

Northport VA Medical Center

# Resident Guidebook

Community Living Centers

Northport, N.Y.  
2019

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## VISIT THESE VA WEBSITES

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Northport VAMC	<a href="http://www.northport.va.gov">http://www.northport.va.gov</a>
VISN 2	<a href="http://vaww.visn2.va.gov/">http://vaww.visn2.va.gov/</a>
National VHA	<a href="http://www.va.gov">http://www.va.gov</a>
MyHealtheVet	<a href="https://www.myhealth.va.gov">https://www.myhealth.va.gov</a>

## OUR MISSION

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Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

## OUR VISION

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Veterans Health Administration (VHA) will continue to be the benchmark of excellence and value in healthcare and benefits by providing exemplary services that are both patient-centered and evidence based.

This care will be delivered by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery and continuous improvement.

It will emphasize prevention and population health and contribute to the Nation's wellbeing through education, research and service in national emergencies.

### Providing Information

Residents should provide, to the best of their knowledge, accurate information about present complaints, past illness, hospitalizations, medications and other matters related to their health.

### Sharing Expectations

Residents should provide the organization with information about their expectations of and satisfaction with the organization.

### Asking Questions

Residents should ask questions when they do not understand their care, treatment, or services or what they are expected to do.

### Following Instructions

Residents should accept their share of responsibility for the outcomes of care, treatment, or services if they do not follow the instructions about their care, treatment, or services.

### Following Policies and Procedures

Residents should follow the organization's policies and procedures.

### Showing Respect and Consideration

Residents should be considerate of the organization's staff and property.

### Meeting financial commitments

Residents should meet any financial obligation agreed to with organization.

## WELCOME

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Welcome to the Northport VA Medical Center's Community Living Center (CLC), where it is our privilege to serve you.

The CLC provides a large range of services including skilled Nursing, Geriatric Evaluation and Management, Palliative Care, Respite Care and Short Stay. Our model of care is resident-centered. Our primary goal is to meet your individual needs through compassionate and expert care, thereby restoring and preserving your health.

We welcome any suggestions you might have that will improve the time you spend in the CLC.

Let us know your personal preferences regarding waking and sleeping, bathing, your hobbies and leisure activities. A treatment plan will be developed with you and your family. This plan is flexible and will change as your care needs change. We hope that your stay with us will be pleasant and relaxing.

This handbook provides basic information to help you and your family participate in your care.

## IMPORTANT PATIENT INFORMATION

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You are encouraged and expected to seek immediate help from your treatment team or a VA patient advocate if you have issues or complaints. Please refer to the “Reporting Concerns” section of this guide for additional details about this process. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation. Please note that privacy concerns will be addressed by the Medical Center’s Privacy Officer.

### Patient Advocate

In support of the basic rights of patients and families to have any unresolved care concerns fully addressed, the facility maintains a patient advocacy program. VA patient advocates are available weekdays, from 8 AM to 4:30 PM, and may be contacted through the medical center’s telephone operator. During evenings, nights and weekends, unresolved concerns may be directed to the facility’s Nurse on Duty (NOD). Requests to speak with the NOD can be made through the CLC unit charge nurse.

### Patient Privacy

Safeguarding the privacy of our patients is more than just a matter of following the law, it is an essential part of caring for patients. The Notice of Privacy Practices we provide explains how we may use and disclose your protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment, and healthcare operations. Additional copies of the notice are available upon request. Please contact the Privacy Officer at (631) 261-4400, ext. 4544, with any questions or concerns.

### Interpreter Services

Interpreter services are available for deaf, speech impaired, and non-English speaking veterans and their family members. Please contact your health care team to arrange for interpreter assistance.

### Office of the Inspector General Hotline

To report criminal activity, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and safety issues to the OIG, call toll-free 1-800-488-8244, or write to

VA OIG Hotline  
P.O. Box 50410  
Washington, DC 20091-0410

or fax to 202-565-7936

or E-mail [vaoighotline@va.gov](mailto:vaoighotline@va.gov)

### Reporting Concerns

You are encouraged and expected to seek help from your treatment team or a patient advocate if you have problems or complaints. You will be given understandable information about the complaint process in your preferred language. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.

You are encouraged and expected to discuss questions and concerns about your care with members of the treatment team in a. Your healthcare providers (e.g. doctors, nurses, etc.) are in the best position to respond to questions or issues regarding your care. We encourage and appreciate family input and suggestions. However, should they contradict medically indicated treatment/care, evidence based clinical/medical practices will supersede those preferences. Please note, all medical, nursing, and clinical protocols will be followed to ensure resident safety.

