



Patient Information Guide

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System



Welcome to the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (BPVAHCS)! Our goal is to provide all of our veterans with the highest quality healthcare. We are dedicated to serving you with compassion and respect.

We want you to be comfortable here, so we have prepared this guide for you. It contains general information about our facility and the services we provide. We hope you find it useful. Thank you for choosing the VA for your healthcare.

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Welcome!

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS) has been providing healthcare to veterans since 1933. Every day over 4,000 veterans receive healthcare at Bay Pines VAHCS, the Fort Myers Outpatient Clinic, and at our Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's). During fiscal year 2006 we treated over one million outpatients in our hospital and clinics. We provide physical, emotional, and psychological support for our veterans.

Bay Pines VAHCS Mission, Vision, and Values

The Bay Pines VAHCS Mission, Vision, and Values guide our actions and choices. We strive to be an excellent, caring healthcare community in which people are valued, trusted, and respected.

Mission: To honor America's veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well being.

Vision: To be a patient centered integrated healthcare organization for veterans providing excellence in healthcare, research and education; an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner and a back-up for national emergencies.

Core Values: Trust, Respect, Excellence, Compassion, Commitment

General Information

Website for Bay Pines VAHCS: www.baypines.va.gov

Telephone Numbers

Pinellas County: (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230

The toll-free number is only valid in Florida outside of area code 727.

Street Address

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
10000 Bay Pines Blvd.
Bay Pines, FL 33744-5005

Mailing Address

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
P.O. Box 5005
Bay Pines, FL 33744-5005

Holidays

Appointments are not scheduled on the following federal holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Note: The Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



The Bay Pines VAHCS and its associated clinics are accredited by the Joint Commission. BPVAHCS and its CBOC's are regularly reviewed to make sure we comply with national Joint Commission standards on safety, quality of patient care, and environmental issues.

If you have a concern, you may contact the Joint Commission by phone, in writing, fax, or by e-mail. Their website is www.jointcommission.org. If you have questions about how to file your complaint, contact the Joint Commission at (800) 994-6610.

Their address is: Division of Accreditation Operations
Office of Quality Monitoring
The Joint Commission
One Renaissance Boulevard
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

Fax: (630) 792-5636

E-mail: complaint@jointcommission.org

Your Safety

You need to be aware of how to report your concerns about patient care and safety, such as:

- When you think you have received the wrong medication;
- When you think the staff may have confused you with another patient;

- When you notice that your caregivers have not washed their hands or used alcohol gel before providing care to you;
- If something just does not seem right to you.

Report your concerns to:

- Any supervisor, service chief, or management official at BPVAHCS;
- Bay Pines Quality Systems at (727) 398-6661, ext. 4121;
- Bay Pines Safety Hotline at (727) 319-1355;
- The Joint Commission.

PATIENT AND NURSING HOME RESIDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Patient and Community Living Center Resident Rights and Responsibilities)

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 patient. Your basic rights and responsibilities are outlined in this document. Please talk with VA treatment team members or a patient advocate if you have any questions or would like more information about your rights.

I. Respect and Nondiscrimination

- You will be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect as an individual. Your privacy will be protected. You will receive care in a safe environment. We will seek to honor your personal and religious values.
- 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 an inpatient or nursing home resident, you may wear your own clothes. You may keep personal items. This will depend on your medical condition.

- As an inpatient or nursing home 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.
- As an inpatient or nursing home resident, you have the right to communicate freely and privately. You may have or refuse visitors. You will have access to public telephones. You may participate in civic rights, such as voting and free speech.
- As a nursing home resident, you can organize and take part in resident groups in the facility. Your family also can meet with the families of other residents.
- In order to provide a safe treatment environment for all patients or 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.

II. 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, if any, before you are treated. You are responsible for paying your portion of any costs associated with your care.
- Your medical 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 you 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 compensation for any injuries.

