

PHILADELPHIA

Volume 3.
2021



Choose **VA**

Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center Veteran Newsletter



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Karen Flaherty-Oxler, RN, MSN
Medical Center Director

It has been an extraordinary 18 months since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have, together persevered, and now see the beginning of the new era in our history. I want to "Thank You" as my fellow Veterans, for continuing your care, both virtually and in-person as well as doing your part in the fight against COVID-19. Getting vaccinated is the single most important step we can take to fight this virus.

We have administered over 55,000 COVID-19 vaccines, yet there are still over 7,000 of your fellow Veterans who we believe remain unvaccinated and unprotected against the existing, new, emerging and much more virulent strains of the virus. We need your help in lowering that number! We know that you are our best advocates with your fellow Veterans. Take the time to reach out to them, their spouses, caregivers, children and all those eligible to get the vaccine. Let them know that every Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., they can walk-in to our medical center and get the vaccine. We are also able to vaccinate adolescents ages 12-17 with the Pfizer, two-dose vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine requires two shots, so it is very important that you remind them to return for the pre-scheduled, second dose to be **fully** vaccinated. Help us to help them. Encourage COVID-19 vaccination!

I also wanted to thank you, on behalf of our Team and share how much we appreciate all the cards and notes of gratitude you wrote to our frontline team members. It really lifted their spirits as they, too, dealt with the impact of COVID-19 within their own families and sometimes themselves.

As you know, we are no longer screening when you come to our medical center, however, everyone is required to be fully masked, while on property. This is for your protection, your fellow Veterans, those with compromised immune systems and our Team!

Inside this edition, you will find some great stories about, and from your fellow Veterans, some of our service providers, programs and a story that involves several of our Iraq War Veterans.

Finally, as we prepare to celebrate our nation's birthday, let us reflect on the core values that we hold that led us to take that sacred oath to defend this nation, its Constitution, and citizens. Your sacrifices are the reason we can celebrate the freedoms enjoyed today. I salute you all and thank you and your families for your service and for choosing the Corporal Michael J Crescenz VA Medical Center for your whole health care. Let's celebrate what is ahead.

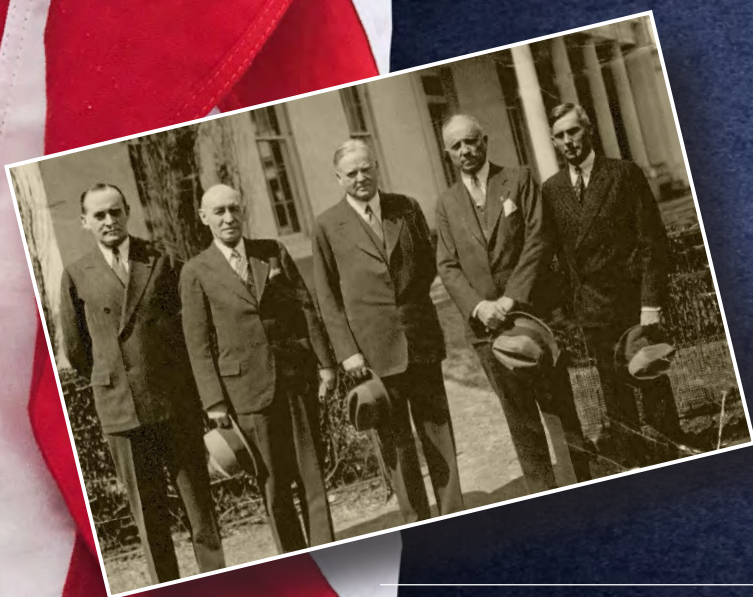




Veterans Health Administration
Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center

Happy Birthday

Department of Veterans Affairs



On July 21, 1930

President Hoover signed legislation forming the Veterans Administration, often called simply, the VA. Since the time of the Revolutionary War, America's government has sought to protect its veterans. ... Then as America entered World War I in 1917, Congress created a new system for veterans' benefits.



The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center is Celebrating

75 VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

*A Legacy of Service. **The Future of Care.***



At Home

Meet with VA providers virtually and send important health data from the comfort of your home, using your computer or mobile device.

Note: Certain telehealth programs may not be available in all locations. To learn about telehealth options in your area, reach out to your provider at the nearest VA Medical Center.

To find your nearest VA Medical Center using the VA facility locator, enter your city, state, or ZIP code and select "VA Health" from the facility drop down menu. VA Telehealth is based out of your nearest VA Medical Center, not CBOC or Vet Center.

Care That Fits Your Life

Having easy access to your VA care team is important for your health. But scheduling appointments and traveling to your provider's office can be difficult. Telehealth at home offers services that work with your current care plan, fit your lifestyle and help you stay healthy and independent.

Remote Patient Monitoring

Telehealth technologies can collect and send your health data, like vital signs, to your care team. Providers get the information they need to manage your care, while you are in a more comfortable environment. Health data will not be collected without your informed consent.

How it works:

You are assessed for Home Telehealth remote monitoring services.

If deemed appropriate, VA provides a device to fit your needs and gives you training on how to use it.

VA assigns you a Home Telehealth remote monitoring care coordinator.

Your care coordinator contacts VA hospitals and providers and helps you arrange treatment changes, clinic appointments and hospital admissions.

Video Appointments

With VA Video Connect, you can meet providers in virtual medical rooms using the camera on a smartphone, computer or tablet. You and your provider work together to schedule online video appointments. You can even invite family members and caretakers to join the sessions.

How it works:

Talk to your doctor to see whether VA Video Connect could become a part of your care plan.

Receive an email link for your VA Video Connect session once it's scheduled.

At the time of your appointment, simply click on the link, enter your information and launch the session. (If you are using an Apple device, you must download the VA Video Connect app to connect.)

For more information, visit the VA Video Connect page on the VA App Store.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center

COVID-19 Vaccines STILL AVAILABLE!

Did you serve in the US Military, regardless of discharge status?
Are you a Veteran, Veteran spouse, caregiver, or adolescent child
ages 12 and up, of a Veteran?
Are you a Veteran widow or orphan?

If so, you are eligible to get a FREE COVID-19 vaccine. You can drop
in/walk-in Monday-Friday from 7 a.m.-2 p.m. and protect yourself,
your loved ones and community from the virus.

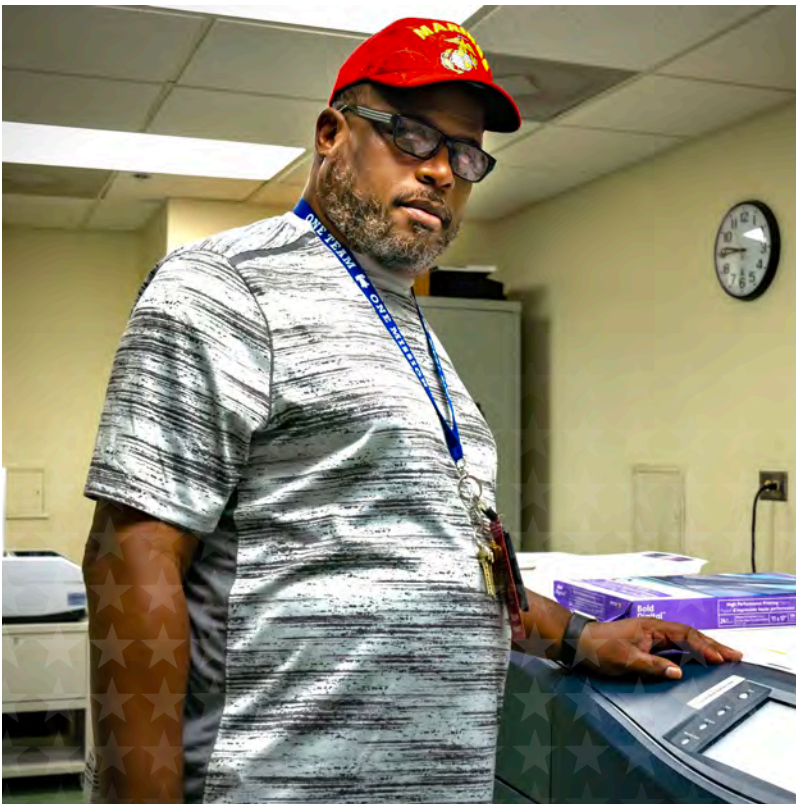
Parents/Guardians: Children are now getting COVID-19 and need to
be protected too! Schools are now requiring children be vaccinated
before the start of school this fall. Don't hesitate, bring your
children, ages 12 and up to the hospital to get their vaccine.
CALL (215) 823-4014 to schedule your appointment in advance OR
just drop in between 7 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday through Friday.



