

VA Dementia Care Resource Guide



Important VA Numbers

Veterans Crisis Line – 988 and Press 1, or text to 838255.

**72 Hour ER Visit Notification Hotline – 844-724-7842 or
<https://emergencycarereporting.communitycare.va.gov/>**

VA Patient Advocate – 513-475-6492

MyVA411 (VA's Main Information Line) – 800-698-2411

Eligibility and Enrollment – 877-222-8387, Option 1

**Billing Questions – 1-866-393-1846 or
<https://www.va.gov/health-care/copay-rates/>**

https://www.va.gov/communitycare/revenue_ops/billing.asp

**Cincinnati VA Medical Center Appointments 513-861-3100
Pharmacy – 513-487-6606, Press 1**

Mental Health Care – 513-475-6325

**Cincinnati VA Main Social Work Office (513)861-3100 ext.
206329**

Clermont CBOC PACT Social Worker 513-861-3100 ext. 233627

Table of Contents

Understanding Dementia	- 5 -
The Way the Brain Changes with Dementia	- 5 -
Care Partnering/Caregiving Compared to Childrearing	- 5 -
The FAST (Functional Assessment Staging) Scale	- 6 -
Communication Tips to Decrease Conflict/Frustration Related to Dementia	- 6 -
Areas of Thinking that Can Change with Dementia	- 8 -
Six Pillars of Brain Health	- 9 -
Caregiver Education and Support.....	- 10 -
Caregiver Support Program	- 10 -
Navigating VA Dementia Care Resources	- 14 -
Whole Health	- 14 -
Primary Care.....	- 14 -
Specialty Teams.....	- 15 -
My HealtheVet	- 16 -
Advance Directives	- 16 -
Ohio DNR/KY MOST/IN POST Form	- 17 -
Specialty/Supportive Services offered through VA to consider:.....	- 18 -
Adult Day Care Programs	- 19 -
Home-Based Primary Care Services	- 20 -
Veteran Directed Care.....	- 20 -
Medical Foster Home	- 21 -
Community Care Nursing Home Contracted Services	- 21 -
Cincinnati VA Community Living Center	- 22 -
Hospice and Palliative Care	- 23 -
Occupational Therapy Home Safety Evaluation	- 23 -
Occupational Therapy Driver Safety Evaluation	- 23 -
Firearm Safety	- 23 -
Physical Therapy.....	- 24 -
Speech Therapy.....	- 24 -
Nutrition.....	- 25 -
Audiology.....	- 25 -
Eye Care Center.....	- 25 -

VA GERI-Vet..... - 25 -

VA Pharmacy - 26 -

 Catastrophic Disability..... - 28 -

Community Resources/Assistance & Applying for Medicaid Benefits..... - 29 -

Levels of Care for additional support - 30 -

 Aid and Attendance..... - 33 -

 Burial and Survivors Benefits..... - 33 -

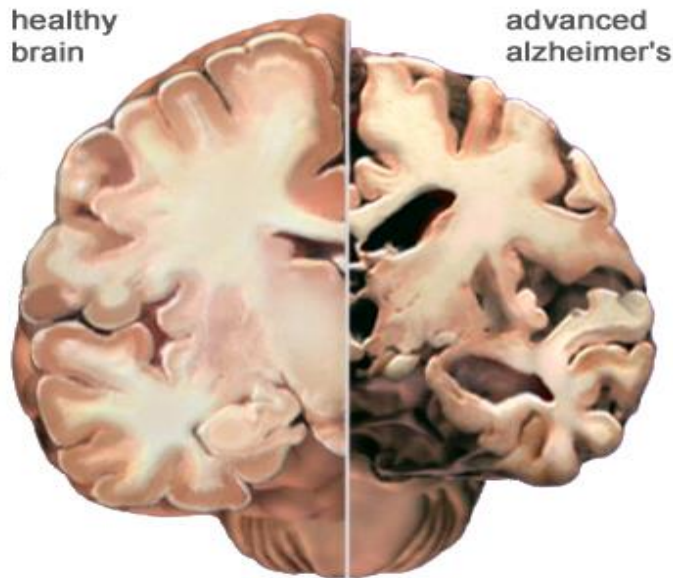
Transportation Resources - 33 -

Community Resources..... - 34 -

Understanding Dementia

The Way the Brain Changes with Dementia

This image shows how the brain will likely die off over time as the dementia progresses (VA Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers' Health – Dementia).



Care Partnering/Caregiving Compared to Childrearing

The diagram shows the experience of caregivers for individuals living with dementia and how that compares to caring for children. (Adapted from Aging and Mental Health, 3rdEd, 2018, by Segal, Qualls, & Smyer)

Full Mutual Autonomy	Observing	Advising	Monitoring	Assisting	Maintaining Primary Responsibility	Full-time, hands-on care
 Childrearing						
 Care Partnering Caregiving						

The FAST (Functional Assessment Staging) Scale

This scale shows the functional changes expected during dementia.

Stage	Stage Name	Characteristic	Mental Age (years)
1	Normal Aging	No deficits whatsoever	Adult
2	Possible Mild Cognitive Impairment	Subjective functional deficit	
3	Mild Cognitive Impairment	Objective functional deficit interferes with a person's most complex tasks	12+
4	Mild Dementia	IADLs become affected, such as bill paying, cooking, cleaning, traveling	8-12
5	Moderate Dementia	Needs help selecting proper attire	5-7
6a	Moderately Severe Dementia	Needs help putting on clothes	5
6b	Moderately Severe Dementia	Needs help bathing	4
6c	Moderately Severe Dementia	Needs help toileting	4
6d	Moderately Severe Dementia	Urinary incontinence	3-4
6e	Moderately Severe Dementia	Fecal incontinence	2-3
7a	Severe Dementia	Speaks 5-6 words during day	1.25
7b	Severe Dementia	Speaks only 1 word clearly	1
7c	Severe Dementia	Can no longer walk	1
7d	Severe Dementia	Can no longer sit up	0.5-0.8
7e	Severe Dementia	Can no longer smile	0.2-0.4
7f	Severe Dementia	Can no longer hold up head	0-0.2

Communication Tips to Decrease Conflict/Frustration Related to Dementia

If you want your loved one with Dementia to change their behaviors, **you must change** how you interact with them and the environment around them.

