

**Kings County
Military and Veterans Coalition
March 12, 2024 - 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:**
 - ***** M-Th 8:00 am – 5pm; Friday 8am - Noon*****
 - 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)**
- **Veterans Support Group - (See Attached)**
- **The Wall That Heals - (See Attached)**
- **New Beginnings Equine Therapy - (See Attached)**

Speaker Topic:

***Genny Twing, Navy Veteran/Work and Family Life Consultant-TAP
NAS Lemoore Fleet & Family Support Center***

New Items –

- **VA Expands Healthcare Eligibility - (See Attached)**

Round Table –

Next Meeting – April 9, 2024 – 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**



Veterans Upward Bound | West Hills College Lemoore

559-925-3350



Kings County Veteran's Support Group

Meets the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month
Time: 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Veteran's Memorial Hall
401 N. Irwin Street
Hanford, CA 93230



KINGS COUNTY
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**For more information call (559) 852-2444
or visit kcbh.org**





NEW BEGINNINGS

AT CIRCLE T RANCH

New Beginnings at Circle T Ranch is a non-profit organization formed with a mission to improve the quality of life for people who suffer from PTSD, depression, addiction, and other psychological conditions. Participants of our program interact with horses in a safe, peaceful environment in ways that can help reduce stress, teach productive coping mechanisms, and facilitate solutions to real-life struggles. Participants will work with a certified Equine Specialist to guide you through a safe, positive experience with our horses.

The Horse Is The Key!

Horses have a unique way of making humans feel peaceful and calm. Their herd animal characteristics enable them to be:

- Non-judgmental
- Unbiased
- Sensitive
- Perceptive

The Connection

There is significant evidence of horses having a calming and healing effect on humans. Research suggests that activities and therapies involving interactions with horses can reduce symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and many other psychological conditions. Interactions with horses can improve the quality of life for people who are suffering. Our program aims to provide equine-therapeutic interventions to heal trauma, provide wellness, and provide positive coping strategies.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram
[\(559\) 288-9537](tel:5592889537)



THE WALL THAT HEALS

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL REPLICA & MOBILE EDUCATION CENTER



A PROGRAM OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND
FOUNDERS OF THE WALL

March 28 - 31, 2024

(Free to the public)

Merced College
3600 M Street
Merced, CA 95348

Presenting Sponsors:

**Mike and Lori Gallo
&
Linda and Kenny Jelacich**



For additional information, please visit
www.thewallthatheals-merced.com

**SIGN UP TO
VOLUNTEER:**



In one of the largest-ever expansions of Veteran health care, all Veterans exposed to toxins and other hazards during military service — at home or abroad — will be eligible for VA health care beginning March 5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 26, 2024

5:00 am

At the direction of President Biden, VA is expanding health care eligibility to millions of Veterans — including all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11 — years earlier than called for by the PACT Act

WASHINGTON — Today, VA announced that all Veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military — at home or abroad — will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care beginning March 5, 2024. This means that all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11 will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits. Additionally, Veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty in the United States will also be eligible to enroll.

As [directed by President Biden](#), this expansion of VA health care eliminates the phased-in approach called for by the PACT Act — meaning that millions of Veterans are becoming eligible for VA health care up to eight years earlier than written into law. This is a critical step forward because Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are proven to have better health outcomes than non-enrolled Veterans, and VA hospitals have dramatically outperformed non-VA hospitals in [overall quality ratings](#) and [patient satisfaction ratings](#). Additionally, VA health care is often [more affordable](#) than non-VA health care for Veterans.

VA encourages all eligible Veterans to visit [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT) or call 1-800-MYVA411 to learn more and apply for VA health care beginning March 5. Since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law on August 10, 2022, more than 500,000 Veterans have enrolled in VA health care.

“If you’re a Veteran who may have been exposed to toxins or hazards while serving our country, at home or abroad, we want you to come to us for the health care you deserve,” said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. “VA is proven to be the best, most affordable health care in America for Veterans – and once you’re in, you have access for life. So don’t wait, enroll starting March 5th.”

“Beginning March 5, we’re making millions of Veterans eligible for VA health care years earlier than called for by the PACT Act,” said **VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D.** “With this expansion, VA can care for all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or any other combat zone after 9/11. We can also care for 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. We want to bring *all* of these Veterans to VA for the care they’ve earned and deserve.”

In addition to expanding access to VA care, this decision makes it quicker and easier for millions of Veterans to enroll. Many Veterans believe they must apply to receive [VA disability compensation benefits](#) to become eligible for VA health care, but this is not correct. With this expansion and other authorities, millions of eligible Veterans can enroll directly in VA care – without any need to first apply for VA benefits.

This expansion of care covers Vietnam Veterans, Gulf War Veterans, Iraq War Veterans, Afghanistan War Veterans, Veterans who deployed in support of contingency operations for the Global War on Terror (Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve, and Resolute Support Mission), and [more](#).

This expansion also covers many Veterans who never deployed as a part of a conflict but were exposed to toxins or hazards while serving in the U.S. Specifically, under this expansion of care, any Veteran who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity (TERA) — at home or abroad – is eligible for VA health care. VA has determined that Veterans who were exposed to one or more of the following hazards or conditions during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training participated in a TERA: air pollutants (burn pits, sand, dust, particulates, oil well fires, sulfur fires); chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, depleted uranium with embedded shrapnel, contaminated water); occupational hazards (asbestos, industrial solvents, lead, paints including chemical agent resistant coating, firefighting foams); radiation (nuclear weapons handling, maintenance and detonation, radioactive material, calibration and measurement sources, X-rays, radiation from military occupational exposure); warfare agents (nerve agents, chemical and biological weapons); and [more](#). VA will use all available information to determine if Veterans participated in a TERA, including military records and service connection.

VA is executing a nationwide campaign to ensure that as many Veterans as possible enroll. To date, VA’s PACT Act outreach campaign has included more than 2,500 events nationwide, \$13 million in [paid advertising](#), 88,000 earned media clips, more than 400 million emails and letters to Veterans, VA’s first-ever text messaging campaign, the creation of a [one-stop-shop PACT Act website](#), and more. This is the largest outreach campaign in VA history, which has one goal in mind: ensure that all Veterans —and their survivors — get the health care and benefits they deserve under the PACT Act.

For more information about how the PACT Act is helping Veterans and their survivors, visit VA’s [PACT Act Dashboard](#). To apply for care or benefits today, visit [VA.gov/PACT](#) or call 1-800-MYVA411. More information on eligibility can be found at [VA.gov/PACT](#).

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