

POLK COUNTY VETERANS WINTER NEWSLETTER-2018

Greetings to all,

Even though it is considered fall right now as I write this letter, it sure feels like winter as I was sliding in to work this morning from all the ice. I am hoping for an easy winter myself this year, but, we'll see what happens.

The office has had a very busy year, especially with questions about health care with all the changes in Insurance plans. Therefore, we are seeing a lot of veterans with these and other questions. As always we are here to answer any questions you may have or find the answer to those questions. Also we have been very busy with compensation claims for many Veterans as well.

Just recently there has been a link found that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can cause or aggravate sleep apnea. If you are a Veteran that is suffering from both, contact our office and we will assist you with filing a claim. With that said, please contact our office for assistance that you may need for any Veterans Benefit assistance. We are always happy and proud to help our Nations Heroes.

The DAV is still looking for volunteer drivers to aid our veterans to doctor appointments made by the VA. The DAV van is housed in Crookston, so if you live in the vicinity and if you have some time on your hands to volunteer a few hours here and there, please contact our office for details.

We have now been in our new office for 5 months if you haven't had a chance to stop in to see us please do. We are in room 241 near the doors entering the Government Center from the parking lot.

That is enough business talk from me, please enjoy our winter newsletter and I wish you all a very Happy Holiday to you and your families.

Let it snow

*Kwite Ellen
Saurie*

VA PROSTHETIC'S



Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Services

VA Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Services (PSAS) is the largest and most comprehensive provider of prosthetic devices and sensory aids in the world. The term 'prosthetic' includes artificial limbs and any devices that supports or replaces a body part or function.

Our vision is to be the premier source of prosthetic and orthotic services, sensory aids, medical equipment and support

Eligibility

General eligibility for PSAS Services:

- Enrolled in the VA health care system, AND
- Have a medical need for a prosthetic service/ item.

Additional eligibility may apply for certain programs or equipment.

PSAS provides...

The VA Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Services (PSAS) provides the following items when medically indicated for Veterans:

- Ambulation and mobility aids: i.e. canes, walkers, rollators, knee rollers, and wheelchairs.
- Bathroom aids
- Assistive devices for daily living:
- Blood pressure cuffs
- Tens units and electrodes
- Eyeglasses and contact lenses
- Hearing and speech aids/ communication devices
- Aids for the blind/ low vision
- Respiratory equipment /home O2
- Patient lifts
- Surgical implants
- Hospital beds w/mattresses
- Post-mastectomy items
- Compression garments
- Orthotic devices (braces)
- CPAP Supplies
- Artificial Limbs/ orthotic devices
- Electronic Cognitive aids
- Wheelchair cushions
- Medication Organizers
- Modular ramps
- Diabetic socks/ shoes/ inserts
- Insulin Pumps

PSAS Contact Information:

Fargo: 701-239-3700 Ext 9-3039

Email/Skype:

VHAFARprosthetics@va.gov

Special Benefit Programs

Home Improvement & Structural Alterations (HISA) Grant

HISA grants provide medically necessary modifications to a Veteran's home which improve accessibility to their home, kitchen, bedroom, or essential bathroom functions. Applications for the grant can be obtained from the PSAS department. Available amounts (lifetime): \$6,800.00 for combined SC of 50-100% \$2,000.00 for all other service and non-service connected veterans.

Major Medical Equipment

PSAS provides major medical equipment. Major medical equipment requests start with the primary care physician. An evaluation from the Occupational Therapist is required to determine the type and style equipment that is needed. All requests are reviewed by the Major Medical Equipment Committee.

Auto Adaptive Equipment

This is a Veterans Benefits Affairs program that provides equipment and training necessary for certain Service Connected Veterans to enter, exit and operate a motor vehicle. Veterans can apply through the VBA Regional Office by completing VA Form 10-4502 via mail or online through ebenefits.gov.

Amputee Clinic

This is a bi-monthly clinic which utilizes the Minneapolis Amputee Clinic Team. The team works together with the amputee and the local or Fargo VA prosthetist to develop a detailed prescription which will meet the amputee's needs.