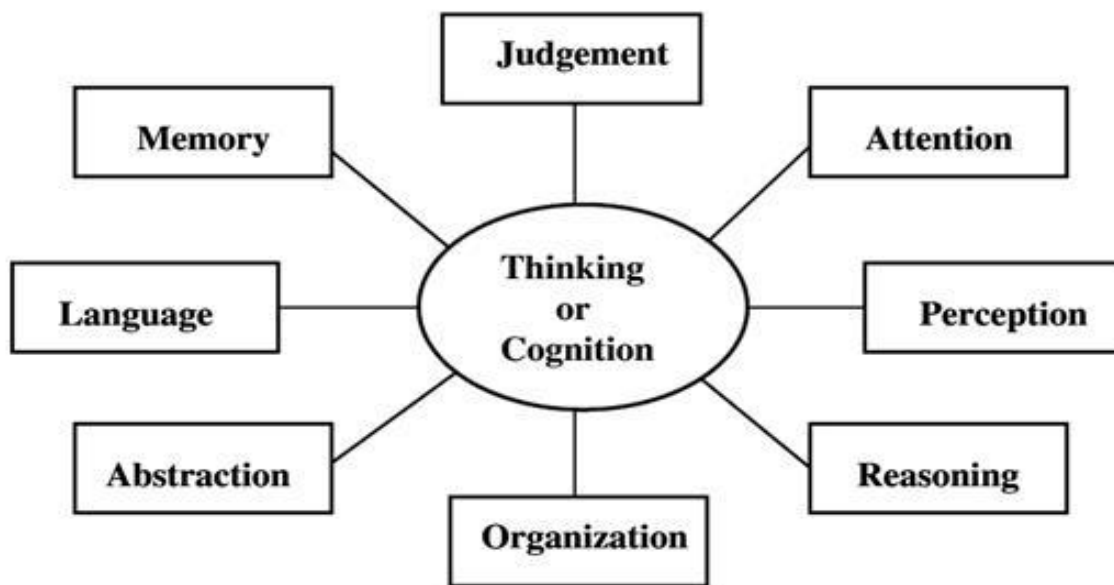
1. Join their reality – it is unkind to correct/clarify and expect them to recall recent information/events as their brain has more difficulty with this now.

2. In some situations, using therapeutic lying is a way to show kindness rather than correcting them (saying "we'll go home in a little while" even when you are home). Correcting and or attempts to teach leads to negative emotions for everyone.
3. Decrease complex verbal information (such as a lot of talking) and instead use gentle touch (hug, arm around, hand on knee) while saying in your words "you are safe and loved". Living with Dementia is scary and feeling safe and loved will go a long way.
4. Give one instruction at a time (simple steps) and repeat.
5. Use more visual instructions when talking is not working (show teeth brushing instead of saying "brush your teeth now").
6. Decrease reasoning with your loved one. If you find yourself in an argument/debate with your loved one, stop and show kindness instead. Reasoning is difficult for their brain now and will only lead to negative emotions given the difficulty. Instead try #2 and #3.
7. Old memories remain while many recent memories disappear. Spend time talking about the past, good memories, and less time expecting your loved one to be current on recent events.
8. To improve mood for your loved one, engage them in meaningful activities at their current ability level, where they feel valued.
9. If your loved one is repeating themselves over and over, reassure/validate their experience and then redirect them to a new topic if you can. Otherwise, choose simple, reassuring answers that you can say over and over. Remember, each time they talk about a topic, it likely feels brand new for them.

10. Give choices rather than open ended options as this can be difficult for their brain (instead of "what do you want for dinner?" say "chicken or beef tonight?").
11. If your loved one is sitting a lot, they might benefit from you starting a movement for them as this is harder for their brain ("here, take my hand, let's get up and go for a walk" vs. "do you want to go for a walk?").

Areas of Thinking that Can Change with Dementia

Dementia affects many areas of the cognition beyond short term memory. The impact in these areas is dependent on the type of dementia and disease process. (The Savvy Caregiver Program, ©2008 Regents of the University of Minnesota, <https://www.hcinteractive.com/files/pdf/SavvyCaregiverManual.pdf>)



Dementia Related Safety Issues

For more ways to increase safety, visit: <https://safetyindementia.org/>

1. Wandering (leaving the home and being unable to find the way back) – Consider GPS devices, which may be available through VA.
2. Unsafe cooking (leaving the stove on or water running) – Consider cameras in the kitchen or removing knobs.
3. Unsafe driving (fender-benders, side swipe, getting lost in familiar places) – Consider a VA occupational therapy driving evaluation or driving retirement.
4. Firearms – discuss a plan for firearms when they may no longer be safe.
5. Problems managing finances – Develop a plan including naming a Financial Power of Attorney and/or adding “authorized user(s)” to bank accounts.
6. Mismanagement of medications – Consider using pill box, monitoring set up.
7. Missing appointments/medical information – Consider signing up for My HealthVet (see Table of Contents for information).