If you have brought a question or concern to the provider and the issue remains unresolved, or if you have a concern you deem of a more serious nature, please use the following general protocol:

- Bring the concern to the charge nurse, who will either address the problem or notify the CLC nurse manager. If it is an issue that requires attention from the treatment team, the nurse manager will bring the concern to the treatment team and the issue will be discussed and addressed accordingly. You will receive direct feedback regarding resolution(s) to your concerns.
- If you are not satisfied with the resolution(s) or if the team indicates the issue is not resolvable by the treatment team, you may contact a patient advocate, who works directly with all departments on your behalf and can address your questions, problems or special needs. If you, or a veteran you care for, has not been able to resolve important issues related to VA through other means of communications, you may contact a patient advocate Monday-Friday (8:00am-4:30pm) by contacting the medical center's telephone operator. If a significant concern arises when the patient advocate is not available, the Nurse on Duty (NOD) may be contacted.

## ABOUT YOUR STAY

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### Items to Bring to CLC

We recommend that you bring the following items with you to the CLC:

- a list of medications, vitamins, and supplements
- a copy of your Advance Directives
- contact information for your legal Next of Kin and/or Power of Attorney for Health Care/Health Care Proxy
- seasonal appropriate casual and comfortable clothing, such as sweat suits, jogging pants, t-shirts, jacket
- hairbrush, comb, toothbrush
- eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures
- wheelchairs, walkers, canes (will be assessed by a rehab therapist for safe use)
- walking shoes/sneakers
- underwear and socks

### Cash

If you have cash for more than your immediate needs, you should deposit it with the agent cashier. Residents should keep their money on their person and keep no more than \$20.00 at a time. If you wish to make cash withdrawals from your account, please see your social worker who will help you make the necessary arrangements with the cashier.

### Clothing and Laundry

Please be sure that all clothing is given to the CLC staff so that it may be labeled with your name and CLC number. This process may take up to a week to complete. Please do not send any items to the laundry until this is complete.

Washers and dryers are available on each unit for personal use and families are welcome to use them to assist you with your laundry. Please provide your own laundry detergent, if you decide to use the unit machines. You also have the option of sending your clothes to the main laundry. To minimize loss, please notify staff when new clothing is brought into the CLC. Clothing will be clearly marked with your name and CLC number prior to wearing or laundering. This will be done by the facility staff. We make every effort to ensure that personal clothing is returned to the proper resident after laundering. Please notify your nurse manager of any missing clothing items.

### Daily Routines

We encourage all residents to be up and out of bed, dressed in appropriate clothing, and with good hygiene every day, to the extent possible based on medical needs. There are a variety of unit activities and events, socialization opportunities, and mealtime gatherings in which we encourage you to participate. The treatment team will work with you to tailor your participation based on your individual preferences and medical needs. As the CLC is your home and not an acute hospital setting, we discourage you from staying in your bed or your bedroom all day long. We strive to promote your independence and connection to others.

### Food and Food Items

Only non-perishable food items, kept in tightly closed plastic or metal containers, may be stored in your bedroom. This may be restricted or limited, based upon your specific diet needs. In keeping with environmental safety protocol, the number of non-perishable food items stored in your bedroom may need to be limited if it becomes excessive. Prepared foods must be placed in the refrigerator in the kitchen, with your name and the date on all food. We are only able to keep food placed in the refrigerator for 48 hours. Condiments and juices are good until the manufacturer's expiration date. Food placed in the freezer must be labeled and dated, and can be kept for 30 days. Any food not properly labeled will be discarded.

Family or visitors are instructed to check with the charge nurse prior to providing any food or beverage items to a resident during a visit. Once food items are cleared by the charge nurse, any perishable food items are to be placed in the resident refrigerator clearly marked with the resident's name and the current date; please only bring small servings into the resident's bedroom. *Due to the varied personal needs and medical conditions of our residents, we request that visitors and residents do not offer or provide food or beverage items to other veterans residing in the CLCs.*

### Mail

Mail is delivered to and from the facility Monday through Friday and distributed by the unit clerk, nursing staff, or your social worker. Any suspicious packages will be opened by the resident in the presence of staff. Your mailing address is:

YOUR NAME  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Medical Center Building 92, CLC 1 or 2 OR Building 8, CLC 3 or 4  
79 Middleville Road  
Northport, NY 11768

### Patient Funds

Upon admission to the CLC, you will have the option to open a Patient Funds account through the on-campus Patient Funds office.