Maximizing Veteran Independence





U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Fargo VA Health Care System

VA COVERAGE OF AMBULANCE CLAIMS FOR EMERGENCY CARE

All ambulance claims must meet the "prudent layperson" standard for payment to be authorized. The "prudent layperson" standard is defined as a medical emergency of such nature that a prudent layperson would have reasonably expected that delay in seeking immediate medical attention would have been hazardous to life or health; an emergency medical condition manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) that a prudent layperson who possesses an average knowledge of health and medicine could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in placing the health of the individual in serious jeopardy, serious impairment to bodily functions, or serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.

When a Veteran is in need of emergency care that cannot be managed and treated by the VA facility where the Veteran is physically located (including Community Based Outpatient Clinics) and the Veteran is transferred out to a community provider that can provide the needed care the cost of such care and the ambulance service is covered by the VA for **ALL** Veterans.

Ambulance treatment at the scene without transportation to a hospital *is not* an authorized cost that the VA can cover under current law. If a Veteran dies on the way to a VA facility where the Veteran was accepted for transfer VA will cover the ambulance costs if the Veteran is eligible for the Beneficiary Travel benefit. **

Veterans that are transported by ambulance to a Community Hospital or Emergency Department from their home, work, a public space, etc. must be eligible for the Beneficiary Travel benefit ** for VA to have authority to pay for the ambulance care and transport.

Refusal of transfer. If a stabilized veteran who requires continued non-emergency treatment refuses to be transferred to an available VA facility, VA will make payment or reimbursement only for the expenses related to the initial evaluation and the emergency treatment furnished to the veteran up to the point of refusal of transfer by the veteran.

** Veterans eligible for the ambulance travel benefit are:

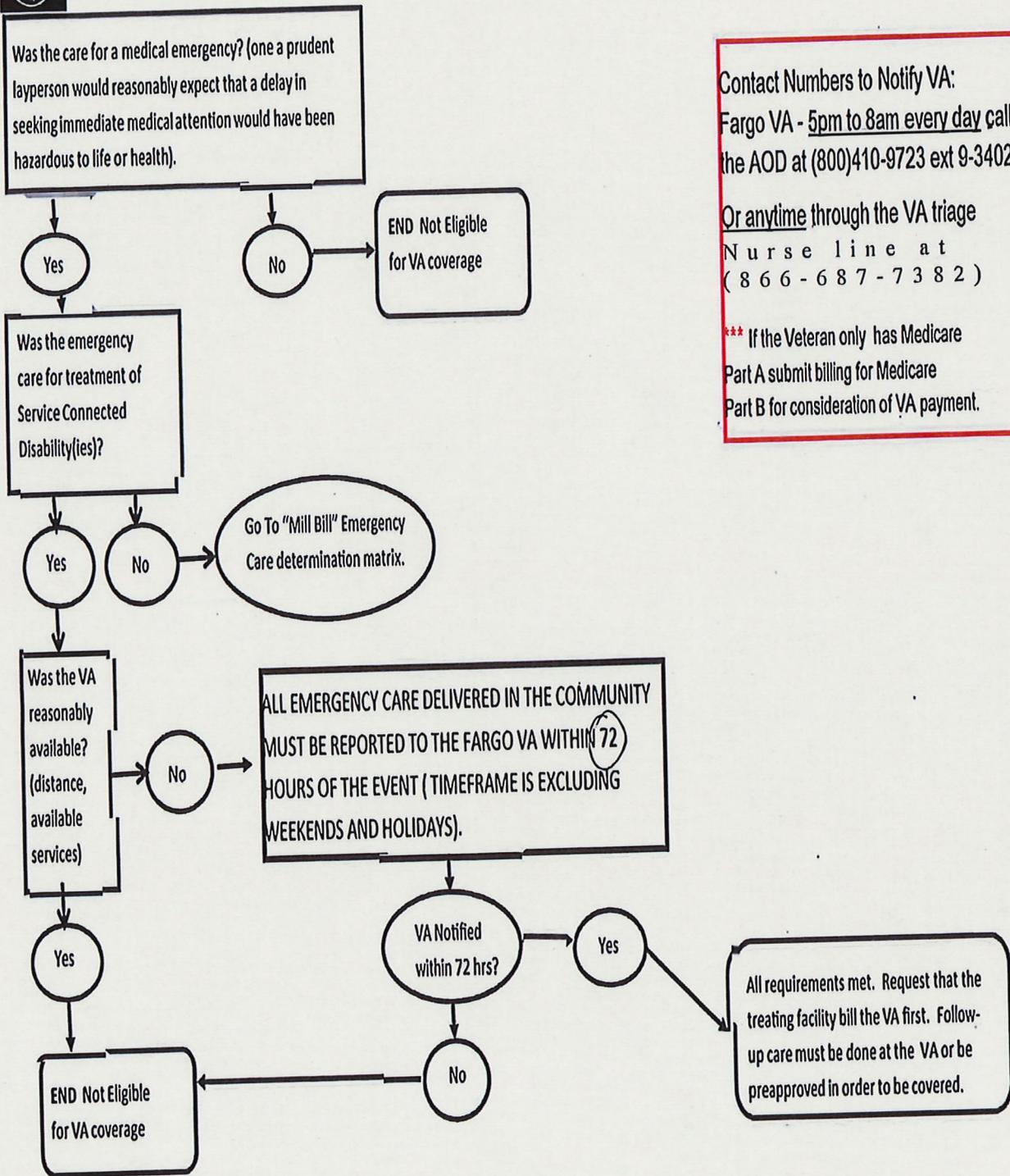
- ◆ Any Veteran who is rated at 30% Service Connected Disabled or greater by the Veterans Benefit Administration.
- ◆ Any Veteran who is treated for a Service Connected Disability rated at 10% or 20%
- ◆ Any Veteran on a VA Pension OR a Veteran whose reported previous year gross household income is at or below the pension rate payable if the Veteran were eligible for a pension.