Six Pillars of Brain Health

For more information on how you can make healthy changes, visit:

<https://healthybrains.org/pillars/>

1. Physical Exercise – Your Body: Get moving.
2. Food and Nutrition – Eat Smart, Think Better
3. Medical Health – Control Medical Risks (Hypertension, diabetes, obesity, depression, head trauma, higher cholesterol, and smoking)
4. Sleep and Relax – Rest Well
5. Mental Fitness – Your Mind: Use it or lose it.
6. Social Interaction – Stay Connected

Caregiver Education and Support

Caregiver Support Program

- Contact the Caregiver Support Program directly at 513-458-9261 or 513-475-6366 or visit <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/> to learn more or download an application.
- **The Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)** provides “**Outside the Box**” resources, Caregiver education, and support. The Veteran can be non-service connected and may have served during any era. No formal application is required. This program offers several resources including Annie Caregiver Text Support, Building Better Caregivers (BBC) course, Caregiver Self-Care Courses, General Telephone Support, Peer Support Mentoring Program, and Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH) VA.
- **The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)** offers the same resources as the PGCSS, but eligible caregivers will also receive a financial stipend, health insurance (if eligible), and beneficiary travel (if eligible). To enroll, the caregiver must complete an application, and the Veteran requiring care must meet the following criteria:
 - Veteran sustained or aggravated a serious injury (or illness) in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service during any service era, and
 - Have a single or combined service-connected disability rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of 70% or more, and
 - Be in need of personal care services (requiring in-person personal care services) for a minimum of six continuous months based on any one of the following:
 - An inability to perform an activity of daily living.
 - A need for supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury; or
 - A need for regular or extensive instruction or supervision without which the ability of the Veteran to function in daily life, would be seriously impaired.

Phone Support

- Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline – 800-272-3900
- VA Caregiver Support Line – 1-855-260-3274 – available M-F 8a-10p ET and Sat 8a-5p ET; can offer brief telephone counseling, referrals to online and phone counseling, education, and support groups.

Text Support

- **Annie** - Annie is VA's text messaging service that promotes stress management and self-care for Caregivers. You will receive text messages 3 times per week for a year with the option to renew yearly. You can pause or stop at any time. Ask your primary care team for a Caregiver Support Program referral to enroll.

Online Trainings

- Alzheimer's Association
 - <http://training.alz.org/home> - online classes on legal and financial planning and understanding dementia.
- VA Caregiver Website – www.caregiver.va.gov
- VA online training videos for caregivers - <http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/vets/resources.asp#dem>
- Careblazers: Dementia YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVgK5-w1dilMx7bPVB5yNug>
- "Safety in Dementia". (<https://www.safetyindementia.org>)
- Story Corps memory education - <https://storycorps.org/discover/memory-loss-initiative/>
- [Teresa Youngstrom - A Better Approach To Memory Care](#)
- Teepa Snow is a SW who has developed a lot of teaching on how to help care partners communicate and interact with patients with dementia – one of many videos on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFrtnG6-fkU>.

Support Groups by Diagnosis

- Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center. 1-800-438-4380. www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimer's
- Alzheimer's Association (all types of dementia) - 800-272-3900, <https://www.alz.org/help-support/community/support-groups> - Early Alzheimer's Group for Individuals Living with Early-Stage Alzheimer's Disease, Caregiver Support Groups, and Caregiver Education Groups
- Lewy Body Dementia - Lewy Line – 800-539-9767 - To join a support group and receive updates visit [LBD Support Groups by Lewy Body Dementia Association \(lbda.org\)](http://LBD Support Groups by Lewy Body Dementia Association (lbda.org)), or please email support@LBDA.org
- The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration 1-800-507-7222; <https://www.theaftd.org>
- Parkinson Support & Wellness 513-558-0113, [Parkinson Support and Wellness \(parkinsoncincinnati.org\)](http://Parkinson Support and Wellness (parkinsoncincinnati.org)), or please email (info@parkinsoncincinnati.org)
- American Stroke Association - <https://www.stroke.org/en/help-and-support/for-family-caregivers>, Stroke Family Warmline: 1-888-4-STROKE or 1-888-478-7653.

Books, Podcasts, and Education

- *The 36 Hour Day* by Rabins and Mace - Great resource book for caregivers to learn about dementia and ways to help the Veteran.
- *Still Alice* by Lisa Genova – A fictional novel about a 50-year-old woman's sudden descent into early onset Alzheimer's disease, written by author Lisa Genova, who holds a Ph. D in neuroscience from Harvard University.
- Dementia Matters: A podcast about Alzheimer's' Disease - <https://www.adrc.wisc.edu/dementia-matters> (The podcast is also available in iTunes, Spotify, and other popular podcasting apps – those links are also available on the landing page, or people can search for Dementia Matters in whatever app they use to listen to podcasts)
- Vascular Dementia | Family Caregiver Alliance – <https://www.caregiver.org/vascular-dementia>
- Alzheimer's Association – <http://www.alz.org/co/> – Click box "Classes and Training" and scroll down "register for a class near you."

Mindfulness Resources:

Mobile apps from the VA:



Mindfulness Coach is designed to support independent mindfulness practice. The app also contains information about mindfulness and PTSD symptoms, increasing resilience and self-awareness, improving emotional balance, and building positive skills.



Mood Coach is an app to learn and practice behavioral activation skills for depression and improving mood. The skills it teaches can also be helpful for people with PTSD.



Moving Forward is designed to provide practical information and interactive tools for effective problem-solving and stress reduction. The app may be used alone or with the Moving Forward online course (www.veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward).



Breathe2Relax is a portable stress management tool which provides detailed information on the effects of stress on the body and instructions and practice exercises to help users learn the stress management skill called diaphragmatic breathing.



Virtual Hope Box is a multi-media coping skill app designed for individuals struggling with depression (particularly military service members). The four main features of Virtual Hope Box include sections for distraction, inspiration, relaxation, and coping skill options.

Navigating VA Dementia Care Resources

The VA has many ways to support our Veterans living with dementia and their loved ones at the primary care and specialty level. The availability and cost for VA services will depend on the Veteran's service connection, location, and program requirements.

