

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

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420
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www.va.govFOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2020

VA lead facilities reintroduce health care services while ensuring safe environment

WASHINGTON – U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert Wilkie announced the department will begin to reintroduce health care services in select VA facilities May 18, as states reopen from COVID-19 shutdowns.

Each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) has selected Lead Sites to be the first to implement a phased approach to reintroducing select health care services while ensuring a safe environment. The lessons learned from these initial sites will help to inform how other facilities plan for expanding services in their facilities.

Lead Sites introducing select services include:

VISN 1-- White River Junction VA Medical Center (VAMC), VT

VISN 2 -- Syracuse VAMC, NY

VISN 4 -- Erie VAMC, PA

VISN 5 -- Hershel "Woody" Williams VAMC, WV

VISN 6 -- Salem VA Healthcare System (HCS), VA

VISN 7 -- Ralph H. Johnson VAMC, SC

VISN 8 -- West Palm Beach VAMC, FL

VISN 9 -- James H. Quillen VA HCS, TN

VISN 10 -- Louis Stokes Cleveland VAMC, OH

VISN 12 -- Tomah VAMC, WI

VISN 12 -- William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital Madison VAMC, WI

VISN 15 -- Kansas City VAMC, MO

VISN 16 -- Central Arkansas Veterans HCS, AR

VISN 17 -- South Texas VA HCS, TX

VISN 19 -- Fort Harrison VAMC, MT

VISN 20 -- Puget Sound VAMC, WA

VISN 20 -- Boise VAMC, ID

VISN 21 -- VA Southern Nevada HCS, NV

VISN 22 -- VA Southern Arizona HCS, AZ

VISN 23 -- Fargo HCS, ND

Veterans should contact their VA medical facility or provider for information about the expansion of services at any of these sites.

"The safety of Veterans and staff is the highest priority when we consider how we provide health care services and procedures during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "VA will take into account guidance from various agencies including federal, state and local government as we gradually expand health care services."

As a high reliability organization, safety is always paramount and will continue to guide our decision making. VA facilities may not be the first to reopen a full spectrum of care but in reintroducing services, VISNs and VA medical centers will consider unique circumstances of their state and local markets, environmental safety preparedness and clinical risk assessments.

VA has developed a risk-based framework to prioritize non-urgent procedures in addition to the urgent procedures currently being performed. Evaluation of such factors as patient health, staff safety and resource considerations will guide expansion, scheduling decisions and which services VA will reintroduce. VA will continue to track capacity needs for in-patient beds and other resources.

Rigorous safety measures including employee and Veteran COVID-19 screening, physical distancing and appropriate personal protective attire such as face coverings, will remain in place at all facilities. Additionally, VA will continue to maximize the personalized virtual care options

of telehealth, phone consults and wellness checks, as these services have been a valuable link to Veterans during this challenging time.

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