



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, October 22, 2017

Volume 8, Issue 43



This-N-That

Over the past few weeks we've had a few Veterans tell us they can't read the news articles being posted to the Veterans-For-Change.org website. So we have been experimenting a little with different fonts and font sizes.

While reading the latest posts, do let us know what you like.

As you all are more than aware, the VA Healthcare system is inundated with numerous problems, tons of promises to fix, yet the delays in approvals has not really changed one bit.

Many, including VFC have been strong advocates in a fully computerized claims processing system which would more than meet the need of claims processing once programmed with all the rules and regulations.

Claims provided being submitted with all the necessary documentation could be approved in a matter of minutes. And those claims which are very complicated then kicked out for human intervention as is done with most healthcare insurance agencies today.

Not only would claims be process far more quickly and in a timely fashion, benefit awards would be being granted equally across the board, meaning those on the west coast would received exactly the same benefit amounts as those on the east coast, which is currently not happening and very inconsistent.

In addition to this, the VA would be saving millions of dollars in salaries, Veteran Service Organizations would need fewer service offices and in turn would also save money which could be put to better use in many other programs.

It wasn't all that long ago the claims backlog was well over ONE MILLION, and with the swipe of an electronic pen, thousands were arbitrarily denied! And this may be happening again sooner than we think all just to get the numbers lowered all for the sake of publicity.

What can you do? You can help by calling your reps in DC, sending them e-mails using their website, and sending faxes demanding they computerize the benefits claim system and do it immediately.

Wouldn't you like to have you claim approved favorably and quickly?

Then please, help all the organizations fighting this battle to help you by making the calls, sending the faxes, sending the E-Mails! It doesn't take much time! You don't have to leave the comfort of your home, and it won't cost you one red cent!

On behalf of our Volunteers nationwide and myself, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org



S. 1153, the Veterans ACCESS Act

Senator Tammy Baldwin (WI) introduced S. 1153, the Veterans Acquiring Community Care Expect Safe Services (ACCESS) Act. This bill would give VA the authority to deny, revoke, or suspend the eligibility for certain community health care providers from treating veterans based on having a medical licensure violation or when a private provider has entered into a settlement agreement for a disciplinary charge related to the practice of medicine.

This measure ensures the safety of veterans and is in accordance with DAV Resolution 173, which calls for, "...strengthening, reforming and sustaining a modern, high-quality, accessible and accountable VA health care system" and "... creating integrated networks with high-quality community providers where needed..." S. 1153 would contribute to improving the quality of providers within such integrated networks by helping to preclude certain health care providers when VA is aware they have a documented record of endangering patient health or safety.

Please join DAV in supporting legislation to ensure that only the best health care practitioners treat our nation's ill and injured veterans. Please use the prepared e-mail to write your Senators today.

Thank you for your support of the DAV Commander's Action Network.

Click [HERE](#) and send your message!

Ending the Abuse of Veteran Pensioners

In 2012, the Government Accountability Office found more than 200 financial planning firms and estate law offices enticing veterans or their survivors into costly annuities or irrevocable trusts intended to hide or reallocate their assets so they qualify for VA pensions that the claimants wouldn't be eligible for otherwise. Since then, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Congress have been crawling toward actions to stop the abusive practices, which twist the intent of the pension benefit in ways to help some veterans, put others in financial binds, and generate fees or profits or streams of residents for the schemers.

2018 Veteran Disability Compensation Rates

Each year the Department of Veterans Affairs updates the VA Compensation rates to meet the expected increase in the cost of living. Be the first to see the new [2018 Veteran Disability rates](#).





Take Command: TRICARE Payment Types for Calendar Year 2018

With the Jan. 1, 2018 changes to new stateside regions and contractors, you may need to update your payment option to guarantee continued payment of your TRICARE enrollment fees and monthly premiums.

Read the full [article](#).

Join the 'Mighty Endeavor'

The Mighty Endeavor is a collaborative effort to collect, preserve, and share the stories of those who served during World War II. The project will call upon individuals and groups to interview, research, and gather details of the men and women of the Greatest Generation. The Mighty Endeavor is a program of [Veterans' Legacies](#), a non-profit created to provide an online resource for students, educators and the general public. Veterans' Legacies is dedicated to the collection of veterans' stories in order to preserve and share them for generations to come. You can help by [contributing to the historical database](#) or through [tax-deductible donations](#).