Whole Health

Whole health puts you at the center of care, rather than your illnesses or conditions. We work with you to develop a personalized health plan based on your values, needs, and goals. The Whole Health System includes conventional treatment, complimentary and integrative health approaches, and supports for self-healing and self-care. The Cincinnati VA is making a shift to focus not only on “What’s the matter” and include what matters most to each Veteran. Instead of focusing only on problems, the focus expands to explore what matters to a person and why they want their health in the first place. This focus on values changes everything. It helps to individualize care using a personalized health plan. It leads both veterans and clinicians to be more engaged. Our goal is to achieve optimal health and wellbeing.

- Ask your Primary Care provider in person, via My HealtheVet, or by calling the Nursing Line

Primary Care

Your Primary Care Team can work with you to identify changes in thinking, memory, and functioning and connect you to resources to support you and your caregiver(s). To contact **Primary Care**, call 513-861-3100.

Geriatric/Dementia RN Coordinator 513-284-9498

- **Primary Care Provider** – Assesses for cognitive changes, prescribes medications, and refers to specialists if needed.
- **Nursing** – Can assist with coordinating your medical care needs.

- Social Work – Can offer help completing an advance directive, coordinating care between service providers, and reviewing VA and community services to support Veterans.
- Primary Care Mental Health – Provides brief cognitive testing.
- Nutrition – Can support healthy options as your dietary needs change.
- Pharmacy – Reviews medications and supports the team.

Specialty Teams

VA specialty programs can assist your primary care team in determining a diagnosis and what supports may be beneficial for you. To see if a referral to one of these teams would be helpful, talk with your **Primary Care Team**.

- Neuropsychology – offers testing to help with diagnosing dementia or other cognitive issues.
- Neurology/Neuro-palliative – Can evaluate Veterans with many different medical issues and unusual symptoms and recommend medical and psychiatric interventions.
- Palliative Care/Tele-Palliative Care – Focus is on improving quality of life for Veterans with a serious or life-limiting disease and their loved ones.
- Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic– provides interdisciplinary care to Veterans with past and/or recent brain injury, specialty care including rehabilitative services ongoing monitoring and care.
- Cincinnati VA Geriatrics (Older adult care, senior care) Common conditions: memory problems, sleep problems, falls, bone loss, weight loss. As you age, we offer a range of medical and support services to help you stay as healthy, active, and independent as possible. We also offer help to family members and caregivers who may support you. We assess your situation and condition to decide which outpatient geriatric services are right for you or a senior Veteran in your care, and then we coordinate your care. Our multidisciplinary team includes dedicated support from Geriatricians, Social Worker, Physical Therapist, Nursing, and Nutrition. Care is provided as a co-

management specialty consultation alongside your primary care team.
<http://www.va.gov/geriatrics/>.

Additional contacts:

- Geriatric/Dementia RN Coordinator 513-284-9498
- Geriatric SW/Dementia SW Coordinator 513-374-8469

My HealthVet

My HealthVet is the award-winning Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) patient-facing website. It offers Veterans, service members, their dependents, and caregivers to access Veteran's health care/ medical record to VA health care information and services. My HealthVet is a private and secure online personal health record. It's free, easy to use, and helps you partner with your health care teams to take charge of your health and well-being.

My HealthVet allows Veterans to request prescription refill for VA prescriptions (Rx), track their delivery, get VA prescription shipment notifications, create medication lists, and more. Finally, once you get in-person authentication completed, you can use Secure Messaging to communicate online with your VA health care team.

- www.myhealth.va.gov

Advance Directives

An Advance Directive (AD) is a general term that refers to legal forms or documents that help your provider and family members understand your wishes about your health care. An Advance Directive assists them in providing medical or mental health care if you are too ill to decide or unable to communicate for yourself. There are two parts of an Advance Directives:

- **A durable power of attorney for health care** (or health care agent) is the individual that the Veteran appoints and trust to make health care decisions when you/Veteran cannot or choose not to make your own decisions.
- **A living will** allow you/Veteran to state in advance, your health care /choices/preferences for life sustaining treatments, options for mental

health care, and any additional wishes you may have about your health care.

For assistance executing a new Advance Directive (some may refer to as Health care Power of Attorney Documentation), updating Advance Directive documentation or prefer to provide completed Advance Directive Documentation that is not currently on file with VA, please contact Main Social Work Office or Primary Care (PACT Social Worker) See contact information below:

Cincinnati VA Main Social Work Office (513) 861-3100 ext. 206329

Clermont CBOC PACT Social Worker (513) 861-3100 ext. 233627

Georgetown CBOC PACT Social Worker (513) 861-3100 ext. 302963

Dearborn CBOC PACT Social Worker (513) 861-3100 ext. 322537

Florence, KY/Bellevue CBOC Social Worker (513) 861-3100 ext. 214436

Hamilton, OH CBOC Social Worker (513) 861-3100 ext. 221574

Geriatric/Dementia RN Coordinator 513-284-9498

Geriatric SW Coordinator 513-374-8469

To download an Advance Directive (VA Form 10-0137) please visit:

<https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-10-0137/>

For more information

Download VA Form 10-0137A, "What You Should Know About Advance Directives": <https://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-0137A.pdf>

Ohio DNR/KY MOST/IN POST Form

A DNR/MOST/POST form is a doctor's order that helps you keep control over medical care. The form provides emergency medical personnel and other health care providers whether to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in the event of a medical emergency. A DNR/MOST/POST form may be

used with or instead of a CPR Directive. The DNR/MOST/POST form may also provide other information about your wishes for end-of-life health care.

To be legally valid, a DNR/MOST/POST form **must be signed by:**

- a doctor or a nurse practitioner
- you or your legally appointed health care representative.

Keep a copy of your DNR/MOST/POST form on your refrigerator so first responders know where to find it.

