



# Patient Handbook

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION  
VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
White River Junction Healthcare System

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)



# Thank you Veterans

We respectfully encourage your active participation in your treatment plan and greatly value your input. Your collaboration is vital to your progress and overall well-being.

Please treat ALL staff with respect and dignity, whether on the ward or on the phone.

Please use a calm manner of speech when speaking with staff.



**24/7, confidential crisis support for Veterans and their loved ones**

**When you call the Veterans Crisis Line, here is what you can expect:**

- A qualified responder will answer your call, ready to listen and help. The responder will ask a few questions, such as whether you or the Veteran you're concerned about may be in immediate danger or at risk for suicide.
- The conversation is free and confidential, and you decide how much information to share.
- Support doesn't end with your conversation. Our responders can connect you with the resources you need

**If you're a Veteran in crisis or concerned about a Veteran in your life, reach caring, trained responders 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

**You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect**

**"Don't wait, reach out"**



Dial 988 then Press 1



Chat online 24/7 at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat)



Text [838255](tel:838255), 24/7

**You're not alone— the Veterans Crisis Line is here for you.**  
[www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)



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# Welcome Message

Dear Patients and Visitors,

Welcome to the Medical Surgical Unit at White River Junction VAMC. We are dedicated to providing you with the highest quality of care in a comfortable and healing environment.

We understand that your loved ones play a critical role in your recovery, and we encourage their involvement in your care. Therefore, we have extended visiting hours from 7am to 7pm to ensure that you have the support you need during your time with us.

Our team of experienced healthcare professionals is here to ensure that your stay is as comfortable and stress-free as possible. We are committed to working with you to develop a personalized care plan that meets your specific needs.

We strive to provide the best possible care to our patients, and we are proud to be a part of your journey to recovery. Thank you for choosing White River Junction VAMC.

Sincerely,  
The Medical Surgical Unit Team

***For a copy of this  
handbook, please scan  
the code to the right***



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

Veterans Health Administration  
White River Junction Healthcare System

# About Us

The VA White River Junction Healthcare System provides you with outstanding health care, trains America's future healthcare providers, and conducts important medical research.

## Health care and services

We provide you with health care services at 8 locations in Vermont and northwestern New Hampshire. Facilities include our White River Junction VA Medical Center and 7 community-based outpatient clinics in Bennington, Brattleboro, Burlington, Newport, and Rutland, Vermont; and Keene and Littleton, New Hampshire.

The VA White River Junction Healthcare System is one of the leading healthcare systems serving Veterans in the VA New England Healthcare System. We're an innovative care center within the VA New England Healthcare System (VISN 1), which includes medical centers and clinics in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island.

The White River Junction VA Medical Center is on 64 acres of a hillside setting in the Upper Connecticut River Valley.

Our campus includes a hospital, a 47,000-square-foot research building, an ambulatory care facility, and buildings for clinical and administrative support.

The VA White River Junction Healthcare System serves approximately 75,000 Veterans. Approximately 50,000 of those Veterans are from Vermont and 25,000 are from New Hampshire.



*"To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors."*



The White River Junction VA has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval



# Patient Rights and Responsibilities

## Rights and Responsibilities of VA Patients

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is pleased you have selected us to provide your health care. We will provide you with personalized, patient-driven, compassionate, state-of-the-art care. Our goal is to make your experience as positive and pleasant as we can. As part of our service to you, to other Veterans, and to the Nation, we are committed to improving health care quality. We also train future healthcare professionals, conduct research, and support our country in times of national emergency. In all of these activities, our employees will respect and support your rights as a patient. Your basic rights and responsibilities are outlined in this document. You will receive this information in your preferred language. Please talk with the VA treatment team members who are providing your care or with a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights and responsibilities.

### I. Nondiscrimination and Respect

You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. Consistent with Federal law, VA policy, and accreditation standards of The Joint Commission, you will not be subject to discrimination for any reason, including for reasons of age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

- You will receive care in a safe environment free from excess noise, and with sufficient light to ensure comfort and safety.
- You have a right to have access to the outdoors.
- We will seek to honor your cultural and personal values, beliefs, and preferences. We ask that you identify any cultural, religious, or spiritual beliefs or practices that influence your care.
- You or someone you choose has the right to keep and spend your money. You have the right to receive an accounting of any funds that VA is holding for you.
- We will respect your personal freedoms in the care and treatment we provide you. This includes trying to accommodate your normal sleep and wake cycles, food likes and dislikes, and other personal preferences.

