

# Patient Orientation Handbook



## Southside Medical Center

1046 Ridge Ave SW  
Atlanta, GA 30315

[www.SouthSideMedical.net](http://www.SouthSideMedical.net)





# Contents

Patient Orientation Handbook .....	1
Contents .....	3
Introduction .....	4
About.....	5
The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program.....	7
Eligibility Requirements .....	8
Recertification .....	9
SMC Ryan White Services .....	10
Programs .....	11
Women and Pregnancy.....	12
Mental Health.....	13
PrEP .....	14
Transgender Health .....	15
Pharmacy .....	16
ADAP/HICP .....	17
Oral Health .....	18
Patient Portal .....	19
Medical Transportation .....	24
Medical Case Management .....	26
Acronyms.....	28



# Introduction

## Southside Medical Center

Welcome to the Infectious Diseases Clinic at Southside Medical Center (SMC) in Atlanta, Georgia. Thank you for choosing us for your care.

At SMC, patient treatment is compassionate and non-judgmental. We respect the dignity, uniqueness, and worth of every person.

It is our policy that no patient shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination, within our programs or activities.

You are the most important member on your care team. In partnership with you, the SMC team strives to offer you the highest quality of comprehensive, compassionate care. The ultimate goal aims to improve your health and quality of life.

This handbook can help you and your family:

- Understand the services we provide to insured and uninsured patients
- Participate more actively in the care you receive
- Learn about clinic procedures important to your care
- Assume individual responsibility as a clinic patient

Our clinicians and support staff are here to help you in your journey toward improved health.

*Your Journey is Our Journey. We are in this TOGETHER!*

## About

Southside Medical Center (SMC) is a Federally Qualified Health Center comprised of 11 clinics throughout the Metro Atlanta area. Our variety of services includes Family Medicine, Internal (Adult) Medicine, Pediatrics, Women's Health, Podiatry, General Surgery, Optometry, Dentistry, and Mental Health.

In 2016, the Southside Medical Center Infectious Disease clinic was re-established with support from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), through the Ryan White Care ACT (RWCA). We were awarded the Part A grant in 2018. Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) support was granted in 2020. The core team is located at the Main Center – 1046 Ridge Avenue SW, Atlanta, GA 30315.

### **Core Team Members**

- Board Certified Infectious Disease Specialist
- Program and Quality Manager
- Pharmaceutical Data/ ADAP Coord
- Front Desk Receptionist
- Medical Case Manager
- Intake Coordinator
- Data Coordinator
- Dentist
- Dental Hygienist
- Dental Assistant
- Director of Quality Assurance
- PrEP Mid-level Practitioner
- PrEP Coordinator
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Medical Assistant

### **We strive to ensure that the care we provide is:**

- Safe
- Effective
- Patient-Centered
- Timely
- Efficient

## Who Was Ryan White?



Ryan Wayne White (December 6, 1971 – April 8, 1990) was an American teenager from Kokomo, Indiana. He became the national poster child for HIV/AIDS in the United States, after his school refused to re-admit him to school, following an AIDS diagnosis. He had hemophilia and was infected with HIV through a contaminated Factor VIII blood treatment. He was diagnosed in December 1984 with a prognosis of six months to live.

Ryan died in April 1990, one month before his high school graduation and only months before Congress passed the legislation bearing his name in August 1990 - the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act.

## The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is a Federal program that provides a nationwide comprehensive system of HIV primary and specialty medical care, essential support services and medications for low-income, uninsured, and underinsured people with HIV to improve health outcomes, reduce HIV transmission, and reduce HIV-related morbidity and mortality.

### **Key Facts:**

- The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is a federally-funded program established in 1990
- Provides outpatient care and support services to individuals and families affected by the disease.
- Ryan White is funded through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
- Functions as the “**payer of last resort**” by filling the gaps for those who have no other source of coverage; or, face coverage limits or cost barriers.

# Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for RW services in the Atlanta Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA), the patient must meet the following requirements:

- 1. Be a resident of 1 of the 20 Counties of the Atlanta Eligible Metropolitan Area:**  
Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Rockdale, Spalding, Walton
- 2. Provide proof of HIV status, income, and residency. See the chart below for acceptable documents.**

<u>Proof of Status</u>	<u>Proof of Income</u>	<u>Proof of Residency</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Records that show a Positive HIV test: antibody tests (rapid tests included); 4<sup>th</sup> Generation Antigen/Antibody test</li> <li>• Records or statements from previous providers, which must be followed by a confirmatory test within 60 days of entry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current check stubs listing gross wages/employer’s statement listing gross wages               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bi-Weekly: 2 Pay Stubs</li> <li>- Weekly: 4 Pay Stubs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Current W-2 Wage and Tax Statement forms</li> <li>• Current year Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Administration (SSA) checks or benefit/award letters</li> <li>• Other letters of Benefits: Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, retirement/pension, Worker’s Compensation, Veteran’s Administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current Lease</li> <li>• Driver’s License/ ID card</li> <li>• Food Stamp Documentation</li> <li>• Utility Bill</li> <li>• Bank Statement</li> <li>• Last Resort: Notarized statement of support</li> </ul>

### **Other Requirements after enrollment**

- Determination of uninsured or underinsured status (insurance verification as proof.)
- Determination of eligibility and enrollment in other third party insurance programs including Medicaid and Medicare
- For underinsured, they must provide proof that this service is not covered by other third party insurance programs including Medicaid and Medicare.

## **Recertification**

- All individuals seeking services must be provided the opportunity to authorize, deny, or revoke consent for the storing and sharing of the individual's information including Protected Personal Health Information. Any individual not providing consent for the sharing of information with Fulton County via e2Fulton and/or CAREWare is ineligible for Ryan White or Ending the HIV Epidemic-funded services.
- To maintain eligibility for the RW HIV/AIDS program, patients must recertify every 6 months. The recertification process aims to ensure the patient's income, residency, and insurance status continues to meet eligibility requirements and to verify that Ryan White is the payor of last resort.
- At one of the two required recertification during a year, recipients may accept patient self-attestation for verifying that an individual's residency and insurance status complies with the recipient eligibility requirements.
- HRSA RWHAP recipients may utilize recertification data-sharing agreements with other recipients and/or sub-recipients to reduce the burden on recipients, sub-recipients, and patients.

**For more information on eligibility documentation and recertification, please visit [www.ryanwhiteatl.org](http://www.ryanwhiteatl.org)**

# SMC Ryan White Services

**The Ryan White Part A program offers a variety of core medical services:**

- Outpatient Ambulatory Health Services (OAHS)
- Oral Health
- Medical Transportation
- Medical Case Management
- Mental Health

## **OAHS**

**Outpatient Ambulatory Health Services (OAHS):** Medical care provided on an outpatient basis and not in a hospital, hospital emergency room, or any other type of inpatient treatment center. These services are rendered by a physician and may include:

- Risk Assessment
- Early Intervention
- Comprehensive out-patient HIV and medical/ primary care
- Immunizations
- Laboratory services
- In-house Pharmacy and 340B program access
- Patient Assistance Program for medications
- ADAP access in partnership with the ADAP Contract Pharmacy Network
- Telemedicine
- Telehealth
- Medical Adherence Counseling



# Programs

## COMPREHENSIVE HIV CARE

Serving insured, uninsured, and underinsured patients

- HIV specialty care and Medical Primary Care
- Immunizations
- Laboratory services
- Early intervention
- Patient Assistance Program for medications
- ADAP access in partnership with the ADAP Contract Pharmacy Network
- Medical Adherence Counseling
- Telemedicine

**RAPID ART (ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY):** a clinical program that provides immediate ART to all HIV infected patients.

Our mission is to meet the goals of the US National AIDS Strategy and CDC HIV Testing Guidelines:

- Identify undiagnosed HIV infection in all patients accessing the SMC system of Primary Care Clinics. A HRSA grant within the Ending the Epidemic (EHE) plan allows for the system-wide free HIV as well as HCV testing.
- Rapid linkage to care for patients newly diagnosed.
- Initiation of Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) as soon as possible, aiming for the same day ART initiation is all accepting patients.
- Supporting patients in their health journey through nursing coordination, psychosocial stabilization and peer counseling, case management with assistance with housing, benefits, addiction referrals and mental health.
- We provide OPT out testing.

## Women and Pregnancy

Many women living with HIV wonder if they can have healthy pregnancies. Happily, the answer is yes! With good medical care, women with HIV can have healthy, HIV-negative babies and be strong and healthy parents.

SMC's Ryan White team works with the staff of the OB/GYN staff of all SMC locations.

