

Date: July 13, 2021

From: Acting Under Secretary for Health (10)

Subj: Stakeholder Guidance for Visiting Veterans Health Administration Facilities

To: Stakeholders Conducting Business and Oversight Across VHA

1. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) prioritizes the health and safety of Veterans and staff during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
2. VHA requires all visitors conducting business at VHA health care systems be fully vaccinated. Certification of visitor vaccination status is the responsibility of the visiting organization. Individuals with medical or religious exemptions for COVID-19 vaccination may visit VHA facilities, if considered essential to that team and the visit is for a mission critical activity. In such cases, the unvaccinated individual must be masked and physically distanced from all throughout their visit.
3. All visitors conducting business are to contact the VHA facility prior to their visit to ensure the safety and timing of their trip. We understand the importance of unannounced and for-cause visits. In these instances, visitors are to report to facility leadership shortly after arrival.
4. All visitors conducting business must follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and VHA guidance for healthcare settings. We are currently reviewing new Occupational Safety and Health Administration Emergency Temporary Standards and local facility COVID-19 prevention strategies may change.
5. Visitors conducting business should be aware that they could be exposed to COVID-19. Visitors will be notified if they meet the criteria for an exposure to a newly identified, confirmed case of COVID-19 during the contact tracking window. Exposed visitors should seek health care support through their employer.
6. VHA facilities may restrict visitor access to areas affected by a local COVID-19 outbreak (e.g., Community Living Center, Spinal Cord Injury and Disorder unit, or acute patient care area). VHA requests any business driven visit that requires physical access to those units be converted to a virtual visit or postponed until the unit meets VHA reopening criteria.



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