III. 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 an inpatient or nursing home 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 issues about your care. You may consult with the Medical Center's Ethics Consultation Service and/or other staff knowledgeable about healthcare ethics.
- If you or the Medical Center believes that you have been neglected, abused or exploited, you will receive help.

IV. Complaints

- 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. You may complain verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.

Your Clinic Visit

Appointments

To make or change your appointment at Bay Pines VAHCS, call (727) 398-6661, ext. 5525, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 5525, or (727) 398-9325.

Making Your Appointment:

Bay Pines VAHCS wants to make it easy for you to get your healthcare at a time that is convenient for you. To do this, we will send you a letter two weeks before your next follow-up appointment is due. This letter will either tell you when your next appointment is, or ask you to call to make your appointment. It is important that we have your current address so you receive these letters.

Day of Your Appointment:

Our goal is to see you at your scheduled appointment time. This may not always be possible, but we will try not to keep you waiting for more than thirty minutes.

- Do not come in to be seen without an appointment.
- Be on time for your appointment.
- Come earlier if you have lab work or other medical tests scheduled.
- Follow any fasting or special instructions given to you.
- Do not be a "no-show!"

Things to bring with you:

- All medical records, reports, labs, and test results from another facility or from non-VA providers.
- All bottles of medicines you take, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, food supplements, or herbal remedies.
- Advance Directive if not on file or if it has been changed.
- A list of questions you may have for your provider.
- A list of medical problems to discuss with your provider.
- Your blood pressure or blood sugar readings, if you have them. Also bring the blood sugar or blood pressure machine you are using.
- Your health insurance information.

- Two forms of identification, such as your VA Identification Card, Social Security card, or driver's license to verify who you are.

Healthy Living and Calendars

Prevention is a key to healthy living. Read the information in the *Healthy Living* pamphlet and the VISN 8 "Salute to Our Veterans" calendar. These are reviewed annually with you and have valuable information on nutrition, diabetes, exercise, blood pressure, and more.

Immunizations

Each year in the U.S. over 40,000 people die from vaccine-preventable diseases or their complications. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Physicians recommend these immunizations for adults:

- **Flu:** Adults over 50 (especially those older than 65) should get a flu shot every year. It can prevent over 50% of hospitalizations and 80% of deaths from influenza-related complications. Flu shots are given October through March.
- **Pneumonia:** Adults (especially those older than 65) should get this shot every five years. It is over 60% effective in preventing pneumonia.
- **Tetanus:** Adults should get a booster shot every ten years. Most people know they need a tetanus shot if they step on a rusty nail, but people can also get tetanus other ways, such as by puncture wounds of any kind.
- **Diphtheria:** Immunization against this bacterial infection usually is given with the tetanus-pertussis vaccine. Adults should be vaccinated against this and need a booster shot every ten years.
- **Hepatitis:** There is a safe and effective vaccine for Hepatitis A and B infectious liver diseases. Hepatitis A can be spread by people, drinking water, or eating shellfish infected with the virus. If you eat shellfish, or if you are an older adult traveling abroad, it is recommended that you get a Hepatitis A vaccine.

PAIN: The Fifth Vital Sign

When you come to Bay Pines VAHCS for an exam, your healthcare provider will check your five vital signs: blood pressure, pulse, temperature, respiration, and **pain**. You have the right to receive treatment for pain. Treatment means relieving, controlling, and managing your pain.

Pain scale from 0 to 10:

“0” = no pain

“10” = worst pain imaginable

You will be asked the following questions about your pain:

- **Where** is it?
- **When** did it start?
- **How long** has it lasted or does it last?
- **What** makes it better or worse?
- **Which medications** have you tried?
- **Have any treatments** worked well?

There are many ways to control or treat your pain. Some of these are:

- **Home remedies:** heat, ice, elevation, rest.
- **Stretching and exercise:** physical and occupational therapies.
- **Medication:** prescriptions are based on the type and degree of pain.
- **Invasive therapies:** surgery, blocks, and/or injections.
- **Non-invasive therapies:** massage, acupuncture, biofeedback, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) - a device that uses electricity to block pain signals going to the brain.