There is no authority for VA to provide transportation through the Beneficiary Travel program for those who do not meet eligibility requirements



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
 Fargo VA Health Care System

SERVICE-CONNECTED NON-VA EMERGENCY CARE ELIGIBILITY MATRIX (38 USC §1728)



Contact Numbers to Notify VA:
 Fargo VA - 5pm to 8am every day call the AOD at (800)410-9723 ext 9-3402
 Or anytime through the VA triage Nurse line at (866-687-7382)
 *** If the Veteran only has Medicare Part A submit billing for Medicare Part B for consideration of VA payment.

VA, Walgreens collaborate to improve care coordination for Veterans

WASHINGTON — As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) efforts to improve care coordination for Veterans, the department is working with pharmacy services provider Walgreens to coordinate patient and pharmaceutical care for VA-enrolled patients.

With the click of a button, VA providers will be able to see the entire medication and immunization history of VA-enrolled patients who receive their prescription and immunization needs at Walgreens.

"This arrangement is the first of its kind and it's a strong collaboration," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

"Partnerships like this will help VA continue to improve the way we care for Veterans."

As it expands its community care program, VA actively refines its ability to track medication prescribed by community providers. Prior to the arrangement, VA providers would ask patients to inform them about medications filled at Walgreens. With the VA-Walgreens exchange, VA providers can now easily view medications directly that are prescribed to VA-enrolled patients by community providers and filled at Walgreens pharmacies.

For the past five years, VA and Walgreens have partnered to provide flu shots at no cost for enrolled Veterans, improving vaccination rates and access to immunizations.

VA exchanges standards-based medical information securely and electronically with participating community health care partners, such as Walgreens, to ensure the best possible care coordination and medication management. Currently, VA exchanges health information with over 170 community health care partners, representing 1,288 hospitals, 537 Federally Qualified Health Centers, 261 nursing homes, 8,649 pharmacies (including over 8,000 Walgreens pharmacies) and over 22,431 clinics.

Additional information about the VA Health Information Exchange Program can be found online at www.va.gov/vler.



The Norwegian Military are now putting a bar code on the side of all their ships. So when they come into port they can "Scan-Da-Navy-In"

VA updates the disability rating schedule related to skin conditions

WASHINGTON — Effective Aug. 13, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updated portions of the [VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities](#) (VASRD, or Rating Schedule) that evaluate conditions related to the skin.

