



Connecting Treatment Court Veterans to VA Healthcare & Benefits- PACT Act 101 and Beyond

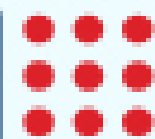


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VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



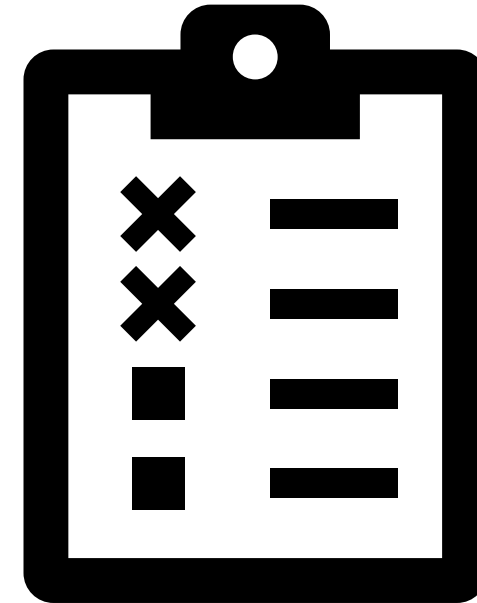
**Veterans
Crisis Line**

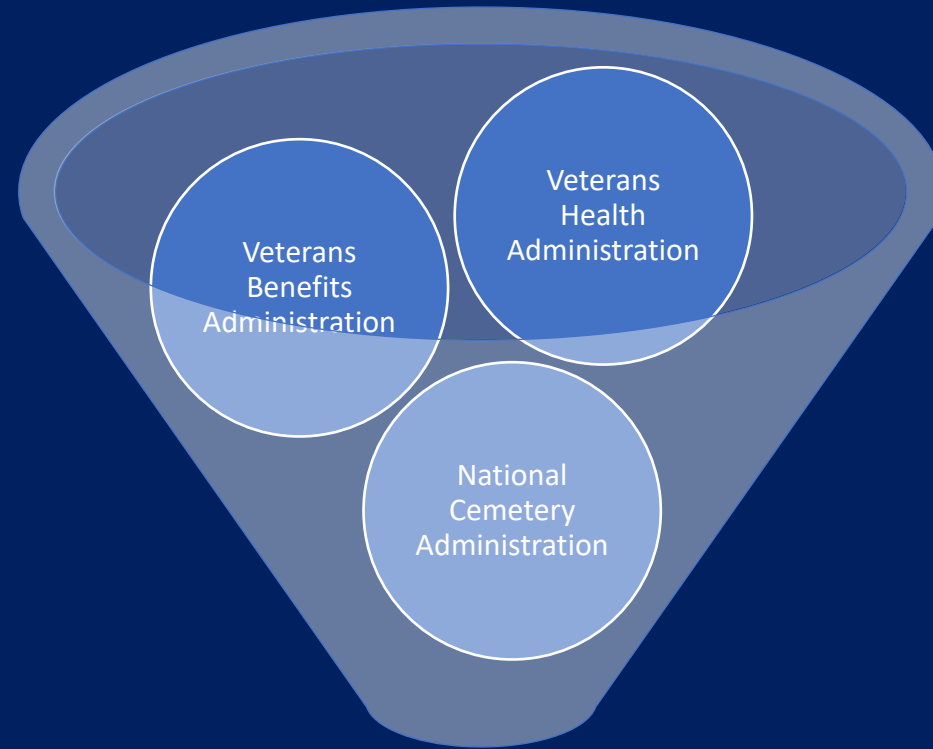
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Agenda

- VA- the big picture
- Why VA Health Care?
- VA Health Care Eligibility FAQs
- Veterans Justice Outreach
- VA Mental Health Services
- What is the PACT Act?
- Benefits Basics
- VHA Questions & Answers





VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs





Why the VHA?

