

# CAREGIVER NEWSLETTER



## PCAFC Expansion Phase 1 Explained

By Courtney Schoenfeld, LCSW

October 1, 2020 marked the expansion of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). Previously, this program was only open to eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001. Now, in Phase 1 of the expansion, eligible Veterans who have incurred or aggravated a serious injury or illness on or before May 7, 1975 are also eligible to apply. Programmatic expansion defines a serious injury or illness as a single or combined service connected rating of 70% or higher. Phase 2 of the expansion of the PCAFC will begin October 1, 2022, and encompass those eligible Veterans who have incurred or aggravated a serious injury *or illness* between May 8, 1975 and September 10, 2001.

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Between October 1, 2020 and December 8, 2020, the VA Portland Caregiver Support Program received 218 new applications for the PCAFC. Compare this to the 2 months prior to Phase 1 expansion, where the VA Portland Caregiver Support Program received only 37 applications between August 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020. Over 50% of our new applications to PCAFC are from Veterans over the age of 70 . The applications for the PCAFC are from eligible Veterans who require hands-on personal care assistance for Activities of Daily Living *each time the act of daily living is performed*. Applications have also been received from eligible Veterans who require caregiving for supervision, protection and/or instruction, on a daily basis, to remain safe in their homes.

The expansion of the PCAFC program has been met with unprecedented growth in the number of applications. To help meet this planned growth and to process applications in a timely manner, the Caregiver Support Program Manager has had to hire qualified staff to help process and manage the PCAFC applications. The VA Portland Caregiver Support Program has hired 4 Caregiver Support Coordinators (CSC), 2 Caregiver Support Social Workers, 2 Supervisory Social Workers, 1 Clinical Assessment Team Social Worker. The Caregiver Support Program has also posted to hire 1 Clinical Assessment Team Occupational Therapist, 1 Clinical Assessment Team RN, 1 Caregiver Support Program Data Analyst and 1 Caregiver Support Program Support Assistant.

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It is an honor to be part of the Caregiver Support Program and work with the Veterans and Caregivers applying to this expanded program. Our team has had the pleasure of participating in assessments that have brought so many important Veteran and Caregiver stories to light that highlight the hard work both our Veterans have given in their military service and after, as well as the daily hard work our Caregivers have given to ensure their Veterans are receiving the support they require to live each day! It is incredibly valuable to hear the input from caregivers on a daily basis. We appreciate your patience as we work tirelessly to meet the needs of our nation's most cherished resources- its Veterans.

## Need Support?

Call the **Portland Caregiver Support Program Mainline at 1-503-273-5210**

Your local Caregiver Support Coordinator (CSC) is a licensed professional who can support you by matching you with services for which you are eligible, and providing you with valuable information about [resources](#) that can help you remain smart, strong and organized as you care for your Veteran.



**Campaign for  
Inclusive Care**

VA has partnered with the **Elizabeth Dole Foundation**, starting in 2018, to launch the Campaign for Inclusive Care. Health care providers are strongly encouraged to seek out and learn about practicing inclusive care for a well-rounded and holistic way to develop a treatment plan for our Veterans that includes this vital component—the Caregiver!

# CAREGIVER SPOTLIGHT



*Let's get to know ....*

## BARBARA

*My Veteran's Name:* Michael

*Branch of Service:* Retired Navy

*I have been a Caregiver since:* [At least 2002](#)

*I enjoy:* Being in the out-doors. Tent camping at the Oregon coast where we can enjoy the best of being in the mountains and at a Pacific shore at the same time. We love roughing it, just a little bit. I especially love time spent at Columbia Gorge waterfalls.

Spending time with our growing family; connecting with long standing friendships and starting new ones; reading historical novels – think Ken Follet and Diana Gabaldon, or Barbara Taylor Bradford. Books about WWII history. And, yes, books about mental health concerns; working counted cross-stitch; making connections with dogs and horses; time in my yard – planting, watering, digging in the dirt. Listening to “my” frogs. Taking in the beauty of the flowers. The least expensive therapy in our world.

*My favorite part about being a Caregiver is:*

Realizing I can make a positive difference in the life of my Veteran. Sharing, smiling, hugs!!  
Advocating for Veterans and their families. Sharing experiences; smiles, hugs!!  
Being open when talking about our journey; speaking our truth as we know it.

*I take care of myself (and my family) by:*

Loving and accepting the love of others. Accepting our differences.  
Being thankful and grateful. Recognizing small gifts in each day. (This requires a change in focus.)  
Openly talking about mental health concerns.  
Being open learning; embracing change and challenge.

