

SPRING
2017

VETERANS Health MATTERS

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8)

*Award Winning Wellness Magazine for **VISN 8** Veterans
in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico & the U.S. Virgin Islands*

INSIDE:

Patient
Aligned Care
Teams (PACT):
What You
Need to Know



Pictured: U.S. Army Vietnam Veteran Winston Figueroa visits with his doctor, Pulmonary and Critical Care Physician Eloise Harman, M.D., at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, in Gainesville, Fla.

To Our Readers

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Veterans Health Matters is a quarterly health and wellness magazine for Veterans produced by the VISN 8 Office of Communication. VISN 8 is the country's largest network of VA hospitals and clinics serving Veterans in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Your feedback is welcome. If you'd like to comment on the content, please e-mail or write to:

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Getting the care you need is a top priority in the Veterans Health Administration and in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network. The PACT (Patient Aligned Care Team) model is the approach we use to coordinate and access care that puts you, the Veteran, in the driver's seat. Read on pages 4 through 6 about when, where and how the PACT model of care works for you. And, for more information about how PACT works when you travel, read page 6.

Everyone loves an inspiring story. Check out page 3 to read about one woman's journey of how she improved her health by embracing a healthier lifestyle.

Now that spring is upon us, it's the perfect time to add some favorite fresh and healthy fruits to your meal plan. Turn to page 7 for details on how to make an easy spring salad. And, have some fun with the Word Find that's there.

Be well!

Timothy W. Liezert, FACHE
Acting Director, VISN 8

Same-Day Services Now Available

MyVA Access provides Veterans with quick access to care. Now, same-day services are available in all VA Sunshine Healthcare facilities.

Enrolled Veterans who need primary care assistance during regular business hours can access services the same day or the next day, if it's after hours, from a VA Medical Center. Health care needs will be addressed with a face-to-face visit, a phone call, a telehealth or video care visit, or a future appointment.

If a Veteran is in crisis or needs immediate mental health care, they will receive immediate attention at a VA Medical Center. Any Veteran new to mental health with a non-urgent need will receive an initial screening by the next calendar day.



We now have same-day appointments in all Primary Care and Mental Health clinics in Florida, South Georgia and the Caribbean when a provider determines the need. Veterans can also use online systems like MyHealtheVet's Secure Messaging to contact their providers.

If you are a Veteran enrolled for care at a VISN 8 facility, talk to your Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) or your Mental Health Team about your options.



A Fraction of the Person She Was, and Thankful For It

By Ed Drohan

Army Veteran Susan Mahon isn't the woman she was just a few years ago, and for that she's thankful.

Mahon, with the help of programs offered through the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, lost 135 pounds. She had gained this excess weight while bedridden with a chronic disease for more than a year. When her health improved enough, she joined several classes at the hospital, including VA's *MOVE!* program. This is the largest and most comprehensive weight management program associated with a medical care system in the U.S.

"For a year and a half, I wasn't able to get out of the house. I got so depressed from the illness and the weight gain that I was at a loss," Mahon said. "I'm a pretty positive person normally, and when I got so low I thought, 'Why can't I bring myself back?' Well, I couldn't, so I joined these classes – *MOVE!*, *THRIVE*, one for pain management, and one for anxiety and stress.

Just through the classes and the instructors, I started seeing a change in my attitude."

Most programs described are available at VA facilities in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network. JAHVH Health Promotions and Disease Prevention Coordinator Dave Folds, says these programs help Veterans lose excess weight and make lifestyle changes to live overall healthier lives. Indeed, research shows that healthy eating, physical activity and a small weight loss can reduce health risks, prevent or reverse certain diseases, and improve quality-of-life and longevity.

Folds said JAHVH's eight-week My Health Works program also helped Mahon improve her life so much that she wants to be a volunteer with the program.

Mahon said she would recommend any Veteran with a weight problem get involved with the classes at their VA facility.

Pictured: Susan Mahon



"I strongly recommend enrolling in the *MOVE!* program and taking as many classes as you can because you get so much support from the instructors and the VA itself," Mahon said. "That's why now I volunteer and help other Vets because their support is what saved me."

Veterans enrolled for care at a VA facility in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands interested in *MOVE!* and other classes, should check with their Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT). To learn more about *MOVE!*, visit www.move.va.gov.

Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT): Here for Veterans When, Where & How You Need Us



Being there for our Veterans when they need us is a top priority in the Veterans Health Administration. PACT (Patient Aligned Care Team) is the model of care implemented in 2010 that transformed how health care is provided within the VA.

What is PACT?

PACT involves the Veteran working with health care professionals to plan for personalized, whole-person care and life-long health and wellness. It puts you, the Veteran, in the driver's seat as an active participant in your care.

How Does a PACT function?

Veterans enrolled for care at any VA medical center or clinic in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network are assigned to a PACT. The core PACT team is made up of the patient, Primary Care Provider (physician, advanced registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant), registered nurse care manager, clinical associate, and clerk. Extended primary care team members may also include dietitians, social workers, pharmacists, and mental health professionals.

A PACT focuses on:



Partnerships
with Veterans



Access
to care using
diverse methods



**Coordinated
Care**
among team
members



**Team-Based
Care**
with Veterans as the
center of their PACT





PACT Is the Hub of a Patient's Care

Your PACT coordinates your appointments and care, and provides you with access when and how you need it. This saves you time and energy.

Besides personal visits with your Primary Care Provider (PCP), you may schedule time with other members of your PACT. For example, if you would like to discuss adjusting your medications, you can talk to the pharmacist assigned to your PACT. This coordinated care uses the expertise of your VA health care team and helps open up appointments for other Veterans.

When you need to see several providers, your PACT can help organize as many appointments as possible in one visit. And you don't have to worry about having to make several phone calls to find out about test results. Veterans with an upgraded MyHealthVet (www.myhealth.va.gov) account can see test results online, so please sign up if you have not yet done so.

Watch the Video!

More of a visual learner? Then visit www.visn8.va.gov/VISN8/news/publications to watch a quick and fun video about PACT, and see how this model of health care puts Veterans first.



PACT Offers Many Ways to Access Health Care

The Veteran is a key member of his PACT, and is encouraged to participate in his or her own health and wellness. This includes telehealth. You may access group clinics and educational seminars, as well as information through the online Veterans Health Library (www.veteranshealthlibrary.org).

With MHV's Secure Messaging (similar to email), you can communicate directly online with your VA health care team to:

- get health updates
- manage appointments
- request referrals and medication renewals
- ask non-urgent, health questions

Electronic medical records and the online MHV portal help make the process seamless.



Know Your PACT

Knowing your PACT Team is one of the most important things you can do as a patient. At many locations, Veterans receive business cards that list PACT names and direct phone extensions. Also at many sites, patients can leave voicemails on the nurse line at any time. And of course, you can send emails to your team via the MHV Secure Message feature. Sign up today!

Not Able to Keep Your Appointment? Communication Is Key

Speaking of appointments, anytime an appointment goes unused, precious care time is lost forever. If you know you can't keep an appointment, please contact the clinic as soon as possible so another Veteran can be served.

- Susan Wentzell with Chona Macalingdong, M.D., and Dana Ringlehan

If you are a Veteran enrolled for care at a VISN 8 facility and you don't know your PACT team, contact the following for information:

Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
727-398-6661

James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital
813-972-2000

Miami VA Healthcare System
305-575-7000

Malcom Randall VA Medical Center (NF/SGVHS)
352-376-1611

Lake City VA Medical Center (NF/SGVHS)
386-755-3016

Orlando VA Medical Center
407-631-1000

VA Caribbean Healthcare System
787-641-7582

West Palm Beach VA Medical Center
561-422-8262

Seamless Care for Traveling Veterans

Frequently Asked Questions

How does VA coordinate care if I am traveling or at a temporary address?

Generally, your VA Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) is responsible for your health care even when you travel or have a temporary change of address.

If you see a VA provider while traveling, this care will be recorded in your electronic medical record so your local VA PACT can access and follow up with you, if necessary.

When should I contact my PACT regarding travel?

Contact your PACT or Specialty Care Provider(s) 4 to 6 weeks before you travel, or as soon as possible, and provide:

- destination(s) and temporary address
- valid telephone number
- arrival and departure dates
- specific care concerns

How can I reach my PACT or provider without an appointment?

You can phone them or use secure messaging in MyHealtheVet. For more information and how to register, visit www.MyHealtheVet.va.gov.

