



**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

1519 W. 51st Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105  
 Phone: (605) 332-4366 Fax: (605) 338-5489  
 E-Mail: [admin@daivs.sd.org](mailto:admin@daivs.sd.org)  
 SD.dav.org  
[www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org)

**TO: DEPARTMENT OFFICERS, DEC, CHAPTERS, AND AUXILIARY UNITS**  
**FROM: DAN FRANCIS, COMMANDER AND MARTY PENNOCK, ADJUTANT**  
**SUBJECT: NOVEMBER 2022 DAV MONTHLY REPORT**  
**DATE: NOVEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS MONTHLY REPORT IS TO BE PRESENTED AT YOUR MONTHLY MEETING EITHER BY THE DEC REPRESENTATIVE OR ADJUTANT. YOU SHOULD TRY TO HIGHLIGHT EACH OF THESE ARTICLES FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP MEETING. YOU MAY USE ANY OF THESE ARTICLES FOR YOUR CHAPTER NEWSLETTER.**

**1. POPULATION SUMMARY:** Life membership discount running through March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. (Flyer attached)

**Population Summary**

Extraction Date: 11/01/2022 1:55:45 PM

DCU No	DCU Name	Current Year					Goal				
		Total Trial	Total Part Life	Total Full Life	Total Paid Members	Total Members	Goal	Goal %	Goal Variance		
40	Department of South Dakota	0	99	4,458	4,557	4,557	4,553	97.98%	-8		
1	Arthur H. Muehler #1	0	30	1,918	1,948	1,948	1,962	99.26%	-14		
3	Rapid City #3	0	29	1,217	1,246	1,246	1,270	98.11%	-24		
4	Coyote State #4	0	25	60	85	85	85	100.00%	0		
6	Watertown #6	0	2	173	175	175	184	95.11%	-9		
11	Northern Hills #11	0	9	352	361	361	370	97.30%	-10		
13	Swanson O'Connor #13	0	0	270	270	270	276	97.74%	-9		
18	Osage #18	0	3	214	217	217	227	95.59%	-10		
19	Milbank-Asseson #19	0	1	86	87	87	97	89.69%	-10		
22	Brookings #22	0	0	139	139	139	148	93.92%	-9		
27	Davison County #27	0	0	29	29	29	36	80.56%	-7		
<b>Active</b>		<b>At Large</b>		<b>Merged</b>		<b>On Hold</b>		<b>Restricted</b>		<b>Suspended</b>	
9		1		3		0		1		0	

**2. BALLOT NUMBERS 4 and 5:** Passed - Approval of 2022 Fall Conference Minutes – Ballot 4, and the Approval of 2024 and 2025 DAV Dept of SD Conventions – Ballot 5, venue locations.

**3. SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COUNCIL:** The next SDVC meeting will take place November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at the DAV Headquarters in Sioux Falls, SD. A Legislative Roundtable will take place immediately after the meeting. Flyer attached – November 16 in Sioux Falls, November 17 in Watertown, November 18 in Pierre, and November 19 in Spearfish.

**4. CHAPTER OFFICERS; DEC FORMS; FINANCIAL REPORTS; AND FORM 990 OR 990-N E-POSTCARD:**

Adjutant Pennock requests Chapter Officers Report to DAV Department Headquarters and DAV National within ten days after the installation of newly elected or appointed Chapter Officers; the Annual Financial Report to DAV Department Headquarters and DAV National by September 30, 2022; and Form 990 or 990N to Department Headquarters by November 15, 2022.

Chapters 3 has been given an extension by DAV National for its AFR.

**5. GRAND FALLS CASINO-DONATION IN NOVEMBER AND DAV BOOTH:** The Grand Falls Casino will host the DAV for the month of November with donations going to the DAV. The Casino would like the DAV to provide a DAV information booth on Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>. A sign-up sheet for volunteers is available. The DAV Sioux Falls Chapter No. 1 received \$5,030.00 in 2019, \$3,050.00 in 2020, and 4,861.00 in 2021. Flyer attached.

**6. CHRISTMAS MORNING AT THE SIOUX FALLS VA MEDICAL CENTER:** The DAV, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Vietnam Veterans of America members will host the VA Patients Christmas Party at the VA Medical Center, on Christmas morning, December 25<sup>th</sup>. You are invited to assist with providing our Christmas gifts of Veterans baseball caps, socks, gloves, and DAV Coffee mugs. Please join us to wrap gifts and drop them off at the entrance of the VA Medical Center before Christmas.

**7. 727<sup>TH</sup> PRESENTED \$47,000.00 TO THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) HOSPITAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK FROM 727<sup>TH</sup>/DAV 18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL POKER RUN**

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) of South Dakota would like to say a "BIG THANK YOU" to the 727th Transportation Committee for hosting the outstanding 18th Annual Charity Poker Run which provided a donation of \$47,000.00 to the DAV Hospital Transportation Network which provides FREE rides for Veterans to the VA Health Care Systems and VA Clinics. This year's donation of \$47,000.00 brings the total to \$396,000.00 in eighteen years from the Annual Poker Run.

The DAV thinks the community of Brookings and the citizens of South Dakota should be honored to have patriotic citizens such as the 727th Transportation Committee who will assist our Veterans who served and sacrificed for our great country.

In FY 2021-2022 the program in South Dakota provided free rides for 3,727 Veterans, 12,604 Volunteer hours by our drivers, and 248,784 miles driven. Since the Transportation Program began we have provided FREE rides for 430,960 Veterans, 848,451 Volunteer hours by our drivers, and 19,776,585 miles driven.

We are very proud, as the DAV Hospital Transportation Network was started in Sioux Falls in 1984 and was picked up in 1987 as a DAV National Program. Currently we have twenty-six (26) vehicles in South Dakota with locations in: Aberdeen, Belle Fourche, Brookings, Fort Thompson, Huron, Lake Andes, Lemmon, Madison, Milbank, Miller, Mitchell, Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, Redfield, Rosebud, Dakota Dunes, Sioux Falls (3 vehicles), Sisseton, Sturgis, Yankton, Watertown, Webster, and Winner.

We have two Hospital Transportation Service Coordinators located at the VA Black Hills Health Care System at the VA Ft. Meade and VA Medical Center in Sioux Falls. The drivers are **ALL VOLUNTEERS** and do a **SUPER JOB FOR OUR VETERANS**.

The DAV Hospital Transportation Network is a **WIN-WIN** for our "**HEROES – OUR VETERANS!**" **A BIG THANK YOU TO THE 727TH TRANSPORTATION.**

**8. DAV HOSPITAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK:** The 2022 DAV Transportation Network and Columbia Trust Grant Application has not been received yet.

To date the following have contacted the Department about purchasing vehicles in 2022: Winner and Mobridge.

**9. DAV AND AUXILIARY 2023 ANNUAL DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA CONVENTION:**

Chapter 1 has approved to use the Chapter Home for the venue to host the 2023 DAV Department and Auxiliary State Convention, May 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Convention booklet advertisement was sent out in the Department October 2022 quarterly newsletter.

A block of rooms has been secured at the Comfort Inn and Suites, 3721 W. Avera Drive, in Sioux Falls. A cutoff date has been set for April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

The DAV Department of South Dakota Fall Conference delegates approved the following:

Raffle sales will take place starting December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Chapters must have donations for the raffle sent obligated to the Department by **November 1<sup>st</sup>**. DAV Department of South Dakota has received permission from both the State of South Dakota Department of Revenue and DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess to sell raffle tickets.

**Raffle Prizes to Date**

- \$1,000.00 DAV AHM Chapter No. 1
- \$1,000.00 DAV Northern Hills Chapter No. 11
- \$ 200.00 DAV Swanson – O’Connor Chapter No. 13
- \$ 500.00 DAV Milbank-Sisseton Chapter No. 19
- \$ 100.00 DAV Brookings Chapter No. 22
- \$ 250.00 DAV Davison County Chapter No. 27
- \$ 100.00 Korean War Display, LLC
- \$ 100.00 Gene Murphy AHM Chapter No. 1
- Vietnam Vets: Still Coming Home Book AHM Chapter No. 1
- Box with Wine, Glasses, Cutting Boards, Cheese, Cracker Gene Murphy

Chapters need to start looking at future award submissions and any nominations for State Officers positions for 2023-2024.

**10. 2023 MID-WINTER CONFERENCE: February 26- March 1, 2023 (Tentative, pending)**

Crystal Gateway Marriott  
1700 Richmond Highway (formerly Jefferson Davis Highway)  
Arlington, VA 22202  
*Telephone: 1.800.266.9432 or 1.703.920.3230*  
Group Name: Disabled American Veterans  
\$210 Single/Double

### **11. 2023 NATIONAL CONVENTION: AUGUST 5-8, 2023**

Harrah's Atlantic City

777 Harrah's Blvd.

Atlantic City, NJ 084011

\$149 Single/ Double

Phone: 888-516-2215 (8am-2am EST, 7 days a week)

Group name: DAV 2023 National Convention

Group code: SH07DV3 (*All callers will be asked for this code but can also book by saying "DAV 2023 National Conv"*)

### **12. DONATIONS TO SERVICE AND LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS**

A message from Past DAV Department of South Dakota Commander Dick Turnwall – flyers attached.

