Cynthia "Cindy" Voltz - Voluntary Service Assistant
- Jacqueline Abernathy - Secretary
- Office Phone: (386) 755-3016 ext 392135
- Staff Email: [VHANFLVAVSStaff@va.gov](mailto:VHANFLVAVSStaff@va.gov)

# What does VA Voluntary Service Do?

- Recruiting, orienting and placing Volunteers within VA.
- Handles Volunteer human resource issues.
- Ensures Volunteer hours are logged into a timekeeping system.
- Coordinates group visits to inpatients.
- Hosts award Volunteer ceremonies.
- Accepts and records donations that directly benefit Veteran patients and their families.
- Hosts special events for the VA Medical Center, such as:  
Veterans Day Ceremony, POW/MIA Ceremony, and National Salute activities to honor Veterans.

# Types of Volunteers

Volunteers accepted into the VAVS Program are considered Without Compensation (WOC) employees. WOC precludes monetary payment, or any form of compensation by VA not authorized by policy.

- **Regularly Scheduled Volunteers:**  
Regularly Scheduled Volunteers are Volunteers that have been processed and issued an official VA ID badge. Regularly Scheduled Volunteers are given a specific assignment, have their Volunteer time tracked individually and are eligible for awards and recognition.
- **Occasional Volunteers:**  
Occasional Volunteers are typically Volunteers who do not volunteer on a regular basis. Occasional Volunteers do not have a specific assignment and are required to be accompanied by a Regularly Scheduled Volunteer or staff member at all times while on campus. Occasional Volunteer time is credited to the organization of their choosing and is not tracked individually.
- **Student (Youth) Volunteers - Ages 13 to 17.**

# Benefits of Volunteering with VA

- A meal voucher may be provided when Volunteering four or more hours a day when and where available.
- Tax free shopping at Canteen Service.
- Personal satisfaction from serving those who served.
- Free on-site training opportunities.
- Free flu shots, COVID vaccinations, screenings and other benefits.
- Recognition and award opportunities.
- Free use of the medical library.
- Social interaction with Veterans and other Volunteers.

# Volunteer Assignments

- Many Volunteer assignments are available based on interests and the needs of the Medical Center.
- Factors like age, background check results, and driving record may be dis-qualifiers for some assignments.
- Some virtual assignments are available. Inquire with Voluntary Service staff about availability.
- We work hard to find assignments that fit your interests and our needs – happy Volunteers keep volunteering!

# Tracking Hours

- Volunteers must sign-in before their tour begins using either the Voluntary Service computer kiosk or sign in sheet to record their hours.
- Locations without sign-in computers use sign in sheets. You will be shown where to sign in during your on site orientation.
- Log time in for virtual assignments as advised by your supervisor. You may reach out to Voluntary Service staff with any questions you may have.
- If you cannot find any other way to sign in, please leave a message on our voice mail:  
Gainesville (352) 548-6068  
Lake City (386)755-3016 ext. 392135  
or email us at: [VHANFLVAVSStaff@va.gov](mailto:VHANFLVAVSStaff@va.gov)

# Timekeeping Reminders

- Signing in is the first thing you will do before going to your assigned area to record your presence at the facility.
- There is only a sign-in, not a sign-out.
- Estimate the number of hours you plan to volunteer that day.
- If your estimate differs from actual, please do your best to make it up next time, or ask Voluntary Service staff to change it for you.
- If the computer is down, or you can't make it to one, use a sign-in sheet or contact us.
- Your Volunteer hours are tracked for awards, recognition and also to quantify the value of Volunteer contributions. Please make sure you sign in!
- If you are a member of more than one organization please specify/select the organization to receive credit.

# Parking

- Parking passes are issued upon completion of the on-boarding procedures. Check with Voluntary Service on your sites requirements.
- Limited Volunteer parking is available at each medical center site and is on a first come, first serve basis.
- Other sites have general parking.
- For additional parking information, contact the Voluntary Service office.

# Meal Vouchers

- Meal vouchers are available for Volunteers at the VA medical centers whom have logged four or more hours (excluding VA employees who also volunteer).
- Volunteers must present the meal voucher to receive a meal at the Canteen or coffee shop. The meal voucher has a value limit and if Volunteers exceed the limit, they will be responsible for the remainder. No change will be given and the meal voucher is only valid for food or drinks on the day you volunteer and is not transferable.
- Those Volunteers in Outpatient clinics will need to check their local policy.