- VHA provides the best and most affordable health care for Veterans in America – and *this* is your chance to apply.
- Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are proven to have better health outcomes than those who get their care elsewhere. And this year alone, VA has beaten non-VA hospitals in quality ratings *and* patient satisfaction ratings.
- That's because our clinicians know Veterans – they often *are* Veterans – and they know exactly how to help.
- VHA offers holistic care to address Veteran's complex psychosocial needs- MH, Medical, etc.
- And VA health care isn't only the best option for Veterans – it's often the most affordable – with copays as low as \$0 for prescriptions, urgent care, outpatient care, and more for some Veterans at VA.
- So don't wait – help link Veterans to the world-class care they have earned.



VA Health Care Eligibility FAQs

What are the minimum active-duty service requirements for VA health care?

In general, Veterans must have served 24 months of continuous active duty or the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty.

Former members of the Reserves or National Guard are eligible for VA health care if they have qualifying service (as described above) **and** meet one of the health care eligibility requirements in the PACT Act. Former members of the Reserves or National Guard who only served for training purposes may not be able to establish Veteran status if they did not incur a qualifying disability during such training.

Some exceptions apply. Please visit www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility for more information.

What are the exceptions to the minimum active-duty service requirements for VA health care?

The minimum active-duty service requirement for VA health care may not apply if any of these are true:

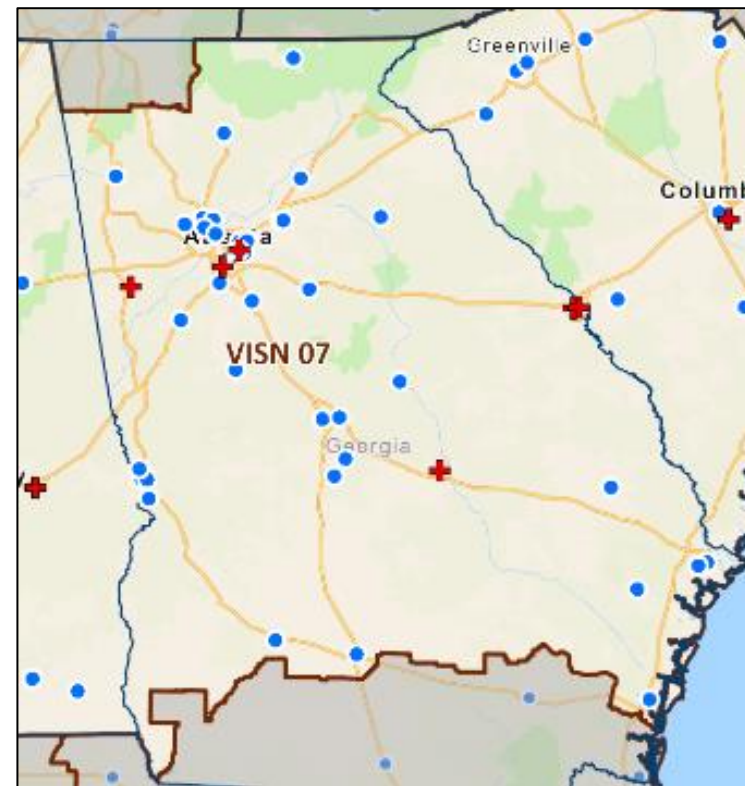
- The Veteran was discharged or released for a qualifying reason (e.g., early discharge, hardship, medical discharge).
- The Veteran was discharged for a disability that was caused—or made worse—by active-duty service.
- The Veteran served prior to the early 1980s.

VA encourages all Veterans to apply to determine their enrollment eligibility. Please visit www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility for more information or call 877-222-8387.



How Veterans Can Apply for VA Health Care

- Online:
<https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction>.
- By phone: 877-222-8387
- By mail:
VA Form 10-10EZ to:
Health Eligibility Center
PO Box 5207
Janesville, WI 53547-5207
- In person at the nearest VA medical center or clinic
<https://www.va.gov/find-locations>





Veteran Justice Outreach Program

- A system-wide effort to ensure access to services for the justice-involved Veteran population at-risk for homelessness, substance abuse, mental health illness, and physical health problems.
- Goal: provide timely access to VA services for eligible justice-involved Veterans to avoid unnecessary criminalization and incarceration of Veteran defendants and offenders with mental illness and/or substance use problems.