We recommend that you keep about \$500 in your Patient Funds account. These funds can be used for resident purchases, recreation outings, and/or barber or beauty salon services. Your social worker will assist you in completing withdrawal slips for money. A Patient Funds representative delivers money directly to residents on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Deposits to Patient Funds accounts should be in the form of a money order or check made out to *Department of Veterans Affairs* with the veteran's name and full social security number on it. Please note that checks take 10-14 days to clear and that all balances in a Patient Funds account will be returned upon discharge.

Family members can deposit funds into a resident's Patient Funds account by either (1) visiting the Patient Funds office in the basement of Building 200 or (2) mailing a check or money order to:

Northport VAMC  
P.O. Box 9020  
Northport, NY 11768  
Attention: Agent Cashier (04F-1)

### Personal Belongings

You are encouraged to keep in your room personal belongings that will help you feel at home. You may wish to bring photographs, plants, books, games, a CD or DVD player (approved by Biomedical Engineering service), or a special blanket from home. Due to fire hazard precautions, personal belongings kept in your bedroom cannot be stored in cardboard boxes or on the floor. We may need to limit personal items if they make it unsafe when trying to go in and out of your bedroom. If you have a question about what is permissible, check with your nurse manager.

All resident-owned equipment, such as electric shavers, CD or DVD players, answering machines, etc., brought into the VAMC is required to be inspected and tagged by Biomedical Engineering. Please notify your nurse

manager or unit secretary about equipment needing inspection. A tag or sticker will be placed on the equipment to show that it is approved for use. Please do not remove the tag or sticker until you are discharged.

### Television

Television sets are provided for your entertainment. Television hours are not restricted, but please be considerate of your roommate. Please notify your nurse or the unit clerk if the television in your room is not working properly.

### Telephone Service

Rooms in CLCs 1, 2, and 4 have bedside telephones; CLC 3 does not provide bedroom telephones. Residents with telephones in their bedrooms can receive calls from their family and friends. They can place outbound calls by dialing (9) followed by (0) which will connect the resident to an outside operator. Upon reaching the operator, they can either make the call collect or use their credit card or calling card to complete the call. It may be possible to have a regular telephone line installed in a resident bedroom to receive and make outbound calls without the use of a calling card. Any cost associated with the installation and the monthly telephone service is the responsibility of the resident/NOK. Please speak with your treatment team for further information. You may also bring an answering machine or special adaptive phone (approved by Biomedicine). On CLC 3, residents are assisted by staff to make outgoing calls. Friends and family can reach residents by calling the unit nurses' station.

Some residents choose to use a personal cell phone. While this is permissible, the VAMC is not responsible for lost or misplaced cell phones or chargers. If a resident makes persistent phone calls or uses the phone inappropriately, a plan may need to be developed with staff to limit or halt such behavior. This may include family's involvement in removing the cell phone from the resident's personal belongings.

### Visiting

The CLCs have open visiting hours. We encourage regular visitation by family members and friends. Children must be supervised by a parent or another responsible adult. Limits may be placed on visitation if there is a concern for the safety and wellbeing of residents and/or the clinical environment. If this situation arises, you will be given a plan outlining the specific guidelines and expectations for your visits.

There are several common areas you may enjoy during visits. Visitor restrooms are available for use during visits. Please refrain from entering staff designated areas.

### Valuables

If you have more cash than for your immediate needs, we encourage you to deposit it with the agent cashier. When large sums of money are kept on the unit, there is a greater risk for personal theft and loss. Residents should keep their money on their person and keep a reasonable amount for their weekly spending habits. The Northport VAMC and CLC staff are not responsible for lost money or other valuables. If there is a suspicion of theft, the police will be notified and a formal investigation will be conducted. Some rooms have locked bedside drawers where you can safely keep money and other valuables. If you do not have access to a locked drawer and would like one, please request one from your nurse manager. Access to locked drawers is not possible for residents whose cognitive deficits preclude them from safely keeping a key for the lock. In such cases, family involvement may be solicited to protect valuables.

### Dining Service and Meals

Your doctor will prescribe the best diet to suit your needs. You are encouraged to eat three meals a day and to drink plenty of fluids, unless you are on a fluid restriction. We encourage you to discuss specific food preferences with your dietitian.

We consider mealtimes to be a social event and we encourage you to keep to the dining schedule. If you have a medical need, mealtimes can be changed - within reason. Ordering take-out food may be an option if you are interested. Please speak with your treatment team for more information.

Nutrition & Food Services has enhanced dining service for the CLC. An employee from Nutrition & Food Services will take meal orders daily. You may request to dine in your room, but we encourage all residents to eat in the dining rooms. Meals offered in your CLC are as follows:

### CLC 1 & CLC 2

#### Breakfast

Fresh cooked-to-order service is available 7 days a week!