- You have the right to keep and use personal items as long as they are safe and legal.
- You have the right to social interaction and regular exercise. You will have the opportunity for religious worship and spiritual support. You may decide whether to participate in these activities. You may decide whether or not to perform tasks in or for the Medical Center.
- You have the right to communicate freely and privately. You will have access to public telephones and VA will assist you in sending and receiving mail. You may participate in civic rights, such as voting and free speech.
- When a loved one is involved in support and care of a VA patient, VA considers a patient family to include anyone related to the patient in any way (for example, biologically or legally) and anyone whom the patient considers to be family. If you are an inpatient, any persons you choose can be with you to support you during your stay.
- Medical staff may restrict visitors for inpatients if medical or safety concerns require it. You will be told promptly about any visitor restriction and the reason for it.
- In order to provide a safe treatment environment for all patients and staff, you and your visitors are expected to avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please immediately report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

## II. Participation in Treatment Decisions

- Your privacy will be protected.
- You will be given information about the health benefits you can receive. The information will be provided in a way you can understand.
- You will receive information about the costs of your care (for example, co-payments), if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying your portion of any costs associated with your care.
- Your health record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your authorization unless permitted by law (an example of this is State public health reporting). You have the right to have access to or request a copy of your own health records.
- Please respect the privacy of other patients and do not reveal their health information that you may overhear or otherwise become aware of.



### III. Partnering in Care

- You have a right to express your preferences concerning future medical care in an advance directive, including designating a healthcare agent to make healthcare decisions on your behalf when you can no longer do so.
- You, and any person(s) you choose, will be involved in all decisions about your care. You will be given information you can understand about the benefits and risks of treatment in your preferred language. You will be given other options. You can agree to or refuse any treatment. You will be told what is likely to happen to you if you refuse a treatment. Refusing a treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you take responsibility for the impact this decision may have on your health.
- Tell your provider about your current condition, medicines (including over-the-counter and herbals), and medical history. Also, share any other information that affects your health. You should ask • questions when you do not understand something about your care. This will help us provide you the best care possible.
- You will be given, in writing, the name and title of the provider in charge of your care. You have the right to be involved in choosing your provider. You also have the right to know the names and titles of those who provide you care. This includes students and other trainees. Providers will properly introduce themselves when they take part in your care.
- You will be educated about your role and responsibilities as a patient or CLC resident. This includes your participation in decision making and care at the end of life.
- If you believe you cannot follow the treatment plan, you have a responsibility to tell your provider or treatment team.
- You will be informed of all outcomes of your care, including any possible injuries associated with your care. You will be informed about how to request compensation and other remedies for any serious injuries.



- You have the right to have your pain assessed and to receive treatment to manage your pain. You and your treatment team will develop a pain management plan together. You are expected to help the treatment team by telling them if you have pain and if the treatment is working.
- As an inpatient, you will be provided any transportation necessary for your treatment plan.
- You have the right to choose whether you will participate in any research project. Any research will be clearly identified. Potential risks of the research will be identified and there will be no pressure on you to participate.
- You will be included in resolving any ethical issues about your care. If you have ethical issues or concerns, you may speak with the Medical Center's Ethics Consultation Service for help.



**Certain activities are prohibited at our facility.  
Please see below.**

- NO smoking/vaping - we are a tobacco free campus  
 NO gambling  
 NO firearms or weapons  
 NO alcoholic beverages  
 NO illegal drugs  
 NO pets except Certified Therapy Animals  
 NO profane or abusive language  
 NO monetary loans to other patients or employees

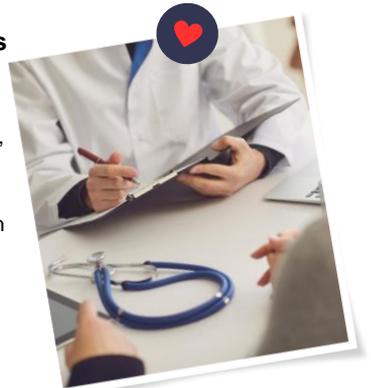


# Care Team and Services

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**As a patient with unique care needs, you will meet various healthcare professionals during your stay. They may include:**

- Hospitalist: a medical provider who orders tests, monitors results, prescribes medication and treatment, and consults with specialists
- Specialty Care Provider: a medical provider with specific training in treating health conditions such as cancer or digestive conditions
- Registered Nurse: a medical provider who will check on you daily, monitor your vital signs and goals for your care plan
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Nursing Assistant
- Laboratory Staff: Phlebotomist
- Imaging Technicians: x-ray, MRI, and other specialties
- Rehabilitation Medicine: physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and other specialty care
- Food and Nutrition
- Pharmacist
- Social Workers: trained professionals who can help access and navigate valuable resources to improve your health and well-being
- Environmental Services: responsible for keeping our hospital clean and helping to reduce the spread of infection



# Your care and ❤️ well being

## Helpful information for your stay

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VA Policies, and patient resources can be found at: <https://www.va.gov/white-river-junction-health-care/policies/> or scan the code to the right →

### Our address and phone number:

White River Junction VA Medical Center  
215 North Main Street  
White River Junction, VT 05009  
Phone: (802) 295-9363  
Fax: (802) 296-6354

*\*If using GPS, please use the following address:*

163 Veterans Drive  
White River Junction, VT 05009-0001

### Local Lodging

- **Hotels:** Many local hotels offer the Rest Easy Rate, a discount to families and caregivers of hospitalized Veterans. Many hotels within a 15-mile radius of WRJ participate in this program. Contact the Social Work Team for more information by calling ext. 4284.
- **Maynard House:** This friendly, affordable guesthouse in Hanover NH accommodates patients, families, and caregivers. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 603-643-3277.



