

# **Aleda E. Lutz VA and Community Based Outpatient Clinics**

## **Veteran Safety Plan for Care at VA Facilities**

**Dated: October 26, 2020**

**As the VA Medical Center and Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) continue to increase face-to-face care, we provide the following guidance to assure the safety of Veterans and staff at each of our locations. Our facility and CBOCs will be scheduling carefully to promote safety through appropriate physical distancing in our waiting areas and clinics.**

**We appreciate your patience and understanding of our efforts to re-open safely.**

- 1. SCREENING/MASKING:** Every VA facility will still be screening Veterans and visitors before they are allowed entry to any VA facility. At this time, if you are able to safely wear a mask, a mask will be required. If you do not have a mask, the VA may be able to provide you one you can keep. Masks must be washed frequently, and it is recommended they are laundered daily.
- 2. VISITOR POLICY:** Access will be determined on a case-by-case decision where the visitor is critical to the care of the Veteran. No visitors under the age of 18 are permitted, including infants. No Visitors will be allowed to wait in common areas (canteen areas, waiting rooms, vending areas, etc.). These restrictions apply to all care locations, including health care facilities, ambulatory care centers, urgent care centers, and emergency rooms.

The Saginaw VAMC Community Living Center (CLC) will not allow visitors at this time. This includes Community Living Center and Palliative Care Units. The only exception is for residents actively dying.

- No Visitors unless resident is actively dying.
  - An order must be entered into the Veteran's medical record by a provider to allow visitation for end of life Veterans.
  - The visitor must be screened, practice physical distancing, use of a face covering or face mask and alcohol-based hand rub upon entry
  - Residents and visitors must wear a cloth face covering or facemask. If a visitor is unable or unwilling to maintain these precautions, consider restricting their ability to enter the facility. All visitors should maintain physical distancing and perform hand washing or sanitizing upon entry to the facility.
- 3. SCREENING TOOL** - Patients are encouraged to use the COVID-19 screening tool on their phones to save time entering the building for an appointment. Text **screen** to **53079** or go to **va.gov/covid19screen** to answer the questions. Simply show your phone at the door.
  - 4. NO SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT – NEED CARE AS A WALK-IN:**  
PLEASE, if you do not have a scheduled appointment at one of the VA locations, and intend to receive care as a walk-in, CALL AHEAD. The reason to call ahead will allow a provider or nurse to better understand your healthcare concerns and offer other ways to provide care and/or instructions.
  - 5. FLU VACCINES:** Veterans may receive their flu vaccinations in the main lobby of the medical center from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday as well at their scheduled face-to-face medical appointments. Flu clinics for the CBOCs vary by location and you can contact your local

CBOC for dates and time. For updated flu information, call the Flu Hotline Number at 1-800-406-5143, Extension 14507. To find community pharmacies in the VA Network go to <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>

6. **SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS:** You will be provided instructions to arrive at your appointment as close to the beginning of your appointment time as possible. The reason for this is to decrease the number of individuals waiting in waiting rooms to promote safety through physical distancing of at least six feet.

**LAB-ONLY SERVICES:** Veterans will be contacted and provided instructions to complete necessary blood work or other laboratory services at the VA or CBOCs.

**OTHER DIAGNOSTIC TESTING:** Veterans will be scheduled for other diagnostic testing on a case-by-case basis or provided instructions on how to obtain general radiology procedures.

7. **CARE BY TELEHEALTH:** For routine and non-urgent care, Veterans are encouraged to continue using VA's online tools.

a. **Telephone or Video Appointments** – Veterans can receive care at home — either over the phone or via video using VA Video Connect on their computers, smartphones, or tablets. To set up telephone or video appointments, Veterans can send their provider a secure message on My HealtheVet by visiting [myhealth.va.gov](https://myhealth.va.gov). Veterans may also call, but VA is requesting that Veterans only call with urgent needs at this time. To learn more about VA Video Connect, visit [mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect](https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect).

b. **Prescription Refills** – Veterans can request prescription refills and order and ship medications to their homes using My HealtheVet or the Rx Refill mobile app. Download the app at [mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill](https://mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill).

**Pharmacy Call Center** – 989-497-2500, Ext. 11705 (open during business hours)

**Automated Refill Line** – 989-497-2500, Ext. 13990 (requires SSN and prescription number on bottle or package).

c. **Text Message Reminders** – Veterans can use Annie's Coronavirus Precautions protocol to send automated text messages with information about COVID-19. This application helps Veterans monitor for symptoms and can assist if they need to contact their VA facility for care. Enroll at [mobile.va.gov/annie](https://mobile.va.gov/annie).

d. **Secure Messaging** – With My HealtheVet, VA's online patient portal, Veterans can send online secure messages to your VA health care team to ask them nonurgent health questions. Register at [www.myhealth.va.gov](https://www.myhealth.va.gov).

e. Veterans can also call local tele-triage at 1-800-406-5143, Extension 11240 for general questions. For more information about VA's Connected Care technologies, visit [connectedcare.va.gov](https://connectedcare.va.gov).

8. **SANITIZING AFTER TOUCHING VA EQUIPMENT/SURFACES:** The VA will do their part in providing hand sanitizer throughout our facilities. Please use them, especially after using the check-in kiosk, or any other public surfaces such as doorknobs, handrails, counter tops, chair rails, etc. This is very important for you to remain germ-free, or at least attempt to decrease

transmission from surfaces to yourself or others. VA staff will also be cleaning, more frequently, exam rooms/equipment, between Veterans.

Veterans and staff are encouraged to take everyday preventive actions to avoid being exposed to the virus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you are sick or becoming sick.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- If you have symptoms or have been exposed to someone with symptoms, call the VA before going to the facility.

Our **VA COVID 19 Hotline** is available for additional information. You may call 989-497-2500, Ext. 14155 or direct dial to 989-321-4155.

**IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION:**

<b>VA LOCATION</b>	<b>TELEPHONE #</b>	<b>EXT.</b>
	800-406-5143 or	
SAGINAW	989.497.2500	11230
<b>COMMUNITY BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS</b>	<b>TELEPHONE #</b>	<b>EXT.</b>
ALPENA	989.497.2500	13510
BAD AXE	989.497.2500	13540
CADILLAC	989.497.2500	11410
CHEBOYGAN	989.497.2500	13560
CLARE	989.497.2500	13530
GAYLORD	989.497.2500	13520
GRAYLING	989.497.2500	13550
OSCODA	989.497.2500	11411
TRAVERSE CITY	989.497.2500	11412

For more information about the Coronavirus, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.