

**Kings County
Military and Veterans Coalition
October 10, 2023 - 2pm PST**

Microsoft Teams Meeting Agenda

**Meeting ID: 266 004 589 548 Passcode: d3WSa9
Join on your computer, mobile app or room device**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 323-433-2320,,839169384#](#) United States, Los Angeles

Phone Conference ID: 839 169 384#

Introductions

Previous Items

- **Veterans Service Office Status – M/Th, 8:00am – 5:00pm and Friday, 8:00am – 12:00pm**
 - **Lobby Hours:**
 - ***** Update: M-Th 8:30 am – 4pm; Friday*****
 - Certain questions may be answered by support staff, without having to speak with a VSR. Feel free to call anytime to ask for assistance. The Kings County Veterans Service Office can still complete the DMV Veteran Status Verification Form (VSD-001) for the Veteran Designation on your California driver's license/ID Card. We are no longer issuing the locally-generated Veteran I.D. cards.
- **Veterans Upward Bound - (See Attached)**

Speaker Topic: LGBTQ+ Veterans Care Services

LGBTQ+ Veterans Care Coordinator

F. J. "Charlie" Charles, Jr. MSN, MS, RN, CNS, LCDR/NC/USN

New Items –

- **Expanded Burial Benefits - (See Attached)**
- **Expanded Maternity Benefits - (See Attached)**
- **PACT Act Claims - (See Attached)**
- **VA Suicide Prevention - (See Attached)**

Round Table –

Next Meeting – November 14, 2023 – Location: MS Teams Meeting



Veterans

UPWARD

BOUND

What VUB has to offer:

- Individualized career assessment and planning
- College Application assistance
- Financial aid and GI Bill® information
- Help obtaining Military and other Transcripts
- Academic Counseling
- Access to other resources: study area, computer labs, student union

Some Eligibility Criteria

- Meet military service requirements
- Received other than a dishonorable discharge
- Completed a minimum of 180 days of active service
- U.S. Citizen, resident or applying for residency
- Low-income and/or first-generation
- Was a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces called to active duty for a period of more than 30 days; or was a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of a contingency operation on or after September 11, 2001

**SCAN TO
START AN
APPLICATION**



VA expands burial benefits for Veterans and their families

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

11:00 am

WASHINGTON — Today, VA announced that Veterans, and their families, caregivers, and survivors now have access to expanded burial benefits to help with end-of-life expenses related to a Veteran's gravesite, burial, funeral and transportation of remains to their final resting place. Burial benefits are available to individuals who pay for a Veteran's burial and funeral costs that are not reimbursed by any other organization. The updated burial benefits are:

- Expanded reimbursement of transportation expenses, to include costs for transporting remains, to state or Tribal Veterans' cemeteries in addition to previously eligible national cemeteries.
- Instituted a more generous single payment rate for non-service-connected burial benefits.
- Extended the VA plot or interment allowance to Tribal organizations.

"Last fiscal year, VA delivered more than 84,000 burial benefits to families of Veterans," said **VA Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs**. "Expanding burial benefits means we are able to ensure Veterans are honored in their final resting place, and assist their family, caregivers, and survivors during the difficult time of their loved one's passing."

VA provides burial benefits for all legal burial types, including cremation, burial at sea, and donation of remains to a medical school. Eligible individuals include a surviving spouse or legal partner, surviving child, parent or executor of the Veteran's estate. Additionally, VA may pay burial benefits to a funeral home or third party who handled burial arrangements for a Veteran whose remains are unclaimed.

Veterans are encouraged to plan with end-of-life benefits provided by VA. These benefits include VA life insurance, care preferences, survivor benefits, and burial benefits that can be applied for in advance of a Veteran's passing. Visit www.va.gov/plan-ahead to learn more.

There is no time limit to file for a service-connected burial, plot or interment allowance, or the transportation benefit. However, claims for non-service-connected burial benefits must be filed within two years of the Veteran's burial or cremation. A non-service-connected burial benefit is one where the cause of death was not related to military service.

Learn more about [burial benefits](#) and additional information regarding [flags, headstones, and markers](#).

###

VA expands maternity care coordination for Veterans

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9:00 am

WASHINGTON — Starting Oct. 1, Veterans will have access to maternity care coordinators from the beginning of their pregnancy to 12 months post-partum — an expansion from the previous end-date of 8 weeks post-partum. These coordinators help Veterans navigate health care inside and outside of VA, connect Veterans with care after delivery, ensure access to follow-up screenings, and [more](#). This means that all new mothers will have the support and resources they need from VA, regardless of where they give birth.

