

South Texas Veterans Health Care System

Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Factsheet



Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Roll-Out

Background

The MyVA Performance Improvement Team has been working with VA medical centers across the country to identify performance improvement opportunities and pilot programs that can positively impact the Veteran and employee experience. One opportunity, identified during sites visits, is the direct scheduling of patients in need of Audiology (hearing) and Optometry (eye) services without referrals through their respective Primary Care providers.

In 2015, VA launched pilots in three locations: Bay Pines VA Healthcare System (VAHCS), White River Junction, VT and Mountain Home, TN. The pilots gave Veterans (including traveling Veterans and those unassigned to a Primary Care provider) the option to directly schedule routine Audiology and Optometry appointments without the need for a Primary Care consult. Because of the success of the pilots, we are now making this program available to Veterans at our facility.

As part of a national VA roll-out, the South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS)' Direct Scheduling for Audiology began in October 2016 and Direct Scheduling for Optometry will begin December 12, 2016.

How Can Veterans Directly Schedule An Appointment for Audiology or Optometry?

Veterans can schedule an appointment for Audiology by calling 210-949-8900 option 3 (San Antonio area) or 830-792-2416 (Kerrville area). To schedule an appointment for Optometry, please call 210-949-8900 option 2 (San Antonio area) or 830-792-2660 (Kerrville area).

What Did Veterans and Staff Gain from the Pilot?

Veterans involved in the pilot indicated that they like the new process. Those not needing a Primary Care visit saved a trip to the facility. When taking into account the elimination of the Primary Care appointment, Veterans' total wait time was reduced appreciably. Employees scheduling appointments saved on average an hour a day reviewing consults and setting up appointments. Primary Care Physicians had clinical time freed up.

For questions about the new process, please contact:

- Audiology: Fran Sims, Chief, Audiology, 617-5300, ext. 210-949-8916
- Optometry: Ray Reil, Administrative Officer, Optometry, 949-8900, ext. 65335
- Medical Administration Service: Stephanie Cantu-Bradford, MAS Supervisor, 949-8900 ext. 65475