VJO Specialists:

- Responsible for outreach, assessments, case management for justice-involved Veterans in the local courts and jails
 - Liaison with local justice system partners
 - Provide/coordinate training for law enforcement personnel.
 - Assist in eligibility determination and enrollment
 - Function as members of court treatment teams
 - Refer and link Veterans to appropriate providers





Benefits of VJO & Treatment Court Services



Source: GAO File Photo.

- Long-term judicially-supervised treatment as an alternative to incarceration or other sanctions.
- Eligible justice-involved Veterans are identified early and appropriately placed in treatment.
- Abstinence of illicit drugs, alcohol as well other prescribed treatment is monitored closely.
- Forging partnerships among VJO, VA, courts, public agencies, community-based agencies, and faith-based agencies to generate local support and enhance treatment effectiveness.
- [Veterans Justice Outreach Program - VA Homeless Programs](#)

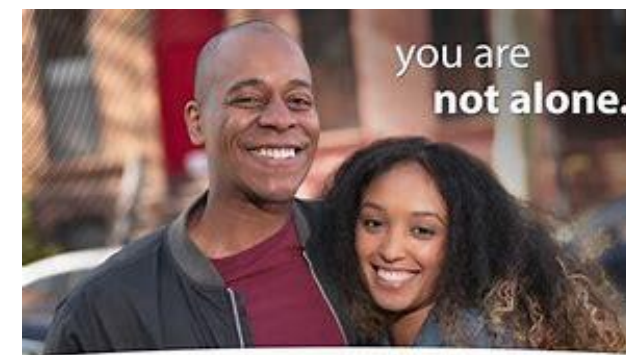


VA Mental Health Services

VA is here to provide and connect Veterans with clinical resources, peer support, and supportive therapies to manage any mental health challenge.

Veterans work with their VA providers to determine the right evidence-based treatments, medications, and therapies to meet their unique needs, including:

- Substance Use
- Trauma Focused Therapy
- Schizophrenia
- Mood Disorders, including Anxiety & Depression
- Suicide Prevention & Safety Planning
- Intimate Partner Violence





What is the PACT Act?



Vietnam



Gulf War Era



Post-9/11 Afghanistan and Iraq



The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022

is a law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances during their military service. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve.

The PACT Act :

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era.
- Expands eligibility for benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances.





PACT Act Key Components



The Act **expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures** and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era.



VA **will improve the decision-making process** for determining what medical conditions will be considered for presumptive status.



Every enrolled Veteran **will receive an initial toxic exposure screening** and a follow-up screening every five years. Veterans who are not enrolled, but who are eligible to enroll, will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



VA health care staff and claims processors will receive **toxic exposure-related education and training**.



The Act **requires research studies** on the mortality of Veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War; Post-9/11 Veteran health trends; and Veteran cancer rates.



The Act will help VA **build a stronger, more skilled workforce** to meet the growing demand for benefits and services.



The Act **authorizes 31 new facilities** across the country, providing greater access to VA health care.





Toxic Exposure Screening for Veterans

WHO: All Veterans enrolled in VA health care

WHAT: A quick (5-10 minute) series of questions to identify and document any potential exposures to toxins during military service

