



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Eastern Colorado Health Care System

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Media Advisory

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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VA ECHCS to host resource fairs, town halls for rural Veterans

AURORA, Colo. – VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS) will host resource fairs and town halls Aug. 8-12 for Veterans in five rural communities.

VA ECHCS provides health care to Veterans in Eastern Colorado and surrounding states. Through a series of resource fairs, Veterans, along with their spouses and caregivers, will get one-on-one support with understanding, accessing and using VA benefits and services.

VA ECHCS Director Michael Kilmer will finish the fairs with town halls, encouraging an exchange of information and feedback that will help VA health care meet Veteran needs in rural communities. The events kick off Aug. 8 in Burlington, continue Aug. 9 in Lamar; Aug. 10, La Junta; Aug. 11, Alamosa; and Aug. 12, Salida.

“I’m a big believer in Veterans returning home to supportive communities, where VA is the backbone of health care delivery,” said Kilmer, who encourages Veterans to get in-person assistance with their personal needs prior to the concluding public forum.

“Our Veterans will always benefit from community-level collaboration. Let’s keep discovering ways to work together. Let’s keep identifying local opportunities and challenges. Importantly, let’s strengthen the partnerships that help our nation’s Veterans access world class care.”

Kilmer said community input is used in developing VA health care infrastructure investment strategies. It’s vital to increasing access and improving outcomes in Eastern Colorado, including ways to jointly identify, test and evaluate innovative solutions for rural Veterans.

When rural Veterans overwhelmingly called for restoring in-person appointments with VA providers during the COVID-19 pandemic, VA ECHCS launched a “reverse telehealth” pilot program, whereby providers in rural clinics may offer telehealth to urban Veterans that are more adept to virtual care modalities.

“This model of care delivery,” said Kilmer, “it’s showing potential in increasing access to VA providers in our rural markets, while increasing capacity for virtual care in our urban markets.”

One-on-one support during resource fairs

During resource fairs, Veterans confirmed as eligible for VA health care will get assistance with enrolling and scheduling their first appointment. For more information on how to apply, including the requested documents, visit VA.gov/health-care/how-to-apply.

A licensed clinical social worker will explain long-term care, caregiver support, home health and applying for home improvement grants or resolving case management issues. A Veteran experience officer will ask about the moments that matter and offer help in resolving issues.

VA ECHCS Office of Community Care representatives can clarify how consults get processed and offer updates. Community providers can learn how to partner with VA through TriWest.

A social worker with the suicide prevention team can talk about screening for suicide risk, promoting connectedness, improving care transitions and increasing lethal means safety, as well as community engagement, coalition building and change initiatives for suicide prevention.

Veterans can learn about VA homeless programs and community-based initiatives. A program expert will explain what efforts are crucial to increasing permanent housing placements and enabling a full accounting of Veterans experiencing homelessness to keep it rare and brief.

“This is an important opportunity for our Veterans,” said Dennis Hunter, commander, American Legion Post 64, the Salida venue. “Come talk to VA professionals about your eligibility and care, then stay for the town hall to listen to and interact with their leadership.”

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Burlington VA Resource Fair, Town Hall

When: Monday, Aug. 8. Resource fair from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.; town hall, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Where: Ambulance Shed
1576 Lowell Avenue
Burlington, Colorado 80807

Lamar VA Resource Fair, Town Hall

When: Tuesday, Aug. 9. Resource fair from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.; town hall, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Where: Lamar Senior Center
407 East Olive Street
Lamar, Colorado 81052

La Junta VA Resource Fair, Town Hall

When: Wednesday, Aug. 10. Resource fair from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.; town hall, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Where: La Junta Senior Center
114 East 2nd Street
La Junta, Colorado 81050

Alamosa VA Resource Fair, Town Hall

When: Thursday, Aug. 11. Resource fair from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.; town hall, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Where: Colorado National Guard
Readiness Center
1877 Old Sanford Road
Alamosa, Colorado 81101

Salida VA Resource Fair, Town Hall

When: Friday, Aug. 12. Resource fair from noon to 2 p.m.; town hall, 2-3 p.m.

Where: American Legion Post 64
235 West 10th Street
Salida, Colorado 81201

Attached Photo



220624-0458 – Director Michael Kilmer, VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System, speaks with VA Secretary Denis McDonough about providing care in rural communities June 24 at PFC Floyd K. Lindstrom VA Clinic in Colorado Springs. (Courtesy Photo/VA ECHCS)