- All seropositive pregnant women are linked immediately to care with rapid initiation of ART in order to achieve undetectable levels of HIV before delivery and significantly decrease the rate of Maternal to Child Transmission (MCTC) of HIV.
- Pregnant women are also referred to our HIV program from other community providers.
- Babies born to HIV positive mothers are referred to the Grady Pediatric Infectious Diseases Clinic for further follow-up.



## Mental Health

- People living with HIV tend to have higher rates of mental health needs than the general public.
- Often, mental health conditions go undiagnosed and untreated, creating barriers to care and causing interruptions in HIV treatment.
- Mental illness is one of the most frequent and most challenging comorbidities.
- We aim to address *all* of our patients' healthcare needs, whether providing care directly; through linkage and referral relationships with specialists and other community-based service organizations; or by helping patients enroll in insurance and benefit programs for which they might be eligible.

## Resources

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255**
- **Westside Empowerment Center: 470-426-4559**  
Westside offers wellness and self-care advice via phone to help individuals manage stress and anxiety during the COVID19 pandemic.
- **CARES Warm Line: 844-326-5400**  
8:30 am to 11:00 pm daily  
CARES is a support line for those with substance abuse challenges.
- **Georgia Crisis and Access Line: 1-800-715-422**
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Line: 770-408-0625**

## **PrEP**

- PrEP is short for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (Prevention).
- PrEP is a safe and effective medication based HIV prevention approach for at-risk HIV negative people. This effort began in the US in 2012, when Truvada was approved for HIV prevention.
- PrEP is a once daily prescription medication regimen (Truvada or Descovy) which an individual who does not have HIV can take to remain HIV negative.
- Through a federal grant, our clinic offers PrEP services (visits, labs and medications) free of charge to any individual who is interested in this prevention method and is uninsured or underinsured.
- PrEP does not provide protection against other sexually transmitted infections (STI) or pregnancy. When taking PrEP medication, the patient must be seen by a physician every three months to be tested for HIV and other STIs.

**For more information on PrEP, please call 404-564-6932**

## **Transgender Health**

- Transgender people face a unique range of challenges and numerous health disparities as well as stigma, discrimination, and lack of access to quality healthcare. Some health disparities include an increased risk of HIV infection, especially among transgender women of color.
- SMC offers a welcoming and affirming environment and aims to provide compassionate, culturally sensitive, comprehensive healthcare for transgender patients accessing services such as PrEP and HIV care.
- Patients can access transition related care such as hormonal replacement therapy and other specialties, such as Behavioral Health. This may also include referrals to Plastic Surgery for gender confirming procedures, through appropriate insurance approvals.
- SMC collaborates with a local Transgender resource center to aid our patients in state identification, name, and gender changes.

## **Hepatitis C**

- With the scientific breakthroughs of effective oral medications, HCV can be cured with proper treatment of relatively short durations and minimal side effects.
- SMC provides opt-out testing for HCV.
- Some patients diagnosed with chronic HCV are offered on-site treatment to achieve virological cure and improved liver function.
- Our clinic has a Fibro Scan, which is a noninvasive specialized ultrasound (elastography) machine that uses sound waves to evaluate fibrosis (scarring) and steatosis (fatty changes) in patients' livers. Together with laboratory tests, this helps the specialist to better assess the health of the liver prior to initiating treatment.

# Pharmacy

Pharmacists are essential members of the HIV patient care team, and their involvement in the management of HIV- infected patients is associated with improved outcomes.

Pharmacists continue to expand their roles to ensure optimal patient care. Southside provides the following supports:

- 340B Drug Pricing Program: A US federal government program created to help uninsured patients gain access to needed prescription medicines. This program has provided financial help to healthcare organizations serving vulnerable communities offer reduced prescription drug costs.
  - It requires drug manufacturers to provide outpatient drugs to eligible healthcare organizations at reduced prices.
  - Patients are provided with outpatient drugs at significantly reduced prices.
- Free Home delivery within the state of Georgia
- Timely medication education and treatment monitoring through an interdisciplinary collaboration with clinic staff.
  - Pharmacist involvement and adherence interventions can significantly reduce treatment failures.
  - Patients can expect follow-up calls from our pharmacy throughout their care.



## **ADAP/HICP**

Patients with ADAP will need to choose among the participating pharmacies across the metro area many of which also offer home deliveries.