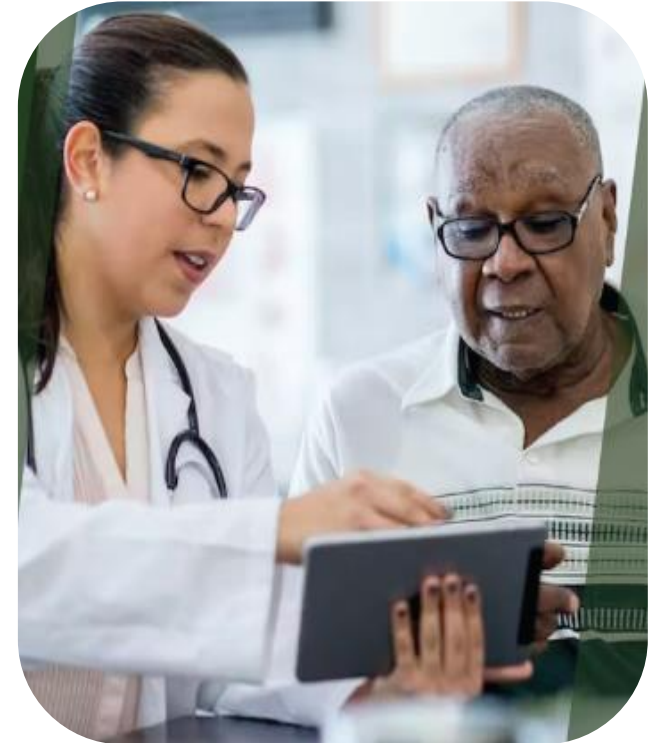
WHEN: At least one every 5 years

WHERE: VA medical centers and clinics, including virtual and phone encounters.

WHY: Supports Veteran long-term health plans and ensures they receive informed exposure informed whole-health care.

HOW:

- Veterans can ask for a screening at their next VA appointment
- Contact their medical team using My HealtheVet secure messaging



TOXIC EXPOSURE SCREENING

AT A GLANCE

WHAT IT IS



A CONVERSATION STARTER

The screening asks Veterans if they believe they experienced toxic exposures while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.



A CONNECTION

Veterans will be offered connections and information on benefits, registry exams, and clinical resources, as appropriate.



A RECORD

Veterans' responses are added to the VA medical record to be included as part of their care.



EXPOSURE-INFORMED CARE

This approach includes exposure concerns as a cornerstone of Veteran care across their lifetime.



WHAT IT IS NOT



A COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

No specific diagnostic tests or physical exams are indicated to screen for illness based solely on self-reported exposure to toxins.



A PATH TO BENEFITS

The screening does not play a role in determining disability compensation, but Veterans who report exposures will receive information about filing a claim.



A VERIFICATION OF EXPOSURE

The screening provides no legal or medical verification.



A REGISTRY EVALUATION

The screening is not part of VA's environmental health registries and does not serve as a registry evaluation.





Conditions Presumed to be Service-Connected

As of August 10, 2022, a long list of new conditions are presumed to be service-connected due to various in-service toxic exposures. **APPLY NOW** at www.VA.gov/PACT to expedite your claim and benefits.

- Asthma (diagnosed after service)
- Brain cancer
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Granulomatous disease
- Head cancer of any type
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Kidney cancer
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)
- Neck cancer
- Pancreatic cancer
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type
- Sarcoidosis





Filing Claims to Receive Benefits

Veterans can file a claim for the new presumptive conditions:

- **New Claim**—Veteran has never filed for the presumptive condition
 - **Supplemental Claim**—the presumptive condition was previously denied but is now considered to be presumptive
-
- If VA denied one of the new presumptive conditions in the past but the Veteran may now be eligible for benefits, VA will try to contact them. There is no need to wait to file a Supplemental Claim.
 - VA is prioritizing the claims of Veterans with cancer to make sure they get timely access to the care and benefits they need.
 - **Pending Claims:** If a Veteran's condition was added to the list of [presumptive conditions](#)* after the claim was filed, VA will consider it on a presumptive basis.



*Presumptive conditions do not require proof that the military service caused the condition. Veterans only need to meet the service requirements and have a current diagnosis of the presumptive condition. Veterans should submit any supporting documentation to assist with their claim.





How to help Veterans Obtain Military Records

Veterans can file a claim for the new presumptive conditions:

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Avoiding Scams & Fraud



VETERAN • SERVICE MEMBER • FAMILY
FRAUD EVASION

There's been an increase in PACT Act-related [phishing \(email\)](#), vishing (phone), and [social media scams](#) targeting Veterans to access their benefits or submit claims on their behalf.

To report suspected scams, please call the VSAFE Fraud Hotline at [833-38V-SAFE](tel:833-38V-SAFE) (8-7233).