VA takes **PRIDE** in serving **LGBT Veterans**



Why I Choose VA



From Caregiver to Family

Marine through and through! Those are the words that are used to describe Marine Veteran Leslie "Les" Geter Lance Corporal. Sometimes, even in describing himself, it's clear how much the Marine Corps shaped his life. Regardless if it's the Marine Corps hat he wears, or the traditional Semper Paratus greeting he gives to every fellow Marine, Geter stands by their mantra, 'Once a Marine, Always a Marine.'

Today, Mr. Geter lives by the statement he learned during his inpatient rehabilitation at the Philadelphia VA, 'Stay away from certain people, places, and things' that are triggers and take you back down the path of addiction.

"I grew up in and around the gangs of South Philly," Geter stated. "It wasn't the greatest of environments, but you grew up fast and tough," he added. "I knew I had to get out of the gang situations before things got even worse, so after a discussion with my mom, it was off to Parris Island I went."

This is where at the young age of 17, Geter entered basic military training for the United States Marine Corps at Parris Island, South Carolina.

"The Marine Corps molded me into understanding that regardless of the situation, I march forward," Geter stated. "There was no running away or backing down from situations, it's now a totally different approach and perspective," he added. "I remember returning to South Philly and having the confidence to walk through areas that I

would not have had the confidence to walk through prior to joining the Marine Corps. I now had a totally different level of self-confidence."

After serving in the South China Sea during the Vietnam War, life changed for Geter and although he now lives by 'stay away from certain people, places, and things,' that was not always the case!

"Following my time in the Marines, I used a lot of drugs and alcohol to cover-up my demons instead of facing them," Geter said. "I went down a long and dark road of drug and alcohol abuse that made me a different person. At that time, I thought it was helping, but it was making things worse," he added. "I had friends who told me to go to the Philadelphia VA, but during that time, I was not going to see any military doctors, or anyone associated with the military because of my active duty experiences."

That's when Mr. Geter's family and friends held a mini-intervention session where his wife insisted he needed to go to the VA, or risk not being alive for much longer.

"I'm glad I came to the VA, it changed my life," he said.

"Without my wife and Debbie Fishman, who knows where I would be today," Geter said. "My wife and Debbie (my mental health therapist), are two amazing people. Between the two of them, along with the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program here at the hospital, I was able to kick my drug and alcohol addictions," he stated. "The Philadelphia VA Medical Center, especially the Blue Team, Behavioral Health Team and Medical Media have become a part of my family," Geter said. "They give me the tough love that family members do when you need it, and help me stay on course."

With the assistance of the primary care team and behavioral health teams at the CMCVAMC, Mr. Geter has come out on the other side of those proverbial dark roads with a new found perspective on life and what it means to face your demons.

"Mary and Melanie on the blue team and Dr. Choi in behavioral health have the trust of a family member to me," he said. "They keep me on track and are the main reason I won't go to an outpatient clinic for my care. I trust them! We all know every organization has things we can complain about, and we all have complaints. However, the VA continues to work on those issues. I would tell any Veteran out there who is deciding where to get their care to give the VA a chance. This hospital is a major reason I'm able to tell you this today," he said.

The CMCVAMC has many programs and services to help Veterans. Choose VA for your total care.

Meet The Provider



Dr. Darshana Jhala, M.D.

Not too many people can say they have appeared in film and on stage, hosted radio shows, worked as a television journalist, play multiple instruments, write, sing and record songs and runs the #1 laboratory within the Department of Veterans Affairs, but our own Dr. Darshana Jhala, M.D. can (and much more).

In addition to the above, she is a medical doctor, surgical pathologist, heads Crescenzo's Pathology and Laboratory Medicine department, is a renowned expert in pathology, was an India television personality on TV Asia, hosted a talk show on All-India radio, is a professor of Medicine **and** Music at the University of Pennsylvania, sings Indian classical music and speaks multiple languages.

Jhala was born in Gujarat, India to parents who pushed her to pursue all areas of interest and provided the support and encouragement that allowed her to become the self-actualized woman she is today.

"I was blessed to have parents who nurtured me and provided the opportunities that have been instrumental in my growth and professional development," Jhala said. "My father ensured I was exposed to our native music and learned to play two staples of Indian music, the harmonium and the tanpura. I was also given vocal lessons," she added.

The investment coupled with her personal drive, led to her many diverse and successful careers. Jhala is an

internationally recognized recording artist who has played and sung in Bollywood movies. She has recorded two albums and is finishing a third. When home in India, she often performs in India's equivalent of Carnegie Hall, and during the pandemic, performed virtually for audiences in India and the USA. Dr. Jhala states that her passion for music, morphed into a love of medicine. For her, the two disciplines are quite similar.

"Medicine and music both require dedication, intense focus and a drive to constantly improve," she said. "I am always seeking to improve my skills and explore new ways of doing things."

After medical school in India, she moved to the United States with her husband, who is also a medical doctor and professor. Both completed residencies (again) to practice in the United States. VA, VHA, VISN4 and Crescenzo are fortunate to have her on our team. This became very evident during the pandemic. Dr. Jhala and the Path & Lab medicine team were a critical cog in the wheel that helped us during the pandemic. Her laboratory, which is the #1 lab in VHA, which was operating nearly round-the-clock, tested 10's of thousands of samples from suspected COVID-19 patients, providing swift and pivotal lab results and medical

diagnoses that gave treating physicians the information needed that guided their next steps in caring for our Veterans. Under her leadership, our facility was well positioned **prior to the outbreak** with the latest diagnostic equipment that enabled the team to perform rapid tests within minutes or hours of receiving a sample. They also served as a referral lab for testing within the state of Pennsylvania for state-run Veterans homes, other VAMCs in our VISN and in surrounding states.

She was given a Challenge coin from

former VA Secretary Robert L. Wilkie.

Dr. Jhala is daughter, wife, mother, mentor, and friend. Married for over 30 years, her daughter is also a doctor and her son plans to study medicine and nanotechnology. Both, she says, are musically inclined and she, along with her two children often perform together as her husband plays his part by clapping from the audience.

On behalf of our Veterans and staff, we "thank you" Dr. Jhala for your commitment to ensuring we are a high reliability organization (HRO) through our Lab.





Dr. Rebecca Helms
Whole Health Director

What is Whole Health?

Whole Health is the VA's cutting-edge approach to care that supports your health and well-being. Whole Health centers around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you. This means your health team will get to know you as a person, before working with you to develop a personalized health plan based on your values, needs, and goals.

In Whole Health care, you are an active partner with your healthcare team. The focus includes not only prevention, illness, and disease but how you want to live your life. Self-care is important and you can learn strategies to increase healing and improve your health and well-being.

How to get started:

We have 3 telephone drop-in classes that you can participate in without a referral or appointment, just call the number at the designated time. These include:

Introduction to Whole Health: If you are interested in learning more about the Whole Health approach, please consider joining this one-time class. Here you will have the opportunity to start your personalized health plan by setting goals in line with what is most important to you. Classes are held Mondays 1 – 2 pm (excluding Federal holidays). To join, please call 1 (404) 397-1596; access number: 199 709 2050 #

Guided Imagery: This past year has been a difficult one. During these 30-minute breaks offered twice a week, you will be led through a visualization that will help you relax and refresh. Each class has a new visualization and participants can attend as many classes as desired. Classes are held on Mondays, 8:30 – 9 am & Thursdays 12 - 12:30 pm (excluding Federal holidays). To join, please call 1 (404) 397-1596; access number: 199 946 5840 #

Gateway to Healthy Living: If you are thinking about making a health behavior change (e.g., lose weight, stop smoking, sleep better) but feeling stuck on where to start, please consider joining us for a one time class to learn about our programs and help you start on your path to healthy living. Classes are held Mondays, 10am-11 am (excluding Federal holidays). To join, please call **1 (404) 397-1596**; access number: **199 949 0805 #**

We offer a host of Healthy Living Services as well. Some of these services include:

- Smoking Cessation
- Weight Management
- Mindful Eating
- Stress management
- Sleep well
- Healthy Aging
- Living Better with Pain

If you are interested in any of these services and/or learning more, please call the Healthy Living Team at **(215) 222-7483**. Simply call the line, leave a message, and a staff member will respond. Our hope is that our services are helpful to your overall well-being and provide additional support.