#### Lunch

Hot entrees are available from our menu daily from the 92nd Street Grill.

Monday to Friday: hot entrée plus griddle service for cooked-to-order options from the 92nd Street Grill.

Saturday and Sunday: hot entrée plus an open deli bar for fresh sandwiches and cold plates.

#### Dinner

Choice of two hot entrees plus an open deli bar for fresh sandwiches and cold plates are delivered to your unit daily.

### CLC 3 & CLC 4

#### Breakfast

Monday to Friday: fresh cooked-to-order service is available in the Happy Days Diner, located in the basement of building 8.

Saturday and Sunday: fresh cooked-to-order service will be delivered to your unit.

#### Lunch

Monday to Friday: hot entrée plus griddle service for cooked-to-order options in the Happy Days Diner.

Saturday and Sunday: hot entrée plus griddle service for cooked-to-order options will be delivered to your unit.

#### Dinner

Choice of two hot entrees are delivered to your unit daily.

## FOR YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY

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### Absence from the Unit

If you wish to leave the CLC to go to another area within the Northport VAMC campus, please notify your treatment team of this request. Based upon a clinical and safety assessment, your treatment team will determine whether the request will be approved. If your request has been approved, please check-in with your charge nurse or nurse manager before leaving the unit, inform them of your destination and expected return time. Please notify your charge nurse or nurse manager upon your return. If you are missing from the unit without notifying staff, VA Police will be notified and a search protocol initiated. To ensure safety, off unit trips may require an escort, which will be determined on a case by case basis.

### Therapeutic Absence

Gate passes of up to six hours may be therapeutically helpful and are intended to reinforce your treatment program. When you have treatment team approval, you are encouraged to go out on gate pass with relatives or friends. Please make your gate pass request at least four days in advance to allow the treatment team time to assess the safety of your request. Your gate pass companion is the person responsible for your safety while off campus. He or she will be required to meet with the treatment team prior to the gate pass to review safety guidelines. Written safety instructions will also be provided. If you, the treatment team and your companion agree with safety guidelines, your provider will then place a gate pass order indicating the time of departure and return, expected destination and activities. Your companion is required to speak to the charge nurse face to face upon leaving for and returning from gate passes. Future gate pass requests will be considered on a case by case basis based on safety concerns and the therapeutic value of the gate pass.

### Authorized Absences

You may also request an extended gate pass of 24 to 96 hours. Please submit your gate pass request at least four days in advance so that appropriate preparations may be made to ensure your safety and wellbeing, including the provision of medications and other therapeutic items. Again, your gate pass companion is the person responsible for your safety while off campus. He or she will be required to meet with the treatment team prior to the gate pass to review safety guidelines. If you, the treatment team and your companion agree with safety guidelines, your provider will then place a gate pass order indicating the time of departure and return, expected destination and activities. Your companion is required to speak to the charge nurse face to face upon leaving for and returning from gate passes. Future gate pass requests will be considered on a case by case basis based on safety concerns and the therapeutic value of the gate pass. *Gate passes are not able to exceed 96 hours, no more than once per month, and are limited to no more than 15 days per calendar year.*

### Fire and Disaster Regulations

Fire drills and disaster drills are held on a routine basis. We expect cooperation in following all rules to ensure your safety. The notification of a fire or a drill will be sounded by a series of tones. You are requested to remain in your room during a fire or drill and to follow the instructions of staff. If you are away from the CLCs at the time of a fire or drill, please remain where you are and follow the instructions of staff in that area. When the fire or drill is completed, an announcement will be made to indicate "all clear." You may then resume your regular activities.

### Fall Prevention

Your risk of falling increases when you are over age 65, take multiple medications, have had a previous fall, have muscle weakness, walk with an assistive device like a walker or a cane, have decreased vision, or are in an unfamiliar place. Tips to prevent falling include:

- Rise slowly from lying down or sitting. Sit for a minute on the side of your bed before standing. Before getting in or out of a wheelchair, make sure the brakes are locked.

- Call for help when you need something that is out of arm's reach, or need to get up and/or go to the bathroom.
- Watch out for furniture and equipment in your way. Avoid leaning on furniture that might move. Report spills and other hazards as soon as they occur.
- Wearing your shoes and socks rather than slippers when out of bed is recommended to prevent skids and injury to your feet. Use your cane or walker as prescribed.

You and your family, along with the entire VA Northport staff, are encouraged to participate in VA's falls prevention and falls injury reduction program.

