



VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

July 2021

HealthLiving Assessment

.The HealthLiving Assessment (HLA) can help Veterans improve their health

A powerful new tool can help Veterans better understand their health habits and overall health. It can also provide advice on ways to improve their well-being. It's called the "HealthLiving Assessment" or "HLA" and is available at the [My HealthVet](#) Web site.

The HLA asks each user a set of personalized, confidential questions. The questions cover things like diet, exercise, weight, family medical history, and alcohol and tobacco use. The answers are used to calculate the Veteran's "health age" and risk for disease. It takes about 20 minutes to complete and is available online 24/7. All registered My HealthVet users can take the HLA, even Veterans' family members and caregivers.

What is "Health Age"?

Health age is an estimate of your overall health. Things like family history, diet, exercise, weight, and smoking, for example, are used to estimate how healthy you are compared to the typical person your age. If you are 50 years old and have a health age of 45, you are living a healthier lifestyle than most people your age. If you are a 50-year-old with a health age of 55, there are some things about your lifestyle that you might want to change to get healthier.

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"Success is not the key to happiness, Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing you will be successful."

- Albert Schweitzer

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Health Age + the HLA = Positive Changes

The HLA is interactive - users can select health recommendations, then re-calculate their health age and disease risk. This can help them understand which changes can most benefit their health. For example, users who select “stop smoking” will see a positive change in their health age and a lower risk for heart disease and some cancers.

Veterans can save or print their HLA reports to share with their health care team. This can help them better partner, communicate, and decide about their health goals. The reports can also help them see how their provider’s recommendations can improve their health and life.

Research has shown that when people see the impact of their health choices, they want to improve their health behavior. And sometimes they just need to see improvement in one area to start making bigger health and behavior changes. VA believes that the HLA can help Veterans make positive health changes to live a healthier life.

Veterans Health Library

Created by and administered by NCP, the Veterans Health Library (VHL) is a culmination of comprehensive, consistent, Veteran-focused health information made available for all Veterans all of the time. The VHL offers Veterans, family members, and caregivers 24/7 access to comprehensive, consistent, Veteran-focused health information, no matter where the Veteran receives care. Available online at <https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/> or via My HealtheVet at <https://www.myhealth.va.gov>. The VHL:

- Provides information that’s been approved by VA experts
- Is designed to be easy for Veterans to use and understand
- Features Veteran-specific health topics, like posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Agent Orange and combat-related traumatic brain injury
- Has been improved with testing and feedback from Veterans, family members, and health care providers
- Is available anywhere there is Internet access.



Social Wellness Month

Social wellness means nurturing yourself and your relationships. It means giving and receiving social support - ensuring that you have friends and other people, including family, to turn to in times of need or crisis to give you a broader focus and positive self-image. Social support enhances quality of life and provides a buffer against adverse life events. Social support can take different forms:

- Emotional (sometimes called non-tangible) support refers to the actions people take to make someone else feel cared for.
- Instrumental refers to the physical, such as money and housekeeping.
- Informational support means providing information to help someone.

Healthy relationships are a vital component of health. The health risks from being alone or isolated in one’s life are comparable to the risks associated with cigarette smoking, blood pressure and obesity.

Research shows that:

- People who have a strong social network tend to live longer.
- The heart and blood pressure of people with healthy relationships respond better to stress.
- Strong social networks are associated with a healthier endocrine system and healthier cardiovascular functioning.
- Healthy social networks enhance the immune system’s ability to fight off infectious diseases.

You can grow your social network by joining a gym, starting a walking routine, volunteering, and sharing a hobby.

Community Care

Veterans may be eligible for care through a provider in their local community depending on their health care needs or circumstances, and if they meet specific eligibility criteria. In most cases, **Veterans must receive approval from VA** before receiving care from a community provider to avoid being billed for the care. VA staff members generally make all eligibility determinations for community care.

Eligibility

A Veteran's eligibility for community care depends on his/her individual health care needs or circumstances. **Please note the following about eligibility for community care:**

- Veterans must receive approval from VA prior to obtaining care from a community provider, in most circumstances.
- Veterans must either be enrolled in VA health care or be eligible for VA care without needing to enroll.
- Eligibility for community care will continue to be dependent upon a Veteran's individual health care needs or circumstances.
- VA staff members generally make all eligibility determinations.

There are six criteria that can qualify a Veteran to receive community care. Veterans only need to meet **one** of these to be eligible.

- Veteran needs a service not available at a VA medical facility
- Veteran lives in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility
- Veteran qualifies under the "Grandfather" provision related to distance eligibility for VCP
- VA cannot provide care within certain designated access standards
- It is in the Veteran's best medical interest
- A VA Service Line does not meet certain quality standards

Appointments

Veterans eligible for community care generally have the option of choosing to receive care from a VA medical facility or community provider. For Veterans who choose to receive community care, a VA staff member will discuss with them their preferences for getting care from a community provider. Veterans can either choose their preferred community provider or a VA staff member can help select one. The selected community provider must be part of VA's network. If there is a specific community provider a Veteran would like to see that is not in VA's network, VA may be able to add them to its network. Once a community provider is selected, an appointment can be scheduled based on the Veteran's preferences and the community provider's availability.

Before scheduling an appointment, it is important for the Veteran to confirm with a VA staff member that they are eligible and authorized for community care. Once authorized to receive community care, they have several options for scheduling an appointment with a community provider, depending on the type of care they need. A Veteran may be able to:

- Directly schedule an appointment and inform a VA staff member about the appointment
- Use VA Online Scheduling to request an appointment for certain types of routine services
- Have a VA staff member schedule the appointment
- Have VA's Third Party Administrator (TPA) schedule the appointment

VA will send the Veteran and the selected community provider a referral. VA will also send the Veteran's medical documentation to the community provider to ensure proper care coordination between their VA care team and the community provider.

Getting Care

When a Veteran arrives for the appointment, the community provider should have the appointment, VA referral, and medical documentation on file. If a Veteran needs a follow-up appointment, the community provider should check to make sure VA has authorized additional care before scheduling the appointment.

Billing and Payments

After receiving care from a community provider, Veterans may have to pay a copayment for non-service-connected care, just as the Veteran would if care was received at a VA medical facility. Community providers cannot bill or collect a VA copayment directly from Veterans.

Upcoming Event



AUGUST

4-8

2021

PROJECT FLEECE

DONATE 1.5 YARDS OR
MORE OF NEW FLEECE
FABRIC

DROP MATERIAL OFF AT THE
WINNEBAGO COUNTY FAIR EXPO
CENTER AUGUST 4-8

ALL TIE BLANKETS MADE FROM
DONATIONS WILL GO TO OLD GLORY
HONOR FLIGHT **VETERANS**



GOAL:
150
YARDS

HAVE QUESTIONS? CONTACT
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CONTACT US

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Visit us on the web at:

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veterans](http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/veterans)



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For a list of more events,
check out our [calendar!](#)