

Contact Information

Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center

www.houston.med.va.gov

2002 Holcombe Blvd., Houston, TX 77030
(713) 791-1414 or toll free 1-800-553-2278

Beaumont Outpatient Clinic

3420 Veterans Circle, Beaumont, TX 77707
(409) 981-8550 or toll free 1-800-833-7734

Conroe Outpatient Clinic

800 Riverwood Court, Suite 100, Conroe, TX 77304
(936) 522-4000

Galveston Outpatient Clinic

6115 Avenue L, Galveston, TX 77551
(409) 741-0256 or toll free 1-800-310-5001

Lufkin - Charles Wilson Outpatient Clinic

1301 W. Frank Ave., Lufkin, TX 75904
(936) 637-1342 or toll free 1-800-209-3120

Texas City Outpatient Clinic

9300 Emmett F. Lowry Expressway
Texas City, TX 77591
(409) 986-1129 or toll free 1-800-310-5001

VA Network Telecare Center (Nurse Hotline)

This 24 hour, 7 day a week hotline will assist you with a wide variety of medical problems and concerns.
(713) 794-8985 or toll free 1-800-639-5137

Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program

(713) 794-7848

McGovern Drop-In Center for Homeless Veterans

(713) 794-7533

Suicide Prevention Hotline

toll free 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

OEF/OIF Support Team

(713) 794-7034/8825/7928

email vhahouOEF/OIF@va.gov

Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center 2002 Holcombe Blvd., Houston, Texas



Fast Facts for Returning Veterans

Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF)
- OEF/OIF Support Team (713) 794-7034/8825/7928 -

Services for Returning Combat Veterans

The VA has developed special programs to serve the nation's newest veterans — the men and women who served in Operations Enduring Freedom & Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) — by assisting them with a smooth transition from active duty to civilian life. VA's goal is to ensure every seriously injured or ill serviceman and woman returning from combat receives easy access to benefits and world-class service.

Benefits and Services

In an effort to enhance benefits for many of our nation's veterans, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2008 extends the period of enhanced VA health care eligibility provided to veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998. Under the "Combat Veteran" authority, the VA provides cost-free health care services and nursing home care for conditions possibly related to military service and enrollment in Priority Group 6, unless the veteran is eligible for enrollment in a higher priority of care.

This benefit applies to OEF/OIF veterans, currently enrolled veterans, and new enrollees who were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003 and is good for five years after discharge. Additionally, veterans discharged from active duty before January 28, 2003, who apply for enrollment on or after January 28, 2008, are eligible for the enhanced benefit until January 27, 2011.

Veterans, including activated Reservists and members of the National Guard, are eligible if they served on active duty in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, and have an honorable discharge. Health benefits include cost-free VA health care and medications provided for conditions potentially related to combat service.

Veterans can become "grandfathered" for future access by enrolling with VA during this period. Veterans with service-related injuries or illnesses always have access to VA care for the treatment of their disabilities without any time limit, as do lower-income veterans. Hospital care, outpatient treatment, and nursing home services are all offered at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC).

Contact Information

Automated Appointment Information

(713) 794-7648 or toll free 1-800-454-1062

Make or Change an Appointment

(713) 794-8985 or toll free 1-800-639-5137
www.houston.med.va.gov/appointments.asp

Pharmacy

Refills toll free 1-800-454-1062 or www.myhealth.va.gov
Helpline (713) 794-7653

VA Eligibility and Enrollment

(713) 794-7288 or www.va.gov/elig

Veterans Affairs Regional Office www.vba.va.gov

6900 Almeda Road, Houston, TX 77030
(713) 383-1999 or toll free 1-800-827-1000
Home Loans toll free 1-888-232-2571
Education toll free 1-888-442-4551
Insurance toll free 1-800-669-8477
Headstones and Markers toll free 1-800-697-6947

Houston National Cemetery

(281) 447-8686 or www.cem.va.gov

Vet Centers

701 N. Post Oak Road (713) 682-2288
2990 Richmond Avenue (713) 523-0884

Copy of Your DD214 or Military Records

The National Archives
toll free 1-866-272-6272
www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/

Federal Benefits for Veterans & Dependents Booklet

www1.va.gov/opa/is1/index.asp

Vet-to-Vet Support Group

(713) 791-1414, ext. 6729

Texas Veterans Commission

Hotline toll free 1-800-252-VETS (8387)
www.tvc.state.tx.us/Locations.html

Mental Health Care and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

The MEDVAMC has developed and expanded several programs to provide mental health screening, counseling, and early treatment. If a mental health diagnosis is made during the veteran's initial screening, he/she is referred to the appropriate Mental Health Care Line program, service, or professional. The MEDVAMC Mental Health Care Line offers full interdisciplinary assessments of all patients and provides on-site treatment and referrals as needed, medication management, individual and group therapy, PTSD education groups, PTSD and substance abuse dual diagnosis groups, an intensive day hospital program, a sexual trauma track, a trauma recovery program, applied research such as medication trial and psychotherapy, specialized smoking cessation program, alumni peer support groups, and coordination and formal consultation with the Houston Vet Centers.

Suicide Prevention Hotline

Veterans experiencing emotional and suicidal crisis, and their concerned family members or friends, have immediate access to emergency counseling services 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Moving Forward and Reintegration Programs

The Moving Forward Program focuses on OEF/OIF veterans who do not require treatment for mental illness, but need assistance coping with stress, vocational counseling, and information about education opportunities. The Reintegration Program provides care to those veterans requiring mental health intervention and uses individual/group/family therapy and medication referrals as the situation requires.