### Identification of Residents

When you are admitted, you will be asked if you would like your name posted on the outside of your bedroom door. You will also be provided with a name bracelet that includes your picture, name, date of birth, and social security number. Depending on your specific needs, your name bracelet may also include the following color alerts: red (allergy to food/medicine/latex), yellow (fall risk), blue (choking risk), or orange (wander/elopement risk). You may also be given another colored bracelet to identify if you have a DNR order (purple band) or limited limb access (pink band). Your nurse will review with you the reasons why you have specific colors on your bracelet(s). It is important that you are properly identified prior to medication administration and other procedures. Always show your name bracelet to the provider to assist in proper identification. A good reminder is to state your name. Residents can partner with us to prevent errors. Never be reluctant to ask questions about your medication or medical treatment, or to question anything you think is wrong.

### Pain Management

For us to determine how to best manage your pain, the nurses may ask you the following questions:

- Describe your pain
- Where does it hurt?
- What is its intensity?
- How often and for how long does it hurt?
- What makes it worse/better?

### Medications and Treatments

You will be expected to be on your CLC for scheduled treatments and medication. Your nurse will inform you of the times for these activities. To prepare for being discharged to your own home, you and/or your caregiver may be invited to participate in activities that will help you when you go home, such as self-administration of medications and treatments.

### Prohibited Items

Alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs, firearms, knives, razor blades, and other items that could be used as a weapon or in a dangerous manner are strictly prohibited in the CLCs. The police will be notified if any of these items are found. The risk associated with certain items may vary depending on the specific CLC, the specific resident, and the item in question. For example, residents are not permitted to keep sharp scissors in their personal belongings. Depending on the unit and/or resident, however, small, rounded scissors may be permitted.

Any prescribed or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, or supplements from home are not permitted in the CLCs. Your CLC medical provider will prescribe any needed medications, vitamins, or supplements and they will be provided to you by nursing staff as ordered. If you do bring in medications, vitamins, or supplements from home, staff will dispose of them following VA protocol. Other items, such as mouthwash and cologne,

must be brought to the attention of your nursing staff. Depending on the unit and/or resident, these items may need to be held at the nurses' station.

If there is suspicion of prohibited items in your possession, a health and wellness check will be conducted to ensure your safety, the safety of others, and that of the environment. These checks may involve nursing staff inspecting your person, bedroom, and personal belongings. VA police may be present for these inspections.

### Shared Medical Information

As part of our patient centered culture, we encourage you to request to review and discuss your inpatient medical chart with a member of your healthcare team. Ask any member of your healthcare team how you may review your inpatient record for laboratory and other test results, your diagnosis and treatment options, and your medications.

### Treatment Planning

Within days of admission and each quarter, you will have the opportunity to meet with your interdisciplinary treatment team. You will be notified in person, and your family/legal Next of Kin will be notified of these meetings by mail. The treatment team meeting is an opportunity to discuss your care, set goals, and review issues. The times and dates are firmly established by the unit.

If you cannot attend these meetings, upon advance notice and availability, a teleconference can be arranged. If indicated, a team meeting can be arranged as issues or concerns arise outside of the set team meetings. We encourage you and your family to be involved in your treatment and care planning. This includes participating in the development and modification of your care plan, formulating and documenting Advance Directives, and following steps outlined in your treatment plan.

### Smoking Regulations

To promote the health and safety of veterans, visitors, and employees, smoking is restricted on the CLC premises. Residents will be assessed for their ability to smoke safely and independently before being permitted to smoke and will be assessed as needed if there is any concern about changes in a resident's ability. Residents who are unable to smoke safely and independently will be provided nicotine replacement therapy and other smoking cessation supports. Residents who are assessed to be able to smoke safely and independently may only smoke in clearly designated smoking areas and *not less than 35 feet from the entrance. Due to varied personal needs and abilities of our residents, we request that residents and visitors do not offer or provide cigarettes or lighting materials to other residents.* Unwillingness or inability to follow safe smoking guidelines will result in the discontinuation of smoking. In such case, smoking cessation supports will be provided for your comfort and safety.

Please speak with your treatment team for further information about the current CLC smoking policy and safe smoking guidelines.

## MEDICAL DECISIONS

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### Advance Directives/Health Care Proxy

Advance Directives are legal written documents that will allow you to decide what health care treatment you want to receive if you become too ill or unable to communicate for yourself. These include: VA Living Will, VA Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care/Health Care Proxy, Mental Health Advance Directives, and a Treatment Preference Form.