### **ADAP = AIDS DRUG ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

- A state administered program that provides HIV/AIDS medications to low-income individuals living with HIV disease who have little or no coverage from private or third party insurance.
- ADAP covers FDA approved drugs to treat HIV infection and HIV-related opportunistic infections.

### **HICP = HEALTH INSURANCE CONTINUATION PROGRAM**

- A state administered program assisting eligible persons who need help with health insurance payments. This program pays a maximum monthly health insurance premium of \$1,100.00, which may include a spouse and children on a family health insurance plan, as well as dental and vision.
- In addition, the program also assists with medication co-payments.

### **Basic eligibility requirements for ADAP and HICP include:**

- Must be HIV positive
- Proof of Georgia residency
- Must be  $\leq$  400% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPL)

Georgia ADAP and HICP services are available to all eligible residents of Georgia. There are 27 enrollment sites located throughout the state, inclusive of 4 sites located in Atlanta. Patients are responsible for providing proof of eligibility to ADAP/HICP coordinators.

For uninsured patients accessing care for the first time at SMC, medication may be obtained through a Pharmaceutical Assistance Program (PAP) provided by the drug manufacturer. PAP enrollment is for 1 year. You will need to enroll in ADAP/HICP before your 1-year enrollment ends.

## Oral Health

Dental or oral health concerns your teeth, gums and mouth. The goal is to prevent complications such as tooth decay (cavities) and gum disease and to maintain the overall health of your mouth. Daily dental services include. Oral health problems are common among people living with HIV/AIDS. Patients enrolled in the Ryan White Program have access to grant-covered oral services:

- Preventive: dental exams, X-rays, cleanings, office fluoride and sealant
- Periodontal care
- Restorative dental care: fillings
- Oral Surgery: routine extractions
- Teledentistry
- Emergency dental care
- Specialty Dental Care Services require referral and approval. These services include, but are not limited to:
  - Prosthetic Care: replacing missing teeth, crowns
  - Endodontic Care: root canals



*Smiles are free, but they are worth a lot!*

## Patient Portal

Using the patient portal, you can connect with your provider through a convenient, safe and secure environment. The portal allows you to request and check labs, refill medication, schedule appointments, and message your physician.

At check-in, the front desk will email you a link for patient portal enrollment.

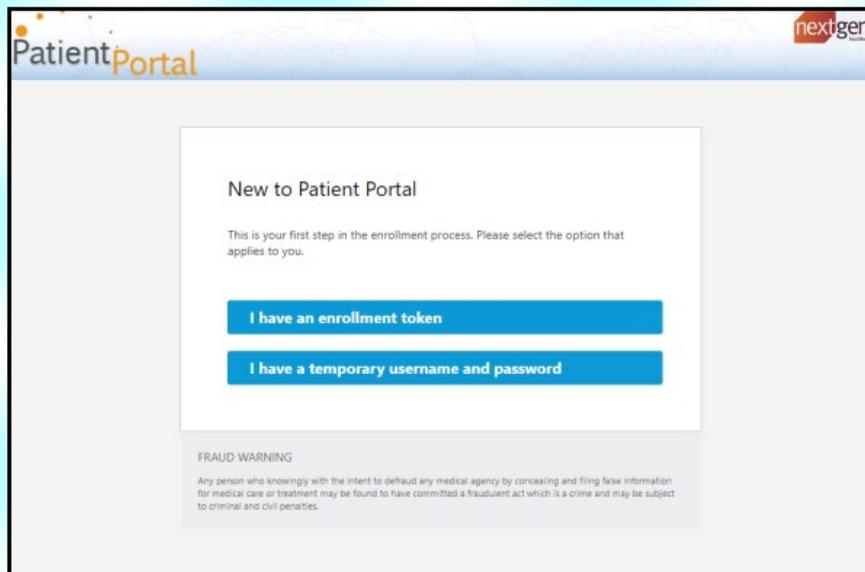
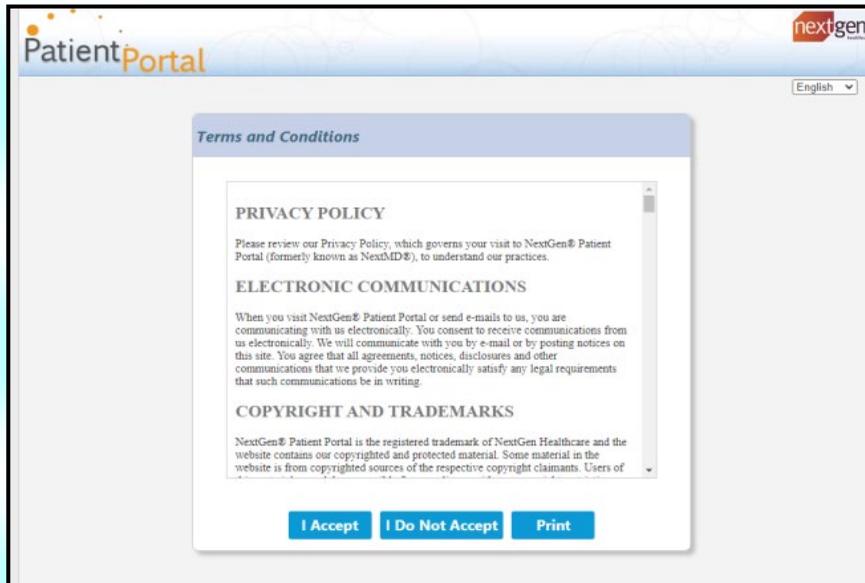
Or, follow the link below and use the steps on the next few pages to complete your patient portal enrollment:

