Erie VA going Smoke-Free this fall!

Erie VA Medical Center is changing our smoking policy along with all other medical centers across the country to further our commitment to provide a safe and healthy environment for patients, visitors, vendors, volunteers, contractors and employees.

Beginning this fall, **smoking will no longer be permitted on the VA campus for patients, visitors, contractors, volunteers, and vendors.**

The policy covers all smoking material including but not limited to:

- Cigarettes
- Cigars
- Pipes
- any other combustion of tobacco
- non-Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approved electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), including but not limited to electronic or e-cigarettes, vape pens, or e-cigars.

Patients, visitors, vendors, volunteers and contractors will be strongly encouraged to leave all smoking materials at home. To reduce the risk of ignition near oxygen or other flammable gases used in our facility, some areas may require materials to be stored during their visit. Erie VAMC offers smoking cessation treatment services for Veterans. Veterans who wish to obtain more information about smoking cessation should contact their Primary Care Team.

**FREE Smoking Cessation Resources:**

Veterans may request the following from their primary care providers: Wellbutrin, Nicotine Lozenge, Nicotine Patch, Nicotine gum and Chantix

Smoking Cessation groups:

- One-time smoking cessation group the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 2:30- 4 p.m. (Veterans should see their Primary Care Provider for more information)

- Weekly smoking cessation support group every Wednesday from 12-12:30 p.m. in the Whole Health room 617 on the 6th Floor of the main building. Veterans can call 814-860-2408 or 814-860-2447 for more information.

Veterans who want extra support can call the free Quit Vet line at 1-855-quit-Vet available Monday-Friday 9 a.m.- 9 p.m. or text VET to 47848.
Two Significant Changes that will Impact Veterans under the MISSION Act:

1. **New Community Care Criteria:** VA established six different eligibility criteria for community care:
   - Veteran needs a service not available at a VA medical center
   - 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 Veterans Choice Program
   - 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

   When you call to schedule an appointment or speak with your health care team, VA staff will notify you if you are eligible for community care. **Please note: VA must still authorize your care before you receive care from an in-network community provider.**

2. **New Urgent Care Benefit:** VA now offers an urgent care benefit so Veterans have new care options in the community for the treatment of minor injuries and illnesses, such as colds, sore throats, and minor skin infections.

   This urgent care benefit is available for any Veterans enrolled in VHA who have received care through VA within the past 24 months.

   Veterans may call 1-833-483-8669 to confirm their eligibility for the urgent care benefit.

   Veterans do not need VA authorization before seeing an urgent care community provider, however, the urgent care MUST be an approved in-network provider.

   To find an in-network Urgent Care community provider, visit [www.va.gov/find-locations](http://www.va.gov/find-locations), enter your zip code, choose the Community Care option, then click on the “Find VA-approved urgent care locations and pharmacies near you.” Veterans may have to pay a $30 copay for the in-network urgent care visit. If Veterans have any issues at the in-network urgent care visit or pharmacy, call 1-866-620-2071 for assistance. As a reminder, Veterans may still visit the Erie VAMC Urgent Care Center open 8am-8pm daily including weekends & holidays.

   **Please note:** if you are experiencing a medical emergency, please dial 911 or visit the nearest emergency room. **This new urgent care benefit does NOT cover emergency room visits.** The process for non-VA emergency care remains the same. If you visit a community Emergency Department or are admitted to a community hospital, VA Payment is not guaranteed. To be considered for payment, you must notify the VA within 72 hours by calling Erie VA Care in the Community at 814-860-2800 and press option 3.

   For more MISSION Act information, please visit [www.missionact.VA.gov](http://www.missionact.VA.gov).
High Reliability Organization

Erie VAMC was selected as one of 18 medical centers across the nation as a lead site in high reliability organization (HRO) which focuses on leadership commitment, culture of safety, and continuous process improvement. As a lead site, Erie VAMC will share and adapt best practices and lessons learned in efforts to collaborate with other VA medical centers and ultimately transform VA.

Our journey as a HRO began over the past decade with the implementation of a system-wide approach to problem solving using Lean principles. Since then, we have expanded the problem-solving approach to include patient experience, servant leadership, employee engagement, and just culture.

We are committed to affirming the trust of Veterans and their families through the achievement of Zero Harm and to provide an unmatched patient experience for those we are privileged to serve.

Veteran Job Club

Erie VAMC offers FREE employment assistance with resumes, interview skills, job searching and more! For additional details, contact: Marty Acri at (814) 860-2861 Lorie Panitzke at (814) 860-2008

**Erie, PA Veteran Job Club**

WHEN
Every Monday (except holidays)
8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
WHERE
Behavioral Health Clinic, Erie VAMC
2nd Floor - Conference Room #237

**Meadville, PA Veteran Job Club**

WHEN
2nd & 4th Friday of the Month
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
WHERE
PMI 764 Bessmer St.
#105 Meadville, PA 16335

**Ashtabula, OH Veteran Job Club**

WHEN
2nd & 4th Wednesday of the Month
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
WHERE
Veterans Service Commission
1212 Lake Ave. in Ashtabula, OH

On June 28, the Erie VAMC opened the Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program. This new program uses a mental health recovery model which includes empowering the Veteran to take ownership of their own recovery and meeting them where they are in their recovery process. For more information, please call 814-860-2474.

In July, the Erie VAMC and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation opened the new entrance on E 38th Street. The entrance includes traffic lights to help staff, Veterans, visitors, and community members enter and exit the facility safely.
2019 Veteran Events

Connected Care Fair
Date: October 9
Time: 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
Location: Erie VAMC
For more information, call 814-860-2547

Domestic Violence Awareness Resource Fair
Date: October 22
Time: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Location: Erie VAMC
For more information, call 814-860-2753

Veterans Day Parade & Ceremony
Date: November 9
Time: Parade begins at 9:30; Ceremony begins at 11 at Jefferson Elementary School

Show Your Support!
1. Sign your organization up to march in the Veterans Day Parade! Call Ken Sawdey at 814-866-9565 to sign up
2. Show your support from the side-lines. We’re asking the entire community to line the streets and cheer on local Veterans.

Important Contacts

Main Line – Phone Tree
814-868-8661
1-800-274-8387 (toll-free)

Press 1 – Pharmacy
Press 2 – Appointments, speak to the Call Center, specialty care provider or to leave a message with your CBOC provider

Press 3 – Nurse Line
Press 4 – Eligibility
Press 5 – Billing
Press 6 – MISSION Act questions/ information
Press 7 – Veterans Crisis Line

Behavioral Health Clinic
814-860-2038
Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 (Press 1)

For information on upcoming Town Halls, Flu Shot Clinics and more, connect with us online:

www.erie.va.gov
Subscribe for email updates!

@VAMCErie

@ErieVAMC