Be the Best Version of Yourself with Whole Health
at the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center

Lose Weight
Learn how to eat healthier, move more, and become a healthier version of yourself.

Sleep Well
Gather tools to fall asleep faster, stay asleep longer, and sleep sounder.

Manage Stress
Keep stress in check and find new ways to relax.

Quit Tobacco
Gain support and learn skills to help you kick the habit for good. Medications also available.

All Whole Health programs are available via telephone and/or video.
Call the Healthy Living Team to learn more: (215) 222-7483.

To Our Veterans



John "Jack" Kelly, M.D.
Chief of Staff

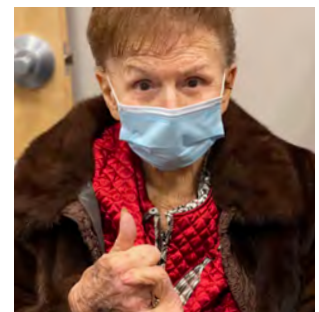
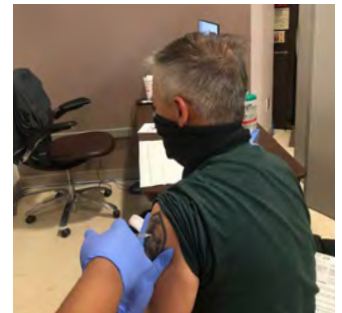
This COVID-19 pandemic has truly impacted our day-to-day lives and caused us to think outside the box in how we deliver healthcare to you, our Veterans. Tens of thousands of you answered our call to get vaccinated starting back in December 2020 and to date, over 55,000 have been vaccinated including Veterans, your spouses, caregivers, CHAMPVA recipients (Veteran widows and orphans) Veteran adolescents 12 and up, former members of the US Military (regardless of discharge status), and our staff. However, there are still over 7,000 of your fellow Veterans who remain unvaccinated!

The enemy is still out there and has grown smarter as it evolves into different varieties, now more deadly and contagious than the original that landed on US soil late 2019. We need your help in encouraging your fellow Veterans, those who served or serve in the US Military and their loved ones to come to the hospital and get vaccinated against COVID-19. Vaccination is our BEST protection against disease, hospitalization, and death.

Currently, children, young adults and the unvaccinated are contracting the newest strain called the Delta variant, which itself continues to evolve into additional Delta varieties. These deaths, hospitalizations and illnesses are totally avoidable by getting vaccinated. I ask you to be our voice in the Veteran and military communities and stress the importance of helping us all return to life prior to the virus by getting the vaccine.

Our COVID-19 vaccine clinic is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. It is a walk-in, free vaccine clinic, or, you can call ahead to schedule an appointment on (215) 823-4014.

We will get through this when we all work together to stop the unnecessary deaths and illnesses caused by this virus by getting the vaccine. If you received the Pfizer vaccine, remember, it requires that you receive two shots! If you don't get the second dose, you will not have immunity/protection against COVID-19. Be sure to keep your scheduled return appointment for the second dose, or, if you miss it, call immediately to schedule a new appointment. You will not have immunity until two weeks after the second dose of the vaccine.





Women-Only Veterans Town Hall

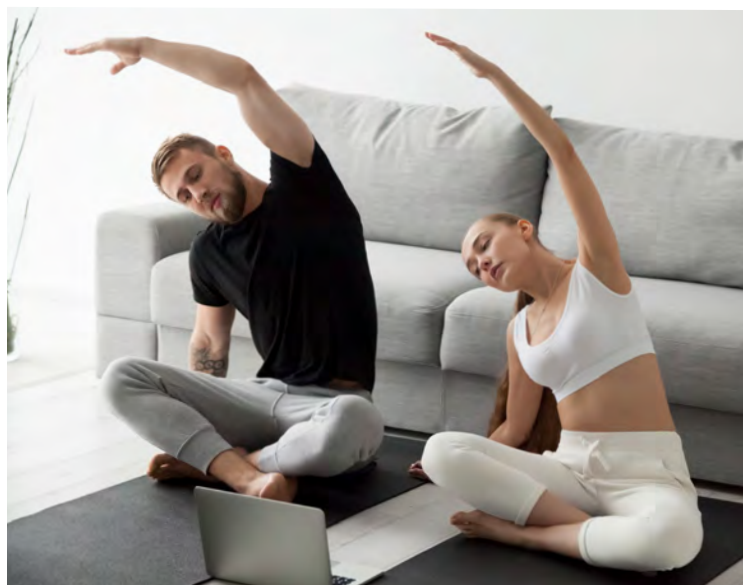
OPEN TO ALL WOMEN VETERANS

Tuesday, September 28, 2021 from 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Gloucester County VA Outpatient Clinic

211 County House Road, Sewell, New Jersey 08080-2525

(877) 823-5230 or (215) 823-5846



Yoga Online

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the C orporal Michael J. Crescenzo VA Medical Center are pleased to provide Veterans, members of the Military and their families with FREE Online Yoga and Meditation programs effective immediately.

Through the service provider OMPRACTICE, the VA is offering unlimited access to virtual yoga and meditation to Veterans, and Military members and their families from the comfort and privacy of their home.




If you are interested, please speak to your VA care provider. Your provider will then give you an access code to use to register. Follow the link below to sign up online: <https://www.ompractice.com/veteransaffairs/>

Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers *Eligibility Criteria Fact Sheet*



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) offers enhanced clinical support for caregivers of eligible Veterans who are seriously injured. These changes are based on the new "Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) Improvements and Amendments Under the VA MISSION Act of 2018" Final Rule, RIN 2900-AQ48 effective October 2020.

These changes include:

-  Expanding eligibility for the PCAFC
-  Establishing new benefits for designated Primary Family Caregivers of eligible Veterans
-  Making other changes affecting program eligibility and VA's evaluation of PCAFC applications

Who will potentially qualify: Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury (now includes serious illness) in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service on or after September 11, 2001, **or** on or before before May 7, 1975.



Veteran Eligibility Requirements:

The Veteran or service member must have a serious injury, which is a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 70% or more, and meet the following eligibility requirements to participate in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers:

- 1 The individual is either:
 - A Veteran; or
 - A member of the Armed Forces undergoing a medical discharge from the Armed Forces.
- 2 The individual has a serious injury (serious injury now includes serious illness) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service:
 - On or after September 11, 2001; **or**
 - Effective on the date specified in a future Federal Register document, on or before May 7, 1975; **or**
 - Effective two years after the date specified in a future Federal Register document, after May 7, 1975 and before September 11, 2001.
- 3 The individual is in need of in-person personal care services for a minimum of six continuous months based on any one of the following:
 - An inability to perform an activity of daily living; **or**
 - A need for supervision, protection, or instruction.
- 4 It is in the best interest of the individual to participate in the program.
- 5 Personal care services that would be provided by the Family Caregiver will not be simultaneously and regularly provided by or through another individual or entity.
- 6 The individual receives care at home or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.
- 7 The individual receives ongoing care from a Primary Care Team or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.

How to Contact a Caregiver Support Coordinator:

Veterans and caregivers can find their local Caregiver Support Coordinator by...



Calling the Caregiver Support Line at
1-855-260-3274 (Toll Free Monday-Friday,
8 a.m. to 8 p.m.)