Dems Want to Help Deported Vets Get VA Care

Five members of Congress recently traveled to Tijuana, Mexico, to meet U.S. veterans that were deported and are now unable to access their VA healthcare benefits. The plan is find ways to connect them with [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) disability compensation, health care and other services available to honorably discharged veterans.

TRICARE During California Wildfire Emergency

There are emergency procedures in place due to wildfires in California. A list of affected counties is available on the TRICARE [website](#). To obtain 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 or search online. 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 is at that pharmacy's discretion to help you.

- 1) Drinking Water: DOD Has Acted on Some Emerging Contaminants but Should Improve Internal Reporting on Regulatory Compliance
- 2) Personal Firearms: Programs that Promote Safe Storage and Research on Their Effectiveness
- 3) Reserve Component Travel: DOD Should Assess the Effect of Reservists' Unreimbursed Out-of-Pocket Expenses on Retention
- 4) The Nation's Retirement System: A Comprehensive Re-evaluation Is Needed to Better Promote Future Retirement Security
- 5) TSA Modernization: Use of Sound Program Management and Oversight Practices Is Needed to Avoid Repeating Past Problems
- 6) U.S. Marshals Service: Additional Actions Needed to Improve Oversight of Merit Promotion Process and Address Employee Perceptions of Favoritism
- 7) Veterans Health Administration: Better Data and Evaluation Could Help Improve Physician Staffing, Recruitment, and Retention Strategies

Commissaries Accepting 'Military Star' Card

To offer greater convenience to servicemembers and their families, the military exchanges' Exchange Credit Program is expanding acceptance of the MILITARY STAR card to the [Defense Commissaries](#) worldwide. By Nov. 9, the card's acceptance will be expanded throughout DeCA for all branches of service. Benefits of the MILITARY STAR card include: (1) two points per dollar on purchases and a \$20 gift card after 2,000 points earned; (2) one of the lowest Annual Percentage Rates; (3) fair and flexible terms; (4) 10 percent discount on first day of use; and (5) reduced interest deployment plan with no payments required for eligible customers. For more information, visit [MyECP.com](#).

**CONTACT YOUR
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!**

To Call your Representative:

202-225-2305

To Call your Senators:

202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553

To call Different Members of Congress:

202-224-3121

TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622

PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!

www.veterans-for-change.org

**CalVet Supports 240,000 Veterans Living In
Fire-affected Areas**

by: June Ilijana

For regular updates via email, sign up to follow
www.calvetconnectblog.com

According to US Department of Veterans Affairs records, 240,000 veterans live in the counties affected by October's wildfires. More than 213,000 acres have burned, an estimated 5,700 structures destroyed and 41 people have been killed. 40,000 people remain evacuated.

Last week Governor Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency for [Solano County, Napa, Sonoma and Yuba counties](#), and [Butte, Lake, Mendocino, Nevada and Orange counties](#) due to the effects of the devastating fires burning across California.

This week, disaster Local Assistance Centers are opening in those areas to help residents begin rebuilding their lives. CalVet staff and county veteran services officers will be there helping veterans file claims, replace service-related and benefit documents, and access job placement assistance to begin rebuilding their lives.

CalVet has posted a schedule for [local assistance centers](#) and will update it regularly. Any veteran needing assistance who is unable to get to a local assistance center near them should call their [county veteran service office](#) for help.

California government entities represented at the local assistance centers include:

Department of Motor Vehicles (driver's license, identification and vehicle registration)
Employment Development Department (unemployment assistance)
Department of Public Health-Vital Statistics (birth, death, marriage records)
Department of Veterans Affairs (military records, awards, benefits)
Department of Social Services (State Supplemental Grant Program)
Housing and Community Development (licensing for manufactured homes)
Department of Tax and Fee Administration
Department of Insurance
Contractors State License Board (rebuilding, licensing)

Veterans-For-Change Web Site

The Veterans-For-Change website has been under construction since day one back in 2009 and every day since then. The looks pretty much stay the same, but in the background constant improvement and change is being done to make our website the most user friendly “One-Stop-Shop” website to find almost everything you might have tried to find searching the internet.

Almost a hundred people have been involved; collecting web links to documents now houses on the VFC website, collecting thousands of web links for various issues, illnesses and benefits. Creating forums for all eras of service and two forums one just for men and one just for woman where you can go question, comment, share medical and personal concerns, what ever you'd like it to be.

We also have a forum with a licensed Mental Health Worker, again where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average **2,200** hits per day, and downloads average **1,200** per day with a total **3,623,701** visitors as of Friday.