## Pressure injury: reduce your risk

*“Bed sores” can result in a longer hospital stay*

### What is a Pressure Injury or “Bed Sore”?

The skin is our largest organ. There are many blood vessels in the skin that help to feed the skin and keep it healthy. When these blood vessels are squeezed shut with too much pressure for a period of time, they are not able to provide the skin with the nourishment and oxygen it needs to survive. The skin dies and a pressure injury or “bed sore” forms. This can lead to pain, infection, loss of function and a longer stay in the hospital.

### When we are sick, risk for pressure injuries increases because of:

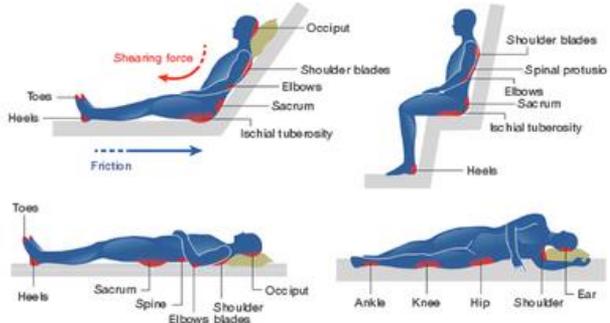
- Being unable to move in bed or a chair without help
- Being unable to control bladder and bowels
- Poor food and fluid intake
- Medicines that cause drowsiness
- Special medical equipment or tubes

### What your nurse is doing to help prevent pressure injuries:

- Your nurse will determine your risk of developing a pressure injury and will check your skin regularly. Prevention strategies will be put in place.
- The nurse will assess your skin to identify any areas that may be at risk of developing a pressure injury.
- If you have a pre-existing pressure injury, a treatment plan will be put in place.



The nurse will come by to help reposition you. It is important to change position even if you are comfortable because pressure injuries can develop quickly.



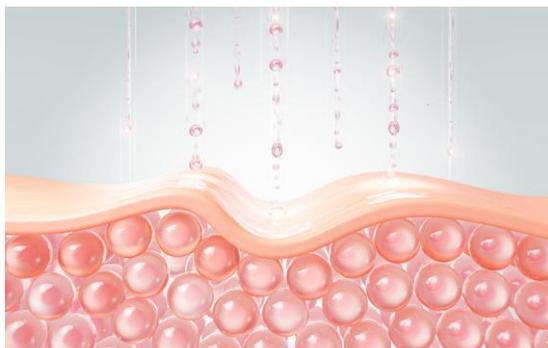
## Anyone can get a pressure injury

Help us help you by getting involved

We invite you to work with us to help prevent skin breakdown because the best approach is working as a team

### How can you help prevent pressure injuries?

- Inform the nurse caring for you of any painful or reddened areas that may have developed.
- Change position regularly, at least every 1 to 2 hours.
- If you are unable to reposition by yourself, ask staff to assist you.
- Don't drag yourself up the bed.
- If able, get up frequently and move about.
- Notify the nurse caring for you if any medical devices such as stockings or bandages are causing you discomfort.
- Let the nurse caring for you know if you have any damp bedding or clothes.
- Use a protective cream on the skin.
- Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet.



### Resources:

- Wound and Ostomy Nurse Specialist **ext. 5229**
- My HealtheVet (*see pg 34*)
- Get your free phone app! VA Pressure Injury Resource:
- <https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-pressure-ulcer-resource> or scan QR code below



# Veterans Taking STRIDES



## What is STRIDE?

STRIDE is an evidence-based inpatient walking program designed to mitigate functional decline during and after a hospitalization.

## What are the program goals?

- Improve patients' functional status
- Reduce length of stay
- Reduce discharge to skilled nursing facilities for short-term rehab

## Benefits of STRIDE

### Research shows:



Walking can mitigate functional decline in hospitalized adults



The STRIDE program can decrease length of stay



90% of STRIDE patients feel better after their walk

## Core Elements of STRIDE

- **Proactive** - no baseline functional deficits required
- **Early enrollment** - ideally within 24 hours of admission
- **Supervised walking** - up to 20 minutes daily until discharge
- **Dedicated STRIDE staff** - to perform pre/post evaluations and daily walks

## Who is eligible for STRIDE?

*Veterans 60 or over :*

- Admitted from home (not nursing home or another hospital)
- Admitted into a general medicine unit



92%

According to a 2014 study, 92% of STRIDE participants were

74%

discharged home compared to 74% receiving usual care



## Nutrition & Food Services

**The goal of the Nutrition & Food Services Team is to prepare and serve healthy foods to our Veterans by following the VHA Healthy Food Model Guidelines.**

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### **Guidelines include:**

- Selecting some organic produce to reduce pesticide exposure
- Reducing salt in recipes and substitute with herbs and spices
- Limiting cured meats such as beef sausage
- Including fresh fruit and vegetables daily
- Switching to whole grain breads, rolls, etc.
- Substituting fruit for juice at breakfast
- Increasing serving size of vegetables
- Limiting red meat to 4-6 meals per week.
- Using low fat desserts

Your doctor may order a diet that includes special considerations because of your medical or surgical condition. Some of the commonly ordered diets:

### **Healthy Diet (Our Regular Diet)**

Your meals consist of food prepared without added fat and salt, fruit and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, eggs, lean meat, poultry, fish and whole grains. If your medical condition requires you to have less sodium, you will not receive a salt packet on your tray.

