



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
VA Puget Sound Health Care System

# Live Whole Health

Official news from VA Puget Sound Health Care System

2023 Winter | Issue 14

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## Observances

### January

- 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

### February

- Black History Month
- American Heart Health Month
- 2: Wear Red Day
- 19: Washington's Birthday

### March

- Women's History Month
- 10-16: National Patient Safety Awareness Week
- 15: American Lake Campus 100 Year Anniversary Celebration - 3 to 7 p.m.



## Korean War Marine Veteran VA Puget Sound's Wall of Heroes honoree

U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Michael J. Kavanaugh was inducted to VA Puget Sound's Wall of Heroes during a ceremony held November 7, 2023.

More than 50 people joined 92-year-old

Kavanaugh at the Seattle Campus celebration including his family (daughter, Lynn Cullom; son-in-law, Robert Cullom; and grandchildren, Anita Dalton and James Dalton); Deputy Consul Kyungho Parks from the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Seattle; U.S. Marine Corps Recruiting Station Seattle Commanding Officer Major Edison Feisal; and representatives from the Offices of Senator Patty Murray, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal and Congresswoman Kim Schrier.

At 16, Sgt. Kavanaugh joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1950. Weeks after assignment with the Marine Corps 12th Infantry Battalion at Treasure Island, he deployed with 1st Marine Division, and fought at the Battle of Chosin Reservoir in the North Korean Mountains near Manchuria.

## Must file travel claims within 30 days

When the national emergency related to COVID ended, it brought back the 30-day requirement to file travel claims which had been on hiatus since the pandemic. To get started on your claim, visit [access.va.gov](https://access.va.gov) and select the Veteran Travel Claim Entry icon. From there, you'll be able log on using a DS-Logon Level 2 account, with a VA PIV card, with ID.me or with your My HealtheVet credentials. While you can still file a VA Form 10-3542 and drop it off at one of our main campuses, filing online ([www.va.gov/health-care/get-reimbursed-for-travel-pay/](https://www.va.gov/health-care/get-reimbursed-for-travel-pay/)) is encouraged as it is the fastest way to be reimbursed. When a paper claim is filed, the Beneficiary Travel Team must manually load and process that claim for the Veteran. This takes significantly longer, leading to substantial backlogs, increasing the wait time to be paid for all Veterans filing this way. Get started with QR code or visit <https://eauth.va.gov/accessva/>



## Change to Seattle/American Lake shuttle service

Our Seattle/American Lake Shuttle pick-up/drop-off service at Seattle Campus will only be at the main entrance (not at South Entrance). American Lake service remains the same.

## New drop-in vaccine clinics at American Lake and Seattle

VA Puget Sound is piloting a new Centralized Vaccine Clinic Program at our main campuses to make getting vaccines more convenient. Now through May 31, 2024, Veterans can get vaccines in Seattle (Building 100 East Clinic) and American Lake (Building 81, Primary Care Clinic), Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. No appointment needed. Vaccines are offered: flu, COVID-19, shingles, Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) and pneumococcal. Just drop by the East Clinic in Seattle or Primary Care at American Lake. Veterans interested in RSV vaccines should talk to their primary care team to see if getting one is right for them.

Need childcare during  
your appointment at American Lake? VA Puget Sound  
offers up to three hours of free, drop-in childcare for children  
(6-weeks to 12-years-old) of Veterans during a scheduled  
appointment at American Lake, Monday through Friday, 7:30  
a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Questions? 253-589-4223 or email  
[PugVeteranChildCare@va.gov](mailto:PugVeteranChildCare@va.gov)

## How to file a PACT Act claim

- You can file online, by mail, in person, or with the help of a trained professional.
- File a new claim online now – [www.va.gov/PACT](http://www.va.gov/PACT)
- Make an appointment with one of our counselors at [www.benefits.va.gov/seattle](http://www.benefits.va.gov/seattle)
- Call Veterans Benefits Administration hotline at 1-800-827-1000 (press 8 for PACT Act)
- Work with a Veterans Service Organization or the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs 800-562-2308.
- Call 800-MY-VA-411 (800-698-2411) to learn more.
- Once you initiated your claim, contact your primary care team to schedule your toxic exposure screening, if not already completed.

