

# MEDICAL FOSTER HOME

*Explore VA's Medical Foster Home Resource Guide  
for Veterans and potential caregivers.*



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Table of CONTENTS

- 03** What is a Medical Foster Home (MFH)?
- 04** MFH Program Overview
- 05** Costs, Agreements, Next Steps
- 06** Becoming a MFH Caregiver *(for caregivers)*
- 07** Hear from other MFH Caregivers *(for caregivers)*
- 08** Criteria for MFH Caregivers *(for caregivers)*
- 09** Criteria for MFH Homes *(for caregivers)*
- 10** VA's Age-Friendly Care
- 11** Notes Page
- 12** Next Steps



# What is a **MEDICAL FOSTER HOME?**



**When living at home becomes difficult, most people would rather remain in a home-like setting than move to a nursing home. The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Foster Home (MFH) Program offers Veterans more options to support independence in a home-like environment.**

Medical Foster Homes (MFH) are private residences where the caregiver lives and provides continuous care and supervision to the Veterans, with the assistance of relief caregivers. This caregiver can help the Veteran carry out activities of daily living, such as bathing and getting dressed. VA ensures that the caregiver is well trained to provide VA planned care.

MFH is a voluntary long-term care placement option. Some, but not all, residents are Veterans. VA can help you find a warm and caring MFH that meets high quality care and safety standards. The Veteran and their family are encouraged to tour homes before making a decision.

While living in a Medical Foster Home, Veterans receive Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC). HBPC is health care services provided to Veterans in their home. A VA physician supervises the health care team who provides the services in the home based on the unique needs of each individual Veteran. HBPC is for Veterans who have complex health care needs for whom routine clinic-based care is not effective.

# MEDICAL FOSTER HOMES

## *Program Overview*

### **Who is eligible for VA's Medical Foster Home services?**

Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care to be eligible for the MFH program. MFH is an equivalent to nursing home care. Veterans eligible in MFH are also enrolled in HBPC or Spinal Cord Injury-Home Care.

MFH is an option for Veterans who cannot live on their own due to physical or mental limitations or disabilities. Generally, if a Veteran is living with a chronic condition, has complex care needs, has difficulty getting to the VA for appointments, and needs supervision and care, they may be eligible for this long-term care option.

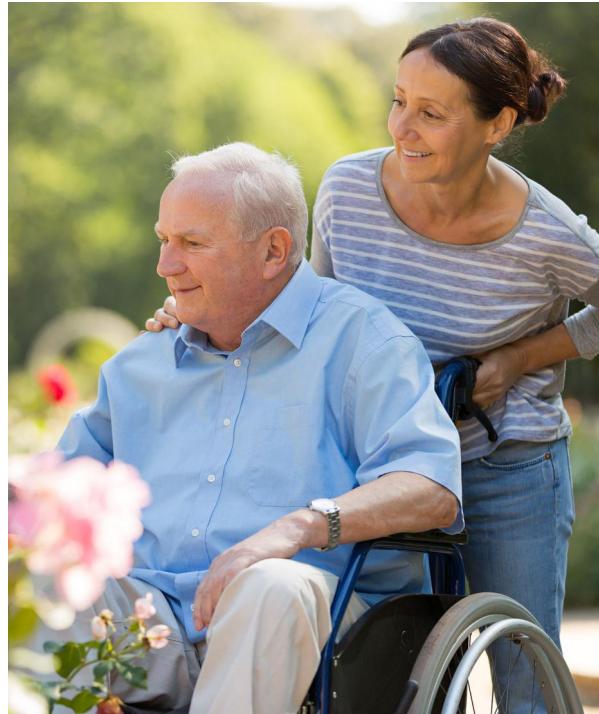
In addition to the benefits of remaining in the community for long term care, MFH is generally half the cost of traditional nursing home care. MFH is privately paid for by the Veteran each month. Some Veterans do qualify for a special monthly pension which can help pay for the MFH. Contact the local MFH coordinator for more information.

#### **Medical Foster Homes provides:**

- Private rooms
- Home-like living
- Flexibility and choice
- A supervised setting
- Choice of homemade meals/snacks
- Social & recreational activities
- Personal care
- Medication management
- Other care support, as needed

Talk with a VA social worker to check your eligibility and learn if a MFH may be a right fit for you.

**Learn more at [www.va.gov/geriatrics](http://www.va.gov/geriatrics).**



# MEDICAL FOSTER HOMES

## *Cost, agreements, and next steps*

---

### How much does MFH cost?

The rate is negotiated between the Veteran or responsible party and MFH caregiver with VA MFH team oversight. An agreement that outlines services provided is signed by both the Veteran and caregiver.

While VA helps coordinate care, VA Medical Foster Homes are not provided by VA. Veterans are responsible for paying for the Medical Foster Home directly or through other insurance.

Rates are determined based on multiple criteria. Please contact your local MFH Coordinator for more information.

---

### Next Steps: How can I connect with a MFH Program near me?

If a Medical Foster Home seems right for you, talk to your VA social worker or VA health care team today. Your VA social worker will determine if you are eligible now or help you prepare for when you may need MFH care in the future. If you are eligible and a MFH is open and available, VA will help connect you with a MFH that is the right fit for you.