# Background Investigations

- Background investigations are performed on ALL potential Volunteers prior to position assignment.
- Higher level background investigations are performed on Volunteers with assignments requiring computer access.
- Results are reviewed case by case. In most cases, minor offenses will not be a dis-qualifier. More serious offenses may limit Volunteer activity. For example, identity theft, drug charges and recent violent offenses may result in non-appointment.
- Volunteers under the age 18 will not have background investigations performed.
- Volunteers who turn 18 while volunteering will be fingerprinted and have a background investigation performed after they turn 18.

# Volunteer ID Cards

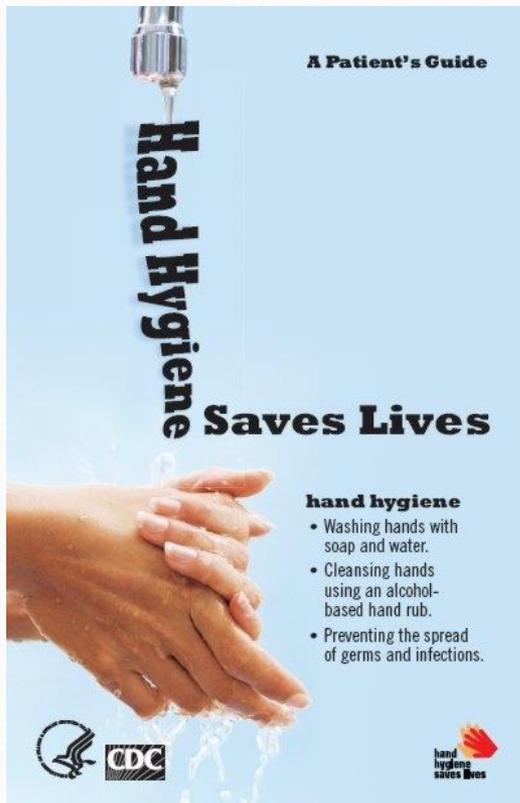
- Approved Volunteers have ID cards issued by the VA. Assignment and location dictate the specific type of badge that will be issued.
- Most badges will require background investigations that will need to be completed prior to badges being issued. This process may need to be completed all, or in part, at one of the two main medical centers. See Voluntary Service staff for more information on the current process.
- Local procedure will determine how Volunteers receive their badges at outpatient clinics.
- Volunteer ID's must be worn at all times while Volunteering at any VA facility and is not to be worn when off duty.
- ID badges are the property of the United States Government. You must turn your ID card into Voluntary Service if you stop Volunteering, or upon request.

# Infection Control

- Infection control practices include:
  - Sneezing or coughing into a tissue or upper sleeve, rather than into your hands; discard tissue into wastebasket and then clean your hands.
  - Avoiding patient contact when you have a respiratory infection or cold.
  - Staying home when you have symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, fever, skin rash, the flu, or any other symptoms.
  - Keeping appropriate vaccinations current (influenza, tetanus, etc.)

# Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the spread of germs and infections



Hand Washing Technique – Takes 20 seconds and includes the following steps:

1. Wet hands.
2. Apply soap.
3. Work up lather for 15 seconds.
4. Rinse hands.
5. Dry hands with paper towel.
6. Turn off water faucet with paper towel.

# Hand Hygiene

- You must wash your hands:
  - Before and after work shifts.
  - Before and after each contact with a patient or objects used by the patient (i.e. pushing wheelchairs or stretchers).
  - Before eating, drinking, or handling food.
  - After restroom use, smoking, eating, grooming, touching face, hair, money, etc.
  - Anytime your hands are dirty or may be contaminated.

# Hand Hygiene



- Alcohol sanitizers are effective and may be used instead of soap and water unless your hands are visibly soiled.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are located outside of each inpatient area and room as well as other common locations.

# Isolation Precaution

- Isolation precaution prevents the spread of infection among patients, hospital personnel, Volunteers, and visitors.
- Volunteers will not enter any patient's room that is marked with a precaution sign. Ask nursing staff for assistance if you have any questions.