This expansion is a key step toward improving maternal outcomes for Veterans and part of the work that VA is doing to implement the [White House Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis](#). In addition to these maternity care coordinators, VA provides Veterans with the full range of [maternity care services](#) throughout pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum — including primary care, exams, tests, ultrasounds, newborn care, lactation support, and more.

Women Veterans are the fastest-growing cohort of Veterans who use VA, and VA currently provides health care to approximately 600,000 women Veterans — half of whom are of child-bearing age. Pregnancies in women Veterans using VA care have increased by more than 80% since 2014, from 6,950 pregnancies in 2014 to 12,524 in 2022.

“This expansion of care coordination is a critical step toward improving outcomes for Veteran mothers and their newborn children,” said **Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough**. “Now, Veteran mothers will know that they have one-on-one support throughout every step of their pregnancy — from the day it begins to one year postpartum.”

“Evidence shows that new mothers often need support and care coordination long after 8 weeks post-partum, which is why VA is taking action to support Veteran mothers for much longer after they give birth,” said **Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, MD**. “We will also screen pregnant and postpartum Veterans for social determinants of health, mental health risk factors, relationship health and safety, and more.”

“Extended follow-up care for postpartum Veterans is a great step forward, given that a significant proportion of poor maternal outcomes happen later in the postpartum period,” said **Acting Chief Officer for VA Office of Women’s Health Sally Haskell, MD**. “Extending postpartum care coordination up to one year allows VA maternity care coordinators the ability to double the amount of contact with their patients to help improve the physical and mental health of both parent and child.”

VA maternity care coordinators also screen for social, physical, and mental health concerns; answer questions about billing; provide resources for childbirth education; and offer lactation consulting during pregnancy and after delivery.

VA understands the importance of having a solid support system during and after pregnancy, so along with extended maternity care, the department offers essential wraparound services. In addition to

primary care, this includes access to mental health care, housing assistance, and resources to address food insecurity. Learn more about [VA maternity care coordination](#).

###

Veterans and survivors filed more than 1 million benefits claims under the PACT Act

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

11:00 am

WASHINGTON — Today, VA announced that Veterans and their survivors have filed more than one million claims for toxic exposure-related benefits under the [PACT Act](#) since President Biden signed it into law Aug. 10, 2022. VA has processed more than 551,000 of these claims, granting 77.9% of them and awarding more than \$2.2 billion in earned benefits to Veterans and survivors. Supporting Veterans and their families is a core pillar in President Biden’s Unity Agenda for the nation, and today’s announcement helps deliver on his promise to comprehensively address military related toxic exposure.

Thanks to the largest outreach campaign in VA history, Veterans and survivors are applying for their earned benefits at record rates. In this fiscal year alone, Veterans and survivors have submitted 2.29 million total claims (PACT and non-PACT) — 40.4% more year-to-date than last fiscal year, which was the previous all-time record. Veterans have also submitted more than 2.1 million “[intents to file](#)” during this fiscal year — 53.1% more than all of last fiscal year and also an all-time record.

The PACT Act is the biggest expansion of Veteran health care and benefits in decades. VA encourages all [eligible](#) Veterans and survivors to [file a claim](#) — or [submit their intent to file a claim](#) — for PACT Act-related benefits now.

Partly due to the PACT Act, VA is delivering more care and more benefits to more Veterans than ever before. Key results to date include:

- **Delivering benefits to Veterans and their survivors:** VA has processed 1.85 million total Veteran claims (PACT and non-PACT) thus far in this fiscal year — 15.7% more to date than last fiscal year and already surpassing last year’s all-time record total of 1.7 million claims processed.
- **Increasing Veteran access to health care:** Since Aug. 10, 378,995 Veterans have enrolled in VA health care. This includes more than 158,691 enrollees from the PACT Act population (Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 era Veterans).
- **Screening Veterans for toxic exposures:** More than 4.4 million enrolled Veterans have received 5-minute screenings for toxic exposures from VA under the PACT Act.

Right now, there is also a [special enrollment period](#) for Veterans to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits. Specifically, until 11:59 p.m., local time, Sept. 30, 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 in VA health care without first applying for disability compensation benefits. VA encourages all of these Veterans to visit [VA.gov/PACT](#) or call 1-800-MYVA411 to learn more and sign up for VA health care before the deadline.

VA is delivering health care and benefits at record rates partly due to a dramatic increase in hiring at VA. For the first time in VA’s history, the Veterans Health Administration has over 400,000 employees and the Veterans Benefits Administration has over 31,000 employees — and both organizations are growing

at the fastest rates in 20 years. Moving forward, VA will continue to modernize and expand capacity to deliver health care and benefits to Veterans as quickly and effectively as possible.

