

The Eagle

Newsletter for Veterans, Stakeholders, and Employees of the
Coatesville VA Medical Center



Summer 2026

Serving Veterans continuously for 95 years



The color guard presents the colors during the 95th Anniversary commemoration event held May 12, 2026.

Coatesville VA Medical Center (VAMC) celebrated its 95th year in service to Veterans, with a commemoration ceremony May 12.

While America celebrates 250 years of Freedom, and the Veterans Health Administration celebrates 80 years of service, the Coatesville VAMC paused to celebrate 95 years of serving the health care needs of Veterans in Southeastern Pennsylvania and beyond with the best care available.

The hospital's original dedication ceremony was held May 12, 1931, and Coatesville VA was specifically designed to treat Veterans with "mental and nervous diseases. The demand for care was so great after World War I, that nearly all 481 beds at the hospital were full within three months of opening.

An additional five buildings were constructed in 1945 in preparation for World War II Veterans, further expanding

the campus to meet the growing needs of Veterans.

From its earliest days, the medical center remained committed to delivering compassionate, high-quality Veteran care. Over the many decades, the medical center has grown into a comprehensive health care system offering a wide range of services, including mental health, rehabilitation, primary care, geriatric care and specialty care.

The celebration not only honors the dedicated staff, past and present, whose unwavering commitment has ensured that Veterans receive the highest standard of care but also the lasting partnerships across the community with Veteran service offices, political offices, and organizations who serve Veterans.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Coatesville VA Medical Center

New option for treatment-resistant mental health conditions



Although we have been ranked #1 nationwide among 139 VA medical facilities over the last two years, we continue to look for new ways of supporting Veterans struggling with mental health issues.

Coatesville VA began offering repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS), specifically intermittent Theta Burst Stimulation (iTBS), in the fall of 2025 to Veterans who have tried multiple antidepressants, psychotherapy, and are taking their medication as directed but their depression remains.

rTMS is a noninvasive brain stimulation procedure using an electromagnetic device to increase activity on specific areas of the brain. This is not electroshock and has been approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) since 2008. rTMS uses

magnetic pulses to stimulate nerve cells, or neurons, in the brain and is approved for major depressive disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder. There is also recent evidence for its effectiveness with substance use difficulties and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Treating Depression

When feelings of sadness don't pass within few days it can lead to depression. Depression is often described as feelings of intense sadness or hopelessness, and some find that they lose interest or pleasure in activities that they used to enjoy. For most, this experience will pass, while for some it can linger for weeks, months, and even years.

"We know that roughly 12 to 14% of Veterans suffer from major depression, and roughly one in three of them would experience treatment resistant depression; meaning, they didn't respond to at least two or three treatments," said Dr. Alexander Puhalla, Research Psychologist at the Coatesville VA.

Coatesville VA began offering rTMS treatments to a small group of Veterans in the Fall of 2025 and it is now available to Veterans through inpatient and outpatient settings when other depression treatments haven't been effective.

"rTMS is delivering real world effects for our Veterans. We are seeing significant reduction in the depression scores, regardless of whether they have PTSD or not. So that's real world changes. That is feeling like you want to engage with your kids. That is wanting to go to work. That is wanting to do your hobbies again."

"rTMS is a safe, viable way to help these patients who may have been struggling for years."

rTMS treatment sessions

The treatments for rTMS is typically 30 sessions and each session is scheduled for 30 minutes with just three minutes of having the electromagnetic device activated. No anesthesia is required and patients remain awake during treatment. Both outpatient and inpatient Veterans can complete what is normally a 30 day treatment course in just 15 days by getting treatment twice per day.

The rTMS team is working hard to expand the program to more Veterans. If you are interested, please inform your primary care or psychiatric provider and they will reach out to the rTMS team to place a consult.

Guitar club improves Veterans' well-being

The Coatesville VA Medical Center offers free group guitar lessons for Veterans enrolled in either outpatient services or are receiving care in one of our residential treatment programs. This activity supports recovery and offers Veterans a therapeutic outlet through music and socialization.