Using the Caregiver Support Coordinator
locator tool at www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp

Online applications will soon be a reality, as well.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center



The
future of
medicine
is in your
genes



MILLION
VETERAN
PROGRAM

The future of medicine is in your genes.

We need your help.

Fifteen minutes and a blood draw are all it takes to make a lasting difference.

The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center's Research department is enrolling Veterans into the Million Veteran Program, a national research program that studies how differences in genes, lifestyle and military experiences affect Veterans' health and illnesses.

The goal is to one day give Veterans specialized care with targeted treatments and preventions based on their genetics and medical history.

Veterans can enroll online at mvp.va.gov or by scheduling an appointment at our facility by calling 866-441-6075. You do not need to receive VA health care to join VA's Million Veteran Program or schedule an appointment at our facility.

What is the Million Veteran Program (MVP)?

Since launching in 2011, nearly 840,000 Veteran partners have joined MVP, helping researchers better understand the genetics of disease in Veterans.

By collecting DNA from as many Veterans as possible, along with information on their health, lifestyle and military experiences, researchers are beginning to answer important questions like:

- Why does a certain treatment work well for some Veterans but not others?
- Why are some Veterans at greater risk for developing an illness?
- How can we prevent certain illnesses in the first place?

If **more women** and diverse populations enroll, MVP researchers can discover new medical breakthroughs that work for all Veterans.

What does it mean to enroll?

To join MVP, you'll be asked to:

Complete a consent process online at mvp.va.gov or at the Crescenz VA Medical Center by calling 1-866-441-6075 to make an appointment.

- Allow access to your health records.
- Provide a one-time blood sample for genetic analysis.
- Fill out occasional surveys about your health and lifestyle.

Once enrolled, you may be contacted again on a periodic basis if additional information is requested, or if there is a research opportunity you may want to consider. You will also receive newsletters about the program at least once a year with updates on research findings and other topics of interest.

For more questions about MVP, [explore their FAQs](#) or speak with a staff member at 866-441-6075.



A Place of Healing, A Place of Peace

We often thank our Veterans for their service, but how often do we stop and think about what that service entailed?

The call to serve is answered for a number of reasons, some include a family tradition, others a call to duty, others looking for a career or path forward and yet others to escape living environments. In addition to different reasons to serve, everyone brings with them their own moral, ethical, religious, and social norms that have shaped who they are and inform how they should act and who they should become. These values are often tested by what a service-member does, fails to do, witnesses, or learns about, during their time in the military, producing moral conflict and moral pain.

This is where for some, internal conflicts arise that can lead to PTSD, suicidal ideations (thoughts), depression, mental illness, and moral injury. Here at the Corporal Michael J. Crescenz (Philadelphia) VA Medical Center we are fortunate to have a specialized program for Veterans struggling with these issues, called the Moral Injury Group. It is a collaboration of our Chaplain and Behavioral Health Service lines. The program is run by retired US Army Veteran Christopher Antal, one of our chaplains and Dr. Peter Yeomans, Ph.D. of Behavioral Health. The 12-week program works intimately with each Veteran individually, and in group sessions. This allows Veterans the opportunity to explore the moral and spiritual dimension of their military experience, and appropriately address moral and spiritual pain and struggle. At the conclusion of the intensive program, there is a Community Healing Ceremony where Veterans share their moral burdens and invite the



community to accept their fair share of the burdens of war. At the conclusion of the Ceremony, tears and hugs abound from the Veterans stories. At our last ceremony in December 2019, Yaroub Al-Obaidi and his three brothers, refugees from Iraq, engaged with several Veterans of the Iraq War who had graduated from the Moral Injury Group. All of them had experienced the hellishness of that war and each was rebuilding from its aftermath. Out of the encounter, the two groups wanted to continue their healing dialogues. From their discussions, the idea was born to collaborate in building a sanctuary called Al-Mudhif. A Mudhif is a traditional grass structure from southern Iraq that dates back over 6,000 years. Mudhifs are the village gathering place for meetings, resolving disputes, prayers, weddings, reconciliation and more. The thought was to build a Mudhif here on U.S. soil as a place for both the Iraq Veterans and the Iraqi refugees as well as the larger community to use. The wheels were now set in motion and the first-ever Al-Mudhif outside of the Middle East would soon be built in Philadelphia, PA. In early February 2020, our Veterans -- Hannibal Collick, Harold Mojicatore, Leroy Enck, Andrew Wall, Philip Forest along with Chaplain Antal (also an Iraq Veteran) and Dr. Yeomans and members of the Iraqi community harvested thousands of 20 feet tall reeds from the John Heinz Wildlife Refuge that would be used in the construction of the Mudhif. With approval from the Lenape Indian tribe whose land would be the site of the future Mudhif and the Schuylkill Environmental Education ground was on Memorial Day, May 31, 2021.



The construction was overseen by environmental artist Sarah Kavage and Al-Obaidi, Veterans, refugees and volunteers worked side-by-side marking of the land, digging holes, binding reeds, and building the structure. The work continued for three weeks until its grand opening on June 24, 2021.

Enck, a Moral Injury Group graduate who did three deployments to Iraq while an Infantryman with the, US Marine Corps, 1st Battalion 5th Marine Regiment led the initiative to build the Mudhif with Iraqi refugees.

"For some Veterans and military members, our time in Iraq was marked with loss and destruction," said Enck. "Losing fellow service-members in body or spirit, witnessing a similar loss among indigenous communities in Iraq, and observing—despite our best efforts—the environmental destruction our presence and operations facilitated. Some of us have struggled with the

larger moral implications of this impact, and after participating in the difficult work of moral engagement, have decided to dedicate ourselves to this work as atonement. Now, we have an opportunity to engage in the hefty work of building by constructing the first Mudhif outside of Iraq, building new community with our brethren among the former Iraqis who now call Philadelphia home, and giving—rather than

taking—an opportunity for generations, both young and old, to experience greater understanding of people and for a displaced through no choice of their own."

The Al-Mudhif will be open to the public through mid-October 2021 as a place of healing, prayer, remembrance, reconciliation, and cultural sharing. Stop by and you too will feel the respite and peace the sanctuary exudes as you commune with nature.



Over 55,000 COVID Vaccinations





Shots Given and Counting...





Eyeglass Eligibility

Parameters for Issuing Eyeglasses:

1. A compensable service connected patient is eligible for a standard pair of lined multifocal lenses OR, if unable to wear a multifocal lens a patient may receive one pair of distance spectacles and one pair of near spectacles.
2. A standard pair of lenses does not include options such as progressives, polarized, anti-reflective coating, tinted or photochromic (Transition) options. If a Veteran wishes to obtain these options, a prescription may be released for the Veteran to obtain at their own expense.
3. Protection for incident radiation is included in the lenses which includes UV protection.
4. Frames and lenses are prescribed for medical reasons, not for cosmetic purposes.
5. Replacement eyeglasses may be provided due to a change in the prescription if there is a change of: +/- 0.25 Diopter Sphere, +/- 0.50 Diopter Cylinder, Axis change 5 degrees for 0.25 to 0.75 diopter, 3 degrees for 1.00 to 2.00 diopters. And 2 degrees for more than 2.25 diopters.
6. Safety eyewear, including polycarbonate lenses, may be provided for Veterans enrolled in a VA-sponsored vocational program or who are monocular, or who have disparity between the two eyes (i.e. amblyopia, retinal detachment, corneal disease, etc.).
7. Multiple replacement eyeglasses within a relatively short period of time due to excessive wear, tear, or loss, may be addressed on an individual basis by the local VA facility and will be determined by the Chief of Prosthetics who may request further guidance from the Chief of Optometry, or Chief of Ophthalmology.

Patients without a compensable service connected disability may be eligible for eyeglasses if their uncorrected acuity at distance or near is 20/50 or worse, or there is clinical justification as deemed by the provider.

References:

VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network (VISN4): Policy Memorandum No. 10N4-20

VHA Handbook 1179.12 PRESCRIPTION OPTICS AND LOW-VISION DEVICES

VHA Handbook 1034(1) PRESCRIBING AND PROVIDING EYEGLASSES, CONTACT LENSES, AND HEARING AIDS.