For more information on VA's implementation of the PACT Act, visit the [PACT Act Dashboard](#). VA is publishing this dashboard every other Friday to document the implementation of this legislation and showcase its impact on Veterans and survivors. The next dashboard, which will reflect the data in this release, will publish on Sept. 15.

Veterans and survivors may apply or learn more about the PACT Act by visiting [VA.gov/PACT](#) or calling 1-800-MYVA411.

###

VA awards \$52.5 million in Veteran suicide prevention grants, announces key updates in the fight to end Veteran suicide

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12:00 pm

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced several critical steps forward on its Veteran suicide prevention initiatives, including \$52.5 million in new Veteran suicide prevention grants, a new set of Veteran suicide prevention public service announcements (PSA), and — for the first time — statistics on the impact of VA's [new program](#) offering free emergency medical care to Veterans in acute suicidal crisis at any VA or non-VA health care facility. Specifically, more than 32,000 Veterans in acute suicidal crisis have received free emergency health care under the [new, life-saving VA policy](#).

“There is nothing more important to VA than preventing Veteran suicide — nothing,” said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. “One Veteran suicide is one too many, and VA will continue to use every tool at our disposal to prevent these tragedies and save Veterans’ lives.”

Ending Veteran suicide is [VA’s top clinical priority](#) and a key part of President Biden’s [Unity Agenda](#). **Key Veteran suicide prevention updates include:**

- **VA awards \$52.5 million in Veteran suicide prevention grants:** Today, VA announced that it is granting more than \$52 million to 80 community-based organizations in 43 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and American Samoa as a part of the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program. These grants will help these organizations provide or coordinate the provision of suicide prevention services for eligible Veterans and their families. For more information and the list of awardees, visit the [Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grants website](#).
- **More than 32,000 Veterans in suicidal crisis have gotten free emergency health care under [new VA program](#):** Since Jan. 17, 2023, Veterans in acute suicidal crisis have been able to 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. Thus far, this expansion of care has helped prevent Veteran suicide by providing no cost care to 32,469 Veterans in times of crisis.
- **VA launches new Veteran suicide prevention PSAs:** This month, VA and the Ad Council released new PSAs as part of the ongoing national campaign, “*Don’t Wait. Reach Out.*” These include one [set of PSAs](#) directed by Academy Award–winning film director and screenwriter Kathryn Bigelow, and another [PSA featuring Metallica](#) — both of which encourage Veterans to visit [REACH](#) to get the support they need. Since the initial launch of the “*Don’t Wait. Reach Out.*” Campaign in October 2021, the campaign has reached more than 7.9 million Veterans and resulted in more than 3.5 million visits to [REACH](#).
- **Shortened Veterans Crisis Line number passes 1 million calls, texts, and chats:** Since the launch of “Dial 988 then press 1” as the shortened Veterans Crisis Line number in July 2022, the crisis line has fielded more than 1.1 million contacts. This includes over 953,000 calls, an increase of 12.1% from the same timeframe from the previous year, with an average speed to answer of

9.48 seconds. There was also a year-over-year increase in text messages (58.1%) and online chats received (10%). This increase in contacts is evidence that the hotline is working —Veterans in crisis are getting the help they need at the moment they need it.

- **All 50 states and 5 territories are now participating in the [Governor's Challenge](#) to prevent Veteran suicide:** All 50 states, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S Virgin Islands have officially joined the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans and their Families. In a coordinated effort to implement the [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#) (PDF, 2.8MB, 12 pages), each state and territory has developed a strategic action plan focused on suicide prevention.
- **VA is now working with 1,500+ community-based coalitions to end Veteran suicide:** More than 1,500 local community coalitions are now working with VA to help prevent Veteran suicide. This initiative now reaches more than 11 million Veterans nationwide.

The [2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#) showed that Veteran suicides decreased from 2019 to 2020 (the most recent year for which we have data) and fewer Veterans died by suicide in 2020 than in any year since 2006. VA will release the 2023 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report later this Fall.

As a part of President Biden's [Unity Agenda](#) and the Biden-Harris Administration's [comprehensive plan to reduce military and Veteran suicide](#), VA has announced or continued several additional efforts to end Veteran suicide. In addition to the policies outlined above, VA has also awarded \$20 million through [Mission Daybreak](#), a [grand challenge aimed at developing innovations to reduce Veteran suicides](#); conducted an ongoing public outreach effort on [firearm suicide prevention and lethal means safety](#); and more.

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