U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Northern Arizona VA Health Care System (NAVAHCS)

Stakeholder Update
March 2021

NAVAHCS Average Wait Time:

Completed Appts - Established - Average Wait Time

Completed - Est - Create - Average Wait Time by Appointment Date and Primary Stop Clinic Group ((5V22) (649) Northern Arizona HCS)											
Clinic Group	**Apr-FY20**	**May-FY20**	**Jun-FY20**	**Jul-FY20**	**Aug-FY20**	**Sep-FY20**	**Oct-FY21**	**Nov-FY21**	**Dec-FY21**	**Jan-FY21**	**Feb-FY21**
Mental Health	6.8	9.0	11.3	11.7	13.3	15.3	14.7	14.9	14.8	14.4	13.0
Primary Care	8.3	11.2	18.6	12.1	13.7	29.3	31.4	35.2	23.7	14.0	17.8
Specialty Care	17.4	16.0	37.3	30.1	35.0	47.5	42.7	38.6	34.6	37.7	39.6

Completed Appts - New - Average Wait Time

Completed - New - Create - Average Wait Time by Appointment Date and Primary Stop Clinic Group ((5V22) (649) Northern Arizona HCS)											
Clinic Group	**Apr-FY20**	**May-FY20**	**Jun-FY20**	**Jul-FY20**	**Aug-FY20**	**Sep-FY20**	**Oct-FY21**	**Nov-FY21**	**Dec-FY21**	**Jan-FY21**	**Feb-FY21**
Mental Health	5.8	9.0	9.3	6.8	6.2	8.4	9.8	14.4	11.7	7.7	9.9
Primary Care	10.3	9.8	14.9	12.4	13.1	16.1	17.0	18.1	15.5	11.9	11.4
Specialty Care	4.9	3.5	21.7	19.3	19.7	30.1	25.3	22.4	21.5	16.3	16.4

VA Video Connect (VVC) Data (as of 02/28/2021):

- For the past 4 months, FY21 (October 2020 - February 2021), NAVAHCS provided 9,962 VVC appointments for Veterans. Although the COVID numbers are decreasing, we are expecting Veterans to continue to utilize VVC services in-lieu of face-to-face appointments and we are anticipating further expansion of services.

COVID-19 Plan (as of 02/22/2021):

- As of February 22, 2021, NAVAHCS has moved to Phase 2 for outpatients. This means our outpatient clinics will see approximately 50% of patients face-to-face. NAVAHCS will continue serving healthcare needs through video and telephone visits as well maintaining 100% scheduling overall.
- COVID-19 vaccinations are by priority group. Begun scheduling 55+ this week. NAVAHCS is providing vaccination by appointment only due to the limited supply of vaccine and following established high-risk priority group stratification. NAVAHCS is one of the first facilities within VISN 22 to set-up vaccination clinics at the CBOCs. NAVAHCS continues to use every dose of vaccine as it is delivered throughout all locations and are also giving the 2nd vaccination dose in the series of two at 28-day intervals.
- As of March 1, 2021, NAVAHCS has given a total of 9,318 doses of Moderna COVID vaccine.
- Initiated Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC) vaccinations the week of February 4th.HBPC vaccinated 32 Veterans with their 1st dose and the 2nd dose is scheduled.
- Initiated vaccination for our Homeless Veteran population the week of February 8th. This has included going to the homes of HUD-VASH Veterans located in Bullhead City that were not able to come to the Kingman CBOC for their vaccination.

Prosthetics Regulations:

- The Prosthetics Regulation takes effect and VA compliance will be mandatory on February 27, 2021. Federal Register: Prosthetic and Rehabilitative Items and Services
- The purpose of the regulation is to establish eligibility and other criteria for providing items and services under the Prosthetics & Sensory Aids Service (PSAS).
- Future PSAS and other VHA directives must adhere to the new Prosthetics Regulations. Currently, there are 11 directives in progress. The new Prosthetics Regulation did not affect existing regulations and provisions of the Clothing Allowance Program, Automobile Adaptive Equipment Program, and Home Improvement & Structural Alterations Program.
- The Prosthetics Regulations defined 15 categories of items and services, if VA determines that such items and services has a ***direct and active component of the Veteran's medical treatment and rehabilitation*** and do not solely support the comfort or convenience of the Veteran.".
- The 15 categories are as follows: (1) adaptive household items, (2) adaptive recreation equipment, (3) cognitive devices, (4) communication devices, (5) home exercise equipment, (6) home medical equipment, (7) home respiratory equipment, (8) implants, (9) mobility aids, (10) orthotic devices, (11) prosthetic devices, (12) repairs for items, (13) replacements for items, (14) specialized clothing made necessary by the wearing of a prosthetic device, and (15) Training with and fitting of prescribed items
- VISN 22 Prosthetics Service Leadership will provide training (e.g. in-services, weekly office hours) and actively collaborate with our clinical partners to ensure that we transition and implement the new regulations efficiently without delaying in patient care.
- VISN 22 Prosthetics Service Leadership will create VISN-wide consult templates to ensure consistent prescribing practices and ensure adherence to the Prosthetics regulation and directives.
- It is worth noting that some items may transition to other services (e.g., SCM or Pharmacy) in the medical center for procurement and issuance. The VISN 22 Prosthetic Service Leadership and staff will continue to provide support to our Veterans during this transition to the new regulations and appropriately address actionable requests (consults) during the implementation of the new regulation. It is not appropriate for VISN 22 Prosthetic Service to not take the appropriate steps to fulfill an actionable consult during the transition.