**For more information, contact your local VA social worker or visit [www.va.gov/geriatrics](http://www.va.gov/geriatrics).**



# *Become a Medical Foster Home* **CAREGIVER**

## **Are you interested in becoming a Medical Foster Home (MFH) Program caregiver?**

Review the checklist on page 8 & 9 for more information. If you meet the criteria, and are interested in earning an income while working from your home caring for Veterans, reach out to your local MFH Coordinator and start the process today.

As a MFH caregiver, VA's MFH and HBPC teams will be available to provide guidance, training, and assistance to the caregiver, and oversight and medical care to the Veterans.

### **MFH caregivers are vetted and their home is inspected.**

During the review and selection process, caregivers are assessed to ensure they would be a good fit to provide care to Veterans in the MFH program. This includes assessing the caregiver's ability to provide care and ability to provide a nurturing, family environment for the Veteran.

All caregivers require a criminal history check and a professional home inspection team performs extensive fire and safety checks. To ensure the highest levels of safety and quality, a VA MFH coordinator makes monthly unannounced visits while the HBPC team provides routine in-home care for Veterans. VA MFHs must meet all state and local requirements and regulations.

### **Next Steps: I'm ready to become a MFH caregiver.**

If you meet the criteria noted above and you are interested in becoming a MFH caregiver, contact your local VA MFH team or VA social worker.

# *Hear what others say about* **BECOMING A CAREGIVER**

## **MFH Caregiver**

"I started this because I wanted to help my grandpa. But it turned into so much more. The empathy I have for these guys that don't have family. It was my goal to show these Veterans love and compassion."



## **MFH Veteran**

"There's 2 words to the program: Love and caring. You can't have one without the other. My caregiver is a wonderful person. I'm very happy."



## **MFH Veteran Family Member**

"[The MFH caregiver] has provided my brother with a loving, caring, safe environment and have given him the best care possible. This is the best home for him."





# *Criteria for MFH* **CAREGIVERS**

**Use this checklist to see if being a MFH caregiver may be right for you:**

- Complete an application and participate in an interview with the Medical Foster Home Program Coordinator and other staff as needed.
- Must be at least 21 years of age and demonstrate financial stability.
- Ensure a pleasant and home-like atmosphere within the residence.
- Willingness to provide hands-on care to Veterans with high-level care needs through the support and education of Home Based Primary Care.
- Able to ensure you or an approved relief caregiver are present and available to provide 24/7 care and supervision.
- Agree to unannounced visits to the home by the MFH coordinator to ensure the health and safety of Veterans living in the home, consistent with VA standards.

# *Criteria for Medical Foster* **HOMES**

**Use this checklist to see if your home may be appropriate:**

- The home must be owned or rented by the caregiver.
- Caregiver must live in the MFH, and it must be their primary residence.
- The home must be located, designed, equipped, and maintained to ensure a home-like environment and provide safe care and supervision for all residents.
- There must be space to care for 1 – 3 Veterans in the home with separate bedrooms.
- The home must be inspected by a VA multidisciplinary team, including a Safety Officer, Nurse, MFH Coordinator, Dietician, and Rehabilitation Therapist.
- The home and caregiver must comply with all state and local licensure requirements and regulations, including construction, fire, maintenance, and sanitation.
- The home must be located within the service radius of a VA Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) team.



# VA's Commitment to AGE-FRIENDLY CARE



**The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA's) Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC) offers programs specifically designed to support older Veterans, and those with complex care needs, by helping them age at home or in smaller home-like care settings.**

For Veterans facing complex health issues, maintaining independence and a sense of normalcy can make all the difference. That's why VA offers Veterans more health care options beyond the traditional nursing home care setting to help them maintain their independence while thriving at home or in smaller, home-like environments.

Programs like VA's MFH program allow Veterans to choose the care environment that most aligns with their care needs, preferences, and goals while delaying or avoiding nursing home placement. Most importantly, the MFH program is Veteran-centric, allowing Veterans to choose how and where they receive their long-term care.

**Learn more about VA's Geriatrics and Extended Care services at [www.va.gov/geriatrics](http://www.va.gov/geriatrics).**

# *Track Important Information*

## **My Notes Page**

## Important Contacts

G. Scott Ralya, LCSW  
Medical Foster Home Coordinator  
VA Northern Indiana Health Care System  
260-426-5431, extension 62959  
[scott.ralya@va.gov](mailto:scott.ralya@va.gov)

# You can help *Veterans*.



***"I don't know where I'd be without my Medical Foster Home caregiver. They gave me a home, they gave me a family."***

## Apply Today

Talk to your VA Medical Foster Home Program Coordinator today to learn how you can **become a Medical Foster Home Program caregiver and give back to those who served**.

Talk to your local VA MFH team or VA social worker to learn more.



**Learn more about VA's Medical Foster Home program.**  
Simply scan the QR code with your smartphone.

The Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care  
[www.va.gov/geriatrics](http://www.va.gov/geriatrics)

This booklet is approved by  
VA's Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care  
*Updated May 2023*



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs