

VFW SERVICE OFFICER NOTES FOR THE TEN-HUT NOVEMBER 2020

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) is for eligible Veterans who have incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975 or on or after September 11, 2001. This program provides resources, education, support, a financial stipend, and health insurance (if eligible), beneficiary travel (if eligible), to caregivers of eligible Veterans.

Veterans may be eligible for this clinical program if they:

Sustained or aggravated a serious injury serious injury (now includes serious illness) in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975 or on or after 9/11/2001; and meet both of the following criteria to be eligible for PCAFC. Among other applicable eligibility criteria, the Veteran must:

- a. Have a single or combined service-connected disability rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of 70% or more. This requirement is included in the definition of “serious injury;” and
- b. Be in need of personal care services (requiring in-person personal care services) for a minimum of six continuous months based on any one of the following:

- an inability to perform an activity of daily living (ADL)
- a need for supervision, protection, or instruction.

How do I apply for this program?

You and the Veteran will need to apply together and participate in an application process to determine if you're eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. You'll both need to sign and date the application and answer all questions for your role. Detailed information can be found at:

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/support_benefits.asp

Veterans, Military Retirees to See a 1.6 % Cost-of-Living Boost in Benefits

Military retirees and veterans benefits recipients will see a [1.6 percent cost-of-living boost](#) in their payouts starting in December, nearly half of the increase [they received last year](#).

Mammograms Can Save Your Life

You may be tempted to put off your mammogram this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. Doing so may put you at serious risk. During the pandemic, breast cancer [diagnoses have dropped](#) by 51.8%.

Take precautions now and keep your mammogram appointment. [Most Veterans](#) receive mammograms through VA. Discover more about mammograms and how VA and My

HealthVet can help you. The risk of breast cancer increases with age. That's why it's crucial for [all women over 45](#) to get regular mammograms.

Did You Get Your Flu Shot Yet?

You probably read in the Winona papers that the Fluzone (extra strength flu shot for people over 65-years-of-age) is currently not available. Keep checking at: www.winonahealth.org. Getting a flu shot is an essential part of protecting your health and your family's health this year. Reducing the spread of illnesses like the flu is more important than ever.

Remember, **the flu shot is covered for people with Medicare** from providers that accept Medicare or your Medicare plan. You can safely get a flu shot at multiple locations, like at your doctor's office or pharmacy.

Continue to Do Your Part to Slow Spread of COVID-19

By now, you've probably adjusted to life during COVID-19. Staying away from large gatherings and wearing a mask in public is the new normal. You've also learned how to safely access your TRICARE benefit. But now isn't the time to let your guard down. These habits will be important to remember—especially as some restrictions begin to ease in your community.

Learn more at:

https://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/BenefitUpdates/Archives/10_06_2020_Continue_Do_Your_Part_Slow_Spread_of_COVID19

COVID-19 K-12 Distance Learning Support Grant Available

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is now offering a COVID-19 K-12 Distance Learning Support Grant to help mitigate the negative financial impact a family experiences by implementing their school district's distance learning or hybrid learning plans by providing a one-time grant.

Applicants for the COVID-19 K-12 Distance Learning Support Grant must demonstrate a negative financial impact on or after August 1, 2020. A closing date for the K-12 Distance Learning Support Grant will depend on the availability of funding, but not later than June 30, 2021.

More information is available at MinnesotaVeteran.org/COVIDRelief

Financial Assistance for Veterans Impacted by COVID-19

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) has had a tremendous response to the COVID-19 Disaster Relief and Special Needs Grants for Minnesota Veterans. We began accepting applications on Monday, April 6 and have received over 4,700 applications to date. We are striving to complete application processing as soon as possible.

Eligible applicants must be:

1. A Veteran or the surviving spouse of a deceased Veteran as defined by MN Statute 197.447;
2. A Minnesota Resident, and;
3. Negatively financial impacted by COVID-19.

It's easy to apply:

- Veterans can apply for the Disaster Relief Grant on our website.
- To apply for the Special Needs Grant, Veterans should work with their County Veterans Service Officer.

Applications will continue to be accepted until the \$6.2 million in funds are depleted. Veterans can apply through their County Veterans Service Officers or online at MinnesotaVeteran.org/COVIDRelief

VA Can Assist Veterans Resolve Community Care Debts

VA's Office of Community Care (OCC) contact center can help veterans fix issues with credit reports or debt collection actions that are the result of an authorized VA community care claim. Once a veteran contacts VA's OCC contact center, with their information regarding debt collection, staff will work one-on-one with the veteran to research and resolve collection-specific issues. Contact the VA OCC at:

https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/about_us/contacts.asp

Complete the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry

All veterans who served in eligible locations should include their information in the [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits Registry](#). Participation in the registry is very important as it will allow VA to track burn pit exposure and draw inferences regarding associated adverse health effects. Exposure to burn pits may be associated with respiratory conditions such as asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD). Recently, VA stated that veterans with underlying respiratory conditions [may be at greater risk](#) for developing complications related to COVID-19. Service members and veterans who have already signed up for the registry should make sure that their contact information, phone number, address, and email are up-to-date.

VA Notifies Veterans of Compromised Data

The VA Office of Management announced on Sept. 14 that there had been a personal information data breach of approximately 46,000 veterans. VA's Financial Services Center (FSC) is alerting the affected individuals, including the next-of-kin of those who are deceased. The department is also offering access to credit monitoring services, at no cost, to those whose social security numbers may have been compromised. Veterans are advised to follow the instructions in the letter from FSC to protect their data. There is no action needed from veterans if they did not receive an alert by mail, as

their personal information was not involved in the incident. Any questions should be directed to the FSC Customer Help Desk at VAFSCVeteransSupport@va.gov, or by mail to the VA FSC Help Desk, Attn: Customer Engagement Center, P.O. Box 149971, Austin, TX 78714-9971.

Be Smart: Get Screened

As you get older, you're at greater risk for certain illnesses and diseases. While you can't stop aging, you can detect and prevent illnesses and diseases early on. Screenings can help find them so they can be more successfully treated. Most screenings are based on age, sex, health, and family history. Mammograms and prostate exams are just two options you may have heard about that can screen for cancer, but there are many different recommended screenings for both women and men. Learn the importance of screenings and immunizations at:

<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthvet/ss20170419-get-checked-recommended-screenings-and-immunizations>.

VA Vision Care

If you qualify for VA health care benefits, you may be able to get some or all of your vision care through VA. Find out more about our vision care. Find out more at: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/about-va-health-benefits/vision-care/>.

Cancer: Diagnosing and Preventing

Know the risks - early detection is important

Cancer can be scary. The disease is linked to genetics, the environment, your age, and pure chance. But, since most cancers show no symptoms, regular screenings are highly encouraged. These screenings increase your likelihood of catching cancer early when it's easier to treat and cure. Learn more about the various types of cancer at: <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthvet/ss20180619-cancer-diagnosing-and-preventing>.

Are You in Need of or Have Excess Medical Assistance Devices?

The Winona County Veterans Service Office has a new Chevrolet pickup truck. This truck is equipped with a tailgate Tommy Lift for items too heavy to lift and ideal for cumbersome/awkward devices as wheelchairs, walkers, etc. Winona County is very fortunate to have this vehicle. This pickup truck is used for picking up and delivering medical devices to/from veterans' residences. Call Jerry Obieglo at: 507.457.6455, 507.457.6458 or John Heaser at: 507.457.6528.



Oh, by the way. Jerry and John are looking for some volunteer drivers to provide these services.