When you are being treated for pain:

- Give an accurate report of your health history (high blood pressure, ulcers, heart, kidney, liver problems, etc.)
- Report any side effects to drugs, such as allergies and reactions.
- Report medicines you are now taking. This includes prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, nutritional supplements, and herbal remedies.

- Take medicines as prescribed.
- When you take your pain medicine, check with your provider first to see if it is all right for you to drink alcohol or use other drugs that can make you drowsy.
- Do not drive if your medicine makes you drowsy.

Primary Care and Primary Care Providers

Primary Care allows you to identify one physician and team responsible for serving all of your healthcare needs. This coordinated effort will help you stay healthy and have a better quality of life.

A Primary Care Provider can be a physician, nurse practitioner, or a physician's assistant. A Primary Care Team is a group of healthcare professionals who will coordinate your care. You will be assigned a Primary Care Provider and Primary Care Team.

Can you get medicines at the VA which are prescribed by a non-VA physician?

No. Prescription medications require monitoring and evaluation for effectiveness, side effects, and potential interactions with your other medicines. If one of our providers writes you a prescription, that provider is responsible for the effects of that medicine. Your provider needs to see you regularly to monitor your health and to write your prescriptions. In order to get medicines at the VA, your primary healthcare must be monitored by the VA.

Can you get primary care here and see a private physician?

Yes. However, we discourage you from doing this. It is best if your Primary Care Team coordinates your care and medications. If you do see a private physician, you need to bring copies of your health records each time you have an appointment here.

Will you be able to get the same medicines you received from your private physician?

Possibly. During your first visit here, your medicines will be reviewed, including any over-the-counter drugs such as aspirin or cold tablets.

Your physician or pharmacist will determine a suitable alternative from the VA Pharmacy if we do not have the same medicines you were receiving from your private physician.

Advance Directives

An Advance Directive is a set of legal forms you fill out and sign to let others know about your healthcare wishes when you cannot speak for yourself. If you are not able to make your own decisions, a *healthcare surrogate* chosen by you can make them on your behalf. Your healthcare surrogate and Advance Directive will let your Primary Care Team know how you feel about:

- Being brought back to life if your breathing or heart stops.
- Having a machine breathe for you.
- Being tube-fed.
- Receiving donated blood.

There are two types of forms used to make an Advance Directive. These are the Living Will and the Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare (Surrogate Decision Maker).

Living Wills are documents stating your healthcare choices when you are unable to make decisions for yourself. This form meets Florida's legal requirements. You can change your Living Will any time. If you already have a Living Will, make sure it still meets your wishes.

Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare allows you to choose someone else to make decisions about your healthcare if you cannot make these decisions for yourself. This lets your Primary Care Team know who is responsible for making these decisions and how to contact them. Make sure this person knows your wishes! That person may have to make a life or death decision about your care.

Your nurse, social worker, chaplain, or member of your Primary Care Team can provide you with these forms. You can also get a copy of the Advance Directive forms in the PERC library. You do not need a lawyer to complete

these forms. Two people must witness your signature at the time you sign the forms. Read the forms for information on who may be your witnesses.

After filling out the forms, please give copies to your Primary Care Team and your surrogate. A copy will be placed in your medical records. Keep the original for your own records.

It is very important that your Primary Care Team knows your wishes. It is your right to accept or refuse medical care. You can change your mind at any time about your decisions for treatment, but let us know if you do. You may also have your Advance Directive prepared by a non-VA source. If you do, please bring a copy with you for your VA medical records.

Remember:

- You can choose to be treated for one illness and not another if you have more than one health problem.
- You can always change your mind about any of your decisions.
- Talk to any member of your Primary Care Team or your social worker for more information on Advance Directives.

Have you thought about these other questions?

- Are your legal affairs in order?
- Have you prepared a will?
- Does your family know where your important papers are kept?
- Do you need to make a plan for your spouse or family's care?
- How do you feel about organ or tissue donations?
- How and where do you want to be buried?