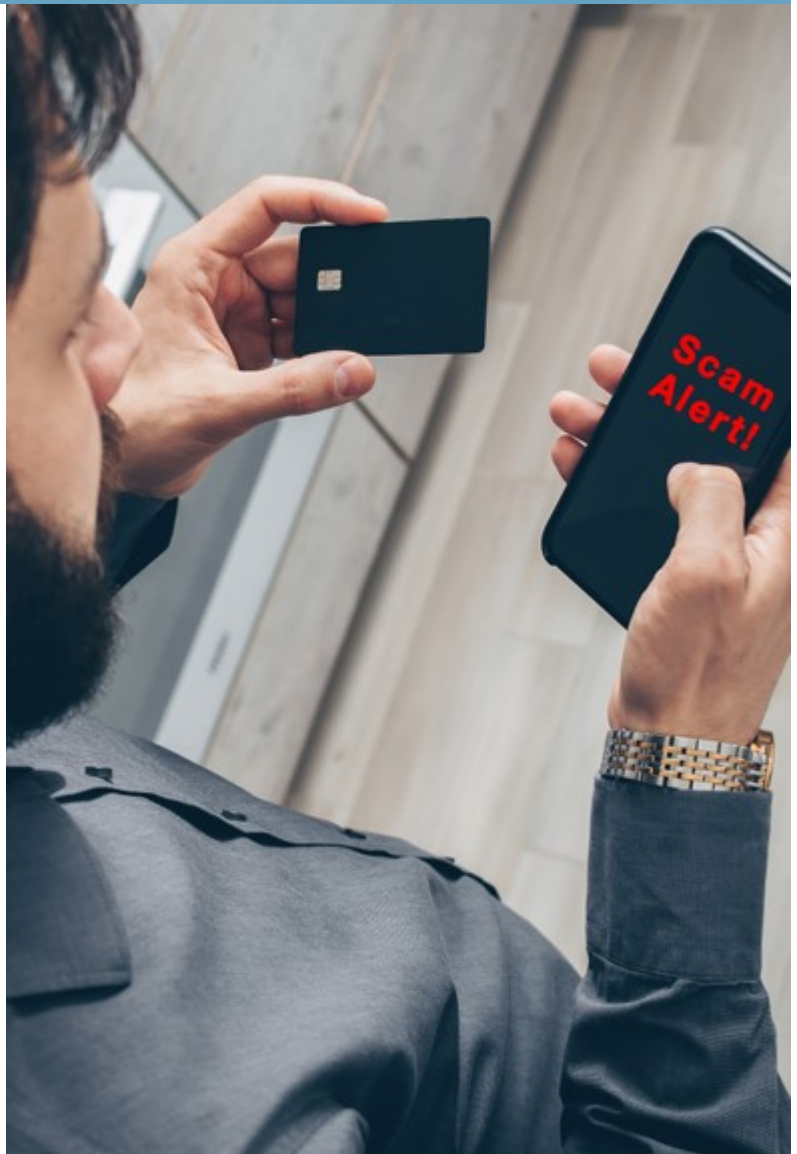
What you can do:

### Scams against Veterans

Veterans and their families are popular targets for financial fraud. Scammers may try to defraud you through misleading emails, texts, cold calls, or online ads. Do not provide your personal information to anyone other than a VA-accredited representative. To learn more or find a representative near you, visit <https://www.benefits.va.gov/vso/>

The VA's Fraud Prevention Kit is a partnership among several agencies to arm our Veterans about common schemes we're seeing, where to report fraud, and how to get help. Download it now—  
<https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/docs/fraud-protection-kit.pdf>

For health care-related fraud, please contact the VA Office of Inspector General Hotline at 800-488-8244. For suspected VA Benefits fraud call the VA Benefits Hotline at 800-827-1000.





Join us on March 15, 2024 from 3 to 7 p.m. at American Lake for music, food and a celebration of our Veterans to mark our first 50 patients admitted to our American Lake hospital!

## American Lake Campus 100 year anniversary in 2024

The American Lake campus began in 1923 as the 94th Veterans Hospital built by the War Department for the provision of care to World War I Veterans. The Secretary of the Army authorized the Veteran Bureau to use of 377 acres of the 87,000-acre Fort Lewis property. The Hurley-Mason Company was awarded contracts for the construction of the facility and work was soon started on Veterans Hospital Number 94. The site chosen on the western shores of American Lake soon became home for the new buildings of Spanish American architecture. Many of the stucco and terra cotta buildings are listed on the National Register of Historical Buildings and are still enjoyed by both patients and staff for their esthetic beauty.