The Health Care Proxy form allows you to name a health care agent/health care proxy to make health care decisions for you. Your agent/proxy should know your health care wishes and values. The Living Will allows you to state in writing what kind of treatment you want to receive if you become ill and unable to make your wishes known. If you have no Living Will, this decision will be based on what your health care agent/proxy or family knows about you. A Mental Health Advance Directive is for patients whose future decision-making capacity may be at risk due to a mental illness. In this directive, you can indicate preferences about future mental health care and treatment choices.

If you would like to complete a Health Care Proxy, Living Will, or a Treatment Preference Form, your VA social worker can assist you. The social worker will help begin this process and complete the paperwork needed to record your wishes. The social worker will also be able to provide you and your family with education and counseling to help you make the best decisions for yourself.

If you already have Advance Directives that were completed in the community, please make sure to give those documents to your social worker upon admission. Your CLC physician or nurse practitioner is available to discuss the medical decisions that need to be made to ensure your wishes are honored in the future. These documents can be changed at any time if your wishes change. Other staff members such as the chaplain, psychologist, dietitian, etc. are available should you desire their assistance. You do not have to complete an Advance Directive to receive treatment.

### Advanced Illness and Palliative Care

Facing an illness that is not getting better and cannot be cured can be very difficult. You may have many questions about your illness and the choices you must make. A member of the Advanced Illness/Palliative Care Consultation Team can help you obtain information, offer support and guidance, help with choices, coordinate your care, work with your health care team, and help you and your loved ones deal with issues of advanced illness. Ask a member of your health care team to contact them for you.

### Consent for Treatment

You have the right to be informed about, and to accept or refuse, any medical treatment or procedure. Be sure that you understand what the consent says. Do not hesitate to ask questions until you feel comfortable about what you are signing. If you do not understand it, ask for an explanation so that you know what you are agreeing to. Tell your doctor who your health care proxy is, in the event that you cannot make a decision for yourself. Make sure that this person understands your wishes.

### Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)

DNR means cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and/or other heroic health or life saving measures will not be started when cardiac or respiratory arrest occurs. After talking with your doctor, you can make the DNR decision. If you are too ill to make that decision, your family, or health care proxy/power of attorney can make that decision for you. A DNR order is not permanent and may be stopped at any time. You will also be asked if you want to carry this DNR request to your home or another healthcare facility, also known as an Out of

Hospital DNR. If you agree to an Out of Hospital DNR, a DNR bracelet will be issued from Pharmacy at discharge.

### [Ethics Advisory Committee](#)

The Ethics Advisory Committee is a group of VA staff who can provide guidance if you are having trouble making choices about your care (i.e. performing heroic measures at the end-of-life, feeding tube, etc.). If you or your family have questions about the ethics of any treatment or other issues, talk to your health care team. If you still have concerns, you may ask the Ethics Advisory Committee for a review.

### [Organ Donation](#)

You can make organ, eye, tissue, body, and other anatomical gifts. Talk to your family members about organ and tissue donation so they know your wishes. Donations will always be handled with discretion and sensitivity to you and your family's circumstances, beliefs, and desires. Under no circumstances will you or family member be pressured into making anatomical gifts. Speak with your social worker for more information and to complete the necessary forms.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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### Chaplain Service

VA Chaplains are spiritual specialists providing soul care in times of spiritual distress. Also, the chaplain stands with patients and their families in their pain and distress as they seek meaning and purpose in their health-related crisis. Spirituality is an integral part of the healing process.

VA Chaplains address: Unresolved grief and/or bereavement, feelings of guilt or shame, moral injury, depression, PTSD, anger/rage difficulties, alienation from faith, and spiritual guidance for life events. The chaplains are skilled listeners who offer emotional and spiritual support to patients and family members of all faith traditions.

Worship and Religious Services in the CLC (Building 92):

#### *Catholic*

Sunday @ 10:00 am

#### *The Rosary*

Mondays @ 1:00 pm

#### *Protestant*

Sunday @ 10:00 am

#### *Jewish*

Saturday @ 10:00 am

### Recreation Therapy Service

Recreation Therapy Service provide a variety of therapy and diversional programs. A monthly calendar of programs and events is distributed to all residents and posted on the CLC unit. Please speak with the CLC recreation therapists for additional information and assistance.

### Pet Visitation

Pets may be permitted in the CLC if proof of annual health certification and current vaccinations is provided to the Nurse Manager **prior to the visit**. Pets must be supervised and on a leash always. Pets will be restricted from the dining area during mealtimes. If visiting a resident who shares a bedroom, please be sensitive to the other resident in the bedroom. Please speak with the CLC nurse manager regarding pet visitation.

### Animal Assisted Therapy Program (AATP)

This program offers residents social, motivational, educational, and recreational benefits. Veterans have a chance to interact with a therapy animal and its handler and recall and share memories. AATP is scheduled on a regular basis pending the availability and clearance of owners and pets.