Did you ever want to tell your story? Did you ever want to share how you grew up or how you entered the military? Did you ever wish your provider knew a little more about you?

Consider participating in the My Life, My Story program whose goal is to strengthen the relationship between patient and provider. VA volunteers are trained to write and tell your story. Once completed and with your approval, your story will be available for providers to read. Also, a copy will be sent to you.

If you are interested in learning more or participating in this program, contact Voluntary Service at (215) 823-5868 or vhaphivsn4voluntary@va.gov

The Office of Community Care

The Office of Community Care is now issuing Pharmacy cards to all Veterans receiving Community Care to be used for **new prescriptions only**. The card entitles you to obtain a 14-day supply of the new medication at one of the pharmacies listed on the card. It is not to be used to refill existing prescriptions.

For instance, if you are seen in an Emergency Room and are given a **brand new prescription** (not a refill of an existing medication) you can use the Pharmacy card for a 14-day supply of the new medication you were prescribed. After that, the medication must be filled at the VA Pharmacy along with your other routine (regular) medications. If you need further clarification or guidance, call (215) 823-6310 or email us at VHAPHI Care Coordination.

The Office of Community Care is now issuing Pharmacy cards to all Veterans receiving Community Care to be used for their first, 14-day only, non-routine prescription (new medication prescriptions only) fill (no refills).

For instance, if you are seen in an Emergency Room and are given a brand new prescription (one that is not one of your regular medications), you can use the Pharmacy card for a 14-day supply of the new medication you were prescribed. After that, the medication must be filled at the VA Pharmacy along with your other routine (regular) medications.

If you need further clarification or guidance, call (215) 823-6310 or email us at VHAPHI Care Coordination.

Veterans Community Care Network

Member ID:	Payer ID: VACCN
CVS caremark Referral Care Rx Plan: 000000 Rx PCN: ADV Rx Group: 000000	CVS caremark Urgent Care Rx Plan: 000000 Rx PCN: ADV Rx Group: 000000
CVS caremark Rx Plan: 000000 Rx PCN: ADV Rx Group: 000000	CVS caremark Rx Plan: 000000 Rx PCN: ADV Rx Group: 000000



Veterans Helping Veterans Fight COVID-19

The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center partnered with two Veteran led organizations – the Historic Montford Point Marines and Laborers International Local Union 57, led by US Army Veteran Esteban Vera, to host two COVID-19 vaccination pop-up clinics.

Both organizations, concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on our Veterans who have given so much to this nation, reached out to CMCVAMC requesting a vaccine event for Veterans, former US Military members (regardless of discharge status), their spouses, widows, caregivers, orphans and children ages 18 and up. The hospital responded and sent staff out to vaccinate those who showed up.

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

MANDATORY FACE COVERINGS

required for everyone

Choose VA

Recall Of Certain CPAP, BiPAP and Ventilators by Philips

Your safety is our top priority. VA has learned of the recall of some Philips Respironics Positive Airway Pressure devices (CPAP or BiPAP) used for sleep apnea. **If you do not have a Philips Respironics device, it is not part of the recall and you can ignore this letter.**

Philips Respironics recently recalled some CPAP and BiPAP devices due to a breakdown of the foam used to reduce sound and vibration. While in use, recalled devices may have very small foam particles break loose and travel through the air hose. This breakdown may be related to exposure to extreme heat and humidity or the use of unapproved cleaning devices. Therefore, do not use ozone or ultraviolet light-based cleaners per the Food and Drug Administration recommendations.

VA requests that you register your device through the Philips Respironics patient portal at: <https://www.philipssrcupdate.expertinquiry.com> or call 877-907-7508. Philips Respironics will send a replacement device. This may take several months.

If you are having any new respiratory symptoms, contact your Primary Care team at the VA immediately. If you are having any problems with your device, contact the Crescenz Sleep Center at: (215) 823-4435. **Otherwise, you should continue to use your device as prescribed and clean it using the manufacturer's instructions.** We are currently working with the manufacturer on a solution and will keep you informed as additional information and guidance becomes available.

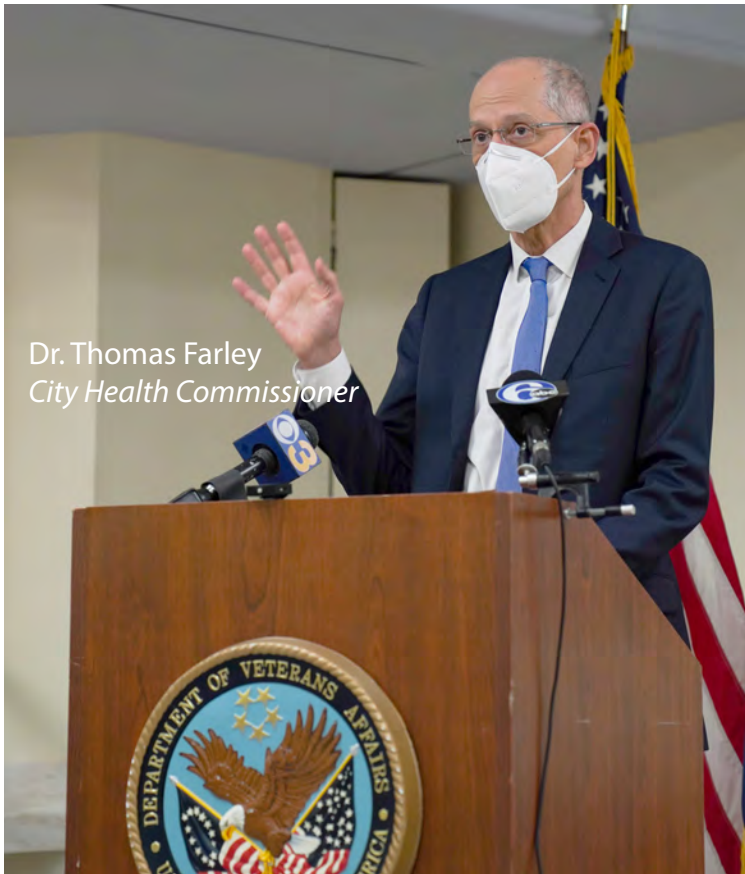


If you have additional questions or concerns, please send a secure message to your care team through [MyHealtheVet](#).



The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz Women's Health Service Wants To Hear From ALL Women Veterans Who Served!

Attention Women Veterans: Women's Health will be holding a series of [Women's Focus Groups](#) in the coming months. We want to hear from ALL Women Veterans, whether they are enrolled in VA Healthcare, or not! To express your interest, email Julie.Allen@va.gov and use the subject line: 'Women's Focus Group.' If you don't have access to email, please call (215) 823-5800 and ask for Julie Allen or leave a message expressing your interest in participating on her voicemail. The groups will be limited in size



Dr. Thomas Farley
City Health Commissioner



Crescenz Opens It's Doors To Support City of Philadelphia Vaccination Effort

The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center partnered up with the City of Philadelphia Department of Public Health (DPH) and held a mass COVID-19 vaccination clinic targeting city residents living in West Philadelphia near the hospital.

CMCVAMC staff volunteered for two weeks, seven days each week, after work hours, to host a night clinic that was open to residents of the City of Philadelphia inside the hospital. The clinic ran from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Some of the vaccinated included the entire University of Pennsylvania baseball team, track and field athletes, and area residents. The City Department of Public Health sent over Philadelphia residents to get vaccinated in our hospital. The clinic ran from April 12-19 for the first dose of the city-supplied Moderna vaccine, and again on May 10-16 for the second dose.

Residents were relieved to be able to get vaccinated close to where they live, attend school and work. It also helped to relieve long lines at other city-operated vaccination sites. Staff at the hospital were happy to extend themselves in order to help fight the pandemic in the communities in which they work. Hospital staff vaccinated over 2,000 city residents during clinics.