### **13. SDDVA ANNUAL BENEFIT SCHOOL**

The SDDVA annual benefit school will be held in Sioux Falls September 5-7, 2023.

The training aspect of the conference will be held at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street).

Lodging has been secured at the Sheraton (1211 N. West Avenue). The Sheraton will be honoring the \$75 state rate. Ask for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs block of rooms. Room block is only open until August 7, 2023.

### **14. OTHER INFORMATION:**

- H.R. 8750, the Expanding Veterans' Option for long Term Care Act
- Legislative Update: Historic VA COLA increase of 8.7%
- PACT Act Signed into Law
- PACT Act VA Health Care Eligibility
- 2022 Pact Act: Understanding Health Care Eligibility and Benefits (5 Pages)
- PACT Act and Gulf War, Post-9-11 Era Veterans
- PACT Act: Vietnam Era Veterans Cold War Era Veterans
- VA Received Nearly 113,000 Claims Under PACT Act
- TRICARE Changes Forces 15,000 Pharmacies Out of Network
- Gulf War Illness has Baffled Scientists. Until Now
- Notes from SDDVA Healthcare Partners Taskforce - September 22, 2022, Sioux Falls
- DAV 2022-2023 National Commander Interim Committees
- VA Extends Delay of HER Rollout Until June 2023 to Address 'Outstanding Issues'
- VA Health Care Enrollment Expo! – VA Black Hills Invites You.

**15. DAV DEPARTMENT BULLETIN DEADLINE:** January 2023 BULLETIN: Submittal deadline: December 10<sup>th</sup>. Email all reports, photos, stories to: [adj@davsd.org](mailto:adj@davsd.org).

Department Officers, Chapters, Auxiliary State Officers, and Auxiliary Units who wish to place an article in DAV Department of South Dakota Quarterly Bulletin should submit them by the deadline date – stated below. The DAV Department Officers WILL BE RESPONSIBLE for submitting their own articles.

**16. DAV DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA QUARTERLY BULLETIN & MONTHLY REPORT:**

If any of the DAV and Auxiliary members would like to receive the DAV Department Quarterly Bulletin and Monthly Report, please send your e-mail address to DAV Headquarters:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

You can either mail or e-mail the information to:  
DAV Headquarters, 1519 W. 51st Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105  
E-mail: [admin@davsd.org](mailto:admin@davsd.org)





**Disabled American Veterans**  
**Department of South Dakota**  
**\$100 DISCOUNT LIFE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM**  
**\$20 DISCOUNT FOR NEW PARTIAL MEMBERS**  
**FY 2022-2023**  
**July 1, 2022 – March 15, 2023**

**\$20 DISCOUNT FOR PARTIAL LIFE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM**

DAV new partial life members would be offered a \$20.00 discount (\$10 discount from your local DAV Chapter and \$10.00 discount from DAV Department) when paying \$20.00 to sign up as a new DAV member to the Disabled American Veterans. Life Membership is obtained on the installment basis with this minimum \$40.00 down payment and the balance set up on a quarterly payment plan.

AGE	LIFE AMOUNT	MEMBER PAYS	CHAPTER PAYS	STATE DEPARTMENT PAYS
Age 79 and Under	\$ 300.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00
Age 80 and Over	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE

**\$100 DISCOUNT FULL LIFE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM**

New eligible disabled veterans would be offered a \$100.00 discount (\$50.00 discount from your local DAV Chapter and \$50.00 discount from DAV Department) when paying for DAV Full Life Membership.

AGE	LIFE AMOUNT	MEMBER PAYS	CHAPTER PAYS	STATE DEPARTMENT PAYS
Age 79 and Under	\$ 300.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Age 80 and Over	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE

**All DAV membership applications should be mailed to:**

DAV Department Headquarters  
 1519 W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street  
 Sioux Falls, SD 57105

DAV Headquarters will bill each DAV Chapter that is participating each month for their Chapter's share.

If you have any questions, please contact DAV Department Headquarters. Thank you.

**DAV LIFE MEMBERSHIP UNTIL MARCH 15, 2023**  
**A GREAT DEAL FOR PARTIAL AND NEW LIFE MEMBERS!**

After a minimum down payment of \$40 toward your life membership, you will receive your membership card. The remaining balance is paid in interest-free installments. All dues payments received are applied to your life membership account. Apply online for as little as \$10 with a recurring monthly credit card payment at [dav.org/membership/join-dav](http://dav.org/membership/join-dav). Thank you for becoming a member!

DAV life membership = \$300 | Veterans age 80 or older = FREE  
Life membership payments are non-refundable and are not tax deductible.



## Receipt

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Payment Type  
 Single payment (cash/check/credit card)  Full payment (\$300)  Down payment (\$40)  
 Monthly Recurring Payments (credit card only)  
Select Monthly Payment Amount:  \$10  \$20  \$30  \$50  \$100  
Amount Paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Payment Method  Cash  Check  Money Order  Credit Card  
Rec'd by \_\_\_\_\_  
signature

## Membership Application (Membership eligibility information is on the back of this application.)

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ M.I. \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Gender:  Male  Female  
Applicant's Phone No. (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Date Enlisted \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Date Discharged \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year Month Day Year Month Day Year  
Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Service-Connected Disability \_\_\_\_\_ % Receiving:  VA Comp.  VA Pension  Service Retirement  
Check all that apply:  Amputee  Visually Impaired  Hearing Impaired  POW  Purple Heart  Gassed  Agent Orange  PTSD  Gulf War Illness  TBI  Burn Pit  
Department Preference \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter Preference \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor's ID No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsor's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor's Phone No. (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor's ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Amt. Paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Payment Type:  Check # \_\_\_\_\_  Cash  MO  Visa  MC  Discover  AmEx  
 Single payment:  Full payment (\$300)  Down payment (\$40)  
 Monthly Recurring Payments (credit card only):  
Select Monthly Payment Amount:  \$10  \$20  \$30  \$50  \$100  
Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_  
Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL APPLICATION & PAYMENT:  
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
1519 W. 51ST STREET  
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57105**

## DAV Membership Eligibility

Membership is open to any veteran wounded, gassed, injured or disabled in the line of duty during time of war and to persons who have been awarded expeditionary or campaign medals. "During time of war" shall include the following periods of service:

World War II and Korea .....	09/16/40-01/31/55
Vietnam and other engagements .....	01/31/55-10/14/76
Iranian Crisis, Lebanon Crisis, Invasion of Grenada, Invasion of Panama and other engagements .....	11/04/79-01/31/90
Persian Gulf Crisis, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan and other engagements .....	08/02/90-until terminated by Presidential Proclamation or Congressional resolution

The requirement "during time of war" may also be met if it is determined that the applicant's wound, injury or disability was incurred:

- 1) at any time as a direct result of armed conflict.
- 2) while engaged in extra-hazardous service under conditions simulating war.
- 3) while the United States was engaged in any war.

Please let DAV know if you were awarded any of the medals listed below. This information will only be used for demographic purposes, and to potentially inform our members about issues related to their specific military experience.

### Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM).

Campaign or Expedition	Inclusive Dates
<input type="checkbox"/> Berlin	08/14/61-06/01/63
<input type="checkbox"/> Congo	07/14/60-09/01/62, 11/23/67-11/29/67
<input type="checkbox"/> El Salvador	01/01/81-02/01/92
<input type="checkbox"/> Laos	04/19/61-10/07/62
<input type="checkbox"/> Lebanon	07/01/58-11/01/58, 06/01/83-12/01/87
<input type="checkbox"/> Mayaguez Operation	05/15/75-05/15/75
<input type="checkbox"/> Operation in the Libyan Area (Operation Eldorado Canyon)	04/12/86-04/17/86
<input type="checkbox"/> Panama (Operation Just Cause)	12/20/89-01/90
<input type="checkbox"/> Persian Gulf Operation (Operation Earnest Will)	07/24/87-08/01/90
<input type="checkbox"/> Quemoy and Matsu Island	08/23/58-06/01/63
<input type="checkbox"/> Taiwan Straits	08/23/58-01/01/59
<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam (Including Thailand)	07/01/58-08/03/65

### Navy Expeditionary Medal and Marine Corps Medal for these operations.

Campaign or Expedition	Inclusive Dates
<input type="checkbox"/> Cuba	01/03/61-10/23/62
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian Ocean/Iran	11/21/79-10/20/81
<input type="checkbox"/> Iranian/Yemen/Indian Ocean	12/08/78-06/06/79
<input type="checkbox"/> Lebanon	08/20/82-05/31/83
<input type="checkbox"/> Liberia (Operation Sharp Edge)	08/05/90-02/21/91
<input type="checkbox"/> Libyan Area	01/20/86-06/27/86
<input type="checkbox"/> Panama	04/01/80-12/19/86, 02/01/87-07/23/88
<input type="checkbox"/> Persian Gulf	02/01/87-07/23/87
<input type="checkbox"/> Thailand	05/16/63-08/10/63
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese Service Medal (Extended)	09/02/45-04/01/57
<input type="checkbox"/> Navy Occupation of Austria	05/08/45-10/25/54
<input type="checkbox"/> Navy Occupation of Trieste	05/08/45-10/25/54
<input type="checkbox"/> Units of the Sixth Fleet (Navy)	05/09/45-10/25/55



# SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COUNCIL TO HOST LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLES

The South Dakota Veterans Council will be hosting four legislative roundtables this Fall. Roundtable logistics are as follows:

- Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at the Disabled American Veterans Headquarters, 1519 West 51<sup>st</sup> Street, in Sioux Falls at 12:00 pm (CST). Lunch will be served.
- Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at American Legion Post 17, 1412 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW, in Watertown at 12:00 pm (CST).
- Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup> at the American Legion Post 8, 520 S. Pierre Street, in Pierre at 2:00 pm (CST).
- Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5860, 3102 E. Fairgrounds Loop, in Spearfish at 10:00 am (MT).

These roundtables afford the Council to review their legislative agenda with legislators; as well as hear from legislators what issues they might be bringing forth during the upcoming legislative session.

The South Dakota Veterans Council is a collaboration of representatives from the American Legion Department of South Dakota, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, and the Paralyzed Veterans of America.



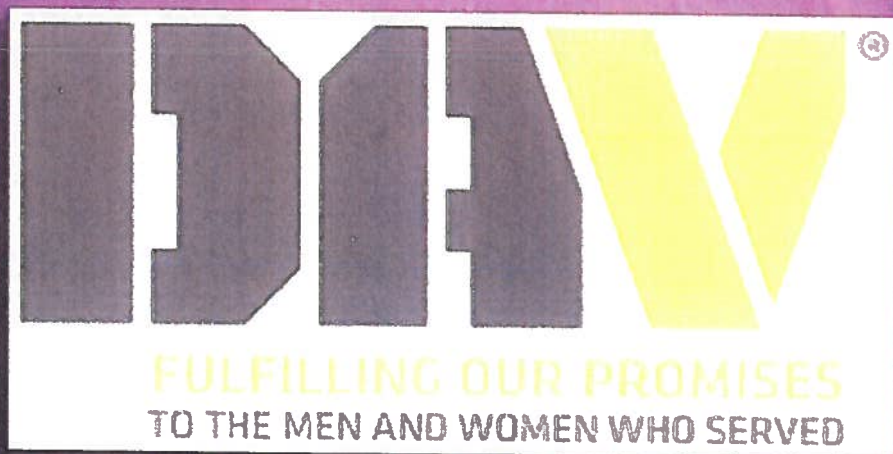
## Legislative ROUNDTABLE

# GIVING BACK

*at Grand Falls!*

Simply donate \$10 at Grand Falls Casino & Golf Resort® to benefit Disabled American Veterans and receive \$10 in Free Slot Play. Donations are made at the Resort Club.

**DONATE**  
**NOVEMBER 1 THRU 30**



 **GRAND FALLS**  
CASINO & GOLF RESORT®

Limit \$10 Free Slot Play per person per day. Donations accepted only at the Resort Club during Resort Club hours. Must be a Resort Club member to redeem. Bet with your head, not over it. NEED HELP? Call 1.800.BETS.OFF.



**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

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Phone (605) 332-6866 Fax (605) 338-5489  
E-Mail: Admin@davsd.org  
SD.dav.org  
www.dav.org

Dear DAV Leaders in South Dakota,

The DAV Headquarters in South Dakota have received the following prizes for the 2023 DAV South Dakota Convention Raffle:

- \$1,000.00 DAV AHM Chapter No. 1
- \$1,000.00 DAV Northern Hills Chapter No. 11
- \$ 200.00 DAV Swanson – O'Connor Chapter No. 13
- \$ 500.00 DAV Milbank-Sisseton Chapter No. 19
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- \$ 100.00 Korean War Display, LLC
- \$ 100.00 Gene Murphy
- Vietnam Vets: Still Coming Home Book AHM Chapter No. 1
- Box with Wine, Glasses, Cutting Boards, Cheese, Cracker Gene Murphy

The DAV still invites Chapters, Auxiliary Units, members, businesses, and corporations to donate prizes for the 2023 DAV Convention Raffle Project. Please contact the DAV Headquarters in Sioux Falls, to let us know what is being donated.

Thank you for your assistance towards the DAV Department of South Dakota Service Programs and Hospital Transportation Network. These programs assist our members and Chapters in South Dakota.

Marty Pennock  
DAV Adjutant

Gene Murphy  
DAV Treasurer



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SD.dav.org  
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## **DONATIONS TO SERVICE AND LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS**

*By Dick Turnwall, Chairman of Income Research Committee*

As your Department Chairman of Income Research Committee, I ask you to consider a donation to the DAV Department Service and Legislative Programs of your first month's COLA increase. This year 2023 the Cost-of-Living Adjustment was 8.7% beginning January 1, 2023. All the donated funds will be used for assisting the Services for Veterans and Legislative Support for our Veterans. In FY 2022 we received donation of \$3,885.67 from seventeen (17) members from their first month's compensation check.

Chairman Turnwall invites ALL MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE. Your support would be very appreciated by the Disabled American Veterans of South Dakota. THANK YOU for your commitment and support.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
AMOUNT OF DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Send all remittance payable to:  
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
1519 W. 51<sup>ST</sup> ST.  
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57105**

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
AMOUNT OF DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Send all remittance payable to:  
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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
AMOUNT OF DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Send all remittance payable to:  
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
1519 W. 51<sup>ST</sup> ST.  
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57105**



## Information Alert

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### KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO AMERICA'S VETERANS

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Historic VA COLA increase of 8.7%

October 13, 2022

On October 10, the president signed into law H.R. 7846, *the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2022*, which authorizes a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for veterans receiving Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation, clothing allowance, and survivors receiving dependency indemnity compensation payments.

The VA adjusts veterans' monthly disability compensation amounts based on the yearly change in the cost of living as determined by the Social Security Administration. The recently announced 8.7% COLA will increase the amount paid to veterans and their survivors effective December 2022, and will be reflected in January 2023 compensation payments.

In 1983, the COLA was over 7%. This year's COLA of 8.7% is the largest increase in over 50 years. The new VA compensation rates are not available yet, but [click here](#) to view the VA's website, where they will be posted soon.

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**No action needed.**



## A JOINT MESSAGE FROM DAV and the DAV Auxiliary

October 18, 2022

H.R. 8750, the Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act

H.R. 8750, the Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act, seeks to assess the effectiveness of providing assisted living services to eligible veterans.

Currently, the VA provides home-based primary care services, which is care provided by a qualified care specialist at the veteran's own home. The VA also provides 24-hour care and supervision by skilled nurses and nursing aides at community living centers (CLC) for veterans who can't be cared for at home. However, more support and services are needed for those veterans whose required level of care falls between intermittent home-based supportive services and an extended care skilled nursing facility.

Assisted living services can benefit veterans with certain conditions, such as a moderate traumatic brain injury, who may need help with daily care, but not as much help as a nursing home or a CLC provides. Exact arrangements can vary, but assisted living residents usually live in their own apartments or rooms and share common areas. They have access to supportive services, including up to three meals a day; assistance with personal care; help with medications, housekeeping and laundry; 24 hour on-site staff; and generally some social and recreational activities.

The Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act requires the VA to implement a three-year pilot program to provide assisted living services in six geographically diverse areas. Veterans who would be eligible to participate are those who are already receiving nursing home level care paid for by the VA, are eligible for such care from the VA, or exceed the requirements for domiciliary care paid for by the VA but do not meet the requirements for nursing home level care paid for by the VA.

This bill would also require the VA to report on the cost of care at each assisted living facility, including an analysis of any cost savings by the VA when compared to the cost of nursing home care, feedback from participants in the pilot program, and recommendations on whether the model studied in the pilot program should be continued or adopted throughout the Department.

DAV strongly supports the Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act, in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 022, which calls for legislation to improve the VA's program of long-term services and supports for service disabled veterans. We are calling on all DAV members and supporters to contact their Representative and urge them to co-sponsor and support H.R. 8750.

Thank you for all you do for America's veterans and their families.

