

VA

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Eastern Colorado Health Care System**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
Aug. 22, 2023**Press Release****FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**Terri L. Clinton, Public Affairs Officer
720-335-3242 (Cell Phone)
vhaechpao@va.gov**PACT Act enrollment period for combat Veterans ends Sept. 30**

AURORA, Colorado—Veterans who served in Iraq, Afghanistan and other post-9/11 combat zones may enroll in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits, a special enrollment period that ends Sept. 30.

As part of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act, Veterans who deployed to a combat zone, never enrolled in VA health care, and left active duty between Sept. 11, 2001, and Oct. 1, 2013, are eligible to enroll directly into VA health care through September.

The PACT Act is the largest expansion in VA benefits in generations. Since Aug. 10, 2022, the day the bill was signed, Veterans submitted more than 900,000 PACT Act-related claims, [according to the VA PACT Act performance dashboard](#). More than 344,000 Veterans enrolled in VA health care.

“If you left active duty between Sept. 11, 2001, and Oct. 1, 2013, you should sign up now,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough, about the special enrollment period for combat Veterans.

“Even if you don’t need this care now, you may need it in the future—and once you’re in, you have access for life,” he said. “But don’t wait. The deadline is Sept. 30 – so go to [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT) and apply today.”

The PACT Act made more than 300 health conditions “presumptive” for a service connection, [expanding VA benefits for millions of Veterans](#). If an eligible Veteran has one of the presumptive conditions, VA automatically assumes the condition was caused by the Veteran’s service and provides compensation and care, accordingly.

In Colorado, where more than 18,000 Veterans filed PACT Act-related claims in the past year, 8,500 Veterans enrolled in care. Of the nearly 54,000 Veterans screened for toxic exposures by VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS), which includes Denver metro and Pikes Peak areas, nearly half had at least one concern documented.

Identifying and documenting toxic exposures enables exposure-informed care, which may help Veterans benefit from early diagnoses and treatments. Veterans may also get connections and information about benefits, registry exams and clinical resources.

Veterans enrolled in VA ECHCS are offered walk-in screenings Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center in Aurora and PFC Floyd

K. Lindstrom VA Clinic in Colorado Springs. To request an initial screening by phone, send a message in MyHealthVet or leave a voicemail at 720-857-2511.

For more information on how to apply for VA health care, including the documents needed to determine eligibility, visit [VA.gov/health-care/how-to-apply](https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply).

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Attached photos



230809-3900 — Army Veteran Karen Bolden, of Colorado Springs, completes a toxic exposure screening with Leah Ford, a VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System nurse, during a three-day claims clinic Aug. 9 at the Colorado Army National Guard Readiness Center in Colorado Springs. (Courtesy Photo/VA ECHCS)



230421-3692 — Army Veteran Judson Willis, of Colorado Springs, completes a toxic exposure screening with Annaleah Ford, a VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System nurse, following a benefits brief April 21 in the El Paso County Veterans Services classroom in Colorado Springs. (Courtesy Photo/VA ECHCS)



Photo/VA ECHCS)

230421-3623 — Marine Corps and Army Veteran Dennis Levings, of Colorado Springs, completes a toxic exposure screening with Germaine Franciosi, a VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System nurse, following a benefits brief April 21 in the El Paso County Veterans Services classroom in Colorado Springs. (Courtesy