The VASRD is the collection of federal regulations used by Veterans Benefits Administration claims processors to evaluate the severity of disabilities and assign disability ratings. VA is in the process of updating all 15 body systems of the VASRD to reflect modern medicine more accurately and provide clearer rating decisions.

“VA remains committed to providing Veterans the benefits they have earned at the highest quality,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “With modern medicine advancing at a rapid rate, it’s important to ensure VA’s disability rating schedule and rating decisions reflect these advancements.” No conditions were removed from the new skin rating schedule. However, several diagnostic codes were restructured or revised. The complete list of updates to the rating schedule for skin conditions is now available [online](#). Claims pending prior to August 13 will be considered under both the old and new rating criteria, and whichever criteria are more favorable to the Veteran will be applied. Claims filed on or after August 13 will be rated under the new rating schedule.

By updating the rating schedule for skin conditions, VA claims processors can make more consistent decisions with greater ease and ensure Veterans understand these decisions.

VA has issued several VASRD updates since September 2017, including updates for [dental and oral conditions](#), [conditions related to the endocrine system](#), [gynecological conditions and disorders of the breast and eye conditions](#).

VA releases health care benefit application for Spanish-speaking Veterans

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the Spanish version of the application for health benefits, as part of VA’s effort to simplify and improve the health care enrollment process for Veterans.

The new language version implements the VA Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans’ recommendation to provide Spanish versions of the application and instructions.

“Our Veteran population is made up of an increasingly diverse group of people,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Our nation appreciates the service and sacrifice of all Veterans, including Hispanic and Latino Veterans. And it’s our duty to expand the ways we communicate with all Veterans, so they’re properly informed about the benefits they’ve earned.”

According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, the number of living Veterans who identify as being Hispanic or Latino, as of Sept. 30, 2017, is nearly 1.5 million people. More than half a million Veterans already enrolled in the VA health care system self-identify as Hispanic or Latino.

The form is available at VA medical facilities and online at https://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-10EZ_Spanish.pdf

Veterans can apply for VA health care benefits online at <https://www.vets.gov/health-care/apply/>; by telephone at 877-222-VETS (877-222-8387) between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. (EST) Monday through Friday; at a VA health care facility; or by completing a hard copy of the form and mailing it to Health Eligibility Center, 2957 Clairmont Road, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30329-1647.

Forever GI Bill expands VA educational benefits

15 provisions enhance benefits for Veterans

WASHINGTON — Effective Aug. 1, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) implemented 15 more provisions of the [Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act of 2017](#), also referred to as the Forever GI Bill.

These provisions, in addition to the 13 implemented since the law was signed less than a year ago, will have an immediate and positive impact on Veterans and their families using VA benefits to pursue their educational goals.

"We are excited to get the word out about implementation of the provisions," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "From the day the Forever GI Bill was signed into law, VA, in collaboration with Veterans service organizations, state approving agencies and school certifying officials, has taken an expansive approach to ensure earned benefits are provided to Veterans in a timely, high-quality and efficient way."

Some of the provisions that began Aug. 1 include:

- Recipients of a Purple Heart awarded on or after Sept. 11, 2001, are now eligible for full Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for up to 36 months, if not already entitled.
- Military and Veteran families who have lost a family member can now reallocate transferred Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.
- Additional Guard and Reserve service now counts toward Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility.
- Post-9/11 GI Bill students may now receive monthly housing allowance for any days they are not on active duty, rather than having to wait until the next month; and

Expansion of the [Yellow Ribbon Program](#), which makes additional funds available for GI Bill students, now covers more students.

More provisions are scheduled related to science, technology, engineering and math benefit extensions; increased benefit levels; a pilot program for high-technology training geared toward "upskilling" Veterans to enter the workforce quickly; and another expansion of the Yellow Ribbon Program, which will be implemented by Aug. 1, 2022.

For more information, visit the [Forever GI Bill – Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act page](#).

Visit the [Education and Training webpage](#) for more information. For questions about GI Bill benefits, call the Education Call Center at 888-442-4551 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. (CST) Monday through Friday. Join the conversation via [Facebook](#) or follow Veterans Benefits Administration on [Twitter](#).