Why is it important to discuss my travel plans with the VA?

This allows the VA to prepare the alternate site for your arrival and avoid any disruption to your care. For example, if you have routine items that require on-going monitoring while you're gone, your Traveling Veteran Coordinator can make those arrangements in advance at your travel site of care.



Urgent & After-Hours Care

You can call Telcare, the after-hours telephone advice care line to speak with a registered nurse. They can help to identify the care you need. The nurse places this information in your electronic medical record and notifies the appropriate medical provider. To reach Telcare, call toll-free: (877) 741-3400.

What if I Require a Hospital Admission?

Your VA provider will arrange admission with the nearest VA hospital that can meet your needs. Depending on various factors, VA may admit you to a non-VA hospital.

Emergency Care

What if I think I am having a medical emergency?

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. You do not have to contact VA in advance.

Who can I contact for more information regarding Veterans who travel?

Contact your PACT or Traveling Veteran Coordinator at your local VA facility or call toll free (877) 222-VETS (8387) Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST).



FEATURED Recipe!

Berry Nice Spring Salad



Ingredients

- 1 medium avocado, sliced
- ½ cup strawberries
- ½ cup blueberries
- ½ cup raspberries and/or blackberries
- 4 cups spring mix
- ¼ cup lowfat honey mustard dressing

Directions

Lightly toss the spring mix with the berries and dressing. Top with the sliced avocado and serve.

Nutritional Information: Serves 4. Per serving: 111 calories, 7.5 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 11.25 g carbohydrates, 5.25 g dietary fiber, 9 mg sodium, and 1.5 g protein.

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To receive a printed copy of Veterans Health Matters through the U.S. mail or sent directly to your email account, just let us know and we'll add you to the mailing list. Ways to reach us are as follows:

By Mail:

1. Complete this form with the Veteran's full name and current mailing address.
2. Cut out the form and insert in a stamped envelope.
3. Mail to:
American Institute for Preventive Medicine
 c/o VISN 8 – VHM
 30445 Northwestern Hwy., Ste. 350
 Farmington Hills, MI 48334

(Please print)

First Name Middle Initial

Last Name

Address

City

State

Zip

By Email:

VISN8VHM@healthylife.com

Be sure to include the above information.

By Phone:

(800) 345-2476 – press 5 for English or press 6 for Spanish

Get to Know Your PACT Word Search

Find the words that relate to the Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) article on page 4. Look up, down, diagonal and backwards to find the words below. Good luck!

ACCESS
 CARE
 CLINICS
 COORDINATED
 DOCTOR
 NURSE
 PACT
 PARTNERS
 PERSONALIZED
 PRIMARY
 TEAM
 TELEHEALTH
 VETERANS
 VIRTUAL
 WELLNESS
 YOU

P R I M A R Y C B E G D H A
 A T K S H T P O F N A O C U
 Q E C A R E R O W U D C Z W
 I L K T E A M R X R E T Y E
 S E J U V P B D M S Y O U L
 R H N C N A C I S E O R C L
 E E R L T C H N B L M V T N
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 T L O N P F B T J K C B H S
 R T M I Q D V E T E R A N S
 A H L C E G I D R Z T U J O
 P E R S O N A L I Z E D W X

WORD SEARCH



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Have you tried Vets.gov? It's a new one-stop VA website currently being tested that provides useful information that's clearly written and presented with tools that are easy to find and use. Check it out at www.vets.gov.

