



Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, January 24, 2016

Volume 7, Issue 04

This-N-That

I've become tired of reading all the bad news regarding Veterans, healthcare, scams and scandals in the VA hospitals and not one real bit of good news anywhere!

While I still admit that in some VAMC's Veterans are receiving top notch care, by providers who have compassion, and love their jobs and the people they serve, but as much as some Veterans would say it's excellent care across the board, they've never experienced the wait times, the delays, the refusals to do proper testing and providing of much needed care to prevent serious illness and in many cases eventual death.

Some will say we need to remove Secretary McDonald, others would say that's not the answer. But, as I see it, so far McDonald has done nothing but made things worse.

He's increased the amount of time on appointments from 14 days to 21 days. He's allowed those who scammed the VA of thousands of dollars to remain employed. He's allowed those who willfully and deliberately caused the death(s) of Veterans to remain employed. He's failed to hold accountable any VAMC director on income and expenses.

I could go on and on with his faults, and among all this faults I can only find one thing and one thing only that he's good at, Photo Op's! Just like any politician!

Although many are still saying 22 Veterans commit suicide daily, there is no real way to track it to be 100% accurate, and I feel that number is far greater leaning closer to 40 plus per day. And the majority is due to lack of claims approvals, medical care provision and treatment to help those who served become again productive members of society.

While I don't think PTSD is 100% curable with the right tools, proper care, most Veterans can become productive members of Society!

And it's been going on a hell of a long time now, but there is still no real resolution on Military Law, and Sexual Trauma or Rape, and is this fair to those male or female who were raped or attacked? NO it's not.

And I'm also sick and tired of most if not all politicians giving the standard lip service line "I thank those who served!" but they still sit in their big offices in DC or at home, and let this drag on and on bringing nothing to the table that would help.

And with Blue Water Navy Veterans, so much information, documentation and evidence has been provided to prove beyond a doubt that those Veterans should be receiving benefits and care, so where is Secretary McDonald, where is Congress? They're all sitting back and doing nothing!

And people who have blown the whistle on fellow VA Employee's are being punished to the point they quit, or are forced out to keep them quiet. How is this being taken care of? Well one whistle blower was paid \$86,000.00 to leave!

I'm constantly fax blasting all members of Congress, trying my level best to push down their throats the problems, and most times even providing a resolution in the hopes one day soon someone will pay attention and actually do something.

I do on occasion have a staffer call me and we will speak on the issue(s), some will call back again, or E-Mail, but not all of them, but does not in any way stop or prevent me from staying on their backs.

So again anyone of our readers, if you have specific issues you can't seem to get past, please write me and tell me your story. Names and addresses, etc. will be kept confidential, only the stories will be passed on to Congress.

Over the past week we've added 1,719 more web links, so if you've not visited lately, give it a try again. We continue to build what we hope is a One-Stop-Shop location for you so you don't need to spend countless hours searching for something that may be informative, useful or needed.

We've also added the new polling system, and will begin to add questions and survey's very soon. So watch for this too!

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,
Jim Davis
Founder & CEO
Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org

State of Emergency due to Winter Storm Jonas

A State of Emergency has been declared for Washington D.C., 21 counties of Georgia (see below) and the entire states of Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia due to Winter Storm Jonas.

Emergency prescription refills procedures are in place from January 20, 2016 through February 19, 2016.

21 Georgia Counties Affected by this State of Emergency

Banks	Gordon	Rabun
Catoosa	Habersham	Stephens
Dade	Hall	Towns
Dawson	Hart	Union
Fannin	Lumpkin	Walker
Franklin	Murray	White
Gilmer	Pickens	Whitfield

Emergency Refills

To get an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any TRICARE retail network pharmacy. To find a network pharmacy:

- Call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303
- Search the [network pharmacy locator](#)

If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled.

- If you use a retail chain, you can fill your prescription at another store in that chain.
- If your provider is available, he or she may call in a new prescription to any network pharmacy.
- You can request assistance at another pharmacy, but it's at that pharmacy's discretion to help you.

OPERATION MAIL CALL

OUR TROOPS NEED US. NOT EVERY DEPLOYED HERO HEARS HIS OR HER NAME AT MAIL CALL.



We need a caring Patriotic people like you to write a couple of letters or cards we can put in care packages to send out weekly?

Operation Mail Call needs your help! We need cards and letters to send to our troops currently serving on foreign soil.

Doesn't have to be anything special, just words of support and thanking them for their service!