For more information

You can view the form here: [Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment \(MOST\) \(ky.gov\)](#); [Microsoft Word - 55317 \(indianapost.org\)](#); [DNR+comfort+care+form1.pdf \(ohio.gov\)](#)

If a veteran is unable to appoint a Medical Power of Attorney:

When no health care agent is authorized or available, the VA will determine who can act as a surrogate for the Veteran. Such decisions are based on the VA Informed Consent Policy. In extreme cases, a trusted loved one may need to pursue guardianship. If needed, the VA has a Guardianship Social Worker who can provide guidance for this process. If you have questions about the Informed Consent Policy or guardianship process, please talk to your Primary Care Team.

Specialty/Supportive Services offered through VA to consider:

Ask your **Primary Care Provider** in person, via My HealthVet, or by calling the Nursing Line, PACT Social Worker at your specific Primary Care Location for information on the following supportive services below:

Home Health Care services -provided through VA contracted services, if Veteran meets medical criteria for services, for more information contact Primary Care Provider, PACT Social Worker, or Geriatric Social Worker for additional information.

Types of Home Care -----

Skilled Home Health Care (example-Registered Nurse visits home provides vital checks, medication management, wound care, Home Physical Therapist provides physical therapy services)

Non-skilled Care Home Health Care/Homemaker Services (helps with getting dressed, grooming, bathing, getting in/out of bed, changing linens, transferring positions for bedbound Veterans, light housekeeping, assistance with feeding)

In-Home Respite Care service provided by VA contracted Home Health Aide Agency, offers care to Veteran within Veteran's residence while Veteran's primary caregiver is not present and allows caregiver to take time to attend their own appointments, while HHA cares for Veteran for approved number of hours.

Other Services through VA to consider:

Adult Day Care Programs

Adult Day Health Care is a program that provide Veterans the opportunity to engage in a social activity, cognitive stimulation, possible outings, companionship, exercise programs, and recreation.

Please contact PACT Social Worker or Primary Care Provider requests consult or referral for this service. You will be contacted by **Community Care RN Coordinator** that will complete an assessment which will determine if Veteran meets criteria for ADC and number of hours Veteran may be eligible to attend the program. Veteran will then be provided a list of facilities near residence for review that have availability. Veteran and Caregiver will have opportunity to tour facility prior to commitment.

There are several factors related to eligibility regarding transportation, Veteran's location, and resources are limited in Cincinnati/Tri-State area for ADC. For more information feel free to contact **Geriatric SW/Coordinator 513-374-8469**.

Home-Based Primary Care Services

Home Based Primary Care is for Veterans who have complex health care needs and cannot travel to the VA for care. The veteran must live within 30 miles of 3200 Vine St Cincinnati, OH 45220

- Contact your Primary Care Provider in person, via My HealthVet or by calling the Nursing Line Home Based Primary Care is a service provided to Veterans identified to as homebound and eligible to receive primary care in their home. A VA Primary Care Provider manages and supervises care provided by HBPC visiting team members (**nurse practitioner, social worker, occupational/physical therapist, psychologist, dietitian, pharmacy, speech therapist, and nurse**) who provides the in-home services.

Veteran Directed Care

Veteran Directed Care is for veterans who require hands-on assistance to complete activities of daily living (for example bathing, toileting, eating). You are given a flexible budget based on physical need for services that can be managed by you or your family caregiver. It allows you to decide what mix of Home and Community Based Services will best meet your needs. You may hire your own personal care aids, such as your own family member or neighbor, and you may buy items that will help you live independently in the community. This VA program is only available in some locations.

- Contact your Primary Care Provider in person, via My HealthVet or by calling the Nursing Line about getting an Occupational Therapy Evaluation first; then contact your Primary Care Social Worker directly or by calling 513-861-3100, for a referral to this program (Does not guarantee Veteran will qualify)

Medical Foster Home

Medical Foster Homes are private homes in which a trained caregiver provides services to a few individuals. VA inspects and approves all Medical Foster Homes. A Medical Foster Home can serve as an alternative to a nursing home. It may be appropriate for Veterans who require nursing home care but prefer a non-institutional setting with fewer residents. Medical Foster Homes has a trained caregiver on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All Veterans in the Medical Foster Program are also enrolled the in the Home-Based Primary Care Team to allow their primary care needs to be met in the home environment. This option is private pay and typically costs \$3500-\$5000/mo.

- Contact Cincinnati [VA Main Social Work Office](#) to find out more information about this program directly or by [calling 513-861-3100 ext. 6329](#).

State Veterans Home

State Veterans Homes are facilities that provide nursing home care for Veterans who are 70% service connected or greater, have Medicaid, or can pay privately. They are owned, operated, and managed by state governments. VA does not manage State Veterans Homes but surveys all facilities each year to make sure they continue to meet VA standards.

- Veteran/Family Calls Facility Directly

Community Care Nursing Home Contracted Services

- For information about Short-Term Skilled Nursing Homes, Out of Home Respite Care, Long-Term Nursing Home Care that meet criteria for VA Contracted Nursing Facilities. Please Contact Community Care Program Coordinators for most up-to-date information on, eligibility criteria, lists of contracted nursing homes, and referral process at: [\(513\) 475-6493](#) or email team at vhacincommunitynursinghome@va.gov

- [General information on Eligibility VA Contract Nursing Home](#)

VA is required to furnish necessary nursing home care, when clinically indicated, to the following:

- Any Veteran in need of nursing home care for a service-connected (SC) disability.
- Any Veteran in need of nursing home care who has a single or combined SC disability rating of 70% or greater.
- A Veteran with a single disability rated 60% but who has a total disability rating based on individual unemployability.

Cincinnati VA Community Living Center

The mission of a VA CLC is to restore the Veteran to the highest practicable level of well-being, maximum function, independence, prevent health decline, and provide comfort at the end of life or in-home environment. **Priority goes to Veterans currently hospitalized within CVAMC** and meet criteria for placement as described above. For more detailed information please contact the CLC SWs.

