



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Montana VA Health Care System

Veterans Eligible To Enroll With VA Sooner Than Expected

Qualified Veterans Can Enroll Directly With The VA On PACT Act March 5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HELENA, Mont.— Beginning today, all Veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military – at home or abroad – are now eligible to enroll directly in VA health care.

Under the PACT Act, a phased-in approach to enrollment eligibility was established. However, the VA recently announced that they were expanding coverage and eliminating the phased-in approach – meaning that millions of Veterans are becoming eligible for VA health care up to eight years earlier than written into law.

With this expansion, all Veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving our country – at home or abroad – will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits. That includes all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, and any other combat zone after 9/11. It includes all Veterans who deployed in support of the Global War on Terror.

This includes Veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty here at home – by working with chemicals, pesticides, lead, asbestos, certain paints, nuclear weapons, x-rays, and more.

“This is a big expansion of health care for Montana Veterans. We now have three new groups of Veterans eligible for VA health care years earlier than called for by the PACT Act,” said Montana VA Health Care System Interim Director, Duane Gill. “Even if you never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or serving on active duty here at home – you can enroll, too.”

Veterans do not need to be sick or file a claim in order to be eligible. Veterans only need to provide proof that they served in one of those locations or operations – or participated in one of the activities that could have exposed them to toxins or hazards.

To enroll, Veterans need to visit [Apply For Health Care | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](#) or call 1-800-MYVA411 to learn more and apply for VA health care today.

Montana VA serves over 47,000 enrolled Veterans across Montana—an area roughly 147,000 square miles in size. Veterans are cared for by a staff of 1,400 at 18 sites of care across the state. One third of Montana VA employees are Veterans. Veterans can connect to their VA healthcare records, information, and message their VA care teams 24 hours a day through the [MyHealthVet patient portal \(https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/how-to-use-mhv\)](https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/how-to-use-mhv). Montana VA information, updates, and events are available on the [Montana VA website \(https://www.va.gov/montana-health-care\)](https://www.va.gov/montana-health-care) and [Facebook page \(https://www.facebook.com/VAMontana\)](https://www.facebook.com/VAMontana).