

Welcome Initial Air Force Active Duty Patients

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you in advance to the HIV Program at SAMMC South and to tell you a little bit about our program.

You will be coming to San Antonio to be medically evaluated for your HIV infection. This *process* will last for approximately two weeks. During this time, you will attend classes and appointments required by the USAF.

Please note that uniform of the day is comfortable civilian attire. You will not need to bring a military uniform unless you are traveling by air-evac or on orders from overseas. Paper copies of medical records and immunization records are desirable for the Medical Evaluation Board and must be sealed and hand-carried for the evaluation process.

Your visit has three objectives.

1. **Clinical Assessment** Full diagnostic work-up to give the physician and you an understanding of how the virus is affecting your immune system and to determine what treatment is needed
2. **Education** Classes to provide you with vital information about HIV Infection and the immune system, treatment and research options, and effective ways to cope with being HIV positive
3. **Fitness for Duty Determination** Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) processing, ***required for all mobility and duty restricting (Assignment Limitation Code-C) diagnoses.*** Based on your current status, as provided in a narrative summary of your evaluation, Board personnel decide if you are medically fit to remain on active duty ***in your current position, can train for another position*** or need to be medically retired

To give you an idea of what to expect, we have attached a "sample" Initial calendar that lists classes and appointments you will attend. You will receive your "personalized" calendar when you check in with the Infectious Disease Clinic, currently located on 7E of the medical tower, Brooke Army Medical Center. The following is a brief description of each activity listed on the calendar:

- a. **Unit Registration**
Please report to 7E medical tower section of Brooke Army Medical Center by 0700 hours on Monday morning to check in. At that time you will be given your calendar and any other paperwork needed for your evaluation.
- b. **Blood Draw**
Please make sure you do not have anything to eat or drink except water after 2400 hours on the evening before your morning blood draw. Medications may be taken with water if needed. Several tubes of blood will be drawn for lab tests to aid the physician in assessing your current medical status. You will have time to eat breakfast in the hospital dining room in the basement after these initial tests are drawn.
- c. **PPD Placement**
This is a diagnostic test used to help determine whether you have been exposed to TB and should be prescribed a medication to prevent it from developing into active tuberculosis. After a waiting period of 48 hours, the injection sites will be examined for reactions.

- d. Unit Orientation
This is a welcoming class for all patients who are being evaluated for HIV that week. Some of our patients have been living with HIV for as long as 15-20 years and may be valuable sources of information and support for you. We will review the patient calendars along with hospital and unit rules.
- e. History and Exam with Physician
One of our physicians will conduct a detailed medical history and a full physical exam. A follow-up appointment will be scheduled to discuss lab results and treatment options.
- f. Infectious Disease Clinical Research Program (IDCRP) Research Briefing
Our Henry M. Jackson Foundation (HJF) Clinical Research Coordinators will provide information about the role of medical research in HIV infection, and an overview of the research studies offered that you may wish to enter.
- g. HIV Science and Treatment Update Class
This is an interactive group class with a physician describing how the virus works, its effects on the immune system, the influence of other diseases on HIV progression, currently recommended treatments for HIV and developing news in research and treatment.
- h. Safer Sex Class
This is a small group discussion on guidelines for safer sex practices and various approaches to risk reduction.
- i. Risk Management Group
This is a support group that discusses the challenges of living with HIV and the impact on relationships.
- j. Mental Health Appointment
This is a routine assessment to determine how you are coping with your diagnosis and whether or not follow-up support counseling is needed. This service will be scheduled with Mental Health professionals at SAMMC South (Wilford Hall Medical Center).
- k. Chest X-Ray
This is a routine test to aid the physician in assessing your current medical status. This can be done anytime during the first three days of your evaluation. Radiology is located on the first floor, Medical Mall area of the hospital.
- l. Initial Community Health Nurse Interview
This is an interview session with a public health nurse to collect information that will aid in the study of the HIV epidemic.
- m. Physician Appointment: Questions, Review Results, MEB Referral
The physician will review the results of your entire evaluation and make recommendations for treatment. The report will be made available to the MEB at SAMMC South (Wilford Hall Medical Center) for further processing and referral to either Medical Standards (DPAMM) for Assignment Limitation Code C fast track review or the Physician Evaluation Board Disability System. Although you will be briefed by Wilford Hall MEB personnel at the end of your first week, you do not have to be physically present for the remainder of this process.
- n. Final outprocessing and scheduling of your next evaluation will occur during your second week after disease specific laboratory tests are collected and result. If treatment is recommended, it may be initiated at this time for continuation by your base PCM.

We realize this may be a stressful time for you and you may have many questions. You are more than welcome to call and talk with one of our physicians or the Community Health Nurse before your arrival. **Our toll-free number is 1-800- 468-6961.**