<https://www.nextmd.com/Enroll/TermsAndConditions.aspx>



**Your Body • Your Health**

1. When you follow the link, it will take you to the ‘Term and Conditions’ page for the patient portal. After you accept the terms and conditions, it will take you to the ‘New to Patient Portal’ screen. Select ‘**I have an enrollment token**’.



2. ‘Enter token details’ page, enter your enrollment token, date of birth, last name, and email address\*, then select ‘**Next**’. On the ‘Welcome’ page, select ‘**Sign up for a new account**’.

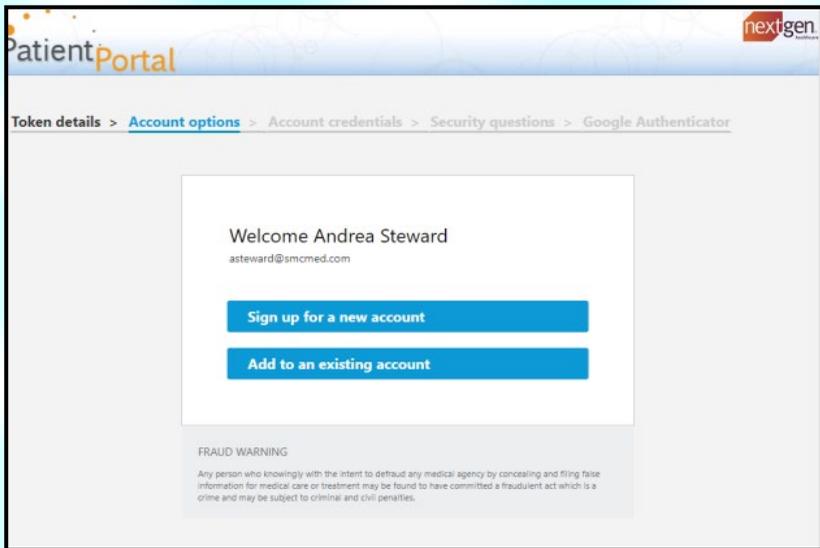
The screenshot shows the 'PatientPortal' interface with the 'Enter token details' form. The breadcrumb trail is 'Token details > Account options > Account credentials > Security questions > Google Authenticator'. The form title is 'Enter token details' with the instruction 'Please enter the following information to verify your identity.' It contains four required fields: 'Token number' (with a hint 'What is a security token?'), 'Date of birth' (format mmm/dd/yyyy), 'Last name', and 'Email address' (with a checkbox 'I do not wish to provide an email address'). 'NEXT' and 'CANCEL' buttons are at the bottom.

\* Please verify that your email address is correct, otherwise you will not be able to complete the enrollment process.