If you subscribe you will have full access to the entire website and best of all it's FREE of charge! You just need a valid E-mail address so the system can send you a confirmation E-Mail. Once received, click on the link to be authorized automatically.

www.veterans-for-change.org

- Documents Library with over 16,142 documents on-line (Updated: 8/12/17)
- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers
- Multiple Forums
 - o Afghanistan Veterans
 - o FMP - Foreign Medial Program
 - o Gulf War & Desert Storm Veterans

- o Iraq Veterans
- o Korean Veterans
- o Men Veterans Forum
- o Mental Health for Veterans
- o Political Issues
- o Suggestion Box
- o The Mess Hall
- o VA Hospitals and Medical Centers
- o Veteran Affairs
- o Vietnam Veterans
- o Welcome Mat
- o Women Veterans Forum
- o WW II Veterans
 - Job Postings
 - Memorial Pages (Updated: 10/10/16)
 - News (Articles On-Line: **6,804**)
 - Polls
 - Web Links, more than 3,608, Added 17 New Links (Updated: 08/12/17)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail:

Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org

App Helps Vets with TBI in Washington State

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs recently launched the Max Impact TBI App aimed at empowering Veterans, family, friends and caregivers of Veterans living with the effects of [traumatic brain injury \(TBI\)](#). MAX is a virtual service dog designed to assist those who have TBI. Veterans can use a screening tool to determine whether symptoms may be related to a TBI, be connected with area providers who can help, learn how to manage symptoms and better relax, and connect with other Veterans with TBIs all in the safety of their own home. The app is available to download for [free at iTunes](#) and the Google Play Store. Or search for it on iTunes and/or [Google Play store](#) as just one word, 'MaxImpact'.

CalVet Begins Returning Evacuated Veterans to Yountville Veterans Home

Yountville -- Today residents of the Holderman Building at the California Veterans Home in Yountville began returning from their week-long evacuation.

Last Tuesday night, ambulances from around the state, worked with Napa County emergency managers, the California Emergency Medical Services Authority and the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to evacuate residents from the skilled nursing facility (SNF) at the veterans home. One hundred thirty residents are currently housed at SNFs throughout the region and at a California veterans home in Redding.

“We are looking forward to having our veterans back home in Yountville very soon,” said Ursula Stuter, Acting Administrator of the Yountville Veterans Home. “We’ve been in regular contact with them since the evacuation, including visiting each person and speaking with the care team at their temporary location, so we know that our veterans are very anxious to get back to familiar surroundings.”

Although the direct fire danger to the campus eased significantly over the weekend, fires are still burning in the area. Smoke exposure was one of the primary drivers for moving residents with respiratory concerns away from the area. The Yountville Veterans Home medical team and emergency managers at the California Office of Emergency Services and Napa County Office of Emergency Services have been cautious not to risk the possibility of evacuating them again.

Over the past several days, CalVet installed commercial air scrubbers in the skilled nursing facility, and in other buildings on the campus, and replaced air filters throughout the building. The California Department of Public Health approved the indoor air quality measures taken to protect the residents and has agreed that it is safe to allow residents to return.

Today, thirteen patients who had been relocated to another site on the campus were returned to the Holderman facility. Beginning Wednesday and lasting through the week, patients in the alternate SNFs will be transported by ambulance to the veterans home.

“Dozens of ambulances per day will be traveling to and from the veterans home for the rest of this week and we want to assure the community that this is good news,” said Stuter. “I know that our entire team at the veterans home, including the more than 700 residents who stayed throughout the fires, are anxious to have our community whole again.”

Anyone seeking information on a family member who is a resident at the Yountville Veterans Home should call our patient information line at (707) 944-4700.

Helping Veterans in Puerto Rico

Here is the latest information on VA services available to veterans affected by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico: (1) The San Juan VA Medical Center, seven outpatient clinics, one Vet Center, the regional Benefits Office, the emergency room, inpatient services, and the National Cemetery are open and providing varying levels of service; (2) Veterans can call the San Juan VA Medical Center at 787-641-7582 or toll free 1-800-449-8729. Veterans with health-related questions can call the VISN 8 TelCare number at 1-877-741-3400; and (4) also, a 24/7 patient and family assistance hotline have been established. Veterans and relatives with questions or in need of assistance as result of the natural disaster can call 1-800-449-8729 extension 19400.