Delaware Valley Veterans Stand Down 2021



September 11, 2021

8:00 AM to 4:00 PM



ADDRESS

Lombard Central Presbyterian Church

4201 Powelton Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19104

Saturday, September 11, 2021

From 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Note:

Only veteran's spouses and their dependent children ages 15 years old and under may accompany a veteran to Stand Down.

No one will be admitted/registered after 3:00 PM.

NO EXCEPTIONS!

Philadelphia Veterans

Use **SEPTA** to arrive at Stand Down

Delaware County Veterans

Chester PA Career Link, 701 Cosby St. at 7:30 AM

Chester Connect: 7200 Chestnut St. at 7:45 AM

**THIS IS AN ALCOHOL/DRUG/
WEAPON/VIOLENCE FREE EVENT**

SERVICES AVAILABLE:

Service Providers, Meals, ID Services, Barbers, Clothing, Legal Advice,

Medical and Mental Health are **(Mandatory)**, Dental, Vision, Benefits and Claim Assistance, Employment Assistance, Spiritual Care, Housing and Entertainment

Find Us on Facebook **Phone:** 267-560-5011

Email Us @ delvalstanddown@gmail.com

www.philastanddown.org

Making Improvements for YOU!



As part of our ongoing capital improvements and renovations to our facilities, our Veterans living in our Community Living Center (CLC) nursing home and their families are now able to enjoy a brand new, beautifully decorated family gathering room on each floor of the CLC building.

The family rooms are fully equipped with high speed Internet access (free Wi-Fi), large screen HD flat screen televisions, cozy gas fireplaces, books, mini kitchens, lovely seating arrangements with tables, updated lighting and a wall of glass in each family room for residents and visitors to look out and enjoy the change of seasons.

In our main hospital, in Building One, we completed the installation of all new smart elevators with beautiful, decorative metal doors. Inside each elevator the floor selection panels have large buttons with Braille underneath each floor to accommodate the visually impaired. The smart elevators are designed to be cost saving by conserving energy when usage is low, while also optimizing efficiency



of use during our peak operational hours.

We hope you enjoy the improvements we are making to better serve and provide you with more modernized facilities.

“VA helped me get back on my feet.”



Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
va.gov/homeless (877) 424-3838

Are you, or do you know a homeless Veteran?

We can, and are here, to help! Our Homeless Programs Services can assist with:

- Health Care for Homeless Veterans
- Emergency Housing
- Rental Assistance
- Permanent, supportive housing
- Legal Assistance
- Social services assistance

Call (215) 823-5800 and ask for Homeless Programs. If afterhours call the VA's 24-Hour Homeless Hotline at (877) 424-3838. If you see or know of a Veteran in Crisis immediately call (800) 273-8255 and press "1" for Veterans.





Major Expansion Changes – Big Wins for Veterans!

Previously: VA required a connection between the need for personal care services and the qualifying serious injury.

Expansion Changes: In addition to expanding to pre-1975 era Veterans, the enhanced PCAFC eliminates the need for a connection between personal care services and the qualifying serious injury. It also redefines serious injury to now include any service-connected disability — regardless of whether it resulted from an injury, illness or disease. Both these changes greatly expand program eligibility.

Why This is Important: In most cases, the eligible Veteran has multiple conditions that may warrant a need for personal care services. A Veteran's needs may be so complex that it can be difficult to determine what specific condition, out of many, causes the need for personal care services.



Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Benefits

Benefits for eligible caregivers include:



Education and training



Respite care



Access to healthcare insurance
(If caregiver is otherwise uninsured)



Wellness contact



Mental health counseling



Travel and per diem compensation
(when traveling for a Veteran's VA healthcare appointment)



Financial stipend

How to Contact a Caregiver Support Coordinator:

Veterans and caregivers can find their local Caregiver Support Coordinator by...



Calling the Caregiver Support Line at **1-855-260-3274** - Toll free - Expanded Hours
(Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET; Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET)



Using the Caregiver Support Coordinator locator tool at www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp

Online application available
<https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers>

Veteran Spotlight



SGT Donald Webster, US Marines (RET)

Each edition we will 'Spotlight' a Veteran who continues to serve. The stories are from the Veterans themselves. Meet Sgt. Donald Webster, retired US Marine and Philadelphia native. Sgt. Webster was recently recognized by the City of Philadelphia for his lifelong service to his community. He is the father of four, three daughters and one son. One his children, a daughter, followed in his footsteps and joined the Air Force rising to the rank of Buck Sergeant.

I was born and raised in Philadelphia and graduated from Dobbins Vocational High School in January 1954. During my high school studies, I learned the electrician's trade. When I graduated, there were no jobs available in my field, so I had to make another career choice. I decided to join the United States Marines. I served from 1954 until 1962 attaining the rank of Sergeant. My experience in the Marines helped me in so many aspects of life and most importantly the need to, "Care for Those Who Has Borne the Battle and for His Widow, and His Orphan," as stated by President Abraham Lincoln. I stand by this statement as I now serve in the community assisting those in need.

Upon returning home from the military, I landed a job with the United States Mint. My duties included supervising the importation and exportation of U.S. minted coins. After several years, I was chosen as an Assistant Forman for the Counting Department. I received several accolades while in this role. I was instrumental in finding errors with the bagging of the coins which became a federal security issue and I

worked alongside the FBI in resolving these issues.

While working full-time, I was invited to join a community group called CRASH (Concerned Resident Association of Stenton Hills). The first year we organized community softball games for the youth which brought the community together in keeping the youth active in sports and away from disruptive things they could otherwise get involved in. We had the participation of more than thirty parents, which was rare. I felt honored and happy to be a part of this community group. It was overwhelming to see the parents and children bond closer together. In addition, we started having bowling parties to raise money for the kids. The money raised was used to purchase team shirts, caps, equipment, and trophies. After five years we organized the community youth basketball and baseball leagues, which competed in various city leagues.

My concern and care for the community extended to assisting families or individuals that needed financial assistance, food, and physical support. It gives me great pleasure helping others in need.

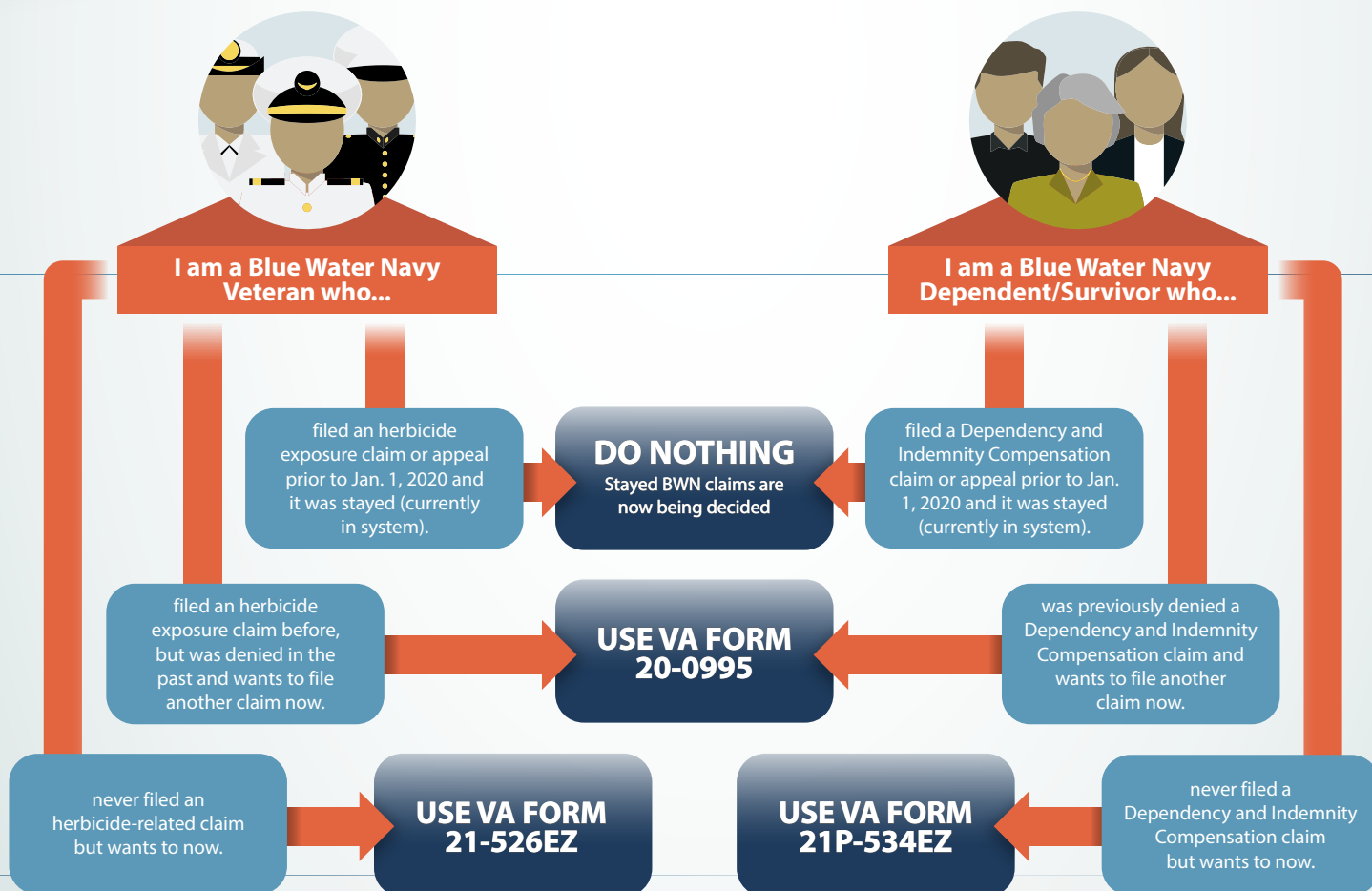
During my life journey I have had the opportunity to do many things and meet many great people. I am grateful for the many experiences and look forward to continuing to serve.