[Take Action!](#)

# PACT Act signed into law

BY MATT SAINTSING

SEPTEMBER 15, 2022



The Honoring our PACT Act is the biggest toxic exposure veterans bill to ever be considered

Veterans exposed to harmful substances will find it easier to receive their earned benefits now that the largest and most comprehensive toxic exposure legislation ever is now law.

Signed by President Joe Biden in August, the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act (Public Law 117–168) expands health care benefits to millions of veterans of all eras—including future generations—who come into contact with noxious material while serving in uniform.

Among its many impactful provisions, the Honoring Our PACT Act will reduce bureaucratic obstacles for an estimated 3.5 million veterans who seek VA benefits due to burn pit exposures during the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and other hostile locations. The law adds nearly two dozen presumptive conditions related to burn pit exposure, meaning veterans who served in overseas locations with active burn pits no longer have to prove their exposure or establish direct service connection if diagnosed with ailments listed in the law that are known to cause such conditions.

The new law also expands medical coverage by extending, from five to 10 years, the time period that combat veterans who were discharged or released on or after Oct. 1, 2013, have for guaranteed enrollment in the VA health care system. For combat



veterans whose service was completed before that date, the law provides a one-year open enrollment period.

The signing of the PACT Act is the culmination of years of work by DAV members and advocates who lobbied Congress to keep our promise to America's veterans. In 2008, DAV brought the critical issue of burn pits to the American public's attention. DAV initiated the pilot for a Burn Pit Registry, which the Department of Veterans Affairs adopted in 2014.

For Vietnam veterans, this landmark legislation will finally make hypertension a presumptive condition for those exposed to Agent Orange, making it simpler for the VA to award benefits to them or their survivors. The law also expands all Agent Orange presumptions to cover veterans who served in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Guam, American Samoa and Johnston Atoll.

"The Honoring Our PACT Act represents a major shift in how the VA will care for veterans exposed to toxic chemicals and other hazardous substances," said DAV National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. "This legislation is another step toward ensuring this nation makes good on its promise to care for all the brave men and women who volunteer to serve their country and defend our freedom."

"No longer will our veterans exposed to harmful substances have to fight the VA for the benefits they earned in service to us all," added DAV National Commander Joe Parsetich. "This is a historic victory for veterans, and DAV is proud to have been there every step of the way in advocating for this lifesaving legislation."

Learn More Online Find updates to other major veteran legislation by joining DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network) at [DAVCAN.org](http://DAVCAN.org).



# PACT ACT VA HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY

The **PACT Act** is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. This law helps provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve.

The law **expands health care eligibility to several groups of Veterans** who may not have been eligible before and requires VA to phase in hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for any illness to three new categories of Veterans:

**Category 1:** Veterans who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity (as defined by law) while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training.



**Category 2:** Veterans assigned to a duty station in certain locations (including airspace above) on or after:



**August 2, 1990**, in Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or United Arab Emirates  
**September 11, 2001**, in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, or Yemen, or any other country determined relevant by VA

**Category 3:** Veterans who deployed in support of:



Operation Enduring Freedom    Operation Freedom's Sentinel  
Operation Iraqi Freedom    Operation New Dawn  
Operation Inherent Resolve    Resolute Support Mission

Veterans who served in these countries during specific time periods may enroll in VA health care effective on October 1, 2022.

**Republic of Vietnam**  
January 9, 1962 - May 7, 1975

**Thailand**  
Any U.S. or Royal Thai base  
January 9, 1962 - June 30, 1976

**Guam or American Samoa**  
(or in their territorial waters)  
January 9, 1962 - July 31, 1980

**Laos**  
December 1, 1965 - September 30, 1969

**Cambodia**  
at Mimot or Krek,  
Kampong Cham Province  
April 16, 1969 - April 30, 1969

**Johnston Atoll**  
(or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll)  
January 1, 1972 - September 30, 1977

Between October 1, 2022, and October 1, 2023, **Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities** after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, may enroll in VA health care.

VA will publish more specific information on the PACT Act and exposure-related disability benefits on [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT) as it becomes available.



## KEY ELIGIBILITY DATES

**AUGUST 10, 2022:**  
PACT Act signed into law.

**OCTOBER 1, 2022:**  
Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, certain provinces in Cambodia, Guam, or American Samoa (or their territorial waters), or the Johnston Atoll (or a ship that called there) during specific time periods may enroll in VA health care.

**OCTOBER 1, 2022 - OCTOBER 1, 2023:**  
Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, may enroll in VA health care.

**NOVEMBER 8, 2022:**  
Begin incorporating toxic exposure screening for enrolled Veterans.

**OCTOBER 1, 2024:**  
Phase in enrollment for Categories 1 and 2 for Veterans discharged or released August 2, 1990 - September 11, 2001.

**OCTOBER 1, 2026:**  
Phase in enrollment for Categories 1 and 2 for Veterans discharged or released September 12, 2001 - December 31, 2006.

**OCTOBER 1, 2028:**  
Phase in enrollment for Categories 1 and 2 for Veterans discharged or released January 1, 2007 - December 31, 2012.

**OCTOBER 1, 2030:**  
Phase in enrollment for Categories 1 and 2 for Veterans discharged or released January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2018.

**OCTOBER 1, 2032:**  
Phase in enrollment for Category 3 Veterans.

## Toxic Exposure Screening



Every enrolled Veteran will receive an **initial toxic exposure screening** and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Veterans not enrolled but who are eligible will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT)  
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](#)  
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)  
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/)



# 2022 PACT ACT: UNDERSTANDING HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS



## PACT ACT OVERVIEW

### What is the PACT Act? Why is it important?

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. **This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve.**

The Act (1) expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era, and (2) expands eligibility for benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances.

### What does the acronym, PACT, stand for?

Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our **Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics** (PACT) Act of 2022.

### When does the law go into effect?

While some provisions take effect at different times, VA considers the presumptive conditions established in the PACT Act to be applicable on the date the PACT Act was signed into law (August 10, 2022). **All Veterans and survivors who believe they may be entitled to benefits are encouraged to apply today.**

### What are the PACT Act key components?

- » The Act **expands and extends eligibility for VA health care** for Veterans with toxic-exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era.
- » VA **will improve the decision-making process** for determining what medical conditions will be considered for presumptive status.
- » Every enrolled Veteran will receive an initial **toxic exposure screening** and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Veterans who are not enrolled, but who are eligible to enroll, will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.
- » VA health care staff and claims processors will receive **toxic exposure-related education and training**.
- » The Act requires **research studies** on mortality of Veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War, Post-9/11 Veteran health trends, and Veteran cancer rates.
- » The Act will help VA **build a stronger, more skilled workforce** to meet the growing demand for benefits and services.
- » The Act authorizes **31 new facilities** across the country, providing greater access to VA health care.

### What is Toxic Exposure?

As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- » **AIR POLLUTANTS:** Burn pits, oil well fires, sulfur fire, sand, dust, and particulates
- » **CHEMICALS:** Agent Orange or other herbicides, burn pits, Camp Lejeune water supplies, pesticides, depleted uranium, chromium, or industrial solvents
- » **RADIATION:** Nuclear weapons testing, x-rays, or depleted uranium
- » **WARFARE AGENTS:** Chemical warfare agents, nerve agents, mustard gas, herbicide tests, and storage
- » **OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS:** Asbestos, lead, fuels, industrial solvents, radiation, vibration, noise, special paint on military vehicles, and some coolants or insulating fluids





# 2022 PACT ACT: UNDERSTANDING HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS



## PACT ACT BENEFITS



### AUGUST 10, 2022:

PACT Act signed into law.



### EFFECTIVE NOW:

Adds 20+ new presumptive conditions. Applies to benefits eligibility for Veterans and survivors.

**For Gulf War and Post-9/11 Veterans:** Brain cancer, Glioblastoma, Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type, Gastrointestinal cancer of any type, Head cancer of any type, Lymphoma of any type, Lymphomatic cancer of any type, Neck cancer, Pancreatic cancer, Reproductive cancer of any type, Kidney cancer, Melanoma, Asthma (diagnosed after service), Chronic rhinitis, Chronic sinusitis, Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis, Emphysema, Granulomatous disease, Interstitial lung disease (ILD), Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis, Sarcoidosis, Chronic bronchitis, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

**For Vietnam Veterans and other Veterans exposed to tactical herbicides, that includes two Agent Orange presumptive conditions:** Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS), High blood pressure (hypertension).



### JANUARY 1, 2023:

VBA will begin processing claims.

### What is a presumption of service connection?

VA assumes certain diseases or illnesses can be related to a Veteran's military service. **Veterans and their survivors may be eligible for benefits and health care services** for these conditions.

### What new or expanded presumptions will the Act create and when will they be in effect?

Veterans and survivors can file claims for all conditions outlined in the PACT Act immediately.