Telephone Programs

Pharmacy Telephone Care System

The Pharmacy Telephone Care System is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You may use it to:

- Order your prescriptions refills **at least two weeks before** you run out of your medicines.
- Check on a prescription.
- Talk to Pharmacy staff (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.)

To access the system, dial (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, then select option “1” and follow the instructions.

Before you call, have your Social Security number ready. You will need the prescription number(s) to request refills.

Please visit the Outpatient Pharmacy to obtain the pamphlet “Pharmacy Telephone Care System: The Key to Ordering Your Prescription Refills” for step-by-step instructions.

You may also order prescription refills by using the MyHealtheVet (MHV) website. See page 20 of this guide for more information on MHV.

Telephone Call Center

The Telephone Call Center is a patient information telephone line. Registered Nurses and other staff with special training are available to answer questions about your care, appointments, medications, and medical concerns.

The staff will help you or contact your Primary Care Provider. If they need to call you back, leave the telephone number where you can be reached and the best time of day to call.

The Telephone Call Center is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Their number is: (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230. Follow the message prompts to get to the right service. After hours and holidays, follow the above instructions, or call toll-free (877) 741-3400 and you will be connected to the after-hours line.

The Telephone Call Center may save you a trip, but it is not an emergency service. **If you have a medical emergency, call 911 immediately!**

When should you use the Telephone Call Center?

- If you have questions about your eligibility for care at Bay Pines VAHCS.
- If you have a problem or health concern, but no appointment.
- If you have an appointment, but want to see a doctor for a different problem.
- If your next clinic appointment is several months away and you are having new problems or symptoms.
- If you have any questions about your medicines
- If you are having a reaction to any of your medicines.
- If you can not keep your appointment.
- If you need to change your appointment.

Helpful Services

Billing (Insurance and Co-payments)

The VA is required by Congress to bill private health insurance companies for non-service connected treatment and to charge co-payments for inpatient hospital care and treatments, outpatient care, extended care, and medications. Co-payment amounts are set annually by Congress.

If you have questions, call the Bay Pines VAHCS Patient Financial Services Section at (727) 395-2301 or (727) 395-2302, or call the Customer Call Center at (866) 793-4591.

CHAMPVA/Tricare questions are handled by the CHAMPVA Program Manager. Call (727) 398-6661, ext. 7464 for more information.

Chaplain Service/Reflection Rooms

The staff of the Chaplain Service cares about your spiritual needs and is always available for you. You can call them at (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 4264. The Veterans Chapel is in Bldg. 2, Room 111A, and is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Bay Pines VAHCS has two Reflection Rooms which are open 24 hours a day and can be used by patients, family, and staff for prayer and meditation. These rooms are located in Bldg. 100 on the first floor in Room 1E243 across from Starbucks, and on the third floor in Room 3D116.

Clinical Trials

Clinical Trials are controlled experimental treatments for different conditions and diseases. These trials test newer therapies that may become the treatments of the future. Information about clinical trials is available from your Primary Care Team or the Patient Education Resource Center (PERC) in Bldg. 100, Room 1E236. Although your Primary Care Team can help you identify clinical trials, the VA does not pay for clinical trials at non-VA facilities.

Details Office and National Cemetery Administration

The Details Office is in Bldg. 100, Room 1A112. They provide information on burial benefits and arrangements. They are your contact between BPVAHCS and the funeral home. Their hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Their phone number is (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 5550. After hours call the Administrative Office of the Day (AOD) at ext. 4104.

The National Cemetery Administration can answer your questions about memorials and burial in national cemeteries. Their phone number is (727) 398-9426, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 5626.

Education of Patients and Family

We want to help you take an active role in your healthcare so that you can receive the best care possible. The Bay Pines VAHCS offers many materials, activities, and programs on diabetes, cardiac care, weight management, stroke, oncology, smoking cessation, and other health topics. Tell your Primary Care Team if you are interested.

The Patient Education Resource Center (PERC) is open to all veterans and their families. The PERC has books, videos, models, and internet resources. These items are for use in the PERC.