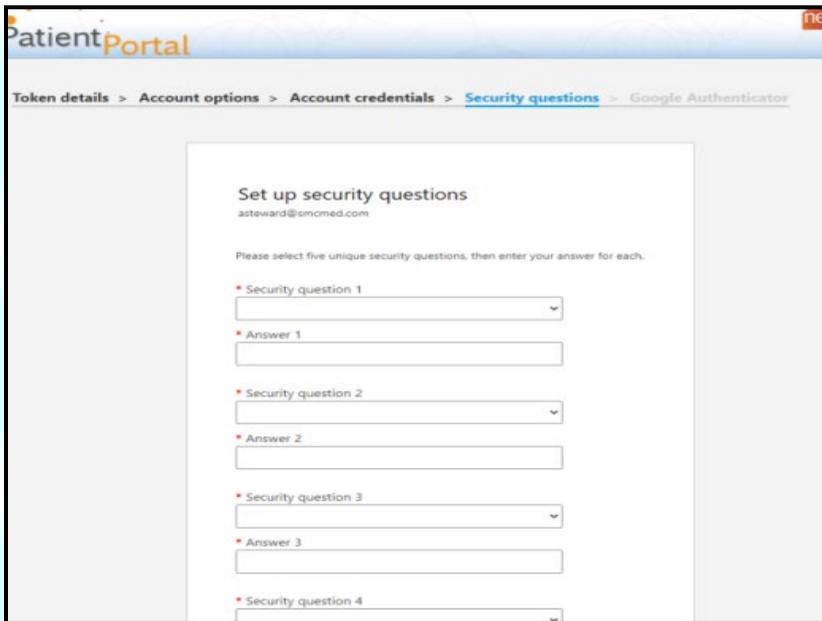
3. Choose a user name and password. Your user name and password are case sensitive.  
Username: must be between 6 and 20 characters long

Password: must be between 6 and 20 characters long, and must contain at least one number.

The screenshot shows the 'PatientPortal' interface with the 'Set up account' form. The breadcrumb trail is 'Token details > Account options > Account credentials > Security questions > Google Authenticator'. The form title is 'Set up account'. It contains three required fields: 'Username' (with a hint 'Use 6-50 characters'), 'Password' (with hints: 'Use 8 or more characters', 'Use upper and lower case letters (e.g. Bb)', 'Use a number (e.g. 1234)', 'Use a special character (e.g. \$!%)', and 'Avoid including commonly used passwords (e.g. password)'), and 'Confirm Password'. 'NEXT' and 'CANCEL' buttons are at the bottom.

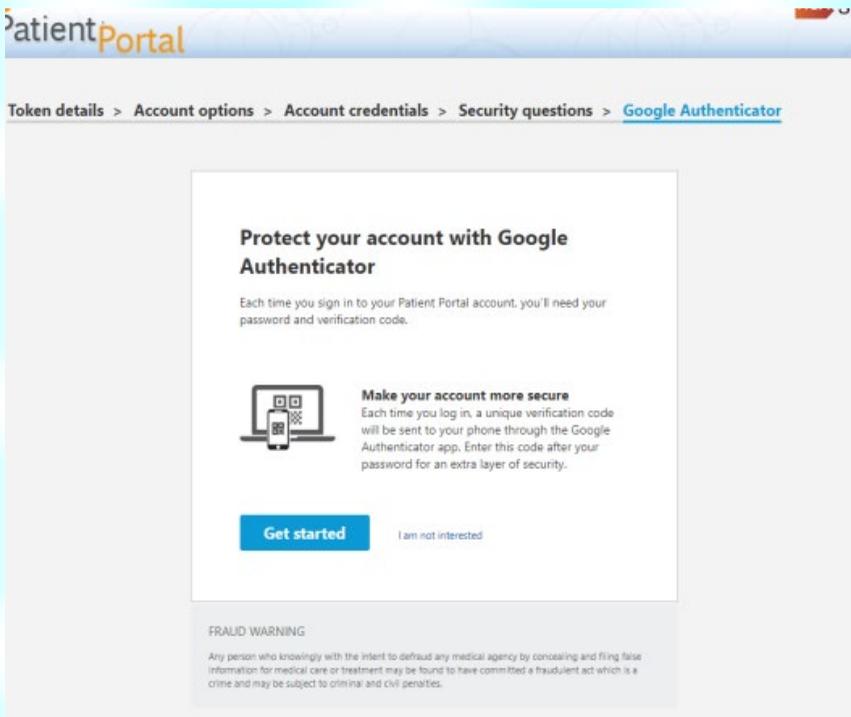


4. Choose Login Security Questions from the list and provide your answers for the questions



5. Since your NextMD account contains confidential medical information that must be protected, you may, at times, need to provide the answer to Login Security Question(s).