### **Carbohydrate Controlled**

This diet is used to assist those with unstable blood sugar. Your meals consist of whole grains, fresh and unsweetened fruit, vegetables, lean protein and food without added sugar.

### **Low Sodium**

This diet is used to assist those who have issues controlling blood pressure and who may have a problem with fluid retention. Your meals consist of food prepared without salt, unprocessed foods and plenty of fruits and vegetables.

### **Hemodialysis**

This diet is used to assist those with kidney disease receiving dialysis. Your meals consist of food low in potassium and phosphorus, food prepared without salt, unprocessed foods, and lean protein.

### **ESRD**

This diet is for those with kidney disease who are not receiving dialysis. Your meals consist of food prepared without salt, unprocessed foods, food which may be low in potassium and phosphorus, and limited amounts of lean protein.

***We are here to provide you with EXCELLENT service. You may contact us at ext. 5457.***

## Spiritual Care

### What to expect during a Chaplain visit

When your chaplain arrives, they will focus on hearing your story, building trust and rapport with you and your caregivers. They will look for clues about what matters most to get to know the “you” beyond your diagnosis. They may take note of your surroundings, including family photographs, mementos and hobbies.

Patients and families guide the conversation, answering only what they feel comfortable with. One of the hallmarks of chaplaincy is to have no agenda. A chaplain’s goal is to listen to the emotion and the issues of the moment and respond appropriately.

#### Some questions a chaplain might ask during your visit include:

- Who are the people in your life that are most important to you?
- What are the places and things that matter to you?
- Where and how do you feel love or give love?
- Where are some places you turn to for support?
- How do you make meaning out of life?
- What are you most proud of?
- What are your regrets?
- Is there any unrest in your important relationships?
- What might you want to say to your family in terms of your hopes for them?
- Do you have a sense of peace?

**We look forward to hearing your story!**  
**Call 802.295.9363: x5416, x6181**  
**or ask your provider to speak with us**



## Learn more about Spiritual Care

### History & Legal Precedent of Chaplaincy:

- Served in the United States since 1771, 2nd Branch of Army appointed by Gen. George Washington, VA Chaplains ensure 1st Amendment is freely exercised by all
- Approximately 10,000 health care Chaplains in the United States that provide 10 to 15 million hours of counseling a year



### What Chaplains Do:

- Chapel Services, Administer the Sacraments (Eucharist/Communion, Anointing Oil, etc.)
- Pray with and counsel patients, family members and staff.
- Participate in discharge planning and help ensure continuity of care with community
- Ethical decisions such as: removing a ventilator support or feeding tubes, as well as other conflicts related to end-of-life decisions
- Refusal of treatment on religious grounds and treatment of the developmentally delayed.
- Crisis Support: ICU, ER, Hospice, Psych, Community Disaster
- Spiritual Care In-Person, Phone, Virtual (Remote) On-Call Coverage & CBOC's
- Formal religious life events: Baptisms, Blessings, Funerals, etc.
- Escort final departures through Honor Walks and escorting families to Decedent Affairs
- Teach classes on relationships and help build bridges with community stakeholders
- Serve on Treatment groups for PTSD, Trauma, End-of-Life, Oncology, etc.

## How Chaplains Provide Care:

- Spiritual assessments using the model provided in the Joint Commission for Accreditation of Hospital Organizations.
- Results dictate additional spiritual care that explores the patient's beliefs and spiritual needs.
- Assessments are patient-centered, and care is patient focused and driven.
- Spiritual Injury Assessment: Never – Sometimes – Often – Very Often
- Process: Guilt, Shame, Rage, Grief, Unfair Treatment by God or Life, Other Injuries to Worldview
- Develop a Spiritual Care plan tailored to the patient's specific needs
- Follow on spiritual care may or may not talk about God or religious topics
- Will use language the patient uses to delve into things that are important to the patient and/or family. I.E. Meaning, concern for loved ones, purpose, physical pain, suffering, fears about death, dying, recovery, etc.
- Will pray with a patient and/or family as appropriate, typically by request
- With consent, coordinates spiritual interventions with community-based clergy





# Ethics

## WHO IS THE ETHICS TEAM?

As you, or your loved one goes through treatment, you may have questions such as:

- How aggressive should treatment be?
- Who should make medical decisions for me if I am not able to do so?
- Do I have to have all the treatments or therapies recommended by my medical team or can I choose a different path?

Health care choices can be difficult. There are many new treatments and technology. Sometimes there can be conflict in values or beliefs.

### ***It can be hard to decide: What is the right thing to do?***

One way to get help is to ask the White River Junction Ethics team. Our team can help you and others involved in your care talk about your concerns. Our goal is to help everyone involved agree about what is best for you or your loved one.