### For Gulf War and Post-9/11 Veterans, that includes:

Brain cancer, Glioblastoma, Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type, Gastrointestinal cancer of any type, Head cancer of any type, Lymphoma of any type, Lymphomatic cancer of any type, Neck cancer, Pancreatic cancer, Reproductive cancer of any type, Kidney cancer, Melanoma, Asthma that was diagnosed after service, Chronic rhinitis, Chronic sinusitis, Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis, Emphysema, Granulomatous disease, Interstitial lung disease (ILD), Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis, Sarcoidosis, Chronic bronchitis, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

### For Vietnam Veterans and other Veterans exposed to tactical herbicides, that includes two Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS), High blood pressure (also called hypertension).

### Can Veterans apply now?

VA is considering the presumptive conditions established in the PACT Act to be applicable on the date the bill becomes law. **We encourage all Veterans who believe they may be entitled to benefits to apply now.**

### What evidence must Veterans submit when filing a claim?

Veterans should submit any supportive evidence along with their claims. The PACT Act states that in processing claims for compensation related to toxic exposure, VA may **consider any Veteran record in an exposure tracking record system**. If no record exists, VA may consider the totality of circumstances. Claims processors can also assist Veterans filing a claim by gathering any identified medical evidence and requesting an examination or medical opinion to substantiate the claim.

Veterans now eligible for benefits based on a presumption of service connection are encouraged to file a claim using [VA Form 21-526EZ](#), Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits, or a supplemental claim using [VA Form 20-0995](#), Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim.

### If a Veteran was previously denied a claim for any of these conditions, what can they do?

VA will contact Veterans when a presumption of service connection is established or changed. However, Veterans previously denied a toxic-exposure related claim are encouraged to file a supplemental claim. **Once a supplemental claim is received, VA will review the claim under the new law.**

### What actions should Veterans take who have never filed a claim for one of these conditions?

Veterans who are diagnosed with one of the new presumptive conditions and meet eligibility requirements should **submit a new claim** for consideration using [VA Form 21-526EZ](#), Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits.

### How can a Veteran file a disability claim?



#### Learn more at

[VA.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/](https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/)



#### Call the Benefits hotline (for specific questions)

at 1-800-827-1000



#### Visit a VBA Regional Office

[VA.gov/benefits/offices.asp](https://www.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)



#### Work with an accredited VSO

[VA.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp](https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp)



# 2022 PACT ACT: UNDERSTANDING HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS



## PACT ACT BENEFITS

**Will family members or dependents—those who lost a loved one during the re-adjudication process or those who lost a loved one who was previously denied a claim—receive any benefits because of the PACT Act?**

Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran **may qualify for various VA benefits** due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. Benefits available include Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), Accrued, and Burial benefits.

- » **DIC** is a monthly payment for the eligible surviving spouse, dependent child(ren) or parent(s) of a deceased Veteran who died in the line of duty or from a service-connected disability or disabilities. Evidence must show the Veteran's death was caused by, or related to, the Veteran's time in service. Survivors who wish to file a claim must complete [VA Form 21P-534EZ](#) to apply for benefits and submit any supportive evidence.
- » **Accrued benefits** are one-time payments to an eligible surviving spouse, dependent child(ren) or dependent parent(s) of a deceased Veteran based on the relationship when the evidence

of record shows benefits, such as disability compensation or Veterans pension, were due but unpaid prior to the Veteran's passing. A family member of the deceased Veteran may also qualify by providing evidence of payment for the Veteran's final expenses or burial. Survivors who wish to file a claim must complete [VA Form 21P-534EZ](#) OR [VA Form 21P-601](#) to apply for benefits and submit any supportive evidence.

- » **Burial benefits** are a flat-rate payment to assist in covering eligible Veteran burial in a national cemetery and funeral costs. VA may provide burial benefits to a family member or dependent of a deceased Veteran who met the qualifications at the time of their passing. VA pays service-connected burial, non-service-connected burial, plot or interment allowance, and transportation reimbursement. Individuals who wish to file a claim must complete [VA Form 21P-530EZ](#) to apply for benefits and submit any supportive evidence.
- » **Health care through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)** may also be available for survivors and dependents of Veterans who are now, or who would have been, eligible for a service-connected disability.





# 2022 PACT ACT: UNDERSTANDING HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS



## PACT ACT HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY

### What are the new health care eligibility criteria?

The PACT Act helps advance a top VA priority: getting more Veterans into VA care by expanding eligibility for, and the availability of, health care services for Veterans. The law **expands health care eligibility** to several groups of Veterans who may not have been eligible before and requires VA to **phase in hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for any illness to three new categories** of Veterans.

- » **CATEGORY 1:** Veterans who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity (as defined by law) while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training.
- » **CATEGORY 2:** Veterans who were assigned to a duty station in (including airspace above) certain locations during specific periods of time:
  - On or after August 2, 1990, in: Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or the United Arab Emirates
  - On or after September 11, 2001, in: Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, or any other country determined relevant by VA.
- » **CATEGORY 3:** Veterans who deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve, or Resolute Support Mission.
- » **EFFECTIVE ON OCTOBER 1, 2022:** Veterans who served in the **Republic of Vietnam** (from 1/9/62–5/7/75), **Thailand** at any US or Royal Thai base (from 1/9/62–6/30/76), **Laos** (from 12/1/65–9/30/69), certain provinces in **Cambodia** (from 4/16/69–4/30/69), **Guam**, or **American Samoa** or their territorial waters (from 1/9/62–7/31/80), or the **Johnston Atoll** or a ship that called there (from 1/1/72–9/30/77) may enroll in VA health care.
- » **BETWEEN OCTOBER 1, 2022, AND OCTOBER 1, 2023:** Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war **after the Persian Gulf War** or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, may enroll in VA health care. Enrollment is free, there are no annual costs, and care may be free as well.

### PACT ACT ELIGIBILITY KEY DATES

- ★ **AUGUST 10, 2022:** PACT Act signed into law.
- ★ **October 1, 2022:** Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, certain provinces in Cambodia, Guam, or American Samoa (or their territorial waters), or the Johnston Atoll (or a ship that called there) during specific time periods may enroll in VA health care.
- ★ **OCTOBER 1, 2022 - OCTOBER 1, 2023:** Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after 11/11/98, and who were discharged or released between 9/11/01–10/1/13 may enroll in VA health care.
- ★ **NOVEMBER 8, 2022:** Begin incorporating toxic exposure screening for enrolled Veterans.
- ★ **OCTOBER 1, 2024:** Phase in enrollment for health care for Veterans identified in Categories 1 and 2 who were discharged or released August 2, 1990 - September 11, 2001.
- ★ **OCTOBER 1, 2026:** Phase in enrollment for health care for Veterans identified in Categories 1 and 2 who were discharged or released September 12, 2001 - December 31, 2006.
- ★ **OCTOBER 1, 2028:** Phase in enrollment for health care for Veterans identified in Categories 1 and 2 who were discharged or released January 1, 2007 - December 31, 2012.
- ★ **OCTOBER 1, 2030:** Phase in enrollment for health care for Veterans identified in Categories 1 and 2 who were discharged or released January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2018.
- ★ **OCTOBER 1, 2032:** Phase in enrollment for health care for Veterans identified in Category 3.



# 2022 PACT ACT: UNDERSTANDING HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS



## PACT ACT HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY

### What is a toxic exposure screening? How will it help Veterans?

Veterans will be **asked questions about potential exposure** to an open burn pit or other hazards commonly associated with military environmental exposure. This will help VA identify other potential risks for Veterans and inform future policy decisions.

### How will a Gulf War or Post-9/11 Combat Veteran's eligibility be impacted?

The PACT Act extends and expands VA health care eligibility. **All Veterans are encouraged to apply for VA health care, regardless of separation date.** VA health care eligibility depends on service history and other factors.

Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged or released:

- » Between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, will have a special enrollment period between October 1, 2022, and October 1, 2023 (if not previously enrolled in VA health care). During this one-year period, Veterans will have another opportunity to apply for enrollment. We strongly encourage them to do so to ensure health care is available now and in the future. Enrollment is free, there are no annual costs, and care may be free as well.
- » After October 1, 2013, are eligible to enroll in VA health care during the 10 year period from the most recent discharge or separation date.



### What is the Burn Pit Registry? How can a Veteran register?

The [VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#) aims to help VA **better understand potential health effects of exposures** and proactively identify health concerns Veterans can discuss with their health care providers for follow-up care.

Veterans deployed to **Southwest Asia or Egypt** after August 2, 1990, or **Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, or Uzbekistan** on or after September 11, 2001, are eligible to [participate in the registry](#).

Participation is voluntary and **cannot negatively impact VA health care access or compensation and benefits claims.** Exposure to specific airborne hazards or having related health concerns is not required to participate in the registry.

