

Serving Those Who Served

**The Official Newsletter of the Kentucky Department of
Veterans Affairs**



**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

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Greetings teammates,

I hope everyone had a great Labor Day weekend following our superb annual State Commanders Conference. We had several federal, state and Veterans Affairs leaders in attendance sharing information on upcoming projects, programs and exchanging information to benefit veterans. It was an informative and critical function for KDVA wrapping up the month of August. We have a lot going on as we close in on the final quarter of 2024.



On September 11th, I invite you all to join us at the Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central in Radcliff, KY for the Patriot Day Ceremony in coordination with Fort Knox. Our cemetery is the site of the only 9/11 Memorial in the Commonwealth.

As September is National Suicide Prevention Month, we have a Suicide Prevention virtual and in-person event planned for September 24th. See our flier for more details and follow us on Facebook for further updates, or to watch the day of.

September is a heavy month given just the two events I've mentioned. So I ask if you are having a mental health crisis, thoughts of hurting yourself, please call 988 so you can have someone to talk to. We've lost too many brothers and sisters to suicide and having someone to talk to about the challenges we face can make the difference.

Very respectfully,

Commissioner Whitney P. Allen, Jr.
Kentucky Department of Veteran Affairs

Latest VA News

VA awards over \$800 million in grants to help homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced it will award \$806.4 million in grants to help homeless and at-risk Veterans through the [Supportive Services for Veteran Families](#) and [Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem](#) programs.

- **Supportive Services for Veteran Families:** Through the SSVF program, VA is awarding 239 grants totaling approximately \$797.5 million to community organizations that help rapidly rehouse Veterans and their families, prevent the imminent loss of Veterans' homes, or identify more suitable housing situations.
- **Grant and Per Diem Program:** Through the GPD program, VA will award 14 grants totaling approximately \$8.9 million to community organizations that provide Veterans with transitional housing and case management — including connecting eligible Veterans to VA benefits, community-based services, and permanent housing. These special need grants will fund approximately 105 transitional housing beds to support special populations of homeless Veterans including women, elderly, terminally ill, chronically mentally ill, or those who care for minor dependents.

Ending Veteran homelessness is a top priority of VA and the Biden-Harris Administration. The number of Veterans experiencing homelessness fell by 4.5% between 2020 to 2023 and has dropped 52% overall since 2010. These grants also build upon the significant progress to end Veteran homelessness, including progress towards VA's fiscal year 2024 goal to [house 41,000 more homeless Veterans](#). In 2023, VA placed more than [46,500 homeless Veterans into permanent housing](#), exceeding the goal set for 2023 by nearly 23%.

"We're making real progress in reducing Veteran homelessness, but there is much more work to do," said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. "These grants allow VA and the entire Biden-Harris Administration, alongside community partners, to provide more housing and wraparound services to more homeless and at-risk Veterans than ever before."

These efforts are built upon the evidence-based ["Housing First" approach](#), which prioritizes housing Veterans, followed by providing them the wraparound support to stay housed, including health care, job training, legal and education assistance, and more.

These new grant awards come just a week after the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and VA [announced policy changes](#) that will help more Veterans receive housing assistance under the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. The changes include requiring public housing agencies that administer HUD-VASH to set initial income eligibility at 80% of area median income, and excluding Veterans' disability benefits when determining income eligibility — both of which are expected to increase the number of Veterans eligible for housing assistance. For more information about VA's comprehensive efforts to end Veteran homelessness, visit [VA.gov/homeless](#). To learn more about the Grant and Per Diem program or view the [full list of grantees](#), visit the [Grant and Per Diem website](#). To learn more about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program or view the [full list of grantees](#), visit the [Supportive Services for Veteran Families website](#).

VA takes steps to expand access to benefits for Veterans who served at K2 and their survivors.