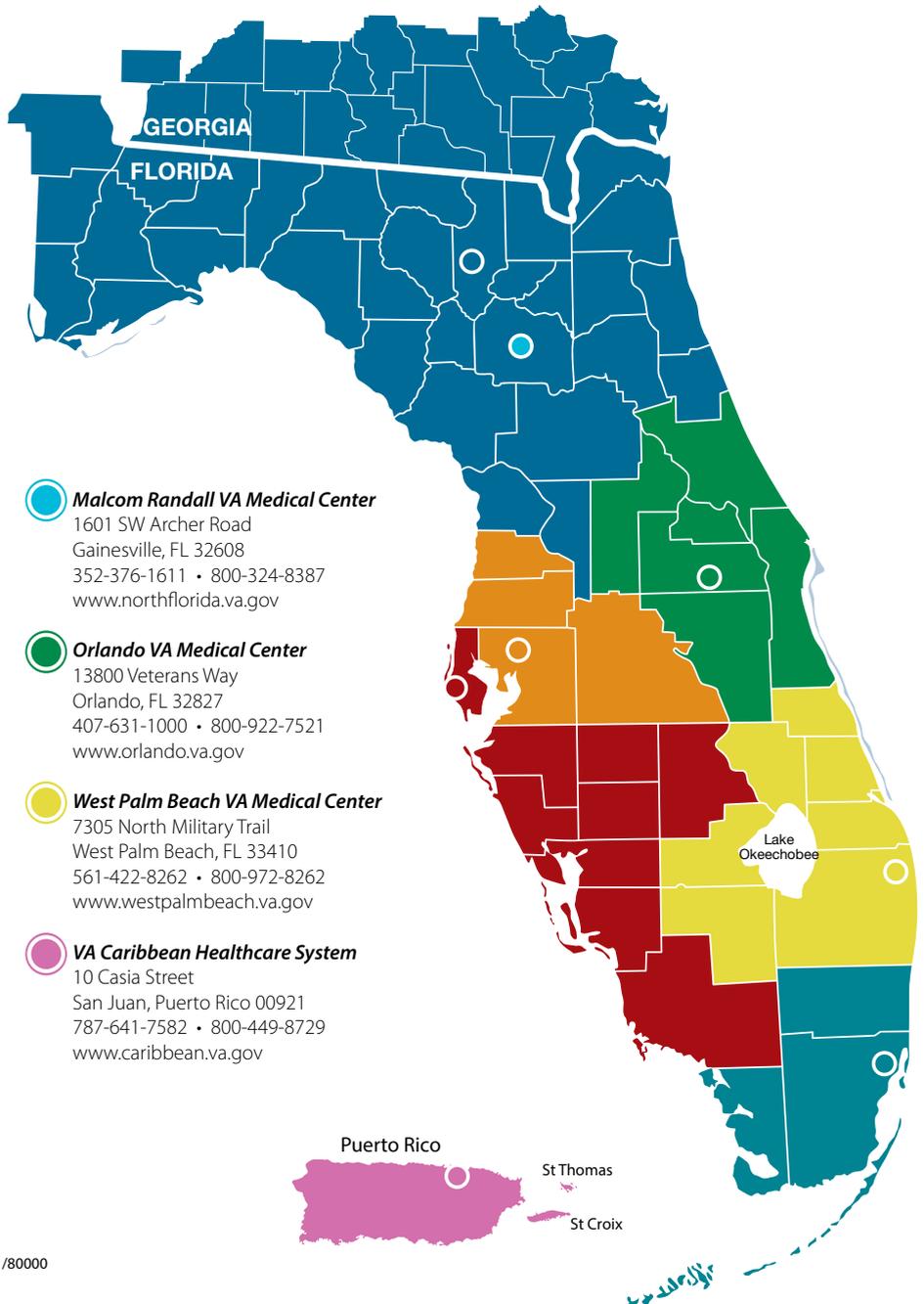
VA Sunshine Healthcare Network

www.visn8.va.gov



at all Medical Centers

Find a VA hospital or clinic near you:
www.va.gov/health/FindCare.asp



Bruce W. Carter Dept. of VA Medical Center
 1201 NW 16th Street
 Miami, FL 33125
 305-575-7000 • 888-276-1785
www.miami.va.gov

C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center
 10000 Bay Pines Blvd.
 Bay Pines, FL 33744
 727-398-6661 • 888-820-0230
www.baypines.va.gov

James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital
 13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
 Tampa, FL 33612
 813-972-2000 • 888-811-0107
www.tampa.va.gov

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 619 South Marion Avenue
 Lake City, FL 32025
 386-755-3016 • 800-308-8387
www.northflorida.va.gov

Malcom Randall VA Medical Center
 1601 SW Archer Road
 Gainesville, FL 32608
 352-376-1611 • 800-324-8387
www.northflorida.va.gov

Orlando VA Medical Center
 13800 Veterans Way
 Orlando, FL 32827
 407-631-1000 • 800-922-7521
www.orlando.va.gov

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 7305 North Military Trail
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