*I would like other Caregivers to know:* [That as Caregivers, we are not alone.](#)

[About self-care.](#) I believe that is gaining a knowledge and understanding of self; valuing ourselves; supporting ourselves first, then offering support to others.

[Learn about Healing Touch.](#) Guided Relaxation. Seated Yoga. Mindfulness practices (Insight Timer) Whole Health (it's not just for our Veteran, but for the Caregiver as well.)

[How to contact the amazing team, who are the Portland VA Caregiver Support Program.](#)

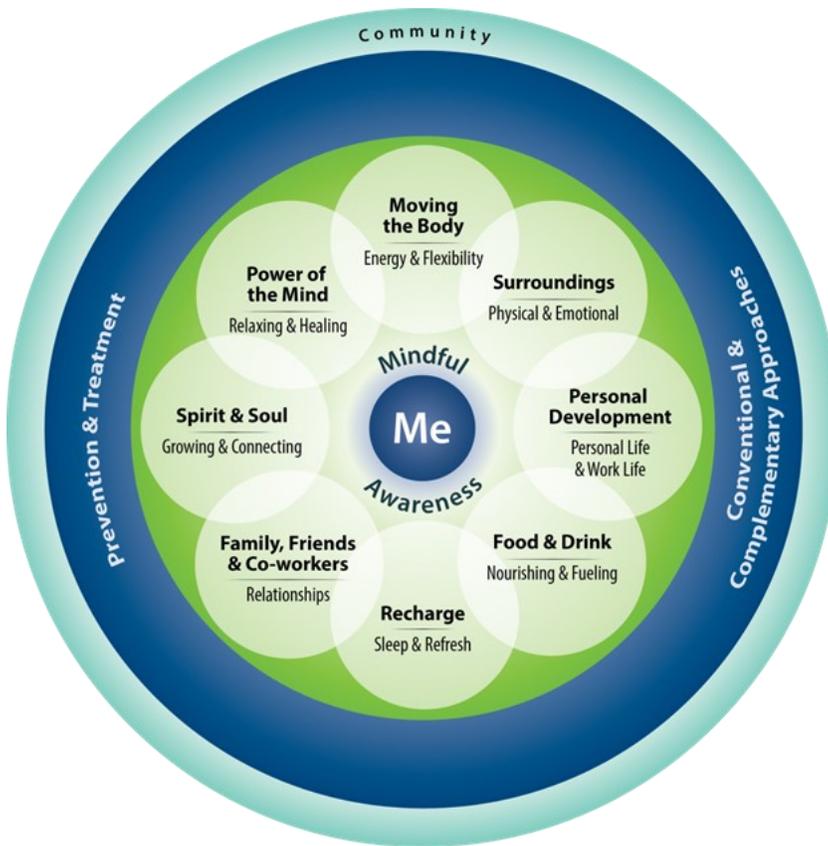
[Read Barbara's full article](#)

# WHOLE HEALTH CORNER

Welcome to the **Whole Health Corner!** We will offer you Whole Health concepts and tools in each Caregiver Newsletter!

Today, we will define **Whole Health** and **The Circle of Health**:

**Whole Health** focuses on what matters most to each of us. It empowers people through mindful awareness and self-care, recognizing the fundamental importance of healthy nutrition, activity, sleep, relationships, surroundings, and the many other areas of our lives that contribute to our health and wholeness. Whole Health supports person-centered, proactive, whole-person care. Conventional treatment is combined with complementary and integrative health strategies such as yoga, tai chi, and acupuncture.



The **Circle of Health** visually captures the richness of **Whole Health**. It can guide people as they reflect on their health and well-being and enhance conversations between patients and family caregivers, and members of their care teams.

The Circle of Health acknowledges each person’s uniqueness, putting the person at the center of it all. From there, they are empowered through mindful awareness and self-care. They are supported and guided by their care team, who may draw from both conventional and complementary approaches. They are embraced by their community. Using the Circle of Health, Veterans and Family Caregivers identify what matters most to them, and then they work with their Whole Health team to create a Personal Health Plan that will move them closer to what is important to them.

Please, see our Caregiver Offerings section for our upcoming [Caregiver](#)

[Whole Health Matters](#) and the **Caregiver MAP Groups!** We look forward to supporting you with **Whole Health** for your whole self!



# CAREGIVER RESOURCES

## Senior Loneliness Line

*Nearly 1 in 5 adults over the age of 50 is at risk of social isolation, which may lead to loneliness. Loneliness can impact your immune system, increase inflammation, lead to diabetes, heart disease, stroke, arthritis and other serious health conditions.”*

### The Senior Loneliness Line can help!

The Senior Loneliness Line is a 24/7 statewide call service for individual older than 55. A team of volunteers and staff are specially trained in working with older adults and can provide ongoing support, connect you with resources or just listen. Information is completely confidential.