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced several steps to expand access to VA benefits for Veterans who served at Karshi-Khanabad (K2) base in Uzbekistan after Sept. 11, 2001, as well as their survivors. These steps include:

- **Making chronic multi-symptom illness a presumptive condition for K2 Veterans:** VA plans to take steps to consider Veterans who served in Uzbekistan as Persian Gulf Veterans, therefore making undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illness (also known as Gulf War Illness) presumptive conditions for Veterans who served at K2. This will lower the burden of proof required for Veterans who served at K2 to receive presumptive benefits for these conditions.
- **Recognition of exposures at K2 as toxic exposure risk activities (TERAs):** VA also plans to take steps to acknowledge that Veterans who served at K2 were exposed to several contaminants of concern — including for example jet fuel, volatile organic compounds, particulate matter and dust, asbestos roofing tiles, and lead-based paint. VA continues to work with the Department of Defense to conduct research to identify any additional exposures.
- **Ensuring that toxic exposures are fully taken into account when processing K2 Veterans' claims:** VA will provide information and training about service at K2, including a list of the contaminants that Veterans were exposed to while serving there, to all claims processors and examiners. This will mean that every time a K2 Veteran submits a disability claim, VA claims processors and examiners will take those K2 exposures into account.
- **Pre-decisional review of K2 claims:** Before a decision is made on a K2 Veteran's claim, it will go through an additional review to ensure that all relevant information (including exposures) was taken into account, and that all benefits to which the Veteran is entitled have been granted. This will apply to any original claim for conditions that could be tied to exposures (for example, there would not be a review for a knee injury).

Importantly, in addition to these steps, all Veterans who served at K2 and meet [basic eligibility requirements](#) are already eligible to enroll in VA health care to get world-class, low-cost care for all their health conditions — without needing to apply for disability compensation first. These Veterans are also eligible for presumptive benefits for the more than 300 conditions [covered by the PACT Act](#), meaning that they do not need to prove that their service caused their condition to receive benefits for it; instead, VA automatically assumes service-connection for the condition and provides benefits accordingly.

Moving forward, VA will continue to evaluate additional ways to support K2 Veterans and their survivors. VA encourages all Veterans who served at K2 to apply for VA [care](#) and [benefits](#) by visiting VA.gov or calling 1-800-MYVA411.

“At VA, our goal is to provide every Veteran who served at K2 with the care and benefits that they deserve for their service to our nation — and that’s what this effort is all about,” said **VA’s Under Secretary for Benefits Josh Jacobs**. “In addition to these important steps forward, we want all Veterans who served at K2 to know that they are currently eligible both to enroll in VA health care (without first applying for VA benefits) and for presumptive benefits for the more than 300 health conditions under the PACT Act. We encourage these Veterans — and their survivors — to apply for VA [care](#) and [benefits](#) by visiting VA.gov or calling 1-800-MYVA411. We will do everything in our power to get to yes and get you the care and benefits you deserve.”

VA is conducting extensive outreach to K2 Veterans and their survivors to ensure they get the care and benefits they have earned. Partly due to these efforts, 13,002 K2 Veterans of the approximately 16,000 known K2 Veterans are currently enrolled in VA healthcare and 11,801 are service-connected for at least one condition.

Upcoming Events

PATRIOT DAY CEREMONY



KENTUCKY VETERANS CEMETERY—CENTRAL
RADCLIFF, KENTUCKY

SEPTEMBER 11, 2024

8:15 AM





KDVA Veterans Claims Clinic

This is an opportunity for veterans and families to file claims for veterans disability compensation, non-service connected pensions, survivor benefits, healthcare, and educational benefits.

***All services provided by
KDVA are FREE ***

**September 19, 2024
9:00 AM to 5:00PM**

Laurel County Courthouse
Community Room 1st Floor
101 S Main Street
London, KY 40741

PLEASE BRING

DD214

**MEDICAL
RECORDS**

**MARRIAGE
LICENSE**

**SOCIAL SECURITY
NUMBERS**



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

VIRTUAL OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM

THURSDAY,
SEPTEMBER 19, 2024
1 - 2:30 P.M. (ET)



Veterans
Crisis Line

DIAL 988 then
PRESS 1



LINK TO JOIN:

<https://bit.ly/3WaDJldfor>



WEBINAR NUMBER:

2761 830 4408



WEBINAR PASSWORD:

A9FhhTp3K2@ (29344873 when
dialing from a phone or video system)



JOIN BY PHONE:

+1-404-397-1596 USA Toll Number
1-833-558-0712 USA Toll-Free Number



ACCESS CODE:

2822 485 9231





KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

KDVA invites you to our Suicide Prevention Event

The health and well-being of the Nation's service members and Veterans continue to be a top priority. KDVA is working with the Department of Veterans Affairs to address military and veteran suicide prevention.