### ***How we can help***

The Ethics team can help to talk through:

- When patients and caregivers don't agree about treatments.
- How best to follow your advance directives?
- When it is time to make end of life choices?
- Who should make decisions when you cannot?
- When there are questions about starting or stopping life support.

### ***What to expect?***

We may arrange a meeting to talk about your concerns. We include people important to your care. It could include the patient, caregiver, family, and health care team. We will talk about your concerns. We may discuss treatment options. We help to resolve conflicts where we find them. The discussion in the meeting will be written in the patient's medical record. Any recommendations made by the Ethics team will be included. Our goal is to help you make the decision that is best for you and your loved ones.



**GET IN TOUCH WITH THE ETHICS CONSULTATION**

**SERVICE:** [VHAWRJVAEthicsRequest@va.gov](mailto:VHAWRJVAEthicsRequest@va.gov)

Or scan the QR code to the left

**Note:** Please send us your contact information but do not send private information over email.



## Patient Advocate

White River Junction VA Healthcare System wants to make sure you get the best care possible. Every employee at VA, especially your treatment team, wants to be involved in providing the best care possible.

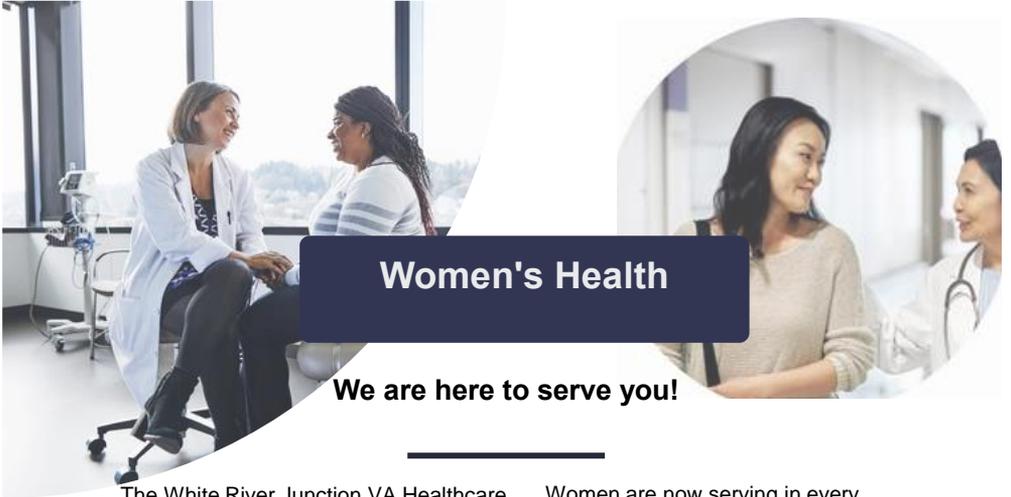
If you have a compliment, suggestion or concern regarding your care, first speak with your treatment team. If you feel your concerns are not being addressed by your treatment team, you may contact a VA Patient Advocate.

The Patient Advocate is designated to manage the feedback received from Veterans, family members and friends.



**Location: Mountains Building, Room 100H**

**Phone Number: 802-295-9363 x6293**



## Women's Health

**We are here to serve you!**

The White River Junction VA Healthcare System cares for women in all medical center departments and at all Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

We are committed to meeting the unique needs of women Veterans by delivering the high-quality healthcare you deserve. You can expect a standard of care at VA that is timely, equitable, comprehensive, and provided in a sensitive and safe environment.

We know your privacy, dignity, and gender-specific needs are an important part of your care. Our Women Veterans Program Manager is available and ready to answer your questions, help you explore your benefits, assist you with accessing care, and follow-up on any concerns you may have.

### **More than Healthcare**

Women were officially recognized as members of the United States armed forces in 1901, but women's military involvement dates to the Revolutionary War.

Women are now serving in every branch of the military, and there are over 2.2 million women Veterans today. Each is a reminder of the courage and sacrifices made for our nation in defense of our freedom.

At White River Junction VA Healthcare System, women Veterans are respected and honored as the heroes they are. In addition to health care, gender specific offerings available to promote women's wellness include:

- opportunities for recognition and
- sharing stories of service
- social events
- book clubs
- writing groups
- creative arts & crafting circles
- activities
- round table discussions
- lectures
- and more

### **Healthcare Services:**

- Disease Prevention and Screening

- Care for Service-Connected Conditions
- Comprehensive Primary Care
- Emergency Care
- Inpatient Care
- Mental Health Care
- Specialty Care
- Care and Case Management
- Wellness and Healthy Living Programs

### **GENDER-SPECIFIC CARE:**

- Gynecological Care
- Preconception Care
- Maternity & Newborn Care
- Contraception
- Infertility Evaluation and Treatment
- Breast and Cervical Cancer Screenings
- Pain Management
- Menopause Evaluation and Treatment
- Osteoporosis Screening and Treatment
- Chronic Disease Management
- Prosthetics and Medical Equipment
- Long-Term Care Services
- Caregiver Services
- End-of-Life Care
- Special Programs

**Women Veterans Program  
Manager  
(802)295-9363 ext. 6134**





Our Palliative Care Team provides support and advocacy for patients with advanced and complex medical conditions. The team includes physicians, a nurse practitioner, a nurse case manager, a social worker and mental health providers. Palliative Care services are offered alongside and in coordination with your other medical teams – primary care, inpatient care, and specialty care.