Operation Mail Call has successfully moved into it's new location:

For more information visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/5439-operation-mail-call-2>

ASK VA SECRETARY TO HELP VIETNAM VETS ON SHIPS

Help Vietnam Vets that served on Ships

A number of U.S. Senators recently dispatched a letter to VA Secretary Bob McDonald asking him to use his statutory authority to extend the presumption of service connection to veterans with Agent Orange related diseases who served in the territorial waters of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam conflict. Shipmates are urged to use the Action Center to contact the VA Secretary and express their support for a regulatory change so that thousands of "Blue Water" veterans can begin receiving benefits that have heretofore been unjustly denied.

[TAKE ACTION NOW](#)

Where the Candidates Stand on Veterans Issues

Task & Purpose recently published an article on where each of the presidential candidates stand on veterans' issue. Using the [Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America](#) organization's annual 11-point [policy agenda](#), Task & Purpose rated the 2016 candidates' platforms and comments about the most pressing issues facing veterans and their plans to address them. The results are available on the [Task & Purpose website](#).

Conflicting Reports on Vet Unemployment

Recently, The Los Angeles Times published an article which stated [high veteran unemployment appears to be a thing of the past](#). However, several sources report the opposite to be true, at least in certain regions of the U.S. For example, the [Center for a New American Security's study](#) from November shows a 30% unemployment rate among veterans in Western Pennsylvania. And, last year's [LA County Veterans Study](#) by the University of Southern California showed that almost 80% of veterans coming to Los Angeles County went there jobless.

Health Coverage Tax Form Available on myPay

All active-duty, Guard, Reserve, retiree and civilian Airmen will need proof of health care coverage when filing their federal tax returns for 2015. The proof of minimum essential coverage will be provided by the Department of Treasury Internal Revenue Service Form 1095. In January 2016, Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) is required to provide each employee with the IRS Form 1095 for employment during 2015. A hard copy form is scheduled to be mailed to each employee and the form will also be available electronically through myPay under the taxes section. For information about the impact of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), visit the [DFAS website](#).

TRICARE News: Nurse Advice Line

The Nurse Advice Line (NAL) is an evaluation tool for those seeking care or who have medical questions. The telephone hotline provides instant access to a team of registered nurses who can answer urgent and acute healthcare questions. The NAL provides TRICARE beneficiaries an assessment of their symptoms and what next steps they should take. Call the NAL, toll-free and 24/7 for your urgent medical needs at 1-800-TRICARE (874-2273) Option# (1). Beneficiaries can still call their PCM or clinic for medical advice and [appointments](#). For more information, visit the [TRICARE Nurse Advice Line webpage](#).

Veterans fought for us; we continue to fight for our veterans!

VFC Website Update

If you've not visited our website, maybe you should visit today! Since going on-line on 10/28/12 we have been averaging between 2,100 and 3,000 visitors per day and have had **2,546,988** visitors to date.

Visit today and subscribe, it's 100% **FREE** of charge to all! Just be sure to use a valid E-Mail address so the system can send you an authentication E-Mail. Becoming a subscriber will show you all the various forum's, added libraries, and more.

We have the largest One-Stop-Shop Veterans website available that is user friendly, offers a host of information on many topics, Several forums, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, a massive Documents Library with more than 12,900 documents, various VA and DoD forms.

www.veterans-for-change.org

- Documents Library with over **140** different libraries and over **14,417+** documents
- FAQ's (**1,567** on-line now) (**Updated 04/05/15**)
- Forums (**with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator**)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated 01/15/16 **38** New Jobs and **1** New Job Fair)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 01/02/16** added **17**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,465** articles on-line)
- Web Links (**3,391** Active Links)(**Updated 01/15/16** added **1,719** New Links)

The documents library has many different categories and contains more than 55 million pages of information and forms.

There are forums for all Eras of service and one just for Women Veterans, which is locked to use by women only. Another for Men Veterans which is also locked to men only.

In the documents and forums we provide information pertaining to women and the ability speak freely in the forums to other women about the same issues and problems you face.

The Memorial Pages are open, and if you have a loved one or a buddy you've lost and would like for them to be added to our Memorial Pages, please send a photo, First and Last Name, Rank, Branch of Service, DOB and DOD, and allow us 2-3 days to install on the proper page. (Send to: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

You also have the ability to comment and rate all NEWS articles which would be very helpful for us so we know the types of information you'd like to see on our website.

TRICARE Co-Pays Adding Up?

Doctor and hospital bills are expensive even when you're covered by TRICARE. Help minimize or even eliminate out-of-pocket expenses with the [TRICARE Insurance Supplement Plan](#).

Survivor Benefit Update for Special Needs Children

A newly released Defense Department policy allows military retirees with special needs children to take advantage of a law changing the way their [Survivor Benefit Plan](#) can be paid after their death. The Survivor Benefit Plan allows military retirees to provide to a designee a monthly payout after their death of up to 55 percent of their retirement pay, depending on the plan the choose. Users pay a monthly premium. If the retiree outlives the person for whom he has designated the payout, the premiums are lost. In the past, retirees have been hesitant to select a disabled adult child as their beneficiary because they feared any extra income would disqualify the child from receiving other government subsidies for disabled adults, such as housing assistance and Medicaid.