September 24, 2024

10 AM to 2:30 PM

In person at 2250 Leestown Rd. Lexington, KY, 40511
Virtual on Teams / Live on Facebook

Register by scanning the QR Code:

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



**SAY 'THANK YOU' THIS
VETERANS DAY**



**LEST
WE
FORGET
THE CONCERT**

FRI 8TH NOV 2024

**FEATURING SONGS WRITTEN
WITH OUR KENTUCKY VETERANS**

**THE HISTORIC
STATE THEATER
ELIZABETHTOWN**

**WITH AWARD WINNING
SINGER/SONGWRITER**

TAMARA STEWART
& THE NASHVILLE SMASH BAND

ADMISSION

**\$25 ASSIGNED SEATING
\$20 VETERANS DISCOUNT**

**PROUDLY PRESENTED BY THE
RADCLIFF VETERANS CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

What's New at KDVA?

2024 KDVA State Commanders Conference



On August 29th and 30th, KDVA held its annual State Commanders Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Lexington, Kentucky. The conference had several federal, state and local leaders as well as Veterans Affairs and Veteran Service Organization leaders in attendance. Panels and speakers discussed various topics and challenges veterans face and benefits available to them.



To see more photos visit our Facebook albums [here](#).

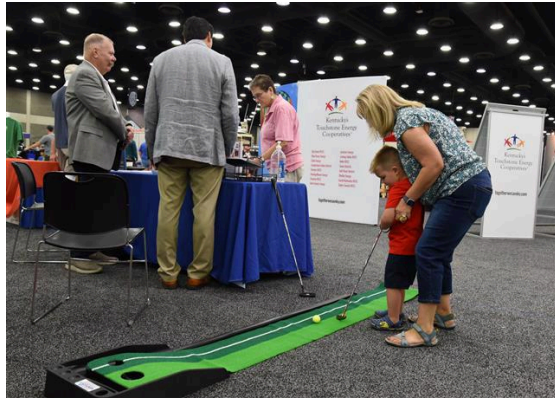
TAP Presentation



Commissioner Allen was a speaker at the 2024 U.S. Army Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Symposium at Fort Knox, KY on Tuesday August 27, 2024. This biannual event brings together TAP team members worldwide and aimed to facilitate discussions on the importance of focusing on the mission and its role in preparing our service members for success. Commissioner Allen briefed on the mission and purpose of state veteran agencies and how these agencies can support the Army's TAP program and service members who are entering the civilian workforce. Walter Hurd, TAP National Director, is working with Dennis Wimer, National Association of Directors of State Veterans Affairs president, connecting state VAs to their state TAP programs. KDVA is a proud partner with TAP, especially with the Ft. Campbell and Ft. Knox TAP teams.

Pictures courtesy of Ft. Knox TAP.

Kentucky State Fair



KDVA, Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment for Kentucky Veterans (HBOT), Brain Injury Association of America, attended the Kentucky State Fair to connect with veterans on the Military Appreciation Day August 19, 2024.

Veterans Centers Veterans Recreation Activities Around the Commonwealth



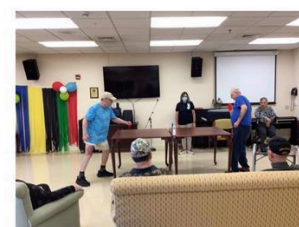
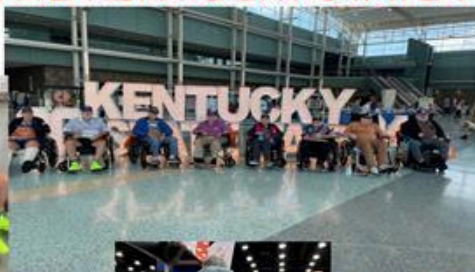
Summer Fun: Fishing



1958 National Champion Johnny Cox meets with 1996 champion and current University of Kentucky basketball coach Mark Pope during a cookout meet and greet event at Perry County Park on Aug. 23.