VA Search for New Under Secretary Continues

The [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) (VA) has announced the establishment of a search commission to help identify candidates for the position of VA Under Secretary for Benefits. The Under Secretary for Benefits is the senior official within the [Veterans Benefits Administration](#) (VBA) that oversees a variety of benefits and services to servicemembers, Veterans and their families. Other programs administered by the Under Secretary for Benefits include: education benefits, vocational rehabilitation and employment for Veterans, and life insurance, as well as VA guaranteed home loans for both active-duty personnel and Veterans. Once named, the commission is expected to complete its work by December 1.



S. 833, the Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2017

DAV supports S. 833, the Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2017, in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 042, which calls for improvement to the process for determining service connection for conditions related to military sexual trauma (MST). Enacting this legislation would expand MST counseling and treatment and ease some of the evidentiary requirements for veterans filing claims for service-connection for conditions related to the after-effects of a MST.

Sexual trauma during military service is ever more recognized as a hazard of service for one percent of men and 20 percent of women who have served. It often results in mental health conditions for veterans and the need for complex care and specialized treatment from VA. An absence of documentation of MST in the personnel or military unit records of individuals often prevents or obstructs adjudication of claims for disabilities of veterans suffering the devastating after-effects of sexual trauma associated with military service. Accordingly, based on an internal survey, VA verified that grant rates for post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from MST were 17 to 30 percent below grant rates for PTSD resulting from other causes.

S. 833 would relax the standard of proof for MST-related claims using mental health professionals to verify a mental health diagnosis and opine about the likelihood of MST occurring given the veteran's circumstances and conditions. Furthermore, the bill would require VA to resolve every reasonable doubt in favor of the veteran with the reasons for granting or denying service-connection recorded in full.

Please use the prepared email to urge your Senators to cosponsor and support for final passage, S. 833, the Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2017.

Click [HERE](#) send your message!

Mint Unveils WWI Coin

The U.S. Mint has unveiled its commemorative silver dollar marking the centennial of American involvement in World War I. The collectible coin will be available for purchase from the Mint in January. A portion of the proceeds will go toward construction of the new National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park, a block from the White House. This is the Mint's first commemorative coin program memorializing the Great War. Read more about the WWI Commemorative Coin on the [U.S. WWI Centennial Commission website](#).

VA Healthcare for Women Veterans

The face of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare is changing. From 2000 to 2013, women Veterans using VA services have more than doubled, from 159,000 to 390,000. Younger female Veterans are using VA services more frequently, including for maternity care, and having service connected disabilities, while older Veterans are using VA services for menopausal needs, geriatric care, and extended inpatient stays. VA health care for women Veterans includes comprehensive gender-specific primary and specialty care, mental health services, disease prevention and screening, maternity care coordination, and urgent care services. For more information, visit the [Women Veterans Healthcare website](#).



Course for Caregivers

The Department of Veterans Affairs is offering a [free course](#) for caregivers that breaks down the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) so that caregivers and Veterans can better utilize its services. In just ten minutes, you will cover essential information including: how the VA is organized, who is eligible, how to enroll, what documents are needed, and where to apply. Additionally, this course offers tips and guidance on what actions to take after enrollment is complete, and resources to help you and your Veteran contact the VA and ask more questions. For assistance and support, caregivers can call the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274.



VA Photo ID Cards Coming

All honorably discharged veterans of every era will be able to get a photo identification card from the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) (VA) starting in November due to a law passed in 2015. The law orders the VA to issue a hard-copy photo ID to any honorably discharged veteran who applies. The card must contain the veteran's name, photo and a non-Social Security identification number. Veterans may apply for the card online, but a timeline for how long it will take to receive a card after application has not been finalized. For more information, read this [article](#).

Veteran Crisis Resources

Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1

Military Crisis Line 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)

VA Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274

Register to Learn About Women's Health, Maternity Care

October is Women's Health Month. Register for our next TRICARE webinar on Thursday, Oct. 19, from 1 to 2 p.m. (EDT) for a discussion on women's health and maternity care.

Read the full article [here](#).