BLUE WATER NAVY ACT TOOK EFFECT ON JANUARY 1, 2020

NAVIGATING THE BLUE WATER NAVY CLAIMS PROCESS

The Blue Water Navy (BWN) Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 extended the presumption of herbicide exposure, such as Agent Orange, to Veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) encourages BWN Veterans, dependents, and survivors to file a claim for disability compensation if they believe they are entitled.



WAYS TO FILE A CLAIM

- ▶ If you are a Veteran, apply using the guidance at <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim>
- ▶ If you are a dependent or survivor of a Veteran, apply using the guidance at <https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation>
- ▶ Contact VA-accredited Veterans Service Organization Representative or claims agent by searching here: <https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp>
- ▶ Go to a VA regional office and have a VA employee assist you. You can find your regional office on our Facility Locator page at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp>

Additional information and resources about the Blue Water Navy Act, eligibility requirements and how to file an initial or supplemental claim can be found online at <https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/blue-water-navy.asp>

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Enhanced VA Options Under the MISSION Act:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR VETERANS

This Covers Six Topics

1 HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY

VA provides a comprehensive medical benefits package to all Veterans who are enrolled through an annual patient enrollment system that categorizes Veterans based on different priority groups. Eligible Veterans can use VA health care services nationwide, including through mobile health clinics that serve rural areas and via telehealth (care through a phone or computer) in your home or on the go.

2 COMMUNITY CARE ELIGIBILITY

You may be able to receive care from a provider in your local community if you meet specific criteria. Generally, Veterans must be enrolled with VA to receive care, although some Veterans are not required to enroll to receive care. Eligibility further depends upon your individual health care needs or circumstances. It is important to remember that under the Veterans Community Care Program, in most instances VA must authorize your care before you receive it.

Under the MISSION Act, there are six different eligibility criteria for community care. Meeting any one of these criteria for the specific care you need means you are eligible to elect to receive that care either through direct VA care or a community provider in VA's network:

- ▶ The specific care you need is not provided by VA at any facility
- ▶ You reside in a U.S. state (AK, HI, or NH) or territory (Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, or U.S. Virgin Islands) that does not have a full-service VA medical facility
- ▶ "Grandfathered" eligibility based on residence and the 40-mile eligibility criterion from the Choice program
- ▶ The specific care you need is not available within designated access standards
- ▶ You and your referring clinician decide it is in your best medical interest to receive the specific care you need in the community
- ▶ VA has designated the VA medical service line delivering the specific care you need as not providing care that complies with VA's standards for quality



3 URGENT/WALK-IN CARE

VA will offer an urgent/walk-in care benefit for minor injuries and illnesses, such as pink eye or ear infections. To be covered by this benefit, you must be enrolled in the VA health care system and have received care from VA within the 24 months prior to seeking this care to be eligible for this benefit. Eligible Veterans can seek this care from an urgent care facility or walk-in retail health clinic that is part of VA's community provider network, but not all urgent care facilities or walk-in retail health clinics are in VA's network. VA will provide additional information on this benefit.

4 COPAYMENTS AND INSURANCE

Like other health care providers, VA may charge a copayment for health care. The copayment amount may be based on your enrollment priority group, the type of health care service you receive, and your financial situation. If a VA copayment applies, you are responsible for that amount whether your care is furnished directly by VA or through a community provider.

VA may bill your health insurance for medical care, supplies, and prescriptions. As a result of the MISSION Act, VA no longer requires your permission to bill your health insurance carrier for health care related to a sensitive diagnosis. If you would like to submit a request to restrict this process, please contact your local VA facility's privacy officer.

If you have other forms of health care coverage (such as Medicare, Medicaid, TRICARE, Indian Health Service, and tribal health), you can use VA health care benefits along with these plans.

To learn more, contact your local VA medical center or visit www.missionact.VA.gov and click:

- ▶ VA Health Care and Other Insurance
- ▶ Indian Health Service/Tribal Health Program (IHS/THP)

5 ACCESS STANDARDS AND STANDARDS FOR QUALITY

VA is establishing designated access standards based on the type of care you need, how long you have to wait to receive that care, and your average driving time to receive that care. We are also establishing standards for quality that focus on domains such as timely care, effective care, safe care, and Veteran-centered care. Within each of these domains are specific quality measures. VA is applying both access standards and standards for quality of care it furnishes in VA facilities and is working to ensure quality of care in the community also meets applicable standards. As VA continues to develop and refine these standards, we will provide additional information.

6 COMPLAINT AND APPEALS PROCESS

VA is committed to delivering an excellent care experience every time. We know that concerns arise, and we're here for you. Patient advocates at your facility can assist with almost any problem you may experience. VA has different processes for clinical and non-clinical appeals, and the patient advocate can ensure your concern is handled appropriately.



TALKING WITH A VETERAN IN CRISIS

You don't have to be an expert to ask if someone is going through a difficult time or having thoughts of suicide. If you notice changes in a Veteran's behavior or moods and you think they might be in crisis, it's time to respond. The simple act of having a conversation can help save a life.

Here are some ways to approach a conversation with a Veteran who may be suicidal.

First, assess the situation to determine if the Veteran may be in **imminent danger**. Check to see if there are any harmful objects in the area, such as firearms, sharp objects, or lethal drugs. Those at the highest risk for suicide often have a specific suicide plan, the means to carry out the plan, a time set for doing it, and an intention of following through with it.

Asking whether a Veteran is having thoughts of self-harm or suicide may seem extreme, but it is important. Although many people may not show clear signs of intent to harm themselves before doing so, they will likely answer direct questions about their intentions when asked. **Remember, asking if someone is having suicidal thoughts will not give them the idea or increase their risk.**

However, some of those who are at risk may not admit that they plan to attempt suicide. In case the Veteran won't talk about it, be sure to look for warning signs in the box to the right.

Safety Issues:

If you believe a Veteran is at high risk and has already harmed himself or herself, you need to call local emergency services at 911.

- **Never** negotiate with someone who has a gun. Get to safety and **call 911**.
- If the Veteran has taken pills or harmed himself or herself in some way, **call 911**.

Veterans who are in emotional distress and are showing warning signs for suicide can be connected to the 24-hour **Veterans Crisis Line**: Call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, use the **online chat**, or **text to 838255**. Caring, specially trained responders are available to provide free, **confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year**. Responders are available to speak to Veterans and their caregivers, family members, or friends.

