

## ATLAS (Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations)

# Veterans Service Organization Talking Points

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### ATLAS Overview

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' ATLAS (Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations) program extends the reach of VA health care.
- At ATLAS sites, Veterans will find comfortable, private appointment rooms equipped with internet access and the technology needed to meet with their VA providers through VA Video Connect, VA's secure video conferencing app.
- This option makes VA care easier to access and reduces burdens such as long travel times to appointments.
- Some ATLAS sites are hosted by Veterans service organizations (VSOs). VA has teamed up with **The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)**, and other organizations to set up ATLAS sites in Veterans' home communities.
- When Veterans arrive at an ATLAS site, an on-site attendant guides them through the process of joining their video telehealth visit, is available to troubleshoot basic technical issues, and cleans the space following the appointment.
- Video visits do not replace or take away Veterans' in-person care options. The choice of where and when to receive VA care is up to the Veteran.

### Possible Veteran Questions

- *What happens during an ATLAS appointment?* When Veterans arrive at an ATLAS site, an on-site attendant shows them to the private appointment room. The attendant guides the Veteran on how to use the provided technology, helps them check in for their appointment, and then leaves the secure room. The Veteran and the VA provider use VA Video Connect for the appointment, each on camera and visible to the other. The attendant is not in the room during the visit and does not have access to any medical information.



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- ***What clinical services can Veterans receive?*** The local VA medical center determines which clinical services to offer at an ATLAS site. ATLAS appointments offer health care services that do not require hands-on exams. These services may include primary care, mental health, and specialty services.
- ***Can a Veteran attend an ATLAS appointment at an American Legion or VFW post if they are not a member of that post?*** Each Veterans service organization (VSO) determines how members and nonmembers may use its space. In general, both members and nonmembers can attend ATLAS appointments as long as the post is associated with the VA medical center at which the Veteran is enrolled.
- ***Is there a copay?*** No. There are no copays for video visits, whether they occur at home or at an ATLAS site.
- ***Can Veterans be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred from an ATLAS appointment?*** Veterans and caregivers who already qualify for travel reimbursement for visits at VA facilities can also request travel reimbursement for ATLAS visits. For more information, see the ATLAS Beneficiary Travel Reimbursement handout on the ATLAS webpage ([telehealth.va.gov/atlas](https://telehealth.va.gov/atlas)).
- ***How do Veterans schedule an ATLAS appointment?*** Veterans can visit the ATLAS webpage to find an ATLAS site's scheduling information and hours of operation. Each ATLAS site bases its hours on the VSO's and the local VA facility's normal hours of operation. For more information, visit the ATLAS webpage at [telehealth.va.gov/atlas](https://telehealth.va.gov/atlas).

## **Possible VSO Representative Questions**

- ***Can Veterans' family members and caregivers have appointments at ATLAS sites?*** VA beneficiaries — including Veterans' spouses and others who receive care through VA — can visit ATLAS sites for select VA visits.
- ***How can I promote ATLAS to Veterans?*** Some promotional materials are available to download on the ATLAS webpage at [telehealth.va.gov/atlas](https://telehealth.va.gov/atlas). VSOs should ask their VA point of contact for customizable promotional materials such as flyers, brochures, and social media content. A communications plan that offers tailored outreach strategies is also available for each ATLAS site.