The PERC is in Bldg. 100, Room 1E236. It is open Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and on Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. You can call the PERC at (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 4375 or 7958.

The PERC provides free medical pamphlets and handouts which you can take home. You can ask the PERC staff to prepare a package of health information for you. They can have it ready for you to pick up in the PERC or they can mail it to you.

Veterans can access the Internet on the computers in the PERC for health, job, and government sites only. They can also access the My HealtheVet and MOVE! websites from these computers.

Fisher House and Lodgetel (Temporary Lodging)

Bay Pines VAHCS has two types of temporary lodging programs to assist our veterans and their families. To be eligible for either program, the veteran and/or family members must live *more than 50 miles* from Bay Pines. During regular business hours Bay Pines' Social Work Service reviews guests for these programs and makes referrals if eligible. After hours, this is done by the Administrative Officer of the Day (AOD) at ext. 4104.

Fisher House is located on the grounds at Bay Pines. It is a home away from home for families of acutely hospitalized veterans. The Fisher House has kitchen and laundry facilities. Guests must take care of their personal needs, maintain their own rooms, and keep common areas clean. There is no maid service.

Lodgetel is an off-site program that provides temporary lodging for veterans who have problems with their medical appointments due to distance and time of day. The Lodgetel program is a self-care program and there are no clinical services available.

Hearing Aids

Hearing Aids are repaired or adjusted **by appointment only**. Call Audiology at (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 4545 to make an appointment.

Hospice

The Inpatient Hospice Unit is available for patients in the final stages of a terminal illness. Emotional and spiritual support are provided in a home-like setting where family and friends can be together 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Ask your Primary Care Team to contact the Hospice Coordinator for more information.

Interpreters

If you need an interpreter for hearing, vision, speech, cognitive deficits, or a foreign language, tell your Primary Care Team.

MOVE! (Managing Overweight/Obesity for Veterans Everywhere)

MOVE! (www.move.va.gov) is a weight management program for veterans to help them lose weight and keep it off. It concentrates on healthy nutrition and behavior. Talk to your Primary Care Team if you are interested in the MOVE! program.

My Health_eVet (MHV)

My Health_eVet (www.myhealth.va.gov) is a secure VA website that allows veterans to take an active part in their healthcare. It allows veterans to order prescription refills online for home delivery, maintain health and military service journals, establish personal calendars, and learn about diseases. New updates will allow veterans to view selected parts of their medical records, appointments, billing information, and more.

Veterans may register online to use the general parts of MHV. To order online prescription refills and to use the newest features of MHV, veterans will also need to watch a short video online and go to Release of Information (ROI) in Bldg. 100, Room 1E303 with two forms of identification to verify their identify.

There are computers in the PERC library in Bldg. 100, Room 1E236 that veterans may use to access the MHV website. For more information on MHV, call (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 5497 or 4007.

Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans

If you need information about OEF/OIF programs and services, contact the OEF/OIF office at (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 5893 or 7541. This office is located at Bay Pines VAHCS, Bldg. 100, Room 1E240A.

If you have questions about eligibility or the transfer process, go to the Eligibility Office in Bldg. 100, Room 1E109, or call (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 4165 or 5684.

Optical Dispensary (Eyeglasses)

The Bay Pines VAHCS provides corrective eyeglasses at no charge when prescribed by a VA or fee-basis ophthalmologist or optometrist. Low fees

are charged for special features (such as tint, UV-filter, scratch coating, etc.) Services are not restricted to veterans. Minor adjustments can be made to eyeglasses while you wait.

The Optical Dispensary is located in the Breezeway between Bldg. 1 and Bldg. 22 in Room CC1. They are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can call them at (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 4069.

Patient Advocate

Bay Pines VAHCS strives to provide the best care possible in the most courteous and efficient manner to our veteran patients. The Patient Advocate staff is the official representative of the VAHCS Director. They are authorized to act on patient issues and complaints. They will make sure your issues are addressed by the proper people.