- **Contact CLC SW 513-861-3100 ext. 204408 or ext.204997.**

The Cincinnati VA Community Living Center (CLC) offers short-term skilled nursing care /rehabilitation, long-term nursing home care, Respite Care, and Hospice Care.

Virtual Tour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckrNJv4w1Dk>

The Following services may require a referral by your Primary Care Provider

Hospice and Palliative Care

- Provides comfort and support to Veterans with chronic or terminal disease.
- VA will assist with setting up in-home or Inpatient Hospice Care which provides medical services for Veterans who have been recently diagnosed with terminal illness and limited lifetime expectancy. Treatment goals focus on comfort and support rather than cure. Veterans who qualify for hospice also become eligible for the End-of-Life Benefit where the VA will pay for Veterans in the event, they do not have Medicare coverage.
- Palliative care is offered along with curative treatment and can be provided as outpatient care or in an inpatient setting.

Occupational Therapy Home Safety Evaluation

The VA Home Safety Evaluation is an assessment completed with the Veteran at the residence to determine eligibility for home modifications to support Veteran's ability to safely engage in daily activities within the home.

Occupational Therapy Driver Safety Evaluation

The VA offers driving wellness checks for Veterans who may be having more difficulty with their driving. The VA CANNOT take away anyone's license, but they can make helpful recommendations to improve driving options or talk about next steps to ensure independence if driving is no longer the best option. Please note, that the VA may defer the driver evaluation to an outside resource.

More information can be found on the following website:

<https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/safety/dementia-driving>

Firearm Safety

Firearms and other weapons can be found in households across the country. In most situations, their presence creates no problems for responsible gun owners and others in the household. However, if someone in the home is living with

Alzheimer's or another dementia, firearms can pose a significant risk for everyone.

For example, as the disease progresses, the person may not recognize someone they have known for years and view them as an intruder. With a gun accessible, the result could be disastrous. Even if the person has past experience with guns, their current abilities will be altered because the safe use of firearms requires complex cognitive abilities and quick decision-making skills, which may be compromised due to dementia.

Visit this website for more information: <https://www.alz.org>

Physical Therapy

Physical Therapy can assist Veterans in improving their strength and mobility. If the Veteran is having difficulty with walking, getting up out of seats or chairs, or other problems with their mobility, you can talk with these specialists to see if any adaptive equipment or exercises will improve their mobility.

- For assistance with your mobility device, visit the Physical Therapy Walk-in clinic – Monday-Friday: 0800-1500 at Cincinnati VA

Speech Therapy

Many people who have dementia can develop problems with their eating and drinking. If a Veteran has difficulty swallowing or is coughing frequently while eating or drinking, this may be a sign of a common problem called **"dysphagia"**. Dysphagia can lead to pneumonia, breathing problems, and other serious conditions. If this is a concern, your primary care provider can refer you to our Speech Therapy clinic for an examination and recommendations for how you can reduce your risk for these conditions.

Speech therapy can also evaluate cognitive-communication difficulties. In working with the individual with dementia and their family, strategies could be developed to address cognitive changes (such as attention and memory) as well as explore different ways to communicate.

Nutrition

The VA's Registered Dietitians are your resource for all food and nutrition related concerns. They can help assess if you need additional nutrition support through supplements to help maintain a healthy weight. They also provide nutrition education/counseling for diabetes, gastrointestinal concerns, heart health and many other conditions.

- To schedule an evaluation at Cincinnati VA call [513-475-6309](tel:513-475-6309). You do not need to see your primary care provider for a referral.

Audiology

- To schedule an evaluation at Cincinnati VA call [513-475-6305](tel:513-475-6305). You do not need to see your primary care provider for a referral.
- Hearing loss negatively impacts quality of life. If a veteran is having difficulty hearing, you can schedule an appointment for a hearing test to see if the veteran would be a candidate for hearing aids or a pocket talker. If the veteran already has hearing aids and needs them checked or fixed, please go to the walk-in clinic.

Eye Care Center

- To schedule an evaluation at Cincinnati VA call [513-559-3599](tel:513-559-3599).
- If you are needing new eyeglasses, call community care directly. They will send you a list of in-network providers, some of which are one-stop shops that offer eye-exams and pre-authorized frames for you to choose from. The VA will then make your new glasses and send them to you by mail. If you have issues once you receive them, you can return to your eye-glasses provider for adjustments.

VA GERI-Vet

(Geriatric Emergency Room Interventions for Veterans)

- Our ER is nationally accredited for geriatric emergency care.
- National VA Geriatric Emergency Department Mission is Enhancing geriatric-focused care in VA emergency departments throughout the

nation via education, standardization, environmental enhancement, and promotion of a comprehensive care model. This initiative is an evidence-based multidisciplinary program performing geriatric screens and care coordination for at-risk older Veterans treated in the ED, was implemented based on established best practices for Geriatric ED care. ED staff receive multimodal geriatric emergency medicine training and champion the care of the most frail, older Veterans during their ED visit.

VA Pharmacy

Outpatient Hours of Operation

Cincinnati VA Medical Center: 8:00AM – 6:00PM

513-861-3100

Automated Refill Line

An automated refill line is available for all VA Cincinnati Healthcare System patients. Please call the following number for assistance:

513-487-6606, Option 1

After you have dialed the number, wait for the automated attendant to answer.

1. Enter your entire social security number, then press the # key and wait for an answer.
2. Press 2, wait for an answer.
3. Press 1, wait for an answer.
4. Enter the prescription number, then press the # key and wait for an answer.
5. To refill additional prescriptions, press 1 and repeat the process.

Refills should be reordered as soon as you receive your prescription but must be ordered at least 14 days before the refill is due to ensure prompt processing and delivery time.