Veteran VA Medical Care Debts

- VA had stopped sending monthly billing statements for medical care debt starting April 6, 2020. This change followed the President's April 2 announcement that was part of the nation's relief response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, all actions on debts owed to VA in the form of copayments under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Treasury were suspended. Here is the link to learn more: Suspension of VA Collection Actions
- Veterans may still make payment on outstanding balances if they wish and are encouraged to do so if they can in order to avoid a large lump sum bill when statements resume after September 2021. Veterans whom are unable to make payment for any reason, will not be subject to penalties or collection referral activities until after September 2021. Financial is assistance is also available to Veterans whom need it and they may either contact the HRC or Facility Revenue staff for assistance.
- Although the freeze on statements has been extended, in November 2020 Veterans were mailed notification which included their current balances and informed billings would resume in January 2021 for any new copay charges for any care or prescriptions from April 6, 2020, through December 31, 2020, and any unpaid copays from before April 2020.

NAVAHCS' Events & Activities:

- **March 17th** –Virtual Women's History Month Event at 1:30 p.m.
- Held a 100th Birthday celebration for Mr. Peter Marshall, WWII FPOW Veteran outside of the CLC on Sunday, **February 21st** (his actual Birthday). Patriot Guard Riders (PGR) participated and Native Air did a flyover with their helicopter. Students donated Birthday cards and Daughters of the American Revolution knitted Mr. Marshall a hat and blanket.
- Mr. Marshall will also be presented with his POW Medal by Navy Officials on **March 19th.**
- Presenting 50th Anniversary Commemoration Lapel Pins to 25 – 30 Vietnam Era Veterans at the American Legion in Prescott Valley on **March 16th**.

Housing Updates for Veterans:

- The Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD) has begun placing Veterans at the Jerry Ambrose Veterans Council of Mohave County and as of March 3rd currently have 3 Veterans in Transitional Housing and are outreaching for additional placements.
- NAVAHCS Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) project has continued its development and the developers are working on completing surveys and obtaining permits to begin the construction process. The EUL will provide housing on the VA campus for an anticipated 70 homeless Veterans. It is estimated to open in early 2023.
- Kingman began housing Veterans at the Villas in December. The project has 48 units set aside for the HUD-VASH Project Based Program. As of March 3rd, 24 Veterans have been housed at the Villas with an additional 2 in process.
- Mobile Vaccination plan has begun to be rolled out to address vaccinating our Homeless Veteran population with the COVID-19 vaccine. Plan has been successful with being able to provide the opportunity for a vaccination to some of our more rural areas such as Bullhead City.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Program:

- NAVAHCS Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program (IPVAP) moved ahead with launching the Strength at Home (SAH) group intervention virtually to offer this specialized service to Veteran while accommodating during the COVID pandemic. SAH is a 12-week, trauma informed, group intervention for Veteran's who use aggression in the intimate relationships. We are currently offering our second virtual cohort and taking referrals for

upcoming groups. Please send any referrals or questions about SAH and the IPVAP to Beth Goldstein, LCSW at beth.goldstein@va.gov.

Flu Shots:

- In addition to being available at NAVAHCS through the PACT teams, eligible Veterans can receive the seasonal flu vaccination (at no-cost) through Community Care Network (CCN) in-network retail pharmacies or urgent care locations through March 31, 2021. Vaccines are subject to availability and may be in limited supply.

Community Care Updates:

- VA is handling Community Care referrals from start to finish (VA will authorize, schedule, and complete referrals with documents of visits).
- Veterans have the option of self-scheduling directly with the community provider and notifying Community Care staff at Northern Arizona VA of their appointment OR utilizing Community Care staff to assist with scheduling appointments.
- Veterans referred to the community for care will get a call from a VA employee. Veterans are encouraged to add the Northern Arizona VA phone number to their cell phone (928) 445-4860 as a contact. We are hearing that this number comes up at times as “Potential Spam” and failure to respond to VA employee calls for scheduling can cause a delay in receiving care.

Trust Scores:

VHA Outpatient Services Survey of the past 90 days shows an 89.3% Trust Score rating which indicates Veterans trust NAVAHCS with their care. VISN 22 Trust Score was 89.4% for the same time period.