The Patient Advocate Office is in Bldg. 100, Room 1E144. They are open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can call them at (727) 398-9524, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 5024.

Call the Medical Administrative Officer of the Day (AOD) at ext. 4104 if you have questions or concerns at other times.

Release of Information (ROI)

In order to better serve you, your Primary Care Team needs copies of the medical care you received from non-VA facilities. ROI has the forms you need to request and send your medical information from and to outside medical facilities. ROI may charge for some services.

The ROI Office is in Bldg. 100, Room 1E303. They are open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Their phone number is (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 4169.

Veterans Benefits Services

The Veterans Benefits Counselor works for the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) and is assigned to Bay Pines VAHCS. The VA Regional Office (VARO) for the VBA is located on the Bay Pines campus. Veterans Benefits and VARO counselors provide information on benefits and services, eligibility, compensation and pension, home loans, jobs, etc.

The Florida Dept. of Veterans Affairs and other veterans' service organizations, including AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, and American Ex-POWs, have representatives to serve you at each location.

Veterans Benefits Office

Bldg. 22, Room 128D
Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
(727) 398-6661, ext. 5494
Toll-free: (888) 820-0230, ext. 5494

VA Regional Office (VARO)

9500 Bay Pines Blvd.
Bay Pines, FL 33708
Monday through Friday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
(800) 827-1000

Voluntary Service

Volunteers provide a personal touch to help our veterans and staff in clinical and non-clinical areas. It's a way to say thank-you to our veterans,

Voluntary Service accepts all donations for BPVAHCS, such as magazines, paperbacks, clean clothing, and money. A "Patient Needs List" identifies items that are needed. Money can be donated toward the purchase of these items.

Hardback books, magazines older than 3 months, or used equipment such as crutches and wheelchairs are not accepted.

Donation slips and guidelines are in the Voluntary Service Office in Bldg. 2, Room 105. For more information on volunteering or donations, call (727) 398-6661, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 5594.

Things to Know About Bay Pines VAHCS

Alcohol, Illegal Drugs, and Gambling

Alcohol, illegal drugs, and gambling are not allowed within the Bay Pines VAHCS. The Bay Pines Police can arrest you for these offenses.

ATM Machines

ATM machines are located in the public dining area in Bldg. 1, the front lobby vending area in Bldg. 100, and outside the Credit Union.

Barber Shop

The Barber Shop is located in Bldg. 1, Room A130. It is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The current cost of a haircut is \$8.00 - \$10.00.

Fire/Disaster Drills

Practice fire and disaster drills are held routinely throughout Bay Pines VAHCS. If you hear the fire alarm, stay calm and follow instructions.

Food Court/Vending Areas

The Food Court is in Bldg. 1. It is open Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Selections include: Country Cooking, 5th Avenue Deli, Bistro, and Papa's Best Pizza.

Vending machines are on the first floor in Bldg. 1 in the dining area, in Bldg. 100 on the first floor near the main entrance, and by the Outpatient entrance. The vending areas are open 24 hours a day, seven days week. There is a Starbucks in Bldg. 100, Room 1D165. It is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Hours are subject to change.

Homeland Security

Homeland Security guidelines require certain actions to protect you. This includes limiting access to the VA grounds and buildings. The doors to the main hospital at Bay Pines VAHCS are open 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. After hours access to Bldg. 100 is through the Outpatient entrance.

The west gate (Bay Pines Blvd. and 100th Way North) is always open. The east gate is locked every day from 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. It is closed during Security Alerts, and on weekends and holidays, except for Memorial Day. You may be asked to show identification and to provide the reason for your visit prior to being allowed entry onto Bay Pines property.

Information Desks

The Information Desks are located in Bldg. 100 at the main lobby and Outpatient entrances. Volunteers are at the desks Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Information is available about Bay Pines VAHCS and community resources, such as bus schedules, restaurants, and motels.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found Office is in the Patient Funds Office in Bldg. 100, Room 1E110, at (727) 398-9424, or toll-free (888) 820-0230, ext. 2166. It is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. At all other times, lost and found items are placed with the Medical Administrative Officer of the Day (AOD) at ext. 4104.