THE KENTUCKY STATE FAIR



Snapshots of veteran centers' and veteran residents' recreational activities around the Commonwealth. Our veterans centers recreation team ensure our wonderful residents are active and engaged. We appreciate the partners and veteran service organizations who love and support our wonderful veterans.

Pioneer Trace resident Ms. Wynema Sorrell honored for her Army Service

By: Michael A. Clary
KY News Group



Ms. Wynema Prince Sorrell, a 95-year-old resident of Pioneer Trace Nursing Home, in Flemingsburg, Ky., was honored for service in the U.S. Army from 1950 to 1952, by the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA), on Friday, August 2, 2024, beginning at 1:00pm.

“Ms. Sorrell graduated from high school in 1947. Times were hard for everyone back then, so after working on the family farm for a few years, she decided to join the Army in search of opportunities for a better career. She joined the U.S. Army in 1950 when she was 21 years old.



Wynema was sent to Fort Lee, Virginia, for her basic training. After basic training, she went to Motor Pool School and was then sent to the Pentagon where she worked as an assistant to the Colonel. When her work in the Pentagon was finished, she then went to Fort Meyer, Virginia, and worked as a food service specialist. She was in charge of all the food orders for the troops at that facility. She loved working with the troops.

Wynema loved her time in the military, however, her mother became very ill, so she decided it was best she go back home and take care of her mother. She was honorably discharged in June 1952. Her mother passed away shortly after she returned home.

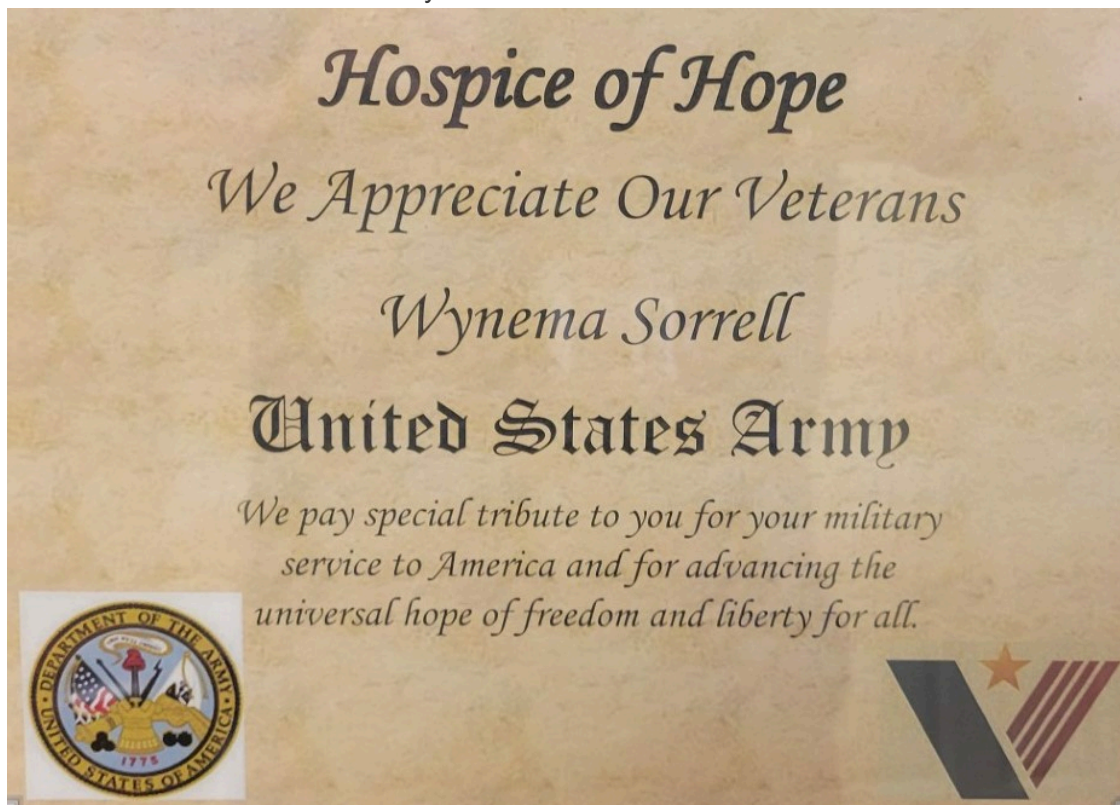
Wynema has always been a strong supporter of the Veterans Administration and enjoys telling stories about her time in the military. She met her first husband, Richard E. Reed, Sr., also a US Army Veteran, shortly after returning home from the service. They married in 1953 and had seven children. Mr. Reed passed away in 1997. Wynema was married