Do's

- Securely submit your application directly to VA online at benefits.va.gov/benefits/applying.asp or in person at any VA Regional Office. VA will assist in gathering supportive evidence at no cost to you.
- Be cautious of companies that (1) claim to be contacting you on behalf of VA, (2) advertise VA benefits can only be obtained with their help, or (3) attempt to pressure you into signing a contract.
- If you're interested in working with a Veterans Service Organization, agent, or attorney, use the VA Office of General Counsel (OGC) accreditation tool at VA.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp to confirm their credentials.

Don'ts

- Don't sign a contract agreeing to pay an unauthorized company a percentage of your benefit payment in exchange for assistance with your VA claim.
- Don't sign forms that are not VA generated or a blank form for someone else to complete later.
- Don't be fooled by companies that advertise special relationships with medical professionals and say they can guarantee your benefits award.
- Don't provide personal information (such as your social security number) to anyone offering claims assistance.



Resources for Veterans & Providers

- **Veterans Crisis Line for 24/7/365 MH Emergency:** 988 press 1, text @ 838255, www.veteranscrisisline.net
- **VA Locator:** www.va.gov/find-locations
- **National Call Center for Homeless Veterans:** 1-877-424-3838, va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp
- **VA Healthcare Eligibility** 877-222-8387, va.gov/health-care/eligibility
- **VA Women Veterans Call Center:** 855-VA-WOMEN (855-829-6636), womenshealth.va.gov
- **VA Caregiver Support Program:** 1-855-260-3274, caregiver.va.gov
- **VA Benefits:** 1-800-827-1000, benefits.va.gov
- **VA National Cemetery Administration:** 1-800-698-2411, cem.va.gov
- **Vet Center Call Center:** 1-877-927-8387
- **VA Mental Health Information:** www.mentalhealth.va.gov, Free VA MH Apps: mobile.va.gov/Appstore
- **Coaching Into Care (for family member of Veterans):** 888-823-7458
- **Make The Connection (Veterans telling stories about MH issues):** <https://maketheconnection.net/>
- **Veterans Justice Outreach Program:** www.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp#contacts
- ***VSAFE Veteran Fraud Evasion:** 1-833-38V-SAFE (1-833-388-7233) vsafe.gov/
- **Suicide Risk Management Consultation Program (free consultation for providers of Veterans at risk for suicide):** www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/consult email: SRMconsult@va.gov
- **PTSD Consultation Program (free consultation for providers of Veterans with PTSD) ,** 866-948-7880 www.ptsd.va.gov, email: PTSDconsult@va.gov
- **VA Postvention Resources (for family, providers and community members following a death by suicide):** www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/postvention/
- **More Free Training Sites & Resources:** Train.Org , Psycharmor.net
- ***National Archives (copies of military records):** archives.gov
- **Accredited Veterans Service Organizations for free help with benefits:** <https://www.benefits.va.gov/atlanta/veterans-services-orgs.asp>
- **PACT Act:** www.VA.gov/PACT
- **VA Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program:** 1-800-799-7233, www.socialwork.va.gov/IPV/Index.asp
- ***Military One Source & Peer to Peer Line:** 800-342-9647, militaryonesource.mil

<https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>

VA Mobile

VA App Store ▾

Support ▾

App Team Resources ▾

About ▾

Connected Care Websites ▾



🔍 Search

Search



App Audience ▾

- ☐ Veterans (41)
- ☐ Healthcare Professionals (56)
- ☐ Family and Caregivers (10)

Types of Apps ▾

Mental Wellness and Self Care

- ☐ Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Use (5)
- ☐ Anger and Irritability (5)
- ☐ Anxiety, Stress, Trauma, PTSD (21)
- ☐ Depression and Mood (9)
- ☐ Mindfulness, Resilience, Goal Setting (11)

Don't Know Where to Start?

Check out these VA app categories



Scheduling VA Appointments Online

Apps for Veterans to schedule and manage VA appointments.



Connecting Providers With Veterans Virtually

Apps for VA health care professionals to connect with Veterans virtually.