VA Billing Phone Numbers

Billing and Copay: 1-866-393-1846 (Mon-Fri, 6:00AM - 6:00PM)

Online Billing Information: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/copay-rates/>

72 Hour Emergency Room Visit Notification Hotline: 1-844-724-7842

*** Call Network Authorization within 72 hours of ER visit. ***

Office of Community Care: 1-877-881-7618

VA Copays

Based on your specific eligibility status, you may be required to pay for medications and/or visits to the VA. This is determined based on your service connection, era of service, and income. You will NOT be charged a copayment for a VA medication used for treatment of a Service-Connected (SC) medical condition. Those who are classified as SC – 50% or greater – will NOT be charged a copayment on any VA medication. To find out more about your Eligibility, Benefits, and Copays, look here: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/> or contact Billing and Copay at 1-866-393-1846.

Means Test

Each year VA requires most Non-Service-Connected (NSC) Veterans and 0%-40% service-connected Veterans to complete a financial (income) assessment (referred to as a Means Test or Copay Test) to determine ability to pay copayments for medical care and/or prescription medications. Failure to complete the Means Test annually may result in increased copays.

You may be exempt from copayment based on financial hardship as determined by your Means Test.

Please ensure that we have the most current information on file for you.

How to complete a Means Test:

- Call 877-222-8387, option 1, to complete the Means Test by phone 6am-6pm. Veteran or Medical Power of Attorney must be present on the call.
- Print VA Form 10-10EZR at <https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-10-10ezr/>
- Mail it to:

Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Road
Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329

Copay Waiver

If you have completed a Means Test and still cannot pay your VA Copays, you may be eligible for a Copay Waiver for bills already incurred in the last 90 days.

You can complete the Financial Status Report Form 5655

(<http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA5655.pdf>) AND Statement in Support of

Claim Form 21-4138 (<http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-4138-ARE.pdf>) and mail them and any supporting financial documents (such as

3 months of bank statements, copy of your lease or mortgage, or social security award letter) to:

VA Central Plains

CPAC

P.O. Box 2012

Leavenworth, KS 66048

Copay Waiver can be submitted every 90 days. For more about Copay Waivers, please call Billing and Copay or contact your Primary Care Social Worker.

Catastrophic Disability

To be considered Catastrophically Disabled, you must have a severely disabling injury, disorder, or disease, as determined by a VA clinician or health care provider, which permanently compromises your ability to carry out activities of daily living, and:

- Requires you to have personal or mechanical assistance to leave home or bed, OR
- Requires you to have constant supervision to avoid physical harm to yourself or others.

If it is determined by a VA health care provider that you are Catastrophically Disabled, your Priority Group assignment will be upgraded to Priority Group 4 unless otherwise eligible for a higher Priority Group, and are exempt from inpatient, outpatient, and prescription copays. However, you may still be subject to copays for extended care (long-term care) services.

- Please contact your Primary Care Team for more information.

Community Resources/Assistance & Applying for Medicaid Benefits

Local resources for applying for Medicaid and/or Food Assistance Benefits:

1st Determine Eligibility:

- OH- <https://benefits.test.ohio.gov/eligibility>
 - Hamilton County 513-946-1000
 - Clermont County 513-732-7111
 - Butler County 513-887-4000
- IN- <https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr>
 - Determine eligibility - [Screen for Services \(in.gov\)](#)
- KY- https://kynect.ky.gov/benefits/s/prescreening?retPage=medicaid_kchip_program_c&language=en_US

2ND Required Documents

- OH/KY/IN Photo ID and official birth certificate.
- Proof of marriage (if applicable)
- Proof of health insurance (Medicare, VA card, etc.)
- Automobile title/registration (if applicable)
- Copy of Medical Power of Attorney document
- Proof of income (Social Security and/or VA award letters)
- Last three months of bank statements
- Proof of Residence
- Life insurance information and/or funeral policy (if applicable)
- DD-214

3rd Assistance with Applying for Benefits

- Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio 513-241-9400 ext. 1157

- VA Justice Outreach offers legal clinic offered every month through VA for more information call 513.977.6838.
- Financial counseling: Smart Money 513-241-7266
- Council On Aging LTC planning: 513-721-1025
- Elder Law KY: 859-279-4100
- NKY Medicaid Specialist: 859-655-2956

Levels of Care for additional support

Medicare.gov

- <https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/search.html>
- 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)

The official US government or Medicare certified providers. You can put in a zip code to find facilities near you and then do a side-by-side comparison of 3 facilities at a time. (Long-Term ACUTE Care, Inpatient Rehabilitation, Short-Term Skilled Nursing Care, and Long-Term Nursing Care)

Long-Term Acute Care (LTAC) and Inpatient Rehabilitation (IPR) will have access to same services as a hospital.

LTAC, is typically a placement following hospitalization for several illness and complex medical care needs to continue for such needs as ventilator or tracheotomy care.

IPR- for intense physical, occupational, and/or Speech/Language Pathology services up to 3-4 hours per day at inpatient facility. A typical placement stay is between 7-14 days.

Short-Term Skilled Nursing/Rehab Placements- are less than 30 days, provide PT/OT/SLP services up 2 hours per day. Physician for facility on site once per week.

Long-Term Care Nursing Placement- for person in need of facility on long term basis, unable to provide care for themselves or live independently. Most individuals apply for Medicaid benefits when going into Long Term Care, due Medicare does not cover any cost of Long-Term Care Placement coverage.

Assisted-Living Facility Placement- for person that requires partial assistance with daily living activities, that can live in a single level one bedroom apartment with supportive services. The facility is staffed 24 hours a day. Facility provides a variety of services such as at least 2-3 meals per day, activities, home health aide services, medication management, skilled nursing, physical therapy, and provides supervision, with a continued sense of independence for individuals that do not meet higher level of care.