**ENHANCED BARRIER PRECAUTIONS**



In the resident's bedroom, gloves and gowns required  
(Except when talking with a resident and there will be no physical contact)

**Respiratory**  
Private between whenever possible; may interact with other residents with same precautions.

**Gloves and Gown**  
In the resident's bedroom, gloves and gowns required, except when talking with a resident and there will be no physical contact.

**Hand Hygiene**  
Sanitize or wash hands before entering room, after removing gown/gloves and before leaving the room.

**Group activity participation/management**  
Residents are free to leave their rooms. They should perform hand hygiene when exiting their rooms. Notify nursing staff.

**Resident transport**  
Use appropriate equipment or vehicle or establish direct or supervised. Closing and disinfected all reusable medical equipment according to manufacturer's instructions between resident use.

**Visitors and Visitors**  
Visitors and visitors should be restricted and encouraged to perform hand hygiene upon entry and exit to a resident's bedroom. Signs and gloves are also required unless providing direct patient care.

**AIRBORNE PRECAUTIONS**  
(in addition to Standard Precautions)

**VISITORS: Report to nurse before entering.**

**Patient Placement**  
Use **private room** that has:  
• Monitored negative air pressure,  
• 6 to 12 air changes per hour,  
• Discharge of air outdoors or HEPA filtration if recirculated.  
**Keep room door closed and patient in room.**

**Respiratory Protection**  
Wear an **N95 respirator** when entering the room of a patient with known or suspected infectious pulmonary **tuberculosis**.  
**Susceptible** persons should not enter the room of patients known or suspected to have **measles** (rubella) or **varicella** (chickenpox) if other immune caregivers are available. If susceptible persons must enter, they should wear an **N95 respirator**. (Respirator or surgical mask not required if immune to measles and varicella.)

**Patient Transport**  
Limit transport of patient from room to essential purposes only.  
Use **surgical mask** on patient during transport.

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**COMPROMISED HOST PRECAUTIONS**  
VISITORS Must Report To Nurse's Station For Instructions Before Entering Room.

Hands must be washed before and after patient care.

1. PRIVATE ROOM- Physician's discretion
2. Masks- No
3. Gowns- No
4. Gloves- No
5. Personnel and Visitors:
  - Upper Respiratory Infection with fever- Do not enter
  - URI- without fever wear mask

**MUST WASH HANDS BEFORE AND AFTER PATIENT CARE**



**CONTACT PRECAUTIONS**

**VISITORS: Report to nurse before entering.**

**Patient Placement**  
Private room if possible, cohort with same microorganisms only.

**Gloves**  
Wear gloves when entering patient's room. Change gloves after contact with infective material.  
Remove gloves on exit of patient's room. **CHANGE GLOVE/GOWN** and perform hand hygiene between contact with patients in same room.

**Wash**  
Wash hands before and after patient care. May use alcohol based hand rub if hands are not visibly soiled.

**Gown**  
Wear gown **UPON ENTRY TO** patient's room. **CHANGE GOWN/GLOVE** and perform hand hygiene between contact with patients in same room.

**Patient Transport**  
Limit to essential purposes only. Encourage hand hygiene with patients.

**Patient-Care Equipment**  
Clean and disinfect between patients if equipment is shared.

**DROPLET PRECAUTIONS**  
(in addition to Standard Precautions)

**VISITORS: Report to nurse before entering.**

**Patient Placement**  
**Private room**, if possible. Cohort or maintain spatial separation of **3 feet** from other patients or visitors if private room is not available.

**Mask**  
Wear mask when working within **3 feet** of patient (or upon entering room).

**Patient Transport**  
Limit transport of patient from room to essential purposes only. Use **surgical mask** on patient during transport.

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# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- PPE includes:
  - Disposable Gowns
  - Caps
  - Masks
  - Gloves
  - Face shields/eye shields
  - Shoe covers
- Volunteers should only wear PPE as directed by supervisor and medical staff.
- **Do not** walk through the facility wearing PPE. Dispose of used equipment before leaving patient room.



# Confidentiality & Privacy

- What is Patient Confidentiality?
  - The obligation of others to keep an individual's personal information protected, disclosing it only within the bounds of professional and legal standards.
- What is Patient Privacy?
  - Freedom from unjustified intrusion into one's personal life.