### **Things they can help with:**

- Identifying what is most important to you in the face of serious illness
- Navigating complex medical information and treatment decisions
- Managing symptoms that impact wellbeing and quality of life
- Emotional, spiritual, and practical needs related to serious illness
- Transition to hospice when this is desired and appropriate

**To contact the Palliative Care Team, please call ext. 6875**





**The mental health service at the White River Junction VA provides consultation, evaluation, and treatment for a variety of issues that can impact well-being. We offer both inpatient and outpatient, group and individual mental health services.**

**Acute Inpatient Mental Health Unit (Ground East):**

Ground East provides secured (locked), safe, compassionate care for Veterans experiencing psychiatric symptoms requiring hospitalization for stabilization. Mental health disorders treated include mood disorders, psychotic disorders, and substance use disorders. The inpatient team of psychiatrists, social workers, and psychiatric nurses works closely with the Veteran's outpatient team to provide seamless stabilization and reintegration to the community. We embrace VA's Whole Health philosophy, and our groups provide education, skills-building, and recreational opportunities.

**Location: Granite Building, Phone Number: 802-295-9363 x5070**



# Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program

## Relationship Health

A Veteran's relationship health is an important part of recovery, healing, and well-being. If you are experiencing any relationship health concerns such as: being yelled/screamed at, talked down to/called names, threatened with harm, physically hurt, isolated from family/friends, or prevented from following recommendations for healing by your care team- we are here to support you. The VA Relationship Health Program is available to discuss your



situation and offer supports and resources as you feel might be best for you. Ask the nurse, social worker, or anyone on your care team for more information or support. These services are available upon discharge if that is a more comfortable option.



## LGBTQ+ Health

Veterans with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Transgender or Gender Diverse identities may have specific concerns or needs with their care. The VA is here to meet the needs of all our Veterans.

Please communicate concerns to your care team so we can ensure you feel safe and able to engage in the care provided during your stay. If you have specific concerns that you do not feel comfortable sharing with your care team during your stay, you may reach out to the Patient Advocate or the facility LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator for support. The LGBTQ+ health program is here to support your outpatient care concerns/needs as well with navigating care. To contact the Social Work Team for connection, please call ext. 4284

## Minority Veterans

VA has a Minority Veteran Program Coordinator to support our African American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific-Islander, and Indigenous/American Indian Veterans with accessing benefits. If you have specific concerns or needs, please ask for Social Work to make a referral. To contact the Social Work Team, please call ext. 4284.





## Discharge Planning

The Medical Team and other members of the inter-professional team – including physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurse case managers, and social workers – collaborate with Veterans and their families/caregivers to develop the discharge plan. Veterans are often referred back to the outpatient primary care and/or specialty team for follow-up appointments. Some Veterans may require additional support – including a referral for home care services or a referral for short term rehab – in order to have a successful discharge. Veterans have the ability and responsibility to participate in the discharge planning process, with the inter-professional team providing the information necessary for an informed decision to be made.

### **RN Case Managers can help with:**

- Making referrals to agencies for home care services
- Coordinating services to address the medical, nursing and /or personal care needs for Veterans to return to an optimal level of functioning.

***To contact the Case Management Team, please call inpatient case management ext. 5925 or 5851***

### **Social Workers can help with:**

- Making referrals to facilities for Short Term Rehab, Long Term Care, and other treatment and housing programs
- Discussing and completing Advance Directives
- Addressing food insecurity as well as financial and legal concerns
- Assisting family members in connecting with local hotels and VA and community resources

***To contact the Social Work Team, please call ext. 4284.***

## After Your Stay

Continue your journey to better health by joining in our health building and maintenance programs!

We are here to encourage and support you in adopting a healthy lifestyle.

### VA Nutrition & Food Services

#### Shopping and Cooking Tips for a Healthy Diet

Several of the products used for our menus are “healthier” food choices, which you can purchase at your local supermarket. You can use these products and adjust your recipes to be lower in sodium and fat and higher in fiber and nutrients. Below is a list of some of these products.

- Ground Turkey
- Turkey Canadian Bacon
- Low Sodium Ham
- Low Sodium Soup Bases
- Whole Wheat Bread and Pasta
- Brown Rice
- Low Fat Whipped Topping
- Frozen Yogurt
- Low Sodium Tomato Sauce
- Reduced Fat and Sodium Salad Dressing
- Gravy– low sodium soup base with cornstarch and seasoning.

No referral from your provider is necessary. Appointments may be arranged as in-person at WRJ, as telephone visits, or as a video appointment from one of our VA clinics throughout our region, or from home. For more information on programs call ext. 5573. To make an appointment, please see page 21.