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Medicare and Medicaid: Additional Oversight Needed of CMS's Demonstration to Coordinate the Care of Dual-Eligible Beneficiaries. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-31>

Offshore Oil and Gas Resources: Actions Needed to Better Protect Against Billions of Dollars in Federal Exposure to Decommissioning Liabilities. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-40>

Medicaid Managed Care: Trends in Federal Spending and State Oversight of Costs and Enrollment. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-77>

Defense Management: Additional Cost Information and Oversight Needed to Strengthen U.S. Position in Negotiating Host Nation Support. http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

Information Quality Act: Actions Needed to Improve Transparency and Reporting of Correction Requests. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-110>

Federal Research Opportunities: DOE, DOD, and HHS Need Better Guidance for Participant Activities. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-128>

Foreign Assistance: USAID Venture Capital Approach Relies on Evidence of Results but Could Strengthen Collaboration among Similar Programs. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-142>

Border Security: Actions Needed by DHS to Address Long-Standing Challenges in Planning for a Biometric Exit System, by Rebecca Gambler, director, homeland security and justice, before the Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, Senate Committee on the Judiciary. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-358T>

U.S. Postal Service: Financial Challenges Continue, by Lori Rectanus, director, physical infrastructure issues, before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-268T>

Army Relief Offers Scholarships

Army Emergency Relief (AER) is accepting scholarship applications until May 1. AER supports both the Spouse Scholarship Program, as well as the Maj. Gen. James Ursano Scholarship Program for dependent children. Scholarship specifics and applications are available on the [AER website](#). AER awards are "needs-based" scholarships based on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and transcripts. The sponsoring Soldier's Leave and Earnings Statement, or LES, should also be submitted for active-duty Soldiers.

Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

Shopping Healthy at the Commissary

To prepare healthier meals for your family, here are several tips to follow when visiting your local commissary: (1) stick to the list you made; (2) shop the perimeter of the store for most of your food purchases because the inner aisles have the majority of processed foods, which can be high in sodium, fats and preservatives; (3) spend the most time in the produce department; (4) aim to fill most of your cart with fresh fruits and vegetables; (5) when purchasing frozen or canned fruits and vegetables, choose items that have no added salt or sugar; (6) purchase some plant-based proteins like dried or canned beans for a couple of meatless meals during the week; (7) choose the least processed foods; and (8) be sure to read the Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients.



Are you seeking employment? Been looking forever and not found the right job?

Well Veterans-For-Change is working very hard to bring you more information on Job Fairs and Job Postings available across the country.

Click on the link below, and find all the jobs available, Job Fairs coming up, locations, details, etc.

<http://veterans-for-change.org/documents-library/category/167-job-fairs-job-postings>

If you have a job position open, and are willing to hire a Veteran, please send an E-Mail to: JIM.DAVIS@VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE.ORG there is never any fee involved, this is a 100% free service in order to help thousands of Veterans nationwide to gain full time employment.

To be Updated 01/22/16 by 10pm PSTs

Tax Assistance for Coast Guard Members

The Coast Guard is offering free electronic tax filing service via CG Support. This service is only applicable to Coast Guard (CG) Active Duty members, Selected Reserve members, civilian employees, and dependents. Assistance is available at many Coast Guard Legal Offices, military Legal Assistance Offices, and at various units through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. Most Coast Guard Legal Offices and unit tax advisers offer this free service by appointment only. The service is available to active-duty members, reservists, dependents, and Coast Guard civilian employees.

Links to other Stories

- 1) [A Way Home for Tulsa surpasses goal of housing 290 homeless Veterans](#)
- 2) [Air Force medical group first to find bacteria unseen in humans](#)
- 3) [Discoveries on women Veterans' long-term health outcomes](#)
- 4) [Focus group works to shield Marines against deafening noise levels](#)
- 5) [Goal of zero homeless Veterans in KC is in sight, but help is still needed](#)
- 6) [Help to get homeless Veterans off the streets](#)
- 7) [HOMELESS VETERANS: Hearing in Riverside looks to find solutions](#)
- 8) [Roby leads partnership talks between local hospitals, VA](#)
- 9) [Sexual trauma raises suicide risk among Veterans](#)
- 10) [VA chief to Congress: You can't fire your way to excellence](#)
- 11) [VA labor contract favors union bureaucrats over Veterans for jobs](#)
- 12) [VA secretly paid exec who punished whistleblower \\$86,000 to quit](#)
- 13) [Veteran's Children Taken & Held Hostage by Govt Agents for Legally Treating his PTSD with Cannabis](#)
- 14) [Veterans Affairs Caught Spying On Whistleblowers](#)
- 15) [Veterans Affairs Privacy Violations On The Rise](#)
- 16) [Veterans Affairs responds to 'delays' accusation](#)

You can help Veterans-For-Change by reading the articles posted, and comment at the bottom and rank the article. If you don't have an account, sign-up today, it's **FREE**. Your comments and rankings help us to better determine the type of information you'd like most to see.