What's the difference? Looking into records without a “need to know” is a privacy violation. Sharing protected information, whether or not you have a need to know it, is a confidentiality violation.

*VA takes patient privacy and confidentiality seriously  
– you should too!*

# What Are Your Responsibilities?

- “Volunteers, as WOC employees, are subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a and 38 U.S.C. Sections 5701 and 7332) and all VA regulations implementing that statute. Accordingly, Volunteers must assist VA staff in safeguarding the privacy of patient information accessed during the course of their duties at the VA facility. Volunteers are not exempt from prosecution or fine in the case of an unlawful release of patient information” – VHA Handbook Section 7a.
- Unauthorized request for, or release of confidential patient information is considered a misdemeanor, and subject to up to **\$5,000** fine.

# What Are Your Responsibilities?

- As a VA Volunteer you are required to protect information from release and to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and security of health information.
- If you accidentally obtain confidential information, do not release – return to sender!
- If you have a Volunteer **assignment requiring computer access**, you are agreeing and accepting the responsibility of protecting VA information when you agree to the Rules of Behavior – please take this agreement seriously.
- If you see a security breach (unauthorized use, suspect fraud, or see/find PHI) report it immediately!

# Cameras, Video Equipment, etc.

- Patient privacy includes the right to not be photographed without consent. Please respect our Veteran's privacy by refraining from taking pictures of them without prior coordination.
- Voluntary Service and Public Affairs have forms to be filled out by a Veteran giving their permission to be photographed. These forms include information on who is taking the picture and where it will be used. Photographs containing Veterans are not to be taken unless these forms are signed.

# Suicide Prevention

- If you encounter a Veteran that appears to be in distress, use the following information to assist them:

**Does the Veteran appear to be an immediate risk for harm to him/herself or to others?**

**If Yes:** Escort the Veteran to the Emergency Department.

**If No, ask: Does the Veteran have a Primary Care Provider?**

**Yes:** Offer to escort the Veteran to Primary Care.

**No:** Provide then Veterans' Crisis Line:

1-800-273-8255, Press 1.

- When in doubt, escort the Veteran to the Emergency Dept.
- If a Veteran appears to be uncontrollable, incoherent, or violent, contact the VA Police.

# Patient Abuse

- Patient abuse or neglect is any action or failure to act which causes unreasonable suffering or harm to the patient.
- It is the policy of the VA that no patient is to be mistreated or abused in any way: physically, psychologically, sexually or verbally by any employee, Volunteer, student or visitor.
- Volunteers who witness any kind of abuse toward a patient must promptly report it to their immediate supervisor or the VAVS staff and be prepared to write a statement.

# Doing What's Right

- Be respectful to everyone you work with including patients, co-workers, supervisors, staff members, and affiliates.
- Provide constructive feedback sensitively; be empathetic.
- Compose yourself professionally.
- Be reliable. Keep your word with your assignments.
- Contribute your best to enhance and maintain the integrity of the VA.
- Demonstrate courteous, warm, and kind behaviors in every interaction.
- Use appropriate language and avoid vulgar behavior.

# Politics, Religion & Money

- Because VA facilities are federal facilities, employees and Volunteers must comply with the federal Hatch Act which states that no materials (including clothing) can be brought into the facility by VA staff (including Volunteers) promoting a party or candidate.
- Only VA Chaplains can provide spiritual guidance.
- Volunteers cannot engage in ANY financial transaction with a Veteran patient to include sales, loans, gifts, check cashing, and money handling. Gratuities are prohibited.
- Only VA Voluntary Service can accept donations.
- If you see a compliance issue, inform Voluntary Service or our Compliance Officer.

# What is Sexual Harassment?

- Sexually-oriented verbal kidding, teasing, or jokes.
- Repeated sexual flirtations, advances or propositions.
- Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature.
- Graphic or degrading comments about an individual or the individual's appearance.
- Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.
- Subtle pressure for sexual activity.
- Unwanted physical contact such as patting, hugging, pinching, or brushing against another's body.

# What To Do If You Experience Sexual Harassment

- Tell the person the behavior is unwanted, unwelcome, or unsolicited, and to stop.
- Keep a record.
- Ask co-workers if they observed the behavior.
- Contact supervisor or Voluntary Service staff immediately.