While the medical center was dedicated in 1924 and chartered with a single mission - neuro-psychiatric treatment, it was on March 15, 1924, the first 50 patients were admitted to the hospital, by transfer, from Western State Hospital at Fort Steilacoom.

Over the years, American Lake grew from its original mission of a neuro-psychiatric facility to a multi-care facility. In the 1960's and 1970's Ambulatory Surgical Services, a 76-bed Nursing Home Unit, Blind Rehabilitation Services, a Substance Abuse Treatment Program, and a 60-bed homeless Domiciliary were added to expand the scope of care to Veterans. In the 1980's and 1990's, additional special programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation, a Residential Care Program, and a Post Traumatic Stress Treatment Program were added. In 1998, Building 81 was renovated and an addition added that allowed for relocation and expansion of Primary Care Services and a Women's Health Clinic.

Today, the American Lake team supports more than 300,000 outpatient visits each year. And we continue to invest in upgrading and expanding American Lake while preserving the historical character of this beautiful campus. Expansion of services at American Lake include our new Specialty Care Building expected to open in 2028. Other improvements at American Lake include the renovation of an existing space—Building 5—for a Women's Domiciliary program. While still in the design process, the estimated construction completion date will be in 2026.

## Free emergency health care for Veterans in suicidal crisis

Veterans in acute suicidal crisis can go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost – including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit.

Veterans in crisis or concerned about one, can contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. Dial 988 then Press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/Chat), or text 838255.

## WWII Veterans eligible for no-cost VA care

The VA announced in November that all World War II Veterans are now eligible for no-cost VA inpatient and outpatient health care.

Under this expansion, all WWII Veterans who served between Dec. 7, 1941, and Dec. 31, 1946, are now eligible for VA health care, regardless of their length of service or financial status. These Veterans will not have to pay inpatient or outpatient copays, enrollment fees, or monthly premiums.

Veterans who enroll may also keep their private providers, Medicare, and most other insurance to meet their care needs.

Veterans who were not approved for VA health care in the past due to income limits should apply again; income levels no longer apply due to this expansion. VA cannot automatically enroll Veterans in health care; WWII Veterans must apply for VA health care if they are not currently enrolled. Visit [www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/](https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/) for more information and to apply.

### Did you know?

Since 2013, VA Puget Sound's Interdisciplinary Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis—ALS—Center of Excellence has delivered timely, effective, and compassionate care for Veterans with ALS (Lou Gehrig Disease) and their families across the Northwest region. Our mission is to provide outstanding, holistic, personalized clinical care and support for Veterans, caregivers and families living with ALS. We are focused on what matters most. We serve as leaders and advocates in developing and disseminating pathways for innovative, Veteran-centered, interdisciplinary care that empowers ALS patients. We offer both comprehensive in-person and telehealth services based on the needs and preferences of our patients.

Our ALS team guides Veterans living with ALS and their families throughout the journey and assists them in maximizing the various VA benefits available, including coordinated medical care, durable medical equipment, home modification services, support and services to aid in activities of daily living. For more information call 206-716-5756.

## Message from our Executive Director:

### *Police using body and in-car cameras*



VA Puget Sound Veterans,

The mission of VA's police force is to protect anyone who comes to the VA. As a part of that effort, local VA police officers will now wear body cameras and use in-car cameras at VA Puget Sound Health Care System facilities.

These cameras will help build trust, demonstrate transparency, support officers, and strengthen our commitment to de-escalation and avoiding use of force.

What does this mean for you? As you come to VA Puget Sound for your medical appointments, you will notice that VA Police will have a new, small device, attached to their vest or coat. Rest assured, these cameras are not recording all the time. Footage from these cameras will *only* be used for police investigations and court proceedings, or for limited other purposes as allowed under federal law. Unless there is a clear and compelling need for a recording, no video will be recorded in locations where a reasonable expectation of personal privacy exists. Your privacy is very important to us, and we will ensure that we remain compliant with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy regulations at all times.