### VA Nutrition and Food Services Veteran Self-Referral Program

- Nutrition
- Diabetes
- MOVE classes
- Healthy Teaching Kitchen
- Grocery store tours

#### We provide nutrition guidance related to:

- Difficulty eating related to cancer and cancer treatment
- Digestive problems and/or food allergies
- Nutrition for wound healing
- Difficulty eating due to trouble swallowing
- Nutrition related to inflammation or pain
- Proper eating for diabetes, heart or kidney disease, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol
- Difficulty gaining weight
- Difficulty losing weight
- Difficulty affording healthy foods



**Make an appointment to join one of our Food and Nutrition Services programs by using the numbers below:**

**Call or visit a medical support assistant at any clinic desk.**

- Mountains 1 (GMF) 5406/6581
- Mountains 2 (WMF) 5797
- Mountains 3 (Surgical/Audio) 6593
- Birches Blg 1 (Desk 80) 3780/5760
- Birches Blg 1 (Desk 90) 6290
- Birches Blg 1 (Desk 100) 6854
- Women's Clinic 6230

**\*\*To make a Telehealth appointment, call:**

- Bennington 802-440-3300
- Brattleboro 802-251-2200
- Burlington 802-657-7000
- Keene 603-358-4900
- Littleton 603-575-6700
- Newport 802-624-2400
- Rutland 802-772-2300

*\*\* A medical support assistant will contact a provider prior to scheduling any in-person or CBOC video visits*

*"An empty lantern provides no light. Self-care is the fuel that allows your light to shine brightly"*

*-Unknown*



# Recreation Therapy



**COGNITIVE HEALTH**

**PHYSICAL HEALTH**



**SOCIAL HEALTH**



**PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH**



Recreation Therapy uses recreation and other activity-based interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals as a means to psychological and physical health, recovery, and well-being

## After your stay, you may need to request your medical records.

You must submit a request in writing to the Release of Information office using the correct Release of Information forms found at

<https://www.va.gov/resources/how-to-get-your-medical-records-from-your-va-health-facility/>.

- If you are requesting your records for yourself, to be mailed to you, the Veteran, please use form **10-5345a**.
- If you are requesting your records mailed to someone other than yourself, please use form **10-5345**.

Provide your completed form to the Release of Information office. The office is located in the Mountains Building, room 132B. Other ways to get the form to us:

- Drop it off in person to building 4 reception, which is next to the Freedom Building.
- Fax the form to: (802) 291-6216
- Mail the form to: **WRJ VA Medical Center, 215 North Main St 136B2, White River Junction, VT 05009**



*Scan below for VA form 10-5345a*



*Scan below for VA form 10-5345*



White River Junction VA Release of Information Office  
Mountains Building, Room 132B  
(802) 296-6408

## Privacy & The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

### **The White River Junction VA Healthcare System is committed to protecting your privacy and safeguarding your personal information**

VA is legally and ethically bound to maintain the privacy of our patients. All medical center staff must adhere to strict privacy regulations to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of our patients, including their Protected Health Information (PHI). PHI is information that identifies individuals through their name, address, phone number, email address, date of birth or social security number.

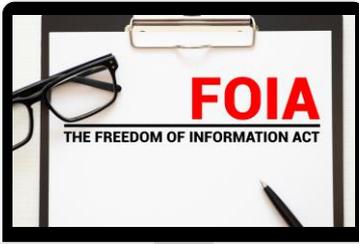


There are laws that specify how and when your medical information and other identifying information can be shared.

If you have concerns about how your information may be shared, we encourage you to speak with your health care team. You may also contact our Privacy Officer at [VHAWRJprivacy@va.gov](mailto:VHAWRJprivacy@va.gov), (802) 295-9363 ext. 5352, or by mail:

**WRJ VAHCS**  
**Privacy/FOIA Officer, Mail code 00**  
**215 North Main St.**  
**White River Junction, VT 05009**

- If you need a copy of your medical record contact the Release of Information Office (*see page 25 for more information*)
- If you need to change or correct your name, DOB, SSN, contact the White River Junction VA Eligibility Office at [vhawrveteraneligibility@va.gov](mailto:vhawrveteraneligibility@va.gov), or call 802-295-9363, ext. 5118 or 6281
- If you need change or correct other information in your medical record such as an incorrect diagnosis, a provider note, or an incorrect prescription contact the Privacy Office



In 1965, Congress introduced the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) which was later enacted into law in 1967.

FOIA is a federal law covered under 5 U.S.C Section 552 that requires the disclosure of certain government records. Records can only be withheld if they fall in one of nine exemptions contained in the Act.