Links to Other Stories

- 1) [A POW twice: VA physical therapist discovers remarkable connection](#)
- 2) [AP Exclusive: Training on Vet Suicides Set at Nevada Prisons](#)
- 3) [Battlefield Cross returned to Ohio cemetery after 'regrettable misinterpretation'](#)
- 4) [Breast Cancer Awareness Information for Veterans](#)
- 5) [Congressional investigators make unannounced visit to Marion V.A.](#)
- 6) [Did Monsanto Ignore Evidence Linking Its Weed Killer to Cancer?](#)
- 7) [FATHER OF SOLDIER SLAIN IN NIGER Defends President Trump: "My Son Knew What He Signed Up For"...This Is "Not About Donald Trump And This Isn't About a Damn Phone Call!"](#)

- 8) Federal Court Decision Orders Removal of 90-Year-Old Veterans Memorial
- 9) Flu Shot Key for People With Diabetes
- 10) For These Veterans, Growing Pot Isn't Just A Job, It's A Cause
- 11) Gold Star mom reminds media Obama 'never called.' What she received from Melania... no words
- 12) HOW THE VA FUELED THE NATIONAL OPIOID CRISIS AND IS KILLING THOUSANDS OF VETERANS
- 13) Nation's Largest Dentist-Sponsored Halloween Candy Exchange Gears Up for Sixth Year
- 14) New Analysis Highlights the Disproportionate Impact of Alzheimer's on Veterans
- 15) New Bronze Lone Sailor Statue At Pearl Harbor
- 16) Okinawa Marines resume Super Stallion flights following accident
- 17) Q&A: Veterans Health Choice Initiative
- 18) Rare Tumor May Point the Way to Diabetes Treatment
- 19) The VA Disability System Is Still Riddled With Errors
- 20) Tips on making a home more accessible without major construction
- 21) VA Announces Veterans Coordinated Access & Rewarding Experiences ('CARE') Act
- 22) VA Commission Established to Recommend Under Secretary for Benefits
- 23) VA conceals shoddy care and health workers' mistakes
- 24) VA proposes CARE Act to address health IT problems
- 25) VA pushes data to the point of care
- 26) VA, Ginnie Mae Create Task Force to Address Mortgage Refinancing Issues
- 27) Veterans Day explained

You can help VFC by reading articles posted and commenting at the bottom and rate the articles. If you don't have an account, sign up today, it's FREE. Your comments and rankings tell us what type of information you want most.

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



Quit Smoking with Support and Accountability from the Freedom Quitline

Have you thought about quitting smoking? Are you tired of the expense, odor, and constant hassle of trying to find a place and time to smoke? Do you want to maximize your chances for a long, healthy life? If so, maybe it's time to quit.

Read the full article [here](#).



CalVet and Habitat for Humanity Riverside Break Ground on 26 New Homes for Veterans

Jurupa Valley, CA – The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) and Habitat for Humanity Riverside held a public ceremony today

to break ground on 26 new homes for low-income veteran families.

The CalVetREN (Residential Enriched Neighborhood) program offers permanent affordable home ownership and family enrichment services, while ensuring the veterans home loan payments don't exceed 35% of their monthly income. Each CalVetREN development includes wraparound services such as financial literacy, trauma-informed care, and proven positive outcomes. The homes themselves will be built by Habitat for Humanity Riverside and the Economic Development Agency of Riverside County, with strong support from the City of Jurupa Valley.

"Adding 26 new homes for our veterans and their families is an exciting step to reward those who have served in our nation's uniform," said CalVet Undersecretary Russell Atterberry in a statement. "Because our veterans pitch in and help throughout the project, this becomes a personally rewarding experience for them. Through our CalVetREN communities, we continue to help our heroes achieve the American dream of home ownership."

This new community will be built on five acres at the end of Amarillo Street in the Glen Avon area, and consist of 26 single family homes including a common community space in the center. These EnergySTAR rated homes will be a mix of three and four bedroom floor plans.

"Habitat Riverside is excited to be able to develop this veteran community in partnership with CalVet and we can hardly wait to begin working with the veteran families, community volunteers and our partner companies to build these homes," said Habitat for Humanity Riverside Executive Director Kathy Michalak.

Among those present for the groundbreaking ceremony were U.S. Congressman Mark Takano, CalVet Undersecretary Russell Atterberry, CalVet Deputy Secretary for the Farm and Home Loans Division Theresa Gunn, California Senator Richard Roth, Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes, Riverside County Board of Supervisors Chairman Chuck Washington and City of Jurupa Valley Mayor Verne Lauritzen.

Like the three previous CalVet REN veteran communities built in Sylmar, Santa Clarita and beginning in Palmdale, the Jurupa Valley CalVetREN development will focus on the unique needs of veterans in the local

community.

Qualified low-income veterans can apply to buy one of the completed homes in the Jarupa Valley community by visiting www.habitatriveraside.org/veterans or by calling (951)787-6754 x 131.