AS A WOMAN was watching a soap opera, her husband asked, "How can you cry over imaginary problems of people you've never met?" She replied, "For the same reason you scream and yell when a man you don't know makes a touchdown."

A POLICE OFFICER pulled a driver over and asked to see her license. After looking it over, he said to her, "Ma'am, it says here on your license that you should be wearing glasses." "Well, I have contacts," the woman replied. "Look, lady, I don't care who you know," the officer snapped. "You're getting a ticket."





VA MISSION Act and New Veterans Community Care Program

Overview

The VA MISSION Act of 2018 consolidates VA's community care programs into a new Veterans Community Care Program that will help to ensure Veterans choose VA by getting them the right care at the right time from the right provider.

Over the next year, VA will need to develop regulations to implement the new law, while also developing policies, training staff, and awarding contracts to furnish care. Veterans and their families, community providers, and VA staff can expect ongoing improvements and regular engagement as VA creates this new Community Care Program.

New Community Care Program

The new Veterans Community Care Program will be a major advancement that will consolidate VA's community care programs and strengthen VA by merging the Department's tangled web of competing and confusing community care programs, including the Choice Program, into one system that is easier to navigate for Veterans.

This single Program will also greatly reduce the complexity associated with administration of these benefits, making for more efficient use of VA's resources.

To implement this new Program, VA will need to develop regulations. The Act provides VA one year to develop these regulations and to prepare to implement this new authority. This time is critical to ensuring that the transition to the new program is as seamless as possible.

The Act appropriates \$5.2 billion in mandatory funding for the Veterans Choice Program to continue to provide care to Veterans until the new, consolidated Veterans Community Care Program is operational—approximately one year after the enactment of this Act.

Going forward, Veterans and their families can expect continued improvements to be made in how Veterans navigate and receive community care.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1. What are the immediate impacts to Veterans for community care due to the VA MISSION Act?

A1. In the near term, the VA MISSION Act of 2018 appropriates \$5.2 billion in mandatory funding for the Veterans Choice Program to continue to provide care to Veterans until the new, consolidated Veterans Community Care Program is operational—approximately one year after the enactment of this Act.

Q2. What are the immediate impacts to community providers due to the VA MISSION Act?

A2. There will be no immediate changes for community providers as a result of the VA MISSION Act of 2018. Community providers can expect continuity of operations due to the appropriation of \$5.2 billion in mandatory funding for the Veterans Choice Fund while VA works to implement the new Veterans Community Care Program.

Meanwhile, VA is working hard to ensure a seamless transition for Veterans and community providers when VA's contract with Health Net Federal Services ends on September 30, 2018. At that time, new care authorizations, scheduling, coordination, and payments will take place directly between VA, Veterans, and community providers. VA is actively working with Health Net and other partners on a transition plan.

Q3. Why will it take so long for VA to implement changes to consolidate its community care programs?

A3. Due to the significant complexity associated with health care delivery, the large size of the VA health care system, along with VA's network of more than half a million community providers, adequate time and consideration is required to properly develop the required regulations and necessary system changes and training for successfully implementing the consolidated community care program. A lesson learned from the implementation of the Veterans Choice Program is that

Fact Sheet

rushing implementation wasted resources and did not serve Veterans, providers, or VA well.

Q4. Does the consolidation of community care programs under the law affect VA's community provider networks?

A4. No. The consolidation of community care programs is different from and independent of the community provider networks through which VA purchases care for Veterans from a community provider. VA purchases care for Veterans from community providers under specific conditions, while VA's community provider networks (i.e. Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) and Veterans Choice Program (VCP) networks) are the contract vehicles between VA and over half a million community providers through which VA actually purchases care for Veterans. VA's community provider networks are managed by Third Party Administrators (TPAs) who perform certain functions on behalf of VA.



Fargo's veterans cemetery now to open one year later than planned

FARGO, N.D. (Valley News Live) - Last year veterans were excited to learn about the first-ever Veterans Affairs national cemetery in North Dakota, originally scheduled to open in Fargo in 2018. But delays in construction have some worried that it might not open at all.

The cemetery would be the first U.S. federal government cemetery for veterans in all of North Dakota. Right now the nearest one is in St. Paul, M.N.

Now officials say it won't open until around September 2019.

John Knapp, who works for the National Cemetery Administration and heads the project Fargo, says the main reason is because bidding for a contractor couldn't begin until the plan went through the process of approvals in Washington. By the time a contract was awarded, he says, it was already almost August of this year. So because of the coming

weather, it was better to just start the construction next summer instead.

Veteran Terry Richardson, commander of the United Patriotic Bodies of the Fargo-Moorhead area, says the delay disappoints him.

"I've actually been at four military funerals," he said, "and they've been cremations and because of that they all said in their brochures that they're gonna be buried at the cemetery. Well, now we just extended it another year. So, that makes a difference to our veterans."

The cemetery will be located on 40th Ave. Northwest, along county road 20. Last year the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration purchased 4.82 acres of land for \$90,000. Right now, the only other cemetery for veterans in all of North Dakota is about 200 miles away: the state-run one in Mandan, N.D.



VEText

Text Message Appointment Reminders and Cancellation System

How Does It Work?

VEText will notify a Veteran of MOST future scheduled VA appointments 7 days and 2 days prior to a scheduled appointment and allow him or her to reply with "Y Number" to Confirm they plan to attend, or reply with "N Number" to Cancel the appointment.

VEText System does NOT recognize the following responses:

Multiple Confirmations or Cancellations to ONE message: Y9 Y11 Y13

Further Questions or Text Response's:

Could this appointment be changed to this afternoon or anytime this week?

If you have any additional questions, please call the number listed on the text message or the number listed on your VA Appointment letter.

Correct way to respond to EACH individual text message separately:

Your VA appointment is on Jun 25 at 08:30.

Reply:
Y23 to CONFIRM
N24 to CANCEL

We hope to see you then!

More info at
<https://www.myhealth.va.gov> or
800-410-9723.

Send STOP to end messages.

Y23

Thank you for confirming your appointment with FAR DENTAL CLINIC 3-DR. AMERSON (1ST FLOOR/DENTAL) at FARGO VAMROC. Please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment.

Your VA appointment is on Jun 29 at 14:00.

Reply:
Y19 to CONFIRM
N20 to CANCEL

We hope to see you then!

More info at
<https://www.myhealth.va.gov> or
800-410-9723.

Send STOP to end messages.

N20

Please Secure Message or call 800-410-9723 to reschedule.

Post-9/11 GI Bill Housing Payment Rates Update

WASHINGTON – Today the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced key changes in the processing of GI Bill benefits payments under the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Forever GI Bill).

Because of continued information technology difficulties with implementing sections 107 and 501 of the law, both of which change the way monthly housing allowance payments are calculated, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie has directed Under Secretary for Benefits Paul R. Lawrence to take the following actions:

- Effective Dec. 1, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) will reset its implementation efforts for sections 107 and 501 of the law to give the department the time, contracting support and resources necessary to develop the capability to process Spring 2020 enrollments in accordance with the law by December 1, 2019.
- This includes soliciting bids from contractors for support in the areas of program integration, systems implementation, and software development.
-
- During this time, VBA will pay monthly housing allowance rates for the Post-9/11 GI Bill at the current academic year uncapped Department of Defense (DoD) Basic Housing Allowance (BAH) rates.
- For many students, this DoD BAH rate will be equal to or higher than their current payment.
- VBA will also correct retroactively any underpayments resulting from section 107 and 501 implementation problems.
- If a student was overpaid due to the change in law or because of VBA's challenges in implementing the law, the student will not be held liable for the debt.
-
- Also, for the current academic year (2018-2019), VBA will pay housing allowances based on the location of a school's main campus, rather than the physical location of the student.
- This interim policy will terminate by December 1, 2019, upon implementation of a fully developed IT solution for sections 107 and 501 of the law.
- Finally, VBA will define a training site as a "campus" when the following conditions are true: the physical site of the training is either owned or leased by the school, and the school has ownership or control over the student's classroom instruction or the faculty conducting the instruction. This approach reduces the administrative burden for schools and students from VBA's initial interpretation of the law.