Polytrauma Center

The Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center treats traumatic brain injury alone or in combination with amputation, blindness or other visual impairment, complex orthopedic injuries, auditory and vestibular disorders, and mental health concerns. MEDVAMC has added clinical expertise to address the special problems the multi-trauma combat injured patient may face. This includes intensive psychological support treatment for both patient and family, intensive case management, and rehabilitation using the latest high-tech specialty prostheses. Polytrauma teams bring together experts to provide innovative, personalized treatment to help the injured veteran achieve optimal function and independence.

Health Care Begins With Two Screenings

An OEF/OIF combat veteran's first contact with the MEDVAMC consists of two screenings: 1) a medical appointment with a general practitioner in a Primary Care Clinic; and 2) an appointment with a mental health professional to be checked for symptoms of a variety of mental health complaints including depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety disorder, substance abuse and/or dependence, and adjustment disorder.

Primary Health Care Appointment

During your first medical appointment, you will be screened for many different medical conditions including hepatitis A, B, and C and traumatic brain injury. Tests will be run if you answer yes to any of the following questions: Do you have a tattoo or body piercing? Have you had unprotected sexual intercourse with multiple partners or engaged in male to male sexual intercourse? Did you eat local foods or drink unprocessed liquids? Are you currently experiencing chronic fatigue? Did or do you use illicit drugs? Did your work put you in contact with blood or other bodily fluids? Your health care provider will also ask questions to determine if you may have an underlying brain injury. Please tell your provider if you experienced an explosion near you, a motor vehicle accident while in service, a head concussion or contusion, or a fall in which your head was involved.

Mental Health Care Appointment

During your mental health appointment, you will be asked questions to determine if you suffer from PTSD. Have you ever had an experience so frightening, horrible, or upsetting that it caused you to have nightmares or daydreams? Have you tried hard not to think about it or went out of your way to avoid situations that remind you? Are you constantly on guard or easily startled? Have you felt numb or detached from others, activities, or your surroundings? You also will be asked some personal questions about your time in service. You will be asked if you ever received unwanted or uninvited sexual attention and if anyone ever forced or threatened to force you to have sex against your will. To determine if you suffer from depression, you will be asked questions like have you been bothered with little interest or pleasure in doing things? Felt down, depressed, or hopeless? Have you felt or thought about suicide, or harming yourself or others?

Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program

This program assists veterans secure safe housing reflective of their abilities and preferences and obtain desired skill development services. Treatment goals for each veteran are individualized and may include immediate basic needs of food and protective housing; stabilization of mental health problems including substance abuse treatment and sobriety maintenance, individual and group psychotherapy, evaluation for financial disability benefits, vocational assessment, gainful employment, and schooling or a training program.

Houston Vet Centers

Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to all veterans who served in any combat zone in consumer-friendly facilities apart from traditional VA medical centers. Services are also available for their family members for military related issues. In Houston, one Vet Center is located at 701 N. Post Oak Road, (713) 682-2288, and the other at 2990 Richmond Avenue, Suite 225, (713) 523-0884.

Dental Benefits

Veterans who served on active duty 90 days or more are eligible to receive one-time VA dental benefits if they make an application to VA within 180 days post discharge from active duty and if their discharge forms (DD Forms 214) does not indicate necessary dental treatment had been provided with 90 days of release from active duty.

Compensation and Disability Claims

Contact the Veterans Affairs Regional Office to file claims for combat related illnesses and injuries at 1-800-827-1000.

VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics

Five outpatient clinics, located in Beaumont, Conroe, Galveston, Lufkin, and Texas City, provide veterans with preventive health services, primary medical care, mental health services, and routine radiology exams and diagnostic tests.

Cutting-Edge Prosthetics Department

Veterans have access to the latest prosthetic technologies. These include microprocessor components such as the RHEO knee, Adaptive knee, Proprio "Bionic" Foot, and the C-Leg. These computer-controlled rheomagnetic, pneumatic, and hydraulic systems are regulated by internal feedback.

Nursing Hotline

The MEDVAMC operates the VA Network Telecare Center Hotline at (713) 794-8985 or toll-free 1-800-639-5137. Registered nurses, social workers, and mental health professionals are ready to provide emergency counseling assistance, make appointments, and answer veteran health care questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Substance Abuse and Homeless Shelters

The Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program has an addiction therapist working directly in homeless shelters, counseling veterans with substance abuse problems.

Visual Impairment Service Center

The MEDVAMC continues to expand its rehabilitation programs for low vision and blind veterans. In early 2008, MEDVAMC officially opened a new, 2,900 square foot home for its Visual Impairment Service Team, Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialist program, and new Visual Impairment Services Outpatient Rehabilitation (VISOR) program.

Supported Employment Program

The Supported Employment Program is designed to help disabled veterans find and maintain competitive employment. This new model for vocational rehabilitation avoids lengthy pre-vocational assessments and shelter-type work experiences in favor of directly placing and supporting veterans in community-based jobs tailored to individual preferences, needs, and strengths. Veterans are assigned to an employment specialist who can dedicate a significant amount of one-on-one time in the pursuit of employment, even if the veteran prefers only a few hours of work per week, and in supporting the worker indefinitely after the hire.

Active Outreach to Combat Veterans

The OEF/OIF Support Team, along with health care professionals from the Mental Health Care Line, proactively meet with local Reserve and National Guard Units before and after they deploy in order to brief them about available VA benefits, placing special emphasis on mental health screening and counseling. Staff members regularly attend meetings of various community and veterans groups in an attempt to contact eligible veterans who have not yet enrolled for VA care. To contact the OEF/OIF Support Team, call (713) 794-7034/8825 or email vhahouOEF/OIF@va.gov.