Physical Wellness and Health

The most-used and highest-rated Veteran apps on the VA App Store.



Mental Health and Behavioral Therapy

Apps to help Veterans manage their mental health and behavior.



VHA Additional Information



DD-214 Basics

- <https://veteran.com/how-to-read-dd214/>

CAUTION: NOT TO BE USED FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES		THIS IS AN IMPORTANT RECORD. SAFEGUARD IT.		ANY ALTERATIONS IN SHADED AREAS RENDER FORM VOID	
CERTIFICATE OF RELEASE OR DISCHARGE FROM ACTIVE DUTY This Report Contains Information Subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, As Amended.					
1. NAME (Last, First, Middle)		2. DEPARTMENT, COMPONENT AND BRANCH		3. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	
4a. GRADE, RATE OR RANK		b. PAY GRADE		5. DATE OF BIRTH (YYYYMMDD)	
6. RESERVE OBLIGATION TERMINATION DATE (YYYYMMDD)		7a. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE DUTY			
b. HOME OF RECORD AT TIME OF ENTRY (City and state, or complete address if known)		8a. LAST DUTY ASSIGNMENT AND MAJOR COMMAND			
b. STATION WHERE SEPARATED		9. COMMAND TO WHICH TRANSFERRED			
10. SGLI COVERAGE		AMOUNT: \$ <input type="checkbox"/> NONE			
11. PRIMARY SPECIALTY (List number, title and years and months in specialty. List additional specialty numbers and titles involving periods of one or more years.)		12. RECORD OF SERVICE		YEAR(S) MONTH(S) DAY(S)	
a. DATE ENTERED AD THIS PERIOD		b. SEPARATION DATE THIS PERIOD		c. NET ACTIVE SERVICE THIS PERIOD	
d. TOTAL PRIOR ACTIVE SERVICE		e. TOTAL PRIOR INACTIVE SERVICE		f. FOREIGN SERVICE	
g. SEA SERVICE		h. INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING		i. EFFECTIVE DATE OF PAY GRADE	
13. DECORATIONS, MEDALS, BADGES, CITATIONS AND CAMPAIGN RIBBONS AWARDED OR AUTHORIZED (All periods of service)		14. MILITARY EDUCATION (Course title, number of weeks, and month and year completed)			
15a. COMMISSIONED THROUGH SERVICE ACADEMY		YES		NO	
b. COMMISSIONED THROUGH ROTC SCHOLARSHIP (10 USC Sec. 2107n)		YES		NO	
c. ENLISTED UNDER LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM (10 USC Chap. 109) (If Yes, enter date of commitment:)		YES		NO	
16. DAYS ACCRUED LEAVE PAID		17. MEMBER WAS PROVIDED COMPLETE DENTAL EXAMINATION AND ALL APPROPRIATE DENTAL SERVICES AND TREATMENT WITHIN 90 DAYS PRIOR TO SEPARATION		YES NO	
18. REMARKS					
The information contained herein is subject to computer matching within the Department of Defense or with any other affected Federal or non-Federal agency for verification purposes and to determine eligibility for, and/or continued compliance with, the requirements of a Federal benefit program.					
19a. MAILING ADDRESS AFTER SEPARATION (Include ZIP Code)		b. NEAREST RELATIVE (Name and address - include ZIP Code)			
20. MEMBER REQUESTS COPY 5 BE SENT TO (Specify state/locality)		OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS		YES NO	
a. MEMBER REQUESTS COPY 3 BE SENT TO THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (WASHINGTON, DC)		YES		NO	
21a. MEMBER SIGNATURE		b. DATE (YYYYMMDD)		22a. OFFICIAL AUTHORIZED TO SIGN (Typed name, grade, title, signature)	
b. DATE (YYYYMMDD)		E			
SPECIAL ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (For use by authorized agencies only)					
23. TYPE OF SEPARATION		24. CHARACTER OF SERVICE (Include upgrades)			
25. SEPARATION AUTHORITY		26. SEPARATION CODE		27. REENTRY CODE	
28. NARRATIVE REASON FOR SEPARATION					
29. DATES OF TIME LOST DURING THIS PERIOD (YYYYMMDD)				30. MEMBER REQUESTS COPY 4 (Initials)	

