

# VA Liaison Program

## RCC Fact Sheet



### What is the VA Liaison Program?

The VA Liaison Program is designed to facilitate the smooth transfer of wounded, ill, and injured Service members from a Department of Defense (DoD) facility to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility closest to their home, or to the facility most appropriate for the specialized services required. As the first step in this transfer process, Service members transitioning to VA are referred to VA Liaisons by case managers at their Military Treatment Facility (MTF). VA Liaisons are integrated and co-located at MTFs to help ensure coordination of health care and to provide on-site consultation and collaboration related to VA resources and treatment options. There are 33 full-time VA Liaisons (nurses and social workers) at 18 MTFs, with sites determined in coordination with the departments of the Army and Navy.

### Which population does this program serve?

VA Liaisons coordinate care for both severely and non-severely injured patients who are currently receiving care at an MTF, and assist Service members and new veterans preparing to separate from the military in transitioning their health care from DoD to VA. VA Liaisons also facilitate the communication between the MTF and the receiving VA health care facility to ensure that care needs, including specialized services, are identified and arranged at the VA health care facility before the Service member leaves the MTF. They meet with Service members early in their transition to ensure access to VA health care programs at the appropriate time in their recovery and rehabilitation process and coordinate the transition of health care to both inpatient and outpatient programs at VA facilities nationwide, including primary care, mental health, and rehabilitation services, as well as specialized services, such as prosthetics, durable medical equipment, driving evaluations, and much more.

### How can this program help wounded warriors and their families?

Much of a VA Liaison's workload involves transfers for the most complex care needs, including polytrauma rehabilitation, spinal cord injury rehabilitation, and blind rehabilitation. They handle inpatient transfers for specialty care programs for mental health and substance abuse conditions, as well. Together with the MTF case

manager, they coordinate outpatient appointments for the continuation of treatment needs initiated at the MTF. Liaisons also participate with amputee treatment teams in acquiring specialized equipment and establishing local relationships for the Service member. In addition, VA Liaisons are engaged when a Service member leaves military service or returns home temporarily on convalescent leave. This allows a Service member to receive care closer to home, which promotes faster recovery.

### How can this program help Recovery Care Coordinators?

At the MTF, VA Liaisons collaborate with people who belong to or assist the Recovery Team, including the Federal Recovery Coordinator, Veterans Benefits Administration, polytrauma rehabilitation nurses, Military Case Manager, treatment team, Warrior Transition Unit triads, military command, Service Wounded Warrior Programs, and other specialty teams. The patient-and-family-centered approach of VA Liaison Care Management is well aligned with the work of Recovery Care Coordinators (RCCs), as it is delivered by an interdisciplinary team of professionals with specialized knowledge in managing patients with complex needs, much like the Recovery Team. Issues addressed by the VA Liaisons are similar to the issues addressed by RCCs, such as mental health, Traumatic Brain Injury, Spinal Cord Injury, financial and marital stress, and vocational challenges.

### Where can I find more information?

The 18 MTFs where VA Liaisons are co-located and their contact information can be found at <http://www.oefoif.va.gov/valiaisons.asp>