# Facility Safety

- Weapons and alcohol of any kind are prohibited on VA property.
- Wear appropriate clothing and shoes for your assignment.
- If machinery is used during an assignment, follow safety rules
- This is a non-smoking facility.
- For safety reasons, food prepared in a private home may not be given to patients.
- Only foods prepared by a commercial licensed/inspected food establishment may be received and served to groups.
- Be cautious about giving personal information to patients.
- Report all injuries to your supervisor, no matter how small.
- Do not use elevators in the event of a fire, power outage, or any other occurrence which may cause you to be trapped in the elevator.

# Suspicious Activity

- Potential signs of threats
  - No ID badge.
  - Visible signs of nervousness (like excessive sweating).
  - Inappropriate clothing that is excessively baggy or too heavy in warm weather.
- If you feel threatened
  - Avoid confrontation.
  - Walk away.
  - Report immediately to Police Service.
  - If you can't get away from the aggressor, scream for help.

**Contact the VA Police Department to report.**

From any VA phone:

Gainesville Police: 104091

Lake City Police: 392026

# Suspicious Bags or Boxes

- Ask yourself:
  - Is the bag or box unattended?
  - Do you see an unknown substance?
  - Do you smell a strange odor?
- If you answered “yes” to any of the above, then:
  - Do not touch the bag.
  - Call the VA Police.
  - Keep your eyes on the bag until the police arrive to ensure no one takes it by mistake.

# Remember:

## When in Doubt, Call Police Service

From any VA phone:

Gainesville Police: 104091

Lake City Police: 392026

Non-emergency: 0 for the Operator

Ask for a local number to reach VA Police or  
Security at outpatient clinics

From a non-VA phone/your cell phone: call 911



# Hazardous Material

- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) developed the Hazard Communication Standard (also known as the Right-To-Know standard) to protect workers from chemical hazards. As a Volunteer, you won't be required to handle any hazardous materials. If an instance occurs where you feel you must, ask your supervisor for instructions.
- **Do not** handle needles, syringes, or other sharps. Request nursing, medical, or other technical personnel to dispose of such equipment.
- **Do not** attempt to clean up any spills, vomit, or excretion. Contact Environmental Management Service to decontaminate the area.

# Fire Equipment

- Fire alarm systems in hallways.
- Sprinkler systems in all buildings.
- Fire extinguishers throughout facility.



# Responding to a Fire

## RACE

- **Rescue**  
Get patients and those unable to escape fire clear of danger.
- **Alarm**  
Pull fire alarm or call 0.
- **Confine**  
Close doors to inhibit spread of fire.
- **Extinguish or Evacuate**

In the case of small, isolated fires, extinguish IF you are able. In case of large fires, evacuate yourself and those unable to evacuate themselves.

# Fire Extinguishers

- When using a fire extinguishers:

## PASS

- **P**ull the pin.
- **A**im nozzle at the base of the flames.
- **S**queeze the handle.
- **S**weep the extinguisher back and forth across the fire. until the fire is extinguished.

# Mobility Issues

- When assisting Veteran patients, communication is key.
- Always ask the Veteran if they need or want assistance with mobility or pushing a wheelchair before lending assistance.
- Do not attempt to assist the Veteran once they have indicated they do not want or need assistance.

# Dress Code

- Clothing with offensive or potentially inflammatory messages are not permitted.
- Open-toed shoes are not appropriate in patient care areas or where risk of injury to exposed feet is possible.
- Clothing appropriate for each Volunteer assignment may be different. You are a reflection of the VA staff, dress appropriately.
- Shorts are not to be worn while Volunteering.(Position specific exemptions may apply.)

# Dress Code



# Code of Conduct

- Professional boundaries must be maintained between staff (including volunteers) and patients.
- No money transactions of any kind can be done between Volunteers, Employees, and Veterans. This includes tips, donations, payments of meals, Canteen transactions, gift, etc.
- Voluntary Services cannot be used to promote an agenda from a religious, social, or personal area to include politics, membership of private organizations, or fundraising.

# Thank You!

- On behalf of the estimated 140,000 Veterans served annually by the North Florida / South Georgia Veterans Health System, we thank you for your interest in serving those who served. Without Volunteers like you, we would be unable to provide the exceptional level of care our Veterans deserve.
- Please return to the home page to print out and take the quiz to be submitted with your application.