for the second time in 2011 to Mr. Bill Sorrell, also a US Army Veteran, until his passing in 2013.”

The ceremony honoring Ms. Sorrell for her service began with the Pledge of Allegiance; a welcome to the many guests and a reading of Ms. Sorrell’s bio from KDVA Acting State Programs Director Everett Bracken (U.S. Army / Gulf War Veteran); remarks from KDVA Commissioner Whitney Allen and the presentation of a certificate of recognition for her service and a special coin on behalf of Gov. Andy Beshear; a pin from the KDVA; a special musical performance; the reading of the poem “The Noble and The Brave” written by Joanna Fuchs; a presentation of gifts, plaque, and pin from Hospice of Hope; a special salute from the two Women Veteran’s present at the ceremony; a pin from the Women’s Veterans Memorial, in Arlington, Virginia, where Ms. Sorrell’s story which will be going into the repository, where it will be acknowledged so that her story will live on; a pin from Lady Veterans Connect in Winchester, Ky.; recognition of the Veterans who were present at the ceremony; and a closing Veterans prayer.

Thank you, Ms. Sorrell, for your service.

Refreshments were served directly after.





On August 1, KDVA led an Equine industry alliance between KDVA, BCTC Equine Studies Program, and Secretariat Center (a non-profit whose mission is to prepare off track thoroughbreds for post-track careers by rehabilitating and giving them a broad-based foundation of skills to ensure a harmonious match with their adopters). This alliance will provide housing, education and employment for veterans and military spouses that are looking to transition into the equine industry and is tentatively scheduled to go live for the Spring 2025 semester at BCTC and offer three equine certifications (workforce, vet tech, and riders) and an associate degree specializing in the equine industry. Photo (left to right): Everett Bracken, KDVA's Acting Director State Programs, Caroline Tatus (Secretariat Center's Equine Program Director), Remi Bellocq (BCTC Equine's Workforce Liaison), Bill Nelson (Secretariat Center's Executive Director), Steven Blackburn (BCTC's Director Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success), Caren Cartwright (Secretariat Center's Office Manager), and Sea Biscuit (American Miniature).

KY Veterans Higher Education Interest Survey

KDVA and the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) are interested in helping our veteran community understand their educational benefits. Research has shown that a workforce certificate or college degree can significantly increase your annual wages. Additionally, there are a number of programs to help veterans gain these types of

certifications and degree programs. Your input will help us assist veterans across the state. Your feedback is very important.

Click on the button below or click [here](#) to participate in the brief survey.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Veteran_Survey

Survey

I Support Veterans License Plates



Who is eligible

Any owner of a noncommercial motor vehicle required to be registered for use on Kentucky Highways.

Steps Requirement

Application must be made at your local County Clerk's office. Upon receipt of this plate, your regular (special) issue license plate must be turned in or issued to another vehicle.

Decal Expires Customer's Birth Month

\$10.00 of the initial and \$5.00 of the renewal registration fee goes to the Kentucky Department of Veterans' Affairs. For more information, please visit <http://veterans.ky.gov>. This plate is available for personalization with an additional \$25.00 fee annually. Personalization is limited to a maximum of 5 characters.

Relevant KRS [186.162](#)

Military Women's Memorial "Tell Her Story"



The Military Women's Memorial (MWM) is the only major national memorial honoring all servicewomen – past, present and future. The MWM honors more than 3 million women who served and continue to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces since the American Revolution.