Parking Lots and Shuttle Service

A map of the Bay Pines campus parking lots is on the back cover of this guide. Handicapped spaces are located near all buildings and in the parking lot in front of the main hospital (Bldg. 100).

The Shuttle Service makes continuous loops to and from the Credit Union parking lots, the Lakeside Clinic, and the main hospital. There is also a separate shuttle that runs between the VA Regional Office and the Outpatient entrance. The shuttle service runs Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., excluding holidays.

Pets/Animals

Pets are not allowed on VA property, except for service animals or those involved in pet therapy programs sponsored by Recreation Therapy. Do not leave pets in your car.

Post Office

The Bay Pines Post Office is in Bldg. 20. It is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., excluding holidays. It is closed for lunch from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Retail Store

The Retail Store in Bldg. 1 is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., excluding holidays. It sells men's and ladies' clothing, electronics, and personal items. There is also a Special Order Kiosk outside the Retail Store where you can order specialty items such as tires, jewelry, personal computers, and appliances.

Smoking

The Bay Pines VAHCS is a smoke-free facility. **Smoking is not allowed inside any building.** There are designated smoking areas outside the east and west entrances to Bldg. 100, on the east side (courtyard area) of Bldg. 1, and outside the Nursing Home and the Lakeside Clinic/Domiciliary.

Telephones/Cell phones

Pay telephones are available throughout Bay Pines VAHCS. Do not use cell phones inside the VAHCS as they can interfere with vital biomedical and patient care equipment.

Weapons

For your safety and the safety of others, no weapons of any kind are permitted on VA property. People entering buildings must consent to the inspection of all packages. Refusing to allow inspection of packages can result in denial of entry onto VA property.

Fort Myers Clinic and CBOC's Addresses and Phone Numbers

Dunedin CBOC

VA Primary Care Clinic
1721 Main Street
Dunedin, Florida 34698
(727) 734-5276

Port Charlotte CBOC

VA Primary Care Clinic
4161 Tamiami Trail, Unit 4
Port Charlotte, FL 33952
(941) 235-2710

Ellenton CBOC

VA Primary Care Clinic
4333 North U.S. Hwy 301
Ellenton, Florida 34222
(941) 721-0649

Sarasota CBOC

VA Primary Care Clinic
5682 Bee Ridge Road, Suite 100
Sarasota, Florida 34233
(941) 371-3349

Ellenton CBOC

Mental Health Clinic

5283 Office Park Blvd.
Bradenton, FL 34203
(941) 721-0649, ext. 6880

Sebring CBOC

VA Primary Care Clinic
3760 US Hwy 27 South
Sebring, Florida 33870
(863) 471-6227

Fort Myers Outpatient Clinic

3033 Winkler Extension
Fort Myers, Florida 33916
(239) 939-3939
Toll-free: (888) 513-0045

St. Petersburg CBOC

VA Primary Care Clinic
3420 8th Avenue South
St. Petersburg Florida 33711
(727) 322-1304

Naples CBOC

VA Primary Care Clinic
2685 Horseshoe Drive South
Suite 101
Naples, Florida 34104
(239) 659-9188

Emergency, Poison, Suicide, and Crisis Hotline Numbers



If you have a medical emergency, call 911 immediately!

Call **Poison Control** at (800) 222-1222 if you have a poison emergency.

If you think you want to hurt or kill yourself, call for help before it is too late!

The Suicide and Crisis Hotline numbers in Pinellas County are:

- 211
- (727) 562-1542

You can also call:

- **The National Hopeline:** (800) SUICIDE (784-2433)
- **The National Suicide Prevention Hotline:** (800) 273 -TALK (8255)

These services are available to help you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you need help, please call them immediately!

This website has excellent resources for suicide prevention:
www.agingcarefl.org/aging/suicide_prev/Resources.

