



We Serve All Who Serve: Recognizing LGBT Veterans and their Caregivers

Know Your Rights / Protect Your Rights - In order to care and advocate for you and your LGBT loved one, it is critical that you are knowledgeable about your rights and/or your LGBT loved ones rights.

- VA Office of Diversity LGBT home page at <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/lgbt.aspx> provides a wealth of information and resources.
- Learn about your federal and state rights regarding; marriage, housing, employment, healthcare, and benefits.
- To help ensure that your rights and your wishes are known, consider completing documents such as Advance Directives, Health Care Proxy, or Financial Power of Attorney. Complete releases of information to allow medical providers to share information with loved ones.
- The VA honors all types of legal Advance Directives. A Social Worker affiliated with the Veteran's healthcare team can assist with completing VA Advance Directives for the Veteran. Seek further information at http://www.va.gov/geriatrics/Guide/LongTermCare/advance_Care_Planning.asp If you are not a Veteran or if you receive care outside of the VA healthcare system, you may consider completing community based Advanced Directives. Hospitals receiving Medicare/ Medicaid funds are required by law to ensure Advance Directives of LGBT patients be respected and that individuals defined by the patient as family be afforded visitation rights.
- VA provides benefits to eligible same sex married couples no matter which state of residence such as Veteran pensions, home loans backed by the VA, rights to burial, survivors and Veteran group life insurance, survivor benefits and pensions, G.I. Bill education, and disability compensation. Visit <http://www.diversity.va.gov/programs/lgbt.aspx> to learn more.

Connect to Support

- Seek support from the VA Caregiver Support line at 1-855-260-3274.



- Find Caregiving information at the VA Caregiver Web site at <http://www.caregiver.va.gov/>
- Consult with friends, LGBT community organizations, local HIV/AIDS service providers to inquire about LGBT affirming health providers and home care agencies.
- Reach out to the Long Term Care Ombudsman who can address questions and advocate for residents with concerns in the community long term care system.
- Seek support, maintain family of choice and family of origin relationships; build supports with those who have shared interests, engage in LGBT events and activities, seek counselling as needed, reach out to spiritual leaders or communities, connect with Caregiver support groups locally or connect on line.

Remember you are not alone. The VA and the VA Caregiver Support line is deeply committed to promoting an inclusive, welcoming, patient-centered care environment for all its LGBT Veterans and their families.