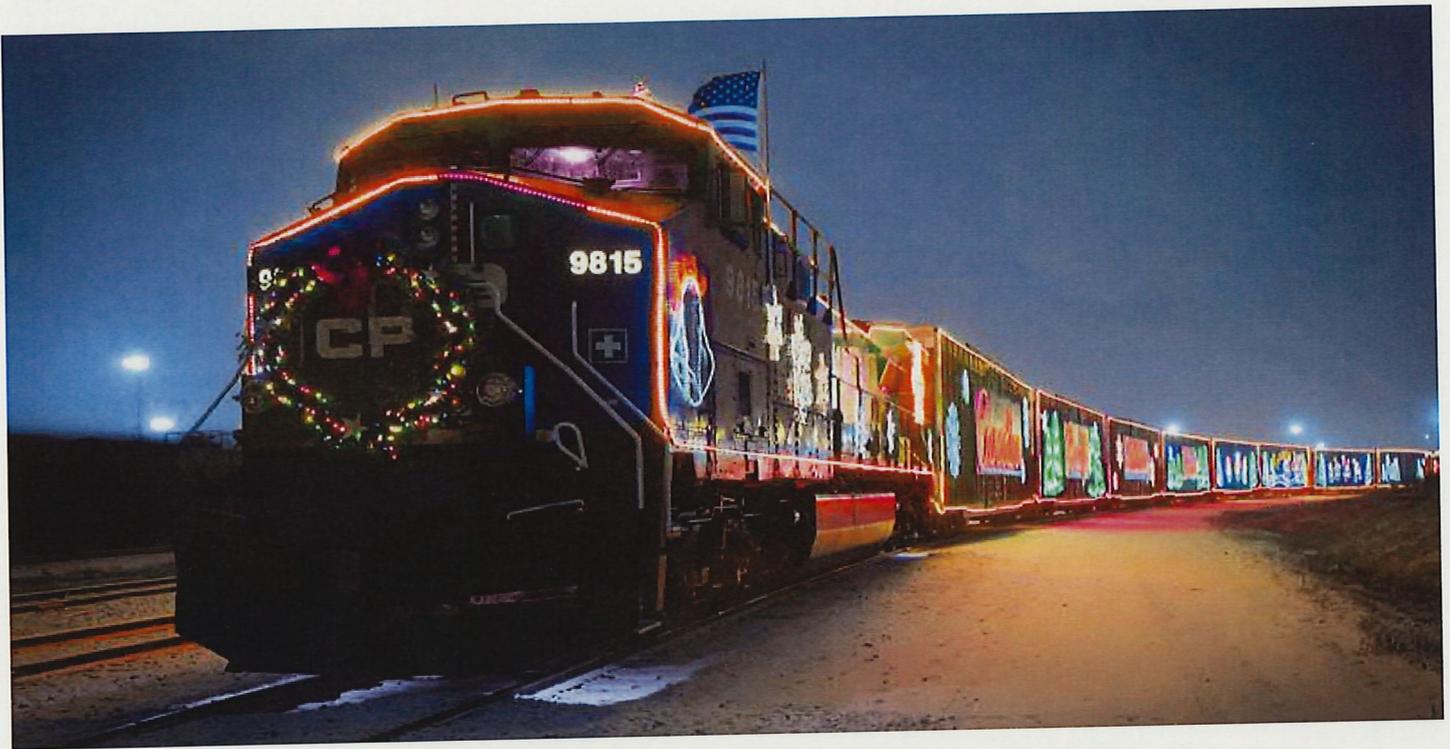
As these changes are implemented, VBA will remain in continuous contact with Veterans, Congress, Veterans Service Organizations and other stakeholders to ensure everyone is informed and knows what to expect.

"Redesigning the way VBA calculates Post 9/11 GI Bill housing rates during a busy academic season was like flying a plane while building it, and that was unfair and frustrating to Veterans and taxpayers. That's why we are resetting our implementation of the law for the next year to ensure we get the technology and formula right to put Veterans first," said Secretary Wilkie. "In the meantime, beneficiaries receiving Post 9/11 GI Bill housing allowances will be paid at the DoD BAH rate, which in many cases will be equal to or higher than their current payment."

While VBA's pending education claims inventory was three times higher than normal in early September, that figure is back to normal levels. For more information on VBA's pending education claims inventory, see [here](#).