Breaking ground on a 26-home project in Jarupa Valley. From left, are:

Riverside County Board of Supervisors Chair Chuck Washington, Jarupa Valley Mayor Verne Lauritzen, Congressman Mark Takano, Habitat for Humanity Riverside Executive Director Kathy Michalak, Senator Richard Roth, Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes, CalVet Undersecretary Russell Atterberry and Habitat for Humanity Riverside Board President Nick Adcock.



Habitat for Humanity Riverside is dedicated to eliminating substandard housing locally through constructing, rehabilitating and preserving homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions. Habitat for Humanity Riverside was founded on the conviction that every man, woman and child should have a simple, durable place to live in dignity and safety, and that decent communities should be a matter of conscience and action for all. Learn more at www.habitatriverside.org.

California Department of Veterans Affairs - CalVet's mission is to serve all of California's veterans and their families. With nearly 1.8 million veterans living in the state, CalVet strives to ensure that our veterans of every era and their families get the state and federal benefits and services they have earned and deserve as a result of selfless and honorable military service. CalVetREN communities are one way we assist veterans and their families achieve their highest quality of life including home ownership. For the last 95 years, the CalVet Farm and Home Loan program has helped veterans find homes in California. To learn more on how CalVet assists veterans, visit www.CalVet.ca.gov.

Media Contacts:

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Habitat for Humanity Riverside, Kathy

Michalak,KMichalak@HabitatRiverside.org 951-787-6754 x 115



Are You Ready for TRICARE Payment Changes?

Effective January 1, 2018, TRICARE will implement new regions and new contractors. Beneficiaries may need to update their payment options to guarantee continued payment of

their TRICARE enrollment fees and monthly premiums. Also, beneficiaries will no longer be able to make payments by paper check. Acceptable methods of payment will continue to be allotment, electronic funds transfer and debit or credit cards. Another acceptable method is to sign into your regional contractor's website to make online payments.

Beneficiaries who currently pay enrollment fees or premiums by allotment through a Defense Financing and Accounting Service (DFAS) or other Uniformed Services Pay Center, will NOT need to update their payment information. Payments will automatically transfer to the new regional contractor on January 1, 2018. Unless a beneficiary cancels their allotment, TRICARE will continue to deduct enrollment fees and premiums.

If beneficiaries reside in an area where a NEW regional contractor is delivering services, they need to update their payment information so it goes to the new regional contractor. This applies if a beneficiary currently pays enrollment fees or premiums by electronic funds transfer from their checking or savings account, debit card or credit card. The new regional contractor will contact beneficiaries with instructions on how to update their payment information.

TRICARE has sent out notice that beneficiaries must proactively update their payment information to make sure payments start going to the new regional contractor, NOT to the old regional contractor. This action will help avoid TRICARE disenrollment.

Are you ready for the upcoming TRICARE changes? The best way to prepare is to update your information in DEERS, sign up for TRICARE benefit updates and visit <https://tricare.mil/changes>

**“We Proudly Support our
Military Personnel & Families”**

American Public
WE NEED YOUR HELP!

**Vietnam War veterans who served in
Harbors and Off-Shore Vietnam
NO LONGER receive Health Care for
cancers and other diseases caused by
exposure to Agent Orange Herbicide.**

WE NEED OUR VA BENEFITS!

**Please Contact Your Senators and
Representatives
(Call, Write, Email, Fax, or Visit)**

ASK THEM TO PASS

HR-299 AND S-422



Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association
PO Box 1035 Littleton, CO 80160-1035
Navy@BlueWaterNavy.org



SVAC Holds Hearing on Suicide Prevention

VA Secretary Dr. Robert Shulkin recently testified before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee about suicide prevention and the VA's "#BeThere" campaign. The new campaign encourages veterans and their families to reach out and offer support to someone who may be struggling with mental health conditions. During the hearing, Secretary Shulkin declared the VA wants to hire 1,000 additional mental health professionals to ensure veterans have timely access to mental health care. Shulkin identified the VA's long hiring process and bureaucratic human resources requirements as barriers to hiring more high-quality mental health care professionals.

If you received this newsletter as a courtesy or a forward from a friend or relative, you can sign up to receive in your E-mail every week.



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Riverside County, CA

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Serving those who served!

Please pass on to all your Veteran Friends and Family!

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San Francisco	80,134
Twitter	44
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US Senators & Staff	119
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