Independent Living Community Placement- provides limited supervision and assistance. Individuals that live in this type of placement are independent with daily living activities, may require minimal assistance and supervision, and may have some supportive services in place. The facility provides handicap accessible living arrangements, community center, transportation, and activities for residents.

For assistance with locating and financial assistance options, local liaisons in the community are here to help:

A Place for Mom

[Find Assisted Living, Memory Care and Senior Living | A Place for Mom](#)

Leanna Bush, LNHA CDP | Healthcare Account Executive

P: (513) 764-3846

E: Leanna.Bush@aplaceformom.com

Bridge to Better Living

[Assisted Living Transition Consultants | Bridge to Better Living](#)

Veteran Benefits Information and Resources

The **Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)** manages monetary benefits and programs such as Service Connection Compensation, Non-Service-Connected Pension, Aid and Attendance, the GI Bill, VA Home Loans, Vocational

Rehabilitation, and many others. VA employees cannot assist with applying for VA benefits, but you can apply in several ways:

- **Contacting VBA at 1-800-827-1000**
- Submitted claims directly through www.ebenefits.va.gov (if filing through e-Benefits Veterans can check on the status of claims)

Veteran Service Officers (VSO) – help navigate the many federal, state, and local benefits/resources available to them. For example, VSO may assist Veterans with filing claims for disability benefits through VA, obtaining benefits relative to local vocational rehabilitation, VA Home Loans, education, insurance, and non-service-connected pension benefits.

Ohio

Hamilton County VSO- 513-946-3300

Butler County VSO-513-887-3600

Clermont County VSO-513-732-7363

Brown County VSO- 937-378-3155

Highland County VSO-937-393-8686

Warren County VSO-513-695-2717

Indiana

Ripley County VSO- 812-689-7165

Dearborn County VSO- 812-537-8819

KY

Northern KY VSO- 859-391-0325 covers the following counties for NKY Veterans:

(Boone, Kenton, Campbell, Gallatin, Grant, and Pendleton Counties)

Cincinnati VA representatives for the following:

American Legion- 513-475-6440

DAV contact at Cincinnati VA-513-475-6443.

Marines Corp League contact at Cincinnati VA 513-475-6441

Military Order of the Purple Heart 513-475-6335

Veterans of Foreign Wars 513-475-6439

Aid and Attendance

The Aid & Attendance (A&A) is a benefit through the VBA that may increase the monthly pension amount for qualifying veterans or survivors. To qualify, you must meet one of the following conditions:

- You require the aid of another person to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing, attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting yourself from the hazards of your daily environment.
- You are bedridden, in that your disability or disabilities requires that you remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment.
- You are a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity.
- Your eyesight is limited to a corrected 5/200 visual acuity or less in both eyes: or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less.

To learn if you may qualify you can talk with a VBA representative or VSO.

Burial and Survivors Benefits

Surviving spouses may be eligible for assistance with burial costs for veterans as well as spousal benefits after a veteran die. These benefits are based on the veteran's service and current federal regulations. You can learn more about your specific benefits through:

- Veterans Benefits Administration 1-800-827-1000
 - Burial Benefits: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp>
 - Survivors Benefit: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/pension/spousepen.asp>
<https://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/ftlogan.asp>
- VA Office of Decedent Affairs 513-475-6510

Transportation Resources

- VTS -Call directly to set up at 513-487-6066, if possible, set up at least 2 weeks prior to appointment

- Cincinnati VA Medical Center offers online requests for transportation,
 - www.vetride.va.gov/
- Transportation Resources for Veterans and Seniors in Greater Cincinnati Community:
 - Disabled American Veterans (DAV)- 859-547-3391
 - NKY, Transportation Senior Services 859-491-0522, 800-255-7265
 - Veteran Service Officers (VSO) -will assists with transportation arrangements (see above for contact information your local county Veteran Service Officer contact information)
- Clermont County Transportation (CART)- 513-724-1255

Community Resources

- Council on Aging of Southwest Ohio- Cincinnati Area 513-725-1025 (offers transportation to medical appointments)
 - <https://www.help4seniors.org/>
- Free store Foodbank- 513-241-1064- offers variety of resources, including food assistance, payee services, etc. <https://freestorefoodbank.org/>
- Northern KY Area on Aging- 859-692-2480
- NKY Legal Aid 859-431-8200
- Lifetime Resources (IN)- 800-742-5001 or 812-432-5215 serves nearby counties in Tri-state area (Dearborn, Ripley, Ohio, and Switzerland Counties)
 - <https://www.lifetime-resources.org/make-a-referral>
- People Working Cooperatively (PWC)- 513-351-7921/4612 Paddock Road; Cincinnati, OH 45229. PWC- is a non-profit organization serving low-income, elderly, and disabled homeowners in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. PWC provides free professional critical home repairs, weatherization, mobility modification, and maintenance services to help residents stay safely in their homes.
 - <http://www.pwchomerepairs.org>
- Safe Link- 1-800-SAFELINK. Public assistance program that ensures wireless telephone service is available and affordable for low-income subscribers. Offers an allotment of free airtime minutes Typically,

individuals are eligible if they participate in a public assistance program such as Food Stamps, Medicaid, SSI, TANF, HEAP, Free School Lunch, and Section 8. www.SafeLink.com

- **Helpful Handyman**- 812-537-2221. 230 Short Street Lawrenceburg, IN 47025. Helps with minor housing repairs.
- **Helping Hands**- 812-689-6363. 202 North Gaslight Drive; Versailles, IN 47042. Utility assistance for residents of South Ripley School District. Must either have a child in the home, **be over 60, or be disabled.**
- **Salvation Army (Greater Cincinnati Area)**-513-762-5600.
<https://easternusa.salvationarmy.org/greater-cincinnati/partner-with-adults/>
- **Salvation Army (Dearborn County)**- 812-926-1585