### How can a Veteran apply for VA health care?

- Apply online** at [VA.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)
- Call the toll-free hotline** at 877-222-8387  
Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET
- Mail** a completed, signed Application for Health Benefits [VA Form 10-10EZ](#)
- Bring** a completed, signed [VA Form 10-10EZ](#) to the nearest VA Medical Center or clinic.

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs


Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov)  
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](#)  
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)  
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/)




# PACT ACT & GULF WAR, POST-9/11 ERA VETERANS



**The PACT Act**, signed into law August 10, 2022, **expands health care eligibility to several groups of Veterans** who may not have been eligible before.


 Veterans who participated in a **toxic exposure risk activity** (as defined by law) while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training.

 Veterans assigned to a duty station in (including airspace above) certain locations during specific periods of time on or after:


**August 2, 1990**, in Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or United Arab Emirates

**September 11, 2001**, in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, or Yemen, or any other country determined relevant by VA

 Veterans who deployed in support of:  
Operation Enduring Freedom    Operation Iraqi Freedom  
Operation Freedom's Sentinel    Operation New Dawn  
Operation Inherent Resolve    Resolute Support Mission

 **SPECIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD:**  
Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, may enroll in VA health care **between October 1, 2022 and October 1, 2023.**



 **Toxic Exposure Screenings**  
As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- Air Pollutants    • Radiation    • Occupational Hazards
- Chemicals    • Warfare Agents


**ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022:** VA will begin incorporating toxic exposure screenings. Every Veteran enrolled for VA health care will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Eligible Veterans who have not enrolled will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.


 The PACT Act adds **20+ new presumptive conditions.** Learn more online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).


Participate in the [VA Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#) to help VA better understand potential health effects of exposures and proactively identify health concerns Veterans can discuss with their health care providers for follow-up care.


**Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran** may qualify for various VA benefits due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. More information for survivors is available online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT).

## 4 EASY WAYS TO APPLY FOR VA HEALTH CARE


 **Apply online** at [VA.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)

 **Call the toll-free hotline** at 877-222-8387 Mon – Fri, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET


 **Mail** a completed, signed Application for Health Benefits [VA Form 10-10EZ](#)


 **Bring** a completed, signed [VA Form 10-10EZ](#) to the nearest VA Medical Center or clinic.

## 4 EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH CLAIMS

 **Learn more** at [VA.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/](https://va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/)

 **Visit a VBA Regional Office** [VA.gov/benefits/offices.asp](https://va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)

 **Call the Benefits hotline** (for specific questions) at 1-800-827-1000

 **Work with an accredited VSO** [VA.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp](https://va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp)

**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT)  
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](#)  
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)  
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://va.gov/find-locations/)





# PACT ACT: VIETNAM ERA VETERANS COLD WAR ERA VETERANS



The **PACT Act**, signed into law August 10, 2022, expands health care and benefits for Vietnam era Veterans.



## PACT Act Health Care Eligibility

Veterans who served in these countries during specific time periods are eligible to enroll in VA health care effective August 10, 2022.

### Republic of Vietnam

January 9, 1962 - May 7, 1975

### Guam or American Samoa

(or in their territorial waters)  
January 9, 1962 - July 31, 1980

### Cambodia

at Mimot or Krek,  
Kampong Cham Province  
April 16, 1969 - April 30, 1969

### Thailand

Any U.S. or Royal Thai base  
January 9, 1962 - June 30, 1976

### Laos

December 1, 1965 -  
September 30, 1969

### Johnston Atoll

(or on a ship that called there)  
January 1, 1972 - September 30, 1977



## Toxic Exposure Screenings

As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- Air Pollutants
- Radiation
- Occupational Hazards
- Chemicals
- Warfare Agents

**ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022:** VA will begin incorporating toxic exposure screenings. Every Veteran enrolled for VA health care will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Eligible Veterans not enrolled Eligible Veterans who have not enrolled will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



The law **expands eligibility for health care and benefits** for Veterans who participated in **certain nuclear response or cleanup activities**.

### Enewetak Atoll

January 1, 1977 -  
December 31, 1980

### Palomares, Spain

January 17, 1966 -  
March 31, 1967

### Thule, Greenland

January 21, 1968 -  
September 25, 1968



## PACT Act Benefits

The PACT Acts adds two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

- **Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)**
- **High blood pressure (hypertension)**

**Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran may** qualify for various VA benefits due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. More information for survivors is available online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT).

## 4 EASY WAYS TO APPLY FOR VA HEALTH CARE



Apply online at  
[VA.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Call the toll-free hotline  
877-222-8387 Mon – Fri,  
8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET



Mail a completed, signed  
Application for Health Benefits  
[VA Form 10-10EZ](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)



Bring a completed, signed [VA Form 10-10EZ](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction) to the nearest VA Medical Center or clinic.

## 4 EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH CLAIMS



Learn more at  
[VA.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/](https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/)



Visit a VBA Regional Office  
[VA.gov/benefits/offices.asp](https://www.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)



Call the Benefits hotline  
(for specific questions)  
at 1-800-827-1000



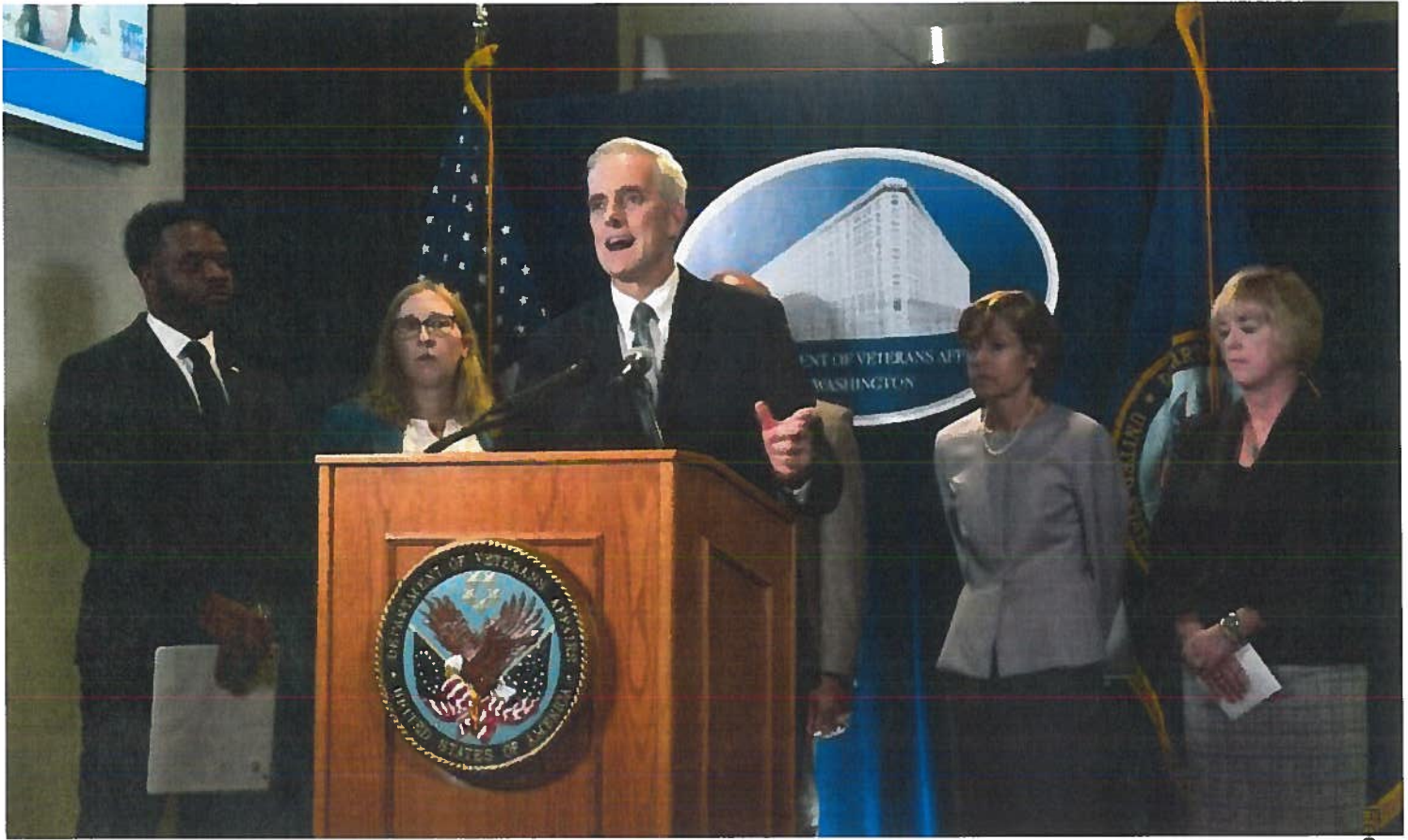
Work with an accredited VSO  
[VA.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp](https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp)

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT)  
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)  
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)  
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://www.va.gov/find-locations/)



(Photo by Sara Samora)

Feedback

# VA received nearly 113,000 claims under PACT Act, urges veterans to submit claims quickly

OCTOBER 26, 2022

The Department of Veterans Affairs has received nearly 113,000 claims under a new law that expands eligibility for health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxins, agency officials said Wednesday.

