

Bedford VA seeks foster homes for vets

The Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital in Bedford has joined a nationwide initiative to offer our veterans an alternative to institutionalized long term care: Medical Foster Homes (MFH).

There are many veterans who have lived home alone and independently for years with the help of comprehensive home-care services. Sometimes, the veteran's health declines to the point that it is no longer safe to continue living alone. Traditionally, the only solution was nursing home placement; however, if the veteran is not interested in nursing home care, the lack of additional supports may adversely affect the health and well being of the individual. The MFH program steps in to offer a safe, favorable and less costly alternative for the veteran.

The MFH program is a unique partnership of adult foster homes and home-based primary care, operating under community residential care guidelines, through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Medical Foster Home finds caregivers in the community who are willing to take a veteran into their home and provide 24-hour supervision as well as needed personal assistance. This is a long-term commitment, where the veteran may live for the remainder of his or her life. Caregivers are paid based upon the level of care needed, ranging from someone with dementia with some dependence in activities of daily living, to someone who may be incontinent, bed-bound and has more intensive care needs. This is a very cost-effective alternative to nursing home placement and allows for a safe hometype environment for veterans.

Payment is made by the veteran directly to the caregiver monthly and includes room and board, 24-hour supervision, assistance with medications, and whatever personal care is needed. Medical Foster Home caregivers are appointed and monitored by clinical staff members from the Bedford VA Hospital.

Potential caregivers must be:

- Over the age of 21.
- Own or rent a home, and live there with the veteran(s).
- Read, write and speak English (Bilingual applicants are encouraged to apply).
- First aid and CPR certified or willing to become certified.
- Have formal or informal experience as a caregiver.
- Allow an Interdisciplinary Treatment Team into your home for needed visits or inspections.
- Willing to accept, participate in and follow the veteran's treatment plan.

To receive more information about this program, contact VA Social Worker Cheryl Coviello at 781-687-2706.