Compact Act: Emergent Suicide Mental Health Care

- Section 201- VA will provide, pay for and reimburse for emergent suicide care for eligible individuals at VA medical facilities and at non-Department facilities.
- Eligible individuals include all Veterans regardless of eligibility for VHA health care benefits (includes OTH discharges).
- Emergent suicide care includes inpatient or crisis residential care for no more than 30 days and/or outpatient medical and mental healthcare for no more than 90 days. If the individual remains in acute suicidal crisis, extensions may be provided.
- Each **new** crisis is a new episode of eligibility.
- VA will ensure eligible Veterans are not financially responsible for costs associated with emergent suicide care, including emergency transportation.

COMPACT Act, Section 201 Impact:

- VA providing cost-free mental health and medical emergent suicide care removes the cost barrier
- By extending eligibility and access to acute and follow up suicide care, the net of protection VA will provide to prevent suicide increases dramatically
- **COMPACT 201 benefit potentially increases eligibility to an additional 9 million unenrolled Veterans, potentially doubling the needed services**

How to Report

- Online: VA's Emergency Care Reporting portal [https:// EmergencyCareReporting.CommunityCare.va.gov](https://EmergencyCareReporting.CommunityCare.va.gov)
- Phone: 844-72HRVHA (844-724-7842)



Caregiver Support Program

- If you would like to speak to someone about Caregiver Support Resources, contact 404-521-6269 or our National Hotline at 855-260-3274.
- If you are a patient or a Caregiver interested in Medical Foster Homes, you may contact our Medical Foster Home Coordinator at 404-312-8532.
- If you are a VA patient who is receiving Homemaker/ Home Health Aide Care or Home Health and would like to speak to the nurse regarding your care, please send an email with no protected health information to vhaatgHomeMakerTeam@va.gov
- If you are a Veteran who is residing in a VA Contract Nursing home and need to reach the team, please call 404-521-6260 x 558421. The VA covers the cost of nursing home care for Veterans who are 70-100% Service Connected and meet the physical criteria for nursing home care.

MISSION Act Community Care

Under the Veterans Community Care Program, Veterans can work with their VA health care provider or other VA staff to see if they are eligible to receive community care based on new criteria. Eligibility for community care does not require a Veteran to receive that care in the community; Veterans can still choose to have VA provide their care.

Veterans may elect to receive care in the community if they meet any of the following six eligibility criteria:

1. A Veteran needs a service not available at any VA medical facility.
2. A Veteran lives in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility. Specifically, this would apply to Veterans living in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
3. A Veteran qualifies under the “grandfather” provision related to distance eligibility under the Veterans Choice Program.

MISSION Act Community Care

4. VA cannot furnish care within certain designated access standards. The specific access standards are described below:
 - a) Drive time to a specific VA medical facility: Thirty-minute (30) average drive time for primary care, mental health and noninstitutional extended care services. Sixty-minute (60) average drive time for specialty care.
Note: Drive times are calculated using geomapping software.
 - b) Appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility: Twenty days (20) from the date of request for primary care, mental health care and noninstitutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider. Twenty-eight days (28) for specialty care from the date of request, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.
5. The Veteran and the referring clinician agree it is in the best medical interest of the Veteran to receive community care based on defined factors.
6. VA has determined that a VA medical service line is not providing care in a manner that complies with VA's standards for quality based on specific conditions.



Expanding Healthcare: Service Act Mammography

- The **Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas Supporting Expanded Review for Veterans In Combat Environments (SERVICE) Act** also expands toxic-exposure eligibility for Veterans who served overseas.
- Signed into law on June 7, 2022, the SERVICE Act expands VHA eligibility for clinically appropriate mammography screening for Veterans, of any age, who served in certain locations (not including bodies of water or air space above).
- The SERVICE Act does not change health care enrollment or claims and benefits application requirements.



Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas, PhD