Check us out today: www.veterans-for-change.org

Homes for Heroes

Wells Fargo and the Military Warriors Support Foundation help military veterans who were wounded while serving their country. Wells Fargo donates homes to the Military Warriors Support Foundation, which uses them for their Homes4WoundedHeroes program. Since 2012 when the company created its Military & Veteran Segment, the Wells Fargo Foundation has donated more than \$17 million to military- and veteran- related nonprofits and the company has given 300 mortgage-free homes valued at more than \$49 million to veterans. For more information, visit the [Military Warrior Support Foundation website](#).

To Contact your Members of Congress

To Call your Representative:	202-225-2305
To call your Senator:	202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553
To call different members of Congress:	202-224-3121
Toll FREE Number:	866-272-6622

Art Therapy for Wounded Warriors

Can art therapy ease the symptoms of post traumatic brain disorder (PTSD)? Melissa Walker, an art therapist and healing arts coordinator with the National Intrepid Center of Excellence ([NICoE](#)) at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, runs an art therapy program in which servicemembers returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan with PTSD or a traumatic brain injury (TBI) are asked to make papier-mâché masks to express their feelings. The masks provide an outlet for non-verbal expression at a time when verbal communication may be challenging for the servicemembers. The masks are so insightful that the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), through its Military Healing Arts partnership, is now funding an analysis of 400 of them at Drexel University in Philadelphia. For more information, visit the [Drexel University website](#).

Veterans Initiative for Marijuana in Utah

The group Utah Veterans for Medical Cannabis has come together in hopes making medical marijuana legal in Utah. A June 2015 [article](#) in the American Medical Association Journal of Ethics attempted to clarify the VA's policy on using cannabis in conjunction with opioids to treat long-term pain. Currently, 23 states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws legalizing marijuana in some form. Follow the Utah Veterans for Medical Cannabis on [Facebook](#).

~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~

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<https://app.expressemailmarketing.com/survey.aspx?sfid=121170>

Complete all information, and select the appropriate box at the bottom of the form. You will then receive an automated authentication E-Mail, follow the instructions and you will then be added to the weekly distribution list.

Our mailing list is never sold, traded or shared with anyone ever, and is held in the strictest of confidence.

Help for Alaska Veterans

TriWest Healthcare Alliance, which manages health benefits for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is bringing six new employees to Alaska to help get veterans' medical appointments scheduled and doctors' bills paid. The new team will provide in-person and over-the-phone help for Alaska's veterans and health care providers who must navigate the [Federal Choice Program](#), which was partly modeled on an earlier system in Alaska. The staff from TriWest will work closely with the staff from the VA to ensure veterans can get timely appointments. Alaska's congressional delegation said in statements Tuesday that they are cautiously optimistic about the additional staff in the state, though noting that it's only one step toward fixing veterans' problems with health care.

DoD to Improve Awards Process

The Pentagon has made a number of changes to the military decorations and awards program to ensure servicemembers receive appropriate recognition of their actions. Key changes include: (1) implementation of new goals and processes to improve timeliness of the Medal of Honor and other valor awards; (2) standardization of the meaning and use of the Combat Distinguishing Device ("V" device) as a valor-only device; (3) creation of a new combat device ("C") when the award related to the most arduous combat conditions; (4) introduction of a "remote impacts" device ("R") when recipients used remote technology to directly impact combat operations; and (5) adoption of a common definition of Meritorious Service Under Combat Conditions.

Veterans-For-Change Newsletter is a once weekly publication deadline for submission is 5:00 PM PST on Thursday!



Our country is not the only thing to which we owe our allegiance. It is also owed to justice and to humanity. Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong.

~James Bryce~

Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today
www.veterans-for-change.org

Serving those who served!

Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!

Distribution	
Express Mail:	14,449
Boston	63,681
Courtesy Copies:	3,500
Dept of VA	11,392
DoD	3,788
Face Book Pages:	3,099
Los Angeles	106,494
New York	114,043
Other Social Media:	15,738
San Francisco	57,508
Twitter:	27
U.S. House of Reps & Staff	804
U.S. Senators & Staff	83
University of So. CA	1,450
US Air Force	14,212
US Army	34,550
US Marines	16,004
US Navy	15,247

Veterans	19,040,437
Washington DC	125,855
Yahoo:	129
	19,642,490