Set up NextMD's secure password reset feature. NextMD will ask you to select a question and provide an answer to it. If you forget your password, you will have to answer this question again to reset it.



**For questions and support, please contact Specialty front desk at 404-564-6912 or 6913**

## Medical Transportation

**Medical Transportation** provides eligible patients with non-emergency transportation services from their homes to the care facility and back. Through the RW medical transportation component, we have collaborated with Uber Health and MARTA to make transportation accessible and convenient for patients. We offer **MARTA tickets** and **Uber health** rides, as needed. Uber health is limited to patients who live outside of the perimeter, where MARTA is not accessible.

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### Uber Health guidelines:

Ryan White patients are able to request medical transportation to and from their appointments at no cost to them.

Patients requesting rides must:

- Request a ride **at LEAST 24 hours** prior to their appointment
- Have an **ACTIVE** cell phone number to receive pickup notifications
- Update the Ryan White team about any changes in address and phone number **BEFORE** the ride is placed
- Look out for text updates from UBER

Probationary Period

- Patients who miss 3 consecutive Medical Transportation rides will be placed on a probationary period of 14 days where they will be unable to request rides to and from their appointments.
- The probationary period automatically resets for patients after the 14th consecutive day

# MARTA

For patients living within the perimeter of Atlanta, where MARTA is accessible, SMC will provide up to 2 round trip tickets per visit. (See MARTA map below)

In case of an emergency, an Uber will be provided.



## **Medical Case Management**

Medical Case Management is the provision of a range of patient-centered activities focused on improving health outcomes in support of the HIV care continuum by ensuring timely and coordinated access to medically appropriate levels of health and support services and continuity of care. Medical Case Management may also include patient-specific advocacy and service utilization reviews.

- Initial assessment of service needs
- Development of a comprehensive, individualized care plan and coordination of service required to implement the plan
- Continuous patient monitoring to assess the efficacy of the care plan
- Re-evaluation of the care plan at least every 6 months with adaptations as necessary
- Ongoing assessment of the patient's and other key family members' needs and personal support systems
- Treatment adherence counseling to ensure readiness for and adherence to complex HIV treatments
- Patient-specific advocacy and service utilization reviews

## **Additional Community Resources**

### **Utility Assistance**

- [GA Energy Assistance Program \(EAP\)](https://dfcs.georgia.gov/services/low-income-home-energy-assistance-program-liheap) pays for some home heating and cooling costs for low-income eligible families, particularly in emergencies.  
<https://dfcs.georgia.gov/services/low-income-home-energy-assistance-program-liheap>

### **Rent Assistance**

- United Way 2-1-1 - Provides information & referrals to agencies in the community assisting with rent payment assistance.  
Search online: <http://bit.ly/211online>  
Text: send a text message to 898211 with the keyword 211od  
Dial 2-1-1 on your phone

## Legal Services

- Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation  
**404-521-0790**  
9:00 am to 1:00 pm MON-THU  
Provide legal support for housing and domestic violence/intimate partner abuse remotely and legal help with landlord-tenant issues (including evictions).  
<https://avlf.org/covid-19/>
- Atlanta Legal AID  
**404-524-5811**  
<http://atlantalegalaid.org/apply>

## Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

The PUA program will provide unemployment benefits to those not ordinarily eligible, for up to 39 weeks. This includes individuals who are self-employed, gig workers, 1099 independent contractors, employees of churches, employees of non-profits, or those with limited work history who do not qualify for state unemployment benefits.

[www.dol.state.ga.us](http://www.dol.state.ga.us)

## Acronyms

ADAP	AIDS Drug Assistance Program
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
ARV	Antiretroviral
EHE	Ending the Epidemic
EMA	Eligible Metropolitan Area
FPL	Federal Poverty Guideline
HCV	Hepatitis C Virus
HICP	Health Insurance Continuation Program
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
MCTC	Maternal to Child Transmission
OAHS	Outpatient Ambulatory Health Services
PAP	Pharmaceutical Assistance Program
PEP	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis
PrEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
RW	Ryan White

RWCA	Ryan White Care ACT
RWHAP	Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program
SMC	Southside Medical Center
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
STI	Sexual Transmitted Infection



**“Never stop dreaming,  
never stop believing,  
never give up,  
never stop trying, and  
never stop learning**

*- Roy Bennett*