The VA said 112,949 claims by veterans have been submitted as of Oct. 22 under The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022, or PACT Act, since President Joe Biden signed it into law on Aug. 10.

More so, the agency is urging more veterans to submit claims quickly. Joshua Jacobs, the VA's senior adviser for policy and acting Veterans Benefits Administration undersecretary, said veterans should submit their claims before August so their benefits begin from the day the PACT Act became law and they will receive back pay.

“We want to make sure veterans know about it and take full advantage of the benefits that they've earned,” he said.

After Aug. 10, 2023, the PACT Act service-connection benefits will begin when they are filed.

The PACT Act seeks to provide an easier path to health care and benefits for veterans who served near open-air burn pits, which were used throughout the 1990s and the post-9/11 wars to burn garbage, jet fuel and other materials. Veterans diagnosed with cancer, respiratory issues and lung disease at young ages have blamed exposure to the toxic fumes from these pits, but the VA contended for years that there wasn't sufficient evidence to support their claims.

Additionally, the law expands health care eligibility to post-9/11 combat veterans and adds 23 conditions related to burn pits and other toxic exposures to the VA's list of service presumptions.

The expanded list includes presumptions related to Agent Orange exposure in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Guam, American Samoa and Johnston Atoll, strengthens federal research on toxic exposure, and improves the VA's resources and training.

The new law also improves the VA's workforce and its claims processing to speed up efforts to meet the needs of veterans and establish 31 new VA health care facilities in 19 states.

Feedback

In August, the VA declared all 23 health conditions outlined in the PACT Act “presumptive” from the date the bill was signed, reducing the burden on veterans or their survivors to prove that certain diseases were caused by service-related exposure to toxins and burn pits.

Jacobs said the decision should deliver more benefits to veterans faster, rather than a phased-in approach.

“It would make it harder for us to do the work that we need to for other veterans and it would be, most importantly, very frustrating for veterans who had to wait,” he said.

VA Secretary Denis McDonough said Tuesday at the agency's monthly news conference that it will begin toxic screenings on Nov. 8 for all veterans now enrolled in the VA system. The screening will consist of a questionnaire that would take five minutes.

McDonough also said more than 15,000 veterans have been screened for toxic exposure at seven different VA sites so far.

“The best thing for vets to do is to be in touch with their primary care provider and make sure that they're getting in to be seen, and in the process of being seen, that they can make sure that they get this toxic exposure screening,” McDonough said.

The law is named for Sgt. 1st Class Heath Robinson, who was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disorder and lung cancer after serving with the Army National Guard in Kosovo and Iraq, where he experienced prolonged exposure to burn pits. He died in 2020.

“We want them to know what's in the law, and we want them to know we're excited for them to come in, get the benefits that they've earned, get the health care that they earned, and ultimately feel a sense of pride that we as a country are finally able to take care of them and recognize them for the service,” Jacobs said.



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Feedback

# TRICARE changes force 15,000 pharmacies out of network

OCTOBER 26, 2022

Nearly 15,000 independent pharmacies are no longer in the TRICARE retail pharmacy network, as of Oct. 24. This is due to a change in the contract with **Express Scripts**, the Department of Defense TRICARE pharmacy contractor.

TRICARE says that over 90% of beneficiaries will still have an in-network pharmacy within 15 minutes from their home. However, the impact on veterans living in rural areas — who already face barriers in access to care — remains to be seen.

“The Defense Health Agency is confident that the new pharmacy contract maintains the quality of the TRICARE retail pharmacy network,” said Edward Norton, Jr., chief of the Pharmacy Operations Division at the Defense Health Agency. “Some independent pharmacies are leaving, but TRICARE families will continue to have access to an excellent network of pharmacies.”

Express Scripts sent letters to beneficiaries notifying them of the change. If you have a prescription at one of the pharmacies leaving the network and would like to transfer it to a new retail network pharmacy, beneficiaries may use the **Find a Pharmacy** tool to find retail network pharmacies in your area.

Here are three easy ways to move your prescription:

- Take your medicine bottles to another participating network pharmacy. The pharmacy will inform you of their process.
- Call your doctor's office. Ask them to send your prescription to your new in-network pharmacy.
- Call your new in-network pharmacy and ask them to transfer your prescription.

If you experience difficulties filling a prescription due to your pharmacy being removed from the TRICARE retail pharmacy network, The American Legion wants to hear from you by reaching out to the National Security Division email at **NationalSecurityDivision@legion.org**.

# Gulf War Illness has baffled scientists. Until now.

BY MATT SAINTSING, DAV NATIONAL

SEPTEMBER 29, 2022



The origins of Gulf War illness have eluded veterans and medical researchers for decades. But now, a new study seems to have cracked the case on how roughly 250,000 veterans were sickened during the 1991 Persian Gulf War: exposure to the chemical

weapon sarin.

While combat lasted 43 days, the harmful health effects on some who served in the conflict have stretched for decades. Known as a cluster of once inexplicable symptoms, Gulf War illness –sometimes called Gulf War syndrome– can include muscle aches, joint pain, dizziness, memory lapses, headaches, fatigue and insomnia.

For more than 30 years, federal efforts have come up short in deciphering the root causes of these puzzling symptoms. To help solve the mystery, a team of researchers at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School looked at the genes and surveys of those affected.

“Quite simply, our findings prove that Gulf War illness was caused by sarin, which was released when we bombed Iraqi chemical weapons storage and production facilities,” said Dr. Robert Haley, the study’s lead author and director of epidemiology in the internal medicine department at UT Southwestern.

“There are still more than 100,000 Gulf War veterans who are not getting help for this illness, and our hope is that these findings will accelerate the search for better treatment.”

The researchers included 1,016 veterans of the Persian Gulf War—about half of whom have Gulf War illness. They also tested for a pair of gene variants, one of which efficiently breaks down sarin and one that processes some pesticides but not sarin. Different combinations of these gene types can have varying impacts on developing Gulf War illness.

The study found that those with the least protective genotype, and who heard chemical alarms during the war, were nearly nine times more likely to develop symptoms.

Sarin was not only stored in Saddam Hussein's Iraq but also used on the country's citizens. In 1988, as the Iran-Iraq War was drawing to a close, Iraqi Kurds in Halabja, an Iraqi town about 9 miles from Iran, were targeted with a mixture of chemical weapons, one of which was sarin.

Armed with the knowledge of past use, American and coalition forces sought to eliminate the likelihood of sarin being deployed against them. However, little did they know it would result in American troops being unknowingly exposed to toxic substances once again.

"As is common with toxic exposures, we may not have immediate answers as to why groups of veterans develop certain symptoms or illnesses," said National Commander Joe Parsetich. "But there is still a need to care for those who were made ill in service and to continue pressing for research that will help us better understand those connections."



Notes from  
SDDVA Healthcare Partners Taskforce  
September 22, 2022  
Sioux Falls

SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock welcomed all in attendance and noted that the goal behind the meeting was to find ways to assist veterans and their families in obtaining and knowing their elderly care options. Partners present were as follows:

NAME	COMPANY
Brett Hoffman	SD Health Care Association
Anthony Erickson	Avera
Greg Whitlock	SDDVA
Aaron Pollard	SDDVA
Kelli Aschoff	Good Samaritan Society
Laura Wilson	Tieszen Memorial Home
Chuck Johnson	SDDVA - MJFSVH
Douglas Ekeren	Avera
Paul Weckman	Sanford Health
Gene Murphy	DAV
Tim Walsh	DAV
Anna Waltner	SD Veterans Council
Kayla Bartmann	SFVAHC
Tamara Forseth	SFVAHC
Nicholas Stanek	Sanford Health

Secretary Whitlock asked all to identify options/facilities that are available for veterans. Discussions ensued regarding long term care, foster care, home healthcare, nursing homes, adult daycare, VA facilities, and rehab care options.

Questions arose on what areas in the state have a demand for veteran long-term care.

It was suggested that we should get stats from the VA, the number of veterans, era served, age, and if service connected.

The VA indicated they are in the process of soliciting for rooms in the following counties in South Dakota: Minnehaha, Lincoln, McCook, Brown, and Codington.

It was noted that in the higher populated counties, many people can afford to pay their own way so the need for subsidized contracts, like the VA, were not needed by the respective facilities.

VA/CMS/DOH inspections of facilities were discussed.

It was noted that the VA does not currently have enough staff for home healthcare, so they are contracting with Avera and Sanford.

It was also noted that most veterans would rather stay in their home and utilize home healthcare vs. being put in a nursing home.

Programs provided by Active Generations were discussed ([activegenerations.org](http://activegenerations.org)).