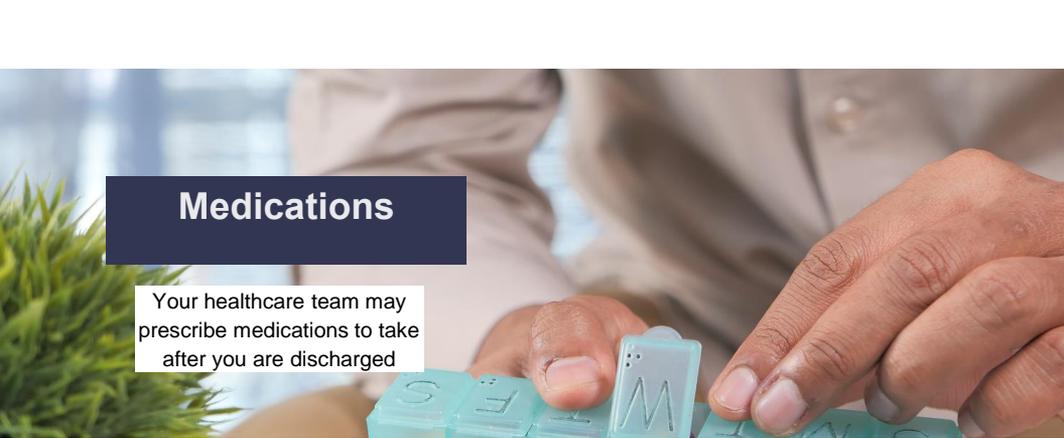
Before submitting a FOIA request reach out to the FOIA Officer to clarify your request. There may be an alternative to submitting a FOIA request which may get you the information you desire faster and at no charge.

All FOIA requests must be in writing, include details of what is being requested, the period covered, who may have the documents, and your contact information to include address and phone number.

**For Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) questions  
contact [VHAWRJFOIA@va.gov](mailto:VHAWRJFOIA@va.gov)**

**To learn more about  
protecting your privacy  
and The Freedom of  
information Act, scan  
the code to the right**





## Medications

Your healthcare team may prescribe medications to take after you are discharged

White River Junction VA Healthcare System has an on-site pharmacy that fills and dispenses medications required for discharge.

Your provider and medical care team will coordinate with the pharmacy staff to fill the discharge medications that you will need to take home.

Your care team will pick up the prescriptions from the pharmacy and deliver them to your room prior to discharge.

We encourage you to ask your care team about your medications, how to take them, what to avoid taking with them, and any side effects you should be aware of.

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## Stay in touch with your health care team

### My HealtheVet

Join the millions of Veterans who use My HealtheVet to help make informed decisions about their VA care.

My HealtheVet is VA's private and secure online patient portal for Veterans and caregivers. Its online resources and tools offer you greater control over your health and wellness.

You can check appointments, order prescriptions, view and download your medical records and communicate with your providers through MyHealtheVet.

You can save a lot of time and eliminate phone calls using this website—and it's easy to sign up and use.

For more information, email [bruce.lyndes@va.gov](mailto:bruce.lyndes@va.gov), visit <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home>, or call **802-295-9363, ext. 6895**.

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When you leave the hospital, you may have questions outside of traditional business hours. Our **Nurse Triage** line is available **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

**(802) 295-9363**  
**ext. 6364**

# The BEE Award

Be Extraordinary Everyday

Want to thank a caregiver?



## Share your experience and recognize exceptional caregivers in non-licensed nursing roles!

The BEE Award was created to recognize exceptional caregivers in non-licensed nursing roles. Based on the success of the DAISY Award program and its positive impact on the nursing profession, the White River Junction Medical Center implemented a recognition program for Nursing Assistants, Health Technicians and Social Services Assistants. If you had an outstanding Veteran experience, allow us to honor the Caregiver who provided your quality compassionate care and service.

Anyone may thank a deserving caregiver. Simply fill out a **recognition form** describing an experience in which the caregiver demonstrated quality, compassionate care using at least one of these *I CARE* principles:

**Integrity:** Maintains the trust and confidence of all with whom she/he engages

**Commitment:** Serves Veterans and their families by honoring the VA's mission.

**Advocacy:** Truly focuses on serving the Veteran

**Respect:** Provides dignity and respect to everyone she/he serves and encounters.

**Excellence:** Strives for the highest quality and continuous improvement

**Recognition forms are available from a staff member or by scanning the QR code below:**





The DAISY Foundation was established in 1999 by members of the family of Patrick Barnes. He was 33 years old and died of complications of the auto-immune disease ITP. Like many families we see every day who go through this kind of horrific loss, the Barnes family wanted to do something positive to honor the very special man Patrick was. The family created DAISY – an acronym for Diseases Attacking the Immune System. As they brainstormed what The DAISY Foundation would do, they kept coming back to the one positive thing they held on to during Pat’s 8-week illness: the extraordinary care he and they received from Pat’s nurses.

The family was very impressed by the clinical care Pat’s nurses provided, but what really overwhelmed them was the compassion and kindness that his nurses brought to Pat’s bedside day in and day out. The nurses’ sensitivity made a great difference in the Barnes’ experience, and they wanted to say Thank You to nurses for the extraordinary care they provide patients and families every day. Pat’s family created The DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurses. What started out as a thank you from their family to nurses has grown into a meaningful recognition program embraced by thousands of healthcare organizations around the world. We are very proud to partner with DAISY as we have extraordinary nurses here at White River Junction VAMC.

Daisy Award honorees personify a remarkable patient experience. These nurses consistently demonstrate excellence through their clinical expertise and extraordinary, compassionate care. They are recognized as outstanding role models in our nursing community. If you wish to nominate a nurse, please ask a staff member for a nomination form or scan the code to the right