VBA strongly encourages schools to begin submitting enrollments immediately for the Spring 2019 term to help VBA process them in a timely fashion. This will ensure that Veteran students receive their housing payments promptly and schools receive tuition and fee payments. VBA expects to maintain timeliness standards of an average 28 days for a new enrollment and 14 days for a re-enrollment.

If students require assistance with their GI Bill benefit or experience a financial hardship due to a delay in payment, we ask them to contact our Education Call Center at 888-442-4551 between 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday-Friday. Students may also keep in contact with VA on our social media sites; on Facebook at www.facebook.com/gibillEducation/ or on Twitter at [VAVetBenefits](#).



All aboard! The Canadian Pacific Holiday Train will stop in more than two-dozen Minnesota towns on its annual ride through the northern U.S., bringing live entertainment and Christmas cheer in exchange for donations to local food banks. The train will be in Minnesota from Dec. 5-14, 2018.

Enjoy free performances by [The Trews](#) and [Willy Porter](#) at each stop, and your food or cash donations will benefit the local community. See the full Minnesota schedule below, and find more details on the [Canadian Pacific website](#).

Wednesday, Dec. 5

La Crescent, 8:15 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 9

- Winona, 4 p.m.

- Wabasha, 6 p.m.

Hastings, 8:30 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 10

- Cottage Grove, 5:15 p.m.

St. Paul, 6:45 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 11

- Golden Valley, 4:50 p.m.

- St. Louis Park, 6 p.m.

- Minneapolis, 7:55 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 12

- Loretto, 4:15 p.m.

- Buffalo, 5:45 p.m.

- Annandale, 7:15 p.m.

Eden Valley, 8:55 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 13

- Glenwood, 10 a.m.

- Alexandria, 11:30 a.m.

- Detroit Lakes, 2:30 p.m.

- Mahnomon, 4:20 p.m.

- Plummer, 6 p.m.

Thief River Falls, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 14

- Elbow Lake, 4:15 p.m.



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 29, 2018

VA Benefits Chief: "Every Single Veteran Will Be Made Whole"

Today, during a hearing before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs,

VA Under Secretary for Benefits Paul Lawrence delivered the following statement:

Before I get into my opening statement on the subject of this morning's hearing, I want to address a misleading NBC news story from late

yesterday that gives the false impression that some Veterans on the GI Bill will not be made whole with respect to their housing payments based

on an announcement VA made yesterday.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Each and every Veteran on the post-9/11 GI Bill will be made 100 percent whole -- retroactively if

need be -- for their housing benefits for this academic year based on the current uncapped DoD rates, and, beginning in spring 2020, we will be in

a position to provide Veterans with the new rates where applicable to meet the law known as the Forever GI Bill.

Once again -- each and every, and I mean **every single Veteran**, will be made whole for their housing benefits this year. As we announced

yesterday, the rates we are providing are the current academic year uncapped DoD Basic Allowance for Housing rates based on the location of a

school's main campus, rather than the physical location of the student.

For many students, this DoD BAH rate will be equal to or higher than their current payment. If a student was overpaid due to the changes in

law or because of VBA's challenges in implementing the law, the student will not be held liable for the debt.

And, starting in the Spring term of 2020, VA will have solved its current technology difficulties so that the department is in a position to provide post-9/11 GI Bill Veterans the new rates, where applicable, to comply with the Forever GI Bill.





Office Hours

**8:00 am –4:30 pm Monday through Friday
Crookston Office 218-281-3066**

Every Wednesday

**Fosston Civic Center, Fosston
215 1st St. E**

(218-280-5506) 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

**Bjella Building McIntosh
240 Cleveland Ave SW**

(218-280-5506) 1:00 PM-3:30 PM

Every Thursday

**Polk County Human Service Center (218-280-5506)
1424 Central Ave. NE, East Grand Forks, MN
(Old Maury's Building)**

9:00 AM-1:00 PM



**Phone: 218-281-3066
Fax: 218-521-7982**

**Kurtis Ellefson
Polk County Veterans Service Officer
612 Broadway St N, Room 241
Crookston MN 56716**