### Barber/Beauty Salon Service

Upon admission, residents (or legal Next of Kin) are asked if they would like barbering services. The prices of haircuts and shaves will be reviewed and the frequency of barbering services will be determined. The barber is available to visit the CLCs on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The request for services and the total monthly cost for those services will be submitted to the Patient Funds office, and the cost will be automatically deducted from the resident's account monthly. A resident (or legal Next of Kin) can modify or stop the barbering service request at any time. Residents can also visit the barber shop/beauty salon located in the basement of Building 7. Shaves can also be provided by nursing staff, which would not be an additional charge.

### [Patriot Café](#)

Visitors are welcome to eat in the medical center Patriot Café, which is located on the lower level of Building 200. We offer hot and cold entrees, beverages and desserts. Vending machines are also available for your convenience 24 hours a day. Vending areas are in Building 200 on the lower level, on the 1st floor by the ER entrance, and on the 3rd floor. Vending machines are also located in the dining room of building 92 and on CLC 4.

### [Patriot Store](#)

We offer a full-service retail store with such products as electronics, cosmetics, toiletries and clothing. Items may be purchased tax-free. The retail store is open to patients, staff and caregivers, and is in the lower level of the Primary/Specialty Care Pavilion.

### [Patriot Brew](#)

Our Patriot Brew is in the Primary/Specialty Care Pavilion Lobby. Visitors may select from a variety of coffees, juices and pastries.

### [Family Council](#)

The Family Council is intended to create an atmosphere of collaboration between staff and veterans' families, and serves as a forum for families to resolve issues, voice suggestions, plan resident centered events, build relationships with their relatives and health care providers, and obtain support from other family members. Upcoming Family Council Meetings and activities are posted within the CLC. If you have any questions, please speak with the CLC social worker.

### [Resident Council](#)

The Resident Council assists our residents in communicating their shared concerns, satisfactions, interests, and suggestions, which are a significant factor in improving the quality of life for our veterans. All residents are encouraged to attend and participate in these meetings. Resident Council meeting times and by-laws are posted on each unit.

On CLC 3, periodic Town Hall Meetings are held to provide residents with a similar forum as Resident Council Meetings.

### [Veterans' Benefits Counselor](#)

The Veteran's Benefits Counselor is available to assist you and your family in applying for VA benefits. He/she will also be able to answer all of your eligibility questions. Questions regarding VA compensation, pensions, or benefits may be directed to the counselor or local regional office. The Veteran's Benefits Counselor is in building 9, room 147, at ext. 7191.

### [Voluntary Service](#)

Representatives from various service organizations are available to assist with many individual and personalized services. These services are both beneficial to the resident and rewarding to the volunteer. Questions regarding how voluntary services are integrated into the CLCs can be directed to the Nurse Manager on each unit or directly to Voluntary Service at ext. 7182.

## PALLIATIVE CARE

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### *Our Patient's Journey is Our Journey Too*

The Palliative care team is here to support you during a difficult time. You are not alone. Patients and family members are encouraged to express their needs and actively participate in the decision-making process. Veterans and their families are provided with individualized programs of care and supportive services that enhance quality of life by addressing physical, emotional, spiritual, and social needs. The services you receive are designed with you in mind.

### The Palliative Care Unit

The Palliative Care Unit is called *The Lighthouse* and is located on the Northport VA grounds on the second floor of Building 8. It has 10 private rooms and includes a family style kitchen and a large day room. Patients and their families can enjoy recreational activities, worship services, support groups, the VA canteen, and cafeteria. Family and friends are welcomed for visits at any time. A private room is available for family members to rest during long visits. Room is subject to availability. Gate Passes for Veterans are also available for patients who are stable for travel. The doctor will write the order for the Gate Pass and will advise the family and the Veteran regarding care giving needs. Please give sufficient notice of this request.

### The Palliative Care Team

The Veteran and their family are the primary members of the Palliative Care Interdisciplinary team. Staff of the Palliative Care Unit provides the care of the patient based on an individualized plan of care. Care includes the full spectrum of medical, psychosocial, spiritual and emotional care. The interdisciplinary team includes the physician, nurse, social worker, chaplain, psychologist, nursing assistant, pharmacist, recreation therapist, volunteers, nutritionist, and physical therapist. Complementary Alternative Therapies (CAM) are also available for the care of the Veteran. Regular team meetings and frequent communications among clinical staff ensure that patient and family needs and goals are met and constantly reassessed.