Women's military service should be no less recognized than men's but historically the focus of history and preservation has been on men.

Why it's Important to Register?

EVERY STORY is important, EVERY STORY deserves to be told. Yet we have lost most of our WWI women veterans and our WWII women are fast coming to their final chapter. What history we have not recorded will be lost with them. We absolutely CANNOT let another generation go by without ensuring that our collective contributions are captured and remembered.

Please REGISTER HERE : www.womensmemorial.org

There is no cost to register! You can register any woman you know who is in or has served in the military. Let's keep "HER-Story alive!"

Useful VA Links

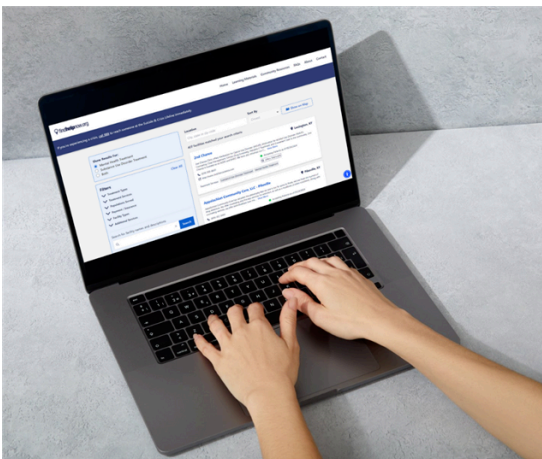
- **VA Housing Assistance Page** - Information about home loans, eligibility, interest rates reductions and other related topics: <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/>
- **National Center for PTSD** - Provides information and resources to veterans, care providers and organizations relating PTSD: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>
- **Covid-19 Vaccine Updates** - Latest updates on Covid-19 guidance and vaccinations: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>
- **VA Life Insurance (VALife)** - <https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/valife.asp>

- **Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E)** - job training, education, employment coaching, etc.: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp>

Upcoming Veterans Dates and Events

- National Suicide Prevention Month (**September**)
- National Service Dog Month (**September**)
- V-J Day (Victory over Japan) (**Sept. 2**)
- National Suicide Prevention Day (**Sept. 10**)
- Patriot Day (**Sept. 11**)
- U.S. Air Force Birthday (**Sept. 18**)
- Air National Guard Birthday (**Sept. 18**)
- National POW/MIA Recognition Day (**Sept. 20**)
- Gold Star Mother's Day (**Sept. 29**)
- VFW Day (**Sept. 29**)

Resources for Veterans



At the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, we are committed to supporting our veterans with the resources they need.

Discover a wealth of services and support options through FindHelpNow.org - your go-to resource for immediate assistance. Whether you're looking for mental health support, housing assistance, or employment resources, FindHelpNow.org has got you covered! Be sure to look for the "Veterans/Military" population filters

available. The website displays near real-time available openings at substance use disorder and mental health facilities, recovery houses, naloxone distribution sites, and social services resources. Visit FindHelpNow.org today to explore these enhanced



**Telehealth Urgent Care
Services are available:**

Monday thru Friday From 8AM-6PM
502-287-4000 / 800-376-8387
Select Option #3, then 1 for primary
care nurse

VA |  **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**
Veterans Health Administration
Robley Rex VA Medical Center
Louisville, Kentucky

Be seen at home or on-the-go

Telehealth Urgent Care Service at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center

Care you can get with Telehealth:

- Influenza, Covid-19
- Prescription Management
- Urgent care issues like colds, coughs, and stomach aches
- Back pain
- Urinary symptoms
- Dental Pain
- Sore throat
- Ear pain
- Arthritis
- Gout

Telehealth Advantages

- Can be seen anywhere if you have internet or access to a phone.
- Time flexibility
- Avoid the ED waiting room
- Friendly and professional staff



Be seen at home or on-the-go with Robley Rex VA Medical Center Telehealth Urgent Care Service. Available Monday thru Friday from 8AM - 6PM. Call (502) 287-4000 or (800) 376-8387. Select Option “#3”, then Option “1” for primary care nurse.

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This message was sent for the sole purpose of testing a draft message.