It was noted that South Dakota law requires adult foster care providers to be licensed if they receive reimbursement from state funds. The purpose for licensing these homes is to ensure a safe environment.

Gene Murphy noted there was a bill in congress (S. 4169) to do a pilot program to provide assisted living services to eligible veterans. He was not sure of the status of the bill.

Rates of reimbursements were discussed.

Recent closures of Monument Health Custer Care Center, Avantara Ipswich, Good Samaritan Society Lennox, and Good Samaritan Society Deuel County were discussed.

Adult day care vs. medical foster homes were discussed and the funding options for both. It was noted that there are currently adult day care facilities in Sioux Falls and Yankton.

It was suggested that we need to get more information out to the partners about foster care and how to become a foster home.

It was also suggested that we all need to do a better job of communicating with our partners and our veterans on what is available and where. It was also suggested that we communicate to veterans the need for them to talk to their VA primary care provider about options.

It was suggested that the VA develop a one-page information piece for all partners to distribute to veterans.

Whitlock asked again, do we have enough care facilities to take care of our veterans for the coming years.

Whitlock suggested that this group meet after legislative session and discuss options and if any possible legislation is needed.

Murphy noted that the Veterans Council is looking at introducing legislation to do research on what care is needed.

Murphy also noted that veterans service organizations should be encouraged to give scholarships to students who will work with veterans and in facilities that serve veterans.

DAV 2022-2023 NATIONAL COMMANDER INTERIM COMMITTEES

Committee	Name	State
Interim Constitution & Bylaws Committee	Robert Reynolds, Chair	SC
Interim Constitution & Bylaws Committee	Gary Burns	ME
Interim Constitution & Bylaws Committee	Ron Hope	NC
Interim Constitution & Bylaws Committee	Floyd Watson	WY

Interim Membership Committee	Matthew Kempainen, Chair	WI
Interim Membership Committee	John Walker	MN
Interim Membership Committee	Shannon Sander	NY
Interim Membership Committee	Penni L. Brown	CA

Interim Legislation Committee	Al Labelle, Chair	WI
Interim Legislation Committee	Trent Dilks	MN
Interim Legislation Committee	W. Lee Gidden	OH
Interim Legislation Committee	Margarett Stubbs	MD

Interim Employment Committee	Joe Hall, Chair	ND
Interim Employment Committee	Lisa Gregory	VA
Interim Employment Committee	Stan Gunno	WA
Interim Employment Committee	Ernie Boisvert	RI

Hospital and Voluntary Services Committee	Mike Elmore, Chair	MO
Hospital and Voluntary Services Committee	Adam Greathouse	WV
Hospital and Voluntary Services Committee	Joyce Gaddis	ME
Hospital and Voluntary Services Committee	Thomas Ayala	FL

Interim POW/MIA Committee	Vince Darcangelo, Chair	PA
Interim POW/MIA Committee	Marty Pennock	SD
Interim POW/MIA Committee	Ken Weinheimer	MT
Interim POW/MIA Committee	Laymond Rose	FL

Interim Women Veterans Committee	Belinda Hill, Chair	LA
Interim Women Veterans Committee	Juliet Taylor	CT
Interim Women Veterans Committee	Kim Hubers	SD
Interim Women Veterans Committee	Sheila Pelletier	MA

Commander Staff Appointments		
National Chief Of Staff	Danny Oliver	OK
Officer Of The Day	Kevin Grantier	MT
Sergeant-At-Arms	Robert Saddoris	MN
National Convention Chairman	Johnnie Walker	NJ

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# VA Extends Delay of EHR Rollout Until June 2023 to Address 'Outstanding Issues'



SALWAN GEORGES/THE WASHINGTON POST VIA GETTY IMAGES

OCTOBER 13, 2022

**The Department of Veterans Affairs said additional time is needed to streamline deployment of its new electronic health record system to “make sure it is functioning optimally for veterans.”**

The Veterans Affairs Department announced on Thursday that it was extending the delay in the rollout of its multi-billion dollar Oracle Cerner Millennium electronic health record system until June 2023 to address continuing technical and performance issues with the software.

In a [press release](#), the VA said it “will continue to work closely with Oracle Cerner to resolve issues with the system’s performance, maximize usability for VA health care providers and ensure our nation’s veterans are served by an effective records system to support their healthcare.”

“During this ‘assess & address’ period, we will correct outstanding issues—especially those that may have patient safety implications—before restarting deployments at other VA medical centers,” the VA said, noting that the delay was needed “to address challenges with the system and make sure it is functioning optimally for veterans and for VA health care personnel.”

The EHR software’s deployment across the VA’s national network of 171 medical centers has been bogged down by system outages, cost overruns, patient safety concerns and technical issues since it first went live in 2020 at the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in Spokane, Washington. A highly critical [report](#) released by the VA Inspector General’s office in July found that the EHR system’s deployment at Mann-Grandstaff improperly routed over 11,000 clinical orders for veterans to an “unknown queue” without the knowledge of clinicians.

VA officials previously [announced in July](#) that they were delaying the rest of the scheduled rollouts of the EHR system at VA medical facilities until early 2023 to address patient safety concerns and technical issues that impeded the rollout of the new software. The VA’s [EHR deployment schedule](#), which has not been updated since the latest delay was announced, has the system scheduled to go live at 25 medical sites in the 2023 fiscal year. The VA has only deployed the new system at five medical facilities so far.

“Right now, the Oracle Cerner electronic health record system is not delivering for veterans or VA healthcare providers—and we are holding Oracle Cerner and ourselves accountable to get this right,” Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Donald Remy said in a statement. “We are delaying all future deployments of the new EHR while we fully assess performance and address every concern. Veterans and clinicians deserve a seamless, modernized health record system, and we will not rest until they get it.”

VA said it plans to use the additional time to review the five medical facilities where the EHR system has been deployed and will send letters “to every veteran who may have been impacted by these system challenges in some manner, asking that if they have experienced a delay in medications, appointments, referrals or test results, to contact VA through the call center or online.”

In addition to the delay, The Spokesman-Review [reported](#) on Thursday that the VA “confirmed it was aware of the death in late September of a patient at the VA clinic in Columbus, Ohio” that was attributed by the facility’s assistant chief of pharmacy “to incorrect information in the Oracle Cerner system.” The patient’s death is reportedly being treated as a possible [“sentinel event.”](#)

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have also excoriated the VA and Oracle Cerner over their handling of the EHR system’s deployment, with President Joe Biden signing bipartisan legislation—the [VA Electronic Health Record Transparency Act](#)—in June that gave Congress additional oversight over problems related to the system’s rollout. Congressional leaders have also balked at an estimate provided by the Institute for Defense Analyses that places the cost of the EHR system’s implementation across all of the VA’s medical centers at [more than \\$50 billion over 28 years.](#)

Following the VA’s announcement that it was extending the delay in the EHR system’s rollout, leading lawmakers on House and Senate committees overseeing the department expressed renewed concerns about efforts to address systemwide issues with the software.

Rep. Mike Bost, R-Ill., ranking member of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, told *Nextgov* in a statement that he has “long said that the new electronic health record should not be rolled out anywhere else until Oracle Cerner fixes its serious problems.”

“I am glad to see that the secretary and his team agree with me,” Bost added. “When I visited Walla Walla [Washington] in July and Columbus [Ohio] in September, the staff made it clear that this flawed system is making their jobs more difficult and crippling the delivery of care to veterans, and I have heard the same thing from the other sites. Unfortunately, these delays are nothing new. VA and Oracle must prove that this time is different, and I won’t allow them to continue throwing good money after bad.”

During a committee hearing in July, Bost said that lawmakers should [“seriously consider pulling the plug”](#) on the EHR system’s rollout and that he would “be writing legislation to do just that.”

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, also said in a [statement](#) that “the new EHR simply cannot be deployed before it’s ready for prime time.”

“When it comes to delivering the quality health care our nation’s veterans have earned, we have to hit the mark the first time around,” Tester added. “That’s why I’ll continue holding VA and Oracle Cerner’s feet to the fire in fixing systemwide issues so existing facilities and any future rollouts guarantee VA health care staff have the tools to provide veterans safe, timely care.”

An Oracle representative did not respond to a request for comment.

During a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies hearing last month, Mike Sicilia—the executive vice president for industries at Oracle, which [acquired](#) Cerner in June—[told lawmakers](#) that the company launched a dashboard to track “our to-do list and progress being made” on the project.

As of Oct. 13, the [public-facing dashboard](#)—the link to which Oracle previously shared with *Nextgov*—shows that the company has closed out seven “assigned issues as originally identified by VA as priorities in February and May 2022 briefings to Congress and as cited in a letter from Congress to VA on June 27, 2022.”

Oracle’s dashboard lists eight other issues to address that are in progress; another four issues that are scheduled; and two others that are marked as “in development.”