These lessons provide Veterans the opportunity to learn a new skill or reconnect with a long-forgotten hobby, while promoting expression, help reduce anxiety, and promote overall emotional well-being. In addition to individual benefits, the group setting promotes social engagement and peer support. Veterans participate alongside others with shared experiences, fostering a sense of community and encouraging positive interactions that may develop into lasting friendships.

"The club helps Veterans set goals, build confidence and self-worth in surroundings with others who not only have similar experiences but also find a sense of meaning and purpose in creating music," said Rebecca Hyman, Local Recovery Coordinator and organizer of the Guitar Club.

Each Veteran enrolled in the program is issued a guitar for their use during the club, allowing them to practice and build their skills between sessions.

This program is made possible through the support of donors and volunteers who contribute their time



and expertise to enhance Veteran care. Instruction is provided by a Veteran volunteer, who brings experience and a commitment to supporting fellow Veterans.

Veterans interested in participating in the Guitar Club may contact Rebecca Hyman, Local Recovery Coordinator, at 610-384-7711, extension 5624, for additional information or to enroll.

Helping Hometown Hero's food drive

To help keep the Lincoln's Promise Pantry stocked all year, we are hosting the "helping Hometown Hero's Food Drive" from June 1 to July 4 so we can make sure Veterans have food all year through.

Lincoln's Promise Pantry is a food choice pantry established in 2022 carrying fresh produce, frozen meat, eggs, and fresh dairy when available along with shelf stable food items.

Our pantry is here for Veterans with both short- and long-term needs. Any Veteran with a self-declared need for food may visit the food pantry weekly. Our team works closely with our VA social workers and case

management teams to reach Veterans in the community who are unable to visit the pantry but are in need of food assistance.

We are currently serving more than 85 Veteran families throughout Chester, Montgomery, and Delaware counties totaling over 400 seniors, adults and children each month.

To set up a time to coordinate your donation drop off, please contact the food pantry using the phone number below.

Veterans may sign up to visit the pantry or talk to the pantry staff by calling 610-384-7711, extension 3748.

Summer VET Fest

Join us for our free annual Veterans resource festival honoring Veterans and their families. This year we have partnered with the Chester County Veterans Affairs Office to bring together what we anticipate will be the largest gathering of Veterans community organizations in one location. While you're there, you and your loved ones can enjoy free entertainment, including a car show, face painting, balloon art, games and other activities for kids. Bring a friend and help them register for the benefits they've earned.

This rain-or-shine event takes place Saturday, June 13, 2026, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at West Chester University, Sykes Student Union, 110 W. Rosedale Avenue, West Chester 19383.

Audiology Services at our West Norriton Clinic

We have expanded audiology services to our West Norriton Clinic.

You no longer have to travel to our Coatesville campus for routine audiology services.

If you live closer to the West Norriton clinic you can schedule an appointment there for:



- Evaluation, treatment and management of hearing loss and tinnitus
- Hearing aids and assistive listening device assessments
- Hearing aid repairs
- Hearing health education

If you live nearer our Delaware County clinic, you can schedule an appointment to have your hearing aids inspected and repaired by a technician.

No matter which of our three locations you visit, you can self-schedule for an audiology appointment by calling 610-383-0217.




VISN 4 Tele Emergency Care
1-833-835-3874

If you have an **urgent** medical or mental health question, call a VISN 4 Triage Nurse!

— Available 24/7/365 —

 **Veterans
Crisis Line**
DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**



Scan QR code with your smart phone to add this number to your contacts! 

VA Medical Center ♦ 1400 Blackhorse Hill Road ♦ Coatesville, PA 19320-2096

Connect with us at
www.va.gov/coatesville-health-care
and on Facebook



For updates about our medical center operations, please view the **"Get updates from VA Coatesville health care"** at the bottom of our homepage.
www.va.gov/coatesville-health-care