VA is implementing this policy as a part of President Biden's Executive Order 14074, "Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices to Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety," as well as the bipartisan Cleland-Dole Act of 2022. The executive order requires that all Federal law enforcement agencies use body-worn cameras to promote equitable, transparent, accountable, constitutional, and effective law enforcement practices, and the bipartisan Cleland-Dole Act requires that all VA Police officers wear body cameras that record and store video and audio.

At VA Puget Sound, it's our job to provide a safe and welcoming environment for you and your families. VA's great police officers make that possible each and every day. We thank them for implementing this new policy and for their service.

Thank you for embracing this positive change, and I look forward to seeing you around the campus!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Bundt".

Thomas Bundt, PhD., FACHE  
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Executive Director

# Veterans Crisis Line: 988 (press 1) or 1-800-273-8255 (press 1)

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## Important Phone Numbers

### Main phone:

- All care sites: 800-329-8387 (press 0 for operator)
- Seattle (S): 206-762-1010
- American Lake (AL): 253-582-8440

### Appointments—Primary/Specialty Care

Make, change or cancel:

- All care sites: 800-329-8387
- S: ext. 62306
- AL: ext. 71234

Then press 1 for primary care or press 2 for specialty care

### Chaplains: 206-764-2023

After-hours 800-329-8387 (press 0 for operator, and ask to leave message for on call chaplain)

### Community Care

800-329-8387 ext. 64545 (multiple choices based on your care needs)

### Community Outpatient Clinics

Edmonds 206-716-5858; Everett 800-329-8387; Mount Vernon 360-848-8500; Port Angeles 360-565-7420; Olympia 253-583-2621; Puyallup 253-583-3821; and Silverdale, 360-307-6920

### Community Resource & Referral Center

Homeless primary care, social work, housing, laundry, showers:  
206-764-5149

### Dental

206-764-2324 (S), 253-589-4005 (AL)

### Enrollment and Eligibility Office

206-277-1469

### Eye Clinic

206-764-2020 (S), 253-583-1232 (AL)

### Mental Health Addiction Treatment

206-277-3318 (S)

253-583-1759 (AL)

### Mental Health Outpatient: 800-329-8387

ext. 62007 (S) or ext. 71759 (AL)

### Nurse Advice Line 24/7

- 800-329-8387 (press 3)
- After-hours: 206-762-1010 (press 3)
- Billing: 800-329-8387, ext. 64545 (press 1)

### Patient Advocates

206-764-2160 (S), 253-583-2585 (AL)  
PUGPatientAdvocateGroup@va.gov

### Pharmacy: 800-329-8387 (press 1)

206-277-4000 (S), 253-583-3000 (AL)

### Prosthetics

206-764-2064 (S), 253-589-4014 (AL)

### Police

206-764-2899 (S), 253-589-4019 (AL)

### Social Work: 206-277-6866

### Travel Office Call Center: 206-764-2120

### Veterans Benefits Administration

Seattle Office: 800-827-1000

### Women's Health Program:

206-764-2441



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**Official news from:**

VA Puget Sound Health Care System  
Office of Public Affairs, MS S-00-PA  
1660 S. Columbian Way  
Seattle, WA 98108  
800-273-8255

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Central Appointments: 800-329-8387

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### Main Campuses

American Lake  
9600 Veterans Dr.  
Lakewood, WA 98493



Seattle  
1660 S. Columbian Way  
Seattle, WA 98108



### Outpatient Clinics



Edmonds  
21616 76th Ave. West,  
Suites 107 and 112

Port Angeles/North Olympic  
1114 Georgiana St.  
Port Angeles, WA 98362



Everett  
220 Olympic Boulevard  
Everett, WA 98203



Olympia  
Memorial Medical Plaza  
500 Lilly Rd. NE, Suite 201,  
Olympia, WA 98506

Puyallup  
Sunrise Medical Center  
11216 Sunrise Blvd. East  
Bldg. 3, Suite 209  
Puyallup, WA 98374



Mount Vernon  
307 S. 13th St.  
Suite 200  
Mount Vernon, WA 98274

Silverdale  
9177 Ridgetop Blvd. NW  
Silverdale, WA 98383



### Community Resource & Referral Centers

Community Resource  
& Referral Center  
305 S. Lucile St.  
Seattle, WA 98108  
206-764-5149



Community Resource  
& Referral Center  
419 South 2nd Street  
Suite 2  
Renton, WA 98057  
425-203-7201

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