



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Fact Sheet

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

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HCV Treatment Care Coordination Plan for Veterans Choice Program Frequently Asked Questions for VA Patients

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) endeavors to provide high quality, safe, and effective health care to our Veterans. Through a comprehensive approach implemented in 2001, VA provides care to all Veterans diagnosed with the Hepatitis C virus (HCV) who are enrolled and engaged in VA care.

In recent years, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved new pharmaceuticals with higher and faster cure rates for HCV and without the devastating side effects of previous medications. Veterans that have been HCV positive for years now have a cure within reach, with minimal side effects. These new pharmaceuticals however, are also much more expensive than previous medications.

Since January 2015, with the approval of these newer and better medications, VA has experienced a rapid growth in the number of Veterans seeking HCV treatment as well as the number of Veterans who are eligible for HCV treatment. Demand for HCV treatment has far out-paced HCV-specific funds in fiscal year (FY) 2015 and VA anticipates that this will be the case moving forward. HCV treatment remains available to our Veterans within VA and in the community through the Choice Program to meet the needs of Veterans with HCV.

To learn more about how your providers make decisions about who should receive treatment early versus and who can likely wait for treatment, please refer to VA's *Initiation of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Treatment: Protocol for Prioritization* which was published on May 21, 2015 at http://www.ethics.va.gov/activities/hcv_framework.asp.

1. Why would my VA health care provider refer me to the Veterans Choice Program for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) treatment?

If VA cannot provide treatment for Veterans, they may be referred to the Veterans Choice Program to receive care in the community.

2. How will getting HCV treatment through the Veterans Choice Program impact my VA health care for other things?

Receiving HCV treatment through the Veterans Choice Program does not impact your existing VA health care or any other VA benefits. All other care you receive through VA will continue as usual.

3. Am I required to go through the Veterans Choice Program for HCV treatment if my VA health care provider recommends it?

The decision to use the Veterans Choice Program for your HCV treatment is ultimately yours. Please discuss with your VA health care provider whether waiting for HCV treatment is a good option for you. If you are satisfied with your anticipated wait time and wish to continue waiting for HCV care by a VA provider, you may certainly do so.

4. How do I know if I'm eligible for the Veterans Choice Program for my HCV treatment?

A Veteran's eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program is based on the driving distance to the nearest VA facility or the projected wait time for care provided at a VA facility. For information regarding your eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program you can call 866-606-8198 or visit <http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/>.

5. Will I be notified by VA if I'm eligible for HCV treatment through the Veterans Choice Program?

The VA's Non-VA Care Coordination (NVCC) staff will notify you by phone if you are eligible for the Veterans Choice Program. At that time, The NVCC staff will offer you the option to proceed with your HCV treatment through Choice. If you are eligible and decide to opt-in to Choice, you can call the toll free Veterans Choice Program number at 866-606-8198 to schedule your care in the community.

6. Who can I call if I have questions about the Veterans Choice Program or do not remember receiving a Veterans Choice Card?

If you do not remember receiving a Veterans Choice Card or have other questions about the Choice Program, please call 866-606-8198.

7. Where can I get more information about the Veterans Choice Program?

Please review the VA Choice website at <http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/> or call 866-606-8198.

8. Who can I contact if I have issues with the care through the Veterans Choice Program?

For customer service, you can contact the Veterans Choice Program at 866-606-8198.

9. Where will I get my prescriptions for HCV filled through the Veterans Choice Program?

Your prescriptions for HCV through the Choice Program must be filled through a VA pharmacy. You can request that your Veterans Choice Program provider fax the

prescription or you can bring the prescription (along with an authorization form that will be given to you by the Veterans Choice Program provider) to any VA medical facility.

10. Can I get reimbursed for HCV prescriptions that are written by a Veterans Choice Program provider, but not filled at a VA pharmacy?

No, only medications that are considered urgent can be filled through a non-VA pharmacy. HCV medications are not considered urgent and therefore the HCV prescriptions may only be filled through a VA pharmacy.

11. Will VA copayments apply to care under the Veterans Choice Program?

Yes, if a Veteran is required to pay a VA copayment, the VA copayments will still apply for care under the Veterans Choice Program. The VA copayment will be determined by VA after the care is provided, and any amount not offset by other health insurance payment (if applicable) will be collected by VA.

12. Will I have to pay cost-shares from my other health insurance?

Possibly, if the care under the Veterans Choice Program is not service connected, and you have other health insurance (other than Medicare, Medicaid or TRICARE), you are responsible for any cost-share determined by the other health insurance. VA may be able to reimburse Veterans for the cost-share if the total VA payment is less than the allowable Medicare rate.

13. Is the Veteran responsible for Medicare, Medicaid or TRICARE cost-shares?

No, these plans are not considered other health insurance providers for purposes of the Veterans Choice Program. Therefore they will neither be billed by the Veterans Choice Program provider nor will the Veteran be responsible for any of the cost-shares associated with these plans.