



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 1, 2020

VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers begins expanding eligibility to Veterans of earlier eras

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today implementation of a new information technology (IT) system marking the official launch of the first phase of expansion of the [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers \(PCAFC\)](#) to caregivers of eligible Veterans of earlier eras.

The Caregiver Records Management Application (CARMA) automates manual processes and integrates with other VA systems, resulting in increased efficiencies and effectiveness for VA staff.

The expansion rolls out in two phases. Effective Oct. 1, the first phase includes eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975. Effective Oct. 1, 2022, the second phase will include eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty between May 7, 1975 and Sept. 11, 2001.

Through CARMA, with a click of a button, an electronic health record will be created for a family caregiver where Caregiver Support Coordinators will document their clinical interactions. CARMA will also help guide consistency by systematically adjusting VA's stipend payment calculations, as appropriate, and alerting VA users when annual reassessments of PCAFC participants are due, among other key functionalities. In addition, this program expansion also includes a new digital version of the application which allows individuals to apply for the PCAFC online.

"Caregivers provide stability and security to our most vulnerable Veterans, allowing them to stay in their homes with their loved ones for as long as possible," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Today begins the first phase of expansion of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Through this expansion, VA is able to give more family caregivers access to essential resources so we can support them as they care for Veterans of earlier eras."

Since [publishing the final regulation](#) July 31, to improve and expand PCAFC — VA also expedited hiring key staff who bring the clinical qualifications and organizational skill sets to ensure consistent eligibility decision making across the enterprise, support program needs and provide strong infrastructure for consistent and standardized application processing and adjudication.

This past year, the Caregiver Support Program expanded to approximately 1,100 staff and will grow to approximately 1,800 staff within the next six months. These changes ensure Veterans and caregivers receive timely, accurate assessments and eligibility determinations, as well as an improved customer experience.

Previously, only available for eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, PCAFC provides education, support, a monthly stipend, health care coverage and certain beneficiary travel to qualifying family caregivers of eligible Veterans.

VA's Caregiver Support Program offers a wide variety of support services for caregivers of Veterans. Partnerships continue to be created or enhanced to broaden services and supports for caregivers. Learn more by visiting the Caregiver Support Program [website](#) or by calling the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274 for more information.

###