

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

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VA opens health care eligibility for Vietnam, Gulf War, post-9/11 Veterans under PACT Act

WASHINGTON — On October 1, The Department of Veterans Affairs will expand and extend eligibility for VA health care for certain Veterans of the Gulf Wars and post-9/11 era.

This expansion will increase health care eligibility for hundreds of thousands of toxic-exposed Veterans. Additionally, VA has already expanded health care eligibility for certain Veterans of the Vietnam War. More detailed information about this expansion can be found on VA.gov/PACT.

President Biden signed the bipartisan [PACT Act](http://VA.gov/PACT) into law August 10, authorizing one of the largest expansions of VA health care and benefits in U.S. history. Veterans can go to VA.gov/PACT to apply for health care or learn more about what this bill means for them and their families.

“This expansion will bring generations of new Veterans into VA health care, and increase the health care benefits of many more, which will result in the one outcome that matters most: better health outcomes for Veterans,” said **Denis McDonough, Secretary of Veterans Affairs**. “I highly encourage these Veterans to apply now for the health care they’ve earned and deserve.”

Beginning on Oct. 1, Post-9/11 Veterans who did not previously enroll in VA health care will have a 1-year window to enroll if they:

- Served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, **or**
- Served in a combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after Nov. 11, 1998, **and**
- Were discharged or released from active service between Sept. 11, 2001, and Oct. 1, 2013.

Also on Oct. 1, Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War will be eligible for care. This includes Veterans who, in connection with service during such period, received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Service Specific Expeditionary Medal, Combat Era Specific Expeditionary Medal, Campaign Specific Medal, or any other combat theater award established by federal statute or executive order.

Starting now, Vietnam-era Veterans who served in the following locations and time periods are eligible for care: The Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975; Thailand at any U.S. or Royal Thai base between Jan. 9, 1962, and June 30, 1976; Laos between Dec. 1, 1965, and Sept. 30, 1969; Certain provinces in Cambodia between April 16, 1969, and April 30, 1969; Guam or American Samoa (or their territorial waters) between Jan. 9, 1962, and July 31, 1980; Johnston Atoll (or on a ship that called there) between Jan. 1, 1972, and Sept. 30, 1977.

While the expansion of PACT Act-related health care eligibility is staggered over the coming years, VA has made all [conditions outlined in the PACT Act](http://VA.gov/PACT) presumptive for benefits as of August 10, the day President Biden signed the bill into law. Eligible Veterans and survivors are encouraged to apply for those benefits now at VA.gov/PACT.

More information about VA’s implementation of the PACT Act can be found in this [fact sheet](http://VA.gov/PACT).

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