The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other Federal agencies to monitor and respond to the current outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States. VHA is operating in accordance with CDC guidance and actively participating in response efforts in local communities to address the outbreak.

Help Us Spread the Word to Veterans

Please help VHA share the following messages with Veterans:

1. “Stay home and phone” – contact your local VA facility remotely before visiting, and consider using VA’s telehealth and virtual care options.
2. Be prepared for some changes in your visit to our facility. We are screening everyone for fever, cough, and flu-like symptoms before they can enter. Call ahead if you have these symptoms or need to cancel or reschedule your appointment. Plan to leave home earlier than usual to allow time for screening.

**VHA Actions**

VHA has a comprehensive plan in place to protect the health of everyone who visits or works at one of our facilities. The Emergency Management Coordination Cell (EMCC) has been activated and is working diligently to respond to this rapidly changing situation. Supply chain measures are in place, negative airflow beds are available across VHA facilities, and COVID-19 testing kits have been made available.

VHA is reinforcing adherence to the Standard, Contact, and Airborne Precautions, which include the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Healthcare personnel evaluating or treating a patient suspected or confirmed to have a COVID-19 infection have been directed to use these precautions.

VHA is conducting frequent, repeated communications with employees on the importance of common sense behaviors for reducing the spread of illness, including washing hands for at least 20 seconds, avoiding touching their faces, covering coughs and sneezes, getting vaccinated against the flu, avoiding other people who are sick, and encouraging employees to stay home if they are sick.

In addition, VHA is heavily encouraging Veterans to call their local medical center before visiting the facility and telling them to consider using [VA’s telehealth and virtual care options](https://www.va.gov/telehealth) like VA Video Connect. VA’s telehealth providers can evaluate their symptoms and provide a diagnosis and comprehensive care.
Screening at VHA Facilities

All VA medical facilities are implementing screening measures for signs of respiratory illness and exposure to COVID-19. Via telehealth services, we will provide a first line of defense using virtual screening for symptoms or exposure. Onsite, we will use standardized screening questions at appointment check in and during initial clinical screening.

Patient Privacy

As a reminder, VHA cannot release Personally Identifying Information (PII) about patients, in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Visit VA’s Public Health Website for the latest updates.