Warning Signs of Imminent Suicide Risk

Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities that could lead to death, such as driving fast or running red lights — seemingly without thinking

Showing violent behavior such as punching holes in walls, getting into fights, or engaging in self-destructive violence; feeling rage or uncontrolled anger; or seeking revenge

Giving away prized possessions, putting affairs in order, tying up loose ends, and/or making out a will

Seeking access to firearms, pills, or other means of harming oneself

If you and/or the Veteran are not in imminent danger, start a conversation to help the Veteran open up and to find out how you might be able to help. You can ask questions such as:

- "When did you first start feeling like this?"
- "Did something happen that made you begin to feel this way?"

When responding to answers from a Veteran, remember that simple, encouraging feedback goes a long way in showing support and encouraging help-seeking:

- "You're not alone, even if you feel like you are. I'm here for you, and I want to help you in any way I can."
- "It may not seem possible right now, but the way you're feeling will change."
- "I might not be able to understand exactly what you're going through or how you feel, but I care about you and want to help."

Even for Veterans who do not appear to be suicidal, it is important to direct them to resources to help them face mental health challenges and more.

For more information about the Veterans Crisis Line, visit [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net)

For more information about VA's mental health resources, visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov

For access to more than 400 stories of strength and recovery from Veterans and their family members, visit [MakeTheConnection.net](https://www.maketheconnection.net)

Annie Messages Can Advise You About Coronavirus



If the new coronavirus (COVID-19) is causing you concern, Annie may be able to help. Annie is VA's automated text messaging app that sends health information and reminders to Veterans. Any cellphone with texting capabilities can receive Annie messages.

Annie's **Coronavirus Precautions** protocol messages can help you monitor viral symptoms and know when to contact your VA care team or a nurse triage line for additional care. The messages also provide general wellness tips and education on precautions you can take to help prevent the contraction of coronavirus.

How to Set Up Annie

Follow these steps to get started. If you already receive Annie messages for other protocols, skip to Step 6.



Step 1: Go to the Website
veteran.mobile.va.gov/annie-vet



Step 2: Log In
Log in using your My HealthVet Premium, DS Logon Level 2, or ID.me account. Find out how to get a secure login account at **mobile.va.gov/login-information**.



Step 3: Consent to Participate
Read the consent information. Scroll to the end and select the consent box.



Step 4: Set Up Your Annie Account
Complete the fields under the **Information Messages, Preferences**, and **Patient Info** tabs. Select **Submit**, which will take you to a screen saying your registration was a success.



Step 5: Confirm Participation
You will receive a message from Annie asking you to confirm your participation. Reply to the message with the word **Start**.



Step 6: Subscribe
To subscribe to the Coronavirus Precautions protocol, text Annie (75338) the words **SUB COVID**.



Taking charge of your health — one text at a time.

For detailed instructions, visit Annie online:

mobile.va.gov/annie

CAMP LEJEUNE HEALTH *and* DISABILITY BENEFITS

Benefits for Camp Lejeune Veterans and family members include health care for 15 conditions listed in the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012.

Veterans can receive disability and health care benefits for eight presumptive disease conditions associated with contaminants in the water at Camp Lejeune.

HEALTH

Health care and health care funding assistance to Veterans and family members who lived on Camp Lejeune and have one of the covered conditions.

Qualifying health conditions include:

- Bladder cancer
- Breast cancer
- Esophageal cancer
- Female infertility
- Hepatic steatosis
- Kidney cancer
- Leukemia
- Lung cancer
- Miscarriage
- Multiple myeloma
- Myelodysplastic syndromes
- Neurobehavioral effects
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Renal toxicity
- Scleroderma

FOR INFORMATION

VA Health Care 1-877-222-8387

VA Benefits 1-800-827-1000

CL Family Health Care 1-866-372-1144

www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/

<https://explore.va.gov/disability-compensation>

www.clfamilymembers.fsc.va.gov/

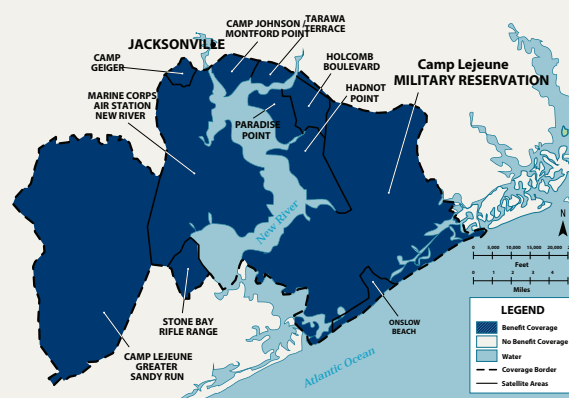
DISABILITY

The presumption applies to active duty, reserve, and National Guard members exposed to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune who later developed one or more of the following eight conditions:

- Adult leukemia
- Aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- Bladder cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Liver cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

Family members are not eligible for disability benefits.

CAMP LEJEUNE DISABILITY BENEFIT COVERAGE AREA



ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Stationed at/lived on Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VETERANS:

Choose VA and be a part of your health care team by providing current and correct information.

PLEASE review and update your home address, telephone contact information, insurance information and email address. We need to know how to contact you, where to send your medications, and how to bill your insurance company to provide you with the best care.

You can update your information in any of these convenient ways:

- Directly on the kiosks
- By speaking with the clerk at the outpatient clinics
- At the Enrollment/Eligibility desks
- When you call the Call Center (215-823-4014) to schedule an appointment
- Through [My Health eVet](#) follow the instructions on how to send a secure message to request an update to demographic information

Billing private insurance companies for non-service connected care helps VA control costs and that benefits ALL Veterans.

Veterans, when you check in for your appointments, PLEASE review and update your home address, telephone contact information, insurance information and email address.

WHY is this information important? Updated contact information is important so we know how to contact you, where to send your medication, where to send beneficiary travel checks, and for any other reason in case we need to reach out to you.

VA asks you to provide insurance information so we can bill your insurance provider for any care, supplies or medicines we provide to treat non-service connected conditions. By law we do not bill Medicare or Medicaid, but we may bill Medicare supplemental health insurance for covered services.

How does it help me to give VA my health insurance information? Funds received from your private health insurer for non-service connected care will be used to offset part—or all—of your VA copayment.

Also, your private insurer may apply your VA health care charges toward your annual deductible (the amount of money you pay toward your care each year before your insurance starts paying for care).

The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center (CMCVAMC) has established the Fiscal Year 2021 Veteran Town Hall schedule to provide the Medical Center and Veterans an opportunity to share information. We will be publishing the schedule quarterly in each of the Choose VA quarterly publications.

The CMCVAMC's Veteran Town Hall 4th Quarter meeting dates are as follows:

September 28, 2021 – 6 p.m. Gloucester CBOC-**Women Veterans-Only** Town Hall

October 28, 2021 – 6 p.m. Victor J. Saracini CBOC Veterans Town Hall In-Person and Virtual

November 23, 2021 - 11 a.m. CMCVAMC In-Person and Virtual Town Hall and Veterans Month Celebration (Special Guests)



VETERAN

Town Hall



VA

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center

**3900 Woodland Avenue
Philadelphia PA 19104
(215) 823-5800
(800) 949-1001**

Burlington County VA Outpatient Clinic
3000 Lincoln Drive East, Suite E
Marlton, NJ 08053
(844) 441-5499

West Philadelphia VA Outpatient Clinic
6232 Market Street, Suite 100
Philadelphia, PA 19139-2922
(215) 222-7540

Camden VA Outpatient Clinic
300 South Broadway, Suite 103
Camden, NJ 08104
(877) 232-5240

Gloucester County VA Outpatient Clinic
211 County House Road
Sewell, NJ 08080-2525
(877) 823-5230

Victor J. Saracini VA Outpatient Clinic
433 Caredean Dr.
Horsham, PA 19044
(215) 823-6050



www.philadelphia.va.gov
www.facebook.com/PhiladelphiaVAMC
twitter.com/PhiladelphiaVAMC