### The Veteran's Journey

The VA Palliative Care Unit follows the hospice philosophy of care. Care is focused on patient comfort and symptom management in an environment that affirms life and dignity, while providing additional support to family members. Hospice care is holistic and treats the whole person, body, mind and spirit. It focuses on the needs of both the patient and the family.

### The Family's Journey

Caring for the families of our Veterans is very important to the Palliative Care Interdisciplinary Team. Support will be provided as you navigate this difficult time. You are not alone as you face the issues of care and grieve your loss.

The Palliative Care Staff is always available to discuss issues of care and any concerns you may have. At regular intervals the Palliative Care Interdisciplinary Care Team will meet with you to discuss your loved one's care. Psychosocial and spiritual support is available for both the Veteran and family. From life planning and engaging with family and friends, to emotional support and spiritual care, to pain and symptom management, we will be your trusted partner. We will be with you and those close to you, supporting your values, priorities, and choices about care so that you can make the most of each day. You can rest in the knowledge that your loved one's care needs are met daily and that you can spend quality time with them at this critical moment. Palliative Care is offered in all LTC settings. Please discuss your options with your Health Care Team.

## VA MEMORIAL AND SURVIVOR BENEFITS

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Detailed information can be obtained from:

Decedent Affairs, Northport VA

631-261-4400 ext. 2347

VA Regional Office

245 W Houston Street

New York, NY 10014

1-800-827-1000

Comprehensive Website: [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)

Benefits may be available to assist with funeral and burial expenses. If the death is determined by the VA Regional Office to be the result of a service connected disability, an allowance may be provided toward the cost of funeral and burial expenses.

For veterans who die in a VA Medical Center, certain costs of transportation may also be compensated. American flags are issued by the VA Medical Center and given to the funeral director for the Veteran's burial. All Veteran's graves are entitled to be marked by a government-provided grave marker, furnished by the VA. Social Security eligible Veterans may also be eligible for death benefits based on their contributions. If the Veteran is survived by a spouse, it must be applied to the actual expenses incurred.

Pension information for dependents may be obtained from the VA Regional Office.

For more information please ask a member of your Healthcare team for assistance.

## RESIDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is pleased you have selected us to provide your healthcare. We want to improve your health and well-being. We will make your visit or stay as pleasant for you as possible. As part of our service to you, to other Veterans and to the Nation, we are committed to improving healthcare 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 resident of a community living center. Your basic rights and responsibilities are outlined in this document. Please talk with the VA treatment team members or a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights.

### Respect and Nondiscrimination

You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. 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 enough light for you to be comfortable and safe.

We will seek to honor your cultural and personal values, beliefs, and preferences. We ask that you tell us about 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 VA held funds.

Treatment will respect your personal freedoms. In rare cases, the use of medication and physical restraints may be used if all other efforts to keep you or others free from harm have not worked. As a CLC resident you are expected to wear your own clothes. You may keep personal items if they are safe and legal.

As a CLC resident, 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 or in the Community Living Center. As a CLC resident, you have the right to communicate freely and privately. You may have or refuse visitors. You may participate in civic rights, such as voting and free speech.

As a CLC resident, you can organize and take part in resident groups in the facility.

To provide a safe treatment environment for all residents and staff, you are expected to respect other patients, residents and staff and to follow the facility's rules. Avoid unsafe acts that place others at risk for accidents or injuries. Please immediately report any condition you believe to be unsafe.

### Information Disclosure and Confidentiality

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 privacy will be protected. Your health record will be kept confidential. Information about you will not be released without your consent unless authorized by law (an example of this is State public health reporting).

You have the right to information in your medical record and may request a copy of your medical records. This will be provided except in rare situations when your VA physician feels the information will be harmful to you. In that case, you have the right to have this discussed with you by your VA provider.

You will be informed of all outcomes of care, including any potential injuries. You will be informed about how to request a review of treatment provided and information about compensation for any injuries.

### Participation in Treatment Decisions

You, and any persons 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. You will be given other options. You can agree to or refuse treatment. You will be told what is likely to happen to you if you refuse treatment. Refusing treatment will not affect your rights to future care but you take responsibility for the possible results to 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. Being involved is very important for you to get the best possible results.

You will be given, in writing, the name and title of the provider in charge of your care. As our partner in healthcare, 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, residents and 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 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 notify your provider or treatment team.

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 a CLC resident, 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 issue about your care. You may consult with the Medical Center's Ethics Consultation Service and/or other staff knowledgeable about healthcare ethics.

If you believe that you or a family member have been neglected, abused or exploited by VA staff, please immediately report this to the treatment team or the patient advocate. You will receive help immediately.