Services Provided: Someone to listen, emotional support and understanding, resources and referrals, grief support, and elder abuse prevention and counseling.



**503-200-1633 | 800-282-7035**

**[www.SeniorLonelinessLine.org](http://www.SeniorLonelinessLine.org)**

## Healing Touch as Self-Care Video Series

Healing Touch is an energy modality that is non-invasive, and utilizes gentle touch to assist in balancing your mind and body. Potential benefits: reducing stress, decreasing pain, strengthening the immune system, creating a sense of well-being, and promoting a better night's sleep. This 3 part video series is an introduction to Healing Touch and how it can be used as a self-care practice.

Healing Touch as Self-Care: Introduction and awareness practice

<https://youtube.com/HzDLB5AXMbs>

Healing Touch part 2: Setting an Intention and Practice

<https://youtube.com/fYKXInK5CWg>

Healing Touch for Self-care: Part 3, Whole Health and Closing

<https://youtube.com/nbwPUOAScgA>



# CAREGIVER RESOURCES

By Maria Loebach, RN

*"Growth and change take place when a person has risked themselves, and dares to become involved in the experimenting of their own lives." – Herbert Otto*

This winter season it is as important as ever to continue to attend to our health and well-being to build our inner strength and resiliency during these ongoing unprecedented times. As we continue to need to practice safe, physical distancing, the CSP team has embraced this as an opportunity to be responsive and creative in the development of our well-being offerings that can be accessed safely and easily from your home!

We remain committed to supporting family caregivers health and well-being. Check out some of our upcoming new offerings and dare to experiment with your own life in new and supportive ways!

## PTSD Caregiver REACH VA Telephone Support Group

*Are you a family caregiver of a Veteran with PTSD?*

Join us and other family caregivers to learn skills to help you in this 6-week education and support series.

Our 1 hour groups will cover:

- ◆ Education: Overview of PTSD, related Veteran issues, related caregiver issues
- ◆ Targeted assessment: Safety, problem solving, emotion and mood management, etc.
- ◆ Support: facilitator support, peer support, exploring social and formal supports

To register, please contact Amber Lynch, LCSW at 503-719-1563 or Erin Dougherty, LCSW at 503-374-8870.

Register today to get your course materials!

### Meditation links

[Guided Rest Practice](#)

[Guided Meditation: Heart Practice](#)

[Guided Meditation: My Breath Sustains Me](#)

*The resources in this newsletter are provided as a courtesy of VAPORHCS. None of these agencies or providers are affiliated with VA. Use of any of these services or providers is at your own risk.*

# CAREGIVER SUPPORT

## Stuffed Butternut Squash

### Ingredients:

|                                                          |                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 butternut squash, sliced in half lengthwise and seeded | 1 cup grated parmesan |
| 1 yellow onion, diced                                    | Olive oil             |
| 1 zucchini, sliced in quarters                           | Thyme                 |
| 1 bunch kale, coarsely chopped (2-3 cups worth)          | Basil                 |
| 4 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped                      | Chili powder          |
| 1 lb. turkey sausage                                     | Black pepper          |
|                                                          | Salt                  |

Preheat your oven to 425° F.

Cut open each butternut squash lengthwise so you have 4 long halves. Scoop out the seeds and strings, then drizzle with 2 Tbsp of the oil and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Place face down on the baking sheet and roast in the preheated oven for about 40 minutes, or until softened. Test softness with a fork – squash will be easily pierced when done.

Meanwhile, heat a large skillet over medium heat and add oil. Add onions, cook and stir occasionally until onions begin to appear translucent. Crumble in sausage, and add garlic and cook until about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way done. Add zucchini and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes. Stir in kale and season to taste – cook for just another minute or two until kale has slightly darkened in color. Stir in parmesan (setting aside some parmesan to sprinkle on top).

Once squash is done, allow it to cool for about 5 minutes, and then use a spoon to scoop out the flesh, leaving a border of about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " around the sides and bottom. Mix the scooped out squash into the sausage and vegetables – squash should crumble easily into mixture but you may cut into smaller chunks before adding if you prefer.

Spoon the sausage mixture generously into squash until heaping, and return to the oven for an additional 5-10 minutes. Once reheated, sprinkle remaining parmesan cheese on top, switch oven to broil. Broil for 1-3 minutes or so until cheese is melted and golden, remove from the oven and enjoy!